

Bedlam

by

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# BEDLAM

## Chapter One

Angelica silently navigated the stairs and approached the sitting room. She was hoping to get past her aunt and her hateful cousin without detection and make her way to the kitchen. Her aunt had placed her on a strict diet that would not have maintained a sparrow in good health. Of course, this was supposedly for her own good, as a slim figure and pale complexion were of the utmost importance if one was to secure a good marriage. It seemed to Angelica that she ran the risk of expiring of starvation long before the much hoped for suitor made an appearance at her door.

Fortunately, Winnie, the old family cook, agreed with her analysis of the situation. Angelica was much prone to walks around the estate and to feeding the birds that dwelt thereupon, so Winnie would pass her bundles of scraps suitable for this purpose. No doubt her advanced age and eccentricity was the reason that she considered large pieces of pie, cheese and ham as suitable feed for the birds.

Something in the tone of her aunt's voice made her pause and eavesdrop.

"Mother, she is going to be twenty-one next year. Once she reaches her majority she will have full legal control of the estate under the terms of the trust, and both you and I shall be out on the street shortly after," said the voice of Angelica's much hated cousin Cynthia Browning in her usual shrill and unpleasant tone.

Angelica nodded in fervent agreement with this sentiment.

"Hush child. Do not fret. I shall find a way to deal with this problem. Curse my brother for his legal meddling. What sane man would set up a trust that would hand over the entire estate to the Church in the event of the death of his daughter before her majority." This was the harsh, bitter voice of Angelica's widowed aunt, Agatha Browning.

Angelica prayed nightly to the sainted memory of her departed father and his legal acumen. She had long suspected that if not for the terms of the trust, she would have been reunited with her father many years ago.

"I can see but one solution mother. Dear cousin Angelica needs to meet with an unfortunate accident on the day of her twenty-first birthday. The trust makes no provision for this eventuality and the estate shall go to her only next of kin, namely her loving and most deserving aunt and cousin."

Mrs Browning's voice said, "I am coming to believe that you are right, although such a move involves many risks. We need to work out a careful and methodical plan, if Angelica is to become an angel." Both women laughed heartily at this jest.

Angelica's lovely eyes widened in alarm at this overt declaration of her aunt and cousin's intentions. The sound of footsteps approaching the sitting room door made her abandon her listening post and hurry to resume her interrupted bird feeding expedition.

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Later that day, Angelica and her less than loving relatives gathered at the front of the house to watch the approach of a town coach pulled by a very fine looking team of horses, and bearing the august personage of Sir Percy Congreve, who was the Senior Trustee of Angelica's trust. It was his practice to visit Angelica once a month as part of his duties to ensure himself of her well being and to see that her income was both adequate and properly employed. Needless to say, he and Agatha Browning maintained a somewhat strained relationship.

In truth, Agatha would have preferred never to have to entertain Sir Percy, but since he controlled the purse strings to the income upon which she and her beloved daughter depended, she had

no choice but to put the best face on it that she could.

However, this particular visit brought with it a surprise that was to change the lives of everyone living in Farleigh Hall. As the carriage approached, it soon became obvious that it had two occupants rather than the usual lone figure of Sir Percy. Being women, all three of them noticed at once that Sir Percy's unexpected companion was male, expensively dressed, young and handsome, in that order.

Sir Percy stepped out from the carriage and bowed. When his companion reached his side, he held out his hand to him and said, "May I introduce my friend, Dr John Seward of London."

Dr Seward bowed and smiled charmingly. "Ladies. Charmed to make your acquaintance."

All three ladies curtsied and Mrs Browning simpered, a sight fit to make the sparrows fall from the trees, and said, "You are most welcome indeed Dr Seward. This is my daughter Cynthia. Say hello to the nice gentleman Cynthia."

Cynthia batted her eyelashes, curtsied again and said, "Pleased to meet you sir."

There was a moment of uncomfortable silence. Sir Percy cleared his throat and glared at Mrs Browning.

With obvious reluctance, Mrs Browning said rapidly and without turning her head, "And that's my niece Angelica."

Angelica curtsied politely and blushed under Dr Seward's regard.

He bowed and said, "I am most pleased to meet you Miss Angelica. Sir Percy has spoken of you to me."

The formalities done with, the entire assembly made their way to the sitting room, where tea and biscuits had been laid out by the maid, although the careful arrangement of the crockery was somewhat disarranged by the addition of an extra setting.

After some polite observations regarding the weather, Sir Percy said, "As you are aware, I have made it my practice to visit you on this day every month in order to enquire as to the state of affairs in this household, as I am obliged to do under the terms of Angelica's trust. I had recently made the acquaintance of the good Doctor, and when this month's visitation came around, I was struck by the idea of bringing him along in order to benefit from his observations and advice."

Mrs Browning's linearly formed lips tightened to near invisibility upon hearing Sir Percy's words. "Are you a medical doctor then, Dr Seward?"

Dr Seward smiled charmingly and replied, "Of a sort, dear madam. I am a doctor of the mind. As a matter of fact, I have had the recent good fortune to open a private hospital in London dedicated to the treatment of the ailments of the mind."

Sir Percy observed, "Dr Seward's establishment is most selective of its patients. None of your common riff raff, you know. After all, the common crowd have Bedlam to go to, don't they."

Cynthia pressed her hands to her bosom and exclaimed, "Sir, surely you do not seek to find madness amongst us?"

Dr Seward held up his hand. "Not at all, dear lady. Sir Percy had merely asked whether I could look in on Miss Angelica and reassure him that she does not suffer from any distress of the spirit."

Angelica imagined that she saw a fleeting shadow of alarm pass over Mrs Browning's usually impenetrable countenance.

Sir Percy turned his head to glance out of the window and remarked, "As a matter of fact, it looks like a fine day for a walk. Perhaps, Mrs Browning, you and Miss Cynthia would do me the favour of accompanying me for a stroll. You need have no concern regarding the propriety of leaving Angelica alone here with young Seward, as he is a doctor after all."

Seeing no option but compliance, Mrs Browning and Cynthia hastened to follow Sir Percy out the door after casting one last glance over her shoulder.

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Upon their return from their stroll, Mrs Browning anxiously studied Dr Seward's face for any clue as to his intended report to Sir Percy. She was given little opportunity to practise her new found interest in mind reading, as Sir Percy was eager to return to London. To her surprise, as Sir Percy was making his way to the carriage, Dr Seward turned to address her.

He removed a card from his vest and gave it to her as he spoke in a soft, confidential tone. "I have made a close examination of Angelica, and as you are her guardian, I believe that my conclusions and recommendations may be of much interest to you. I propose that I return again on the morrow, unaccompanied by Sir Percy, whereupon we may discuss matters of mutual benefit."

Mrs Browning's keen instinct for personal benefit told her that she should accept Doctor Seward's proposal, so she nodded and replied cautiously, "Naturally, I am always desirous to learn of anything that may affect the well being of my dear niece. I would be delighted to have you come by again tomorrow."

## Chapter Two

As soon as the carriage faded from view, Mrs Browning turned on Angelica. Her claw like fingers gripped her niece by the ear, and using that convenient handle, she directs her victim back into the sitting room, followed by a gleeful Cynthia. With the door firmly closed and the three of them safely ensconced in the privacy of the room, Mrs Browning demanded, "What lies did you tell that nice Dr Seward? I know your cunning and deceitful nature much too well to believe that you spent your time with him discussing embroidery or the latest dances in London. Not that a clumsy cow like you would have any use for such knowledge."

This last induced a rather unladylike snigger from cousin Cynthia.

Angelica had been the recipient of such a multitude of similar tirades over the years, that the storm of words ran over her like raindrops over a window pane, making no impression whatsoever. However, her aunt's suggestion that her terpsichorean abilities were on par with a stumbling bovine did sting, as she was rather proud of her skills in that arena. Although she knew full well that her protestations would be useless, Angelica said, "Indeed dear aunt, we did but discuss the most innocent of subjects. He inquired as to my general health, and I assured him that I was hale and fit. He then extended his inquiries to my state of mind, in particular whether I was happy, and whether I had any fears or if any matters oppressed my spirits. Once again, I replied in the negative, and assured him that I was in good cheer. Other than that, our discourse was indeed limited to such matters as the weather, my favourite colours and the like."

Mrs Browning's face darkened with anger. Truth be told, it required one as skilled in the interpretation of the woman's Gorgon-like features as Angelica or Cynthia, in order to be able to tell the difference in her present expression from her ordinary appearance. "I see that I was foolish to expect the truth from you. It is a wonder that the good lord does not strike you dead on the spot for so abusing your god given ability to speak. Well, you know the penalty for such behaviour. If the lord will not will not send down his wrath, then it is my duty as your guardian to carry out his will."

As always, her aunt's ability to interpret the intentions of the lord amazed Angelica. However, she knew that she had no option but silent submission. From what she overheard that morning, it appeared that even that would not save her the moment that she achieved twenty-one years of age.

Mrs Browning turned to Cynthia and bade her fetch the instrument of correction.

With a smile of glee, Cynthia hurried to comply. It was her duty to prepare a fresh bundle of birch twigs every time that Mrs Browning had occasion to use the birch on Angelica's posteriors, which was rather more often than Angelica would have preferred. She skipped back and held out the ribbon bound bundle of twigs towards her mother.

After bestowing a loving smile on her obedient daughter, Mrs Browning thrust her head towards Angelica in a manner reminiscent of a striking viper. "You know what to do. Lord knows, I've been

forced by your stubborn and uncooperative attitude to punish you sufficient times in the past for you to be familiar with the manner in which you should prepare yourself for correction."

Angelica did indeed know all too well what was required of her, and she moved towards the table with a carefully concealed sigh. Any indications of discontent or rebellion were deemed by her aunt as sufficient cause for additional punishment, so she took pains to demonstrate a subdued and obedient manner, even as she prepared herself for the unfair and unwarranted punishment. She had long ago realised that the birching that she suffered bore no relationship whatsoever to her behaviour, but rather to the ill humour and vindictiveness of her supposed guardian. She bent herself over and raised the hems of her skirt, petticoat and chemise, all the while painfully aware of the gleeful anticipation of cousin Cynthia. With a feeling of shame that was only slightly tempered by familiarity, she exposed her legs and then her buttocks. She leaned forwards and laid her upper body upon the white linen of the tablecloth and then tucked her skirts up above her waist such that they would safely remain in position during her birching. With that task done, she pressed her cheek firmly to the table with her hands to either side of her head. The final shameful step of her preparation was to slide her feet apart to the width of her shoulders. According to her aunt, this was to demonstrate her submission to the punishment by ensuring that even the most private part of her person should be properly exposed to the birch. Mrs Browning seldom took advantage of this facility, being mostly more concerned with the infliction of the hardest possible strokes. On the other hand, cousin Cynthia derived great delight in her skill with the birch, directing the harsh tips of the twigs into the most private and sensitive nooks and crannies as often as she could without appearing to be deliberately targeting those areas, which would of course have been improper. It became a mental game for Angelica, while waiting upon the birch, to attempt to decide which weilder was less to be desired.

On this occasion, Mrs Browning decided to cede the honour to her daughter, the better for her to appreciate Angelica's discomfort. Returning the birch bundle to Cynthia, she said, "Angelica's stubbornness has quite worn me out. I am certain that I'm getting one my heads. Be and angel and deal with her for me."

Ever the obedient and thoughtful daughter, Cynthia accepted the burden with good cheer. On the pretext of adjusting Angelica's skirt, she leaned towards her cousin's head and whispered, "Your cunny is going to dance under the birch today dear cousin."

Angelica's was much tempted to make a witty retort, but common sense prevailed and she refrained from baiting the person who was about to give her a birching. Instead, she concentrated on maintaining her composure and determined herself not to cry out or to give Cynthia the satisfaction of seeing her tears. She felt the stiff birch twigs brush her bottom and she clenched her fists. "Swish! Thwack!" The birch danced on her rounded globes and ignited a flame that would shortly spread all over her indecently exposed posterior.

Cynthia dashed the birch against her cousin's bum again, and yet again, watching in glee as the harsh kiss of the birch turned Angelica's bum a deep pink, speckled with dots of crimson. When she judged that she had placed sufficient strokes upon her cousin's posteriors to provide the appearance of a good birching, she cunningly began to shift her aim and change the angle of her wrist so as to make the tips of the twigs curl and bend into the deep split, skilfully reaching for those sensitive parts that are normally sheltered from rude treatment and prying eyes.

Having been forewarned by her spiteful cousin, Angelica fastened her teeth upon the side her thumb, not having the benefit of the leather pad on which to bite upon, that is usually provided to soldiers on the whipping block. Ostensibly, her aunt frowned upon laying the birch upon any other target other than the posteriors. However, Angelica had learned from bitter experience that Mrs Browning always developed a convenient defect in her vision whenever her daughter wielded the birch, and that any protests on Angelica's part would only result in additional punishment for bearing false witness against her cousin. Thus, cousin Cynthia was at liberty to shift and adjust her victim's posture such that the birch was almost obliged to strike within the shadowy regions between the thighs. As the

birch bit and stung her delicate skin, Angelica knew that for her, walking or sitting would be a most unpleasant trail over the next few days. Again and again, the birch danced merrily on her bottom, with the rigid tips of the twigs bowing their heads to savage her most private parts, the pain of which Angelica was obliged to suffer in stoic silence.

Cynthia sighed with regret when her mother signalled the end of the punishment. On the other hand, the birch had been worn down to a mere stub, such had been her enthusiasm in performing her duties and her cousin's posteriors were glowing with a heat sufficient to warm the room in substitution for the fire that crackled cheerily in the fireplace. She noted with particular satisfaction that she had managed to draw several small spots of blood from the pink lips that peeked out from the slit of her cousin's cunny.

With her duty discharged, Mrs Browning retreated to her bedroom to lie down, complaining of an aching head, which of course she blamed on her niece. Cynthia cheerily donned a bonnet and went out into the grounds with shears and basket in hand, in order to harvest a fresh bundle of birches.

Angelica could not retreat to her bedroom immediately after a punishment, since such an action would be interpreted as being an expression of defiance or dissatisfaction with her treatment. Instead, she carefully seated herself in the sitting room in order to practice her needlework and to reflect on the painful wages of her many imaginary sins.

## Chapter Three

Dr Seward was as good as his word, and returned promptly on the very next day. He arrived at Farleigh Hall riding a fine chestnut gelding, and once again, all three ladies gathered at the door were unanimous in their assessment that he cut a fine figure indeed as he rode up to the house.

Mrs Browning had taken great pains that morning to ensure that Cynthia looked her best, although it must be said that Angelica was more striking to the eye in her simple muslin dress and strikingly pale and interesting complexion, which was accentuated by the discomfort in her nether regions that was the natural result of her cousin's enthusiastic efforts with the birch on the previous day. Mrs Browning greeted him effusively and all but dragged the gentleman into the sitting room in her eagerness to learn more about the mysterious proposal to which he had alluded the previous day.

Dr Seward said, "If I may be so bold, I would request a private consultation with you. I have certain delicate matters of a medical nature that may not be suitable for the ears of these young ladies."

Mrs Browning had been anticipating something of the sort, and was most amenable to his proposal. Once again, Dr Seward's medical credentials extended a wing of propriety over what would otherwise have been a scandalous imposition. Once they were alone, Dr Seward abandoned any pretence of impartiality and set out his plan.

He folded his hands on his lap and said, "Sir Percy has explained to me your situation with regard to Angelica. Am I correct in assuming that you do not rejoice at the prospect of the young lady's forthcoming majority?"

Mrs Browning was moved to deny the truth of his words, until she realised that his demeanour presented not a trace of rebuke or criticism, but rather, was the opening gambit to a deeper game. She replied, "I would admit to having some concerns regarding the prospects of my self and my daughter once Angelica gains legal dominion over her inheritance. Although I have done my best as her guardian and a loving aunt, I regret to say that she displays a singularly ungrateful manner towards the two of us."

Dr Seward made the appropriate sympathetic responses and then proceeded to make plain his scheme. He explained that he had recently established and had licensed a legal madhouse in London, specialising in the care and treatment of female lunatics. As he was also a licensed doctor and a graduate of Oxford, and thus able to issue a medical certificate declaring a person to be suffering from various degrees of mental incompetence, he was having significant success in attracting patients from

prominent and wealthy families. He confided in Mrs Browning the fact that many of his patients were in fact wives, mistresses and daughters who had proven to be troublesome or intractable. It provided a convenient and discreet method of removing inconvenient females from the public eye, similar to the role that the nunneries of yore had served. Naturally, the living conditions and general environment of his facility were miles above those to be discovered in any ordinary madhouse or hospital, as standards had to be maintained by his clients.

Her eyes gleaming, Mrs Browning was not slow in grasping the possibilities that Dr Seward was offering her. However, she was quick to spot the weakness in his proposal, when considered in relation to her own situation. "Alas, Dr Seward, I am not wealthy, and even if Sir Percy were to approve the expenditure, I would be loath to employ large amounts of Angelica's inheritance to finance her stay in your establishment."

The good doctor was quick to reassure her that in Angelica's case, money was not the primary consideration, "Which is why I consider this venture to be ideally beneficial to both parties," he said.

Hope kindled in her heart once more, and Mrs Browning eagerly urged him to elaborate.

Dr Seward said, "The treatment of the illness of the mind is a relatively new field of study for the medical profession. After all, it was not so long ago when people spoke of possession and effects of the moon when faced with mental infirmity. I therefore consider it my duty to employ the opportunities provided by my establishment to study the patients placed in my care and to experiment with new methods of treatment. Angelica's case presents numerous aspects of interest to my research, so I wish to propose the following. I shall undertake to perform a series of tests on Angelica. If she proves to suffer from an infirmity of the mind, as I am sure that she does, I shall certify her as mentally ill and undertake to accept her in my madhouse for as long as may be necessary. In return, I expect you, as her legal guardian, to place her in my sole care, and to authorise me to deal with her person as I see fit. As for payment, I propose a token sum, sufficient to cover her meals and clothing, plus a token contribution to the upkeep of the hospital."

