

ANGELA PEARSON

**THE
WHIPPING POST**

613

OPHELIA PRESS

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Angela Pearson

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INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK IS AN excellent example of the care which must be taken to distinguish between works of only passing value as entertainments and those works which, nonetheless entertaining, have significant social lessons. Angela Pearson has presented a novel which is well-paced, which delineates recognizable personalities in its characters and which carries a portrait of a side of society which is only dimly and reluctantly acknowledged.

The reader must know at this stage in the work that this novel is part of the literature of Flagellation. As such, this work lays legitimate claim to being part of a long tradition dating to the early days of the Christian west as well as into the dark recesses of the pagan world.

The Rev. William M. Cooper in his classical treatment of this subject, *A History of the Rod in All Countries*, tells us:

“Records of various kinds of corporal chastisement inflicted during the most remote pagan ages are still extant, the heathens having made a most industrious use of the scourge, frequently practising with relentless severity on the backs of their unfortunate captives. The extended use of the whip, however, is due to more Christian times. The ancient Persians were familiar with the Rod: the nobles of the kingdom even were not spared when flagellations were going the round, whilst a satirical custom prevailed then, as it does even yet in some eastern countries, of the punished having to return grateful thanks for the punishment—an observance of etiquette which at a not very remote period, we believe, was insisted upon by hard hearted lady teachers—

‘Flick-em, flap-em, over the knee,

Say, Thank you, good dame, for whipping of me.’”

Thus, in one paragraph, we have sketched for us the major sequences of the history of flagellation. I will delineate these sequences here for the reader who may be yet not familiar with the broader field.

Mankind in its progress may be compared in a rough manner with the individual man in his growth. So we may say that the first and simplest stage is to perceive flagellation (and its allied corporal punishments) as punitive and painful. The offender was whipped because it hurt him; the child was punished because it hurt him and retribution was exacted for an offense. The second stage begins with a recognition that mixed with pain there is pleasure. Thus the one who punished may have realized that he enjoyed or was stimulated by the act of punishing. More surprising, the one who was punished may have recognized some enjoyment lurking in the act. The third step is taken when society or the individual refines the accidental stimulation of pain and makes it purposeful. In this third stage we recognize as brothers the jaded Roman emperor who needed to be beaten before he could be roused to sexual enjoyment and the saintly penitent who lacerated his body so that his mystical experience could be heightened. Both of these classic examples show our ambivalence about our bodies and the dualism implicit in the idea that debasement of the flesh may be a medium of exaltation of the spirit. The fourth historical stage of flagellation is the one parallel to the social milieu of “The Whipping Post.” We may call this the institutionalization of flagellation, the organized collective practice of mortification of the flesh. In Great Britain this socialized sadomasochism reached its peak.

At one period in the history of England it is estimated that more sexual activity was associated with the infliction of pain through whipping, etc. than was carried on without such association. There were ladies’ and gentlemen’s whipping clubs

and even the literature of the times burgeoned with poems called “Rodiads” and the like.

The Whipping Post omits only one of the traditional elements of the flagellation literature, and this is the association with the church and the clergy. During those periods of French and English history when the clergy were subject to abuse by the press it was commonly alleged that they made misuse of their confessional relationships to punish fair postulants and thus derive unearned dividends. For further elucidation of this the reader is referred to the various works of the notorious Girard-Cadiere case in 1738. Miss Pearson does delineate, however, the progression from fear and distrust of pain as a stimulant to full-fledged participation. One particular scene is worthy of our consideration in this regard. In the second chapter of this book Audrey, one of the heroines, is visiting a psychiatrist and his words as he calms her fears about the “normality” of pain in association with sex are enlightening and enlightened. The doctor points out that what is accepted and what is not accepted is frequently a matter of degree in various cultures and that therefore the sophisticated may school themselves to the point of view of other groups. “It is simply unusual; or, to be more exact, the beating is unusual— in the eyes of society; the scratching and biting are more or less accepted as normal.” Indeed!

The interview with the psychiatrist leads us to another interesting technique employed in this book. During this interview the doctor expresses the feeling that certain kinds of sex acts are indeed perverted. This statement prepares us for the ultimate destruction of the book’s villain who abhors the “normal” flagellation but clings to those choices the doctor calls “unnatural.” Thus our author makes a moral out of her tale by bringing destruction to villain-deviate or deviate-villain, if you prefer.

Finally, I would call your attention to the manner in which class distinctions are portrayed in Whipping Post. In many works of this nature educational backgrounds are ignored in the interest of sexual proficiency. Here the complications of relating to people with varying backgrounds is rather

forthrightly portrayed. Lest the reader of this preface mistakenly think that the book is as pedantic as the preface, I would remind him that it is not, but rather fast-paced and diverting and leave with this quotation from Lord Strangeletch in Buckle's "Library Illustrative of Social Progress":

Come now for mirth and pleasure

In such delightful measure

Some pretty miss

The rod shall kiss

In this sweet land of bliss.

THE WHIPPING POST

ANGELA PEARSON

CHAPTER ONE

Rodney Pearce put down his newspaper, thrust his hands behind his head, and stretched against the back of his chair. He gazed appreciatively at his wife who was sitting opposite him, on the other side of the fireplace, reading a glossy magazine. She had her lovely head slightly on one side. There was an amused light in her eyes and a half-smile on her lips.

“What’s amusing you?”

She looked up at him and chuckled. “Why does this wretched magazine always pick my worst photographs? And they’ve got that Audrey Milton girl in a perfectly dazzling one again.”

He stretched out a hand. “Let’s see.”

She gave him the magazine, folded back to the page she had been looking at. In the top half was her photograph. Over her head she was wearing a plastic handkerchief to protect her hair from the rain that was falling. She had on a tightly-belted raincoat of rubberised silk. On her feet were dainty ankle-high galoshes. She was walking down the steps of a large building, and signaling for a taxi.

“You look very fetching.”

He looked at the caption beneath the photograph.

PAULA MURRAY POSTPONES HOLLYWOOD DEPARTURE. WILL STAY
HERE TO MAKE FILM OF “THE HOUSEMASTER’S WIFE.”

He looked at the photograph in the bottom half of the page. It was of a girl with a strong likeness to his wife. She had a riding crop in one hand and was caressing the nose of a horse with the other. She was wearing a tight sweater, breeches, and riding-boots. Beneath her photograph was the caption

THE HONOURABLE AUDREY

MILTON WINS THE RUNNYMEDE STEEPLECHASE.

His wife took back the magazine. “You know her, don’t you? Where did you meet her?”

“Oh, at some cocktail party or other.”

“Is she really my double?”

He thought for a moment. “I’m not sure. I didn’t know you then. I shouldn’t think so, though. Certainly not if you were together. But apart, well—perhaps.”

Paula stared at the magazine page. “Mmmm.”

“But she can’t hold a candle to you.”

She glanced up at him and gave him a dazzling smile. “Sweet Rodney. Always says the right thing.”

A very pretty maid entered the room. “Excuse me, madam. There’s a Mr. Arthur Simes from the Clarion. He says he has an appointment.”

“Oh! damn!” said Paula. “I’d forgotten. All right. Tell me I’ll be with him in a minute.”

“Very good, madam.” The girl left the room and shut the door.

“Damn!” said Paula again. “I don’t like this Arthur Simes. I’m a bit afraid of him, in fact.”

“Why?”

“I think he’s on to something.”

“About the club?”

“Yes.”

“Surely not.”

“I hope not.”

Rodney looked at her. “What makes you think he may be?

“Oh, I don’t know. Instinct, perhaps. But he’s the scandal hound of the Clarion. He had a lot to do with the exposure, as he called it, of Marilyn Marsh and Greta.”

“But neither of them said a word about the club.”

“No, that’s true.”

“I shouldn’t worry about it. You’ve got a guilty conscience, that’s all.”

Paula laughed. “Perhaps. What time is your train?”

“Five-fifty.” He knew why she had asked. Nevertheless he said: “Why?”

“Why! As though you don’t know! Because I want to whip you a little before you go. There’s plenty of time, though.”

Rodney nodded. Then he laughed. “Arthur Simes would be most interested to know that.”

Paula laughed with him. “He would, wouldn’t he?” She got up from her chair. “Oh, well. I’d better go and get it over. But he’s a horrible man! Wears loud sports jackets, has a false public school accent that you could cut with a knife, and drives around in a bright red open Austin Healey.”

“Darling, be reasonable. The Austin Healey is a very good motorcar, bright red or not.”

She brushed his cheek with a kiss. “Ill thrash you a little harder for that.”

“For what?”

“For being unsympathetic.”

She went out of the room, and Rodney lay back again against the back of his chair. Her words had made his nerves tingle. He felt, as he always did before one of her whippings, a mixture of fear and excitement. He knew that during the whipping itself the pain would be shocking. He knew also, however, that when it was over he would be in the state of almost delirious exhilaration that would

intensify a hundred-fold the pleasure he would receive from the subsequent love-making. He knew he could not have the exhilaration without the pain. The pain, therefore, had to be endured. He knew, too, that Paula would be a hundred times more exciting as a partner after she had whipped him. Her whipping would lift her to a height of orgiastic ferocity that would once more amaze them both.

“Another cup of coffee, sir?”

He looked up and saw the pretty maid beside his chair. “No, thank you, Elisabeth.”

“Perhaps a brandy, sir?”

He started to shake his head, and then changed his mind. He nodded. He realised that the maid knew that he was to be whipped. She would probably be called in to assist.

The girl went to the sideboard. “A large one, sir?”

He nodded again.

She brought him the brandy. There was the suspicion of a twinkle in her eyes.

“Thank you.” He sipped the brandy, and felt her eyes still on him. She is mentally undressing me, he thought. She is picturing me either with my trousers

down and bent over one of these chairs, or tied up to the whipping-post in the back room, or manacled over the couch there.

He looked up at her suddenly. “It’s silly, isn’t it, Elisabeth?”

“What, sir?”

“This pretence. You know I’m going to be whipped, don’t you?”

“Yes, sir. Madam has just told me to prepare you.”

“Where?”

“In the whipping-room, sir.”

“In which position?”

“The couch, sir. But finish your brandy, sir. Madam said there is no hurry.” She picked up the coffee-cups and left the room.

Rodney sipped his brandy and wondered how bad the pain would be this time. It had been very terrible indeed the first time...

The first time had been two years before. It had been at Buckley Manor, the headquarters of the Whipping Club. This was a club, he later learned, composed of fifteen women, most of whom were young and good-looking and all of whom took a great delight in flogging. They preferred, of course, to flog men, and they spent a lot of money on finding victims. They employed some pretty fifteen-year-old girls whose work was to entice men into bed with them. The next day the man would be informed that he was open to a criminal charge that would inevitably earn him several years in prison, since the girl whom he had taken to bed, who had seemed to be at least seventeen years of age, was only fifteen. He was offered the alternative of a flogging at the club. After his initial astonishment, he nearly always accepted the flogging.

Rodney had been flogged by three girls, one of whom was now his wife. He had presented himself at Buckley Manor in time for lunch. He could not at first believe his eyes when he saw that one of his hostesses was the very beautiful and world-famous Paula Murray, for whom he had always had a passionate admiration. He fell head over heels in love with her over the lunch table, the knowledge that she was to flog him increasing, instead of lessening, his desire for her. After lunch, with Marilyn Marsh and Jane Lambert, the two other beautiful girls, she flogged him. The flogging took place in some woods on the estate, lasted a long time, and was very terrible. Nothing so terrible had ever happened to him before. After it was over, however, he found, to his intense astonishment, that he was filled with a strong exhilaration—and that he was more than ever in love with her.

He asked her, some days later, to marry him. She hesitated because, although their attraction had been mutual and she was herself in love with him, she knew that she could not control her sadistic desires. He told her that he would accept her sadism whenever she wished. He did not then tell her why. He himself had not yet understood why his flogging had been followed by such unbelievable exhilaration. All he knew was that he was prepared to accept further floggings in order to experience the exhilaration again. He hoped, on the other hand, that the floggings would not be so terrible.

They were married six weeks later.

Arthur Simes made a shorthand note in his notebook and looked Paula straight in the eyes. “The story is a very good one, Miss Murray. It’s also good propaganda for the public school system. But may I ask your own private opinion of the system?”

“I think,” said Paula slowly, “that it is a wonderful system of education.” He is leading up to something, she said to herself. That may not be such an innocent question as it seems.

“Would you send a son of yours to a public school?”

“But of course.”

“Even though you know that he will be beaten a good deal by masters and prefects?”

Here it is, thought Paula. Be careful now. “Ye-es. That can’t be helped. It’s part of the system.”

Arthur Simes made a note in his book. He looked up. “Do you yourself approve of corporal punishment, Miss Murray.”

“Yes—in certain circumstances.”

“May I ask what circumstances?”

“Good heavens, I don’t know! There are a good many, I suppose.”

“Do you approve of it generally?”

She frowned. “That’s a very difficult question, Mr. Simes. Why do you ask?”

The reporter said blandly: “I’m sure that the readers of the Clarion would be very interested to hear your views on such a controversial subject.”

“I—I don’t really think I have any views.” Except, she added to herself, that I should like to take you to a certain room in this flat, and show you.

“Did you ever meet Marilyn Marsh?”

Paula felt herself go cold. “Marilyn Marsh?”

“You surely remember? It was quite a story. She was beating her husband and he had a heart attack. She had a German maid called Greta who was helping her to beat him. The Marsh woman got five years and the maid was deported.”

Paula nodded. "Yes, I remember. It was quite a story, as you say."

"Did you ever meet her? She was an actress, I think."

"No.

The reporter put away his pencil and notebook. He stood up. "Her views on corporal punishment were rather unusual." He laughed. Then he looked her straight in the eyes again. "Did you ever hear of a club called the Whipping Club?"

Paula met his eyes. "The what club?"

"The Whipping Club."

"Good heavens! Whatever is that?"

"I'm not sure. Perhaps it's only a rumour. But it seems to be a sort of society of women who have unusual ideas about corporal punishment."

"But how extraordinary! And what extraordinary questions you ask me, Mr. Simes."

The man laughed. "Not really, Miss Murray. Our readers are interested in whatever famous people like yourself think—and do. Now, could I have one or two photographs to take along with me, please?"

Paula got up and went to a desk. "There's a box-full here, I think."

"Sexy stuff, if you please," said Arthur Simes.

The maid Elisabeth came back into the living-room. She looked at Rodney's glass. "Would you finish it, please, sir? I think I ought to prepare you now."

Rodney drained his glass. His heart began to beat very fast. He stood up.

"All right."

The maid led the way to a door at the other end of the sitting-room, opened it, and stood aside for him to pass. "No, you go ahead," said Rodney. "You've got to unlock, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir." The girl preceded him out of the room and down a corridor. She stopped outside a door. She produced a Yale key from her pocket. She unlocked the door, reached a hand to the switch inside, and stood back. "Now, after you, sir." He walked past her. "And would you please take off your clothes?" She followed him into the room and closed the door behind her.

It was a windowless room about thirty feet square. At the side facing the door there was a heavy-looking contraption that looked rather like an upright ladder. This was the whipping-post. Leather straps, which were used for the purpose of securing its occupant, dangled from its sides. In the centre of the room was a solid-looking divan from whose four corners hung steel manacles. There were several comfortable armchairs here and there. On the left of the whipping-post was a tea-trolley on small wheels. On the trolley lay a number of whipping instruments. On its top shelf there were two long slender canes, a riding crop and switch, a birch made of piano wire, and a heavy rubber belt. On its lower shelf were two whips and a cat-o'-nine-tails. On the right of the whipping-post was a coat-stand. On this were hanging a number of floor-length robes of various colours, and a pair of Persian-style pyjamas. They were made of a flimsy blood-proof rubber material. The divan and armchairs were covered with similar material.

Rodney slipped out of his shirt and pants and handed them to her. She hung them with his other clothes on the coat-stand which held the long robes and pyjamas. He knelt to take off his socks. He gave them to her. He was now quite naked.

“Down you go, sir.” She looked at his stiff penis and caught her breath.

He lay down on his stomach on the divan. His heart began to thump with fear.

The maid picked up one of the hanging steel manacles and snapped it round his left wrist. Then she secured his right wrist. She moved to the foot of the divan and snapped the manacles around his ankles. He was now in a spread-eagled position and quite helpless. His buttocks and back were criss-crossed with blue-black weals.

The girl went to the trolley and picked up a cane. She swished it around her. “Madam said I was to give you a little warming-up, sir. But only on your bottom. I’ll start with this, I think.”

She took up position at the side of the divan and raised the cane. She brought it down hard across the exact centre of his buttocks. He gasped. “Nice, sir? Not too hard, I hope?” She raised the cane and brought it down with greater force. He gasped again. She drew a deep luxurious breath and began to thrash him rhythmically, aiming always at the centre of his buttocks. On the twelfth stroke she paused. “Yes, we have blood, of course!” She glanced at her apron. “Oh, bother it! It’s splashed me.” She went to the coat-stand and took down a long white floor-length robe. She put her cane on the trolley and slipped into the robe. She found the ends of its belt and knotted them into a bow. She picked up one of the whips.

Rodney watched her, and felt himself go cold as he saw the whip in her hand. He held his breath. She moved back into position and raised the whip. Her long robe rustled as her arm went high.

The whip hissed down. It struck with what seemed to Rodney like white-hot teeth. He cried out. The girl sucked in her breath and lashed him again.

There was a knock at the door.

“You’re lucky, sir.” murmured the girl. “Here’s madam. I would have nearly killed you.” She put down the whip and went to the door. She unlocked it. Paula came into the room. “Have you warmed him up?”

“Yes, madam. Twelve with the cane and two with a whip.

“All right, Elisabeth. You can go now.”

“Thank you, madam.” The girl slipped off her white robe, hung it on the coat-stand, and left the room. There was a click as she closed the door.

“Well, darling. How was the warming-up?”

“Beginning to be very painful.”

“Nothing to what it’ll be when I begin myself.”

Paula began to take off her clothes.

Rodney said: “How was your interview?” He stretched against his manacles.

“Not so good, I’m afraid. I’m sure he’s on to something.”

“He can’t be.”

“I’m afraid he is. But to hell with it.”

She stripped herself to total nakedness and put on the Persian-style pyjamas, shivering slightly as the cool rubber material slid over her body. She went up to the trolley and gazed at it reflectively. She picked up the birch of piano wire.

Rodney said: “For God’s sake, not that one, darling.”

She came to the side of the divan. “Yes, this one. You’re going to be away for a couple of days, aren’t you? I must give you something to remember.” She raised the instrument and lashed downwards at the buttocks. The birch hissed as it flashed down, its wires splaying outwards to give pain to a wide area of the buttocks.

Rodney shouted as they struck him. The pain was excruciating. He tugged vainly with his wrists and ankles at the steel manacles. The birch hissed down again, and again. He began to shout for mercy.

In the kitchen Elisabeth smiled at the other maid. “Can you hear? I wonder which one she’s using?” Rodney’s cries came faintly from the whipping-room.

“It’s a good job that room’s sound-proofed,” said the other, “or what the neighbours would say, I don’t know! What did you use, Liz?”

“Cane and a whip. But I’d only just got started when she came. I like the whip best. Which do you like best, Gwen?”

“A cane, I think. Short of the cat, of course.”

“She’ll never let us use the cat, and that’s a fact.”

Gwen shivered. It was a shiver of sheer sexual longing. “No, but I wish she would! Do you know what I’d like to do to him with it?”

“What?”

“I’d put him on the couch on his back. And then”— she moistened her lips —“and then I’d use the cat on his prick and balls.”

“You’d kill him.”

“Not him! He’s tough, that one! Six foot two, shoulders like an ox, face like a Greek god—and tough, too. What a man!”

“He doesn’t sound tough now. Listen to him!”

Rodney was sobbing in his agony. Paula, a wild light in her lovely eyes, had begun to thrash his shoulders with the birch. His bottom was covered with blood. Her heart was pounding violently, and bliss-bringing fingers seemed to be caressing her sexual nerve centres. She struck ten, fifteen, twenty times at the

shoulders. Then she half-turned and aimed with her birch at the fleshy part of the legs below the buttocks. Rodney's cries grew in agonised intensity. She thrashed like a woman possessed. Then she dropped her birch and fell into a chair. She lay, with legs wide open, moaning and panting with furious ecstasy. The front of her pyjamas was spattered with blood.

She put a hand on her heart and closed her eyes. It would take her, she knew, several minutes before she could regain control of herself. She knew, too, that it would take the same time for Rodney's agony to turn slowly into the delight of his exhilaration.

"She's stopped," said Gwen. "You'd better get the stuff out."

Elisabeth went to a cupboard and took out a white enameled dish in which lay a roll of cotton wool. She put it on a table and took from the cupboard a bottle of surgical spirit and a larger bottle of antiseptic. "She's been quick today."

"Late night last night. No strength."

"Wish she'd let me finish it off."

The bell rang.

Elisabeth picked up the dish and the bottles and left the kitchen. She walked to the door of the whipping-room, unlocked it, and entered. She caught her breath at the amount of blood on the lacerated shoulders, bottom and legs. She put the

dish on the side of the couch and pulled a handful of cotton wool from the roll.

Paula watched her lazily. She felt slightly unsatisfied, but she realised that she was too tired to do any more whipping herself. She decided to watch the maids doing a little. She said: "Go and bring Gwen, Elisabeth. You can both of you have a go if you like."

Elisabeth looked up quickly, a thrill in her heart. Yes, madam." She went out of the room rapidly. In a moment she was back with the other maid.

Paula said: "You prefer canes, don't you, Gwen?"

"Yes, madam."

"Go and get one then, and put something over yourself. You do the same, Elisabeth, and take the belt." She closed her eyes again. Her heart still pounded furiously.

The two maids put on the blood-proof robes. Gwen picked up a cane. Elisabeth took the heavy rubber belt and ran it slowly through her hand.

Paula opened her eyes. "Gwen, go to the far side and thrash the bottom. Elisabeth, you come on this side and thrash the legs with your belt. One and one. You know how. And quite hard, please."

“Yes, madam.”

Paula looked at Rodney, who had listened in silence. “Just a leetle more, Rodney darling. Your pleasure afterwards will be all the greater.”

The two beautiful maids took up their positions on either side of the couch and began to thrash. As Gwen’s cane flashed down to the buttocks, Elisabeth’s heavy rubber belt was raised for its own lash downwards. An excited sadistic light danced in their eyes.

Paula lay back in her chair. She slipped her breasts out of her pyjama top, and caressed them lightly as she watched the flogging. The bliss-bringing fingers round her genitals seemed to begin to squeeze. She allowed the girls to thrash for about three minutes before she stopped them. She felt she could stand no more excitement.

“That’s enough. Clean him up, now, please. And undo him.”

The maids put down their instruments. Elisabeth took the cotton wool again, poured some disinfectant on to it, and began to wipe away the blood. As she cleaned each leg and each buttock, she poured some drops of surgical spirit into the wounds. Gwen went round the divan unlocking the manacles.

As he felt the blood being cleaned away, and his wrists and ankles becoming free, Rodney’s spirits underwent a gradual change. He knew that the pain was over—the flogging had finished. Now it was the turn of the exhilaration. He lay still and relaxed, waiting for it to come. It came, stealing into his nerve-system as the pain subsided. As it came, he felt his loins begin to tingle. His penis grew

under him to an almost painful hardness. He heard the maids leave the room. He felt Paula sit beside him.

“How is it?” she asked softly. “Arrived yet?”

He nodded, and turned over carefully on to his lacerated back. “It’s well on its way. But what a flogging, darling!”

She put a finger on his penis. Despite its hardness, it gave a great jump, seeming to try to leap at her. “Yes, I see it is! And it wasn’t such a flogging. Not really.”

She stood up and took off her blood-spattered pyjamas. Then she climbed on to Rodney, sitting down on his penis. “Do you still love me?”

“Yes. Terribly.”

“Will you always love me?”

“Yes.

“However much I whip you?”

“The more you whip me, the more I’ll love you.”

“And will you always love me when I get other women to whip you?”

He drew her down to him. “Yes, Paula darling. I’ll always love you.”

She moved her vulva over the top of his penis. “And I’ll always love you. But I’ll love you more, the more I whip you.” The penis nosed around her moist entrance. She pressed downwards with her hip muscles. The penis entered the mouth of the vagina. She pressed again. It went inside another half-inch. Rodney thrust. The penis slid three inches inside her. She gasped and cried out. He thrust again. She slowly sat upright, the penis penetrating painfully as she moved. “Oh, Rodney! Oh God, oh God, oh God!”

“Not too quickly, Paula darling. I want my reward for that flogging—and the feeling I’ve got in my balls is quite a reward. Please don’t be too quick.”

“Don’t be too quick yourself,” she said softly, and put her hands to his testicles. Her long fingernails scratched delicately at the tightly-stretched skin of their bag. “Does that give you more of a reward?”

CHAPTER TWO

The Hon. Audrey Milton leaned forward as the car turned into Harley Street.

“Put me down here, Blake. And then go on home. I’ll come back by taxi.”

“Very good, Miss Audrey.”

The girl got out of the car, waited for it to move forward again, and began to walk up the street, looking at the numbers above the doors. She came to a stop and rang a bell. The door opened almost at once. A nurse smiled at her.

“Good afternoon, Miss Milton. Sir James will see you straight away.”

“How nice. Thank you.”

The nurse led the girl along a richly carpeted passage, tapped lightly on a door, opened it, and said: “Miss Audrey Milton, Sir James.”

The door closed behind her as Audrey walked forward to meet the tall man who rose from his desk and stretched out his hand, smiling warmly. “Do sit down, Miss Milton. I’m delighted to meet you. I’ve seen you many times before, of

course.”

“Have you? But where?”

“At one or two cocktail parties—on the other side of the room. And many times in the glossy magazines.”

“Oh!” The girl laughed. “May I smoke?”

“Of course.” The psychologist held out a box to her. He rose to light her cigarette, lit one for himself, and sat down again.

From behind the first clouds of smoke the two people took stock of each other.

The girl saw a tall distinguished-looking man in his early sixties whose face was deeply lined but whose eyes held a look of calm and confident serenity; they were the eyes of a man who had seen much, listened to much, and experienced much; they were the eyes of a man who was no longer capable of being surprised or distressed by the vicissitudes of life and people; they were the eyes of a doctor, a healer.

The man saw a girl whose beauty turned most men’s bones to water, and whose legs and figure made even women turn in the street to stare after her. She wore no hat, thereby allowing her smooth dark hair to appear in its full glory. She was dressed in a simple linen frock that looked very expensive. Her bag and high-heeled shoes were of dark brown crocodile. One hand lay at rest on her lap. The

other held her cigarette; it was trembling slightly.

The doctor said gently: “How can I help you. Miss Milton?”

The girl hesitated for a second or two, drew deeply on her cigarette, and seemed to come to some decision. She said: “As I was walking up the road I was thinking that the best way for me to begin would be to tell you that I want you to help me get rid of some distressing dreams. But that would be beating about the bush.” She paused and smiled.

The doctor returned her smile but made no comment.

“So I’d better come straight to the point. I want you to cure me of sadistic longings.” She drew deeply again on her cigarette.

.The doctor leaned forward slightly in his chair. “It is very wise to come quickly to the point. It saves so much time and”—he smiled—”money. Sometimes patients take as long as a year to say what you have just said at the very beginning. We shall get on well, I can see.” He leaned back in his chair and crossed his hands on his lap. “Perhaps, though, it would be a good thing now to tell me something of your dreams. They are usually a definite guide in this sort of matter.”

Audrey Milton looked down at the hands resting relaxedly on the doctor’s lap, and felt a comfort from their relaxed immobility.

She said: “Whenever I dream, it is always about thrashing, beating, flogging. And I am the one who is thrashing, beating and flogging. I always seem to have got some man or other into a helpless position—perhaps I have tied him to a bed, or a chair, or a tree—and I am beating the life out of him.”

“Always a man? Never a woman?”

“No, never a woman. It’s always some man or other. Very often someone I know, but sometimes a complete stranger.”

“And you feel a sexual pleasure when you are beating him?”

“Yes, very strongly.”

“Do you do anything else to him—apart from beating him?”

The girl hesitated a second. Then she looked into the doctor’s eyes. “Yes. I nearly always fondle him. That is to say, I nearly always play with his—his genitals. I do that from time to time during the beatings. And then, afterwards, I let him make love to me.”

“Are you a virgin, Miss Milton?”

“No.”

“When did you first make love?”

“When I was at school. About seven years ago. I was eighteen.”

“And since then?”

“I’ve had three love affairs.”

“In your love affairs, have you wanted to beat your lover?”

“Always.”

“But you have never done so?”

“No, of course not. I do it —only in my dreams.”

“In your dreams, do you restrict yourself to beating,? Or do you dream of other forms of brutality?”

“Oh dear, no!”

“No mutilations with a knife or some such thing? No racks, no thumbscrews? No burnings of your victims with, say, a cigarette or a cigarette lighter?”

“No.

“No killings?” “No, nothing like that. Just beating.”

The doctor looked down at his hands. They lay, still immobile, on his lap. He looked up at the girl. “Good. That’s very clear. Now will you tell me, please, how much this affects your waking life? Apart, that is to say, from your wish to beat your lover during the sex-act.”

Audrey smiled a little ruefully. “Now that we’re going away from my dreams, it’s rather embarrassing again. I feel, you see, that I can’t somehow be held altogether responsible for what happens in my dreams.”

The doctor smiled back at her, a gentle smile. “You mustn’t be embarrassed by anything you tell me. I’m a physician, a psychiatrist. I want to help you.”

“Well,” said the girl, “whenever there is any sort of film with beating in it, I make certain not to miss the film. Sometimes I go twice. And I’ve read Johann Junggesell. I become almost sick with envy when I think of some of his patients. There is one woman he describes. She’s a rich, attractive woman who always seems to attract men who will accept a beating. And she always beats them before she lets them make love to her. I should love to be that woman.”

“Go on.

“Then there’s my brother. He’s a prefect at Biltergrange. Prefects there are allowed to beat, you know. And when he’s on holiday and he tells me of the boys he has to beat, I feel weak with excitement—and sick with envy again.”

“You’d like also to beat boys?”

“Yes. I’d prefer them to be grown men, of course, but so long as they are male it doesn’t seem to matter.”

“Please go on.”

“I don’t know that there’s much more to say. Oh— except that I’ve heard whispers here and there that there’s some sort of a female whipping club somewhere here in London, and whenever I think of being a member of it —if it indeed exists—I feel weak again.”

“I’ve heard of the same club.”

Audrey opened her eyes wide. “Have you indeed? Then it may not be complete nonsense—what I’ve heard. It may exist?”

“It’s not impossible. Is there anything else you’d like to add?”

“I don’t think so.”

“Then let me ask you a question or two. Have you at any time in your waging life felt the impulse to do anything more to men than flagellation?”

“Flagellation? That’s beating, flogging, and so on?”

“Yes.”

“No, never.”

“And you have never felt the desire to beat or flog anyone of your own sex?”

“No, never.

“And you have never, at any time, wanted to mutilate, burn, torture, kill?”

“No, Sir James, no!” She stubbed out her cigarette rather violently. “Thank God, no! It’s bad enough as it is, isn’t it?”

The psychiatrist looked at her very seriously. “No, my dear girl, it’s not at all bad—as it is.”

Audrey stared at him. “Whatever do you mean?”

“One more question, first. And please think very carefully before you answer.”

“Go on.

“When in your dreams you actually flagellate, and when in your waking thoughts you would like to flagellate, is there always a sexual pleasure in the background?”

The girl answered immediately. “Very much in the foreground. Not at all in the background.” She paused and then added: “I’m sorry to say—and I’m ashamed to say.”

The doctor nodded. “Don’t be ashamed of it. There’s nothing to be ashamed of.” He began to speak more quickly as the girl raised her eyebrows in surprise. “Tell me, Miss Milton, do you like cigars?”

Audrey’s eyebrows went up a little higher. “I—whatever do you mean? I don’t smoke them, if that’s what you mean.”

“It is, partly. But do you never take a puff from your father’s cigars?”

“Yes, I do, as a matter of fact.”

“And you like the taste?”

“Er—yes.

The doctor smiled. “You should. Your father has an excellent taste in cigars.”

The girl sat up in her chair. “Do you know my father?”

The doctor nodded. “Lord Curie and I are members of the same club. But don’t let that worry you, my dear.”

Audrey relaxed. “No, of course not. The doctor’s consulting-room and the confessional.”

“Exactly. Now, tell me, since you like the taste of cigars, why do you not smoke them?”

“Because it just isn’t done. Because—”

“Because it just isn’t done. Exactly. You don’t do what you would like to do, because society, or social conventions, or whatever you like to call them, must be observed.” He held out the cigarette box to her, lit her cigarette, leaned back in his chair, and said: “Now, I want you to listen to me very carefully. And try not to interrupt.” He smiled warmly at her. “Unless, that is to say, you really can’t help it.”

The girl responded to the warmth of his smile. “I’ll try very hard.”

“Good girl. Now, here is the first thing.” He placed the tip of his left index-finger against the tip of his right. “There is nothing at all that I can do for you. There is no way in which I can cure you of anything—because you are not suffering from anything which can—or need— be cured.”

Audrey sat bolt upright in her chair and opened her mouth. The doctor raised a hand.

“Please try not to interrupt. I shall now try to explain. Why do you not smoke cigars? You say that you would like to. You don’t smoke them because society would criticise your smoking them. Why do you not beat your lover? Why does any woman not beat her lover, if she wants to? Is it because the lover would object? Perhaps. But it is much more because society would find it very strange that she wants to do so. I shall not try to tell you that the wish to beat your lover is as natural as the wish to smoke your father’s cigars. No, it is not so natural. But it is not so unnatural as society would think. And it is not at all abnormal. Tell me, Miss Milton, would you regard it as abnormal, or even unnatural, to bite or scratch your partner in the sex-act?”

Audrey had relaxed in her chair and was listening with attention. “No, I would not,” she replied quietly.

“Nor does society. But beating your partner is only an extension—an elaboration, if you like—of biting and scratching him. It is also a way that a woman compensates for her feeling of sex-inferiority. We are all born, you see, Miss Milton, with a little bit of the other sex. Every man has something of woman in him. Every woman has something of man in her. When that admixture is unbalanced, the man becomes a homosexual, a pansy; the woman becomes a lesbian. When, on the other hand, the maleness in a woman is very strong, but not unbalanced, she does not become a lesbian; she generally becomes a flagellant. When the female in a man is very strong, but again not unbalanced—abnormal, that is to say—he does not become a homosexual; he becomes a masochist, and he submits to the beatings of a woman with the same pleasure as she receives while she is beating him. If there is anything unnatural in this, it is only in the unusual amount of maleness in a woman, and femaleness in a man. And that is something with which we are born. It is not something which we have acquired. It is therefore not something which a psychiatrist can deal with. You might as well ask him to deal with the fact that someone has been born with unusually large toes.” He smiled. “You have been very good. Would you like to ask anything now?”

Audrey said: “Not yet. Please go on.”

“I asked you whether your wish to flagellate is restricted to beating and so on. That is because the wish to burn, mutilate, torture, kill, is something apart from what I am talking about. It is abnormality. And therefore it is, sometimes, curable by means of psychoanalysis. But your wishes are not abnormal. Or, let us say, if there is anything at all abnormal in them, it is that they are abnormally normal. You evidently have a good deal of maleness in you, and you are rebelling, subconsciously, at the fact that you are a woman. And there is nothing at all that can be done by any doctor about that. There are, indeed, a great many psychiatrists who would be delighted to recommend a long course of treatment for you—but there are charlatans in all professions.”

“But whatever shall I do?”

“That, now, is an entirely different matter. You are no doubt suffering from frustration, inhibition—and that is because you are repressing what is in fact a desire that is not unnatural. You are doing so because you are afraid of what society would say. For the same reason you do not smoke cigars! You are not suffering because you do not smoke cigars, because your desire for them is not very urgent or strong. But you are suffering because you do not flagellate, because that desire is very strong indeed.”

“What do you propose that I should do?”

“There are only two courses open to you. Either you continue to observe the conventions of society—in which case you will become more and more frustrated, or you indulge your desire—and take good care that society does not find out about it.”

Audrey stared at him. Without believing that it was possible, she had half expected that he was going to say something like this. The trend of his comments had seemed to be leading inevitably in this direction. Now, however, that it was said, she could hardly believe her ears. “Are you really serious?” she asked slowly. “It is astonishing advice—from a doctor.”

“Is it? Suppose that I saw that you were in danger of a nervous breakdown arising from the frustration of an unusually strong desire to smoke cigars. I should advise you to start smoking cigars.”

“But it’s not at all the same thing. I wish to God it were! But this—this sort of

desire seems so abnormal, in spite of what you say. And it seems so horrible.”

“My dear, I am now going to risk shocking you. There are many things in sexual life that are abnormal, and, from society’s point of view, horrible. Let me give you one or two examples. There are many people, of both sexes, who desire that someone shall urinate over them. There are others who desire to drink the urine. There are others who desire the same two things with excreta. These things are abnormal. For a woman to scratch, bite, or beat a man during the sex-act, or for a man to accept such scratching, biting and beating, is not abnormal at all. It is simply unusual; or, to be more exact, the beating is unusual—in the eyes of society; the scratching and biting are more or less accepted as normal. But, as you know, conventions of society change with the centuries. In the earlier civilisations—Greece, China, and so on—sex-flagellation was regarded as perfectly normal. For heavens’ sake, it was standard practice for the bridesmaids to prepare the birches for the bride, and in many cases the birches were presented to her during the ceremony!”

Audrey smiled and relaxed. “I’m beginning to feel a lot better.”

“You came to me,” the doctor went on, “thinking that yours is an unusual case. It is not so. There are no definite statistics, but I should say that at least twenty-five per cent of women consciously or subconsciously desire to inflict some form of sex-pain during love-making. But only about ten per cent actually do it. The rest of them are frustrated because they fear to do what they know society would condemn.”

“But what about the men? They wouldn’t like us to do it.”

“Rubbish! Many men—if they could forget their masculine ego—would find that a reasonable amount of pain inflicted by a woman during the love-act

increases the ultimate sex-gratification.”

Audrey looked him in the eyes. “Would you?” she asked bluntly.

The doctor laughed. “I’ll tell you a secret now. I am speaking from personal experience!”

