

# **PORT ROYAL**

V. W. Singer

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Author's Note: All characters in the adult fiction story are at least 18 years of age.

## NOTES

1. The "Spanish Main" included present-day Florida, the western shore of the Gulf of Mexico in Texas and Mexico, Central America and the north coast of South America especially the stretch of the Caribbean coastline that runs from the ports of Porto Bello on the Isthmus of Darien in Panama, through Cartagena de Indias in New Granada, and Maracaibo to the Orinoco delta. Other than Brazil, which was given to Portugal, most of the American continent was awarded to Spain by Pope Alexander VI. The Spanish Main was a source of incredible wealth which Spain shipped back to Europe via its Treasure Fleets.
2. Naturally, the other European powers, especially England, were none too pleased and were determined to get a share of the treasure of the Americas. In 1655, the English captured the island of Jamaica, which happened to lie right in the middle of the shipping routes running from Europe to the New World. On the south-east coast of the island lay a huge deep water harbour, and despite poor soil conditions and lack of water, the English established there what would become the city of Port Royal. By 1659 over two hundred houses, shops, and warehouses had been built around the fort that defended the port.
3. Letters of Marque were issued by European governments which authorised Privateers to attack and loot enemy shipping (for a share of the booty). Basically it was legalised piracy.
4. "Buccan" was a Caribbean native term for a grill used to smoke meat. French (and other) hunters on Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic) produced smoked meats for sale to passing ships. When the Spanish drove them out they became pirates who came to be known as "Buccaneers".
5. Port Royal was vulnerable to Spanish attacks, so in 1657 Governor Edward D'Oley invited the Brethren of the Coast (the Buccaneers) to make Port Royal their home. He issued Letters of Marque to all who were interested and qualified, thus obtaining a free navy to defend the city and a lucrative source of income at the same time. Eventually all manner of privateers as well as outright pirates based themselves in the city, bringing it fabulous wealth.
6. This wealth drew many businessmen (and women) who bought the plunder and sold the necessities of life such as food, rum, and sex. Port Royal became known as the most wicked and sinful city in the world. One sailor is recorded to have paid a woman 500 "pieces of eight" (Spanish Dollars) just to see her naked.
7. It is estimated that of the population (7,000 to 8,000 people at maximum), around 2,500 were (mostly Irish or English) slaves, many of whom had been forcibly kidnapped, first by the orders of Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, who had overthrown and executed King Charles I, as well as by legal companies and "Spirits", organised gangs of slavers who kidnapped thousands of people, especially political dissidents, off the streets of Britain to supply not just Port Royal and the rest of the Caribbean, but the American Colonies too. Hence the term "spirited away". In the history books they are often called "Indentured Servants", but in reality they were treated no differently than slaves and often worse.
8. The English used during the period was just changing over from Old English to what we would recognise as that language today. I have tried to retain the flavour of the times as seen in stories and texts written during the middle 17<sup>th</sup> Century, without making the dialogue a bother to read and understand. The same goes for the Irish-English. How far I have succeeded I leave to your judgement. The word "cunt" was much more commonplace in those times and not the highly offensive term it is today. In fact, the word "vagina" was not commonly used as a name for the female sexual organ until 100 years later. "Vulva" however was known, but probably as little used in everyday conversation as it is today.

## Chapter One

The sky was a brilliant blue, and the wind was blowing briskly, but it was neither stormy nor threatening. It filled the sails, drawing the canvas taut and made the colours, flags and streamers on the masts and yards flutter and snap bravely. All in all, it was a beautiful day to be at sea and Captain Harry Pierce breathed deep of the good salt air. Taking his gaze from the woolly clouds he called out, "Master Gunner, fire as you bear!" and heard his command echoed by the First Mate.

A Spanish gunner panicked and his gun boomed, sending its ball shooting harmlessly over the water and past the bow of Harry's ship the Talon, shrouding the high stern castle of the treasure ship with a cloud of grey smoke. The Talon had the wind gage as well as being larger and faster than the Santa Margarita and she relentlessly angled across the stern of the Spanish ship until the first of the Talon's guns came to bear.

The deck shook beneath Harry's feet when the first of the Talon's forty-six guns spoke. If this had been a Royal Navy vessel, the ball would have smashed through the Spaniard's stern, flown along its deck, and possibly ripped through some of its crew. But the Talon was a privateer flying English colours, and as captain, Harry desired to capture the ship as intact as was possible. He didn't really care about the crew, although the Spaniards still had aristocrats commanding their ships, and they were sometimes good for ransom. So instead, the muzzles of his guns had been raised by pulling out the quoins, calibrated wedges placed under the breech of the cannon, and the guns were loaded with grapeshot or chain, which would shred the sails, cut rigging, and shatter masts and yard arms.

A cheer went up from the men when a ragged hole was torn through the Santa Margarita's mizzen topsail, leaving it flapping uselessly. Gun after gun fired in their turn, doing further damage to the enemy's sails and rigging, which were already much torn and broken from their first run.

In between the booms of the cannon there came a loud cracking sound. Harry peered through the fog of smoke and grinned when he observed that the enemy's mainmast had snapped off just below the mast top, its fall only slowed by the network of rigging. "Master Wilkes, bring us board to board. Prepare the men for boarding." As the Talon came into a more parallel course with its prey, the Santa Margarita was able to bring some of its main guns to bear in addition to a single swivel-gun firing a half-pound ball, something that English ships had abandoned for years. A Spanish ball smashed through the bulwark, sending splinters flying in all directions and men screaming to the deck, save for the unfortunate soul whom it directly cut in half.

"Let fly the grappling irons!" cried Jeffrey Briars, the First Mate. Despite the enemy fire, crewmen dashed to the side and flung hooks at the gratings that the Spaniards had raised above their sides to discourage boarders and ripped them off by heaving on the attached ropes. Once the way was clear, more grapplings were hurled across the space between the ships and soon the two vessels were bound together by a web of rope and chains.

"Launch granadoes!" Harry cried pointing at the enemy, echoed immediately by the First Mate. Men lit the fuses on the gunpowder filled iron balls and hurriedly tossed them overboard. Some fell into the water, but most landed on the deck of the Spanish ship. Dozens of the deadly balls flew and exploded amongst the Spaniards with sanguine effect while men with muskets on the deck and in the rigging fired upon the enemy to prevent them from doing the same in return.

In the meantime the cannons continued to fire from both ships. But better trained and better motivated, the gunners of the Talon soon silenced the Spanish guns that were able to bear upon the English ship.

When Harry judged that the numbers of the Spaniards had been sufficiently thinned, he drew his sword and one of his "turn-off" pistols. Seeing this, the drummers and trumpeters sounded off bravely. "Saint George and England!" Harry cried, and a great roar rose up from the crew. Men threw themselves across the gap hoping to catch themselves in the enemy's rigging, while teams of men placed long boards in such a position so as to act as temporary bridges. Harry led a group of sailors onto the Santa Margarita, leapt onto the deck and shot a helmeted and armoured Spanish marine in the face. He drove the point of his sword into the throat of a cutlass wielding sailor and

then turned towards the ship's quarterdeck, searching for the officers. He saw Briars standing beside him armed with a cutlass and a belaying pin and he pointed with his sword. "That way!"

Briars nodded. "Right behind you, Captain."

With someone watching his back, Harry began to fight his way sternward past the mainmast in search of the Spanish captain. The screaming shouting press of men were a blur, and his sword cut, thrust, and blocked as if possessed by a martial spirit of its own, and Spaniards fell away from his path in showers of blood until he abruptly found himself standing in an open space and facing a Spaniard dressed in the fine fabrics and tailoring of a nobleman. "Yield, Captain. *Te rindas*," he said, testing his seldom used Spanish, which he understood well enough but spoke less fluently.

"Nunca! Never, English dog. I will see you in hell," the Spaniard shouted. He spat and lunged at Harry with his expensive looking cup-hilted rapier.

Harry swiftly parried, studying his opponent's style. As to be expected, the Spaniard was a skilled swordsman, but from his stance he was more used to duelling on ground that did not sway or judder from the collision of the joined ships or the press of men running hither and yon in the wild melee of combat. He allowed the Spaniard to dictate the exchange for the moment, matching him stroke for stroke but slowly giving way before him, backing to starboard, all the while observing the condition of the ship with his well-honed sailor's senses. Then he felt it. Entangled as they were, the ships had lost way and the wind was coming directly across the beam from the starboard. A gust struck the sails and the Santa Margarita heeled leeward.

The Spaniard was too skilled to lose his balance, but just for a moment was forced to plant his feet solidly and pause in his attack. Harry lunged, and was rewarded by the heated sting of his opponent's sword point slicing into his cheek. Ignoring the injury he completed the lunge and felt his sword pierce flesh and then grind against bone. With a twist of his wrist he was back and on guard again, albeit with blood streaming down his face and neck.

The Spanish captain was a brave man, and though his face was drawn in pain he neither cried out nor wavered. But when he attempted to advance once more his leg failed him and he staggered.

Without hesitation Harry moved in for the finish. A tap of his sword brushed his enemy's blade aside and a swift backhanded horizontal cut opened up his throat.

The sword fell from the Spanish captain's hand as he tried to staunch the torrent of blood that ran down the fine white lace that decorated his tight fitting long coat. His wounded leg failed him and he collapsed to the deck in an oddly graceful twirl.

Harry leapt upon the ladder that led to the ship's poop deck. "Your captain is dead. Yield and lay down your arms!" he shouted over the din of battle, echoed a moment later by Briars.

Most of the Spaniards did not speak English, but the Englishman's shout made everyone pause, and the sight of their captain's bloody corpse made the meaning of his words plain.

Some of Harry's crew who spoke Spanish translated and embellished the call for a surrender. Silence spread across the ship, and then there was the dull clunk and rattle of steel falling upon wood as one by one the defeated crew let their weapons fall.

