

**Kate and Julia 2:
Concubines of The Raj
by Lindsey Brooks**

Smashwords Edition

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Chapter 1

Julia's nipples were no longer their usual pink but the deep wine-red of the rouge that Afia had just finished smearing over them. They stood out boldly on her breasts; two up-tilted cones that pulsed gently from the friction of the native girl's fingers.

Staring at the image of the painted face framed by golden blonde hair that gazed back at her from the mirror, Julia felt a thrill of pleasure. Her master had told her she was beautiful and it was true. She looked as strikingly exotic as the darkly lovely girls with whom she had shared Jahngir Khan's *zenana* for the last four days. She felt beautiful too, and feminine and desirable in a way that was totally new to her.

Her eyes were drawn to the bare pout between her slightly parted thighs and her belly gave a flip. Not only did she feel desirable, she also felt desire. It was this place that did it. Its whole atmosphere was imbued with carnality. During every waking moment she saw, smelled and felt it – the exotic eastern furnishings, the silken cushions piled around the richly carpeted floor, the bare skins of herself and her companions, scarcely concealed by their luxurious but scanty clothing. The air was heady with the scent of roses and jasmine and sandalwood, and always, it seemed, a faint but provocative aroma of female arousal.

It all seemed too incredible to be real. Just a few days earlier Julia had been a lady's travelling companion accompanying Mrs. Winter, a respectable young widow, on her journey from England to India's North-West Frontier. With only hours remaining before they reached their destination she and Kate, the lively redheaded girl who had attached herself to them on the voyage from England, had been taken by white slavers. Quickly separated from Kate, Julia had found herself handed over to a native Pathan and carried off to his mountain fortress to be trained as a slave-concubine. Her hope now was that Mrs. Winter had alerted the authorities and that they were searching for her and Kate, but being deep in the remote mountains she had little expectation of rescue.

Timid and shy by nature, Julia had suffered agonies of embarrassment as well as intense discomfort as the man she had to call master had stripped her naked, dressed her like one of his houris and then expected her to endure the most lewd experiences without a murmur of complaint. And to Julia's utter shame and humiliation, she had responded by surrendering to her base passions and allowed herself to become aroused by what had been done to her.

The girls spent much of each day making themselves more beautiful for their lord and most of the rest in anticipation of his arrival, each, Julia guessed, with the hope that he would choose her as his bed-partner for the night. Not that Jahngir Khan, she had discovered to her consternation, confined his carnal activities to the hours of the night.

It ought to be boring, at least for his concubines, who did not have the threat of being sold into slavery hanging over their heads as she did, yet the girls never seemed to be bored. Neither did they seem to argue or squabble with one another, as Julia

would have expected, though she had only her past experience at an all-girls school to judge by. Rivalries and jealousies had been abundant there. She had thought that six young, healthy women competing for the attentions of a single man would have created even more. Of course, Jahngir's strict discipline might have something to do with it, but that did not appear to be the main reason. Julia had the impression that it was much more the fact that the girls genuinely liked one another and, more importantly, liked their master too and did not want to disappoint him.

They had not been unkind to her either, even though, she had been stunned to discover, they considered her an uncultured barbarian – just what she had thought about them until she had begun to recognise and understand that they were no such thing. Different to anything Julia had encountered before they may be, but they were far from the ignorant savages she had taken them for in the beginning, and so was their lord and master.

Jahngir had been absent for much of the previous day. Shortly after he had shared the girl's morning meal, while he was watching Julia standing self-consciously naked in front of a mirror being lightly oiled from neck to ankles by Afia and Laila, he had been called away urgently. It had been nearly dark when he had returned, sweat-stained and dusty.

To Julia, it had seemed inevitable that he had chosen her as well as Saba to accompany him to the bath house, and that the two girls sponging his naked body would produce the startling change in the direction his penis pointed that was a shock to her modesty every time it happened. To her great relief he had selected Saba to serve him with her lips.

But Julia had not escaped entirely. Jahngir had escorted her to her bed, and in fear and an embarrassing anticipation she had raised her wrists eagerly to have the manacles that he chained her with each night close around them. They had absolved her of guilt when his fingers had tickled their way up her inner thighs and toyed deliciously between them. Not only had he surprised her by once again planting a kiss low on her belly and another on her moist-lipped mouth, but he had also asked if he should free one of her hands. Cringing in embarrassment at the implication in the question, Julia had refused.

The result had been another restless night with her arousal making frustrating demands that she could not meet. They had become even more insistent when the lights had gone out, and in the dim glow of the lamp Jahngir lit in the cubicle next to hers Julia had watched through the gaps in the wooden screen as he had taken his pleasure with Saba. The sights and sounds of it had made her heartbeat quicken and her wrists tug at the steel encircling them.

Why had her mother told her it was an unpleasant task, she wondered. From the noises Saba had made it was clear that she had enjoyed it, even when, amazingly, she had knelt on the bed, reached back to spread her buttocks and let Jahngir Khan enter what lay between them. It was then that Julia had turned away, and with a clinking of chains had pressed her hands to her ears and drawn up her knees to her chest. Even when she had finally slept she had been unable to escape the sensuality in

the charged atmosphere of the *zenana*. Not for the first time, her dreams had been full of the carnal pleasures she had witnessed since her enslavement.

Laila's image appeared in the mirror, standing looking over Julia's shoulder. The girl casually adjusted the folds of the tiny triangle of white silk that hung from a thin cord around her hips and which was the only covering she was wearing.

"You look much better than when you first arrived, Tsira," she said with a smile at Julia's reflection. "You are more like one of us now."

The smile Julia returned her was uncertain. She had no wish to resemble one of Jahngir's concubines. She was not a slave.

"Come, you must be oiled," Afia told her. "We will go to the bath."

"But you did it here yesterday."

"Not today," the girl said flatly.

"Why have the girls started calling me Tsira?" Julia asked as they crossed the garden to the bath. "I know *tsir* means yellow, for my hair I suppose, but I already have a name."

"But only a foreign one, which my lord says has no meaning."

"What difference does that make when it's what I'm called?"

"A name should mean something," Afia said. "Mine means 'vitality'. Reshmina's means 'silken' and Helai's 'swan'. Saba's is 'morning' and Laila's 'beloved', and Orzala's means 'the brightness of fire'. When you have your own master he will decide your name but until then we will call you Tsira."

"M... my name is Julia." She felt a hollowness in her belly as she spoke it. "I don't want to have it changed, especially not by someone who thinks he can buy and sell me as if I was a cow or a horse."

"Alas, that is not for you to choose." Afia smiled at her. "But do not be too downhearted. It may be that you will not find yourself standing on the auction block as you fear."

"What do you mean? Has something happened? Are the authorities searching for Kate and I?" Julia asked hopefully.

"No, nothing like that." Afia stopped on the bathhouse steps and faced her. "I can say no more. My lord has said I will be flogged with the switch if I reveal what he told me, and you too. But you are not going to be auctioned, I promise. Now you must promise not to reveal that I have told you."

"I do. But what *is* going to happen to me?" Julia asked anxiously.

Afia would not reply. She urged Julia onto one of the cool marble slabs in the bathhouse and began oiling her skin. The scent of sandalwood filled the air, and soon she felt the same sensuously soporific dreaminess in her head that she had the first time the girl had massaged her back and buttocks and thighs. At least this time she was not in danger of being surprised by Jahngir Khan, she thought. Soon after she had awoken he had left, dressed for riding as he had been the previous day, and clearly intent on repeating whatever he had been doing then. Curiosity surfacing through the fuzziness in her brain, Julia asked Afia what it was.

“My lord has gone to aid in the work of building the channel that will carry water to the town,” she said. “There was some problem yesterday which only he could solve.”

“He builds things?” Julia asked, surprised.

“Yes. He studied in England. He is what is called an... engineer?” She spoke the obviously unfamiliar word slowly. “There are wells, but many people draw their water from the river. Sometimes it almost dries up in summer and is no longer fit to drink. My lord is diverting one of the streams in the mountains so there will be water all the time. He is skilful in such things. He built a clinic and brought a doctor from Rawalpindi to care for the sick, and he has given many homes the light that burns without fire.” There was a note of pride in her voice.

“Electricity,” Julia said absently as she absorbed what the girl had said. She had been right in thinking Jahngir was more than an uncouth barbarian, but she had not realised how much more. “He was educated in England,” she said. Then he knew British ways and that women there were not confined and forced to submit. Yet he had still done it to her.

“He was there for several years,” Afia said. “And he and his brother were visiting England when the revolt happened and his father was killed. They came back with the British to arrest their uncle.”

“There was a revolt?”

“The Prince was killed by his brother who wished to rule in his place. The Prince’s sons got help from the British to punish their uncle’s treachery. He died in the fighting.”

Julia rolled onto her side and looked hard at the native girl, the relaxing massage forgotten. “Then... then Jahngir Khan is a prince?”

“No, his brother is now Prince. My lord is always very insistent about that. Do not speak about what I have told you. He would not admit it but his uncle’s plot to overthrow my lord’s father is a sore subject with him. Since his brother became ruler he is now in the same position his uncle was with their father.”

“And he thinks people see him in the same way,” Julia said, “as a potential rival for his brother’s throne.”

“Perhaps some do. There are always those who are discontented with the way things are. My lord has done much to improve the lot of the people but he is always careful to make sure his brother gets the credit too.”

“Is there rivalry between them?” Julia asked.

Afia shrugged. “There is some, I’m sure. That is the way of brothers, I think. But my lord has never done anything disloyal, nor ever would. If anything, he tries too hard to prove he has no ambition to become ruler. I think that is why he is so bad-tempered sometimes, especially now. He hoped to have the water supply ready for the anniversary of his brother becoming Prince but the work has gone more slowly than expected. There are only a few days to go and it will not be ready in time.”

Julia gave a sudden gulp. There were only a few days left for her too. Afia may have told her she would not be auctioned but it was still plain that Jahngir Khan meant her to be a slave. So whose slave was she to be? As the question arose in her

mind so did a sudden suspicion and it was one which, to her great surprise, made her heartbeat quicken.

“Lie on your back,” Afia said, and soon Julia surrendered again to the languor the girl’s rhythmic rubbing created, even when she felt her slick palms slide over her firm breasts and down to her belly and thighs. Afia’s fingers moved gently to and fro on the soft skin on the insides of the latter, drawing ever closer to the place where they met. Julia stiffened, eyelids flickering open. The native girl’s dark gaze met hers.

“Relax. You are to be pleased. My lord has ordered it.”

“Oh, no, not again!” Julia wailed. “You’re a girl. It isn’t right. I don’t want you to.” She groaned, and clamped her legs together on Afia’s suddenly tickling fingers.

“You say that but your body does not agree,” Afia said.

“I know,” Julia groaned dejectedly. Her nipples had been like pebbles from the moment she had awoken, and she had felt tingly and moist long before the native girl’s first touch.

“I brought you here so the others will not see. I know it is harder for you when they are watching.” Afia smiled. “It must happen, little golden hair. My lord has said so. You may as well enjoy it.”

Julia swallowed. There were no manacles to chain her wrists, no hands to hold her and force her to surrender. “Wh... what if I refuse? I know I will be punished. What about you?”

Afia nodded. “I would not have obeyed my lord’s order.”

Gritting her teeth, Julia gripped the edges of the marble slab. “You must do it then.”

It felt lovely. Somewhere amid the wonderful sensations Afia’s slender fingers created within her and the shivering thrills that made her beauty-bud emerge, Julia lost her hold on the marble and discovered her own hands roving over her oily nakedness, squeezing and rubbing while her blood pulsed through her veins. She could not stop herself. Nor, she realized, building towards her climax as Afia teased her ever more profoundly, did she want to. Julia suddenly gave a long, gasping sigh and shuddered ecstatically, back arching and hips writhing in the grip of the marvellously tickling spasms. Breasts heaving as she sucked air into her lungs, she felt a gentle tug on her wrist.

“Get up. Now it is your turn to pleasure me.”

“What?” Julia’s belly went tight as Afia drew her to her feet. Her knees struggled to support her. “Y... you mean...?”

“My lord has ordered that too.” The native girl took her place on the massage table. “You must do it to me.”

“But...” Julia realized that Jahngir Khan had been entirely serious when he had told her he would make her do it. She remembered the awful fire of the ginger in her rear. He may not have beaten her but his methods of discipline were almost as frightening as the cane and perhaps only a little less distressing. She looked down at the naked girl. Her excitement was obvious in the pout of her sensual lips and the

brightness of her eyes with their dilated pupils. A fine sheen of sweat coated her pale brown skin and a scent that the English girl had come to recognise easily in the last few days clung to her. She had been as aroused by what had happened as Julia was.

“I... I’ve never...” Julia swallowed nervously.

“It’s easier to pleasure another girl than it is a man,” Afia said, giving a soft, breathy sigh. “Just do what you like to do to yourself.”

Anxious, Julia moved closer to the marble slab. Yet, she was curious too. Would Afia react to her touch the same way she had to the native girl’s? Would she feel the same there as Juila herself did, and would she tingle with excitement at the touch of her fingers? Would Afia squirm and wriggle her hips too?

Julia felt a stab of guilt as she watched her hand reach out and rest low down on the warmth of the girl’s soft-skinned belly. Her mother would be horrified if she knew what she was contemplating. She had said only a certain kind of woman would give in to her baser desires, but Julia did not believe Afia was that sort and neither did she think it of herself. Her reaction to the girl’s teasing touch had been perfectly natural and inevitable.

Afia’s hand closed over hers and pushed it downwards until it rested on the smooth, warm skin between her thighs. Julia let it stay there. She had seen and heard Jahngir making love to the other girls. Her mother had been wrong about it being a chore. Suddenly convinced she had also been wrong about giving in to the pleasure, Julia stroked a fingertip over what lay beneath her fingers. Afia gave a soft groan and a little quiver.

“Do... do you like girls?” Julia asked, driven by her need to know. “Better than men, I mean.”

“Oh, no! There is nothing so good as a strong man, if my lord is anything to judge by. But there is pleasure to be had from a woman’s touch too, when he permits.” She gave a soft gasp and rubbed herself against Julia’s hand. “Now, would you please begin? It is very frustrating to feel your fingers so close but not moving.”

“My mother says love-making is something for men to enjoy and women to put up with,” Julia continued, trying not to think about where she had just slipped her middle finger. “She says women are not meant to take pleasure in it unless they are the lowest sort.”

The native girl made a sound between a laugh and a grunt. “Then she has not served you well. It is the greatest of pleasures, for men and women both. She must be a very sad woman to believe anything else.”

“She is,” Julia said with her chest tightening, “though not because of that.”

“Ooh! Don’t slow down,” Afia gasped, “and rub me here.” She pointed a finger.

Julia looked at the little bump of flesh that her rubbing had prompted to appear. Catching her breath at the enormity of what she was doing she complied with the girl’s request.

“Yes. Yes, that’s it,” Afia said breathlessly. She squirmed. Her mouth opened and her eyes closed as she lost herself in the pleasure. Julia knew exactly how

she felt. She really was doing it, she thought, as she slid her fingers deeper, seeking to give the native girl the same delight that Afia had given her.

“Oh, mother forgive me,” Julia muttered guiltily as she felt a tingling of her own and the native girl wriggled under her touch while the odour of arousal filled the air. An abrupt up-thrust of Afia’s hips and a sudden clenching of her muscles told the English girl she had climaxed. She continued rubbing her, well aware that it would heighten the girl’s pleasure. Suddenly filled with shame at how far she had allowed herself to go, Julia pulled her hand away and stepped back. Her naked body met something very large and warm and solid. Startled, she turned, saw a broad, hairy chest directly in front of her, and looked up in fright into Jahngir Khan’s smiling face.

“I am pleased to see my orders are being obeyed,” he said. The Pathan was wearing jodhpurs and tall riding boots, and holding a dusty shirt in one hand. Julia’s prominent breasts were pressing into his chest. She drew back and felt the hard marble table against the small of her back. She had expected him to be away for most of the day. Instead, he had returned in time to watch the girls manipulating one another. With a horrible sinking feeling in her stomach, Julia felt her cheeks flame with a fierce blush.

“Has your work gone well, my lord?” Afia asked as she got to her feet.

Jahngir pulled a face. “It progresses once more but it could be as much as three weeks before it is finished. The aqueduct will not be ready in time. That is why I must have another gift to present on the day of the anniversary.” He went to the stone bench beside the bath and began pulling off his boots. Afia hurried to help. Julia remained where she was.

“Return to the *zenana*, Afia. The little *murgah* will help me bathe.” He crooked a finger at Julia and a shiver ran through her as the native girl left her alone with him. “Do you forget the penalty for disobedience so soon?” Jahngir asked, no longer smiling when she continued to keep her distance.

She approached him warily. Her shyness had resurfaced the moment she had set eyes on him and so had her fear, but she knelt when he told her to and helped him remove his other boot.

“The trousers now,” he said.

With trembling fingers she loosened their buttons, very conscious of the large bulge beneath the material. The Pathan slid them down his muscular thighs. He wore nothing beneath and his brown-skinned, half-upright length was suddenly pointing directly at Julia’s face. A tremor tickled through her. Shocked, she looked away, but he drew her to her feet and led her down the steps into the warm, steaming water of the bath. He dunked a sponge and held it out.

“Hurry,” he ordered when she hesitated. “Time is short. Yesterday was wasted as far as training you was concerned. Today we will make up for it.”

Julia rubbed the sponge over his broad shoulders and chest, afraid to move it lower and afraid of being punished if she did not. But most of all she feared the tingling excitement that was growing within her once again. Her fears warred with each other, but she had known all along that she had no choice. She moved the sponge over the ridged muscles on Jahngir’s stomach, wincing each time her forearm

came in contact with the manhood rising from his groin. Below it, she could see the sac of his scrotum bobbing on the water's surface. The sudden temptation to reach down and touch it made her look away, disgusted with herself.

His fingers pressing her jaw, turned her head towards him, and dark, intense eyes looked deep into hers. She gulped. He plucked the sponge from her fingers, grasped her wrist and guided her hand downwards. Julia gave a startled gasp and found she could not tear her wide-eyed gaze from his. Heart thumping, she curled her fingers around what she was touching, as she had seen the other girls do. It was rigid, powerful, commanding. Somehow it seemed natural to move her hand up and down on it. Jahngir's eyes narrowed and he reached for her breasts. She looked down as his wet fingers rubbed the dark-red rouge from their tips, revealing they were firm and pink. Julia's belly flipped and she felt a prickling where her thighs met. Her tentative hold on the warm, thick flesh tightened. Its tip too was pink, and shining in the sunlight coming through the open-fronted bathhouse.

The sudden pressure of Jahngir's hand on her shoulder made Julia sink to her knees with the water lapping around her breasts. She felt mesmerised by his manhood. It seemed to pulse beneath her fingers.

"Open your mouth," the Pathan said.

Julia parted her lips and felt the resistance in his rigid flesh as she pulled it down to meet her lips. They parted and she leaned forwards. It touched her mouth. Sanity returned and Julia leaped up and fled. Jahngir caught her before she even reached the steps of the bath. He dragged her back with one hand around her waist while the other dealt her a stinging smack on her bottom.

"Ooh, don't!"

"Be silent," he said, "and stand straight with your arms by your sides."

She had been about to cover her nakedness but stopped her movements as she saw the anger flashing in his eyes.

"So, you think it is right for your master to give *you* pleasure, but you refuse to do the same for him?"

"None of it is right," Julia cried, surprised she was ready to argue. "You shouldn't be touching me at all, or making me do those awful things. You've lived in England. You know it is wrong to treat a white woman like this."

"It seems Afia has been doing more than just pleasure you," he said dryly. "But whatever the colour of your skin, you *are* a woman and meant to be ruled by a man. I know many whites see sex as sinful and feel guilt for taking pleasure in it, but that is not the way here. Jefferson was right about overcoming your cultural inhibitions. I had not expected them to be quite so strong. But they will be overcome, little *murgah*. If I have to beat them out of you, you will be ready on the appointed day. You *will* be a trained and willing slave girl."

Julia trembled at the anger and determination in his expression, and felt her utter helplessness in the face of his strength and power.

"Besides," he continued, "it is plain that you do find pleasure in the 'awful things' done to you. I don't believe you are half so set against them as you pretend."

“That’s not true. I... I can’t help what I feel. Any woman would be the same if it was forced upon her as it has been on me.”

“Forced? Perhaps to some extent, but not so much as you want to believe, I think. Let’s see, shall we?” He pointed to the floor at his feet. “Kneel.”

“Oh, don’t!” Julia pleaded, certain he was going to make her serve him with her mouth.

“Do as you’re told. Have you forgotten you call me ‘Master’? Do you imagine my orders are to be obeyed only when it suits you?”

She did not. Belly fluttering, she sank to her knees.

“Spread your thighs more.”

Julia shuffled them wider, face burning with embarrassment as his gaze went between them. To her surprise, he sat down on the stone bench several feet away. Did she dare hope? Would he spare her the horrid ordeal?

“Now, I want to see you pleasure yourself,” Jahngir said.

Julia’s mouth fell open. He had merely spared her one trial to make her suffer another. Her heart seemed to shrink in her breast.

“You have already displeased me and will be punished for it,” he said when she made no move. “Do not displease me further.”

The promise of punishment and the threat of more were enough. Cringing inwardly, Julia slid a hand between her legs and pushed her fingers into herself. He sex felt much more responsive than she would have wished.

“Keep your thighs spread,” Jahngir barked as they automatically tightened on her hand.

Soon, Julia was breathing hard and could feel the trickle of perspiration over her skin as the stimulating quivers grew stronger and faster. Her big breasts jiggled from the back and forth motions of her arm, and she could not stop her hips rocking in rhythm with her thrusting fingers as she rubbed ever more eagerly.

It was wonderful and horrible too when every move she made and every gasp and whimper she gave were under the Pathan’s stern scrutiny. Each time she tried to lower her eyes from his, he tersely ordered her to look at him and she was too afraid to disobey. She was close to climaxing again when he made her stop, and he knew it as surely as she did.

Jahngir got to his feet and, still naked, stood very close to her. “So, I forced you to touch yourself, but was it I who made you do it with such enthusiasm?” His hand on her head made Julia start as he tilted he face up. “Are you ready to pleasure me in every way I instruct you now?”

Breathless, she nodded.

“And so you will, but not until I impress upon you that you will obey me instantly. I have made allowances for your English ways, girl, but there is no more time for that. You will learn what you must and you will learn it quickly, do you hear?”

“Y... yes, Master.” Again Julia could not drag her eyes from his uncompromising stare.

“Come then.” Ignoring his scattered clothes, he strode bare-skinned out of the bathhouse.

She rose quickly and hurried after him towards the *zenana*.

* * * * *

“Ooh, what are you doing to me?” Kate cried. She squirmed against the horribly confining leather straps on her body and felt the chafe of the thick leather collar Ross had buckled around her neck. It was chained to a wooden rail behind her. Her arms too were bound, straps at wrists and elbows holding them in a reversed praying position at her back and attached to the same rail as her neck. Cutting into her flesh above her breasts was another strap that ran under her armpits and secured her tightly to a second rail behind her.

“I’m going to show you what Jefferson would have done if it had been him you had threatened to shoot,” Ross said as he finished buckling a strap around her left thigh. He had placed it very high, as he had the one on her right, with both of them biting into her skin and pulling apart more than just her legs.

“Ooh, that’s awfully tight,” Kate groaned.

“It needs to be. We don’t want you jerking around and injuring yourself.”

Her belly flipped at the implication in his words. “Oh, don’t hurt me. I’m sorry. Really I am.”

“You’re sorry now,” Ross said. “You weren’t when you pointed that pistol at me. There’s a lesson for you, little miss. Never aim a gun at a man unless you intend to use it, especially if that man is me.”

“How do you know I wouldn’t have?” Kate asked, a flash of temper rising through her fear.

His forbidding expression vanished in a grin. “I know. I reckon you would shoot if your life was threatened. You’re a brave little thing, after all. But even if the gun had been loaded, you wouldn’t have fired.”

Frightened, resentful and very uncomfortable though she was, Kate somehow still managed to be pleased that he thought she was brave. He was right too. She had never intended to shoot him. The sight of his whip in his hand made her catch her breath as he reached to two brass handles on the frightening device to which he had bound her. It was made of wood, a rectangular frame within a frame, one resting solidly on the floor, the other fixed to it by a large brass pivot at either side. The ex-soldier turned the handles beside each pivot, and Kate’s heart leapt when the inner frame swung back and forth as it was unlocked from the outer one.

Ross tilted it and she gave a startled cry as her body angled forwards. Her feet rested on the lower bar of the inner frame, strapped at ankles and knees as tightly as they were at her thighs. Kate felt some of her weight transfer from her legs to the strap above her breasts and a wooden bar that crossed the frame at her belly, in line with her hips. The collar around her neck pressed against her throat and she had to force her head back, increasing the strain on her pinioned arms and shoulders. It worsened as Ross tilted the frame further. He moved a hinged bar on it across her

chest, two lengths of wood joined at each end by a big brass bolt topped by a large wing nut. They locked in place above and below her hanging breasts, and she flinched as his hands firmly pulled the twin rounds between the two bars.

“Oh, no” Kate whimpered when he began tightening the wing nuts, squeezing her flesh tightly between the narrowing space separating the wooden lengths until she hissed in pain. Ross tilted the frame upright, easing the pressure on her neck and belly, and she was able to look down as he locked it in place with the handles.

“No, please.” The bars were tight against her chest, the flesh of her breasts bulging grotesquely between them and their pale skin already mottled pink and beginning to darken. They hurt, and they looked horribly, frighteningly vulnerable. Their points had already become swollen and puffy.

“You’ve been a very naughty girl,” Ross said, giving one of them a tug.

“Ooh! Yes, Sir,” Kate whined.

“It’s ‘Mister Ross, Sir’ when I’m punishing you. Remember?”

“Yes, Mister Ross, Sir,” Kate answered quickly.

“Aye, you’ve disappointed me, little miss. I told you there isn’t much time. Just enough for you to learn the basics, really. But I thought you had listened to reason and all the time your head was still full of silly ideas about escaping.” He let the short tail of his whip slide over his left palm and swing free. “You know there’s no chance of that now, don’t you?”

“Yes, Mister Ross, Sir.” Racing though it was, Kate’s heart felt leaden with despair. She braced herself for the first stroke and her breath escaped in a rush as she heard the door to the mirrored room behind her open and his footsteps retreating. Belly fluttering wildly, she waited.

Ross reappeared. “I said your backside needs widening a bit. We’ll start on that at the same time.” Dangling from one hand by three lengths of cord was a conical piece of ivory about six inches long. From a rounded tip no more than a quarter-inch across it widened gradually to at least two inches at its base. Attached at the broader end was a metal ring to which the three cords were tied. Kate gulped. The thing was shiny with oil, and from what he had said she had no doubt about where he intended to put it.

“No, you can’t. You mustn’t,” she said desperately. “Oh, please Mister Ross, Sir!” She jerked as his whip stung her left buttock.

“Nothing you say is going to change what happens, little miss, so you may as well save your breath. If you hadn’t been so impulsive you wouldn’t have ended up like this. But you just couldn’t resist grabbing the gun, could you, even though you had no idea what you would do next? If it had been loaded and *if* I had followed your orders, do you really think you would even have got across the compound, let alone anywhere near Peshawar?”

Kate did not reply. She knew she had acted without thinking. It was far from the first time. The same impulsiveness had made her attach herself uninvited to Mrs. Winter and Julia, and coupled with her yearning for adventure had brought her to the extremely uncomfortable and frightening position she found herself in at that moment.

She squirmed as Ross's arms encircling her caused a painful tug on her trapped and squeezed breasts.

"Best keep as still as you can," he warned as he fastened a thin belt around her waist and moved behind her. She felt his fingers touch her skin at the back of the belt then slide to the rounds of her bottom cheeks and draw them apart. Reflexively, the little muscle they no longer concealed tightened. "You'd better relax if you don't want it to hurt," he said.

Though she was expecting it, Kate still could not help lunging forwards when she felt the pressure of the tip of the ivory cone. The fingers spreading her cleft let go and a second later tickled her between the legs. Abruptly, they thrust inwards.

"Oh! Ooh!" Impossible though it was in her tight bondage, she still tried to wriggle as Ross mercilessly teased her. Quivering she felt the oiled ivory push hard against her. Her tight little muscle yielded abruptly and her breath escaped in a whoosh as the cone slid inside. "Ooh, ooh, no!" Kate wailed as the broad end stretched her rear opening and held it that way.

Ross stopped rubbing her pussy, moved in front of her, pulled the two remaining cords attached to the unusual dildo up in front and tied them to two iron rings on the front of her waist belt. The third was already fixed to the back, the three together drawn tight and holding the ivory so it would neither slide all the way inside her nor allow her to force it out. That knowledge did not prevent her knot from trying to clench and clamping hard around the cone. A trembling tickle ran through her there, and, alarmingly, another in front. A heartbeat later the sharp slap of leather on bare skin ended in a scorching streak of pain to her bulging left breast, followed immediately by another across the right one. The aching that being crushed between the wooden bars was causing was joined by a fiery stinging.

"Ow! Ooh, that's awful!" Kate cried. "Ooh, it hurts so much!"

Ross paused and pointed to the rack of canes and switches on the wall nearby. "That's what Jefferson would have used on you. Any one of them would hurt a damn sight more than my whip. You should be grateful it's me punishing you and not him."

Resentful and in pain, Kate could still be glad it was not Jefferson dealing her the blows. The ones Ross gave her were bad enough. The whip seemed to come at her from all directions at once, smacking onto her helpless teats, making them bounce and buzz with burning pain. The old soldier never missed. Every sharp, fierce stroke landed squarely on the distended flesh nipped between the wooden bars, sometimes just the split tip of the leather, sometimes its full length. Several times it scored her tender points, making Kate cry more loudly and squirm in her straps at the ferocity of its bite. Yet, even as her body ached in its confinement and the torment made her tears flow, she knew Ross could have hit a lot harder if he had chosen to.

When he finally stopped the blows, Kate hung in her bonds, her legs weak and her flesh on fire, breathing raggedly and with sweat streaming down her shuddering nakedness.

"Right, I'm off outside for a smoke," he said. "When I come back it'll be with a switch for your backside." His familiar stern frown was on his face as he looked at

her. “You blink away those tears, little miss, and ask yourself if you want to behave in future or if you want to go through this again.”

He disappeared through the door behind her and she heard it close. Kate already knew the answer to the question. Every heaving breath she took heightened the smart of her breasts. A glance down revealed they were fiery red and her nipples were swollen and throbbing. She very definitely did not want to experience anything like it again. Her belly tightened. Ross had just told her it was not yet over. He meant to treat her poor, defenceless bottom in the same way.

She closed her eyes and concentrated on breathing as shallowly as she could, vainly trying to ease the painful pulling on her trapped flesh. A tormenting minute or two passed very slowly. Kate heard the door open but it was the one in front of her, not the one behind. She opened her eyes. Her sharp intake of breath stoked the fires in her breasts as she stared horrified into Jefferson’s forbidding features.

Chapter 2

“What the hell’s going on here?”

“N... nothing, M... Master,” Kate stammered, quailing under his angry stare. There were some occasions when Ross frightened her and others when he did not, but she was terrified of Jefferson all of the time.

“Don’t lie to me,” he snarled. “Sergeant Ross wouldn’t put you there for nothing. What have you done?” He prodded the tip of the varnished bamboo cane he always carried into the plump swell at her lower belly.

Kate’s mind raced feverishly. “I don’t know. R... really I don’t.” With a glimmer of hope she added, “He’s just outside. He can tell you, Master.”

The man eyed her reddened breasts, which were purpling now from lack of circulation under the bite of the wooden bars. “He doesn’t need to. If he’s done this, it must be something serious.” He walked a circle around her helplessly bound figure. “Ah, he’s stretching you, I see, but he hasn’t flogged you there yet.”

Kate’s heart leapt as Jefferson paused by the rack of punishment implements. He looked into her face and she shuddered at his cruel expression. Ross had said he was a bitter man. She could see it in his merciless grey eyes as they stared into hers.

“Impertinent girl! We needn’t wait for Sergeant Ross. You’ve been rebellious since the beginning and you’ve just lied to me twice. That’s reason enough to give you a good thrashing.” The lines at the corners of his eyes and mouth deepened as he smiled coldly. “One I’ll make sure you don’t forget.”

Terrified, her bound body aching and throbbing, her gut churning horribly and her heart pounding in her ears, Kate opened her mouth to plead. Several things stopped her. Her breath seemed trapped in her throat, preventing speech, and she knew, too, that it would do no good. Mostly, however, it was because Ross had called her brave and she was suddenly stubborn enough to prove that he was right.

Even so, she almost wet herself when she saw Jefferson take a fearsome-looking whip from the rack and bend its stiff leather between his hands until it creaked. From its cord-bound handle to its rounded tip it had to be three feet long, two heavy strips of brown leather stitched together along their edges and widening over the last foot of its length into a long tongue that was not just broader than the rest but thicker too. As Jefferson stood behind her, Kate steeled herself for the torment she knew was coming.

It was still an awful shock. The blaze of pain that followed the first sickening crack of leather on her bare bottom was incredible. Jaw clenching tight, Kate somehow managed to choke back the shriek that was trying to escape her so that nothing more than a guttural croak got through her gritted teeth. A thousand needles simultaneously piercing her flesh could not have hurt her more than the second stroke. Still she fought the need to cry her pain and gave a half-stifled grunt as her buttocks bounced under the scorching fire of the impact. Torment greater than she had ever felt before flared across her tortured rear-cheeks.

Only then did she realize that even Jefferson had held back when he had caned her that first day. This time he was not sparing his arm or her ravaged flesh. His third lash brought more tears to her eyes, and with the next they flowed freely down her cheeks as the pain seared her tender skin and started a fierce throbbing deep in the muscles beneath. It was agonising, and growing worse with every wicked bite of the whip's long, broad tongue.

