

The Bondmaid Carnival



Simon Grail

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by

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CHAPTER ONE

The big gaudily gilded coach, drawn by four plumed horses, bowled briskly along the country lane. On its side was mounted a colourful sign that read:

**“COME TO MARVELL’S
MARVELLOUS BONDMAID
CARNIVAL!!!”**

Inside the coach a well-upholstered seat faced forward. Mounted on a deep wooden shelf opposite was a bank of half a dozen wire-mesh cages, three rows wide by two high. Each cage was just large enough to accommodate a woman bent over on her hands and knees. Naked female posteriors were pressed against the wide-spaced door bars of four of the six cages. Four pairs of smooth buttocks overhung the pouting swells of deep-cleft pubic pouches. Every cleft sparkled as though with morning dew and every buttock bore the sunrise-pink blush of a recent tanning.

Seated comfortably facing this arresting display was Maxwell Marvell: a big bright-eyed man with fading red hair and mutton-chop side-whiskers. He was dressed in red jacket and trousers with a wide collar, frilly cravat and flowing lace cuffs. Currently his eyes were closed and he was smiling contentedly. The reason had much to do with the two naked young women who knelt at his feet between his wide-splayed legs and who were sucking and licking his erect shaft as it rose proudly from his unbuttoned flies.

Their wrists were roped together behind their backs and they had choke-chain collars round their necks. In each of his big hands

he gasped a fistful of their hair, holding them in place as they served him, their lips sliding up and down his straining manhood. They took it in turn to plunge his purple cock-plum into their mouths until their cheeks bulged.

The first girl had shoulder length straight dark hair tied back in a small ponytail. Her nose was straight and narrow. A silver ring piercing its septum hung over her upper lip. Her eyes deep brown and mouth full. Her skin had a light olive tint, complimenting the large brown erect nipples, also pierced by silver rings, which capped her full, proud breasts. Her navel was deep and smooth, her hips wide and her bottom cheeks well rounded. The lips of her pouting labia were richly curved, smooth and naked. Silver rings pierced them, joining both inner and outer lips together, and also the fleshy hood of her clitoris.

The second girl was a blonde of slightly slimmer in build with a long mane of curling honey-blonde hair. By contrast her eyes were blue, her nose a little broader and her lips naturally red and pouting. Her skin had a light golden even tan that showed off her smaller but still prominent pink nipples that were perfectly in proportion to her neat, high breasts. Her waist was trim, her stomach flat and her navel a pleasing deep slot. Like her companion her prominent sex was quite bare. Like her companion she was pierced through the nose, nipples, labia and clitoris.

The girls were alike in another respect. On the upper slopes of their right buttocks the skin of both had been finely scarred and infused with purple dye to form the conjoined letters RW set inside a circle.

The dark haired girl was called April and the blonde Niki and Marvell had bought them barely twenty minutes earlier. That, apart from the fact that they were a pair of pretty bondmaids and had spirit, was all he knew about them. For his purposes it was quite sufficient. He neither knew nor cared that they were not from his world...

Some months earlier, April Harper and Niki King, her workmate and best friend, had been holidaying on the Cotswold Way when they had been chased by a pack of drunken quad-bike riders. Scrambling through a narrow cleft in a rocky ridge to escape they had somehow been transported into the market town of Ramswold in the parallel world of Nethervale where the lifestyle and technology resembled that of the eighteenth century pre-industrial revolution. There were no mobile phones, cars or electricity, but there was a long-established system of institutional female slavery.

April and Niki were soon arrested, sentenced and scar-tattooed to mark them as “bondmaids”. Bondmaids had virtually no rights and were kept collared and naked at all times. They could be hired or sold and used to satisfy any sexual whim. To amuse their various masters and mistresses they had been forced to perform sexually together, which unexpectedly had become genuine passionate love.

But bondmaid life was changing them in other ways and as they came to terms with the constant bondage, beatings and forced sex they found themselves experiencing orgasms of increasing intensity. Was it a consequence of living in Nethervale or had they always unknowingly been masochists? The lurking fear was that if they stayed too long they would no longer have the will to escape.

They served on a farm, in a tavern slave-brothel, a great country house and, most recently, at Flagewell Abbey under the nuns of the Sisterhood of Saint Theow, who devoted their lives to the training of perfectly obedient and submissive bondmaids. April had almost been brainwashed into believing there was some sort of divine purpose behind bondmaid service and had only come to her senses and made a dramatic recantation during the “leaving service”, which had turned out to be nothing more than a commercial auction presided over by a bishop. Fortunately she and Niki had caught Marvell’s eye and he had bought them for a bargain price, saving them from further punishment.

Their only hope was to remain together until they could escape back to the rock cleft above Ramswold where they had emerged into Nethervale and return home. However, until then they were at the mercy of their new master.

Marvell grunted and hot sperm spouted from his cockhead to be immediately sucked and lapped by April and Niki. Only when his manhood was quite clean did they cease their efforts. Still keeping their lips pressed to his shaft they rolled their eyes up to him in patient expectation. He might want them to begin again and until ordered otherwise they held their place. It had been beaten into them that in Nethervale such choices were not theirs to make.

With a contented sigh Marvell pulled their heads out of his groin, then reached out and clipped the ends of their leashes to the bars of the cages opposite, pulling them back onto their heels. Buttoning himself up he took out large handkerchief from his pocket and dabbed his brow, considering them thoughtfully as he did so.

‘You work well together and know how to use your tongues. Keep that up and you won’t go far wrong in my show... but no doubt you’ve heard of it.’

‘No, Master,’ April said meekly. ‘We’re strangers here. Outsiders.’

‘Are you now? I’ve had a few of your kind before. Good girls when they put their minds to the job. Well, I’m proprietor of the finest travelling bondmaid carnival show in Nethervale! Such a collection of rides, games, and sundry diversions you never did see, nor such a fine covey of pretty girls so eager to please. Now you’re the latest additions to my stock. Your job is to bring the punters in, give them a good show and send ‘em away too happy to notice how much lighter in the pocket they are. It’s hard work but if you behave yourselves and try your best we’ll feed you well, treat you fair and only beat you when you deserve it. There’s travel, fresh air and plenty of exercise. We’ll even ring the changes and move you about the stalls so you don’t get stale. Nothing worse than a bored bondmaid, I always say.

We want to keep you fresh and juicy. The punters expect to see plenty of stiff nipples and slippery slots, so you've got to learn to keep 'em up and keep 'em wet, whether you're in pain or pleasure. Can you do that?'

'Yes, Master,' April and Niki said together.

He grinned, flicking their nipple rings and noting the stiffness of the fleshy nubs in which they were anchored. 'We'll see. In you get...'

Marvell freed their chains, pushed their heads down and patted them into the remaining cages, which they entered by shuffling forward awkwardly on their knees with their arms still bound behind them. He closed the doors on their backsides. The girls in the other cages around them turned their heads to peer through the intervening bars at their new sisters in servitude.

Sitting back Marvell surveyed the pigeonholed array of bottom-flesh with satisfaction. 'I told my daughter this morning that we needed to find half a dozen lively new girls with bouncy tits, bright eyes and ripe cunnies to fill out the show. You see that the wagons are formed up for the parade, I said, and I'll go out and look from some new girl-flesh. I know where to find quality bondmaids, and so I have! They'll make that scoundrel Carlo green with envy...'

There was a long-handled spanking paddle clipped to the side of the carriage by the door. Unfastening it Marvell sat back and began swiping it across April and Niki's buttocks as they protruded between the bars of their cages, making them gasp and yelp.

'Now, I want to see those slots dripping!' he commanded.

A few months ago April would not have believed how such treatment could have stimulated her sexually. Now she knew pain was both foreplay and aphrodisiac to a bondmaid, and she and Niki were no exceptions. What it said about their true natures was unsettling, but the fact was that confined and presented like this with her bottom simmering with the heat of a tanning she could no more prevent

herself lubricating than she could stop breathing. She felt the slick hot flow ooze between her sex lips as they engorged. Her pierced clitoris was a shameless hard bud swelling and lifting. She could smell the scent of her own juices mingling in the close air of the carriage with those of Niki's. They were trickling down her thighs now. She was responding to a beating from the man who now owned her. He was her legal master and she his slave. April gave a choking sob of despair and wonder at how good it felt.

Marvell rested his paddle arm to reach through the bars of their cages and between their legs to check the hardness of their ringed nipples, which he tweaked and pinched until they yelped. Then he pushed his index and forefingers stiffly into their vaginas and began to pump them hard and fast, making slurping, sucking sounds as the elastic passages clung to his digits.

Suddenly he pulled his fingers free and rammed them into the tighter entrances of their anal rings, bringing forth gasps as his fingers explored their rectums. Luckily these had been flushed out and greased before the auction so they were perfectly clean and receptive. April knew he was testing their responses to being penetrated by every orifice. He did not find them wanting.

They whimpered, clenching their thighs and pushing back against his thrusts, their anuses contracting hot and tight about his fingers. After only a few sharp prods and twists he whipped his fingers out again, pinched their swollen clitorises between thumbs and forefingers and rolled them to a fro, twisting their flesh against their transfixing rings. They shrieked and wailed in pain and delight, thrashing about and banging against the sides of their cages. Then they came: spraying their juices over his hands.

Marvell chuckled. As their convulsions diminished he released his hold and sniffed the shiny discharge that now coated his hands. Chests heaving April and Niki sagged until their faces and sweaty breasts rested on the floor of their cages.

‘Yes, you’ll do fine,’ Marvell declared. He patted the rumps of the other girls. ‘You’ll all do fine. Hah! This is going to be a good tour!’

He sat back on his seat, wiped his fingers on his handkerchief, laid it across his face and in a few minutes appeared to doze off, lulled by the gentle rocking of the carriage.

Once she was sure Marvell was asleep, April leaned against the bars that separated her from Niki. Niki did the same. Their heads touched and she felt the warmth of her lover’s flesh. Though April knew the other girls might overhear there was something she had to say and did not know when they would next get the opportunity to be this close without being gagged.

Twisting her head round she whispered in Niki’s ear: ‘Are you all right?’

‘Of course,’ Niki whispered back. ‘That was nothing. What about you?’

‘I’m fine...’ April’s heart tightened and she felt hot tears springing to her eyes. ‘...I just wanted to say I’m so sorry!’

‘What for?’

‘The way I acted back in the Abbey. I was an idiot! I don’t know what got into me. It all seemed to make sense of what had happened to us. Belonging felt so wonderful. Now I don’t know why I believed all that nonsense!’

‘You believed because you were brainwashed!’ Niki said firmly. ‘They controlled everything we did so it wasn’t hard. You’re a less cynical cow than I am so they got to you first, that’s all. But in the end you came back. That’s what matters.’

April found tears were running down her cheeks. ‘I’ll never let you down again, I promise!’

‘I know. We’ll stick together, no matter what!’

It was perhaps twenty minutes later that April felt the coach slow down and come to a halt. They could see nothing from within their cages but they could hear the sounds of voices, the jingle of harness and the snort of horses.

Marvell roused himself and climbed out. He heard him speaking to a few people, then the voice of a young woman said accusingly: ‘Really, Pa, I began to worry that you were going to miss the parade!’

‘Marian, dear, have I ever? Now just you see what I brought back. Bill, fetch them out...’

Somebody clambered into the carriage. April heard the cage doors being opened and one by one the girls were pulled out and stood upright. Their handler was a wiry middle-aged man dressed in dark trousers, a loose blue smock belted at the waist with a gold sash and a red bandana tied about his neck. As they emerged he linked their choke chains into a coffle with practiced hands and passed them down the steps of the carriage to a beaming Marvell who took charge of the front of the string.

They were in a long tree-lined country lane bordered by the usual bountiful and lush Nethervale fields. Along the length of a broad grass verge was drawn up a procession of at least fifty horse-drawn vehicles of all sizes, from single horse caravans to large high-sided fright wagons the size of a pantechicon with teams of six. All were brightly painted and carried signs on their sides proclaiming they were part of the bondmaid carnival, including some graphic artwork of the sort April had become familiar with in Nethervale.

The wagons were also decorated with living bondmaids.

They hung naked on chains along the sides, dangled from tailboards and were bound astride lead horses like so many Lady Godiva’s at a bondage convention. They had coloured ribbons in their hair and

small bells clipped to their noses, ears, nipples and labia. Some had their breasts painted to compliment the decorations of the wagons to which they were fastened. More men in blue smocks, together with men and women in far gaudier costumes, were moving about the caravan making last minutes adjustments to the girls' harnesses and holding buckets between their legs for them to pee in.

April tore her eyes away from this fleshy display to see that a pretty red-haired young woman of about her own age was standing beside Marvell. She was dressed in a costume of a red shako and jacket, heavily decorated with gold braid, black culottes tucked into black riding boots with a coiled whip hooked to her belt. Her eyes were a bright penetrating bottle green.

The coffer were made to kneel down in front of the young woman, which they did gracefully, sitting back on their heels and spreading their legs to display their pussies, arching their supple backs to show off their breasts but bowing their heads and casting their eyes downward submissively. As they took their places April had a chance to see them properly for the first time. Beside herself and Niki there was a blonde, two brunettes and a black-haired girl with a slight oriental look. They were all pretty and moved well. As they displayed themselves there was a subtle tension in their postures that she could also see in herself and Niki. It was an air of alertness and readiness to respond. Was this that elusive "spirit" Marvell had been looking for?

'How much did they cost?' Marian Marvell, as she had to be, demanded of her father.

'They were all excellent value for money,' Marvell said.

'How much?'

'Please, Marian, look them over first...'

Marian Marvell perused the line with a critical, experienced eye, lifting chins to examine faces. As she did so Marvell's face took

on an expression of increasing concern. Suddenly he looked less like the ebullient, assured entrepreneur he had in the Abbey and more like a child worried he would be accused of being spendthrift with his pocket money.

Marian finished her inspection. 'Yes,' they look like fine girls, Pa,' she conceded. 'Now how much did they cost?'

'Can you put a price on quality, Marian?' Marvell said evasively. 'Besides, the last few months have been so good we can afford to —'

'How much?' his daughter persisted.

Marvell pointed to April and Niki. 'These two were a bargain!'

'How much?'

'Just a pound for the pair.'

'A pound! We can get four good girls for that.'

'But these are a Flagewell Abbey trained pair. See that ringing? And they're very responsive and they've got plenty of spirit.' Seeing her face darken dangerously he added quickly. 'In truth, they're really a present for you, My Dear.'

Momentarily she appeared taken aback. 'For me?'

'You've got so much work, what with managing the cunniers and keeping the accounts. They can be our housemaids and keep the caravan. You shouldn't have to do the washing and cleaning as well. They'll be something warm to cuddle up with at night. You deserve that.'

Marian Marvell threw up her arms. 'All right, Pa, have it your way. I won't ask about the others. Yes, we'll have these two to keep house — but they'll work the show just like the other girls the rest of the time. We've no room for fripperies on the road.'

‘So like your mother,’ Marvell said wistfully.

‘And they can start now.’ She turned to the blue-smocked man. ‘Bill, take an empty cage and move it to the back of the line. Pull up the covers and run it as a flogging show with plenty of whack and crack. We’ll see how well they can scream and help bring in the punters.’

‘Right you are, Miss M,’ Bill said cheerfully.

Bill took the lead chain in the cuffle line. The girls scrambled to their feet and were led off, leaving Marian Marvell telling her father to move his carriage up to the front of his line and put on his other hat.

They passed wagons hung with gaudy boards advertising various individual diversions, some of which April could only guess at. The principle behind “PENNY IN THE SLOT” was graphically illustrated but what was “SENIOR SERAPHIC’S FAMOUS GIRL-O-PHONIUM”? The “PONYGIRL RACETRACK” was fairly self-explanatory, as was “BOWL THE MAIDS OVER”, but what about “PUNCH AND BONDMAID JUDY”?

Every few wagons along were girls fastened on longer collar chains, allowing them to walk beside the vehicles. They all carried some sort of simple musical instrument chained to their wrists, such as cymbals, tambourines and triangles. At one point there were two girls linked together. The first was bent forward with a large drum strapped to her back. A rod from a dildo plugged into her anus ran back to another dildo locked inside the vagina of the girl behind her who held the drumsticks.

They reached the rear of the caravan and came upon a large cage on wheels such as wild animals might be transported in, with painted canvas covers rolled down over its bars. As April had not seen any sign of real animals so far she presumed this was where some of the girls currently on display were housed. It did not shock her. In Nethervale bondmaids and animals were treated very much alike.

‘Horace!’ Bill called up to the driver, who was perched on the seat reading a battered book. ‘Change of plan: the Boss’s bought half a dozen new cunnies back. Miss M says to put them in your cage for a flogging show. She wants them to sing out good and proper.’

‘I thought I’d be cutting through the town straight to the pitch,’ Horace grumbled, putting away his book and clambering down.

‘Well now you’re in the parade. Give me a hand...’

They rolled up the covers up revealing a hay-lined cage open on three sides and hung with chains and cuffs. The cage sides were a diamond latticework of metal strips riveted together where they crossed.

Bill and Horace unlocked the back gate, flipped down a step and the girls were marched up inside. There was just enough headroom to stand upright. In one corner clear of hay was a lidded hole in the floorboards for a squat toilet with a waste bucket hung underneath. A wooden partition wall separated the cage from the driver’s seat. On it hung tin mugs, a water flask, several blankets on hooks and a rack of spanking paddles, straps and beaters.

Working quickly the men separated the coffle and positioned them standing, facing outward and spreadeagled, pressed up against the insides of the bars, three down each side of the cage. The lattice bars were just open enough for them to squeeze their heads through, while their breasts jutted out of the adjacent diamonds below them. As Bill clamped heavy metal cuffs about their wrists and ankles, Horace went round the outside of the cage with a box of bells strung on short chains. The ends of these he screw-clamped to their nipples, so the bells hung freely between them on the outside of the bars.

Shouts were running down the line of vehicles. Twisting her head round April could see people waving and climbing aboard their wagons. The caravan was about to set off for the parade.

Horace went back to his seat behind the horses while Bill stayed in the cage. Taking something down from the rack of punishment devices he swished it through the air so that it hit the wooden panel at the front of the cage with an alarming crack that made them all flinch and jerk at their cuffs.

‘Now, we haven’t got much time to practice, so you’d better listen real hard,’ he said earnestly. ‘This is how Marvell maids perform in a parade...’

The signpost said: *Cocklesford One Mile*.

Turning her head within the diamond frame of the cage bars April looked at Niki, whose head and bell-hung breasts jutted through the bars at her side. The sight of her was so uplifting that she found herself smiling foolishly. Niki raised her eyebrows as though in amused resignation at their fate and grinned back. They might be caught up in more Nethervale madness, but at least it was of a more playful kind than the obsessive atmosphere of the Abbey.

Twisting her head round to look ahead once more April could see the rooftops of a sizable town rising from beyond the trees and hedgerows. From the front of the caravan the music started up with the thump of a drum. The proudly marching girls flanking the wagons down the line picked up on it. Thump, thump, jingle, crash! It was not a tune so much as a merry discord designed to make people take notice. It worked.

Workers in their gardens stopped and stared, carts pulled over and windows were flung open. April saw colourful posters advertising the carnival on gates and lampposts. Evidently the parade was expected.

In a tide of glitter, paint and bare flesh the parade wound its way into the town. Ordinary traffic came to a halt and the pavements filled with people. In typical Nethervale fashion the men mostly wore variations on the frock coat with tall hats, while the women were

dressed in long straight ankle-length dresses with high waists and puffy sleeves, while their heads were covered by a variety of bonnets. In Nethervale fashion many were leading naked bondmaid slaves about with them as one might dogs on leashes. Collared, cuffed and bridled the girls followed after their masters and mistresses, some with baskets filled with shopping strapped to their backs.

Yet the blaring passage of the carnival caravan with its fleshy temptations still appeared to enthrall the local inhabitants. Even the local slavegirls goggled in fascination. In a world without radio, television, or cinemas, April realized, this sort of event must seem hugely exciting and colourful.

As the parade entered the high street gibbet like arms swung out from the sides of the larger wagons, each with a girl dangling from the end. They were suspended from spreader bars, with their wrists cuffed above their heads and legs splayed wide and ankles fastened to the bar ends by short chains. The bars were suspended by swivel rings so they spun the girls over the heads of the crowd as if they were performing aerial splits, with their naked pouting perfumed groins gaping wide. Thin slips of coloured card could be seen protruding from their pussy clefts.

‘Free tickets for the lucky few!’ the carnival barkers began to call out. ‘Catch them if you can!’

People began to spring up and down and make wild lunges in an attempt to snatch the tickets from their intimate pockets. A few began to run along the pavements after the elusive prizes as they swung and twirled by. Even respectable men and women seemed to be caught up in the fun, laughing at their frustrated efforts. Others simply reached up to playfully slap or pinch the bottoms of the exposed girls as they passed overhead.

As the tail of the caravan entered the high street there was a warning crack as Bill smacked his spanking paddle on the floor of the cage.

‘Let me hear you sing out good and loud now!’ he said. Then began to beat them.

Left and right, up and down the double row of backsides he went. April felt a stinging smack and let out a pitiful yelp into the upturned faced of the onlookers. With every blow their bodies jerked against the bars, making their breasts heave and jiggle and setting their nipple bells swinging and jingling. Smack... yelp! Smack...yelp! After a few blows their bottoms were burning and their eyes were sparkling with tears and the rise and fall of their cries rivalled the noise of the girl band.

‘See us suffer for your entertainment,’ their cries seemed to say. ‘However bad you feel there are always those worse off. Bring a tear to a pretty girl’s eye and a smile to your lips...’

The crowd pointed laughed at the row of weebegone faces and jumping breasts, and quite right to. It was a bondmaid’s place to serve and suffer. Everybody knew they had to be disciplined regularly. They enjoyed it, really, as could be seen by the wetness of their pubic lips framed within the second diamond of cage bars down from that which held their heads. Judging by the distress on their faces and the sound of the swish and crack of the beater the man in the cage was using, the carnival girls were getting a sound thrashing.

Except in good showbusiness tradition things were not quite what they seemed...

The beater Bill was wielding was made of two flat springy blades. When the first hit it delivered a stinging blow that brought a healthy blush to their bottoms and encourage tears but did not cut or bruise their skin. The second blade then slapped into the back of the first and produced the alarmingly loud sharp crack that so amused the crowd. That way the showmen gave the punters what they wanted but did not damage their most valuable assets.

However, April thought the most perverse thing was that being chained and beaten in front of all those eyes really was turning her on. It was sick, shameful, degrading, and yet also somehow desperately arousing.

The grand parade wound its way triumphantly through Cocklesford and out the other side towards the hired field on the outskirts of the town where the carnival was to be set up. As they passed beyond the last of the houses the music faded away and Bill rested his arm.

‘Good girls,’ he said, moving round the cage and patting and stroking their sore and simmering bottoms. ‘That show raised a few cocks and dampened some drawers. They’ll be along to see more of you, like as not...’

Then April heard a rustle of fabric and from the far side of the cage the sudden gasp of a girl being penetrated, accompanied by the jingle of her nipple-bell as she was ground against the bars. There was a few seconds of this, then a pause, then the gasp of another girl. Bill was making the rounds of the cage giving each a quick shafting.

