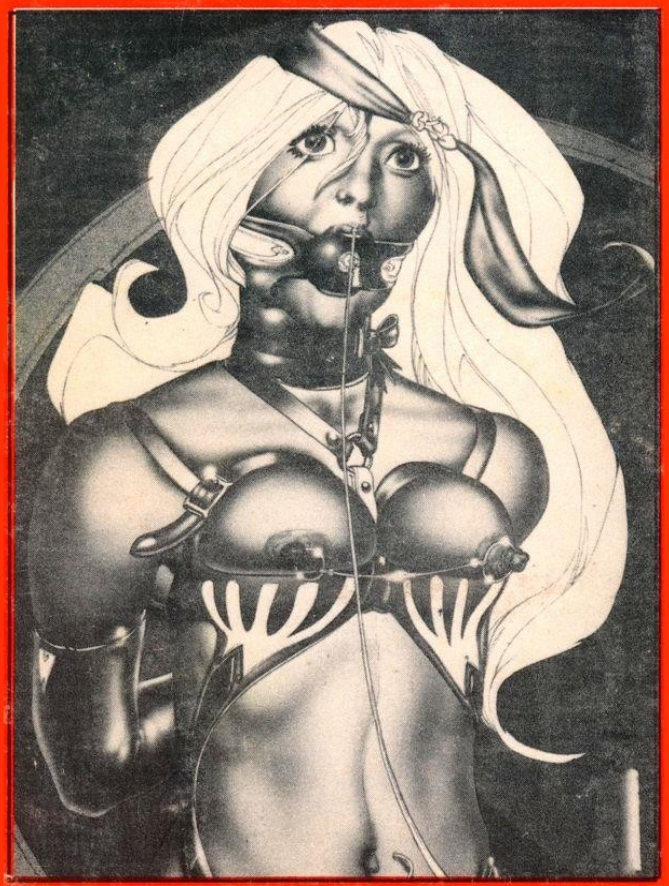
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MARGO



F. E. CAMPBELL

HIT 165

Margo

by F. E. Campbell

CHAPTER ONE

PAINFUL PENURY

By the time she had traversed the park and made her way around Franklin Square, Margo was breathless. In the crowded lobby of the Boulter Building, the rise and fall of her breasts was attracting male attention. It was nothing new. She was used to it. She was not a girl to hold it against men for acting like men. If nature had so endowed her, she felt only gratitude for her good fortune. Just as she felt it for her narrow waist and trim hips. Her bottom was a subject best ignored at this moment.

She entered the elevator positive she was late. Norma Boulter had kept the top floor for herself. Above it was the penthouse in which she lived. The panel beside the main entrance bore an impressively gilded reference to the many companies whose head offices were her own. Threading her way past the appraising eyes of the feminine staff, Margo was aware of measuring glances which centered on her frontal equipment. No doubt they were attributing it to falsies. Most girls did, but that did not matter either. What mattered was the mahogany doors just ahead. Bea Maxwell, the secretary, produced her usual smile and cocked an eyebrow at the clock.

“Hello, Miss Davis. Just one minute late today. You’re doing better all the time.”

Margo had once trembled at this point. But that was seven weeks ago, and she supposed with a shrug that the girl thought she was a supervisor. She pushed at the mahogany slab, which had probably cost a king’s ransom, and entered the holy presence.

Norma Boulter was ageless. One was never quite sure if you caught her too early in the morning that she might be less than beautiful. Her hair and features were regimented. She kept control of them, allowing neither to show any feminine weakness. Margo was willing to believe there was no weakness behind the cold gray eyes. The head of Boulter Inc. pressed the button to kill the intercom, the phone, the Dictaphone, and the tape machine. She, too, looked at the clock before raising a languid regard upon her flushed visitor.

“One minute late, Margo.” She shrugged. “I suppose that shouldn’t bed too bad, all things considered.”

“It’s very difficult to arrive precisely at the right moment Miss Boulter. If you would give me a little more leeway?”

“It doesn’t matter. It’s your loss you know. I’d like to see you five minutes late each time. But anyway just one extra today.”

Making herself bare for Miss Boulter’s attention was still a thing of shame, particularly inasmuch as what they were about to do did not call for such total exposure. But Norma Boulter had been adamant.

Her terms were “naked or nothing”.

Margo supposed it did not matter. For the occasions on which she visited Miss Boulter, she wore as little as possible so she could shrug out of the several trifles with ease and speed. She went to the second desk, which always had an air of waiting especially for her, and draped herself across its polished surface, its sharp edge indenting below her pubic bush. She held breathlessly still which Norma Boulter walked around to grasp a bare arm and handcuff

its wrist with one of the severed handcuffs not normally in view. She repeated the process with Margo's other wrist, to leave the visiting girl with arms widespread and breasts thrust hard down upon the utilitarian wood. Miss Boulter then got the yellow cane and flexed it back and forth suggestively while she talked. It was an unnecessary and cruel little ritual she obviously enjoyed. It had not been included in their terms of reference, but since it did no more than add extra shame, Margo had not complained.

"Are you ready for your punishment, Miss Davis?" "Yes, Miss Boulter, I'm ready." "Do you deserve the thrashing I'm about to give you?" "Yes, Miss Boulter, I deserve it. Please whip me hard." This part of the ceremony never varied. Margo supposed it revived in Miss Boulter's mind some erotic memory of childhood. Perhaps she too had once been thus caned and punished. But Margo had not felt she knew Norma Boulter well enough to ask questions. After all, it was the check that counted.

"The usual ten, Miss Davis? And one extra for being one minute late. A total of eleven."

"That's right, Miss Boulter. I'll try not to make too much noise."

"You always say that, dear." The voice of Norma Boulter was becoming increasingly vibrant, her flexing of the cane more emphatic. "Perhaps it's just as well you have never been ten minutes late. It would tax you sorely." The older woman's hands sought and caressed the tautly bent and stretched curves she was about to pain.

“You carry a few fading marks from week to week, dear. Be sure and tell me if you wish to move to another part of you. You are really still quite virgin.”

Margo could guess where the other parts would be. She made one more good resolution to arrive punctually on time and thus extend the useful contribution of her derriere. Ten strokes were just beyond endurance but not enough to break her down totally. Both females understood this fine line and walked it cautiously.

“You may keep your legs close together this time, Margo,” Margo Boulter said primly. “We experimented last time with having you open them wide for the cane to have entry. But you are fastened too close to the desk to make that practical. But it’s something I will give some thought to. It is the obvious place to whip or cane a girl, far more suitable than that portion of you I’ve caned so far. Now, are you ready?”

“Yes, Miss Boulter.”

She would never be ready. No girl could ever be ready for the force of a blow with a cane across her bent-over buttocks from Miss Boulter’s savage hand. It hurt like fury and every time Margo vowed she would never submit to this again. But she always did. Once again, it was the power of the check. Margo clenched her teeth and tried to match the rhythm of the fearful waves of pain.

Knowing the extent of her punishment always helped. Both she and Norma Boulter used that word in reference to what was actually an erotic enjoyment of the older woman’s. Margo always supposed a girl did not have to do something bad in order to be punished. It was a most suit-

able word, and she always thought of what was done to her as exactly that. She tried hard not to listen to the snickering whir of the approaching impact. But it took several strokes before agony enveloped her so totally that she thought of nothing else.

When a girl is caned by Miss Boulter, she was caned but good. But Margo had no way of knowing or comparing the severity of what Miss Boulter did to her each week. The practice of punishing young females by corporal means had been discontinued by the time Margo went to school.

But she had heard of it, and older people sometimes referred to it, always jokingly. She doubted if any schoolgirl had ever had a creaking bottom caned with the severity Miss Boulter appeared to consider normal.

Margo Davis thrust hard against the sharp edge of the desk as it burrowed into the softness of her loins in order to ease the stress of her wrists. Each time Miss Boulter struck her bottom, there was an involuntary spasm of revolt with her hands against the steel biting her wrists and holding them widely apart. The magnificence of her breasts made them also vulnerable. Nothing would touch them. But they were thrust down hard upon the surface in a manner the owner would like to relieve but never could. The handcuffs were tremendously unkind, but they held her safely, and after the first arrangements had been made, she had decided against seeking any amelioration of her lot. In a way, she was glad about the handcuffs. She really did not wish to free herself of being punished. It would be an untidy act and stupid in that she had made a contract for exactly what she was receiving. But it would have been infinitely more

comfortable if Miss Boulter had used straps upon her wrists. Margo presumed it unlikely that would happen.

“You do take a whipping marvelously well, my dear,” Miss Boulter conceded generously. “Everything you do is in its proper context and adds enormously to the enjoyment. The motions of your feet, for instance. It would be a mistake to bind them. You use your feet most eloquently. And the raising and lowering of your head and those fearful glances back over your shoulder are quite exquisite. You have a positive gift for punishment, Miss Davis. I do regret your use of it is so limited.”

With the skin of your bottom scalding and burning in a crying out pleading for surcease it was very hard to follow Miss Boulter’s remarks. It appeared to be understood that they required no response other than a continuation of the carnal and sexual motions commented on. When the sixth slice seared the already tender seat, the fastened-down girl realized she had only passed the halfway mark, but it seemed a century. The cut just received could just as well have been the fiftieth as well as the fifth. Margo Davis moaned and shifted her hips against the cutting edge in a fruitless seeking of comfort. She was now self-conscious about the raising and lowering of her legs in response to pain. Sometimes she actually kicked back as though at some tangible object. Once her bare foot had inadvertently come into contact with Miss Boulter’s shin and was rewarded with a sharp, vicious cut across its sole. Margo would always remember that single cut. When the bastinado was mentioned, she never failed to shudder.

“There we are, dear. No ten. I’ve spaced them well today. Be sure and examine yourself when you get home. The ef-

fect is quite gorgeous. Now you have only the last one left. The one you need not have had at all. Brace yourself."

Knowing it to be the last made it bearable. Margo was quite sure if it had been in the beginning, she would have relapsed into screaming right away. But as its bitter scald penetrated her sex in a cruel ecstasy, she was saying over and over to herself, "That's all, that's all."

Nothing mattered now. She could put up with anything.

"You are to remain as you are, for the usual thirty minutes, Margo." Miss Boulter was obviously feeling better. Her voice was noticeably warm, with almost a touch of humor as she spoke.

"I do think it's so good for a girl to remain fastened in the same manner as her punishment for a period in which she may quietly think upon her sins and contemplate her possible future punishments should she digress."

Margo wanted to retort "up yours", but with Miss Boulter, a girl had best be circumspect. She had learned this when she had been an employee out there on the main floor with all the other girls. Being fired in disgrace from Boulter, Inc. was something very easy to achieve. It had happened to her, and when two weeks later she came back, the faint hope of pleading for mercy and receiving it, that her present predicament had come about. It had all been remarkably matter of fact.

"You are the mainstay of your disabled parents, Miss Davis. Now you ask me for mercy?" The tone had been somewhat less cold than Margo had expected. "And this mortgage business you speak of would appear to me to require sums

of money far beyond what you can earn on a monthly salary."

"What else can I do, Miss Boulter? I was happy here, and we were getting along fairly well, I thought until that silly mistake."

"Would you consider thrashing once a week for a larger sum, Miss Davis?"

It had been like a physical blow Margo had been uncertain of hearing right. She gazed across the desk before which she stood as a convicted culprit, dismayed and distraught. Miss Boulter had come to the rescue.

"I could have worked up to that more easily, Margo. But you and I are both adults, and I deplore euphemisms. If you desire this larger sum, you will be required to present yourself here once a week a precise moment in time. You will then strip naked and allow me to fasten you across the desk. I would then use a cane upon your bottom. Ten strokes is the minimum I would care to bargain for. But if you are so disposed, we could always discuss a larger sum or a more frequent punishment."

She had stood staring in shocked silence until Miss Boulter made the rationalizations which enabled Margo to evaluate the strangest offer of her life. She had accepted it and had so far survived. Now, chained down on the hard wood of the desk, she reflected and reviewed. In spite of her vows of abstinence, she was well aware she would return again and again. Norma Boulter had offered her a solution to all her financial affairs. After Margo had been whipped a number of times, the older woman had increased the weekly stipend. Margo simply told her parents of a new job

and additional responsibilities. It had all been extremely simple.

“I was particularly pleased with you today, Margo,” Miss Boulter enthused. For her, this was lavish praise. “There is a sensuousness, a sexuality about you that is quite unique. I suppose I don’t have to tell you that you are a remarkably beautiful young woman. I’m surprised you have not been taken under some rich man’s wing. For a girl of your quality, it is by far the best choice. Have you considered it?”

“I never meet any,” Margo mourned as the handcuffs fell away from her chafed wrists. She stood, unconscious of her nakedness, while she massaged her semi-wounds and ran reassuring fingers across the raised welts left by the cane.

“I don’t move in those circles. It’s easy to say, and I expect it is easy for the right girl, but not for me. In any case, it’s not something I’d want to do.”

“Even for a great deal of money?” There it was again: always the temptation of money. Margo shrugged and said, “Well, I suppose I could become a call girl and make a great deal of money.” She looked at Norma Boulter and smiled deprecatingly.

“You’ve always been rich; you don’t understand.” “Like hell I don’t! Margo, if you only knew. I’ve used my sex, and I’ve used men for everything they’ve got. And everything I’ve got is the result. How serious are you about money?” “There’s never enough. I’m still trying to catch up on my mortgage. Then there’s the hospital bill?” “Okay then, come twice a week. We’ll alternate between your bottom, your back, your breasts, and between your legs. I’ll double the ante.” “I couldn’t take that. Not on my breasts. I’m sorry,

Miss Boulter, but even if I thought I could bear the pain, I don't think I'd want them spoiled. Whipping a girl's breasts can't possibly do them nay good." "Horseshit! They thrive on it." "I'm terribly sorry." Margo knew she sounded as though she really was sorry and would have performed the service if she possibly could. She accepted the check Miss Boulter now handed her and knew the usual thrill of accomplishment. What did pain matter in the face of this all-encompassing power money gave a girl? She found herself not wanting to disappoint Norma Boulter. Today, more than ever, she had felt closer to this strange woman with her strange compulsion.

"I think if you'd just forget about my breasts and concentrate on the other places, I could probably manage something. Would that please you, Miss Boulter?"

"Oh, sure." Margo shrugged and managed a wan smile. "My trouble is I never get the right one. They want to maul these breasts that you want to whip, and a few other places too. They don't seem to offer any future at all."

"How would you like to meet a man who enjoys what I like doing?" Increased vibrancy was once again notable in the quiet voice. "Don't ever knock men," Norma Boulter laughed dryly. "Some of them even have more money than I've got. Grab yourself one."

It sounded so easy. But Margo knew it was something she would never do. She supposed Norma Boulter was paying her handsomely for the pain she bore each week from these visits, but she could not even be sure of that. She had no comparisons. And she certainly was not going to seek them. When she had finished putting on her shoes and had straightened up, Norma handed her a business card.

“Go and see this man. He could do a lot for you, and he’s into this up to his neck. He’s also extremely charming and most imminently eligible. If I didn’t have so much money, I’d marry him myself. But it’s a great mistake for a woman to have it all and a man a lesser amount. Not that’s broke – far from it. Go ahead, you’ll like him.”

Margo looked down at the severely expensive card. It bore a name and a telephone number. Nothing more. The name was Henry Ross. She put it into her bag, along with the check. She supposed she could call it a successful day. When they parted, Norma kissed her goodbye, reminding her when they would next meet.

When Margo walked past the cute secretary, she knew something had changed. But she did not know what.

“He’d make a catch for any girl,” the henna-rinsed female stated with fervent conviction. “But he’s out of my class, and he’s probably out of yours too. Henry Ross puts on a damn good party, but as for the rest, you can stop drooling.”

“The most elusive and eligible bachelor in town,” the bleach blond sighed. “Every time he looks at me, I cream my panties.”

The girl with the natural hair color laughed at her companions. “Let’s be grateful to him for his parties. God knows there are men enough around. Surely we aren’t short of men. And as for Henry Ross,” she said, her voice lowering dramatically, “I wish I had the nerve to ask him if he keeps little naked girls in cages in his cellar.”

The subject of their conversation slipped quietly and unobtrusively from the big room. Henry Ross well knew his

parties sustained themselves. All they needed was his presence to get them going, and this one was certainly well under way. He had an errand. It would not occupy him for the whole evening, but it would be from time to time a demanding compulsion. Swiftly, he went downstairs.

The naked girl he was concerned about rekindled her hopes at his appearance. She had been moaning softly in solitude. But with the offer of her travail in the room, there was always the chance that he would be prevailed upon… Her greeting was simple.

“Mr. Ross, I’m terribly sorry, but I can’t stand this. I just can’t. It’s way too much.”

The sybarite fondly examined the author of the plaint. He was fond of his girls, never failing to appreciate the sacrifices they made for him. The fact that some were paid and some were not in no way affected their qualities. This one had promise. She was sitting astride a bar, her feet out to either side and anchored loosely to the floor, her hands bound behind her back. She was totally naked and quite obviously terribly conscious of this condition. She voiced her next concern.

“Please, Mr. Ross, cover me up. At least that much – you know.” She dropped the shameful subject and reverted to her main distress. “And please get me off this thing. It’s far worse than you can realize.”

“On the other hand, my dear, it is nowhere near as bad as you suppose. The object you are sitting on is, in principle, what used to be called the horse. It’s a punishment that has been used on both sexes throughout the ages. However, you are getting off lightly. That bar you’re sitting on is the

dimension that will not cause you too deep – and I do mean deep – distress. I would judge that at the worst you are simply uncomfortable."

"Uncomfortable!" The girl made the word sound obscene. "I'm dying. You're making me sit on – well, you know what I'm sitting on!"

"May I simply call it a cunt? It's as good a word as any, and better than most. I'm sure it's more descriptive than one of the euphemism that you were about to use." Henry Ross chuckled. "You are supposing this asset of yours is totally ruined by a bit of friction on a pole. You're quite wrong. It may even improve some of its qualities. You should stop worrying. The party is about halfway through. When the last guest has gone, you will be released."

The nude beauty astride the pole wriggled ineffectually and cast a reproachful gaze at the man who was responsible for her plight. She tried again.

"Look, Mr. Ross, never mind the money. Keep it. Just let me off this thing and let me go home. Please?"

"My dear, you are forgetting – we made a contract." "Ohhhh, please! I can't help any contract. All I want is off." The lovely body made one more futile struggle. The girl's eyes beseeching the man who was her only hope of rescue. "Please, Mr. Ross. What good does it do me to have me down here like this when you've got a party going on upstairs? You've had to leave your guests to come down here now." The man made a leisurely circle around the captive girl. He tested the bound hands, their wrists crossed and tied behind the virgin back. He tested the shackles on the slender ankles. Neither of them taut enough to impose an

additional burden on sex beyond that of the weight of its owner. He bent to look at the sex itself below the pubic patch, now swollen slightly from the stress under which it sat.

He shrugged and said, “Everything is in order, Margo. One day you’ll realize how easy I’m being on you this first time. If I ever sit you upon the sharp edge of a real horse, you won’t be half as calm and collected as now, believe me.” He turned and left.

The girl stared after him in a measure of despair. Yet strangely, Henry Ross’ assurances of her well being had in some way eased the anxiety and fear. She moaned again, but this was in contemplation of the hours still to pass.

Margo Davis looked around at luxury and stammered, “Mr. Ross, I’m afraid I’ve picked the wrong time. You’ve got a party going. I could have made it another time.”

“My parties rarely miss me, Miss Davis. Norma phoned me about you. You come with the highest praise.”

“Miss Boulter has been terribly kind. We are… we are friends.” The man nodded. Assessing his visitor with an amused but searching gaze, he said, “I had better tell you at the start, Miss Davis: I have had you checked out. I find you do not have the invalid parents. Both your parents are deceased and that you have neither house or a mortgage.” He made an airy gesture with a careless hand as the girl blushed and started to rise.

“I doubt, with your talents, if you had any need of this fabrication with Norma Boulter. You have no need of it with me, I assure you. I admire any girl who is out to make her-

self independent, so long as she yields value for what she gets."

Conscious of her blush, Margo tried again. "I don't even know if I can please you, Mr. Ross. I'm not even sure what you want, although naturally I've got an idea."

The man nodded. "It would have been very easy, Margo, for me to take you downstairs where I now have a naked girl enduring what she considers the torments of the damned. Actually, it's a minor discomfort only, but this is her first evening. On the basis that one picture tells a hundred stories perhaps I should do this on the other hand, it could be a waste of time. You may be well ahead of phase one. What I require of you goes beyond that, however. I will not take you down to one of the rooms and suspend you by your wrists, seat you on the horse, whip your back, or cane your bottom. I will do none of those things. Is that a disappointment?"

"Not a disappointment – a surprise. Please don't overrate my capacity. I'm not at all sure I'm ready for your phase two, whatever it may be."

Henry Ross smiled. He was pleased with what he saw. There was a demure charm about this girl, which he judged to overlay character. This girl would not panic. She would not scream. Gazing upon her unquestioned beauty, he saw visions. Quietly, he asked, "How would you like to go to school?"

CHAPTER TWO

THRICE OWNED

Penny Pendleton supposed that if she had to be caned – and she undoubtedly did – she was lucky in the mistress delegated to the task.

Mistress Mary never whipped a girl too hard or too long, and she was very comforting afterwards. Penny did not expect to enjoy what she was about to receive, but she was well aware of other possibilities, all of them worse. Timidly, she knocked at the door.

“Ah, Penny. Dear child, I’m sorry to see you here again on such a mission.”

Mistress Mary began all such interviews this way. She would have been equally sorry for Prudence or Nancy or Joan. Mistress Mary had a very kind heart.

Playing it for all she was worth, Penny said, “And I’m sorry to be here in this way, Mistress Mary. I’m sure I deserve to be punished. Would you like me to undress?”

“The right spirit. Penny, you are indeed a treasure. And, of course, I need you naked. You do understand the rules.”

Penny did not object to being bare in front of Mistress Mary. With some of the other mistresses, it would have been different. They had eagle eyes that sought out portions of a girl’s anatomy besides her twin cheeks beneath her panties.

“I was rude to Mrs. Drysdale in class today,” Penny informed her solemnly. “I forget, is that ten or fifteen strokes I have to have?”

“Don’t prevaricate, dear child,” the mistress admonished gently.

“You know as well as I do it’s fifteen. It is just as well you haven’t been punished lately. Let me see your bottom.”

Penny scrambled out of her school tunic. She did not wear a bra, but she made a big performance of removing her pink panties. She knew that Mistress Mary enjoyed this procedure and was quite willing to oblige. Penny wished she had the lovely bushes of pubic hair like some of the older girls, but being the youngest in school, she still had a way to go. She kicked off her shoes and then obediently turned and bent down to enable Mistress Mary to examine what she was about to cane. The adult fingers were pleasant on the young skin, and Penny drew in a deep breath in a sensory response.

“Against the wall, Mistress Mary?”

“No, dear, not against the wall. It enables you to flatten out and evade some of the impact. Our principal was talking to me about this the other day, and I think he is arranging for the wall straps to be removed. Kindly take up your position by the big chair.” The big chair was impressive. It was not so much designed to sit upon as it was to be a solid anchor for the two wristlets, one on either side of its massive back. Penny put each of her hands within one of the loops of a strap, and then, when Mistress Mary had buckled them tightly around her wrists, she stepped back to enable the forward bend so much to be desired. Penny stood, a slender naked nymph, her arms outstretched, her hands held fast. She had the feeling that everything that mattered was behind her. Mistress Mary selected the cane. There was a rack of them upon the wall, and the delinquent

maiden noted with relief that the one chosen was by no means the most unkind. Penny Pendleton clenched her teeth.

The caning of the young bottom was a slow affair, interspersed with words of wisdom and loving admonition about future behavior. Penny did not hear much of what was said because her bottom was hurting so badly, and because she was busy kicking, raising her legs, lowering her legs, and weaving her hips back and forth. She did manage to contrive an occasional “Yes, Mistress Mary,” which she delivered gaspingly. She did not want to seem indifferent to any possible benefit.

The young, round bottom accepted the scarlet lines Mistress Mary was planting upon its twin surfaces with skill and precision. Penny was generally referred to as “the youngest delinquent in the whole school”, and was treated accordingly. Mistress Mary gazed affectionately upon the soft sheen of downy hair in the hollow of the narrow waist. The girl would be a beauty in a couple of years, and her sentence would certainly keep her longer than that at the Rossland Academy for Young Women. The sentences imposed upon the young inmates of Rossland were contrived to cover that period of a girl’s life when she was most to be desired by the man, from the age of nineteen up to twenty-five. After that, it was considered they would possibly have enough sense to survive without babies, at least long enough to get married. The parents were mostly extremely wealthy and lived abroad. They were all grateful to Rossland for relieving them of a painful responsibility. Penny Pendleton, at the age of sixteen, had started early in her delinquencies, and her parents, possessing an acquaintance with Henry Ross, had prevailed upon the institution to ac-

cept her at an earlier age. She had immediately become the school favorite – sort of a pet. Her feet had been chained for the regulation two weeks after her arrival, but she had never evidenced any wish to leave the premises. Penny was one of the minority who enjoyed the Rossland Academy for Young Women.

There were those who attributed this sentiment to her affection for Mistress Mary, but that was really beside the point. At this moment, Penny was wondering if she could take the full fifteen stripes on her bottom without making unseemly sounds. It was generally understood at Rossland that a girl should not scream unless she must. After all, they were from excellent families and were expected to maintain certain standards after leaving. It was a precept of the Academy that "cane builds character". It was a theory no one had yet disproved. When the cane had slyly cut at the young bottom for its eighth stroke, Penny timidly gasped, "Do you think we could stop for a little rest, Mistress Mary?"

"No, dear. Life teaches us that tribulations must be bravely borne. They rarely come with rest periods. You will benefit most from this painful infliction by enduring it in one steady application of the cane. I do hope you approve of my choice of the one with which to punish you."

Penny had discovered one of the nicest things about being whipped by Mistress Mary was that a girl could never be quite sure about the way the mistress would go about attending to her after the last stroke had left its scarlet line across the young bottom. There was always the question of who looked after who first, and Mistress Mary did not always claim the precedent due her office. In this particular

instance, she lowered herself to the floor from behind and raised her hungry mouth up between the slender young legs, clutching the tenderized young bottom for stability and then biting Penny's pussy as though starving. Penny gasped, but she was firmly held by strapped wrists, so she could do no more than widen her legs sufficiently to accommodate the mistress who was busily employed. She kept on gasping for a long time and squealed several times when the clutching hands grasped handfuls of her whipped skin. But it was a highly pleasurable pain, an agony much to be desired. It was at this point in time that Penny decided beyond any doubt that being whipped was a small price to pay for such glory. Mistress Mary was highly skilled and made it last a long, long time before the eventual, inevitable explosion. When that had run its course, the young wrists were unstrapped from the chair back and the mistress and maiden enjoyed the brief respite essential to the drinking of a small glass of blackberry cordial, a beverage much favored by the Academy and concocted yearly by several of the mistresses who assured everyone that it was in no way intoxicating, but that it did provide the most pleasant euphoria. It heartened the ardors of beaten bottoms immensely.

Penny Pendleton hoped Mistress Mary would take off her own clothes for what they were about to do. She thought Mistress Mary was extremely beautiful. She had such simply gorgeous breasts and the loveliest patch of curly black fronds framing her lower lips. Penny had tasted quite a number of Academy females, but always vowed that none were as sweet as Mistress Mary. Having downed her cordial, she proceeded to once more prove this point. Mistress Mary chose to be seated on the edge of the chair,

spreading herself in total availability for the kneeling girl. Everything was understood between them, Penny always wished she could be whipped again and that they could start out fresh. But this never happened, and anyway, she was not certain that either she or Mistress Mary could bear such a crescendo of utter joy.

Miss Mildred Harridance, like Norma Boulter, was ageless. The girls who were prisoners at the Rossland Academy for Young Women all supposed she had come with the premises sometime in the previous century. Probably she was a witch. None had seen her naked, but it was generally conceded that she was a beautiful woman who affected severity of hair styling and dress to supplement and sustain her position as headmistress, sometimes sarcastically referred to as head wardress or, more simply, the warden. Everyone but Penny was scared of her and treated her with immense respect. None came through the Academy with the respect already engendered. It was fostered in their first month of being chained, naked, and constantly punished. Newcomers were admonished about minding their Ps and Qs. In those first weeks, an inmate could be punished even for a raised eyebrow or a sniff. Thereafter, the slightest evidence of intent to escape or even a simple disobedience was instantly corrected by the wearing of leg irons and possibly cuffed wrists. These reminders of their captivity came in addition to corporal punishment, and certain other refinements the Academy provided as part of the curriculum. It was explained to the new girl on her arrival that tuition was achieved more effectively by the cane than by the pen. This was one more precept no one dared to dispute. Miss Harridance's study was an extremely pleasant room, in vivid contrast to the austerity of the ac-

commodations provided the inmates. She had graced its luxury with a queenly presence behind her desk. She gazed across its shiny surface at a nervous young woman. Her voice was femininely fluid.

“You come highly recommended by Mr. Ross, Miss Davis. This ensures your entry. May I bid you welcome.”

“Thank you. I – I’m afraid I’m not too well informed.” Mildred Harridance sighed. Henry Ross was up to his old tricks. But if he had chosen the girl, there must be something to her.

“Rossland Academy comes closer to being a prison than a school, my dear. Were you aware of this?”

“Well… in a way.” Margo Davis fingered her bag and looked beseechingly for aid. “Mr. Ross told me I could come and talk to you today, and if our interview was unsatisfactory to either of us, I could simply go home and the whole matter would be forgotten.” She paused diffidently. “But he also said that if I chose to stay, the decision would be binding for a period of years. I’m twenty-one. Mr. Ross said something about me staying here until I’m twenty-five.”

Mildred Harridance nodded. “That’s correct. You will make your choice today, and should you wish to come to us, you may return home to make your final arrangements it’s up to you.”

The shrewd, ageless eyes studied Henry Ross’ choice. He ran true to form. There were few flat chests at Rossland, and absolutely no excess weight.

“I should explain the unusual nature of your circumstances here. Since we have pupils here to be taught, then obvi-

ously we must have those to teach. We contrive to have neat blend of both. Your duties would be primarily as a mistress. But every mistress is subject to the same disciplines as those beneath her. In short, you can either punish or be punished. There is one other most unusual facet of the establishment. I want you to consider it carefully. Everyone here, except myself, is the perquisite of Henry Ross. You will be totally available to him in all ways. He can punish you or make love to you." Mildred Harridance shrugged and permitted a small, quiet smile. "Usually he does both."

They sat in silence as the moments ticked by. Mildred Harridance understood the vital importance of the girl's decision. The girl herself was assessing the endurance of her flesh against the prudence of the check. She spoke hesitantly.

"I'd be a fraud, Miss Harridance. I have nothing to teach of any value to girls the same age as myself. Would I not fit in better as a pupil? Mr. Ross told me that most of the girls here are at Rossland because of the wish of their parents. But are there others in the same class as I am in? Mr. Ross wants me here to amuse himself when the mood strikes him."

"That is correct, Miss Davis. I see your point. We can easily make you a pupil instead of a teacher. But I will warn you, as a pupil, you will be subject to more constant disciplines and a good deal of feminine jealousies and intrigues than you would have as a teacher. I suggest you try the teaching role first. It may surprise you. It has the virtue for Mr. Ross, upon his visits here, of you being demoted from your teacher status to become his plaything. Spiritually, Ross-

land belongs more in Victorian England than modern-day America."

Margo was still nagged by a seeming inconsistency. "But it would seem to me that the whole idea of the school is a waste. If Mr. Ross wishes to keep a girl like me as a prisoner for his amusement, why is this not then simply a prison? Why bother with the pupil-teacher relationship?"

Mildred Harridance laughed at the young naivet? "My dear, consider it a mansion full of females! Without the influence of the school and its teachers, the dear things would be bored stiff, subject to endless intrigues, animosities, plots, and illicit pleasures. As it is, we keep them occupied. We give them standards, and most sincerely teach them behavior and deportment. They emerge at the end of their sentence a far better personality than when they came."

Margo looked at the older woman, and momentarily she envisioned Norma Boulter. They were remarkably alike. She wished it was Norma Boulter who owned Rossland instead of that strange, austere man with whom she had had only a brief interview. But since she had found a rapport with one of these women, she could do so with the other.

Without more hesitation, she said with forthright resolution, "My affairs are already in order. I looked after that. I choose to stay here now."

Mildred Harridance smiled. She pressed a button on her desk.

"You need your head examined! Don't you realize you've sentenced yourself to four years in prison?"

The girl looked at Margo with a mixture of irritation and pity. She was entirely naked and unconscious of the fact as a nymph a woodlands scene. But she had taken possession of the new girl from Miss Harridance with total assurance. She laughed now at Margo's quite obvious perplexity, and then continued.

"Oh, you mean my not having any clothes on. You'll have to get used to these things, Margo. I'm a mistress, but I'm going to be punished later this evening. Girls who are sentenced to any punishment at all are instantly made nude." She laughed without bitterness.

"It sort of advertises to the school that if they haven't already been instructed to come and watch, they are at liberty to do so. My being naked says I am on exhibit." Her eyes narrowed shrewdly. "Are you here for money, or because you have no choice?"

"Money," Margo replied. "I thought you knew." "I guessed. That's why I told you that you need your head examined. There isn't enough money in the world to pay a girl for being in here for four years." Then came a short, bitter laugh.

"I was sentenced to five years, and I've only done two. Welcome to the club."

"You told me to take my clothes off – must I really? I'm supposed to be a mistress."

"You'll be a mistress when you've done your thirty days. By that time, you'll wish you'd never seen this place. Look, Margo, I'm terribly sorry, but I've got to put leg irons on you. That's the first thing."

Margo drew a deep breath. This was the beginning. She already knew about the leg irons, so it was no great shock. She removed her clothes under her companion's watchful eye, folded them neatly in a pile, and put them where she was directed. Even undressing in front of this girl was embarrassing, and she could see that she was trembling slightly as she extended on bare foot.

Dully, she conceded, "Yes, I know about the leg irons. I've been told. But if it's only for the first two weeks?"

"By the way, this is the armory. It's where we keep the stuff. If you look around the walls, you'll see it's a real cringe-crinkler. Oh, and I'm Jean Evans." She let out another bitter laugh. "They haven't gotten around to giving us numbers yet. Look, I really am sorry about this leg-iron business. They're not the kind the police use, or the kind you buy in stores. They are especially made for the Academy. The metal bands are wider and the links heavier. Miss Harridance says they have an aesthetic quality – maybe she's right. All I know is that when they're locked on your ankles, you don't move around very fast, and they make the most embarrassing noises at the wrong moments. I suppose you do realize a girl can get them put on herself at any time if she does something to warrant it. It's not just for the first two weeks."

In wonder, Margo looked down and watched the shiny metal anklet clasp tight on her flesh. Jean had tried two other pairs first, but one was too large and the other too small. It was explained that girls' ankles varied enormously and that the Academy stocked shackles for every size. The pair now chosen was snug and tight, and heavy enough not to be easily forgotten. First one leg and then the

other. The naked girl shackled for the first time in her life took a tentative step, then another. She looked at her companion in dismay.

“But, Jean, I’m… I’m hobbled!” “That’s the general idea, sweetheart. You know you can’t run away. You also walk damn good and slow. By the way, watch out for swear words. You can get punished for them.” Jean gestured cheerfully. “Go ahead. Walk around the room. You’re going to have to get used to them sometime. It’s best to do it when you’re not in a hurry.” Margo obeyed. It was the strangest feeling, and when she stumbled, they both laughed. But she completed the circle and did another. This time more gracefully. But the paramount message of the metal on her feet told her she was captive. The Rossland Academy for Young Women held her tightly in its grip.

“And now these.” Jean was offering more shining chrome. Margo viewed it in surprise.

“Must I? It seems so silly.”

“You must, and it’s not silly. They get you accustomed to not being a person any more. With these on, you’re just a girl with two breasts, a patch of pubic hair, and a pussy.” Jean held out the handcuffs and said once more, “I’m sorry.”

It was one more first. True, there had been the cuffs in Miss Boulter’s office, but these were the real things, distinctively different. Sensations flooded as each metal circlet was fitted and clicked tightly around her wrists. It was like the closing of a dungeon door and the turn of a key. Jean watched in sly amusement.

“Make you feel horny?”

Margo looked up, startled. “Should it? Do handcuffs do that to a girl?”

“Well, you should know. I just put them on you. How does your cat feel about it?”

“Well I’m not sure.”

Margo felt the blush coming back as she stood still in a shaming realization of some truth in what Jean suggested. There was a small but definite heat. “Yes, I suppose you’re right,” she admitted slowly, still testing her response. “I bet it’s not the handcuffs, though. It’s probably the girl who puts them on you. I’m just relating to you.”

Jean laughed. “You’ll find out about all sorts of things, honey. One of the first discoveries here is that we are all lesbians. We may not have been when we came, but we are now.” Once more came the sharp, bitter laugh. “Henry Ross can’t be expected to look after all of us, you know. He’s instituted a standard penalty for any girls caught nibbling one another. It’s fifty lashes. But we do it anyway. Of course, the mistresses do it too. We don’t often get caught and sentenced, though. The next thing is the band around your tummy.”

“Is that what you’re wearing? What’s it for?” “It tells the world you’re a mistress. Not that it does you any good – you get punished anyway – but when you haven’t got any clothes on, it’s the only distinction there is. Look at me now. I’m sure I wouldn’t look the least bit like a mistress if it weren’t for this band around my middle. It locks just tight enough for us not to forget.” “Look, there isn’t a collar or something… all this stuff you’re locking on me?” Margo raised her arms to allow the fitting of the band. “Leg irons,

handcuffs, and now a belt around my middle. Good God, Margo's middle.

"It sets you off beautifully. It's one thing I never complain about myself. The belts are immensely becoming to a girl with a narrow waist, and that's the only kind of waist Rossland accepts. And you were right about the collar – it comes next."

The collar was bronze. There was nothing light about it, but the metal was flat and it nestled snugly around a maiden's neck. From the back dangled a single link of chain, its purpose all too obvious. The girl who wore such a collar could be handily leashed. When it was secure on her throat, the newly captive girl raised exploratory fingers to its unfamiliar surface. Everything felt strange and a little frightening.

"That's it for now," Jean reassured her. "Come along, I'll find a mirror for you. You absolutely must see yourself. You're quite ravishing. That's one thing about this place: the girls look a lot better without their clothes. I often think the only reason they get those tunics is to have something to take off when they wish to shame and punish us. The tunic is all any girl gets to wear. You now get the fifty-cent tour."

"But, Jean, I can't – I'm naked! I can't wander around with everybody looking at me like this."

"Why not?"

Jean cocked an amused eyebrow. "I'm naked too. I don't mind people seeing me. You get used to it, you know. You've got to get used to it too. And if we meet a few of the other girls, they will be the same. Just forget it."

It was not an easy thing to forget. The customs of a lifetime die hard.

As they set out on their tour, Margo wondered if her blush reached her breasts. When they found a mirror, she was surprised that it did not. But she forgot the blush in an immediate absorption in herself. She voiced her immediate reaction in a thoughtless exclamation.