Despite her unceasing criticism of every aspect of Angelica's appearance and personality, Mrs Browning was well aware of her niece's beauty and charm. Once her niece was committed to his care under the terms that he proposed, Dr Seward would have unrestricted access to her person, and even in the event that she should manage to make a complaint regarding her treatment to anyone such as Sir Percy, Dr Seward could simply attribute such claims to her illness.

Dr Seward could see that the woman was favourably disposed to his scheme, so he added what he hoped would be the final garnish to his argument. "During my conversation with Angelica, she informed me, most bashfully I might add, that you place great trust in the birch as a method of instruction and correction."

Intrigued by this diversion in their conversation, Mrs Browning admitted to her preference for corporal punishment as a means of enforcing discipline.

The doctor smiled and explained, "It is my belief that the methodical infliction of pain to carefully selected areas of the human body, combined with other stimulation techniques of my own invention, and combined with the new science of mesmerism, invented by Dr Franz Anton Mesmer of Austria and lately of Paris, may lead to the successful treatment of many illnesses of the mind. Naturally, as a scientist, I have a need to carry out numerous experiments in order to test and prove the efficacy of my treatments. With your approval, I should like to incorporate Angelica into my research. Naturally, as a responsible guardian, I would not expect you to approve such a thing without the opportunity to carefully observe my procedures in practise. Therefore, if you decide to commit to this enterprise, I would be delighted to have Angelica, yourself, and your charming daughter, visit and stay at my home in London, during which time you may observe for yourself the application of my methods, both on Angelica and other patients."

Mrs Browning did not require the doctor to spell out in detail the implications of his plot. Once Angelica was certified as insane by Dr Seward and committed to his asylum, she, Mrs Browning, need



only wait until Angelica reached twenty one years of age. The trust would be devolve upon Angelica and the meddling Sir Percy would be removed from the scene. As Angelica's sole adult living relative and her appointed guardian during her minority, Mrs Browning would remain in control of Farleigh House and Angelica's inheritance. She suspected that Dr Seward might return at a later date with demands for money, but she felt confident that she could deal with him when the time came. She speculated that for an adequate financial incentive, the good doctor might even be persuaded to see to it that Angelica suffer an unfortunate and fatal illness while at the sanatorium.

It did not require much further conversation for the two parties to agree upon a plan of action. In order to commence the process by which Angelica's fate was to be sealed, Mrs Browning consented to write a letter addressed to Dr Seward, requesting his advice in dealing with certain strange behaviours that she had observed in her niece, and which had aroused her concern. Once said letter was delivered into the doctor's hands by post, he would invite Mrs Browning to bring her troubled niece to see him in London.

Having sealed their pact, Dr Seward took his leave of Angelica's guardian and returned to London, to await the arrival of the letter.

Mrs Browning did not inform Cynthia of her plans, and the next several days passed in the normal manner for the occupants of Farleigh House, although Angelica had her suspicions.

Finally, the awaited letter from Dr Seward arrived. After reading it, Mrs Browning announced that they had been invited to London by Dr Seward, which news was greeted by excited exclamations from Cynthia, and a more restrained display from Angelica. Mrs Browning herself could barely suppress her anticipation and bustled about the house supervising the packing and other preparations, as if that would make the time scheduled for their departure arrive sooner.

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Even Angelica found herself stimulated and invigorated by the incredible sense of life and industry that was to be observed everywhere in the streets of one of the greatest cities in the world. London seemed to be overflowing with busy people, horses and carriages. The air was so filled with sounds and smells, both fair and foul, that it made the head spin. Despite her nervous anticipation, it was a relief when their carriage clattered into the relative quiet and calm of the street in front of Dr Seward's elegant home which was located between Hyde Park and Belgrave Square. The doctor was there to greet them and welcomed them all warmly to his home. However, once their luggage had been unloaded and the ladies were given the opportunity to refresh themselves, Dr Seward revealed that he had urgent business at his sanatorium. He gave Mrs Browning a significant look and suggested that they accompany him, promising a tour of the asylum and an excellent supper. He revealed that he had engaged a most excellent cook to run his personal kitchen at the madhouse, since he spent much of his time there. The prospect of a good meal cheered the ladies to no end, and there was an almost festive atmosphere in the carriage as they made their way east across the city.

Angelica was pleasantly surprised by her first view of Dr Seward's hospital. In her imagination she had been expecting a dark, grim fortress of bleak stone circled by ravens and crows, and haunted by screams and the rattling of rusty chains. Instead, when their carriage passed through the elegant, black and gold painted gate, she was greeted by the vision of a large, three storey building that resembled one of the new luxury hotels that were appearing in London and Brighton, save for the lack of a uniformed doorman. The grounds were pleasant and well kept, with an abundance of flowers and neatly trimmed bushes. Obviously, Dr Seward had not been exaggerating when he had said that his establishment was directed towards the afflicted who came from the upper, or at least moneyed classes.

They were greeted by a handsome looking woman in a neat, well tailored muslin dress which bore styling on the neckline and sleeves that somehow gave it an air of a uniform. Dr Seward introduced her as Mrs Emma Goodwin, who acted as housekeeper for the whole of the establishment.

He noted his guests' surprise and said, "All of the staff in the Seward Sanatorium are female, as are all of the patients."

The interior of the building was just as pleasant as the exterior. Housemaids busily went about their duties, cleaning, scrubbing and polishing. The front entrance led through the administrative section of the sanatorium, so the visitors were not exposed to any of the inmates as they made their way to a comfortable interview room located next to Dr Seward's office, the door to which bore an ornate brass plaque inscribed with his name. A maid served them tea, scones with jam and clotted cream, and Battenberg cake, while Dr Seward made his excuses and hurried off to attend to his patient.

Mrs Browning inquired as to Angelica's impression of the Sanatorium and of the doctor himself.

Angelica admitted that she was favourably impressed with the establishment and that Dr Seward seemed to be well mannered and personable. For some reason, her disclosure seemed to amuse her habitually stern faced aunt. This did not serve to comfort Angelica, since she had learned over the years that any subject which proved to be a source of amusement to Mrs Browning usually resulted in dire consequences for Angelica herself.

Approximately half an hour had ticked by before Dr Seward made an appearance once more. He appeared somewhat flushed and his hair was a fraction out of place, from which one might assume that his patient had proved to be difficult. He straightened his cravat and said, "I really must apologise for being such a poor host." He lowered himself into a chair and then continued. "Angelica, I am afraid that your aunt and I have caused you to be brought here under false pretences. Based on my observations from our first meeting, and combined with such information as your aunt and you cousin have been able to provide to me, I have developed serious concerns about your mental and emotional well being. On the occasion of my second visit, I expressed these concerns to your aunt. Being a good and responsible guardian, she at once inquired of me as to my recommendations. It was thus under my instructions that you were brought here to London. I propose to subject you to a number of tests and examinations, which shall allow me to discover the precise nature of your illness, and direct me as to the proper course of treatment."

Angelica's face had turned pale and displayed a degree of anxiety natural to anyone faced with such news. "May I ask then, what exactly is to become of me?" she asked with admirable composure.

Dr Seward turned to Mrs Browning. "Good lady, it would perhaps be best if you were to answer that question."

Displaying what Angelica judged to be a somewhat crocodilian expression of sympathy, her aunt said, "Should the results of Dr Seward's tests prove unfavourable, I have agreed that you should be placed under his care and that you shall reside in this nice place until such time as he is certain that you have fully recovered. We only have your best interests at heart, and in order to assure myself that your committal is absolutely necessary, your cousin Cynthia and I shall stay in London and to witness the entire testing procedure."

Angelica's delicate frame seemed to shake under the influence of some violent emotion. In an unsteady voice she inquired, "And what if I should refuse to be subjected to this – this treatment?"

At this point, Dr Seward deftly interjected, "Mrs Browning, I have had considerable experience with this kind of situation, as every patient who comes here naturally has similar concerns and fears. I suggest that I be allowed to speak to her in private for a moment. I am confident that I can allay her fears."

Mrs Browning saw the wisdom in this and permitted the doctor to remove Angelica to his office, where they conversed behind a closed door for nearly fifteen minutes.

Upon the expiry of that time, Dr Seward returned to the interview room, displaying a confident and satisfied manner. "She is now calm and had resigned herself to being placed under my care."

Mrs Browning expressed her surprise at his success and Dr Seward leaned towards her and spoke in a confidential tone. "In truth, I informed her that her any show of uneven temperament or physical resistance would only support the conclusion that she is unsound of mind and thus lengthen

the period of her stay here at the Sanatorium. I advised her as an impartial party that her only chance of escaping permanent incarceration was to fully cooperate with my tests and treatments, no matter how unpleasant or unusual that they may seem."

Mrs Browning's smile was positively vulpine. "It was wicked of you to lie to the poor girl."

Dr Seward mirrored her expression and replied, "It would not help her peace of mind to know that her stay here might prove to be permanent. Hope springs eternal, and all that."

Cynthia, who still had not been fully informed of their plans, observed their laughter with much confusion.

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When Mrs Browning next met Angelica, she observed that her niece was much more subdued, but additionally wore an air of quiet determination. It was obvious that she had taken Dr Seward's advice to heart and was bent on facing whatever was to come with as much calm compliance as she could muster.

Dr Seward led them deeper into the building, down some increasingly large corridors and up to an imposing door that bore the inscription, "Examination Room No. One". The well oiled lock silently opened under his hand.

As they entered, all three ladies uttered sounds of amazement and surprise, though for differing reasons. Apart from a large oak work desk covered with bundles of documents and loose sheets of paper, there were numerous cabinets and shelves along the walls filled with books, surgical instruments and other devices, the utility of which were not immediately discernible. These however, were not the source of their surprise. Rather, it was the large devices of ominous appearance that filled the remainder of the room. There were large wooden frames, both vertical and horizontal, fitted with all manner of brass rings and shackles. There was a padded device of grim and complex appearance that resembled a barber's chair, except that no barber would ever require the many straps and buckles that adorned this particular seat, nor would the supposed barber have use for the padded restraints mounted on adjustable arms that were clearly meant to support and hold fast the occupant's ankles. Similarly, there was a device that resembled an adjustable doctor's examination table, but which once again possessed an alarming multitude of straps, fastening points and the stirrup-like devices. Were it not for the tasteful décor, and numerous oil lamps and candles which maintained an atmosphere of genteel luxury, it would not have been difficult to imagine the room being part of some grim underground dungeon, presided over by a black hooded torturer.

Despite her obvious determination, Angelica took half a step backwards at this daunting sight.

Dr Seward gently took her arm and let her forward saying, "Do not be distressed by the equipment that you see before you. They were carefully designed to assist in the examination of patients of every sort, some of whom are severely disturbed and must be restrained for safety's sake lest they injure themselves or others. You shall not be restrained so long as you are cooperative and comply with my instructions".

Cynthia could barely suppress her glee at the sight of the devices. She could readily imagine her hated cousin being held in their forbidding embrace, and could hardly bare the wait before her thoughts became reality.

Dr Seward turned back to lock the door, assuring Angelica that this measure was to defend her modesty against the accidental entry of staff or visitors. He then showed Mrs Browning and Cynthia to a row of comfortable seats that were conveniently placed to allow their occupants the best view of the proceedings. He said, "I would request that the both of you remain seated and silent while I examine Angelica, as I do not wish her attention to be diverted from my words and instructions."

Dr Seward washed his hands in the basin located behind the desk, donned a long white coat, and then finally turned his attention to Angelica herself. In the even and kindly tone of voice employed by

most doctors as well as horse handlers, he said, "Now Angelica, I would remind you that I am your doctor and that everything I do is directed towards your well being. Therefore, there should be no false modesty between us. Is this understood?"

Angelica nodded while simultaneously biting her lip, as it did not require very much imagination in order to see where his words were leading, and she had an excellent imagination.

The doctor smiled and pointed to the large dressing screen that was placed to the side of his desk. "The first part of the tests is a thorough physical examination. Please go behind that screen and undress. Kindly remove all items of clothing, including your stockings. You will find a robe and a pair of slippers behind the screen. Put them on and then return to this spot."

Cynthia could barely suppress a gasp of excitement at this development and looked to her mother to observe her reaction. When she saw Mrs Browning's unconcerned smile, she realised that this had all been planned, and her excitement grew even more.

With a great show of reluctance, Angelica made her way behind the screen and the other occupants of the room listened to the sounds of fabric moving and sliding over skin. There was a long moment of silence, which was broken at last by the sound of slipped feet and the sight of Angelica coming around the screen, dressed only in a white cotton gown and a pair of carpet slippers. Despite the fact that the gown was respectably modest, the sleeves fully covering her arms and the hem going all the way down to the floor, her cheeks were red with embarrassment in the knowledge that she was totally naked under that single garment.

Dr Seward led her to the examination table and had her sit on the black leather top. He had her undo her hair, which fell to the middle of her back, and then checked her eyes, ears and mouth, making careful notes all the while. He also felt the shape of her head, running his fingers through her hair and palpitating her scalp.

Angelica rapidly came to feel like a prize pig or cow at a country fair, but made no complaint. She was acutely aware that much worse was to come, and soon.

Dr Seward's examination had progressed to her throat, neck and shoulders. Then he said, "Kindly slip your arms out of the sleeves and lower the gown to your waist so that I may continued with the examination."

Angelica could almost palpably feel the gaze of the doctor and the other two women upon her skin, like cobwebs blown against her body by the wind. Dr Seward had warned her that should she refuse to comply with his instructions, he would call upon the services of some nurses to restrain her. With a shudder of horror, she pulled the front of the gown apart and allowed the garment to slide down her slim white shoulders and to fall of its own accord down to her waist. She extracted her arms and hands from the sleeves one at a time, cringing as she felt her breasts sway as she moved. She felt Dr Seward's hands move over her shoulders, trace her collar bones, and then touch the upper slopes of her breasts.

He said, "I am now going to palpitate your breasts and then stimulate your nipples with my fingers in order to ensure that they are in good health and ready to perform their natural function of producing milk for the children that you no doubt shall bear in the future. Sit up straight and pull your shoulders back."

Angelica gasped when his hands closed over her breasts. No one apart than herself had ever touched them since they had developed their present full, rounded feminine shape. She had been expecting him to grope and squeeze them like a cook selecting a pair of grapefruit at a market stall, but instead, his touch was gentle and caressing. Being a good, proper, god fearing English girl, it had never even occurred to her that her breasts could be a source of pleasurable sensations. It therefore came to her as quite a shock when she discovered that the doctor's touch was not only painless, but quite stimulating as well. Shivers of a quite heretofore unknown sensation ran down her spine and made her hands clench into fists. She blushed bright red when she glanced up and saw Dr Seward's knowing smile.

In a voice that was too low for Angelica's aunt and cousin to hear, seated as they were across the width of the room, Dr Seward said, "Yes, I imagine that feels rather pleasant. So far, the expression on your face might be interpreted as shame and embarrassment. However, in just a moment I am going to direct my attentions to your rather charming nipples, and I should warn you that the sensations that my touch shall produce will be much more intense. It would not do to have your aunt conclude that you are actually enjoying yourself, would it?"

The mental image of her aunt's disgust if she discovered that Angelica could experience carnal pleasure from something so innocent as a doctor's examination, made Angelica want to sink into the ground in shame. She replied in a similarly discreet tone, "I shall do my best to remain impassive. I thank you for your warning Dr Seward." She decided that it had indeed been fortunate that the good doctor had seen it fit to warn her, as the sensations that erupted in her bosom when he began to squeeze and rub her nipples would have undoubtedly made her moan and gasp out loud in a most improper manner had she not been forewarned. As it was, the almost unbearably pleasant sensations made her squeeze her knees tightly together and to feel quite short of breath. She was shocked by the realisation that she would have gladly submitted to this particular form of examination all the rest of the day, if it had been possible.

Dr Seward spoke again, still in that soft, confidential tone. "I am now going to pinch your nipples rather hard, in order to test their sensibility to pain. Please allow your natural expressions full reign, as I am sure that no one shall blame you for any sounds or exclamations that you might make. Indeed, it would probably reassure your aunt to hear such vocalisations from you."

Angelica realised that Dr Seward was telling her that it would please her aunt to imagine her experiencing pain. Although she had known about this aspect of her aunt's character for some time, she was encouraged to know that the doctor had so quickly made a similar discovery. She tried to express her gratitude with her eyes and said, "I thank you for the warning Dr Seward. I shall strive to behave appropriately." The doctor's fingers closed over her nipples, and tightened slightly as a warning before suddenly closing together to pinch her delicate buds in a most severe manner. Angelica did not require any great degree of thespian talent in order to convincingly express her discomfort, which was unpleasantly real. A surreptitious glance in the direction of her aunt revealed a satisfied smirk on her face which was quickly disguised as an expression of sympathy. Naturally, cousin Cynthia made no attempt at all to hide her glee at Angelica's shame and discomfort.

Angelica's embarrassment quickly intensified by a distressing degree when Dr Seward ordered her to hop off of the table and to remove the gown in its entirety. Despite her bared breasts, she found that having the gown wrapped around her lower body still allowed her to imagine herself as being dressed. The loss of this final sop to her modesty was a chilling shock. Never before had she realised the degree to which a person's clothing contributed to her sense of identity and her confidence. Stripped of all emotional armour that even a flimsy chemise provided, she felt totally vulnerable and naked in every sense of the word. She wrapped her arms around her breasts and shivered. She might have given into the urge to collapse and weep, but as always in her life, her rather twisted sense of humour came to her succour. A sudden image of a plucked chicken squawking indignantly in Winnie's kitchen appeared in her mind, and she realised that like that chicken, she remained exactly the same after the loss of her feathers. She lowered her arms and attempted to present herself with as much dignity as she could under the circumstances. Dr Seward nodded at her and she thought that she detected admiration in his manner. In response to his instructions she climbed back up onto the examination table. She could not suppress a shiver as she laid herself down and pressed her back against the chilly leather surface.

