

White Ivory
by Lindsey Brooks

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Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.

Chapter 1

As the first dusty shovelful of African earth landed on the plank coffin, Douglas turned away from the grave and strode back towards the bungalow. He hated funerals. If he had not had the misfortune to have found the body, he would never have come to this one.

At first, he had thought the fellow had crashed head-on into the tree but there had been no damage to the front of the car. It had just slipped out of gear and coasted to a halt when the dead man's foot slid off the throttle. Fever, the doctor had said, though Douglas had seen the gin bottle in the car's foot-well when he had checked the body for signs of life. Maybe it was fever, but helped by too great a liking for drink unless he had mistaken his guess.

He leaned through the window of the Chevrolet parked in front of the bungalow and plucked a cigarette from the tin of Players on the passenger seat. The car's interior was already like an oven. Douglas checked his wristwatch as he lit the cigarette. Quarter of an hour to get the poor bugger underground, that was all. It was just as well. The taint of corruption that had risen from the coffin still clung in his nostrils. Breathing smoke down his nose, he lowered his head so the brim of his hat shaded his eyes from the morning sun, and watched the two other people who had stood at the grave walking back from the parched, little cemetery beside the white-painted mission church.

Douglas had met the man twenty minutes earlier. Piet Van Gryf, he had called himself as they had shaken hands, but there had been no time for conversation before the burial began. He had met the woman the previous afternoon at the District Commissioner's hearing into the death. That had been the same day he had found her husband's body. Such things moved fast in Africa, driven by the need to get the corpse underground as quickly as possible. Despite the circumstances, Douglas could not help thinking at the time that she was a tidy little package, though she had not suited black. At least, not the black, woollen dress she had been wearing, more appropriate for a chilly day in England than for equatorial Africa. She was not wearing it for the funeral, as though any outward display of mourning was no longer necessary now she was out of the public eye. She was not shedding any tears either.

He watched her hips sway and the side-to-side movements of her breasts as she approached. Their fullness stretched taut her white cotton blouse, and the beige linen of her calf-length skirt hugged the neat curves of her figure, clinging tightly over the slight swell of her abdomen. The long strands of blonde hair that had escaped from under her sun-hat made him recall the golden mane she had revealed in the courtroom the day before. She clearly did not favour the short, bobbed hairstyles that were the current fashion.

Aye, Douglas told himself, a very tidy package and more his type than that skinny, small-titted bitch, Celia. What a dance she had led him, all coquettish smiles, and come-to-bed eyes filled with a promise she had never intended to keep. He lowered his eyes as the widow got close enough to see him watching her. That was women for you. They would dress up like the best Paris tarts and flaunt it in your face, but when the moment came, it usually turned out they were saving themselves for the rich husband their mamas had told them to be on the lookout for. And of course, he never quite fitted the bill. Not that he was looking for a wife. God forbid! He had neither time nor patience for pandering to the feminine need for courtship, romance and declarations of affection.

The widow paused at the steps leading to the bungalow's veranda. "I'm afraid I haven't prepared anything, Mr. Douglas, but will you join us for a drink?" Her voice was a rich contralto that sounded very pleasant to Douglas's ear, and to most men's, he supposed.

"I didn't expect it, Mrs. Milton," he replied. "This is hardly Kensington." He eyed her neatly rounded bottom and shapely calves and ankles as he followed her up the steps. She was not wearing stockings and had low-heeled pumps on her feet - what his late mother, bless her, would have called 'sensible shoes'. Douglas knew it was damned ungentlemanly to be lusting after a woman at her husband's funeral, but if the war had taught him one thing, it was to live for the moment. He continued to appreciate the tempting wiggle of her backside as they entered the bungalow's living room and she went to a table and began fussing over a drinks tray.

"Where's your houseboy?" the other member of the funeral party asked, ignoring the hide sofa and armchair to sit at the table. Douglas joined him.

“I paid him off, Mr. Van Gryf, and the other servants. There’s only the caretaker left. He’s employed by the mission society.”

“Well you can’t stay here on your own,” Van Gryf said. “You’d best go to a hotel in Nairobi until I can get you a passage home.”

“I can take you back with me,” Douglas offered, not entirely unselfishly.

“I... I don’t know.” Mrs. Milton sat down facing them, leaving the top off the whisky bottle and the drinks unpoured. She took her hat off and ran slim fingers through her long, golden hair. She was hesitant, unhappy, but Douglas did not think grief was causing it, or her very obvious nervousness, which seemed to be bordering on real fear.

She met Van Gryf’s eye. “I don’t want to go to Nairobi. I thought maybe.... That is... I hoped perhaps... *you* would offer me a position.” Her gaze was bright and intense in the moment before she looked away with her cheeks blushing and a quiver on her lower lip. Douglas thought he saw surprise in the man’s expression, quickly concealed, and followed immediately by a suspicious narrowing of his eyes.

“Don’t you want to go home?” Van Gryf asked. “To England, I mean.”

Mrs. Milton shook her head, light scattering from her blonde hair. “There’s nothing for me there. I’d... I’d rather stay here.” She lowered her eyes. “W... with you.”

“I don’t think you at all understand what you’re asking for, Mrs. Milton.” Van Gryf poured whisky into three tumblers and placed one before each of them. As if on cue, they all drank. He offered a packet of Gold Flake around, lit one and leaned back in his chair. As he blew smoke from the side of his mouth his eyes went briefly to Douglas then fixed on the widow, who was turning her glass on the tabletop with trembling fingers.

Douglas sensed an undercurrent in the conversation, one which told him there was something out of the ordinary about the woman’s request for employment.

Mrs. Milton drew on her cigarette. Douglas saw Van Gryf’s gaze flicker to the full breasts straining the thin cotton of her blouse as she inhaled deeply. Her deep-blue eyes lifted. Her pupils were dilated and there were little beads of sweat above her upper lip.

“Please... *sir!*”

Van Gryf's eyebrows rose a fraction at what was clearly a heartfelt plea. He studied her face in silence, smoking and sipping his drink until she would no longer meet his stare. Only when she looked away did the widow seem to recall Douglas's presence. The redness in her cheeks deepened. What was so embarrassing about asking for a job, he wondered. Why that look of... was it guilt? Unless.... Bloody hell! Was she asking to become the man's mistress? And her husband hardly cold in the ground.

"I'm curious, Mrs. Milton," Van Gryf said at last. "What exactly is it you think you know about me? And *where* did you hear it?"

"I didn't hear, I saw," she replied. "When you invited us last New Year. It was very hot and David was... was drunk. I got up, just to cool off under your ceiling-fan, and saw you going out to the... the stables. I... I followed."

"So, you've seen my mares?" If there was a flicker of relief on Van Gryf's face, it was gone in an instant. A thin smile wrinkled the corners of his mouth at her nod. "But I don't believe you can have understood what you *think* you saw. Otherwise you would not have asked me to give you - what was it? A position?"

"I understood perfectly... *sir!*"

The way she delayed her use of the respectful term for a second and the emphasis she placed upon it puzzled Douglas.

Van Gryf stubbed out his cigarette. "I doubt that. You haven't realised, for instance, that there is no going back, no withdrawing from such a commitment. Have you thought that you will not be permitted to go where or when you please as you do now? That you will have no contact with friends or family ever again?"

"I have no friends, and there's no one in England who matters."

"I think you've chosen the wrong time, Mrs. Milton," Van Gryf said soberly. "After recent events, you're upset. You should -."

"I'm not upset," she interrupted. "You know how it was between David and I. He blamed me and he drank. I'm *not* upset. I'm *relieved*. Oh, Lord! What a terrible thing to say."

"You see? This is no time for far-reaching decisions. Ones from which there can be no turning back."

"I want it," Mrs. Milton said flatly. "I've wanted it for a long time. Long before I ever saw your stable."

Douglas saw that moisture had gathered in the woman's eyes. Before the war, he had always been a hopeless case when a pretty female started blubbing. He watched her tears spill onto her cheeks and was unmoved.

A big African in bush-jacket and shorts appeared in the doorway.

"It is done, Bwana," he told Van Gryf.

"Right, N'kruma, get the boys back to the compound. I'll be along shortly."

Van Gryf had had to bring the men who dug the grave. Not much of a send-off, Douglas thought, not even a service, but then the fellow had been the local preacher. He could hardly conduct his own funeral. And it was still more than most had ever got in the trenches.

The African disappeared, and a minute later Douglas heard a car drive away. Van Gryf finished his whisky, all his attention fixed on the anxious woman. She kept her eyes down, one hand clutching her glass, an inch of ash on the cigarette in the other. She was shivering like a gazelle in the split-second before flight. The ash fell to the table.

Van Gryf stood. "I'd better get going." He shook hands with Douglas. "Nice meeting you, Englishman. A pity the circumstances were so unfortunate. Once again, Mrs. Milton, my condolences."

The widow raised bright, blue eyes filled with a desperate entreaty.

Van Gryf studied her, his weathered features expressionless. He sighed. "Are your cases packed?"

She nodded.

"Fetch them."

She went into another room and reappeared dragging a medium-sized cabin trunk. When Van Gryf made no move to help her, Douglas carried it outside. Mrs. Milton followed as far as the top of the veranda steps, looking even more fearful now that Van Gryf appeared to have agreed to her request. He opened the boot of his car and Douglas put the trunk inside.

"Are you wearing any knickers?" Van Gryf suddenly asked.

"Of course I am!" The widow looked stunned.

"Then take them off."

Douglas watched in astonishment as Mrs. Milton promptly pulled her skirt up to the tops of her thighs and reached underneath. Looking up from the foot of the steps and only feet away, he was almost sure he saw

the flash of a golden-crowned slit as she pulled her white, cotton pants down to her ankles and stepped out of them.

“Leave them,” Van Gryf told her as she bent to retrieve the knickers.

Cheeks aflame, she stood up.

Van Gryf gave a thin smile. “Come on then.”

The woman looked towards the white-painted, little church and its graveyard.

“Come!” Van Gryf barked.

With a long, indrawn breath that made her blouse gape between its buttons, Mrs. Milton walked decisively down the steps. Douglas turned to the Chevrolet, greatly disappointed he would never know the final outcome of the extraordinary events he had witnessed, or if his suspicions about the widow were correct.

“Bugger!” He stared at the black puddle spreading out from under the front of his car. Van Gryf joined him as he lifted one side of the Chevrolet’s hood and stared at the engine.

“Crankshaft oil seal,” Douglas said after a moment’s inspection.

“It’s the heat. Dries the damn things out ’til they crack. You’re not going anywhere in that, Englishman. You’d best come with me for now.”

“But I was going the other way.” Douglas pointed north.

“Have you pressing business in Nairobi?”

“Nothing that won’t wait, I suppose.” He decided to be completely honest. “In fact, I have no business in Nairobi.”

Van Gryf laughed. “Being my guest for a few days won’t delay it then. I got the impression you were more than a little curious about Caroline Milton.” He jerked a thumb over his shoulder to where she sat in the back of his car. “And to tell you the truth, so am I. Come on, get in the Crossley.”

Fetching his haversack and cigarettes, Douglas settled on the scorching leather of the car’s front seat. “How far are we going?”

Van Gryf started the engine. “Oh, Mrs. Milton and I are close neighbours. Only fifteen miles.” He stared at her reflection in the rear-view mirror and raised his voice to be sure she would hear. “And she had better think very hard about what she’s doing for every one of them.”

* * * * *

As the big car rocked over the dirt road, Caroline crouched in a corner of the back seat. Elation, fear and embarrassment all surged within her, varying in proportion with the turmoil of thoughts racing through her mind. She cowered inwardly at the humiliation of Douglas witnessing her abject plea. When they had met the day before, he had seemed irked at having to become involved in her business. She had not expected him to attend the funeral. But she had known very well that it was her only chance. She was damned if she was going to give it up.

It was all she could do to keep from squirming her bare crotch on the seat as she remembered vividly what she had seen on that night at New Year.

He had accepted her. Oh, Lord, he had! It was *really* going to happen. The nerves of her stomach jumped suddenly and uncontrollably. Caroline stared at the back of Van Gryf's head. She was not going to follow his advice. If she thought about what she was doing she would funk it and lose the only opportunity she would ever have. But *was* she certain? He had brought Douglas too. Would she have the added humiliation of a stranger being present? The thought made her heart beat faster and the prickle of excitement between her legs became a warm tingling, glow.

Sudden shame overcame her as she remembered what she had said about David. But it was true. She *had* felt relieved after all the years of brooding silences, resentment and alcohol. She had shed no tears for him. After what he had tried to do, she could not forgive him, even in death. David had never been the one for her. She would have tried in the beginning if he had, but she had always needed a stronger man, a bigger man. Bigger in every way.

"What was that about Kensington?" Van Gryf asked the Englishman and Caroline was grateful for the distraction.

"Oh, I just went to a funeral there once. A fellow-officer died from his wounds about a year after the war's end. It was the gloomiest bloody affair I've ever attended. There were a whole lot of people I didn't know standing around sipping weak tea and eating little sandwiches with no crusts, all saying what a fine, brave fellow Rathbone had been. Well, so he was, but they didn't have a bloody clue about him or what he'd been

through. That was the last straw. I hopped on the boat-train as quick as I could square-up my affairs.”

“And five years later, you’re in Nairobi with no job and your money about to run out.”

“How the bloody hell do you know that?” Douglas demanded.

“I made some enquiries when I heard about Milton’s accident. No offence, man, but when a stranger reports he has found someone I’m responsible for dead at the roadside, I look into his background.”

“Responsible?”

“The mission is on my estate. I was Milton’s landlord.”

“I take it you were satisfied with what you found out,” Douglas said acerbically.

“I don’t usually pry, but you’ll allow the circumstances were exceptional,” Van Gryf replied. “And yes, what I heard was mostly good.”

“Only mostly?” Douglas produced a tin of cigarettes and offered him one, his resentment apparently forgotten. He turned and held out the tin to Caroline. She shook her head. Her mouth felt dry enough as it was.

“One or two ladies don’t seem all that enamoured of you, though I gather that wasn’t always the case.”

Douglas laughed. “Ah, Celia and Daphne. They weren’t so critical when I was spending my money on them. A couple of prime bitches. Oh, excuse me, Mrs. Milton!”

“That’s all right,” Van Gryf answered for her. “You can say anything you like in Mrs. Milton’s presence. She won’t object.” His eyes met hers in the rear-view mirror. Caroline looked away and swallowed. A shiver ran up her spine. It really *was* going to happen. And soon.

Douglas gave her a puzzled glance over his shoulder. “You say the mission is on your land,” he said to Van Gryf. “I thought you said it’s fifteen miles from your place.”

“From my house,” Van Gryf agreed, “but I own everything in between.”

“Everything?”

“For about twenty square miles.”

“Hell’s bells, you’re landed gentry!”

Van Gryf laughed. “Not at all. There are plenty of bigger estates. I took a fancy to this area when I was up here during the war. When I finally got the wherewithal, I bought as much as I could. I’m told your father is the real gentry. Lord Bankheath?”

Caroline saw the Englishman stiffen.

“That’s so.”

“I took you for another idle-rich Englishman playing big-game hunter in ‘Darkest Africa’,” Van Gryf said, “but from what I hear, I was mistaken.”

“Well, I’m not rich. I’m a younger son. In Britain, the eldest always inherits everything.”

Caroline thought his laugh had a bitter edge.

“And I’m not English, I’m a Scot.”

“I stand corrected.” Van Gryf’s laughter rumbled above the engine noise and the airflow past the open windows. “What do you think of Africa then, *Scotsman*? It’s come a long way since the days of Mungo Park and Livingstone. Maybe you’re disappointed?”

“It’s still a big place,” Douglas replied, “and I like it. I like it a lot. There’s room to breathe and space enough to stretch your arms out without bashing them into somebody else. Out here, I mean, not in the cities. They’re full of shippers’ agents and colonial civil servants doing their bit to preserve the Empire, in between pink gins and cocktail parties.” He waved a hand out of the window. “Here it’s raw, real like nothing I’ve seen before. Maybe the way it was before we got civilised. I’ve knocked about a bit further north - Egypt, the Sudan, Abyssinia - but I’ve never seen a sunrise to equal what you get here, or heard a dawn silence so profound.” He stopped, looking embarrassed by his admission, but it struck a chord with Caroline. She had seen those sunrises and heard that silence, and felt them stir something inside her too. Van Gryf would understand. David never had.

“So, are you thinking of staying around?” Van Gryf asked.

“Not much choice for now. As you said, I’m a bit low on funds, but I expect something will turn up. It usually does.”

“Maybe it already has,” Van Gryf said, but Douglas’s attention had been caught by the sight of a half-dozen native girls waving from the roadside ahead.

Caroline's belly shrank suddenly. The car left the bush behind and followed the road through cultivated fields. They were nearing their destination. Despite the heat, she shivered.

"They're all women," Douglas said in surprise.

"Of course. The men of the tribes wouldn't lower themselves to do any work. They leave all that to the womenfolk whenever they can."

The girls were naked but for their usual tribal dress - a little leather apron slung around their hips, only just covering the essentials at front and rear. Their brown skins gleamed with perspiration from their labours. Caroline eyed their bare breasts and naked limbs, and something clenched tightly, low in her belly. She saw Douglas's head swivel as the car passed.

"They aren't bad looking," he said.

"The younger ones are the best workers," Van Gryf told him.

"Would you like to fuck one of them?"

Douglas's head turned sharply. "To what?" He gave Caroline a startled look.

The car crested a rise, and in fear, excitement and anticipation, she saw the white buildings surrounded by a high wall that made up Van Gryf's compound. Fear gained the upper hand. Was she *really* sure? Plagued by second thoughts, she heard Van Gryf repeat his question. Again, Douglas looked back at Caroline.

"Never mind *her*," Van Gryf said. "Would you fuck them?"

"I... I suppose so."

Van Gryf laughed and his eyes once more met Caroline's in the car's mirror. Her courage deserted her. She looked away. The crude, raw-sounding word filled her mind as they drove into the compound and stopped in front of the big house. Douglas got out and stood staring at the solid, impressive, white building.

"Maybe you will, Englishman," Van Gryf said, so only Caroline could hear. "Or maybe I'll come up with something better."

Heat rushed to Caroline's cheeks. She kept her head down, avoiding his blue eyes, a shade lighter and so much harder than her own. With the ceasing of the car's motion her resolve almost deserted her. She had found the nerve to ask him, she told herself, to show him she knew his secret and had not revealed it, to show him that she meant what she had said. She had done the hardest part. Hadn't she?

Chapter 2

“Two tall gins, Abu,” Van Gryf told the African in white shirt and shorts who had appeared on the veranda the moment the car pulled up. He opened the Crossley’s rear door. “Out.” As the widow obeyed, Van Gryf took her trunk from the boot and left it standing on the beaten earth of the compound. When Douglas moved to pick it up, Van Gryf laid a hand on his arm. “No, she can do it herself. Come inside.”

With an apologetic glance at Mrs. Milton, Douglas followed him up the white stone steps to the veranda and into the house. Its walls were thick, he noticed, which helped explain how cool it was within. A large ceiling-fan hissed overhead, wafting a welcome breeze down onto his face when he removed his hat. Van Gryf sank down on a long, deep sofa and gestured to several comfortable-looking armchairs.

“Take the weight off, and don’t concern yourself about her.”

The Scotsman had been watching Mrs. Milton pause in hauling her baggage up the steps and wipe a forearm across her sweating brow. It went against his upbringing to let a female struggle with something he could have done easily if Van Gryf did not seem so set against it. Only the fact he was going to have to be a guest in the man’s house until he could repair the Chevrolet made him resist the urge to help. That, and his curiosity about what was going on between the two of them.

He sat down and accepted the cigarette Van Gryf offered as their drinks arrived. To his surprise, there was ice in the gin. The glass was coated with a film of condensation. Douglas swallowed appreciatively, enjoying the bitterness of the quinine in the tonic that followed the snap of the alcohol in his throat. He lit his cigarette, very mindful that Mrs. Milton was not wearing any knickers as she dragged her cabin-trunk into the room. She hesitated, looking very wary as her gaze met Van Gryf’s.

“It’s the same room as when you were here last,” he said. “Stay there until I send for you. And take a bath.”

After six months in Nairobi, Douglas had become used to the church-picnic manners with which the colonials treated white women, even more exaggerated in their politeness than those he remembered from back home. It was a surprise to hear the terse instructions and sharp tone

Van Gryf used with Mrs. Milton. It was an even bigger surprise that she was prepared to tolerate them.

Van Gryf watched her expectantly as she began battling her trunk towards a passage at a back corner of the room. “Move!”

The woman gave a start and tugged harder, dragging one of the rugs on the floor along with her baggage. Van Gryf got up and placed a foot on the end of the rug, slowing her progress. She looked up into his face. She really was a beauty, Douglas thought, and all the more appealing for the ‘frightened doe’ expression on her face, but if she was so scared, why the hell had she asked to come there in the first place?

“Go along, Mrs. Milton,” Van Gryf said quietly. “Do as you’re told.”

The words sounded even more intimidating to Douglas than the stern tone the man had used earlier. Suddenly bubbling with curiosity, he waited impatiently for the widow to disappear into the depths of the house.

“Would I be indelicate if I asked what the hell is going on?” he asked.

“More like premature,” Van Gryf replied. “Don’t worry, Englishman, the situation will become clear in time. For now, I’ll only say that it is my intention to do everything I can to persuade Caroline Milton she has made a very bad decision, and to make her change her mind.”

Disappointed, Douglas could only accept he would have to wait. He leaned back under the draught from the ceiling-fan. “You have electricity.”

“Diesel generators,” Van Gryf said. “Proper plumbing too. After four years roughing it, I decided I wanted all the latest conveniences when I built this place.”

“You fought here in Africa?” Douglas enquired with genuine interest.

Van Gryf nodded. “South West Africa at first, ’til we took Windhoek. Then I went up to Cameroon and eventually Tanganyika, but we never did manage to pin that bastard Vorbeck down. When I got the chance to join Allenby in Palestine, I took it.”

“Fighting the Turks, eh? I was there myself a couple of years after the peace. Did a stint in the Palestine Police.”

“The war wasn’t enough for you?”

“More than enough at the time. Afterwards, it was difficult to settle at home, or anywhere else, come to that.”

“Western Front?” Van Gryf’s eyes narrowed as he asked the question.

“Aye.” Douglas took a swallow from his glass and sighed. “That’s bloody good.”

“You had it rough then?”

The Scotsman shrugged. “I suppose so. Hellish at times. But it had its moments. I admit I enjoyed some of it.” His confession surprised him. It was something he always kept to himself and had always expected that he would, but there was something about the man he sat drinking with that suggested he might understand.

“So did I,” Van Gryf said. “I know there was a lot of misery, but there’s no greater challenge in a man’s life. Kill or be killed. Life or death, with only a hairsbreadth between them. I found it exhilarating.”

“In between the boredom,” Douglas said. “But you’re right. You’re on the edge in a fight, and if you can dodge the bloody shellfire and the machine guns, then it’s man to man. You against him. And you better do everything you can to make sure it’s him.”

“And then you get that rush,” Van Gryf said. “That feeling when you know you’ve bested him and you’re the one who’s going to live to fight another day. Hell, that’s almost as good as a fuck!”

“But not quite,” Douglas said, feeling the effects of several weeks of celibacy after his failures with the ladies of Nairobi. “I’ve always thought that if the Good Lord invented anything better than a good fuck, then he’s keeping it to himself.”

Van Gryf gave a chuckle. “I entirely agree, Englishman.”

“I’m Scottish. Remember?” Douglas said.

“Well, it doesn’t sound like it.”

Several years of school in England and two more at college had eroded the burr from Douglas’s speech. Now his ancestry only showed when he was very drunk.

“You don’t have much of the Afrikaner left in the way you talk,” he countered, guessing at Van Gryf’s origins.

“Too much exposure to you damned English,” Van Gryf said, laughing. “But it’s not the way a man talks that’s important. It’s what he says. As long as he means it.”

“I’ll drink to that,” Douglas agreed, finishing his gin.

“You want something to eat?” Van Gryf asked.

“I’d sooner have another drink.” Though it was past noon and a long time since breakfast, Douglas felt comfortable as he was. It had been a long time since he had enjoyed the companionable feeling the man had awakened in him.

“Forget about lunch, Abu,” Van Gryf told the patiently waiting houseboy. “We’ll have dinner at sundown. Settings for three. And pass the whisky.”

Abu produced the bottle, two tumblers and a soda siphon. Pouring three fingers into each glass and adding a dash of soda, Van Gryf handed one to Douglas, lit a cigarette and leaned back in his chair with a satisfied sigh.

“You’re going to leave her alone in her room until sundown?” Douglas asked. There was no need to elaborate on who he meant. He guessed Mrs. Milton was as much in the Afrikaner’s mind as his own.

“Let her stew a while,” Van Gryf said with a grin. “I want her thinking long and hard. Thinking that she’s made her bed and that she has no choice now but to lie in it.”

* * * * *

Caroline was lying on her bed, the half-closed blinds on the windows casting thin bars of light and shade across her naked body. The bedroom had gained a ceiling-fan of its own since her last visit and she lay beneath it, listening to its gentle whirring and feeling the downdraughts of air caress her. The thick walls of Van Gryf’s home did a good job of keeping the sun’s afternoon heat at bay; so good that Caroline felt a chill run over her skin. Or perhaps fear was the cause.

The quivering in her belly had been there since she had awoken that morning but had doubled in intensity the moment she had wrestled her trunk into the room and closed the door behind her. A nerve-racking silence had followed, disturbed only by the fan’s swishing blades. Caroline had leaned her forehead against the door, eyes closed and

breathing fast from more than just the effort of dragging the heavy trunk. Cringing inwardly in embarrassment, she had imagined Van Gryf telling the stranger everything. Had he been disgusted? Had he laughed? Had they both laughed - amused, derisive, mocking? How on Earth could she ever face either of them again with even a vestige of self-respect? But did self-respect have any part in what she desired, and did she want it anyway, if its loss meant all her fantasies would be fulfilled?

She had taken her time over the bath, enjoying the endless supply of hot water flowing from a real tap. The mission had never had such luxury. Caroline had soaked until her fingertips began to wrinkle, and the knot of her anxiety had even started to loosen a little in the steamy, relaxing water. It had tightened at once when she had begun soaping herself. The touch of her hands on her breasts had immediately created a rush of breathtaking excitement. Caroline had hardly dared let her fingers stray to their peaks and lather nipples that had stood out as hard as buttons, pulsing in time with the blood pounding through her veins.

It had been torture to resist the need to thrust her fingers deep when she had soaped her sex and heightened the tremors teasing her tender opening. She had washed it thoroughly but quickly, doing her best to ignore the swelling of her inner petals, and her clitoral bud suddenly springing erect from its concealing hood. The thought that if she remained so fiercely aroused, she would be a gibbering wreck by the time Van Gryf summoned her, had persuaded Caroline to position her pussy under the cold tap and give it a long douche. Even so, the sensual feel of the fluffy towel with which she had patted herself dry had been enough to set the sensations stirring again.

Deliberately, Caroline stretched out her arms and legs to lie spread-eagled beneath the fan, letting it finish drying her, but the wafts of air flowing over her stiff nipples and exposed sex were almost as stimulating as her own touch had been. She slid her fingers through her soft, golden pubic curls and laid her middle finger on the narrow slit bisecting the little crescents of her outer-labia. It parted easily at the gentle pressure.

Caroline leapt up from the bed, tearing her hand away. She had to show she could control herself. Van Gryf would expect it. Her belly clenched into a tight ball. Fear of rejection mingled with her fear of being accepted. The feelings did not differ at all; only what inspired them. She must go through with it, Caroline told herself. She had taken

the biggest step by revealing her desires. Now she must show her willingness, her eagerness, prove she truly was sincere. That should not be so hard. Surely Van Gryf would understand, even if the Englishman thought she was a whore or mad, or both. Oh, Lord! What if he was there too when Van Gryf summoned her? As her gut lurched in fear, a ripple ran the length of her pussy.

Scrabbling through her trunk, she found her handbag and the cigarettes inside. Caroline lit one and drew deeply. She caught sight of her nude body in the full-length mirror on the wardrobe. Was she attractive, she wondered? Was she good enough for Van Gryf? The few boys her father had allowed her to meet had paid her compliments. David never had. He had rarely touched her even in the beginning, and never at all during the last two years.

Caroline thought she was pretty. Her skin was good, pale and clear in comparison to the light tan that, despite her precautions, was inevitable when face and neck and hands were exposed to the African sun. Maybe her breasts were a little large in relation to her hips, she mused, but they were not slack, and her waist was narrow, and the gentle, outward bow of her belly was taut. The more David had let himself go, the more Caroline had felt a need to look after herself, exercising regularly in the cool of the morning and evening. Her legs were quite long too, Caroline decided, and as shapely as any of the models' in the women's magazines she had bought on her quarterly shopping trips to Nairobi. She eyed the pout of her sex hungrily, its dark slit showing through the downy, blonde curls at the apex of her thighs. Abruptly, she turned from her reflection. Maybe if she put some clothes on she could stop the quivers of arousal that were tormenting her.

Caroline selected her best – long, sheer silk stockings with attached garter tapes, which she tied high on each thigh, cream silk brassiere and short, lace-edged pantalettes with a matching slip. She had not packed her evening dress. It was old and shabby. Instead, she chose a pale blue skirt that buttoned down the front, a white, short-sleeved, cotton blouse, and put on her only pair of high-heeled shoes, white because she had worn them for her wedding. The hard points of her nipples showed through the thin blouse but Caroline had to resign herself to that since they defied all her efforts to get them to subside.

She found her powder compact in her handbag and gave her face a dusting, added a touch of blue to her eyelids and applied a little rouge to her lips, all the time wishing she did not look so anxious. Like her buzzing excitement, Caroline's fear was beyond her control. She sat on a corner of the bed and finished her cigarette, then smoked another, watching the shadows lengthening. The short, equatorial twilight had almost descended when she reached for a third and a tap at the door made her leap to her feet.

"Bwana says come," Abu told her.

Weak at the knees, heart in her mouth, Caroline followed the African to the lounge. Both men stood as she entered, Douglas, she was sure, from common courtesy, Van Gryf merely to stride towards the arched passage that led to the dining room.

The Englishman gave her a 'good evening' and a smile that did not disguise his curiosity. Caroline could not find her voice. She settled for a stiff nod and found she was incapable of smiling back. Her facial muscles were as tense as the rest of her. Every nerve was strung as tight as a violin string. What had Van Gryf told her, she wondered as his eyes flickered over the outlines of her erect nipples. Not much perhaps, from his polite greeting and the way he took her elbow and escorted her into the dining room.

He stopped as abruptly as she did. Van Gryf was leaning back in his chair at the head of a big, rectangular table. At either side of him stood a young native-girl, entirely naked.

"I'm famished," he said. "Let's get started."

Douglas sat at his right, his attention all for the brown-skinned African girls. Caroline hesitated only until she saw the impatient look Van Gryf was directing at her, and almost stumbled in her haste to sit at his left. No one held her chair for her. She shuffled it closer to the table, painfully self-conscious. She had seen plenty of naked native girls but never in the circumstances in which she now found herself, and she knew very well she was witnessing something no white woman would normally be allowed to see.

"What do you think of my staff, Douglas?" Van Gryf enquired casually as the girls began offering them dishes.

"Very nice indeed. A sight better than the waiters at my hotel," the Englishman said enthusiastically.

“And you, Mrs. Milton?”

Caroline looked from her empty plate to his face. He knew what she wanted. Why could he not just get on with it? She still had not found her voice. Smiling coolly, Van Gryf poured white wine into her glass. She almost knocked it over as she reached for it. The wine was cool on her lips, sharp on her tongue, welcome in her dry mouth, and very uncomfortable in her fluttering stomach.

The Afrikaner offered beer to Douglas while the naked serving-girls added to the growing piles of food on the men's plates. Big, brown-nipped breasts thrust towards Caroline's right cheek as one of the girls offered her a dish. She shook her head, sighing with relief when the girl withdrew, only to find two more shiny brown breasts almost brushing her other cheek as the second girl did the same. Again she shook her head. After she had done it twice more, Van Gryf transferred part of the guinea fowl on his plate to hers.

“You've got to eat,” he told her. “You've had nothing all day. N'dele, give Mrs. Milton some salad to go with that.”

“Yes, Mastah.”

Dismayed, Caroline realised the African girls spoke English. They would understand every word that was said around the table. Very little was said, however. Both men addressed themselves solely to the business of eating. Even Douglas did not permit his obvious interest in the servants to distract him.

Keeping her head down, Caroline raised her eyes to watch the Africans, who had returned to stand beside the Afrikaner. They were both tall, though not so tall as she was. The one Van Gryf had called N'dele had slightly darker skin than the milky-coffee shade of the other, but their figures were very similar. Their full breasts jutted proudly as the girls stood straight with their hands behind their backs and their long legs slightly parted. Their waists tapered above shapely hips that were neither too narrow nor too wide, and their bellies showed a slight outward curvature that Caroline suspected a man would find very enticing. At least she hoped so. Her own was very nearly identical. She did not let herself dwell on the shocking sight of their bare sexes, which were smooth and completely hairless. By any standards, Caroline acknowledged, Van Gryf's serving-girls were true beauties.

She lifted her head a little to examine their lovely faces and saw Van Gryf watching her, his expression unreadable. Caroline looked down and made a pretence of eating. She knew from previous experience that the guinea fowl was delicious, but the sliver she put in her mouth felt and tasted like cardboard. As she forced herself to chew, her attention turned to the men. They too looked similar in many ways - both were well over six feet, broad of shoulder and chest, with hard muscles that stretched the cotton of their bush-shirts tight, and big, long-fingered hands that made their knives and forks seem tiny. She had always thought Van Gryf an attractive man - ruggedly handsome was the way the stories in her magazines always described it. Perhaps though, Douglas was the more attractive, with his short, dark hair and classical profile and a certain intensesness in his dark, deep-set eyes.

Caroline knew Van Gryf, both by reputation and from her own observations during their encounters over the years. He was tough, confident and capable, with his own code of right and wrong and his own way of dealing with trouble, and to hell with conventions, laws, and anything or anyone who got in his way. Caroline thought the Englishman might not be much different. In fact, either one of them was probably just what she was looking for. The knowledge made her stomach churn all the faster and her heart pound inside her ribcage. She washed the dry wad of meat down her throat with a big swallow of wine and laid her knife and fork on her plate.

“You don’t seem to have much appetite this evening,” Van Gryf said, “and the cat has definitely got your tongue. Perhaps you had better go through to the lounge.” A ghost of a smile played around his lips. “I’ll be along shortly.”

Caroline’s mind went suddenly blank. For long seconds, all she could do was stare into his face without seeing it.

“Go along,” he said quietly, without menace or threat. “You don’t have much longer to wait.”

The rush of heat to her cheeks was immediately followed by a different kind between her trembling thighs. Befuddled by a dozen conflicting emotions, Caroline rose on unsteady legs and tottered away to do as she was told.

* * * * *

Douglas watched the tight, rounded buttocks of the serving-girl who had closed the door as she returned to her place beside Van Gryf.

“Do I get that explanation now?” he asked. “She’s nearly bloody shitting herself.”

Van Gryf laughed. “Good, that’s how I want her. And no, it isn’t quite time to explain just yet.”

“Then you had better get on with whatever you intend doing before she faints.”

Van Gryf drained his beer tankard and set it down. “Before I do, I need you to make a promise. You’re going to see something very unusual, something I guarantee you’ve never seen before. I need to be sure you won’t interrupt or interfere, whatever happens. Afterwards, you’ll have your explanation, but for now, give me your word.” He grinned at Douglas’s doubtful look. “I know you’re intrigued, man. She’s an intriguing woman, and she may well surprise us both. I plan to test her mettle.”

He was more than intrigued, Douglas admitted to himself. He was completely bloody fascinated. “All right, you have my word.”

Van Gryf turned to the African girls. “Wait here until I call you.”

As Douglas entered the lounge behind the Afrikaner, his eyes were drawn at once to Mrs. Milton’s tidy, round rear, perched sideways on the very edge of an armchair. She jumped at the sound of their approach, then squared her shoulders and gave a determined little lift of her chin. The wonderful mane of her blonde hair flowed in waves down to her breast as she turned her head to keep Van Gryf in view.

He poured three whiskies, added ice and soda, and passed one to the Scotsman, who sat down opposite him watching Mrs. Milton with an enormous feeling of anticipation. The woman’s tension was palpable, filling the room like the crackle of electricity before a thunderstorm. Douglas waited impatiently for the mystery to unfold. He had not looked forward to anything quite so much in a long time.

Van Gryf slid a smaller measure of whisky towards Mrs. Milton, who sat leaning forwards, her hands clenched together in her lap. He lit one of his Gold Flakes and held it out to her. Not meeting his eye, she took it with shaking fingers and raised it to her mouth.

“Enjoy it,” he said. “It might be your last for a while. And that goes for the drink too.”

Her full red lips formed a silent ‘O’ as she stared at him with wide doe-eyes. “You mean... you mean I can stay?”

“No, Caroline, I don’t mean that at all. I’ve told you what I think. You have made a mistake, both in what you think you saw and in believing that what you imagined it to be is right for you. How old are you?”

“Twenty-two.”

“Be more precise,” Van Gryf said tersely.

“Twenty-two and three months and... and a few days.”

The Afrikaner nodded, as if her reply had only confirmed his opinion. “How long have you been here, in Africa?”

“Four years.”

“You were very young when you arrived. And only just married.” His eyes narrowed at her nod. “And not very happily.”

Her mouth turned down at the corners. “No.”

“Tell me, do you like fucking?”

Chapter 3

Caught in the middle of drawing on his cigarette, Douglas almost choked. Such a question just could not be put in so direct a fashion to a respectable white woman. A protest rose to his lips, prevented from escaping by his coughing fit. By the time he could speak he had remembered his promise to keep silent.

Mrs. Milton was spared from replying by Abu's arrival with coffee. Van Gryf had him put it on the table and dismissed him for the night. The woman, not much more than a girl it now seemed to Douglas, took the opportunity to gulp down her whisky.

"I'm waiting for you to answer me," Van Gryf told her.

"Yes," she said flatly, perhaps almost defiantly.

"When did you last get fucked?"

Again caught in the act, this time of pouring coffee, Douglas struggled with his disapproval of the question. He was even more incredulous when Mrs. Milton answered it.

"T... Two years. More than two years."

Whatever the hell she wanted, Douglas thought, she must want it desperately to be willing to endure this.

"But you play with yourself, of course," the Afrikaner said in the same conversational way he might have swapped small talk at a Nairobi cocktail party. "Between your legs, I mean, with your fingers in your pussy."

The girl had gamely been holding her head up, doing her best to meet Van Gryf's gaze as he asked his grossly inappropriate questions. As her cheeks flamed, she let it drop.

"No, look at me," Van Gryf said. "And answer."

Deep-blue eyes alight with indignation stared at him. "Yes! Yes, I play with myself. Are you satisfied?"

"Not by a long way, Caroline. Unless, of course, you've changed your mind?"

Her breasts rose and fell in time with her rapid breathing. Her chin lifted and she shook her head.

"When did you last play with your pussy?"

"Last Thursday," Mrs. Milton answered at once.

Van Gryf regarded her sceptically. “Not today? While you were in the bath or alone in your room?”

“No.”

“But you were tempted, weren’t you?”

The mixture of guilt and embarrassment on the girl’s face answered the question. Douglas penis stirred as he imagined her naked in a bath of soapy water with her long, slim fingers sunk deep between her parted thighs.

Van Gryf was only satisfied when he had forced an admission from her. “So, you like playing with yourself and you did it last Thursday. What about before that?”

“The previous Saturday.”

“And before that?”

Mrs. Milton’s fiercely blushing face twisted. “I don’t know. How am I supposed to remember? What does it matter, anyway?”

“It matters a great deal if you want me to give your request serious consideration,” Van Gryf said. “Or would you rather leave for Nairobi in the morning?”

“I could go to the District Commissioner instead,” the girl snapped back. Her temper vanished as she spoke. Her high colour faded, leaving her face pale and her expression one of mingled fear and regret. “Excuse me, I didn’t mean that.”

“I know.” The Afrikaner gave her a thin smile. “If I’d thought you capable of it, you would already be on your way to Mombassa and the boat home, not removing your clothes in my living room.”

Her eyes went wide. “Removing...?”

“What did you expect, Caroline? That I wouldn’t want a thorough look at what you’re offering? Stand up and take your blouse off.”

You had to admire the girl’s determination, Douglas thought as she got to her feet. When she went after something she wanted, she went all the way. He still had no idea what the something was, but it was obvious it had a significant sexual aspect.

The young widow’s fingers shook as they fumbled with the first button on her blouse but moved more nimbly with each one she unfastened as she seemed to summon her resolve. Nevertheless, her cheeks were flaming red again as she slid the garment off and carefully began folding it.

“Drop it,” Van Gryf ordered.

Mrs. Milton’s pained look as she let it fall gave Douglas the impression of a young woman who had never had many clothes and always felt a need to take care of the few she possessed.

Her hands were poised over the buttons of her skirt even before the Afrikaner told her to remove it. Shifting to relieve the pressure on his hard cock, Douglas watched the girl loosen her skirt enough to slide it over her hips, step out of it when it fell, and push it aside with a foot. She darted a glance at him and he was too aroused to care about the way she flinched from the lust he knew was plain on his face. She turned her blushing features to Van Gryf.

“Carry on,” he ordered and she pulled her slip up and over her head, revealing the ivory perfection of her skin and her long shapely legs in their sheer, silk stockings. As the garment came free, she tossed her head and her corn-gold hair shimmered in the electric light.

Douglas almost groaned aloud. The urge to reach for her, to tear away the thin silk and lace of her underwear and throw her down on one of the rugs was nearly irresistible. To escape pressing a hand to his erection he drank his whisky. Mrs. Milton reached behind her, seeking the hooks of her brassiere. Inevitably, she hesitated, her eyes flickering between Douglas and Van Gryf. The tip of her tongue appeared and ran over her rouged lips as her blush reached her hairline.

“If you want me to even consider keeping you, Caroline, you really can’t afford to be so self-conscious,” Van Gryf said levelly.

Keeping, with its implication of ownership, seemed an odd choice of word, Douglas thought, but it banished his remaining doubts that the girl’s objective was to become the Afrikaner’s mistress. Van Gryf was being damned fussy about it, though. If she had offered herself to Douglas, regardless of what it suggested about her morals, he would have jumped at the chance. The aching urgency in his loins increased.

Mrs. Milton sucked in a long breath that lifted her confined breasts. Douglas recognised the same determined little up-tilt of her chin she had given earlier as she loosened the brassiere and slipped the straps from her shoulders. Despite an impatient snort from Van Gryf, she turned away to remove it and laid it on the arm of the chair behind her. She turned back with her breasts bared.

Douglas stared, spellbound. They were absolutely superb. Instantly, he imagined how they would feel beneath his hands – big, out-thrust, tapering mounds, their flesh firm yet yielding and tipped with red, strawberry nipples, each the size of a half-crown. There was something else about those nipples, too. They were fully erect.

The Scotsman switched his gaze to the girl's face. It was still flushed, but was that purely with embarrassment? Her eyes had narrowed, lowering her long lashes, but he was close enough to see her dilated pupils, and her moist lips part as her breathing quickened. She was getting excited. He shot a glance at Van Gryf. He looked cool and relaxed, but the telltale bulge in his trousers showed he was no less stimulated by Mrs. Milton's statuesque figure than was Douglas. The Afrikaner gave him his thin, amused smile, added a wink and turned his attention back to the nearly naked girl.

Her thumbs were in the waistband of her knickers and her bright gaze was fixed upon Van Gryf. Douglas saw her trembling, which was unsurprising considering she was about to reveal her most intimate place.

"Yes, those too," Van Gryf said when she appeared to waver, "and the shoes and stockings. You're going to show us everything, Caroline."

Mrs. Milton winced but hesitated no longer. She slipped her knickers down and stepped out of them in one quick, smooth movement that revealed little before she half-turned away to fold them and lay them beside her brassiere. She faced the men again, bending immediately to remove her shoes. The Scotsman admired the ripple of muscles across her shoulders and the graceful curve of her back before surrendering to the enticement of her swaying breasts as she leaned down and undid her shoe buckles.

She stood finally, and the view was breathtaking. Her stockings were fastened high on her thighs, no more than two inches below the tantalising little creases in the skin on either side of her sex. Above its narrow, shadowed cleft, her mound was lightly fleeced with fine, curling hair scarcely darker than the rich, blonde locks that crowned her head. Chest tight, Douglas watched Caroline loosen her stockings, roll them down her long legs and take them and her shoes off at the same time. Her eyes again darted in his direction before centring on Van Gryf.

Her nervousness was more evident now that she was entirely nude, though her nipples still stood out stiffly on the tips of her marvellous

breasts, suggesting her excitement had not abated. She stood straight-backed, hands held firmly against the outsides of her thighs, her noble chin raised in spite of her humiliation. Douglas decided that, whatever her morals, she was a brave little thing to put herself through all of this. She certainly did place a high value on whatever she was seeking.

The silence lengthened. The girl no longer watched Van Gryf but had fixed her gaze on some spot on the wall behind him. He sat wordless, looking at every naked inch of her, apparently indifferent to the twitching muscle above her right knee and the continual flexing of her fingers that betrayed her anxiety. Neither did Douglas spare Caroline any embarrassment by looking away, so aroused and fascinated was he by the sight of her beautiful body. A tidy package, he had called her. What an understatement that was! She was close to perfection in face and figure, one of the loveliest women he had ever seen.

Caroline's nerve finally gave way and she pressed her right hand over the pouting crescents of her bare vulva and raised a forearm to cover her breasts.

"Stop that," Van Gryf barked. "Close your fists and put them behind you with their backs on the tops of your buttocks."

She blinked, looked as if she wanted to protest, and then obeyed.

"N'dele. M'shende. Come here," Van Gryf called.

Caroline's head turned sharply as the African girls entered. Her eyes widened with alarm and the sudden tensing of her body told Douglas she was about to flee. She dropped her fists to her sides, knuckles white, and half-turned towards the passage that led to her room. A second later Caroline regained control. She returned her hands behind her back and faced Van Gryf again.

