

Repression

The Femdom Edition

by

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and

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Chapter I

Innocent Taken

They took him suddenly and unexpectedly. One minute he was walking along the road, nearing his home, then next strong arms were holding him as cold, hard steel cuffs bit into his wrists.

A cry escaped his lips until he saw the tall women in black uniform and suddenly understood what was happening to him. Then his lips fell silent but a cold knot of pure fear formed in his stomach. His legs grew weak and trembled. While one black uniform on each side of him held him tightly, the black robed priestess stepped forward to stand before him.

“Mr. David Cranston,” she intoned sombrely, “you are under arrest for heresy and other crimes against One World and God.” That formality over, she nodded to the guards and turned her back on the young man.

A van pulled up to the sidewalk and the sliding door opened to disclose another female guard dressed in tight black leather, and a silvery steel box the front of which was opened wide. With remarkable ease, the guards lifted him, turned him, and deposited him on the small seat within the box. With practiced efficiency, they pushed his feet in and locked another set of handcuffs upon his ankles. Those were attached to the floor by a very short chain. Another chain secured to the back wall at one end was wrapped around his waist and pulled very tightly, and then locked back to the same ring it started from. He was tightly pressed against the back of the box, his handcuffed arms between him and the hard steel.

David did not resist them as they restrained his body. He knew it would be of no use. No one could fight the priestesses and expect to win.

People passing by turned their heads so as not to see the taking of a citizen from off the street. Some turned around and walked quickly the other way. Even a couple of people from that neighbourhood who knew the young man turned away and said not a word.

With a snicker and wicked grin, one guard grabbed for his belt and undid it, then wrenched his trousers and underpants down around his ankles. She reached down, grabbed his testicles and squeezed. Even as he gasped in pain, the touch from the female had the inevitable reaction. He closed his eyes at the embarrassment of his unwanted erection, while the laughter of the guards echoed in his ears.

“Hey, that’s almost worth *fucking* ,” the guard informed him rudely. Then she dug her fingers into the flesh of his shaft hard enough to make him gasp. “Damned nice. We’ll have fun with you.”

David tensed his body and tried to think of anything other than the leather-clad females surrounding him. He kept his face turned downward, refusing to meet their eyes. Instinctively, he knew not to show any resistance or rebellion. Never give them a reason to hurt you, he had been told, but he had ever thought that he would need the advice.

While one guard pushed down on the back of his head, another began closing the door to the metal box. With his head forced down, David felt the chain cutting even more into his middle until breathing was difficult. Then the door was closed. He could hear locks clicking shut on the outside.

The hard metal above him kept his head forced down in a very uncomfortable position, his chin pressed against his chest. He was very much aware of the narrowness of the box and the steel walls so close to him on all sides. Adding to his discomfort was the fact that there was no light inside.

He had seen this box used before, but on other people. He knew they called it a Transportation Box. It was designed to make escape impossible, but also to make the journey most uncomfortable. The steel cuffs cut into his wrists painfully. He made one attempt to move a hand down to at least pull up his underpants, but his reaching fingers could not approach anywhere near his ankles. And it hurt to try. He gave up. He prayed that it would be a short journey, but he had little hope for his future.

In the darkness, he resolved he would not give them the satisfaction of seeing that he had been crying – something he had not done since he was a small child. But, now a grown man, it was the one thing that he so badly needed to do right now.

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It was a time of repression; a time of crushed freedoms and mangled laws. All forms of dissent were banned and that ban was cruelly enforced upon the population. One theology had come to rule the land and you either adhered to it with all your heart or you suffered under its stifling might. “Land of the Free” no longer echoed through the halls of authority nor through the

minds of the people. Another Dark Ages had come to human history.

What had once been a shining model of civilization and reason was now a rigidly regimented life, rife with fear. Even the name that once stood for hope was no more. The United States of American was only Zone 11 of One World. True, the uniting of the world under one government has brought an end to the horror and destruction of war. Hunger was, for the most part, eliminated. Diseases were being pushed back and violence of nature was being tamed slowly. Some would argue that the world was a better place now. But at what price?

You obeyed, did your job, did not question, and dared not even think against Control. Do those things and you lived. Those who did not were dealt with quickly and harshly.

The world, all school children were taught, had been a dreadful place ruled and controlled by men. Thousands and millions starved. Neighbour fought against neighbour under those illogical divisions called countries. Or races. Or beliefs. It had taken a third world war to teach all that we were truly one people, one world. Sides had been taken and the violence grew with frightening speed. It had been a religious war; one of the endless string of such that man had so loved all his time on earth. The Muslim world united against the Christians. It was a gross oversimplification, of course, but it was as good an explanation as any. Some would say it was really over resources: oil, water, farmable land. But it was under the banners of Islam and the Cross that the armies marched.

The conclusion as predictable as it was extreme. The technology of the Christians won out, but that was not an end to it. Millions had died; many of them soldiers and most of them men. To this day, there are many areas where no one dares set foot and will not be able to go for thousands of years, but there was more to come.

When the last shot had been fired, the world struggled through a generation of poisonous clouds drifting over the landscape and millions more deaths. It was then that the theology of the victors was purified, made rigid, strong and unbending, and became the Law. Women made the Law, because women were in the majority in almost every position of power. Women outnumbered men by ten to one. Such is the aftermath of a war of those proportions, and who could argue that it was not men who had caused the war as well as been most of its casualties? The old values had been tested and had fallen. It was time for a new thinking and a new theology. You will worship in the right way, the only way. You will perform your duties without question. You will not doubt for a second that what the Law tells you is absolute Truth. You will obey. All this was necessary to please God and to ensure the tranquillity and survival of the global community.

And no one – No One – was to question, let alone take the slightest action against One World Law. Retaliation must be swift and sure.

It was into this world there came an innocent.

He was born the usual way, one hundred and sixteen years after the Day of the Nukes, on July twenty-fourth, three days after the world holiday celebrating the victory. There was nothing

special about this baby. The tests proved he was not defective, was reasonably intelligent and had none of the usual genetic markers of future physical problems. Having passed, he was turned over to his parents to be raised and trained for his place in One World.

He grew, repeated his lessons in school, and showed no indication of anti-social behaviour. He marched in the school parades and sang the approved songs with the rest of the children. He showed an aptitude for math and sciences but because there was a surplus of scientific personnel projected for the immediate future, he was routed to General Ed where he was taught how to be a good house-maker and father. A secondary track taught him electronic assembly in case there was a future need for more of them. But it was unlikely the projections could be wrong, so that track consisted of only a few courses.

He had been named David by his parents. That name had been approved by Control so it remained with his. Had there been too many Davids born that year, Control would have picked another for him. It avoided the confusion of having too many people with the same name.

The school psychologist suggested that David was not producing grades as high as they should be based on his intelligence, possibly because he expressed dissatisfaction with the curriculum for General Ed. His parents requested that he be put into the Science Track but were overridden because more scientists were simply not needed. Instead, he was made to attend Special Ed classes to adjust his attitude. Being intelligent, probably much more so than they suspected, he realized what was going on and conformed so well that he was excused the Special Ed classes after only two months. But inside him, the terrible seeds of discontent had been sown.

David grew into a good-looking young man. His father had been short but David showed every sign of becoming very much taller. As he grew into a man, it became obvious that his build would be athletic and muscular. His black hair and dark eyes gave him a mysterious, slightly foreign, appearance even though his parents had been standard stock. The school principle plotted ways she might have him assigned as a worker at the school. More than one Church official made plans for this young man as soon as he reached the right age. He was unaware of any of this, although he knew that girls had already taken an interest in him, and although his body and desires reacted to them as was only natural, he avoided their suggestions he might provide them with "a little entertainment", as they put it.

As he neared eighteen years of age, David made a mistake. He made friends with one of the boys at school. His name was Andrew. They talked about girls, as all boys do. A little fearfully, they discussed what kind of woman might be assigned to them as a wife. As soon as they turned eighteen, all men were assigned a suitable wife. Control, the administrative arm of One World, did this. Assigning a life-long partner was too important a job to leave up to chance or to the selection of his parents. Or, heaven forbid, the man himself. Control had massive databases on everyone. From those they could pick a very compatible partner. Compatible, of course, with the needs of One World. The man usually did not meet the woman who would rule the rest of his life until the day of the wedding.

The Church still conducted all marriages. It was ritual and ceremony designed to make the couple feel that their union was a contribution to the good of all. God, through Her priestesses,

approved and smiled down upon them. The ritual was to impress upon them, as it had all their lives, the importance of conformity and of obeying God's will.

Avoiding the girls was one thing, but ignoring their presence was quite another. Some, many in fact, were in David's thoughts far more often than he thought could possibly be healthy or, indeed, the way that a properly brought-up citizen of One World should be thinking. There was one girl – no, there were several – who David would have been quite content to have selected for him as his future partner. But the chance of one of those girls being picked for him was very remote. The match selected might well be with someone from another part of One World, and he would find himself shipped off far from his home. There was only one language spoken the world over; that had been one of the first steps taken to make One World a reality. But there were still some cultural differences and adapting might be hard.

This did not seem right to him. It seemed logical that a man should be able to pick the woman with whom to spend his life. David openly said this to Andrew, adding that there were other parts of their rigid society that did not seem right to him. Like why he could not study the sciences that interested him so much. Andrew nodded and was sympathetic, but careful in what he said aloud.

It was only a short time later, two weeks before his wedding day to a still unknown female, David was arrested and found himself being transported in shackles and a steel box to an unknown but greatly feared fate. Those picked up by Control never returned. Never.

As he swayed and bounced inside his box, David realized that there was only one person who could have turned him in: Andrew. Unless some of the rumours were true. Some said that Control guards occasionally picked up a person at random and hauled them off. This was so that there would always be arrests to keep a good, healthy fear in the population.

His back ached and his stomach hurt from the chain cutting in. When the truck stopped, he was both glad the trip was over and fearful of what might lie ahead. There were metallic sounds around him, then a jolt and he was moving again. But now the movement felt different. It took him a moment to realize that he was not moving with the van. Apparently his box had been detached from the van and was being moved someplace unknown. It made him feel uneasy to be treated like a piece of cargo, not a human being.

The box stopped and for a long time he heard no noises. Had they left him alone? He had expected to be removed from the box and brought before a judge or priest or something. But to be left sitting in the dark and discomfort was worse. It brought home to him just how helpless he was. They could do anything they wanted to him. Being left to suffer in the box was just one of the options. And there was nothing he could do about it.

Time loses meaning when you are in darkness and alone. The longer he sat there, the more uncertain he was of how long it had been. Minutes turned into hours, at least in his mind. And then more hours. A mild panic washed over him with the idea that this was what happened to those arrested. They were simply left alone in a Transportation Box. Locked away in some room where no one would ever go, the prisoners were abandoned. He wondered how long it would be

before he starved to death? Then he reasoned that he would probably dehydrate before starving. And he also wondered if he would go insane first. The fear, the discomfort that would certainly turn to agony as the hours crept by, all would press against his mind, until it drove logic and reason from him.

David fought to keep from calling out. If they expected him to call for help, to beg and plead, they would be disappointed. He vowed not to give them the satisfaction of knowing how frightened he was. It was an easy vow to make at that point. But later, when the pain increased and he became convinced that abandonment was truly his fate, maybe then he would be yelling himself hoarse.

In the darkness, his thoughts turned to his parents. His father was a mousy little man who quaked at the mention of Control. He was always properly respectful to David's mother, of course, but their relationship was one of near-equals, and despite the overwhelmingly female-controlled state of One World, David had always assumed that was the way it should be.

His mother was a strong woman, very law-abiding, and yet living in fear of accusations, true or false, that might destroy her life or the lives of those she loved. What would they be thinking now? They would worry when David was not home on time? Of course they would. But there had been enough people on the street. Someone was sure to tell his parents what had happened. They would then know that they would never see their son again.

Grim were the tales passed around in school about those who disappeared. They were killed, cut up into pieces and served in the cafeteria, so one rumour had it. Another related how they would be used as slave labour animals. Some said that the people were taken to an island where they were shoved off the boat and had to swim ashore to live as savages for the rest of their lives. There were some who maintained that the missing were merely "re-educated" and transplanted somewhere else.

David always thought that being used as slave labour made the most sense. From the way the girls at school had always ordered him around, making him run errands for them with the threat of telling the school authorities he was behaving inappropriately towards them if he did not comply, he was sure that many women regarded men as no more than slaves. After all, the whole society was based on women in control, wasn't it? And since all Control guards and all priestesses were females, well, it just made sense.

David had been careful. A man who had sex before the wedding day was punished, and the consequences for making a girl pregnant were severe. Both the girl and the man disappeared – just as David had now disappeared.

So, he wondered, if he were sent to serve as slave labour to women, what form would that labour take? Would he be used for sex? There were rumours about that too, but like all rumours they seemed to have little substance to them. Although David had no experience of what sex actually involved, beyond the brief lecture his father had given him at the age of thirteen and the somewhat mystifying lectures at school. He had imagined it, of course. What teenage boy had not? And he had imagined it with almost every one of the girls in his year at the school. No, it

really was not likely. Whatever punishment awaited him, he was sure that it would not be anything like that! After all, it would hardly be a punishment, unless... David had a sudden, terrible, mental image of being forced to have sex with the ugliest, most horrible, oldest and most deformed hags from whom any normal man would retreat as rapidly as possible. He shuddered. No, it could not be that!

Hours crept by and David became convinced that to remain here was indeed to be his fate: darkness, pain and ultimately a very slow but painful death. The grumbling in his stomach told her that hours were indeed passing and he had at least missed the evening meal, but then he would miss every meal now. He would never see food again. Never again would he see his parents or their apartment. Never even would he see the sun. So lost was he in wondering if they would even give him a proper burial that he almost missed the sounds of keys in locks.

Bright light suddenly flooded over her as the front of the Transportation Box swung open.

Stiff muscles in his neck made it painful to lift his head and the light kept him blinking for a few moments. Eventually he made out three figures standing before him. A black-robed priestess he had never seen before, and on each side of her stood a Control Guard, each anonymous in her black uniform and shades.

David wished he could move a hand around to pull up his underpants, but the chain and cuffs remained on him. It was an odd feeling to have strange women staring at his bare legs and his exposed genitals. Without any thought or control over what he was doing, he felt himself start to stiffen once more.

The priestess nodded to the guard on her left and the woman strode forward until she was within reach of the captive. From her belt, she extracted a small knife. One by one, she used the knife to cut the buttons off David's shirt, and then she slit the material across to one arm and down the sleeve. She repeated it with the other arm. David could do nothing but sit there as the remains of his shirt were pulled off and tossed aside. He was naked, except for his trousers and underpants pitifully scrunched down around his ankles, and it was only seconds later that the guard leaned forward and with one swift slash of her knife, divided David's remaining garments so that the useless material fell into the bottom of the Transportation Box.

He tried to protest, although he was sure that protests would gain him nothing. Likewise, he knew that pleading and begging would be a waste of time, but he did it all the same. He was ignored, as he had expected, and yet he was desperate to do something, anything, to avoid this totally humiliation under the sharp eyes of the priestess and her guards. The other guard came forward with keys and unlocked his ankles from their shackles. The waist chain was next, leaving David with only the handcuffs holding his arms behind him.

"Stand up, boy," said the priestess in what most people would have called a kindly voice.

"Madam..." he began, then changed the title, "Mistress, please tell me what is happening? I have done nothing wrong! I am loyal to One World and God. I go to church..."

With a wave of her hand, the priestess cut him off. "It is too late for you to protest," she said. "The Church has been given evidence that you have questioned God's will. That is enough."

"But..."

"Silence." Her voice remained calm, as if she were talking to a school child. "Do not speak. You have been found guilty and will undergo purification and penance."

David did not like the sound of that and started to speak again. Again he was cut off.

"One more word and you will be gagged." She made it sound as if she would be doing him a favour.

David swallowed. This just was not fair! He had tried to be obedient and dutiful to both the world government and the Church. He had been careful in what he said. Only a few times had his inner thoughts been given voice, and then only to friends he thought he could trust. Hell, he had heard much worse comments from other boys, and if half of what his friends had told him was true about what they had done with girls, he was virtually blameless by comparison.

"Step out of the box, sinner," the priestess said mildly.

David stepped down the few inches to the floor and stood there, very fearful of what would come next.

"Take the last of his dignity from him," the priestess told a guard.

David had no idea what she meant as he stood there, already completely naked. The guard reached a gloved hand towards his groin. It closed around his erection, and he yelled in pain as small spikes on the palm and fingers of the glove dug deeply into him. His erection subsided immediately, but for David this was just too much. Without a thought to the repercussions of his actions, he turned to flee. And ran right into the arms of the other guard.

Apparently, she had been expecting him to react like this. Her hand was around his testicles and gripping tightly before he realised what was happening. Her gloves were not spiked, but the pain was intense as she held and squeezed. David froze, motionless, open-mouthed, a half-formed shriek of agony in his throat that never came out as the guard held him with expert skill; releasing enough pressure to ease the agony and yet maintaining a grip that promised the intensity of the pain would increase if he tried to move. For a long time no one said a word. The women seemed fascinated by the expression on David's face, and watched him intently.

"Please, Mistress, please! At least let me have some clothes," David cried at last.

At a gesture from the priestess, one guard removed something from a pocket and, while the other guard held David firmly, she forced a metal bar into his mouth. The bar was half an inch thick and was firmly in place before he realized what was happening. There were two small

chains attached to each side of the bar. Those were brought together behind his head and locked together with a small lock, but not before being pulled as tightly as the guard could. David found himself most uncomfortably gagged. His tongue was pushed down, and the hard edges of the bar crushing the soft flesh at the corners of his mouth.

“If you do not obey, we can do much more to you,” the priestess informed him. “Much more.”

David believed her.

“You will be dressed as befits a sinner,” she continued. “And then you will be taken to a place where you will begin purification.”

With a guard on each side, he was forced to march away from the Transport Box to another part of the room. For the first time, he noticed where he had been taken. The room reminded him of the school cafeteria. It was fairly large and twice as long as wide. There were, he realized with a shock, four more Transportation Boxes. One, to the left of the one that had brought him in was also open and empty. The other three were to the right and closed. He had to wonder what was inside them. Where they empty? Or did each hold a prisoner, helpless and afraid, as he had been. And as he still was, for that matter.

There was a table with a dozen boxes on it. Each cardboard box had a number written upon it. The priestess studied him carefully for a moment, then went to the box with the number eight written on it. From within she took something small and shiny black. She tossed it to one guard.

Working together as if they had performed this ritual many times, one guard held his arms while the other lifted one foot and inserted it into the black garment. When his other foot had been also inserted into it, he realized that it was, more or less, a pair of shorts. But as the garment was pulled up his legs, he realized two additional facts. First was that it was made of rubber. It stretched. The second thing was that it was way too small for him.

But the guard pulled and tugged and managed to force the too-small shorts over his hips. When she was finished smoothing them out, David realized that they were too small for a reason. They fitted tightly! Very tightly around his hips, his buttocks and, worst of all, they squeezed his genitals most painfully. It was, almost, worse than having the guard's gloved hand gripping and squeezing him, and he groaned in pain. But he did not dare to say a word of complaint, for fear of an even worse punishment.

The priestess handed a pair of shoes to the other guard, but it was a pair of shoes unlike any David had ever seen before. These were not what he knew as men's shoes. In fact, he had rarely seen anything like them even worn by a woman. Something similar, perhaps, he had seen on films of women parading the latest fashions, but those the guard was now holding were like some ridiculous caricature of fashion model's footwear. Firstly, the heels were so high and so pointed as to make it virtually impossible to balance on them. Secondly, the shoes seemed as though half of each one was missing. The area around the heel was complete, and so was an

unnecessarily thick leather strap designed to fit around the ankle and hold the shoe in place, but from an inch or two further down the shoe there was nothing at all. Whoever wore them would have no protection whatsoever on the underside of the foot from somewhere around the centre of the foot's arch to the end of the toes. And, it was clear, David was expected to wear them!

The guards forced him to sit on the table, and one held his leg while the other fitted the shoe onto him. It fitted. Just. It squeezed his heel and the top part of his foot quite uncomfortably, but it fitted. The broad ankle strap was locked into place with a small, brass padlock, and then the guards turned their attention to the other shoe. Soon, both shoes were fitted onto him, but the guards were not finished.

A thin, strong length of chain joined the shoes and was locked on. Its purpose was clear. Even if he were able to walk with any confidence at all in these shoes, he would only be able to take very short steps. Running, or even walking at any speed would now be impossible. The guards were still not finished.

The priestess handed the first guard a hinged ring of metal with another thin chain welded onto it. With an evil grin, the guard reached towards David's groin and pulled the sides of the rubbery garment towards her. Her hand reached inside. David closed his eyes and cringed, expecting her to grasp his balls again. She did, but to his surprise her grip was almost tender. He felt something cold, and there was a sharp click, then the slap and moment of intense pain as the rubber shorts tightened on him again, but by the time he had opened his eyes she was again standing in front of him.