Dr Seward resumed his examination of her person, pressing and kneading his way down the length of her abdomen. Her alarm steadily grew as his fingers approached and then passed her navel, but to her relief, he chose to move down the curve of her hip and on down her thigh, knee and calf. The soles of her feet were terribly ticklish, and tears of forced mirth ran down her face when he reached her

foot. He examined her foot carefully, tugging on her toes and peering into the gaps between them. The tickling torment continued as he moved on to her other foot. She was actually relieved when he started up the ankle and calf, despite knowing that he could only have one objective when he reached to top of her leg. He lingered on her upper thigh, working his fingers into her flesh in a most intimate manner, which she had to admit, felt rather nice. The touching of her thigh stopped and she opened her eyes, only to look straight up into the doctor's piercing gaze.

Dr Seward said, "Angelica, I need to examine your genitals in order to ensure that your reproductive organs are healthy and properly formed. Before I do that, I need you to answer some questions as honestly as you can. Are you a virgin? To be more precise, have you ever engaged in sexual intercourse with a man?"

Angelica's face flamed red as she shook her head, struck dumb by the indelicacy of the question. When the doctor continued to stare at her, she realised that he required a verbal answer of her. She had to employ an intense effort of will, in order to overcome the stiffness that had somehow inflicted the muscles of her jaw. Her voice quivering with shame, Angelica said, "I h...have never been with a man." She imagined that with that answer the worst was over, but the doctor's next question almost made her faint.

"And have you yourself ever inserted your fingers or any other object into your vagina?" he asked.

There was a loud snigger from Cynthia, and Angelica prayed for a thunderbolt to strike her obnoxious cousin down where she sat. When Zeus inexplicably failed to respond to her reasonable request, she was left with no choice but to answer the doctor's question. She shook her head once more and replied, "I have never...done that." She was unable to bring herself to be more specific. The nightmare grew ever worse as she felt the doctor's hands on her knees, urging them apart. Her first panicked reaction was to squeeze her legs together as tightly as she could, but the idea of being held down by two strange women who would then be witness to her shame was just too awful to contemplate, and with a sob of despair, she allowed her limbs to relax and move apart under the urgings of Dr Seward's hands.

The doctor pushed her knees out to the edge of the table and then made her legs bend and lift. By the means of numerous small adjustments to her posture, he brought Angelica's heels towards her buttocks with her bent legs leaning sharply outwards. In a final adjustment, he pushed at her knees, forcing them towards the top of the table and slightly lifting her hips upwards.

As the result of the doctor's manipulations, Angelica found her loins pointing up towards the ceiling, plainly showing her most secret parts to every person in the room. As if this was not bad enough, she felt Dr Seward brushing at her pubic hair, with the obvious intention of more completely exposing her cunny to his view. She nearly panicked when his fingertips actually touched her cunny, her every instinct screaming at her to resist this obscene intrusion. She told herself that he was a doctor and that it was quite proper for him to be touching her in such an intimate manner, and that she had in fact given her consent to his actions. It felt like he was exposing her very soul when his fingers pulled the plump, hair covered lips apart to bare the moist, glistening pinkness within.

Dr Seward stared with quiet intensity at Angelica's vulva, murmuring comments to himself as he probed and prodded. Then he raised his voice to a normal level of audibility and said, "Angelica, I have to perform some tests on your genitals, and for that I need my hands free. For this purpose, I have designed and arranged to be fabricated a special set of harnesses. I tell you this because in order to properly fasten them to your person, I shall employ several clips, and they shall unavoidably cause a certain amount of discomfort. I am told that the sensation is in the form of a slight sting. Please do not be alarmed, and try to bear it with as much fortitude as you are able to muster. It is important that you do not move during this part of the examination. If you feel that you are unable to remain unmoving, I can offer you the option of being fastened to the table through the use of a number of leather straps. I would spare you this indignity if at all possible, but I leave it to your judgement."

The idea of being trussed up like a hog with her cunny pulled apart by some horrible device did not appeal to Angelica at all, so she said calmly, "You have my word that I shall remain unmoving throughout your examination Dr Seward." She found it very difficult to lie still with her vision largely limited to an excellent view of the ceiling, while listening to ominous and unidentifiable sounds emanating from below the table, where there were a number of drawers, one of which presumably contained the sinister harness. There was a jingling of chains, and Dr Seward reappeared in her field of view. In his hand, he held a strip of leather that resembled a small belt or the collar of a large dog, complete with a buckle. From this miniature belt depended three silver chains. One was attached at one end to the centre of the belt, and the other two attached equidistant from the first. When the doctor held the device up, she was able to determine that the loose end of the chains each possessed a small metal clip, although in her innocence, she was unable to fathom the purpose of the device. She shivered when she felt the cold chains touch her skin as the Dr Seward wrapped the belt around her left thigh and fasten the buckle.

Once it was firmly fastened in place, Dr Seward adjusted the positioning of the device by rotating it around her thigh until each of the chains was in the desired position. With that accomplished, he went on to duplicate the action on Angelica's right thigh.

Angelica was not lacking in natural wit, and she had by now realised, to her horror, the purpose of the devices. Her suspicions were soon confirmed when she felt his fingers grasp the upper part of her cunny lip and pull it outwards and upwards, causing her flesh to extend. Then she felt the cold touch of the clip on her skin.

Dr Seward said, "I am going to fasten the first of the clips on your body. Prepare yourself for some discomfort." With that, he forced open the firm jaws the clip against its spring and placed Angelica's flesh within the gaping jaws. He then smoothly allowed the jaws of the clip to close on their victim, and when he was certain that it was in the proper position and angle, allowed the full force of the spring to prevail.

Being forewarned, Angelica did not shriek nor leap up, but remained tranquil and still, as if Dr Seward had merely fastened an earring on the lobe of her ear. However, it was her considered opinion that the sensation that she was experiencing could in no manner be described as a "slight sting". She had pricked her finger many times when doing her embroidery, and the degree of pain was much worse than that, since unlike the prick of the needle, the discomfort was not of a momentary nature, but showed every sign of going on into the infinite future. The pain induced her to make a slight outward movement of her thigh, and the discomfort multiplied as the chain that attached the clip to the leather belt around her thigh was tugged, which movement was immediately transferred to the clip and hence to her intimate flesh.

With the practised skill of a physician, Dr Seward rapidly fastened the remaining clips to Angelica's vulva, and then stepped back to view his handwork. He nodded in satisfaction as he studied the widely splayed labia majora or outer lips. The placement of each chain and clip had been cunningly designed so as to effect the maximum exposure of the female patient's genitals. The upper pair of clips and chains not only parted the labia majora, but were so angled as to impart a lifting motion to her clitoral prepuce, thereby causing the visible part of her clitoris to be fully exposed. Most medical men placed little importance on this feminine organ, comparing it to the human appendix as lacking in function. However, as Dr Seward's interests had become focused on the mental aspects of human health, he had come to believe something that again was contrary to the popular view of female sexuality. The majority of the medical profession had adopted the belief that women possessed no capacity for sexual pleasure and therefore did not experience sexual lust or desire. However, after extensive study of historical medical literature from all over the world, and combined with his own experiments, Dr Seward had come to the conclusion that to the contrary, women were fully capable of experiencing sensual pleasure and that it was not only harmless, but a function that was necessary to the mental well being of all women. In this, Angelica was most fortunate, as there was a certain

movement in the medical profession that viewed female sexual pleasure and masturbation as vile and dangerous, and who recommended clitorendectomy, or surgical removal of the clitoris as a sovereign remedy.

In the meantime, Angelica was totally unaware of her great good fortune, and was fully occupied with the severe discomfort that she was experiencing in her cunny. However, she was shaken from her preoccupation with her pudendal unease when she heard Dr Seward's next words.

Dr Seward was justifiably proud of his invention and naturally wished to share his discovery with anyone who might possibly have an interest in the subject. He turned to his audience and said, "Perhaps you two ladies would be interested in observing the operation of my device from a closer perspective."

Since the operation of the device was obviously both painful and shaming, Mrs Browning and Cynthia were delighted to have the opportunity to prolong and increase Angelica's suffering by adding their particular comments and observations of the girl's genitals and therefore hurried forward with almost unseemingly haste.

Angelica had managed to largely ignore the presence of the two ladies, and had been preoccupied by the effects of the doctor's invention on her person. But when their faces suddenly loomed large in the space between her outstretched thighs, her shame and embarrassment returned with full force. If not that she had given her word that she would not move under any provocation, she would have jumped off of the table and ran behind the changing screen. She would have preferred to have suffered any discomfort rather than to see the gloating face of her cousin as the girl stared at her obscenely displayed cunny, making mocking expressions of disgust.

Cynthia stared in fascination and gloating satisfaction at her cousin's disgrace and shame. Before anyone could prevent her, she extended a finger and prodded Angelica's clitoris most ungently and said, "Dr Seward, what is this thing? Surely it is a boil. Poor Angelica. Perhaps you should lance it with a needle?"

From her tone of voice, Dr Seward strongly suspected that Cynthia was deliberately teasing her cousin, however he obviously decided that the best way to deal with her suggestion was to respond to her statement and question with all seriousness. He said, "Fortunately, that is not a boil or disorder of any kind. That is Angelica's clitoris, which is a natural and very sensitive part of every female body. I shall therefore not be needing to lance or excise it." In the face of Cynthia's obvious disappointment, he added, "However, I shall be performing some tests on that very organ in a short while which you may find interesting."

"Will the tests hurt her clitoris?" Cynthia asked with undisguised hope.

Dr Seward nodded seriously. "I shall be testing the sensitivity of her clitoris, as well as the rest of her genitalia, to various stimuli, and unfortunately it is quite possible that there will be some degree of discomfort."

After mentally deciphering that sentence, Cynthia fairly danced with glee, and one might have imagined that even Mrs Browning's stern visage melted ever so slightly at this news, although she limited herself to an admiring nod and the words, "A most ingenious design indeed."

Of course, none of this was good news to Angelica, who was forced to listen to this conversation while having to maintain her uncomfortable and indelicate position. She consoled herself with fantasies of being in a situation where the roles were reversed, and where she was the one who had the power to do unpleasant things to her cousin's cunny. Angelica had never been a vindictive soul, but recent events had acted to radically change her opinion regarding the satisfaction to be gained from vengeance.

Unfortunately for Angelica's peace of mind, Cynthia had not finished with her verbal torments. She pointed to a lower portion of Angelica's cunny and said, "Dr Seward, what is all that moisture that is gathered there? It appears to be of a disgustingly slimy nature. Has she peed herself?"

Angelica was somewhat alarmed at this development. She was not aware of having urinated,



and could not for the life of her understand why there should be sufficient moisture in that part of her body so as to attract her cousin's attention in that manner.

However, Dr Seward's next words served to explain the matter, but only at the cost of further adding to Angelica's humiliation. "No Miss Browning, the moisture that you see is not urine. It is a natural fluid that is exuded by the female vagina when the woman in question is sexually stimulated. It is of a viscous nature for the reason that it operates as a lubricant during the process of intercourse."

Cynthia's face assumed an expression of shock and she exclaimed, "Mother! Angelica is having lustful thoughts. She must be enjoying this disgusting display of her private parts."

Mrs Browning shook her head sorrowfully and said, "I see now that I was well advised to bring this wanton girl to you Dr Seward. Lord knows what terrible sins of lust she might have committed had we not caught her symptoms in time."

Dr Seward was well aware of the unfairness of these statements, but saw no purpose to correcting his clients, as the end result of his tests had in fact been pre-determined by his agreement with Mrs Browning. As a matter of fact, he too was somewhat intrigued by Angelica's reaction, as he had noticed that which the two women had not, namely that Angelica's lubrication had become sufficiently copious as to be easily visible only after the application of his harnesses. This discovery opened up fresh vistas in regard to his treatment of her, and the manner in which she might be expected to react to his attentions. He decided that the two women had received sufficient opportunity to examine and admire his invention, and that he should proceed with the main body of his examination. After the ladies had retired to their chairs, he opened another drawer located below the examination table and extracted several large goose feathers of a kind suitable for use as writing quills. In fact, the quills had been trimmed to a point in a similar manner to a writing instrument, but without the final split at the end, rather being finished to a fairly sharp point.

Angelica studied the feather that Dr Seward held up for to see with some trepidation, especially when he explained that he intended to employ the feather as a means to test her physical reactions by applying it in various ways to her mechanically spread and helpless cunny.

Dr Seward declared, "I shall now commence with a gentle stimulation of your senses through the use of the tip of this feather. Your reactions to this will provide me with a scientific basis on which to judge your more extreme reactions when I increase the intensity of the stimulation." With these words, he lowered the feather towards her vulva and commenced to tickle and brush every part of her exposed genitalia, paying special attention to her clitoris and the area surrounding it.

At first, Angelica found the attentions of the feather to be in the nature of a mild irritation and tickling, and she merely resigned herself to bear it as best she could. However, Dr Seward had practised long and hard with this tool and it was not long before she discovered that the sensation had changed in her estimation from tickling to an inexplicable warmth and intense tingling that seemed to dance along her nerves with an almost malicious glee, and she was possessed of the urge to wriggle her hips in a most unseemly manner. She also had the horrible suspicion that her treacherous cunny was producing more of that tell-tale moisture that had so amused cousin Cynthia. The movements of the feather became more focused, concentrating on specific parts, rather than painting in broad strokes, and she felt her skin grow warm, almost feverish. The urge to move her hips grew to alarming proportions and her throat insisted on adding a strange, purring sound to her exhalations. Her nipples tingled and she felt a shocking desire to have Dr Seward repeat his earlier treatment of them, even the painful pinching. In fact, the very thought of the sharp, painful sting of his fingers on her nipples made the roiling confusion in her belly suddenly condense and concentrate in her loins. A new, totally irresistible sensation in her cunny made her cry out softly in alarm, fearing that she was about to lose control of her bladder.

Dr Seward hushed her and said, "Do not be alarmed. You are about to experience an orgasm or climax. It is likely that you will be unable to remain absolutely still when it happens. This is natural and I shall not consider it a breach of your promise to remain still. Now just relax and do not try to fight against it."

Thus reassured, Angelica's fears receded, but she nonetheless attempted to keep her reactions to a minimum, primarily in order not to give her aunt and cousin an additional reason to laugh at her. Unfortunately, a sudden swirl of the soft tip of the feather around her clitoris shredded her determination like paper exposed to a rainstorm and her entire body alternately stiffened and quaked with devastating intensity, and she found herself uttering the most embarrassing noises and crying out words that seemed to have little actual meaning, but with the intensity of a drowning person calling for succour. As the convulsions faded, she experienced a mixture of great languor and tranquillity. Such was the power of these feelings that she found that was able to totally ignore Cynthia's taunts and mocking laughter as well as the discomfort of Dr Seward's cunny harness. It took several moments for her to realise that he was speaking to her.

Dr Seward smiled and patted the perspiration damp inside of Angelica's thigh. He said, "That was very well done. All of your basic sexual reactions seem to be operating normally. Now you must be brave as we move to the next phase of the testing of your genitalia. I have tested your reactions to sensual pleasure, but we must also test the opposite, which is the ability of your sexual organs to feel pain. Your recent orgasm has rendered your labia minora and clitoris extremely sensitive to sensation, which is the perfect time for the tests of pain. Have no fear, I shall not cause your vulva any permanent injury. I shall be employing the other end of this fresh feather, which has been specially shaped for this purpose." He chortled in a kindly manner and held up the original feather, which was sadly limp and bedraggled, soaked as it was with Angelica's secretions. "I fear that you have rendered this one hors de combat." Having had his little jest, Dr Seward stroked her thigh once more and said, "Now brace yourself and concentrate on what you have just experienced."

Angelica gathered herself and tried to follow Dr Seward's advice, holding on to the intense and unexpected pleasure like a potpourri clings to the fragrances of summer. She felt the hard point touch her private place, and it was a jarring experience, knowing that someone was deliberately seeking to bring discomfort to that carefully guarded place. However, the harness and clips that still bit spitefully at her cunny had already led her imagination across that shaky bridge, and she discovered that she was now able to face what was to come with more equanimity than when she had first stepped into this room. The thought struck her that Dr Seward's methodical examination might possess the secondary purpose of gradually preparing his subjects for each following infliction, in a manner similar to the way a bather first dipped her toe, a foot and gradually her entire body into steaming hot water that would otherwise have elicited shrieks of pain if she had suddenly lowered her entire body into the bath.

Dr Seward turned to Mrs Browning and her daughter and said, "I am now commencing to inflict carefully controlled amounts of pain on Angelica's genitalia. Please do not be alarmed by any utterances of distress that she may make. You may be assured that I what I do will not cause her any injury." He noted that neither of the ladies displayed the slightest degree of concern at this pronouncement, and in fact, Cynthia seemed totally unable to comprehend why she should be disturbed by Angelica's cries of pain.

Angelica held her breath as Dr Seward commenced to scrape the sharp tip of the quill over the tautly stretched surfaces of her cunny. Just like pins and needles, the sensation was extremely sharp, but it was hard for her to decide whether she was feeling actual pain or merely a very intense tickle. At this point, the clips of the spreader harness were clearly the greater source of discomfort. Then she felt his fingers firmly grip one the inner lips of her cunny and stretch it out. This hurt, but not as much as when he jabbed the sharp point of the quill into the stretched out lip. The sudden piercing pain made her start, and then she gasped when he repeatedly poked her with the bodkin-like point of the quill.

Dr Seward observed with intense interest, her reaction as he stabbed her labia minora repeatedly with the quill. He was gratified when she demonstrated a commendable degree of fortitude, making only a barely perceptible complaint, even when he repeated the procedure on her other labia minora. He knew from experience and from the subtle movements of her limbs and musculature, that she was actually experiencing a not inconsiderable degree of discomfort.