He gave no indication he had seen her moment of panic. Pushing the coffee table aside, he directed the native girls to a spot facing Caroline, with himself and Douglas seated between them. The Scotsman wondered why the servants seemed entirely unsurprised by the sight of a white woman standing naked in Van Gryf's living room. There was more curiosity in the looks they were giving him as they adopted the same position they had held through most of dinner. The same position, Douglas realised, in which Caroline was standing. He eyed the Africans' breasts and thighs with the same hunger that he felt for her. One of the

girls said something in Swahili, too fast for his rudimentary knowledge of the language to grasp. They both giggled.

“That will do,” Van Gryf said. “Keep your eyes on Caroline.”

“Yes, Mastah,” they answered together.

“Look at them, Caroline,” the Afrikaner ordered, and she raised her eyes uncertainly. “See them looking at *you*? Humiliating, isn’t it? Worse than Douglas and I watching you strip. You feel shamed by them seeing your bare breasts and that pretty little opening between your thighs.”

Caroline flinched as though he had slapped her.

Van Gryf chuckled softly. “I remember some time ago you telling me you didn’t think of Africans as your inferiors. Of course, you had your clothes on at the time. It’s different now, isn’t it? You’re horrified by these two black girls seeing you like this. Do you still feel that they’re your equals? If you remain here, they will be exactly that.”

Douglas was puzzled. Surely, as Van Gryf’s mistress she would have authority over his servants? Yet he understood the rest. He had got to know and respect several people among the different races he had met during his travels. He no more consciously thought of the natives as his inferiors than Mrs. Milton did, but the paternalistic, colonial attitudes ingrained into him throughout his upbringing were too strong to overcome. He knew that however much he could admire an individual, he could not make the mental leap that let him think of all native peoples as his equals. Caroline’s increased agitation since N’dele and M’shende had appeared seemed to confirm that she could not do it either.

Van Gryf waited, keenly watching her, while Caroline looked at the two expressionless African girls, her shocked expression revealing her internal struggle.

“If you wish, you can return to your room,” Van Gryf prompted.

“I... No, thank you, Master.”

Her use of the title surprised Douglas.

“No, no,” Van Gryf said, “You’re a long way from being allowed to address me that way, if, indeed, I ever permit it. You may continue to call me ‘sir’.

Caroline stopped staring at the black girls to look at him. “Yes, sir. Excuse me, sir.” She shivered.

“I believe we were discussing your masturbation habits,” he said.

M'shende and N'dele looked at each other and giggled. Caroline seemed to momentarily cringe.

“Yes, they know the word.” The Afrikaner laughed. “I’ve made sure of that. If I told them to, they would masturbate now, in front of us, immediately, unquestioningly and without hesitation. Do you understand what I’m saying, Caroline?”

“Y... yes, sir.”

Douglas’s penis twitched.

“What if I gave you the same order?”

“I... I would try, sir.”

“But trying isn’t enough. Nothing but instant obedience is acceptable, Caroline. You have to prove that you’re capable of it. So I’ll ask you again. What if I told you to masturbate now, with these girls looking on?”

“I would obey you, sir.”

“Then begin.”

Caroline dived a hand between her legs.

Douglas’s astonishment as he had listened to the conversation was nothing compared to his amazement at the sight of the girl pushing her slender middle finger into her sex. He looked open-mouthed at Van Gryf, saw the small headshake the Afrikaner gave him, and was immediately drawn back to the sight of the beautiful blonde playing with herself. It was absolutely unbelievable. It took a real effort of will to remain in his seat and only watch.

Caroline spread her legs further and slid another finger between the parted swells of her outer pussy-lips. Her palm rested on her mound, rubbing up and down in time with her thrusts, and the movement of her upper arm against her right breast set her jutting teats swaying spectacularly. She panted, open-mouthed, her short, rapid breaths interspersed with sighing moans that betrayed her burgeoning pleasure. Her left hand appeared from behind her, running over her thigh before rubbing in tightening circles over the taut curve of her abdomen and then the full-fleshed roundness of her right breast to grip the ripe, strawberry nipple at its tip.

“Ooh!” Caroline wriggled her hips. She gave a whimper that became a groan and then a full-throated cry. Her hips thrashed furiously. She stiffened suddenly, and the frenzied movements of her fingers

changed to a single, long thrust that forced her swollen sex-lips wide and plunged deep into her sheath. The writhing of her hips became a series of convulsive jerks as Caroline surrendered to her orgasm, swaying and tottering until Douglas was certain she would fall.

She managed to stay on her feet, breathing hard, her perspiring body racked by shivers like the after-shocks that followed an earthquake. Long eyelashes fluttered then lifted. The far-away glaze of passion still shone in Caroline's eyes as they fixed upon Van Gryf. Only then did she appear to realise her fingers were still buried in her pussy. With a gasp, she pulled them free, and Douglas felt another rush of desire as he saw the glistening moisture that coated them and her gleaming juices bathing her thighs. She had not feigned it, then. And it had taken less than a couple of minutes for her to come. Despite the humiliation and embarrassment Van Gryf had put her through, Caroline's excitement had plainly been growing all along.

"I think it's safe to say you enjoyed that," Van Gryf said dryly. "Would you agree?"

"Yes, sir," the girl answered huskily, breasts still heaving. She had not recovered her equilibrium, as she demonstrated by stumbling as she obeyed Van Gryf's order to stand before him. The position treated Douglas to an uninterrupted view of the tight, round cheeks of her very tidy backside, which he appreciated to the full. When the Afrikaner leaned towards Caroline, Douglas automatically did the same, though her body blocked his view of what Van Gryf was doing. He heard the soft hiss of her escaping breath and saw her buttocks clench and quiver.

"Like silk," Van Gryf said. "As fine and soft as silk. Douglas, come and feel this. You won't be disappointed."

Anything that got him closer to the delicious Caroline Milton could not possibly disappoint him, Douglas thought. Feeling as if his penis was about to burst, he rose awkwardly and sat down next to the Afrikaner. He was stroking the light fleece of hair on Caroline's mound.

"Feel it," Van Gryf said.

Rich and feminine, the ripe, heady scent of Caroline's arousal filled Douglas's nostrils. He raised his hand, hesitated and looked up. Caroline was looking down, eyes half-closed, mouth half-open, cheeks flushed red. Embarrassment or excitement, or a mixture of both? Douglas no longer cared. The shudder that ran through her made her breasts shake, and she

was gasping as loudly as when she had masturbated. He brushed a fingertip over her blonde pubic hair. In his experience, the hair on a woman's sex was usually coarser than that on her head. Mrs. Milton's was exactly as Van Gryf had described. The Scotsman rolled a few strands between his finger and thumb, twirled the silky-soft curls around his finger-end, and gave them a gentle tug.

"Ooh!" Caroline arched her back, pushing her pussy towards him. She made the sound again when his fingers strayed lower and stroked the warm, damp skin of her inner thighs. Her legs trembled as his touch rose higher, and he heard her groan and saw her sex tighten to a dark, narrow slit then part suddenly and reveal the red, swollen petals within. At its apex, a small, erect clitoris stood out pink and proud from beneath its little hood. Somehow, Douglas kept his self-control, suppressing the urge to clamp his lips to the shiny, straining bud and suck hard. Instead, he spread the girl's outer-labia wider with a finger and thumb. Another intoxicating wave of Caroline's woman-scent teased his senses.

Van Gryf leaned close. "Her inner-lips are very small," he observed, pointing to the narrow, puffy, red slivers, darkly flushed with blood by Caroline's arousal. "They'll be smaller still when she's not excited. And I don't think I've ever seen such a little clit-hood on a woman before."

"Nice and neat and tidy," Douglas responded. There was that word again. 'Tidy' always seemed to crop up in his thoughts where Mrs. Milton was concerned. "And sensitive. It certainly doesn't stop her from coming, and bloody hard too." That the girl resented them discussing her most intimate parts, or if she even heard, he doubted very much. She was breathing hard, continually sliding her tongue back and forth over her lips, mewling, and rocking her head from side to side.

Douglas pressed one finger gently into her pussy and rubbed his thumb on the point of her clitoris. She bucked wildly and plunged herself down onto his finger. With a torrid cry, Caroline writhed again in orgasm. Her knees buckled and she fell forwards into both men's arms. Van Gryf flashed a big grin at Douglas over her bucking body and the Scot grinned back just as broadly. They held her until all but her noisy panting quieted. Douglas found he was gripping one of her well-rounded buttocks and only reluctantly let it slide from under his hand as Van Gryf eased Caroline to the floor at their feet.

“You’d best kneel there for now,” he told her. “Here, girls, get down on either side of her.”

The Africans knelt with their buttocks on their heels, backs straight and heads raised, their palms resting on their parted thighs.

“Get in the same position,” Van Gryf told Caroline, while Douglas was captivated by the sight of three young women kneeling like supplicants before him and the vivid contrast between the brown skins of the native girls and the paleness of Caroline’s. Blinking and looking bemused, but apparently no longer troubled by the Africans’ presence or their sudden proximity, the white girl obeyed. Her eyes went suddenly wide as they focused on the erection rearing up uncomfortably inside Douglas’s trousers. Her lovely face was suddenly enlivened. It was plain that, despite two orgasms in quick succession, she was still fiercely aroused.

“Ooh, sir!” she moaned, shivering.

“Settle down, Caroline,” Van Gryf said. “You need to listen carefully to what I say.”

“Yes, sir.” The girl drew her shoulders back, breasts lifting as she sucked in a steadying breath and assumed an air of attentiveness.

Douglas suppressed an amused smile.

Van Gryf maintained his stern expression. “This is important for you, girl,” he said. “I’ve made you play with yourself and we all saw how much you liked it.”

Caroline darted a glance at the grinning girls on either side of her and her flushed cheeks grew darker.

“You need to understand that that was only a very small taste of what lies ahead of you if I let you stay,” Van Gryf continued. “You can’t imagine the things you will have to do to reach the standard I demand. What if I make you masturbate five times a day, or ten? And with myself, these girls, or anyone else I choose, watching you? Think of it, Caroline. Every movement of your fingers in your pussy, every thrust of your hips and sway of your tits, every feeling that shows on your face, will be watched and scrutinised. Every moan and whimper will be heard, every cry you make as you come. And you will come. Every time. You’ll be made to. Do you understand?”

Douglas certainly did not. All he knew was that he could forget his theory about what Mrs. Milton wanted from Van Gryf. Whatever the hell

he had described was not the way that a man would treat his mistress. At least, not any man he had met before. While the Afrikaner's words had added to Douglas's confusion, he saw they had affected the girl very differently. Her nostrils were flaring and her trembling made her breasts shake as a deep, breathy moan escaped her lips.

Van Gryf smacked his fingers sharply down onto her left teat. Douglas stared in shock and something approaching outrage. He had struck a white woman.

"No, you're not to get excited," the Afrikaner said sternly. "Do you hear? I want you thinking clearly, not ready to play with yourself again."

Caroline rubbed her breast, staring up at him with big, shocked, round eyes. Beside her, N'dele and M'shende knelt impassively, as though the blow was not something to excite any surprise. Recalling his promise, Douglas followed their example as best he could.

For several seconds Van Gryf regarded Caroline silently and with an expression of irritation. "Very well, I see this is not as straightforward as I thought it would be. I'm not going to grant your request, Caroline."

A look of intense disappointment appeared on her face. "Oh, please! I-"

"Be quiet," Van Gryf barked. "I'm not going to refuse it either. You presenting yourself like this is something that has never happened before, so I am going to do something I have never done before. You're going to remain here -."

"Oh, thank you!" Caroline said, face lighting up with something akin to joy.

"Shut up," Van Gryf snapped. "Don't you dare interrupt me. Stick your tits out."

Abashed, Caroline bowed her head. "Excuse me, sir."

"No, I won't. Stick your tits out."

Caroline looked up at him, eyes moist and bright, drew herself upright and arched her back to thrust her superb breasts towards him. She knew what was coming as surely as he did, Douglas thought. Van Gryf smacked her right breast hard enough for the impact of the blow to be audible. Caroline gave a soft cry and tears welled up in her eyes as she reached to her hurt. Van Gryf knocked her hand away.

“Keep still.” His tone was strict, commanding. “From now on, you can expect to be punished for that kind of impertinence.” He smoothed a fingertip over the skin of her breast where it was marred by the pink imprint of his slap.

“I’m sorry, sir,” Caroline whispered.

“I know.” He gave her nipple a gentle pinch. “Now, since this evening’s demonstration has clearly not been sufficient, I am going to let you experience more of what your life will be like if I was to grant your foolhardy request. You will begin full training in the morning, just as if you were to be a permanent addition here.” Van Gryf held up a hand for silence as her mouth opened. “I’ll give you four weeks to show me that you really mean what you say. After that, if I’m still not convinced of your absolute sincerity, I will send you on your way. And unlike the others, I will give you the chance to withdraw at any time. The moment you change your mind, you will be free to go wherever you wish and I will see to it you have funds to do so.” He wagged a finger at her. “That means I’ll be trusting you when I let you go, Caroline. I will accept your promise of silence because I know I can rely on you keeping your word.”

The girl nodded gravely, though it was plain she was bubbling with excitement and gratitude. Utterly astounded, Douglas abandoned any attempt to understand what was going on.

“Now, you’ve had a long day and so have I,” Van Gryf said. “Off to bed with you, and no more touching yourself tonight. In future, you will only come when you are given permission.”

Caroline got to her feet, appealingly vulnerable in her nakedness and with her tears shining in her deep-blue eyes. Incredibly, after everything she had gone through, she smiled happily. “Thank you, sir. I’ll... I’ll be obedient. I’ll be very good. I’ll make sure you want to keep me.”

“We’ll see if you’re so ready to thank me this time tomorrow,” Van Gryf said dryly. “Now off to bed. And straight to sleep, mind.”

She almost skipped towards her room, and both men watched the irresistible, feminine wiggle of her bottom until she disappeared from view.

The Afrikaner shook his head, looking rueful. “I’m probably being a bloody fool. I hope I don’t end up regretting it.” He poured more

whisky, handed a glass to Douglas and swallowed his own in one draught.

The Scotsman did the same. “Are you ready to explain now?”

Van Gryf reached for his bootlaces. “Before I do, take your boots off.”

Chapter 4

In their stockinged feet, Van Gryf and Douglas crept to the door of Caroline's room. The Afrikaner cocked his head and listened. Flashing a grin, he opened the door.

The light from the passage revealed the girl lying face-down on the bed, thighs spread, hips jerking rhythmically as she thrust her fingers into her shiny, pink sex. Her face was turned towards them, eyes screwed shut and mouth wide open as she avidly fingered herself. Lost to her passion, she was unaware of their presence.

Van Gryf flicked on the light. Caroline's eyes snapped open, blinked in the sudden brilliance, and saw them. She yanked her hand from between her legs and curled into a ball, dragging the corner of the sheet over her nakedness.

"So much for obedience," Van Gryf growled. "I can only assume you want me to punish you." He took a pair of shiny, steel handcuffs from the drawer of the bedside table. "Stand up!"

Caroline got to her feet. Her hands moved uncertainly, as if she wanted to resist but could not quite overcome the automatic impulse to conceal her breasts and sex. The provocative musk of her arousal hung heavily in the warm room. Despite his incredulity at the sight of the handcuffs, Douglas erection strained his trousers.

"Arms by your sides," Van Gryf barked. "Did you even listen to a word I said?"

Trembling, Caroline avoided his gaze.

"Well, did you?"

"Yes, sir." Her words were no more than a whisper. Douglas saw the fine, golden hair on her pubic mound was damp and there was a small stain on the bed sheet.

"Then you chose to deliberately disobey me. Is that so?"

Caroline's glorious, tousled, blonde hair flashed as she nodded.

"Lie on the bed," Van Gryf ordered. "No, not on your belly, on your right side. And raise your arms." He closed the handcuffs around her right wrist and fed the short chain through one of the rails of the bed-head. As he clinched the second cuff on her left wrist, Caroline gasped, shuddering and squirming her hips.

“Did you just come?” Van Gryf demanded. “You came when I specifically told you that you mustn’t without permission?”

“Please, sir, I -. Ow!” Caroline’s cry followed the hard slap he dealt to the outer curve of her left buttock.

“Quiet! Show me. Come on, open your legs.”

She rolled onto her back, the cuffs trapping one forearm over her eyes but not hiding the crimson blush on her face. A sound between a groan and a sob escaped her as she drew her thighs apart. Her pussy gaped. Van Gryf flashed another grin at Douglas, and they both looked at Caroline’s swollen vulva and inner-lips and the pink point of her clitoris, all glistening with her juices. Another bigger stain had joined the first one on the sheet.

Van Gryf forced her onto her belly and repeatedly smacked his broad palm on her upturned bottom until her pale skin was glowing bright red and she was yelping and pleading, and wriggling to escape.

“No touching, I said. No coming, and go straight to sleep.” He gave her a final, harder swat that provoked a heartfelt cry of anguish, and she buried her face in the mattress. Van Gryf turned it back towards him. Her tear-filled eyes looked into his.

“I can see I need to teach you that there’s more than one meaning to the word restraint.” He rolled her onto her side and tested the chain securing her to the bed. “I think it’s time for a fuck,” he told Douglas.

Caroline whimpered.

“Not *you*,” Van Gryf said, giving her scarlet buttocks another slap. “And don’t imagine you’ll be getting one any time soon. You’ve a lot of hard work ahead of you before you’re ready for that. There are young women waiting who know how to do as they’re told. Now go to sleep. You’ll have a busy day tomorrow.”

Still struggling with the image of Mrs. Milton being spanked in handcuffs and writhing in orgasm as they had closed around her wrists, Douglas followed Van Gryf back to the living room.

“You knew she was going to do that,” he said.

“It was pretty obvious,” the Afrikaner replied. “I could see she was so excited that coming twice wasn’t going to be enough. I knew she’d never be able to resist the temptation to do it again.”

“And the handcuffs. That’s a bit bloody drastic, isn’t it?”

Van Gryf grinned. "It's part of what she's asking for. Maybe a big part, judging by their effect. What she doesn't know is that the cuffs don't lock. All she has to do is test the catches and they'll open. But I'm betting she won't try."

"Unbelievable," Douglas said. "She wasn't even able to touch herself that last time, and she still came."

"I think that was very much the point." Van Gryf beckoned to the African girls, who continued to kneel where he had left them. "Come N'dele. Would you mind very much, Englishman, if we put off the explanations until tomorrow?" he asked, sliding a hand between the girl's thighs. "I suddenly feel that there are more important matters to attend to."

"But I've been waiting all day," Douglas protested.

"I know, but it's not so important that it won't keep 'til morning." Van Gryf nodded in the direction of the second black girl. "And M'shende is waiting."

"M'shende?" The girl was looking at him with boldness in her eye and a wide smile on her lips. He stared at Van Gryf.

The Afrikaner grinned. "Man, did you expect me to make you sit through this evening and then send you to bed on your own? What kind of a host do you think I am?"

"A bloody good one!" the Scotsman said with feeling. "The very best."

Van Gryf laughed. "N'dele is waiting too. I'm for my bed. Forget about Caroline for now. M'shende will see to your needs. She'll do anything you tell her to."

Douglas felt the ache in his rock-hard penis and decided to take the Afrikaner's advice. There *was* something more important than his curiosity to satisfy.

He felt oddly nervous as M'shende led him to his room. The moment the door closed, she began loosening his shirt buttons. He took her wrists in his hands and looked down into the smouldering invitation in the deep-brown pools of her eyes.

"Mastah?"

Though he had been up well before dawn to reach the mission in time, Douglas forgot his fatigue as the girl pressed the hard points of her chocolate-coloured nipples against his chest. He released her hands,

undid his belt, and began freeing his throbbing erection from his trousers. M'shende immediately went back to loosening his shirt.

“Are you obedient, M'shende?” he asked, with an odd quiver running through his gut. “Will you do as I tell you, like your Master said?”

“You are my Mastah tonight,” she answered, smiling. “I do what you say.”

However, when he sat naked on the edge of the bed and drew her to her knees before him, there was no need to instruct her. Her head dipped, and Douglas caught his breath as she pressed her tongue to his swollen cock-head. Her warm, full lips closed over it, drawing gently, then more forcefully upon his rigid flesh.

The Scot leaned back on his elbows, watching with fascination as M'shende did things to him with mouth and lips and tongue, and long agile fingers, that he could never have imagined in his wildest fantasies. All too quickly it ended, as the girl's magical talents and the pent-up force in the hard-on he had had all evening made him explode in a head-spinning climax.

Douglas slumped back with a long groan of satisfaction. He looked down his heaving chest at the girl kneeling between his thighs. Scarcely believing it, he watched her throat bob as she swallowed the thick semen he had spurted into her mouth. Never before had a woman so willingly or so easily let his spunk fill her belly. M'shende's eyes met his and she smiled, showing no distaste or self-consciousness. She lifted his flagging penis, caught the thick pearl of come clinging to it on the tip of her tongue and swallowed that too.

Douglas laughed. He had spent all day being astonished by one novel experience after another. Why should the night be any different?

“Mastah?” The girl looked puzzled.

Douglas shook his head and kissed the end of her nose. “You, my dear, are absolutely bloody amazing,” he said, still laughing.

M'shende joined in. “Yes, Mastah.” Seconds later, her mouth once more engulfed his cock and began making it hard again. He drew her onto the bed beside him, enjoying her rich, brown-skinned softness and the ripe firmness of her breasts, teasing her erect nipples while she moaned and thrust against his exploring hands. He smoothed them over her hips and belly to the moist heat between her thighs. Her mound and

sex were entirely bare of the little peppercorn curls he had seen on other African girls he had taken in the past. Nor was there any stubble to indicate she had shaved herself.

Douglas spread her outer sex-lips. He loved to see the startling contrast between the pink interior of an African girl's pussy and the dark skin surrounding it. He smiled with sheer pleasure as M'shende gave a breathy moan and wriggled on his penetrating finger. She was hot and wet. He teased and tantalised her, taking his time, revelling in the feel of a real, warm-fleshed woman after his enforced celibacy. M'shende was eager and responsive. Douglas had worried that there might be an awkwardness between them. After all, Van Gryf had not consulted the girl about her wishes before offering her to him. But M'shende had shown nothing but eager enthusiasm, and with her clitoris standing erect and her juices flowing over his fingers as he worked them deep in her pussy, the Scotsman had no doubt it was genuine.

He toyed with her hard bud for as long as his twitching cock could stand it. Confident he would last longer this time, Douglas mounted her and sank into the hot, wet well of her sex. It was everything he had been anticipating, and more. As his shaft reached the limit, the girl's pussy seemed to shrink around it, gripping him tightly, and an unusual but very pleasant sensation ran along the length of his cock. Douglas drew back until only its tip remained inside her and slid slowly forwards. Once more, the sensation, almost a vibration, thrilled through his penis. M'shende was clenching her sex around it, not just her entrance but the whole of her sheath, its walls gripping him as he moved within her. The effect was like a ripple or wave of sensual pleasure teasing its way up and down his shaft, heightening the intensity of his arousal.

The feeling only diminished when he quickened his strokes, penetrating M'shende with increasing force, delighting in the moaning and panting that told of her own pleasure. He gloried in the feel of the girl's strong, young body arching upwards to meet his plunging cock as it forced its way into her soft, yielding inner-flesh with ever-increasing passion. Her knees lifted, thighs gripping him eagerly as she moved continually to alter the angle of his penetration.

She orgasmed with a series of high-pitched yelps, her sex abruptly clamping hard around Douglas's cock before its frenzied spasming triggered his own climax. Hips jerking wildly, he felt the ecstatic surge

of indescribable delight that always accompanied his release, and he sprayed his spunk deep into the girl writhing beneath him.

Feeling light-headed, Douglas subsided slowly, moving his body against M'shende's while she continued squirming in the aftermath of her orgasm. He gripped her breasts, lowering his head to suck one long, hard nipple into his mouth and wishing he could do it all over again at once. When he tried to roll off her, the girl rolled with him and he ended up on his back with her astride him and his slackening penis still inside her. She leaned down, hands either side of his head, her hanging breasts brushing his cheeks.

"Lie still, Mastah," she said, white teeth flashing. "I make you happy again."

Her sex tightened and the rippling sensation ran through Douglas's cock again. In far less time than he expected, he was hard once more. M'shende moved her hips to and fro, creating a gentle friction and adding to it by fractionally raising and lowering herself on his shaft.

"Good, Mastah?"

Douglas gave a throaty laugh. "Good? It's bloody marvellous!"

* * * * *

Caroline awoke to the greyness before dawn. A shiver ran across her bare skin. Still half asleep, she reached for the bedclothes and her arms jerked to a sudden stop. The handcuffs tightened around her wrists. Her belly lurched and her heart thumped wildly as heat flared between her thighs. A thrill of intermingled fear and excitement surged up inside her.

Deliberately, Caroline strained against the confining metal bands. The first time she had felt the grip of the cuffs she had orgasmed. And Van Gryf and the Englishman had been looking on while she lay nude and helpless on the bed in the stark glare of the electric light. Her stomach contracted again and a tremor ran through her tingling pussy. Never before had she come without touching herself. When they had gone, she had eagerly strained against the handcuffs a second time. To her great disappointment it had not had the same effect. She had lain for what must have been hours in the darkness, maddeningly frustrated, her sex crying out for the relief her fingers could no longer provide.

Now she would have to endure the same frustration all over again, with the confinement of her wrists once more provoking an urgent, demanding tickle in her pussy that she could do nothing about. Caroline had tried the alternatives during the long night, pressing and rubbing her thighs together, lying on her belly and thrusting down to try and rub her throbbing clitoris on the mattress. They had only made it worse, until she had almost cried aloud in her need for the release the shackles denied her.

Her arousal must have ebbed at last under the weight of her fatigue or she would not have slept at all, but within seconds of her awakening it was back. Caroline had never before felt such a deep and long-lasting sexual excitement. But then, she had never before been given the chance to have her deepest desires fulfilled. And that fulfilment could start at any moment. She looked towards the door. How long until he came, she wondered? How long until her new life, her real life, began?

In an agony of anxious anticipation, Caroline lay listening to the soft hiss of the ceiling fan. Doubt tormented her. Was Van Gryf right? Was she making a huge mistake? Had she misunderstood what she had seen on that January night? Her pussy quivered at the memory. No! She was sure she had not. And she was sure she wanted the same for herself.

Her certainty did not stop trepidation gnawing at her belly as she watched the daylight strengthen with a slowness that was painful. She realised she had no idea what lay ahead of her. Full training, Van Gryf had promised, but what did that mean? She had assumed her willingness would be enough. Caroline remembered Van Gryf's slaps to her breasts and the fierce sting each time his hand had struck her buttocks, and knew immediately that they would be the least of the punishments he had mentioned. Her throat tightened. How her bottom had burned after he had left her in the darkness. In sudden panic, Caroline jerked at the steel bracelets encircling her wrists. Oh, God! What if - ?

The door opened. Caroline's belly did an enormous flip and her pussy clenched tight. She followed Van Gryf with her eyes as he opened the window-blinds and turned to her.

"Did you sleep?" he asked.

She nodded, too dry-mouthed to speak.

"But not much, by the look of you." He pressed a button on the cuff around her left wrist. It opened and her hand slid free.

"Stand up."

Caroline got to her feet and held out her right wrist so he could remove the dangling handcuffs.

“Take them off,” Van Gryf told her.

“S... sir?” she managed to croak, confused.

“Push the button. They’ll come off.”

Caroline stared at the metal band. There was no keyhole or any other sort of lock. The things could not *be* locked. She had lain all night in their grip, seething with need, and all the time her hands could have been free. She felt suddenly stupid. Her resentment swelled, quickly followed by acute indignation when she saw the thin, amused smile on Van Gryf’s face.

“Are you still sure you want to go on with this?” he asked. “No one is forcing you, as you can see.” He nodded towards the handcuffs.

She took them off and flung them on the bed. Caroline was anything but sure. Perhaps he was right to have given her a way out, she thought, but she had to try. She had to know. “I... I’m ready, sir.”

Van Gryf shook his head. “Not by a long way, girl.” He sighed. “But very well, your first lesson. Stand the way I told you to last night.”

Caroline closed her hands into fists and placed their backs on the tops of her buttocks.

“Head up, feet wider apart. That’s it. You will stand in that position whenever you are not involved in any activity and I or anyone else who has charge of you is present.”

“Yes, sir,” Caroline said and immediately backed away as he reached a hand between her legs.

He gripped her nipples between his fingers and thumbs and pulled her back to her original position. “Second lesson: you never, *never* try to avoid my touch. If you do, you will be punished. Understood?”

“Y... Yes, sir,” Caroline stammered and he pinched harder.

“Yes!” She winced then gave a gasp as he released her.

“Let’s try again.” Van Gryf’s finger slipped easily between her outer sex-lips. He held it there, stroking the sensitive membranes at her entrance until she was breathing hard and halfway to orgasm. Caroline could not stop her little mew of regret when he withdrew.

“You’re very wet,” he observed casually. “You seem to get aroused very easily, don’t you?”

“Yes, sir.” Caroline had no choice but to agree, with the evidence shining moistly on the finger he held up before her eyes. Her cheeks were glowing hot with embarrassment, but she longed for him to put it back inside her.

“I expect that’s because it’s such a long time since you had a fucking.” He opened a cupboard and took out a thin robe of white cotton. “Put that on and brush your hair. Hurry up.”

Trying to ignore the frantic quivering in her pussy and its incessant demands she do something about it, Caroline belted the robe around her, sat at the dressing table and quickly tidied her hair. The twin, dark points of her nipples were clearly visible through the light material. It clung to their outlines, emphasising how hard they had become.

Van Gryf eyed her sternly when she rose and faced him. “Have you forgotten the position already?”

Hastily assuming it, Caroline realised it was not just the needs of her sex that were demanding her attention. “Please, sir, I have to use the toilet.”

“You want a piss?”

She blushed at the crude description and nodded.

“You can wait. Come along.” He saw her glance at the trunk that held her belongings. “You won’t need that.”

With a deep breath and a shiver running the length of her spine, Caroline followed Van Gryf out of the back door and across the compound towards the large building she had always known as the stable. That the man did not own any horses had never crossed her mind until the night she had discovered what really lay beyond the big, double doors in its high front wall.

As they approached, the stable’s white stone was tinged pink by the first rays of the rising sun. The closer they got, the slower Caroline’s paces became. Van Gryf had already unlocked and opened the doors by the time she reached them. The thin, amused smile that never seemed far from his lips when he looked at her was like a challenge. He expected her to back down. He was sure she had neither the strength nor the resolve to go through with it. Determined she would prove him wrong, Caroline stepped over the threshold. She swallowed hard as the doors slammed shut behind her.

They were in a square entrance-hall. On either side were white walls, each pierced by a single, solid, wooden door, ironbound and locked by two big bolts. In front of Caroline was a glass door that led into a garden. The building was a hollow square, she realised.

“Strip,” Van Gryf ordered, and she knew the shiver that ran through her as she obeyed had nothing to do with the coolness of the room. He opened the glass door and walked diagonally across the well-watered, green lawns. Her brief glimpse through the window had revealed none of this, Caroline thought. As the Afrikaner made for a walled-off area in the far corner of the garden, she eyed his broad shoulders and remembered the girl she had seen, as blonde as herself, kneeling naked in the bare room while he paced in circles around her. Her tingling sex tightened. Caroline blinked, remembered she was supposed to be following Van Gryf and, naked outdoors for the first time in her life, scurried past shade, trees, and tubs of bright African flowers to catch him up.

Had he been so reluctant to accept the other girl, she wondered? Why was he so determined to persuade her she was making a mistake? She knew he desired her. She had seen the evidence in his bulging trousers the night before. The memory tickled her pussy. Then what was it about her that had made Van Gryf almost reject her, and even when he granted her wish, impose conditions he had never applied to the others?

Others, Caroline thought. So there were more than just herself and the Africans and the other blonde girl here. Perhaps there were many more, judging by the building’s size and the many windows in its inner walls, a distinct contrast to the few in its outer ones. It almost looked like a convent, she decided, staring up towards its red-tiled roofs, a nunnery. Except that she was sure its purpose could not have been more different. Pussy quivering, Caroline followed Van Gryf into the walled-off part of the garden and remembered to adopt the position she had been shown as she halted.

The area was paved, and at its centre was a low, circular wall with a windlass mounted above it, covered by a small, pitched roof set on four square, stone pillars. It was a well. She looked questioningly at the Afrikaner.

“You need a piss, I recall,” he said, ignoring her curiosity.

Caroline gulped. “Yes, sir.”

He took her shoulders, turned her to face away from the well and nodded to the paving at her feet. "Do it then."

Her racing heart missed a beat. It was her first test, the first of many she was suddenly sure she would face in the days to come, and she had to prove she was equal to them all. How innocent she had been to think her willingness to submit would be all that was necessary.

"No, remain standing," Van Gryf said as she began to squat.

Caroline widened her stance and leaned back, keeping her hands pressed to the small of her back. Deliberately fixing her eyes on Van Gryf's face, she let loose a stream of urine. He met her gaze before letting his own travel slowly down her body to the spray of piss arcing from between her legs and splattering noisily onto the stones in front of her. It remained there until she had squeezed out the last dribbles, and then travelled just as slowly back to her face.

Her cheeks were aflame. Unable to hold his stare, Caroline looked away. A jolt of shock and fear ran through her. Standing in a doorway of the building, directly in front of her and not thirty feet away, was a big African wearing a long, white caftan. As Van Gryf drew her away from the puddle she had made, the African strode towards her and she saw he was carrying towels, a bar of soap and a large sponge. His face split into a broad, white-toothed smile.

"Good morning, *effendi*," he said with an accent that sounded more English than Caroline's own. He looked at her. "So, here is the new one. Truly a beauty, as you described."

Van Gryf had called her that? Amidst her cowering embarrassment, Caroline felt a little thrill of pleasure. She lowered her head under the stranger's scrutiny and struggled to suppress the need to pull away when a big, brown-skinned finger lifted her chin.

"Head up, missy," the man said. "You always keep your head up unless you are told differently."

Caroline looked anxiously at Van Gryf.

"This is Mustafa," he said, "though, of course, you will always address him as 'sir'. He will be keeping an eye on you when I'm not around. You will obey him as you would me. Clear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then tell him so."

With everything Van Gryf had said about her feelings concerning Africans racing through her mind, Caroline looked up into the tall black-man's face. She was afraid of him. "I... I will obey you, sir."

Mustafa smiled. "Good, then your punishments should be few."

Caroline's fluttering belly turned over. Again, she looked at Van Gryf.

"Mustafa has a job for you. I'll let him explain." He gave the man a nod. "See she gets settled, and make sure she eats some breakfast. I'll come back after I've had my own."

Caroline watched him walk away, feeling suddenly, horribly, alone. She desperately wanted him to stay. Before he disappeared around the end of the wall, he turned. Hope stirred within her.

"Oh, Mustafa. See that she masturbates first. And make sure she comes."

Chapter 5

Caroline stared open-mouthed at the spot where Van Gryf had been.

“Your name is Caroline?” the frightening black-man asked in the silence that followed the Afrikaner abandoning her.

She nodded, still in shock. A heavy hand landed hard on her right buttock.

“Ow! Yes, sir!”

Mustafa looked amused. “Good, you have not been struck deaf and dumb as I feared. So you heard Van Gryf. Kneel down and begin.”

With the sting in her bottom to encourage her, Caroline sank to her knees and hesitantly slid her right hand towards her sex. She looked up at the towering figure of the African and immediately dropped her gaze, cringing inwardly under his watchful eyes. Then she remembered he had told her to keep her head up, and she raised it at once. Caroline had no desire to feel the weight of his hand again. Tentatively, she slipped a finger between her pussy-lips. After the raging frustration of the night and the excitement of beginning her first day she was very wet, but she was certain she would never be able to pass this test with Mustafa looking on.

Caroline soon learned she was wrong. Almost immediately, the friction of her fingers on the tingling membranes of her sex provoked a fiery response. Heat flooded her lower belly. Flashes of fierce delight teased and tickled her quivering sheath. Caroline’s eyelids felt heavy, and she lowered them as a warm dizziness buzzed like too much alcohol in her brain. Her left hand eagerly sought her clitoris, pinching her hard bud and setting her whole belly wriggling with pleasure. Her slitted eyes looked upon the vague shape of the building before her. What awaited her within its walls? What had that other blonde-haired girl experienced there? Was she there now, four months later, and experiencing it still? The thought brought Caroline to the edge. Her own fingers frantically rubbing her swollen clitoris pushed her over.

She could not prevent the short, high-pitched cries that escaped her as her pussy roiled and rippled in the sudden rush of her release. Hot juices flooded her sheath as it spasmed wildly around her thrusting

fingers. Gasping, shuddering and horribly, exhilaratingly, humiliated, Caroline slumped breathlessly forwards, head spinning and lights flashing behind her eyes.

A tight grip around her upper arm pulled her ungently upright and turned her around. With the last little tremors of orgasm still thrilling in her pussy and her eyes having difficulty focusing, Caroline felt Mustafa's broad palms press into the flesh of her damp inner thighs. Before she had even begun to think clearly, he pushed the swollen crescents of her outer-labia apart, bent and peered into the interior of her wet sex. As his big, blunt fingertip probed inside, Caroline's pussy clamped hard around it. Grinning, Mustafa stood up, lifted his finger to his nose, sniffed and rubbed the ball of his thumb against the moisture coating it. Caroline blinked stupidly, too sunk in the aftermath of her climax to feel much embarrassment.

"Adequate," Mustafa told her, and pointed to a metal bucket resting on the low wall surrounding the well. "Fill the pail from the well, carry it up the ladder and pour it into the tank." He pointed to a large, copper water tank standing on stilts in the angle where the garden wall joined that of the main building. A ladder stood beside it. Caroline looked from Mustafa to the bucket. She had often fantasised about what she might be made to do in Van Gryf's stables, but she could never have imagined this.

"You have one half-hour," Mustafa said, taking a large watch and chain from a pocket of his caftan and consulting it. "Twenty bucketfuls will fill it."

Caroline had never realised just how much the stuff weighed until she wound the well bucket up on the windlass, transferred the water to the pail and began carrying it towards the ladder. She walked on the first trip. Half an hour seemed plenty of time. A sudden, sharp pain across both buttocks quickened her pace as she returned to the well. Mustafa had produced a four-foot length of thin, springy cane, which he flicked deftly across her rear a second time while she worked the windlass.

"Faster, Caroline," he urged. "You need to hurry."

Encouraged by the cane, she moved more quickly with her second bucketful and faster still with the next two. It was not enough to satisfy Mustafa, as more brisk, stinging, little smacks to her buttocks proved. By the time Caroline had heaved the fourth bucket of water up the ladder and poured it into the tank her body was aching and streaming with sweat.

Mustafa followed her back and forth between the well and the tank, continually telling her to speed up and emphasising his order with frequent flicks of his cane.

It had not really been very painful to begin with, scarcely more than the bite of an insect might have been, but as he continued to ply it over and over, and always on the soft-skinned cheeks of Caroline's bottom, they began to smart uncomfortably. She was annoyed too that however much she tried to weave and dodge, Mustafa always landed his strokes on target, and her attempts to avoid the blows were slowing her down. Caroline realised that to complete the task in time would be far less easy than she had expected. It took a good two minutes just to haul up the water from the well and then she had to fill her bucket, carry it, climb the ladder, and pour it into the tank without spilling any. Long before Mustafa told her the half-hour was up, Caroline knew she was not going to succeed.

"Eight, missy," he announced with a sombre shake of his head. "Not good."

She sank down beside her half-filled pail, body aching, bottom sore and very out of breath.

"What are you doing?" Mustafa demanded. "You must finish the job." He let her do it in her own time, impatiently tapping the butt of the cane on the ground and giving her backside an occasional swipe as she passed him.

Finally finished, Caroline lowered the lid on the water tank and climbed wearily down the ladder, panting and dripping with sweat. She was shocked when Mustafa took off his caftan and revealed he wore nothing beneath. Caroline had never seen a completely naked African man. He was not as muscular as she had thought, more plump and with a thickening of fat around his waist. He stepped under a showerhead attached to a pipe that angled out from the underside of the water tank. Caroline found it difficult to hide her resentment as she understood what all her efforts had been for.

"Here, wash me." Mustafa handed her his sponge and soap, and pulled a handle on the tank to release a spray of water over his naked body.

Caroline's gut twisted. Here was another task she could never have imagined, another test she must pass if she wanted Van Gryf to accept

her. She looked at the long, heavy penis hanging between Mustafa's thighs. What would happen when she had to wash that? It was bound to get hard, and then what would she do? What would the African do?

Very apprehensive, she wetted the soap and sponge and rubbed them together to make a lather. Mustafa shut off the shower and motioned her to begin. Caroline had never washed anyone but herself. It seemed such a menial task and especially demeaning to have to do it for a black-man. She cringed inwardly as she saw the point, and remembered what Van Gryf had said the previous night about her attitude to Africans. It had pained her to admit he was right.

Nevertheless, she had little difficulty washing Mustafa's upper body. It was only when he had her kneel before him that her reluctance formed a lump in her throat. Gingerly, she began with his feet, sponging higher and higher until she could no longer avoid the dangling, dark-skinned cock brushing against the back of her hand. With her heart pounding, she took hold of the thick, flaccid length and rubbed the sponge gently over it. Half in dread, half in anticipation, and wishing she dared look away, Caroline waited for the flesh to harden.

Nothing happened. Mustafa stood with his arms folded, apparently unmoved by her ministrations. Caroline slid the sponge under his cock to wash his scrotum. She stopped abruptly. It was not there. He had no balls.

"What are you looking at, missy?" he demanded.

"Nothing, sir," Caroline replied, and almost had a fit of the giggles as she realised it was quite literally true. Not sure if she was relieved or disappointed, she finished her task and stood up.

When he had rinsed off the soap, Mustafa made her stand beneath the shower and turned it on. Caroline closed her eyes and gratefully lifted her face to the cooling water. A sting on her bottom made her jump.

"Turn."

She made no attempt to hide her resentment this time. The eunuch held the cane shortened in his hand and rapped it on her sore behind every time it faced him as Caroline rotated under the water until the tank was empty. When he gave her one of the towels, Caroline learned that pressing her hand to her stinging flesh was not a good idea. She carefully avoided it as she patted the rest of her body dry.

“Come.” Donning his caftan, Mustafa beckoned her. With a nervous flutter and a sudden renewed tingling in her sex, Caroline followed him into the stable. He turned left down a short passage, away from the angle where two corners of the building met. Caroline glimpsed what she guessed was his room through its half-open door. Ahead was a door like those in the entrance hall. The African pulled back the two bolts, made her enter ahead of him, then locked the door behind them and pocketed the key.

She was imprisoned, Caroline thought, with a shiver of fearful excitement. She was Van Gryf’s now, to be used as he pleased. But it was not really true. She need only ask and he would set her free. It was not fair. He ought to have taken her on the same terms as the others he had mentioned. Caroline abruptly realised she had no idea what those terms were. She remembered the gnat-bite sting of the nasty, little cane, could still feel its burn and the aches in her limbs, and her doubts returned. Could it be that she would weaken? Resolutely, Caroline tossed her damp, blonde head, promised herself it was not going to happen, and had to hurry to catch up with Mustafa.

To her left, large windows with half-open, slatted blinds looked out upon the garden quadrangle. Walking down the passage, Caroline passed a closed door and then an area furnished like a bedroom but without a front wall. Beyond it was an identical cubicle, and beyond that one more. Another short passage ended at another locked door. Halfway down, Mustafa led her into a modern, white-tiled bathroom with toilet, bidet, washbasin, bath and a separate shower with no curtain. With a little thrill of embarrassment, Caroline saw the room had no door. All her most private ablutions could be interrupted at any time and there would be nothing she could do to prevent it.

“Unless you are alone, always ask permission to use the bathroom,” the eunuch cautioned as he took her back the way they had come. He stopped at the central cubicle and pointed to a small table and chair near the wall dividing it from its right-hand neighbour.

“Sit there until I return,” he ordered and disappeared down the passage.

Caroline heard the door open and close and the sound of the bolts being pushed home. She looked around at the cubicle’s white-painted walls and ceiling and its floor of red, terracotta tiles. In the centre, its

head against the windowless back wall, stood an iron-framed bed. On a small table next to it was an electric lamp and nothing else. There was no wardrobe or anywhere that clothing might be kept. The only other furniture was a blue, fabric-covered armchair and a small dressing table. Caroline stood before its mirror. Turning her bottom towards it, she craned her neck over her shoulder to look at the crisscrossing pink lines covering the curves of her buttocks.

“Disobedience already.”

Caroline’s heart leapt at the softly spoken words. Startled, she looked around and stared into Mustafa’s dark, disapproving eyes.

“Oh! I’m... I’m sorry, sir.”

“Sorry you were caught, perhaps,” the eunuch said, “but not that you disobeyed. When Van Gryf hears of it, you may be sorrier still. He said you would bear watching. Why are your hands at your sides?”

Suddenly remembering, Caroline assumed the required position, hanging her head like a naughty schoolgirl.

“Head up,” Mustafa snapped. “Come here, missy.” He turned her sideways and his heavy hand on the back of her neck forced her to bend. Before she had even guessed what he intended, the African’s meaty paw dealt two hard, fiery slaps to each of Caroline’s buttocks. He pushed her towards the table. “Now sit, and stay seated until I come back.” He waited until Caroline put her stinging rear to the wood of the chair before departing.

Mustafa had frightened her less since she had discovered he was a eunuch, Caroline realised, and it had made her underestimate him. And she *had* disobeyed, she admitted, in spite of her promise to Van Gryf, and the one she had made to herself to do everything in her power to make him keep her. The knowledge did not stop her rising from the seat enough to smooth a hand over her smarting backside.

The eunuch returned with a tray of scrambled eggs and coffee. Caroline needed no encouragement to eat. She had had almost nothing the day before. Neither the fluttering in her belly nor the buzzing of her bottom could distract her from clearing her plate. Afterwards, she obtained the eunuch’s permission to use the bathroom, and spent several nerve-racking minutes straining her ears for the pat-pat of his sandaled feet approaching while she squatted on the toilet. He did not disturb her,

and she returned to the cubicle, remembering to stand straight with her hands in the small of her back when she presented herself.

He took her to the dressing table and showed her the cosmetics and hairbrush that were the entire contents of its single drawer. He had her brush her hair and made her put on powder, lipstick and eye shadow, selecting brighter shades than Caroline would have chosen and insisting she apply more than she normally would.