"Gather up the weapons and bind the prisoners," Harry shouted. "Briars, send a man to check on the magazine. I'll not be pleased if we're blown to kingdom come after all this." This raised a laugh from his men as he had expected. They needed something to ease the fear and anger that came from a deadly fight, lest they might take it out on the captives. The ship's hull was undamaged and no other enemy sail was in sight so they could take the time to properly dispose of their new prize. "You have words, Bos'n?" His boatswain, Isaak Diggle, had a good head and Harry knew it was always worth taking the time to listen if the normally dour faced man had something to say.

"They fought hard, Capt'n."

"Indeed they did," Harry said, knowing there was more.

"Harder than them Diegos normally do even for a treasure ship," Isaak said, giving his captain a knowing look and then nodding towards the door at the rear of the quarterdeck leading to the cabins of the captain and important passengers.

Harry nodded and drew a pistol for reloading. There was no telling what was behind the doors. A twist of the barrel unlocked it from the breech. A tap and flick of his powder horn charged it. He extracted a ball from the pouch at his waist and placed it in the cup shaped cavity in the breech. Though slower to load in a hurry, he liked this style of pistol since it needed no oiled patch or ramming which often deformed the ball and spoiled accuracy, plus it fired with a greater and more reliable amount of power. The barrel and lock were returned to their place and locked down with a firm twist. A flick of his thumb lifted the frizzen, in went the pinch of priming powder, down came the frizzen, and the gun was ready to fire. He did the same for his other pistol, and then pointed at the doorway. He approached it carefully, staying out of direct line of the portal. He had heard tell of a less wary pirate who had opened a door only to meet the blast of a blunderbuss with his face. He discounted the part where a seagull flew through the resulting orifice before the body fell as a storyteller's embellishment.

When Isaak was stood on the other side of the doorway with his cutlass readied to strike, Harry cocked his pistols, first one then the other, and then kicked against the door with the tip of his boot. "The ship is taken. Come out with your hands empty and you shall not be harmed." Under such circumstances no one really placed much reliance upon such assurances, but it had been known to work, assuming that the person or persons inside understood plain English.

There was a click of a bolt being drawn back and the door came ajar. Harry fancied he heard the sound of footsteps, but no one came out. He reached out with a pistol and pushed. The door opened with a creak, but no gunshot or arrow came in response.

"Have a care, Capt'n. It might be a trap."

At least a dozen of his men were watching by now and Harry could not afford to display any lack of courage or daring. "No gentleman could refuse such a polite invitation," he declared, earning more laughter from his men. Banishing thoughts of loaded blunderbusses from his mind, he straightened his shoulders and stepped through the doorway. The vision that met his gaze after he had taken two steps down the passageway made him come to a halt. Spinning on his heel, he went back to the door, holstered his pistols and smiled at the puzzled Isaak. "I shall be closing the door for the moment, Bos'n. Have the men carry on and get arranged to have fallen rigging cut and the mast repaired. I shall be out presently." He raised his eyebrows and waited until the confused boatswain tugged his forelock and said, "Aye, aye, Capt'n" and then gently shut the door in the man's face. He straightened his coat with a tug and reversed his direction once more.

"Am I to be ravished in this wretched cabin, señor?" the dark haired young woman asked stiffly with the demeanour only a blooded aristocrat could manage under such circumstances.

"Ah! You speak English. Excellent. That will make things much simpler. Perhaps then we might start with introductions before we discuss ravishment. I am your captor Captain Harry Pierce, at your service," he said and bowed politely.

The woman appeared to be taken aback by his courtesy, but out of habit she curtsied and said, "I am Señora Cristina Rodríguez de Aguilar, and it seems that I am your captive."

"If your family are able to pay your ransom, then your stay with us need not be a lengthy one," Harry said hopefully. One could never have too much plunder.

For a moment it appeared as if she intended to say something else, but then she seemed to change her mind and simply nodded. "They will pay to have me back."

"Excellent. In that case, if you will follow me, I shall have you transferred to my ship, the Talon where I assure you that you shall be treated with respect and such kindness as we may manage at sea."

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"So, Quartermaster, what do we have?" Harry asked, his hands behind his back as he stared out of the stern windows of his cabin. Cristina had been sent up on deck to get some air escorted by the First Mate, so he was able to discuss matters of finance in privacy.

On many pirate ships the Quartermaster had more authority than the Captain, who could be

voted out by the crew. Harry's ship was a strange amalgam of custom. Officially it was a merchantman owned by Harry in his own right, crewed by wage earning seamen employed by the trading house of which Harry was the senior partner. However, Harry had obtained a privateer's Letter of Marque from the English Governor of Port Royal. When he sailed under the privateer's flag, his men were volunteers and entitled to a share of the booty. However, even though they could not depose Harry as captain without committing violent mutiny, the crew were no fools and recognised a cosy berth when they saw one. They were able to loot and carouse like any pirate, but when they woke up with sore heads and empty purses, they still had a job, meals, and wages to look forward to. Harry also offered something no other privateer or pirate could. He ran the finest brothel in Port Royal, and he kept a coterie of special girls only for his crew at special prices and who were kept free of the pox. Any sailor who brought the pox into the house was banned and booted from the brothel, the Golden Siren.

"Including the ship, supplies, the medicine chest, with the gold and silver coin, each ordinary seaman's share should be close to two-hundred pounds," the Quartermaster reported, grinning. "That should keep the men in rum and skirt for a few days at least."

"First-rate, William. The men performed and fought splendidly."

"I'll be sure to tell them you said so, Captain."

When the Quartermaster didn't leave or make further report Harry leaned on the table between them and said, "Out with it then."

"It's the woman, Captain. You know they have no quarrel with having women aboard. If it's good enough for His Majesty's Navy, it's fine with all of us. But ... she is part of the booty, and the men were wondering .... "

Harry tapped his fingers on the polished wood of the table top. "She claims that her family are good for the ransom, but there is something about her that bothers me, and I would not let the men think they are entitled to a share of something that might not exist."

The Quartermaster looked uncomfortable. "I understand Captain, but some of the men are talking."

Harry's eyes narrowed. "And what do they say?"

"That you plan to keep the woman for yourself ... and the ransom."

"Is that what you think?"

The Quartermaster looked hurt. "I've sailed with you from the beginning, Captain. But you've got to admit, your reputation with the women is known in every tavern in Port Royal."

"But have I ever shorted anyone of their fair shares?"

"No Captain. You never have."

"Well you go and remind the men of that, while I have another word with our fine Spanish lady. Then I'll come up to talk to the men."

The Quartermaster nodded happily. "I'll do that thing Captain," he said, and turned to go.

"And William, tell Bos'n to bring her to me."

"Aye, aye, Captain."

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"You wished to see me, Captain," Cristina said as the boatswain closed the cabin door behind her.

"My men have some concerns about the ability and willingness of your people to pay your ransom." Once again Harry saw a fleeting shadow pass across her elegant visage, and his doubts grew. He held up his hand to forestall her reply. "Although I and both owner and Captain of this ship, when we are out on account as privateers, the men have equal say when it comes to sharing out the booty. The consequence of which is that either they get a share of your ransom, or of your person. Seeing as there are nearly a hundred and eighty men on board, they are likely to be none too pleased with what they receive should it prove to be the latter, the consequences of which are likely to be expressed upon your person. Nor will I be able to protect you. I do believe that you have not

told me the full story regarding your ransom. I strongly advise that you do so now, while you still have the chance." To his surprise she laughed bitterly in response to his demand.

"My father will pay my ransom, have no doubt. Your men shall have their silver. What I have not disclosed are the consequences to me when I am returned. But I imagine that is of no importance to a pirate ... my apologies, a privateer, which is why I have not spoken of it."

"Let it not be said that Captain Harry Pierce was ever heedless of a maiden's distress." He pulled the cork from an onion bottle and poured two glasses of rum, one of which he handed to her. "Come, sit yourself down and tell me the details of your condition for we have time yet before I must face my men." He held the chair for her and then leaned himself against the table with one ankle crossed over the other. He raised his glass to her and took a sip of the rum.

Cristina sampled the rum, grimaced and fanned herself with her hand. "I would suspect that you plotted to murder me if you had not drunk of the same just moments before."

Harry chuckled. "My apologies. At sea I must share my men's tastes or be called a fop or a weakling. Now your tale, if you please."

She slowly twirled the cut crystal glass, studying the way the light sparkled upon it. "I was but recently betrothed and then wed. He was a good match, as such things are counted, and I went willingly enough to my wedding bed."

"I take it that this happy state of affairs did not continue?"

"Indeed. For when the time came to do the deed, so to speak, he found himself unable to rise to the occasion. Perhaps I was not to his taste." She shrugged her smooth bare shoulders eloquently.

"I find that hard to credit, señora. However, pray continue with your tale," he said with a wave of his hand.

She smiled at his compliment and said, "You are too kind, Captain. He continued his assault despite the dampness of his powder, and with each failure he only grew more impassioned. He commanded me to perform all manner of actions in order to stiffen his resolve, and though I was innocent of the ways of a man and a woman, I did my best to comply even though some of what he required was strange and even distasteful to me. But still he failed at the breach, and this did anger him greatly. And for this lack of success he did blame me although I do not know what more I might have done. Driven by his rage he declared that I was the sole cause of his misfortune and that I should be punished for it. With that he began to strike me, first about the arms and shoulders, but soon moving on to more sensitive parts of my person." She glanced down at her bosom and then boldly into Harry's eyes. "Believing that he spoke the truth and that I had somehow offended, I did my best to endure what I assumed to be a rightful rebuke, folding back my arms and baring myself to his blows and biting my lips till they bled in order not to alarm the household with my cries." Her eyes grew wide and gleamed with moisture as she continued with her tale of woe.

"When even this failed, he sprang out of our bed, filled with rage, and declared at the top of his voice that I was a witch and had laid his manhood low with my evil spells. All this noise had drawn the attention first of the servants and then his parents, who began pounding upon the door, demanding to know what was the matter."

"A sorry state of affairs," Harry said sympathetically.

