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MANACLED MAIDEN



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by F. E. Campbell

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The Pain and the Pride

CATHERINE FOUND IT HARD TO DOCKET HIM. In her mind, she labeled him “The Professor”. There was about him an academic air. He was sleek and middle-aged, extremely fluent, though a trifle pedantic. He was a fluent lecturer. She was still straining and twisting her arms and shoulders against bound wrists, still in disbelief at what had been done to her. The attentive class had all been party to her present condition, so there was no advantage in appealing to them any more than to the Professor himself. They were obviously enjoying both herself and the lecture as she stood before them between the iron stanchions which were two lengths of four inch pipe, capped at their top, and fastened immovably below the surface of the rug on which she stood. Her strength had availed nothing against them. They were solid as rock and held her easily. Close to the top of each of these metal pillars hung a ring, and it was to these rings that she was attached by corded wrists. Miss Catherine Mordant could not suppress her panting or the swift rise and fall of her angry breasts. It had all happened so swiftly she was still trying to catch up.

“What we have here,” the Professor droned, in the full ride of his enthusiasm, “is a typical example of a young woman of the moneyed classes. Her father owns an investment

house and sundry other interests. She will be a most suitable subject for the high born maiden, haughty and contemptuous of the hoi polloi, who we will reduce to complete humility—"

"If it's ransom you want—" Catherine focused her indignation upon the lecturer. "I'm quite sure my father—"

"It is not ransom, my dear girl," the Professor assured suavely. "We intend to extract from you something far more valuable than your father's dollars. The more I see of you, the more pleased I am at our selection. You're going to serve our purpose quite admirably." He returned his attention to the class.

"What we are going to do with Miss Catherine Mordant is to reduce her step by step, studying her reactions to every inch of her descent to the common clay of enslavement." The Professor coughed gently. "I am uncertain of her eventual disposition, but should we have no further need of her, and should her company prove unrewarding, I am aware of certain brothels where such females may find a resting place in surroundings to preclude them becoming a nuisance."

"Look here, you humbug," Catherine complained, tugging at her wrists and glaring at the master of ceremonies, "stop being ridiculous. We can put an end to this now, so we can all go home. I'm prepared to say nothing about it—just simply put it down to a piece of academic nonsense. I

really don't know what you're trying to prove."

"You see and hear this young woman in the full flush of her wealth-produced arrogance," the Professor continued as though Catherine had remained silent. "We will all enjoy her descent into shame. I want you to take notes on what she has to say on these occasions. I anticipate using her in class twice a week until our objective is achieved. In the meantime, she can be kept safely incarcerated in premises I already have provided."

"Oh, dry up, you ridiculous old fraud!" Catherine was panting even more heavily. Her cheeks were flushed by the lecturer's calm reference to herself. "This is an outrage! I'll never forgive you and if you don't correct the situation immediately, I shall start proceedings." She sniffed hautily. "I still think you're all having fun at my expense, but I'm prepared to overlook it if you let me go."

"This young woman will be as predictable as a symphony," the Professor continued. "What we are hearing now is the prelude. She will go through all the various nuances of comprehension. At the moment it is no more than a faint light on her horizon. What she will subject us to now is a series of indignant protests, promises, and threats. Her father and his money will feature prominently." The Professor beamed benignly. "Now, to impress our captive maiden with the reality of her condition, I will from time to time remove an article of her clothing until we have her completely bare." He suited action to words by bending

down and removing Catherine's left shoe. He held it up for her to see. "You will not be needing this any more, Miss Mordant." He threw it aside with a gesture of contempt. "Perhaps for the rest of your life you will need no covering at all."

"This is going beyond a joie. Do you realize that your acts now are criminal? You could go to prison!"

"Of course, of course," he said, as though soothing an erring child. "Everything is understood, Miss Mordant, and I do want you to know we will appreciate your remarks, providing of course they do not become redundant. If you could bring yourself to listen along with the class, you might find something interesting in what I have to say."

Catherine Mordant was no fool. Moreover, she was an extremely rich young woman, with a father who was power in the community. If the Professor was to be taken at face value, she would indeed be an excellent subject for his discourse and whatever research into anthropology he might contemplate But it had been no more than half an hour since she had been apprehended and bound to the two uprights. If this was not a joke, soon to be disclosed and apologized for, then there was an undercurrent of evil. She could not put her finger on it, but it was there. The hurt of the cords tied tightly around her wrists were an emphasis. The class was made up of young adults, old enough to know better. They were obviously under the Professor's thumb or shared with him whatever it was he

pursued. Catherine found it difficult to stand with one shoe on and one off, so she kicked off the one she still wore and could then stand sensibly and not look stupidly awkward. Appearances were of extreme importance to Catherine Mordant.

The Professor noted the second shoe flying after the first. He paused in his discourse long enough to reprimand. “That was a mistake, my dear. If I had wanted that shoe off your foot, I would have taken it. You’ll wear it until I decide otherwise.”

“You pompous idiot!” Catherine stood, her arms outstretched and glared at her tormentor. The Professor was not to be taken seriously. His behavior removed him from acceptable society. Icily she informed, “I’m not impressed by any of these proceedings. The whole thing strikes me as supremely idiotic.”

The class made notes, and the Professor replaced the shoe. Catherine kept a discreet but frosty silence as this was done. When the Professor stood up, she snapped at his beaming features, “My wrists hurt! Untie them!”

Her request was blandly ignored. The Professor returned to his class and continued his dissertation on feminine behavior under stress. Casually and without pause in his flow of speech, he relieved the captive girl of first this piece of clothing and then that. It was not until she was reduced to panties, bra, and nylons that he relieved her of the second

shoe. She was sure he had kept it on to make her stand awkwardly as an emphasis of his authority. Catherine was blushing. To be stripped in this casual fashion was unflattering. She was being made to feel exactly what she was; an interesting subject, all of which must be fully revealed and studied academically. Her breasts never paused in their tempo of rise and fall. When, with the lecture continuing, a hand reached out to grasp her bra, she drew back the scant inches her bonds allowed and snapped furiously, “That will be enough! Leave me alone. If you uncover me, you will be compounding your felony.”

The bra was torn abruptly from her shoulders. Her breasts gleamed white in this fresh exposure. The class admired them fully, both male and female giving them instant and intent attention. The Professor’s voice droned on. “You will note her reaction. The baring of the breasts of a girl of this class has its own significance, quite different from that of a lower class female. I suspect Miss Mordant is suffering acutely at this very moment. She is abstaining from protest simply because she does not wish to attract more attention to her naked breasts than need be. We will use this as part of the thesis you will write. I want you to trace the origins of this particular taboo that denies a female’s breasts their inherent right to sun and air.” The Professor’s voice was savoring every word.

Catherine knew herself scarlet. It was not a Victorian shame, for she was neither virgin nor stranger to male regard. She had undressed often enough in the casual love

affairs by which her prestige was enhanced. She slept with only the most impressive names. But this was a different matter. This was something else again. To be forced to stand with arms outstretched while she was casually stripped as an exhibit in a lecture was an affront she would never forgive. It was also a new experience. She had never before realized the magnificent proportions of her breasts and the manner in which they defied gravity. This fact was now commented on and duly observed. Pencils scribbled busily. Miss Catherine Mordant was furious.

The garter belt and nylons went next, accompanied by academic comment. It was not until only her panties remained that the bound girl contemplated the full horror of total exposure. She had always been shy of pubic hair and had debated the wisdom of shaving it off. It was an inexplicable growth girls shared with the male, but often the female feature luxuriated beyond the normal and became a cause for male humor and the girl's own chagrin. Catherine's pubic hair was a heavy mass of silken fronds. It was quite beautiful, denying sight of the skin beneath and acting almost as an expensive supplement to the female genitals she only discussed under the most urgent need. She was well aware of the four-letter words it had spawned through the centuries, and of that one in particular most commonly used today. She had used it once in the privacy of her own room, and had blushed for an hour afterwards. Catherine was neither shy, coy, nor a prude, but there were still certain limits beyond which she would not go.

Catherine had given up pleading for release and struggling against the cords. She knew that her predicament would end only by someone else's choice. She would not influence it a particle by demeaning herself. She felt almost grateful to her bonds, for it would have been totally impossible to have stood thus without their compulsion. Then again, without them, the whole thing would have fallen apart. The strictures on her wrists gave the lecture a significance the Professor could have achieved in no other way. Catherine Mordant waited breathlessly in certain knowledge of total nakedness, but when it came, it was no less loathsome for the delay. After the Professor's wrench and downward tug, she stood and offered his class a full frontal view of a wealthy, naked young woman. She was certain one or two girls of her acquaintance would find erotic stimulus in this exposure, but she certainly did not. Instinctively, she crossed her legs, but the act was far too reminiscent of a Victorian novel or underground erotica. It hid little, but made her look silly and lower class. Realizing this, she placed both feet solidly apart and glared back at the smiling students. It would be interesting to see what they wrote, but she was certain she never would. When the Professor thoughtfully plucked a pubic hair from among the black forest she offered, she kicked out savagely and sent him sprawling back. Regaining his balance, he seemed pleased rather than disgruntled. He turned to the expectant class and jubilantly exclaimed. "You see! A predictable response. This young woman will respond to a great many trivial impositions which touch her dignity, particularly the

privacy of her sex. I will wish you to deal separately with this guardianship of Miss Mordant's genitals. A young woman of the class will use it judiciously and with a keen eye to an eventual favorable matrimonial venture." The professor chuckled. "If I wished to be vulgar, I suppose we could say that she will experiment until she finds the most satisfactory cock and then obtain upon it a financial statement. The mating ceremonies of the Papuans are no more quaint. They probably are respectable by comparison."

"You're a rotten son of a bitch!" Catherine exclaimed crisply. "If you touch me again, I'll kick you where it hurts."

"Ah, excellent! Exactly as expected, but this now brings us to a second step in the understanding of this young woman." The Professor beamed around his class and chose a smiling face. "Ah, yes. Dorothy my dear, will you do the honors? It is now time for Miss Mordant to savor her first touch of discipline. I believe you know where we keep the strap."

Catherine froze. Surely this absurd man would not go that far! Shocked and apprehensive, Catherine watched Dorothy go to a desk, open a drawer, and extract from it a strip of leather. It was fairly heavy leather and had been shaped into a weapon. Dorothy flexed it back and forth in her hands several times, then approached.

"Don't you dare!" The archaic exclamation burst from

Catherine's lips without volition. She strained back as far as her wrists permitted, her eyes focused in mesmerized horror upon the two-foot length of hide which presumably Dorothy intended to bring into sharp impact on her skin. When the girl took up position behind the posts and the naked girl they held, the naked girl looked back over her own bare shoulder and repeated what she had already said.

"Don't you dare! If you touch me with that thing, I'll have you put in jail!" When Dorothy's arm swung back and she balanced on one heel, Catherine Mordant dared look no more. Instead, she whirled about as best she could and glared stonily at the enraptured class.

The impact of the leather across Catherine's right cheek was positively vulgar. She presumed the pain was vulgar too, but she was too busy coping with it to bother. The only thing to penetrate the unexpected agony was the Professor's voice: "Excellent, Dorothy. I knew I could rely on you. I do suggest you follow that practice one cheek at a time. It is far more effective than trying to get a good cut at both at once. You can more easily choose your mark. May I suggest you leave the exposed hip bone alone on this occasion?"

As the twin half of her posterior received its own impact, Catherine came alive, her voice ringing out in uncontrolled fury. "Stop it! Stop it! That hurts shockingly. Haven't you any sense?"

No one paid attention, least of all Dorothy. The Professor stood back, gently nodding his approval as each humiliating blow extracted its own thwack and slap. No matter how the recipient of this attention twisted her posterior, she never succeeded in moving it far enough from the target area to ease a single blow. Each one of them was carefully aimed and delivered with enthusiastic gusto. It was as though Dorothy had been offended by the attitude of a rich bitch who was now totally at her mercy. She delivered ringing strokes with only enough pause between to encourage their recipient to commence an exclamation of disapproval which never quite got finished. Catherine's flashing legs were a vivid expression of her discontent. They had borne the first few impacts in stoic immobility, but it did not last. It was not long before Catherine was performing an amusing little jig which was intended as evasive action but was totally unsuccessful. Her protests became more urgent as her bottom burned.

"Please stop. Can't we talk about this? You're not being civilized. Don't you realize I don't know what you want of me? This is torture—it hurts abominably." Once again, she looked back over a shoulder to glare in semi-defiance. "And as for you, you sadistic little bitch—" The sentence went unfinished beneath the impact of the next stroke Dorothy implanted with the full youthful vigor of her arm. Catherine was shocked to discover she was fighting back her tears when, after twenty vulgar sounds, the beating ceased. The Professor was first to make his comment. "In

times to come, Miss Mordant, you will realize the relative innocence of what you have just received. Dorothy was not being cruel—she is a delightful girl, and you may hope she will whip you again at some future date. Corporal punishment is very much a part of our curriculum. Dorothy has experienced it herself and, should you desire, will no doubt discuss it with you at a later date. The class has been observing your behavior under discipline and will draw their own conclusions from your behavior. We'd all like to express our thanks for your unsolicited contribution to our studies."

The girl whose bottom flamed from contact with the leather was certain she had experienced the very nadir of human experience. For the first time since she had been brought to this place, she was frightened. The pain had done it. It was all too obvious to Catherine Mordant that if she could be whipped once, she could be whipped twice or twenty times, and the same would apply to being stripped naked. She was not yet prepared to accept the Professor's assurance that she might never wear clothes again. She was not prepared to accept any part of any of this, but she did not know what she could do about it. While heat flamed below, she awaited the next word in what she was now thinking of as her kidnapping. The Professor provided it without delay. "Ernest, Robert—would you be kind enough to escort Miss Mordant to her quarters?"

They were two smiling boys her own age. If they had not witnessed her shame, she would have been prepared to

like them. They bore that touch of class to which she was accustomed, but each of them took the liberty of patting her burning skin and testing the resilience of her breasts before untying her wrists. When she was free, she was given no chance for a scuffle but was securely held by strong male hands.

“Sorry, sweetheart, you’ll get the hang of this after awhile. Bit rough at first.” They led her from the room.

The apartment was pure luxury, matching her own in her own home. The smiling boys crossed her wrists behind her back and bound them fast. They also snapped closed upon her left ankle a shackle and a chain which appeared to trail on forever since she could not see its end. Before leaving, each one of them kissed her, and had they not simultaneously clutched a handful of her helpless sex, she would have enjoyed their affection and kissed back. But Catherine was so busy thinking of something appropriate to condemn their male vulgarity that they had gone before she found the proper words. Dorothy, who followed along behind, remarked, “Aren’t they sweethearts? I adore them both, and they’re terribly clever, and in case you’re interested, they are both very, very rich.” She giggled. “The Professor works only with the best people.”

Catherine Mordant, still naked, was busily exploring her new condition. It was inconceivable that she could not free

her hands, but all her writhing and twisting and tugging did no more than chafe her wrists. The shackle on her ankle was something she would deal with later. In the meantime, she fixed a deadly stare upon the offending Dorothy. “Please untie me. There’s no need to carry this farce any further.” She turned around and offered her captive hands for attention.

“Sorry, love.” Dorothy turned her around, “You have to stay as you are. Would you like a drink?”

“You mean—”

“Yes, a cocktail before dinner. Very civilized, you know. You don’t have to worry about not having hands—I’ll look after that.”

The apartment boasted a bar—well stocked. She watched Dorothy mix the two potions and gulped her own gratefully when it was held to her lips. It was no more than her due. Catherine felt no loss of face by this minor indulgence in alcohol, Dorothy was a pretty little snippet, quite obviously youthfully strong and very much in love with the Professor. Returning to the main topic, Dorothy said, “I loved strapping your ass. Did you get anything out of it?”

“Pain! What else was there to get?”

“Well, some of the girls enjoy getting their bottoms strapped if it isn’t too hard, I enjoy a little of it myself.” She looked at Catherine searchingly. “It’s all part of the study,

you know. When we get around to it, the class is going to do a thesis on B&D—you know what I mean. You read about it in magazines and newspapers."

"No, I do not know about it! What's more, I don't wish to know about it, I suppose that's the answer, isn't it? I suppose the Professor provides you with opportunities and excuses for your perversions."

"Oh god, you sound like my grandmother—you disapprove of everything." Dorothy held up the glass. "Here, have another swallow—I think you need it."

The bound, naked girl realized how difficult it was going to be for her to do anything without seeming to offer approval of the whole scene. But she was badly shaken by what had taken place so far. She gulped once and then again, and said a stiff "Thank you."

"You really are a bit starchy, you know. Couldn't you sort of unbend a bit?" Dorothy anxiously inquired. "I mean, I want to be friends. I guess I forgot to tell you I'm supposed to look after you. The way you talk and act I feel like I'm with Queen Victoria or something."

"Of course I'm stiff!" Catherine exclaimed angrily. "Figure it out for yourself, I've been kidnapped, I've been stripped naked, I've been tied so that an entire class of both sexes can examine my nudity, and then you have strapped my posterior so that it hurts something awful. Do you expect me to sing 'America the Beautiful' or something! It's you

who ought to get some sense," the captive girl snorted angrily. "And now you can untie my hands. I don't care about the rules or what anybody's told you—simply untie my hands!"

"My, you do take on so, dear. You mustn't get so bitchy. It's not good for you, and you may as well get used to tied hands because yours are going to be tied a great deal, and there's no use getting mad about me strapping your bottom with that lovely strap. We sort of hoped you'd enjoy it. But anyway, we'll try again."

"Don't you dare!"

"You said that before, darling. You really must watch these repetitions. The Professor doesn't like them, and if he gets it in for you, he'll punish you for every little thing."

"Punish me!" Catherine vented all her fury on her innocent companion. "He's got no right, and neither do you. I absolutely refuse to accept punishment from anyone in this house, or for that matter, anyone else anywhere. You're all simply getting yourselves longer sentences in prison every time you hurt me." The distressed beauty took a long, deep breath. "The best thing you can do, Dorothy, is let me go and show me the way out of here. I'll have to have some clothes, of course. I refuse to go into the street naked."

"In that case, I'm afraid you'll stay here for a long time, darling. But I do have to tell you that you'd just as well forget about either escape or rescue. Neither of those things is

likely to happen."

"My father—"

"Yes, I know about your father, but his money won't do you a bit of good here. This abduction has been very cleverly planned. It's one of Professor Pomfret's life-long ambitions. You really ought to feel honored."

"Don't be absurd! The man's an idiot. He's breaking all sort of laws, as well as frightening me to death."

"Seems to me you've said all that before," Dorothy gently reminded. "Would you like to do a tour of the apartment in case there's things I can explain?"

"Why on earth would I want to tour this idiot's apartment? It's none of my affair!"

"But I'm afraid it is, darling. You see, you're going to live in it. Don't you want to see what it's like?"

Dorothy sounded truly concerned. Catherine realized she was only trying to help. It would be silly to antagonize her. "Very well, if that's what you want," she agreed ungraciously. "I think what you're telling me is that this is my prison?"

"Here, you'd better finish your drink before we start. You really are being terribly difficult. Anyway, come on along." Dorothy giggled, "I'd hold your hand if you were allowed to have one."

The apartment had everything. It was pure luxury. But Catherine gave neither praise nor thanks. Her first and most important discovery was the length of the chain shackled to her foot. It enabled her to traverse the entire apartment. It made little sound on the expensive pile of the rugs. It allowed entry to every room but snubbed her short of the door by which an exit might be made. It slithered behind her like a watchful snake, and the drag on her foot never allowed her to forget its presence. It was solidly anchored to a ring bolt in the floor. Together with the cords around her wrists, it made a primitive contrast to the modern luxury she saw around her. There was, however, one more door which Dorothy had obviously saved for last, no doubt the piece de resistance of the tour. When her guide opened it, she disclosed another door of heavily barred iron, and through these bars Catherine beheld an exact replica of a prison cell. She shuddered. It was so precise in every detail of what she had seen on television and once in a tour of Attica. The wash basin, toilet, and pathetic cot were very much the real things. A girl could have been kept forever in such a place. Her food could have been pushed through a slot provided in the bars of the door. The walls were of stone and were illuminated by a barred window far above where she could reach. “Can’t tell whether you’ll get locked in there or not, dear,” Dorothy told her. “It’s got two purposes really. One is to keep you more securely prisoner, and the other is as punishment. I got locked in there once for a couple of days, and I hated every hour of it. Shit, I was sure glad to get out

of there!"

"Simply one more outrage," Catherine sniffed disdainfully. "Really, Dorothy, is there nothing normal anywhere in this place?"

"I could whip you, dear. That ought to be normal enough for anyone," Dorothy suggested. "You're terribly hard to please, you know. I really thought you'd be tickled to death over this apartment. I know I was when I first got in here."

"You mean you've been a prisoner in this place too?"

"Well, yes. But I was a volunteer." Dorothy giggled deprecatingly. "You see, darling, I'm into it. I'm part of the scene. It's awfully hard for me to understand what you're making such a fuss about." She mused quietly for a few moments. "But I suppose it's all that money and your father and your social position. You're terribly handicapped in the business of being alive." Dorothy patted a bare breast. "I have to run along now, darling, so you'll be on your own for a little while, and I do want you to enjoy everything. Just forget about the cell. Leave the outer door closed so you don't see it. Why don't you have a bath? I always think that having a bath gets rid of time delightfully, and the bathroom here is super."

Catherine watched her go. It was like the passing of a sunbeam. Dorothy was life exemplified. In the meantime, Catherine's hands were tied behind her back and she could not get them free. She was confined to the apartment by

the shackle on one ankle. All the windows were barred, and in any case, she discovered she was in an apartment high up beyond any hope of signaling or attracting attention. Morosely, she gazed out through the panes of glass, but the landscape was unfamiliar.

She trailed her chain as far as the bar, wondering if she could contrive to pour herself a second drink with bound hands. She surprised herself. It was difficult, painful, and humiliating even though there was no one to watch her fumbling efforts. She did, however, finally contrive to make a drink almost as well as Dorothy had done.

She was then confronted with the problem of how to drink it. After the first few sips, the level became too low and she couldn't raise or tilt the glass. She overcame the disability by utilizing a shallow bowl designed to hold a flower pot and in a manner no lady should be forced to do. Entering into the spirit of her lonely game, she started on number three. She had got as far as filling the shallow container and slurping some of its content when Professor Pomfret reentered her life. He appeared to be the eternally busy man. Bustling was the word that came to mind. He surveyed her effort with delight.

"I'm so pleased! I would have been disappointed in you, Catherine, if you had not used your time to some advantage. Please continue—you make a charming picture."

The captive deliberately did not continue. She flushed,

quite certain her chin was wet and probably the tip of her nose too. Unwilling to be sulkily silent, she sneered, “Needs must when the devil drives.”

“Ah, you see! You’re educated, my dear. It shows. I’m confident you’ll be a rewarding subject.”

They stood and stared. Catherine supposed she would eventually get used to being naked, but she was not accustomed to it then. Under his scrutiny, she could feel the pink flush stealing down her cheeks towards her breasts. Despairingly, she pleaded, “Please untie my hands. There’s no need to have them tied like this. You’re being deliberately unkind. It’s not asking much—you’ve got a shackle on my foot so I can’t possibly leave the apartment.” She studied him cautiously before asking, “And can I have some clothes? I don’t think keeping me naked proves anything.”

His reply was surprising “Except that I’m a dirty old man. I’ll tell you frankly, Catherine—I enjoy seeing a girl naked. I find her the most beautiful thing in the world, and you are most decidedly one of the most beautiful naked girls I’ve ever seen. You needn’t be shy about it. You have something to be proud of.”

“I would prefer to be clothed, if you don’t mind.”

“Forget it.” He erased the testiness from his voice. “I do understand your concern. This is a bad time you’re going through. I suppose I should apologize, but I’m not going to.

It's you who has to make the adjustments. While you're doing so, I'll make you as comfortable as possible."

"There is still time to send me home. I probably haven't yet been missed." Catherine put her heart into every word. "Please, please, please!"

"No." The negative was like a blow—decisive and final. The bound girl felt its impact. For all his academic appearance, the Professor was a forceful male. The still-smarting cheeks of her bottom warned her to be cautious.

Listlessly, she said, "It's a beautiful apartment—don't think I'm not grateful for that—but what am I going to do with myself in here?"

Professor Pomfret cocked a sardonic eye. "Has it occurred to you what you just said represents a change in your attitude? You are now contemplating a stay here in this apartment with a shackled leg. How come?"

"If you're going to analyze everything I say, I'd best keep quiet," Catherine said pettily. "There's nothing significant about it. I expect all it amounts to is Dorothy. She's a sweet little thing, and she's been kind to me."

"No credit at all to that strap she used on your ass?"

"All right, that too!" Catherine irritably conceded. "I won't deny it has an effect. You've instilled fear into me. I suppose that's what you want."

“That’s right, but mostly what I’m looking for is respect—not only for me but for the members of the class. What you’re going to have to understand is that you’ve taken a drop in social status. You no longer give orders. Quite soon, in fact, you’ll take orders as a matter of course.”

Catherine bit back a sardonic remark and instead asked, “But could you please untie my hands?”

“No, my dear. Loss of liberty is one of the most potent factors in your training.”

“Training! What the hell does that mean! Look, Professor, can’t we get right down to the nitty gritty, and then you send me home? We could stay friends. If you want to ask questions about feminine behavior, I’ll answer them as best I can. But this business of keeping me prisoner is for the birds!”

“It’s for you, sweetheart. Get used to the idea. If you’re bothered about your hands, let me show you something worse.”

It was one more segment in what could be called a nightmare. Not that it was a violent nightmare, just simply difficult to believe. As if by magic, the Professor produced cord. He turned her around in much the same manner as Dorothy had and looped her elbows. She was too thunder-struck to protest, and by the time she did, it was too late. The several bands of twine had circled her and were being drawn tight and then tighter still. “You’re hurting

me! The cord's too thin! Please, you don't need to tie me like this—it's silly."

Professor Pomfret made no reply. He seemed to be studiously engaged in getting Catherine's elbows as close together as possible and binding them tight. When he had succeeded in securing them beyond any hope she might have for escape, he answered, "You're going to have to get used to the idea of being bound without reason. Simply caprice on my part, or on the part of the class, is all we need. And as for your training, we'll do a few preliminary motions today. You're not ready yet, but I don't want to think you'll be cooling off your heels here for no purpose. Given time, we'll make a model girl of you, perhaps a prototype for a new breed."

"I don't want to be a prototype for a new breed!"

"That remark is irrelevant. From now on, what you like or dislike, Miss Mordant, influences nothing. Part of your training will be to persuade you to accept the premise of being nothing—absolutely nothing! And you have a very long way to go."

The final knot was tied and made secure. Catherine was turned around to face her captor. Her immediate concern was pain. It was an incessant nag from the twine deep within her flesh. Her elbows screamed their own disapproval, and her wracked back shoulders added their own complaint. Disgusted, the naked girl realized this new

binding had the effect of making her breasts far more demanding than she desired. They now jutted out beyond anything she remembered. Arrogance was a pale word to use in the face of this female glory. Catherine most ardently wanted her breasts covered. “They are beautiful!” the Professor enthused in tribute. “I know what you’re going to say, though, so don’t bother. I told you I was a dirty old man, and I intend to enjoy these breasts of yours to the fullest. What you have here, my dear, is probably the finest pair in the entire country. You should be proud of them. There are a few million girls who’d give half their lives to have what you appear to be ashamed of.”

“I am not ashamed!” Catherine snapped at him. “It’s just that they shouldn’t be on view in the first place, and in the second, they shouldn’t be thrust into this abnormality by the binding of my elbows. Please be reasonable, Professor. Untie at least my elbows. The twine you’ve used hurts horribly, and it serves no earthly purpose.”

“Yes, it does, my dear,” he said paternally. “It keeps you properly in line and decently subservient. Have you noticed that you’ve stopped calling me names?”

“I’m trussed up like a Christmas turkey. Is there any other part of me you intend to subject to the same indignity?”

“Well, now that you mention it…” The Professor disappeared for a minute and returned bearing something Catherine viewed with fresh alarm. Why hadn’t she kept

her mouth shut and left well enough alone! The object was an exquisitely fabricated collar. “Does a lot for a girl, a collar does. Don’t suppose you’ve ever been collared?”

Catherine’s angry denial was diverted by the casual manner in which the Professor used a free hand to test the taut resiliency of her right breast. He nodded approval. “Magnificent—simply magnificent! This collar is of metal, Miss Mordant. It locks around your neck, and needless to say, you’ll not be given the key. Now just stand still.”

“Would you prefer me to call for help?”

Catherine stood still, but with seething resentment. Male hands passed metal around her neck, adjusted it carefully, and then clicked it shut. It was exquisitely snug. In another time and place she might have been proud to wear it. The collar was a silver masterpiece studded with gems. The Professor sighed admiringly. “Go ahead and look in the mirror,” he commanded. “And wipe that sulky look off your face.”

Catherine obeyed. She hated to admit to a feminine curiosity, but it was there. Standing before the glass, she gasped in admiration. The effect was stunning. Had she chosen it herself in the most expensive jewelry store in the city, she would have been immensely gratified at the effect. The barbaric beauty of the band matched her own vivid coloring. From her neck, her eyes traveled down to her thrusting breasts. She had no arms—they had vanished

somewhere behind her back—but her breasts more than made up for their absence. Along with the newly clasped collar, they complimented each other in splendor. Despite herself, she was pleased with both. The effect was quite tremendous. She turned back to the Professor and casually said, “Nice. Yes, I’ll agree that it suits me. Thank you. Now that you’ve had your fun, may I kindly be relieved of it?”

“Only thing you’ll be relieved of is the elbow tie,” the Professor assured genially. “I only put it on you as a demonstration that things can always get worse. You remember that.” He turned her around in a manner now becoming familiar and commenced the task of undoing his own knots. Never had the captive girl felt more grateful than when they were peeled from the indentations and her skin. She said a fervid “thank you”, but remained stiffly disapproving.

“Well, that’s that,” Professor Pomfret said. “I’m a busy man, so I’ll leave you here to get acquainted with your new home. You’ll probably surprise yourself.”

The bound girl watched him go. She realized his leaving the door only partially closed was a chuckling emphasis on her chained foot. Closing the door no longer mattered; she could not even reach out and touch it. She turned her immediate attention to the most obvious: she went in search of a knife. If she could free her hands, it would at least be a moral victory, even though it got her no closer to freedom. But there was no knife. The tiny kitchen was well

appointed with everything but a sharp edge. Such knives as the drawer contained were plastic. Instead of what she sought, there was a glaring note on a full sheet of paper: “You didn’t really expect to find one, did you?” Catherine turned her back to grasp the missive in angry fingers, crumple it, and drop it in the waste basket. Somewhere the Professor would be having a quiet chuckle at her expense. It was a light note in the thread of her captivity, but it did not erase the suspicion that beneath the surface something was lingering, awaiting her for some terrible purpose of its own. Professor Pomfret and his class were about as far removed from her concept of kidnappers as they could get, yet here she was with her hands bound, ankles chained, and neck collared. She returned to the big mirror to admire herself again. Of everything done to her so far, the jeweled collar remained the single item from which she had drawn erotic stimulation. There was something about the collar, it was trying to tell her a story. She could well believe it had been worn by princesses of ancient times. It had that appearance, but its lock possessed a distinctly modern snap when it closed upon her throat. Involuntarily, she shuddered.

Foiled in her search for a knife, Catherine turned her attentions elsewhere to a thorough search for anything by which she could fray the cord upon her wrists. Heroines in fiction always found some such surface and inevitably freed themselves. Surely she could do no less. But such objects as she chose to bite at the cords proved useless. The

cords were nylon and not easily frayed. The knowledge she was thus bound only to emphasize her new condition did nothing for her temper. By the time Dorothy appeared, she was flushed and angry.

“I bet you’ve been trying to get loose,” Dorothy said, laughing at the sudden guilt on the flushed but lovely features. “Don’t feel bad about not making it—you’re not supposed to get loose, so there’s simply no way you can manage it. Don’t you enjoy being tied like that just a little bit?”

“Of course not—don’t be silly. Please untie me, Dorothy.”

Dorothy selected a chair and settled herself comfortably. “Do sit down, Catherine. Don’t just stand there looking all stiff and red and angry. Don’t you want to ask some questions?”

“Yes, I do.” Catherine found a chair of her own and sat down awkwardly. “What’s this training or whatever it is that ridiculous man mentioned?”

“He isn’t ridiculous, dear—he’s just not the way you think. He’s nice and very clever. You ought to be pleased about the training; it means he’s going to start you on it right away. He wouldn’t do that if he didn’t think you were intelligent and receptive.”

“But what is it?”

“Oh, it’s really very simple: we teach you how to behave properly.” Dorothy chuckled. “I suppose, really, it’s pretty

much like the army. The recruits all complain about the first few weeks because all they do is drill and stand in line and a whole bunch of stuff they figure is a waste of time. Probably the first thing the Professor will teach you is how to kneel."

"I already know how to kneel. I am not an army recruit or a candidate for a harem."

"You don't know how to kneel the way he will teach you," Dorothy admonished. "You don't really know how to kneel at all. Would you like me to show you? I don't mean as a lesson, but simply to get you started painlessly."

Catherine was aware of embarrassment. She was being treated like a child, and for no sensible purpose. But Dorothy was sweet. Her smile was infectious. She was obviously trying to help. Ungraciously, Catherine muttered, "You don't have to show me—I'll show you." The naked girl slipped to her knees and knelt before the seated girl. She glared angrily. "Well? What's so damn remarkable about this?"

Dorothy's laughter was a trill of silvery sound. "Oh, darling, you look so funny like that. The proper way to do it is to first of all relax, then sit back on your heels. Go on, it's very simple."

Suspecting she was the butt of a joke, Catherine cautiously obeyed. She supposed she had sat thus before, but she could not actually recall doing so. Finding herself stable in

the new position, she looked up inquiringly at Dorothy's smile.

"Ready for the second movement, dear?"

"I would be if you'd untie my hands. I think it's best you do so now and stop this continual emphasis on my imprisonment. "

"That was a cute little speech," Dorothy agreed pleasantly. "But I don't want to hear any more about letting any part of you loose from anything. I'm allowed to whip you if you refuse to be sensible. Darling, please do be sensible."

"Oh, very well," Catherine agreed testily. "Do we have to continue with this silly act?"

"Of course we do. The next move is for you to separate your knees as far apart as you can get them. Please don't complain."

"But—!" Catherine was viewing what, to her, was an impossibility. No self-respecting girl would ever sit or expose herself in the manner suggested. Acidly, she retorted, "I refuse to expose myself in that manner. You ought to know better than ask. It's obscene."

"If it's obscene, then you're obscene. Actually, you'll look very lovely."

"But you'll be looking straight at my—my—"

“Your pussy?” Dorothy prompted helpfully. “Of course, dear. Pussies are supposed to be looked at. There’s nothing shameful about a pussy. You don’t have to keep the poor thing hidden away in darkness all its life.”

It would have been easier with hands with which to clutch and hide and give stability. But Catherine had no hands. Compelled by an inexplicable impulse which was half curiosity, the bound girl edged her knees apart at least six or eight inches, then stared defiantly.

“That’s a good start, darling. So much more comfortable, isn’t it? And now the rest of the way, please.”

They understood each other. Catherine knew she would feel ashamed if she quibbled childishly with this delightful young woman. She separated her knees a couple more inches and then, almost as an act of desperation, threw them as wide apart as she could in the most deliberate exposure of her life. She was deeply thankful the Professor was not part of her audience. “Is that what you want?” she asked bitterly. “You ought to be ashamed making me do this.”

“I haven’t made you do anything, dear. I’ve just suggested.” Dorothy’s tone was soothing and placatory. “You look simply gorgeous. The Professor will be so pleased.” Dorothy giggled again.

“You can get one up on him tomorrow when he starts to give you the do’s and don’t’s. Simply slip into this position

and you'll throw him for a loop."

"If I do that, he'll think I'm enjoying it. You all seem to have this silly notion a girl should enjoy what I'm enduring. Do I get up now?"

"No, we're not finished yet. There's more to kneeling than you think, Catherine. The next move is the bowed head bit. You simply bow your head forward and down in shame or submission or homage or whatever. Go ahead, it's simple."

It was not simple! It was one of the most difficult things Catherine Mordant had ever done. She did not share Dorothy's lightheartedness about the bowing of heads. There was only one reason a girl would bow her head, and she had no intention of being that humble or humiliated. On the other hand, since this was only a rehearsal, why not? Finding a strange and vibrant sensation in what she did, Catherine bowed her head.

Dorothy gasped. "Oh, darling, if you could only see yourself! I can't do it half as well. And I don't think it's the actual doing of it—it's an atmosphere, an aura that clings to you. The Professor will absolutely flip his lid. Please stay like that just a minute. I want to enjoy this."

Catherine was prey to several emotions. It had been easy to go this far with this girl, but supposing it had been a man who was directing the scene and who was looking down at her in masculine regard! She could not have borne it. With a man it would mean something utterly different, perhaps

also with some women. But she remained in the pose of utter submission until her companion said, “Darling, thank you—thank you so much! That was really gorgeous.”

“Do I get up now?”

“No, there are a couple more things. Your hands are tied now, and of course they often will be when you take this pose, but if they were free, you would hold them on your thighs, one on each with the palms up. Of if you are to be bound, you offer them up, keeping your head bowed by raising your arms so that your wrists are available to your owner.”

“And to what end do I suffer these subserviences?”

“To make you the world’s most perfect slave girl.”