"Stand him up," ordered the priestess.

The guards obeyed immediately. As he tried to straighten to stand unsteadily on the ridiculous high heels he was wearing, he found that it was impossible. Worse, he was in intense pain the moment he tried, and worse still the guards and the priestess were laughing at him. He lost his balance and fell.

"Get up," the priestess commanded.

He tried. He really tried. With handcuffs still on his wrists, the high-heeled half-shoes locked onto his feet, the short chain between the shoes and, as he quickly discovered, a chain linking the now-locked hinged metal band around his balls to the chain between his feet – too short to allow him to stand fully upright, it was virtually impossible.

They gave him nearly ten minutes to struggle unaided, and then picked him up and stood him on his feet, bent forward enough to keep the chain between his groin and his feet from pulling too hard on him. They removed the handcuffs.

For a few seconds David stood there, rubbing his sore wrists gratefully.

"Handcuffs are efficient," the priestess told him, "but entirely too comfortable for sinners. You are to be in constant pain as a reminder of your status. Guards!"

It was so fast that David did not realize what was happening to him. One second he was trying to stand still without falling, the next second his arms were behind his back and he could feel rope being wrapped around them. As the ropes went on and he felt his elbows being pulled together, he realized that what the priestess had said was true. Handcuffs were more comfortable. They were much more comfortable than having his arms bound tightly behind him.

They tied with expert cruelty and efficiency. His wrists were quickly bound together, and then his elbows. Then, another piece of the slender rope was looped around his waist and pulled tightly, forcing his arms hard against his back. That rope encircled his waist half a dozen times, and then was cinched down tightly and knotted even more tightly. It was like nothing he had ever felt before. His arms were completely denied him. All he could do was wiggle his fingers as they were held down just above his buttocks.

He was helpless now but they were not yet finished with him. They set him on the table and bound his ankles tightly together. Then they bound him just above his knees. For some reason, his mind wondered why the rope above his knees was a little looser than the other ropes upon his body. Everything else they did was extra tight.

He found out. While still sitting on the table, he was rotated until he was lying on his side. Then the strong hands folded him at the waist until his knees were pushed against his chin and his chest against his legs. Ropes were wrapped around his legs and torso, holding him in that folded position. A dozen windings of rope wrapped around his arms at the elbows and behind his knees. Because of the bending of his body, the rope around his waist cut into him, reminding him of the chain in the Transportation Box.

Not content to fold him up, they also tied a rope to that already around his ankles and pulled that back under his ass and to his wrists. A couple times the rope passed that way, and then it was slowly pulled taut. His legs folded at the knees with his feet coming down towards his ass. They were strong, stronger than David would have imagined any woman could be, and their strength prevailed over his body not wanting to be folded into a ball and, when the final knots were tied, his feet were touching his thighs and he was as small a ball as a man could possibly be folded into.

The ropes hurt. Not terribly, but painfully. What scared him most was wondering how long they were going to leave him tied like this. If it was anywhere near as long as he had been in the Transportation Box, he would be very miserable indeed.

A metal box was brought over and set on the table next to his bound body. It looked very much like a large suitcase, but there was no handle and there were holes, apparently air holes, cut into the sides. David's heart sank when he saw that, for he knew immediately the purpose of that box. It was another form of the Transportation Box; this one designed to hold a man tied into a ball.

He was, of course, correct. They picked up his balled-up body and placed it in the box. A little pushing and shoving was necessary. The box was not really quite big enough for a man of

his size, but they crammed him in and closed the lid. Once again his head was forced down by the metal walls of his new prison. Only, this time his chin was pressed against his knees. He heard the snap of padlocks and knew that, even if he could somehow escape the ropes, he would still be a prisoner. He wanted to shout, to tell them that they could not do this to him, that it was inhuman. No words came. He knew it was, in any case, be pointless. There was only despair.

* * *

Chapter II

Welcome to Saint Secundina's

Small amounts of light crept into his metal prison through the air holes, but the position of his head allowed him no view of her surroundings. All he knew was that it was a long trip. And that he was very uncomfortable.

Motion was almost constant, that much he could feel. Occasionally there were pauses when his container rested but unlike the long hours spent in the Transportation Box, these motionless periods were very brief. At first he remained on his right side, the position they had placed him in. But a few times his box was turned so that he was sitting on his bottom, and a few times even on his back. Whoever was manhandling his box around did not seem to really care which side should be up. Or, maybe, since lying on his bound arms was more uncomfortable, it was an additional and deliberate part of his punishment. Because his body filled the narrow confines, he did not move within the box, only felt the changing stresses as his positions altered. For a while he assumed that him being bounced around and placed in different positions was random, but after a while he realized that only once had he been placed in a head down position, and that for less than a minute.

There were noises. Clanking and bangs and voices. Sometimes he could make out words but never were they directed to him. Mostly it was instructions to place the box here or there. Or chatting on unrelated subjects. The voices ceased at the same time as there was a change in the way he was being handled. Now he lay on his bound arms, it was darker, and he could sense constant motion. Those clues, plus the sound of a motor, gave him to know that he was again being transported in a truck or something like that.

The ride took a long time. With nothing else to do, David tried to work free of the ropes. Of course, he had no idea what he would do if he could manage to free himself of them. He would still be a prisoner inside the metal box, but part of him wanted to try to do something. It did not sit easy upon his mind to simply lie there and accept whatever fate had in store.

His fingers explored the very limited range they had. The tight ropes around his wrists

restricted his hand movement, but what was more limiting was the fact that his hands were partly numb from the pressure of those ropes tightly wrapped around his arms at the elbows. As well as holding his arms tight against his body, the ropes restricted the flow of blood in his arms and gave rise to a cold and sluggish feeling in his fingers. He wondered if some kind of damage might be done to his hands if the ropes remained on him too long, but the numbness remained constant and he could move his fingers, so maybe his captors had gauged exactly how tightly a man could be bound.

He finally gave up all attempts to work free. The only rope he could feel was that running from his wrists down to his ankles. It was taut, and he could feel no knots. Pulling and tugging his arms accomplished nothing. He was forced to lie there, quite uncomfortable, and endure. Anger alternated with fear in his mind. He knew now that they did not intend to kill him outright. But what was “purification and penance?” Maybe if he renounced his protests against the marriage laws and promised to be a good, obedient husband and citizen, they would let him go.

Even as those thoughts gave rise to hope, he knew it was not likely. Of all the people he knew who had been arrested and disappeared, no one had ever reappeared. If they purified people of sinful thoughts and made them into correct-thinking, good citizens, would it not be to their advantage to release them back into the neighbourhoods they came from as a lesson to others? Role models or something like that? But he had never heard of a single case of that happening. It would lead one to assume that either those taken were never released or they were released someplace so far from their former homes that they could never return. Something was rotten in Denmark, to quote a play he had once read.

David had no idea how much time had passed since he had been snatched on his way home, but from the discomfort in his stomach and his tiredness, surely many hours had passed. He had been walking home when the black uniforms grabbed him, about three o'clock. Dinner had certainly been missed. His best guess was that it would be rather late, perhaps even midnight. He prayed that he would soon be free of this metal box and these terrible ropes, but even as he did, he realized that his praying was only habit. He was not really praying in sincere belief and certainly not expecting that God would help him. Having never really thought about it, David suddenly realized that he had never really believed in Her. He had gone to church, repeated the Bible lessons, sang the songs, dutifully performed all the rituals of a believer but, inside, had he really believed? Now, at the one moment of her life when he needed belief and faith in an all-powerful being who would protect him, he found that faith lacking.

In the turmoil of a mind pushed towards its limits, he wanted to believe. True belief would save him. True belief would prevail and he would become the proper citizen he should be. Then, they would cease punishing him, and “purification and penance” would not be needed. But true belief did not come to him. He realised with a heavy heart that it had never been with him.

David was half way between consciousness and sleep when it came to him that the motion and noise had stopped. So had the sounds. Some hope flared that finally he would be allowed out of the box and untied. It would be wonderful, a victory of sorts amid a flood of defeat. But the hope died as long minutes stretched out with no indication that anyone was near him, let alone about

to unlock his box. The ropes continued to dig into his flesh and the metal bar chained into his mouth continued to make his jaw ache. It also made him drool on himself because he could not swallow properly. And he had found that being forced to wear those high-heeled half-shoes made his feet ache terribly.

Once again he wanted to cry out against the injustice of it all, but it seemed too much effort.

Then voices came faintly into his prison. As they grew louder, he began to make out words.

“What’s this? Oh, crap, another one.”

Then a different voice, “It’s three o’clock in the morning. Hell, I don’t feel like processing another one in. Let’s just leave it and let the morning shift take care of it. They’ll be here in four hours.”

“Yeah, he’s not going anywhere. Let’s get coffee.”

There followed crude laughter, and then the sound of footsteps fading away.

David made whining noises around the bar in his mouth and wished he could shout angry words. It was doubtful that the two women walking away heard his distress. Even if they had, they would have done nothing about it. Why put out the effort? He would still be lying inside that metal box when the morning shift came in.

It was a big surprise to David when he heard voices again and realised that he had been asleep.

“The swing shift left a package for us.”

About the time the first locks were being opened, David was fully awake and aware of hands moving his box, also aware of aching and stiff muscles over most of his body.

The bright light made him blink so he really did not see the faces of the four women who lifted him out of the box and set him down on a metal table.

“Packing looks okay,” one commented. “Go ahead and call the Mother Superior’s office and tell them they’ve got a new one.”

As one woman closed his box and stacked it against a wall where there were half a dozen others, the other woman checked him over. She felt his hands, checked each and every knot and rope on his body, and even shook the lock on his gag chain. “Okay,” she muttered to herself. “No circulation problems, no restraint problems.” Then she slipped a hand in between his thighs and clasped his genitals. “Not bad,” was her comment.

She began to unknot the rope between his wrists and ankles, taking her time and humming to herself. David found it painful to straighten his neck after having had his head bent forward for so long. Then the rope loosened and his legs began to unfold, an action that brought pain to joints

and muscles locked too long in one position. The ropes holding him folded in half were removed, and for the first time in hours he was able to start to straighten his body. He gave a yelp of pain as he was stopped short of straightening his legs completely by the chain joining his genitals and his feet. He had forgotten about it completely.

Thankful for the lessening of some of his pain at least, he looked up into the eyes of the female guard. She was a little older than most of the guards he had seen so far, but she still wore the black uniform. It was just a little tighter across the middle than most. He whined and tried to show her the metal bar in his mouth.

"I can't do any more until the nun arrives," she told him. "Get used to it. You're going to have to live with ropes and chains and gags for a long time."

David frowned. If he were finally at the place they were sending him for "purification and penance" why was it necessary to keep him bound up like a wild animal? Surely this place was like a prison. The cells and walls kept the prisoners in, not ropes and gags.

There was a noise and the guard turned to throw a smart salute to the newcomer. David tilted his head to see who it was.

The woman was wearing black, but David immediately realized that it was not a guard uniform. It was... Well, David did not know what to call it. The whole suit was made of leather and fitted its owner like a second skin. With a high and tight neckline, it covered almost every bit of skin, yet made the woman sexier than full nudity would have done. The fair-sized mounds of the top told of breasts at least as large as David had seen on any of the girls at his school. The waist was slender and flared nicely out to the hips. David could not see below that, but just knew that those leather-clad legs ended in high heels. They clicked on the concrete floor as she walked up. Her blonde hair was pulled back in a tight ponytail. David could see no earrings, nor any make-up. The young woman had deep blue eyes and over-sized lips that made her seem to pout.

As the two guards stood by, this woman walked slowly around the newly arrived guest. David had never felt so strange under the gaze of a woman before. He was simply not used to being looked at like a piece of beef or a prized animal. He shuddered under that predatory gaze; it made him feel like a mouse cornered by a cat. The woman reached out and pulled one of the hairs at the top of his leg. David uttered a small noise as the hair was yanked out of his skin. It was not a lot of pain, but it was unexpected.

"Untie his legs," she ordered.

David was glad to hear the order. Next, he truly hoped, would be his arms, which hurt much more than his legs.

Two of the women easily pulled him up to a sitting position at the edge of the table, and began unknitting the ropes with difficulty. The other guards had finished the bondage of this young man with seriously tight knots. As the ropes were peeled from his flesh, David was amazed to see the deep, red marks left behind. They had been put on tightly enough, but being folded up as

he was had made them cut in all the more.

As they were removing the ropes, David suddenly saw something that frightened him a lot. In the gloved hands of this woman was a short, black leather whip! The slender whip was only two feet long, and it ended with a thinner strip of leather. David had no real way of knowing about such things, but instinct told him that such a whip would hurt.

His legs free, David waited for them to start on his arms. They did not. Instead, the woman nodded to them. "Take him to the prep room."

He was carried to the prep room. There was no question about whether or not his legs would take his weight and allow him to walk. He was simply picked up, two guards on each side of him, and carried off through an open door. There were cabinets and a couple chairs, but the main attraction in that room was a table much like the examining table in a doctor's office. It was a little longer than David and a little wider. He was immediately lifted up and placed on it. He thought he could see some straps attached to the sides of the table.

"Strap down his top part," came the order. The guards were already doing just that. Placed on his bound arms, leather straps were quickly wrapped over David's torso. One strap went across his chest, another over his waist. There was even one across his neck. All were pulled down tightly and buckled.

"Pull those shorts off."

Again, as if anticipating the order, they were already reaching for him. David tried to resist, but it was hopeless. It took them not more than a few seconds to unlock the metal bracket around his genitals and unlink the chain. One woman forced his knees apart while the other slipped her finger into the very tight waistband and pulled. It took a bit of struggling for the rubber garment was indeed far too small for him. Deliberately or otherwise, she managed to pull out a more than a few of his pubic hairs along with the shorts.

"Come on, you know what to do next!" came the sharp order. Those sparkling blue eyes looked as if they might be happy using that whip on the guards.

They did know. Each took an ankle, pulled his legs apart until the knees were just over the edges of the table, and then pulled down so his legs from the knee down were pressed against the sides of the table. There was a strap waiting for each ankle and in a few seconds David's legs were held wide apart.

All four guards stood at the end of the table. They seemed eager for the next stage of this procedure.

"I'll do it, girls," the nun said. She was taking a few items from a drawer. "I wouldn't want you cutting off something important."

"Yes, Ma'am." If they were disappointed, it did not show too much. At least she allowed them

to stay and watch.

The items set on the table between David's legs were simple. A mug, a brush and a razor. The mug had a cake of soap in the bottom; the brush was round and only a few inches long with a plastic handle. And the razor was a cheap disposable kind.

The nun took the mug to a sink and added a small amount of water. Then she lathered up the soap with the brush. David could not see what was going on, but he felt the cold soap as it was applied around his genitals. The soap was rubbed in thoroughly, taking care not to miss any part. David could only wonder what was going on, for the idea of shaving off his pubic hair would never have occurred to him.

With the target well lathered, the mug and brush went into the sink and she picked up the razor. David still could not see what was going on but he felt as the first touch of the razor began cutting. He squealed in fear, as well as he could squeal with the gag bar in his mouth, as he realised what she was doing, suddenly terrified that a slip of the razor would be disastrous – and, at the same time, not at all sure that she would not quite deliberately damage him. The straps, of course, prevented any movement, which perhaps was fortunate. Carefully, but with swift, practised strokes, she methodically shaved his pubic hair. The razor was wiped occasionally on a towel, which was then dampened and used to wipe off the excess lather.

“There you are,” the nun said with pride. “All nice and smooth. It's so much nicer now, isn't it? Shall I shave your legs too? Or shall I ask the guards to pull out the hairs one at a time?”

The guards chuckled.

“Ahhggg! Verrrr!” David was trying to tell them he had been quite happy with his hairy groin just the way it was and he most certainly did not want his legs shaved or the hairs pulled out one at a time!

“What are you trying to tell us?” the nun asked.

“Urghgh,” gurgled David, shaking his head vigorously.

The nun smiled wickedly. “Oh, joy! I think he's trying to tell us that he's a virgin. Poor little man. Have you never had sex normally? Too late now, you know. You won't be doing anything like that around here, will he girls?”

She reached down to pat his hairless genitalia. “Don't worry. We won't hold it against you for being a virgin. In fact, I'll make a note of it in your file, and we'll take special care of you, I promise.” There was a lot in common with her smile and a cat playing with a mouse.

“Let's move this show along,” the nun said. “Get those shorts back on him. Have to dress him befitting his status here at Saint Secundina's, right?”

They were already releasing the straps from his ankles. As they lifted his legs to pull the

shorts towards his waist, David got the first glimpse of his newly bald groin. He was shocked. It did not seem possible but he felt more naked than he had done a few minutes ago!

As the shorts settled crushingly into place, the guard let go of the waistband after pulling it as far out as it would go. It snapped against his flesh with a loud smack, and for a moment he was in agony as it seemed to grasp and squeeze his testicles at least as painfully as the guard's gloved hand had done earlier. The metal bracket and chain was carefully re-fitted.

"Stand him up." They obeyed, releasing the straps and pulling the newly shaved young man to his feet. And it was necessary for them to hold him. He was still wearing the half-shoes locked onto him and, with those impossible high heels and the rough treatment his legs had been getting all night, he could hardly stand, not even slightly stooping, which was all that the bracket and chain would allow him to do even if nothing else prevented it.

"Okay, you can take off the ropes and the gag."

David wanted to shout with happiness.

He did moan, however, as the rope came off and circulation returned to his arms. He cried out when the metal gag was pulled from his mouth and he found that he could not close his jaw. He finally managed it, but the process was painful. Eventually he was standing unsteadily, free of all restraints except for the half-shoes locked onto his feet and the chain between them, and the pins-and-needles feeling was fading away. He almost said thank you, but he was not sure if his mouth would work. His jaw was not feeling at all normal.

Freedom, he was quick to discover, was a fleeting moment in time at Saint Secundina's, something rarely experienced and to be savoured while it lasted. In this case, it was about two minutes. While he stood there swaying on unsteady feet, they locked handcuffs on his wrists behind him. Strangely enough, he really did not care. They were more comfortable than the ropes had been; that was all he could think about.

Then they dressed him – well, sort of. The nun produced a small black package and proceeded to unfold it. At first, he thought it was a woman's nightdress, but it had far less shape to it than any nightdress he had ever seen and seemed to be open at the back. It looked something like a hospital gown, with tie-strings to pull the back together and yet it was much longer, and far flimsier, and black. While two of the guards held him steady, the nun placed the garment over his head. It almost reached the floor all around him, and hung loosely from his shoulders.

The final touch was another set of handcuffs, this time locked on just above his elbows. It forced his arms together behind him, not quite touching. It was a strangely comfortable yet awkward way to be secured, and it made him feel very strange indeed. The nun pulled the edges of the garment together and tied the strings together, and stepped back to look at him.

"This is ridiculous..." David began, realising how bizarre he must look, but was immediately cut off by a sudden pain on his left flank closely followed by another pain on his right. The thin garment did nothing to protect him from the nun's whip. He might as well have been naked.

“Do not talk unless told to,” the nun told him. “You are here for penitence and purification and... Well, some other stuff too. The Mother Superior will explain all. And don’t get any fancy thoughts about your rights as a citizen. Under Chapter IV, section 18 of the One World Charter, you are no longer a citizen. You are a sinner.”

The nun grinned as she swished the whip back and forth threateningly at the level of David’s groin.

“You will remain in this status for the rest of your life.”

Feeling his heart sink, David tried to swallow but his mouth was dry.

“One more little matter to attend to and then you are finished with your preparation. Guards!”

The guards grinned as they picked him up and carried him back out to the reception room and through another doorway. While the other room had seemed like a medical office, this one was like a dungeon. There was a wooden rail about waist high in the middle of the room and a propane-fuelled barbeque in one corner. Flames were dancing in the barbeque.

“What?!” David began but was hushed by another flash of pain across his ass.

Without command, the guards dragged him to the rail, bent him over it and, while one held his head to keep him in that position, the other looped a thick rope around his neck and tied it down to a ring in the floor. Then they both went around behind him and each took an ankle. Lifting and pulling, they spread his legs into a very wide “V” shape, and then secured those ankles in that position with additional ropes. Within a couple minutes, David was bent in half and resting upon the rail. His toes barely touched the floor on one side while the rope around his neck was quite snug.

“This branding iron,” the nun began, “has metal slugs set into a bar arrangement. On each slug is a number. The seven slugs have the numbers assigned to you. Let me see... Hmmmm. You are number 8233881. You are no longer David whatever. To identify you from now on, this number will be branded onto you.”

“No!” cried David. “You can’t!”