She smiled again. "That was not the worst of it. He continued to accuse me of being a witch, being encouraged by having a receptive audience, red faced and foaming at the mouth. Then he clutched his chest, groaned most horribly, and dropped to the floor, kicking and shaking like an axed steer. The door finally gave up the fight and burst open, spilling the household into our bedroom. And there I was, naked as the moment of my birth, covered with bruises and blood, while my new husband lay on the floor and by now, quite dead. One of the serving girls saw my wild and bloodied condition and cried "witch" and "murder". Moments later the rest took up the refrain."

"I am surprised that you survived to become my captive."

Cristina laughed. "I must admit, I am somewhat surprised myself. But my father is a man of some influence in Madrid, King Charles II is a sickly child, his mother the Regent lives in France, and even the Inquisition is corrupt. Instead of having me broken on the wheel, it was agreed by our families that the marriage be annulled on the grounds of non-consummation, and that I would be

sent back to Spain where I would be committed to a very strict nunnery, where I would be purged of my evil through the application of daily scourging, hunger, and vows of silence."

Harry tapped the rim of his glass thoughtfully. "I see. So your father would be forced to pay your ransom in order to comply with his bargain, and you would be sent on your way once more to take holy orders in Spain."

She nodded. "Not forced. I have become an embarrassment to him. He would not see me dead if it is in his power to prevent it, but he would have me gone. As you see, you may be sure of your ransom."

"I take it then that you are not eager to be re-united with your family."

Tilting her head she said, "I suppose it would depend upon the alternative. Being torn to pieces by an angry mob of sailors after being ravished by most of them, is not such an improvement over my original fate," she said ruefully. "In the convent I would at least continue to live a life, however miserable."

Harry rubbed his chin. The Quartermaster had been right about his near obsession with women, although he never allowed that to adversely affect his financial decisions nor his duties as a master and commander. After all, he could rightly be named a pimp, since he owned a brothel and numerous indentured women, slaves if one were honest, and made a good profit out of them. On the other hand he had never been presented with the opportunity to own a proper lady of good breeding, and definitely not one as pleasing to the eye as Cristina. "I do have in mind an alternate path, one in which can result in you being free after a number of years and in possession of sufficient wealth to see to your needs for the rest of your life."

Her reply proved that she was shrewd and possessed of keen wits "You dangle an enticing bait, Captain Pierce. What then is the hook?"

"It is no trap that I set before you. But what I have to say may not be such as should touch a proper lady's ears."

She laughed softly. "All the good people of Porto Bello know me to be a murderer and a witch. My dead husband's family made sure that their side of the tale was widely told and believed. I doubt me that anything you might say or propose would be unsuitable for the hearing of such a wanton and wicked woman. Say what you must Captain, and fear not for my blushes."

"As you say, my lady. Back in Port Royal I own a number of women, mostly Irish, under contracts of indentured servitude. Whatever it may be in London, here in the Caribbean, that is no different from slavery. The majority work in a brothel owned by me in the city, with a number that I reserve only for my crewmen. Most of these women I purchased from dealers in such commodities who were bound for other brothels, taverns, plantations, and even mines. Most would have been worked to death within three years of stepping foot in Port Royal, saving their owners the expense of freeing them at the end of their contracts, which accounts for the unceasing demand for fresh supplies of indentured servants. I offer better wages, better living conditions, and true freedom after an agreed period provided they do whatever is required of them. My customers and crewmen can be demanding."

"You offer to purchase me to work as a whore?" she asked with surprising calm. "Surely you would never earn enough from selling my charms, such as they are, to repay my ransom even should I work on my back till I was old and toothless." Instead of angering or offending, the idea seemed to amuse her.

"What I have described is by way of, shall we say, framing the situation. My proposal is this. Of these women, whom I would describe as fortunate to be selected by me, I do pick a certain few for my own amusement and service."

She smiled. "Ah, the painting becomes clearer."

He held up a warning hand. "There is more. I require much of those who would enter my personal service. To be clear, I enjoy using the rod and the lash upon my companions, and I expect them to give themselves fully to my pleasure. Thus, none are ever compelled to serve me, but only come of their own choice."

"A bold picture indeed. I take it that I am being asked – and allowed – to choose my fate?"



"You are. I regret that I cannot offer you the simple position of tavern wench or even that of a girl in my brothel, for the amount I would have to give to the crew in place of your ransom is too great to be dismissed as a mere act of charity. Above all, I am a man of business. If you reject my offer, I shall send the ransom demand to your father and return you unharmed when I am paid."

Most men melted like tallow under Cristina's gaze, but she was sufficiently keen as to realise that this English captain was different and well armoured against a woman's wiles, so she did not even consider the possibility of manipulating him. She could either surrender to the nunnery and eternal penance, or she could give herself to this man for a number of years and be free. Since both options would result in physical punishment it came down to a question of how highly she valued her virtue. A year ago she would have unquestioningly chosen death rather than dishonour, but since then she had been abused and betrayed by her own husband, branded a bride of Satan by her own father, and sentenced to a life of hardship and punishment by the servants of God for no fault of her own. As a good and dutiful wife she had been willing to endure beatings from her husband in the cause of his carnal pleasure. Why then should she not do the same in order to save herself when all others had abandoned her? So far, this pirate had shown her more Christian courtesy and consideration than those who were supposed to love her.

She placed her glass upon the table and folded her hands in her lap. "Very well. Provided the terms of my indenture are set out to my satisfaction in writing and you swear to abide by the terms therein, I shall sell myself and my body to you."

Harry toasted her with his glass of extremely harsh rum. "In honesty I cannot deny that I am pleased by your decision. I have with me copies of an agreement of indenture that I use with the girls that I buy. I simply need to add your name, the period of your indenture and the reward due to you upon completion of your period of service. Can you read English?" When she nodded he went to his writing table and drew out a copy of the contract and handed it to her. "Read first the penalties for attempted escape, attacking your owner, his family or his employees, and for failing to satisfactorily perform your duties. When you are done I shall write in the rest."

She read the specified words and she frowned. "These conditions are harsh indeed. Doubling of the period of indenture for attempted escape, and such punishment of the body as deemed fit by the owner including branding and the amputation of fingers and hands."

"The terms are that same as those used in all contracts of indenture and were originally drafted in London by solicitors of the Crown, and have been much copied since. Be as it may, it is not in my own interests to have you sickly, dirty, or weak from hunger, nor to punish you in such ways that will mar your beauty. Perform your duties to the best of your ability and all will be well. You have my oath on it."

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Harry stood on the quarterdeck looking down at the crew, who had gathered to hear him speak, filling the forward deck and much of the rigging and lower yard arms. "Men! I have questioned our captive at length, and I must regretfully report that I have serious doubts regarding the ability or willingness of her family to pay a ransom."

This announcement resulted in a rumbling of unhappy remarks and several outcries such as "Silver! We want our share of the silver that you promised us.", and "Give her to us if she can't pay. We'll take the ransom out of 'er hide!" from the understandably unhappy sailors.

Raising both arms, Harry waited calmly for the noise to die down. "I promised you a ransom, and a ransom you shall have. I shall forgo a full half share, which shall be placed back in the pot for all of the crew."

It took a few seconds for the meaning to sink in, and then the cheering began. The money involved was paltry, but the men needed to know that their leader would look after them and treat them fairly. That was what kept them charging into enemy cannon-fire, muskets and pikes. It kept them working harder than the lowest servants in the houses of the rich. On the sea, they were a brotherhood, and brothers looked out for each other.

"What about the woman?" a sailor shouted above the shouts and noise.

"I paid for her, so she goes into the House."

This raised another lusty and lustful cheer. Harry smiled and waved his first above his head. It was not his fault that they assumed he meant the brothel when he spoke of his house. But he doubted not that they would have cheered just as loudly if he had said that he intended to whip her raw and fuck her senseless

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"It is done," Harry said to Cristina, who stood waiting in the centre of his cabin. He had told her that there was a chance that some crew members would be sufficiently roused to oppose his proposal. Although in most things his will ruled, the sharing of booty was strictly done according to the articles that each had signed when joining the crew. Disagreements over the spoils could be more deadly than enemy cannon balls.

"I must admit to some relief," she said with a mischievous smile. "All women enjoy having many suitors, but I did not look forward to servicing so many of them at the same time."

Harry approached her, stopping when the hem of her skirt touched his boots. "Are all Spanish ladies so bold in their speech?" He smiled to show that he intended no criticism in what he said.

"I have discovered that being an outcast can be quite liberating. Before my wedding night I was as meek and gentle a lady as any." She looked into his eyes. "It appears that I am now your property, no more in the eyes of the law than yonder chair or candle stick. The contract was most definite on that point." Her tone held more challenge than submission. "What shall you do with your new chattel, I wonder?"

Harry commenced to slowly pace around her in a tight circle, his hands behind his back. "I have just purchased a most expensive trinket almost sight unseen."

Her laughter was rich and sensual. "Then it behoves you to examine closely what is now yours, does it not?"

"Why so it does. Do you require my aid to disrobe?"

It was evident that she had given this moment some close consideration. "There's no need to bother yourself. Be at ease, have some brandy, and I shall take it upon myself to reveal all to you." She did not take her new condition lightly, and fully intended to make the best of her new life by indulging her new master's desires to the very best of her ability to do so. She made no pretence of modesty or shame and quickly unlaced her tight bodice with its puffed sleeves, which she slipped from her arms, pulled from around her waist, and placed upon the table. Next came her skirts, both layers, and the separate pockets, all of which she let fall to the deck, seemingly unconcerned that her stockinged legs were now bared to his sight, with her loins shaded only by the hem of her lace-trimmed shift.

"I mean no criticism, but you seem much at ease in exposing your nakedness. Such composure is rare in a girl of so little experience."