“Good heavens!” Audrey studied her fingertips. She was wondering whether, after all, she could continue to have faith in this doctor. After a moment’s reflection she remembered that he was the country’s leading psychiatrist. She leaned forward. “What about the other way round? What about men who want to beat women? Is that the same thing? Is that as normal?”

“Provided it is connected with the sexual urge, it is normal,” replied the doctor at once. “It simply means that the man has been born with more maleness than usual. It is only when a person wishes to inflict pain that is unconnected with sex that it is abnormal—and therefore something that a psychiatrist can try to deal with.”

“And women who like to be beaten by men? Does the same thing apply?”

“Provided again it is connected with sex, yes. They have been born with more femaleness than usual. And so their submission to pain is perfectly normal.”

“God bless psychiatry!” said Audrey with a laugh. “It seems to me that I must find me a man who won’t be troubled by his ego. But there are a few things I’d

like to ask you. You've been very clear, but I'm just a stupid woman, and your advice has knocked me father off my feet." She laughed again. "But I'm feeling so much better. Have you any more time to give me?"

The doctor glanced at the clock on his desk. "Yes, fifteen minutes, if you wish. Ask away."

"Well, the first thing is this overdose of maleness that some women are born with..."

Twenty minutes later, Audrey Milton walked down Harley Street towards a telephone box at the corner. Her head was high and her step was light. She entered the box and dialed a number.

"Peter?"

"Audrey! How wonderful! You're not still angry with me then?"

"Do you still want to make love to me, Peter?"

There was a pause. Then: "Are you serious, darling? I'd give anything in the world. But you're always so aloof—so untouchable—"

"You'd give anything in the world?"

“Of course.

“Would you let me beat you?”

“What did you say?”

“Would you let me beat you?”

“Beat me?”

“Yes.”

“Why?”

“Because I want to.”

“I see you are still angry with me.”

Audrey sighed. “It’s difficult to explain now. Just tell me this. Would you be prepared to accept a beating if I let you make love to me?”

“Audrey darling, have you gone mad? Or is there something wrong with this phone? I keep hearing you talking about beating.”

“I am talking about beating. Would you accept one from me?”

There was a silence. Audrey waited, her heart pounding inside her breast.

“You haven’t been drinking, darling?”

“No, Peter.”

“And you’re quite serious about this?”

“Yes, deadly serious.”

“And you’ll tell me all about it later?”

“Yes, Peter.”

“All right, then. What are you going to do it with?”

“I don’t know yet. I’m just going down to Faulkner’s to buy something.”

“Audrey darling, what has got into you? There seems to be something awfully wrong.”

“There’s nothing wrong, Peter dear. Everything’s suddenly come wonderfully right. We’ll meet as you suggested, then? Savoy Grill at seven-thirty?”

“Yes, of course. But I’m worried about you. Perhaps you ought to see a doctor.”

“Peter, you’re very sweet. Have you any methylated spirits in your office?”

“Methylated spirits?”

“Yes.”

“Audrey, you have gone crazy! Why should I have methylated spirits here?”

“My brother Bob at Biltergrange tells me that boys who are going to be beaten rub their bottoms with methylated spirits. It apparently hardens the skin. I thought perhaps you might like to do the same thing. Anyway, goodbye Peter dear, till seven-thirty.”

The taxi stopped outside Faulkner's. Audrey paid the driver and glanced at the selection of riding-crops and switches on display in the windows as she walked towards the entrance. Her heart was still thumping.

"Good afternoon, madam. May I help you?"

"I want a whip, please."

"Certainly, madam. Would you please be seated. A crop or a switch?"

"I don't know. Show me what you have."

"Certainly, madam." The salesman pulled out two flat drawers. One was filled with crops, the other with switches.

Audrey gazed at both drawers. "Not the crops, after all. I already have one. I think I need a switch. A long and very swishy one."

The salesman picked out a long leather-covered switch. He waved it experimentally. "This is quite swishy, madam."

Audrey took it from his hands and waved it herself. "It's rather thick. Have you anything thinner?" She peered at the drawer. "Yes, that one, please."

The salesman picked out the switch she had seen and handed it to her. Audrey stood up and experimented with the switch. It was long, thin, and very swishy. She continued to experiment with it, imagining that she was her brother giving what he called “six of the best” to a boy under punishment. She looked up and caught the look of surprise in the salesman’s eyes. “This,” she said, “will do very well.”

“Thank you, madam. Will there be anything else?”

“Yes, I want a cat-o’-nine-tails.”

The man’s eyes opened wide. “A cat-o’-nine-tails, madam?”

“Yes. The sort of thing they use in prison.”

The man coughed. “Er—yes, madam. Of course. I’m afraid, though, that we do not stock such—implements. Our custom is—er—rather restricted to riding whips.”

“Couldn’t you order one? Couldn’t you have one made specially?”

“I am afraid I don’t know, madam. I—I have never been asked for a cat-o’-nine-tails before.”

Audrey gave him a dazzling smile. “Could you go and ask someone, then?”

The salesman gave her back a startled look. “Er—yes, madam. Of course. Will you excuse me a moment, please?” He moved out from behind his counter and scuttled down the shop for all the world, Audrey thought, like a frightened rabbit. She chuckled to herself and lit a cigarette.

Three minutes later, the manager of the shop hurried up to her, the salesman trotting behind him.

“Good afternoon, madam. I fear that the salesman may perhaps have misunderstood you. In what way may we help you?”

“I want a cat-o’-nine-tails.”

The salesman flashed a triumphant look at the manager.

“A cat-o’-nine-tails, madam?”

“Yes, like those they use in prison.”

“I’m afraid that we do not stock such things, madam.”

Audrey smiled towards the salesman. “So I have already been told. Could you not have one made for me, though?”

The salesman flashed another look at the manager. Poor man, Audrey thought, the manager must have been quite unpleasant to him.

She looked at the manager and said sweetly: “This young man has been most helpful. He has explained that you are not often asked for a cat-o’-nine tails and —”

“We have never been asked for one, madam.”

—and since I need one, I am prepared to pay a good price to have one made. How much would one cost? Have you any idea—”

“I’m afraid I have no idea, madam.”

“Suppose I were to leave you fifteen pounds? Do you think you could get one made for me for that?”

“Fifteen pounds, madam? Er—yes, I think we could possibly find someone to make one for that sum.” He looked at Audrey intently and seemed to be on the point of saying something else.

He’s trying, thought Audrey, to summon up the courage to ask me why I want it.

I wonder whether he will? No, he probably won't. Fifteen pounds is too good an order. Hell probably spend only a fiver on getting one made, and all the rest will be clear profit. No, he'll swallow his curiosity this time.

She opened her bag and took out her wallet. She counted out three five-pound notes and put them on the counter. She looked at the salesman. "And the switch? How much is it?"

"Four pounds seventeen and six, madam."

She put another five-pound note on the counter. "Will you wrap it, please?" She turned to the manager. "And when do you think you will have the cat-o'-nine-tails?"

"Er—in perhaps a week, madam. Shall we send it?"

"No, I'll call for it."

"Thank you, madam. And—er—may I say what a great pleasure it is to serve Miss Paula Murray? I have been an admirer of yours for a long time. I see all your films."

Audrey stared at him, and then smiled. "You've made a mistake—a mistake that seems to be happening quite often these days. I'm not Paula Murray."

She picked up her change, put the wrapped switch under her arm, and walked out of the shop. She was followed by the curious stares of the manager and the salesman, but she did not care. Her heart was filled with excited happiness. She took the wrapped switch from under her arm and held it in her free hand. “And now, Peter dear,” she said to herself, “you are going to liberate me from seven or eight years of awful frustration!”

A cruising taxi came towards her. She signaled it with her switch.

CHAPTER THREE

In his study in the prefects' block at Biltergrange School, the Hon. Robert Milton, nineteen years of age and head-prefect of Bartlett's House, put aside his book and glanced at his watch. Ten minutes to nine. The morning's beatings had better begin, he thought. He had five of them this morning. He stood up and stretched. He walked to a cupboard and began to examine a number of canes.

In the corridor outside the study, five boys were standing. They ranged in age from thirteen to fifteen. They had been standing there, waiting to be beaten, for the last twenty minutes. One was to be beaten for being late at supper the previous night, one for reading after lights-out, and three for smoking in the lavatories.

"The bloody sod!" said Carter. "Why doesn't he have us in and get it over with?"

"Language, language!" said Angus Minor, nodding towards one of the housemaids who was polishing the corridor windows a few feet away from them.

"That's all very well," said Carter. "But it's ten to nine and I'm going to be late for first school. And then I'll get another six from Old Baxter."

"What about me? I've got to get down to the physics lab for first school, and that's much further away. Be a sport. Let me go first. You'll have plenty of time."

“Buy me a packet of crisps?”

“All right.”

The two boys changed places in the queue.

The fourth boy in the queue looked at the boy behind him. “If you’d like to change places?” he said quietly. He was a Persian, with delicate and very good-looking features. “My form has Divinity in first school and I don’t go to the lesson at all. I have a different religion. I’m not in a hurry.”

“Good old Hassan,” said the boy behind him, as he moved forward. “Do you want a packet of crisps too?”

“No,” said the other, in his soft voice. “I am glad to oblige.”

The maid at the windows glanced at the Persian boy. He was the youngest of the five, she thought—and he was almost impossibly good-looking. It was awful to think that he was to be thrashed by this beast of a prefect.

The door opened and Robert Milton appeared. He looked at the line of boys and then at the maid. Yes, he thought, that’s the best-looking of all our maids. How I should like to put her at the end of this line! I’d love to give her six of the best and make her howl too. I’d take off every stitch of her clothes. I’d take off that slinky apron and then her dress and then her underclothes and then her stockings

and shoes. I'd leave her cap on, though. She looks very pretty in that. Yes, I'd do that and then I'd roger her. Oh Christ! I'm so sex-starved! Thank God the holidays are only a week away. I'll get myself a woman like lightning!

The girl felt his eyes on her and turned slightly. She met his gaze and turned quickly back to her windows, blushing deeply. "The beast!" she said to herself.

Robert Milton looked at the queue again. "Are you first, Angus Minor?"

The boy nodded. "Yes, Milton." He swallowed and made his report. "I'm to be caned for smoking."

"Six of the best, eh? And it's the second time. It's a good thing for you I'm not permitted to give you more than six. Come along in." He turned in a leisurely way and re-entered his study. Angus Minor followed him and shut the door.

The Persian boy said: "Is it true that we have to take our trousers down?"

The boy who had taken his place nodded. "'Fraid so."

"Is it permitted for prefects to demand that?"

"Not really."

“Why should we do so then? Do other prefects demand it?”

“No, only Milton.”

“Why should we obey?”

The boy in the third place in the queue, who had been silent up to now, laughed sourly. “You’re new here, aren’t you, Hassan? You’ll soon learn mat—”

He broke off as the sound of a cane striking flesh came through the door. The four boys stiffened and seemed to hold their breath. The maid stopped the movement of her hand, and stood quite still.

Six times the cane struck flesh. There was a pause. The door opened. Angus Minor, his face twisted with pain, his hands fumbling with his trouser buttons, appeared and jerked his head at Carter. He said, between his teeth: “Piece of cake! In you go!” The boys relaxed a little. The maid resumed her window-polishing.

Carter went into the study and closed the door.

The Persian boy said: “You were saying that I’d soon learn something.”

“Yes,” said the boy who had interrupted himself. “You’ll soon learn that prefects have more power than God. That’s why we have to take down our bags.”

The sound of the cane striking flesh was heard again. The three boys stiffened again. The maid put down her cloth. She put her hands low in front of her, over her blue apron. She pressed them against her lower stomach. The sound of the lashes struck her nerves and made her bones feel like water. "The beast!" she murmured to herself, and waited for the next lash. It came, and sent a thrill through her. She pressed harder with her hands. "Oh, the beast, the beast!"

On the fourth lash a strangled cry came through the door. It grew louder on the fifth, and was a scream on the sixth.

The girl caught her tongue between her teeth and felt herself growing weaker. I would give anything, she said to herself, to do the same thing to that beast! I would give anything, anything, to give him a taste of his own medicine and make him scream too!

The door opened. Carter came out, rubbing his bottom with his hands, and rushed down the corridor without a glance at the others.

During the next two beatings, the girl stood quite motionless. Waves of hot desire were flooding through her. Her vulva felt very wet. So he takes their trousers down, she said to herself. And what then? Does he bend them over? Or does he lie them over the arms of his chair? Oh, if only I could watch it! Oh God! If only I could do it to him! The beast! I'd have his trousers down like lightning, prefect or no prefect. Would I beat him bent down or over the arms of his chair? I'd do it in both ways. And I wouldn't give him only six! I'd give him sixty! And I'd make him feel them! Oh, why can't I have the chance? I'd teach him to look at me like that. He always undresses me with his eyes. His handsome eyes. He's very good-looking. He's a beast, a beast!

The Persian boy went into the room and shut the door behind him.

Milton, cane in hand, looked at him. “You’re new, aren’t you?”

“Yes. Er—what should I call you? ‘Sir’?”

Milton laughed. “Good lord, no! You only call masters sir. Call me Milton. That’s my name. How old are you?”

“Thirteen, Milton.”

“And it’s for smoking that I’m to cane you, isn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“Take down your trousers and pants, then. It’s six of the best for smoking.”

The Persian boy unbuttoned his trousers. Milton watched him with interest. The boy was very good-looking, he dought; pretty, in fact—as pretty as a girl.. His penis stiffened as the trousers and pants fell to the floor. “Bend down,” he said.

The boy gave him a quick glance with his soft expressive eyes, and smiled a little. The smile was sweet, like a girl’s. He bent his body.

Milton stepped up to him and raised his shirt. He caught his breath at the beauty of the naked honey-coloured hips and bottom. He put a hand to the buttocks.

They were soft and inviting. He took up position and raised his cane. He asked: "Are you afraid?"

"Yes. Yes, very afraid." The buttocks began to tremble slightly.

Milton's penis was now very hard. He lowered his cane. "If you didn't have to go to first school," he said, "there might be a way for you to get out of this caning."

From his bent position, the boy said softly: "I don't have to go to first school."

"Why not?"

"My form has Divinity."

"I see." Milton thought to himself: I could do it, then. I'm free myself till second school. He said: "Do you want to get out of this caning?"

"Yes, please."

“If you’ll suck me off, I’ll let you off the caning.”

The boy stood up. “Certainly I’ll suck you off.” He began to raise his trousers.

“No, leave your trousers down. Just come here and unbutton me.”

The boy put his hand to Milton’s fly-buttons, opened them, and brought out the rock-like penis.

“Now kneel down and put it in your mouth. And then suck.”

The boy did as he was told. He knelt on his naked knees, his honey-coloured limbs bringing an urge of sex through the body of the young man. He cupped his hands around the testicles. He put out his tongue and licked the head of the penis.

Milton caught his breath.

The boy slowly slid the penis into his mouth.

Outside in the corridor, the girl waited for the sound of the lashes. He must begin soon, she thought. Whatever is he doing? It can’t take all this time for that little boy to take his trousers down. Oh, I wish I could watch! If only I could see them

bent down with their bottoms stretched tightly, waiting for the cane. Why don't I just walk in, as though I want to ask something? I'd be sure to see something. He's probably got the boy in position now. Why don't I? He couldn't do anything to me. He could only complain to the housekeeper, and I could say I didn't know what he was doing. Dare I do it? Yes, why not? But what can I ask him? I've got to have something ready. Yes, I could ask him whether he wants his own windows done. That's it. Come on, girl, let's have a look at it!

She turned on her heel and walked the few steps to the study door. She hesitated for a second. Then she opened the door and walked into the study. She opened her eyes wide. She stood as though transfixed. Then she shut the door, very deliberately, behind her. "So!" she said. "So this is what is going on!"

Milton found his breath. "What the devil do you mean by walking in here like that without knocking?"

The Persian boy rose slowly to his feet and pulled up his trousers.

The girl jerked her head at the door. "Off you go, you."

The boy walked quickly out of the room, and shut the door behind him.

The girl studied Milton, with a dancing light in her eyes. She looked at his penis, now becoming rapidly smaller. "Better put that away. And give me the cane." She held out her hand.

Milton handed her the cane, and then suddenly began to bluster. “What the devil —”

“Be quiet,” said the girl. “Shall we sit down? I know I’m only a housemaid and you’re a prefect, with more power than God, but I think the situation might allow me to sit down, don’t you?” Her eyes continued to dance. “What do you say?”

“Why do you want to sit down?” asked Milton mulishly. “What right have you to sit down in my study?”

The girl said, as though to herself: “Sixty now becomes seventy.” She sat on the nearest chair. “I want to ask you a few questions.”

“What questions?”

“Oh, do stop being stupid!” exclaimed the girl, and lashed viciously with the cane in a downward stroke. “You’re in a very awkward position, aren’t you? What would happen if I went to the housemaster—or the headmaster—with my story? You’d be expelled, wouldn’t you?”

Milton’s obstinacy fell from him. He sat down on another chair. “Yes,” he said dully. “I’d be expelled. I’d be disgraced. I’d never be allowed to go up to Oxford. And my father would probably disown me. So, for God’s sake, stop talking about going to any master with your story. Just forget it, will you? I’ll make it worth your while.”

“Would you be beaten too?”

“No, prefects are not beaten.”

The girl ran the cane through her fingers. “This prefect is going to be—if he doesn’t want me to go to the headmaster.”

“What do you mean?”

“Isn’t it clear?”

“No.”

“Yes, it is. You are just being stupid. If I cane you, I’ll not tell anyone about what I’ve seen. If I don’t cane you, I will. And that’s flat.”

Milton looked at her. “You’re serious, it seems. Why do you want to cane me?”

“Because the idea excites me.”

“How many?”

“Seventy.”

“Seventy! You’re mad! Nobody ever gave seventy. Even the headmaster doesn’t give more than a dozen.”

“I’m going to give you seventy,” said the girl simply. “Take it or leave it.”

There was a silence. Milton struggled with himself, glancing now and then at the girl and at the cane she was fondling. She waited with calm confidence. She knew what the outcome of the struggle would be. He would have to accept her beating. He would see it in a moment or two. She pressed her hand down on her apron again. Her vulva was hot, wet, and excited. I’ve got him where I want him, she told herself. I’ve got him completely in my power. He’s asking himself whether he can take seventy. The silly ass! As though I’m going to be satisfied with only seventy. I’ll thrash him every day to the end of term. Oh God! Life is wonderful!

“All right,” said Milton, with an attempt at a smile. “I’ll accept your caning. But seventy is a monstrous thing. When are you going to do it?”

The girl stood up. She said: “A little now. Just twenty. You’ll come to our dormitory tonight for the other fifty.”

“Our dormitory? Won’t you be alone?”

“No, I share a dormitory with two other girls. I want them to watch me caning

the head-prefect of Bartlett's."

"Hey! That wasn't in the agreement."

"It is now."

Milton shrugged. "All right. But you'll tell them to keep their mouths shut."

"Of course." She swished the cane again. "Have you any other canes?"

"Yes."

"Bring them to me."

Milton went to the cupboard and brought out four more canes of assorted lengths and thicknesses. He handed them to her. She examined them carefully, and picked out a longer one than the one she had been holding. "I'll use this, I think. Now, take down your trousers."

"My trousers?"

"My trousers?" she parodied his deep voice. "Yes, of course your trousers! Will you stop being so bloody stupid! Get your damn trousers down. And bend

over this chair. Now, be quick!”

Without a further word, Milton unbuttoned his trousers and let them slip to the floor. He pushed his pants after them. Thank God, he was thinking, that she’s bending me over a chair and not making me touch my toes. He bent low over the chair.

The girl lifted the shirt-tail out of the way and caught her breath at the sight of the naked buttocks. What a lovely bottom, she thought—and I’m going to cane it now! Oh! Oh! Oh!

She adjusted her position and raised the cane. She brought it down across the buttocks with all her strength. As it struck the flesh with the familiar—but now louder— sound, a thrill ran through her with the intensity of an electric shock.

Milton flinched, but made no sound.

I’ve got to make you scream, she thought. I must, I must, I must hear you shout!

She brought the cane down the second time. The thrill struck her again.

“Come away from that chair,” she said suddenly. “Move into the centre here and touch your toes.”

And some fools, thought Milton as he obeyed her, don’t believe in telepathy!

She brought the cane down again, swinging on the ball of her foot as she did so. Milton grunted as the cane bit into his now very tightly stretched flesh. The pain was shocking. It was a long time since he had been beaten, and he had forgotten how shocking it could be. He wondered dully how he could take what she was going to give him.

The cane lashed down again, and again...

She moved behind her victim, put her hands on his hips and pulled his buttocks closely against the front of her thighs. She began to breathe in gasps. She moved back into position and gave him another five lashes with all her strength. Milton's grunts changed into low groans.

"Now stand up and kiss me," she ordered breathlessly. She put down her cane.

Milton stood up painfully and looked at her in surprise. "With pleasure," he said. "I've often wished I could." He shuffled a little towards her and took her in his arms. He put his lips to hers. She sucked his tongue far into her mouth and then allowed him to pull hers into his own. Then she broke away. "You beast!" she said. She slipped off her apron and opened the front of her dress. "Put your hands in here."

Milton obeyed with a will. Things were taking an unexpected turn, he thought. He felt for her nipples and began to squeeze them lightly. The girl put her hands downwards to his penis and testicles. She caressed them gently. "You beast, you beast," she repeated breathlessly. "Oh, how I'm going to beat you!" He put his head to her breast and licked first one, and then the other, nipple. He felt the girl's body straining against him. Her fingers tightened around his penis. It had

become as hard as a rock.

Suddenly she broke away. She picked up the cane. There was a fire in her eyes. “Bend over again,” she ordered. “Come on! Be quick! Touch your toes. And now God help you!”

She began to lash the buttocks again. Her passion gave her extra strength. The skin broke and blood started to trickle down Milton’s legs. His groans grew louder and on the fifth lash he cried for her to stop.

She stopped. His cry had brought her to the edge of an orgasm. She flopped into her chair and gave herself to the sweeping waves of sex that were flooding through her. Her orgasm receded slowly. She groaned softly. Milton straightened himself and looked at her. “Have you finished?” he asked, his lips twisted with pain.

“No,” she replied dreamily. “You have five more to come now, and fifty more tonight. And after the fifty tonight, I’ll let you poke me—and that’ll be nice for you.” She closed her eyes and murmured to herself: “And if you haven’t the strength after your beating, I swear I’ll thrash you to death!”

Milton smiled. “I heard that.”

She opened her eyes and straightened herself on the chair. “Come here. Stand in front of me. Stand close in front of me. Come on.”

Milton did as he was told.

She handed him her cane. “Hold that a moment.” She took his penis in her hands and watched it grow hard again as she held it. She looked up at him. “Would you like me to put it in my mouth?”

“What? Oh, yes! Yes, please!”

“My mouth’ll be better than the mouth of a little boy, won’t it?”

“Yes. Please put it in.”

She leaned forward and licked the knob. She opened her mouth and slid the great erection past her teeth, over her tongue, and in towards the back of her mouth. Milton stiffened, put his hands on her shoulders and strained his back into a bow. Her tongue fluttered under the central nerve of his penis and he felt his orgasm coming nearer and nearer. Suddenly it hit him. He strained himself further backwards and thrust at her mouth. His hot creamy sperm spurted. She tasted the sour-sweet liquid and swallowed it as it spurted at the back of her mouth. She put a finger into her vagina and agitated herself. She felt her own impending orgasm leap forward again. She pulled her mouth away suddenly and took her hands away from her vagina. No, she thought, I don’t want it like this. I want to be properly poked. And he’s going to poke me tonight—or I’ll thrash him to death! She looked up at Milton. “Now go and bend over again. Give me the cane.”

Milton found, to his surprise, that he was still holding it. He gave it to her. A feeling of deep peace and contentment filled him. He realised that further pain

was to come, but he did not mind. He went to the centre of the room and bent down.

As the cane struck him, he realized that, after all, he minded very much. The pain was far greater now, after his orgasm. He closed his teeth and counted.

The girl thrashed as though possessed. Her every nerve tingled as the cane struck and struck again.

At last it was over. She fell again into her chair and relaxed. Her breath came in great gasps, and she moaned with pure joy.

Milton straightened himself, took a clean handkerchief and a bottle of antiseptic from a drawer, and began to clean up the blood on his buttocks and legs.

The girl sighed and slowly stood up. "Now I'd better get on with my windows," she said softly. She picked up her apron and put it on. "Listen, you will come to our dormitory tonight immediately after lights-out. Thank heavens you're a prefect and you have no lights-out time. You will bring this cane that I've been using. Goodness! Look at all the blood on it! You'd better wipe it off. And you will bring two more canes, in case the other girls want to have some fun with you." She turned to the other canes and selected two. "This and that. And don't forget this. If you don't come, I'll go to the headmaster first thing tomorrow. I swear that."

"I'll come," said Milton. "It seems I have no choice."

“Good. Now, listen carefully and I’ll tell you how to find our dormitory. We don’t want you walking into Matron’s room by mistake.”

CHAPTER FOUR

“And that,” said Audrey Milton, “is the whole story.” She picked up her brandy glass and sipped, looking reflectively at the man opposite her.

He leaned back in his chair and let out his breath. “It is the most incredible thing I’ve ever heard. I can hardly believe my ears.”

“I could hardly believe mine, either, this afternoon. But I accept it now. If anyone but Sir James Tatham had said it, I wouldn’t’ve accepted it. But, well, Tatham is—

“Tatham. Yes. And so I have to accept it myself.” He wrinkled his brow and said thoughtfully: “I wonder how much of the female I have in me?”

Audrey laughed. “That, Peter dear, we’ll soon find out!”

Peter Morphy laughed back. “No, but seriously, darling. Why aren’t I terrified to death? I’m not, you know. If anything, I’m a little bit excited.”

“At the idea of being whipped by me?”

“Yes.”

“You haven’t seen my whip yet!”

“What sort of whip is it?”

“A switch.”

“Long and swishy?”

“Long and very swishy.”

“No, but seriously! You’ll cut me to bits with a thing like that.”

“I intend to.”

“Oh God!”

“Still excited?”

“I don’t know. Perhaps a bit.”

Audrey looked at her watch. "Let's finish our drinks and go, shall we? I wonder what Bob would say if he knew what I'm going to do."

"Bob?"

"My brother at Biltingrudge. He's head prefect of Bartlett's, and he has a lot of beating to do."

"Does he talk to you about it?"

"Oh yes, certainly. Bob and I have always shared each other's secrets. He says that he rather enjoys doing his beating. He's got four or five different canes of all shapes and sizes."

"He sounds rather a terror."

"I think he is. He always has them take down their trousers. Says it's a waste of time otherwise."

"But surely that's not allowed?"

"No, of course not. But who'd dare to report a head prefect?"

“Yes, I see your point.”

“And that,” said Audrey, finishing her drink, “is why I was wondering what he’d say if he knew that I’m going to take down your trousers now. Shall we go?”

As soon as the outer door of Peter Morphy’s flat was locked and bolted, Audrey handed him her wrapped switch. In the taxi, he had wanted to open the wrapping but she had told him to wait. “You can have a look now,” she said, and put her fur coat over the back of a hall chair. She led the way into the sitting-room, switching on table-lamps and heaters. “What a summer! It’s like the middle of December!”

Peter followed her, tearing off the paper wrapping. He drew out the switch.

“No, but seriously!” he said, staring at it with a kind of horrified fascination. He gave it to her. “Let’s have a drink. Brandy again?”

“Yes, please.”

He went to a sideboard. “Do you really think you ought to use that tiling?” He jerked his head in the direction of the switch in her hands. He poured the drinks.

“Why not?”

“You’ll cut me to ribbons.”

“But, Peter,” said Audrey seriously, “that’s the idea. I explained that at dinner. If you want to cry off, just say so. But if we’re going on with this, if you want to make love to me, you’ve got to pay my price. And you know now what it is. Are you going to be a coward?”

“No, of course not,” the man said, and with a shaky hand trebled the amount of brandy he had poured for himself. He lifted the glass and drank off its contents. He filled it up again. Then he picked up both glasses and returned to the centre of the room.

“Now where,” said Audrey, as she took her glass from him, “shall we do it? Here or in the bedroom?” She looked thoughtfully around the spacious sitting-room. She was wondering what she could tie him to. “Let’s have a look at your bedroom. It may be more fitting— since you’re going to make love to me afterwards.”

“If there’s anything left of me, I am,” said Peter, and led the way to his bedroom. It was the first time he had taken her there.

“This is better,” said Audrey, looking at the heavy oak head and foot of the bed. “Yes, we’ll do it here. Now, go and find me some rope or wire or something.”

“What for?”

“To tie you up with.” Oh.” He shook his head and left the room. In a moment he was back with a coil of picture wire, a length of rubber-covered flex, and a ball of strong twine. “Will any of these do?”

Audrey took the ball of twine from his hand. “This’ll do perfectly. Now, take off all your clothes.”

“Oh God!” said Peter, and began to undress.

“Have you any scissors?”

“In the drawer beside you.”

Audrey found the scissors and cut several lengths from the ball of twine. For all the calmness of her actions and her speech, she was in a turmoil of emotion and excitement. Her mouth was dry, her heart was thumping almost painfully. Out of the corner of her eye, as she cut the twine, she watched Peter taking off his clothes. She began to breathe fast. She threw the lengths of twine on the bed and examined her switch closely.

It was a very beautifully made whip. With a centre of whalebone, which gave it its suppleness, it was covered with a tight plaiting of soft learner. At its handle it was the thickness of a finger. It tapered down to the thinness of a slim pencil at its lash end. At its tip there was a knot and two short ends of a thin red silk cord.

The girl’s hands began to tremble. This whip, she realized, would give a great

deal of pain. It would certainly give far more pain than the canes her brother had described to her, though those, he had said, could cause a person to faint if they were used scientifically. This one would certainly bring blood very quickly, and blood from her own lashes was something for which she had a strong thirst. She raised the switch and brought it downwards with great force. It hissed.

Peter's nerves jumped as he heard the hiss. He reached for his glass and emptied it again.

"I hope," said Audrey, "that the walls are thick."

"They're pretty thick," said Peter, with a great effort to control his voice. "The building is not a new one, and they built thicker walls then."

"Who lives next door?"

"Paula Murray and her husband. It's a very big flat. Three knocked into one, in fact."

"Paula Murray, the film star?"

"Yes. That was her husband we said hello to, in the lift."

"Of course. Now I remember! I knew I knew him. I just couldn't place him."

“He’s a nice man. He’s a university professor in maths and physics.”

“What’s she like?”

“A darling. And, as you know, unbelievably good-looking. Like you.”

Audrey smiled. “Thank you. But you’re taking an unbelievable time getting your clothes off. Come on!”

Peter slipped his shirt off and stood naked except for his socks. He held out his glass to her. “Do be a darling and fill it up for me.”

She looked admiringly at his tall slim body, his broad shoulders, flat stomach and lean hips. “Coward!” She went to the living-room and refilled his glass. She stood motionless for a moment beside the drinks-trolley. She wondered in which position she should beat him first. She had a number of choices. In her dreams she had had great experience. She made up her mind. Taking care that the trembling of her hand should not spill the brandy, she returned to the bedroom.

Peter, now completely naked, took the glass. He drained it again, shuddered, and said: “That’s better. Now I’m ready for you.” He forced a smile. “And now we’ll see whether I have any overdose of the female in me.”

Audrey pointed with her whip to the open space in the middle of the room. “Come and stand here, please.” She put the whip under her arm and picked up

two lengths of twine. “Your thumbs, please.”

Silently, Peter held out his thumbs. He watched her with a feeling of sick fear as she tightly tied the twine around his left thumb, knotted it three times, and left the two ends, each a foot long, dangling. She did the same thing to the other thumb. She put the whip on the floor.

“What are you going to do?”

“You’ll see. Bend over now. Touch your toes.”

“I doubt whether I can.”

“Don’t be silly. With all the sport and athletics you do, you could probably touch them with your elbows.”

This was nearly true. Peter bent his body and put his hands flat on the floor.

Audrey knelt. She picked up the ends of the twine that was tied to his left thumb. She looped the ends round his left large toe. She drew the twine tight. She made a number of knots. Then she stood up and moved to his other side.

“Wicked idea!” said Peter, as his right thumb and large toe were also tightly joined.

Audrey picked up her whip. She moistened her lips with the tip of her tongue. And now, she said to herself, I'm going to get rid of years of frustration. She put herself into position. She pressed her chest with her free hand. Her heart was pounding furiously. I wonder, she asked herself, what my pulse-rate is at this moment. Something dangerously high, certainly. What utter heaven) God bless Sir James! And God help Peter now!

She stretched out her hand and placed the length of her whip lightly across the tightly stretched naked buttocks. Quickly she raised the whip and brought it back to the buttocks with all her strength. A red livid weal sprang to life on the flesh.

"Ouch! Christ!" shouted Peter. He bent his knees and squatted low on the floor.

Audrey received an emotional shock that had the force of a sledge-hammer. She reeled a little, and put a hand to her head. She felt dizzy. She walked unsteadily to her glass and drained it. She returned to Peter. "Up you get!" she ordered. "Don't squat like that. Stand up, please. Touch your toes again, and don't bend your knees."

"No, but seriously!"

"Yes, but seriously!"

"Honestly, Audrey. I can't take this, you know. Nobody could."

Audrey looked at him, fear in her heart. Would he cry off the agreement, she wondered? Just as she was beginning, for the first time in her life, to realise the bliss that sex could hold. She decided that, even if he cried off, she would continue her thrashing. She had gone too far to stop now. But it would be better if he submitted voluntarily.

“Are you such a coward, so soon? Do you want to be a coward, and cry off?”

There was a silence.

“No,” he said quietly. “Go ahead and do your damndest!”

She smiled happily. “Good Peter! Nice brave Peter! Here we go then.”

She raised her whip and began to lash in earnest. On the eighth lash, Peter’s knees buckled again and he fell sideways to the floor, groaning with agony.

Audrey, her brain swimming, glared at him. “This won’t do! You must not bend your knees.” She turned on her heel and went out of the bedroom. She went into the kitchen and began to open drawers. After a moment or two she found what she wanted. These were two thick wooden cooking spoons, each about fifteen inches long. She marched back to the bedroom and put down her whip again. She picked up some more lengths of twine from the bed. “Come on, get up,” she said. “I’ll make it impossible for your knees to bend!”

Peter, lying on his side on the floor, struggled to get up. She put down a hand

and helped him. He bent again, without a word—his legs again straight.

Audrey put the long wooden spoons against the back of his legs and tied them firmly, above and below the knees, with the twine. She stepped back and regarded them. There was not enough fastening, she decided. She found the length of rubber-covered flex which he had brought to her, and cut it into four lengths with the scissors. She bound a length above and below each knee. “Now,” she murmured, “your knees will have to stay straight.”

She took her whip again.

She began to lash.

Hot tearing waves of sexual ecstasy tore at her with each lash. Dimly she heard the cries of her victim, now tied rigidly in front of her. The cries grew in strength. She disregarded them. She lashed frenziedly, until she had no strength to lash more. She let her whip hand fall to her side, and realised, for the first time, the state of the buttocks she had lashed. A further shock of ecstasy struck her.

The bottom was covered with blood. The flesh was covered with a criss-cross of livid weals. Six or seven of the weals were bleeding. The blood was trickling slowly down the sides and back of the legs.

She put a hand to her throat and pressed her fingernails into her skin. She put her other hand over her vulva and pressed downwards with it through her dress. Her vulva was very wet. So were her legs around it. She stood, as though in a dream, gazing at the bleeding buttocks. Her head was swimming and her faculties

seemed very far away. The cries had changed to moans, but she hardly heard them.

She saw the man's body begin to sway. Suddenly she came to life.

"Don't fall, Peter!" She moved quickly beside him and supported his weight with her body. "Don't fall, darling. There'll be no more thrashing for the moment. Try to stand as you are."

She knelt quickly behind the man. She put her lips to the bleeding weals. She licked up the blood with her tongue. It had a peculiar, but not unpleasant, taste. When she had enough blood in her mouth, she swallowed. A convulsion of sexual bliss shook her as the blood slid down her throat. She licked at another weal. She put a hand up between the man's legs and took hold of his scrotum. She moved her hand and placed her fingers round his penis.

Peter gave another groan. This one had a different sound. It held a note of pleasure.

She continued to lick and swallow the blood, playing the while with the penis.

Slowly the penis grew hard and large.

"Dear Christ!" said Peter softly, as though to himself. "I'm getting randy."

Audrey raised her lips. She chuckled. “So you have some female in you, after all.”

“To hell with that for a tale,” he said, grinning. “I certainly didn’t enjoy much of your maleness!”

“But you’re getting randy now, as you say yourself.” She squeezed the hard penis. “I think I’ll untie you and let you lie down for a little before I go on. You’ve earned a little rest.”

“Good Christ! Haven’t you finished?”

Audrey laughed happily. “Finished? My sweet, I’ve only just begun. Particularly now that you’re randy!” She looked again at the buttocks. The weals, whose blood she had removed with her tongue and lips, had begun to bleed again. “But you can’t lie on the bed in this condition. Your maid would have a fit tomorrow. Have you got anything waterproof in the flat? Anything that blood would wash off easily?”

“I don’t think so. No, wait a moment. In the chest in the hall there’s some camping stuff. I think there’s a groundsheet there.”

“Good.” Audrey reached for the scissors and cut through the twine that bound his thumbs to his toes. She untied the flex around his legs, cut through the twine, and removed the spoons. “You can stand up now, but don’t sit down anywhere.” She left the room and went to the hall. She rummaged through a number of things in the chest and drew out a large khaki-coloured groundsheet. She returned to the bedroom and spread it, rubber side upwards, on the bed. “Now

you can lie down.”

Peter walked slowly to the bed and flopped face downwards on it.

“No,” said Audrey. “Turn over on your back. I want to play with you.”

Stiffly and with a number of grunts, Peter turned himself over!

Audrey lay down on the bed beside him, her face on a level with his hips. She put her hands again to his penis and scrotum, delicately caressing the sensitive central nerve of his penis with the tip of an index finger.

The penis, already hard, grew harder with a convulsive leap. She put her lips to its head. She moistened her lips and then kissed the head of the penis. She put out her tongue and ran it lightly up and down the central nerve.