Angelica knew enough about Dr Seward's methods by now, not to experience relief when he ceased to poke at her nether lips. Instead, she waited for the increment in pain that was bound to come. A moment later, her pessimism was justified when she experienced a painful jab right inside her cunny hole. For a second, she feared that he had torn her maidenhead, but she harboured sufficient confidence in Dr Seward's character to believe that he would not do such a dastardly thing without at least informing her prior to the act. The pain was repeated several more times, and despite the mental distress caused by this very intimate pain, she was able to determine that he was stabbing at her cunny in a circular pattern that most likely was following the rim of her vaginal orifice, which Angelica thought of merely as her "hole". This was not the form of penetration that she had imagined or associated with that part of her body, and she was still able to feel a mild amusement. She was a good and innocent woman, but every woman of near marriageable age, no matter how pure, has considered at least once in her life, the dimensions of the member that some day would presumably be inserted into her cunny, and the quill quite definitely did not come anywhere near that imagined size. She wondered whether she ought to feel relieved or disappointed. Following that thought, came the realisation that the pain was not as awful as she would have imagined either. The stab of the quill into that very intimate spot was without a doubt, painful. However, to her at least, it was similar to the sort of pain that one got from rubbing a sprained muscle, lacking the distress that accompanied a cut finger or scratched knee.

Dr Seward grew increasingly intrigued by his observations as he pricked the opening of Angelica's vagina. That area was an acutely sensitive part of her anatomy, in both physical and emotional terms and the vast majority of his test subjects had demonstrated extreme distress when presented with this particular infliction, and surely none had received it with the fortitude that she was demonstrating. Neither had her natural lubrication dried up in the face of the distress that he was causing her. He had come across a few other women who had actually enjoyed pain, but all of them had complicated sexual histories, and none had been virgins with impeccable backgrounds like Angelica. He took aim at his next target, which was to be her clitoris itself. This would be the most serious test of her visceral response to pain of a sexual nature.

As had been mentioned before, Angelica was a very perceptive girl, and she had held no doubts whatsoever as to the nature of the climax of this stage of the examination, and when Dr Seward ceased to attack the rim of her cunny hole, she felt a distinct tingling in her clitoris. This was odd, as she had never before been so aware of the sensations generated by that little spot in her anatomy. However her entire world had been turned upside down today, so she supposed that it should be no surprise that her own body would also hold some revelations for her. The greatest surprise however, was that fact that she found herself viewing the forthcoming attack on her clitoris as a challenge to be faced and overcome, rather than a terrible affliction to be suffered and endured. A slight lift of her head allowed her to see the actual approach of the sharpened quill towards her unsheathed clitoris. The example of her many birchings at the hands of her aunt and her cousin had taught her that a frightened tensing of the muscles actually made the pain worse, so she inhaled deeply, and then made her body and limbs relax as she exhaled. However, despite this exercise of mental discipline, her toes insisted on curling up tightly of their own accord. This minor rebellion did not seem too significant, so Angelica allowed them their little eccentricity and calmly awaited the first touch of the quill on her clitoris.

Rather than immediately stabbing Angelica's clitoris with the quill, Dr Seward slowly brought the tip into contact with her skin and then applied an even pressure, indenting her flesh until he observed the first signs of discomfort from his subject. This approach largely eliminated the element of shock and surprise, thus allowing Angelica's reactions to the actual pain to show through more clearly.

The prick of the quill on her clitoris was a far more intense sensation than anything that she had felt thus far in the day. It rapidly built up from a feeling of pressure to a sharp, extremely focused pain that radiated through her entire lower body from that one small spot. However, just like everything else that had been done to her cunny, the pain incorporated an element of sensuality. She had never believed

this to be possible, but it was undeniable that when pain was applied to her nipples and cunny in a certain way, the difference between that pain and sensual pleasure became more than slightly blurred. This was not to say that the prick of the quill did not hurt, for it pained her intensely, but there was also a tiny portion of her mind that expressed a strange reluctance to have the pain end. She sighed with relief when the painful pressure stopped, but discovered that her relief was premature when the point of the quill returned, but this time in quick, fierce stabs as Dr Seward covered her clitoris with rapid pricks. The pain changed into brief, sharp stings, like the pain from the spark that sometimes flashed from the finger to a brass door knob, but only more intense. It was also harder to bear, as each flash of pain came and went before she could consciously brace herself against it. There was an additional and more embarrassing effect, which was that the rapid pricking of her clitoris created in her a strong desire to pee. The pricking of her clitoris continued unabated and her body fell into a rhythm of tiny starts and jerks, dancing to the tune of the punishing needle point of the quill, which gradually turned into a steady, sensuous writhing.

Dr Seward continued the pricking of Angelica's clitoris long after the point when he had originally intended to stop, as he watched in fascination the gradual transition of her pained reaction into something that resembled enjoyment. His hand went up and down like a carriage going over a cobbled road, stinging at her clitoris like a wasp gone mad. His sharp eye caught the signs in her body, and he whispered to Angelica, "I can see that you may be near to a climax, and I have every intention of discovering whether that can indeed happen. However I suggest that you disguise your orgasm when it comes, with cries of pain. If your aunt suspects that you are enjoying this to the slightest degree, she will insist that I increase the severity of my inflictions to the point where I fear that you may be permanently injured. Do you understand me?"

Angelica realised that Dr Seward had accurately assessed her aunt's nature, and his advice seemed to be sound, so she nodded her head and smiled gratefully. Indeed, to their mutual amazement, her climax was not long in coming. The now familiar feeling of rising tension and internal striving tightened its grip on her body and she whispered, "I do believe that I am going to ...." Dr Seward obligingly gave her clitoris and extra hard jab as a reminder, and she had little trouble in turning her moans of pleasure into convincing cries of pain, and the sensual writhings into what appeared to be futile efforts to escape the pain.

So convincing was Angelica's display of pain that Cynthia felt quite faint with excitement, and Mrs Browning was obliged to fan her swooning daughter.

Seeing the duo thus preoccupied, Dr Seward employed the soft tip of the feather to stimulate Angelica's clitoris, thereby extending and heightening her unusual orgasm.

Angelica's face had turned a bright red from the knowledge that Dr Seward had deliberately encouraged her climax and had been a close witness to her every gasp and twitch.

Dr Seward said, "That ends the examination. Brace yourself again, as I am going to remove the clips. I have been told that the pain of them coming off is even worse than when they go on." He put aside the feather and reached for the clips.

The first clip came off, and Angelica found that Dr Seward had been correct once more. The sensation was most unpleasant, and the compressed flesh that had been held for so long by the jaws of the clip ached and burned fiercely as soon as it was liberated. Within moments there were six similar spots, all positively glowing with pain. Angelica fancied that one could toast bread over the heat that her cunny was producing. With great relief, she lowered her legs and assumed a more modest and comfortable pose, even though she still remained totally naked.

Dr Seward went to his desk and scribbled several notes in pencil for later transcription to ink, and then returned to address Mrs Browning. "That completes my initial medical examination of Angelica's physical condition. From what I have discovered, she seems to be in perfect physical health and therefore quite fit to undergo my testing procedures which, as you know, shall determine whether she suffers from a serious form of sexual hysteria as I suspect. The tests are quite rigorous and

physically demanding, so I think it best that we adjourn for the day and re-commence the procedures on the morrow."

The sanatorium possessed a fine private dining room where Dr Seward entertained his clients, patrons and friends. He led the party to that room where they were each served a glass of beer as refreshment prior to the promised tour of the premises. Dr Seward inquired of Angelica whether the examination had left her disinclined to walk, but his concerns were summarily dismissed by Mrs Browning, who was eager for her niece to see first hand the future that lay in store for her.

Angelica had expected no less and gave Dr Seward a smile and a nod to convey her thanks for his consideration before saying, "You need not be concerned, for I am quite fine Dr Seward. I too am eager to tour your fine hospital." In truth, her cunny was extremely sore and the idea of walking down endless corridors was just about the last thing that she would have chosen to do. However, at the moment she had little left to her except her pride, and she was bound and determined not to demonstrate any sign of weakness in front of her aunt and cousin.

## Chapter Four

Mrs Goodwin met the party at the entrance that connected the private clinic area to the main part of the sanatorium. She greeted everyone pleasantly and said to Dr Seward, "I have made all the arrangements for the tour as you instructed doctor. I suggest we now make our way to Dormitory Four, where they are ready for the daily inspection."

Dr Seward indicated his approval of this suggestion and said, "Since the ladies who are in our care have a variety of mental ailments which often lead to them suffering injuries, which arise either through their neglect of their own safety, or are deliberately inflicted, on themselves or to others, we are obliged to preform a thorough inspection of their persons every day. We try to vary the inspection times so as to prevent them from anticipating our arrival. I must warn you that what you see from this point onwards may offend your delicate sensibilities, and may sometimes seem harsh or uncaring. However, you may rest assured that everything that happens here has a definite medical reason."

Mrs Goodwin had led them to an imposing, metal covered door. Large white letters informed them that this was the entrance to Dormitory Four.

Angelica noted that beside the door there was a wooden frame which held a list of names, presumably of the occupants.

Dr Seward paused at the door and said, "You need have no fear, none of the ladies within are in any way violent or aggressive."

With that, Mrs Goodwin unlocked the door, using a key from the large bunch that hung from her belt. She pushed the door open and shouted in an authoritative voice, "Right ladies. Prepare for inspection. We have guests today, so all of you be on your best behaviour."

Angelica heard the sound of movement and startled female voices, although her view of the dormitory was blocked by Dr Seward's broad back and the prim figure of Mrs Goodwin in front of him. When those two worthies had moved forwards into the room, she saw that the long space was filled with six neatly arranged beds. The room itself was not the grim place of confinement that she had expected and feared, but was light and pleasant, resembling more the dormitory of a good boarding school than the traditional dungeons of Bedlam. Beside the end of each bed stood a young woman wearing a simple calico dress, that by their similarity to each other suggested a uniform, although the printed patterns employed several different colours.

Mrs Goodwin noticed the direction of Angelica's gaze and accurately guessed her thoughts. "We provide every patient with clothing while they are with us. The consistency of fabric and design prevent jealousy or disagreements over style, while a limited choice of colours in the printed pattern allows us to cater to individual taste. The dresses are also specially tailored to facilitate ease of dressing and undressing, as I believe Dr Seward is about to demonstrate."

At these words, Angelica returned her attention to Dr Seward, who had stepped forward and was visually examining the beds and attire of each patient. She watched the faces of the women, and beneath the impassive exteriors, she fancied that she saw apprehension, if not outright fear as they stood in front of him. Yet they did not cower or shake, nor did they seek to avoid his gaze, but they all seemed to be waiting for something.

Dr Seward gave a nod of satisfaction at the overall state of the room and of the women's appearance and deportment. He said, "Very well ladies, let's not keep you standing there. Shall we proceed with the inspection? We'll start with you, I think." He pointed at the nearest to him and on his right.

To the visitors' amazement, the selected girl reached behind her and tugged at several ties, and in an instant, her entire dress slipped off of her body. She was not wearing a petticoat, chemise, or the newly fashionable trouser-like knickers. In short, she was rendered completely naked by the removal of her dress. Seemingly unperturbed by all the watching eyes, she neatly folded her dress and placed it on her bed before stepping into the open space between the two rows of beds and stood facing Dr Seward with her hands by her sides and her feet together. She gave a curtsey, spoke her name, and said, "I am ready for your inspection doctor."

Angelica noted at once that the girl was truly naked, as her pubic hair and the hair under her arms had been completely removed, leaving her body as smooth as a Greek statue. She appeared to be healthy and in generally good condition, although sensitised as she was to the subject, she thought that she detected a suspicious reddening around the girl's cunny. Since it seemed that her aunt was determined to have her admitted to this sanatorium, she studied every last detail with intense interest. Living in her aunt's household, she had long ago learned that forewarned was forearmed. She was not as outspoken and lively as her cousin, but she was well read, and possessed of intense determination, patience, and a ferocious will to survive, that would have alarmed her aunt had that woman been aware of it. Most other girls would have been bewailing their fate and hiding behind the belief that such a horrible fate could not possibly befall them. In contrast, Angelica had accepted the fact that she would most likely soon be one of the girls lined up in front of Dr Seward. From her reading, she understood that every place, be it the Royal Palace or the alleys of Seven Dials, had their own unspoken rules and tricks to survival, and Angelica was determined to learn the rules that applied here. She wasted no time on embarrassment or disgust, but instead keenly watched the girl's attitude and every movement since she had undressed, in order to see what pleased or displeased Dr Seward and Mrs Goodwin.

Angelica knew that both her aunt and her cousin had mentally dismissed Mrs Goodwin as being part of the help, and ranking therefore slightly above the furniture. However, she had quickly realised that Dr Seward was little involved with the day to day running of this large establishment. It was Mrs Goodwin who attended to the care and keeping of the inmates. Angelica suspected that she was also responsible for the maintenance of discipline and was granted the power to issue rewards and punishments without needing the prior approval of her employer, much as the butler had absolute power over the other servants in a large household, save for the master's valet. Her goodwill was therefore something much to be treasured.

Dr Seward said, "Position one."

The girl stepped to the side with her left foot, thereby spreading her legs apart, and then thrust her arms out to the sides, holding them level with her shoulders. She held herself stiffly and with her eyes looking straight ahead.

Dr Seward examined her front with the practised eye of a physician, searching for bruises, cuts or boils on her skin. He bent to similarly examine her armpits, and then grasped her nipples, squeezed them and then used them to lift and extend her breasts so that he could see into the fold where her breasts met her body.

The girl endured this outrageous treatment in silence, and obediently bent over with her hands on her knees when he said the single word, "head".

Dr Seward ran his fingers through her hair and over her scalp, presumably searching for lice and sores. Satisfied, he then had her straiten up and turn around, whereupon he examined her back with similar care. That done, he said, "Position two."

The unnamed girl moved her feet further apart and bent forward, but this time she reached behind herself, took a firm grip upon her buttocks, and forcefully pulled them apart, exposing her bum hole in a most indecent manner.

Naturally Cynthia found this amusing and giggled loudly, earning herself a stern and disapproving look from Mrs Goodwin.

While Dr Seward was studying his patient's bum, Angelica leaned towards Mrs Goodwin and asked, "Are all the patients so composed when undergoing this process?"

Mrs Goodwin smiled approvingly and replied, "That is an intelligent question Angelica. In truth, many of the new patients find this completely necessary procedure upsetting, so we have a special and compulsory course of instruction which every new girl takes. They are taught the rules of the hospital and any special procedures such as the one you are observing. Those who prove uncooperative are given special attention. In the end, all of them learn to comply." She turned her head to look directly at Angelica as she spoke those last, decidedly sinister words.

With as much sincerity as she could muster, Angelica said, "If I were a patient, I would do my very best to cooperate with the staff in all things. After all, it would all be for my own good, would it not?"

Mrs Goodwin was quick to understand Angelica's meaning. She smiled and said, "Indeed. Patients who accept their treatment find their time here much more pleasant." The girl being examined uttered a gasp and Mrs Goodwin excused herself in order to fetch a metal basin and towel.

Angelica glanced around Dr Seward's shoulder and saw that he had a finger buried deep inside the girl's bum hole. This was apparently a normal part of the inspection, as Mrs Goodwin as ready at his side with the basin when he pulled his finger out of the patient's bum with a plop.

Dr Seward rinsed and dried his hands as he said, "Position three." He watched as the girl quickly straightened up and went to the end of her bed.

She sat down and then lowered herself onto her back, and then lifted her legs up, with her knees held together. Her feet were extended and held at the doctor's eye level, with her toes spread apart. She held them patiently in that position as Dr Seward examined her feet and between her toes.

Angelica was impressed by the thoroughness of his procedures, although she suspected that it had an ulterior purpose, that of instilling discipline and obedience, similar to that which rifle drill and marching served in the army. She watched as the girl parted her legs at a word from Dr Seward, obligingly exposing her cunny to him.

Dr Seward leaned forward as the patient spread her labia majora apart and studied the condition of her genitalia critically. Using the tip of one finger, he pushed her labia minora from side to side. He said "vagina," and observed as the girl changed her grip by reaching under her thighs to pull at her labia majora from that angle, which served to open up her vagina almost as well as a speculum. Finally, he straightened up and turned to his assistant. "Mrs Goodwin, this lady's vulva shows small traces of urine and the discharge from her last orgasm."

"Class One cleaning sir?" she asked briskly.

The girl made a soft cry of alarm.

Dr Seward, shook his head and replied, "No, the infraction is a minor one, so a Class Two will do this time. However, please make a note of it, and we shall not be so lenient the next time." He prodded the girl's clitoris with an admonishing finger. "It is my firm belief that a lack of hygiene contributes to the spread of disease. Admittedly this is not widely accepted by the medical profession, but so long as you are under my care you will comply with my rules. Is that understood?"

The girl nodded, and appeared greatly relieved. She thanked the doctor profusely and promised to wash more carefully in the future.

Angelica asked Mrs Goodwin, "What is the Class One cleaning that seemed to alarm the girl so much?"

Mrs Goodwin smiled thinly and replied, "If a patient is too lazy or stubborn to wash herself properly, then we are obliged to help her. Through the goodness of his heart, Dr Seward provides Mr Andrew Pear's glycerine soap for use by every patient. This is an incredible luxury and any patient who is so ungrateful as to refuse to make proper use of it, deserves a Class One washing. For a Class One, we still use the same fine soap, but the nurses employ a good stiff scrubbing brush as an aid to achieving proper cleanliness. For some reason, most patients are very eager to avoid a repetition of a Class One washing once they have experienced their first one."

Angelica shuddered as she imagined the effect of a vigorously employed scrubbing brush on her cunny, and vowed that she would maintain her cunny in a state of pristine cleanliness.