At the fifth stroke, Kate's resolve faltered, and with the sixth scorching like a licking flame through the flesh of her bottom it deserted her completely. She threw her head back, opened her mouth and cried her pain aloud. She shrieked at every savage stroke after that, jerking and writhing in her tight straps, helplessly and horribly exposed to the whip's cruel work. Surely her skin was ripped to pieces by now and the vicious leather was tearing into the tender tissues of the flesh beneath, carving and biting deep. The thought filled Kate with a fresh terror so intense her bladder betrayed her and she let go a little squirt of urine as she squirmed in the aftermath of another agonising lash.

"What the...?"

She heard the exclamation amid the dying echo of her last scream. Another blow landed, a glancing one it felt like, though it still blazed like fire.

"No, Captain, that's enough," Kate heard Ross say from behind her. "Have you forgotten there are only a few days before she's sold? We'll never get the full price if she's covered in welts and bruises."

"What did she do?" Jefferson rasped.

"Nothing much. She doesn't like swallowing. I put her in there just to show her what to expect if she doesn't get a taste for it soon. I only meant to switch her."

"She's insolent, and she's resisting too much," Jefferson said. "She needed a thorough lesson."

"Maybe so, but you put her training in my hands, Captain, and I'd be obliged if you'd leave it there unless you're not satisfied with the way I'm doing it."

"What? No, of course I'm satisfied. I've every confidence in you, Sergeant."

"Well then, I'd like to get on with it, if you're finished, Sir. I'd better do something about her backside or she'll still be marked on the day of the sale, and we don't want that."

"Yes, quite. Excuse me for interfering," Jefferson said. "I should have known you had everything under control. It's just that I have a... particular interest in this one, and the girl I let Jahngir Khan take. I hope he's making a proper job of things."

"Aye, I've noticed, Captain. And I'm sure Jahngir Khan knows what he's doing, him having a particular interest too, as you might say."

If Kate had not been so distressed and hurting, she would have wondered what the 'particular interest' was, but with her mind swamped by pain the men's words were forgotten the moment she heard them. The man Ross called Captain left without even a glance in her direction. The old soldier dropped the whip he had taken from Jefferson's hand and unfastened her as quickly as he could. She slumped against him the instant she was free, struggling to stay on her feet.

Carefully avoiding contact with her flaming rear, he scooped her up, carried her to his bedroom and laid her gently face down on the bed. Kate whimpered at the pressure on her hurting breasts but it was the blazing agony in her buttocks that kept her weeping and sobbing as Ross hurried from the room. He was back in minutes, only a blur through her tears as he knelt at the bedside. She heard water sloshing and something blessedly cool touched her tormented backside.

“The ice-water will help keep down the bruising,” he said, “and I managed to stop him before he split your skin.”

Kate gave a heartfelt sigh of relief. Her buttocks felt raw and she had been sure they were torn and bleeding. She felt Ross’s hand lift a corner of the cloth covering them.

“But only just, by the look of things. I’m afraid your bum’s going to hurt for a while, little miss. You have a sleepless night ahead of you, I’m thinking. Now, let’s cool your tits off.” He lifted her enough to slip a cool, damp cloth under her. She shivered, suddenly hot and cold, as she lowered herself onto it.

“If I’d known Jefferson was back I’d never have put you in that damned thing,” the ex-soldier said. “I didn’t expect him until tonight. He’s been down in Peshawar picking up another girl. I’d have thought he had enough to do dealing with her without interfering elsewhere. He’s never in a very good mood but for some reason it’s been worse since a message came from Peshawar about you and your friend. You’d think he’d be pleased at the prospect of selling a couple of beauties like you and her, wouldn’t you?”

Ross kept talking even after Kate’s tears dried up and her sobs subsided. For a long time she was sunk too deep in the fiery throbbing of her bottom to pay much attention, but eventually his constant soaking of the cloth with ice water seemed to have a lasting effect. The pain still pulsed through her buttocks but the shock had worn off sufficiently for Kate to listen to what he was saying.

He talked of his army days and the places in India he had seen and the things he had done on and off the battlefield. It was all new to Kate, a glimpse of the underbelly of the British Raj that she had never even known existed while she had lived within the protected cocoon of upper-class colonial society. Much to her surprise, she found it interesting. There had certainly been no lack of adventure in the old soldier’s life so far, and he had already made it clear that he was not done with it yet.

The sun set and the room grew gradually darker. Ross switched on the bedside lamp and fetched more ice, soothing her hurts while he told her about himself and the people he had known, some friends, some enemies. He had lived life to the full, she thought, and felt a twinge of envy that he had done so much and she so little. As the knife-edge of her pain dulled slightly she listened with increasing fascination, forgetting everything that lay beyond the dim pool of lamplight that encompassed only her and the softly speaking man beside her.

Ross paused to light a cigarette, the match flame illuminating the planes and angles of his face, emphasizing light and shadow. Once more Kate was struck by its familiarity. It was as if she had known the man for years, not days. The memory of

her moment of recognition as he had plucked the gun from her hands returned. Her belly flipped. It was her father – that was who she saw when she looked at Ross; her father before he had put on weight and settled down behind a desk. It was he who had told her her first tales of adventure when she was a girl; of expeditions to Burma and Nepal, and the time he had spent in China and the South Seas before he had married. Ross would never marry, Kate thought, nor settle behind a desk. His lust for adventure would never wane with the years.

They did not really look anything alike, she decided, surreptitiously studying the ex-soldier's face. It was only the stern frown, the determined lines of their mouths and firm set of their jaws where their similarity lay. From his photographs, Kate had always thought her father had looked dashing and rather raffish when he was young. Ross looked very dashing too.

He blew out a cloud of tobacco smoke and looked at her. "How is it? I know it hurts. I wouldn't have flogged you half as hard with the switch and I wouldn't have used that whip at all."

"I know," Kate said huskily.

He smiled and kindled a glow of warmth inside her that had nothing to do with the fire in her bottom.

"Shall I take the bum-stretcher out? It'll likely hurt a bit if I do."

Her muscle contracted around the ivory the instant he mentioned it. She had been aware of its presence the whole time but her focus had been on her pain. "No. I'd like to hear about the lost city you're going to search for."

"There's not much I know. It is lost, after all. They say it's full of grand buildings, temples and the like, and there must be some trace of the people who lived there. Maybe their descendants live there still." He grinned. "Or maybe it's full of lost treasure, eh? There's only one way to find out."

"But it's not the finding that's important. It's the looking."

"Aye, you're right there. I always did want to go to the next hill to see what was on the other side. It got me into trouble a few times when I was soldiering."

"I wish I could go with you," Kate said wistfully. "It sounds really exciting."

He laughed. "There's a different kind of excitement in store for you, little miss. Mind, you'd warm up those cold nights in the mountains and no mistake."

"Then let me come too," Kate said impulsively. "I'm sure you could get me out of here without Jefferson finding out until it was too late."

"I could, but I won't."

"Then... then couldn't you b... buy me?" Her stomach fluttered as she spoke of herself as a chattel.

"I wouldn't need to buy you. When I joined Jefferson he said I could choose a slave girl of my own whenever I made up my mind I wanted one."

"Then you could choose me," Kate said excitedly.

He shook his head. "Nah. Just look at you – a proper posh, cultured little miss." His thumb tapped his chest. "And look at me – a hard-bitten old wreck who's seen better days. A youngster like you doesn't want to be hooked up with the likes of me."

Better than some horrid, barbarian native, Kate thought. "I'm not posh," she said, "or cultured. My mother says I'm far too rough and ready and... and my father says I need taking in hand."

Ross laughed. "Aye, well you're a neat little package to be doing that to. But how long do you think you'd last in the mountains? You'd be begging to go home by the end of the first day."

"No I wouldn't. I don't want to go home and be tied down by some boring old husband."

He laughed again. "I suppose you'd rather be tied down by me?"

"Yes," Kate said and was astonished that she meant it. Heat rushed to her cheeks but she persisted. In his arguments he had not once mentioned that she was intended to be someone else's slave. "I don't think you're nearly so old as you pretend. I'll bet you're not even forty and..." The warmth in her cheeks increased. "And you don't look like a wreck to me."

"Well, thank you, but I'm old enough to be the daddy of a soft young thing like you."

"I'll be twenty-four soon," she told him, "not so young, and I've got myself out of a few tight spots of my own on my travels." It was a lie. The only tight spots she had ever been in were facing Roger's marriage proposals, which had been coming far too frequently and persistently before she had left for Europe.

"Is that the truth?" Ross asked, and the stern look he gave her sent a wriggle through her belly.

"No," she confessed, "but I'm tougher than you think. Watch."

He would have stopped her as she levered herself off the bed, but she slid under his outstretched hand, gritted her teeth as she rose to her feet and hobbled a few steps across the room. Her buttocks flamed and throbbed. Ross steered her back to the bed with an arm at her waist, wet the cloth that had slipped off when she stood up and laid it over her bottom.

"That was brave, but foolish. You've only hurt yourself. You won't be capable of much tomorrow and that only leaves seven days before you're sold."

Kate's heart shrank and her hopes with it. She felt him pat her shoulder.

"But maybe you are tougher than I thought."

For a while she drifted on the verge of consciousness, feeling the regular, constant pulses of pain in her backside battle with the exhaustion that was overtaking her. Kate felt the warm hand resting on her shoulder-blade too. Despite her knowledge of what its owner was and what he planned for her, its gentle pressure was comforting until her mind surrendered to its fatigue and she sank into a fitful sleep.

She woke to full daylight, and from the angle of the shafts of sunlight streaming through the window Kate guessed the day was well advanced. After her night of torment Ross had let her sleep late. She still lay belly-down on the bed. She was sore and stiff and her breasts buzzed uncomfortably, but the cold cloths the old soldier had spent most of the night applying to her bottom seemed to have worked. The awful flaring throb that had filled it the day before was no longer present.

What had remained was the odd feeling of fullness in Kate's behind caused by what Ross had called her 'bum-stretcher'. Recalling the name was enough to make her sphincter contract involuntarily around the hard ivory still firmly held in place by the cords and the belt at her waist. She felt a twinge of discomfort as her buttocks tightened, but at the same time there was nothing at all unpleasant about the sensation that ran through her inner tissues. In fact, it felt very nice. Shocking herself, for it was only the previous day that Kate had discovered men could take pleasure from a woman there, she deliberately squeezed her muscles onto the broad base of the ivory cone filling her. The quivering thrill it gave her was not confined to her rear entrance but was transmitted to the front, which gave a tremor of its own.

Suddenly mischievous and feeling daringly naughty, Kate tightened herself again and then several times more, regardless of the ache it awakened in her bottom. The effect was almost like masturbating without having to use her fingers. Captivated by its novelty she gave a series of short, quick contractions that sent tickles of pleasure through her at both front and rear, and prompted a growing warmth within her. The buzzing of her whipped breasts increased as her nipples stiffened but the temptation to keep gripping the 'bum-stretcher' was irresistible.

As Kate's breathing became more rapid she rubbed her cheek on the pillow, sighed and turned her head. Ross lay on the bed next to her, naked, eyes closed, his chest rising and falling regularly as he slept. He had been awake for most of the night, probably even longer than she had. Kate felt a warm-hearted gratitude. He could have just shut her in the low cage on the other side of the room and left her to her suffering. She looked from his muscular arms to the greying hairs covering his broad chest, and then with increasing fascination at his upward-rearing baton. She was startled to discover it could be like that even while he slept.

Intensely curious, she raised herself on her elbows and took the opportunity to study it closely for the first time. Thick, bluish veins stood out on it randomly. The skin was stretched back so tightly from the bulbous tip that Kate could scarcely believe it was not painful. Yet Ross slept peacefully on, obviously untroubled. Even when she reached out a fingertip and touched him there he did not stir. The long cock rose up a little from where it rested on his belly and then subsided again. Kate had to suppress an urge to giggle, though why she should see humour in anything when her situation was so desperate she could not imagine.

Nor did she expect to feel the sudden, impish desire to trail her fingers slowly down the underside of Ross's shaft all the way to its base. Did they all grow so big, Kate wondered, or was this one out of the ordinary? She closed her hand on the warm, rigid flesh and found her fingers only went a little more than half way around. The tingling sensation she could feel increased and she clenched on the ivory again with a delicious bubble of excitement swelling inside her.

The penis seemed to be inviting more than just her touch. Did she dare? Kate shuffled closer, watching Ross's face for any sign of him stirring. She tightened her grip on his hard flesh and angled it towards her. Tremors tickled between her thighs, and the ivory felt hard and exciting within her tender membranes as she raised her head, pushed her chin forward and licked tentatively. The swollen length twitched

beneath her fingers. She licked it again, for longer this time, moving her tongue in circles over its resilience, watching Ross's face for a reaction. It showed none. Running her tongue over her lips, Kate closed them over his length and drew on it gently. Still he did not react. Irritated, she took it deeper into her mouth and sucked harder. She felt as much as heard his long, rumbling chuckle and his hand stroked her head.

"Such enthusiasm. And here I thought you'd be no use for anything today."

Kate freed her mouth and, cringing in embarrassment though she was, turned to look at him. He was smiling and seemed pleased.

"Don't stop," he said, tousling her red hair with his hand in what she interpreted as a playful gesture. "Not after you've made such a promising start."

Kate had no intention of stopping. She was quivering with excitement. The sight and feel of the hard, up-curved member glistening with her saliva was heightening the prickling arousal that had been growing since the moment she had awoken. Greedily, she turned from Ross's smile and took up her pleasurable task once more. As she bobbed her head, her sheath rippled and moisture bathed its tingling interior.

It seemed hardly credible that it was only yesterday she had done it for the first time. It seemed even less believable that she was the one who had initiated this new encounter. A shiver of excitement ran through her as she heard Ross's pleased gasp while she practised what he had taught her to do with her lips and tongue. The touch of his big, warm hand on the backs of her thighs was equally thrilling. Obedient to its pressure she slid her body closer to his, rubbing her erect nipples against his skin before turning her bottom towards him.

A broad fingertip slid between her parted thighs and tickled the soft, sensitive tissues within her. Without ceasing her efforts Kate gave a long breathy sigh at the delicious feelings he was creating. A sudden intense resolve rose up in her breast. She was going to be obedient from now on. She was going to be the best, most obedient girl Ross had ever seen – not because she was ready to embrace her slavery but because she was determined to escape it. And he was going to help her.

* * * * *

"The cords are so tight, Master," Julia said. The fear twisting her belly reached a new intensity as Jahngir knotted the last silken rope around her ankle and turned to the cupboard nearby. He did not answer.

Julia was bent double, bottom resting on the floor while her wrists were bound above her head to the crossbar of the wooden framework the Pathan had placed before the big, carved chair at the far end of the *zenana*. He had not spoken to the other girls when he had returned from the bathhouse with Julia half-running to keep up with his long, impatient strides. They were both still naked.

"It's very uncomfortable, Master," Julia said breathlessly. Her upraised legs were held apart by ropes at her ankles, which Jahngir had secured to two upright posts of the frame, slightly ahead and on either side of her, leaving all of her bodyweight

resting on the upper curves of her buttocks and exposing the whole area between her spread legs to anything he might choose to do to it.

Julia was very afraid. The memory of her first evening in the *zenana* added to her dread as she watched him take a small glass-stoppered bottle and a slim ebony phallus from the cupboard. The image of Helai sweating and suffering with the fiery oil filling her rear made Julia wriggle in her ropes.

“Please, Master,” she whimpered as Jahngir turned to her and removed the stopper from the bottle.

“I gave you the chance to obey me and you couldn’t bring yourself to do it. We’ll see if an hour with the oil makes you less reluctant.”

“Ooh, not an hour!” Julia clamped her lips together. She would be babbling for mercy soon. It seemed suddenly important not to. Helai had taken her punishment with a stoical calm that had impressed Julia. Though she had no idea why, she wanted to do the same. Taking a deep breath she fought down her growing panic. Nevertheless, she could hear the loud thud of her heart as the Pathan held the phallus upright and tilted the bottle above it. A tiny, red droplet of oil dripped to the tip of the ebony length. Jahngir began to tilt the bottle again. He looked down at her and she tried to meet his stare evenly. A fleeting smile crossed his lips and he replaced the stopper, returned the bottle to the cupboard and took out another. He knelt in front of her, holding it in his hand. Unlike the first one, the oil inside it was clear, and instead of avoiding it contacting his skin he poured it liberally over his right forefinger. Julia tensed as the finger probed between her buttocks.

“You are virgin here too?”

“Of course.” That he even thought he needed to ask was offensive to her.

His dark eyes looked into hers. “You know what you must do?”

Julia nodded grimly.

“I will switch you if you resist,” he warned.

“I won’t, Master.” The thought had not entered her mind. Her belly fluttered. There were beads of sweat on her brow and the fire had not even begun. How much worse than the ginger would it be, she wondered. Despite what she had said, her little muscle tightened as Jahngir’s finger probed it. Julia’s cheeks flamed in embarrassment but she forced herself to relax. She gasped as his long, thick, slippery digit pushed inside.

“Oh! Oh!” It felt strange and alien and horribly intrusive. Before he had brought her to the *zenana* she had never even put her own finger in there. She squirmed with humiliation and the discomfort she had anticipated his penetration would cause. The thick finger was describing circles, rubbing against her sensitive tissues as it spread the oil over them, creating a strange sensation but one far less unpleasant than Julia had expected. She gasped again as it pushed deeper. Afia had done the same when she had soaped her but this was different in some way, though Julia was not sure how. She lowered her eyes as Jahngir’s gaze lifted to her face.

“Look at me, or must I fetch the switch?”

Why, even when he was degrading her and about to give her a distressing punishment did she find him so attractive, she asked herself, raising her eyes again. It

made no sense. In spite of everything, she could have laughed aloud at the irony - how much sense had she managed to make out of anything that had happened to her since her kidnapping?

Still rubbing deep within her, Jahngir began to tease the tender folds and petals at the apex of her thighs with his other hand. The cords around Julia's limbs tightened as she jerked.

"Ooh!" Her hips wriggled as much as the ropes allowed. "Ooh, Master." A warm tingling low in her belly joined the twitching in her behind that the constant pressure there was creating. Tickling thrills ran through her as the Pathan's thumb grazed back and forth with increasing speed. His finger slid from her rear.

"Ooh, no!" Julia wailed as the pressure of the phallus replaced it. She tried to tighten the ring of muscle, but it was slippery with oil and quivering from the stimulation of Jahngir's touch. Longer and thicker than his finger though it was, the phallus slid easily into place. She gave a breathy grunt and tensed for the fire of the oil to begin. Instead, Julia felt only a gentle, buzzing warmth around her stretched little knot. He had spared her the torment by only adding the single droplet to the tip of the ebony length. Relief and gratitude were more powerful feelings than her humiliation at the violation of her intimate entrance, but they were rapidly overtaken by her excitement as Jahngir's thumb continued strumming her trembling bud like a guitar string.

Horror-stricken that the other girls could hear her, Julia could not prevent her gasps and moans and sighs of pleasure as the Pathan drove her towards her peak. Through eyes clouded with desire she saw him watching her intently as his skilful fingers manipulated her. Even the unfamiliar feeling of fullness behind and its pulsing warmth seemed to add to the tremors of delight rippling through her. Suddenly, the spasms of her fulfilment burst forth in wriggling, writhing ecstasy and drove every other thought from her spinning head.

The last wonderful quivers were still tickling through her when she felt her right ankle untied, quickly followed by her left. Jahngir's smooth, swift tug on the ebony slid it out as Julia eased her stiff legs to the floor.

"I was hasty with my promise of punishment, little *murgah*," he said. "Sometimes I grow ill-tempered when my mind becomes too fixed on an idea. I think perhaps you have been punished enough for now. You took the dildo well. Did you find it pleasant?"

Julia blushed. "I... I'm not sure, Master," she answered honestly. "It was... not as bad as I expected."

"You will need to become accustomed to it," he warned. "Your Master will expect you to take him in there too eventually."

"Oh, I'm sure I wouldn't like that," she said at once, glancing at his thick length curving arrogantly upwards in front of him. What she had just experienced was very small in comparison.

He laughed softly. "Well, I have given you pleasure once again. Are you ready now to do the same for me?"

“Yes, Master.” She still felt grateful to him for sparing her the ordeal of the fiery oil, and if she was nervous it was nothing like the anxiety she had felt earlier. And this time her arms were tightly bound.

Jahngir’s big member loomed before her. He angled it downwards with a hand and stepped closer. It seemed as if Julia could feel the power pulsing through it the moment she let it slide between her lips. She shuddered, not in disgust at the feel of the hard, warm flesh filling her mouth but from the wriggles of excitement it sent tickling through her. Three times already today she had experienced her climax and it was barely noon. Oh, mother, she thought, how could you have been so wrong? She clamped her lips down and sucked.

“Not so hard,” Jahngir said. “Go softly to begin with. Let the pleasure build slowly, as you would wish for yourself. Then it will be more satisfying for your master. Remember what you have seen the others do and try to do the same.”

It was hard to focus on his instructions when something so much more physical was demanding all of her attention. Julia discovered it was only possible to breathe through her nose when her mouth was so full, and that Jahngir made no complaint if she let him slide out occasionally so she could inhale more deeply, providing she took him back in immediately. It would have been easier with her hands free to hold it, she thought, and, with a pang of shame, exciting to feel its strength throbbing beneath her fingers. But then she would have had the voice in her head berating her for giving in to her desires. With the bonds still on her arms, it remained silent.

The same could not be said for Jahngir Khan. The more Julia moved her mouth the louder his breathing became and the more frequent the sighs and grunts escaping him. It could have been any of the girls provoking those sounds, Julia told herself, but it was not. It was she who was giving him pleasure, even though she had never done anything like it before. And much to her amazement she was taking pleasure in it too. She ought to be ashamed, alarmed, disgusted. Only days ago she had never known such things happened, yet now it was happening to her. How much longer would it be before the Pathan went further and used her fully as he did the others, she wondered. Her belly fluttered, half in fear, half in excitement. Jahngir’s hand rested on her blonde head.

“Concentrate,” he ordered. “Your mind is wandering.”

How could he possibly know that, Julia asked herself, drawing back to give him the benefit of her lips and tongue the way she had seen Orzala and Helai do. He gave a sudden gasp and his hips jerked so that he sank deeper. Thick, glutinous fluid spurted into Julia’s mouth. Taken by surprise, she turned her head aside and the rest sprayed the side of her face from jaw-line to forehead. Blinking from the sudden stickiness of her right eyelashes, Julia looked up at Jahngir’s face. It was flushed, eyes slitted, lips parted as he gave a long sigh of pleasure and satisfaction.

She was startled to find that they were feelings she shared, so much so that her mouth turned up its corners in a small smile of triumph. Liquid had pooled inside it. Julia knew it should be abhorrent, nauseating, but the truth was she was not repelled by it at all. The stuff’s gooey texture reminded her of school custard, and its starchy

bitterness seemed symbolic of the power and potency that was so characteristic of Jahngir Khan. Still looking up at him she swallowed it without difficulty, the only reaction from her stomach a little wriggle of excitement as it arrived. Craning her head forward as far as her ropes allowed, she lapped his still upright flesh clean and swallowed again.

His eyebrows rose. "Not bad for a first time but we must hone your natural talents in the next few days. Your master will expect you to take his seed without any reluctance or hesitation."

Only then did Julia feel a stab of guilt and the return of her self-conscious shyness. Nevertheless, when he untied her and they returned to the living area she did not suffer the cowering embarrassment she had expected to. Neither did the looks Afia and the others give her show any condemnation or distaste for what she had done. Of course they did not, she realized. For them, it was no more than part of everyday life. When, despite the evidence of her deed still clinging to her face, she dared to meet their eyes they smiled at her and Julia found the courage to smile back. She watched Jahngir put on his silk robe, leaving her the only one completely naked. His mention of her future master had reawakened the suspicion her earlier conversation with Afia had planted in her mind. Was it possible, Julia wondered, and her belly wriggled again at her surprising reaction to the thought.

"Wash your face, and you may dress now," Jahngir told her.

He left the *zenana* then, but returned along with the mid-day meal, by which time Julia's hair had been styled, her make-up reapplied, including the rouge to her nipples, and she was again wearing what passed for clothing amongst the girls. Along with the little, sleeveless jacket that left her breasts bared, she again wore the baggy, sheer muslin trousers with no seat in them. They were ridiculous, but Julia could understand how they might be interesting to a man.

"The gold looks well on you," Jahngir told her with a gesture at the necklace, bracelets and armlets that Afia had made her put on.

"Thank you, Master," Julia replied and felt a pleased little thrill at his obvious admiration. When they all sat down to eat she made sure she kept her back straight and her shoulders squared.

The worst heat of the afternoon passed with everyone relaxing on cushions or couches. No one seemed inclined to conversation or activity and Jahngir appeared to be asleep. He showed no interest in pleasure as he had on other occasions. Perhaps her performance had been enough to satisfy him for the time being, Julia thought, or more likely he was still tired from the physical work he had done that morning.

Though she lay as still and quiet as the others her mind was working feverishly. What had she done? She knew it was not the question she should be asking herself. The real issue was why she had done it. Because she had had no choice, she could argue. The results of refusing would have been far worse. But it was not the real reason. Julia's pulse quickened as she faced the truth. She had done it because she had wanted to. It seemed utterly unbelievable but it was also undeniable. Bashful, reticent, unassuming little Julia Thomas, who never did anything even remotely unconventional, had broken every rule she had been brought

up to follow and willingly surrendered herself to a man. And what a man! Julia wrestled with her surprise and with feelings both unfamiliar and confusing until her weariness and the heat and the quiet of the *zenana* lulled her into sleep.

Music woke her and she saw the sun was sinking towards the western mountain peaks. Laila and Reshmina stood in the carpeted space in front of the balcony, their backdrop a deep blue, cloudless sky. They were dressed identically, if dressed was an accurate description of their near-nudity. Each girl had a slim, gold chain around her hips from which hung a narrow strip of white silk about three fingers in width. Julia blinked. Their breasts were not quite bare. On each girl's pointed peaks was a small, golden clip. Between the clips and attached to them at either end, several thin golden chains dangled, each a little longer than the one above it so that they hung in a series of semi-circles down towards the girl's navels.

As Julia sat up amongst the cushions she saw Jahngir lounging on a couch facing the two girls. Their sensual loveliness and his obvious interest caused her a twinge of envy, immediately forgotten when he beckoned her and pointed to the cushions at his feet. A tingle of excitement ran over her skin as she knelt and he placed a hand on her shoulder and rubbed his thumb on the nape of her neck. A second later the other girls finished tuning their instruments and began to play.

Though the music sounded slightly discordant to Julia, she caught the soft beat of the little drum Helai was tapping. Immediately she was reminded of the nightclub and the two almost naked dancers she had watched wheeling and whirling their oiled bodies in the lights of the stage. Laila and Reshmina began to dance. Their skins also bore the sheen of oil and their bodies moved with the same graceful precision that had so fascinated Julia the first time she had seen it. The girls' hips snaked and swayed in time with the music. The chains hanging from their nipples swung to and fro to the same cadence as the music, catching the sunlight as they turned this way and that with an elegance Julia could only admire and wish she could emulate.

As the tune speeded up so did the steps of the dance, and the girls' movements became more abandoned. As she had in the nightclub, Julia felt the earthy, primitive sensuality they exuded as they postured and spun, thrusting out their hips and breasts, wriggling their buttocks or rising on tiptoe and revealing the finely delineated muscles of their brown-skinned calves and thighs. Her pulse quickened. There was something very appealing about it all that made her long to have the skill to do it herself.

It ended too soon as far as Julia was concerned, with a final loud tap of Helai's drum and the two girls falling to their knees before their lord with their breasts lifted high by their arching backs and their thighs parting wide as they pulled aside their tiny strips of silk to reveal what lay gleaming and bare beneath them.

"You enjoyed that, I think," Jahngir said to Julia after he had congratulated everyone on their performance.

"Yes, Master." Her breathing, quickened by her excitement at the dance, did not slow as his thumb again stroked the back of her neck. "I wish I could dance like that." A pang of guilt and embarrassment accompanied her admission.

"Do you? Well, it may be your master will allow you to be taught, if you please him."

She looked up at him uncertainly, half-hoping and half-afraid that he would confirm her suspicion. “Please, who is to be my master?”

Chapter 3

Jahngir Khan smiled. “All in good time, little *murgah*. Whoever it is, you must have the skills to satisfy him. You must concentrate on learning them first.”

Half relieved and half disappointed, Julia dared not press the matter. He did not speak to her again before the evening meal arrived, brought to the door by one of the kitchen girls. No one but the concubines and their lord were permitted to enter the *zenana*. Jahngir left soon after they had eaten.

The girls played backgammon and asked Julia if she knew any card games. When she described some they had not heard of, they insisted she teach them how to play. Except for its exotic location, her evening passed in much the same way it might have at home. But, of course, when the time came to go to bed it would be nothing like the same.

Julia became more and more restless. She felt nervous but also a sense of anticipation, which reawakened her shame and guilt and drove her tangled emotions into turmoil once again. Her nerves were already strung tight by the time the Pathan returned. He sat with the girls, discussing their music and dancing while the minutes dragged by and Julia’s pulse went faster and faster. She was almost glad when he rose and conducted her to her sleeping cubicle – almost, but not quite. Her stomach was turning somersaults as she lay on her mattress and he sat on its edge and laid a hand on the front of her thigh. Julia stiffened.

Jahngir chuckled softly. “I almost forgot. You have not yet been chained.” He made no move to do it. Quickly she raised her arms above her head in the hope he would secure her wrists, but he just smiled down at her. “You have very full lips,” he said. “They are very inviting.” Her mouth opened in a gasp as he leaned down, and then he was kissing her longer and harder than he had before, one hand toying with the fullness of her breast. Julia’s eyes closed of their own volition and her lips moved on his without her willing it. He tugged the lower one with both of his. “Full and very sweet.”

Breathless, she stared up into his dark, simmering eyes. It was all she could do to stop her arms going around him and crushing him to her hard-nippled breasts. He trailed a finger between them and down her stomach to the little swells below it. Her hands sought the manacles on the wall and closed tightly around the two steel rings.

Jahngir laughed softly. “Very well, if it makes you happy.” He fastened the cuffs around her wrists.

At once she felt better. Paradoxically, it seemed that there was something liberating about being restrained. It freed Julia from her conscience. She no longer had to feel responsible when the Pathan’s fingers stroked the fleshy bump that had risen where her thighs met and tickled it until it swelled into a bud. She only had to enjoy it.

Like the dancing, it stopped too soon. With a soft sigh of frustration she opened her eyes. Jahngir stood up, the evidence of his own arousal tenting the front

of his robe. It slipped from the silken folds, only inches from her face as he leaned forward and unfastened the shackle on Julia's right wrist. Without conscious thought she ran her fingers over its velvety length.

He stepped back, smiling and shaking his head. "You've done enough for one day. Rest. Tomorrow we begin again."

Stunned by what she had done Julia jerked her hand away, suddenly aware of the significance of it being free.

"So you can do more than just watch if you want to." And with that he was gone.

Julia's cheeks flamed. He knew she had been spying on him. He had deliberately chosen the cubicle next to hers when he had made love to the other girls, planned it to ensure she became ever more enmeshed in the lustful ways of the *zenana*. And it had worked. She remembered the feel of him filling her mouth. How could serving him thus have had such an effect on her? It was not as if it had filled her.... She shied from the thought and realized it had been the wrong image to conjure in her mind as she felt a long, delicious ripple of excitement.

Long before the lights went out Julia had assuaged her overwhelming need with her free hand as quietly as she could. By the time the room went dark and familiar, excited sounds began coming from the next cubicle, she was lying with the warm, comforting glow of her climax's aftermath in her belly. Oddly, she felt calm and clear-headed after her fulfilment, her earlier confusion dispelled and her thoughts distinct.

She had begun by fearing Jahngir Khan, hating him for wanting to enslave her, and for the humiliation of his assaults and degrading punishments. She still resented him and was still afraid but she could not deny, however much she would have liked to, that she found him far more attractive than was good for her. There was no ignoring his masculinity and masterful presence, or how they affected her. Julia shivered. How on earth could she admit she was attracted to a man, even to herself? It was completely out of character.

A low, impassioned moan came from close by. Reshmina was with him. Julia had heard the girl speaking to him in her native tongue minutes earlier. She turned her back on the glow of lamplight shining through the pierced screen separating her from them. A strange and unfamiliar feeling filled her but she knew what it was. For the first time in her life, Julia was jealous.

* * * * *

Jahngir Khan woke Julia early. Though it was light, the sun was still hidden behind the eastern mountains as he led her to the bathhouse. Once again she found herself alone with him, both of them bared and immersed to the thighs in water. Without needing to be told, Julia began sponging his broad-shouldered figure, acutely sensitive to the heavy sway of her breasts and how their points kept brushing his skin. She was aware too of the big, brown-skinned length hanging between his thighs and

that it was unlikely to remain that way for long. To her embarrassment but not her surprise, her sex quivered. She was surprised by the question Jahngir asked.

“Why did you come to India?”

Haltingly, Julia explained that she had needed a job and had replied to Mrs. Winter’s newspaper advert for a lady’s travelling companion. “It was only at the interview I discovered I was expected to travel all the way to India.”

“Yet you have travelled here, ill-prepared though I think you were for such a journey. You’ve never done anything like it before, have you?”

Julia shook her head.

“You don’t seem the type who is eager to visit distant lands,” Jahngir said.

She had told herself that a hundred times but felt a twinge of resentment when the Pathan said it.

“I wasn’t enthusiastic about going to England to study,” he continued, “but my father insisted I do it. Was it perhaps your parents who persuaded you?”

“Oh, no! Quite the opposite.” Though in a way he was right. “I came to get away from them,” Julia admitted.

“You do not honour your parents?” His eyebrow arched in surprise, but it was the rising and thickening of his manhood that seized Julia’s attention.

“Of course I do,” she said thickly. “It... it’s complicated.”

He sat on the bath steps, heedless of his effect on her. “Explain.”