Catherine considered the proposition. It was absurd and impractical. Under the threat of being whipped, any girl might make a temporary acquiescence to such a state, but it would be temporary; they would escape from it at the first opportunity. Sardonically, she ejaculated, “Hand maiden to a fat, pompous, middle-aged academic! Oh, Dorothy, come on!”

“Not to Professor Pomfret. And don’t keep speaking of him in that tone—I don’t like it.” Dorothy’s own voice had taken on an icy tone. “When you’ve reached perfection, you’ll be sold.”

“To J. C. Penny’s or Sears?” The voice of the kneeling girl

was heavily laden with sarcasm. “May I get up now?”

“No! Stay as you are. I have other things to talk to you about, and you won’t be sold through a department store. Believe it or not, the class and Professor Pomfret have already trained several girls to this degree of perfection and sold them. Really, darling, it leaves you astonished what rich men pay for beautiful girls who’ve learned to behave.” Dorothy returned to her familiar giggle. “There’s been times when I’ve thought of selling myself, except slave girls are not allowed to have money and couldn’t spend it if they did.”

“A delightful fantasy. Now can we be serious? What happens to me?”

“I’ve just told you. If you don’t believe me, it doesn’t matter. Things will move forward just the same. What I want you to do now is get back up on your feet. Back away a bit so you can step towards me as gracefully as you know how, then kneel and kiss my feet.”

“I’ll do nothing of the sort.” Catherine was still uncertain about the practical joke. Sometimes such things were carried a long way. This one had gone far enough. “It’s time we stopped being silly. Untie me.”

“Which do you prefer dear, the riding crop or an English cane?”

There it was again: the iron hand in the velvet glove.

Dorothy, for all her youthful ebullience, was cold steel from a world Catherine did not understand. “You know I’m not going to do anything so demeaning, and all this talk of whips and canes is purely theatrical. Dorothy, please be sensible.”

“What I have to do with you,” Dorothy said soberly, “is consider your background and make allowances. But, on the other hand, I absolutely must never allow you to manage me. You really are loaded with that beautiful arrogance of wealth in which you assume everyone will do whatever you ask. Darling, those days are gone. What we try and do is bring you to that realization without being too brutal. I’ll get the riding crop, it’s far the most flexible.”

They stood facing each other. Catherine gazed in mesmerized fascination at the limber length Dorothy was flexing back and forth. A few hours earlier she had been free, white, and twenty-one, going about her private affairs. She was still white and twenty-one, but her freedom seemed in great doubt. It wasn’t fair—there hadn’t been time. The whole thing was too much too soon. Brokenly, she said, “You’re not giving me a chance. You can’t take me back two hundred years in a couple of hours, especially when I don’t want to go and have no intention of ever doing so.”

“We can try, darling. I’ll go back to my chair and count to ten. In that time, you can pick up where we left off and there’ll be not penalty. You know what’s going to happen if you don’t.”

Catherine knew. At the count of eight she was on her knees busily, kissing an expensive pair of feminine shoes. She consoled herself in this humiliation by assuring no one in particular that she would never have done it if Dorothy had been a man. She would have to draw the line somewhere. In the meantime, Dorothy was rather sweet. She kissed until she was breathless, then raised herself up. “Is that sufficient humiliation? Am I properly debased now?”

Dorothy bent forward and kissed the hurt, sulky lips. “You see, dear, you can be sensible. You looked at my lovely riding crop and then my shoes. After that the choice was easy. It was easy for you, but some girls have found it quite impossible. They’d have fought and struggled and screamed and got themselves well cut up with an instrument really intended for horses, not bare-skinned girls. Any reactions?”

“Shame and humiliation. Isn’t that what I was supposed to feel? If you’d have been a man, I’d have died. I simply wouldn’t have done it I would sooner be whipped to bits.”

“Okay, okay, have it your way, Catherine. That name of yours—it’s cumbersome. I have to call you something else.” Dorothy pondered for a moment. “I don’t like Cathy, and I don t think much of Cath. I think I’ll call you Kitten.”

“Don’t you dare!” Catherine was aghast. “I am not a kitten —I don’t look like one, and I don’t act like one.”

“Yes, you do, dear. You’ve just been acting like a kitten, although you don’t know it. When you made a choice between my riding crop and something you don’t want to do, the riding crop wins every time. At least it has so far.”

“That’s not fair. You’re a girl, and I was trying to please you because I—I like you. Goodness knows why I like anyone in this place, but I seem to like you. But I’m so sick of the whole thing. Can’t you realize how miserable it is for me? I’m a prisoner in what would be easy to describe as a madhouse. I mean, don’t look at me—have a look at yourselves and consider how you appear to other people. Me, for instance. You’re a bunch of kooks!”

Dorothy sighed. She understood, but understanding made her task more difficult. She was apt to sympathize at wrong moments. She could easily be too tolerant. With this thought in mind, she slowly said, “Really, Kitten, you do ask for trouble. I realize it’s part of being what you are and one of the reasons why we want you here, but you sure do make that pretty skin of yours vulnerable. If I were you, I’d tone it down. What I’m going to do right now is something I hadn’t even thought of, but that word kook is unacceptable. We are not kooks, and will not be called that under any circumstance. You won’t like what I’m going to do one little bit, and you’ll be sorry you said you liked me. For a little while I’m sure you won’t like me any more.”

The captive eyes widened. Catherine was already regretting her use of a distasteful word. These people were cul-

tured and educated, and whatever their aims might be, they were going about it in what was quite probably a civilized manner. Certainly they would believe this was the case. Catherine eyed the two objects Dorothy held. Her comprehension was instant, her revulsion immediate. Once more the words of a cliché sprung out without volition: “You’re not going to put those things on me—I absolutely forbid it!”

“The virtue of them, Kitten, is their domestic nature. They will also hurt you. In your case, their effect will be to demoralize. With them properly clipped on your nipples, you will suffer more shame than pain. Are you going to stand still, or do you intend to be tiresome?”

“If you think you’re going to clip those things on my breasts, you’re crazy!” Catherine exclaimed in a mixture of fear and outrage. “Keep away from me. If you come close, I’ll kick you!”

Dorothy came close. Catherine kicked hard and landed a heel on an enemy knee. She ran. It was a maneuver fully expected by a girl who held the crop. Dorothy would have been disappointed had it not happened. Without haste, and in a deliberately casual manner, she made pursuit, refusing to run but catching up with her quarry whenever Catherine paused for breath or to look around in evasive action. The chain to the captive leg clattered and rattled merrily as it was dragged back and forth across the rug. The two breasts, which were themselves the focal point

and purpose of the chase, bobbed and heaved to keep pace with their owner's panting breath. Whenever Catherine trapped herself against a piece of furniture or the wall, Dorothy cut shrewdly with the crop to elicit a howl or protest and further evasive action in a fresh direction. In this manner the two girls toured the apartment from room to room with Catherine avoiding the bathroom since it was itself an obvious trap, a cul de sac in which she would be at the mercy of the crop.

"Don't stop, dear—I'm enjoying this immensely." Dorothy was obviously telling the truth.

Her chained ankle was Catherine's real enemy. It inevitably snagged around a bedpost to bring her headlong to the floor where she lay panting and dragging at a foot which refused to come free. While in that position, Dorothy took advantage of those portions of the captive girl most readily available. The crop cut again and again until Catherine struggled to her feet against the pain and surrendered. "All right, all right! I think you're mean, and you're taking a terrible advantage, but I'll stand still."

Dorothy tidied her victim's hair before beginning the gentle massaging of the pink buds on the heaving breasts which were now hers to do with as she wished. Gentle fingertips alternating with palms of gentle hands frictioned each sensitive nipple until they were hard as flint, erect and demanding. With great care, which was in no way an affectation, she positioned the wooden clothespin above

Catherine's heaving mound. With a precision seeking perfection rather than pain, she positioned the tiny jaws and allowed them to close. Catherine yelped and winced, looking down at something new, every fiber of her being in revolt against the stupid little domestic wooden horror biting at her with a steady pain. All she said was, "I still think you're being terribly mean."

The positioning of the second wooden torment was equally cautious. Dorothy was seeking an effect. Properly positioned, its pin would stick out from its parent breast as though a part of the breast itself. They would bob and quiver enticingly as they continued their incessant nipping of maiden flesh. Dorothy stepped back to view in ecstasy. "Darling, they're marvelous! I've never seen a girl wear them as well as you. Do go to the mirror and have a look."

It was in Catherine's heart to refuse, but she was impelled by a fervid curiosity of her own. What had been done was so far distant from anything she would have dreamed of a day ago that it merited attention. She could not believe it was happening except for the nagging pain, which fell just short of agony and which she suspected would increase rather than improve. She stalked angrily to the mirror and surveyed Dorothy's work. Despite herself, she could not avoid a gasp. She knew not if it was of admiration or horror or simply surprise at what she now beheld. The two little wooden pins danced and trembled as she breathed, but stuck out jauntily as though they were a pair of show-offs, exhibitionists in a public place. Even though it

hurt, she shook her shoulders angrily in the hope that they would fall off, but she instantly realized that would not happen. The only way they would surrender their bite would be under the guidance of finger and thumb, and she herself had neither where they could be used. True to form, she turned and said with her usual arrogance, “Very well, you’ve done it. You’ve made me look at myself, and I think it’s horrid, and they’re hurting terrible. Please remove them.”

Dorothy’s eyes were bright with mischief. “But, darling, you have to wear them quite a long time. I’m going to leave you now, and you can enjoy yourself. Just get used to them, and of course, if you can get them off, it is permissible. You won’t be punished for that, so please do try.”

“That’s a mean thing to say. You know I can’t get them off. I can’t do anything the way you’ve tied my hands! I suppose it’s useless to ask again for them to be untied.”

“That’s right dear—it’s useless.” Dorothy flicked each clothespin in turn to make them bob and dance and vibrate upon the taut breasts. She pulled rebellious lips toward her own and kissed them hard. “You’re a terribly silly girl, Kitten, but you’ll improve. I’ll make sure you do. Now enjoy yourself. Think of it—a whole lovely apartment all your own. You can do anything you like except escape. Bye-bye, love.”

Catherine watched her leave and close the door, but it was

not locked. She stood resolutely, pondering, unwilling to demean herself, but since there were no eyes to see, she might as well try to remove the biting little demons from the innocence of her nipples. To the musical accompaniment of her chain tether, she searched. Surely there was a way!

But there was no way. Catherine tried a number of possibilities, even to the point of closing or striving to close a door upon the offending object so that that the jaws might spring open. She might have contrived this had she possessed hands, but robbed of them she was again and again foiled. The clothespins knocked, danced, bobbed, and vibrated to her anger and dismay, but would not be dislodged. Catherine sat, lay upon the bed, and leaned against the wall, but none of these did any good at all. It was like trying to walk away from her own shadow. Wherever she lounged or whatever she did, the clothespins were there. In defeat, she lounged in a big armchair and wept. But she could not dry her tears. They trickled down her cheeks to anoint her breasts. The mocking pins quivered as though in gratitude Catherine longed to scream and beat her fists.

On the following day, Miss Catherine Mordant was sold to Prince Abed Jamal.

2

Bartered Beauty

“I REGRET, SIR, that the young lady is almost completely untrained.” Professor Pomfret was very apologetic. “But if you would like to leave her with us for a few weeks or months, I’m sure we could make her fit your needs.”

The dark-eyed descendent of Haroun El Raschid smiled and made a negligent gesture with one hand. The Prince spared the Professor a brief glance, then returned his intense regard upon the naked girl who stood before them, her hands still bound behind her back. “It does not matter. In fact, I believe I prefer this one as she is. She has a quality. At this moment I am picking up what you describe as vibes.” He chuckled. “I accept them as a cry for help. Professor, I will rescue this young girl from your clutches and train her myself.”

“But, Sir, you have always—”

“Yes, yes, you are right—I have. I could not complain of any of your merchandise. It is of superlative quality. Your training methods are beyond reproach, but forgive me an aberration. In this case, I wish to take the girl in hand myself. I am a busy man, but I will spare a week or two.”

Catherine seethed. What was taking place was an interna-

tional outrage. The crime was compounded by the Prince himself. He was undeniably handsome and everything a prince should be. She would have informed him of her equality of social status had not the Professor prudently gagged her. It was a neat and effective piece of work, and left her with a mouth wadded full to prohibit sound and a pair of lips solidly sealed by a band of soft leather buckled at the nape of her neck. Catherine stamped an indignant foot and shook her head vigorously enough to indicate a desire to speak. No one paid her the slightest attention other than the Prince's obvious enjoyment of her nudity. Prince Abed Jamal was by no means reticent. "You haven't thrashed her I notice. Why?"

"I never thrash a girl too early in her confinement," Professor Pomfret said. "We train, rather than break our maidens."

Once again the negligent notion with a princely hand. "No matter. In fact, I will be happy to do the job myself. I've always been intrigued by the outrage, the shock, the indignation, and sometimes the tears which are part of a girl's first communion with the whip. You say her name is Catherine? I will call her Jasmine."

If she had not believed the result ludicrous, Catherine would have stalked angrily from the room, but the thought of dragging shackled feet with the clinking chain, plus the wiggling of her hips as she retreated out of sight, gave her pause. She could not be more exposed than she already

was. In desolate resignation, she stood her ground and afforded the Prince an uninterrupted view of her pubic patch. He was studying it with unusual interest. “Best I’ve ever seen,” he said with deep absorption. “It’s one of the reasons I’m buying her. So many girls are so sparsely haired they might as well be shaved. That’s what I do with them, but this one will keep it. How much do you want for her, Professor?”

“I would rather not discuss her price while she is listening, Sir.”

The Prince once more exercised his prerogative. He waved away the concern of such niceties. Without preamble, he suggested casually, “One million?”

“I was thinking more in terms of five.”

The princely hand waved away such quibbling. “Make it six,” he suggested equably. “Money has become mere tokens to me. We produce the oil, and you give us the money. Then we give it back to you for treasures such as this.” He indicated the infuriated maiden standing bound and gagged for his pleasure. “Before such loveliness, money is nothing. I’ll give her her first thrashing and rename her at the same time.”

“May I ask, Sir, how you intend to transport the young lady?”

“Oh, that is no problem. I have my own plane. I thought

you knew that. She can sit and talk to me, or preferably kneel and talk to me. It will simply be a continuation of the confinement you have instigated. She can even remain naked, as she is now. Once of the privileges of a title is diplomatic immunity. I find the manner in which you have her hands bound behind her back very pleasing. Perhaps I will heave her as she is."

Apart from being frightened, Catherine was now outraged by the name Jasmine. It was impossible, the sort of name given to a cheap perfume or even a common dancing girl. She felt Professor Pomfret was being unkind and unfair in failing to mention to the Prince her own social superiority. No one in America would dream of naming the daughter of the Mordant family Jasmine. The absurd name conjured up visions of pantaloons and a tiny vest, both transparent. Once more she stamped and made such motions with her head as to indicate a most urgent desire to be heard. Once more nobody appeared to notice. However, the Prince was not as insensitive as the Professor. Blandly, he suggested, "Take that gag out of her mouth. We've arranged the details, so she can't interrupt us in any way that matters. I'd like to hear what she has to say."

Catherine was nothing if not an opportunist. When the wad was removed, she immediately burst out, "My father is the head of Mordant Investments! He possibly has more money than you have. Your six million dollars does not impress me."

The Prince tilted his head. “It was not intended to, Miss Mordant. I’m well aware of who and what you are, and as a matter of fact, I have passing acquaintance with your father. We have done business. I’m sure he would be glad to know you have fallen into good hands.”

“You intend to tell him?”

“Not at this moment, but perhaps later.” The Prince smiled with a flashing of white teeth and another eloquent gesture. “You will understand, child, that I am unconcerned with social status, but I will admit I would not have purchased you had you been less than you are. Thrashing the young Miss Catherine Mordant carries far more distinction and panache than doing the same thing to little Jenny Smith or Zelda Schwartz. I’m sure you understand.”

Jasmine understood all too well. She was by no means sure about the constantly repeated word thrashing. It might or might not happen. No doubt it was designed to intimidate and make her obedient. But she acknowledged shock in the fact that she had thought of herself under the new name the Prince had given her. She repeated it silently in her mind: Jasmine, Jasmine, Jasmine. It had a ring to it even though it evoked visions of see-through pantaloons and a tiny vest. But these people who owned the oil were now civilized. She could not be certain of the fate awaiting her. “If you do not release me and return me to my father, he will destroy you both,” she threatened dramatically.

No one seemed impressed. The Prince eyed her heaving breasts and flat belly appreciatively. Dismissing all she had been and everything she had said, the Prince briefly stated, "You will not be rescued. Your father will do nothing. You have simply vanished. If I allow you to be resurrected at a later date, it will be for my own reasons."

"You must be mad. If I was some little trollop you'd picked up on the street, this would make some sense even though it is shockingly illegal, but to kidnap me is an act of madness. If you do dump me in the middle of your harem, or wherever you keep girls like me, I'll be nothing but trouble for you. I'm not going to be your ever-loving wife or slave or concubine or whatever you want to call it! You'll have to keep me tied up or chained all the time, and I don't see that that can possibly be much use to you. I'll repeat what I've said before. It would be much the best if you untied me and let me go!"

"Charming—quite charming!" the Prince enthused. "Anger animates you exquisitely, my dear. Often I will make you angry just for the pleasure of seeing the performance of your breasts and the flush you manage to manufacture in your cheeks. By the way, I notice it's spreading lower and lower. Does it ever get as far as your breasts?"

He was insufferable. Catherine suspected she was being deliberately goaded. Possibly his grandfather had been kicked by a sergeant in the old Imperial Army of the British Raj, and now he was giving his own back. Whatever he did

to her would be revenge. The thought was no comfort. The helpless girl's suppressed visions of Oriental tortures. Even though her father was a wealthy man, Catherine could not forebear a thrill of pride in the sum of money the Prince had paid for her. It had been done altogether too casually for her liking. She would have preferred some bartering coupled with an exposition of her virtues. Along with everything else, she cherished fictional visions of an auction block and herself the center of carnal attention. The least the Professor could have done was to extol the virtues of her breasts, her pubes, and her bottom. If a man was going to pay six million dollars for the whole collection, he might as well be given an inventory. She sniffed at the absurdity of the thought, but still felt cheated. No doubt it was the Prince's fault. He had probably purchased all too many girls for far too much money, but Catherine was nonetheless impressed. It seemed the only recognition of her social status she was likely to receive.

There was nothing picayune about the Prince's plane. It was simply magnificent. The reluctant concubine mounted the steps with a guard in front and one behind. When she turned to wave in the hope of attracting attention, a gruff male hand swept swiftly up beneath the cape which hid her nakedness and clutched that portion of her she was most hesitant to name. By the time she had gathered aplomb, she was inside the plane and out of sight of possible aid. It was all well managed and wickedly contrived. As the engines revved and roared, the heir to the

Mordant millions looked out of the portholes in a last despairing glance at her native land. Thereafter, she would be Jasmine and pliant to whatever laws the Prince might subject her to.

Nothing is ever as we expect. Catherine was being kidnapped and taken to a foreign land on a foreign plane under the noses of the police, the army, the navy, and the air force, and no one either knew or cared. She was being purchased by a foreign prince, and no one seemed to be distressed about that either. The Prince was looking at her now with amused regard. His voice was as nonchalant as ever. She wondered if she might kick him on the kneecap and erase his smile. “Will you join us in canapés and cocktails, Jasmine?”

The reply the purchased girl had ready was not uttered. The plane was now well off the ground and she was more totally in the power of this man than she had ever been of anyone in her whole life, other than her parents in early childhood. Catherine was annoyed with prudence, but prudence was there. It counseled caution. Instead of the angry words, she said a simple, unenthusiastic, “Thank you.”

“Come here.”

Catherine obeyed. Obedience would be less painful than disobedience—it was that simple. She stood before what she was now contemptuously thinking of as her lord and

master, and was both shocked and surprised, and most regrettably pleased by him reaching up to the clasp of her cloak and tossing it aside to reveal her nakedness and her arms still pinioned at her back. He turned her around and cut away the cords with a convenient knife. Catherine had been bound since the day before, and the weals in her skin were still deep and red. The Prince massaged them as though the act was unworthy of note, while his newly purchased slave girl stood passively for the attention. Catherine's paramount impression was that the hands of a prince were exceedingly wise. She accepted the cocktail and made her selection from the plate proffered by an impassive butler. Both were superlative.

"You will remain standing, Jasmine, until I give you permission to be seated," the Prince explained gently. "I will make allowances for your shock, your dismay, your distress—these are natural. I will not tolerate sulkiness, petulance, or disobedience. The thrashing already mentioned will happen to you sometime within a couple of days, perhaps in an hour's time. You are not to know this." His smile made Catherine wish she had met him in the proper place at the proper time. She knew he was too good to be true, and she was stolidly awaiting the denouement. But there was nothing conventional about Prince Abed. He raised his cocktail glass and glinted at her. His toast was outrageous, but it was something she could not contradict. "Here's to the new slave maiden," he suggested genially, then put the glass to his lips. Catherine did the same, but remained

mute. She had not offered her glass to his, and now said with a firmness to belie her quaking heart, “I’m not a slave. I cannot be a slave. I’m sorry if this disappoints you, but you have purchased the wrong girl. When we reach our destination, you would be wise to ship me back home again and forget me.”

As usual her plea fell shattered in the face of indifference. Instead of replying, he commented with a frightening sobriety: “You need that thrashing in the worst way, Miss Mordant. When I’m through with you, you won’t be Catherine Mordant any more—you’ll be Jasmine. Tell me, have you ever been whipped?”

“Of course not!”

“A pity! It means you have a longer road to travel. We do things much better in the East. Really, I sometimes despair of your civilization. The way in which you have handed over your wealth in return for our oil has demeaned you in the eyes not only of yourself but in the eyes of the world, particularly mine. You drilled the wells, and you could have reclaimed them with a few thousand troops, but you lacked the courage. The West has exhausted its courage in the two wars. It is not Mr. Chamberlain’s peace at any price. Ten or twenty years ago, I would not have dared to buy you. Today I have done so, and nobody will care.” The Prince sighed. I suppose I am the principle beneficiary of the new order.” The shook his head sadly. “But I find myself often regretting the passing of the British Raj.” He

smiled down at her. “You will receive your thrashing within a very short space of days. It will be something for you to look forward to, a great help in making adjustments.” He waved a hand. “Don’t bother to disagree—I know your sentiments.” The Prince’s smile was altogether charming. “I do wish you could stop looking so angry and distressed. Perhaps I should keep you occupied. A nice idea might be for you to take over the duties of a stewardess. The charming lady about to serve us drinks is Miss Susan White. She will instruct you.” The Prince turned his charm upon the smiling girl with her tray. “Susan, would you mind?”

Once again, it was too much, too soon. The girl renamed Jasmine was furious, beholding in the smiles only ridicule. Decisively, she turned and backed against the man who presumably now owned her. She once more crossed her wrists and demanded, “I’ll have none of that nonsense! You may as well tie me up again.”

He pushed her gently away and nodded to the stewardess. Susan White evidently knew what to do. Perhaps the whole thing had been preconceived. Jasmine watched in ill-concealed horror. As though by magic, Susan produced a small, wicked whip. She knelt before the man and presented it humbly. She then rose, stripped to the waist and to the watching girl’s disgust, knelt submissively, offering her bared back to the man who now held the whip. Prince Abed wasted no words. “I will whip Susan until such time as you decide to be sensible. Her duties are light—they will

not burden you." He raised an arm.

"Stop! This is impossible—ridiculous! Please put that horrible thing away. You don't expect me to stand watch a half-naked girl get thrashed, do you!"

"We expected you to react as you are now. I'm sure Susan is not the least bit apprehensive."

Anger again! Whichever way she turned she was stymied by those who held the upper hand. Hautily, she exclaimed, "Well, if that's the case then, you may as well go ahead and whip the silly creature! If you wish, I'll watch."

Susan turned away and resumed her submission, her gleaming white back an open invitation to the cruelty of the whip. The Prince stood, rolled up his sleeves, and once more swept the whip in as wide an arc as the place allowed.

"Oh, damn you—all right! I'll do it, but I think you're both ridiculous and unkind."

The naked girl realized the ordeal would not be easy. It would tax all her dignity and inflict a series of humiliations. She knew this at the start. It began simply with a tray containing two glasses, one for the Prince and the other presumably for herself, unless she and Susan and changed places. The first real tax upon her tolerance came when she was obviously expected to kneel when she offered the Prince his libation. It savored to much of fiction, of fairy

tales, of silly sexual fantasies, but a vision of Susan's white back and her own so conveniently bare overcame her scruples. She knelt, she offered the tray. Of her own accord she offered the bonus of bowing her head. The act had the virtue of obviating the meeting of eyes.

They sat opposite each other and chatted. Had it not been for her nakedness, the contact would have had a pleasantly casual atmosphere. There was an awkward and rebellious pause when the Prince instructed her to widen the space between her legs. "You're behaving like a dirty old man, looking at me down there." She glared defiantly. "It's not a natural way for a girl to sit, and you don't have to make me do it."

"Oh, but I do indeed, and if you think I am dirty—well, perhaps a dirty young man?" His eyes sparkled mischievously. "Of course, if you prefer to see Susan whipped—"

Disgustedly, Catherine provided him with a blatant view of her pubic hair and that which lay beneath. The Prince nodded, unblushingly enjoying what he beheld. Susan looked relieved. It was not much later that the girl beckoned. This time Jasmine discovered her duty was to present a cigar and then light it for her master. Susan had explained that this was how she must regard Prince Abed Jamal, and when necessary, it would be the name by which she would address him. Seething with anger and thoughts of terrible retributions, Jasmine performed the task, her flushed features revealing her hatred of every motion.

“Thank you,” the man said. “You are also forbidden to sulk, Miss Mordant. You understand that. I want those surly looks erased immediately.”

“Drop dead!”

Even Jasmine herself was shocked. Susan’s gasp was clearly audible. The Prince looked pleased. He turned to the waiting stewardess.

“Susan, dear girl, once more if you please.”

“Oh, for heaven’s sake!” With a forceful arm, Catherine propelled the stewardess toward her quarters, then turned her attention to a prince who was only slightly surprised. “If you’re so damn whip-happy, whip me, you pompous idiot! No man with any chivalry at all would play the game you’re playing with us. It’s a game you have to win—there’s no other way because if one of us doesn’t get whipped, the other does. Neither of us could possibly admire you.” Jasmine stood nakedly furious, panting in the vehemence of outrage. “You must have been reading *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*! You’re whip-happy, like Simon Legree. Don’t you have a mattress or something you can beat to get it out of your system!”

“I have you, Jasmine.”

The quiet voice was more frightening than angry. He had her indeed. The airplane was an effective prison. The Prince’s tone remained gentle as he turned to the uncertain

member of his staff. “Susan my dear, would you do me the kindness of taking this silly girl and whipping her for me? I’m not going to whip her myself, she’s too ridiculous.”

“Yes, Sir.” It was as though the Prince had ordered one more drink. In this exchange, Jasmine had stepped back and now stepped back again surveying both the man and the stewardess in pure disbelief. “This is a charade,” she declared venomously. “I’m not impressed. I would suggest all three of us return to normal.”

“What are you complaining about? It was you who asked to be whipped in Susan’s place. You are supposed to be aiding our stewardess in the execution of her duties, so do so now.” The authoritative voice turned to the waiting girl. “Susan, explain to Jasmine how she will be fastened while receiving her thrashing.”

The two girls faced each other like boxers in the ring. Catherine was furious in the frustration of being constantly engineered into situations where she had a choice between violence and rationale. Violence was deeply satisfying, but would avail her nothing. She had no wish to lay her hands on Susan, but it would be pure joy to claw, club, and scratch the male features to complacently watching her internal battle. Jasmine shrugged and turned to Susan. “Very well, I will do what you want. Please show me.”

The private plane of Prince Abed Jamal had everything: luggage compartments high above the seats opened to dis-

gorge a short length of chain and a handcuff, just a single band of steel one on each side so that when Susan raised the reluctant arms and clipped the manacle tight upon the angry wrist, Jasmine stood in the aisle, her hands held up outstretched and solidly secured. While this was being done to her, she had completely forgotten the purpose, other than her own humiliation, but now it was forcibly borne upon her that she was naked and about to be whipped by a girl of inferior social status, and this in front of a man who might or might not be a prince but was most certainly an extremely wealthy member of another race. All she could think to say was the ancient cliché. “You’ll both be sorry for this!”

It was Jasmine herself who bore the sorrow. A seat folded back and set aside provided Susan with the necessary room in which to perform her task. It was obvious she had done it before. She was not embarrassed. If there was sympathy in her eye, it was simply that of maidens sharing a common experience. This time when her arm swept up and back there was no descent. Prince Abed Jamal watched. His attention was that of one artist watching the genius of another. He was appreciative of Susan’s technique and of Jasmine’s response. His features were studious, absorbed.

Jasmine herself was fighting to stand still. This was a different experience to Dorothy and her strap. The cut of Susan’s small whip bore no resemblance to the resounding impacts of Dorothy’s leather. It was as though a child had

graduated to an upper grade. There was no doubt in her mind she would stand hautily while receiving this indecent infliction on her flesh. She must neither scream nor writhe. It was her duty to exhibit to these perverts a fine educated indifference to pain and exposure. But after the seventh stroke had bit cunningly in a place no whip should go, Miss Catherine Mordant discovered herself doing both. Her scream was partly of anger, but her contortions were whole-heartedly dedicated to the distress of her whipped skin. The handcuffs and their chain, off to either side above her head, rattled and clinked merrily in accord with her struggles which Jasmine assured herself were involuntary and beyond her control.

“Be careful of her breasts, Susan, we must save them for another occasion.”

The quiet comment penetrated Catherine’s haze of agony. She had no doubt of an intention to break her spirit, to reduce her to subservience. In spite of her inability to remain silent or stand still beneath Susan’s punishing whip, the girl whose skin was rapidly acquiring a pattern of tell-tale marks knew her spirit was intact, they would not touch it by crudities such as this. They were whipping her as they might whip the less sensitive skin of a delinquent in reform school. But Jasmine yelped and twisted as a couple of cunning cuts caught her one across the velvet expanse of her shoulders, the other lapping and biting at a hip. It was becoming increasingly evident to the girl named Jasmine that to be whipped by a woman was to be in the hands of

an expert, one who knew all the worst possible places on a girl.

“I think we might pause a moment, Susan.”

The quiet command stopped the whipping instantly, but it did not stop the thudding of a captive heart or the continued motions of revolt against the steel on haughty wrists. They continued until Jasmine realized the infliction had come to a stop. She was suddenly, shamingly aware of being bathed in the sweat of pain, her skin glistening in the porthole’s light. For a minute the whipped girl was satisfied to regain her panting breath and her composure. Then, despite resolution, she looked back over a raised arm at the seated man.

“I have thought of this as a possible termination, Susan, but it would appear that it is no more than an intermission. Please continue.”

It was too cruel. Catherine’s first scream was a peel of pure outrage rather than of pain. What did he expect of her! What could she do fastened as she was! Resignedly, she uttered swift but well controlled words, “I can’t fight the whip, you know I can’t. What is it you want?”

“Nothing. You are being trained. Consider yourself lucky. I would not take this trouble with every young woman.”

“I can’t bear it! Ooohhh! I’ve had enough—please!”

The whip ceased its snapping cuts, but Susan stood in

readiness for a resumption, the man said nothing. “I don’t want to be whipped any more. Is there something you wish me to say?”

“You could try ‘please, master’.” The Prince’s tone was dry.

It was too much! They had stripped her skin bare, they had whipped it, and now they would strip and scour her mind. Bleakly, the chained girl said, “If all you want to do is rub my nose in the dust, you may as well go on whipping me.”

Jasmine had said the wrong thing and regretted it instantly. She had overrated her fortitude, and the snap of the whip seemed harder on her skin. After the fourth stroke she turned and her voice was heavy with misery. “Please… master.”

Susan unlocked the manacled wrists. Their owner stood dejectedly in defeat. Miss Catherine Mordant had spoken the unforgivable word and would condemn herself forever. Drearily, she muttered, “You can make me do or say anything if you whip me enough. It isn’t significant. You have to realize a girl’s acceptance of defeat that way is insincere.”

“It is what I asked of you. Forget the martyrdom. Please sit down, your cocktail is still waiting.”

Susan and her whip had discreetly vanished. Jasmine dejectedly sought to see the damage on her skin, only the overlaps were visible. In sudden need she sat opposite her

owner and gulped gratefully. Perhaps in a little while she would feel better, but at the moment she was simply a naked girl who hurt.

“There is now the matter of our disembarkation,” the Prince said affably as though nothing untoward had occurred. “You have two possibilities. You can be carried screaming and struggling from the plane to the waiting car, or you can be clothed and escorted by myself in queenly fashion. Your conscience will tell you the first choice is the right one for you, but your reason will dictate the second. I recommend it highly.”

It was so stilted and formal. Kidnappers were supposed to be brutal men who kept their victims tied up or locked in a coal shed or some such dismal place and spoke to them only in monosyllables heavily laced with four-letter words. But could Prince Abed Jamal properly be described as a kidnapper! He had purchased her and paid a great deal of money. On the other hand, Professor Pomfret had in no way resembled her concept of a kidnapper either. Had she been treated in her own vision of the way kidnapped girls were manhandled she would now be a whimpering bundle of female anguish. But in these swift transitions she had contrived to retain a modicum of dignity. She was sitting across from her new owner rapidly gulping the contents of her glass, automatically and rejecting guilt, she deliberately spread wide her knees for his approval. She told herself she preferred the voluntary act rather than his male command. Still resentful, she asked bluntly, “What are you

going to do with me? I mean, what is often referred to as what is my fate?"

"I have a profitable use for you. That is all you need to know. Now, the matter of our disembarking?"

"Yes, of course," she wrinkled her nose in distaste. "I won't struggle and scream. I feel I ought to, but I'm quite sure you have all the bases covered. You may escort me in the manner you described. Do I get to keep the garments I wear?"

"Oh, a touch of humor, but alas no, you do not remain clothed beyond the necessities of conveyance to my home."

"A castle, a moat, and a drawbridge, I suppose?"

"No. You appear to have been reading gothic paperbacks. I'm surprised at you. I am an admirer of Moorish architecture. You will see."

Catherine was escorted from the plane to the limousine in style, but the arrival was not an event. The Prince was primarily a businessman. The press was not there. Had she chosen to scream and struggle, her efforts would have lacked drama. Wearing the clothes and shoes provided, Catherine almost wished for a larger audience. Settled inside the limousine with the community unfolding beyond the windows, she was confronted with one more cross to bear. This time a pair of handcuffs. The Prince handled them thoughtfully and perhaps lovingly, but his enforced

guest viewed them with intense distaste. “You have no need of them at all. I told you I wouldn’t struggle. Please, not that humiliation too!”

“The same terms and conditions, Miss Mordant. May I suggest compliance?”

Disgusted, she extended her hands. She was now being treated as a convict and wondered where this succession of humiliations would cease. She could not avoid a flinch as the shining steel was neatly arranged around each of her wrists and clicked tight.

“Exquisite,” the Prince said with great admiration. “You should always wear bracelets, Jasmine. I will see to it.”

“They are not bracelets; they are chains placed upon me under coercion.”

“Oh, for Pete’s sake, can’t you unbend just once!” The princely voice was suddenly boyishly colloquial. “Do you always have to talk like a Victorian novel?”

“Do you have to act like one?” she demanded acidly. “This whole affair could well be Victorian melodrama. Do you happen to have a snake pit or some red hot irons awaiting my arrival?”

“Oh, shit! You’re impossible.” He was being deliberately uncouth in an effort to shock her into the human race. “No, I have none of those things. I may have some others you’ll be equally shocked about. Of course, there is always

another taste of what you've just had."

"I have no wish for another taste of what I have just had. Surely you realize such methods are ineffective. You can make me scream, you can make me contort, you can even make me perform various acts, as for instance my behavior now, but you cannot change me. If that is an essential part of your ambition, please send me home immediately, you're wasting your time."

Prince Abed Jamal looked at his purchase with a genuine admiration. "You're one for the book! I can see the Professor's point about getting a girl from the upper classes. Their behavior is far more entertaining than a girl from a Safeway checkout. I'll have to let the old boy know how long it takes and the means employed to get you down to normal."

Jasmine sat primly, hands in lap, trying not to look at the shining metal on her wrists, but it had a fascination she could not resist.

She remembered heroines of fact and fiction who had been similarly restrained. There were connotations to the chrome bands not to be ignored. She would have lifted them for close examination, but watched by princely eyes, she would not so demean herself. Instead, she asked as politely as she could contrive, "May I ask, in all sincerity, that you leave me clothed as I am now? I can see no possible profit for anyone in keeping me naked. If you wish to see

my body, I presume you have the power to make me strip at any time. Surely that is sufficient."

"Hmmm, for me, yes, but not for you. Nakedness is implicit in the state you now enter. You are a slave, Jasmine. Act like one."

A slave! In a limousine! Gowned by Dior! Braceleted in gyves of shining steel! Jasmine was painfully aware of the contradictions her master ignored. But he was a contradiction himself, a relic of another age in the habiliments of today. Jasmine fully expected to be raped before the day was through. In an effort to provoke information, she asked stiffly, "There's a rape scene in here somewhere I have no doubt. When does it happen?"

"You can hardly wait, can you?" He laughed at her discomfiture. "I have many willing bed girls who are far more comforting than you. Perhaps I will have Susan instruct you in that art too. I have no intention of wasting my virility on sulkiness, martyrdom, and immobility."

