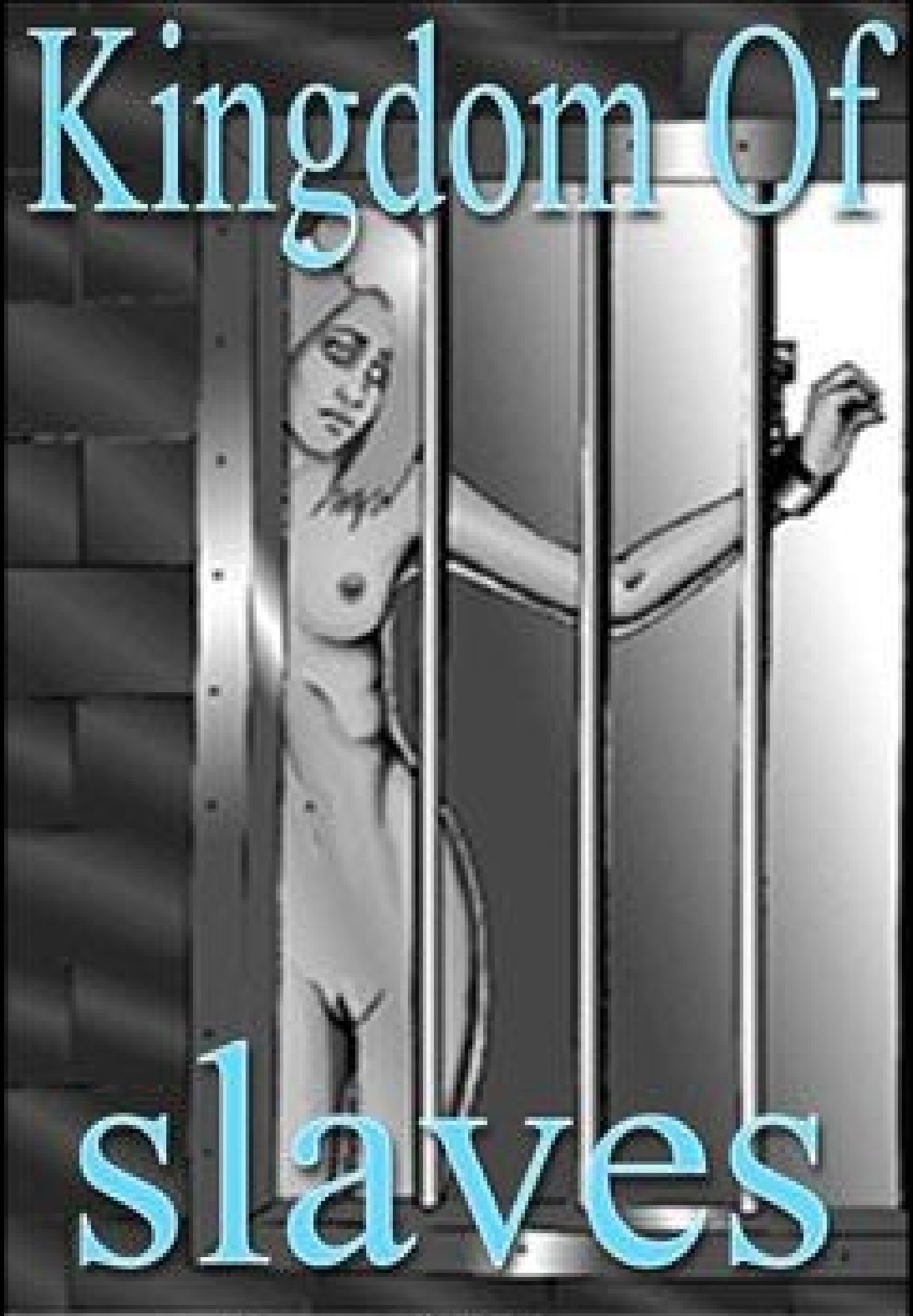


Kingdom Of

A black and white illustration of a woman with long hair, looking out from behind vertical prison bars. She is wearing a simple, light-colored dress. Her right hand is visible, gripping one of the bars. The background behind her is a dark, textured wall, possibly made of stone or brick. The overall mood is somber and confined.

slaves

Paul Moore

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Kingdom of Slaves

By Paul Moore

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Pink Flamingo Publications

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Prologue

There were sixty links in the chain. Kim had counted them several times, following them back until the last link was swallowed into the concrete floor. The other end of the chain was padlocked to a shackle around her ankle. Each link was an inch of freedom. She could reach the seatless toilet when she needed it, the bare mattress she slept on, and the slot in the wall where food appeared twice a day. A ten-foot circle was her world.

Overhead, a bare bulb burned constantly, and two video cameras watched her every move. She wasn't alone. Boredom and fear were constant companions.

She knew the isolation was meant to break her. As a reporter, she had heard enough of brainwashing techniques to know loneliness and uncertainty are potent weapons against the will. Knowing this did nothing to lessen its effect upon her.

There was a spigot in the corner, which she used for drinking, and washing. She bathed often, fearing that a lack of cleanliness was the first sign of surrender, and she was determined not to give in to despair.

The food was a monotonous gruel, which always left her hungry. It came on a tin plate without a spoon. The first day she only picked at it. The second day she ate it all. The third day she licked the plate, not caring if the cameras overhead saw her lapping like an animal.

At first she had calmed herself with thoughts of the story she would write after she escaped. "Domain, Coterie of Kink", the headline would read. Later she amended the headline to say "My Vacation in Hell".

It was impossible to know how long she had been there, but she estimated three days had passed when she heard footsteps in the hall. Cautiously, she approached the door to the limit of her chain and peeked through the tiny, barred window into the hall. Three men went by, striding purposefully, wearing the brown uniforms of guards. She heard a key rattling in a lock, and a female voice whimpering softly.

The men returned, leading a naked girl on a leash. Her hands were bound behind her and cinched up high between her shoulder blades with a strap connected to her collar. One man held the leash. A second held one of the girl's elbows and propelled her along. The third man walked behind with a leather strap. When the girl balked, he would strike her unprotected rear with the strap to urge her along. As they passed by, the girl turned her head and looked into Kim's cell, then the strap connected again, making the girl face front and step smart. The guards made crude jokes as they marched her down the hall. A door slammed.

The screaming went on for days.

From time to time there would be a pause in the screaming and Kim would hear other things, the creak and clank of some dreadful machinery, barked demands and whimpered capitulations, wet rhythmic sounds that went on and on. Then the screams would start again.

Kim heard it all. Putting her hands over her ears could not shut out the sound, so she gave up. She kept remembering the brief glance she had of the beautiful, tear streaked face and the horror in those eyes.

I won't be able to sleep, she thought, then chastised herself for her selfishness. A girl was being tortured in that room. She had no right to complain about noise. She did sleep, and woke to more screams when the food arrived.

She had never felt so alone, vulnerable, and naked.

There are many ways to be naked, she reflected bitterly. Being naked in the bath is a comfortable thing. Being naked with a lover is sensual. Being naked with a doctor is clinical. Now she was naked for a new reason. Clothing is an armor protecting us from the eyes and hands of others. A naked woman knew no privacy and kept no secrets. She had no shield against the whip. Kim shivered under the camera's unblinking gaze.

She heard steps again in the hallway, the men passed by and returned with another girl. This time Kim couldn't see her face. She was slung over a guard's shoulder like a grain sack.

Her bound hands dangled over his legs. Her bound legs were wrapped inside his right arm. His left hand was busily burrowing into her loins.

Kim ate seven meals before the screaming stopped.

In the silence that followed, she heard footsteps. This time she knew that they were coming for her.

Chapter One

“I need to talk to someone.”

Kim Victor looked up from her typewriter at the voice, irritated at the interruption. She could feel the delicate threads of her last, unwritten sentence separating.

It was one of the girls from the back of the newsroom. Kim wasn't sure what she did, obituaries or something. She was one of those invisible worker bees who speak to others only when their job requires it, go directly home at the end of the day, and make no lasting impression on those around them. Kim struggled to remember her name.

“I'm Charlene Weaver,” the girl offered helpfully. “You don't know me; nobody does. I've never asked for help from anyone, but I need help now. I know you're very busy right now, but could you come to my place tonight to talk?” The speech sounded rehearsed.

Kim looked skyward, as though seeking help from heaven, then flashed her famous “just kidding” grin and asked, “Why me?”

“I know, it's not fair to ask.” Charlene looked down and started to turn away.

“Wait a minute,” Kim stopped her. This was a girl who expected rejection. She would have to be handled like an egg. “Where do you live?” she asked, wondering if it was concern or curiosity that prompted the question.

It was a small apartment, Spartan as a monk's cell. Charlene's personality had made no impact on the place. Kim sat in one of two living room chairs. Charlene knelt on a cushion at her feet, explaining cryptically that she was more comfortable that way. Kim had coffee. Charlene had none.

“I'm avoiding caffeine,” she said.

Kim looked at the girl on the floor, discovering that she was pretty. Somehow she had managed to go unnoticed by all those predatory males down at the Herald, or maybe they had

noticed and her shyness had turned them away. Office romance seldom went unobserved, but Kim had never heard Charlene's name mentioned by any of the office gossips.

She remembered how much of a stir her own break-up with Larry had caused. The stares of pity from her friends had been bad enough. The opportunists circling to offer her "comfort" had been worse.

Charlene stared at her own clasped hands as she spoke. Kim thought that she looked as though she were praying or confessing.

"I'm a very shy and submissive person in all ways. I don't have many friends, and none of them are close. My father died when I was a child. My mother died last year. I'm alone most of the time. I had a brief affair with a married man about a year ago. The details of the affair are not important, but the man I was going with introduced me to a friend, and the friend told me about a place called Domain."

"Domain?" Kim interrupted, her reporter's instincts aroused.

"It's a secret place, not a religious cult, but they're jealous of their rituals there. I met one of their representatives, and he explained to me what Domain was about. After a time I asked to join them. I was interviewed and tested. When they were satisfied with me, I was given a month to put my affairs in order before going with them. I suppose they also wanted to give me time to change my mind."

She shuddered slightly and muttered to herself.

"Excuse me?" Kim prompted. She was intrigued and longed to be able to take notes.

"I was going to be a Class A."

"I don't understand."

Charlene shook her head. "I've told you too much already. Believe me, some things are better left secret. I know your reputation as a reporter. You won't let go until you have the truth. That's why your column is the first thing people read when they pick up the paper."

“The second,” Kim amended, “they read the comics first.”

Charlene smiled, then sobered again. “I only told you about Domain so that you would understand my problem. I promised myself to these people. They were going to come for me on Saturday. Now I want to break that promise.”

“Why?”

Charlene put her hands to her mouth. It was the gesture of a child bursting to tell a happy secret. “I’m in love.”

“Aha!” Kim laughed. “Is it anyone I know?”

“No,” said Charlene quickly, “but you should. He’s a very special man. He seemed like an old friend the first time that we met. I never felt wanted and needed before. I realize now that I was looking for this when I promised myself to Domain. I had to belong somewhere.”

“Well, it doesn’t sound as though you need help making up your mind,” Kim laughed. “I don’t see that you have any problem at all.”

Charlene stared at the floor. “Only one, I feel it’s my duty to let Domain know I’ve decided not to come. My fiancée wants me to leave with him for Brazil on Thursday. I’ve no way to contact Domain. They are so careful with their privacy they wouldn’t even give me a phone number to call. Someone will be here to pick me up on Saturday, and I’ve no way of telling them not to come. I can’t just leave a note on the door. I’m afraid they may believe that I’ve betrayed them somehow.”

Kim said, “So the only way to handle it is for me to be here on Saturday morning to make apologies and explanations for you.”

Charlene nodded unhappily, “It’s too much to ask.”

Of course, Kim didn’t think it was.

Kim finished brushing her teeth, spat, and wiped her face with a towel, suddenly catching herself off guard in the mirror

and really seeing herself as she was.

She was beautiful, but not vain, and usually glanced in the mirror only when grooming made it necessary. Now she looked hard, and tried to be objective about what she saw. Fresh from the shower, she was naked, innocent of makeup, which she had little use for anyway, and stark looking with her wet hair plastered tight to her skull. It looked dark now, but would dry to the color her mother called “dishwater blonde”, an unglamorous shade which never came in any bottle. It was glossy with good health, but cut short for the sake of convenience. Style and beauty were things she had never worked at. There was deodorant on her dressing table, but no perfume.

Yet the face that greeted her was striking, with fine features, high cheekbones, dimples when she smiled, and intelligent and determined blue eyes. She admitted to herself that she was probably not centerfold material. Her breasts were well formed, but not as heavy as most American men seemed to prefer. At five feet five, she lacked the long grace of a fashion model. She patted her hips and decided that losing five pounds would be a good idea—tomorrow.

Today she had to deliver a message and try to wheedle an interview out of some very secretive people. She still wasn’t sure how she would go about it, but asking questions was her business. She knew the world was full of people who were bursting to tell a secret or confess a sin. It was just a matter of finding the right trigger.

Dressing, she reflected that she would be twenty five in two weeks, and wondered uneasily at what age a woman might begin to consider herself a spinster. Only last month she had seen the last of her college friends married off. This latest wedding had been a particularly bitter experience. She and the bride had been roommates at school, and had tumbled into bed together one night after splitting a bottle of wine. The next morning, they rose and dressed without looking at each other, and by unspoken agreement neither of them ever mentioned the incident. At the wedding, there had been an awkward

moment when Kim kissed the bride to congratulate her and saw her blush at an unwelcome memory.

Kim wondered if she was one of those closet lesbians who don't discover their true nature until late in life. There had been no man in her heart since her breakup with Larry months ago. She wasn't even looking right now; the bitterness of their parting had left her gun shy.

It was Charlene Weaver, or Kim's envy of her, which conjured these thoughts. Charlene had found Prince Charming. Kim wondered if she would ever meet a mysterious stranger who would whisk her away to a magical place.

After dressing, Kim paused for a moment at the door to make sure she hadn't forgotten anything, and found herself examining her apartment with the same critical eye she had used on herself. It was only slightly less Spartan than Charlene's, furnished for utility rather than beauty. Only an overloaded bookcase and a few cheap prints on the walls told anything about the personality of the girl who lived there. Later she would wonder if it was a premonition that made her stand looking at the room for a moment before she locked the door.

She walked to Charlene's apartment. It was a beautiful autumn day, the distance was not great, and the neighborhood was safe.

She unlocked the door with the key Charlene had given her and left it open. The apartment was bare now; not even a chair remained. Kim sat on the floor with her purse on her lap, all her movements echoing in the emptiness. She wished she had thought to bring a recorder. She had a thousand unanswered questions. Where was Domain? Who lived there? What did they do that had to be kept secret?

She knew that secret societies usually centered on politics, religion, or sex. Charlene had told her it wasn't a religious cult. That left politics or sex, or a mixture of the two. Maybe it was a genetic breeding farm, selecting its human stock carefully and pairing them by bloodlines. Naturally, the first reporter on the scene would resurrect memories of Nazi

Germany and twist the facts for maximum shock effect. The fear of that sort of misunderstanding would make them publicity shy.

Maybe it was a fiefdom of some kind. The name Domain inspired thoughts of the Middle Ages. Maybe someone was being deliberately atavistic like the Pennsylvania Dutch. Were the woods full of people in tin suits, sharpening their broadswords for the next crusade?

Kim looked up and saw two men standing in the doorway.

“Are you Charlene Weaver?” one of them asked her.

Kim stood up, clutching her purse. She hadn’t planned what she was going to say, but with the moment upon her the words came easily.

“Yes,” she said. “That’s my name.”

Chapter Two

Kim studied the two men. One was about forty, bald and bearded, with a wiry build which spoke of hard work and hidden strength. She suspected he seldom spoke or smiled. The other man was much younger and heavier. His face was earnest and boyish, a college football player, she decided. The other one looked like a retired soldier. Mentally, she gave them nicknames, “Baldy” and “Muscles”. Both men wore brown shirts and slacks that could have been work clothes or uniforms.

“Come with us,” said Baldy.

He turned and led the way. Kim followed, wondering how she would go about pumping them for information. Baldy looked too taciturn, but muscles might open up and tell her what she wanted to know. Neither of them seemed inclined to introduce himself.

Muscles stood aside in the doorway and let her pass, then fell into step behind her. The move could have been accidental or planned. Kim felt like the filling in a girl sandwich, and it made her uneasy. She almost felt as though she were marching under guard.

There was a huge refrigerator truck parked in the alley. The side door of the truck was open, and a stepladder was set up in front of the door so that it could be entered easily. A woman was standing by the door wearing a brown uniform. She had high cheekbones and a sharp chin. Her dark hair had been braided and wrapped into a bun. The way she stood suggested to Kim that she was very fit. Even in low shoes she towered over Kim.

“The express to Domain is about to leave,” she said cheerily. “All aboard.”

The cheerfulness seemed false, like the patter of a guide on a cut-rate tour who doesn’t want the tourists to realize they have been cheated.

Behind the gaiety was the suppressed eagerness of a hunting cat, a sort of dark joy. Alarm bells were starting to go

off in Kim's head, but curiosity shut them down. Members of the press are used to getting grudging respect, even in unfriendly third world countries. If things got hairy, she could always flash her press card and give up the game. It would mean the bum's rush, probably, if Charlene had been right about Domain's passion for privacy. Before she let that happen, Kim wanted to find out as much as she could. There was no way she was going to waste the entire morning without getting a story of some kind. Holding her purse like a shield, she stepped into the truck.

The interior of the truck had been hastily outfitted as a camper. There was a table and chairs, cupboards, a refrigerator, a stove, and three beds made up with clean bedding. An area in one corner had been partitioned off for a small bathroom. In another corner was a bare mattress. It lay as though it had been cast aside, an afterthought.

All the changes were utilitarian rather than cosmetic. Behind the spare furnishings was the riveted sheet metal that covered the walls when the truck was manufactured. Iron rings were bolted into the floor and walls for tying down cargo. Two heavy chains, equipped with hooks, dangled near the ceiling. A meat truck, Kim decided, wondering at the carelessness that left all this hardware inside it. The four of them stepped into the truck together. Muscles came in last, closing the door behind him.

"We have a long drive ahead of us," explained the woman, observing Kim's curious inspection. "This suits our needs."

Kim wondered if it was poverty or a miserly spirit which kept the citizens of Domain from chipping in together to buy themselves a proper camper.

"We have a formality to take care of before we get under way," said the woman briskly. "There is a paper for you to sign. Since you're here, I assume that you intend to come with us."

Kim wanted to start firing questions, but she had to play along just a little longer. Maybe she would overhear something

really important if they thought that she was one of them.

“Yes,” she said.

The woman handed Kim a document. “Read and sign.”

Kim read:

“I, the undersigned, do consign myself to Domain, trusting my body, soul, and mind to its dictates, and pledging complete obedience to its laws. I shall hereafter be identified by my new designation CAS 123.”

That was all. A simple printed form with no address, masthead, or logo at the top. The number at the end had been typed in.

Political nuts, Kim decided. She hoped they weren’t another survivalist group. The Herald had carried a survival nut story last month, and wouldn’t want to bother with another one for a while. Whoever they were, they seemed to take themselves very seriously.

There was a space at the bottom for her to sign. Kim shrugged. In for a penny, she thought. She took the pen that the woman held out to her, then realized that she would have to empty her hands to sign the paper. The woman ended her confusion by relieving her of her purse.

“I’ll hold this for you.”

She almost signed her own name, then caught herself and wrote “Charlene Weaver”.

She turned, startled to see the three people crowded closely around her. Their faces were intent. Trying for levity, Kim asked, “Do I get my I.D. badge now?”

“How about an I.D. bracelet?” said Baldy. Something cold closed around her wrist. Kim turned to look at a heavy metal band about three inches wide and half an inch thick. She couldn’t see any catch for removing it, only a ring riveted to its side, and a narrow slot like a keyhole.

“Hey!” she turned, confused, to look at Baldy, and Muscles snapped another bracelet upon her other wrist.

“HEY!” she said it louder this time. Grasping her forearms, the two men lifted until her feet lost contact with the floor. They used the rings on her bracelets to hang her on the hooks dangling overhead. Kim started to scream for help, remembering everything she had been taught in self defense classes, and wishing vainly for the can of pepper spray in her purse. There was enough slack in the ceiling chains for her feet to reach the floor. She stood on her left foot and tried to kick Baldy with her right, but he saw the kick coming and sidestepped. Her shoe came off and sailed across the room to bounce off the wall. Her struggles robbed her of breath, and her screams grew fainter.

“This truck is insulated,” the woman said calmly, when Kim paused to draw breath, “no one can hear you.”

They gagged her anyway. The rubber gag they forced into her mouth and strapped in place resembled a short, thick penis. The two men stripped away her remaining shoe and socks, spread her legs, and shackled her ankles to rings set in the floor.

The woman fished through Kim’s purse, found her wallet, and removed the cash. Then she threw the wallet and purse into a trash barrel. It was the last thing that Kim saw before the blindfold descended.

They cut off her clothes with a knife.

A diesel truck rolled south, carefully observing all traffic laws. There was no company name on the truck to tell what sort of cargo it might carry. The “cargo” swayed in her chains, rocked by the truck’s motion. She had been allowed enough slack to touch the floor with feet that were fastened far apart. If she stood on her toes, it eased the strain on her wrists and chest, but her leg muscles tired, and most of the time she would hang limp, her joints silently protesting the traction. Mute and blind, she could only endure and wait.

A cool hand touched her breast, causing her to stiffen and try to draw away. She heard a soft chuckle.

“Don’t be so timid, sweet thighs,” it was the woman’s voice. Her cheeriness was gone now, replaced by husky

menace. “I know it took courage to come here. Let that courage sustain you. You’re a Class A Slave. You have status now, a place in an orderly system. I offer you acceptance and affection. I offer you penance and absolution.”

The hand returned to toy with Kim’s nipples, teasing them into erection with pinches and finger flicks.

“I offer you pain and pleasure.”

Two hands worked her now, stroking and teasing, bringing responses from the wracked and trembling captive.

“The life of a Class C is not for you. They are only painted whores, insolently parading in their finery, red silk on their throats, invitation in their eyes, and a sneer on their lips. I don’t care for them at all.”

The hands tested the firmness of Kim’s flanks.