The nun and guards had heard all possible protests before. They had heard how important men were, how God would protect them, how they just COULD NOT possibly do such a terrible thing to any man, and many other complaints. They had heard screams and moans and cries of disbelief, and they had heard every plea imaginable. None of it meant anything, and none of it deterred them from their task.

The branding iron was glowing red. Even with seven digits, it was not really large, maybe three inches long by an inch wide. The nun checked the number on the branding iron against the invoice and nodded to the guard holding the iron. He turned and brought the hot end up near the

flesh of David's ass. The other guard was holding aside the rubber shorts to expose enough skin to accommodate the number. David could feel the heat as it approached his bottom and cried out loudly.

As his mind raced for anything to say that might avoid this terror, he realized that his mental processes had frozen. He was unable to think of anything. He did not even try to move his backside away from the heat -- not that it would have done him much good.

With a practiced move, the guard plunged the hot metal against his flesh. It would have been fun to do it slowly and watch as he squirmed and screamed in agony as the heat increased, but she knew that quickly made a much cleaner impression of the numbers. That, after all, was her job: to mark this sinner with his number, not to simply hurt him. There would be plenty of other occasions to cause pain, and plenty of other people to do that job.

David finally found voice and gave out a loud scream. It was more pain than he had ever felt in his young life. It was terrible -- no, it was worse than terrible. His head jerked up as his body tried to unfold from around the rail. The rope jerked tightly closed around his neck, cutting him off in mid-scream. It also cut off incoming air, a fact that he realized a few moments later. He forced himself to bend, and then sucked in air as the noose loosened.

"Welcome to Saint Secundina's, sinner number 8233881!" laughed his tormentor. "Welcome!"

* * *

Chapter III

Thy Rod Will not Comfort Me

David moaned as he stood in the middle of the room. After his branding, which the laughing nun had proclaimed very well done, the number being quite clear and easy to read, he had been removed from the rail, from that room, and taken down a long corridor. Saint Secundina's was evidently an older brick building or series of buildings, to judge by the walls and the few quick glimpses of it he saw out of windows.

Life was not going well for the young man. His backside hurt terribly; he was hungry, tired, and cold. The flimsy garment he was forced to wear and the excruciatingly tight rubber shorts were far from enough to keep the near-naked young man warm. Nothing he had ever experienced had compared to the burning of his flesh. Not even the long hours of tight bondage, the confined, cramped quarters of the Transportation Box were as bad as the shocking pain that lanced into his rear. He had even smelled seared flesh and knew it was his own.

The rubber of his shorts had been placed back over the burn so his fingers could not actually

touch the sore place. The location had been chosen carefully. Placed where it was easy to view on the lower part of his buttock, it was still far enough down to leave most of his ass untouched. There would be many occasions to mark up that currently untouched flesh, but whip marks and bruises and welts would not obscure the number.

As he walked along, he was glad to have the hands of those strong female guards, one on each arm. It was nearly impossible to walk normally in those high heels and, combined with his fatigue, he would not have been able to make it on his own. He glanced down at the feet of the nun walking in front of him and wondered how the woman could walk so well on boot heels easily as tall as those on the half-shoes he was now forced to wear.

They turned into a room that was barren of furniture and ornamentation. Windows along one wall showed a courtyard surrounded by more building and windows, all of red brick and institutional in their plainness. Apparently, they were on the second floor. The early morning sky above was grey and overcast, lending a gloom to the scene.

There was one other man in the room. David immediately assumed that he was also a “sinner” because he also wore the same ridiculous flimsy garment and the high-heeled half-shoes. His arms, David could see through the thin material covering him, were also locked in handcuffs behind him. In addition, his ankles were locked in another pair of handcuffs, the chain between which was longer than regular handcuffs and had its middle link locked to a ring bolt solidly set into the floor.

David was led to a similar ring and cuffs, and made to stand still while they were locked upon his ankles. Finished with that task, the guards left the room without a word. The nun in black leather walked slowly around David, eyeing his body from head to toe, and gently tapping her whip against the palm of her hand. Then she inspected the other man in another slow walk-around.

Finally, she stood before them, spread her legs wide and clutched the whip behind her back. “You will remain here,” she said loudly. Her words echoed off the bare walls. “You will not talk.”

She said nothing more. She marched from the room, her heels making a loud clacking on the wooden floor.

David turned to the other man to find he was looking back. For a long time they simply stared at each other. Both wanted to talk very much, but both were too afraid to so. The silence stretched out.

David could see that the other man wanted to talk as much as he did, and yet neither of them dared to speak a word. “Never stand out,” David’s father had often told him. “Follow the rules, and keep yourself to yourself. When it seems as though you have nothing left, you always have yourself. Remember that, and you’ll get through anything.” It had not been difficult advice to follow. Until now, David had never really had any real problems in his life. Now, however, he remembered those words clearly, and he knew that it was far and away the best advice to follow.

Turning his attention to his own predicament, David moved his arms against the handcuffs binding them. The steel bands offered no slack, no chance for him to force a hand from them. Likewise, his feet were snugly secure in their cuffs. He could shuffle an inch or two, but that was all. After a little consideration of his position, David thought that he would be able to sit down when standing became too tiring, but then he doubted he could regain his feet with his arms locked behind him, especially wearing those high heels. So overwhelmed by what was happening to him, he was afraid that sitting down might get him in trouble.

He also noted that there were five more sets of leg cuffs locked to the floor, each about three feet from the next. They could have seven sinners standing in a row, he realized, which led him to wonder how many people were arrested. Everyone knew of someone who had disappeared. It had to be almost a daily occurrence, and that really was a frightening thought.

With a sigh, David tried to prepare himself mentally for another long wait. That seemed to be the pattern. Restraints and long waits.

This one turned out to be not so long. There was a noise from the hallway and a minute later a pair of guards hustled in another man. Like the first two, he was young, wearing the flimsy, flowing robe-like garment, and bound with handcuffs. And like the first two, he was led to a pair of leg cuffs and locked into them. There was no nun with this prisoner, so one of the guards stood before him, face to face, and told him there would be no talking. Then they left.

This prisoner, or sinner, or whatever the women in this place chose to call those men they were ill treating, was on the other side of the first one, a little too far for David to see clearly through the garment he wore and establish whether the number branded on his backside started with the same two digits as his. He was sure it would do. He could see, however, that this man had numerous red marks half hidden by the rubber shorts and more across the backs of his thighs, vicious swollen ridges of red skin that stretched down half way to his knees. David shuttered. Those marks could only have come from a whip, and they must have hurt him terribly.

The newcomer's eyes searched the room, then his two fellow prisoners. He jerked angrily at his ankles shackles, an action that had to hurt, and then he glared around again. David could see that the handcuffs on the man's arms were locked much more tightly than his. The thin metal cut into the flesh both at the wrists and above his elbows. He was also a little heavier-set than David, and apparently could not easily bring his elbows together behind him. They were forced together by the handcuffs in a manner that had to be painful.

"What the shit is happening?" the newcomer asked in a loud voice, almost as if the other two prisoners were responsible for his condition. He looked defiantly from one face to the other, but both men were too frightened to reply. For a long time he glared at them, and then seemed to break down completely. His lower lip began to tremble and, quite unexpectedly, tears streamed down his face. "What the fucking hell is happening?" he wailed.

There was the sound of heels on wooden floor and three nuns walked in.

One was the nun who had “processed” David. All three wore the same black leather suits. Two had their hair pulled sharply back into ponytails. Those two carried their small whips like field marshals with their batons. The third was different. She was older, heavier and wore a classic nun’s headpiece of black and white. Hanging between her breasts was a heavy, gold cross with red and green gemstones set into it.

For a long minute none of them spoke, but the older nun glared at the newest man. She must have heard him talking as they came down the hall, David reasoned. He hoped desperately that he would not be punished because one of them had spoken.

“I,” she began regally, “am Mother Superior Helena. I am in charge of Saint Secundina’s.” She paused to glare at each of them. “You are sinners.”

The word dripped with venom, as if it were the nastiest word in the language.

“You are here to be purified of the sin that fills your minds and bodies.” She fingered her cross while she spoke. “You are here to become one of God’s Children again.” She paused dramatically. “If that is possible.” She sounded as if she thought it would not ever be possible.

“You will pray, night and day. You will do penitence daily. You will come to know that pain is the only way to God’s forgiveness. You will come to embrace pain, for it cleanses the body and soul. It is through the pain and tears of sinners that God is refreshed and made to know Her creations love Her.”

As she warmed to her subject, her fingers caressed the cross faster.

“The world was filled with evil! Men almost destroyed it, before the one true God showed us the way. Now we must continue our crusade to destroy all evil.”

She was pacing before the captives and her voice rose. “And,” she told them, “the only way for that to happen is by constant prayer and penitence. Constant! We must cleanse out all evil from ourselves and, through our suffering, God will keep us safe!”

“No!” came a cry from the new man.

The Mother Superior was jerked to a halt in her pacing. It was obvious that she was not used to being interrupted in her sermons. She glared at the offender for a long time before resuming.

“It is through such places as Saint Secundina’s that this good work is done.” She waved an arm to encompass all of the buildings and grounds. “Here, thousands of sinners are constantly praying. Here, and in other such places around the world, thousands of sinners are suffering penitence that we all may live in God’s holy light! Your pain is pleasing to God for it shows that we are sincere. Man used to sacrifice animals, but now your pain is our sacrifice to God. It must continue! It will continue! Forever!”

Clasping the cross in both hands tightly to her breast, the Mother Superior lifted her eyes

heavenward in religious bliss.

Coming down from her high, the woman looked around as if remembering where she was, then turned abruptly to leave. But before she went out the door, she called back to the nuns still standing there, "The one who spoke: The Shaft."

The two nuns smiled wickedly at each other, and then left the room.

When they were alone again, the outspoken man proclaimed. "Crazy! She's absolutely crazy!" When neither of them answered, he added, "Don't you see? God can't want us to be suffering constantly? My father says that God is a God of love. A forgiving God. This isn't right. This is crazy!"

David agreed but dared not speak it aloud.

The nuns returned, along with two others. "Your legcuffs will be unlocked from the floor now but left on you," one told the group. "You will find you can walk if you are careful. Remember you're on heels."

Two of the nuns knelt at David's feet to unlock his legcuffs. "There are rules here. Remember and obey them. None of you will talk unless told to. None of you will attempt to injure a guard or nun in any way. You will obey any order given to you by a guard or a nun, or any other female you should chance to meet here. And don't even think about trying to escape. Security is quite good here. No one has ever escaped. And attempts will be punished most severely."

The two had moved to the next man.

"I am Mistress Bernadette. And the first one of you who tries to call me 'Bernie' I will rip the tongue out of your head. You will address all nuns as 'Mistress.' Remember that."

They were working on the third man. At the point where his ankle chain was unlocked, the third nun stepped forward with a short pole in her hands. At the end of the pole was a metal band, slender and in the shape of a loop. It was quickly slipped over his head and then tightened down until the loop was snug against his neck. The intent was not to strangle, but to control. Using that pole for leverage, it was easy for the guard to force him to move in any direction she wished. As the pole was twisted, the metal band cut in painfully. The device held him at arm's length and controlled him nicely.

"Since all three of you were assigned here at the same time, and given sequential numbers, I will simply use your last number instead of the full number. You," she said, pointing to David, "are number one. And you two and you, troublemaker, three."

The ankle chains, they quickly found, did allow walking – at a slow pace with short steps, and only if they were carefully to maintain balance on those absurd high heels. They were led out of the room with Mistress Bernadette in front of them and the other two nuns on each side of the sinners, whips at ready.

The trip was a very long one for men with shackled feet, high heels, and unable to stand fully upright because of the chains joining their genitals to their ankles. The corridor was long, stairs negotiated with great care, and David's feet ached terribly by the time they reached a door with the number twenty-three painted on it. From the passage down two stairways, he was sure that there were now underground. The corridor they were in contained thirty or more doors with numbers. Most were closed but they did pass one door that was open, allowing a view David found most depressing. Inside were three wooden posts, and on each was a sinner, tightly bound and totally helpless. David did not have more than a quick glance before one of the nuns kicked the door closed in a manner suggesting that it should not have been left open in the first place. Yet it was enough for David to see that each of the men within was very, very tightly bound with numerous ropes wrapped around his body. Here, they were all totally naked, each with shaved genitals, and all gagged with a ball stuffed into their mouths and held in place with a strap. From what little she could see, their arms were bound behind the wooden posts, and dozens and dozens of cords crossed their bodies, each cutting in deeply. The impression that David had was that these men could not possibly have been tied tighter, and that there was much pain from such tight restraints.

Room twenty-three did not contain posts. It was a narrow room, hardly more than four feet wide, and contained just two objects that David could see. The first, was a padded table with what appeared to be a step at one end of it. The other was some sort of mechanical device on wheels, from the end of which a long metal pole protruded. On the end of the pole was something that David thought he recognised immediately, although he had never seen anything artificial like it. He had no idea what it could be used for in a setting like this. There was nothing else in the room; no windows, no furniture, nothing but the device, the table and its bizarre step, and drab grey walls.

Sinner number three was dragged into the room, seeming at first to be as confused as to the nuns' intentions as was David. The others remained in the doorway.

The flimsy garment was ripped from sinner three, and his chains and cuffs were removed. With some difficulty, the tight rubber shorts were also removed, and there was an obvious expression of relief on his face as the pressure was taken off his genitals. He was led over to the padded table.

The nuns made sinner three kneel on the padded step, his arms stretched out across the table and his wrists secured by thick leather straps. A wider strap went over his back and was tightened, holding him down onto the table, and then more thinner straps held his legs in place on the step. He, and the other men, still had no idea what was about to happen.

After checking that sinner three was secure and unable to move at all, the nuns turned their attention to the mechanical device. It was only when they wheeled it towards him, the implement on the end of the pole pointing in his direction, that the other men began to realise what was intended. That implement was exactly what David had thought it resembled: a phallus.

One nun guided the device carefully. The other two positioned themselves either side of sinner

three and, each with a hand on one of his buttocks, reached for the phallus as it approached. Full realisation of what was about to happen came to sinner three as he felt the blunt end of the phallus pressing between his buttocks. He squealed, but he could do nothing.

“Relax,” suggested one of the nuns. “It will hurt less if you relax. Relax and pray.”

While the two of them pulled his buttocks apart as wide as it was possible to pull them, the third pushed the device forward. The phallus was pressed hard against his anal sphincter while he continued to squeal his objections to what they were trying to do to him but, as far as the men watching in horror could see, it had not penetrated him. Apparently satisfied, the nun stopped pushing and bent down to turn catches at the base of the device, locking the wheels so that it would not roll either forward or back.

Sinner three was breathing heavily. The muscles on his arms and legs bulged as he strained against the restraints holding him, but he was unable to move any more than a fraction of an inch in any direction. One of the nuns, looking down at him in amusement as they all were, slapped his buttocks lightly with every appearance of it being an affectionate gesture. “Lubrication?” she asked the other nuns.

One of them shook her head. “He won’t need it,” she replied confidently. “The phallus was changed this morning. It’s the new frictionless coating.”

“Frictionless?”

The nun shrugged. “That’s what they call it. I think it just means very smooth. I’m sure there will be more than enough friction for him to *get the point* once he’s been here for a while.” She laughed at her own joke.

“Ready?” asked the nun behind the device, and when the others nodded, she began to turn a handle on a small wheel at the side. Little by little as she turned, the pole extended and pushed the phallus into sinner three. He screamed.

“It’s in,” advised one of the nuns standing by him. “A few more turns, and we can start.”

The phallus was indeed in. It had pushed past his anal sphincter and was now slowly disappearing into sinner three’s backside. Even from the doorway, the other men could see the sweat on sinner three’s back, and he screamed constantly.

“Oh do shut up,” commented one of the nuns, apparently without any expectation that he would take notice of her at that particular moment. She brought down her whip in a vicious whack on the side of his buttocks. “We haven’t done anything to you yet!”

The other nun ceased turning the wheel. Instead, she pressed a button and moved a sliding control a little way forward. Immediately, the device sprang into life with a whirring of motors. The pole retracted, bringing the phallus almost out of sinner three’s backside, and then pressed forward again. Slowly, steadily, and relentlessly, the mechanism thrust forward and

back. Sinner three's cries and screams rose and fell in time with the motion of the machine.

"Get on with it," suggested one of the nuns. "We haven't got all day."

It took a second to move the slider control further forward, and the nuns left the room taking the other men with them. The whirring of the motors became a deeper, heavier throb, and as one of the nuns closed the door, David could see the phallus thrusting in and out of sinner three's backside with rapidly increasing speed.

Just outside the door was a light switch. One of the nuns casually flipped it, and David knew it meant that sinner three was now in darkness within that torture chamber. When he looked at the nun in horror at what he had seen, the nun was smiling. She answered the unasked question. "He'll probably be there all day." She chuckled and added, "And he'll walk funny for a day or so."

Sinners number one and two were led away, each wondering silently if this terrible fate would one day happen to them. Maybe, but their fate that day was much milder. There was a room farther down the hallway, a number eight identifying it. Inside was a larger room with several curious devices in the centre: horizontal planks of wood each set between two thick posts. As he was led into the room, David could see that the plank was not one piece of wood but three, one of them set across the end of the other two. Each had semi-circles cut out of it, which came together to make round holes when the planks were together. He realised it was much like the pictures of stocks and pillories he had seen, only this was horizontal. There was a smaller hole between the two longer planks, and for the moment the purpose of this third hole puzzled him.

The use of this device was quickly made clear to the sinners. They were completely undressed, except for their shoes, just as sinner three had been, and then the planks was hinged and swung open. The men were then made to lie on the wood with their wrists positioned for the larger holes between the planks and their genitals dangling in position for the smaller hole. When the plank was swung back, the holes fitted snugly around their wrists and genitals, effectively trapping them in position. Two large padlocks were placed at the ends, locking the planks together.

"You will pray until dinner time," Mistress Bernadette informed. "You will not talk to each other, and you need not pray aloud. But you will pray. For your salvation, for your purification, for your souls, hell, I don't care what you pray for. But the rules say you are to constantly pray." She grinned. "Besides," she added, looking around at the boring grey walls and lack of windows, "what else have you to do?"

* * *

Chapter IV

Room and Board

For a long time David did nothing except to stare at the wooden plank. Eventually, he turned his head towards his fellow prisoner to find that the other man was looking at him too. Neither spoke for several minutes. Finally, still remembering the warning that they should remain quiet, David bravely uttered, very quietly, “Are you praying?”

The man smiled weakly. “No. Are you?”

“Oh, yes. I’m praying to wake up and find this is all a terrible nightmare.”

“I’ve been doing that since they took me off the street.”

David noticed that sinner number two, who was a bit shorter than he was, was stretched out on the plank quite uncomfortably. It was, in any case, going to become more and more stressful as time passed, but to have constant tension of being stretched between his wrists and his genitals, each trapped securely in the rough cut-outs between the planks, must already be not far short of agony.

“My name is David. I was walking home yesterday afternoon when a van pulled up and they grabbed me.”

“My name is Colin. My friends call me Cole. The same happened to me. I have no idea why. I was standing talking to a friend when the guards came up. They knew my name. I was dragged off to a truck and locked in one of those Transportation Boxes. God, it was terrible.”

“I know.”

They exchanged experiences, talking in as low a voice as they could, constantly fearful that they were getting themselves in trouble. It was thus established that they both had just had their eighteenth birthday, were nervously awaiting their assigned weddings, neither was a troublemaker in any sense, and both had considered themselves to be good, obedient citizens. Cole did, however, admit to having expressed some doubts about the upcoming wedding to friends. And he might have – just might have – been a little critical of the system.

After arrest, they had both been treated about the same: the Transportation box for a long trip and a longer wait, more transportation in a smaller box, the shaving of pubic hair, the rubber shorts, branding of their asses, and then meeting for the speech from the Mother Superior.

Lying face down on the wooden planks was not as bad as the other things that had happened to them, but it was still unpleasant. His stomach grumbled and he wondered if starvation was also a part of “purification and penitence.”

They both explored the limits of their bonds, coming quickly to the conclusion that escape was out of the picture.

“How long will they leave us like this?” Cole asked.

“Wasn’t something about dinner mentioned?”

“Gosh, that’s a long time off. It’s only morning.”

“Yes. But at least it gives us something to pray for,” David offered.

“Huh?”

“We can pray that the food here is better than the treatment.”

Cole snorted. “Probably bread and water.”

David said nothing, but in his heart he was afraid that Cole might be right. It would somehow go along with the rest of this place; it would be something that the Mother Superior would approve of.

It was as they had been told. Long, long hours crawled by with no respite from their restrained positions that grew steadily more bothersome. There was little they could do to ease the stress. They talked and then were silent for long periods. They told each other about their families, what they had liked in school, and their friends. Then they talked about what was going to happen to them. That was a short conversation for lack of facts. Cole left the idea dangling in the air that they might, indeed, spend the rest of their lives in that terrible place, prisoners and suffering.