Peter squirmed on the bed, groaning both with pleasure and with the pain that his squirming gave to his lacerated bottom.

As she kissed and sucked at the penis, Audrey put her hands round the bag of the scrotum and twisted it lightly, letting her long fingernails sink a little into it.

She felt a shudder in the man’s loins. It grew stronger. This, she realised, was the rising orgasm. She quickly took her mouth away from the penis, her hands away from the scrotum, and sat up abruptly. “Don’t, Peter! Hold it, please. I want it for

myself afterwards.”

Peter sighed. “All right. But if you thrash me like that again, I doubt very much whether I’ll be able to.”

“You will,” said Audrey with conviction. She reached for her whip and studied it. Its lash-end was covered with blood. I must thrash him a bit more, she said to herself. Just a bit. But not so much as I thought I would. I suppose it’s nearly out of my system. I want him to make love to me. But all the other lovely positions I was going to tie him in? What a pity not to do it. But I want sex now. Or nearly now. Just a little bit more thrashing and then sex. Oh, God! What sex it’s going to be, after this thrashing! I can tie him in the other positions another time.

She stood up. “Turn over on your tummy again. Just a little bit more whipping, and then we’ll make love. Only a little bit. Twenty or so. I’m not even going to tie you up.”

Peter started to turn over, and then lay back again. “No, but really seriously, Audrey. No more. Please.”

She put her hand to his penis again and stroked it. “Peter darling, you can’t be going to be a coward now! Not after all that you’ve taken already. Come on! Be a man. It’ll be quite a short one. Only twenty or so.”

Peter looked up at her. A smile came into his eyes, and then he laughed. “All right, you bitch.” He turned over on to his stomach.

Audrey raised her whip again and brought it down on the fleshy part of his legs below his bottom. Peter roared with pain and threw himself on to his back just as the whip was hissing down for the second time. It caught him across the front of his legs above his knees. He shrieked with agony.

The girl let her whip hand fall. "Peter, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. But it's your own fault. Why don't you lie on your tummy as I told you?"

Silently, Peter turned again on his stomach.

Seven more lashes cut into the fleshy part of his legs. The pain was excruciating.

Suddenly something seemed to explode in his brain. He swung himself over and sat up. He put his legs to the floor and stood erect. He reached forward and grasped the whip.

Audrey felt an icy hand take hold of her heart. "Peter! What are you doing? Lie down again please. I've nearly finished. What are you doing? Let go of my whip! You know our agreement. Stop it! You're not going to be a coward at the last moment, are you?"

"No, my sweet," said Peter, between his teeth. "I'm not a coward. I think I've proved that well enough for one night. I'm just going to see whether you have any overdose of male in you." He wrenched the whip from her hand and placed it on the side of the bed. He put a hand into the V of the neck of her dress and gave a mighty tug. The flimsy silk tore like paper. He tugged again and tore the dress from her body. He flung it across the room. He gazed at her silk brassiere and pants.

Audrey tried to back away from him. “Peter! Peter! Stop! Stop it!”

He took one of her wrists in his hand and seized the other. He brought it, without much force, towards him. He put it with the first and closed his fingers over both wrists with the strength of a vice. “I’m going to give you a little whipping now, Audrey sweet,” he said, through closed teeth. “And we’ll see whether you feel at all randy after it.” He tightened his hand as she struggled to free her wrists.

“No! Peter, stop! Do you hear? This wasn’t in our agreement!”

“You know what you can do with our agreement? No. It wouldn’t be polite to tell you.”

With his free hand he ripped off her brassiere and her pants with two violent tugs.

Audrey’s protests changed into a howl. “Peter, stop it! How am I going to get home with no clothes?”

“You have a very beautiful mink in the hall. That’ll cover you.” He flung her on to the bed, face downwards. He lifted a foot and put it, with all his weight behind it, on the small of her back. He picked up the whip.

Audrey, her face turned towards him to see what he was doing, screamed.

“You’d better shut up,” he said grimly. “Unless you want me to gag you. These walls can’t be as thick as all that.”

She turned her face and buried it in the pillows, thrashing about wildly with her hands.

Peter raised the whip and brought it down with all his strength.

Audrey screamed into the pillow. Blood splashed as her skin broke. It splashed up on to his wrist. Spots of it fell on to his chest and stomach. “Oho!” he said to himself. “Feminine flesh, of course. Better not lay on so hard, chum. Just give her something to remember. You don’t want to kill her.” He brought the whip down again, and again, but with less force. Audrey stopped screaming and began to sob, piteously, into the pillows. Peter paused suddenly, looked down at her, and felt very guilty. He also felt deeply ashamed. This was not right, he realised. It was not in their agreement—as she had said. He dropped the whip and stood irresolutely, wondering what to do. Audrey’s piteous sobs made his feeling of shame turn to a sort of sickness. He removed his foot from her back and sat on the side of the bed. He put his hands on her naked shoulders.

“I’m sorry, darling. Oh God! I’m so sorry. What a filthy swine I am! It wasn’t in the agreement. Can you ever forgive me? I’m so ashamed of myself.” He buried his head in the hair at the back of her neck.

Slowly her sobs came to a stop. She stretched her limbs painfully. As he felt her head move, he sat up.

She turned over slowly on her back. Her eyes were filled with tears. She smiled up at him. "Hello, my filthy swine." She put up her arms. "Come and kiss me, my swine."

Hardly believing his ears, Peter put himself in her arms and pushed his own arms under her shoulders. "Do you mean that I'm forgiven?"

She nodded. "Yes, darling. And anyway I asked for it."

"No, you didn't. It wasn't in the agreement. I'm a sod."

"If I told you what you can do with our agreement, it wouldn't be polite."

He stared at her and laughed, wholeheartedly and with relief. "Audrey darling, you are the most wonderful person. And you know how much I love you. I've told you often enough."

She looked back at him. "Shall I tell you something very serious, Peter?"

"Yes, darling."

"I'm in love with you. I fell in love with you a few minutes ago."

“Good God!”

She smiled. “It seems that I’ve got quite a lot of femaleness in me, for all the overdose of maleness. Are you going to make love to me now?”

“Do you mean to say that you’re randy—after that whipping?”

“Very randy.”

“Glory be to God! And will you marry me?”

“Of course.”

“Will you open your legs a little, please?”

“With pleasure.”

She opened her legs. As Peter slid over her, his lips going to her very hard nipples, she took hold of his again enormous penis and guided it towards her hot and hungry vagina. She rubbed its tip against her vulva-lips and against the very sensitive spot at their head. She played here for several moments before letting it slide deliciously inside her soft vaginal passage. Its slow movement into her body gave her a sensation of delirious joy. It reached the end of its journey and was slowly withdrawn as far as her vulva-lips. It slid tinglingly back into her...

CHAPTER FIVE

A little earlier on the same evening, three twenty-year-old housemaids sat in their dormitory and listened to the tolling of the lights-out bell of Biltergrange School.

One of them, a very pretty brunette with vivacious eyes, said: “Mary, I can’t believe it! You’ve been pulling our legs.”

Mary shook her head. “He’ll be here in a few minutes. And then you’ll see, Maisie, that I’ve been speaking God’s truth.”

The third girl, a good-looking red-head, whose name was Pam, sighed: “I ‘ope you ‘ave. I’d love to cane the ‘ead-prefect of Bartlett’s. I’d love to cane any prefect, the way they walk round like they was God. But I’d partic’ly love to do it to Milton. He’s too good-looking. And he’s knows it.”

Mary smiled. “He knows he’s too good-looking?”

Pam pouted. “Oh, go on! We all know that you’ve ‘ad a superior education. You know bloody well what I mean.

Maisie said: “Mary, suppose he doesn’t come. Will you still go to the headmaster?”

Mary shook her head. “No, course not. It’d ruin him. And I wouldn’t want to do that to him. After all, he’s practically a grown-up man and it’s natural for him to get a bit hungry towards the end of term. He hasn’t done anything really wrong.”

Pam sniffed. “Hungry with little boys! I’ll show ‘im if ‘e comes. You say ‘e’ll be bringing some canes?”

“Yes. Three.”

Maisie leaned back against her pillow. “I still can’t believe it.”

“If ‘e doesn’t come,” said Pam, “I think you ought to go to the ‘eadmaster.”

Mary looked at her. “No, Pam. He had enough punishment this morning, if anything. He’s coming here tonight because I want a bit more pleasure, and I thought you two might like to have some fun too. But going to the head is out. Definitely out. And you’re not to say a word of this, do you hear? Can I trust you? Will you swear?”

Pam walked sulkily to the window. “Yes, you can trust me.”

“Swear?”

“All right.”

“Say it.” I swear.

Mary looked at the other maid. “And you too,’ Maisie?”

“Oh yes, I swear. I wouldn’t want to do anything really bad to him. His father’s some big nob in the government, isn’t he?”

Yes, and it might ruin him too. So you’ve got to keep your mouths shut. We’ll have our bit of fun with him tonight—and every night till the end of term if we want to. But we’ve got to be quiet about it.”

Pam said: “It’s a good job there’s nobody else in this wing.”

“Why, Pam?” asked Maisie, her pretty vivacious eyes alight with interest.

Pam turned round from the window and looked at her pityingly. “Maisie, you’re stupid sometimes. Because otherwise we’d not be able to cane ‘im. Caning makes a noise. ‘Aven’t you ‘card it in the masters’ room and in the prefects’ block?”

There was the sound of a footstep outside the door. The girls looked at one another with shining eyes. There came a soft tap on the wood.

Mary said softly: "What did I tell you?" She raised her voice. "Come in."

The door opened and Robert Milton came slowly into the room. He was obviously in the grip of a powerful emotion. He opened his mouth and then closed it again. There were three canes under his arm.

"Good evening, Mr. Milton," said Mary, walking to him and taking the canes from him. "I was sure you'd come."

Pam moved behind him and shut the door quickly. She turned the key.

Milton found his voice. "Well, well," he said, as naturally as he could. "So our three most beautiful housemaids share the same dormitory, do they? This is more than I dared to expect."

"What bloody nerve!" said Pam. She moved to Mary's side and took the canes in her hand. She examined them carefully, and then looked up at Milton. "You're going to get a lot more man you expect, you are."

Milton smiled at her, forcing himself to make his smile warm and natural. "No, but really! Of all our housemaids, three are beauty queens. And they're all in the same room! It's a nice surprise."

Maisie slid off the bed. "Oh, he's nice!" She went up to him and looked into his eyes. "Am I really a beauty queen, Mr. Milton? Do you think that?"

Milton nodded. "I do indeed."

"Would you like to kiss me?"

"Very much."

She reached up her arms and put them round his neck. She put her lips to his.

"Hey!" said Pam roughly. "Pack it up! That's not what 'e's 'ere for."

Mary laughed. "No, it isn't. Come on, break away, Maisie. Let's get on with what he's come for. Fifty of the best."

"From each of us?" asked Pam, a smouldering light in her lovely eyes.

Milton disengaged himself quickly from the arms of Maisie. "No," he said quickly, looking directly at Mary. "It's fifty and full stop. Not fifty from each of you, for God's sake!"

Mary looked at him and then looked away. "Well," she said softly. "I told you that you're going to get fifty from me myself and I told you to bring two more canes in case the other girls want to have a bit of fun with you. It's up to them."

“Then you’ll get fifty from me too,” said Pam at once.

Maisie looked at him again and said softly. “And I’d like to give you fifty—fifty of the best, as you call it down there in the school.”

Milton said violently: “We do not call it any such thing. The expression is ‘six of the best’.”

Never mind, ducky,” said Pam, moistening her lips.

“Up ‘ere it’s going to be an ‘undred and fifty of the best. So shut up.”

Mary said: “Well, let’s stop arguing. Let’s get on with it. Come on, Mr. Milton, down with your trousers.”

Pam said: “Only ‘is trousers? Why don’t we ‘ave all ‘is clothes off?”

“Oh, yes!” said Maisie. “Let’s have him in the nude. It’ll be more exciting.”

“Maisie, you’re shameless,” said Mary. “All right, Mr. Milton, get stripped.”

Milton looked at the girls, one after the other, and seemed to be on the point of saying something. Then he shrugged and began to take off his clothes.

Mary said: "Choose your canes, girls." She picked up the cane she had used that morning.

"You take your pick, Maisie," said Pam. "Just so long's it's a cane, I don't care. I'll make the bugger hop." She moved close to Milton. "There's something 'e doesn't know. And I'm going to tell 'im what it is." She looked up into his eyes. "You're the son of a lord, ain't you? Well, my pa used to work for a lord. One day something was stolen from the 'ouse. And do you know 'oo the lord 'ad to pick on? My pa it was. And my pa went to jug for six months. Even if 'e did take the thing, whatever it was, the lord didn't ought to 've put 'im in jug. The sack would've been enough. But 'e put 'im in jug for six months. And you're the son of another bloody lord. So I'm going to make you hop tonight, sonny boy."

Milton opened his mouth, and then shut it again. He removed the last piece of his clothing.

Maisie caught her breath. "He's beautiful! Look at them shoulders and them hips." She lifted her cane to his mouth. "Kiss it, handsome. Kiss the beauty queen's cane.

Milton moved back his head, and then changed his mind. He put his lips to the cane, his eyes on his pretty tormentor. I'd better do what they say, he told himself. Then the quicker it'll be over. It's going to take a long time, though. A hundred and fifty! I wonder whether I'll last out. I'd better! I wonder what this one is going to get out of it? Sex? She doesn't seem to have any sort of vendetta like that class-conscious redhead. As for the one this morning, I know her game. She's like a woman in that book Audrey lent me. A sexual sadist. Oh, dear God!

How did I get into this mess?

Mary said, pointing with her cane to the middle of the floor: “Come on, over you go again. Touch your toes.”

Milton moved forward and bent down.

Maisie and Pam caught their breath as they saw his buttocks for the first time. They looked at Mary in astonishment. “You did work on him, didn’t you?” said Maisie.

Pam said viciously: “I’ll give ‘im some fresh marks down the back of ‘is legs.”

“No,” said Mary quickly. “We’d better keep to his bottom. He can hide that. He’d never be able to hide marks further down his legs.”

Milton, from his bent position, looked up at her gratefully. “Thank you,” he said.

“Not at all, sir,” said Mary happily, and swung her cane.

The cane bit into his already lacerated bottom ten times... twenty... thirty—

“Stop a bit!” said Pam. “Let’s ‘ave a go.”

Mary moved away. Pam took her place, running the length of the cane backwards and forwards through her fingers. She looked at the bent body with a curious light in her eyes. "Get up and turn round," she ordered.

Milton obeyed. He relaxed his tightly clenched jaws. He had made no sound as yet.

"Now get down and kiss my feet."

"No."

"Look," said the girl, still running the cane through her fingers. "I'm going to give you only fifty if you're good and obedient. If you're not, I'll make it five 'undred. So 'elp me, I will. So you'd better do as I say."

Milton hesitated for a second and then knelt. He put his lips to each of the girl's shoes.

"Now say you're sorry for what a bloody lord did to my pa."

"I'm sorry," said Milton quietly.

"For what?"

“For what a bloody lord did to your father.”

Pam looked at Maisie. “Get me my cap, will you? And an apron.”

“Why, Pam?” asked Mary.

“I’m going to put ‘em on this son of a bloody lord; ‘nd ‘umiliate ‘im a bit. Come on, Maisie, ‘urry up.”

Maisie gave her the cap and apron. She stood back with shining eyes.

“Get up, sonny boy,” ordered Pam.

Milton stood up.

She quickly slipped the straps of the blue apron over his broad shoulders and moved behind him to adjust and fasten them. She came again in front of him and placed her housemaid’s cap on his head. She giggled. “My! You do look pretty! Turn round and show yourself to Mary and Maisie. Go on, turn round.”

Milton, blushing with embarrassment, turned.

The other two maids looked at him standing in front of them. The pale blue cap sat on his head at a slight angle. The apron covered the whole of his front as far as his knees. His back and bottom were still totally naked. Mary caught her breath. This is a good idea, she thought. He looks so sweet and helpless. And his bottom is there all ready for our thrashing.

Maisie had begun to breathe fast. The sight of the young man standing in front of her, in the cap and apron, gave her a feeling she had not known before. Almost without knowing what she was doing, she stepped forward and put her hands to the apron, just above his penis. She took hold of his penis through the apron. She had wanted to do this from the moment he had taken off all his clothes, but she had been overcome by shyness. Now that he was partly covered by the apron, her shyness had gone. She felt the penis stiffen and grow hard. "Naughty boy," she said softly, looking up at him. She caressed his testicles through the apron.

Milton wished she would fondle him with her naked hands but gratefully accepted the pleasure he was feeling. A sensual tingle began to creep through all his genitals.

With disappointment, he heard Pam say explosively: "Maisie, will you stop that! Get away from 'im. I'm going to cane 'im now. Bend down, sonny boy. Here it comes!"

Milton bent again as Maisie released his penis and the apron fell down to his knees. He heard the quick swish of the cane and clenched his jaws again.

Pam thrashed with all her might. This is for my pa, she thought, as the cane struck and bit into the flesh. This is for his six months in jug. I'd like to kill you for that. But you're quite tough, aren't you? Why don't you shout a bit?

She drew on all her strength. Milton began to grunt, and then groan.

Maisie stepped forward. “Give him a breather, Pam. Have a heart.”

Panting, the red-head let her cane fall to her side. “All right,” she said, and fell across her bed. Her heart was beating furiously. That was bloody good, she thought. I didn’t count so I don’t know what I’ve given. But it doesn’t matter. It doesn’t have to stop at fifty. I can go on to five hundred if I want to.

Maisie was now standing in front of Milton. “And now it’s my turn, when you’ve got your breath back. You can stand up if you like.”

Milton stood up.

The girl put her hands again to his apron and, through it, again took hold of his penis and testicles. The penis leaped at her touch.

“You like me a bit, do you?” she said softly, looking into his eyes. “Would you like to put this thing”—she gave the penis a squeezes—”inside me?”

“Very much,” said Milton, at once. “May I?”

Mary stepped forward. “Not yet, you mayn’t. You’re going to do it to me first. I

told you that this morning.”

“Yes,” said Milton. “You said you’d thrash me to death if I didn’t.”

“And I will. Leave him alone, Maisie. Get on with your caning. We’ll have the sexy stuff later.”

Maisie released his penis reluctantly. “All right,” she sighed. “Over you go. Say your prayers.”

Milton almost began to do so, as she started. He had somehow not expected Maisie’s caning to hurt as much as the others. To his agonised surprise, he found that her lashes had an extra pain. What he did not know was that Maisie, for all the slimness of her frame, had the duty of beating carpets three times a week, and had in her right arm the strength of a man.

With her tongue caught between her teeth and a light shining in her eyes, Maisie thrashed him. She swung her lovely body as she lashed. She gave him twenty strokes of her cane and stopped. “Oh!” she panted. “After Mary, you’re going to put your thing into me. And I’ll thrash you to death if you don’t or if you can’t!

Mary unbuttoned her dress. “That’s the end of the first round of caning,” she said, slipping it over her head. “Now for some sexy stuff.” She pulled off her petticoat, looking at Milton as he painfully stood up, agony tearing through his every nerve. “You’re going to poke me now. And if the girls want to cane you while you’re doing it, they can.” She pulled off her pants, stockings and brassiere, and stood naked before him.

Milton caught his breath at the loveliness of her body. I've often thought I'd like to do it to her, he thought, but I never dreamed she's as lovely as this. He moved forward. "May I take this off?" He looked down at his apron.

"No, you keep that on," said Mary. "Just pull it up. And keep your cap on too." She lay down on her bed. "Come on and do your stuff."

Milton approached her slowly, his penis rising to its full height beneath the apron and pushing the material up away from his body. He lay down on the bed beside her. He put his lips to her breasts.

Mary sucked in her breath and stiffened herself. Then she relaxed and gave herself up to ecstasy.

Pam got up from her bed and took a cane. "Come on," she said to Maisie. "You stand on one side of the bed and I'll stand on the other and we'll help 'im a bit."

Maisie nodded and went, cane in hand, to the far side of the bed.

"Wait a bit, girls," said Mary. "Let him get in first. I don't want you knocking his stiffness out of him. Come on, Mr. Milton. Get inside your mistress. You with your cap and apron! Say 'Yes, madam.' Go on." She pulled up the apron, away from his penis.

"Yes, madam," said Milton, almost happily. He was going to enjoy himself now.

He pushed the head of his penis between her legs, moved it around a little, and then thrust. Mary gave a small cry. The penis had gone far inside her. She grabbed at his shoulders and sank her nails into his flesh.

Pam nodded at Maisie and raised her cane. She lashed down with great force. Maisie lashed, with her greater force. Pam lashed again. And Maisie lashed again.

To his intense surprise, Milton found that the pain of the canes was now quite different. It did not agonise him. Instead, it stimulated him. He began to enjoy it, as he moved his penis slowly upwards and backwards. Mary moaned, her eyes shut tightly. She dug her fingernails deeper into his shoulders. “Thrash him!” she whispered. “Oh, thrash him now!” Her orgasm began to roll forward in great sweeping waves of bliss. “Thrash him! Kill him!”

The two girls thrashed with all their might.

The extra pain gave Milton only an extra stimulation. His own orgasm was very near its peak. He fought to keep it back, and continue his pleasure.

Nobody heard the knock on the door.

Pam began to moan as she lashed. She felt the grip of a tremendous sexual thrill in her loins. Her head began to swim.

The knocking on the door was repeated, more loudly.

Mary's orgasm struck her with terrific force. It was an ecstasy unlike anything she had experienced in other love-makings. They, she realised, had not been worth the trouble. And as she floated away from herself in her bliss, she found herself thinking: no love-making ever again for me unless there's a caning attached to it...

This is unbelievable, Milton was thinking, as he himself was possessed. Quite unbelievable! These lashes aren't giving agony any longer. They're giving a heavenly sweetness. What a damn shame she's come so quickly! He abandoned himself to his ejaculation. He found its savagery slightly shocking.

The knocking on the door changed into banging, thumping. A shrill angry voice was shouting: "Open up! Do you hear? Open up!"

It was Maisie who heard it first. The colour drained from her cheeks and fear filled her eyes. "Listen!" she whispered. "Stop! Listen! There's someone at the door!" She reached over the bed and caught Pam's arm as it flashed down. "Stop! Listen! There's someone knocking! Oh Lord, who is it?"

Pam looked at her and went white in her turn.

There was silence in the room.

The handle of the door was rattled angrily. "Open up, do you hear?" It was the voice of a very angry woman.

Maisie put a hand to her mouth. “Oh Lord, it’s Matron!” She looked at Mary, who was lying in a blissful stupor beneath Milton’s now inert body. “What’ll we do?” she whispered. Mary did not hear her.

The red-head sighed. “There ain’t nothing we can do. We’re on the top floor and there ain’t no other way out. We’re copped an’ that’s all there is to it.”

She shrugged resignedly, threw down her cane, and walked to the door.

“Pam!” hissed Maisie. “Don’t open it!”

Pam glanced over her shoulder. “And let ‘em bring the fire brigade to the bloody window? Don’t be stupid.” She turned the key, opened the door, stood back.

A white-haired woman of about fifty-five marched into the room, and stopped dead in her tracks. She stared with wide-open eyes at the scene before her.

At last Mary came back to her senses. She looked up and saw the Matron. With a feeling of sickness, she nudged Milton. “Get up,” she muttered. “Get up quick!”

Milton caught the inflection of fear in her voice and looked towards the door.

“Milton!” The Matron’s eyes opened wider as he got up from the bed, and took

off his housemaid's cap. He made as though to remove his apron, but thought better of it.

The Matron said: "Milton, turn round. I want to see your—your backside again."

He hesitated a second and then turned. All the bridges are gone now, he thought. So what the hell? Let her see if she wants to.

The woman at the door gave a great gasp as she saw the lacerated buttocks, with blood flowing freely down the sides of the legs. She looked at the blood-covered cane in Maisie's hand, and then she looked at the equally blood-covered cane that Pam had thrown down.

"All right, Milton, you may turn round again. You had better take off that apron, put on your clothes, and go back to your room." She paused, and added professionally: "Before you go to bed I advise you to wash your wounds with some disinfectant. And tomorrow I suggest you hold yourself in readiness for a call from the headmaster." She looked coldly at the three maids. "And you will be in my room at eight o'clock."

Milton shrugged and looked at Maisie. "What a pity. I shan't be able to do it to you now." Now that the bridges are gone, he thought, to hell with everything.

Maisie looked at him in terror. "Stop talking like that! Go away from me!" She sank on to a chair and began to wail. "What'll happen to us? What'll she do to us?"

Pam snorted contemptuously. "What can she do? Except sack us. And jobs are easy enough to find nowadays. Not as good as this, p'raps. But to 'ell with it!"

From the bed, Mary said quietly: "I'm very sorry, Mr. Milton. It's you who's in awful trouble now. I don't know what to do. I don't want you to get into any more difficulties. Not after what we've done to you tonight."

Milton smiled. "Don't worry about that part of it. I began to enjoy the end of it, as a matter of fact. But as for tomorrow, I think you'd better tell the truth."

"But if I do, you'll be expelled. You said so yourself."

"I imagine that I shall be expelled in any case. But it can't be helped." He took off the apron and began to dress himself. "At least, it has been a very interesting experience."

CHAPTER SIX

The headmaster glared across his desk at Robert Milton. "You are not telling the truth!" he thundered. "Neither are the maids."

Milton, his buoyant resignation of the previous midnight totally dissipated, sat with a feeling of sickness in his heart.

"On the other hand," the headmaster went on more quietly, "it doesn't matter really what the truth is. It must be something pretty bad for those girls to have had the power to make you, the head-prefect of Bartlett's, accept such a flogging as I'm told you were given." He put the tips of his fingers together. "The important question is what we are going to do with you." He glared again at Milton. "Let us face facts. You are not a fool. You know that my decision is going to be influenced very strongly by the fact that your father not only is a cabinet minister and a very old friend of mine but is also a member of the board of governors of this school. If this were not so, you would have packed your bags by now and gone. And because I am in the exquisitely awkward position of having to try to find some way to get you out of this mess in order to protect your father from the repercussions of your disgrace were you to be expelled from Biltergrange, I am sick with disgust. I feel sick to look at you, Milton."

The boy dropped his eyes. Colour flooded his cheeks.

"There now," said the old man, more gently, "I've got it off my chest and I feel better. A lot better." He gazed with understanding eyes at the dejected figure opposite him. "Look at me, Milton."

Milton looked up. The headmaster went on: "If this had happened at the university, it wouldn't have been quite so bad. It's bad because it happened here at school, where a different set of laws are in force. I don't say you wouldn't have been sent down from the university. You almost certainly would. But there's not the same disgrace at being sent down as there is at being expelled from a public school. However, you know all that. The point is this. You're in your last term, and you're in your last week of your last term. That makes you very nearly at the university, doesn't it? But, hang it, that doesn't help! You're still at Biltergrange. So what is to be done with you? How many people know about this? Let me see. Only the Matron and the three maids. They've been dismissed, of course. That leaves the Matron. And she's on your side. She asked me to be lenient with you. I don't think she'd speak of this. Do you know, Milton, I think that the best thing would be for her to diagnose a slight case of measles or chicken-pox or something, and pack you off to the sanatorium for the last week of term. For it's a fact that you must be relieved forthwith of your duties."

Milton looked at the old man, and felt tears come to the back of his eyes. He tried hard to fight them back. The headmaster looked away quickly and rummaged in a drawer.

When he felt he had control of his voice, Milton said: "Thank you, sir, with all my heart. And now, sir, may I tell you the truth?"

The old man glanced at him. "D'you want to?"

"No, sir. I'd do anything rather than tell you. But I think I'd feel cleaner if I told you. You're letting me off, sir. I know why, of course. But still, you're letting me off, and I get away scot free. I don't deserve it, of course. And I owe it to you, I think, to tell you the whole thing."

The headmaster grunted. “You don’t have to tell me, lad,” he said quietly. “But if you’d do me the favour, I’d be grateful. Y’see, I’ve had a long life and a lot of experience, but I’ve never met anything like this before!”

“I was being—er—masturbated by a younger boy,” said Milton, staring with difficulty into the old man’s eyes. “Or rather, if I am to tell the whole truth, it was by the boy’s mouth. And one of the maids walked in and caught us.” He looked away at last. “And I accepted the floggings in exchange for not being reported.”

“I see,” said the headmaster. “Yes, I see now. Now everything fits.” He stood up. Milton also rose to his feet. “Thank you for telling me. I always said you had guts.” He knocked out his pipe. “Listen, my boy. A public school education is the best thing in the world. But there’s one thing wrong with it. And that’s the sex problem. When a chap gets to your age, he must get some release. And a public school environment doesn’t provide it.” A twinkle came into his eyes. “On the other hand, I’m told that you have recently had some form of release as well as a flogging. That is, and must remain, a unique exception.” He held out his hand. “We’ll say goodbye now, Milton. I’ll not see you again before you go. Report to Matron after lunch. I’ll see that she knows what to do with you.”

—2—

“So you’ve lost your bleedin’ job, ‘ave you?” said the father of Pam. “And now I s’pose you’ll be ‘angin’ round ‘ere at ‘ome till you find a new one. ‘Ow did you come to lose it? By lazin’ around like the lazy bitch you are, I s’pose.

“No, Pa,” said his red-headed daughter. “It wasn’t like that at all. It was for a

very different reason, I can tell you.

“Tell me, then.”

“I can’t.”

“You see! Bleedin’ liar as well as a lazy bitch.”

“I’m not a bleedin’ liar,” said Pam, with an angry light in her eyes. “If you must know, it was because of you.”

Her father looked at the ceiling. “Imbecile, too! Because o’ me! Cor strike a light! Bleedin’ liar, lazy bitch and ‘alf-witted idiot, too. Cor! What a daughter I’ve got!”

Pam promptly lost her temper, as he had intended. She told him the whole story.

Lord Curie, Minister of State in the National-Coalition Government, looked up as his secretary approached. “Excuse me, sir. Your daughter is on the private phone.”

Lord Curie sighed and picked up the yellow receiver. “Yes, Audrey?”

“Daddy, darling. Are you very busy?”

The man looked at the mountain of papers on his desk. “A bit.”

“Could you spare five minutes?”

“Can’t you tell me on the phone?”

“It’s not for me. It’s for a young man. A very nice young man. He wants to see you.”

“Now?”

“Yes, he’s downstairs. They won’t let him up to your floor. Please see him, Daddy. Will you please, for my sake?”

Lord Curie sighed again. “All right. What’s his name?”

“Peter Morphy.”

“What does he want?”

“He’ll tell you. But, Daddy, please be nice to him.”

“Why particularly?”

“I’m in love with him.”

“What?” There was a click in his ear as he spoke. Audrey had hung up.

Lord Curie growled. He rang a bell. When his secretary appeared, he said: “There’s a young man named Peter Morphy downstairs. He wants to see me. Bring him up.”

Three minutes later, Peter Morphy entered the great office. He approached the enormous desk. The man behind it looked up, stood up, and held out a hand. “How d’you do? So you want to marry Audrey, is that it?”

Peter looked a little startled. “Er—yes, sir. How do you do?”

“Are you free tonight for dinner?”

Peter was not free. He had an engagement for dinner with Audrey. “Yes, sir,” he said. “I’m quite free.”

“Good. Black’s at eight. We’ll have a talk mere over a drink and some grub. Have to ask you to excuse me now. Mountain of work. And I’ve got to get to the House in half an hour.”

Fifteen minutes later, the secretary approached again. “I’m so sorry, Lord Curie, but there’s another call on your private line.

“Thank you, Miss Blair. Who is it now?

“The headmaster of Biltergrange.”

Lord Curie raised his eyebrows and lifted the yellow receiver.

“Hello, Richard,” he said. “Haven’t heard from you for a long time. How are you?”

“Very fit, thank you, Hugh. I’m ringing you about Robert.”

“Anything wrong?”

“Not seriously. A case of chicken-pox. But he’s in the sanny.”

“Bad luck. No good my coming down for Speech Day then?”

“No. That’s why I rang.”

“How’s he been doing, Richard? Satisfied with him?”

“Very satisfied indeed.” The answer came promptly. “He’s a fine boy. He’ll go far.”

“Thanks, Richard. It’s nice to hear that from you. Must see you some time. Lots to talk about. My daughter Audrey’s thinking of getting married.”

“Is she indeed? Who’s the man?”

“Fellow called Peter Morphy. Know anything about him?”

“Peter Morphy. Let me think. Of course. Is he a tall fair chap, about thirty years old.”

“That’s the chap.”

“Yes, he was an All-England wing-threequarter some years ago. I know his father. Good family. And the boy did exceptionally well at Cambridge.”

“Thanks very much, Richard. Ring me when you’re next in town and we’ll have a nog.”

Lord Curie returned to his mountain of papers in a contented state of mind.

—4—

“Audrey?”

“Yes, Peter. Did you see him?”

“Yes. Straight away.”

“What happened? Was he nice?”

“Very. He’s dining me tonight at his club. We’ll have to cry off our date.”

“Of course. You can give me a nightcap, though, if you like. After you leave him.”

“Wonderful idea.”

“Where are you ringing from now?”

“The flat. There’s a note from the neighbours. Want us to have a drink with them at the week-end. Like to?”

“Paula Murray and her husband?”

“All right. By why us? They don’t know me.”

“Rodney docs. And he saw us together in the lift last night.”

“Yes, of course. Peter, will you ring me as soon as you get back tonight? And then I’ll come straight over.”

“Right.”

“And Peter.”

“Yes, darling.”

“Get the lovely swishy whip out, will you? I feel awfully sadistic again. And also the groundsheet and the cords. Put them all on the bed, nice and ready.”

“All right. Oh God!”

— 5 —

The salesman of Faulkner’s knocked on the door of the house in the East End Road.

“I’m looking for Mr. Joseph Briggs,” he said to the burly man who opened the door.

“That’s me.”

“You make the cats for the prisons?”

“Aye. I do. Why?”

“I want you to make one for a private order, if you will.”

The burly man opened the door wider. “Come in.” He led the way into a workroom. “Who wants it?”

“A customer of ours.”

“Who’re you from?”

“Faulkner’s.”

“What did she say she wanted it for?”

The salesman opened his eyes. “I didn’t say it was a she.”

The burly man chuckled. “No, you didn’t. But it was, wasn’t it? Four times out of five it’s a woman who orders a cat. What did she say she wanted it for?”

“We did not ask,” said the salesman, pompously. “It is none of our business.”

“If you ‘ad, she’d’ve said it was for a play. But it wouldn’t’ve been the truth.”

“In this case it might well have been. The customer happens to be the film star Paula Murray. Anyway, will you make one for us?”

The burly man opened a long shallow box. “I don’t ‘ave to. I’ve got ‘em ready.” He took out a handful of cruel-looking instruments. He gave one to the salesman. “Nice looking thing, ain’t it? Be careful that your customer doesn’t get

you alone, though. Or else she'll put it across your back before you can say crikey!"

The salesman made no reply. He was looking at the cat-o'-nine-tails in his hand. It had a polished mahogany handle to which were attached nine lengths of leather, each about three feet long and each the thickness of a Woodbine cigarette. To the tip of each of the tails was attached a small flat piece of lead. "Jesus Christ!" he murmured.

"First time Faulkner's been asked for one?"

"Yes."

"Mmm. Yes, they usually come to me direct. It don't take 'em long to find me."

"You mean to say that you sell a lot of these things to women?"

"Course. Why else do you think I'd keep a box full of 'em?"

"But what do they want them for? What do they use them for?"

The burly man glanced at him. "You really mean you don't know?"

“No, I’ve no idea.”

“Then you’d better sit down, son. And I’ll complete your education.”

—6—

“My name is Morphy. Lord Curie is expecting me.” “Yes, sir. Would you go straight through to the bar, please. He is waiting for you there. It’s straight through the smoking-room and on the left.” Peter gave the man his hat and umbrella, and walked into the club. He found Lord Curie talking to another man in the bar.

“Oh, hello, Morphy. What’ll you have?”

“Hello, sir. Pink gin, please. Hope I’m not late.”

“No, I’m early.” He turned to the other man. “Do you know each other? Mr. Peter Morphy; Sir James Tatham.”

Peter gave a little jump. He coughed to hide it. “How do you do, sir?” He shook hands. “I know your name very well, of course.”

“Who doesn’t?” said Lord Curie.

The doctor stayed with them for a few minutes, talking mainly of horses, a subject in which Lord Curie seemed particularly interested. Then he excused himself and left.

“Let’s go and have some grub,” said Lord Curie.

Peter nodded and finished his glass. He was not looking forward to the meal. He would be under a minute examination the whole time. But it had to be endured. They went to the dining-room, sat down, and ordered.

Lord Curie said: “Let’s come to the point. No good beating about the bush. You want to marry Audrey. With commendable behaviour you have come to ask my permission. Very commendable—and very rare these days. Bit academic, though. Audrey does as she damn well pleases. So if she wants to marry you, I suppose she will. However, two or three questions.”

“Of course, sir.”

“What do you do?”

“I’m a stock-broker. With Williams and Glenwright.”

“That’s a good firm.”

“I’m a junior partner.”

“Good. Got any private money?”

“Three thousand a year.”

“Net?”

Peter laughed. “I’m afraid not. Gross.”

“Never mind. It’s not too bad. And Audrey’s got about the same. You’ll have enough. Next thing. Have you got anything in your past”—Lord Curie’s eyes met Peter’s—“that you’re ashamed of? Anything, say, that’d prevent your getting into this club?”

“No, sir.

“Good. Then that’s that. I’ll give it to the Times tomorrow. And I’ll put you up here. Can’t have a son-in-law who’s not a member of Black’s. Now, what do you know about horses?”

—7—

Peter let himself into his flat at eleven o’clock. He went straight to the telephone. Audrey came on the line almost at once.

“Right, Peter. I’m on my way. Did it all go well?” “Yes, I’m to be put up for Black’s, too.”

“He must have liked you. Have you got the whip out?”

“No. Have a heart. I haven’t taken my hat off yet.” “Well, take it off. And then take off everything else. And put the whip and the other stuff on the bed. I’m a-coming!”

“All right. Oh God.”