“You’re much too pretty to be a Class B. I would hate to see your lovely hands grown rough with work, your leather collar stained with sweat, your eyes dulled by a life of drudgery.”

A fingertip teased Kim’s navel.

“Your life will be a glorious adventure. Your steel collar will be a badge of honor proclaiming to one and all that CAS 123 dares everything, endures everything, and surrenders everything. When you bow down to kiss your Master’s feet, you will wear a secret smile.”

A feather light touch against her belly made Kim damp. She strained to close her legs.

“You will not be punished merely for disobedience, but for our pleasure as well. Though one Master will own you, you will obey everyone. There is nothing you have the right to demand or refuse.”

As she spoke, the woman’s hands had traveled down until one of them was cupping the furred mound of Kim’s sex, while the other stroked her buttocks. When a finger slipped into her slit, Kim was anticipating it and actually leaned into

the touch. The hands were exciting her, even while the woman's words were inspiring fear.

They wanted to make her a sexual slave! It was hard for Kim to believe that Charlene had volunteered for such a fate. Then she thought of Charlene's humble nature, her need for love, and her desire to please.

Kim hardly noticed the hand trailing down the cleft of her buttocks, for the busy fingers that pleased her in front absorbed all her attention. She was caught unaware when a finger suddenly burrowed into her anus. She lunged forward and sought to evade the assault. Her muscles clenched against the invading finger, attempting to expel it.

Suddenly the hands were withdrawn and Kim stood swaying, her panting breath whistling through her nose.

"So!" said the woman softly. Kim could hear her cross the room, open the refrigerator, pop the top on a can, and slide a chair away from the table to sit down. The woman's gaze upon her body was something Kim could feel. She was naked and afraid, stretched open painfully, displayed like a butterfly; and this woman was sitting down to have a drink and enjoy the show. The knowledge of just how cold and merciless her captors might be was beginning to sink in.

"You're trembling," said the woman. "You should be. It's my job to examine and observe you on the way to the training camp. I am the one who decides just how unpleasant your stay there will be." Papers shuffled. "I'm writing on your chart right now. It's quite obvious that you are an anal virgin. This is a very bad thing for a Class A slave to be. Your ass is going to be in great demand. Any Class C can be fucked in the usual way, and most of them are experts at fellatio. If a man's pleasure is sodomy, he seeks out a Class A, and a lovely ass like yours is almost certain to attract attention."

She delivered this lecture with utter seriousness, though she could not keep the delight out of her voice. The prospect of Kim's suffering seemed to please her.

"So that little asshole that you guard so jealously is in for some heavy treatment. The muscles must be stretched and

trained to relax. Not a day will go by when you are left unpenetrated. You will be fucked with objects and by some of the biggest cocks you have ever seen.”

She stood up then, and Kim could hear her moving about the room, gathering something up. Kim felt arms reaching around her as a belt was buckled around her waist. A cold buckle dangled against her belly, a leather strap tickled the cleft between her cheeks.

The finger was back at her anus. This time it was covered thickly with lubricant and slid in deeply in spite of her resistance. The finger felt alien as it squirmed inside of her. When a second finger was added, she felt pain, and protested inarticulately into her gag. The fingers turned and wiggled, stretching, making her twist against her chains as she struggled to free herself of the impalement.

When the fingers were removed, Kim was empty for a moment. Then she felt something else being forced in. It was a smooth, hard cylinder. Unable to see, Kim could only estimate its size by the pain it caused her. The fingers at least had been warm, living tissue. The object now being introduced into her most intimate orifice was unyielding and cold.

“Relax your muscles,” the woman commanded. “Unless you want it to hurt going in.”

It went in deep, deeper than any fingers could have reached. Kim could feel her flesh settling around it, making way, warming the intruder with its own heat.

“It won’t fall in,” the woman assured her. “The base is flared.”

The strap between Kim’s legs was drawn up between her cheeks and her labia before being buckled tightly in front. The strap divided her loins in a grip both painful and stimulating, driving the object deep into her and holding it there.

“You see,” said the woman. “You didn’t like my little fingers, so now you have a big plug up your ass. This is lesson number one. Slaves should never complain, because things can always get worse. I have larger plugs for you to wear later, but

right now I want you to ponder the futility of resistance while you are being whipped.”

“There’s a rest stop ahead, I’m pulling over.” The male voice had a tinny, mechanical sound. Kim heard a click and the crackle of static. Then the woman said, “All right, I’ll put the coffee on.” Kim decided that there must be radio communication between the cab and trailer.

The woman’s hand patted Kim’s bottom affectionately, then delivered a series of rapid, stinging slaps to both cheeks. Kim lunged forward in surprise, seeking escape from the sudden pain.

“It looks as though you have to hang around a bit longer to wait for your whipping,” the woman said regretfully. She walked away. Kim could hear her rummaging through cupboards, running water, and lighting the stove. The truck slowed and stopped, idling. There was a knock on the side door. The woman spoke into the radio.

“Otto?”

“All clear here.”

The woman unlocked the door and let him in.

“We’re making good time,” said Otto, coming in. “Is she behaving?”

“Does she have a choice?”

Though she couldn’t see them, Kim could feel their eyes upon her. She was completely exposed in this position. This fact had brought her shame before, now it brought terror. She was going to be whipped, and every inch of her body was an available target. In her fear, a memory came, the memory of a summer that she had shut out of her mind until now.

Chapter Three

Like most children who grow up in comfortable circumstances, Kim had been naive and immature. Though her parents had always tried to teach her high moral values, they had been indulgent and permissive as well. She had attended church every Sunday, and a parochial school during the week. She was an obedient child, not because she feared authority, but because she believed it was proper to honor the wishes of her elders. In school she avoided the corporal punishment common there, and ignored the internal imps that urged her to misbehave, just once, to find out what punishment was like.

There had been boys, though she had never loved any. During her seventeenth summer she had surrendered her virginity to a boy whose name she had since forgotten.

It was during her eighteenth summer she went to stay with Aunt Sarah and Uncle Emil.

They were a strange couple. Kim only knew them from family reunions, where they patted her head and bottom and remarked at her growth. They weren't even really related to her. Aunt Sarah had once been married to a former husband of a half sister or something like that. Kim had always been a bit hazy when it came to the family history. It was a complete surprise when they showed up at her high school graduation and offered to pay her college tuition that year in exchange for her help as a live in housekeeper on their farm. It seemed to be a generous offer to a family barely climbing above the working class. Kim wasn't getting along that well with her parents just then anyway, since her mother had discovered the two joints Kim thought were safely hidden under her dresser drawer. At the time, getting out of the house seemed like a good idea.

She had been shy at first, a bit afraid of the strange old couple. They had no television, only listened to hymns, and only read the Bible. Kim's attempts at levity met only dark looks, and all conversations seemed to end with Uncle Emil's ranting. Kim decided it would be best to do the work expected of her and keep to herself. It was soon obvious no one ever

visited the isolated farm, and the old couple seldom went anywhere.

Kim was expected to help Uncle Emil in the barn morning and evening, and clean house during the afternoons. The work was hard, and Kim never seemed to do anything well enough to satisfy. She was reprimanded severely for minor mistakes, and constantly lectured on the evils of laziness. Nevertheless, Kim remained cheerful, her spirits buoyed by open spaces and contact with animals.

It all came apart the night she refused to eat turnips.

Her eating habits had never been an issue at home. Never a “picky” eater, she had simply been allowed to select from a variety of good foods. She wasn’t a child any more, and found the old couple’s insistence on her cleaning her plate laughable.

Uncle Emil wasted no time arguing. Instead he announced in a chillingly quiet voice what Kim needed to set her straight was a good stopping.

“Oh, come on now!” Kim said, getting irritated.

Suddenly, Kim found herself being wrestled to the floor by four gnarled and work roughened hands. At first she only tried to get away, but when they began to strip off her clothes, she fought. A lifetime of hard work had given the old couple more strength than Kim had expected them to have, and in minutes the girl had been stripped naked and dragged into the bedroom. There she was thrown face down on the bed. Aunt Sarah held her wrists while Uncle Emil struck her naked bottom several times with his belt. Kim thrashed helplessly, unable to twist free of her Aunt’s iron grip. Once she managed to flop over, only to catch a savage blow which bit at her hipbones and touched her pubic mound. Then she had been forced back into position and given an extra ten strokes for resisting.

She was sobbing hysterically when the beating ended. Aunt Sarah crooned softly to her and kissed away her tears, planting a final kiss full on the girl’s lips before releasing her.

Then Uncle Emil seized her wrist and dragged her into the kitchen. Since she still had a tender bottom, she was allowed to stand while she ate the turnips cold, gagging on every bite. Despite her distress, she was expected to clean the kitchen that evening. Uncle Emil sat in his favorite chair with his belt draped across his lap as a reminder the punishment could continue at any time. Aunt Sarah sat beside him with her knitting.

Kim had not been allowed to dress, and her naked welted body was in full sight of the old couple while she did the dishes and scrubbed the kitchen floor on her hands and knees.

Finally Aunt Sarah took the girl to bed and tucked her in. Kim was given a lecture and told to pray for forgiveness for the trouble she had caused. When Aunt Sarah kissed her goodnight, Kim thought she felt the old woman's tongue flicker across her lips.

She cried herself to sleep that night, more from shame than from the already ebbing pain. Though she was mature enough to see that her Aunt and Uncle were mentally unbalanced, she was still young enough to feel that she was somehow at fault. Her parents had almost never punished her, and certainly never like this, but not because she had never deserved it. She was still impressionable enough to concede guilt. Until now, she had tried to be respectful and obedient, thinking her elders were wise and just. Now, faced with an intolerable situation, she knew she should get far away from this place as soon as possible.

Sometime during the night, she woke alone in the darkness. The lingering warmth in her bottom had triggered an unexpected response. Her fingers trailed over her body, examining the welts with wonder. Then the questing fingers found an area that gave her pleasure, and stayed there until she shuddered and fell asleep.

She woke the next morning filled with guilt. Her response to the beating had been inappropriate, she thought. She was no stranger to sexual pleasure, but the circumstances were all wrong. Her religious training was no help to her in this situation. Sex was for reproduction, she had been taught, and

self induced pleasure was a certain sin. She knew only confusion and a need to go home.

Morning brought surprises. Kim's eyes were hardly open when the old couple entered her room without knocking, and set to work with hardly a glance at the girl in the bed. Kim watched, unbelieving, as Aunt Sarah opened her suitcases and began to take Kim's clothing out of the closet and dresser.

They're sending me home, Kim thought with relief.

Then Kim noticed what Uncle Emil was doing, and suddenly nothing made sense any more. He was putting a deadbolt lock on the door.

If I'm going home, she thought, *they don't need to lock me out of this room.* Then she realized that the lock was keyed on both sides. They weren't planning to lock her out.

They intended to lock her in.

Kim leaped from the bed. "What are you doing with my clothes?" she demanded.

Aunt Sarah was unruffled. "I'm putting them away. You won't be needing them for a while. We have decided that you will remain naked while you are here."

Wishing to avoid another beating, Kim stood helplessly and watched as her clothes were packed up and taken away.

Kim really didn't think that Uncle Emil would make her go out to do the morning barn chores without letting her dress, but half an hour later she was carrying buckets of water to the cattle, shivering in the early morning chill. It was this indignity which convinced her. She no longer doubted her Aunt and Uncle were as mad as hatters.

Her escape attempt was unplanned, but probably would not have been successful if it had been. When her Uncle's back was turned to her for a moment, Kim ran to the pick-up truck parked in the driveway. There were no keys in it. Reasoning that she would be easily overtaken on the road, she set out at a run across the open field behind the barn. The stubble of the new mown hay was sharp under her bare feet, forcing her to pick her way carefully. She aimed for the gate

on the far side of the field, hoping to lose herself in the woods beyond. She wondered how far it was to the nearest road, and whether she would be able to reach the police before some passing farm boy decided to take advantage of a naked girl wandering down the road.

Looking back, she saw Uncle Emil standing in the barnyard with his hands on his hips. A moment later, she heard an engine roar to life, and Uncle Emil came racing across the field astride the three wheeled off road vehicle she had once heard him affectionately call his “mule”. She ran faster, knowing that the race was already lost.

A naked girl on foot was no match for a man on a machine. Kim’s mad flight turned into a nightmare. Whenever she came close to a gate, the three wheeler was there ahead of her, charging at her and turning her aside. Uncle Emil herded her home like a stray cow, and it was a sobbing and thoroughly dispirited girl who surrendered herself to Aunt Sarah in the barnyard.

This time they tied her to the bed before they beat her.

In the evening, Aunt Sarah came in to check on her. Kim had been bound to the bed all day. She had been thinking hard, and found that a burning bottom was a potent aid to meditation. She was a prisoner. Her parents would come for her in ten weeks, but until that time, she had no serious hope of escape. She had reached the unhappy conclusion that her safest course was cooperation. She had to appease her captors, humor their madness as much as possible, and come out of this situation without suffering serious harm.

So, when Aunt Sarah felt the subdued girl’s forehead and pronounced her feverish, Kim did not contradict her. She even managed to hold her tongue when the old woman prescribed an enema to “purge the bad humors”.

Crouching naked in the old bathtub, Kim cringed as the greased nozzle slid into her tight behind and filled her with soapy water. She was not even allowed privacy while she expelled it.

After that day, everything changed. Sensing their power over the girl, the old couple became increasingly dominant and abusive. Uncle Emil began to wear two belts, one to hold up his pants, the other to correct his young charge. The slightest balkiness or clumsiness on Kim's part was instantly punished. Leather straps were installed at the corners of her bed so Kim could be secured there three or four times a week when the old couple found a sufficient excuse to give her a severe beating. After one long and savage whipping with a supple green birch limb, Kim had been left strapped to the bed for the entire night.

She was no longer allowed to sit in a chair, and had to take her meals kneeling on the floor. Denied utensils, she ate with her hands.

The enemas became a frequent ritual which never failed to shame and humiliate her, though she secretly came to enjoy the nozzle's warm penetration, and the relaxed feeling she had after she had been thoroughly purged.

In the darkness, locked in her windowless room, Kim came more and more to find comfort in the pleasure her own hands provided. While the punishments were a stimulant to her senses, Kim would never admit to herself the pain was in any way connected to her secret pleasures. She told herself the punishments were just, though not for the reasons that the old couple gave. The thrashings became a sort of penance on account, granting her license.

A week before Kim was to return home, the beatings ceased. The morning Kim was expecting her parents to come for her, Aunt Sarah came into her room.

"Go and stand in front of the mirror," she commanded.

Kim got out of bed and did as she was told.

"Turn around and look over your shoulder. What do you see?"

Kim looked, turning this way and that. Her bottom had healed. Even her thighs, once so badly welted, no longer bore the faintest trace of a mark.

“Nothing,” she said, surprised.

“If you go to the police today and tell them that your old Aunt and Uncle whipped you, what evidence will you have?”

Kim looked in the closet and found her suitcases had been returned. She knew before her parents arrived the straps would be off of the bed, and the lock would be off of the door.

“None,” she admitted, ruefully.

Aunt Sarah smiled smugly. Suddenly, she didn’t seem so crazy after all. “I have a large check to give you today,” she said. “It will be more than enough to cover your expenses for an entire semester of college. In three months I will give you another check for the same amount. Do we understand each other?”

“You are buying my silence.”

Aunt Sarah’s smile was warm. “I knew you were a sensible girl. Nothing has been injured except your pride. We have had our fun, and you have made two old people very happy. Now you can go off to school and forget that the whole thing ever happened.”

Kim dressed and said nothing. She was imagining the difficulty she would have proving that two pillars of the community were sexual sadists. She had no physical evidence and no witnesses. No doubt her Aunt and Uncle were fully prepared to tell stories which would make her look like an ungrateful slut.

When she was dressed, Kim took the check, feeling like an accomplice. Then she carried her suitcases outside and waited.

When her parents came they were surprised at the quiet way she greeted them, and the submissive manner she displayed. Her mother held her silently on the way home, and thought it was homesickness which caused Kim to sob into her shoulder like a child.

Now, years later, Kim found herself a prisoner again. With the memories of that summer came a return of the confusion she had felt then. She was about to be punished, and

could not shake a secret feeling that she deserved it somehow.
In her mind she was nothing but a naughty child.

Chapter Four

The smell of coffee and food brought Kim back to the present again. Terror had driven all other thoughts from her mind, but now she realized how hungry she was. How long had she been hanging in these chains? It had been long enough to make her shoulder and hip joints ache, long enough for her fingers and toes to grow cold.

“John is going to take over the driving after we have coffee,” said Otto.

“It’s ready,” said the woman. “I’ll run a cup up to him. Keep an eye on tits.”

“No problem.”

The door opened and closed. Kim felt hands fumbling with the strap holding her gag in place. The rod of rubber filling her mouth was removed. Kim swallowed and worked an aching jaw.

“I thought maybe you could use some soup,” Otto said gently. “Take it slow. It’s hot.”

It was hot, but she was hungry and drank greedily, burning her tongue as he held the bowl to her lips.

“Listen carefully,” she spoke rapidly, hoping that Otto would be a sympathetic ear. “I’m not Charlene. I’m Kim Victor, a reporter. I took Charlene’s place because I wanted to write a story about Domain. I thought it was a cult or something. I didn’t know what I was getting into. If you let me go, I won’t tell anyone what happened here.”

“Where’s Charlene?” Otto was obviously having trouble taking all of this in.

“She went to South America to get married. I was supposed to tell you that she wasn’t coming, but I was nosy. I lied to you and I’m sorry. Please let me go! I’ve made a terrible mistake!”

The door opened and closed again.

“I didn’t tell you to feed her,” said the woman angrily. “Put that gag back in.”

Kim began to protest and plead her case, but the gag was forced back into her mouth, cutting her off in mid sentence.

Otto repeated what Kim had told him, as well as he could remember it. The woman only laughed.

“You’re new here,” she told Otto, “so I will take the time to explain this. When we start to get rough with new slaves, they panic. Usually they try to bribe us. I’ve been offered huge sums in exchange for a suit of clothes and a ticket home. Sometimes they get creative and tell really credible lies. One girl told us that her father was a Mafia Don who would kill us all when he found out where she was. She was so convincing I actually ran a check on her. She was a Jewish orphan, and didn’t even have a friend with a police record. Naturally, she paid for that lie.”

There was the sound of a drawer opening. When the woman spoke again, her voice was directed toward Kim.

“Telling lies is a serious offence for a slave. I promised you a whipping earlier. You’re going to get it now.”

Kim’s blindfold was removed and she blinked her eyes into focus. The woman stood before her, looking at her intently.

“I’m Sarah Gyve,” said the woman. “You will address me as Mistress Gyve, but only when you are spoken to. I think you should know who is whipping you.”

Kim’s eyes widened at the name, and the woman noticed.

“Ah, the name is familiar to you. A former lover perhaps, or an enemy? It matters not. You shall come to love me, even when I bring you pain.”

She held the whip up where Kim could see it.

“Beautiful, is it not?” she asked. “It’s rubber, three feet long. It hurts, but the marks it leaves are not deep, and fade quickly. They tell me that the sting lasts longer. I’ll let you be the judge of that. With a whip like this I can beat you long and

hard without doing you any lasting injury. You will be fit for more tomorrow.”

She drew back her arm and struck. Kim lurched frantically against her chains. The whip had wrapped itself around her ribs, and the tip had nipped at her breast.

“This is going to be a memorable experience,” promised Mistress Gyve.

It was. Kim was whipped slowly and deliberately from neck to knees, front and back. Her bottom was saved for last, and it was there most of the blows landed.

Mistress Gyve paused to wipe the sweat from her brow. Kim was sweating, too. Pain had raised a bright sheen of dew over her entire body. Her skin sang with burning agony. Her throat was raw from unvoiced screams the gag had muffled; though she couldn't remember screaming. She had only been aware of the awful pain, and the terrible whistling sound the whip made as it cut the air. Her wrists and ankles were chafed and sore. She had tugged against her cuffs trying to curl up into a protective ball, but the chains had kept her splayed wide, and no part of her had been unmarked.

“You have been whipped for punishment,” said Mistress Gyve, panting. “Now I will whip you for my pleasure.”

Kim lay on a mattress in the corner of the truck. Sarah and Otto had taken her down from her chains. She had been too exhausted to resist when they dragged her to the corner and secured her wrist cuffs to the wall, leaving enough slack in her chain so she could roll from side to side. Sarah had removed the gag and chastity belt, gently easing out the anal plug. Kim wanted to use the chance to repeat her story, but thought better of it. She knew they would not believe her, and she didn't want to suffer any more.

She was fed and allowed to use a bedpan. Mistress Gyve stood by and watched her urinate, then emptied the pan into the toilet without comment. The ritual reminded Kim of her summer with Aunt Sarah and Uncle Emil. How quickly she had reverted to the servile state of that far off time. She wondered if she wasn't secretly submissive in the depths of

her soul. Perhaps she continued to fall victim to sexual dominants because her own unadmitted desires exerted a sort of mystical attraction, drawing them to her like the scent of prey.

No, she told herself. *It was blind fortune. She had to submit because circumstances* allowed her *no other choice, then or now*. When she saw her chance, she would explain her plight; failing that, she would find a way to escape. She would not surrender again.

Thinking, she fell asleep.

When she woke up, Otto was there, turning her over on to her belly.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It's orders, nothing personal."

One strong hand against the small of her back held her firmly against the mattress, the other hand smeared her anus with grease. She flailed her legs without effect, trying to roll over.

"Relax," Otto advised helpfully. "If I don't do it, Sarah will, and the rubber prick she uses is a lot bigger than mine."

He buggered her.

She screamed into the mattress with pain and outrage as she felt his erection burrowing into her. It was hot, and hard, and impossibly thick; but she was well lubricated, and her resistance did little to keep him out.

"Try to relax," he repeated. "It won't hurt so much."

She willed the tension out of her muscles and the pain began to subside. He stayed inside her for a minute, enjoying the grip of her tight channel around him. Then he began to ease in and out with a slow rhythm. He lasted a long time, and before he had finished, Kim was discovering to her horror she was actually beginning to enjoy the silky hardness, which plumbed her. A wetness pooled between her legs.

"Please," she moaned, not believing the sound of her own voice. "Please put it into my pussy instead."

“Sorry,” he grunted. “Sarah said you should only get it in the ass until she says otherwise.”