Talking helped a lot. Had he been alone, David was sure the time would have passed much more slowly. Also that he would have fallen asleep even held as he was in such a position.

When the door opened, both men actually felt a sense of relief.

It was short-lived.

The nun who came in was one of the ugliest women David had ever seen. She was dumpy in a strange way, sort of fat here and there, not all over. Her face was narrow and came to a pointed chin. She was completely bald and seemed to have no eyebrows. Maybe they had been shaved off along with her hair. A couple of moles adorned her chin, one with a hair growing right out of the middle, but the worst was the eyes. Reptilian and cold, they viewed the two helpless men with an eagerness that was scary.

“Number 8233881 and 8233882! I am Mistress Hildegard. However you need not know that because you will not address me at any time. You will not say a word! Understand?”

She accented the question with a swish of her black leather whip.

“Yes, Mistress,” ventured Cole.

His reward was a swift cut across the back, making him cry out in shock and pain.

“I said you are not to address me,” Mistress Hildegard hissed. She turned to David. “Anything you want to say?”

David shook his head and clamped his lips shut.

“Too bad. Well, I’m going to march you down to the cafeteria. If you don’t hurry along, you’ll feel the whip.”

She unlocked the stocks and swung away the planks. The men eased themselves up from the open half circles in the wood, and then paused to look at their captor. “Well!” she ordered them. “Stand up properly!”

Cole tried to rise but his knees gave way and he came very close to falling to one side. David considered the situation. His legs were suffering, but most of all it was his arms and his back that were giving him pain. Carefully, using the rigid plank for leverage, he managed to swing his legs over the side from where he could raise himself into a sitting position on the edge of the plank. Once sitting, he slid slowly forward until his feet touched the floor, already almost standing upright. He wobbled unsteadily.

Cole had watched and followed suit.

The noise that came from Mistress Hildegard might have been a snort. Apparently, she had been waiting for them to fall over. David suspected that she would then have whipped them until they managed to gain their footing without help.

She told the men to stand side by side and then handcuffed them together wrists to each other. With a swift cut of her whip to each of them on the buttocks, making them yelp and almost lose balance, she ordered them to walk in front of her.

Walking in the high heels and taking short paces because of the chain joining the half-shoes was hard enough. Stiff muscles from being held so long in one position made it worse, as did the handcuffs joining them, but what made it much worse was the snaps of the whip as the sadistic nun hit at their bare flesh while she rushed them along.

The cafeteria resembled every other cafeteria David had ever seen. It was large, had a serving line and numerous tables. Easily fifty or more sinners were eating with a few more standing in the serving line. As they were brought up to the beginning of the line, the handcuffs were unlocked and tossed on a large pile on a table.

“You sinners are new here,” said Mistress Hildegard. “So I’ll tell you the rules. You will pick up a tray, go down the line, and select your meal. Take as much as you want, but you will eat all you take. Wasting food will be punished. Do not talk while eating. When you are finished,

take your trays over to that place. Then line up by the door over there and wait for me.

“Needless to say,” she added, “do not try to leave the room. Escape from Saint Secundina’s is impossible, and any attempt will be severely punished.” Her mouth told them not to try escape but her eyes told them she wished they would. Undoubtedly she would enjoy administering that “severe punishment” herself.

David picked up a tray and shuffled forward. And he was very surprised by what he found.

The food smelled delicious! Sure, he was hungry and anything would have been good, but this was a top quality spread. There was a large bowl of mixed greens, followed by numerous salad additions, then a selection of a dozen different dressings. After that came sliced roast beef, turkey, also carved in front of him, mashed potatoes and gravy, and three different green vegetables. David opted for the turkey and probably took a larger portion than he should have done, but hunger drove him to recklessness.

There were rolls and butter, all the usual condiments available, and it was all followed by a selection of really first class desserts: cake slices, fresh bowls of fruit, sherbets, and even cream puffs! David took a couple cream puffs but felt guilty. Such a desert was very rare in his previous life; a real delicacy.

The greatest surprise of all came when he had finished making his choice of food and turned to see if Cole was behind him. Cole was, but right behind Cole was Mistress Hildegard! It seemed extraordinary to David that the nuns and the guards would be eating the same food as the prisoners and in the same dining hall!

Cole and David sat down next to each other and immediately were aware of the pain the hard wooden seat caused when pressed against fresh brands. They wiggled a bit to find a position that did not hurt too much. David noticed that Mistress Hildegard had moved off to a table populated by nuns only.

David devoured the salad far faster than he had been taught to eat. As he was cutting into the turkey, he realized that he was holding a steak knife, one with a sharp point and serrated edge. That could be a serious weapon in the hands of a desperate man, he thought, and looked around him. There were, as he had half expected, four nuns standing in each corner of the eating area, doing nothing but watching the sinners. He was pretty sure that any attempt to hide a knife would be noticed severely punished. Besides, where could anyone hide such a weapon? It had not really registered until that moment, but he and all the other sinners in that hall at that moment wore nothing at all except for high-heeled half-shoes. He wondered whether this was a deliberate policy. Certainly, if he had still been wearing the tight rubber shorts or the diaphanous black garment, then there might have been some possibility, however slight, that a concealed weapon could have gone unnoticed. As it was, the possibility was zero.

Ignoring thoughts of escape for the moment, he actually enjoyed the meal, especially the cream puffs.

Cole and David looked at each other, then over to Mistress Hildegard who was apparently savouring each bite and chatting with the other nuns. They decided to sit there a while longer. Naked as they were, it was very much better than being confined and restrained.

For the first time, David had a chance to look over a large group of sinners. All were men, although David wondered whether perhaps there were other prisons where only women were confined and punished. It was logical that there should be, but somehow it seemed unlikely. As he knew only too well, One World society believed that a woman's position was supreme. It was men who had caused the wars and conflicts of the past; at least, that was what David had been taught at school. It was inconceivable that anyone would be allowed to treat women in any way similar to the way he and the other men were now being treated.

There were a few men in the group now eating, however, whose appearance was rather different. All were as naked as he and Cole were, but there were several whose bodies were scarred or showed the deep red marks of recent whippings. Several also had additional chains locked onto them. One sinner to their right was burdened by quite a quantity of heavy metal shackles and chains, unlike most of the others who had their hands free while they ate. This man's arms were locked behind him in wide iron shackles at the wrists, above the elbows and around his neck. Heavy chains connected the shackles and trailed down underneath where he sat. David could see that his legs were similarly shackled. Another sinner, one with fewer chains attached although still not completely free of them, was feeding him.

Looking around, David found one corner where three sinners were eating in a different style. All three had their arms bound by cords behind their backs, elbows tightly together. Their ankles were locked in legcuffs. They were all kneeling in a row and eating out of bowls they had to bend down to reach. It was like a row of dogs eating. Each man had a bowl with some kind of stew or something similar in it, and a bowl of water. A nun standing above them held leashes attached to collars around their necks, and was vigorously using a whip to urge them to eat faster.

It had to be some kind of extra punishment, David reasoned, and he was very glad for his free arms and lack of additional restraining chains. He looked around to see if the man who had started out with them was anywhere, but failed to locate him. He wondered whether he was still restrained in that torture chamber, screaming as the mechanical phallus continued to pump in and out of his backside. David shuddered. That was a torture that he could hardly think about without squirming and clenching his buttocks.

There came a tap on his arm and Cole was pointing to the other side of the room. Mistress Hildegard was getting up. Certain that they should not keep her waiting, they both rose, took their trays and placed them on the ledge of the hatchway that obviously led to some sort of kitchen. Then they hurried over to stand by the door just ahead of Mistress Hildegard.

Frowning as if disappointed they had failed to keep her waiting, the nun took two pairs of handcuffs from a pile by the door, being sure to add the third pair to link the two sinners together. Then they were off, to where the men had no idea.

To their surprise, the destination was a communal shower area much like the locker room in school but lacking lockers. Half a dozen sinners were already there, along with several nuns. This time, they were free of all the restraints, and had even taken off the high-heeled half-shoes. In the large tiled room with a dozen shower outlets, they were washing, naked, and apparently totally oblivious to the nuns who watched them intently.

David was immediately worried. He glanced at Mistress Hildegard, and knew that there would be no problem for him with that particular nun. His concern was the others. Being a normal young man despite the treatment his body had received since he had been taken, he knew that if he were showering naked he would have the greatest difficulty in avoiding the natural male reaction to the younger, leather-clad nuns watching him.

Mistress Hildegard told them of the rules while removing the handcuffs from their arms: "No talking. The restroom is over there. You see the showers. Clean yourself and get out. There are soap dispensers there and washrags over here. Do a good job of it, too. You know what they say," she added with a wicked smile, "cleanliness is next to Godliness. And we expect a clean mind too. If we see any evidence of unclean thoughts, you will be punished for that too."

David was not sure if the nun was making fun of them or if she was serious but, either way, he was grateful for a chance to clean up. He had been through unpleasant and rough treatment for the last twenty-four hours, and he realised how sweaty he had become. He was under the shower almost the same second that Mistress Hildegard unlocked his high-heeled half-shoes.

David sighed with relief as he stood flat-footed for the first time in too long under the warm, cascading water. There were times, especially when walking, when the ache in his feet overrode all the other pains. He tried to ignore the watching nuns, and concentrated on washing thoroughly. It felt strange as the water splashed and flowed down his body over the newly shaved area around his genitals, but he tried not to think about it. Right at this moment, he had more important matters on his mind.

There seemed to be no rush. It was pleasant to stand unrestrained and allow the rivulets of warm water to flow over him. He thought about what was happening to him and the other men held captive here, and what might be done about it. Here, as in the dining room, the sinners outnumbered the nuns by at least four to one. Surely it would not be difficult for the men to overpower their captors right now before any sort of restraint was locked back onto them? Indeed, this would be the ideal opportunity to use those same restraints on the nuns. That would keep them out of action for a while, and give the men the opportunity to escape. The idea of having the nuns all locked up in the handcuffs that had been used on them was most appealing.

But then what? In which direction lay freedom? They had been told that escape from Saint Secundina's was impossible. How many more nuns and guards were there? How many locked doors would they have to get through? And, even if they reached the outside, what would they do next? All were nearly naked, and most, David guessed, had had their clothes cut off them just as he had. They could hardly expect to get very far if all that was available to wear were the tight

rubber shorts or the ridiculous thin robes or, perhaps, the uniforms worn by the guards or the nuns. The ever-present Control guards would on the lookout for them. Could they make their way back to their homes? And would that even be a good idea? They had been picked up from there once. Too many citizens would happily turn them in. Their families might try to hide them, but how would they live in this rigidly controlled society? How would they get jobs when Control had access to all employment files? And there was that brand on their backsides, labelling them as sinners for the rest of their lives.

David felt sick inside at these thoughts. The church had him, had them all, in a vice-like grip. He understood why none of the sinners showed the slightest inclination to rebel. It was all so frustrating!

A pile of large white towels awaited him. He dried himself, and then stood awkwardly. Mistress Hidegard ignored him, although he did his utmost to fix his attention on her. Almost every one of the other nuns was very much younger, very much prettier and, simply, for a young man in other circumstances they would be highly desirable and arousing women. He could see that several of them were staring at him intently, although he was deliberately not looking at them. Despite the aches and pains in his body and the extreme embarrassment he suddenly felt, he could also feel the natural stirrings within him.

“He’s waiting for you,” one of the younger nuns told Mistress Hildegard. “It looks as though you’ve made quite a hit with him.”

Mistress Hildegard snorted. “I’ll make a hit *on* him shortly,” she grunted. “He’ll learn.”

“We’ll do it, if you like,” offered one of them, and three of the leather-clad women came towards David.

“No you won’t,” declared Mistress Hildegard just as one of them was reaching towards David’s groin. “He’s mine for the moment. And I’m definitely not putting up with any disobedience like *that* .”

With the word “*that*”, David realised that he was, as he had feared, fully erect. Mistress Hildegard raised her whip.

“No! Please!” begged David, seeing that the blow from the whip was about to fall right onto his stiff member.

She ignored him. A second later he squealed in pain as the lash of the whip struck his prominent manhood. She raised the whip to strike again.

David tried to back away from her, clutching his groin with both hands. He backed straight into the three nuns who had approached him just a minute ago.

“Stand still,” one of them advised him. He did not have much choice. One grabbed his right arm, another grabbed his left arm, and the third pressed against his back, preventing him retreating. His hands were pulled away from his groin, and there was nothing he could do about it. With a sadistic glint in her eyes, Mistress Hildegard raised her whip again.

It took eight strokes of Mistress Hildegard’s whip before David’s erection subsided. He squealed, wriggled, screamed, and begged her to stop, much to the amusement of the nuns holding him. When at last Mistress Hildegard was satisfied she had destroyed his arousal completely, she signalled to the nuns to let him go. David fell to the floor, moaning, curled into a foetal position with both hands between his legs as if to protect himself.

“Get up,” ordered Mistress Hildegard curtly.

The nuns did not wait for him to scramble to his feet, which looked as though it was going to take a long time. He was pulled up, shaking, unable to believe what had just been done to him, and in considerable pain. He hardly had time to think what he should do or say next to avoid further punishment before his hands were cuffed behind his back, another pair of handcuffs joined his arms at the elbows, a pair of tight rubber shorts had once again been pulled up his legs, and he was wearing the high-heeled half-shoes locked onto his feet and linked together by a short chain.

He was led away, hobbling unsteadily, and taken to a dormitory.

There were at least thirty “beds” in the dormitory. A few were occupied already but most awaited a sinner. David did not know what sort of facilities he could have expected to be provided for the night, but this was certainly not it. Each bed was simply a length of wooden plank only a couple of feet wide. Various straps were secured to the sides, at the moment hanging loosely onto the floor. He was ordered to lie face down, and Mistress Hildegard made sure that he was centred on the narrow and rather hard wooden plank. Then she brought up a strap and pulled it across David’s back at waist level. It was joined to a matching strap on the other side and then pulled down tightly, pressing David quite firmly against the wood.

Another strap went over his legs just above the knees, and then he felt something at the chain joining the half-shoes. As far as he could tell, for he could see nothing of it from that position, it was pulled down over the end of the bed and secured there. He could feel the pressure on his legs and ankles as his feet were pulled at an uncomfortable angle.

His head was turned to one side and another strap passed over his neck. An additional length of leather strap was attached at a right angle to the neck strap, and that went over the top of his head to be buckled down at the top of the bed.

He watched as Cole was secured in the same manner with his head turned away from David.

It was a bit odd to have his body was rigidly held down, but his arms had some degree of freedom. They remained locked in handcuffs at the wrists and above the elbows, but were

otherwise unrestrained.

Mistress Hildegard leaned down between them to warn them. "There is a sensor in each bed. It is sensitive to sound in the range of the human voice. If you try to talk during the night, it will record the fact. In the morning, any sinner whose sensor shows he was talking will be punished."

She patted each sinner on the rubber-covered bottom and was gone.

For a while, David could hear other sinners being brought in and secured down to their beds. With his head held down, he could see very little, only an occasional nun or sinner passing through his field of vision. There was no talking, only the sounds of chains and leather straps being jerked tight. Eventually the last man was brought in and the lights turned off. He heard the door close.

In the dark, it was a terrible temptation to talk to Cole or to someone else. He had not seen anything that looked like a sensor, but how could he be sure it was all a bluff? Probably not, given the degree to which this place mistreated the sinners. His position was not all that uncomfortable, given what he had gone through recently. He explored a little with his fingers but quickly realized that he could touch nothing useful.

With all the rough treatment he had received, added to a full meal on his stomach and a warm, comfortable feeling of being clean, he was quickly asleep.

His dreams were troubled by nightmares of helplessness.

* * *

Chapter V

First Whole Day of Praying

For half the night, David slept without awakening, so filled with fatigue was he. For the second half, his sleep became more troubled, full of waking periods and bad dreams. Numerous times he tried to move as people normally do during the night, but was dragged out of sleep as movement proved impossible and he was fully awakened by the realization of his situation. When the lights were finally turned on, he did not feel very rested.

Two nuns went down the row of beds, unlocking chains and unbuckling straps. Most of the men, David noted, simply lifted themselves up to sit on the edge of the bed and wait. David

followed suit when his restraints were released.

They were marched off as a group for breakfast. David was beginning to feel this was more of a prison than a church or convent as the name would imply. Really, the nuns were simply female guards. There were, however, many unanswered questions and puzzling facets of the place, not the least of which was a strong sense that Saint Secundina's was not all that interested in the rehabilitation of its inmates.

Breakfast was good hot food and all you wanted of it. At least they were not starving sinners. After breakfast, they were all taken to a bare room and made to wait. A few at a time were taken out to destinations unknown. Cole and David were nearly the last to be taken. David expected them to go to some kind of room where they would be secured in some painful position and left there to pray all day. That seemed to be the pattern in this place. Instead, they were marched a long distance, around corners and down corridors to wind up in a room that looked very much like a doctor's surgery. In fact, it was the infirmary for Saint Secundina's, and it was soon clear that they had been brought here in order to be given a thorough medical examination.

As David had half expected, the medical staff here did not look much like he would have expected doctors and nurses. They were, inevitably, all female, and their uniforms were not so very different from the clothing worn by all the nuns. It was not, David only noticed when one of the nurses began her examination of him, made of leather as the nuns' and guards' uniforms were. It was, in fact, made of a smoother, shinier material that David supposed must have been some sort of rubber or latex. Perhaps, he thought, it was easier to keep clean than leather, even shiny leather, would have been, and there was no doubt that these nurses were obsessed with cleanliness.

His wrists and elbows remained cuffed together. The chained, high-heeled half-shoes remained locked on his feet. Two nurses grasped his rubber shorts, one of them on each side of him, and pulled them down to his ankles. David looked round nervously for Mistress Hildegard and her whip. Despite the pain he was still feeling from the merciless whipping she had given him the previous evening, he could feel himself reacting to the two nurses the moment the crushing pressure of the rubber shorts was removed. There was no sign of her. David breathed a sigh of relief, and then was suddenly frightened that the nurses would apply precisely the same rules and punishments as the sadistic nun.

He need not have worried. Not about that, anyway.

"No problems there," announced one of the nurses, reaching to grasp his erection in her latex-gloved hand.

"None here either," agreed the other nurse from behind him as she pulled his buttocks apart and examined the crevice between them. "Clean, as far as I can see."

"Hey!" objected David.

"Shut up and bend over," said the nurse behind him.

He did not have much choice. As she pushed his shoulders forward with one hand, the nurse in front of him yanked downwards with a grip so firm that he felt as though she would pull his penis right off if he did not comply. He bent forward, squirming as he felt a gloved finger probe and then force past his anal sphincter.

“Normal?” asked the nurse in front, now kneeling to maintain her grip and hold him in position.

“As far as I can tell,” said the other, withdrawing her finger and then re-inserting it. “See what comes out. No need to move. I can do it all from here.”

David had no idea what ‘do it all from here’ might mean, but he was about to find out. He squirmed as the nurse’s finger moved within his anus, pressing down, forward and then back. Suddenly, he had the most extraordinary sensation that originated somewhere deep in his backside and seemed to go right through the whole of his groin area. He gasped. There was a grunt of satisfaction from the nurse, and then before he knew anything of the sort was going on, he found that he was ejaculating. It was not an orgasm, or at least it was not an orgasm of the sort he had ever experienced, but he had no doubt that it was an ejaculation. It was a sensation quite unlike any other.

“That works normally,” announced the nurse on her knees still gripping him tightly. “I’ll take a swab for tests, but I don’t think we have any problems here.”

David was pushed upright once more as the nurse behind him removed her finger from within him, took off the latex gloves and threw them into a bin in the corner of the room. In front of him, the other nurse had still not released her grip on him, although his erection had wilted and his legs were feeling wobbly. He teetered precariously on his high heels while she remained on her knees in front of him. Uncomfortable as it was, he realised that all that was preventing him losing his balance and falling was the steady hold she had on him.

“Get it up,” demanded the nurse.

“What? I can’t!” groaned David, taking a moment to work out what she meant.

“You can,” she informed him, “And you will.”

While the other nurse stood a few feet away with something small that David could not see properly held between her fingers, the nurse before him began to squeeze rhythmically.

The result was inevitable. David began to stiffen again, and as soon as the nurse was satisfied he had reached the appropriate size and rigidity, the other nurse approached. David squirmed, horrified as she inserted a cotton swab into the end of his penis and pushed it well into him. The bud of cotton on the end of the little wooden stick felt far too large. He was sure it would do damage to him, but with his arms and elbows cuffed behind him, standing unsteadily on the high heels and with the other nurse maintaining her grip on him, there was nothing he could do. With a merciless smile as she watched the expression on his face, the nurse twisted the

swab round and round inside him. He screamed. She pulled it out.

“All finished,” she told him, and they both let go of him. He fell, and lay panting and groaning on the floor of the examination room.