She bent over to retrieve her skirts, providing a mouth-watering display of her creamy buttocks. When she had tossed them upon the table as well, she said, "After my husband's unexpected death, I was dragged from our marriage bed by coarse menservants and spent many hours being questioned and subjected to much verbal abuse, all the while naked as the day I was born. They even beat me in that state, although I was spared the knives and hot irons because they desired that I would not appear to be the victim when brought before the governor." She shook herself as if dispelling the ghosts of that time and smiled. "Once a woman has passed through such an experience, mere nakedness holds no further fears for her, I assure you. In fact it is a relief to see but simple lust in a man's eyes rather than the fear and hatred inspired by an accusation of witchcraft, especially a witch who is supposed to have used her powers to un-man her husband." She seemed to dispel the sombre mood that had come upon her with an effort, and with renewed gaiety she lifted her shift over her head, leaving her naked save for her stockings and the ribbons

that held them up. "There, your purchase is unwrapped. Are you disappointed?"

It was a fact that one could find some flaw in any woman's body, no matter how beautiful, but he had to admit that nothing at all came to his mind as he studied her smooth youthful form. "Having seen you thus, I can truthfully say that I do not begrudge a single silver piece of the price."

"You are too kind, Captain." She bowed her head gracefully and then stepped closer to him, her hands at her sides, hiding nothing from him. "I wish you to know that I'm grateful. I'm well aware that you paid your crew much more than I'm worth in ransom, saving me from a living hell. I am determined to fully repay you in the only way that is left to a woman in such circumstances. Whatever I have to give is yours, and I shall begrudge you nothing."

Harry held out his hand and drew her up to stand in front of his knees as he sat down upon the narrow bed that was a luxury aboard ship where all others slept in hammocks or upon the deck. He looked at her and saw the pride and the generations of aristocrats in her blood, and he smiled. Slowly, almost reverently, he ran his hands over her legs and buttocks. "I trust you will. I have told you that I will be cruel in the treatment of your body, but only in so far as it is necessary for my pleasure. I'll never wantonly abuse you or strike you simply out of an excess of bad humours." He leaned forwards, kissed her thighs and then her belly. "In fact, I hope that you will come to enjoy your life in my household."

"For a man who takes pleasure in cruelty, you have a most gentle and pleasing touch, and your words give me hope, and hope is something that I haven't had for a long time." She sighed softly when his fingers gripped her buttocks and pulled her loins towards his face, which he buried in the furry triangle at the juncture of her thighs.

Cristina allowed her feet to slide further apart, giving the pirate room to move between her legs. No one, not even her husband, had ever treated her womanhood in such an intimate fashion and she felt her cheeks redden and the fires of lust heat her blood. Despite all that had happened to her, she was not adverse to the pleasure of love, and was thus pleased that Harry was inclined to use her as a woman and not just a dumb animal to be whipped and beaten. His tongue delved between the lips of her sex and discovered that little point the physicians called the clitoris. The sensation took her breath away and the intensity of it was frightening. She of course knew that the correct pressure on that area could be pleasant, but this direct attack upon her senses was as different as ale was to brandy. "Madre de Dios! What are you –" She realised how stupid her question would sound and bit her lip. Under normal circumstances a gentle bred lady should utter words of denial, "no", "stop", "don't" and the like, but she was acutely aware of her changed status. She was a chattel, a thing that belonged to Captain Pierce, and she had no right to deny him anything. She herself had seen slaves savagely beaten for simply daring to say the word "no". At any rate, it felt extremely good, and she had no desire at all for him to stop, so she made her female parts as available to him as was possible and uttered a chain of appreciative noises. He licked and sucked for what felt like both a very long and a sorrowfully short time, and she sighed even louder when he ceased his caresses.

Harry wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and grinned at the red faced young woman. He slapped her playfully on her bottom. "That was first-rate. You're a lusty little piece to be sure."

"And that's a good thing?" she asked breathlessly.

He slapped her again. "Indeed it is. There are women who, whether by birth or by teaching, are cold fish and in whom the spirit of licentiousness has fled or was never present in the first place. Such women make miserable playthings and make all around them miserable." He pulled her down onto his lap and was further pleased when she giggled and threw her arms around his neck. "And there's the other kind of woman, who possesses and demonstrates to one extent or another, the natural heat and passion that lust generates in us all."

"I cannot deny that I experienced a most unaccustomed heat when you were ... doing it," she said bashfully. "And I would have asked for more, if it had been my place to make such a demand," she said and then buried her face in his neck, shocked by her own boldness.

"Would you indeed! Then fortune has smiled upon me this day in truth, for I have taken a wench who is both handsome and greatly lusty." He bent his head and kissed the tops of her bare

breasts.

"Fie sir, you make me sound like a lowly whore or tavern wench."

"Nay, you are wrong. Such women teach themselves to speak the words of lust in order to lay their hands upon a man's gold, but more often than not their hearts and loins are cold and passionless." He captured a pink nipple between his lips and suckled, making the Spanish woman squeal and moan. "Your dead husband must have been the greatest of fools or a lover of sheep and other men if he was not stirred by one such as you."

She giggled. "It seems to me that you are determined to make up for his failures." She looked at him curiously. "You are much kinder and funnier than I had expected. I admit I was prepared to be hung up by my wrists and flogged the moment you came back through the door."

This made him grin. "Are you disappointed?"

"Of course not. It's just ... I'm afraid to relax because then I might not be able to muster my courage if you were to suddenly commence beating me."

He kissed her lips and revelled in the way she sweetly kissed him back, neither with the formality of an elder female relative nor with the careless abandon of a dockside whore. Her kiss still meant something to her, and thus had meaning for him. "I would not have you live in constant apprehension. While I would train and fashion you for my sport, I have no desire to break your spirit or your pride in yourself. Half of your beauty lies within you, in what some would call your soul." He cupped a hand over her breast. "Perhaps I am being too careful. Are you ready to obey me?"

"In all things. Command me as you will, sir," she declared proudly.

"That being the case, do you put your hands behind your back and keep them there until I am done. I am of a mind to play with your breasts, but do not be afeared. I shall not press you beyond your easy capacity, at least not this early time."

She smiled as she obeyed and shifted her hands to her back. "I trust you to keep my welfare in mind and thus I give myself completely over to your mercy. Though they are greatly delicate and sensitive, my bosoms are yours to use as you will, and my hands shall not shield them though I may cry and scream in the greatest distress."

He kissed her again, first on the lips, and then on her brazen nipples, which made her giggle once more. "I shall first pat them firmly, so prepare yourself."

"I am ready," she replied. Her shoulders bent out of habit when first his hand fell, but his early touches were indeed almost caresses, and she felt her courage grow as the next few were no worse. Her shoulders straightened and greatly daring she did urge him on. "I perceive you would strike me harder. Pray you do so, for I am prepared for it." If he had asked, she would have told him that his many touches and kisses had so roused her fancy that she was quite eager to experience more. However, as a lady, even one in servitude, she felt it best to retain some element of modesty and not to shout her lust from the rooftops.

Indeed, Harry's pats had not been so gentle that they did not leave their mark upon her breasts, which did now exhibit a most fetching pink blush where his hand had landed, so her words were a most welcome encouragement, signposts of her courage and ability to endure. Leaning her shoulders back he lifted her breasts such that her nipples did point upward at an angle, the lightly tapered tips of her breasts offering his fingers an easy and tempting target. With his new Spanish plaything so prepared, he set about slapping them, first one then the other, this time harder than before, briskly and with such force as a man might employ to swat a fly.

Cristina closed her eyes and cried out as softly as she could manage. "Ah! Ah! Ah!" If not for the odious behaviour of her husband, the young and previously pampered woman might have broken and wept at such treatment, but her innocence was a thing of the past. She told herself that the hurting of her breasts and nipples was not a punishment to be feared and endured, but a service she performed for the pleasure of her new master. Therefore, the pain that she felt was a thing to be desired and welcomed. Just as the soreness of her fingers and the bloody pricks of needles were simply part of the process by which beautiful embroidery was made, the martyrdom of her maiden's breasts were the spice which fanned the heat in Captain Pierce's loins. Cristina was a great believer

in duty and responsibility, and now she turned that determination to the purpose of serving Harry's lust. Many noblewomen were taught that compliant submission in the marriage bed and the production of children were their sole purpose, but her mother and father were both lusty people, and she had been raised to believe that the giving of sexual pleasure to her husband was part of God's plan as well. Captain Pierce was not her husband, but she was duty bound to pleasure him even more specifically than her dead husband, since child bearing was no longer her principal purpose. She did not fear the pain, for was not child birth also terrible pain and possible death? The striking of her nipples continued and she noted how they grew stiff and bold under Harry's rude caress.

Harry noted this as well and took it as another sign of her natural lewdness. He had known women who enjoyed the kiss of the lash, but Cristina did not seem to be of that nature, and yet she was plainly enjoying his touch. It would be of great interest to learn what went on inside of her mind and how best he could use it in their games. He paused in the slapping of her nipples to tweeze and twist the stiff pink buds and chuckled merrily at the way it made Cristina moan and beat at the deck with the heels of her dainty feet. When he was satisfied, at least for the nonce, he clucked and stroked her hot and blushing cheek. "How now? Do you regret your choice and see me a greater devil than those fearsome nuns and their scourges?" He lightly touched her arm to indicate that she might bring her hands to her front.

Her freed hands flew straight to her sorely affronted breasts and she closed her eyes, her chest heaving from the impassioned breaths which her recent sufferings compelled her to draw. But truly she was no weakling and it was not long before she smiled once more. "I do confess that I have but once before felt such pain in these parts, and that was but briefly. My husband was too consumed in his wrath to properly apply himself to the punishment of my breasts and teats. Do I regret my choice? Not at all." With that she uncovered her breasts and drew his hands to replace them, pressing his rough sword-calloused palms against the very flesh that but moments ago they had visited with such force. And in all truth she did welcome his touch upon her, even though her breasts did burn and ache most fiercely, and she sighed in delight when he lightly brushed her hardened nipples in sweet apology.

"Egad, you are the sweetest morsel," Harry exclaimed and pressed his lips to hers once more.

Cristina clung to him tightly, as a drowning man might cling to a log. Desire filled her, the need to be wanted and to be safe driving out all fear and doubt. For the first time in her young life she experienced true lustful desire and she wanted to give him everything. "Do you fuck your women or does only the lash bring you amusement?" she asked boldly.