Peter took off his hat. He went to the chest and took out the groundsheet. It was clean again. Audrey had washed away all the blood. He took it into the bedroom and spread it on the bed with its rubber side upwards again. He said “Oh God” again several times and then found that he did not really mean it. He took the whip out of a drawer and looked at it reflectively. He felt the stirring of excitement in his loins. He put his hand to his penis. It was growing rapidly harder and larger. “Well, well, well,” he said. He went, whip in hand, to the sitting-room and poured himself a drink. He swished the whip around him. He began to feel very excited. “Now, why is this?” he asked himself. “I ought to be feeling afraid of what she’s going to do. But I’m not. Not much, at least. In a way, I rather look forward to it. Or do I? How can I? It was bloody murder last night. But all the same it was nice at times, too. Oh well, I’ve got more female in me than I thought, that’s all. That is, if Tatham knows what he’s talking about.”

He returned to the bedroom and put the whip on the top of the groundsheet. He opened a drawer and took out the twine and rubber-covered flex. He threw these on to the bed. He began to undress.

The bell rang as he stepped, naked, out of his pants. He reached for a spotted silk dressing gown, slipped it quickly on, and went to open the door.

“Aha!” said Audrey. “Good Peter. Brave Peter.” She lifted the front of his dressing-gown, as he closed and locked the door. “Nice and naked. And look at the size of this!” She took his penis in her hands. She looked up at him with shining eyes. “Peter! Does this mean—?”

“That I’m looking forward to it? Yes, I suppose it does. It seems I’ve become quite a masochist since last night.”

The girl threw her arms around his neck. “Oh, wonderful, Peter! How wonderful!” She disengaged herself and led the way into the sitting-room. “Give me a drink, please. What wonderful news!”

Peter looked at her doubtfully. “Steady on, darling. I don’t think I’m that much of a masochist. It’s just that the idea of it is rather exciting. The thing itself will be bloody murder. I’m sure of that!” He went to the drinks-trolley and poured her a brandy. He gave it to her.

“But, Peter. That’s what so wonderful. A whipping’d be a waste of time if it didn’t hurt. It’s got to hurt. But if you’ll accept it voluntarily, because the idea of it is exciting to you—well, that makes everything perfect. You said last night that you’d always let me do it when I want to. But I wonder how long you’d have kept that up—after we are married. Now, though, it looks quite different.”

She sipped her drink. “And, do you know, Peter—I’ve got another rather exciting thing coming in about a week. Another thing to whip you with. A delicious thing.”.

“What is it?”

“A cat-o’-nine-tails.” She sat on the sofa and crossed her legs slowly.

Peter stared at her speechlessly.

“Yes,” Audrey went on. “A real one. Like the ones they use in prison.”

Peter swallowed. “They don’t any more. They’ve been abolished.”

Audrey shook her head. “They haven’t. Not completely, that is. They’re still used for mutiny in prison— for attacking a warder and things like that.”

“However do you know?”

She smiled. There was not much that she did not know about floggings in schools, cadet colleges, prisons, concentration camps, Gestapo torture chambers, and so on. Avid reading during what she now thought of as her frustrated years had provided her with a large fund of information. “You would be surprised to know how much I know,” she said quietly.

“Do you know how they do it?”

“Of course.”

“How?” He handed her a lighted cigarette.

“They have a cell that is three times the size of the normal one. It would be about the size of your bedroom.” She lay back on the sofa and smiled. “That’s very fitting, isn’t it? For when I do it to you.” She drew on her cigarette. “In the centre of the cell they have a triangle made of very heavy posts, about eight feet high. They tie the man’s wrists to the top of the triangle. He’s not completely naked, as you’ll be. He has his trousers on. Then they give him one lash. And then the prison doctor listens to his heart with a stethoscope. If it’s all right, they give him the second lash. Oh, I forgot. They strap a piece of leather over his kidneys and the back of his neck, for protection. They work on his back and shoulders. After the second lash, the doctor listens again, and they go on to the third lash, and so on. We’ll have to get some leather for your own kidneys and neck, of course.” She looked up at Peter and laughed. “Oh darling, you look just like a frightened little boy! Look, go and get the whip. Go and get it quickly, please.”

Peter left the room. In a second he was back with the whip. She took it from him. She sat squarely on the sofa and patted her lap. “Come on, my frightened little boy. Lie down over my knees. Frightened little boys ought to be put across knees. Come on, lie down. But put my glass down, please.”

Peter put down her glass and his own, and lay down across her knees. She pulled away the front of his dressing-gown and took hold of his penis with her left

hand. It was very hard still. “This doesn’t seem to be frightened, does it?” She pulled up the back of the dressing-gown and looked at his naked bottom. The weals of the previous night were now black, blue and dull red. She raised her whip and struck at the buttocks. Peter gasped. She squeezed his penis and struck again. “Poor—little—frightened—boy!” She struck with each word that she spoke. “Poor—Peter!” She began to feel the mounting dizziness of ecstasy, and struck harder. “He—doesn’t—look—at—all—forward—to—his—whipping—with—the—lovely—cat—o’—nine—tails,—does—he?—And—now—he—can—turn—over—and—kiss—me!” She fell back against the back of the sofa, and took her hand away from his penis. It had become slightly smaller during her whipping. She was panting from excitement.

Still lying on her knees, Peter turned over on to his back. His bottom felt as though it was on fire. He drew her face down to his. He put one arm around her neck and squeezed her to him. He put a hand beneath her dress and slid it gently towards her vulva. She reached for his penis again. She found it rock-hard once more. She stiffened and squirmed as his hand played with the moist lips of her vulva. She thrust her tongue far into his mouth. Then she pulled away, panting. She said: “Come on. Let’s get started. I’m going to thrash you properly now. Come on, up you get! Have a drink if you want. You’ll need it.”

Peter stood up and slipped off his dressing-gown. He threw it on the sofa. His buttocks had become a vivid red again. One or two of his previous night’s wounds had opened again. A little blood shone wetly on them. He walked to the drinks-trolley, fear making his heart thump. He poured a large measure of brandy into his glass. “Would you like one too?”

Audrey shook her head. She stood up and caressed her whip. “This is quite sufficient intoxication. Come on, drink up!” She walked into the bedroom.

Peter drank his brandy in two gulps. He followed her.

She had picked up two lengths of twine. Her whip lay on the bed. “Thumbs, please.”

Peter held them out. “Bending over again?”

“No. I’m going to tie you to the bottom of the bed.” She knotted the lengths of twine tightly around his thumbs. “Now come and stand here.” She pointed to the heavy wooden foot of the bed. “No, face the bed, darling! I’m not going to whip your front! At least, not tonight. Now put your hands on the knobs.” Peter stretched out his arms and placed his hands on the knobs at the corners of the bed. Audrey took the ends of twine and bound his thumbs tightly to the knobs. She stepped back and looked at him. “Yes, that’s how it is,” she murmured, thinking of her dreams. “You’re nice and helpless, aren’t you. Frightened?”

“Very,” said Peter quietly.

“Is this frightened too?” said Audrey, and slipped a hand between his legs to his penis. “No, it’s not.” She reached for her whip. “I’ll make it frightened, though.”

She swung the whip. It hissed and bit into the buttocks. Peter gasped again.

Audrey struck again, and again. The sex inside her mounded to a fury. She went on lashing. She did not want to release her sex yet. She wanted it to make her faint with its ferocity, if that was possible. She lashed on with all her strength. And the fury inside her loins grew greater as she lashed...

It very nearly did make her faint. After delivering about thirty lashes, she felt very dizzy. She put a hand to her head and moved quickly to the bed. She flopped down on her back. The dizziness cleared at once. She felt the impulse to get straight up and start again. She decided, however, to relax for a few moments to regain her breath. She lay back on the pillows and gazed at Peter.

He had stopped groaning as soon as her lashes had ceased. His eyes were closed and his face was twisted with pain. She wondered if she had hurt him too much. She hoped not, for she had not finished yet. He would simply have to take it...

The tearing waves of pain in Peter were ebbing. And to his amazement, the pain that remained was not unpleasant. It had in it a straining sensation that was not unmixed with the sweetness of sexual titivation. While the whip had been cutting into him and bringing the tearing, searing waves of white-hot agony, there had, of course, been no thought, no hint, of pleasure. But now that the whip was not falling, pleasure was certainly there, straining at his loins. He felt his penis move away from his legs and begin to rise. His testicles were like two hard nuts. He felt them beginning to tingle.

He opened his eyes and looked at her. He smiled.

She smiled back, relief filling her breast. Clearly, she had not hurt him too much. "How are you?"

He grinned. "You bitch! How do you think I am?"

“No, but seriously, Peter?” She smiled at herself. She had already picked up his expression.

“Ready for you any time you like.”

“Honestly?”

“Yes, honestly. The whipping itself is bloody murder, but when you stop there’s a very strong sexual pleasure. Most peculiar.”

Audrey got up and began to undress. “I’d better get ready for you then. I don’t want you tearing my clothes off again.” She undressed down to her brassiere and panties. They were of black crepe de chine. Peter caught his breath at her beauty. His penis gave a jump. She sat down on the bed and prepared to take off her stockings. “No,” said Peter. “Please leave those on. And your shoes for the time being.”

She put on again the shoe she had taken off. It was a court shoe with a very high stiletto-like heel. She stood up and took her whip in her hand again.

A thought seemed to strike her. She looked at her watch. “Yes, we can get some dance music on the radio. It’ll be nice to whip you to the beat of Rock ‘n’ Roll.” She went into the sitting room and turned on the radio. She moved the dials until the dance music was clear and fairly loud. It was a tango. She went back to the bedroom. The tango came to an end. A Rock ‘n’ Roll number followed at once. She stepped to the foot of the bed.

“Oh, my goodness! Your bottom!” A hand flew to her mouth.

The buttocks were a flaming mass of bloody weals.

“We’ll have to rub it with a lot of meths,” she murmured. “We must harden it up. But the damage is done now. So here we go!”

She struck with each second beat of the tune. The waves of searing pain tore again through Peter. This time he did not mind. He knew they would be followed by something unbelievably sweet straining at his loins. He could not prevent himself, however, from gasping and groaning. And he could not prevent himself from pulling at the twine that bound his thumbs to the bedpost. Audrey had tied the knots too tightly and too cleverly, however. His thumbs would not move more than a fraction of an inch, and certainly could not be pulled free. So he writhed and squirmed...

The tune came to an end. Another began immediately. It was a rumba. Audrey changed the speed and the rhythm of her whipping, and lashed on...

She flopped again on the bed when the rumba finished. She lay, panting and moaning with joy. Her legs were drenched by the wetness that had come from her vagina. Several times she has been on the verge on an orgasm during her whipping, but she had succeeded in fighting it down. She wanted it with Peter’s penis inside her. She lay for a few moments to get her breath.

Peter felt the waves of agony recede. The sweet straining began in his loins. As the agony decreased the sweetness increased. He pulled on his thumbs, not, this time, to free himself, but to stretch himself against the straining sweetness. He

took great gulps of air deeply into his lungs. The sensation spread from his loins. It slowly entered his every nerve. Soon even his shoulders were filled with the aching bliss. He felt himself becoming lightheaded with desire. His penis felt to him as though it had a life of its own. It pulsed and throbbed. It seemed that it would burst if it grew any larger.

He said: “Audrey darling. Any more whipping?”

She shook her head. “Not tonight. I’m completely female again. Do you want your revenge?”

“Not tonight, sweetheart. I want to make love to you. I’ll burst if I don’t.”

She got up quickly from the bed, fetched the scissors from the drawer, and cut his thumbs free. He rubbed them sharply to restore the circulation.

“Lie down on your tummy first, Peter. Let me drink up some of that blood I’ve brought.”

He flopped face-downwards on the bed. The rubber surface of the groundsheet felt cold and smooth and pleasant to his hot body. Audrey lay half over him. She put one hand to his penis, the other to his testicles. “My God!” she said, as she felt the size of the penis. “Is that going into me? It’ll split me wide open.” She put her lips to the bleeding weals. A savage thrill tore through her with each mouthful of blood that she swallowed. She began to tremble violently. She thrust herself upwards to bring her vulva on a level with the penis. Peter turned over. He raised himself and leaned to put his lips to her vulva. She caught his shoulders and pulled him down. “Not tonight, Peter. I couldn’t stand anything

more. Just make love to me quickly. If I don't have you straight away, I'll burst too."

He gently put his penis inside her. It felt to him as though his penis had a life of its own and was luxuriating in the soft and delicious wetness of her vagina. It felt to her as though the titillative delight would send her out of her mind...

CHAPTER SEVEN

Although it was only a quarter to four, the lowering clouds had brought an early dusk to London.

The procureuse sat alone at the end of the bar of the “700” Club in Shepherd’s Market. She was a large, heavily-built woman of about forty. She wore dark glasses, a mannish tweed suit and flat shoes with thick soles. She carried no bag.

She gazed through her glasses at the men and women in the bar, and wondered whether any of them could be likely customers. Through the window she saw a bright red open sports car draw up. A man in a jacket of a conspicuous checked material got out. He spoke briefly to the man at the door of the club, gave him what looked to her like a ten-shilling note, and came into the bar. He looked around the room. His eyes fell on her. He walked to her end of the bar. He stood beside her.

He put a half-crown on the counter. “Bass, please.”

She felt his eyes turn to her. She looked straight at him.

He took a deep draught of his beer. “Could you be Mrs. Turner?”

“I could be. Do you want a girl?”

He shook his head.

“A man, then?”

He shook his head again. “I want a little information. If you’ll give it to me.”

“You a copper?”

He took out his wallet and extracted a card and a pound note. “My name’s Simes. I’m from the Clarion.”

The woman studied the card and gave it back to him. She put the pound note in a pocket. “What do you want to know?”

“What’ll you have?”

“Scotch.”

He gave the order and turned his back on the barmaid. He lowered his voice. “Ever heard of the Wh_ipping Club?”

“I might have. Why? You one of those?”

“No. But I’d like to know about it. What do you know?”

“Nothing. I’m not so sure it exists, for that matter. May be just rumour.”

“That’s not much for a quid.”

The woman took the pound out of her pocket. She gave it back to him.

“You’re right. It isn’t. But I don’t know anything about it.”

“You said you’d heard of it.”

“I have. I’ve heard of it. That’s all.”

“No idea where I could find it?”

“No, none.”

He sighed. “Pity. But I’ll find it yet.”

“Why are you interested?”

“It’ll make the story of the year.”

“I wish you luck. You wouldn’t like a little girl for tonight?”

“How much?”

“Five pounds.”

“Don’t be silly.” He drained his glass, and then looked at her-closely. “Unless it’d be a virgin.” He licked his lips and grinned.

“No.”

“I might take a boy, if you’ve got one young enough. But not tonight. I’ll come back and talk to you sometime. You’re always here?”

“About this time, yes.”

“Okay. See you, then.” He walked out of the bar. A moment later the red sports

car drove away with a snarl of its engine.

The procureuse caught the barmaid's eye and nodded at her glass. "Keep your eye on it, ducks. I'm just going to the blower." She left the bar of the club and went into a telephone box which stood a few yards away.

"I want to speak to Mrs. Collett, please. This is Jessie Turner."

"One moment, please."

There was a pause. Then: "Hello, Mrs. Turner. This is Mrs. Collett's secretary. Can I do anything for you?"

"I'd like to talk to the boss."

"She isn't here at the moment."

"Is she at Buckley?"

"No. Can I give her a message for you? Is it anything urgent?"

"It may be. Man called Simes from the Clarion has been asking me what I know about the club."

“Oh. How much did he seem to know?”

“Only its name, I think. But he seems a bit determined. Says it’ll make the story of the year.”

“It would. Well, thank you very much, Mrs. Turner. I’ll tell Mrs. Collett as soon as I see her. And a cheque will reach you in tomorrow morning’s post.”

—2—

Three beautiful girls were sitting on the banks of a small river near the village of Buckley. They were Mary, Maisie and Pam, lately of Biltergrange School. Their bicycles lay on the ground beside them. Far away to the south the sky was black with storm clouds. Here, the afternoon was warm and fine.

Mary was looking fixedly at Pam. “You haven’t told anybody, have you, Pam?”

Pam looked back at her with a bland stare. ““Course not. What do you think I am?”

Maisie said: “And of course I haven’t, Mary. So stop worrying.”

“What are you worrying about, anyway?” demanded Pam. “What would it

matter?”

“It would matter a lot,” said Mary firmly. “He’s had enough trouble, as it is.”

“Trouble!” Pam snorted. “What trouble? ‘E wasn’t expelled, was ‘e? ‘E got away scot free. We didn’t. He spends the week like a bloody lord in the sanatorium, and we gets chucked out of our jobs. I’d like to ‘ave ‘im under that cane again. I’d show ‘im.”

“So would I,” said Maisie softly. “What a shame we was copped that night. If we hadn’t been, we’d’ve done it again the next night and the next, and we’d do it again tonight and tomorrow and—”

“And kill him,” said Mary.

The other two girls exchanged glances.

“What’s got into you, Mary?” demanded Pam. “You gone soft on ‘im or something?”

Mary looked away at the river and nodded her head. “Yes,” she said simply.

Pam stared at her with open eyes. “Straight?”

“Yes. ‘Fraid so.”

Maisie said: “Mary, you mean that you’ve fallen for him? You’re in love with him?”

Mary nodded again. Then she looked up at them and laughed. There was a suspicion of a tear in her eyes. “Bloody silly, isn’t it? Fat lot of good it’ll do-me.”

Pam looked at her incredulously. “You’re bleeding right! Never ‘eard such cock in me perishing life.” Her voice softened. “What ever did you go and do that for?”

“Wish I knew,” said Mary, with a catch in her voice. “It just went and happened.”

“When, Mary?” asked Maisie. “When he was poking you?”

Mary shook her head. “No, it’s not the first time I’ve been poked. Though it was the first time I’d been poked like that—it was so good! No, it happened, though I didn’t know it at the time, when I was caning him in his study in the morning. And it hit me for sure when he was getting it from me again that night.”

“Is that why you wouldn’t tell the ‘eadmaster the truth? And made us both swear that we wouldn’t either?”

“Yes.”

“Cor stone a lark!” said Pam, and frowned at a young man who, with the line of his fishing rod in the river, was moving slowly upstream towards them. “What are you going to do about it?”

“Nothing, of course,” said Mary. “Except forget it as soon as I can.”

Maisie smoothed her dress over her knees. “Well, I never! Who would’ve thought it?” She plucked at a blade of grass. “Still, I still think it’s a shame we was copped so soon. I enjoyed caning him.” She sucked in her breath. “Oh my, I did enjoy it.”

“So did I,” said Pam. “An’ now I know ‘ow much I like doing it, I want to find someone else to do it to.”

“Oh yes!” said Maisie, excitedly. “Do you think we could?”

“If we puts our ‘eads to it, why not? What about you, Mary? Would you like to do it again to someone else? Or are you too much in love?”

“No,” said Mary. “‘Cause I feel like that about him, I’d rather it be him I’d do it again to. But since it can’t be him, I’d like to do it to somebody else. It doesn’t matter who it is. Just so long as it’s somebody. I like the feeling of doing it.”

“But how could we ever find anybody to do it to? said Maisie. “Tisn’t so easy, is it?”

Pam looked reflectively at the young fisherman, now twenty yards away.

“What about ‘im?” she said slowly.

“Who?”

“Who do you think? I can’t see no more’n one man.

Maisie glanced at the man and looked back at Pam. “You can’t mean it! You—”

“You’re crazy, Pam,” said Mary.

Pam narrowed her eyes and stared at the man. “Why?” she said quietly. “Why am I crazy? There ain’t nobody round. And even if somebody did come, we’ve got an excuse this time. We’d say we was punishing ‘im for makin’ ‘imself a nuisance with us.”

“With all of us?”

“No,” said Pam. “No, that wouldn’t do.” She thought for a moment, still staring

as the young man. “Yes, I’ve got it. We’d say that ‘e’d been making a nuisance of ‘imself with Maisie, and we two friends of ‘ers ‘ad come along ‘ere for a walk an’ rescued ‘er. And we was punishing ‘im for it.”

There was a silence for a moment or two.

Maisie said: “And we could tell him that if he said anything after, we’d go to the police and give him in charge for attacking me. It’d be three words against his.”

Mary put a finger to her lips. Her eyes were shining. “Do you really think we could?”

“We’ll look a long way for a better opportunity,” said Pam, her own eyes beginning to smoulder. “It’s miles from nowhere, ‘ere. Nobody’s likely to come this way. And ‘ave you noticed mat tree?” She pointed to a willow a little way upstream. “Look at them branches. Better’n canes, I should say.”

The two other girls looked at the tree she was pointing to.

“My!” said Maisie.

Mary nodded her head slowly.

“Well?” said Pam. “Are you on? Shall we warm ‘im up a little?”

“I’m on,” said Maisie. “What about you, Mary?”

“Yes,” said Mary. “But I don’t see how we’re going to hold him still. He looks quite strong.”

“That’s easy,” said Pam. “Listen. This is what we ‘ave to do...”

—3—

Lord Curie stood at the open French-windows of his office on the tenth floor of the Ministry building. He gazed over the edge of the balcony at the sea of roofs below his eyes. Rain began to fall heavily. London looked grim and depressing.

He turned. “Lucky young devil,” he growled. “How would you like to be able to get away for six weeks to the Riviera, Miss Blair?”

His secretary smiled. She knew that she was not being offered six weeks there.

“I couldn’t imagine anything more heavenly, sir. To be able to get away from this! Who—er—is the lucky young devil, sir?”

“My son Robert. He’s leaving the day after tomorrow.”

“But hasn’t he got chicken-pox? I thought you told me—

“They thought he had. Wrong diagnosis. It was something he ate. Gave him spots. Will you get him his radon of travellers’ cheques, please. And write to Andre Faure at Nice to let him have whatever other money he wants.”

“Very good, sir. Is that all?

“Yes, for the moment.”

Miss Blair got up from her chair. Lord Curie turned back to the open windows. He pushed his head out and looked up at the sky. His secretary started forward.

“Lord Curie!” she said loudly.

Her employer jumped. He swung round. “What is it?”

The woman relaxed. She smiled with a shade of embarrassment. “I’m so sorry. I didn’t want to startle you. But when that window is open I’m always afraid that you’ll forget about the balcony and walk out on it. You are so absentminded, sir, at times!”

Lord Curie glared at her for a second. Then he gave her a shy smile. “Thank you,

as a matter of fact I had forgotten it.”

“Oh dear. May I close the windows? This balcony is so dangerous now. It wouldn’t hold the weight of a cat.” Without waiting for permission she closed the windows. She smiled. “Now it doesn’t matter, sir, if you’re a bit absentminded.”

“When in God’s name are they going to repair it?”

“I’ll send another note to the Ministry of Works. It’s a disgrace.”

Lord Curie returned to his desk. “Oh, one other thing, please. Ring Wilkinson and tell him to open the house in Chelsea. I’m going to give it to my daughter and son-in-law as a wedding present.”

—4—

“That,” said Helen Collett, “is not at all good. The Simes man was behind the Marilyn Marsh scandal.” She thought for a moment. “There’s not much we can do about it, though—short of moving out of Buckley Manor and going abroad or something.”

“Or closing the club for the time being,” said her secretary.

“Yes. But that’s only as a last resort. It would be a great pity.”

“Of course. But think, Mrs. Collett, of what would happen. He said himself it would be the story of the year. That, if anything, is the understatement of the year! Think of what your position would be.”

Helen Collett crossed her lovely legs and lit a cigarette. She inhaled deeply and blew out a cloud of smoke. “I think he’ll have to be paid off. A man like that generally has a price. It’ll be expensive, but—well, it’s better than a scandal. And closing the club wouldn’t necessarily take away the possibility of a scandal. He seems to have got his teeth into the thing.”

“It’ll be very expensive.”

“Can’t be helped. Get on to Buckley, will you, and tell Howarth to come up here to me early tomorrow. He’s the best man to tackle Simes.”

The secretary got up from her chair and went to the telephone on a side-table. She dialed the exchange and asked to be connected with the Buckley number. She waited for a moment. Then:

“Parkes? Good evening. This is Miss Lancing. I want to speak to Mr. Howarth, please.”

“I’m afraid he’s not here at the moment, Miss Lancing. I think he’s out fishing somewhere. But he’ll be back in an hour or so.”

“All right. Ask him, please, to take the early train up tomorrow morning. Mrs. Collett wants to see him.”

—5—

Arthur Simes took the lift to the fourth floor of the Clarion building, walked along a corridor until he came to a door marked women’s page, chief editor, tapped lightly, and pushed it open.

He put his head into the room. “Got a minute to spare, Betty?”

A good-looking woman of about forty-five looked up from her desk. “Oh, it’s you, Arthur. Yes, come on in.”

Simes closed the door behind him and sat in the chair in front of the desk.

“What’s on your mind?” asked the woman.

“I’m on the wrong tack. And I want your advice. Your feminine advice.”

“What about? What are you on the wrong tack about?”

“This Whipping Club business.”

“Oh that.” She sniffed. “You’re chasing a will-o’-the-wisp, sonny boy. It doesn’t exist.”

“It does, Betty. I know it does.”

“How do you know it does?”

He shrugged. “Feeling in my bones.”

“That all?”

“Strong feeling.” He sat forward. “And I’ll lay a hundred pounds to a busted bollock that Paula Murray is very much mixed up with it.”

“Paula Murray? You’re crazy.”

“She is, Betty. I know she is.”

“How d’you know? A feeling in your bones again?”

He nodded seriously. “Yes. And a word that Marilyn Marsh’s maid let drop.”

The woman looked at him seriously. If you're right, you'll break her, you know. A story like that would ruin her. You know that?"

Simes laughed unpleasantly. "What is this? The Y.M.C.A.? So what if it breaks her? It'll make me!"

She sighed. "No, this is not the Y.M.C.A. It's the Clarion. And your career is your career. And to hell with Paula Murray. Okay. You said you wanted my advice."

"Yes. Everybody I ask shuts up as soon as I mention the words Whipping Club. So I've got to try a new tack. And I'm stuck."

"The great scandal reporter!" she mocked. "He's stuck."

"Where would you go from here if you were doing the story?"

"I wouldn't be doing the story."

"If you were. Please, Betty."

She lit a cigarette. "Well, what would a whipping club use?"

“Whips, canes, birches—things like that. But mat’s no good. I’ve checked the likely shops.”

“Faulkner’s?”

“Naturally. It was no good, of course. How can they tell, when they sell a whip, that it’s not for a horse?”

The woman drew on her cigarette. “What else would a whipping club use? Something that Faulkner’s and suchlike shops wouldn’t stock?”

“Tell me.”

“Well,” she said, looking at him through her smoke, “I’m not a member of the club, but if I were I think I might want to use the real thing sooner or later.”

“What real thing?”

“A cat-o’-nine-tails, sonny boy. And if I were doing your story I’d ask myself who makes those pretty little instruments.”

Simes sat up again in his chair, his lace alight. Betty, you’re a very clever—”

“But, I repeat, I wouldn’t do your story. His face fell a little. A sulky look came into his eyes.

“Why not?”

“I happen to like Paula Murray. I think she’s a nice person. I wouldn’t want to break her.”

Simes stood up. “To hell with Paula Murray! But thanks very much. So long.”

—6—

“What are you fishing for?” asked Pam, peering into the water.

The young fisherman looked round. He was surprised to see that the three very pretty girls who had been sitting some distance away had come up behind him.

“Anything that wants to be caught,” he said. He looked again at the girl. They were all, he thought, extremely pretty. He laughed. “But nothing seems to want to be.” He told himself that it didn’t matter now. These girls were far better fish.

“What a shame,” said Pam silkily, and gave him a strong push.

He fell face forward into the water.

“Now!” hissed Pam. “Come on!”

The three girls started to give shrill, excited cries. They stood on the edge of the river, waving their hands.

The young man floundered around in the water for a moment and then climbed out. He was very angry. “What did you go and do that for?”

The girls fluttered around him, talking excitedly. “Poor man, he’ll catch his death!”

“No, ‘e won’t catch ‘is death, ‘cause it’s summer—but ‘e’d better take ‘is clothes off.”

“Yes, and he can dry ‘em in the sun. It’s still quite warm.”

“It’s very lucky we was ‘ere to ‘elp ‘im! Might’ve-drowned otherwise!”

“Or caught his death of cold!”

“Come on up the bank, lad.”

“Yes, sit down ‘ere, and we’ll ‘elp you take off your clothes.”

“What a terrible thing! Can’t imagine how it happened.”

“Just sit down ‘ere.”

“Let me help with his jacket. You help him with his trousers, Maisie.”

“Don’t struggle so much. We’re trying to help you, ain’t we?”

“Just lie back, lad, and leave it to us. Don’t take on so!”

“What are you struggling s’much for? Ain’t we trying to ‘elp you?”

The young man was indeed struggling as much as he could. He had been helped out of the water, and then pushed and pulled up the bank with surprising violence. He found himself now on his back with the three girls pulling at his jacket and trousers. His trousers were down around his knees. His jacket had been pulled back over his shoulder-blades. He made a further effort to free himself and stand up.

To his intense astonishment, he found he could not move his feet. They seemed to be bound. He glanced down at them and found that his ankles had been tied, during the commotion, with a woman's silk stocking. He shouted loudly. At the same moment he felt his arms, half-pinioned already by his jacket, being taken in a strong grip. His wrists were forced towards each other. He shouted again. He felt his wrists being bound by what he guessed was the other stocking.

The girls stood up, one after the other, and gazed at him. They were panting with their exertion.

"Good!" said Pam. "That's trussed 'im all right."

The young man lay on the ground looking up at them. He began to shout again.

"Oh, 'ell!" said Pam. "Give me your stockings, Mary. Or you, Maisie. We've got to gag 'im."

Mary pulled up her skirt and undid her stockings. The young man continued to shout.

"How'll we gag him?" said Maisie.

"S'easy," said Pam. "Like they do in wild westerns. You watch." She reached for her bag and took out a cigarette. She lit it and held out a hand to Mary for her stockings. She rolled one of them into a ball and gave the other to Maisie. "Now come and 'elp. The moment I shove this in 'is mouth, you catch your stocking

round ‘is mouth and tie it behind ‘is ‘ead.” She looked down at the shouting man. She knelt beside him, the rolled stocking in one hand and her cigarette in the other. “Whyn’t you shut up?” she asked him pleasantly. “Listen ‘ere. I want you to open your mouth. If you don’t—before I count five—this cigarette is going on your prick.” She pulled open the front of his pants, bared his penis, and poised her cigarette. “An’ it’ll go on the tip of your prick. Now, open your mouth. I’m going to count five. One—”

The young man stopped shouting abruptly. He opened his mouth.

Pam pushed the rolled stocking as far into his mouth as it would go. “Come on, Maisie,” she said.

Maisie, the ends of her stocking held in her two hands, darted behind him and slipped the loop of it over his mouth. She pulled tightly. She fastened the two ends behind his head.

Pam stood up again. “Good. That’s shut ‘im up proper.” She looked critically at his ankles. “They’re not safe enough. And I don’t suppose ‘is wrists are either.” She glanced at Maisie. “Come on, girl. Your turn now. Give me your stockings. Let’s make proper certain of ‘im before we begin.”

—7—

“Go and get me a News, please,” said the manager of Faulkner’s.

“Yes, sir.” The salesman fetched his umbrella and went out into the pouring rain. In a second he was back with the paper, tucked inside his jacket for protection.

The manager took it into his office. On the front page was a photograph of Paula Murray. It showed her walking, in the rain, down the steps of a large building, and signaling for a taxi. She was wearing a plastic handkerchief over her head. She had on a tightly-belted raincoat of rubberised silk. On her feet were dainty ankle-high galoshes. Beneath the picture was the caption

LOVELY PAULA MURRAY, QUEEN OF THE SCREEN, MAKES LIGHT OF LONDON RAIN.

It was a picture that had already appeared, above a variety of captions, in a number of magazines.

The manager gazed at the picture. Under the cover of his desk he unbuttoned his flies and put a hand to his penis. He agitated it as he looked yearningly at the girl.

He removed his hand, buttoned his flies again, and tapped on the glass window of his office. The salesman who had brought him the paper looked up. The manager signaled to him. The salesman came quickly into the office.

“It was you who served Paula Murray about the cat-o’-nine-tails, wasn’t it?”

“Yes—but she said she wasn’t Paula Murray.”

“I know. But look at this.” The manager pointed to the picture on the front page of the evening newspaper.

“Silly, wasn’t it? How could she not be recognised?” The salesman gazed at the picture. “Very silly. She was Paula Murray all right, that girl was. But she was buying a cat-o’-nine-tails, and she didn’t want it known.”

“Why wouldn’t she want it known? What are you talking about?”

The salesman looked pityingly at the manager and wondered whether he might offer him some education. He decided he had better not. “Oh, I dunno, sir.”

The manager frowned at him. “Then don’t make a remark at all, if you don’t know why you’re making it.”

Through the window of the office the two men saw the door of the shop open.

“Strewth! Here she is,” said the salesman. He glanced again at the picture. “And dressed practically the same, too. Excuse me, sir.”

Audrey Milton walked into the shop. She was wearing a tightly-belted raincoat of rubberised silk. On her feet were ankle-high galoshes. She closed the umbrella which had been protecting her hair. She smiled at the salesman who approached her. “Good afternoon. I’m a couple of days early, but I was passing. Have you got to the cat-o’-nine-tails yet?”

Yes, madam,” said the salesman, moving behind his counter. She’s a brash one all right, he thought. No shame at all. “It’s here, ready for you, madam.”

The manager approached her. “Good afternoon, madam. What dreadful weather! But as it says under your picture in the News today, you make light of London rain.”

Audrey stared. “My picture? In the News? I haven’t seen it.”

“A very good photograph, too—if I may be allowed to say so. I will show you. One moment, please.” He walked quickly to his office and returned with the paper.

Audrey looked at the picture and laughed. “I tell you I’m not Paula Murray!”

“Er—of course not, madam—if you say so. Er—excuse me, please.” He walked in a dignified way to the end of the shop and turned casually. He put himself into a position from which he could study her. He put his hand into his trouser pocket and took hold of his penis through the lining. He agitated it gently.

The salesman put a wrapped package on the counter and began to untie the string.

“Don’t undo it,” said Audrey. “I’ll take it as it is.”

“Don’t you want to see it, madam?”

“No, it’s not necessary really.” Audrey began to feel a little embarrassed for the first time. “One cat-o’-nine-tails is much the same as another, I suppose.”

The salesman looked at her with a queer look in his eyes. It was almost, she thought, a leer. “Might I assure you that it’s a very good cat-o’-nine-tails indeed, madam? I’m sure you’ll be most satisfied with it.”

“No doubt,” said Audrey coldly.

A corner of the man’s mouth twisted upwards. “Might one ask for what purpose you want it, madam? For what extra special purpose?”

Audrey paused for a second before replying. She felt suddenly that she had not been wise in buying the thing from such a shop as Faulkner’s. Then, mentally, she shrugged. She had been so full of excitement after her talk with the doctor that she had not stopped to consider discretion. In any case, there was no withdrawing now. “I want it,” she said, “for when I have to punish people who ask inquisitive questions.”

—8—

Sidney Howarth looked at his watch. Time, he decided, to get back to the Manor. And anyway, nothing seemed to want to rise today. It was probably the weather.

Dark storm clouds were approaching slowly from the south. There would be heavy rain soon. He dismantled his fishing rod and packed it in his case. He lit a cigarette and walked upstream in the direction of the village.

The small river swung round in a wide bend. He made his way through the trees and bushes along its bank.

He came abruptly to a standstill. He put a hand to his eyes to shade them from the rays of the setting sun.

Two hundred yards away he saw three women. They seemed to be beating something that lay on the ground. They were beating it with what looked like long, thin sticks. He narrowed his eyes, and saw that the thing on the ground was the body of a man. He moved into the shadow of a tree. He watched for a few minutes.

He threw away his cigarette and made his way forward, darting from tree to tree and bush to bush. As he came closer to them he saw that the man on the ground had his jacket and shirt pulled up over his head and his trousers down around his ankles. He was tied hand and foot, and there was a gag in his mouth. He was squirming and thrashing about ineffectually under the lashes of slender willow switches.

Howarth was no more than twenty yards away when the girls saw him. They stopped their beating at once, and looked at him with fear in their eyes.

He moved out of the shadow of a bush and came up to them.

“Well, well,” he said. “Nice fun and games for a summer afternoon.” He looked them up and down. They were extremely good-looking, he thought. And they all had very good bodies and legs. “Well, well,” he said again.

One of them, a red-head, pointed to the man on the ground. “We caught ‘im mucking about with our friend ‘ere.” She nodded to one of the others. “And so we’re teaching ‘im a little lesson.”

Howarth smiled. “And quite right too. A very proper thing to do.”

The girls seemed to relax. “Glad you agree,” said the red-head.

“Oh, I do,” said Howarth. “And don’t let me interrupt you. Go ahead.”

“We’d almost finished,” said one of the girls. She had an educated voice. “He’s had about enough.” She sat down on the ground and laid her switch beside her.

“Oh, I wouldn’t think so,” said Howarth, looking at the naked bottom and the weals which covered it. “You haven’t brought any blood yet!”

The man on the ground twisted his body over. He glared up at Howarth with fury in his eyes. He strained vainly at his bonds.

Howarth laughed. “No, I don’t think you should stop yet. But I’d like a private word with you. Will you walk along with me for a few yards.” He glanced at the silk stockings round the man’s ankles. “He’ll stay here and wait for you.”

“What for?” said the red-head suspiciously.

“Walk along with me and I’ll tell you. I think you’ll find it to your advantage.”

The girls looked at one another enquiringly. The one on the ground shrugged her shoulders and stood up. “What can we lose, Pam? Come on, Maisie. Let’s hear what he’s got to say.”

The three of them walked with Howarth about ten yards up the bank, out of earshot of the man on the ground. They came to a halt.

“Well?” said Mary.

Howarth looked them up and down again. “Yes,” he said, and nodded his head. “Tell me, please. What are your jobs?”

“We’re ‘ousemaids,” said Pam. “Why?”

“Do you want to earn a bit more? Say ten pounds a week and all found?”

“Doing what?” asked Mary.

“More or less the same job.”

“What do you mean—more or less? What’s the catch?” asked Maisie.

“No catch.” Howarth nodded back to the man on the ground. “You might have to do a bit of that sort of thing from time to time.”

“Caning?” asked Pam incredulously.

“Yes.”

“And ten pound a week and all found?”

“Yes.”