*

After his medical examination was over, David was taken back through the corridors to the area near the dormitory. He did not see Cole, but assumed that he was now being given the same sort of examination by the nurses. David found himself in a room that could only be yet another place for prayer, unless, of course, you considered simply making a man as uncomfortable as possible and leaving him that way as purpose enough.

The room had two rows of wooden posts, five to a row. Each post was round, about a foot in diameter, and well worn as if they had seen a lot of use. The posts were about five foot high and ended with a large metal ring screwed into the top. Four of the posts were already in use, so David got a pretty good idea of his fate for the day by looking at those sinners already installed on their posts.

The handcuffs were removed, and David was made to kneel at one post, back up to it until it was pressing against him, and then put his arms behind it. The nun who brought him there then proceeded to bind his arms behind the post with white cotton rope. The wrists were tied and then the elbows, which were pulled almost together. It firmly locked his body to the post. David was flexible enough so that it would not normally have been too much of a problem to have his elbows forced together behind him, but with the post between his arms it was a great deal more strain. His ankles were then pulled back and tied in a crossed manner. The ankle bondage was then attached to the wrists and pulled until his feet were totally lifted off the floor and their weight was pulling down on his arms. He could almost touch his ankle binding with his fingers, but the final knots were tied back up at his elbows where there was not a chance in hell of him reaching them.

At that point, the position was not too uncomfortable, save for the strain on his shoulders and where the ropes cut deeply into his elbows. He suspected, however, that this would change with time until it eventually became quite painful.

The final touch came when the attending nun looped rope around the post and across David's mouth, forced between his lips. Several more wrapping followed so that, when the final knot was tied, he was not only gagged by rope through his mouth but also his head was held firmly against the post.

He watched out of the corner of his eye as, some minutes later, Cole was affixed to the next post in the same manner. Both men were admonished not to talk but to pray for the rest of

the day. David thought maybe it was a joke, considering the rope gagging him, but then he noticed that not all the sinners were so gagged.

The nun left. Ten minutes later, three more sinners were brought in and secured to other posts much as David had been.

When a half hour at least had passed without the arrival of any additional sinners, the man on David's left side spoke to him.

"They won't bring in anyone else now," he said quietly. "But to be safe, stop talking immediately if you hear the door open."

David turned his eyes to look at the man as much as the ropes allowed him. He was one of the oldest looking sinners that David had seen in the place, perhaps in his late thirties. He looked somewhat haggard, and quite clearly he had been at Saint Secundina's for quite some time. Faded scars crisscrossed his body.

"I see that you are new here," he continued, directing his comments at David. "My name is Michael Donovan. Don't try to tell me your name, I can find out later when you're not gagged. You're probably wondering how long we'll be left here. The answer is all day. They will not come for us until nearly dinner. Yes, that means you'll miss lunch. Lunches are not served around here."

A voice from one of the posts in front of them interrupted, "I've only been here a few days," the man said. "Every day it has been like this. Yesterday I was tied into a ball and left in a small box all day. They said I should pray. The day before, they hung me by my wrists for half the day, and then by my ankles for the rest. How the hell am I suppose to pray for God's forgiveness when I'm hanging upside down and getting very dizzy?"

"Your story is not uncommon," said Michael. "For the most part we are made uncomfortable and left to pray."

"How long will this continue?" wailed the young man.

"I think I am the oldest sinner here," Michael said with a sigh. "I was taken seven years ago." There was a gasp from the man in front and David was shocked, too. "When I came there were some men who had been here for years before that."

"What happened to them?"

"What is your name?"

"Martin. I'm usually called Marty."

"Well, Marty," Michael continued, "to answer your question, they simply disappeared. One day there were here, the next day gone."

“Oh, my God! Do you think...?” Marty wailed.

“I don’t know. They were simply gone.”

“Why are we here? What kind of place is this?”

“Marty, I am not sure. Many times it seems as if their stated purpose of pleasing God by constant prayer and penitence is true. Then other times it seems to be just an excuse to torture us. And I can tell you, there are times when that torture is very bizarre.”

“What do you mean, ‘bizarre’?” Marty asked.

“I mean that there seems to be no real purpose to it,” Michael informed him. “I sometimes wonder what this is all about. It is as if we’re here just for the pleasure of the more sadistic of them, and no one has any real interest in penitence or rehabilitation like they keep telling us. They just want to torture us sexually and humiliate us.”

“Oh, shit! Those nuns really hate men that much?”

Michael shook his head. “No. That’s the odd part about it. I think a few of them hate men, but with most of them it’s quite the opposite. They love what they do, and having naked men around them under their control gives them real pleasure. Many of them like to touch when there’s no reason to touch, even though most of them end up causing us pain one way or another. I’m not sure I understand it properly even now after all this time.”

“You mean this is all, somehow, sexual?”

“Don’t be naïve. Most things are sexual. It’s always been that way, but this place turns everything around. You know your history. There was a time when men dominated, sexually as well as running everything in the world. Well, this is the reverse. The domination of the nuns is absolute. In some way, they’re taking revenge for centuries of male domination, although my guess is that for most of them they’re doing it because it excites them to do it. It’s not so bad really. As long as you please them, they’re probably not going to do any permanent damage to you. It’s not in their interests to do that. It’s our maleness that they want to torment, and if they destroy our maleness then they have nothing to torture. Does that make any sense to you?”

David tried to ask what would happen to them all, apart from the almost constant bondage they were already suffering, but he could not form the words properly with the rope gagging him. Michael knew what he was trying to say.

“It’s not rehabilitation. It can’t be. However much they tell us it is, I don’t think there is one of them who wants any of us to change. If we changed, then we wouldn’t interest them. I think those who disappear are those who do change, who stop reacting to what they do to us. They want to see you squirm, and suffer, and yearn for release. And they want to see you react sexually. They want to take their pleasures on men who react to it and who hate it at the same

time. We have to give them what they want, otherwise they'll just punish us more."

"How can they punish us more?" cried Marty angrily, but David was wondering exactly what Michael meant when he said 'they want to take their pleasures on men'.

"You don't want to know how they can punish us more," Michael told Marty. "But you will find out. No one escapes punishment completely, and no one escapes the additional punishments far worse than being bound up all day. As I said, they enjoy doing it to you, so they'll find an excuse to justify it some time or other. Do nothing to break the rules. You will be punished anyway, but there's no need to get more than necessary. Every man in here is punished regularly anyway."

"What kind of punishments?" Marty asked.

"Have you ever been whipped? Really whipped until your skin is marked with bruises and welts and even bleeding? Have you ever had The Shaft? Have you ever had your balls squeezed over and over again or flicked repeatedly for hours? Have you spent a whole day with electrodes in your urethra and up your arse, connected to an electrical pulse unit? Have you been strapped up naked on the wall of the nuns' bathroom and slapped, kicked, pinched and punched by every nun as she passes by? Those are just a few of the punishments I could tell you about. Believe me, you really don't want to know." Michael sounded as if he were telling this all from personal experience. "You'll find out what punishment really is."

For a while no one spoke. Then a couple of the other sinners chatted among themselves but so quietly that David could not understand what was being said. Eventually Michael spoke again to David and Cole.

"They can't change what is inside me, because *it's inside me*. That is one of the only reasons I haven't gone totally insane. They tell us not to talk but truth is most of the nuns don't give a damn. Telling you not to talk but to pray is the official policy here. Just don't do it in front of them. Then they'll have to punish you. Oh, and be damned careful when that Mother Superior Helena is around. She's the worst. Certifiably insane. But she is the power here. Get on her bad side and you'll really suffer. She's probably the only one who actually believes that God requires constant sacrifice and pain, and that suffering is good for your soul. For the others, it's their own pleasure that interests them."

For a while, he was silent, thinking his own inner thoughts. "You know, I was a college teacher before I became a sinner. In my case, I guess they were right. I was teaching students that the system is wrong and should be changed. I guess I didn't realize how absolutely freedom of speech has disappeared from our country. They arrested me, some of my students, and I've been here ever since.

"You know what's funny? There really was a Saint Secundina. Around 250 AD she was caught up in the persecution of Christians in Rome under Trajanus Decius. She was flogged to death. Being a virgin and a martyr, the church made her a saint. Her feast day is January fifteenth. I wonder if someone picked that name for this place as a joke. A flogged virgin."

During the next lag in conversation, David tested the ropes. They were tightly and skilfully applied, well-knotted and totally able to defeat any attempt to escape from them.

Marty continued to ask questions off and on, mostly centred around the possibility of escape. Michael had to admit that he had never seen nor heard of a single escape. A couple times there had been an attempt, usually one of the newer sinners. The punishment of those men was usually performed before a good sized group of sinners. The attempted escapee was denounced as unredeemable and impenitent, then strung up before their eyes and horrible things done to him. Usually it took a long time and was accompanied by a lot of screaming.

It was a potent lesson for all sinners.

The day was long. Time became measured by how much your body was hurting rather than any passage of the sun or movement of the hands on a clock. David was learning what it was like to really feel helplessness. His mouth hurt from the rope cutting into the edges. His elbows pained him and his wrists were partly numb again. His knees hurt where they took all of his weight. With the ropes pushing down on his tongue, it was hard to swallow and he was drooling down the side of his chin. He wished he could fall asleep to help pass the time but the position he was tied into was far too uncomfortable.

Michael lapsed into periods of silence. Then other times he was talkative, knowing that it was helping the other sinners.

The day was long.

Someone off to one side was moaning weakly when the door opened and a couple of nuns came in. They went to David and Cole, checked the numbers burnt into their buttocks against a list and then untied them from the posts. David looked at his arms when the stiffness in his muscles eased enough to bring them around in front. He was surprise to see how deep were the red marks where the ropes had dug in. It took a good ten minutes for the pins and needles feeling in his hands to stop.

They were handcuffed and led out. David wanted to say a thank you to Michael for his efforts to help them, but had to be content with a weak smile for talk was once again banned.

He expected to be going to the cafeteria but instead was taken to the shower area. After a shower, he was feeling almost human again. The red impressions had almost disappeared from his arms and legs. They were handcuffed yet again and marched to a room where they had to wait for quite a while. Then a woman came in, dressed in normal, everyday clothes like anyone on the street. She was carrying a bag, and began pulling out various items and setting them on a table. First was a very professional looking camera. Then strobe lights, electrical cords and other attachments for the camera.

Two nuns entered. With no word of explanation, they pushed the two men into one corner and removed their handcuffs. Next came the rubber shorts, leaving both men naked. The photographer went about her set-up with no regard for the two naked men in the room. David

and Cole were carefully examined as if they were prize animals at a show. Then the nuns grabbed Cole and pulled his arms behind his. From someplace they produced rope and began bind his arms, working the elbows first. It seem to David that they more concerned with making sure his elbows were as tightly crushed together as possible than they were with simply securing him.

Then it was David's turn. The rope went on very tightly and he could easily believe these two were pulling them with all their strength. When they were done, the nuns turned to the photographer.

For the next few minutes, both men were photographed a dozen times. The photographer posed them and took the shots while the nuns watched in interest. One time David was made to stand with legs spread and firmly set apart, and his arms up above his head. Another time he had to kneel and look up at the photographer, then to lie on the floor with his knees drawn up to his chest. David could not be sure but he had the feeling that they were being posed to look as submissive as possible.

The photographer was suddenly disassembling her equipment. The nuns slapped the legcuffs on their ankles but left their arms tightly bound with the rope. They were then led off to the cafeteria. Fortunately, the ropes were taken off so they could feed themselves.

Their arms were handcuffed for the trip to the dormitory where both were secured down to the hard wooden bed for the night. After he was solidly strapped down, David fell asleep wondering why the rubber shorts had been left off. It was not much in the way of clothing, but he missed them.

* * *

Chapter VI

Nothing but a Sex Object

The next day was much the same as the one before. David had breakfast then was fastened to a post for a day of prayer and contemplation. This time the rope gag was left off. Once they were sure the room had its quota of sinners, the men talked, taking turns and speaking softly. Michael was not present, nor was the one called Marty. But David and Cole met others: Neil, Lawrence, Richard, Len and Harry. They learned that all their stories were similar. Each had been snitched on or made public statements that could be interrupted as being against Control, One World or the Church. Some had been there for a few months, some only for days. A few of the more experienced ones confirmed that they had been abused by the nuns in private areas away from

the prayer rooms where sinners were punished together. David found it hard to believe some of the extraordinary activities the men said they had been forced to endure and perform.

They also learned that most of the men would try to escape if given the chance. But none had. The sinners were kept under almost constant restraint of some kind. They agreed that there were times when they might be able to gang up on some of the nuns, but were at a loss to say what to do then. A couple voiced the opinion that they should take the next opportunity and “play it by ear” from there. David did not think that was a very good idea. There was far too much organization to this place to allow a handful of men to escape. Even if they got out of the building, David was certain they would not last long on the outside. He said so, even though inside he wished with all his heart that he could escape. A lifetime of this was... Well, unacceptable. There was no other word for it.

David spoke not of it, but he also wondered just what happened to those men who disappeared. Were they taken to some other institution? Or returned to a different part of the world as rehabilitated sinners? Somehow that just did not sound likely.

As he knelt with aching shoulders and arms, he had to wonder about Saint Secundina’s and whether Michael had been right in what he said. He had not seen any real attempts to make them see the error of their ways and reform, yet he had not seen any real evidence of any other purpose either. Certainly, he had heard the stories of nuns getting enjoyment from what they did to the men, and that was confirmed by his own experience. But it was limited. Clearly, in any correctional institution there would be some of those guarding the prisoners who took a sadistic pleasure in seeing their captives suffer. That was natural. There really was nothing that had so far happened to David to suggest the purpose of Saint Secundina’s was anything other than it purported to be. What they were suffering was, surely, just a softening up, a prelude of pain to get the men into the right frame of mind to begin the real brainwashing.

The idea sounded right to David. When a man had been tortured for days or months, he would become malleable. His will would be broken and receptive for new patterns to be imposed. Then he would be taken from here to someplace where the real retraining would happen.

The only problem with this logic was that some sinners, such as Michael, had been there for years. Surely if a man was going to have his will broken, it would not take five or six years to do it?

David resolved to himself that he would not let them break him, nor would he stay here for the rest of his life. He would find a way to get out. There had to be a way. There had to!

That night, after dinner, he was taken to a room with nothing in it. There was a door through which he came, and a mirror on the wall, and nothing else. He was not made to wear the tight rubber shorts, but his arms were bound behind him with thin rope. The high-heeled half-shoes remained on his feet.

Also, and most peculiarly, he was once again made to wear the thin, black garment they had put on him on his arrival at Saint Secundina’s. He could not understand the purpose of this. It made

some weird sense to force him to wear it when there were other people around, because it most certainly produced a feeling of humiliation and ridicule, but there was no one in this room! He was pushed in; the door was closed; he was alone; and then... nothing!

Nothing at all happened. Out of boredom, he walked around the room, passing the mirror and, after an initial glance at how ridiculous he looked, trying to avoid even glimpsing his reflection. Eventually, when still no one appeared and there was nothing else to do, he turned and tried to see his bound arms in the mirror. The thin cords looked as painfully tight as they felt. He hoped this would not last too long. He had put in a long day of prayer and yearned for the relative comfort and immobility of his wooden plank bed. He would be happy to trade this thin cord bondage for regular rope. At least it was more comfortable.

Eventually they came and took him away. As he was leaving, he saw Cole being escorted into the room to replace him. His arms too had been bound as David's, extra tight with thin cord, and he was wearing one of the thin garments flowing and flapping around him as he walked on his high-heeled half-shoes. Then the door was closed and David was on his way to the dormitory having never realized for a second that a dozen women were seated just beyond that one-way mirror. He had no idea of the bids being made, what they bid on, or who won. Had he known, he might well have fallen asleep far less easily than he did once he was again bound to his wooden plank bed.

Sleep was easier that night. Most likely, he was becoming used to the hard plank and restrictions. Whatever the reason, he slept longer between periods of waking up, and when the lights did come on, he was more rested than he had been since coming to Saint Secundina's.

After breakfast he was led one way and Cole another. He was not to see his friend again that day, and nor would he see the wooden posts that had been his close companion for the last two days. Instead, he and two other sinners were led to a room that was quite different. In place of the posts, were long wooden benches, not unlike the planks of wood on which they slept each night except these were rather wider. At the corner of each bench were leather straps that could have no other purpose other than to restrain an unfortunate prisoner spread-eagle to the bench. To David, it did not look nearly as uncomfortable as any of the restraints he had suffered since his arrival. In fact, if this was to be how he was to spend the day, it would be a welcome rest from the usual far more uncomfortable bondage.

However, he had not noticed that there was something else. As the handcuffs were removed from his wrists and he and the other sinners were strapped down to the benches, face-up and naked except for the half-shoes that remained on their feet, the chains between them disconnected so that their legs could be separated further than usual, one of the nuns explained.

"These will be placed over your heads," she told them, holding up what appeared to be some sort of thick, padded, flexible gasmask or hood. "They will be locked onto you, and will not be removed until the end of the day."

She demonstrated the tightening of a thick strap that fitted around the neck of whoever wore the hood.

“We’ll suffocate!” David panicked, struggling vainly to free himself from the leather wrist and ankle straps.

“Don’t panic,” advised the nun, smiling widely at David’s concern. “It’s a long time since anyone has actually died from wearing one of these. You see these?” She indicated two long tubes David had not noticed, leading from each mask to a control panel set into the wall. “One of these will feed air to you, or suck the air out, depending on the settings. These hoods are designed to help you to focus your mind by forcing you to control your breathing. The process is automatic. It will follow pre-programmed settings that have been optimised to ensure maximum learning. You will pray, of course. You must always pray. Today, you will also pray that you will be allowed to continue to breathe.”

David stared at her in disbelief. These hoods would “control their breathing”? In other words, they would be half-suffocated, or worse. And it was to go on all day! He had no choice. As the nun slid the mask over his head, he was in total darkness. As she fastened the strap around his neck, he wondered whether he would ever see the light again.

David panicked immediately the hood tightened. The inside of it was made of a soft, clingy material, padded and flexible and yet tough and resilient. It pressed around his head, moulding itself to the contours of his face as if already trying to suffocate him. It was several seconds before he heard the mechanisms behind the control panel in the wall spring into life, and the hood filled with air, lifting the material a fraction of an inch from his mouth and nose.

Whether or not the nuns had now left the room, David had no idea. He could see nothing, and he could hear little except the sounds of the mechanism that was feeding him air. For three or four minutes he was allowed to breathe normally, and then he heard the sound of the machinery change. Almost before he realised that the tube was now sucking air out of the hood, it had clamped tightly onto his face. He had not even had time to take a deep breath.

Fortunately for David, it did not last very long. As rapidly as the hood had gripped him in airlessness, it released him.

Ten times the hood compressed over his face for a few seconds, and ten times it released him for several minutes. Then everything changed. It blocked his breathing for very much longer, and gave him air for no more than a few seconds. The first time caught him by surprise and the panic rose again, but he adapted to the new rhythm without too much difficulty. And then it changed again. Now, there was a series of rhythmical airless squeezes followed by a much longer period of complete airlessness. As he gasped and wheezed whenever he was able to snatch any air at all, David began to wonder how much worse this could become. It was then that he noticed how wet it had suddenly become inside his hood. He thought for a moment it was just condensation, and then realised that there was warm liquid seeping through tiny holes in the material that regularly smothered him. The second tube connecting the hood to the machinery had now been activated, and he had a substantial and variable amount of liquid to contend with as well as the periods of airlessness.

It was a sorry group of men that the nuns eventually released when it was time for dinner. Some were scarcely conscious, but all those who had some awareness of what was going on were very grateful to have the hood removed. They were freed from the wrist and ankle cuffs, had the handcuffs re-attached on their wrists behind them, and led to dinner. If David had known what was to happen later that evening, he might well have not eaten at all.

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David was taken for a shower as usual but, unlike the normal routine, he was not immediately led to the dormitory and bound to the plank for the night. Instead, he was taken to a small room with benches and seats, and made to wait. He was there, alone, long past the normal time that all the sinners would be in the dormitories and the lights would have been out, until two nuns came to fetch him.

He was taken on a long walk. It was not to the dormitory, but he had not expected that. The break in the usual routine was obviously for something different, something special, but he still had no idea what was waiting for him.

He was led into what was obviously a bedroom. A very large bed, right in the centre, was the main fixture. It looked inviting after sleeping on hard wood for the last few days, but right then David would rather have been on his way back to that hard bed and straps. He knew that this was unlikely to be no more than his bedroom for the night, and he suspected that there would be something unpleasant awaiting him. There was always the hope in the back of his mind that perhaps, just perhaps, the scene had been set for him to make love to some beautiful, frustrated woman, but his rational thoughts told him that it was unlikely to be that simple.