When she was finished, the face that looked back at her in the mirror did not seem quite her own. She suspected that if she turned up at a Nairobi hotel painted thus, she would be turned away as a prostitute, yet here in Van Gryf's stable it somehow seemed entirely suitable. It made her feel different - exotic and alluring, sensual and sexual in a way she had never felt before, had never even known she *could* feel. She was suddenly eager for Van Gryf to see her this way. She was suddenly *very* eager to please him. Moist, pulsing warmth filled her pussy.

"Each morning you will apply your makeup like this," Mustafa said. "Do it carefully and well or you will be punished. You will have to apply this at times also." The eunuch held out a small jar.

After examining its contents, Caroline looked at him blankly.

"For here." He rubbed a finger over one of her nipples and pointed between her closed thighs. "And there. Put some on now."

The discovery that some people actually applied cosmetics to such intimate places increased the thrum of excitement in Caroline's sex. She dabbed a finger into the little pot and watched herself in the mirror as she smoothed rouge over her nipples. It was the same red shade as her lipstick. She was more reluctant when she had to stand before her reflection and self-consciously spread her outer-labia to apply rouge to the hood of her clitoris. Her bud already stood erect, as it had since the moment she had awoken. Caroline only just managed to suppress a moan as she rubbed her fingertip over the sensitive flesh. She was struck by how the bright colour made her nipples and sex so much more obvious. They seemed to invite, even to demand, all of her attention. Would they affect Van Gryf in the same way?

"Good enough for now," was Mustafa's judgement when he examined her handiwork. He gave her pubic hair a gentle tug. "This conceals too much, but we'll deal with that shortly."

Caroline dared not ask what he meant.

“You’re an excitable girl,” he said, baring his white teeth and chuckling at the shiny little pink protrusion of her clitoris rising from its freshly-rouged covering. “Time I had a proper look at you.”

The eunuch felt the muscles of her arms and shoulders, weighed her breasts in his hands and squeezed her hard nipples while she hissed through her clenched teeth. He ran his palms over her belly and hips, examined her calves and ankles, her thighs and the firm, buzzing rounds of her buttocks. He gestured to the bed. “On your knees. Put your cheek to the mattress with your bottom towards me.”

With a shiver of humiliation, Caroline obeyed.

“Knees wider. Arch your back.”

Belly all aquiver, Caroline raised her bottom higher to fully reveal her most secret place. Her pussy rippled and clenched tight. It was so humiliating, so exciting. And she had no choice. If she did not obey, Mustafa would make her, and punish her afterwards. Shivering, Caroline reached back and pulled her buttocks apart when he told her to. She gave a startled yelp when his fingertip pressed against the tight knot of her anus.

“You’ve never had anything in there.”

“No, sir.” Though it had not been a question, Caroline answered, again wondering what he meant.

“You’re still very wet.” Mustafa pushed a finger into her sex.

She gasped and her hips jerked involuntarily, seeking the friction that would set her on the road to orgasm. The eunuch immediately withdrew. Caroline jerked again at the pressure of his finger on her bud as he probed her clitoral hood.

“Behave yourself.” He gave her bottom a light slap.

She struggled to keep her unruly desires in check. It struck her that he could not be enjoying any of it in the way a normal man would, but the knowledge did not prevent her arousal from increasing as he continued to tease her trembling clitoris. Abruptly, his touch was gone.

“Rub it yourself,” Mustafa ordered.

When Van Gryf had told her she might have to masturbate five or ten times a day, he had not been exaggerating, Caroline thought. Gulping, she slid a hand under her belly and obeyed. Soon, the thrill of her rapidly moving fingers was driving her towards a climax once again.

“Stop now,” Mustafa said.

Lost to the shimmering delight filling her sex, Caroline barely heard him. The hard, stinging impact of his hand on her bottom brought her back to reality with a yelp. He yanked her to her feet.

“Tardy,” Mustafa told her. “You stop the moment you’re told, missy, if you don’t want to be punished.” His glare sobered Caroline. She realised that she had again forgotten to assume the proper position and quickly rectified her mistake. With a disapproving look, the eunuch reached into his pocket and produced a set of leather cuffs joined by a short chain. “Right hand.”

Horribly self-conscious, Caroline held it out and he buckled one of the wide straps around her wrist. It was padded inside and lined with black velvet. Dizzy with excitement, she let him turn her about and fasten the other cuff around her left wrist, trapping her hands behind her.

“Ooh!” Fresh tremors goaded her sex as she felt the grip of the leather on her wrists and the tug of the chain joining them. She was bound and naked and imprisoned in Van Gryf’s stable. And it felt wonderful. Tears of happiness welled up in her eyes. She looked up at the eunuch. He was grinning. Heat rushed to Caroline’s cheeks.

“You can walk around if you wish,” Mustafa said, “but do not try to make yourself come, or I will punish you.” He pinched one of her nipples to emphasise the threat, and left her.

Caroline’s belly flipped as she heard the bolts on the door snap home. She tugged again at the cuffs confining her wrists. There was nothing false about them. She had no chance of using her fingers to satisfy her tempestuous cravings. She could rub herself on the raised rail at the end of the bed, or the corner of the dressing table might work. But then she would be disobeying again and she did not want to do that. Besides, even supposing it was not another trick, she knew if Mustafa asked if she had obeyed him, any lie she told would show on her face. Her bottom had suffered more than enough already. The last thing she wanted was more punishment. Caroline gulped. Would every day be like this, with the tiniest infraction of rules she only seemed to learn about when she broke them, resulting in a smack from the cane or a hard hand?

To distract herself from her anxiety and the continual, insistent throb of her arousal, Caroline explored her prison. The other two cubicles were identical to hers, even down to the colour of their armchairs. She paced out the distance between the two locked doors and

back again, but her chained hands rubbing uncomfortably on her smarting buttocks increased her awareness of her confinement, which in turn only heightened her desire. Remembering the bidet, Caroline turned on its cold tap with difficulty and squatted above the spray of water, douching her sex until all but the tiniest tickle was gone and her clitoris had retreated beneath its hood.

By the time she had walked to the windows overlooking the garden, her pussy was pulsating again. She peered through the narrow gaps in the blinds. The sky overhead was blue but the morning sun was still hidden beyond the stable's high walls. It seemed so long since Van Gryf had brought her there, yet barely two hours could have passed. In so short a time, her dream had become reality.

Movement to her right caught Caroline's eye. A sort of cloister ran along the side of the building there. Thirty yards away, a dark-skinned figure stood beneath it, beside one of the pillars that supported its sloping, red-tiled roof. A second figure joined her and then one more, much lighter-skinned. Together, the three girls stepped out onto the grass. Caroline caught her breath as she saw a flash of blonde hair.

* * * * *

Douglas awoke to the feel of M'shende rubbing the deep, warm cleft between her buttocks against his morning erection. He entered her as she was, on her side with her back to him, sliding one hand to her breast and the other to her clitoris as her soft, moist opening yielded to his cock. Her response was everything it had been on the previous night. Once more the muscles of her sheath tightened, rippling over his shaft as he took her slowly, making the pleasure last. Only when M'shende had gasped and groaned her way to orgasm did he roll her onto her back and fuck her hard until he came with a long, rumbling growl of satisfaction. Almost immediately, the girl began to clench her sex around his cock. He checked his wristwatch. The morning was slipping away, and he had remembered Caroline Milton.

"Mastah," M'shende breathed, smiling up at him, and Douglas felt his shrunken cock reviving under her sheath's renewed caresses. To hell with his curiosity, he decided and lowered his lips to hers.

A little later, while he shaved in the bathroom, M'shende entered, squatted on the toilet and let loose a powerful stream of piss.

"You bath now, Mastah," she said with no sign of shyness or embarrassment on her smiling face, while Douglas looked on in astonishment. Van Gryf's home was like nothing he had ever seen before. The only place he had ever seen girls behave in a way even remotely similar was a high-class brothel in Paris where a French acquaintance had taken him during the war. The Afrikaner was unlikely to appreciate the comparison, Douglas thought dryly.

As soon as he sank into the bathwater, M'shende began washing him. Her soapy hands running over his body stirred his penis to life once more. By the time he stood to enjoy the feel of her slick palms on the hard muscles of his legs and buttocks, he was fully erect again. M'shende's fingers curled around his rearing shaft. With a surge of complete happiness that he was alive to experience such pleasure, Douglas grabbed the girl and pulled her into the water.

Only the thought that he was keeping Van Gryf waiting finally persuaded the Scotsman to reluctantly forsake M'shende's delightful and seemingly inexhaustible body. The image of Mrs. Milton writhing in orgasm as the handcuffs closed on her wrist came into his mind as he buttoned his shirt, and he was suddenly eager to hear the mystery revealed.

Her brassiere and knickers still lay on the arm of the chair when Douglas entered the living room, but to his disappointment Van Gryf was not there. Abu appeared.

"Breakfast on the veranda in ten minutes, Bwana," he announced and with a pat to M'shende's rounded backside, escorted her towards the back of the house.

Douglas watched her swaying hips. The girl looked back over her shoulder and gave him a simmeringly seductive smile. Hoping it was not the last he would see of her, he felt a twinge of envy for his host. Van Gryf could have the girl any time he chose. For him, she had been only a fleeting pleasure before he returned to Nairobi and his search for some way of bolstering his dwindling bank account.

Lighting his first cigarette of the day, Douglas strolled along the veranda, turning the corner and following it as far as the rear of the house. Thirty yards in front of him stood a long, two storied, white building with

a gently sloping, red-tiled roof. The other structures within the compound were all the usual sort he would expect to find on a large, agricultural estate, but the purpose of what was by far the biggest building eluded him. It was a large square, and its blank, windowless front and arched double doorway reminded him of a castle a medieval knight might have built at the centre of his domain. The analogy was apt, he thought. With his vast lands in the bush, far from the white rule of Nairobi, Van Gryf was not so very different from a medieval baron, running his estates as he saw fit, dispensing justice and defending himself when the need arose, virtually a law unto himself.

The idea appealed to the Scotsman and he felt envious again. He could imagine carving out his own little kingdom in this part of Africa he had taken such a liking to, free from the conventions and restrictions of so-called civilisation. It was a far cry from the restless lack of purpose that had dogged him since the war. There were other attractions too, like M'shende, with her willingness and obedience that came without the complication of any demand for the affection Douglas found it so difficult to feel for anyone these days.

He finished his cigarette and turned away from the unusual building, in no doubt that it was the one Mrs. Milton had enigmatically called the 'stables'. After all he had seen and heard, Douglas was beginning to think it might contain something more interesting than horses.

Van Gryf was sitting at the table on the veranda when the Scotsman returned to the front of the house. He looked up from a big plate of eggs and bacon and smiled a greeting.

"Good morning. Did you enjoy M'shende?"

"Van Gryf, she was superb," Douglas said with complete sincerity. "I've never had a girl her equal."

The Afrikaner's smile broadened. "I'm glad to hear you say so."

"And I'm bloody grateful you let me have her, believe me,"

Douglas said, making a start on the breakfast Abu put before him.

"It was a small thing," Van Gryf assured him, forking bacon into his mouth.

They ate in silence, Douglas content to satisfy the needs of his stomach before those of his curiosity. Afterwards, he leaned back in his chair, lit a cigarette and eyed the Afrikaner with mounting anticipation.

“Caroline Milton,” Van Gryf said, lighting his own cigarette. “You must have realised she gets excited, sexually excited I mean, by being dominated. Ordered about, treated without respect, confined and that sort of thing.”

Douglas nodded. He had worked that much out last night, though M’shende’s presence in his bed had given him no time to think about it.

“I knew a girl like that,” he said. “She was always wanting to be demeaned and humiliated. Put in her place, she called it. Once, she even asked me to piss in her mouth.”

Van Gryf arched an eyebrow. “Did you?”

“Yes, but I didn’t bother with her again after that.”

“What was she like outside the bedroom?” the Afrikaner asked.

Douglas shrugged. “Like any other respectable young woman, I suppose.”

“Doing all the things respectable young women like to do?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I don’t think that is at all what Caroline wants.” Van Gryf gave a regretful shake of his head. “I can’t understand why I didn’t spot her submissiveness long ago. What *she* is asking for is to be dominated twenty-four hours a day, every day.”

Douglas blew out cigarette smoke and gulped his coffee. “That’s so bizarre it’s damn near unbelievable,” he said when he had recovered from the shock. “I’ve never heard of anything like it. With the woman I knew, it was just a preliminary to sex. What she did to get aroused.”

Van Gryf smiled thinly. “But if Caroline is to be believed, it goes a great deal deeper than that as far as she is concerned. It’s as if she wants to be aroused all the time. But there has to be more to it than just sex. I’m not really sure. As I told her, no one has ever come to me with a request like hers. It’s not just extraordinary that anyone would want such a way of life, it’s entirely the opposite of my experience.”

“Why did she choose you?” Douglas asked. “Oh, I suppose she was thinking of your African girls.”

“No, she had never seen them before last night.”

“Well, she said she saw *something* in your stable. That must have put the idea in her head, and you told her if she stayed here, M’shende and N’dele would be her equals. She must have had some notion of the

way she would be treated if she became one of your servants, though the way you described it, it sounded like nothing short of - .”

The thought struck home like a fist in the Scotsman’s belly.

Chapter 6

Van Gryf's level gaze met Douglas's stare of amazement. "You're right. M'shende and N'dele aren't my servants."

How could he have been so stupid, Douglas asked himself? He found his voice at last. "For heaven's sake, man, Caroline Milton is a white woman."

"And a very beautiful one," Van Gryf agreed. "But what she wants to be is a white *slave*."

Douglas was silent, his mind grappling with the scarcely credible idea that the girl had been asking, even begging, that Van Gryf make her a slave.

"White Ivory." He spoke the thought aloud, noticed the cigarette between his fingers and drew on it, inhaling deeply.

"That's what they call them," Van Gryf agreed.

The Scotsman felt numb, like when he had spent hours under shellfire in the trenches. "She can't be serious," he said finally.

"She thinks she is. I hope to make her see she's wrong."

"I understand now why you want to change her mind," Douglas said.

"Oh, it isn't because she's a white woman." Van Gryf smiled at his shocked look. "I intended to tell you the rest, but I think it will be easier to let you see for yourself. If you're interested, that is?"

The Scot was even more intrigued than he had been on the previous day. He guessed where Van Gryf would lead him. As they approached the stable, Douglas thought of the skills M'shende had shown. He found it not at all difficult to imagine Caroline Milton on her knees with his cock between her lips, or her hips moving rhythmically beneath him as he thrust into her rippling sex. A slave, he thought, willing, obedient, and if she meant what she said, begging to be used in any way a man might want to use such a lovely woman.

The immediate thickening of Douglas's penis after all his recent exertions was just something else to add to his lengthening list of surprises, as Van Gryf carefully locked the doors of the building behind them. He slid back two large bolts on a door to the left and motioned the

Scotsman to precede him. With an increasing sense of unreality, Douglas stepped inside.

He was in a large room furnished with sofas and armchairs and low tables covered with a scattering of magazines. Its long window looked out onto an area of grass and shade trees, accessible through French doors that led to a covered walkway and then the garden itself. There was no one in the room, but as Douglas followed Van Gryf to the door in its opposite wall he heard girlish voices beyond the open French doors.

The first person he saw when he entered the next room was M'shende. In the act of stepping indoors from the garden, she immediately assumed the position, hands behind her back and feet slightly apart, that Van Gryf had made Mrs. Milton take up the previous night. She gave the men a short, respectful bow of her head. She was naked, except for a little semi-circular leather apron thonged around her hips.

"Mastah," she said, eyes glittering as she turned her smile on Douglas.

"M'shende," Van Gryf acknowledged as they passed her. The Scotsman looked back at the jut of the girl's breasts and her luscious curves. She seemed changed in some way, though there was nothing obvious in her appearance. Then it struck him. Last time he had seen her, he had thought of her as a servant. Now he was seeing her for the first time as a slave. He had never imagined a single word could make such a difference. His cock twitched.

Hurrying after Van Gryf, he passed an empty sleeping cubicle, sparsely furnished but comfortable looking, then another. The Afrikaner awaited him at a third where another African girl stood in the respectful position Van Gryf seemed to always require. She was almost as tall as the men, with a build and features that clearly proclaimed her origin, and she had the startling, sloe-eyed beauty so characteristic of the women of her tribe.

"Ulemba," Van Gryf said. "She's nineteen, and like all the Masai girls I've met, she's a bit too flighty for her own good sometimes." A smile played over his lips. "How long since your high-spirits last got you into trouble, Ulemba?"

The girl smiled back, gave Douglas a look that was brazenly inquisitive, and pushed out her big, pointed breasts. “Nearly two weeks now, Mastah.”

“That’s good going for you.” The Afrikaner chuckled. “This is Mr. Douglas, as I see you’re dying to know. Give him a proper greeting.”

“Welcome, Mastah.” She bowed her head and gave a wiggle of her hips that made her firm teats shake.

“I told you to greet him, not seduce him,” Van Gryf said, laughing as he turned to Douglas. “You see what I mean? Flighty.”

Struggling to arrange everything he was seeing into some semblance of order in his mind, the Scotsman could only nod and follow Van Gryf down the short passage ahead to another open door. He stopped short as a glance to his left revealed a doorless bathroom and N’dele squatting over a bidet. Van Gryf joined Douglas as the girl looked up. She got to her feet at once, water streaming down the insides of her thighs, and assumed the position of respect.

“Forgive me, Mastah. I did not see you.”

Douglas thought he saw a flicker of relief on her face when Van Gryf waved her apology aside. Could she be punished just for a moment of inattention, he wondered? He remembered she was a slave. She could be punished for any reason Van Gryf chose. His gut went tight. Or for no reason at all.

“We only lock these at night,” the Afrikaner said, answering the question in Douglas’s mind as they passed through the next door and into another dormitory exactly like the one they had just left. Three young women came hurrying in from the garden, obviously alerted to their presence, and presented themselves in position before Van Gryf. They were not Africans, at least not local Africans. Their skins were lighter and their features more resembled those Douglas was familiar with from his time in the Middle East. They bowed their heads as Ulemba had, and looked at him with undisguised interest as soon as they raised them.

“Eyes down,” Van Gryf barked, and the girls instantly obeyed. “Forgive their staring, Douglas. They haven’t seen any man but myself and Mustafa in a long while. Come here, Atiyah.”

One of the girls stepped forward. Douglas knew her name was an Arab one meaning ‘gift’.

“Look at me.” Van Gryf stroked her left breast. Douglas watched her nipple swell to erection, her sultry, black eyes narrowing as the Afrikaner’s fingers teased the pale-brown point and her other nipple stiffened of its own accord. The Scotsman’s penis, swollen since the moment he had entered the building, responded by thickening even more. He eyed the narrow rectangles of white silk the girls wore suspended around their hips from a fabric belt, all the covering they had for their buttocks and sexes. As he looked up, he saw the two girls not receiving Van Gryf’s caresses staring at his groin, and the tip of the nearest girl’s tongue slide over her sensuous lips. Her nipples thickened visibly, lifting with her breasts as she inhaled deeply.

“Those two so insolently staring at your cock are Badroula and Zaina,” Van Gryf said. The girls giggled and fluttered their eyelashes until he sent them all scurrying back into the garden. There was little that escaped his notice, Douglas thought, somewhat embarrassed that the Afrikaner had seen his obvious lust. It lasted only until he realised Van Gryf’s trousers were bulging as much as his own and he understood that the whole point of the girls being almost naked was to titillate and arouse. There was no reason to feel self-conscious when it worked.

“You haven’t said a word since we came in,” Van Gryf said as they set off towards another door. “I thought you’d have questions, Douglas. At least tell me if you like what you’ve seen so far.”

“Yes,” the Scotsman said hurriedly. “That is... I’m sure I’ll think of some questions eventually. It’s just a bit hard to take in for the moment. This place, the whole idea.... Well, I know what I’m seeing. It’s just a bit of a surprise.”

The Afrikaner seemed to relax. “Ah, of course. I thought I hadn’t misjudged my man. But you do understand? They are *all* slaves. *My* slaves.”

“Yes, I understand.” Douglas gestured at his surroundings. “I just didn’t expect anything like this.”

Van Gryf grinned. “Come and see the rest.”

They entered another dormitory. A girl sitting in the armchair in the first cubicle sprang to her feet.

“Arsinoe,” Van Gryf said as she bowed respectfully.

“Greek? A European?” Douglas asked in surprise. The girl’s beauty unmistakably bore the stamp of the Mediterranean.

“From Cyprus.” The Afrikaner moved to the next cubicle.

Douglas stared, in no doubt whatever about the origins of the girl before him. “She *is* European,” he said.

“Technically, Julia is African,” Van Gryf corrected. “I picked her up in the Union. But what you really mean is she’s a white woman.”

“And your slave?” Douglas had less difficulty with the word than he expected. He looked uncertainly at the South African girl but she did not react to him speaking it.

“Of course. Every girl here is a slave. A sex slave. Trained and nurtured solely to give me pleasure. Isn’t that so, Julia?”

“Yes, Master.” There was no trace of Afrikaans in her accent. She could have been as British as Douglas. Yet Van Gryf owned her as surely as the Scot owned his Chevrolet. She was property, a possession. She was White Ivory.

Van Gryf stroked one of her pink nipples, and then traced a line with his fingertip down to the gentle bow of her belly. Her nostrils flared. He unfastened the belt at her hips and her white, silk loin-covering fell at her feet.

“Bald as a French tart.” Douglas spoke without thinking. At once, he looked at the girl’s face, embarrassed for her as well as himself by the crudity of his comment. Julia did not return his gaze. Her half-closed eyes were fixed on the thick erection beneath his trousers. She was a slave, Douglas told himself, and let his gaze return to her sex. Julia’s love-mound and labia were as hairless as M’shende’s, her slit and the pink hood of her clitoris entirely revealed.

“Touch her if you like,” Van Gryf said.

Very unsure of himself, Douglas reached out a hand that shook slightly and felt a warm glow spreading over his cheeks. Julia sucked in her belly and gasped as the Scotsman explored the little crevices on either side of her pussy-lips with one finger. He stroked the outer edges of the fleshy crescents, seeing the rise and fall of her breasts quicken. Confidence growing when she gave a low moan, Douglas slid his fingertip the length of her narrow cleft with just enough pressure to part it a fraction. Her hips pushed forward, seeking penetration.

Van Gryf stood behind the girl, one hand on her shoulder, the other smoothing over the skin of her back and buttocks while Douglas sought the hood of her clitoris. He had barely begun to rub there when her

pointed bud rose from its concealing folds. Still holding her hands behind her back, Julia pressed herself against his teasing finger, breathing hard. Douglas pushed it into her wet pussy. With a deep, sighing groan she thrust herself avidly down onto his rapidly moving digit. Julia's girl-musk filled the air as Douglas felt her juices flow over his hand. His cock was twitching hungrily as he watched the girl's stiff-nippled breasts bounce in time with the gyrations of her hips.

"I think that will do," Van Gryf said, giving him a grin and a wink.

Regretfully, Douglas pulled his finger from the girl. She groaned her disappointment.

"You see? They all respond the same, no matter their colour or race." Van Gryf pushed the slave girl away. "You can finish yourself off, Julia."

"Thank you, Master," she panted, and immediately flung herself on her bed, raised her knees and reached for her sex with both hands.

"We won't linger," the Afrikaner said as Douglas watched the girl masturbate. "I don't know about you, but I could use a little relief." He walked straight past the empty cubicle next to Julia's. "Sylvie isn't here. She's being punished. You'll see her later."

Punished how, the Scotsman wondered, but Van Gryf's mention of relief sounded more interesting. Another open door admitted them into yet another dormitory. How many more, Douglas thought, and how many more beauties did Van Gryf possess? He was not quite so surprised when a white woman presented herself at the front of the next cubicle.

"Annaliese, my first acquisition," Van Gryf said as the girl bowed her head and took a breath that lifted her tight, smallish breasts invitingly. Her large, brown, doe-eyes stared at him wonderingly. She was naked. When she saw him looking at her hairless sex, she gave a little jiggle of her slim hips.

"Another flighty one," Van Gryf explained. "Behave yourself, Annie. I hope you've been obeying my orders about playing with yourself."

"Yes, Master," the slender girl replied, and her mouth twitched fleetingly at its corners. Douglas thought he detected a slight German accent.

"Go and play outside, Annie," Van Gryf told her. He grinned after she had gone. "It's a little game the girls and I play. I forbid them to

masturbate without permission, they pretend they're obeying me, and I pretend I don't know they're doing it every day." He chuckled. "Of course, they know they're for it if they get caught, but that just seems to add a little spice for them. It helps stop them getting bored. Mustafa and I have other things to do, so there are times they're pretty much left to themselves."

"Mustafa?"

"You'll meet him soon." Van Gryf moved on to the next cubicle. Only after staring for several seconds did Douglas realise the nude, blonde girl who had risen from the chair was not Mrs. Milton, but she *was* Caroline's equal in every way. Her hair was the same corn-gold shade and her lovely face had the same straight nose, smooth jaw-line and high cheekbones that made the English girl so strikingly beautiful. Her breasts might be a little smaller but they thrust out with an identical, proudly provocative up-tilt and she was just as long-legged and prettily curved.

"This is Mr. Douglas, Natasha," Van Gryf said.

"Yes, Master." The girl bowed. "How do you do, Master?" Even her voice was similar, though her accent was much different.

"Is she Russian?" Douglas asked, and discovered he was no longer embarrassed about asking questions concerning the slaves when they could overhear him.

"Yes, a refugee from the Bolsheviks. Natasha was a bit of a fluke. I found her in Durban when I was there last year. She was fresh off the boat and penniless when I picked her up. Does she remind you of someone?"

Douglas nodded, eyes fixed on the blonde beauty's nudity. "They could almost be twins."

"Yes indeed. Come, Natasha." Van Gryf went to the last cubicle. "Susan," he barked.

The girl was face down on the bed. She slid her feet to the floor, gave a pained gasp as she levered herself upright, and hurried to take up the position of respect before him. Douglas saw her wince as she placed her hands behind her back. He had noticed how red the cheeks of her bottom looked before she turned to face them.

"Are you sorry now that you slapped Sylvie?" Van Gryf demanded.

“Yes, Master.” Her wide, blue eyes filled suddenly with tears. It added to her air of vulnerability, which Douglas was feeling guilty about finding so appealing. Like Annaliese, she was narrow-waisted and her breasts were small, though the erect nipples tipping the hard cones of each teat were longer and a darker red. Again, no hair obscured the slit of her sex or the pink protuberance of her clitoral hood.

“What was the argument about?” Van Gryf asked.

“I don’t remember,” Susan said.

“Liar! Though I’m sure it was nothing of importance.”

“She started it, Master,” the girl said indignantly.

“But you hit her first, according to the other girls. Or are they all lying, despite knowing the consequences if they’re caught?”

“No, Master.” Susan gave a sob. “You didn’t even come to watch.”

“Mustafa is quite capable of disciplining you without me being present,” Van Gryf said. “As you can see, I haven’t gone to watch Sylvie either.” He wagged an admonishing finger. “And I don’t want to hear that you and she have been arguing again after she comes back, unless you want another caning the minute your bottom is healed. Do you want to spend the whole week wondering how many strokes you’ll get next time?”

“No, Master,” Susan said quickly.

“Then turn around, bend over and show Mr. Douglas what happens to naughty girls who misbehave.”

As the girl presented her buttocks to him, the Scotsman learned his capacity for being surprised had greatly diminished since he had first entered Van Gryf’s stable. Her pert rear-cheeks were streaked with raised, fiery-red wheals that could only have been inflicted very recently.

“I find corporal punishment the best way to maintain order,” Van Gryf explained - very casually, it seemed to Douglas’s ear. “I particularly do not tolerate fighting. Too much risk of injury and scarring. That’s why this little minx got thirty with the cane while we were at dinner last evening.” He put a hand gently on her bowed head and stroked her light-brown hair. “And why Sylvie got exactly the same this morning.”

Paradoxically, if Douglas was shocked, it was by the fact that he was not really very shocked at all. He had an intense desire to reach out and run his fingertips over the angry, red and crimson ridges on the girl’s

pale skin, and slip a finger between the pink petals that peeped out invitingly from her pouting sex. It was not the way he had expected to react to the knowledge that Van Gryf beat his slave girls. Slave girls! The words themselves were fascinating, stimulating.

“Now, Mr. Douglas is going to sit on your bed, Susan, and you are going to suck his cock. Perhaps, if you are very good, he may give you permission to play with your pussy afterwards.” The Afrikaner grinned at Douglas and gestured to the bed.

With a fierce thrill of excitement, the Scot sat down and leaned back on his hands. Susan hurried to kneel between his legs, wincing in pain as she reached for his belt buckle. Freed from the restraint of his trousers, Douglas’s cock sprang upright and the satin touch of the girl’s fingers curling around his throbbing flesh made him catch his breath.

Van Gryf sat in the armchair. Douglas watched the supple play of muscle in Natasha’s buttocks as she got to her knees before him, deftly loosening his trousers and drawing forth his swollen cock. As her hand guided a shaft equal in length and girth to Douglas’s own between her parted lips, he realised he need have no concerns that his manhood did not measure up.

A warm, wet tongue running the length of his penis from base to head abruptly focused his attention on the girl at his feet. Douglas watched her lips close over the tip of his cock and felt their pressure as they seemed to draw it into her mouth. With a surge of delight, he learned that Susan was as skilled as M’shende. She showed the same enthusiasm too, sucking, licking and nibbling his shaft, her fingers fluttering softly and tantalisingly along its length every time she slid it from her mouth to flick her tongue over its bulbous head. The feeling was unbelievable. The whole situation was unbelievable. Douglas surrendered to the pleasure.

Determined to make it last as long as possible he pushed the girl’s hand from his penis. “Just your mouth. And look into my eyes.” They were the first orders he had ever knowingly given to a slave girl. A sudden, profound feeling of power and supremacy filled him. Only during the war had he experienced a similar emotion, when he had had a man in the sights of his rifle and known that he held in his hands the power of life and death.

With the same rush of elation he had felt then, he stared into Susan's bright, wide eyes. What lay behind their liquid depths, he wondered - resentment and hatred, or humility and submission? He had only just met this girl, knew nothing about her except her name. And none of it mattered a damn, because she was a slave and would do as she was told or pay the price for her disobedience. His come exploded into her mouth.

As the fierce shudders of his climax subsided and Douglas could open his eyes, Susan drew her lips from his cock and he watched her bobbing throat as she swallowed his spunk. It would always fascinate him, no matter how often he saw it. At once, the girl began sucking him again. It struck him she would continue until he told her to stop.

"Do you want to come?" he asked her.

She freed her lips from his cock long enough to answer. "Yes, please, Master."

With a glow of pleasure at how readily the young, white girl had used the respectful title, he laid her belly-down over his lap to spare her wheeled buttocks and slid two fingers into her wet sex. Douglas knew how to pleasure a woman. He had met a widow in her thirties while he was at college and had paid close attention to her coaching each time she had taken him to her bed. He found the little ridge of Susan's pleasure-spot and rubbed it firmly. When she was breathing fast and moaning, he slid his other hand beneath her and strummed her hard, little clit like a guitar string. As he played with Susan, he watched the curves of Natasha's back, her beautifully rounded bottom and her blonde head rising and falling above Van Gryf's groin. It could have been Caroline Milton kneeling there. Before long, it might be.

Susan bucked suddenly, pushing herself hard against Douglas's penetrating fingers, cooing and moaning as her juices flooded her and filled his nostrils with more heady woman-scent. While the girl shuddered over his knee, Douglas heard Van Gryf give a long groan and saw Natasha's head cease its rapid movements and tilt back as she swallowed. He resisted the urge to pat Susan's red-striped bottom, but he could not stop himself gently touching a finger to one of the raised welts. Still panting, she seemed not to notice.

“Good girl,” he told her, eased her onto the bed and fastened his trousers. Her head turned and blue eyes still misty with passion looked up at him.

“Th... thank you, Master.”

A feeling of intense satisfaction that was only partly due to his sexual release came over him. He smiled at her.

“Right, off you go and play with yourself, Natasha,” Van Gryf said. “Susan, you can do the same if you wish. Come on, Douglas.” He stepped through the open doors facing Susan’s cubicle and into the garden. A glance around showed Douglas they had walked the length of one side of the building. Van Gryf cut the corner to enter another dormitory. An exotically beautiful girl rose and presented herself as the Scotsman followed him inside.

“Here’s Marisse. I bought her from a Riff *mudir* who had brought her down to Khartoum to sell. She’s half-Arab, half-French, captured in a raid. She was still virgin. The Riff likes his women big and she wasn’t to his taste.”

The girl’s face betrayed no resentment at being discussed like an object but, with the words ‘bought’ and ‘sell’ repeating themselves in his mind, Douglas noticed the inquisitive glance she gave him when she thought no one was looking. The Afrikaner made her display the marks of a less recent beating than Susan’s on the fine, honey-coloured skin of her bottom.

“She’s still under training, but far enough along to be allowed to mix with the others,” he said. “I let most of the girls socialise during the day.” He led the way back outdoors and pointed to Ulemba and one of the Arab girls, whose name Douglas had forgotten, playing with a ball on the grass. “They can sit in the lounge too and move through the dormitories. They’re only locked in at night.”

They passed two more girls, nude but for their scanty loincloths. They bowed, but Van Gryf did not stop to speak to them. Both were white women and immensely lovely but Douglas refused to be surprised. It was too exhausting.

“We won’t bother with those two for now,” Van Gryf said when they were beyond earshot. “They won’t be here much longer, though they don’t know that, of course.”

Douglas wanted to ask why but another question was uppermost in his thoughts. "Do you beat them often?"

"Not the way Susan and Sylvie were beaten. Fighting is the worst offence. I prefer to fuck them than flog them, though I'll admit there is a certain pleasure in it. A sense of mastery, I suppose, of dominance and the satisfaction of being in complete control."

Douglas did not comment. He had just felt all those things himself.

"I have to keep order," Van Gryf continued. "They're a spirited bunch or they wouldn't be here. They expect to be punished if they break the rules." He laughed. "Of course, I make the rules, so I can change them any time I please, and without telling the girls. It keeps them interested and on their toes. I don't want them getting lazy."

"Thirteen", Douglas said. "You have thirteen slave girls."

"Plus the two we just passed," Van Gryf agreed.

"And Caroline Milton."

Van Gryf gave him a wry look. "Maybe. Let's go and see her."

Chapter 7

The Afrikaner first took Douglas to meet Mustafa. As soon as the Scot saw him, he knew him for a eunuch and stopped wondering why Van Gryf was willing to trust his girls to the man.

“How is our latest addition, Mustafa?” Van Gryf asked.

“Frightened, *effendi*, but not so much as they usually are at first. And you were right about her masturbating. She shows no inclination to resist her desires. She is much more willing than the others were in the beginning, and she was as excited as she was afraid when I confined her hands.”

“It may be the restraints she likes best,” Van Gryf said thoughtfully. “We’ll need to watch her carefully. I’ve been talking about her particular tendencies to Douglas, here. I think he knows more about them than we do.”

“Hardly,” the Scot protested. “One brief encounter when I was home on leave doesn’t make me an expert.”

“It’s still more than I’ve had,” Van Gryf replied. “My speciality is turning the unwilling into the willing. In Caroline’s case, the job is to do the exact opposite. I’ll take any help I can get.”

“It is too soon to make judgements, *effendi*,” Mustafa said. “She is excitable, undisciplined and unschooled, but they are all like that when they arrive. She may well prove satisfactory with the proper training.”

“Yes, but what is the proper training? And what if she doesn’t prove satisfactory? That’s why I only gave her four weeks. I don’t want her to end up being no good to me but no good for any other sort of life either.” He sighed and fished out a cigarette. “I assume Sylvie is still in room one?”

“Yes, *effendi*, but I have arranged room two as you requested.”

“Then we’ll carry on as planned. Take Caroline along while we look in on Sylvie.” He shook his head. “Damn it, I can’t help feeling this isn’t going to end well, for me or for Caroline. I should have just sent her on her way.”

“Why didn’t you?” Douglas asked.

The Afrikaner barked a laugh. “Because it’s entirely possible that I am completely wrong.”

* * * * *

Caroline had stopped watching the garden. It was as frustrating as the persistent buzzing of her bottom and the unreachable tingling in her pussy. She had seen at least six girls. She longed to speak to them, to learn about their experiences and what would happen to her, and how they had come to be there. She was not fool enough to believe there were many like her, eager to surrender their independence, their will, their whole future. Caroline had had many months to think about what she had fleetingly witnessed on her last visit to Van Gryf's home. The more she had pondered, the more she had become convinced it was not just her own cravings that had persuaded her the Afrikaner took pleasure in dominating women. The knowledge had obsessed her until the mere sight of him had been enough to make her aroused, and she had almost wished he would stop calling at the mission.

Caroline knew now that she had been naive to think the girl she had glimpsed through the stable window had been a willing participant. Nor could it be true of all the others she had seen. Most were surely not there of their own free will. She gulped. Unlike herself, they really were prisoners. The tingling in her sex grew more urgent and she tugged again at the straps holding her wrists. It was maddening that they prevented her relieving her desire, but it was wonderful too, constantly reminding her of her subjugation. She was completely in Van Gryf's hands, to be used however he wished, to obey him or – a delicious ripple ran through her – to be made to obey him.

She eyed the dressing table. If she bent her knees just a little she could rub herself on its corner. Caroline frowned. She would be disobeying if she did it, but it might allay her passions for a while. She could barely think with her pulsing pussy continuously driving her to distraction. She looked away, once again determined to overcome Van Gryf's opposition and make him admit her to the ranks of his slave girls. Slave girl – the words alone made her dizzy with excitement.

Driven back to the window by her frustration, Caroline found the girls had gone, retreating from the sun as it climbed higher above the rooftops. Behind its slatted window-blinds and thick walls, the dormitory remained cool and very silent. She went to the bed, the only place she

could sit comfortably with her hands fastened behind her, and tried to wait calmly for whatever was to come. Apart from the soft, rapid thud of her heartbeat, there was no sound.

The bolts of the door sliding back made Caroline's heart leap and her belly go tight. She stood and faced the pat-pat of approaching sandaled feet, straightening her back and lifting her head as Mustafa appeared and beckoned her. Dry-mouthed, she followed him past his living quarters, turned a corner, and entered a white-paved corridor. A frightening thought flooded her mind as she passed a closed door and the eunuch's hand on her cuffed wrists halted her outside another.

"Oh, sir, I'm not going to be punished, am I?"

"Never you mind, missy," Mustafa said, ushering her through the door and pointing to the red-tiled floor. "Kneel there facing the chairs." He left Caroline alone and trembling.

The room was large, divided into two by a curtain. Long windows high on one wall let in light from the corridor. The others were stark, solid, white stone and bare except for a cupboard fixed to the one behind the two plain, wooden chairs before which Caroline knelt. This could not be the room she had glimpsed that night, she realised, for there was no window in its outer wall. Hanging from the ceiling though, was a light like the one she had seen, a cone-shaped shade at the end of a long flex. Her heart thumped louder. Glancing over her shoulder, Caroline saw a large, misshapen object hidden beneath a dustcover and wished she had not looked. Fear of the unknown kept her shivering as she waited.

The door opened. Caroline saw Van Gryf and, with gut-wrenching consternation, the Englishman, Douglas, framed in the doorway.

"...pretty sure Sylvie did start it, even if Susan struck the first blow," she heard Van Gryf say before he sat on one of the chairs and Douglas on the other. A shiver across Caroline's skin added to her body's quaking as she raised her head and saw Van Gryf's uncompromising stare settle upon her.

"Tell me what you saw last New Year, Caroline."

"S... sir?"

"Describe what you saw, and I want to know how you managed to see it. You can't have followed me inside."

"No, sir. I... I went around the sides. It was late and I wondered what you... That is, I... I was curious." Caroline described how she had

seen the glimmer of light from a window and looked through the tiny crack where the blind was broken.

“That would be next door. I’ll have to see it’s repaired,” Van Gryf said, lighting the cigarette Douglas gave him. “So, what did you see through this crack, Caroline?”

“I... I saw a girl with blonde hair.” Caroline was having difficulty breathing. “She... she could almost have been me, except... except...”

“What was she doing?”

“N... Nothing. She couldn’t. She was... was bound, fastened to something.” Her pussy quivered.

The Afrikaner stood, walked to the dustcover and whisked it away. “To this.”

Her pussy clenched tight. It was a large, rectangular wooden block with a T-shaped iron bar fixed to one end. Riveted to the centre of the crossbar was a hinged, steel collar and at either end, wrist cuffs of the same metal.

“Y... yes,” Caroline stammered. “She was kneeling, moving all the time, as if she couldn’t keep still. There was a round patch of light shining down. The rest of the room was dark and you were walking around her. Y... you had something in your hand.”

“How do you know it was me when most of the room was dark?”

“You kept stepping into the light, flicking your hand towards her. She... she was wriggling. I...” Caroline faltered as Van Gryf strode to the cupboard. She turned her head to watch him, and saw Douglas’s dark gaze move from her breasts to the curls on her mound and the slit below it that her kneeling posture could not conceal. The warmth flowing through her sex turned to heat.

Van Gryf opened the cupboard and Caroline’s breath caught in her throat. A row of canes and whips and similar implements whose names she did not know, filled the space within. Chest tight, she watched him remove something.

“This is what you saw, Caroline,” he said, moving ominously closer. “Fine, plaited strands of horse’s tail. Twenty of them.” He stood at her side and draped them over her right shoulder and breast. “Feel them.”

How could she with her hands cuffed, Caroline thought, and in the same instant he stepped back and flicked the whip across her breast.

“Ow!” She cried more in surprise than hurt. Her skin tingled, rather than stung. She looked sharply up at him.

“That’s what I was doing, Caroline. The girl’s name is Natasha,” Van Gryf said and his stern gaze increased the moist tickling in her sex. “Could you hear anything?” He smiled thinly at her headshake. “I thought not. The girl was begging me. Begging me to let her come.”

“Oh!” Caroline’s pussy clenched again.

The Afrikaner pulled her to her feet and over to the wooden block. She felt his overpowering strength as he pushed her to her knees.

“Straddle it.”

Giddy with nervous excitement, Caroline placed her knees either side of the wood with the iron bar at her back. The pressure of Van Gryf’s hand bent her forward and he freed her wrists. She fought the need to dive her hands to her wildly twitching sex.

“Keep them away from your pussy,” Van Gryf ordered, as if he had read her thoughts. His hand on her head drew her upright and pushed her back until the nape of her neck touched cold steel. Mind whirling, Caroline felt the hinged collar close across her throat and heard the snick of the catch lock it in place.

“Ooh!”

“Calm down,” Van Gryf cautioned her. “No coming without permission or you know what to expect.”

Caroline wanted to tell him she did not, but could find no words amidst her swelling excitement. Eagerly, she raised her arms to help the Afrikaner secure her wrists.

“Ooh!” She was trapped, held fast as the girl she had seen through the window had been. Caroline’s simmering sex abruptly reached boiling point. For long, tortuous, tantalising seconds she hovered on the brink of orgasm, a hairsbreadth from the raging release that had been bubbling up inside her for hours. The sudden, sharp slash of the horsetail whip across her squirming abdomen made her eyes snap open and stole away her climax.

“No!” Van Gryf said sharply. “You are *not* to come, Caroline.”

She blinked, eyes clouded with desire.

“Do you wish to stay here?”

“Yes! Yes, sir,” she panted.

“Then you will accept my authority completely. You will obey me.”

“I... I will, sir.”

“Then you will not come unless I say so.”

“Ooh!” His harsh, inflexible tone sent thrills shivering through Caroline’s sheath. “It’s... it’s hard, sir.” She fought the feelings off somehow, groaning with frustrated passion.

“Of course it is.” Van Gryf flicked the whip across her breasts. “That’s why I have this to help you.” He went to the cupboard, handing the whip to Douglas. Through her half-closed lashes, Caroline saw the Englishman examine its short handle and its thin, plaited strands, then return his attention to her naked, shackled body. His dark eyes were intense and intent as he watched her, his expression unreadable, but his penis was straining the fabric of his pants leg. Van Gryf came back with something in his hand, the evidence of his own arousal plain in his trousers. She was doing that, Caroline thought with a thrill of mingled humiliation and excitement; arousing these strong, virile men by abasing herself before them. It was what she had always wanted.

Van Gryf knelt beside her. There was a hole in the wooden block directly below her. He slid the plug at the base of the ivory dildo he held into it and retrieved his whip.

“You will not allow your pussy to touch that,” he instructed. “If you do, I will punish you.”

The moment Van Gryf had put the dildo in place it had pressed against Caroline’s sex. With an immense effort of will she drew her pussy away from it. Her buttocks pushed hard into the iron bar behind her, making her arch her back, but that was so uncomfortable she had to move. She lifted herself and felt the steel collar dig into the muscles at the base of her neck. Shrinking from the discomfort, Caroline felt the dildo’s tip nudge her pussy-lips. The whip flicked her across her belly.

“Don’t touch,” Van Gryf barked.

Caroline pulled away and felt the hard iron against her bottom, arched her back, lifted herself, lowered herself, and hissed at the dildo’s touch. The horsetail whip struck her left breast and the tingling that was not quite pain spread across her skin.

How long it went on, Caroline had no idea. Too uncomfortable in any position to keep still for more than a few seconds, she squirmed

continuously in her struggle to avoid contact with the phallus. It was impossible. She knew it was meant to be. At some time during the cycle of movements she was being forced to make, the end of the dildo met the wet, quivering lips of her sex or the hard bud of her clitoris and sent tremors of delight coursing through her. Van Gryf continued to ply the whip to her breasts and belly, and with each flick what had begun as slight discomfort changed to a sensation of heat and then a burning sting.

Nevertheless, Caroline's arousal burned brighter with every rub and chafe, prod and press of the ivory against her pussy until she was weeping and whimpering with the effort of holding back. At last the inevitable happened. The whip and Van Gryf's harsh commands were no longer enough. Caroline came, her sheath writhing and roiling with an intensity she had never felt before. Stars swirled in her head as breath-taking spasms convulsed the whole of her belly, and she cried out in wild, unfettered passion.

It seemed a long time before the final, furious thrills of ecstasy eased enough for her to open her eyes, and longer still before she could focus them. She saw Douglas first, leaning towards her, eyes bright and his face flushed. Van Gryf was looking down at her and shaking his head.

"Not even ten minutes. Natasha lasted over an hour, and *she* waited for permission." His sudden smile surprised her. "Never mind. Call it an experiment. It isn't a normal part of the training at this stage." He drew back the curtain dividing the room. "This, however, is."