“Where?”

“Never you mind—for the moment. What do you say?”

“Cor stone a lark!” said Pam, at once. “Just show me the way. I ain’t never ‘ad an offer like this!”

Howarth looked at her seriously. “You’d have to tidy up your speech a bit and stop throwing your aitches around so much.”

“When it’s necessary,” she said, with a pout, “I can speak as well as Mary here.” She said this with an affected drawing-room accent, emphasizing the aitch of her final word. She grinned and added: “I have never hoped to have such an offer.”

“Good,” he said, smiling. He looked at the others. “And you two?”

“Yes,” said Mary. “I’m on.”

“So’m I,” said Maisie. “What do you think? Ten pounds and all found, and a bit of beating too. Who do we have to beat? And what for?”

“And where?” said Pam.

“Everything will be explained to you in due course,” said Howarth. He took out his wallet. “Here’s a fiver for each of you—just to seal the bargain. But you must keep absolutely mum about it. One word—to anyone— and the bargain’s off.”

“Yes,” said Mary. “Of course.”

“Do you know the Manor?”

“Yes.

“Well, come up there tonight about seven o’clock.” He grinned. “That’ll give you plenty of time to finish what you want to do with that fellow you’ve got there.”

“Who do we ask for?” asked Pam.

“Me. The name’s Howarth.”

“Do you own the place?”

He laughed. “Oh dear me, no! I’m a sort of—er— master of ceremonies there.”

— 9 —

“You look eatable,” said Peter, as Audrey came towards him across the Savoy bar.

“In a mac and rubber boots? Darling, you are easy to please.” She was carrying a package under an arm. She put it on a chair, took off her flimsy mackintosh, laid it on top of the package, and sat down beside him. “How are my weals today?”

“Very painful.”

She gave him a dazzling smile. “Poor darling. Is it very painful to sit down?”

“Extremely.”

“How delicious! Do stand up for something and sit down again. I want to see.”

“You are a bitch,” said Peter, smiling and standing up. He winced as he sat again.

She watched him, finger to lip. She began to shake with laughter.

“An utter bitch,” he said. “And what will the Savoy bar say if you go on behaving like this? What’ll you have? And what’s in that parcel under your mac?”

“A martini, please. And in that parcel under my mac is my cat-o’-nine-tails.”

“Oh God! I wonder what the Savoy bar would say to that!”

“I’d like to show them. And I’d like to show them your weals and say: ‘Do you see these? They’re my handiwork!’”

Peter caught his breath. “I’d like to show you what I’ve got between my legs. It’s quite a size.”

“Don’t let’s stay long at Paula Murray’s. Oh, for goodness sake, what is her husband’s name again?”

“Pearce.”

“At the Pearces’ then. Don’t let’s stay long, darling. I want to get to work on you again.” A hand flew to her mouth. “Oh dear!”

“What’s the matter?”

“The groundsheet. I didn’t wash the blood off it. I hope your maid didn’t see it.”

“No, I put it in the chest last night after you’d gone.”

“Like that? Covered with blood?”

“Yes.”

“Peter!”

“Yes, I ought to have rinsed it under the shower or something. Damn! It’ll be difficult now it’s all dry.”

“Never mind.” Audrey pointed to her flimsy mackintosh. “I’ll put you down on that tonight. It’ll be softer too. Awful army groundsheet! This is silk.”

“It isn’t the silk you put me on.”

“The rubber is silky too. Come on, shall we drink up and go? So we can get home sooner?”

Peter paid the bill, helped Audrey into her mackintosh, and led her to a taxi. In the back of the taxi she undid his fly-buttons and caressed his enormous erection. “I wish I could put him in my mouth,” she said. “But I’m going to do a lot of things later. That will be one of the first. And then I’m going to use my nice new cat.

The door of the Pearce flat was opened by the pretty Elisabeth. She took Audrey’s mackintosh and Peter’s burberry and hung them on pegs in the hall. She led the way to the large living-room.

Paula Murray came towards them with hand outstretched, a smile of welcome on her lovely face. Rodney moved a little in front of her.

“Evening, Miss Milton. Hello, Peter. Don’t think you’ve either of you met Paula, have you?”

“At last,” said Paula, “I meet the girl I’m always being mistaken for.” She had, in fact, only once been mistaken for Audrey, but her words had the effect of making Audrey fall for her there and then.

“The boot,” said she, smiling warmly, “is very much on the other foot.

“Come and sit down,” said Rodney. “What’ll you have?”

—10—

Mary threw down her switch of willow. It had broken. “We must get some more,” she said. “That’s the fourth I’ve broken.” She went towards the willow tree.

Pam and Maisie flopped to the ground, panting. “Get a few for us too,” called Pam. “But, cor, I must ‘ave a rest for a bit.” She looked at the man on the ground. Some of the weals on his bottom had begun to bleed. He was moaning softly to himself. “Cry-baby!” she said. “And splashing your blood all over our dresses too!”

Maisie said: “Pam, this thrashing is a bit of all right, isn’t it? Whyn’t we ever thought of it before?”

“It’s a bit of all right, all right! An’ I’m wondering the same thing. We’ve lost a lot of time.”

“And fun. Pam, what does it do to you?”

“I dunno. It does something funny. What’s it do to you?”

“Makes me go all hot all over—and p’ticularly here.” Maisie put her hands on her lap and pressed them downwards.

“Yes, same with me. An’ it makes me tingle all over. An’ do you want to know something else?” Pam looked at her feet, and seemed suddenly a little shy.

“Yes, Pam?”

“It makes me feel like I was coming all the time. Not right at the beginning, that is. But after I’ve been thrashing for a bit—a few minutes, say—I begin to feel like I was coming. And then it goes on all the time like that.”

“It’s the same with me, Pam,” said Maisie softly. “And Mary said she felt the same thing when she was caning young Milton.”

“It’s a pretty nice feeling. Makes ordinary poking look a bit weak, don’t it?”

“It does at that. I don’t think I’d be interested in an ordinary poking now, would you?”

“Cor stone a lark, no! I wonder what’s going to ‘appen with this ‘ere job up at the Manor?”

“That, said Mary, returning with an armful of willow switches, “is something we’ll soon find out.” She looked up at the sky. “We’d better not be long. It’s going to rain.

“So what?” said Pam. “We’ve all brought macs. Rain or not, I’m going to ‘ave a proper basinful of this while I’ve got the chance. Bird in the ‘and. We may ‘ave to wait a long time for the next chance—spite of what that geezer said about the job. But I wish I knew what sort of a job it is. It’s going to be something unusual, and that’s a fact.”

“We’ll soon know,” repeated Mary. “Be patient.”

Several drops of rain fell on and around them.

Pam got up. She went to the satchel that hung from the seat of her bicycle. She took out a tightly rolled mackintosh. Mary and Maisie ran to their own satchels. Mary took out a mackintosh like Pam’s. Maisie unrolled a thin transparent

raincoat of flimsy plastic material. They put their bags into the satchels.

“Now,” said Pam, as she belted her coat, “to ‘ell with the rain! Let’s get cracking again.” She picked up a switch from the bundle that Mary had brought.

Maisie said, “Wait a bit. I want his head between my legs. I want him to lick me off. You can thrash him while he’s doing it.” She knelt beside the prostrate man, put her hand on his head, took a handful of hair, and turned his face to her. “You heard that, didn’t you? I’m going to put your head between my legs and you’re going to put your tongue into my fanny. And you’re going to lick me off while the others are working on you.” She gave his head a good-natured shake. “You understand, don’t you? You’d better do it nicely, too—or I’ll tell ‘em to stick a— a bicycle pump up your bottom, and that’ll show you.”

Pam moistened her lips. “I’d like to stick one up ‘is bottom.”

Maisie stood up. She opened the front of her raincoat, lifted the skirt of her dress and took off her pants. She handed them to Mary. “Stuff them in my satchel, will you? They’ll get sopping wet in this rain, otherwise.” She knelt again beside the man and untied the stocking that held his gag in place. “Now don’t start shouting again, do you hear?”

The man moved his tongue to produce some saliva. He gave her a wry grin. “Not much good, is it? Listen, don’t hit me any more. I’ll give you a licking-off—I’ll give you one that’ll cock your marrows. But tell ‘em not to hit me any more.”

Pam gave a sharp laugh. “Listen to ‘im.” She lashed viciously with her switch at his buttocks. “You’ve got a lot more coming, you ‘ave!”

The man gasped with the pain. “Tell ‘em to stop, and I’ll make my licking-off so good you’ll not know what’s happened to you!”

Maisie sat down on the ground in front of him. “You’d better make it that, in any case. Unless you want a bicycle pump up your bottom.” She opened the front of her transparent raincoat again. She pushed her legs downwards a little, one of each side of his body. She wriggled and brought her vulva below his lips. She lay back on her elbows. “Now, come on. Get cracking.”

“Don’t hit me any more. Please. Tell ‘em to stop.”

“Don’t be silly. I want to watch ‘em doing it. It’s going to double my pleasure. Now, are you going to get cracking, or do they stick the pump up your bottom?”

The man gave a resigned shrug. He put his lips very gently to her vulva. She trembled at his touch. He moistened his lips and kissed the sensitive nerve above the vulva. She trembled again.

Mary stooped to pick up a switch. She stood on one side of him and raised it. Pam stood opposite her and raised her own switch. She looked at Maisie. “Ready?”

Maisie nodded.

The switches lashed, hissing, down over the quivering bottom.

The man stiffened with the pain and threw back his head. He cried out.

“Do you want that pump?” said Maisie savagely. If not, get on with it.”

The man put out his tongue and thrust it into her vagina. She sucked in her breath. The rain fell on her face and neck. She moved an arm for a moment and buttoned her raincoat over her throat. She put back her arm and relaxed again on her two elbows. With the rain falling on her face and hair, she watched Mary and Pam thrashing alternately with their willow switches. Her vagina seemed to be on fire. She began to squirm from side to side in her ecstasy.

“Damn!” said Pam, as her switch broke. She bent quickly and picked up another one.

The rain began to fall more heavily.

Mary and Pam, quite oblivious of it, thrashed on with a feeling of mounting delirium.

Maisie felt her crisis creep ravishingly forward, step by ecstatic step, as the man’s tongue thrust and withdrew within her vagina.—”Oh Christ! Oh Christ!” she murmured, and straightened her arms. Her body fell backwards on to the soft earth. “Whip him! Thrash him! Flog him! Oh Christ! I can’t stand this! It’s heaven! Oh, flog him!”

“Do you really have to go?” said Paula Murray. “So soon? And we have something to show you. Something that we think will interest you.”

Audrey smiled. “We really ought to go, but please show us. What is it?”

Paula stood up. “Come then. It’s at the other end of the flat.” She led the way to the door at the back of the sitting-room. The others followed her through the door and along a corridor. She stopped outside a door at its far end, produced a key from the pocket of her dress, unlocked the door, and stood aside. “I’ll not turn on the lights until you’re inside. We want to give you a surprise. Go ahead, will you?” She stood aside.

Audrey and Peter went forward a few feet into the darkness of the room. They stopped, fearing to fall over something. They heard the others come into the room behind them.

Paula switched on the light.

“Good God!” said Peter.

Audrey stood, a hand to her mouth, and gazed round the room with wide-open eyes. Then she turned to Paula. She smiled shyly. “So you’ve been hearing us?”

Paula moved to her and kissed her impulsively. “Yes, my dear. And we’re very excited that you’re like us.”

“So the walls are not so thick,” said Peter.

Rodney laughed. “No, old boy. They’re not. That’s why this room is sound-proofed as much as it can be.”

Audrey sat on the edge of the divan. She picked up one of the steel manacles and examined it. “Well, well,” she said. “Life is full of surprises!” She looked up at Paula.

“And your servants? Did they hear it, too?”

Paula nodded. “They heard it first. The kitchen, you see, is next to the room in which you were doing it.”

“Oh dear!”

“But don’t worry about the maids,” Paula went on quickly. “They’re in on all this.”

“In on it?”

“Yes, both of them. They help me. And they like doing it themselves.”

“To your husband? And you let them?”

“I have to. It’s the price we pay to keep their mouths shut.”

Peter said suddenly: “You know, I think I need a drink.”

“So do I,” said Audrey faintly. “A rather strong one.”

“Here or in the sitting-room?” asked Rodney.

“Oh, here, please,” said Audrey. “I want to look around a bit. When I get some strength back.” She ran her hand lightly over the rubber material that covered the divan. She looked at the chairs that were covered with the same material. She laughed a little hysterically. “We’ve been using an old groundsheet. But I was going to put him down tonight on my mac.” She looked up at the coat-stand. “Yes, I see. I don’t have to ask what those are for. I ought to have thought of it myself. I had the devil’s own job this morning trying to wash blood off a dress.’

Rodney had opened a cupboard. “Will you have the same as before?”

“Yes, please,” said Audrey. “But rather stronger, if I may.

“Let’s make ourselves comfortable,” said Paula, as Rodney poured the drinks. She sat down in one of the easy-chairs. Peter sat in another.

Audrey continued to study the manacle in her hand until Rodney gave her her glass. She lifted it. “Cheers,” she said. “I rather need this!” She drank the whole of its contents straight down. She gasped. “Forgive me—but I feel better now! And I am glad you asked us tonight. But may I ask a question or two?”

“Let me anticipate you,” said Paula. She glanced at her husband. “Fill their glasses, darling. And I’ll tell them all about it.” She handed her a box of cigarettes. “It’s a very long story, really, but I’ll cut it down to essentials. I must have been born, like you, with sadistic tendencies—but I was never able to do anything about them until I met Helen Collett.”

“Helen Collett? The millionairess?”

“Yes. She has the same tendencies. But because she’s so disgustingly rich, she had been able to get things organised,” Paula paused. “She had formed a sort of club at Buckley Manor. That’s her country house—an enormous place—in Hertfordshire.”

“Not,” breathed Audrey, “the Whipping Club?”

“Oh dear, have you heard of it too? Too many people seem to have heard of it. Yes, it’s called the Whipping Club.”

“What is it exactly?” asked Audrey. “I mean, who are its members?”

“Fifteen women,” said Paula simply, “who like to whip men.”

“Good God,” said Peter. “And who are the men?”

Paula smiled. “Some are guests who voluntarily submit to it. Others are—well, trapped into it, and have to take it rather than go to prison for one thing or another. But that’s a longish story, and I’ll tell you all about it another time. The point is,” she looked at Audrey, “would you like to become the sixteenth member?”

Audrey glanced at Peter. He nodded slowly. “Yes, please,” she said. “I can’t tell you how excited I am!” She drained her glass again and held it out to Rodney. “Please. I shall probably get stinking, but this sort of thing doesn’t happen every day.”

Peter finished his own glass. “And for me too, please.”

Paula laughed. “And for me, darling. I’m just as excited as they are.”

Audrey said: “Thank you so much for telling us— for letting us into all this.” She got up from the couch and went to the trolley that held the flagellation instruments. She picked up the birch of piano wire. “This looks murderous.”

“It is,” said Rodney, handing her her drink. “That’s an understatement.”

She put down the birch and picked up the heavy rubber belt. “This is a very nice thing, too.” She put it down and looked at the lower shelf. She gave an exclamation of surprise as she saw the cat-o’-nine-tails. She picked it up and examined it closely. She ran her hands lightly over its lashes. “What a lovely thing! Where did you get it?”

“In Spain,” said Paula.

“Abroad? Oh. Not here in London?”

Paula laughed. “Oh dear, no. You can get them in London, certainly. There’s a man in the East End Road who makes them. But I wouldn’t dare. Somebody might just recognise me, and begin to wonder what I want it for.”

“Yes,” said Audrey quietly. She wondered whether to tell her hostess about her visit to Faulkner’s that afternoon, but decided against it. It might just worry her a little, and there was no reason to worry her. She gave the instrument to Peter. “Look, darling. Isn’t it delicious?”

Peter took the whip and swallowed. “It’s a brute.” He stared at it with a sort of horrified fascination. He gave it back to her. “I don’t like it at all.”

Paula laughed. “Nor does Rodney. But I do. And so, I think does one of our maids. I see her looking at it sometimes with a sort of longing.”

Peter said: “Rodney, old son, tell me. What do you get out of it?”

Tremendous pain,” said Rodney, “followed by a terrific sexual exhilaration.”

Exhilaration, eh? Yes, that just about describes it. That’s what I feel.”

Paula handed the box of cigarettes again. “Look,” she said slowly, “I don’t know how possessive you are about each other, but—well, if you’d like to join forces we’d probably have a lot of fun together.”

Audrey looked again at Peter. He nodded again, but with some hesitation.

“The four of us?” asked Audrey, looking back at Paula.

“Yes. And our two maids as assistants, if you’d like that.”

“I’d love it,” said Audrey. “And so, I’m sure, would Peter. And if he’s a bit shy, we have ways of knocking it out of him, haven’t we? When do you suggest?”

“Tomorrow? Oh, wait a minute. We have a party to go to.”

“We’ll be back at nine,” said Rodney.

“Yes, we shall. What about nine-thirty?”

“Wonderful,” said Audrey. “Peter is taking me out to dinner. We’ll come straight here then after dinner. Nine-thirty.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

The bright red sports car pulled up outside the house in the East End Road. Arthur Simes got out of it and knocked.

“Can I have a few words with you?” he said to the burly man who opened the door.

“All right. Come in.”

In the workroom Simes came straight to the point. “I want information. I’m from the Clarion. I’m not a copper.”

“What do you want to know?”

“What do you know about the Whipping Club?”

The eyes of the burly man became suddenly expressionless. He looked away.
“The what?”

Simes sighed. “Look, I’ll pay you pretty well for any information you give me. Come off it, will you. You make cats for the prison, don’t you?”

“I used to. What of it?”

“So you probably make ‘em for anyone else who wants ‘em.”

“I might. So?”

“So you must make ‘em for the Whipping Club.”

“The Whipping Club? What’s that?”

“Oh, Christ! Will you come off it? I know there’s a club called the Whipping Club—and you must know it too.”

“You said something about paying for the information.”

Simes grinned and took out his wallet. “Aha! That’s better.” He pulled out a five-pound note. “That’s a hell of a lot, but I suppose the paper will stand it if you give me something worth while.”

The burly man looked at the note with contempt’ “You call that a hell of a lot! You’re crackers.”

“How much do you want?”

“Five hundred.”

Simes blew an unpleasant sound with his lips. “You’re crackers!”

“Then I don’t know nothing, son.”

Simes looked at him narrowly, and lit a cigarette, “This is bigger than I thought,” he said slowly. “If that’s your price, it means that they are prepared to pay you something pretty big to keep your mouth shut. Yes, it’s a lot bigger than I thought.”

“That’s all very interesting, but I’ve got work to do.”

“All right, all right. That was one question. I’ve got another.”

“Okay, but you’ll ‘ave to ‘urry.”

Simes curled the five-pound note round one of his fingers. “Has Paula Murray ever been here? Has she been a customer of yours?”

The burly man looked at the banknote. “Who’s Paula Murray?”

Simes snorted with disgust. “Who’s Paula Murray! Just about the most famous film star since Garbo.” He pulled out his wallet and took out another five-pound note. “Does this help your memory?”

The burly man smiled and held out his hand. “I reckon it does a bit.”

“Let’s have it first,” said Simes coldly.

“She ain’t never been ‘ere ‘erself. But she ordered a cat through Faulkner’s t’other day.”

Simes gave him the two notes. His eyes were shining. “Okay. You’ve earned it.” He left the workroom quickly and went back to his car. He drove towards the West End. I knew it, he said to himself. I knew it in my bones all along. Oh, Christ! What a story this is going to make. And it’s going to make you, Arthur boy.

He parked his car at the top of St. James’s Street and walked to Faulkner’s. It had begun to rain again. He pushed open the door of the shop and looked around.

A salesman approached him. “Can I help you, sir?”

“Have you served Paula Murray recently with anything?”

“I beg your pardon, sir?”

Simes turned to a display case. He took out his wallet. He produced a pound note. “I’m in a hurry,” he said. “Who has served Paula Murray in the last week or so?”

The salesman glanced over his shoulder and then took the note. He pretended to point at something in the display case. “The salesman who is standing at this end of the counter on the left.”

“Thanks,” said Simes and went up to the salesman who was standing at the counter on his left.

“Good morning, sir. May I help you?”

“I’m from the Clarion. Would you like to help me?”

“If I can, sir.”

“Have you served Paula Murray recently with anything?”

“Paula Murray?”

“Yes, for Christ’s sake! Paula Murray.”

The salesman tightened his lips. “I don’t—”

“Oh, Jesus!” said Simes and took out his wallet again. He put a crisp new five-pound note on the counter. “This’ll ruin me if the paper doesn’t back me up. Now, please tell me. Have you served her?”

“Yes,” said the salesman, casually picking up the note and hiding it in his palm.

“With a cat-o’-nine-tails?”

“Yes. How did you know?”

“Never you mind. When was it?”

“Yesterday. That is to say, she came to take it yesterday. She ordered it about a week ago.”

“She didn’t say what she wanted it for?”

“No. I asked her, and she was very rude. Offensive, in fact.” His lip twisted upwards. “But I reckon it’s not for use on a horse.”

“No,” said Simes. “I reckon it’s not.”

—2—

The rain streamed down over London.

Audrey brought her car to the side of the road at the top of Threadneedle Street. Peter darted out of his office building and clambered quickly in.

“What luxury,” he said. “How many people are picked up in a Rolls-Royce for lunch?” He leaned his back gently against the seat. “Good morning, darling.”

Audrey saw his consideration for his back and smiled. “Morning, Peter boy. How’s the back?”

“Gaping with wounds.”

“Oh, Peter!” Her shoulders began to shake.

“What are you laughing about? It’s no joke.”

“I really am sorry, darling. But that cat is a lovely and wonderful thing.”

“It is a brute, and I hate it.”

“Poor darling. I’ll try not to use it too often.”

She threaded her way carefully through the lunchtime traffic of the City. Peter lit two cigarettes and gave her one.

“What is your exciting news? And why wouldn’t you tell me over the phone?”

“You’ll see. It’s a surprise.”

“Nice one?”

“Lovely one. I want to stop at Harrods, though, on the way. You put so much blood last night on my mac that I had to throw it away. I want a new one. Look at this rain!”

“Where are we going after Harrods?”

“You’ll see.”

They stopped at Harrods. Audrey bought another flimsy raincoat and refused to let Peter pay for it. Then she led him to the furnishings department and bought several yards of thin rubber. “I can’t buy a new mac every day,” she said. “And this will cover more of the bed than my mac did last night.”

They went back to the car.

“This is Chelsea, isn’t it?” said Peter, a few minutes later. “Where are you taking me, darling?”

“In just a moment you’ll see,” said Audrey. She turned the car into a quiet street that was lined with oak trees. She brought it to a stop outside a house that stood, detached and alone, at the top of the street.

She turned to Peter. “I don’t know whether you’ll like it. But this could be our home, my darling.”

Peter peered out of the car windows. “It looks very nice. But—”

“Daddy’s going to give it us for a wedding present.”

He turned to her. “Oh! Yes, that is quite a surprise! And very nice of him.”

Audrey switched off the engine and put the key into the pocket of her new raincoat. "Come on. Let's go and inspect. It has eleven rooms. Let's go and pick the one that we'll make our own whipping-room. I'm jealous after seeing that one the Pearces have."

They ran hand-in-hand, through the rain, up the steps of their house.

—3—

Arthur Simes went into his office and looked enquiringly at the man who was sitting in his visitors' chair. "Are you waiting for me?"

"Mr. Simes?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I'd like a private word with you, please."

Simes shut the door and went to his desk. "What can I do for you? And what is your name, please?"

"Sidney Howarth."

“Right, Howarth; Shoot.”

Howarth looked out of the window. “You are, I think, doing some research on a story about something called the Whipping Club?”

Simes gave a small jump. “Go on.”

“Are you?” “Yes.

Howarth took out his cigarette case and offered it. “Would you be prepared to consider dropping your research?”

Simes whistled softly. “That depends,” he said. “But excuse me a moment.” He went quickly out of the office and along the passage. He put his head into another office. “Alone, Paul? Can I come in?” He went into the office without waiting for an answer. “Do something for me? I’ll make it worth your while. Don’t know how much at the moment, but you can trust me.”

The man behind the desk nodded. “Okay,” said Simes. “There’s a chap in my office. When he leaves, I want you to follow him. I want to know where he lives. Okay? For Christ’s sake don’t lose him.” He left the office and walked quickly back to his own. “So sorry. Now, where were we?”

“You were saying,” said his visitor, “that it depends.”

“Of course. What’s your offer?”

“A thousand pounds.”

Simes jumped again. “A thousand?”

“Yes. In return for a complete halt to your research.”

This is really big stuff, Simes thought to himself. It’ll be the story of the century, not just the year. “All right,” he told his visitor. “I agree. When do I get the thousand?”

The other took a thick wad of new five-pound notes from his pocket. He threw it on the desk. “I have your word that you’ll stop everything as from now?”

Simes picked up the wad of notes. “Of course.”

“I hate to suggest anything unpleasant,” said his visitor slowly, “but if you did change your mind, something rather unfortunate might happen to you. Some car accident, or something like that.”

Simes looked him straight in the eyes. “What do you think I am? I’ve accepted your money. That means you have my word.”

Howarth smiled at him coldly. “Just so long as we understand each other. And I assume, of course, that you will not follow me as I leave. Good afternoon.” He went out of the office.

That’s what you think, said Simes to himself. I just hope you’re not going to be difficult to follow. This is going to be the story of the century!

—4—

“This would do beautifully, wouldn’t it?” said Audrey, gazing round the room on the top floor of the house. We can ask the Pearces how to get it sound-proofed.”

“Why should we bother?” said Peter. “The house is detached. No need to worry here about how thick the walls are.”

“Silly Peter. What about the maids?”

“Oh God, yes. If we ever find any.”

“Daddy says he’ll let us have a couple from home until we do find some.”

“Your father is a very nice man indeed.”

“Yes, he is. But since Mummy died, it’s really not been necessary to keep up the sort of state we do keep up at home. Do you know we have five servants who live in?”

“My God! What it is to be rich!”

“So we can certainly spare a couple of them. But wouldn’t it be wonderful if we could find some maids like the two the Pearces have got?”

“You don’t need any help, darling.”

She tucked her arm under his and squeezed. “I don’t! But it would be wonderful not to have to worry about them. And I would like to watch them, now and again, beating you.” She turned her face up to his. “And do you know what else? I’d like them to thrash you while you’re on top of me—while you’re making love to me.” She drew in her breath sharply. “Oh, Peter, I want you again so badly. I know you’ve got to go back to the office, but are you in an awful hurry?”

“No, darling.”

“Good. Then lie down there on the bed and I’ll sit on you.” She pulled open the front of her raincoat and slipped out of her pants. “Come on, down you go. This is one love-making when I’m not going to beat you. I’ll make up for it tonight, though.”

Peter undid the belt of his trousers and let them fall. He pushed his pants down after them. He lay on his back on the bed, wincing as his weals took his weight upon them. His penis stood up, hard and magnificent.

Audrey cupped her hands around it. She bent forward and put her lips to it. It quivered with the touch. She opened her mouth and slid the great thing towards the back of her throat.

Peter stiffened and groaned with pleasure.

She took away her mouth and climbed up on to the bed. She sat with her vulva over the penis. “This must be very quick. I’m not even taking my mac off. Oh, Peter, Peter, Peter!” The penis slid past the lips of her vulva and entered her vagina. “Oh, Peter darling. Oh yes, I want a maid to be whipping you while you make love to me. Or two maids. I’ll tell them when to start and when to stop and what to use and how hard to go. Oh, Peter, Peter, Peter!”

Erect though she was, she felt herself melting downwards into him as her vagina seemed to burst into exquisite fire.

—5—

In the middle of the afternoon the man whom Simes had asked to follow his visitor returned. “Slippery customer,” he said.

“For Christ’s sake, don’t say you lost him!”

“Did at the end, I’m afraid. But he took a ticket for Buckley, if that means anything to you.”

“Buckley? Wait a minute. I remember something about that name.”

“It’s a biggish village in Hertfordshire, I think.”

“Yes, that’s it. You go through it on the way to Biker-grange. There’s a hotel there where parents take their brats to lunch when they go down to the school for the day.”

“Fair enough?”

“Well, better than nothing. Thanks, Paul.” He took one of his new five-pound notes out of his trouser pocket. “This do you?”

“Very handsomely, Arthur. Glad to oblige any other time.”

—6—

“Mrs. Collett, please.”

“Who is it, please?”

“Paula Murray.”

“Oh, good afternoon, madam. Would you hold the line a moment, please.”

Paula signaled to Rodney. “Give me a cigarette, darling.”

Her husband lit a cigarette and gave it to her.

“Paula, my dear!”

“Hello, Helen. How’s everything?”

“Oh, so-so. Bit of trouble with a man called Simes from the Clarion. Do you know him?”

“Yes. Nasty bit of work. What was the trouble?”

“Oh, snooping around about the club.”

“Oh dear!”

“Don’t worry. We bought him off this afternoon.”

“Poor Helen. The money you spend! Was it very expensive?”

“Rather. But never mind. As long as I don’t pay income tax. If my money didn’t come from abroad, it’d be a different story. What’s new with you?”

“I have a new member.”

“Who?”

“Audrey Milton.”

“Lord Curie’s daughter?”

“Yes.”

“Well, well! That’s very interesting. Isn’t she engaged, though? I mean recently? I thought I saw it in the Times.”

“Yes. Nice man called Peter Morphy.”

“And, of course, he’s one of us?”

“Naturally.”

“Good. I’ll look forward to seeing them at Buckley. You’ll be bringing them to a meeting?”

“Yes. Not the next one, perhaps. But quite soon.”

“I suppose they’re pretty well-off?”

“Oh, yes.”

“And they’ll be setting up a menage somewhere?”

“Yes. As a matter of fact, they said so last night when we showed them our special room. Peter Morphy lives next door to us, but his flat is too small for the two of them. Why do you ask?”

“I was thinking that they might like some maids— of the special sort. It sounds as though they could afford it.”

“I’m sure they could. But maids of that sort aren’t easy to find.”

“I might be able to help.”

“Helen darling, you’re too wonderful for words! How?”

“Howarth found three new ones yesterday. Rather nice-looking too, all three of them. I’ve taken them-on, of course, but Buckley doesn’t really need any more.”

“But this is wonderful! I’m sure they’ll be very pleased to hear it.”

You don’t know when they’re getting married?”

“No, no idea.”

“Never mind. I’ll hold on to the girls for the time being. Train them up a bit. In any case they’ve still to be screened to see if they can hold their tongues. But let me know what your friends say. They might not want all three.”

“Helen, you’re an angel. I’ll tell them tonight. They’re coming here after

dinner.”

—7—

“So you found a job, did you?” said the father of Pam. “An’ at Buckley. Only a few miles away. Be nice for your ma. You can come ‘ome an’ ‘elp a bit on your days off. What are they payin’ you?”

“Four an’ a half quid,” said Pam quickly. “Not bad, eh?”

“Not bad! Cor strike a light!” said her father. “That all? You ought’ve got five quid at least, the way maids is ‘ard to find these days. You don’t sell yourself proper, my girl. Still, that’s your funeral. You’ll go on givin’ three quid to your ma, see?”

“Yes, Pa.”

He stood up and stretched.

His wife glared at him. “Where are you going? To that perishin’ pub, I s’pose.”

“If you know,” he said truculently, “why the ‘ell do you waste your breath askin’?”

His wife sniffed. “Whyn’t you move your bleedin’ bed down there an’ make a job of it?”

—8—

“Audrey, do you want a bang-up wedding?”

“No, not really. Why, darling?”

“Why don’t we get married straight away then?”

“Registry Office?”

“Why not?”

“Yes, why not. And the house is ready. Daddy said we can move in whenever we’re ready ourselves. Yes, Peter, let’s.”

“Right, I’ll fix it.”

Audrey leaned back in her chair and studied the people in the restaurant. She was unaware that she herself had been the cynosure of their eyes since she had sat down. As usual, she was looking extremely beautiful. She was wearing an

aggressively simple, and very expensive-looking, dress of black silk. Her hair was dressed in a low chignon that emphasised the loveliness of her head. Her only jewellery was a pair of fabulous earrings of ruby and diamond.

She glanced at her watch. “Almost time to go. I’m looking forward to his party tonight. It’s going to be a sort of orgy, I think—and that’s a very exciting idea.”

“Yes,” said Peter, slowly. “It is, but—”

“What, darling?”

He grinned. “Aren’t we going to feel a bit jealous?”

“If I play around with Rodney Pearce, and Paula plays around with you?” Yes.

“I’ve thought about it. And I know that I personally shan’t. In a—an orgy, I think everything should be allowed.”

Even poking other people?”

“Yes, why not? I don’t think there’s any place for jealousy in a thing like this. After all, it’s just plain and simple sex. And we’ll be together. Don’t you agree?”

Peter laughed. “Oh, yes, I agree all right. I wasn’t thinking of me. I was wondering how you’d take it if you watched me poking Paula.”

She smiled silkily at him. “I shan’t only watch. I shall thrash you while you’re doing it. And I hope that she will thrash you while you’re poking me?”

Peter signaled the waiter for a bill. “Come on, then. Let’s go and have our first taste of an orgy.”

The door was opened again by the pretty Elisabeth. She was not, however, wearing her uniform of the previous night. She was dressed in one of the floor-length white blood-proof robes from the whipping-room. Rodney looked at her in surprise. He thought she looked very pretty indeed. He wondered what the other maid looked like, and whether she would be dressed in the same way.

“Will you come this way, please?” She crossed the hall and opened the door of the living-room. The front of her robe swished open as she walked, and showed that her legs were quite naked.

“You look very fetching,” said Audrey, with a friendly smile.

“Thank you, madam.”

Paula and Rodney came across the room towards them. They caught their breath.

Paula was naked except for a tiny brassiere made of some soft shiny leather, a skirt which was made of thin strips of the same leather and which barely covered her thighs, and shoes with very high pointed heels. Rodney was completely naked. His penis was greatly erected. It stood out from his stomach and seemed to be trying to reach upwards.

He looked at his guests, and particularly at Audrey, in some embarrassment. "Come along in," he said. "Nice to see you. We're a nudist colony, as you see. Hope you're not shocked. Paula's idea." As he turned, they saw hundreds of marks on his back and legs.

Paula said: "We thought we'd meet you like this and so speed up the throwing away of any silly shyness we might all have. But I do hope you're not shocked."

Audrey smiled. She went up to Rodney. "We're neither shy nor shocked." She put a hand round his penis. It gave a jerk under her fingers. She caressed it.

"Oh, good!" said Paula. She turned to Peter. "Will you come here to me, please?"

Peter walked up to her, wondering what she wanted.

She put both her hands to his fly-buttons and undid them. She put her left hand inside the trousers and fumbled for a second with his pants. She drew out his penis. Like Rodney's, it was greatly erected. She agitated it gently and then gave it a light slap. She looked at Audrey. "Come along with me. I've got all sorts of things that you could wear. Come and choose."

With sex pounding in his loins, Peter watched the two girls leave the room. “I think I’d better get out of these clothes. The quicker the better.” He began to undress.

“What’ll you drink?” said Rodney.

“Er—brandy, please, if you have it.”

“Certainly.” Rodney touched a bell as he went to the sideboard. He poured a large measure of brandy into a balloon glass. “Stiffish one?”

“Yes, please. Very stiff, if you don’t mind.”

The door opened and a maid came into the room. Peter glanced up and saw that this was not the one who had opened the door for them. She wore, however, the same sort of floor-length white robe. She was, he thought, equally pretty.

“You rang, sir?”

“Yes, Gwen. Help Mr. Morphy, will you, with his clothes.”

“With pleasure, sir.” She came up to Peter’s side and picked up his jacket and tie from the chair on which he had placed them. She stood in front of him as he took

off, and handed her, his trousers and pants. Her face was expressionless but attentive and respectful.

My God, thought Peter, they're well-trained, these maids. I wonder what she is thinking. And I wonder which of them is the one who Paula says has a longing to use that cat-o'-nine-tails. After last night I think I've had about enough of a cat-o'-nine tails. I wonder whether they'll do any whipping tonight. Paula said they're her assistants. It would be nice if Audrey and I could find a couple like them.

He slipped off his shirt and knelt to take off his shoes and socks.

The girl looked down at his back. It was covered with a very large number of livid, criss-crossed weals. Oho, she said to herself, you've had the cat recently! Oh goodness! How I would like to give you a few more lashes with ours! Whoever did it to you didn't bring much blood. Must've been your girl. Too gentle with you, she was. I wouldn't be. I'd bring blood all over your back if I had the chance. Oh, please God give me the chance one of these days!

She took his shoes and socks and walked out of the room, her robe making a rustling swoosh as she moved.

Peter, now stark naked, took the glass from Rodney's hand. "This is all a bit—er—unusual," he said. "God bless!" He drank a large quantity of his brandy.

"You'll get used to it, old boy. I felt as shy the first time.

“Damn good idea, though—this party.”

Rodney laughed. “Going to be rather painful for us at first.”

“Only at first. It’s wonderful when they stop.

Paula came back into the room with Audrey.

The two men gazed at her, speechlessly.

She was wearing a sarong of the same sort of soft, shiny leather as Paula’s pants and brassiere. It was caught over her left shoulder, and concealed part of her left breast. Her right breast, not covered by the sarong, was quite bare. It was very tight at her waist, and very short. The hairs of her genitals could be seen clearly as she moved. So could some of the weals of Peter’s whipping of their first night. Each of her wrists held a heavy, wide leather strap which was studded with sharp metal points.

“Absolutely eatable!” said Peter.

She went to him and put her arms around his neck. She murmured in his ear: “Don’t be shy about anything, darling. We’re going to have a wonderful time tonight, both of us.”

Paula said: “Shall we go into the whipping room? We can have drinks in there.”

The maid Elisabeth stood at the door of the special room. They trooped inside. Gwen was standing beside the ladder-like whipping-post, her face still expressionless save for a light at the back of her eyes. Elisabeth closed the door. The lock clicked shut.

“Get some drinks, darling, will you?” Paula said to her husband. “Now, Audrey dear, what would you like to start with—and on whom? Rodney or Peter?”

“Oh, please, it’s your party. You say.” Rodney, then.” She looked speculatively at the couch, and then at the whipping-post. “I think the post, to start with. Gwen, Elisabeth, prepare Mr. Pearce, please.”