He was right. The handcuffs were removed from his arms and the half-shoes from his feet. His wrists and ankles were restrained to the corners of the bed so that he lay, face up, just as he had lain on the bench where he had been half-suffocated by the hood earlier that day. The nuns checked the restraints carefully, making sure he was secured tightly and that he could not possibly break free. Then they left the room.

There was a very strong sense of dread inside David. He had no idea what was coming. Perhaps, the hope rose again, that beautiful, frustrated woman would appear, satisfy her frustrations on his erection, and then leave. No, that was too much to hope. It must be something like that, but David was sure it would be no beautiful nymphomaniac who appeared. It would be some frustrated old hag who could not get a man anywhere else. It had to be. All right, so that was not really so bad. Whoever it was and whatever she looked like, all he had to do was to close his eyes and *imagine*. She could be anyone he wanted her to be, if only he did not have to see her, and there was absolutely no reason he had to see her. It would be the very first time David had ever had sex, and although having it tied to a bed and at the mercy of some strange women was not the perfect scenario he would have chosen, the thought of it already excited him.

As he lay there, he remembered the photos taken of him. Advertisement of the goods for sale? Probably. It was disturbing, certainly. Was he correct in his assumption? It seemed bizarre, most bizarre that a man could be sold in that way. Certainly, he knew, there had been women in the past and, for all he knew, there might still be women, who sold their sexual services for money or even whose sexual favours were sold without their permission. But a man? Surely it would be fairly unusual for a woman not to be able to find a man to satisfy her needs. Men were invariably far more eager for sex, and so few women would have a problem. Was there any other explanation for what was happening to him?

He tugged at the restraints, but they were far too strong for him to break and far too tightly attached for him to have any hope of working them loose. He could do nothing, except to lie naked and helpless and await whatever was about to happen to him.

The bed was, he had to admit, incredibly comfortable. The sheets beneath him were smooth and cool. If it were not for his apprehension about whatever might be coming, he might even have considered taking a little nap.

Time passed and David began to hope. Perhaps nothing was going to happen after all. Perhaps whoever was coming had changed her mind. Perhaps... there are a million possibilities. Relief flooded through him, and at the same time there was disappointment; deep disappointment.

The lights lowered. Soft music floated into the room from someplace. And then the door opened.

In the dim light he could see that it was a woman. He knew it would be, but even that was a relief. She walked slowly across the room. She was not a nun. She was not one of Saint Secundina's guards, nor was she one of the Control guards. She was a woman; just a woman, and she was in no hurry.

Fear went through David. With the light behind her, he could not see her properly, but as she approached him he was surprised by what he saw.

She was not old. She was not ugly. She was not fat. But she was no youngster; probably in her early forties, which made a little more than twice David's age, and she was tall and athletic. Her hair was long, and flaming red.

She undressed rapidly without seeming to care that David was watching. Her breasts were full and firm. Her hips, although broader than those of the girls David had looked at longingly at school, were perfectly proportioned, as was the rest of her body.

She said nothing. David was trembling in anticipation. It turned to fear as she picked up her wide leather belt she had dropped on the floor with the rest of her clothes. She gripped it near the buckle, and brought the free end down onto the bed with a heavy thud, not more than two inches from David's naked hip.

“Please...” he begged, not sure what he should say, but knowing that if that heavy belt hit him as it had hit the bed, it would cause pain and serious bruising, or worse.

“Silence.”

She was on the bed and kneeling astride him, the belt still held threateningly in her hand. Briefly, too briefly for David, her hand clasped his erection. She laughed, but it was not a pleasant laugh.

“Afraid?” she asked.

David nodded.

“You should be,” she informed him, “But tonight you’re lucky. You’ll live. Probably.”

She straddled his chest, and then eased forward. “Lick,” she demanded.

David licked. He had no idea whether he was licking as she wanted to be licked, but it was no more than a few seconds before she was pressing down on him and making a low moaning noise. He felt smothered, and then he was smothered. Her thighs clenched and gripped, then parted and she pressed down again. She shuddered, wriggled, pressed forward and back, clamped down onto him repeatedly and then released, using his face at every angle that gave her pleasure and, if the way she laughed was any indication of her feelings, some that were simply to cause him the maximum discomfort. Finally, with a low scream and a muscle spasm that threatened to break the bones in David’s face, she fell backward onto the bed next to him and lay there, gasping.

After a few minutes, she dressed and left without another word and without even glancing back at him.

David lay there, confused. He was more aroused and more frustrated than he had ever been in his life. If his hands had been free, he would most certainly have done something to relieve his frustration. As it was, there was nothing he could do. At the same time, he was shocked at what the woman had done to him. It was something he had never considered. He knew, of course, of oral sex, and like any young man he had fantasised about girls giving him oral sex. He had also imagined the pleasure it would give him and a girl for him to kiss and lick her, but to be used in the way this woman had just used him was quite beyond anything he could have envisaged.

It was half an hour before the nuns returned. Two of them arrived, and stood either side of the bed looking down at him. David hoped desperately that they would take him to the bathroom before he was returned to be restrained in the dormitory for the night. The few minutes he was allowed alone in the toilet cubicle was all he needed; all he so badly needed.

They seemed to be in no rush to untie him. One of them reached forward, and to his surprise she gripped his erection between her fingers. He groaned, and involuntarily he tried to push upward

with his hips. She let go and slapped him painfully. The other nun had a damp towel in her hands, and she began to wipe his face, roughly but thoroughly.

Ten minutes later they left him, still tied to the bed and still desperately frustrated. David felt like screaming, although he knew it would do him no good.

Eventually, the door opened once again. David breathed a sigh of relief, but the relief was short-lived. It was not the nuns coming to take him back to his dormitory, it was an older and much larger woman who strode purposefully towards him. She did not bother to undress. She leapt on him with an urgency that bordered on desperation. She lifted her long, voluminous skirt, positioned herself over his face, and descended onto him. David's face was instantly and completely overwhelmed by a mass of heavy, smothering flesh that was already wet and aroused.

He licked, as he knew he must, sucking at those places he had already learned would give the woman on top of him the most pleasure. The once thought going through his mind was that he must bring her to a climax as swiftly as possible, before either he suffocated or her weight on his face did serious damage to him.

She rode him. There was no other way of describing it. She rode him as if he were the saddle of her horse, and she were out for a long, pleasant canter across country. David choked and spluttered on the fluids that streamed from her, but at least she moved and rose from him every few seconds. That is, until she did actually reach the climax and, much like the woman before her, clamped onto David's face in a crushing, airless embrace for what seemed like forever. He nearly lost consciousness, and when she finally lifted from him, he felt as though she had drained every ounce of energy out of him.

She had not finished. Once climax was, evidently, not enough for this woman. Twice more she rode him, and twice more she half-suffocated and half-crushed him underneath her.

Then she left.

Then the nuns returned to clean his face. Then, one at a time, four more women came in to use his face for their pleasure.

It was almost dawn when the nuns returned a bruised and trembling David to the dormitory and bound him to the plank as usual. He slept, but his sleep was troubled by nightmares, and it was almost a relief to be awoken after no more than a couple of hours for another day of prayer and bondage.

* * *

Chapter VII

Mistress Tanya Teaches David A Lesson

David was depressed; more depressed than he had been since he arrived at Saint Secundina's. Now, at least, he had some idea of the purpose of this bizarre establishment, and yet he feared there was worse to come. The first woman had already hinted at it. Her desires, clearly, went far beyond satisfying her sexual frustrations on David's face, although that was bad enough. As far as he was aware, it was only by pure luck that he had survived the previous night. Any of those women might have suffocated him either deliberately or unintentionally while in the throes of sexual climax. He was sure that the night had not been a one-off. There was more to come. There was much more to come. It would continue, perhaps night after night or at the very least on a regular basis, until one day the inevitable would happen and that would be the end of him.

He ate breakfast but he did not really taste the food. He went to his daily prayers in a somnambulant state, not caring what was going to be done to him that day.

It was a different room yet again. This one had nothing but the wooden floor. He was made to stand with half a dozen other sinners for a while, probably to wait until they all were present. Then they were secured for the daily prayers.

It was simple. His handcuffs were removed, including the legcuffs, and then he was hogtied. His arms were bound behind him with the elbows firmly together but not overly tightly. Then his ankles were tied together. After that it was a simply matter to place him on his stomach on the floor. He wondered at first why the nun was so careful to place him just over a small black mark on the floor, but the answer came soon enough. There was the hum of an electric motor and a ring attached to a wire cable came down from the ceiling. There was one over each of the black dots on the floor.

A loop of rope was passed between his legs, between his forearms and through the ring. When that loop was tightened, his feet came up to his hands in a classic hogtie and the both were lifted towards the ring. The rope was passed through this loop several times then knotted off at the ring. When the electric motor was again activated, David felt his arms and legs being pulled up behind. He feared they might actually lift him totally off the floor, but the motor was stopped just at the point where his body was arched and only his stomach was still in contact with the floor.

Each of the sinners was secured in the same manner. A dozen naked male bodies were held in that most uncomfortable position while, at first, the nuns walked around between them, aiming an occasional slap with a whip at them, apparently for no other reason than the amusement of seeing them flinch in pain and squeal in fear.

The nuns left them after the usual admonishment to pray, and it was quickly clear to David that this position would become steadily more uncomfortable as the day wore on. A couple of the men cursed and swore. A few told the rest over and over again that it could be worse, and some, like David, remained quiet and simply accepted this punishment.

It was not that he was happy. It was just that he was still in shock over what had happened the night before and what it had revealed about this place. No, it was more than that. It was what it had revealed about all of society, not just this place. Worse still, it was what it had revealed about women – some women, at least. He had been used and then tossed aside, as if he was nothing more than a sextoy for a woman's pleasure. It was as if he were not even human. That, in itself, would not have been so terrible. What made it so much worse was that such treatment would, inevitably, sooner or later, lead to his death with no more purpose than to provide a fleeting orgasmic climax for some anonymous women who, presumably, was prepared to pay for the privilege. *And nobody cared.*

Later, as the day wore on and the discomfort in his limbs grew, so did his anger. It was simply not right, he told himself, that this place could take a man and turn him into something so utterly worthless. Earlier, while the sinners were still talking to each other, he had listened to the stories that some of them told of their experiences here. What had so recently happened to him was not unique in any way. Most of the men who had been here for some time had been used in a similar way, but many of them went on to tell stories of far more intense and far more painful experiences. It was not unusual, David found out, for there to be whippings, beating, torment and all manner of pain for the amusement of the women who paid to have a man to use and abuse. Sometimes, according to some of the men, more than one woman would administer pain with no interest at all in anything other than causing as much suffering as possible. At other times when there was more than one woman, they would take their physical pleasures from each other right in front of the helpless man, and frequently while they had already given him enough pain to have him screaming while they did it.

Some of the stories did not seem to David to have any ring of truth about them. A number of the activities described were, surely, physically impossible. Others, it seemed unlikely that the man would have survived to be telling the tale. Only one thing was certain: David's experiences so far were most certainly not unique, and the purpose of Saint Secundina's was very, very far from being a place of repentance and rehabilitation.

As the pain and strain wore them down, the talking faded away until there was no one who felt like chatting. There was a terrible ache in his back and shoulders. His wrists hurt from the tight ropes. Here and there a muscle trembled under the unrelenting strain. He prayed, he really prayed, for the day to be over.

It finally ended. And dinner was most welcome, not so much for the food but for the fact that it meant they were taken down from those semi-suspension hogties and allowed to walk. After dinner and a shower, David was again taken to a bedroom.

Oh, lord, not again, he thought. Not again!

The handcuffs were put onto his wrists, and his elbows were bound, almost together, behind him. The rubber shorts were removed, but his high-heeled half-shoes were left locked onto his feet. He was pushed down to sit on the edge of the bed, and told to stay where he was. The nuns left.

He was a little puzzled because he had expected to be tied down to the bed spread-eagled as before. When the door opened, he was not surprised to see a nun enter. Obviously, they simply had not yet finished securing him down.

But the nun did not start to add ropes to David. She stood here, legs braced wide and the small whip they all carried tapping against the side of her leg.

“I am Mistress Tanya,” she said. “Stand!”

David rose from the bed. Before he had realized what was coming, the whip swished twice, catching him across each hip. David cried in surprise and pain and fell back to the bed, the vicious cuts burning his skin.

“That is just to show you that I hurt you any time I want.”

David believed her.

“Now get back to your feet.”

David struggled to get up, fearful that more blows were coming.

“Do you want me to whip you again?” David was asked.

“No, Mistress,” he replied as meekly as he could.

The whip danced out again, this time to place a fiery red line across the front of David’s chest. He almost fell, but forced himself to stand straight. It was a small victory.

“Now, do you want me to whip you again?” Mistress Tanya repeated calmly.

“Ah... Yes, Mistress?” David ventured. If no was the wrong answer, then...

The whip cut across his tummy this time. It was a surprisingly painful place to be whipped.

“Please...” David begged. He realised that the nun was playing with him. There probably was no correct answer – whatever he said would earn him pain.

“The correct answer, sinner,” began the nun, “is ‘whatever you wish, Mistress’.”

“Whatever you wish, Mistress,” David repeated hastily. He was rewarded with another cut, this one across his left thigh.

“Do you understand?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

“Do you like the pain?”

David hesitated before saying: “Whatever you wish, Mistress.”

“Smart boy. You learn fast. You’d be surprised how many marks I’ve put on some sinners before they wised up.”

She took a step forward until she was face to face with David. “What you also have to know is that Mistress Tanya can give out pleasure as well as pain.”

She tossed the whip on the bed and pressed her hands onto David’s chest. Leaning forward, much to his surprise, she began licking one of his nipples.

The sensation was nothing like David had ever experienced. He had no idea that such attention to his nipple could produce such an immediate, pleasurable and arousing sensation, and Mistress Tanya was clearly an expert. She teased, squeezed, licked, sucked, and even nipped with her sharp teeth. David was in ecstasy, and his arousal was intense.

David moaned. This was something he had never even imagined, and it was good! To do something like this to a girl’s breast was, naturally, something that all boys wanted, and there was no doubt in his mind that a girl would enjoy it. He had never, never considered that attention to his own nipples could be just as pleasurable. Tingles raced into his chest, and shivers went down his spine. This was very good!

For a long minute Tanya kept sucking and teasing, and then suddenly she pushed David back onto the bed. As he lay here on his bound arms, Tanya crawled between his legs, pushed his thighs widely apart, and gripped his erection in one hand. Before David was really aware of what was happening, Tanya’s tongue was licking the end of his stiff, throbbing penis.

At first, the licks were soft, gentle, slow and long. David squirmed in pleasure but it was, in an odd way, still a torture. Tanya was an expert at this. She knew just how much was necessary to get this sinner to the state she wanted without taking him too far. So, it was a minute later that she backed off, leaving David moaning and gasping with frustration.

Kneeling between David’s wide spread legs, she looked down at him. A quick pinch of one nipple got David’s attention.

“You see that I can give pain or pleasure.”

“Yes, Mistress.” David sounded much more sincere now.

“Have you ever made love before?”

“I... those women took...”

Mistress Tayna laughed. "Not that. Have you ever *made love*?"

"No."

"I didn't think so. But you do know what to do."

"Of course." Without meaning to do it, David's hips moved forward and upward.

"Not *that* either," Mistress Tanya told him, without the laugh this time. "I think you do know," she continued, "So we're going to have fun tonight!"

Tanya grinned wickedly down at her captive and began unzipping her leather uniform. When the clothing was off, Tanya presented her pointy breast to David's mouth. The sinner took it between his lips and began as he had been shown.

The night was filled with lessons taught and learned. And occasionally pain, which, for the first time since coming to Saint Secundina's, David did not really mind. They rolled naked on the bed together, Tanya always in charge but David eagerly following. This was a world of pleasure he had never expected here at Saint Secundina's. A little voice somewhere in his brain was telling him that this was wrong and that he was only enjoying it because he had been used and abused for so long. Sex was suppose to be between a man and a woman as equals, not with the man having his hands and arms restrained behind his back and everything he did directed by a woman who would cause him pain if he displeased her. He told the little voice to go to hell.

Most of the sexual action was directed for Tanya's pleasure, and the session could easily have been as one-sided as the night before with the strange women. But Tanya showed a great deal of concern for this sinner, giving pleasure as well as receiving it. When his first orgasm came, many, many minutes after David felt he would explode with frustration, his whole body felt on fire with the force of it.

By the time they both lay exhausted on the bed, Tanya holding David tenderly in her arms, the sinner's last thought was that everything he had ever heard about sex was absolutely right: it was wonderful.

* * *

Chapter VIII

It's a Privilege

The next morning David was even more confused than he had ever been. He was still a prisoner. He was still being cruelly mistreated, and still on schedule to be sexually used and abused until some over-enthusiastic woman would take it all too far and put a final end to him. But what had happened to him the night before had been incredible. He had never known anything could feel so good. That made it almost worth the suffering at Saint Sucundina's.

Later, after half a day of prayer, he was reconsidering.

The prayer position for that day was strange but somehow fitting for that strange place. A few of them had been taken to the room with the electric hoists in the ceiling, but they were not to spend the day in arched, painful hogties. They were bound as before, arms behind them, elbows together, and ankles together. But then, after the cable from the ceiling was lowered, it was only their ankles that were tied to it. Up went the ring, and up went their feet. Each was halted only when their backsides were just off the floor.

In some ways it was not as rough as the hogties. But in other ways it was terrible. Their ankles took the weight of their legs and hips, which forced the ropes tighter around them. At the other end, the sinner had the choice of lying on his bound arms, or twisting to the side, or even flopping around to lie on his stomach with half his body bent backwards. The room looked like an orchard of hairy leg trees and high heel fruits.

It was the ankles that fared worst. David could feel his feet slowly going numb from the pressure and the fact that they were elevated high above his body. Some of the men's feet, he noticed, were shades darker than they should be.

They were visited in the afternoon by Mother Superior Helena, and had the pleasure of attending a lecture from her explaining all about how God demands constant sacrifice, constant prayer, and constant devotion to Her will. They were urged to pray harder and even more than during the days. They should pray during their meals, as they lay on their beds, and even in the showers. They should gladly suffer pain, for it showed God just how much humans love Her. In fact, the Mother Superior explained, this was so important, that a new program was being put in place. Each night, one man from each dormitory would be taken to a special room and granted the privilege of extra suffering as a sign of his, and Saint Secundina's, devotion.

David could sense men groaning under their breath all around him. He had to wonder about this "Special Privilege", but was certain that whatever it was, he would hate it.

Mother Superior Helena thanked the sinners for the good work they were doing and held out the promise that one day they might each again bask in God's glory and be one of Her children.

After she and the nuns with her left, someone to David's left muttered, "Crazy old bitch!" David had to agree, but he kept silent.

For the rest of the afternoon, they hung there, occasionally shifting around, seeking some comfort where there was none, for the most part silent. That was the pattern of the prayer

days. Chatting at first but then quiet after the unrelenting pain had worn them down.

Dinner was spaghetti and meatballs, one of David's favourite dishes. The shower felt wonderful, as it usually did after a day of being tortured. And for a while it seemed as if the new program of "Special Privilege" might not happen. All the men, including David, were strapped to their hard beds. If any of them had been taken for this special program, it must have been before they were secured for sleep, and as far as David could tell there was no one missing.

It was then that David noted that the lights had not been turned off. This made for a sinking feeling in his stomach.

He was right to feel apprehensive. The door opened and in walked the Mother Superior, accompanied by two surly looking nuns, one of which was Mistress Hildegard. The Mother Superior walked slowly down the rows of strapped-down men, inspecting each. No one knew what her criteria for selection was, but when she was standing over David, she hissed out, "This one!"

David muttered a silent "Oh, shit!" and felt the straps being taken off him. Handcuffs were put on and he was walked off down the dark corridors.

The room was like none other he had seen in that place. It was fifty feet long and had what appeared to be advertising displays along each wall, at waist-height instead of the normal level one would expect such posters to be. Each display had a small spotlight above it that highlighted whatever was on the placard. From the end of the room, David could not see any of them properly.

He had to wait, standing silent with two other sinners as more of them were brought in. When their count had increased to twelve, David had to wonder how many dormitories there were in this place.

Twelve was apparently all, for with the last man the Mother Superior addressed them.

"Thank you for volunteering," she began. She glared down the moans of disbelief and continued, "This is an important part of Saint Secundina's mission. In exchange for a little missed sleep, you will have the gratitude of all Saint Secundinian's and win the admiration of your brother sinners."

She paused, but no one dared scoff. "We will try not to chose you again soon, but since the selection process will be totally random, well..."

"In any event, I'm sure you are all happy that on this first night of Special Privilege, the honour goes to you."

She turned but before she made it out of the door, she tossed a cheery, "Carry on!" over her shoulder.