"I am not adverse to fucking," he replied, biting her lightly upon the neck. "But I rarely take full advantage of a woman's cunt, not desiring to sire bastards all over Jamaica, or to spoil the figures of my girls. Thus must I use their other openings for that pleasure."

"Oh? Then must I beg your instruction. I'm but a simple girl, untutored in the ways of love. To what openings do you refer, and how may they be used? I am eager to learn all in order to better serve your pleasure. Do not think to spare me such carnal knowledge."

Harry suckled her nipple and made her gasp by biting his teeth upon it. He was greatly impressed when she offered him her other nipple with a gracious smile. He repeated the bite on this nipple but maintained the pressure of his teeth for several counts longer. "The first of a woman's openings that might be employed for the purpose of pleasure is of course this one," he said, pointing at the juncture of her legs.

"My cunt," Cristina said, eager to show that she was both complicit and compliant. She felt an almost childlike glee in saying the word aloud in the presence of a man.

"Indeed, and a pretty one at that. The next hole in the order of being most commonly used to accept a prick when in pursuit of pleasure is right here." He touched her lips with his finger and followed up with a kiss.

"My mouth? I had wondered about that. In his fury, my husband did push his limp tarse against my face, buffeting me sorely with his loins, but I was never able to discern his purpose. So it

was my mouth that was his destination? I did not dare to part my lips in fear he would accuse me of biting him." She shook her head in wonderment. "That does not seem so bad. If I can accept a man's prick in my cunt, then surely my mouth can stand in its stead. What then is the final opening?"

Harry clucked his tongue. "A quick witted woman like yourself must have guessed the final portal by now. Tell me what it is."

Her habitual modesty made her blush and look down. But her lusty nature made her smile and look up again. "There is but one opening in my body left that might accommodate a cock, and that is the hole of my behind." When she considered her own words her eyes widened. "But that portal is so small. Surely it would cause terrible suffering were such a large object to be forced through? Or perhaps that is your purpose? In which case I am content to be fucked there for your pleasure, though I fear I shall be torn and bloody after the deed."

He lowered her from his lap and onto the bed beside him. "While I'll not hesitate to cause you some pain should it serve my pleasure, in this instance you are mistaken. Come, lean back against the wall and part your thighs, thus, and I shall demonstrate."

Cristina allowed him to move her as he pleased, leaving her with her knees drawn well up and her feet widely astraddle. It felt greatly strange and immodest to show her privates so, but she told herself that matters of erotic love and a tea party in the Governor's mansion each had their own niceties, and so allowed herself to be at ease. The touch of his hand upon her cunt made her hold her breath, but when nothing terrible happened she discovered that the slow gentle stroking of her female parts gave her much delight. When his finger dipped into her slit, sliding up and down and pressing against the portal of her womb, she hastily said, "I am still a virgin. I say this not because I begrudge you my maidenhead, but just so you do not break me by accident since most men place such great value upon it."

Harry lifted his finger kissed the tip and replaced it upon her hole. "Deflowering a screaming maiden does little to arouse my fancy, although I know many men who would pay much to deflower a beauty such as you. But one's first time should be an event worthy of memory, so I shall only pluck that blossom at greater leisure and comfort."

She touched his cheek, and her smile was filled with warmth. "I shall not forget this kindness."

He took her hand and kissed her palm. "I shall not always be kind, and you would do well to remember that."

She glanced down at her breasts and the finger marks that showed clearly upon them. "I have not forgotten." Pressing her hand to his chest she said, "And now sir, pray continue your lesson, for I am eager to be educated in all matters of fucking."

Reminded of her maiden condition, Harry rubbed her cunt with more care but even greater pleasure, knowing like Francis Drake, that he was doing what no other Englishman had done before. After a while he felt her moisture begin to flow. He lifted his wet finger and showed it to her. "Observe the proof of a woman's arousal. There is nothing that a man likes to see more."

Cristina crinkled her nose in delicate disdain. "You men are strange creatures indeed. I would have imagined that seeing a woman's parts thus, moist and disarrayed, would be a most unwholesome sight. However, if it is as you say, then I shall endeavour to put myself in such condition whenever possible for your pleasure."

He dipped his finger lightly back into her well and then moved it lower, making Cristina stir uneasily. "Have no fear, this won't hurt."

Her smile was strained as she said, "Forgive me. My distress is because I have never even imagined the touch of another, least of all a man, upon that spot. Furthermore, sodomy is frowned upon by the Inquisition. Ignore my foolishness and I shall school myself to stillness." Despite her words, she could not prevent a sharp intake of breath when his finger landed upon the tightly furled grommet that lay between the cheeks of her arse, and it was all she could do not to close her thighs tightly in outraged offence.

Harry left his finger resting upon her arse hole and waited as the woman battled against her own modesty and shame.

Cristina realised that Harry was waiting upon her, and she flushed in shame that she had so quickly neglected that duty to serve his pleasure which she had recently declared. She tried to conceive of a way to adequately do penance, and decided that only a greater shame would do. "I beg your pardon, Captain Pierce. I was remiss in my duty as your servant. Please accept this as my atonement." She eased her hands down to her sides and under her body until her fingers entered the crevice between her arse cheeks. Biting her lip, she pulled hard, spreading those cheeks apart and completely baring the very hole that Harry's finger did press.

"Your apology is accepted. And now – " His finger continued its interrupted progress and pressed steadily against her arse hole until that pink portal gave up the fight and allowed his digit to invade that most secret of passages.

"By my soul, that is a most singular sensation," she exclaimed breathlessly. Then she surprised Harry by her merry giggle. "Your pardon, sir. I laugh because I had never in my wildest fancy imagined that when a man first entered my person it would be by that particular passage – nor that I would so willingly permit it."

Moving his finger gently he said, "Are you truly willing then, or do you tell me what I wish to hear?"

"If I were unwilling I would die rather than allow such a liberty," she replied. "Mmm, the feeling is not so very unpleasant. If you choose to use me thus in order to save my belly I fancy I would have little to complain about."

He pushed the finger deeper and moved it about in a lively fashion. "A larger item such as my prick may cause discomfort at first, quite fiercely some claim, although most girls learn to accept it soon enough."

She smiled artfully. "Given your tastes, I'd wager that your words are more a wish than a warning."

Harry chuckled. "Your dart strikes true. I do confess I would not be disappointed should there be some wailing and gnashing of teeth when I fuck you briskly in your nether hole."

She gasped softly when a second finger joined the first inside of her arse hole. "You're making a good start of it, Captain."

"Am I hurting you then?" he asked, pushing his fingers deeper.

"There is some discomfort when you move your fingers so vigorously, yes." She nodded and then pressed her lips firmly together.

He pulled his fingers out of her and held them up. "Later on, I shall make you clean these fingers off with your tongue," he said, grinning at the look of horror and disgust on her face.

For a moment Cristina looked down and her shoulders hunched. Then she sighed and lifted her head again. "My servitude shall be no greater tomorrow than it is today. If I were breaking in a new slave or maid, I would make sure that she is taught the necessity of obedience on the very first day."

"Well said. Better to plunge deep in cold water than to timidly dip one's toe." He held his fingers to her lips. "Clean my fingers."

As the daughter of a Spanish aristocrat, she had been taught from birth that decorum and upholding her family's dignity was everything, especially when at court. She could never show pain, not when her belly hurt during her moon blood, or when her new slipper threatened to crush her toes. She must never show disgust no matter how strange the foods presented at the table. This harsh schooling served her well now. She could hardly think of anything more horrible, but her face remained smooth and calm, and she even managed a smile before she extended her tongue to lick. To her relief, the taste was not exceedingly foul, though she took pains not to dwell upon it. Instead she concentrated upon doing a good job of cleaning his soiled fingers and showing as much enthusiasm as could be expected.

Harry was impressed. "Bravo, señorita!"

This made her laugh merrily. "You are too kind, Captain. I admit that I never expected to be complimented for such an action."

It was his turn to laugh. "I am often named many things, but I am seldom accused of being

kind."

She pressed herself against him, crushing her breast against his shoulder. "I hope to often give you cause to compliment me in the future. Tell me Captain, surely there must be a favourite part of a woman's body, a part where your hand or your lash would naturally go? I ask only so that I might prepare myself to best please you and thus win your good opinion."

"Are you certain that you wish to know? Perhaps ignorance would be better?"

"Is it so terrible then? Already I am able to guess that it is one of a few places. Do not doubt my courage. Men face many terrors on the battlefield or at sea, but women too often face their own terrors within the bed chamber. Most ladies of good breeding wed to further the interests of their families. Some husbands are kind, but others are hateful and cruel. Yet a dutiful wife must please both, and submit her maiden body to whatever his desires may be."

"So be it. Know you then that my eye, and hand, most commonly fall upon a woman's cunt."

"Ah hah! I guessed aright," she exclaimed, almost gleefully.

"Does it not discomfit you?"

"You paid a large sum for me and you were plain regarding what you wanted in exchange. I am not so simple as to assume that my cunt would be immune from the bargain. 'Tis certain that I would pay special notice to a woman's cunt should ever I desire to torment her, knowing my own sex as I do."

"What would you do to this unknown woman's cunt, who so offended you?"

"That is a shrewd and cruel question you ask. Cruelty is a trait much admired by the courtiers in Madrid," she said with a rueful laugh. "So, you would have me devise my own punishments?"

"Perhaps this will aid your thoughts," Harry said as he cupped his palm over the split mound of her cunt, easing his middle finger into the warmth of her slit.

In a dreamy tone she said, "I confess that I once used the back of a hair brush on the cunt of a maid who offended me. I recall that her shrieks intrigued me at the time, but I never had the opportunity to explore that form of punishment further."

"A good start. Carry on," Harry said, gently kneading her cunt.