She dragged her gaze from his groin. “It was the Wall Street Crash. Have you heard of it?”

“The whole world has heard of it. Even in our remote little corner we were not entirely unaffected. Your parents suffered?”

“My father’s business failed. He got another job, but he and my mother can’t forget what they had before. For two years I’ve had to listen to them harking back to how things used to be. Then they somehow came up with the idea that I could get them back everything they had lost.”

“You? That hardly seems likely.”

Julia’s cheeks heated with a blush. “I know I’m not clever or educated like you but I don’t think I’m completely stupid.” Her sharp retort surprised her and from the look on his face, Jahngir Khan as well.

He smiled. “So there is a spark in you, little *murgah*. I thought one so passionate could not be without at least a little fire. And I do not think you stupid. Continue.”

“They wanted me to find a rich husband.” Julia sighed. “They even made a list of possible candidates. I tried to tell them I didn’t want to do it but they never take any notice of what I say. They never have. They couldn’t understand that everyone could see very well what they were doing and we were becoming a laughing stock. It was getting more and more embarrassing. God knows I wasn’t very confident before they started parading me around like a prize cow.” She stopped, out of breath and wishing she had not told him any of it.

“Families can make things difficult at times,” he said with a thin smile and she remembered his own experience. “But arranged marriages are common in India and hardly unheard of in England.”

“But I don’t want to marry for money. It’s obscene and degrading to be traded off so my parents can have things back the way they used to be. I felt as if I was being sold into slavery.” She gulped. That was exactly the fate that awaited her.

Jahngir smiled thinly. “Then it seems you have fared no better by coming here, but also no worse. Tell me, do you always run away from what frightens you? Have you never tried confronting your fears? You ran from your parents just as you have run from me. Yet you could have stood up to them and refused to cooperate in their plan.”

“You don’t know my parents,” Julia said. “My father said he had had me flogged once and he could do it again if I defied him. So I made my arrangements with Mrs. Winter in secret and came here.” She had thought herself very bold at the time but what he had said was true. If she had had the real courage to simply pack her bags and leave instead of sneaking out in the dead of night, she might not be naked in his bath right now.

“I believe I met many people like your parents when I was in your country,” Jahngir said, “and their daughters - determined, ambitious girls very interested in wealth. Have you never had any ambitions?”

“To love and be loved,” Julia answered at once. Not that she ever expected to have it fulfilled when all the men she met only wanted to stare at her breasts. And why was she revealing it to him when she had never told a living soul before? She realized she had never thought about any sort of life but the one she had been brought up to expect – marriage, husband, children. That was what English girls did, after all, although Kate did not seem to believe it. “I always expected to become some man’s wife,” she ended lamely.

“As long as you got to choose him yourself, eh?” Jahngir took her hand and drew her down beside him. “Well, now you must learn to be some man’s concubine, and you need to practice.”

Julia winced. He had not pulled that punch, but her pussy prickled when she looked again at his groin.

“Kiss me first. That is a skill you need also.” His arm snaked out and pulled her close and she trembled as his warm body pressed against hers. Her mouth seemed to find his without her being aware of it. It moved moistly on his lips of its own accord, parted, drew gently upon them and then more eagerly. Hard flesh pressed against her belly. His tongue pushing into her mouth was only a momentary surprise before she responded in kind. She rubbed herself against him, feeling the strength in his hard muscles, his vigour and potency. His hand smoothed down her back and cupped her bottom, leaving her skin tingling where it had touched. Julia sighed against his lips as his hand slid down the cleft in her buttocks and stroked the pout of her intimate opening. Her breasts seemed to swell and felt achingly tender. A wonderful warmth filled her head as well as her pussy.

Her mouth still captured by his, she found herself rolled onto her back on the hard stone steps. The discomfort of his weight coming down on her meant nothing as she quivered excitedly. He was going to put it inside, Julia thought with a great rush of excitement. She was going to feel the power of that marvellous shaft filling her. Arousal made her wriggle wildly. She was ready. There was nothing she wanted more. Her head spun.

Her mew of disappointment as his lips abandoned hers changed to a groan of pleasure when they traced a tingling trail of delight down her neck and breast to one stiff, pulsing nipple. He drew the hard point into his mouth, flicking it with his tongue and drawing on it until it ached. Julia ran her hands over his body, revelling in the feel of his warmth and strength. The faint voice of conscience was swamped by her surging excitement as Jahngir's fingers slowly stroked their way up the insides of her trembling thighs towards the moistly eager core of her femininity.

His mouth found hers again, and this time it seemed natural that his tongue should thrust between her lips at the same moment his fingers pushed between her prickling petals and sent ecstatic shivers coursing within. She clasped him tighter, rubbing herself against his thickened flesh.

"Yes, oh yes," Julia panted as his lips kissed their way to her breast once more. She was slick with dew and trembling in anticipation and desire. She rocked her hips and drew her legs wider apart. Jahngir's rigidity slid over the sensitive skin of her thigh and she felt it nudging her quivering nether-lips as his fingers withdrew.

"Master," Julia moaned breathily and knew she meant it. Her eyes opened and stared up into his. A dark, glittering flame of desire seemed to fill their depths. "Yes, Master," Julia gasped, lifting, offering herself and feeling his pressure between her thighs increase until she ached with her need.

With a harsh growl, Jahngir Khan pulled himself from her embrace and got to his feet. "Are you trying to bewitch me girl? First you play the timorous virgin and now suddenly you're a temptress." He strode to the bench. "You will come here and serve me as I desire. Do you think it is for a slave girl to dictate to her master what is done to her? Here, I say, and on your knees."

Fearful, confused and more disappointed than she would ever have believed, Julia crawled to him on all fours. Though his cock remained very upright, the smouldering desire she had seen in Jahngir's eyes had turned to flashing anger and she could not understand why. His mood had changed in a heartbeat. She had been so sure he meant to make love to her as avidly as she had seem him do with the other girls. What had happened to steal her moment away? What had she done to anger him, when all she wanted was to make him pleased with her? Her belly flipped as she realized just how eager she had been, how much she really *had* wanted to please him, but now was not the time to ask herself why. Jahngir's anger was warning enough of that. It left her in no doubt that she would be punished if she did not perform well, and this time there would be no last-minute reprieve.

Yet despite her puzzlement and regret, Julia continued to feel the ripples of her arousal and her longing still held her in its grip. With a hand that shook only a little, she obeyed Jahngir's order to once more pleasure him with her mouth.

* * * * *

Courtney moved Penny into the wide shaft of sunlight slanting through the arched windows in the wall of the high-ceilinged room.

“Stay there. You will not move,” he ordered.

The nervous flutter in her stomach increased as he disappeared through the double doors ahead of her. The native guard there closed them behind the Englishman, and with what Penny interpreted as deliberate insolence ran his lascivious eyes over her. She felt very alone and frighteningly vulnerable. Beneath the lightweight, white cotton of her dress she wore nothing, and with the sun shining down on her she knew the dark points on her breasts were visible through the thin material, along with the red weals Courtney had carved across her skin. The other guard behind her would be looking at the streaked purple bruising on her caned buttocks, she was sure. Doubtless it was what Courtney intended.

Penny longed for a cigarette, but he had denied her her handbag as well as her underwear for the five-minute walk up the town’s steep main street from the British Residency to the palace of the Prince of Jargahal. She had no idea why she was there. Courtney had told her if she wanted to see the girls again she would do as she was told. The threat had been enough to make her acquiesce, just as it had been when he had used it to bring her to his bed on both of the previous nights. And what nights they had been! Never before had Penny experienced so extraordinary a mixture of pain and pleasure, of maddening frustration, outright humiliation and fierce, relentless arousal as she had in the forty eight hours that had passed since the first cruel kiss of Courtney’s cane had lashed across her backside.

The man she had once thought of only as an ageing eccentric had warned her he would be demanding, but Penny had not been prepared for the trials he had put her through on her first night. From the moment he had made her clamber onto his wide bed and place a slim, steel collar fixed by a chain to the wall around her own slender neck she had known she was completely at his mercy. And he had shown her none. Nothing she had done, from posing to display her breasts and buttocks and even greater intimacies to him, to the way she had followed his orders to give him pleasure, had been good enough.

Courtney’s response had been to flog her with a thin, plaited-leather whip and make her repeat every action until she satisfied him. Every bee-sting bite of the lash had added to the pain and throbbing the whippings and canings he had given Penny that same afternoon were already causing. It should have been unmitigated torment. Yet, he had shown he was skilled at more than just plying the whip. In between the floggings and the demeaning demands, the touch of his long-fingered hands had fired her passions and brought Penny to the boil again and again. For all her shame and smarting hurts, her body had wriggled and her head had whirled with the flaring intensity of her desire. She had felt such pleasure before, but never repeated over and over again with barely a pause.

Only when the first paleness of pre-dawn had tinted the sky beyond the open-shuttered windows had Courtney finally taken her. The memory of the mind-swirling climax she had experienced beneath him was enough to bring a prickle of excitement to her belly and a blush to her cheeks. As she had slumped, exhausted, onto the bed and drifted towards welcome oblivion she had had to acknowledge the man was a master of his art.

Nor had her degradation ended there. At Courtney's insistence and under his supervision, the moment Penny had awoken in the early evening of the next day, Ranee and another Indian slave girl had bathed the stiffness from her body in a deep, square bath big enough to hold all three of them. Already embarrassed by them touching her most intimate places, the Englishwoman had then been forced to submit to the two girls massaging a salve into her welts and throbbing bruises. Only grudgingly had she admitted it helped relieve the awful pain.

It had been hard to face Ranee with even a vestige of dignity after the way Penny had whimpered and wriggled under her lapping tongue and probing fingers while she has been chained in Courtney's punishment room. Never before had she submitted to the unnatural attentions of one of her own sex. That she had surrendered to her passion the instant she had felt the girl's touch made the incident doubly humiliating to recall. Yet now it seemed insignificant compared to what she had suffered on her second night in Courtney's hands.

He had hardly touched her himself except to bind her on her knees to the foot of his bed. Despite her unwillingness, it had been his slave girls who had aroused her, much to Penny's shame. They had taken turns. While Courtney used one, the other had explored Penny's bound nakedness with hands and lips and tongue, pinching, teasing, nibbling and licking at every inch of her and continually driving her to the verge of fulfilment. Each time, a hairsbreadth away, she had heard Courtney's curt order to stop and the maddening teasing had vanished and left Penny groaning in an agony of frustration.

It had gone on for hours, made worse by the sights and sounds of the man using his slaves, filling them in every way imaginable, much to Penny's shock and embarrassment. To hear the girls' pleased moans and cries as they climaxed and to smell their ripe woman-scent mingling with her own had almost had her screaming from the urgency of her need.

Finally, as Penny was sure her tormentor had intended, she had lost all self-control and begged to be allowed her own release. The price had been high, and not only for her. First, Courtney had caned both of his slave girls across the buttocks while they crouched on all fours on the bed. To Penny's discomfiture they had taken their punishment with much more fortitude and far fewer cries than she had managed. She knew that was one reason they had been beaten in her presence. The other had clearly been to stimulate Courtney before he made her serve him.

"You'll pleasure me exactly as I tell you if you want to come," he had told her. Penny had not hesitated. The knowledge that the two native girls were watching had meant nothing compared to the raging demands of her passion. Penny had knelt before him and licked and lapped and nibbled and finally accepted his bitter seed,

though she had struggled to keep it down when it reached her stomach. Only then had he freed her right hand. Desperately, Penny had dived her half-numb fingers between her madly twitching thighs, and seconds later her lower belly had roiled ecstatically with a profound and protracted climax. Wincing though she had been at the bright-eyed stares of Courtney and the girls watching every writhe and wriggle, she could not remember when anything had ever felt so wonderful.

Recalling it was enough to send a tremor through her just as the door opened. Courtney raised a beckoning finger. Cursing her thoughtlessness at taking a deep breath that strained the thin material of her dress against her breasts and increased the guard's leer, Penny stepped forward.

With her stomach performing somersaults, she heard the door close behind her and barely noticed her luxurious surroundings as all of her attention was seized by a man sitting in the big, leather armchair on the opposite side of the room. Or rather, not all of it, for it was not the sight of the man that made her catch her breath and her eyes go wide. It was the nearly naked Indian girl kneeling on the floor at his right, and more especially the equally scantily clad white girl at his left.

"Your Excellency, this is Mrs. Penelope Winter." Courtney's hand in the small of her back propelled Penny towards the seated man. "Penelope, I present His Excellency Sahar Gul, Wazir of His Highness the Prince of Jargahal."

They could only be slave girls. The thought repeated continually in her head as she struggled to focus on the wazir.

"H... how do you do, Your Excellency," Penny stammered. Why in heaven's name had Courtney brought her here? What possible business could this man have with her? The nagging discomfort in her bruised buttocks increased as they clenched nervously, and Penny fought the urge to stare at the slender, white slave whose hair was the same light-brown shade as her own.

Sahar Gul did not greet her. Leaning back in the deep armchair he moved his gaze slowly up from the cream, high-heeled shoes Courtney had made her wear to the blush she could feel staining her cheeks. Self-conscious under his silent scrutiny, Penny lowered her eyes and heard him snort a laugh.

"Better," he said in almost accentless English. "It is customary for women to bow before they address me, but I am not surprised by her discourtesy. I see she has the usual challenge in her eyes so common among her kind. The *mem-sahibs* are all so convinced of their own superiority." He stood up, and Penny would have backed away but for the continued presence of Courtney's hand on her back. It was hard, insistent, controlling. She swallowed. The wazir's comments had been addressed to him, not her.

The Englishman chuckled. "I believe she is not quite so certain of it as she was a day or two ago, Excellency. You will see why if you care to remove her dress."

With a very audible gasp Penny turned her head to stare in fearful astonishment at Courtney's face. "But..." He's a damned native, she wanted to say, a heathen tribesman hiding behind a thin veneer of civilisation. The white man could not possibly mean to expose her to such a barbarian. Sahar Gul smiled coldly as she looked anxiously into his face.

“It appears she is not enthusiastic about your suggestion, Courtney *Saaquib*.”

The Englishman’s hand slid slowly down the aching curve of Penny’s bottom. “She will warm to it when she understands I have explained to you her wish and that she needs your permission to carry it out, Excellency.”

Penny gasped again as realisation struck her like a slap in the face.

“Then she can remove her dress herself,” the wazir said evenly.

Courtney moved to stand beside him and she saw his face bore the same harsh, uncompromising expression as Sahar Gul’s. “Do it, Penelope,” he said quietly.

Mouth dry, Penny looked at the curious stares of the kneeling slave girls and did not move. Courtney was telling her to strip naked in front of them and some heathen Pathan. Did he imagine she had no pride, no dignity or self-respect? Did he really think she had sunk so low that she would reveal her nakedness to a crude, coarse native just because he told her to? Yet, her whole future depended on the return of Julia and Kate and getting them to Dhokat on time. All her past trials and humiliations would have been for nothing if she refused now. Penny steeled herself. Her head stopped spinning. The blur at the edges of her vision cleared and she saw the menace in the Englishman’s steady stare. Slowly, she reached her shaking hands to the top button of her dress.

“Let it fall,” Courtney instructed when she had unfastened the last one.

Belly leaping, Penny allowed the dress to slide from her shoulders and drop to the floor.

“You have whipped her,” Sahar Gul observed, frighteningly casual, and Penny lowered her eyes from his appraisal of her nudity. “Is she disobedient?”

“Disrespectful and conceited,” Courtney replied, and grinned at the indignant snort she gave.

The wazir went behind her, and she jerked violently as his hand closed over her buttocks and her discomfort flared into pain.

“Stand still,” he barked. “Put your hands on your hips and get your feet wider apart.”

Pulse racing and gut churning, she obeyed and felt a sudden excitement mingle with her fear at his stern, inflexible command. Oh, heavens! It was happening again.

“It is the way of the *mem-sahibs*,” Sahar said, appearing in front of her and eyeing the rapid rise and fall of her breasts. “They are haughty and proud, and their arrogance makes them slow to obey. I find I punish my white slaves much more often than the others. Yasmeena, show them.”

The white girl rose from her knees and turned to display the angry red welts on her taut, narrow buttocks that told of a recent beating. He had changed her name, Penny realized. Would that happen to Kate and Julia too?

“She has been mine for over a year,” the wazir continued, “and still I must give her a dozen regularly to remind her that her pride has no place here.” He laughed as he tweaked the up-tilted point of one of her small, pointed breasts. “But I will admit she pleases me greatly.”

Penny thought she saw a glint of what might have been pride in the girl’s eyes at that moment, and a small smile on her lips that became a grimace of pain as she

obeyed the order to kneel once more. Was it possible the girl had been pleased by his words? Penny was given no time to wonder about it.

“She has good big tits.”

She flinched as Sahar weighed them in his hands, but with the warning of the girl’s red-striped bottom fresh in her mind she did not pull away. Two brown-skinned thumbs rubbed her worryingly stiff nipples and she felt a frightening twitch of anticipation between her legs. The wazir gave her teats a very firm squeeze and looked disappointed.

“A pity she’s not in milk. Look at me.”

Puzzled by his odd remark, Penny was slow to obey. A shiver ran through her as the pressure of his fingers under her chin lifted her eyes to his. The dark, glittering lust she saw set her quivering again and made her gulp.

“Does she perform well?”

“She’s adequate,” Courtney allowed. “Untrained, of course, but quite responsive providing your expectations aren’t too high. Remember, she’s not schooled like a slave girl.”

“Precisely why she interests me.” Sahar gestured at the girl he called Yasmeena. “White slaves I have, but a free white woman, a true *mem-sahib* like the arrogant, immodest ones who treat me so patronisingly at their dinners and cocktail parties – that excites my curiosity.” He began unbuttoning his *chapaan*.

Penny’s heart leapt. Excites was the right word, she realized, as she saw the big bulge in the front of his trousers. At once she raised her eyes, only to find herself looking again into the blatant desire in his own. A curl of fear and excitement made her belly contract at the same moment as a tingling ripple tickled between her thighs. He was a native, a voice screamed in her head, but her brain could not even control her thoughts, let alone her feelings. Sahar Gul was not old, she found herself musing, certainly much younger than Courtney. His hair was cut in the European way and his brown, clean-shaven face was quite handsome, and he was tall and broad-shouldered too. He was strong, she acknowledged, and not just physically, for he governed the Princedom of Jargahal for its titular ruler. If he could control all of that he would have no difficulty controlling her. Penny’s horror at the thought did not prevent it from feeling deliciously wicked and intensely stimulating. What was it about such men that their casually cruel and offhanded treatment seemed to attract rather than repel her? What had come over her that she became excited by no longer being the user but the one being used? It defied all logic and common sense, as well as her ability to understand it. And it did not matter at all when her blood was pounding through her veins and the warmth of her arousal was tingling low in her belly.

“I confess, Courtney, that I was surprised when you told me a *mem-sahib* was anxious to visit the slavers in the mountains. It is much more usual for a beautiful white woman to keep as far away from them as possible.”

With almost hypnotic fascination, Penny watched Sahar unbutton his trousers as he spoke. Her breath escaped in a rush when the last one came free and his thick manhood sprang into the open.

“She is either very brave or very foolish,” he said.

“Or perhaps only very desperate,” Courtney chuckled.

“Or perhaps all three.” Sahar took a step that poked his erection into Penny’s stomach. It seemed as hard, implacable and demanding as the look he was giving her. “On your knees, white woman.”

He was a native. He should not be giving her orders as if she was one of his slaves. And she should not be obeying them. Fear, abhorrence, shame and excitement were all sending shivers through her. Stunned, Penny felt herself sink to her knees, her conscious will powerless against the need – Oh, Lord, the desire! – to do whatever he told her to. Her belly felt hollow but her excitement was raging, a craving beyond her control. She stared at the thick flesh rearing up before her.

“You know what to do,” he said flatly.

Chapter 4

They were all watching, Penny thought. They would see every intimate movement of her lips and tongue – Courtney, the white girl and the Indian one, and Sahar Gul himself, looming over her, arrogant and imperious. She raised her eyes to his and the curling, cringing humiliation of what he was forcing her to do made her blood pump faster and the tremors quicken within her. It *was* happening again, she thought desperately, but desire far outweighed despair, and if she refused she would lose everything and she would be whipped again. Taking a deep breath, she parted her lips.

The wazir pushed his fingers into the thick waves of her hair, gripping her skull and thrusting himself vigorously into her open mouth. Penny wanted to reach down and chafe her trembling sex but it was difficult with Sahar's big baton plunging so fast and half-choking her each time it jabbed into the back of her throat. Her eyes watered, and she gagged around the hardness between her lips. Yet, she dared do nothing but let it happen and, to her utter shame, wish it was her pussy he was using so roughly.

His hand tightened in her hair, forcing her head back and tilting her face up. He pulled from her mouth and she saw his hand begin pumping furiously and reflexively shut her eyes. A heartbeat later something splattered wetly into Penny's face. She tried to twist in his grip but could not escape the thick, viscous fluid spraying over forehead, nose and cheek as he huffed and grunted his way through his climax. Breathing hard through her nose, Penny kept her lips clamped as the warm goo flowed slowly down her face towards them. She had never even allowed a white man to do such a thing to her before.

"Here, Yasmeena," she heard the wazir order, and opened her eyes a crack to see the English slave kneel before her. Penny would have shied away, but Sahar Gul's controlling hand still gripped her and she had no choice but to submit as the girl scooped some of the slimy fluid from her cheek with a finger.

"Open," the wazir barked.

Penny's stomach lurched in horror. She had thought she had at least escaped having her mouth filled. As Yasmeena held the slimy stuff under her nose the Englishwoman reluctantly accepted she had been sadly mistaken. Avoiding the searching look in the girl's eyes she opened her mouth and let the white slave drip the fluid onto her tongue. It tasted just as sour and foul as Courtney's did.

Yasmeena scraped every drop from Penny's face and fed it to her, while the wazir continued holding her head and she cringed inside and half-choked on the puddle collecting in her throat.

"Many times I have imagined my seed on the faces of the haughty, white *mem-sahibs*, Courtney," Sahar Gul said as the girl finished her task and drew back. "It is most satisfying to have finally really done it to one of them." His hand tightened on Penny's skull. "Look at me, *Mem-sahib* Winter, and swallow."

Staring up into his eyes in an agony of humiliation, she forced the horrid, bitter stuff down to her crawling stomach and fought the instant urge to puke it back up. Sahar drew her to her feet by her hair. With one hand he grasped the heavy roundness of one bare breast and slipped two fingers of the other into her slick warmth. His face split into a grin.

“She is aroused, Courtney. See, her bud is sticking out. It seems that not all *mem-sahibs* are cold, unfeeling bitches.” His thumb grazed the swollen bud and made Penny gasp at the tickle of excitement it created. His hand withdrew and she smelled her musk on the fingers that lifted her chin. “She seems prepared to put up with a great deal to find these missing girls of hers. They must mean a great deal to you, woman, for you to attach such importance to recovering them.”

“Th... they do,” Penny agreed, flinching under his hard stare.

His laughter was not at all comforting. “Then let’s see how far you are willing to go.” He pointed to a wooden platform that stood on its own close to one wall of the room. “Go and kneel on that.”

Yasmeena’s sharply indrawn breath added to the trepidation already filling Penny as she obeyed. She did not fail to see the rack on the wall nearby with an array of fearsome-looking canes and whips that filled her with a hollow dread. Trembling, she climbed onto the platform, a box-shape about five feet long and three wide, its surface padded with dark-brown leather. A vertical steel post was fixed to the centre of the long edge at either side, their upper ends joined by a wooden crossbar.

“Reach up and grasp the bar,” Sahar said as he approached her, and Penny looked nervously over her shoulder and saw Courtney grinning cruelly. She groped her shaking hands upwards until her fingers curled around the wood. To reach, she had to kneel upright with her thighs pressed together. “You will keep holding it until I say you can let go,” the wazir said. “Do it sooner and you can forget any idea of going into the mountains.” He went to the wall rack. “She’s felt the cane already, Courtney, from the look of those stripes on her backside.”

“The whip and strap too, though only the lighter sort,” Courtney replied.

“Then we’ll see how she deals with something heavier.”

Penny’s heart thudded as Sahar took a broad leather strap attached to a chequered wooden handle from the rack. The instrument was thick and heavily stitched. It was going to hurt horribly. The wazir would not be lenient. She knew she was a surrogate for every white woman who had ever patronised and disdained and insulted him. He meant to extract his revenge from her. Penny gulped. Should she call a halt before her suffering began? But to do that would mean her losing both the girls and her only chance of restoring her fortunes. She could not bring herself to waste everything she had been through already. Taking a deep breath she summoned all of her determination. It was a surprise as well as a relief when Sahar announced she would receive only six strokes, but the latter was short-lived.

“Six to the thighs, six to those fat tits and six on your arrogant backside. I do enjoy seeing a white skin redden under the whip, Courtney. It’s so much more obvious and immediate than the effect on a brown one.” He laughed wickedly and flicked the leather in his hand backwards.

Her gut wrenching violently, Penny tightened her grip on the bar above her and clamped her jaws tight. Her position on the platform raised her out-thrust breasts to the same height as the wazir's chest. From the way he was eyeing them she had no doubt where his first stroke would land. Why, she wondered irrelevantly, were her nipples still stiffly erect? The hard, rosy cones seemed to invite the man to abuse them.

Sahar accepted the invitation. His arm shot forward. Penny had not even time to close her eyes. She heard the hiss of displaced air and a split second later the vicious crack of the strap on her flesh sent fiery torment through her tender teats. They bounced furiously from the blow, and Penny fought for all she was worth to keep her hold on the bar and not reach for the source of her sudden agony. She threw back her head and howled.

Scorching pain exploded in the fronts of her thighs. She howled again, her fingers trying to dig into the wood beneath them as she jerked madly and tossed her head. Fresh fire blazed across her breasts and then once more her soft-skinned thighs. Courtney at his most demanding had not struck so savagely, and he had fastened her in place. It was so much harder when she also had to battle the desperate need to clutch at her hurts. Yet Penny hung on while the wazir alternated the blows of the biting leather between her breasts and thighs. Tears streamed down her cheeks and sweat down her twisting body as the heavy whip tore into skin and burned the flesh beneath it in a fury of excruciating pain. She had no breath to beg, only to cry out in torment. The cries grew in pitch and volume with every fearsome lash until her howls had turned to shrieks and even she could not believe she had found strength enough to keep her grip on the bar.

Tortuous seconds passed before Penny realized she could no longer hear the wicked crack of leather and that her breasts had ceased their demented bouncing and the sensitive flesh of her thighs had stopped yielding under the fiery blows. Her pain scarcely diminished however, and Sahar moving behind her reminded her it was not yet at an end. Casting a dreading glance over her shoulder, she shuddered as she watched him raise his arm. The broad tongue of the whip rose with it and swished downwards to blaze a scorching trail across Penny's helpless buttocks. Already ravaged by Courtney's cane and lash, they flamed and throbbled unbearably under the fresh assault. Twice Penny almost let go of the wood to fend off the merciless attack. Twice, digging deep, she somehow held grimly on.

The wazir laid on the final stroke. Penny would not have believed it possible, but it was harder than all those that had gone before. Her parched throat managed to produce a last, long scream as she writhed under the leather's savage bite. Panting hard and weeping, she waited for the longed-for order to release the bar.

Replacing the whip in the rack, Sahar spent several minutes walking around Penny admiring the fiery evidence of his handiwork. Blinking away her tears she watched him warily, suddenly aware of his up-curved flesh as he halted in front of her.

"Let go now, *Mem-sahib* Winter. It's time I took you. You do want me to take you, don't you?"

“Y... yes, Your Excellency,” Penny lied with her gut twisting into knots. What she wanted most was to sink into a cold, soothing bath and beg Ranee to massage salve into her burning hurts. From Sahar Gul’s snicker of laughter as she obeyed his order to lie on her back on the platform and raise her legs, she knew he had guessed she was not telling the truth. Only endure this final assault, she told herself, and she would be free to continue her search for the girls. Just a few more days and her life would be worth living again.

The native took her roughly, remaining on his feet as he used her the way Macdonald had but showing no care or concern for any pleasure but his own. His hard thrusting added to the cruel throb of her buttocks and thighs, and his deliberate grip on her fiercely reddened breast as he lunged into her brought tears back to her eyes. Still, the feeling of being so completely and helplessly controlled caused Penny a tremor of excitement, and Sahar’s plunging thrusts sparked a flicker of arousal. The colour of his skin was suddenly unimportant as she began to quiver in response to the friction.

He finished too quickly for her to do any more, grinning grotesquely down into Penny’s face as he grunted his satisfaction. Her ordeal did not quite end there, however. Horribly conscious of the two slave girl’s watching her every move, she had to clean him and then stand once more with his seed running down her thighs while he enjoyed the sight of the searing welts he had added to those already covering her pale-skinned body. Had it been enough, Penny wondered. She lowered her eyes as his gaze lifted from the angry red of her breasts to her face.

“Most interesting and entertaining, Courtney,” he said. “Definitely an experience I’d like to repeat with another spoiled, proud white woman. I’m glad you brought me this one. I enjoyed humbling you, Mrs. Winter, but I like your courage, whatever the reason for it. I will speak to the Prince about you. If he agrees to let you go to the slavers, I will not forbid it.”

“The Prince! But I thought -.”

“Be quiet, Penelope,” Courtney interrupted her. “Of course you need the Prince’s permission. You are in his country, after all. Now, bow to His Excellency and thank him for everything he has done for you.”

Careful to hide her bitter disappointment, Penny did as she was told. She had thought Sahar Gul was the last obstacle to achieving her objective. Now he had placed another in her way. The awful throb and blaze of her hurts suddenly seemed too much to bear. Tears filled her eyes once more.

“Give her tomorrow to recover and bring her to tea with His Highness the day after,” the wazir told Courtney.

“Two days!” Penny said, dismayed. “But that’s only a day before the *khillat* is distributed.” She would have only five days left until the slave auction and she still had to travel into the mountains, obtain the girls’ release and get them to Dhokat. Time was rapidly running out.

“Hush, Penelope.” Courtney tossed her dress carelessly at her. “Surely you know better by now than to argue. Or shall I schedule another spell in my punishment

room for you? Now, you've taken up enough of His Excellency's time. Get dressed and we'll get back to the Residency."

He almost dragged her from the room while she was still buttoning her dress. Sahar Gul did not even glance in her direction. The reminder of how he had hurt and humiliated her was still damp on the insides of her smarting thighs. The pressure of the thin dress was increasing the pain in her breasts and the cruel throb in her buttocks. Penny felt soiled and defiled. As she meekly followed Courtney into the street, for the first time since setting out on her journey, she heartily wished she had never left England.

* * * * *

"Must I go in the cage again tonight, Mister Ross, Sir?" Kate asked softly as the old soldier unlocked the side of the narrow wood and metal box where she had slept for the last three nights.

"No need to call me that except when I'm punishing you," he said, opening the steel-framed bars.

Kate gave him the winsome smile she had been practising in the mirror during the times he had left her chained alone with the dildo deep inside her. "I know, but I like to. It's better than just saying 'Sir', and if I called you Master it would remind me of horrid old Mister Jefferson." It felt more personal too, but Kate could not tell him that.

"He's younger than I am," Ross growled, "and don't be disrespectful or I'll give you a switching."

"Yes, Mister Ross, Sir," Kate replied with her best look of contrition. It turned into one of disappointment when he gestured for her to enter the cage. "Oh, must I? You said I w... was ready." A shiver ran through her. She sucked in a breath that lifted her pointed teats and gave a sigh that made them shake.

Ross grinned. "Tomorrow will do. Don't tell me you're so eager you can't wait."

Kate felt a blush heat her cheeks. It was true. In a matter of days she had been transformed from a near-innocent virgin into a wanton who could hardly stop craving sexual pleasure. "I... I hoped tonight in... your bed." She looked away as embarrassment got the better of her. "I don't want to be chained the first time." Her coyness vanished as she squeezed her rear muscle on the ivory cone holding it open and a thrill of pleasure tickled through her at front and rear. For most of the hours of her training she wore her 'bum-stretcher'. Kate had been amazed and ashamed at how rapidly the sensation of fullness it caused had stopped disgusting her and started arousing her instead. Now she found every tightening of her distended opening on the hard object intensely stimulating. It was almost a disappointment when it was removed. She met Ross's level gaze. "Don't... don't you want to do it too?"

He gave a throaty laugh. "You've almost got me believing you, little miss. But I'm not so easily taken in. Do you think I haven't seen through your act or guessed what you're up to?"

“Act?” Perhaps it had been in the beginning, though Kate was not even sure about that.

“Your instant obedience and willingness. No insults, no complaints, and not even any arguments until now. It’s too good to be true, my girl, and it’s not going to work. If you think you’ve found a way to escape through me you’re mistaken. I’m not taking you into the mountains and that’s final.”

“On, no, I didn’t...” Kate protested. “It’s not...” It had been, or so she had thought, but she had had three lonely nights in the cage to ponder about her motives. The odd thing was that the outcome of that had not really been a surprise. She liked the rough and ready ex-soldier. On the surface he was tough and cynical. Beneath though, she was sure, was a different kind of man and one certainly far cleverer than he pretended to be. After the way he had treated her she had no business admiring him, but there it was. She could not alter her feelings. Incredible though it seemed even to her, Kate had fallen for him, and she had fallen hard.

He stood up, tall and imposing. “I ought to punish you for trying to deceive me, you little minx.”

“I haven’t deceived you,” she said. “I...” What could she say? By his own admission he had lost count of the girls he had trained. To him, she was just another slave. If she tried to explain he would only laugh at her, and besides, she was far from certain about her feelings when she spent so much time in a state of distracting arousal. All she knew was that there was more to them than simply lust.

Ross sat on the bed and slapped a hand on one thigh. “Over my knee. Let’s get that dildo out, then you can fetch me my switch and have a dozen on your behind for your devious ways.”