“I’m beautiful! Oh, Jean!”

“What did I tell you.” Her mentor chuckled at her confusion. “That’s another of Miss Harridance’s precepts – simply that a naked girl is doubly beautiful in chains.” Jean shrugged. “I suppose it’s like exotic lingerie. You cover the good bits up so people want to look. Chains evoke even more questions. Why are we wearing them? Who put us in chains? What happened to us? A chained girl is a delight to everyone except maybe herself!”

The tour was unavoidable, something she knew she had to do. Already, Margo was feeling the weight of authority, not only in the metal locked around her wrists, neck, and ankles, but in Jean Evans herself. She realized her companion could do anything she wished with her. At the moment, she was simply a mentor and a guide. But suppose she became something more than that! It was not impossible. There was also the sexuality of the two nudities. It was impossible to avoid some vibrations in connection with the girl at her side. Jean had spoken flippantly of making love. But it was quite possible eventually. What concerned her now as the appropriate words to utter to those she met.

But she need not have worried. They made the decisions for her. When they discovered she was, as it were, a volun-

teer, they assured her cheerily that she must have holes in her head or be completely nuts. Those who had been sentenced by parental will to Rossland kissed her in sympathy and told her she would from now on live only for release. They were girls in limbo, robbed of normalcy. But as she spoke to them, Margo realized how little real unhappiness she encountered. They were, in fact, a cheerful collection of young women. Most of them wore the school tunic. The mistresses, in addition, wore a belt, an innocent replica of the one embedded in their flesh underneath their tunics. Most girls were without restraint. But some wore handcuffs and Margo's were not the only hobbled feet. One and all commiserated with the new recruit on her first thirty days which she now faced. They explained it as being like boot camp in the army. They said after you had endured it, everything else was bearable by comparison. Young women at the Academy exhibited their own brand of cynical humor.

They actually discovered a class in progress.

It appeared that any girl labeled mistress could search her mind for subjects on which she might be proficient, and that was what she taught. It was done without planning or advance notice. The pupils assembled and listened to what she had to say. In a sense, it was a lecture. But they all joined in offering their own points of view. It was borne upon the naked, chained Margo that there was an actual value in these exchanges. The girls were all involved. They were animated. Some were quite obviously extremely interested in the subjects they were talking about. Each day, one of the mistresses directed a number of inmates to a class. Every class was run on the same lines as the one Margo witnessed. With typical Rossland cynicism, Jean

Evans explained that a girl always had a choice. She could go to class, or if she chose to refuse, she would be immediately whipped. But Margo realized there was more to it than that. These girls went first to counteract boredom and secondly for the human communion the classes gave. If they learned something, that was a bonus. She knew that if she were left alone to wonder, these huge halls of the ancient mansion by herself she would quickly seek entry to one of the seminars.

She was then shown the doors and windows. They were heavily locked, and where the need was obvious, they were also barred.

Imprisonment was implicit. She could understand that after awhile all thoughts of escape would vanish from a girl's mind. It would become simply a wasting of her time.

"I may as well show you a punishment. It's not all gravy here. I think there's a girl downstairs in one of the punishment rooms. Come along."

The girl was most definitely there. Punishment was simple and ingenious. Its severity depended on the length of time it was imposed.

In the center of a large room, a cloth had been laid, and from it protruded innumerable spikes, all pointing up, all close enough together to prohibit the placement of a foot. A naked girl stood upon widely separated concrete blocks. They were not fastened, but were free to do their owner's bidding. The owner herself was naked and half suspended by her wrists above her head, but not tightly enough to rob her of an awful choice. She could stand as she was in the atrociously tiring widely spread pose or she could step

from the concrete blocks. But what awaited her bare feet below made the choice an impossible one to make. The delinquent maiden was obviously weary. Her head bent forward as she supported her weight from the strapped wrists above. Jean treated the introduction as normal.

“Alice, this is the new girl. Her name is Margo Davis. I’m giving her the tour.”

Tired eyes raised and focused. A tired voice said, “Hello, Margo. I’m sorry you’ve caught me like this. Maybe tomorrow I’ll be back to normal – I hope.”

Their conversation did not matter. The punished girl was breathing heavily. Her thoughts and efforts obviously aligned to her predicament.

Her pubic hair and the plump lips of her sex were obscenely thrust into prominence by her wide spread legs. She could do nothing to hide any part of herself. Margo shrank from the thought she herself might someday stand like this, available to anyone who wished to look. Rossland left a girl nothing to call her own.

“Damn it, Margo, I hate to be forever apologizing, but there’s something else – I have to whip you.”

Jean sounded genuinely sorry, as though contemplating au unpleasant duty, which perhaps it was. They had left the punished maiden in her wide spread pose, her gasping and laboring and the contemplation of the spikes so close to her bare feet. They now stood in the hall beyond the door. Jean’s announcement heralded their next move.

“Whip me!” Margo was incredulous. “I haven’t done anything. Why on earth would you whip me?”

“Remember the thirty days, honey. Every girl gets whipped on the first day and quite often during the time period. But most certainly today. I warned you you wouldn’t like it.”

“But I thought it was Henry Ross who whipped the girls. I didn’t realize we whipped each other. It seems such a waste I’m not going to get anything out of it, and I don’t see what you get either. Does Miss Harridance get in on the act?”

“Just you and me, honey. But there’s something else you’ll learn. You say I don’t get anything out of it, but there you’re wrong. I suppose it is deplorable, but we’re all the same. After awhile we all get so we love to whip another girl. It doesn’t matter which girl it is – there’s no animosity involved. It’s just the beautiful sound of the leather on girl flesh.”

Jean paused. “I’m terribly sorry.” Margo was instantly thankful for Norma Boulter. The older woman’s caning of her youthful bottom had removed most of the terrible fear a girl might normally experience when confronted by what most evidently confronted her now. Woefully, she gazed at Jean.

“There’s no way I can talk myself out of this?” “You know there isn’t, dear. There never is. Once a girl is sentenced, things happen. Look, I can fasten you well enough the way you’re chained. There no sense in taking things off. I’ve just locked them on you. Come this way.” It was unreal and unbelievable. But Margo knew it would happen. When they reached the appointed room, there were several girls leaning against the walls, obviously waiting. She turned to Jean in dismay.

“I’m sorry, sweetheart. It’s their privilege. Any of us can watch a punishment if we want. There will be a few more drifting in before I get you fixed.”

Fixed! Watch while she was whipped! Margo understood the sympathetic glances and the blunt enquiries about holes in her head.

The metal she wore certainly weighed a ton.

It was very simple – exactly as Jean had promised. It required no freedom from her metal bonds. A hook snared the link in her cuffed hands and rose gently above until she stood almost on tiptoe, thus tautly stretched so she could do nothing. Her whole body was naked and vulnerable to the whip. An involuntary moan of disenchantment escaped her lips. But she clinched them tight to stem whatever else may have lurked in her protesting mind. Instead, she looked around. It was as though the trapped girl sought escape or aid or the assurance of a friend. But it was all impersonal. The number of her audience had increased, and others were still arriving. From comments she could hear, she gathered the behavior of new girls was often a matter of interest. They did not all accept the whip in precisely the same manner. Their responses ran all the way from the stoic down to mindless screaming. Margo hoped she could keep her own somewhere safely in between.

There was, in her mind, no single thought of reprieve. She thought this strange, but Rossland had put its first finger on her mind.

It was an actual whip. It wasn’t a cane or a crop – it was a whip. Margo was no expert, but assessed it as being neither good nor bad.

It was just a whip, designed to hurt girls. It would not cut her flesh raw and bloody, but that was its only consolation.

Casually, Jean said, “You’re not supposed to know what you’re going to get. It could be five or fifty. Are you ready?”

It was utterly different from the yellow cane across her bottom cheeks.

She remembered Norma Boulter’s suggestion of a graduation to her virgin back. This was it. The single thong sliced her skin crosswise from shoulder to shoulder. She bit off an involuntary scream, and found herself kicking in futile anger and frustration at chained feet. The act made a fine sound of clashing links, but that was all. The pain seeped once more into every crevice of the girl named Margo Davis.

“I’ll start at the top and work down. But I’ll break the pattern often enough to keep you off guard. There’s no use in my apologizing. It’s standard procedure.”

Margo started to reply, but her voice trailed away into another flash of flaming anguish. The tip of the thong bit sneakily into the armpit of the raised limb. She handled it with no more than a squeal of combined anger and agony which slowly turned into a low moan. In the pause before the next lash, the helpless girl gazed around at the considerable array of faces watching avidly what was being done to her. None were cruel or flushed with pleasure. She saw sympathy there, but for most she was just “the new girl” getting her first taste of the whip. They had seen it all before. Margo closed her eyes for the third stroke. It was generally conceded she had done well. Few new girls did better. It now transpired that she had been sentenced to

twenty strokes, this being the standard initiation. And when the last of them had cut her innocence, she was warmly kissed and embraced by a great many young women she had never previously seen. Her whipping had sparked a memory in all of them. Some laughingly flipped their skirts for her to observe the same scarlet lines upon their own flesh. They were a sisterhood of pain.

Margo would have liked to reciprocate the ardent arms. She managed very well with the hot, moist lips, but it would have been nice at that moment to have put her bare arms around another girl and find comfort in the act. But this was not to be. One by one, the inmates left the room until only Jean was left. She too kissed her and hugged her tightly, assuring her she had done well and said perhaps Margo would not be too unhappy at Rossland. She ran her fingers up and down the weals she herself had made on the innocent back.

“My, I did knock you beautifully,” Jean said. “Please forgive me. And please forgive me for the other things I’ll do in the future. Now you have to stand for awhile.”

It could be the severest test of all – to stand naked with her hands fastened above her head, the belt constricting her waist, the collar hot upon her neck. Once more, Margo kicked her feet. First one, then the other, as though to reassure herself of being chained. Perhaps it was in disbelief. But she could well believe this simple standing with her scorched, seared flesh still protesting could be the worst punishment of all. She did not know when it would bend. She may have to stand thus for a very long time. She could not get free. Probably she would never be free again.

Margo was puzzled by the behavior of her nipples. They should have vanished from sight, perhaps actually been inverted. Instead, they stood erect, fruity hard and larger than she remembered. They were arrogant and joyous in this painful captivity. It was as though they had a life of their own and laughed at she who was bound and could find no freedom. Perched upon her breasts, they were always free and could demonstrate their feelings as they pleased. She had no control over them. It was a fresh discovery.

Standing in dejected nudity, the neophyte realized she was already at that predicted point of cruel regret. How wonderful life might have been if she had not chosen the check! Margo knew for sure if she could get free and go back home, she would so so, regardless of the poverty which would be her lot. But she would not go home. She would stand thus and bear her chains in somber knowledge of having sold a portion of her life. There would be no men in it. No love, no babies, no nothing – except Henry Ross. And she could not be sure of him even.

Perhaps all he would vouchsafe her would be brief carnal moments of attention. Most assuredly he would never marry her. The only future she could attain from Henry Ross was the check, and that would take four years to earn. In the meantime, she could be assured only of whipped nakedness and the fruitless orgasms of girls.

Jean Evans gave Margo back her hands at bedtime. There was also a cup of coffee and a cookie, presumably all a whipped girl would desire.

She was led to a bare, austere dormitory in which the inmates slept on narrow cots. Each one of the uncomfortable

structures was well anchored to the floor. Bolted to the floor beside each was a chain and shackle, but since she was already hobbled and handcuffed, they were of no use. Jean held the bedclothes high for her to enter and then tucked her in. Her last act was the most significant of all. It was to pluck the dangling length of chain from the wall at the headboard of the cot and padlock it to the link hanging from Margo's collar.

"It will not stop you from sleeping," she said gently. "It is the rule." Once more the captive maiden, on her first day at Rossland, was left alone in the darkness.

CHAPTER THREE

ENSLAVED

The dream was graphic. Margo never thought of it afterwards as a nightmare. It was far too clear and specific. In its own terrible way, it was too rational to be called a nightmare. She had little choice but to believe that a memory from the past – a memory no doubt sparked by her present chained condition – had contributed to the experience.

So much of it was the same as Rossland. In the vividness of impression and its etchings on the matrix of memory, she could still see the gloomy, smoky place. It smelled of sweat. Margo knelt naked on a platform.

It was low, just off the floor, but sufficient to place her in prominence.

The hollows of her knees were in some way clamped down with some sort of stocks which had been lowered across them by the Beadle and locked. Her hands had then been tied and hoisted high, until she knelt, taut, stretched and ready. The Beadle consulted his notes.

“Ten strokes Mr. Bascom, and lay them well upon this lass. She’s a rebel. Her shoulders, down to the bottom of her arse. That’s what it says here. Do your duty, man. And get a scream out of the slut.” Margo remembered her pale voice, or it sounded pale, crying aloud for mercy. But apparently there was no mercy, or at least none heard her plea. Bascom held the thonged whip by which she would be scourged and spoke gruffly.

“Oye. Have no doubt about it, I’ll smarten the lass up. But when she’s had her ten, what do I do with her?”

The Beadle once consulted his notes. The notes seemed to chronicle the life and death of Margo Davis.

“She’s to be indentured and sold. There’s an auction today. You know what to do.”

“Ye’re not staying to watch, Mr. Bascom sir? Tis a pretty sight, and for sure I’ll make her sing for ye.”

The Beadle stopped and turned. He surveyed the stretched nakedness ready for the whip. Grudgingly, he conceded, “Ah well, what’s a few minutes! You always do a good job, Bascom, and ‘tis well worth watching. Let her have it!”

It was agony beyond belief. Margo screamed from the very first blow as the knotted thongs swept almost lovingly across her back. She knew there would be blood. There was always blood at whippings such as this.

Puritan mercy was harsh. In her case, it did not exist at all. She was a trollop caught kissing a man in a dark street, and then fleeing from the watch. She had been swiftly apprehended and was about to pay the price for lechery. Then, beyond the whip, lay the years of her indenture. No one could tell how good or bad they would be for her. But most certainly they would separate her from life. She would become a kitchen drab or field hand, unless, of course, she was purchased by a gentleman for his own pleasure. The latter fate was the best she could expect.

Margo Davis screamed steadily while she was whipped. She had made up her mind to strive for silence. But the many-thonged instrument wielded by Bascom’s brawny arm was too much for any girl. With the eighth stroke, she fainted, but was revived by a deluge of icy salt water thoughtfully provided by a benevolent authority. At the

end of the tenth lash, she hung limp, her head bowed, only dimly conscious of what was taking place.

First the chains. No maiden could stand in unseemly freedom and nakedness upon the auction block without suitable gyves. Loss of liberty was implicit in her new status. She was a slave. Strong arms carried her to the smitty, where she was greeted jovially.

“Why, lass, we’ll soon have ye fixed up. Them’s pretty ankles and wrists ye’ve got. I’ll iron ‘em welt so ye don’t go traipsing off.”

It was very simply done. She was made to kneel. Her hands were raised. The metal circlets fitted around them and beaten into shape, and then the rivets, the awful rivets by which through the pounding of the smith’s hammer were flattened out to keep her captive for always, or until such time someone brought her back here to this noise some place for the smith to pound her free. Her hands suitably shackled, she was placed upon a box and her feet similarly dealt with. Then she stood erect. She was told to walk around a bit.

But when she tried to do so, she stumbled and needed the reassuring arm of her jailer. She was still weak from the flogging, but none gave aid. Since she was to be exhibited in public, it became needful to hide the shame of her nakedness. This was done with a white sheet provided by the same thoughtful authority who received the money from her sale. In a puritan society, it was essential that all things balance and none show loss. A noose was placed around the slenderness of her neck, and she was led to an adjacent shed from which she would later be taken to the block. It was actually a huge cage in which there were others like

herself, both black and white, but all similarly chained. There her whipped back was attended by sympathetic hands. Its true healing lay with time.

Margo had thought often of the slave block. It was a fantasy she shared with many, and a fate awaiting the unwary. It took but a small excuse to place a maiden or man thereon. When Margo's turn came, she was trembling and it was a warden who picked her up bodily and carried her up a few steps to stand her in the eyes of the small multitude ready to bid. She surveyed them without shame. She had done nothing of which to be ashamed. Shame became a reality when the sheet was stripped away and she stood naked for their approval. The bidding was sharp and determined. She was seen as a prize. Few girls of her quality reached the block.

Margo stood there, naked. She fingered her chains while the bids mounted. She was knocked down to a Mrs. Marcia Tremont for a sum of money to stagger the imagination and was immediately taken to where settlement was made. Mrs. Tremont elected to have the ankle chains taken off her new acquisition but insisted on the retention of those confining the slender wrists.

The smitty laughed at her woebegone appearance. "We puts them on and we knocks them off. It didn't take long, now did it, deane? Hear ye sold for a good price. Ye are a beauty, ye are, lass. If I had the gold, I'd buy ye myself."

"But if 'tis Lady Marcia Tremont who's purchased ye, then surely ye'd best prepare those pretty lips to work upon a pretty cunt. You'll not be working any fields, unless ye be a bigger fool than ye look. Now up with them pretty legs, and we'll get the iron off them."

It was daunting to the new slave to watch the tremendous force of the hammer blows required to drive the rivets from the shackles about her ankles. It told her all too clearly that the chains remaining on her wrists could well be there for life unless someone returned her to this place. The leg irons fell away and she stood, but without any sense of freedom. The links between her hands hung heavy across the now soiled whiteness of the sheet, which was still her only covering. She did not walk to Marcia Tremont's carriage. The smith picked her up bodily and carried her out, and surprisingly tossed her onto the seat opposite the waiting lady.

The two girls, one rich and widowed, the other stripped and chained, stared at each other in silence, drinking the situation in with a furious speculation until the more fortunate of the two waved a languid hand for the coachman to commence their journey. Her questions were crisp.

"Have you ever been whipped?" "No, never – until today. Today, I was most cruelly flogged." "Flogged?" She leaned over to inspect the whipped back without comment and replaced the white covering over the shrinking nudity indentured to her for five years.

Margo nodded dismally. "Aye, blood. I fear it stained the sheet before those in the big cage tended me."

Marcia laughed. "Well, at least your education has begun. It'll save me a lesson. A girl who hasn't been well whipped or properly flogged is not much use to anyone." She eyed her purchase shrewdly, focusing on the chained hands and then the unchained ankles.

“Have you any idea of escape? Most girls have. I’ll warn you now: I’ll whip it out of you.”

“I haven’t even thought of it,” Margo said truthfully. “Everything’s happened so quickly, and I’ve been hurt so much. I’m just frightened. I’m not thinking about anything properly.”

Marcia nodded. She was enjoying the power she had over this girl who, except for an accident of marriage or birth, could have been herself. She gained a vicarious thrill from picturing herself where Margo sat now. Marcia Tremont had no illusions about her own sexuality. She gloried in it. She intended to enjoy herself to the fullest extend possible with this girl after she had got her home, where she could be kept naked and properly dealt with. Her next question was like the firing of a gun.

“Do those pretty lips of yours know what to do between a lady’s legs?”

Margo was not shocked. “I’ve heard about it, and once I played with a girl I knew, but what you really mean is still strange to me.”

“Good. You’re a virgin. I’ll train you. By the time I’m through with you, those pretty lips will be honey sweet with my secretions. Do you understand that?”

“Yes, I suppose so.”

Margo looked at her chained hands to examine them and exhibit them to the girl on the other side of the carriage.

“I have been made a slave,” she confessed in dull misery. “I am sure there is much for me to learn. I do not wish to be whipped again. I’ll do my best.”

Marcia laughed gaily. “The church folk got you, didn’t they? Well, they haven’t got you now. I’ve got you now. I’ve got you for five whole years.” Again her laughter pealed.

“Ye should feel grateful ye weren’t bought by some beetle-browed old bastard who’d have fucked you before he got you home, and then put you in the fields the next day.”

“I am grateful – really I am. I will try to please you.” Marcia cocked an amused eye. “I’ve got fields too. Have you ever worked in a field all day, under the hot sun?” “Never.”

“Well, there’s worse things, you know.” The young, wise eyes became serious in retrospect. “Once, long ago, I tried it myself. I wanted to know what it was like. I figured it would be useful information for a girl who one day might own her own plantation.” She shrugged and grinned.

“It most certainly was. Have you heard of the quota?” “Isn’t it where someone has to pick a specified amount of cotton or suffer a penalty?” “Well, you know about it.” The youthful widow held up an admonishing finger. “You’d best remember it. If you ever get out in my cotton fields, the overseer will see that you do your stint, and you’ll be whipped like a black if you fail.” Once more came bright laughter.

“But they only put a girl in the fields as punishment, and you’re not going to be punished, are you?”

The inference was plain. The sly hint all too clear. Margo shivered beneath the sheet. For all her youth and beauty, Marcia Tremont might well be as ruthless as a man. She

would know best how to hurt a girl. Uncaring of the answer, she politely asked, “By what title do you wish me to address you… madam?”

“My, my, how formal! I don’t like madam, and I don’t much care for being Mrs. Tremont. Mistress sounds like a school teacher, and a school marm I most definitely am not. For the time being, just call me Marcia. I’ll call you Margo.” Once more the sly grin. “That sounds sweet – two girls together, but only one with a whipped back. I’ll not be sending you to the Beadle or the overseer if I want you whipped. I’ll do it myself. Have you ever had a child?”

“Good gracious, no!”

“Don’t sound so shocked. Slave girls often do. It seemed to me that to have you made pregnant by one of the blacks would be about as bad a punishment as I could contrive. I’ve had a few girls like you, but I could never quite bring myself to do that. Maybe you’ll be the lucky one to carry around a black pickaninny for a few years.”

Margo was unsure. Her companion might well be joking. The fate mentioned was too horrendous to even contemplate. But its utterance made the chains upon her hands weigh doubly heavy and seem twice as tight. She had a sense of life closing in upon her, and it was a life she did not wish to leave. She had been taken from what she previously knew, and in the space of little more than hours, had become a slave. The only bright spot in her firmament was the youthfulness of her new owner. Surely Marcia would not be too cruel.

The young widow read her thoughts. “You’re wondering what I’ll do with you and how cruel I may be, or on the

other hand, how kind. I could be kind, you know. You don't have to look at me with that frightened little-girl-look you've got on your face right now, and by the way, let me warn you, don't ever be sulky. That's one thing I can't abide – a sulky slave."

It seemed a tremendous contradiction to the chained girl, this being seated in a luxurious carriage with a wealthy woman to whom she presumably belonged. Marcia had carried on the conversation in the most light-hearted fashion, and some of it was difficult to believe, but that which happened now was terribly, wickedly real.

Marcia waved her hand again and said to the coachman, "Good enough, Jacques. You can let her off here." Wondering, the new slave allowed herself to be helped from the carriage by the grinning, black attired man. His grin might cover sympathy or animosity. She could not tell. But he reached up for her and secured from inside his own seat a coil of rope at the sight of which the slave girl's heart sank. She was sure it boded her no good. In this she was correct. Jacques made a noose and slipped it over her head to draw it snugly around her neck. He tied the other end at the back of the carriage and allowed the coil to fall upon the dust. His advice was good: "It's best that you don't stumble or fall down, missy. And don't you hold back none, you get yo' pretty neck broke. Don't you worry yo' little head none, missy. I ain't gonna make them horses trot. We goes nice and slow, and saves yo' pretty neck. It ain't all that far."

Shame and dignity! Never in her life had Margo felt it as she did now. The hemp was unkind around her neck. She gathered a handful of rope in her chained hands to give some protective slack. The carriage started and Margo took

her first unfettered steps toward the enslavement into which she had just been sold. Her flogged back throbbed beneath the hot sun and the pebbles hurt her feet. But she followed in meek obedience behind the elegance of Marcia Tremont's carriage. There was little traffic and fewer pedestrians. But what there were examined her only with an idle curiosity, mostly prompted by her good looks. Bad it not been for that, she would have been just one more slave girl being taken to the fields.

Marcia had referred to the estate at "Tremont". They did not go first of all to the house. The carriage had been directed to go through the farmyard and slave quarters before taking the mistress to her front door. It did not take the chained girl trudging at her rope's end very long to guess why. She suspected her mistress had arranged a reception for her benefit alone.

The whipping post bespoke its evil purpose. A naked black girl stood facing it, her arms raised, her hands bound tight against the wood. She was obviously waiting. Her back was, as yet, unmarked. The next exhibition was equally simple and even more graphic. Two posts a dozen feet apart joined at their top by a massive beam. From the beam hung two black girls bound by their wrists, their toes just tantalizingly above the soil. They hung taut and stretched in obvious weariness. They were as helpless and vulnerable as maiden flesh could be. Those going about their duties in the yard paid them scant heed. But Margo viewed them in horror and dismay. Marcia was teaching her a lesson by example. Once again, she had a terrible vision of herself hanging as these girls hung. The lovely girl in the carriage had only to give an order and this would happen. Once more, Margo shivered beneath the hot sun.

If Tremont punished its male slaves, there was no evidence of such intent. Within a well-trodden square stood a massive pillory and an equally massive set of stocks. Each held a girl. Each girl was naked and showed evidence of standing or sitting where she was for a long time. Dejected, hopeless eyes raised from their imprisonment to watch as the carriage passed. But no girl pleaded for help or mercy. Every line and muscle of their lovely nudity told merely they expected neither. Their next stop was the smitty. Margo was strangely glad of its existence. It meant that her chains could be stricken off here rather than far distantly in the town. But there was no striking out of chains today. Instead, it was the familiar ritual of seating and the raising of her legs to the anvil. But this time, even Margo herself conceded pleasure in what was being done. The manacles the smith now fitted upon her ankles were most definitely feminine. They were not of a common iron, but of chased metal she could not name. The linkage between them was long but light. She realized it would constantly be in her way as she walked, but it was infinitely better than the close, heavy hobbles so recently struck from her feet. The rivets by which they were closed upon her flesh were more subtle but nonetheless secure. Only a blacksmith could cope with them. They would defeat any girl or the strongest man.

Marcia had watched the flesh ironing with amusement and a tremendous pride of possession. She would have the girl washed and cleansed and given a proper hair styling by her own personal slave. The girl seemed tractable and might not need a period in the cotton fields to break her in. She had a quality of intelligence but promised to be inter-

esting. But for very sure, she must be given no chance of escape.

“Can you walk?” she asked brusquely. “Show us.” Margo could walk, but she must proceed cautiously. Walking was difficult, and running was impossible. She would be a slave, well constrained. The jingle of the links would never let her forget what she had become.

“I can walk,” she admitted shyly, “but only slowly. I hope I please you.”

“You’ll please me better when you’re clean, child. Come, let us get you to the bath.”

The black maiden who shyly attended her was immensely competent. The girl wore scant clothing and some of her revealed flesh indicated she had been whipped at a not too distant date. But there was no use alluding to such things. Margo allowed herself to be ministered to and every part of herself cleansed. The black girl tenderly applied lotion to the angry-looking weals on her back. She clucked in sympathy.

“You been flogged, missy. Ah knows what it’s like. Don’t you ever rile Miz Marcia, she be real good with the whip, she whip a girl in the damnedest places.”

It was always the same. The ever-present whip! Margo realized it had become a part of her life and something she must keep forever in her mind. This would be her function from now on – to please both usefully and carnally to avoid the cutting of her flesh with the leather thongs. The thought was foremost in her mind, and now as she walked into the pleasant lounge where her mistress waited. Every step she took evoked metallic music. She found her chained

hands awkward to dispose of. She dared not use them to cover her new nakedness. The sheet had been taken and not replaced. Evidently, Marcia wished to once again examine what she had bought. Margo stood, humbly beseeching approval but respectfully silent, while gay young eyes searched every crevice of her being.

“Come closer, Margo. Separate your legs. I want to look at your pussy.”

In her past, now gone forever, Margo would have indignantly refused. Even after all her exposures during this dreadful day, she was still hesitant and shy about baring her most intimate secrets. She could do nothing about her breasts. They asserted themselves of their own accord and were allowed no covering. But that which nestled in coy shame between her thighs was something else again. She had kept it inviolate. But there was about Marcia an authority undeniable. Margo clinked forward until her knees touched those of the seated girl. She spread her legs, and for a full measure of obedience, clasped her chained hands behind her neck. All of her was visible and available to the avid young woman whose property she now was.

Marcia was not satisfied to simply look. A pert young hand reached within the revealed crevice to feel to knead and pinch.

“It’s a lovely little cunny,” she said enthusiastically. “I don’t see why you are so ashamed of it. It’s neat and tight and trim. All right, you can close your legs again. And since you are already standing, you may as well serve the tea. Chloe has just brought up the things. You may serve me and then yourself. You will drink yours kneeling before me while we talk.”

It was like a dream. Even when free, the slave girl had not been accustomed to luxury such as Tremont offered. She was deathly afraid of the eggshell-like china, and was obliged to be cruelly careful with the chains between her hands. But this ceremony of the afternoon tea was not new to her. She had done it in freedom. Now she did it in the abject servility of chains. She suspected that most of the difference lay in her mind.

“Before you kneel, I want you to turn so that I may examine your back.”

Once again, she prepared for close inspection, and once again, an exploring finger made her wince.

“Well, I must say, Beulah made a good job of you, dear. And I’m sure you’re grateful. You may now kneel.”

Margo knelt. In response to a sharp command she widened the distance between her knees, flushing pink at the unseemly exhibition. But she gravely took her tea cup and gratefully sipped her tea, her eyes searching above the rim of the cup for approval or disapproval. She knew how close the line she must now tread.

“After tea, you may come with me and watch dear Jenny get whipped,” Marcia said amiably. “Jenny is the dark girl you saw at the whipping post. I had them fasten her there early in the day. It’ll do her good to wait and know what’s coming. You do enjoy seeing a girl whipped, don’t you?”

“Not really.”

The admission had slipped out without thought. It was probably the wrong thing to say. In amendment, she added, “What has Jenny done to get herself whipped?”

“I’ve quite forgotten, dear. It doesn’t matter,” Marcia retorted brightly. “The overseer looks after most of these things. Of course, he won’t be looking after you. You are specially mine. Jenny is so much fun to watch being whipped. She makes such a tremendous fuss. I’ve instructed them to tie her hands above her head, the way you saw. I did this on purpose so that she has plenty of room to kick and wriggle those lovely hips of hers. I’m sure you’ll enjoy it.”

Margo was equally sure she would not. But since whipping girls seemed to be of first importance at Tremont, she thought it best not to say anything to offend. But, struck by a sudden realization, she spoke: “But, Marcia, I’m naked. I can’t possibly go out there among all those people with nothing on.”

“Don’t be silly, dear. There will be some of them out there too who don’t have anything on. When a girl is being punished or is about to be punished, she mustn’t wear clothes. It’s one of the rules. You won’t be alone, and they won’t think I’m playing favorites, because they’ll see your whipped back. Everything’s okay – don’t worry.”

It was all outrageous and insane, but no more so than the rest of this devastating day. The walk to the whipping post would demand all her concentration. It was the first real test of her chained feet. When the time came, Margo was distressed by the clatter she made on the parquet floor. True, it had a musical quality. It was not offensive. But it advertised every movement she made and announced to all her condition as a slave. While Margo watched her feet, and awkwardly held her hands so as not to obstruct her view, the young Mistress Tremont brightly made conversation.

“Mr. Manley is so clever with the whip, dear,” Marcia informed animatedly. “He doesn’t just slash away at a girl’s back or her bottom. No, he has her spread her legs and gets up between. He thinks of special little places like armpits and her belly. He’s really tremendously clever. The girls are all frightened of him and treat him with utmost respect. Probably you should too, just in case I’m away some time and he has you all to himself. I’ve given him carte blanche with the girls, but that won’t include you, dear. Any man I give you to will get the privilege by some special dispensation of my own.”

Yesterday an innocent, tomorrow a harlot! Margo cringed. She could well imagine this sparkling girl bestowing her body as a favor upon some neighboring male or relative. It would be one more hurdle to cross, but she would worry about it when the time came. For the moment, she was intently watching her feet and was thankful that her mistress understood her preoccupation.

“You’re doing well, dear. I’d almost believe you’d walked with chained feet before.”

“I haven’t, but the chain is very light. There’s quite a lot of it. I think I could take a full stride, but I’m afraid of stumbling.” The captive girl made a sideways glance seeking approval. “You don’t have to worry about running away. It’s quite impossible. I couldn’t run across the yard without someone catching me.”

A half circle of staff formed behind the girl tied to the post. Jenny had courage. She looked back, beneath a raised arm, to each new arrival and gave them a pale wan smile.

“Has Jenny been whipped before, Marcia? She seems so-well, so unafraid.”

“Don’t worry about that, dear. The little so-and-so is scared to death, but there is a streak of bravado in her which I don’t want to break. I only have her whipped often enough and hard enough to keep her properly on her toes. She’s one of those slave girls who absolutely must be whipped every so often or she becomes impossible. She’s already run away twice. You can see the brand on her thigh.”

It was true. There on the satiny dark skin was the livid imprint of a hot iron, now healed, but nonetheless proclaiming its “R” for runaway. In the most graphic form, Margo wondered how awful the pain must have been branded! It was by no means an unknown punishment. But this was her first personal contact with it. All her life, the girl bound to the whipping post would bear the mark to proclaim that once she had been a runaway slave. Once more, Margo shuddered, vicariously feeling the hot iron’s glow.

“Here comes Mr. Manley with his whip,” Marcia actually sounded excited and pleased, like a little girl about to enjoy a treat.

Margo stood unhappily, toying with her chained hands, not knowing where to put them for either comfort or appearance. Free, they presented no trouble, but chained, they were forever in the way of everything. She allowed them to hang listless before her. At least they covered some of the pubic hair. But there was very little of her not open to public view. When Mr. Manley, the overseer, uncoiled his whip and made it snap, she did not spring alert and erect as did the rest. Margo was determined to watch as little as possible. She was sure it would be a hateful sight.

It truly was! The atrocious whip smacked smartly the full length of the ebony back. The sound of the impact was frightening. The puffy weal proclaiming the stroke formed rapidly. After the fourth such cut across her skin, Jenny screamed uninhibitedly. So truly was Marcia engrossed by the punishment that she failed to notice Margo's closed eyes or turned cheek. Jenny followed all her mistress had hoped for from her. Her hips weaved frantically, her legs kicked at nothing, but in all directions. Quite soon, a little blood showed beneath the cords around her wrists. It was a most competent punishment and all present conceded Mr. Manley had been in good form. No one seemed much concerned with his victim. Jenny was only a slave.

Two days later, Margo met Denby Wright.

The word for Denby Wright was debonair. He was older than Marcia, but still young. He owned the neighboring plantation. It was understood between him and Marcia that one day they would marry. But neighbor was in a hurry. In the meantime, they enjoyed the sparring match, the prize for which was Marcia's body. It was a game Denby sometimes won, and sometimes it was Marcia, but both of them enjoyed its thrust and parry. They were adept in repartee. The mistress had frankly related their circumstances to Margo, making a joke out of it, but insisting that the slave girl be naked for her first appraisal by a man who might conceivably become her master. It was coyly hinted that perhaps Marcia would make a gift of her to the man and that should she fail to please, her punishment would be dire.

With the stage thus set, Margo wheeled in the tea tray from where Chloe had delivered it outside the door.

“You’re an absolute jewel, Marcia. Nothing but the best.” The admiration was genuine in the male voice as he viewed Margo’s blushing nakedness. “Damn, if the girl isn’t a beauty!”

“Of, couse. Would I buy less? She cost me a pretty penny too.”

Marcia laughed slyly. “I’m sure you’d like to take it out on her hide.”

Margo sense their raillery. They would wish to keep her frightened and alert. She was, in fact, a plaything for their afternoon. She poured the tea as daintly as shackled hands allowed and served it on her knees. Denby applauded.

“Damn fine show! I should have gone to that auction and outbid you Marcia. I wouldn’t mind having those breasts and that twinkling little cunt on a chain.”

“You don’t have enough money, Denby. You know that.” “Well, I’ve got enough to have given you a run for your money. But I didn’t see any sense in bidding her up. You’ll share her with me, won’t you?” The mistress of Tremont laughed her silvery laugh. “I shouldn’t, but I probably will. But don’t get the idea you’ll be fucking the little darling every other day – certainly not twice a day – the way you’re thinking right now. I can read it in you eyes, Denby.” “I could never desert you!” Denby proclaimed dramatically. “I would never demean you by going from your slave to your sheath.” Denby smiled benignly at both females and added amiably. “At least not for a couple of hours.” “You’re outrageous. You shouldn’t be allowed. You’ll be giving Margo ideas.” The mistress turned to her naked, blushing slave

who was now coyly kneeling with her knees far apart in the prescribed pose.

“Don’t listen to him, girl. This man is a positive menace. No girl is safe with him.”

“Thank you, thank you.” Denby was quite obviously flattered, and no doubt this was part of her little ritual, like love’s postering between birds. “I sure you’ve tried her out for nibbling. Is she any good?”

“She’s a darling! I climaxed three times her first try.” Margo was appalled. She had not came from a bohemian circle or from those monied classes who in their private lives were totally without inhibition. She could scarcely believe the frank discussion of which she was not a part. Obviously, this man and this girl enjoyed it. She bowed her head, but whether it was in shame for them or for herself, she would not tell.

“Your little darling’s blushing,” Denby observed enjoyably. “She’s beautifully responsive. I like that. Look, sweetheart, if she’s so damn good at nibbling you, how about me?”

“Denby, don’t be disgusting!” Marcia wrinkled her nose in an affection of disapproval. “Really, you are a bit much. I bet the poor girl’s never done such a thing in her life.”

“Well, ask her. We’ve got lots of time.” “I have never done it,” Margo interjected with decision. “Please, Marcia, don’t make me.” “Another country heard from!” proclaimed Denby, again the same muck dramatics. “There’s more to your blushing little maiden than you supposed, sweetheart. She’s probably sucked more cocks than you have.” Margo’s blush was without bounds. It had been said right out loud in just that many words! She would not have believed it

possible, and the act described was noting more than a wicked whisper behind closed doors, with giggling colleagues at school and after church. She had been cruelly flogged for an offense far less the Denby spoke of now, casually, as though he were asking for another cup of tea.

“Give the man more tea, Margo. See if you can’t shut him up. Really, Denby, these extravagances of yours are damned embarrassing. You’re not safe in public. You come out with the most outrageous things. If you think you’re going to have this girl do what you’ve suggested, you might as well pack up and go home right now.”

“I might settle for you, dear heart.” There was the faintest hint of malice in the suggestion. “You’re really damn good at it, you know.”

“You’re disgusting. Fancy talking like this in front of the slave girl! A new one at that! Denby, please…”

“Seems to me your little slave girl is going to pick up a trace of good old Shakespeare. You know the quote: ‘me thinks the lady doth protest too much’. You seem to be forgetting, sweetheart. My original suggestion was not for your favor, but for her mouth. How about it?”

Margo hurriedly served the second round of tea. Keeping herself busy with cups and plates because she dreaded reverting to the humble posture wherein she displayed everything she had. But she could not stand dithering so once again she submissively knelt.

“You see, like I told you, the girl’s a treasure. Look at her now. She’s a natural. She’d suck my cock and enjoy every inch.” Denby chuckled. “In fact, dear girl, I’ve decided that’s exactly what she’s going to do.”