He came to April last, pulling out of Niki and grasping her hips with the urgency of a man close to climax. His hard cock slid between April’s buttock cheeks, parted the ring of her greased anus and rammed deep into her rectum. Her nipple bell jingled as he sodomized her with hard, masterful thrusts, making her grunt and whimper. Nevertheless, after the pain of her beating it felt good to be plugged by a stiff shaft. Her own pussy was running with delight. It was the natural reward for her efforts, like an initiation into an exclusive society.

With a final grunt his hot sperm spouted inside her.

‘Now you’re proper carnival girls,’ he said.

CHAPTER TWO

The carnival set up in a big field ringed by trees. The caravans and wagons formed into a loose rectangle and within them the carnival folk set about creating their temporary wonderland of light and colour and fleshy pleasures.

The horses were unhitched and tethered down one side of the field. They had done their duty and now had a chance to rest and crop the grass. Not so the bondmaids. From their cage April saw them being unchained from the sides of the wagons and set to work hauling posts, painted boards, coils of rope and folded bundles of canvas as fast as they were unloaded.

Bill and Horace went off leaving them secured in the cage.

‘I think this is going be hard work,’ Niki said.

‘Marvel said it would be,’ April agreed. ‘But it might be fun as well. At least it’ll be colourful.’

‘Oh yes — about the colour of our bums!’

‘I didn’t say it would be pain-free fun. Does it hurt?’

‘It stings... but it could have been worse, I suppose.’

‘Mine does to, but it looked and sounded a lot harder than it felt. It was like that man Bill said: a bit of a show to impress the potential punters. I think there’ll be lot of that sort of thing going on around here.’

‘Maybe, but still I think we’re in for a whole lot worse before we’re through!’

April grinned. ‘Of course we are. But we can take it.’

‘It’s not like we have a choice, do we?’

‘No, but this is a bondmaid carnival and we’re the stars, so they have to look after us as well. I think Marvell buying us was the best thing that could have happened.’ April giggled foolishly. ‘In fact, this is almost like running away to the circus!’

Niki frowned in concern. ‘Are you all right? You’re not going funny again?’

April realised she was getting light-headed. ‘Sorry. I’m just so pleased to be away from the Abbey! It was like... like I had a straightjacket on my mind. But now I can think for myself again!’ She felt her eyes pricking with tears and had to blink them away. ‘Whatever Marvell has planned he’s not going to try to make me believe it’s all down to divine providence or some shit like that! We’re here to put on a show and give the punters a thrill so they hand over their money. Both sides know where they stand. At least that’s honest.’

‘I don’t care if it’s honest or not,’ Niki said with a smile. ‘As long as I’ve got the real you back again!’

Shortly afterward Bill returned with Marian Marvell. He was carrying a bundle of metal cuffs and collars, while she held a large blue ledger. One at a time the girls were released from the cage sides and were collared and cuffed.

The collars were gaudy metal bands that were colourfully enamelled in blue and red and studded with brilliant glass “gemstones”. Each was stamped with a number and the words: *Property of Marvell’s Bondmaid Carnival*. They were fitted with four securing “D” rings, front, back and sides. Marian Marvell noted their names and numbers down in the ledger as they were assigned, together with the prices paid for them. For a few hours they had been free of proper slave collars, but as April felt the cold weight

close about her neck she knew she was just a numbered piece of property once again.

Next came a set of equally colourful and sparkling wrist and ankle cuffs with single rings riveted to their sides. These were locked onto them as securely as were the collars. The matching restraints were almost like a uniform, marking them out unmistakably as carnival girls.

Two of the other new girls had nipple rings and another had a double labial set, but none were as thoroughly pierced as April and Niki. Marian Marvell examined them all carefully and then said: 'These need more sparkle.'

Bill had come prepared with cutters and a pack of replacement rings of assorted sizes. He removed their old silver rings and replaced them with ones mounted with more "gemstones". In a few minutes their noses, nipples and vulva shone with twinkling points of white fire.

No concessions were made to their sore bottoms and they were allowed no time to rest. At Marian's direction, Bill armed himself with a long whip and the new girls were set gathering water from a nearby stream. With yokes across their shoulders chained to their collars and wrist cuffs, they tramped back and forth until the horse troughs were full. Then they had to go round filling washing butts that had been put outside each caravan. When this task was complete their ankles were hobbled and they were given picks and shovels and set digging latrine pits in a corner of the field.

As they worked April tried to make sense of the activity about her.

Blue-smocked men such as Bill were working under the general supervision of Marian and Maxwell Marvell. The erection and fitting out of the smaller stalls and booths were apparently the responsibility of the individuals or families who owned and ran them. Bill and his fellows seemed to be the general roustabouts of the carnival, responsible for assembling the larger-scale attractions,

organizing the communal facilities, caring for the horses and of course the bondmaids. That this last was their most important function might explain the name she had heard earlier by which she heard them referred to. They were the “cunners”.

Of course, April thought wryly, it might also mean that they were particularly clever at their jobs, or perhaps just good and putting things in and out again...

Soon the layout of the site became clear. Along the middle swathe of the carnival ground were the big show rides while flanking them were the rows of smaller game stalls and booths. She watched intriguing signs being put up. Some she had seen on the wagon sides before the parade, but there were many others. Along the midway were the DODGEM MAID RINK, CHARIOT GIRLS, GIRL-GO-ROUND, the DUNGEON DREAM RIDE and TONGUE IN THE DARK. The stalls offered target games such as CUNNY SHY, BOTTOMS UP, TIT-A-LING, and PUSSY SHOTS. You could apparently place bets on the BAGATELLE MAID, WHEEL OF TEARS and PEG BOARD GIRLS. The booths promised the mysterious delights of the INCREDIBLE IMPALER TORMENT, BRIDE OF THE APE MAN and THE AMAZING SNAKE WOMEN.

Would she participate in any of them, she wondered?

April had imagined it might take a day to set up the carnival, but she was amazed by the speed at which it was constructed. It was as though a tiny village had grown in the field in a few hours. Pegs were hammered, guy-ropes strung, poles fitted and with a heave from a team of sweating harnessed bondmaids the larger structures rose from the ground. Storage crates were unpacked and in turn became temporary stages and podiums. Panels and rails were rapidly slotted and pegged together at well-worn junctions. Some wagons simply unfolded, their sides becoming floors, put up canvass walls and roofs and threw out awnings to become virtually instant stalls. How many hundreds of times had they done this before?

Once their labours were completed the cunniers gathered the teams of bondmaids together about long feeding troughs, cuffing their wrists behind them. It meant they would have to eat with their mouths alone like animals, but they were all evidently used to this and they hungrily gobbled up the tasty mash that was poured into the troughs. As they fed, with their heads down and haunches up, April made a rough count of bottoms and decided there must be well over a hundred and fifty bondmaids in the carnival. That was at least as many as Lord Debawsher had kept at his grand country residence of Hardrack Hall where she and Niki had once served. Just feeding that many girls must cost quite a sum. Of course their labour was free, which was one reason why a bondmaid economy was so appealing — at least to non-bondmaids. Nevertheless Maxwell's Carnival was still big business.

Large stakes had been hammered into the ground. Long chains were passed through their collar rings and they were padlocked to them. There they sprawled on the grass in little huddles, whispering to each other or sleeping. April rested with Niki's body pressed against hers. She had no idea what would be expected of them that evening, but for now all that mattered was that they were still together.

As the afternoon drew on the cunniers took the girls to the latrine pits they had dug, where they were made to squat on rails and void their bowels and bladders. All this occurred in plain sight of the rest of the field, but that did not trouble them. April and Niki had little sense of bodily shame left by now. In Nethervale bondmaids were treated much like dumb animals in such matters.

Stirrup pumps and rubber hoses were then used to flush them clean. A huge tub bearing the familiar label "JYMPSON'S FINEST BONDMAID GREASE" was brought out and their bottom holes were prepared for whatever use might be required of them. April had become so used to this ritual over the last few months that she began to wonder if she could ever feel comfortable again without the

reassuring slippery feel of the lavender scented jelly softening between her buttocks, which had undoubtedly saved her anus from much painful friction. A bondmaid's rectum was almost as likely to be penetrated as her vagina and needed proper preparation and protection.

A sort of production line open-air washroom had been set up beside the latrine pits. Freshly greased girls shuffled along, being sponged and scrubbed down to wash the sweat of their exertions from them, then spray-rinsed. The cunniers handled them with rough efficiency. It was odd to see large tough men also carefully combing the girls' hair, but in Nethervale it was no less manly a job than grooming horses. The cunniers also took the opportunity to trim back the pelts of those girls who had pubic hair, keeping their labia bare. Perhaps this was how they got their name, April thought mischievously. April and Niki's bare sexes were treated with Jympson's equally indispensable (finest) bondmaid smoothing cream, which stung at first but left their pussies perfectly smooth and stubble-free.

Once they were spic and span, the girls were paraded in collar number order for distribution amongst the attractions according to their requirements, with Marian Marvell checking them off against a roster. Most stallholders led their strings of girls away quite happily, but one man, sporting a red face and large waxed moustache, complained when Marian assigned him two of the new girls.

'Why can't we keep and train our own girls, like we did when I was with Carlo's?' he grumbled. 'I'll have to show these two the ropes.'

Marian frowned. 'Mr Biglow, we've been over this before. You know we only allow a few of the speciality acts to limit the girls they take from the pool. Now these new girls need breaking in and it does not take a great deal of skill to perform in Bowl the Girls Over. Two minutes instruction should be enough.'

'It's a very popular game,' Biglow said defensively.

‘It is, but not indispensable,’ Marian said coldly. ‘This is not Carlo’s Carnival and we have our own standards. My father likes the girls to be rotated to keep them lively and give the punters more variety. Pooling them allows us to do this and means we can look after them all to the same standard. Do you have a problem with this?’

‘No, I was just saying it was a waste of my time.’

‘Mr Biglow, you’ve wasted more time arguing than it would have taken to instruct them. Please take your girls.’

Still grumbling, Biglow left, dragging a string of girls after him.

April and Niki were relieved to be assigned to a far more jovial man named Pinker who ran the “Girl-Go-Round.”

‘No problem, Miss M,’ he said cheerily. ‘Soon have them ready to trot...’

The Girl-Go-Round looked a little like a traditional fairground merry-go-round, but with certain uniquely Nethervale modifications. April and Niki were instructed as to what was expected of them and mounted on the contraption along with the other girls who made up the ride for that night

All the while in the attractions about them other girls were being spread, bent, strapped, chained, slotted, clamped and otherwise secured in their proper places. Bare flesh goosebumped, nipples hardened and pussy clefts glistened in anticipation.

The carnival folk donned their show costumes in preparation for the opening.

Coloured lanterns had been hung out along the short lane to the town, which was itself coming alive with lights of its own as the evening drew in. Girls were suspended on either side of the entrance archway. The lamps of the stalls were lit. Many were fitted with mirror

mobiles that hung on vanes that rotated with the rising air of the wicks and candles, sending out dancing reflections that turned the carnival field into a multicoloured sparkling jewel.

Music started up as men began to crank the handle of a large barrel organ set up by the gate, advertising the carnival was opening. Marvel, dressed in a magnificent sequinned suit and beaver hat, took up his position in front of the gate. People began to appear, wending their way along the lane.

One by one the rides, empty as yet, began to roll and turn. It was all down to muscle power as there were no electric motors, nor even as far as April knew, any steam engines in Nethervale. In most case the muscles involved belonged to the bondmaids themselves, providing both principle attraction and also the main power source.

As April and Niki helped set the Girl-Go-round turning, all around them hurdy-gurdies, chimes, and bellow-operated pipes and flutes began to sound. It was the most intense concentrating of colour, sound and movement they had seen since coming to Nethervale. For the locals it must have been almost overwhelming.

The people bought their tickets and began to pour into the carnival ground, chattering excitedly. The barkers in front of the booths began calling out, enticing them to sample the wonders that lay within.

As the crowd flowed closer April saw with surprise that they were all wearing masks. Some were simple dominos, scarves or bandanas tied about the wearer's head with eyeholes cut out of them, while others were more elaborate animal masks.

They had been told nothing about them, so presumably it was an established tradition when attending a carnival, though why it should be April could not for the moment imagine.

About a quarter of the crowd were women, apparently just as ready as their menfolk to enjoy the delights and suffering of bondmaids. Free women regarded bondmaids almost as a different species and

sex with a bondmaid by either partner in a marriage was certainly not considered infidelity. That they might also be sentenced to bondmaid servitude if they ever fell foul of the law women did not seem to believe was possible — until it happened to them.

Swishing a riding crop through the air Pinker marched round the decking that ran about the outside of the carousel frame. Behind him was an upright ring of cutout painted flat trees and low bushes representing the English countryside. Through this screen could be seen the ponies mounted about the central shaft of the carousel, which was decorated like a tree and radiated painted overhanging boughs.

‘Step right up, ladies and gentlemen. Take a trip on the Girl-Go-Round! There are half a dozen lovely ponies here just waiting to give you the ride of your life!’ He flicked his crop across a bare female bottom, bringing forth a whinny of pain.

The ponies were of course April and her sister bondmaids. They were bent over in horse-like postures with painted papier-mâché masks of horse snouts and ears strapped onto their heads. Their breasts hung freely under them. A stout pole rising up from the floor ended in a padded disk on which their stomachs rested. They were secured to this disk by broad thick leather straps, from the sides of which projected a pair of handles, very like those of a bike. Connected by a length of thin chain to a ring set in the end of one handle was riding crop, the business end of which was buried deep in each girls’ vagina. Loops of thinner strapwork went from the disk round their shoulders and upper thighs, ensuring they did not slip forward or back.

Their arms were extended stiffly downward with extensions slipped onto their forearms ending in fake hooves that were held separated and clear of the ground by a T-bar. They had boots on their feet with horseshoe soles, but their legs were free to bend. They were however held splayed wide by stout coil springs linking their ankle cuffs to the sides of a small raised wooden platform mounted on the floor between their back legs. The girls’ feet rested

on two concentric rings of slatted flooring, with a continuous gap between them through which the base shaft of the T-bar supporting their front “legs”, their mounting pole and the shorter support rod for the platform rose.

Niki was the next pony along from April and she had a lovely view of her perfect golden backside and the naked split peach of her sex as her tensed spread legs invited her penetration. Her labia, sucking about the shaft of the riding crop jutting out from between them, glistened. April could smell her arousal and that of the other girls, and knew she was contributing her share. They were all helplessly ready to serve.

The first six customers paid over their pennies and stepped up to their chosen mounts.

‘Let them know who’s master,’ Pinker advised.

Pulling the riding crops from their fleshy wet sheathes they gave the ponygirls a few quick swipes across the backsides with the sodden crop ends, laying down the first red stripes of many that evening. Then they took their places on the small platforms between the girls spread legs. Flies were unbuttoned; shafts were released and rammed into the waiting hole of their choice.

Niki’s rider was a woman. As she took up position she hitched up the front of her dress and thrust with her hips, making Niki grunt. Had she come wearing a strap-on dildo under her dress, April wondered?

Then it was April’s turn to gasp as she felt a thick cock slide up her vagina and her passage automatically clamped about it. The riders took hold of the girls’ belt handles, ensuring they would remain coupled.

‘Let the ride begin!’ Pinker called.

Bracing their arms the girls began to push against the floor slats with their spread metal shod toes. The springs connected to their ankles limited their stride length but gave them a boost as they pushed down and back. They and their riders began to move smoothly forward on the small trolleys that ran along rails concealed under the floor. As they did so a wheel and pivoting sleeve arrangement to which their mounting poles were connected began to operate. The pads under their stomachs rose up and down, at the same time rocking them forward and back, grinding their bottoms into the groins of their riders, adding to the twisting of their hips as their legs worked to propel them forward.

Hidden chains coupled the trolleys together under the floor, so they maintained their spacing. As they picked up speed soundboxes under each mount powered by their motion began to imitate the galloping thud of horses' hooves.

The riders used their crops to drive the girls faster, flicking them across the girls' flanks or upwards against their swaying and bouncing breasts. April snorted through her mask as her own heavy breasts received several stinging slashes. Even as they whipped their mounts the riders pumped their cocks into the girls' oscillating groins. The challenge was to come before the ride finished and beat their fellow riders in the race to ejaculate first inside their mounts clinging vaginas or hot tight rectums.

Round and round went the rocking ponygirls and their pumping riders, flying past the painted scenery creating the illusion of a country ride, chasing their sister ponies while the riders hunched further over them whipping them on. Girl juices dripped onto the boards under their scrabbling feet. The faces of the onlookers were a blur beyond the screen of scenery but April could hear them cheering the riders on to greater efforts.

Now she understood the masks. They allowed people to stretch the boundaries even of Nethervale's liberal behaviour to public sexual activity. Few of the masks would conceal the identity of their wearers from anybody who knew them well, but perhaps they served as a

symbolic anonymity. At the carnival people could indulge their fantasies. Only the bondmaids were what they seemed to be.

A rider on the other side of the ponygirl ring suddenly called out: 'Yes!' and raised a hand in triumph, bringing forth a fresh cheer from the crowd. Then April felt her insides flooded with hot sperm and her rider came. With it her first orgasm of the evening coursed through her. A tiny burst of pleasure she had little time to savour.

Finally the ponygirl ride slowed and came to a halt. The satisfied riders pulled their now limp cocks out of them. Ahead of her April saw Niki's rider step aside to reveal Niki's red and glistening pubic lips. She had been well used, but had she cum? She hoped so. That was a bondmaid's only reward.

As Pinker began gathering a new batch of riders, his assistant went round the girls with a bucket, sponge and hose, washing them clean. In a minute they were ready to be mounted once more. It was going to be a long night.

CHAPTER THREE

April awoke in a strange bed. Above was a low ceiling while on all sides were carved wooden panels, cupboards and shelves packed with books and odd mementoes. Daylight showed around the edges of a small curtained window. To one side of the bed was just enough floor space for a small washstand and closed commode.

Her arms were cuffed behind her back. A chain looped up from the back of her collar to a ring sliding through a metal channel bolted to the ceiling. The slumbering form of a large man lay beside her. She was stiff and aching, her bottom stung and her vagina and anus felt raw and bruised. There was a taste of old sperm in her mouth.

For a few moments she did not know where she was. Then memory flooded back.

This was the Marvell's caravan bedroom. When the carnival had closed last night she and Niki had been brought here from the Girl-Go-Round ride. After they had been cleaned up, Marian Marvell had taken Niki to her bedroom and Marvell had taken April. He had spared her having to employ either of her well-used nether orifices to please him, but he had taken full advantage of her mouth, ramming his cock deep down her throat. Not so long ago she would have gagged on such a large member being forced into her. Now she had simply responded by sucking and swallowing, working hard to please the pulsing cockshaft as any bondmaid should. It had become second nature. When he had finally cum she had gulped it down with every sign that there was no finer milk she could drink. Marvell had fallen asleep well satisfied.

There came sounds of movement from the rest of the caravan and gradually the aroma of frying bacon filtered around the door.

'Breakfast's nearly ready, Pa,' Marian Marvell called out.

Marvell stirred, yawned and scratched himself. On the matt of greying hair on his chest rested two keys tied to a leather cord that hung round his neck. One she knew was the master key to her collar chain.

Opening his eyes Marvell smiled at April and patted her head with sleepy good-humour. To her shame but no longer her surprise April felt a thrill of delight at the gesture. It was impossible for a bondmaid not to feel happy when she knew her master, at who's whim she might suffer the direst punishment, was pleased with her conduct.

He unclipped her wrist cuffs. In bed they had helped emphasised her inferior status and his physical dominance but now she was expected to serve in other ways.

Putting on a gown and slippers that had been hanging on the back of the door, Marvell pulled it open and stepped into the main room of the caravan. April scrambled off the bed after him onto her hands and knees, waiting like a dog for fresh instructions. Until she knew her new master's routine and special fancies she must not presume anything. The end of her collar chain slid along the channel that was flush with the upper frame of the door, allowing it to pass through.

The main room of the caravan held a tiny dining table, a small cast iron stove and cooking range with its chimney snaking up to pass through the barrel roof, and an enamel sink. Shelves and cupboards filled the free wall space. At the far end another door opened onto Marian's bedroom.

Marian Marvell, also dressed in a gown, was seated at the table with a battered but sturdy black cash box and a ledger beside her. She was counting coins, putting them into neat piles and entering the tally. Niki, naked and lovely, was standing in front of the tiny range busily preparing a large pan of eggs and bacon. The chain from her collar also hung from a rail in the ceiling. She flashed April a quick smile. Her bottom was still red from last night's cropping.

‘Marian, you’re working already,’ Marvell protested.

His daughter looked up briefly from her bookkeeping and smiled.
‘And good morning to you, Pa.’

‘Marian!’

‘But do you see how I’m letting the new girl make breakfast? So your gifts are saving me time.’

Marvell took his seat at the other side of the table. ‘For you to have some rest not to find more work to do,’ he chided.

‘Pa, someone has to check the bills and reckon up the takings against the outgoings to make sure we’re turning a profit.’

‘Hmm... well, yes of course, I know that. Anyway, how did we do last night?’

Maria smiled. ‘We did very well, Pa.’

‘Then enjoy our success, put that away and let’s eat!’

Marian closed her ledger and locked the cash box with one of a pair of keys identical to those Marvell carried that hung on a ribbon round her neck. Still juggling the pan with one hand Niki pulled open a drawer and pointed, nodding to April. Inside were place mats, napkins and cutlery. Obviously she had already been shown where things were kept. April quickly laid the table for their master and mistress with a proper show of servile eagerness. The better they demonstrated how well they worked together the more chance there was of them remaining that way.

Niki dished out the food and April served. Once Marian had given her approval, Niki was allowed to put out portions of what remained into two bowls and set them on the floor. She and April then went down on their hands and knees and ate like dogs, bottoms submissively facing their new master and mistress.

‘Did you enjoy her?’ Marvell asked his daughter, prodding Niki’s vulva where it swelled from between her thighs with the toe of his slipper and making her squirm.

‘She was a treat, Pa. I admit you were right and she’s very passionate.’

‘Tonight you must try this one. She has a wonderful tongue...’

Back in her world April would have been acutely embarrassed if not somewhat disturbed to overhear to a father and daughter comparing the sexual prowess of a girl they might share so brazenly. However this was Nethervale. Not only might bondmaids be shared amongst family members but also they were quite casual about what they said in their hearing. April suspected that many really did think of bondmaids as dumb animals.

‘I’ll give her a try,’ Marian promised. ‘But please, Pa, don’t spend so much on girls again without asking me first.’

‘The show needs them. Besides, you can’t put a price on quality!’

‘Yes you can, Pa, and I can show you what it is down to the last farthing!’

Wisely, Marvell chose not to argue the point any further.

When they were done the Marvell’s washed and dressed while April and Niki cleaned up. Marian Marvell then instructed them in their duties for the day while her father unlocked their ceiling chains with his master key and put them into hobbles. These were short lengths of chain linking their ankles supported by a lighter chain that ran up between their legs and was padlocked to their labial rings. The weight of the chains tugged on their flesh lips. It was a guaranteed means of ensuring they would only to move with short neat steps and not contemplate escape. Any attempt to run and stretch their hobble chains to the maximum would be acutely painful.

Satisfied their new slaves understood what was required of them, father and daughter left the caravan to make their inspection of the carnival grounds.

As the outside door closed behind the pair, April and Niki fell into each other's arms, hugging and kissing in relief. They had survived their first night not only as carnival attractions but also serving the boss and his daughter.