Kate gave a little indignant mew. Her bottom had not taken a beating since Jefferson had thrashed it, and Ross had used his little whip sparingly on the rest of her and his blows had been light. Now he meant to punish her for something of which she was not even guilty. Nevertheless, Kate did not argue. Glancing nervously at the switch that stood against the wall near the bed she draped her body over his lap, resting her hands on the floor at one side and her feet at the other.

The position heightened her awareness of the weight of her breasts and the vulnerability of her bottom, and she could feel Ross’s warmth on her belly. Her pussy gave a quiver and her rear contracted on the conical dildo. He loosened the belt and cords holding it in place and pulled out the hard ivory. Its removal provoked almost as much pleasure as when it was inserted.

Ross’s big, bear-paw of a hand smoothed over Kate’s taut rear-cheeks. Though their bruises had not yet entirely faded, they caused her little discomfort now and his exploration was much more stimulating than painful. She gasped when he prised her buttocks apart and shivered as much in excitement as embarrassment as his fingertip tickled between them. Deliberately, she relaxed and squirmed suddenly as his finger pushed through her lightly-oiled little pucker.

“Hm, you’re still very tight back here,” he said, and made her jerk by sliding his finger to the knuckle. She clamped around it, wriggling as the long digit moved within her, and Kate rubbed her naked belly against Ross’s thighs, gasping and feeling

the sway of her hanging breasts. “Maybe it’s time it took something a bit bigger, little miss minx.”

She could picture his amused smile as he spoke. “Yes, Mister Ross, Sir. Ooh!” His finger waggled and little thrills tingled through her. His other hand teased her in front, stroking her moistly warm petals.

“Well, I have to admit your pussy isn’t acting.” His soft laugh started a glow in her heart that nearly equalled that lower down as he added a second finger and stroked her slick, quivering membranes. Kate gave a breathy moan and pushed back. Abruptly his touch vanished.

“That’s enough. You’re over my knee for punishment, not pleasure,” Ross said sternly.

Recalling the sharp, fiery bite of the switch sent a shudder through Kate but her hope of avoiding a night in the cage was not dashed. She could feel the pressure of something long and hard against her left hip. His hand described little circles over her firm-fleshed buttocks. He laughed.

“I’m not going to switch you,” he announced. “I’ve had another idea.”

Kate felt a tremor of anticipation, abruptly ended by a fierce sting as his broad palm cracked briskly down onto her upturned bottom. She hissed and jerked, felt the weight of his other hand on the small of her back and heard him chuckle.

“You’ll have a good spanking with the flat of my hand, my girl, and then we’ll see if you’re sorry for your play-acting.”

“Oh, I wasn’t acting,” Kate cried. “I’m -. Ow!” More hot, stinging pain cut her off as her bottom bounced under a hard slap.

“Don’t deny it,” he said, giving her a third meaty smack. “You’ve been a bad girl and you know it. Say it.” Another fiery slap was sufficient encouragement.

“I’ve been a bad girl, Mister Ross, Sir,” she cried, wriggling as her firm flesh yielded again under his heavy hand and pain flared across her soft-skinned rear-cheeks.

“Yes, you have,” Ross agreed. “A bad slave girl. Say it.”

“I’m not a -. Ow! Ooh! I’ve been a bad slave girl,” Kate said quickly.

“And what is a slave girl’s first duty?” he demanded with another swipe to her upturned bottom.

“Ooh! Obedience, Mister Ross, Sir.”

“What kind of obedience?”

Another searing impact made her cry out and writhe over his lap. “Ow! Unquestioning obedience, Mister Ross, Sir.”

“Then why are you jumping about all over the place when you should be holding still while I smack your impudent little bum?”

“I’m -. Ooh! I’m trying but it hurts,” Kate gasped.

“Then you aren’t trying hard enough, slave girl.” He gave her another half-dozen wickedly fierce spansks. Kate tried not to writhe but the scorching of her skin made it impossible. She did not doubt that Ross had known it would be and was only mocking her with his scolding.

He continued smacking her for what seemed an age but was probably no more than a minute, the only sounds the regular crack of his palm on her flesh and Kate's pained cries. Her buttocks were searingly hot and seemed to be vibrating continuously from the blows. The switch might well have hurt her less, yet Kate knew she would not have traded the spanking for the springy rod. There was something more personal, more intimate about being in contact with her tormentor's body and knowing her pain flowed directly from his flesh to hers. It added another dimension to her punishment, not just physically, but for Kate, also emotionally. Unfortunately, it did nothing to reduce the scorch of the smacks or help her control her increasingly frantic wriggling.

"There now," Ross said. "Your cheeky little bum is a very nice shade of scarlet, miss minx. Are you going to admit your deceit or shall I turn it crimson?"

Kate sucked in a deep breath. "I'm not deceiving you. Really I'm not. I swear I -. Ooh, please! Ow! Ow!"

Ross's hand rhythmically smacking her backside turned her protests to incoherent yelps. Only after he had dealt her another dozen squarely on the apex of her flaming and squirming rear-cheeks did she manage to get enough air into her lungs to surrender. By then, her tears were dripping to the floor below her.

"All right, I admit it," she panted between sobs. "I deceived you."

"No you didn't. But you tried to, and I think that deserves another half-dozen, don't you?"

"Oh, no," Kate wailed. An instant later his horny palm cracked down and stoked the fires already blazing across her skin. It seemed her buttocks were bouncing in all directions under the smacks, and she jerked and jiggled in a frenzy of pain. A particularly wicked blow made her howl but she knew from its ferocity that it was the last one, always much harder than the rest. Breathing hard, she stopped flailing and sagged on her tormentor's knee, sobbing and rocking her hips in a vain attempt to ease her pain. Ross rolled her carelessly off his lap and she sprawled on the floor but quickly got to her knees to lift her weight from her smarting bottom. Wiping her tears away with the back of one hand, she looked up into his stern face.

"You're a naughty girl. You owe me an apology."

"Yes, Mister Ross, Sir," she said meekly, hiding her resentment.

"Well you should know how naughty girls apologise by now," he said, and began unbuttoning his shirt.

Despite the sting in her buttocks a warm tickle thrilled through Kate's pussy. She shuffled forward and reached for his trouser fastenings. He leaned back on his elbows, watching her fingers nimbly freeing his erection. How willing she was, Kate thought, how eager to do something she could never have imagined just a few short days ago. The thought came and went in the moment her hand curled around him and she closed her lips over his shaft. She almost forgot her scorching buttocks in the surge of excitement that tightened her belly and sex as she drew gently on the hard flesh stretching her jaws.

She did everything Ross had taught her during her long hours of instruction – bobbing her head as she sucked both gently and hard, rubbing and licking and lapping

along his length. Kate had noticed he particularly liked it when she wagged the tip of her tongue on its sensitive underside and was pleased when several times she managed to make him sigh with pleasure by doing so.

Strangely, though she was kneeling like a supplicant at his feet performing what many would think a degrading and demeaning act, Kate was more aware of a sense of her own power than she was of any shame. It was her beauty that aroused Ross, the skills with hand and mouth she had learned which were stirring his desire. It was very satisfying to know she had made him desire her. He seemed to vibrate suddenly between her lips, much sooner than Kate had expected. At times he had gone a whole morning before spilling his seed, but that had been part of her training. This time, she realized, he was using her purely for his pleasure.

The knowledge sent more shivering tremors through her as she felt his warm fluid flood her mouth. Nothing but perfection would satisfy him, Kate knew. Releasing her suction, she swallowed, gulped, and swallowed again, shuddering as it slid down her throat. Her stomach did not rebel. It was getting easier every time. She scooped the dribbles that escaped her lips from her chin onto a finger and licked it clean then, raising her eyes to his, swallowed once more. He was watching her with one eyebrow raised, his expression thoughtful. His eyes were still bright but no longer, she thought, with anger.

“At least you’ve been paying attention to your lessons,” he said eventually and the glow the faint praise created in Kate’s breast increased when the corners of his mouth lifted in a smile. “But you had better not try to fool your new master the way you tried with me, little minx. I doubt he’ll be satisfied with smacking your bum if he catches you. He’ll likely take a cane or a whip to it. So, are you going to behave yourself from now on?”

Lips still wrapped around his hardness, Kate nodded and saw his eyes narrow as the movement wagged it in her mouth. Somewhat to her surprise, it already seemed to be thickening again. Ross leaned forward and pushed her away, and she hissed in pain as her buttocks sank onto her heels.

He laughed softly at her discomfiture. “Stand up. I want to see if you’re excited.”

Kate was, and more so by the time his teasing fingers stopped massaging her swollen petals and little button until both were tingling. The heady aroma of her arousal filled her nostrils as she looked down at the ex-soldier seated figure through passion-clouded eyes and saw his member was once more at the peak of readiness. How would it feel within her quivering sheath, she wondered, and shivered excitedly at the thought she might soon find out.

“That’s enough,” Ross said. “We’ve another busy day tomorrow. Into the cage with you and straight to sleep. No touching yourself or you know what to expect.”

With an awful sinking feeling inside her, Kate stared at him in dismay and disappointment.

“Oh, Mister Ross, Sir,” she groaned in frustration. He had deliberately aroused her just to intensify her disappointment and remind her exactly who was in

control. Deflated, she recalled the feeling of power she had experienced minutes before. She had been deluding herself. She was nothing to him but another slave girl to be trained and taught her place. His sharp tug at the little red-gold tuft of hair on her love-mound quickly ended her distraction.

“I see everything is back to normal,” Ross said, looking stern. “Must I take the switch to you to get you to obey me?”

“No, Sir,” Kate said and found it was much easier to suppress her temper than she expected. “I don’t want to make you angry. I... I want you to be pleased with me.” She crawled inside the cage and lay on her side to keep the weight from her buzzing bottom. He crossed the floor, raised the bars and locked them in place.

Back on the bed, he lit a cigarette and watched her as he smoked. Kate looked back with the heat radiating from her thoroughly spanked rear-cheeks, her breasts tender and nipples erect, and tingling excitement shivering through her. She fought the temptation to slide the hand resting on her stomach any lower. No touching he had said, and she would obey. She would prove she was sincere. His eyes travelling slowly over her nudity heightened the moist glow between her legs, and she knew her eyes were bright and simmering with passion as she turned them up to his. She could still taste him.

“I do want to please you. Really I do.”

“It’s not me you should be thinking about,” Ross said. “It’s your new master you need to please. He’s used to perfection in all things from his slaves. He won’t make any allowances because you’re from a different culture, the way I have.”

“But I don’t even know who it’s going to be,” Kate protested.

“That shouldn’t make any difference. You have to be ready to serve any man in any way you’re told. There might be times your master orders you to serve one of his guests, or loans you as a reward to a subordinate. And you’ll have to perform as well for them as you would for him.”

“Are you serious?” Kate asked, horrified.

“Of course. Remember a slave girl’s first duty? It’s more than just words. What if I told you to go to Captain Jefferson’s room and ask to serve him for your first proper time? Would you be so eager then?”

“I...” Kate’s belly curled into a ball at the thought of offering herself to the cruel man.

Ross laughed at her expression of distaste. “You see? There’s the value of your obedience and desire to please. You’ll have to do better than that, little miss, and you’ve only a few days left to accept the fact and do something about it if you want to save your bum from the whip in future.”

“If... if that’s what you want, I’ll do it,” Kate said, with the knot of her fear tightening more.

He stubbed out his cigarette and stood up. “Go on then.”

Chapter 5

Ross had unlocked the cage and lowered the bars while Kate was still wrestling with the alarming consequences of her impulsive decision. But it might be her only chance to show him that she was in earnest.

“Well?” He looked down at her and raised an eyebrow.

Hardly noticing the smart of her bottom in her new anxiety, Kate crawled out, stood unsteadily, and went slowly to the door. Opening it, she clung to its handle for long seconds before, with a deep breath and a glance back at Ross, she crossed the threshold.

“Wait,” he said.

Thank god, Kate thought with a flood of relief. She turned, filled with gratitude that he was not going to make her go through with her rash promise.

“What are you going to tell him?”

Kate’s belly flipped as her heart sank. It was not a reprieve at all. She struggled to think straight. “That... that you sent me, Sir.”

“And?”

“To... to please t...take me.”

Ross nodded. “Good enough. Off you go.”

Certain now that she meant nothing to him, Kate turned dejectedly to the open door. A hand grabbed her wrist, pulled her up short and yanked her back into the room. The door slammed shut and two strong arms enfolded her and pulled her against a muscular chest.

“Oh, you beast! I really thought you meant it.”

Ross laughed. “Maybe I did. In a few days I might give you to Jefferson. But not tonight. Not your first time. I happen to know he’s putting his latest acquisition through her paces right now. Besides, you need some kissing practice.” He scooped her up, carried her to his bed and dropped her on the mattress. Kate tried to roll off her bottom but his weight coming down on her prevented it, and his lips on hers and his hand cupping her breast made her stop caring about her burning buttocks. The curl of fear in her belly had become one of pure excitement and moist, tingling warmth suffused her as she moved her mouth greedily on his. Her skin felt as if it was on fire and her blood was singing in her veins. She clasped Ross tightly and pressed harder against him.

“Gently girl,” he said against her mouth. “We’ve got all night. No need to rush.”

Yearning to feel more fully the hard flesh against which she was rubbing herself, Kate thought there was every need. Yet, at the same time, she did not want the wonderful sensations running through her to stop. Twice the ex-soldier’s teasing fingers, nibbling lips and flickering tongue brought her to the brink, only to draw back at the last moment and leave her groaning and begging for fulfilment. At last he gave in and positioned himself between her eagerly parted thighs. Kate’s breath felt

trapped in her lungs and her heart ready to burst as his cock nudged aside her dew-bathed nether-lips.

“Ooh, it’s nice,” she panted as the rigid shaft glided slowly over the quivering walls of her sheath. “Ooh, it’s lovely!”

Ross thrust his hips forward. Their bellies met and his hardness struck sparks on the rippling membranes within her. Lightning flashed before her eyes. Stars exploded in her head. Kate bucked and writhed, spasming and squirming with ecstatic delight. Nothing she had ever felt before could have prepared her for the intensity of the sheer, unutterable pleasure that flared within her. In a heartbeat it spread to every nerve and fibre from her spinning head to her curling toes. For long seconds she hovered on the edge of consciousness while the mad sparkling clamped uncontrollably on the hard flesh filling her. It was incredible. It was wonderful.

Only when her frenetic thrashing and the wild clenching subsided did Ross begin thrusting again. Kate’s sex rippled in time with the slow back and forth rhythm. Gradually he increased the tempo, swinging his hips more rapidly until he was lunging harder and faster and panting as much as she was, their joined bodies slick with their mingling sweat and the air thick with an arousing aroma. Kate climaxed twice more before Ross gave a throaty growl and ground his belly against hers as his own fulfilment overtook him. His marvellous, furious thrusting triggered another breathtaking rush of delight that set her bucking and writhing in unfettered passion once again. As she shivered ecstatically, his mouth closed over hers in a long kiss and completed Kate’s feeling of total euphoria.

Afterwards, she experienced another first – lying in blissful contentment in her lover’s arms with their warm bodies pressing against one another. She drifted, not thinking, only feeling. The glow within her was more than just the aftermath of their love-making and was not confined to her pussy. It filled her heart too.

It could have been a minute or an hour later that Kate stirred and opened her eyes. A thrill ran through her. Ross was upright again, big and hard. The temptation to touch was irresistible. So was that to suck him again when she curled her fingers around his hard flesh and heard the pleased hiss of his escaping breath. He stroked her back as she bobbed her head. Tremors tickled her at the rear as well as in front. Ross’s fingers moved to the back of her neck and drew her up beside him. He caressed her breasts with hands and lips.

“Please,” she said, breathing faster. “Will you...? I want...”

He raised his eyes to hers and she felt her cheeks burning.

“Oh, hell!” Kate said, and cast off her embarrassment. “Put it up my bum, for heaven’s sake.” She cringed the moment the words were out.

“Well, you’ve changed your tune very quickly, little miss,” Ross said.

“Oh, don’t mock me, please!” Kate begged.

He smiled. “All right. Lie on your side and pull your knees up towards your chest.”

Belly fluttering with nerves and excitement, Kate turned her back and felt her buttocks separate as she drew her knees into the unfamiliar position. His big paw closing on her right rear cheek forcefully reminded her of the fiery burn in her well-

spanked bottom, but she cared nothing for the discomfort when she was so aroused. Her little muscle clenched in delicious reflex as his blunt fingertip pressed against it but, still oily from the intrusion of the bum-stretcher, it yielded easily.

“Ooh!” Kate sighed, and squirmed at the tremors rippling through her. “Ooh! Ooh!” A second finger joined the first, pushing deeper and stretching her tight pucker as if testing its elasticity.

“Ready, sweetheart?”

“Ooh, yes!” Her heart leapt as she heard the endearment, and then again as she felt Ross guide his manhood between her parted buttocks and push insistently against her shivering knot. Kate pushed back, eager to drive it deep inside at once. The hand gripping her right buttock tightened.

“No, we’ll go slowly to begin with. Relax. Get used to the feel of it first.” His hand slid over her hip and belly to gently squeeze her pebble-hard nipples. Tense and trembling in her excitement and with the tip of his hardened flesh already distending her, she found it difficult to keep still. It was even more difficult to resist tightening the ring of muscle around the head when she abruptly dilated and accepted it fully inside.

Ross gave Kate’s nipples a firm pinch. “Slowly, I said. It’s not hurting you, is it?”

“On, no! It’s lovely,” she gasped, forcing herself to slacken her grip. She did feel a twinge or two of pain as the broad baton sank deeper, but they were instantly swamped by the pleasure assailing her senses. The sensation of her sensitive tissues stretching to accommodate the intrusion was just as stimulating as their earlier love-making had been. When Ross’s hand moved from her breasts to between her thighs it increased further. His thumb found her upright button and rubbed. Kate gave a convulsive jerk backwards and drove the last inch of him into her wriggling passage. At the same moment, his fingers slipped between her feminine lips and teased her wonderfully.

“Ooh, yes! Oooh!” A moist surge of excitement accompanied the rippling thrill of a little climax. Automatically, her rear contracted around its invader, making her gasp and squirm. The rigid flesh drew back against her clenching grip, then sank slowly deeper once more until Ross’s belly was hard against the upper curve of her buzzing bottom.

He did it a dozen times more, all the while rubbing between her trembling thighs. Wriggling madly inside as well as out, she bucked against his hard body.

“Ooh, harder, faster!” she moaned

Ross withdrew almost completely then gave a sudden jerk of his hips, followed at once by several more.

“Ooh-hoo!” Kate cried as her tingling membranes expanded under the vigorous thrusts, and her pussy thrilled and tickled with sparkling delight. His belly was slapping against her buttocks, and every lunge of his hips drove him deeper. Kate thrust back just as avidly, heightening the marvellous friction. Her sheath rippled and spasms wriggled and wrenched through her whole lower belly until she seemed to explode with sensation. Kate bucked, overwhelmed by pleasure, her body racked by

writhing contractions that made her clamp down hard both front and back. Through her own ecstatic cries she heard a long, guttural growl and felt a hot flood on her sensitive inner tissues.

Kate's own climax continued unabated, profoundly and breathtakingly intense. She juddered and writhed, utterly engulfed by the pleasure. Ross thrust on for several more thrilling moments before he subsided panting beside her. Utterly spent by the time he had finished, Kate found she had not even strength to brush her sweat-soaked hair from her eyes. She felt his tight hold relax but an arm remained wrapped reassuringly around her, and his slowly shrinking flesh did not withdraw. She sagged, sated and breathless, against him.

Drifting once more she could feel the thump of his heartbeat against her back. It slowed gradually and his ragged breathing steadied and became even. Kate guessed he had fallen asleep. She was on the verge of doing the same. Carefully, she eased away from the cradle of his loins and let his flaccid manhood slide free. Sighing, she flexed her little muscle and felt it shiver. Lord, how good it had felt! Nothing could ever equal the delight she had known from being filled front and rear like that.

Kate told herself it was madness to lie there feeling safe and protected in the arms of a man whose stated purpose was to teach her to act like a whore and then sell her to the highest bidder. Inexplicably, insanely, it made no difference. The glow in her heart remained. She thought suddenly of Roger and his earnest declarations of love each time he proposed to her. Kate tried to imagine his reaction if she offered herself to him with the words 'put it up my bum, for heaven's sake.' Picturing the look on his face set her giggling.

She stopped abruptly as she remembered her parents. They would be horrified if they knew how willingly she had surrendered her innocence. Were they worried yet? She was only a few days late so far, and she had sent them a telegram from Bombay saying she was delayed and carefully avoiding explaining why. Her belly fluttered as she realized she might never get a chance to explain anything to either one of them ever again. Yet even then she knew she was not half as anxious about it as she should be. She craned her head over her shoulder to look at the cause of her dilemma. To her surprise, he was awake and looking at her.

"Something amusing?" he asked. "I'm surprised you've got the strength." He grinned. "I've had a good few little minxes like you in my time, but nobody ever came close to anything like that little performance of yours. It was quite something."

Kate was more pleased than embarrassed by the comment. "I was just thinking," she said.

"Me too," he replied. "What was it about your thinking that was funny?"

"Nothing really. I was being quite serious. I was thinking that Mummy and Daddy will be wondering where I am. Mummy calls me wayward and Daddy says I'm too impetuous for my own good."

"And what do you think?" Ross asked, pulling her closer.

Kate nestled gratefully into the crook of his arm and rubbed her cheek on his chest. "I'm not sure any more. I always thought I was just adventurous. I've always been the outgoing sort and... a bit outspoken, I suppose. I like doing things on the

spur of the moment. I don't want to be tied down." She winced at her poor choice of words and waited for him to laugh. When he did not, she sighed. "It's got me into a lot of trouble this time, hasn't it?"

"Maybe. Or maybe you were just in the wrong place at the wrong time, *and* with the wrong people."

"I don't understand," Kate said.

"Never mind. There's nothing wrong with wanting some adventure in life."

"I know. It's just that so many people seemed to think I was being headstrong or obstinate or downright unruly."

This time he did laugh. "I wonder why."

"Oh, you're mocking me again!" Kate said. "You don't see it either. Why should I have to settle for marriage and putting up with a boring life just because everyone else expects me to? You haven't."

Ross smiled and gave her a squeeze. "That's different. Anyway, I bet a beauty like you could have her pick of eligible young men. You must have had plenty of offers."

Kate pulled a face. "Not really. I suppose I was a bit *too* outgoing and outspoken sometimes. I have plenty of admirers, but I don't think they see me as the kind of girl they want to take home to meet their mothers, except for one, that is. But he doesn't interest me. Young men are either too serious or too juvenile, and they bore me."

Ross chuckled. "Ah, so you like older men. Men like me, I'm guessing?"

"Well, there's nothing wrong with that. And there's nothing wrong with wanting more out of life than being another bored housewife. People don't realise things are changing. There are women doctors and scientists now, and even some flying their own aeroplanes. I'm not clever enough for that, but that doesn't mean I should just give up on what I want."

It struck Kate that her craving for adventure had never had a clear focus in the past. She had only ever been sure about what she did not want, and her restlessness and love of travelling had helped her to avoid it. Now she knew with complete certainty what she did want. Her adventurous spirit had been given the direction it had lacked. It meant giving up her independence but was that not a big part of what made it so attractive? And it would be worth it to see the world with this man always at her side. If only she could convince him that she meant it.

He was chuckling again. He gave her left nipple a tweak. "I see where this is going, little minx, and you're not fooling me. I know what you're after."

Kate looked into his eyes. "Truly, Mister Ross, Sir, I'm not trying to deceive you."

"No, of course not," he said sardonically. "And you'll be telling me next that you want to be a slave girl."

"I do," Kate said. "But only if I can be *your* slave girl."

* * * * *

“Head up.” Jahngir Khan’s impatient order penetrated the haze of pain filling Julia’s mind. She forced her eyelids open and raised her drooping head. Sweat ran down her face and dripped from her chin to the floor of the *zenana*. Warily, she craned her neck and took her Master’s saliva-sheened manhood between her lips once more. As it had every time, the movement made the dildo buried in her backside shift, and the fearsome burning that its oily coating had created grew worse. Julia groaned around the flesh in her mouth as it slid back and forth over her tongue.

She was bound within a steel frame – two sets of X-shaped struts joined by welded crosspieces. Her knees were held wide, tied to the struts resting on the floor, her arms bent and roped from wrist to elbow to those that formed the upper part of the device, both holding her torso angled forwards. Behind her neck was a crossbar to which she was fixed by a leather collar around her neck. Another bar pressed into the small of her back, forcing her to arch her spine and jut her bottom rearwards. Jahngir had looped cords tightly around each of Julia’s breasts, distorting them into two swollen, fleshy globes whose pale skin had quickly changed to an alarming mottle of purple and blue. They ached, but their pain was nothing compared to the awful fire in her rear.

The Pathan pulled away and disappeared behind her. She hung her head, heard the slurping sounds Afia began making and trembled when the movements of the native girl’s bobbing head were translated into fiery discomfort in her own insides. Afia was bound in an identical fashion to the other side of the frame with her back to Julia’s. Jahngir had forced the opposite ends of the same long, black, double-ended ebony dildo into both girls. The slightest move either of them made was transferred to the oil-smearred phallus and heightened the fierce stinging of the sensitive membranes within their stretched openings.

Jahngir appeared in front of Julia again and she wearily opened her mouth. This time he climaxed. The sudden gush caught her by surprise but she knew better than to let any escape. The mood he was in Jahngir might easily use the switch he had waved threateningly at her and Afia after discovering the native girl teaching her some dance steps in the garden that morning. So Julia suppressed her need to cough and continued serving him until he slid from her pursed lips. Tired and hurting, she still felt a brief thrill as she swallowed. It seemed as if it was the taste of the Pathan’s strength, the essence of his masculinity, the same power she saw when she looked at his muscular figure, and heard in his commanding tone, and sensed in his dark, piercing gaze.

He took his time releasing the girls. He freed Afia first, as Julia had known he would. She had the feeling he took much pleasure from the sight of his concubines bound helplessly in the elaborate coils of rope and cord with which he carefully and painstakingly enmeshed them. Tying them in position had taken nearly as long as the punishment and he seemed to enjoy the act of removing the ropes almost as much as he did putting them in place.

He left freeing Julia’s breasts from their constricting cords until last. Their awful aching turned to a wicked throb as blood circulation returned, but she did not

surrender to the need to rub them with her numbed hands. Instead, like Afia, she remained kneeling between the struts of the frame.

“Come,” Jahngir ordered, and both girls crawled to his feet. “Look at me. I hope you are suitably contrite.”

Julia looked up and then away from his frowning face, and saw instead his naked, muscled figure and the slack length hanging between his thighs. A little droplet clung to its tip. Afia must have seen it too. She leaned forward and lapped it onto her tongue.

“Forgive us, my lord. They were only a few dance steps. You have never disapproved before.”

Jahngir flicked the switch in his hand across her right teat.

“Ow! My lord, you...” She looked at him, plainly shocked.

“Impertinent girl! Neither did I order you to do it. If I want her to learn to dance I will say so.”

Afia bowed her head. “Yes, my lord, it is as you say.”

“And will continue so. The day will not come when my concubines usurp my authority in my own *zenana*.”

“My lord?” Afia looked bewildered.

He waved the switch impatiently. “Enough. Clean yourselves up.”

Julia needed no second bidding, and Afia was right behind her as they hurried past the other girls’ concerned glances and rushed to the bath, clutching hands tingling and half-numbed to their breasts to stop their painful bouncing.

Only when both girls had douched each other’s rear entrances with several jugfuls of blessedly cold water and stepped into the warm bathwater with heartfelt sighs of relief, did Afia speak.

“I have never known him to be in such a mood for so long. He is often quick-tempered but also quick to forgive. I cannot think what has made him like this.”

“Perhaps his aqueduct,” Julia suggested.

“I don’t think so. Not this time.”

A fiery little stab shivered through the English girl’s innards. “What is that awful stuff he puts on the dildo?” she asked.

“Oil mixed with curry powder and extracts of chilli and peppers. And what we’ve just had isn’t the hottest.”

“Hot enough,” Julia said ruefully. “He’s not an easy man to understand. I think he likes to see us all tied up in the ropes and cords.”

Afia laughed. “Of course he does. He doesn’t just do it to punish us.”

“You mean when he... he makes love to you? That can’t be very nice.”

The native girl laughed again with her eyes sparkling. “Oh, you’d be surprised!”

“You enjoy it?” A shocking little quiver ran through Julia. “But you’d be completely helpless. He could... could do anything. He’s just using you for his own pleasure.”

“That is always true in the *zenana*.” Afia smiled. “To serve our master is why we are here, but he is a considerate lover. He always makes sure we are pleased too.”

Julia remembered how being manacled had allowed her to escape her guilt, and she found the idea suddenly more appealing. And she would willingly be tied any way Jahngir Khan wanted her if it meant he would make love to her.

This time when Afia produced the pink soap Julia did not argue. She bent over and welcomed the slippery, well-lathered fingers that slid into her to wash away the last vestiges of the stinging oil. Nor did she demur when it was her turn to do the same for the Indian girl, though the sensations both actions caused her were strange and confusing.

“He’s very stern,” she said as she felt Afia’s soft tissues yield under her fingertips. Recalling how stern sent another quiver through her sex.

“But not always, as you have seen for yourself.” Afia gave a grunt, and pushed back against the pressure of the English girl’s hand. “But there are times I would gladly box his ears, and this is one of them. My bottom hasn’t suffered like this for ages. This ill-humoured behaviour isn’t really like him. He’s been much more bad-tempered since he brought you home with him, and especially after you both came back from the bath the day before yesterday. Did you do something to upset him?”

“I don’t know,” Julia said. “I was... trying to please him. I thought I had, then the next thing I knew he had dragged me to the *zenana* and I was tied up with that dildo thing stuck inside me. And then yesterday he said I was inattentive during training and did it again.”

“And now the same today and for no real reason,” the Indian girl said, and wriggled suddenly. “Ooh, deeper! There’s a place giving me hell and you’re not reaching it.”

Julia forced her finger further in and her own rear muscle reflexively pinched tight. “Oh, it’s awful, Afia! I don’t know how you can bear it each time he does it to you.”

The girl laughed. “Because I know what we will do together afterwards. And because I love him.”

Julia took a deep breath. “I thought he meant to do it with me the other day. I was sure, in fact, but then he stopped at the last minute. That’s when he got angry. He frightens me when he acts so strict and domineering.”

Julia’s soapy digits slid free as the girl turned to face her. “Frightens or excites?”

Julia gulped. “Both,” she answered honestly, and saw Afia’s knowing smile. “He does that to me too, and the others. I suppose that’s one reason I love him.”

“Isn’t it hard having to share him? Wouldn’t you rather have him all to yourself?”

The native girl’s eyes widened in surprise. “Just he and I? I never thought of that.” She considered for a moment. “Maybe I would, but it will never happen. It is

not the way for men like Jahngir Khan to have only one bed-mate. I would be selfish to expect that of my lord, and unfair to the other girls to try to keep him to myself. I would much rather be one of my lord's concubines than the wife of a lesser man."

A wriggle ran through Julia's belly as she braced herself and made her confession. "So would I. I love him too." It was total madness, almost beyond belief and understanding. Nevertheless, tears of sheer joy brimmed her eyes as she spoke. She shook her head in bewilderment. "I've only known him a few days. After how he's treated me I should hate him, but Afia, I've never been so sure of anything before. Am I going mad?"

Afia hugged her, crushing their full breasts together. "Not mad, poor girl, not mad at all. I fell in love with him on my first day. But you need to know -."

"I couldn't believe it when I first realized," Julia interrupted excitedly. "I didn't *want* to believe it. This sort of thing doesn't happen to me. I blamed my... my frustration to begin with but it's more than that. Jahngir is moody and bad-tempered, and clever and witty, and strong and... wonderful. I hated it when he brought me here, but now I want to stay and be with him and you and the rest of the girls always. It might sound like craziness, but I feel like I have more freedom here than ever I did home in England, or ever could have there." She laughed happily. "I know it makes no sense, not even to me, but I feel it just the same." She felt liberated – from the conventions she had always allowed to rule her life, from her parents' plans to force her into a loveless marriage, from the need to conform to other peoples' expectations, and most of all from the shyness and timidity that had stifled all of her ambition. Now, concubine and slave though she was, she had found the freedom to be herself.

Julia was not exactly sure when it had happened; sometime during the long night that had followed the day on which Jahngir had almost made love to her and when her rear was still buzzing warmly from her mild punishment with the oil. She had lain in darkness with both wrists shackled so she could do nothing about her frustrations and suddenly everything had been clear.

She had been vaguely aware that her feelings had been changing, growing alongside the suspicion that she had guessed who was going to be her master. The shock that had come when Julia realized her suspicion had become certainty had been nothing like what she would have felt a few days previously. In truth, it had not really been a shock at all, but a pleasant, reassuring glow of sudden happiness and contentment. It was then that she had understood there could be only one reason why, and had looked into her heart. The result of that had been astonishing but undeniable.

"I love him," Julia said again, with the same joyful thrill as before.

The Indian girl clasped her tighter. "I'm sure you do, but I need to tell you -."

"What's this, more misbehaviour?" Jahngir's deep voice demanded.

Thigh-deep in the water the girls let go of each other and turned to face him.

"We are obeying your command, my lord," Afia said.

Julia felt no need to conceal her nudity from his glowering gaze. She drew herself straighter. It seemed as if a new strength had filled her since her confession. Despite Jahngir's frown, his presence increased her happiness, and as he tossed his robe aside and waded naked into the bath her sex pulsed excitedly.

“Then your backsides should be thoroughly cleansed by now,” he said and when they agreed, “Then you can do them again, and you can soap each other’s pussies too.” He sat down with the water lapping his shoulders and leaned against the side of the pool.