Rodney finished his glass, gave it to Elisabeth, and walked to the whipping-post. He raised his arms above his head and placed his wrists beside the leather straps above his head. He glanced over his shoulder at Peter. “Moriturus te salute!” He grinned. “But it’ll be your turn next!”

Peter and the two girls watched the maids fastening their master to the post. Gwen brought forward a small wooden stool and, with a swooshing of her robe, stood up on it to fasten Rodney’s wrists in the leather straps. She stepped down and fastened a heavy, wide belt around his waist, drawing him closer to the post as she did so. Elisabeth knelt and fastened the straps at the foot of the post around his ankles. Gwen moved the stool behind the post and sat on it, facing Rodney. Her head was on a level with his stomach. She put a hand to his testicles and began to squeeze the skin of his scrotum lightly with her fingers. His penis seemed again to be trying to reach upwards. Elisabeth moved behind the trolley that held all the whipping implements.

“I suggest,” said Paula to Audrey, “that you and I choose our whips and start on him. And Peter may like to sit and watch for a bit. If you’ve no objection to it, Elisabeth can keep him amused at the same time.”

“No objections whatsoever,” said Audrey, smiling at Elisabeth. “As I told him a little while ago, my view of all this is that, in sex, anything and everything is permitted.”

“You are going to enjoy the meetings of the club, I can see,” said Paula. She went to the trolley and looked reflectively at the implements. Audrey followed her, thinking that, with Elisabeth behind the trolley, it looked almost as though they were in a shop, studying things on a counter. Paula picked up the birch of piano wire. “You admired this last night. Would you like to use it? Or do you prefer a whip or something?”

Audrey took the birch from her hands, her heart beginning to pound heavily again. “I’d like to use this, please. It’s a beautiful thing.”

Paula said: “And I’ll have a whip.”

“Which one, madam?” asked Elisabeth.

“The shorter one, please.”

The maid gave her the whip and moved away from the trolley. She went up to Peter. “Which chair would you like to sit in, sir?” She pointed to the chair

nearest to the whipping-post. “I would advise that one, if I may.

Peter nodded and went to the chair she had indicated. He saw that he had a side view of what was going to happen at the post. Elisabeth opened the front of her robe widely, revealed her naked genitals and hair, and knelt on the floor in front of him. “Open your legs, sir, please. Open them wide.” Peter opened his legs and stretched them out on either side of the girl. She hunched herself forward a few inches and put her hands round his penis. Her hands were cool, pleasant, and very experienced.

“Are you right-handed?” asked Paula.

“Yes,” said Audrey.

“You’d better go on that side then. I’ll stay here. I can whip just as well with my left as my right.”

“Where shall we start?” said Audrey, running the wire lashes of her birch through her fingers. Their feel seemed to give her a series of electric shocks.

“Back, bottom, legs?”

“Wherever you like. Take your pick.”

“Shoulders then,” said Audrey promptly. All right. I’m going to take his bottom. Excuse me for a moment, though. There is a little ritual now that has to be done.” She went to the front of the whipping-post. Gwen stood up and moved

her stool to one side. Paula came as close to her husband's front as the horizontal bars of the post would allow. She put her arms round his neck and looked into his eyes with a mixture of tenderness and cruelty. She put her lips to his for a second and then stepped back. "Now," she said softly, "say it."

"You are going to whip me very hard."

"Yes?"

"And it is with my complete consent."

"Yes?"

"I deserve to be punished."

"What for?"

"For what Gwen is doing to me and for what she will do to me."

"You will enjoy what she will do?"

"Yes."

“Very much?”

“Yes, very much.”

“You know that I shall know what you are feeling? You realise that I can usually feel everything that you feel?”

“Yes, I know that you sometimes have that power— to an astonishing extent!”

“And it may make me angry—if you enjoy her too much. You know that?”

“Yes.”

“And so I shall whip you as hard as I possibly can?”

“Yes.

“With all the strength you can find.”

“And if I kill you? If you have a heart attack?”

“It will not be your fault. I have asked you to whip me with all your strength. I take the risk.”

“Good. You’d better start enjoying yourself then. A very painful punishment for it is going to start.” She held her whip to his lips. “Kiss it!”

He kissed the whip. Paula moved away. Gwen put back her stool in front of him. She cupped her hands round his testicles, and put her mouth to his penis. Slowly she slid it inside and over her tongue. His body stiffened at once.

Paula faced Audrey. She ran the whip through her fingers. Audrey noticed that she had gone a little pale; she wondered how serious had been the conversation she had been listening to. She gave a little shiver.

Paula raised her whip and brought it slashing down across the centre of the buttocks. Its lash curled several inches round the hip. Rodney gave a cry.

Audrey, her pulse racing furiously, raised her birch and brought it down across the shoulders. The usual shock of sadistic ecstasy struck her. She raised her whip again as Paula’s whip hissed down a second time. Rodney cried out with each lash.

Peter lay tense in his chair, straining to accept to the utmost the delicious pleasure that Elisabeth was giving to him with her fingers. He sat with his head turned slightly sideways and watched, for the first time in his life, the flogging of a fellow-man. He felt very afraid, for it seemed certain that he would soon be

flogged in the same way. He knew that the whippings that Audrey had given him, and particularly the one of the previous night with her new cat-o'-nine-tails, had been brutal enough, but this one that he was now watching was very terrible. His own had, moreover, been given only by Audrey; this flogging was all the more terrible because it was being given by two women together. And both of the women were using the whole force of their arms and shoulders as they swung their bodies rhythmically, regularly, with their lashes. Each seemed to be doing her best to outdo the other in ferocity. He could not clearly see the face of Audrey except when she swung her body round, with her birch raised high, for her next lash. He was slightly shocked. Her eyes, as he caught sight of them, were blazing with a fire that he found terrifying. Her mouth was a little open, her lips smiling with excited happiness. She was breathing very fast. Paula's face, directly in front of him, could be studied more carefully. And this shocked him very much. Her eyes were quite glazed, as though she were under the influence of some narcotic. He realised, suddenly, that she was in fact under the narcosis of what she was doing with her whip. He realised, too, that she was in the grip of an ecstasy that no ordinary narcotic could ever give. He wondered, however, why Rodney submitted to such pain —why, indeed, he had allowed himself to be bound to the post, for he must have realised what sort of a flogging was to come. On the other hand, he had himself asked his wife to thrash him with all the strength she could find. Had he perhaps developed some form of yogi-like transmutation of pain into pleasure? It did not seem so, for his cries were pitiful. And yet, as he listened to the cries, Peter thought he could detect among them a lower note, a sort of moan, that was certainly not a protest. He moved his head a little and looked carefully at the mouth of Gwen as it slid backwards and forwards over the penis. He saw that the penis was still hard and erected.

So, thought Peter, he has developed something! But I haven't, and I certainly couldn't take a flogging like this. I'll refuse, if they want me next. It's much too much. I do get a lot of pleasure myself, when the pain stops. But this would kill me. I don't care if Paula Murray thinks I'm a cissy. Audrey, at least, knows that I'm not.

Rodney, on the whipping-post, continued to cry and moan. Peter had been right. His moans were not a protest; they were caused by the agonising pleasure that

filled his loins as his penis slid in and out of the mouth of the maid in front of him. The intensity of the pleasure, however, depended on the ferocity of the pain that tore through his other nerves. The one was in a direct ratio with the other. Therefore, to experience the unearthly pleasure, he had to submit to the dreadful pain. He had not, as Peter had wondered, developed some special sort of power. He had simply found, under Paula's lashes of the past years, that this was what happened if his penis and testicles could be caressed by a girl's tongue during the actual thrashing. When he was thrashed in another position—bent over one of the chairs, or manacled to the divan, or in any way that prevented his penis from being treated in this way—the pleasure was never felt. The pain was simply pain, and he had to wait for it to stop before the exhilaration slowly filled his body and lifted his senses to another world.

Audrey's birch flashed down, struck, and then fell to the floor. She turned and staggered, gasping, to a chair. She lay back and closed her eyes, a hand over her heart. She was very pale.

Peter said quickly to Elisabeth: "Excuse me." He got up and went to Audrey. "Are you all right, darling?" He put a hand to her wrist. Her pulse rate frightened him.

She opened her eyes and smiled dreamily at him. "Oh, yes, very much all right." Her breath and words came very gaspingly. "I'm out of this world! Oh, yes! Just leave me to lie here a little."

Peter turned. He looked at the birch of piano wire lying where it had fallen. He hesitated and then made up his mind. He picked it up. He went purposefully back to Elisabeth. She glanced at the birch in his hand and backed away from him, her eyes wide with fear, her hands stretched out in front of her. "No, sir! No!"

“Yes!” said Peter, and grabbed her. He threw her over an arm of the chair he had been sitting in, lifted the hem of her blood-proof robe and threw it quickly up over her head, and put the palm of his left hand on the small of her naked back. He held her firmly over the arm of the chair. She kicked wildly and called out to Paula.

Paula turned her head. “Give her a bit of a whipping, Peter,” she said, her eyes still glazed. The rhythm of her lashes was not interrupted.

“I want,” said Peter, half to Elisabeth and half to himself, “to find out what all this is about. I want to see whether it does the same thing to me.” He lifted the birch and struck her naked bottom. She screamed. “The only time,” he went on, “that I’ve ever done it before”—he struck again; she screamed again—“was when I was angry. It’s different now.” He struck the third time, and began to feel a tingle of excitement. “Yes, it’s rather pleasant, isn’t it?” The screams turned into howls.

Audrey got up from her chair and went to the trolley. She picked up the other whip. She chuckled as she saw the struggles of Elisabeth. She put her whip under her left arm, took a cane from the trolley, moved behind Peter and struck his bottom with the cane seven or eight times, simultaneously with the strokes of his birch. She chuckled again, threw down the cane, and returned to the whipping-post. She paused for a second to synchronise herself with Paula, and then began to use her whip with all her force.

The renewed pain of the double flogging made Rodney’s senses reel, and he knew that soon he would faint. The pleasure, however, was in its turn intensified. He stared down at the head of the maid. “Faster, now, Gwen. Bring me!” The maid increased the speed of her mouth action. His juices began to form.

Peter threw down his birch after the fifteenth lash. He did not want to risk trouble with the Pearces if their maid walked out in a fury. He removed his hand. Elisabeth stood up. She looked at him with a wild light in her eyes. She put a hand on his chest and gave him a violent push. He fell back on the chair. She seized the wire birch and lashed frenziedly at his chest, stomach, and genitals.

“Ill teach you!” she hissed.

He flung out his hands in a vain attempt to ward off the lashes of the birch. He tried to struggle to his feet, but fell back under the next lash. When the birch had struck his penis for the third time, he began to beg for mercy.

Rodney’s juices rolled forward.

The whips of Paula and Audrey swished down and cut into his bleeding body.

Paula felt herself hovering between her own orgasm and a feeling of faintness. She willed her orgasm to mount to just below its peak. She held it there, knowing that she could bring it at any second. She fought to control her faintness.

Rodney’s juices spurted at the back of the mouth of the maid. His bones seemed to turn to water with the ferocity of his ejaculation. The whips struck and struck, and cut into his body, increasing more and more the agonising sweetness of his fulfilment...

At last it was over. His head fell forward in exhaustion and utter satisfaction.

The whips continued to cut into him. Now that the agony-pleasure was over, the pain became insupportable. His senses reeled drunkenly in his head. He felt a blackness swimming around in his brain. He fainted. His body slumped on his leather fastenings.

Gwen removed her mouth from his penis, stood up, took a handkerchief from the pocket of her robe and wiped her mouth. She went to a small cupboard and took out a bottle of smelling salts. She returned to Rodney and opened the bottle under his nostrils. She was very deliberate in her movements.

Audrey felt a sick feeling of fear as she realised that he had fainted. She hoped it was not a heart attack, and realized at the same time that it was not at all unlikely. Peter, in the midst of his own troubles from Elisabeth's birch, realised it too, and stared at the post with a face gone suddenly white. Elisabeth paused in her punishment and turned to follow his look. Only Paula seemed oblivious of what had happened. She continued to strike with her whip. Her eyes still had their far-away look.

Audrey put out a hand and touched her whip-arm as it descended. "Paula dear, stop. Look! Something has happened to him. Something awful."

Rodney's head moved a little above the bottle of smelling salts, and then jerked to one side. Strength came back to his leg muscles. He straightened himself up and took his weight away from his wrists. Paula said: "It's nothing. He's all right."

There were several audible sighs of relief in the room.

Paula dropped her whip to the floor. She leaned forward a little, putting her hands on her knees. She willed her orgasm to arrive now. She murmured to Audrey: “Whip me now. Hard. All over my body.” She seemed to be speaking from a long way off.

Audrey looked at her irresolutely.

“Please. Quickly. I’m going to have my crisis in a second. Hurt me. Flog me.”

Audrey shrugged imperceptibly and moved forward into position. She raised her whip and brought it down over Paula’s bent back.

“Harder, Much harder.”

“All right. If you really mean it.” She began to thrash with all her strength.

A cry came from Paula. It was a cry of total abandonment, of ultimate, final ecstasy. Her orgasm was sending waves of searing sweetness through her loins, her legs, her stomach, her back, her breasts, and her brain. She willed it to be slow. The pain from Audrey’s whip added a delirium of its own, an anguish that was compounded of bliss and agony. The agony helped the orgasm to be slow in its fulfilment...

It lasted for nearly sixty seconds. To Paula it seemed that for an aeon of time she was transported to a heaven where, without body or brain, without limbs or mind, she experienced only rapture.

When it was over she walked, as though in a stupor, to a chair. She collapsed into it as though she had no bones. She lay with closed eyes. Her only signs of life were the regular rise and fall of her breast, and the sound of deep breathing.

Audrey, whip still in hand, looked at her with a troubled frown on her face.

Elisabeth came to her side. "Don't be anxious, madam. She is perfectly all right. She must lie there, though, for ten minutes or so."

Audrey nodded her head slowly. She felt the unfulfilled excitement return to her heart. Her loins began to ache again. She saw Gwen step up on her stool on her stool and untie the fastenings round Rodney's wrists. She turned quickly to Peter. "Darling, come on! I must have you now, now, now! Come quickly!" She ran to the couch and flung herself on her back. She raised the front of her sarong.

Peter rose quickly from his chair. His chest and stomach were livid with the weals of Elisabeth's punishment. He lay down on the top of Audrey, wincing at the pain of the weals as they rubbed against the soft leather of her sarong.

Elisabeth said: "May we whip him, madam?"

"By all means," said Audrey. "But be careful not to hit me too."

Elisabeth picked up the shorter whip that her mistress had dropped. She put herself in position beside the couch, measured her distance in order that the lash of the whip should not curl round Peter's body and hit Audrey, put her tongue between her teeth, and began to flog the raised bottom that was moving with the movements of the penis as it slid forwards and backwards in the vagina of Audrey.

As the first pain tore through his body, Peter felt his pleasure become greater. He felt as though he was swimming in a mixture of agony and joy. He gave himself up to the agony and wallowed in the joy.

Gwen helped Rodney to a chair. He sank into it and closed his eyes. She turned towards the couch and stood for a moment, watching.

"Come on, Gwen! Get a whip or something," said Elisabeth, without turning her head. She had put her free hand to her genitals. Her middle finger was agitating her vulva as she whipped.

"Yes," said Gwen. She was wondering whether, at last, this was the opportunity for her to use the cat-o'-nine-tails. She decided impulsively that it was. This man was not her master. She ran to the trolley and picked up the terrible instrument. She ran back to the couch, running the tails lovingly through her fingers.

"No, Gwen," said Elisabeth, as she saw the cat-o'-nine-tails. "Not that. You'll get the sack."

“I don’t think so,” said the other. She raised her arm. With a singing hiss the nine leather-tipped tails descended and bit into Peter’s shoulders.

He gave a shriek. His brain reeled.

“Blood!” muttered Gwen. “Come on, blood! I want a lot of it.” The tails hissed down again. “Good! Here it comes. Oh Christ, I’ve waited a long time for this!” She flogged with every last ounce of her strength... and each time the terrible whip bit into the flesh she received a stimulation that had the force of a pile-driver. She found herself able to lean back, as it were, against the mounting tide of her fulfilment.

CHAPTER NINE

Peter hurried across the wet pavement from his office building and climbed into the Rolls-Royce.

Audrey darling! How very nice. Are you always going to pick me up for lunch?"

Audrey smiled. "Certainly I will, if you've had the cat-o'-nine-tails the night before." She started the engine and drove in the direction of the West End.

"I could have killed that maid," he said. "She had a bloody nerve!"

"Poor Peter. Two nights running! You'll have to have a bit of a rest for a few days. Or at least your back will. Your bottom is fair game!"

He half-turned in his seat. "Audrey, promise me something!"

"Of course. What is it?"

"Promise me that you'll never let a maid of ours—if we get these three that Paula was talking about—use a cat-o'-nine-tails on me! Promise me that you'll be the only one!"

“Yes, Peter,” said Audrey quietly. “I promise, if you feel strongly about it.”

“It’s bloody murder.”

“All right, darling. And I won’t use it very often myself. It doesn’t really matter. There are so many other things, and they’re all nearly as good.”

Peter brought out his case, lit two cigarettes, and handed her one. “I’ve fixed the Registry Office for next Thursday. Eleven o’clock. All right?”

“Next Thursday? That’s four days. Yes, that’ll be very good.” She pressed the accelerator and swung the wheel. The great car shot forward through a narrow lane in the traffic. “I was with Paula for coffee. She’s an absolute darling, that girl. When she heard about the house in Chelsea she straight away rang up Helen Collett and asked her if she could send up some of her own people from the club at Buckley to fix our own special room.”

“And did she agree?”

“At once. She must be darling, too. She’s sending up the carpenters today and someone else tomorrow or the next day to cover all the chairs and things. I’m going to buy the stuff this afternoon. I thought we might get the same sort of stuff that my mac is made of. You seemed to like the feel of it the other night. We’ll have it silk side down and rubber side up, of course. And let’s have it in red.”

“Very nice. But will you be able to find it?”

“Paula gave me an address. And about the maids. One of them can cook, it seems. So, I’ve plunked for all three. Can we afford it?”

“I should think so. Anyway, a house that size could certainly do with three. But are we sure they’re going to be safe? Keep their mouths shut, I mean?”

“Helen Collette says they’re being screened now. I wonder what she means by screened. I wonder how she can find out.”

“Yes, I wonder. Must have some way, though. Paula says they’ve got such a lot at Buckley Manor. If they weren’t safe everything would have leaked out about the club long ago.”

“Exactly. I think we’ll be safe enough in leaving it to her judgement. Anyway, I’ll ring her and tell her that we’re going to be married on Thursday. She thought it would be a good idea to have them installed in the house—if they’re all right—the night before. So everything will be ready when you carry me over the doorstep!”

“I don’t,” said Peter grimly, “have to ask what you mean by ‘everything’!”

Paula Murray's secretary bustled into the living-room. "I'm so sorry I'm late back from lunch, Miss Murray. There was such a queue!"

"Never mind," said Paula. "You can bring in the letters any time you want."

"Arthur Simes is here and asking to see you."

"Again?"

"Yes. I've told him that he can't see you without an appointment, but he's very insistent. Says it's most important."

Paula flashed a glance at Rodney. She sighed. "All right. I'll see him." She got up from her chair and moved to the door.

Her secretary said: "Is there anything wrong, Miss Murray? Have you hurt yourself?"

Paula looked at her. "No, why?"

"You're walking so stiffly."

Rodney buried his head in his newspaper to hide his smile.

“Er—no,” said Paula. “I’m just a bit tired, that’s all. Late night.” She left the room and walked to the library.

Simes rose as she entered. “Good morning, Miss Murray. Nice of you to see me without an appointment.”

“My secretary says you told her it’s important. Do sit down.” She sat down in a deep leather chair and crossed her legs.

“Yes, it is rather.” He sat again on his upright chair and offered his cigarette case. He lit the two cigarettes and said: “I’ve not quite finished my story on you, and there are one or two other little points.”

Paula blew a cloud of smoke and hoped that her hands were not shaking. “Yes?”

He pulled his notebook out of his pocket and turned over its pages. “You said, among other things, that you approve of corporal punishment.”

Her heart missed a beat. “I said that I approve of it in certain circumstances. But why, for heavens’ sake, do you harp all the time on corporal punishment? It’s not a very interesting subject, is it?”

He looked straight into her eyes. “Isn’t it, Miss Murray?”

She returned his look. "I've no idea of what you mean, Mr. Simes." Be careful, Paula girl, she said to herself. There's very thin ice ahead.

He gave a laugh that was without mirth. "Oh, a lot of people are very interested in corporal punishment, Miss Murray. And everybody will be most interested to know what you think about it."

"Why particularly?"

"Because you're going to play a housemaster's wife in a school where a lot of beating necessarily goes on. And because you're the great, the famous, the beautiful Paula Murray. And a public which thirsts for information about what scent you use in your bath, and what colour are your underclothes, and how high up your legs your stockings go—"

"I think you are going a little too far yourself, Mr. Simes."

—will be very interested too to know whether Paula Murray approves of school-boys having their bottoms thrashed with a cane."

He is going too far, though Paula. He must be leading up to something. He wouldn't dare to speak like this to me otherwise.

"All this," she said coldly, "was discussed the other day. You said you have some other points."

“Yes.” He took out his pencil and twirled it in his fingers while he looked again at his notebook. “So, you approve, in certain circumstances, of corporal punishment. In saying this, are you speaking of the corporal punishment of children or the corporal punishment of adults?”

“Oh, goodness me, I don’t know. I didn’t separate them.”

“What would you say now? About the adults?”

“I—I suppose so. Again in certain circumstances.”

“Do you approve of the cat-o’-nine-tails?”

“Er—no, I don’t.”

He looked her straight in the eyes again. “Why then, Miss Murray, have you got one of your own?”

Her heart seemed to turn over and then stop beating. She felt herself going very cold. A tumult of thoughts raced through her brain. How does he know? How can he know? He can’t. He must be guessing—bluffing. Only Gwen and Elisabeth could have told him, and they would never do so. Does anyone else know I have one? Anyone at the club? Did Marilyn Marsh and that German maid of hers ever know? No, I didn’t have it then. Who else knows? Audrey Milton and her Peter—they know. But that’s equally absurd. On the other hand,

this is a waste of time. He seems to know—unless he’s pulling a gigantic bluff. But then he must know something or he wouldn’t dare. This is the end, Paula girl. The end for you, and for Rodney at the university. Just think of the headlines in the Clarion—and all the papers—all over the whole damn world...

She heard herself saying, calmly: “Whatever are you talking about?”

“About your cat-o’-nine-tails. Please don’t deny that you have one. Just tell me what you use it for—since you say you don’t approve of it as a punishment.”

... It will really make a stir, this will. And Helen said that he knows something about the club. Can he have connected me with it in some way? But she also said that he’d been bought off...

“I think you must be drunk, Mr. Simes—or mad.”

He leaned forward in his chair. “Miss Murray, I’ve talked to the salesman at Faulkner’s.”

“Faulkner’s? What are you talking about now?”

“Oh please, Miss Murray! I’ve talked to the salesman at Faulkner’s who sold you the thing a few days ago.”

... Faulkner’s? A few days ago? But our cat-o’-nine-tails was bought in Spain,

ages ago. Oh, dear sweet God! This means he is bluffing. He doesn't really know anything at all. No, stop! He may be bluffing about the cat-o'-nine-tails, but he must know something or he wouldn't have any reason to bluff about it...

She got up from her chair. "I think this interview had better come to an end, Mr. Simes." Her voice was icy. "It appears that you have taken leave of your senses."

He did not move. He grinned at her insolently. "Quite in the best traditions of the theatre—and nobody can do it better than Paula Murray. But it cuts no ice with me."

... In a drawer of that desk there's Rodney's pistol. If I could only get at it I'd put an end to all this straight away. I could say he had attacked me. No, idiot! Stop. You could do no such thing, and you know it! That's not the way...

He lit another cigarette. "Stop being pompous, Miss Murray. Why don't you come clean? You've been found out—and that's that."

Her eyes suddenly blazed with anger. "Get out of here! How dare you!"

He put his hands in front of his face in mock self-defence. "Miss Murray, Miss Murray," he said placatingly, "do stop acting. I know you've just bought a cat-o'-nine-tails. I've talked to the man who supplied it to Faulkner's—especially for you. You may not know who it is, so I'll tell you. It's a whipmaker in the East End Road. So, for God's sake, stop this tommy-rot. I'm prepared to make a deal with you if you'll sit down and be reasonable."

... A whipmaker in the East End Road? And that's where most of them come from. But ours came from Spain! Or am I going mad? It did come from Spain, though! So he must be bluffing...

She went to the door and turned with her hand on the knob. "I shall ring your editor in a few minutes and tell him of this conversation. I shall also tell him that if his paper wants any other interviews with me in the future, it had better send someone else. I will send my secretary to show you out."

"Wait a minute!" he said, rising abruptly to his feet. "I'll give you fair warning. I'm going to do the story of you and your cat-o'-nine-tails in any case. If you come clean and give me your own side of it, I'll see you come out of it as well as possible. If you don't—well, I suggest that you'd better get out your atlas and start looking for some backward spot where your face is not known."

She turned on her heel and left the room. She put her head quickly into her secretary's office. "Will you please see Mr. Simes out, Miss Hayter?" She half-ran back to the living-room. "Rodney, give me a very big drink, please. Quickly!"

Rodney got up from his chair at once, looked sharply at her, and went to pour her drink without a word.

He watched her drink it straight down and shudder. He lit a cigarette and put it in her trembling hands. "All right, old girl. Tell. What's happened?"

Paula drew deeply on her cigarette. She looked up at him. "I'm afraid that things are pretty bad with that Simes man. As bad as they can possibly be." She began

to tell him in detail of the interview.

When she had finished, Rodney nodded a couple of times without speaking. He took her glass and re-filled it. He poured a drink for himself. “Yes, things do look rather bad. He’s bluffing about the cat-o’-nine-tails but, as you say, he wouldn’t have any reason to bluff about it if he didn’t have something else.”

“Then why didn’t he speak of the something else— whatever it is?”

“God knows! But it’s very clear that he has.”

“Do you think he’s managed to connect me with the club?”

“Possibly. And that might be a reason for not speaking of it. Helen said she’d bought him off, didn’t she?”

“You mean that he may have dropped everything about the club itself but—”

“But not your connection with it. Yes, I’m afraid so. We’ll have to face up to facts, darling. Look at it-like this. He said that if you didn’t co-operate with him you’d better look for somewhere where your face is not known. All right. But a simple story about Paula Murray’s having bought a cat-o’-nine-tails couldn’t possibly cause that sort of trouble. You bought a cat, he thinks. So what? You wanted it for a film. The public wouldn’t know that stars don’t buy their own props. Therefore, your explanation would be accepted without even a raised eyebrow. So, since he made the threat, it means that he has something else that

would raise the public's eyebrows—and literally the only things in your private life that would do that are our special room here in the flat and your membership in the club. But if it had been the room here he would have spoken of it—and, in any case, he can't know of it. I agree with you about the maids, and Audrey and Peter. None of them would ever breathe a word. So, I'm afraid it must be the club."

"Oh, God! Oh, dear sweet God!"

"I think you had better go and lie down for a bit. Leave everything to me now. Try to stop worrying too much about it."

"What can you do?"

"I don't know at the moment. I'll think of some way out of it."

She looked up at him very seriously. "Rodney. Promise me. You won't do anything crazy? You won't do anything that could get you into trouble?"

"Well—not big trouble."

"Promise?"

Like a schoolboy, he crossed his fingers as he replied: "I promise." He put down an arm and helped her out of the chair.

“I’m awfully shaky,” she said, as she went with him to the door.

“Of course. But you’ll feel better after a rest.”

He took her to their bedroom and swung her lightly off her feet. He laid her gently on the bed, took off her shoes, and covered her with an eiderdown. He saw that she had begun to shiver. He went into the bathroom and filled a hot water bottle from the tap. He put it under the soles of her feet. He smoothed her hair back from her forehead. “Try to sleep a little, old girl. And don’t worry. It’s going to be all right. Rodney will fix.”

She smiled up at him, a contented trusting smile. “Rodney always fixes. If he says it’s going to be all right, then it’s going to be all right. I trust my capable Rodney. And I love him.”

He bent to kiss her lips. “Go to sleep now.”

He left the bedroom and went straight to the study. He sat behind the desk and opened a drawer. He took out a Mauser automatic pistol. He held it in his hands for a few moments, staring thoughtfully at it. He put it back in the drawer.

He leaned forward with his head on his hands. He began to think, carefully and deeply.

“I don’t think that was very bright of you,” said the editor of the Woman’s Page. “So what if she has bought a cat-o’-nine-tails? That’s no story. You may know what she uses it for—or you may think you know— but the fact that she’s just bought one is no story. And you tell her she’ll have to find some place to hide! Give me strength!”

I’m going to connect her,” said Simes slowly, “with that Whipping Club. And then it’ll be a story! Then she’ll have to make a very black veil for her face and go and hide in some jungle.”

“What on earth have you got against her? What’ve you got your knife into her for?”

“Nothing.”

“But it’ll break her if you do find that club and if she is connected with it.”

Simes put one of his legs over an arm of his chair. “You can’t make an omelette without breaking eggs.”

“Oh Christ!” said the woman disgustedly. “All right, my trite little omelette, tell me. How are you’re going to connect her with that club? You’re not even sure it exists.”

“Yes, I am.”

“The same old feeling in your bones?”

He shook his head. “No, I’ve got proof now.”

“What proof?”

“Never you mind.”

“Where is it?”

He hesitated. “I’m not sure about that yet. But I think it’s somewhere near the village of Buckley.”

“Where’s that?”

“Near Biltergrange School. It’s my bet that it’s one of the big country houses round there.”

“So? What’s the next move? How’ll you find which country house it is?”

He frowned and said slowly: “There’s one person who might be persuaded to tell

me.”

“Who?”

“Do you remember the Marilyn Marsh case?”

“Who doesn’t? Five years for whipping her husband to death!”

“She had a German maid who was helping her to whip him. The maid was deported back to Germany. It was the maid, in fact, who dropped the half-word that put me on the track of Paula Murray. If I could run her to earth I might get it out of her now. It’s some time ago, and her loyalty may not be as strong now as it was then.”

“The paper would never stand the expenses. And in any case Germany is off your beat. You’re just a home boy, my little omelette.”

“If I knew where to find her I’d take a couple of days off and go on my own steam. As for expenses, well—if I break the story the paper would cough up all right afterwards. I’d risk it now—now I know for sure the club exists.”

“I thought you were always broke. How could you afford the trip—and the bribe?”

“I—er—I’ve just had a bit of a windfall. I can afford it.”

“Pay me back the twenty quid you owe me then.”

He took out his wallet. “I was going to.” He gave her four five-pound notes. “Trouble is that it’s going to be like looking for a needle in a haystack—trying to find that maid. I’m going to wire our man in Bonn first— just as a long shot. He may know something.”

The woman looked at him quizzically. There was an expression of contempt in her eyes. “I still think you stink. Paula Murray’s a very nice woman. I don’t know why I have any time for you.”

He grinned insolently. “Oh yes you do! I’m very convenient for you to have around when you want your peculiar sexual appetite to be satisfied.”

“You nasty bit of work!”

His grin widened. “What about a bit now? I may be away for some days. And the plane may crash! Hadn’t you better have a bit while you can?”

She flushed with anger. “You—”

He put out a hand. “Oh, Betty. I’m only ragging you. Don’t go off the deep end. Really, why not have a bit now, in case I do go?”

She looked at him steadily for a moment and sighed. “All right, you worm. Let’s have a bit, as you so delicately put it. As you say, the plane may crash. I hope it does! No, I don’t. There’ll be other people on it—nice people.”

“You do love me, don’t you!” He got up from his chair. “I’ll go and send the wire. Get out your machinery, will you? I don’t want to be long. I want to go down to Buckley to have a bit of a scout round.”

He returned to his own office and wrote a telegram to the Clarion representative in Bonn. He took it to the office-boys’ pool. He then went back to Betty. She was still sitting at her desk.

“Not ready yet? Where’s the machinery?”

“Don’t be bloody silly!” she said, getting up now from her desk. “Do you think I’d get that out before the door’s locked?” She went to the door, opened it, moved the indicator to show “out,” closed it again, and locked it. “Now, don’t talk any more. And don’t make any other noise. And get your trousers down.”

She took a bunch of keys from her bag and unlocked a drawer of her desk. She took out another bunch of keys and went to a cupboard that was set in the wall. She unlocked this and took out a wooden contraption. It was made of two lengths of plank, three-and-a-half feet long and three inches wide; it was hinged at one end so that the two three-inch widths together made a width of six inches. In the centre of this hinged six-inch width was a hole about the size of a golf ball. At the ends of one of the pieces of plank were screw-grips like those found on a vise.

She took the contraption to one end of her desk and fixed it firmly across its width with the screw-grips. She tightened these as much as she could and shook the contraption to see that it was firm. It now stood up from the end of the desk like a six-inch wall with a hole in its middle.

She signaled to Simes. He had put his trousers and pants over the back of a chair and now stood in his jacket and shirt-tail. He came to the end of the desk. He opened his legs. He put his penis and testicles to the hole in the middle of the planks. They were some inches higher than the hole. He opened his legs wider. His penis and testicles dropped to the level of the hole. She raised one end of the upper hinged flap of the contraption. Simes moved forward an inch or two and put the base of his penis and scrotum into the half-hole of the lower flap. She lowered the upper flap. Its own half-hole fitted snugly around the base of the angle made by his penis and his stomach. She pressed a catch that was on the end of the planks opposite to the hinge. The catch locked the two free ends firmly together. He stood with his face to the desk, and with his bulging testicle-bag and erected penis trapped on the other side of the hole. Any movement he made now would be at the expense of his testicles. He carefully fondled his erection with the tips of his fingers.

Betty took off her skirt and pants. She went back to the wall-cupboard and took out a very large dildo. It was a double-dildo, one part of it to go inside her own vagina and the other part to penetrate the anus of Simes. The part that was to penetrate him was six inches in length and half as thick again as any ordinary human erected penis. The part that was to enter her was about five inches in length and only a little thicker than a human erection. The parts were made of hard rubber.

She opened her legs and bent her knees a little. She put a finger to her vulva and caressed it to produce a little more wetness. She pushed the tip of her end of the dildo slowly inside herself. She bent her knees a little more and pushed it as far as it would go. Its other end stood up and away from her at an angle, like the penis of a monster. She strapped its leather fastenings tightly around her legs,

buttocks and waist, and slowly stood erect. Her own end felt very hard inside her.

She moved slowly up behind Simes. She pushed the head of the great dildo between the stretched cheeks of his bottom. It nosed its way towards his anus. He caught his breath as he felt it. She murmured very softly: "Now, not a sound, Arthur!"

She pushed with her thighs. The dildo-head nosed further into the entrance of the anus. Simes began to agitate his penis violently with his fingers. She pushed again. The dildo-head penetrated the anus to a depth of half an inch. He caught his breath again.

Suddenly she gave a great thrust with her thighs. The dildo slid inside him. He gave a strangled gasp.

"Sssh!" she said. She pushed again. It slid to its full extent.

She put her arms over his shoulders and folded her hands on his chest. With her arms as a lever, she began to oscillate the dildo backwards and forwards. As it moved, it caused a proportionate oscillation of the part inside her vagina.

She began to breathe fast. "My little bum-boy," she murmured. "Little pansy-queen."

He grunted softly. He felt as though his bottom had been torn asunder by her first

great thrust. The movements that she made caused a fiery pain in his anus. He agitated his penis as hard as he could. As she pulled backwards he could not help being pulled backwards with her—and his testicles, trapped on the other side of the hole in the planks, sent waves of protesting pain through his loins. To counter this pain, he had to do his best to pull forward as the dildo was pulled backwards.

Betty began to feel the juices inside her gathering for their eruption. She quickened her movements. She felt them rise, and rise, and rise—and erupt...

Simes realised the moment of her eruption from the shudder that went through her body and from the force with which she pressed her arms against his neck. He increased the violence of his agitating fingers and willed his own crisis to arrive. It obeyed him almost at once. His creamy juices ejaculated out of his penis and spurted themselves over the rexine that covered the top of the desk.

She lay against his back for a few moments, breathing heavily. Then she withdrew the dildo from his anus. She unstrapped the leather fastenings and pulled her own end of the dildo out of her vagina. She took a newspaper from the desk and wrapped the dildo up in it. She put it back in the cupboard.

Simes unfastened the catch on the wooden contraption, raised its upper flap, and took his genitals away from the hole. He massaged them gently. They felt inflamed and sore. He unscrewed the grips and took the contraption from the desk. He gave it to her. She put it in the cupboard and locked its door.

When they were both dressed again, Simes gave her a cigarette. “All right?”

“Very nice. Thank you.”

“Don’t mention it. Glad to oblige.”

“Better unlock the door.”

“Yes. Well, so long. I’m off to Buckley.”

He went to the door and softly turned the key. He opened the door and went out. He moved back the indicator to show “in,” and returned to his office. He walked stiffly, each movement of his legs causing a pain to his anal passage. He took his raincoat and went down in the lift.

He walked out on to Fleet Street and turned up the collar of his raincoat against the driving rain. He turned left at the first corner. His bright red Austin Healey, with its hood up, stood in the entrance of the Clarion garage. He got in and drove away.

Rodney Pearce, sitting at the wheel of his own car on the other side of the narrow street, nodded to himself. “All right,” he murmured softly. “The enemy is spotted. And this is where he garages his car. So, tomorrow it shall be. But I hope to God this rain stops. He’ll never put down his hood otherwise.”

Paula woke. She felt refreshed and well. Then she remembered why she had been put to bed. She felt the weight of anxiety return to her. She lay for a few minutes staring at the ceiling. Then she put her hand to a bell-push. Elisabeth came into the bedroom. “Yes, madam?”

“Would you ask Mr. Pearce to come to me, please?”

“Mr. Pearce left the house an hour ago, madam. He hasn’t come back yet.”

“Oh. All right, thank you, Elisabeth.”