He had said the words just to hurt her, she knew he had. The idiot had no knowledge of her prowess. If he ever gave her the chance, she would surprise him. Catherine prided herself on her techniques, but it was a subject she could not pursue and win. She dropped it. Soon, outside the perimeter of the town, she beheld the palace of the Prince. It was everything it should be: a Moorish dreamland of courtyards and patios, of trickling streams and fountains.

There was lush green aplenty. Her heart sang at the sight of it. His home was beautiful, but that was not out of character but normalcy had ended. At the main doorway of his palace the Prince dismounted, nodded to her in a perfunctory manner, and departed. In his place were two servitors, a man and a woman. They helped her from the vehicle, but there courtesy ended. Each grasped one of her arms and led her not into the building but away from it. They traversed patios and gardens to reach a courtyard. It was of considerable dimensions, mostly paved with tile, a good many flower beds, and one or two palm trees. They led her to an anomaly. It was a quite separate square of a differently textured and colored tile, perhaps twelve foot square. In its center was a metal post about three feet high. From the top of it trailed something Jasmine recognized all too well. She did not believe it was happening, but knew it would. Once more refusing to fight, she stood stiffly while the woman removed her gown and all else to leave her once more nude. Gentle hands that were very, very firm compelled her forward to kneel beside the slender metal post while equally firm fingers encircled her neck with the waiting collar. When it was snapped shut, the sound told of a modern lock. It was also sufficiently snug to be almost a part of her. It weighed heavily, as did the trailing chain. The man and the woman salaamed and went away. No one had spoken a single word.

The courtyard had a thousand eyes. True, no single human being marred its perfection. The prisonered girl searched

in vain for company. Finding none, she turned her attention to her own plight. It was very simple—she was chained by the neck to a steel pillar in the middle of a rectangle of tile in which there was a grate above a drain. Gazing at it, its significance was suddenly apparent and brought a flush to captive cheeks. It also prompted a thrill of fear. It spoke of permanence. Exploring the collar, she found it costive and without sympathy. Lifting the chain and examining the links, she knew escape would be only a dream. It would be nice to sit down and gather her disorganized thoughts but to sit on the stone squares was unattractive. It would be extremely hard upon bare skin, and she saw no way of sitting down without appearing untidy and graceless. She shrank from the idea, instead she took tentative steps to test the length of the metal bond by which she was prisoner. It took her only as far as the outer limit of the tiles square, no more. She tried the other direction simply for something to do, but the result was the same. Disgusted, she returned to the central post, sat down, and leaned her back against it. If this was the best she could contrive, well so be it.

The prisoner's day had been well advanced at its beginning. It would not be long before twilight. Catherine had taken the precaution of seating herself to enable a full view of the house, and she was ever alert for any sign of life. But as the time wore on and evening fell, the only other human being to come into view was a servant girl who timidly deposited a container of water within her reach, then

hastily returned to the house. Once more the act had been in silence. The maiden ignored Jasmine's urgent appeals. Quite probably she spoke no English.

No food! No attention! Nothing! Jasmine well realized the situation contrived. She was going to be allowed to sit there chained, to stew in her own thoughts and fears. But despite this conviction, it was impossible not to feel the icy hand of fear in a possible abandonment. Perhaps she had been forgotten! She thrust the thought away. There was but one single comfort in this whole thing: the air was warm, so she would not suffer from exposure. When the serenity of stars took possession of the courtyard in their silvery light, the captive of the chain knew she was condemned. For her there would be no release. She wondered if she was watched from the blind eyes of the windows of the house.

To sleep upon the squares of tile was unthinkable. Surrounding the rectangle on which she was captive was a fringe of grass, well tended and green. She made every effort to strain her tethering chain in such a way as to enable her to lay upon it, but she was denied. This too had no doubt been carefully planned by whoever had measured out the chain. Not that any of her bondage appeared freshly designed, it could have been as it was now for centuries, had that thought not been belied by the snap of the lock on the collar. Catherine disposed herself unhappily and uncomfortably upon the stone beside the metal post. She would try and sleep on what was probably the most uncomfortable bed in all of Africa. She cried and was

thankful there was none to see.

Morning brought no change. She had slept poorly and was still listless and irritable squatting beside the post and using it for support. Eventually the woman and the girl she had previously seen arrived with a pail of water, some clothes, a towel, and food. Washed and fed by impersonal hands, the girl called Jasmine surveyed her day. It was a bleak prospect. It was also evident the courtyard was out of bounds for the household staff. It remained deserted so that a pall of loneliness fell upon the naked maiden who was its only occupant. But Jasmine consoled herself with the thought that the Prince would surely come. She knew she would be inordinately glad to see him. She was still thinking in terms of "making him see the light or coming to his senses." To keep the daughter of the Mordant millions chained in his backyard was altogether too bizarre. And anyway, what was the profit? But when by evening no one of importance had come near, the chained girl realized a purpose. She was being softened up, conditioned, made humble and fearful so that when the Prince deigned to make an appearance she would be frightened and ready to please. When she complained to the girl who brought her water and food, the child only shook her head and smiled and went away. She refused to speak. The whole effect was eerie and disquieting, as though she was chained on a dead planet revolving in space.

The first day passed and then the second. A squall of heavy rain did nothing to lift Jasmine's drooping spirits. She could

do nothing but remain as she was with the water beating at her in fierce gusts, which were fortunately warm. The collar and its chain mocked her in everything. The band around her governed and controlled her every move, almost her every thought since she had to consider it any fantasy she dreamed. To repair the ravages of the rain, the girl provided a comb and brush and watched wide-eyed in solemn contemplation as the captive girl used it grateful to tidy her hair, then handed them back and watched her small jailer once more depart.

Jasmine's loneliness ended on the fourth day.

The heavy-set figure emerging from the house and striding purposefully toward the captive girl was not the Prince. It was a large, fleshy man of less than middle-age. Immediately he spoke he proclaimed himself a Texan. He surveyed the chained nudity with approval. "Honey, you're a sight for sore eyes. Been out here long?"

"Four days and nights!"

"Huh! Bet you're ready got a good steak? They sure do know how to treat a girl in these parts. I'd have never thought to fix you this way. Do my old lady back home a world of good, it would. My name's Henry Kemp. Ever hear of me?"

"No."

"Guess that's because you ain't in oil." Henry Kemp spoke

as though lowering her social standing. “You’re Mordant’s daughter, ain’t ya? Bet the old boy’d bust a gut if he saw you like this. I’ve had dealings with Mordant. He’s a tough cookie.”

“He’ll pay ransom, though! Daddy would never leave me chained in this condition. Please help me.”

Henry Kemp waved away the nonsensical request. “Honey, ain’t nobody going to help you. Forget the idea. What I likely am going to do is use you. You’re damned expensive merchandise, but worth every penny. I see his nibs had you whipped, eh?”

Jasmine flushed. The marks even after a lapse of four days were still clearly evident upon her skin. She did not bear them with pride. “I’ve been treated outrageously,” Jasmine affirmed vehemently. “Surely I can look to you for some sort of help. You’re not going to just stand there and make fun of me, are you?”

“Well, not for too long, honey. But I don’t have no key to that pretty collar around your neck, so I ain’t letting you loose. What I’m figuring on is buying you. You’re a damn pretty little trick. I suppose you know that. You’ve got a pair of knockers there like I’ve never seen, and that there pubic bush down below—honey, you got something there a man has to see to believe.”

She could not place him. She recognized him as a type but not a type she had dwelt amongst or dealt with. There was

about him a ruthless geniality which could do her good or ill. Jasmine supposed his references to her physical features were to be expected from one of his kind. But to buy her from the Prince…! It made no sense, these vast sums of money banded around in payment for a naked girl! Testily, she demanded, “What do you want for me? You can buy all sorts of pretty girls for far less than I think you’ll have to pay for me.”

“But they ain’t Mordant’s daughter.”

Jasmine forced her hands away from her breasts. Kemp’s reference to them had caused them to instinctively rise and shield. This was not a man with whom to be coy. There was a blunt decisiveness about him she wished to match. Unhappily, she inquired, “What you’re saying is you and the Prince intend to extract something from my father as ransom for my return. Is that right?”

“Something like that, honey. You don’t need to bother your pretty head about it. Your dad and me, we’ll fix the details. If Mordant knows you’re going to get that little ass of yours whipped every day, it’ll speed up negotiations right smart.”

“But I thought the Prince wanted me. I mean just me—”

Jasmine blushed, her hasty words had betrayed more than she intended. In fact, more than she had realized herself. The big Texan instantly picked up the message. “Got the hots for him, eh! Well, can’t say I blame you. He’s a handsome son of a bitch, and he’s got a way with him. When he

talks about letting me buy you, you'd think he was slipping me the crown jewels of England or the Taj Mahal." There was another lewd chuckle. "I'd have thought, at his age, he'd have wanted to keep you for a bit of fun. He can afford it. I bet you're a damn good piece of ass."

"There's no need to be offensive, Mr. Kemp. I'd be grateful if you'd get in touch with my father immediately and put an end to this whole sorry business."

The Texas grin studied her with amused approval. "You always talk like that, honey?" He chuckled. "The Prince told me about you and the way you sound Mrs. Beaten's cookbook or that crap you recite in school. Honey, what you've got to do is loosen up. I was thinking of screwing a bit of ass of you myself before I passed you on, but damn it, I'd just as well screw that there pole you're chained to."

"Please, if you have any chivalry at all—"

"I ain't got none of that stuff at all, honey." The Texan laughed delightedly at her chagrin. "Ain't much of it around these days. Don't suppose they ever heard of it in these parts, and there's damn little in Texas. What a man would have to do with you is give you a damn good lacing on that round rump of yours first get you warmed up. You're so damn frosty I bet you wouldn't feel a pin if I stuck one into you."

Jasmine's breasts were once more heaving under the stress of emotion. Here was salvation! But Henry Kemp would

grant it to her only under his own conditions. Jasmine was bitterly hurt that Prince Abed was so willing to part with her so soon. He was a romantic figure any girl could get a heart throb from, and now to learn she meant so little to him was shattering. Dully, she echoed her thoughts. “I’d do anything to get back home.”

Henry Kemp laughed. He was enjoying this lovely creature fastened to the end of a chain. He was picking up the vibrations of Jasmine’s disgust, fear, outrage, and hope. He might amuse himself with her before sending her back to Mordant—if negotiations went that far. His tone was humorously mocking: “Honey, there ain’t nothing you can do a man can’t take without bargaining. If I want a piece of tail off you right now, what can you do about it? I’d take it. I could make you recite the Constitution or the Gettysburg Address. Best face up to it, girl—you ain’t got nothing.”

Jasmine longed to dismiss him with something curt and acid. But Henry Kemp was the only communion she had enjoyed in her four days chained to the pole. He might be uncouth, vulgar, and certainly not gentleman, but he was of her own race and a man not to be ignored. He had even offered a possibility of her return to her parents’ home, but viewing this seemed altogether nebulous. It made her more than ever conscious of being a pawn in a huge game without rules. A girl was disarmed indeed when she could not even bargain with her own flesh. In caustic sarcasm, she asked wearily, “Would you like me to stand up and pose for you so you can get a proper view of what you

buy?"

The shaft missed its mark. Henry Kemp beamed. "That's a damn fine idea, honey. I'm glad you thought of it. Sure, get up and wiggle them hips."

It served her right. It also told Miss Catherine Mordant all the manner in which anything she said could be used against her to someone else's advantage. It seemed silly to make a fuss over doing something that, while once unthinkable, was now common place. She got to her feet, stood a little way from the post to rid herself of the chains, and turned and twisted beneath the intent Texan's regard. Blushing vividly, she retorted, "There, I hope you're satisfied! But I also hope you'll buy me and send me home. Please do."

At Henry Kemp's departure, loneliness returned and all the nagging fears of isolation. It seemed impossible she would be forced to stay upon this small tile square in a huge foreign courtyard because of a collar around her neck and a length of chain. The naked girl was constantly aware of the weight of metal by which she was controlled, but nonetheless, for an intelligent adult it seemed tantalizingly improbable she could find or devise no means of freedom. Bitterly, she paraphrased a quotation. "Never had so much girl been held prisoner by so little." But bitterly, she knew, for her, there was no escape.

3

The Hateful Post

JASMINE'S RELEASE, when it came on the sixth despairing day, was without drama. It took the form of the same wide eyed servant girl who unexpectedly held up a key and stated words obviously rehearsed. "You come to house." Breathlessly, the chained girl held still while the key searched and found and the collar clattered to the tile.

It was one more moment of glory. The naked girl rose, stretched, walked around the square of tile, and stepped beyond its confines as though in the discovery of a new continent. It was altogether wonderful. The girl stood and watched with her large, limpid eyes.

She had gathered up the few items of her prisoner's need and stood waiting. But glory swiftly passes. It was only a matter of moments before Jasmine realized opportunity. The courtyard was huge. In their high walls were doors, some barred, some of solid wood.

Surely one of them would yield to her need. Without thought or without a word to the waiting girl, she sped away toward the first of them. Motion was an exquisite sensation. She leaped and sped in exhaultant freedom. Careless of consequence, she enjoyed the flexing of her limbs in unrestrained flight.

The door was solidly locked and barred. So was the second and the third and the fourth. Defeated, Jasmine turned away in disgust.

She wondered if anyone had watched or if the girl would tell. Gloomily, she joined the grinning girl and walked with her to whatever fate she had now earned.

“Enjoy your run, Jasmine?” Prince Abed Jamal surveyed his captive without rancor. He lolled comfortably behind his desk, and before it, the girl called Jasmine stood in disarray, awaiting sentence. He laughed, reading her thoughts. “Don’t worry, you won’t be punished for it, and you needed the exercise.” He grinned. “How did you enjoy Texas?”

“You buy me and now you sell me.” Her gaze was, if anything, reproachful. “I don’t much understand any of this, but I’m being used for barter, aren’t I?”

“Right. Girls always have been, y’know, although mostly they use other names for it. I expect you’ll be glad to be home.”

“Well, yes.” She sought for words she could not find. “It’s a sort of anticlimax, isn’t it?”

“You would prefer to return to the courtyard and the chain?”

“No, it’s not that. You know it’s not that. I don’t ever want to see that chain again. But it all seems so much fuss and bother and expense over just me.”

“None of it wasted,” Jamal assured her earnestly. “Here, put these on.”

Once the shining handcuffs pushed at her across the desk would have shocked, but they did not now. Feeling herself in the grip of a tide she could not stem, Jasmine picked up the metal circlets and their single link and slowly and in wry amusement fitted one around her left wrist. The second was more difficult upon her right hand, but by a few contortions she contrived to handcuff herself satisfactorily snug. The Prince watched appreciatively. “I think I told you, didn’t I? Bracelets become you. If I had decided to keep you, you would have worn them always.”

There flashed through Jasmine’s mind the simple words: “Then why not keep me?” But she bit them back. They were an utterance of a girl named Jasmine, not of Miss Catherine Mordant. She was being silly. Jamal read her mind and laughed. “Not all that keen on Henry Kemp, eh? Don’t worry, he won’t keep you long. Your father will claim you.”

“At some awful price,” she said disgustedly. “And as for Kemp, I don’t trust him—he frightens me.”

They remained silent as the minutes ticked by. Between them was the desk and all the ages of the ancient land. Reading the depth of her indecision, Jamal chuckled and suggested, “I’ll make you a deal. I won’t sell you to him if you tell me that you’d prefer thirty days in solitary confinement.” His eyes were shrewd and searching. “I’m not

talking about a dungeon and racks. You'd simply be chained in a stone room and sit it out. I've one in mind in which the lighting is good and there's a bit of a view."

Decisions, decisions! Jasmine was uncertain if he was pulling her leg or deadly serious. In this place it could well be true. Forgetting reticence, she asked, "And after thirty days, what then?"

"Well, well, you're actually considering it, aren't you?" Jamal's full attention was piqued. "But I won't be a bastard. I'll tell you frankly. Thirty days in solitary is more than most girls can handle."

She was tempted to accept. She had no time to analyze, but the impulse was strong. But she owed it to her parents and herself to accept Kemp's hope for a return home. Before she could voice the thought, Jamal's voice came once again, still mocking. "If you don't think the penal servitude, I'll make you still another offer." He paused, his eyes still searching her for clues. "How about one hundred strokes?"

He was being cruel, teasing and testing at the same time, stripping her mind as bare as her body. Morosely, she said, "I suppose a girl who was in love with you would pay the price. I expect I would. But this doesn't concern just me; it concerns my parents. I owe it to them to follow any avenue of escape."

"Henry Kemp is it then!" Jamal gestured decisively. "His terms are instant delivery, and I can't promise what he'll

do or fail to do with you while he awaits the definite transaction with your father. He may give you a bad time."

"A hundred strokes," she said bitterly.

"Don't hold them against me." Jamal's laugh was admonitory. "You might have been glad of the offer. I know you considered it. I was watching you. Your face is beautifully honest. I have to regret your decision even though it makes me quite a few million dollars."

"All stolen from my father, I suppose." She pouted sulkily. "Do I now get shipped to Texas?"

"Yes, and not strapped tight in a box the way Henry suggested. I'm loaning him my plane so you will return to America in the same comfort in which you approached Africa. I'm sorry you haven't seen this place. There are some things of interest."

"Whips and chains, I suppose?"

"Oh, come off it, girl. Gad, you're stiff! You just can't let go, can you?" The Prince shook his head at her sadly. "I'm afraid you'll find good old Henry far less receptive to either sulks or severity than I am. I think he has it in mind to frequently attend to those two lovely cheeks you sit on." He chuckled. "It's quite likely you won't be doing much sitting down in his possession."

"You mean he's some sort of sadist!"

“Oh no, he’s not that. He’s just a great big hulking lout who’s had everything his own way ever since he made his first hundred million, which is a few years ago now. He’s simply blunt and ruthless in all he does. I suspect this covers his treatment of slaves and probably his wife too, if he knew the truth of it.”

“I am a slave girl, aren’t I?” Jasmine mused thoughtfully. “The bunch of you have had that effect on me. I think this business about buying and selling me has had an extraordinary impact. I’m still Catherine Mordant, and I’ll go back to being Catherine Mordant and be just as bitchy as I ever was.” She held up her joined hands for them both to see. “I suppose these things influence thinking too, and you know damn well what being chained to that post in your courtyard did for me. You had it all planned. If you’d come out to me instead of sending that girl, I’d have crawled. I’d have done anything to get that collar off my neck. I shouldn’t tell you this, but we won’t be seeing much of each other again, so why not!” Her glance was lingering. “When do I get put aboard the plane?”

“Immediately. You know what Texans are. I’d tell you to go pack if you had anything to pack.”

Jasmine flushed, feeling cool air on nakedness. Spurred by a sudden vision, she pleaded. “Look, if you have any influence with Kemp, will you ask him a favor? Don’t send me back to my father naked. When I am released or picked up or whatever is done with me in the exchange, please let me

be clothed."

"Not sure I have that much influence with Kemp, and he's not a man to like being told what to do, but I'll try. I can see your point, but we have to remember he's got it in for your father, and he'll go about selling you back where you belong in his own way. Best leave him alone."

"But he'll be mean to me—I know he will."

Jamal shrugged. "He talks a lot. I wouldn't believe everything he says. It amuses him to watch you react to promises of getting your bottom whipped. I know, he's told me." Jamal paused. If the captive girl saw pity in his eyes, it was but a fleeting glance. Abruptly, he announced, "There's a couple of hours before the plane. Don't make a fuss about what my servant does with you." He pressed a buzzer on his desk.

It was the same young woman. This time there was amusement in the dark eyes. She grasped Jasmine's bare arm and led her through a maze of corridors and passages. Before she opened a final door, she said simply, "I must make you so you not see."

Miss Catherine Mordant made no demure other than to clench cuffed hands into fists while a bandage was wound around her hair and eyes, fold after fold, until the darkness was complete. Then one wrist only was unlocked from its cuff and she was led through the now open door and guided to sit upon what was unmistakably a bed. The

insistent hands pushed her gently down upon her back. Her still cuffed hand was drawn up and out and clicked shut, presumably upon the framework of a bedstead or headboard. Another cuff sought her still free hand and closed upon it with the familiar clicks, and then the hand and arm were drawn as the other one had been and similarly fastened to leave the naked girl upon her back upon a bed with her hands and arms held high and wide. The thought was obvious: “Is someone going to rape me?” Her voice was trembling.

But, as usual, there was no answer until the impressive female voice said, “I go. You keep still, you no fight.”

Fight! How could she fight! She supposed the woman had meant she should not kick. Kicking was the only effective motion left. She strived to reach the bandage on her eyes with a fettered hand, but no matter how she hurt her wrist, it fell inches short of its objective. Catherine lay quivering in total darkness but knowing something would happen. Something had to happen!

It would be the Prince, she knew it would be. But then her conviction dissolved under the realization that the Prince was relinquishing his title to her. It could just as easily be Henry Kemp. It could, in fact, be anyone, but whoever it was she had been prepared for, he evidently had little faith in his own ability to charm. She had been fastened so that any man or woman could do anything they wished with her. A cut with the crop across her shin would readily stop

any hostile kicks. She was most competently prepared for the oldest sacrifice in the world. Jasmine lay quivering. From time to time she made another abortive effort to reach the blindfold, but was always foiled. After the last of these efforts, she resigned herself to being blind. It was then that she first realized she was no longer alone. Someone was in the room with her. Unknown eyes were eating at her nudity.

There was no sound, but Jasmine was positive. Tense and still, she heard breathing other than her own. Decisively, she said, “There’s no need to blindfold me. Whatever you’re going to do with me, please let me have my eyes.”

There was no answer, no sound. Plaintively, she tried again. “I know who you are, you know. Please don’t do what I think you’re going to—not in this mean way as though you’re ashamed of it.”

Jasmine knew it was laughable, but her paramount thought was thankfulness that she was not a virgin. To have it done to her like this the first time would be unbearable. She would already be in screaming hysterics. But when the bed took the added weight and she felt the bare thighs between her own and then felt another’s breath upon her breasts, she said as decisively as before, “I know who you are, but please be gentle with me.”

Miss Catherine Mordant was brought to unbearable excitation with consummate skill. There was no part of her

nakedness untouched by lips, by tongue, and by the tips of fingers. They were wise and knowing, leaving her without defense. In the first motions of alarm her feet had been kicked to either side with rough force, but thereafter the rape of Jasmine was not a rape at all. She ceased to have need of words; her only concern became to match the rhythm of her impalement. After the first explosion there was no withdrawal. The lips started all over again and fingertips uncovered all her secrets.

The second time was better than the first!

Jasmine's journey back to the plane was less splendid than when she had left it. This time there were guards on either side ready to clutch her should she seek escape. She was not gorgeously gowned, but wore only a cloak from neck to knees beneath which she was naked, her hands crossed and tied behind her back. She was most definitely merchandise being taken to market. Jamal was nowhere to be seen. This time Susan was both hostess and jailer.

"I'm afraid he wants you fastened," the girl said regretfully. "But I understand this is with your consent. I take it therefore you will not give me any trouble, Jasmine?"

It was very simple. The cloak was removed, her hands were untied. Had she wished to flee there were those outside waiting. Jasmine shrugged and made her wry admission. "I'll do what you want, Susan. I suppose the old goat wants to ogle me the whole time."

“I’m afraid that’s the way of it,” Susan admitted apologetically. “He wants you facing him, not with your back turned the way you were before. I expect he prefers the scenery. I’ll get the cuffs out if you’ll just raise your arms.”

It was that simple. Two girls with the same idea. Jasmine raised her hands up and to either side to meet the waiting steel circlets which would ensure her helplessness. When they were both secured she stood in center aisle cruelly exposed to view. She could hide nothing, and before the trip was done would become weary with the standing. They had only a short wait for the man by whose behest this was being done.

“Your name’s Susan, ain’t it? You got my little filly all fixed up the way I said?” The Texan’s tone was unmistakable. The owner of the voice appeared to fill the fuselage with his bulk. He carefully selected the seat which would give him the best view of his exposed purchase. He produced an infectious grin. “Ain’t the first time I’ve seen you bare, honey, but I will admit it’s better than last time. Boy, them knockers! May fix them feet after awhile and see if we can improve things, but right now you’re a sight for sore eyes. If there’s one thing I do enjoy, it’s a naked girl.”

Jasmine had once more become Miss Catherine Mordant. In icy disregard of ribaldry she said a cool, “Good day, Mr. Kemp. I hope you enjoy your flight.”

“Oh, I will, I will. Hey, Susan, give me a double whisky. Give

little sweetheart here anything she wants, but you'll have to feed it to her. Just don't obstruct the view, just so long as you don't stand in front of them tits." He laughed brutally. "But she's going to have to get used to it. She can cover 'em up when she gets back to papa—if she ever does."

The plight of Miss Catherine Mordant would have been hard to bear had she not had in view the possibility of eventual release. Surely these men could complete these negotiations in the bartering of her body within a week. In the meantime, she would bear what she must but always there would be the mental reservation that one day revenge might come her way. She would dearly love to rub this idiot's nose in the dirt. To have her fettered as she was and then unblushingly sit and examine her body, making his lewd and indecent comments to whatever part of her took his fancy. Since she could not win the battle of being either shy or sulky, she asked another icy question.

"Could you give me some idea when I will be returned to my father, Mr. Kemp?"

"Depends on papa, honey, won't it? I ain't in no real hurry. I aim to use you a few times first. You're figuring on being fucked, I hope?"

"I have considered the possibility."

"Well, that's damn nice of you, sweetheart! You can stop calling it a possibility. It's going to happen, and like I said, I'll warm your ass up first with a cane."

“There is no need for sadism along with carnality, Mr. Kemp. I am trying to act the role of a civilized prisoner. I would have thought you could do the same.”

“Honey, I’ve taken a lot of shit from that old bastard of a father of yours. If I can’t take it out on him, I’ll take it out on you, and I’ll make damn sure he knows about it too. You’re going to cost the Mordant bank a pretty penny.”

“Do you have to look at me like that—staring?”

“Ain’t a question of have to—I want to. Can you give me a good reason why I shouldn’t?”

Catherine dropped an unprofitable subject. All she had learned from the exchange was the probability that this man had not been her visitor, or when she was blindfolded on the bed. It was undoubtedly Prince Abed Jamal who had made love to her so skillfully. She could not imagine this loud-mouthed oaf making any decent quality of love, but you could never tell about men. They often surprised a girl. Fretfully, she tugged at the steel around her wrists.

It was going to be a long flight if she would spend it standing with her arms held as they were. Did this rich buffoon intend to stare at her so fixedly the whole time! She knew she had no choice but to stand spread as she was for his enjoyment, but perhaps she could escape him within the latitudes of the mind. She was much concerned with thoughts of Jamal. Even though she chided herself for what she feared was a silly, girlish infatuation, the man’s face

returned to her vision again and again, and the memory of his maleness with her on the bed was still potent. In the event of her return to a normal life, it might be amusing to visit the place where he had held her captive.

“You getting the hots, baby? Damn it, I’d swear you’re thinking about tail.” Henry Kemp guffawed. “You girls don’t fool nobody. You’re as hot between your legs as anybody else.” He laughed. “Wouldn’t be me you’ve been thinking about, now would it?”

Catherine ignored the jibe. She wondered if somewhere in the depths of this big bluff hearty man there might not be a streak of kindness. She suspected it was there. Henry Kemp was doing as so many others did—he played a role. His was the rich Texan. Relieved of the compulsion of this acting, he might be a quite decent type. Since she did not wish to be thrashed daily until release, it would be needful that she tap this vein of compassion. She wondered how many men possessed this mania for whipping girls. It would be easy to suppose it universal. Perhaps even her own father felt the urge! Catherine had been around enough to glimpse the strange impulses hidden beneath a business suit or a pair of jeans. In sudden curiosity, she inquired, “Have you possessed others girls in this fashion, Mr. Kemp?”

“You mean do I go ‘round kidnapping broads?” Henry Kemp laughed enjoyably. “Well, not exactly. I’ve had quite a few girls in my time, and I’ve come by them in a diversity of ways, but I ain’t never run into anything as romantic as

you and that there prince. Damn it, girl, you and me ought to get together and sell that to Hollywood." He chuckled. "And not forgetting that bit with you on the chain out in the yard there, getting your little ass well whipped. Shit, they could give you the star part and make a mint. Think about it, honey."

Catherine realized that it was in just such quick ideas in the mind of wealthy men that spawned fresh millions. Henry Kemp might very well do exactly that. She had no doubt that if he did, the role would be hers if she wanted it. Like most young women, she had a total conceit about herself and a camera. She wondered why she had not thought of this before. Now, to cover the embarrassment of standing naked on display, she asked, "Look, Mr. Kemp, I know when I'm beaten I know you can chain me as I am and look at me for as long as you wish, but this is a damn tiring way for a girl to be held, and it hurts my wrists. Can I make a deal with you? Let me loose and I'll stand in all sorts of different ways for you to admire. I'm not that much of a prude I can't do it, and it's a great deal easier on my muscles."

"Hell, the lady comes to life! Sweetheart, that's the longest speech you've ever made, but hell no, I'm not going to let you loose. That's the fun part of this, just having you so you can't get away or hide anything. You're gonna damn well stand there for as long as I want! I'd have thought you'd know that by now."

Catherine bit back the angry words. The man was a boor. It was useless to demean herself. But once more she twisted against her steel bracelets, longing to be free. Her reverie was long, but was finally broken by a sharp command. “Hey, Susan, take a piece of rope and tie this silly bitch’s leg up off to one side so she has to stand on one leg and show me her cunt.”

There was a strained silence, both girls hating the command. They exchanged looks of disgust. When Susan fetched the rope, she looked at the already helpless girl and said, “I’m sorry.”

It would be useless to fight and demeaning to protest. Catherine did neither. She allowed her right ankle to be noosed and tugged up to one side and out, to be fastened to the opposite wall of the fuselage. It was a useless, unkind act which exposed her in a way almost obscene and imposed upon her a new dimension of helplessness in as much as now everything was doubly stressed. To stand on one leg was bad enough, but with the other drawn tautly out to one side and raised to the level of her hips compelled fresh strain upon her ironed wrists. She longed to plead, to point out the impossibility of what had just been done, its shocking and outrageous revelation of herself, and of the pain entailed. But she bit back the angry words. Henry Kemp would probably enjoy them, so it was best to remain silent. If her features depicted martyrdom, well so be it. That was how she felt.

“Honey, I’ll be damned if that ain’t an inspiration!” Henry Kemp boomed complacently. “Me and that guy Rodin talk about a pose! Now, if we was to tie your other foot up the same way—I bet you’d hate me!” He slapped his massive thigh and guffawed.

What could she say? What was there to say? Wearily, she enunciated, “This is indecent and painful. Is that was you desire?”

“That’s right, honey. I’m a dirty old man who’s simply starting young. You stay with me long enough and I’ll have that pretty little pussy of yours sticking out in all directions. We only just got ourselves nicely started.”

The flight wore on. Susan, without being asked, lifted drinks to the captive lips, but the alcohol could not defeat anger. Catherine drank gratefully but found no relief. After a lapse of time she could not guess, her leg was lowered and the pose repeated with the other foot. There was neither pause nor remission. She was there to please her owner, and please him she did. Even when Henry Kemp dragged out a briefcase and scanned documents, his eyes constantly rose above the printed sheet to gaze at her and sometimes wink at his appreciation. So absorbed was he with both the chained girl and his briefcase of papers that he ignored the scenery beyond the portholes. But when the plane began its descent, he spared a glance for his native Heath. His strident exclamation was instant: “Damn it, that ain’t Texas! What the hell!”

Catherine was startled. It was difficult for her to see beyond the small panes. She twisted and tried to look, but got no other impression than that of an amount of verdre upon the still distant ground that certainly bore no resemblance to Texas. Texas should be grain or gass, but what she saw below was either forest or jungle.

“Susan, go and see what those assholes up in the cockpit are doing. They got the wrong country.” It was the first time Catherine had not been the center of attention, but she was not grateful. Intuition prompted fear in the awkward silence. When Susan returned, her face was white. “It’s not our crew,” she told them simply, “They’re taking us down into a place called Kandaka, somewhere in central Africa.” She paused and looked from one to the other of her audience in obvious dismay. “I think we’ve been hijacked!”

For Catherine it was a swift montage of dramatic impressions, Henry Kemp’s bellicose bellowings made an irritating accompaniment while Susan lowered her raised leg and freed the roped ankle. The stewardess was frightened, but no more frightened than the chained girl who remained naked and helpless throughout. The arrival of the smartly uniformed soldiers was prompt. Obviously they had been ready and waiting. They freed the captive wrists but immediately clasped Catherine’s arms behind her back and handcuffed them there. They then handcuffed her feet tightly together, picked her up, and carried her from the plane. The last she saw of Henry Kemp and Susan was a pair of shocked, startled faces.

4

Dark Bondage

"AH YES, THE AMERICAN GIRL. Bring her in."

It was the first time Catherine Mordant had heard the voice. It was a most disturbing voice and unquestionably African. If it had overtones of the London School of Economics and Harvard, they were no more than a thin veneer. Adam Madanda's voice was a force Catherine sensed its power before she saw its owner. She saw it matched by the man himself as she was carefully stood erect before his desk. Her ankles were still handcuffed, as were her wrists behind her back in the manner in which she had been taken from the plane. She had been transported directly to the executive office. Once more her nakedness was intently studied, this time with amusement. The voice now held laughter. "Miss Catherine Mordant, I am quite sure you are an angry young woman."

He was what Catherine labeled in her mind as a "handsome brute". There was a lot of Adam Mandanda to see. He wore only shorts and sandals, yet strangely did not look out of place behind the massive desk. Adam Madanda was a presence. Catherine scorned all the things a girl was expected to say in this predicament. She kept silent and assessed this new factor in her life as he was assessing her.

“My mother was English, Miss Mordant. My father was African.” He smiled gently. “I fear I am not as black as I am painted.”

She recalled him now, one of the new group of black leaders who had seized power by simple audacity. She could believe it of him, and having seized power, this man would keep it: Adam Madanda was power personified. Very simply, she said, “I have nothing to say. The words are all yours. I will be glad to listen.”

“Ah, I do like that! You and I will become friends. In fact, we are friends already. Do you not feel it?”

Catherine felt it. Here was a man to destroy his enemies and engulf his friends utterly by the strength of his personality. But she was naked and teetering on her ironed feet. Striving to match his tone, she said simply, “You are a strong man. Yes, I feel your strength, but do you want me standing in this disgrace before your desk? Need I be this helpless?”

“It gives me pleasure to see you thus. Accept it. In fact, turn and show me your cuffed hands.” He watched her obey, then quietly mused, “Ah yes, very neat, very effective.” He rose, and taking her by the shoulders, turned her to face him. “I will now ravish you. That is what you expect, no?”

It was what Catherine expected. It was also what she wanted, but she would tell him neither of these facts. She knew herself upon a tide beyond control. Madanda picked

her up as though she was an incident in a busy day. In an adjoining room there was a couch and upon it Catherine paid one more tribute to a conqueror. With great deliberation, Madanda unlocked the handcuffs on her feet and her hands. He set them aside and mounted her with the same air of quiet purpose. The consummation of purpose took a long, long time and conveyed his subject to new worlds of sensation unexplored. When, after several centuries, it was done, Madanda turned her about with that same gentleness that comes only from immense strength and once again handcuffed her passive wrists. Her ankles were left free. The ravished girl likened his voice to black velvet. "You have been owned by three men—I know them all. I have taken you and you cost me nothing. This is the way of conquerors." He chuckled. "No one will do anything about the hijacking. No one will do anything to rescue you. You are mine!"

Standing before his desk, properly balanced on feet now free, Catherine made the inevitable inquiry: "Why? I don't understand."

"Your father and two of the men who have owned you hold immense power in a manner vital to Kandaka." He surveyed her with a lingering caress which could be admiration for her flesh or her father's case. "Kandaka is my country. I will do what I must to make it survive and prosper. These men control something I must have. I control you." He grinned amiably. "It is an ancient game."

“You’re holding me for ransom?”

“Yes, in a way. I have considered what to do with you while you are our guest. There will be no rack, no hot irons, no dungeon. I intend to bestow complete freedom. You will be appropriately dressed or undressed for each occasion. If you earn discipline by immodest behavior, it is I who will administer it. Do you understand?”

“Not really, but never mind me—please continue.”

“In Kandaka none will aid your escape, not even your own consul. But since you must be identified as my property, your hands will stay as they are now, handcuffed behind your back. A female member of my staff will attend your needs.” Adam Madanda smiled paternally. “And now, if you will excuse me, I am extremely busy.”

It took Miss Catherine Mordant several hours to pick up the courage to leave the official residence of the ruler. Since she was already within its confines, it imposed no additional shame to explore the building and be seen by those who served. But to emerge into the glare of sunlight in Kandaka’s streets was something else again. The laughing girl who attended had contrived a tasteful arrangement of a sheath of cotton by which she was reasonably covered. Cunning hands deftly tugged the gaily colored material into the feminine art of revealing by concealing. But since other maidens were similarly attired it remained only for her handcuffed wrists to betray her condition. The laughing

girl pointed out that they would be message to all that she belonged to Madanda. None would molest her, but on the other hand, none would offer aid in her escape either. In fact, should she show evidence of such intent, she would be brought back to the official residence and properly punished. It made Catherine feel like a small girl being cautioned before being sent out for a walk. Having explored what the doors revealed, the captive girl now had a choice between sitting and doing nothing, or boldly setting forth upon Kandaka's streets. Her destination seemed obvious. She would turn the handcuffs to good account.

Catherine arrived at the American Consulate hot, dusty, and deeply shamed. Girls in Kandaka did not wear handcuffs. She had attracted attention from every passerby, not that the attentions had been demonstrative but they bad evoked quiet smiles of secret knowledge. The embassy itself was unimpressive, and when inside, took on a peculiarly elusive quality. Catherine was warmly greeted, but it was all too evident they wished she had not come.