Margo watched Denby drain his cup with leisurely enjoyment, then commence to remove his clothes. In this quiet drawing room, it seemed an impossible act. She looked imploringly at her mistress, but found there on the lovely features only some of her own perturbation. Marcia Tremont's breast were rising and falling to denote turmoil within.

When the male was totally without clothes, Marcia rose like a startled animal and became blushing vehement.

"Denby, behave yourself. Stay away from me. I absolutely refuse one of those absurd tussles you enjoy so much."

"Very well then, the answer is simple, isn't it love? Take off your clothes."

Instead of the heated denial or dismissal Margo expected, she became a witness to the unbelievable.

The mistress of Tremont stood breathing heavily and glaring anxiously at the rampant male. Then, without another word, she began throwing her clothes petulantly at the couch.

"I'll never forgive you for this, Denby." The young voice was uncertain, tremulous. But the lovely breast, when they came into view, were heaving rapidly in an excitation, probably for removed from fear.

The watching maiden, kneeling in submissive pose on the floor, began to suspect that Marcia was capable of playing many roles. She appeared to be the perfect foil for Denby's masculinity. When her quite remarkable loveliness was fully revealed, she hid none of it, but stood poised for either flight or fight, according to a decision she had not made.

“You’re beautiful,” Denby assured her in a hushed tone. He was drinking in every aspect of Marcia’s beauty. He seemed a trifle awed by such a feminine display, but quietly, he said, “Darling, you know what to do. I don’t have to tell you.”

“Not before this girl, Denby, I implore you. I’ve only just purchased her.”

“You know what to do, Marcia. Don’t let’s quibble.” He repeated his instructions in a quiet, assured way that appeared to stroke the unclad mistress like a blow. Margo could swear she saw her wince. But Marcia’s voice held a sob as she venomously retorted, “Very well, Denby, but I think you’re a beastly man, and I hate you.” Once more, the kneeling slave was treated to a spectacle beyond belief. After this, she could believe anything. Backing away as from a slowly pursuing monster, Marcia Tremont got halfway to the far wall, then turned, and with determined steps, went to where there was a bare panel, devoid of ornamentation. She thrust her breast hard against it and raised her arms. It was only then that Margo saw the straps. Denby circled each slender wrists with the waiting leather and buckled each of them tight and firm. The mistress of Tremont stood nakedly helpless.

“Ah, that’s better!” He stepped back to survey his handiwork. A naked back and round, tight bottom glared back at him without sound. “That’s the way to have a girl. If every female was trussed up like that everyday, the world would be a better place. You’re uncommonly beautiful today, Marcia.”

“All right, you’ve got what you want. You’ve shamed me and made me helpless in front of the slave. Now let me loose.”

Marcia’s demand sounded anxious, even to the kneeling girl. The mistress moved uneasily against her bonds and repeated, “Denby, undo these straps immediately!”

The male, in the form of Denby Wright, spared the kneeling slave a glance of semi-apology.

“Your mistress feels that she has to say these things,” he explained patiently. “She doesn’t mean a word of it, and if I listened and did what she asked, she’d be the most disappointed girl in the world. You are about to be the only witness to a unique event. I’m speaking of the caning of your mistress’ bottom. Marcia canes exquisitely, and you’ll be able to tell her afterwards of the manner in which the scarlet lines appeared.” Denby smiled benignly. “Feel free to move to wherever you can get the best possible view.”

“Denby, this is outrageous. You’re spoiling the girl!” Marcia’s flushed face was turned accusingly. Words were her only weapon. She could move no part of herself effectively. “It’s all very well for you and I to play games, but not before a slave girl.”

“But, me dear, you’ve said yourself that this girl is special. She’s something that’s going to be very personal to you. It’s not like we had brought in a field hand to witness your shame. Actually, this is going to be a part of Margo’s training. If I happen to be absent for any lengthy period, she can take my place.”

He bent her, and with exaggerated solicitude, patted and smoothed the palpitating twin round that appeared to have a life of their own. Marcia turned her face to the wall.

By now, Margo had passed the point of astonishment or any feeling of loyalty to her mistress. She realized she was a spectator in an exotic game between these two, a game they had played before. The thought that she had taken part in it generated an unusual excitation. The quivering nudity held so rigidly against her own wall by straps buckled upon her wrists by a visiting male was evoking all sorts of new sensations within Margo's maiden breast. Abandoning hypocrisy, she admitted to herself a sexual excitement prompting a desire for Denby to get on with the job. Her nude, flushed mistress was delectable as she now was, no doubt she would be even more so once the cane sliced the tender spheres yet unmarked.

"I'll never forgive you, Denby." The assurance lacked conviction. It was hard for Margo to know if the wrigglings and writhings her mistress now indulged in were truly the result of apprehension or simply an additional erotic prelude to excite the male. Once more, a vision of the mating antics of concupiscent birds flashed across her mind. But Denby had now taken up a position and selected his cane. With swift precision, he planted his first scarlet line upon the intimate flesh.

Few things are as we expect. This was one more instance. Instead of screaming and leaping wildly about, Marcia drew air into her lungs with a prolonged inhalation in the manner of a connoisseur enjoying a good cigar. She exhaled just as slowly, as though savoring every contribution of her lungs. She moved her exquisite body only slightly,

but lifted one leg as its knee as far as she could contrive, and then let it slowly fall back to its resting place. She said no word.

It was as though some telepathy existed between the man and the girl. Margo watched in pure awe. No doubt Denby could have struck the helpless bottom far harder than he did, but he was most certainly striking far harder than Margo herself would have wanted to suffer. As the beating progressed, the blows impacted with their own wicked sound, well spaced, affecting a grid of lines and then a latticework of scarlet as they crossed again and again. The aristocratic owner of the punished sounds contrived a sound all her own, casting only infrequent backward glances. Marcia had now retired within the shelter of a bare arm and seemingly lived out her agony in the small, whimpering noises and erotic writings as though the man and his whip were no more than a generating force for a lust within itself. Margo could well believe that nothing now existed for Marcia Tremont beyond the measured cut of the cane, which kept alive the incandescence within her sex.

Denby was obviously in full and total control, well aware of what he was doing and what Marcia suffered. By the time he finished caning the lovely nudity, the whole expanse of Marcia's skin imbued with the sweat of pain. It glistened and shone, and her sounds and motions only very gradually died away after the last stroke.

Denby served brandy, first to the strapped girl he had so unkindly punished and then to the kneeling slave girl. For a reason all his own, he allowed the Mistress of Tremont to

remain strapped to the wall. His attention was transferred to the trembling slave.

“Nice little warming up for your dear mistress, eh?” His tone was bright and cheerful, and he obviously expected a reply. “The dear girl adores it upon her bottom. But she’s not to keen on having her back whipped, are you, darling?” he asked her over his shoulder.

Darling wiggled her hips as though in disdain and made small-small negative sounds. They were by no means positive, but a carry over from the keening accompaniment to the cane.

“If I were to obtain a whip and use it on her lovely back, she would be much distressed.” His voice lowered in tone to become suggestive. “Would it give you pleasure?”

“No. Oh, no, please don’t do that, sir.” Margo had had enough of such extremes of eroticism. She wanted no more. Whether Marcia enjoyed the caning of her bottom or not, it had nonetheless been a horrendous thing to watch and the scarlet skin now proclaimed itself someone’s guilt. “May I take it that you are now amenable to such a performance?” It took a moment to register, but then the full obscenity of it struck the slave girl in full force. Her stricken gaze sought and found the rampant maleness of the man who had asked the question. Quite obviously, her duty was, in his eyes, all too clear. Distracted, she muttered the only words she could think of.

“No, oh no! Please, Mr. Wright, don’t!” Her vehement voice trailed away from lack of words to say. She felt totally inadequate. She was up against a force to commit an act never

previously contemplated. Recognizing the vapid sound of it, she simply added, “I’m absolutely not that kind of girl.”

“Every girl is that kind of girl, Margo – don’t be silly. It’s habit forming, you know. If you stay with me, you’ll come to love it.”

The kneeling girl sensed a thing unsaid. Her suppliant gaze was pathetic in a sudden guess. But all she could bring herself to say was, “Please, don’t make me – please don’t.”

“My dear child, in the true sense of what we are talking about, I cannot make you. The act requires a certain voluntary contribution of your own. To make it easy for you, I am going to suggest that until you announce your consent to willingly, shall we say, appease my lust, I will whip this lovely back your mistress wishes to keep unmarked.”

She had guessed it all the time. Now it was in the open. It could be examined. But what was there to say or do? The choice was all too obvious. It would be a simple yes or no. She could not temporize for long. It was forcibly imposed upon the slave girl’s mind that she was the property of this woman who was trapped to the wall and who had been caned. If she betrayed that woman, then after Denby had gone, what could their relationship be other than hostile? Margo knew herself in the grip of a terrible impotence in which nothing she could do could be entirely right.

But the idea of being forced to watch the whipping and marking of the lovely white back held helpless against the wall and totally dependent on her will was more than she could bear. Abjectly, she surrendered.

“Very well, Mr. Wright, I will do as you request.” She paused in confusion, then added, “Please help me.”

Margo Davis supposed there were worse things to do than to take the male phallus within her mouth and use it as the male voice directed.

Denby chose to seat himself in such a manner the mistress had done at an earlier time and made himself available to a girl who knelt between his knees. For the first minutes of her administration, he gently stroked her hair, but as her efforts increased the crescendo of his sensations, he more and more grasped that hair within his hands and grew it up to himself. When all was over, he assured the slave girl blandly that she had done well for a first time and was girl of much promise. He then unstrapped the mistress of Tremont who immediately threw her arms around his neck in a fevered embrace and proceeded to sob and sob against upon the breast of the man who had been so cruel. The two nudities intertwined and became one, to tell the watching slave she was witness to a strange and perverted love. As Margo watched, her horror in her own defilement lessened and dissipated to become simply a knowledge of an act that would be repeated again and again. If there was virtue in enslavement, it was simply to relieve the slave itself of guilt or responsibility. A slave girl did what she must. Absently, Margo raised her chained hands and plucked male hair between her lush, ripe lips which she could swear were strangely swollen.

The caning of Marcia Tremont's bottom and her demonstration of the strange affection between herself and Denby made no difference to her relations with her newly purchased slave. Marcia carried the whole thing off with extraordinary aplomb, even to the point of implying Margo's possible enjoyment of the carnal act with the male phallus and sly hints of what she herself might sanction Denby to

do with her quivering possession a glimpse of a world previously undreamed. Since the cane and the whip governed all things at Tremont, Margo was not foolish enough to make either criticism or complaint. She waited.

The visits of Denby to Tremont were frequent. He chose his time and sipped his tea with total nonchalance in a discussion of the unmentionable. He was totally without inhibition and blandly included Marcia Tremont in all his speculations. His next visit, on the following day, gave Margo food for thought and apprehension. She had served the tea and clinked her chains to where once more she knelt with her thighs wide open for his appraisal. She felt certain it was only a matter of time before he was given permission to use her. In the meantime, he could look and whet his appetite. He was by no means a sex-starved man, but a new girl is a new girl, and must inevitably be sampled before too long. Between Margo and the phallus she had laved with lips and tongue lay only the authority of Marcia Tremont. It was a very feminine authority, subject to male influence.

“Really, Marcia, I don’t see why you need this girl. I know she nibbles your fanny, but there are better uses for her. How about selling her to me?”

“Forget it, Denby. All you’ll do with her is keep her in our bed. I regard this as a total waste of a lovely girl.”

Denby was quite unruffled. He smiled blandly and suggested, “You underrate me, darling. A man can’t possibly spend all his time in bed with a girl. What you’re worried about is that the little dear might not properly get her bottom caned. But you’re wrong there. I’d enjoy caning her de-

lightful little buns as much as I enjoy caning yours. By the way, would you like a repeat performance today?"

"Denby, you're impossible! The answer is absolutely no! I'm finding it uncomfortable enough to sit down as it is."

"And you are absolutely reveling in every gorgeous, lustful moments, aren't you, darling?" Denby rolled out the words with obvious enjoyment. "A girl's bottom should be constantly inflamed so that every time she seats herself she is aware of the male!"

"Denby, stop this teasing! You men are so predictable. I think you'd whip a girl's bottom three times a day if you had the chance. You're obsessed with the whipping of bottoms. I don't see what it does for you. I mean, you're horny enough to begin with. It's not as though you're some aged man who needs the stimulation to, well, get it up." The mistress of Tremont sniffed disdainfully and continued her accusation. "You may consider the bottoms of both myself and my slave girl as out of bounds. Both will remain inviolate. Damn it, man, you've got enough cute little black girls on your estate to satisfy any lecherous urges. You only come here because the fact that both men and my little slave girl are white, and that excites you. Doesn't it?"

"It excites me to the point where neither of you two delectable creatures is safe," Denby affirmed benevolently. "There is no question but that man's highest aspiration is to warm the little arses of the maidens who come his way. You deserve – you enjoy it. It does you no end of good, you know. And it gets me an erection. What more could a girl ask for?"

The mistress of Tremont affected hauter. “Denby, you are assuming far too much. You impose on my good will. I have to suppose that all your black wenches have been so thoroughly thrashed as to be unavailable to you and at the same time carry on their duties. You’re a positive monster!”

“Of course I am. Isn’t it lovely?” Denby turned his attention to the quivering girl. “Sweetheart, you have already given your lips and your delightful mouth to appease the suffering of this capricious female.” He smiled as though with pure love. “I am sure you will donate your bottom.”

It was a cruel question. Margo could not divine the proper answer. What she came up was primly proper.

“I obey my mistress, sir. I will do only that which she directs.”

“Bravo!” Marcia clapped her hands in glee. “You see, Denby, you can’t charm all of us all of the time. And if it does get caned, it’s I who will do it. And in any case, I’m a little weary of this caning business. If I want to engender some heat in her delightful crotch, I will do so by some other means. Perhaps hanging her up by her thumbs or by having her fastened to the whipping post and leaving her to wonder if she really gets whipped or not.” She turned to the listening, quaking girl. “Darling, which would you chose?”

The question was rhetorical – mischievous. But it could not be ignored, not by a girl who was a slave.

Timidly, Margo ventured, “Mistress, they all sound terrible.” There was a short, uncomfortable pause before she added, in a burst of candor, “I think it would be much nicer for me if Mr. Wright caned my bottom.”

It was a stroke of pure diplomacy. Marcia gazed down at the kneeling girl askance, but Denby applauded, actually clapping his hands and shouting, “Bravo, bravo! Damn it, Marcia, this girl has brains. She knows a good thing when she sees it, and I promise not to mark her up any more than I did you. And that’s practically letting a girl off scot free. Come, darling, what do you say?”

“Oh, have it your own way!” Marcia turned a petulant regard from one to the other problems. “You’ll never be happy, Denby, until you’ve whipped her bottom. I now that. I expect she knows it too. So you may as well get it over with.” She turned to the kneeling girl. “Okay, Margo, you have my permission to obey Denby in what he has just mentioned. If he goes beyond it, look to me and I will say the final yes or no.”

Margo felt ridiculous and inadequate. Everything she wanted to say would sound trite. And all the talk of whipping bottoms – and hers in particular – seemed stupidly in excess in an endless repetition of something she would have supposed might have become a bore. Although she did remember the heat within her own loins at the sound and even the fell of the impacts in all she had experienced. It was all absolutely puzzling, impossible, and unreal.

“Come along, my pretty.” Denby beckoned invitingly, as though it was something much to be desired. “Let’s see if those wrist shackles will stretch the span. They might just manage.”

They required some tugging, but Denby enjoyed his work. It was not long before Margo stood where her mistress stood, her breasts thrust hard against the panel in exactly the same place. The tightening of the straps above her head

had drawn taut every link of the connecting chain, but she was severely and prettily handled. Her mind was furiously debating the choice she had made. Perhaps, after all, it would have been better to take a chance on the whipping post. It was not impossible. But she had done so, she might have been reprieved at the last moment. But she had made her choice and must abide by it. She peeped back over her raised arm to observe her mistress's petulance. Marcia was by no means happy about what was taking place. She was aware of having lost the initiative.

"Denby, I've changed my mind. I don't want the girl whipped. All this whipping…"

"But, darling, I'm not whipping your little pretty-pretty. What I'm doing is caning her bottom. It is quite a different thing." He turned to the girl strapped to the wall. "You'll enjoy every moment. You'll enjoy every stroke, won't you, my dear?"

"No."

"You see, she's being honest about it." Marcia was triumphant. "There aren't many girls like me, and I can't manage to feel in the mood every day the way you'd like me to. Really, Denby, you're an absolute menace. Why don't you go and buy yourself a couple of mulattoes or you might even get a white girl you'll be satisfied with. You don't need to use my property." "Oh, very well!" he exclaimed with make-believe irritation. "You're not in the mood. She's not in the mood. I'll settle for, say, twenty light strokes." Margo's captive heart went out to her mistress when Marcia exclaimed testily. "There's no such thing as light strokes! You know that was well as I do, especially from you. You've never given me a light stroke in my whole life,

let alone what you'd do to a slave girl." "Well, don't get so hot about, my pet. I can always cane a girl's bottom. It's no big deal. But, damn it, you owe me something." "I don't owe you a damn thing," Margo vowed heatedly. "And I know what you're working up to, you lecherous hound. You're going to ask if I'll allow you to take Margo to bed." "The thought has crossed my mind," he admitted. "But if you're so all fired determined to protect your little innocent, how about me having a go at you? I haven't fucked a girl since yesterday, and I'm horny as hell." "Well, if that's all your trouble is, go on out to the fields and pick up any of the black girls that take your fancy. The pretty ones have got a ball and chain locked on their ankles, but that shouldn't bother you. You can do your foul deed right there between the cotton rows and the let the girl go back to work." "Can I use your riding crop on her bottom first? It improves their performance tremendously, you know," he sighed at the vision. "A well-cropped black ass on hot rough soil – my, my, it is tempting." "Run along then. You don't need a chit from me. He can probably recommend a girl. He's tried them all." When the male had strolled away blithely on his carnal errand, there was silence in the room. Marcia was still pouting, and Margo longed to thank her mistress, but was not yet certain that she had anything to give thanks for. It could well be that her mistress would pick up where Denby had failed to commence. Once again, she realized privilege in having witnessed and being a part of another almost incredible exchange, a clash of personalities between two members of the ruling class. Plantation owners were kings and queens – omnipotent in their casual disposal of human flesh. She whished Marcia would undo the tight straps and allow her arms to fall.

“What the devil am I going to do with you?” Marcia demanded irritably. “Damn it, I’ve let that man outfox me again. He’s forever doing it. I’m damned if I’m going to let him have you free of charge. I bought you for myself and I’m keeping you. I should never have let it go as far as it did. Here, I’ll let you loose.”

Margo now thought it opportune to say her fervid thank you and heaved a sigh of relief. She was glad to be free of the straps around her wrists and free of the wall. The panel heated by her body seemed an instruction and an impertinence upon a space, particularly designed and treasured by the girl who owned her. It was Marcia who belonged there against the wall with her arms strapped high for male attention. But only on Marcia’s own terms and in her own time.

Anxious to please, she asked tremulously, “The tea things, mistress – shall I remove them?”

Marcia waived away the idea as of no consequence. “Oh, one of the girls in the house will do it. I’m not going to waste you. I think I’ll revert to an original idea.” She grinned impishly at a thought which had obviously improved her disposition. “I want you to go down to the slave compound and get Manley or anybody who is handy to fasten you to the whipping post in the standard position – nothing out of the way. Do you think you can manage that?”

“Yes.”

“In case you’re wondering why, it’s because it will do you good. You’re bound to end up on the whipping post sooner or later. Every girl does. As I said, it does not actually mean

you'll be whipped. But it will be a marvelous opportunity for you to gather the atmosphere of the place and realize what it's going to be like for you wait there, fastened and helpless on the final occasion when you are actually going to be your skin marked."

Marcia now smiled brightly. "I think it's a wonderful idea. Don't you agree?"

"I'll be frightened, but if it's what you want..." "Yes, it is, so run along. I'll come down and talk to you later." The slave girl left her mistress. When she found Manley, he simply laughed in a knowing, experienced amusement.

"Well, you all come to it sooner or later, don't you, missy?" He chuckled, surveying her nakedness appreciatively. "Took you two days, but I've seen some girls get it the first day they come. It depends on their temperament." He chuckled once more. "Or on your mistress's temper. Come along. There's a bit of rope beside the post that'll do just fine."

Manley was right. The rope was there, as though waiting especially for this moment. Margo watched while the overseer picked it up, then obeyed the signal of his hand and thrust herself hard against the wood, raising her arms above her head. The chain of her shackles prohibited totally embracing the cylindrical timber, but it was long enough for Manley's purpose. He looped the shackle at each end and drew it tight behind the post, then tugged and knotted it to leave the nude slave standing fearfully with arms raised. The rope firmly held the shackles and the shackles held her with and equal implacability. Manley slapped her rump hardily and advised, "Just stand there quite, my pretty. Think of your sins and maybe you can fig-

ure out whether you'll get ten or twenty or fifty." He eyed her with a faint hint of sympathy. "I don't suppose you'll get hundred today."

Margo watched him go, fearful he might use the whip on her himself without waiting for his mistress. But he ambled out of sight to leave her with a restricted view of the wood in front of her nose and against which her breast was tightly thrust.

The only virtue she could see in her position was that it gave her a degree of decency as opposed to being bound in such a way as to stand with her back against the wood with her breasts flaunting themselves for all to see. For slave girls, in their nakedness, there was a vast gulf between their backs and their fronts. Each had their own implications, both frightening.

From their indifferent glances she drew from those who passed, Margo divined she was by no means the first white girl to stand thus. But her gravest concern was speculation on the capriciousness which had put her where she was. Manley had spoken quite carelessly in quite horrific numbers. The idea of a naked girl receiving fifty strokes might be no more than a sardonic threat, but she had been so recently flogged by the law and was now to be flogged again. Even the minimum number of ten strokes etched across her wounded back was frightening. But Margo supposed this was the idea of what was not being done to her. She was being deliberately frightened, deliberately placed in the frame of mind where humility and gratitude would result if she were freed without the cuts of fresh inflictions. But suppose this was not part of Marcia's plan.

By the time Marcia sauntered into view, Margo's shoulders, arms, and wrists were all screaming silently in protest against the strain and stress. Manley's bit of rope imposed. The mistress was in high good spirits.

"You look so sweet standing there, so penitent and scared." Loving fingers traced themselves up and down the old wounds, then playfully tickled Margo's neck. A determined young hand burrowed its way between the stressed thighs to cup and hold the sexual lips Margo hoped would show no sign of excitation. That portion of a girl nestling hotly between her thighs was not ever to be trusted. It produced secretions in the most likely circumstances. It had apparently done so now. Marcia laughed without comment, other than to wipe her damp palm on an innocent cheek of a waiting bottom. Musingly, she thought aloud.

"I've often wondered about a slave girl's sensations tied to this post the way you are now." Her voice became sly and mischievous. "Is it very bad?"

"It's awful. Marcia, I can't tell you how awful it is." "Good. That's the way it's supposed to be." She giggled. "And I'm still not going to tell you whether you get whipped or not. Would you like to make a guess?" "No, I'm too frightened. Anyway, I wouldn't dare say that you will whip me, because then you might. Oh, Marcia, please forgive me – please let me loose." "But, darling, you haven't done anything for me to forgive you for." The mistress was all too evidently by this byplay of words. "But if you do get whipped – and I'm not saying you will – I'm quite sure you'll emerge from the experience a far more humble and obedient girl than you are now." The still loving fingers continued their tracing across the helpless nakedness. "Not

that you haven't been obedient. On the other hand, you're not exactly the abject slave yet, are you, dear?" "I don't know what I am," Margo said miserably. "I'll try to be anything you want me to be, but I always seem to be on the verge of being flogged or whipped or caned. I can't talk naturally for fear of saying the wrong thing and being punished. Being a slave girl is like waling around under a blanket, people never seeing the real you. I'm just a sort of puppet, making motions." "I do see what you mean, darling, I'm sure it's difficult. I've always supposed slaves a bit stupid or they wouldn't be slaves, but you're not the least bit stupid. Now I'm wondering what I bought you for." The young fingers became more animated on the captive flesh. Margo's breathing quickened. She wished Marcia was a slave girl like herself, or that she herself was free. Being an owner and being owned created a gap. Margo supposed unhappily that most slave owners met this problem by punishing their possessions until the girl no longer used her mind, only her body.

Thoughtfully, Marcia spoke as though now thinking aloud: "Darling, it might really be a good idea to have Manley give you ten. It would help you adjust. I do want you to be happy with me, but I can see how difficult it is as long as you are you. I must make an extension of myself. Do you understand?"

"I've never owned a slave, so I don't understand. Marcia, I'm so tired of standing like this. How much longer do I have to do it?"

But the fingers had stopped their play. There was no one to answer.

Startled, Margo looked back over her shoulder to observe her youthful mistress quietly walking back to the big house, obviously deep in thought. She sighed, wondering if she had given offense. Quite probably, she had. Most likely now, she would really be whipped. And yet Marcia was in her own way an absolute darling – a delectable slip of youthful girlishness who would be so much fun as a companion if they were not divided by slavery. It was so hopeless. Margo listlessly allowed her head to slip against the post and then rest against her raised arm. She shifted her feet as she had done many times and also twisted against her shackled hands. Everything was as Tremont dictated. She could not effectively move. She had now only to wait to discover her punishment.

"Well, well, what a charming sight." Denby Wright's voice was like a blow. Margo had been half asleep, or at least oblivious to her surroundings, when he startled her. Instinctively, she turned to face him, but was thwarted by her bonds. It was hard to talk to a man when your back was turned away from him. But she supposed that being naked she should be thankful for this mercy.

Denby was a connoisseur of girl flesh and might find hers hard to resist. Suddenly embarrassed, she muttered, "I don't think you should be here. Please go away."

"Oh, don't worry about that. Her little majesty and I walk about each other's estates as though they were one. I had sort of premonition I'd find you here. How'd you like me to buy you and take you home?"

"I have nothing to say about it. You're embarrassing me. Don't you understand Mr. Wright? I am not one of the girls here. Just a very little while ago I was an adult. I was free,

white, and a respected member of the community. Now, all of a sudden, I'm a slave and everything's crazy. I don't think I have any business to be standing here naked like this with my hands tied above my head and my back all marked like this with my hands tied up above my head and my back all marked by that terrible whip. If you really wanted to help me, you'd buy me and set me free."

"Well, that was a mouthful, I must say." Denby sounded a trifle shocked. "Damn, you are articulate. You're wasted on Marcia. What you need is a man. I'd bring you to heel and keep you there, but we'd interest each other. We'd have the damnedest arguments. I do enjoy a girl who can talk."

Inhibitions dissolved. A girl is always grateful for being desired, and somehow Denby was easier to talk to about real things than Marcia.

CHAPTER FOUR

PUNISHMENTS

The dream died hard. But Margo placed little significance upon it. What more natural to dream of such horrors when she herself was sleeping with chains upon her feet, her hands, and her neck. The vivid impressions remained, but she sent them to the back of her mind and told no one. After all, it was only a dream.

The Rossland Academy for Young Women drew Margo Davis within itself to absorb quickly. Her collar was unlocked from the wall, but remained around her neck. Her handcuffs were removed to enable her to join the rest of the dormitory in its morning rituals. The cautious, watchful solicitude of Jean Evans remained guide. Quite possibly, she was also her guard.

The Academy constantly threw curve balls at its inmates, always the unexpected. The first of the came after breakfast in the communal dining hall. Jean diffidently said, “I’ll need your hands behind your back, dear. I have to tie them.”

“What on earth for? I haven’t done anything.” Her arms went rigidly to her sides, her fists clenched.

Jean laughed at her disquiet. “It’s nothing, sweetheart. You have to take these things as they come. Remember, this is the Academy.”

“But the only answer to what you’ve just said is a couple of clichés: ‘When in Rome do as the Romans do’, or ‘Ours is not to reason why, but doomed to die’.”

Suddenly the two girls were laughing. Margo was aware of the inconsistency of her revolt. She had sold herself, and those who now owned her could call the shots. If they wanted to tie her hands behind her back, they most certainly could.

There came then the Academy's latest recruit, a sensation and an act with which she could become increasingly familiar; the passive surrendering of herself or a part of herself to the will of someone else. Margo shrugged, grinned, and kicked her chain as she turned and crossed her wrists behind her back. Then she stood erect, quivering as the cords encircled her wrists and were drawn tight by the hands of a beautiful girl. It was a strange sensation and a potent one. If she wished to be fanciful, she could listen to the act of the bride, surrendering herself to her lord and master at the alter. Margo's breathing had quickened. Her nostrils flared, and deep within her sex, the fire flamed anew. She said nothing, and Jean said nothing, but both were aware of what was taking place. The girl being bound emanated vibrations in waves. Jean patted the final knot and cheerfully said, "Come on, you're going into a cage."

It was a large cage in a large, bright room. The cage already had inmates: four girls. All were bound. They had the appearance of preparing themselves for a day of boredom and discomfort. They viewed the newcomer with a fresh interest. Jean locked the door behind her charge and went away. Around her lips was a quivering smile.

Margo felt shy. She felt foolish. She was actually glad her hands were tied where they were. Had they been free, she would not have known what to do with them. It was one of

those moments. True, the other girls were naked, as she was naked, but compared to them, she was almost free.

The first was bound in the same manner as herself, but had been backed against the bars and her neck roped by three bands of harsh hemp to compel her to stand upright. The second offering a variation. She wore no chains, but her hands were also tied behind her back. She lay upon the floor, and one ankle had been snared by a rope and lifted high toward the top of the converging bars. It had been drawn just sufficiently high to almost raise her bottom from the floor. Margo sensed her discomfort. The third stood in a pose of languid weariness. She bore no bounds whatsoever except on her wrists. They were handcuffed. But before being joined, the cuff had been slipped around a bar above her head to compel her to stand facing in or out, as she chose. But whatever her choice, her hands would remain high above the crosspiece which denied withdrawal. The fourth stood like an exquisite butterfly impaled against the side of the cage. Her arms had been draw out and wrists bound to the bars in the totally outspread position of a bird's wings. It was very simple, very effective, and after the hours had passed, would become very cruel.

"Welcome to the club, honey." It was the girl with the bound neck who now twisted and shook her head disdainfully to ease herself and improve articulation. The ropes were snug enough to impede speech. "You're getting the quivering treatment, sweetheart. They put you in here to let you see what's going to happen to you sometime. It may be today, or it may be a week from now. None of us have done anything to warrant being fixed this way, but it's been done to us just to educate us. You should feel flattered."

Margo did not feel flattered. She felt guilty for realizing herself so much a focus of so much feminine discomfort. The girl with the raised leg laughed up from her posture on the floor.

“Don’t worry about it. Your name is Margo, isn’t it? We’re all delinquents together, and the girls get used to this sort of thing. Ask Patsy, the one with the handcuffs. She had to stay the way she is for an entire night once. Has the master used you yet?”

“The master?” Margo was groping for someone to fit the term. “Oh, you mean Mr. Ross, don’t you? Is that what you call him?”

“Don’t kid yourself. He is one. He’s the only bright spot in our lesbian lives. If it weren’t for him, men would become merely a memory.” There was a bitter laugh. “The trouble is, there are a lot of us, and only one of him.”

There was a snickering pause until the handcuffed girl added her contribution.

“Don’t get excited, sweetheart. If he happens to choose you, it’s a very mixed blessing. A girl can’t be positive whether she gets her bottom caned or whether she gets taken to bed. Usually, it’s both. He’s an extremely versatile man. He’s an artist with rope, and a girl can get tied up by him in more ways that you can dream of. Mostly, you’d wish he’d cane your bottom. You get it over with quicker that way. You can pretty well rely on the cane or the riding crop with Miss Harridance. She likes to get you well heated before you service her. One of her favorite tricks is to have you do the servicing while another girl canes your bottom for her. That way she gets the best of both worlds.” She gave a

short, sharp laugh. “Don’t worry, honey, you may even get to like the place.”

Everything was an object lesson. Each girl had something to teach. At a later time Margo was thrust together with a girl, Patsy, who in this first instance in the cage had been attached to the bars with handcuffs and forced to stand there in idle lassitude. In this particular instance, the Academy had seen fit to place the two girls in a bare compartment, placed them with their backs to the wall, extend their far hand, and bind it to a ring. This left each girl standing some feet apart with one hand outstretched and immovably lose to them. They were then very neatly linked by taking their free hands and cuffing them together. It was a strangely exasperating bond. Neither girl could reach her bound hand to use her teeth. Neither girl could pull the other’s arm sufficiently to herself to reach anything. They simply stood with one arm outstretched to either side, the other joined to her companion in distress. They went nowhere.

Patsy was philosophical. She shrugged and grinned at her companion.

“We can try to reach each other, if you like. It would be a nice way to pass some time, and I bet we’ve got lots of time. It would be nice if we could play with each other, but you’ll find that we can’t. Thee have these cute little ties figured to the last inch. Come on, try.”

They tried, but as Patsy had said, they failed. Their handcuffed hands were as lost to them as the outstretched ones so tightly bound with cords. They fell back on conversation.

“You’ve got the most gorgeous body,” Patsy enthused enviously. “The master will be picking you all the time. But then you’re one of the girls he’s purchased, aren’t you? You’re not here because Mommy and Daddy sent you.” She sighed. “I only rate the master’s attention about once in two months. I’m trying to work up a crush on Miss Harridance. She isn’t exactly second best. She’s tops in her own way, but if you service her enough, you get out of gear with things. Men start to seem odd to you, and then when one comes along, you resent whatever he does. The Academy is for the birds.”

“Did Henry Ross start it?”

“Sure, he did. How else would we get the name?” Patsy laughed without rancor. “Ross gets around. And he soon discovered there was an awful lot of rich people with daughters who were a bit of a nuisance. So he started Rossland, and in his brochures and interviews, he promised the finished product when returned home after a period decided by the parents, she would behave herself and be a credit to the family. He never told them about Rossland’s efforts. And I’ve got a notion they were just as happy not to know. He also failed to mention this interest in what we’ve got between our legs.” “Yes, I can understand all that. But what I don’t understand is who profits from keeping us fastened here against the wall the way we are now. I mean, nobody is looking.” “That’s hard to explain,” Patsy admitted. “Everything that happens at Rossland creates atmosphere, and there’s a sort of brainwashing process. Both Henry Ross and Miss Harridance adore a bound girl.” Patsy’s laugh was now genuine enough. “Yes, really. They get a tremendous sexual kick out of seeing us handcuffed, chained, tied up, strapped up. In fact, any sort of constraint

at all. That big cage we were in that time. Well, if a girl were not tied up at all, so long as she were touching the bars and looking through them longingly, you see, that's a form of restraint. And it tells its own story. Sometimes they take pictures when they think they've created something special, like with us now. After a while, we'll get tired and drop a bit and look sad and weary. That's the moment when Miss Harridance will pop in with a camera." Patsy paused and gave her companion a compassionate sideways look. "Look, Margo, don't be shy about it. Be honest. You've been tied up quiet a bit now, and your feet are still shackled through the first two weeks. Haven't you felt something, I mean, a sort of a warmth or heat? I suppose what I'm really asking is don't you ever get horny?" "Yes." Margo made the admission grudgingly. "I just figure it's being made helpless or in the possession of somebody else. It probably stems from lovemaking in which one person or the other dominants or takes a leading role. It seems to me this is true of heterosexual or lesbian activities. Or it could go back to infancy, you know. Our mothers were absolutely and totally dominant with us. They owned us completely and did what they like with us. We had to simply accept that. Maybe it sucks around the rest of our lives. Well, anyway, there's an awful lot of the girls sort of get infected. They start getting a bang out of things done to them. My cunny positively crinkles every time I'm handcuffed. But I'll admit it's all crazy. If you're looking for logic, don't come to Rossland." The two girls fell briefly silent, but amused themselves by pulling at each other's arms by the medium of the handcuffs. First one, then the other. They experimented with various postures and places in which to hold their arms, but always in defeat. They always returned to the original pose allowing their arms to droop

and gravitate to govern the handcuffs grip. Rossland Academy was a stern mistress.

“I’ve been here a bit over a year,” Patsy said. “I really believe I would have gone hairy, if it hadn’t been for just what I told you. This whole place seethes with eroticism and sex. A girl gets to where she looks forward to being summoned to Miss Harridance’s office. And, of course, the visits of the master excite us terribly. It might be easy for an outsider to see the whole place as just a bunch of girls busy eating each other, but the management watches out for that. We manage it once in awhile, but mostly we don’t. Like now. How in the devil could you and I do anything? The only part of each other we can touch is our fingers. Sometimes a girl gets real grateful for that.”

Margo considered what she had learned. She remembered reading about Victorian schools somewhat similar, but there the girls had been younger and more impressionable. But then, docile, obedient maidens had been much revered and in great demand as wives. She could not imagine this being true today. She voiced this thought.

“But, Patsy, when a girl is freed from this place today and goes home to her parents, I figure she’s lost. Does she know what to do with herself or how to act? She’d probably run off with the first man or the first woman who asked her. And this thing you speak about, this getting sexually excited when bound, she’d go looking for that too! I think she’d be more of a problem than ever.”

“Ah, but you’re forgetting, honey, she be past the stage where she picks up babies too easily. She be wise about that. That’s something Rossland teaches us. If they didn’t this whole place would be littered with little editions of

Henry Ross. Do you know that there have been some cases where girls have come back to Rossland and asked to reenter? For them, the inside had become better than the outside. In one or two cases, it was actually arranged."

The girl Patsy was by no means Margo's only mentor or source of comment and information. In all that was done to her during the first two weeks of initiation, she could clearly see a pattern of indoctrination.

She was exposed to difficult girls and different situations in a seeming jumble of misplaced authority. But in the end, she realized she was in some measure molded and condition by the events. One of these which she could laugh at afterwards was the cage.

When Margo was ushered into the room in which the cage was kept, it contained a single naked girl whose only bondage was handcuffed wrists. Margo herself was handcuffed and still wore the initiation shackles on her ankles. The girl stared in sudden realization.

"You sit on the edge, swing your feet over, then slide down," the mistress informed her without emotion.

"I can't possibly. There isn't room." She stared in perplexity from the girl within the cage to the one who stood by her, waiting.

"That cage is made for one girl only. I can't possibly get in with her."

"Yes, you can. All you have to do is try." The tone became grim. "And you'd better try."

Shocked, shamed, and feeling silly, Margo did as she was told. Rossland was teaching her that few things are impossible. She crouched between the other girl's open knees and bent down to allow the top of the cage to be lowered and padlocked. It's what Rossland called "togetherness".

The mistress said dryly, "Well, I'll leave you two to get acquainted. Goodbye."

Margo's first impression of togetherness was girl scent. She flushed in a sudden realization that her own was mingling with the other occupant of the cage. The two girls stared at each other face to face.

The other girl was first to speak.