When he left her, she was sobbing into the mattress, filled with shame at what he had done, and even more ashamed by her reaction. She could not deny to herself that the attack had aroused her sexually. With her hands bound as they were, she couldn’t use her fingers on herself, and her sex throbbed with a desire that she could not satisfy.

They had her controlled. She would eat and eliminate when they let her. She would do what they told her to do in order to avoid pain. She would be aroused and satisfied at their whim.

Sleep came again. She dreamed that her old Aunt Sarah was giving her an enema, but the tube she had selected was as big as a fire hose. Kim protested that it would kill her. Uncle Emil came in with a rubber whip.

“I don’t have to use this, do I?”

She was awake. The bald man was standing over her with the same whip which had scalded her earlier.

“Hard or easy, it’s all the same to me.”

Kim knew what he was there for. With a tired whimper she rolled over on to her face and spread her legs.

“Good girl,” he said. “Lift your ass.”

He was rougher than Otto. She felt as though she had been attacked by a torturing machine that drove into her aching orifice with brutal piston strokes.

The truck rolled on into the night.

Chapter Five

The sun was hot and blinding.

Kim had been roused from her brief, troubled sleep by the rough hands of her captors unchaining her and lifting her to her feet.

“I’ll do what you want,” she said tiredly. “Please don’t hurt me any more.”

Her hands were locked behind her and the two men urged her toward the door. After the darkness of the truck her eyes took some time to adjust to the brightness outside.

The truck had been parked on a gravel cul de sac. From the open door she saw beach, emerald green water, and a pleasure boat bobbing at a small, wooden dock.

Mistress Gyve stood outside, and reached out to assist Kim to the ground. The sand was hot under Kim’s feet. She wondered how far they had come. They had been driving long enough to be outside of the States by now. She wondered if they had the audacity and resources to smuggle her across the border, and decided that it didn’t matter where she was. She was a naked captive, and her captors enjoyed hurting her. That was all that really mattered.

“I’ll take care of the truck,” said Otto.

Mistress Gyve and the bald man grasped Kim’s arms and hurried her down the beach toward the dock. She pretended to stumble and twisted free. She ran.

The bald man was sporting. He let her have a head start. She had a brief glimpse of the truck heading back the way it had come, disappearing into jungle, before her legs were swept out from under her and she landed heavily in the sand. The handcuffs dug into her wrists as she fell, and the sand scraped her shoulder.

Her captors stood over her.

“She has spirit,” remarked Mistress Gyve. “I admire that. It seems a shame we have to break her.”

The whip sang and Kim thrashed madly in the sand as blow after blow landed on her defenseless body. Whether she curled up like a baby or threw herself flat, the lash followed and found her, striking her most tender places. When the chastisement ended, Kim was face down, sobbing in an agony of despair.

“You will come quietly now,” said Mistress Gyve. It was not a question.

Kim nodded, unable to speak.

As insurance, a rope was tied around Kim’s ankle before she was pulled to her feet. The bald man, John, held the other end of the rope. If she tried to run, he only had to hold on to the line to bring her down again.

“You can’t escape,” he assured her, “and trying only brings you more pain.”

“Yes, Sir,” she said. Humility seemed her only course now.

They marched her down to the dock. There were two men in the boat, dressed in brown uniforms.

“We thought maybe you were going to need some help,” one of them called. He was a burly man with a ragged scar running from his forehead to his chin. His companion was shorter and swarthy. Looking at them, Kim thought they both probably had their photos hanging on the post office walls back home, just above the warning: “Armed and dangerous-Do not approach”.

“No problem,” said John. “Give me a bucket.”

They handed him a bucket. He leaned over the edge of the dock and dipped it into the water. He poured it over Kim’s head to wash the sand off her body. She gasped with shock and pain as the salt water burned the scraped skin.

Mistress Gyve examined the shoulder. The damage was slight, but a tear of blood seeped slowly from the wound.

“Come here,” she commanded. “I have something to show you.”

She led Kim to the edge of the dock and bent her forward, grasping the injured shoulder. For a moment Kim thought that she was going to be thrown into the water to drown, but Mistress Gyve simply squeezed the wound to bring blood and shook the drops into the water.

“Watch.”

There was a disturbance under the surface of the water. A huge sleek gray body rolled by. A blunt snout became visible, and sharp teeth snapped where the blood had fallen.

“These are the sentries of Domain,” said Mistress Gyve. “There are forty miles of water between here and there, and they patrol every inch of it.”

“I understand.”

They put Kim into the boat and took her to Domain.

Chapter Six

Anton Lestrade stood at the tower window, looking out across the unhealthy looking green of the Caribbean. He knew the color came from natural causes, algae, or plankton perhaps, that the sea here was reasonably clean, compared to other places on earth. Still, he was Canadian born, a child of the Great Lakes, and grew up thinking that water should be blue. It wasn't the water drawing his attention now; it was the motor launch coming in to shore. Another slave is arriving in Domain.

There was a time when he would have brought her in himself, and trained her personally. Those days were long past now. There were others who would take care of those details. He was too busy being dictator and supreme ruler of Domain, titles he applied to himself with sharp irony.

Power had never been his goal. His mini empire had started as a private club, his rise due more to accident than ambition.

A combination of hard work and good luck had brought him wealth early in life, and he had come to the realization one day that he could not possibly live long enough to spend it all on himself.

Parallel to the growth of his financial empire, but separate from it, a closely kept secret in fact, was his involvement in the world of sexual dominance and submission. It had started small, with a couple he met at a costume party. He suspected that the costumes they wore were psychologically revealing.

"Does your wife wear a collar at home as well?" he had asked, laughing.

The husband, who was not laughing, had answered that she did wear a collar, and nothing else.

From that first meeting he had progressed from tentative experimentation to intense involvement. He became frustrated by the fact he had to hide his activities from a world that neither understood nor approved. He and his friends could only reveal their true natures for short periods of time, and

only in seclusion. Then they had to put on masks of normality and return to a world that called itself real, but was in fact only a masquerade of another kind. He began to understand that he could not change the world, but he could set aside a piece of it, and create it in his own image.

An oil exploration company which he owned had used a small island for its base of operations. Finding no oil in the area, the geologists and workers had moved on, leaving behind a ghost town of shacks and equipment. It was cheaper to replace than to ship. Ironically, geothermal energy had been found there, enough to supply heat and electricity for a small town. Hot springs and abundant fresh water made the idea of a resort appealing, but the reefs and sharks around the island made swimming and pleasure boating dangerous.

Lestrade and his personal accountant, Bob Rayburn, had gone out to inspect the island, taking along the ladies who would later become their wives. The four of them, Anton and Gina, Bob and Trish, had developed a closeness rare among couples. The men were dominant, the ladies submissive. The four of them had “played” together on many occasions. As Gina liked to say, they were bonded by bondage.

When Lestrade suggested on the boat going over that the women be kept naked and bound during the entire weekend, the idea was eagerly accepted by all. The two girls were marched ashore wearing nothing except smiles and handcuffs, evoking memories of pirate stories and jungle dramas that had entertained them all as children. They explored the vacant buildings and empty streets of a twentieth century boomtown, a place now wrapped in silence. While Bob was eagerly using a chainfall to suspend Trish upside down in a service garage, Lestrade walked slowly and silently up and down the streets. Gina walked, naked, two paces behind him. She knew him well enough to recognize deep thought when she saw it, and held her tongue as she maintained her distance. It was enough for her to know that she wore his collar, that he would use her later.

He did.

The moon looked down on Gina, bound between two upright posts in the center of town. Firelight reflected off her naked skin, casting deep shadow over the space between her breasts, the hollow of her navel, and the dark patch between her legs. She felt like the heroine in a “B” movie, captured by Indians, awaiting rape and torture. In the movies, the handsome hero always came in the nick of time. For her there would be no rescue: that thought made her shiver with delight.

He gathered willow branches, thin and flexible, and used them to whip her from neck to knees. He enjoyed the barbaric sight of her body doing an erotic dance of pain under the stars. Her shrieks were a song of pain and joy. He placed spring clips on her nipples and labia, hanging weights on them to increase the stress. He used a huge dildo to sodomize her. Through it all, Gina gasped and moaned, but never asked for mercy.

“If I had an iron, I would brand you,” he rasped, as he stood admiring her wracked loveliness.

“If you had an iron,” she panted through her pain; “I would ask you to.”

When he set her free, she dropped to the ground and crawled to him. She took him deep into her mouth and sucked greedily, as though seeking nourishment from him, and only paused long enough to beg him to fuck her.

“Where,” he demanded, “which hole do you want filled?”

“All of them.”

Before the long night had ended, her request had been granted. They spent the night in a tool shed. Lestrade slept on a cot the workmen had left behind. Gina lay on the floor at his feet, her hands cuffed behind her, writhing with frustrated desire. She had lost count of the orgasms he had wrung from her. She still wanted more, but the cuffs prevented her from satisfying herself.

In the morning, he took her again, driving deep, leading her over the brink once more.

On the boat going home, the girls dressed, rejecting the bikinis they had worn on the way over for slacks and blouses.

They had marks to cover. Gina spoke for all of them when she said, "I hate to leave. I wanted to stay there forever. I wanted to be your naked slave for life."

"We will come back," Lestrade promised.

When they returned to the mainland, Lestrade and Rayburn began to lay plans. They had a vision of a private kingdom where Masters would rule and slaves serve. At the time, they thought it would be small, a dozen people perhaps, recruited from among their personal friends.

They built a castle on the island, a Gothic fortress with towers and high walls. Though it evoked a bygone age, it was equipped with modern amenities like plumbing and electricity. No castle was complete without a dungeon, of course. Lestrade moved his business operations there, keeping in contact with the mainland by phone, and later by fax machine. He found few reasons to leave, and he never stayed away long.

He married Gina. After the public ceremony with lace and flowers, they traveled to the island where they enacted a private ceremony. She stripped naked and pledged herself to serve as his slave for life. He branded her, and she became the first Class A slave on Domain. That had been twenty years ago. Gina had not been off of the island since that night, and she had never worn anything except his collar. Even now she occupied a tiny cell in the dungeon, doing penance for a minor infraction. She was still beautiful, (in his eyes at least) and when he punished her, he did it with love. They satisfied each other's deepest needs.

Domain had grown. Lestrade and Rayburn had contacted Tonia Aldona, a dominant woman they knew, and she had suggested the names of others who belonged there. Discreet interviews had produced investors who saw a chance to build a dream and make a fantasy real.

Early into the enterprise, Lestrade had seen the need for an orderly system and had set down rules. Every person who set foot on Domain was interviewed and psychologically tested. They signed an oath of allegiance, pledging to keep the location of Domain a secret, and never to tell the names of

anyone who lived there. Everyone was tested for disease, and drugs were prohibited. In addition to laws against theft and murder, there were guidelines regarding the treatment and disposition of slaves. No slave came to Domain without first being told what fate was in store for him or her. They signed waivers that gave the kingdom of Domain complete control of their bodies and minds. They were tested to see if their commitment was complete. Once in Domain, they were not allowed to change their minds. Some slave contracts had time limits. Others did not.

A planned city developed. All the architecture was of the same kind as Lestrade's castle. Motor vehicles were banned, and slave drawn rickshaws became the vehicles of choice. On an island of only a hundred square miles, they were enough.

Eventually, the population of Domain settled into a caste system. At the top were the Masters and Mistresses, wealthy people who had built the island and managed its affairs. Below them were the guards, recruited from the ranks of professional dominants, military intelligence, and mercenary soldiers. They were entrusted with the security of the island and the training of slaves.

The slaves had classes as well. Class C slaves were like unpaid prostitutes. Domain provided them with a comfortable life, and in exchange, they were available sexually to guards and Masters. For a woman who enjoyed frequent sex with a variety of partners, but wanted to enjoy herself in a place free from the dangers of disease, drugs, and physical assault, Domain was a sort of heaven. Class C slaves were allowed to go where they pleased, and dress if they wished. A ribbon of red silk tied around their throats identified them.

Class B slaves were the worker bees of the hive. They signed contracts which specified whether or not they would be sexually available, and to whom, and in what manner. Many of them were artists and craftsmen, who wanted to work, but found little market for their skills in the outside world. For them Domain was a patron, and the work they produced could be seen everywhere in the city. Other Class B slaves were submissives who wanted to be dominated, but lacked the

courage to make a total surrender. They were given jobs doing menial work or clerical tasks. They were often naked except for leather collars and the protective gear required to perform their duties, but there was no law prohibiting them from wearing clothing. They were only punished for gross disobedience or criminal offences. The most severe of these punishments were banishment or demotion to Class A status.

At the very bottom were the Class A slaves. Most of them were females, though a few attractive males had been allowed to join their ranks. They had no rights, were sexually available in every way, and could be punished for no reason at all. Mere property, they could be bought and sold, and belonged completely to their Masters.

Every Class A slave who came to the island was taken to the training center, where they were mentally and physically conditioned for the period of time necessary. Usually this took about two months. Once a year, new slaves were sold at public auction.

The slaves were told they would serve for life, but in practical terms that had proved unrealistic. A master who purchased a slave went through a sort of “honeymoon”, a time when he took delight in using and abusing his new toy. After that he either grew tired of the slave and sold it to another Master, or found himself growing overly fond of the slave. Some slaves had been freed. Some had even become Masters themselves. Oddly enough, freed slaves often became the cruelest Masters.

Sometimes, Masters would leave the island and take their slaves with them, never to be heard from again. Lestrade tried to keep the laws of Domain flexible enough to allow for all possibilities.

In years past, there had been as many as forty slaves at a time sold at the auction, but now the demand for new slaves was not as great. There were five Class A slaves in the training center, waiting for an auction now two months away. The guards were keeping them amused while they waited, and no girl was allowed to languish in her cell for long.

The girl who arrived today would bring their number to six.

Chapter Seven

It was an island fortress, surrounded by dangerous reefs. There was only one safe way in, and only a handful of boatmen knew that way. No casual pleasure boater was likely to find it. Just in case someone did, the dock was marked with a sign that was clearly visible from some distance. It read: **Trespassers will be shot.** The guardhouse on the dock made this claim credible.

When the boat docked, John and Sarah unloaded their human cargo and led her, still bound and ankle tethered, up a path leading into the jungle. The slack in Kim's ankle rope flapped about with every step, making her progress awkward. She was hardly aware of it. Her mind was filled with the bitter knowledge that her chances of escape were growing smaller all the time. Someone had gone to a great deal of trouble to create this private penal colony, (or penile colony, she told herself with black humor). The same precautions which kept others out would also serve to keep her in. Her best hope now was to convince someone that she really had made a mistake in coming here. As though reading her thoughts, Mistress Gyve began to lecture her.

"We are taking you to see Mistress Aldona. She is part of the triad which rules our little community. Master Lestrade organized Domain twenty years ago. His right and left hands are Master Rayburn, who manages the business of the island, and Mistress Aldona, who manages the slaves. If you are wise, you will show her humility and respect. Don't tell her any silly lies, or she will have the truth out of you soon enough."

They only traveled a short distance. The jungle was only allowed to grow along the beach as a screen, and had been cleared from the interior. In moments they stood before an iron gate. To either side of the gate, as far as Kim could see in both directions, was a high, stone wall. On top of the wall were three strands of electrified razor wire.

An armed sentry opened the gate from the inside. He greeted John and Mistress Gyve as old friends. Then he turned his attention to Kim. In spite of the events of the last two days,

Kim was shocked by the rude liberties he took with her body. His hands roved over her nakedness, testing the firmness of her flesh and the tightness of her orifices. He didn't even speak to her, but addressed his remarks to the two who held her forward for his inspection.

"Class A, isn't she?" he asked. "Nice ass, how long before she's ready?"

"She is a trouble-maker," said Mistress Gyve. "I'm afraid her training will be long and difficult."

"That's okay," said the sentry. "The ones who come in struggling make the hottest slaves in the end. The day will come when she will bring the whip between her teeth when you haven't asked for it; just because she is feeling neglected. When you use it, she will purr and raise her ass high to invite more."

"Never!" said Kim with sudden rebellion. She winced as the fingers inside of her body probed deeper.

The sentry just laughed. "When you come out of the training center, I will be waiting outside the door. You will see me and remember this day, then you will fall to your knees and beg my pardon, and ask me humbly to fuck you up the ass."

"Never!" she said again. She wanted her voice to be firm, but a quaver crept in. How many slaves had entered this gate with similar words of defiance? No doubt the sentry's amusement was inspired by experience.

Beyond the gate was the city, one unlike any Kim had ever seen. All of the buildings were nearly new, and built in a similar style. Kim mentally dubbed it modern Gothic. Though none of the structures were more than three stories tall, they were imposing, and made her feel smaller and more naked. Masonry was the favored building material. Statues stood everywhere she looked; menacing gargoyles, bound nudes, and a fountain where the center-piece was the figure of a naked woman who writhed in the throes of some great pleasure or pain.

The people on the streets seemed to pay little attention to Kim as she passed, as though the sight of a woman wearing nothing except handcuffs and whipmarks was a common one. Her guards might have been walking a dog instead of a captive. Kim realized with dread that she was entering a city-state where slavery was legal and normal. If she were to attempt escape she would find sympathy nowhere, but would most likely be returned to her proper owner by the first citizen who encountered her. She would be treated like a lost dog. Worse than that, dogs are seldom punished after they are found.

In spite of her situation, Kim gazed about with a newswoman's eyes, observing and taking mental notes. Domain appeared to be a caste society. Rank was clearly defined by dress. The ruling class dressed as affluent people in tropical climates do everywhere, in loose, light colored clothing, short in the sleeve and open at the collar. Brown uniforms indicated security people. Those who performed the physical work wore leather collars and little else, usually only the gear needed to protect them from the hazards of their occupation. A girl selling hot dogs in the park wore an apron with nothing underneath. A stone mason worked under an umbrella to shield him from the sun, wearing only steel toed shoes and a collar.

Transportation was provided by slaves pulling rickshaws. As one male 'horse' trotted past, Kim noticed the bright tail swishing behind him. She blushed and looked away when she realized how the tail was anchored.

There were women who wore red silk scarves and met the eyes of men who passed them. They had the bold gaze of hookers.

There were men and women in steel collars who wore handcuffs and sometimes ankle chains. They were invariably led on a leash in the hands of a Master or guard. Kim turned her head to look at a pretty brunette who was led past her and saw that her eyes never left the ground. Her back was crisscrossed with angry welts, and her left buttock was marked with a scar that could only be a brand. Kim saw her own

prospects with dread. She was a Class A slave, the lowest of the low. She would suffer to entertain others, and be led about on a leash.

The streets of Domain were arranged like the spokes of a wheel. The hub of the wheel was a small, grassy park. As Kim and her escort approached the park, she saw a silhouette there that sent a chill down her spine. At first, she thought that she was looking at another bizarre piece of statuary, then she was close enough to see that the figure was breathing.

A scaffold had been erected in the park. On the scaffold, stretched tight as a bowstring between two upright posts, was a naked girl. Her head was hanging in exhaustion, her body a latticework of welts.

Mistress Gyve pushed Kim up to the foot of the scaffold and pulled her head back by the hair so that Kim was staring up at the girl. She was close enough to see a drop of sweat fall from the girl's nose.

"Look well," advised Mistress Gyve. "This is a runaway. At sundown she will be taken into the training center, the building directly behind her. There she will spend a week in solitary eating bread and water. When she is returned to her owner, she will no doubt be punished again at his discretion."

Still gripping Kim's hair, Mistress Gyve impelled her around the scaffold and toward the doors of the training center, a grim building of black stone and barred windows. Armed guards with cruel smiles opened the doors when they saw Kim coming. There was an inscription chiseled in granite over the door.

Lasciate ogni speranza vol chentrare

Kim recognized the Italian, and mentally translated from Dante. "*Abandon hope ye who enter.*" This was the gate of hell.

Curiosity is perverse. We wish to know the worst details of bad news. Remembering the brunette who had passed them on the street, Kim glanced over her shoulder to look at the scaffolding and saw the backside of the girl spread-eagled

there. On her left buttock, overlaid with whip marks, was the unmistakable scar. She had been branded.

The training center swallowed Kim.

It could have been a modern office in a major city. At a glance, Kim saw computers, fax machines, and tasteful prints on the walls. She would have sold her soul for ten minutes alone with the telephone that rested on the desk. Behind the desk sat a tall, severe woman, who regarded the naked girl with a merciless gaze. Across the wall behind the woman were six television monitors. Five of them were switched on, each displaying a similar scene. Kim scanned the row of screens and saw naked girls in chains. One was pacing to the limits of the chain on her ankle. One slept. One girl had a hand between her legs and was obviously pleasuring herself. One was curled up into a ball with her face in her hands. One was splayed across the floor on her stomach. The sixth screen was dark. As she watched, Kim saw the girl who was masturbating look up as though startled. Three men came into view and pulled her to her feet.

“Eyes front!” barked Mistress Aldona. “You aren’t here to watch television.”

Kim looked at the woman in front of her. She was leaning forward intently, the better to see the prisoner.

“You people have made a mistake,” said Kim.

The rubber whip struck her flank. “You don’t have permission to speak!” growled John.

Kim gritted her teeth against the pain and ploughed on, knowing that this might be her last chance at a fair hearing.

“I’m not Charlene Weaver. I’m a reporter trying to get a story. I thought Domain was some sort of cult. Send me home and I won’t tell anyone about this place.”

She spoke in a rush, hoping to keep the pleading out of her voice. Her shoulders were tensed against the blows she expected.

They never came. Mistress Aldona looked beyond Kim and held up a hand to stay the whip.

“What is this about?” Her question was directed at those behind Kim.

“She’s lying,” Mistress Gyve sounded bored. “The smart ones all try it sooner or later.”

Mistress Aldona pressed the intercom button. “Jane, bring in the Charlene Weaver file.”

They waited. Kim was elated. In a moment, they would know the truth. She wondered if she would be able to get home as soon as tonight, and if she would be able to keep Domain a secret as she had promised.

A girl entered the room wearing only a leather collar and carrying a manila file.

“Thank you, Jane,” said Mistress Aldona. “You may go to lunch now. No pastries today, you’re starting to put on weight.”

The girl blushed and murmured, “Thank you, Mistress,” before she left.

The mention of food set Kim’s stomach growling. Maybe she would have a chance to grab a bite before she went home.