"You see, my dear Miss Mordant, the situation here at the moment is extremely fluid." The balding middle-aged consul looked at his guest with faint disapproval as though convinced she would not be in her present predicament unless it was her own fault. "You appear to have got yourself into the middle of a power play in which our state department is deeply concerned that no one rock the boat."

“What you’re saying is that they lack the courage to deal with it.”

The consul squirmed. “Your hands, Miss Mordant they appear to be handcuffed behind your back?”

“By all means relieve me of them if they bother you. I’m not wearing them by choice.”

The consul visibly winced. Catherine bitterly suspected he winced often. “That is the point, Miss Mordant. A key to those things does not exist in this consulate. We have no need of them.”

“Don’t bother then,” Catherine said bitterly. “I’ve become accustomed to them. I expect I’d miss them if you took them off.”

“I will communicate with Washington—”

“Don’t bother.” Catherine got to her feet and turned to give the dignitary a full view of her chained hands. Turning around, she retorted, “Madanda will do that quicker than you’ll manage it. Good-bye!”

Angry but determined, the frustrated girl continued her tour of the African town. She had no pockets and no money and no hands.

All she could do was look. She could well believe none would help her. If she paused as though to speak, they edged away. But she was ill disposed to further entangle-

ments. She had little doubt that Madanda, the Prince, and Henry Kemp, spurred by her father, would affect her release. All she would suffer would be a few days of shame and embarrassment as the plaything of an African dictator. Her thoughts flittered back and forth between Madanda and Prince Abed Jamal. Each had conquered her. But each seemed unconcerned with possession, seeing in her only a token for barter. Catherine clenched her cuffed hands in the biggest frustration of all. On her return to the residence, there awaited still one more shock.

Adam Madanda flexed the thin yellow cane delicately between his hands. He and the startled girl stared back at one another. She in utter dismay, he in amusement. Catherine Mordant exclaimed, “You can’t be serious! You can’t be—”

“You can chalk this up to the consulate, Catherine. Come here and I’ll give you your hands so you may disrobe.”

“I don’t want my hands for such a purpose. They can stay as they are.” Her temper flared. “You’re not going to turn me into a sniveling child.”

“I’ll turn you into a woman if I have you long enough. Come, don’t be silly. There’s no need of force between us.”

She flounced to him and turned her back. At least a girl with free hands could argue more effectively than one with them locked behind her back. But she was given no time for debate. His voice was insistent. “Take it off, I want you naked.”

“You’re doing this to shame me, aren’t you?”

“No, I’m going to cane your bottom. I want it out in the open.”

“There’s no need for me to be naked. I could not it up—” Catherine flushed, realizing what she had said. The familiar blush began to suffuse her cheeks. “What I mean,” she said defensively, “is there’s absolutely no need to strip me bare.”

Madanda was enjoying her confusion. “Very well,” he agreed amiably. “Let me see you lift the hem of your skirt. Way up, of course—don’t hide anything.”

“I refuse. You’re being outrageous.”

“I could tie you over a chair.”

Breathlessly, Catherine loosened the slip and tossed it aside.

Shame enveloped her always at each unveiling. She never became accustomed to the deliberate stripping of herself to please a man. She backed away, eyeing the cane. The unctuous voice followed. “Very well, now finish the job. You know what to do.”

She knew all too well, but this man had just performed the act of love with her and now proposed to make her posterior scarlet with his ridiculous cane. It was too incongruous for words. She said stiffly, “You can make me do it—I know

you can—but I wish you wouldn't. I ask you not to."

"Do it. Touch your toes."

The naked girl shrugged and obeyed. The cane rapped at her knees to stiffen them and at the small of her back to lower it and protrude that portion of herself about to be punished. The daughter of one of the world's richest men touched her toes and held her breath.

Madanda was a giant of a man, and in his hands the yellow cane seemed so light and inoffensive, but the pain that flared across Catherine's twin cheeks was brutal. Instinctively, she leaped erect and clutched the wound. But when she turned to reproachfully meet the watching eyes, she realized the absurd picture she must make. As though seeking refuge in conformity, she resumed her shameful pose. As the next stroke bit and the others followed in a slow measured cadence, the punished girl reiterated again and again in silent wonder: I am Mordant's daughter, I am Mordant's daughter—and this is happening to me!

When the sixth stroke bit savagely on top of number five, she could bear no more. She straightened up erect and turned to glare. "I can't stand it! Please, no more. You're a brute. You don't know when to stop." Then she said aloud that which she had said to herself: "I am Mordant's daughter! Don't you understand—I am Mordant's daughter! You can't do this to me!"

"Resume position," the voice said impassively.

In anguished indecision, Catherine gazed around as though seeking some avenue of escape, but there was none. In a feverish need of understanding, she blurted out, “I’m only a girl! Don’t you understand? You can’t beat a girl like this. I thought you’d stop at six, and I don’t see why you can’t.”

“Seven.” The voice was as impassive as before. She knew his trick. He would demean her: he would yield nothing. He was prepared to stop, but not at her request. It would be by his own decision. Miserably aware she could endure one more cut, the hurt girl bent over again and offered herself to the yellow cane. When the seventh blow had added its scarlet line to the other six, Catherine rose erect, stiffly and doubtfully, uncaring of being seen, rubbing her weals. Both her cheeks were on fire. She turned slowly to the watching man.

“You did remarkably well, Miss Mordant. You have what the Americans call a lovely ass. I have made it even more entrancing.”

“You had no need to do it at all. I don’t understand why you felt you had to. I know men enjoy whipping girls, but I’d have thought you were above that sort of nonsense. Goodness knows you don’t need it to make you potent.”

“Ah, you have been reading Freud, Miss Mordant, or the underground books.” Madanda’s voice was silk. “Since we’re on the subject, may I ask the effect of your bottom being caned upon your own libido?”

Damn him! He was pinpointing something of which the punished girl was disgustedly aware. Heat flamed within her loins. The mere thought of the cane, coupled with the insistent burn of her scarlet flesh, had lit a fire between her legs of which she had never previously been so aware. Stiffly, she retorted, “It’s none of your business.”

Madanda laughed. “That answers my question. Would you like me to appease your pain?”

“No, stay away from me. Haven’t you done enough? You’ve made me hate myself and you too. I think you could be a nice man if you wanted to.”

“I am a nice man. Put on your slip, then come here and get handcuffed like a nice girl.”

Catherine had forgotten the slip. She supposed now it was indicative of something. She snatched it angrily and arranged it upon her curves with savage small motions. Facing Madanda again, she said, “I’m not going to go over there and let you do that to me again. I’ve behaved like a pussycat quite enough for today. I’m ashamed of myself, and you ought to be ashamed of yourself. You’ve ravished me and whipped me, but all I’m supposed to represent to you is a bargaining leverage.”

Madanda quietly ignored her tirade. He flexed the yellow length of cane suggestively while bestowing his quiet assured smile. “You may have this, Miss Mordant, or you may come and get your handcuffs. The choice is yours.”

Catherine longed for heroics to rend and tear and scream. Instead she shrugged in bitter frustration, marched toward her master, and turned her back. As the chrome slid around her wrists and clicked snugly tight, she proclaimed, “I don’t see why you have to do this to me. You really don’t have to do it at all. It’s just an additional humiliation, isn’t it?”

Madanda slapped her bottom and pushed her gently away. She turned and faced him, her hands once more twisting against familiar steel. “This is the way to treat a desperate male criminal, not a girl!” she accused. “I hope you’ve been in touch with my father so we can put an end to this farce.”

“Do you consider those seven strokes you’ve had so recently as farce?”

“No, you know they’re not. What they are is the sort of vulgarity that belonged to the old burlesque shows. It’s simply vulgar.”

“You prefer something more sophisticated?”

“I don’t prefer any such punishments at all, and I don’t deserve them.”

Madanda pressed a buzzer on his desk. His smile was benign. “I have underrated you, Miss Mordant. Let me make amends.”

The front of the residency was gardens. Its rear was pure utility.

There was a coming and going, the parking of cars, the functions of domestic laborers. Placed centrally in the open space was the gibbet to which Catherine was now attached. Her breasts heaving from the struggle and this new fresh shame, she watched the retreat of the two soldiers who had stripped the shift from her, bound her hands, and raised them high above her head to the gibbet's arm. She stood nakedly for all to see. She supposed she could describe herself as in a public place, but those who came and went showed remarkably little interest in her. A glance or a nod was all she had received so far. She was undeniably piqued. The shame of such exposure was generating her usual blush.

Madanda was an enigma, a mixture of so many things she could neither share nor exploit. If only he had refrained from the thrusts of humiliation which seemed to amuse him, she might still be in relatively comfortable circumstances. But she had fought every inch of the way until she could fight no more. She looked up at her pinioned wrists by which she was compelled to stand. As usual they offered no hope of release or escape. She would stand as she was at Madanda's pleasure. Her anger flared again at the thought of her dependence on an omnipotent male. She was sick of omnipotent males and now simply wanted to go home. She resented every hour of the negotiations by which she was held captive.

Catherine twisted around on her tether. She could make a complete circle. She was not suspended, but the freedom she was allowed did no more than emphasize the compulsion of standing in this one place naked and with her arms raised. To add to her dolor, another hazard now came into view. It was several small children, grubby urchins in search of diversion. They had scented her as surely as a hunting dog scents its quarry. There were four of them. They stood wide-eyed to examine what was probably no phenomenon to them. Doubtless other unfortunate girls had stood as she stood now. Catherine viewed them with distaste and quite simply said, “Go away.”

Presumably they spoke no English. They viewed her in the same wide-eyed speculation until the oldest, a girl, stepped forward to grasp Catherine’s exposed, helpless sex. She looked up and said something no doubt obscene. Catherine kicked her squarely to send her sprawling.

The four urchins animatedly discussed this outrage. They wasted but little time. Going to an adjacent bush, they cut a switch. With it they proceeded to lash away busily at the legs of the helpless victim displayed for their enjoyment. The victim herself was horrified. These children, unsupervised, could half kill her. The untrimmed withe was horribly painful, and despite herself, she could not refrain from a humiliating dance from one foot to the other and one kick to the next in an effort to ward off as many blows as she could.

But help came in the form of an irate native woman who gathered her progeny with a staccato of reprimands and sent them scurrying away. She glared at the helpless nakedness which had been no more than the innocent victim of her children's enjoyment. Her eyes roved and lit upon the discarded switch. Picking it up, she took a swift, wide sweep and cut it squarely across the innocent belly of the bound girl. It broke and disgustedly she looked at the half still held in her hands, threw it away, and said briefly, "You very bad girl. You not nice to my children." Then she stamped away in obvious self-righteousness.

There were other visitors. One was a man apparently obsessed with breasts. He fondled and kneaded Catherine's to his heart's content. He then spared a few brief moments in exploring her crotch with an experimental hand. He shrugged, giving the impression that he had seen and done better. He went away, leaving the girl feeling utterly soiled.

The next visitor was a girl of perhaps nineteen. She stood quietly surveying the white skin of the bound captive. She paid no heed to Catherine's plea for release. When Catherine offered money in return for help, she simply shook her head and said, "No can help. You never get away. No girl ever get away when she tied here. You wait, this afternoon they whip you good."

There it was again! This everlasting reference to the whip. The words of whip and girl seemed synonymous. Miserably, Catherine watched the maiden depart on her affairs

and was once more alone. She wished she had been less irritable with Adam Madanda. Anything he had done to her had been inflicted with a touch or humor. But there was nothing humorous about her present condition. The gibbet itself was daunting, and her arms were getting tired. Her next visitor was, surprisingly, a white man.

“Heard you were out here. Least I could do was come and say hello.” He was English. His eyes roved up and down Catherine’s nudity with keen appreciation.

“Thank goodness!” she exclaimed. “Get me out of here, please.”

“Sorry, old girl. Like to and all that, but you know how things are.”

“No, I don’t know how things are!” she flared angrily. “Don’t tell me you refuse to help!”

“Well, it’s not exactly that I refuse,” her visitor explained. “It simply isn’t in the cards. Everybody knows about you. You can’t hide a thing in these small places, but the locals think it’s great fun, and the rest of us have been told to see nothing, say nothing, and hear nothing.” He chuckled gloomily. “That’s the nature of life in these queer places. I wouldn’t come near if it wasn’t that there’s money to be made.” He made a deliberate circle of examination. “I suppose it was Madanda who whipped your bottom.”

“Does it matter? If you’re refusing to help—”

“Madanda’s famous for it, you know. He’s probably whipped the bottoms of more girls than any chap alive.” He beamed. “Harmless actually, but I expect it’s a bit painful at the time.”

“If you’re not going to help me, go away!”

“Well, don’t get so steamed about it, girl! I suppose it’s because you’re naked.” He searched his pockets and said with a wry grin, “I’ve got a fairly large handkerchief. Problem is how to keep it in place.”

“You’re impossible!” Catherine tugged at her tethered hands to demonstrate helplessness. “I’d have thought any white man would have had the decency. What could possibly happen to you if you set me free?”

“I’d disappear, that’s what would happen to me. It would probably be a painful disappearance too. You see, what you have to realize is that these people are about a thousand years back in the past in their morality. Madanda’s not a bad chap, but he’s completely ruthless. It’s a case of knowing just how far to go. If I were you, I’d test it out a bit and not step over the line. You must have stepped over the line already or you wouldn’t be hung up the way you are now.” He shrugged deprecatingly. “It’s oil and minerals, you know. There isn’t an outside power that will raise a finger against any of these black boys, and they know it. The Russians are behind the whole thing, of course, but I don’t suppose you’re interested in that. My word, he really

did lace into your derriere! It's a regular Turner sunset."

He went his way as had all the rest. Evidently prolonged conversations with girls beneath the gibbet was not encouraged. Catherine wondered if the maiden's information about being whipped later in the day was true or false. Quite probably she had been sent out to drop the hint as one more subtlety to disturb a captive girl. The hours passed in a slow succession of weariness.

Miss Catherine Mordant was not whipped, but in the twilight was taken to the house, bathed, and made lovely by willing female hands and then delivered to Adam Madanda. He raised a quizzical eyebrow. "Interesting day, Miss Mordant?"

"You know what my day was like. It was hateful. Am I expected to thank you?"

"You were whipped, were you?"

"Is it possible to have a conversation between a man and a woman in Kandaka without some reference to a whip?"

"Lay on the bed and dispose yourself."

"I refuse to act like a whore. You'll have to compel me. I don't want you to, but there's no other way I can keep my integrity."

"Your integrity, my royal ass!" Madanda laughed as he picked her up and tossed her into the position he desired.

Hating herself for the betrayal by her flesh, Catherine prepared herself for pleasure.

When, eons later, Madanda's pleasure bore him into sleep, a servant appeared as if by magic, took the satiated maiden by her arm, and led her back to the gibbet. Something had been added. A chain was now padlocked around its base and trailed away a ten-foot long length to a metal shackle. The shackle was padlocked around Catherine's left ankle. The servant went away, leaving her abandoned in rejection. Furiously, she stamped a bare foot, but this did no more than hurt. She kicked at her shackle and was rewarded by the mocking sound of chain. Catherine lay down upon the warm Kandakan soil.

Freedom came in the pale gray light of dawn.

The first Catherine knew of escape was the solid click of bolt cutters severing the metal from her ankle. Her white visitor of the previous day had crept upon her unannounced and unaware. The Englishman had lost no time. Now, with the shackle cast aside, he grasped her hand. "Can you run?"

"Yes! Oh yes! Ohhh, how wonderful!"

They ran, hand in hand, and as they ran the male voice told the little there was to tell. "Couldn't sleep, kept thinking about you. Damn it, the way these assholes treat women and kick the rest of us around—I'm sick of it! If we get caught, we'll have had the biscuit—at least I will—but let's

give it our best shot."

Catherine could have loved him, hugged him, given him all of herself, but in her exultation of freedom her legs sped to keep pace with his until they found the jeep. Its engine was warm and started with little sound. It whispered them beyond earshot of the residence. They found a road. "I brought a blanket—here it is. It's not much, but it'll do you until we get to civilization. The border is only about twenty miles away, and the Johnny who runs the next state isn't all that friendly with Madanda. He isn't going to stop us. If we can get that far, we've got it made."

The jeep spurned Kandakan soil beneath its wheels. Its motor purred. They crossed the border without incidence, without having even seen anyone. There was no border post, as in more civilized states. Sunrise brought the first freedom the naked girl had known since before Professor Pomfret's class.

5

The Waiting Cane

FREEDOM IS RELATIVE. It takes different forms with different people. It was so with Catherine Mordant. She surprised herself with various seeming inconsistencies and was forced to the realization of change. She was not the same girl who had stood naked before Professor Pomfret's class. Just what she was or had become was a subject giving her a good deal of sober thought.

The greetings and reunions had followed a natural course. She had saved her father vast amounts of money. Her mother had been dead a number of years, but there were other relatives who welcomed her home. But in all these welcomes, Catherine was aware that her absence had been of relatively short duration. To her it had seemed like half a lifetime. To all the others it was a space of less than three weeks, and in speaking of it the once captive girl found herself hindered by unexpected inhibitions.

First of all there was the matter of the marks upon her skin. She had imagined herself joyfully displaying them and demanding redress. But she did not do this, even to her more intimate friends and most certainly not to her father. She unveiled no portion of her punished skin. The cheeks of her bottom gradually returned to their normal satin

smoothness without evoking gasps or exclamations from anyone. With their final fading, Catherine came to a recognition of a new honesty. She wished to keep their memory alive between herself and the men who had thus marked her skin. It was a secret she wanted to share with no one else. When her father had anxiously inquired about injury, she had reassured him by telling him no more than of the handcuffs. She had shrugged away this joining of her hands as no more than normal in the circumstance. At the end of two weeks her adventures were ancient history. Her father returned to his preoccupation with business, and she herself was free to pick up the loose ends of her former life. When Catherine discovered those loose ends a bore, no one was more surprised than she. She was a vigorous young woman whose every instinct had been made vividly alive by the attentions of two men, Prince Abed Jamal and Adam Madanda. She could forget neither of them, and being feminine, she was doubly intrigued by her memory of being taken by force when blindfolded. It was like a story in which you are kept in suspense until the final chapter. The nagging question was if the final chapter had indeed been written.

Her confidante was Allen Morehouse, the Englishman who had contrived her escape. They dated, but made no pretense of being in love. They had much to talk about, and she valued his advice. He appeared to be one of those men who vaguely wander the world “in oil”. She was talking to him now.

“But, Allen, I want to forget the whole silly business. Why don’t it go away? I’m twenty-four—surely I ought to be past the ‘silly girl’ stage.”

“Not hard to figure, love. I suppose if any bastard had set out to get you erotically aroused and involved and perhaps forming a bad habit or two, he’d probably have done pretty much the same thing to you over pretty much the same period of time.” Allen Morehouse laughed easily at her concern. “Fact is, there’s all sorts of dark desires down underneath the surface of all of us. It just takes something to bring them out. You could have gone two ways. One of them to morbid and hysterical broodings and isolation, and the other to where you are now.” He frankly laughed. “You’re eaten up with curiosity, aren’t you? You’ve told me about Madanda and Jamal, and I can see that both of them started something they didn’t have time to finish.” He stared directly. “You want to go back and finish the job?”

“Good heavens, no!”

“That’s probably the biggest lie you’ve ever told. But when you said it, you didn’t know it was a lie.” He squeezed her hand. “Do you recognize it now?”

Catherine recognized it with an ache in her loins and an exclamation. “But this is ridiculous! I never used to be like this before—before—”

“You don’t need to say it, love—I know. I’ll say it for you. You got laid, and your little bottom got lashed. That’s a

damn potent combination."

"But it's—it's primitive!"

"Aren't we all?" His laugh was sardonic. "Civilization is not even skin deep, you know. Most of the world would wonder why you couldn't figure this out for yourself."

"But I'm not a trollop. At least I never thought—"

"I'd offer to lay the ghost for you, old girl, but I'm the wrong color, aren't I? What you need—"

"Don't you dare say it! It's—it's obscene."

Morehouse shrugged. "I know a girl whose boyfriend whips her every time before they get into bed. It's their thing. They've been doing it a long while, and they're now thinking of getting married. Can you comprehend that?"

"But they're perverts—deviants!"

"No, they're not. You could multiply them by a million and still not reach the right total. They're simply lucky in having found each other. Cheer up, Catherine old girl, you're not a monster."

"But what you're telling me is almost like saying I should go back."

"Why don't you? Lay yourself a ghost." He laughed cynically. "Take a bodyguard, of course, and have yourself well documented. I wouldn't suggest you visiting either of those

boys alone and unattended. They're only human, you know."

Allen Morehouse's cynicism evoked visions, but worse still, generated an unwelcome heat within Catherine's loins. She assured herself the heat was indeed unwelcome, but it was exciting. It made her feel superior to other girls of her circle. She was beginning to glimpse herself as having been a silly rich bitch who had now grown to maturity. It was, of course, ridiculous to suppose that a whipped bottom matured any female. She set the thought conveniently aside and consoled herself with the probability that the adventure as a whole had this effect. There germinated within her mind delicious visions of treating both Jamal and Madanda to a proper contempt on equal terms. It was playing with fire and she knew it. Had it not been for Allen Morehouse, she would have lacked the courage.

"Look, I can spare a month, and there's odds and ends of business I can do in those places anyway. How 'bout I be your bodyguard?" He was laughing at her concern across the dinner table. "We'll do it properly—a visa properly recorded, a visit to the consulate. They won't like us, but they will be aware that we exist. Maybe I can manage a small item in the local newspaper. All in all, those two sons of bitches aren't going to have all that much gall. Goodness knows they've got enough, but they won't arrest either of us or kidnap you. You'll be too well documented."

It was immensely plausible. Catherine thought about it of-

ten in the ensuing days. She wondered how much of her old self or how much of her new was doing the prompting. Repeatedly, she swept the whole idea under the carpet, but it constantly renewed itself with fresh insistence. It was not too long before a return to the scenes of her pains and humiliations took on an air of inevitability. She remembered some old saying to the effect that if you wanted something badly enough, you would surely get it. But there had been two men and only one of her. Could she be in love with both, or was her wish purely to rub their noses in the same dirt of shame and humility they had imposed on her? She frankly did not know. But the thought of discovering the man who had ravished her when she was manacled and blindfolded took on an ever increasing excitation. She was almost positive it had been Jamal, but suppose it had been another man! But she had gone over this ground previously and would have no more of it. Impatiently, she expelled the female curiosity. She was ashamed of herself, but nonetheless she remained intrigued with the thought of a journey.

Catherine's father proved surprisingly amenable. No doubt he sensed her preoccupation and knew their cause. Perhaps too he wanted the whole affair sticken from her mind and was wise enough to know that a return to the scene was always inevitably disappointing. He regarded Catherine as still young and probably considered she would return from her pilgrimage prepared to pick up her normal life once more. Very simply he said, "If you must,

you must, my dear. But yes, take Allen Morehouse. I've checked him out and he's okay." He allowed himself a pale smile. "You'll be interested to know the deal everyone was so concerned about has been consummated in my favor. It's over and done with. Any rich man's daughter is subject to kidnap, but no one is going to kidnap you as a leverage upon me for control of a company. You might very easily have an enjoyable holiday."

But Catherine remained troubled. Her old self still had the power to deny. It refused to have any part of a fresh adventure. It told her she had things good as a rich man's daughter right where she was. To flit around Africa in search of answers to silly questions was ridiculous. Allen Morehouse approached her problem diffidently. "Do you want to visit the Howells, Catherine? I've know them a long time, and Melanie's a good sport. I've already spoken to them, and she says it's okay—that she'd do it for a friend of mine. She wouldn't do it for everyone."

"Oh, Allen, please!"

"Damn good golfer, actually." Morehouse cocked a cynical eye. "Mustn't take these things too seriously, you know. You got to do it with a chuckle. Whatever a fellow's or a girl's thing may be, you'd best do it with a smile and stop being ponderous and portentous about it. Hell, what's a whipped bottom or being tied up and put in a closet for a couple of hours amount to?" He surveyed her with a wry grin "With the right people, of course—that's for sure!"

In her daily life, Melanie Howell was a young woman of some presence, but in her private existence she sparkled mischief and emanated an indefinable something Catherine could not name. She shared an adequate apartment with a young man who called himself Wilson Hayes. Between them was an obvious affection. After greetings in which Catherine was warmly hugged and kissed, Melanie discreetly vanished, leaving Wilson the official host. He had watched Catherine's stiffness soften and unbend. Now he took her a step further along the path. "Catherine, I want you simply to watch, both Melanie and I want you to reserve judgment. Remember this, though: We are not selling you a bill of good; we are not selling you anything. We are simply giving you a glance at something intensely private which we value. Don't bother to comment or exclaim. Take the experiment home with you and make what you wish of it. It is our gift." He grinned cheerfully. "But one thing you can remember is that there'd be a million men who'd pay a lot of money to watch as you will watch. Brace yourself—here comes our little sweetheart with the drinks."

It was a Melanie none had seen before. To all intents and purposes, she was nude, but she did wear a pair of transparent gauze pantaloons in the harem tradition. There was a collar and some sparkling, barbaric decorations in her hair. She carried a tray, and on it were three glasses. Kneeling before her lover, she uttered the single word "Master". She bowed her head submissively while Wilson

selected his drink. Then, without pause, she flitted to kneel before the astounded Catherine, but in this case, she whispered, “Mistress”. Dazed, Catherine reached for her glass, then watched the repeat performance with Allen Morehouse. There was no drink for the slave girl herself, and it was not until Melanie lowered the tray that Catherine observed the handcuffed wrists. The girl now retreated to kneel and bow submissively, looking at no one but simply there as might be required. She sat back on her heels and rested her handcuffed hands in her lap. She was very beautiful.

They talked, but Melanie remained silent. Wilson spoke entertainingly about what he called their thing and the thing of others. After awhile the ritual of the cocktails was repeated. It was not until Wilson had sipped his drink and held up an empty glass that he demanded, “Here, dispose of this.” When the slave girl did as she was told, her hands fumbled so that she dropped the glass and the tray with a clatter. The silence to follow could be felt.

“That was a damn silly thing to do,” Wilson said sternly.

“I’m sorry, Master.” Melanie’s voice had receded through the centuries.

“I would hope you are sorry. Is that all?”

“I should be punished, Master. Please punish me.”

The silence could be felt. Catherine looked at Allen More-

house, but received only a raised eyebrow. Wilson Hayes held the stage. His voice was cold. “Get me the cane and rope. Come now—hurry!”

Melanie hurried away with tray and glass. She was flushed and confused, but her eyes were sparkling bright. She returned with the items demanded and kneeled before her master to proffer them, eyes downcast in shame. Wilson took them, and in the same cold, emotionless voice said, “Assume position.”

It had obviously been done before. Between these two there were no secrets, all was understood. The quaking slave girl went directly to a massive armchair and stood to its side facing across its two arms. Her master bound her feet, taking the rope between the chair’s legs to bring it up beneath the opposite arm. The slave girl leaned forward and her handcuffed wrists were circled by the rope from her bound feet and pulled down, the rope pushing back beneath the chair to rise up the other side and provide more leverage. The master tugged until his slave was bent tautly across the two arms, Melanie’s hair falling in disarray toward the floor. With a gesture of pure savagery, the master tore away the flimsy transparency covering the delinquent hips, stripping it away to the bound feet and then tearing it free. Melanie was nude. She cast a frightened eye at Catherine and tried to smile.

“How many do you deserve, girl?”

“Six strokes, please, Master.”

“Six! Is that all?”

“If it pleases you, Master.”

“It does not please me, but I will give you six strokes on your bare bent bottom.”

“Thank you, master.”

Catherine watched and listened in amazement. There was something preordained and quite beautiful about this obvious ritual. Melanie’s twin cheeks already showed fading marks of a previous caning. The girl was twisting and pulling at her bonds, whether in a sincere attempt to get free or simply a demonstration of helplessness Catherine could only guess. Certainly, Melanie was exquisitely helpless. Catherine shivered. This had become terribly real.

“Six!” The master rapped the bare, taut curves with preliminary motions. “You will count your strokes, slave girl.”

The watching Catherine could swear the air positively thrummed as the cane cut it in a swift slash to bed itself upon female flesh. Melanie jerked, struggled, and gasped, visibly tearing at handcuffed wrists. She looked back up in genuine dismay, her face pink from the exposure and her bent posture. But she said no word, and quite suddenly was again still and waiting expectantly. From her dry lips the single word came in a loud whisper: “One.”

The watching girl's heart went out to she who was bound and in the process of punishment. They were indeed sisters, Catherine vicariously sharing every blow, wincing under each impact until the six strokes had planted their scarlet upon Melanie's skin. Controlling her gasping breathing, the punished girl said a meek but clearly audible "Thank you, Master."

Wilson Hayes turned to his audience. He had become very much the master of ceremonies and was in complete command. He flexed the yellow cane back and forth suggestively between his hands, he tested the weals that he himself had raised upon his girlfriend's skin, and the girlfriend winced and moaned. "A mere warming up," he said evenly. "We should now get down to giving this delinquent damsel and adequate caning."

"No, Master. Oh, please, not any more. Not any more!"

"I will use a somewhat lighter cane," Wilson pronounced solemnly as though the whipped girl had said no word. He went to the cupboard and produced a slender length of yellow wickedness. It was indeed more slender than the one already used but whether it would hurt more or less was something Catherine could only guess. A pink-faced slave girl looked up at it in dismay. "Oh, please, Master, not that one. Please not that one—it hurts terribly."

"The better to teach you a lesson, my dear."

"I'll be good! I promise! Please don't cane me any more. If I

have to be punished, couldn't I be locked in the closet or something?"

The master of ceremonies turned to the attentive pair who were his guests. "You see how abject she so easily becomes," he pointed out equably. "She actually hates the closet, and it's the last thing she wants me to do with her, but I will let her describe the experience to you. Melanie, go ahead and do so."

Catherine could swear a tear fell from Melanie's eye onto the rug beneath but could not be sure. Melanie's voice came now gaspingly and charged with emotion. "My master punishes me often by tying my hands behind my back and putting me inside the closet where it's all dark, and then he closes and locks the door. I don't ever know how long I'm in there, and it's absolutely terribly awful. The time goes on and on, and I'm quite sure he's forgotten me and gone away somewhere, and I'm all alone and I'll stay there until I die." Pink-cheeked, she looked up at Allen and Catherine in an obviously earnest desire to convey to them the true rigors of her penalties. "But then when my master lets me out, I discover I've only been in there one or two hours. My longest time in the closet was three hours. I thought I'd die."

The bent-over girl was prepared to say more, but the thrum of the cane cut short whatever she would have disclosed. The slender wand made a wicked snicker as it sliced the air and cut home upon the waiting curves.

Catherine winced and Melanie gasped. “Should I count the strokes, Master?”

“No, I have not yet decided how many to give you. I shall just administer a sound thrashing.”

“Thank you, Master.”

It was unreal and impossible. It was all so civilized and so polite in this pleasant living room in a modest apartment. A girl was being thrashed. She had been made naked and bound for this punishment now taking place, and she was enduring the punishment with an unbelievable fortitude. If this was the thing between these two, it was nonetheless incredibly real. The yellow withe thrummed, snickered, and cut. Melanie’s gasps and moans became increasingly audible, her face more and more flushed. Catherine winced in sympathy. She knew had this scene been taking place in a dungeon or some stone-walled room with barred windows, it would have had an atmosphere of horror, but there in the conventional surroundings it had between these two a strange beauty. She knew herself witnessing a remarkable communion between the sexes. She found herself thinking of Wilson and Melanie as “lucky”.

The caning continued methodically, Catherine wincing with every cut until she could bear no more and cried out as though it was she herself beneath the cane. “She’s had enough, Wilson. I think you ought to stop. You’re punishing her terribly!”

Once again the silence. All eyes turned upon Catherine in disapproval as though she had been guilty of an obscenity, even the startled gaze of the whipped girl beheld reproach.

“Perhaps you would like to take her place, Miss Mordant?”

“Don’t you dare. Don’t ever be so silly. It hurts something awful!” Melanie’s sincerity could not be doubted. “Don’t let anyone talk you into it, Catherine. Just because I—”

“Quiet, girl!” Wilson’s voice was once more stern. “If Miss Mordant wishes to take your place, we will allow her to do so.”

“I never said I wanted to be caned.” Catherine’s desperate gaze went from one to the other. “I simply said I think poor Melanie’s had enough. I still think she has. You’ve caned her terribly.” She turned her stricken gaze upon Allen Morehouse. “Perhaps we should go.”

Three people were suddenly laughing at her, Wilson, Melanie, and Allen Morehouse. It is true, Melanie’s laugh was not loud, but it was certainly a laugh. Wilson dropped his master of ceremonies routine and became human. “Show’s over,” he announced jovially. He grinned specifically at Catherine’s indignation. “Just testing, that’s all.”

Wilson Hayes freed the caned girl with a few swift motions by which the rope was loosed and she stood erect. Melanie held out her hands and a minute later the shining cuffs were taken from her wrists. She stood naked and free, but

only for a moment. She was then enveloped in two male arms and her own were tight around a male neck, hugging in a strange ecstasy of longing. Catherine realized she was witnessing a scene between two people deeply in love who had shared a vivid experience. A moment later Melanie turned her shining eyes to ask coyly, “Would you mind if we disappeared for just a little while?”

The two who remained stared. The single word Allen Morehouse uttered had about it an inevitability: “Well?”

“It has to be seen to he believed,” Catherine admitted unwillingly.

“She’s quite incredible. She enjoyed it all, or maybe she just looks back at it with some sort of erotic joy. But she’d do it all over again, I’m sure!”

“I told you.”

Catherine Mordant eyed him sternly. “I think what you’re really saying is that you believe I’m the same as Melanie and would enjoy a good caning myself. Well, you’re wrong. I’ll admit there’s a terrible eroticism about if. You can’t watch and not be affected in some way.”

“Come on now, Catherine. There’s more to what you’re thinking than just that.”

“So, all right, I’m sexually aroused. Is that what you wanted me to say?” Catherine’s cheeks were as scarlet as Melanie’s had been. “I don’t know what there is about the sort of

thing we've just witnessed, but it probably affects everybody in the same way. It's intensely sexual, and then this obvious affection!"

"She'll be giving Wilson the time of his life."

"In those times when I was caned it wasn't like this at all."

"But you still want to go and revisit the scene of the crime," Allen chuckled at her chagrin. "I'm not contesting that, but I do want you to get your priorities straight. Don't kid yourself you're going all that way for a cup of tea and a biscuit."

Catherine was panting. She knew not from what emotion other than the deep feelings engendered by what she had seen and what Allen was now saying. She had an uncomfortable conviction that had they been in private she would have taken Morehouse, so intense was the heat she could not control. She was angry and perplexed and was grateful for the reappearance of the happy pair, Melanie had donned a wrap and lost no time in putting her arms around Catherine's neck.

"Thank you for coming." It was a sweet small whisper in Catherine's ear. "I don't mind a bit that you're watching. I'd hate it if it was just men, but with you I felt good. Did it settle anything?"

"Not really, but you love it, don't you?"

"I'm afraid I do. Is that bad? I've never seen it as bad, and I

only do it for Wilson. I think if you didn't love the man who was caning you, you'd hate it terribly." Melanie giggled. "Mind you, I'm not all that happy about it while it's happening. I manage not to scream, but there's times when it would be awful easy to do that. It's the before and after that's so wonderful. It's sort of rejuvenating, like being made over and starting fresh. Wilson and I will love each other immensely for quite awhile now until all of a sudden we'll realize it's time to do it again." She hugged and backed away, her eyes still bright. "He thinks up the damnedest ways to tie me, and he doesn't always use just a cane; sometimes it's something else, but the end result is always the same, and the motives are the same. Wilson and I often say that if everybody did it the way we do it, it would cure most of the world's troubles. It's the ultimate orgasm—complete fulfillment."

For Catherine it solved nothing. It perplexed her even more. Allen's laughing references to caned feminine behinds were an irritation, making Catherine feel she should either yield herself for so drastic an infliction or simply put the past behind her and forget it all. She seemed forever condemning herself for her own sexuality. She had never thought of herself as either sensual or sexual. She recognized a difference. She had always aimed for the image of a girl faintly frigid with a fine disdain for the untidiness of sex, now to find herself aflame with desire and a heat burning incessantly in her loins was irritant enough to cause her to consider the Victorian remedy of icy cold

baths. She did, in fact, take one, but emerging shivering, decided it preferable to go to bed with Allen Morehouse. She was therefore open and vulnerable to Allen Morehouse's suggestions.

"Look, it's bothering you, I can tell. You're ashamed of it, so you don't want to talk about it. Let me get it out of your system. How'd you like to bend over for a scarlet backside?"

It would have been so easy. The two of them were now friends enough that it could have been achieved without embarrassment. They would approach the matter of caning her bottom in a spirit of achievement. There would be jokes and laughter until that fatal moment when she was bound beyond the point of no return. Catherine was positive that then Allen would refuse her pleas. No matter how she begged or changed her mind, it would be to no avail. She would suffer to the bitter end whatever she had started. Allen Morehouse was that kind of man, in fact, it would be hypocritical of her to approach the adventure in any other spirit. But determinedly she rejected the whole concept. She was still the daughter of the house of Mordant and mistress of her own destiny. The caning of her bottom was altogether ridiculous, and she told Allen so. Instead, she took a step into a far more dangerous wilderness.

"Allen, I'm going to buy those two tickets, I want you to accompany me on the terms and in the way you suggested. What I need is to lay the ghosts on its own ground. That

evening with Melanie and Wilson was really love play—it had no significance beyond getting them and us sexually aroused."