Mrs Goodwin smiled at Angelica's reaction. She said, "I would never employ a procedure on a patient that I myself have not tried, and I can assure you that a Class One washing of your private parts is something to be avoided at all costs."

Angelica's eyes widened in amazement. She said, "Do you mean to say that you actually used a scrubbing brush on your ...." She could not bring herself to say cunny, let alone vulva or vagina.

The housekeeper smiled. "That's right. I had one of the nurses wash my vulva with soap and a scrubbing brush. I don't mind admitting that I cried like a baby."

Dr Seward withdrew his finger from the depths of the girl's vagina and announced that he had completed his inspection of the patient and washed his hands in the basin once more.

Mrs Goodwin waved her hand, and a nurse who had been waiting at the doorway came in to lead the girl away for her wash.

Dr Seward said, "Since I have guests, I shall continue this inspection at a later time. Kindly remind me of this tomorrow Mrs Goodwin." He turned and led the way to the door of the dormitory. "Let us proceed to the treatment rooms," he said.

Mrs Browning imagined Angelica as the regular subject of such inspections as they had just witnessed and smiled. She said, "I am most impressed with the care that you take to safeguard the health of your patients. I hope that Angelica will receive the same degree of care if she is admitted."

Everyone in the group, including Angelica, was well aware that she wanted to ensure that her niece was not spared from the humiliating and possibly painful inspections. Dr Seward said, "Of course, my dear lady. I would not dream of neglecting Angelica's health and well being."

Angelica noted Dr Seward's careful choice of words, and she took heart in the hope that he meant exactly what he said, rather than what her aunt chose to believe that he was suggesting. She cautioned herself not to view him as a knight in shining armour, but rather as a third party with his own agenda and desires, which might possibly favour her interests more than those of her aunt. At the very least, he had no particular reason to want her dead shortly after her twenty-first birthday. Her rumination had fully occupied her attentions and she was surprised when the party came to a halt outside another door. On the door was a pair of brass rails upon which various signs could be easily mounted and removed. The present sign read, "Familiarity of Touch". The sound of continuous slaps on skin could be faintly heard through the door.

Dr Seward gazed at the sign and said, "Ah yes, an interesting case. The young lady in question is the newly wed wife of a wealthy merchant in London. In all ways, she is a good and dutiful wife, save one. It appears that from a very young age, her mother continually admonished her against allowing any man to touch her person. By the time that she had reached a marriageable age, this admonition had become something of a mania in her. She is unable to bear the touch of any man, including her lawful husband without experiencing extreme shame and agitation. Despite being a loving and patient man, her husband was justifiably upset when she continued to throw him out of their bed even a month after their wedding. She too was unhappy that she was incapable of performing her wifely duties. Finally in desperation they approached me for help, and I devised a course of treatment for her. This particular



treatment is designed to help her mind accept the touch of another person on her bare skin. Please do not address her directly, or attempt to approach her too closely. All right, let's go in." He led the way into the room.

Both Angelica and Cynthia had to stifle their gasps at the sight that greeted them. A pretty young woman of petite build and an innocent, almost childlike face, stood enmeshed in a strange mechanism. She stood within a large wooden frame, with a leather belt fastened around her waist that was secured by a small lock. A slim chain ran from either side of the belt to the frame, preventing her from moving completely away, but otherwise leaving her free to move her body as she pleased. Her feet were placed on rectangular platforms that were stationed a shoulder's width apart, and her hands were stretched out to her sides and level with her shoulders, and each of her hands gripped a wooden handle. Neither hands nor feet were fastened in any way. But the feature that had caused such amazement in the minds of the visitors were the complex set of metal disks, six in all, that were mounted on a series of metal arms that held them in place with their edges towards the woman's body. There was one disk in front of each of her breasts, one mounted vertically in front of her cunny, one horizontal between her thighs, one facing her buttocks and one last disk level with her upper back. At the edge of each disk was fastened a light strip of leather, and every disk was connected to an ingenious system of chains and pulleys to a pair of large counterweights. When the weight that was uppermost was released, it caused each of the disks to rotate. This caused the leather straps to whirl around the disk like miniature whips.

Angelica noted several interesting features of the device. The whirling whips were too light to be truly painful, striking the woman's body with barely enough force to produce a slapping sound. Angelica imagined that their effects were more startling than painful. In addition, the mechanised whips were set so as to strike the specific parts of her body at different times, so that she was subjected to a constantly varying set of smacks, on one breast, then on her back, then on her cunny, on her other breast, and so on. She also realised that the handles that the woman held and the platforms for her feet were also attached to mechanical linkages that all led to a single disk of ominously larger size, to which was attached not a leather strap, but a knotted piece of rope. This disk was stationed on a swivelling frame that also held the disc that slapped at the woman's cunny. Angelica realised that in the event that the woman released one of the handles or lifted a foot, her action would cause the disks in front of her cunny to switch places. This would result in her cunny being struck by the heavy, knotted cord rather than the soft leather. The swivelling frame itself prevented the woman from closing her legs together in order to shield her cunny. In other words, if the woman attempted to shield herself by covering her breasts with her hands or by shifting her position by moving her feet or leaning to one side, she would be whipped in earnest on the cunny with the evil looking knotted rope.

Dr Seward remained silent for several minutes, allowing his guests to listen to the continuous "slap, slap, slap," of the leather straps on the woman's body, and to study the strained, but determined expression on her face. Finally he spoke. "As you might have gathered, the patient is not suffering any severe pain. The leather straps are made of fine, soft, kidskin, and strike her no harder than a loving mother might smack a young child. Pain, of course is not the objective here, but rather to accustom the patient to firm but random touching of her private parts. Other than the belt around her waist, she is not restrained in any way. However, if she attempts to protect herself, the device delivers a very painful whipping to her vulva, which ceases only when she resumes the proper position. She is therefore compelled to either allow the smacking of her body or accept something that is truly unpleasant. As you may imagine, her first few sessions resulted in a very sore vulva, but over a relatively short period of time, she has learned to accept the mechanical touching of her body with relative equanimity."

Despite the undoubtedly therapeutic purpose of the apparatus, Angelica found the sight of the tense and perspiring woman subjecting herself to an unending spanking of her breasts, cunny and buttocks to be oddly stirring. Her cheeks reddened at the thought that should Dr Seward examine her cunny at this moment, he would find more of that tell tale moisture leaking from her body.

Dr Seward stepped forward to speak quietly with his patient, who nodded and even managed a tiny smile in response.

Mrs Goodwin examined the watch that was fastened to her unfashionable, but necessary belt by a gold chain, and cleared her throat.

Dr Seward smiled and said, "Mrs Goodwin is tactfully informing me that we have run short of time and that supper is due to be served very shortly, so I suggest that we end the tour at this point and retire to the dining room."

This suggestion was greeted with enthusiasm by everyone. Even Angelica discovered that she was hungry, despite the somewhat dire situation that she found herself in. She reasoned that she would need all her strength to face the challenges to come, and that she should eat heartily while she still had the opportunity.

## Chapter Five

Angelica arose from her bed with a feeling of dread. The previous day had been both shaming and painful, yet Dr Seward had been careful to distinguish the examination from the tests that were to be administered today. The fact that he had felt the need to ensure that she was sufficiently healthy to endure the tests suggested that they would be much more of an ordeal. By now, she had no illusions that she would be allowed to return home to Farleigh House. On the other hand, given the murderous intentions of her aunt, being committed to the sanatorium might not be the worst that could happen to her. The real challenge that she faced was that she did not know what the doctor's tests were supposed to discover. She had found a moment to ask Dr Seward about them the previous evening after supper, but he had told her that he was compelled to keep her in ignorance, so that she could not consciously manipulate the results of the tests. He had patted her hand and asked her to trust him. She took comfort in the knowledge that it had been Dr Seward's suggestion that she be considered for committal to the sanatorium in the first place, and that as far as she knew, she would be more useful to him alive than dead.

Dr Seward had instructed her to use the lavatory and to try to empty her bladder as much as she could. She obeyed to the best of her ability and then washed herself carefully with a towel and a basin of water borrowed from the kitchen, suspecting that her naked body would be the subject of much attention during the day, and taking into account Dr Seward's attitude towards cleanliness. She quickly dressed and then went down to breakfast. Once again she forced herself to eat an ample meal, as this might be the last day in which she would have a choice of what and how much she ate. She could see that Cynthia was simply bursting to tease her about the events of the previous day, but the presence of Dr Seward forced a degree of decorum upon her.

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Once they were ensconced in the same examination room, with Mrs Browning and Cynthia comfortably seated in the self same chairs as they had occupied on the previous day, and Angelica seated in the patient's chair beside the doctor's table, Dr Seward addressed the three of them. "As you know, many operations of the human body function independently of our will. The blinking of the eye, the beating of the heart and so on. Some such reactions of the body are linked with a person's state of mind. The most common and obvious example of this is when we cry. We experience a strong emotion, and the body produces a visible reaction. It is my observation that the reverse is also true. As you witnessed yesterday, intense stimulation can be used to change mental processes that are beyond our deliberate control. In the case of female sexual hysteria, which can result in aggression, disobedience, wilfulness and so on, it is my belief that the application of prolonged and intense stimulation to the very locations on the woman's body that are the centres of sexual sensation, namely the breasts,

nipples, and pudenda is capable of suppressing and even curing sexual hysteria."

Mrs Browning smiled cruelly and said, "When you mention intense stimulation, do you refer to pain?"

Dr Seward tapped his chin thoughtfully and replied, "My method is a combination of sexual stimulation and pain. The patient is brought to a high level of sexual excitation, and then exposed to intense but controlled pain. This technique allows me to adjust, or train the patient's mind to function in an appropriate manner." He paused to see if his answer had satisfied Mrs Browning, and then continued. "However, before I may attempt a cure, I must first be satisfied that my diagnosis of sexual hysteria is correct. To do this, I need to apply precise amounts of stimulation to the patient's body and then observe her physical and mental reactions. I have observed through my research that sufferers of sexual hysteria display specific reactions to my test, which I have learned to detect. I therefore propose to apply these tests to Angelica and observe the manner in which she reacts to them. If I am satisfied that the symptoms of sexual hysteria manifest themselves, then I shall issue a medical certificate as to her condition and admit her to the sanatorium."

Mrs Browning was positively aglow with excitement herself at the prospect of having her niece declared insane, and nodded most enthusiastically.

Dr Seward's face formed a hesitant frown. "There is one matter that must be settled before we may proceed. I have had the misfortune of having clients who have brought their loved ones to me for testing and treatment, but become overwhelmed at what they perceive to be the cruelty of my methods. I have actually been accused of assaulting certain patients and only cleared my name after most extended and expensive legal proceedings. In order to avoid such problems I have made it a strict policy that I shall accept patients into my care after their spouses, parents, guardians or closest next of kin sign over to me complete authority over the person of the patient. To be clear, I do not desire any rights or claim over their monies or other worldly goods, but only that the parent, spouse, et cetera, acknowledge that they give the patient entirely and irrevocably over to my care, in my capacity as a doctor. Further to this, I have had prepared in advance a legal document which is to be signed by both parties and witnessed by a third. Mrs Goodwin is willing to serve as the witness, or if you prefer, you may bring in a witness of your own. Naturally, I shall not proceed with the tests until this matter is properly settled." He went to his desk and picked up a lengthy document, which he presented to Mrs Browning.

Unlike many legal documents which are fit to bring a frown of perplexity to the most learned of men, the agreement that Mrs Browning held was relatively clear, and contained several paragraphs that vouchsafed in no uncertain terms that at no time did any rights to cash, chattels or real property accrue to Dr Seward under the agreement.

Dr Seward added, "Should you feel uncertain in any way, I would be pleased to allow you to have the document reviewed by your choice of lawyer or other person in whom you place your trust, prior to your execution of it. However, I have many patients waiting for a place in the sanatorium. I have given Angelica this opportunity as a favour to my friend Sir Percy, but I cannot guarantee that there will be a place for her here if you choose to delay the resolution of this matter."

Mrs Browning recalled the women in the dormitory and the patient held in the strange whipping device and had no doubt at all that this was the place that would solve the problem of Angelica's future. The agreement was clear, and Sir Percy would most certainly not have recommended anyone who posed a threat to Angelica's financial well being. She rose and went over to the desk. "There is no need for further consultation, Dr Seward. Let us be done with this formality and get on with the matter of poor Angelica's health." She accepted the dipped quill from Dr Seward's hand and signed the document with a flourish.

Dr Seward signed as well, and then summoned Mrs Goodwin, who obligingly signed as witness.

Angelica observed the entire exchange with a feeling of unreality. Her entire life and future

were being decided by those few strokes of the pen, without allowing her the slightest say in the entire matter.

With the paperwork done, both Dr Seward and Mrs Browning were eager to get back to the matter at hand, which was of course the testing of Angelica. Dr Seward turned to her with a kindly expression and said, "I apologise for that necessary interruption. Now I must ask you to go behind the screen and once more remove all of your clothing. You will note that the dressing gown is absent, as I shall require you to be nude for every one of today's tests."

Angelica rose up from her chair and stepped behind to screen. As Dr Seward had said, there was no dressing gown waiting for her this time, and despite the knowledge that the gown provided neither modesty nor protection, she still felt the loss of it. She disrobed as quickly as she could, although she still experienced an aching sense of shame and sadness at the loss of her modesty and freedom. The feeling of having her innocence stolen from her hurt more than anything Dr Seward might do to her body. The carpet slippers were still there, so she placed them on her feet. She allowed herself another moment of self pity, then she straightened her shoulders and touched her eyes to ensure that no tears lingered there to betray her, and then proudly walked out from behind the screen. As she had expected, her cousin sniggered at her nakedness and was clearly gloating at the prospect of seeing her suffer under the rod and lash. But for some reason, the approving smile from Dr Seward seemed to overshadow her cousin's spitefulness. Since he was the one who was going to administer the beatings and other tortures of this day, her desire for his approval did not seem to make very much sense to her, but still she trusted her instincts. She returned the doctor's smile and said, "Well Dr Seward, what diversions do you have in store for us today?"

Dr Seward offered his arm as if she were fully dressed and then walked her across the large room to where the gathering of ominous looking devices awaited. When they were a sufficient distance from the two seated women, he spoke softly, "Angelica, I have come to believe that you are a brave and intelligent woman. By now, I am certain that you have no illusions either of what is going to happen to you today, nor of the final conclusions of my tests." He paused at this point and looked into her eyes as if to read her thoughts.

Angelica nodded and replied in an equally discreet tone, "My aunt wishes to see me suffer, and to be assured that you will treat me with appropriate harshness, when I am handed over to your care." She returned his gaze with equal candour and added, "But what is it that you wish of me Dr Seward?", placing a deliberate emphasis on the word "you".

Dr Seward smiled again. "You accurately grasp your situation. In truth, I am not certain what it is that I would have of you. Suffice it to say that I bear you no ill will. For now I would give you a word of advice. You are brave, but there is a time for bravery and a time for discretion. I ask that for now you should trust me, and be guided by me in the manner of your reactions. You are engaged in a battle, and sometimes it is best to show your enemy only what she expects to see."

Angelica immediately saw the wisdom of his advice. Although her pride demanded that she not give her aunt the satisfaction of her tears and screams, her best option at this moment was to exchange the dangers of Farleigh House for the unknown possibilities of Dr Seward's sanatorium. In order to accomplish this, she required her aunt to be convinced that the sanatorium represented a purgatory that Angelica had no wish to enter. She nodded. "Then let me be the singer and you the conductor. Together we shall make sweet music for my aunt's ears." They had arrived at the first of the devices, and there was no more time for conversation. She studied the wooden device with interest. It was not very difficult to fathom its application. There was a sturdy wooden base, upon which was attached two cupped and padded shapes near to the front and about two feet apart. Slightly behind these items and centred between them was a thick wooden shaft that protruded upwards and which leaned slightly backwards. The base of the shaft was mounted on a track that went from front to back. Clearly, she was meant to kneel on the padded cups with her thighs well separated, and her torso leaning backwards at an angle. Attached to the thick wooden shaft at a point that would be just below her shoulder blades,

was an arched support that would force her breasts outwards. A solid wooden rod protruded from either side of the back support, and an small adjustable padded support at the top of the leaning shaft provided support for the back of the patient's head. Two smoothly curved wooden blocks that were positioned directly behind the knee rests and again mounted on tracks, completed the device.

Dr Seward gave her a moment to digest the sight and said, "You shall not be bound or otherwise restrained. However, the apparatus is designed to hold you in such a position that you would not easily extricated yourself from it simply by mindless struggling." He reached for a bell pull on the wall and gave it a firm tug.

Moments later, Mrs Goodwin entered the room. Judging from the speed of her response, it was obvious that she had been waiting just outside the door all this time. She strode briskly over to where they waited. She greeted Dr Seward politely and nodded in a friendly manner at Angelica.

Dr Seward turned and explained her presence to his audience. "This first test, as with many of the others, involves both sensual stimulation, and the infliction of pain. Mrs Goodwin shall employ her fingers and the tip of a feather to stimulate Angelica's vulva, while I shall use a rattan cane to strike her breasts and nipples. I shall then observe her reactions to these contrary sensations."

Mrs Goodwin helped Angelica insert herself into the device, sliding the small wooden blocks under her ankles, thereby lifting her calves and making it difficult for her to change the position of her bent legs.

Angelica placed her arms over and around the protruding rods, which fell neatly into the fold of her elbows. In conjunction with the back support, they served to force her shoulders backwards and push her breasts up and forward. Once leaning back like that, she found herself firmly held by the device, despite the lack of straps or shackles. Her own weight and balance prevented her from moving quickly in any direction. When she was firmly placed, she watched Mrs Goodwin lower herself to the ground in front of her.

Lying on her back, Mrs Goodwin slid her head between Angelica's thighs such that she could comfortably reach up to touch her patient's genitals.