'Are you OK?' April asked Niki.

Niki pulled a face. 'Sore! My cunt feels like it's had a road drill in it and don't even ask about my arse! But I'll survive. How about you?'

'The same plus I ache all over! I never thought I'd have to drag somebody round after me on a rail with his cock up my slot — and being bounced around at the same time!'

'I think it was easier to run with them up your bum,' Niki said. 'What pervert dreamed that up? Still, the customers certainly seemed to enjoy it. How many rides did we give in the end?'

'I lost count. You didn't cum each time, did you?'

'I wouldn't be standing if I had, though I did manage a few times which was nice... oh shit, listen to me! What a slut this place has turned me into!'

April grinned ruefully. 'But at least we've got a comfy job when we're not giving rides. We spent the night in real beds for a change. Better than a cage. By the way, how was sleeping with the bosses daughter?'

Niki smiled. 'Oh, she's got a nice body. She plays it cool and then goes off like a firecracker. She tastes nice to. I think she keeps a lot bottled up. How was sleeping with the boss?'

‘He nearly choked me shoving his cock down my throat but he was all right after that. At least he didn’t fall asleep on top and he doesn’t snore.’

‘And he likes to sleep in.’

‘Bosses prerogative,’ April said defensively.

‘Well Marian is an early riser so I had no choice. Still, she showed me where things are kept. Are you thirsty? We’ve got doggy-style water bowls but I think we can risk using real mugs while they’re out.’

Niki produced some tin cups and filled them from a pitcher. It felt strange to be allowed to actually handle a mug. As they drank April noticed something she had been too busy to take in earlier. Pinned up on a cupboard door was a map of Nethervale: the first one she’d ever seen.

‘Hey, what’s this?’

Niki smiled. ‘Yeah, I was going to show you that. Take a look...’

The map showed what April thought of as the South Midlands, including the Cotswold Hills and the Severn Estuary, plus a slice of Wales and the Chilterns. On it were marked and named towns and cities, linked by a pencilled line with dates by each stop followed by a circled number.

‘That must be the carnival route,’ April said. ‘The numbers in circles must be how many days we stay at each site.’

‘Yeah, and look, there’s Cocklesford with yesterday’s date by it. And down there is...’

‘Ramswold!’ April exclaimed.

It was not laid out with the precision of an O/S map and was half pictorial, but for the first time since coming to Nethervale she could get orientated, with the help of what she remembered from the

maps of the area she had studied for their ill-fated holiday. When they had been bought by Lord Debawsher and carried off on his carriage they must have gone Northeast, though of course nobody had bothered to inform them of such details. Now it appeared that Hardrack Hall must have been somewhere near what in her world would be Stratford on Avon. Flagewell Abbey could not have been much over five miles from that and Marvell had taken them another ten, perhaps to rendezvous with the carnival outside Cocklesford. Was that about the equivalent of Leamington Spa?

‘How far from Ramswold are we?’ April wondered.

‘There’s the scale marked down there.’

‘Hmm... about thirty-five or maybe forty miles I guess. That’s not so far!’

‘Not if you’ve got a car, but it is when you’re a buck-naked, collared, cuffed and pussy-hobbled runaway slave,’ Niki pointed out.

For a moment April had been thinking in terms of travelling in her world. ‘I suppose you’re right. Still, this is a start.’

The carnival route as marked meandered about the map, making a big ragged closed loop. Of course the local names were strange but April could tie some of them into familiar locations. The river Severn was the Riddle and the Cotswolds were shown as the Papswell Rises. After Cocklesford the next major town on the carnival route was Pullwick (Worcester), followed by Cunnestow (Ross on Wye), Thrasherdale (Gloucester), Riddlemouth (Bristol), Flauntwell (Bath), then up along the Southern side of the Rises to Cummage (Cirencester), South-east down to Buttsford (Swindon), East to Quimshold (Oxford), then North up to Shaftsdale (Northampton) and Teatsbury (Leicester), before turning South-west to Tearworth (Coventry), then Clittingham (Birmingham) and finally Cocklesford once more.

'Is it my imagination or are some of these name pretty weird?' April wondered.

Niki smiled. 'Well we're not in Kansas anymore, Toto.'

April grinned back. 'True. Perhaps the locals don't have any sense of sense of irony, or else they never invented the double-entendre.'

'Maybe....' Niki sighed. 'I suppose it would be too much to hope for that the carnival actually called at Ramswold. But it looks like we never get within ten miles of it.'

'No, but its nice to know where we're headed.'

'Yeah, around in a circle.'

'But if we do get away then we'll have some idea which way to run. We'd better study this every chance we get so we know what signposts to follow.'

'So it's the usual plan, eh? Keep the masters happy, cum whenever we can and stay alert for any gaps in the security.'

'Have you anything better to suggest?'

Niki suddenly looked despondent. 'No... only it hasn't done us much good so far.'

April hugged and kissed her. 'I'm sorry, love, but it is the only way I can see and at least we're better off here than anyplace we've been kept so far. We'll be on the move and we haven't got dungeons or high walls to get over. The whole show has to be put up and taken down every few days so it must get pretty confusing at times. Then there are hoards of punters coming and going. Anything might happen to give us a lucky break. And we must be ready to take it when it does.'

Niki nodded bravely and forced a smile. 'I know. I'll be all right.' She took a deep breath. 'Now we'd better get on or else we'll get a

thrashing for being poor housemaids...'

They dutifully cleaned up the caravan, tied back curtains and remade the beds, which folded back up against the walls in the daytime. This gave easier access to the doors at each end of the caravan, which opened respectively onto a sort of tiny covered back porch and the driver's seat.

After using the chamber pots themselves, they took them and the wastewater bucket outside. Clambering down the steps with care so as not to tug on their hobbles they stepped out onto cool, still dew-damp grass. The water went into the nearest hedgerow and the pots went into the latrine pits. They also took with them buckets to fill for fresh washing water.

By contrast with the crowds of last night the carnival field now looked virtually deserted and slightly forlorn. A few of the carnival folk were moving about checking their stalls and making minor repairs, but most of the activity involved bondmaids, chained or hobbled as April and Niki were. At this time of day the encampment seemed to be largely populated by naked young women. Chains jingled as they emptied pots and fetched wood and water. A few were squatting by the sides of caravans peeling potatoes and chopping vegetables for large cooking pots.

Some girls, perhaps those judged to have worked unusually hard last night, had been allowed to sleep on. Only now were the sides of cage wagons like the one they had ridden in yesterday being rolled up to reveal bondmaids curled up like sleeping animals on the hay inside.

A few other girls were less comfortably confined. April and Niki passed a couple chained spreadeagled to the sides of large wagon wheels. They were blindfolded and gagged and their bare bottoms were a glossy red. Their hair was sparkled with dew, suggesting they had been left out all night. Upright rods had been tied to the wheel spokes so as to impale the girls' anuses, forcing

them to stand upright in their bonds. Perhaps it was punishment for not pleasing the punters. It was certainly an incentive to the others to try harder.

While they were down by the stream April surveyed the woods opposite keenly. It would not have been hard to slip away. They might not be missed for an hour, but hobbled and wearing the distinctive carnival collars and cuffs, how far would they get? If only they could get hold of a pair of bolt-cutters or even heavy pliers. There must be tools like that around the site. If they hid them away somewhere in Marvell's caravan they could bide their time until they were closest to Ramswold.

Even if they did manage to escape most bondmaids had nowhere to go. Nethervale was a land of slaves and as far as April knew there was no safe haven for them. The choice was only between one type of slavery and another, and serving in the carnival was probably preferable to other types of drudgery. The girls knew that if they escaped they would either be caught and returned to face punishment or else enslaved by some new master. She and Niki were different. They had an objective to head for: a doorway back home.

All the bondmaids were gathered together for lunch at the trough and then they were put through the ablutions in preparation for entertaining the punters. Apparently, once it was set up, the carnival opened in early afternoon. Sitting on the grass with their wrists cuffed and rears greased they waited in the common pool to be assigned as Marian Marvell checked their numbers off on her list.

April felt the butterflies of anticipation fluttering in her stomach mingled with excitement and arousal. The soreness of last night seemed to have gone from her vagina and it was throbbing and weeping almost eagerly. Her body knew what was coming and it was preparing for the only possible response.

She and Niki were assigned to the “TOPS AND TAILS TARGET GALLERY”, along with Susan and Nanette, two of Marvell’s other new purchases.

It was a small target gallery for the more genteel player, with a circular counter about the outside sheltered by a conical tented roof. The middle of the tent was divide into four segments, each of which contained a different girl target. The masked public lined up round the outside of the counter, paid over their money and tried their luck on the target of their choice, with the chance of winning a cheap ornament as the prize. The jovial middle-aged couple that ran the stall parade round the inside of the counter urging the punters to have a go at the various challenges.

‘Nothing to it, ladies and gentlemen,’ they said. ‘Just get three rings of the same colour over any of the hooks...’ ‘Just get a ball into that cup...’ ‘Just get a mouse in that pussy hole...’ ‘Just get a dart onto the gold or the bull in her slot...’

Susan was suspended spreadeagled from one of the four arms of a gibbet frame mounted in the centre of the stall that supported all the target girls. Her wrists were cuffed to a spreader bar from the ends of which chains ran down to her ankle cuffs. She was a pale-skinned full-figured brunette with a delightfully narrow waist in proportion to her hips and breasts. Wire hooks had been clipped to each of her large brown nipples so they hung down beneath them. Another hook mounted on a pair of screw clamps was fastened to her labia, so that it jutted out from her deep slot and dangled between her thighs. The game was to throw thin rings of coloured rope and get three of them over any of the hooks.

Of course it was not as easy as it seemed. Susan flinched as each ring was thrown so that she twisted in the air, making her an enticing but difficult target. When the rings did come close they usually rebounded from her stomach or the swell of her breasts. Any rings that did catch on a hook pulled it downward, stretching its fleshy mounts and making it harder to land a second ring. But the punters

still had their fun, often paying for two or three sets of rings, laughing at Susan's whimpers of pain as her tender parts were stretched and not noticing how infrequently anybody won.

Nanette was also facing the punters but hung upside-down, with her hands cuffed behind her back and legs wide and her ankles chained to a spreader bar. Her long dark hair hung loose and brushed the ground, while her neat conical breasts jutted sharply out from her chest. She offered just one target but it seemed an easy one. The spout of a fine mesh funnel had been forced into her vagina with the flared end opening between her thighs, stretching her labia almost painfully wide. The funnel's rim was the size of a side plate enabling the punters to look down her passage and see its pink wet walls held open like a tunnel. All they had to do was get a ball down into that hot wet opening.

However the small wooden balls bounced and skipped about the flared rim, circling it and flying off in odd directions. Sometimes on impact they pinched the soft inner flesh of her sex lips as it squeezed through the mesh of the funnel, making her gasp and flinch and twist in her bonds and adding to the fun.

April also offered her sex as a target, but the means to achieve it were different. She was hung from a pair of spreader bars with wrists and ankle level, her wide parted legs facing outward. The stallholders had made use of her labial rings, threading cords through them and tying them to her thighs so that her vulva was peeled back like a flower, exposing her sparkling ringed clit and the gaping dark mouth of her vagina.

Into this orifice the players were supposed to try to shoot "mice". These were in fact small padded and greased slugs of lead with string "tails". They were slid down slotted wooden arms with upward curving ends that could be pivoted about to aim them. The mice raced down the slots and flew through the air towards April's exposed groin, bouncing off her thighs, stretched labial flesh and buttocks, leaving small bruises behind. Sometimes they hit her swollen clitoris, making her yelp and jump in her chains. Only very

occasionally was there the plop as a mouse found its way into her pussy hole and lodged there with its tail hanging out. Every success brought forth a cheer from the players.

Niki was bound over a padded bar with her rear to the punters. Her legs were bent clear of the ground and her wrist and ankle cuffs were chained together, so that she hung freely with her bottom and sex invitingly presented. A target of concentric coloured rings had been painted on each of her buttocks. Her vagina had also been ringed with red on her surrounding labia while her protuberant clitoris had been painted gold. The punter had flights of very light darts with fine but short tips which they had to score a certain number of points to win a prize. Soon Niki's smooth bottom was feathered with darts and pinpricks of blood accompanied by her yips and squeals. A hit on her sex lips or clitoris brought forth a shriek of pain, tapering away into a groan of miserable frustration.

Yes, frustration. They were all suffering in the same way.

They simply had to hang there playing their part as living targets. There was no sex involved and not really much pain. Even the darts were so fine and light that each inflicted far less discomfort than a cut with a riding crop. However the exposure and stimulation was incredibly exciting and it was making them all needy as only bondmaids could get. As the hours passed this made them even friskier targets, squirming desperately at every opportunity, willing the players to hit their most sensitive spots, which only made them more appealing.

April appreciated the rich irony even as she suffered its consequences. Last night they were being screwed every five minutes until they were exhausted and today they were yearning for penetration. As their arousal became more obvious and their sexes ran and dripped to the floor, some of the punters offered their handkerchiefs to the stall holders who would dab corners into the girls' wet clefts and then hand them back as the most intimately perfumed mementos of their day at the carnival.

Soon they were having mini-orgasms each time a ball, ring, mouse or dart hit their straining clitorises or even their pulsating nipples. Each time the crowd cheered at their helpless shameful display. It was another long night...

CHAPTER FOUR

Once again April awoke in a strange bed with morning light filtering in past the curtains. The fittings surrounding it were similar to the last time but the sheets were scented with female perfume.

April was cuffed spreadeagled on her back. Marian Marvell's naked body lay sprawled on top of her. She could feel her mistress's pubic bush pressed against her own hairless mound. Where their two clefts kissed there was a lingering wetness.

Marian stirred and raised herself onto her elbows, rubbing the sleep from her eyes and brushing back her auburn locks. Like her father she slept naked except for the master chain key and the key of the cashbox that hung from the ribbon between her pale breasts with their ember-red nipples. April suspected the keys never left her. It seemed that even when she was having fun Marian did not take risks where practical matters were concerned.

She smiled approvingly down at April. 'Mmm... that was very nice. You really are a most passionate creature.'

'I'm glad to have given pleasure, Mistress,' April replied meekly.

Marian idly toyed with April's nipples. 'I must admit now I'm rather glad my father bought the pair of you. Niki was also a delight... I mean, she was quite satisfactory... well worth the money.' Her fingers became painfully tight about the nub of flesh. 'However if you tell my father I said that I'll whip you raw, understand?'

'Yes, Mistress,' April whimpered. 'Not a word!'

The morning routine was as the previous day. Once they had eaten the Marvell's left April and Niki hobbled to attend to the housekeeping while they made their rounds.

When they were alone April and Niki hugged and kissed, their hard ringed nipples pressing into each others' breasts and their gemmed labial rings clinking together.

'I really wanted to spend the night with you,' Niki said, 'but having a big cock up me came a good second. I never imagined being used as a dartboard could get you so hot!' She twisted round, trying to see her own rear. 'How's my bum looking? Like a pincushion?'

April examined Niki's lovely bottom and then kissed each cheek. 'It's a bit red and there are a few blood-spots and scratches but otherwise it's a great as ever.'

'That's a relief. What about your pussy after those "mice" had a go at you?'

'A bit sore and bruised... but maybe you'd better check to make sure...'

Grinning Niki did so, examining April's pubes with care, kissing her lips and swelling clitoris. 'It's all still prime cut!' she declared at last, sliding back up into April's arms. 'And how was Marian? I can still smell her on you.'

April beamed. 'Nice. I'd so much rather it had been you as well, but she knows how to use her fingers. You were right about the way she cums. Afterwards she collects herself quickly.'

'Yeah, it's almost like she doesn't want to admit she's having too much fun,' Niki said.

'Maybe she keeps her emotions in check because she's trying to look after her father and thinks it'll look too weak and feminine.'

'Well this isn't exactly a land of fem-lib and equal opportunity and she is bossing a lot of men around, so she probably has to play it cooler and tougher than she is.'

‘That might be it. Anyway I like her,’ April declared. ‘In fact I think we could have done a lot worse with both of them.’

‘I suppose if you have to be a slave it might as well be to the boss’s family,’ Niki agreed.

Later, while Marvell went into town on business and Marian did some bookkeeping, April and Niki were set to work cleaning and polishing the outside of the caravan, which was brightly painted in blue, red and yellow. It was a simple, undemanding task made enjoyable by the typical warm bright Nethervale day, which made being naked and splashing about with buckets of water into more of a game. What bondmaids did when winter came April did not know, except that it probably involved shrivelled nipples. Then did winter ever come here? They had been in Nethervale for months and the weather had hardly changed. Was it a land of perpetual summer? It was easy to believe it was just a perverted version of early Nineteenth Century England, but how weird was it really under the surface.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of a stranger.

He was tall man in his forties, dressed in a black frock coat, trousers and top hat, contrasting with a brilliant red and blue checked waistcoat. He carried a silver-topped cane. The tips of a waxed moustache curled upward towards his dark narrow eyes.

Hardly sparing April and Niki a glance as they washed down the caravan sides, he strode purposefully up to the stable–style side door, the top of which was swung back, and rapped smartly on the frame with the end of his cane.

As Marian came to the door he took off his hat and made a bow which was a shade too low to be genuine. ‘Ah, Miss Marvell, such a delight to see you as always,’ he said grandly.

By contrast to his effusive greeting her reply was frosty. ‘Mr Carlo, I thought we had ended our discussions last month.’

‘But I wondered if you might have reconsidered my offer, Miss Marvell. And as I happened to be in the vicinity and saw one of your little posters, I thought I might drop by.’ He glanced around at the tents and wagons. ‘I trust business is good.’

‘Business is very good, Mr Carlo,’ Marian assured him. ‘And we have not changed our minds regarding your offer.’

Carlo smiled in a condescending manner. ‘Quite, but perhaps I might speak with your father about the matter, man to man, as it were.’

Chauvinist pig, April thought. However, she carried on as if she had heard nothing, laying a set of short steps against the side of the caravan and climbing up to start on the windows. Both Marian and Carlo were ignoring them as bondmaids were so often ignored. If Marian wanted privacy she could have invited him in instead of talking on the doorstep.

Pinch-lipped Marian said: ‘My father is out attending to some business in town at the moment. If you must see him then you may call back this afternoon, but I assure you the answer will remain the same. As he made it quite clear last time we are not interested in selling the carnival and certainly not for such a miserly sum. We stay on our agreed route and regular venues and you keep to yours so our paths do not cross. That is an end of it.’

Carlo smiled thinly. ‘As you wish, Miss Marvell, but do not dismiss the possibility that you may reconsider too soon. The carnival business can be so fickle. Problems with pitches, bad weather, troublesome officials... little accidents...’

As he spoke he stepped to one side and casually but quite deliberately jammed the tip of his cane against the side of April’s steps and shoved. Desperately April grabbed the top of the window frame to prevent herself from falling as the steps slithered out from under her. As she hung against the side of the caravan kicking her legs, her hobble chains clattering, his cane slashed across her bottom, leaving a blazing stripe on her skin.

‘You see,’ Carlo said, ‘accidents happen so easily... arghh!’

There was a whoosh and splash of water. Niki had thrown the contents of her bucket over him.

As Carlo turned about, dripping and red-faced, razing his stick in fury, Niki rolled out of the way under the caravan. Marian was calling out: ‘Bill, Bill!’ at the top of her voice.

Bill appeared at a run from between the tents. He goggled at Carlo’s dripping form.

‘Bill, Mr Carlo has had an accident,’ Marian said. ‘Kindly escort him off the pitch. Inform the cunniers at the gate that he is no longer to be admitted.’

‘Right you are, Miss Marian,’ Bill said brightly, then glowered at Carlo and jerked his thumb. ‘Hop it this way, Harry...’

‘You’ll regret this!’ Carlo warned Marian.

‘That we shall see,’ Marian replied coolly.

As Carlo squelched off, April felt Niki grab her legs and help her drop safely to the ground.

Marian looked at them sternly. They bowed their heads. ‘Bondmaids do not assault visitors to our carnival, whatever the provocation.’

‘No, Mistress,’ they said meekly.

The corner of her mouth twitched. ‘How fortunate that it was an accident, then.’

‘Yes, Mistress.’

‘Well then clear this up and get on with your work.’

They smiled. ‘Yes, Mistress...’

When Marvell returned an hour later Marian had a long talk with him. He emerged from the caravan scowling with anger, pausing only to pat April and Niki on the heads and feed them candies from his hand. April and Niki sensed a change in the carnival atmosphere as word of the confrontation with Carlo spread round the field. Some stallholders appeared amused while others were apprehensive.

However, the show had to go on. The bondmaids were fed and prepared as the previous day. April did notice one change. The incident with Carlo and perhaps also their performance over the last two nights in bed had clearly raised Marian's opinion of them. Instead of treating them as just two more girls in the common pool as she had the first two days, she took the time to explain why she was placing them in different amusements.

'I want to try you both out on betting games, but the Wheel of Tears is for full-titted girls only. So I'm putting April on that and you, Niki, in the Bondmaid Steeplechase.'

April was formed up with five other large-breasted girls and led away. She would have liked to have Niki with her but she was cheered by Marian's consideration. She was treating them like her personal slaves worthy of extra attention. April felt she could stand almost anything bondmaid life could throw at her if she knew she was being valued as a person and not simply an anonymous body.

The "Wheel of Tears" was set out in the open with a large canvas sheet hung behind it and rope cordons around the front and sides to keep back the crowd. It resembled nothing more than an old-fashioned ship's paddle wheel. It was about four metres long by one and a half in diameter, and was mounted on a frame supporting its axel at each end so it was free to rotate, controlled by a lever operating a friction clutch. Set in front of it were two tall posts supporting a long beam that ran parallel to the wheel, from which hung numbered pairs of ropes each with nooses on their ends. By

the ropes there was a stall with a chalkboard for odds to be written up where bets could be placed. Beside it was a stack of crates containing apple-sized balls of waxed brown paper, with a sign reading: TEAR BOMBS: 2 FOR A PENNY.

The girls were instructed as to what was expected of them. Soon April understood why big-breasted girls were essential for the game and that the “Tears” would not only be those of frustrated gamblers.

The carnival gates opened and punters began to flow in. The barkers launched into their enticing patter and a crowd gathered round the wheel.

‘See the pretty maids dance and cry, ladies and gentlemen,’ the barker for the Wheel of Tears cried. ‘But which one will be first? Who will be last? Are you feeling lucky? Could you pick all six dancers in order they fall?’

Odds were given; bets were made and tear bombs purchased.

‘Rope up the maids!’ the barker called.

The six girls, with their arms cuffed behind them, were lined up with their bottoms to the crowd standing on a long bench that had been placed just in front of the wheel. Handlers took up each pair of ropes in turn and gave them a twist about each other before threading them through the girls’ bound arms from the back. The nooses were then placed over their breasts and pulled tight about their roots. Six pairs of full plump mammaries bulged and lifted enticingly while their owners winced as the ropes bit into their tender flesh. Gingerly they stepped up onto the blades of the wheel, leaning forward against the drag of the ropes that curved up from under their arms to the beam, struggling to balance with their bound arms. The bench was pulled then away.

The barker had moved over to the wheel’s brake lever. ‘Let’s get the wheel spinning and the tears flowing!’ he cried. As the crowd cheered he pushed the lever forward.