Caroline's mouth fell open and her last shivers of pleasure vanished as her stomach curled into a tight knot. Even the touch of the dildo was forgotten as renewed fear banished the mists of desire from her brain.

"Oh, you're going to punish me!" she cried as Van Gryf released her from the block and pulled her reluctant body upright. She struggled against his grip as he dragged her towards the padded leather surface and restraining straps of an oddly shaped table. The excitement of being bound was insignificant compared to Caroline's fear of being beaten. It was what had worried her most from the moment she had conceived the idea of offering herself to Van Gryf. Everything else about the concept of bondage attracted her immensely, but the thought of being hurt, being really hurt, so that she was permanently scarred, terrified her. Soon after

coming to Africa, Caroline had seen an overseer use a rhinoceros-hide sjambok on a native girl accused of stealing. The long, cruel lash had opened a bleeding wound on the girl's buttocks at the first stroke.

Shivering at the memory, Caroline raised tear-brimmed eyes to Van Gryf. "Oh, sir!"

"Calm down. I'm not going to take the skin off your backside, girl," he told her, as though again he knew exactly what she was thinking. While she trembled beside the table, he went to the cupboard and returned with a straight, slender cane no thicker than her little finger.

Before she could react, he smacked it across her bottom.

"Ow!" She clasped her hands to her stinging flesh and rubbed.

Van Gryf laughed softly. "Are you so frightened of a little pain? What use would you be to me with your backside torn to shreds, Caroline? Of course, you don't have to put up with it. We can return to the house. Your trunk is waiting where you left it."

His words were another challenge, Caroline thought. She remembered the nervousness, the trepidation and confusion she had been feeling all day, and the ever-present arousal that came with them. The trials she had faced so far meant nothing. This was her first true test – to endure that which she most definitely did not want, in order to have that which she did. She had longed for domination for years, dared for months to hope it might be within her reach. Was she going to let her only chance to realise her dream slip through her fingers after less than a day? The thought mocked her and she felt very foolish. Summoning her courage, Caroline looked up into Van Gryf's eyes again.

"No, sir."

"Feet in the stirrups and lie face down."

Two broad lengths of wood with their lower ends carved into stirrups angled down from one end of the table. Caroline stepped into them and laid her belly and breasts, still buzzing from the effects of the horsetail whip, upon the cool, leather tabletop. Despite her fear, she felt a little thrill as Van Gryf fastened a strap tightly around her left ankle.

"Would you see to her wrists, Douglas?"

The Englishman seemed diffident and buckled the first strap too loosely. Caroline raised her head as he refastened it, and their eyes met briefly before he looked away. Was he embarrassed to take part in her punishment? Should she not be the one to feel that? To relish the

delicious curl her humiliation caused in her belly? But she feared the cane too much to feel aroused. Caroline had an awful feeling that the stripes already marking her upturned bottom would seem trivial compared to the ones Van Gryf was about to deliver. She looked over her shoulder just as he raised the slim rod.

Caroline tensed, heard it swish through the air and cried out as it landed with a splat on her defenceless rear. Tears stung her eyes, more perhaps from relief than hurt. The cane's bite was sharp but brief, nothing like the savage pain she had been dreading. It still stung, and stung even more when the Afrikaner laid a second stroke across her jiggling buttocks, very close to the first. Caroline gave a soft cry and jerked her head up. Blurring with tears, her eyes met the Englishman's. As though transfixed, she could not look away while the cane cracked down four more times onto her smarting bottom.

"Perhaps you'd like to give her the other six, Douglas," Van Gryf said.

Caroline stiffened.

"I don't... I'm not..." He blinked and lifted his intense gaze from hers. "Yes! Yes, I believe I would."

Caroline watched him take the cane from the Afrikaner and give it a couple of practice swings that hissed menacingly. Would he be cruel? A surge of fear that set her heart racing had her tugging anxiously at the leather straps on her wrists and ankles.

The first blow was a tap, much lighter than any of Van Gryf's. The second was much harder, and the shock and burn of it scorching her tender skin made Caroline cry loudly. Douglas was not so rough dealing her the rest, but by the time he had finished, the cumulative effect of the twelve blows left her wriggling and gasping at the fiery heat radiating through her bottom.

"It was eight bucketfuls you managed this morning, wasn't it?" Van Gryf asked, moving to stand beside her head. "Eight from twenty is twelve, so that is the number of strokes you got."

"Oh!" Caroline looked up at him and he laughed at her surprise.

"No, I didn't punish you for coming. I said that wasn't part of your training. But carrying the water is. If you don't want to go through this again, you'll go faster tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow?"

Van Gryf laughed again. “You’ll do it every day until you fill the water-tank in thirty minutes. After that, you will take your turn like the other girls do.” His palm smoothed over her hot backside and she flinched. “Was it so very bad, then?”

“Not so *very*, sir,” Caroline admitted, though she dearly hoped the stinging would soon subside.

Van Gryf smiled at her. “Well done,” he said softly.

A little glow of pleasure spread through Caroline’s breast.

He checked his wristwatch. “We’ve missed lunch by a long way, Douglas. How about a cold beer and an early dinner?” When the Englishman agreed, Van Gryf left the room without another glance in Caroline’s direction. Douglas followed, but he turned in the doorway to look at her. The corners of his mouth lifted briefly. Then he was gone.

Shuddering, Caroline laid her cheek on the table. Rivulets of sweat ran over her helpless body and her buttocks were burning. But she had held out. The words that would have meant surrender had not passed her lips. She eyed the thing of wood and iron to which Van Gryf had first secured her. How exciting *that* had been. What torment she had suffered fighting to stave off her climax, and what an extremity of delight when the dildo’s teasing tip had finally forced her to yield. Caroline’s pussy quivered. Surely it had been worth the pain and even her terror when she had seen the cupboard filled with canes and whips, to experience such pleasure. Her belly fluttered. Had Van Gryf been lenient with her this first time? Next time he might be much harsher. Would she be able to stand it if he was? Anxiety made her limbs jerk against the leather straps. Another tremor tickled her sex.

Returned to her dormitory, Caroline was surprised but relieved when Mustafa did not cuff her wrists before locking her in. She saw the sun had almost disappeared below the rooftops and the garden was in shadow, apart from the well. Her heart sank at the thought her day would begin there again tomorrow and what the consequences would be when, as she certainly would, she failed to accomplish her task. Immediately, she went to the mirror and was shocked by the bright pink of the skin on her belly and breasts. She turned and saw the stripes on her buttocks were scarlet, with a single darker line where Douglas’s harder blow had struck.

With a tangle of thoughts and emotions overwhelming her, Caroline eased herself face-down on the bed and cautiously rubbed a hand over her smarting bottom. Soon, her other hand slid under her belly to the moist, tingling opening between her thighs.

* * * * *

“You’re taking a big risk showing me all that,” Douglas said, handing Van Gryf a cigarette and lighting one himself.

“I don’t think so.” The Afrikaner took a swallow of his beer.

Douglas sipped his own, looked out from the veranda at the savannah glowing orange in the light of the setting sun, then fixed his eyes on Van Gryf’s. “Those girls aren’t there by choice. They were coerced.”

Van Gryf’s level gaze did not waver. “Yes, they were. M’shende and N’dele were gifts from the local tribes. Some of the others I bought. The rest I took.”

“Took? You mean - ?”

“Kidnapped,” Van Gryf said. “Yes, that *is* the word. Didn’t you recognise Susan? Her picture was in all the newspapers for a while a couple of years ago.”

The girl had seemed vaguely familiar. Douglas suddenly remembered. “The tea heiress. She was lost on safari. The papers said she must have wandered off and been taken by lion.”

The Afrikaner smiled. “Not lion.”

“Hell’s bells!” Douglas remembered Susan’s wheeled buttocks and the feel of her warm mouth on his cock. He thought of Caroline Milton, all aflutter like a frightened dove, yet still eagerly assisting in her own degradation for the sake of sexual pleasure. The other girls had been even more compliant, yet they must have been the same once, perhaps even more afraid and probably a lot less willing. “It’s against the law,” he said, finally understanding Caroline’s hollow threat to go to the District Commissioner. “Buying or owning slaves is illegal.”

“Highly,” Van Gryf agreed. “So is selling them. I do that too, though not so often now that I’m established.”

He was too relaxed, Douglas thought, too matter-of-fact as he admitted it. “You seem very sure I won’t go to the authorities.”

The Afrikaner smiled thinly. "I said I had made enquiries about you after Milton's death. That wasn't strictly true. I knew you were in Nairobi long before that. I liked what I heard, so I sent a few cables to people I know in Britain and some of the places you've been more recently. They confirmed my opinion."

"Which is?" Douglas demanded, resentful of the man's prying.

"That you're a man after my own heart. You're not bound by convention. You have your own moral code. You have little interest in so-called civilisation, which is why you've been avoiding it ever since the war. And you're not afraid to act decisively when you see the need, regardless of the consequences."

"You've heard about those buggers in Palestine," Douglas said hotly. "They were robbing, raping and killing their own people, and brutally. When I caught them, I gave them what they deserved."

"And got fired for it."

Douglas shrugged. "Deskbound bureaucrats. I saved them the cost of a trial."

Van Gryf grinned. "Just what I'm talking about."

"Where are you going with this?" Douglas asked impatiently.

"Relax. Drink your beer." Van Gryf drained his glass. "I told you earlier that Mustafa and I have to leave the slaves to their own devices a lot, especially when there's training to be done. I was going to get another eunuch down from Khartoum to take some of the load, but I think I've found someone far more suitable for the job."

"What?" Douglas could not believe it. Stunned, he looked away from Van Gryf's unwavering gaze to the African landscape and the vast, deepening blue of the sky. He could not be serious, he thought, but the Afrikaner would never have revealed his secret unless he was. The Scotsman recalled his daydream about making his own kingdom in the bush. He remembered the superbly skilled, compliant slave girls, far beyond anything he could ever have imagined.

Here in Africa, where the veneer of civilisation lay thinly over an ancient and lawless culture, the idea of owning slaves suddenly seemed not only understandable but even justifiable. He knew there was a traffic in white slaves from Europe to North Africa and the Middle and Far East. Many of its victims would face a far tougher time than the girls in Van

Gryf's stable. Douglas would not have been surprised to learn that there was even such trafficking within Europe itself.

What did surprise him was the fact that, far from being repelled by the whole concept, he found it attractive. House them, feed them, train them, fuck them and – an image of Caroline Milton's buttocks yielding to the blows from his cane came to mind – when necessary, punish them. The pang of guilt and embarrassment he had felt as he struck her for the first time returned. He had let his lust and his fascination overcome his ingrained respect for the opposite sex when he had helped strap her to the table and watched Van Gryf beat her. And he had wanted so much to know how it would feel, physically and emotionally, to smack the cane onto her firm backside. She had looked stunning with her face powdered and painted. Her red lips and her long-lashed eyelids, subtly shaded with blue and grey beneath the slender arches of her eyebrows, had not overpowered her natural beauty but enhanced it. She had looked wildly exotic. The memory made his cock swell.

"You're offering me a job?" Douglas finally managed to say, and swallowed hard when Van Gryf nodded. He thought of the beautiful slaves – no need for courtship or declarations of an affection he could no longer feel; just straightforward, uncomplicated, and with those girls, incredibly arousing sex. Or was there an obvious catch to the unbelievable offer? "I'm no eunuch. I would never be able to keep my hands of them."

"You wouldn't have to," Van Gryf said.

"You'd share those beauties with me?" Douglas's incredulity reached new heights. "Why, for heaven's sake?"

"I told you, I liked what I heard. I like you better since we've met."

"And you decided you knew enough about me in only twenty four hours?"

"Less. I think I'm a fair judge of a man." He leaned forward. "It's not all fucking girls, Douglas. Slaving is a risky business. There'll be times I need you to watch my back. No one has ever measured up to that in the past. I need a man of action and judgement who isn't afraid to meet violence with violence when the need arises. I believe I've found him, but take some time to think it over if you wish."

"No need," Douglas said. "I accept."

Chapter 8

They remained on the veranda, smoking and drinking until sunset. Van Gryf explained how he had found himself in the slaving business.

“Complete bloody accident, really. I’d only just bought the place. This house wasn’t here. I’d only just got the land cleared and started planting. Two German girls turned up one day out of the blue. One of them was Annaliese. I thought they were sisters but it turned out Dagmar, the other girl, had picked her up along the way from Tanganyika. They were refugees. Lost everything in the war. Dagmar was looking for her father, who she thought had been taken prisoner. What she thought I had to do with it, I don’t know.

I let them stay, since to turn them out in the bush amounted to killing them, but Dagmar kept going on about her father, really getting on my nerves. I’d made enquiries in Nairobi and got nowhere. I had to go up to Berbera to see a contact about selling my crops. She heard about it and insisted I took her along, though why she thought her father might be in British Somalia, I never did find out.”

To keep her quiet, Van Gryf had taken the girl with him, promising to see the British authorities on her behalf. Afraid that if he left her alone she would get into trouble trying to do it herself, he had taken her to his business meeting.

“You could have bowled me over when the Arab I was dealing with took me aside at the end of the meeting and asked me if Dagmar was for sale.”

“Arab?” Douglas enquired.

“Aye, Khasim al Kabir he’s called. I still do business with him, legitimate and otherwise. Berbera is a funny place, as much Arab as African and bloody dangerous if you don’t keep your eyes open. The British might be running it for now, but there are parts where you’d never know it, and places I wouldn’t go without a gun in my belt and a man at my back.”

“What about the girl?” Douglas asked.

“Well, remember I was pretty pissed off with her going on about her father. And I’d sunk all my money into the estate and still had plans I couldn’t afford. He offered me three hundred pounds. She was blue eyed

and blonde. He promised she'd have a good home and he would treat her right, though of course we both knew he was going to fuck her whether she liked it or not. He showed me where he'd keep her."

"A harem," Douglas said. "I knew your place reminded me of something."

"I'm not bragging," Van Gryf replied, "but I prefer to think of myself as the stallion and the girls as my mares."

"Hence the term 'stable'."

"There really was a stable there when I first arrived. After I'd sold Dagmar, and I admit I did it purely for the money, I came back with a powerful urge to fuck Annaliese. She didn't object and, when I got M'shende and N'dele soon afterwards, I fixed the place up and installed all three of them so I could visit them whenever I liked."

The girls had been satisfying but unskilled and Van Gryf had taken pains to teach them the sexual techniques he enjoyed. As they had improved, a plan had gradually formed in his mind. His crops were in the fields, tended by his workers, and his manager was running the farm. His house was built. He had time on his hands. Van Gryf bought a white girl from a dealer in Zanzibar and installed her in the stable. Then he began her training.

"I got a thousand pounds for her." Van Gryf grinned at Douglas's surprise. "The training makes all the difference to the price. With the crops sold and the money from selling the girl, I had enough to start building a proper stable. It was just one side to begin with but I planned it to grow from the start. And I began collecting slave girls as well as selling them."

"How many can it hold?"

"Eighteen, not counting the upper floor, which mostly isn't in use." The Afrikaner laughed. "Maybe it never will be. I have enough trouble finding time for the slaves I've got, never mind adding to them. The girls' only real outlet is sex. If they don't get enough, they squabble and fight, like Susan and Sylvie did. I hate to admit it, but even my capacity for fucking them isn't inexhaustible. That's where you come in."

Douglas did not try to hide his pleasure at the prospect of having a free hand with the slave beauties.

"The estate doesn't run itself and I have other demands on my time," Van Gryf continued. "And a girl in training needs a lot of

attention. It's why I've cut back on my activities this last year. I don't need the money any more. I only take a girl if I think she has real potential. There's a great deal of pleasure to be had from training her, but every girl is different. I never know whether it will take weeks or months."

"One more reason why you were against taking Caroline," Douglas guessed. Having caned her backside, he could no longer think of her as Mrs. Milton.

"Amongst others," Van Gryf said.

After his frank explanation about his slaving activities, Douglas expected him to elaborate but he looked away from the Scotsman's enquiring expression.

"Another is that I, or rather we, have to go up to Berbera shortly and it will interrupt her training," Van Gryf said. "I don't like doing that. It usually means starting again almost from scratch, and with Caroline there wouldn't be time."

"Can't Mustafa do it?"

Van Gryf smiled thinly. "Let's say he isn't fully equipped to deal with it." He rose from his chair and led the way inside when Abu announced dinner.

"Can't you delay the trip?" Douglas asked.

"Impossible, I'm afraid."

"Take her along then," Douglas suggested.

"That's something I hadn't thought of." Van Gryf shrugged.

"Though I doubt Caroline will be a problem by the time we have to go. She'll probably be begging me to put her on a ship for England before the end of the week."

When they entered the dining room, Annaliese and Julia were awaiting them.

"Strip your loincloths, girls," Van Gryf ordered as he sat down. "Let's see your pussies." He grinned at Douglas. "And you're going to be seeing a lot more of Mr. Douglas in future. He will be joining us permanently. You're to obey him, and from now on he is going to fuck you when it suits him."

The girls' heads turned sharply in Douglas's direction, their surprised expressions replaced almost immediately by appraising looks. He smiled. They were weighing up his potential. As they let fall their

little strips of silk he felt a surge of satisfaction at the sight of their hairless sexes. They were his whenever he wanted. He still could not believe his luck. As Annaliese bent to offer him a dish, he caught the odour of perfume and the rich tang of her juices wafted up from between her thighs – one, it seemed, the civilised scent of Europe, the other the wild aroma of Africa. Could he ever have been in doubt about which he preferred?

“The word will be around as soon as they get back to the stable in the morning,” Van Gryf said, still grinning. “Except for Caroline. I don’t want the others telling her what’s going to happen during her training, so I’ll keep her isolated until I decide she’s ready to mix with them. You can tell her your new role yourself tomorrow, if you like.”

Douglas had reservations about that. He had not met the other slave girls beyond the confines of the stable and knew virtually nothing about them. He did know a little of the life Caroline had led, and of the troubles she had had, and he could even guess at the disappointments that had perhaps helped persuade her to turn her back on it so drastically. Despite what he had done to her, or perhaps because of it, he knew the self-consciousness he seemed to have overcome feeling around the other girls would return the next time he saw Caroline.

“Well,” Van Gryf said when the meal was over, “I’m ready for a fuck.” He ran his hands up the inner thighs of the girls either side of him and stroked their sexes. They wriggled. “Would you like to try Annie?” he asked as casually as he would have offered Douglas a drink.

The Scotsman had Annaliese suck him as soon as he got her to his room, partly to compare her talents with M’shende’s but mostly to relish the sight of her unhesitatingly swallow his spunk. He let her continue sucking until his cock was hard again and then made her kneel sideways on the bed, back arched and bottom high. While he filled her to the hilt from behind, he enjoyed the sensation of her pussy muscles rippling around his cock until the need to thrust deep and hard became irresistible. Douglas gripped her hips tightly and ravished her until he came with a breathless, half-strangled cry of pleasure.

Annie’s own whimpering passion seemed muted in comparison, though when he felt her clitoris it was pebble-hard. He remembered she was there to satisfy him and whether she enjoyed it or not was of little importance. Nevertheless, he was determined she would find her first

time with him memorable. Douglas wanted no adverse reports about his prowess circulating among the slaves. He began by sucking her nipples, gradually moving his mouth and tongue over her body while he used the skills he had learned in his youth to bring her to the boil. She came more energetically the second time, thrashing against him as her sex contracted around his deeply probing fingers.

Afterwards, to see her reaction and because he could, Douglas scooped a gob of the mingled spunk and juices leaking from her pussy onto a fingertip and held it to her lips, looking into her eyes. She opened her mouth, sucked his finger clean and swallowed.

“You’re very obedient,” he said, holding her gaze with his own.

“Yes, Master.”

She flinched as he brushed a lock of hair from her forehead.

“You’re afraid of me.” He had not expected it after the playfulness she had shown in the stable.

“A little, Master,” Annaliese confessed. “I didn’t know what to expect. I feared I wouldn’t please you. I do not know you as I do my Master.”

He cupped one of her petite, pointed breasts and stroked its nipple. “Aren’t you afraid of him?” he asked.

“Sometimes, a little, but...” For no obvious reason she smiled coyly and dropped her gaze.

“Never mind, Annie, you pleased me very much. And I will never be any harder on you than Van Gryf is, or on the other girls. You can tell them all that tomorrow.”

“Yes, Master.” She did not look entirely reassured by that promise.

“Were any of the others ever displeased with you?” Douglas asked. “The men who were here before me,” he explained at her questioning look.

“There have never been any, Master.”

Douglas realised Van Gryf had never given anyone access to his slave beauties before. He marvelled at the man’s generosity and appreciated it all the more.

“Tell me, Annie, what’s it like to be punished?”

“It hurts, Master.”

“I mean, how do you feel when you are punished?”

“A... a little afraid,” she answered, looking uncomfortable. “It’s not nice waiting for it. It’s not so bad when it starts and I know it will be over soon... except... except it hurts.” She faltered, but Douglas wanted to know.

“Do you get excited? Do your nipples get hard like they are now?” He gave the nearest a tweak and slid his hand to her clitoris. “Does your little bud get stiff?”

“N... no, Master. But it doesn’t seem quite so bad if my Master punishes me, or at least if he’s watching. It’s worse if it’s only Mustafa.” She tilted her head on the pillow. “I don’t know why, but sometimes I do get a little excited if my Master is there. He often lets me serve him afterwards. That helps take my mind off the pain.”

For the first time since Douglas had met her, the girl looked self-conscious. She could suck him and swallow his come without batting an eyelid, but talking about her feelings embarrassed her. He let it drop. He had learned what he wanted to know. He tickled her clitoris.

“You don’t like being punished, Annie, but you do like fucking, don’t you?”

“Ooh, yes,” the girl cooed.

“Good, because that’s what we’re going to do now.”

* * * * *

Caroline’s second day did not start well. Going as fast as she could, she only managed to get ten bucketfuls of water in the tank before her half-hour was up. Sweating and breathless by the time she had finished, she washed Mustafa as she had the day before and unhappily contemplated the prospect of more punishment. Her bottom was stinging already from the smacks the eunuch had dealt her as she ran to and fro with her bucket.

He made her shower, took her indoors, and supervised while she applied the cosmetics as he had shown her the day before. Caroline had to do it twice before he was satisfied and went off to get her breakfast. He stood over her while she ate, and then cuffed her wrists behind her and left.

The confinement of her hands heightened the tickle in Caroline’s pussy. The knowledge she could do nothing about it focused her

attention on the feeling. Soon the tickle became a warm, simmering glow that spread through her lower belly. She eyed the corner of the dressing table hungrily. Mustafa had not actually said she was forbidden to come. She sighed. Her confined wrists were a clear enough message.

Instead, Caroline watched the girls in the garden through the gaps in the blinds, acutely aware of the moist pulsing in her sheath. It had been present when she awoke and had scarcely left her since. It was why she was there. For one such as she, yearning for the control of a strong man, there could be no better place. Where else could she stand at this time of the morning, naked and aroused, and know that it would continue almost uninterrupted for the whole day? What more could she ask? A surge of utter happiness brought a smile to her face.

The girls outside abruptly assumed the position of respect. Caroline saw a figure in bush-denim crossing the lawn. Her pussy shivered. Was he coming to her? She had not bargained for so many other girls to compete for Van Gryf's attention. Caroline held her breath as he came in her direction. His head turned to watch the girls as they returned to their ballgame. Her belly flipped as she recognised the Englishman.

Alarm and embarrassment made her turn away as he passed the window. Caroline had expected Van Gryf. Her new surroundings were unfamiliar but he was not. Even while he was denying her an orgasm and caning her bottom, his presence had somehow remained reassuring – and exciting. Caroline thought that Van Gryf understood her and her need to serve. Though Douglas had witnessed her act of submission, seen and touched her nakedness and even taken part in her punishment, she knew nothing about him and dreaded what he must think about what she had done. Her sex quivered. What she did know was that she had the power to incite his desire.

The bolts on the door slid back. Anxious and reluctant, Caroline went to her cubicle and took up the position of respect. Suddenly, she was more afraid than excited by the grip of the leather around her wrists. Her arousal waned. Douglas could only be there with Van Gryf's approval. He would expect her to obey the Englishman, regardless of her feelings. This was something else that had never entered her fantasies as she had lain alone in her bed at the mission. She had put herself into Van Gryf's hands, and he had put her into those of a stranger. Caroline took a

deep breath. Incongruously, through all her anxiety she remembered Douglas had said he was Scottish.

“Good morning.” Douglas’s greeting was stiff, like the smile that accompanied it, and not aimed directly at her but a little to one side. Caroline knew his wary expression reflected the one on her blushing face. Her reply was equally stilted.

“How did you get on with the water today?” he asked.

Caroline grimaced at her failure. “N... not very well... sir. Only ten.”

“Ah.” He shot her a brief glance. “You didn’t like the pain, did you?”

Cringing inwardly with a humiliation that did not at all provoke a response in her pussy, Caroline shook her head.

“Does it hurt much?”

“Not too much.” But more than she would ever admit to him.

“I expect you tried harder this morning.”

What the hell do *you* think, came into her mind. “Yes, but it’s impossible,” she said and sighed. “I’m sure it’s meant to be. No one could do it.”

“Are you certain?” Douglas looked directly at her. “Have you thought that it might be more than just a test of strength and stamina? That maybe it’s testing your intelligence and ingenuity as well?”

Caroline had not. “Did Van Gryf tell you that?”

“No, but I don’t believe he would set you a task just meant to get you punished. You know him better than I. Do you think it likely?”

“Maybe not,” Caroline allowed.

“Think about that tomorrow,” Douglas said with a smile that seemed more natural.

“I... I will,” Caroline said. “Thank you.”

“I think you had better call me ‘sir’,” he said mildly.

“Oh! Excuse me, sir,” she said quickly.

“Never mind. But don’t forget again.” His next smile was broad and clearly one of satisfaction. “You’ll be seeing a lot more of me. Van Gryf has asked me to join him. I’ll be helping take care of you and the other slave girls.”

Despite her shock, Caroline’s sex quivered at the words ‘slave girls’ and the fact that he had included her among their ranks. She saw

him watch her breasts shake and his eyes travel down to the swell of her pussy between her parted thighs.

“I’m not mad,” Caroline blurted. It was suddenly important he understood that.

His brief, surprised look was followed by a short laugh that brought the heat of blushing embarrassment to her cheeks.

“I know that. And if Van Gryf thought you were, I’m sure he wouldn’t have let you stay.” He took a step towards her and Caroline struggled with the urge to back away. “You’re not the first young lady I’ve met who had a liking for being dominated.” Douglas was suddenly right in front of her. “That is it, isn’t it, Caroline? You want to be put in your place, don’t you? And kept there.” His hand closed over her right breast, rubbing her hard nipple.”

“Ooh!” Caroline felt an electric thrill run through her.

“Don’t you?” Douglas repeated and squeezed her left breast.

“Ooh! Yes, sir.”

He let her go. “Don’t worry, you will be.”

His confidence had grown since his first hesitant words, Caroline thought, and so had the cock outlined in his trousers. Suddenly, she wanted to feel it thrusting inside her and felt a pang of regret when she remembered Van Gryf had told her she could not hope to be used in that way yet.

“Turn around and bend over. Show me your bottom.”

He showed no sign now of wariness or uncertainty. His brusque order made Caroline shudder as she obeyed. She felt his fingers on the pink marks left by the eunuch’s cane.

“These are fresh,” Douglas said. “Was it Mustafa?”

“Yes, sir. He says it’s to encourage me.”

“Does it?”

She had to admit that it did. A curl of excitement wriggled in her belly as he brushed her sex.

“Did he have you play with yourself?”

“Y... yes, sir.” It was incredible. She really was bent over, exposing her bare, caned buttocks and her glowing pussy to someone she hardly knew, and answering his questions about her most intimate behaviour. It was so humiliating. She breathed hard and the moist

tickling of her sex increased when he told her to straighten up and face him.

“Did you come?” Douglas asked.

“No, sir. Mustafa forbade it.”

“Would you like to come?”

She lowered her eyes. He already knew the answer, but Caroline knew she must reply. “Yes, sir.”

The soft rumble of his laugh sounded oddly pleasant. “Maybe later. For now, there’s something else Van Gryf wants. Come along.”

Caroline became increasingly nervous as she realised where he was leading her. Was it to happen again so soon? Her heart was thumping when they entered the room where she had been punished. The presence there of another girl was less startling than Douglas scooping her up in his arms and depositing her on the convex metal table standing in the middle of the floor.

She gasped. “Sir!”

“Hush! No talking unless I say so. Roll onto your side.”

He removed her cuffs, made her lie on her back and fastened her hands above her head to leather straps at the corners of the table. Caroline shrank from his admonishing glance when she gave a little anxious mew as he fastened a strap around her right ankle. He bent her leg until her heel was almost touching her buttock, drew her ankle to a metal ring on the table edge and attached the short chain on the strap to it. He repeated the procedure with her left ankle, and Caroline found herself lying with her hips raised higher than her head by the curvature of the table and her legs drawn up and apart to expose her sex and most of her bottom. Her nervousness far outweighed any stimulus she felt from her bondage.

“Relax, you won’t be beaten.” Douglas told her. “Badroula.”

Relaxing was impossible. Chest heaving, Caroline watched the girl who had been waiting in the room approach her. She stood at her right side, licked one finger and thumb, and reached down to Caroline’s mound.

“Ow!” Caroline wriggled in discomfort as the olive-skinned girl began pulling out her pubic hairs one at a time.

“Quiet, now.” Douglas stood at the head of the table, looking down at her. “If you’re good, I might let you come when it’s over.”

She stared at his upside-down face, spellbound by the intensity of his dark eyes. Once again he held her gaze while she compressed her lips to stifle her cries as the tugging and stinging went on without pause. Her silken curls had never completely hidden her sex, but soon even their inadequate covering would be gone. Caroline's tears brimmed.

"Oh, it hurts so!"

"Be brave," Douglas said softly. "It's not as bad as the cane, now is it?" He smiled. "Though it may go on for quite a bit longer." He rubbed her hard nipples. Despite her pain they tingled. He kept toying with her breasts until the gasps escaping her were more than just a response to the stinging between her legs.

After several minutes he went to the doorway and smoked a cigarette, watching Caroline squirming and the swaying breasts of the girl plucking out her fleece. She was only obeying her Master's orders, Caroline thought, and felt no resentment towards the black-haired girl tormenting her. There was so much she wanted to ask her, but the girl made no attempt to communicate and barely even glanced at her face.

Caroline's arousal died completely when the maddening stinging reached her outer sex-lips. The hurt seemed to increase. Douglas came back and stroked her breasts with one hand, smoothing the other over her fluttering belly. It helped and she was grateful. She jerked suddenly as the girl separated the two halves of her bottom and began pulling out the fine hairs in its crease. Never before had she experienced such intimate contact from another woman. A girl she had never met was seeing and touching her in ways she had never imagined, while a man she knew little better looked on. Such was the lot of a slave girl, Caroline thought with a quiver of mingling fear and excitement.

"It is finished, Master," the girl announced, and to Caroline's relief wiped a cool, damp cloth over her smarting skin. The curve of the table stopped her seeing her hairless pussy but already it felt different: vulnerable, defenceless. Caroline flinched under Douglas's touch as he examined her, even humiliatingly spreading her buttocks to view her anal cleft. He chuckled as he released her and tickled a fingertip beneath her hood. Caroline groaned.

"Hush." Douglas placed the same fingertip to her lips. "Here, Badroula." He led the girl out of Caroline's sight. She heard the curtain dividing the room drawn back and the Scotsman speaking, too quietly for

her to hear his words. There was silence, followed by a grunt, a gasp and a long, feminine moan.

Craning her neck, Caroline could just glimpse Badroula bent over with her elbows on the punishment table and Douglas thrusting into her from behind. The girl was thrusting back just as avidly.

A long, wriggling thrill ran the length of Caroline's sex. She longed to feel the power and potency of a hard cock surging against the walls of her sheath. She watched until her neck cramped, and then lay listening to the sounds of sex, shivering with a desperate need. It was yet another first for her when she heard the girl sighing and moaning as she came, and seconds later Douglas's deeper growl of release.

Wet, slurping noises followed and Caroline risked more cramps to look again. Badroula knelt facing away from her, her face buried in Douglas's groin. It was true! Caroline had always believed that a man would find a woman's mouth around his penis an irresistible pleasure but had never been quite sure that it happened. Now she needed wonder no longer.

Douglas looked up from the girl's bobbing head and Caroline quickly turned away. A little later, Badroula assumed the position of respect beside the open doorway, alternately grinning and licking her lips. Caroline's belly flipped. Douglas appeared beside her.

"How was it?" he asked.

"N... not very nice, sir," Caroline stammered, blushingly unsure if he was talking about her depilation or her voyeurism.

"You know you'll be plucked regularly for as long as you're here, don't you? Van Gryf likes his girls' pussies bald. Next time it will be tweezers and your armpits will be done too, and you'll have your legs shaved regularly. In fact, you'll spend a lot of time just taking care of your appearance. If it's less than perfect, you will be punished."

"Yes, sir, I understand," Caroline replied.

"Are you sure? Do you really know what you've got yourself into?" He freed her ankles as he spoke and she straightened her aching legs. "If you stay, you'll be a slave. A sex-slave, Caroline! Is that really what you want?"

Her pussy quivered. "Yes, sir," she said firmly.

Douglas shook his head and smiled suddenly. "You're a very determined young lady. And a *very* unconventional one. You must have

thought long and hard about this to be so certain. But you've spent such a short time as a plaything, Caroline. Yes, that's what you are now. A toy, like all the other girls. You do know that none of them came here from choice?"

"None at all? I thought maybe..."

"Not one. They were all enslaved. They're forever at Van Gryf's beck and call, and mine too now. Is that what you want? To have no will of your own. To lose the freedom to ever be able to say no again." He laughed as a moan escaped her. "I see from the way your little clit is standing to attention that it is." His finger drew circles on her newly depilated mound until it touched her upright bud and a rush of heat in her sex made her thighs quiver. "What is it you like? Shall I insult you, call you a dirty little whore? Tell you what a worthless cunt you are? That you're a slutty little slave girl not worthy of the attention I'm giving you?"

"Oh, no!" Caroline moaned as he rubbed her clitoris harder. "I want to be good, and obedient. To do as I'm told and make you pleased with me."

"Oh, so that's it! You've a long way to go then." He reminded her of her many failures since her arrival, all the while teasing her sex until maddeningly delicious tremors surged within it. "You want to be properly controlled, do you? Deep down you're a naughty girl just longing to misbehave. You need a strong hand, don't you? A hand that will rein in that waywardness and stop you taking liberties. One that isn't afraid to bind your hands and feet and make sure you behave."

"Ooh, yes, sir!" He was teasing her, Caroline realised, playing a wonderful, exciting game that was making her pussy wriggle and ripple. And he was so close to the truth.

"I said I'd let you come," Douglas said.

"Yes! Ooh, yes!"

His touch vanished. "What if I lied?"

Chapter 9

Caroline whimpered with need.

“You see what it means to be totally in the power of another?”

Douglas seemed to savour the words while Caroline tugged in frustration at the straps about her wrists. She saw Badroula watching her, perhaps despising her, but all she felt was the urgent, overwhelming desire for release. Breathless, she fought her surging passion to force out her words.

“I... want... to serve. Without... any choice. To *have*... to serve. I... need it.”

“What you need is to come,” Douglas said. His fingers did things Caroline’s inhibitions had never allowed her to do herself, probing and pinching and teasing until she was in a ferment of desire. He stroked a place inside her sheath that made her whole belly writhe in delight, and moments later, as his other hand pinched her stiff little button, her sex was surging and spasming with a pleasure so great it almost stole away her senses.

When her chest stopped heaving and she could open her eyes, Douglas brushed the hair from Caroline’s perspiring brow and gave her a half-smile and a small shake of his head. He did not release her hands. Drained by the delicious ferocity of her orgasm, Caroline drifted, marvelling at its intensity. It was only when Mustafa came and made her mount the punishment table that she was reminded there was a price to pay for it.

“See she masturbates afterwards,” Douglas told him with the briefest glance in Caroline’s direction as he left the room.

Mustafa’s cane-strokes seemed harder than those Van Gryf and Douglas had dealt her. Caroline found herself wishing it was they who were punishing her instead of the eunuch. She felt a curious loneliness as the cane’s fiery bite across her buttocks banished the last embers of orgasm from between her thighs. But the thought of having another climax like the one she had just experienced helped her bear the pain.

* * * * *

Douglas was well pleased by his first solo encounter with Caroline Milton. The feeling of power and dominance he had experienced as he had restrained her and toyed with her body and her mind had not only been arousing but deeply satisfying. He had long forgotten his initial self-consciousness by the time he took Badroula, knowing and caring not at all that Caroline would watch. Van Gryf had said to meet him in the lounge afterwards. He was only mildly surprised to find the Afrikaner sitting naked on one of the sofas with dark Ulemba and flaxen-haired Sylvie at either side taking turns to suck his penis.

“Douglas, come and get your cock sucked,” he invited, grinning.

“Er, I’ve just had Badroula,” the Scotsman replied, uncertain how the man would react. He had not sought his approval.

Van Gryf’s grin did not falter. “Good, but choose a couple of girls. They’re all keen to make your acquaintance.”

Were they, Douglas wondered, glancing around. Susan was kneeling in front of Van Gryf, breathlessly rubbing her fingers on her clitoris. Four other slaves stood in the position of respect behind her, all looking in Douglas’s direction. What he saw on their faces was not reluctance. Whoever he picked, he was going to disappoint someone. He swallowed a little apprehensively. He was going to have an audience too.

“Arsinoe,” he said, eyeing the Cypriot girl’s generous hips and breasts, “and Zaina.” With their little loincloths flapping in their haste, the girls hurried towards him. His cock stirred.

“N’dele, Julia, get down beside Susan and play with yourselves, and mind, no coming before Douglas and I do.” Van Gryf patted the heads of Ulemba and Sylvie. “Take your time.”

Douglas watched their lips and flickering tongues slow in response. His eyes were drawn to the vivid, crimson and purple welts on Sylvie’s buttocks. The previous evening, he had seen the girl bound over a punishment table, tearful after her caning. Van Gryf had questioned her about the fight with Susan, and as she had sobbed out her side of the story, the Scotsman had discovered just how appealing a weeping girl, naked and helplessly restrained, could be. It was a feeling he had felt more embarrassed about experiencing when he had looked upon Caroline in the same position shortly afterwards.

Finding himself naked, he sat on a sofa with his chosen girls' hands already caressing him. They knelt at his feet and he felt a glow of contentment as their mouths began gently exploring his hard cock.

"How did it go?" Van Gryf asked somewhat thickly above the moist sounds of sucking and the panting of the masturbating girls.

"Not bad," Douglas answered and grunted at the incredible feeling of two tongues pressing themselves to his straining cock-head. "Damned good, to tell the truth. By heaven, that girl can really come! She was surprised when I told her I'd be helping train her but she soon got excited too. She isn't so different from Christine, the girl I knew, though name-calling doesn't work for Caroline. It's being controlled she's after. Maybe that's why she likes the restraints. They're the most extreme form. Or maybe they came first and she discovered she wants to go further. She may feel guilty about enjoying it. She says she wants to have no choice but to serve."

"By serve, she means fuck," Van Gryf said, "and if she can tell herself she's being made to do it, she can absolve herself from any guilt. But there's nothing wrong with liking fucking. Why feel guilty at all?"

"Upbringing, school, religion, parents and all the usual *civilised* conventions," Douglas suggested dryly. "But I'm not sure it's guilt. She's very anxious that we be pleased with her obedience. Perhaps she once knew someone who wasn't."

"Her father lives in Hereford, yet she said she had no one who mattered back in England," the Afrikaner said.

"Well, it's hard to feel comfortable about the way you are if you never gain the approval of the people who matter to you." He ignored Van Gryf's sideways glance and enjoyed the feel of Zaina sliding his cock to the back of her throat. "It's your approval she's seeking now. I told Caroline she was really a naughty girl who wanted to misbehave and that she needs a strong hand to keep her in her place. She didn't deny it. Shut in here, completely under your control, I think she's getting exactly what she wants."

"Pity," Van Gryf said. "I'd hoped the initial shock would be enough to change her mind."

"I tried to dissuade her right after she was plucked, just as you said," the Scotsman told him. "She's a lot more determined than you

give her credit for.” Tremors ran through his cock as Arsinoe gently rubbed her teeth over its head.

“Oh, I’ve never doubted her determination. It’s her conviction that I wonder about. She’s never had much of a life, thanks to her damned useless husband. She should have a chance to learn that it can be better than what she went through.”

“You sound as if you feel sorry for her.” It hardly seemed likely, considering the Afrikaner’s chosen profession.

Van Gryf gave a long sigh in response to what the girls were doing to his penis and shook his head. “Hardly that. I’ll admit I felt a little awkward at first, having known Caroline so long. I usually only get to know a girl well *after* she joins the stable. And there’s her willingness to submit.”

“Won’t that just make it easier?” Douglas asked, finding it increasingly difficult to concentrate with two wet, warm mouths alternately engulfing his cock.

“Lord knows,” Van Gryf said, breathing hard. “I don’t feel fully in control of the situation and that’s not a feeling I like. But let’s continue another time as I’m about to come in Ulemba’s mouth.” He gave a grunt and arched his back to push his cock deeper between the Masai girl’s lips. Douglas watched with his usual fascination as she swallowed Van Gryf’s spunk while gazing up into his eyes.

Arsinoe abruptly flogged her tongue over his cock-head and drew it deep into her mouth. Douglas climaxed noisily. His two girls tittered at his puffing and panting, until Van Gryf’s sharp command set them back to licking his shrinking penis.

“Remember your lack of respect next time you earn a punishment and find Mr. Douglas wielding the cane,” the Afrikaner said. “I’m sure *he* will.”

Chastened, the girls looked nervously at Douglas, and the prospect of plying a cane to their beautiful bottoms was suddenly very attractive. He gave Zaina and Arsinoe a smile and a wink as the girls who had all the while been masturbating began coming one after another. The men watched until they had all climaxed.

“You can all do it again, if you wish,” Van Gryf said and led the way back to his house.

It was well into afternoon before they returned to the stable. The Afrikaner introduced Douglas to the girls he had omitted from the previous day's tour. Anne and Margery were as beautiful as the rest, and just as obedient so far as the Scotsman could tell. Yet when Van Gryf had said they would not be there much longer, his tone had suggested they were in some way unsatisfactory. Van Gryf agreed when he mentioned it on the way to the punishment rooms.

"They lost something during their training. It's hard to pin down. They just seem too compliant now. I want my slaves to keep their spirit, their own character if you like, beneath the obedience and submission I demand."

"Their own personalities," Douglas said.

"Exactly. The training isn't so much to break a girl as to mould her without stripping away who she is. That's the art, and the entertainment of it too. It's a great pleasure to overcome their resistance, seeing them change as the resentment and rebelliousness is gradually eroded but not eradicated by the training."

Douglas immediately appreciated the appeal of what Van Gryf described and a little more about the man's reluctance concerning Caroline. "So there might not be much pleasure in training Caroline because she doesn't want to resist."

"I do wonder. My other girls still have their spark, the thing that attracted me to them in the beginning. That's why I have to punish them so often and it's why they're still here. I've hardly punished the two you just met since the first weeks of their training. They're too abject, just too ready to submit and I don't enjoy that."

"So what do you mean to do with them?" Douglas asked, sure he already knew.

"I'm going to sell them."

"And if Caroline doesn't measure up?" The Scotsman's gut tightened.

"I'll let her go, if I can." Van Gryf shrugged. "But if I think she can't look out for herself, I'll have to sell her too."

"You really think there's a danger of that happening?"

"I think it has already begun," Van Gryf replied, opening the door to the punishment room.

Douglas was still trying to understand his gut's reaction to the Afrikaner's words as they entered. Mustafa awaited them beside a long, leather-padded table. Caroline knelt upon it on all fours with her big breasts hanging enticingly beneath her, and her bottom, freshly reddened by ten cane-strokes, jutting rearwards. She was bound by leather straps at wrists and calves and ankles. As her head turned, Douglas saw a big, cylindrical rubber gag between her teeth, held by a strap around her head. Her eyes were wide and anxious.

"All ready, I see," Van Gryf said, going to the cupboard on the wall. He returned carrying a metal plug about four inches deep with a steel rod ending in a brass ring fixed to it. Caroline's head turned to try and see what was happening behind her as he pushed the plug into one of several holes in the tabletop between her lower legs and adjusted the height of the rod.

"Fucking, Caroline," he said and returned to the cupboard with the girl watching his every move. He brought a box back to the head of the table and she gasped into her gag when he revealed it held several dildos of different sizes. "I expect you think it's just a matter of lying back and letting a cock fill your wet little tunnel, eh?" He laughed. "Well, there's a lot more to it than that. You need to learn to do it properly, and these are going to help you."

He took hold of one of the ivory phalluses, paused, put it back and selected the larger one next to it, smiling thinly at Caroline's squeak of protest.

"Eight inches should do."

Again her wary gaze followed him as far as it could when he went behind her and fed the dildo through the ring on the rod with its tip pointing towards her. Caroline flinched from his fingers, her sex contracting as he parted her outer pussy-lips. His palm smacked the narrow, red ridges on her left buttock and she gave a cry that was muffled by her gag.

"Bad girl," the Afrikaner said. "Keep still or you'll be caned again."

He spread her a second time. She shivered, but did not jerk away as his fingers parting her vulva revealed the moist coating on the little petals of her inner-lips. With a rush of excitement, Douglas saw the pinkish-white tip of her clitoris creep out from its hood.

“Push your bottom back,” Van Gryf instructed and slid the dildo further through the metal ring. With the Afrikaner holding her open, Douglas could see the shiny, pink interior of Caroline’s sex tighten at the dildo’s touch. She shrank from it, and Van Gryf slapped her bottom again.

“Back, I said,” he barked, and it was enough to make her ease her knees further apart and push her pussy towards him. He slid two thirds of the dildo’s length inside and clamped the ring around its butt end. The moment she was penetrated, Caroline began trembling and making odd, huffing noises around the rubber stretching her jaw. As Van Gryf stepped back, she began rocking her hips. He slapped her a third time.

“No, you’re not to move! You will keep perfectly still.” He took the horsetail whip from the cupboard and raised it before her eyes. “Every time you move, even if it’s the tiniest wriggle, you’ll have a stroke from this. It may not seem much at first, but I guarantee after an hour you’ll regret every little twitch. So keep still!”