Angelica blushed at the thought of what Mrs Goodwin was seeing from her position. She had the horrible vision of her cunny dripping unmentionable liquids onto the woman's face. Mortified, said to the housekeeper, "I wish apologise in advance for any lack of decorum on my part. Please believe me when I say that I shall try my very best not to ...."

Mrs Goodwin laughed and said, "Drip? Leak? Do not concern yourself. I shall be doing my very best to enable you to produce those very fluids, so I can hardly protest if I am a victim of my own success. I would appreciate a warning however should you be unable to hold your water during the caning of your breasts. Now just lean back and try to enjoy this while you can."

Angelica assured Mrs Goodwin that she would do her very best to provide adequate notice of any urinary activities on her part. Then she took the housekeeper's advice and leaned back against the backrest, closed her eyes and tried not be feel embarrassed when she felt Mrs Goodwin's fingers on her cunny. The housekeeper proved to be most proficient in her duties and Angelica was surprised that she was able to derive such pleasure from the touch of a woman. She had expected to feel repugnance, perhaps even a queasiness of the stomach, but was relieved that nothing of the sort presented itself. The last thing she wanted to do was to insult Mrs Goodwin by appearing to be revolted by her touch. In fact, she enjoyed what the housekeeper was doing between her legs so much, that she was completely caught by surprise by the first stroke of the cane across her breasts. Such was her shock that she screamed in a most natural and genuine manner. When she had recovered sufficiently from the pain to be able to think clearly, she told herself that her aunt must certainly have been pleased by her reaction. When the shudders of pain faded, and she was able to convince herself that her breasts were still attached to her body, the very different sensations that emanated from her cunny re-asserted themselves once more. The swing from one extreme of sensation to the other, made her feel light headed.

The cane struck her breasts again, sending then rippling and bobbing, and Angelica actually

found the bar through her arms to be a comfort, as she was able to strain her arms hard against it while she struggled with the burning pain in her boobies. She didn't scream this time, although her head shook from side to side as her body tensed and trembled. Even though her silence was not necessary, she felt that she had to resist at least once, as a sop to her self esteem.

Dr Seward watched her struggle to absorb the pain, and smiled at her stubborn refusal to scream. He glanced down at Mrs Goodwin, who gave him a nod and a smile before resuming her work. "Four more to go to make six of the best. I warn you now that the last two strokes will be right across the nipples and will be most severe."

The third and fourth strokes landed just above and below her nipples. Angelica uttered little barks of pain, but otherwise remained still, save for the heaving of her chest. She glanced down and noted that her boobies glistened in the lamplight, which was somewhat unladylike, but which she decided was a decorous touch to the overall scene. She could also see the deep red ridges of the cane marks, set against a more general pinkish glow, and she took a moment to wonder if her bottom looked like that when she was birched by Cynthia. A cunning touch of Mrs Goodwin's fingers turned her mind to her cunny, and she smiled as she was daring enough to wonder whether Dr Seward would find her cunny attractive after it had been caned, for she had no doubt whatever that her precious cunny was going to suffer just as much as any other part of her today. She saw Dr Seward swing the cane back and away, and she clenched her fists. Her eyes widened as she felt Mrs Goodwin commence a brisk rubbing of her clitty. A moment later, the cane whooshed through the air and struck precisely across her stiff, throbbing nipples.

Angelica made no attempt at bravery this time and her scream rang loud and musically through the room, even as she felt Mrs Goodwin stroke her thighs comfortingly. She surprised herself by not struggling out of the embrace of the apparatus and running behind the screen to huddle in the corner. She opened her eyes, and found Dr Seward gazing directly into them. In his gently smiling face she fancied that she saw sympathy and admiration, and it gave her the strength to straighten her shoulders and thrust her breasts out proudly once more. Mrs Goodwin was still busily working away between her thighs, and the flame in her nipples seemed somehow to combine with the honey flowing from her cunny, and they blended into a powerful liquor, harsh yet mellow like a fine whisky. She felt intoxicated, heady with the knowledge that she had the strength to bear such pain and warm from the maddening tickle that throbbed in her loins. She glanced at her nipples and then back at Dr Seward, and she nodded.

The cane blurred and hissed through the air to strike across her nipples for the final time. Angelica cried out fiercely, her voice echoing like the war cry of some ancient warrior queen.

Simultaneously, Mrs Goodwin ran her fingers over Angelica's clitoris in a cunning, expert motion that lifted the girl past the portal of pleasure, and the housekeeper smiled, as liquid evidence of her success ran down her wrist.

Angelica hid the juddering and writhing of her climax amongst her reactions to the cane, and must have appeared to her aunt and cousin that she was fairly swooning from the agony of her tortured breasts. She turned her eyes to her breasts and was amazed at the glowing red evidence of her suffering. And yet, marks that she would normally have viewed as disfigurements, she now saw as badges of pride when viewed through the prism of the obvious approval of Dr Seward and Mrs Goodwin. For the first time in her young life, she experienced the unfeigned approval and appreciation of others. She still felt no love for the pain itself, but she no longer feared it, because she knew that it was the key to her escape from the hate and misery of her previous life. Her legs were numb and weak from the long period of kneeling, and Mrs Goodwin helped her to stand and walk in a small circle until the circulation and strength returned to them.

While Angelica was thus occupied in recovering the use of her legs, Dr Seward went to his desk and made lengthy notes.

Mrs Browning said, "And what have you learned from this test doctor?"

Dr Seward looked up irritably from his writing, but then recalled that he still required the good will of this woman and amended his expression to a patient smile. "The initial results are indeed interesting. There was a strong reaction to the stimulation of her breasts, which give me reason to be optimistic that my initial diagnosis is correct. The expected symptoms of sexual hysteria appear to be manifesting themselves clearly. However, there are several tests to go and we must not be too hasty in leaping to conclusions."

Cheered by the thought of Angelica undergoing further painful "stimulation", Mrs Browning simpered agreeably and turned away to listen to Cynthia's excited commentary as she gleefully relived the sight of Angelica's punishment.

Dr Seward checked Angelica's breasts and nipples for evidence of any serious cuts, but found nothing that warranted alarm. He poured a small glass of water and bade her drink it. "Do you feel faint or otherwise unwell?" he asked.

Angelica shook her head and smiled. "No, I am quite all right apart from a soreness in my breasts." She now felt comfortable speaking of her intimate body parts in a manner that would have shocked her speechless just a few days ago. Greatly daring, she made herself meet his eyes and said, "I would be comforted if you would inspect my nipples to ensure that they have suffered no damage."

Dr Seward realised that she was offering him an excuse to manipulate her sore nipples because she had guessed that he would enjoy doing so. Once again, he was surprised by Angelica's shrewdness and quickness of wit. Although he would not have normally taken advantage of a patient in this manner, it was obvious that she was trying to communicate her feelings, and she would interpret a refusal as a rebuff on his part. He therefore smiled and said, "I think that you are correct. The female nipples are a delicate part of the anatomy and we should be careful in our handling of them." With that, he reached out and touched her proffered nipples. He made vaguely medical comments as he kneaded and stroked them, although neither of them were under any illusion whatsoever that he was doing anything other than indulging his own desires and senses.

Although her nipples flared in pain at his touch, Angelica was greatly pleased that Dr Seward had accepted her approach. For a moment she had feared that she had misinterpreted the situation and that he would rebuke her for her improper and indecent suggestion. But as he toyed with her sore nipples with evident enjoyment, she felt that she was moving some way towards establishing a rapport with this unusual man.

When he had satisfied his sense of touch, Dr Seward said, "We must move on to the next test. You may be relieved to learn that this one does not involve the use of the cane or any other form of flagellation or corporal punishment. However, make no mistake, as it still requires the strong stimulation of a sensitive area of your person."

Angelica sallied a smile and said, "I would be disappointed if it did not. So, which part of my poor weak woman's body is to suffer your terrible attentions this time?"

Dr Seward led her towards the appropriate apparatus and said, "Hardly weak, I'd wager." He pointed at the desired device. "Here we are. I know that it does not appear to be very impressive, but it is adequate for its purpose."

Indeed the apparatus was far from imposing, comprised as it was merely of a padded wooden base that was obviously meant to allow someone to kneel in relative comfort, with two wooden blocks, each shaped like an upside down capital "L", fitted in such a position as to keep the patient's knees apart. The short leg of the "L" would fit behind the knees to prevent the patient from sliding her legs backwards. Just above these items was a padded bar mounted on a squared upside down "U" that would support the kneeling patient's waist and keep her hips at a certain height when she bent over it. Finally, there were two smaller upside down "U" brackets with a hand grip several inches in front of them. The only item that puzzled Angelica was the circular wooden platform, large enough to support a beer mug that was set into the platform right between the "L" brackets. She could see no possible way in which it could assist in securing the patient. Next to the platform, there stood a low table on which were placed

a small brown bottle of liquid, and a wooden case the size of a man's hat box and a single leather glove. In addition, there was a tall glass beaker, which bore scale markings of some kind running vertically along its side. None of this appeared very threatening, which made it all the more sinister.

Dr Seward touched her shoulder and said, "Allow me to explain the purpose of this test. As you may have realised, when a woman is sexually stimulated, her vagina produces a fluid. The greater the stimulation, the larger the quantity of liquid. However, in cases of sexual hysteria, the patient will produce this liquid even when subjected to non-pleasurable stimulation. Therefore, this test is designed to measure your production of vaginal fluid while experiencing continuous discomfort. Since the amount of the liquid produced is very small, we need to provide a stimulation that does not transmit motion to the patient's body as would a cane or whip, in order that we may accurately gather and measure the amount of fluid produced."

Angelica nodded and said, "I can now see the purpose of the apparatus. Once stretched out on it, I would not be able to bring my legs together nor raise or lower my hips. With my hands and forearms held immobile, my upper body would also be unable to move to any great extent. That circular platform is intended to support the beaker which will in turn collect the ... um, liquid. But how will you provide the desired pain? You will forgive my directness, but as I am the one who shall be experiencing the sensation, I prefer to call a spade a spade." She smiled to show that she was not expressing anger with this statement.

Dr Seward returned the smile and said, "As a physician, I am a great supporter of plain speech and accurate descriptions, so I see no offence in your choice of words. With regards to the method, let me first ask you whether you ever experienced the effect and taste of chili peppers?"

Angelica nodded. "I have. Although my aunt disapproves, I often seek refuge in the kitchen. Winnie, our cook sometimes uses small amounts of the spice as a seasoning." She broke into a smile when she realised the significance of his question. "I remember Winnie warning me against getting any of the juice of the chili on my skin or in my eyes. She said that it burns like fire, although no real harm is caused." She pointed at the glove and box. "But I do believe that there is more. Let me guess." She frowned and thoughtfully scratched at the tip of her nose. "Nettles! I wager that the box contains nettle leaves." She grinned when she saw his expression. "I knew it."

Dr Seward nodded. "I surrender to your wit and acuity. Now I must ask you to place yourself on the device, for I fear that your cousin shall suffer a fit should your test be delayed much longer."

"Oh, we certainly would not want that," Angelica replied. She knelt on the platform, and by supporting herself on the cross bar, managed to fit her knees below the brackets.

The supports of the cross bar were hinged and slotted to accommodate patients of different heights, and Mrs Goodwin adjusted it to suit Angelica's person.

Angelica bent over at the waist and lowered her upper body until her forearms were resting flat on the platform's padded surface, and then slid her hands through the hoops, and finally firmly grasped the hand grips. She discovered that this left her bottom raised high into the air and her breasts touching the ground, causing her back to arch tightly. She heard Dr Seward set the measuring beaker on the platform between her knees. Once again, she found that her posture and the shape of the apparatus made it very difficult for her to move about, even though she was not truly fastened or restrained. Her posture also made her realise the intended target of the chili extract and the nettles, for her bum hole could not have been presented any better than a roast chicken on a platter. Her deduction was soon confirmed by the touch of Dr Seward's finger tip on that very spot. The novelty of having another person touch her there was quickly overcome by the familiarity of that touch, as she realised that he was stroking her there as one would stroke a pet or a loved one's cheek. She strained to look over her shoulder and was rewarded by a glimpse of his face and a bold wink of his eye. She blushed, and for the first time in two days, she was reminded that a man and not just a doctor, was looking and touching the most intimate parts of her body. However, what had made her blush was she realised that she enjoyed the feeling of his touch there. She wondered how had she suddenly become so wanton, and for



a moment she feared that Dr Seward's diagnosis of sexual hysteria was true, and not merely an excuse dreamed up between him and her aunt in order to conveniently dispose of her.

Dr Seward walked around and knelt in front of Angelica, in order to inspect the placement of her arms. If an arm was placed at an awkward angle, a sudden movement of her torso could quite possibly dislocate a joint or even break a bone. He said, "No matter what happens, do not release your grip on the handles, as they help to keep your arms and shoulders in a safe position."

Angelica lifted her head and said softly, "Dr Seward, I find my self experiencing such strange and indecent feelings when you touch me as you did. I swear that I shall do anything that you require, and willingly suffer any pain that you care to inflict on me, but please, tell me the truth. Do you honestly believe me to be insane?" Dr Seward gazed at her in silence for a long moment, and she felt her heart gripped with terror.

Then he reached out and touched her hand. "Although I find you to be an exceptional young woman, I may unequivocally say that I do not believe you to be suffering from any mental or physical illness. I am sure that you are aware that your aunt wishes you to be committed to my sanatorium in order to remove you from the world, but believe me when I say that I am trying to do what I think to be best for you."

Angelica sighed with relief and momentarily released the handle to return his touch. She said, "Since I am bare to you in every other way, let me admit then that I enjoyed your touch on my...back there. Do I shock you with my wantonness?"

Dr Seward squeezed her hand and replied, "We are not at a society ball or tea party, so do not speak of wantonness. I touched you out of desire, and it gladdens me to know that my touch was not an intrusion." He gently replaced her hand on the handle. "Now I must proceed with the test. Be strong."

Angelica listened to his footsteps move around the platform and heard a tiny rattle of glass on wood as he picked up the small brown bottle that she now knew contained the fiery extract of the chili pepper and her bum hole contracted involuntarily. She heard the scrape of the stopper and the sound of glass on glass.

Dr Seward's voice came over Angelica's shoulder. "It won't hurt when I first apply it, so please try to remain still, as I only want to spread it on your anus."

Angelica felt the chill touch of wet glass on her obscenely exposed bum hole, and a careful, moist stroking. For all her determination, she could not prevent her muscles from contracting, making the orifice shrink, but also carrying some of the liquid deeper within her body. She felt an unusual tingling, but no real pain. She also felt the familiar and welcome touch of Mrs Goodwin's fingers on her clitty. She focused her attention on this pleasant sensation, as if she could somehow store up the pleasure, to be doled out later in time of need. A sudden chill ran down her spine as she felt the first sharp bite of the chili on her bum hole. Her hands squeezed down hard on the handles as she resisted the urge to shake her hips, as if the sting was the fault of some venomous insect that could be flung away by her movement. Then came a feeling of heat, and she imagined that Mrs Goodwin was holding the flame of a candle between her spread cheeks, as the sensation rapidly grew from warmth into a distinct burning. The pain steadily grew, and the candle flame became a glowing ember of coal that was held a hair's breadth away from her skin. Angelica began to pant as the gnawing pain in her rear made her shiver. Unlike a caning, this pain was a continuous, unrelenting stream that gave not a moment of respite and ate at her determination like the tide erodes a cliff. A scream might have provided relief, but the constant pain only made her moan.

Mrs Goodwin moved around to her head, and her hand stroked Angelica's hair as the housekeeper whispered, "Try to keep very still. You're starting to flow and we don't want to waste any of it. He's going to use the nettles in a moment. If you need to move, shake your head and squeeze the handles, but do not move your hips."

Angelica nodded, sliding the side of her face over the leather surface that was damp with her perspiration. The pain in her behind had become a pounding sensation in her head, like an old,

persistent headache. Then she felt Dr Seward's hand return to her buttock and his thumb pull at her flesh, spreading her cheek even wider, and she knew that he was preparing to apply the nettle leaves. Unlike the chili extract, the sting of the nettle was immediate, and when combined with the soreness produced by the chili, agonising. The backs of her feet slapped frantically against the leather padded base, beating a tattoo that announced the arrival of the new, needle sharp pain that pierced her bottom like a cook's skewer thrusting into the rear of a trussed up chicken.

Dr Seward selected another nettle leaf from the box and carefully applied it to Angelica's anus like a watercolour painter's brush, each stroke of a leaf adding another element of pain. Although she could not see it, and was probably too preoccupied with her discomfort to feel it, her vagina had started to produce a steady trickle of clear, glistening fluid that ran down the length of her vulva to form a drop around her clitoris, before falling away and into the tall glass beaker. Whenever he observed her body's pained reactions slow, he thoughtfully applied a fresh leaf and rejuvenated her suffering. The slow, steady torture of the girl's anus continued until Mrs Goodwin touched his arm and showed him her watch. The burning of the chili extract eventually ceased to produce pain and rendered the afflicted spot numb instead. Dr Seward had carefully determined the average time that was required for the numbing effect to replace the pain, and Mrs Goodwin had just reminded him of it.

The applications of the nettle leaves ceased. However, the soreness of Angelica's bum hole did not magically disappear, though the overall pain did seem to be gradually fading into a vague pounding of her pulse under the skin. This pounding spread downwards to her cunny and became a heated throbbing. She sighed as she felt Dr Seward's hands soothingly stroke her flanks like a rider stroked his horse. With her preoccupation with her own pain fading, she actually heard the soft plop made by a drop of liquid as it fell into a shallow puddle.

Mrs Goodwin reappeared by her side and she said, "Five more minutes for the collection to complete, and you will be able to get up from this thing. As soon as you are done, I have some Dock Weed leaves that will sooth much of the sting from the nettles when rubbed upon the affected area. I suggest that you allow me to apply it, so that your aunt and cousin remain in ignorance of the treatment. Continued pain past the specified time is not a required part of the test, but I wager that your aunt and cousin will derive much amusement from the belief that you continue to suffer from the nettle's sting."