Since Afia was holding the soap, it was Julia who first had to lean on the edge of the bath, present her rounded rear and accept the ministrations of the native girl’s lathery fingers. As they smoothed over her sensitive membranes, she felt the same confusing sensations that she had before. Now that the burning had ceased it was not quite discomfort, nor the stimulation the same touch between her legs would create, but somewhere between the two and not really unpleasant. For her, Julia thought, that should have been a difficult admission to make. That it was not she saw as another proof of how much she had changed in so short a time. A greater one was the eagerness with which she greeted Afia’s hand on her nether-lips and the slithering of two long fingers inwards.

Knowing Jahngir was watching, Julia could not quite manage to evade a twinge of embarrassment as she gasped and panted and wriggled with increasing arousal, but she did not try to hold back. She would have failed in any case with the way her pussy was rippling under Afia’s skilful manipulating, and besides, it might make the Pathan just a little pleased with her. Much too soon for her liking he had the girls swap places. He rose to his feet and came closer as Julia liberally lathered her hands. With greater courage than she ever thought she would possess, the English girl boldly raised her eyes to his and smiled. His glittering stare seemed to hold a challenge she was determined to meet. She did not look away.

“What are you waiting for?” he demanded icily.

Julia gulped. “Nothing, Master.” She pushed her soap-slick fingers into Afia’s rear and worked them back and forth. As she had admitted to the girl, Jahngir Khan did frighten her, but he excited her much more. The hot passion that the Indian girl’s rubbing had provoked in her continued while she returned the favour. Jahngir let it continue much longer than he had for Julia, with Afia’s gasps and breathy groans growing ever noisier, and her rearward thrusts onto Julia’s teasing fingers more abandoned until it was obvious she was close to climaxing. Afia gave a mew of frustration as he called a halt.

“Face me, both of you,” he instructed. “And I had better see two prettily upright buttons on those pussies or there’ll be trouble.”

They stood hip to hip. The little waves he made in the pool as he waded towards them lapped against Julia’s feminine lips, making them tickle and washing away the soapsuds. She looked down and saw her bud was indeed standing out firmly. Jahngir turned Afia with his hands on her waist and bent her forward until her breasts flattened on the stone edging around the bath. For a third time she arched her back and jutted her bottom rearwards.

“Come here next to me,” he told Julia. “You need to watch this. It’s going to happen to you too, sooner or later.” He pointed to his erection. “Soap it.”

It felt as hard as iron when her lathered fingers closed around it, yet warm and velvety and pulsing with power. Julia felt a wriggling of renewed desire as her

moving hand made soft, slippery, slapping noises on the straining flesh. Her pussy's fluttering reached up into her belly as Jahngir sank the fingers of both hands into Afia's firm rear-cheeks and pried them apart.

"Do you know where it's going, girl?" the Pathan demanded.

"Yes, Master." She remembered the night she had lain in her sleeping cubicle and watched Saba offer him her rear. With a hiss and a moan, Afia relaxed her little pucker and Julia saw it flex abruptly.

"Then you know where to place it."

"Yes, Master," Julia said, a tremor in her voice. Her hand trembled too, and she felt the resilience in his up-curved shaft as she angled it downwards and held its broadness against Afia's soap-slathered entrance.

"Now watch closely," he said.

Julia could not have dragged her eyes away if she had wanted to. With her own behind nipping tight, she saw the Indian girl's expand under the pressure. It must be nearly as big as her fist, she thought, heart racing as Afia's little ring of muscle stretched alarmingly and Jahngir eased himself slowly inside. She had to snatch her hand away to avoid it being trapped between their bodies as the Pathan gave a swift lunge of his hips and buried himself to the hilt. Afia wriggled and gave a breathy moan.

"See how easily it went in, girl?" Jahngir asked. "Is it hurting, Afia?"

"No, my lord. It feels good," she replied between rapid, shallow breaths.

"You don't need to fear it, you see," he told Julia. "You don't need to worry that it will hurt you, not even the first time. Just relax and let it happen and it doesn't have to be painful at all. Remember that and you'll enjoy it. You like it, don't you, Afia?"

"Oh, yes!" Afia said, wiggling her bottom. "Ugh! Ooh!" The sounds escaped her as he drew back until Julia could once more see how wide-stretched the girl was by the impaling member, and then he thrust his hips forward again. He gripped Afia's waist, taking her with long, quick thrusts that she was soon enthusiastically pushing backwards to meet.

Julia could not help but try to imagine how it must be feeling. It looked rather rough, and she had thought that something so big filling her would at least hurt a little, but Afia's gasps and sighs held much more of passion than of pain. However, it was only when Jahngir pulled from between her jerking buttocks and immediately thrust into her other entrance that her arousal seemed to fully overtake her. She grew louder and her hips' boisterous backward movements more unruly as the Pathan took her hard and fast.

As Julia watched their unbridled coupling, she felt the pangs of jealousy that had pained her heart only once before. Why did he take Afia so avidly yet deny the same pleasure to her? What had she said or done, or not done, to make him refuse her fulfilment that day they had lain on the steps of the bath? Afia bucked wildly and gave a high-pitched cry of delighted abandon. Seconds later, Jahngir jerked frantically, crushing his belly to her buttocks as he revealed his own pleasure with a long, guttural growl. Hot and quivering and with the scent of excited womanhood

filling the air around her, Julia felt only the frustration of her own unsatisfied desires, made worse when Jahngir raised Afia upright and kissed her lips.

“That was lovely, my lord,” she panted softly.

“Go and dress,” he told her, and grabbed Julia’s wrist. “I’m not done with you yet,” he said, pulling her to the stone bench where he had flung his robe.

Afia looked back from the entrance, and Julia saw her anxiety as their eyes met briefly before the girl disappeared. Jahngir sat on the bench and pushed her to her knees.

“This is something else you’ll do in future. Your master may take more than one girl at a time. You’ve seen what I’ve just done. Let’s see if you’ve properly learned obedience yet.” He pointed to his groin, leaned back on the bench and arched an eyebrow at her.

She must not hesitate, Julia told herself, and reached for his slack manhood. It was shiny and sticky on her fingers as she lifted it and bowed her head to her task. She licked it first. It tasted of mingled moistness and also, disconcertingly, of soap, but she refused to be put off. Neither was she deterred by the knowledge of where it had been only moments ago. She still desperately wanted it to fill her and so she used all the skills she had learned to bring it back to life. Shortly, she sat back with a satisfying feeling of accomplishment as it reared arrogantly upright once more. Julia looked hopefully at Jahngir’s brooding face. His expression remained stony but he gave a grudging nod.

“Good. Finally you seem ready to obey in the way a slave girl should.”

“I am ready, Master,” she said, not only pleased but also emboldened by his words. She cupped the undersides of her breasts with her hands, lifting them to offer the hard cones of her nipples to him. He did not reach for them, but Julia saw a glitter in his eyes and the tip of his tongue slide over his lower lip. “I am ready,” she repeated, spreading her thighs and leaning back to expose the full length of the lips between them and the firmness of her feminine bud at their apex. “I am willing too, Master. See?” Heart swelling with hope and longing and love, she let go of her breasts and ran a hand down her belly. Still smiling, though her stomach fluttered wildly, she reached her fingers to her flesh and spread them and it apart.

Jahngir was breathing faster, and Julia saw his thickness twitch as he looked at what she was displaying to him. Her eyes met his in a silent plea filled with all of her love. Still the hard planes of his face did not soften.

“What has happened to the shy English girl and her outraged modesty?” he asked.

“I have no modesty where you are concerned. I want only for you to... to...” She groped for the word Afia had used. “To honour me as you do the other girls.”

“No!” He shook his head and looked even more forbidding.

Julia felt a stab of pain through her breast at the curt refusal. She turned in a half circle and lifted her bottom. “Then use me here as you did Afia. Please, let me serve you properly like your other concubines do.”

“You are not my concubine,” Jahngir said. “You must remain unused until you are sold and securely in the possession of your new master.”

“But why must I wait?” Julia groaned, turning to face him. “I’ve guessed the truth, my lord.” A thrill ran through her at using the title. “I know who my new master will be. It’s you! It was you all along!”

The Pathan’s eyebrows rose. “Girl, you are right that I will buy you.”

Julia’s heart leapt with joy. A thin, pained-looking smile appeared on Jahngir’s lips.

“But I’m not buying you for myself. You are a gift for my brother, the Prince.”

She stared at him open-mouthed. Her joy vanished.

Chapter 6

“Is the tea not to your liking, Mrs. Winter?”

Penny gave a start. When the Prince had begun discussing with Courtney his arrangements for the day the *khillat* was to be distributed, her attention had gone to the soreness in her ravaged, aching bottom, which had barely begun to recover. She looked up. Raham Dil, Prince of Jargahal looked back with his plump face bearing an expression of concern. Or was it annoyance, she wondered.

“It is excellent, Your Highness, but also a little hot,” she lied. The tea had an odd aftertaste she did not find to her liking.

“It will have cooled by now,” Courtney said. “Drink it down, Penny and you can have another.” He drank deeply of his own and smacked his lips. Disliking the sarcastic smile he gave, Penny eyed him suspiciously over the rim of her own cup as she drained it. She forced a smile for the Prince who nodded his satisfaction.

“Excellent idea, Courtney *Saaquib*. More tea,” he said enthusiastically, and his chubby jowls and double chin wobbled as he clapped his hands. The petite, slender slave girl kneeling beside his chair jumped to her feet and reached for the teapot on the low table before them. Penny had been uneasily glancing at her since she and Courtney had been shown into the opulent surroundings of the apartment where Raham Dil held his tea parties. Naked but for a thin jewelled belt around her hips and a strip of white silk no wider than a hair-ribbon to hide her sex, the slave was a disturbing reminder of the fate facing Julia and Kate and the reason for her meeting with the Prince.

His large, pudgy paw shot out with surprising speed and smacked hard on the girl’s narrow bottom. She jerked upright with a yelp and clutched it. “How many times must I tell you? The English always put the milk in first,” he snapped. “Please excuse her Mrs. Winter. She is unschooled in such niceties.”

Penny inclined her head and wished she dared light a cigarette. The man’s politeness was becoming unnerving. Almost every encounter with men she had had since returning to India had resulted in her stripping off her clothes and having to endure the most humiliating indignities. She had good reason to suspect this one would end no differently. Alarmingly, she felt a little excited quiver, which heightened her awareness that beneath her white calico skirt and thin cotton blouse she wore no underwear. Courtney had forbidden it while she remained in his house. Nervous, Penny crossed her legs in an effort to suppress a second tickle, and then remembered the Prince’s culture disapproved of women doing such a thing and immediately uncrossed them.

“Careless girl,” the Prince said when the slave tilted the milk jug over Penny’s cup and only a trickle ran out. He continued in rapid Pashto.

After almost five years Penny’s was somewhat rusty, but she caught the gist of it, especially the word ‘whipping’ that brought a mew of dismay to the slave’s lips. Looking distinctly displeased, Raham picked up the little gold bell from the table and rang it vigorously until two girls hurried from a side door into the room.

Penny was astonished. Both were clearly slaves and wearing almost nothing except gold jewellery, but it was not their nudity that shocked her. One of the girls was white-skinned with hair as blonde as Julia's and breasts that were even bigger but which, Penny could notice even amid her surprise, were less firm and upright than her own. Most astonishing, however, was that her belly was swollen enormously with a pregnancy that had to be close to reaching full-term. The Indian girl beside her was the same broad-hipped and heavy-breasted type, and though she showed no signs of pregnancy, her brownish-pink nipples were thick and distended and had two big drops of white fluid clinging to their tips. The Prince half-turned towards the slaves with the milk jug in his hand.

"Good Lord, it's *pei!*" Penny blurted, using the Pashto word.

Raham Dil laughed. "It is indeed. Breast milk, Mrs. Winter. I never drink any other kind, and always fresh and warm from the tit. Which would you like, brown or white?" His face split into a grin, and Penny heard Courtney chuckle throatily as she fought to regain her composure. No wonder the tea had tasted strange.

"I... I really have no preference, Highness," she replied hoarsely.

"Some of both then," he said, tapping a finger on the European girl's bulging belly. Expressionless, she leaned forward, offering the big globes of her teats to her master. He circled the left one with two fingers and a thumb a little behind the nipple, held the jug underneath, and simultaneously squeezed and pulled on the hanging breast. There was a hollowness in Penny's stomach as she queasily saw and heard the milk squirt from the thick nub and into the jug.

"This one has just started milking in the last couple of weeks," Raham said conversationally as he tugged and squeezed her fleshy teat. "Of course, she'll be good for two or three years now, before I have to decide whether to mate her again. Sometimes they disappoint me and dry up sooner but I have high hopes for her. It takes seven or eight girls to keep me supplied, depending on how much they produce." He transferred the jug and his fat fingers to the right breast, and continued milking. Just like he would a goat, Penny thought. "I keep a little back for the milkmaids to drink themselves. I'm sure it improves their production."

Penny winced. With a glance at the level in the jug, the Prince motioned the European girl away and the Indian slave took her place. Her teats were even larger and her milk ran freely from her elongated nipples as she bent over. Without being told, she pinched the one not above the jug with her fingers to stop its flow while Raham milked her other breast.

Penny squirmed her complaining backside on her seat. It seemed such an intimate and personal thing that she felt embarrassed to witness it, not for herself so much as for the girls being milked. Was Raham Dil a kind master, she wondered. Were any masters kind to their slave girls? His name meant 'Mercy Heart' but she had a feeling he was unlikely to live up to it. He was gross. His hair was heavily oiled and slicked back from his high forehead. Beneath his fat face, his neck seemed to have vanished into the corpulent bulk of his body. An immense paunch strained the buttons of his richly embroidered *chapaan* around its middle and what looked like

breasts bulged beneath it. Penny quickly lowered her critical gaze as he turned back to the table with the milk jug brim-full.

“Perhaps you could spare enough *pei* to allow Mrs. Winter to appreciate its flavour to the full, Highness,” Courtney suggested before he could pour any into Penny’s cup. She caught her breath as the Prince’s expression turned suddenly frosty, and she tried to keep her own studiously neutral.

“Well, maybe a little to show her the quality of my milkmaids,” he said grudgingly. “But only a small glass, mind.”

To Penny’s dismay, the petite slave quickly brought one and Raham filled it half way and set it before her. The men sat back and drank their tea, watching her expectantly. With a dagger look at Courtney, she raised the glass to her lips. Little opaque bubbles floated on the milk’s surface. It could not possibly taste as foul as the disgusting, slimy semen she had been forced to swallow, the Englishwoman told herself, and she took a hasty sip. Her stomach churned as she made herself swallow, but the stuff’s flavour was not the cause; simply the knowledge of where it had come from. To Penny, it seemed unnatural and rather perverse to be drinking the product of another woman’s body. It was warm and recognisably milk, but not like that of a cow, or like anything else she had ever tasted, but she could not have called it exactly unpleasant. Penny saw Raham eagerly awaiting her opinion as she replaced the glass on the table.

“Excellent, Your Highness. A unique and most distinctive flavour,” Penny said, unashamedly dissembling, and ignoring the grin Courtney gave her. When the Prince beamed happily, she risked a request. “I wonder, may I smoke?”

“Excuse me. I forgot it is a habit among white women as well as men.” He flipped open a gold box on the table and slid it across to her. The cigarette was Virginia rather than the Turkish she preferred, but Penny lit it gratefully and dragged the tobacco smoke deep into her lungs. Sunk amidst his pudgy face, the Prince’s eyes widened as they watched her breasts rise and fall. Another disturbing tremor teased through her at his obvious interest, and again she could not understand how the attention of such a horrid creature could provoke even the smallest spark of excitement in her.

“I am told we have met before, Mrs. Winter,” he said, “though, alas, I cannot recall the occasion.”

“It was only once, briefly, Highness. My late husband commanded the garrison here for a short time before it was withdrawn. Perhaps you remember him, Captain Thomas Winter?”

“That was several years ago, but I believe I do. I’m surprised I have forgotten you though. I would have expected to recall a *mem-sahib* with a pair of tits as remarkable as yours.”

Oh, Lord, here it comes, Penny thought with her belly going tight.

“My wazir tells me they are not in milk, however,” Raham continued. “Is that correct, Mrs. Winter?”

“I...” She caught Courtney’s warning look and stifled her urge to tell the Prince to go to hell. “They are not, Highness,” she confirmed.

He sighed. "A great pity. But I'm sure you would still like to see my milking parlour, wouldn't you?" Raham hauled his obese carcass out of his sturdy, gold and ivory decorated chair before she had a chance to reply. What choice did she have, anyway, Penny thought grimly as her heart began beating faster. She rose to her feet. "Oh, finish your milk first," he said.

Resignedly, Penny accepted she was not going to escape that either, and, ignoring the flutters in her belly, gulped the breast-milk down, consoling herself that it did taste a lot better than semen. As the Prince showed her to the same door through which the slave girls had entered, she realized all three were following, and Courtney too. Whatever humiliation awaited her, and she was now sure that she was going to be humiliated, there were going to be plenty of witnesses. The Prince opened the door and paused.

"There is one thing before we continue. No *mem-sahib* has ever seen my dairy before. Usually it is a place for my slave girls and their master, and as such no female is permitted inside unless she is naked. So if you wish to enter, you must -."

"I understand, Highness," Penny interrupted, already reaching for the fastenings of her skirt. He knew as well as she did that she had no wish to see inside but too much was at stake for her to refuse, so let them just get on and get it over with.

"Then please remove your blouse first."

With a disconcerting wriggle inside her, Penny obeyed the polite request she knew was really an order, and watched his bright, piggy-eyed gaze drink in the sight of her out-thrust breasts. Her skirt fell around her feet and he looked down at her nakedness. Even his tongue looked fat as he ran it over his fleshy lips and returned his attention to her breasts.

"Excellent. Superb." He lifted them on his pudgy palms, feeling their weight then squeezing them firmly before letting them bounce back into place. "And as white as lilies too, Courtney." He thumbed Penny's left teat where one of the welts the Englishman or Sahar Gul had inflicted still marred her skin. "A shame you had to flog them."

"She needed a lesson in humility, Highness," Courtney replied, "or she would not be so amenable today. And I laid most of the strokes on her backside, as you can see."

Raham Dil's hands turned her so he could see her ravaged rear-cheeks. She had looked at them in the mirror, a mass of purple bruising overlaid with vivid, dark-red streaks that even numerous cold dressings and applications of Ranee's salve had not yet persuaded to fade. The Prince turned her back without touching them, and his finger under her chin lifted her eyes to his.

"Are you humble now, Mrs. Winter?"

There were a lot of replies she could give him that he would not like. Penny settled for one that he would. "Yes, Highness."

"Then there will be no need for me to flog you today," he said. "I seldom beat a girl's breasts. They have more interesting uses." He pinched her nipples and she was surprised to find they were erect. "And it would be a pity to disfigure, even

temporarily, two beauties like these.” His eyes glittered, diamond hard. “But I do make exceptions.”

“I understand, Highness,” Penny said with a gulp.

“Come then.”

Not much reassured by what he had said, she followed him into the room. Immediately, her attention focused on the four pieces of strange apparatus that occupied much of the floor space. They were too similar to the ones Penny had seen in Courtney’s punishment room for her not to feel fear shrink her belly and clench her buttocks tight as she recalled how terribly vulnerable she had felt when bound and helpless. Standing at either side of a door in the far wall were two upright frames of wood and metal, festooned with leather straps she had no doubt were intended for the restraint of defenceless slave girls. Nearest to her were two tables with iron uprights attached that reminded her of the whipping the wazir had given her two days earlier. A longer table against one wall held a line of squat glass jars, and next to it was a refrigerator which, near bankrupt though she was, Penny would have bet money had been supplied by Macdonald.

“How do you like my milking parlour then, Mrs. Winter?” The Prince’s face was alight with anticipation.

“Er... very impressive, Your Highness. Most, um... efficient, I’m sure.”

Clearly he was proud of his strange fetish rather than embarrassed by it. Penny hoped it might be to her advantage if she played along.

“It’s all my own design,” he told her. “Sometimes I let the girls milk themselves or each other without strapping them down, just for the pleasure of watching them, but it’s more satisfying if they’re bound. It’s easier to control the flow too, and less wasteful. Here, I’ll show you.”

“That’s most kind, Highness,” Penny said with a smile.

He motioned the pregnant girl to one of the tables. Her face was impassive as she clambered onto it, but the look in her eyes when they caught Penny’s made the Englishwoman turn away. She was probably English too, Penny thought with a pang of something close to guilt; someone’s daughter, maybe even someone’s wife before she was snatched away and sold into slavery. Not that she could do anything about it, she told herself, standing there as naked and defenceless as the girl.

The white slave knelt on the leather-padded tabletop, resting her knees just short of one end, and leaned forward to feed her big, milk-filled breasts through two looped leather straps riveted to the edge of a wooden crossbar held by iron uprights at either side of the table. As her hands met the tabletop, her shoulders and chest above her dangling teats rested on the crossbar and the Prince and the Indian milkmaid fastened leather cuffs attached to the table around her wrists. Similar cuffs fitted just above her knees secured her legs and another wooden bar, which Raham locked in place between two more uprights, pressed down into the small of her back and emphasised the bulge of her hanging, distended belly.

Penny’s feigned expression of intense interest deserted her as he produced a large, heavily-ridged ivory dildo, spread the pregnant girl’s thighs with one hand and pushed it deep between them with the other. The girl gasped and wriggled, the first

signs of any emotion she had shown, and the Prince gave Penny a broad grin as he fastened a third bar level with the phallus to hold it inside her.

“I like them to feel pleasure during their milkings. It helps the flow.”

The Indian milkmaid had already removed the lids from two glass jars and placed them in cut-outs in the tabletop beneath the girl’s pendent teats. Raham gripped the leather loop encircling the right breast, and Penny saw it was a thin belt that he pulled very tight and buckled around the flesh, compressing it into a narrow neck with the heavy teat swelling out below it. The girl gave a faint moan and her milk at once began trickling from her right nipple into the jar beneath. The Prince treated her left breast in identical fashion, and soon its milk was doing the same.

“Have a good look, Mrs. Winter,” he said. “You can see she’s flowing nicely. That will continue for several minutes with her tits as full as they are, or we can help it along.” He reached out and squeezed the white girl’s right breast in the way he had earlier. There was a soft hiss as the fluid squirted more quickly into the jar and little bubbles formed on its swirling surface.

“Yes, I see. How fascinating,” Penny lied and racked her brain for a question to reinforce the impression she was interested. “You said you always have it fresh, Your Highness, yet you have a refrigerator. What is its purpose?” She heard Courtney’s smothered laugh and cringed inwardly.

“It’s where we keep the supply for the milkmaids,” he said, oblivious to her subterfuge and the Englishman’s amusement, “and the whipped cream, of course.”

“Oh, of course, the whipped cream,” Penny said, incredulous. Surely he was not fully sane. For a moment, she could only watch the gentle sway of the milkmaid’s large breasts that was making the streams of liquid from her long nipples describe little circles on the surface of the milk in the jars. She noticed the pregnant girl’s breathing had quickened and the reason for her breasts’ swaying was the almost imperceptible wriggling of her hips as she repeatedly tightened herself on the dildo. She would do the same in that position, Penny decided, and was astonished that such a thought had entered her head.

“I expect you’d like to try milking her yourself,” Raham Dil said.

“Oh! I... er... yes, I would.” She could not stop the heat rising in her cheeks as she reluctantly gave the girl’s right breast a tentative squeeze.

“More firmly,” the Prince said. His damp, sweaty hand closed over Penny’s, pressing it harder into the milk-laden teat until the flow quickened and sprayed with a gurgling sound into the container. She released her grip the instant he did, and stepped back, forcing a smile to her stiff lips.

“Most informative, Your Highness. Very intriguing,” Penny said, avoiding looking at Courtney. She caught her breath as Raham’s clammy paws closed over her own jutting globes.

“You’ve never known the feeling yourself, have you? Never felt your tits swell with milk until their skin was so tight you thought they would burst and it sprays out at the slightest pressure.” His tongue flickered wetly over his lips. “You’ve never felt it flowing from the suction of a mouth clamped over those delicious, fat udders and suckling them really hard.” Almost reverently, it seemed to

Penny, he rubbed the pebble-hard points at the tapering tips of her swelling breasts, and then suddenly lowered his head and sucked painfully hard on one of them. She gave a startled yelp and for a second tried to pull away before she remembered why she was there. For more than a minute he slobbered on one nipple and then the other before letting her go.

“It’s time you climbed on the other table, Mrs. Winter,” he announced.

“But, Your Highness, as you know, I have no... no milk.”

“Most regrettably, but the table has other uses, so do as you are told.”

There was no mistaking his tone – commanding, authoritative, used to demanding instant obedience and expecting nothing less. Penny gave it. Though her gut was churning, she shivered with a little ripple of excitement as she mounted the table and nervously let him manhandle her breasts into the leather loops. The Prince and the Indian girl, her milk still dripping steadily from her big nipples, fastened the straps around Penny’s wrists, pulling her upper chest hard into the padded crossbar. She almost lost her battle with panic as she felt herself once more bound in dreadful helplessness. She was completely at Raham Dil’s mercy.

“Oh, that’s extremely tight, Highness!” she said, voice quavering as she fought her fear.

The Prince did not reply, but continued securing her in the same fashion he had his pregnant milkmaid, except that he did not add a bar behind her but placed it under her belly to hold her up on all fours. Penny discovered the position was as uncomfortable as it looked. It was even more so when he pulled the belts tight around her dangling breasts.

“Ooh! That’s quite painful, Highness,” she whined, though she knew he did not care.

“Would you like to finish the milking, Courtney, while I deal with Mrs. Winter?” he asked, as if she had not spoken.

“Very much, Highness.”

Penny raised her head and watched Courtney grasp the white girl’s breasts and begin tugging and squeezing alternately on them. They had become a mottled, bluish colour, and her belly flipped as she realized her own painfully nipped globes would soon look the same. With mounting anxiety she prayed that whatever was going to happen would be over quickly. A moment later, the Prince’s hands closed around her teats just behind her nipples and began pulling and squeezing as though she too was being milked. To her surprise, it was not an unpleasant sensation. He carried on for several minutes with the silence broken only by the sound of Penny’s gasps and the regular squirt-squirt of the pregnant girl’s milk into the glass jars.

He was fat and gross and disgusting, Penny told herself. Yet still his touch was stimulating her stiffly erect nipples, despite the discomfort of the tight straps biting into her breasts. Her sex even tried to give a little tickle, but it was quashed by the apprehensive flutters in her stomach at the thought that the Prince would not be satisfied with toying with her teats. She was proved right as he released them and positioned himself behind her.

“Let’s see what you’re like back here.”

Penny gave a startled jerk as his fat fingers spread her nether-lips and pushed inside. This time, the tickle there overcame her fears sufficiently to run the full length of her sheath. It ended abruptly with her cry of pain as Raham grasped the cheeks of her bruised, tender bottom and pulled them apart. He held them like that while Penny's muscles automatically contracted, and she whimpered and tried to squirm, and discovered just how restrictive her bondage was. She groaned her relief as his grip vanished and he moved to her head. He gestured at the white slave girl.

"Loosen her straps when her flow slackens, Courtney. You'll find she'll give a little more after that. Oh, and feel free to use her mouth when she's finished."

"I will, Highness. Thank you," the Englishman replied. "I hope Mrs. Winter is proving satisfactory."

"Splendid so far. I have a feeling she may well exceed my expectations."

"I expect you found her quite stimulated. Despite her lack of formal training she's very responsive."

"Well, let's find out, shall we?" the Prince said, unbuttoning his *chapaan* as he spoke. The petite slave girl had to help him get it off his obese body along with the white silk shirt he wore beneath. She knelt to remove his trousers.

He was even more disgusting naked. He did look as though he had breasts, and they hung slackly onto a stomach that began half way up his chest and bulged out further than that of his pregnant slave. Below it, his waist sagged grotesquely, its weight of fat pressing on his erection, making it stick out horizontally instead of stand upright. To Penny's surprise, for she had always imagined fat men were small, his shaft was long and almost as thick as Courtney's. The thought of feeling it penetrate her while that mountain of sweaty, blubbery flesh pressed against her body made her feel nauseous. There was nothing she could do to stop it. The Prince was controlling her just as Macdonald and Courtney and Sahar Gul had controlled her, and as with them, for the sake of recovering Julia and Kate she would accept it. Penny knew she was prostituting herself. She could only hope and believe it would be worth it in the end.

Raham's fat belly wobbled bizarrely as he stepped towards her and his pale-brown length was aimed at her lips and only an inch away. He gave no order. There was no need. Penny could just see his chubby face above her and recognise its harsh, uncompromising expression. Fatter and grosser than the others he may be, but underneath he was the same kind of man with the same kind of power. And just as she had been to the others, she was the same kind of helpless victim. Disgusted though she felt, Penny parted her lips and began to serve him. He was damp and greasy. Somehow she quelled the urge to vomit and tried to forget the presence of the slave girls standing at either side of the Prince. He motioned to the petite slave.

"Go." A slap to her bottom propelled her the length of the table. Penny bucked, stunned and alarmed as she felt the slave's fingers trail slowly over her vulva. Her despairing wail as she realized she was once more going to be made to submit to the unnatural attentions of one of her own sex was muffled by the thickness in her mouth. The girl's fingers delved between her soft petals. Immediately, tingling arousal quivered through her. She struggled but the straps above her knees and bars

beneath her belly and at her back held her fast. Penny had known before she tried that there was no escape. Raham's sudden thrust towards the back of her throat cut off her groan.

"Pay attention, Mrs. Winter," he said sharply, "and for your own sake you had better make it good and wet by the time you're finished."

She did her best, craning her neck forward to lap her tongue as far along his flesh as her bonds allowed while the girl explored her most intimate place and Penny's arousal intensified with every tickle and tremble her teasing touch created. A small finger and thumb gently squeezed her sensitive button and as her excitement rippled through her Penny wriggled under the pressure of the wooden bars and sucked harder.

"How is she back there?" Raham asked.

The petite slave's fingers pushed further in and smoothed over moistly quivering membranes.

"*Wressmin, Saaquib*," she answered in Pashto.

Penny's Belly fluttered madly as she recognised the word – 'silken'.

"Foolish girl! Is she ready yet?" he said, and at the girl's affirmative answer, "Then get on with it." His plump hand patted Penny's cheek. "And you can give me one more licking. You'll thank me for it shortly."

Increasingly distracted by her rising excitement, the Englishwoman did not understand or much care what he meant. She did as he ordered, smearing his rigid flesh with her saliva while her sex quivered ever more eagerly as the little slave girl added more fingers to those already wriggling inside it. Powerful, teasing thrills added to its dewy heat. The pressure of the girl's hand increased until it suddenly became so uncomfortable Penny forgot about Raham's demands and her face twisted in a grimace. Her feminine opening seemed to dilate momentarily and then the discomfort ended as it shrank again.

"Ooh!" Penny clenched her buttocks and felt herself contract around something much bigger than fingers. Her gut twisted in sudden horror. It was the slave girl's wrist! Her whole hand was inside Penny's helpless pussy and it was sinking deeper.

"No, no, stop it! Oh, please!"

"Quiet, Penny," Courtney said. "Remember you are here to satisfy His Highness's wishes, not your own."

"But it's her arm! Oh god, a woman's arm!" She jerked frantically and uselessly as the slave's fingers slid further and stretched her wider.

"Relax. It's hardly bigger than my cock and you can take that easily enough," he said carelessly. "And it's only her forearm, not the whole thing."

"Oh, no!" Penny felt the forearm sink deeper still and the girl stroking higher on her sensitive walls. It made no difference that Courtney was right. The arm was quite slender and his erection was pretty big, but that did not stop Penny cringing in embarrassment at the perversity of what was being done to her. Neither, however, did it lessen her rippling arousal. The girl began giving short, quick thrusts of her hand while her fingers continued their tickling and the Englishwoman found it impossible

not to respond to their stimulus. Through her horror and humiliation a low, breathy groan escaped her lips.

“Ah, I believe you’re fully prepared, Mrs. Winter,” Raham Dil said.

Penny craned her neck to see over her shoulder as he moved behind her. The little slave sank out of sight somewhere beneath the table but did not withdraw her arm and her madly teasing fingers were provoking pulsing waves of pleasure inside Penny. The other slave girl positioned herself at the right of the table and leaned over. Drips of milk from her leaking breasts splashed Penny’s perspiring skin.

“Ooh, don’t, that hurts!” she cried. The milkmaid had clasped her hands onto the twin rounds of her aching buttocks and was pulling them apart. Jerking ineffectually, Penny only succeeded in increasing her pain by thrusting her back and belly against the restraining bars of the table.

“Keep her wide,” she heard Raham Dil say, and her stomach turned over as the pressure of the milkmaid’s fingers against her tender flesh increased, broadening the furrow between her buttocks and revealing what lay between to the Prince. She shivered at the idea of being so exposed and again at the tremors filling her, and then her hips bucked as Raham’s fat fingertip traced a line down her rear crease and pressed against her tight muscle. Reflexively, it contracted and clamped her tighter around the girl’s forearm.

“Oh, no, please!” Penny begged in sudden, horror-stricken understanding, and heard his rumble of laughter.

“She’s good and tight, Courtney, just as you said. You know, there’s nothing quite so enjoyable as one that’s never been entered before. In my experience, no matter how hard she tries the girl just can’t make herself go slack the first time. And there’s so much pleasure to be had in overcoming the resistance, and in the way they squirm and wriggle and cry. And when you do finally break in they always have such a tight grip, even if they don’t want to.” He laughed again. “Yes, I’m really going to enjoy this, Mrs. Winter. A captain, I believe you said your husband was?”

Penny’s gut was twisting and wrenching. “Please, Highness, you -. Ow! Agh!” Her desperate pleas had hardly begun when something pushed hard against her little ring, which automatically pinched tighter and, to Penny’s utter revulsion, made her grip all the more on the arm inside her. The painful pressure increased and she flinched from it, only to be brought up short by the wooden bar across her belly digging into the fronts of her thighs and that at her back into the tops of her buttocks.

“Oh-ho, she is tight, Courtney! As tight as I’ve ever known.”