Caroline stared at him and made inarticulate noises behind the gag.

“Yes, I said an hour,” Van Gryf confirmed. “You’ll move nothing except your pussy. I want to see it close tight around the dildo, and you’re to grip it for as long as you can. No rubbing on it. Just tighten, relax and tighten again.” He gave her a flick with the whip to emphasise the order and returned to eye her impaled sex intently. Standing beside him, Douglas watched Caroline’s pussy contract around the big phallus. She was shaking, resisting the urge to swing her hips and feel the friction of the dildo against her sheath. She gripped it for a few seconds, and then relaxed.

“Again,” Van Gryf snapped, flicking her with the whip. “Come on, Caroline, you need to do much better than that.” He kept on exhorting her to greater efforts and slashing the plaited horsehair across her buttocks at the slightest movement of her quivering body. The noises she made grew louder and more frequent until she was continually moaning and snorting and snuffling. Douglas saw her muscles were rigid from the tension of holding herself still. She bucked suddenly, hips thrusting frantically back onto the dildo as her orgasm overcame her and a shrill but muted cry escaped around her gag.

Van Gryf waited until Caroline stopped writhing and her forehead had slumped to the tabletop, and then he flicked her with the whip.

“Barely five minutes. Up you get. Let’s start again.”

Breathing hard, Caroline groaned, pulled herself back into her kneeling position and pushed her bottom towards the dildo. This time it did not need Van Gryf’s guiding hand to slide between her glistening wet labia. They parted easily before its blunt tip, the ivory sank deep and Caroline’s pussy tightened around it.

Half spent after her first climax, Caroline lasted almost twenty minutes before she surrendered to another. Again Van Gryf swished the horsetail whip across her bottom and forced her back into position. He went to her head and lifted her drool-slobbered chin.

“You’re not half-way through yet,” he said. “If you’ve had enough, just nod. You can leave for Nairobi in the morning.”

Douglas eyed the big, bright bead of liquid clinging to the point of the girl’s clitoris as the rivulets of sweat streaming down Caroline’s buttocks mingled with the juices dripping from her pussy. If Van Gryf was adamant she should leave, he thought, he would need to find a different way of persuading her. Sure enough, she shook her head and penetrated herself with the phallus once more.

“Very well,” Van Gryf said. “Mustafa will take over now. He won’t ask you if you want to stop.” He pointed to a hole in the table below Caroline’s chin. “And when it’s done in your pussy, the dildo goes there and Mustafa will teach you to suck a cock.” He handed the whip to the eunuch and left the room. Douglas could not see Caroline’s face as he followed but guessed she was as surprised as he was by the Afrikaner’s words.

“Is she really going to get a full hour?” he asked as they crossed the garden.

“Yes, I said she’d get the same training all my slaves do. She’s certainly full of surprises. No girl has ever come like that on her first time. They’re usually so nervous they hardly get aroused. Her cunt must be aching by now. She’s using muscles she never knew she had until today.”

“I see now how they manage that thing they do to my cock.”

Van Gryf laughed. “Stimulating, isn’t it?”

“You have to admire her courage,” Douglas said. “She’s certainly sticking to her guns.”

“Courage maybe,” the Afrikaner replied, “but backed up by a large dose of good, old-fashioned lust. I may have to rethink Caroline’s training, despite what I promised. I’ve always used punishment and reward – pain when they’re bad, pleasure when they’re good. It’s tried and tested and has always worked before. But she likes being tied up, and humiliation excites her too. Fortunately she doesn’t like pain, or any kind of discipline would be much more difficult, but we can hardly flog her until she cries quit. She might even begin to like that too, and go and find the first man willing to beat her bloody the minute she leaves here.” He shook his head. “The trouble is, the longer she’s here the more she’s getting just what she’s after. A slave’s life is pretty much one of continuous restraint.”

“So what can we do?” Douglas asked, remembering the dispassionate way Van Gryf had mentioned selling Caroline.

“Buggered if I know. Carry on as we are and see what happens.” Van Gryf threw up his hands. “Balls! I’m hungry, and after Caroline’s little performance I want a fuck. Let’s go and choose the girls to serve our dinner.”

Was he mistaken, Douglas wondered, or was it the second time Van Gryf had found an excuse to end a discussion about his latest acquisition?

* * * * *

When Mustafa took Caroline to the well on her third morning at the stable, she did not immediately rush to begin carrying the water. Remembering Douglas’s suggestion, she ignored the sting of the eunuch’s cane on her bottom and took time to examine the windlass.

Her lower belly ached dully from her hour of repeatedly clenching her pussy on the dildo the day before. Straight afterwards she had spent another hour licking and sucking the same ivory shaft under Mustafa’s stern direction. Even now, it seemed she could still taste her own juices on her tongue, but her immediate problem was to avoid another caning.

Caroline discovered the windlass had gears. If she used the higher one, it would take more effort but less time to raise the bucket from the

well. She tried and it worked. Next, she examined the bucket for carrying the water to the tank and found a circular lead weight clamped under its bottom rim. Loosening the wing nut holding it, she removed the additional load. As she carried her first, considerably lighter bucketful, Caroline realised the ladder was too far away from the tank and had been making her strain when she leaned from it to pour in the water. She moved it closer and noticed Mustafa had stopped hitting her and urging her to hurry. He was grinning.

Douglas had been right. Caroline's anxiousness to get on with the task had been blinding her to its other purpose. Even after sacrificing the time to make her examination, she managed thirteen buckets before the half-hour was up. Aching, panting and sweating, she could still feel a glow of triumph as she washed the eunuch and took her turn under the shower. Tomorrow, she knew she would do better still.

After she had put on her makeup and had breakfast, Mustafa did not secure her wrists or forbid her to touch herself, but for once Caroline had no inclination to masturbate. She had spent a sleepless night twisting and squirming with her wrists cuffed and shackled to the bed above her head, and her ankles fastened to its foot. Van Gryf had been right about the cumulative effect of the horsetail whip. Mustafa had also used it freely on buttocks already buzzing from Caroline's caning. Her bottom had burned for hours. She had spent most of her time lying on her stomach, stinging, feeling her pussy muscles aching and the pulse of arousal her restraints had awakened the moment they had tightened around her limbs. With her discomfort now easing, Caroline made up for her fitful night's rest by sleeping until the eunuch brought her midday meal.

Straight afterwards, he took her to the punishment room. The cane or the dildo, Caroline wondered, equally nervous about both. Nevertheless, when Mustafa bound her to the table on her hands and knees and fitted the dildo on its metal stand before her face, a thrill ran through her pussy. Its cause was much more the leather's grip than the prospect of sucking and licking the ivory phallus until her jaws hurt.

Was there any real point to it, or was Van Gryf simply trying to wear her down? Caroline found his attitude perplexing. Was his opposition from some misguided moral consideration? Knowing the tough, uncompromising man he was, she thought it unlikely. She could

only assume it was something about herself. Yet she knew that he found her desirable. So what was it that set her apart from his other captive girls?

Caroline's resentment grew, along with the arousal and aching in her sex as Mustafa re-positioned the phallus and set her continually flexing her pussy muscles around it. It grew with every fiery swish of the horsetail whip to her tender bottom that told of the eunuch's displeasure with her performance. She did not want to endure such discomfort for four weeks, only to be dismissed at the end to a life of disappointment. To have experienced what she had yearned for and then have it denied to her would be far worse than never having known it at all.

Why could Van Gryf not see it was only he who had any doubts? Why was he so convinced she would change her mind when almost everything she had seen and done so far only made her more convinced it was the life she had always dreamed of? Even long sleepless nights, the cane and an aching pussy were worth it if they meant she could continue to feel the incredible pleasure that came with them.

Caroline's two orgasms during her pussy-tightening exercise did not dispel her indignation. It had become simmering anger by early evening when Van Gryf came to see her. Mustafa had cuffed her wrists the moment her training had ended, and the bondage had started a gentle thrumming in her sex as she lay awkwardly on her bed trying to avoid contact between her buzzing bottom and the mattress. She rose with difficulty and warily eyed the thin, whippy cane in the Afrikaner's hand.

"You did better this morning, I hear." His eyes roved over her out-thrust breasts and down to her hairless sex.

Caroline gave a curt nod, and his raised eyebrow made her add an equally curt, "Yes, sir."

"But not well enough. And Mustafa says your performance in training was unsatisfactory."

"I did my best," she said, curbing her temper and deliberately ignoring a second lift of his eyebrow.

"Your best is when you get twenty buckets of water in the tank in thirty minutes."

"I know that," Caroline snapped. "I'll do it tomorrow or the day after. Then you'll have to invent another trick to have an excuse to beat me." She lifted her chin and glared at him. "It's not fair. You're treating

me worse than the other girls just to make me leave.” She stamped her foot. “Why can’t you give me what I need, you bastard, and stop all this pretence of testing and training.”

For a big man, Van Gryf could move very fast. His finger was in Caroline’s sex even before he had her backed against the wall.

He laughed. “You’re angry, yet you’re still aroused. All right, Caroline, tell me what it is you need. I’ll bet you’ve never used the word before, but say it now.”

With her temper far greater than her fear, Caroline tried to wriggle her pussy free.

Van Gryf pushed deeper. “Say it.”

“I need fucking, damn you.” Her sex contracted around his finger. He pulled it out.

“Back in position,” he barked.

Caroline’s gut gave an awful wrench as she realised what she had done. Her stupid, rebellious streak had ruined everything again. Why did it have to be there, so contrary to the rest of her nature, and always surfacing at the wrong moment? There was no chance now that Van Gryf would keep her. The depth of her disappointment brought tears to her eyes.

Chapter 10

Caroline sobbed. “I... I’m sorry. I... I’ll leave in the morning.”

“No, you will listen to what I say,” the Afrikaner said. He tapped the cane on his palm. “Firstly, I have not made you do anything that all of the other girls here have not also done at one time or another. I said you would get the usual training and you are. I thought you knew I am a man of my word, Caroline.”

Despairing, she nodded as his eyes met hers.

“Secondly, none of the training is a pretence or designed to trick you. It all has a purpose – to make you suitable to serve *me*. Thirdly, I have already told you, you will get a fucking when I decide you can do it satisfactorily and not before. What do you think your pussy exercises are for?” Van Gryf flexed the cane between his big hands. “Finally, I am not a bastard. I do not tolerate impertinence and disrespect such as you have shown. I think I’m justified in adding an extra four strokes to your caning, don’t you?”

Caroline blinked, unsure she had grasped his meaning. He smiled at her.

“If, I thought you meant it, Caroline, I would let you go. But *if* you leave, it will be by your own choosing, not because you think your defiance has offended me. I promised you four weeks and unless *you* say differently, that’s what you will have. If you’re still here when the time is up, it will be for me to decide what happens next. That was our agreement and I intend to stick to it. Do you?”

“Oh, yes, sir!” Relief flooded her. “Yes, yes, thank you.”

Van Gryf gave his thin, amused smile. “Call it giving you a fair crack of the whip.” He freed her hands and made her bend over where she stood and grip her ankles. “I won’t restrain you. Punishments are not meant to excite but to chastise. And you are not to move until I give permission.” He tapped the cane on her jutting rear. “How many stripes did you earn this morning?”

“Seven, sir.” Caroline swallowed hard.

“One more thing you should know: as the strokes reduce in number, they also get harder.”

Fearful, yet at the same time grateful, Caroline took her caning almost gladly. The pain was fierce, searing her buttocks dreadfully as Van Gryf swung the slender rod with greater force than he had used before. She had to fight hard against the need to leap upright and rub her tender, scorching flesh. He need not have given her a second chance, she reasoned. After all his opposition, she was astonished he had not seized the opportunity she had given him to be rid of her. And she *had* insulted him.

The cries Caroline had been stifling broke free when the extra four wickedly painful blows of the cane scored deep into her already blazing bottom. She deserved it for being such a fool, she told herself, blinking away her tears and keeping her trembling body bent over until Van Gryf ordered her to rise.

He sat on the bed and motioned her to kneel before him.

“Let’s see if you’ve learned anything from your training,” he said, unbuttoning his trousers and taking out his long, thick shaft.

Caroline’s heart leaped as her stomach turned over. Stunned, she stared at the big, fat-headed cock rearing in front of her.

Van Gryf gripped its base and angled it towards her mouth. “Suck me.”

A tingle of excitement surfaced through her hurt. Humiliation, anxiety, gratitude and pain all competed for Caroline’s attention, but it was firmly fixed on Van Gryf’s straining erection. Until she had seen Douglas and Badroula the previous day, she had not even been sure it was not just fantasy. Now Caroline knew women really did suck cocks. And her turn had come.

Fascinated, she reached out and smoothed her fingers over the warm, velvety flesh. It twitched. Round-eyed, she looked up into the Afrikaner’s face and ran her tongue nervously over her lips. He nodded encouragingly. Caroline leaned forward, summoning all she could remember from her training. She pushed out her tongue and gave the broad cock-head a tentative lick. It tasted of nothing, but it felt marvellously exciting. Hard and uncompromising like Van Gryf himself, it seemed to demand her service. Heart pounding, almost reverently Caroline took it into her mouth.

Silence followed, disturbed only by the Afrikaner’s increasingly rapid breathing and the soft, slurping noises Caroline’s lips and tongue

were making. She did everything she could recall doing to the ivory phallus. The real thing was much more stimulating, for it responded to the flickering of her tongue, the nibbling of her lips and the suction and movements of her mouth. She yearned to feel the big shaft fill her pussy, but there was something very satisfying about feeling it penetrate her mouth and knowing it was her sexual power that was making it so hard. She, and she alone, had roused Van Gryf's ardour.

He gasped suddenly, and bitter, salty fluid sprayed the inside of Caroline's mouth. Reflexively, she jerked back then forwards again as her fiery bottom met her heels and the stream of spunk erupting from Van Gryf's penis spurted over her face. Disorientated by pain and surprise, Caroline inadvertently swallowed some of the come in her mouth. She coughed suddenly, gagging at the slimy feel of the semen sliding down her throat to her heaving belly.

The Afrikaner laughed softly. "It's like beer, Caroline, an acquired taste. I won't punish you for not swallowing properly this time. We haven't covered that in your training yet, but next time I expect you to take it all in your mouth and get it down your throat."

"Yes, sir, I'll try," Caroline said hoarsely, then as his eyebrow lifted, "I will."

"You should really lick my cock clean," he told her, wiping it with a handkerchief instead. "You'll get used to that too, in time. You need more practice, but I'm pleased you've been paying attention to your training."

Sex quivering, Caroline felt suddenly daring. "I paid attention to my pussy training too, sir."

Van Gryf laughed heartily. "I'm sure you did. Don't tempt me, girl. You've a long way to go yet."

He did not wipe his spunk from Caroline's cheek or chin, or nose, or even remove the gob that was clinging to her left eyelash and making her squint. Her resentment rose up again just a little when he cuffed her wrists to the outermost rails on either side of the bed-head so she had to lie on her back with her smarting bottom pressing on the mattress. With her ankles still free, she rolled onto one hip to ease her discomfort, but Van Gryf sliding a finger over her moist slit stilled her movements. Caroline mewed with excitement as he tickled her hood until her little bud swelled and her sex tingled and glowed. The come in her eye and on

her face, and the fire in her buttocks were no longer important as he teased and tantalised her with a skill equal to the Scotsman's until her damp warmth had become wet heat.

"You've done well today, Caroline," Van Gryf said, circling her throbbing clitoris with a fingertip. "You've proved your intelligence at the well, and that you can learn from your training. I'm very pleased with you."

"Ooh, th... thank you," Caroline managed, belly and pussy and thighs all trembling.

"I expect you'd like to come now."

"Ooh, yes please, sir!"

His stopped rubbing her and stood up. Caroline opened the eye not clogged with spunk and saw his thin smile. She groaned, knowing she was condemned to another night of sleeplessness and sexual frustration.

"You will have to tell me if you decide to leave. I won't ask you again," Van Gryf said, looking down into her eyes. "And don't worry about your little outburst. I'm glad to see you have spirit."

The light went out a minute after he left her. Caroline lay in darkness, tormented by the fire in her bottom and the one raging in her pussy. The warm glow in her heart was much more comforting. She was pleased by Van Gryf's praise. And maybe she could even hope she was a small step closer to achieving her goal.

When Mustafa woke her at dawn to take her to the well, Caroline was weary but still aroused, and Van Gryf's dried spunk made her face feel stiff. Nevertheless, she got sixteen buckets of water in the tank before her time was up, and the eunuch's cane only began goading her when it was clear she would fail.

After she had made-up her face, Mustafa took her to the bathroom, had her shave her legs, and examined the stubble beginning to appear on her sex and armpits.

"Tomorrow," he decided.

Caroline wished he had kept it to himself. The moment he left her alone after breakfast, Caroline knelt upright on the bed to spare her sore bottom and masturbated until the delicious spasms of orgasm flooded her pussy and her juices ran freely over her fingers. Then she did it again. She stank of sex when Mustafa returned to take her for training but he did not reprimand her.

It was well into afternoon before Caroline got a chance to examine her bottom. She was dismayed to see the fading marks left by her earlier canings had been replaced by deep red lines across both buttocks that still hurt at the slightest pressure. Four especially were a vivid, carmine shade and showed signs of purple bruising. Her reward for her rebelliousness, she thought ruefully, but chose to regard them as proud battle scars from her brief conflict with Van Gryf. He may have won, but she felt sure that she had not entirely lost.

It was Van Gryf who came again in the evening and added to Caroline's battle-scars with four blistering cane-strokes that made her bottom bounce and burn until she was sweating rivers in her efforts to keep her grip on her ankles. The Afrikaner had warned her the penalty for breaking her position would be two extra blows.

Much to her disappointment, he did not make her demonstrate her oral skills again, and though she could see he was aroused, did not touch her before leaving her to get what rest she could. But he did not confine her hands. She lay on her belly and fingered herself furiously every time her discomfort became too much, until she finally drifted into sleep.

The following day Caroline achieved eighteen buckets of water and Mustafa gave her two sizzling cuts with his long cane immediately afterwards as punishment.

"Tomorrow you will do it," he told her, smiling as if it pleased him, though it made him no less harsh with her during her training.

He must have told Van Gryf the same, for he and Douglas were present soon after sunrise next day to witness her success. And Caroline did succeed. With nearly a minute to spare, she emptied her last bucketful into the water-tank and descended the ladder in triumph.

Van Gryf and Douglas immediately seized her and pushed her against one of the pillars supporting the well's roof. Her alarm changed quickly to arousal as both men held her arms above her head and took turns toying with her pussy and clitoris until she experienced a frantic, shuddering orgasm.

After she had washed Mustafa, he gave her the rest of the day off. With both the soreness in her bottom and her fear of another punishment much diminished, Caroline caught up on her sleep.

The aches in her jaws and pussy woke her eventually. She slipped a finger into the damp warmth of her sex and floated on the edge of

consciousness, recalling the other times she had seen Van Gryf and Douglas during the last few days.

The day after the Afrikaner had caned her in her dormitory, he had supervised her training. His obvious arousal had heightened Caroline's own excitement at the feel of her pussy rippling over the thick ivory filling it. Van Gryf had shown no consideration for the painful welts on Caroline's bottom and had lashed her with the horsetail whip as freely as he had the first time she had knelt upon the table. She had still come three times around the phallus inside her, and her pussy had continued quivering through the hour she had spent sucking the dildo, her mind filled with the memory of the sight and feel of Van Gryf's cock.

Caroline had realised she was more stimulated performing her exercises for Van Gryf than for Mustafa, and she had known immediately why. Not her bare breasts and sex, her upturned bottom or bound limbs, nor even her pain, could arouse the eunuch. With Van Gryf and with Douglas too, she had the power to incite their desire.

She had discovered something else the next morning when Douglas had come into her dormitory shortly after she had had breakfast. She had been about to go to the toilet, and with her cheeks flaming in embarrassment had had to ask his permission. He had accompanied her as far as the doorless opening to the bathroom, and to Caroline's intense relief had not followed her inside. Even so, she had had to sit on the lavatory with his shoulder visible just the other side of the doorway while she urinated, knowing he could hear every squirt and splash of her piss into the toilet bowl, down to the last drip. She could not understand why it was that certain things she was made to do were both humiliating and exciting, while others only made her cringe with embarrassment.

Both the Afrikaner and the Scotsman had appeared that same afternoon while Mustafa conducted her pussy training. The previous day the Afrikaner had spared her the rubber gag but the eunuch always used it. It made her jaw ache even before she began sucking the phallus, and stopped her swallowing properly so that she was forever drooling when it filled her mouth. It had not prevented her excitement increasing when she had looked longingly at the outlines of the men's hard cocks until she had suddenly writhed in orgasm.

When they had both left shortly afterwards, Caroline had felt such regret that tears had misted her eyes. An awful loneliness came over her.

She felt abandoned and deeply disappointed that her nakedness and willingness had not been enough to hold their interest. An upsurge of an emotion she had rarely felt had tormented her. She had been jealous. Caroline had had no idea where the men had gone but the thought that they might be with one or more of the other slave girls had been enough to fill her with envy. She had not counted on having so many rivals for Van Gryf's affection.

The bizarre thought jerked Caroline fully awake. Her belly flipped. Never once had she thought of seeking the Afrikaner's affection. What mattered was that he fulfil her submissive desires and gave her the sexual pleasure she craved. Yet when Caroline looked around her empty dormitory and heard its silence, the loneliness overcame her again.

Girlish laughter came faintly from the garden. She went to the window and saw four girls chasing a ball and each other across the grass. They seemed happy, carefree despite their slavery or, Caroline hoped, because of it. The thought cheered her, and the sight of Van Gryf and Douglas stepping out from under the cloister cheered her more. Every day since her arrival one or both of them had come to see her at some time, she reminded herself. She need only wait patiently and they would come again. Caroline watched them talking to the girls in the garden and gently slid her finger back into her sex.

* * * * *

"I really ought to do something about the Chevrolet," Douglas said, finishing his breakfast coffee and lighting a cigarette.

Van Gryf lit his own and grinned. "I'm afraid I tricked you there, Englishman. There's nothing wrong with it. I had N'kruma pour oil down the front of the engine block to make it look like the seal had broken."

"You did what?"

Still grinning, Van Gryf spread his hands. "I wanted to get to know you. It gave you a reason to accept my invitation. Has it worked out too badly?"

Douglas laughed. For two weeks he had been like a boy let loose in a toyshop. In one way or another he had enjoyed all of Van Gryf's slave girls, including the two due to be sold. He had also punished

several. First had been Zaina, one of the Arab girls, after Van Gryf had caught her masturbating without permission and was too busy with Caroline's training to cane her himself. Shortly afterwards, under the Afrikaner's tutelage he had plied a broad, leather strap over Ulemba's superb, brown buttocks when her 'flightiness' had once more got the better of her. The day Julia started an argument because Douglas chose to fuck N'dele instead of her. He had taken the girls to a punishment room, given them six strokes apiece, brought them both to the boil with his fingers, and fucked Susan instead.

During the same period, the Afrikaner had disciplined another of the slaves himself, and Mustafa one more. Van Gryf had also ordered Susan and Sylvie to make-up their quarrel by making lesbian love to one another, and afterwards Douglas had sampled the Belgian girl's charms himself. Last night he had learned the Afrikaner had been right when he said Arsinoe liked anal sex and was very skilful at performing it.

Never in his life had the Scotsman had unrestricted access to so many beautiful young women, to use in virtually any way he pleased, at any time he chose. It seemed far too good to be true, yet every morning he awoke with the proof it was not lying in bed beside him. And still he could not quite believe his luck.

Though he appreciated Van Gryf's generosity, it was not the main reason his liking for the man was growing with every passing day. During the war, Douglas had learned to insulate himself from feeling, to keep men who could be dead at any moment at arms length. The habit had continued into the peace, encouraged by his dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the post-war world. It felt good to have met someone who not only understood him but also was so closely attuned to his own way of thinking. To his immense surprise, Douglas had found a friend.

"I should still go and get my car."

"I'll have N'kruma drive you," Van Gryf said. "Why don't you take Caroline along? A reminder that the outside world is still there might make her change her mind."

"You think so?" Douglas asked.

Van Gryf gave a wry smile. "Not really, but anything's worth a try. She's halfway through her four weeks. If she doesn't leave soon, I'll have to decide what to do with her while we're up in Berbera. We have

to go in a few days.” He laughed at the Scotsman’s expression. “Don’t worry, the girls will still be here when we get back, and you’ll find it an interesting experience.”

It was over a week since the Afrikaner had made any mention of Caroline leaving. Though her training had become more frequent and varied, she had never once shown any desire to be freed from her bondage. Douglas had frequently participated in her dildo-sucking and pussy-tightening sessions and been present when she had been introduced to several new exercises. Van Gryf had begun bringing one of the slaves along and, while Caroline practised sucking the phallus, made her watch the girl demonstrate the same techniques on the real thing. On several evenings they had visited her together in her dormitory and once again made Caroline watch as one of the other girls had sucked their cocks. She had looked quite shocked every time the slave had readily swallowed the men’s spunk. Douglas had discovered that rather than feeling self-conscious and embarrassed, as he would have done only days earlier, he enjoyed having Caroline watching.

On other occasions, Van Gryf had strapped her to her bed or to one of the punishment room’s tables and teased her mercilessly with an ostrich feather until she was alternately shrieking with laughter at the tickling and begging for a finger in her pussy to relieve her arousal. Several times they had fastened her to her bed with arms and legs wide, and slowly explored and massaged every inch of her naked body until Caroline was whimpering her need. Then they had either fingered her to orgasm or left her hovering on the brink to endure a long night of sexual frustration.

After watching her being plucked for the second time, both sex and armpits as Douglas had warned her to expect, Van Gryf had made Caroline straddle a thick, hairy rope, pulled taut until it had parted her outer-labia and forced her to stand on tiptoe. She had been forbidden to come, and when she finally succumbed, Van Gryf had caned her over one of the punishment tables. The next day, they had strapped her to the same table and left her to wonder what she had done to deserve further discipline. After an hour, they had returned to find Caroline streaming with sweat and feverishly fighting her bonds. The merest touch of a finger to her sex had brought on her climax.

Yesterday, Van Gryf had secured the girl on her bed and pushed a large, rubber dildo into her sex. To test the progress of her pussy exercises, he had given her three hours to expel it, and threatened her with her first whipping if it was still inside when he returned. It was, and that evening the two men had turned the pale-skinned rounds of Caroline's beautiful buttocks cherry-red with twenty strokes of the leather strap. Her indignation had been plain on her face when they released her from her bed, but only until Van Gryf had made her kneel and masturbate to orgasm. It had not taken her long.

The strapping explained why Caroline was continually changing position as N'kruma drove them to the mission. After five minutes listening to her hissing and wincing, Douglas pulled her face-down over his knee.

"Better?" he asked

"Yes, sir. Please... may I ask where we're going?"

Caroline had been wearing her 'frightened doe' expression since he had made her strip the white, silk loincloth she had been permitted to wear for the last two days and put on the blouse and skirt she had worn on her first evening.

"To get my car," he said, and as her upturned face suddenly relaxed, he realised the reason for her apprehension. "No, you're not being sent away. You should know Van Gryf wouldn't do it like this, and certainly not with you dressed that way." She was naked beneath her outer garments. The knowledge and the pressure of her breasts on his thighs made his cock stir. As the car jolted over the dirt road, he steadied her with a hand on her back, enjoying the feel of her warm body. Though it must have been uncomfortable, she kept her face turned up to him for most of the journey.

As soon as Douglas had assured himself the Chevrolet would start, he waved N'kruma on his way. Instead of driving back straight away, the Scotsman went into the house. It was deserted, as the little white chapel also seemed to be. With a fleeting glance towards the cemetery and another at her knickers still lying where she had dropped them on the veranda, Caroline followed. The whisky was still on the table. Douglas poured a measure into a clean glass and lit two cigarettes, handing one to Caroline. As she inhaled, her breasts lifted, outlining her dark, erect nipples against the semi-transparent cotton of her blouse.

“Thank you, sir,” she said but refused the drink he offered. The exotic allure of her rouged and powdered face was a vivid contrast to her everyday clothing and mundane surroundings. She stood uncertainly as Douglas sat on the big hide sofa.

“Sit if you wish,” he said.

“No thank you, sir.”

He remembered her sore backside. “Kneel down then.”

Her attempts were hampered by the tightness of her skirt.

“Loosen the buttons,” Douglas advised. Though it was not what he had intended, she took him literally and unfastened them all. The skirt fell around her feet. Caroline had been plucked again the previous day. The Scotsman eyed her hairless mound and her narrow, dark cleft with the little, crimped bud of her hood at its apex, like a flower ready to burst into bloom. She knelt with her thighs wide apart, heels well away from her striped buttocks and her sex almost brushing the carpet. Her deep-blue eyes looked boldly at him. She ran her tongue over her upper lip and gave a small shake of her shoulders that made her breasts sway inside her blouse.

Douglas grinned inwardly. She was learning the art of seduction. Van Gryf had warned him. “She’ll beg you to fuck her, but don’t,” he had said. “She isn’t ready yet. Do anything else you like though, and make sure she sucks your cock.”

Douglas had every intention of doing just that, but first he wanted to satisfy his curiosity. To hide his uncertainty about how to begin, he picked up one of the magazines from the side-table next to him and stared at its cover. He had done many intimate things to Caroline recently but what he was about to do seemed even more personal. For it was not her body he would be invading this time, but her mind.

Chapter 11

“Your husband didn’t treat you well, did he?” Douglas asked bluntly.

Caroline’s eyebrows arched and the brightness of desire left her eyes. She shook her head.

“And he drank.”

She nodded.

It was not difficult to coax the story from her. Caroline had married David Milton because her father had told her to. Milton was an ambitious curate who had quickly seen that advancement was easier for a married cleric than for a single one. If he was interested in Caroline’s beauty at all, it was because it attracted the attention of his superiors to her, and therefore to him. Unfortunately, he was also completely lacking in judgement. He had heard that certain members of the local church hierarchy took a particular interest in some of the younger, female members of their congregations. Not two months after his marriage, Milton had offered his eighteen-year-old bride’s body to a canon of the local cathedral as incentive to help him secure a prime parish in the diocese.

Only when his proposition was met with outrage did he discover he had completely misjudged his man. Faced with peremptory dismissal or a penance of a year’s missionary work, he had opted for the latter and regretted it the moment he had stepped off the ship at Mombassa. When his year was up, a letter extending his time in Africa had arrived. He had already begun drinking heavily when another letter extending it again arrived a year later, proving the canon had a long memory and an unforgiving nature. Rather than blame himself, Caroline’s husband had blamed her and drank more, withdrawing almost completely so that sometimes days would pass without him speaking a word to her. The days had turned to weeks even before the letter condemning Milton to a fourth year had arrived, and then to months, until at last he succumbed to the alcohol and the fever.

Cynical though he considered himself to be, Douglas understood why Caroline had shed no tears for the man who had tried to prostitute

her. "You say your father made you marry him," he said. "Did you know him well?"

"Only from church. One day David just came and asked my father for me and that was it."

"And you always obeyed your father?"

"I tried." Caroline sighed. "He was always telling me I was a naughty girl. He said I had a rebellious streak and I needed to learn to do as I was told. I tried so hard to please him but he never gave me a kind word. He was always strict but he got worse when my mother left. I wasn't allowed to go to dances or even the picture palace. He let my brother do it and he was younger than me, but he said girls were more trouble. I know he never liked me. He never listened to anything I said. All that concerned him was his customers' opinion. He even stopped me playing with the boys in the street in case it put people off coming to the shop."

"You were a tom-boy?" Douglas found it hard to believe.

Caroline shook her head. "They used to play pirates." Blushing, she looked away. "I... I was their captive. They tied me up."

The Scotsman smiled. "I see. And you discovered you liked it."

"No, I knew that already. Though not really why. When I couldn't play with them anymore, I did it to myself, but... but..."

"It wasn't the same." Douglas smiled again when she nodded. He could understand how she must have felt. He too had had scant affection or attention during his childhood, with his mother an invalid and his father focused entirely on his older brother, the heir to the title. The day the war had begun his father had got his eldest son a safe job in some Ministry in London and his youngest a commission in the Guards. Douglas had rejected it and, like many another, gone to Liverpool and joined the Canadians as their troopships docked. It had been two years of fighting that got him promoted to officer, not Lord Bankheath's influence. Unfortunately for Caroline, her own escape from parental control had been a case of from bad to worse.

"I never did please him," she said bitterly. "Nothing I did was good enough and then he just got rid of me." Two large tears spilled from her eyes and ran down her cheeks.

Though he had seen Caroline crying in pain, frustration and even sexual release, it had always aroused Douglas's desire rather than his

sympathy. Looking into her sorrowful face, a feeling of compassion and tenderness that he had never experienced, even before the war, overcame him. Thoroughly disturbed, he looked from her tear-brimmed eyes and saw the magazine in his lap.

“Do you read these love stories?” he asked gruffly.

Caroline gave a long sniff and nodded.

“Do you believe in all this romantic stuff?” Douglas did not know why he asked the question.

Caroline avoided his gaze. “They’re just stories. They’re not real.”

“You don’t think men and women can care about each other that way in real life?” It was something Douglas had never quite believed himself. And still he did not know why he persisted in questioning her. “You don’t believe in love?”

Caroline continued to avoid his eyes and shook her head.

“Yet you read about it.”

“I... I read detective stories too, and westerns. It doesn’t mean I want to chase criminals or be a cowboy.” At last she looked at him and her chin lifted in a little gesture of defiance, or maybe pride. “I *do* doubt there can be any real affection between men and women. But there are feelings they *can* awaken in each other - passion, desire, lust – call it what you like. I *know* that exists.”

The Scotsman looked back into her bright eyes. The feeling that he and this young, submissive girl had more in common than he cared to admit was an unsettling one. He retreated from it at once. “And you’ve proved it many times lately, haven’t you?”

Her flash of resentment lasted only a second before she began to laugh. It was a rich, warm gurgle of mingled pleasure and satisfaction that Douglas wished he could hear more often.

“Oh, yes! Shall I prove it now?”

He suppressed a smile. The mistiness in the girl’s eyes was not just the residue of her tears. She slid a forefinger down her belly from her navel to the pouting crescents between her thighs. It hovered above her small, pink-fleshed hood and she looked at him enquiringly.

“No,” he said and her inviting smile faltered. “Take your blouse off while I decide whether to punish you for not calling me ‘sir’.”

Her expression wary and annoyed, she bared her breasts, casting the blouse aside as if it meant nothing to her.

“Did your father beat you?” Douglas asked before his rigid erection banished his curiosity entirely.

“No, he never hit me... sir.”

“What do you think he would do if he saw me put you over my knee and spank you?”

Caroline laughed again. “He’d have a fit.”

“Then it’s as well he isn’t here to see you sucking my cock.” The words had barely left his lips before the girl was unbuttoning his trousers. He gasped as she curled her fingers around his shaft and aimed it towards her mouth. She looked up at him.

“Sir, please, w... wouldn’t you rather f... fuck me?”

Douglas grinned and shook his head. With her gaze locked on his, she brushed her lips over the underside of his cock head and wriggled her tongue on the sensitive spot where it was joined to his foreskin.

“Please, sir. I’m well-trained now. Please fuck me.” Her warm breath caressed his penis as she gave a long, seductive sigh.

Douglas grabbed her, jerking her up and onto the sofa. He laid her on her back, bent her double and pinned her upraised legs beneath her arms. Her cry of alarm became a groan of pleasure as he planted his mouth on her pussy and plunged his tongue inside. Caroline writhed and pushed hard against him as he revelled in the tang of her flowing moisture. Douglas breathed deeply, savouring the rich, ripe scent of her arousal and his cock ached to fill her and take her hard.

Instead, he held her with one hand tight on her left breast and clamped his lips on the rising nub of her clit as he slid two fingers of his other hand into her slick sheath and teased its sensitive membranes. Caroline moaned and squirmed. With a surge of satisfaction, Douglas sought the little ridge of her pleasure-spot high at the front of her shivering sex. She came in seconds, crying out and arching her back as she spilled her piquant juices over his lips. He held her down and spread her sex to watch its bright-pink interior convulsing with the spasms of her orgasm.

Before they had ceased, he thrust his tongue inside her once more. Caroline heaved beneath his restraining hand, giving little, disjointed cries as Douglas stoked the fires of her passion and ignored her breathless

pleas to be fucked. When she had thrashed her way through her second orgasm, he drew back from her glistening wetness and looked at his wristwatch. If they did not leave soon they would have to travel in the worst heat of the day. As he pulled Caroline to her feet, her passion-clouded eyes went wide.

“Ooh, I’m coming again!” She clasped him tightly against her.

£££He held her quivering body as her blonde head pressed against his chest and her sweat-dampened stomach rubbed on his hard penis. Caroline turned her face up and suddenly pressed her mouth to his in a long, greedy kiss. Douglas returned it, until he realised the movement of her belly against his cock was Caroline trying to lift high enough to mount herself upon it. He disentangled her, laughing.

“I think your daddy was right. You *are* a naughty girl. And insatiable too.” He pulled her over his knee and dealt four firm swats to her upturned backside. She yelped and wriggled as her bottom bounced and he reawakened the hurt of the stripes already decorating it. He had not brought any handcuffs. He used his belt to tie her wrists behind her and knelt her on the floor between his splayed legs.

“No fucking for you until Van Gryf says so,” he told her. “Now, you’ve had your pleasure. It’s time I had mine.” Again he saw a flash of temper before the girl obeyed him. She had to press her head to his chest to get her mouth over his penis and he held her there, stroking the golden mane of her hair and thrusting gently between her lips. She tensed, and he realised it was something of which she had little experienced. With the practice dildo she had had to make all the movements. Douglas released her and she drew back with his cock held firmly between her lips and began to suck. At times she was clumsy compared to the other girls but he did not care. He had been craving for the touch of her mouth on his pulsing cock since the night he had watched her strip in Van Gryf’s living room. It was worth the wait.

Douglas was too aroused to last long. He guessed Caroline would try to pull away, and he held her head as his cock twitched with the shivering thrill of his climax. Caroline made gurgling noises and screwed her eyes shut as his spunk spurted into her mouth. The moment he released her head her lips parted in a gasp and most of his come overflowed and dribbled down her chin.

“Is this the first time you’ve sucked a real cock?” he asked, disappointed that he had not had the pleasure of seeing her swallow. Her head-shake surprised him. “Your husband?”

“Van Gryf, last week,” she said thickly.

“Was it, by heaven? He didn’t mention *that*. I expect he told you you’re supposed to swallow?”

“I tried. It’s not... not easy.” Caroline met his gaze, licked the come from around her mouth, drew in her tongue and gulped. Douglas smiled at her look of distaste and watched her throat bob.

“Good girl. It’ll get easier with practice.” Her doubtful glance filled him with sudden concern. “Are you still certain this is the life you want, Caroline? You have only to ask and Van Gryf will let you go.”

“No!” she said at once. “I want to stay.”

Relieved, Douglas leaned back on the sofa. “Then you’ve seen the other girls do it often enough to know you aren’t finished yet.”

All credit to her, she was ready to go through a lot to achieve her goal, he allowed as she sucked the pearl of semen from the tip of his cock, licked up the come coating its head and forced it down her throat. He thought he had learned why it was so important to her, though he wished now that he had not delved into her personal feelings. He had not even concerned himself with whether the other slave girls were content with their present lives, let alone those they had led before.

It was past time to go. The Scotsman freed Caroline’s hands, gave her what remained of his whisky to wash away the taste of his come and made her put on her blouse. When she reached for her skirt he snatched it away and took it outside.

She faltered at the doorway. “Sir, I can’t...” Caroline gestured at the blouse, which barely reached her hips.

“Yes you can.” Douglas made her sit beside him on the Chevrolet’s sun-heated front seat. She was blushing prettily as he drove away but the hard points of her nipples straining against the blouse and the way her fidgeting hands kept straying towards her sex told their own story. She really was insatiable, he thought, and he had been sorely tempted to fuck her when she had clung so tightly to him. Maybe that was not so far off though, with only a few days left before the trip north. With his erection stirring at the sight of Caroline squirming her bare bottom on the seat, he hoped not.

Only as the car neared the compound did Douglas allow the girl to put on her skirt. Before long, she would be back in the stable wearing nothing but two tiny strips of silk. The thought was hugely satisfying.

* * * * *

Caroline was worried. It seemed hours since the journey had begun. With the truck's rocking motion bouncing her uncomfortably on the sweat-soaked pallet beneath her, she felt the steel shackles tug on her wrists and ankles. It was hot and stuffy inside the big crate, despite the drilled holes that let in air and a little daylight.

She had not wanted to climb into the back of the truck outside the stable and lie in the wooden box. Even when the blonde girl who looked so much like her had obeyed Van Gryf unhesitatingly, Caroline had remained reluctant. Then she had seen the amused challenge on the Afrikaner's face. Was it another test? If so, it was more frightening than anything she had faced before. She had desperately wanted to ask what was happening but she knew he would only give the same answer he had given to all her questions in the last few days – a slave girl's duty was not to question but to obey.

Though she had done most of the talking, Caroline felt as if she knew Douglas much better since their conversation at the mission. It had seemed almost as if a bond, or at least a rapport, had developed between them during their time away from the stable, but he too had refused to tell her why her training sessions had been stopped or why the men had not visited her in the last two days.

Still smiling his challenge, Van Gryf had shackled her limbs himself when Caroline had unhappily lain in the crate. It had taken all of her resolve not to cry her surrender when he had closed the lid and secured its catches. The scant light within had dimmed further when a tarpaulin had covered the cramped box and she could do nothing but lie in the semi-darkness with her heart pounding.

She listened. The truck was slowing, and as the engine note faded, she faintly heard the sound of many voices. They were amongst a crowd. In a city? She swapped a nervous glance with the girl dimly visible beside her. Caroline had learned she was Natasha, the girl she had seen through the window all those months ago, whose naked writhings had

sparked her own ambition to join Van Gryf's stable. That was all she knew about her, except that she had no idea what was happening either. The noise and discomfort of the journey did not encourage conversation.

They stopped. The truck's doors slammed and the light inside the crate brightened. Through one of the air holes, Caroline saw blue sky and glimpsed Douglas, his hand guiding a steel hook attached to a cable. There was a lurch, and the corner of the second crate, already closed when Caroline had climbed aboard the truck, swung above the hole then disappeared. A minute later, her heart leaped as her own crate rose quickly upwards, making her giddy when it swung, and her belly feel suddenly empty as it descended. The crate landed with a gentle bump. The light faded, then vanished altogether as a loud thud came from above. At the same moment, Caroline heard the deep, reverberating hoot of a ship's siren. They were in a harbour, she guessed and from the sudden vibration running through the crate and the rocking motion, they were putting to sea.

"What are they doing with us?" Natasha whispered.

"I wish I knew," Caroline replied. Fear was stopping her from thinking straight. Until her training had abruptly stopped two days before, she had been sure things were going well. She had seen more of Van Gryf and Douglas as the training had intensified. Her pussy exercises had become less exacting as her muscles strengthened. In fact, she had begun to look forward to them, with the promise they held of an orgasm, though Van Gryf had decreed she must be punished if she had more than one. He was teaching her control, she understood, and she was beginning to develop it, if only marginally. Her bottom had felt the cane or the strap daily since he gave the order.

They had stopped her dildo-sucking. Every day, Van Gryf or Douglas had come to her dormitory and made her practice instead on their cocks. Caroline was getting used to the salty, starchy flavour of spunk, though its glutinous texture still made her stomach want to rebel when she swallowed it. It did not detract from the thrilling feeling of the men's warm, rigid cocks filling her mouth, even if it made her sex throb with frustration at being denied the same. She had even learned to flex her pussy muscles to expel the thick, rubber dildo, and how to come while she was doing it. Though Van Gryf had not said so, she had seen it

as a reward when he had left the phallus on her bedside table between sessions and had not forbidden her to play with it.

Caroline had spent most of her time in a state of sexual arousal, only briefly appeased by her climaxes before another stimulus set her pussy tingling again. Even the maddening touch of the hairy rope teasing her sex while she fought to resist rubbing on it had become something she welcomed eagerly, though each time she failed she had received a brisk half-dozen cane strokes on her bottom. And so long as it had not been Mustafa plying the rod, that in its way had been arousing too, for it meant the men's attention was all for her.

Then why, Caroline had asked herself during her few tranquil moments, had she begun to feel that something was lacking in this ideal world that fulfilled all her submissive fantasies? It was no more than a vague perception that had surfaced shortly after Douglas had put her back in the stable on their return from the mission, and she could make no sense of it. She loved being a slave girl. Her reaction to everything she had experienced told her so. Even the shocking discovery she had made only days earlier had ended with her becoming aroused.

She had just completed her pussy exercises when Van Gryf had fitted a new dildo, shorter and slimmer than usual, in the stand behind her. Caroline had been stunned when the Afrikaner had pressed its oiled tip to her anus and told her to push herself onto it. The idea had seemed unnatural and repugnant. It had taken a dozen lashes from the horsetail whip and the threat of twenty with the cane to make her relax her sphincter and allow the barest inch of ivory to penetrate it. Caroline had balked then, astounded when she realised that what she was undergoing was merely preparation for the day a real penis would take the dildo's place. She had never imagined a man could take pleasure in using her there.

For a moment, she had remembered she need only speak out and she could escape the demeaning act. The next second the men were stroking her breasts and pussy and she had forgotten everything but the pleasure. Her own wriggling had made the phallus slide deeper, but its presence had been tolerable until the men stopped playing with her. Then, uncomfortable but aroused, Caroline had followed Van Gryf's order to tighten her anus around the phallus. She had not liked it, but it

was not the first task she had found less than pleasurable to begin with and stimulating later on. She could only hope.

But why, Caroline wanted desperately to know, had she now ended up sweating inside a wooden crate? This could surely not be part of her training? Nor could it be intended for her alone. Not only was Natasha there, but also Caroline strongly suspected that two other girls occupied the second crate that had already been closed when she had boarded the truck. Helpless in the grip of the irons on her limbs, she felt her belly knot in fear.

“What have I been telling you for days now?” Van Gryf demanded when Caroline at last had the chance to ask what was happening.

They were standing in a plush saloon where they had emerged after the Afrikaner had freed them and led them from the ship’s hold. Looking through its big, stern-facing windows, Caroline recognised the port of Mombassa disappearing into the distance.

“Natasha, tell Caroline the first duty of a slave girl.”

“To obey without question, Master, but...”