"You are most kind," said Angelica.

Mrs Goodwin shook her head. "Do not deceive yourself. I will carry out any infliction, no matter how dreadful, if Dr Seward judges it to be necessary for the treatment of the patient, or in furtherance of his research. However, I do not condone unnecessary cruelty for any reason."

True to her word, Angelica felt Mrs Goodwin discreetly rub the Dock leaf over her swollen bum hole, and such was her relief that she forgot to feel embarrassed at having a woman touch her there. She stiffly disentangled herself from the device and climbed unsteadily to her feet.

Glancing towards her aunt, she saw Cynthia whispering urgently in her ear, with the occasional gesture of her hand in Angelica's direction. Her cousin appeared to be demanding something, and such was her familiarity with her aunt's nature, that she was in no doubt that her obnoxious cousin would get what it was that she wanted. Her conviction was justified mere moments later when her aunt summoned Dr Seward over to her side of the room for a conference. She watched as her aunt spoke, and Dr Seward shook his head while looking at Cynthia with an expression of distaste on his face. Mrs Browning's voice grew louder and the movements of her hands grew more agitated as Dr Seward's face grew darker. Finally, he gave a curt nod of his head and strode angrily back to where she stood waiting in all her nakedness.

Dr Seward looked apologetic as he said to Angelica, "May I please have a word with you in private." He indicated the changing screen with his hand and led her in that direction. He picked up a dressing gown from a shelf behind his desk and handed it to her, indicating that she should put it on. Once she was dressed, he led her behind the screen, where he allowed the full degree of his anger to

show in his expression. Such was his distress, that he was unable to speak as he stood clenching his fists and taking deep, forceful breaths.

Angelica said, "Dr Seward, I observed my cousin speaking to my aunt, and from her gestures, I guess that she has made a demand that involves the infliction of some indignity upon me. As is her custom, my aunt no doubt gave in to her beloved daughter's desires, and then transmitted them in the form of a demand to you. I have never expected any better of my two relatives, so I suggest that you just present her demand plainly and cease to blame yourself."

Dr Seward shook his head in admiration and said, "I admit that I have underestimated the brazenness of your aunt. I had assumed that I had only to satisfy her that you would subject to a strict regime and be completely under my control in the sanatorium. However, she has now demanded a test, not of you, but of my ruthlessness. Your cousin has apparently developed quite a fondness for punishing your genitalia, and has never felt sufficiently free to indulge herself in a manner that would satisfy her. Since she will lose all access to your person after you are committed, she had demanded to be given a final chance to cruelly mistreat your vulva, and even your vagina. As you surmised, Mrs Browning has acquiesced to this demand, and has in turn made it a pre-condition to her releasing you into my care. There is to be not even a pretence of medical propriety in this, for she desires that I implicate myself fully in her plot to destroy you."

Angelica closed her eyes and took a deep breath. She reopened her eyes and said, "If anyone in the family truly has an illness of the mind, I fear that it is my cousin, for she has expressed a terribly cruel nature since she was a small child. Many cats and birds at Farleigh House have suffered a sad end at her hands over the years. I am well aware of her obsession with causing me pain between my legs, as she has often whispered her desires and imaginings to me, knowing that my aunt would never credit my word above that of her daughter."

Dr Seward drove his fist into his palm in anger. "What she proposes is monstrous. I cannot be party to your deliberate torture for no reason other than the entertainment of a crazed young woman."

Angelica pulled the robe tighter around her body and touched his arm. "Your principle and concern for me is much to be admired, but as I divulged to you on the first day that we met, if I remain resident at Farleigh House under the authority of my aunt, I shall never live to see my twenty-second birthday. I am aware that you might have considered my words the exaggeration of a girl desperate to escape a harsh guardian, but now you have seen their true characters for yourself. I cannot return to Farleigh House after this, for I will surely meet with an unfortunate accident shortly after my twenty first birthday, which is but months away."

"Then what would you have me do?" he inquired.

Angelica said firmly, "You must agree to their proposal, with the condition that the torments to be applied are to be specified in advance, and that any attempt to exceed or change the punishments shall be cause for you to immediately terminate the torture session and to summon the police, even if it means your own ruin. My aunt will agree to this, as she is driven only by greed, unlike her daughter. As for Cynthia, I know exactly what will satisfy her." She then described a list of punishments to be applied to her cunny, which she had derived from the hate filled whispers of her cousin that she had been forced to listen to over the course of many years.

Dr Seward looked aghast as he listened to Angelica's suggestions. "You cannot be serious about what you propose. And how am I supposed to convince you to submit to this atrocity?"

Angelica said, "Dr Seward, I know my cousin's mind better than she knows it herself. What I propose is the bait that is needed to make her bite, short of anything that I think will leave me crippled or disfigured. I am depending on you to save me from permanent harm at her hands. As for my compliance, simply tell her that you offered me the options of voluntarily submitting to Cynthia's demands and then going on to live under the sanatorium's regular regime, or refusing and to be forcibly bound and delivered into my cousin's hands, after which you would chain me up in a bare cell to be treated as the unfortunate inmates of Bedlam have been for over two hundred years. I know that you

would never treat a patient in such a manner, but it is the kind of threat that my aunt would make, were she in your position. You can attribute your earlier reluctance to a fear of damage to your reputation and business if you allowed a patient to be harmed."

"And what would compel me to change my mind and disregard the risk to my reputation?" Dr Seward asked.

Angelica fluttered her eyelashes coquettishly at him and replied boldly, "Why, my maidenly charms of course, which you have recently had occasion to examine in such detail." However, she had the grace to blush at this last statement.

Dr Seward shook his head in admiration. "I do declare that you possess more courage than I. The thought of putting myself at the mercy of that person makes me quite weak at the knees." He reached out his hand and gripped her arm firmly as if finding it necessary to compel her. "Very well, let us proceed with this madness. I suppose the fact that we are all standing in a sanatorium is quite appropriate." Still holding her firmly by the arm, he led her out from behind the screen and back towards Mrs Browning and the eagerly waiting Cynthia. His face stern, he said, "I have convinced Angelica that it is in her best interests to cooperate with your request." His raised hand cut off whatever it was that Mrs Browning was about to say. "However, I have some terms of my own. Your daughter is not a trained surgeon, she is not even a skilled interrogator. By god she isn't even a farmer's daughter. I will not give her carte blanche to run amok in my clinic. If it ever became known that I had permitted a patient to be killed or permanently crippled in my hospital, I would be ruined. I will not risk my living and place in society in order to get my hands on a woman, even one as delightful as your niece. So, after careful consideration, I have prepared a list of "amusements" that I will allow your daughter to employ. If she agrees to them, we may proceed. If not, I can have Mrs Goodwin summon a carriage for you right now."

Mrs Browning was actually surprised that Dr Seward had managed to convince Angelica to submit to her daughter's desires, and wondered what manner of threats he had employed. She decided that she had underestimated his ruthlessness. She was reminded that they were in his hospital, and at his mercy, should he decide that things had gone too far. It was not inconceivable that he could order Cynthia and herself to be killed and thus have Angelica for himself, if the risks to him became too high. She knew that Sir Percy would not raise a finger to investigate were she to disappear, as there was no love lost between them. Pride would not allow her to merely capitulate, so she said, "Very well. If Cynthia approves of your list, then I shall agree to your terms."

Dr Seward realised that Angelica had indeed correctly anticipated the mind of her aunt, and he felt certain that Cynthia would agree as well, rather than lose the opportunity completely. He turned to the girl and said, "I have agreed the following with Angelica, and I have given her my word that nothing else shall befall her. She agrees to wear the spreader harness in order to provide you full access to her genitals. She will mount that examination table and place her legs in the stirrups, thereby parting her limbs and providing a clear field of operation to you. She undertakes not to move from that position until you are done or I order a stop. All parts of her genitalia shall be open to your attentions, specifically including her clitoris and her vagina. Since she is an intact virgin, her hymen is included in the list so that there should be no obstruction to your full enjoyment of her vagina. Knives and cutting instruments of any kind are prohibited, as are any processes which are designed to remove pieces of tissue. Acids, corrosive chemicals, flame or heated items other than hot needles are also prohibited. In general, anything which shall cause permanent disfigurement or loss of function are not allowed." Dr Seward allowed himself a smile at this point and he winked conspiratorially at Cynthia. "This last is for my benefit."

Dr Seward's wicked attitude made Cynthia giggle, and just listening to him describe what she could do to her hated cousin made her wet between her thighs. She nodded eagerly, and said in her most grown up tone of voice, "I fully understand Dr Seward, and I wish you much enjoyment from the use of her cu...privates in the future. Your terms are acceptable. Can we get started now?" Her attempt

at maturity was somewhat spoiled when she thrust out her tongue at Angelica and then proceeded to skip up and down with excitement.

Dr Seward bowed stiffly to Mrs Browning. "Then we have an agreement. I shall prepare Angelica right away." He took Angelica's arm and led her away to the specified examination table.

Angelica said, "I must thank you once again for your efforts on my behalf Dr Seward."

"I just hope that we both do not regret this," he replied.

She gave him a little smile and said, "I regret it already. However, I would regret accidentally falling into a well or being trampled by a team of horses even more. Now, let us prepare my unfortunate cunny for the sacrifice." She slipped out of the dressing gown, folded it neatly and placed it on the floor. She reflected that she was becoming quite accustomed to being naked, and in fact rather enjoyed Dr Seward's admiring glances at her figure. With his assistance she clambered up onto the high examination table and positioned herself with her bottom right at the end.

Dr Seward raised the metal arms of the stirrups and adjusted them to suit the length of her legs. He moved the firm leather head rest down and placed it under Angelica's head and made small adjustments to the position of her body. Then he helped her lift her legs up and fit her feet and ankles into the stirrups.

Angelica closed her eyes as Dr Seward fastened the spreader harnesses on her thighs and tried not to wince as the clips went on to the lips of her cunny. She was particularly aware of the way that the harness left her clitoris terribly exposed. Cynthia was a precocious girl and had very early on become aware of the extreme sensitivity of the clitoris. When they the two of them were alone, she had often forced Angelica to listen to her describe the many and varied means that she had invented to inflict pain on that part of her cousin's anatomy. She had even compelled Angelica, under the threat of a beating, to participate in numerous obscene plays that she had composed. In all of them, Cynthia would naturally play the part of the victorious pirate, or Saracen or rapist, and her cousin the conquered victim. Angelica was forced to act out long and humiliating scenes where she grovelled on her knees and offered up her cunny for torture in exchange for her life. Cynthia had proved especially ingenious in discovering new ways to hurt Angelica's clitoris, and Angelica was certain that it would be the centre of her cousin's attention now that she had the chance to bring her fantasies to life. The last clip went on, and she wriggled her hips in order to see how much she could move. She whispered to Dr Seward, "It is my belief that she will concentrate her attentions on my clitoris, although my maidenhead and the inside of my...my vagina might be of special interest too. You might want to think of what tools you can give her that will suit those areas."

Dr Seward said, "I am amazed that you can be so calm about this."

Angelica smiled bitterly. "You might say that the two of us have been working up to this very event for years. If I survive the experience I promise to tell you all about it. I suspect that you might find the tale rather stimulating."

He leaned over her and patted her hand. "I look forward to that with great eagerness." Then he straightened and turned towards Cynthia and beckoned her over. "Is this to your satisfaction?"

Cynthia stared at her cousin's splayed out limbs and indecently exposed cunny, and sighed with happiness. "Oh yes, that will do very nicely indeed." She stepped right up between Angelica's legs and leaned forward to look into her cousin's eyes. "I think that you know what to do, dear cousin," she said.

Adopting an expression of fear and shame, Angelica said, "Oh please do not kill me good lady. I am at your mercy and you may do with me as you wish. Will you spare me if I offer something special to you?"

Cynthia puffed up her chest and placed her hands on her hips. "And what would a pitiful specimen like you have to offer someone like me?" she said, speaking in a loud and exaggerated tone.

It was immediately clear to Dr Seward that acting was not one of Cynthia's talents. If the situation had not been so serious, he would have been hard put not to laugh.

Angelica had adopted a child-like sing song voice and said, "Spare my life my lady, and I shall

offer my cunny to you."

Cynthia declaimed, "Bah! Are you blind as well as ugly? I am a woman. What need have I for your smelly cunny?"

Angelica joined her hands in a prayerful position and said, "Indeed, it is because you are a woman that I make this offer. A man would only think of my cunny as a means to satisfy his carnal lusts, but you as a woman know the proper use of a lowly prisoner's cunny."

Cynthia grinned, twirling non-existent moustaches. "Ah hah! You speak of pain, do you not?"

Wringing her hands, Angelica said, "Indeed I do, great lady. Only a woman knows the proper ways in which to inflict pain upon another woman's cunny and to extract craven and terrified screams from her unworthy body."

Dr Seward noted that playwriting was also not one of Cynthia's god given skills, for it was obvious to him that both were following a script that must have originated from Cynthia's fevered brain some time in the past. Indeed, in his opinion it would have earned much in the way of free vegetables if performed in a public theatre, although he would certainly have paid a great deal to see Angelica naked.

Cynthia held an imaginary pot belly and roared with evil laughter. "And what of that tiny spot that scholars call the clitoris? As a woman, I know full well how delicate and sensitive it is. Do you offer that to me as well?"

Angelica pointed at her cunny and said, "Indeed I do, great lady. See, is that not my clitoris that peeps out at you this very moment? I beg you to treat it as you will."

Cynthia stepped back dramatically and stared down at her cousin's cunny. "Well blow me down. It is a clitoris that I see before me." She reached out her hand and flicked Angelica's clitoris as if she would knock a speck or dead fly from a tablecloth.

Angelica cried out in surprised pain, but quickly recovered. "Yes, great mistress. You have struck my spot most shrewdly. I can see that you are wise in the ways of torturing the clitoris. I beg you to do as you will with it."

Cynthia leaned over and studied her cousin's clitoris carefully. Despite her heated imaginings, this was the first time that she had been able to view it in any detail. During the treasured birching sessions, she had been restrained to an arm's length view, but now, the delicate pearl was just inches from her face. She longed to simply snip it off with a pair of scissors and to deprive her cousin of her clitoris forever, but she knew that Dr Seward would not permit that. Despite his calm demeanour, there was something in his eyes that made Cynthia afraid of him. Her eyes gleamed spitefully as she gently stroked Angelica's clitoris with the tip of her finger. "Does that feel good? Does it make you feel all trembly inside?" Like the jaws of a striking serpent, her finger and thumb shot out to grasp her clitoris. She pinched and twisted it mercilessly, saying, "Tell me how good that feels, dear cousin. Doesn't that feel nice? Aren't I good to you?"

Angelica made muffled noises of pain, refusing to give her cousin to win a victory so easily. "Your touch is as delicate as ever cousin," she said.

Cynthia's brow darkened with annoyance, and she turned to Dr Seward. "Do you have some ordinary cotton thread? If you do, I would like a piece, about a foot in length. The colour does not matter." When Dr Seward nodded and strode away to fetch the item, Cynthia smiled at Angelica. "Ah, I see that you remember the thread game. How wonderful that we shall be able to try it out in reality. In the mean time – " She left off pinching her cousin's clitoris and instead used her fingernail to scratch at it, as if she was trying to scrape it off of her cousin's body. The pain of this was too great for Angelica to withstand without reacting, and Cynthia smiled in triumph as she observed her cousin's hips twist and writhe under her indelicate touch. "How I shall make you scream and cry, dear cousin. I am going to bring such delicious pain to your precious cunny, that you will never, ever forget my touch. And I have not forgotten your maidenhead. Oh no, indeed. No husband shall ever have the pleasure of taking your virginity on your wedding bed, for I intend to rip it from your dirty little hole and toss it away with all the other rubbish." She saw Dr Seward returning out of the corner of her eye and ceased to

taunt her cousin, and instead gave her cunny a fierce slap. "Was that a fly I saw? Oh dear, perhaps I was mistaken. Never mind, I'm sure that you didn't mind that little smack, did you dear cousin."

Angelica gave her cousin a tight smile and said, "Of course not. What matters a slap on the cunny between the two of us."

Dr Seward held out several lengths of thread to Cynthia. "I hope that these are suitable for your purpose."

Cynthia grinned like a wolf and nodded enthusiastically. "That will do very well indeed. Thank you."

Dr Seward examined the thread curiously. "What do you intend to do with it, if I may ask?"

"It is a little diversion that Angelica and I worked out years ago. Watch and you shall see." Holding her index finger and thumb in the shape of a "C", Cynthia wrapped one end of the thread around her thumb, pulled the thread to her index finger and wrapped it around that finger too, leaving a line of thread stretched between the tips of the two digits, forming what resembled a tiny, single stringed harp. Using her left hand, she tugged and stretched the skin that surrounded Angelica's clitoris, thereby ensuring that it protruded from an almost flat plane. She directed a fiendish grin towards her cousin and then brought the thread up to Angelica's clitoris.

Although Angelica could not be sure of how it was truly going to feel, since they had never actually tried it, she was fairly certain that it was going to be very unpleasant. She clenched her teeth and glared balefully at Cynthia, who replied with an angelic smile. Her exquisitely sensitive clitoris easily detected the first touch of the thread against its side, and when Cynthia slowly drew the length of the thread back and forth, the sensation that it produced made Angelica quiver from head to toe. However, from the obscene games forced upon her by her cousin, she knew that this was not the true objective, and that much worse was to come. All too soon, the movement of the thread began to accelerate, rubbing back and forth like a miniature saw. Although the thread did not possess any teeth, nor was it even very rough, the amount of friction created by the rubbing of the cotton thread against the delicate skin of her clitoris rapidly became sufficient to produce both a painful abrasion and a searing amount of heat at the spot where the thread rubbed against her clitoris.