In the silence that followed, Mistress Hildegard stepped forward. "I'm sure you all agree with the Mother Superior wise words. I am here to tell you the rules of Special Privilege. It is quite simple, really. All you have to do is go from station to station, stopping at each and reading the prayer printed there. There are twelve stations. When you have finished, you start over again.

"Ah, I see a question on some of your faces. The answer is yes; you will do this all night. Tomorrow will be a prayer day, no different from the others. This is an extra, a Special Privilege for each of you.

Mistress Alicia and I will prepare you for the night's prayers."

The first man was pushed down to his knees. The handcuffs were taken off his arms, but immediately they were twisted and his hands pulled up on his back. While one nun held his hands up between his shoulder blades, the other bound his wrists with cord. Additional rope was passed from his wrists around his neck and back around the wrists several times. When that was knotted off, there was no way he could pull his hands back down. They were locked high on his back.

Each of the sinners was secured in the same manner. For a few of them who were less flexible than others, the nuns had to exert extra force to bring their hands high up, but they prevailed. Soon enough every man was bound in that manner, some hands higher on the backs than others, but most already showing the strain on their faces.

David was one of the lucky ones whose arms were flexible. It was not too hard to get his hands up there and tie them in place.

The legcuffs were taken off, but immediately replaced by a pair of handcuffs. The handcuffs, having a shorter chain, would have made walking much more difficult, but fortunately none of them was told to rise to his feet.

At that point the nuns tied a short piece of rope between the link of the handcuffs and the binding around the men's wrists. That rope was then pulled until he was forced to bend backwards. When it was David's turn, he found that the rope from his ankles pulled not only on his wrists but also on the ropes around his neck. They did not constrict, but they did force him to bend backwards.

When all twelve were bent back and secured beyond their ability to free themselves, the nuns explained what they must do.

"You will crawl on your knees to each station. You will read aloud the prayer that you find there. Then you will move on to the next station. When you have circled the room, you will start over. Simple, no? Oh, but there is one other thing. If you should happen to fall over..." She moved to the first man and gave a gently shove against his shoulder. He fell to his side with a groan. "If you should happen to fall over, you will be helped back up. Like this."

'Helping' was simply whipping the man until he struggled back to his knees. It was extremely

difficult to do with no hands, and before he made it he had numerous red welts over his naked body.

“I think you all know the rules now. You, go to the first station.”

The whipped man shuffled on his knees towards the first of the placards. David wondered why he was grimacing so as he shuffled forward. When it came his turn, he found out why. The floor had been covered with a rubber-like carpet, but embedded in that carpet were hundreds of tiny stones. Or something hard, small and sharp. It was very much, David found, like crawling on a bed of rocks. They were small but tried to press themselves into the flesh of his knees and the tops of his feet.

He also understood why the legcuffs had been exchanged for regular handcuffs. The legcuffs had longer connecting chains. You could take much bigger movements with your knee and foot. The handcuffs forced you to make smaller moves. That made the rocky surface hurt more.

He shuffled up to the first station bent backwards was awkwardly and feeling very uncomfortable. But he could see down his nose to the placard enough to read the print there.

“Please, oh Lord,” he began, “punish this unworthy one for having sinned against You. Increase my pain so that I may show my love for You. Make me suffer the fires of hell so you will know I love You. Rip my fingernails out that my hands might serve You better.”

He crawled to the next sign.

“Please dear God, tear the flesh from my body. I am unworthy of it.”

In succession, he had to loudly proclaim himself a wimp, a coward, a sinner, a scumbag and other forms of low-life. He begged to be impaled on a sharpen post, boiled alive, stoned, have his bones broken with a mallet, ripped to shreds by wild dogs, and drowned in the wild blue sea. He told God how much he loved Her and how much he begged Her to make him more sensitive to pain that he might show this love for Her better.

All in all, it was not quite what he had heard in church before.

On his third circuit, he heard a wail, followed by a whip cracking and a man sobbing in pain. He concentrated on keeping his balance as he crawled from sign to sign.

The night was long, and David was already tired from praying all day. As he crawled to each next sign, he wished he could just lie down and go to sleep. He struggled on. After twenty-seven, he lost count of the circuits of the stations. All that mattered was making it to next one.

It was then he found that you could earn fresh whipmarks on your skin by not pronouncing the words of each station loudly and clearly.

Sometime during the night, he began to think that maybe it was better to just lie down and let

them whip him to death. The harsh rules of One World and the Church had always frustrated and angered him, but this life was something entirely different. Never had he felt so completely helpless. He had no choice in anything except maybe what food he picked in the cafeteria. But absolutely nothing else. He was forced to shower, sleep, and eat when they wanted him to. He had to endure tortures when and how they wanted. If he faltered in this task, they would simply whip him until the pain forced him to struggle back to his knees and begin again.

He was even told when he would have sex, and with whom.

The anger slowly grew inside him. It helped him to carry on when fatigue bid him fall; that and the promise that one day he would escape from this place kept him from going insane. Any other future but one with the hope of eventual escape was too terrible to think about.

How had that Michael taken this place for so many years? David honestly had no idea how anyone could. He was certain he would be stark, raving crazy long before that.

The first time David fell was because he had not noticed the man in front of him slowing down and bumped into him. A quick whip helped both men to fight to their knees and continue. The burning welts on his thigh just added to the burning hatred inside. One day, he told himself, one day...

* * *

Chapter IX

Punishment

The next day might have been very hard on the poor sinner, yet, through fate or just good luck, the position he was affixed in for prayers was relatively mild — by Saint Secundina's standards.

The room had wooden posts from floor to ceiling, a dozen of them. They were about a twelve inches across and quite solidly immobile. Each man, in this case there were four of them, was backed up to a post and his arms tied behind it. His elbows were tied towards each other but only firmly and not exceedingly tightly. His legs were bound together then bound to the post with numerous wrappings, cinching down, and knotting. More wrappings pinned his torso and arms to the post. All in all, the nuns must have used several hundred feet of rope on each of them. From their high heels to their necks, they were quite firmly attached to their post.

"As the Mother Superior says," one nun told them just before leaving them in darkness, "your prayers must be unceasing and sincere. It is of supreme importance that God hears lots of prayers

and knows we love Her.” Was that a hint of smile on the nun’s lips? David wondered. “Besides,” she went on, “you can always give a little prayer of thanks that you’re in comfortable positions today!”

David knew sarcasm when he heard it. The ropes were tight and he was held totally immobile; that was unpleasant enough.

The men talked some after the door closed and the light went out. When they found out that David had been one of those chosen for “Special Privilege,” they demanded to know all about it. He explained about the way his arms had been bound high up on his back, how he could hardly move his fingers for a long time after the ropes came off, and how his elbows ached. He told them of the floor and its sharp points. And he even recited, from memory, each of the prayers he had to repeat aloud. And repeat, and repeat, and repeat...

He doubted he would ever forget those damned words or the sickening feeling as he loudly pleaded with God for Her to inflict more torture and torment upon him.

The other sinners were silent for a while; undoubtedly thinking that it might be their turn that very night. Eventually they began chatting about other things; their favourite food, girls they once knew, anything to help pass the time.

David, however, found himself slipping away. In the dark, with the cocoon of ropes holding him, it would have been hard to try to stay awake. He did not try. Soon his head tilted to one side and he was asleep.

His rest was interrupted only once when, around noon, the light came on and another sinner was dragged into the room. For one of the only times, David actually saw a sinner fight the nuns. The man was handcuffed in the usual manner, and his ankles shackled with legcuffs. But he still tried to kick at the two nuns holding his arms and pulling him along. He struck out to the side with handcuffed wrists, but most of the blows missed and those that did land were ineffectual. He also cursed the nun, Saint Secundina’s, and even God in very imaginative and colourful language.

There were four nuns in all, one being Mistress Hildegard. They stood this man next to a post. Two held his arms, and one put her foot on the link of his legcuffs to prevent kicking, the last nun shoved a large rubber ball into the man’s mouth. He resisted but the nun squeezed the sides of his mouth, creating enough pain to force it open. The ball was rammed home by being struck with the flat palm. The ball must have been too large for him, to judge by the way his jaw was forced wide open and the pained expression on his face. A strap through the ball was buckled behind his head. David could see the nun pull as hard as she could on the strap before forcing it into the last hole of the buckle.

With the silencer in place, the curses ceased but the struggling did not. The sinner was forced to the floor where all four nuns held her down while the handcuffs were removed from his arms. David expected that they would replace them with rope, or stand him up to put his back against the post as the rest of them were tied, but instead two of them lifted his shackled feet. The others pushed him towards the post. With some effort, they finally had his back against

the post, but upside down! While two held him up, the others pulled his arms behind the post and tied the wrists together, palm to palm. Then they pulled his arms harder and tied more rope around them just above the elbows. They tugged on those ropes until his elbows were almost touching, and then they began binding his legs, first together, then to the post.

The legcuffs were removed before the first rope went on his ankles. His legs were bound tightly together, and then a couple hundred feet of rope was used to weld his legs to the wood. It was much like the position the rest of them were in, but this man had his shoulders and head on the floor, not his feet.

He might have been silenced by the huge rubber ball, but anger and hate flared in his eyes. David felt sympathy for him. He had, after all, had times when he wanted to yell and kick out at the harsh treatment. It was only the fear of punishment such as this that had held him back at those times.

“This sinner,” one nun began to lecture them, “tried to hit a Mistress. That cannot be tolerated. He will be punished continuously until he sees his error and repents. This is the beginning.”

She took the small black whip from her belt and stood before the bound sinner. With deliberate slowness, she took aim and cut a vicious slash across the man’s buttocks. Even with the gag in place, he yelled loudly. David could see the short red line forming on his flesh. The skin had not been cut but already looked as if it were becoming swollen under the redness.

More strikes followed, on the buttocks, thighs, and some across his chest. After thirty or more strokes, that nun stood aside and another took her place. The whipping continued.

By the time the fourth nun had tired out her arm lashing the rebellious sinner, all the accessible places of his body were covered with a crossing pattern of swollen ridges of red flesh. Some of the welts were turning darker colors, especially where the whipmarks were laid on top of each other.

David had watched the man’s hands in horrible fascination as the pain increased. The way he was tied had his arms flat on the floor, stretched out behind him. At first, his hands were clenched into fists. Then, when a blow particularly hurt, they jerked open. Finally, as the pain mounted to unbelievable proportions, his hands were thrashing back and forth, his fingers clutching at the floor and each other.

The first nun again addressed the rest of them. “I know you all talk when we’re not around,” she stated. “Pass the word of what you have seen. Attacks against the Mistresses will not be tolerated! And this,” she increased her voice to emphasize, “is only the beginning of his punishment.”

To illustrate, she pulled something out of a pocket and reached out towards the suffering man. At first, David could not see what the thing was, but the nun was attaching it somewhere at the man’s groin. It was, as David soon realised, a clamp that fitted neatly over the man’s

testicles, holding them firmly between two solid metal plates. The nun began to tighten the clamp. The man screamed.

“I could tighten them much further,” the nun informed them all as she stepped away from him, “But that will do for the moment. There won’t be any permanent damage unless we do have cause to turn the screws any further. As it is, the pain will increase in time.”

She had not finished. She pulled something out of a pocket, knelt down by the suffering man and attached it to one of his nipples. He screamed and jerked. The nun did the same to his other nipple.

“Those are alligator clips,” she announced when she rose. “They were metal clips with a strong spring and sharp teeth. Electricians use them. So do we.”

As the nuns left the room, their victim was panting, his eyes wide with pain and fear, and his head trying to reach his chest in hopes of dislodging the little monsters that bit into his flesh. Tied as he was with her head bent that way, his nipples were only a few inches from his face. He could see the metal jaws and the razor sharp teeth as they bit into him, but he could not reach them.

The pain in his nipples and his testicles must have been considerable, for the man struggled and whined for a long time. Eventually he were reduced to continuous moaning.

The men did not talk. David wished he could say something, some words of comfort, but none came. What could he say? That the pain would eventually stop? Sure it would. And then they would create more pain for him. David realised that they could keep on punishing this man until... Well, forever. It was a depressing thought and one that again made David feel so utterly helpless.

He did not sleep at all the rest of the afternoon. The man bound upside down to the post went on moaning, with occasional yelps of pain that sounded more like an animal in distress than a human. When the nuns came to release them for dinner, they left him just as he was.

That night, after dinner and a shower, David was abused again.

Two nuns took him to one of the bedrooms, one that had a pillory, a small cage made of iron bars, and a rail in addition to the bed. Mixed emotions danced through David’s mind. He did not want a repeat of the night when all those women had ridden his face. That had been painful and frightening, despite the arousal it had caused him. But then the night with Mistress Tanya had been something else, and a repeat of that was something that David would have welcomed. What would tonight hold in store?

“Tie him down to the bed?” the first nun asked.

“No. This is Miss Herington-Smythe, and she likes...”

“I know!” laughed the first nun.

They did not tie him to the bed. The handcuffs were removed from his arms and replaced with ropes at the wrists and above the elbows. They were tightly applied but not punishingly tight. Then the legcuffs were taken off and he was moved to the rail opposite the foot of the bed. It was a simple device; just two short wooden posts with a third attached to the tops. The bar across the top was only a couple of inches thick.

“I’ll bet this is his first time with Miss Herington-Smythe,” one nun said. “Wonder if he’ll like it?”

“Some do,” said the other, “Once they get used to it. I wouldn’t. Too much discomfort for me, but it’s not a punishment for some of them!”

They pushed David up against the bar, which was at waist height, spread his legs wide and tied his ankles to the supporting posts.

“He won’t enjoy it,” said the other nun. “It is sort of an acquired taste, you know.”

They laughed at that, and then tied a rope to his wrists and bent him over the rail. The rope went over to the wall and was passed through a ring set in it. When they pulled, David felt his arms being lifted up behind him. The closer they pulled his hands to the wall, the more it forced him to bend over. Soon his head was down around the level of his knees, and his arms were rigidly pulled towards the wall. He could shake his head and wiggle his hips a little, but that was all.

The nuns set some things he could not see on the bed and left.

It was uncomfortable having to bend over the bar, and the ropes were moderately tight, but he had been in worse positions. Far worse. What did worry him was that his backside was the highest part of him in that position. He remembered the first woman on that previous night, and her thick leather belt. He was in the perfect position to receive a severe beating on his buttocks, and he could think of no other reason for being tied and left in that position. Worse still, with his legs spread the way they were, his balls were exposed and vulnerable. It would only take a slightly mis-aimed blow to cause his serious pain and permanent damage. This was all seriously worrying.

Eventually, a woman, presumably Miss Herington-Smythe, came into the room. She inspected his position, announced it was “quite satisfactory,” and laughed. She even patted his bottom in an affectionate manner, and then walked round in front of him.

Miss Herington-Smythe was tall and athletic, with the look, appearance and dress of a keen horsewoman. Some might have uncharitably described her as looking more like a horse than most of those she rode, but in fact she would not have been particularly offended. She did indeed love horses, but there was something, something that was not readily available at the stables, that she loved even more.

David looked in dismay at the woman standing before him. There was no doubt of her strength, and in her riding outfit she was an impressive figure. His eyes focused fearfully on the riding crop held commandingly in her right hand.

He could not see what she was doing when she went round behind him again. He might have been able to turn his head, or even look at her through his own legs, but he was afraid that it might provoke her to thrash him even harder than he was now sure she was about to do. He braced himself for the pain.

The bed creaked, which surprised David a little. He had assumed she would stand on the floor to thrash him, where she would have better balance and the space to wield the riding crop effectively. He felt her hand pat his buttocks again.

He flinched and gasped. It was totally unexpected, although not a completely new sensation for David. Her gloved finger pressing against and past his anal sphincter was an indignity he had already suffered from the nurses. Miss Herington-Smythe's intrusion, however, felt cold and somewhat slippery! It took him some moments to realise that she had spread some sort of gel onto the latex glove she now wore, and she was working it in and out of his backside. Unlike the nurse, she made no attempt to press down with her finger to stimulate the nerves that David had not known existed before coming to Saint Secundina's.

She was lubricating him; there was no doubt about it although David could not fathom what purpose was in her mind. First one finger, then two, then three slid in and out of his backside. He had a sudden and terrifying picture in his mind of the artificial phallus on the end of a long, mechanised pole ramming in and out of the man who had been taken for punishment all that time ago. But no. There was no mechanism of any sort in this room. It could not be anything like that. Unless...

Her hands were on his hips. The blunt end of the phallus was pushing between his buttocks and against his sphincter. No! It was too large! It couldn't possibly...

He squealed. It was a squeal of outrage as much as of pain. She drove forward as her strong hands gripped his hips and pulled back, forcing the large phallus deeply into him. He jerked frantically, but the ropes held him and Miss Herington-Smythe began to thrust energetically.

It was beyond David's comprehension. He could understand why women might want to satisfy their sexual urges on his face, as odd as that was. He could even understand why some women might derive some sort of bizarre satisfaction by causing men pain. But this was something else. What pleasure could Miss Herington-Smythe possibly achieve by this... this... this *rape* ?

Perhaps that was it, he rationalised even as the pain became worse and her thrusting increased in speed and ferocity. This woman, this madwoman, must have some crazy desire to *be* a man, and along with that and even crazier desire to perform a rape. He, David, was nothing but the victim of her assault, and it was not the sexual act that gave her satisfaction; it was the assault itself.

David gasped and jerked again as Miss Herington-Smythe's assault continued with renewed

vigour. Would she never tire?

This isn't right, he told himself. No man should have to undergo this sort of treatment. It could not have any justification, not even the implausible excuse of being some part of penitence and rehabilitation. It was not sex, nor providing anyone, least of all Miss Herington-Smythe with sexual satisfaction. It was a perversion, and that was all.

It hurt, and it went on hurting. It seemed as though she would never stop, and the more David gasped and squealed, the more her enthusiasm and energy increased. After many minutes, David found that it became far less painful if he relaxed and ceased trying to resist the intruder. In fact...

The sensations David had felt when the nurse had rubbed somewhere inside his backside with her finger were starting to return. This time, however, there was something more, something accompanying the pain, outrage and humiliation that was neither pain nor outrage nor humiliation. This can't be right, he told himself. It's almost... Well, it feels sort of good. And he was uncomfortably aware that he was fully and indisputably aroused.

He had no idea why this perverted violation should feel give him such a firm and obvious arousal. It did. And now David was worried that there was something wrong with him; that such a reaction to an act so undeniably unnatural and perverted was an indication that *he* must some sort of pervert to be aroused by it. He hated every second of it, and still his body was telling him, through the pain, that it was building up to an ejaculation no different to the one created by the nurse, except that this time there was every indication it would be a full and indisputable orgasm. Without being conscious of what he was doing, he began pushing back with his hips to match her strokes. She seemed to like that. The thrusting sped up.

David realized that he could see herself in a mirror off to one side. It was a strange picture. A woman dressed in riding gear, leather straps around her hips holding a long, thick, artificial phallus in position at her groin, pounding away at his arse. His erection bounced underneath him, slapping up against him, his fingers clenching and unclenching in pain and so much more than pain. It was indeed most strange, and yet the strangest of all was to see that this poor, abused, raped man seemed to be enjoying every second of it.

Then it stopped.

It stopped suddenly and without warning. One moment Miss Herington-Smythe was thrusting away, and the next moment she had not only stopped but had withdrawn from him completely.

David had been only seconds away from orgasm, and would have already done it some considerable time ago if only someone or something had given just the slightest attention to his wildly waving erection.

He wanted to yell at her to put it back in, to reach underneath him and take his hardness in one hand, to grip it as she rode him once more. He could not ask it. It was too humiliating.

“Damn!” he muttered.

“What was that?” Miss Herington-Smythe asked.

“Nothing, Mistress. Nothing at all.”

The woman left without another word.

It was almost an hour before the nuns came to untie him.

Chapter X

Escape!

David wondered if there was any way he could get Mistress Tanya to pay him another visit. He could not think of anything. He did not even know how it was determined which nun attended to him each day. Maybe it was random, maybe some kind of work schedule. He did know that, if he ran into Mistress Tanya again, he would find some way of dropping a large hint that he would love to repeat their night together.

His backside was sore. It was very sore. Miss Herington-Smythe’s penetration had stretched muscles that were not designed to be stretched. At least, they might be designed to expand to allow things *out*, but they most certainly were not designed to be forcibly stretched to allow things *in*. He had no idea why such incomprehensible treatment of him had made him aroused and close to the point of orgasm, he only knew it had. And that made him feel even more uncomfortable and unhappy with the whole thing. Even more disturbing, to say nothing of frustrating, was that he now felt as though he needed to finish it. He needed it, or *something*, to finish what Miss Herington-Smythe had started, and a few minutes on his own in a toilet cubicle was not going to satisfy that need, even if he were allowed a few minutes alone.

The next morning he was taken to a new room for prayers. This was the first one he had seen with windows. The view was out over a street with cars passing by and even some people walking around. Just a plain ordinary street, but it brought home again how much of a prisoner he was. He felt a helpless feeling wash over him, and he hated it.