Cristina closed her eyes and uttered a soft, comfortable sigh. The English pirate was as skilled with a cunt as he was with pistol or sword. "A woman's sex, her cunt, is both greatly sensitive and yet capable of enduring much. A light flexible rod might be suitable if applied with care, but I think a leather strap or belt would be best for beating a cunt – my cunt." As she spoke she imagined punishing her maid again, the way the frightened girl had looked up imploringly at her even as she held her thighs obscenely wide open and bit at her thumb when the brush struck her sex. This separation from reality helped to maintain her calm and suppress the shivering fear she felt at the thought of having her sex tortured. It would be easy to think of Harry as a monster and herself as a helpless victim, and thus blame it all upon him, but she had too much pride to imagine herself in the role of the helpless and terrified serving girl, and it was only her pride that prevented her from finding someone to kill her and ending the nightmare that her life had become, suicide being denied to her under the threat of eternal damnation.

Harry sensed the darkness that clouded her spirit. He had taken in and trained many women for the brothel as well as for his own household, and he could feel when each girl reached a point of crisis. Up to now, Cristina had been partially in shock and fighting with all she had to survive. But at some point in time the truth of her situation would reach the very depths of her being. Many women became hysterical and even violent, while others sank into despondency. For this reason he had been patient and gentle with her. In the early days he had ruined several promising girls due to inexperience. His girls were not plantation slaves, or dull eyed tavern drudges, and he had to take great care not to break their spirit with too much harshness, but neither could he allow them to believe that he could be manipulated. It was a difficult game, but one that he relished. His tone gentle, as if soothing a startled horse, he said, "The thought of such punishment frightens you. That doesn't disappoint me, nor should it be something to be ashamed of."

His words surprised her, but they served to stem the surge of darkness that had threatened to



overwhelm her soul. She nodded and drew a deep shaking breath. "I had thought myself courageous, but it seems that I quail at the first sign of real suffering. It is a humbling thing to clearly see your own cowardice. Perhaps you spent your gold unwisely after all." She felt tears rising to her eyes and she scrubbed them away angrily with the back of her hand.

"Many a soldier or sailor has pissed himself going into battle. Fear comes to us all."

"Then how may I overcome my fear?" His hand had not stopped the slow kneading of her cunt, and the pleasurable warmth of his intimate touch was soothing.

"First by holding fast to honour and duty, which I can see you have been doing. The second may be harder, but just as necessary, it being to trust in your leader or the one placed over you. In time one comes to rely upon experience and one's own skill, but for the new recruit, the first two must serve."

"You would have me trust my torturer?" she asked amazed.

"If for no other reason than I paid a large sum for you. If I had recently purchased an expensive horse, do you believe I would use it beyond its strength or beat it so cruelly that it sickens?"

She slowly shook her head. "Not unless you were a fool."

Harry smiled. "Do you think me a fool?"

She returned the smile. "Many men are fools when it comes to women, wine, and cards, but no, I don't think you foolish."

"Then trust me, at least until the first time I betray that trust."

"That seems fair enough," she said. In that instant, the darkness lifted from her soul and hope returned. She also noticed that the pleasure that she felt from his caress had steadily grown and that her hips were swaying in time with his touch. She thought once more of the careless maid, and how she had accepted her punishment out of duty and necessity.

Softly Harry said, "You spoke of a leather strap. In plain words, a whip. How would you employ such a whip?"

She imagined standing over the maid with whip in hand. What would she do? "I would be sparing with the force of my strokes. A woman is sufficiently delicate in that spot that the whip need not cut and tear the skin in order to sorely punish. Rather I would rely on the number of strokes to build the pain." The whip swung and struck the maid in her mind. The vision became ever more real and she could almost feel the whip in her hand. "It is hard for a woman to give that part of her over to punishment, for the positions required are all most shameful. Yes, I would have her part her legs and bend her waist in all manner of ways to increase her shame and feelings of vulnerability. I would require her to beg for each stroke, using the most coarse language, and to thank me after." Her enthusiasm grew, spurred by the heat of Harry's hand upon her cunt. "But even that would not be enough. I would force even greater shame upon her."

"How so?"

"By making her part the lips of her sex to reveal the hidden secrets and to offer them up to the whip."

With an artful movement of his fingers, Harry spread Cristina's cunt lips apart. "In this manner?"

"Yes, just like that. Then the lash would fly, stinging lightly in one moment, and burning like fire in another, ever changing in its force." His middle finger tapped against the exposed secret flesh of her sex, mimicking the kiss of the lash and she moaned.

Without warning, his hand lifted and planted a brisk slap upon her cunt. Her fear threatened to return, but she remembered his words. She had to trust him and abandon herself to his mercy or go mad with constant terror. She threw her legs wide, offering herself completely. His hand struck again and yet again, but though there was no doubt at all that it hurt, the blows never crossed that threshold beyond which she would be tempted to shield herself or plead for mercy.

For Harry, beating the cunt of a fresh victim was always a particular pleasure, but since Cristina was Spanish, and of noble blood and upbringing, it was an even greater and very special delight to have her willingly part her thighs for him, to feel his fingers land upon her virgin cunt,

and to see the knowledge in her face and eyes that her previously sacrosanct sex was now being hurt simply for his amusement and pleasure. However, he was not using the pain to break her spirit as the Inquisition did to their victims, and so he was careful not to strike her too hard. He continued the slapping of her cunt until he saw both the inner and outer lips of her sex begin to darken and swell, whereupon he ceased and took her in his arms. Her skin was hot and slick with sweat as if she were feverish, but she returned his embrace easily and with no trace of chagrin. "Well done. Very well done indeed. Brava!"

"You are too kind, Captain," she said, fluttering her eyelashes at him coyly as if he had complimented her dancing. Even though her cunt was woefully sore, she felt invigorated and strangely optimistic.

"Tell me true, in what condition is your cunt?"

She laughed. "I would never have imagined that the state of my cunt would become a topic of social discussion as if it were the weather or the lace on a lady's new dress. But to answer your question, it is astoundingly hale after being so roughly treated. If it would not be foolish of me, I would say that it is ready and able to participate in further amusements."

"Such a declaration might indeed be reckless, if not foolish," he teased.

"Nay, not reckless. You earlier compared me most flatteringly to a horse. If a horse I be, then I would sooner be a sleek charger than a broken nag. I have resigned myself to my new purpose, and I desire to perform my duties well and be valued for it."

All this teasing had left Harry in a painfully aroused state. Kicking off his boots, he quickly undressed and re-joined Cristina on the bed after carelessly tossing his clothes aside.

He was only the second adult man Cristina had ever seen naked, and she was relieved to see that he was neither grossly fat nor emaciated, his body well-muscled and carrying the scars that showed he was a real fighting man. She traced a long curving scar on his forearm, and then pointed at his loins. "I am glad to see that my travails have not been wasted," she said, smiling at his rampant erection. She welcomed him back into her arms and then allowed her thighs to fall apart, remembering that he had not given her permission to close them. "May I be permitted to know where you intend to lay your seed, or do you wish it to be a surprise?" His hand moved to stroke the inner surfaces of her thighs and it tickled. When it moved towards her cunt, she was surprised to discover that she felt no apprehension. Pirates lived with the threat of pain and death all the time, but they did not cower in fear. She now belonged to a pirate, and she would do the same.

"It shall be your sweet mouth, I fancy," he replied, kissing her lips.

"And when your seed is in my mouth, what should I do with it?"

"Why, swallow it of course. No harm will come of it."

Cristina laughed. "From the way you say it, I surmise that many women object to this requirement?"

"And you don't?"

She laughed again. "I eat whatever is placed before me at dinner parties, with great apparent pleasure, I might say, because it is expected of me. Some rich crusty old dowagers speak their mind and spit out food that doesn't agree with them, but they have no fear of being ostracised or of making enemies at court. Swallowing your seed doesn't sound so terrible to me. Does it taste absolutely foul?" she inquired, only half in jest.

It was Harry's turn to laugh. "That is not what most women tell me. Some even like it."

"There you have it then. Perhaps it seems too similar to pissing in their mouths. I shall be pleased to drink as much of it as you please." Watching his face intently, she let her hand move down over his belly, stopping just short of his prick. When Harry nodded, she allowed her fingertips to glide, feather light, along and around it.

"And if I chose to piss in your mouth?" Harry asked playfully. Her hand stopped moving upon his cock for a brief moment.

"What you suggest offends my pride more than anything, that I am reduced to a status lower than the boy who empties my chamber pot. In all honesty, I would not do it gladly, but I recognise that torment does not always come from the whip or rack." She felt his prick jump under her hand

and she smiled. "The thought of my humiliation tickles your fancy I see." Her fingers caressed his cock and she sighed, seeing another crumb of her pride fall away. "If you chose to piss in my mouth I will drink it down if that be your pleasure, though I may choke in the doing of it."

Harry licked her neck and pressed his lips to her breast. "For now it is a fancy that I shall keep in store for later consideration." He lightly bit each nipple, making her wriggle. "But such forbearance comes at a price."

The smile returned to her face. "What forbearance does not?"

His hand returned to its favoured position between her thighs. Her moisture was unmistakeable now, and the swelling could not be blamed solely upon the slaps that he had laid upon it. He gripped and squeezed her cunt. "It seems that lust is not completely foreign to your character."

She placed her hand upon his, following its movements. "As your servant I am allowed to speak the truth and not simply what is proper. I am no lover of pain, though I have known men and women who were, but I had hoped that my husband would be lusty and would lie with me for pleasure and not just out of duty."

"And if I made it your duty to pleasure yourself as well as me?"

She laughed. "Then I shall be most diligent in my duties, Captain Pierce."

He rolled over and positioned himself between her thighs. "Then let us make sport of your lust rather than your pain for the nonce."

"Is my poor maidenhead to face the axe after all?" she asked with a wicked smile. After all the teasing and play, she was not reluctant to be fucked.

"In a manner of speaking," Harry said. "First, allow me to guide your hands and do as I tell you."

Cristina held out her hands as if to be kissed. "Do as you will." She lifted her head and watched as he touched her cunt and spread her slit open with his thumbs. With a cunning application of pressure, he caused her feminine bud to protrude.