Mistress Aldona studied the file, then held it out so that Kim could see it. Kim stepped forward and looked at it. Charlene Weaver’s name was on the file, and most of the biographical data was hers. The physical description was not. There was a photo at the bottom of the page. The naked girl in the photo was flashing a carnal smile as she sprawled on a bed and held out her breasts toward the photographer.

It was Kim.

She remembered the photo, and the golden afternoon when, after indulging heavily in wine and sex, she had playfully tossed her camera to her lover and dared him to take her picture. When she saw the picture; Kim knew that she had been betrayed, by whom, and why.

“Cell six,” said Mistress Aldona.

There were ghosts in the cell.

She fought the guards desperately all the way there, squirming, kicking, and trying to bite. They handled her like a child who was having a tantrum. Arms held her fast as the ankle chain was locked on. When they turned to go, she charged the door, only to be thrown flat when she reached the end of her chain.

Mistress Gyve paused at the door.

“The video camera in the corner sees everything you do, so I would caution you against playing with yourself. It is not allowed. Meditate on the sins of lying and talking out of turn. When we come back you will suffer for them.”

The door clanged shut.

Overhead, the light bulb always burned. There was no window. Time was meaningless without the sun and moon to chart the progress of her days. Food came from time to time, pushed through a slot in the wall by hands she never saw. It was never enough, and hunger became her companion.

She spent hours tugging at the chain with short jerks and long, slow pulls which left a sheen of sweat on her body. She began to feel that being free of the chain would be a victory of some kind, but it was thick and well anchored, suitable for an elephant. Defeated, she sank into apathy.

She sang songs she learned as a child, recited poetry, made plans to escape, and dreamed of rescue.

Larry was sitting on the toilet.

“I didn’t see you come in,” she said.

He just laughed, “Looks like you finally got what you really deserve.”

“Nobody deserves this. What did I ever do to you?”

“You said you loved me. I believed you. Did you really convince yourself you got your own column because you were such a great writer? You knew the editor and I were friends. I’m only surprised you didn’t sleep with him, too.”

Kim began to cry. "I did love you, but things changed. It wasn't ambition. I'm not that cold blooded."

"We're both cold blooded, sweetie, but I'm the one who came out on top."

"No! You're wrong! I never meant to hurt you!"

"Meditate on the sin of lying," he said, and vanished.

Was it drugs in the food, she wondered, or just the long time in isolation doing this to her? She tried to remember stories of other prisoners she had heard about, to strengthen herself with thoughts of how they had endured. The only thing which came to mind was her interview with a psychologist who told her anyone could be broken in time, if the correct methods were used.

"I see that they put you where you won't do any more harm."

It was Charlene. She was different now, no longer a timid girl, but a mocking presence in the corner of the cell.

"Tell them it was a mistake!" Kim pleaded. "You know who I really am!"

"Sure I do. You're the bitch who broke Larry's heart. You don't remember the time you passed the water cooler while we were talking about you. You were too full of your own self-importance, chasing a hot tip on some political scandal probably. Larry was cool. He ignored you. He was making a point of ignoring you in those days. I had to pretend to fill my cup again so you wouldn't notice how guilty I was looking. Most of what I told you when you came to my apartment was the truth. I didn't tell you Larry was the man I was leaving town with. He knew curiosity would get the better of you. Now you pay."

Charlene dissolved and Aunt Sarah took her place. She held a full enema bag with a nozzle like a huge cock.

"You naughty girl," she said with disdain, "Uncle Emil said that you would end up in a place like this."

Kim remembered her summer at the farm, the long nights when she had to touch herself to ease the desire kindled by her throbbing bottom. She remembered how Aunt Sarah's hand had sometimes caressed her vulva before inserting the nozzle into her anus.

With a furtive glance at the camera, Kim jerked her hand away from her crotch. Was fear an aphrodisiac? Was she only seeking comfort and relief from boredom? Had an undiscovered facet of her personality been revealed under stress?

When they came for her, they found her crouched in the corner, sobbing.

She thought they were another hallucination.

Chapter Eight

Sarah Gyve woke and stretched out a lazy hand to stroke the head of the iron collared slave kneeling on the mat beside her bed.

After ten years in Domain, every day was still a wonderful adventure for Sarah. True success comes from doing work that one enjoys and doing it well. Sarah knew that satisfaction. She could imagine no joy greater than that of molding personalities, turning the human clay of Domain into devoted slaves.

Before coming to Domain, she had run a house of domination in New York, but it had never been enough. She grew tired of businessmen who stopped by for an hour of discipline between appointments. That life had been the shadow. Domain was the reality. Here the slaves really served. They didn't call a halt because things were running a little late, pay at the door, and go back home to the family. Commitment was total here. For Sarah, that was a complete turn on.

True, Domain's cruelties had limits. It was never Sarah's intention to turn the slaves who were entrusted to her into mindless robots. She didn't want emotional cripples either. She wanted them to be proud of their surrender and glory in their gift of pain; so her discipline was meted out carefully, with an eye to the physical and emotional limits of her subjects. It was her intention to bend them to her will without breaking them.

It was real. The cold metal tight around Kim's wrists brought that fact home with perfect clarity. When her bindings were secure, Kim was dragged out of her cell by three burly guards who propelled her down the hall to the room from where she heard the screams. They blindfolded her before they opened the door.

The room had been washed with disinfectant, and the smell reminded Kim of hospitals. Under that smell, almost masked by it, other odors lingered; urine, sweat, and fear. *This is going to be bad*, she thought. In spite of her resolve to be

brave, her knees began to tremble and her bladder let go, spilling a warm stream down her leg.

They enclosed her hands in thumbless leather mittens with tight, padded cuffs. The fingertips of the mittens were outfitted with D rings attached to a hook over her head. She heard the ratchets of a winch clicking, and her hands rose high. Soon she was standing on her tiptoes. The clicking continued and she found herself swinging free, her toes unable to find the floor.

Her ankles were shackled and spread apart until her legs were carrying some of her weight, making the strain on her wrists and shoulders almost bearable.

She understood the mittens had been padded so the circulation in her hands was not restricted. That was not good news. It meant she could be left swinging there for some time without injury. The strain on her shoulders quickly became painful, and she knew a greater exposure and helplessness than ever before.

The men went to work on her.

Mistress Aldona's duties were administrative, in spite of her title. Sarah was the one who actually trained the Class A female slaves who came to the training center. It was Sarah who met the slaves when they stretched out trembling hands to sign the contracts. It was Sarah who took them to the edge of panic with discipline harder than their dreams had anticipated, then mothered them back to acceptance of their condition.

So many slaves arrived with a little experience at weekend slavery, or maybe just a fantasy that they could no longer deny. What she gave them was a plunge into icy water. The training center was not a school, which taught the finer points of sexual submission. It was a boot camp, which destroyed old identities, belief systems, and values—offering new ones to replace them. The formula was really very simple, and had changed little since the inquisition converted heretics.

Kim dangled by her heels with her legs spread wide, like a carcass waiting for the butcher. The greased plug invading her anus was larger than the one she had worn yesterday, and

she had been promised a larger one tomorrow. The inside of her thighs burned from recent whipping. The rush of blood to her head made her see stars behind the blindfold. She wondered how long they would leave her like this before she was changed to a new position.

She was never sure if she was alone at times like this, or if her torturers were watching her distress with feral eyes. She had been aware of a woman who came and went, sometimes directing the men, silently observing at other times. Whenever she was around the guards seemed to become more cruel and inventive.

She never saw who it was who came to bind her in positions both humiliating and uncomfortable. She never knew which hands worked the paddles and straps that scalded her buttocks when she was bound over a bench with her legs spread wide. She never saw the hard cocks that ploughed into her again and again, using all of her orifices; though she became familiar with the taste and feel of many. Sometimes it was a woman who used her, gripping her flanks with long nailed hands and driving a dildo in deep.

Terror was primary, Sarah mused, as she stroked the head of the slave beside her. The first step in the training of a new slave always involved terror. It saps the will. She would render the girl helpless, bind her fast until she could hardly wiggle, then show her the whip and promise her horrible pain.

The second step was to get the girl naked. Clothing identifies a person. It is a status disguise, a protection from the elements, a privacy screen against the eyes of the world. When that protection is literally ripped away, a slave had immediate knowledge of her new condition. Just depriving her of her wallet and purse was a potent psychological weapon, since so much of a modern woman's identity is established by the little plastic cards she carries.

Naked and constantly observed, she lost all privacy. Normal bathroom functions were controlled. She urinated only with permission, and was punished for wetting herself. Enemas controlled her bowels. Plugs invaded her rectum and were strapped in with locking belts. The plugs served a dual

purpose, teaching the slave that every part of her body belonged to her Masters and could be violated at will, and enlarging the opening so that the slave could be more easily used. The pain and humiliation of having swollen cocks and foreign objects thrust into her backside was devastating. There was no other invasion of her privacy so absolute. It was the ultimate rape.

Next came isolation. Every new slave started out with a two week stay in solitary confinement. Even the most impudent slave often reacted with tears of joy when her torturers finally came for her, so grateful was she for human contact.

Such joy was always short lived.

Pain was always the final persuader. Sarah liked to start out with simple things. She found the pain was more effective if it started small and gradually increased, otherwise the subject could go into shock and become numb to all sensation. A girl would eventually bargain away everything to avoid pain. It dissolved courage and pride. The tortures were many and varied, all designed to cause great pain without real injury. The purpose was to disorientate the victim, not disable her. Sarah would decide which techniques to use as she observed the slave's reactions. Slaves left the training center with minor and temporary physical damage, but a completely altered mind.

It was at this point when Sarah's true talents came into play. The slave was malleable and receptive to new truth. Class A slave 123 was now approaching that stage.

The thought of the girl brought Sarah sitting upright in bed. She had work to do, and it was work she expected to enjoy. CAS 123 had been a difficult case. Even after her lie was exposed she had persisted in telling it, even under torture. Only last week had she finally confessed.

Today she would begin the path to true slavery.

Kim drifted in and out, not so much sleeping and waking as passing out and coming to. The woman's voice was always

there, speaking out of the darkness beyond Kim's blindfold. It was a calm, well-modulated voice, but it confused her.

The thin mattress Kim lay on was soaking wet, making her shiver. At first, she thought they had thrown the water on her to keep her awake. Later she realized that it was because water was a good conductor. The parts of her not in contact with the bed were drying now, making her welts tighten and itch.

She was manacled face up on an iron cot. Alligator clips bit into her labia, and a cold brass rod penetrated her anus. The insulated wires coming from these devices ran between her widespread legs and were connected to a transformer somewhere. The current had been stepped down. It would jolt her, send her muscles into spasms, and make her surge against the chains that held her; but it would not burn her flesh or stop her heart.

Sometimes, on the lower settings, the current would wring involuntary orgasms out of her. There was no satisfaction in these orgasms. They were like sneezes. It was just one more thing she no longer had control over.

The voice, the ubiquitous woman's voice, soothed and reasoned, even while it brought pain.

"We are making progress."

"Yes, Mistress," Kim panted, hoping that it was a safe reply.

"What is your name?"

The simple question set her heart pounding. At first she had insisted that she was Kim Victor, knowing that response would make the transformer hum and the metal bite at her loins. Then, sobbing, she had confessed to a lie she never told, and said that she was Charlene Weaver.

"Wrong," the voice had said, and the transformer had hummed again. You are CAS 123, a slave."

"Yes, Mistress!"

Another surge, bad enough to make her scream.

“Say it.”

“I am CAS 123, a slave!”

“Excellent. Rest now. We will continue later.”

She had confessed to many things in the last few days, dredging up memories of petty thefts, thoughtless remarks, childhood cruelties, hearts she had broken, promises she had failed to keep. She would say anything to stop the pain. The confessor had forgiven her, speaking evenly in that motherly voice, but the pain always came back, and only talking would stop it. The same question was asked over and over, and the correct answer kept changing.

“What is your name?”

“Who are you?”

Sarah pressed the buzzer beside her bed and a naked man in a leather collar entered the room.

“Good morning, Mistress Gyve,” he said, looking down respectfully.

“Is breakfast ready, Jim?”

“Yes, Mistress. Shall I bring a tray?”

“No. I’m getting up. I’ll want my sleeveless uniform today. I’m going to need freedom of movement.”

As Jim helped her dress, Sarah looked down at the girl beside the bed. The girl had been trained to wake up just before her Mistress did, and assume the approved kneeling posture. Every morning when Sarah woke up, she found CAS 48, her personal slave, kneeling beside the bed with her knees apart and her eyes down, awaiting her Mistress’ pleasure.

Most days she would be invited up into the bed to do oral service for her Mistress. When she was very good, Sarah would do the same for her; though Sarah usually left that chore for another slave. Slaves never knew. Their pleasure or pain was subject to whim. Today, thoughts of the slave waiting at the training center had aroused the cruel side of Sarah’s nature.

“Jim,” she asked, “how long has it been since Forty-eight was whipped?” She was studying the girl as she spoke.

He was brushing Sarah’s hair, and the brush paused for a moment as he recalled. “About two weeks, Mistress.”

Forty-eight made no sound, but began to tremble slightly, and slow tears appeared below her long eyelashes.

“Have it attended to, please. Tell the Whipmaster to do her front and back, moderately hard; then have her thoroughly flushed and put on the bench. I want her available for the household staff.”

“Thank you, Mistress,” said forty eight softly. There was a tremor in her voice.

“Thank you, Mistress,” echoed Jim. His reply had more enthusiasm. He was a member of the household staff.

Sarah understood his delight. Leather collared slaves, like their sisters in silk, had low status compared to free citizens. They enjoyed seeing the punishment of those even lower than themselves. It was the same attitude poor white trash had toward black people in the old south. Jim, and the other members of Sarah’s staff, used every opportunity to degrade and humiliate the Class A slaves they dealt with. Sarah recognized this, and it amused her to let the staff attend while forty-eight was punished and grant them sexual use of the slave afterward.

She knew that after the Whipmaster had come and gone, Jim would be the first in line to bury himself to the hilt in the defenseless anus of forty eight. He was well endowed, and he would not be gentle. It would almost be worth staying home to see it, but duty called.

Chapter Nine

CAS 123 lay still as death. Only the faint movement of her chest indicated that she was only sleeping; if the troubled unconsciousness that claimed her could be called sleep. They had been coming to abuse her at odd times, disrupting the normal patterns of waking and sleeping. Once they had tortured her in shifts for a day and a night and a day, until even a dousing with cold water wouldn't wake her.

It had been two weeks since the guards had finally come, rescuing her from one waking nightmare only to deliver her to another. She didn't know how long it had been. Information had been deliberately refused her. She was always blindfolded, and no one even spoke for the first few days. Her need for simple human communion was strong now. She knew she was being punished, but she didn't remember why any more. Things were getting hazy and confused. She needed tenderness and forgiveness.

Maybe it was hunger. The meager rations she had been given in her cell were mere scraps from the hands of her tormentors. She had to beg for those scraps, and thank them humbly when she was fed. She promised to do shameful things for bread crusts. Once, a laughing guard forced the handle of a broom into her rectum and promised her a slice of orange if she would sweep the floor. Obediently, she dropped into an awkward crouch, leaning forward so she would not tumble over backwards on to her bound hands, and swinging her bottom back and forth. As the broom straws dragged across the floor, the handle shifted inside her.

When he called a halt and gave her the orange slice, she wept with gratitude.

"Thank you, Master. May I have more, please?"

"Suck my dick and swallow my cum," he said, "and you can have the rest of the orange. If I feel any teeth, you will be a sorry little bitch."

She went eagerly to work, opening wide for him and swallowing when she felt the fleshy knob against the back of

her throat. His pubic hair tickled her face as he raped her mouth. She had learned the hard way to control her gag reflex, and to take quick breaths on the outstroke. When he came, she swallowed convulsively, and carefully licked him clean. She wondered with a flash of the old Kim Victor wit if there were many calories in sperm.

The whisk broom incident was part of a deliberate program of humiliation. Some small part of Kim still had enough awareness to recognize this. She knew that when she had to urinate, squatting over a floor drain in full sight of her captors, or confess out loud to eating dog shit and drinking out of urinals, or polish the guards' boots with her tongue. She was being taught her place. Her pride was gone, along with hope, joy, and any real sense of self. She pleased them to survive, to get food and approval, and to avoid pain.

Pain and promises of pain were always present. All the vile threats that she had heard on the playground as a girl in school were common practices here. When they said they were going to whip her ass, or shove something up it, or put her tit in a wringer; they meant it.

She had a dim memory of how horrified she had been the first time she was raped. Now it was an everyday routine. She often asked the guards to use her, knowing rape and sodomy were nothing compared to what might be done to her. With a waning sense of shame, she realized she was coming to enjoy the rape. What difference did shame make? She would be raped anyway.

They beat her with whips and paddles, straps and crops. She knew how each one felt upon her body. The guards knew all the special tender places where the greatest pain could be caused. Under the arms was bad. The skin was thin there, as it was on the inside of her thighs. The soles of the feet brought excruciating pain when they were struck. One of the guards told her the nerves there connected to the rest of the body.

When she wasn't dangling from the ceiling, she was strapped over a bench, elevating her bottom to the perfect position for beating and violation. Since the bench placed less stress on her body than hanging, she was often left that way

for extended periods of time. There was a floor drain under the bench, but she was not allowed to void her bladder without asking first. After she urinated, she would be hosed out with cold water. Her bowels were flooded daily, and the discharges hosed away. It was like being a laboratory animal. She no longer had personal control of simple human functions.

Then, one morning, she was bound hand and foot and dumped on a heap of straw. Exhausted, she slept.

Sarah entered the room softly and looked at the sleeping girl. She was about ten pounds underweight now; probably fifteen pounds lighter than when she arrived. It was not a great loss, and Sarah knew that she would not allow it to become more serious. Her hair was tangled and dirty, with bits of straw in it. Sarah would attend to that soon.

“Wake up.”

Kim’s head came up, startled, casting about for the source of the voice.

“Kneel.”

Sarah was glad to see the guards had at least taught the slave to kneel properly, with her knees apart and her head bowed. Of course, training slaves was Sarah’s job. The guards were only there to abuse them.

Kim struggled into position. She had been sleeping on her side; there was numbness in one arm, pins and needles in her fingers and toes. Her arms were fastened behind her. She remembered to spread her knees as much as her bound ankles would allow.

“Who are you?” asked Sarah.

Kim fumbled through her mind for the correct answer, tense and confused. “I’m Kim,” she started to say, then remembered her confession. “Charlene,” she amended hastily. “I’m Charlene.”

Blindfolded, she couldn’t see the blow coming. The whip wrapped around her ribs and kissed her breast. She gasped, but held her position, knowing that she must never move unless told to.

“You are CAS 123, a slave. Say it.”

“I am CAS 123, a slave!”

The blindfold came off. Kim blinked, her vision clouded by the long confinement under the blindfold. Her eyelids were crusty with dried tears. The first thing she saw was Mistress Gyve smiling down at her. It was the first face she had seen in two weeks, and she had not realized until now how hungry she had been for that sight. Sarah reached out and touched her face, and Kim surprised them both by turning her head and kissing the woman's hand.

Sarah was not as surprised as Kim was. She knew from long experience that slaves had a need for love and approval at this stage of their training. It was a need she intended to exploit.

“Are you hungry?”

“Yes, Mistress. I'm thirsty, too. Could I have something, please?”

Sarah smiled indulgently and went over to the wall, where she pressed the speaker button on the intercom.

“Breakfast for one,” she said, “scrambled eggs, bacon, biscuits, honey, and orange juice.”

“Yes, Mistress Gyve,” answered a metallic voice.

Kim looked around the room. Though she had been here for two weeks, she hadn't seen it before. It was all white tile, as sterile as a surgery—or an abattoir. Easy to clean, she thought, remembering the hosing down and flushing out she had been subjected to. She spotted the hose, a black rubber python with a dildo for a nozzle. The decor was utilitarian, stainless steel carts laden with instruments of torture. Whips, straps, and paddles hung on the walls. There was the whipping bench, bristling with restraining straps. In a corner was a card table and chairs. A deck of cards and two empty beer bottles rested on the table. When not actively engaged in tormenting her, the torturers had passed their time playing cards. She remembered how she had come to tense up at the sound of

chairs scraping across the floor, knowing that they were rising to return to their dreadful work.

“Look at me!” barked Mistress Gyve.

Kim looked, fear in her eyes.

“I ordered breakfast for you. Thank me.”

“Thank you, Mistress.”

“Remind me later to punish you for forgetting.”

“Yes, Mistress.” Kim was crestfallen. She had been doing so well today, and had dared to hope that things were going to be better now.

“Have you learned humility?”

“Yes, Mistress!”

“We shall see.”

Breakfast came, delivered by a girl in a leather collar. Sarah worked the fork, feeding her charge like a baby. It would have been easier to free the girl and let her feed herself, but Sarah wanted to reduce her mentally to a dependent infant, who was fed and cleaned, punished or praised at the whim of its mother.

Kim ate ravenously, hardly taking time to chew, afraid that the food would be snatched away. Tears of gratitude welled in her eyes when she realized that she was being allowed to finish.

“Lick the plate.”

She lapped eagerly, greedy for the crumbs of egg and drops of grease that remained.

“Thank you, Mistress.” She meant it.

“You need grooming,” said Sarah. She stroked the tangled mass of the girl’s hair. “I’m going to remove your bindings and take you down the hall to give you a trim. I’m showing you kindness, don’t spoil it by doing something foolish.”

“No, Mistress.”

Sarah studied her, seeking the glimmer in her eyes that would betray an intention to attempt escape. There was none. She unlocked the shackles binding the girl's wrists and ankles. She helped her to her feet. Kim was wobbly, but she could walk.

"Follow me."

Sarah opened the door and led the slave down a corridor past locked doors. Kim heard a faint whimpering behind one door, and remembered that she was not the only prisoner here.

"Here we are."

The room contained a barber chair outfitted with restraint straps. Instead of a footrest there were high stirrups like the ones Kim had seen in the doctor's office.

"Sit down," Sarah ordered.

Kim hesitated, but her tortures were a fresh memory, and she didn't want to invite trouble. What could be done to her that she hadn't endured already? She sat.