She heard Raham Dil chuckling gleefully, and a jerk of his hips increased his pressure on her crimping pucker. Her hurt increased along with the horrible force he was exerting on her delicate little knot. Penny knew there was only one way to escape it – to relax and allow the rigid flesh to thrust its way inside. But the idea of such a thing was abhorrent to her, and in any case the same wilful refusal by her body to obey her that was causing her trembling excitement was also preventing her from controlling her muscles. Even when, after well over a minute of gasping and whimpering in pain must have passed and she had accepted the inevitable, her rear

remained firmly constricted. It stabbed and stung under Raham's assault and Penny grew increasingly desperate.

Yet, along with the pain she still felt the pleasure tickling through her, the contrast between the two creating the oddest sensation she had ever experienced. It was one that mercifully came to her rescue. The slave girl began opening and closing her fist and its tickling touch on Pennys sensitive sheath sent a sudden spasm rippling along its length. As it teased through the whole of her lower belly she relaxed for a moment.

Raham Dil seemed to sense it. He gave a grunt and a hard lunge that slapped his fat, sagging gut against Penny's pain-racked bottom and finally prised her open. A sharp, fiery sting seared through her suddenly dilated rear. Hurt and shock mingling, she cried out and for the first time felt her insides expand under a man's thrusts. It was almost as painful as his cruel method of entry.

"Ah, she yields at last!" the Prince cried triumphantly. "And what a tussle it was, Mrs. Winter. Well done. Well done, indeed!"

His words just added to her cringing humiliation and were scarcely audible above Penny's own anguished cries as her muscle reflexively tightened again and clamped around the thing stretching it. That anguish increased as the Prince pulled out and immediately forced his way back in again with no more lubrication than her own saliva. Six more times he repeated the same action, while Penny writhed in torment and tears streamed down her cheeks and sweat down her body. She begged desperately for him to stop the dreadful discomfort he was causing and he laughed.

"Oh, Mrs. Winter, why would I want to stop when I'm having so much fun?"

Still she could not help but continue her frantic pleading, but when he did finally stop she knew it was not because of that. He remained sunk all the way inside her with the weight of his massive belly lying on her buttocks and the milkmaid's hands that still held them apart. Raham pushed the girl aside and ran his paws over Penny's sweat-sheened skin, leaning more of his weight on her and driving even deeper as his fat fingers groped her dangling breasts.

"You're doing splendidly, Mrs. Winter," he rasped, and she felt his breath between her shoulder blades. "Now you only need to come."

"Ooh, no!" Penny wailed despairingly, but her pain had not stopped her quivering from the tantalising touch of the slave girl's fingers. In sudden shock, she realized they were pressing on that part of her sheath closest to Raham's penetrating member. The girl was rubbing it through the thin-walled membrane that separated it from her hand, stimulating both Penny and the Prince at the same time.

"Yes, girl, yes," Raham Dil panted. "Finish her off. Get her clamping down."

"Tell her to rub her bud," Courtney said. "She's very sensitive there. That'll bring her off."

The slave clearly understood, for her free hand did as he had suggested, chafing vigorously. Half-crushed by the Prince's mountainous obesity, racked by pain and pleasure and with her senses reeling under the assault of so many diverse sensations, the Englishwoman felt a rippling thrill of delight tingle its way through her. For long, heart-stopping seconds she teetered on the edge, refusing to believe

what she was feeling in the midst of such horrid, humiliating torment. The first wriggling contraction seized her, and suddenly she was writhing madly in surging waves of pleasure.

As a rush of excitement seized her her muscles contracted, wriggling wildly around the slave's forearm and convulsing uncontrollably around the Prince's flesh. It seemed the girl's fingers were striking sparks of pleasure on Penny's sensitive tissues while at the same time the stretching of her rear intensified her pain. Abruptly, Raham lunged forward, and seconds later gave a bellow like a bull, his lard-laden body bucking and bouncing against her. Penny was as disgusted by her own behaviour as she was by his.

Soon afterwards, he slid from her with a sloppy, sucking sound and the slave girl's arm withdrew at last. Finally freed from her confinement by the Indian milkmaid Penny sank into a crouching ball on the tabletop and sobbed bitterly. Except for the aftermath of her orgasm still tingling faintly, every part of her stung or ached or throbbed terribly. She felt debased and degraded. That part of her body she had denied even to her husband and her lovers had been violated in the cruellest way by a gross and obese monster. He was not even a white man. God help the poor slave girls he held in his wicked grasp, Penny thought, and remembered Kate and Julia and her purpose.

With an effort, she lifted her head and blinked her tears away. Raham stood obscenely naked in front of her, pudgy paws resting on the folds of fat covering his hips. Kneeling at his feet, her right arm shiny all the way to the elbow, the little slave was lapping at him.

He laughed. "An excellent performance, Mrs. Winter, and a unique experience for us both. Sahar Gul was right, Courtney. It is very satisfying to humble a white woman such as this. I see now why you were so free in flogging her."

"Her arrogance invites it, Highness. But I think her lessons are beginning to have the right effect."

Penny turned her head towards him and saw the self-satisfied grin that she expected. He was buttoning his trousers. Next to him the pregnant white girl was still bound. A long, thin string of fluid dangled from her lower lip.

"You've pleased me well, Mrs. Winter," the Prince said. "Ordinarily I would grant your request to travel into the mountains."

Her belly turned over as her future vanished at the whim of an ugly, fat man. "But you promised..."

He held up a hand to silence her. "I promised to consider it. As it happens you have no need to go to the mountains. The man you are seeking has come here instead."

Penny heard the tap of boot-heels on the tiled floor behind her, and summoned her remaining strength to look over her shoulder. Her heart leapt.

"Oh my god, it's you!"

Chapter 7

Julia stood in the shade of a fig tree staring unseeing at the girls exercising on the grass. She had never imagined that love could hurt so much. Oh, heaven, love! How on earth could it have happened in this remote, alien land and in such unbelievable circumstances? How in a few short days crammed with so much anxiety and humiliation could she have fallen in love with a man whose sole purpose was to make her into a slave girl for someone else? She remembered him walking down the steps of the bath and coming towards her with a smile on his handsome face. The warmth it caused in her belly only made the awful ache in her heart turn to stabbing pain.

Tears filled Julia's eyes. What a fool she had made of herself with her delusions that he actually cared, that in so short a time she could have taken her place in his affections along with Afia and Reshmina and the others. She had offered him everything – her submission, her body, her heart and soul – and he had thrown them back in her face. To him they were valueless, and so was she except as a present for his brother. If his aqueduct had been ready in time he would not even have known she existed. Julia felt a flash of anger as she imagined Jahngir's amused smile when he thought about her naïve little dream. It faded quickly, and once more there was nothing but the cold, bitter desolation of her heartache.

Afia came towards her. "Come and join us. My lord will be displeased if you neglect your exercise."

Julia had not noticed her approach. 'My lord', she thought, and remembered the thrill she had felt the one and only time she had dared to address the Pathan that way, moments before he had devastated her with the truth. "I don't care." She burst into tears.

Afia's big, damply perspiring breasts crushed against her own as she wrapped Julia in her arms. "I know it's hard, but you have to keep going," she said. "I've never seen Jahngir like this before. He could do anything. You mustn't provoke him."

Julia sobbed against the girl's shoulder. "Oh, I want him so much, Afia. And I want him to want me." The arms around her tightened.

"I know," Afia said gently. "I tried to tell you. I wanted to do it sooner, but my lord forbade it. But you must think of yourself now. You have only a few days left here. You don't want to spend them being punished. Come and exercise with us and then we will go to the bath."

The English girl shook her head despondently. "It doesn't matter any more. Oh, Afia, you and the other girls made me feel.... And Jahngir too. I was so shy when I came here but I felt that was changing." She eased from the girl's grasp and met her eye. "I was too timid to do anything except what everyone else expected me to. Then I saw Mrs. Winter's advertisement and ended up in India, and then I thought it had all gone horribly wrong when I was abducted." She gestured at the house and garden. "But this place.... I had never looked inside myself before, never asked who

I was or what *I* wanted. The things I've seen and done and felt here and the people I've met changed that." Julia gave a thin, ironic smile. "The answers weren't what I expected but they're what I got and I can't alter that. I want to stay here and love Jahngir Khan the way you and the other girls do, and... and to have him love me." Her tears began again and Afia took her in her arms once more.

"It would be useless to tell you that in time you'll get over it, or try to make you believe that one day you will love your master as much as you now love his brother. But, trust me, until that day comes you will find the strength to carry on."

Strength, Julia thought. It was not something she had ever possessed in abundance, certainly not the physical kind, but that was not Afia's meaning. She was talking about strength of will, and much to Julia's surprise she realized that was something else she had discovered in herself recently. Apart from her one moment of panic on her first day, she had not surrendered to hysteria as she was sure many English girls would have in her position. She had accepted her fear and done her best to control it, even at times to channel it to help her deal with the embarrassing and uncomfortable situations she had had to face. And those very situations had not only increased her determination but also her self-confidence. Julia sighed. Now both had shrivelled once more, along with her fractured heart.

Afia abruptly disentangled her hold on Julia and stepped away. The English girl followed the direction of her gaze and saw Jahngir Khan dressed in his blue robe walking down the path towards them.

"Come, girl," he said, frowning. "You too, Afia." He turned back to the *zenana*. Julia followed dejectedly. She had ceased to be 'little *murgah*' the moment she had broken down in tears after he had told her who her master was to be.

The Pathan sat on one of the *zenana*'s couches and pointed to the cup and brass tray resting on a side-table. "Watch, girl. Afia."

Clearly she knew what he wanted without being told. Afia took the tray in both hands, sank to the floor several feet in front of him and seemed to glide forward on her knees. Holding her body low, she raised her arms higher than her bowed head and offered the cup on the tray to Jahngir. He made her repeat her lithe, graceful movements a half-dozen times before turning to Julia. "Now you."

Apathetically, she took the tray, knelt and shuffled awkwardly towards him. It tilted as she raised it and the cup slid towards its rim.

"Again," Jahngir snapped, and made a sound of annoyance when her second attempt was no better than the first. "Did you even trouble to watch?" he demanded, and had Afia demonstrate again. As the native girl passed Julia the tray, she raised her eyebrows and gave a small, warning shake of her head.

"Go and bathe, Afia," the Pathan ordered, and for several seconds after she had gone sat silently and sternly staring at the kneeling English girl. She sat back on her heels. The tray in her hands pressed on the undersides of her big breasts, lifting them higher. Julia saw Jahngir's eyes flicker to her up-tilted nipples.

"What am I to do with you, girl?"

Love me, she wanted to say and felt the ache of longing and regret grow worse. She gave a sigh of her own, and saw his eyes again drop to the movement of

her breasts. He had asked her once if she had any ambitions. To love and be loved had been her answer and now more than ever it was true. Was she going to let her only chance of seeing that ambition fulfilled slip through her fingers without a fight? Would she retreat into her shell and let her shyness defeat her as it had always done?

The strength Julia thought had deserted her surged up inside again, and she looked determinedly at the evidence of Jahngir's interest in her that was tenting the silk of his robe where it covered his groin. Very obviously he still found her beautiful. Plainly he still desired her. Julia moved her knees further apart and arched her back, revealing the full length of a pussy she knew was suddenly gleaming with her dew, and a love-bud she could feel growing larger. Jahngir's black eyes widened and she saw his nostrils flare.

With all the grace and poise she could muster, Julia glided her naked body to his feet as Afia had, and offered up the tray. Heart thumping, she raised her blonde head and looked into his face. Dark, intense eyes lifted from the roundness of her downward-pointing breasts to the gloss of her rouged lips and the brightness of her blue eyes. Slowly, she lowered their painted lids then raised her long lashes to boldly meet Jahngir's glittering gaze. He took the tray from her and laid it aside.

At once, Julia reached for the cord holding his robe, loosened it and, holding one end between her palms, looped its length around both of her wrists and held them out to him.

"Master," she breathed, making the word a sensuous whisper that sent a tingling excitement down her spine and all the way to the core of her femininity. Desperately, she hoped it would have the same effect on him. He looked at the symbol of her willing bondage entwined around her wrists, then at the tapering jut of her out-thrust breasts and the fleshy swells between her thighs. A sudden twitch of his manhood freed it from the robe and revealed it in all its rearing splendour. Very deliberately, Julia ran the tip of her tongue over her upper lip. "Master," she sighed again, hope and longing swelling in her breast.

Strong arms seized her and she found herself on the Pathan's lap with his rigid flesh pressing against her. Her belly flipped and her sex wriggled as his lips crushed hers and his tongue thrust greedily into her mouth. A hand closing on one breast and the pressure of its palm on Julia's hard nipple made her moan against his lips. They pulled free and she felt his breath hot on her cheek.

"You're beautiful." His mouth closed on hers again. Julia curled one hand around his straining manhood. It too was hot and seemed to pulse beneath her fingers as she stroked its length. His hand left her breast and delved into the slickness at the apex of her thighs. As it sparkled under his probing fingers, she squirmed in his lap and moved her hand faster on his upright flesh.

"Temptress," he whispered against her mouth, and kissed her long and hard.

Lips bruised and tingling almost as much as her intimate place by the time he released them, Julia laid her blonde head against his chest. His fingers stroked her deliciously. She shivered in delight, took a deep breath and summoned all of her determination.

"Master, I love you. Let me be yours."

Julia's bottom thudded painfully onto the floor at Jahngir's feet. Dizzily, she looked up and saw he had risen and was glaring down at her.

"You little schemer," he accused. "You clearly paid attention to some of your training. You've learned the art of seduction quickly enough. But you had better not try it on me again or you'll find yourself punished. Now pick up the tray."

"Please don't send me away," Julia begged, her hope turning to despair. "Please. You can tie me up as much as you like. Punish me every day if it pleases you, but let me stay and serve you the way the others do." She clutched wretchedly at his bare feet. "Please. Do anything you like but let me stay. I love you."

"After a few days? Nonsense! You're being fanciful, in your foolish, English way. I've spent the last four years doing everything I could to show my loyalty to my brother. I'm not going to throw that away by letting a slave girl come between us. You and the other white girl will be my gift to him. That's how it is and that's how it will remain."

"But you could give him another gift," Julia argued, growing ever more exasperated by his stubborn refusal to see sense. "I'm sure he's not even aware of my existence. What harm could it do? He need never know."

"I would know," Jahngir Khan said. "It would not be honourable and it would be disloyal. Now do as you're told before I lose my temper."

"Your temper?" The rarest of events happened. Julia lost her own temper. Grabbing the tray she jumped up and clashed it down at Jahngir's feet. The cup flew off and shattered into fragments. To hell with it, she thought. She had done her best to please him and it had not worked. Now she was going to displease him, and damn the consequences. The fire of anger filled her belly. "Damn your temper," she yelled, "and damn your training. And damn you too."

Her gut twisted in sudden alarm, but her fury kept her head up and her eyes glaring into his as the thunderstruck expression on his face turned to rage. He seized her wrist, and with Julia fighting every step of the way dragged her to the far end of the *zenana* until they stood before the throne-like chair. He pointed to the three canes and the whip that rested on their pegs on the wall above it, and his eyes flashed threateningly as he bared his teeth.

"I remember the first time we met, girl, and I'm sure you do too. You were running away from a beating in such a blind panic that you were wetting yourself. Those canes haven't left their places on that wall since I became Master here, but that can change." He lowered his head to look into her eyes. "And it will. No girl has ever dared speak to me as you just did. I have never heard such insolence from a slave, nor do I intend to ever again. Unless you want a beating, you will get on your knees and humbly apologise for your outrageous behaviour. And you will promise to obey my will in all things, including stopping this nonsense about my brother." Jahngir let go of her and pointed to the floor in front of him.

Julia took a step back. Fear was a hollow chill in her gut and her heart was racing. She knew he was angry enough to mean every word, but she was angry too, and enough to care nothing about what became of her now that her efforts to win him had failed. Yet, behind her anger she felt a calmness that bordered on serenity and a

clarity of thought that was as new to her as her growing courage. He thought her weak and had called her foolish. He thought the threat of beating her was enough to bring her to heel. Julia took a firm grip on her fear and used it to reinforce the sudden resolve that rose up inside her. She stared back defiantly.

“I’m not sorry and I won’t say I am,” she said levelly, and then her temper really got the better of her. “Do your worst and see if I care. Why don’t you go the whole way and use the whip?”

Jahngir’s lips twisted into a snarl. “Very well. I will.”

* * * * *

As Penny reached for the handle on the parlour door her hand began to shake. It was another symptom of the nervous tension that was overflowing her and not just setting her whole body quivering but making her heart pound and her belly flutter wildly. Of all the encounters she had experienced recently this, she knew, was the most important. This one would decide her whole future. How she spent the rest of her life depended on her ensuring it had a successful outcome.

It would have happened sooner if she had had her way, but the moment she had limped painfully back to the Residency her body had betrayed her. Exhausted, pain-racked and shocked by her ordeal at Raham Dil’s hands, Penny had taken her ravaged, burning and throbbing bottom and breasts off to bed.

Only after a night of fitful sleep and half a morning spent trying to soothe her pain with some of the patent medications she always carried, had she found time to reflect on her amazement at discovering who was behind the abduction of her girls. Her attempt to find him had proved fruitless. It was the day the *khillat* was being handed over. The town was filled with celebrating crowds and he had disappeared amongst them to make his final arrangements for the upcoming slave auction. Cursing him, her own weakness and her frustration at having to wait, Penny had retreated to the fragile sanctuary of her room and become increasingly ill-tempered and anxious.

Her anxiety worsened as she opened the door, paused for a second to brace herself and stepped into the parlour.

“Hello, Penny.”

“Hello, George,” she said, dry-mouthed. Jefferson was standing in front of the empty hearth smoking a cigarette. The smile he gave her looked distinctly predatory as he gestured towards the hide sofa.

“Have a seat. That’s the one you prefer, I believe.”

Penny felt a rush of heat to her cheeks. He had obviously been speaking to Courtney. Her belly shrank. He probably knew everything all the way back to her meeting with Macdonald. The thought rattled her, especially the knowledge that he had witnessed her enduring the awful assaults of the Prince. It was very clear he felt no sympathy whatever for her and that any attempt to employ her feminine wiles would not only be pointless but potentially dangerous

Summoning the little pride and dignity left to her, Penny moved closer but did not sit down and was careful to keep the sofa between herself and Jefferson. She was determined her meeting with George would not end up as a repeat of her recent experiences.

He laughed briefly. "Don't worry, Penny. I've seen your tits already, and had your body too, remember? I don't want it now, so relax."

"Where are the girls? I want to see them," she demanded, ignoring his embarrassing reminder of their affair.

He grinned. "Believe me, not after what you've just been through. They're a two-day horseback ride away in the mountains. Your backside wouldn't like it."

Biting back an angry retort, she forced herself to speak calmly. "I want them back, George. You had no right to take them. I must say I'm surprised an honourable man like you has taken up such a... profession. I'm sure you could have found a respectable position after you finished with the army."

"The army finished with me, Penny, as I'm sure you remember very well. There aren't too many opportunities open to a cashiered and disgraced officer, and very few friends left to help him." His face twisted for a second. "And *I* must say I'm surprised you have the impertinence to criticise me considering your own circumstances."

She met his stare levelly, eyes narrowed. "I have no idea what you mean."

He smiled, showing the edges of his teeth. "Of course you don't. But you see, Penny, I still have my honour in spite of what the army says. I'm a man of my word and that's good for business. And I'm good at my job. People trust me, and they like what I produce from my modest training establishment in the mountains. They're prepared to pay very well for my slaves. You see? I have no qualms about calling them what they are. I deal in slave girls, specifically the kind that provide pleasure - beautiful, obedient, always willing and very, very skilled at what they do. You're acquainted with some of them, I think. Intimately acquainted, Courtney says."

A shiver ran through Penny as she recalled Courtney's girls teasing her repeatedly to the verge of climax with their hands and tongues. She quashed the feeling before it could go any further and cleared her throat.

"Perhaps you're unaware that the Prince of Dhokat has a particular interest in Kate and Julia," she said. "Along with myself, they are to attend him at his celebration for the anniversary of him ascending the throne. That is in three days time, George. I understand your 'modest establishment' is not so very far from the border with Dhokat. Do you think it would be good for business if he learned you were responsible for preventing their appearance?" Penny held her breath. It was her only trump card. Had she played it at the right moment? To her intense disappointment and annoyance, Jefferson laughed.

"Excuse me, Penny. There is a certain irony in the situation you could only appreciate if you were in possession of the full facts."

"Then please enlighten me," she replied with mounting anger.

"Oh, I couldn't do that. It would spoil it for you. Much better for you to find out for yourself. What if I offer a compromise?"

Penny reached into her handbag.

"I wouldn't try to use the gun," George said. "Courtney knew all about it. He took the precaution of removing all the bullets from the magazine."

A small glow of satisfaction brought a smile to her lips for the first time since their conversation had begun. "I know, George. And I reloaded it. Didn't you think I'd have the sense to check, or to bring spare ammunition?" As Penny spoke, she removed her cigarette case from her handbag and took out one of her Turkish cigarettes.

"Well, you did learn something from Tom after all," Jefferson said with a wry smile. "All those years together weren't entirely wasted."

"As far as I'm concerned, none of them were," Penny responded acidly. "Despite what you and everyone else seem to think, I loved and respected my husband, and when it really mattered I did not betray him."

Jefferson's smile faded. "Excuse me. I shouldn't have brought the subject up."

"Your compromise?" Penny asked impatiently.

"Ah, yes. Well, since the Prince of Dhokat seems to be involved in the matter anyway, why don't we let him settle it? I am also invited for his anniversary. We can both turn up on the day and ask him to decide which of us gets the girls. I'll ask Courtney to drive you. It's a longer way round, but quicker and more comfortable than riding over the mountains."

Penny saw the pitfalls at once. "And what's to stop you bringing the girls here instead and selling them at the auction the next day? I couldn't possibly get back from Dhokat in time to stop you."

"Do you really think you could stop me if that's what I decided to do? No, you'll have to trust me, Penny. I can give you my word if you still think it has any value. Unless, of course, you have a better idea?"

Penny did not. Yet it seemed almost too good to be true. George had no reason to compromise when, as he had rightly pointed out, she had no power to stop him doing whatever he wanted with Julia and Kate. Clearly he had been untroubled by her threat that the Prince could make life difficult for him, and he knew as well as she did that she would never use the gun except to protect her own life. But George was not aware of the true nature of her arrangement with the Prince, Penny realized, or that because of it he was bound to find in her favour. Of course, that was it! A thrill of excitement ran through her, which she carefully concealed as she gave him her apparently grudging acceptance.

"Good, that's settled then. No more need for any argument. Let's have a drink."

His obvious confidence that he was fully in control of the situation still made her a little uneasy, but then again, it always had. And this time he was in for a disappointment. The gin he handed her had the merest dash of tonic and ice she was sure came from another of Macdonald's refrigerators. Penny would never be able to look at one of the contraptions again without shuddering. Because she remained standing, George did the same and lit her cigarette when she raised it to her lips. He

had not entirely lost the gentlemanly courtesies of the British officer he had once been, she thought, nor perhaps the sense of honour he had mentioned earlier. Neither had Penny. She had to tell him the truth about Tom.

"I... I have to say something. It... it's only fair," she began hesitantly. It's about the... incident." She faltered. It was going to be as difficult as she had always imagined it would be, not that she had ever really expected to have the chance to tell him face to face. Jefferson continued to look evenly at her, a brief flicker of his eyebrows the only evidence her words had had any effect.

Penny straightened her back. "Some time ago, Tom wrote a letter and locked it away to be opened only in the event of... of..." She drew on her cigarette. "It explains everything that happened that day and the reasons why."

"Then it would have been very useful to have had it at my court martial," Jefferson said dryly, lighting a cigarette of his own.

"Please, just listen and try to understand. Tom always had some doubts. About his... his courage, I mean. He wanted to test it, to be sure he was the man he thought he was. That's why he transferred to the frontier. Only... only..."

"He *wasn't* the man he thought he was," George finished. "I've already worked it out for myself, Penny. God knows I've spent enough years thinking about it. There only ever could have been one reason why he didn't bring his men up to support us – he was too afraid. So he left us there, pinned down in the defile while the Afghans picked us off one by one. Two thirds of my men were killed or wounded, Penny, while Tom sat with the mortars and machine guns that would have saved us and did nothing." The ice cubes in his glass rattled suddenly, and he set it on the mantelpiece with an unsteady hand and paced the floor before turning to her. "At least I can understand that, if not forgive it. What I can't understand is him lying at the court martial. What I can't stomach is him sacrificing my honour and reputation to salvage his own. I thought he was a better man than that, and a better friend too." He went back to his drink and gulped it. "I could never have lived with myself after such a betrayal, Penny."

"Neither could Tom," she said. It was all in the letter: the sniping in the defile on the mountain road, how Tom had ordered George forward with his men and the sniping had turned into an ambush. And how Tom had been unable to find the courage to lead his own men forward under fire to rescue those trapped. Only the arrival of a troop of armoured cars had finally extricated the survivors. In the confusion, George had lost his map case containing Tom's written order to advance and Tom had destroyed his own copy. Without any other witnesses to the order ever having been given there was no one to refute Tom's evidence at the court martial. Captain George Jefferson had been cashiered from the regiment in disgrace for attacking without orders. The trial had split the other regimental officers, some believing one version of events and some the other. Already tormented by his cowardice and what he had done to conceal it, Captain Thomas Winter had resigned and returned to England.

"Tom never left a note," Penny said. "He just drove off like he did most nights, but that time he never came back. I don't know if he deliberately took his own

life. Perhaps he hadn't the courage to do that either but his recklessness finally led to the outcome he wanted." His letter had shown the torture he had gone through over his lies and betrayal, the shame and misery that had eventually destroyed him. Penny felt the sting of tears, and shook off the memory. "I'm sorry, George. I wish things could have been different."

His laugh was bitter. "So do I, Penny. Believe me, so do I."

A thought struck her. "I hope you don't bear me any ill will over what happened."

"Good Lord, no. You had no hand in it. But I will admit to being disappointed when you ended our little liaison so abruptly." He smiled without warmth. "Though I understand why."

A blush heated her cheeks. "That was some time ago. Surely we are both a little older and wiser now."

"Yes indeed, a good deal wiser."

"I still have the letter," Penny said. "I would have sent it to you sooner but I had no idea where you were. The truth can't hurt Tom now. If you show it to the Colonel of the regiment you will be exonerated. Perhaps you could even be reinstated."

He seemed genuinely amused by her suggestion. "It's much too late for that. Besides, I like my new job and the rewards are a lot better. I believe I've got what I wanted most, Penny; Tom's acknowledgement of the wrong he did. I don't need to see the letter. Your word it exists is good enough. And it was decent of you to speak up; surprisingly unselfish, in fact."

Irrked by his implication, she did not reply. He looked at his wristwatch.

"I have a long trek ahead of me if I'm to have those girls in Dhokat in time. There are still several hours of daylight left so I'll get going today, though I've time for the late lunch Courtney promised me first." He gave her a big grin. "Don't fret, Penny. You'll meet your girls in the palace at Dhokat three days from now, I promise. And don't go imagining there's anything personal in any of this. Believe me, it's purely business."

He turned to the double doors dividing the parlour from the dining room as they opened. Courtney stood in the doorway, flanked by Rane and another Indian slave girl. Penny gasped. Apart from their jewellery, both girls were entirely nude.

"Ah, Penelope, come and eat with us," Courtney said. "You must be hungry. You missed breakfast and, as I recall, despite all your exertions yesterday all you had was a little milk."

She winced.

"Yes, come on, Penny," George said. "You needn't worry we'll make you strip and serve the meal. That's what the slaves are for. And I'm sure Courtney has a soft cushion for your chair. Do join us."

A twinge of pain shot through her rear even as he spoke, and Penny almost damned both men and stormed off to her room. But she *was* hungry and rather to her surprise believed what George had told her, even if he had made it sound like an order. She remembered how controlling he had been with her in the past, and she was

relieved when no thrill of excitement teased between her legs. Maybe her treatment at Raham Dil's hands had cured her of that, she thought hopefully.

She would eat with them, Penny decided. She needed her strength. Only three more days and she would be in Dhokat. Once more, though George did not know it, she would be the one with the upper hand. At last Penny Winter would be back in control, her trials at an end and her future secure. The pleasant feeling of satisfaction the thought gave her just managed to take the edge off the discomfort in her backside as she sat down.

* * * * *

Jahngir Khan closed both hands around the rope and looked deep into Julia's frightened eyes.

"I'll give you one last chance," he said. "You will humbly beg my pardon and promise to obey me, or I'll flog you just as my grandfather flogged his slave girls, and with the implement you yourself chose."

Julia was greatly regretting that foolhardy act of bravado as she felt the strain on her shoulders and upraised arms already beginning to make them ache. For half-an-hour he had made her kneel in silence beside him while he had oiled the whip's stiff, ancient, plaited strands of dark-red leather until they became supple and pliant once more. She had hoped it would have been enough time for his temper to cool, at least sufficiently for him to exchange the whip for a switch instead, but he had shown no sign of relenting. Neither had Julia.

It had been obvious his purpose was to unnerve her into giving in. It was plain that he was determined to force her to submit. She was equally determined she would not. Her heart was pounding madly and her gut churned incessantly with a fear bordering on terror. But it was not quite terror, nor blind panic either, and even though its grip was fierce Julia could feel her new-found strength flowing through her tautly-strung body as surely as she could the blood pumping rapidly through her veins. Steadfastly, she looked back at his dark, brooding stare and shook her head.

"I love you," she said with swelling pride. And she would prove it the only way she could – by facing her worst fear and showing him she could overcome it. It might be as meaningless to him as her love was, but it meant everything to Julia, the one sacrifice she could make for the man she loved, even though he was the man who was forcing her to make it.

For over five years her shyness and lack of confidence had hung like a millstone around her neck. Then in a few brief and startling days she had seen who she was, what she could be, what she could have and what she truly wanted. All too soon it had been taken away from her but she was not going to return to being timid little Julia Thomas; so staid, so conventional and so willing to do everything everyone else expected of her. That had all begun with a whipping, and now it was going to end the same way. What would happen afterwards Julia did not know or even care. What she did know was that she would never be the person she was before. And that was the way she wanted it.

Jahngir's eyes flashed with anger. Lips compressed into a thin line, he yanked on the rope and pulled it tighter still until Julia was balancing precariously on her toes. The bite of the leather straps binding her ankles to the bronze bar set into the bathhouse step intensified as her hands were strained higher until her fingertips almost brushed the bronze ring in the lintel above her head. The Pathan secured the rope that was tied to the short chain joining the stiff leather cuffs encircling her wrists, and stepped back.

Julia twisted her head around to look back between her up-stretched arms at the girls huddled apprehensively close to one another at the edge of the garden behind her. Their faces still bore the shocked and fearful expressions that had appeared when they had returned from their bath and seen Jahngir with the whip in his hands and Julia naked on her knees beside him. Their happy chatter had died at once, and she had seen the wide-eyed look of horror Afia had given both her and the Pathan. He had prolonged the English girl's anxious wait by having the girls dress and put on their make-up. Never had Julia heard such a silence in the *zenana* while they performed their morning ritual. When she had not weakened, he had increased the pressure on her by having her made-up too, her blonde hair brushed and arranged, her face powdered and painted and even her nipples rouged. For the first time they had not stiffened and swelled in response to the touch of Afia's fingers.

The girls were silent and still as they watched her, with the same awful anticipation Julia felt herself plain on their faces, and she could see that more than just Afia's eyes were looking back at hers with a wordless plea for her to submit. She turned her head to face her front. At once, her belly gave a lurch. Jahngir had taken a position in front of her and to her right, and was stretching out his hand.

"Give me the whip, Afia." He had made her hold it while he fastened Julia so uncomfortably in the place where his grandfather had flogged his slave girls until they bled. So dry-mouthed her tongue stuck to her palate, the English girl swallowed hard and tried ineffectually to suppress a shiver. The heels of Afia's silken slippers tapped on the stone steps and she held out the whip with her thumb and forefinger as though it was unclean.

"Please, my lord," she began, and got no further when he snatched the length of leather and brandished it before her eyes.

"Silence, or you will be next," he growled. "I've had enough of rebellious slave girls disrupting my household." His glittering gaze shifted to look beyond Julia to the rest of the concubines, and she could imagine them quailing beneath his fierce glare. Yet, intimidating though it was, she met it levelly when he turned it on her, even when her lower lip trembled as he raised the whip. Let him see her fear. Let him see her conquer it for the sake of her hopeless, unrequited love.

The stiff whip rested suddenly below her throat, and Jahngir let it trail slowly over her uplifted and out-thrust breasts. Julia looked down as she felt its menacing touch. It was terrifyingly thick, much more than his middle finger at its hilt and tapering gradually to a tip still as wide as her own before ending in a tight, knotted tassel. It must be over three feet long. Julia's gut clenched tighter than her balled

fists as she remembered the savage hurt of the wicked riding crop the head groom had used on her five years earlier. Could the whip possibly be even worse?

“Are you so eager to feel the bite of the lash?” Jahngir demanded.

Julia looked up. “No, my lord.” She used the title deliberately. “I... I fear it very much. But I love you more.” Even through her rising terror the words brought a wan smile to her lips.

He seemed to flinch from it. “If that is true, why will you not obey me?”

“In everything else, gladly. But I will not willingly be given away.”

“A slave cannot impose conditions on her slavery,” he said, eyes bright with anger again. “You will obey without question.”

“In all else I would, and accept your judgement always. But not in becoming a gift for another man.”

“You will not be given a choice,” he said flatly, bringing his body level with her left hip.

Julia looked straight ahead. The morning sun was not yet high. She could feel its heat on her bare back and see its beams reflecting in the water of the pool within the bath house. Sweat was already streaming down her nude body. Her belly was hollow with fear and her bowels were knotting and twisting as they had when she had watched Kate stretched across Jefferson’s desk and caned. Once more she remembered how her unreasoning terror had filled her as the riding crop had scored agonisingly into her tender young buttocks, and the jeers and laughter that had accompanied her torment that day.