"In English we call this a woman's clitoris. Have you knowledge of it?"

"I would be a poor woman not to know of that little spot, although I admit none of my tutors or books gave a name to it. Clitoris you say?" She laughed merrily. "You are clearly familiar with it as well."

"A man must know his tools and the materials he works upon. Replace my fingers with yours and hold out your clitoris as I am doing."

She did as he bade. "Are you going to punish me there?" she inquired warily.

Rather than answer her, he moved his knees closer to her buttocks so that his prick was positioned above her open cunt. "Don't allow your grip to slip no matter what happens," he said, leaning forward and planting his hands upon the bed to either side of her head. This movement of his body lowered his prick and it came to rest firmly upon Cristina's cunt and in particular upon her bared clitoris.

A shiver ran through her body. "Ooh. I can feel your tarse touching me ... there. What are you going to –" Her words cut off as if slashed by a cutlass when Harry began to run his cock up and down the length of her slit, with the greatest part of the chafing being against her unsuspecting clitoris.

"Keep your ... hands in ... place," Harry said while moving his hips rapidly as if fucking an unseen cunt. Her slit was sufficiently moist to make the effort a pleasurable one for him, whilst the noise Cristina was making assuredly did not indicate indifference.

She could not swear that she was in pain, but whatever she was feeling, it was so intense that she wanted to scream and claw like a cat with its tail on fire, and it was the most difficult thing she had ever done to keep her slit spread apart under Harry's unrelenting venereal assault. The rubbing and scraping of her feminine centre continued unceasing, until all other thoughts and emotions faded into nothingness, entirely lost to what was happening between her thighs and to the will of the man on top of her. She was feeling what he wanted her to feel, and it would only stop when he wanted it to.

When at last he could hold back no longer, Harry lifted himself back up onto his knees, and then pulled Cristina gently but firmly into a sitting position.

Her head was still spinning when she felt him touch her jaw and she heard him say, "Open your mouth wide." She obeyed, and was only beginning to understand his intention when her mouth was filled by the head of his cock.

"Beware of your teeth," Harry warned. He was in a hurry and had no time to instruct her regarding the proper methods by which a man's cock should be sucked, so he held her head steady with one hand, and rubbed his prick with the other, leaving just the smooth knob within the warm moist cavern of her mouth. He felt his climax rising. "I'm about to come. Remember to swallow it all."

This was the first time that Harry, or any man for that matter, had come in her and she wanted it to be good for him. She wasn't really sure what she could do to make it better, but she guessed that licking that part of his cock in her mouth would be good, given the way her clitoris had felt just a moment ago. As a matter of fact, her cunt still felt rather good, all hot and tingly, although she sensed that there was something else, something more, which could make it even better. Harry's grip on her hair tightened and it hurt her, although she knew that it was not his intention to do so. Oddly, the way he pulled her hair and used it to hold her head in position was strangely exciting, though she could not explain why it was so. Then he came, and she felt his seed spurting into her mouth. Faithful to his command, she swallowed quickly so as not to get choked, fearful of a mighty torrent of liquid like a person squatting with a belly full of ale. But instead the flow was quite tolerable, although strange of taste and texture. She guessed that she would be tasting its like often, so she did not hold her breath and swallow, but instead savoured it carefully, teaching herself to accept the taste, just as she had done with raw oysters and other exotic foods when she was growing up. It seemed that her life had not changed all that much. If her mouth had not been full she might have smiled.

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"You have the smile of a man who picked up a gold coin from the street," Briars said.

Harry clapped his First Mate on the shoulder. "It seems that my half-share was not totally wasted." He inhaled deeply, taking in the tangy salt air that made the sails crack and rumble.

Briars shook his head. "I will never understand you, Captain. I have followed you for four years, and I know you are no skirt chasing fool, but I would never pay that much for any woman, and I can't understand why any man would."

"Gold isn't everything, my friend."

"Says the man who has more wealth than I will ever see in a lifetime."

"To a man who's share of today's prize is more than most men see in years." As First Mate, Briars was entitled to one and one half shares according to the ship's Articles. "Most of the crew will waste their prize money on drink and whores, so I don't see what you're grumbling about."

The First Mate shook his head. "Drinking and whoring is natural. But putting all that money in one woman is too much like marriage for my taste. Makes a man weak to chain himself to one woman."

"Have you forgotten that I have a flock of skirts back in the house? And that I paid for all of them. I don't see any chains on me."

"You never paid so much. It makes her too valuable, and that's a weakness." Then he laughed and waved his arm dismissively. "Argh, it's just me talking about nothing. Forget I ever mentioned it. We all find our pleasures in our own ways."

Harry laughed and clapped Briars on the shoulder again. "Yes we do, old friend. Yes we do. Tell me when the prize crew is aboard the Santa Margarita and she's ready to sail."

"Aye, aye, Captain. Do we make sail for the rendezvous as planned?"

"Indeed we do, Briars. And if we're lucky, we'll soon have more women for you to complain about."

"Them's cargo, Captain, not women."

Harry's gaze was speculative as he watched his friend and right-hand man walk away. Briars had very definite ideas about the place of women in his world. He inhaled again and smiled at the clear sky and brisk breeze. They should intercept the English merchantman off Hispaniola just as he had planned.

## Chapter Two

"Ahoy the Constance! Captain Pierce of the Talon would have words with you!"

After a moment a man appeared at the side of the quarterdeck of the merchantman. "I'm Mr White, master of the Constance. What is your business?" he shouted, all the while nervously eyeing the Talon's many gun ports. If it turned out that he had made a mistake and the strange ship was a pirate, he was heavily over-matched in fire power and out manned as well.

"I know of your cargo, Mr White. I would offer you a premium on the price of your goods for the opportunity to have first choice."

"I've heard of your name Captain Pierce. They say you deal fairly and pay an honest price. Come aboard and we can discuss business over a glass of wine," White shouted back, lifting his tricorn hat in salute.

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"To your health, Mr White." Harry raised his glass in a toast.

"And to yours, Captain Pierce."

They were in the Master's cabin, which was relatively plain and austere, compare to his own aboard the Talon. "Tell me, where did your cargo come from?"

"Ireland, Captain. Good strong stock. Better than the scum they scrape up from the streets and prisons in England." The master scratched his head. "You must have spent a lot of time tacking across this trade route in order to intercept me. Tell me, why did you not simply wait at Port Royal harbour?"

Harry tossed back the glass of wine and smacked his lips. "For several reasons. I dislike auctions. I find them distasteful. Plus I do not get to talk to the girls at an auction. More importantly, you are still nearly a week from Port Royal. Poor food and conditions can seriously affect the health and appearance of the girls." He held up his hand to forestall the master's objections. "I mean no criticism, sir. I'm sure you do not wish to lose any of your cargo to sickness. But you must admit, they are not fed and watered as well as even the lowest of your seamen. After all, a merchant must make a profit to survive."

"True enough. I see you understand the financial aspects of my trade." White grinned and thumped his fist upon the table. "Come then. Let us go below and I'll show you my wares."

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Harry followed the ship's master down the ladders into the hold. The main thing that a person visiting a slave ship for the first time would be struck by was the infernal stench. Sailors are not the most fragrant of people under ordinary circumstances, but slaves have little chance to wash even with the seeping rain water or the salt water that leaked into the ship, nor could they move about in the open air during the month's long voyage. Unlike the crew, who could visit the head, the holes near the bowsprit, when they needed to ease themselves, the slaves made do with buckets which were passed forward and emptied over the side by one of the slaves or supposed "indentured servants". Combined with the odour of ample amounts of vomitus and festering sores, the odour in the slave holds was truly hellish, although White did not seem to notice.

The women were kept separate from the men for obvious reasons, only a little to do with modesty. Most of them were kept in light chains, unlike the men, mostly to prevent the ugly scars and sores that heavy iron neck and ankle shackles unavoidably produced. Even though they were women, Harry was not surprised that with them came four crewmen armed with clubs and cutlasses, while more men, bearing blunderbusses guarded the hatch.

"On yer feet!" the sailors shouted, beating on the wooden bed frames with their clubs, while Harry and Master White each held up a lantern to provide light.

Surprised by this unexpected visit, those women who possessed the strength to obey climbed

out of their cramped accommodations, and fearful whispers echoed about the foetid hold.

Harry judged that the investors in the voyage and Mr White himself were generous and kind based on the measure of their kind. Aboard many slave ships the slaves sat chained upon a plank for the entire voyage, pressed tightly against his or her fellow sufferers.

Mr White waved his hand around proudly. "We throw buckets of sea water on 'em every few days to wash away the filth. Some would say it were an unnecessary kindness, but from my experience I find that less of 'em die that way, which is good for the investors, as well as me and the crew. Lessens the stink too."

Mr White turned to look down the length of the hold and the two rows of filthy, half-starved women. "Listen to me! Beside me stands Captain Pierce. He is interested in buying some of you bilge rats, which means you get out of those chains and this hold." He stepped back and nodded at Harry.

The privateer held up his lantern so that the glow lit up his face. "Hell awaits you in Port Royal. Most of you will end up in plantations, or working in taverns and brothels scrubbing floors and doing laundry until your fingernails fall off and you die of hunger. The better looking of you might become slave whores, fucking rich drunken pirates to earn gold and silver for your masters, and then die of drink, hunger, or the pox, if some sailor doesn't cut your throat first." As he expected, this caught their attention. The need to survive is strong in most, and would get minds dulled by exhaustion and starvation working again, if only for a moment. But what drove people even harder was that evil bitch, hope. "But for some few of you, it need not be like that. I run the best brothel in Port Royal. My girls eat well and their lodgings are better than most of the free folk in the town. I do not allow the customers to hurt you, and those patrons that show signs of the pox are banned. Those who are chosen shall be given a fair wage. I have an estate inland, and those who are too old or sick to attract custom are allowed to live out their lives there. Those who so desire can save up and buy their freedom before their contract expires, and I do not make it so that you are always in debt."