April felt the wheel begin to turn under her and stepped up to the next blade, then the next, leaning forward against the motion, using the ropes to steady her. The clutch was let out a little more and wheel spun faster. The row of girls began to high step like ponies; setting their bottom-flesh shivering and their jutting bound breasts bouncing.

The first tear bomb was thrown. The waxed paper burst against the rump of the girl on the far end of the line, sending out a shower of red-dyed water. She shrieked and stumbled but kept on climbing.

The bombs began to fly thick and fast as those who had made bets tried to knock down rival girls. The fact that their attempts at sabotage inevitably cancelled each other out never occurred to them. It felt like they were improving the odds in their favour. In minutes the girls were all covered in multicoloured dyes and sodden fragments of brown paper. The bombs hit with painful smacks, the favourite targets being of course their buttocks. The water was cooling but it made the wheel blades slippery.

With a shriek the blonde girl beside April lost her footing, dropped and swung backwards away from the wheel. As the nooses tightened about her breasts the ropes untwisted, turning her round to face the crowd as she swung back and forth, her legs kicking about in mid air as she scrabbled for a foothold that was not there. All could see her distraught features and bulging breasts swelling still further as the nooses tightened and they were pulled unnaturally towards her armpits. They could hear her whimpers and sobs of pain. Her struggles were only adding to her distress and slowly diminished until she hung limp and trembling, her swollen breasts turning from pink to mauve. Those who had bet on her lasting longer took out their frustration by throwing their remaining tear bombs at her defenceless body, making her flinch and twist about as the missiles smacked into the skin of her balloon-taut breasts and pouting sex.

That was their incentive to keep climbing the wheel. The blonde would remain suspended until the last girl had fallen. The Wheel of

Tears speeded up...

April was the third to fall. As she slipped she clamped her arms to her sides to minimise the sliding of the rope and terrible wrenching on her breasts as the nooses tightened and her bulging globes were pulled up and sideways, her ringed nipples standing out like organ stops. The ropes untwisted and she spun round to face the crowd, scrabbling about with her legs even though her toes were a metre from the ground. She forced herself to hold as still as possible but the crowd were shouting and pointing. A tear bomb burst against her vulva, showering her thighs in red dyed water. She jerked and swayed and the noses pulled a little tighter. The ropes were thick and did not cut her skin, but they were still horribly painful. The nooses were also cutting off the blood to her breasts that were stinging and slowly going purple.

So she cried. There was no reason to hide her tears. The crowd expected to see bondmaids in distress. It was all part of the carnival. Therefore April sobbed and whined, finding a strange delight in being hung up before so many in all her misery with her emotions displayed as nakedly as her body.

The next girl to fall peed in pain as she swung about, spraying her water far and wide about the grass, bringing forth laughs and appreciative cheers from the crowd.

Finally the last girl came off the wheel. The crowd cheered while those with losing tickets tore them up in disgust. A handful collected their winnings.

The dangling trembling girls were lowered to the ground and the torment was lifted from their breasts. Nooses were loosened and pulled off purple mushrooms of flesh, leaving their imprints about their roots. Gasps and whimpers arose as the blood coursed back into their tender glands.

The girls had a short rest while they were cleaned up. Another girl was given a large mug of water to swallow so she would be ready to

pee to amuse the punters this time round. Meanwhile the bets were being laid for another spin of the wheel...

Late in the evening as the crowds thinned and The Wheel of Tears finally closed down. To April's surprise and pleasure Marian came round personally to collect her. Clipping a leash to her collar she led her over to the Bondmaid Steeplechase, which was just running its last race of the night.

An oval track of wooden boards had been set out on the grass inside a canvass ring, which was lined on the outside by a scattered crowd who had placed their final bets. Many of them were carrying long-shafted spanking paddles. In places the track narrowed and ran close to them as they leaned on the "rails". It was also crossed at intervals by low thin broom-twigg "hedges".

Niki and five other girls were lined up before the starting line. Niki's face was flushed, her buttocks were rosy and she was streaked with sweat, but her eyes were still bright.

The girls were all bent and strapped over frames of lightweight struts that confined them to rocking horse postures, with their feet and legs extended stiffly forward and back. Heavy coil springs ran from the torso sections of the frames that supported their hips and chests to the hinged arm and leg struts. These ended in pushchair-like pairs of wheels which had sprung pawl and ratchet cogs on their sides.

The girls had all been fitted with bridles and had rubber bits in their mouths. They also had small saddles strapped to their backs on which rode third-scale mannequins of jockeys complete with racing colours. The model riders were holding reins that ran under the girls' bodies to fasten to nipple clamps.

The starter cried: 'They're off!' and jerked a lever that raised the starting line. Immediately the girls began to bounce up and down on their frames, setting their breasts bobbing while splaying and

drawing in their leg struts. As the wheels could only turn one way this sent them jerking forward along the track in fits and starts, with their dummy riders reeling about on their backs waving their tiny whips in the air.

As they came towards the first fence the crowd began to cheer. The girls bounced and jolted through gaps in the bristling sprays of twigs, which jabbed painfully up into the girls' dangling, jolting breasts and then scraped between their thighs and through their pussy clefts.

Approaching the first of the narrow sections of track the girls began to string out. April was pleased to see Niki was second. The crowd at that point leaned over the rails and began swiping at the girls with their paddles. There came the sharp smack of rubber on flesh and grunts from behind their bit as they hit the bobbing bottoms of those they wanted to urge on to greater effort.

For those ponies they had bet against they struck not their bottoms but the heads and chests of their model riders. The jockeys were evidently mounted on springs at their waists for they went flat over backwards under a hard blow and then rebounded. This jerked on the nipple reins they held in their carved hands, yanking the girls' nipples painfully up and backwards and causing them to yelp and lose their rhythm or else swerve to one side. Yet despite the pain and discomfort the track under the ponygirls was stained with droplets and dribbles from their glistening clefts, and their clamped nipples strained in their confinement.

Round they went like this for three laps until they crossed the winning line, with Niki coming in a brave third.

April and Niki, now, leashed together, trotted wearily along at Marian's heels as she led them through the near deserted carnival ground back to the caravan. As they did so April wondered at their own inner nature.

How could she accept what had been done to herself and Niki during the last few hours and yet resent Carlo's earlier assault on her? It had been far less painful than anything she had suffered on the Wheel of Tears. Yet she felt no such ill will to the carnival folk or the punters.

Perhaps it was because Carlo had been taking cruel advantage of her. It had been mean and calculating and she had felt genuinely threatened. Performing in the amusements by contrast seemed quite natural. She could not deny her suffering and degradation also gave her pleasure, in the same way that watching Niki racing round the track had aroused her. It was what bondmaids were for.

She cursed silently. The trouble was that she liked both Marian and Maxwell Marvell. By local standards they were kindly and considerate masters and she had already discovered she had a soft spot for such people. Merely by not being overtly cruel they allowed her masochistic nature free rein. She wanted to please them...

Briefly her old fear resurfaced: that she and Niki would become so habituated to this strange existence that they would not have the will to escape when the chance arose. How long would it take until they became bondmaids for life?

CHAPTER FIVE

Under the shamelessly bold and brassy sign: REG'S CUNNY SHY, four bondmaids stood in a row at the back of an open-fronted square tent. Each girl was balanced on a small board screwed to the top of a low post, the bases of which were surrounded by sacks stuffed with straw padding. Their arms were cuffed behind them and they had rubber bits in their mouths and protective wire cages over their faces. Their naked bodies stood out starkly against the black canvass hanging behind them. On the counter at the front of the stall were piles of balls with wooden cores softened by layers of string-bound rags.

Reginald, the young man who ran the stall, was issuing his traditional challenge.

‘Come on, gentlemen! Test your throwing arms and win some choice cunny. Any girl you can knock off her perch you can have the pleasure of as you wish in our bijou private booth. Three balls for a penny! Put them out of their misery! They don't want to be standing around all day; they'd rather be on their backs...’

Naturally many men took up the challenge. The girls made very tempting and easy targets. The boards they stood on were hardly big enough for their feet. The balls weren't very heavy but you only needed get the girls a little off balance and they had to fall. A strike almost anywhere should do it but what about going for their breasts? Two of the maids had sparkling nipple rings, which made tempting targets. That should make them squeal. Knock them down with style...

Many balls did hit their tender targets, making both resilient hard-nipped cones and fatter globes ripple and bounce fluidly. The girls did yelp and squeal through their gags and flinch and wobble. Their feet came off from the stand, waving about as they teetered and swayed, leaning over so far they had to fall...

Except time after time somehow they regained their balance and stood upright again.

The throwers were baffled. Was it a trick? Yet the girls could not be suspended in any way because they could see the top of the tent above them, and their feet were clearly not stuck to the platforms they stood on. They must have a remarkable sense of balance. Perhaps the men had not hit them as hard as they thought. Determined to prove themselves the men bought more balls...

From her precarious perch on the end pole April looked down at a bunch of three such brawny youths even as they prepared to throw again.

Surely she should be ashamed and disgusted at being turned into both a physical target and a sex prize in a perverted coconut shy. The new fusillade of balls pummelled her breasts and stomach and she reeled about. It hurt and it was degrading... yet as the glisten on her pussy lips testified it was also desperately arousing. She was going to be given to whoever knocked her down, like a hunter claiming his felled prey.

But not this time...

To the cries of incredulity from the ball-pitchers, somehow she regained her balance and stood upright once more.

'Gorblimey, how did she do that?' one of the lads exclaimed.

'Sorry, gentlemen,' said Reg. 'It's all in the wrist action, you see. It's not how hard you hit 'em, it's getting the right spin on the ball.'

April glanced sideways and grinned round her gag at Niki, who stood on the other end of the line.

They were privy to another carnival ploy to extract a little extra money from the innocent punters. It was a variation on the old myth

that the coconuts in coconut shies were glued in place. Except having bondmaids as targets instead of coconuts it was far subtler.

As the brawny youths debated whether to have another go a skinny young man wearing round spectacles over his simple bandana mask stepped up to the counter and nervously purchased three balls. The brawny trio looked at him with undisguised contempt.

Noting their attitude Reg enquired amiably: 'Any maid in particular you have your eye on, sir?'

'Well... that one on the end looks... nice,' the skinny lad said, blushing and pointing at April.

'She is lovely, isn't she?' Reg agreed. 'And look at her cunny dripping. She's just begging for a man to give her a good shafting. However, like as I was telling these other gentlemen, it's all in how you hit 'em, not how hard. Just take your time...'

The brawny trio were laughing openly by now. If they could not knock April over then what chance had this weakling got?

They did not see as April did Reg pressing a peddle under the counter with his toe. This actuated a cord that ran through the backcloth to Charlie, who carried out his essential work behind the scenes.

The bulbous rubber head of the anal plug that had been filling April's rectum deflated and was then pulled out of her rear by the black painted rod that had been helping her keep her balance so miraculously. The rod itself slid back through the small slit in the canvas behind her. It was time to give the punters a taste of what they were missing...

The skinny lad's first ball glanced off her thigh with barely enough force to knock over a day-old kitten. April flinched and swayed but knew a fall would look unbelievable. His second ball missed entirely, but the third hit her squarely in the middle. She

grunted and wobbled wildly, made a genuine attempt to keep her balance and then toppled into the straw.

‘Congratulations, you’ve won yourself a cunny!’ Reg exclaimed.

Reg took off April’s protective face-cage, clipped a leash to April’s collar, handed the end to the dazed young man and pointed him down the side of the shy to a smaller tent at the back decorated with the banner: CUNNY WINNER! ‘Enjoy yourself...’

As the lad led her away the brawny trio were buying more balls and eying up the other girls. If the little runt could do it, so could they...

The interior of the winner’s tent was simply furnished with straw-filled palliasse, but then it was not intended for lengthy use. April looked expectantly at the young lad who had won her, noting his spots. He goggled back at her as though he could still not believe his luck. April laid herself down on the rough mattress and spread her legs invitingly with knees bent, opening her thighs to display her mound.

He blinked at her ring-spangled pubes and a bulge began to form in the front of his trousers. With a sudden gulp he began fumbling at his belt, pulling it free and doubling the end over in his fist. He licked his lips.

‘You... you bondmaids need this first, right?’

That was a myth common in Nethervale that bondmaids could not give pleasure properly unless they were beaten first. Of course it was utterly ridiculous...

April nodded.

He lashed the tongue of leather across her open thighs and defenceless groin, making the swollen, protuberant lips of her sex mound shiver. She heard the sweet crack of her own flesh being abused. As it caught her rings it drove them painfully into her flesh, forcing snivels and whimpers of pain round her bit. Her juices

splattered, staining the end of the belt. The lad's eyes bulged at the sight of her naked body writhing under his lash and the crimson blush he was painting across her belly and thighs.

With a desperate whimper April lifted her hips and her tear-filled eyes beseeched him to take her.

He dropped the belt and tore down his trousers to expose a slim up-curving shaft. Throwing himself on top of her he thrust two or three times up and down her slot before his cockhead found the mouth of her simmering vagina. Then he pounded with desperate bruising force, wide-eyed and frantic with need, driving the breath from her body. With a groan and a look of disbelief he spouted inside her, his cock discharging spurts of sperm like bullets from a revolver. Then he collapsed and lay still.

He had been so eager and clumsy perhaps she was his first, April thought. A girl he had won in a cunny-shy. Only in Nethervale...

The next day the carnival left Cocklesford.

Early that morning, as the tents were coming down and the rides were being dismantled, Marvell took his leave. He was travelling on ahead of the carnival caravan in his own carriage to Pullwick, their next venue. April and Niki gathered that he normally went ahead like this to check the site arrangements and see to the posters. He had the materials and a few bondmaids for billboard duty already loaded up. They overheard his final words to Marian.

'Now, I don't know if Carlo's threat's going to come to anything, but be on your guard just in case. He wants us out of his way so he can expand his circuit and he's not above trying a little sabotage to help things along. If he can lose us a few shows or damage our reputation he might think we'll agree so sell up. You can be sure I'll be checking everything twice in Pullwick. You mind how everything goes here. Keep your eyes open tonight.'

'I'll be careful, Pa. You take care of yourself.'

'See you there for the parade tomorrow.'

They kissed and with a cheery wave he left.

In a few hours the magical transformation they had been performed on their first day had been reversed and the field was empty save for yellow patches of grass where tents and stalls had been pitched and the worn tracks left by a few thousand pairs of feet. April and Niki, red-cheeked and sweating after helping with the dismantling work, clambered back onboard the Marvell's caravan.

Marian stood them against the carved posts that supported the front of the roof where it overhung the driver's bench and chained them facing forward. With their carnival cuffs, collars and glittering piercings they merged with the bright paintwork, a little like ships' figureheads.

Around the wagons spare girls were similarly being put out on display, bound to posts, hanging from brackets or suspended from caravan sides. It was a fine day and they might as well be shown off instead of being shut away in the cage wagons or taking up space in the caravans. The display was not as elaborate as the parade into Cocklesford had been, but it was still a pretty show of flesh. Nobody passing them on the way could be in any doubt Marvell's Bondmaid Carnival was on the move.

It never hurt to advertise, April supposed.

With a jiggle of many pairs of bared breasts the carnival rolled out of the gate and turned towards the road to Pullwick.

They travelled through countryside of typical Nethervale picture-postcard perfection formed by gently rolling woods and fields and lush hedgerows. They passed through villages where black and white

half-timbered houses mingled with those of honey coloured stone. The only other traffic was also horse-drawn, interspersed with occasional ponygirl powered traps. The steady clapping of the horses' hooves became soporific and April found herself dozing in her chains as the scenery rolled gently by.

It was nearly dark when they turned into what was evidently a pre-planned layover site in an isolated field on the side of a hill. The horses were put out to graze and a minimal camp was set up. Marian had a conference with Bill Grudd, who they had by now learned was chief cunnier, and the principle stallholders. Watches were arranged. That such a precaution was enacted without argument was some indication of their joint opinion of Harry Carlo's principles.

By the light of oil lamps in the cosy interior of the caravan, April and Niki prepared a meal and waited on Marian before eating themselves, pulling their ceiling leash chains tight as they bent over their bowls on the floor. As they ate April wondered, with her father absent, what Marian would do with both of them that night. Would she take just one of them to share her bed? The beds in the caravan were hardly big enough for all three.

Once they had cleared up they knelt awaiting Marian's command as she sipped a glass of red wine. Perhaps it was the wine or because she was alone but she seemed more relaxed than usual, and she smiled approvingly down at them.

'You really are a fine pair of bitches,' she said.

To a bondmaid in Nethervale this was a compliment.

'Thank you, Mistress,' April replied.

Marian considered them thoughtfully. 'Are you close? I mean a real pair, and not just trained to perform together?'

April and Niki exchanged quick blushing glances. They had still not quite become used to the absolute bluntness employed where matters of bondmaid relationships were concerned. In Nethervale it was hardly considered a step above the breeding of livestock. Bondmaids were animals who happened to be able to talk.

‘We’re lovers, Mistress,’ Niki said.

‘How sweet,’ Marian said, and then frowned. ‘Have you coupled since my father bought you?’

‘No, Mistress,’ April admitted.

‘Would you like to?’

At the thought April’s nipples stood up and her clit pulsed. She heard Niki give a stifled whimper. ‘Oh yes, Mistress!’

‘Well perhaps this evening you can put on a cunny-tonguing show for me. Send me to bed content and you can spend the rest of the night together.’

April trembled with sudden anticipation, even though she knew deep down how obscene it was that their love life should be dictated by the whim of another. However there was nothing false about the gratitude in her voice as she choked out: ‘Thank you Mistress.’ She knew she sounded so pitifully grateful but she could not help it. ‘We would love to perform for you...’

They folded the dining table back, leaving just enough room on the floor to lay out a bed quilt in front of Marian’s chair.

‘Use your tongues only,’ Marian said, reaching down and pulling their wrists behind their backs and clipping their cuffs together. Then she sat back, pulled her gown aside and hitched up her nightdress so she could toy with her flame-haired pussy. Naturally she was going to enjoy herself as they performed and was not in the slightest degree embarrassed at masturbating in front of them.

April tried to put Marian out of her thoughts as she knelt on the quilt and looked into Niki's eyes. She was all that mattered to her. They nuzzled and kissed, their tongues intertwining, their breasts mashing and flattening. Coiling round each other they slid to the ground, their mouths travelling down their bodies, flicking across their straining ringed nipples. Niki rolled onto her back, pulled up her knees and spread her legs, offering the beauty of her naked sex. April straddled her, riding Niki's face with her pussy, grinding her love lips into Niki's mouth then laying across her to bury her lips in Niki's sex.

Her juices tasted like nectar.

With ever increasing urgency and passion they sucked, lapped and burrowed with their tongues into each other's hot clenching tunnels and nuzzled their staining clits with their noses. Unable to use their hands their faces became their substitute sex organs, lathered with their exudation. As their scent filled the caravan they convulsed and bucked and then soaked each other with the outpouring of their love.

As they lay collapsed in a panting, sweaty intertwined, satiated heap, Marian's urgent command cut through their bliss: 'Bring me off, now!'

Obedient instinct brought them back to reality and they scrambled to obey. Together they thrust their heads between Marian's smooth spread thighs and lapped at her already dripping vagina with its swollen clitoris. Their noses brushed her red curls while their tongues took the place of her fingers and delved deep. She grasped their hair, jammed their faces into her cleft and doused them with her womanly discharge.

When Marian was recovered she smiled down at her two maids, their eyes bright and faces shiny with both their own and her juices. 'I think you've earned a night together...'

She clipped their collar rings to their clit rings and laid a blanket over them.

They fell asleep curled up in a sixty-nine with their faces buried between each other's thighs.

When April woke the cold light of morning was filling the caravan. She blinked at a very strange view through a gap between Niki's thighs with a corner of blanket hanging down half over the inrolling swell of Niki's bottom. The wash of Niki's breath whispered between her own thighs. She should have felt stiff and numbed from sleeping cuffed and doubled up as she had, but instead she felt perfectly rested. The scent, taste and warmth of her lover filled her and she did not want to move.

There was movement. Marian had opened the door of her bedroom. April saw the tail of her gown and her slippered feet come towards her. For a moment she paused as though looking down at them. April expected to be roused and set to work. However, Marian must have thought they were both still asleep and allowed them to rest a little longer. Quietly she took an apple from the fruit bowl and went back to her bedroom, leaving April and Niki lying on the floor as one might a pair of sleeping dogs. Not bothering to close the door she sat on her bed chewing. April was grateful for her consideration. She wanted to savour every moment with Niki.

April was just going to close her eyes again when she saw a slight frown cross Marian's face. She put aside her apple and went down on her knees in front of her commode. What was she doing, April wondered? Marian slid the commode to one side and inserted a finger in a knothole in the floorboards. There was a faint click and a panel hinged back like a small trapdoor. Reaching inside Marian pulled out the carnival cashbox and laid it on the bed. Using the key hung round her neck she opened it up and took out the ledger, which she began flipping through, nodding to herself as though confirming something that had been on her mind.

April realized she had never seen Marian take out or put away the cashbox before. That was where it was hidden. A sense of guilt suddenly stole over her. She had not meant to spy on Marian. It

made sense for travellers to keep their money concealed in such limited space as their homes afforded. The takings must soon mount up to quite a sum. She had no idea how the banking system in Nethervale worked. Possibly there were towns where they could not simply deposit their earnings easily, or perhaps Marvell did not believe in banks. Well, that was their business. She would never reveal what she had seen. Marian's kindness had earned her silence.

They met Marvell at the agreed rendezvous just outside Pullwick and he and Marian conversed while the carnival made ready for their parade.

'Everything seems right enough,' Marvell assured his daughter. 'The posters are up, the feed deliveries are arranged and the pitch is ready.'

'That's good, Pa. I'm glad you haven't come back with more maids than you took with you.'

'I hope you've no complaints about the last batch. Are April and Niki behaving?'

'Actually... they're working out fine, Pa.'

'I said they had spirit.'

'And you were right, Pa. Now, let's get you changed...'

The raucous cavalcade that was the carnival grand parade marched into Pullwick, stopping the traffic and briefly making people forget their everyday concerns with the promise of sensual delights and diversions.

With bits between their teeth and bells on their nipples, April and Niki were chained sitting astride absurd half-metre long pink wooden

phalluses that jutted up and out from the sides of a wagon, which caused the crowd to shriek with laughter. They were actually impaled on smaller vertical dildos that slid along slots in the top of the phalluses. As they progressed April and Niki worked their hips forward and back as though riding the shafts ecstatically. The motion drove hidden bellows and a wheel of wire loops turning through a bath of soap solution mounted in the heads of the phalluses. Steams of bubbles poured out of a slot in their tips in fitful clouds that drifted down over the crowd.

Soon their show of mounting passion became genuine and their own juices lubricated the dildo slots, making them side back and forth even faster. Their bells jingled and danced wildly from their stiff nipples. All this performed before hundreds of watching eyes.

It was mad, obscene, shameful and exciting, April thought. Wasn't it fun being a carnival girl!

CHAPTER SIX

The carnival pitch in Pullwick was on another large field on the outskirts of town. Soon the carnival took the site over and made it into a replica of the one in Cocklesford, with the same arrangement of wagons, rides and stalls. This continuity not only made setting up easier but it followed the convention that stallholders each had their own long established relative positions within the carnival grounds. From what April overheard as she and Niki dragged and carried, any changes to the layout forced on them by external conditions led to bitter arguments.