“You need only speak my name to end it,” Jahngir said, and flexed the tightly plaited, shiny leather between his hands. It creaked softly, ominous and threatening.

Julia clenched her jaw and clamped her lips hard together as she battled the sudden, desperate urge to cry her submission. From the corner of her eye she saw him lift the whip high above his head. Her heart leapt and she caught her breath as every muscle in her body tensed.

Then the Pathan’s arm swung down.

Chapter 8

A vicious streak of sharp, searing pain tore across the soft-skinned cheeks of Julia's buttocks. It was agony. Even as the appalling shock of the first ferocious impact ripped through her body like a lightning bolt, a second scorching stroke lashed her helpless flesh.

It was like fire, yet worse than fire, for with the cruel burning came the weight of the blow itself, scoring a throbbing furrow into Julia's yielding bottom, driving the hurt deep into its firm, resistant muscles. Eyes wide and staring, she heaved against the rope holding her arms aloft, and fought the need to scream.

A third stroke blazed a fiery line across her flanks, followed at once by another and another, each accompanied by a crack like a pistol shot and more terrible pain. Julia's buttocks bounced excruciatingly. She had been right. The whip was even worse than the crop. She would never stand it. She would crumple and her resolve would abandon her. Tied so tightly she could not even writhe in her torment, her body still tried, twisting and straining her sorely stretched joints in its futile efforts to escape the flaring burn and bite of the leather. Yet, she did not cry out. Her jaws were clamped together so hard she expected her teeth to shatter at any moment. Her rapid breaths were snorting in her nostrils and her chest was growing tighter with every second that passed, but Julia's mouth remained adamantly shut. She would not cry out, she would not beg, and most of all she would not submit.

A fearsome lash seemed to set her tender skin aflame and sent pain ploughing deep into the throbbing flesh beneath. In Julia's throat a half-strangled shriek rose up and tried to force its way through her clenched teeth. Fighting hard, she suppressed it, only for another savage bite of intractable leather to immediately score deep into soft, fragile flesh. Julia screamed. The floodgates opened. With every meaty crack of the whip that followed she cried out, helpless to stop herself. She wept too, from the ferocious pain and at her own weakness in giving in to it. But still she did not cry Jahngir's name.

His blows hurt her abominably. Julia breathed raggedly, head spinning, body streaming with sweat and racked by uncontrollable shudders and frantic jerks. Each wicked stroke seemed harder than the last, as though her obdurate refusal to give in was provoking the Pathan into intensifying her punishment. Or perhaps it was only that she was losing her battle. Surely by now her tormented rear-cheeks had been flogged to torn and tattered shreds under the blistering bites of the whip. The panic Julia had been fighting from the beginning surged up inside her. She summoned her waning strength and fought it down, but she knew she was been driven beyond the limit of her endurance. Her gesture, her sacrifice for the sake of love, meaningless in any case to Jahngir Khan, was at an end. As the leather scored agonisingly into her flesh again, the pain in her heart seemed to equal that searing her tortured buttocks. Her courage and defiance dwindled, melting away under their double assault. Julia could bear no more.

“No, my lord! Oh, stop, stop! She bleeds.”

Two arms wrapped around Julia as she heard Afia's fervent entreaty rise above her own cries. At the same moment, she felt the pressure of a body against her blazing bottom and the wicked crack of the whip scorching bare skin.

"Agh! Ooh! Ooh!"

It was not Julia who cried out. A strangled sob came from directly behind, and the arms tightened around her and pressed two big breasts against her naked back. The Indian girl had deliberately taken the stroke meant for Julia across her own buttocks.

"Afia, my love, forgive me," she heard from Jahngir, immediately followed by the clatter of many slippered feet on the bathhouse steps. Instantly, Julia was surrounded by the girls and their hands at her arms and shoulders and waist were supporting her sagging figure. She had not strength to raise her drooping head and her vision was a blur through her tears.

"Please, my lord, enough," she heard Afia plead tearfully and the others joining in. "Your point is made. Untie her I beg you. Let us bathe her and soothe her hurts. There has been enough cruelty."

"Cruelty?" Jahngir asked sharply. There was a long, and to Julia, agonising pause. "Aye, you're right. That's what it was." She heard no anger in his tone. It was quiet, almost subdued. Abruptly her arms were free, and but for the girls she would have fallen. Afia released her hold and pulled away. Julia's bottom flamed. Through the pain and her tears a vague outline appeared.

"I'm sorry," it said in the Pathan's voice. "You were very courageous." The blurred figure vanished. "Do what you want," the same voice said, and then more faintly, "I want nothing more to do with the girl."

It was just another blow to add to all those he had already given her.

* * * * *

"Down," Ross called sharply.

Kate dropped to the thin carpet, painfully hitting knees and elbows on the hard tiles beneath as she sprawled full length. He made an impatient noise and rolled to the edge of the bed, sitting upright to plant both feet on the floor and lean towards her.

"Why have you lifted your head? Didn't I say to keep as low as you could? And you're sticking your bum up as well. Get up. We'll do it again."

Rubbing a bruised elbow, Kate got to her feet, bewildered and rapidly running out of patience. What sort of training was this? And if he attached so much importance to it, why had he left it until the last minute? There were only hours now until her fate was sealed. In the morning she was going to be taken away, not, she had learned only the previous day, to be auctioned off to the highest bidder, but to be sold privately to a rich and powerful man who would keep her in pampered luxury. As if it made any difference, Kate thought with a flash of temper. She no more wanted to be a slave now than she had on her first day, unless....

She looked at Ross, sitting there as naked as she was, a big, cuddly bear of a man, strong, magnificent and so much kinder than he pretended. He had barely raised

a hand to her in the last three days, even when her performance during her training had been less than perfect. Kate had tried hard, hoping, aching for him to say the words she longed to hear, but as each day had passed and the deadline drew nearer, her heart had grown heavier and she had become ever more distracted.

Now it was their last night together, the last time she would ever experience their lovemaking, the last time she would ever lie comfortably and happily in Ross's arms in the warm glow of its aftermath. And here he was wasting what little time they had left in a puzzling and pointless exercise. What possible use could she ever find for flinging herself to the floor? Kate's temper flared, then died at once as the pain of regret overcame her and moisture prickled her eyes. She had never imagined that anything could mean more to her than her quest for excitement and adventure. She had not even understood that there were things of far more importance. She knew better now, for she had discovered something that mattered much, much more.

"Get down," Ross barked, and Kate flopped to the floor, suddenly determined to satisfy him and get the senseless business over with. She pushed her pelvis into the carpet and crushed her breasts flat against it, pressing her cheek down onto its roughness.

"That's it. That's the way," Ross said. "Good. Now, one more time."

"Oh, what's the point?" Kate groaned as she clambered to her feet. "There's only a few hours left. I... I thought... Oh, won't you make love to me? We'll never have another chance after tonight. Doesn't it mean *anything* to you?"

The familiar stern look of displeasure that so reminded her of her father appeared on the ex-soldier's face. "Come here. Here! Now!" The moment she was in arms' reach he grabbed her and tipped her over his knee.

"Oh, don't punish me," she begged. "Not when there's so little time." Any other protest she might have made was silenced by a firm swat to her bottom. Several more followed, but Ross used his fingertips rather than his palm and the sting on her jiggling buttocks was mild.

"Remind me," he said. "Who is in charge here?" His free hand pressed Kate's belly deeper into his lap as he dealt her rear cheeks a harder smack.

"Ow! You are, Mister Ross, Sir."

"Then who gives the orders?" Another slap made her bottom bounce, and she wriggled over his thighs.

"Ow! You do, Mister Ross, Sir."

"And who obeys them?" He smacked her again.

"Ooh! I do, Mister Ross, Sir."

"Right. So when I shout 'down' you get down fast. I don't care if it's sand, rock, mud or water. Soft or hard, you drop as flat as you can and you stay there until I say different, understand?" Once more his big paw came down and made her bottom bounce and smart.

"Ooh! Yes, Mister Ross, Sir." Kate found herself back on her feet.

Confused, she tottered a few steps back, rubbing her backside and staring resentfully at his grin.

“There, that’s for questioning orders,” he said. “And any time you don’t jump the minute I say so, you’ll get more of the same. I don’t care if it’s a mountain track or the middle of the street in some native village, I’ll have your pants down and your bum smacked before you can blink if you don’t instantly do as you’re told.”

What?” Kate’s belly gave a huge flip and she caught her breath as his meaning began to sink in.

“And practising taking cover might seem silly here,” he continued, “but it’s important. When we’re up on the border, getting down fast could mean the difference between life and death.” He smiled at her. “And I know I wouldn’t like not having you around, little miss. That’s why I’m taking you with me.”

Kate’s heart leapt, and her pent-up breath escaped in a joyous whoop as she flung herself into Ross’s arms. Laughing, he fell backwards onto the bed with Kate wriggling in excitement on top of him. She clutched him tightly, rubbing her breasts on his chest, her belly squirming on the hard shaft of his cock.

“Ooh, I’m coming! I’m coming!”

“Yes you are,” he said, still laughing. “Haven’t I just said so?”

“No, I mean I’m really... Ooh! Ooh! I’m coming right now,” Kate gasped, shivering and writhing with the delicious spasms of her climax. The ex-soldier’s arms around her and his hand cupping her bottom held her close while she moaned and wriggled her way through the quivering delight.

Afterwards, she lay where she was with her cheek resting on his broad chest and basked in the warmth of the happiness filling her. For long minutes he held her in silence while her breathing steadied.

“Well, are you happy now, sweetheart?” he asked finally.

“Oh, yes!” Kate raised her head to look at him. “I love you,” she said with tears welling in her eyes and, suddenly bashful, laid her cheek back on his chest.

His throaty chuckle vibrated through her body. “And so you finally managed to convince me. *And* that I’d be a damned fool if I let you get away. A little fun-bundle like you doesn’t come along more than once in a man’s life. He’d be mad to throw over a chance to have her. It’s funny though, I never thought a thing like that would happen to an old dog me.”

“Like what?” she asked, looking at him in sudden concern. “What’s happened?”

His finger under her chin raised her lips to his. He kissed her gently and tenderly. “Something good, Kate. Something really good, my little love.”

A wonderful thrill ran through her. He had called her by name for the first time, and in the same breath come as close as he probably ever would to saying outright that he loved her. For Kate, it was good enough and always would be. She hugged him madly and smothered him in kisses until he laughingly called a halt.

“I love you,” she said again, just for the sheer pleasure of speaking the words. A thought struck her. “I don’t even know your first name.”

Ross’s mouth twisted ruefully. “It’s Archibald.” His hand closed over one of her breasts and tugged firmly. “And if you ever call me that I’ll take the skin off these pretty little tits of yours with my whip and then do the same to your backside.”

Kate suppressed a giggle. “Yes, Mister Ross, Sir.”

He gave her a smile that warmed her heart. “Just ‘Ross’ will do unless I tell you otherwise, but we’ll stick to ‘Sir’ in the bedroom.”

“Yes, Sir.” Her excitement bubbled up again. “How long before we can set off?”

“Well, I’ve been planning for years. Most of the preparations are made. The ones that are left shouldn’t take long and it’s the right season. There’s no reason why we shouldn’t be ready in a couple of weeks or so.”

“Two weeks?” In her enthusiasm, Kate leapt to her knees and clapped her hands. “Oh, I can’t wait to get going!”

Ross gave her his stern look. “Kate, this is a serious business. It isn’t a jaunt on a liner to Europe. Not all the natives will be friendly. Make no mistake, I’m taking you into danger if you come with me.”

“If? There is no ‘if’. I’m coming and that’s final. I’m not afraid.” It was true. She would never be afraid with Ross at her side. She hugged him hard. “Who’s going to keep you warm on those cold, mountain nights if I’m not there?” Her hand strayed to his erection and closed around the hardened flesh.

He chuckled. “All right, sweetheart. Were you telling the truth when you said you know how to handle a gun?”

“Pistols *and* rifles,” Kate confirmed. “Daddy made sure of that. Oh! I really ought to write to my parents. They’ll be starting to worry by now.”

“You can send a letter from Rawalpindi before we set off. Though quite what you’re going to tell them, I don’t know.”

“Not the full story, that’s for sure,” Kate said, and smiled. “I’ll tell them the important bit – that I’ve met a marvellous man and fallen in love.” Her arousal tingled instantly when his arm tightened around her. She could feel the blood pulsing through the thick flesh under her stroking hand. “What about Jefferson? Won’t he be angry at losing the money he can get for me when you tell him?”

“I already have,” Ross said. “The minute he got back from Jargahal. I didn’t think he’d be very pleased about me upsetting his important client, but as I said he’s a man of his word. Oddly enough, he didn’t seem troubled at all, just smiled and said that like any good soldier he had a contingency plan and he was sure everything would work out satisfactorily. He even wished us luck and offered to pay for the mules we’ll need for the expedition.”

Kate remembered the pain of the beating Jefferson had given her. “That doesn’t sound like the man I’ve met.”

“No. He did seem a lot less gloomy than usual. In fact, quite light-hearted. I hope something has cheered him up permanently at last. He got a rough deal from the army. It wasn’t what he deserved.” His calloused palm stroked the last of the sting from Kate’s bottom. “There’s one thing, sweetheart. Jefferson wants us both to turn up at the sale tomorrow.” He held up his hand as she looked up sharply. “Don’t worry. No one’s taking you away from me, but I owe him a lot – my life for one thing, back in my soldiering days – so I agreed.” His eyes met hers. “Trust me, Kate. You’ll be safe.”

She smiled. "I know. I do trust you."

"Good. We'll need to trust each other when we're in the mountains."

"What's it like?" she asked eagerly. "Are there -?" A sharp tap on her right buttock cut her off and sent a tremor tickling through her pussy.

"Plenty of time for questions later," Ross said and pointed to his erection. Kate's hand was still curled around it but had stopped moving when he told her about Jefferson. "You're neglecting your duties, little miss. Don't think you can start taking liberties just because I've decided to keep you, not unless you want me to give my naughty slave girl another spanking."

Kate knelt up on the bed again, arched her back to thrust her stiff-nippled breasts towards him and gave him her best seductive smile. "Do you know, Mister Ross, Sir?" she said, "I rather think I do."

* * * * *

Penny yawned. She had not slept well the night before. When Courtney's servant had come to waken her she had already been up and dressed, and nervously smoking a first cigarette in anticipation of what lay ahead.

They had left in the pre-dawn for what had proved to be a long, tedious and uncomfortable journey. It had not taken much bumping and jarring over the uneven asphalt of the motor road for Penny to discover that while the discomfort the Prince of Jargahal's assault had caused no longer troubled her, the same was not true of the effects of the canings and whippings she had endured. Her breasts and especially her buttocks, in constant contact with the car's seat, were soon aching. She consoled herself that she was at least wearing underwear again, freed at last from that particular constraint now that she was no longer under Courtney's roof. She had not dared do it sooner in case he found out and punished her, but to her great relief he had not made any demands upon her since her torment at the Prince's hands. It was surprising how much more confident Penny felt wearing a camisole and panties beneath her outer clothing.

Courtney's nudge of her elbow made her look up just as his old, wheezing Vauxhall rounded a bend in the road. There was a wall of rock on their right and a sheer drop on their left, and ahead and below she could see a fertile valley between the mountains with the mid-morning sunshine sparkling on the ribbon of a river that threaded its way through the green fields.

"Another ten minutes," the Englishman announced.

In five, Penny could clearly see the ancient town of Dhokat below them and the pale-yellow stone of the palace of its prince standing on a small plateau above it. Soon the road angled downwards towards the river, with the size and grandeur of the palace becoming ever more obvious as they drew closer and finally stopped on a flat, paved area before its high gates.

"Jefferson's beaten us to it," Courtney observed with a nod towards two big, black Ford V8's that were already parked there.

A servant hurried to open the Vauxhall's door, and Penny thankfully climbed out and wished she could rub her sore backside. The sound of gunshots from the town made her look down towards the river.

"It appears the celebrations have already begun," Courtney said. "In the traditional way, by the sound of it."

Penny's alarm faded. It was just some locals firing into the air. She picked her handbag off the car's seat, slipped its handles over her left wrist and let Courtney take her arm as they walked towards the palace. Her belly fluttered. At last, she thought. After all the years of being poor, after her fear and desperation when the girls were kidnapped and the humiliation, degradation and suffering she had had to go through, it was all going to be behind her. She could forget the embarrassing poverty and forget too her astonishing sexual response to being forced to submit to the orders of others. She was back in control now.

Yet, to Penny's surprise, as she stepped out confidently she felt a quiver between her thighs at the memory, or perhaps, she thought, it was only the caress of her silken panties. She seemed more acutely aware of them after so many days of going without. Another kind of excitement bubbled within her as she thought how satisfying it was going to feel when Jefferson discovered she had outwitted him. Penny could imagine how incensed he would be when the Prince declared in her favour and George found he had to surrender the girls. The Prince might also be annoyed that she had turned up so late, but she was sure it would soon pass once he heard her explanation for the delay.

Her confidence seemed justified when she gave her name to the palace's major-domo and he immediately asked her to follow him. Clearly she was expected. With Courtney tagging along behind, she was conducted through a lavishly decorated, high-ceilinged reception room to an unobtrusive side door. With an upsurge of mingling relief and excitement that her ordeals were at an end and her plan about to be fulfilled, she stepped through the door and into the room beyond.

Penny spotted Kate at once, and was surprised that the redhead was not dressed in one of the skimpy, semi-transparent outfits she knew slave girls were usually required to wear. She wore a simple khaki skirt and white blouse, though it was obvious from the outlines of her breasts and the pink points of her nipples visible through the blouse's thin cotton that there was nothing beneath it. The girl was holding the arm of a big, rugged-looking man who Penny took for one of the two sergeants Macdonald had told her about, and even more surprisingly she was looking up at him with an unmistakably happy smile on her face. It was scarcely the expression Penny expected from a girl who had been kidnapped from her bed and was about to be sold into slavery. Nor did it change when Kate looked at her without any sign of hope or relief or excitement and merely gave her a single nod of recognition.

Penny's puzzlement changed to alarm when she looked beyond Kate and saw the girl a second tough-looking man, who could only be the other ex-sergeant, was holding firmly in front of him by a grip on her narrow shoulders. The girl was staring at her, wide-eyed and fearful.

“Subaidah,” she gasped. Her gaze swung sharply to Jefferson who stood on the opposite side of the room, his head bowed close to that of the Prince while they conversed in low voices. She caught his eye, motioned her head towards her servant, who should still have been awaiting her in the hotel in Peshawar, and looked a furious question at him. His knowing smile made her temper flare but the Prince was coming towards her, his hand outstretched in welcome.

“Mrs. Winter, a pleasure. We meet again at last.” He gestured to their surroundings. “Rather different from a London hotel, with you in mourning and me weighed down by the worry of returning to recover my throne, don’t you think?”

The memory of their meeting, during which he had expressed his admiration for a beautiful, blonde-haired young woman who had been drinking cocktails in the hotel bar, was what had given Penny the idea of writing to him with her offer after Tom’s death. At the time it had seemed so straightforward.

“Yes indeed, Your Highness,” she replied. “I apologise for my late arrival. I would have been here days ago but some unforeseen difficulties delayed me.”

“So I understand. Jefferson Sahib has been explaining them to me. And now you wish me to act as arbitrator, I understand?”

“Jefferson Sahib is the one responsible for them, Your Highness,” Penny said with a venomous look at the Englishman. “It was he who....”

“Before we go further, Your Highness,” Jefferson interrupted, “may I point out that it is necessary for us to wait until your brother arrives before we begin.”

“My brother? Has he some part in this too?” the Prince asked, looking only slightly less confused than Penny was suddenly feeling. “But the Grand Reception doesn’t begin until noon. He isn’t due ’til then.”

“He’ll be here long before, Your Highness,” Jefferson assured him, and glanced at his wristwatch. “He was due at ten, so he’s a little late, but you may be sure he’ll arrive shortly.”

“Very well, we’ll wait,” the Prince declared.

Penny opened her mouth to protest, and realized that Julia was not there either. She could hardly insist they proceed without the girl being present. Outmanoeuvred, she cursed George silently, cast a worried glance in Subaidah’s direction and forced a smile to her face as the Prince asked if her journey from Jargahal to Dhokat had been a pleasant one.

* * * * *

“You look beautiful,” Afia said as she added two gold combs encrusted with pearls and sapphires to the blonde hair she had just pinned up so artfully on Julia’s head. The English girl stared at the mirror, indifferent to her reflection, and uncaring. Eyes bleak and shiny with unshed tears stared back at her. The girls’ best efforts with the make-up had not managed to completely disguise the fact that they were red and puffy from all the weeping she had done during the night. Her heart ached.

Afia dabbed the corners of Julia’s eyes with a handkerchief. “Come now, no more crying. You’ll have your cheeks all stained again. You must be beautiful and

perfect when you are presented.” She clasped her hands to the blonde’s upper arms and spoke more softly. “Be brave, my dear. You have shown us your courage before. You must do it again now. You have every right to be proud. Let your new master see that it is so. Show *him* your strength as well as your beauty, as you did Jahngir Khan.”

Julia felt a stab of pain. Unable to stop herself, she glanced towards the balcony of the *zenana* where the steady tap of the Pathan’s boot-heels told her he was still pacing back and forth, as he had been since the moment he had arrived. He wore a white shirt and trousers and a magnificently embroidered silk *chapaan* and matching turban. He looked every inch a prince. Another stab increased her heartache. But he was not. The Prince was the man to whom she was being given.

She had barely seen Jahngir at all in the four days since her whipping. For the first two Julia had barely been able to get out of bed to answer the calls of nature. The *zenana* girls had taken turns to bathe her ravaged bottom and try to soothe it with salves and ointments while she had lain virtually helpless, face down on her sleeping platform. Once, through a haze of pain she had heard the Pathan’s voice speaking quietly and Afia replying, and she sensed he was looking down at her. She had not turned her head. What was the point?

On the third day she had recovered enough to thank Afia and the girls for intervening and sparing her more pain, and to learn that so far they had not been punished for their actions. Julia had also discovered that, though bruised and ridged with welts, her buttocks had not been shredded as she had imagined and that though her skin was split in several places she had not shed much blood. She had not felt relieved. She had not felt anything except the regular throb of her backside and the awful, hollow ache that filled her. However, Julia had not been so sunk in her misery that she could not sense the changed atmosphere in the *zenana*. The cheerful and light-hearted tone she had grown used to had been replaced by one of gloom and brooding tension.

Jahngir too, Afia had told her, remained short-tempered and sullen. His mood seemed even worse since the flogging. He had barely visited the *zenana* and had not indulged in any of the usual pleasures with any of the girls.

“The whole business of the Prince’s anniversary has done him no good,” she had said. “The delays with the water channel, racking his brains to think of another gift, and then chasing around after Jefferson Sahib to find him one just upset him all the more. After he brought you here I thought he was getting back to his usual self, but then everything suddenly went wrong again. Perhaps when you....”

She had stopped herself at that point but Julia had known what she had been about to say. Perhaps when she left, the *zenana* would get back to normal. She could not find it in herself to blame the girl. Afia and the others had to live with Jahngir after she was gone.

She watched him pacing the balcony, his chin on his chest and a deep frown on his face. Julia sighed. Why should she care if he was troubled? Very soon it would no longer be any concern of hers. She had made her gesture, for all the good it had done. Now there was nothing left but to face her fate as best she could. A little

of the pride Afia had mentioned and the determination Julia had discovered for herself stirred in her breast. The girls had told her she had taken nearly thirty strokes of the whip before Afia had placed her own buttocks in the way and suffered the blow that had persuaded Jahngir to end the flogging. By then, Julia may have been on the verge of surrendering, but first she had squarely faced her fear and overcome it. Whatever happened to her from now on, she would never have to endure it with the blind, terror-stricken panic she had known when Jefferson had threatened her with the cane.

Afia's hands on her shoulders faced her towards the balcony.

"My lord, she is ready." She had to repeat the words more loudly before he stopped and looked up. He seemed more morose than impatient as he ran his eye briefly over Julia and looked away. She wore fine, baggy trousers of pale-blue silk, patterned with gold thread and gathered at the ankle above dark-blue, high-heeled slippers. Her white skin and a small rectangle of dark-blue silk hanging from the gold chain encircling her hips to cover her intimate place were plainly visible through the opaque trousers. A sleeveless jacket of the same blue silk, edged with gold, was held by a single golden button just beneath her bare breasts. Bracelets and armlets, earrings and a necklace of the precious metal, all set with pearls and sapphires to match the combs in her hair, completed her outfit. If Jahngir was impressed, it did not show.

"She looks very fine, my lord. What a pity we could do nothing to disguise her bruises," Afia said pointedly.

His gaze flickered in their direction. Afia produced a full-length cloak of white silk with a pale-blue collar, draped it around Julia's shoulders and fastened it at her neck and across her jutting breasts. She put her arms around the blonde and hugged her tightly, though careful not to smudge her make-up or disarrange her hair.

"Goodbye, little golden hair," she said. "I will see you again. We are allowed to visit the girls in the Prince's *zenana*. Good luck, and remember: one day you will be happy again. And no more tears, or all the work the girls and I did will be undone."

Julia sniffed hard and did her best to fight the prickle in her eyes as Afia gave her a hopeful smile and the other girls crowded around calling their good wishes and farewells. Jahngir Khan stepped into their midst and laid a heavy hand on her shoulder.

"Come, we're late."

When she looked back, his body blocked her view of the faces she was leaving behind. His horse was waiting in the courtyard. He mounted and pulled her up in front of him to sit sideways across the saddle. Julia bit back a cry. She had stood the whole time she was being made ready for a good reason. Though her pain had diminished in the days since the whipping, her bottom was far from healed. Any pressure on its welts and bruises caused her intense discomfort.

Jahngir cradled her shoulders and slid his other arm between the backs of her thighs and his leg, taking much of the weight off her hurts. Guiding the horse one-handed, he rode through the gate and onto the track, which quickly steepened.

Julia kept her head turned from him and looked down into the valley. She could see the town beside the river: white and brown and yellow buildings, and the tall minarets of two mosques. It was of no interest. She had been attracted to him, she thought, she had admired him, obeyed him, done her best to please him and finally fallen in love with him. And from the very beginning he had never intended anything except to turn her into a toy for another man. The moments of intimacy she had imagined they had shared, when it seemed as if their minds as well as their bodies had met, had never meant anything to Jahngir. The hopes and fears and ambitions she had revealed, her sacrifice and her love had left him unmoved. It felt as if the emptiness inside her was about to swallow her up.

“That is the city of Dhokat,” Jahngir said. “Above it, across the valley, is the palace of my brother, Bahram Khan, the Prince. That is where you will live. It is a fine palace, much grander than my home. You will have every luxury for your comfort.”

Dhokat, Julia thought dully. That was where she and Kate had been travelling with Mrs. Winter. She felt the briefest flicker of irony. She had been living in the place that had been her destination from the start and never even known it. Now she was about to meet the man they had all come so far to see but certainly not in the fashion Mrs. Winter had intended. Would it make any difference to what happened to her, she wondered, and found that she did not care. It would not give her the one thing she truly wanted.

“I owe a duty to my brother,” the Pathan continued. “While the revolt is still fresh in everyone’s minds I cannot oppose him about anything. Though I would never betray him, I cannot allow myself to be seen or used as a focus for the ambitious or disaffected. There can be no discord between us, either on an official or a personal level. There have been times he has made decisions I disagreed with, but I did not tell him so. To ensure the people’s loyalty is not divided, both publicly and privately I must demonstrate my own. You understand what I’m saying, little *murgah*?”

When Julia did not reply, his arm tightened around her shoulders, jerking the hand that held the reins. The horse gave a surprised snort and tossed its head. Julia groaned as her bottom slipped on the saddlebow. Jahngir lifted her, taking her weight on his arm again.

“I’m sorry,” he said. “Damn it, I’m sorry I beat you! Afia was right. It was nothing but cruelty, but you were driving me to distraction with your stubbornness. It seemed like such a good idea when I thought it up. My brother always admired white girls when we were in Britain, so why not buy him some? Now I wish...”

Sunk in her discomfort and despondency, Julia barely noticed when he fell silent. She had only half heard his words. Now that she knew she had never had any chance, there was nothing he or she could say that mattered.

He let the horse pick its own way across the ford at the river and rode parallel to the ancient town walls, paying no heed to the noise of the crowds and the gunfire on the other side. Soon they were climbing the slope towards the palace less than a mile above the town. Moments later, it seemed to Julia, they were at its gates and

Jahngir lowered her to the ground and passed the reins to a servant. It had ended, she thought. Everything felt as if it had ended.

Another servant led them through a big room where tables were being laid with white cloths and piled with cups and dishes. The steady pressure of the Pathan's hand in the small of her back guided Julia through them. Her heart felt as if it was tearing itself apart as he opened a door and ushered her through it.

Too despairing to be surprised, she saw Mrs. Winter standing beside a tall, lean, older man she did not know. Julia recognised Jefferson along with his two henchmen, one holding Kate and the other Mrs. Winter's servant, Subaidah, who she had not realized had also been kidnapped.

"Jahngir, what a pleasant surprise. I've just learned you were on your way. I wasn't expecting you until later." The man who spoke was tall, broad-shouldered, black-haired – a slightly older version of Jahngir. His gaze rested on Julia, curious and appraising at the same time. Her aching heart beat faster. She felt a sudden upsurge of strength that straightened her limbs and stiffened her back. Her head lifted and her jaw tilted up in renewed determination. She was not going to meekly submit. Let them beat her if they wished, but first they would know that it was Jahngir Khan she loved and him alone she wanted. And they would learn that she was not too timid to say it, but proud of the fact. Then let them do their worst.

"Congratulations on the anniversary of your accession, my Prince," Julia heard Jahngir say. He stood close behind her, his big hands resting on her shoulders. "In honour of the occasion I have brought two gifts that I hope will give you much pleasure. One stands there with Captain Jefferson's man, trained to perfection, I was guaranteed, to serve you in any way you desire. The other stands here with me, as rare and wondrous a woman as any man could ever wish, as I learned for myself when I trained her with my own hand." He freed the hooks holding the cloak around Julia and pulled the garment away, exposing her bare breasts and her body in its brief, revealing costume.

Pain stabbed through Julia's heart and she flinched despite her resolve as Jahngir's grip returned to her shoulders, and he pushed her out in front of him, offering her to his brother. Giving her away.

Chapter 9

Penny watched the war of emotions on Julia's face as the Prince's brother held her out at arms' length. She had never imagined the girl would find her enslavement so painful. She had always seemed so timid and anxious to do what was expected of her that Penny had assumed she would accept it quickly and with little fuss once the initial shock had worn off. Yet the conflict she saw told a different story.

For a moment Julia seemed to sag, then her head came up and the shoulders under Jahngir's hands seemed to grow broader. That the posture thrust forward her full, firm breasts and their red-rouged, pointed nipples, the beautiful blonde appeared to care not at all as she fixed her bright-blue eyes on Bahram Khan. Despite Penny's mounting excitement as the culmination of her plan came closer, the big, taut young breasts provoked a twinge of envy. Rather to her surprise, she felt admiration too for the way the girl had found the courage to overcome her obvious despair. She also experienced some very unwelcome pangs of guilt and regret. Penny forced them from her mind. Her success was too close now to be having second thoughts. She ought to voice her protest, she thought, but she was reluctant to interrupt the brothers. It was plain that Jahngir Khan knew nothing of the true situation. Doubtless his brother would explain, once he had found in her favour.

The Prince took a step towards Julia. Jahngir's face was sombre, devoid of any of the pleasure Penny would have expected him to show when presenting a gift to his brother. Julia's chin lifted higher. She opened her mouth as if about to speak. Penny saw Jahngir's hands tighten on her shoulders. His mouth twisted as though he was in pain. Abruptly, the hands gripping Julia drew back but without releasing their hold. He pulled her against him and wrapped a forearm around her waist.

"Forgive me, brother, I cannot do it. I care too much for this girl myself. I have wanted her since the moment I first saw her. Even for your sake I cannot let her go."

The light of joy that shone in Julia's face was like nothing Penny had ever seen before. With a short, startled cry the girl twisted in Jahngir's grip, clasped her arms tightly around him and pressed herself hard against his broad chest. Gulping, Penny saw a mass of weals and bruising on Julia's buttocks through the transparent seat of her silk harem trousers. They were even worse than those Courtney had inflicted on her own backside. Jahngir Khan had clearly flogged her mercilessly, yet still she very obviously wanted him with an intensity that could only mean she was in love. Astonished and bewildered, Penny watched the smile that had appeared on Bahram Khan's face grow wider.

"Little brother, I have waited for a whole year to hear you tell me what *you* want. Never once since I came to the throne have you asked for anything for yourself. You have never disputed the decisions I made, even when I knew you thought them the wrong ones. You never disagreed with my opinions or offered me advice you thought I did not want to hear. Thank heaven that something has happened to make you act like your old self again."

The pained expression on Jahngir's face changed to puzzlement that clearly equalled Penny's own.

"What? But... but my duty," he spluttered. "And honour demands you have a gift. The girl was for you, a sign of respect and loyalty. What about the people? They need to see...."

"Oh, Jahngir!" the Prince cut him off. "The people know that you are loyal. They know you are not like our uncle and that you never will be. Why, we could stand in Dhokat's market place and argue with each other from dawn 'til dusk and no one would ever believe we were anything but the devoted and loving brothers we have always been." He shook his head at the baffled expression on the other's face. "As for gifts, is the aqueduct not enough? And will it not be a reminder of your loyalty and respect every time people see it and benefit from its water, and of much more interest to them than who has ownership of a slave girl?" He held out his hand. "Come, Jahngir, if you wish to give me a gift this day, take my hand in love and friendship and promise me that next time you think I'm being a fool you'll tell me so."