She lay inert on her back, her brain a welter of worries. She began to wonder what Rodney would do. He had said that he would fix matters. How would he be able to do so? He would not dare to try to bribe Simes, for that would be admitting that they had something to hide—and Simes might be more interested in his story than in the amount of money that they could pay him. They didn’t have the resources of Helen Collett... The only sure way, she thought, was the one she herself had thought of. She suddenly felt cold.

She swung her legs off the bed, put on her shoes, and went quickly to the study. She pulled open one of the drawers.

She sank in the chair and breathed a deep sigh of relief as she saw that the pistol was still in the drawer.

Simes looked at his watch. A quarter to eight. Time to be getting back, he thought. There might be a telegram from Bonn. And he was wasting his time here. Pub after pub after pub, and not a bloody hint of anything to do with the club.

He pushed his glass across the bar. "One for the road, please."

The father of Pam, standing beside him, said: "That your car outside, guvnor? That red Healey?" His voice sounded thick. He had obviously been drinking heavily.

Simes nodded. "Yes."

"I saw it earlier on. Outside the Bull at Buckley."

"Yes, I was there."

"It's a nice village."

"Yes."

"Got a 'andsome manor."

Simes wished the man would leave him alone. He was in no mood for light bar conversation. "Has it?"

"Yes, it 'as. An' my daughter works there."

"That must be nice for her."

The father of Pam looked gloomily at his nearly empty glass. "They don' pay much. An' my daughter's a fine girl. A fine loyal girl. Loyal to 'er father."

"That must be nice for you."

The man glared at him. "You don' talk much, do you? I tell you no man ever 'ad such a loyal daughter."

Simes sighed. "I'm sure you're right. But I must be going."

The man laid a hand on his arm. "You don' believe me, do you? You don' know what loyalty is, you toffs." He hiccoughed and then belched. "If I was to tell you 'ow loyal my daughter is to me it'd take your breath away."

Simes put down his glass. "I'm sure it would. But some other time. I have to be on my way."

“She caned the son of a bleedin’ lord last week. Copped ‘im muckin’ about with a young un, an’ she took down ‘is bags an’ gave ‘im a sound canin’.”

Simes looked at him narrowly. “She did what?”

“She caned the son of a bleedin’ lord. Copped ‘im—”

“Which lord?”

“Lord Curie or somethin’ like that. Some big nob in the government.”

Simes took a deep breath. “What’ll you have? I’d like to hear all about this. Let’s go and sit down comfortably.”

“I thought you was in a ‘urry.”

“I am. But it’s not often I have a chance to meet anyone as interesting as yourself. I’d like to know how this is connected with your daughter’s loyalty. Tell me all about it—from the beginning.”

It was half-past ten when Simes reached his office. A telegram was waiting for him.

GRETA HOLLRIEGL IS

DANCER AT THE BOTSCHAFTER NIGHTCLUB IN HAMBURG.

He picked up his telephone. When the operator came on the line, he said: "Will you get me B.E.A., please?"

He waited for a moment. Then: "Do you fly direct to Hamburg? Good. What time is the next flight, please? Nine, tomorrow? All right, book me a seat, please. Arthur Simes of the Clarion."

He hung up and took a sheet of paper. He wrote:

"Dear Betty.

"Do me a favour, please, will you? I'm off to Hamburg at nine o'clock in the morning and it's too late now to do anything myself. I want an appointment with Lord Curie, the Minister of State, for sometime on the day I get back, which should be Thursday. It will be very difficult to get one, but if you emphasise the Clarion enough to his secretary you may swing it. Anyway do your best, please. It's very important.

“Arthur.

“(P.S. Are you still satisfied—or has the appetite returned?!)”

CHAPTER TEN

Rodney woke at half-past six.

He got out of bed slowly and quietly, taking care not to wake Paula. He tiptoed with his clothes into the bathroom and shut the door. He showered quickly, dressed, and went to the study. He rang a bell, wondering whether the maids would be up yet.

Gwen came to him. “Good morning, sir. You’re up bright and early. And it’s going to be a fine day, I think.”

“At last,” said Rodney. “Will you bring me some coffee and a boiled egg, please. As quickly as ever you can.”

“Certainly, sir. Five minutes. The papers haven’t come yet, though.”

“Never mind.”

While he waited for his breakfast, he took out the pistol and examined its mechanism. He made sure that it was fully loaded, slipped on the safety catch, and put it into his hip pocket. It made a bulge. He took it out and put it into his right-hand trouser pocket.

He ate his breakfast quickly, got up, and went to the windows. The sky looked grey on the horizon. It would rain later. He went out of the study, put on his raincoat, and left the flat.

Outside in the street, he put up his raincoat collar and walked rapidly to his garage. He got into his car, a closed Humber, and drove down the ramp. In the street, he turned in the direction of Fleet Street. When he arrived at the Clarion building he turned into the side street and pulled up opposite the garage.

He got out of his car and strolled across the street and past the entrance of the garage. He saw the red Austin Healey, its hood still up, standing at one side. He returned to the Humber, lit a cigarette, and settled down to wait.

He glanced at the clock on the dashboard. It was a quarter past seven. He took a pair of dark glasses from the pocket of the car and put them on.

Paula woke up at twenty minutes past seven.

She saw that she was alone in the bed. She looked around the room and saw that Rodney's clothes had gone. She pressed her bell. A small worried frown was on her face.

When Elisabeth came to the bedroom she said: "Is Mr. Pearce having breakfast?"

“No, madam. Mr. Pearce had breakfast and left the flat a little after seven o’clock.”

“So early? Oh dear.”

“Is anything wrong, madam?”

“I hope not. Give me my robe, please.” She slipped out of the bed, put on her dressing-gown and slippers, and hurried to the library. Elisabeth followed her.

The pistol was not in the drawer. She sat in the chair, remembering her relief of the previous afternoon. Now she felt cold and sick.

“Is anything wrong, madam?” repeated Elisabeth, a frown on her pretty face.

Paula looked at her and nodded slowly. “Yes, I’m afraid so. Something terribly wrong. But there’s nothing we can do about it.”

“I’m very sorry, madam. If—if there’s anything—”

“Thank you, Elisabeth. I’ll let you know if there’s anything you can do.”

When the door closed behind the maid, Paula put her head on her hands and said

softly to herself: “Oh, Rodney! Rodney darling, you promised!” Tears came to her eyes. “Where are you now? How can I stop you?”

She began to sob pitifully. Soon she began to pray.

Simes arrived at the garage at half-past seven. He got out of his taxi with a suitcase in his hand, paid the driver, and went inside the building.

Rodney started the engine of the Humber. He offered up a silent prayer of thanks to his lucky star for bringing him here early enough. He waited, his eyes on the garage entrance.

Simes went straight to his car, put the suitcase on the back seat and thought for a moment. He lowered the hood. He got in, started the engine and drove towards the entrance. He stopped with his front wheels on the pavement.

“Bert!” he shouted.

Rodney offered up more thanks when he saw that the sports car was open again.

“Yes?” A shout came from the back of the garage.

“I shan’t be bringing her in tonight, Bert,” Simes called back. “I’ll leave her at London Airport. Be back either Wednesday night or Thursday morning.” He let in his clutch and turned into the street.

London Airport, thought Rodney. Now that's a nice bit of news. I know a rather good stretch of road that's usually fairly empty. Yes, that's a very nice bit of news.

For the next forty minutes he gave all his attention to following the red sports car. Much smaller than the Humber, it was able to nip in and out of traffic, and several times Rodney thought he had lost it. Finally, however, the two cars left the dense traffic and approached the more open suburbs.

Rodney pulled his collar high up around his ears. He put his right hand into his trouser pocket and took out his pistol. He put the safety catch off and laid the pistol on his lap. He began to watch for the stretch of open road which he remembered.

It was upon him almost before he recognised it. He looked in the driving mirror. The road behind him was empty. In front of the red sports car one delivery truck was approaching. He waited until it had passed both the sports car and his own. He took the pistol from his lap and held it in his right hand. He glanced again at his driving mirror. The road was still empty.

He pressed his foot on the accelerator.

The Humber began to overtake the red sports car.

Seventeen miles away, Paula abruptly lifted her head from her hands. Her whole body had gone quite cold. She stood up from the desk, a hand to her forehead.

“No, Rodney,” she breathed. “No, darling, no, no! It isn’t worth it! Don’t!”

She stood like a statue for a full minute. Then she gave a cry and collapsed to the floor in a dead faint.

The Humber gained steadily on the sports car. Rodney glanced at his speedometer and saw that he was travelling at over seventy miles an hour. This is mad, he said to himself. I’ve seen too many American gangster films. It’s outrageously mad—but it’s the only way. Come on, be quick! There’s a bend ahead. At this speed we’ll be on it in no time. And if there’s another car coming...

The Humber drew level with the sports car.

Simes glanced at the car that was trying to pass him and pressed his foot harder on his accelerator. I’ll be damned, he said to himself, if I’ll let him pass.

At nearly eighty miles an hour, the two cars, abreast of each other, tore down the road.

So he’s a road-hog too, thought Rodney. Well, that suits me very nicely.

He raised his pistol. He pointed it, across his chest, towards the open sports car. He glanced again at the road and then turned his head. His left hand tightened on his steering wheel. He took aim.

Simes glanced to his right with a mocking laugh. He saw the pistol pointing at him. The laugh died on his tongue. He put his foot hard on his brake.

Rodney fired.

The bullet passed six inches in front of Simes' head.

Rodney fired again. With the deceleration of the sports car, the bullet again went wide.

He sensed, rather than saw, the huge lorry that swung round the bend. He thrust his foot on the brake with all his strength.

It was too late. The Humber crashed, head on, at seventy-two miles an hour, into the front of the lorry. There was a tremendous noise of tearing metal.

Simes threw his wheel to the left, climbed crazily up the grass verge, and whipped clear of the collision. He turned his head and looked back at the wreckage in the road. He shivered. He did not stop.

He bought it, he told himself. He said he'd arrange an accident if I didn't lay off the story. He must have seen me at Buckley yesterday. Well, the accident has gone to the wrong person. He's bought it himself. But it all chinks up. Trying to shoot me, eh? Oh yes, it all chinks up. Just wait till I write this story!

He shivered again. He leaned forward and rummaged in the pocket under the dashboard. He brought out a half bottle of whisky. He opened its cap and drank deeply.

It was not until he boarded his plane that he wondered what had happened to the driver of the lorry.

—2—

Paula sat, white-faced, beside the telephone. She sat motionless, waiting. Her body and limbs felt heavy, her muscles like lead. Mercifully, her brain was numb.

The telephone rang at five minutes past ten.

Paula seized the receiver. “Yes?”

“Is Mrs. Pearce there, please?”

“I am Mrs. Pearce. Who is this?”

“St. Miriam’s Hospital. Dr. Tomlinson.”

“Yes?”

“I’m afraid your husband has had a very bad accident.”

“Yes. Is he dead?”

“No, by a miracle, he isn’t. But he’s very bad. Can you come out here at once?”

“Yes, of course.” She put a hand to her head. “Is he going to be all right?”

There was a pause. “Yes, with God’s help.”

“God will help,” she said softly. “Tell me, please.’ Was anyone else hurt?”

No, it was another miracle. The lorry driver was thrown clear. He was hardly scratched.”

“And you’re telling me the truth about my husband? He is going to be all right?”

“Yes, I think so. But it’s going to take some time. You’d better prepare yourself for a pretty bad shock.”

“Tell me. Please tell me.”

“I think you’d better come out here at once.”

“Yes, yes. But tell me now, please.”

“Well, both legs and one arm are broken. And most of his ribs are broken too. And—well, we’ll talk about the other things when you get here.”

“The other things. Are they worse?”

“No, they’re not worse.”

“Right, I’ll be with you as soon as I possibly can.”

Paula put the receiver slowly back on its rest. She put her hands to her cheeks. She felt her tears running over her fingers. “Thank you, God. Thank you.”

—3—

Simes had lunch in the restaurant of his hotel in Hamburg and went back to his

room. He opened the telephone book and looked up the number of the Botschafter nightclub. He asked the telephone operator to get him the number.

There was no reply.

He was not surprised. He realized that he would have to wait until evening for the place to open. He lay down on his bed and went to sleep.

He awoke shortly after six o'clock, washed his face, and went down to the hotel bar. He ordered an obstschnapps and idly picked up an evening newspaper that was lying on the bar beside him.

On its front page was a photograph of Paula Murray hurrying into a large hospital-like building. He studied the German caption but could understand nothing of it.

He looked at the barman. "Do you speak English?" Yes, sir.

He reversed the newspaper and pushed it towards the barman. He pointed at the caption with his finger. "Would you tell me what that says, please?"

The barman read the caption. "It says that Paula Murray's husband has miraculously escaped being killed in a car accident—and she is here entering the hospital."

Simes stared at him. “Does it say where the accident was?”

The barman looked again at the newspaper. “Yes. Near London Airport. Early this morning. He crashed into the front of a pantechicon at very high speed.”

Simes took the newspaper back. “Thank you very much indeed.” He stared at the picture, a twisted smile on his lips. Well, well, he said to himself. So it wasn’t the man from Buckley, after all. It was her husband. My, oh my! She’s really bought it now. Just wait till I get back!

He left the bar and the hotel, and took a taxi to the Botschafter. It was not yet open, but a doorman was in the foyer.

Simes asked: “What time is Greta Hollriegl’s act?”

“Midnight, sir.”

“Does she come here earlier?”

“Yes sir. She is usually here at eleven o’clock.”

Simes turned to the photographs that hung on the walls of the foyer. He soon found those of Greta Hollriegl. He smiled to himself. She looked very different from the frightened maid whom he remembered at the Old Bailey. She was naked except for a black gossamer-chiffon scarf that was draped across her torso,

and shoes with very high pointed heels. “Very nice,” he murmured. “And what a figure! I wonder how much she costs.” He looked at his watch. He wondered how he should pass the time till eleven o’clock. He looked round at the doorman, and took out his wallet. “Do you know of a good brothel that’ll be open now?”

The doorman watched the notes being taken from the wallet. When he thought they were sufficient he said: “Number six, Fenstergasse.” He felt it unnecessary now to add the word sir.

Simes gave him the money. “Does it go in for specialities?”

“I do not understand.”

“Do the girls there do—er—special things?”

“Special things?”

“Oh, to hell with it,” said Simes disgustedly. He walked out of the foyer and signaled a taxi.

—4—

Audrey hurried across the Savoy bar.

“So sorry I’m late, darling. I’ve been with Paula.”

“How is Rodney?”

“He’s going to be all right. My goodness, what a miracle! He was doing over seventy, you know.”

“So the paper said. I wonder how they know. But, as you say, it’s a miracle. She must be very happy.”

“That’s what I thought. But she’s not. Or rather, she is happy that’s he’s all right—but there seems to be something on her mind. She seems to be awfully worried about something.”

“Probably about his weals. They must have raised some eyebrows in the hospital.”

“My goodness, of course! His weals! I’d forgotten about them.”

He grinned. “You women are awful bitches! What’ll you have?”

“May I have a martini, please? Listen, darling. Daddy is a bit upset about the Registry Office.”

“Oh!”

“The poor darling wanted a slap-up wedding. I think he was looking forward to giving the bride away.”

“So?”

She laughed. “So nothing. I’ve brought him round. But he’s chuntering a bit.”

He frowned. “Shouldn’t we do it the way he’d like? After all, he’s your father—and he’s only got one daughter. And, dammit, he’s given us that house. He’s been awfully good about everything.”

She hesitated. “I know. But, darling, it’ll take ages to arrange the sort of wedding he’s thinking about. It wouldn’t be only society—there’d be odd bits of royalty here and there. And that sort of thing is awfully complicated.”

“All the same, he—”

“And I don’t want to wait all that time. If our sex-life were normal, it wouldn’t matter at all. We could poke whenever we want at your flat. But, as it is, we want a special menage, don’t we?”

He laughed. “You’re just a hungry flagellating sadistic bitch.”

“I’ll punish you for that. Anyway, we go ahead as planned on Thursday. But he wants us for dinner on Wednesday night.”

—5—

Arthur Simes regarded the blonde German girl on the bed.

She was very beautiful, he thought. He had been lucky. He had asked the madam for a girl who could speak English, and she had said there was only one— and she was not free. Simes had decided to wait. He realized that he had been wise to wait.

She said: “What sort of speciality do you want? Let’s get on with it.”

“I’d like you to pee over me.”

The girl gave a laugh. “So that’s why you made me drink all that beer! It’s a little difficult.”

“Why is it?”

“It makes such a mess.”

“Isn’t there a bathroom?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Let’s go there.”

She got up from the bed. “All right. Come on. I’ll burst otherwise.”

Simes picked up his trousers.

She said: “You don’t need those. Where do you think you are?”

He grinned. “Natural delicacy! All right, come on.”

The two of them left the room and walked, without any clothes, down the passage to a bathroom. They went into it and locked the door. Simes lay down in the bath. The girl climbed up on to the sides of the bath and stood erect, towering above him. She pressed on her bladder muscles. A stream of warm urine gushed down upon his stomach and genitals. She moved her feet forward and directed her urine over his face. He opened his mouth and sucked eagerly at the liquid. He agitated his erected penis as he drank. He felt a violent impulse in his testicles. His orgasm hovered.

Her bladder took a long time to empty.

When the last drop had fallen, she stepped down from the sides of the bath. She turned on both the hot and cold taps.

“Hey! What are you doing?” said Simes, drawing up his feet.

“Giving you something to wash yourself in. What do you think?”

“Why? I don’t want to wash yet.”

“Well, I want you to. Do you think you’re going to lie on my bed in that condition?” She took a towel from the rack and put it over the side of the bath. “When you’re clean you can come back to my room.” She left the bathroom.

He cleaned himself, climbed out of the bath, and rubbed himself dry. He went along the passage to her room.

She was standing in the centre of the floor with a short, heavy whip in her hand.

“What’s that for?” he asked.

“Don’t you want to be whipped?”

“Good God, no!”

“I thought that men who like a woman to pee over them usually like to be whipped afterwards.”

“Not me! You put that bloody whip away, do you hear? It gives me the shivers to look at it!”

She smiled. “You don’t like pain?” She ran her fingers lightly over the lash of the whip.

“No. I do not like pain! Put it away, will you?”

She shrugged. “What a pity. I like giving it. And German men can take it.” She put the whip away in a drawer. “German men are tough,”

“To hell with German men! Lie down on the bed.”

She lay on her back on the bed. He climbed on top of her. She put her hands to his testicles. “To hell with German men, is it? That is not polite.” She squeezed his testicles hard.

He shouted with the pain, and immediately felt sick.

She laughed. "When you are in Germany, you must not say such things."

The waves of nausea slowly subsided. "You bloody cow!" he said. He was very angry. He got up from the bed and went to the drawer in which she had put the whip. He gave it a great pull. The whole drawer came out and fell to the floor. He seized the whip. He returned to the bed.

She looked up at him with a mocking light in her eyes. "And German women are tough, too!" She saw the whip begin to fall and flung herself over on her stomach.

He lashed with all his strength. He struck at her shoulders, her back, her kidneys, her bottom, her legs. He said, between tightly-closed teeth: "We'll see how tough they are!" He thrashed with all his force. Blood from the weals spattered over the bed.

She lay tense. She made no sound at all.

The whip continued to cut cruelly into her body.

Blood now spattered up over the front of his body.

He began to feel exhausted. He gave a dozen more lashes with all his force, and threw down the whip.

She lay still for a few moments, and then slowly turned over. Her face was deathly white.

She said: "Well? Are German women tough, too?"

He made an unpleasant noise with his lips. "You probably enjoyed it."

"Get out!"

"What?"

"Get out of my room. You've had your money's worth."

Her eyes were blazing. He decided it would be safer to leave. He put on his clothes and left. He agitated his penis as he walked downstairs. He was very sexually hungry.

He returned to his hotel and went to the restaurant for dinner. When he finished eating he looked at his watch. It was a little after nine o'clock. He wondered what to do for the next two hours. He went upstairs to his room. He rang the bell for the chambermaid. When she came he gave her his shoes. He lay down on the bed and thought of his drive to the airport that morning. It seemed to him a long time ago. He began to make plans about the revenge he would take when he returned to London.

There was a knock on his door.

“Come in,” he called.

A young page entered the room with his newly-polished shoes.

He looked at the boy. He felt the stirrings of desire in his genitals.

“Do you speak English?” he asked, as the page put the shoes on the floor.

“Mein Herr?” The boy looked up with a smile.

“Do you speak English?”

“Nein, mein Herr. I have at school only a little English words learned.”

Simes grinned. “Little words, eh? Do you know the word fuck? That’s a little word.” The page was about fourteen, blond, good-looking—and very desirable to him.

The boy looked seriously at him. “Yes, mein Herr. I know that word.”

“Would you like me to fuck you?”

The boy frowned doubtfully. “Perhaps—if you much money pay.”

“How much?”

“One hundred marks.”

“That’s a lot.”

“It will be good. I will soap use. Very nice for you.”

“Soap?”

“On your—er, what do you call it—your prick. It will be very nice for you.”

“You know quite a lot of little words, don’t you? All right. Let’s see this soap thing.” He reached for his jacket, took out his wallet, and extracted two fifty-mark notes. He gave them to the boy. “Come on, men. Get cracking.” He lay back against his pillows.

“You must your trousers remove.”

“You remove ‘em.

“With great pleasure, mein Herr.”

The boy moved to the side of the bed and put his hands to Simes’ trousers. He undid the buttons of the flies. He unfastened the waist-clasp and patted Simes’ hips. “Up, please.” Simes raised his back from the bed. The boy pulled the trousers and pants down to the level of the knees. He took the front of the shirt and laid the ends aside. Simes’ penis stood up toweringly erect.

“You have great prick,” said the boy. “Now feel I much fear.”

“What about this soap?” asked Simes. “Get on with that first.”

“With pleasure, mein Herr,” The boy took a towel from the wash-stand and spread it on the bed beside Simes. “Please lie on this.” Simes did so. The boy went back to the wash-stand and turned on the hot tap. He picked up the soap and made a lather with his hands. He returned to the bed and put his wet, soapy hands to the genitals. He massaged gently. Simes stiffened against his pillow. “We have not enough water,” the boy said, and returned to the wash-stand. He put his hands under the tap and wetted them thoroughly. He rubbed soap on them. He returned to Simes.

As the soapy fingers caressed his penis and testicles, Simes lived over again the

flogging he had given to the blonde prostitute. He felt again the tingling thrill that he had felt as his whip had cut into her unprotesting body. He had been resentful that he had not been given a fulfilment, but now, with the good-looking blond boy's fingers playing lightly, amid the lather, with his penis and testicles, he realised that he did not mind. This was by far the better thrill. He lay back against the pillows and gave himself up to the blissful sensation.

Suddenly he felt himself on the verge of an orgasm. "Stop!" he said abruptly.

"Mein Herr?"

"Stop it now. I'm going to fuck you. Get your trousers down."

"Shall I not the soap remove?"

"No, leave it. Get your trousers down." He swung his legs off the bed and stood up. He looked at the desk opposite the bed. That, he thought, would do very well. He turned his eyes to the boy and watched the trousers fall around his ankles. "All right. Come here." He pointed to a corner of the desk. "Lie down over there. Stretch yourself over the corner." He noticed that the boy had an erection.

The boy obeyed. He put himself into position at the corner of the desk and opened his legs. His fingers played lightly with his erection.

Lie flat," said Simes. "Put your chest down on the desk."

“I feel much fear,” said the boy. “You have great prick.”

Simes grinned. “You just thank your lucky stars that I haven’t still got the whip that I had an hour or so ago.” He sucked in his breath. “I’d like to put it across your bottom. You’d feel much fear then!”

The boy said quietly: “You have heavy belt on your trousers, mein Herr.”

“You mean,” said Simes slowly, “that you want to be beaten?”

“If it would give you pleasure. And if you would pay me another fifty marks.”

“Good Christ!” Simes stooped and took his leather belt from his trousers. “All right, another fifty marks it is.” He ran the heavy leather through his fingers.

The boy said: “Not more than ten hits. If you want more, you must more pay.”

“Ten,” said Simes, “will be quite enough.” He swung his belt with all his strength at the bent buttocks. He did not feel the thrill that he had felt with the whip. This was rather weak stuff, he thought. He reversed the belt in his hands. He struck again. The metal buckle now thudded heavily into the tightened bottom. A gasp came from the boy. A globule of blood appeared on one of his buttocks.

At the sight of the blood Simes began to feel excited. He put his total strength into the next eight strokes. He felt his orgasm moving forward again.

No further sound came from the boy. He lay inert over the corner of the desk.

Simes let his hand fall. "You're either very tough or you're very masochistic, you Germans. Now let's see what your bottoms are like." He moved closely up to the boy's stretched bottom. He took his penis in his hands and guided it to the mouth of the anus. He agitated himself a little in order to cover his penis again with the soapy lather. He thrust with his thighs. His penis entered the mouth of the anus.

The boy gasped again and stretched out his arms to the far edges of the desk.

Simes thrust again. His penis penetrated the small anus to a distance of two inches. He thrust once more. His penis slid tightly up the anus.

The boy caught his breath. "Your penis is very great!" He stretched and strained with his arms on the far edges of the desk. "Oh! Oh!"

Simes lifted the boy's jacket and shirt-tail up over the back of his neck. He ran his left hand over the naked back. He thrust again with his thighs. He raised the belt that he still held in his right hand. He brought it down sideways across the naked back, and thrust again with his thighs as the metal buckle thudded into the flesh.

His orgasm hit him as he thrust and struck for the tenth time. He called on all his strength. He lashed in a frenzy of cruelty. The metal buckle began to rip to shreds the skin of the quivering back.

The boy began, at last, to sob.

—6—

Audrey spread the sheet of silky rubber over the bed. “Try not to kick this off,” she said. She smoothed it flat. Oh, how nice it’ll be when we’re in our nice new house! Everything will be properly covered—and sewn into place.”

Peter chuckled. “If you weren’t such an awful sadist, you wouldn’t have to bother whether I kick it off or not. It’s your own flagellating fault.” He stepped out of his pants and stooped to take off his socks. “You shouldn’t bring so much blood!”

She picked up her switch. She looked at his towering erection. “How dare you be like that! You’re supposed to be terrified of me.”

He wagged his penis at her. “I am terrified of you.”

“I’ll make you! Lie down there. I’ll knock that erection out of you!”

He lay down on the bed. His penis and testicles felt like rocks against his

stomach. He rubbed himself lasciviously against the cool, soft, silky rubber.

She began to thrash his bottom. She gave him twenty lashes. Then she said: "Show me." She lowered her switch and relaxed to catch her breath.

He turned his body and showed her his penis. It was still as hard as a rock.

"Well, well! Turn over again!"

She gave him twenty more lashes. "Now show me."

The penis was still very hard.

She set her teeth. "This is absurd! I'll knock it out of you somehow." She pulled up her skirt and lifted a foot to the small of his back. She thrashed with all the force she could command. She gave him thirty lashes. Then, panting, she let her whip hand fall and removed her foot from his back. "Now show me!"

He turned his body painfully. He smiled up at her. "You awful bitch! You win."

Although his penis was still large, its stiffness had disappeared.

She chuckled happily and sat on the edge of the bed. She took his testicles in her

hands. “Lovely! Of course I win! Now I’ll make him hard again—and then I’ll thrash him into impotence again. And then I’ll put him in my mouth.”

—7—

Greta Hollriegl sat down at the table of Arthur Simes. She looked at him closely. “I think I know you.”

“You do,” said Simes. “That was a nice act. Congratulations! You’ve come a long way.”

The girl narrowed her eyes. “Where have I met you?”

Simes offered his cigarette case. “At the Old Bailey in London.”

“The Old Bailey?”

“The Central Criminal Court, my dear.” He lit her cigarette. “Don’t you remember? The Crown versus Marilyn Marsh and yourself.”

She drew a deep breath. “You’re that reporter.”

“Yes. I’m that reporter.”

“What do you want?”

Simes smiled. “I want to give you a drink and talk to you.”

“I’ll have champagne.” Champagne? Oh yes, of course.” He signaled a waiter and gave the order.

“What do you want to talk to me about?”

“Oh, a lot of things.”

“Such as?”

“The Whipping Club. And Paula Murray. You dropped a hint about her when I last talked to you.”

“I don’t remember. What did I say?”

“Nothing much. It’s what you’ll say now that’s important to me.”

“What do you want me to say?”

He leaned forward across the table. “I want you to tell me what you know about that club. Where it is, who belongs to it, and what connection Paula Murray has with it.”

She drew on her cigarette, and made no reply.

Simes gave her time to think. He looked her up and down. She was certainly an extremely good-looking girl. She was wearing a tightly-fitting dress of soft white kid-leather. It made him catch his breath. His penis erected between his legs.

He said gently: “I’ll pay you very well.”

“Why do you want to know?”

“I’d like to join the club.”

“It’s only for women.”

Aha, he thought, so we begin! The club is only for women! He said: “But surely they have men there too? Maybe not as members but—”

“You like to be whipped, do you?”

He looked her in the eyes. “I love to be whipped.”

“Why do you want to know about Paula Murray?”

“I’ve got a yen for her. I’d—I’d like to be whipped by her.”

“She’s married.”

“So what?”

She stared at him thoughtfully as the waiter brought the champagne.

“When her glass was filled, she picked it up and said: “There’s something wrong about all this.” She sipped from her glass.

“Wrong?”

“Yes. I have a feeling. Did you come to Hamburg especially to ask me this?”

Simes forced a hearty laugh. “Good God! What do you think I am? No, sweetness, I’m here on a story, and I happened to see your picture outside the

entrance this afternoon.”

She regarded her glass. “You said you’d pay me well.”

“Yes.”

“How much?”

“How much do you want?”

She looked at him. “Let me think.” She seemed to be weighing up the contents of his wallet. “A thousand marks.”

He made a mental calculation, and felt pleased. He had expected her to ask for more. “That’s a lot of money.”

“No, it isn’t. And you know it.”

“Is Paula Murray a member of the club?”

“Yes. Or at least she used to be.”

“That’s good enough. She probably still is.”

“Okay? A thousand marks?”

“Okay.”

“I’ll throw in a whipping for good measure.”

He looked at her quickly. “What do you mean?”

She put a hand to her leather skirt and smoothed it over her knees. “I’ll give you a free whipping—in addition to the information you want.”

He swallowed. “You don’t have to. The information will be enough.”

She raised her eyebrows. “I thought you said you love to be whipped?”

“I do. But I’m not feeling much like it tonight.” “Well, I am. No whipping, no information.”

“For God’s sake! I tell you I don’t want it.”

She narrowed her eyes again. “You know, I have a feeling that you’re not on the —what do you call it— the up and down.”

“The up and up.”

“All right, the up and up. If you love to be whipped, you’d jump at the chance of being whipped by me. If you don’t jump at the chance, it means that you’re not on the up and up about this.”

He swallowed again, and took a large drink of his champagne. “All right. I’ll be whipped. It’s just that I’m feeling rather tired. Why do you want to whip me?”

“I’m a sadist,” she said simply. “Don’t you remember the details in court?”

He nodded his head ruefully. “Yes, I remember only too well. Okay, I give you a thousand marks and—and you give me a whipping. And then you’ll tell me where the club is, and who runs it, and everything?”

“Yes.”

“But, because I’m rather tired, you won’t make it much of a whipping, eh?”

She shook her head. “I cannot promise that. When I have a whip in my hand I cannot control myself.”

He was silent for a moment. Is the story worth a whipping, he asked himself—a whipping that looks as though it's going to be pretty terrible? It is really—it'll make me a senior on the Clarion, and that means another five hundred a year. The whipping will be pretty awful, but it can't last long. And that prostitute took it this afternoon without a murmur. If I get some novalgin I ought to be able to take it. And it's the only way, it seems, that I can get the facts. She'll be too suspicious otherwise.

He grinned at her and licked his lips. "What are you going to use?"

She put her tongue to her own lips and delicately licked them. "All sorts of things. Mainly a whip made of rhinoceros hide. It'll cut you to ribbons."

He felt himself going cold. He forced a grin. "When?"

"I can't leave here till four. You can entertain me until then. Let's have another bottle."

"Of course." He signaled a waiter. "Look, though. I've got a job that I must finish—for the paper. I'll go and polish it off and then I'll come back."

"How long will you be?"

"Oh, half an hour or so."

“All right. I’ll sit here and drink the champagne till you come back. If you’re too long, I’ll have ordered another bottle.”

He got up from his chair. “Order what you want. See you in half an hour or so.”

He walked out of the nightclub.

“Taxi, sir?” asked the doorman. He peered closely and recognised Simes. “How was the brothel?”

“Rotten,” said Simes, and got into the taxi which had approached. “Take me,” he said to the driver, “to a chemist.”

“Bitte?”

“A chemist.”

The taxi driver looked at him enquiringly.

“Oh, hell,” said Simes. “What’s the German for it?” He cast about in his memory. “Oh yes. Ein Apotheker, bitte.”

“Jawohl, mein Herr.” The taxi pulled away from the nightclub.

Simes entered the all-night chemist’s shop and looked around to see if there was a woman assistant. He saw one at the back of the shop. He approached her.

He gave her his most charming smile. “Do you speak English, please?” Yes, sir.

“I want some novalgin, please.”

The woman took a box from a shelf behind her.

“No, not tablets,” said Simes. “The liquid stuff, please. For injections.”

The woman shook her head. “Without a doctor’s order, we cannot supply that.”

Simes twisted his face into a grimace of pain. “I know. But I’ve got the most shocking toothache. Please give me some. I’m a foreigner here. I couldn’t possibly start to find a doctor with this terrible pain. And I’ll be back in England tomorrow. The tablets are really no good.” He twisted his lips into a pathetic smile. “I think it’s a abscess under my gums. Please have pity on me.”

The woman looked at him for a moment and then shrugged slightly. She put back the box and took down a flat tin. She opened it. Inside were ten phials of yellow liquid. “These are probably too many,” she said.

“What is the dose?”

“One phial every three hours. That’s the maximum.”

“I’ll take the tin, please. And I want a hypodermic syringe, too.”

“Do you know how to do it?”

“They’re intra-muscular injections, aren’t they?” Yes.

“All right. I know how.”

He took another taxi back to the nightclub. Greta Hollriegl was sitting at a table with a bald-headed man.

She waved to him. He waved back rather peevishly and sat at his table. He looked at the bottle of champagne. It was empty. He signaled to the waiter disgustedly and ordered another bottle. He glanced at his watch. It was a little after two o’clock. He crossed his legs, lit a cigarette, and settled down to wait.

Greta came back to his table shortly before four o’clock.

“Let’s go,” she said. “Let’s go and find that rhinoceros-hide whip.”

He got up from the table. “All right. Where’s the small boy’s room? I must pee or burst.”

She pointed to a door. “On the left.”

“All right. Back in a second.” He went to the lavatory and locked the door behind him. He took out the tin box of novalgin from one pocket and the hypodermic syringe from another. “Not even sterilised,” he muttered. He broke the top of a phial and filled the syringe. He let down his trousers. “Why the hell didn’t I get some alcohol?” He put the tip of the needle against his right thigh and pressed it into his muscle. He slowly pushed down the plunger of the syringe, watching the yellow liquid disappear. He pulled the needle out of his muscle. He broke the top of another phial. He filled the syringe again and injected the liquid into his left thigh. He withdrew it and filled it once more. “A treble dose should be enough,” he muttered, “but where the hell am I to put it now?” He pushed his trousers down over his knees. He pushed the needle into the muscle on the top of his left leg. He pushed on the plunger. A large swelling appeared on his leg.

Oh, hell!” he said explosively. He pushed the plunger down to its full extent and withdrew the needle. He began to rub the swelling with both his hands. When most of it had subsided he pulled up his trousers.

“That was a very long pee,” said Greta, as he came back to the table.

“For God’s sake! Are you so impatient?”

“Yes, I’m very impatient. Let’s go. Have you paid your bill?”

“No. Not yet.”

She sighed elaborately and leaned back in her chair.

He signaled the waiter and paid the bill.

They left the nightclub and got into a taxi. He pinched his leg, and felt no pain. The drug had taken effect. He chuckled softly to himself.

“Get undressed,” said Greta, when they were in her bedroom.

Simes took off all his clothes.

She took a length of thin cord from a drawer and made a loop in its centre. She came to him and slipped the loop over his testicle bag. She drew the loop tight. She made a knot. “Come,” she said, and pulled him by the cord.

He followed her without protest. The loop of the cord had been tied around the base of his scrotum, leaving his testicles bulging out in front of him. He knew it would cause him great pain if he resisted.

She led him to the foot of the bed. She wound the ends of her cord around one of the bed-posts. She made several knots.

He found that he was totally helpless. He could move his feet, but he could not move his body without castrating himself.

She picked up his jacket and gave it to him. “The thousand marks, please.”

He grunted. He took his wallet out of his pocket and counted out the money.

“Thank you,” she said. She put the notes into a drawer and took out a number of whips. One of them was a very thick and wicked-looking rhinoceros whip. She put it to his face. “This is my favourite. Isn’t it a beauty?”

He grunted again. ‘

“What is that bump on your leg? she asked.

“Bump? What bump?”

“That swelling on the front of your leg.”

“Oh, that. Er—yes, I knocked myself this morning.”

“You are a liar. Or, at least, I think you are a liar.” She raised her whip. “It is easy to find out, though.” She swung the whip hard across his shoulder-blades.

In spite of the drug that he had taken to deaden his nerves, he gave a sharp cry of pain.

“Yes,” she said. “You are a liar. You have taken something to stop the pain.”

He turned to her with wide-open eyes. “What are you talking about?”

“You know what I am talking about. That lash would certainly have made you cry more if you had not taken a drug. I should like to know why you have taken a drug. You said you love to be whipped. One who loves to be whipped does not take a drug to stop the pain.” She went back to the drawer and took out another length of cord. “Put your hands behind your back.”

He obeyed her without a word, wondering whether he would still get the information he wanted. Everything would be ruined if she became suspicious.

She tied his wrists together in an expert manner. “You also said that you were tired. Perhaps that is why you took the drug. I am myself tired—too tired to ask why, why, why. But I do not whip a man who has taken a drug to stop the pain. That is a waste of time. I whip a man to give him pain. So I shall go to bed for a few hours. And when I wake I shall whip you. Your drug will have finished by

then.” She put the rhinoceros whip on the bed beneath his eyes. “I shall whip you with this when I wake up.”