"Your name is Margo, I know. You can call me Debbie. The most important thing to remember is don't panic. That's the first thing a girl does in a cage. But we're both going to live. And we may even manage a little fun if nobody is watching. You won't have to kneel all the time, because I'll shift a little, and that will enable you to shift a little, and we'll sorta go around and around, taking turns in the most uncomfortable positions. It's absolutely for the birds, but it's one of the few things in this place that gives us a chance to get at each other." She giggled. "Can't you smell our pussies perking up? They've scented each other." Debbie leaned forward and bit Margo's ear with sharp young teeth. "You see, darling, we can do things. Don't be shy. Why, I do believe you're blushing! There's absolutely no need for two girls locked in a cage to do any blushing. But I do wish they hadn't handcuffed us. They just do, you know, to be mean. It makes things just that much more difficult."

“You’ve been in here before,” Margo accused. “I’m going to die if I stay squashed down like this.”

“No, you won’t, darling. You just watch me. You’re right, I’ve been in here before.”

Margo watched in amazement. She was also kicked, jostled, pushed, and prodded as Debbie performed the impossible task of turning herself around to insert her head between her fellow captive’s legs and open her own invitingly. The position she had attained was simple to lie on her back in an open invitation to a 69.

“Now, darling,” she said softly, “bend your legs up at the knee and let yourself down onto my lips, then you’ll find that the best part of me is sort of staring you in the face. You do know what to do, don’t you?”

Margo Davis knew what to do.

There was much talk of whips and canes and riding crops, but remarkably few scarlet bottoms. Such punishments were for emphasis only, and in any case, a girl had only so much skin to offer and once it’s been used. Since what Rossland had most of was time, most punishments were designed to use it to the best advantage. A maiden who approached some form of bondage with an insouciance and lack of concern in the morning would later, when released, be a much more tractable young woman. A girl might be bound in lonely solitude or with a second girl in a similar plight. Or she might be one of a group. The Academy was infinitely resourceful.

One morning, shortly before the end of her initiation period, Jean Evans spoke.

“Just hands and arms today, darling. Aren’t you lucky?” Margo reserved judgment. She stood and got her usual thrill from the binding of her hands behind her back. It was not until the task had been finished and she was firmly knotted that she realized that they had been tied palm to palm instead of the usual crossed wrists position. When rope found her elbows and drew them slowly tighter and tighter until they touched, the initiate realized this could be one of the worst days. Her shoulders were wracked back hard and taut, thrusting her breasts into a most attractive elegance. Her nipples, for reasons of their own, chose to protrude in the same proportion and to become flint hard and immensely sensitive to the touch. When Jean Evans ran a mischievous hand across their tips, it was to evoke a startled gasp from their owner.

The girls exchanged glances. They understood.

It was strange to be so helpless and yet look down at one’s own nakedness and see no single bond beyond the usual shackles. Next, Margo was lead to a square, six-inch post running from floor to ceiling.

Its vertical length seemed innocent enough. But by the time Jean had bound the already trussed arms and hands back tight against the wood, it took on a more personal connotation. The girl was, in a sense, not bound to it at all. It was her arms and hands which were tied to the wooden surface. Because they were attached to the rest of her, by virtue of her shoulders, she stood at their pleasure.

“A girl looks her absolute best when she’s tied like this,” Jean assured her. “You’re a knockout!”

For brief moments, the structured girl was proud of what Jean had made of her. From a frontal view, she was a Venus without arms at all. Her arms ended at her shoulders and were lost from view. But she already was increasingly conscious of pain. A girl with bound elbows knows indeed of helplessness. To struggle was futile. She could reach nothing, and the pain doubled.

“Oh, Jean, this is awful. Must my elbows be tied so they meet? Must they? Couldn’t you just tie them to the post in a sort of ordinary way?”

The answer was both understood and unrewarding. Jean simply patted the captive’s cheeks and said, “There, there, darling. You’ll have to put up with it. But do remember, while you stand like that, you are the most beautiful thing in the world. I almost envy you, but not quite! Don’t bother to shout for help or tell somebody how bad it is. If you do, somebody may gag you. Bye-bye for now.”

So simple. Such a joyous thing between two girls. Such rapport. But left alone, the naked girl whose only visible bonds were the leg irons on her feet soon felt close to tears. The pain was an endless nag. It was not dependent on her struggling or her position. There was only one position and that was to stand straight upright very much at attention Margo could swear her arms were bound with hot metal wires becoming increasingly incandescent. It was as though back behind the post were was a creature intent upon her torture. She tried to move, but the ropes told her curtly it would be wisest to stand absolutely still.

Miss Harridance was an unexpected visitor. By the time she had arrived, Margo was seriously debating taking a chance on screaming or calling out. Surely if her pleas and

cries were piteous enough, someone would rescue her. But Miss Harridance immediately took command.

“It’s bad, isn’t it, dear? We do understand.” Her smile was beneficent. “I’m very pleased with you through this process of initiation, but your prelude to Rossland would not be complete without the elbow tie.” She frictioned the still arrogant breasts and nipples, and nodded wisely at the resultant gasps she evoked. Her hand went lower and sought the inevitable place to test, presumably for secretions. However, she made no mention of what she found there, and by the time Margo herself was unconcerned. Miss Harridance could have found a blazing fire or got herself a very wet hand for all she scared. Gaspingly, she struggled to speak.

“This is too awful. I can’t stand it. I’m terribly sorry, Miss Harridance, but I really can’t stand it. Please give me a break.”

“One of the nice things about being a captive girl, such as yourself, is that no one pays any attention to anything you say,” Miss Harridance explained evenly. “You will discover a reaction in yourself to things being ignored. I’m quite sure you are certain you will die, or that you will lose your arms, or some other disaster will befall you. You want, in some way, to impress upon me the enormity of these hazards and your own horror at what you foresee.”

The headmistress smiled and patted a flushed cheek.

“Forget it, dear. Just simply forget it. You are going to stand like that for the period of your sentence, and I’m not going to tell you how long that is. The experience will be a memorable one for you. We usually confine the elbow tie to a

girl in transit. It keeps them tractable and humble. A girl with bound elbows has little thought for anything except to be untied. It is a most admirable control. After you have endured it and been released, you will agree."

"But it's still too awful. I didn't bargain for anything like this with Mr. Ross."

"Obviously not, or you would not be here." Miss Harridance's logic was irrefutable. Her next remark was pure Rossland.

"Would you like me to introduce an orgasm for you, dear?"

The bound nakedness gasped in astonishment. While she was gathering her wits to reply, the headmistress blandly continued.

"I refuse to compete with shackled ankles, dear. But a woman's hands are tremendously potent, or don't you know?"

"No, thank you."

"I do understand, dear. Your embarrassment is reaching main waves. You are quite delightful. I asked you a question, but it was purely rhetorical. You have nothing to say about what I may or may not do to you. Let me give you an example."

The hand was potent indeed! From the moment it sought her most private place, the agony of her arms was forgotten. Margo gasped and gasped again, and stared to find the eyes of authority very close to her own. They were searching, totally in command and soon took on the absorbed air of erotic possession. Margo herself closed her eyes and delivered herself to sensation. The hand provoked her flesh

in ways she had never dreamed. Miss Harridance was a female of versatility.

She was moreover exactly that: female.

It was hard to be alone again. True, the influence of the headmistress remained long after she was gone. The bound girl stood in a daze of mesmerized possession, a glowing aftermath of female joy. But then, little by little, her elbows once more took possession and sang their litany of anguish. But their owner now was willing to believe she might survive.

There was also the memory of the bare room and the two girls who kept her company. It was extremely simple and had a certain decorative quality about its punishment. All three were hanging from the ceiling by bound hands, their toes only inches from the floor in an exasperating temptation to continually search for it. One link of the connecting chain would touch the floor below when she hung limp. Care had been taken to preserve their wrists. They had been bound with bandages, which made a neat, tight bond which was circled by the tethering rope and drawn high. The greatest distress each girl suffered was wracked shoulders and strained arms. Left alone after first being raised from the floor, each one of them essayed to struggle and explore the limits of her bonds. In so doing, each maiden was able to see herself mirrored in the naked distress of her companions. Whatever she was doing, they did too, until in the end each one of them hung limply and passively in resignation to their day.

“And I never did a damn thing,” said the red-headed girl. “It’s that bitch of a mistress. She doesn’t like me. I bet we’re here for the whole day too.”

“It’s news to me. We have to do something to be punished,” the brown-haired maiden contributed unhappily. “The last three times I’ve been punished, it was for absolutely nothing. Just because somebody got the notion it would be amusing to give me a bad day.”

Margo felt they looked to her for her own assessment, so she said, “I suppose it’s because this is within my first two weeks – the initiation. I haven’t done anything either.”

They were unquestionably beautiful. Miss Harridance had visited briefly and had commented on the symmetry of the arrangement, the slenderness of their nudity was vastly enhanced by suspension, bowed heads and hair falling awry added to the effect. They could not move other than gracefully. And in almost any given moment, one of them would make some tentative effort, which was no more than a mental prompting to do something. It is hard on female flesh to remain immobile when in pain. If it is not bound tight it moves. Margo was willing to believe they made an attractive and appealing trio, an exquisite tableau. Miss Harridance honored them by using the camera.

When Penny Pendleton made her appearance and brightly announced her mission, Margo could have wailed aloud in protest.

“I’ve been ordered to hobble each one of you until I’ve gotten you all excited and ready to pop, then I have to leave you cold,” the nymphet pronounced with obvious relish. “Isn’t that mean! I wouldn’t do it if I hadn’t promised you a whipping if a I failed.”

“If you come near us, we’ll kick you, Penny,” the brown-haired maiden warned. “Go away. Tell them you’ve done it. They’ll never know the difference.”

“Yes, they will,” Penny vowed vehemently. “I’m not taking any chances. Anyway, haven’t you noticed what I’m carrying?”

Margo’s eyes, in company with two other pairs of equally disturbed orbs, focused on the riding crop in Penny Pendleton’s small fist.

Disgustedly, they said no more.

The nymphet, delighted with her assignment, went to work with gusto. She soon had her first victim, hot and flushed and gasping. She then went to the second girl and repeated the process all over again. It was so easy for her to push apart the suspended legs, that because of the riding crop, there was no protest. When it came Margo’s turn, it was all too evident the young mouth was highly experienced. Trying to be clever, she made the mistake of making her motions too loud, too soon. Penny was not deceived and smilingly delivered a sharp, swift cut with the crop across a suspended bottom.

“See, I told you so,” she said wisely, shaking an admonishing finger. “Don’t try and fool me. I know when a girl is ready to pop and when she isn’t. Jeepers, I ought to!”

It was no more than an interlude. It was a bothersome interlude, leaving them with jangled nerves and unsatisfied yearnings. The three of them agreed it was punishment in itself. But they bore Penny no malice. Each girl in Rossland did what she was told. Quite often, it entailed being unkind to another girl. But that went with the territory.

Before leaving, Penny surveyed her three flushed, irritated victims while extracting from between her lips the hairs she had collected in the process of her duty. Laughing, she went away.

The day wore on.

Most of Rossland's punishments were designed to irritate, frustrated, or by a process of attrition, wear a girl out. She might not be hurting in the least by the time her punishment had progressed for several hours, she would willingly give anything she had, or exchange the punishment for something corporal in order to be free. One of the simplest of these was known jokingly as "the Hall".

Rossland boasted a large main hall. There was considerable coming and going there, since it lead to almost anywhere you wanted to go in the building. Some of the classrooms opened directly off this hall. From its high ceiling, a rope dangled at the end of which was a plain ordinary snap. On the last day of her two-week initiation, Margo made its acquaintance.

Jean, with all the familiar words and gestures, bound Margo's hands tightly behind her back. She lead her to the dangling rope and to the snap. And with a single motion, snapped the ring in her victim's collar.

"There you are, darling – no hurt at all. You can even step this way or that, maybe a whole stride. It's not too tight. That's it. I'm going to leave you now. See how you enjoy yourself."

It was deceptively innocent. The naked Margo stood as she must.

Sometimes she took a short step this way or that. Since they proved nothing, she became satisfied only to stand. The tether on her collar held her in a compulsion she could do nothing to counter. She must stand as she was for as long as the Academy desired. She could speak to those who passed or bespoken to. Everyone spared her a sympathetic glance and after a couple of hours, she understood their sympathy. From irritation her punishment moved on to frustration and this was followed by dismay. The human machine is not made to stand still. It can do so, but it will make its own complaints. At the end of a couple of hours, Margo Davis was longing either to sit down or to run – anything that would give her movement instead of this passive, motionless stance and the casual greetings with those ho passed. Any one of them could have set her free by unsnapping her collar from the tether. It was an act a child could have performed, but no one did.

Margo stood and stood.

There was some camera work. Miss Harridance congratulated her on the manner in which her nakedness graced the great hall. She said that Margo was so much an asset to the place that it was a pity she could not be left to stand there forever.

Penny came and offered an orgasm, but this was indignantly refused by the tethered girl. She might secretly have longed for it, but in so public a place…! She told Penny she should be ashamed of herself, and Penny blithely agreed. The nymphet was one of the happy ones, even though tomorrow she might stand were Margo now stood.

On the day the leg irons should have been taken from her legs, Margo made a mistake. She slapped a mistress's face.

Looking back afterwards, she realized the mistress had provoked the instinctive act, but that brought her nothing. Margo must be punished.

It was decided that she and three others should share a day's hard labor. They would not be whipped or painfully bound. They would simply work their little butts off, and to this end, they were herded down to a hitherto unexplored basement.

It was a black cavern of a room. In its center was a massive hub of a wheel from which radiated four huge spokes, on each of which was firmly fastened a shackle and short chain. The place itself and thing it contained imparted an obvious malicious intent.

Three of the delinquents were naked, but one was a mistress, who was obviously annoyed with herself and with the system. She was clothed as a mistress is clothed, but was disrobed to total bareness before her right wrist was shackled to one of the spokes. Each girl in turn was similarly chained to the thing upon which she would exert her efforts throughout the day. When Margo's turn came, there was some debate about her chained feet, but it was decided the efforts of the four of them would turn the mechanism slowly enough to enable her to cope, even with short hobbled steps. If her ankles were chafed in the process, so what! Her arm was raised, and the shackle clicked tightly around her wrist.

The overseer – the girl who would supervise – was not even a mistress. She was just one of the girls and was given a whip with which to enforce commands. Any one of the four whose footsteps and efforts lagged was to receive the full force of its bite upon her bent back. The maiden her-

self, who seemed entirely bored by the whole thing, announced they could not start pushing like crazy to get the mechanism underway and thereafter would maintain its momentum. She cracked the whip to emphasize her order. It was not amusing. Each of the four girls was compelled to exert every ounce of muscle she possessed to get the wheel going with a sufficient momentum to it that they could maintain the round about without falling by the wayside from fatigue. None of them knew what the mechanism achieved. Perhaps it achieve nothing at all, other than their distress. But if that indeed was its purpose, it achieved it well.

It would be difficult to design hard labor any more conveniently. To each of the toiling young maidens was added the indignity and frustration of being secured by so slender a thread as a metal band on one wrist only and a few links of chain. But the rest of their personage was free to toil. For the first minute, until they had achieved a moderate speed, each of them was obliged to put her shoulder to the spoke and dig in her heels upon the earthen floor. They did this with one eye upon the whip. But the girl who held it was not disposed to use it unless compelled to do so.

After they had found their pace, their overseer spoke.

“Look, girls, we know each other. We know the system. It’s up to you; I will whip any one of you who plays the fool or pretends she can’t keep up. You don’t have to run. Just push for all you’re worth.”

Quite soon, the smell of maiden sweat was heavy in the cavern, and their breathing became labored. The clink of Margo’s irons made metallic mockery as she took each step punctuated by the girls straining as they made their

rounds. Their overseer reminded them, “No talking. You have to work your little asses off in silence.”

Until she reached her second wind, Margo was quite prepared to risk whatever punishment she must in order to rebel. True, she could not escape because of the shackle on her wrists. But if she stopped pushing, perhaps the rest would have to too, and maybe some attention could be given to their distress. Quite soon, the labored breathing eased, as each girl fell into a natural rhythm and coped with the labors she must perform. Quite possibly, the ugly cavern had been given its dim light and indeterminate form as a depressant to the spirit.

It was illuminated only by smelly flares which gave a ghostly illumination to the straining torsos of the naked girls.

Margo remembered reading of such places, where in ancient times men and women had truly labored. But then they produced corn or some other useful substance. For all any of this quarter could tell, they produced nothing other their sweat.

It was inevitable that the whip be used. Whether it was earned or not, it was implicit to the scene. And whether they earned its cuts or not, each one of them received its bite. Not often, but enough to maintain their interest. They pushed in dismal silence – none dared speak. One girl did manage a few words, but was rewarded with the whip. After awhile, each delinquent girl allowed her head to rest against a bare arm as she worked and lived within the imagery of her own mind. They shut the cavern out. Their only consciousness of it or the wheel was the continual

threat of the thong. It was an extremely simple arrangement. No doubt Rossland was proud of it.

Toward the end of the afternoon, each girl was sweat stained, and the cavern was pungent with girl scent. Perhaps some of them had thought erotic thoughts, but no doubt the exercise was good for healthy young females and conducive to their libidos. But most assuredly, each girl, when her shackle fell free from her wrist, was ready to vow to anyone interested their total fealty to the place and principles of Rossland. They would have done anything or said anything which might have freed them from a return to the wicked spokes. It was a sad, sorry quartet which made its way to the bath to be hosed down.

The loss of her leg irons was to Margo a mixed blessing. It automatically elevated her to the rank of mistress, a position for which she felt she was entirely unsuited. It also ensured a greater severity of punishment should she earn one. It was implied she was big girl now and should know how to behave. Miss Harridance who performed the final ceremony was cheerfully informative.

“There.” The headmistress unlocked and tossed aside the shackles which had gained their heat from Margo’s legs for the past two weeks.

“Your initiation is now officially over, dear girl, and there are a few things I want understood between us now. This is the last time you will ordinarily stand before me naked. Here.”

She tossed a small pathetic bundle of mistress garb across the desk.

“You can put this on after I’ve finished talking to you. If you stand before me again, pain will follow.”

Margo longed to kick her heels in elation, but deemed it unwise. Instead, she carefully raised one of them as far as she decently could and then lowered it again. The absence of a metallic accompaniment to the act was reward enough. She had crossed Rossland’s first hurdle.

Somewhere in the distant future awaited the check. She wanted to tell Miss Harridance of the intention to do her best to hold out and get that slip of paper, but that was silly. She had no choice. For her, there was no out. She was as firmly a prisoner as a girl could be.

The headmistress had been watching the play of emotion on her pupil’s face. Seriously, she said, “I know what you’re thinking, dear. It’s a long road ahead and a short one behind. When you leave this office, it will be with the dignity of a mistress – a title which will save you not a single punishment, but it does bestow a pleasant authority. Girls not so designated must obey you. But mistresses are forbidden to use pupils. You will invoke no girlish lips or hands between your thighs. Do you understand?”

“I think so. I belong to you and the master. Is that so, Miss Harridance?”

“No, not exactly in that order. But perhaps I may change that one of these days. Be assured, Margo, that when I have you, I have you completely. There will be no mental reservations or loyalty to any man.” Mildred Harridance sighed. “I have been hoping Mr. Ross would tire of this establishment and sell it to me. Perhaps this day may come. In the meantime, he is totally the master. He will violate you and

thrash you as he pleases. But I'm sure he has told you this. I will not repeat it. You will keep what I have told you to yourself. You will not speak of it to the girls. If you do, I will find out and you will be punished. I find myself possessed of a particular desire. You are less vapid that the daughters of the rich and less indoctrinated with loyalty to Henry Ross than most of the merchandise he places in my care. Margo, do you think you can view yourself as solely mine?" It was a condition Margo could have done without. But in Rossland assent was easy. There was nothing else for a girl to say, unless she wished to be instantly whipped. She made her tone as bright as possible.

"I will try. This whole thing is so new to me. I think you're telling me you wish me alone to service you?"

"Don't use the word service. It implies some monetary exchange. You will call it making love, and when we are alone as now, you will call me Mildred. I will call you Margo. We will dispense of titles." The eyes of the headmistress focused forbiddingly. "I do hope you understand. I'm conferring an immense privilege."

"I understand… Mildred. Do you wish me to make love to you now?"

"No. I intend to make love to you. I've been hungry for you ever since I first saw you. The thought of you in these silly situations of initiation has bothered me. From now on, your agonies will be mature. Have you any subject on which you believe yourself a sufficient enough authority to teach?"

"Yes, I have considered literature. I think I could do well for the girls in that."

“Good. Now put on that dress.” Wonderingly, Margo obeyed. As usual, Rossland was way ahead of her. What this woman had just said was shattering. Had she been free, she would have run. But even without her shackled feet, there was no freedom for Margo Davis. She would simply graduate from one captivity to another. In silent obedience, she donned the tight neat slip of a dress with its authoritative band around its waist, then stood.

“We all have our fantasies, dear girl. You must get used to mine. The first of them I’m about to perform upon you now. Don’t you dare say a word.”

Margo Davis stood silently as her legs peremptorily thrust into a wide separation by strong hands. Then, to her astonishment, the headmistress knelt between them, lifted Margo’s recently donned skirt, and dived underneath its sheltering gloom. A moment later, her hungry mouth was glued to the girlish sex and was feeding avidly. In a mixture of fear and astonishment, Margo stood absolutely still. When she climaxed, the lips refused to stop. The hungry mouth was unappeased.

Which Mildred Harridance finally emerged with some signs of satiety, the older voice was glowing in its praise: “My dear, you are quite marvelous. You have the most amazing flavor. I knew you would have. I could sense it. All we needed was a little time to do the thing properly. You will not make love to me here in the office. I will call you to my bed chamber at my convenience and we can feed upon each other without urgency. You now have my permission to take over your duties. You can use any room you choose and gather around what girls you can. Mostly, you will find

them amenable. A class is far less painful than other things so easily arranged."

A little dazed and a little shattered by the assault of the hungry mouth, Margo Davis walked out into a perplexing new world.

She was now a mistress!

CHAPTER FIVE

LOVE IN CHAINS

“I’m terribly frightened, Miss Davis. Please help me.” The young voice and the wide, appealing eyes had cornered the new mistress in an empty classroom. The young voice, which was not much younger than Margo’s own, continued urgently: “My name’s Emaline. I get called Emmie for short. You may call me Emmie, please. Please don’t brush me off, for my feet are chafed and I’m new here. I loved your class. I think you’re wonderful.”

There was a terrible poignancy in the appeal. Margo backed away, but grasped the bare shoulders of the naked supplicant in her hands and studied the tearful features. Emaline could be beautiful if she tried. She was not beautiful now. Even her body, which was in itself a slender loveliness, was drooping and her features wan. The new mistress remembered her own first day. Perplexed, she asked, “Emmie, is it really that bad?”

“Oh, yes.” Emmie was under the stress of a most evident emotion.

“They’ve chained my feet so I have to take short little steps. They said it was so I couldn’t run away, but I wasn’t going to run away anyhow. Then they did the most awful things. They put handcuffs on me. Look.” She held up joined wrists to show the gleaming chrome of her distress. “Nice girls aren’t handcuffed, Miss Davis. Handcuffs are only for convicts and people in police stations. I’m not one of them. I’m so ashamed!”

“But, Emmie dear, handcuffs are used on all sorts of people, for all sorts of things.” Margo contrived a short,

cheerful laugh. “I’ve been handcuffed quite often, and if I wanted to stop a girl from running away, I think that’s what I’d use. I’d handcuff one of her wrists and attach the other to something very solid. It’s really not all that bad.”

“Then they locked this collar around my neck. And it’s got a ring hanging down in behind. I’m sure that’s for some terrible purpose. I’ve tried and tried, but I can’t get it off. Miss Davis, please help me. I promise I won’t run away.”

Margo sighed. Compared to this delightful creature, she felt a century old. Glimmering light in darkness as she asked, with a touch of incredulity, “Emmie, didn’t your parents know what Rossland was before they sent you?”

“Of course not.” Emmie sounded indignant. “They thought it was just another school for older girls. And that’s what I thought too.” She turned on the appeal again. “But it isn’t, is it? It’s not an ordinary school at all. I think it’s a place for naughty girls, not for girls like me.” Hesitantly, she added, “You see, Mommy and Daddy had to go abroad for a couple of years, and they thought this would be nice for me.”

She held up her cuffed wrists. “But this isn’t nice at all. It’s terrible.”

Margo took the child in her arms. Emmie was not a child, but she talked and acted and almost looked like one. Margo felt a tremendous maternal instinct well up in her whole being by the trust and choice imposed.

Comfortingly, she said, “Emmie, you mustn’t get a crush on me. Girls often get a crush on their teachers, but I’m just here with the rest of you. Maybe they’ll make you a mistress someday and you’ll see there isn’t all that much dif-

ference. If I lifted my dress, I could show you the marks where I've been whipped too."

"You!"

Another wave of pure horror engulfed the young slenderness. "But you couldn't do anything bad. I'm sure you couldn't." There was a prolonged pause while the two girls clung and clung. The young nakedness finding refuse against the scanty tunic of the mistress' attire.

It was then the question came.

"Miss Davis, some of the girls have told me about the things we have to do here. And Miss Harridance said something. I didn't believe it at the time, but now I'm beginning to wonder. It's about the master."

"Are these things true?"

"I'm afraid they are, Emmie. But there's no way we can escape them. They seem pretty bad the first time, but we get used to it. So will you."

"Oh, I couldn't. I won't ever get used to it!" The young voice was vehement. "Miss Davis, I thought of a way you could really help me. Please, if I have to do these things, can I please do them with you? I don't think I'd mind too much with you. But I couldn't possibly with anybody else."

Margo's heart went out to the waif. Emaline was indeed an orphan in the storm. Without addiction, as she herself actually was, she longed to take this girl to a private place and there make love. It would be a kindness. But she remembered the prohibition.

“I’m sorry, dear. I’d love to, but it’s forbidden. I’m a mistress, and I’m absolutely forbidden to make love with any of the girls. If I did, I’d be punished. I’m just the same as you. I belong to the two people at the top, and only they can use me.”

The girl-woman absorbed the bad news. She allowed it to simmer, without finding an answer until she came up with, “And they caned my bottom, and I hadn’t done a thing!”

Her cry was one of pure injustice, of innocence in the face of evil. “Look, I’ll show you.” She broke away and turned around, bending over to display a well-whipped bottom. Probably only the cane had been used on it, but it was a delicious scarlet, and Margo felt her pulse race and her fire flamed at the sight of it. If this young woman was thrust into her company for too long, she would not answer for the consequences. Soothingly, she said, “It’s a lovely red, Emaline. It will soon fade. I bet the hurt’s mostly gone already, hasn’t it?”

“Well, yes, sort of. But I haven’t done anything!” What could she do? Margo surveyed her new responsibility with total sympathy and some irritation. Her title was almost meaningless, but if it gained her confidences such as this, it would be a punishment in itself simply because she was so totally helpless in giving aid to anyone. She took the tearful young woman by the arm and led her to where there were other girls with whom she could talk and perhaps find solace. It seemed a betrayal of trust.

On the following day, she received the summons.

“The master wants you, darling.” Penny Pendleton was, as usual, bubbling with enthusiasm. “You’re so lucky. I bet

he'll either fuck you or whip you. Isn't that wonderful? I wish I was a bit older to get in on all these things. Everybody looks on me as just a kid. It's not fair."

How do you tell a child she is lucky to be young? Margo shrugged away the imponderable and asked, "What does he really want? Penny, you are so silly about the things you said."

"How would I know?" Penny asked irritably. "He simply wants you. And when the master wants a girl, she doesn't ask any questions. She just goes and gets whatever he wants to give her." She giggled happily. "And I just told you the two things I expect he'll do to you." She sighed heavily. "You're so lucky!"

So this was it! Margo had no illusions, but she found herself looking forward to the interview as she made her way to the holy of holies, that one place in Rossland where man was omnipotent, in fact where he existed!

"Miss Davis, a pleasure! Take off that silly tunic." Henry Ross took her head in his hands and kissed her warmly on the mouth. "I hear nothing but good of you. Are you prepared for pain?"

"Yes, master, I am prepared." In his presence, it did not sound as silly as it had elsewhere. This man was a master. Power flowed from Henry Ross like a visible stream. She picked it up and realized he was picking up the emanations she was shooting at him. They were man and woman. Male and female. Primal.

Primly, she said, "This is my first time with you here, Mr. Ross. Please be kind. Please help me."

He laughed. “You don’t need help. I’ve got the report on you here.” He motioned to a sheet of paper on his desk. “And anyway, I’ve got my memory of our interview. You wouldn’t be here if I were not convinced you were well suited to what I’ll demand of you. They haven’t thrashed you much, have they?”

“No. Is that because my skin must be saved for you?” “Possibly.” He sounded indifferent. “There’s all too much fuss made of canings and croppings and floggings here.” He chuckled. “But I suppose it has its uses. It keeps you girls in your place and feeling sufficiently humble. Instead of calling it Rossland, I should have called it Humble House. How would that strike you?” Margo sensed his humor. She shrugged. “Why not? Humble is what we girls become. It hurts too much to be anything else.” “My, my. Complete candor. Now tell me what do you expect me to do to you right now?” The direct demand was disconcerting. Taking her courage in her hands, Margo dived squarely into the male-female arena. “I can only go by what I’ve been told,” she said evenly. “But that leaves me to suppose you will use a cane on me and then fuck me.” She met his gaze evenly. “Or perhaps the other way around?” “Any preference?”

“Perhaps I would prefer to have my bottom caned first,” she said as she contrived a pale smile in his direction. “That would leave me something to look forward to.”

Henry Ross was flattered. Margo herself had failed to realize the flatter implicit in her choice of options. Enigmatically, he asked, “You then regard being violated by me as pleasure?”

“Yes.”

“And so you should. This stuff has done well with you. No resentments. No complaints.” He laughed. “I’d expected both.”

Margo realized Ross was enjoying this bandying of words, and she was too. Why not! It would delay whatever price she had to pay for being what she was. If Henry Ross enjoyed this exchange, she would be foolish to complain, but she had a wish to be done with it. She wanted to experience the hard male thrust and put them in their place in her consciousness. Because of Miss Harridance, she was no longer positive the hard cock was a girl’s only road to ecstasy.

Without emphasis, she asked, “How would you like me to position myself to be thrashed?”

Ross was intrigued. Here was a girl of quality. She could match him in directness and had no illusions. But of course. Why not? She was not the simpering product of parents discontent. This girl had chosen her lot. She had expected and was prepared to suffer what Rossland chose to impose. Quietly, he spoke.

“I’m sure you do not need to be tied. You have a will. But I want you tied. It pleases me to have a girl tied when I whip her. It adds a piquancy. I’m sure you understand.”

Margo understood. She positioned herself against the desk, leaned across it, and slipped her hands within the waiting loops of strap. Henry Ross buckled them brutally tight. He said with ridiculous cheerfulness, “I’m going to hurt you, Margo. I have here a cane.”

The strapped girl hoped she emerged from the ordeal in good shape.

The cuts were cruel. They were precise. They were evenly spaced across her flesh. Each one deserved a scream. But she delivered her screams sparingly. Every time she took the scalding impact without sound was to her a gain of points in a silly game. Neither of them would have called it a game, but both were conscious of the imagined points and mentally were giving credit for the fortitude it represented.

Henry Ross caned the bent-over bottom of the helpless girl with immense relish. Margo could not fail to recognize his ecstasy in every stroke, and to know without volition she was bestowing upon him the greatest benefit a girl could give a man. She was making him intensely happy. To that end, she subdued her screams and made her moans and other sounds as femininely somber as her flesh dictated. She supposed that when a pain became too great, a girl was released from inhibitions.

“You are positively superb!” There could be no doubting the sincerity in Ross’ voice. His bands were gently soothing the inflamed bottom he had caned, his fingers searching and finding every raised welt. Quite brutally, his hand thrust itself below to penetrate her thighs and find that which was pressed hard against the edge of the desk. He tested, kneading ruthlessly. When the hand was withdrawn, it was thrust beneath her lips.

“Lick it off.” The demand was authoritative. The girl, whose wrists were still strapped, dared not disobey. For the first time in her young life, she tasted her own secretions. Afterwards, she wondered why she had felt no disgust.

When Henry Ross finally desisted from his flagellation of innocent flesh, he freed the tender wrists and brusquely told her to turn over.

Margo obeyed. It was brutally painful. Her whipped skin was now in direct contact with the edge of the desk. A moment later, her wrists had been strapped anew, but this time to compel her face up to the predatory male. Unless she closed her eyes, she must witness her own shame. The female orifice was cruelly exposed, and disregarding her moans, he impaled her as she lay. He could scarcely have chosen a great humiliation to inflict. At its commencement the girl of his choice blushed red and moved protestingly. But beneath his maleness the mood soon passed. Once more, Margo Davis entered another world, a world of ultimate sensation, of hot shame merging upward to ecstasy. She moaned again and again.

Henry Ross stayed the night. His bedroom was both plush and sinister. Margo's knowledge of it began when she was ordered to stand against one of the posts of the huge four-poster bed and raise an arm. Her wrist was cuffed by a waiting shackle and there she stood. The master casually reclined upon the bed itself and sipped a brandy.

"You need not tell me, Margo. Let me guess. You are quite willing to sacrifice everything for release, call it quits, to get back to what you call freedom."

"Yes."

"A good honest answer. The initiation must have been rough. Or was it the thrashing I just gave you this evening?"

“The whole thing.” Margo looked down at him. Her arm unconsciously tugged to hurt her wrist within its shackle. She would never get used to being chained and bound and restrained – not ever.

Without vehemence, she said quietly, “I could stand it if it were for a lesser time. But for years, I can’t. I just can’t contemplate the years.” Her eyes widened, her arms strained. “Can I get you to free me tomorrow? You would owe me nothing. I would write this off to experience. It is something you could easily do.” She surveyed him somberly. “If you desired me, I could visit you in appropriate places at appropriate times.”

“Logical enough. If I find a treasure, I don’t toss it away.” “Very well then. How about keeping me for thirty days? I think I could endure thirty days. I can’t possibly endure years, though. Somehow, I must make you understand.” “I’ve forgotten how many girls said those lines,” Henry Ross said as he sipped his drink. “So much of this is a natural reflex – predictable. I find it amusing, but I can understand you do not. Doesn’t the thought of the check comfort you? It is for a great deal of money.” “When pain reaches a certain point, money ceases to matter. I thought you’d know that. I’d thought with all the girls you have at your command, you would have understood this long ago. Please set me free.” Henry Ross chuckled. “You see, sweetheart, you put your finger on the most priceless pail of it all – the pleading maiden, the implacable bondage in which she is indentured. I pick up her vibrations and they are absolutely delicious. I’m picking up yours now. Damn it, girl, the implacability of maiden captivity is its very essence. The hopeless knowledge that she can never escape is what I’m paying for.” He chuckled again. “After all, you don’t get

your bottom caned or your back whipped all that often, do you?" "No, I suppose not. I suppose what's really getting to me is the word you used – implacability. The knowledge that nothing I can do or say can alter a course." Margo motioned, impatiently. "But that's not strictly true either. You can alter anything in this place. You could set me free tomorrow. You could take me home to wherever you live and make me your mistress. You don't have to leave me here to be constantly punished. I don't see any sense in these endless punishments. I would if you were here to watch them, but you're not – you're a great distance away. And that's what defeats me." "Ah, very well put!" Ross applauded in genuine approval. "But there is something you are not aware of. You've no idea of the tremendous impact this has upon my mind. To realize, as I go about my daily affairs, that you are suffering these pains, these punishments and this imprisonment. It is absolutely terrific. It's worth every penny of what I've offered you." Margo's retort was bitter. "What you're saying is that knowing I'm being given a bad time here keeps you with an erection. Every thought of me being whipped or bound hardens your cock. Is that it?" "My dear girl, you are being deliberately vulgar." Negligently, Henry Ross set aside his drink, rose from the bed, selected a cane, and without further preamble, proceeded to punish the already whipped surface of the twin globes that could not move beyond his venom.

No matter how she turned and twisted, the girl with one hand securely shackled above laid herself open to the bite of the cane, until she hopelessly turned her face to the post and dared him to do his worst. The punishment instantly ceased.

“Vulgarity is something I cannot abide,” Henry Ross said evenly, as he returned to his reclining position and his drink. “You would do well to remember that, young lady.”

She was crying and dabbing at her tears with her one free hand. Enough of anything was enough, and to be caned anew for what she had just said scented an outrageous injustice. She had spoken no more than what she believed to be the truth. Pathetically, between sobs, she muttered, “There isn’t any justice. You don’t believe in justice. You just believe in your own belief in your own pleasure.”

Languidly, the man sighed, and once more set aside his drink. For the second time, he thrashed the girl chained to the post of his bed.

This time he elicited screams that were at least half from anger and her burning sense of something utterly unfair. But at the end of it, she hung limply. In answer to his question, she said abjectly, “Yes, I will obey you. I will do anything you want. Everything I have said is wrong. I should not have said it, and I apologize.” Desperately, Margo gave way to a second flood of tears she could not restrain.

For an appreciable time, Henry Ross stood surveying the punished girl. He found a pathetic loveliness in her forlorn pose. Her wrist was still cuffed to the post above her head, and she drooped against the carved wood in hurt weariness. Satisfied, he finished his drink, turned out the light, and went to bed. He was almost instantly asleep. His thrashed slave girl was ignored and allowed to stand as she was through the dark hours of the night.

“What the hell did you do to the man?” Mildred Harridance said, eyeing her youngest mistress with amused and toler-

ant eyes. “He’s coming back this afternoon, and he’s made a point of asking that you be in attendance. It’s a royal command.”

“I didn’t do anything. He thrashed me and made me abject to a point where I bated myself. This time I’d better grovel on all fours right from the start.”

“No, don’t do that. He made his point with you last time – don’t belabor it.” The headmistress chuckled at an inward visiion. “You’re in for another little surprise. Henry’s a bit of a kook in his ways. I have to round up a few delinquent girls, if I can find any, and that means he’s here for a punishment spree. I suspect you’re going to have to watch, and he’ll be curious about the effect on you. Look, if you feel disgust, don’t show it. He doesn’t want any emotions to touch his shining male ego. When he thrashes a girl, he wants to be a shining hero in her eyes, not what he really is – a mean son of a bitch. There’s no use my asking if you can handle it. You damn well have to handle it. I don’t imagine you want to spend another night hooked to his bed post.”

Margo went back to her class to bask in the adoring regard of Emaline and several others she had rounded up. She was beginning to see the class as a saving grace to Rossland’s severity. Her class learned from her and she from them. At the moment, they were dissecting Dylan Thomas. It was an island of serenity in an ocean of the bizarre. But throughout the morning, their pursuit of significance in the Welsh poet’s eccentricities was interspersed with apprehensions of the afternoon. Margo’s wrist was still sore from her night by her master’s bed. It was an undoubted fact that Henry Ross was as much the headmaster of Rossland as Mildred Harridance was the headmistress. Neither was

called on to exhibit academic prowess. They were simply authority, with a capital A.

It pleased Henry Ross on this occasion to don an academic gown. He had found its effect potent on quaking maidens as they were drilled and punished. It was, in actuality, a cruel sport since the maidens themselves often entered his class in the belief that they might acquit themselves well and gain his approval. The older girls knew better. Margo herself had no hope of anything good.