Fortunately the carnival assembled itself with the same remarkable efficiency as before and soon it was standing in all its garish glory. April felt a certain satisfied pride at having assisted. The exercise had been a pleasant relief after the restraint of their journey and they had something wonderful to show for it when it was done.

She had to admit she was falling for the carnival life, yet she had been part of it for less than a week. Was it just that it was such a relief after the nightmare of the Abbey? Perhaps. However, there was also something undeniably romantic about it. The carnival held an undeniable escapist appeal despite the fact that she was made to perform the most unromantic and perverted acts. Yet even they were about having fun. Not hers, of course, but the punters. Through them she did ultimately achieve her own brief escape. The only kind allowed a bondmaid: the unrestrained slavish orgasm.

It also helped that she liked the Marvell's and knew she and Niki were fortunate to have become their personal maids. Of course it was a relief to find they were by kindly owners but even that did not explain how quickly she had taken to them. Was it that people did not feel the need to pretend in front of bondmaids and you quickly saw them for what they were, good or bad? There was an unexpected honesty in the relationship between master and slave.

April also sensed that serving the carnival owners gave them a certain status amongst the other bondmaids. Even the cunniers and stallholders treated them with a little extra consideration. Yet because they were also put them in the pool to serve with the other girls there seemed no resentment. They were all carnival girls together, to suffer the excitement, the pain and the pleasure.

Therefore, on first night the carnival was in Pullwick, April found herself almost impatiently awaiting whatever amusement Marian Marvell would assign her to.

At the back of the PUSSY BELLES stall, a rotating double belt of chains carried a string of six bondmaids endlessly round a netting partition strung between two vertical cogwheel drums. The belts of chains were two metres apart and the girls were strung out between them in inverted "Y's", with their wrists cuffed together over their heads and legs widespread. Hanging down between their legs were large hand bells with dildo handles that had been inserted into their vaginas.

Each bell was coloured, matching a painted circle on the bellies of each girl. Players chose a particular bell and girl to aim at. To win a prize, all the players had to do was throw balls and hit their chosen bell hard enough to knock it out of the grip of the girl's pussy hole as it rolled by.

The targets were moving but the bells were quite large and heavy. The stallholder had shown them the bells before inserting them. It was not possible that even bondmaids could cling onto them for long. Once they started to slip they must fall out. If one ball did not do it the next would.

Round and round the girls went while the balls flew thick and fast. Some missed and hit the netting screen while others struck the girls' stomachs and thighs, making them wince. Unlucky shots hit the apex of the girls' clefts, mashing their clits against the handles buried

inside them and making them shriek loudly even as their eyes bulged in dismay.

A few balls hit the bells square on. These strikes made the bells swing and their dildo handles twist and jerk painfully inside their fleshy sheathes. A hard full-on shot made a girl's lower stomachs bulge briefly, even as the bell rang out between her thighs while she gulped and whimpered in pain.

A well rung bell bounced about wildly and slipped partway out of its sheath, exposing a length of wet rubber handle from between clinging labia. The girl's teeth then gritted with effort as if she was trying to suck the handle back up inside her. More often than not they saw the handle begin to do just that. By the time the girl had gone round the net screen and emerged again the handle was back where it started between her thighs, if a little shinier from the juices that trickled down the handle and over the dome of the bell.

April clenched at the bell handle inside her, aware of how shamelessly her nipples and clitoris were standing out. The players might guess she was stimulated by the dildo and was responding as any bondmaid would, but they did not realize she was doubly plugged. That was the secret of the girls' remarkable powers of retention.

It was another carnival trick. Every bell had a large bar magnet in its handle. Another matching magnet with poles reversed was plugged up their rectums. The two attracted each other, pressing against the thin membrane that separated front and rear passages. If a bell was hit and started to slip out of her vaginal tunnel it was pulled back by the magnet in her rear, boosting the grip of her own muscles.

The constant play between the two magnets inside April, rubbing the handle and the anal plug, was highly stimulating, combined with the awareness of all those eyes upon. The result was inevitable.

When April's orgasm came her hips jerked about so much she rang the bell herself. The watching punters laughed and cheered. The

player who was targeting her at the time was awarded a consolation prize.

What an exhibitionist slut I'm becoming, she thought.

Morning routine was another pleasant interlude between performances. It gave her and Niki time to recover from the previous night. Fortunately, aided by liberal applications of Jympson's healing creams, aches and soreness of well-used and abused passages seemed to heal remarkably quickly in Nethervale. In fact their recovery was unnaturally rapid and more than once she and Niki speculated about it.

However, compared to all the other unlikely things about the land, this was a minor wonder. There were other subtler forces at work upon them of more immediate concern.

It was only when April felt the eager anticipation rising in her as they were put in the pool with the other girls that she felt a pang of anxiety. The carnival was rapidly taking over her thoughts and plans. It was inevitable that bondmaids adapted to whatever physical demands and duties their masters required of them, but there was a danger of losing their own identity in the process, as April knew only too well.

Of course she had no choice but to make the best of her situation and be grateful for whatever small pleasures she could find along the way. It was not wrong to get a twisted kick out of the perverted things they were made to do. They'd given up trying to preserve their dignity or belief in the absolute moral standards of their home world a long time ago, but they must not lose sight of their ultimate goal of escape. I'm just enjoying carnival life, April told herself firmly, while biding my time for the right moment...

The "Bagatelle Maid" game was another instance of Nethervale taking something traditional and applying its own unique perverse

twist. In fact to April and Niki the game seemed more closely related to pinball. Had the concept somehow seeped through from their world and caused the local game to be modified?

Six of the boards were arrayed about the game tent. They were made largely of wood, the size of dining tables and were mounted on stands tilted back at forty-five degrees, so their lowest edges were at a little less than waist height. The boards had to be oversized because they each contained a bondmaid.

They hung with their heads down, arms a little out from their sides and their legs spread. Metal hoops went over their cuffs and collars and were bolted through the baseboard, holding them firmly in place. In addition a larger hoop was screwed down across their stomachs. Padded blocks pressed against their shoulders, preventing them from slipping down the board. Screw clamps on either side of their heads stopped them from turning sideways. They were not gagged but hinged mesh grilles covered their mouths.

The game playing area of baffles, channels, bells and stops was all above and between their legs, with a "V" of board running down into their groins to the mouths of their upturned vaginas, which were guarded by small flip-up traps that could either drop the ball down a chute at the back of the board or let it roll on. Their labia were held wide open by metal mesh tubes with funnel mouths that were fastened to the boards. The bottoms of the tubes held pressure switches. Dropping a ball, which was the size of a table tennis ball and of solid metal, onto them was the object of the game.

The girls could influence the game to a small extent. They held twist grip handles that actuated a set of flapper arms on the board. The players had a different set of flappers. The controls for these were a pair of twist rings clamped tight about their girl's breasts, forcing them to balloon upwards, thus combining play with the thrill of squeezing and twisting their breasts, with their hard nipples pressing into the players' palms, which added to the fun.

The bagatelles were the first coin-operated devices April had seen. A coin in a slot in the box at the top of the machine started a clockwork timer and freed the spring plunger at the side of the machine to fire the balls into play. By Nethervale standards these were complex devices, more colourful and elaborate than anything most of the locals had seen before. It was like being in a primitive games arcade and the tent resounded to the rattle of balls, the clack of paddles, the whimpers and grunts of girls and the frustrated curses and groans of players. Beside her she could hear Niki's moans and groans as the players tried to pot their balls into her inviting slot. The air was scented with the aroma of half a dozen open and expectant bondmaid sexes.

A set of trousers loomed over April's head, barely concealing a hopeful bulge, as a new player stepped up to try his chances. April clasped her controls tightly. A coin rattled into the slot, activating the game. The plunger was drawn back and the ball was launched. The player squeezed her hot breasts hard and began to twist them rapidly left and right. April twisted her flapper controls frantically, unable to see the ball and playing largely by feel. Her desperate activity was almost worthless but it looked good, as did the panic on her face.

The difference was that her flappers were trying to keep the ball in play while his were trying to drive it downwards, with gravity to assist him. Bang, clatter, ting, went the ball as it bounced around. April twisted her handles as hard as she could, willing them to hit the bounding ball which she very much did not want dropping into her open passage. That desire was her motivation to play.

With a clunk the timer clocked up one minute. The controls locked and the trap opened between her legs, dropping the ball out of play. The player swore and put in another coin. The bulge in his trousers was much bigger now.

This time he was more fortunate. He beat the ball past April's flappers, twisting her breasts painfully hard in the process. She could

feel the ball getting closer to her wide-open pussy. Suddenly it bumped off the inside of her thigh and dropped into the funnel.

April shrieked as it hit the pad at the bottom of the tube, pressing on a tiny sprung lever that angled up and out of the side of the tube and drove a pin into her clitoris. A second lever activated by the ball freed the latch on the visor over her mouth and the player cheered as it flipped back.

As he tore open his flies and freed his stiff cock, April opened her mouth submissively. Fired up by excitement he took hold of her head and rammed himself into her until his balls ground against her nose. Not long ago she would have choked submitting to such vigorous oral sex, but her training in the Abbey allowed her to accept such a violation. She snatched breaths when she was allowed and accepted him inside her. She was his prize to be enjoyed. It was right and proper this way.

He spouted deep in her gullet and she gulped his sperm down.

When he was done he pulled out of her and tugged on a lever on the side of the board. With a whir of gears a little arm came out with a magnet on the end, dipped into her vagina, fished the ball out and dropped it down the trap between her legs. The visor snapped back over her mouth and she was ready to be used as a living bagatelle board once again: a literal sexual plaything.

That night the comfortable routine was disturbed.

In the early hours an urgent knocking on the door of the Marvell's caravan roused them. It was one of the cunniers on night watch who had seen unidentified figures prowling about the site. He had given chase but they had got away.

Leaving April and Niki chained to their beds the Marvell's led a brief search of the site by lantern light. After half an hour they returned empty-handed.

‘Do you think it was Carlo, or maybe somebody he hired, Pa?’ Marian asked.

‘Perhaps, or it might be nothing to do with him,’ Marvell said. ‘Try to get back to sleep. We’ll know more in the morning...’

Almost as soon as it was light the carnival sight was alive with activity as everybody made a close check of all the equipment and installations. They found signs that several stalls had been entered and a few small items had been disturbed but nothing seemed to be missing. Securing pegs and guy ropes were examined for evidence of tampering and all the large pieces of equipment were checked for loosened bolts and couplings, but all was in order.

‘Just some local lads prowling round for a dare, or else some petty thieves hoping to pick up anything valuable,’ Marvell declared eventually. ‘The gates will open as normal this afternoon...’

Performing in Senior Seraphic’s Famous “Girl-O-Phonium” booth required some practice, so the ten girls it took were assigned early, after Seraphic himself, a flamboyant man with a shock of white hair and an indeterminate European accent, had approved the pitch of their voices. Fortunately both April and Niki passed the test. The coffle of girls were then taken to his booth and with due ceremony were introduced to his prized instrument, in which they were to play a vital part.

A few hours later the carnival opened. The barkers went into their routine and soon a crowd had been enticed into the Girl-O-Phonium booth to see the remarkable instrument played.

Beyond a keyboard resembling that of a small organ, complete with pedals and stops, rose a tiered structure like of a wedding cake. It was an array of rods, wires, chains and pipes decorated with ornate scrollwork flourishes. Imprisoned within this were the ten chosen

girls, one at the top, two on the next tier, three on the next and four on the bottom. April was on the bottom row and Niki one up from her.

They faced forward and out to the sides, their arms pulled up and back behind them and cuffed to the frame of the machine. Cymbals, triangles and tubular bells hung from their nipples with rod-actuated strikers rising on posts between them. Spanking paddle arms with different sized blades were poised behind their bottoms ready to strike. Their mouths were plugged with the ends of rubber tubes that ran up to tall hats strapped to their heads that supported what looked like small organ pipes. Between their spread legs more posts, with rods and wires running up their sides, supported clamps fastened to their labia.

Seraphic appeared, now dressed in a sequined tailcoat, bowed to the audience, and took his place at the keyboard. He set the stops, positioned his feet on the pedals, raised his hands dramatically and launched into the first piece.

Bottoms were smacked in time, producing a sort of base beat, bells and cymbals chimed and the pipes on the girls' heads tooted. Incredibly it all came together to form recognizable tunes. None of the girls had to be able to sing or know the music to play their part. It only required them to respond to a certain simple stimulus in the manner they had been taut: instantly, repeatedly and without question, which was natural for a bondmaid. Each time their labia were pinched they blew into the tubes and stopped when the pinching stopped. Each pipe hat produced a different note. The assorted metal wear hanging from their stretched nipples did not require their attention, nor did the surprising range of sounds being generated by their spanked bottoms.

The tunes Seraphic wrung out of his Girl-O-Phonium must have been popular ones for the audience were soon singing and clapping along to them. The bondmaid instruments themselves had tears glistening in their eyes as their bottoms simmered and nipples stung. April however felt not the slightest resentment at her bizarre usage nor had she any notion of disobeying the next tweak of her

labia. She was in a strange state of helpless compliance generated by the steady pain and exposure before all those watching eyes.

Because of this it took some moments for the gradually mounting babble of voices outside the booth to register on April's senses. Seraphic played on until the noise became too great, then he stopped and stormed angrily outside, leaving the audience muttering. April heard snatches of conversation filtering in.

‘... something wrong with them...’

‘... and did you see their cunnies...’

After five minutes Seraphic returned and announced gravely: ‘I regret the rest of the performance has been cancelled. Your money will be returned. Will you please leave the carnival...’

The audience filled out. With the help of an assistant Seraphic began dismounting the girls from the phonium and chaining them into a coffle. Then they were led outside.

The last of the punters were drifting away through the gates. The rides had stopped and the stalls were empty and silent. All round the site bondmaids were being led out of various tents and rides crying pitifully and clutching at their groins. April glimpsed their pubes. Normally smooth pussy lips and bottom clefts were painfully red, blotchy and swollen, as though suddenly afflicted with severe nettle rash.

Marian Marvel strode past calling out: ‘Get all the girls, whether they’ve got rashes or not, down to the latrines straight away.’

Chains of confused and fearful bondmaids were being trotted along to the latrine pits and the open-air washroom. Cunners were working the pumps. Girls were being bent over and having their inflamed passages flushed out with soapy water until they frothed, then rinsed

and dried. Tubs of cream were opened and the men worked dollops of it into pussies and bottom holes.

The worst afflicted girls were treated first, then as a precaution all the rest. None of the Girl-O-Phomium girls seemed to be suffering, but they were flushed out and greased in their turn.

As April was bent over a cunnier's knee having her bottom attended to she saw Marian conversing urgently with her father and Bill Grudd. Marian had a rubber dildo in her hand.

'I think its some kind of plant-based irritant made into a clear gel,' she was saying. 'You can hardly see it when it's dry. It only melts and becomes active again when its warm and wet — like it gets once its inside a maid.'

'So that's what those fekkín' scallywags were doing here last night!' Bill said angrily. 'They were putting this stuff on every pussystick, bumpole and plug they could find!'

'And now every one of those has got to be found and cleaned,' Marvell said. 'And from now on they're not to be left outside at night.'

'Right you are, Mr M,' Bill said, and hurried off.

'It wasn't just a prank, was it Pa?' Marian said.

'No, my dear,' Marvell agreed sadly. 'This is too clever by half for some juvenile pranksters to think up, though they might well have been hired to carry it out. This is Carlo's first shot at us!'

CHAPTER SEVEN

The next day the afflicted girls were in less discomfort but they were not fit to perform in the amusements. For the first time April appreciated the difference between a pussy that had a healthy glow on it after a strapping or was swollen with lust from a good shafting, and one that looked sadly stung, red and lumpy. Nobody would want to use one of those.

The carnival gates opened as usual but only half the amusements were operating. As it turned out even those were little used by the sparse crowds. The enforced exodus yesterday had not been good publicity and despite notices being put up in town explaining it had only been a temporary problem, a rumour had started circulating with suspicious speed that an infection had broken out amongst the bondmaids. It was a miserable day.

That evening the carnival closed early. An hour later the Marvell's, the cunniers and the stallholders gathered on the dodgem rink, the largest covered space in the carnival. April and Niki had by then been chained up in the caravan, but by leaning out of the windows they could hear their words drifting over in the still air between the intervening stalls.

All were angry and frustrated. Several suggestions were made about improving security and making sure the bondmaids could not be harmed again. The general consensus was to put it behind them and continue with the tour as planned. Then a voice they recognised as Biglow's rose above the rest.

'Listen, I worked for Harry Carlo for three years, and what I'm saying is he's not a man to cross. He won't stop at this, you mark my words!'

'I hope you're not suggesting giving in to this cowardly act of sabotage,' Maxwell Marvell's voice rumbled out, 'because that shall

happen only over my dead body!’

That got a round of applause. Biglow spoke again. ‘No, I’m not saying that, I only mean Carlo won’t give up easy!’

‘And neither shall we, Mr Biglow,’ Marvell said. ‘That I can promise you. Well, are you all with me?’

There was a loud cheer.

In the caravan April made a high-five and Niki slapped her palm into hers.

Then Niki frowned, looking more sober. ‘But Biglow’s right, it’s not going to be easy. Who knows how Carlo’s going to try to knobble us next? Oh, how the fuck have we got mixed up in a war between rival sex carnivals? We’re going to get screwed either way. If the carnival does bad business for a while, so what? We get a rest.’

‘Yeah, but if they are forced to sell up, would you like to belong Carlo?’

Niki looked alarmed and hastily punched the air. ‘Bondmaids unite! Screw Carlo!’

The next morning they cleared the site and left Pullwick and its disappointments behind them. As before Marvell went on ahead in his carriage, this time taking a couple of cunniers with him as well as the poster girls.

Though the road to Cunnestown was picturesque, it was not a carefree journey. The girls who had been afflicted by cunny rash were having more douches and creams applied as they travelled in an effort to get them fit to perform. The other girls were not hung out to enjoy the scenery but kept protectively inside the wagons and cages. The atmosphere throughout the winding caravan train was

tense and expectant, as if they expected Harry Carlo to be lurking behind every bush.

They had a stopover in what in her world April knew of as the Malvern Hills. Watchmen patrolled the camp all night. It felt more like a wagon train in a western passing through Indian territory. Marian kept April and Niki chained to her bed and they all slept in a close huddle. There was no sex-play between them but it was comforting.

Nothing untoward happened on the rest of the journey and the next day the carnival caravan arrived at the agreed assembly point outside Cunneestow to find Marvell already waiting for them. He appeared more cheerful than when they had last seen him.

‘Everything’s set up,’ he said, rubbing his hands together. ‘The news of our troubles in Pullwick don’t seem to have spread here. If we have a good parade there should be no trouble bringing in the crowds. How are the girls?’

‘The swelling and redness had gone down. I think they’ll all be ready to perform. They might be a bit more tender than normal, but the punters won’t mind that.’

‘Then let’s give them a show!’

Marvell went along to each of the wagons, passing on the same message. The mood lightened palpably and they set to putting out the girls.

The parade through the winding, steep streets of Cunneestow went perfectly. Belled bondmaid breasts were flashed, bottoms were spanked and pussies were spread invitingly. The people gawped, laughed and applauded. In high spirits the carnival was set up on level fields by the river, with the town rising on a low hill about them. Harry Carlo was not going to stop them this time.

April and Niki were put in Biglow's "Bowl the Girls Over". As they had some experience by now he did not complain. Perhaps it was a calculated move on the part of the Marvells to trust him with their personal bondmaids. Biglow was not popular with the other stallholders.

The game was simple. In a long tent boards had been laid down to form four lanes with three pin spots at the end of each lane set out under a framework of ropes and pulleys. The balls used were solid polished wood the size of basketballs. The pins were bondmaids.

Dildo rods were strapped between their legs with the ends lodged up their vaginas, ensuring they did not bend their knees. A second rod was laid along their backs and held in place with a broad tight waist strap. Their arms were then pulled back and strapped to it from elbows to wrists. The top of the rod hooked to the back ring of their collars, while its lower end had an adjustable dildo hook that curved round so that its rubber head faced back upwards. This was screwed deep into their anuses. Between the two rods they were held rigid as though standing to attention. To protect their feet from the balls they were put in what looked like oval wooden plant pots, padded on the insides and with lids that closed about their ankles. Gag bits were of course strapped into their mouths.

The girls were stood on their spots at the ends of the lanes and ropes from the frames over them were tied to the side rings of their collars. When they tumbled they could easily be hauled upright and repositioned again.

With their feet confined and unable to move to keep their balance the living bowling pins could now be knocked over quite easily. To give them some protection when they fell, they were fitted with broad straps from which radiated large coil springs with padded ends. These were buckled about their necks, waists and knees. Now when they fell they also bounced amusingly like real tenpins. As a final touch, large tapering springs were twisted onto their breasts until they stood out like fat cones, their flesh bulging between the metal coils.

When they were all positioned Biglow went round deliberately pushing them over one by one. When they fell and rolled the ends of their breast springs mashed against the boards, pinching their imprisoned flesh as they were compressed and so making them yelp and whimper.

‘You do plenty more of that when they knock you over,’ he told them. ‘It’s no fun for the punters if they don’t see you suffer a little. Make ‘em think it’s all down to their skill with the ball.’

When the carnival opened and the crowd poured in through the gates the bowling tent soon attracted eager players. April didn’t like Biglow but he did his job of bringing in the punters well enough.

‘Try your skill on the lanes, gents! Can you knock down three pretty skittle girls with three balls? See ‘em fall and hear ‘em bawl!’

The balls were not true spheres and the lanes were not level, so the game was more than half chance, but enough struck their targets to satisfy the players. With squeals and yips the girls toppled and bounced. Breasts were cruelly twisted and pinched and bondmaid eyes soon sparkled with tears.

With every tumble April felt the plug-heads of the bracing rods churning away inside her as the upper and lower halves of her body flexed as far as was possible. Soon her pussy was wet with juices that ran down the tight cleft between her strapped thighs. Eventually a fall brought on a mini-orgasm that shot through her and left her mind spinning. While she was still dazed the ropes hauled her upright and dropped her back on her spot again. It was just as well she was so rigidly braced because she could not have stood unaided.

By the end of the night April and Niki were exhausted. Their passages front and rear were sore and their breasts were bruised

and indented with the marks of the springs. However they had the satisfaction of knowing it had been a good day for the carnival.

The next morning April and Niki were doing the Marvell's laundry round the back of the caravan, using a wooden tub, a washboard, a mangle, lots of soap and plenty of elbow grease. It was hard work and April was grateful bondmaids had no laundry to add to their load.

April was just daydreaming about automatic washing machines when Marvell appeared and hurried up the caravan steps. The windows were open and they heard him say to Marian: 'Cuthbert Quint is at the gate.'

'Oh no! Not that grubby little weasel again!' she said with exasperation.

'He says he's heard about our trouble in Pullwick and wants to make an inspection. I know SWOB is a nuisance but we can't afford any trouble with them, especially right now. I've got to go into town to arrange the printing. Do you think...'

Marian sighed. 'All right, Pa, I'll show him round and try to be polite.'

They left the caravan together.

Marian was gone for nearly an hour. By the time she returned April and Niki had just finished hanging out the washing on the line. As she had company they went down onto their knees respectfully.

Quint was a small soberly dressed man with receding dark hair. He was leading a tall blonde bondmaid on a leash. She wore a mesh muzzle and matching mesh pouch chastity belt. On her back was strapped a black painted flat box.