Sarah strapped her arms to the chair at wrist and elbow, then lifted her feet into the stirrups and strapped them in place. She adjusted the support arms of the stirrups so Kim's legs were spread wide. Another strap went around Kim's throat and secured her to the back of the chair. There was no headrest.

Kim didn't question any of this, even in her own mind. She had been bound so much it seemed a normal condition now.

Sarah wheeled a cart over to the chair and lifted a cloth to expose the items it contained; a comb, scissors, electric clippers, shaving lather, and a safety razor.

Kim was becoming a well-trained slave. Her whimper was barely audible when she realized what was about to be done with her. She watched with mounting horror as her hair piled up around the chair. The clippers buzzed past her ears, and the razor glided over a scalp that was suddenly cool. Sarah rubbed Kim's head with alcohol before turning her attention to the pubic area and repeating the operation.

“I’ll leave the eyebrows,” Sarah commented as the razor scraped between Kim’s legs. “They please me.”

The alcohol was a cold burn.

Sarah cleaned her tools and put them away before spinning the chair around so that Kim could see the result. It took Kim a moment to understand that she was looking in a mirror. The girl she saw was thin, her body a mass of welts, old and new. She seemed as bare as a baby robin.

“Behold the newborn slave,” said Sarah softly.

Chapter Ten

Clean sheets on a soft bed, soap and hot water, sunlight and fresh air; these are the simple luxuries civilized people take for granted.

The room to which Sarah led her captive was like a suite in a modern hotel, except for the barred windows and the shackle bolted to the floor at the foot of the bed. Without saying anything, Sarah stripped herself naked and led Kim into the shower. There she scrubbed the girl down, paying special attention to her bald pubic area. This accomplished, she handed the soap to Kim.

“My turn,” she said huskily.

Kim returned the favor, surprised to find herself becoming aroused by the feel of the firm, soapy body under her hands. They dried each other with soft towels, a silent bond forming between them. Sarah took the girl’s hand and led her back into the bedroom.

Kim needed no command now. They tumbled into bed together, eager hands exploring, tongues probing. Both women exploded into orgasms which merged and built in intensity as morning became afternoon. Sarah gloried in the feel of the smooth head nestled between her thighs, the tongue gently lapping, the hands shyly seeking her breasts. When both women were spent, Sarah held Kim while the girl wept with gratitude and emotional release. They fell asleep that way.

The sun coming through the window was amber when Sarah woke Kim gently by tracing her fingertip around the perimeter of her ear.

“Slave girl.”

“Yes, Mistress?” she raised adoring eyes.

“You forgot to remind me.”

Sarah felt the shoulder tense under her hand. Kim’s eyes clouded with rediscovered fear.

“Mistress?” It was a plea.

“You forgot to thank me this morning. Then you forgot to remind me to punish you for it. That’s two faults.”

“Forgive me, Mistress!” Kim’s voice held no real hope of mercy.

“I want you kneeling on the floor with your legs apart and your hands on your knees.”

Kim scurried to comply, hoping that a demonstration of obedience would earn clemency.

Sarah took her time getting out of bed. She put on a clean uniform and fixed herself a drink before coming to stand over the girl. She had a box in her hand.

“I have a gift for you,” she said, opening the box. She removed two half circles of stainless steel and held them in front of Kim’s eyes. “This was made to your size. You see that it has CAS 123 engraved on it. It will identify you as a Class A slave to everyone who sees you.” She fitted the two pieces around Kim’s throat and snapped them together.

“It can be cut off,” Sarah explained, “otherwise it is permanent.”

The collar was cold and snug. If Kim needed a constant reminder of her slavery she had it now.

“Listen carefully, slave. If you do exactly as I tell you, I will bring you a nice breakfast tomorrow, and then we will come back here. If you forget even one detail, you will go hungry tomorrow and be severely punished all night.”

“Yes, Mistress,” Kim quavered.

“When I finish speaking, you will stand up and leave here. You will go back to the punishment room and wait on your knees in the middle of the floor. Three men will come in. When the first man snaps his fingers, you will crawl on your hands and knees, select a paddle from the wall display, and bring it to him in your mouth. When he takes it from you, I want you to say ‘Please give me twenty five hard strokes with a paddle and fuck me up the ass.’”

Kim began to cry. Sarah shushed her.

“When the second man snaps his fingers, you will bring him a strap in your mouth and ask for twenty five with the strap and an ass fucking. It will be the same with the third man, except that you will bring him a crop. When all three men have been properly armed, you will go to the whipping bench, bend yourself over it, and ask them to fasten you down for punishment.”

Kim’s shoulders shook with sobs.

“Hush child, don’t you want to please your Mistress?”

“Yes, Mistress.” Kim tried to keep the petulance out of her voice.

“Then go.”

Kim went with dragging feet and shaking knees. Worse than her fear of punishment was the dreadful knowledge that she had failed Mistress Gyve and spoiled the wonderful thing that they had shared together this day. Halfway down the hall, she realized she was alone and unbound. She could run, but there was no advantage in running. She would be stopped by the first locked door she came to, and dragged back to face a severe penalty. The door to the punishment room yawned like a crocodile.

Clean sheets, hot water, and sunlight—six weeks ago Kim would have laughed if someone told her some day she would sell her soul to have these things.

Sarah watched it all on television.

The video cameras missed nothing that went on in the punishment room. The images were so clear Sarah could see fear sweat on the girl’s body. The sound system picked up her ragged breathing. Sarah put it all on tape so that she could watch it again later.

She let Kim kneel for half an hour before sending in the three men she had selected for generous endowment and stamina. She wanted this night to be a memorable one for CAS 123.

Kim sobbed as she delivered the implements that would scald her, though she didn’t miss a single word of her litany as

she requested pain. Sarah smiled with approval as she watched. She had expected Kim to display intelligence and courage, and she was right.

Many slave girls had failed such tests, groveling and pleading for a mercy they would never see. Sarah had given them extra punishment, of course, discipline had to be maintained, but afterward it had been necessary to nurse them back from the brink of hysteria. Some, she knew, would always be inferior slaves, unable to bear the rigorous demands of a real Master. They sold at bargain rates during the annual auction, and most ended up being coddled by some soft heart who lacked the will to control a quality slave.

Sarah watched as Kim arranged herself on the bench, asking to be strapped down. Kim relaxed a little when she had been secured, and no longer had to choose compliance. The sight of her bravery was almost enough to make Sarah pardon her. A hastily mixed drink killed that impulse, and Sarah settled into her chair to watch.

There were three cameras trained on the activity in the punishment room. Sarah could use the remote control in her hand to switch from one to the other, and see the action from the best angle. One camera showed Kim's face hanging over the bench. She was biting her lip and staring straight ahead. The second camera, from the side, showed the nude length married to the table with straps at wrist, elbow, neck, and waist. Last and best was a view from the rear. Sarah could see the lovely legs spread wide and held immobile by straps at knee and ankle. The thighs and buttocks bore fading marks, dark bruises from the paddle, wide welts left by the strap, and dark lines from the whips and crops. Her sex and anus were also clearly seen, the anal opening red and swollen from previous abuse.

The man with the paddle stepped forward and held the paddle up to her lips to be kissed before walking around behind her. He beat her hard, with no pause between blows. Her screams were continuous.

It was over in a minute, though she kept on screaming for a time after the paddle ceased. The rapid blows had generated

heat which would not soon fade. When the prescribed twenty five strokes had been delivered, he opened a jar of lubricant and worked it well into her. His fingers brought gasps as they probed the tender area. She felt cool hands against the heated flesh of her buttocks, yawning her apart. The blunt tip sought her opening, found it, and entered with a deep thrust.

She cried out at the brutal impalement, trying to relax muscles that tightened reflexively in protest. He allowed her no time to adjust to his girth, but skewered her with deep, rapid jabs that brought tears to her eyes. When he came, he remained inside her until the last spasm had subsided, and before withdrawing he smacked her heated backside hard with the palm of his hand and promised:

“Don’t worry, honey. When the others are done, I’ll be back for sloppy seconds.”

Something brushed against her cheek. She opened her eyes and a heavy leather strap swam into focus. She kissed it, knowing the ritual of humiliation.

“Repeat after me,” said the man with the strap. “I am CAS 123 and I am a slave.”

Kim recited the liturgy, knowing what would follow.

The strap fell. It was different from the paddle, but no less bitter. It curled and bit.

“Say it again.”

“I am CAS 123 and I am a slave.”

The strap sought sanctuary between her thighs. It swept into the cleft of her buttocks.

“Again!”

It came from below and found her slit, unprotected now by even the worthless armor of pubic hair. After every blow she had to repeat the shaming sentence, and after the tenth cruel stroke the words were screams.

“I am CAS 123 and I am a slave!”

He was bigger than the first man, or he felt that way because she was already sore. There was no doubt that he had more endurance.

Kim bit off the cry that escaped her lips with the first hard thrust, and held her silence through the rest of the assault, though he worked in deeper still and rocked her against the bench with fierce power that bruised her inside.

The orgasm which blossomed inside her was unsought and unexpected. The part of Kim's mind that had not grown numb to thought wondered if it might be an aftershock of the morning's passion. How different that had been from this.

The other part of Kim simply enjoyed the wave and rode it.

Then the pleasure was gone and the unseen invader was still thrusting into her, bringing pain again. When he finally spasmed and withdrew, she was limp and panting.

She unclenched her eyes and saw the crop before her, waiting for the kiss that would send it on its way.

Sarah stood up suddenly and switched off the television with a decisive movement. The recorders were getting it all. The slave had spoken her lines like a troupier. There was no longer any need to watch.

She had a drink. "Empathy," she said aloud to the empty room. "Am I getting soft?"

She had another drink. Too much time with this slave, she decided, too many days spent sitting in silence in the punishment room while 123 writhed in front of her. It was important to love the dance of pain without falling in love with the dancer. She had another drink and went to bed to wrestle with unshakable disquiet.

During the night someone came in and stabbed a flashlight beam into Kim's eyes. She awoke, startled, caught like a deer in headlights.

"Who are you?" demanded a voice.

"I am CAS 123. I am a slave."

The light went out and she was left alone again in darkness.

Chapter Eleven

Kim rested her head on her Mistress' belly, enjoying the feel of hard muscle under soft skin. Mistress Gyve had kept her word. Breakfast had included fresh fruit and muffins, and they had come back here to hot showers and a big, soft bed. Kim expressed her gratitude with lip service, tongue service as well, bringing her Mistress several intense orgasms.

At last Sarah had called a halt and collapsed, panting and sweating, guiding the slave's smooth head to a position of rest. Satisfied sexually, Sarah's mind returned to business, and she knew a twinge of guilt. She had been lax in her duties. True, 123 was at a critical stage in her training, but there were other slaves here. She couldn't neglect them forever. It was wrong to leave them in the hands of ignorant guards who would abuse them, meet their basic physical requirements, and ignore their most important need; to find redemption through surrender.

There was something about this slave which made her different. Most of the girls who came into Sarah's hands were halfway down the road to submission already. They were like cattle as far as Sarah was concerned. This one was a spirited horse. She would obey, but she would dare much with a firm and trusted hand holding her reins.

"I want to know your mind," Sarah said abruptly. "Tell me what you were thinking and feeling last night."

"I was terribly afraid," Kim murmured. "I told myself I had to obey or face something worse, but I wanted to please you, too. I wanted to pass my test and make you proud of me. I guess that helped me to overcome my fear enough to do what I had to do. Knowing I was to be rewarded helped me to bear the beating, and when the guards were using me..."

"Don't use euphemisms here," Sarah warned her. "You know the Anglo Saxon words. I want to hear you say them."

Kim colored. "When the guards were—fucking my ass—I came."

"Interesting," mused Mistress Gyve, "your body is wiser than you are. It is learning to connect sexual pleasure and pain."

The proper emotional set can turn your trials into triumphs. It is going to happen to you anyway, so you might as well learn to like it. I don't mean just pretend; I mean learn to like it."

The slave girl's eyes misted over as she grasped the full hopelessness of her position, and the mental shift being demanded of her. "It will be hard," she said.

"Worthwhile goals always are," Sarah lectured. "As Gordon Liddy remarked while roasting his hand in a candle flame, 'The trick is not minding'. Remove yourself from the pain, examine it, bend it to your will."

"I will try."

"I have confidence in you," said the Mistress. "Yesterday you passed a test of obedience. Today you will pass a test of self control." She felt the bare shoulder under her hand go suddenly cold and rigid.

"Put your face to the wall, over there between the green chair and the desk."

Kim got out of bed and obeyed. She had too much pride to scurry into place, and too much fear to dawdle. Sarah let her stand there, enjoying the sight of her slave awaiting discipline. The girl's hands were clenched at her sides, and she weaved back and forth on knees that had become weak. Her wrists and ankles still bore faint traces of the shackles she had worn last night. Her firm little bottom was a mass of fading welts. It would still be tender, so much the better.

"Take two steps backward," Sarah commanded. "Spread your legs. Now lean over and put your hands against the wall. Good, spread those legs a little wider."

Following these directions, Kim found herself leaning off balance, bent, stretched, and dreadfully exposed.

Sarah jumped out of bed and got completely dressed. It was important for Masters and Mistresses to be dressed as much as possible. Many had gone so far as to wear pants with a codpiece or a veil over the crotch. In this way a slave could be used sexually without being permitted to see the Master undressed. The more a Master wears, the more naked a slave

becomes by contrast. Sarah felt the crisply pressed uniforms she wore gave her an air of authority, which made her doubly dressed.

She had sent Jim out this morning to her favorite willow, and he had returned with a bouquet of slender branches in a pail of water. It was all new growth, each bough nearly supple enough to be tied in a knot. She selected one and swished it through the air. Hearing it, Kim flinched.

“I have a fabulous dinner in mind,” said Mistress Gyve, “broiled fish, baked potato, tropical fruits, an excellent wine, and perhaps a little ice cream for dessert. I would love to share it with you, but you have to prove that you are worthy.”

She was going through the rods as she spoke, testing them for flex and heft, listening to the whicker each one made as she slashed the air with it.

“Your hands stay flat on the wall, and your feet stay flat on the floor until I say otherwise. Is your little bottom hole still sore from last night?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

“You wouldn’t want me to give you to the guards again tonight?”

“No, Mistress.”

“Then show me how much self control you have.”

The willow switches were sharp and savage. The pain of each cutting stroke seemed to grow after it had been delivered. The slender tongues darted and curled, seeking secret and tender places. Kim wailed and pleaded. Her knees flexed. Her bottom bobbed and swayed. Strokes fell in a rapid rhythm—back and forth, up and down. Kim uttered her most piteous cries when the lashes found her armpits and breasts, or curled around her loins to snap at her belly.

Yet, through it all, Kim’s hands and feet remained in position as though nailed.

Sarah rested. She was breathing hard. “Such courage is rare,” she said.

In fact, she was surprised. She had meant for 123 to fail this test. It had been designed as a lesson in humility, a chance to defeat pride and make the slave admit her weakness. Kim had held her ground where others would have curled up into a ball to beg for mercy. Sarah felt somehow that this slave had won a victory over her by obeying an order that was meant to be impossible.

“Stay as you are. I have a special reward for you.”

Kim’s arms trembled with the strain of pushing against the wall, and she was aware of a trickle of sweat tickling the underside of her breast as it followed the contours of her body. Every nerve was singing. Her skin felt scorched.

She felt cool hands on her stinging bottom as a soothing oil was rubbed on. Fingers dipped into her vagina, spreading oil. She was wet again. Lately her body seemed to be betraying her, becoming aroused against her will. Something large and blunt probed her. It penetrated easily, riding in on the oil. She gasped, her body welcoming the intruder with a gush of natural lubricant.

It was thrust into her again, deeper this time, and she could feel a clothed body pressed against her burning bottom.

“I wish I had a real one for you,” Mistress Gyve whispered in her ear, “but this one has its advantages.” As she spoke she flipped an unseen switch and the member that ploughed into Kim began to vibrate.

“It’s all right,” the Mistress cooed. “You may move now.”

Kim slid slowly down the wall, leaving smears of sweat where her hands had been. Sarah rode her down as she collapsed. Kim pressed her face to the floor and arched her back to welcome the deep thrusts rocking her. She couldn’t remember ever cumming so hard.

Sarah withdrew from the limp girl and left her on the floor. Switching off the vibrator and unbuckling it from her hips, she put it away. Then she went back to drop to her knees beside 123 and gather her into her arms. She kissed the slave, dancing deep into her

mouth with a questing tongue. Sarah was filled with a need she could not express.

“Thank you, Mistress,” Kim gasped, recovering her strength.

Sarah hugged her hard. “I can’t begin to tell you what pleasures you bring me.”

“I hope to serve well, Mistress.”

“Oh you will. You do. You arouse such a terrible need in me.”

Kim began to grow frightened again, sensing what that need would bring.

Sarah kissed the top of her head gently and whispered, “This time I want you to bend over and grab your ankles, and count for me. Count out loud.”

Chapter Twelve

Six bald, naked girls stood in the center of the gym floor. Their hands were clasped behind their necks and their legs were spread. A burly man stood behind them with a heavy leather strap in his hand. Another stood before them and spoke.

“In three weeks there will be an auction,” he said. “Each of you will be sold to the highest bidder. You have all been conditioned to obey. You have learned to ask for punishment and accept it with gratitude. You have learned to find pleasure in pain, to ask for nothing and give everything. All that remains is for you to be conditioned physically. You must be toned so that you are prepared for the rigorous demands of slavery. You will be happy to know that your diet will be excellent from now on; though you will not be allowed enough food to make you soft and fat. Every other day for the next three weeks you will be brought here for strenuous exercise. On alternate days you will be allowed complete rest. We are going to make your bodies more beautiful than they have ever been before.

“We will start with push ups. I want twenty five from each of you. I will count the cadence. My assistant will be standing by to assure correct form.”

So it went. The strap fell on any girl who wavered or failed to complete the required number of repetitions. They chinned themselves on a bar. They did sit ups, leg lifts, and knee bends. They did parallel bar dips. Within an hour, all the girls were streaming sweat and displaying blushing bottoms.

Two of the trainees, a petite girl and another with Eurasian features, were very weak, and suffered the most. After nearly every exercise they had to bend over in front of the other girls and count aloud the strokes which seared their buttocks. Before the morning was half over, both girls were weeping steadily. Kim’s heart went out to them.

At the end of the session, the four who had performed well stood by and watched as the two who had failed each

spent a half hour pedaling frantically on an exercise bicycle while the strap urged them on to greater speed. The bicycle seat was outfitted with two large, rubber dildoes impaling the user, adding to her discomfort as she rode.

After lunch they were allowed to soak in a hot tub together. The churning water soothed the ache of tired muscles. Kim relaxed in the water, finding herself face to face with a tall, pale skinned girl who had luminous green eyes. Their eyes met, and Kim saw the girl silently mouth “Katy”. She was introducing herself. Kim understood the need to reach out to a sympathetic soul. She felt it too, and answered silently “Kim”.

A trainer came in, carrying a strap. “Time’s up,” he said. “Everybody get out and stand over by the blower until you are dry. Most of you will be going to new cells now, comfortable cells with real beds and windows; but two of you seem to have energy for idle chatter, so I think that a half hour each on the bicycle is in order.”

Minutes later, Kim found herself astride the bicycle, the dildoes working inside her, the strap driving her on, pedaling furiously to nowhere. Katy watched and waited her turn.

Afterward they were taken to their cells. Exhausted, Kim fell upon her bed. The last thing she saw before she fell asleep was Katy. The girl was in the cell opposite Kim’s, standing at the window, basking in the light of the setting sun.

Morning brought boredom. Kim lay on the bed, nursing sore muscles. She missed reading. She missed working. She even missed television. She knew that their isolation was deliberate. The old reality had been stolen from them, and they were forced to accept a new reality. They had numbers instead of names, nakedness instead of decorative and protective clothing, pain and uncertainty instead of security and routine. It was human nature to seek comfort and protection, and now their only safety came from pleasing the ones who tormented and controlled them. Kim missed her Mistress. She felt abandoned here, one slave among many, special only when she sinned.

It was a long day.

The next day was better. Kim was grateful for the activity of their workout. She had gained strength during her rest day. Though the demands of the trainers were greater, she only earned punishment once. On the chin up bar she was only able to complete half of the ten demanded, and had to remain hanging from the bar while the strap swept across her seat five times. Otherwise she was untouched.

The small girl who had suffered so much in the last session seemed even weaker today. Kim wondered at it, watching the girl from the corner of her eye. Then she decided that the girl was slacking on purpose, that for reasons of her own she was inviting the kiss of the strap.

This day they ran laps wearing wrist and ankle weights. When the small girl stumbled and fell, an anal plug was forced into her and secured with a chastity belt before she was driven to run again. She wore the plug for the rest of the day.

During “rest breaks” they were directed to assume awkward and humiliating postures and hold them. From time to time, one of the trainers would pull a girl from the ranks and rape her casually while the other girls held their poses and watched.

Katy wouldn't meet Kim's eyes in the hot tub that afternoon. She was afraid of being disgraced and punished again. Kim understood this, and knew that she wasn't being snubbed. A slave girl had to look out for herself.

When they were dry, the other girls were taken to their cells to rest, but Kim was taken to the private chambers of Mistress Gyve. She was thrust into the suite and the door slammed behind her, locking automatically. Kim fell to her knees and bowed her head, expecting the Mistress to appear. It was some time before the complete absence of sound told her that she was alone.

She cast a cautious eye about and saw a piece of paper lying on the bed. She stood up and approached it as though it were a bomb, expecting a trap of some kind. There were two words written on the paper.

“Surprise me.”

Kim knew that her Mistress had written the note for her. She wanted a surprise. Kim thought hard. What was the last thing that a frightened slave would be expected to do? What would please her Mistress most?

Sarah unlocked the door an hour later and found the room empty.

Sarah laughed aloud with genuine amusement. “Hide and seek?” she asked. “Is that the game?” It took her five minutes of searching to decide that 123 was not anywhere in the suite.

Biting her lip, Sarah pressed the intercom. *It's not an escape attempt*, she told herself. The girl was doing too well for that. Sarah was dimly aware that she was taking that possibility personally, as though flight would be a rejection of her.

“Yes, Mistress Gyve.” The voice on the intercom sounded faintly amused, as though he enjoyed a practical joke that Sarah was not a party to.

“Did you bring 123 to my quarters tonight?”