The owner of Rossland chose a classroom in which to exhibit his talents and impose such torments as amused him on his unfortunate class. Five young women had been selected by Miss Harridance as possessing some evidence of delinquency. She had delegated them and given them some wise instructions of what no to do. It was understood that Margo should stand to one side as an observer and to offer information as desired, very much in a pupil-teacher relationship in the presence of an examiner. Except that two of her pupils were naked and one was handcuffed, everything had the delightful appearance of normalcy.

Margo was seeing a new side to her master. There was a glint of amusement in his eyes, and he wore the knowing smile which he often shared with her. As part of his charade, he conferred upon her an extreme dignity and was markedly polite in his address. Scared and trembling, the first maiden to be selected for his attention was not long in making an appalling gaff. The master stopped the proceedings, and in the deepest silence managed to convey a sense of shock that such stupidity could exist. The young woman stood, flushed and awkwardly shifting her feet.

It appeared that there was no second chance with the master. His voice was stern: “Would you kindly step before the class, Miss Hinton?”

Miss Hinton left the shelter of her class with obvious reluctance.

Perhaps she had been forewarned, but at any time, to be the sole offender of the master’s regard was a terrifying thing. As she trod the short but dreadful space to where she must stand before her concerned companions, she strove to make amends. “Could I amend my answer, sir?”

“Silence!”

The young woman completed what was, for her, probably the most anxious journey of her life. She stood before the master and the class awaiting male pleasure.

“Kindly remove your clothes, Miss Hinton.” It was not Miss Hinton’s first time to be publicly nude. Baring herself before the male was nothing new. Except, in this case, she knew she was going to be punished. She folded her garments neatly and stood before the headmaster with hands cupping her breasts. She was obviously fighting back tears.

“Are you afraid your mammary development will fall off, Miss Hinton?” The acid query was heavily sarcastic. “I have better use for your hands. You’ll hold them out, one at a time, to be caned.”

There was a shocked silence. Miss Hinton was most shocked of all. Her exclamation was entirely without volition.

“But, sir, I haven’t done anything! I’m not a child anymore. Adults don’t have their hands caned.”

“They do at Rossland, Miss Hinton. Kindly extend your arm its full length. Stretch your hand out so that the palm is tautly uppermost. I am waiting.”

The frightened girl hesitantly obeyed. Margo realized there was little else she could do. Revolt or argument undoubtedly increased whatever is was she was now destined to suffer. Miss Hinton stood, arm outstretched, hand tautly open, and watched the headmaster make his selection of canes from the rack. He swished his choice in obvious approval. Without preliminary tappings or gauging of distance, he cut a single swift slash upon the open palm. Miss Hinton remained in stricken shock for only a moment. Her hand then instinctively sought the bare armpit waiting to comfort it. She bent almost double, and small animal cries came chokingly from her lips.

This was the caning of a hand such as no other school had ever seen. The headmaster stood in exaggerated patience for almost a full minute before ejaculating, “I am waiting, Miss Hinton.”

“I can’t. I’m sorry, sir, but I just can’t hold my other hand out. I can’t bear such awful pain.”

Margo saw the gleam of satisfaction in the male eye. She saw the beckoning finger point to another of the already naked girls and beheld that maiden rise from her seat and walk unhappily to the front of the class. The male voice left nothing in doubt.

“Miss Hinton, you see this young woman I have just called out to join you here before the class. I intend to thrash her until such time as you obey.”

The girl looked sideways to instantly comprehend. Her voice was weak.

“No. Oh, please don’t. I’ll try and do what you want me to.” The vivid tableau resumed. The second girl, at a nod from the man, returned to her seat. Miss Hinton tried to stand erect and hold out as yet an uninjured arm. Margo would have found it impossible to enforce compliance. She could make a good guess at the horrifying intensity of the pain. But the headmaster was obviously pleased with himself and the manner in which things had progressed. This time he went to considerable trouble to tap the unwilling palm in make-believe gestures of gauging distance. Miss Hinton closed her eyes. The blow, when it came, was as brutal as the first. The naked recipient now clutched two scalding palms within the shelter of moist armpits.

Unrestrained, she sobbed. The tears fell to the floor beneath her face.

“This is a ridiculous posture, Miss Hinton.” One could not fail to sense the man’s savoring of each word. This was a theatrical production in which he was both director and the male lead. He would make the most of it. His tone, heavily sarcastic, he inquired politely, “You appear to be examining your cunt – is there something wrong with it?”

“No, sir, oh, ohhhh… it hurts. It hurts so bad!” “Excellent. We are therefore ready for your first hand again. It should be well rested by now.” Once more the silence, the awful silence. She was contemplating something too awful for

speech. Each girl present was placing herself in Miss Hinton's place, knowing that she could not extend her arm a second time. Miss Hinton herself called on all her heavy artillery and managed to speak firmly.

"I'm sorry, sir. It's not possible to hold my arm out again, and I don't think you have any right to hurt me so badly."

Can silence double its shocked intensity? It would appear now that this was happening. After her brave pronouncement, Miss Hinton had relapsed to again hugging her injured hands and paying no attention to the rest of those present.

Henry Ross was entirely divorced from the executive type Margo had first seen in his office. He entered the world of headmaster perfectly as though long rehearsed and secretly lived. It was as though this was not play acting at all, but vividly real.

Once more his voice came, this time he was crisp.

"The class is tired of seeing your posterior. And I'm tired of seeing your bowed head. I want no more such pronouncements such as you have just made. I hope you will not compel me to use one of your colleagues to induce you to behave. Now! Upright! Out with that hand."

Molly Hinton did her best. She managed to stand. She managed to hold out an unwilling arm and to open the wounded palm, but when the singing cane was humming to its mark, she withdrew it in a motion so instinctive that it was doubtful she could have done otherwise. She stood abjectly, awaiting male wrath. But she was entirely cowed. Several moments of shocked concern had passed her by.

She once more straightened and once more held her arm out. Her voice was controlled.

“I’m sorry, sir. This isn’t a bit easy. Please cane my hand.” It was swiftly done, and the punished girl returned to her pose of pained penance.

Henry Ross was a connoisseur of matters such as this. He had no wish to ruin a delightful afternoon or impose too great an agony on any of his victims. Magnanimously, he announced, “I’m prepared to consider the three strokes sufficient, Miss Hinton. May I compliment you on your decision to extend your arm?”

“May I put my clothes back on?” “No, you may not. I see no point in girls wearing clothes. They are simply a hinderance to those who attend you.” He pointed to the girl who had come forth previously.

“You, Miss Hinton, please be good enough to inform the class what you know about the autumn equinox.”

Hefty Hinton looked properly distressed. She had no idea what the autumn equinox might be. She gulped a couple of times and then frankly admitted, “I don’t know anything about it, sir. I never heard of it.”

It was a repeat performance. Hefty marched bravely to the front and stood expectantly to learn her punishment. She managed to keep her hands close to her sides, covering nothing of her sex. The headmaster nodded approvingly and thrust forward a chair.

“Do not sit on this, Miss Hinton, but raise your leg upon it. I want you to stand in exactly that position.”

Henry Ross moved majestically to the rack holding instruments of torture. He selected a wicked-looking small whip. Watching, Margo could make a shrewd guess about how Miss Hinton was to be punished. The headmaster continued to speak, now in an almost bland tone.

“Since you know nothing of the autumn equinox, perhaps you will be kind enough to tell the class and myself exactly the names of those portions of your person generally associated with sex. I will be satisfied if you name four.”

Hefty Hinton blushed. She had been at Rossland long enough that her blushes had become infrequent, but she produced a magnificent specimen now. As though diving into icy water in one fell swoop to get the agony over with, she blurted out, “Two breasts. And… my pussy, sir.”

“That last item? It escapes me, Miss Hinton. To what are you referring? I know the term is commonly used to refer to kittens.”

Hefty’s blush continued. She searched her mind, but found her store of euphemisms scant.

“There are several names for it, sir, but they are all rude. I mustn’t use them.”

“The most offensive is the most graphically descriptive, Miss Hinton. Be good enough to use it.”

“My cunt, sir?”

“That is much better. I want all of you to use that term in speaking to me of that portion of yourselves. Rossland wants no false modesty. Now name the fourth item. You let that one out.”

Hefty glanced anxiously around as though hoping to discover on others what she could not remember herself. Timidly, she suggested, “My mouth?”

The headmaster sighed. It was obvious he was a much put-upon man, confronted by both ignorance and stupidity. Thoughtfully, he swished the small thonged whip through the air, as though aiming for small invisible flies.

“You will remain quite still for ten, Miss Hinton. There will be a break when you change from one leg to the other. It might be best if you clasp your hands behind your neck. And face the class too. I’m sure they will judge you by your deportment.”

The thongs bedding themselves within the virgin cleft making their own vicious sound, quite unlike any other. The recipient of their bite gasped and straightened even more erect in stark terror, but held her pose. The second and third strokes followed in even, measured cadence. Margo shrewdly guessed that the headmaster was gauging the pain he inflicted carefully. Quite probably, he had no wish to have naked girls groveling on the floor in an anguish too great to bear. Henry Ross was an artist. At the fifth stroke, when it was time for the punished girl to turn around, he suavely inquired, “I trust you feel some benefit, Miss Hinton?”

“Yes. Thank you, sir.”

It was obvious Miss Hinton had wished to grovel on the floor either. But she was breathing heavily. She was flushed a bright pink, and in the motion of turning around, her hands instinctively sought her wounded sex, but were met by the swift cut of the thongs and told curtly to get them

back behind her back, her bottom and whatever else was open view. The class gazed at her, speechless.

Margo remembered at this injunction not to show disgust. She composed her features carefully, and since she could do nothing to help anyone, stood silently to watch and memorize. Momentarily, her glance caught the eye of the girl being punished. A smile passed between them – a smile of understanding. As though encouraged by her knowledge of a limited infliction, the girl who still had five strokes to accept within her crotch stood bravely at attention, with no more than wincing, cringing, and gasping. When the tenth cut had reddened the tender flesh, the class would willingly have clapped in approval of the girl's courage, but they did not dare. The girl herself was given permission to return her foot to the floor and rejoin the class.

"Why are you handcuffed, Miss Hinton?" The third maiden to wend her way to the front answered, "I dropped a dish at lunch, sir. It was stupid clumsiness, and so I am handcuffed." "For an appropriate period of time, I trust." "One week, sir. Handcuffs do not impede my class work." "Excellent, and now since your offense is failing to answer a simple question is hardly an academic crisis, your punishment will be relatively mild. Be kind enough to put on these panties." The headmaster handed an immaculate pair of spandex panties to his astonished pupil. "I think you will find them adequately tight." The headmaster ordered two pupils to assist the handcuffed maiden to don the new panties.

They were tight indeed, but very becoming, a garment designed to improve on nature itself. Henry Ross nodded in satisfaction and returned his attention to Hefty Hinton.

“You will find a pail over in the corner, my dear. I want you to take the foliage you find therein and do a good job of padding the spandex covering this young lady’s loins. I want every inch of space properly filled, and I want a couple of leaves inserted well within her lips down there. Kindly proceed.”

Miss Hinton picked up the offending pail and looked at its contents aghast. She turned to the watching man, her eyes wide in concern.

“But, sir?”

“Quite sorry, my dear. They are stinging nettles. No doubt they are a cousin to our poison ivy. I had a patch of them imported from England several years ago, and they have flourished mightily. They will adequately supply our school with its requirements.”

“But, sir, they sting, I can’t possibly?” “Yes, you can. Do it. If your hands suffer in the process, I will remind you that your own punishment was extremely light.” The girl with the nettles and the girl who was about to receive them in a place she least wanted stood and stared. But what could they do? They shrugged at another, and Miss Hinton dismally said, “I guess you have to. Go ahead and do it. Here, I’ll help.” It was both clever and cruel. The nettles stung the young hand, now busily thrusting them beneath the tight spandex. Miss Hinton used her cuffed hands to pull aside the top of her panties, so as to aid in her own punishment. She was instantly gasping and became increasingly pink as the panties were loaded with the deadly leaves. In the one last desperate detail of the sad proceedings, Hefty grasped a handful of the terrible things and thrust it hard down inside the spandex, pushing it ruthlessly into and upon the

innocent sex. She looked at her own hands, now reddened and angry, and clasped them beneath her armpits in the same manner as the girl whose hands had been caned. She returned to her seat. All eyes focused on the girl with the cuffed wrists.

Shocked and distraught, she looked agonizingly at the headmaster and ejaculated, “Please, please… oh, sir!”

“You may sit down. You will keep your hands in view, upon the top of your desk.” His finger swiveled to confront one more quaking girl.

Peggy Phillips followed the same path as her predecessors. Upon arrival at the fateful spot, she was handed a pair of simple metal clips and told to snap them on her own nipples. There was another shocked silence. It would be bad enough to have someone do that to a girl, but for the girl herself to be compelled to fasten the clips on the little rosebuds was an appalling thought. Peggy Phillips voiced it forlornly.

“But, sir, I can’t. I can’t possibly do that. It will hurt terribly.”

“You will do it, young lady. And you will do it without any further quibbling. If you wish to quibble, we will perform the service for you, but will give you in addition ten strokes in a place you will not relish.”

Peggy Phillips was holding the small metal monsters as though they were alive and likely to do her injury. She gave a despairing glance around to all the faces unable to offer her aid. In innocent naivete, she enquired, “What part of me did you intend to whip, sir?”

“Your breasts – five strokes each.” There was an inevitability about the ritual. Peggy Phillips would not say one word. Forlornly, she gazed down at the pink buds of flesh she was about to clip. Strangely, they appeared to have grown. She could swear that even as she watched, they became more erect. It was like an open invitation. With a tiny sob, she swiftly and with little care made the first entrapment of her flesh. She looked at the headmaster for approval. But the headmaster did not approve. His voice was brusque.

“A poor sloppy job, Miss Phillips. I want you to affix them properly on the nipple itself and not the areola surrounding it. I want moreover the clip to extend prettily from the flesh. I do not want it hung sideways or in some disjointed fashion. Please try again.”

It was probably the most agonizing thing she had ever done, but Peggy Phillips unclipped the little monster and gasped at the sudden, unexpected agony. Gingerly, she positioned the small open jaws and carefully allowed them to close upon herself. She made a small whimpering sound of dismay, but bravely repeated the motions on her other breast. She now faced the headmaster of Rossland with breasts arrogantly out thrust, and on the tip of each, a throbbing small clip of wicked metal. She found it difficult to control her voice.

“Oh, sir, please may I take them off now?” “Of course not. Don’t be ridiculous. I want you to stand over against the wall there, clasp your hands behind your back, and remain stationary while we deal with the next young lady. Come. Don’t stand there with your mouth open.” Dejectedly and quite anxious to say more but not daring to utter a word, Peggy Phillips did as she was told. She went to the wall,

leaned back against it, and clasped her hands at her back. She stood in suffering misery for all to see.

The last girl to receive the headmaster's attention was both clothed and handcuffed. She was, moreover, a mistress. She inevitably fluffed the question asked, and without hope, made her way forward to receive her punishment. Without waiting to be asked, she volunteered, "I'm handcuffed, sir, as punishment for insubordination. I was rude to Miss Harridance. I must remain handcuffed for seven days. It does not impede me in my duties."

"Well, well. Does it impede the removal of that school tunic?"

"No, sir." The cuffed hands were busy with fastenings until the tunic fell to the floor. The girl wore nothing underneath and stood stark naked for the headmaster's approval. After a moment, she bent, picked up her dress, and folded it, placing it carefully to one side. Miss DuPont's voice was toneless.

"You wish to punish me, sir?"

"Indeed I do. I am wondering what punishment would be most effective upon a mistress. Quite obviously, you are more responsible than these unhappy maidens who have gone before. Would you care to make a suggestion?"

Margo was not sure about Miss DuPont. The girl could well be an exhibitionist or a masochist, or perhaps she was having a little quiet fun beneath a passive exterior. Miss DuPont's suggestion was cool and unconcerned.

"Whipping is such a bore, sir. It's been terribly overdone, and as a matter of fact, I was whipped quite recently. I

doubt that to whip me further would interest you much. Therefore, I suggest the employment upon person of those same metal clips you are using on Miss Phillips. However, you have mentioned that my maturity and official position merits a greater severity, so may I suggest that the clips be placed not only on my nipples, but also on the lips that are beneath my pubic hair."

Henry Ross gazed at her in amazement and admiration. Here indeed was a pleasant change from tearful subservience. This young woman was either a fool or remarkably courageous. He conceded a slight deference in his tone.

"I accept your suggestion, Miss DuPont. I had considered something more trying, but in view of your excellent attitude, I am prepared to make concessions. I believe we have a boxful of these little metal contrivances. Allow me."

Miss DuPont viewed the contents of the proffered box with distaste. But without pause, she reached out and counted four of the hated objects. She looked steadfastly at the man and suggested, "I have taken four, but if it will please you to affix one also to each of my ears, I will do so. But I must say that from previous experience they are extremely painful."

"Splendid, Miss DuPont. I am impressed." He set aside the box and patted the impressive delinquent's cheek. He was chuckling. "By all means, and do let me know if any of us can help."

Margo added her gasp to all the rest. Miss DuPont was magnificent. One after the other, she clipped the little horrors on the most intimate places. She did so with no more than a slight flinch and a gasp, just enough to give a piquancy to

a proceeding altogether bizarre. The pink nipples, the almost hidden labia, the coral ear lobes. Fastened upon her ears, the biting clips took on the aspect of costume jewelry. Still unconcerned, she politely enquired, “Would you wish me to stand by Miss Phillips at the wall, sir?”

“I am about to disband the class, Miss DuPont. I would like both you and Miss Phillips to wear your ornaments for one hour, at which time you will present yourselves to Miss Harridance for her supervision in their removal. I’m sure I can count on your cooperation. You may go.”

Margo watched the class dissolve. She was thankful it was over. She was tired of cringing and wincing for the agonies of others. If she received agony for herself now, then at least she would be going through the motions for some purpose.

Henry Ross wasted no time. He took her hand and spoke.

“I can’t stand it any more. I’m too damn horny. Come along.”

He led Margo to his private suite to the bedroom, not even stopping for a drink. His demand was almost savage.

“Off with that damn rag and get yourself on the bed. I’ve been wondering why I didn’t fuck you half to death last night. Now I’m going to do it.”

He tossed aside the academic gown and became more human. His speech was less stilted. The twinkle came buck to his eyes.

“I won’t even cane your ass, and believe me, that’s a big concession.” Henry Ross was a man of moods. He lived up

to his word and ravished Margo Davis to the point of near exhaustion. She could not deny his ability or the ample dimensions of his maleness. She could understand such a man having no patience with lesbianism. To him, it was a waste. And with him, in fact, it truly was a waste, so great was his capacity for satisfying the female. After he had emptied himself completely, and having brought to Margo a multitude of intense orgasms, she nestled beside the male, allowing his mood to govern hers. First, though, there were the handcuffs.

"I cannot abide a young woman without some restraint. Here, let me have your hands. These are not going to bother anything you and I will do."

He snapped the cruel circlets on her wrists and clicked them together tightly. Margo wondered if he knew how little she cared. For her, handcuffs bad become no more than costume jewelry. She said demure thank you and then added, "Would you like me to wear leg irons too?"

They were on the same wavelength – evenly matched. He took her to the lounge for drinks and then ordered a picnic lunch from the kitchen. It was all the greatest fun and a tremendous relief after the weight of Rossland's authority. Margo flashed her handcuffs, and her animated conversation was increasingly lively. When they returned to bed, it was to begin the most hectic night of abandoned sexuality she had ever heard of or dreamed of. But she was not aware of the erotic stimulus Henry Ross provided for the entire class. His maleness was quite inexhaustible. Before they slept, he brought Margo to total surrender and an exquisite satiety. In the morning, he was gone. But by some magic feat, while she was asleep, he had contrived to move

her handcuffs from front to back. No doubt it was a bit of pixie humor he enjoyed. After dreaming happily for more hours than Rossland usually allowed, she went in search of someone to take them off.

Margo knew the status quo could not endure. No sooner had Henry Ross taken his magic and departed than Mildred Harridance moved in to fill the gap. Margo's mouth, tongue, and lips were expected to replace and erase the male. But the male was now a factor in her life.

Previously, Henry Ross had been abstract. Now he was a terribly, vitally real to her. They had reached a togetherness, a sense of belonging and common purpose. Mildred Harridance was an intrusion. But she was a lovely, forceful, authoritative intrusion. In between the visits of the male, she held Margo's life within her hands. She could demand everything and give as little or as much as she chose. Mostly, she gave lavishly. It was this wish to please her prisoner which told the prisoner herself she had the upper hand.

"Darling, I suppose I arranged an escape for you. I could keep you conveniently in an apartment somewhere. You would always be there, waiting for me. Since I cannot be free of his authority, I can at least take from beneath his nose."

It was tremendously tempting. But selfishly, Margo realized that Henry Ross could offer her far, far more than any female. Mildred was an employee and could be summarily fired. But suppose she and Henry had formed a more permanent bond. True, even as his wife – and this was aiming high – she could be whipped and chained and probably popped into sundry cages or cells as pleased his fancy. Still,

she would be his wife. She would home some inevitable portion of his power. She could visit Rossland, not only on equal terms but as a superior. Margo had glimpsed a more rapid road to fortune than she had originally planned. But she ate Mildred assiduously, and with the zest of momentary superficial acts enjoyed doing so. Margo saw this as reprehensible and knew consequential guilt. But she also knew she had not yet reached any point of security with Henry Ross. He would need careful handling. And if Mildred suspected her intentions, she would unquestionably work upon him to thwart her slave girl's desire. It was a thin and narrow line Margo must tread. It came to an end on the evening. Henry Ross unexpectedly visited Rossland and discovered Margo and Mildred inhabiting the same bed, busily engaged.

He had not fired Mildred. Henry Ross was a man of measured and cautious decisions. He knew the angles. He ordered Margo to be locked in a cell and prepared for a flogging before the assembled school on the following day. What he did or said to Mildred, Margo never knew.

It was a miserable little cell in the best tradition of TV and movie sets.

It held the bare essentials for existence. A girl could be kept there forever, simply by passing food through the already prepared opening in the bars of her cage. She was naked and handcuffed, but that was all. Her imprisonment could have been far more punitive or much longer, but what awaited her at the end of it was horrendous enough to absorb all her concern. To be flogged in front of the whole school!

It sounded beyond bearing. She remembered the flogging of her dream.

But that could hardly be comparable. She would simply inhabit the dismal little cell until the event was ready to happen. Meanwhile, elsewhere in Rossland, Mildred Harridance was facing her own future.

She was furiously angry and terribly afraid.

“But, Henry, it would destroy me utterly. My authority would vanish. You cannot possibly flog a headmistress and expect her to continue to function.”

“Not if you flog her before the assembled staff and inmates, Mildred. This, I understand.” Henry Ross was examining the woman who was totally in his power. Mildred would never be dull, even in adversity. There were lessons to be learned from her. Quietly, he spoke.

“The staff and the pupils will know nothing of it. I will flog you personally. The only witness will be Margo, who will herself be flogged. In her case, it will be before the whole school.”

“Henry, that’s horrible! The poor girl?” “Poor girl nothing! She was eating your cunt when I caught the two of you. I’m not giving her up, not by any means. But I’m taking her away from your influence. However, I want your work at Rossland to continue. You will simply be flogged as evidence of my authority. If you want to go, then go.” “You know I won’t. Henry, you are a bastard. You leave me no choices. You’ve got everything figured.” “You are a beautiful woman, Mildred. It will be one of the high spots of my life to see you under the whip. It will give me immense pleasure to witness your submission to being bound. I ask

myself, 'Why are you doing it?'. I'll be damned if I know!" Mildred glared and sniffed defiance. But she knew her defiance was limited. "I suppose the fact is, Henry, you've got under my skin. I have a feeling for you. And then there's Rossland. I've got a feeling there too. You know as well as I do it would devastate me to either part from this place or from you. If the price of my retaining these things is to allow you to punish me, then that's what I'll do. But I still say you're a son of a bitch to make me do it."

Margo hated the tiny cell. Her sleep was intermittent, bothered to an unusual degree by the handcuffs on her wrists. She had said they didn't matter, but they did. They told her she was not free. They told her she would be flogged. They told her she would never escape. In fitful periods of slumber, she slipped back into that other world of the dream she had never forgotten. She had been flogged there and had been a plaything of men and women. She wondered what Denby Wright would have done with her, or to her, or about her had the dream been real. In morbid fascination, she wondered too if Manley would have been allowed to flog her had his lash held fast in its entwinement of her ankle. She shrugged the whole memory aside. Her condition was morbid enough without nightmares. But supposed Mildred Harridance was actually Marcia Tremont and Henry Ross was Denby Wright.

But the idea was absurd. There was absolutely no resemblance other than their hold upon her person. That was terribly similar. Margo spent the morning clutching the bars with handcuffed fingers and gazing through them at what was almost nothing: a blank wall, a passage. She asked herself what she was hoping for, what she expected to see. But she realized she had become one of those caged animals in

the zoo, who perpetually paced up and down against the bars. She supposed she should be devoting though to her behavior and attitude while being flogged, noble resolutions to silence crossed her mind. She visualized a contemptuous hauteur as she was led to where she would be fastened.

But she did not care. All she wanted was to get the ordeal over and done with and move on to whatever Rossland had in store for her. She felt sure her whipping would be for Henry Ross, a beginning and not an end. He had imprisoned her in Rossland. He could also set her free.

But Margo was destined to be a viewer before she was watched by many eyes. She was taken from the cell to the room where it would happen. She saw a dangling rope and waiting straps. But they were not yet for her. A handcuff on one wrist was freed and attached to a ring in the wall, so she must stand and behold whatever first took place. It was a shock to both the woman and the girl to confront each other in this place of punishment, both naked, both sentenced to the lash. For Mildred, the dishonor and degradation of having her own slave witness her flogging was as great a shame as Margo would endure before the eyes of the entire school. Neither said a word. Their eyes flashed a female message. The slave girl found her mistress utterly lovely in her nudity. It seemed impossible that any man would whip a body made so well for love. But she herself was to be whipped, so it evidently was a thing a male could do easily. Margo looked at her handcuffed wrist hanging from the wall and silently cursed the impotency it imposed.

The preparations were simple. The victim's hands were bond in front of her and hoisted above her head. Her legs

were spread and secured by anklets chained to either side. This left her sex open and exposed, compelling her to stand in the one posture without being able to turn or wriggle with the strokes. The chained girl stood in stunned amazement that this woman would allow Henry Ross to bind her without demur. It was a phantasmagoria, a vivid nightmare of the impossible. But there it was. Mildred had been securely bound and made shamefully naked by the man who evidently owned them both. If Mildred was without recourse, then certainly she was without hope. When Henry Ross picked up the whip, Margo used her one free hand to cover her eyes.

"You there! I want you watching." The male voice was fierce.

Margo opened her eyes and allowed her hand to fall listlessly at her side. She was quite helpless and knew that what she was being forced to witness was in part a punishment for herself. She had eaten the forbidden fruit and now must pay the price.

The master was a man of resource. He had no sooner picked up the whip than inspiration dictated his next move. He set aside the weapon with which he would strike and cut female flesh, and instead turned to the girl chained to the ring. Decisively, he went to her, unlocked the single cuff, and joined it to its fellow behind Margo's back. She could now move from the wall, but was more helpless than before. She looked at her master questioningly.

It was very simple – fiendishly simple, utterly male in its concept.

The slave girl was forced to kneel between the bound legs of her mistress and found herself confronted by the source of all their agonies. Margo scented its familiar pungency and knew what she would be compelled to do. The bindings of Mildred's ankles, far to each side, displayed her sex, obscenely open and available.

"Eat her. Go on, eat the bitch. You wanted to. I caught you doing it." Margo knelt. It was strange to be confronted this way with something which in bed had seemed wonderful, but which now was simply disagreeable. Strange too to have no hands to be no more than a seeking mouth and a searching tongue. But the scent of Mildred Harridance enveloped Margo in a cocoon of its own powerful perfume. She longed for her hands and tugged at the metal on her wrists to no avail. She was a female armed only with her mouth. With a tiny moan, she thrusted to her task.

There began then the strangest of rituals – love and lust and pain. The impacts of the whip on the naked back of the headmistress of Rossland transmitted themselves through flesh and blood and bone to the hungry mouth of the kneeling girl. Margo winced with each of them. The headmistress herself was transported to a land few women ever know: a land of female agony and ecstasy, combined. Strive as she could against the bonds, she was so totally exposed to the male wrath that she could evade neither leather nor lips. In the small motions she could make they both followed her implacably. Margo's view was limited to pubic fronds, but mostly she closed her eyes and pretended none of this was happening. She ignored the heat generated in her own sex, but she could not ignore the excitement of the sweat and smell now blending itself with Mildred's own

perfume. No doubt it was her fancy, but she could swear the impacts now sounded wet on Mildred's skin.

Henry Ross wished there was an audience. Margo was lost to him in that capacity. She was busily and almost blindly involved. It would have been pleasant and effective to have had two lines of naked maidens watching this punishment of two female mouths, too hungry for their own good. There would have been cringing and wincing in every heart and each one of them would have learned a lesson. But he valued Mildred's authority. She had known Rossland well and yielded unto Caesar that which was Caesar's. The pain and shame of what was being done to her now would keep her in line. But he would keep an eye on her. She could use herself with the other girls, but Margo was his alone.

Mildred Harridance did not scream. Margo could not imagine what resources she called upon to remain silent through the agony. Perhaps it was Rossland itself, with all the authority it had placed on her, that helped her now. When the last stroke had fallen, she simply hung limp and sweating without comment. The girl left kneeling and solitary in the room could well imagine what would now take place. Dismally, she turned to the task of ridding her mouth of pubic hairs without the aid of hands. Her future seemed hopeless.

The school filed in to take positions around the four walls. They looked at the kneeling girl and the dangling ropes askance. Margo did nothing. She considered getting to her feet, but what then? Mistresses would have stopped her from leaving the room, so all she could do then was to stand in stupid isolation, tugging at handcuffed wrists. It

was better to kneel, to give complete approval, she widened her knees apart in the position Henry Ross so dearly loved. She bowed her head and closed her eyes and entered a kingdom of her own, a kingdom inhabited solely by punished girls.

Henry Ross took his time. When he finally appeared, he was freshly washed and attired in slacks and a white silk shirt. There was a freshness about him, and if any girl present could guess what he had just engaged in, it did not matter. He was the master. He motioned to a pair of mistresses to do the work he himself had done on Mildred. In deep breathing silence, they bound Margo for her punishment. Hands together and held high, feet wide spread and locked fast. She could not move, but could evade nothing. Her sex was open to the thong.

Margo sensed the master's mood. It was transmitted to her with each leather strap which cut her skin. The punishment was potent and terrible enough, but she was not being flogged. There was something lacking in the vigor of the blows. Henry Ross had found some surcease for his anger, some venting of his spite. What the newly stretched girl was receiving now was the residue of a greater anger, now appeased. It was still very terrible, but Margo was becoming adept at gauging the cruelty of punishments. Once more, her mind returned to the dream, to the smoke-blackened room and the scourge. This was nothing like that. There she had bled. She would not bleed now. But quite soon in her punishment, she screamed and continued to scream intermittently to the end. After the final stroke, she was left to hang limply as she was. Her audience filed out in orderly fashion. Henry Ross was the last to go. Margo was left to hanging in the punishment posture for an hour.

She supposed it was for emphasis and to give her the opportunity to savor the scalding agonies which persisted in the more intimate crevices discovered by the lash. She could use her hands to assuage nothing. Her back burned, her buttocks were scalded and scored. Her belly had received the overlap of enough strokes to say that it too had been whipped. It sang its own song of anguish. Her sex throbbed painfully and distressfully. She wondered if it had been cut or injured. But she couldn't see, nor could she feel. She hung in passive sweatiness until the master once more appeared. They spoke no words as she was freed. But he caught her as she was about to fall and once again carried in triumph the trophy of his anger, bearing her to his bed where her bottom and her back and all the rest of her were to pay its female price for being female.

For Henry Ross, it was a gala day! Rossland absorbed them. The tunic of a mistress covered Margo's wounds. She was now sufficiently uninhibited that if one of her colleagues shyly suggested she would like to observe more closely the terrible results of her punishment, she cheerfully raised her tunic and allowed her wounds to be examined. There was no cut skin. But most certainly, there was an array of rainbow colors to evoke quite satisfying gasps from those who ventured. But there was not a single girl in the school who either had not or would not receive a similar coloration of her skin. None were immune from the thong. It was, in fact, very much a part of their daily life. They lived with it.

Mildred bore herself well. None would suspect the wounds she bore beneath her dress. Her punishment remained entirely secret. Only Margo knew. The headmistress waited a

couple of days before summoning the whipped girl to her office.

“The bastard!” she said. “It’s taken me this long to look you in the face. He didn’t have to do that, but he’s a clever son of a bitch, and he knows what hurts most.” She laughed dryly. “Not that I didn’t enjoy the role you were cast in. I could not have endured being whipped half as much without your help. Even if I did nearly go crazy when you made me orgasm. How many times was it? The whole damn thing is best forgotten.”

Tonelessly, Margo asked, “What now? I’m under your authority here while the master is absent.”

“Of course I want you! I want you right here and now, but we are both frightened, aren’t we? That asshole has got us so scared we won’t dare act naturally. We’ll see him peeping at us from every corner. Is that the way you see it?”

“Of course,” Margo admitted. “That’s the effect of any punishment. That’s the intent behind it all – to make you too frightened to do it again. But it won’t last. By the time the marks on your skin have disappeared, we’ll have relaxed, and we’ll be doing it again.”

“And eventually he’ll catch us, just as he did this time,” the headmistress said somberly, sharing Margo’s disgust with female dependence on the male. “How do you still feel about me setting you up in that apartment and having you all to myself?”

“What’s the use? He’d find me. We couldn’t keep anything from Henry Ross.” Margo shrugged hopelessly. “With all his money, he can do anything.”

“All we can have of each other is illicit and subject to punishment.”

“For the sake of this position you hold, which has to be valuable to you, you would do best to forget me. Just let me go out there among the rest of the girls and don’t ever bother to notice me again.”

“Is that what you want?”

“No, it isn’t. You know it isn’t. But in a way, we’re both prisoners here. What the hell else can we do?”

They surveyed each other in rueful silence. Both, in their way captive, by invisible bonds. Mildred spoke again, forcefully.

“I won’t let you go. I simply won’t! It’s too much to ask, to have you walking around this place and neither see nor touch you.”

Standing before the desk, in the posture of humility, Margo realized the strange alchemy of female love which had made her this woman’s equal. It had ceased to be headmistress and pupil – it was now lovers, fugitive from male wrath. Margo knew herself torn between male and female, but knew also she would not desert this woman in a crisis. Helpfully, she made a suggestion.

“You could make things easy for me here. You could easily make certain I was not constantly punished. I would simply serve my time and be available to Henry Ross when he wanted me. Isn’t that the best way out?”

“No, it isn’t. He’d find out. If I make things easy for you, the other girls will be jealous and suspicious, and one of them

will tell him. You mustn't forget that he occasionally picks one of them rather than you or me, and a girl in bed will tell a man anything. The little bitches are so damn grateful for a male cock!"

"Well, how about letting me escape? Surely we can figure some way of my getting out of here which will place no blame on you."

"You're dreaming, sweetheart. That's my job – to make sure you don't escape." Mildred shook her head, perplexed. "So, all right, we get what we can of each other in the way we've been doing. And fuck Henry Ross! I'm having you in my bed tonight, regardless."

It was not to happen, but neither knew it then.

Henry Ross appeared early in the evening. He wasted no time, but had Margo stripped, her hands cuffed behind her back, and another set of cuffs securing her ankles. Since she was not quite helpless, he picked her up bodily and carried her to his car. He did not put her in the trunk, but sat her on the sat by his side and drove away with her in much the manner of a conquering hero taking his prize to the family castle. Margo was quivering with excitement. She was outside the walls of Rossland in the owner's Rolls Royce. She felt she bad been promoted.

"Rossland will have done you no harm, sweetheart. I will have prepared you for what I now intend." He spared her an affectionate sideways glance, his voice softening and taking on a more normal tone.

"Don't worry about the handcuffs. I've got them on you just in case you change your mind or find this sudden change too much for you. I'm setting you up in an apartment and

having you all to myself. There will be a woman to look after you and to look after the place itself."

"I'll still be a prisoner?"

"Yes, of course." He smiled. "Do you think you're quite ready for freedom?"

It was a question Margo could not answer. Of course, she was ready for freedom, but on what terms and at what price? She was unsure about spending her days in freedom and yielding her body every evening to his caprice. Henry Ross had not yet unbent enough for her to feel she truly knew him. His headmaster role clung and dictated her regard. But she was still in no position to quibble and had no intention of doing so. Within sight of freedom, she would be stupid to ignore its possibility.

Wryly, she was forced to concede within her own mind the absence of ignominy in the yielding of her flesh to either phallus or whip. These things were now a part of her life, possessing a potency to make the routines of everyday life insignificant. She was about to speak of these things when they saw the fallen tree.

They were still well into the country. The road was narrow and the tree blocked it completely. It was not a big tree. A man might, with considerable exertion, drag it to one side. Without concern, Henry Ross left the car with that intent. The man who had delivered the blow to knock the master unconscious had risen from the foliage of the tree and now proceeded to drag it back into the ditch out of sight. He dragged the unconscious Henry Ross to one side and left him on the grass. Margo was aghast. Helplessly, she had seen the whole terrible charade without being able to use

either hands or feet in defense of the master or herself. The man responsible came closer, and she watched his approach as the victim of a snake might watch the hypnotism of its eyes. He wore a hood of transparent spandex, totally obliterating his features. He drove the Rolls Royce to the side of the road and parked it. Silently, he plucked the nakedness from the seat and deposited her roughly in the trunk of his car, which was parked a few feet from the Rolls. The whole thing was well conceived and had taken only minutes to execute. The car, with its helpless burden, drove away without even a screech of rubber. The abduction had been discreet. In the total darkness and discomfort of the trunk, Margo was mystified. She could not be other than terribly afraid. In her fear and loneliness, she wept.

She knew not who the tears were for.

CHAPTER SIX

KIND KIDNAP

The feminine voice had a familiar sound, but was hard to place. It was, moreover, in the next room and difficult to hear. Margo, tied spread-eagle on the cot, was still dazed and bewildered by the swift succession of events but was straining every nerve to pick up the conversation which might be her only clue to why and what was happening. A short, sharp struggle with the cords on wrists and ankles had already convinced her she would not escape their clutch.

"I sure hope you're right with the facts." It was a male voice, brooding, uncertain, but still holding a forceful tone. "The damn girl's a beauty, all right, but with a school full of 'em the way you say the asshole has, I don't see why he'd be all that excited." There was a male guffaw. "With that college full of cunts he's got, I wouldn't figure him as getting excited about any single girl. If he's not interested in this one, I won't charge her nothing for screwing her the first time." There was another immense guffaw at this bit of male wit.

The more cultured female voice intervened: "Leave her alone. She's not to be harmed. She's merchandise, Bernie. Remember that. If Ross doesn't come across, we've got a market for her somewhere else. It won't be as much money, but it'll be more than expenses."

Straining to listen, the bound girl knew she had heard the female voice before, but where and in what connection. It was a very ordinary female voice, without regional inflections.