'...so I hope you're satisfied now, Mr Quint,' Marian was saying, sounding as though she was struggling to remain polite. 'You've

talked to the cunniers, you seen the girls cages, the sanitary arrangements and their food. We take good care of our bondmaids. We need them to be fit and healthy to perform well.'

'So you can abuse and exploit them in your so-called carnival,' Quint replied in a whining, prissy tone. 'We at the Society for the Welfare of Bondmaids are strongly opposed to such pubic maltreatment of these creatures for the purposes of puerile entertainment.'

'They enjoy it,' Marian said. 'Yes, they whimper and cry a bit, but then they cum... er, orgasm. I've seen it hundreds of times. They like having people watch them.'

'Do they also like being beaten, unnaturally penetrated and used as targets for various projectiles?'

'As long as it's within reason it helps get them hot... aroused. They respond better. It's perfectly natural.' Marian looked at the statuesque blonde on Quint's leash. 'You must have tanned your girl a few times.'

'How I treat my pet is my private business, Miss Marvell,' Quint said icily. 'We at SWOB are concerned with your cynical exploitation of vulnerable creatures for commercial purposes. You would be ill advised to incur our disapproval. We have an influential new patron, you know: Lady Fitzwilliam.'

'Yes you keep mentioning her.'

He snapped his fingers and his bondmaid went down onto one knee. Quint went round behind her and opened the box on her back, which folded down to form a tiny desktop. Quint took out a letter.

'Now, information has reached us that at your last venue in Pullwick, a number of your girls fell ill. Is that right?'

'Who told you that? Harry Carlo, I suppose.'

‘I’m not at liberty to divulge my sources, Miss Marvell. Is that correct?’

‘Well, yes, some of the girls did have swellings and a rash about their groins. But that was because —’

‘Was it not due to gross maltreatment of their sexual organs and anal canals?’

‘What!’ Marian exclaimed. ‘No, it was some mixture Carlo had put on our stock of plugs and dildos that made them swell up.’

‘Have you any evidence for this grave accusation against Mr Carlo, a gentleman who, I might add, has made a generous contribution to SWOB funds?’

Marian looked like she was fighting to remain calm. ‘Well who else could it have been?’ she said through gritted teeth. ‘Why would we want to put half our own girls out of action? Look, ask them, if you don’t believe me! You’re so concerned about how they feel but you never speak to them.’

‘Because their testimony could not be relied upon.’ Quint said, almost pityingly. ‘They would hardly speak out against you when you would be free to exact retribution when I was gone.’

‘Then speak to them in private.’

‘Any of them?’

‘Yes.’

He pointed to April and Niki. ‘Those two over there, for instance?’

‘If you want.’

‘Will you personally bring them to my town house for an interview?’ He produced a card. ‘Here is my address.’

‘Mr Quint, I’m very busy. Why can’t you just take them to a corner of the field —’

‘Because I wish to interview them in controlled conditions where I can be sure their responses are genuine. I will see you at ten tomorrow, then. Kindly be punctual.’ He hesitated meaningfully: ‘Unless, that is, you wish me to inform the Society branches in Riddlemouth, Flauntwell and Buttsford of your non-cooperation. They are on your planned route, I believe?’

Marian took a deep breath. ‘I’ll be there, Mr Quint.’

Quint smiled coolly. ‘I look forward to our next meeting, Miss Marvell.’

CHAPTER EIGHT

Quint's house was a large three story building set back from the road behind iron railings. Marian Marvell descended from her father's carriage that had drawn up at its front steps just before ten the next morning.

In deference to local decorum she was wearing a dress rather than the culottes and boots she normally wore about the carnival ground. Behind her were April and Niki on leashes. They were further restrained, as was expected for bondmaids in public, with their wrists cuffed behind them and ball gags in their mouths.

Marian rang the front door bell. A maid, bare-breasted in the tradition of Nethervale domestic servants, opened the door and they were shown through to Quint's comfortable book-lined study. Quint was seated behind an imposing desk. His blonde slave was curled up in a basket by the side of his chair. A small table had already been laid out with a silver tea service.

Quint rose to greet Marian. 'I'm so pleased you chose to come, Miss Marvell. Do make yourself comfortable. You see I have tea and cake ready, and there is a bowl for your slaves.'

Marian ignored Quint's outstretched hand and seated herself in a high backed leather armchair while April and Niki knelt either side of her. 'Let's not pretend I want to be here, Mr Quint. Shall we just get on with it?'

'To the point with you as always, Miss Marvell,' Quint said, smiling thinly. 'As you wish. I will be conducting the interviews individually with your maids through there where they can speak freely.' He indicated a side door set between the bookcases. 'And you agree I may ask them anything?'

'Yes.'

‘Good!’ He rubbed his hands together, looking April and Niki over. ‘Then who will go first?’

Marian handed him April’s leash.

Quint led April through the door, which she now saw was the first of a double pair. Quint cupped her bottom as he ushered her through and closed it behind them. ‘The room is perfectly soundproofed. Nothing that goes on in here will be overheard...’

The room was small with a single window with slatted blinds pulled over it. The furnishings comprised a single large cupboard, a row of hooks high up on the wall and, set on a low plinth in the middle of the floor, a chair. It was high-backed and constructed of heavy black timbers and fitted with broad cuff straps on the arms, legs and back. Other devices hung from its sides that April could not identify. The seat was an open wooden horseshoe with a bucket underneath.

April’s stomach gave a flip-flop at the sight of it and she flinched but Quint dragged her forward. ‘Don’t worry, girl. This is just to ensure you will pay attention to what I say. You bondmaids are so easily distracted.’

He sat her down in the chair, spread her legs and closed the integral cuffs about her ankles. Her bottom and the pouting purse of her pubes hung over the empty middle of the seat. A broad strap went about her waist. The carnival bracelets employed a common style of locking clip that could easily be worked by anybody with their hands free. He released it, pulled her arms round and clamped them to the arms of the chair. There was an adjustable strap set in the middle of the chair back at the very top. This he bound across her head, preventing her from turning it aside.

Now he positioned the devices that had been hanging down the sides of the chair. They were metal rings on adjustable arms. Quint slid them over April’s breasts, feeding her full plump mounds through the rings and then tightening them until they bulged like mushrooms. He flicked her swollen nipples a few times and smiled. Each of the

rings had half a dozen radially mounted bolts screwed through sleeves on their sides, with larger knob heads for finger adjustment and sharp points pressing inward. Quint turned the knobs until April could feel the tips pressing into the ballooning sides of her breasts.

Once she was completely secured Quint took off his jacket and hung it on a wall hook. Then he rolled up his sleeves, came back to April and pulled out her gag.

‘This is all for your own good, girl. You must tell me the truth. The Marvell’s have been mistreating you, correct?’

‘No, sir,’ April said. She would not call him “Master”.

‘There’s no need to lie to me. I know what’s been going on. All those sore cunnies in Pullwick were the result of maltreatment!’

‘No, sir,’ April insisted. ‘It was sabotage.’

Quint shook his head. ‘I’m sorry you feel you have to protect them. Blind animal loyalty, I suppose. But you will tell me what I want to hear...’

He began to turn the screws on the breast rings, working round each ring, progressing each shaft a centimetre. April whimpered as the points began to dig into her flesh.

‘Speak, girl! Tell me what goes on in the carnival. They’re cruel to you, aren’t they?’

‘No, sir... this is cruel, not what they do to me! I... I enjoy it!’ She’d said it aloud and it was quite true.

Quint growled in frustration and savagely twisted the screws further. April bit her lip as she felt the points break through her skin. Drops of hot blood began to rise about them even as the ballooning flesh began to go purple. ‘That’s a lie!’ Quint hissed.

‘It’s the truth, sir, I swear it!’ April sobbed.

‘Why defend them? What does it matter to you what happens to the Marvells?’

‘I like them. They’re decent people... not that you’d know about that, sir!’

He slapped her cheek. With her head bound she could not ride the blow. Her cheek blazed with pain as the impact rang through her skull and the flesh was ground against her teeth. She tasted blood on her lips but forced a smile. No need to be polite any longer.

‘Is that the best you can do you pathetic creep? I’m a trained bondmaid. I’ve had worse than this before breakfast!’

For a moment he did not seem to be able to handle her outright defiance. Then he strode over the big cupboard, wrenched it open and took out a lash with a silver handle and black trailing thongs. He returned to stand over her.

‘You will tell me what I want to hear!’

‘Go screw yourself!’

He swung the lash across her captive bulging breasts. April howled as they shivered under the impact, the thongs cutting searing trails across their taut flesh.

‘I want to hear you confess!’

‘Never!’

Hiss, thwack! Her collared breasts bounced left and then right as he swung the lash across them forehand and then backhand. Her nipples felt like they were on fire but kept popping up for more.

April was grimly determined not to give in but she had to do something. There was only the bondmaid escape left open to her, but there was almost no sexual element in her suffering; the bondage had left her cold and she despised the little creep who was

doing it. There was only the pain. Was that enough? She would make it so! It was the only way. She had to make herself do this...

She willed the tingle to start even as she whimpered and sobbed under the blows Quint was raining down wildly on her. The need was always there. Men could cum in seconds so why not her? Her tits were on fire but she wanted the heat in her belly. The hot wet liquid heat that would fill her loins, make her clit rise and cunt blossom and weep tears of joy...

April screamed as an orgasm rose like a breaking wave from nowhere and washed through her. Pee and girl-juices spurted from her cleft into the bucket as fireworks burst in her brain. For a few seconds she was an island unto herself knowing only joy, and then she fell into soft welcoming darkness.

The next thing April knew Quint was slapping her face to wake her.

As her eyelids flickered open she saw real concern distorting his face. Perhaps he feared he had done her serious damage. She looked him square in the eye and smiled feebly knowing she had won. He's not even a very good sadist, she thought. He's playing the game but underneath he's a wimp!

Quint unstrapped her from the chair, re-cuffed her wrists behind her back and hauled her upright, not bothering to refit her gag. Her legs felt rubbery and her breasts were twin domes of searing crimson ringed by trickles of blood but she would not show any weakness now. He led her out through the double doors and back into the study.

Marian looked up as they entered. As she saw the state of April's breasts her face clouded with rage and she sprang to her feet. 'What have you done to her?'

'I would not tell him then lies he wanted to hear, Mistress,' April said before Quint could speak.

From where she was still kneeling on the floor Niki's eyes filled with tears of sympathy over her own gagged lips.

Recovering a little of his former poise Quint said: 'She's confused, like her sort often are. I merely asked her a few questions...'

'I did not give you the right to try to beat lies out of her!' Marian said furiously.

'Some judicious force was necessary to break down her natural inhibition against informing on her masters,' Quint blustered. 'Surely you cannot give an credence to her accusation that I asked her to lie.'

'Oh but I do, Mr Quint. And I'm leaving now!'

'But I still have your other maid to question,' he pointed out.

'You don't think I'm going to let you torture her as well?'

Quint looked at her with sudden supercilious contempt. 'Really, such hypocrisy! You torment bondmaids all the time for the purposes of entertainment and claim they enjoy it.'

'There's a difference,' Marian retorted, 'but I don't suppose you can see it. You're not laying a finger on another of my girls. Now I'm leaving.'

Quint made a mocking bow. 'As you wish, Miss Marvell. Please note, however, that if you do I will send out a negative report on the carnival. We have many influential members about the southern shires. You may find permission to perform in some towns hard to come by in future...'

Niki stood up, looking at the door to the interrogation room and nodding to Marian to indicate she was willing.

Marian's face showed her agony of indecision. She hated Quint's mean little game but he had the upper hand. She had to consider the livelihood of the carnival and all those who worked in it.

'You just like the excuse to play with bondmaids,' she said with contempt.

'Of course I enjoy playing with bondmaids,' Quint said. 'They're the most lovely toys a man can possess. That's what their kind was created for. You would be out of business if that were not true.'

'But you're offering to barter sport with them for the carnival's future. That's not appreciation or enjoyment, that's extortion!'

'I prefer to think of it as rewarding cooperation,' Quint said. 'But the question is, Miss Marvell, are you willing to make that exchange?'

Marian bit her lip, looking at April's lashed breasts and then at Niki's brave face. 'You must not damage her. She can't work like that.'

'There will be no need to question her so vigorously if she tells me what I want to hear,' Quint said. 'Then I can make my report to the Society confirming their suspicions.'

'But it'll all be false!' Marian exclaimed. 'The tour will still suffer. Why should I agree to that?'

'Ah, a conundrum,' Quint agreed. 'However there is one way out of it. If you demonstrate beyond any doubt how valuable your bondmaids are to you and that you are genuine in your wish not to see them suffer unnecessary harm, then I might concede that I was wrong.'

'Do you mean a bribe?' Marian asked bluntly.

Quint looked affronted 'Kindly do not insult me, Miss Marvell. What do I need your grubby money for? No, I was thinking you might demonstrate your sincerity by offering to take your maid's place in my interview room.'

‘What!’ Marian exclaimed in disbelief.

The twisted little pervert, April thought. This was what its all been about. He was after Marian. This is how he gets his kicks. His society was not just an excuse to play power games with bondmaids but their owners as well.

As Marian gaped at him Quint continued reasonably: ‘Why not, if they, and your carnival, really mean so much to you? That’s the problem with taking on such responsibility. If you act like a man you have to pay the dues. Look, why don’t you come through and see my interview room while you think it over?’

In a daze Marian did not resist as Quint ushered her through the double doors. April and Niki followed anxiously after her.

Quint stroked the restraining chair and beamed. ‘Yes, I love to play with bondmaids... but not as much as I do free women. Regrettably one gets so little opportunity. I have admired you for some time, Miss Marvell. True your origins are lowly but you have such assurance and strength of character. I really would like to see you in tears as I applied my lash to those no doubt perfect breasts of yours.’

‘You... cannot be serious!’

‘But I am, Miss Marvell. The question is: are you?’

He’s planned it this way this all along, April thought. He’s manoeuvred her into this. We were only pawns.

As Marian agonized Quint said: ‘Here is my offer. I shall have you gagged and strapped naked in my chair for one hour. While you are secured I may do with you as I wish. I shall take care not to leave any marks on your pretty face or where anyone can see them, nor will I inflict any lasting damage. Well?’

April could see Marian looking at the chair calculatingly, balancing her likely suffering against the needs of the carnival. It was the sort

of sacrifice woman had been making down the ages. April already knew what Marian would decide, but she could not blame her for trying to anticipate the consequences. If she was secured to the chair at least it limited Quint's options and might make it a little less unpleasant.

'What gag will you use?'

'A most practical question,' Quint said, going to the cupboard and producing a standard rubber bit. A ring gag might have implied an attempt at oral sex.

Marian closed her eyes for a moment and then took a deep breath. 'I agree,' she said, almost in a whisper.

Quint smiled. 'I thought you would. It is a compliment to your strength of character.' He rubbed his hands and glanced at April and Niki. 'Perhaps we should be alone?'

'No,' Marian said firmly. 'Leave my girls here. That is my condition. I've nothing to be ashamed of.'

'Very well, but they must not interfere.'

Marian put April's gag back in her mouth and then hung the handles of their leashes over the wall hooks, tethering them in place. Then she turned back to Quint, standing awkwardly, not knowing how to begin.

'You may begin disrobing, Miss Marvell,' Quint said, holding his arms wide. 'A changing room was not part of the bargain.'

Biting her lip Marian began undoing the buttons on her jacket.

As Marian peeled off her dress, then blouse and underskirt, April watched Quint's face and the hunger and triumph in his eyes. A man watching a free woman unwillingly strip before him. He must feel such power and satisfaction.

A chemise dropped to the floor and Marian was naked except for her boots and knee stockings, which Quint did not seem to object to.

As Quint walked round her as though on a tour of inspection, Marian stood straight, fighting back a tremble. She did not try to conceal herself. April had seen her naked often enough by now, but was still impressed by her strong slender body, her creamy pale skin contrasting with her red locks, her neat breasts and her pertly rounded bottom.

‘You are quite superb, Miss Marvell,’ Quint declared. ‘I admit I have had dreams about this moment. You have held such a fascination for me. I speculated much... but you have exceeded my imaginings. Now, if you would be seated...’

Marian sat down in the restraining chair and positioned her arms and legs so that Quint would not have any additional excuse to touch her. He buckled the straps about her as he had April, put the gag bit into her mouth, and then slid the rings over her breasts, tightening them until Marian’s plaint mounds bulged and were tinted with mauve.

He pinched and tweaked her scarlet nipples, smiling as she winced. ‘Superb, really superb!’ he exclaimed again.

Quint began turning the screws into her imprisoned breasts, all the while searched Marian’s face for the first wince and tear sparkle in her eye. Only when both globes were deeply indented by the cruel pins, and Marian was snivelling and biting on her bit, did he step back.

April saw Quint’s face was flushed and a straining bulge had grown in his trousers.

Quint took up the lash and ran the thongs through his hands. ‘You will bear my mark for a week,’ he told Marian.

April winced as each stroke fell on Marian’s collared and swollen breasts, but she could not tear her eyes away as they shivered and

trembled. There was a terrible fascination in watching a girl being punished, even though she hated the circumstances and took no joy in seeing her mistress suffer as she had. She felt no ill-will at the use Marian and her father had made of her and was glad Marian was not trying to be stoic as she shrieked and gurgled and dribbled round her bit. The gag smothered the worst of the noise and gave her something to bite on.

Only when the globes of Marian's breasts where they bulged out from their collars were as red as her nipples did Quint rest his arm. He dabbed the tears from Marian's cheeks with his handkerchief and beamed into her reddened eyes.

'That was a delight. How I wish I could mark your rump in the same way. Can I get a good swing up under the seat from the side or back? No, the frame is in the way. But wait,' he suddenly declared theatrically, 'what's this?'

To April's horror he bent down, pulled at a bolt recessed into the rear legs of the chair, then pushed at the back. The chair hinged forward about its front legs, the seat frame lifting off its back legs, carrying a shocked Marian with it. The front corner of the plinth under her cuffed feet folded backwards out of the way. The rotation stopped when the chair had tipped more than ninety degrees. Marian's knees were nearly touching the floor in front of the plinth and she was hanging face down squirming desperately in her straps.

Quint folded the now freestanding back legs flat to the floor and moved the waste bucket to one side. Now Marian's buttocks, red-pelted pussy cleft and her spread thighs were uptilted and exposed, framed by the horseshoe of the seat.

'You agreed that I could do anything to you while you were still secured to the chair,' Quint said, stroking Marin's pale bottom and ticking the pout of her vulva, 'and you are certainly still secured...' He picked up the lash again.

April and Niki jerked against their leashes but they could not get free to help their mistress. They could only watch as Quint turned Marian's bottom as red as her breasts. They saw her buttocks clenching in a futile attempt to escape the onslaught. They looked so incredibly vulnerable.

When Marian finally hung limp and half sensible in her straps, Quint dropped the lash, freed a long thin prick from his trousers, hunched over the tilted chair and rammed into Marian's flaming and defenceless cunny again and again...

A little less than an hour later Quint watched Marian being dressed by April and Niki, who were trying to fit her clothes back on without disturbing her raw and simmering breasts or bottom.

'You really were quite remarkable, Miss Marvell,' he said. 'Having you is a memory I will treasure in perpetuity.'

Struggling to maintain her composure, Marian said: 'I don't care what you treasure, Mr Quint. As long as you do not trouble us again.'

'I am a man of my word,' Quint said. 'You may go with SWOB's blessing... until the Carnival next passes through Cunneestow, of course. Then we shall have to re-negotiate our agreement.'

Marian looked at him in contempt. 'This was the one and only time I let you make free with me!'

'I don't believe I agreed to any such thing,' Quint said.

'Try it and I'll tell all of Nethervale of this filthy bargain you forced on me!'

'It will be your word against mine, Miss Marvell,' Quint said unperturbed. 'And the word of a carnival woman does not carry as much weight as that of a respectable gentleman.'

It was Marian's turn to smile grimly. 'That's why I wanted my girls to stay. I thought you might go back on your world. They'll be my witnesses. It'll be three against one!'

Quint shook his head pityingly. 'What of it? My girl will say they are lying. In any case, who would listen to the testimony of bondmaids? They will say anything their masters tell them. That's why Bondmaids need the protection of SWOB. They are inferior beings who are incapable of looking after themselves.'

'Then I'll free them!' Marian retorted. 'Then it will be three free women's word against yours. Go back on your agreement and I will do it!'

'Nobody frees bondmaids,' Quint said incredulously.

'But there's no law against it, is there? Think about the publicity. People would certainly ask why I did it and I'd be only too happy to tell! If these two cope well with being free what would that do for SWOB? Think about it!'

They left Quint looking distinctly troubled.

Back in the carriage Marian sat gingerly down on the seat, wincing as she did so. April and Niki laid their heads on her knees sympathetically. She stroked their hair.

'This is what we are going to tell my father...' she said.

CHAPTER NINE

‘So of course, when I saw the state of April’s titties I told Quint he was not having his way with Niki and try to make her tell lies about us as well,’ Marian said. ‘Though she was ready to go through with it just to defy him. Anyway we had a long row and I threatened to sue him for property damage. In the end he gave in. I don’t think we’ll be having any more trouble with him and SWOB for a while.’

Marian stood perfectly straight as she related this highly edited account of what had occurred at Quint’s house. There was no hint of the pain she was in. Watching from where she knelt on the floor by her feet, April admired her self-control. That morning she’d been thrashed and violated and yet she let none of it show. Perhaps it was slightly less shocking for Netherworlders living with similar acts being perpetrated on bondmaids all around them, and Marian was even closer to such things in the carnival, but it still showed a lot of character.

Marvell’s face had been going steadily redder as he listened. Now his big fists clenched in anger. ‘How dare he do this to one of our girls! I’ll wring his scrawny neck!’

Marian put a restraining hand on his shoulder. ‘No Pa, please don’t. He isn’t worth it. I’m sure he won’t give us any more trouble. We don’t want a war with him as well as Carlo, do we?’

Marvell subsided. ‘I suppose not. You always keep your head better than I do.’ He looked at April and Niki. ‘It seems you’ve both been good girls.’ He patted their heads like dogs. ‘Well done! I knew you had spirit!’ Then he frowned at April’s sore breasts. ‘But it looks like we’ll have to keep you out of the pool for a couple of days until those tits heal. Tell you what. You can come with me when I go on to Thrasherdale and help with the posters and sandwich-boarding.’

‘Thank you, Master,’ April said.

That night in the privacy of Marian's room April carefully applied Jympson's cream to her mistress's sore buttocks and pussy as she lay naked on her front across the bed.

'Mistress,' April whispered, 'I must tell you I think you have been very brave.'

'I just did what I had to do. The carnival had to come first. In any case I could hardly fail to follow your example. That was very loyal not giving in to Quint. Are all outsider girls like you and Niki?'

'I don't know about them, Mistress. Like you I just did what I knew was right. In any case Quint's a slimy creep and I'd rather have my tits tanned until they bleed than play his twisted game.'

'I played his game,' Marian said slowly. 'I gave in.'

'No Mistress,' April said emphatically, 'you proved how much stronger you are than he is. He was doing it to get his leg over. You were doing it for others. That took real courage!'

The next morning, as she and Niki cleaned the caravan, Niki asked: 'Do you think Marian meant it? Saying she's free us if Quint tried it on again? Or was it just to frighten him?'