Since her objective was to inflict the maximum amount of pain on her cousin, and not merely to cut off her clitoris, which Dr Seward would have prevented anyway, Cynthia rapidly stroked the thread over one spot on Angelica's clitoris until her cousin's cries of distress, and the evidence of her own eyes indicated that a satisfactory amount of damage had been inflicted, whereupon she shifted her hand very slightly to began sawing at a fresh, albeit tiny, strip of skin. In effect, she was slowly but surely scraping the entirety of Angelica's clitoris agonisingly raw.

Angelica's thighs trembled violently as pain being caused to her clitoris became increasingly difficult to bear. The stroking of the thread produced an severe pain that rapidly intensified from being merely painful to being unbearable, much like the probing of a rotten tooth, save that the spot being hurt bore a mental as well as physical significance. It was an attack in the very centre of her sexual being, and was immeasurably more terrifying than a more mundane injury. That she was denied the option to flee or to protect herself, and was in fact obliged to be instrumental in her own torture, tested her courage and her very sanity to the limits.

Cynthia exulted over her cousin's agony as her fingers busily continued their excruciating work. "Poor dear. Does our little clitty hurt? Does the nasty thread make you want to cry? I know, why don't you beg me to stop. Beg me to spare your filthy, shameless clitty. Go on, you know full well that you want to do it."

Angelica had been on the brink of submitting to the almost irresistible urge to surrender and beg for mercy, but her cousin's hate filled taunting revived her anger and determination. Cynthia and her aunt had treated her like some barely tolerated kitchen cur all of her life. But instead of breaking her spirit as they had hoped, it had filled her with burning determination and gave her uncommon resources of the spirit. Drawing upon an inner strength that until now she had not known that she possessed, she

said, "Indeed I am tempted to beg you to stop, for your caresses give me such pleasure that I fear that I may be converted to the pleasures of Lesbos. Indeed, observe how my body shakes in delight. I had never before realised that you harboured such desires in you cousin."

This unexpected rebuttal of her taunts rocked Cynthia backwards, rendering her speechless. She would have screeched with rage, save that it would have made her look silly in front of Dr Seward. She knew that she could not inflict very much more injury to Angelica's clitoris, after having nearly skinned it with the thread, without incurring the risk of having Dr Seward call a halt to the proceedings. There were many more things that she wanted to do to her cousin's cunny and it would have been foolish to give it all up in a fit of pique. Biting back her anger, she stripped the blood stained thread from her fingers, tossed it on Angelica's naked belly and spun to face the man who stood observing her actions. "I need a whip, such as one would use to whip a dog," she demanded with a furious scowl.

Dr Seward was relieved that in her anger, she had not asked for a cane, which would have been much more damaging. He had doubted Angelica's wisdom in deliberately angering her torturer, but now it seemed that it had been the right thing to do. He nodded curtly and walked over to the shelves to retrieve a short leather whip. Although he was trying to protect Angelica as much as he could, he had given his word that he would facilitate her abuse with the limits that he had specified, so the whip that he selected was no mere toy intended to tickle a partner's fancy, but a solid workmanlike piece of leather. From Cynthia's gleeful expression as he handed it to her, she was well satisfied with the tool that she had just been given. Fortunately for Angelica, Cynthia's entire experience with flagellation had been with birch rods, although she had often dreamed of using a whip and had given her cousin many an imaginary flogging. Due to her lack of experience, she did not possess the skill to put the greatest force into the lash, not was she very accurate with the soft, unfamiliar length of braided leather. If she had been able to convert her intent precisely into action, she would have torn her victim's cunny to shreds with her first few strokes.

Angelica knew that unlike the insidious torture of her clitoris, Cynthia was now too angry for subtlety and that her entire cunny and probably her thighs were going to be the target of a wrathful lashing. This was a more familiar form of punishment, and she braced herself for the pain. Whether by luck or skill, the first stroke caught Angelica's cunny squarely down the middle, missing her already pained clitoris but striking the soft, moist femininity that lay between her inner lips. The whip was less cutting than a birch, but the lash carried more weight than each slim birch rod, and the impact drove the blow deep into her loins, as well as biting at the delicate skin of her cunny. The whip struck again and then again, covering the soft pink of her cunny with streaks of bruises that glowed a sullen dark red. This was not a deliberate torture, but a beating, pure and simple, as Angelica's cunny received the full force of her cousin's jealousy and spite. She moaned and gasped as Cynthia sought out her intimate flesh and savaged it with the lash. The metal frame of the stirrups shook and rattled, as Angelica's legs struggled without success to close and to protect that secret area that lay between them. The tip of the whip burrowed into the opening of her vagina, narrowly missing her maidenhead, tearing an agonised scream from her throat. Then she screamed again as the next blow shrewdly caught her raw clitoris, filling her body and mind with the fires of hell. Her entire body glistened with perspiration, and damp strands of hair pasted themselves to her forehead as her fingernails cut into her palms. But still she would not submit to her fear and her cousin's spite. She glared back at her nemesis with pain filled eyes, and when her cousin paused for breath and to rest her aching arm, Angelica deliberately pushed her hips and her cunny upwards, inviting further punishment. She lips twisted in a bitter smile and she said, "Does your arm pain you cousin? Perhaps you should substitute your tongue for that whip and apply it with the same eagerness to my cunny, as your tongue has always been your favoured weapon."

The unexpected indecency of her cousin's words cut through Cynthia's fury like a splash of icy cold water on her face. Angelica had never dared to speak in this manner to her in all the years that they had known each other, and she did not know how to properly respond to her obscene suggestion. The very idea of touching her tongue to her cousin's cunny made her feel ill, especially in its present bruised



and reddened condition. The whip suddenly lost its appeal, and she allowed it to drop from her hand. She looked down at Angelica's impudently raised cunny and consoled herself with the thought that although she had not succeeded in breaking her cousin's spirit, she had turned her cunny into a swollen, battered mess. In addition, her greatest triumph over Angelica's was still to come. She retrieved the whip and thrust it at Dr Seward, and then demanded, "I need some kind of pliers or pincers, small but with longish handles."

Since he had been expecting her to ask for something of the sort, he knew immediately what he was going to give her. It took him but a moment to find a pair of surgeon's forceps. These were made of fine steel and shaped like a pair of elongated scissors, save for the lack of blades at the tip, which were replaced by blunt gripping surfaces. He flipped the forceps over in his hand and held the handles out towards Cynthia and said, "I am sure that these will suit your purposes."

Surprised by the weight of the forceps, Cynthia almost dropped them, but quickly recovered and was delighted by the solid feel of the polished steel, and the smooth, precise way that the hinged parts moved and slid over each other. She held the forceps up and waved them in front of Angelica's face. "Have you ever dreamed of the handsome man who would one day make love to you? Have you dreamed of how good it would feel to finally have a man inside your cunny? Deep inside that place that no one had ever touched before? I know you have. Every girl imagines what it will be like. Well, dear cousin, that is never going to happen for you. Dr Seward is going to lock you up in this lunatic asylum forever, while I and my mother have a wonderful life with your money. But I think that it is unfair that you should die a virgin and never know what it feels like to have something inside your cunny. Every cunny should have something inside it at least once, even a cunny as dirty and smelly as yours. Well, I am going to do you a favour. I am going to touch the inside of your cunny with this handsome fellow and it is going to rip your maidenhead right out of your body. Perhaps I shall keep it in a glass jar like a pickled egg to remember you by. Aren't you going to thank me for my kindness cousin?"

Angelica could not think of a witty verbal riposte, and she knew that threats or curses would just make Cynthia laugh, so she remained silent. Despite her courage and determination, her cousin's words had struck deep into her heart. Cynthia was going to steal her precious maidenhead, her virginity, and she was going to rape her with that horrible instrument. This was an injury from which she could never recover. She could not prevent herself from flinching when she felt her cousin's fingers on her cunny, and tears sprang from her eyes at the sound of Cynthia's mocking laughter.

Cynthia pulled the opening of Angelica's vagina open with her fingers and after a moment of two of tugging and stretching, she finally found her cousin's hymen. She was fascinated to see that the veil of tissue did not completely seal the entrance, and that there was sufficient space for the forceps to pass through into the depths of her vagina. She carefully manoeuvred the tip and shaft of the forceps past the opening and then pushed it in.

Angelica cried out in alarm when she felt the cold metal object prod her intimate flesh, probing right inside her body. Her cousin's hand pushed on the forceps and Angelica felt the metal tip painfully force the walls of her vagina aside, as it slid right into her passage. She felt a wrenching sense of regret as the hard steel slid about inside her body, rubbing and jabbing parts of her that only her husband should ever have touched. A jolt of fear struck her as she felt the metal jaws part and press against the wall of her vagina. They indented her flesh, and then slowly closed, capturing a fold of her vaginal flesh in its grip. The jaws closed, and she felt a strange pinch, like nothing she had ever experienced before. The pressure smoothly increased, until the feeling changed from a squeeze into a painful crushing sensation, that rapidly progressed to raging agony.

Cynthia twisted her wrist, spitefully wrenching at the trapped flesh of her cousin's vagina.

Angelica's scream was shrill and desperate, as pain beyond bearing ripped through her loins, but somehow she forced her legs to remain in the stirrups and her knees to remain apart, even as her cousin relaxed her grip, opened the jaws of the forceps and closed them again over a fresh spot of her vaginal wall. The jaws of unforgiving steel wrenched a second shriek of pure agony from the suffering girl,

which blended eerily with her cousin's cry of insane glee.

Unable to wait any longer, Cynthia pulled the bloodied tips of the forceps out of Angelica's vagina. She turned the metal instrument sideways, allowing the jaws of the forceps to close over the filmy curtain of skin that stood proof of her cousin's purity. She giggled like a fiend as she snapped the metal jaws closed, took a deep, triumphant breath and wrenched hard.

Angelica's scream was so terrible that even Mrs Browning looked alarmed. She screamed not so much from pain but from the awful aching loss that crushed her chest. Then she fainted dead away.

Cynthia stared at wildly at the trickle of blood that flowed from the torn tissue of her cousin's vagina.

Dr Seward cursed in shock and anger as he watched Cynthia dab her finger in Angelica's virgin blood and put it between her lips. He shoved the gloating girl aside and tugged the bell rope that summoned Mrs Goodwin.

The housekeeper had been made aware of the situation by Dr Seward, and she gave Cynthia a disgusted glare as she hurried to Angelica's side. A second nurse had followed her in, bearing a canvas stretcher. The lifted the unconscious and naked girl off of the table and onto the stretcher, whereupon the two women lifted her limp body up and carried her away.

Dr Seward took a moment to recover himself, and then strode over to his desk. Picking up a quill, he scrawled his signature on the medical certificate that he had prepared the night before. He went to Mrs Browning and said, "I have fulfilled my part of the bargain, and I am certain that you have adequately satisfied yourself as to my commitment to properly treat your niece. Here is the medical certificate certifying that I am satisfied that your niece is suffering from sexual hysteria and is in need of extended treatment, which I am willing to provide at the Seward Sanatorium." He handed her two documents as well as the freshly dipped quill. "The second document is a simple confirmation that you have witnessed and approved the transfer of your niece to my custody and care on this date, and also confirms your agreement to the modest fee to be paid to the Sanatorium at the beginning of every month. Kindly sign it at the indicated place, and our business here is done."

Mrs Browning signed the proffered document compliantly after the briefest of glances and smiled. "I wish you every enjoyment of my niece's person. I pray that you should not be too lenient with her. She needs to be handled with a firm hand."

Dr Seward smiled. "I shall heed your words, Mrs Browning, and I have every intention of making the best of your niece's presence," he said as he waved his hand at the varied instruments of torture in the room.

Soon after, the two women were aboard their carriage and on first leg of their journey back to Farleigh House. Mrs Browning had quite recovered from her shock at her daughter's savagery, and waved a handkerchief gaily at Dr Seward, while Cynthia chattered on unendingly about her triumph over her incarcerated cousin.

## Chapter Six

A little over six months had passed from the day that Mrs Browning and Cynthia had departed the Seward Sanatorium.

In the meantime, Sir Percy had paid an unscheduled visit to express his regrets over Angelica's illness and to inform Mrs Browning that he would not be visiting Farleigh House again, unless Angelica should by some miracle be re-instated to normal society. His gloomy expression showed that he did not hold much hope of that happening.

Naturally Mrs Browning was delighted as this news and had bid him an enthusiastic farewell.

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On this particular day, Cynthia was dressed in her best dress, and had spent many hours having the maid doing up her hair. Winnie the cook had been instructed to prepare a very special nuncheon and Cynthia gleefully viewed the repast that spread over the table.

Even Mrs Browning, who was normally restrained in her manner of dress, had added a festively coloured ribbon to her hair in honour of the event. She smiled indulgently when she saw her daughter and held up two glasses of fortified wine, one of which she handed with great ceremony to Cynthia. Their glasses met and Mrs Browning declared, "Yesterday was Angelica's twenty-first birthday, and I think that we all have reason to celebrate that event, and even more so, this day when I ..." Her voice faded as the sound of horses and of footsteps, penetrated her self congratulation. She frowned and turned towards the door, intending to question the servants regarding the commotion. The expensive crystal glass fell from her hand to shatter in gem like fragments on the floor. Her face turned pale as she said, "You!"

Angelica smiled sweetly at her aunt and curtsayed politely. "How kind of you to prepare this fine repast. I assume that it is in celebration of my marriage to Dr John Seward?" She removed her glove and held out her left hand to reveal the gold band that decorated her finger.

Dr Seward stepped through the door and took Angelica's upraised hand in his. "Indeed, it is most gracious of you to celebrate my wife's birthday and our wedding. It is a pity that you were not present at the wedding. Sir Percy was quite moved to tears."

Mrs Browning stuttered, "B...but we...you were going to keep her in the asylum and..."

Angelica smiled widely. "Whip me, torture me, do all manner of horrible things to me? Well you may take comfort in the knowledge that kept his word. Indeed, I felt the kiss of his riding crop just this morning before I got dressed. Does that not please you? As for my stay in the sanatorium, the arrangement was that I was to be committed to that fine hospital for further examination and treatment for my diagnosed sexual hysteria. Perhaps my husband should explain this part of events."

Dr Seward kissed his wife's hand and said, "As Mrs Seward just said, upon her committal to the sanatorium, I continued to subject her to further tests and treatment. However, it soon became clear that my diagnosis had not been accurate. To be fair to me, I was not totally wrong, but the results of the tests were somewhat misleading. You see, Mrs Seward does not and never did suffer from sexual hysteria. Rather, she merely has a strong preference for flagellation and other related pastimes, developed possibly out of certain childhood experiences. However, I did not rush to change my diagnosis and spent quite half of a year in confirming this theory, and during which time we also developed a certain mutual attraction. I informed Sir Percy of this, and with his blessing, upon her reaching her twenty first birthday, did ask for her hand in marriage. Sir Percy very kindly assisted in arranging a marriage license, and we were wed in my family church yesterday."

Mrs Browning fairly ground her teeth in rage and shook her fist at the couple. "Mark my words,

you shall not benefit from this foul plot to take advantage of a girl who is of unsound mind. I shall bring the full weight of the law upon you."

Angelica raised a sculptured eyebrow and said, "And what of your plot to murder me upon my reaching my majority?"

Mrs Browning was taken aback by this disclosure that her scheming had been overheard, but she quickly recovered and rebutted the accusation. "The ravings of a sick mind. No court would accept your word against that of me and my daughter."

Angelica smiled. "Perhaps you are right, but they might believe two independent witnesses." She waved her hand, and Winnie the cook and one of the house maids came hesitantly through the door. Angelica said, "Although I had thought that I was the only one to hear your evil plans, it appears that others in the household had also harboured fears for my safety, and had taken to listening to your rather indiscreet conversations."

Winnie nodded her head. "Miss Angelica's father and mother were most kind to me when they were alive, and Miss Angelica herself has always been like a daughter to me. I heard your words and will so testify in any court in the land be it necessary."

Mrs Browning shook her head angrily. "Bah! Mere words mean nothing. I have committed no crime and I dare you to prove otherwise."

Dr Seward replied, "Perhaps not murder, but your daughter did most certainly commit assault upon Angelica's person in my presence."

"With your agreement," Mrs Browning spat.

"I was aware of your threat to murder Mrs Seward from the first day that I met her. I allowed your daughter's assault to happen only to gain custody of my wife's person and secure her safety. Indeed, I had informed Mrs Goodwin and Sir Percy of your plot on the very day that I returned from my first visit to Farleigh House, so I am confident as to the innocence of my motives."

Angelica held up her hand to forestall further argument. "It matters not who shall be believed. We have no intention of involving the law in this matter of my treatment. However, should you choose to pursue the matter of my supposed illness and the control of my trust and its income, your daughter's assault upon my person shall be brought to the attention of the police and the courts. In addition, we and Sir Percy shall make it our business to inform everyone of significance in society of your perfidy. However, there is another option that you may wish to consider."

Sensing a possible way out of her pending reduction to the status of a pauper, Mrs Browning suspiciously said, "And what is that?"

Dr Seward said, "Although we must insist that you and your daughter vacate my new property, Farleigh House without delay, taking with you only such items of personal clothing and accessories as you may possess, I am willing to provide an income sufficient for you and your daughter to live in reasonable comfort, providing you fulfil two conditions. First, that you set down in writing a statement that you have no objection to Angelica's marriage and that you believe that my treatment of her has been correct and honourable in every way."

Mrs Browning knew that she had no viable option, and said, "Agreed. What is the second condition?"

Dr Seward smiled. "The second condition is that your daughter Cynthia should voluntarily, and authorised in writing by yourself as her parent, submit herself to the exact same testing process as was undergone by Mrs Seward during your visit to my sanatorium last year, including the impromptu addendum that Miss Browning insisted on adding at the end."

Mrs Browning hesitated for almost a full half of a second and then snapped, "Agreed."

Cynthia's horrified wail was of such a volume that it could have been heard in the next county. "Mother!!"

The End