"What do you think you're going to do by buying those tickets and going half way across the world?"

"Frankly, I don't know, but it is at least a serious experiment. If it does no more than pass a couple of pleasant weeks, what are you complaining about?"

"You can save yourself a lot of money, Catherine. I made you a good offer. A sound caning free of charge. Hell, what more do you want!"

On the following week, Catherine Mordant and Allen Morehouse took a plane to the kingdom of Prince Abed Jamal.

6

Sweet Slavery

THE HALL WAS WIDE AND COOL in the African day. It came close to being an art gallery, its walls lined with pictures and a considerable scattering of statuary in marble and bronze. In addition, there was a living statue of flesh and blood.

The girl stood, her hands tied and raised upon her head, she was obviously weary and had probably stood there a long time. The man servant, Catherine's guide, made no comment other than to slow his stride to enable the honored guest to observe this feature of the palace of a prince. The girl lifted her bowed head and managed a pale smile, then contrived to turn herself to display a cruelly whipped bottom. The imprints of crop or cane were so interlaced as to make the lovely coffee-colored curves a single wound. When Catherine slowed her stride, the punished maiden gently shook her head in negation and the Major Domo said, "Has been very bad girl, Miss Mordant. She deserves what you see. You coming this way, please. The Prince awaits."

Catherine took a lingering glance back at the punished girl. It had started already, and there was instantly the familiar response within her sex. She had no doubt the incident was

no accident. The girl had been placed there for her edification. It was as though Jamal was laughing in the wings.

Jamal was a charming host. He awaited her upon a shaded terrace looking out into the sunlit African day. He kissed her hands with a quite devastating charm. His voice was silk. “The British stayed here briefly. They left some mementos of their stay. One was afternoon tea. We are about to enjoy this most civilized rite.”

They sat and faced each other across the small table. The Prince completely at ease, Catherine uncertain and uneasy about the spectacle she had just witnessed. It was on her tongue to mention the whipped girl back there in the hall, but the Prince had prepared yet one more shock. She stared in disbelief at a distant portion of the huge place to where a pillar rose in slender beauty from the floor to the ceiling. Bound to it tight with rope was a naked girl.

She too was light coffee color and like her sister in the hall had obviously been as she was a long time. There were no whip marks; she was just very tightly bound and totally nude. The Prince intercepted Catherine’s startled gaze. “A delinquent maiden, that is all, Miss Mordant. It is my practice to allow them to see and to be seen. I am not a devotee of dungeons.”

“They make beautiful statues,” Catherine agreed casually. “Are you using them to convey a message?”

“Yes.” His smile was the usual flash of white teeth and deep dark eyes “Or should we say a test? For you to see them thus makes me a perfect host.” He paused. “Doesn’t it?”

Catherine needed no reply, her attention was instantly absorbed by a quite young girl whose hands and feet were joined with light silver chains and who wore the gossamer transparencies of the conventional vision of a harem. The child arranged the tea things and poured the tea with a singular grace, then clinked her way from the terrace. With a touch of her familiar ice, Miss Catherine Mordant queried briefly, “Charming, really charming! For my benefit?”

“Of course. But I will inflict no more of these delightful maidens on you. I have presumed enough. But I’m curious —have they pleased you?”

Catherine’s gaze had reverted to the girl bound to the pillar. It was a fascinated mesmeric regard she could not resist. There was something ineffably beautiful about the slender curves welded tight against the stone by the thin strands indented in the flesh. She suspected the girl could not move, but there was a perfection in the pose completely fluid as though the limbs were free. Her fancies were shattered by a polite question.

“Why are you come to visit me, Miss Mordant?”

Catherine sipped her excellent tea and glinted at her host above the rim of the expensive china. She had made up her

mind to be forthright. “To spit in your eye, I suppose. I intend to visit Kandaka and spit on Madanda too.”

The Prince smiled brightly. “And what about poor Henry Kemp?”

“You and Madanda were never a bore. Henry Kemp was. I expect he lost a lot of money on me, did he not?”

“The loss was mine. I returned Mr. Kemp his money. You were stolen on my plane, and I felt a responsibility.” The Prince waved an airy hand. “But what is a few million dollars compared to a treasure such as you?”

It was as Catherine had hoped. The thrill was coursing through every fiber of her being. Here she was playing with fire, across a tiny table sipping tea was a man who could imprison her and make her captive for the rest of her life but who was deterred in such a purpose by the most tenuous of threads: Morehouse, the American consulate, and the State Department. Jamal read her thoughts.

“You feel completely safe, Miss Mordant, don’t you? You come to gloat over your brief enslavement, and you have arrayed against me a formidable group of influences.” He sipped as though quietly thinking. “I could have Allen Morehouse killed and disposed of, your consulate and State Department would do nothing. Yours is a race halfway to oblivion.”

Catherine Mordant was shivering deliciously and con-

demning herself for doing so. She had wished to play with fire and now she felt its heat. Jamal's smile held no menace, but his presence and the punished girls all spoke vividly of possible intent. The Prince had only to clap his hands or give some such signal to make her the fourth of a suffering quartet of feminine dolor. She imagined herself as the hours slipped by while she was bound without mercy to a marble pillar. She had returned to be once more Jasmine, but the Mordant side of her nature still chided her indulgence in the fancies of silly servant girls of an age now passed.

Irrelevantly, she demanded, "That night when I was manacled to the bed and blindfolded—it was you?"

The Prince shrugged and refilled her cup. "Does it matter? Was it not for you the dream of every girl—the faceless, nameless masculinity to make you a woman?"

"I don't know about that, but in my mind and in my heart I know it was you." She recognized deep water and changed the subject.

"Now, why don't you untie that poor girl up there on the pillar and let her go so we can return to normal? She doesn't bother me, but hasn't she made your point for you?"

"There is another pillar across the room from here. I suggest I bind you to that one. You would complement each other delightfully."

She was being played with, but it was a delicious play. She would not put it past this man to actually do what he had just described, simply to show his contempt for her precautions. But to be bound nakedly thus while the Prince transacted business or entertained upon the terrace as he now entertained her would be an undeniable quintessence of sensation. The girl, Jasmine, was sorely tempted.

She could not rid herself of the conviction that the Prince could read her thoughts and was quietly laughing at her, but his voice was quietly enticing. “Come, Miss Mordant, spit in my eye and then I will tie you to the pillar. It is a fair exchange. We will do it in the most civilized way. I will sit here for you, and you will stand there for me. Come, what do you say?”

“I can’t spit in your eye. It’s just a figure of speech.”

“Uh, this I understand, but you most certainly can stand against that marble column. Come, drop your fears. Each of us is striving to prove a point, and it is so easily done.” He leaned forward, and, with a determined finger, tilted up her chin. “Surely Jasmine is not frightened of her master? I will have you bound there for a single hour, then set you free. You never need see me again if that is your choice.”

It happened! Catherine never knew quite how. She was too confused, her mind too chaotic with conjecture and sensation. Her hands were nerveless, but it was the Prince’s fingers who removed her clothes and set her back

against the marble where she stood in palpitating breathlessness while she was bound. It seemed to Jasmine that the strands and strictures found every crevice of her femaleness. They were tugged and looped until she became a part of the pillar itself, her hands helpless at its back, her elbows almost joined. The greatest care and attention was given to those bindings by which her breasts would be made more prominently vulnerable. When it was done, the Prince's kiss was an undoubted seal of approval. Jasmine had forgotten her nakedness. She had forgotten everything except the touch of lips and hands. Such reason as still remained reminded her insistently: one hour, one hour!

Jamal kissed each of the captive nipples, then went away to leave his most recent acquisition staring at the other girl bound as she herself was bound. The feminine voice was as dusky as the feminine skin. "You have pleased our master. You are a lucky girl."

"I'm not lucky. I'm just plain silly." Jasmine assured her companion irritably. "How did you come to be tied like that?"

"To please my master." There was a tinkle of silvery laughter. "Perhaps to please you. It does not matter. Slave girls cannot guess the motives of a prince."

"There's a girl out in the hall—she's been whipped?"

"She has also been naughty. We all get whipped sometime—even you."

“Will he honor his promise and set me free at the end of an hour?”

“Indeed he will—he is a prince.” The low feminine tones became shadowed with amusement. “But before that happens, I think he has a surprise for you.”

The surprise was Allen Morehouse. He entered the terrace with the Prince, both in animated conversation. If they noticed the girls bound to the two pillars, they gave no sign. Instead, they sat down and discussed some sort of business deal. Jasmine did not bother to comprehend. She was furious. If Allen Morehouse had set her up for this, she would never speak to him again, but at the moment she could be sure of nothing except being naked and in plain sight of two men who could discuss or examine her as they pleased. The fact that at the moment neither paid her the slightest attention was an additional affront. She considered breaking in upon their conversation and forcing her existence upon their attention, but she had a momentary vision of the whipped skin of the girl in the hall. Perhaps Jamal wanted only an excuse!

In seething indignation, Jasmine tested her bonds, but she could not move enough to intrude upon the notice of the omnipotent male. She was furious with them both and with herself, but could not deny a touch of humor in the situation. She was a victim of her own femininity. She could have stayed at home; there was absolutely no good reason for her being naked and bound to a marble pillar in

a prince's palace—none! When the two men, still busily talking, rose and went their way to leave the bound maidens untouched and apparently unseen, the fury of both Jasmine and Miss Catherine Mordant knew no bounds. It needed physical expression, but she could not move. No doubt it was her own agitation which now caused the ropes to bite more painfully. All Jasmine could do was compile bitter words for delivery if she ever got the chance.

As time passed the bound girl became more and more certain she had become victim to either outrageous humor or sinister plot. She felt sure the hour had come and gone. But now all her calculations were awry; she could not believe either Allen Morehouse or the Prince could do her harm, but they might easily keep her captive to teach her what they would call "a lesson". She saw this as highly probable and denounced herself constantly for falling into such an obvious trap, but her concerns were within her own mind. At the end of an hour a polite servant released her, restored her clothes, and informed her that Prince Abed Jamal had been forced away on business. She returned to the motel like a small army advancing into battle.

"You asked for it, sweetheart. Come on now, be honest, if ever any girl sought that sort of adventure, it was you!" Allen Morehouse refused to be perturbed. He had borne the brunt of her accusations and denunciations with his usual equable cynicism. He was laughing at her still. "What do you want me to do, apologize? Get down on my knees and offer my resignation?"

“You betrayed me! You let me down! You didn’t need to be so mean. I’m not that stupid.”

Allen shrugged. “You made a deal, love, and it was honored to the letter. You wouldn’t be here otherwise. Jamal put on a damn good show for you—he’s a decent type. I’d say we about exhausted your experiment here. What you say we move on to number two?”

“Suffer this! Then just walk away as though nothing ever happened!?”

“Well, you got what you wanted, didn’t you?” Allen chuckled wisely. “Except the beaten bottom, of course. But I’ll ask Jamal to arrange that for you if you wish.”

“You’re being deliberately unkind.”

“No, I’m not. It’s become an obsession with you. You should have let me give you a good thrashing back in the U.S. Save all this money.” He fell soberly silent. “But one thing is certain. If you go on probing around in these out-of-the-way places, you’re going to find trouble. Honest, Catherine, I wish you wouldn’t. Why the hell don’t we go back home?”

They did not go home. Instead, they toured the town which was a conglomeration spanning the centuries to make them one. They found it a place of infinite delights and allowed their footsteps to stray beyond the borderline of prudence. Within the emporium of a dealer in Arabic rugs

Allen was struck on the head from behind at the same moment a bag was slipping over Catherine's head and drawn tight. Her last glance of her protector was of him slipping sideways in unconsciousness.

No word was said. There was no need. Whoever the enemies were, they were well trained and well rehearsed. They crossed Catherine's wrists behind her back and bound them tight with what she suspected was thin rawhide. They bound her ankles with the same stuff. Both bindings were tight enough to hurt, no doubt an admonition to behave. Blind and helpless, she was tossed into a vehicle and driven away. She could not tell if Allen Morehouse had been taken too, but she had never felt more dismally alone.

When the conveyance was well underway, someone thoughtfully raised her feet and legs to bring them back and then to tie them to her bound hands. It was the classic hog-tie. Catherine recognized it from fiction and found it outrageously uncomfortable. Within a few minutes it started to hurt, but her complaints were buried in the bag covering her head. If anyone heard them, they paid no heed. The wheels were swift upon the desert sand.

The cage in which Catherine and the three other girls were imprisoned was of massive bars and supporting horizontal struts. It would have held an elephant, let alone four naked and very frightened maidens, each of them handcuffed with shining chrome. All four of them were naked. Her

dusky companions lost no time in informing the new arrival of their status as merchandise in the slave market of a gentleman named Sirdar Ben Sirdar. They expected to be sold at any moment and cautioned Catherine to do everything she was told or she would be most terribly whipped. They exhibited the bottom of one of their number to demonstrate their point. It had indeed been well and truly disciplined. When the talk was done, Catherine joined her companions in a listless and lethargic squatting on the floor. There was simply nothing else to do. She could see no hope of release or rescue. Her mind flitted back to when the hood had been lifted from her head.

These men were Arabs in a way Jamal would never be. They were dirty, hawk eyed sons of the desert. They appeared to have a brand of humor all their own and joked constantly as they stripped their recent acquisition and stood her up to be examined. They blandly ignored everything she said; she might as well have been mute. They peered clinically within her mouth and inside her other most secret places. Evidently slave girls were expected to be in the best of health. No doubt their price was adjusted to what the examination revealed. Catherine's feet were quickly freed as an aid to this examination. The rope on her wrists was released only long enough to be replaced by handcuffs.

"You will behave and do as you're told or we'll make you very sorry," said Sirdar Ben Sirdar. "You are white and will be very quickly sold. I suggest you make the best of your

new condition."

It had been that simple! They had opened the cage door and thrust her inside, closing it behind her with a horrendous clang of metal. There could be no doubt the four maidens had become the inventory, the stock and trade of a man who bought and sold girls. Catherine's companions assured her it was an ancient and honorable state that had never ceased to be in spite of the admonitions of the United Nations. Men with money wished to purchase beautiful girls. What was more natural therefore than that the demand be supplied? She gathered that Ben Sirdar was a highly respected member of the community. She gathered further that whether any girl living here about became a slave was largely a matter of convenience to Mr. Sirdar. Any girl who could be kidnapped without a fuss and repercussions was kidnapped. Often he went far afield to maintain his inventory. This had been the case with her. The rug dealer had received a small commission.

Once more Catherine found herself disgusted by her own stupidity. Feminine caprice had led her into this and now she could easily become a lifelong captive of some idiotic man pursuing an idiotic fantasy. Along with this was the injury to Allen Morehouse. He had been an innocent victim seeking to protect her and betrayed by his own loyalty. He might very easily be dead. Mr. Sirdar's establishment was run on rituals long understood. The slave auction came punctually on every Wednesday. There might be one girl or a dozen, depending on the enterprise of Mr. Sirdar's

assistants and his own endeavors. One of her three companions informed Catherine that she herself had not been kidnapped but purchased legitimately from a man who had tired of her. She had had no less than three masters before she had long ago been enslaved. Each one of them had whipped her and she expected no less from whoever might buy her now. She laughed at the dismay of the girl among them who had the bruised cheeks, explaining that all men whipped girls—that it was a female's natural destiny and was no doubt the will of Allah. She counseled them on the need to acquire carnal skills and offered her experience for their benefit but deplored the market's policy that no girl within the cage should engage in any sexual undertaking. No doubt that was the will of Allah too.

Wednesday came and the merchandise was groomed and polished to a degree of desirability no man surely could resist. It was understandable that Catherine, being white, should be reserved as the piece de resistance. She was placed to stand demurely at one side to be examined and hopefully excite. Horrific threats of what would be done to her if she made a fuss had frightened her enough to make her anxious to please. These men were for real, and what was being done with her was equally real and frighteningly permanent. Breathlessly, she watched the bidding as girl after girl stepped up onto the platform with the auctioneer and stood nakedly while her virtues were extolled. The girls remained handcuffed, but had been in-

structed on the manner of raising their arms back over their heads to clasp their hands at the back of their necks and thus expose themselves as fully as might be. There had also been an instruction on the separation of their feet. The closing of shy legs was forbidden!

The amounts were stupendous, but this was oil country and money had become only tokens whereas the girls were flesh and blood and enticingly young. It appeared that many of the men who bid had no wish for recognition. They wore the conventional caftan and kept the hood sufficiently shadowing their face that the girl on whom they bid could know only the sound of their voice, but even that was denied since most bids were made by the raising of a hand. Miss Catherine Mordant stood in shamed amazement as her price passed the first million, then the second, then the third. To her each raised finger was the knell of doom. She was knocked down for the sum of six million dollars, the next figure for which she had been enslaved so long ago. It was not until she had been escorted to a waiting limousine that she discovered she was now the official possession of Prince Abed Jamal.

They sat together in the back seat of the limousine, Catherine still naked and handcuffed. Bitterly, she exclaimed, “So now I’ve cost you twelve million dollars! I’m not worth it.”

Jamal kissed her. “Surely you’re worth it.”

“You throw money around as though it’s nothing.” She sniffed unhappily. “But I suppose I have to say thank you for rescuing me. How did you know?”

“It is my business to know, but believe me, I had no hand in this affair. You were legitimately abducted and legitimately sold. You are now most officially a slave.”

“All right, I’ll enjoy the sensation while it lasts,” she said ungraciously. “Will you be kind enough to drive me to the hotel and provide some sort of covering?” She held up her joined hands. “And I’d like to get rid of these too if you don’t mind.”

There was a strained silence. It went on long enough to tell the captive girl all she needed to know. Feminine intuition told the rest, but still she had to ask. “You are rescuing me, aren’t you?”

“No.”

“Oh, don’t tell me! Do we have to go through that again?”

The Prince picked up her handcuffed hands and kissed each of them gently. His voice was designed to soothe. “It is so convenient. What has happened, my dear, is that your status as a slave girl has been legitimized. I want you to consider you have simply vanished. No one will ever find you again. Mr. Morehouse is in the local hospital and will recover. He has already informed all interested parties of what took place in the bazaar. All anyone will know is that

you are somewhere in Africa."

"But that doesn't legalize—"

"I'm afraid it does, dear girl. Sirdar Ben Sirdar is a respected businessman. You fell victim to his assistants purely by chance, but that does not alter the fact that you became his possession. Your white skin excuses nothing. I have long had an acquaintance with Ben Sirdar, and I can assure you white skin is no stranger within his cage." Jamal chuckled and pinched her cheek playfully. "You were sold by a public auction and you were purchased by me. You are now my possession. Should the authorities make inquiries after you, particularly at the slave market itself, they will be blandly informed by all that no one ever heard of you."

Once more she was in palpitating disarray. All she could think to say was, "Well, at any rate, please take these handcuffs off me. They're not doing any good—I'm not going to leap out of a speeding car."

The request was ignored. Looking down at her cuffed wrists, she felt doubly captive. The trouble was she could be sure of nothing. This could still be some grandiose joke of a wealthy man. Allen Morehouse may not have been hit with anything too hard and may simply have enacted the role she had briefly seen. If he was in the hospital, she had no means of knowing but, conceding the facts as Jamal presented, she demanded, "What are you going to do with

me?"

"You are now a slave girl whose name is Jasmine. On arrival home I intend to thrash your bottom. You'll find it painful to sit down for several days."

So there it was. Out in the open, a fait accompli. Her obsession was about to receive its own reward. Coldly, she announced, "If you expect me to enjoy it, you can think again. This silly business of whipping every girl's bottom—it's time all you men grew up!"

"You are not frightened?"

"What I am is angry. I'm angry with myself as much as with you. I think you're simply a rich man having fun with a silly girl, and that's exactly what I am."

"You are a very beautiful woman, Jasmine."

She sniffed disdainfully. "Yes, and tightly handcuffed too. I suppose now I'll walk around in chains the rest of my life."

The girl whose name was now indisputably Jasmine sat, her breasts heaving, her pulse racing. She longed for something devastating to say but could think of nothing. She wondered if she became coy and loving whether she could prevail on some sort of lenience, but Jamal would not be easily deceived. She sat in stormy silence as the car took her closer and closer to punishment and a permanent enslavement. It took her thirty minutes of desultory conversation to reach a point where her mind fully com-

prehended she was about to receive the infliction Allen Morehouse had joked about so often and accused her of desiring. She was forced now to ask herself how much she did actually desire to have the cheeks of her bottom viciously caned. It would hurt abominably and be terribly shaming. It would reduce her to a nothing. She remembered the caning she had received from Madanda. In bravado, she inquired, “Will you cane me yourself or have a servant do it for you?”

“A servant. But I will be there. When it is done, I intend to exercise my right of purchase.”

“You mean you’ll fuck me!” The bitter ugly word slipped past her lips and could not be retrieved. Shamed she conceded, “So all right, I shouldn’t have said that—it’s an ugly word. I’m sorry.”

Jamal patted her hands. He lifted them from where they covered her pubic patch and patted what was concealed beneath. To do so he had to thrust aside her knees. Jasmine made only a grudging concession. “All right, go ahead. There’s nothing I can do. I belong to you—you can do anything you like with me. Enjoy yourself!”

Jamal laughed gaily at her vehemence. This girl would be a delight. He would keep her well hidden and well secured. He would also ensure her entertainment. If it was sometimes painful, it was no more than she had secretly desired, but he did not jibe her about the caprice which

returned her to his chains. It was a secret and private thing entirely her own. He would appease and would watch with amusement the effect of the appeasement on her temperament. He well understood that as the car sped closer and closer to the thrashing of her bottom, she would be understandably perturbed. He spoke casually of world affairs, and it was not long before they were in a heated argument.

It was a bare, uninteresting room. Certainly no torture chamber. The term punishment room flitted through Jasmine's mind, but even that seemed inappropriate. It was simply a room littered with various odds and ends designed for the discomfort or pain of girls. She herself had come there to have her bottom whipped, and she was quite certain that some of the devices she was looking at would hold her securely while this was done. In the meantime, she stood naked, her hands still cuffed in front of her, her breasts heaving to await the arrival of the servant who would do her master's bidding.

She devoutly wished she was anywhere but where she was. But she stood here now to await a punishment as the final end to a sequence of events she herself had set in motions. Surely she should have released in all this pandering to her caprice there could be but this single end. Her seeking had been known and understood. Now she was going to have to clench her teeth and try hard not to scream.

Jamal did not even deign to fasten her, but motioned to the

man servant who appeared to perform the task. The device was simple. Metal bars had been welded to enable her ankles to be tied to the bottom of one horizontal strip, then she bent over another at the level of her hips to be painfully thrust forward and down and have her handcuffed hands cinched to one more bar close to the floor. It was extremely simple. She could have picked the contrivance, a simple framework, up herself but it would hold her securely and no struggle she could make would cause it to overturn. With her feet securely bound and resting on the floor at one side and her hands equally secured at the same level on the other. The metal bar over which she was now drawn tight was painful within her flesh, she wondered if it was painful enough to inhibit her struggles. But what good would struggles do her? She knew that her posterior was now stretched taut and tightly and cruelly exposed. Ashamed, she felt certain some fronds of pubic hair were now peeping coyly between her thighs. The servant had the gall to smooth the satin skin he was about to weal, to pat it suggestively and exhibit it in all its exposure to his master who had taken an advantageous chair. All Jasmine could do was peer up and back, her features suffused, and say, “I hope you’re satisfied. I hope you’re properly ashamed of doing this to me.”

The Prince did not reply. He simply waved one negligent hand as a signal to begin.

This was much, much worse. It could not possibly be borne. The girl upon whose flesh the cane was impacting

with swift, hard cuts knew she had to make someone understand or she would die. Frantically, she looked back and up, but received only a kindly nod and a smile from the man to whom she now belonged. From between clenched teeth, she muttered, “You mustn’t, you mustn’t! Please stop him—I can’t bear it! I never wanted this at all. This wasn’t the way I expected—”

“What did you expect—love pats?” Jamal’s query was dispassionate and faintly amused.

“But this is a terrible punishment, and I haven’t done anything wrong.”

“You are guilty of desire. Is that not enough?”

The strokes had paused. They now resumed to Jasmine’s total dismay. She was certain they were horrifically cruel and far worse than any other girl had ever suffered. For some reason of his own, Jamal was going overboard. If the cane continued its present rhythm upon her flesh, she would faint, she was quite certain. Between moans she expressed that opinion.

“Don’t be silly, Jasmine. In retrospect you’ll enjoy every single cut. If I allow you to use your hands afterwards, you’ll be fingering your weals and loving every one.”

“I won’t! I won’t! Ohhhhh, this is impossible! You’re killing me!”

“I could order you whipped up between your legs. That

might give you something to complain about." Jamal's voice remained pleasantly controlled. "But your fantasy was to get your bottom whipped, and that's what we're doing to you. It's not your first time, y'know. Don't make such a fuss."

"But it was never like this—never! Ohhhh, make him stop! Please! He's hitting me far too hard." A moan interspersed the tirade of complaints. "It's horrible having a man do this to me. It's not decent. I don't see why you can't do it yourself."

"If I did, the strokes would be far more severe. Would you like that?"

"Yes, yes! No, no! Oh, what am I saying? Oh, damn you! You've got me all—"

"All pleasantly hot between your legs. Isn't that what you were going to say?"

"You know it wasn't! And I can't help how I feel—"

"Would you like me to feel?"

"No, stay away, and tell this man to get away and stop caning me. He's being absolutely brutal. Look, if this has to be done to me, couldn't he wait a little longer between strokes? He's not giving me a break."

"You are receiving the standard whipping of your bottom as prescribed in the slave girl's code, Jasmine. You have no

complaint."

"Code? Oh, don't be silly—there's no such thing. Oooohh-hhh!"

Jasmine's words availed her of nothing. When her control of them broke under pain, the resultant moans fell on deaf ears. What she was receiving might seem the end of everything to her, but by the law of this land it was purely routine. The bent round cheeks accepted impact after impact from the cane and accounted for each with a scarlet line. Fleetingly, the pinioned girl remembered someone saying she would not sit down easily for several days. She could now believe it. But her main concern was to have done with this steady cadence of the whippy weapon in the servant's hand. Until that stopped nothing else mattered. From her punished posterior there spread a network of pain which had no end. She greeted each fresh stroke with a fresh sound of anguish. They were feminine sounds to soften any man's heart. With them were the most genuine of moans, but Prince Abed Jamal evidently knew his girls and the tolerance of feminine bottoms. He sat quietly while the skin of this girl, who probably was in love with him, was close to flayed. When Jasmine's rotundities were a uniform red, he held up his hand. The servant put the yellow cane back on its rack and stood quietly to attention. The bent girl looked up in disbelief. She could not believe the miracle of cessation. The thrum and beat of the yellow wand had absorbed her totally. Weakly, she quavered, "Is that all?"

“We can resume should you wish it.”

“I didn’t mean that! You know I didn’t mean it. I don’t know what I mean. I’ve been hurt so bad.”

“A mere nothing, Jasmine. Your back is still virgin.”

In the intervals of laborious breathing, the caned girl demanded in disbelief, “You don’t mean you’d whip my back too with that awful thing?”

“It’s not an ‘awful thing’. It’s a slender, yellow cane. But no, we don’t use that on a girl’s back. We have a special whip. Backs are for whipping, bottoms are for caning. It’s very simple.”

The servant departed. Seeing him go, Jasmine angrily demanded, “Aren’t you going to let me off this thing? Can’t I be untied? This damn bar is cutting me in two.”

“Not noticeably, dear girl. You appear to be completely in one piece. I myself will let you loose. I wish you to use the mirror and observe the colors you will carry with you for several days.”

The room held a tall mirror. Evidently, the girls punished therein were invited to view themselves at some time during the proceedings. Doubtfully, the present victim backed up and bent forward and looked around at her own offering. She gasped. There was no blood, but it was far more picturesque than she had dreamed. It was a study in scarlet and purple and even black, to delight an artist’s heart.

Incredulously, she gasped, “But I can’t possibly go home like this!”

“Have you forgotten, dear girl? You are not going home. You will never go home again unless I tire of you.”

Uncaring, and as she had done once before in the long ago, Catherine clutched the burning, scalding surface on which she would be required to sit. Her concern for these injuries was now modified by a fresh realization of servitude. She had become, legally, a slave or as close thereto as native law allowed. She could well believe foreign diplomats would fight shy of interference with such a disposition of a girl. Girls here were very much merchandise, and she had been bought and sold. She wished she was not still handcuffed, that she could perform the task of mercy to her whipped flesh more competently. But she did not ask. Miss Catherine Mordant was becoming tired of silky cynicisms. She would not invite one more by asking for the steel to be taken from her wrists. She turned and faced the watching man, her voice querulous, “So you’ve done it to me! What now?”

She had forgotten, but she remembered now and the flush on her cheeks rivaled that lower down. She was not unaware of the heat within her own loins. She was quite certain Jamal’s would equal her own, but just the same she longed for the fortitude to deny the act which she felt sure was about to happen.

But there was nothing she could do or say. At this moment, more than ever, Jasmine realized her fate. She was a slave girl and as such subject to the wishes of her master, and her master had risen purposefully from his chair. Instinctively, she backed away, but then, realizing futility, she stood firm and contented herself with a frigid stare. Jamal picked her up and carried her to the room she remembered. The bed was still there, the manacles at each of its corners. With outrageous masculine ease, he tossed her to where she had laid previously and then took her with a force and vigor beyond her memory. Jasmine said good-bye to a girl named Catherine.

Jasmine supposed it altogether appropriate. She had wished to revive memories and lay ghosts. She had forgotten the post, the chain, and the collar, but Prince Abed Jamal had not. It was evident, he desired her nostalgia properly complete. It was the same woman who escorted her across the deserted courtyard. The slave girl looked longingly at the closed doors and the distant walls, but she had tried them once and would not try again. Jasmine had distaste for being manhandled and was by no means sure this woman could not get the best of her in a tussle. She suspected she probably could. When ordered, she kneeled beside the post and kept still as the collar was fitted around her neck. The snap was exactly as she remembered, but the flood of heat within her loins was, this time, tenfold by comparison. The woman paned her hair as though she was a child. She told her her wants would be tended and then

left her alone.

Jasmine did not try and sit, but contented herself with leaning against the post to which she was chained and savoring the dream. She had gone full circle and was back where she had been before. This identical captivity had been vivid in her memory throughout her return to the U.S. It flooded back now as though there had been nothing intervening except the cane so recently impacted on her skin. She allowed herself to remain in a vacuum in which she did not look ahead but only back and that in a strange sort of longing for which once more she scolded herself. Surely her scorching flesh should convince her to be sensible! But then again, what was sensible about kneeling naked by a post to which she was chained by a collar around her neck? It was all crazy, just as it had been crazy once before and she had no better idea now where it would lead her than she had had then. She did not bother to test her chain, but sank gingerly down to recline upon one hip. It was not until she had rested thus a long time that she realized the path the Prince would take her on may only just be glimpsed. It would go on from agony to agony or shame to shame. He could take her to his bed as the mood might strike or he could have her punished and did not even need to be present. She existed by and for his pleasure.

Angrily, Jasmine put a stop to profitless musings. She could prove nothing, and there was still a possibility the whole thing was a bad, bad joke. Had she been capable, she might

have planned something, but that was silly. To reassure herself of its silliness, she got wearily to her feet and once more made the circle of her captivity. It was exactly as previously. The chain allowed her to walk to the end of the tiled square, that and no more. What it told her forcibly was that she no longer had a life to dispose of, it belonged to someone else. The tether and the collar were only the beginning in a long line of such restraints by which she would be held captive. She had ceased to cherish illusions. She no longer believed herself in love with Jamal. She supposed that if he married her, she would become a princess and the picture was entrancing. He was altogether a desirable match for any girl, but the music had dissolved. His impersonal sitting to watch the caning of her bottom earlier that day had been a turning point. If he had caned her himself, it would have been altogether different, but to delegate the task to a common servant, and that servant a man, was an affront to wound her deeply. As the hours dragged by, the excitation of being once more chained and collared to the post waned. She recalled now that the Prince's original purchase of her had been simply as a means of barter on a business deal. He had retained possession of her for little more than a week and in that time shown her remarkably little attention, then sold her to Henry Kemp for one more business advantage. It was hardly a romantic association on which a girl might build a life. She had behaved stupidly, allowing the vision of herself manacled to the bed and ravished by an unseen male to so possess her imagination as to once more make

her a slave. Now she faced what all slaves face, an endless array of days and confinements and punishments. True, it would be interspersed with carnal delight, but these incidents could be rare and fleeting. After all, how long does it actually take for a man to ravish a girl? It was in this frame of mind, and held only by the puppy dog leash, that Susan White once more entered her life.

It was on the fourth day. Behind the chained girl was an endless array of hours of self-recrimination and an increasing apprehension about her future. When Catherine Mordant thought of the continuance of life all about her while she remained chained to the tiny post, her frustrations intensified. There was nothing glamorous in being chained naked for the sun and the rain and the night winds to work their will on her. The experience of being thus collared was a thing becoming increasingly elemental by her oneness with the revolutions of the planet and the succession of dorms and noons and darkness. Trees stood thus, brooding to infinity. But Catherine had no wish for such Yoga-like philosophy. Catherine Mordant was twenty-four years old and vividly alive, and with a wish to live. The girl named Jasmine was once again fading from consciousness.

“I’ve been bothered about you, Catherine. I simply had to come.”

The stewardess had crept upon the drowsing girl silently and unobserved. She stood now gazing down upon the

prisoner of the post in sincere compassion. Then, with a rattle of chain, Catherine leapt to her feet and the two embraced as though from an ancient friendship. Catherine's first need had been of human communion, but this satisfied her second thought was purely slave. "But, Susan, you'll be punished. You're not supposed to be here. You're not supposed to talk to me. How did you manage to get here at all?"

"Oh, that's easy. I have a lot of slack time between flights. The Prince isn't using the plane all the time, although sometimes he does lend it around. He's busy today outside somewhere in the town, and I've always had more or less the fun of the house. I'm sort of privileged." Susan grinned sheepishly. "I'm sure you can guess why."

Once Catherine would not have understood, but her exclamation now was one of shocked urgency. "You mean—"

"Yes, me. Of course me. Why not!" Susan remained unruffled, her smile as angelic as ever, her voice just as feminine. "It's a big cold world out there for little girls without rich fathers." There emerged a trace of bitterness in the silvery tinkle of her voice. "I was working as a stewardess when he met me. He liked me and propositioned me, and I accepted. He pays me a really shocking amount of money to be what I am: part-time stewardess and part-time slave. Weren't you surprised to see me do and say the things I did?"

“Well, yes, but I never imagined, I mean, you’re so sweet!”

“Well, being mean to an occasional girl like you and getting my own bottom caned regularly doesn’t have to turn me into something disagreeable. I’ve frankly loved most of it, and I’ve never been able to see it do much harm to anyone. These fellows like the Prince and Henry Kemp are simply overgrown children, they’re still schoolboys. Having all that money stops their growth. They never grow up.”

The chained and collared maiden could not rid herself of apprehension She felt it positive that quite soon men servants would emerge from the house and apprehend this shining girl who seemed totally unaware of danger. But her own great need forced the words. “Susan, can you help me? Can you get me loose from this chain? I’ve been a damn silly idiot and what I want is out!”

Susan laughed delightedly, fingered her purse, and held up a small metal object. “No problem, honey. This is what you need, but there s a price tag on it.”

“Anything—just get me out of here.”

“Think a bit, honey,” Susan said soberly. “If I let you loose, I lose everything, and if we’re caught, the penalties will be worse for me than for you. At the best, I’ll be giving up a very profitable life. Its only disability is that I get my bottom caned from time to time when the mood strikes His Highness.” Susan’s voice quickened. “I don’t mind telling you one of the reasons I’m here is that he’s been increas-

ingly dropping hints about moving up from my bottom to my back. Men are like that; they never stay satisfied with anything. Getting a schoolgirl caning is one thing, but to be flogged is something else again. I don't want it."

"So what do you want? Susan, I know you've something in mind, but what is it?"

"We'll both get out of this country, pronto. But all you'll have achieved, Catherine, is a change in ownership. You will then belong to me."

Catherine heard the simple statement in disbelief. Susan was so sweet, so angelic, such a delightful teenage type who would never age. The solemnity of her pronouncement was out of character. Surely a girl so light hearted and sparkling eyed could never be cruel to another of her own sex! The idea was absurd, and whatever Susan might wish to do to her would most certainly be better than remaining as she was now. Without pause, Catherine exclaimed breathlessly, "Sure, anything! I really don't mind, but get me out of here. I'll go with you any way you like." At that moment, the removal of the collar from her throat was the most vital essential in life. So imbued was she with hunger for the outside world she scarcely heeded the crisp command.

"Hands behind your back then, sweetheart. This is where it starts."

It was almost pleasurable to do as she was told, to stand

her back to another girl of her own age and cross her wrists, then to feel them tied with an unexpected competence. Susan was evidently a girl of many parts. Breathless with excitement, she whispered, “Susan, you don’t need to tie me, you know. I’ll do whatever you want. Oh, Susan, I’m so glad that you came!”

The jeep was already loaded with Susan’s personal possessions. Since the slave girl had no personal possessions, all she had to do was sit and, in doing so, was instantly and painfully reminded of the cane. But pain no longer mattered. She shifted as best she could to aid her companion in covering her nakedness with a flimsy native cloak. Bound hands would not matter.