Margo tensed against her bonds and listened to the man.

“Wouldn’t be figuring you could get along without me now, would you? I wouldn’t put it past you, now that you think you’ve got it made.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, Bernie. I can’t handle this alone, and I don’t want to. It’s time you got yourself to a telephone box and made the first contact. We don’t want to stick around this dump any longer than we must.”

Then came a sound of male rumblings and complaints.

“You ain’t gonna be fool enough to let any part of her loose, are you? From what you’ve told me about her being tied up, she’s probably an escape artist by now.”

“Bernie, stop worrying. If I do untie any part of her, I’ll replace it with the handcuffs.” There was a lilt of girlish laughter. “Personally, I prefer her tied. I enjoy tying her, and I’m going to continue doing it. I’m probably better at it than you are.” There was another chuckle.

“I get a charge out of tightening the cords around her wrist or ankle, and watching it sink deeper and deeper into her skin. I like to feel her tension while I’m doing it. I like to put a second strand, and then a third, and make them neat and very, very tight before I knot them. You wouldn’t understand this, Bernie. I guess it’s a girl thing. But leave it to me.”

“How much do you figure we can get for her if Ross don’t come across?”

“Goldstein offered twenty thousand. That means he’ll pay thirty. If we fix her up a bit maybe present her naked, he

might go higher. She's a valuable piece of merchandise, don't you kid yourself."

Bernie did nothing silently. The sounds of his departure were distinct and defined. He appeared to be a man much subject to complaint. After his departure, the female member of the abduction team did not immediately appear. From the sounds, it was evident she was cleaning up a few dishes. When she did enter the room in which the captive Margo lay, recognition was instant.

"Bea! Bea Maxwell!"

The girl bound to the bed looked up in astonishment. She had next expected to be kidnapped by Henry Ross' own personal secretary.

Bea smiled down at her in open friendliness.

"Hello, Miss Davis. I feel like a terrible bitch. You'll never forgive me, I'm sure." The secretarial smile was still there and quite potent.

"I simply have to hope you won't hate me too much." "But why? Why you, and why me?" The queries sprang instantly from captive lips.

"Money, darling. Why else? We do everything for money, don't we? Henry's a bit of a dear, but he still never pays a secretary enough to make her independent."

The thin little laugh came again. It came very readily to the ripe red lips of this girl who did not belong in this setting.

"Even when he slept with me, he seemed to regard it as a bonus for me instead offer him. He gets away with that sort

of thing. I suppose all millionaires do. That's the reason they're millionaires."

"But what are you doing with me?" "It's called kidnapping."

"Bea, you shouldn't! You could go to prison." Bea shrugged a pair of lovely shoulders. "I doubt if he'd send me there. Even if Bernie and I blow the whole thing and get arrested, which isn't likely, I'm sure Henry would make good use of his advantage. I'd get my bottom well whipped and do the good old phallus worship. Bernie might go to prison, but I doubt if I would. Anyway, this whole thing's a cinch for me." "Then you know all about… the fun and games? You know about Henry Ross – what he does with girls?" "Darling, don't be naive."

Once again, the silvery laughter filled the room, giving its drabness light and life. "Any girl Henry Ross has honored by his bed is going to learn a thing or two. I certainly did. The morning after my first night with him, I had a damn bad day sitting on my seat. He'd whipped it to a fare-thee-well." She laughed again. "But, of course, that's never all. You can't be sure whether he'll fuck you before or after he uses the cane or the crop. But one way or another, he certainly will get around to it. Along with my smarting feet, I had the most prodded pussy in the place. I'm sure you know the drill."

"Since we know each other, couldn't you untie some little bit of me?" Margo asked the hopeful question. "I'm quite willing to behave in any way you want."

"I see your point, sweetheart, and I do admit you are my first kidnapping. This tying up does seem a bit melodramatic, but as I was telling Bernie, I enjoy it. I expect a bit of

Henry rubbed off on me, but I really did enjoy tying you down the way you are, and I enjoy tying you up in other ways too. If the negotiations go on long enough, I expect I'll do it too."

"Cords do get awful painful, Bea – I can't move. Am I spread out like this for your friend's convenience?" The captive's tones were bleak.

"Actually, no darling. You're tied that way for my convenience. I've led a sheltered life, and I'm going to enjoy you. In a minute, I'm going to give you an orgasm. It will be the first time I've ever done such a thing to another girl. You can probably instruct me on technique."

"Bea, don't say things like that! You're a nice girl, and I think you're making a terrible mistake. But it's too late now. You're sort of stuck with me. But, Bea, if Mr. Ross doesn't pay the ransom, you wouldn't really sell me to someone… that Mr. Gold…?"

"Mr. Goldstein? Well, actually, no. Mr. Goldstein doesn't even exist. I invented him for Bernie's benefit. I'm quite sure we could get quite a bit of money from someone who'd put you in a brothel – maybe thirty or forty thousand dollars. You're such a honey of a looker! But that's no good to me. What I need is a good solid chunk to give me independence the rest of my life. We're asking a million for you from dear old Henry. If you were his wife, we could make it much more. Not because he would love you more, but because society would expect him to do his duty. For a girl he simply fucks from time to time, a million dollars should be about right."

“Bea, please! Look, you can play absolutely safe. Untie my legs and then handcuff my ankles. That way, I can’t really do anything. I can’t possibly escape, that’s for sure. Please, you won’t be running any risk.”

“Margo, I told you. I like you tied, and that’s the end of it. There should be some privilege to go with this job of kidnapping. I want to do a few things my way. If you beef too much about being tied, I will tie you tighter. I can think of one or two more places I can use a bit of rope. Failing that, I can easily gag you. How would you like my panties fresh from my pussy stuffed in your cute little mouth and taped in tight?”

“I wouldn’t. Okay, all right, I’ll stop asking you to let me loose. I just hope your conscience bothers you.” The bound and naked girl looked up beseechingly. “Look, I bet this Bernie guy is a creep. He is, isn’t he?”

“Sort of. The better element of society doesn’t dabble in kidnapping. I had to take what I could get. I needed Bernie for moving that tree and bopping poor Henry. I’m sure he’ll be recovered by now and able to write a check.”

“You’re not going to let Bernie do things to me, are you? I mean, the way you’ve got me tied and the way he talks, it’d be easy for him to… well, you know.”

“Fuck you? Darling, say it out loud. You don’t need to be frightened of the word. It is so beautifully suited to the situation. I’m pretty sure Bernie doesn’t know any other name for it. If you spoke of intercourse, he’d probably think it was something to do with a racetrack. Just leave everything to me. If I do let him screw you, it’ll be because I believe it’s the wisest course for us both.” Bea gazed down with some

degree of tenderness at the girl so totally in her power. “I suppose I could do the heroic thing and let him screw me instead, but that’s carrying the thing a bit far. I’m supposed to be on top of this whole affair, not underneath. Cheer up. I’m not going to let you get really hurt.”

Bea seated herself comfortably at the side of her captive. Her hands strayed to nipples which could not evade their frictioning. Amused, she said, “Darling, I’d like you to tell me something about Rossland. You’ve been there, but I haven’t. It must be the damnedest place. I want to play with you and get you nicely excited while you talk.”

Margo supposed the plight of a captive could be much worse than her condition now. These hands held magic. Her fingers were sly and very wise. Shyly, she said, “If that’s the way you want it, Bea, I’ll do my best. But what you’re doing to me is gong to make it nearly impossible. You’re clever at it. All I’m gong to do in a minute is gasp and moan.”

“That’s all right, dear. You can come out on the other side and continue where you left off. It’s a lovely arrangement. You ought to feel grateful.”

“Well, I am. Bea – oh, dear, it’s starting already. You’re just too clever at this! Bea, I wish you’d stop. I don’t mind a bit telling you about Rossland, but the way you’re going, I’m not going to be able to. Oh, Bea, please!”

Two girls together. Without the binding cords, they could have been friends or lovers. Quite soon, they were so involved as to make Rossland an abstract thing, totally forgotten. But all things pass and when the final spasms had trailed away, Margo did her duty and told the extraordin-

ary story of an extraordinary academy. Bea's questions were avid with interest and curiosity. Margo answered all of them. At the end, she made the dry suggestion that if Bea was indeed that interested in the place, she could gain entry to it as one of the girls or as a mistress. Surely Henry Ross would do that for an old, trusted employee.

"It wasn't in the cards." Bea mused thoughtfully. "Henry would never dispense with a useful secretary. He would not have given me that much of a hold on him." Bea chuckled in amusement. "Although if he had got me in there, he might have kept me forever. I doubt if he'd want me walking around knowing all about the place." She shrugged in resignation. "But anyway, I've blown that deal completely. And now I won't even get set up in an apartment the way he was doing with you when we picked you up. You must have really got under Henry's skin, darling. The trouble he was taking over you – do you have some special muscle development inside that cute little slit I'm looking at?"

"Don't be silly, Bea. No girl ever knows what a man sees in her. She's just thankful he does. Nobody ever understand what we see in a particular man either. To them, he's a droop, but he isn't to us. The whole thing's screwy. Sometimes, back at Rossland, I used to think that if we weren't punished constantly, the place had a certain virtue. It took a girl away from most of her problems, and so far as sex goes, the place positively reeks of it. They go through the motions of keeping the girls apart, but that's all it is… just motions. We always found each other some way or other. When you're promoted to being a mistress, it's easy."

Margo sighed and tried to look appealing. “Are you sure you wouldn’t like to… uh… oh, sorry. I’m not to be untied, am I? You like the way the cords dig into my skin. I’m so glad I give you pleasure.” Her tone in the final sentence was a trifle acid.

“I wonder what the hell is keeping Bernie.” Bea consulted her watch. “He’s been gone a lot longer than there’s been any need. The phone booth isn’t that far down the road. Maybe he’s gone on to the store. But that’s foolish; he’ll be noticed. The little shack we’re in is just a little place we discovered in the woods. Goodness knows who owns it. We don’t aim to be here any longer than we have to. It’s an absolute dump.”

“Well, suppose he gets himself arrested. He sounded to me like a big enough dope to let that happen. Would he split on you or just keep quiet?”

“Honey, if I knew that had happened, I’d run like crazy and take you with me. With those two sets of handcuffs Henry so kindly donated, I could keep you safe under any circumstances. You couldn’t do a thing.” Bea patted a sad, hopeless cheek. “Don’t look so sad. I’m not all that bad, am I?”

“You’re simply a darling. I wish we could put the clock back.” The two girls talked. At the end of thirty minutes, Bea was becoming obviously disturbed. Her captive could understand why. Bernie was second-class material and perhaps none too bright. Bea must be feeling terribly alone in this shocking adventure. At the end of another half hour, Margo threw caution to the wind and blithely began speaking.

“There has to be something wrong. He can’t possibly take this amount of time, either for the phone booth or the store. Look, you can still come out of this as the heroine. You go to the phone and call Henry Ross. Tell him you’ve discovered me, then deliver me to him. You needn’t tell him you happened to have a key to my handcuffs.”

“Oh, sure! And no million bucks – no nothing. Just back to the same old desk and the same old job, while Henry sets you up in great splendor and screws you to a frazzle.”

“Well, that sounds all right the way you put it, but remember before he does what you say, he’ll have used a cane to beat my bottom to a frazzle first. Being the sultan’s favorite isn’t all that good, you know.”

“Well, I’m willing to trade it for what I’ve got right now. Margo, I’m becoming alarmed. That asshole of a partner should have been back a long time ago. Look, I think the best thing I can do is put those handcuffs on you the way you say and then take you to my place back in town. I can easily get you up into my apartment from the garage in the basement. I’m not sure what I’ll do with you then. It’s not the ideal place to keep a kidnapped girl, but I’ll worry about that when it happens.”

Bea’s disgust was not shared by her captive. Any way she looked at it, Margo could see only benefit in whatever was taking place with the absent Bernie. As far as she was concerned, if he never showed up again, it would be soon enough. Margo had no expectation of immediate freedom. She was well enough acquainted with bond and handcuffs to realize Bea would have no problem in keeping her helpless.

But the helplessness would surely not last. Something was sure to happen. She sighed happily when the cords were pealed from her ankles and replaced by the familiar bands of steel.

“You see, Bea, it’s easy. And you’ve still got me absolutely safe.”

“Well, you may be right. Now for your hands.” Margo actually did debate momentarily the thought of using her arms and fists in hope of subduing Henry Ross’ secretary and returning her to him as a neat, bound package. It was a delightful dream, but she knew that was all it could be. Even if she got the best of Bea and had her pinned down, how could she then either bind herself or escape? A girl with ankles closely joined and handcuffs enforced, cannot go anywhere or do anything effectively. She allowed the temptation to pass and obligingly rolled over after the cords had been taken from her wrists and allowed her hands to once more be cuffed behind her back. It was no longer a hardship. She was accustomed to it.

The two girls laughed over Bea’s inability to carry her captive to the car. Instead, the captive obligingly hopped to the car and pleaded.

“Please don’t put me in the trunk, it’s hateful in the trunk. Let me sit beside you. If you want to cover me up, it only takes a little bit of anything handy.”

“All right.” It was a very doubtful affirmative. “I’d rather have you with me – someone to talk to. And if you still think I’m enjoying this adventure, well, you’re wrong. I’m not. I’m worried stiff about Bernie. Something’s gone

wrong for sure." Bea drew a deep breath and emitted a hearty exclamation of disgust. "Oh, shit!"

For Margo it was a delightful ride. Whether she got to their destination or not no longer mattered. The handcuffs did not hurt, and she was not disposed to chafe her wrists trying to get out of them. She felt an immense affinity for this girl who was undoubtedly vexed, worried, and afraid. But Margo could see no problem. All Bea had to do was deliver her to Henry Ross. If there was a reward, she could claim it. Margo had already made up her mind to hold Bea innocent. She would make no accusations, no charges. She was tremendously grateful to the girl for keeping her inviolate in the mercenary captivity.

She even obligingly opened her mouth for the gag when they were ready to leave the car. It might have been daylight outside, but underground garages are gloomy places, and had she not been gagged, she might well have laughed at the way she hopped her way to the elevator. The whole kidnapping was taking on the atmosphere of a farce. Neither of the two girls felt enmity, only self-interest. Suppose she was actually delivered to Henry Ross – would she then be free? Margo examined the premise doubtfully. For her, freedom had become abstract, something that might apply to others but not to her. At this moment, it appeared that she would be a prisoner in one of two places: Bea's apartment or Ross' penthouse. She suspected the latter. Her captivity there might be more comfortable. With Bea, she had an unhappy vision of dark closets and gags. But she obediently hopped her way into it with her captor in close attendance. It proved to be a pleasant apartment, although not large. Its living room was delightful, and contained an

obviously comfortable couch. On it, quietly sipping a double scotch, sat Henry Ross.

“Figured you’d show up here sooner or later,” he said pleasantly.

“Helped myself to a drink. I’m sure you don’t mind, do you, Bea? And by the way, we picked up your boyfriend while he was buying cigarettes at the store. It took us a little time to get the facts out of him. When we got to the shanty, you had already left. Bea, I’m grateful you took such good care of my little girl.”

“Henry Ross, you bastard!” Bea’s exclamation was almost without volition. “You always win! Damn you! You always get the best of everybody, except maybe Norma Boulter. I suppose I’m in for the high jump?”

“Indeed you are. But let us be polite to your best. You may seat her beside me on the couch and provide us both with a potable. I’m sure you both need one.”

Bea sniffed unhappily, but she obeyed. It was quite probable she knew he was right. She was facing difficulties and voiced this fact.

“All right, what happens to me now?” “I am thinking in terms of a well-thrashed bottom, my dear.” Henry Ross’ voice was urbane. He had matters well in hand. There followed a silence. Beas mind was busy with possibilities. She voiced them.

“You mean you’ll let me go back to my secretarial job? Is a thrashed bottom all you’ll do to me?”

“Come, come, dear girl, you know better than that. You’re quality material. You are one of us. You may be pleased that I have been viewing you for some time as a potential Rossland student. You have now elevated yourself to this much desired position.”

“What you’re really saying is you’re going to put me in your own private prison.”

Henry Ross playfully chocked his indignant secretary under her chin. “Why not? It may do you a world of good, and at the very least, it will enable you to pay your debt to me for this ridiculous kidnapping fiasco. There is also the matter of the bump on my head.”

“You won’t send me to prison?” “I have only to look at you two girls to realize neither one of you will testify against the other. No, I won’t be sending you to prison. But I am sure you realize you may wish I had.” “Oh, all right. You and your justifications! Do you want to handcuff me or something?” “Dear Margo is wearing my entire stock.” Henry Ross beamed at them impartially. “But I suppose you could share them. But first I wish you naked.” Margo had listened in silent appreciation of the exchange, but her hands remained behind her back. Her drink stood unattended on the end table. Forlornly, she spoke.

“If someone would change my hands from back to front, I might rejoin the human race.”

It was immediately done. Bea performed the act as though in a hurry from an oversight. She hastily bestowed upon the freed prisoner the abandoned drink and bent to Margo’s feet to use the key which was testimony to her own guilt. She stood erect and asked, “This business of being na-

ked – do I really have to?" She searched for humor. "Who in the hell wants a naked secretary?"

"Your position is temporarily suspended, dear girl." Henry Ross' voice was silk. "When you return to it, I'm sure you will be a much wiser young woman."

"Oh, sure! And I'll have a sore bottom and back, and I'll be relieved of all my shames and inhibitions. But, Henry, please don't make me strip naked in front of Margo. Please?"

"Why not? I haven't noticed you offering Margo any covering. She's as bare are can be, and you kept her bare throughout her captivity with you." The male voice became sternly demanding. "Bea, stop being silly – take off your clothes."

Bea was lovely. She would grace Rossland as did all the other inmates. Her figure needed no apologies. Admiringly, Margo wondered at her hesitation. Margo reproved herself for her own lack of shame in being nude. She had become so accustomed to it that she was no longer aware.

She realized what she witnessed now was a heart-searching, shattering of pride. Bea Maxwell would divest herself of not only her clothes but her dignity and her pride and self-respect. It was almost awesome to watch the lovely girl part with one garment after another until she stood as shamefully naked as Margo herself. She cupped her breasts in protective hands, but then, realizing the absurdity, allowed her arms to fall to her sides, revealing herself in total frontal nakedness. To the man, who had seen this before but never in the present context, Bea Maxwell was the epitome of femininity.

“The handcuffs, girl!” Henry Ross sounded impatient. “Damn it, you’re dawdling, girl. Put them on.” Bea retrieved both cuffs and key from the rug. She gazed at them with infinite distaste, then offered them to the man.

“Henry. I don’t know what to do with them. They’re beastly things and I don’t like them at all. Here, you put them on me, please.”

It was quickly done. Margo suspected that Bea’s quibbling had earned her one extra notch of tightness in the metal bands. The girl stood, examining her chained hands in wonder, almost in disbelief. She twisted and clinked them in hopeless exploration of restraint never previously worn. Bea looked at the watching man and sarcastically asked, “What now, master?”

Henry Ross laughed at his former secretary’s dolor. “Rossland, what else? You’re going to be taught a lesson or two. The first of which is a ride in the trunk of my car. I’m told it’s most disagreeable. Margo can sit beside me as I drive.”

“Oh, Henry, don’t be such a pig! If you’re going to be so mean, I think I’d sooner go to prison.”

“Look here, Bea. I’m being patient.” The master’s voice sounded weary. “I can understand this is a transition for you but as of now, let’s stop these exclamations and questions. You simply must go and you will.” He chuckled, “Look upon yourself as a little girl going back to school.”

On the journey back to Rossland, Henry Ross had little to say. He seemed preoccupied and Margo, beside him on the front seat, doubted it had anything to do with the unhappy maiden firmly fastened in the trunk. When she asked him, he shrugged and said, “I’m wondering what to do with you.

I think I'll forget the idea of the apartment – it leaves you too exposed. This fool affair with Bea is a message for us. I've never had to think about kidnapping before. I have no close family, but with you – well, if I set you up, you'd simply become a profitable target. For the time being, you'd best go back to Rossland. You may amuse yourself exerting your mistress status upon the little lady in the trunk. Don't hesitate to mark her up. She deserves it."

"But she was kind to me. That is, as kind as anyone can be to a kidnapped girl. I'm not sure I can?"

"Certainly you can. I order you to. Never mind Bea. We were talking about you."

"Wouldn't it be best if you just gave me back my freedom? I wouldn't expect any money, and it need not be the end of our knowing each other." Struck by sudden inspiration, Margo said, "You're going to need a secretary, so how about me?"

"No. There would be too many tongues wagging. You'd be bombarded by questions." He drove awhile in brooding silence. "There's something else I'm thinking about in regard to you. I haven't figured it out yet. You'll have to give me time. And anyway, it's no big deal, except to give you a change of pace and scene."

He laughed at her curiosity. "You probably haven't realized it but you're a tempting morsel to a lot of people. The face of your being at Rossland and being with me makes you doubly potent. I have to watch what I expose you to. The one safe place is Rossland."

Margo shrugged in silence. Beneath the blanket thrown carefully around her shoulders, she fingered the handcuffs.

Evidently, she was not to lose them yet. There were times when she wondered if she even wanted to lose them. This was one of them.

Henry Ross was a man who made things happen. He was a force. It was good too belong to him. He was what girls expected of husbands but rarely got. She hotly denied to herself his prowess in bed had anything to do with her sentiments. Rossland enveloped her again as though she had never been absent. Most of the inmates did not know she had. They had not missed her. But one intensely interested female was Mildred Harridance.

Henry Ross had no sooner seen Bea Maxwell safely installed in a prison call than he departed on the eternal business of the male. Mildred lost no time in summoning to her office the object of her curiosity. Margo thought how silly people were to become too attached, so deeply immersed in almost anything, no matter how bad it was, she was finding it now, in the return to Rossland. Her mistress' tunic seemed to fit her more snugly and flatteringly than before. Its band around the middle was distinctly becoming, and she wore it with some pride. She was beginning to feel now that she had earned it. Feminine fineries were denied beneath any girl's tunic at Rossland. In fact, there was little room for them. Her nipples were again excited under the friction of the frock. Her still red bottom blushed shyly and unseen only a few tantalizing inches above her hem. A pair of new shoes went along with this authoritative attire. Margo Davis was not even handcuffed. She felt as though she owned the whole establishment.

"All right, honey, sit down and let's have the whole damn thing." Mildred Harridance was obviously pleased to see

her back. In a way, they had become companions rather than prisoner and wardress. The older woman who bore the same welts as Margo quietly listened to what was, after all, an account of a brief adventure. When it was told, she spoke.

“I’m glad to have you back. I need someone like you here. You are a buffer. Did you know you’re being made custodian of this silly Bea Maxwell bitch?”

“I don’t want to be mean to her. She wasn’t mean to me at all. I’m afraid I feel a bit sorry for her.” Margo made a hopeless gesture with free hands. “Her only trouble is the same as mine. She wants a lot of money, and she saw a way to get it. It was a different way than what I took, but essentially, we’re not that different.”

“That may be true.” Mildred smiled grimly. “But you know Henry Ross. He wants the little biddy’s ass properly warmed. In fact, if you sat her on a hot stove, I think he’d approve. After all, she did betray him.”

“This custodian bit?” Margo was curious but not enthusiastic. “What does it mean exactly? Do I keep an eye on her while I go about my usual affairs, or is it something far more personal and serious?”

“Henry Ross was emphatic. You are to give Bea Maxwell a real hard time. She’s safe in a cell now and scared to death.” Mildred chuckled. “Since a girl has only so much skin, you’re a bit limited how to use the cane and the whip on her. But let’s say you’d do well to use what skin she’s got. Henry Ross is going to be looking for the marks. It goes without saying that you’ll keep her naked.”

“I wish you’d give the job to some other girl, or do it yourself.”

“Look, sweetheart, what I don’t see, I really don’t have to know. If you want to get a bit of help with thrashing those parts of Bea Maxwell that embarrass you, go ahead. I’ll never know. But don’t you ever dare allow her within a mile of escape.”

“How could I? I can’t escape myself, let alone help somebody else. She’ll probably think of something. In the meantime, Margo, there’s something you can do for me.”

Margo knew instantly. This was a return to duty with a vengeance. Without concern, she asked, “Here or in the bedroom?”

“What the son of a bitch did to me has made a fix in my mind,” Mildred mused pensively. “I can see how people get hung up on something like that. But I constantly see you there between my legs, your hands helpless behind your back and your busy little mouth eating away at me as though you hadn’t had food in a week. I’m going to recreate that, with just one or two small changes.”

“I would have thought that would have been hateful to you. Not me, of course, but what he did to you while I was… well, doing what I was told. It will be different this time, sweetheart. To begin with, your hands won’t be cuffed behind. They’ll be cuffed in front, and it will be I who hold the whip and use it.” Mildred laughed a full mated exhalation of amusement. “I’ll use it to spur you on to greater effort and to keep you on the bit. An amusing variation, don’t you think?”

“Oh, Mildred, I’m not a bit sure.” “I’m still headmistress. Henry didn’t say a thing about equality.” The headmistress smiled fondly. “Are you going to make me pull rank?” It all seemed natural, inevitable, and exciting. Once more, Margo was imbued with the sense of coming home. In the presence of this woman, Henry Ross was fading from her mind. Margo knew herself terribly torn between two loyalties and saw herself as a welding inasmuch as when in the presence of one, she forgot the other. But when she threw aside the coverings from her nakedness and held out her arms for the handcuffs she could not deny a tremendous thrill and a sudden concupiscence. Mildred was already nude and panting. She held a whip Margo had not seen before, a clever little horror of several thongs. She realized it was designed to excite them both. She knelt between the well-spread thighs, raised her joined hands to grasp Mildred’s still-welted flesh, and began her ministrations avidly. The lash swept down to sear one of her bottom cheeks. She squealed into Mildred’s flesh and worked harder than before. Her own femaleness brilliantly aflame. The little whip was pure magic.

Bea Maxwell was a sorry sight. Someone had crossed her wrists behind her back and bound them tight and then performed the same unkind service with her ankles. She was quite helpless and could only flounder around like a fish out of water. She’d obviously been doing exactly that, for she was flushed and moist and angry. She viewed Margo through the bars with a mixture of thankfulness and resentment. Her first words reminded Margo of herself once long ago.

“Get me out of here. Margo, this is ridiculous. I’m tied up as though I were dangerous. And on top of that, I’m locked up

in a cell I couldn't get out of in a hundred years." Her exclamations trailed away into silence. She was obviously thinking hard before coming out with, "But I suppose this is the way it is. I'm here to be punished. These ropes I'm tied with, they're a punishment, and this damn cell is a punishment too. But I bet the school doesn't think so. I bet the Academy is just considering me as getting nicely started."

"That's about it." Margo searched for solace to offer, but could think of none. Her own mission and status relative to Bea was something she was not yet ready to speak of. Instead, she asked, "Would you like me to come in there with you for awhile?"

Bea stared at her in amazement. "You mean you've got a key?"

"Yes, I'm afraid I have. You see, I'm…" "Unlock the damn door, for God's sake! Then use the one that gets us out of the building, and we'll go home. If Henry tries this on me a second time, it won't be him who'll go to the police – it'll be me. Hurry up."

"I'm afraid you're still working on your first kidnapping. The only door I can unlock is this one. There's no way you or I can get out of this building. Forget it."

"You've got rank here?"

"Well, sort of." Margo was still trying to think of a way to explain her undesired and unsought office. "I'm supposed to be looking after you, and in Rossland, that means I keep you tied up, chained up, and probably whipped. I'm terribly sorry."

“You’re sort of a trusty now, eh?” Bea sounded fretful as Margo used her key and then untied the captive’s ankles. “I call that a pretty fast promotion.” Margo sighed and grappled with the knots. Bea, because of what she had once been, would probably be a handful, and unless she was properly broken in, she would find it difficult to adjust. Breaking in Bea was something Margo had no wish to do. Looking at the strained nudity upon the cot, she noted a particular curve of her breast and her concave tummy most alluring. Had the two of them been less absorbed with problems, it might have been entrancing to.

But Margo cast the thought aside. She was involved enough already with Mildred Harridance, and God knows what Henry Ross might still demand of her. By nightfall, she might be thrashed and ravished once again. Her glimpse of freedom had been brief and might well be disastrous. She cast the rope aside and said brightly, “There, is that better?”

“It’s better for my feet. What about my hands?” “They stay tied, darling. Please do try and be patient and understand that you’re in Rossland, not back at the office.” “Good gosh! How could I forget?” Bea was busily exercising her free feet. When she spoke again, her tone had softened. “I’m sorry I’m talking like a bitch, Margo, but this is hard to take. It’s all so new. Prison wouldn’t be half this hard on a girl.” She twisted her bound arms fretfully and wriggled constrained shoulders before hastily asking, “Do you think I’m guilty? Do you think I deserve this?” “Yes, I do.” Margo hoped she was being patient. “What you did was a damn fool act by any standards. Just because you knew me and Henry Ross didn’t give you any license to kidnap anybody, least of all me. Don’t you realize what a mean, petty response you were showing the man who employed you?”

Margo managed a mild chuckle. “If it were not I who had to punish you, I’d say, sure, you deserve it. But, Bea, I don’t know what I’m going to do with you. I honestly don’t.” “Well, first of all, you can untie my hands,” Bea suggested briskly. “Why are they tied with these cords anyway when they’ve got all these handcuffs and things?” “Cords hurt more and give you less freedom.” “You think I don’t know?”

“Bea, you must not be too shocked, but you’re going to get your bottom caned, and I’m the one who has been assigned to do it. I wish I were not the one, but I can’t get out of it. I really do not want to do it.”

“Well, don’t do it then! Can’t you paint some lines on my behind with lipstick or something? Nobody’s going to examine me with a magnifying glass – are they?”

Margo sighed. Bea was going to be a problem. She was far more a prisoner of Rossland than any other girl, including herself. Bea was here purely for punishment and imprisonment. There was no parental motive, nor cash at the end of the lien. The length of her sentence had not been named. At this moment, even while they talked, Bea was busily twisting her bound hands as though still under the illusion she could free herself. It was then that Margo had an inspiration. She locked her captive in and went in search of Penny Pendleton.

The nymphet was delighted. Her eyes shone and she wriggled in the prospect of bliss.

“Oh, Margo darling, you mean I can have a whole grown-up girl just for me? Is she really all grown up? I mean, her breasts and everything are fully developed?” The teenager

sighed in prospect. “Just think, Margo – a whole grown-up girl to whip. You did say I could whip her, didn’t you? I’d suggest the cane to begin with since this is all a bit of a shock for the poor dear. What did she do to get in dutch? I bet she refused to sleep with Mr. Ross. Was that what it was?” Bea was standing in the center of her cell, still busily twisting her bound hands. She spared Penny a glance of disfavor and complained, “Margo, you shouldn’t exhibit me to children. This girl is hardly well, anyway, she’s not old enough to see naked women.”

“Isn’t she simply gorgeous?” Shiny eyed, Penny entered the cell to survey her new responsibility. She made a complete circle of the nude and annoyed Bea Maxwell and once more turned to her mentor.

“Oh, Margo darling, is she really and truly all mine?” Bea stopped struggling. She glared at the girl she had so recently kidnapped and demanded, “What does this child mean I’m all hers! Look, this girl is far too young.” “The poor dear’s shy, that’s her trouble,” Penny said with youthful wisdom. “I’ll take my clothes off too, then she’ll feel better.” She giggled. “It doesn’t take long.” A moment later she stood nude and explained seriously to an outraged Bea Maxwell, “You see, I’m not nearly as nice as you are. I don’t have all the lovely things. Mine are still a bit small, and I haven’t got as much hair as I hope to have one day.” She turned to Margo. “Keep an eye on her, darling, while I dash off for a collar and leash.” “What the devil is she talking about?” Bea stood in outraged nakedness and resumed the twisting of her wrists, but her eyes were now riveted accusingly on Margo.

But the girl who was now her keeper stemmed the floor before it started.

“Bea, stop worrying. Penny’s a darling, and she’ll look after you beautifully. I know you will be humiliated because she is just a teenage, but she knows all about everything. She’s more a part of Rossland than the furniture. I’m delegating your punishments to her. I just don’t want to punish you. But you must be punished, so Penny Pendleton is the one to do it.”

“Look, I don’t want any damn teenage slashing away at my bottom with a cane!”

“Bea, stop beefing! You’re in a jam, and I’m just doing my best. Anyway, I turned things around for you here at Rossland. It’s going to hurt. It’s going to hurt your dignity, your bottom, and your back. For Pete’s sake, resign yourself to it.”

Bea stood as though stunned while nimble young fingers fitted the collar on her neck and clicked it tight. From it trailed a sufficient leash for Penny’s needs. The outraged young woman had considered kicking Penny squarely where it would hurt most, but was deterred from this noble thought by sight of the cane held ostentatiously for her attention. Nothing was said, but everything was understood. In triumph, Penny led her captive from the cage. Reaching their designation, Bea looked around the austere room and demanded belligerently, “What’s this, the torture chamber?”

“Isn’t she a darling?” Penny giggled appreciatively. “She comes up with the cutest things. I can’t wait to hear what she has to say when I cane her bottom.”

Margo was feeling surplus to the occasion. Boa was completely helpless, and Penny was well on top of the situation. The youngster had already checked the bindings on her captive's wrists, since she would take no chances. But when the mistress suggested, "I'll leave you two together," and then turned to leave, Bea's reaction was instant.

"Margo, please don't go. Don't leave me with this young twerp. I'm scared of what she'll do to me."

"You see!" Penny was delighted. "She knows I'm going to cane her ass, and she wants you here to make sure I don't do it too hard." She turned to her captive and admonished, "You're so silly. With Margo watching, I'd have to cane you much harder, because she's a mistress and will expect only the best."

The captive with the bound hands sniffed in disdain. She could think of nothing devastating enough to say. She was becoming increasingly aware of a helplessness and impending doom. Her glance at Margo was imploring to the point where Margo decided to stay and watch. Penny's insouciance would carry the thing off in a manner of obviate embarrassment. She smiled and shrugged at the unhappy victim and grinned at the waiting girl.

"Go ahead, Penny. She's all yours." Margo reproved herself silently for a certain feeling of tremendous zest. Bea was probably 26, compared to Penny's 16. The decade wide gap was bitterly humiliating to the older of the two. It was widened by Bea's former authority and her close association with the master of Rossland, whereas Penny was nothing but a nymphet consigned to the Academy by outraged parents. Now the woman was to be punished by the girl! Margo could understand and sympathize, but that was

all. Feeling like a bitch, she got herself a chair and made herself comfortable. The nymphet with the cane was in charge from the beginning. She led her dubious prisoner to the whipping bench and sweetly invited her to drape her person upon it. Bea's retort was predictable, and so was her youthful wardress's response.

The cane flashed, Bea yelped, and even as the scarlet line proclaimed itself on virgin skin endeavored to turn and flee, only to be dragged back by the implacable leash in the young strong hand. As though imparting amazing information, Bea exclaimed, "That hurt! It hurt something awful. Don't you ever do that again."

There was an engaging quality of innocence about the young woman who had just received her first cut from the cane. Corporal punishment had been entirely absent from her life, her thoughts, her conceptions. For several moments, she stood glaring at her companions, then abruptly demanded, "What is it you want me to do? Show me again."

To strap and buckle down the feminine curves was a task Penny Pendleton undertook with relish. Watching her, Margo realized the excitement in the girl. She realized too the female perplexity of the owner of the female curves. Miss Bea Maxwell was entering a world which she had only previously guessed but never quite believed.

Penny's choice of a method by which to restrain the former secretary while the caning of her bottom took place was shrewd. She could hardly have picked any implement or posture more shaming. The bench was on two levels. The victim knelt on the lower one and then bent forward to drape her body across the larger surface above. An arm

went down each side, and her hands were securely strapped. Another strap circled the waist and was cinched quite cruelly tight. The resultant effect was to protrude and raise the twin curves to be caned into a delightful prominence. There were straps also for knee hollows and ankles. But the most shaming facet of the whole design was the half circle into which Bea's neck frantically fell as she was pushed into position. No sooner was it neatly in place than the top half of a stock was pushed over on its hinge to totally encircle the lovely neck in a yoke of wood. The effect of this was not only to immobilize but to rob the unfortunate girl of any vision of what was taking place at her rear. Her view was restricted to the floor below to brief, sharp glances to either side, revealing little.

For all her youth, Penny was an artist in control and an expert at punishing young ladies. Having been punished herself in every imaginable severity and posture, she was enriched by painful memories she could now put to good use. Bea was in the hands of a past mistress in the skill of caning feminine bottoms. Penny circled her victim, tightening a strap here and another there, until the flesh bulged around each leather strap. She now gently pumped the lever which thrust again Bea's pubic patch to further raise and stretch the already taut spheres on which were emblazoned a perfect scarlet weal.

"Stop it! You're breaking my back!" Bea strove desperately to look back at what might be happening to a portion of herself over which she had lost control. Her cinched waist was taking the stress of the upward thrust within her loins. Her figure was becoming exquisitely arched and curved in an exaggeration of every feminine feature. Margo herself watched. Bea's derriere was thrust and molded into a

prominence beyond anything in preparation for punishment. A bottom thus curved and bent would absorb the cane with twice the agony of the conventional “bend over and touch your toes.” Penny had achieved genius in her delineation of a delinquent derriere.

The teenager was in rapture. Her victim was not. Penny once more circled the strapped-down nudity and intently patted portions thereof. It was inevitable that she come to the close clasped thighs between which a black tendril coyly proclaimed itself, along with a pair of plump lips, which could scarcely fail to share in the impacts of the cane. Coyly, Penny reached down and gripped a single hair between a thumb and finger, and slowly pulled.

“Stop it! You’re not supposed to do that! Margo, stop the little bitch. What she’s doing is too much!”

“She’s simply plucking a hair, Bea. That’s all. You can spare one little hair, can’t you? You’ve got a really luxurious bush.”

“Don’t be horrid! And I hope you realize I’m breaking in two. I can’t see, and I’m sure I look disgusting. Margo, please make her undo these straps.”

Margo sighed. Being a mistress was not all that much fun. Patiently, she explained, “Darling, you’re in Penny’s care now, and Penny won’t pay any attention to any of these things you’re saying. I think you’re in one of those situations where a girl simply just has to grin and bear it.”

The exuberant nymph did not deny herself the pleasure of the preparatory motions and sounds. She swished the cane to make it sing its unkind song with a high, whining note of promise. She rapped the waiting bottom experimentally, as

though to gauge the distance. Watching the act, Margo could not help but think of ripened melons which split open under the rapping of knuckles.

Her neck firmly secured by the yoke, Bea was striving fruitlessly to turn and see the origin of the sensations now felt. Her hands tugged as fruitlessly at the straps as they had previously twisted at the ropes. She felt much abused and was desperately afraid.

The blow was swift and sure, and the sound of the cane on female flesh was as potent as ever. Margo winced in sympathy. The strapped down limbs and torso did not move. But the yoked head twisted frantically from side to side while Bea screamed and screamed while every emotion strove for ascendancy. In the gasping aftermath of the first stroke, the second stroke impacted its own exquisite mark on virgin skin. Bea's scream was cut off halfway through by her own determined control to say something she was convinced needed saying.