“Yes, I did.” He was really enjoying himself now, making her work for the information.

“Do you know where she is now?”

“Yes, I do.” His laughter was barely contained.

Sarah put a little bit of ice into her voice. “Would you care to tell me?”

He recognized the beginning of an ass chewing when he heard it, and his tone became placating. “Nothing to worry about, Mistress Gyve. She used your intercom and called for an escort to the punishment room. We have her down here now, keeping our dicks hard until you show up.”

It was true. When Sarah entered the punishment room, she found Kim bound over the bench. One guard was buried to the hilt in her mouth; a second was riding her hard from the other end. Two men were playing cards at the table, waiting for a turn. They all looked a trifle sheepish when they saw

Sarah, like boys caught playing with themselves. This party had not been scheduled, of course, but they had reasoned there was no harm in putting in a little overtime.

Sarah put away the stern look that had settled on her face. *What the hell is this?* she asked herself. *Am I becoming jealous of a slave?* The slave girl, her head held fast between the hands of the man who was using her mouth, could only cast questioning eyes toward Sarah.

Sarah used her fingertips to trace a slow line from the slave's bobbing head to the base of her spine, where a large, greased organ was pumping roughly in and out of her rectum.

Sarah knew what had happened. The girl had arranged for a surprise, calling for an escort to the punishment room. She had probably assumed that the guards would simply secure her there and leave her to wait for the Mistress to arrive. No one had told them to turn this into a gang bang, but then, no one had told them not to. The slave had certainly been in no position to refuse. They were rapists. It was their job. They were doing it well.

Nevertheless, Sarah reasoned that if this slave's idea of a surprise was asking for a trip to the punishment room, then she deserved everything she bargained for and more.

"Let me know when you have finished here," Sarah told the guards, and left.

"It's a good thing that you have tomorrow off," Sarah commented.

Kim turned her head to look at her Mistress. The slave was still bound fast to the bench. Her head was all she could move. There were circles under her eyes. She had been hard used.

"Yes, Mistress."

"You were going to be a cocky little slave girl, sitting in the punishment room with a whip in your mouth, waiting for me to find you." As she spoke, Sarah spread the girl's bottom cheeks and observed the swollen orifices, seeping slowly with semen. "You didn't know that the guards you summoned

would charge such a heavy transportation fee. Do I have it about right?"

"Yes, Mistress."

Sarah rinsed out a rag with warm water at the sink, and pressed the intercom on her way past.

"Yes, Mistress Gyve," a voice on the intercom answered.

"Pipe me through to the speakers in the slave quarters," she directed. "I have an announcement to make." Waiting, she gently washed Kim's bottom and said: "Your little friends back in the dorm are having lights out right now. They need something to tuck themselves in with."

There were clicks on the line. "Done," said the voice on the intercom.

Sarah raised her voice slightly to be heard in the cells. "Girls," she said, "I know you all trained hard today, and all of you are tired; that's why your friend number 123 and I have arranged to perform a lullaby for you."

She tossed the rag back into the sink, leaving Kim's buttocks wet. She took a rubber whip down from the wall and slashed the air with it. The whistling sound that it made was audible in every cell. "I will provide the music," she said, "and 123 will sing."

Kim sang, but it was a song of joy as well as pain. She raised her voice in praise of the whip. If her Mistress wanted screams, she would give them gladly.

Kim spent the next day in bed with her Mistress, and was amused by the sympathetic looks the other girls gave her when they were assembled in the gym for their workout on the following day. They didn't know her hours of pain had been repaid with a day of pleasure. What did the marks on her bottom matter, or the fading ache in a rectum repeatedly used? She had spent a whole day making love with her Mistress. It was worth a greater price.

They were worked hard that day, but Kim attacked the exercises with a new enthusiasm. She noted that the petite girl did miserably again, inviting the inevitable strap, and Kim

decided that it was all a sham. She had come here to be punished, of course. Kim was the only one among these girls who had entered Domain with no idea of what to expect there. The others had been warned, even allowed time to think it over. She wondered how many of them had come to Domain filled with ripe fantasies, only to panic when they found out the reality was more than they were prepared to bear. Once there, they had to bear it. Their contracts were binding, and escape impossible. Whatever motives brought them there; they shared a common fate. They were all slaves now.

They trained hard as the days went by, and Kim suspected that they were all becoming motivated less by fear of the strap and more by pride. They were making the grade. The fire had tempered them instead of consuming them. They were punished less often now, and their marks began to fade. They filled the places where fat had once been with lithe muscles. They were beautiful slaves who sweated with pride.

During the evenings, and on their rest days, Kim waited impatiently for the summons to bring her to her Mistress's side. She was amused by the looks of pity the other girls gave her when she was taken away; though she often returned covered with marks. She walked with joy, knowing that her pain was a tribute to the Mistress who had singled her out. She was desired more than the others. She was the chosen one.

Kim sat in the punishment room and waited for Mistress Gyve to appear. She wasn't comfortable. The saddle she rode was no wider than a bicycle seat, and two large rubber dildoes impaled her deeply. Her feet dangled a foot from the floor. Her arms had been bent up high behind her, bound together, and fastened to her collar; so she was unable to use her hands to ease the strain of her position. Every movement of her hips rocked the dildoes inside her. She had been there for some time.

Mistress Gyve came in, pulled up a chair, and sat down to watch her. The Mistress had an air of sadness about her. Kim could not understand as yet.

"Do you have anything you wish to say?" Sarah asked.

“Yes, Mistress.”

“You may say it.”

“May I come down? I have to pee.”

“Do it where you are. You have permission.”

Kim fought back tears. A flood of urine burst from her, flowing over the saddle and dripping to the floor. Sarah used the hose to rinse it down the floor drain and flood the sundered loins with icy water.

“Better?”

“Yes, Mistress. Thank you.”

“You will be sold tomorrow.” That was it, a simple announcement, flatly stated. The Mistress betrayed no emotion, and Kim had no way of knowing how hard it had been for Sarah to bring her this news. Kim mistook Sarah’s control for coldness. The tears that she had been holding back flowed freely now.

“Can’t you keep me, Mistress? Haven’t I pleased you?”

No look of pain was allowed to cross Sarah’s face. “It’s the law. When training is completed, slaves are sold to the highest bidder. I can bid for you, but there will be others, and some of them will be able to afford a very high price.”

Kim wept hopelessly while Sarah watched. *If only there was a way to explain*, Sarah thought. She was as much a subject to the laws of Domain as any slave. Though her rank gave her some status, she could not select a slave for herself without entering the winning bid at the public auction. She wished desperately that it were otherwise. Now she had to find a way to distance herself from this girl. It was always a mistake to get emotionally involved with a slave.

“I will bid for you,” she promised.

“Thank you, Mistress.”

“It has been hard for you here, hasn’t it?”

“Yes, Mistress.”

“You have had much to bear, but you have come through. I will always be proud of you. Whoever buys you, you must serve well. Learn to desire only to please your Master, as you once pleased me.”

Kim tried to speak, but a new fit of sobbing prevented her.

“I can’t stay,” said Sarah. “I hope you understand.” She kissed Kim hard and turned to go. When her hand was on the doorknob, Kim pulled herself together long enough to call after her.

“I love you, Mistress.”

The Mistress stood regarding the slave coldly for a moment. Then, striding back into the room as though inspired by helpless rage, she lifted a ball gag from the wall and jammed it into Kim’s mouth. She pulled the straps tight enough to hurt. “That should teach you to mind your tongue.”

She slammed the door when she left.

Kim dangled another hour before two guards lifted her up and carried her back to her cell.

Chapter Thirteen

It was auction day.

The despair of the night before had passed, now Kim felt a sense of adventure, a desire to prove herself in a new arena. She had spent a sleepless night in her cell, thinking long and hard about the words her Mistress had spoken. *She had bonded to the woman*, she told herself, *only because no one else in the training center had displayed any kindness and affection*. Certainly she could find it in herself to feel just as deeply for a new Master or Mistress, whoever it might be. In time, if she were a loyal and obedient slave, the Master might come to feel something for her as well. Still, when the guards came to gather the girls up and take them away, Kim searched in vain among the faces around her for Mistress Gyve.

Before the slaves left the training center, they were taken to a dressing room for preparation. A dozen leather collared slave girls descended upon them. Giggling, the girls informed the slaves that they were to be given a final polish to raise their value. The slaves were stood in a line and told to bend over and spread. Then the attendants went up and down the line with full enema bags and emptied them into the upturned bottoms. As soon as a slave returned from the bathroom, she was put back into the line again. All the slaves were filled and emptied twice. Kim was sure that she had never been so completely cleaned.

When this chore had been attended to, the real pampering began. Two of the leather-collared attendants worked on each slave girl. Their heads and bodies were carefully shaved. They were showered and douched, oiled, massaged, and perfumed. Their teeth were cleaned. Their collars were buffed.

Just before the slaves were led outside, they were told to bend and spread once more. One of the attendants donned a pair of heavy rubber gloves and worked her way down the line of slaves with a jar of lubricant. She pushed a thick glob of grease into each slave's anus and worked it in well. Kim felt as though she had been packaged and processed. She only needed to be stamped "Grade A".

Flanked by a dozen guards, the slaves were led outside. Kim enjoyed the feeling of sunlight on her body, and her elation only faded slightly when a man suddenly confronted her, looking down at her nakedness. She halted. The guards beside her didn't urge her forward. They were waiting to see what this was about.

"Do you remember me?" he asked.

Kim searched her memory, then it came to her. He had been the sentry at the main gate the day she arrived.

"Yes, Master," she said politely.

"Isn't there something you have to ask me?"

She knit her brows in concentration, then remembered and fell to her knees before him, clasping her hands in supplication.

"Please fuck my ass, Master." There was only humility in her voice.

The guards looked on, not understanding, but seeing no problem here. The sentry chuckled and stroked the top of her head, making her feel like a dog he had encountered on the street.

"Another time, maybe," he said. "I'll bid on you tonight, would you like that?"

"Whatever pleases you, Master."

"Good girl. Now run along. You're holding up the parade."

Kim got up and jogged a few paces to catch up to the others. Everything the sentry had told her on the day she arrived had turned out to be true. She had surrendered completely, and would now offer herself to anyone who demanded it. She had made the request only because she knew it was expected of her. There had been no desire for the man, she had even feared that he might take her there in the street. She had been motivated by a desire to please, a need to be accepted on the terms of her Masters.

So be it, she thought. She would be a slave—not just a slave, but the brightest and best. Her suffering would be a tribute. The man or woman who purchased her tonight would take possession of a rare prize.

Naked except for their steel collars, six slave girls were marched through the streets of Domain. The sentry had called it a parade, and Kim realized it was. People had gathered on the side of the street to watch, knowing there was an auction tonight, that the girls would pass this way. Kim studied faces as she marched. Tonight she would belong to one of these people. Whether her Master was cruel or loving, fair or foul, she would have to serve.

She knew this street. She had walked it before in bad dreams. Naked in full sunlight on a public street, she had not even her hair for cover; yet she walked without shame. Let them look. She felt more beautiful and desirable than she ever had in her former life.

Her eyes met those of a spectator who wore red silk at her throat, and she was surprised to see the girl's lip curl into a sneer.

“What are you so proud about, slave bitch?” she jeered. “Don’t you know your ass is getting sold tonight?”

Kim ignored her. She would have tossed her hair, if she still had any. What did the opinion of a Class C matter? She had been too cowardly to make the supreme sacrifice. True, Kim had never been given the choice, but she had still walked through hell to get where she was now. Sometimes scars meant more than medals.

The red silk girl called after her, “Your ass is cooked, honey!”

They marched on, past the brooding stone buildings, the pillories and whipping posts marking some intersections, the jeers and taunts of slaves in leather and silk, and the appraising stares of potential buyers. They reached a sort of fairground. Pavement turned to grass under their feet. Streamers and balloons decorated a pleasant park. A banner had been raised high between two posts.

Nineteenth Annual Slave Auction

They passed by tents where merchants were setting up to offer food and drink, leather goods, games of chance, and side-show entertainments. There was a tent where a slave could be rented by those who were unable to afford to own one. Different rates had been posted for the different classes of slaves. Kim noted with some satisfaction that Class A slaves cost the most. Then she realized she might be purchased for something like this, to be rented by the hour; raped and abused by a dozen different strangers every day. It was a dreary prospect.

The centerpiece of the fairground was a high stage, surrounded by rows of seats. The girls were led to the rear of the stage. On top of the stage was a heavy pipe suspended between two uprights, like a football goalpost, but higher and heavier. Several pulleys had been chained to the pipe. Six of the pulleys had cable threaded through them. The cables hung down to end in hooks, and the hooks had been attached to the connecting ring atop six ornamental iron cages.

The cages were high and narrow. One could stand in them, but not sit in anything except an awkward squat, and lying down was out of the question. Though decorative, the ironwork was solid. The bars were too close together for even a child to squeeze through, but not so close that they would screen the occupants from view. Kim had no doubt who those occupants were to be.

She noticed that the floor of each cage had been covered with a piece of plywood, and that a round hole of about five inches in diameter had been cut in the floor. Kim colored slightly when she realized they would not be coming out of the cages to use the bathroom, and found herself grateful that her enema this morning had been thorough.

The first cage was opened and the Eurasian girl put inside. When the door was secure, a guard hooked the loose end of the cable to a winch and cranked. The girl inside gave a little gasp as she found herself swinging above the ground. When the guard stopped cranking the winch, her cage was level with the stage. If the cage door were opened, she could

easily step across the small space between them, just as passengers step out of an elevator.

The petite girl went up next, then Katy, then Kim. In moments, Kim found herself dangling ten feet off the ground. Looking forward, she could see the stage, bare now except for a couple of workmen laying cables. Looking down, she saw a cluster of guards locking the next girl into her cage and hooking up the cable so that she could be hoisted.

They dangled like birds on display in a pet shop. Kim leaned against the bars and waited. There was nothing else to do. She watched the workmen as they set up a microphone on the stage, and decorated the edges of the platform with balloons. Most of the heavy work was done by leather collared slaves, she noted, while men in short sleeve shirts and guard uniforms directed.

Other people came up on the stage, people who were apparently there to inspect the merchandise. *Prospective buyers*, Kim thought, and shuddered. Some of them seemed merely curious, others studied the girls intently. There was an older woman, hatchet faced, dressed like a Victorian lady in spite of the heat, who stalked the length of the stage in high heeled shoes that clacked authority with every step. She peered intently at each girl in turn, flexing a riding crop. At each cage she would order crisply, "Turn around," and study the buttocks that were presented to her.

Katy caught the eye of a handsome young man who seemed to hang back. He looked embarrassed by the sight of so many beautiful girls, reminding Kim of the men she had seen back home slinking out of porno book stores with a bag under their arm.

"Buy me, Master," Katy implored. "I can please you in every way. You won't need a whip to make me mind."

Impressed by her candor, he came closer to Katy's cage. "You want to be my slave?" he asked.

Playing the moment for all that it was worth, Katy dropped to her knees, a posture that put her heels against the

bars behind her, and her knees against the door. "Yes, Master. It would be an honor to serve you."

"I'll bid on you," he promised.

Kim was impressed by Katy's initiative. Katy knew that she had to be sold, and had tried to attract a Master who was at least good looking and perhaps kind. From his diffident manner, Kim guessed that he might be a new arrival on the island. Still, she remembered an interview she once had with a serial killer. He had the same handsome features and mild eyes. Katy might be setting herself up for a dreadful surprise.

An old man approached Kim's cage. He frightened her. There was a craggy, rocklike power in his presence, a suggestion of ancient evil. His hands were large and gnarled. In his eyes she saw a ruthless intelligence gone mad. His leering gaze betrayed an obvious lust. He even reached into his trousers to adjust an erection that promised to be unexpectedly large. It didn't matter to him that Kim saw him playing pocket pool. She was only a slave. In a few hours she might know that erection more intimately.

"I can see that you have been whipped more than the others," he said. "Are you a bad slave?"

"No, Master," she answered respectfully. "There was a Mistress at the training center who was pleased to see me whipped often."

"It will please me to see you whipped often, too. If you pass my inspection, I will buy you. There is no one here with enough money to outbid me. Show me your pussy. Spread it open."

Obediently, Kim separated her legs to the limits of her cage, cocked her hips forward, and used her fingertips to spread the labia. He reached between the bars to stroke her.

"Do you like that?"

"If it pleases you, Master," she breathed, hoping that it was the correct response. In fact, she was both disgusted and aroused. Revolted with herself for responding to his touch.

“Oh, it pleases me all right,” he chuckled. “Have you ever worn clamps there?”

“Yes, Master,” she said, remembering with a shiver the bite of the clips that had conducted electricity into her body.

“Good, I like clamps. They are wonderful for getting a slave girl’s attention. Open your mouth.”

When she did, he pulled back her lips to inspect her teeth. She tasted herself on his fingers.

“Good,” he announced finally. “Turn around and spread your cheeks.”

It was no more than she expected. Slaves have no secrets. He probed her with one finger, then two, then three. She was thoroughly reamed and explored. She gripped the bars of her cage and endured it, grateful to the attendant who greased her before sending her out of the training center.

“I have a very large dick for such an old man,” he explained. “I want to be sure that you can handle it. I think you’re going to be excellent. You have been enlarged enough so I can get in with no trouble, but you will still grip me firmly.”

Satisfied with the inspection, he removed his fingers and wiped them off on her flank. “You may turn around now.”

When she was again facing him, he focused his attention on her breasts, stroking and squeezing them. His hands were like bird claws.

“Nice pink nipples,” he commented as he pinched. “I’ll have you pierced and ringed. When I put a leash on you, I won’t have to worry about whether or not you follow my lead.”

The optimism Kim had felt this morning was gone. New vistas of pain and humiliation had just been opened up to her. She could be tortured and mutilated in ways that she had not thought of before. This vile old man might not even represent the worst that could happen.

Abruptly, he turned away from her. His attention had been captured by something else. Kim followed his gaze and saw that everyone—buyers, slaves, and workmen, had turned as one and were staring toward the stairs which went up to the stage. Two men were coming up the stairs, carrying something between them. It was a barbecue grill.

At first it held no meaning for Kim. It seemed innocent enough, a reminder of family picnics on the patio, just a common household item. The two men set the grill on the stage. It had already been filled with charcoal. One of the men took a can of lighter fuel out of his pocket, squirted the fluid on the charcoal, and lit it.

The Eurasian girl in the end cage went suddenly berserk, beating on the bars of her cage with her fists and hammering her heels against the floor.

“You have to let me out!” she screamed. Her panic made the words almost incoherent. “This isn’t right! You can’t! I’m not an animal! I’m just a girl! Let me go!”

In the cage next to Kim, Katy was staring with unfocused eyes and muttering, “Oh shit! Oh shit!” It sounded like a prayer.

Comprehension eluded Kim. Then a voice from her past spoke to her. In college, she had asked her history professor how the holocaust could have happened under the noses of the German people. He answered her in the patient manner of a man who is forced to explain the obvious.

“Denial is the first defense of a civilized mind confronted with unthinkable barbarity.”

The girl in red silk had shouted in the street. “Your ass is cooked, honey!”

They were going to be branded.

Chapter Fourteen

The day wore on. Six dispirited slave girls wept steadily at the grim prospect ahead of them. Buyers came and went. All the girls were poked, prodded, and inspected repeatedly. It became a routine—spread your legs, open your mouth, turn around. Kim's body betrayed her, finding a perverse excitement in the fingers fondling and probing her. One young man walked slowly down the line and paused at the cage holding the Eurasian girl.

"You're an interesting specimen," he said. He took a dildo out of his pocket. It was rubber, not terribly long, but very thick. "I had this made specially," he explained, showing it to her. "It's the same size and shape as my cock when I'm hard. I want to check you for fit."

The Eurasian girl looked down. Her panic had subsided, leaving apathy in its wake.

"Open your mouth," he commanded.

When she did, he pushed the dildo in. She gagged on it, but she had been trained well, and swallowed when it touched the back of her throat, allowing its full length to slide into her mouth.

"Good," he murmured. "Now spread your legs."

The dildo slid in easily, lubricated by saliva. He worked it in and out with the clinical air of a doctor observing a patient's reflexes. "No problem here," he remarked.

He withdrew the instrument and took a tube of lubricant out of his pocket. "Grease it for me," he commanded. "I don't want to get my hands dirty."

She accepted the lube and the dildo and held them for a moment, as though debating the wisdom of throwing them back in his face.

"Come on," he said impatiently. "I haven't got all day."

She spread a layer of grease on the dildo, taking care to see that it was well covered; then she handed the objects back

to him with obvious reluctance.

“You hesitated,” he said petulantly. “After I buy you, I’ll beat you for that. Turn around.”

She complied, bending and spreading her legs for the inevitable penetration. He slipped the dildo into her anus without preliminaries, ignoring her outraged gasp, and worked it in and out, slowly at first, then with more speed and energy. At length, he tired of the sport and took it out.

“See you later, babe,” he promised, and left.

The Eurasian girl stayed as she was, gripping the bars and turning her back to the stage, until another buyer smacked her bottom and ordered her to turn around.

From time to time, yielding to a need that could no longer be denied, a girl would squat and release a long stream of urine through the hole in the bottom of her cage, flooding the ground below. It was a humiliating thing to do in front of a crowd of strangers, but slaves are not permitted shame.

A huge man mounted the stage and advanced to the cages. He carried a long iron rod slung carelessly over his shoulder. His red beard bristled in the sun. He looked like a lumberjack carrying his axe to work.

“Allow me to introduce myself, ladies,” he said pleasantly. “They call me the Whipmaster. I am called on when a slave has badly misbehaved by attempting to escape or attacking a Master. Sometimes I am sent for when a Master or Mistress wishes to see a slave punished, but has no time to attend to the matter personally. Most often, I punish the bad ones. If you see me after today, rest assured you will have earned a severe whipping for your misdeeds. I’m strong. My whips are stiff. I lay on with a will. Part of my payment for services rendered is use of the body I have just punished. You can be sure my cock is in proportion to the rest of me, and that I prefer to worship at the altar of Sodom.

“Tonight I have another pleasant duty to perform.” He lifted the iron from his shoulder and displayed it for the slave

girls to see. On the end of it was a stylized letter “D”, wrought in iron.