7

Fettered Female

IN TIMES TO COME, Catherine Mordant was to wonder why she had so joyfully accepted a fresh slavery to a girl called Susan White. She shrugged it off as being no more than an intense need of escape from another enslavement threatening everything she prized. Susan was her own age, a charming, carefree companion. She was also exceedingly wise in the ways of the world and of airlines in particular. Catherine had no doubt in being able to assert herself some way in the long journey between the post in the courtyard and Susan's miniature farm in upstate New York. True, her hands had been always secured behind her back, but at the time this had seemed no more than an amusing pleasantry between two girls. She could certainly have asked for help during any part of her transportation. Her feet had been free, so she could most certainly have run away. She could have kicked and made a fuss and drawn attention which would have gained her freedom and a return to her father's home. She thought of all these things too late and once more wryly admitted her own heatedly erotic involvement in a new adventure. Susan was a delight. She was immensely sexual, and this sensuality transferred itself to her captive to make the abduction a thing for giggling and an exchange of wise female eyes. Once more,

Catherine's libido betrayed her. Nor could she deny the immense potency of that moment in which the two of them had stripped naked and examined the colorations of the cane on each other's flesh. Susan herself had been recently punished with the same severity as the girl she now called slave. They laughed about it and coined the phrase that it made them sisters of the cane instead of sisters under the skin, as in the old adage.

The flight home had possessed a deliciousness all its own. By that time Susan had acquired handcuffs and discarded the cord. A fellow colleague was on duty and the three girls adjoined to a private place so that this friend might view the shining steel confining the hidden wrists. There had been much giggling and thereafter through the journey the girl had met Catherine's eyes with a knowing wink. Their journey had seemed a game between girls, so had the picking up of Susan's car and the ride to the tiny farm. It was when the two of them were alone within Susan's own domain that Catherine once more confronted reality. The reality was the removal of her coverings including her shoes and the retention on her wrists of the steel circlets. She was completely in Susan's power.

Throughout the journey, Catherine had constantly asked herself why, why, why? But she had set doubts aside in her pleasure in the shining girl who had released her from the post. Susan had a way about her, an affectionate authority in which it was pleasant to bask free of all responsibility. Catherine had refused to be concerned about the hand-

cuffs. They had become so much a part of her life that it seemed silly to question their presence on her wrists. If it pleased Susan to have them there, so what! The fact that Catherine, successfully, sought relief again and again had been a reassurance. They were two girls playing an enchanting erotic game. Over and above the pleasure Catherine found in this association was the reiteration of the one marvelous word she was free, free, free!

“Why did you let me get away with it, Catherine? You didn’t have to, y’know.”

“I like you. I owe you. I’m not frightened of you. Isn’t that enough?”

Susan shrugged soberly. At that moment she felt infinitely older than this ebullient girl. Quietly, she warned, “Catherine dear, I’m not playing games. At least not innocent games. You’re my prisoner and I’m going to keep you.”

“Yes, I know. You’ve told me. Here I am.” Catherine raised her joined hands and rattled the single link by which they were held together. “See, I belong to you. What more do you want?”

Susan sighed. It seemed a shame to take this happy captive from her euphoria and plunge her once more into despair. Slowly, she ventured, “Men aren’t the only ones to have silly fantasies, you know, dear. Goodness knows you had yours, and look what they got you into. I’ve had a fantasy myself all my life.” She grinned a shameful grin. “I’ve

always wanted to own a girl, a girl my own age and infinitely beautiful. We would love each other, but I would keep her always chained or bound or behind the bars of a cage. She would never, never escape. After awhile she would not want to; she would become a happy prisoner. Often I'd whip her and she would come to love that too."

Catherine examined the proposition and came up with the obvious. "But, darling, isn't that us! Susan, I'm your fantasy. I am! What are you looking so sober about?"

"You mean you're not bothered? I don't seem cruel?"

"Goodness no! Right now I'm so sick of men and what they do to girls that you're a glorious relief. I say, Susan, can you get word to my father I won't be home for awhile?"

"I'll look after it. But, Catherine, I'm not sure you get the point. Suppose you never do go home? Suppose I keep you always?"

"What a lovely idea, darling. Could we make coffee?"

They made coffee, but before doing so Susan used a length of chain and two padlocks upon the slender ankles of her captive girl. "I don't have proper shackles or leg irons, darling. But I will get some," she apologized as she snapped the locks. "I'll warn you now there will never be a time when you are not held in some way like this. Right now I'm going to change the handcuffs from front to back. For a moment you'll think you're free, but you're not. With your

ankles joined as I have just locked them, you can't fight me effectively. You'll have to do as I ask."

"Of course I'll do what you ask!" Catherine was wondering what all the fuss was about. If Susan had spent as much time chained to the small point in the courtyard as she herself, then Susan would certainly understand what was happening now was mere fun and games.

Catherine kicked her newly acquired hobble to make the links clatter. She held out her hands. "But, Susan dear, I won't be able to lift my cup; you'll have to lift it for me."

The exchange was swift. One moment Catherine had hands, the next they were securely locked behind her back. In a fever of emotion Susan turned the captive nude around and clasped her hungrily in her arms. "I've wanted this so long, I've wanted you so badly ever since I first saw you." Her voice was almost tearful. They kissed in an increasing need. "You know, don't you, what I'm going to make you do?"

"Of course I know—I'm not stupid." Catherine wondered what all the drama was about. "Don't you understand, Susan darling, I've belonged to men, and they've done whatever they've wanted with me. Once I was manacled naked on a bed and then blindfolded. A man came and he used me over and over, and I've never known for sure who he was." Catherine laughed in the relief of retrospect. "I've had my bottom whipped and then been made to lay on it.

What should we call it dear—the act?"

"You've made love to a girl before?"

"No, I haven't, but I'm not frightened. Not with you, Susan." Catherine laughed again. "You've bottled up your fantasy too long. It's obsessive, isn't it? It's making you more serious and concerned about owning me than there's any need to be. Okay, I'm owned. You own me. Now can I have my coffee?"

There began then for the two girls a quivering, palpitating journey to the kingdom of Sappho and the lesbian isle. They found it a place of wonder and delight. In Catherine Mordant's mind the images of men faded and became hazy into an eventual disbelief they have ever existed. The days passed in idyllic happiness, but through it all Susan kept her promise. Never for a single moment was her slave girl free of bonds. Leaving her new possession safely bound, Susan went to town and returned with a boxful of metal and leather accessories by which a maiden could be constrained in any one of many ways. They tried them all, and the slave girl herself was happily amused by her owner's absorption with her purchases. Gladly, she offered her wrists, ankles, and neck to receive the benediction of the bonds. The union of the two girls and the domination of one over the other was accentuated and reaffirmed by Catherine's chance attempt at escape.

It was necessary that the prisoner be left alone at times

when her mistress went for supplies or to purchase additional erotic items for their armory. On this occasion Catherine had seemed safe enough. She was handcuffed, her ankles hobbled, and her neck tethered to their bed by a strand of rope. She had been patted and kissed and told to go to sleep like a good girl. On the face of it escape was impossible. But the slave was in a mischievous mood. After the mistress had departed, Catherine had contrived to back up to the terminal of her rope tether and work on it with handcuffed fingers. Her ability to do this was an oversight on her Captor's part. But in the spirit of pure mischief she worked and worked until she had the knots undone and could either hop or take short, hobbled steps from the bed and from the room. She did this with an accelerating pulse. At first with no more than mischief in her mind but reaching the bottom of the stairs and then the back door of the farm house she realized the possibilities of this chained freedom. To reach a road on which help might come would be a long and arduous passage of tiny steps. But why not! There is an element of boredom in the life of any slave. Catherine suddenly found her pulse quickening with a vision of a return to a life in which there were no chains, no ropes, no collars on her neck, a life in which every moment of every day would be as she desired. It was a delightful dream, and she realized it did not preclude Susan from her life, but they would then meet on equal terms and she would never again offer her limbs to the chains or ropes of anyone. Imbued with the delightful prospect, she started on her fearfully handicapped journey.

It was surprisingly easier than supposed. Before starting, she had draped her hips with a towel to enable her to face possible male regard without too deep a shame. Her ankles must inevitably be chafed. They were worked overtime in the tiny ten-inch strides permitted by the span of links. Her hands could not have helped her in any case. It would have been nicer had they not been cuffed behind her back, but she consoled herself with the thought she could not have everything. Her feet twinkled steadily to an accompanying clink of links. She giggled, thinking of Susan's shock and chagrin. Catherine looked around. There was no sign of life anywhere. Somewhere over the hill ahead lay the narrow country road which was her only hope. It was still far distant!

There was an air of fate about the way it happened. It had taken a long, long time to reach her objective, and her ankles were cruelly red. Catherine surmounted the low ditch beside the narrow road as the last obstacle. Standing in the middle of the chamber, she looked up and down, but there was no sign of an approaching car. There was nothing. She sighed and sat down. At least she would not be ignored.

It was some little time before the vehicle came into view. She saw it with a thrill of excitement and got instantly to her feet. She could not wave because she had no hands, but certainly a seminaked girl in the middle of the road would halt any vehicle. Her hazard now was that whoever stopped at her behest would treat her kindly. She was wickedly vulnerable. When the approaching vehicle came

close enough to be examined and assessed, Catherine's hopes crashed. Frantically, she turned to hobble her way back across the ditch. Halfway she heard the grind of brakes and the cheerful feminine voice. "Were you going somewhere, darling?"

It was too, too cruel. Like a naughty child, she sat, her cheeks flushed, beside Susan in the seat of the busy little jeep. She felt silly and ineffectual. She was also scared. This was the first real test of Susan's tolerance. Catherine had no expectation her escape attempt would be unpunished.

"You silly little idiot. Where did you expect to go? Who did you expect to rescue you? It's a miracle you got as far as you did with your feet chained the way they are." Susan sighed in mock exasperation. "I really don't know what I'm going to do with you. How would you like me to keep you in a cage?"

It was all too delicious and heating to the loins. Never for a moment did they cease to be two girls in love, that one of them was delinquent changed nothing. Without a word being said it was completely understood the naughty member of the duo would be punished.

Susan too was savoring the situation to the full. She would push nothing but allow her slave to quiver in her own particular apprehension. Catherine was allowed to help in the preparation of dinner.

"For heaven's sake, stop looking like a forlorn sheep!" Su-

san demanded. “We both know I’m going to punish you and that’s that. Surely you can behave normally until it happens!”

“But will you forgive me?” Catherine’s voice was almost tearful. “I feel so silly, just as though I’ve done something terribly wrong. Any prisoner is entitled to try and escape.” She gave a forlorn and questioning glance to her owner. “That is so, isn’t it?”

“You appear to think so. It’s my job to teach you differently. Now for goodness sake, stop looking and peel the potatoes.”

She could be sure of nothing, but this was a condition of enslavement. Catherine understood this all too well. She was longing to ask what her punishment would be but did not dare. She was sure she would enjoy the dinner more if she did not know. She was not hungry, but dutifully ate the morsels offered on her mistress’ fork. It was not until after the dishes were dried and put away that the awful moment came.

“Are you ready, darling?”

It would be silly to ask for what she should be ready. Catherine knew all too well. Briefly, she admitted a scared affirmative, “Yes. Oh, Susan, please don’t hurt me too much!”

It was a small, cylindrical pedestal which rose or fell according to the manipulations of the mistress. Across its top

was a narrowly curved bar. Catherine's ankles were chained on one side. She leaned across the bar and then down to have her hands chained to other manacles waiting. Susan then exerted the necessary pressures to cause the pedestal to rise slowly and thrust and burrow itself into Catherine's most secret place. When the delinquent was tautly stretched, Catherine realized her bottom was more cruelly exposed than even the devices previously used on her could not compete. Despite tear and the questing fingers tracing themselves across the stretched skin about to be caned, Catherine's complaints were inhibited by an unmistakable heat rising from the bar across which she was literally draped. The delight in Susan's voice was unmistakable.

"I've dreamed of this, darling, and now you've made it happen. You're beautifully guilty, and I can whip you with an easy conscience." She allowed the thought to simmer momentarily. "I do hope you agree."

"Yes, I-I suppose so."

"Well, I can't expect you to be singing in joy, darling, but isn't it wonderful the way you've healed up? My bottom's absolutely virgin again, and so is yours. It's sort of messy when you lay one whipping across another one that's still recent. I do wish you could see yourself. You're gorgeous!"

"I hurt and I can't move—if that's what you want."

"You know it is. You're only complaining just because you

think you ought to." The feminine voice became sly. "Do you think you'll be making another escape attempt, darling?"

"You know I won't. Susan, please don't tease. This is awful. I really am terribly sorry." There was a pause and a pink-cheeked face looked doubtfully upward. "I suppose you couldn't possibly forgive me?"

Susan's response was instant, "Don't be silly, darling. I'm not going to let you talk yourself out of anything." From somewhere she had obtained a slender yellow withe of wickedness. She was flexing it suggestively. "Isn't this a really marvelous cane, dear? Can't you simply feel it on these dear little cheeks of yours that are so nicely positioned?"

"They're being tortured the way you've got them pushed up. Gosh, I feel all bottom. Susan, I wish—"

The cane sang its song and cut its scarlet line across the virgin matrix tautly waiting. The fastened maiden wailed. "Susan, not like that—it's too hard!"

"Would you like to be gagged, darling?"

"No. I wouldn't! Susan, couldn't we talk this over?"

"There's nothing to talk over, dear. My, you do mark beautifully. I m going to try the next one lower down."

Catherine was certain it hurt far worse, but her complaints were inhibited by a sudden realization of something

happening upon the bar over which she was so rigidly bent. The heat engendered by the cane was fanned into a greater conflagration with each blow. Number three and number four flared it to a point beyond control. Hating what would happen, Catherine implored, “Susan, don’t! Stop a little while—you’re making me… well, you know what!”

“Of course, dear. I’d be disappointed if it didn’t. Enjoy it. I won’t allow it to interfere with your punishment at all. Isn’t that sweet of me?”

It was shaming. It was wonderful. It was awful. It was everything Catherine did not want while being whipped. What she desired was to bear her punishment with fortitude and in as much silence as she could contrive, but the pending explosion was totally beyond her control and would possess her regardless of her wishes. In the meantime, the cane was making its steady impacts to build and build the pressure of internal spasms until nature took over and expended every fiber of the captive’s being in one vast sensation and display of fireworks. Catherine panted her way in and out of ecstasy, tugging ruthlessly at chained ankles and chained wrists, but she could not move, and the rhythm of the cane continued remorselessly until, with the final fading of joy, she was compelled once more to plead. “Susan, please. It’s happened, give me a break. Stop it for a little while, it’s happened, don’t you understand!”

“Of course I understand, dear. Your climax has finished,

but I haven't. I'm enjoying myself immensely. I do hope you don't mind."

The caning of Catherine continued its steady cadence until, with the fifteenth stroke, it suddenly ceased. The relief was stupendous. Catherine refrained from mentioning her surprise in not receiving more. She had feared a minimum of twenty strokes. Fifteen was a bonus, and she was grateful. She knew all too well that had the strokes continued to indent her flesh, there would have been still one more orgasm to bring her shame. She said weakly, "Thank you, Susan. I'm sorry I ran away."

"Don't thank me yet, darling. I'm not finished with you. You've had the main course, now you get your dessert. Aren't you lucky?"

Her blazing bottom absorbing most of her attention, the slave girl allowed herself to be manipulated until she was astride the bar instead of bending over it. An ankle was still chained down to each side, her hands now handcuffed behind her back. This had all been achieved without offering her a single possibility of argument or escape. She had come close to being free, but never close enough.

Apprehensively, she watched as Susan's finger reached for the control.

"Susan, what on earth!" The prisoner could feel the bar rising slower within her loins to press itself even more intimately within her most female place. The bar was hot

from her own flesh, from her own suffering, and moist from her own secretions. When her heels left the floor and then her toes followed, she wailed frantically, “Susan, I’m off the ground! I’m sitting on this thing! Oh, stop it, stop it—please!”

Nothing stopped. The helpless girl was elevated sufficiently to tauten the chains about her ankles. Her already handcuffed wrists could achieve nothing. She sat now astride the bar and could move nothing of herself to sufficiently help in what she recognized as an increasingly unhappy plight. When the upward pressure stopped, she and the bar were welded as one. Susan’s voice was complacently proud.

“I read about this thing, Catherine, and I knew I simply had to have it for you. Isn’t it gorgeously simple? All you have to do is sit.”

“But it hurts! And you know where it hurts. Oh, Susan, get me off here, please!”

“I understand the idea with this is for you to suffer in silence and solitude. You just sit there and think about your sins and you resolve never to be a naughty girl again.”

“All right, all right. I’ve already resolved that. Let me down. Get me off this thing!”

“Of course, dear, but that’s superficial.” The mistress’s voice was gently soothing. “You’re simply beginning this

punishment, not finishing it. I'll go away and leave you to enjoy."

"Enjoy!" The delinquent's cry was heavy with outrage. "Don't be a beast. How can I possibly enjoy this? Susan, it's too, too awful."

"Did I hear you call me a beast, Catherine dear?" The tone was silky, the question deadly. "Would you care to rephrase that?"

"Yes, oh yes! Susan, I really am sorry. It's just this pain—it drives me to say things. I'm sorry I called you a beast—you're not a beast at all. But, ooohhhh, please take me off this thing!"

"Good-bye, dear I'm sure you'll be a sadder and wiser girl when I come back." Susan kissed the hot, agitated lips and went away. A distraught slave girl watched her go in disbelief. With the closing of the door, Catherine realized her penance was indeed just beginning.

Everything was hopeless. She could not move her feet, she could move her hands but to no avail, they could reach nothing. Catherine twisted her arms and reached with her fingers to no avail. The shackles on her ankles laughed at her dependence on their tug. Along with this horrible thing on which she was perched, there was the indignation of knowing her caning had not been sufficient punishment, but that her caned cheeks were now bisected by the bar which was absorbing some of the excess heat engendered

by the rod. Catherine soon discovered there was no motion she could make to give any kind of comfort. She was prey to a steady upward thrust against her loins. As a crowning indignity, she was quite certain she appeared ridiculous. If only Susan knew how terrible this was then she would undoubtedly provide relief, but Susan was not here. It might be a long, long time before Susan returned. In the meantime…

It was indeed a time for thought. Accompanied by the agony of her perch, the helpless nude allowed her thoughts to drift. What was happening now emphasized something she had ignored. This was both imprisonment and punishment. She was helpless and could not escape, and she was in this predicament because of the desire of a girl she had come increasingly to adore. She wondered now if that adoration arose from lust, love, or a dog-like devotion to a sweet authority. Unhappily, she realized the bar on which she sat in no way changed her feeling for the sparkling eyed mistress. Whatever had happened previously would happen again when she was released, but now she would understand punishment as a fact of her existence and not an abstract possibility. She would best mind her Ps and Qs. She was quite sure that after this abortive escape attempt she would be given no other chance. Susan's box of tricks would be utilized to their full.

But Catherine was forced to wonder how long two girls, no matter how much in love, could go on entertaining each other to the exclusion of the rest of life. It had worked fine

so far, but the punishment she now endured seemed a dividing line, a great big question mark or perhaps a period. She suspected now the whole thing had risen from an unsuspected element of boredom in their existence. She had sought escape and Susan was punishing that attempt, both in an erotic seeking of a new excitement.

So where did they go from here? It was an imponderable Catherine could not cope with. Instead, she moaned and moaned again, the burrowing bar within her crotch becoming increasingly an enemy. She thought longingly of the moment, perhaps still far distant, when Susan would release her from the torment. She would be very humble and very obedient, but for how long she could only guess.

“I can’t possibly let you loose, darling.” Susan’s voice was lingeringly affectionate. “If you only knew how beautiful you look, you’re tired and you’re hurting and you’ve got a little glisten of perspiration all over you. When I came in, you had your head bowed down in the most delicious fashion. I wish I’d had a camera.”

Catherine said nothing. She knew Susan was aware of every word she might exclaim. She was terribly weary and terribly hurt, but she had crossed the borderline of sentence and passed over into a lethargic world without hope. She was quite prepared for her mistress to turn and leave her alone once more.

It did not happen. Swiftly, Susan handled the controls to

bring the pedestal down from its heated home within her slave girl's crotch. Suddenly Catherine's feet were on the floor and she stood erect without the agony of the iron but only its aftermath of ache and burn and tenderness. Once more she said the thing that came most naturally to her lips. She was always ashamed of it but it always seemed it need be said. "Oh, thank you, Susan. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

The two girls fell with unexpected ease back into the two roles neither could escape. There was a strange inevitability about Susan's possession of Mordant's daughter. They seldom referred to the punishment of the cane and the bar. It receded into an affirmation of Susan's dominance, its principle legacy being an increasing use of metal in the confinement of her slave. It was not that cord or strap ceased to be used in Catherine's confinements, but now, whenever she was left alone, there would always be a metal linkage no key could touch, no hand undo. As Susan laughingly chided, "she was not to be trusted."

They played their game in many ways. As though by mutual consent they broke the ties of boredom by an increasingly inventiveness of the shape of Catherine's captivities. The acreage of the small farm was largely composed of brush, within these green and pleasant glades in which a naked maiden, bound there to a tree for the day, might while away the time in relative contentedness. This was Catherine's condition on the day of her next confrontation.

“It’s a nice little tree, dear, just right for a naked girl and it’s far too big for you to walk away with.” Susan stood back to survey her handiwork. She found it perfect. Catherine was backed against the trunk, her wrists had been crossed behind the bole and tightly bound. Other cords captured her ankles and were crisscrossed over her shoulder and breasts to tug her back until she was almost a part of the tree itself. But the safety feature was there too. Instead of a number of rope strands around her waist there was a single length of chain. Its links were moderately heavy and well indented within the softness of the captive belly. Its two ends were joined behind the trunk by a quite massive padlock that would yield to only the right key and could not be doctored with wire of similar expedience.

“I’m going to get awfully tired of this before evening,” Catherine pointed out doubtfully. “Do you really need all this rope on me?”

“Of course not, dear. You know that as well as I do. What it achieves is simple effect. You’re a beautiful picture like that. I wouldn’t touch a single strand. If it hurts, you’ll have to put up with it.”

It was a familiar theme. They played it often, as though by doing so they reaffirmed their roles. As always, the mistress kissed the slave girl’s lips before she went away.

It was pleasant in the sunlight of the tiny glade. Catherine knew she could be much worse off, but just the same, she

wished there were fewer cords buried hard within her flesh. Susan never understood how difficult it was for a girl who had to be bound for hours at a time. Her own efforts to explain the hazards of such binding were laughed away. Along with her love, Susan was always a stern mistress.

They both accepted the hazard of the exposure the slave girl was in. It was a situation which left them both with delicious apprehension. It was unlikely anyone would wander into this little stretch of uninteresting woodland, but it was still possible. Suppose someone did come upon the bound girl—what would they do? Catherine accepted the hazards to her flesh, and Susan accepted the possibility of losing the slave girl she adored. Still, it was indeed spice added to their relationship.

Catherine always went through the motions. It helped to kill time, rather than being any real belief that she could find slack rope or an opportunity to free herself. As usual, she was bound extremely tight. She knew her best course was simply to relax. There was no use fighting the inevitable victory of the cords. As for the chain around her middle, it negated escape with a finality best accepted.

The sun was Catherine's clock. By the time she heard the footsteps, they told her she had been tied to the tree for several hours. When Allen Morehouse walked into view, she was as speechless as though she were gagged. But Allen was not.

“Well, there you are, sweetheart. I knew she’d have you kicking around somewhere. I’ve been keeping an eye on the place.” He chuckled. “You really are one for the book, aren’t you? How the devil did you get this little act going?”

Shock receded and was replaced by joy. The man who stood before her had become dear to her in a way she would not have guessed. He had, in fact, risked his life on her behalf. All she could say was, “Oh, Allen!”

“Damn, girl, you have a positive gift for this sort of thing!” He viewed her roped nudity with approval. “Whoever tied you certainly is an artist at it. You look quite lovely. I think I’ve got a knife here somewhere.”

“No, Allen, please don’t! You mustn’t cut me loose. Besides, you can’t—there’s the chain.”

Allen Morehouse came close, and before seeking her release, he kissed her gently, a nice brotherly sort of kiss in the best British tradition. Uncertainly, she exclaimed, “I’m so sorry! I’m such an eternal nuisance—I know. Oh, Allen, you’d best just go away and leave me alone.”

“You mean you’ve fallen in love with your dragon? I should just leave and be done with it? And here I thought I’d have a chance to polish up on my chivalry.”

“I know I sound terribly ungrateful. Oh, Allen, this is awful, and I know just what you’re thinking.” She eyed him doubtfully, then continued, “The trouble is you’re abso-

lutely right. I'm ashamed of myself."

"The eternal damsel in distress, eh?" Allen walked a complete circle around the tree and its burden. "Reverting to instinct, I'd say. From what I can see of your bottom, it's been well whipped. You should be a very happy girl."

"Yes, I—no, I'm not! Oh, Allen, you've got me so mixed up I don't know what I'm saying!"

"This Susan White girl—did she grab you, or did you deliver yourself to her in a neat package?"

In broken, sobbing sentences, she told him the complete story, omitting only the references to the sexual encounters between Susan and herself. The man listened, nodding from time to time in understanding, his half smile remaining as cynical as ever.

"With you it makes sense," he admitted slowly. "Most people would say you'd lost your marbles." He surveyed her again. "So where does that leave us? Where do you go from here?"

"I don't go anywhere, Allen. Don't you understand—this is it. I belong to Susan, and what you're looking at now is something that intrigues us both. If it's silly—well, I can't help that."

"Bullshit! This is one time I could cane that bottom of yours myself and enjoy every stroke. Really, Catherine, you're behaving like a little idiot. Let me get you loose—I'm sure I

can."

"Don't you dare! Anyway, you can't. You can't possibly get this chain off me. You'd need tools and things."

"So? What's wrong with that? I can be back here within an hour and cut that goddamn chain in two before that bitch of yours gets back."

"But I don't want you to, Allen. Don't you understand? It would spoil everything between Susan and me. Please, Allen, let me play this out. If it does wear itself out, then I'll be what I suppose you'd call cured. Please tell Daddy I'm all right. I feel so guilty about him. Tell him I'm visiting Susan and I'll call when I can."

"You really expect me to just walk away and leave you here?"

"I'm asking you to—I'm begging, Allen." She eyed him woefully. "Look, leave me alone, but if you're worried about me, why not check me out, say, once a month?"

"Huh!" His voice was heavy with masculine disapproval. "You expect me to knock at this girl Susan's door and politely ask the little bitch how her slave girl is today? By that time, she'll have you well hidden and nobody will ever find you." His tone now changed to a warning. "And that will be the time you'll want out. Catherine, I know I went along with you before, but it was against my better judgment, and look what it got you into. Don't you realize you're

playing with fire, girl?"

Catherine told herself Allen Morehouse had ruined her day, but then admitted to a comforting glow of security in the knowledge that he was around and would be watching out for her, the fact that he had given in to her request to remain bound and chained was proof of his sincerity. She knew he believed she would soon tire of her captivity and long to return home. She wished she could share this belief, but she could not. Susan's magic was strong upon her, and their lesbian love was not easily tossed away. In the hours she remained bound, awaiting her mistress' return, she resolved to tell Susan nothing of Allen's visit. The little farm had endeared itself, and she had no wish to be transported to a less pleasant place.

It happened on the fourth day.

Old farms can be storehouses of antiquity, and Susan's was exactly that. Catherine brooded on the subject in the sunlight of another day outdoors. Susan had departed for the city, leaving her slave girl in the possession of a massive ancient relic. No doubt it had been originally intended for the tethering of animals. It was simply a huge rock through the center of which a hole had been drilled and a huge bolt threaded from one end to the other, its top a massive ring and the bottom riveted from the rock itself. Catherine's handcuffs had been threaded through the huge ring and then locked in another pair of the same chrome restraints. She could have stood had she wished to bend

halfway to the ground to accommodate the rock. Instead, she kneeled at its side and held her hands at the ring to pose much the posture of a penitent in prayer. But this had not been all. Following her principle of always having an element of safety in her darling's bondage, Susan had padlocked a chain around the captive's neck and fastened the other end of it to the same ring which held her hands. This made it more than ever certain she would kneel. If she did so, there was little discomfort except for her forearms leaning, of necessity, upon the stone.

"Think I'm mean, honey?"

"Of course I do. I feel silly, and it's awkward. I'll have to kneel all day, like I'm saying my prayers."

"Then say them, darling. Make use of your thing. You look absolutely charming."

"I don't feel charming," the chained girl sniffed. "What time do you expect to be home?"

Susan laughed gaily. "Sometime, sweetheart. You can just kneel there and hope. By the way, that's not a bad position for caning your sweet little bottom, or for that matter, whipping your back. You're very nicely posed."

"Why don't you make a note of it?" the slave girl said bitterly, "It's something I'd sooner forget."

It was their usual delicious repartee. They adored it and each other. Catherine's memory of Allen Morehouse's visit

was fading rapidly, leaving only thankfulness that he was safe. For a little while, he had reawakened the female yearning for the male, but that too had faded. Susan had repossessed her totally, absorbing all her attention and affection. Even the relatively unkind posture in which she was now chained did nothing to alter this love. Catherine was consciously aware of drifting day by day further into a lesbian slavery.

She was positive even without the fleshly joys she would have remained content to be Susan's prisoner. She had survived the first awful punishment and had been told another would follow if she gave her mistress the least excuse. Catherine Mordant crouched down experimentally and nestled a cheek within the hollow of an arm, thinking that perhaps she could sleep.

"Good god, the things that girl does to you."

Catherine awoke, startled. Dazed, she kneeled and looked gazed upon Allen Morehouse. He was his usual caustic self.

"That's a real pose of penance. You look very charming. Damn shame to disturb you. In that position, I assume you are expecting a caning of your bottom?"

"No, I am not! What are you doing here again? You woke me up, you know. Look, you can't possibly set me free from this rock, so the best thing is to just turn around and go home."

It was not until she had spoken that she noticed what he was carrying. Her heart sank, then raced in excitement. “No use visiting you without a pair of bolt cutters. Prepare to be released, my dear.”

“Don’t you dare! Stay away, Allen—please. Don’t spoil Susan’s property with those awful things. I don’t want them cutting my handcuffs in two.” Catherine took a deep breath and strived for reason. “Look, Allen, be a friend. We talked about this the other day. Please leave me alone to play this out in my own way. It’s something I want to do—something I want to do very much.”

“Ah, yes. Right there you put your finger on the key word play. That’s exactly what you and your dear little Susan have been doing—playing a delicious game that gets neither of you anywhere. You’re wasting each other’s time.”

“But it’s none of your business, Allen. If Susan and I are happy, that’s all that matters. Please respect our privacy.”

“Bit late for that, I’m afraid.” Allen fitted the steel jaws of the cutters to cut the padlock holding Catherine. There was a brief snap, and then the chain fell down between Catherine’s breasts. She could stop nothing. It would be foolish to seek evasion. She allowed him to tilt her chin and once again imprison metal in the brutal jaws. Again there was a snap. This time both padlock and link fell away to leave her throat free of any restraint. Allen set the bolt cutters aside and reached in a pocket. “Everyone has a

handcuff key these days," he remarked casually. "Just hold still for a moment."

She watched him unlock her hands from the huge ring in the rock, but it was not entirely as she expected. He unlocked a cuff, withdrew it from the ring, and then relocked it on her wrist. She was still a handcuffed girl. He then unlocked the handcuffs from her ankles and put the circles of shining steel in his own pocket. He grasped her arm and helped her to her feet. "There, how's that feel?"

It felt good. It always felt good, but Catherine was not about to tell him so. She said a polite thank you, then stood waiting and wondering if he heard the beating of her heart. With only the slightest trace of bitterness, she asked, "If you're so keen on my freedom, why are my hands still cuffed?"

"If you can't guess, I won't tell. In the meantime, there's something I want you to see. Come along, sweetheart."

Catherine could guess. There was about Allen Morehouse that male assurance which spoke of deeds, not words. He kept a firm hold on her bare arm as he led her to the ancient barn. The barn was another relic of another age situated on the other side of the house. It was dilapidated and falling apart, but some of its timbers remained sound. Led inside its non existent door, Catherine gasped in dismay at what she saw. Susan White stood in the center aisle, her hands high above her head tethered to a rafter by a long

rope. She had been struggling before their entry, but upon their entry, she angrily demanded, “Look, you idiot, we don’t want you! Can’t you understand that? Hasn’t Catherine told you? Surely you can believe what she says. Untie me and go about your business.”

The angry words slithered into silence as though absorbed by their own futility. Susan did not look like a maiden expecting release. She looked scared and apprehensive. She kept a stiff silence while the male lowered her arms and replaced the rope upon her wrists with the handcuffs be had taken from Catherine’s ankles. He looked at the two handcuffed girls with satisfaction, then sat upon an ancient box and asked, “Care to hear the scenario? The two of you share the stellar role.”

“No, we don’t!” Susan snapped. She paused, then grimaced and asked, “Okay, what is it?”

“You said you didn’t want to hear.”

“All right, I’ve changed my mind. What are you going to do with us?”

“Ah, that’s much better. I’m going to keep the two of you prisoner, that’s what I’m going to do. I intend to cane your bottoms regularly.”

“Drop dead!” Susan said vehemently. “If you refuse to remove these handcuffs, I shall leave just as I am. I’m sure Catherine will wish to accompany me. Now good-bye!”

Allen was swift. A rope circled Susan's cuffed hands and drew her tightly into an upright position. Ruthlessly and without preamble, he stripped her bare. What could not be undone, he tore away brutally. "Will you still be running away?" he inquired.

"You son of a bitch! If you think being naked is going to stop me, you've got another thing coming. Anyway, even with chained hands, I can still drive. Catherine, are you coming?"

"But you're tied to that post," Catherine said. "I don't think we're going anywhere."

"That's the first sensible thing either of you have said," Allen conceded. "Is that a cane I see hanging on the wall?"

"Leave it alone. Don't you dare!" Susan exclaimed. "I don't want you caning my bottom. You've got absolutely no right. You're trespassing."

"Ah, I take it therefore, Miss White, you do not want your bottom caned." Allen was in an expansive mood. "But I see another little item hanging here as well."

There was a strained silence. Both girls had also seen the quirt, the heavy braided stock, and the two heavy dangling thongs. In her first quivering doubt, Susan suggested, "Look, Mr. Morehouse, can't we talk this over? You're being ridiculous, you know. This is my property. You can't possibly come in here and use my own quirt on me. Or

perhaps you're simply joking? For your sake, I hope you are."

"Never more serious in my life, love. I'll just give you an introductory thrashing. Nothing to get excited about."

"Allen, stop it—you're frightening Susan!" Catherine was genuinely concerned. She put her chained hands on a masculine arm and pleaded. "Please, leave us alone, or if you feel you absolutely have so talk to us, can't we make some coffee and be sensible about it? Poor Susan hasn't done a thing to deserve—"

"Damn nice idea, sweetheart. She'll still get the thrashing, of course, so she has a hot ass to sit on while we have our coffee. Can I trust you not to go running off, or do you want to be tied?"

"Oh, Allen, this is awful! Of course I don't want to be tied. I don't want any of this. I just want you to let Susan go." Catherine was genuinely concerned. She recognized the male quality of Allen's voice and heard in it the determination it might be hard to counter. Anxiously, she pleaded, "Look, this is all my fault. It's been fault from the beginning. You getting knocked on the head was my fault, and Susan being tied up in her own barn is my fault too. Let her go and tie me there instead—then whip me. You seem as though you have to whip somebody, and I'm sure I deserve it more than she does. Please, Allen?"

He turned to grasp her by bare shoulders and twist her to

face him. He kissed her, patted her bottom, and said, “You’re a good girl, Catherine, and I won’t have you being disappointed. You’ll get that little bottom of yours caned as often as you want. In fact, more than you want. But in the meantime, this little bitch here needs my attention. Let’s get it over with.”

“Don’t you dare!” Poor Susan was still relying on feminine indignation to win the day, but her confidence in it waned as Allen selected the quirt from the hook on the wall. Breasts heaving, she pleaded, “Don’t use that awful thing on me—please! If you must be brutal, then use the cane.”

“But you said—”

“Never mind what I said,” she responded, blushing. “I simply prefer the cane.”

“In that case, I should most certainly use the quirt.”

“Damn you, do what you like! I refuse to bargain with you. I think you’re an unmannered boor.”

“And I think you’re a spoiled little stewardess who needs her skin properly marked with her own quirt, and that’s what I propose to do. You can leap around a bit the way you’re fastened—I don’t mind in the least.”

Catherine wanted to cry. Everything had gone wrong, and it was all her own fault. It all stemmed from her own silly fantasies and obsessions. She could well understand what Allen was doing. To him, it would seem like a rational act to

try what he would call knocking some sense into a pair of silly females. She could well imagine the process would be painful. It would certainly be painful for poor Susan. Instead of weeping, she grasped Allen's arm and bluntly stated, "No, I won't let you. Allen, please don't. That thing probably hurts terribly. It's supposed to be used on horses, not on naked girls."

It was demeaning and humiliating, and it left Catherine wanting to cry more than ever. It only took Allen a couple of minutes to fasten her the same way as Susan. The plight of the two girls was identical. They gazed upon each other in wry dismay. But they were given no time to argue. The first blow with the quirt was swift and sure. It lapped Susan's bottom from hip to hip, and evoked a squeal which was a mixture of pain and anger. "You bastard! You complete—"

She got no further. The quirt punctuated her exclamations with a second singing snap across her skin. Defensively, the one-time stewardess leaped from side to side as best her tied hands would permit. All she achieved was to present a different target for Allen's attentions. He cut and swished away with casual unconcern at whatever portion of herself Susan made available to the quirt. As thought for a spectator's gallery, Catherine added her own pleadings to those of her mistress until Allen paused, looking from one to the other of the disturbed young woman in wry amusement. "My god, what a pair of cackling hens you two are!" he commented, forcefully pointing the quirt at

Catherine. “Look here, you—I hadn’t intended on whipping you, but if you keep up this racket, I will. Now keep quiet!”