He was staring at her with open mouth. “You mean,” he said, when he found his voice, “that you’re going to leave me tied up like this while you go to sleep?”

She smiled. “I mean exactly that.” She looked at her watch. “It is now a quarter to five. I shall wake about nine o’clock. That is in a little over four hours. That is plenty of time for your drug to finish.”

“And I’m to stand here like this for four hours?”

She smiled again. “It is your own fault. You should not have taken the drug.”

“I’ll yell the house down! I’ll bring someone.”

“You will only tire yourself. People in this building are accustomed to hearing shouts and screams from this flat.”

He tugged at his wrists in desperation. He found he was completely helpless.

She said: “And after four hours standing like that, you will be in a very nice weak condition. The whipping will hurt you very much indeed.”

“You must be a devil! Let me free, do you hear? This has gone too far!”

She gave a gay laugh. “Too far? It has gone too far? You foolish man, nothing has begun yet! It will begin in four hours’ time.” She laughed again. “You love to be whipped. All right, I shall whip you. I shall cut you into pieces with my nice rhinoceros whip. Would you like to know how many lashes I shall give you with it?”

He made no reply.

“I’ll tell you all the same. I shall give you at least two hundred hard lashes. Isn’t that exciting? For anyone who loves to be whipped it must be exciting.” She sat on the side of the bed and took off her shoes. “I would very much like to know, though, why you took the drug.”

He watched her undress. He looked down at the heavy whip on the end of the bed. He felt himself going cold at the thought of what was to come in four hours’ time. He wondered whether the drug would still have any effect at all. He realised that it would not. His treble dose had had a treble pain-deadening effect. It could not last for a treble length of time.

He said: “Please, Greta. Please.”

She looked up at him. “Yes?” There was a cruel smile at the back of her eyes.

“Please.”

“Oh, you want your information. Of course. I am so sorry. I have taken your money, and I have not given you your information.”

“To hell with the information! Just untie me and let me go.”

“Oh no. A bargain is a bargain. So, I will tell you. The Whipping Club is at a country house called Buckley Manor. Its president is a very rich woman named Helen Collett.”

Despite his gloom and terror, Simes pricked up his ears. “Helen Collett? The Helen Collett? The millionairess? Is this the truth?”

“Yes.”

“And Paula Murray?”

“Paula Murray is a member. It was there that she met her husband. She whipped him one afternoon in some woods. There were two others members who whipped him too. I know it because my employer was one of them.”

“Marilyn Marsh?”

“Yes.”

He blew out his cheeks. “Christ Almighty! Go on.”

“What else do you want to know?”

“The names of the other members.”

“Why do you want to know that? It is Paula Murray you say you want.”

“For Christ’s sake! I’ve given you a thousand marks! Come on! Give me the names.”

She crossed her legs and looked up at him. “You are a very lying person. You want this information for your newspaper, don’t you? Why were you not honest with me? It is nothing to me any longer. I would have given you the names. But you had to lie to me and say that you want to join the club because you love to be whipped.” She got up from the bed. “I’ll write down the names for you. I’ll be honest with you. But you must be punished very heavily for not being honest with me.” She sat at an *escritoire* and took a sheet of paper and a pencil. She wrote a number of names. “Those are all I can remember—but I think they are enough for a thousand marks. And now I shall go to bed.” She took a transparent black chiffon nightdress from the wardrobe. She slipped it over her naked body. She threw aside the sheets. “It’s hot tonight.” She smiled cruelly at him. “Goodnight, my drug-taking reporter.” She lay luxuriously on the bed and stretched against her pillows.

He made one final attempt. “If you’ll let me go, I’ll give you another thousand.”

“I don’t want another thousand,” she said silkily. “It’s worth more than that to me to know that you are tied up there by your balls. You cannot move, unless you do great harm to yourself. You will stand there for four hours and wait for your whipping. You will look at the whip that is at my feet and you will realise, as the hours go by, what a very, very terrible whip it is. And when I wake I shall whip you to within an inch of your nasty, dishonest life. And that may teach you to tell the truth in future. Goodnight.”

She put a hand to her bedside light and turned it off. She pressed another switch and turned off the overhead light.

The light of the midsummer moon streamed into the room and illuminated both her shapely body on the bed and the whip that was lying at her feet.

Simes gazed at her beautiful body, half-covered by its transparent black chiffon, and wished that his hands were free. He would masturbate himself at once. He caught sight of the whip at her feet, and looked away quickly. It was too terrible to be a serious threat. Nobody could use a thing like that... and particularly not a beautiful girl like this one lying in front of him. The whole thing was a joke! He rubbed his penis against the bedpost. He would wake her in a few minutes and tell her that the joke had gone far enough.

He looked down at the whip and chuckled.

He caught himself in the middle of the chuckle. He had remembered her last words: “And when I wake I shall whip you to within an inch of your nasty, dishonest life.” He realised, with a sinking of his heart, that she had not been joking. He shivered. He began to feel sick.

He had never in his life felt such terror.

He stood, with his wrists and testicles tightly bound, trying to look neither at the beautiful girl nor at her terrible whip.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Thursday dawned bright and sunny over London.

Paula Murray got out of her car and went into the hospital.

“How is he?” she asked the nurse in the passage outside Rodney’s room.

“Quite well, Mrs. Pearce. As well as can be expected, that is.”

“May I go in?”

“Yes, but only for ten minutes, please.”

“Will he know me today?”

“I think so.”

Paula went into the room.

Except for bandages, there was not very much to be seen of Rodney. Slits had, however, been left in his head-bandages to permit him to see, breathe and speak, His eyes lit up as she came to the side of the bed.

She smiled down at him. "Hello."

"Hello."

"You're a fine one!"

"Yes. I'm sorry, darling. Did they find the pistol?"

"No. I did."

"You?"

"Yes. It was in the ditch."

"Thank God! They'd have found it themselves if they'd known they ought to look for it. How did you know about it?"

"I saw you had taken it from the drawer. And I lived through the whole thing with you."

“Poor sweet.” He was silent for a moment. “The other man? The lorry driver?”

“Hardly a scratch.”

“Miracle.”

“Two miracles.” She looked down at his body. She wanted to touch him but there was nothing but bandage to touch. “Rodney darling.”

“Yes, my dear?”

“You’ll have to promise me this time—promise me honestly, I mean. Otherwise I’ll just not leave you alone.”

“Yes. I promise. But it’s a bit academic. He’ll have printed his rotten story long before I get out of here.”

“Let him. Listen Rodney. I don’t care a damn about his story. Let him do what he wants. It may bust me up as an actress, but I honestly don’t care. I have another career—as your wife. The only thing I’m sorry about is that it’ll be very difficult for you at the university.”

“To hell with that too.”

“You really mean that?”

“Yes. Just so long as we’re together.”

“And you promise? No crazy attempts at revenge and so on?” I promise.

“Thank you darling. I love you so much.”

The door opened. The nurse came into the room.

“I’m sorry, Mrs. Pearce, but you’ll have to leave now.”

“Can I come again this afternoon?”

“For ten minutes, yes. Not longer. He’s got a terrible concussion, you know.”

Arthur Simes walked stiffly out of the London Airport building and headed for the car park.

He had spent the precious forty hours lying on his stomach in his hotel at Hamburg. He had eaten his meals standing up. He had passed the rest of the time

composing his story in his mind. He was filled with a burning hatred of life and people. The story, he knew, would provide him with some very satisfying vengeance. He fully realised that he was laying himself open to several charges of criminal libel, but he felt sure that none of his victims would dare to prosecute him. He would watch them squirm in their suffering, and that would compensate him a little for what he had himself suffered at the hands of Greta Hollriegl.

The whipping had been very terrible. She had woken at nine o'clock, as she had said. She had gone to the bathroom, taking the rhinoceros whip with her. It would give more pain, she said, if it soaked in hot water while she was having her bath. She came back in her transparent black chiffon nightie and began her flogging. Simes had not dreamed that life could hold such excruciating pain. Each time she felt tired she relaxed on the side of the bed and gave him more details of the Whipping Club. Then she took up her whip again and continued with her flogging. He fainted three times before she had given him the two hundred lashes she had promised him.

As he thought of the terrible morning, he felt sick again.

At the entrance to the car park was a telephone booth.

He went into it. He took a diary from a pocket and found a number. He put in his three pennies and dialed.

“I want to speak to Miss Murray, please.”

“One moment, sir.”

There was a pause.

“I am Miss Murray’s secretary. Who is speaking, please?”

“Arthur Simes of the Clarion.”“

“One moment, Mr. Simes.”

He waited, the twisted smile playing about his lips.

“Mr. Simes. Are you there?”

“Yes.”

“Miss Murray says that she will not speak to you. She says that she has told you that.”

He gave a short unpleasant laugh. “Tell her I want to talk about Buckley Manor.”

“Buckley Manor?”

“Yes. Just go back and tell her that—and see how quickly she comes to the phone!”

“Well—er—wait another moment, please.” He waited again. He heard a click as the call was transferred to an extension.

“All right, Mr. Simes,” said Paula. “What do you want now?”

“I just want to tell you that the story will break either tomorrow or Saturday. It will be a wonderful story. All about how you met your husband at Buckley Manor, and what you did to him. And all about the other things you do at that club. I’ve got a mass of delicious details—and I’ve got a good many dates too. Are you still there?”

“Yes,” she said quietly. “I’m still here.”

“And another thing. On the day that the story breaks, I’m going to the police. They’ll be most interested to know that Paula Murray’s husband shot at me twice before he crashed into that lorry.”

He put the receiver back on its rest and left the telephone booth.

Paula heard the click, and put down her own receiver. She turned and walked out of the living-room. She went into the bathroom and was sick.

Simes sat down gingerly in his car and drove into London. As he passed the place of the accident he gave another unpleasant laugh. When he reached Fleet Street he drove to the Clarion garage. He left his car and took the lift up to the fourth floor. He tapped on a door and pushed it open.

“I’ve got it,” he said triumphantly. “Every last bloody-little detail!”

The woman looked up from her desk. “Hello, little omelette. So you’ve got it, have you? Paula Murray?”

“Yes, in a big way. And a lot of others. Oho, just you wait till you see the names. London society is going to have its lid taken off it.”

“When?”

“Day after tomorrow. It’s too big a story to rush. And I’ve got something else to do first. Did you get me the appointment with Lord Curie?”

“No. But his secretary will see you.”

“Bloody nice of him.” Her.

“All right. Thank you, Betty.” He closed her door and went to his own office. He

put a sheet of paper into his typewriter and began to type.

—3—

“Well, Mrs. Morphy,” said Lord Curie, outside the Registry Office. “I hope you’ll be very, very happy.”

Audrey hugged him. “Thank you, Daddy.”

“Can’t understand why you don’t want a honeymoon, though.”

“Oh, we’ll have one later. It’ll be a wonderful honeymoon just to go into our own house in Chelsea.”

Peter said: “Thank you again, sir, for that. It’s extremely good of you.”

Lord Curie snorted. “Bosh! What was the good of keeping it closed up? You’re more than welcome to it. You’re going there now?”

“Yes,” said Audrey. “He’s going to carry me over the doorstep as they do in films.”

“Hope he doesn’t drop you. Well, goodbye. All the very best.”

He got into the back of his car. “The Ministry, Blake.” He glanced at his watch and sighed.

His secretary came into his office as he sat at his desk. “There’s a reporter from the Clarion. I’ve told him he can’t possibly see you, but he insists that I give you this, sir.” She handed him a sealed envelope. Printed in large red letters were the words urgent and very private! The secretary left the office.

Lord Curie frowned and opened the envelope. He took out a sheet of paper.

His face went white as he read.

In capital letters, at the top of the sheet, was: cabinet minister’s son expelled. On the next line was: HOMOSEXUAL ORGY WITH THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY. Beneath this was: flogging by three housemaids. Then followed a full page of close typing.

Lord Curie read the paper and put it down on his desk. He gazed out of his window at the blue sky. He felt very old. He looked back at the paper and pressed a bell.

“Let the reporter come in, Miss Blair.”

“Very well, sir.”

Arthur Simes approached the huge desk with a jauntiness that was not real. “Good morning, Lord Curie.” He did not sit down in the visitor’s chair.

The man behind the desk looked at him coldly. “What do you want?”

“I’d like your advice.”

“Go on.

“You see, I’m in a very difficult position. If I print that story in the Clarion it’ll probably get me a promotion that’ll mean two or three hundred a year more for me. If, on the other hand, I resign from the Clarion, I could sell the story to one of the agencies for a very large sum of money.”

Lord Curie’s jaw muscles tightened. “And you can go to prison for a long time for blackmail.”

Simes opened his eyes. “Blackmail, Lord Curie? But I am simply asking your advice. What would you do in my position?”

“How much would an agency pay you?”

“Perhaps a thousand pounds.”

“I’ll think about it. Come back here tomorrow at eleven.”

“Thank you, sir. I’ll do that.” He walked out of the office.

Lord Curie pressed his bell again.

“Miss Blair, get on the phone to my son, please. Tell him to take the next plane back. I want him here in London by eight o’clock tonight. Tell him to meet me at Black’s for dinner at eight.”

—4—

Audrey stood with Peter in the special room of their house.

“What a lovely job of work,” she breathed. “Bless Helen Collett!”

The room looked very different from when they had last seen it. The window had been bricked up and covered with the same thick asbestos sound-proofing material as covered the walls. Over the top of this asbestos material was stretched a dull-red plastic cloth. On the floor was a thick covering of black sorbo-rubber that gave them the feeling of walking on air, as they moved about the room.

At the far end was a whipping-post similar to the one in the Pearces' flat. In the middle of the floor was a divan with steel manacles at its four corners. To the left of the divan, two chains, with handcuffs at their ends, hung from the ceiling. There were three deep armchairs. These, and the divan, were covered with the red rubberised silk that Audrey had bought.

Peter looked at the clothes-stand, and the trolley that contained a number of canes, belts and birches. "She's provided every single thing! Whips, clothes and all!"

Audrey went to the clothes-stand and took down a flimsy rubber floor-length robe. "Yes, bless her. It's her wedding present, she says." She slipped into the robe.

"And we don't even know her."

"We soon shall. We're invited to a meeting of the club next week-end."

"That reminds me of my meeting tonight."

"Yes. Honestly, Peter! Of all the days to have a meeting!"

"I know darling. I'm awfully sorry. But with the senior partner ill, I can't—"

"You'll pay for it when you get back." She ran her hands over the front of her

robe and looked down at its skirt. “Very nice indeed.” She unbelted it, took it off, and hung it with the others. “Let’s go down and have a drink.”

They went downstairs to their living-room. Pam was clearing away the coffee cups.

“Er—Mary, will you bring some ice, please,” said Peter.

“Yes, sir. At once. But I’m not Mary, sir. I’m Pam.”

He laughed. “Excuse me. We’ll get used to your names soon.”

“Thank you, sir.” Pam left the room.

“I think,” said Audrey, “you’ll have got used to their names before you go to bed tonight.”

—5—

Robert Milton passed the paper across the table to his father. His face was deathly white. He forced himself to look into his father’s eyes.

“I’m afraid so, sir. It’s all true—except that, technically, I wasn’t expelled.”

“That,” said Lord Curie grimly, “won’t make very much difference.” He turned his wine glass slowly in his hand. There was a deep frown on his face.

Robert watched him. He tried to find something to say. He could think of nothing.

At last—

“I’m terribly sorry, Father.”

The man looked up. “All right, old chap. It’s a bit of a mess, but we’ll get out of it.”

“It’s an awful mess.”

“Your headmaster must think a lot of you, though.”

“He did it for you, sir. Not for me.”

“No, I wasn’t thinking of that. He told me that you’re a fine boy and you’ll go far.”

“Did he really?”

“Yes. And so this story has got to be stopped. You won’t go very far if it comes out.”

“Is there anything I can do?”

“No. Leave it to me. I may be able to stop it. You’d better go and see your sister and her husband. Go and give them your congratulations.”

“You’re awfully good, sir. Thank you very much.”

Lord Curie snorted. “What’s a father for—if he can’t get his son out of a mess?”

“Not many sons have such fathers. I—”

“Bosh! Shut up! Fill up your glass.”

— 6 —

Mary answered the door. Her hand flew to her throat as she saw Robert Milton standing on the steps. She looked at him as though he were a ghost.

“What do you want?” she said softly. “How did you find me?”

He stared at her in amazement. “What are you doing here?”

“What do you want? Why have you come?”

“This is my sister’s house.”

“Mrs. Morphy?”

“Yes.”

“She’s your sister?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, goodness me!”

“Is she at home?”

“I’ll go and see. I mean—yes, she is.”

He grinned. “This is a delightful situation. Hadn’t you better ask me in?”

“Er—yes, of course. Will you please come in?” She stood aside as he entered the hall. “Will you sit down, please? I’ll go and tell madam that you’re here.”

He sat down. He watched her disappear. He wondered how she had found her way into his brother-in-law’s household. It would be an amusing situation, he thought, if he were not so desperately worried.

She returned. “Will you come this way, sir?”

He followed her to the living-room.

Audrey ran to him. “Robert darling! How wonderful! I thought you were on the Riviera.”

There was a loud crash as a tray and glasses fell to the floor.

He turned his head. He caught his breath.

Maisie was staring at him with her mouth wide open. She shook her head

dazedly and stooped to gather the broken glasses.

“Oh no,” he murmured. “This is beginning to be too much!” He turned to his sister. “Have you got any other maids?”

Maisie hurried out of the room and closed the door.

“Yes,” said Audrey. “One more. Why?”

“And her name, I suppose, is Pam?”

“Yes. How did you know?”

He put a hand to his head. “Audrey dear. I need a drink badly. A very large one, please. Where is your husband?”

“Out. He’ll be back in an hour or so.”

“So much the better, I want to talk to you very privately.” She gave him his drink.

“What about?” He sat down.

“There’s rather a crisis in the family—and it’s quite connected with these maids that you have somehow found. I’d better start at the beginning.”

—7—

Peter returned home shortly after eleven o’clock.

“What’s the matter?” he said, as he kissed his wife. “You look a bit glum. I’m not terribly late, am I? There’s still plenty of time for the special room?”

She shook her head. “It’s not that. And I think we’ll have to put off the special room for tonight—wedding-night or not. There’s a ghastly crisis in the family.”

“What’s happened?”

“My brother Robert has just left. He’s told me a fantastic tale. I’ve got his permission to tell you. But you’d better get yourself a large drink first.”

CHAPTER TWELVE

Lord Curie sat at his desk and gazed out through his windows.

The rain poured down again over London. The sky was dark. Although it was eleven o'clock in the morning, it looked like late evening.

His secretary came into the office. "Mr. Simes of the Clarion, sir."

"Send him in, please."

Simes entered the office with a less jaunty step. He looked narrowly at the man behind the desk. He glanced around the room. He felt relieved to see they were alone.

"Sit down."

"I'd—er—prefer to stand, if you don't mind."

"Suit yourself. Now listen to me. Blackmailers always come back for more."

Simes raised a hand. “You continue to speak of blackmail, Lord Curie. I have asked only for advice about what—”

“Shut up! Don’t waste my time too. If I pay you the money you want, how do I know that you won’t return for more?”

“If you buy the story, you mean, sir. If you buy the story, you buy the story. And that’s that. If I were to sell it to an agency, I couldn’t sell it to another. The same thing applies if I sell it to you.”

Lord Curie stood up from his desk. “Blackmailers always return for more.” He took his wallet out of his pocket. “I assume you want notes and not a cheque.”

Simes spread his hands and shrugged. “Not a cheque, Lord Curie.”

“You’d better come on the balcony. I don’t want my secretary coming in while you’re counting notes.” He walked to the windows and opened them wide. “It’s raining but that won’t have to matter.” He took a deep breath and stepped on to the balcony. He felt a strong tremor beneath his feet. “Come on. Let’s get this over with.

Simes walked out on to the balcony past him. “A nice view,” he said conversationally. “You are very high up.” He went to the balcony rail and looked downwards.

There was a grinding noise as the balcony tore away from the wall. Lord Curie

turned and flung himself, with all his strength, back into his office. He landed on his face on the carpet. His legs and feet lay over the window edge where the balcony had been. He pulled them quickly to safety.

Simes screamed as he fell with the balcony. He flung his hands towards the window in a pathetic appeal for help.

Fifteen tons of masonry and steel plunged to the road below. It cracked the asphalt like the shell of an egg.

The lifeless body of Arthur Simes, broken and twisted, with its arms still outstretched, lay at rest amid the debris.

—2—

Robert saw the newspaper-seller's placard as he left the restaurant where he had had lunch. CABINET MINISTER'S ESCAPE FROM DEATH, TRAGIC END OF CLARION REPORTER. He bought an Evening News. He stood reading the front-page story. He felt a shiver run through his body.

He looked around him and saw a telephone booth on the corner. He went to it quickly.

"Lord Curie, please."

“Who is asking for him?” His son.

“I’ll put you through to Lord Curie’s secretary, sir. I cannot connect you directly.”

“All right.”

There was a pause.

“Hello. Miss Blair speaking.”

“Miss Blair, this is Robert Milton. May I speak to my father, please?”

“He’s not here, Mr. Milton.”

“Has he gone home?”

“Er—no. He’s left town for the week-end. He was a bit shaken up.”

“No wonder. Where has he gone? I want to speak to him rather urgently.”

“I—I don’t know. He said that you might ring, though. He left a message for you.”

“What was it?”

“Well, it seemed a bit incomprehensible to me. I wondered at the time whether perhaps he was suffering from more shock than he showed.”

“What was the message?”

“He said: ‘Tell my son, if he rings, that I’m also quite sure that he’ll go far.’”

Robert was silent.

“Are you there, Mr. Milton?”

“Yes, Miss Blair. I’m here. And I understand the message. Thank you very much.”

He hung up and dialed the number of the Chelsea house.

“Mrs. Morphy, please. This is her brother.”

Audrey came on the phone very quickly. “Robert, do you know where daddy is?”

“No. You’ve heard, then?”

“Yes, I heard it on the one o’clock news.”

“He’s a wonderful father.”

“Oh. You’re thinking what I’m thinking, are you?”

“Yes.”

“Oh dear! You don’t really think so?”

Robert opened his mouth to say yes. Then he changed his mind. “We’ll never know. And we’d better not talk like this.”

“No, we’d better not. Look, are you free for dinner?”

“Yes.”

“Come and have it with us then. Come along about seven-thirty.”

—3—

Paula Murray had also heard the one o'clock news.

She had switched off the radio and stood motionless for several minutes. Then she went to her bedroom and flung herself on the bed. She drenched her pillow with tears of relief. At the same time she asked forgiveness for feeling so happy about the death of a fellow-creature.

After a while she got up from her bed and cleaned her face.

She went downstairs to her car. She set off in the direction of the hospital.

She hummed a gay little tune under her breath as she drove.

—4—

The dinner party was a great success. Peter and Robert drank a little too much and were amusingly gay. Audrey thought it was safe to make her suggestion.

“Robert,” she said, “I have an idea.”

“Yes, my dear?”

“You told me last night that you rather enjoyed being beaten by these maids.”

“I didn’t say that, Audrey! I said it was not so bad as all that. It was a bit exciting—at the end.”

“Exactly. For goodness’ sake, don’t be shy! You know all about us now.”

He smiled. “After seeing your amazing room upstairs, I couldn’t be shy!”

“Good. Well, let’s have the whole thing over again.”

“What do you mean?”

“Let’s all go up to the room, and bring the three maids up. And then let’s have your beating over again. We’ll watch. I’d like to see exactly what happened.”

Robert regarded his cigarette end and then glanced up enquiringly at Peter.

Peter nodded. "Damn good idea. And then you can watch Audrey beating me, if you want to."

Audrey said: "Not only Audrey. The three girls too."

"All right," said Robert. "It might be fun. It sounds a bit incestuous, though."

His sister got up from the table. In sex, everything should be permitted. Come along. Let's go up to the room." She rang a bell.

Mary came to the dining-room. "Madam?

"Would you like to beat my brother again?"

The girl looked at Robert and blushed.

"I'm quite serious," said Audrey. "I want you to do again what you did at Biltergrange. And my husband and I will watch. Would you like to do it again?"

The girl looked into her eyes. "I'd like it very much indeed, madam."

"Good. Go and fetch the other two girls. Come up to the room upstairs."

Mary looked again at Robert. Her eyes flickered. She turned and left the room.

“Let’s go up, then,” said Audrey.

They climbed to the top floor and went into the special room.

The three maids followed them after a few moments.

Audrey took three of the blood-proof robes from the clothes-stand and gave them to the girls. “Go and take off all your clothes, and put these on. Then come back here.” She turned to her husband and brother. “And I think we’d better take off our own clothes. Come on.”

She undressed herself completely and took a shimmery pale-blue rubber robe from the clothes-stand. She slipped it on with a shiver. “It’s a bit cold at first! Come on, you two. Get stripped.”

She went to the trolley and took a cane. She ran it through her fingers as she watched the two men strip themselves naked. She pointed with her cane to the end of the divan. “Come on, Robert. Bend down. Six of the best!”

“Hey!” he exclaimed. “You said it would be the maids. “I don’t want to be beaten by my sister!”

“You’re going to get six,” she said firmly. “All the times I’ve listened to you talking about giving boys six of the best. You didn’t know, did you, that I always longed to bend you down and do the same thing to you?”

“This is incestuous!”

“Never mind. Bend over.”

He obeyed her without further protest.

“Oh, you still have some very beautiful marks, I see.” She ran her hand lightly over his naked buttocks. “I’ll freshen them up a bit.”

She gave him six very hard strokes with the cane. The maids re-entered the room, making a rustling noise as they moved. They looked with interest at the two naked men. Robert straightened himself.

Audrey handed her cane to Mary. “All right, go ahead.” She sat down in one of the armchairs and crossed her legs. Peter did the same.

Mary held the cane irresolutely. “Who started—that other time?”

“You did,” said Pam. Her eyes had the smouldering look again.

“Yes, so I did,” said Mary. She looked at Robert and seemed to take herself in hand. “I gave you about thirty, I think.”

Robert smiled. “You did!”

“Well, another thirty now. Bend down please.”

He bent low over the side of the divan.

She lashed him across the centre of his bottom. As her cane bit into his flesh she felt the thrilling sensation running through her body like electric shocks. She gave the cane to Pam. “You went next, didn’t you, Pam?” He stood upright.

“I did,” said the red-head. “And I made him wear a cap and apron. He looked very pretty.” She put her hand to his hard penis and squeezed it.

Audrey said: “You didn’t tell me that, Robert.”

“No,” said her brother. “I forgot.”

“Well, I want it to be as it was. Pam, run and get your cap and an apron.” The red-head put down her cane and left the room.

Maisie stepped up in front of Robert. “If madam wants it to be as it was, it’s time for me to do this.” She put her hands to his penis and testicles. “I remember I did this to you just before Pam caned you.” She looked up into his eyes. “You’d called me a beauty queen, didn’t you, sir? But I did this through your apron. I was a bit shy.” She knelt in front of him. “I’m not shy now, though. We’ve learned a lot of things in the last few days at the Manor.” She put her lips to the head of his penis. She kissed his central nerve, and then opened her mouth. His penis slid slowly inside. She twisted his testicle-bag lightly with her fingers.

Audrey got up from her chair and sat down on Peter’s lap. She put a hand beneath her and found his penis. She held it tightly. He pulled open the front of her flimsy robe and put his hands to her breasts.

Pam came back into the room. In her hand she had a housemaid’s cap and a dainty white apron. She put the cap on Robert’s head and slipped the apron-strings over his shoulders. “Come out of the way, Maisie,” she said. “You’re terrible!”

“Listen,” said Audrey. “Listen, all of you. Nothing that happens in this room is ever terrible. I want you all to remember that always.”

“See?” said Maisie triumphantly to Pam.

“Well, come out of the way, anyway. I want to cane him.” She picked up the cane again. “Over you go, Mr. Milton. Here comes Pam!”

She gave him thirty strokes very rapidly. Then she threw down the cane and leaned against the wall, panting and gasping. “Oh, you do look sweet in that cap

and apron, sir!”

Audrey said: “You’re quite tough, Robert dear. Not a sound yet.”

Maisie picked up the cane. “I’ll bring the music now, madam. Further down please, Mr. Milton.” She put her hand to the front of his apron and squeezed his penis. “It was like this, wasn’t it, sir?” She stepped back and swung her cane.

Robert gave a shout on her twelfth stroke. He continued to shout as the cane struck him. Blood started to spatter up over the front of her robe in great globules.

There was a wild light in the maid’s eyes. “I told you I’d bring the music, madam! I’m the strongest of the three of us—though I don’t look it.”

Audrey agitated her husband’s penis as she watched the brutal caning. Peter put his lips to one of her breasts. She began to breathe very fast.

Robert flopped down on his stomach on the divan as Maisie finished her caning.

“What next?” said Audrey. “What happened after this?”

“He made love to me next,” said Mary quietly. “And the others caned him while he was doing it.”

“All right. He shall make love to you now. This is where he gets his reward.”

Mary moistened her lips. “Could I— could I ask a very great favour, madam?”

“Yes. What is it?”

“Could I please take him away this time? Could I take him to my room—to make love to me? Please, madam.

Audrey looked at her. “I don’t see why not, she said slowly. “If you want it like that.”

“May I take the cane with me too, please?”

“By all means.”

Mary smiled happily and took the cane from Maisie’s hand. “Thank you very much, madam. Come along, Mr. Milton.” She swished her cane. “Get up and come along with me.”

He stood up stiffly. He rubbed his bottom and then looked with surprise at the blood on his hands.

Mary went up close to him. “Would you like to make love to me in my room, sir?”

He gazed into her burning eyes. “I’d like to very much.”

“Come then. Keep your cap and apron on, please.”

She opened the door and stepped aside for him to go out of the room. She followed him, closing the door behind her. “I’d better lead the way, sir.” She moved in front of him and led the way, cane in hand, to her bedroom. She put the cane on the bed and took off her long robe. She moved behind him and undid the strings of the apron. She took it away from him and put it on her own naked body. She reached up and took the cap from his head. She put it on her own. “That’s nearly quits now, sir. Tell me, please. Do you want to make love to me?”

“Of course,” said Robert. “I want to very much.”

She picked up the cane from the bed and handed it to him. “Will you please cane me first?”

“Cane you? Why?”

“I want it to be more nearly quits.” She bent her body in front of him. She put her fingers to her toes. “Go ahead, sir, please. Thrash me as hard as you can—and as much as you want.”

He hesitated.

“Please, sir. I want us to be quits. Please!”

“All right.” He raised the cane. “Do you know, I remember thinking once that I’d like to cane you. I thought I’d undress you completely except for your cap.”

She straightened and took off her apron. She was now totally naked except for her cap. She smiled at him. “Like this, sir?”

“Yes. Just like that.”

She put a hand to his penis. “I’m glad. When was that?”

“Outside my study one day. You were cleaning windows.”

“That was the day I caned you.”

“So it was!”

She let go of his penis and bent again. “Now you can do what you wanted to

do.”

He raised the cane again. “How many should I give?”

“At least seventy.”

“All right. Here we go!”

The cane hissed down and cut into her tender buttocks. She sucked in her breath sharply but made no other sound.

The cane hissed down again...

In the special room, Peter had been manacled to the divan in a spread-eagled position. Maisie lay on her stomach between his legs, with her mouth on a level with his bottom.

Audrey and Pam stood on either side of the divan. Each held a heavy leather belt.

Maisie put her tongue out of her mouth and formed it into a pointed tip. She put the tip to Peter’s bottom. She licked delicately at the mouth of his anus.

Peter stiffened with the thrill that ran through him.

“Did you learn that at Buckley Manor, too?” asked Audrey interestedly.

Maisie raised her head. “Yes, madam. And a lot of other things.”

Audrey laughed. “Peter darling, I’m looking forward very much indeed to going down there next week-end.” She nodded at Pam, raised her belt and brought it down across his shoulders.

Maisie put her tongue back to his anus and licked.

Pam brought down her own belt with all her strength.

Robert threw down the cane. “Whew! I’m exhausted. And you’re very brave. Not a sound!” He had given her fifty very hard strokes, and had brought a lot of blood.

Mary straightened herself with difficulty. She twisted herself and looked at the blood on her legs. “You’re very strong. Let’s make love now. But what about all this blood?” She took her rubber robe and spread it out over her bed. She lay down on it, wincing. She held up her arms to him. She was on fire with desire.

Robert lay down on top of her. She opened her legs, wincing again. He pushed his penis inside her.

She caught her breath. “Listen,” she said. “Whenever you want to cane me, or whip me, or thrash me— you just say so. I’ll take it from you any time you want to do it.”

He lifted himself a little. “Why? Why should you?”

“Never you mind why. Just you remember it, that’s all.”

He lay down flat again. He pushed his penis further inside her.

“And another thing,” she said. “Whenever you want a woman, I’ll always be ready for you. Whenever you like. Will you remember that?”

“Yes. But I don’t understand why.”

“You don’t have to understand. It wouldn’t do either of us any good. Just remember it, sir. I’ll always be ready and waiting for you whenever you want me.”

“Well, thank you, Mary. I’ll certainly remember it. And I’ll take you at your word.” He put his lips to one of her breasts.

She stiffened with delight. “Oh, yes! Bite it too! Bite it off if you want!”

He tightened his teeth on the nipple.

“Oooh!” she breathed. “More, more, more!”

He put his lips to her other nipple. He bit it lightly.

She gave a gasp of frenzy. “More! Harder!”

He bit harder.

“Ooooh!” She put her hands down to his testicles and scratched the skin of the bag with her nails. “And will you let me cane you, sir—now and again?”

“Whenever you want.”

She shuddered with pleasure. “Do you know something, Mr. the Honourable Robert Milton? I’m crazy about you. Don’t worry about it. Just let me go on being crazy about you. You’re only a year younger than me, you know—and you’re my ideal of a man.”

The penis slid ravishingly up and down inside her.

“So,” she breathed, “don’t be too long before you come back here again.”

She felt the penis inside her growing larger. She took her hands away from the testicles and threw her arms around his neck. “Ooooh! Robert, Robert, wonderful Robert! Oh, how I wish I were caning you now! Ooooh! Ooooh! Oooooooh!”

Pam let her arm fall to her side. Her belt hung down to her feet. She looked at its end, lying across her shoe, and had an idea. She moved to the foot of the divan. She raised her belt and brought it down hard across the naked sole of Peter’s left foot.

He shrieked with agony.

The sound of the shriek gave her a thrill that almost stunned her. She lashed again at the naked foot. “This,” she gasped, “is called the bastinado. They do it a lot at Buckley Manor.” She moved to the other foot and lashed down with her belt. “They say it’s terribly painful.” She lashed again. “From the noise you’re making I think it must be terribly painful.”

Audrey said suddenly: “Stop, Pam. That’s enough.” The sound of Peter’s piteous shrieks had made her brain reel with gratification, but she realised that, sadist though she was, enough was enough. “Undo him now, please.”

Pam put down her belt reluctantly and unlocked the manacles at the foot of the divan. Maisie stood up and unlocked the manacles at the other end.

Peter stretched. He turned over on his back. ‘He looked at Audrey. “So that’s the bastinado, is it? Please, no more of that!”

She sat beside him and put her hands to his penis and testicles. “All right, darling. No more of that—for tonight, anyway.” The penis grew hard and large under her fingers. “We’ll make love now.”

Maisie said: “May I make a suggestion, madam?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Do you know what soixante-neuf means, madam?”

Audrey smiled. “Yes, I do.”

“May I suggest, then, that you—you have some soixante-neuf now, and Pam and I can whip him while you’re doing it.”

Audrey looked at Peter, a light dancing in her eyes. “That’s quite a good idea. Let’s do that.” She stood up and unbelted her shimmery rubber robe. Then she changed her mind and belted it again. “No, I’ll keep this on. It’ll be a protection in case the whips curl round and hit me too.” She sat down again on the divan. “Move over, Peter dear. I’ll lie on my back. You come on top of me.”

Peter got up painfully from the divan. Audrey lay on her back and opened the

front of her robe to reveal her genitals. She opened her legs. He turned himself and lay down over her, his face to her genitals and his penis and testicles above her mouth. She turned her head and looked at Maisie. “What do you want to use?”

Maisie glanced at the trolley that held all the implements. “Something swishy and cutting, madam.” She moved forward to the trolley and picked up a slender whalebone switch. “This, I think, please.”

“All right. And you, Pam?”

Pam hesitated. “I’d—I’d like to play a bit with Maisie, madam—while she’s using that switch. That’s if I may, madam.”

“Certainly.” Audrey turned her head and put out her tongue. She licked the central nerve of the enormous penis above her.

Peter groaned with pleasure. He buried his head in her warm, moist genitals. He put his tongue to the lips of her vulva.

Pam pulled aside the skirts of her long robe and sat on the floor with her back to the divan. “Come on, Maisie,” she said. “I’ll give you a licking.”

“Oh, yes!” said Maisie. “Yes, please. A licking while I do a bit of cutting with this!” She ran the switch through her fingers and moistened her lips. She moved to the side of the divan, in front of Pam. She unbelted the front of her long robe.

She pulled aside its fronts and revealed her lovely naked body. She moved forward a little more, opened her legs wide, and brought her vulva to the level of Pam's lips.

Pam put out her tongue and licked slowly and tantalisingly.

Maisie gave a moan of joy and raised her switch. She brought it down across the middle of Peter's buttocks with all her force.

He gave a great flinch, and thrust his tongue into Audrey's vagina.

Audrey felt herself growing weak with bliss. The rapture floated up through all her bones. She heard the hiss of the whip and the chekkk of its impact against the flesh. Ecstatically she drank in the noise—and waited for the next hiss. She put her hands up, under Peter's body, to his testicles. She sank her fingernails into the skin of their bag. She opened her mouth and let the great penis slide over her tongue.

Peter's crisis advanced steadily forward. The pain from the slashing whip mutated to a frenzied delectation. He thrust his tongue further inside his wife. He relished the agony that struck him every second as the whip hissed down and cut into him.

Maisie was in another world. With the ecstasy that came from her whipping and from the thrusting of Pam's tongue she felt as though she were enveloped by a searing flame.

The orgasm seemed to explode inside Audrey. It took her in a stupefying grip and raised her away from herself. She felt herself soaring at a dizzy speed far, far away— high, high up—as far as the highest cloud...

THE END