Van Gryf raised a sardonic eyebrow. “You too? It seems you’re both eager for the kiss of the cane before we reach Berbera.”

“Berbera,” Caroline repeated.

“Yes, Douglas and I have business there. We decided to bring you along rather than interrupt your training. The trip might take a day or two longer than the twelve days you have left but I assume you won’t object?”

She shook her head, belly fluttering at the reminder she had less than two weeks. Had she done enough to persuade him? Caroline remembered the other crate, already open and empty when she was released. “What about the other girls?”

“Not your concern,” Van Gryf said sharply. “Another matter entirely. Now get cleaned up, both of you. You’ll be serving our lunch shortly.”

The girls showered together in a bathroom attached to a luxurious stateroom forward of the saloon. The men watched through the open doorway. Natasha caught Caroline’s eye and gave her a small, secretive smile. She smiled back. She too had seen their erections. She dried herself on the softest towel she had ever felt, excited and embarrassed by Douglas and Van Gryf looking on, and then walked barefoot onto the

deepest carpet she had ever seen. The men's bright eyes flickered back and forth between her and the equally naked Natasha as the girls put on the clean, silken loincloths lying on the bed.

Van Gryf checked his watch. "Too late to get our cocks sucked now. Let's have a drink before we eat."

The girls knelt at their feet while the men sat on a long, deep-cushioned sofa on the saloon's starboard side, sipping gin until a knock sounded at the door. Caroline noticed Van Gryf had to unlock it before taking a tray from whoever was on the other side.

Caroline had never served at table before. She was surprised that the menial task stimulated her almost as much as her sexual performances did. It was as if by offering the dishes she was also offering herself and her willing servitude to her masters. She felt a jolt of surprise. Though he never let her address him as such, Caroline had always thought of Van Gryf as her Master. She realised that for some time, without consciously being aware of it, she had begun regarding Douglas in the same way. The moist tingle between her thighs kept increasing even after the food was served and she stood silently in position by the Afrikaners chair.

Caroline remembered M'shende and N'dele serving dinner on the night she had arrived. They must have felt then as she did now.

"This is quite a boat," Douglas said when the meal was over. "It must have cost an awful lot."

"It must have," Van Gryf agreed. "A motor yacht, one hundred and fifty feet long, thirty foot beam, and what's more important, she cruises at eighteen knots. She'll have us in Berbera in three days if the weather holds."

"And then we get to meet the owner? He must really value your friendship to send this beauty to get you."

Van Gryf laughed. "That *and* the cargo. He's the uncle of my trading partner up there. I've known him longer than I have his nephew. In fact, he's the reason I started trading with Khasim in the first place."

"Ah, the one who bought Dagmar and started the ball rolling," Douglas said. "He can't be near as wealthy as his uncle if he has to work for a living."

"Jamal ibn Yusuff works for a living too," Van Gryf said. "He has lands to rule, the peace to keep and rivals to deal with."

“Not so different from you then.” Douglas grinned and Van Gryf barked a laugh.

“Oh, on a much grander scale. He’s an important and powerful man in the Hejaz, and a symbol to his people.

“I thought the Arabs like their women big,” Douglas said.

“Some do, some don’t, and some enjoy variety, just like us. Jamal is a connoisseur. He admires beauty but he also appreciates there’s a lot more to a woman than her looks. What good is the loveliest if she’s cold as a fish in bed?” Van Gryf reached out suddenly. Caroline jumped as he gripped her buttocks in one hand and Natasha’s in the other. He laughed. “Not something that can be said about our present company. I think it’s time we got them fed and watered and ready to be fucked.”

Caroline’s growing concern at the Afrikaner’s talk of cargo and Arabs, and Douglas’s casual reference to someone being bought, was banished from her mind by her surge of excitement. Had she heard him right? Did he mean what he had said?

Chapter 12

A glance at Natasha showed her face alight with the same eager anticipation Caroline was feeling. Pussy quivering, she looked from Van Gryf to Douglas.

The Scotsman gave a broad smile. "I think we had better leave the feeding and watering 'til later. It looks as if they're ready for the fucking right now." He got up and went to the long sofa. "Here, Caroline."

She hurried to stand before him. He leaned forward and lifted the flap of silk that barely concealed her sex. A tremor teased her moist opening.

"No sign of her little button," Douglas told Van Gryf who had crossed to the opposite end of the sofa, drawing Natasha with him. "Would you say Caroline has been a good girl lately?" Douglas gave her a knavish smile as he let fall the piece of silk.

"Well, at times, perhaps," Van Gryf said, pulling Natasha onto his lap.

"But you know that underneath she's a naughty girl, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, I know that!" Van Gryf agreed.

"You've seen those little looks she gives when she thinks no one's watching. The little pouts and resentful glances when she thinks she's being hard done by."

"I certainly have." Van Gryf loosened the knot on the belt holding Natasha's loincloth around her hips. "I'll admit I didn't expect her to have such a temper. And considering her promise to be good, she has shown a surprising streak of rebelliousness at times."

Caroline's belly lurched. He sounded like her father.

"Not to mention all her complaints about not getting fucked."

With a wriggle in her pussy, Caroline lowered her eyes from Douglas's sardonic grin.

"You're an impatient girl as well as a naughty one, Caroline," he said, "and I'm wondering why you aren't on your knees and close enough for me to play with those nice, big tits of yours."

Caroline knelt and shuffled forward until he could reach out and roll her hard nipples between his fingers. She caught her breath as he pinched them firmly.

“We’ve been talking about your little attempts at seduction,” the Scotsman continued. “All those flirtatious glances you’ve been giving us and shaking your tits and wiggling your backside in the hope we’d fuck you. That was what you were hoping, wasn’t it?”

Caroline gulped and felt her cheeks flame. “Yes, sir.”

“And now the question is, does a naughty girl like you deserve our hard cocks in her pussy?”

“Oh, yes, sir!” she said with a furious tickling between her damp thighs. “Sir, I’ve tried hard. I haven’t really been so *very* naughty, have I?”

Douglas looked at Van Gryf. “Has she?”

The Afrikaner was playing with Natasha’s breasts as she finished removing his shirt and began excitedly unfastening his trousers.

“Well, let’s see. She has been diligent with her pussy exercises and her cock sucking is coming on nicely. But she doesn’t try anywhere near hard enough when she’s told not to come, and she’s too fond of questioning orders. And Mustafa says she’s forever playing with her dildo without permission.”

Caroline looked at him sharply. “But you never said - ” she began indignantly and knew she had fallen straight into their trap.

“There’s that look again,” Douglas said. “What a temper. Perhaps I had better fetch a cane, Van Gryf, so we can remind Caroline what happens to naughty, ill-disciplined slave girls.”

“Oh, it’s not fair!” Caroline said. “You’re not giving me - ” She saw his sudden grin and heard Van Gryf chuckling. It was a game! Just as Douglas was toying with her breasts, both men were toying with her mind, teasing and provoking her to greater arousal. And it was working.

Douglas lifted her silk covering again. “What have we here? It seems our naughty girl is getting excited.” He stroked the swelling nub of Caroline’s clitoris. Her breath hissed between her teeth and her nostrils quivered as her ripe woman-scent filled them. “Perhaps, considering your protest, we had better just put some restraints on you and let you watch us enjoy Natasha.”

“Ooh, no!” Her bud pulsed under his rubbing finger. Did he mean it? Caroline looked a plea at the Afrikaner. He slid Natasha from his knee and stood to strip the rest of his clothes. His eyes were fixed on Caroline’s kneeling figure and his long cock was curving up from his

hairy groin, hard and thick and demanding. She whimpered when Douglas stopped his stroking. She wanted it so much.

Turning to plead with him, she saw his penis was also free. He tugged her nipples, drawing her closer until her bent arms rested on his thighs, and aimed his arrogant shaft towards her lips. With a breathy moan, Caroline took it in to her mouth, heart racing as Van Gryf knelt behind her. His big hand smoothing over her bottom forced a little squeak of nervous excitement past Douglas's fat cock-head. There was no fiery smack, however. The Afrikaner's fingers trailed gently down the cleft dividing her buttocks and over her slit. Her sex shivered, and Caroline tongued and sucked the cock in her mouth more avidly as her juices flowed.

Van Gryf stroked her vulva and clitoris for long minutes. Finding it increasingly difficult to concentrate on the cock in her mouth, Caroline yearned for his penetrating fingers as her hot passion swelled with every little squeeze he gave her sensitive flesh. At last she felt him part her pussy-lips, and her sex tingled in anticipation of the finger that would slide into its wet warmth. Caroline's mouth went wide in a gasp of delight that made Douglas's penis spring from her mouth and slap against his belly. It was not Van Gryf's finger that was sliding into her pussy. It was the broad head of his cock.

With an overwhelming rush of desire, Caroline thrust backwards to meet his penetration, impaling herself in one frenzied lunge on the enormous shaft. Her sex contracted suddenly. Lightning flashed inside her head and the balled excitement in her belly exploded into a ferocious, pussy-wrenching orgasm. Van Gryf gripped her hips, holding her buttocks hard against his belly, and Douglas's hands closed tightly on her upper arms, overpowering the wild thrashing of her body that was far beyond Caroline's control. Racked with incredible delight, she felt the strong, subjugating hands and her rippling pussy clamping on the great, potent cock, and she came again. Her cry was cut off by a surge of quivering ecstasy as another climax seized her and its first spasms had barely begun when her pussy writhed in the grip of yet another.

"Ye gods," Caroline heard Douglas say, his face blurring before her eyes. They snapped shut of their own volition as her climax erupted again and filled her head with flashing, flickering lights. She cried out uncontrollably, revelling in the men's grasp that forced her bucking body

to obey their will when what it wanted was to thrash and wriggle with a pleasure that was almost stealing away her senses. Eventually it did.

“She must have come six times.”

Caroline heard the astonishment in Douglas’s voice as she recovered from her faint. It could not have been greater than her own. She was sprawled on the carpet, her pussy wet and quivering.

“At least,” Van Gryf said.

She felt herself lifted, and he sat her in his lap on the sofa, cradling her.

“I’m sorry sir,” she said, still dazed. “I couldn’t help it.”

Van Gryf laughed. “I know. You certainly surprised us, and yourself as well, I think. I know you’ve been waiting a long time but I didn’t quite expect that.”

“N... neither did I.” Caroline could feel the heat radiating from her pussy and her wetness flowing onto her thighs. Natasha moaning made her look up. She saw the girl slide Douglas’s cock from her mouth and straddle him on the sofa’s wide seat. Her hand guided his big shaft to her sex and her head went back as it penetrated her. A thrill ran through Caroline’s pulsing sheath. Natasha did not seem to be moving a muscle, but Douglas’s long sighs showed she was giving him pleasure. Caroline understood immediately just what had been the point of all those sessions spent clenching her sex around the dildo. She looked up into Van Gryf’s face.

“Sir...”

He smiled at her with surprising warmth. “Try to keep still this time. Just grip my cock the way you’ve been taught.” He laid her on her back against his broad chest and she spread her thighs over his groin, looking at her juices glistening on his rearing cock.

“Ooh!” Tremors coursed through her when the swollen baton nudged her entrance. Van Gryf held her around the waist, easing her slowly onto his shaft, pinching hard on one of her nipples until she was gasping in pain. It was just enough to quell her rising climax as he settled her onto his belly with his full length buried inside her. Caroline began tightening and relaxing the walls of her sheath around it, fighting the urge to wriggle her hips. Soon, she was groaning with the strain, and the delicious feeling it created in her sex was driving her towards another orgasm. Another hard pinch of her nipple quashed it. She lay panting for

a minute, listening to Natasha's soft cries as she too struggled to hold herself in check.

Van Gryf's gentle squeeze of Caroline's teat set her pussy flexing again. When her climax approached once more, the Afrikaner's quick, painful nip of her erect clitoris subdued the tremors. How many times it was repeated, she had no idea. Only the incredible sensations and the knowledge she was completely controlled by the man whose rigid cock was their cause had any meaning for her.

Finally, Van Gryf's fierce tweaking of her clit came just too late. Caroline tipped over the edge and came with a ragged cry and a wild, raging delight that clamped her sheath hard on the wonderful cock. She had no time for surprise or regret when it slid free. Van Gryf laid her on the sofa. His awe-inspiring weight came down upon her and her pussy yielded to him. Caroline came again as his shaft thrust aside the trembling membranes in her sex and fierce shivering heat flooded her lower belly. He took her with long slow strokes, driving deep, gradually thrusting harder and faster until she was coming again and again and the joy in her ecstatically convulsing pussy almost stole away her senses once more. Van Gryf's cry as his hot spunk surged into her increased her delight. Her hips jerked manically as yet another orgasm tore through her and made him thrust all the harder.

Breasts heaving, nipples buzzing from the pinching and her pussy all a quiver, Caroline lay with her eyes closed and heard Natasha's impassioned cries as Douglas rode her to orgasm with a vigour the equal of the Afrikaner's. It was several minutes more before the English girl found enough self-possession to open her eyes. She saw Natasha's tongue lapping on the Scotsman's flagging erection. With a stab of guilt, Caroline crawled to Van Gryf and laid her blonde head on his warm, damp thigh. She reached a shaking hand towards his penis.

"Never mind," he said and pulled her into his arms. "You had better lie down, young lady." He carried her to one of the staterooms and laid her on the big bed. Though she was weary and languid after all her orgasms, her astonishment at the pleasure she had felt would not let her rest. Douglas entered and laid a limp Natasha next to her. The moment they were alone, the Russian girl stretched luxuriously and sighed.

"We are so lucky," she said. "We have them all to ourselves."

Caroline saw she was smiling. It was hard to believe she had been coerced into slavery when she seemed so happy.

“I had only sucked Douglas before today,” Natasha said. “He is a strong man. As strong as Van Gryf. He made me come really hard.” She laughed her pleasure. “Soon I think I will be in love with him also.”

“Love!” Caroline forgot her fatigue. “You love Van Gryf? But didn’t he abduct you? He has made you his slave. He beats you and makes you serve him. Shouldn’t you at least resent him?”

Natasha continued to smile. “Perhaps I did at first. I was frightened then. But I was alone and poor when he found me. He taught me to pleasure myself and then to pleasure him. I would never have dared do such things before. I never thought I would, but when he took me for the first time I gave myself willingly. And soon after, I gave him my heart too.”

“What did he say?” Caroline asked, astounded.

“Oh, I’ve never told him! He does not need to know. It is enough that I do. The other girls feel the same.”

“The others? You mean they’re all in love with him?” It was beyond Caroline’s understanding. She had been eager to submit to Van Gryf. She admired his strength and commanding manner, and unlike Natasha, she had wanted to give herself to him from the start. But she had never imagined falling in love with him. That was the kind of thing that only happened in the stories she read. All Caroline wanted was for him to dominate her and give her pleasure. Her heart skipped. She had just had that in full measure.

“You will understand in time,” Natasha assured her. “It takes a little while to get used to the idea of being stolen.”

“I... I came willingly,” Caroline confessed.

“Then you love him already,” the Russian girl said brightly.

“No! No, I don’t! I’m not looking for love.”

“It is not something to be sought. It finds you whether you wish it or not.” Natasha gave a long, smiling sigh. “And when it does, it is wonderful.” Her hands squeezed her stiff-nippled breasts and slid down to her mound. “Oh, I can hardly wait for tonight. They are bound to want us again.”

Caroline looked away. For once she was sated. Racked by so many orgasms, her body ached and her mind felt torpid. It was more a

feeling than a conscious thought when she recalled the warm glow in her heart that came whenever Van Gryf or Douglas was near her. She remembered how happy it made her feel when they came to watch her training or to have her suck their cocks, and the little tug of loneliness and loss when they left her. Part of her mind wanted to think about it, but she was tired, and the hum of the yacht's engines and its rocking over the waves were lulling her. She closed her eyes.

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"Mmm, it's so nice," Natasha mewed, undulating her belly to rub her hairless love-mound against Douglas's palm. His finger was in her sex, stroking gently on the ridge of her pleasure-spot while he recovered his strength before taking her again. She moaned and mumbled in Russian as he let his thumb graze the hard nub of her clitoris. He smiled. Both times she had thrashed beneath him, she had lapsed into her mother tongue to express her pleasure. Or so he assumed. She could have been calling him a bastard for all he knew, but he doubted it. If Natasha had been disappointed when Van Gryf had chosen Caroline to share his bed, she had not shown it. Nor did the way she had avidly sucked and fucked since Douglas had led her to his stateroom suggest she had any aversion to his company. And she *was* a true beauty.

The Scotsman eyed the hard cones of her nipples and lowered his head to flick his tongue over each one in turn. Natasha's hair flashed gold in the light of the lamps at either side of the bed as she gasped and rolled her head from side to side. She was superb, with her body toned by just the right amount of exercise and trained so perfectly to please him. The intense satisfaction he had only known since joining Van Gryf bubbled up inside once more, and he would have laughed aloud from sheer delight if he was not licking his way slowly over Natasha's warm, perspiring skin towards her smooth, bare pussy. He did laugh when she wriggled and cooed at the firm grip of his lips on her bud, but only briefly before sucking the juicy morsel into his mouth. She yelped and yipped, and he had to press hard on her belly to hold her still and stop his finger sliding from her sex. His cock was achingly erect again, throbbing with the need to pierce her.

"Please, Master, from behind," Natasha begged breathily.

Douglas flipped her over and pushed two pillows under her belly, spreading her legs with his knees. She panted, wriggling as he explored her buttocks, the pink lines of her last caning faintly visible on their up-thrust rounds. He stroked the hollows at the tops of her inner thighs and felt the wet heat radiating from her sex. Exulting in the power and dominance he had over the whimpering girl, Douglas slid his pulsing penis into her pink, glistening opening. The rich, intoxicating scent of ripe womanhood set his nostrils twitching. Marvelling at her control as she held herself rigid and tightened the walls of her sex, he fought his need to move and savoured the rippling sensation on his shaft. Natasha's anal knot flexed to the same rhythm, and he could not resist pressing a forefinger wet with her juices to the little pucker.

“Ooh, Master!” She squirmed to force his finger deeper.

Douglas was on the verge of yielding to the need to fuck her hard when the door opened. Van Gryf pulled Caroline into the room after him. “Want to swap?”

“Very much.” The Scotsman pulled his finger from Natasha's anus. Her pussy made wet, sucking sounds as his cock slid free. He gave her bottom a light slap, and she got up wordlessly and went with Van Gryf.

Douglas found himself alone with Caroline. Her expression was a familiar mixture of arousal and anxiousness, which was no less appealing because he had seen it many times before. If anything, it was more stimulating than usual. This time he was going to fuck her.

He patted the bed, his straining cock twitching in anticipation. Caroline came hesitantly, wide eyes fixed on his shaft until she walked into the edge of the bed and tumbled down beside him. He pulled her close. She was warm and sweat-sheened, just as Natasha had been, and her body arched very satisfyingly when he slipped his fingers into her pussy. His cock seemed to glide into its soft, yielding membranes when he mounted her. He stayed buried to the limit while she clenched her sex on his rigid length. It had barely begun when Caroline bucked beneath him, lips parting to emit a series of short, yelping cries and her big breasts heaving with her gasping breaths.

Douglas kept still, savouring every spasm of Caroline's pussy around his cock until her climax subsided. Her eyes opened. Deep blue, bright yet clouded with passion, they stared up into his. He lowered his

lips to hers and kissed her for a long time. Her mouth responded hungrily, and though it was clearly a surprise when he probed his tongue inside, she responded to that too. Warm, rapid breaths from her nostrils bathed his cheek as her lips clung to his. She gasped suddenly, and he felt her sex begin to tighten and relax as she remembered her duty. He pulled his mouth from hers and looked at her lovely, flushed face.

“Aren’t you tired?”

“A little, sir. But...” She gave a kittenish grin that set him laughing and made his hard cock jiggle inside her.

“But not *too* tired, eh?” Douglas’s need was suddenly overwhelming. He drew back his hips and lunged.

Caroline mewed and clasped her arms around him. “Ooh, harder! Do it harder!”

He gripped her shoulders, driving into her. Her breathless pleas and violently jerking hips spurred him to greater efforts until a thrilling surge of delight wriggled through his cock and he felt the fierce, exultant gush of his spunk. He kept thrusting, spurting semen, his long, deep growl of fulfilment joining Caroline’s high-pitched cries as she writhed in her own climax.

Breathing raggedly, Douglas sagged onto her slick, perspiring body, rolled to one side and closed his eyes. The thump of his heartbeat was loud in his ears. Caroline shuffled closer until her hip was touching his. He slid an arm around her shoulders and pulled her closer still, and she rested her blonde head on his chest. The scent of sex and their mingling sweat was piquant in his nostrils, her skin’s warm dampness pleasant against his own. He lay quietly while his head cleared, enjoying holding the superbly feminine body in his arms.

After a few minutes, Caroline’s face turned up to his. “Sir,” she said meekly, “was I good?”

He gave her a puzzled look.

“Did... did you enjoy me?”

He laughed. “You mean, are you a good fuck? Oh, yes, Caroline! Don’t worry on that score.”

“As good as Natasha?”

“At least her equal,” Douglas said, suddenly understanding and telling Caroline what she wanted to hear. In a way it was true. Her skill did not yet rival the Russian girl’s, but she was wonderfully responsive

and climaxed with a satisfying ease that flattered his masculine vanity. “Are you worried Van Gryf might turn you out when your time is up?” He had spent days avoiding acknowledging his own concerns about that.

“More than ever,” Caroline said. “Natasha told me something earlier that changes everything.”

The Scotsman quirked an eyebrow. “How so?”

“All of Van Gryf’s slave girls are in love with him.”

“Love?” He laughed, though the idea was startling. “He’s never mentioned anything like that to me.”

“He doesn’t know, or, at least, none of the girls have ever told him.”

“Even if it’s true, and I doubt it, how does it make a difference?”

“Because... because I *don’t* love him.”

Douglas could not see her point. “What does it matter? If you measure up, he’ll keep you, just as he said he would.”

“I think perhaps he does know they love him. That he senses it without realising what it is. He’s going to sell those girls he brought along, isn’t he?”

“That’s not your concern,” Douglas said uncomfortably, remembering what Van Gryf had said about selling Caroline too, if he thought it necessary.

“I know why,” she said quietly.

Her stiff, right nipple was pressing on Douglas’s chest. He reached for the left one, standing like a ripe strawberry on the peak of her breast.

“Oh, do you now? And why would that be?”

“Because they don’t love him either.”

He laughed. “Silly girl, that’s not the reason at all.”

“It is,” Caroline insisted. “He’s not doing it for the money. He’s rich. He could afford to keep them if he wanted to. He may not be aware of why, but he knows they don’t please him as much as the others. So he’s going to get rid of them.”

Her choice of words was not lost on the Scotsman. He released her nipple and looked into her eyes. They shone with a film of moisture, and Douglas felt again the unfamiliar and disquieting pang of sympathy he had experienced when Caroline had used the same phrase to describe the way her father had treated her. Could she be right? Van Gryf had said the two girls had lost their spark, that their personalities had been

submerged by their training, but was he misreading what he saw? Could it be that they had not lost as much as he believed, but that his other slaves had gained more than he expected as they were trained – love for their Master?

It all seemed very far-fetched. After all, Van Gryf was not a man to dwell on his emotions, any more than was Douglas, and he was probably unconcerned about his slave girls' feelings towards him. The Afrikaner was tough, uncompromising, used to having his own way, and ruthless when he saw the need. He kept the girls who pleased him most and sold those who did not. But that still left the question of why he found some more pleasing than others.

Douglas suddenly remembered asking Annaliese if she was afraid of Van Gryf and the coy, secretive smile she had given, despite answering that she was. His laugh felt forced as he reached again for Caroline's nipple.

"You've been thinking a damned sight too much about all this. You should be concentrating on pleasing Van Gryf, not inventing wild ideas to scare yourself."

"Oh, you don't understand!" Caroline gave a little sob. "He isn't going all the way to Berbera just to sell those two girls. He's going to sell Natasha. And he's going to sell me too."

Chapter13

Douglas's gut gave a lurch. "Nonsense," he scoffed. "He has no intention of selling Natasha, and he gave his word you would have four weeks. Before that time is up, we'll be finished our business and on our way home. There's no risk of him selling you." A thought that quelled his sudden anxiety struck him. "In any case, you've not finished your training. You wouldn't fetch a high enough price."

"Oh!" Her lips pouted as she pondered his last remark.

"There, you didn't think of that, did you?" Douglas saw some of her nervousness disappear. "Now, I think it's time you stopped worrying about nothing and did what you're here for, slave girl." He took her hand and laid it on his swelling penis.

"Do you really think I'm worrying over nothing?" Her expression was endearingly hopeful as she looked into his eyes. Douglas smiled. Despite her ardent sexuality, she was such an innocent about so many things. He understood why Van Gryf was worried she would not do well on her own.

"Of course. Van Gryf is a man of his word. But if you're so worried, you have only to tell him you've had enough and he will free you. Have you had enough, Caroline?"

Her fingers curled tighter around his cock. Her breathing had quickened. As Douglas had hoped she would, Caroline shook her head. He slid a hand over her vulva and saw her wince.

"Are you sure you want to? Your pussy's had a very busy day."

"Not so *very* busy." Her smile was kittenish once more.

Douglas knew she was lying. He reached into the bedside drawer and took out the leather cuffs he had found there earlier. "Would these help?"

"Ooh, yes please!"

She was panting and rubbing her thighs together by the time he finished securing her wrists to the headboard. Laughing at her startled cry, he rolled her onto her belly.

"You've been a naughty girl again. You haven't called me 'sir' once in the last ten minutes." He smoothed his hand over her firm buttocks. "I think six should be a sufficient reminder."

Caroline moaned as he rubbed ever closer to the pink, swollen outer-lips of her pussy. She turned her face towards him. “Sir, I don’t know your first name.”

“It’s Robert. Rob to my friends.”

“Rob,” Caroline said, and yelped as his palm smacked her bottom.

* * * * *

The stateroom’s ceiling-fan was wafting gentle air currents over Caroline’s naked body. She opened her eyes and watched it turn, remembering her first afternoon at Van Gryf’s when she had lain anxiously on her bed and struggled to resist slipping her fingers into her quivering sex. Three weeks had not yet passed since that day, yet it seemed long ago and a whole life away. Caroline listened to Van Gryf’s softly snorting breaths and suppressed a giggle, wondering if any of the slave girls had ever dared tell him that he snored. She certainly did not intend to after displeasing him so much the previous afternoon.

She had been lying on top of him on the sofa in the saloon, tightening her pussy on his penis and rubbing her achingly-erect nipples on his chest, when his finger had suddenly pushed into her anus. Taken by surprise, Caroline had wriggled so much to escape that his cock had slid from her sex. Van Gryf had dragged her angrily to the table and bent her over it. With Douglas holding her upper arms, she had taken six, solid strokes to her backside from the Afrikaner’s cane.

Bottom burning and her hands cuffed behind her, she had been forced to her knees and had had to submit to Van Gryf pushing a slim dildo deep into her rectum. For over half an hour she had watched as he and Douglas took turns bugging Natasha. That it seemed to excite the Russian girl as much as the men using her pussy would have done had not helped Caroline get over her shock. The sight of their cocks stretching Natasha’s little rosebud horribly wide with their hard thrusts had convinced her it would soon split apart. Relieved when it did not, she had still been left feeling very queasy by the thought it might soon be happening to her. Her belly had almost rebelled completely when they had made her lick and suck their cocks clean after they had finished. Yet Caroline could not deny that the humiliation of it had heightened the

tremors in her pussy and made her sphincter clamp all the tighter upon the dildo impaling it.

Her sex tickled at the memory, and she looked at Van Gryf on his back beside her and the thick curve of his morning erection. Three days of what seemed like continuous copulation with her masters had not dampened Carline's ardour or her determination to please them to the full. She recalled all too well Van Gryf's mention of 'cargo' and the men's casual talk about Arabs buying women. There had been nothing in the yacht's hold but the crates that had held her and Natasha, and Anne and Margery, the other two girls. *They* were the only cargo.

Had she been deluding herself all along, Caroline wondered? Had she been a fool to trust Van Gryf, who she now knew did not just coerce young women into slavery but bought and sold them too. He was a dealer in female flesh, a slaver. And she and Natasha, and Anne and Margery were his prime commodity.

White Ivory, they called them, white women sold for their beauty to the highest bidder. She had chosen Van Gryf. To know she was in his power was the most exciting thing she had ever experienced. The knowledge that that power extended to selling her to anyone he pleased caused a knot of trepidation in her belly every time she thought of it. And recalling Douglas's confident assertion that there was no chance of her being sold, no longer did anything to make it go away. Why then, along with her fear, did she feel a thrill of arousal?

Van Gryf took a deep breath that made his hard cock lift then settle back onto his stomach. It was as if it was beckoning her. With little thrills teasing the mouth of her sex, Caroline slid carefully down the bed to look more closely at the thick baton of flesh. The great, distended length strained upward above Van Gryf's navel, strong, demanding, potent. Caroline loved it.

As a delicious shiver ran through her, she dared to reach out a finger and stroke the place where the taut foreskin joined the red, swollen head. The cock twitched, and Caroline smiled. She might be weak compared to the Afrikaner but she had a power of her own, enough to make his beautiful penis react to it even while he slept. With a butterfly touch, Caroline fluttered her fingers down the velvet-skinned shaft. It seemed to pulse beneath their tips. Emboldened, she pushed her hair

back and gently pressed her tongue to the broad underside of the cock-head.

“Go on then.”

Caroline jerked away and stared into Van Gryf’s face. Though he gave his thin, amused smile, his eyes were heavy-lidded with desire.

“Suck me, Caroline.”

It was what she wanted. She laid her right cheek on his hard stomach. His cock was aimed directly at her. Belly aquiver, Caroline pursed her lips and kissed its tip. A glow of excitement heightened the tremors in her pussy as Van Gryf sighed. Delicately, she licked the head until it shone with her saliva, and slowly lapped her way down the shaft from tip to base several times before finally stretching wide her jaws to take the hot, bulbous head into her mouth. Van Gryf gave a grunt of satisfaction and Caroline’s juices flowed.

He leaned sideways suddenly, his cock pushing to the back of her throat so she almost gagged. His left hand slid over her back and buttocks, and she tensed at the pressure of his finger on the tight opening between them. After yesterday, she dared not provoke his anger again. Steeling herself, Caroline forced her sphincter to relax and continued sucking the Afrikaner’s penis. She gave a shiver of something less than pleasure when his blunt digit pushed into her tender anus. She heard the door open but was facing the wrong way to see who was there.

“Breakfast, Master,” Natasha announced.

“In a minute,” Van Gryf replied. “First, come and rub Caroline’s clit.”

Caroline stiffened and felt her anus grip the Afrikaner’s finger.

“Relax,” he told her, wiggling it inside her.

No woman had ever touched Caroline’s clitoris before. It was hard to keep her mouth pumping rhythmically on Van Gryf’s cock as she felt the mattress give under Natasha’s weight and then the gentle touch of her hand sliding between her thighs. Caroline recoiled from the finger that delved beneath her hood, but the bigger finger in her rear held her still as the Russian girl began teasing her bud. Soon, the pleasure began to flow and Caroline’s clitoris began to swell. Her breathing quickened until she was gasping around the thick meat in her mouth. It was hard to keep still with sparkling delight thrilling through her sex, and even the Afrikaner’s penetration of her sensitive rectum no longer seemed unpleasant.

Caroline was halfway to orgasm when Van Gryf gave a muted cry and her mouth filled suddenly with thick, salty spunk. She blinked, fought the need to cough, and drew back her head until only the tip of his cock remained between her lips. The first, powerful gush ended and Caroline let the glutinous fluid pool at the back of her throat then swallowed quickly. Its slightly bitter, starchy flavour no longer seemed so unpleasant – as Van Gryf had promised, she was acquiring the taste – but the slimy feel of it flowing down her gullet was something she had still not become accustomed to. Ignoring the quaver in her stomach, Caroline sucked the rest of the Afrikaner's semen into her mouth, gulped it down, and licked the gooey remnants from his flagging cock. He withdrew his finger from her anus and patted her bottom, still tender from the caning he had given it the previous day.

“Good girl. I think I was a little harsh with you yesterday, Caroline. I should have made greater allowance for you being new to having your backside used.”

She stared in surprise. It was the closest thing to an apology Caroline had ever heard the Afrikaner utter.

He got up. “Right, you have until I've showered to make each other come.”

Caroline gulped, but Natasha was already moving to kneel astride her, facing down her supine body with her long, blonde hair tickling the English girl's belly as she began rubbing her clitoris once more. After a minute of rippling delight from Natasha's skilful manipulations, it seemed almost natural for Caroline to slip her fingers between the shiny, swollen petals of the pussy that was inches from her face. Far less reluctantly than she could ever have imagined, Caroline began to pleasure another woman.

The Russian girl wriggled her hips, sighed and lowered her head. Astounded, Caroline froze as the girl's lips nuzzled her hard little bud then sucked it gently. The movement pushed Natasha's pussy closer and the air was suddenly thick with her ripe aroma. The girl was giving her such pleasure, Caroline thought. It was only fair that she do the same for her. She pushed out her tongue and lapped the juices from the pink, glistening swells of Natasha's inner-lips.

Both girls came within seconds of one another. When Natasha rolled off her quivering body and Caroline opened her eyes, she saw Van

Gryf standing by the bathroom doorway, watching them. His cock was rearing upwards again.

“Five minutes,” he said, smiling. “You will have to do that for me again sometime. Then I’ll see to it you last longer. Right, you’ve got ’til I’m dressed to get cleaned up and into your loincloths. I’m hungry.”

Natasha grinned broadly at Caroline while they shared the shower. She grinned back, and realised that though they had had little time to become acquainted she liked the Russian girl. She felt that they shared more than just the similarity of their appearance and their liking for sex. Thanks to her father, Caroline had never had a real friend. She had not been seeking one at Van Gryf’s, but much to her surprise she had the feeling she had found one in Natasha.

When they entered the saloon, Margery and Anne had already finished their breakfast. Except at mealtimes, when they usually ate after everyone else had, Van Gryf kept them locked in their cabin. The Scotsman raised his fork in greeting to Van Gryf and continued clearing the large plate on the table in front of him.

Caroline sat down and washed the taste of the Afrikaner’s come from her mouth with coffee, watching the two girls she had never had a chance to speak to during the voyage over the rim of her cup. Did they have any idea what was going to happen to them, she wondered, convinced they would be sold.

A picture of them standing on the auction block, pawed and prodded by strangers, filled her mind. She imagined hard-faced men in Arab robes assessing their beauty and sexual prowess, while the girls cowered in abject humiliation until the auctioneer’s gavel fell and they were dragged off to their fate. What would it be? The pampered life of a concubine in some exotic harem? Or that of the lowliest servant, performing the most menial tasks for girls more favoured than herself and subjected to the whip or the cane for the slightest infraction? Or perhaps slavery in some Bedouin’s tent, valued less than his camels and goats, and treated accordingly. The picture changed abruptly. Instead of Anne and Margery, it was she and Natasha who stood on the auction block. Caroline’s breath caught in her throat. Fear gripped her belly, and at the same time her pussy rippled with excitement.

“You seem distracted, Caroline. Is your pussy getting wet again?” Van Gryf asked, grinning with his mouth full.

Caroline shook herself. “Yes, sir,” she replied, blushing as Anne and Margery looked at her from across the table.

“Perhaps Douglas will do something about that shortly.”

The Scotsman did not respond to Van Gryf’s words. He was leaning forward to peer through the window behind the Afrikaner.

“Ship at anchor,” he said.

Van Gryf turned to look. “We must be closer than I thought. You may have to do without another fucking for now, Caroline.”

He was right. In less than half an hour, the yacht had made its way between more anchored vessels and slowed to a halt. Van Gryf had lowered all the blinds on the windows but it was obvious they had reached their destination. Caroline got no chance to see it. Beyond the passage giving access to the staterooms were two other cabins. Anne and Margery had spent most of the trip in the one to the right. Van Gryf led Caroline and Natasha to the one on the left and ordered them inside. Caroline looked up at him, her belly leaping.

“It’s just a precaution,” he told her. “For your own safety.”

Caroline stared at the cage that almost filled the room; stark iron bars within which a slave girl could be kept helpless until her turn came to be sold. The cage door stood open.

Natasha stepped inside at once. When Caroline hesitated, Van Gryf gave her a push.

“No nonsense, Caroline. I’ve no time for it.” He pushed harder and she stumbled inside, and heard the door clang shut and the key scrape in its lock.

She turned. “Please, I want...” Just at that moment she did not know what she wanted. It made no difference. Van Gryf had gone.

* * * * *

“They are beauties, as usual, Piet,” the Arab in the tailored suit and gold cufflinks who had just shaken Douglas’s hand said. “Trained to your usual impeccable standard, I assume?”

“They wouldn’t be here if they weren’t, Khasim. You know that I haven’t sold a girl untrained since you bought Dagmar from me. Lord, that must be nearly five years ago!”

Khasim al Kabir's long, hook-nosed face split into a rueful grin. "Alas, it is so. The time passes swiftly, my friend. I had hoped by now to be a gentleman of leisure, like yourself and my uncle, but..." He spread his hands in a resigned gesture and sat at his wide, uncluttered desk, inviting the two men to sit opposite.

"Well, it's not all sitting around with my feet up," Van Gryf said. "And Jamal has plenty to keep him busy, too."

"Not so much he cannot find time to come here to collect his new slave girls in person."

Douglas saw Anne and Margery exchange glances. They had stripped off the white Arab garb they had worn to travel in the taxi to Khasim's offices near the waterfront. If it had been Caroline that Van Gryf had made expose herself to a stranger, her eyes would have been flashing and her temper would have been plain on her face, Douglas thought. The girls' expressions revealed little of their feelings. The Scot admired their composure. He would have greeted the news *he* was about to be sold with a great deal less.

"How is Dagmar?" Van Gryf asked.

Khasim's black eyebrows rose. "She is well and as satisfying as the day I bought her, though not up to your current standards, I believe. Why do you ask after all this time?"

Van Gryf glanced at Douglas. "Something happened recently that brought her to mind. How is it you've never asked me for another?"

"At the prices they fetch? I am not a sheik, like my uncle. Anyway, it would not be worth my while. Dagmar is an exception. These days I don't keep my slaves for long." Khasim grinned. "As you British say, variety is the spice of life." He cocked his head towards the sound of the door to the outer-office opening. "That will be my uncle. The transaction can begin."

Despite his confident words he took a Luger pistol from his desk drawer. Douglas had already reached under his white, linen jacket and drawn his Colt forty-five revolver from his belt holster. Van Gryf had warned him they needed to be careful. Slave girls, and especially white slave girls, were valuable targets and just about anyone, from the dealers to the ragged street gangs that roamed the seedier areas of Berbera, would go to great lengths to get their hands on them. The Afrikaner's big automatic pistol was in his hand, safety catch off, as the door opened.

“Jamal!” Van Gryf replaced the automatic in its shoulder holster and strode with his hand outstretched towards the man who stepped into the room. Jamal ignored it, clasped him in a bone-crunching hug then held him at arms length and looked him up and down.

“Old friend, it is good to see you again,” he said.

Douglas guessed he was in his mid-forties, as tall as himself and almost as broad, his black hair lightly flecked with grey. He had the same hawk-nose and black eyes as his nephew, but the evidence of his greater experience was plain in the lines on his face and he had the air of a man used to wielding authority. A man, in fact, very like Van Gryf. The Scotsman knew immediately that his western suit had come from Saville Row and the diamond in his gold tiepin was no fake. More gold and jewels flashed on his fingers as he took Van Gryf’s hands in both of his.

“You look well, old friend. I’m glad my prayers for the man who saved my life are being answered.” Jamal looked at the naked girls. “And that once more you bring me such beauty to grace my harem.” He eyed Douglas appraisingly. “A new associate?”

“A new *partner*,” Van Gryf said. “Jamal ibn Yusuff, Captain Robert Douglas.”

The Arab’s grip was as firm as Douglas expected when they shook hands. He managed a greeting, though he was still recovering from the double surprise of learning Van Gryf had saved the sheik’s life and being introduced as the Afrikaner’s partner.

Unlike some of his race that Douglas had met, Jamal was not a man for lengthy preliminaries. He turned to the slave girls.

“I have never seen such colouring before,” he said, eyeing Margery’s distinctive reddish-gold hair. She shied from his touch and looked anxiously at Van Gryf.

“What’s your name, girl?” Jamal asked, drawing her gaze back to his own. He smiled when she told him in a nervous whisper. “Well, Margery, do not fear me. I just want to take a look at you. It won’t hurt.”

She kept still while the sheik rubbed the rich strands of her hair between his fingers and cupped one of her upright breasts, squeezing gently.

“Her nipples are the palest pink,” he commented, rubbing the ball of his thumb on one and smiling his satisfaction when it began to harden. “Ah, good! Your girls are always so responsive. I would never dare

admit it to my other slaves or I would cause a riot, but I do find myself favouring those I buy from you.” He slid his hand down Margery’s taut belly and pushed a finger between her thighs. She shifted, spreading her feet and gave a little gasp as he penetrated her. “She’s wet already,” Jamal said delightedly. “I wish I knew your secret, my friend.”

Van Gryf grinned. “Maybe I’ll tell you some day.”

“Just keep bringing me beauties like these,” the Arab said, “and I will have no cause to complain.” He turned Margery around, pressing between her shoulder blades to bend her forward, pulled her buttocks apart and eyed her anal pucker. “She is virgin here?”

“Apart from the dildos she practised on and my finger, and Douglas’s too, of course.”

“Indeed?” Jamal’s glance at the Scotsman seemed to hold greater respect. “Relax, Margery,” he told the girl, and her anus widened to let his finger enter. She gave a shiver, of pleasure or discomfort was unclear, but her eyes were bright when Jamal let her stand and face him.

“Excellent,” he said, and turned his attention to Anne. She was half a head shorter than Margery, with thick, wavy, light-brown hair and large, blue eyes that gazed wonderingly into the Arab’s face.

“Are you really a sheik, Master,” she asked wonderingly, “with a palace and... and a h... harem?”

“Why, yes, and you are going to live there from now on.” He smiled and praised the firmness of her breasts while Anne continued to stare at him as if spellbound. His laugh was filled with pleasure when he stroked her sex and saw the tip of her clitoris rise from its fleshy cover. “Splendid, Van Gryf, quite splendid.” When he turned Anne around, she at once bent over and pulled her bottom cheeks apart. After he had probed her rear opening, Jamal wiped his finger on his handkerchief and threw the silk square into the wastepaper basket beside Khasim’s desk.

“There is six thousand pounds sterling in gold in my nephew’s safe,” he told Van Gryf. “It will be on my yacht when it returns you to Mombassa. You may wish to examine it first.”

“You know your word has always been good enough for me,” the Afrikaner said. “And that price is overgenerous.”

“Not in my opinion,” the sheik replied. “Do you know I am the envy of all my peers? Those few I have allowed the hospitality of sampling their charms have offered me fortunes for my ‘Van Gryf girls’.

So do not underestimate these new slaves, my friend. They already please me greatly. I'm sure they will please me more when we have made our intimate acquaintance." He rubbed his hands together as he turned to the slaves. "Anne, Margery, do not fear I will be a bad master. You have only to serve me as you have Van Gryf and you need not be afraid."

The girls had been watching him with rapt attention. They looked at each other and smiled. "Yes, Master," they replied together.

"I'll take them home when the fair is over," he told Van Gryf while the girls dressed again in their robes. "For now, they'll do well enough in my house here. You must come and eat with me this evening, and you can see how they're settling in. Khasim, you must come too."

"I'll try, Uncle," the younger Arab said, "but I have a lot of business to deal with. The fair is my busiest time, as I'm sure you will appreciate."

"Yes, but you should make some time for yourself. It's about the only chance I have to see you these days. You always have some business or other to attend to."

"It was you who set me up here," Khasim replied, rather testily, Douglas thought. "You cannot blame me for trying to make a success of things. I'll do my best to come but you must excuse me if I cannot."

Jamal looked down his long nose at him for a moment then nodded. "It is as you say. But do try, my boy. You know I enjoy your company and you are always welcome, both here and on the other side of the gulf."

Khasim gave him a smile. "Yes, I know. I will try, but you know that some matters just will not wait."

"Khasim seems to think of nothing but making money these days," Jamal sighed when he had shepherded his new slave girls to the outer office where four men with rifles waited to escort them. "The old life was simpler, Van Gryf. My wealth was far less but so were my worries." He laughed. "But then I could never have afforded these beauties. Perhaps it has its advantages. I hope I can expect you both this evening?"

"We're looking forward to it," Van Gryf assured him.

"What was that about?" Douglas asked when he had gone.

"Khasim's father was killed in the war. Jamal promised him he would look out for his son."

“Was that before or after you saved his life?”

“After.” Van Gryf did not elaborate.

“And what’s this about me being your partner?” Douglas demanded.

“You are for this trip. You share the risk; you share the reward. That seems fair enough.”

“Not when the reward is so big. I haven’t done a bloody thing to earn that kind of money.”

“Only half,” Van Gryf corrected, “and the trip’s not over yet.” He grinned. “Want to see some of the local colour?”

The Scotsman readily agreed. As they walked downstairs, a figure hurried upwards, almost shouldering them aside in his haste.

“Wasn’t he on Jamal’s yacht?” Douglas asked.

“Aye, first mate I think. Hey!” he called to the man. “If you’re looking for the sheik, he just left. You’ll find him at his house.”

The man looked back, nodded and went into Khasim’s office. Van Gryf shrugged and led the way to the street.

They soon left the main thoroughfares with their motor traffic and uniformed police, going deeper into a part of the city untouched by any European influence. Many of the buildings were Arab in style.

“The Arabs have dominated this area for centuries,” Van Gryf said when Douglas commented on it. “Their influence is everywhere and not just in the architecture. The fair began as an Arab festival. As I told you, it’s huge. People come from as far as North Africa and even the Orient, as well as all of the Middle East. There’ll be encampments all around the city full of people buying and selling just about anything you can guess at, and half of it will be illegal – hashish, heroin, guns, slaves.”

As the sound of traffic and the crowds faded, Douglas paid less attention to the buildings and more to the few people on the streets. His hand went to his pistol. They were all men and they did not look friendly.

“I think this is one of those times you mentioned when I need to watch your back,” he said.