“I know my business,” he told them. “After you heal, you will all be beautifully and permanently marked as Domain’s property.”

He thrust the iron deep into the coals and left it there to heat, then turned away to supervise two leather collared slaves. They were bolting a heavy bench to the stage. Many thick straps were riveted to the bench.

Kim shuddered. The sight of the iron had made branding a reality that she could no longer deny. Once branded, a girl could never hope to return to a normal life. She would be marked as a slave forever.

A warm breeze came up and set the cages swaying. By late afternoon, the prospective buyers had looked their fill and the preparations for the auction were complete. A leather collared slave appeared and cooked hamburgers on the grill. These he distributed to the slaves. Kim accepted hers and ate, appreciating the irony. She wondered if branded girls gave off the same odor as broiled beef. Cattle are branded, too. She had no appetite, but forced the food down anyway, thinking she would need her strength. Fear had dried her throat, and she drank greedily when a pail of water was passed. She was too thirsty to care that the water she consumed would eventually fill her bladder, forcing her to endure the humiliation of urinating in public.

The brazier became a murky red eye in the dusk. Floodlights came on, illuminating the stage. The seats around it began to fill as auction time drew near. Though the tropical night was warm, six girls trembled in their cages.

While most of those attending were freemen, Masters, Mistresses, and guards; there were also slaves in the audience. Some of the slaves who wore leather and silk were off duty tonight, and had come to be entertained. Some had come to attend to the needs of their Masters. Iron collared slaves knelt at the feet of those who held their leashes. They appeared

nervous, perhaps remembering the night when they had been sold.

Kim searched the audience for Mistress Gyve, but the floodlights shining in her eyes made it hard for her to see faces in the darkness beyond the stage.

The crowd burst into wild applause as a man in a white suit mounted the stage. He tapped the microphone to be sure it was working, and addressed the sea of pale faces staring up at him.

“Ladies, gentlemen, and slaves, good evening and welcome to the nineteenth annual slave auction. We have fewer slaves than in some past years, but they are all of the highest quality. As always, the proceeds of this sale will go to help defray the expenses of our training center. I don’t have to tell you what fine work these people do. Every satisfied slave owner knows that their methods produce slaves of unsurpassed obedience and beauty. These girls are Class A in every sense of the word. So let’s have a big hand for the trainers!”

When the applause died down, he continued, “I must remind you that you take immediate delivery, all sales are cash on delivery. United States currency only, and there are no refunds; though any slave who fails to please can be sent back for re-training free of charge.”

A titter rippled through the audience at this last remark. Kim could only imagine what cruel fate lay in store for a girl who displeased her new owner.

“As is customary, these slaves come to you clean inside and out; collared, shaved, and branded. Once you take possession, of course, future hair growth will be a matter of personal choice. The piercing parlor will be open all night for your convenience. The service includes a free set of stainless steel nipple or labia rings. Gold rings are available for a small extra charge. Now, without further ado!”

The audience roared its approval.

“Let the auction begin!”

Four guards advanced on Katy's cage and opened the door. She seized the bars in a death grip and they had to pry her fingers loose. Katy fought them hard, kicking and biting, but they were many, and they were strong. She was thrown belly down on the bench. The heavy straps were swiftly buckled around her ankles, knees, and thighs, waist, chest, and neck, wrists and elbows. The straps were very tight. She could turn her head or wiggle her fingers and toes. That was all.

The men who prepared her displayed neither pity nor joy. They only seemed to be concerned with doing their job well.

The sight of Katy's hopeless struggle had subdued the crowd, but they broke into wild applause when the Whipmaster mounted the stage. He waved at the crowd, then pulled a thick rubber cylinder from his pocket and bent down to Katy's head. He said something to her, speaking too softly for Kim to hear, then put the rubber bar in Katy's mouth crossways, biting her like a horse. She accepted it and dropped her head.

The Whipmaster put a cigar in his mouth as he stood up and advanced to the brazier. A hush fell on the crowd as he used the branding iron to light the cigar. He selected his spot with care and touched the glowing iron quickly to the pale skin that was helpless to evade it.

Katy's scream was a mindless thing, the sound of agony and terror. She surged with all her strength against the straps. Then, abruptly, she went limp. The iron came away from her flesh still hissing and crackling. The bit fell from her mouth. She had fainted.

The Whipmaster returned the iron to the fire, while his attendants doused Katy with cold water and sprayed her buttock with antiseptic.

So impersonal, thought Kim, *no more fuss than branding a calf.*

Katy revived, though she moaned piteously. She was unbuckled and hauled roughly to her feet. Her arms were bound behind her, wrists to elbows, so that they were folded up high on her back, out of reach of the brand. When Katy was

turned to face the crowd, Kim had a good look at the red and blistered flesh.

The auctioneer began to speak again. “CAS 119—Lot 19, fully trained. She is skilled in deep throat sucking. I know her pussy is tight because I’ve tried it out myself. Her anus has been enlarged, but it’s still tight enough to milk you dry. She is guaranteed to be free of all virus and infection. A redhead, they tell me. Who will give me fifty thousand?”

Kim could not count the hands which were raised, but as the bid went up the hands went down, and in minutes the fast talking auctioneer had sold Katy for half a million dollars.

The happy buyer who mounted the stage was the handsome young man who had spoken to Katy earlier in the day. He had kept his promise to buy her. Kim hoped the girl would be able to find joy in serving him. He snapped a leash on Katy’s collar and leaned down to kiss her forehead.

“I’m the luckiest man in Domain,” he said.

Katy looked up at him and risked a timid smile, though the pain of her brand still choked her with sobs. When he led her away, the applause was only polite, subdued by envy.

“Goodbye, Katy,” Kim called out impulsively.

The Whipmaster’s head spun around, and he cast baleful eyes at Kim. She cringed. How could she forget that a slave should never call attention to herself?

Flanked by guards, the Whipmaster strode across the stage and threw open the door of Kim’s cage. She shrank back, gripping the bars behind her for support. He studied her a moment, then extended his hand to her.

“Come quietly,” he said with surprising gentleness. “Don’t disgrace yourself the way she did.”

Surprising herself, Kim stretched out a trembling hand. It was dwarfed inside the huge paw that swallowed it. She gripped him tightly, gaining courage from the contact, and stepped out of the cage.

A roar of approval greeted her. The crowd was pleased at her show of submission. No slave ever went willingly to be branded. Kim felt numb, and the part of her mind that was still rational realized she was in shock. She wondered if her shock would insulate her from the awful pain awaiting her.

As she was escorted to the bench, Kim's eyes drifted over the audience. She was closer now, able to see down into the front row where Mistress Gyve sat with a leather collared slave beside her and an iron collared slave kneeling demurely at her feet. Mistress Gyve clutched a fistful of money. Her face looked stricken.

A few seats away sat the old man who had inspected Kim earlier in the day. He leaned back confidently in his seat, an open case full of money on his lap. The slave girl at his feet had her head bowed. Huge rings dangled from her pierced nipples, and between her widely spread legs the glint of metal could also be seen. Her body was marked by fading lines overlaid with more recent stripes. She had been whipped savagely and often. Her eyes were cast toward the ground, and Kim saw her own future in that hopeless face.

The guards laid Kim upon the bench and strapped her down. The straps were cruelly tight, bending her spine, restricting her breathing, and cutting off the circulation to her hands and feet.

"It's too tight!" she protested, wasting what little breath she was able to draw.

"Don't worry," a guard told her. "This won't take long."

The Whipmaster picked up the rubber bit that had fallen from Katy's mouth. It was still wet with saliva, and Kim saw the marks of Katy's teeth in it before it was forced into her own mouth. *It's to keep me from biting my tongue*, she thought.

The Whipmaster stood up. The crowd had grown silent. Kim could hear his boot heels as he walked behind her, and the rasp of the iron being drawn from the fire. She stared at the floor, heart pounding, waiting for pain.

Suddenly there was a stir in the crowd, and the sound of shouting drawing nearer. Footsteps pounded as someone mounted the stage.

“Stop!” shouted a female voice. “You have to let her go! There’s been a terrible mistake!”

Though confined by her straps, Kim was still able to turn her head and see who had spoken.

It was Charlene Weaver.

Chapter Fifteen

They were in the office of Mistress Aldona. The triad was assembled there, called together in an emergency session to deal with a problem which had not come up in the twenty years of Domain's existence. Master Lestrade sat in the middle, an aging lion with powerful shoulders and a grey mane. To his left sat Master Rayburn, a younger man whose bland expression and thick glasses made him look more like an accountant than co-ruler of a ruthless slave state. Mistress Aldona sat on the right.

Mistress Gyve and Kim sat in chairs against the wall on the other side of the room. Kim was dressed in borrowed clothing, feeling alien and uncomfortable against skin that had known only nakedness for so long. Someone had given her a wig to cover her bald pate, but it felt wrong on her, like a Halloween costume. She had removed it and held it in her lap now. She looked like a concentration camp survivor, her bald head and slender neck rising above the ill-fitting tee shirt, which only emphasized the thinness of her body. She still wore her steel collar. No one had rounded up a blacksmith to cut it off. There were more urgent matters to deal with.

Flanked by two guards, Charlene Weaver occupied center stage. She had not been offered a chair, and stood looking at the floor. She was unable to meet the steady gaze of her interrogators. She wore slacks, which were too dark and heavy for such a tropical climate, a long sleeved blouse, and walking shoes. A heavy coat was over her arm.

Looking at her, Kim realized that winter must have arrived back in the city; a winter hardly noticed here. Charlene's clothing was rumpled from travelling far and fast. She clutched a crumpled tissue in one hand, rolling it into a ball with nervous fingers.

"I was planning to submit myself to Domain when I fell in love," Charlene explained. "My lover took control of my heart, my mind, and my life. I told him about Domain, and told him that I would forsake this place for his love. I had not signed my final contract yet, and the choice seemed easy.

“Then he told me he was carrying around a lot of anger because of a former lover. He convinced me that we would never be happy together until this anger was purged. It was his scheme to trick this woman into entering Domain in my place. He promised to rescue her after she had learned her lesson. We changed the records, substituting her photograph and physical description for mine. It worked.

“After she was gone, I began to feel guilty for the part I had played in all this. I begged him to let me reveal the truth. At night I would lie in bed and think about what she must be going through here.

“Three weeks ago, he was killed in an auto accident, and I was left alone with my conscience. I searched my purse and found the phone number, my only contact with Domain. One of your field representatives met me at the airport and escorted me here.

“Kim Victor was tricked. She didn’t know what she was getting into. She must be allowed to go home. I stand guilty before you, waiting to be judged.”

She began to sob. The Triad watched, unmoved by her emotional display.

“There is something missing in your story,” said Lestrade at last. “Your records were in a confidential file here. How did you manage to alter them?”

“I take full responsibility,” said Charlene quickly. “Domain has not been compromised.”

Lestrade tapped a pencil against the side of the desk, obviously unsatisfied by this answer. Mistress Aldona leaned forward and pressed the intercom. “Jane, bring the Charlene Weaver file in, please.”

“Miss Weaver,” said Lestrade to the girl who fidgeted before him. “You confess freely and that counts in your favor, but your offences are serious. Not only did you allow another to take your place without her informed consent, but you have placed the sanctity of Domain in danger. Up to now, we have existed only because the legitimate governments of the world

knew nothing about us. What would happen to all of us if the United States Government learned that one of its citizens was a prisoner here? We are hardly prepared to defend ourselves against an invading army.”

He sighed, genuinely saddened by the hard choices he was being forced to make. When you make rules, he realized, you have to be ready to enforce them. “Are you prepared to accept the judgement of this Triad?”

Trembling and sobbing, Charlene could only nod.

“Take her downstairs and put her in a cell. I may have more questions to ask her in the morning.” He gestured to the guards. The unresisting girl was led away.

Just as they reached the door, Jane entered bearing a file folder. She shot a glance at Charlene as she passed. It might have been curiosity at the sight of an unscheduled prisoner. She handed the file to Mistress Aldona.

“Thank you, Jane. You may go.”

Jane hesitated a moment, and seemed about to ask a question, then turned to go. Mistress Aldona stopped her before she reached the door.

“Jane.”

She turned too quickly, as though expecting the call. “Yes, Mistress.”

“Who has access to the files?”

“We get the files from the field investigators. They’re kept locked in the office.”

“No one has touched them?” Mistress Aldona seemed to be less interested in the answer than she was in the girl’s reaction to the question.

“Not to my knowledge, Mistress.”

“All right. You may go.”

Jane’s exit seemed almost an escape. Mistress Aldona ignored the file before her for a moment and turned her

attention to Kim. "It seems that we have all been the victims of a cruel hoax, Miss Victor."

Kim looked down at the wig in her lap, lost in thought.

"Miss Victor?"

Kim looked up, startled to be addressed by a name she had ceased to know. "I'm sorry." There was a flicker of fear in her eyes, the memory of punishment for inattention.

Mistress Aldona gave her a gentle smile, the first anyone had seen all night. "You have been wronged," she said. "How can we make it right?"

"I don't know," Kim stammered. "This has all happened so fast."

"You are free to go, of course. Transportation can be arranged in the morning. We can find a place for you tonight, one more pleasant than what you have come to know."

"She can stay at my house," said Sarah Gyve abruptly. Then she realized her outburst had revealed an unspoken wish and amended it. "That is, if she wants to, of course."

Kim rescued her. "Thank you," she said. She had recognized the desire of her former Mistress to spend a last night together. "I'd like that. I need time to think."

Mistress Aldona found the exchange interesting, but decided to let the subject rest.

"You forged Charlene Weaver's name on the final contract," she said to Kim.

"Yes," Kim admitted. "I thought you were a religious cult or a political group. I wanted to get inside. I was looking for a scoop. I had no idea what I was signing."

Mistress Aldona nodded. "I believe you. You are a reporter?"

"Yes. I was. I don't know if I still have a job."

Master Rayburn broke into the conversation. "We have resources. A new identity could be arranged, and a lifetime income the I.R.S. would not question. You wouldn't have to

work any more.” He was thinking that Kim’s silence could be bought.

Mistress Aldona didn’t look at him. She was studying Kim. “We can work out those details in the morning,” she said. “Right now I would be interested in Miss Victor’s professional opinion concerning Miss Weaver’s testimony.”

Kim was taken aback by the question. No one here had treated her as a woman of intelligence before, and it took her a moment to change gears. “She’s protecting someone.”

Mistress Aldona smiled. She had observed Kim’s confusion, and wondered if the ordeal she had just come through had left her impaired mentally. The answer told her that Kim’s mind was still sharp.

“Of course,” she said, “but who is it, and why?”

Kim shrugged. “Someone inside Domain. Anyone else would be safely beyond your reach.”

Aldona pressed the intercom. “Jane, bring your own file in, please.”

They waited. When Jane came in she was obviously nervous, gripping her own file with white knuckles and holding it before her as a shield to her small, naked body. She handed the file to Mistress Aldona with shaking hands, not looking at anyone.

“Excellent,” said Mistress Aldona. “Stay here a moment, hands on your head, legs apart.”

Jane obeyed. Kim, sitting behind her, had a clear view of the smooth white back and bottom, unmarked by any beating. She felt a stab of envy for the privileged girl in her leather collar. Then she realized that Jane’s position now was no cause for envy.

Mistress Aldona opened the file and read aloud: “Jane Collins, Class B slave. Contract calls for oath of allegiance to Domain, mild punishment for disobedience, and oral sexual service to females only. Assigned to clerical work at the training center with full mail privileges. Married two years, divorced three years ago when she recognized her latent

submissive lesbian tendencies. Height is five feet two inches, weight one hundred pounds.”

She paused and looked up at the girl before her. “Closer to a hundred ten now, I should say. I never did put you on that diet.”

No one laughed. Tension was mounting in the room. Aldona was working up to something, and everyone knew it.

“Blue eyes, light brown hair, no tattoos or blemishes. Obedient, eager to please, and intelligent.” She looked up again. “I don’t see anything here about loyalty.”

Jane’s eyes began to tear. “Please, Mistress!”

“What did they offer you for this betrayal?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Jane was pleading, hoping that she would be believed.

“A slave who lies is subject to punishment,” said Mistress Aldona. “A slave who betrays her oath can be demoted. You know the law.”

Jane trembled and said nothing. Mistress Aldona sighed. “Remove your collar and set it on the desk.”

Unlike the iron collar that Kim still wore, the leather collar could be unbuckled. Jane removed it, her fingers clumsy with fear.

“As of now, you have no status here. Your rank will be determined after I am satisfied with your answers.” She pressed a button on the desk to summon the guards.

“It’s time to weigh you on the scales of justice.”

Kim was allowed to watch as Jane was questioned, since the matter was her concern as well as Domain’s. Jane was taken to a bare concrete room. The center of the room was dominated by a huge balance scale with a gambrel hanging from each arm.

“This is only used in extreme cases,” Mistress Gyve whispered in Kim’s ear. Whispers seemed appropriate here. The air was heavy with solemn tension. The guards made Jane

lie on her back on the concrete floor. One arm of the scale was lowered, with a squeak of metal against metal, and Jane's hands were strapped wide apart to the gambrel. Then her legs were raised and her ankles fastened beside her wrists. Her legs were spread wide; her loins yawned at the audience. Kim could see her pink, shaved mound and the tight openings below it. She felt another twinge of envy, knowing that her own openings had no such virginal appearance. Oral service only, the file had said. This was a body that had not known men for some time.

Secured to the gambrel, Jane was left on her back. The guards brought in a galvanized cylinder and chained it to the gambrel on the other side of the scale. The way it was carried, it had to be empty. When filled it would weigh hundreds of pounds. Now Jane's weight on the other end of the scale was enough to set it swinging as it hung above the floor. Mistress Aldona came into the room with a length of black hose under her arm. It looked like the hoses Kim remembered from the punishment rooms. She watched as the woman screwed the hose on to a wall spigot and uncoiled it. The room was hushed as she removed the threaded cap from the top of the tank and filled it with water. The weight of the water in the tank began to lift the other end of the scale. Jane's arms and legs went taut, her shoulders lifted, then her bottom came off the floor and she was swinging. The tank dropped to the floor with a soft clunk, and Mistress Aldona shut the water off.

Jane gasped at the way her wrists and ankles were jerked when she stopped rising. She was swinging helplessly now, her split bottom three feet from the floor. Mistress Aldona produced a black rubber cone a yard long. It looked like a highway safety cone except that it was narrower. At the point was a blunt tip like a phallus. Kim flinched. She was beginning to understand what was coming.

Mistress Aldona held the cone up for Jane to see. "It is an inch in diameter at the tip," she explained. "Its diameter increases a quarter of an inch for every inch of its length." She opened a jar of muscle liniment, donned rubber gloves, and smeared the end of the cone liberally with grease. The odor of camphor and menthol was sharp in Kim's nose. Jane began to

whimper. Aldona set the cone between Jane's legs and applied liniment to the loins displayed before her.

"Not my ass!" Jane cried, as the fingers penetrated her. "You know I've never had it there! It burns! Wash it off!"

Aldona positioned the cone. With its base on the floor it was just long enough to penetrate the girl's anus. Jane cried out and squirmed, trying to dislodge it. The movement set her swinging and rocked the cone on its base, but she was unable to escape the impalement.

Mistress Aldona watched her antics for a moment. She appeared to be satisfied with the arrangement and turned aside. She stripped the rubber gloves off and threw them away. There was a drain valve on the bottom of the tank. She opened it a quarter turn and a slow stream of water flowed, puddling on the floor before finding a path to the floor drain. "I think in about ten minutes she will tell us everything."

Kim watched the drama unfold. Jane stared in horror at the flowing water. As the tank drained it would become lighter, and she would be slowly impaled on the cone by her own weight.

"Mistress," she pleaded, "you can't do this! It will tear me apart!"

Her anus clenched around the cone, trying to resist it, but it was well greased. She moaned as the ring of muscle yielded and she slid downward the first two inches. Progress slowed then, as the diameter of the cone increased. Nevertheless, it burrowed into her inexorably.

"Take it out! Please! It's killing me!"

Mistress Aldona stepped forward and remarked coldly. "You little coward, there is barely five inches of it inside you. I have guards here who are thicker than that."

When another inch had penetrated her, Jane was screaming. Mistress Aldona put two hands on top of the tank and pressed downward, easing the pressure. "Are you ready to talk?"

"Please, I don't know anything!"

Her protests became screams again as Mistress Aldona raised her hands and Jane settled once more onto the cone “Stop! I’ll talk!”

Kim let out the breath she had been holding. She had been impaled on enough members, real and artificial, to know how frightful Jane’s torture was.

With help from the guards, Aldona lifted the girl and removed the cone. Jane was set on the floor, still bound and spread.

“Talk,” Mistress Aldona demanded, “or we can start all over again.”

Between sobs, Jane confessed. Her maiden name was Weaver. She was Charlene’s sister. She had changed the records at Charlene’s request.

“Take her downstairs and lock her up with her sister,” Lestrade commanded. “I’m sure they will have much to talk about. We will pass sentence in the morning.”

As Jane was led away, Kim felt a hand fold shyly over her own. She turned and saw Sarah Gyve smiling at her.

Chapter Sixteen

Sarah had Jim bring her and Kim drinks as soon as they were inside the door. The experiences of the night had left Kim emotionally and physically drained, and Sarah felt a need to mother her now. They went into Sarah's bedroom, where both women looked immediately at the naked girl tethered beside the bed by an ankle chain.

It was Forty-eight, of course. Sarah had momentarily forgotten the slave who occupied her bedroom every night. In the past the girl had been a pleasant diversion, but tonight she would be an unwelcome distraction. If Sarah and Kim were to have an intimate night together, they didn't need a chaperon.

Sarah took the drinks Jim provided and said, "Jim, take forty eight downstairs and lock her in a cell, please."

"Yes, Mistress Gyve. Do you want her chained up?"

"No need; give her a blanket."

Jim unlocked the slave's ankle chain and led her away on a leash.

Sarah sighed, "There now," and turned to Kim. She took the wig Kim was holding and handed her a drink. "Our own vintage," she explained. "We have a vineyard and winery on the island." She was about to say that she would take Kim to see it some time, then her eyes clouded as she realized that it would never happen.

Kim accepted the drink gratefully. "I need it," she said. The words felt clumsy in her mouth. She had spoken so little in the last month, or was it two?