'I don't think she's the sort to make empty threats. I think she meant it.'

'Well if she did she's the first owner we've ever had who talked about it. I got the feeling you were a bondmaid for life.'

'I know. That's how everybody acts. Now I think about it, though, back in Ramswold when the Sheriff sentenced us, he said we'd serve "until decreed otherwise." Maybe that's what he meant.'

Niki snorted. 'But I bet hardly any maids are ever freed. I mean who'd give up having a domestic working animal and sex-slave combined if they didn't have to?'

'I know. Still it might be another way out for us. If we were free, even just for a day or two, we could get back home. The carnival route never takes us too far from Ramswold. Maybe if we serve the Marvell's really well they'll let us go.'

'Or they'll keep us because we're such hot slaves and star performers,' Niki pointed out. 'They're business people and we're their merchandise. You don't let that go unless you've got a really good reason.'

April sighed. 'You're probably right.'

Niki said quietly: 'I almost hope Quint does try it again.'

Early the next day April was loaded into Marvell's carriage along with five other girls, a stack of sandwich boards, packs of posters, paste and pins. The cages had been removed to make way for the supplies and the girls, cuffed and gagged, were packed in around them and beside Marvell as they proceeded along the road to Thrasherdale. Unlike her first journey in the coach this allowed April to see out of the windows. As they went Marvell toyed with them playfully, bent a girl over his knees to use her bottom as a rest for his notebook and then later pulled another down between his legs so she could suck him off.

It was not a long journey and in a couple of hours they reached Thrasherdale, which lay in the vale of the river Riddle with the Papswell Rises to the East. It was the first city April had been in since coming to Nethervale, and she pressed her face to the window glass to see as much as she could. After months spent largely in the countryside the busy streets, broad shop fronts and houses, some of which reached four stories, seemed like a teeming metropolis and stirred memories of home.

Yet it was unmistakably a Nethervale city. There were no cars and vehicles in the streets were either drawn by horses or bondmaids. April suspected bondmaids were the preferred beast of burden within the city limits for short-haul work. She saw them harnessed to carts and carriages of all shapes and sizes, from a single girl with her wrists cuffed to the shafts of a handcart wheeling it along after her master, to a team of eight girls hauling brewers dray, with their harnesses hung with decorative brasses.

The shocking thing was it was no longer shocking but perfectly natural. The docility of the girls in their harnesses, the easy way they trotted through the streets and the almost total indifference of the people they passed told of a custom established long years past. It was not a sensational show of female flesh like the carnival but everyday life.

Some of the pedestrians were also accompanied by bondmaids, trailing after them on chains and leashes, with shopping piled in baskets strapped to their backs. A few of the better-dressed men and women had bondmaids with them that were clearly and exclusively pets, with perfectly styled, combed and pinned hair and highly polished harnesses. Some were confined to moving on all fours like real dogs, with rubber "paws" on their feet and hands. Many had ribbons in their hair.

As a working bondmaid April found herself thinking uncharitable thoughts about their clearly pampered lifestyles. Even when she and Niki had been living statues in Lord Debawsher's pleasure gardens it had been more of a challenge than simply trotting along at somebody's heels looking pretty.

They passed more bondmaid flesh on display in the larger shop windows. Nethervalers had long ago hit on the idea that a living, moving window display would attract the eye of potential customers. Clothes shops were the obvious employers of bondmaid manikins. Some were shown dressed and parading about the window space like models on a catwalk, but with long chains on their ankles, ensuring nobody could mistake them for free women. In

other windows dressing rooms were recreated in which naked bondmaids were shown enviously taking out their mistresses newly bought dresses and holding them up to the imaginary mirror of the shop window.

In milliners naked bondmaids poised in tableau with the latest hats on. Bespoke boot makers had them marching and high-kicking or lying on their backs doing the splits in the air with their elegantly booted legs. There were few stores of any size that did not employ a bondmaid in some way, if not in their window display than hung out over the street as a living sign, on the principle that an attractive naked body helped draw the eye to almost any trade name.

April gave a shiver as she looked up at those dangling and spreadeagled figures, sometimes adorned with the business logo, bound within signs for ironmongers, coffee houses and taverns. She'd once hung in one of those frames herself. The strange calm of the restraints coupled with the acute sense of utter exposure had caused her thoughts to wander dangerously.

Marvell booked himself, George his coach driver and the girls into a small hotel for the night. Then he visited the city council offices and the city sheriff, the nearest thing Nethervale had to a police force, to confirm the parade route. From there he went out to the pitch site that he had rented, which was a large field east of the city centre, to check the ground and access.

All was well and Marvell looked happy.

'If Carlo thought setting SWOB onto us would do the trick he was mistaken. He's probably still waiting to hear back from Quint, which means we can push on. Now we've got to let this town know we're coming. Time to advertise, girls!'

'Come to Marvell's Marvellous Bondmaid Carnival!' April called out as she walked down the street. 'Maybe I'll be on the Cunny Shy or

perhaps the Girl Go Round. Why not try your luck on the Wheel of Tears or the Bondmaid Derby? Come to the carnival and find me!

Bondmaids were normally not expected to speak in public and were usually gagged. As a compromise April wore a wire dog muzzle over her mouth, which still allowed her to speak but reassured the city folk that the animal side they suspected lurking inside all bondmaids was safely contained, as was the rest of her body.

She was wearing a tall glittering shako with the carnival name emblazoned across it. She had waist-length sandwich boards hung over her shoulders, bearing the carnival name and venue dates. The front board had cutouts through which her breasts protruded. Bells hung from her nipples. A chain joined the lower edges of the boards together through her legs, securing her inside them. Her ankles were hobbled and her wrists cuffed to the board with short chains that allowed her just enough movement to hand out advertising fliers that she gave to anybody who showed interest. The rest she pinned to any useful looking post or gate frame.

April and the other girls, similarly attired, were working their way through their own segments of Thrasherdale following maps showing the streets they had to cover, radiating out from the central square where Marvell waited to pick them up. The carefully drawn maps, April suspected, were a product of Marian's forward planning. No wonder the parades were so well attended.

Despite her restraints it was a thrill to be trusted to walk the streets unescorted. She'd done this before advertising for the Spreadeagle Tavern: a bondmaid brothel back in Ramswold. Of course she was not free in any real sense and there was no chance she could escape, but it was still liberating for a bondmaid.

'Maybe I'll be on the Dodgems or the famous Girl-O-Phonium. Perhaps you can put a penny in my slot or bowl me over. For the best bondmaid amusements in Nethervale come to Marvell's!'

She supposed it was doing wonders for her self-confidence. Was there anything by now that she would be too ashamed to say or do?

April returned to the rendezvous in the main square a couple of hours later with all her fliers dispersed. Her boards and muzzle were removed and she was chained up in the coach, feeling well satisfied with her efforts. By now there could not be anybody in the city who did not know the carnival was coming. Soon all the girls had returned except a perky blonde called Wendy.

They waited another ten minutes. Marvell consulted his big pocket watch and frowned. 'She's usually a reliable girl,' he said to George. 'She's gone out with the boards before. What's keeping her? Let's go back along her route.'

Marvell sat up top with George as they drove through the streets. The other girls peered out of the carriage windows.

It was not long before they came to a street where carnival fliers had been ripped off gateposts, screwed up and thrown on the ground. There were a maze of small lanes and alleys winding off it, many leading round the backs of warehouses or small manufacturers. Marvell got down, opened up the carriage and unchained the girls. His expression was grave.

'If you want to help find Wendy as quickly as possible you can all take a look round these lanes. She may have gone down one of them to post up some leaflets. Ask if she's been seen. Don't go inside anywhere, just call out if you see anything.'

The girls scampered off.

April ran down a couple of winding alleys, past grimy back windows, stacks of old crates and anonymous doorways, but saw nothing useful. She ran back to the main street and saw the carriage some way down with the bare bottoms of the other girls twinkling about as

they dashed in and out of the side streets. Clearly they still hadn't found Wendy. She ducked down the next alley.

This wound about the back gates of a furniture maker and then came to a dead end at a pair of heavy double doors. April was just going to turn back when a flash of colour caught her eye. It was the corner of one of their fliers caught in the jamb of the door. She tugged at it and the end tore free. She tried to peer through the small window set in one side of the door but it was too grimy to see anything within. She rattled the door but it did not budge. Yet the flier could not have just blown into the doorjamb so the door must have been closed on it. That might be a clue. She turned to run back to the main street and alert Marvell....

The door swung open behind her, a big rough hand closed over her mouth even as a strong arm encircled her waist and she was jerked off her feet backwards into the darkness. The door slammed shut again and a bolt was thrown across.

The dim shape of a large man with a black hood mask covering all but his eyes loomed up before her. The hand lifted from her mouth. Before she could scream the man pinched her lips, pushed a rag wad into her mouth and tied it in place. Her wrists were pulled together behind her back and the cuffs clicked and locked. She kicked out desperately, trying to hit a shin. The hooded man slapped her cheek with such force that it set her head ringing.

'You quit that, girl or it'll go worse for you!' he growled.

'What do we do with her?' the other man holding her arms asked.

'He said to make an example of one of their girls and put her where she'll be found so they get the message,' said the first. 'Looks like now he'll get two for one.'

'Well we'd better be quick before they get the tipstaffs out looking for them.'

‘Hah! They couldn’t find a fart in a hatbox!’

With sick fear churning in her stomach April was dragged through a second set of doors into a larger space smelling of must and damp. A few scattered workbenches stood lonely and unused between the heavy timber posts supporting the floor above. The flagstones under her feet were strewn with litter. Wan light filtered through a row of cracked and grimy windows on the far side of the room. In their rays she saw Wendy.

She was hanging from a beam by her bound ankles, with her arms cuffed behind her. Faint moans sounded through her gag and her eyes were closed. Even in the dim light April could see the lash marks striping her body.

The first man took charge of April, taking hold of the back of her collar and pushing her face down across one of the dusty workbenches. ‘Get some more rope, he told his partner. ‘I’ll just tender her up...’

Lying beside her on the bench were Wendy’s hat, muzzle and sandwich board, cut chains and a stack of her fliers.

The man kicked April’s legs wide. Keeping one hand on her collar he fumbled with his flies. ‘We’re by way of being messengers, girl,’ he said. ‘And the message is Marvell’s carnival isn’t wanted here, get it?’

April nodded fearfully.

‘You’ll pass that on?’

She nodded again.

‘Well we’ll just make it easy for you to remember...’

His cock rammed into her anus with brutal force, stretching her sphincter painfully wide despite its protective greasing and making

her eyes bulge. He pounded into her, sending her thighs thudding against the side of the bench and grinding her breasts across the scarred wood of the worktop. April whimpered with pain and her eyes filled with tears. He was violating her not primarily even for his own pleasure but to bruise and hurt, punishing her rectum as a way of leaving his mark on her.

With a satisfied grunt he came, spilling himself inside her ravaged rear passage. Pulling his shaft out of her bruised anal ring with a sucking pop he left her lying limp and trembling across the bench as he went over to where Wendy dangled and wiped his cockhead clean on her trailing blonde mop of hair.

‘Right, lets get her strung up,’ he said.

They bound April’s legs, threw a rope over the beam next to Wendy and hauled her up to hang beside her, so that her full breasts flowed down inverted over her collar bones. Then quickly and efficiently they used their belts to thrash her, making her bounce and twirl and pike and arch as they laid blazing stripes across her belly, breasts and buttocks. They only stopped when her face was purple with bottled in pain and eyes were bloodshot and her tears were dripping to the floor.

Taking up a handful of Wendy’s fliers they hastily scrawled across them, then used the box of drawing pins she had been give to fasten them to both girls’ trembling bodies. They snivelled and whimpered afresh as the points sank into the flesh of their raw buttocks and shivering simmering breasts.

‘We’ll leave you with a bit of light if you’re still here when it gets dark,’ the first thug said.

The light was from thick candles that they stuffed deep into their vaginas and lit. They jutted out at slight angles from between their clenched thighs.

‘We were going to let blondy here have both up her, but now you can share,’ the second told April.

‘If you don’t get found by the time they’ve burnt right down I reckon your scream’s will help bring them here,’ the first added.

They went out by a side door, leaving April and Wendy with the candle wax beginning to drip and trickle into their clefts and over their mounds.

By the flickering light April could read the warning words added to the fliers pinned to Wendy’s trembling breasts.

STAY OUT OF THIS TOWN!

The candle flames were about two inches from the lips of their vulvas when a member of the city tipstaff’s search party finally found them.

CHAPTER TEN

April and Wendy lay face down on Marvell's hotel bed with soothing cream easing the pain of their lashing. Plugs of ice up their rectums numbed the bruising of their violent sodomizing.

The sheriff's men had questioned them and Marvell, but there was little chance of finding the hired thugs who abused them from the minimal descriptions they could give. Wendy had been lured into the alley by a figure she had only half seen who had invited her to flash her breast boards to the men in their workshop. Instead a sack had been thrown over her head. There was no forensic science in Nethervale so although they had plenty of semen inside them there was no way of tracing its source.

In fact the assault on Wendy and herself, being mere bondmaids, was not viewed as a crime against them as persons, but rather an offence against Marvell as their owner. Disconcertingly April found herself feeling the same way. She'd hated what had been done to her and wished it had never happened but knew she would get over it as only a bondmaid could. What hurt her far more was that there was no way to link Carlo to the crime, though they all knew he was responsible.

When the constabulary had gone Marvell stood over the girls looking both dismayed and seething with anger.

'I never dreamed it would get this bad,' he growled, half to himself. 'Giving you cunny itch was one thing but doing this! How can Carlo order such lovely fresh maids as you punished like that just to get at me? There was no call for it! Then he's never cared for his stock properly. He doesn't appreciate how wonderful bondmaids are. He can't see their spirit!' He sighed. 'Well, I'll have to tell Marian. We can't risk the rest of you getting hurt. We'll call off the parade...'

Wincing, because every part of her seemed to ache, April levered herself up on one elbow. 'No, master, don't give in on our account.'

'That's brave of you girl, but I can't take any more risks. In any case when the news of this gets out people won't want to be mixed up in a feud that's turned violent. We'll have no punters.'

'It just needs a change in advertising, Master.'

April had forced herself to think as she had hung next to Wendy with a candle burning down in her vagina: fighting the pain, fear and self-pity with anger and calculation. She was aware of the incongruity of her championing the cause of people who wanted to put her up for public usage and degradation every day but then she was not feeling rational. This had become personal.

Marvell frowned. 'What do you mean, girl?'

'The Carnival should be packed and ready to move tomorrow morning early to come here direct for the parade, is that right, Master?'

'That's right. No need for a stopover being so close.'

'So you could go back to Cunneestow tonight and bring some more sandwich girls here ahead of the parade and get them on the street early. Better have a cunnier to accompany each of them for safety. Then this is what they say...'

That morning a second flock of sandwich girls paraded along the streets led on long chains by watchful cunniers discreetly armed with coshes.

'Come to Marvell's Marvellous Bondmaid Carnival today!' the girls called out. 'See the show they tried to ban! Marvell's Bondmaid Carnival triumphs over second sabotage attempt and is bigger and

brighter than ever! See the girls they did not want you to see in the Grand Parade at midday!’

Nobody said who “they” were or why “they” did not want the carnival to perform. Let the public use its imagination. April hoped sheer curiosity would do the rest...

Leaving the girls to drum up the crowds, Marvell took April and Wendy back in his carriage the short distance to rendezvous with the carnival caravan as it formed up just outside the city.

Niki had hugged April and kissed her injuries while Marian had an urgent talk with her father.

‘Even if this works it won’t stop Carlo,’ she said. ‘He’ll try again.’

‘I know, my dear, and we shall be ready for him.’ He glanced at April being comforted by Niki. ‘I wavered earlier but I found my resolve again. This is not just for us, but for all those other little fairs and carnivals Carlo will squeeze out if he gets a monopoly. I won’t give in to a bully!’

April saw Marian look at her and give a tiny nod. ‘No, Pa, we mustn’t give in to bullies.’

April hated sitting out the big parade, chained up inside the Marvell’s caravan, glimpsing the crowd through the windows and listening to their applause, even though she knew it meant her stratagem had worked and it was a success. However, she was still too shaky and certainly too badly marked to participate. She found herself envying Niki who was even now suspended from a wagon bracket having free tickets snatched out of her hot wet cunny by eager hands.

Once more she wondered what Nethervale had done to her to make her crave such things. She could not help sympathising with owners who were even halfway decent to them and wanting them to

succeed, despite the cost to herself and Niki. Was this a variation on Stockholm Syndrome? Bondmaids were after all the most total captives imaginable. Alternatively, was she simply a rampant masochistic, exhibitionist pain-slut at heart? She hoped it was more complex than that.

They were booked to stay over four days in Thrasherdale. April was unfit to perform that first night but pleaded to be allowed to take part in the second. She was feeling left out after this further injury kept her from the amusements. She wanted to be a proper part of the carnival again. Marian relented and assigned her to the "Pussy Shots" stall, which did not take much effort and only required the use of her undamaged orifice.

April balanced on the small of her bowed back at the top of a greased wooden slide.

A masked couple held her shoulders and watched the targets come and go, trying to judge the right moment to release her.

April's wrists were cuffed to her ankles and elbows strapped to knees, thereby pulling her legs into the air and spreading her thighs. Small wheels on the sides of a broad belt strapped about her waist kept her from rolling to one side. A third wheel under the back of her collar stopped her tipping too far backwards. This presented the greased cleft of her pussy directly forward. It was gaping hungrily open in contrast to her well-gagged mouth.

The Pussy Shot stall comprised a counter ring encircling a slightly lower round rink of greased boards with a padded drum-like object at the centre. This radiated long black soft rubber dildos like the arms of an octopus. Operated by a pulley and cam mechanism hidden under the boards the "octopus" slowly rotated and at the same time its arms rose up and down. Several wooden ramps linked the counter top to the rink floor. Down these were pushed girls bound like April, their greased bottoms sliding easily across the wood,

rocking and swaying against their wheels, gaping pussy holes ready for penetration.

As the hit the dildos bent and slid up through greased slots or glanced off thighs and bottoms, sending the girls tumbling helplessly into each other or the padded drum. Even an eager bondmaid's vaginal mouth was a small target to impale her on.

'Now!' the man holding April cried and they thrust April forward. She shot down the ramp and across the rink. Was she going to miss the dildo again?

The arm dipped to meet her and its tip found her wet mouth. The soft rubber curved to slid up into her as her weight drove her on, impaling her, ramming the dildo head against the end of her elastic passage, filling her with its swelling bulk so that her belly bulged and she shrieked with its sudden overwhelming presence within her.

'Hole!' her aimers cried in delight.

An assistant reached out from the edge of the rink with a hooked rod, caught hold of her collar ring and pulled her off the now wet dildo that sucked reluctantly out of her clinging vagina. He dragged her to the edge, back up the ramp and onto the counter for another go.

April felt perfectly recovered from her ordeal by the next day. The vaginal bruising she felt after the Pussy Shot game did not count as injuries in her mind. Marian assigned her and Niki to the dodgem rink.

The man with his cock up her pussy urged April on faster, steering their green car at the side of a yellow one. Crash! They bounced off. April grunted as his cock was rammed deeper into her. The man laughed uproariously as did the other man driving the other girl car. Her driver pulled April backwards and round and she obeyed,

peddling as fast as she could, sending them scooting across the rink in search of other targets.

It was fairground dodgem cars without the electricity and with bondmaids as motive power. April could not believe that the design of the cars, which were so unlike a local cart or carriage, had not been influenced in some way by her world. Perhaps some other girl had come across in the past as she and Niki had and gave an enterprising showman the idea. Of course it had then been give a uniquely Nethervale twist.

April knelt within the small low tubby car with sprung bumpers all round it. There were two small wheels at the back and a larger steering one in front that she leaned over with its pedal handles strapped to her hands. Her knees were widespread and ankles clipped to the car body. There was a padded cushion between her shins where somebody could kneel, resting against her bottom, and penetrate her in the orifice of his choice. Her driver held a U-shaped rigid control handle that connected to the cheek rings of a bridle and bit strapped to her head. Twisting and turning this and changing the pressure on her bit was all he needed to steer her and control their speed.

The rink resounded to the squeak of wheels, the rattle and bang of collisions and the muffled gasps of bondmaids as their riders were driven even deeper into them. The floor was stained with drips of sweat, spilt sperm and bondmaid juices. Onlookers standing round the outside of the rink cheered them on as they waited to take their turn at the controls of these novel living cars.

Niki, red-faced and sweating with effort, flashed past in her purple car, with her rider pumping into her rear to urge her on to greater speed. April's driver turned her toward them and pushed her head forward. There was a crash as they struck and rebounded, both cars spinning round in circles. With a shudder April's driver came inside her, slapping her rump in triumph.

For a moment April's eyes met Niki's over the battered bonnets of their two cars and they grinned round their bits. It was utter madness but also ridiculous fun!

Marvell was going on ahead to Riddlemouth. It was the largest stop on the tour and he wanted everything to be perfect.

'I'm well prepared for anything Carlo might try,' he assured Marian. 'You keep April and Niki with you. They're good reliable girls to have around.' He smiled at April and ruffled her hair. 'That one especially has the right spirit!'

The interior of the "Bride of the Ape-man" booth was dimly lit and hung with fake jungle vines draped about a curtained podium. Before them stood "Captain" Dangerfield, a square-jawed man dressed in boots, jodhpurs and the Netherworld equivalent of a safari jacket. He held a whip in his hands and addressed the expectant audience in dramatic tones.

'In my travels to the dark continent I came across many strange and mysterious things, ladies and gentlemen, but none more so than the creature the natives called Ulgad!'

The curtains swished back to reveal a pair of slender tree trunks nailed to wooden bases with vine ropes hanging from them, and an upright cage. In the cage stood a naked hairy being with the head of a gorilla, massive shoulders, long arms and short bowed legs. He rattled the bars and snarled. He had a heavy studded collar round his neck. Protruding from the thick tangle of hair between the creature's legs was an unnaturally large and menacing penis.

Dangerfield slapped his whip across the front of the cage and the ape-man flinched back. 'What strange race of primitives he comes from I do not know,' he continued. 'Perhaps he is the last of his kind. An ape-man, with an insatiable lust for human females! And yet, repulsive as he is he has a strange power over them...'

The ape-man lunged at the bars again and the crowd flinched back. A few women giggled nervously. His huge manhood had poked through the bars.

‘In a moment I will open the cage and Ulgad will emerge. You will be perfectly safe if you do nothing to alarm him. I have discovered that he is pacified by a certain rhythm beaten upon the native drums. This will sound all the time he is loose. One of you ladies here he will select for his bride and she will be unable to resist him. Then you will see him enact the primitive mating ritual of his kind. Begin!’

From behind the scenery bongos began to beat out a steady pulsating rhythm.

Dangerfield unlocked the cage and stepped aside. The ape-man went down onto all fours and knuckled out of his cage sniffing the air. The crowd edged out of his way as he slowly shuffled forward. As he moved his huge penis swung like a bell clapper, drawing the masked eyes of both men and women in envy and fascination.

He stroked his huge hair hairy hands across skirts and sniffed at them, making women titter nervously. Slowly he moved deeper into the crowd.

‘Stay well back!’ Dangerfield commanded. ‘I believe he has the scent of his bride...’