Catherine was actually awed. She had never seen Allen Morehouse in such a mood. The red streaks turning to scarlet upon Susan’s skin were graphic proof of his resolve. Feeling herself a traitor, she remained mute while two more cuts were planted on Susan’s skin. The one-time stewardess and now one-time mistress had given up her evasive actions and contented herself with burying her face against her bound hands to give the omnipotent male every opportunity to do his work. It was not an intentional pose, but it achieved a purpose. Allen stopped and allowed the quirt to dangle from a limp arm, surveying the damage he had done to his female victims. The scarlet lines should be enough to teach any girl a lesson, and anyway, it was just the beginning. For now, though, he was content to consider it phase one. The two girls still had far to go, for their walk back to the house, the two girls were linked by rope from neck to neck. It gave them only four feet of freedom, their hands still handcuffed. Behind them, Allen Morehouse swished the quirt suggestively to keep them aware of his authority. Both girls wanted to say much, but neither said a word. Reaching the living room, he seated himself comfortably and told his two captives to kneel facing him at a distance of ten feet. The girls looked at each other with questioning distaste. Neither wanted the humiliation, but each suspected what was likely to happen and knew there was nothing they could do about it.

Dejected, they knelt before the male.

“I’m not sure it’s the same lesson for both of you,” Allen explained patiently. “You need a lesson young lady,” he said, pointing the quirt at the cringing Susan. “You need to be brought down a peg or two. You’ve been riding much too high.” He turned his attention to Catherine and said, “As for you, you ridiculous creature, the only thing I can see is to beat you steadily until you’ve had enough. I won’t be brutal about it. In fact, I shall do it with some finesse. But by the time I’m through with you, you’ll have no unsatisfied yearnings to seek out sundry dictators in foreign lands. Your own parts will be hot enough without anything they might have to offer.” He surveyed them quietly and then added, “I want both of you to tell me you understand what I’m going to do.”

Once more there came the exchange of timid glances, and the same message passed between the restrained girls. Chained hands rose instinctively to roped necks, but the knots were not there to find. They were as captive as any pair of maidens could possibly be. “I understand all too well, you bastard! And you’re going to regret this.” Thus Susan made her declaration.

Catherine stood irresolute. She felt certain if she could throw her arms around Allen’s neck everything would be all right, but her roped neck and chained hands stopped her. She looked at her companion in distress and then at the stern man. Disgusted, she admitted: “Very well. I un-

derstand of course. I understand. I've already said the whole thing is my own fault. I suppose I deserve whatever you're going to do." She flowered and exclaimed vehemently, "And don't dare call me a masochist! I'll hate every stroke and every hour you keep me chained." Her defenses broke and she wailed in desolation, "Oh, Allen. please let us go! Please stop this horrible nonsense. You're frightening us. Look, if you'll only let us loose and be sensible, I promise I'll do anything you want from now on. I'll go to Daddy and be a good girl."

"Oh, indeed you will, my love, but not until after I've attended to you. When you go back to Daddy, it will be to stay there, not go waltzing off on some damn fool quest to get your butt warmed up again. I know you, Catherine."

Allen Morehouse had left neither of his captives much to say.

They knelt in docile submission, their joined hands covering their pubic hair and the rope coffle tight upon their necks. Solemnly, their master continued his instructions: "I'm going to put you on a strict regime. Each morning when I free you from whatever bondage you have been put in you will both assume the suitable position for me to cane your little asses. I promise you nothing too drastic, but enough to start you out properly on your day."

Once again the two girls exchanged questioning glances. They knew there was nothing to stop this man from keep-

ing his promise.

If what he had just said was what he truly wanted, then most certainly they would be compelled to obedience. They listened silently to further instructions.

“Another thing—neither of you do enough good, honest work. From now on, every day you will be allocated certain chores. To begin with, I am considering the sawing of logs for the fire. I noticed quite a lot of dead wood piled outside. Well, it will be your job to saw it into suitable lengths. How does that idea hit you?”

“I’d prefer to go to prison for kidnapping,” Susan retorted angrily. “I certainly don’t intend to be a member of a two-girl chain gang.”

“Can you avoid it?” Allen asked sternly. “I’m not giving you any choice in the matter, and you know what disobedience will get you.”

The girls fell silent. Unhappily, they sank back upon their heels and, without intent, bowed their heads. They were a picture of penitence. But if Allen Morehouse’s heart was touched, he gave no sign. “You can both address me as ‘Sir’. If you forget, you may then bend over for a nice hard one to your bottom. I consider that extremely merciful. You will soon become accustomed to addressing me formally and in the proper manner.” He laughed. “I could insist on being called ‘Master’, but it’s a bit theatrical for me. ‘Sir’ will do nicely.”

“Sir, if you’ll only let us go, I’ve got some money in the bank—you can have it all.” Susan’s voice was tremulous.

“Good god, girl, does it sound that bad! A warmed bottom every morning and a bit of hard work—it’s not going to kill you.”

“But that’s not all, is it… Sir?”

“Oh, by no means. You’re very perceptive, Miss White. Just goes to show what a whipped bottom does for a girl. Now it’s not all. In addition to what I have told you, you will be chained in the kitchen in the late afternoon, and I’ll expect a banged-up dinner to be properly prepared.”

Another questing glance between the delinquents, but the dinner demand was hard to deny. They waited without hope.

“In addition to the dinner duties, you will then serve me at the table. I will be the only guest. The two of you will play the role of maids. If you don’t have anything here, I’ll get you a couple of little aprons to cover your pubic hair when I go to town. Dinner will be a very formal meal. When I have finished, the two of you may enjoy the scraps, but you will do so on the floor—you will not sit at the table.”

“That’s ridiculous! You’re being absolutely absurd. I may as well get the whole thing over with right now and refuse. You should do the same, Catherine.” Susan glared, her breasts heaving with indignation, but she watched the man

who was now her master with increasing apprehension.

Allen Morehouse rose, still holding the quirt. “You forgot the proper address,” he said firmly. “Since this is all new to you, I will settle for a simple five strokes. Prepare yourself.”

It was a battle of wills. Catherine watched, awed by the electric current in the air. Susan’s agitation was tugging at the rope upon their necks. She moved over to give the sentenced girl a greater latitude of movement. The hostile glares continued as the moments ticked by, and then with a stiffened sob, Susan twisted her nakedness to rear her already punished bottom into inviting prominence. Catherine could see her clenched fists and could well guess the clenching girl accepted the five strokes from the whistling quirt with an obvious trembling, but no more sound than gasping moans with each fresh impact from the quirt’s two thongs. At the end of the punishment, Allen barked a belligerent, “Well?”

“Thank you, Sir.” The words were uttered in bitter defeat. Susan White had met her match.

8

Bound

EXCEPT FOR THE LABORED BREATHING of two girls, the room was silent. It was a pleasant, well-lit room. Its only fault was the bizarre furnishing. Catherine and Susan sat upon a low bench, their feet indecently spread wide and their ankles firmly locked in stocks. In addition to this indignity, they have been compelled to bend forward and offer their hands and arms to a second set of stocks above the first at the level of their eyes. Thus, with ankles and wrists firmly in the clutch of oak, they sat immobilized, angry, and far from happy. The strangely fabricated engine in which they were held was sufficiently implacable to have discouraged them from attempts at escape. They sat, dejected, consoling each other with moans and plaints.

“I should have more sense than to have the damn thing made!” Susan avowed with wise hindsight. “A guy I know made it for me, and it was his idea to make it to hold two. At that time, I never dreamed it would hold even one. But look at us now! I’m so goddamn mad!”

“I wish he’d at least made it so we didn’t have to lean forward like this with our arms stuck out,” Catherine said. “Allen’s being so mean. I’d never have thought it of him. But I suppose I have been a bit of a pain in the ass for him.”

She sighed. “I’ve been a pain in the ass for everybody, including you.”

“If he hadn’t used that damned quirt on us before planting our behinds on this wooden atrocity, it wouldn’t be so bad.” Susan wiggled ineffectually. “Anyway, this whole thing is for the birds. And to think it was me who bought the wood for it! Catherine, somehow we absolutely must escape. The things this guy thinks up—”

“We’ll never escape,” Catherine said dismally. “But after he’s gotten bored with giving us a hard time, he’ll let us go. I’m sure he will. Allen is really a good guy.”

“All right then, you go to work on him. I don’t seem to have any charm at all for that son of a bitch.”

It was not an elevating conversation. They had no reason for optimism. It was their fourth day, and Allen Morehouse had kept his vow. Each morning the two girls were forced into the shameful posture with bottoms reared to receive the quirt. Thus, sore and shamed, they started their day. The hard wood on which they were seated was a constant reminder of this infliction. For Susan White, there was not only the question of a possible escape or release, but also the question mark looming large in her mind as to what would happen then.

“So, okay, darling,” Susan said, voicing her thoughts, “if he sets us free, which way will you be headed?”

“He’ll make certain I go back to Daddy,” Catherine said with assurance. “If he didn’t, then I’d let you handcuff me and we’d start all over again. Honest, I would! But it’s not likely to happen. I don’t think Allen likes lesbians. I think all men resent the idea of girls nibbling at each other. We’re supposed to be exclusively for them.”

Catherine looked sideways at her companion in distress. She had seen Susan naked many times, but had never ceased to marvel at the exquisiteness of the golden-haired girl to whom she owed loyalty. Most girls in the bent posture she was in would have exhibited the weakness of drooping breasts, but neither Susan nor Catherine were guilty of the faintest sag. Both were young and taut and vibrant. It seemed so wrong that they should be held thus on a sunlit summer day. Catherine could comfort herself with guilt, but not Susan. She had done nothing to bring herself this masculine punishment. When their master came, he radiated good will.

“Well, well, two damsels in distress.” He made a slow circle of the prisoned pair. “If it’s any comfort in your present circumstances, you look charming.”

“No, we don’t. We look horrible and untidy—we’re both a mess. Oh, Allen, please let us out of this. Can’t you think of something else to do to a couple of girls you’re mad at?” Catherine’s demand carried sincerity.

Allen laughed. “These old houses and that old barn offer all

sorts of possibilities, love, but I don't think you'd care for any of them. If I were you, I'd enjoy this while you can."

"How long do we have to enjoy it?"

"I was thinking in terms of the rest of the day. You've only been sitting here a couple of hours, you know."

"You mean a couple of centuries," Catherine said bitterly. "If you do leave us here all day, we'll both be dead. Allen, don't you understand? This horrible thing you've got us fastened into is an instrument of torture. I don't think it was ever intended for a couple of innocent girls."

"Ah, but it was!" Allen leered at his unwilling captives. "How about it, Susan? It's your property, and you made it to fit girls. If it had been designed for men, the holes would be far too big for you, but the way you had it made, it's delightfully snug on you girls."

The captives were doubtful about repartee. They could not be sure whether the man who held them prisoner was being facetious or serious. Their main concern was that he might not comprehend the rigor of what he was now inflicting. It seemed innocent enough, but as the hours passed it would become increasingly impossible to bear. Their backs ached, their seats burned horribly, and their arms were weary. Gloomily, they told him so, but received only the bright assurance that it was "good for them". They longed to scream, but Susan contented herself with a single indiscretion: "You're an absolute son of a bitch… Sir!" Her

emphasis on the title was an insult in itself.

There was a strained silence. Both girls were breathless with fearful anticipation. Susan wished she had better control of her anger. She looked at the punished girl at her side. “I’m sorry, Catherine—it just slipped out.” She glared at the waiting man and retorted, “All right, punish me! You’re holding the damn quirt, or do you prefer a hot iron this time?”

“Ever had the soles of your feet whipped, Miss White?” Allen inquired casually. “I understand it’s an interesting experience for a girl.”

This time the silence was from pure shock. Both girls instantly realized the terrible vulnerability of their feet. They were sitting on that portion of themselves usually reserved for punishment, but their feet were firmly held in a position to invite anything anyone wanted to do to them. The four soles of the two girls were the most prominent features of their predicament. Catherine’s response was instant and predictable.

“Allen, you mustn’t—I mean… Sir. Oh, please don’t keep making me call you Sir. It sounds so silly, and you mustn’t punish Susan that awful way. This is bad enough the way you’ve got us fixed now. Whipping a girl’s feet is absolutely barbaric.” She turned upon the watching male her most soulful gaze. “Susan didn’t mean it. You just make her so angry the words slip out. You mustn’t punish her. If you

have to punish somebody, punish me. At least we're old friends."

Allen laughed in delight. "Are we back there again? I've heard that one several times. The noble friend who gives her all to save the skin of the one she loves. Would you like me to write a bit of poetry?"

"Yes, all right, do that. Do anything, but don't whip Susan's feet. Allen, you're acting just the same as those dictator guys you disapprove of. Jamal never whipped my feet the whole time he had me."

"He probably will whip them damn good and hard if he ever gets you back, sweetheart. And I happen to know the bastinado is in common use within his jurisdiction. He's had more than one little girl limping around for a week or two."

It was simply dumb. Two swift strokes with the quirt, two agonizing peals of feminine anguish. Susan buried her cheek against a raised bare arm and quietly sobbed. Allen stood, watching what he had wrought and added a sober footnote. "I could just as easily have made that ten on each foot, or twenty for that matter. I'll tell you straight: I feel like an absolute bastard, but you two girls need the lesson. I'll probably feel this way a good many times before I'm through, though." He shook a warning finger at the weeping girl. "But don't you ever call me names again."

The man who owned them and who could bestow his fa-

vors as he pleased did so with a strict partiality. No doubt as one more step in the process of teaching her a lesson, he possessed Susan in a savage assault upon her sex which might well be called a rape. But Catherine was often taken to his bed, which she and Susan had once shared. The fact that she was tethered to it by collar and chain in no way affected her gratitude for something soft on which to sleep and for the opportunity to speak to him in private. Sometimes she remained silent, but mostly he listened to what she had to say. If she earned punishment by imprudence, the risk was hers. After her day of punishment, it was pleasant to lay naked by his side and exert her feminine wiles.

“But, Allen, you can’t keep us forever. How long does this go on? I’ve told you I’ll be good and go back to Daddy. Look, if you still believe I need more of your lessons, keep me, but let Susan go. She doesn’t deserve any of this.”

“Don’t be silly, pet. We’re in her home. Most of things I use to punish you belong to her. She bought them, I suppose, to use on you. I’m not all that fussy about lesbians, even she happens to be a Playboy centerfold.”

“Well, all right, but can’t you keep her a prisoner while you sort of look after me. I mean, you don’t have to punish Susan just because you punish me.” Catherine sighed. “I do think I’m being awfully reasonable about this whole thing. I ought to be hating you, but I’m not. I know why you’re doing this, but I do think you’re carrying it a bit far.”

“I’m going to get the island of Lesbos out of your system, sweetheart, and I’m going to make you wish you didn’t have a bottom. I’d just you to be about halfway there now.”

Men are so exasperating, Catherine thought. There were a hundred exclamations Catherine longed to make, but prudence kept her silent. She hoped what she did say held validity. “Allen, it doesn’t work always just the way you think. I’m not a bit sure the more you whip my bottom, the more I’m going to remember just that. I’ve already told you I hate it while you’re doing it to me, but afterwards it comes back, and the more it hurts the more solidly fixed it gets in my mind. I’m sorry. I wish I could tell you I’m already cured, but I can’t. I can only tell you the way it is.”

“Then let’s say I’m a callous brute who likes doing it to you. I do, you know. Caning that pert little ass of yours gives me almost as much joy as having an orgasm with you. Not quite, but it does come close.”

“It’s habit forming. It’s bad for you,” Catherine sad wisely. “I’ve heard of men getting so they have to whip a girl’s bottom before they can sleep with her. The cane first and then the erection. I don’t want you like that.”

“Sweetheart, we’re not married, you know.”

“Well, we might as well be the way you’re acting, and the way you hold me prisoner here is just like I was your wife. A wife gets held prisoner by a bit of paper. There’s not much difference between that and a few bits of rope. Allen,

please let Susan and me go. You can take me home in chains if it will tickle your male ego, but I doubt if my father will thank you for it."

"He will when I tell him the whole story." Allen considered the proposition silently for a few moments and then added, "Probably the most sensible thing for me to do would be to marry you. You're not safe running around loose."

The naked maiden, collared and naked upon the bed, stiffened tensely. For a moment she was breathless. She had never considered Allen in this light, and in view of what he had been doing to her and Susan, the idea seemed incongruous. At the moment he would have Susan somewhere about the house kept uncomfortably captive. Miss Catherine Mordant reasserted herself.

"That's silly, Allen. If I did marry you, I bet you'd continue right on the way you're going. Whipping girls is habit forming for you men." She gave him a sly, mischievous sideways glance. "I suppose you'd insist on me positioning myself every morning for the quirt?"

"Of course. I've come to have a lot of respect for the quirt. It would be the surest way to wedded bliss."

"Well, you know what you can do with your old quirt!" Catherine suddenly realized possibilities and hastily added, "If I was to say I'd marry you, would you let Susan go free? I mean really free—none of this handcuff stuff."

The man beside her yawned in mock boredom. “I haven’t even asked you to marry me, sweetheart. I just mentioned it as a possibility, one of the cures for your yearning for a beaten bottom.”

“There you go again! Having me with my bottom stuck up in the air and you slashing away at it with that horrible quirt or some beastly cane! If I didn’t owe you so much, I wouldn’t stand for it.”

“Do you have any choice, pet?” Allen was dryly amused. “I haven’t noticed you walking away mad.”

“I would if I could, but you never give me a chance. You ought to be ashamed the way you keep me chained or tied. I haven’t been free since you came.”

“I didn’t exactly notice your freedom then, sweetheart. Seems to me you were attached to something.”

Catherine flushed, her fingers clutching the collar around her neck. Allen was right, of course; he was always right. He wrote the rules by which she must now live. The captive girl knew the condition could not last forever, but it could last a long, long time. She thought back wistfully to those halcyon days with just Susan and herself inhabiting the tiny female paradise. She believed that could have gone on forever except for the intrusion of the serpent in their Eden. Testily, she declared, “All right then, don’t marry me. But you’ll still have to set Susan and me free sometime—you can’t keep us like this forever. Sooner or later you’ll get

bored and start feeling guilty."

"Bored!" Allen chuckled to himself. "Bored with you two? Honey, with you two, I have two slave girls I can do anything with, and you don't have a hope of talking me into letting you go." He reached a male arm beneath her bare back and drew her to him. "Come here, you! There's always one argument you idiot females understand."

In the days to follow, Allen Morehouse made no further mention of marriage. He knew he enjoyed a unique privilege and took the greatest possible advantage of possessing two of the most beautiful girls he had ever seen. He became ingenious in inventing things for their discomfort.

"This is getting desperate," Susan said irritably to the girl on the other side of the tree. "There has to be some way we can get out of the clutches of this son of a bitch. I don't see why you don't hate him the same as I do. He treats you badly enough. The only thing he does for you he doesn't do for me is screw you." Susan sniffed disdainfully. "He raped me that one time just to show he could, and since then he's left me alone. He really is a bastard the way he keeps us apart. We haven't managed to get at each other since he took over. Look, on those nights he takes you to bed, surely there's something you can do?"

"Oh, Susan dear, don't be so demanding. I'm no more able to get the best of him than you are the way he fixes you every night, and look at us now. It's absolutely hopeless.

We'll never get free of him. I thought at first he'd get bored, but he's loving every moment."

It was one of the kinder days. Allen Morehouse's pair of naked maidens were back to back against the same tree. The right wrist of one was handcuffed to the left wrist of the other on one side and vice versa on the other. They had a considerable latitude in which to struggle and could if they wished, circle around and around the tree from which there was no escape. By dragging on her companion's bare arm, it would be possible for either of them to examine their bonds, and they had done so several times in the forlorn hope of finding some trace of slack. But the cuffs were snug upon their wrists and after awhile they had given up hope and fallen into desultory conversation. Susan was tireless in her probings for release. She advanced a thought. "Look, Catherine, the guy has to be lonely. He doesn't have a wife or a girlfriend that we know about, and he's just walking around loose. Every man's looking for a female whether he knows it or not. Why don't you or I offer to marry him in return for freedom? I mean freedom for both of us! Think he'd go for it?"

Catherine recounted the one reference to marriage already made. She had come to regard it as no more than one of Allen's cynical comments on his favorite theme of "teaching her a lesson" or "being good for her". She contrived an unseen shrug and suggested, "Why don't you ask him? Any man ought to be glad to get you."

“That’s the whole point, honey. He’s already got me. He’s got you too. He doesn’t have to marry us, but surely he has to think a bit about the afterwards when he can’t keep us here any longer.” Susan sniffed. “But anyway, I’m too scared. He punishes me for damn near anything I say. I’d hate to think what he’d do to me if I proposed marriage.”

“But, Susan, if he keeps chaining us out here in the open the way he does, it’s only a matter of time before somebody’s going to find us. How do we act then? What do we say?”

Susan laughed bitterly. “About the only person who’s likely to find us is some tramp roaming the woods. It’s too isolated for kids. So what happens is simple to figure: the guy screws us and goes away laughing. Don’t even think about it!”

It was always thus. They went around in conversational circles or in confrontations of apprehension. They were captives most securely held. They were grateful to have each other for company in the long days of whatever tribulation Allen had hatched up. But there had been days in which even that was denied. They hated the solitudes he devised. They emerged from such travails both humble and chastened.

There had been the day of what they afterwards referred to as “the cupboards”. It was very simply that their hands had been hound behind their backs, and they had been put

into four-by-four compartments in the wall, but not together. Each cubicle had accepted a single naked girl and she had been locked therein. The cubicles were at the far ends of a largish room, and after they were left alone, the girls discovered they could hammer with their bare feet upon the walls and receive a similar but very faint message from their beloved. It had been an unsatisfying communication which soon died. They had sat upon the floor in almost total darkness and spent the day in an unsuccessful assault upon the nylon cords around their wrist. Upon release all they had for the man who owned them was reproachful looks. They were inclined to be tearful. Allen found the punishment unsatisfactory and did not use it twice.

The three of them fell into something of a routine. Resigned to male dominance, Catherine accepted each day and each solitude as they came. Gradually, she expected nothing else, but she did not always accept them in silence. She was usually extremely vocal. She suspected Allen sanctioned her complaints because he found them amusing. She was never punished for them, although quite often Susan was. Allen Morehouse shamelessly played favorites.

“Are you going to untie my hands after you’ve got me fixed the way you want me, Allen? It’s not nearly as frightening to a girl if she has her hands, even though she can’t do a lot with them. Allen, stop looking like Oliver Cromwell and listen to me!”

It was always the same. He spoke when he wanted to and listened when it suited his purpose. It did not suit his purpose now. Catherine stared at the contrivance on the grass behind the house without affection. “I bet you made this on purpose,” she accused. “And I bet I’m not going to like it. What do I have to do?”

It was a simple little piece of carpentry, a tiny platform from which rose a small wooden structure the height of a girl’s foot. Catherine stood upon the platform, her legs well apart, while her master encased her ankles with a board from each side, there were suitable holes. When the boards were pushed tight upon the feminine ankles and locked with two padlocks in tantalizing view, the naked girl discovered her punishment was simply to stand, her ankles held snug and tight within the wood which had been raised by the tiny platform sufficiently high that it would not be practical for her to sit upon the ground. It would not even be possible without hurting. Catherine was still looking down at this quaint imprisonment when her hands were untied from behind her back. “I think you mentioned having your hands free, didn’t you, honey?” Allen queried diffidently. “I like this.” He stepped back to admire his work. “You’d look quite ravishing if you knew what to do with your hands now that you’ve got them.” He laughed. “There’s really not much you can do except hold them behind your back again. You really are a lucky girl.”

It would be nice to scream and stamp her feet and use her fingernails as claws, but Catherine could do none of these

things, least of all the stamping of her feet. She spared a thread-bared glance of reproach and hautily said, “No gentleman would do this to a girl—certainly not a girl to whom he had proposed marriage.”

“Hey, hold on now, sweetheart!” Allen laughed at her ready use of what he considered a slip of the tongue. “I didn’t propose to you, but if I ever do, I’ll keep this little gadget in mind. It has a real virtue all its own.” He came close and reached up for her bare shoulders to pull her to where his lips met hers. He indulged in these intimate embraces often enough to keep his slave girl alert and wondering, but she had long since discovered they were no sign of male weakness. Allen simply enjoyed kissing her, so that’s what he did. She watched him amble away, presumably to do something unkind to Susan. But Susan was not in view, and Allen soon disappeared from sight. All that was left was a very limited view of rural upstate New York. Catherine sighed and tried to shift her feet for an easement of weight and a little additional comfort, but they would not much, they were fixed immovably and would stay like that for the rest of the day. She sighed again, but at least she had her hands. She looked at them woefully in a wish that she could use them to her advantage, but the padlocks would laugh at anything her fingers could do. It seemed a terrible waste. She did not often have her hands to use.

On the far side of the house and out towards the garden patch, Susan White was having her own travail. Her hands had not been untied, and her wrists were still crossed and

bound behind her back. Allen's hand was heavy on her bare arm. She knew it was the beginning of another day, a period she never endured cheerfully or without as much complaint as she dared make. When she beheld the narrow hole deep in the ground, at its bottom a pool of muddy water, her dismay overcame prudence. "You're not going to put me in there! Damn it, it's a vertical grave!"

"Do you want to sit down and slither yourself in there, or would you sooner I picked you up and dropped you?" Allen asked pleasantly.

"But you can't possibly! Look, you ridiculous man, I'd be standing in mud. And anyway, you're not going to bury me, are you?"

"Not in the true sense, dear girl, but this is an opportunity I just can't miss. If you've never had it done to you before—and I don't suppose you have—it's going to be a real experience for you."

"I'll get pneumonia with my feet all wet and in that cold ground."

"No, you won't, sweetheart. Your feet will get a mud bath which is supposed to be good for them, and it's no way chilly this time of year—you know that. Would you like your bottom caned again before I drop you in?"

"Look… Sir!" Susan's use of the title was, as usual, overdone. "My hands are tied. Do I have to have my hands tied

for whatever horrible thing it is you're going to do to me?"

"Are they indeed? I thought I noticed them. In fact, it was me who tied them, wasn't it?" Allen's conversational tone was deliberately infuriating. "Yes, they stay tied behind your back. You really have no use for them, believe me."

The bound naked girl was being edged closer and closer to what she saw as a terrible fate. She looked down into the dark, clammy space which had all the appearance of a miniature well. She could half guess the man's intent for her and wanted no part of it. Wearily, she implored, "Look, Mr. Morehouse, can't we possibly talk this over! I'm so tired of being a prisoner, and I don't see that it's serving any purpose at all. You're being mean to me because—"

"Because you've been nibbling on Catherine, and that's a damn bad habit to get an innocent girl into. I suspect you had her pretty well addicted by the time I showed up. I didn't come a moment too soon." Allen cupped Susan's breasts in exploratory fingers. One hand trailed down to perform the same intimacy upon the cleft between her thighs. His voice remained serious. "I suppose you've noticed, Susan, that I've left these little things alone. I've admired them, of course, and I've commented on them. You really are a beauty. Has it occurred to you that all three of them could be subject to separate punishments?"

"Don't be horrible. Look, do whatever you're going to do with me and leave it at that. I wanted to talk to you seri-

ously about letting me go. I think we ought to talk about it, but since you're in this mood..."

The ease with which Allen Morehouse picked her up was almost frightening. There was about this male strength a message of hopelessness. She would never escape it, nor would Catherine. Keeping their hands bound or handcuffed, as Allen always did, turned them both into neat little packages he could handle with facility. He did so now, and the naked girl gasped in dismay as mud enveloped her feet and oozed between her toes. It was a disgusting sensation and she now found herself viewing the world from ground level. If she dipped her head, her chin came into contact with the soil. Hating herself for the abject humility, she pleaded, "Please don't, please don't!"

It was simply a square of boards nailed together and hinged. They opened up to reveal the tiny circlet designed for a maiden's neck. A maiden's neck is of tiny dimensions, quite startling to anyone who has not dealt with them previously. Allen evidently had. The fit was perfect. The rough boards were harsh upon the maiden neck. Allen snapped the padlock and cheerily commented, "There! That makes you all neat and tidy. From a distance you might be mistaken for a watermelon. You're just the right height."

"Don't be disgusting. I think you're being beastly cruel. You don't need to do a thing like this to me. It's horrible. I bet there's worms and beetles and things."

The man was not yet through. He had provided a hammer and four stakes, and proceeded to drive each wooden peg deep into the ground beside a corner of the square of boards. When all four were driven as far as they could go, the square was held immovably. Since the square encompassed Susan's neck, she was as much a fixture as the wood itself. She voiced the fact emphatically: "Mr. Morehouse, Sir, I can't move. I can't do anything except stand here in the mud. Look, you can't possibly leave me like this!"

"Give me three good reasons why not, Susan. I'll listen."

"No, you won't. You know damn well you won't. If you want three reasons, I'll give them to you. One is that this is no way to treat a girl. Another is there's something awful likely to happen to me before you come back. And the third is I've never done a thing to deserve this." She gazed at him soulfully. "Have I?"

"I did mention something about nibbling."

"Oh, all right I knew you wouldn't listen. There isn't anything I could say that would make you listen. I think I'm going to cry, but I know you'll just watch the tears trickle down my cheeks and you couldn't care less. What have you done with poor Catherine?"

Allen ignored her question and left her alone. Susan was annoyed by the tears staining her cheeks with no one to see. She tried to get a foothold against which to brace an upward thrust, but her bare foot slipped on the damp soil

and she felt certain the square around her neck was immovable anyway. She sighed dismally as Catherine had sighed. It was one more day.

Their nights too were not without travail. They could not be sure of them because there was no pattern. On the night when Allen had handcuffed Susan to the foot of her own bed so she might kneel to watch his play with Catherine, he broached a subject Catherine would have preferred to forget. She was chained with the familiar collar and chain which enabled uninhibited lovemaking, but this was the first time Susan had been witness. It was not too devastating a thought. The girls had seen enough of each other and done enough together that this enforced voyeurism would add nothing to their shame. Shame accompanied each hour of their day. They might have become blasé had not their master varied his inflictions to keep their flesh forever quivering. Laying beside his chosen slave girl, he played idly with her nipples and that other part of her he had made so totally his own. His voice was reflective. “There’s something you never got around to, honeybunch,” he affirmed as though thinking aloud. “Our little sweetheart down at the end of the bed shoved a spoke in your wheel. She probably saved you from Jamal’s wrath, but she robbed you of something else.”

“She didn’t rob me of anything. She simply saved me from some awful fate I was foolish enough to get into. I’ll be for-

ever grateful to her."

"And for the way she's nibbled your pussy too, I expect," he said dryly. "I expect you had so much fun between each other's legs you forgot about Kandaka and Madanda." The naked slave girl stiffened. The man must have felt her suddenly tautened flesh. "I had word from him the other day. He wants you back."

Catherine was suddenly afraid. The two names brought back too many vivid memories which Susan had erased. She supposed Allen had erased them too with his unwelcome attentions. Now he must have something in mind or he wouldn't have mentioned Madanda at all. Quiet but scared, she asked, "What does he want?"

Her owner laughed "You, of course. What do men ever want except girls? You females are addictive. You're a menace." He laughed easily again. "Poor old Madanda's gone and caught your thing. I gather these things about whipping a girl's bottom are contagious. I gathered he would like to have another go at yours."

"But, Allen, you didn't tell him where I was—did you? I mean, is he going to walk in here on us?"

"I doubt it, sweetheart. I simply told him I had you in a safe place. He offered quite a lot of money. That little bottom of yours is earning itself a reputation. Here, I've been whipping it every morning without realizing what treasure I enjoyed. God, the way these African types toss around

money for girls!"

The collar and chain prevented Catherine's escape, but that was all. She turned in panic and grasped her master in her own bare arms and thrust herself against him in a terrible need for reassurance. "Allen, don't! Oh, please don't give me back to him. I'm cured. I know now how silly I was, but going back to Kandaka is the last thing I want. Don't you understand? The way you've been whipping us—it's got me so I don't ever want to see a whip or a cane again. Allen, I'm cured!"

Allen Morehouse listened quietly. The amused smile never left his lips. "You'll never be cured," he assured her. "And I've discovered I don't want you cured. But you can bet your boots I'm not wasting you on Madanda or anybody else. Not even for his lousy five million dollars."

"Five million dollars!" The shocked voice came from the bottom of the bed. Susan was kneeling upright, tugging at her handcuffed wrists. "You mean that idiot will pay five million dollars for whipping a white girl's bottom!"

Allen laughed at her eagerness. "That's right, but I suspect there's a bit more to it than that. I'm pretty sure he'd want to keep the girl around for awhile, have a few repeats, you know. Probably some innovations even I haven't thought of." He chuckled at a sudden realization. "Damn it, at current market rates, I'm getting five million dollars worth out of each of you for as long as I've got you safe. I'll have to

make doubly sure you don't get away."

The two girls exchanged another of their glances. Susan took the plunge. Vehemently, she said, "For five million dollars, I'd sell myself. If he'd put a period on whatever he wanted to do to me. I wouldn't want a life-long thing." Her voice trailed away into silence. She searched her master's eyes questioningly. "Would it be possible? I mean, could you arrange it so that I get delivered to him and the money gets put in a safe place until I'm freed?"

"I don't sell girls," Allen announced abruptly. "Forget it. I'm certainly not going to engineer such a deal. I won't be a go-between. You ought to know damn well those guys over there could make what I do to you here seem like child's play. Consider yourself lucky I'm me."

Susan knelt despondently where her handcuffed wrists compelled. She was not fastened to allow her to lay down and get out of sight. Since it was easier to watch, she simply watched, annoyed with her own envy of what she saw. She knew Catherine was treated more kindly than she during each day, except when they shared a similar punishment. But that her fellow captive should enjoy this Arabian nights' delight during the hours of darkness while she remained chained beyond participation was the unkindest cut of all.

If only she could escape!

Madanda was not mentioned again, he became no more

than a dark cloud beyond Catherine's horizon. A cloud which Allen dissolved a little more each day by his use of crop and cane and quirt. A smarting bottom was an accompaniment which each girl had to bear each day of their less prosaic punishments.

They cooked their master's meals in obedience to his edict. They served them in deep humility and ate only the scraps. Often they were left in the kitchen for lengthy periods of time. Heavy rings had been bolted into the floor, and each girl was chained to one of them by a single ankle. It was enough! It left the rest of them freed to do Allen's bidding. When they ruined so many knives in their futile efforts to defeat their locks on their ankles, they paid the penalty by being forced to extend their hands and received upon the taut palm of each no less than three strokes from a yellow cane they had come to respect. The punishment had left the two of them weeping like little girls, their bare hands clasped beneath bare armpits in an instinctive effort to comfort hurt. They were forgiven nothing. Grudgingly, each girl realized the crumbling of her feminine defenses. They no longer uttered threats and rarely pleaded. One day Allen told them that if their progress continued as it was, they could look forward to a not-too-distant freedom. They did not believe a word of it, but nonetheless cherished the thought. It had been Susan who spoke most often of escape, but it was Catherine who actually achieved it.

It had been a humiliating punishment, to sit astride the ancient gate, Catherine's feet bound to the weathered wood

below and her thighs and waist solidly roped to keep her in position. Neither she nor her master had noticed that in his preoccupation with his other bindings he had forgotten to tie her hands. It took the naked slave girl several minutes of sad contemplation of their plight before she realized what had happened. Allen had made a mistake. No doubt he had become so bored and blasé with his binding of his slaves that it had been easy to forget. It took the shocked girl nearly thirty minutes to twist and wriggle and tug herself free of her insecure perch. But when she did so, she found herself more free than either girl had ever expected to be again. She walked around in dazed ecstasy, then leaped joyously toward the bit of woodland which separated the farmhouse from the road. This time Susan would not be waiting in the car to make her captive a second time.

But thought of Susan stopped the flight before it had got well started. She could not possibly flee and leave Susan captive. She dismissed the thought of finding her way home and then bringing her father's resources to bear upon Susan's rescue. By that time her darling girl would have vanished. She began the search. Never on any day could either girl be certain what their master did with their fellow captive. Today she discovered the one-time mistress securely enclosed within Allen's latest invention. It was nothing more than a square box, a packing case. It would hold a girl only if she sat crouched with her knees well up. In this case, nothing was visible of the captive Susan except

her head and its tumbled mass of curls. The master had not even bothered with padlocks.

He had simply fitted the boards, two of them shaped with the inevitable half circle, around the captive neck and nailed them down. No amount of pushing any girl could do would get her out of such a fix. The girl, now well and truly held, gazed at Catherine in stark amazement.

It took only a few brief sentences to tell what there was to tell. “Darling, I’ll get you out of here.” Catherine surveyed the solid wood with both doubt and disfavor. “I don’t know how I’ll manage it, but I’ll find some tools. There must be some somewhere.”

But of the two of them, Susan was the more practical. Her voice was urgent. “Don’t fuss, Catherine. Don’t bother with me. You get away and then bring help later. There has to be something wrong with this whole set-up. Look, I’m not hurting. Run like crazy and bring help after you’re safe.”

“And leave you nailed into this beastly box? No way! If I can find some tools, I’ll have you out of here in no time.”