"Finish it. Then we can get you out of those ridiculous clothes and get you cleaned up."

Kim looked down at herself. "I do look absurd this way," she admitted. She set the drink down and stripped, leaving the clothing an untidy heap at her feet. "Is that better?"

"You're magnificent," Sarah confessed. She passed a hand over Kim's head. Stubble was beginning to grow.

“Baldness becomes you. You have fine features and a well shaped head. You are a living sculpture this way. It seems a shame to cover it again with hair.”

Kim lowered her eyes, unable to meet the appraising stare. How could she relate on equal terms with someone who had mastered her so completely in the past?

Sarah lifted her chin with a forefinger. “Ashamed?” she asked.

Kim blushed. “I suppose I left shame behind a long time ago, but it’s hard to be naked in front of you when it’s my own choice. It’s so different now.”

“Don’t ever be ashamed of your body, and don’t ever be ashamed of the things that you were forced to do.”

Kim nodded solemnly.

They showered together. Sarah tended to Kim’s needs as though Sarah were the slave and Kim the Mistress. When they were dried, Sarah led her charge into the bedroom and had her lie stomach down on the bed. Sitting beside her, she began to knead Kim’s back and shoulders, massaging away tension.

“Ohh, that feels so good!” purred Kim.

Sarah’s hands stroked lightly down the length of the pale body from neck to ankle. Kim quivered under the gentle touch. “After what happened tonight I thought that I would never sleep,” Kim drawled. “Now I feel as if I could doze off right here.”

Sarah looked down at the slender form with undisguised admiration. Her legs were perfect. The swell of her round buttocks, decorated with the marks of punishments past, the taut thighs and supple calves, even the small feet, callused from going about barefoot, excited Sarah.

Sarah’s hands moved over the shoulder blades and stroked the muscular ridges on either side of the spine, toying with the dimples above her bottom. She grasped the buttocks and kneaded them firmly. Kim gasped.

“Tender?” asked Sarah solicitously.

“A little, but I like it.” Kim didn’t tell her that pain and sexual pleasure had become wedded during her time at the training center. She was getting wet. The hands were intimate and knowing, transmitting a silent message of desire. Sarah’s touch was a caress as she stroked the finely grained, white skin of Kim’s inner thighs. She grasped Kim’s knees and squeezed the joints. Little jolts of pleasure shot upward to Kim’s loins.

“You’re arousing me.”

“Do you mind?”

“No, don’t stop.”

Kim surrendered completely to the sensual delight of the caressing hands. She could feel the busy fingers playing with her toes now, pressing and fondling. She felt as though her toes were being confined by Sarah’s fingers. The simple gesture of affection was as intimate as any act of love.

Sarah bent over the prostrate girl and began to nibble and suck at her toes. She worked her way up to the soles, leaving a trail of kisses across the sensitive arch. Her busy tongue flickered in and out as Sarah licked ravenously up the calves and across the tendons in back of Kim’s knees. Kim lay passively, wondering how far the kisses would go.

The swiftly darting tongue traveled up the inside of her thighs, and Kim spread her legs to allow Sarah a better access to this tender flesh. She could feel the wet, firm tip of Sarah’s tongue glide smoothly up and down the cleft between her buttocks. Then it withdrew.

“Roll over,” Sarah’s voice was husky.

Kim flipped over on the bed. Obedience was a habit, of course, but she was eager to comply anyway. She had been transported into ecstasy already, and her inhibitions were swept away by her mounting excitement.

Sarah kissed her. Tongues explored.

“I want to make love to you,” said Sarah, “not as a Mistress, but as a lover.”

“Do it.”

The dark head descended and a warm, wet mouth suckled at Kim's breast. Sarah sucked hard, worrying the nipple with her teeth and flicking it rapidly with her tongue. She played with each breast, then kissed their pale undersides and nudged them with her nose.

As Sarah's nibbles and licks worked downward, Kim spread her legs expectantly, anticipating the goal of the searching mouth. Sarah teased Kim's navel with a probing tongue and chuckled at the way it made her squirm with desire. Down moved the mouth that brought Kim such pleasure. It swept across her soft belly and she responded by closing her eyes and rotating her hips.

Teasingly, Sarah postponed the pleasures her actions promised. She avoided the soft, bare lips below the belly and concentrated her affectionate attentions upon the tender thighs instead. She bit down just hard enough to cause pain, and chuckled at the small bruises her mouth left on this sensitive area. Kim was panting.

"Oh, please," she panted, "do it now!"

Sarah was in no hurry, however, and licked up and down the length of each leg before she finally buried her face in the denuded area around Kim's madly aching loins. Kim sighed with relief, grateful at last to be given the most intense pleasure possible. Her agony of waiting was over and she had nothing to do now except relax and enjoy the gift that Sarah was offering her.

She was scarcely relaxed, for the intense pleasure that these attentions brought soon caused her to moan and squeal softly as wave after wave of beautiful sensation overcame her.

She was nearing orgasm when Sarah suddenly ceased administering to her and stood up. Was this all? Was she going to stop now and leave Kim unsatisfied?

Sarah reached out and took the wine bottle from the nightstand. Carefully, she spilled a few drops of wine into the warm crotch before her. The wine was cold, but not unpleasant, and Kim squirmed as she felt a drop trickle over her labia and into her damp hole.

Once again Sarah applied her mouth to the throbbing orifice. Kim moaned ecstatically. Sarah was licking the wine out of her vagina, tasting wine and girl together. The knowledge of this fired Kim's imagination and raised her to new heights.

Her orgasm was so violently intense that Kim doubled over with it. She curled herself into a tight ball of flesh as her temples pounded in rhythm to her frantic heart beat.

She rested then, and Sarah lay beside her on the bed.

"A compensation," Sarah explained, "for pleasures given and services rendered."

"Oh, Mistress Gyve," panted Kim, "I won't rest until I have done the same for you."

"Call me Sarah," Sarah advised. "You no longer have an obligation to serve me." She smiled generously, and Kim realized what a beautiful woman she was.

Wordlessly, Kim took the wine bottle, poured a shimmering drop of the sweet red liquid on each of Sarah's nipples, and dripped a tiny stream on the soft flesh between her breasts. She kissed and nibbled in diminishing circles until she was sucking the drops away from Sarah's nipples. As her mouth found the hard pink buds, Sarah began to writhe with the drunkenness of pleasure.

Kim continued her game by dripping the wine on portions of Sarah's anatomy prior to kissing them. She proceeded quickly, and Sarah always knew where to expect the next oral caress. Kim was becoming excited again, and the smell of Sarah's damp excitement urged her to finish her task. Her flickering tongue darted rapidly across the woman's taut belly and slipped effortlessly down between the folds of flesh guarding the clitoris. Sucking hard on the pink love button, she waited excitedly for Sarah's moans of pleasure. She alternately sucked Sarah's clitoris and darted a tongue deep into the opening below. Cool fingers against her scalp urged her deeper as Sarah sought to draw all possible pleasure from the girl.

Sarah gasped and clenched. Kim's head was gripped hard and she knew that her efforts were being rewarded. Sarah stiffened as though her orgasm were a deathlike trance, even her breathing stopped. Kim looked up into Sarah's face and saw the features drawn and frozen, as though by shock. Kim shared her moment, finding unearthly beauty in Sarah's stillness. Then, with a shudder, Sarah breathed again. She laughed.

"Wow! My life for you, darling." She said it lightly, trying to take some of the sadness out of the moment.

Tomorrow clouded their joy. Neither would speak of it. They lay in darkness together.

"We have to sleep now," Sarah said regretfully.

"I know, Mistress."

"Sarah."

"Sorry, Sarah. I'm having trouble adjusting to freedom. It's harder than I remembered."

"How can I help?"

Kim let the silence grow. "You'll think I'm crazy. Maybe I am."

"Earth is an asylum. Domain is its recreation center. As the Cheshire cat said, we're all mad here."

Kim broke in hastily, getting it said before she changed her mind.

"Chain me."

"What?"

"When I came in you had a slave chained beside your bed. Her place is empty now. Let me fill it. I need to be the dog lying at your feet."

Words of argument would have spoiled it. With unspoken understanding, the two women got up. Kim sat on the floor and extended her foot for the chain. Sarah locked it on and got back into bed. "I love you, Kim."

The chain rattled as Kim sought a position of comfort on the floor. "I love you, Sarah."

Kim was instantly asleep. Sarah poured herself another drink and sat up in bed. She was still sitting there when the sun came up.

Chapter Seventeen

Jim brought breakfast and news. When Sarah gave him permission to enter, he found her sitting on the edge of the bed with Kim's head pillowed on her lap. Kim was still naked, though Sarah had removed the ankle chain, she remained on the floor.

"An assembly has been called," said Jim. "There will be a public punishment at noon. Master Lestrade has sent word that he would like to speak to Miss Victor this morning if it is convenient."

"Thank you, Jim. You may go."

He left. If he had any questions he didn't voice them.

The women ate in silence. There was so much they both needed to say neither knew where to begin. Kim dressed, even putting on the wig and combing it out. The wig was darker than her own hair had been. She felt as though she were in disguise.

"You won't leave without saying goodbye?" asked Sarah.

"No. You'll see me again after I talk to Lestrade."

Kim sat in Lestrade's office drinking coffee.

"I would like to apologize for what happened to you," he said. "Until now, no one has ever come here without their consent, and we have always made certain that they knew what they were getting into. You can be assured that those responsible will be punished."

"What's going to happen to them?" asked Kim.

"Jane has violated her oath of allegiance, and she knew the penalty for that before she did it. Charlene bought a one way airline ticket when she came. I have reviewed their psychological profiles and found them very revealing. Both women have a need for extreme chastisement, but lack the courage to ask for it. They needed to commit crimes to make punishment acceptable and just in their own minds. We can't escape our destiny, Miss Victor. It is a mistake to try."

Kim wondered about her own destiny, and wished there were a psychological profile of her mind in his files.

“I don’t suppose it will do them any good if I forgive them and speak in their behalf?”

He shook his head. “It’s out of your hands.” He leaned forward. “It is you I want to talk about. Naturally, I want to keep Domain secure. Short of kidnapping you or murdering you I have no way to force you not to expose us and bring criminal charges. I won’t do that. The laws of Domain apply even to its rulers. I can arrange transportation for you in an hour, and take you anywhere you want to go, but first I would like to make you an offer.

“Domain has vast resources behind it, and we would pay a very high price for your silence. You can live in luxury anywhere in the world. All I ask is that you forgive us and keep our secret safe.”

Kim remembered Aunt Sarah and Uncle Emil. They had put her through ten weeks of hell and bought her silence with tuition checks. History was repeating itself.

“The staff at the training center report you made an excellent subject, by the way.” He spoke now to fill the silence as she thought about his offer. “If you wish, you could remain here as a Mistress, a slave, or an honored guest. You could negotiate a contract, and I don’t have to tell you that you have most of the bargaining chips.”

“How much time do I have to think about it?”

“All the time you wish.” He looked at his watch, “I have only another half hour, however. There is an appointment I cannot miss. Perhaps you would like to think it over and discuss this again tomorrow.” He started to rise from his chair.

“Wait,” she said. “I know what I want.”

Jim pulled the rickshaw carrying Sarah to the City Square. Forty eight, leashed to the back of the rickshaw, marched behind. Her wrists were bound behind her and secured to the chastity belt she wore. Buried inside her were

two dildoes shifting with every step she took. She knew her Mistress was troubled, but not why. Mistress Gyve had been silent all morning, and when Jim tried to give her a massage, she had waved him away impatiently. Forty-eight had never seen her Mistress like this and it frightened her.

The entire population of Domain was assembled at the square. The scaffolding had become center stage of a theatre in the round. The empty upright posts seemed expectant. A microphone had been placed on the stage along with a covered utility cart. Chairs had been arranged in a circle, leaving a broad aisle from the scaffold to the front door of the training center.

Every chair had a cushion on the ground in front of it. Slaves occupied the cushions. Some were kneeling, some were on hands and knees, acting as human foot rests for their Masters, some had their heads busy between the legs of their owners.

Jim stopped the rickshaw when he spotted empty seats. Sarah got out and took forty eight's leash.

"Join us after you find a parking place," she told Jim. "I want you to see this."

Jim wanted to see it too, and hurried off. Sarah scanned the faces in the crowd before she sat down, hoping to see Kim. She was afraid the girl had suddenly come to her senses and headed out as fast as possible. If she had looked back at all, it was to make sure that there was no pursuit. Sarah reflected that the love Kim professed was really just the survival reaction her training fostered. As soon as it wore off, she would see that she owed nothing to Sarah except contempt. Sarah gave herself a mental slap, telling herself to sit down and stop acting like a schoolgirl.

She sat, directing forty-eight to the cushion before her. When Jim arrived, she patted the chair beside her. As a leather collared slave, he was allowed to sit in chairs with permission. Sarah generally indulged him. It made forty eight's posture more humiliating. Jim was just sitting down when the rest of the crowd leaped to its feet with a cheer.

The doors to the training center had opened.

Lestrade came first, smiling and waving. Sarah was amused. Lestrade loved public appearances. Behind him was the Whipmaster.

The prisoners came last. Charlene and Jane were escorted by six burly guards, an unnecessary precaution, since neither girl could have run. Their hands were behind them, secured with thick metal shackles extending halfway to their elbows. Their ankles wore similar bindings. The chains between their ankles were about a foot and a half long, and the links were huge. Just walking was awkward.

Jane was completely nude. Stripped of her collar, she was stripped of rank. Charlene was barefoot. Her shoes and stockings had been taken so that the leg irons could be put on. Other than that, she was still dressed in the rumpled clothing she had arrived in. Both women had red, puffy faces from a night of weeping, and it was obvious in their eyes they held no hope of mercy.

Lestrade mounted the scaffold and went to the microphone.

“Masters and Mistresses,” he boomed, “guards and slaves. We have assembled here to see justice done. Probably everyone here has heard by now that a young woman was duped into coming here by conspirators bent on revenge. One of these conspirators has met an accidental death far from here. One of them was a Class B slave working here in Domain. She is here now.” He turned and swept his arm toward Jane, who was being propelled toward the upright posts, her chains clattering, a small, naked girl among large men.

“She has been found guilty of assisting in a kidnapping, falsifying documents, and betraying her oath of allegiance to Domain. Her sentence begins now.”

As he spoke, Jane’s hands were unshackled, only to be refastened over her head between the posts. A moment later, her legs had been spread and fastened as well. The guards went back over her bindings, drawing out slack until her toes

barely touched the scaffold and the heavy ropes holding her were humming with tension. She was spread out helplessly, unable to cover herself or turn aside.

“The Whipmaster will administer one hundred lashes, sparing no area of her body. Then she will be taken into the training center for a period of six months. In June she will be branded and sold.”

There was enthusiastic applause, and Sarah could hear hecklers shouting obscenities at the slave. Public whipping was hard punishment simply because the victim’s pain and humiliation was seen by all. Sarah had no doubt there would be people in this audience who would be checking their calendars and saving their money toward auction day. Jane’s screams would advertise her. This would be her “coming out” party.

An expectant hush fell over the crowd as the Whipmaster stepped forward and lifted the towel that covered the cart. The audience was too low to see the devices he had brought with him today, but those who were able to look at Jane’s face could see her eyes grow wide with horror.

He selected a cat and went to work.

Charlene stood behind Jane, flanked by guards. When the first blow fell, a vicious upward swing between Jane’s legs, Charlene tried to turn her head away. A guard grabbed a handful of her hair and roughly forced her head back to face front. Watching her sister being whipped was part of Charlene’s punishment, and they wanted her to see it all.

The Whipmaster knew how to make a victim’s suffering most intense. His pattern was random. Jane might otherwise pick up a rhythm and brace herself for the coming blows. He would slash her savagely in an unexpected place, then pause. Her screams would fade to whimpers and she would hang, panting, until she was surprised by a series of quick strokes.

He changed implements from time to time, always selecting lighter and less damaging whips for the breasts and genitals.

It was Jane's bottom that absorbed the worst of it, however. He knew she could stand heavy treatment there. He warmed the area with a wooden paddle before switching to a light, flexible fiberglass rod that left deep purple lines in its wake. The crowd began a murmured chant, which grew slowly louder. When Sarah realized they were counting the strokes out loud she joined in.

The count reached ninety and the Whipmaster paused to look out at the audience. Jane hung, bathed in sweat and breathing heavily with hoarse, trembling sobs. She was lost in pain.

The Whipmaster pointed to her breasts and addressed the audience. "Here?" he shouted. He was asking them to vote on which area they wanted the last ten blows to land on. There was a scatter of applause. He walked around behind her and indicated her bottom. This brought more applause. Returning to the front, he cupped Jane's sex with his hand. The cheers swelled this time and rose to a roar as he nodded and raised the leather cat.

He struck the ten blows quickly, hitting up and down as Jane writhed. She arched her back and turned her toes in, trying desperately to close her legs and tuck in her hips, but there was no avoiding the cruel whip.

The Whipmaster tossed the cat down on the cart and picked up a chastity belt. The crowd cheered again as they recognized a familiar ritual. He buckled the device around Jane's striated waist, leaving the crotch strap open. Then he picked up a large dildo and pressed it home. Jane moaned, and Sarah wondered how long it had been since Jane's vagina had been penetrated. He oiled a plug and held it aloft for the crowd to see before forcing it into her rear opening. Jane's cry was sharper now. She was no doubt still sore from her impalement the night before. The chastity belt was closed and locked. The Whipmaster pushed a penis gag into her mouth and strapped it in, then he stepped back and indicated to the guards she was ready to come down.

The message of her triple penetration was clear to all. Jane was now available to everyone in every way. She was a

Class A slave. Freed from her bindings, Jane collapsed. A burly guard threw her limp body over his shoulder and carried her into the training center.

Lestrade stepped up to the microphone again.

“There was a third party involved in this plot,” he said.

Charlene fought a hopeless battle against superior strength and numbers as she was dragged to the posts and fastened with bindings still damp with her sister’s sweat.

“This woman has a greater guilt. She corrupted her own sister, and tricked a woman into taking her place as a Class A slave. Her punishment will be extreme. She will be given a hundred lashes today, and a hundred more a week from today. Her sentence in the training center will be extended to a full year. When that time has passed she will be branded and sold at a special auction that will be attended only by Masters and Mistresses who are known for their cruelty. Justice will be served.”

Charlene sobbed with despair as her sentence was pronounced. She had attempted to avoid the slavery she had chosen for herself, now a harsher one would be imposed upon her.

The Whipmaster used a sheath knife to split Charlene’s clothing up the seams and pulled the shredded rags from her. Watching, Sarah understood why Charlene had been allowed to keep her clothing for so long. It was more humiliating for her to be stripped naked before a thousand people. Her awareness of vulnerability would be the greater for it.

The Whipmaster went to work, using his stiffest whips. Charlene thrashed against the posts that held her exposed for punishment.

While the whipping progressed, Lestrade handed a note to a leather-collared slave. The slave looked around at the sea of faces, until he spotted Sarah and delivered the note to her.

Sarah took the note, thanked him, and read:

“Please come up to the stage when the whipping has ended.”

She waited, wondering what the summons meant.

Charlene passed out on the eighty first stroke, and had to be revived with a bucket of cold water poured over her head. A spell of silence gripped the crowd as they watched the cruel drama conclude. The Whipmaster delivered the final strokes to her bottom, using a stiff, heavy strap, which cracked like gunshots.

Sarah stood and approached the stage as he began to place the chastity belt on Charlene. Sarah was not surprised when he selected a large anal plug. She knew that he would be coming to Charlene's cell tonight to claim his tribute, and the attention he had given to that red and welted bottom told Sarah which orifice he would choose. She wanted to be there to see it happen. Charlene and Jane would be in her care for some time, and she intended to see that their stay was not pleasant.

Sarah mounted the scaffolding and Lestrade began to speak again.

"I spoke earlier of justice. Now I want to speak of love. We have another outsider here, one who was brought against her will, but bears no grudge."

Her orifices filled, Charlene was released and carried into the training center. The doors closed behind her, then opened again, and a girl stepped out alone.

She was a slender girl, barefoot in jeans and a tee shirt, which were baggy on her. She walked toward the scaffold with steps that were purposeful without haste. A beautiful, pensive girl who seemed not to notice the stare of the crowd; she might have been walking alone on the beach.

"This girl has been offered a life of luxury in a place of her own choosing," said Lestrade.

Sarah didn't recognize her right away, because of the wig. When she did, she shouted, "Kim!"

Kim looked up and smiled, walking faster.

"She has refused that offer in order to be near someone she loves, and pay homage to that love by making a gift of herself."

Kim bounded up the steps and into Sarah's arms.

"Is there room in your house for another Class A slave?"

"How can you ask me that? You know that I want you. Are you sure? You're giving up so much."

"When Lestrade asked me where I wanted to be, I knew that I was meant to be with you. We can't escape our destiny."

"I love you," Sarah confessed. "But my desire will make me cruel. I won't spare you."

"I don't want you to."

The two women turned and looked at Lestrade. Kim nodded. "I'm ready."

Two guards wearing heavy leather gloves carried a smoking charcoal brazier up the stairs and set it on the scaffold. A third guard carried a bench equipped with straps.

"Miss Victor will have a status unique in Domain. She has selected her own Mistress. In honor of that commitment, I have prepared a special brand, the personal mark of Mistress Sarah Gyve."

Donning a leather glove, he withdrew the iron from the brazier and displayed it for the crowd. The end glowed bright orange. The audience rose to its feet cheering and applauding. Everyone there was moved by Kim's love and courage. Lestrade put the iron back in the brazier and pushed it deep into the coals to heat.

All eyes were on Kim as she took off her wig and handed it to a guard. Yesterday's stubble had been shaved, leaving her head smooth and shining.

"I won't be needing this, please return it."

Hastily, wanting to get it over with, she stripped off her tee shirt and threw it into the fire. A ripple of sound passed through the crowd, like the murmur of awe heard at fireworks displays.

Jeans and panties went into the fire, where they burst into flames, increasing the heat.

Naked, Kim threw herself belly down on the bench. “Hurry!” she pleaded, “I’m getting scared.”

Hands shaking, Sarah buckled the straps. Then she took Kim’s head in her hands and kissed her deeply. She put a rubber bit in Kim’s mouth.

“Bite down. It will help.”

When the iron found its mark they were holding hands.

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