The crowd parted to reveal a buxom dark-haired girl in the cheep skirt and blouse of a shop girl on her day off. At the sight of her Ulgad sniffed and grunted and bobbed up and down. She put a hand to her mouth in horror. ‘No...’ she whimpered.

Ulgad shuffled closer. The girl could not take her eyes from him. He sniffed her skirts, then lifted them and pushed his huge head between her bare thighs. She squealed in surprise and feebly tried to push his head away. Ulgad raised his head and looked at her, making a series of growls and grunts, both soothing and commanding. As he did so her resistance seemed to melt away. The

girl's hands dropped to her sides and her eyes, seen through the black band of her mask, appeared to glaze. Ulgad clasped his huge hands about her breasts and squeezed them through her blouse. She rolled her head and sighed dreamily but nothing more.

'And now she is under his spell,' Dangerfield said in hushed tones.

Ulgad picked the girl up and threw her over his shoulder as if she was a child. She hung limp in his grasp.

'Do not interfere,' Dangerfield warned. 'It is her destiny now...'

Ulgad carried her back to the stage and set her on her feet between the two tree trunks. She swayed as she stood there but did not fall. Ulgad took the vine ropes and tied them roughly to her wrists, pulling her arms out wide. Then he spread and tied her ankles.

Now she was his captive he pawed and sniffed at the girl, circling her as she swayed in her ropes, stroking her cheeks and bottom. Then with a sudden sharp wrench he ripped her blouse down the middle, baring her full breasts and leaving the torn shreds hanging about her shoulders.

The crowd gasped.

The ape-man patted and pinched her breasts, nibbling at her nipples, which made her whimper. Then with another sudden violent surge he ripped her skirt and slip apart and tossed the remains aside, leaving her naked from waist to the tops of her dainty white socks. Her pouting naked sex glistened wetly.

Ulgad danced around her, sometimes on two legs and sometimes four, beating his chest in excitement. As he did so his penis bobbed and stiffened, swelling into a dark veined shaft over a foot long. He rubbed this over his captive's naked body, between her legs and up through the cleft of her buttocks. She moaned and rolled her head and tugged feebly at her bonds. Her sex began to drip visibly.

The drumbeats were quickening now.

The ape-man moved behind her and clasped her hips. His shaft appeared riding up out of her cleft, wet with her juices. A few women in the audience tittered nervously. Back and forth it sawed in torment, rousing the girl to lust. With a sobbing inarticulate cry she dipped her back and spread her legs wider, offering herself to her half human master.

Up from behind he thrust, his shaft sliding between the lips of her sex, spreading them wide and making her belly bulge. Further and higher it penetrated. The girl gasped and wailed as she was stretched. Then with a grunt Ulgad lifted her off her feet. She was impaled on him to the limit, fluttering in her ropes, skewered and plugged. With a howl of triumph Ulgad came, his sperm spurting out of her overstuffed sex. She convulsed and added her juices to the outpourings and her beast master howled again in primitive delight at the claiming of his bride.

The curtain closed, the crowd cheered and Dangerfield bowed low.

Behind the curtain Ulgad pulled his softening cock shaft out of April's ravaged vagina that dribbled freely onto the floor. She hung limp and trembling in her ropes, dizzy with effort, her chest heaving. Ulgad pulled the ape mask off his head to reveal sweaty but amiable and altogether human features.

Grasping April by the hair he lifted her head up and said. 'You did all right, girl.'

'Thank you, master,' she said faintly.

His name was Harold; a very well endowed, broad-shouldered but short legged man who had found the ideal employment for his abilities. She'd have bruises nobody would ever see.

At the next performance April, now without a mask and properly collared and cuffed once more, observed from the back of the tent as Niki took her turn to play the bride and be ravaged by Harold's monster prick. As she watched she wondered about herself.

Briefly, with her restraints and piercing rings removed, she had played the role of a free woman. She had worn clothes, which had felt strange, rough and confining. However what had been more disturbing was that while she had nominally been a "free woman", she had not once thought of trying to escape. Had she lost the will? Was she committed to the carnival for life?

After four successful days the carnival packed itself away once more and headed down along the long flat lush Vale of the Riddle with the river taking its meandering course to the sea on their right. While April and Niki cleaned the caravan, Marian brought the bookkeeping up to date. She looked happy. April noticed the strongbox was brimming with their takings and knew Marvell would be pleased as well.

The trouble began when they were halfway to their planned overnight stopover site. April heard shouts being passed along the straggling caravan train and the wagons came to a gradual halt. Frowning Marian went outside to see what had happened.

April and Niki looked out the windows. Marian was having a conference with Bill Grudd.

'Several of the horses are looking sick, Miss M. It seems to have come on quite sudden. We may have to move them round to the lighter wagons if we want to keep going.'

'Do that Bill. Pass the word for everybody to slow down. We've got time in hand and we want to stay together.'

She returned to the caravan looking grave. April and Niki exchanged anxious glances.

The carnival arrived late at the stopover point. By then nearly half the horses were sick and some could hardly walk. They were unharnessed and allowed out into a field to graze, where they staggered about or lay on their sides in obvious discomfort.

Bill conferred with the other cunniers and reported to Marian again.

‘We don’t think its an infection, Miss M. All the horses that have got sick had nosebags filled with grain from the fresh sacks we got in Thrasherdale yesterday. I reckon there was something bad in them.’

‘Carlo!’ Marian said bitterly. ‘He had it poisoned!’

‘Could be, Miss. Leastwise it’s made them very sick. Shall I go see if I can find a vet in the village?’

‘Yes, do that Bill.’

April and Niki knelt by Marian and rested their heads on her knees in sympathy and support. She stroked their hair distractedly. ‘He couldn’t get at you anymore so he went after the horses. He’s trying to make us late for our opening in Riddlemouth. And with only half the horses fit to pull a wagon that’s what’ll happen.’ She took a deep breath and tilted the girls’ heads back so she looked into their eyes. ‘But at least we’ve caught it quickly. We might miss a day but we will get there!’

It was an hour later that the door of the caravan banged open and Marvell stomped inside.

Marian looked up from her supper in surprise. ‘Pa! I didn’t expect you until the morning.’

‘I had to come back early. What wrong with the horses?’

Marian explained. Marvell shook his head in dismay. 'Curse Carlo! You know what he's done? He's got his show waiting on the other side of Riddlemouth. He's been talking to the council, telling them we weren't reliable. He's got them to agree that if we don't run a full parade on time as we promised he gets our pitch and the licence to put on his carnival in our place!'

CHAPTER ELEVEN

At midday curious crowds began to gather in the streets of Riddlemouth. News of the rivalry between the two carnivals had spread. Some posters for “Carlo’s All-Girl Carnival” had already gone up. Who was going to parade through the streets?

Then they heard the music and somebody shouted: ‘There they come!’

A train of brightly painted wagons appeared. However it was the carnival stallholders who were standing on their wagons playing the instruments. The bondmaids, plumed, harnessed and sweating like horses, were hauling every other wagon.

Standing on the leading wagon was Marvell in his gaudiest most glittering coat and hat, bowing left and right to the crowd. As he did so he was calling out: ‘Come to Marvell’s Marvellous Bondmaid Carnival! The carnival they could not stop!’

And the first pair of the team of six girls pulling his wagon was April and Niki...

April had no idea what Riddlemouth looked like and did not care. The rest of the world changed about them but only the carnival was constant.

She could hardly see through the sweat encrusting her eyes and her legs felt as if they were going to give way any moment. The blurred shapes going past her must be the people and their cheering sounded good, but all she really cared about was that they had reached the city in time for the parade, which meant Harry Carlo had lost.

The driver's whip cracked across her back and she clamped her teeth about her bit, but she did not resent it. She needed the pain to keep her going the last half-mile to the pitch. Then she could collapse...

That afternoon the cunniers erected the carnival without bondmaid help. It was unanimously agreed that after their supreme effort the girls deserved the rest. In any case they had to be fit to perform that evening.

As they lay in grassy shade together resting their aching limbs, Niki said wearily: 'You're crazy, you know that!' She imitated April's voice: "Please Master, we bondmaids can pull the lighter wagons if there are enough horses for the rest."

'Well we knew the road was level most of the way here,' April replied drowsily. 'It seem like a good idea at the time.'

'I suppose it was and I'm pleased that Carlo's got screwed again, but promise me you'll let me know next time before you offer my services as a carhorse.'

'I promise. Now try to sleep. We've got a show to put on.'

April hung in her chains in the gloom of the "Dungeon Dream Ride". Moans and cries of pain and the smack of tender flesh being abused rang out around her, together with the ominous clack and rattle of many pairs of wheels coming and going. Lanterns flickered, illuminating a wooden rail track that twisted and turned between painted canvas pillars and arches. Here and there it shone on bare bondmaid flesh.

Bondmaids hung in chains spreadeagled from walls, bound to posts or dangling freely right over the track. April was chained to an arch with her legs spread wide, exposing her pouting vulval cleft at head height.

With a rattle of wheels a small cart came slowly into view. It comprised a pair of wooden seats on a four-wheeled frame. Sitting in them were two laughing youths holding long-handled beating paddles. Strapped underneath their seats and facing backwards was a pair of bondmaids. Their feet sticking out behind the seat backs were chained to pedals that turned the rear wheels and propelled the cart. Their heads came up through scallops cut into the front of each seat, to which their collars were chained. Their ring-gagged mouths were full of their passengers' cocks.

By the track in front of April a bondmaid's bottom protruded from a set of stocks. The lads leaned over and swiped at it as they passed, the beaters making satisfyingly loud smacks as they set her cheeks shivering and left burning imprints on her buttocks. She shrieked loudly and jerked against the boards that held her fast and so exposed.

April felt her pussy running hot and wet as the two youths sized her up as their next target.

'No, please no...' she begged pitifully as was expected of her and thrillingly to no effect.

As they passed under the arch of her spread legs they swiped at her thighs and the pink peach of her cleft. Their paddles smacked resoundingly into her groin, belly and breasts, making them bounce. April screamed and jerked in her chains.

Then they were gone, happily flailing away at the helpless flesh all around them while being sucked off to a climax by the bondmaid engines strapped under them. April's sobs faded and she prepared herself to look terrified for the next cartload of punters coming round the bend.

Every dozen sets of rides there was a pause while one of the stallholder assistants walked the track with a rag and bucket. His job was to wipe the accumulated red stain, with which the rubber coating

of the beater paddles was impregnated, off bottoms, groins and breasts of the dungeon captives, leaving them merely pinkly blushing and fresh for the next series of rides through the Dream Dungeon.

Marian collected April when the dungeon ride closed for the night. The crowds were beginning to thin and a few stalls had put up their shutters.

‘Has the gate been good, Mistress?’ she asked as Marian led her away on he leash.

‘It has. Which is all thanks to you, April.’

‘I’m sure you would have thought of the same thing, Mistress.’

Marian frowned. ‘I’m not sure. You have so much imagination. Perhaps it’s being an outsider. You make things happen. Sometimes nothing seems to change in Nethervale...’

For a moment April felt she was getting closer to the truth at the heart of this alternate world. Then Marian shrugged and smiled brightly. ‘My father was quite right about you two. I’m going to tell him that you were a bargain for a pound!’

April felt her curiosity melt away at her mistress’s words. It was the highest praise a bondmaid could hope for.

‘Niki is just starting her last performance,’ Marian said. ‘Let’s see how she’s doing...’

Niki was starring in the booth show: “Punch and Bondmaid Judy”: a version of the old seaside puppet staple April was fairly certain had never been seen in Blackpool.

The stage was an enlarged version of the basic puppet show proscenium with space for Niki to stand on. There were smaller shelves to each side representing different parts of Punch’s home,

allowing the glove puppets to move about on them so they could interact with Niki at different levels. She was “Judy” his long-suffering bondmaid servant.

Punch beat and abused Judy in every way. He was endowed with a huge phallus that swelled and erected every time he saw Judy bending cleaning the floor, and he coupled with her violently. If she displeased him she was spanked with a Punch-sized version of the beaters they had use on April in the dungeon, which left equally vivid marks. Sometimes her bottom suffered and at other times her breasts. For that she had to stand with them resting on one of the raised mini side-stages while Punch used the beater upon their upper slopes.

The traditional supporting cast were also there and equally cruel to Judy. The policeman, in this version transformed into a tipstaff, interrogated and beat Judy, finally sodomizing her with his staff of office. The crocodile bit her breasts and the string of sausages were at one point stuffed up her vagina.

Standing at the back with Marian, April watched all this pantomime play out squirming helplessly. There was something freakily exciting and arousing about seeing a living woman being used like that by toy characters. Even though she was watching her best friend and lover being abused by a puppet for the amusement of others it was turning her on and there was no denying it.

When Niki had suffered her final humiliation and the curtain had fallen, Marian collected her and took them both back outside.

The last of the punters were drifting out through the gates. Marian clipped April's leash to Niki's collar and patted them in the direction of the latrine pits and washing stands.

‘Get cleaned up and then go back home while I check the watches are posted,’ she said, and then walked away.

Once again Marian had left them alone assuming they would obey like good bondmaids, April thought. It would not be impossible for them to sneak out of the field. Of course they would not get very far, but at least they would have tried.

She looked at Niki, reading the same fleeting thoughts in her eyes. 'We must be fifty miles from Ramswold. Fancy your chances?

Niki made a face. 'Not tonight! All I want to do is sleep! Oh, my legs! I couldn't run away if Marian ordered me!' Her tone became more serious. 'But is this how it'll be tomorrow and the next day, simply doing as we're told? Is the carnival our life from now on? Have we forgotten about home or getting back to our families?'

'I know,' April sighed. 'Sometimes I find it hard to remember this isn't how it's always been and my other life in the so-called real world seems more like a dream. But then if we worry about that all the time and how mad all this is then I don't think we'll last long. We have to deal with things as they are and make the best of them. Right now we're together, our owners are pretty decent, we're making people happy and we're about as important as Bondmaids get. It could be worse.'

Niki smiled ruefully. 'I suppose it could. Come on, let's get cleaned up and go to bed...'

CHAPTER TWELVE

‘Fire, fire!’

The cry filtered past the curtains over the open bedroom window of the caravan and penetrated April’s consciousness. Blinking her eyes wide she saw the curtains were edge with a shimmering orange glow.

Marian threw back the covers and sprang from the bed, and April felt the cool night air wash over her. Dragging on her robe Marian yanked open her door and almost collided with her father who had just burst out of his bedroom. Together they flung open the outer door and dashed out into the night.

April and Niki scrambled out of the beds from where they had been lying under their owners and ran to the door, dragging their collar chains along the ceiling rail until they could see out. Between the stalls and wagons they saw lights bobbing about in confusion and the silhouettes of running figures. There came the frightened neighing of horses from where they were tethered along the side of the field. Above the tent tops they saw a rising plume of smoke illuminated by flames from below.

‘Where is it?’ Niki gasped.

‘Right over the far side of the field, I think,’ April said. She jerked impatiently on her chain. ‘Why did they have to leave us here? We could help, carry buckets of water or something.’

‘Well they know where to find us if they need us,’ Niki said. ‘There are the cunniers and plenty of other girls around who can carry buckets. You’re not the only bondmaid in the camp. Stop trying to be the hero every day.’

April gave a sheepish grin. ‘I suppose not — hey!’

The caravan had given a lurch and then started to roll across the grass. Except there was no horse in its shafts...

They ran through to Marvell's bedroom and the window in the door that looked out over the driver's bench. In the flickering light they saw the bulky shape of a man steering the empty shafts. A long rope had been hooked to them that ran tautly away into the night in the direction of the main gate.

April unlatched the door and pushed it open. 'Master, can we help?'

He spun round to look at them. However they saw no face because a black hood mask covered his head.

'That's not a cunnier,' Niki said faintly.

April slammed the door shut and bolted it. 'Get the other door!'

Niki ran back to the side door and scrabbled to pull it shut from where it had swung back flat against the outside of the caravan. Before she could get a grip and pull it shut the masked man was on the steps. He wrenched the door out of her grasp and hauled himself into the caravan, slapping Niki aside and knocking her to the floor. April snatched a frying pan off the rack and swung it at his head, but he caught her wrist and slapped her across the face. She felt blood spurt in her mouth even as her head rang with the stunning force of the blow.

He grabbed both of them by the hair and dragged them into the back bedroom. Throwing them face down on the bed he pulled their arms round behind them, locking their cuffs together, then did the same for their ankles.

There was a lurch and bump as the unguided caravan ground against the field hedge. The man swore and snarled: 'If I hear a sound I come back with a knife, get it?' Then he ran back outside, slamming the bedroom door behind him.

The caravan bumped again then veered to one side and continued on more smoothly. In the distance they could still hear the shouts of the carnival folk fighting the fire and see the glow of the flames in the windows. They were all at the bottom end of the camp. Nobody was watching the main gate.

The caravan made a turn and they heard the crunch of gravel under its wheels as it ran out onto the road that flanked the carnival field. After a few yards it stopped. The bedroom door had not quite closed and through it they heard a sound they had become familiar with in recent weeks; that of a horse being cajoled and backed into the shafts of the wagon and being harnessed up.

By her side Niki, fighting to keep the fear from her voice, whispered: 'What's going on? Why are they stealing the caravan?'

'I don't know,' April whispered back. 'But I recognized the voice of that thug. He's one of the pair that took me and Wendy.'

'Oh... shit!'

In a minute they heard heavy boots clatter onto the boards at the front of the caravan and then it started off again now with the motion of a horse drawing it. As they pulled briskly away from the carnival field there came the sound of a pane of glass in the front door of the caravan being smashed in and the clop of hooves got louder.

'What did you do that for?' a new voice growled

The voice of the thug who had slapped them replied: 'Just checking. They had a couple of bondmaid bedwarmers chained up inside. They can't get loose and if they make a peep now I'll know it.'

'They're witnesses!'

'That's his problem not ours. We just deliver this like he paid us to. Now drive steady, we don't want to turn it over! They'll look along the country roads first so go through the town.'

‘Why did he want us to snatch this bloody caravan anyway?’

‘Because that’s where carnival people hide their money, see. He didn’t think I’d know that. Tearing it to pieces to find it could take hours. Well that’s his problem. We’ll take our money easy and go. Now just watch the road...’

‘Carlo is trying to bankrupt the carnival!’ Niki hissed.

‘Yes... and I know where the cash box is hidden!’

‘What?’

‘There’s a secret compartment under the commode. I saw Marian open it up once. If we can get to it we can throw the box out the back so Carlo won’t find it.’

‘But what about us?’

‘Even if we can get our cuffs unhooked we can’t unlock the ceiling chains. The Marvell’s have the keys with them.’

‘We could get to the back door and call for help!’

‘Help from who? It’s the middle of the night. And they’ll have to have to be ready to take notice, catch us up and tackle two thugs before we get cut!’

Niki was silent for a moment, then said: ‘You’re being the hero again.’

‘No... but at least this way Carlo doesn’t get his hands on the money and the carnival survives. That’s something.’

Niki took a deep breath. ‘All right, let’s do it!’

Hoping the rattle of the wheels would mask any noise they made, April slid onto the floor. Niki rolled onto her knees and used her teeth

to pull the curtain that covered the back window aside, letting in the intermittent light from yellow oil streetlamps.

‘It looks like we’re going through the side streets,’ she hissed, pressing her face to the glass.

April squirmed round and felt about the base of the commode with her cuffed hands. How had Marian worked it? It took her a minute to find what felt like a large nail head standing slightly proud. She pressed it in and the base slid sideways. Underneath was the hidden panel in the floor. She hooked her little finger into the knothole, found a trigger and with a click it lifted. She felt the cashbox resting in a padding of sacking in the gap between the floor joists and the second skin of boarding covering the underside of the caravan. Clasp its handle she managed to lift it out.

Pushing the box clear she lowered the floor panel and nudged the commode back into place.

‘Wait a minute,’ Niki hissed in her ear. She shuffled over to the tiny bedside locker and pulled a drawer open. Twisting round she felt inside and brought out a small pair of scissors.

While April held the box steady Niki held the scissors between her toes and scratched into the enamel paint of the lid: REWARD IF RETURNED TO MARVELL’S CARNIVAL.

They pulled back the bolts and opened the rear door that led onto the tiny porch at the back of the caravan. Their collar chains allowed them just enough freedom to step out onto it. Rows of dark houses with small neat front gardens were going past on either side.

‘This’ll make a hell of a noise if we just drop it on the road,’ Niki hissed. ‘They might hear and if they stop they’ll see it.’

‘If we could throw it into a back garden it’s be quieter and there’s more chance of it being picked up by somebody responsible,’ April said.

‘How can we throw it that far with our arms behind our backs?’

‘Like this...’

April lay down on her back along the porch and put her feet up in the air. Niki grasped the handle of the cash box in her teeth and laid it flat across April’s feet. April tucked her legs up and then thrust as hard as she could, tossing the box through the air. There was the rustle and swish of it hitting a hedge and then a muffled thump. They held their breath but the caravan kept moving.

They had done all they could.

The stolen caravan passed through Riddlemouth and out the far side. Half an hour later it pulled up in a small clearing down a wooded track.

‘You took long enough,’ they heard a third voice say impatiently. It was Harry Carlo.

‘You pay us to do a job we do it our way in our time,’ the first thug said.

‘Well here’s the rest as agreed,’ Carlo said. There was a chink of coins. ‘Now you can clear off.’

‘Hold hard, we’ve got some tidying up to do first...’

April and Niki, lying meekly on the bed once more with the back door closed, looked up fearfully as the hired thugs came in. They gagged and blindfolded them, unclipped their ankles and used a jemmy to force the links on their collar chains. Then they dragged them outside.

‘What are they doing here?’ Carlo exclaimed. ‘Damnation, they’re Marvell’s personal pair!’

‘They were chained up inside when we snatched it. No time to put them off until now. Want them for your show? Five shillings each.’

April’s stomach clenched.

‘How can I have them in my show?’ Carlo retorted angrily. ‘They know too much! Get rid of them!’

‘As you like. Come on...’

They dragged April and Niki stumbling across rough grass, then picked them up and dumped them in the back of another smaller cart. The pair climbed into the front and they drove off, leaving Carlo to begin his futile search. April huddled against Niki’s warm body. She felt sick with fear but at least they were still together.

They had not been going long when the cart pulled off the road again.

‘What’re we stopping here for?’ they heard one man ask.

‘To enjoy the perks of a job well done,’ said his companion.

They pulled April and Niki out of the cart, bent them over the tailboard, spread their legs and forced their stiff cockshafts up into them. April did not try to resist. Bound, gagged and blindfolded she had no choice. From the steady pressure of Niki’s thigh against hers she knew Niki was doing the same. Now they must accept what came.

As the men pumped unhurriedly away inside them, making the cart rock, the one using April said: ‘This is good meat! That Marvell knows how to pick ‘em. Shame to waste it.’

‘He said get rid of them,’ said the other.

‘So what? He didn’t pay us to dispose of ‘em, did he? I think we’ll just wait a week or two ‘till the heat dies down and then sell them off. In

Flauntwell, maybe.' April's stomach flip-flopped. He slapped her rump. 'They'll pay good money for prime maids there. I know somebody who'll handle them, no questions asked.'

'And until then?'

He rammed harder into April, making her wince. 'Until then we'll have ourselves a nice cunny carnival all of our own!'

THE END

April and Niki's adventures in Nethervale continue in:

BONDMAIDS IN THE CITY

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