Anxiously, the boxed-up Susan watched her savior depart. She sighed, perhaps it would be best for the two of them to be together, but she was desperately uneasy. But her heart leaped when her former slave girl jubilantly returned with a hammer and large screwdriver. “This ought to do it, sweetheart. Just keep still.” Catherine was breathless. She fixed the screwdriver beneath the top plank and hit in a

timid blow with the hammer. The hammer glanced off the polished handle and grazed her hand. She yelped and was busily rubbing the injured member when a male voice from the doorway remarked, “Need some help, sweetheart?”

The two girls stared in dismay. Susan’s worst fears were realized. Catherine burned with indignation, her voice accusing, “You thought this whole thing up! You rotten stinker! You laid a trap for me. You’re supposed to be off on business.”

“You two are my business, sweetness. I’ll go about my other affairs after I’ve got you safely boxed. Come here and get your hands tied.” There was only one door. It was well behind the smiling man. Catherine knew her chances of reaching it were nil. She looked at Susan and shrugged in resignation, then turned her soulful gaze upon their master. “Allen, please don’t be a beast. Now’s your chance to let us go.” She gestured with free arms. “It’s so wonderful to be free—can’t you understand?”

“My heart’s breaking,” Allen said sarcastically. “Now if you’ll just come over here and turn your back and cross your wrists.” He chuckled. “It shouldn’t be hard to do—you’ve had lots of practice.”

It was a bitter surrender, but what else could she do? Sulkily, the naked girl about to lose her freedom did her master’s bidding. If her heat flared within her sex as the

strong male fingers entwined her wrists and tugged the nylon tight, so what? At that moment Catherine could have cared less about any association between a fresh captivity and the generation of sexual excitement within her loins. Once more she disgusted herself she had bungled. Standing, her hands safely bound behind her back, she watched their master drag in a second wooden box. At his gesture she distastefully stepped inside and crouched down to sit awkwardly as Susan must already be doing. She wanted to cry, but was too preoccupied for several minutes by the placing of the boards and the fitting of two of them around her neck, followed by the pounding blows of the hammer. She looked at the size of the nails being driven into cement her tiny imprisonment and realized how inadequate her screwdriver had been for such a task. When the last nail was driven home with a slamming crash, she felt almost as though encased in cement. The wood in contact with her neck had not been polished. It rasped horribly. In a final flare of anger, she said, “Allen, you’re an absolute brute!”

“Hurting, love?”

Catherine twisted her bound wrists. She moved her head enough to test the snugness of the wooden grips but there was no pain. Reluctantly, she conceded, “No, I suppose not.” Instilling all the venom she possessed, she added the male title, “Sir!”

Allen Morehouse nodded. He patted both the heads which

were the only visible portions of his two slaves. “See, I’m not a brute at all. It’s all in your mind. You can sit quietly in that box, Catherine, and think about your punishment for the escape attempt.”

The silence could be felt, but it was only momentary, giving way to Catherine’s outraged indignation. “Punishment! You absolute idiot! Why would you punish me for something you deliberately did yourself? You surely didn’t expect me to sit up on that rickety gate once I’d discovered I could get free.”

The male was delighted with her vehemence. Catherine could always be relied upon to come across with adequate indignation, but his voice was gently reproving. “Your proper course, honeybunch, was to come in and sit with Susan until I returned. You could have had a nice talk, and since you could move around, you could have got her drinks and maybe lunch and had a real pleasant picnic.” He shook his finger at her. “But not you! You go and get a hammer and screwdriver, and start messing up that lovely box I went to so much trouble to make. How’d you like to sit in there as you are right now for the next week?”

“I’d simply die.” Catherine sniffed and wrinkled her nose in almost the only gesture she could make. “I don’t deserve punishment at all, certainly not that.”

The master’s tone became thoughtful, his voice quietly musing. “I’ve got a bit tired of lacing into your bottom with

the quirt, Catherine. I'm wondering if you're not a big girl now. You've got the loveliest back. I wonder if we couldn't graduate you up to where you get it whipped. The proper whip, of course, and an appropriate number of strokes." He nodded brightly, as though confirming an inward vision. "I'm seeing something a bit ritualistic, sweetheart. Rather like they used to do with the military in ancient days when the delinquent was what they used to call triced up."

"I refuse to discuss it," Catherine affirmed hautily. But her dignity immediately dissolved. "Oh, Allen, please. Don't keep us in these boxes all day. If you let us out, I'll do anything—I'll agree to anything. Whip me all you want, but please get us out of these horrible little coffins."

"They're not coffins, dear heart. They are simply square wooden boxes. You just happen to be inside one. If I'd wanted to be real mean, I'd have slipped a couple of mice in with you." He chuckled. "In fact, that's not a bad idea. Keep you both amused all day."

"Don't you dare! Don't be so horrible. I'd absolutely die! You know what mice do to girls."

"No, I don't. Tell me, what do mice do to girls?"

"Well, never mind. I'm not too sure about it myself. If you put mice in here with me, I'll never love you again."

"My, my, so you really do care!" Allen cocked a sardonic eyebrow. "Just goes to show you, doesn't it? The surest way

to a girl's heart is through her bottom."

"You're still being beastly, and I wasn't talking about loving in that way at all. I was talking about behaving myself in bed with you. There's a difference, y'know."

They watched their master leave. It was the saddest moment of their day. "It wasn't your fault, darling. Stop worrying about it and stop worrying about that threat of his, I bet he never does whip you. I bet that whole story about tricing you up and all that stuff is just done to scare you into being a good little girl. When he doesn't do it, you'll be so grateful you'll love him more than ever."

"Do I love Allen?" The question was one of disbelief. "After the way he treats us—"

"Don't tell me you don't know," Susan's reprimand held a tinge of acid. "It sticks out a mile, and when I was chained so I had to watch you make love the other night, you ought to have seen yourself. You adore the guy."

The captive Catherine surveyed the proposition. It came as a surprise, and she was by no means sure it was correct. She had had this brother and sister feeling for Allen since the start, and she had always believed that brother and sister feelings led the couple nowhere. If she had responded to him in their lovemaking or in what she preferred to think of now as their coupling, it was only because of his immense competence and her own lonely need. Susan was dreaming, but it didn't matter. What mat-

tered was a return to the brief freedom she had just enjoyed. “I don’t suppose we can get out of these boxes?” she ventured tentatively, “Are your hands tied the same as mine?”

“Of course they are. Not that it would do us any good even if our hands were free. You saw the size of those nails he was driving in. What we need is a friend with a wrecking bar, and you know the chances of that!”

The boxed and bound maidens fell silent, fully aware of helplessness and also of a dreary day ahead. Allen Morehouse might be wonderful in bed, but he thought up the damnedest things for the daylight hours. In spite of herself, Catherine could not but consider marriage with this insouciant male who had first of all rescued her from an eastern enslavement and then diverted her neatly to his own devices. It was ironic indeed that striving to cure her of erotic inclination, he should have himself become addicted. But none of this altered the fact she was firmly encased within a box and her hands most competently bound behind her back. Catherine experimented with such motions as were possible, but decided immobility was best. Allen Morehouse had devised a most ingenious method of confining a girl in an infuriating frustration. Demandingly, she inquired, “Susan, if you had a chance to marry Allen, would you?”

“Like a shot. But what I’d like a lot better is for you to marry him and persuade him to sell me to Madanda for

that five million dollars. It would get us both out of this captivity and the one I'd be getting into might not have any wooden boxes with big long nails."

"It would be a lot worse than that," Catherine affirmed with deep conviction. "If you push Allen hard enough, he may arrange it for you, but I think you'd be crazy."

She giggled. "How would it be if I marry Allen and he and I keep you as our own personal little slave girl? I'd make sure he didn't whip you more than once a week."

"What would you say to that if it was the other way around? I bet you wouldn't go for it."

"There's only one thing would stop me, and that's the feeling I'd have of being redundant. Nobody wants to be the odd one out. What you and I need to do is escape."

"But Allen is in possession of my property!" Susan wailed. "I suppose if we lived in an apartment in the city, he'd move in on us. Darling, I think we have to figure on Allen, whatever we do." She sniffed angrily and added, "Whatever we can do, that is."

Each girl heard the sound and rasped her neck to turn and stare. Within the opened doorway stood the immensity of Adam Madanda. He was taking in their plight with undisguised amusement. His voice boomed, "Both of you ready for shipment, eh? I have to hand it to this Morehouse fellow, he's got the right idea about girls."

Catherine's world shattered, the wood box became a tomb. The cord around her wrists became the cruelest of chains. Worst of all, she could think of nothing to say. It was useless to shout at Madanda to go away or go back home or any of the usual platitudes. Madanda would do exactly as he wished. He had undoubtedly come for her, but would take Susan along as a bonus.

"I suppose you know what I'll do with the two of you back home," Madanda said.

"Yes, I know. You'll whip us. It's what men always do with girls. Can't you think of something else?"

Madanda nodded, seeing her point. "Like wooden boxes for instance?" he inquired. "I suppose you could call them a punishment after a girl's been in one for a week or two. It would take a bit of time. We'll be taking them along with us. In fact, I think we'll ship you in them. We can throw a tarp over your heads to take you onto the plane. It should work well."

Madanda turned his attention to Susan. "I owe you quite a lot, don't I, my pretty little stewardess? You'll pay your debt with stripes across your skin. A little solitary confinement in heavy chains might do no harm either. This is what you expect, isn't it?"

"Yes," the young voice said in despair. Madanda would be merciless.

“I’ll get you out of here before Morehouse gets back. I don’t dislike the guy, so there’s no need to know him around. Is this his house?”

“No, it’s mine,” Susan said dismally. “Why can’t you leave me here? I’ve never done you any harm.”

Madanda’s laughter boomed through the big room. “Not by your standards perhaps, but certainly by mine. I’ll tell you what, young lady, I’ll make arrangements for this place to be looked after and kept in your name. You can return to it when I’m through with you. Let’s say in about five years?”

“Allen told us you offered five million dollars if he would deliver Catherine to you. How about paying that for me?”

This was a language Madanda understood. “Why would I pay for you?” he asked contemptuously. “I can get you for nothing. I’ve got you now. I’ll have you back in Kadanka tomorrow. I’ll teach you then what is expected of a good servant.”

Catherine wanted to weep. This was too, too cruel. Allen Morehouse might be a trial and leave a girl with a permanently tender bottom, but Madanda was capable of almost anything. She knew this dark, huge man was fond of her, but that might ensure no more than her closer captivity. She looked in desolation at Susan White. “It’s no good, darling, he’s got us. You’d best accept his offer about looking after your place.”

“A wise child,” Madanda approved. He stood there in the doorway in his immensity. For the purpose he had shed all clothing above the waist and his extraordinary masculinity shone and shimmered in the room in all its ebony power. Catherine wilted at the sight of what once again became her fate. For Allen Morehouse to bind her and box her for no other eventual purpose than delivery to this ruler of a distant place was irony indeed. With the rough wood chafing her neck and the cords biting her wrists, she was terribly aware of impotence and mournfully pleaded, “You don’t have to take us, Madanda. Please leave us alone. We’re happy here, and you’ve no right to steal our lives away.”

“Happy!” Once more Madanda filled the room with the sound of laughter. “Nailed down in a box and with your heads sticking out as though awaiting the headsman’s sword! I suppose you’re naked and bound inside there?”

“Yes we are, but—”

Madanda paid no heed but shouted back down the passage and was almost immediately joined by a pair of servants Catherine recognized all too well. “Put them in the van. Leave them boxed as they are and cover them with a tarp when there’s any danger of someone seeing them. Take them straight to the plane.” He waved a genial good-bye to his repossessions and departed. The two servants summed the whole thing up neatly. Looking from one to the other of the captive maiden heads, one said, “You be plenty fuck,

fuck. You be plenty whip, whip. You have plenty good time. You most lucky girls."

They saw nothing of the ride, the van and the tarps defeated them. But, safe within the cargo bay of Madanda's aircraft, the wooden imprisonment of their necks was easily dealt with. Tears of chagrin came to Catherine's eyes as she winced beneath the blows and screech of raised nails and sundered wood. How easily men did things like this! How impossible such havoc for a girl! It was all too, too cruel. But when she was lifted from the crate, she could not repress a sigh of thankfulness as her bent knees returned to life and her neck no longer rasped as she moved. Susan White was given back her stewardess uniform, minus undergarments. Her hands were freed and she was roughly told to get back into the grave of her former occupation. Catherine was left simply naked and with her hands still tied with the cord Allen Morehouse had snared them in that morning. The plane had already taken off and when she went to the passenger area, she saw the diminishing homeland fade away beneath its raising wheels. Madanda was, as usual, busy with his documents. He nodded affably as though a naked girl whose hands were tied tightly behind her back was an everyday occurrence. "Susan will be serving drinks," he said absently as he turned a page. "You can stay as you are, I like the effect."

It was humiliation plus. For Catherine to sit or stand in diffident awkwardness was a punishment in itself. Without

hands she could do nothing useful but slump in a seat and gaze out of the window at a freedom she had lost. There would come an ocean and then another continent and there she faced a life imprisonment, the only bright spot of which would be the carnal attention of this magnificent creature sitting opposite her across the aisle. Being sexually possessed by Madanda as his mood dictated would give but temporary surcease from captivity. She hated his ability to transform her into bliss and cause her to moan in ecstasy. But this was as much a fact of her condition as bound hands. Slumped in her seat, she looked up in surprise at Susan White.

Susan had been to the restroom. She had used the time to improve her hair and do all the things Catherine longed to do but could not. As though there had been no intervening period, she carried a tray on which were tall glasses in much the same manner and attitude as the first time Catherine had seen her. What else could she do! Both girls knew revolt would bring them only striped skin or a punishment such as suspension or a return to the hated boxes. Madanda nodded in approval and reached in an absent-minded fashion for his drink. He paid neither girl the slightest attention. The second drink was for Catherine and was held to her lips by the uniformed stewardess who sat close enough for them to pick up each other's scents. Catherine had no fondness for alcohol, but realized wryly how often she had gulped it during her captivities as an anesthetic against fear or pain. Broken-hearted, she whis-

pered, “Oh, Susan, I’m so sorry. This wouldn’t have happened without me. It was me he was looking for, not you. Now you’re in this too, up to your neck.”

Susan White was “in it” indeed! When she picked up the empty glasses, she was curtly told to bare her bottom and expose it for the cane. It was no more than expected, but it came as a shock under the prosaic circumstances in which the three of them sat. She shrugged, bent over, flipped up the tiny skirt, and revealed the desired portion of her anatomy.

“Get the cane, you idiot girl. You know where it is. Bring it to me.”

The stewardess flushed, but hastened to obey. She went one step further and, kneeling, presented it to her lord after kissing its sleek yellow length. Madanda accepted it with approval. Once more the shaming ritual of the bend and the lifting of the cane as it cut at the innocent skin of an innocent girl, Susan White said a trembling, “Thank you, Sir,” then rose, rearranged her skirt, and sought to return the hateful instrument to where it was normally kept.

“Never mind, leave it here. I’ll be using it again,” Madanda said gruffly. “In the meantime, and until you need more drinks, I want you to kneel in the aisle. You know the pose, it presents no problem since you’re not either bound or chained.” He chuckled to some inward thought. “But that’s something we can correct in our own good time, isn’t it,

Susan?"

The stewardess arranged herself as ordered. Madanda's eye next settled upon Catherine huddled in her seat. "You look dejected," he remarked with heavy humor. "Come out of there. Stand up and look like what you are—a beautiful girl. Here, stand to the other side of me and stand erect with your head up, don't slouch." He guffawed at his own wit. "Tell you what, if you can wiggle out of those cords Morehouse put on you, I'll excuse you from the stripes you will otherwise receive. Go ahead, don't hesitate to try. There's no penalty for that." He returned in instant absorption to his work.

The two girls looked at each other in shared dismay. They dared not speak, nor did they break pose. It took a space of minutes for Catherine to remember she had permission to strive to free her hands. But what was the use? The permission was probably nothing more than a sly piece of Madanda's humor. She could not have freed them in the box, and she could not now. Yet if she did not try, Madanda could easily be annoyed. Quite probably, he did not realize the depth of resignation to which she and Susan had sunk in their acceptance of bonds. They no longer expected to escape or gain freedom from their own efforts. As unobtrusively as possible, she twisted and tugged enough to give the illusion of intense effort. That she would be punished for failure was a foregone conclusion.

Susan White was sent on another errand. On her return it

seemed almost a matter of course for her to touch her toes and flip up her skirt once more to receive the stinging cut which she took with remarkable fortitude before resuming her kneeling shame. “I suspect young Morehouse tanned both your rumps sufficiently to get them toughened up,” Adam Madanda observed shrewdly. “We’ll see about that. A girl’s got more than one place, you know.”

Catherine did not get free, but she was not punished. She watched unhappily while Susan was compelled to strip and place her hands for binding. The two repossessed slave girls were then marched down the steps to where the soldiers waited and the car was in readiness. Madanda’s residence greeted them with a hundred memories. Susan was taken to a fate unknown, but Catherine had instantly guessed what would be done with her. There was an inevitability about the little post and the chain out in the courtyard. She was certain this punishment for girls had some symbolism in this eastern place and gave Madanda some particular satisfaction. She was marched back into the courtyard and to the concrete square with full military honors. When the collar was locked back upon her neck, it was as though the intervening time had not existed. The airplane had transported her back to the medieval disciplines of Kadanka. It was not until she had stood in silent meditation for a couple of minutes and watched her escort disappear beyond the walls that she realized they had forgotten to untie her hands. Or perhaps they had not forgotten at all. She walked the span of her tether in all

directions. She looked around, but saw no watching eyes. In resignation to an ancient punishment, she sank to her knees and then slumped back against the pole from which her span of links tinkled and rattled every time she moved. She was willing to believe she would be here a long, long time before Adam Madanda decided on exactly what to do with her. She thought longingly of Susan White's little farm house in the country, realizing now the happiness it had given her, longing for a return she would never know. Allen Morehouse would have discovered their disappearance and if Madanda had left no written word, would have to draw his own conclusions as to what had happened. The only bright spot Catherine could see was his undoubted deduction. He would put two and two together and come up with the name of Adam Madanda. But what good would it do? He had rescued her once, but it would not happen again, she was sure of it.

The captive girl was denied the solace of a pattern. She remained chained to the little post throughout the night, sleeping as best she could and as she had previously done when tethered to the post of Prince Abed Jamal, but finding oblivion in exhaustion. In the morning, she ruefully recognized how easy it would be to think of her condition as a homecoming, a return to something holding high reward. But the girl who brought her food and a bowl of water summed it up in the same manner as the soldier the day before "You very silly girl. You be bad punished." She untied the captive hands and left the chained girl to her

own device. An hour later a military escort took her upon a three-foot pedestal so fashioned as to provide a foothold at its apex and on either side of a tapering prong of stone rising between her legs to the inevitable sharp point precisely beneath the place she least desired. An ankle shackle clinked shut and the military departed after a smart but sardonic salute.

It had happened so swiftly Catherine was uncertain of her condition until she had taken time to fully discover its animosity. Her ankle was chained with only a couple of links upon the truncated column to compel the soles of her feet to rest solidly upon spaces both provided and shaped for the purpose. There was no space for motion. The rising tapered shaft between her feet forbid much movement and was a constant threat, a girl thus fastened would not dare fall asleep! Catherine gazed at the floor below and instantly realized she dared not step down to it with her free foot. To do so would leave her condition worse than now, although since her hands were free, she debated the possibility of taking such a step. and if it proved unprofitable to swing herself up by the use of her hands against the tapering top of the column. She realized, of course, the whole situation had been cleverly designed to leave her in a quandary. She had little doubt eyes were watching the decisions she might reach. Undoubtedly, there would be traffic through the great hall and the passersby would view her with a keen amusement, perhaps even pausing to enjoy her discomfiture. Adam Madanda was the first

“A living statue, beloved child.” His voice was silk. “You grace my home, it bids you welcome.”

Catherine was not yet tired, she was well aware of shame in the posture she must hold. Dejected, she said, “I thought you loved me, Adam. You did once. I thought you desired me, but you leave me chained to a post in the courtyard through the night, and now you exhibit me to be laughed at by all your staff. Adam, this is a beastly way for a girl to have to stand.”

“I still adore you, child. Why would I not? You will be loved full well in my own good time. It is not for you to ask or instruct.”

“You you’ve got that threat of punishment hanging over me. Some awful whipping or something.”

“That in its own time too.” Madanda’s eyes lingered lovingly upon her frustrated curves. “My men forgot your hands. I will have this attended to. I wish you could see yourself, dear. You are exquisitely lovely.”

“Adam, if you are fond of me, why must you torture me like this all the time?”

“Torture! Would you say I have tortured you since the repossession?” His tone was seemingly one of genuine interest. “Is this torture the way you stand right now?”

“Well, no, I suppose not. I don’t suppose being chained to the post all night was torture either. I suppose it makes

sense to you, but it does not to me. Please, don't make me stand here like this."

He paid no heed, but silently circled her standing nudity several times before nodding in satisfaction and departing. Half an hour later a girl came with handcuffs.

"Behind your back, missy."

The simple command almost prompted Catherine to step from her perch. That a servant girl should be sent on an errant to chain the hands Madanda professed to love was a deliberate indignity. But if she refused to so posture herself, undoubtedly it would be a man next time, and the girl to be handcuffed was acutely aware of the tapering point beneath her sex, a struggle was not practical. In abject surrender, she placed her hands behind her back and held them still while they were circled in the familiar steel and prisoned snug and tight. "I bet you not step down now," the laughing girl said slyly. "You not get back up again, you stand one foot high up and one foot very tired. You be very sorry girl." Laughing, she departed.

It was not exactly lonely on the pedestal. Servants came and went, even some visitors who cocked an amused eye but seemingly considered her of less social consequence than merited their further attention. It was a loneliness within a loneliness, bearing its own shame.

It was not long before weariness added its threat. It is hard for a human foot to sustain its owner's weight if not

allowed movement. Whatever motions the captive girl dared make were small, not enough to ease tired tendons and aching muscles. More and more, she came to hate the tapering length advancing upward within her thighs to bring its points within the distance of a threat. Wryly, she tested the latitude allowed, flexing her knees to lower her cleft down upon the pointed prong. Contact was almost instant. She resumed her pretty pose and wept in bitter frustration. It was a sad and sorry young woman who was finally lifted from the pedestal and taken back to the courtyard, the post, and the collar around her neck.

It was wickedly clever but only cruel enough to tax her to the limit. Catherine found herself scarcely daring to move, the least movement added to the agony of the little lumps on which she knelt. She looked to either side and realized there was nowhere to go. The small protuberances mocked her in all directions. Her bound ankles prohibited any real attempt at release, but it was her hands she found the most frustrating of all. The collar was of metal, firmly locked. She could forget about dislodging it. Her handcuffed wrists were tethered to it by a short length of locked chain. As on the previous occasion, Madanda was not far behind the departure of his men.

“Most charming, as usual, dear girl. I trust you find the floor uncomfortable.”

Catherine looked at the ruler of the kingdom. She did not even think to plead, she had been cured of useless plead-

ings, and could think of nothing else to say except, “Does it give you pleasure to see me like this, Adam?”

“An interesting arrangement of your person, don’t you think?”

“I can’t do anything with my hands except dry my tears and arrange my hair.”

“For what other purpose would a woman desire hands? They will be freed in ample time for when we return to lovemaking.”

“When will that be?”

“When you have learned a few lessons and some extra humility. You will be interested to know I have designed some delightful travail for your charming companion. Dear Susan is learning the same lessons as yourself. I suspect her little farm in the country is receding further and further into space. Oh, and by the way, I received a phone call from your Allen Morehouse. He’s deduced where you are and demands your release. Unfortunately, he is in no position to offer me something of value in return. He is a reasonable man and will probably consider my offer of a female of lesser quality than yourself. I may carry on negotiations with him to this end.”

Catherine watched her master’s retreating back. Her life seemed to be one of these retreating backs after another. She wept her tears and dried them with her chained hands.

She looked in desolate resignation down at where her knees received their agony, an agony which did not recede with time but seemed instead to constantly increase. It was so simple and so deadly effective. If she had secrets to disclose, she would disclose them now. The hours stretched ahead in forbidding procession.

There had been a change. The square was not of concrete but was of tiles since there had been no time for ought else but the post was as firmly imbedded in the center of the square as was her own. It was distant twenty or twenty-five feet where she stood collared and tethered. Upon the square of tile was a figure of a naked girl.

Catherine viewed her companion in disbelief, the pose enforced upon her was grotesque. She had been laid down upon the ground with her feet against the post, then one foot alone had been raised and shackled to its blunt peak, there to stay and hold her in a posture impossible to ease. Susan White had been laying on her back when Catherine had been escorted back for the night, but now she twisted over to raise herself upon her elbows and watch the chaining of her companion. When the soldiers had departed, she said, “Look what he’s done to me! This is the damnedest and lousiest fix he’s had me in. I can’t stand up unless I stretch myself to spitting and there’s no point in that. Do you think he’ll ever get over his peeve and treat us like girls?”

Catherine walked to the limit of her chain. She was still far

short of Susan's lovely nudity. The ex-stewardess was painfully turning and twisting to seek some sort of comfort while she talked, but her ironed ankle denied anything she sought. She contented herself by allowing some portion of her weight to tug at her raised and prisoned leg while she twisted her torso into some semblance of normalcy, resting upon one arm. "You can't accuse Madanda of torturing us," she said in disgust. "But the things he thinks up are clever. They're all designed to reduced us to a couple of nothings." She tugged angrily at her prisoned foot above her head. "Look at this now! There's no way I can appear anything but ridiculous. Cathy, darling, can't you do something about him? He's in love with you. He's not in love with me. Couldn't you smile at him or part your legs or something?"

"If he is in love with me, he isn't showing it. Look at me now! I'm chained out here in the courtyard same as you, and everyday I go through some rotten humiliation which is usually damned painful."

"You're just being softened up to make a good African wife. Gosh, I wish he'd marry me—all that lovely money!"

But there was no escape for the two girls. They spent the following day in each other's company, but their condition was no less onerous and held a quiet touch of pixie humor. The great hall appeared infinitely versatile in its provision for delinquent damsels. Their travail proved to be a vertical pillar of four to six inches in diameter and at above shoulder level a couple of heavy planks, the orifices in

which clearly told their intent. Each girl was positioned by her guard, a yoke was raised and fitted to her neck covering only half of it. The timber itself finding its center and pivot in a prepared grove in the pillar. The second yoke filled its function with obvious neatness. The girls obediently placed their wrists in the half prisoned necks and the final timber closed snugly upon the entire ensemble. Centered within the grove of the vertical post, the now locked halves of the yoke were held fast but gave freedom of a circular perambulation to its prisoners at a distance from each other of ten or twelve feet. With the final click of locks the guards departed laughing and the captives eyed each other in disgust. “It’s just one more of the same,” Susan said morosely. “But at least we can see each other.”

“Let’s take a short walk,” Catherine giggled. She was relieved by the absence of pain “Let’s see if we can go around and around.”

They could go around and around indeed! It was like being in two sections of a revolving doors except there was no emergence into freedom. The slow circular plodding of the two captives proved only the obvious. They could walk around and around to their hearts’ content, but they would never ever get free. The massive yoke beneath their chins and their hands was expressly designed for the column within which it so neatly functioned. After a few revolutions, they stopped and stood in pathetic helplessness, awaiting visitors.

Madanda was in high good humor. “It’s a good thing you’re the same height,” he observed genially. “I’ve thought of a small diversion for you. After I’ve departed one of the servants will arrive with an appropriate instrument to urge you into motion. You will circle the pillar all day, no need for speed, just so you keep walking. The exercise will do you good. I loathe fat women.” He departed, obviously having enjoyed the interview with mischief.

“The rotten son of a bitch!” Susan exclaimed bitterly when he was out of sight.

“Well, walking probably isn’t much more tiring than standing still,” Catherine consoled. “Look, darling, don’t be too rebellious and get more marks on your skin. There’s enough there now.”

To add insult to injury, the new arrival, instructed to ensure their constant movement for the day, turned out to be an adolescent maiden with mischievous eyes and an obvious intent to do her duty. Immediately upon arrival she gave each helpless bottom a sure swift stroke to make her charges twist and yelp before casually explaining, “You walk. You no walk, I whip. Master give me lovely cane. Now you start!”

The youngster made the whole thing worse, but that was her function. She also inhibited frank speech, no doubt rebellious remarks would be reported to their owner and his disapproval etched upon their skin. The adolescent bundle

of mischief informed them her name was Zenna, and they would be required to address her as Miss Zenna or face a terrible retribution. Catherine simply nodded, but Susan swallowed a torrent of bitter words. Without enthusiasm, they took their first step into an uninviting day.

They would never know Zenna's terms of reference. Cathy suspected the youngster made her own rules as she desired. Their slow, circular perambulation was soon spurred by sly snaps of the cane into a faster and faster tempo until they were jog trotting in an awkward but earnest desire to avoid the next stroke. It was wickedly unkind, the heavy timbers about their necks chafed horribly, and the awkward posture of their raised arms prohibited grace. When they were panting, Susan dug in her heels and said, "Go ahead and whip me. I've had enough."

Catherine waited in trepidation for wrath to come. But as usual, nothing was as she expected. Zenna grinned her broadest grin and agreed. "Very well, you now start walk. You warmed up nice. You sweat, I smell. That is good!"

The prisoners found themselves in the hands of an uninhibited hoyden. When it pleased Zenna's fancy, she allowed the cane to fall to the ground within inches of where the prisoners must tread. She then used her hands upon their persons in whatever ways pleased her carnal interest. Like other girls of similar age, Zenna was consumed with an intense curiosity about the full development of those feminine attributes only partly formed upon herself.

Catherine found herself walking around and around with a pair of immature breasts thrusting at her back and her own matured twins grasped firmly in a pair of small, hot hands which appeared to find delight in their size and symmetry. When this tension was transferred lower down between her legs, she realized miserably the inevitable climax she would have to endure while she took step after heated step. It was unlikely Zenna would permit a halt in progress while one of her charges had an orgasm.

The nymphet was nimble. She devised the cute idea of standing in front of one of her captives and walking backwards ahead of them, with their nipples tightly clasped between each of her thumbs and fingers. By such means she was able to control the speed of the circle trek. She could pull on two rosebuds incapable of protest and thus compel their owner to quicken her steps. When this little play was in progress, it behooved the companion captive to watch and quicken her own steps in sympathy that her companion be hurt no more than need be. Another indulgence of the youthful wardress was to grasp a full handful of captive hair and then, holding her cane in shortened lengths, use it to gently reprimand whatever portions of her victim was easily accessible as they walked. There were few female features her cane could not thus reach. The right breast and armpit were particularly vulnerable and received an unwelcome attention neither captive could do anything about other than to twist and make ineffectual plaints and pleas. The morning progressed with-

out boredom. Zenna enjoyed every fleeting minute, the captive girls did not.

At midday, Zenna called a halt. They could stand and rest she informed them blithely, as though standing captive within the brutal yoke could be thus described. She would not be back in the afternoon. She kissed them both with surprising warmth and waltzed away to her midday meal. “I’d like to get my hands on that little madam sometime,” Susan said bitterly.

“We could easily get worse this afternoon,” Catherine mused. “Is your neck badly chafed, darling?”

They compared their wounds, looking at each other in disbelief that two girls could be thus compelled by a simple contrivance of wood around their necks and wrists. When their jailer of the afternoon came into view, they stood transfixed in shock.

It was a boy, the same age and stature as Zenna and with Zenna’s mischievous eyes and wide grin. He carried the same cane and was flexing it almost hungrily between his hands. However, he also carried a pail of water and a cup. Having satisfied their thirsts, he set the pail aside and picked up the wicked yellow length they had never ceased to be aware of. His young voice held a tremendous camaraderie. “One good whip before we start?”

It was evidently a ritual, not to be escaped. The two girls bore the infliction in stoic silence, doing no more than lift and kick a captive leg under the scorch and burn of the impact of the unkind length. The adolescent young man informed them his name was Orrie, and they would now commence to walk.

The girls were already tired and in no mood for masculine attention. This attention was distinctly different from Zenna's. It was even more highly sexual with the same intense absorbed interest in feminine attributes. Orrie felt them up and down and all around. There was no part of them he left unexplored. The bitter words Susan would once have uttered were now submerged in weariness and resignation. She could hide nothing of herself. Every particle of her nudity was available to any passerby.

Orrie was an opportunist. He kept an alert eye on the comings and goings within the great hall. At the first opportunity he unsheathed his male weapon, and coming up behind the straining Catherine, clasped her about the waist and thrust at her lustily from behind. It was to be presumed motion defeated his true purpose, but nonetheless, he achieved a penetration of the hard-working cheeks from which he derived intense sensation. Having achieved orgasm from the friction of Catherine's labors, he transferred his attentions to Susan. He was proud of this innovation and repeated it as often as his forces would regenerate throughout the afternoon.

It was an exhausting day, sustained only by hope. When, in the evening, Catherine was freed and led from the place of punishment, she was already in the courtyard before realizing something wrong. She stuck her heels hard and fast and pulled back on the tether from her neck, her command peremptory. “Stop, you mustn’t take me out to the post. I’m supposed to be taken to Adam Madanda. He told me so this morning.”

Her guard shrugged and laughed. “Madanda, he called away on business. He say I tell you this. He say you not worry. He say be back tomorrow. Now I chain you nice and easy so you sleep and dream happy dream of master’s big prick.”

Always something! Nothing ever as a slave girl expected. This was the essence of slavery. A slave girl was relegated to the sidelines with unconcern. You simply tethered her in a convenient place and then forgot. Without any sense of tragedy, Catherine allowed herself to be led to the familiar square of concrete and there tethered once more to the familiar.

“The bastard must be ill,” Susan proclaimed with grim satisfaction across the intervening space between the tolerance of their collars. “Look, darling, we’re almost free. A collar and chain is almost nothing. Did you manage to get to him some way?”

Catherine told of her day and its outcome. She warned

against optimism. Slave girls should never be too optimistic about anything.

But despite this air of caution, the two girls found a degree of hopefulness too long absent from their lives. They sought their sleep in pleasant expectation.

It was in the dark of night that a male voice said, without preamble, “You two are a problem. You give a man more trouble—”

It was like the repetition of a dream. Rising in alarm, Catherine looked at Allen Morehouse in pure dismay. If he were caught, the best he could hope for would be a swift death. But she could not disguise from herself the sudden rush of gladness at his voice and the sight of another pair of bolt cutters he was holding with his usual careless stanch. Choking with emotion, she exclaimed, “Oh, Allen—Allen darling!”

From somewhere beyond the depths of her more ardent embrace, Catherine heard Susan declaim, “For Pete’s sake, don’t stand there canoodling. Allen, use that damn tool you’ve got and get us loose!”

Allen gave Catherine a final kiss and thrust her aside. “I was about to get around to that,” he assured both girls. “I will use these only upon my own terms.”

“Oh, damn your terms Allen! Let us loose. That’s what you’re here for, isn’t it?”

“Conditionally, yes.”

“Allen darling, is this safe? Aren’t you likely to be caught? Can we possibly get away with this again?”

“We can, dear heart. Madanda’s out of town, and you can bet everyone’s fast asleep in the big house. I’ve got a few friends, and we’ve scouted the ground thoroughly. If I choose to free you both, there will be no problem. The jeep awaits.”

“What do you mean if you choose to free us?” Susan asked irritably.

“My terms are lifetime slavery for both of you,” Allen assured them. “You, Miss Susan White, will be my number two slave girl. Catherine has the honor of my first choice. You will agree to this, plus my continued residence upon that delightfully little farm of yours, or I’ll leave you both exactly as you are. Don’t hurry about your decision.”

“Of course we’ve got to hurry. Someone’s going to see or hear us. Allen, you’re taking a most shocking risk.”

“A risk for you, dear heart, and for sweet little Susan. You should both be flattered.” Allen was his usual self and enjoying every moment.

Susan was aghast. “You mean you’re going to take us back into the same slavery you had us in before Madanda kidnapped us!”

“That’s exactly right,” he said, and then turned to Catherine.

“I think I know your answer. Should we leave little sweetheart chained here? She is a bit of a nuisance.”

“Don’t you dare!” Susan said in alarm. “Look, you don’t intend to whip my bottom every morning the way you were doing back there, do you?”

“Of course. That is an essential part of my terms. Not that you’d have anything to say about it once I’ve got you chained.”

“Then drop dead!” Catherine took their rescuer in her arms. She was still chained and could still be left behind, but her whisper into the male ear was fierce. “Allen, take me. My answer is yes. I’ll be your slave on the farm. But please don’t pay attention to Susan. Bring her along. We can’t possibly leave her, and she doesn’t even want to be left. She’s just being Susan, that’s all.” She made her voice more tender. “Darling?”

The bolt cutter did its work swiftly, cutting away the tethering chain, but leaving the metal collars on each feminine neck. Holding hands and without a backward glance, the trio fled. When they reached the hidden jeep, Susan was unceremoniously deposited in the back and Catherine lifted to sit beside Allen in the front. He had brought two blankets which could be discreetly used should either maiden wish to hide her charms. Catherine resolutely

dropped hers over into the back so that Susan could have two if she could use them. Catherine sat straight and upright, very naked in the seat beside her master. She gave him an arch sideways look which was returned by an equally goatish wink. The jeep slid forward into the night

Catherine found herself without doubt. Her heart sang, her spirits soared. The jeep was a Roman chariot, and the man beside her the warrior who had won her as his prize. Soberly, she considered the problem of Susan White. There would be a piquancy for Allen in the possession of two girls, one of whom was constantly in revolt. Allen would know how to deal with Susan and would no doubt whip out of herself whatever tendencies she might have to jealousy. It was the ancient parable of the half loaf.

It was better than no bread.