Jahngir released his hold on Julia's waist, grasped the outstretched hand and shook it vigorously, though he at once slid his other arm possessively about the girl, Penny noticed. "I will," he said, giving her a somewhat stunned smile. "I will deal honestly with you in all things from now on. Though you may not always like it."

Bahram laughed. "Oh, I will, brother! I've been waiting a long time for a good argument like the ones we used to have. But it's not going to be over a slave girl."

"Why didn't you say something sooner?" Jahngir asked.

"Would you have believed it was true if you hadn't started to arrive at the same conclusion yourself first? I knew you'd come to it eventually, though it took rather longer than I thought." He smiled at Julia whose face still bore an expression of pure joy. "She is a beautiful girl. You should return her to your *zenana* as soon as possible. Come back this evening. The party will be in full swing by then."

"This evening? But my duty is to be here with you. The people...."

"Can get along very well without you for a few hours," Bahram interrupted. "Go home and enjoy your girl, Jahngir. She was meant to be yours all along."

"Mine? That can't be. I arranged with Jefferson to buy her for you."

"So I have just recently found out," the Prince said. "But I had already arranged to buy her for *you*. Isn't that right, Mrs. Winter?"

Penny felt a rush of heat to her cheeks and a lurch of her belly as Bahram Khan starkly revealed the true purpose behind her bringing Julia and Kate to Dhokat. She glanced nervously at the girls. The surprise she had expected appeared on their faces but it vanished almost at once, replaced by expressions of glowing happiness. There was no sign of the anger and hatred she had been anticipating ever since she and Julia had set out from London weeks earlier. She heard Bahram Khan laughing softly.

"Yes, it's all been something of a muddle, brother. It appears we both had the same idea. I also wanted you to have a special gift to celebrate my anniversary. I'll

admit I was at a loss to know what until suddenly, out of the blue, I received a letter from Mrs. Winter far away in England making me a rather surprising but attractive offer. She said if I would cable her the cost of the journey she could produce a young, blonde and beautiful English girl to grace the apartments of my *zenana*, and deliver her for a satisfactory fee.” He paused to light a cigarette.

Penny watched Jefferson stroll towards her with a smile on his face and position himself at her left. He leaned down to whisper.

“All set, Penny? The Judgement of Solomon, eh?”

“Ordinarily I would not have accepted such an offer from a lady after a single, brief acquaintance,” Bahram continued, “but I was rather intrigued by her as well as by the letter, and it gave me the chance to obtain a unique present for you, Jahngir. So I sent my agreement to Mrs. Winter’s proposal, and as soon as she notified me she had found a suitable candidate, cabled her the money. Two months later I received a telegram from her announcing her arrival in India and soon afterwards a letter informing me she had obtained a second girl who could be had for a price equalling the four thousand pounds we had agreed for the first.” He pointed at Kate. “That young lady there, I am told. Regrettably, for she is indeed very lovely, she is no longer available.”

“Then the same girls you were buying for me were the ones I asked Jefferson to find so I could buy them for you,” Jahngir Khan said. “That is rather ironic, and quite a coincidence.”

“Not really, when you consider the scarcity of suitable white girls in these parts,” Jefferson said. “I keep a regular watch on the railway stations, so of course I was notified about these ones arriving and that they were both very much out of the ordinary. Once I knew that, it was inevitable that I would have them.” He grinned at Penny. “I was told there were four actually, but only my two associates were available on the night so we could only abduct two girls, and the ones who had been drinking were the easiest.” He laughed softly. “But really, Penny, four thousand pounds? They’d make at least twice that at auction.”

“You seem to know this lady well,” Jahngir said.

“Oh yes! I used to fuck her some years ago.”

Penny’s cheeks burned at Jefferson’s frank admission and the terms he had used to make it. She looked to Bahram, but he did not rebuke him for his crudity in front of a lady.

“I didn’t know Penny was involved when I took the girls,” George went on, “or, of course, yourself, Your Highness. It was only after she called on Macdonald and he sent one of his men to tell me, that I learned she was back in India and on her way here. I knew she wouldn’t come all the way from England without a good reason, and that it would be one that served her self-interest, but I couldn’t work out what her game was to begin with. Once I found out how far she was prepared to go to get the girls back I guessed that money had to be involved. From there, it wasn’t such a big step to realize the only thing of any value she had with her were the girls, or to work out what she planned to do with them.” He gave her a short bow. “I must say,

Penelope, I admire your enterprise. It was a damned clever plan. I'm sure no one suspected your real motives for a moment."

Unimpressed by his compliment but thoroughly embarrassed at how sordid her scheme had sounded when it was revealed, Penny looked self-consciously at the other people in the room. Although the whole business was about them, Julia and Kate were so steeped in their lovesick euphoria that they appeared to care nothing for its outcome. Everyone else was watching her and plainly awaiting a response.

With an excited flip of her stomach, Penny realized her moment had arrived. Her life was about to be transformed, and at the same time she could pay George back for all the suffering he had caused her when he kidnapped the girls. She was going to win! Immediately confident, once more she sucked in a breath and felt a warm glow of triumph as the Prince's eyes fixed upon the rise of her full breasts.

"Your Highness, Mr. Jefferson has given you a fairly clear account of what happened," she declared. "He has also admitted that but for his interference I would have arrived much earlier than today." She looked resentfully at Courtney. "And, I might add, have had a much less difficult journey than the one I went through to be here. But I *am* here, just as I promised to be in the agreement we made long before Mr. Jefferson involved himself in our business, and in accordance with that agreement the girls have been delivered into your hands." She gave a pert tilt of her head in George's direction and Bahram Khan her sweetest smile.

The one he returned her showed the same amusement that twinkled in his eyes. "Cleverly put, Mrs. Winter. You managed to avoid the issue of who delivered the girls, for which I must thank Mr. Jefferson and my brother. But our agreement was that you would personally deliver them to me, and that did not happen. Alas, neither are they in my hands. As you can see, one is in those of Jahngir Khan and the other, for reasons I do not pretend to fully understand, now belongs to one of Mr. Jefferson's associates."

"But..." Penny's belly gave a wild leap. He was trying to swindle her. Her heart raced as the prospect of more long years of poverty loomed over her. "But I kept the bargain," she protested. "I escorted them safely all the way from England and right across India. You can't quibble about who brought them the last few miles."

"I'm afraid I must, Mrs. Winter, if you wish me to arbitrate the matter fairly, as I'm sure you do. And it seems to me that you, Jefferson, cannot say in honesty that you have kept your bargain with my brother."

"I make no such claim, Your Highness," he replied. "In the case of the redhead I can only say that I made a promise to my comrade and that as a man of my word I could not refuse when he asked me to keep it. If my reputation must suffer as a result, then so be it. As for the blonde girl, well, she seems to have made her own choice in the matter, so I won't expect or ask any payment for her, especially since Jahngir Khan handled all of her training himself."

"A sensible decision," the Prince said. "In the circumstances, I think we can say you acted properly in this affair."

"Properly?" Penny snarled. "But he stole them. If he hadn't..."

“Quiet, Mrs. Winter,” the Prince barked, giving her a forbidding look. “Wait until I have finished if you wish to speak.”

She recognised a familiar uncompromising air of authority in his tone and expression. Swallowing hard, she reined in her anger.

“I’m not going to criticise Mr. Jefferson for simply going about the usual operations of the profession both of you have chosen to follow,” he continued. “The girls were your responsibility at the time they were abducted and you can only blame yourself for what happened. However, I won’t overlook your achievement in bringing them so far, and I won’t therefore demand you return the travelling money I sent you. But we still have an agreement, Mrs. Winter, and that means you owe me two white slave girls.”

“What? You’re not serious!” Penny stared at him in disbelief.

“Entirely serious,” he assured her. “I have your written offer and a copy of my written acceptance. Therefore, you are obligated to provide me with two slave girls.”

“B... but I can’t.” She looked guiltily at Kate and Julia. “I couldn’t do it again. I... I know now I shouldn’t have done it the first time. And I have no money, not nearly enough for a passage back to England, and even if I had, I’d have no home to go to when I got there.” With growing alarm she looked pleadingly into Bahram’s stern face.

He gave an eloquent shrug of his shoulders. A tear brimmed from the corner of one of Penny’s eyes and rolled slowly down her cheek. She felt utterly wretched. She was beaten, even worse off than when she had set off on the journey that had ended in such an awful nightmare. A sob escaped her.

“Y... Your Highness, what am I to do?”

Slipping Penny’s handbag from where it hung on her left wrist, Jefferson stepped forward from his place beside her.

“Sorry Penny. Remember what I told you. It’s purely business.” He grinned at her and turned to the Prince. “Your Highness, I believe I have a solution that will solve Mrs. Winter’s problems and at the same time allow her to meet her obligation to you. I think you might find it rather attractive too.”

His soft, sardonic laugh made Penny shudder in sudden fear.

* * * * *

The horse had carried them more than halfway to Jahngir’s mountain fortress before Julia dared let herself speak. She had been on the edge of both laughter and tears since the moment she had heard him refuse to let her go. It had taken all of her strength to control her excitement and emotions but, anxious to preserve his dignity in front of the others, she had managed it somehow. A little calmer now, moisture still filmed her eyes and elation once more bubbled up inside her as she lifted her head from his shoulder.

“Did you mean it?”

“That I wanted you from the first?” Jahngir kissed her forehead. “Yes, little *murgah*, every word. And what a torment it was to resist going all the way with you,

especially when you started tempting me at every turn.” His soft laugh rumbled. “And all along you were meant to be mine. What a fool I have made of myself. And how badly it made me treat you.” He kissed her brow again. “I am sorry, my love. Forgive me. It will never happen again.”

Julia tightened her arms around his neck as a thrill of joy ran through her. He had called her his love. Tears overflowed her eyelids as she smiled up at him.

“Are you hurting?” he demanded. “Should I stop?”

She shook her head. “I’m not hurting. I’m happy, m... my lord,” she said, and felt another thrill.

“You’ll be home soon. Then you had better rest until you’re properly healed. I have never regretted anything more in my life than beating you like that. I never thought of myself as cruel or unjust but I took all of my frustrations out on you. It was very wrong of me.”

“You aren’t a cruel or unjust man,” Julia told him, “nor have you any reason to become one if you follow your brother’s advice in future.”

“Oh, I will,” he replied. “I suppose I overreacted after the revolt. I was so anxious to never cause any strife between Bahram and me that I carried it too far.” He nuzzled her hair. “But I know better now, and you helped me see it, my love.”

Once more a tingle of excitement ran through Julia at hearing the endearment, but this time its warm glow reached all the way to her pussy. She shifted in Jahngir’s arms.

“Nearly there,” he said, misinterpreting the reason. “There’s something I want you to see along with all of the girls and then you can get some rest.”

“But I’m not tired,” Julia said with the tickle of her arousal increasing. “I hoped you meant to follow your brother’s other advice too.”

“His other...? Oh, I see! But you’re not up to that yet. You can only lie on your front.

As the horse drew to a halt in the courtyard Julia rubbed her cheek on the embroidered silk *chapaan* covering Jahngir’s muscled chest. “I saw Helai do it with you once and she didn’t have to lie down at all.”

“Oh, so that’s how it is,” he laughed. “You can be very determined, I’ve learned, and very brave. I want you very much, little *murgah*, and I’m glad after what I’ve done you still want me.”

Julia pressed a fingertip to his lips. “Please, my lord, never feel any regret. I would go through it all again right now to stay here with you and the girls.”

“This is your home now and always,” he assured her. “And you will never feel the whip again. I’ll make certain of it.” He helped her dismount and led her by the hand through the house to the *zenana*. Home, Julia thought with a happiness and contentment she had never dreamed she would ever know.

Once the noise and excitement that her return provoked had finally died down, the Pathan took all seven girls to the far end of the *zenana*. Suddenly subdued by the fact it was usually where their punishments were meted out, they were surprised when, despite the day being hot, Jahngir lit one of the braziers used for heating in winter. As they watched he took the three canes from their pegs on the wall, broke

them over his knee and fed them into the flames. While they burned, he pushed the red leather whip deep into the glowing heart of the fire and waited until it flared in the heat and crumbled into charred fragments.

Jahngir looked at them solemnly. "Never again," he promised.

There was an awkward silence after that, until Afia gave him a saucy smile and asked, "Have you forgotten the switches, my lord? And what of the oils and ropes and other instruments?"

He gave a smile that quickly widened into a grin. "Would you leave me helpless with seven of you to keep in line now? No, my dears, I draw the line at surrendering completely. Now back to amusing yourselves. Julia and I have something to do. Something we should have done days ago. So off with you." He laughed as he took her hand, and the girls laughed too and skipped ahead of him as he led her to her sleeping cubicle. Julia was shivering with excitement and brimming with happiness. She could not recall him ever speaking her name before.

"My lord, Afia said I would be given a Pashto name when I had a master of my own," she said, turning her head to kiss the palm that was caressing her cheek.

"Do you have one in mind?"

"I thought perhaps, Murgah?"

He laughed softly and pressed his lips gently to hers. "I like Julia."

"But it has no meaning."

"It has to me," he said. The backs of his hands rubbed the undersides of her breasts as he loosened the button on her silk jacket. "It means 'great treasure'."

"Great t... treasure," she whispered against the lips that softly kissed hers, and tears prickled her eyes again.

"Greater than gold." He took his time undressing her, savouring as much as she did her flimsy silks sliding from her body and his touch on the soft, sensitive skin beneath. Julia helped him undress with an eagerness and intensity of desire that no longer shocked or surprised her. Her pussy quivered, eager and ready for him long before Jahngir took her in his arms and she felt his hard, muscular body against hers and his rigid erection pressing into her stomach. She shook with excitement as he laid on her sleeping platform and drew her down on top of him, careful to avoid her bruised buttocks with his exploring hands.

The giggles of the other girls told Julia they had not retreated to the living area but were close by and listening for every moan and whimper and cry she had no doubt she would soon be making. She felt no shame or embarrassment. Let them share in as much of her delight as they could. They were her companions and her friends, and they loved the same man she did with a fervour that matched her own.

Ignoring the dull throb her movements caused her bottom, she straddled Jahngir, looking into his face and smiling as she closed her hand around his upright manhood. Smiling back, he reached up and stroked the twin rounds of her breasts. His touch made her nipples pulse under their layer of bright-red rouge. A ripple of arousal teased through her, followed at once by another and then many more until she was aware of nothing but the smouldering gaze of her lover and the urgency of her need.

She raised herself a little and saw the swelling of her feminine bud as she looked down to guide Jahngir's big member between her trembling thighs. Julia felt it push inwards and the wriggles and tremors within grow stronger and swifter. Fiery ripples made her catch her breath and a great swell of joyous delight surged up inside her. She pushed herself down to meet his eager thrusts and cried out as she spasmed and squirmed exultantly.

Let the girls hear her, she thought as the ecstatic pleasure flowed. Let them know that she was his now and always would be. And that he was hers.

Chapter 10

Hips swaying seductively to the rhythm of the music, Penny glided with all of her natural poise and grace across the marble floor. Raising her arms into an arch above her head she thrust out the heavy globes of her breasts and shook them. Her rouged lips drawn back in a fixed, frozen smile, she pirouetted to present her bare, jiggling buttocks to her audience and bent over, thighs parted. Humiliation was a physical pain in her chest as she danced in a circle, paused facing the watchers and heard the tinkle of the little bells at the tips of her gold nipple-caps as she shook her breasts once more.

Cheeks aflame with her blush, she darted a nervous glance at Bahram Khan who reclined amid a pile of silken cushions with his brother sitting at his right hand and the associate of Jefferson's whose name she had never learned at his left. The Prince watched her intently, his dark eyes bright and glittering. Penny's stomach fluttered wildly.

She had known the moment George had slipped her handbag from her wrist and deprived her of the gun inside that she was not going to like what he had to say. Even so, Penny had been unprepared for the shock of the cold, unfeeling ruthlessness of his so-called answer to her problems when he had explained it to the Prince.

"Oh, come now, Penny," Jefferson had said above her angry and frightened protests, "it's the perfect solution. You get a roof over your head and all your money troubles solved, and His Highness gets the two slave girls you owe him." To her surprise, the smile he had given her had been neither sardonic nor self-satisfied, but had seemed one of understanding, though of what she could not imagine. "I've a feeling you'll be grateful to me before too long," he had said. "You ought to be glad I thought of it."

Penny had not been glad at all. Minutes later, her protests by that time frantic, she had found herself, along with Subaidah, in the *zenana* of the Prince of Dhokat, stripped, bathed, perfumed, made up and dressed in the scandalously revealing garments of a concubine and slave girl. It had been unbelievable, horrifying and incredibly frightening. It still was.

Burning with embarrassment, Penny presented her bottom once more and snaked it sinuously from side to side, turned, spread her feet wide, bent her knees and undulated her belly in the way she had been made to practice during each of the ten days she had been a prisoner. They had been the strangest, most bewildering and anxious days of her life, and caused her the greatest confusion of conflicting emotions. Penny knew she had experienced first hand everything Julia and Kate must have felt when they had been kidnapped and enslaved. The thought of belonging to someone else, of being owned like a pair of boots or an overcoat, had been enough on its own to make her tremble with fear.

She had felt the switch too, every day since she had been made a slave, and once the cane, though the pain of the beatings had been minor compared to that she had suffered during her attempts to recover the girls. And there had been pleasure. It

had been forced upon her by the man who called himself her master, and more often than not under his supervision – pleasure from her own hands, from those of other slave girls and from Bahram Khan himself. Always it had been only at his command, for anything else meant punishment and his discipline was strict. He made it very clear that he alone was in control.

The knowledge sent a quiver tickling through Penny's pussy and alarm through her mind. More than once she had found herself growing aroused when thinking how completely the Prince had her in his power. Did Kate and Julia feel the same thrill at being so helplessly dominated, she wondered. Unable to stop herself, she looked at the two girls, each reclining beside their masters, each looking relaxed and absurdly happy despite what had befallen them. How could they possibly find such contentment in their slavery?

Penny looked back and forth between them and then quickly away as each in turn met her eye. Cringing inwardly with shame, she missed a step of the dance and saw Bahram's mouth turn down at the corners. Belly lurching, she caught up with the music and continued her weaving and whirling across the marble floor.

What did the girls think of her? She had still seen no malice or hostility in their faces, but how humiliating it was to have to expose her naked body to them in the lewd dance, and what an awful contrast to the respectable and refined English lady she had always portrayed herself to be. Now, she was sure, they would only ever remember her clad in nothing but jewellery and revealing every intimate detail of her nudity in this outrageous carnal display. At least George was not here to witness her degradation and heighten her despair, Penny told herself. That would have been too much to bear. She wished she knew if the Prince had paid him any money for her and, to her greater embarrassment, found she hoped that he had and that it was more than the four thousand pounds she had been promised for Julia. She was worth that at the very least.

The music ended abruptly, Penny's cue to sink to her knees with her thighs spread wide and lift the big mounds of her breasts with her hands as if offering them to the Prince. He gave a non-committal nod.

"Here, slave."

With the irritating bells at her nipples tinkling in the silence, she hurried to his side and knelt on the cushions indicated by his pointing finger, hoping desperately that he was pleased with her performance.

"Well, gentlemen," Bahram said, "I hope you enjoyed my little entertainment. She has yet to be properly schooled but I believe she shows great promise."

Penny bowed her head to avoid their appraising eyes as the men agreed that she had not done badly for a first attempt. She was oddly glad that none of them found any reason to criticise her.

"I'll see you at tomorrow's council meeting," she heard Jahngir Khan tell his brother. "I'll take my leave now, and I'm sure Mr. Ross has some last-minute preparations to attend to before he begins his journey in the morning."

So the man was Ross, Penny thought, ears pricking up. Earlier in the day she had dared to ask Bahram what the occasion was at which she was being made to

dance. His answer had been a dozen stripes with the switch to her bottom and a reminder that no slave girl, however beautiful, was allowed to question his decisions. Although the switching had hurt, Penny had felt quite pleased that he thought her beautiful.

“Remain where you are,” the Prince told her, and to her disappointment rose to escort his guests to the palace gates. She was not going to learn anything more.

“Goodbye, Mrs. Winter. I’ll come and see you again if I’m allowed.”

She looked up sharply and saw Julia give her a quick smile before the blonde turned and hurried in her master’s wake. Though she had every right to be, she had not seemed unfriendly and certainly not hostile, Penny thought, but did not ponder about the girl for long. The clips holding her nipple-caps in place, and even more so the one attached lower down were making their presence felt. They were the only covering she had been allowed while she had danced, a conical cap for the point of each breast and a gold disc the size of a half-crown on the flesh of her feminine bud, with three short chains ending in pearl drops hanging down from it and sorely inadequate to hide her sex. No longer distracted by the need to dance, Penny grew more aware of their painful pinching as the minutes dragged by and she waited, not daring to touch let alone remove them herself, or even to shift from the position Bahram had ordered her to take up.

She was not sure whether to be relieved or afraid when he returned.

“Jahngir wanted his new girl to have a chance to bid the red-haired one farewell,” he told Penny as he sat down beside her. “She is going on a long journey with her master. As I wanted my brother to see how well you’re coming along and I owed Jefferson the price for you and Subaidah, I suggested Jahngir and Ross come here and we could sort out the whole business at the same time.”

“Price?” She had been bought and paid for, Penny realized with a flip of her belly and a perplexing little tremor of excitement. “May I ask how much you paid for me?” It was still difficult to keep her resentment from her tone.

The Prince smiled broadly. “I won’t tell you. You’ll get even more conceited.”

She blushed and looked down, not entirely disappointed by his reply. He unfastened the clips from her nipples and cupped her breasts in his large hands, massaging their painfully pulsing points with the balls of his thumbs. It felt very soothing after the bite of the metal.

“You have very beautiful breasts, Penelope,” Bahram said, adding a finger to each gently rubbing thumb and rolling the stiffening cones at their tips between them.

“Th... thank you, Your Highness,” Penny said, more pleased than she expected by his appreciation. She arched her back to push them out.

He laughed softly. “But a short memory, it appears. Though I think that is not the reason you keep failing to obey me. You’re my slave girl, Penelope. What did I tell you slave girls must call me?”

“M... M... Master,” she stammered as the grip of his fingers tightened.

“That’s right. Not such a difficult word to pronounce, eh? But you’re finding it hard, aren’t you? It’s not the way of prideful Englishwomen to acknowledge anyone has the mastery of them, is it?”

Her gut tightened as she lifted her eyes to his and gave a tiny shake of her head. It *was* hard. Every time she said the word it felt as if she was surrendering a little more of herself, as if she was giving up a little more control to him. But what had being in control ever got her except discontentment and dissatisfaction? It had certainly never given her the fulfilment and happiness she wanted.

The soreness in her nipples dissipated under his touch, but they continued to pulse as they strained, upright and elongated, at the peaks of her breasts. Bahram sank his fingertips deep into the fleshy fullness of her twin globes and squeezed firmly.

“There, feel better now?”

Penny’s gaze was still locked to the dark glitter of his eyes. Breathing faster, she nodded.

“Then say so.”

“Th... they feel better, M... M... Master.”

He smiled. “Good girl. And as long as you never fail to call me that in future, I won’t have to take a willow wand to your lovely tits, Penelope.” He used his grip on her breasts to push her down into the cushions, propped himself on one elbow beside her and ran his forefinger over the fullness of her lower lip. “You really are very beautiful. I expect a lot of men have told you that before, eh?”

“Y... yes, M... Master.” Her tongue seemed to thicken as she spoke the title.

“But none of them owned you the way I do, did they?”

“No, M... Master.” The fluttering in Penny’s stomach began spreading lower.

The Prince trailed one finger between the up-thrust swells on her chest and down her belly to where he had just had her freshly plucked. He chuckled. “You’ll adapt, Penelope. You’ll get used to life in my *zenana*. You’ll learn to obey me in all things, and I mean *all* things, for there won’t be a minute, day or night, when you’re not under my control. And sooner or later you’ll learn to love me as the other girls have, and you’ll be as eager as they are for my attention.” He opened the jaws of the third clip and pulled it free.

Penny let out a long sigh as the tight nip of the metal vanished at last. A heartbeat later Bahram’s finger replaced it, massaging the buzzing flesh where her thighs met with the same skill as he had her breasts. His mouth sought hers and brushed her lips.

“You were a naughty girl, Penelope,” he said softly into her ear. “When you looked at your erstwhile protégées during the dance you let your concentration lapse and missed a step. I told you I always demand the best from my concubines, didn’t I.”

“Y... yes, M... Master.” Penny whispered in her nervousness.

“But you didn’t do your best, did you?”

“N... no, M... Master,” she admitted, fear wriggling in her belly.

“This evening at six o’clock you will be stripped naked and chained at the whipping post in the *zenana*. Then, with the other girls looking on, you will receive twelve strokes to your buttocks with the cane for your inattention to your duty.”

She gasped, partly in fear of the punishment but mostly from the things his rubbing fingers were doing below her waist and the tremors of arousal he was creating there.

“After your caning you will go straight to your room. On the bed will be an ivory phallus. You will kneel on the floor by the bed, insert the phallus and keep it there while you spend the time until I come to you thinking of the ways that you are going to pleasure me.” He tweaked the flesh that was growing increasingly firm under his fingers stroking.

Penny wriggled and gave a mew of mingled passion and surprise. Only twice since her arrival had he taken her. Soon it would be three times, one more than Subaidah. The beating would hurt, but after the thrashings she had had in the past she knew she could bear it. It was the thought of what would happen afterwards that made her belly wriggle and provoked her tingling excitement. Once again, something that should have been repellent suddenly seemed disturbingly attractive.

“Do you understand, slave girl?” Bahram demanded, his fingers pushing into her and tickling and teasing her sensitive tissues.

“Yes, M... Master,” Penny gasped and using the title did not seem quite so difficult, nor the ignominy of speaking it so painful.

“But I’m not going to wait until this evening, my prideful English rose,” he said, smiling as he stripped off his shirt. “I want you now.”

Her eyes widened as he removed his trousers and his arrogant length sprang upright. “Oh, M... Master!” Despite her rapid breathing and the pounding of her heart, the word came more easily than before.

Again his fingers probed deeply and Penny moaned and wriggled her bottom on the silken cushions.

“Oh, Master!”

Bahram’s weight came down on her. She felt his upright flesh rub against her own, shivered ecstatically and lifted herself to meet the first thrust.

“Ooh, Master!” Penny cried as he slid to the hilt and she felt a ripple of sparkling delight. “Ooh, Master!”

Suddenly it was not difficult to say the word at all.

* * * * *

“No regrets about what you’re leaving behind?” Kate asked.

Julia smiled and shook her head. “No, Kate. Nothing back in England means half as much to me as what I have here. I suppose I’ll have to write and tell my parents some of what’s happened eventually.” She grinned. “I won’t be giving them a return address, though.”

“Nor I mine,” Kate said. “Not that I will have one.” Grinning broadly, she clapped her hands in delight. “Oh, we’re off tomorrow! I can’t wait.”

“I won’t bother to ask if you’re sure it’s what you want.” The answer was plain to see on the redhead’s face every time she glanced at the man she had chosen. He stood a few yards away, waiting beside the car, just as Jahngir was holding the horses and waiting for Julia. “We shouldn’t keep them hanging around,” she warned. “They’ll only get impatient.”

“And we know how that will end up.” Kate laughed and tapped a hand on one buttock. “And I’ve got to ride a train tomorrow.” She wrapped her arms impulsively around Julia and they hugged one another tightly. “Good luck, Julia. Be happy always.”

“I will,” Julia assured her. “How could I ever be anything else when I have everything I want?”

“Me too.” Kate moved her mouth closer to her ear and lowered her voice. “Listen, if your man hasn’t put it up your bum yet, get him to do it soon. It’s absolutely wonderful.” She giggled and Julia joined in.

“I know. We’ve done it already. Whatever would our parents say if they knew?”

They laughed together happily for a moment then drew apart.

“Goodbye, Kate. Good luck on your travels,” Julia said. “Be careful and be safe.”

“I’ll always be safe. My man will see to that. There’s no one like him.”

“Except my man,” Julia said, and they both laughed again.

“I might be back in a year or two,” Kate said. “I’ll come and visit you.”

“And you’ll be welcome. Welcome always,” Julia replied.

There was nothing more to say. The farewells were over. Kate climbed into the car and drove off up the motor road, waving excitedly until she vanished over the brow of the hill. A little sadly, Julia turned away and took her horse’s reins from Jahngir’s hand.

“She’ll be fine,” he said as he helped her mount and she arranged her cloak to hide her flimsy clothing. “That Ross is a good man. He’ll look after her.”

“I know, my lord. I was just remembering the time we spent together with Mrs. Winter. May I go and visit her some time? Afia says it’s allowed.”

“You can come with me tomorrow,” Jahngir told her. “I’ll have a word with my brother. If he agrees, you can see her while we’re in the council meeting.”

“Thank you. I remember how I felt when I first came to your *zenana*. I thought she might need a little comfort.”

“She’ll do well enough. She’s a clever one. She’ll run rings round Bahram if he gives her half a chance. He’ll need to keep an eye on her.” Jahngir laughed. “And I’m sure he’ll enjoy doing it.”

“She had stripes on her bottom,” Julia said as they approached the river.

“My brother’s discipline is strict. But he’ll take care of her, trust me. She won’t suffer any lasting harm. Maybe a few piercings, but that will be all.”

“Piercings?” Julia asked. “That sounds rather intriguing.”

He grinned. “Ask Afia.”

They rode side by side across the ford. A little way downstream Julia could see the water flowing from the newly completed aqueduct and into the river, and felt a glow of pride for her Master's achievement.

"Mrs. Winter danced well, I thought," she said as they began to climb the side of the valley.

"She wasn't anything special, though she might be one day, with practice. She let herself be distracted when she looked at you. Bahram will probably punish her for it."

Julia's rear muscle tightened. "Oh! Does he use the... the oil?"

"No, he prefers the switch, or occasionally the cane."

"My, lord," she said tentatively, "would you switch me the next time I have to be punished?"

"Why would you want me to do that? Anyway, what makes you think you'll do something that will make me want to punish you?"

"Oh, I will eventually."

He smiled. "Is that a promise or a warning?"

"Neither, but it's bound to happen sooner or later." She felt a tickling quiver as she spoke. "And I would like to know how it feels to be switched. I mean, compared to the whip. Oh, I'm sorry! I shouldn't have mentioned that."

He shook his head. "Never mind, I understand. All right, if that's what you want. If you prefer not to wait to satisfy your curiosity I'll do it today if you like."

"Would you? That's very kind, my lord." It sounded odd even to her own ears to thank him for a punishment, particularly when she had done nothing to deserve it, but Julia was genuinely curious to know how it would feel and did not want to wait before finding out.

"Then we'll do it as soon as we're home. We'll need a reason to give the others. I don't usually give out punishments for nothing, especially a switching."

"Oh, can it wait a little longer? I'm to practice my dancing with Reshmina and Laila. I wouldn't do very well with a sore bottom."

Jahngir laughed. "Whatever pleases you, little *murgah*. Though you're better than Mrs. Winter already. I doubt missing it for once will make much difference."

"But I want to improve as quickly as possible," Julia said. "I want to... to be graceful and beautiful and... seductive for you." Another little wriggle teased between her legs.

"You dance very gracefully now," he told her.

"But I'm clumsy compared to the other girls."

"You're as graceful as they are, Julia."

"That's not true and you know it."

"Are you contradicting me?" Jahngir demanded sternly. "I think I had better give you a switching, my love, to remind you of your manners."

She could not help smiling. Julia always smiled when he called her his love. This time it became a giggle at the way he had turned her touchiness about her dancing into a means to give him an excuse to punish her.

“Oh, wait!” she said in sudden dismay. “If my bottom is all striped I might not be able to.... That is, I thought you might want to....” Her heart sank when he shook his head.

“Not tonight, little *murgah*, or Laila will think I’m neglecting her.” He grinned slyly. “And, as you know, she has a very skilful way with her lips and tongue.”

“No, I didn’t,” Julia said stiffly, but her pang of jealousy lasted only a heartbeat. She could not begrudge Laila or any of the girls their fair share of pleasure with their lord.

Jahngir chuckled. “Then perhaps it’s time I let you find out. And you can show her some of your own considerable talents at the same time.”

Julia felt a rush of heat to her cheeks, not embarrassment, but excitement at the idea of making love to the girl with Jahngir watching them, and the pleasure it would give them all. She shifted in her saddle and felt the friction of its leather on her intimate place.

The Pathan gave her a sidelong look and smiled broadly. “It’s a long, uphill climb ’til we’re home. Perhaps we should stop for a rest on the way. There’s a glade among the trees just off the track where it steepens.”

“Yes, Afia told me about it,” Julia said with a sudden quickening of her pulse. She gave a mischievous grin. “Maybe we had better lie down there out of the heat for a while.”

“Good idea,” Jahngir said, grinning back. They tethered their horses and he took her hand, leading her through the trees to a little, grassy hollow beneath the spreading branches. He spread his cloak on the sun-dappled ground and unbuttoned his *chapaan*. Julia slipped her cloak from her shoulders and quickly shed her scanty clothing. She stood admiring Jahngir’s muscular body as he undressed, feeling deliciously reckless to be naked outdoors with the breeze gently caressing her bare skin. An eager shiver ran through her, ending in a ripple of arousal that teased and tickled all the way to the core of her femininity.

“What if someone comes along?” she asked as the Pathan cast aside his last garment and took her in his arms. His hands closed on her breasts and they pulsed beneath his palms as his lips nuzzled her neck.

“They will see the horses and know we are here. And they’ll pass by and smile the way people always do with lovers.” He kissed her, and tremors of excitement tingled through her.

Julia laughed. “I never dreamed when I left England that I would ever be daring enough to do anything like this.” She sank down onto the cloak, drawing Jahngir with her and felt his arms tighten around her.

“It’s all right, my love. Everything will be wonderful,” he said, kissing her again.

“I know,” Julia whispered against his lips.
And everything was.

The End