“Some of these are just lookouts in case the police show up,” Van Gryf replied, “but there’ll be the usual villains as well. Given the chance, they’d cut your throat for the change in your pocket. We’ll be all right once we’re inside, though.” He pointed to a large, two-storied building of

red stone with a high-arched gateway. They were not challenged by the two Africans with rifles guarding the entrance.

The building was a large open rectangle, with a central area of hard-packed earth shaded from the sun by awnings strung from the structure's upper storey. Douglas turned to follow the Afrikaner down a long corridor divided into stalls like those used for housing domestic animals.

“Slave pens, by heaven! It's a slave market.”

Chapter 14

“Aye, I thought you’d be interested in seeing it,” Van Gryf said. “I got Badroula here the year before last.” He indicated a young, Arab girl propped on one elbow in the first stall. She looked up languidly. Douglas heard the chink of metal as she shifted, and saw the shackle on her left ankle and the chain that led from it to a big, iron staple set into the wall.

The girl in the next pen, a full-breasted African, was similarly chained. She rose to her knees when she saw them with a smile playing coyly on her lips. They passed her by, and several other pens containing more Arab and African girls until Van Gryf halted. A girl leaned against the side of a stall, staring vacantly at the opposite wall. She was pretty and naked, fair-haired rather than blonde.

“White Ivory,” Douglas said softly. He had used the name to describe Van Gryf’s own white girls but it had far more impact to see one chained naked in a slave market in an alien city, and to know she could be sold to any man, white, black or Arab, who had her price in his pocket.

“Just bloody ruined now,” Van Gryf snarled, turning the girl.

“Bloody hell!” Douglas saw the pink and silver scar tissue that covered her buttocks and the backs of her thighs.

“Aye,” Van Gryf said. “Some of the bastards will lay on a hundred or even two hundred with the cane or the whip, sometimes for nothing more than their own entertainment. And this one looks to have gone through it more than once, poor creature.”

In places, the girl’s buttocks were raised into malformed ridges, and in others deeply grooved where the whip or cane had carved its way into her tender flesh. Douglas imagined how it must have looked, torn and raw and bloody, when the wounds were fresh, and he swore again. Van Gryf turned her back, revealing fainter, silvery lines of scars on her breasts and even on her belly and thighs. The Scotsman looked into her face. It was blank and her eyes were dull and lifeless. She must have seen them, yet she gave no sign she was aware of their presence.

“That’s not the worst of it,” Van Gryf said. “See here.”

Douglas stared. At the apex of the girl's sex there was nothing. The folds of her hood and what they should have concealed were gone, replaced by a faint, silver-pink scar.

"Circumcised, by God!" He dropped to one knee to look closer. She did not react when he gently parted her vulva. "Even her inner-lips, for God's sake!"

"Some even cut the outer ones," the Afrikaner said disgustedly, "carve away the inner edges and sew them together. Fucking barbarians. And they don't usually use doctors or anaesthetics. It's fucking cruel and fucking pointless, torturing a girl and taking away half the source of her pleasure at the same time. How the hell they think it makes them more attractive is beyond me."

The Scotsman had never seen Van Gryf angry as he was now. That it was a cold anger he was clearly battling to keep reined-in just made it seem so much worse. Movement in the shadows at the back of the stall made Douglas look closer. Another girl huddled in a corner, back turned, the scars of a severe flogging visible on her buttocks. She flinched from his hand on her shoulder and turned wide, frightened brown eyes up to his.

"Oh God, you're a white man!"

"Easy, I won't hurt you," Douglas said. He gently pressed her thigh to part her legs and saw below her hairless mound the scar left by her circumcision. "How long a slave?"

"T... two years, Master."

She used the title without even thinking. He guessed she was not yet twenty.

"English?"

The girl nodded. "Can you help us? Marie can't take much more."

Douglas hesitated, suddenly realising where his unexpected sympathy for the girls' plight might lead him. "I'll... try," he said without conviction and watched the light of hope leave the girl's eyes before she looked away. "Couldn't we tell the authorities?" he asked the Afrikaner.

"There'd be nothing here but a few goats by the time they arrived. And we might have a problem getting out of Berbera alive."

Douglas gave the girl called Marie a backward glance as they moved on. She had passed beyond hope, he thought. He had seen men

die in unimaginable ways in the trenches and felt nothing but relief at knowing he was not the one torn apart by shellfire, or chopped to pieces on the barbed wire by the machine guns. After that, he had never expected to feel much again except his ever-present anger. Strangely, much of that had melted away since he had met Van Gryf. As Douglas looked at the mutilated girl, an image of Caroline, naked in the grubby straw, chained by the ankle and with an obscene scar where her clitoris should be, filled his mind. Just as on that day at the mission, emotions long buried stirred within him.

“Robbie! Oh, Robbie! Thank God! You have to help me.”

Only one person had ever called Douglas by that hated name more than once. He looked towards the sound of her voice. Tall and slender, she bounded from the back of a nearby pen and almost fell as her ankle-chain pulled her up short.

“Celia, what the hell...?” Stunned, Douglas stared at her pale nudity. “I thought you went up to Addis Ababa to meet Roger.” He knew it was a stupid remark in the circumstances.

“Oh, I did! They grabbed me before I even got off the train.” Celia’s small, pointed teats shook. “Oh, it’s been horrible, Robbie! Now they say they will sell me. You *must* save me.”

Van Gryf joined them. “Well, well, Celia Wallis. We come a thousand miles and bump into the girl next door. Not so surprising, I suppose, considering this city is the centre of the slave trade at the moment. But to find you here in this particular market on the very day we decide to visit *is* an incredible coincidence. I take it you were only recently acquired?”

Celia’s face twisted at the casual way he asked the question.

“Piet Van Gryf, Miss Wallis,” he reminded her. “We met once at a party. Of course, you were wearing a little more on that occasion. This *is* your old flame from Nairobi, isn’t it, Douglas? You know, I once considered taking her myself.”

The girl was too frightened to react. Her desperate, terror-filled eyes stared at the Afrikaner.

“Yes, it’s the same Celia,” Douglas confirmed. Recovered from his shock, he remembered what a little cock-teaser she had been. “After she dumped me, she went off to meet the fiancé she conveniently forgot

to mention while she was taking me for an expensive ride around the nightspots of Nairobi.”

Celia’s lower lip trembled. “Robbie, please! For heaven’s sake, you can’t leave me here because of that!”

“It’s Rob or Robert, not bloody Robbie!” Douglas said harshly. He sighed at the plea in her pretty, tear-stained face. “No, I suppose not.” He turned to Van Gryf. “I’ve only got sixty pounds. Can you help me out if I need more?”

“You’ll need a lot more,” the Afrikaner warned.

“Oh God, please!” Celia begged. “There was an awful man here just now. He did horrid things to me. He said - .” She broke off with a cry of pain as a whip cracked across her bare bottom.

“Be silent!”

“Hey!” Douglas turned, balling his fists.

Van Gryf laid a restraining hand on his shoulder. “No violence in here. It means death.”

The Scotsman eyed the man in white Arab robes who held the stiff, three-foot length of leather that had lashed Celia’s narrow backside. He wore a black kufiyeh, the loose edge of the headdress drawn across his face, concealing all but black eyes that glared at the Afrikaner.

“You won’t have this one, Van Gryf,” he said, pulling the covering from his hawk-face and baring his teeth. “She is bought and paid for. She is already mine!”

Celia wailed and shrank into a crouch against the wall, revealing the wheals of a recent beating on her buttocks. A big African, stripped to the waist and rippling with muscle, freed her ankle from its chain. She cringed when he made her hold her wrists out to be manacled and handed their chain to the Arab. Cowed into silence, Celia made a last forlorn plea with her tear-filled eyes and stumbled after her new owner.

Van Gryf curled a disdainful lip as he watched them.

“Trouble?” Douglas asked.

“Only if I let him be. He’s Rasul ibn Hassan, one of the bastards who flogs his slaves bloody and cuts the poor bitches’ cunts.”

“Hell’s bells, he’s got Celia! Isn’t there something we can do?”

“Not without starting a small war. Rasul’s always well guarded. He’s wanted by the British for slaving, gun-running and drug smuggling. Mostly he stays on the other side of the Gulf of Aden. When he comes

for the fair, he keeps a half-dozen different houses in Berbera and switches between them while he's here."

"He doesn't like you," Douglas said, pushing aside the thought of Celia having her clit cut off.

Van Gryf barked a laugh. "I don't like *him*. I've beaten him to a couple of girls in the past and I refuse to sell him any of mine. I'm sure he'd like to put a knife in my back. I know there are times I'd like to put one in his."

"But if he's brought armed men with him-," Douglas began but stopped when Van Gryf shook his head.

"He daren't start anything. Back in the Hejaz, Jamal is an important sheik. Rasul is just a *thargi*, a very minor one. He knows Jamal would have his balls if he did anything to me."

"You told me you were with Allenby in Palestine, not in the Hejaz," Douglas said.

The Afrikaner shrugged. "I got around a bit."

"Enough to save a wealthy sheik's life."

"He wasn't wealthy then, though he was important. It's only since the oil companies got interested in Arabia that he's become rich. But he is a good man by his own standards, and by mine. He is honourable."

"Unlike Rasul?"

"Worthless bastard, wasting women like that," Van Gryf growled.

"And he's bought bloody Celia. Why the hell couldn't the silly bitch have stayed in Nairobi? What the hell can we do?"

"Do you want to do anything?" Van Gryf asked. "You weren't exactly delighted with her after your last acquaintance. You could just forget her."

"I don't believe you mean that," Douglas said.

Van Gryf smiled thinly. "No. Maybe I've got too many scruples to be a slaver. I take the girls I want and do what it takes to train them to the way I want them. But there's a limit. One I don't believe any man should go beyond. If it had been Jamal or his friends buying her, I'd say let her go, but Rasul and his kind are another matter." He shrugged. "I'll speak to Jamal tonight. Maybe he can do something. If not, I'm afraid her future is pretty bleak."

They stayed for the start of the auction. Van Gryf explained that the market dealt only in sex-slaves and that in a day or two, as the fair

gathered momentum and more girls arrived, the place would be much busier. That day, only about twenty prospective buyers were gathered around the dais where a fat, turbaned Arab displayed each naked slave and conducted her sale. The bidding was lively but not high.

Douglas had just decided he had seen enough and wanted a drink when the two circumcised, white slaves mounted the dais. He stopped in the act of turning away, feeling again the unfamiliar tug of compassion. The girls were offered as a single lot and the bidding opened at thirty pounds. Their circumcisions might be an attraction to most of the bidders but their scars would put off many, despite their white skins. At least, Douglas hoped so.

“Thirty-five,” he called, ignoring the heads that turned in his direction. He saw the head of the girl he had spoken to turn also. He was too far away to see, but he knew the light of hope was back in her eyes. When the price reached fifty pounds, only the Scotsman and a middle-aged man he thought was Egyptian were still bidding. “Fifty five,” Douglas said, nervous as his limit approached.

The Egyptian went to sixty.

“Fuck,” Douglas said under his breath.

“Seventy,” Van Gryf called and the Scotsman looked at him sharply. The Afrikaner grinned and offered him a cigarette. He had to go to a hundred and ten before the Egyptian gave up.

“I’ll pay you back when we get home,” Douglas assured him after Van Gryf had handed over the cash and they were waiting under the slave market’s portico for the girls to be delivered. Strange, he thought, when had he begun thinking of Van Gryf’s estate as home?

“Bloody right, you will,” the Afrikaner said. “What the hell are we supposed to do with the sorry bitches, anyway? We can’t just give them some clothes and send them on their way with a pat on their poor, scarred behinds. Not after what they’ve been through.”

“We could always fuck them. There’s room at the stable.” Douglas admitted to himself he had not thought about the girls’ futures when he had bid for them. Incredible though it seemed, for the first time in years he had let his heart rule his head.

Van Gryf laughed. “Aye, I suppose so.” He slapped Douglas on the shoulder. “We’re a couple of bloody fools, my friend. And I’m getting far too bloody soft-hearted to be involved in this game.”

The girls appeared, dressed in black robes and veils that Van Gryf had also had to pay for.

“No one is going to hurt you now,” he told them. “You’re safe with us and you won’t ever be flogged again. Stay close to me, and if anything happens you’re to stand completely still while my friend and I deal with it.” He looked at the girl with the large, brown eyes and indicated the one she had called Marie. “Is she going to be all right?”

“Yes, Master.” She pushed a hand through a gap in her robe and grasped the other’s arm.

“What’s your name?”

“Joan, Master.”

Van Gryf smiled at her. “Right, Joan, let’s go.” He led the way, with the girls right behind him and Douglas at the rear. “Keep your eyes open,” he warned the Scotsman. “Someone is bound to be tempted now the goods are on display.”

They were two hundred yards from the slave market when Douglas’s sixth sense started prickling between his shoulder blades. “Van Gryf,” he called softly and eased his big revolver from its holster.

The Afrikaner’s left hand lifted in acknowledgment at the same moment his Colt automatic appeared in his right.

Two figures in dirty white leaped from a doorway just ahead of him, yelling and waving long knives above their heads. Douglas turned away, raising his pistol. Someone rushed from the doorway they had just passed with another man close on his heels. The Scot shot the one with the rifle first, sidestepped his falling body, and fired twice at the second man who was rushing towards him with a knife upraised. As the revolver bucked in his hand, he heard the throaty roar of Van Gryf’s automatic and glanced in his direction. Assured the Afrikaner was safe and on his feet, he turned back, narrowed eyes searching the street. The sound of footsteps made him drop to one knee and level the pistol at two men who appeared around the corner. They stopped and lowered their rifles when they saw him.

“It’s all right, they’re lookouts for the market,” Van Gryf said. He turned to the slaves who had not moved during the fight. “Good girls. We’ll be fine now they’ve seen we mean business.”

They left their attackers where they lay, dead or dying, and no one else troubled them on their way to one of the main streets where Van Gryf flagged down a taxi.

“Sorry I got us into that,” Douglas told him as they set off.

“It wasn’t your doing” Van Gryf said. “They would have jumped us with or without the girls. They knew we were bound to have money. Anyway, it gave me a chance to see how you handle yourself.”

“Any complaints?”

The Afrikaner grinned. “I told you I’m a good judge of a man.”

Marie was looking at him with big, round eyes that showed a small spark of interest. Joan alternated between looking around the taxi’s interior and out of its windows, her expression hidden by her veil.

“There’s no need to be frightened,” Douglas told her.

“I’m not, Master,” she said and a crinkling at the corners of her eyes showed she was smiling. “I’ve never been in a car before. It’s exciting.”

“How about a yacht?” Van Gryf asked, swapping amused glances with the Scotsman.”

“No, Master.”

“Then you’re in for a treat.”

The taxi dropped them yards from the boat.

“Where’s the harbour watch?” Douglas asked as they helped the slave girls aboard.

“Down below, maybe,” Van Gryf suggested, but he drew his pistol and walked around the deserted deck and upper works. “No sign of him,” he said when he returned.

Standing at the rail by the entry-port, Douglas looked down at the gap between the vessel and the quay. “There’s a body in the water.”

The Afrikaner hurried to his side. The man was face-up, eyes staring. A big bloodstain covered the front of his shirt.

“The watch,” Douglas said.

“The girls!” Van Gryf ran along the deck with Douglas a pace behind him. The door to the saloon was half-open. They rushed to the forward cabin. Its door too, stood open.

The cage within was empty.

Chapter 15

Caroline crouched numbly in a corner of the cell, one arm around Natasha. Cold dread filled her heart.

“He sold us,” she said, more to herself than the girl beside her. “He sold us.”

“You belong to me now,” the tall, hawk-faced Arab had said as he had entered the yacht’s cabin and unlocked their cage. After that, everything had become hazy. Caroline vaguely remembered sitting in the back of a truck surrounded by men with guns, a big, alien-looking house, being locked in the bare white cell. It could have all been happening to someone else.

Now the shock was wearing off and her emotions were resurfacing. More than once the idea of being sold had seemed exciting. But then it had been more a fantasy than a fear. Reality was horribly, terrifyingly different.

“He sold us,” Caroline repeated, not wanting to believe her awful suspicion had been true all along. “I know I defied him sometimes. I thought he enjoyed it, even admired it a little. I never really thought...” Tears stung her eyes.

Natasha’s arm tightened around her. “No, don’t believe it. Van Gryf would never sell us. He cares for us too much.”

“He doesn’t care,” Caroline said bitterly. “He doesn’t care at all. He’s just like my father. He’s got rid of me.”

Natasha grabbed Caroline by the shoulders. “We’ve been stolen. Do you hear? Van Gryf has not sold us. He is looking for us right now. And he’s going to find us. Believe it.”

“I want to,” Caroline said. “Oh God, I want to.” Her heart leaped as a key rattled in the door lock.

The Arab had swapped his robes for a white shirt and riding breeches. His tall, black boots shone as brightly as his thick, black hair in the harsh glare of the bare light bulb.

“Stand,” he barked.

Despite her distress, Caroline responded to the command as quickly as Natasha and tearfully assumed the position of respect Van Gryf always demanded. The man’s black eyes roved over every jut and

curve of the girls' nude bodies until Caroline wanted to curl into a ball and hide herself from their glittering intensity. Heat filled her cheeks and fear her belly, as she saw the stiff, tapering whip of tightly plaited leather the Arab tapped impatiently on the leg of his boot. It pointed suddenly.

“Here.”

The girls took position before him. He lashed out immediately, scoring the whip across the underside of Natasha's right breast. She cried in shock and pain.

“Stop snivelling.” The man's hard features twisted in a snarl. As the Russian girl clasped a hand to her hurt and half turned away, he lashed another blow onto her exposed left buttock. “Stand still, slave.”

A streak of fire blazed across Caroline's abdomen a second after she had flinched from the sound of the leather cracking on Natasha's flesh.

“Still, I said! If this is all the obedience Van Gryf gets from his slaves, he doesn't deserve his reputation.” The thought seemed to please him. He smiled.

The expression sent a chill through Caroline. She looked down from its cruelty, saw the thick swelling in his breeches, and swallowed hard. If it had been Douglas or Van Gryf, such evidence of arousal would have sent a thrill of anticipation through her. Instead, she felt only fear. Natasha was sniffing, fighting back her tears as she trembled under the glare of their new master, but Caroline dared not even dart her eyes in the girl's direction lest she feel the scorch of the whip again. Only when the man turned with a brusque order to follow him did the girls exchange a quick, frightened glance. Yet Natasha raised her head determinedly as she stepped through the doorway. Belly churning, Caroline tried to do the same.

To her surprise, they did not enter some medieval dungeon but a large, bright room thickly carpeted with Persian rugs. The windowless walls were covered with white and arabesque-patterned tiles and the floor with cushions and quilted mattresses. Daylight came from above, where a long window was set into the roof. Clearly, they were on the top floor of whatever building they had been brought to. They followed the Arab through an archway into an identical room. Two dusky Arab slaves and a white girl, reclining on cushions, scrambled to kneel and bow their heads

as their master passed. He opened the arched doors at the far end and motioned Caroline and Natasha to precede him.

They entered a third, long room, similar to the other two. Caroline sucked in a breath at the same instant she heard Natasha gasp. A pale-skinned girl lay face down on the floor. Her hands were shackled above her head with irons fixed to ring bolts in the wall and her ankles were joined by heavy fetters. But it was not the sight of the restraints that shocked Caroline. The girl's buttocks were deep purple and heavily crisscrossed with line upon line of thick, vivid, carmine stripes. In many places, her rounded rear cheeks were split and oozing bright beads of blood that clearly showed how recently she had been flogged. With awful, gut-wrenching certainty, Caroline knew it was the Arab's whip that had inflicted the cruel wounds.

They reached another set of arched, double doors. At either side of them an African in wide, baggy trousers stood, each man's naked torso showing the fleshy plumpness that Caroline recognised as a sign they were eunuchs. As the Arab opened the doors, the Africans moved behind the girls, gripping them by their upper arms.

"Oh no!" Caroline cried at the same moment Natasha exclaimed in Russian. Directly in front of them was the upturned bottom of a naked girl, ridged and whealed with the vicious tracks of a cruel beating. The doors slammed ominously behind them. Caroline struggled uselessly in the eunuch's grip. The Arab went to the heavy wooden table to which the girl was bound and spoke to her in heavily accented French.

All Caroline could see of her was her ravaged buttocks, her legs shackled to those of the table, the curve of her back and a tangle of fair hair. She heard her mumble something and end it with a sob. The Arab spat words back at her, shot out a hand and squeezed her tortured bottom. The girl shrieked in pain, straining frantically against the steel cuffs on her wrists and ankles.

"Oui, Maitre, oui, oui, vraiment!"

Clearly not satisfied, her master forced her buttocks apart with one hand and stabbed the forefinger of the other into her anus. She shrieked again and vehemently repeated her agreement to whatever he had demanded.

"That's better, Sandrine," he said in English and turned to Caroline and Natasha. "She has yet to fully understand her situation. I hope the

same is not true of you bitches.” The whip creaked as he flexed it between his hands and his hard stare rested on Caroline’s face.

She shook her head. He lashed the whip across her breasts. Writhing in the eunuch’s grasp, Caroline fought to breathe as fiery pain seared her tender teats. Tears spilled over her eyelids.

“Answer properly, as you would Van Gryf,” the Arab snarled.

“We understand, sir.” She cried out as he again cracked the stiff leather onto her breasts.

“Master! You call me Master.”

“But you said - . Yes, Master,” Caroline agreed as the whip rose threateningly.

“Yes, Master,” Natasha said at once when his stare settled on her.

“Kneel.” He pointed the whip at his feet. Released by the eunuchs, the girls knelt before their new master. “Remove her,” he told the Africans, slapping the tip of the whip on Sandrine’s disfigured bottom and provoking a pained and startled cry. She groaned and wept as she was unshackled and the eunuchs dragged her from the table. Caroline dared a glance at her face as she hobbled past. It would have been lovely if it was not twisting in pain.

The Arab cracked his whip against the leg of his boot. “I’m waiting,” he snapped, looking down his long, hooked nosed at the kneeling girls.

Suddenly understanding, Caroline gulped and stared at his bulging breeches. Natasha began loosening them. They had no choice, the English girl accepted reluctantly. Between them, they pulled the riding breeches down to the Arab’s boot-tops. Caroline’s belly shrank at the sight of his fat, brown-skinned cock rising taut and hard from the black curls at his groin. It did not excite her, as Van Gryf’s or Douglas’s did. Her humiliation sparked no tingle of arousal, as it would have in their presence. They too made her perform degrading acts and beat her, but they would never be so cruel as he.

That was the difference, Caroline realised. In all the things they had done to her, they had never treated her with real cruelty. Even when they denied her sexual release or caned her, she had known with certainty she would ultimately receive the reward of pleasure to compensate for her suffering. Those were the rules of the game. And however wicked it might seem at the time, it *was* a game, and one they were all playing

together. Though Caroline was still learning its rules, she knew that Van Gryf and Douglas might bend them at times for their amusement but that they would never break them. She knew with equal certainty that her new master cared nothing for her pleasure and that he was definitely not playing games. For him, and for her now also, it was in deadly earnest. She curled her fingers around his cock and guided it into her mouth.

He made the girls look into his eyes as they took turns to suck him, tapping his whip on the cheek of whoever had his penis in her mouth when he wanted the other to take over. It was Caroline's misfortune to have the big, plum-headed baton thrusting towards the back of her throat when the Arab gave a grunt and a gasp and a sudden heave of his hips. Thick, glutinous slime flooded her mouth. Terrified of displeasing her new master, she fought the need to cough up the salty spunk clogging her airway and struggled to swallow it with several inches of cock still thrusting between her lips.

To her immense relief, the Arab pulled it free, grabbed Natasha's golden hair and dragged her face against his dripping penis. Without hesitation, the Russian girl took the shiny, spunk-slobbered shaft into her mouth while Caroline fought her nausea and swallowed the bitter, cloying fluid filling her own. Trying hard to hide her distaste, she quelled her belly's sudden urge to empty itself onto the man's shiny boots, and kept her eyes fixed on his face until he pushed Natasha's bobbing head away.

He said nothing as he refastened his breeches but his expression was smug and arrogant. When he looked down at the girls it changed to a disdainful sneer.

"So, you are Van Gryf's finest, eh?" Once more he flexed the whip between his hands until it creaked, and then tapped it on Caroline's shoulder. "This one first."

She had not heard the eunuchs return to the room. The first she knew of it was when they seized her and dragged her to the table where the French girl had been fastened. Abject terror first robbed her of her strength and then doubled it, so that she almost tore free of the Africans as they manhandled her onto the tabletop. Sudden, savage pain tore across her buttocks.

"If you struggle, I will make it much worse," her master threatened.

Heart thumping, Caroline ceased to fight the hands that locked the shackles around her wrists and ankles. She felt no thrill of excitement.

Her gut was churning as she was fastened face down, breasts crushed against the hard wood, buttocks turned up for the whip. A thick, wedge-shaped leather cushion under her belly raised her bottom higher than her head and stopped her toes touching the floor. The steel cuffs on her wrists were joined by chains to two upright metal posts at the upper corners of the table. The eunuchs pulled the chains tight, wrapping them around the posts until her arms were so stretched the shackles were biting into her hands and straining her shoulder joints.

“Oh, please, I’ve done nothing wrong!” she panted. “Please don’t beat me.”

The whip cracked down on her bottom a heartbeat later. Caroline shrieked. Searing pain scored a fiery line across her soft skin. She had not even drawn breath before another blow tore into her defenceless buttocks, its vicious impact forcing her body forwards. The table edge bit into her thighs and the steel shackles into her ankles, but Caroline was scarcely aware of it. All she knew was the unbelievable, blazing agony of the stiff whip lashing again and again onto her tender flesh. Her buttocks yielded in torment beneath it, stinging and scorching and bouncing back to meet the next vicious blow. All she heard was the wicked, meaty crack of the leather and the tortured screams each fierce lash tore from her burning throat.

She could barely move in her chains but she still tried, squirming desperately and pathetically to escape the merciless strokes. Caroline had never imagined there could be such awful, relentless torment. In terror, she remembered the black girl she had seen flogged and the blood running from her open wounds. If she could have found her voice, she would have begged for it to stop, but the Arab laid on the whip so hard and fast she could do nothing but scream. Yet, the few pounding, anguished beats of her heart between one agonising lash and the next seemed to stretch on forever.

It ended at last, but only after a final stroke even harder than those that had gone before tore with a sickening crack and incredible agony into Caroline’s ravaged bottom. No longer half-drowned by the wicked smack of leather on flesh, her manic shriek echoed from the room’s white tiled walls. A hand under her jaw lifted her head. Eyes brimming with tears, she vaguely saw the Arab’s face and the flash of white teeth as he grinned.

“Now you understand the same way Sandrine does. That was just a demonstration. Thirty strokes. If any of my slaves displease me they never get less than fifty. You *do* understand?”

“Yes, Master,” Caroline croaked, her throat raw.

He released her chin and she let her head sink to the tabletop. She was racked by uncontrollable shivers. Though her bottom burned fiercely, her skin seemed to alternate between feeling hot and cold. Boot heels clicked on the floor and for a heart-stopping moment Caroline thought the sudden pressure on her vulva was the Arab’s gross cock. It was scarcely a relief to feel his finger part her labia and push against the tight mouth of her sex.

“Hah, you’re barely damp. I thought all Van Gryf’s slave sluts were always meant to be wet and ready. So much for his lofty reputation.” Her master rubbed Caroline’s inner petals until she was moist enough for him to force his finger inside. Even that was done roughly, with no concern for her discomfort or any intention of giving her pleasure. The Arab just thrust to the knuckle and twisted the invading digit against her sensitive sheath. It was a minor misery compared to the blazing throb of her buttocks.

Suddenly, the awful pain flared into agony again as her master forced her ravaged rear-cheeks apart. The same finger that had filled her sex thrust hard into the dry pucker of Caroline’s anal knot and wrenched a shriek from her aching throat. She bucked against her shackles, almost tearing her arms from their sockets in her frantic urgency to escape the torment of the unlubricated finger plunging deep into her rectum. Her pain scarcely eased as his hand left her buttocks and he forced her into immobility with all the strength of his arm behind the digit sunk so painfully in her anus.

“Oh, please,” Caroline managed to rasp between her cries.

“Have you learned the lesson? Are you going to be obedient?”

“Yes! Oh yes, Master, truly I will!” Caroline’s words echoed those of the French girl almost exactly. His finger hurt almost as much coming out as it had going in. Sobbing wretchedly, Caroline shed more tears and fervently hoped the ordeal was over.

She began to sink to her knees the moment she was freed. The Arab’s hand on her throat and the whip pressing hard enough between her legs to crush her labia quickly straightened her sagging legs. He held her

like that, half-choking, while the Africans fastened Natasha to the table. Her pleas for mercy were no more effective than Caroline's had been, her anguished straining at her shackles equally futile. She lapsed into Russian, and then into sobbing and finally to screaming as her flogging began.

With one of the eunuchs gripping the back of her neck and twisting one arm behind her back, Caroline was afraid to watch the whipping but more afraid of the consequences if she did not. It must have been awful for Natasha to have seen her flogged and to know that she would be next to suffer. It was just as bad for the English girl to see the fiery, red welts on Natasha's bottom increase in number with every vicious lash of the leather on her delicate flesh. It was horrifying to watch the girl scream and squirm in helpless torment, to see the angry stripes thicken into ridges on her soft skin and how they began to overlap as the whipping went on and on. It was horrible, Caroline thought. It was like watching herself. Bile rose suddenly in her throat. The savage scourging had split Natasha's skin. Bright blood flowed, smeared over her raw, bouncing rear-cheeks by the next lash, and immediately replaced by a fresh upwelling from the wounds being carved into her burning buttocks. And Caroline knew that they were burning. Her own burned atrociously.

She watched with loathing as the Arab stopped the whipping and callously penetrated the Russian girl's sex. She shuddered at the helpless girl's screams when he drove his finger hard into her rectum and forced the promise of obedience from her. Caroline almost vomited when he turned from Natasha, grinning wickedly, and she saw he had freed his penis and a dribble of fluid was oozing from it and running down its shaft. He had enjoyed hurting them so much it had almost made him come.

Caroline learned something else in that moment. She did not even know her new master's name but she hated him as she had never hated anyone before. And she hated Van Gryf too, for selling her, and Douglas for not stopping him. Terrified her master might decide to use her, Caroline lowered her eyes, but in spite of his obvious arousal, he showed no further interest in the girls.

Staggering as much as Caroline had, Natasha was released and the eunuchs took them to the outer room. Sandrine lay belly-down beside the girl they had seen earlier, and Caroline and Natasha soon joined them,

their ankles locked in heavy steel cuffs joined by a short chain and wrists in irons fixed to the wall. Indifferent to their suffering, the eunuchs returned to their positions on either side of the door.

Caroline closed her eyes and laid her cheek on the thin mattress between her and the floor. It was almost impossible to think of anything but the pulsing pain in her backside. Despair was a leaden weight in her tight-wound belly and dulled her mind as she continued to shiver in reaction. Before it engulfed her entirely, she experienced a moment of the harshest, bitterest irony. She had exactly what she had yearned for – total enslavement, total domination, total bondage. Just as in her fantasies, she was controlled completely by a strong, compelling man. But he was also a cruel, savage beast who delighted in hurting her.

Only now, when her fantasy had been totally fulfilled, did she realise that it was not at all what she wanted. Only now, when it was much, much too late.

* * * * *

Jamal ibn Yusuff's frown deepened with every word Van Gryf spoke. Darkness had fallen by the time Douglas and the Afrikaner had reached his home. They had found him overseeing the final preparations for what would have been a sumptuous meal. The feast was forgotten long before the Afrikaner finished describing what they had found on the yacht.

"You think it was Rasul," Jamal said sombrely. Douglas noticed it was not a question.

"Who else hates me enough? He's been trying to best me ever since I saved him from that Turkish hand-grenade." Van Gryf's mouth twisted. "I should have let the bloody thing go off."

"If you had not thrown it back, he would not be alive today," Jamal said with a grim smile. "But neither would I, and I would not be able to help you find your stolen girls." He summoned a servant and spoke in rapid Arabic, but the little of the language Douglas had learned in Palestine did not allow him to follow.

Van Gryf seemed to understand. "He won't be easy to find. He must know we'll be looking."

“Not so difficult as you think. I always keep track of his whereabouts. He is my kinsman, after all, however distant, and a man it is wise to keep an eye on.” The sheik frowned. “There is no doubt Sallal was murdered?”

“None at all, I’m afraid,” Douglas said. “He was gone long before we fished him out of the water.”

“It surprises me.” Jamal rubbed his short, greying beard. “Rasul knows I must exact blood for blood. I did not think him so careless, or so obvious. He hates owing you his life, Van Gryf, but to take such a risk for the sake of a couple of slave girls? I know he values white women highly, but it is not his way.”

“An attempt on my life would have been more like him,” Van Gryf agreed, “without any evidence linking him to it. He looked ready to kill me when we met at the slave market, but that isn’t unusual.”

“And if he was really serious about it, he has had years to try,” Jamal added. “Why now?” His shrewd gaze turned to Van Gryf. “And the locks on the yacht were not forced, you say? That seems odd, since only you, the captain, and I have keys. I wish I had known the slaves were aboard. I could have ordered additional precautions.”

“I was a bloody fool to bring them,” Van Gryf said, “but... Oh hell! I just didn’t like the idea of not having them around. I didn’t mention it because I thought they’d be safe under lock and key, and I intended taking them back with me.” His expression hardened. “I still do.”

“There remains the question of how he even knew they were there,” the sheik said. “We must ask the crew, I think, though they may be harder to track down than Rasul now they’re ashore.” He called another servant and gave more instructions, then took a cheroot from a gold case and lit it. “Now we can only wait. Let us hope not for long. Rasul is not known for his kindness to his slave girls.”

He ordered coffee be brought. One of the girls carrying the trays was Anne, dressed in opaque-silk Turkish trousers and a gauzy, transparent top that did little to conceal her breasts. She was smiling as she laid her tray before her master. She appeared content, Douglas thought, and glanced at Van Gryf. He seemed not to notice the girl. The man’s brooding rage was as great as his own. They had been robbed and made to look fools. The Scotsman’s pride was hurt and Van Gryf’s more

so, for he had had to go cap-in-hand to the man he probably respected more than any other and ask him for help. That it was freely given would not make the Afrikaner any happier about it, Douglas was sure.

There was something else, of course, something Douglas had been reluctant to acknowledge from the moment they had discovered the girls were gone. From the very beginning, he had felt an affinity with Caroline. Her first day in the stable had also been his. When she had told him her story, he had felt sympathy for her, love-starved and ignored by her parents and then by her husband. Her early life had been too similar to his own not to have struck a chord, and if that chord's resonance went too deep there was nothing he could do about it now. He faced the truth. He not only liked Caroline Milton, he cared about her. She had revived feelings in him he thought had died in the war, emotions he had never expected to experience again that went far beyond the sexual pleasure she had given him. Douglas had not realised how far until she had been abducted.

And at that moment, sipping black, bitter, Arab coffee and fuming at his helplessness, he was experiencing another emotion. It was one that he had known often in the past, one familiar to any old soldier. It was fear. Yet this time it was different. Douglas did not fear for himself. But for Caroline, he was very, very afraid indeed.

* * * * *

A long, groaning gasp came from around the big, leather ball-gag wedged behind Sandrine's teeth. The rope creaked, and Caroline saw the girl's muscles go rigid with the tension it exerted on her naked body. She knew how it felt. Only minutes before, the eunuchs had fastened her ankles into shackles set into the floor, her wrists to those on the steel triangle overhead, and hauled on the rope attached to it to stretch her own body painfully taut. Natasha hung beside her in identical fashion, also facing the French girl.

The man who, for want of any other name, she had come to think of as The Master, wrung another whimper from Sandrine as he heaved on her rope again before tying it to a ring on one of the tiled pillars that supported the room's roof. She hung with all her weight on her arms, stretching her toes vainly downwards towards the floor. Caroline had

done the same until she realised the futility of it. Now she just dangled by her wrists with her hands turning numb, and breathed as shallowly as possible. The least movement increased the pain in her shoulders. Her buttocks felt stiff and throbbed abominably. Every muscle ached, just as the French girl's must, and, like her, Caroline's struggles during her whipping had bruised her wrists and ankles. Very frightened, the English girl risked a glance at Natasha, but the Russian was staring fixedly at The Master.

He had wheeled a small trolley next to Sandrine and was lighting a spirit-burner that stood upon it. He flicked a white cloth off the shallow tray lying next to it, revealing two, six-inch long, sharp-pointed, steel shafts with ivory handles. Belly fluttering, Caroline saw they were almost as thick as knitting needles as he placed them on a wire frame above the flame of the burner. Very soon their points began to glow.

The Arab turned his attention to Sandrine's breasts, tweaking and pinching the red, conical points on their peaks. Though she was at least six inches shorter than the man, her bondage raised her until her eyes were on a level with his, her tightly stretched arms lifting her firm breasts high. Despite her obvious fear, her nipples stiffened and darkened in response to his touch. The Master reached for one of the thick needles, eyed its redly glowing tip and turned his cruel smile on Natasha and Caroline.

"This slave is already sold. Her new master wants her tits ringed." He squeezed her right breast behind the nipple. Sandrine made panicked noises into her gag. Drool spilled from around the leather in the girl's mouth. Caroline had never seen eyes as big as those in her terrified face as the Arab brought the fiery point into contact with the skin at the base of the outside of Sandrine's right nipple. There was a hiss as tender flesh yielded to red-hot metal, drowned immediately by a shriek the gag scarcely muffled at all.

"No! Stop, stop!" Natasha and Caroline cried out together.

The Master paid no heed. The French girl was stretched so taut her frenetic struggles were barely visible. Only the wild shaking of her head, the clenching of her manacled fists and the big tears squeezing from beneath her tightly shut eyelids betrayed her agony, and her shrill, piercing screams that went on and on as the glowing metal melted the delicate tissue of her breast.

Caroline watched in horror as the point of the shaft appeared at the opposite side of Sandrine's nipple. A wisp of steam or smoke rose from the hole it had made as the Arab withdrew it and the acrid stink of burned meat filled Caroline's nostrils. Though her stomach heaved, she could not drag her gaze away when The Master picked up the second needle, squeezed Sandrine's left breast, and slowly let the fire-tipped steel burn its way through the base of its rosy point. Again her barely-stifled shriek of agony tore through the room and she jerked uselessly against her bonds. The Master was grinning evilly as he took two gold rings from the tray, each much bigger than the circle he could have made with his thumb and forefinger.

"Your first gift from your new master, slave," he said, opening the hinged rings. Sandrine gave a long, keening wail through her gag as he forced a ring through each of the freshly burned holes in her nipples and their clasps clicked shut. "And you bitches," he said, facing Caroline and Natasha, "are here to watch and learn, not speak without permission. If your last whipping did not teach you obedience, perhaps this one will."

He went to a bucket standing by one wall. Several wooden handles rose above its rim. He snatched one, and Caroline's heart leaped as he held up a whip before her eyes. A dozen leather thongs, heavily knotted along their length, dripped water onto the tiled floor.

"Oh please, Master!"

Chapter 16

Caroline knew it was useless even as she pleaded with her pitiless new master.

His arm lifted and, just as Sandrine had when the fiery steel neared her breast, Caroline snapped her eyes tight-shut. She heard the sickening swish of the thongs through the air and blazing pain slashed across the fronts of her thighs. Even as she screamed, fire like a hundred red-hot needles seared her breasts. She screamed again, and the same scorching torment lashed her thighs, and then once more her breasts.

Stretched until her joints were cracking, Caroline could not even flinch from the fierce blows. It seemed she could feel the wicked bite of every knot on the thongs that were making her jutting breasts bounce and shake and spraying water in all directions as they wrung themselves out on her tortured body. As the Arab switched his blows to her abdomen, lights flashed suddenly behind her closed eyes. Caroline screamed in an extremity of torment as one wet, ferocious crack of the lash landed squarely on the little protruding hood of her clitoris. Every muscle rigid, she hung in her chains, slowly strangling from her sudden inability to breathe.

Another blaze of agony across her breasts made her chest heave abruptly, and Caroline could suck in blessed air and shriek her pain once more. She heard her master's deep laugh, hating him for enjoying her suffering. A second later, the knotted thongs tore into her sex again and blackness swirled inside her head. It seemed unconsciousness must free her from further pain, but it was only a moment before fresh fire in her breasts snapped her back to full awareness and set her screaming again.

It was enough to satisfy The Master. Through tear-filled eyes, Caroline saw him lower the whip and turn his lustful, wolfish grin on Natasha.

"Bath," he told the eunuchs, returning to the bucket and selecting a fresh whip. Panting and shivering in reaction, Caroline was released and had to rely on one of the Africans to hold her up as he guided her to an alcove and the head of a circular stone staircase. Before they reached the bottom of the stairs she heard Natasha scream.

The staircase led directly to a bathroom, a small, tiled area of floor surrounding a big, rectangular pool lit by overhead electric lights.

Where the lashes had scorched her, Caroline's skin shivered hot and cold at the same time. The eunuch gave her a push, and she walked down the steps at the end of the pool and into the water. It felt very hot. The fierce smarting of her welts and the throbbing in her buttocks intensified as she waded deeper. Her nipples stung atrociously as the water lapped them, and she turned to retreat and found the eunuch had gone. She could hear Natasha's screams but not the rhythmic smacking of the wet thongs on her flesh.

Caroline waded through the steam clouds hovering above the water until it was just below the burning stripes at the tops of her legs. The dozens of thin ridges stinging on her breasts and belly and thighs were a frighteningly bright shade of crimson. Where the knots had bitten, there were dark, misshapen bruises beneath her skin. She shuddered. They would be black by the day's end. And they all hurt so horribly. Running her tentative fingertips over the raw welts on her bottom made her wince in pain and she dared not touch her throbbing sex. Terror churned her belly, made worse by Natasha's continued screaming.

It stopped abruptly. Had her own flogging taken so short a time? It had seemed to last for hours. Caroline heard the click of boot-heels on the stone steps. Heart leaping, she sought the deeper water, ignoring the pain to be as far away from the monster as she could get. Natasha appeared, eyes red and puffy and still dripping tears, her pale-skinned belly, thighs and breasts lined crimson by the whip. The Master pushed her down the steps of the bath. She stumbled, plunged beneath its steaming surface and came up gasping and spluttering, with water streaming from her body and her long blonde hair. The Arab stripped, watching them all the while with a malevolence Caroline could not understand. What could they possibly have done to earn such hatred and cruelty from a man they did not know?

Her belly flipped as The Master sat naked on the steps of the bath and motioned her closer.

“What's your name, slave?”

“Caroline, Master,” she answered with a tremor.

“Come here. Suck me.”

The water buoyed up the fullness of her breasts as she knelt before him. There was something obscene about the way his slack balls floated, swaying to and fro with the little waves Caroline's movements created. Fighting her nausea at the fluid oozing from the slit at the end of his cock and trickling down the fat purple head, she bowed her head over the upright shaft. Its taste was sour on her tongue. Only fear made Caroline close her lips over the warm, greasy flesh and suck. Terrified, she did it with all the enthusiasm she had shown when serving Van Gryf and Douglas, but with none of the willingness. She was afraid too of what her master would do if her stomach rebelled and she puked his come back up after swallowing it.

Minutes later, Caroline discovered that particular fear had been needless, but it was replaced immediately by another as the Arab pulled out of her mouth and made her kneel with her hands on the bath's steps. Her ravaged buttocks clenched nervously as he positioned himself behind her, straddling her flanks and pushing her bottom under the water. Caroline steeled herself. This was not going to be pleasant. There was no way she could avoid contact between her throbbing backside and his belly when he penetrated her. His hand went between her legs, fingers parting her vulva to explore her inner-lips and the stinging hood of her clitoris. To her surprise and disgust, Caroline felt a tingle of excitement in her pussy, banished instantly when The Master's hand slid into the cleft of her bottom and pushed hard against her anal knot.

"Oh, no!" The pain in her buttocks made her catch her breath and an awful dread knotted her belly tight. With only the bathwater to lubricate her squirming sphincter, the Arab forced his finger into her rear-opening.

"Stop wriggling, bitch, or I'll leather your arse again," he snarled, working the digit deeper.

Caroline whimpered through gritted teeth at the pain in her bottom and the horrid, probing finger unnaturally penetrating her. It felt far more painful than when Van Gryf had done it, and she knew with awful certainty that there was worse to come.

She could not help twisting away from the pressure of The Master's big cock-head against her sensitive anus. It earned her a painful slap to her half-submerged buttocks and another snarling threat of reprisal if she did not keep still. Sobbing, hurting, she held her position and tried

to relax her tightly clenched knot as Van Gryf had taught her. Shivering with strain, Caroline let the Arab's fingers prise her rosebud apart. She whimpered again as the broad shaft pushed hard against it and hot water filled her rectum with what felt like scalding heat to the sensitive membranes within.

Caroline had seen Natasha buggered by both Douglas and Van Gryf and how wide her rear opening had stretched to allow them entry. Even so, she was sure her own poor backside was being split in two as The Master's thick cock overcame the resistance of the little ring of muscle and sank deep and hard into the tender tissues of her bowels. Hot tears blurred Caroline's vision and the wicked lunge that forced the rigid flesh to the hilt wrung a cry from her twisting lips.

"You're tight, slave," The Master grunted, drawing back and thrusting hard again. "It seems your arse hasn't seen much use yet."

If he expected a reply, he was disappointed. It was all Caroline could do to stifle the cries of pain rising in her throat. It felt as if her innards were tearing as the Arab ploughed ruthlessly into her rectum with his inner thighs pressed against her burning buttocks.

The stabbing torment worsened as he quickened his cruel strokes, gripping her with a muscular arm around the wheals on her belly to stop her inevitable writhing to escape his plunging cock. His other hand gripped the back of her neck, and as his grunting and panting increased he suddenly pushed her head down into the bath. Caroline's mouth and nose filled with water, and at the same moment she felt the splash of The Master's spunk in her bowels. He held her like that, jerking against her tortured buttocks, cock ramming into her ravaged rectum while she drowned. An age seemed to pass before he hauled her to her feet, still buried in her rear passage. Coughing and retching, Caroline dragged in an agonised breath. His cock slipped out and he forced her to her knees before the flagging flesh.

"Clean it."

Still gasping and coughing water, she dared not defy him despite her disgust at knowing where his shaft had just been. Once more she felt only revulsion at performing an act that would have excited her if Van Gryf or Douglas had made her do it. It took several minutes before the Arab's cock swelled in her mouth. He pushed Caroline roughly away.