"I can't bear it! It's too awful! You absolutely must stop! Don't hit me again! Don't you dare!"

"They all say that," Penny explained kindly. "I remember saying it once myself." Joyously, she swung the cane once more.

Margo was aware of a new, enhanced status. The whisperings of Rossland's underground had become aware of the special attention of the master and a more intimate relationship with the mistress. She was no longer punished except for whatever might happen behind the closed doors of the headmistress or headmaster's study. Penny basked in reflected glory.

For Bea, it was very different indeed. She felt the weight of Rossland upon her person in much the same way as she would have felt the authority of a federal penitentiary. But she saw the bright and ebullient Penny as the unkindest cut of all. She would have preferred her punishment at the hands of an older girl or from Margo. Penny might be a sweetheart some, but to Bea she was literally and metaphorically a pain in the ass. Even though Margo had made up her mind to stay away from her prisoner as much as possible, she constantly had to combat curiosity with the result that she usually ended up examining the former secretary through the bars of her cell. In this first instance, she discovered Penny's mischief in leaving her charge upon the cot with both handcuffed wrists and ankles intertwined with hands and feet in such proximity there was little their owner could do but glare at anyone who came into view. She did so now.

"Margo, look what the little bitch did to me! I can hardly do anything. And then after she'd done that awful thing to me with that horrible cane, she left me strapped to that beastly bench for goodness knows how long. My poor bottom – I thought I'd die!"

It was vintage Bea. There would be much more of it before the day of her release. Margo was aware of inadequacy in the striving for the rational.

"But, darling, you do realize you are here to be punished, and that's what Penny is doing. Believe me, she won't be a bit harder on you than any other mistress – maybe not as bad." She shrugged and motioned helplessly. "If I took on the job, I'd feel I'd have to be really and truly severe with

you just to prove I wasn't playing favorites. It's much better this way."

"My bottom is flayed."

"Well, not really, darling. At the moment, you're sitting on it and?"

"That's because it's too horrible to lay over on my side. I tried that too. You have no idea what a rotten way this is to be handcuffed!"

"Well, you didn't like the rope." "I don't like any part of this. Be a darling and undo something for me, preferably either my hands or my feet." "Sorry, Bea, but I can't possibly interfere with Penny's authority. I've given her the job. You and she will have to get along." "How in the devil can I get along with a child who delights in caning my ass!" Bea contrived an infinite indignation into the exclamation. "The little so-and-so says I must stay like this until she's ready to punish me some more. Margo, tell her this is a punishment. This right now is a punishment. I don't need anything else." Margo felt guilty in slipping away leaving the delinquent secretary helpless behind bars. Bea was best left alone in her present mood. The poor girl had far to go, yet might not become amenable to reason until she had been more vividly striped and more uncomfortably restrained. For Margo, her kidnapping had been forgotten. She would happily have allowed the delinquent to go free.

But Bea was a side issue in Margo's involvement with Rossland. Penny would look after the delinquent in good order, which left the captive mistress with time on her hands. It was at this juncture that she received the summons to the

headmistress's office. She no longer approached the sacred door with the old trepidation.

What Mildred Harridance had to say was like the beginning of a repetitive dream.

"You're habit forming, Margo. I want you. I don't want you wandering around this place and involved with other girls. I want you for myself. At this moment, I want to use a cane on you so damn bad."

It was no surprise. Margo was amazed within herself at how little impact the words now had. They seemed entirely natural and normal in the extravagances at Rossland. Quietly, she said, "Very well. Do you want me to raise my dress and bend over, or would you like the full treatment with me naked and tied?"

"Sweetheart, do you need to ask? Off with that tunic – quick!"

If it was not the delinquent, Bea, then it was herself in this exuberance of eroticism. The girl who now divested herself of the mistress's tunic freely admitted to an incandescence burning within her sex. It might almost be a relief to receive the catharsis of the cane. Margo knew for sure of her own bewilderment and divided loyalties. When outside the room, she had a tremendous longing for the maleness of the master. But here, safely within the feminine sanctuary, it felt good to be alone with this woman who was about to give her pain. She gave up trying to think things out and simply asked, "Do you wish to do it here, Mildred, or shall we go to one of the rooms?"

Being seen on the way to punishment mattered little to Margo. It was well within the context of life at Rossland.

She was simply a junior mistress who Mildred Harridance desired to cane. There was nothing odd about that, was there? Reaching the chosen room, she simply asked, “How would you like me, Mildred?”

With urgent emotions, the headmistress stripped, then locked the door, her arms engulfing the girl she was about to punish. Her breath was hot on Margo’s cheeks, their breasts intertwined and frictioned in amorous contact, all four outrageously demanding. Their nipples flint hard and pleading.

“I want all of you, Margo. I’m so damned excited and hungry, I could do without the cane, but I’m not going to. I want every bit of you. Do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand.”

The simple ritual was, quiet and in total accord.

“Do whatever you want with me, Mildred. Make me do whatever pleasure you. I want to be compelled. I want to know I am in the power of a headmistress.”

Margo was uncertain how it happened. It did not matter. But seemingly, without volition, she found herself standing erect, her arms outstretched, her wrists solidly locked in the stocks, which had no other function than to hold a girl at arm’s length while she was whipped. It was delightfully simple. Mildred dived beneath and between the outstretched locked arms to come up to where she could once more possess the willing lips and clasp her victim breast to breast. She held the pinioned girl a long, long time before slipping away to pick up the yellow cane.

Margo had never enjoyed her communion with the cane. No matter who wielded it, it hurt. But now it was different. She could not define the difference, perhaps it was the posture in which she simply stood to receive her punishment. It was less demeaning, less shameful than the strapped or bound postures by which her skin could be stretched to ultimate tautness. Except for the grip of wood upon her wrists, she was as free as the woman with the cane. But that grip held her totally. Surprisingly, she had no wish to break free of it. With agony lacing the twin tenderness of her derriere, she found her heat not lessening, but flaring in a tremendous incandescence she could not control, nor the whip subdue. When it blossomed into orgasm, after many strokes, the headmistress flailed the innocent erotic flesh in a frenzy, a crescendo of shared feeling. Her orgasm matched that of a girl who had lost her hands. Mildred tossed away the cane and clasped the damp nakedness in hungry arms and worked feverishly at placing a hickey on the innocence of a maiden neck. Without striving, they had created something beautiful.

Margo was not set free. She did not want to be set free. But stood with outstretched arms and clasped wrists to allow herself to be enveloped in dreams, entering a fantasy world entirely her own. When, an hour later, Mildred returned, she found her junior mistress still dazed and bemused, not visibly anxious for release. The older woman leaned against the stocks which held her loved one's hands and asked, "Darling, what are we going to do?"

Out of Margo's dreams had come only compromise. She shrugged. "Don't let's do anything," she said softly. "You've got me here at Rossland. Simply send for me any time you

have the opportunity. I'll always be available." She grinned ruefully. "I can't escape."

"Sure, that'll work fine for awhile. Then what about Henry Ross? He's bound to find out."

"What can he do?"

Margo wriggled the burning bottom she could not touch.

"But couldn't we look on that simply as the price we have to pay for having each other?"

"We might get by with that once more. I'd pay the price willingly enough, but the master won't give us another chance. He'll take you away or fire me. I couldn't get you up in an apartment the way he can. With all his money and power, he'd snatch you out of it in no time." The headmistress shrugged and made a motion of disgust.

"There is a way we might prolong our relationship indefinitely. I suspect you can guess."

"You mean if you don't use a cane or whip on me. Then there would be no marks." Margo grinned. "The other thing we do doesn't leave any telltale marks. And I bet he figures we do it anyway. After catching us once, he's not going to really believe we won't touch each other again."

They left it at that. Released, Margo went in search of Penny Pendleton and Bea Maxwell. She found the prisoner in her cell. Bea was standing on one foot, her hands tied behind her back and her leg raised to place her ankle on the crosspiece in the bars. There it was tightly bound in front of its owner's face. Bea could survey as long or as often as she liked, but she could not touch it, and she could not free

it. She was simply forced to stand upon one foot and wait for someone to come along. As usual, she was extremely verbal.

“Look what the little snippet’s done to me now!” Ruefully, she invited Margo’s inspection. “I couldn’t do a thing. Honest, not a damn thing. She had that beastly cane, and every time I hesitated, she gave me another stroke with it, and she isn’t a bit fussy about where it lands. Look at the marks I’ve got.”

Margo looked. She thought it best not to tell the owner of the marks how becoming they were and how amusingly attractive her ensemble was. Having stood on one foot herself on occasion, she was aware that no girl feels at her best in this situation. Bea was flushed, her hair was untidy, and her hands were busily engaged in their careless twisting of the cords. Catching a fleeting glance of amusement on Margo’s features, she exclaimed, “Go ahead and laugh! I’m going to tell Mr. Ross about you giving me to this little brat for her own amusement. I’m sure he never intended that I should be abused like this.” She glared, first at Margo and then at her bound and elevated ankle. “Just look at it! I mean, no girl should be subjected to anything like this. I bet it just wrinkles your pussy disgustingly. Such a posture.”

“You look very pretty, Bea, if you could only realize it. So does your pussy. So do those extra marks you’ve collected today. If you want to throw yourself on Mr. Ross’ mercy, you’ll find he has less of it than Penny Pendleton. Grin and bear it, darling. We all have to.”

Bea’s breasts were heaving, but she was suddenly contrite.

“I’m sorry I’m always blasting you, Margo dear. I know it’s not your fault. But now long is that idiot going to keep me in this nuthouse? He never told me, and I forgot to ask. If it’s a long time, wouldn’t I be better off if I give myself up to the police and take my chances?”

“You can’t even do that, dear,” Margo explained gently. “You’re a prisoner in Rossland – the master’s got you. He’s not going to give you to the police. The police might keep you prison a long time, but they won’t cane your bottom or do any of these quaint notions such as you are suffering right now. And these are what the master wants for you.”

“Piss on the master! I’ll master him, damn it – if I ever get out of here. Look, Margo, be a darling and untie my foot. I feel like such an idiot, standing like this. I’m getting so tired. Pretty please?”

It was hard to resist. Bea was a damn pretty girl, and in her present forlorn condition, immensely appealing. Margo’s flame, so recently appeased, flared anew at the sight of the shy, coy slit of Penny’s imposed punishment revealed. Were she not so beset with her own problems, it would be nice to take Bea Maxwell to a private place and work her will on her. But enough is enough. Perhaps, sometime…

Suddenly. Margo Davis remembered her class. It might be a diversion?

CHAPTER SEVEN

INEVITABLE CAPTIVE

The rank and file of Rossland tended to gather in classrooms simply for companionship, and if that mistress who had a subject they felt like teaching made an appearance, well and good. If not, it did not really matter. In this instance, Margo found a sufficient gathering to warrant her reviving English literature. In the light of all she now knew, it was moving to teach the motley crew of maidens who wandered around unclad or clad, chained or free, according to the whims of the institution. In such matters, the Academy was delightfully informal. She found such a gathering in her favorite room, and the girls were equally glad to put an end to boredom.

They choose their subject and were immediately involved when the door opened and Emaline Boskin joined the class. The latest recruit made a woeful addition to those present. Emaline was still in her two weeks of initiation and naked. Her hands were tied behind her back, but her most notable feature was the impudent clothespins bobbing up and down on her nipples. Whoever had placed them there had made an excellent job of their anchorage. They protruded and pointed from the two young breasts like cannons on a ship. When she saw Margo, her spirits improved greatly.

“Oh, Miss Davis, I’m so glad it’s you. I was told to come here and sit in the class just the way I was. I’m supposed to tell whoever is in charge that they mustn’t take these awful things off my tits. Oh, Miss Davis, I’m so ashamed.”

Emaline possessed a delightful quality of naive innocence. It was impossible not to feel sorry for her and share in her

dolor. Knowing the hurt of clothespins well, Margo was sympathetic to any unfortunate girl who had them affixed upon her rosebuds. But a cardinal rule of Rossland was that one mistress would never countermand the order of another, unless prepared to have a battle over protocol and hurt feelings, there was nothing she could do to aid poor Emaline in this present misfortune. However, she could most certainly be as kind as circumstances allowed. Her response was instant.

"We're so glad to have you, Emaline. I'm sorry I can't take those things off. Since you've been sentenced to them, you have to wear them. But to find a seat and take part in what's going on."

"But I'm not supposed to sit in the class, Miss Davis." Emaline was taking pleasure in bearing an infinite supply of bad tidings. "I'm supposed to stand up front and face the class so they can all see me and these terrible things I have to wear. Jeepers, Miss Davis, if you only knew how they hurt!"

Margo knew. So did most of the rest of the class. Few girls lasted long at Rossland without getting their nipples pinned. One or two malcontents had been reprimanded more severely by having gold or silver rings immovably implanted in their tender buds. It was not a widespread practice, since parents had to be consulted. It was discovered that most girls thus decorated were by no means shamed, but were instead immensely proud of their embellishments. Rossland had become cynical about punishment and was inclined to view the old tried and true caning of bottoms and whipping of backs as being hard to improve on. Pinned nipples were a small pleasantry often indulged

in as a sense of mischief. The wearer never shared the mischief or the enjoyment thereof, but everybody else did. It was so now with Emaline.

Whoever had bound the wrists of the unhappy maiden being punished had done a most excellent job. Margo could not avoid constant glances at the crossed wrists and the neatly bedded cords within their skin. They were tight enough that Emaline had given up any hope she may have cherished in freeing her hands. She allowed them to hang passively at her back without the twistings and turnings so common among maidens thus secured. She was blushing furiously and could not avoid constant glances down at the pins she could not dislodge. They tended to be bouncy and to vibrate with the least motion. She had evidently been told to stand still and stick out her chest for better effect. She obeyed this precept with noble but cheerful fortitude.

Margo had rarely punished a girl. She was well aware of the difficulty of maintaining authority among a group of girls when they were well aware the mistress herself was subject to the same or even worse penalties than they. She tested their credulity and tolerance as little as possible. However, she became well aware that one among her class was mocking and making sport of poor Emaline's condition. It was being done by impertinent caricatures with her own frontal equipment and by facial expressions and by the sticking out of a wet, pink tongue.

It was not long before the jokester was stealing the attention of the class and causing Emaline to be doubly aware of herself. In her own disturbed mood, Margo was irritated enough to call a halt.

“Sharon, out to the front, if you please.” Sharon was already in disfavor. She was naked, her feet shackled, and she made a familiar clatter when she walked. But she was an exhibitionist and quite prepared to suffer some mild penalty to gain the attention of others. No doubt, like most of the inmates, she was bored.

“Sharon, be good enough to get me two clothespins for yourself and also a pair of handcuffs. Run along.” Margo made her voice as stern as she could command.

It was easy to see Sharon was pondering the wisdom of disobedience, but she shrugged indifferently and went on her errand. It was not long before she was back, bearing her acquired items. She tried hard for a laugh by suggesting, in pretended innocence, “I don’t think you’ll enjoy wearing these, Miss Davis.”

Sharon got the laugh. She also got another stern reproof.

“That will cost you a stroke on each hand, Sharon.” Margo was suddenly proud of her ability to carry off the punishment of a girl who, in her own way, was no different from herself.

But Sharon tensed. Once more it was easy to watch the emotions flit across the young and lovely face. Should she thwart authority or take her medicine and hope for correction, and hope to capitalize on bravado! She chose the latter. Obediently obtaining a cane for her own hands, she knelt, she kissed it, and handed it to the now shy mistress. Sharon was evidently going to ham it up for all the part allowed. Again, in obedience to a stern demand, she knelt facing the class and extended her left arm to its limits, with the palm tightly offered for the cane.

Margo was suddenly aware of a racing pulse. She wished she had chosen the bottom instead of the hands. But it was too late now. No doubt, she and Sharon could carry off a single cut on each palm without too much commotion. She would measure distance with the glazed yellow cane when Emaline's pitiful voice interposed. "Please, Miss Davis, don't punish anyone on my account." She pleaded pathetically, with a sweetness all her own. "I'm sure Sharon didn't mean any harm. I expect she made fun of me because I look so silly. I feel terribly silly the way I have to stand here like this. Please don't punish her."

The plea drew a round of applause, some of it from hands joined by steel cuffs – applause to which Margo paid no heed. She felt certain her authority was at stake, and authority was an asset not lightly to be tossed away. She looked upon the open palm, and with a shameful zest, cut it in a swift sharp slash with the cane. It was quite possible Sharon had been faced with punishment of unknown duration or severity might have yielded a predictable response. But one stroke on each hand! It was a penalty worth bearing with all the evidence of unconcern. The class would be impressed, and so would this ridiculous new girl who it was fun to lampoon. With remarkable little emotion, she contrived to say, "Thank you, Miss Davis. You did that beautifully. May I offer you my other hand now?"

Margo knew that had she been a true mistress, she would have rewarded this impudence with a couple of extra strokes on each delinquent palm, but that was going too far. She gave Sharon the stroke on her other hand and watched the tremors and the hesitations of the punished girl. But Sharon got obediently to her feet and put her arms behind her back.

When her wounded hands were joined by steel, she once more strove for points. “Thank you, Miss Davis. You do everything so beautifully.”

By this time, the clipping of pins on impudent nipples could be viewed with pleasure and without guilt. Sharon had earned what she was getting.

She might be doing what she was from simple boredom, but she was nonetheless doing it. With considerable pleasure Margo ordered, “Stick your breasts out. Take a deep breath. I want your chest way, way out.” When she was obeyed, she carefully placed the hateful little demons on each trembling nipple and was obliged to give Sharon credit with accepting them with only the smallest of gasps and winces. She had her stand beside Emaline, facing the class in the same manner and then continued the lesson. When, at the end of the period, the class was dismissed and Sharon freed and sent on her way, Emaline remained. She did not ask to be relieved of the biting clips, but Margo was well aware of her most urgent wish. Laughing, and without preamble, the mistress removed the offending objects with a single swift motion which caused Emaline to yelp in agony and then indulge in a flood of gratitude tempered by concern as to what the other mistress might do or say.

“Don’t worry, dear. You wore those things long enough. If the other mistress gives you any trouble, please refer her to me.”

Margo was suddenly enjoying herself. She examined the bound bands, but told their owner they would have to stay as they were until whoever had tied them so neatly decided to remove the cords herself. Being bound was a fact of life at Rossland.

“But, Miss Davis, she keeps promising to do terrible things to me, and some of them I don’t think are a bit proper or decent.” Emaline viewed her savior with wide, beseeching eyes. “She’s not a bit nice – not the way you are.”

“What is she going to do to you, Emaline?” Emaline twisted uncomfortably. It was evident that she was truly shocked and reluctant to mention some of the things involved.

“Well, really, Miss Davis. They’re absolutely awful. The first thing she thought up was that I should sit on the horse. I’m not really sure how it works, but I have to sit on the edge of a plank, which is really cruel to my poor pussy, and I’m afraid it will injury it. I don’t think a girl should have her pussy injured just for punishment. Do you, Miss Davis?”

“She’ll probably never do it, Emaline. She’s just trying to frighten you. What else was there?”

“Well, I’m supposed to be hung up by my thumbs and left there for I don’t know how long. And I think I told you before she promised to whip me down there. I mean, on my… well, on my cunny, Miss Davis. That seems to me terribly rude.”

“She won’t do any of those terrible things, Emaline,” Margo assured the tearful maiden. “Look, if you want to break the chain of command, how would it be if I punish you? I know you don’t deserve any punishment, but you don’t have one coming. But if I did something mean to you, then she won’t bother. Would you like me to do something mean to you?”

“Oh yes, please!” Emaline was delighted. “I wish you would, and I won’t mind a bit what it is.”

“How would you like to spend the rest of the day and all night with someone who’s as cheesed off as you are?”

“Oh, I wouldn’t mind, not as long as you say so.” Emaline looked wistful. “But wouldn’t you like me to go bed with you? I wouldn’t mind a bit what you did to me. You could tie me up so I couldn’t move, just so long as I was beside you. That would be lovely!”

Margo was inclined to agree. Emaline was a delectable young package of potential female, as yet un-aroused. But she had other things on her mind. She simply took the girl by the hand and led her to where Bea Maxwell provided a predictable greeting. They found the former secretary in the pillory. “You absolutely must do something about this girl, Margo. She doesn’t know where to stop. Look at me now! This is ridiculous. This contraption belonged somewhere hundred of years ago… and I’m in it! That little biddy and her damn cane…!”

Margo patted the cheek which could not move under the two halves solidly locked in the oaken yoke.

“Darling, you look delectable,” she assured the unhappy prisoner. “I can hardly keep my hands off you.”

“You and everybody else!” Bea twisted unhappily within the confinement from which there was no escape. “Every trollop in the place has been feeling me up and pulling on my tits. They made me climax with their rotten little games, and all they did was laugh. I was so ashamed. Can you imagine what it’s like having a climax when you’re locked in a pillory?”

“Well, cheer up, Bea. I’ve got something for you. You do know Emaline, don’t you? When I’ve locked your ankles, I’ll let you out of there.”

“Lock my ankles? What the devil do you want to do that for?”

“So you don’t give me any trouble, dear. I’m going to fix you up in the most interesting way. There.” Margo made her voice honeysweet. “But you’re always so upset. It’s best not to give you an opportunity to argue or be difficult. Just a minute.”

Grudgingly, Bea, released from the pillory’s grip, conceded, “I suppose I ought to thank you. Well, all right then – thank you. I hated that thing. It was horrible to stand in that thing and feel such a fool.”

Bea stared down at the leg irons fastened on her ankles. “You really do carry things to extremes, Margo. Everybody in Rossland does. These horrible things you’ve just locked on me are some sort of police device, aren’t they? They’re intended for criminals.”

“Kidnappers are criminals, darling.” Bea blushed, but allowed herself to be led, along with Emaline, back to the little cell. Margo picked up something along the way. Upon arrival, she told Emaline to clasp her hands behind her back and stand still. And while the willing maiden did this, strapped around her middle the belt she had thoughtfully provided. It was a wide, heavy belt of leather, with straps and buckles on the sides. It came with padlocks.

Emaline surveyed this embellishment of her person with keen interest, particularly the straps on either side which

were obviously intended for a wrist or arm. She giggled and exclaimed, “You think of the nicest things!”

The mistress thoughtfully made everything nice and snug, then directed Emaline to lay on her back on the cot and open her legs. Her next order was to Bea.

“I want you to kneel between Emaline’s knees, Bea. Hurry up.” It was obvious Bea was thinking hard, weighing the possibilities of escape against the impediment of leg irons. She shrugged, but did as she was told, saying only, “Margo, please don’t be too much of a bitch with me. That kid with the cane has damn near worn me out.”

It was now very simple. Margo took an unwilling hand and forearm, and drew it down to insert it within the waiting strap at Emaline’s waist. The straps in the belt were vertical and not horizontal. She buckled it tight around the rebellious waist, then did the same service on the opposite side down to accommodate her strapped wrists. A padlock in the belt and a small one on each wrist completed the ensemble.

“There you are, Emaline. She’s all yours,” Margo said cheerfully.

“You can do what you like with her. If you grab a couple of handfuls of her hair, she has to do whatever you tell her.”

“You mean I could actually…”

“Look, Margo, this isn’t fair.” Bea turned an indignant face to the girl in charge. “Emaline can do anything she wants with me, but I can’t do a thing with her.”

“That’s right. I want you to think of the possibilities.” “I don’t have to think – I know. Look here, I don’t want to spend the night eating this thing that’s staring me in the face. This is absolutely bizarre. You’re being terribly unfair. Emaline’s got her hands. She can do anything she likes, and look at me!” “If you edge down and batten it, darling, you’ll find it’s very comfortable. You can go to sleep on Emaline’s thighs.” “Huh! You did say things, didn’t you? It looks to me as though I can rest my head on something else. I’m so close to it now, I’m picking up her scent.” Politely, Emaline asked, “Is it okay for me to move now?” She gazed down with interest at the woman who was fastened to her in a manner neither could evade. She giggled.

“Margo dear, do you really think I could or should do that? It would be such fun.”

“Sure. I give you permission. And don’t forget, you can stand up if you want. That will leave Bea kneeling between your legs. She can’t get up because the straps won’t turn. You two should really have a wonderful evening. I envy you both.”

“You can have my place then!” Bea said distractedly. “This is absolutely ridiculous, and I’ll never forgive you.”

“Yes, you will, dear. I bet Emaline tastes gorgeous. By morning, you’ll be ever so grateful to. Bye-bye now. I’ve got things to do.”

It was hard not to laugh as Margo looked back through the bars at the two females happily bewildered, the other angrily intent on escape. Bea had returned to her favorite sport of twisting and tugging, and was even using her mouth in a fruitless effort to free her hands. The mistress

locked the cell door and went to Mildred Harridance's office.

Mildred was on the phone. Listening, it was easy to guess the person on the other end of the line.

When the headmistress returned the receive to its cradle, she turned to the apprehensive Margo.

"Guess who," she disgustedly added. "That man's impossible." Dispassionately, Margo asked, "Which one of us is he hurting this time?" She sneered. "Or do we both get it in the neck?"

"It's you, honey, and I'm damned if I know what his game is. It's almost bedtime now, and he's coming here in the morning. But he's ordered the most outrageous thing – something I couldn't talk him out of." The headmistress looked appealingly at her favorite pupil.

"Darling, he's told me to strip you naked and hang you up by your wrists, and to leave you there until he comes."

They stared at each other in dismay. The thing spoken of would be a most terrible punishment. An hour of such travail would be enough for any girl. But all night!

Shocked, Margo asked, "But why? Did he give a reason? By morning, I'd be half dead."

"He knows that, and I know that. I'd been arguing with him a long time when you walked in. Margo, I'm simply not going to do it. I won't. It's too damn cruel."

"But, Mildred, your position here – everything you've worked for and everything you are!" Margo was stricken by their dilemma. "You'd best do it. I expect I'll survive."

“No, it’s too absurd.” Mildred was thinking swiftly. She stated the obvious: “If he isn’t coming until morning, the worst I need to do to you is get you up early and have you hanging there at his arrival. Leaving you suspended all night is just not in the cards. I won’t do it.” They discussed the pros and cons. Mildred’s thought was the obvious answer. Even that would impose terrific stress on the girl to be made naked and so ruthlessly punished. Unhappily, Margo asked, “Then what? Is he taking me away with him?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, Margo! What are we going to do?” It was a confrontation they had glimpsed. It had just fallen upon them sooner than they had supposed. They could only guess at the master’s intent.

“There’s no use going off the deep end,” Mildred mused cautiously.

“We’d best wait and see what he’s got up his sleeve. But I’ll be damned if I’m going to hang you up by your wrists all night. Look, I’ll tell you what we’ll do. I’ll bind your wrists all ready for the morning. I’ll use bandages – he won’t object to that. When we wake up, we can go right to the room. Damn it, it’s a poor choice, but the best we can manage.”

They went to bed, but it was a long time before they slept. They should have guessed. Mildred cursed herself for underrating the master’s shrewdness. It was 1:00 a.m. when the door to their bedroom was quietly opened and Henry Ross walked in. Once more, they were caught and confronted in guilt. Margo, naked, her wrists tightly bound with the elastic bandages in readiness for her early morning

suspension, sat up in a daze and looked into the face of doom. Mildred, equally naked, was no better prepared. The scene might have held some elements of humor for someone uninvolved.

“I’d have thought you would have more sense,” Henry Ross said with disgust. “I set a trap and you walked right into it. Damn it, you’re allowing those palpitating little slits between your legs to dictate your lives.” He glanced in amusement at Margo’s bound hands. “Well, well, all ready for an early start in the morning, eh! Everything is just the way I expected it would be. Really, you’re like a couple of kids.”

It would have taken Margo a considerable time to free her hands by means of her teeth. She did not bother. In the grip of a compulsion she could not name, she left the bed and went to the glowering man. She held up her fastened hands.

“All right, you’ve caught us. Now what are you going to do? Whatever it is, do it to me, but not to Mildred. You need Mildred. Rossland needs Mildred. It doesn’t need me.” Margo made a play with bandaged wrists before his eyes. “Look, Mildred has me all ready for you. Take me wherever you wish and hang me up as long as you want, if that’s what pleases you.” Contemptuously, she added, “I suppose you’ve got a male thing about seeing me suspended, and that’s the only way you’re going to get rid of it.”

Henry Ross paid little heed. With a single arm, he guided her to one side and went to the waiting headmistress of the Academy. His voice was abrupt.

“Turn around.”

It was sudden and abrupt. It was Henry Ross. Margo looked askance at the lovely figure of her naked mistress who now stood in shocked surprise, her hands cuffed behind her back. Neither woman had thought to protest, to argue, or to struggle. There was an inevitability about the whole thing which they could not deny Mildred was doubly angry.

“Henry, you son of a bitch! You always win!” She lowered her tone. “Henry, please?”

When Norma Boulter entered the bedroom, it was almost anticlimactic. The naked delinquents stared in dismay. Norma viewed them with interest. The president of Boulter Enterprises viewed the blushing nudities with intense pleasure.

Casually, she said, “Hello, Margo. I knew you’d be here. We’ll have a lot to talk about.”

She turned her attention to the older woman who was so much a facsimile of herself and said sweetly, “Miss Mildred Harridance, I believe. I’ve been waiting to meet you. It will give me immense pleasure to give you the thrashing of your life.”

Mildred was outraged. She turned her furious regard upon the smiling man. “Henry, you can’t do this! Get this woman out of here. I don’t want her looking at me naked, and if she thinks she’s going to thrash me, you’d better tell her she’s got another thing coming. Henry, unlock my hands and let me dress.”

“You are suitably attired now, my dear.” Henry Ross was unperturbed. “It is quite possible you will never be clothed again.”

He turned to Norma Boulter and asked, “Do you find her attractive? Would you wish to acquire possession?”

It was not Norma Boulter who answered his question. Mildred, white with fury said, “Henry, you bastard! You’re not giving me or selling me to this woman – you absolutely are not!” Mildred tore angrily at the steel bands upon her wrists. It was not an act in expectation of freeing herself, but simply motions of exasperation. Breasts heaving, she lowered her tone. “Henry, please…? Let Margo and me put something on, and then the four of us can talk about whatever it is you’ve got on your mind. There’s no need to exhibit me in front of this woman who I have never met.”

“Miss Boulter is considering purchasing you, dear. Please stop tugging at those handcuffs. You’ll chafe your wrists. You should know better than anybody you can’t possibly get free of them.”

He turned to his clothed companion and enquired affably, “Which one of them would you like to purchase?”

“Why not both of them? The subsidiary you’re trying to talk me out of should be a pretty big price for a couple of pretty little pussies,” Norma Boulter laughed, feeling herself in charge of the situation. “You can well spare them. The way I hear it, this whole building is full of palpitating little twats, all awaiting your attention. Damn it, man, you could well spare these two. A pair like these will be well suited to that new place I built.”

Henry Ross slowly admitted, “In the meantime, let us go to more room. I wish to demonstrate the qualities of what I’m selling. Come along.”

Margo felt herself swept along in a tide controlled by others. It would be silly to try to free her hands. She didn't bother. Mildred disgustedly did as she was told. The four of them made their way in a curious procession to a destination Margo suspected boded two of them no good. She was right. Within a couple of minutes, she was standing naked with her bandaged wrists held high above her head, but not suspended. She had a sense of being put on hold.

Next, Mildred Harridance was collared and tethered to the wall to compel her to stand in frustration for whatever might befall her. There was now about Henry Ross an air of fulfillment, of purpose achieved. He turned his full attention to the amused and interested president of Boulter Inc. But at that moment, Norma Boulter was more interested in the two members of her own sex so interestingly displayed, presumably for her approval.

"I'd like to whip them one at a time, Henry," she quietly suggested quietly. "Their behavior under punishment may aid me in deciding which one to take." She bestowed an austere smile upon all present. "My, my, I'm getting so rusty in this matter of punishment since I passed Margo along to you. I should never have done it. I should have kept her. She is a jewel."

Henry Ross had divested himself of his coat and tie. He now stood before the watching females in slacks and an open-necked white silk shirt. About him was a tremendous air of purpose. Quietly, but with tremendous relish, he purred.

"There's a little matter between you and me. We are not going to whip or cane either of those delicious creatures you are enjoying. We are first of all going to cane your bottom

and then whip your back. In short, I am going to give you a sound thrashing."

Norma Boulter regarded her host as though he had lost his senses. His statement had failed to register simply because it was not within her scope of possibilities that the president of Ross Enterprises and sundry other lesser institutions should aspire to cane the bottom of the president of Boulter Inc. This was fantasy – beyond comprehension. She laughed it away, but her laugh held a trace of nervousness. "You men! You must have your little jokes! I think I prefer the thin yellow cane and I will start with your Miss Harridance. I have already caned dear little Margo many times, so she takes second place today."

"Hold it! Hold it!" Henry raised an admonishing hand. He was becoming more and more the master by the minute.

Margo began to feel sorry for the woman who remained dressed and probably faced the ordeal of her life. She and Mildred could offer no aid whatsoever. Norma Boulter was entirely at the mercy of the male.

"I mentioned something, Norma. You appear to have failed to listen."

"Oh, I heard all right. But, Henry, that's pure nonsense. I don't like to be spoken to in that fashion before subordinates."

Henry Ross positively glowed. "Nonetheless, I can give you an option. Will you quietly remove all your clothes or must I do it for you?"

"Don't be ridiculous. If you're going to talk such nonsense, I will call the whole deal off and leave immediately."

“You can’t leave immediately. All the doors are locked. You’re going to have to see this one through, Norma. Come along now – strip or be stripped!”

“That is not a question worth answering. If you think for one minute I’m going to take off my clothes to amuse you.”

“I do indeed think exactly that. But perhaps I should point out to you, my dear, the advantages of you removing your clothes yourself. If I remove them, they are likely to get badly torn, and they are all you’ll have to wear after I’ve had the pleasure of giving you the thrashing I have just described.” He grinned amiably and continued. “I prefer to strip you myself – really, I do. I mean, what man wouldn’t? But we do have to be practical about these things. I don’t want to send you home naked or in rags.”

Margo’s heart bled for the feminine tycoon. Never in her life had Norma Boulter faced so terrible a prospect, or been so helpless in dealing with it. But the fully clothed woman would not surrender easily.

Norma’s tone was almost derisive.

“You thrash me! You have to be nuts. I won’t say you’re not physically able. You are. But when I get back into circulation, I’ll tear you and your sad little corporation to shreds.”

Her words were brave, but her hand went defensively to the neck of her dress. She surveyed the two helpless nudities and no doubt saw herself in similar plight. But she had courage.

“You think you can subdue me, and maybe you can. But don’t be too sure of it. I’m not a weakling, you know. I’ll go for your eyes!”

“In this scene, I am the dastardly Desmond. I leave no act unfouled.”

Henry Ross laughed joyously at the intent concern upon his victim’s face.

“After I have given you the thrashing of your life and I do realize it is probably the only one you’ve ever had. I will give you an alternative. I can either start to thrash you a second time all over again, and I do mean all over. Or you can sign the documents by which I gain possession and control.”

“I’m sure this is not the first time a piece of property has not changed hands under similar circumstances.”

“You son of a bitch!”

For the first time, it was evident that Norma Boulter was taking the proposition seriously. She was glaring at her captor in disbelief. “You’ve this whole thing figured, haven’t you?”

“But the signature you obtain will not hold up in court. I’ll drag you through all the mud there is. Now unlock the door.”

“All right. I assure you, Norma, neither of these delicious creatures will say a word against me in court or anywhere else, for that matter. They are my property, body and soul.”

“Bullshit. You sure do fancy yourself. I’ll admit you’re a handsome bastard, and the girls do fall for you, but I’m no teenager.”

“You are of the marrying age. In fact, it is high time you got yourself a husband. I have been considering you as a wife

for some time, and now, perhaps, after I have you properly subdued."

The chair Norma threw at her tormentor was easily grasped and tossed aside. While she sought more ammunition, her wrist was grasped in a firm male hand. She was swung around, and another male hand sought the fastenings of her dress. Undaunted in the ensuing struggle, she contrived to give wounds with her spike heels for as long as she retained them. But she was flipped over on her back, and both shoes were removed with a gesture as contemptuous as the male could contrive.

Her panties followed. In the space of a couple of minutes, the mistress of the Boulter empire was on the floor, totally naked, breasts heaving, eyes glaring and hands beating ineffectually upon the rug, while her right foot was held comfortably in the air by male hands. The owner of the male hands was not even panting. Henry Ross was calm and completely collected, his voice suave.

"You see, Norma, the old battle between the sexes. The male will always win if he's got the guts. You girls don't have a chance. I am now going to suspend you in the same manner as I have Margo. I could immobilize you more totally, but I want to see you struggle, writhe, and kick. I want you to know that whichever way you turn, the cane or the whip will be waiting. You're going to find this a remarkable experience."

"You sound like a Victorian villain." Norma tried to roll this way or that, kicking ineffectually with her free foot. "If you think I'm going to stay still while you tie my hands, you've got another thing coming."

The man wasted no words. From his pocket, he drew the shining steel Margo knew so well. He tossed the handcuffs on the writhing belly of his victim.

Margo wondered if he would keep such a horrific threat. Norma wondered too, but a steadily increasing pressure on her small toe gave no time for speculation. She yelped in dismay and cried demandingly.

“Stop it! Oh, stop it! Damn it, you’re hurting me!” “It will hurt much more if it begins to break.” The distraught female on the floor sought for and found the shining steel. She grasped the handcuffs much as she might have grasped a life buoy in a ship wreck. Fumbling, she encircled her left wrist. She clicked it loosely closed and then complained.

“I can’t possibly do the other.” The master’s motions were swift and deadly. He released the foot and stooped to grasp the shining steel with which his victim was making ineffectual motions. Dragging up the partially imprisoned hand, he completed the necessary clicking motions to make the steel band tight on Norma’s left wrist. But to encircle its twin, it was necessary for him to kneel on the struggling female torso to gain the necessary control. But the end was predestined. When he stepped back from the recumbent female, Norma Boulter was looking in mute wonderment at joined hands, which she tugged and twisted as though to assure herself that what she beheld was true. Dazed, she got to her feet, rearranged her hair with hands forced to work in unison. Then she surveyed the impossible feminine task of covering two breasts and a patch of pubic hair with what was essentially only one hand. She was still harping on her favorite theme.

“Henry Ross, you’re going to be so damn sorry for this. I’ll break you to bits!”

“In the meantime, perhaps you’ll be kind enough to come over here.”

Henry Ross waved an inviting hand at a dangling rope and hook, its purpose all too clear.

“Damn you! You surely don’t imagine I’m going to neatly walk over there and stick my hands in that damn hook, do you? It was a dirty rotten trick you got these handcuffs on me! I’ve never heard of such a thing.”

“Care for another tussle, Norma?” Margo recognized the dilemma all too well. The eternal confrontation with male physical superiority was probably the most frustrating part of being female. It was do damned unfair.

The president of Boulter Inc. was evidently considering options in the same way she might have done behind the desk at her office. If she fought, she would lose.

She muttered savagely, “I hope you feel decently ashamed of what you are doing, Henry Ross. You’re behaving like a real bastard!”

Hating every motion, she obeyed the command, and a moment later, stood with hands high above her head, the metal bracelets cutting cruelly into her wrists. Her face was a study in shocked dismay and disdain.