There were five of them for prayers that day and David, much to his good fortune, was placed next to one of the windows. Their handcuffs were removed and their wrists tied together in front of them. That was a strange feeling for David, who had come to expect that his hands would always be tied behind him. He quickly enough found out why they were tied that way. As with other similar rooms, there were electric motors and cables that lowered from holes in the ceiling. His wrists were bound to the metal ring at the end of the cable, and then lifted up before him when the motor came on again. His hands went higher and higher until he could feel his toes

leaving the floor. And then higher still. When the motor ceased humming, his toes were two feet off the floor.

All of them were left to hang by their wrists. Their weight pulled down and tightened the ropes around their wrists. It was uncomfortable but David realised that it could have been worse. The rope, for one thing, was thicker than average. It was also softer. The result was that it cut into his wrists much less severely than thinner cord would have done. When you are going to hang by your wrists all day, that is a kindness.

As usual, the men talked, but David found his interest being drawn to the outside. They were on the second floor and had a good view out over the street. The windows seemed to be tinted so he assumed that those outside were unable to see the naked men hanging there. Also, the windows had metal bars across them. Even if he had been totally free, he could not have fitted through the gaps between bars. He suspected all the exterior windows of Saint Secundina's were barred.

He watched the cars go by with a longing in his heart to regain his lost freedom. He had to wonder if those people driving by knew what was going on inside these walls. Would they care? Absolute obedience to One World and to the Church had been implanted so deeply in people that few could even think against the rules, let alone act. Maybe those people out there did know some of it, and simply assumed that useful retraining was going on within.

David sighed. Maybe, he figured, seeing the freedom of outside was a part of the punishment. Sort of rubbing his lack of freedom in his face. Well, it worked, but maybe not the way they wanted. David was hardened against the people and system that had taken away his liberty and free will. If he could, he would tear down the building with his bare hands and rip the face off anyone who tried to stop him.

He knew it was all fantasy, but dreaming about revenge against those who hurt him helped to pass the time. He really did not feel like praying.

The realisation was slow to come. As he hung there with aching wrists and numb hands, he had been watching one part of the building. Nuns and guards in black uniforms were coming and going from that door. Most walked round the corner of the building or came from that direction. From the cars he saw pulling out into the street, he assumed that was where they had been parked. This, he finally concluded, must be the employee entrance to Saint Secundina's.

The more he studied that scene, the more he picked up on the pattern. Most of those coming or going held pieces of paper in their hands. Passes? Orders? From the way nuns pulled the papers out pockets as they walked up to the door, he figured they were necessary to enter. And the people leaving were putting papers away. So, logically enough, a pass was necessary to leave this place, even if you were a nun. He filed away the information, not sure if it would ever be any use to him.

He tried to nap but it was a little hard in that position. He figured he could probably sleep like this if they left him there long enough for him to get tired enough. It was not one of the worse ways to spend the day praying.

Dinner came and went. David realized that having his arms handcuffed behind him was coming to feel normal, even comfortable compared to the other restraints he had endured. Even sleeping strapped down to the hard wooden bed was becoming easier.

He was very glad when someone else was picked for “Special Privilege” that night, and the next morning he found out about a very different side to life in Saint Secundina’s that he had never suspected.

Instead of being taken to pray, he was taken down to a room in the basement. There, much to his surprise, the handcuffs were removed and he was given a job to do. The room, it turned out was a laundry. Some of sinners were taken off “prayer duty” each day to run the clean the sheets and clothing of sinners and apparently all the clothing of nuns and guards too. There were plenty garments that needed washing, drying, ironing and folding carefully. He spent the day moving piles of clothing around, stuffing washing machines and driers, and stacking the clean clothing into neat piles. The room was hot and steamy. It was hard work, but David did not complain. He figured it was better than hanging by his wrists all day, or something far worse than that.

He was later to learn that sinners were also used to wash dishes in the cafeteria, and clean bedrooms and offices. That gave him an idea. If he could get into one of the offices...

The next day it was back to praying, hogtied and ball gagged. The day after that he was once again tied like a mummy to a post for prayers. That night, while awaiting her turn in the showers, he was given a disposable razor and told to shave. Not only was his face decidedly stubbly, his pubic hair was trying to make a reappearance and Saint Secundina’s did not like that, so he was obliged to shave with soap from the shower. Afterwards, the razor was collected and he was inspected to ensure he had done a good job. He passed the inspection.

It was almost a week later before an opportunity presented itself to the sinner. David had been assigned to clean up some of the offices. As with any large institution, Saint Secundina’s had a bureaucracy, and all bureaucracies ever known to man or woman ran on paperwork. There were forms for this and forms for that. Approvals had to be signed in triplicate and cross-referenced.

David was assigned to sweeping out a little-used office, but what sparked his interest were two computer terminals sitting there. Playing with computers and understanding how they worked was one thing he had learned at school, and he had spent many hours of his own time with those that were freely available in the school library for any of the students to use. He had learned all he could about them, simply because it was a fascinating subject.

The nun in charge of the clean-up crew looked in on him occasionally but for the most part he was left on his own. With his nudity and shackled feet, they figured he would not get very far even if he tried to flee. Fleeing, however, was not on his mind. As soon as he was sure he was alone, he sat down before one of the terminals and put his fingers on the keyboard.

A minute later, he whooped with joy. They were so sure of themselves that they had not

even put password protection on the system! He was into a main menu and looking over the choices. A few minutes later, a piece of paper was sliding out of the printer on the next table. David quickly folded the paper in half and then in half again. He shoved the paper between his foot and the high heel half-shoe. Quickly, he turned off the computer and made sure all was as it had been before.

He was busy dumping the rubbish bin into a larger one when the nun next checked on him.

David's brain was racing, and one of the first things it told him was that his shoe was not a good hiding place for the valuable document he had managed to print. The shoes were taken off for showers and sometimes other purposes. He had seen sinners tied face down on the floor with their feet tied up to a bar, and then the bottoms of their feet whipped. It was far too likely that paper might be found there.

Instead he hid it behind some small boxes on a shelf. He was careful to note exactly where that office was located as he was led away later. His heart had been racing with excitement, but later, after he calmed down, he realised that he might still never have the chance to use it.

Spending the day tied to a post does have one advantage; it gives you time to think. And plan. David formulated dozens of escape plans and rejected them all. As the days passed and he became more familiar with the routine, some of the ideas began to seem more practical. But it would still depend on luck and on being ready to move when the right moment presented itself.

One day his group was led out to a courtyard instead of dinner.

"This sinner," they were told, "has tried to escape. He was caught, as everyone who tried to escape is caught, and he is being punished. Look upon him well and remember what you see. Escape is impossible! Do not think otherwise."

David recognised the man as the same one who had been given The Shaft the first day. He had been hung upside down from a pole by leather bands attached to his ankles. His body was scarred and bleeding from ankle to neck by whipmarks too numerous to count. He hung with head down and eyes closed but they could see that he breathing and still alive. As if a full-body whipping and being hung upside down was not enough, thick leather cords had been twisted around his genitals and down to the handle of a bucket. David could see rocks filling each bucket and had to shudder at the thought of how much pain that weight must be adding to his suffering.

"He will be whipped again tomorrow morning. And then left to hang there all day. If he survives, he will be whipped again and left to hang another day. After that, it will be up to the Mother Superior if she wishes to show mercy on this sinner."

David looked at the man and had to wonder just how long he had been hanging already. He looked terrible. A couple days of hanging that way had to do permanent damage, he was sure. If he were granted "mercy" and eventually let down, he would never be the same, David was sure.

A more intelligent and logical person might have taken this lesson to heart and abandoned all escape plans. David did not. If anything, this mistreatment of one of his fellow sinners made him all the more resolved to get out of that place.

That night, after dinner, he was taken to a bedroom and tied down spread-eagle to the bed. The first woman who came to him was, David thought, a nun he had seen from a distance, although she was not wearing her nun's uniform. Before taking her pleasure riding his face, she whipped his body with a riding crop until he was bruised and begging her to stop. Then she mounted his face and slammed down onto him repeatedly before sliding backward and forward on top of him until she reached a brief but intense climax.

The night after that he was again taken to a bedroom and tied down. This time, one woman after another took delight in making him squirm, cry out in pain and plead for mercy by tormenting his genitals. He was flicked, pinched, squeezed, twisted and even bitten several times. One of them even told him she was going to give him a "blow job", and then closed her teeth tightly around his erection and moved her head up and down until, as he screamed in agony, the erection finally subsided.

As he lay hogtied on a hard concrete floor the next day for prayers, he considered his life. The very idea of spending the rest of it as a sinner in Saint Secundina's should have driven him insane. It was simply a fate too terrible to endure, but the tiny hope that one day he would find a means of escape kept him rational and able to keep going. He clung fiercely to that tiny hope.

David did not know it, but it was exactly on the three month anniversary of him coming to Saint Secundina's that the hoped for opportunity came his way.

A short time after the lights were turned off, they suddenly came back on. A nun stood in the doorway looking the men over, and then she staggered down a row inspecting each strapped down sinner. She stopped at David and grinned. "You're a good looking bitch," she muttered and began unlocking his ankle chain. Quickly enough she had David standing in front of her, still wearing his handcuffs and ready to be taken someplace.

The nun was one that David had seen around but had no real personal contact with. She was just another of the sadistic tormentors at Saint Secundina's. She was in her thirties with long blonde hair pulled back as all the nuns did. Her features were not pretty, not ugly, but hard. She was as tall as David, and heavily built. She looked like a woman with a particularly savage mean streak. David could smell the alcohol on her breath as he was led off in the general direction of the bedrooms.

The nun removed David's handcuffs and then took off her own clothing. She flopped backwards onto the bed and spread her legs wide.

"Get in there," she growled, pointing between her legs. "Use your tongue."

David crawled hesitantly onto the bed between the spread legs. He leaned his face close to

the pubic patch exposed there, one that was not blonde, he noted.

“Damn it, spread my lips and get your tongue in there!”

David was not opposed to oral sex with a woman, particularly if he was not tied spread-eagled and she was not crushing his face and half smothering him. With Mistress Tanya it had been a real pleasure; at least, it had been a pleasure when compared to everything else that had happened to him here. But this was something else. This woman smelled bad, and was very rough as she grabbed David by the ears and pulled his head down to shove his face into the bush.

David might have gone along with orders. He had become rather obedient in her months of captivity, and this would have been no worse than so many of the unpleasantness he had been forced to endure. But sometimes it is the tiniest straw that breaks the camel's back. He suddenly brought up both arms to free himself from the nun's hold on his ears. He reared back, his right hand raised high in the air, and he brought it down on the nun's face with all his might, his hand closed into a fist.

It was a good, solid blow. Blood splattered from the broken nose. David was surprised that it had hurt his hand so much, but still glad he did it.

With a growl, the nun tried to sit up, one hand holding her bleeding nose, the other reaching for David's face. David leapt backwards off the bed and looked rapidly around for a weapon. This woman was strong. In the normal way, David would have had little problem in dealing with one woman on her own, but the days and nights at Saint Secundina's had taken their toll on his strength. He was not at all sure he could handle her.

There was not much in the bedroom that could be any use to him, but then he spotted a small chair in the bathroom before a vanity mirror. Quickly he moved towards the chair and almost fell on his face. His ankles were still joined. He had forgotten about the half-shoes and the chain linking them. But he reached the chair, grabbed it and turned in time to see the nun take her first step. David swung the chair in an upward arch, connecting squarely with the nun's jaw. The nun went down without a word.

David dropped the chair and stood there, panting. What he had done had been done by instinct. He had not thought it through. He had simply reacted, and now that he had time to think he was not so sure he had done the right thing. He had no choice. There was nothing to consider. He had to follow it through.

He remembered the man hanging by his ankles in the courtyard and doubted whether that man had done as much damage to a nun as he just did. There was no way to hide what he had done. He could not even sneak back to the dormitory and strap himself down to the plank. He was in for it if caught. Therefore, he could not allow herself to be caught. Simple logic.

David rummaged through the nun's leather uniform to find the keys. He unlocked his half-shoes. It was fortunate for David that this nun was near to the same height as him and her build was particularly solid. Her clothes would fit him; well, almost. The nun's high-heeled boots were

a very tight fit, but he found he could just squeeze his feet into them and zip them up. Walking would not be easy, but the practice of walking on the ridiculous high-heeled half-shoes was now going to be put to good use. Similarly, the nun's leather outfit came close to fitting him but not quite close enough. He was sure he would look ridiculous, and anyone seeing him would know immediately that he was not one of the nuns. There was much more to be done for him to stand the slightest chance of his plan working, and the consequences of failure were unthinkable.

He had seen some of the nuns wearing headgear; a sort of hood that hung loosely onto their shoulders. This nun, however, had nothing like that. He would have to find something. He went to the bathroom, and looked at himself in the mirror. He did not look much like a nun, not even one of the really ugly ones. He found a razor in a cupboard and shaved. It did not make much difference.

He shrugged. It would work, or it wouldn't work, he thought. He had no choice.

He locked the chain from the half-shoes onto the nun's ankles, winding it round and round to restrict any movement as much as possible. He put the handcuffs on her wrists behind her back, and used a pair of pillowcases from the bed, twisted into a short rope, to bind her elbows. That would do for the moment.

Leaving the nun for the moment, he stepped out into the hallway. Stand straight, he told himself. If anyone sees you from a distance, there is a chance they will believe you are one of the nuns. Act like you belong here. You are a nun, a guard over sinners. Remember that.

He began checking doors, cautious in case there was anyone in any of the rooms. It was unlikely. The sinners were all asleep in the dormitories, but he was well aware that even this late at night there might well be some who were still enduring punishment and most certainly some who were in this part of the building providing pleasure for the nuns or visitors. In the next corridor, he found what he recognised as prayer rooms or punishment rooms, it was hard to tell which. He went back to the bedroom and dragged the nun by the feet out the door and down the corridor, keeping a sharp ear out for any sounds of approaching people.

He made it, and closed the door of the room behind him. This room had a couple of posts, a table, a closet and a steel-barred cage. David considered all the possibilities. He opened the closet to find boxes of ropes, handcuffs, chains and locks and, to his delight, a complete nun's outfit. He already had most of the clothes, of course, but the headgear was perfect. Before he began to attend to the unconscious nun, he put it on and adjusted it so that as much of his face was in shadow as was possible. He would not pass close inspection, but from a little distance away he was a perfectly passable, ugly, flat-chested nun!

He pulled the boxes out of the closet and kicked them aside before dragging the cage over to where the nun was lying. After a few unsuccessful starts, he managed to stuff the nun into the cage, folding her into a ball in order to close the door of the cage. Then he locked it with several padlocks, and quite unnecessarily added several more chains and padlocks just because he felt like it.

He rocked the cage back on its edge and managed to walk it over to the closet. With an effort, he pushed the cage inside, closed the door and locked it.

It was a temptation to find something to make the nun even more uncomfortable when she awoke. It would only be right. They had been hurting him for months, and he owed them big time. At the last minute, he decided that escape was more important than a little revenge. Besides, when this nun woke up, she was going to be very uncomfortable for a long time. These rooms, David knew were pretty much soundproof. Besides, the nun was also inside a closet. It might well be a very long time before she was found, and the thought of the nun spending many hours or perhaps many days locked in that cage was not at all unpleasing to David.

He left the room and headed in the direction he was sure the offices were located. It was hard to walk without the boots' high heels clacking on the hard floor. All sorts of people might be prowling the corridors. Maybe they even had night guards on patrol. He hoped not.

A couple of times he heard footsteps and had to hide in a room until they passed. His heart was pounding as he crouched behind closed doors and prayed that no one would open them. It was most ironic, he noted, that he was finally honestly praying in a prayer room. One time he ducked into a room only to realise that it was one of the punishment rooms and was occupied.

He had closed the door behind him and was trembling in the dark when he heard a moaning and froze. If there was a sinner in here, then there might also be a nun, or the very footsteps that had driven him in here might well be coming here to check on this prisoner. He waited, hardly daring to breathe, until he was sure the footsteps outside had gone on, and then he turned on the light.

In the middle of the room was a sinner, a young man hanging by his ankles from long straps fixed to the ceiling. His head was several feet off the floor. He was, as was normal for a sinner undergoing punishment, naked and bound. His hands had been pulled up on his back as David's had been during the "Special Privilege." He had been blindfolded, but the blindfold had slipped. He gazed fearfully at David out of one very watery eye.

David felt for his suffering. Spending the whole night hanging by your ankles is terrible, he felt, and somehow so much worse to be blindfolded and left entirely alone. But should he try to help? He could let him down, assuming he could find the switch controlling the electric motor that must have been used to hoist him up there. He could even untie him.

There were, however, problems with each course of action. If he let the man down and left him there, by the morning he would be discovered and it would be known that someone had helped him. That would give David only a few hours to try to get far away. If he untied the man and took him, there were more problems. He had no nun's uniform for him. True, there was a nun's uniform in that room where he had left the caged nun, but there was definitely no spare headgear and David was extremely reluctant to spend more time to search. Most importantly, he had no paperwork for a second escapee.

If he left the man exactly as he had found him, David would feel guilty.

A no-win situation, he told himself. Then he turned off the light and left the room.

Let him work out his own escape, David cynically rationalized.

With caution and a few wrong turns, he found her way back to the office he had cleaned. The paper was still there! Now all he had to do was to find the exit, pass the numerous guards, and get away. That was all.

Having never been to the front door, it took him a while to find it. And more than one occasion where he was certain he was caught. All that saved him was remembering to act like he belonged there. Twice he even walked right past nuns. The first time his heart nearly stopped, but they ignored him, intent on their own conversations.

The closer he came to the main entrance, the more crowded it became and the more frequently he saw the guards as well as the nuns. Remembering their rough treatment of him when he first arrived there, he had an almost overpowering urge to attack them.

When he had been studying the comings and going from the entrance, he had noticed that most of the nuns had been carrying bags or purses. He had nothing. That might look suspicious and cause someone to look at him more closely. He knew that the moment anyone took a proper look at him, they would realise he was a man. He must not appear to be out of the ordinary in any way, so he kept his eyes open for an unattended purse.

He could not find any.

At least he had a pass. During his short time on the computer terminal, he had found a menu that included the printing of numerous forms. Just click on the desired form, and a series of blank boxes came up to allow you to fill in the information. He had created a two-day pass. All the bearer had to do was present the pass at the door and walk out. Looking over the personnel roster, he had picked out a nun who had been there only a couple weeks. He just had to hope that this "Jill Clayborn" was not personally known to the guards, and that they would not look at him closely when he presented the pass.

Keeping up the facade that he belonged there and with the hood covering as much of his head as he could without looking suspicious, he walked up to the main exit. There was a desk there, and a couple guards. His knees felt so weak that he was scarcely able to stand. He wondered whether he was actually trembling. It felt as though he was. Would the guards notice?

He handed the paper to the first guard, looking straight ahead at the exit. She looked it over.

Oh, shit! thought David. He knows I'm not Jill Clayborn!

"Have a nice trip, Miss Clayborn," said the guard as she handed the paper back without even looking up.

He headed towards the gate, fully expecting to be called back at any second, and hardly believing it when he cleared the door and was walking, knees still trembling, towards the car park.

He wanted to shout with joy, and it was a struggle to keep his bubbling emotion under control. He walked between the parked cars, trying to look casual. It was not over yet. Most of them were locked, but a few... Ah, there! The keys were right there, on the dashboard!

He got in and started the engine. With trembling hands, he put the car in gear and slowly drove away from Saint Secundina's.

It was a dark night and the city, at least the part he was driving through, was pretty much deserted. He drove, turned and drove more, then turned again. Only when he was certain he was many miles from Saint Secundina's did he stop. He pulled into an alley and reversed the car with the front headed back towards the street.

It was then that he began to shake all over. It had been so easy; and so hard. So much for the often-proclaimed fact that no one ever escaped from Saint Secundina's. He had!

When the emotions flooding over him subsided, he began to think about what he should do next.

Where would he go? He had no idea. Maybe back to his parents – but not right away. As soon as Saint Secundina's knew he was missing, that would be the first place they would look.

How would he live? He did not know. Where would he sleep? He did not know that either. And what would he do? About that, he did have some ideas.

There had to be, he reasoned, some people out there who understood the corruption and evil of One World. There were others who knew how far the Church had drifted from a true religion into a quagmire of lies and hypocrisy. There had to be some people who would fight to regain the freedom all people once enjoyed. There had to be!

He would find them. He would join them. If necessary, he would lead them from apathy to take the action that was so badly needed. It would not be easy, no path worth travelling ever was, but he had to do something about the injustice he had seen. Maybe, one day, he would be the one to tear down Saint Secundina's. And, he would happily do it with his bare hands, if that was what it took to put an end to it.

The End