"Name, slave," he barked at Natasha.

She told him in a quavering voice, still shuddering from the savagery of her flogging. He made her lean forward with her hands on the edge of the bath and the water lapping the bare mound of her pussy, and he entered her from behind. Almost at once he pulled out and slapped her out-thrust bottom.

“What are you doing, stupid slut? Keep your cunt still.”

Kneeling dejectedly in the bath, Caroline looked away. She could tell from Natasha’s mewling and sobbing that he did not treat her gently.

“Clean yourselves,” he told them when he had done with her.

“You have five minutes.”

Caroline was willing to bear the additional pain in her bottom to clean the Arab’s slime from her rear passage. Though her anus ached, she was relieved to find it did not seem torn by its rough violation. She saw Natasha look up from washing the foul spunk from her sex and was surprised when she smiled. She grasped Caroline’s forearm.

“Don’t worry. Everything will be all right.” Natasha spoke confidently and seemed excited, much to Caroline’s confusion. “Do you not understand? This man knows nothing about us, not even our names or how we have been trained. He did not realise what was happening when I tried to grip his cock.”

Caroline shook her head, bewildered.

“Would not Van Gryf have told him such things before he sold us?”

“I... I don’t know.”

“Of course he would!” Natasha grabbed Caroline’s shoulder.

“You see? I was right. We weren’t sold. We were stolen. And from the way he speaks of Van Gryf, it is plain he envies him. That is why he is treating us so cruelly.”

Dazed and hurting, the English girl groped for the meaning of Natasha’s words. Van Gryf had not sold her. Her heart swelled joyfully. Then she remembered the startling revelation she had experienced while she lay chained and hurting after her awful flogging.

“He *does* care,” Natasha said. “And he *will* come.”

For you, perhaps, Caroline thought. No one had ever cared about her. Not her mother, who had abandoned her, or her father who had never trusted her, or her husband, who had only ever seen her as a means to an end. Why should Van Gryf be any different, or Rob Douglas?

That was when it had begun, Caroline realised, that day with Douglas at the mission, when he had questioned her and actually bothered to listen to what she had said. He had spoken little himself, but she had sensed his understanding, and his sympathy too. For a moment, before they had given in to their desire, Caroline had felt a connection, a link between them. It was something she had never felt with anyone before. For her, it had made what followed more than the impersonal service of a slave to her master. She could see now that she had always wanted more than that, even at the moment she had first conceived the idea of asking Van Gryf to accept her. But her encounter with Douglas was what had set her on the path to understanding what had only now become obvious.

The Afrikaner and the Scotsman were much more to her than just the strong, demanding masters who gave her the pleasure she craved. Caroline had said that pleasure was all she needed. Now she had discovered she was wrong. It was incredible, but it was true. All the time she had been revelling in the mastery and subjugation, emotions she had been too afraid to acknowledge existed had been growing within her – affection, attachment, even a fondness for the men. She dared not call it love. But she liked them. And she wanted, she *needed* them to like her.

* * * * *

Douglas ducked as the bullet whined over his head and flung himself down to the left of the open door. Another rifle shot cracked from inside as Van Gryf rushed forward and crouched at the right of the opening.

“Bloody hell!” Douglas heard him say, and grinned. He felt a stone beneath his hand, dug it out of the dry earth and lobbed it through the entrance.

“Grenade!” he yelled, hoping the men inside understood the word.

A sudden frantic scrabbling told him the trick had worked, and he stepped inside and emptied his pistol at the dim outlines of the figures scrambling towards the back of the building. One of them turned, rifle raised as Douglas crammed cartridges into the revolver’s cylinder. The boom of Van Gryf’s Colt forty-five going off was very loud in the confined space. The rifleman staggered backwards and suddenly seemed to vanish into the floor.

“What the - ?” Van Gryf strode past the Scotsman, switching on the torch he held. Douglas joined him in staring down into the hole in the floor its beam illuminated.

“Escape tunnel,” he said.

Van Gryf swore. “It took a quarter hour to get in here. The bastard’s long gone.”

The back door caved in. Jamal ibn Yusuff burst through the splintered planks. He lowered the pistol in his hand as he saw Van Gryf and Douglas beside the tunnel entrance.

“Has he taken the slaves?” he asked, hurrying up the staircase. The two men clattered after him. They found the only solid door in the house on its top floor. Anxiously, Douglas watched the sheik draw back the heavy bolt and swing it open. The beam of Van Gryf’s torch flickered around the darkness and rested on the corner where naked figures were wedged together in a tangle of limbs.

“Caroline! Natasha!” Van Gryf and the Scotsman called out together.

“Robbie?” a querulous voice asked from amidst the cowering bodies.

“Celia?”

A head lifted from the scrum. Celia squinted as the torchlight found her face. Douglas pulled the mass of frightened girls apart.

“Oh, Robbie, you came for me!” Celia bleated. “You saved me. How can I ever thank you?”

He pushed her aside impatiently and hauled the other girls to their feet so that Van Gryf could shine his torch on each in turn. They hung their heads, but even before one of Jamal’s men arrived with a more powerful torch, it was obvious that none of them had the corn-gold tresses of Caroline and Natasha.

Douglas grabbed Celia by the shoulders. “Where are the other girls?”

“Other girls?”

“Two blondes. They look alike. Have you seen them?”

“No, Robbie. There weren’t any others. Only us.”

“But they must be here,” Van Gryf insisted.

“We have searched the whole house,” Jamal said. “There is no one else. Rasul would be too concerned with saving his own neck to take them with him. Perhaps at one of his other houses?”

“Let’s get going,” the Afrikaner said.

They had just emerged into the street when a car drew up and a man in caftan and kufiyeh got out and ran to the sheik. His words were lost on Douglas. Impatiently, he waited for a translation.

“Jamal’s men were watching Rasul’s launch at the harbour in case he tried to cross the gulf with the girls,” Van Gryf supplied. “He turned up there about ten minutes ago.”

“Then we’ve got them.” The tight knot in Douglas’s belly began to unwind.

“Unfortunately not,” the sheik said. “He was alone. And it seems my men were not the only ones watching for him. In his haste to escape, he failed to take his usual precautions. The police have arrested him. He is now in the hands of the British.”

“So where the hell are our girls?” Douglas demanded.

“Another of Rasul’s hideouts, I hope,” the Afrikaner said.

“Then let’s get bloody looking!” The knots were back in Douglas’s gut, tighter than before.

* * * * *

Balancing on the balls of her feet, Caroline felt her calves and shoulders already beginning to ache as the eunuchs finished shackling Natasha beside her. They were both back in position on the steel triangles in The Master’s punishment room. It was scant consolation to Caroline that this time her toes could reach the floor. She felt exhausted after hours of fear and pain spent chained face down with only thin cushions between her smarting skin and the floor. Caroline had tried, but had found it impossible not to add her own moans and sobs to those Sandrine had made as she suffered the additional pain of her nipple piercing. Even Natasha’s newfound confidence had not been enough to stop her from adding her own groans of distress, yet her expression as she had been led back to the punishment room had shown her faith that Van Gryf would save her was unshaken. Caroline wished hers were half as

strong. Even if the Afrikaner was looking for them, he had no way of finding out where they were. She did not even know herself.

Her gut lurched as the Arab entered, dragging Sandrine after him by her chained wrists. She was bombarding him with rapid French, all the while looking around with desperate, panic-filled eyes. The Master's whip cracking across her thighs changed her pleas to an anguished cry of pain. The gold rings hanging heavily in her nipples emphasised the girl's naked helplessness and reminded Caroline how utterly they were at the mercy of the heartless beast.

The table the girls had been fastened to for their punishments had been replaced by another. Its shiny, polished steel surface shone in the glare of the numerous electric bulbs that lit the room now night had fallen. Sandrine's eyes seemed to double in size and she began pleading frantically again as the eunuchs removed her wrist cuffs, lifted her onto the tabletop and began to strap her down.

Caroline had never seen anything like the table. It was entirely of metal, and she had seen before they dumped Sandrine's trembling body upon it that its top was made up of several separate panels. Small hand-wheels around its edges suggested it could be adjusted in various ways, and there were a lot of leather straps attached that the Africans were fastening very tightly around the French girl's body and limbs. She struggled as they did so, continuing to breathlessly beg until The Master silenced her by forcing a big, cylindrical rubber gag between her teeth and buckling it behind her head. Sandrine's eyes rolled, her rapid, anxious breaths snorting in her nostrils and hissing around the hard rubber filling her mouth.

The eunuchs tightened the last straps around the girl's body. She was completely immobile, bound at each ankle, at the knees and thighs, hips and waist, above and below her breasts, and at wrists, elbows and upper arms. The sight was frightening. The restraints The Master had used when he had pierced her nipples were insignificant in comparison. Heart pounding, Caroline wondered what he could possibly intend to do to the poor girl that required she be confined so tightly. She stared at Sandrine and her churning belly knotted. There was something horribly, terrifyingly cold and clinical about that shiny steel table which filled her with an awful dread.

One of the eunuchs wheeled the small trolley The Master had used earlier next to the table. The spirit-burner stood at one end and a squat, glass-stoppered bottle of clear liquid at the other. Between them was a metal tray covered by a white cloth. Sandrine's frightened eyes followed The Master's every movement as he lit the burner. He turned to Caroline and Natasha and slashed his whip hard across each girl's breasts.

"That's a sample of what you will get if you dare look away." He pointed to one of the eunuchs. "He will be watching you, so be sure and pay close attention. I think you will find it educational and very relevant." Baring his teeth in a cruel smile, he went back to the table and cranked one of its hand wheels, raising the French girl's head and torso until she could look down the length of her body. "I want you to see it too, Sandrine," he told her, eyes glittering.

More adjustments of the wheels raised and separated the steel panels supporting her legs, spreading her thighs wide and exposing her sex. Dry mouthed, Caroline felt her belly flip. He meant to pierce her down there as well.

The Arab did not stand between Sandrine's parted legs but at her left side, leaving Natasha and Caroline with a clear view of whatever he was about to do. With what was obviously a practised routine, one of the eunuchs held a basin under his outstretched hands while the other took the bottle of liquid from the trolley and poured some of its contents over them. The Master turned back a corner of the cloth covering the tray and picked up one of two steel clamps that lay there. He fitted it over the right outer-lip of Sandrine's sex and tightened it until the fleshy crescent bulged between its blunt teeth. A whine came from behind her gag and her head, the only part of her she could still move, rolled from side to side. Tightly clamping her other labia in the same fashion, the Arab fastened cords to each of the metal jaws and tied them off to the outer edge of the metal panels supporting Sandrine's legs, stretching her pussy-lips wide.

Caroline gulped at the sight of the pink, moistly glistening interior of the girl's sex, so crudely exposed by The Master's actions. Sandrine's face was pale with fright and her wide, blue eyes were brimming with tears. Her strong, white teeth gnawed at the rubber stretching her jaw as she watched the Arab pour more liquid from the bottle onto a piece of gauze. She tried hopelessly to wriggle as he swabbed it over her pussy.

Discarding the gauze, he turned back more of the cloth covering the tray and picked up a scissor-like surgical clamp. Slipping one finger under the swell of the French girl's clitoral hood and his thumb above, he pulled the little flap of flesh taut and closed the jaws of the clamp upon it, laying it on Sandrine's belly.

At once, one of the eunuchs moved to stand at her right side while the Master took two other objects from the tray and placed their ends in the flame of the spirit-burner. Aquiver with fearful apprehension, Caroline could not guess their purpose. They looked like small screwdrivers but with two flat, inch-long metal strips set at an angle on the ends of their blades. What could they possibly have to do with piercing the poor girl's hood? Caroline shuddered, imagining the pain of having such a delicate, sensitive area seared by the hot needle and hung with a gold ring. It did not bear thinking about.

The Master whisked the cloth away from the tray. Caroline stared, her breath catching in her throat. Instead of the pointed steel shaft she had expected, another instrument lay there.

And it made her blood run cold.

Chapter 17

Sandrine screamed into her gag as the Arabs fingers closed around the handle of the scalpel and raised its long, narrow, curved blade before her eyes. It gleamed in the electric light, as wicked as the man who wielded it. The French girl heaved against her straps, frantic.

“Now behave, girl. Struggling isn’t going to alter anything.” The Master turned his cruelly grinning face to Caroline and Natasha. “Watch closely, slaves. They always make such a fuss, yet it’s over in a few minutes.”

Every muscle in Sandrine’s body was rigid as she continued to strain against her bonds, wildly shaking her head and making inarticulate sounds into her gag. Though Caroline was willing her to break free, she could see it was hopeless. The French girl shrieked and snorted as the Master laid the heel of his hand in the hollow at the top of her thigh, closed the tips of a pair of surgical tweezers on one of the delicate petals of her inner labia and poised the scalpel-blade above it.

“Pull her clit up,” he told the eunuch at the other side of the girl’s defenceless body.

Sandrine heaved again and gave a muffled shriek of naked terror as the African gripped the scissors-clamp and stretched her flesh. Chest so tight she could barely breathe, Caroline saw the interior of the French girl’s sex clench as the blade descended. A second later, merciful blackness engulfed her.

The moment Caroline came around, a wave of nausea made her belly heave until she was retching. She stared in loathing and revulsion, not wanting to believe he had really done it.

“There, that should please your new master,” the Arab said, wiping his hands on the cloth that had concealed the scalpel, completely unconcerned by Sandrine’s suffering. “In a few days you will be healed and you’ll have nothing there but a neat scar. And there won’t be any ugly, dangling bits to offend the eye.”

Caroline knew Sandrine had not heard him. The girl had lost consciousness. The Master took a jar from the trolley, filled it with alcohol and screwed on the lid. Obscene pieces of flesh floated inside it.

The English girl's arms were aching and her legs were cramping from standing so long on tiptoe. They gave way altogether, and for a moment she thought her bowels would too, when The Master opened a cupboard mounted on one wall. He took a stub of pencil, wrote Sandrine's name on the jar's label and added it to the end of a line of identical containers.

Caroline knew then that he was mad. There were dozens of jars on the cupboard's shelves, each with its pieces of severed flesh floating in the alcohol within, each labelled with a name in carefully printed capital letters.

"Five days from now there is going to be an auction," The Master announced. He picked up his whip and regarded Caroline and Natasha. "Soon, men will come here to view my latest stock and bid for them. They are wealthy men who hold to the old ways and traditions. They like their women to be traditional too, cut in the way that has always been their custom. Circumcised." He ran the whip's end over the painful welts on Caroline's belly, then did the same to Natasha. "A pity your stomachs were so weak you couldn't pay attention while I circumcised Sandrine. I particularly wanted you to know how it is done." His mouth split into a smug, wicked smile as he met their eyes. "Since tomorrow it will be your turn."

"Oh, God help us!" Caroline cried.

* * * * *

Douglas woke with a start and looked at his wristwatch. Like most soldiers, he had acquired the knack of sleeping whenever the chance arose. He had slept for twenty minutes. Van Gryf sat opposite, chain-smoking and drumming the fingers of one hand on the arm of his chair. The whole night and half the morning spent fruitlessly searching every one of Rasul's hideouts in Berbera had left them all tired and dispirited.

"Any word?" Douglas asked. Jamal's men were combing the city for information.

"Would we be sitting here with our thumbs up our arses if there was?" Van Gryf demanded testily. "Oh, hell! I'm sorry. It's not your fault."

"Isn't it? I'm the one who told you to bring them along."

“And I needn’t have listened,” the Afrikaner said. “I’m the one who knew what this place is like. I was a bloody fool. I may be king in my own castle but up here I’m just another bloody target. I should have remembered that.” He stubbed his cigarette violently into the ashtray.

“Are you sure it was Rasul who took them?” the Scotsman asked.

“No, I’m bloody not!” Van Gryf lit another cigarette. “For all I know the minute they were taken off Jamal’s boat they were put straight onto another. They could be on the other side of the Red Sea by now and just about anywhere in the Hejaz. Even with Jamal’s help we might never find them.”

His words were like a blow to Douglas’s belly. He got to his feet, fists clenching in frustration. “For God’s sake, you’re not just going to give up, are you?”

“You should know better than that. I want them back, Douglas, and I’ll turn over heaven and earth to get them if that’s what it takes.” Van Gryf rubbed a hand over his haggard face. “I’ve got used to having them around. I’m not going to lose them.”

“Including Caroline?”

“Especially Caroline!” He looked up and gave Douglas a wry smile. “The first time I saw her I wanted her for the stable. I seriously considered abducting her, even though it might have brought the authorities too close for comfort. I made some enquiries and found out about that waster she married and the way her father treated her.” He leaned back and blew out smoke in a long sigh. “I suppose I always felt a bit sorry for her after that. She always seemed alone, even when Milton was in the same room with her, but she was always cheerful and welcoming with me. Why the hell Milton treated her the way he did is beyond me. She’s a bright girl, and witty too.”

Douglas nodded understanding.

“I even considered arranging an accident for Milton myself,” Van Gryf admitted. “All that stopped me was the effect it might have on Caroline. I knew she wouldn’t want to go back to her father, but she couldn’t have stayed here on her own either. Of course, at the time I didn’t know about her submissive urges, or that she’d seen inside the stable.” He laughed without humour. “If I had, I’d have snatched her there and then.”

“She told me she was worried you brought her up here to sell her and Natasha,” Douglas told him. “For a while she had me half-convinced.”

“What? I’d have to be bloody mad. You know, I don’t think I’ve ever enjoyed training a girl as much as I have Caroline. Her being different has made it a new challenge.”

“Yet you were dead set against her in the beginning.” Douglas cocked an eyebrow. “Were you afraid maybe you would get too attached to her?”

Van Gryf gave him a lopsided grin. “Man, I already *was* too attached to her. That’s what made me so reluctant at first. I thought she’d already had things rough enough without me kidnapping and enslaving her.” His mouth twisted again and he threw up his hands in a gesture of surrender. “Damn it! I like her, Rob, probably too damned much for my own good. And I like Natasha too, and all the other girls I can never quite bring myself to part with. I should have realised long before now that when I built the stable I made a trap for myself as well as them.”

The fact Van Gryf had called Douglas by his first name was indication enough of the depth of his feelings.

“Then it’s one I’ve fallen into too,” the Scotsman said, “because I’ve grown as fond of them all as you are.” The admission was not quite as embarrassing as he expected.

The Afrikaner looked pained. “I told you we’re too soft for the slaving game.”

“Not so much that you couldn’t sell Anne and Margery.”

“Aye, to someone I trust to treat them properly. But I would never auction off a girl to a stranger who might treat them like those two we bought at the slave market.”

Douglas’s gut lurched at the thought of Natasha and Caroline flogged and disfigured like Joan and Marie. Even Celia, the little cock-teasing bitch, did not deserve that, though he still wished it was their girls they had found at Rasul’s instead of her.

“They’re like pets, I suppose,” Van Gryf said. “My aunt gave me a cat when I was a kid. I’ve never liked cats, but the little bugger still wormed its way into my affections.” He gave a self-conscious smile that turned into an ironic laugh. “Maybe dogs is a better analogy. Some

breeds you like, others you don't, and even among the ones you do, there are those you like more than others."

"Like the one puppy in the litter you can't bring yourself to let go when you don't mind parting with all the others," Douglas agreed.

"Aye, well I'm going to do my damndest to make sure we hang on to *our* puppies." Van Gryf got up. "Let's see if Jamal has any news."

The Scotsman thought of telling him what Caroline had said about Van Gryf unconsciously being in love with his slave girls, but he decided they had bared enough of their feelings for one day. Besides, the look on the Afrikaner's face had already told him that Caroline was right.

Ibn Yusuff sat cross-legged amid a pile of cushions with the captain of his yacht beside him. At any other time Douglas would have felt a stir of interest at the sight of the lovely Arab girl who knelt offering coffee to the seaman. Margery, bare-breasted and wearing nothing but a silken loin cloth, doing the same for the sheik, only reminded him of the danger Caroline and Natasha could be facing.

"No, go down on both knees," Jamal was telling Margery, "and keep your back straighter when you hold out the tray." He waved her away as he saw Douglas and Van Gryf. "I think we may have done Rasul an injustice, my friends," he said. "A pity he chose to fight instead of talk when we gave him the chance." He gestured at the captain. "All but one of the crew are assembled. Only the mate is still missing."

"Have you spoken to Khasim?" Van Gryf asked. "We saw the mate going into his offices yesterday."

"I have not been able to contact Khasim," the sheik replied. "He does not answer his telephone. I sent messages to his offices and home to tell him what has happened. As he said, this is his busiest time. He may be away at one of the encampments around the city."

"I thought the mate was looking for you," Douglas said. "He arrived just after you left."

"He did not come to me, and he can have had no business with Khasim," Jamal said. He looked questioningly at the captain who agreed. "Then we had better speak to the rest of the crew."

The men said they knew nothing, though they confirmed the mate had been last to leave the yacht. They were nervous under the suspicious eyes of their captain and their employer, but Douglas was pretty sure they were telling the truth. He watched them leave with his leaden fear

growing heavier in his belly and a maddening helplessness that was stretching his nerves to the limit.

“This is as bad as waiting to go over the top in the bloody trenches,” he told Van Gryf as they climbed the staircase to return to the sheik’s private apartments. They had almost reached the top when one of the house-servants called from below.

“Highness, one of the slaves you found last night says she knows Mr. Van Gryf. Forgive me, Highness, she has only just awoken. I have only now learned of it.”

Bloody Celia, Douglas thought. If she was going to start wasting their time with her whining, he would take a cane to her backside. He hurried back downstairs with the others.

The naked girl the servant motioned forward was not Celia. Douglas did not recognise her, though he could only have seen her by torchlight and would have paid her no attention once he had realised her hair was the wrong shade of blonde. This time it did not hide her pretty face, but what first drew the Scotsman’s eye were the large, gold rings through each of her nipples. His gaze dropped lower, to two more rings hanging from her outer-labia, high on either side, pulling their narrow crescents down and slightly apart. Douglas stared. Where the swell of her clitoral hood should be, the skin was smooth and bare, and he could see the faintest of scars.

“Dagmar?” Van Gryf strode past the Scotsman, staring at the girl’s face. “Dagmar, you belong to Khasim. How the hell did you end up at Rasul’s?”

“Van Gryf.” The girl’s eyes filled with tears. She sagged suddenly, head lolling.

The Afrikaner caught her before she fell. “Fetch some water,” he said urgently.

* * * * *

Caroline fought every step of the way. She was damned if she was going to go meekly to be tortured and mutilated by a madman. It was hopeless. One rake of her nails across the eunuchs’ black skins was all she managed before they hauled her arms high to lift her off her bare, kicking feet, and they carried her through the door.

The table stood waiting. Its shiny, steel surface glared at her in the mid-morning sunlight pouring through the window in the roof. Sheer terror gave Caroline the strength to tear free of her captors. They caught her in seconds, and all she achieved was a painful wrench to her shoulder and an increase in the throbbing of her flogged buttocks. Her bottom hurt even more when, heart leaping, she found herself on her back on the unyielding table and staring up at the bright blue of the sky beyond the roof window. She did not waste energy in pointless pleading. Straining every muscle, Caroline thrust her limbs upwards against the leather straps the eunuchs were fastening around them. Sudden, savage pain slashed across her abdomen as The Master brought his whip down hard.

“Stop that, you stupid bitch. Why do you all struggle so? You must know it will make no difference.” The Arab leaned close. “You are going to have your cunt cut, slave. Nothing can stop me from doing it. Why all the commotion? It will look much prettier afterwards.”

“You bloody bastard,” Caroline spat and cried out as he lashed her breasts. Her belly twisted with horror. The searing whip was nothing compared to what she was about to suffer. The straps above and below her burning breasts cut into her skin as Caroline sucked in a long, quavering breath. Already those encircling the tops of thighs were making her legs feel numb. She jerked her head aside as The Master pressed a leather ball-gag against her lips, but one of the Africans held her and prised her jaws open. The Arab forced the hard, dry ball behind her teeth and buckled it in place. Caroline suddenly felt desperately thirsty.

Her head and upper body began to rise. The Master was turning one of the table’s hand-wheels, lifting her into a half-sitting position. With a fresh stab of fear, Caroline realised the Africans had finished fastening her. All she could move were her fingers and her head. Oh, God! How different it felt to all those times Van Gryf had bound her into helplessness.

Directly ahead of her were the room’s double doors, and six feet away, a little to her right, Natasha hung once more in shackles, her toes barely brushing the floor. Her eyes were big, blue pools filled with fear and foreboding. There was no sign now of her confidence that Van Gryf would come to their rescue. Natasha knew that she was next.

Caroline's panic swelled. Circumcised – the knowledge of what the word meant for her in pain and torment deepened her awful dread and made her buck frenziedly in her restraints until she ran out of breath. In gut-wrenching horror, she watched The Master wheel his trolley of torture implements to the table. Her bowels turned to water. If there had been anything in them, they would have emptied of their own volition. It was a small and meaningless mercy that she was spared that humiliation. She had eaten nothing since her abduction. She felt no hunger, only the chilling terror at what was to come. When they had offered it, Caroline had drunk a lot of water though, for she had had none of that either, except what she had swallowed in the bath. She felt a sudden, compelling urge to piss, yet still her mouth was so dry she could have drunk a river.

The Master worked the hand-wheels that raised and parted her legs. Caroline fought the pressure ferociously and with total futility, sweat streaming over her naked body with the effort of trying to stop him exposing her sex. Desperate and despairing she looked into Natasha's blood-drained face, and tears filled her eyes as the girl gave a helpless shake of her head. The Russian girl was also crying.

The Arab's demonic grin split his face and his eyes were alight with evil anticipation. It was useless to beg, but Caroline could not stop her head shaking violently or the pleas that were turned to nonsense by her gag. She shrieked in utter terror as The Master fixed the clamps onto her outer-labia and screwed them tight until they hurt. They hurt more when he tied off the cords attached to the clamps, stretching her pussy wide and revealing its delicate, frighteningly sensitive interior. Caroline heaved and bucked again, sex and anus clenching as the Arab swabbed her with cold, astringent alcohol. The hard, steel jaws of the scissors-clamp bit into her bruised clitoral hood and stretched it painfully upwards into the waiting hand of one of the eunuchs. The Master leaned forward, gazing between her throbbing outer-lips.

“Hah, such a small thing to make so much fuss about! It's so little, it's hardly worth the trouble.” His hawk-face with its wicked grin loomed above her. “Don't worry, it won't take long. And you'll be much more compliant without the urge to keep rubbing your clit to distract you. I'll bet I see ten thousand pounds from the two of you. I'll sell you as a matched pair.”

Caroline barely heard. She was trembling uncontrollably, jaws clenching so tight her teeth had sunk deep into the leather filling her mouth. Above her ragged breaths she could hear the furious pounding of her heart. She dropped her wildly staring eyes from his face to the hands that suddenly rested in the hollows at the tops of her thighs.

She screamed.

Chapter 18

The Master clamped the tweezers down crushingly hard and stretched Caroline's tender flesh taut. His long fingers held the shiny, curved blade of the scalpel.

"So much noise over such a little thing," the Arab said with a throaty chuckle just audible above Caroline's half-stifled shrieks. Seconds passed like hours. Her head spun and lights flashed behind her tightly closed eyes. The need to piss was urgent and overwhelming, but, absurdly, she held back. Her pain and degradation were enough without the added humiliation of wetting herself. As if it mattered. He was going to cut away her womanhood, mutilate forever her most intimate place and the source of her greatest pleasure. Why had she ever given herself to Van Gryf? Why had he not saved her as Natasha had promised?

"Pull it good and tight," The Master told the eunuch.

Caroline felt the pain in her obscenely stretching clitoral hood worsen, watched in dread as his hand lifted the shiny blade above her sex. She could no longer breathe. Her scream was trapped in her throat. The straps around her were tighter than ever, and all her strength was gone. Her bladder was ready to burst. Head spinning, she saw blackness flicker at the edges of her vision as the Master's fingers pressed against the base of her clitoris. Praying the darkness would take her, Caroline waited for the agony to begin.

"What the - ? What was that?" The Master demanded.

The pressure on Caroline's sex vanished. The gleaming blade did not descend. She watched the Arab put it hurriedly aside and look questioningly at the eunuch.

"What is it?"

The African stretching her hood so painfully let go of the clamp and stepped back with a shake of his head and a wary glance at the doors to the room. From beyond them came a crackling sound Caroline could only just hear above her rasping breaths. Suddenly, there was shouting and more crackling, louder than before.

"Lock the doors," The Master told the eunuch and rushed to a small cabinet while the African obeyed. He returned with a big pistol in his hand and took up position between Caroline's parted legs. His vile

grin had disappeared. His glance at her was fleeting and nervous as he turned to face the doors. Feminine screams came from the other side and the harsher, guttural cries of men, followed by what even Caroline's fraught mind finally recognised as gunshots.

"Van Gryf!" Natasha cried. "It's Van Gryf!"

"Bastard," The Master snarled.

It could not be, Caroline told herself, more bewildered than relieved. He could not possibly have found them. The shooting stopped. There was more shouting, then long seconds of pregnant silence. A loud thud on the doors made The Master aim his pistol towards them. The eunuchs scuttled for the doorway leading to the bathroom and disappeared. A second thud ended in a splintering of wood and the doors crashed open. Carried by their own momentum, two figures staggered into the room.

"Nobody move!" The Master yelled, levelling his gun.

Beyond his outstretched arm, Caroline saw Douglas freeze in the act of raising the pistol in his hand. The Arab's body blocked her view of Van Gryf but she guessed he had done the same.

"Give it up, Khasim," she heard the Afrikaner say. "All your men have. You're outnumbered. You've got no chance."

"We'll see," The Master flung back. "As you English say, blood is thicker than water. You're not going to let them kill me, are you, Uncle?"

"Why, Khasim?" a man's voice Caroline did not recognise asked. "You are not poor. You live well. Why have you done this?"

The Master laughed harshly. "For years every sheik in the Hejaz has heard you praise the talents of the slaves Van Gryf sells only to you and your most trusted friends. Only you and they have ever enjoyed them. There are many willing to pay highly for the same pleasure."

"But you have money. And status and respect too."

"But not enough, Uncle. I want a palace like yours and the riches that come with it."

Caroline heard the man's deep sigh.

"Then you know less than I thought about the responsibilities that also come with them. I am sorry for you, Khasim."

The Master laughed again. “No need, Uncle. I’ll get what I want. I won’t let these foreigners stand in my way. Or anyone else who tries either.”

“No! I forbid it. Are you mad to talk of killing your friends?”

Caroline heard the man’s agitation and her heart lurched. The Master meant to murder them.

“You know I must kill Van Gryf and this other one, or *they* will kill me.” His body stiffened and the gun in his outstretched hand shifted slightly.

Caroline knew he was going to shoot. In an instant of inspiration, she let go her bursting bladder and loosed a stream of piss that splattered the length of The Master’s back all the way to his neck. His head turned in surprise. For a split second his eyes met her own and she saw fear spring into them as he realised his mistake.

Two shots crashed out simultaneously. The Master jerked backwards, spun in a half-circle and slowly sank to his knees. Unable to stop, Caroline sprayed piss into his face until he slumped sideways to the floor. Van Gryf and Douglas rushed forward as he fell. The Afrikaner hurried to Natasha. The Scotsman removed the clamp from Caroline’s clit hood, her gag, and the straps from around her body. She felt weak and her body ached dreadfully. Another man appeared. He had the same hawk-face as her captor, but older. It was twisting, not with cruelty but with intense emotion.

“Uncle... I...” Caroline heard The Master say. She had thought he was dead.

The man looked down. “You have disgraced yourself, Khasim, dishonoured your family and your father’s memory. You were right. I will not let Van Gryf kill you. I will do it myself.”

The shot sounded distant to Caroline. Relief and reaction were overpowering her. Her arms and legs tingled with returning circulation. Her struggles had made her whole body a throbbing agony she could no longer stand.

“God, see what he meant to do!” she heard Douglas say, and then she sank into unconsciousness.

* * * * *

“Oh, Robbie, no,” Celia whined as Douglas pushed her into the cabin and she saw the steel-barred cage. “You can’t mean to lock me in here for the whole trip.”

He grabbed the back of her neck, pushed her against the bars and dealt four hard swats to her tight, little bottom. Celia hissed and whimpered. Her backside was already marked by the dozen cane strokes Douglas had given her the previous day, and they were not the first she had taken since Natasha and Caroline had been rescued.

“What did I tell you to call me?” he demanded, giving her rear another smack.

“Ow! ‘Sir’! I have to call you ‘sir’.”

“Don’t forget again,” he warned and shoved her into the cage.

She turned to face him. “Oh, it really is too bad of you!”

Douglas had to lift his hand again before she added a reluctant ‘sir’. Celia had shown little sign of feeling humiliated by being kept naked. She made no gesture of modesty now, doing nothing to hide her newly plucked pussy or her tight little teats as she looked into his face. Her eyes were bright and moist but not, he thought, entirely from the sting of his palm. She had wept when she was caned at Jamal’s home, but even then the Scotsman had had a suspicion she had not found the experience wholly unpleasant.

“Do you really mean to keep me prisoner always?” she asked, and ran her tongue wetly over her lips. “You’re just saying that to get your own back, aren’t you?”

Douglas sighed. “I’ve told you already, Celia, you know too much. Even if we wanted to, we couldn’t let you go. And you’re not a prisoner. You’re a slave girl, and if you aren’t a damned good one, I guarantee your backside is going to be permanently sore.” He was surprised at how much pleasure the prospect gave him.

“A slave girl,” she repeated, licking her lips again. “Does that mean I’ll have to... have to serve you?” She shivered as she spoke.

“It means next time you start cock-teasing me, I’ll make bloody sure you go all the way, Celia.”

She gave him a pettish look, sat on one of the beds and half-turned her back, but the Scotsman was pretty sure she was making certain he could still see the red, erect point of her right nipple. Her face turned towards him and she pouted.

“Well, I think it really is too bad of you,” she repeated. “You are quite heartless.”

Douglas took a step into the cage.

“Sir!” Celia said quickly, looking away again with a petulant toss of her head. A moment later, she turned it enough to watch him from the corner of her eye, and he saw a little smile play over her lips.

Same old Celia, he thought as he locked her in. She was going to be a proper handful, like so many of Van Gryf’s girls. But that, of course, was half the pleasure. He wondered if anyone in Nairobi would much miss Daphne, the other little tease he had met there, if she were to suddenly disappear.

When Douglas returned to the saloon, Natasha and the two circumcised girls Van Gryf had bought were looking out of the yacht’s stern windows at the island of Socotra gradually disappearing below the horizon. They were leaving the Gulf of Aden. Van Gryf sat at the table, watching the girls and absently listening to their chatter. Douglas sat next to him and passed him a cigarette.

“They seem happy enough,” the Scotsman said with a nod towards the slave girls.

“Aye, an absence of brutality makes a big difference. Natasha even asked to share my bed tonight.”

“On the mend, then.” Douglas glanced at the fading bruises on her buttocks. “I wish Caroline was doing so well.”

Van Gryf blew out cigarette smoke in a long sigh. He had worn the same worried expression often during the days they had spent at the sheik’s house while Caroline recovered from her ordeal. Jamal’s personal physician had sedated her and Natasha for the pain, but he had said there was nothing more he needed to do. They would suffer no lasting physical effects. Even their savage whippings had caused no permanent scars. Khasim had left that for the man who would have bought them, Douglas thought grimly.

But it was not Caroline’s physical well being that worried him. Ever since she had awoken from her drugged sleep she had been quiet and withdrawn. Her sparkle and enthusiasm were missing. Both he and Van Gryf had sensed it was more than the shock and pain of what Caroline had been through that troubled her. They had agreed not to

mention it to her, hoping she could resolve herself whatever inner-conflict was troubling her.

The sheik had installed all of the rescued slave girls in his house at Berbera. There were eight circumcised girls among them, including Dagmar. Van Gryf's self-reproach for having sold her to Khasim had been very obvious. The Arab had circumcised her within days of buying her and used her as an example of what he could supply to his clientele for the right price. Only a few days before Van Gryf's latest visit to Berbera, he had sold the twenty-three year old girl to Rasul, having found a younger replacement. Without the story she had told about Khasim, they would never have pieced together the clues and found Natasha and Caroline in time.

The Afrikaner had made a point of ensuring Dagmar and every other circumcised girl knew how to find the pleasure-spot within her sex and how to give herself an orgasm by stimulating it. Douglas knew it would take more than that to salve Van Gryf's conscience. He was resolved to do everything he could to help his friend.

He guessed the Afrikaner would have taken Dagmar back to Kenya with him, but the sheik seemed to have taken a particular liking to her. She was still a beautiful girl, and but for her mutilated sex she bore no scars. Perhaps it had helped Van Gryf to see her smiling in response to Jamal's attentions and gentle teasing. The sheik had shown a patriarchal concern for all the slave girls and insisted he would take them to his palace in the Hejaz to be permanently cared for. He had been as disgusted as Van Gryf and Douglas by Khasim's grisly collection of nearly fifty clitorises and had ordered it destroyed. The Scotsman thought he was more disappointed than grieved by his nephew's death – after all, it was Jamal who had killed him, though Douglas was confident that if he had not, the two bullets he and Van Gryf had put in Khasim's chest would soon have done the job.

They had said farewell to the sheik that morning after his yacht had ferried him and his much-enlarged retinue of slave girls to his home across the gulf. As they had shaken hands, Van Gryf had thanked Jamal for his invaluable help.

"I will not pretend it was without cost," the sheik had replied. "I promised to look after Khasim. I did not do a very good job."

“It was he who failed you,” Van Gryf had told him. “A man builds his own character. You were not responsible for Khasim’s greed and ambition. I thought I was a good judge of men. I can’t believe I was so wrong about him.”

“As was I. And I recommended him to you. You cannot blame yourself. He was my own blood and even I could not see it.” Jamal’s pained look had slowly changed to a smile as he had run his eyes over the waiting girls. “Let us be thankful for the comfort we can take from our beautiful slaves and be glad we are still here to enjoy them. And you, my friend, perhaps have understood that it is not weakness to love them just a little.”

Douglas recalled that the Afrikaner’s laugh had sounded a little self-conscious. He had given the sheik a small notebook he had spent several hours writing in while they waited for Sandrine and Caroline to be well enough to travel.

“My methods for training girls to use their pussy’s properly.”

Jamal had been surprised. “You would give away your secrets?”

“To a true friend. Besides, I have plenty more.”

“You do intend returning next year?” the sheik had asked in concern. “I have lost a nephew. I do not want to also lose a friend.”

“I’ll be back,” Van Gryf had assured him. “I’ll bring you the best trained girls you’ve ever had, Jamal. And next time you can leave your gold at home. They won’t cost you a penny.”

They had parted then, the sheik to swell the ranks of his harem with his new concubines, the others to head out to sea until the yacht’s bows could turn southward towards what Douglas now indisputably considered home.

He looked again at the Afrikaner’s troubled face.

Van Gryf abruptly stubbed his cigarette into the ashtray and stood up. “Let’s go and see her.”

* * * * *

Caroline lay on her bed and listened to the powerful thrum of the yacht’s engines. They were taking her home. She felt no spark of anticipation or excitement, only the aching heaviness in her heart.

Van Gryf did not care. The moment Khasim had fallen, the Afrikaner had rushed to Natasha. It was the Russian girl he had come for. Caroline admitted he had not sold her as she had believed, but one day he would. One day she would board the yacht again and be locked in a cage in one of the forward cabins to wait to be bought by the sheik or some other wealthy Arab who liked to number white girls among his concubines. She might not have to endure the kind of torment she had suffered at Khasim's hands but it would still be torture. Jamal had been kind, but he was not Van Gryf, or Douglas either.

Her belly twisted. Caroline slid one hand to her sex. Her fingers brushed the hood of her clitoris and she thanked heaven she could still feel the little, tickling thrill that ran through it. But she was not seeking arousal; more, perhaps, reassurance that she had come though the ordeal unscathed – at least physically.

Natasha had told her Van Gryf said even circumcised girls could still orgasm, and apart from Sandrine, who was still healing, he had shown the others how. Caroline recalled the way he and Douglas had toyed with the little petals she had so nearly lost, rubbing and pinching until the hot blood of arousal had engorged them and she had wriggled in delight. Warmth flowed in her belly and a moist tingling teased her sheath. She pulled her hand away restlessly and swung her feet to the floor.

From the very beginning, Van Gryf had not wanted her. All the minor victories she thought she had achieved in overcoming his resistance had been just a delusion. He no more wanted her now than he had at the beginning. It made no difference. Caroline had already made her decision.

She had told Douglas she did not believe there could be real affection between men and women. She had never believed in the romance she had read about in her magazines. Yet, it seemed to Caroline she had found another kind during her time in Van Gryf's stable, exotic as well as romantic, and, for a while, fulfilling as she lived her dream. It had proved hollow. She had learned the pleasure that she craved and the subjugation she had yearned for were not the only things she had been suppressing for so many years. Caroline accepted the truth – she needed affection too.

White Ivory, they called her kind. Caroline remembered the thrill that had run up her spine the first time she had been called a slave girl in the stable. But she was not the ever-obedient, unquestioning object of pleasure she had imagined she could be when she had first stepped through its doors. If Van Gryf did not like her, could not care for her even a little, then it was too impersonal, too empty, too unfeeling. She could not go on. It was not the Afrikaner's opposition that had defeated her in the end but her own emotions.

Utterly miserable, Caroline hung her head. Two big tears welled up in her eyes and splashed onto her naked thigh.

* * * * *

The Afrikaner did not knock before opening the door. Caroline sat on the bed with her bare toes curled into the carpet. Her hands lay limply in her lap. She barely raised her head as the men approached her.

"Do you know what today is, Caroline?" Van Gryf asked.

Not looking up, she shook her head.

"It's decision day. You remember I promised you four weeks? Well, they were up yesterday. Today I have to decide whether you should join the stable permanently."

Caroline did not respond.

"Don't you want to know what I've decided?" the Afrikaner asked, glancing uneasily at Douglas.

The Scot remembered her eagerness, her determination to win Van Gryf's approval and make him want to keep her. Where was it now?

"It doesn't matter," she said with the merest lifting of her eyelids in Van Gryf's direction. "I know now I was just deluding myself. You were right all along."

"No, I was wrong," the Afrikaner said. "I made the mistake, not you. I should have accepted you outright from the beginning. I wish now that I had."

"I thought you had sold me. Natasha didn't believe it, but I did. I knew you didn't want me." Her voice was flat, unfeeling.

"I did want you," Van Gryf insisted. "I do. It was only.... Damn it! You loved being in the stable, Caroline. I know you enjoyed every minute. It's what you always wanted. It's where you belong."

“Until you tire of me.” She raised her head at last, and Douglas saw a flicker of emotion cross her blank face. “Until you *do* decide to sell me, and I couldn’t - ” Caroline looked down as her voice cracked.

“Tire of you? How could I ever tire of you? I’d need my head examined if I ever thought of selling you. Besides, Douglas would shoot me if I tried.”

“Definitely,” the Scotsman agreed, “but only after I’d bought her myself.”

Caroline looked sharply at his face, then at Van Gryf’s. Her head drooped again.

Van Gryf got down on one knee and lifted her chin until her gaze met his. “Come back where you belong, Caroline,” he said with a gentleness in his voice that Douglas had never heard before.

For long seconds she stared into his eyes, and then drew back from his touch.

“Don’t you want to stay with us?” Van Gryf asked.

“I can’t. I thought the pleasure was all I wanted. I thought it would be enough, but... but...” Caroline gave a shake of her head. “I had better go.”

Van Gryf stood up and planted his balled fists on his hips. “Go where? Back to Hereford and your father?”

Caroline’s eyes glistened with tears. Douglas was not surprised when he felt his heart go out to her.

“I can go to London,” she said. “I’ll get a job.”

Van Gryf snorted. “You’ve got a job. And I’ve never met anyone more perfectly suited for it than you are, my girl. If you think I put in all that time and effort just to let you ruin everything for yourself, you can think again.”

A brief, indignant spark flashed in Caroline’s eyes. “You gave your word.”

“Then I’m breaking it,” Van Gryf said flatly. “For the first time ever, I’m breaking it. Consider yourself abducted, young lady. And you can think yourself lucky if you don’t get a dozen on your backside when I get you home.” He turned on his heel and stalked out of the cabin, slamming the door.

Caroline gazed after him, a mixture of resentment and bewilderment on her face. Douglas sat beside her on the bed and took her hand.

“Don’t mind him. It’s just his way of saying he likes you.”

Her head jerked up, blonde hair flashing. “Likes me? He went straight for Natasha when you rescued us.”

“Of course. That’s what we arranged before we broke the door down. We didn’t know which of you would be in the most danger. It was me who insisted he took Natasha.” He smiled at her look of surprise. “And we both know we might not still be here if you hadn’t distracted the bastard. If you could have seen Van Gryf when we were searching for you, you would understand. I only realised then how deeply he cares about you.”

“Cares?” Big, deep blue eyes searched his face. “He... he likes me?”

Douglas chuckled. “Oh, yes! You know he would never admit it, but I’m pretty sure he’s really a little bit in love with you.” He took a deep breath. “I know I am.”

Caroline’s eyebrows arched high. “You? You... care about me?”

He smiled, relieved he had managed to say the words and relieved too that his feelings were whole again. “*We* care, Caroline. That’s why we brought you with us on this trip and it’s why we want to take you back with us too. We want you to come home. Both of us. And we’ll never let any harm come to you again.”

“But Khasim. He did things to me...”

“That’s all in the past,” Douglas assured her. “And we will make damned sure nothing like it ever happens to you again. You are our girl. Van Gryf’s and mine. The girl we’ll always take care of.” He smiled at her again. “We *do* want to take care of you, Caroline. Perhaps not in the conventional way, but then you aren’t a conventional girl, are you?”

Her bright gaze still fixed on his, Caroline gave the smallest shake of her head. “I suppose I’m not.” A tinge of pink appeared on her pale cheeks. Douglas saw her tension ebbing away. “No,” she said with a more confident shake of her head, “I’m not a conventional girl at all.”

“Then come back where you belong.”

“Well, I...” The corners of her mouth lifted a little.

The door opened. Tall and broad and imposing, Van Gryf filled the narrow space. He pointed at Caroline.

“And another thing, slave girl. From now on, you call me Master.”

Caroline’s determined, little chin lifted. Douglas saw the rebellious flash in her eye. For a moment he thought the Afrikaner had ruined it.

But it was all right. She was smiling.

THE END