Henry Ross stepped back to view his prize. It was indeed worth viewing. Norma Boulter, without her clothes, was an immensely attractive piece of female. Every bit of her was in its proper place and most abundantly proportioned.

However, her tummy was still taut as in youth, and now in her stressful and strained posture with arms held high, her rib cage pronounced itself in company with her agitated breasts. She was raising a still-free foot up and down, as though in search of suitable anchorage upon the floor. She had not been suspended, but the tension was tight enough to make her long for a firmer foothold upon the rug.

“You rotten son of a bitch! I’ll have your guts for garters over this!”

“There is another possibility. Seeing you naked as you now are reminds me you’re not a bad property yourself. I am quite seriously considering the project of marrying you.”

“Drop dead!”

“I have been thinking of marrying Margo.” “That little snippet!” Norma stared at him in rage. “You mean you prefer an immature little package of tits and twat to me? All she’s good for is bottom-caning.” Margo was prepared to make allowances, but felt she had been unkindly described. It was with feminine enjoyment of which she was partly ashamed that she observed Henry Ross select the cane and flex it appreciatively between two strong hands.

Other feminine eyes were focused on it too in a cringing interest they could not control.

“I take it you reject my proposal?” he inquired amiably. Norma Boulter was magnificent in a role she could not win. Her voice was icily contemptuous.

“I suppose I get a double of everything if I tell you I wouldn’t marry you if you were the only man?”

“Naturally.”

“Go ahead and do it then – and be damned with you!” “You’d probably make a rotten wife anyway, and I’m sure I’ll enjoy Margo much more.” Henry’s voice was reflective. “And she’s damn good in bed.” “How do you know I’m not?” Norma’s question was pure feminine outrage. “If you’re talking about a girl being impaled.” “Impaled! What a delightful way of describing a piece of tail.” Henry appeared amused. “But I like it. In fact, I may impale you as one of the fringe benefits of this evening’s entertainment.” As though for a last resort plea, the naked, suspended woman turned to the two females who must watch what was taking place.

“Look, can’t either of you or both of you say something to this idiot to change his mind? Can’t you stop him in this idiocy?”

The two fastened females exchanged frustrated glances. They shrugged. They looked at the hopeful woman in a manner to tell her all too clearly of their helplessness.

Henry Ross grinned and shrugged. Making gestures to encompass both his audience and the woman he was about to cane.

“And now, my dear Norma,” he suggested sweetly, “if you will forgive me another Victorianism, I will simply ask if you are now ready to have your bottom caned.”

There was no answer. None was expected. The bound businesswoman glared in icy disdain, and Margo, watching, wondered if she had any concept of the agony she was about to endure. Quite probably, she was passing it off in

her own mind as a childish piece of nonsense, a carry-over from school days long past.

There was now alive in the room a fresh atmosphere. There had been indeed, up until now, a leisurely talking, mouth-watering word play. This was done. Without warning, Henry Ross swung on the ball of one foot, his cane circled in a wide arc and planted itself on the posterior of Boulter Inc. and all its subsidiaries. It was a most satisfying thunk. It caused Norma Boulter to stiffen in pure horror and dismay, the pain being far greater than she had imagined causing the immobility of shock.

Margo shifted uneasily in her own bonds. She knew all too well the sights, sounds, and feel of what was taking place. She was willing to believe a sound thrashing would do Norma no harm. It never did any harm to bring the mighty low, but nonetheless, she would herself suffer vicariously the agony of each stroke. She looked at the features of an entranced Miss Harridance, but they registered only intense interest and satisfaction.

Henry Ross again drew his arm back. The second time the noble, untouched flesh of the feminine tycoon accepted the weal and the scarlet. When she regained her breath, she wasted no words.

“Henry, stop this! You can’t possibly realize the appalling pain you are now causing me. It’s unbearable. I’d absolutely no idea, and I’m sure you haven’t either. Stop this whole affair before it goes too far.”

The third stroke followed as does the night the day. It brought Norma into full awareness of her plight. This time there were no heroics about keeping silent or keeping still,

she did neither. Her sounds and motions had an appreciative audience of three. By the time the strokes had reached ten and showed no sign of stopping, she spoke.

“Very well, Henry Ross. I accept your proposal of marriage. Please unfasten me now.”

Miss Harridance laughed. Henry Ross himself grinned and provided a chuckle. Margo kept silent. She felt herself redundant to this whole affair.

“Too late, my dear,” Henry Ross said pleasantly. “You should have said yes when you had the chance. We are now approaching the halfway mark in your punishment, and it would be a pity to stop.” His voice was deliberately mocking. “I’m sure, in years to come, the immense value of what you are now receiving will make a new woman of you. And remember, after the bottom comes the back.”

“I can’t stand anymore. I’ve had enough.” Norma’s voice was leaden with defeat. “What you are doing to me is pure torture – no girl could possibly endure it.”

“Margo has. Ask her.”

The question was never asked. Henry Ross had a fresh idea.

“Margo dear child, would it please you to take this cane and administer the rest of Miss Boulter’s punishment?” he asked suavely.

Margo was horrified. She twisted awkwardly against her wrists and said uncertainly, “I’d rather not, if you don’t mind, sir.”

“I’ll do it.” Miss Harridance’s voice rang out loud and clear. “If you want to see a thrashed female, let me loose.”

There was a stunned silence, until Henry Ross ejaculated, “Why in the devil didn’t I think of that? You’re the obvious person. Just one moment, while I get you free.”

“Don’t you dare!” Norma Boulter’s voice was more than ever concerned. “I don’t want to be thrashed by one of your lackeys. Besides, this woman is far too experienced in such matters – she’ll half kill me.”

“No, she won’t, her very experience is your protection. But I do think she may be aware of certain little nooks and crannies on your person that will receive the attention of the cane in a manner superior to my own.”

There was little else to say. Three pairs of eyes anxiously watched as the iron wrists of Miss Harridance were freed and stood naked, rubbing the chafe marks on her wrists. But there was no time to be lost. She accepted the yellow length of cane with an obvious and immense satisfaction. Purpose radiated from her in waves. She advanced to the woman to be whipped, tilted her chin, and asked, “So I’m a lackey, am I? So I don’t rate – I’m your inferior, Miss Boulter?” She spat the word out in high disdain. “We’ll now see about that.”

Mildred Harridance was a past mistress in the art of correcting delinquent females. That the strung-up nakedness before her now was in no way a delinquent made no difference. It was a more mature and satisfying nudity than she had been accustomed to. She drew back her arm with relish, measuring her distance.

The thunk of cane and flesh, and the scream it evoked were almost simultaneous. Margo flinched. Norma tugged at metal circlets on her wrists and kicked wildly at nothing with free feet. On her face was a mixed expression of pain and anger. At the back of Margo's mind, there hovered this query about marriage. Henry Ross seemed all too anxious to bandy the possibility before both her own nose and that of the punished woman. He evidently saw it as both punishment and reward. Norma and Ross deserved each other. A marriage between them might not last long, but it would be full of the most graphic storms. She could well imagine Ross exerting his male strength again and again to bring his wife to her knees until Norma would give up the unequal fight and divorce him. But by then, she would be a different woman, her life changed in ways Margo knew all too well. Margo was willing to concede she was not the girl who had first entered slavery.

Again, there was a fresh feeling in the room. Dominance had passed from the owner of Rossland to his first lieutenant. True, he had punished her on occasion, but was now intrigued by her assumption of authority and Norma Boulter's fear of it. Here was a delightful contest between social structures. Here was punishment of a prestige. He would quietly retire to the sidelines and join Margo in her role as audience.

Without dramatic emphasis, she said, "Miss Boulter, I want you to raise your leg. Get your right leg as high as you can hold it while I cane what lies beneath." She chuckled. "I won't keep you long."

Norma did not obey. As she looked back over a bare helpless shoulder to where her tormentors were regarding her with studied interest. Her voice was bitter.

"You are a bunch of bastards! If you had a grain of sense, you'd let me go right now. If either of you do what you're talking about, I'll bring your whole world tumbling around your ears." Her voice became tremulous. "Please let me go. Please, please, please."

Mildred circled the helpless and priceless nudity. She selected her spot and slashed it with a wicked cut which evoked from Miss Boulter a screech of anguish. Her audience watching her writhing, kicking, and contorting. The performance seemed likely to last for a very long time.

Margo wished she was anywhere but where she was. It would be easy for her to hate all three of the others in the room. She had been thrashed by each and possessed by all. She wondered if, given the chance, she would choose any one of them as master or mistress. She knew that her only chance to return to dignity would be to accept enslavement to one. Ross and the woman being thrashed were immensely wealthy and would give her the good life. It would be a good life in chains or cords, but would be ripe, lush, and rich. On the other hand, she had felt for Mildred a warmth of affection unsuspected since she had come to Rossland. Stripped and bound, Mildred had emerged as a far younger and more desirable female than attired severely as headmistress of a school for delinquent maidens. Margo remembered the feel of Mildred's arms and heat engendered by Mildred's whip. But just the same, she wished that the present proceedings would be brought to an end. She saw no sense in this endless procession of pun-

ishments. She had come to despise Rossland and its owner. She saw it now as prison and the girls who wore its chains as a lost legion of the underprivileged. Even though they came from wealthy homes, their lives had been diminished by their subservience and the carnal lust of Henry Ross. Margo's whole being was in revolt against an outrage the price of which she had once been prepared to pay.

But what did opinions matter! Margo looked up the length of her pinioned arms, at the cold clasp of steel upon her wrists. The handcuffs would ensure her loyalty to the power that held her in its grasp. Henry Ross would exact his pound of flesh. It seemed unlikely that Norma Boulter could effectively counter his male strength. The woman stood now, naked and flinching before the cane which wielded either by Mildred or the master would hurt cruelly. By now Norma would be wondering about a return to freedom. It might never happen. But whatever her future fate, the whipping of Norma proceeded without further delay.

Norma had given up her pretense of dignity or authority. In theory, she retained them both. That is, if she could regain her freedom. She had used them in her threats, but now pleaded solely because she as a woman to be loved, not whipped.

Mildred again selected the portion of femininity which was most vulnerable and struck it one more blow.

"No, don't do that! You rotten bitch! Stop hitting me that way." The urgent female plea turned to the male. "Henry, stop her. Stop her before she does me serious injury. She's capable of anything. Henry, I beg you."

“The matter of the transfers, Norma?” “Yes, I’ll sign them. But only if you promise me that this punishment will stop.” “No conditions, Norma. You will sign them when you are ready and you will take the consequences. You will have to rely upon my tolerance and mercy for the cessation of your punishment. I make no promises.” “All right. But please stop long enough for us to talk and forms to sign the papers. Damn it, Henry, once you’ve got the papers, what else do you want of me?” “A good question, my dear. In the end, a man always wants a woman’s body. I think that, along with the signing of the documents, I will insist that you plead with me to take you to my bed and use you in any way I please.” “That’s simply a rotten humiliation.” Norma tugged uselessly at her bonds and looked at the females present for support. “Very well, I’ll do anything you want, just as long as it brings this torture to an end. Good god, man, you’re getting everything on a plate! What more do you want?” It was a solemn proceeding. Leg irons were locked upon the female tycoon’s slender ankles. A collar was locked upon her neck, and from it a tether of chain secured her to the wall. Her hands were then freed. Margo watched, fascinated.

“You have nothing more to say about anything, Norma.” Henry Ross was dispassionate. “As an additional humiliation, I now instruct you to bend over and touch your toes and request Miss Harridance to cane your bottom. For a few minutes, I want to see you as a naughty school girl receiving her just desserts.”

“I absolutely refuse. Henry, you’re going too far. You’re taxing me beyond tolerance. Very well, dear, in that case, we will return you to your former position.”

“No, stop! Very well, I’ll do it. But I want you both to know!”

Margo watched, feeling every motion and every indignity. She had been there herself and knew what it was like. Norma slowly and obviously hating everything she did took a suitable position and bent down and touched her toes with reaching fingertips.

“Very well, Miss Harridance. Will you be kind enough to cane my bottom as if I were a little girl in school?”

It was cruelly erotic, wickedly potent with feeling. Margo felt her heat generating in vivid waves. She had ceased to care about her vulnerability and handcuffed wrists. Her whole attention was devoted to the tableau and what was about to be done.

Sensing the master’s wish, Mildred played her role to perfection.

“Yes, dear girl. I will punish you as you ask. You will receive six hard strokes and you will thank me for each and request the next. If you break the post or indulge in foolish utterances, we will start your punishment over again. Do you understand?”

Norma understood. She cast a glance of pure hatred at Henry Ross. She lifted a helpless head in Margo’s direction. Before taking up the hated position, she paused and looked at Mildred long enough to give the woman time to come to her defense. But there was no defense. Abjectly, Norma bent forward and touched her toes, cut and burned by the singing cane she spoke woodenly.

“Thank you, Miss Harridance. Please cane me again.” The strokes went on and on. It seemed as though there were

not six but six hundred. If she but knew it, Norma Boulter was truly magnificent. She broke no pose, conceding only an occasional bent knee and a weaving of wounded hips. Her responses were instant and precise. She was delivering unto the man and the woman the full dues of her new penitence. She was doing it without any assurance of release or the cessation of her pain. But after the sixth stroke had scorched her flesh and she had said her thanks, she was told to rise and given gracious permission to rub the weals implanted on her skin. When she realized the intense pleasure these childish emotions of comfort to the flesh provided both Mildred Harridance and Henry Ross with satisfaction. She stopped and allowed her arms to hang listless from her sides. The chain for the collar around her neck hung in a long loop toward the wall. She had never tested it.

Three naked women in a cage! The hands of two of them were handcuffed in front. The hands of Norma Boulter were cuffed behind her back. Henry Ross had given no explanation of this discrepancy. Margo supposed it was without significance. Obviously, Norma was to be reduced to a mere nothing. She had signed away control of her empire, and Henry Ross had announced his departure for the city where the documents would become effective. In the meantime, Miss Norma Boulter would be caged with those of a lower social status than herself. She made no demur. She appeared stunned with all she had suffered and her ignominious defeat. She now treated Margo as an equal and even conferred some measure of deference upon Mildred. But despite their acceptance of a common condition, the three females, regardless of status, were helpless captives, each bearing the stigma of handcuffs and seeing the world

as a very small, limited plate for them – from behind iron bars. As an added indignity, it was Emaline who tended to them.

“The master says I must not let you loose,” the youngster informed cheerfully. “He says he’ll be back sometime tomorrow and you have to stay the way you are until then. And you needn’t think I’m going to open that door. I’ll feed and water you through the bars. Isn’t this the cutest situation!”

“Emaline, let us out of her.” The voice of Mildred Harridance was heavy with authority.

“I’m sorry, but I can’t.” Emaline was obviously happy to impart this negative assurance. “You have to stay in that case with the naughty girls.” She giggled happily. “But I expect the master will let you loose when he comes back tomorrow. Please promise not to be mean to me when you are headmistress again and I’m just one of the girls. If you won’t promise that, I’m going to think up some way to be real mean to you in there.”

“Of course, I’ll give you that assurance, Emaline.” Mildred was warmly assuring. “I realize you’re only doing what you’re told.”

She placed her joined hands between two bars and suggested, as though it was the most natural thing to be expected, “Dear Emaline, there is just one thing you can do. You can unlock these handcuffs. I could, but I’m not going to,” Emaline said cheerfully. “He told me not to.”

The three nude females accepted the water and the bread offered through the bars. Margo ate and drank her por-

tions. She was accustomed to captivity and its depravations. The other two disdained. They still had far to go.

“The man is out of his senses,” Norma declared with conviction.

“I can understand you’re being locked in this cage, Margo. It’s part of your acceptance of Rossland. But for Miss Harridance and myself!”

She allowed the enormity of the thought to hover in the caged air. “As I said, the man is obviously insane. We must be prepared to act.”

“What do you propose?” Mildred dryly asked. “We can’t very well send a gun boat, and we don’t have the key to either our handcuffs or our cage.”

“But Emaline has them. Surely you can impose some authority on the child.”

“I could if I were outside this cage and my hands were not locked together,” Miss Harridance rejoined acidly. “You’ve got all the money in the world. Why don’t you try? Offer the child a million dollars. Who knows?”

There was more to Emaline than met the eye. When next she made an appearance, she carried a cane and explained cheerfully, “I’m going to let you out of the cage one at a time. I’ll cane your bottoms, and then you go back in. Just so you can’t give me any static, two of you will stand at the far side while I let the third one out. We’ll repeat this as we go around. If all three of you choose to try and fight me, I’ll get the hose and turn a jet of cold water on you all until you decide to do what I tell you. It won’t be a bit of fun, be-

ing wet and cold, having to sleep in water. It will be much easier for you to do what I want."

Three pairs of captive eyes exchanged questioning looks and shared a bitter reflection of total helplessness. To ease the situation, Margo chose to be first and stood again the door, then told the others to stand back. The child watched warily as the lock clicked and Margo stepped into relative freedom.

"Don't worry, Emaline," she said. "I know you can defeat us. I'll do what you want. Shall I bend over for the cane now?"

"I'm a little bitch, aren't I?" Emaline's arms were suddenly warm around the captive's neck. Her voice was a hot whisper in a female ear. "Darling, I'd let you go if I dared. But you know what that would get me into. It was sweet of you to come to the door first, and I know why you did it. But I don't want to cane your bottom or do anything bad to you at all. I'm going to open the door, and I want you to go back in and tell the others whatever you like, so long as you tell one of them to take your place." Then came a very tiny feminine giggle.

"I'm not going to give up the pleasure of caning the other two. It must be simply yummy to cane a real hive woman's bottom, especially if one of them's caned you often enough."

There was little that Margo could do but mutter thanks and assure the nymphet of total obedience. She was deeply thankful, but knew suspicion must inevitably surface between her two companions and herself. Hopelessly, she

stepped back within the cage and gave Emaline's instructions.

"Emaline does not want to cane me now. She wants to cane you two. She asks if you, Miss Boulter, will go to the door and she will tell you what to do. Miss Harridance and I will stand back here."

It was impossible not to feel sympathy for the woman about to receive a humiliating infliction. Whatever Norma Boulter had done or whatever she was, she did not deserve what was about to happen. Margo watched the play of emotions across the artistic features before the handcuffed woman went to the door to await her turn. The youthful Emaline inserted the key and turned the lock. A moment later the head of Boulter Enterprises stood beyond the bars and bent forward without even asking for instructions. Woodenly, she said, "You wish to cane me Emaline, so go ahead. I invite you to."

The youngster took her time. The blows were as vigorous as her youthful arm could contrive. They were hard enough to inflict a bitter pain that was not only an agony of the flesh but of the spirit. For a multimillionaire to be caned by a mere child, and upon her naked flesh not yet recovered from her previous punishment, was a cruelty Henry Ross had most assuredly assessed before he left. Norma accepted the six strokes and then stepped back into the cage without complaint. The watching Margo gave her points for both fortitude and courage. In female discernment, she saw the tears welling, but blinked back from her eyes.

Mildred was next. She knew herself condemned, knew there was no escape. She knew also the bitter humiliation

of someone possessed of authority but now finding it stripped from her and bestowed upon a child. Emotionally, she cautioned, “Emaline, you shouldn’t do this. You should set us free. I will bend over for your cane, if you insist, but I want you to think a moment of possible consequences.” Mildred’s glorious nakedness stood quivering in anticipation of the answer of a girl still in her puberty.

“You know I’m – going to cane you, Miss Harridance, so don’t beef about it. You’ve caned my bottom often enough and put me in a cage and all sorts of things. You don’t imagine I’m going to give up this chance to get even, do you?”

“You will release me, Emaline, if you know what’s good for you. I most earnestly implore you to be sensible.”

“And I implore you also to be sensible,” Emaline responded, “Bend over!”

Margo watched through the bars. She and Norma had once more approached to get the best possible view. Margo realized Miss Harridance had been whipped on another occasion. She was no stranger to the scorch and scald of impacts on female flesh. What would hurt her now was the immaturity of Emaline wielding the cane. Margo found it surprising the youngster would run the risk of future reprisals by indulging in her present power. But Emaline evidently considered the present privilege worth the risk of future strips on her skin. The young girl had no doubt been caned and whipped often enough to make her feel one more or less infliction mattered little. She rapped the twin mounds unwittingly turned her way.

“Bend over, Miss Harridance. I’m sure you’ll love every stroke I’m going to give you. Because you’re the headmistress, I’m going to make it ten.”

Mildred did not bend forward as requested. Instead, she straightened up and turned around to face her tormentor.

“Emaline, don’t be absurd. Stop this play-acting at once. I will accept not a single stroke.”

“Ten. And don’t forget to bend over, please.” Emaline was in her glory. The breasts of the headmistress were heaving in her emotional travail. Margo, watching, saw the lovely hands twist within the confines of the steel circlets. Looking at the enraptured Emaline, it was hard to believe this delightful child held three adult females so totally in her power by virtue of nothing more than handcuffs on their wrists. But the handcuffs were enough.

“If you like, I’ll fasten you in some way, Miss Harridance, so you won’t jiggle around and feel foolish. Would you like that?” Emaline asked solicitously.

Mildred straightened up, flushing. “I think I would prefer that, Emaline – yes.”

Margo suspected Miss Harridance of a crafty mood. To fasten her might entail the unlocking of the handcuffs on her wrist, and then heaven help Emaline!

But this did not happen. Emaline was in full command of the situation and guided her reluctant charge to a rope from above that could attach to the shining steel of the cuffs and be drawn high. The result was the lowering of Miss Harridance’s head so as to cause her hair to cascade toward the floor and the raising of her her bottom for at-

tention. It was a pose neatly designed for its purpose. The first slash, with all the strength of Emaline's young arms behind it, impacted with a wicked crack and caused the recipient to heave against her raised bound arms and to shift uneasily upon her feet, still free to express their owner's distress. Margo remembered how she had first seen this woman as a stern, unrelenting authority. But that was now long past. What she beheld now as the lithe and lovely figure of a mature girl whose enforced bending posture emphasized firm breasts and a concave belly. Across the twin spheres of the bent, curved bottom, the scarlet claimed its line of wealed flesh. Mildred looked back briefly in apprehension and then returned her gaze to the floor to which her hair was streaming in a charming signal of distress.

Emaline giggled happily as she performed her task. The blows fell with measured precision to extract the maximum of cringe and squirm from the tethered woman. There was no mercy, only a mischievous determination to get every possible particle of eroticism from the punishment. After several cuts had left their mark and while Mildred was still squirming from the last blow, Emaline parted the whipped cheeks to demonstrate to those who watched prominence of the plump lips of Mildred's pudendum. Playfully, she plucked one hair after another to add to the squire and cringe of a woman who could not fight back. Evidently, considering silence her best weapon, Mildred uttered no sound except at the time of the impact of the cane, a gasp or moan, and the uncontrolled shifting of her bare feet. When the seventh stroke followed the sixth, she could keep silent no longer.

“Emaline, stop this! Emaline, I forbid you to hit me again. I have received quite enough punishment to satisfy your sadistic little soul. Let me loose.”

It was as though she had not spoken a single word. Emaline continued to impose the cane upon the headmistress’s flesh with the same aplomb and verve as before. She took pains to ensure a good view of the girls behind the bars. The tenth stroke was a horrendous cracking impact to extract from the bent-over femininity one last appeal.

“Emaline, I beg of you – stop! This is enough!” Emaline stopped. She had delivered the ten strokes, as promised.

“Miss Harridance,” she said mischievously, “if you hadn’t made all these beefs and kept telling me to stop, I actually would stop right now. But I do think you deserve a couple more on your pretty little cunny. Don’t you agree?”

“No, I do not. Don’t be disgusting, and never use the vulgar word again. Unlock my hands.”

“Oh, Miss Harridance! You don’t like cunny! I think it’s a lovely word. I’m going to whip yours a couple of times more. If I use the thin end of the cane and come up between your legs, it will hurt you beautifully. Aren’t you lucky?”

Margo watched the inward turmoil depicted on Mildred’s face. She found it easy to follow the train of thought. It would be just as she would feel.

Hating every motion, Mildred separated her legs to accept the extra punishment Emaline desired. But as the first cut sliced the air and bedded itself within her most sacred

flesh, she broke all pretense of control and went berserk in contortions of agonies undreamed.

“Emaline, please stop! I can’t take this!” “If you don’t put your feet well apart,” the youngster warned, “I will raise the count to five instead of two. Now do it!” Miserably, Mildred obeyed. The atmosphere was electric as Emaline positioned the now pliant thighs to her approval and took position. The swinging upward cut was the wickedest of all, but it was also the last. Two women and a child watched the vivid contortions of the woman as she employed berserk body movements to counter the agony of the cane upon her most intimate lips.

“There, Miss Harridance. You’ve had your bottom caned. Gee, I enjoyed that! Even if you are to be headmistress again and cane me terribly to get your own back, I won’t mind a bit. I’m going to remember this moment all my life. You look so beautiful and so female with your skin glistening with sweat and your cunny sort of half peeking out behind. It was so glorious to cane it the way I’ve done. Now I’m going to put you back in the cage.”

There happened then something to make Margo and Norma gasp in wonder. The voice of Mildred Harridance was measured and controlled.

“Emaline, there is something you can do for us. You can set us free. I know you won’t do this unless you are bribed with something meaningful to you. You have caned me hatefully and cruelly. I now offer you a bargain. Unlock my hands and give me back my freedom, and then I will voluntarily submit to whatever posture you desire to be whipped as it may please you for ten more strokes.”

The headmistress paused to swallow and collect her emotions before continuing.

“In addition, I will give you my solemn promise that when things return to normal at Rossland, you will not be punished in any way by anyone.”

There was silence so deep it could be felt. All eyes were upon the teenage nudity as three pairs of hands strove against the handcuffs on their wrists. Emaline affected to consider deeply, and then quietly, she spoke.

“If you’ll promise not to jump me when you are free, and if Margo will promise to let me punish her the same way, I’ll set you free. I don’t know anything about Miss Boulter, so I’ll leave her out of it. It will be just you two.”

“My answer is yes. Margo will make her own decision.” Margo sighed and said, “Yes, Emaline, you can do as you wish with me too.” It was proof of the awe in which Mildred Harridance was held by the pupils of Rossland that Emaline had no doubt as to her character. First, the asked nymphet in charge of proceedings lowered the wracked arms, then inserted the tiny key within the handcuffs which were and had been the true mistress of the occasion. Without pause, as though anxious to catch herself in the proper mood, she announced, “Very well, Emaline, I’m at your disposal. How do you want me?” The beauty of the two – a naked adolescent and a nude woman with striped skin – was breathtaking. The woman’s words were an instance of mind over matter.

Emaline prepared for the punishment of Mildred Harridance and Margo Davis.

“I’d like you to lay on your back on the floor, please, Miss Harridance, and then raise your feet and bring them back so you can hold onto your ankles. I won’t use the cane on you in that lovely place – I’ll use the little whip. I’ll expect you to keep as still as you can possibly can and not call me bad names while I give you your ten strokes.”

The response was instant. A moment later, Mildred was upon the floor, assuming the desired, most shameful posture. She did not speak.

She was evidently resigned to nymphet authority. It is possible that her desire for freedom was so great that Emaline could have extracted an even higher price. The two nudities within the cage exchanged the bars with an intense personal interest. When she saw there was a taste of something to come, she herself would undergo. As unemotionally as she could contrive, she stated, “Don’t worry, Emaline. I’ll keep my part of the bargain.”

The little whip was different from the cane. It is doubtful if Mildred could have contrived to bear the infliction of the wicked yellow cane within the confines of her crotch. But the whip whistled in and out and up and down each exposed thigh with an almost sweet facility. The awful pose the headmistress was forced to maintain swayed and jerked and weaved back and forth as it fought the bitter venom of thongs splatting upon damp female skin. At the end of the tenth stroke, the woman’s eyes sought those of her young tormentor and received the nod allowing her to become once more a normal person.

Mildred stood erect, clutching those portions of her body most bitterly cut and striped, but in her heart there sang the song of freedom.

While Norma stood back against the far wall of the cage, Margo blithely stepped outside the bars and stood expectantly while Emaline used the little key again to give her freedom. With the same willingness to immolate her flesh, Margo asked quietly, “How do you want me?”

“Would you mind if I pulled one of your feet way up in the air?”

“No, I don’t mind.”

Margo lay upon the floor and raised a leg to watch its ankle become tethered to the rope and behold it rise to where she was strained up with her hip only barely touching the floor. She did not need to ask where and how she would be whipped. It was all too obvious. She bore one after another of the stinging impacts from her raised knee, down to her crotch, and then up her still free thigh in a procession of measured strokes delivered with all the force of Emaline’s young arm and the bitterness of the little whip so well designed for the punishment of girls.

When it was over and she was standing erect and free, Emaline said, “You’re not going to do anything to me, are you? You’ll keep your word?”

They assured her they would keep their word. All they required now as for Norma to be freed. Emaline went into the cage and the little key did its work, unlocking the third set of cuffs.

“Well, I might as well be running along,” Emaline tentatively said.

Three naked women nodded in unison, sending the nymphet on her way. They had had quite enough of Emaline and were glad to see her go.

Mildred took charge. She directed her gaze upon Norma and said with her old forcefulness, “Margo and I can overpower you easily, Miss Boulter, are you willing to go along with our intention of escape?”

“Good God, yes! If you know a way out of here.” The three freed women obtained clothes in Mildred’s room. Mildred herself took from a drawer a small but wicked revolver. She checked its load and thrust it into a recess of her recovered clothing.

Quietly, she said, “We still have work to do. I’m going to take Margo from this place and possess her for my own. But first Henry Ross has got a bill to pay. I want you to follow me downstairs.”

In the forest of iron bars, the cells were side by side. Mildred and Norma fought a battle of eyes before Norma shrugged and entered the one indicated. The door clanged shut behind her back and Mildred turned the key.

“I don’t need you handcuffed or chained or anything else. All I need is you as a captive.” Mildred’s voice was even and determined. “I can leave you here to the tender mercies of Henry Ross, or I can set you free. If I set you free, will you finance Margo and myself in a new life? I am thinking in terms of a great deal of money.”

“You silly idiot, you don’t need to put me in this cell or wave that gun at me,” Norma said irritably. “Of course I’ll look after your escape and your fresh new life. May I visit you sometime? I’d love to.”

Margo found herself a spectator. No one asked her wishes. They were taken for granted. Her body belonged to the strongest. It was that simple. She found herself glad the strongest was Mildred, but spared thought for the man they were waiting for. Henry Ross would give her wealth and the sanctity of marriage. She considered the prospect briefly but the vision dissolved before the reality of the vibrant woman now in charge of three destinies.

Mildred said, “I forgot your handcuffs, Margo. Go and get them, please.” There was not a thought in her mind but to comply. When she returned with both pairs, her own and those from Norma’s wrists, she turned her back and offered her hands without question. Having locked her tight, Mildred turned her attention the woman in the cell.

She held up the second pair of handcuffs and asked, “Do you want these on?”

“I don’t really care.” Norma’s voice was listless. “If you’ll set me free and come to my office tomorrow, I’ll give you a check to set you and your slave girl up for life.” Her eyes probed, almost hungrily at those of the erstwhile headmistress. “But if you prefer me to buck up to the bars and allow you to put those things on my wrists, I’ll do that too. I don’t see any sense in doing that, but I’ll do it if you wish.” Action was suspended by a sound.

“For some reason, he’s back, and he’s looking for us,” Mildred said hurriedly. “Margo, this way. Just around the corner. We’ll wait.”

Heart thudding, her wrists once more captive, Margo allowed herself to be dragged out of sight. She listened with baited breath as male foot steps proclaimed themselves

upon the concrete. By the time Henry Ross had beheld the captive woman in the cell and made a sharp exclamation, he was lost. Mildred stepped forward with her gun.

Stupefied, the master of Rossland gazed into the menacing muzzle. As though dazed and uncomprehending, he obeyed its motions and stepped slowly back into the open door of the cell beside the woman he had sought to conquer. Safe behind the bars, his same startled gaze comprehended the slamming of the door by Mildred's forceful hands. He looked from one to the other of the three females who now looked at him through his own bars of his own cell in his own building. He was still non-plussed.

"What the hell goes?"

"Henry, you are my prisoner." Mildred pointed the tiny gun towards the man. "I am wondering if you would care to contribute to the future welfare of Margo and myself. Let us call it a pension."

"Like hell! Let me out of here, woman. I must have been insane to have walked through the door in the first place."

"No, you weren't, Henry. You were quite rational. If you had refused to do so, I would have shot you first in one arm and then the other. Then I would have got you in the legs. But, of course, by that time you would have seen the light. Wouldn't you?"

"I don't get it. What's going on!" Henry Ross' eyes moved from the woman to the slave girl who now stood in complete docility, and then to the president of Boulter Inc. in the next cell.

“I’m not giving anybody a cent. If you value your skins, you’ll let me out of here and return to normal.”

Mildred was in her element. She handed a pair of handcuffs and the key through the bars to the startled Norma Boulter, who was still unsure of her own situation. Mildred then unlocked the door to the cell.

“I suspect you’re a bit of a bitch, Norma Boulter, but just the same, you’re not as much of a bitch as Henry Ross is a bastard. He’s all yours.”

Margo stood, quivering. She was still handcuffed, but that was to be expected. She had rode beside the woman who possessed her, and in the woman’s own car, to the woman’s cottage in the country. They stood now within its walls gazing at each other in a fresh beginning. Rossland clung about them in an almost visible aura which might take days or weeks to disperse. But in the meantime, they were free. Mildred said, almost in wonder, “This is gong to take some getting used to. I’ve had this place quite awhile. I always figured the day would come when I’d need it.” She gazed at Margo searchingly. “Sweetheart, are you expecting to be set free? Do you think I’ll let you loose?”

“No.”

The thought of being set free had never entered Margo’s mind. There was between the two woman a relationship beyond dissolving. She hoped Henry Ross and Norma Boulter would face into a bad dream. In the meantime, though, there was a path to tread, and Mildred would lead the way. When the fingers of the headmistress sought her captive’s clothing and began to take it from her, it was no more than to be expected. When their lovemaking was fin-

ished, Margo was brought back into the real world by the headmistress's whisper.

"I'll keep you chained and tied and whip you regularly, darling. Do you want that?"

"Oh yes!"

"One or both of those we left back in the cell will try to get you back. They'll try to get me too. Tomorrow, we'll see how honest Norma Boulter is, but Henry Ross will be unrelenting, I know."

To Margo, it was no more than a continuation of her life at Rossland and before. She was owned, this time by a beautiful woman. But others would seek to own her. This was the lot of slave girls: they belonged to the conqueror.

"Mildred, don't you want to take me to bed again?" The invasion of Mildred's small cottage took place in the middle of the night. Its initial stages were carried out in sufficient stealth and silence to enable the invader to reach the feminine bedroom in which his victims slept. Margo's hands were still cuffed behind her back, so she was helpless to resist. The master had only moments before female strength proved ineffective against the male. The eyes of the former headmistress sought those of her former pupil in misery and dismay as the handcuffs clicked their metallic derision thrusting the now helpless women from him, Henry Ross triumphantly revived one more cliché.

"And now, my proud beauties…!" To Margo, it was no more than a continuation of her drift upon a inevitable tide. Two women and a man, each of them dominantly as strong, had chosen to possess her. If it was not one, it would be another. Gazing upon Henry Ross, now in his triumph, she

felt the old feminine stirrings for the male hand the male command. Margo's sex flared in response to captivity by the male. It was the age-old female response to the knowledge of what now lay ahead. This knowledge was emphasized by Henry Ross' barked order.

"Margo, stand and face me! Tell me what you expect on return to school."

"I expect to be caned and whipped." "A sensible answer and a sensible girl. You have learned your place." Henry Ross was in many ways a pompous and pedantic figure but he was handsome and tremendously masculine. He dominated the room utterly. There was never a thought in the mind of his naked prisoners of either escape or mercy. He had them and he would use them as he wished. He must have come to terms with Norma Boulter, or he would not be here. He would still be safely locked within a cell. But Norma Boulter no longer mattered. What did matter was the present predicament.

With the sudden snap of a pistol shot, he fired at Margo, "Do you expect to marry me?"

"Yes."

It was a shot in the dark which would probably earn her additional punishment, but Margo no longer cared. She was flotsam in a tide she could not stem. Her blunt affirmative had not come from her heart, but from a wish to test this male creator to the full.

Ross raise an amused eyebrow.

"Mrs. Henry Ross, eh? I'm not sure you deserve it, but perhaps after a few whippings."

The master turned his attention to Mildred. He was still the Victorian villain and enjoying every moment.

“And you, my dear headmistress, what do you expect?”

“You’ll whip me.”

“Come, come, dear. Is that all?” Mildred flushed and twisted her joined hands. She knew she was being baited and was uncertain of her fate. But she faced it bravely and looked her tormentor in the eye. “I don’t suppose that will be all, Henry. I expect you’ll whip me more than once. I expect you’ll think up a few of your other specialties on my behalf.” She visibly sneered. “But when you’ve humbled me and satisfied your male ego, you’ll return me to my position as headmistress.” She stood tautly erect in her magnificent nudity and stared in arrogance at the male who could bring her to her knees. “That is my assessment… sir!” Henry Ross nodded, unperturbed.

“You are quite magnificent, my dear. You are right. I will punish you terribly, and I will bring you to your knees, but I will also reinstate you in your former position. Where else could I find one such as you?”

“Thank you, Henry. May I ask what you have done with Miss Boulter?”

“Of course, you may ask, my dear. The condemned may ask for any privilege. I ran true to form with dear Norma. I played the village of the piece. I made her promises I did not intend to keep and thus persuaded her to unlock the door of the cell. She now awaits my pleasure behind the bars. She is appropriately naked. I have her hands well cuffed behind her back and her ankles similarly joined. I have suggested that she think soberly of her condition

while I am gone. I have considered marrying her – this you know. And I am sure she is giving this matter a good deal of thoughts, perhaps with hope. I intend to recreate a situation we have already once gone through. I will fasten all three in equal nakedness and helplessness, then proceed to thrash you separately so you may enjoy."

Margo did a mental shrug. What did anything matter? She knew she was inescapably a prisoner. Her eyes sought those of her former mistress and heard her stark admission.

"I'm sorry, Margo darling. I did try. I wanted you – I still do. I feel I let you down."

Amused, the master clasped two handfuls of female hair, thrusting two female heads together. "There, you may kiss. I suggest you do. It may be your last chance."

They kissed. It was a passionate kiss despite their disabilities under which it was performed. It was the kiss of love, condemned to chains and slavery. Before it was over, Henry Ross thrust them roughly asunder and produced a length of rope. Face to face with Margo, he tied a loop of it around her neck, then kissed her with surprising gentleness. The other end of the tether was tied tightly around the throat of Mildred.

He surveyed the naked helplessness with immense satisfaction. His voice held the promise of pain and imprisonment. As he picked up Mildred's discarded riding crop, he spoke.

"Perhaps we should not go to the car. You may enjoy togetherness in the back seat before joining Norma Boulter in the cell."

The naked duo, helpless and close to tears, walked before their master, their condition emphasized by occasional short impacts of the crop.

Each female knew herself a conqueror's prize. Margo's heart smoldered scorchingly within her sex as she considered a possible fate and how she would feel.