There was an immediate stir amongst the younger and fitter women, or at least those that spoke enough English to understand what he had said. They already knew the harsh fate that awaited them in Jamaica, where conditions were even worse than in the Barbados or the Colonies. Their guards had delighted in regaling them with horrifying tales of merciless black overseers who delighted in tormenting their white charges.

Harry paused, waiting for his words to sink into their minds and for whispered translations to be passed around.

"In addition, I also seek a few for my own household. Those who are picked will open their legs for no one other than me."

Some of the girls retained sufficient spirit to giggle at this.

"But pleasing me is hard. However I shall explain in greater detail once the first selection has been made." Lowering the lantern he looked along one row and then the other. There were about one-hundred and fifty women in the hold, but many were easily eliminated. Some were too old or sick, some ugly, some too fat, though there were fewer of those since the hardships of the voyage tended to make everyone lose weight. "Those who wish to be considered, remain standing. The rest sit down. There was much uncertain shuffling and whispering. He waited for a moment and then shouted. "Be quick about it! If you can't make up your mind, then I don't want you." More women sat down, weeding out the meek and the easily frightened. Soon there were only twenty-six girls still on their feet.

But Harry was not done yet. "When I come up to you, you will open your mouths and show me your teeth, then open your bodices and show me your breasts, and finally lift your skirts up to your waist and show me your back and front. I don't need your name, but if you are a virgin, then say so." This resulted in five more girls hurriedly seating themselves, making him smile. He was not intent on humiliating these women simply for his amusement, but he did not want any girl who was so painfully modest that she could not overcome her modesty for a chance to save her life.

Now that he had separated the wheat from the chaff, Harry began the actual inspection. The

first two women were not to his taste and he ordered them to be seated. The third was pretty. He was accustomed to seeing under the grime, sweat, and sallowness brought about by fear, anger, and exhaustion.

"Are you after telling us the truth?" she asked, the Irish burr clear in her voice.

Most English despised the Irish and had little sympathy for any hardships they suffered, seeing them as less than human. Harry had no great liking for the Irish, but he did not hate them or despise them either. Many of his crew were Irish, and they were just as good, or bad, as anyone. So when he looked at her, he saw a pretty girl who had the strength of will not to simply grab at the offered lifeline, but who dared to question it. "Pon my oath," he replied.

She nodded, and then opened her mouth. She pulled back her lips in a mock snarl to show her teeth when Harry held the lantern up to her face. When he nodded, she closed her mouth and her fingers went to the fastening of her bodice. As she worked she said softly, "You spoke about the serving of only you by some of the girls, and you mentioned a price. I'd like to know what that be?"

Such boldness and challenging gaze interested Harry, so rather than rebuking her for speaking out of turn, he leaned close to her ear and whispered.

Her eyes widened and she lifted her eyebrows. "So that's the game," she said. She finished unlacing the front of her stained bodice and coolly lifted her breasts out of her shift. She put her hands on her hips and waited.

From the shape and colour of her nipples, he gauged that she had never nursed a child. He nodded and pointed at her skirts.

As she bent over to gather up her hems, she said softly, "I amn't afraid, and I'm strong." Then she briskly gathered her skirts up, baring her lower body completely. When he lowered his eyes to look at her cunt she said, "I've had fingers up me, but that's all. God's truth."

"Turn," Harry said, and silently studied her buttocks and the backs of her legs. She had good skin and no serious scars. "All right. Face me. Have you any scars or marks on you?"

"Only the one on my knee when I fell."

Harry nodded. "All right." He turned to Mr White and pointed to her. "This one." He moved on to next girl. One had only half her teeth, several had breasts and bellies badly marked by childbirth, more were too plain or too frightened. He had picked six in all by the time he reached the last girl. She was slight and boyish and Harry might have passed her by except for her startlingly red hair and china white skin. "Are you certain you understood what I'm offering?"

The girl covered her mouth and giggled. "After I be seeing all them girls show you their breasts and other bits I'd have to be daft not to know what you're seeking."

"And you're not daft, are you," Harry stated.

"No, your Lordship. That I'm not," she said and grinned.

"I'm no lord. Captain will do."

"As you say, Captain."

"Are you sure you desire to be a whore? If you stay with Mr White you may be sold to a tavern or a plantation and work as a servant."

"You didn't come out here in your ship just to get first pick. You're looking for something special, something to be doing with the sex."

Intrigued by her boldness and obvious intelligence, Harry nodded his head and waited to hear what more she had to say.

"You whispered in that girl's ear. Would you be telling me what you said to her?"

He smiled. "I would," he said, and repeated his whispered words into the redhead's ear.

Rather than appearing frightened or shocked, the girl simply nodded. "So, it was the sex." She showed him her teeth and commenced to undo the fastenings of her dress. "I amn't as shapely as some, but there's nothing I can't or won't do for you."

The fact that the girl still had the strength of will to speak as she did after all that had happened to her informed Harry that she was indeed stronger than her slight form suggested. "Show me what you have, and perhaps we'll talk."

The girl nodded. "Fair enough," she said. When her bodice was sufficiently loose, instead of



pulling her clothes aside to show her breasts, she bent over and pulled both bodice and shift up and over her head. Tossing them behind her she unfastened her skirts and lifted them up and over her head as well, her ankle being in the grasp of the light steel shackle and chain. Completely naked save for her shoes, she lifted her arms and raised her hands above her head.

Harry ignored the gasps of shock from the other women in the hold who could see what was happening and concentrated upon the pale figure before him. He held the lantern close and ran it up and down along her slim, sweat stained form. Now that she was naked, the girl actually seemed more shapely than when she was swaddled in cloth. She was clearly used to hard work. Poised and stretched as she was, she reminded him of a fine greyhound. Her slim body made the curves of her breasts and hips look larger than they actually were, and the bright red triangle of hair at the juncture of her thighs glowed like a flame in the lantern's light when he held it near.

Swivelling upon her toes she turned herself around to show her back, and then turned to face him once more, all the while with her hands raised above her head. "Now I'm after being naked, what do you think of me?" Her gaze did not waver in the slightest beneath his regard.

"I'll not lie. My expectations were not high when first I saw you, though your features are handsome enough. Now that I see you clearly –" He could see that she braced for the humiliation of rejection in front of all her peers. "I am forced to admit that my initial impression was wrong. I like what I see, and I like the boldness and fortitude it required to expose yourself to ridicule and humiliation in pursuit of your aspiration."

It was obvious that she was not accustomed to praise and her fair complexion betrayed her blushes more clearly than most. She essayed the barest hint of a smile. "Fortitude, is it? I can show fortitude with more than being naked."

"But why would any girl seek out such attention?" He brought the lantern back to her face.

"Perhaps I do be liking it?" she said lightly.

"The fucking or the other?" Harry asked, noting the way she had made not the slightest effort to hide her private parts from him.

"Maybe both? The only lustful acts that I've known do be from my own hands, but I've liked that well enough. As for the other, my mother she be having a wicked temper and a heavy hand."

Harry was a good judge of character, and he felt sure she was speaking the truth. Besides which, the sexual heat fairly glowed from her body like a red hot coal. Silently, he reached out and gripped her nipple with his finger and thumb. He squeezed lightly in warning and saw her nod. Then he pinched – hard. He saw the muscles of her upraised arms tighten and flex, but she remained as still as a statue, and even smiled when he withdrew his hand. He smiled back and turned his head to Mr White. "And this one too."

There were some angry and disgusted faces amongst the watching women, but more than a few softly called out in encouragement and support, but the slim redhead ignored the former and smiled at the latter as she hastily dressed herself, grimacing at the touch of the filthy rags that had been her clothes. Harry waited until she was freed from her chains and led her back to the others.

Mr White grinned. "You've chosen well, Captain. I do declare that you have skimmed the cream from the barrel. Come back to my cabin and we can talk business over more wine."

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In the end Harry managed to settle on prices going from 25 to 30 pounds for each of the girls depending on age and condition. This was as much as was normally paid at the dockside slave auctions for skilled workers and craftsmen, and much above the 14 pounds normally fetched for a female slave, who cost the slavers around 9 pounds in England or Ireland plus the cost of feeding them on the voyage. He guessed that Mr White would not be recording that full sum in his books but rather keeping a cut for himself.

Aboard the longboat, Harry addressed the women, who were delighted to be in the open air once more and in high spirits. "Ladies, you see before you my ship the Talon. Once aboard, you shall be allowed to wash and be given a good meal. Although you will be confined below deck, you

shall not be chained or otherwise ill-treated."

The women cheered and began to chatter amongst themselves like a flock of birds.

"Silence!" Harry's roar cut through the chatter like a headsman's axe. "You now belong to me, body and soul. Displease me and I will have you flogged. Do it again and you will be thrown overboard wrapped in chains. Am I understood?" He glared at each of the women in turn, his hand resting on the hilt of his sword. "Am I understood?" he repeated and smiled grimly at the bobbing, nodding heads. "Better. You are headed for Port Royal. The pirate city of the Caribbean. The King and his laws care nothing for the fate of slaves. The Governor of Port Royal doesn't give a piss for slaves as long as he receives his cut of the booty and his taxes. Only one person cares whether you live or die, and that's me. Cross me, and you'll wish you were dead. Make me happy and you'll live as well as any in Port Royal. My word on it, and my word is gold – isn't it boys?"

"Aye, Captain!" the sailors shouted, grinning at the frightened women, many who had seen this same show before.

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Cristina had been allowed to watch the arrival of the new girls from the quarterdeck, and the sight of their sad condition drove home the degree to which her well-being depended upon remaining in Captain Pierce's good favour. The only way she could differentiate herself from those bedraggled wretches in his eyes was by her behaviour and skills. What lay between her legs had suddenly become a base and common commodity. But she knew she was better than these peasants, and she was going to prove it. She leaned on the railing and watched as the women were hoisted aboard one at a time, and then made to take off their rags right on the main deck. Their cries of outrage and shame made her smile. Her smile grew wider when the sailors, following the orders of Captain Pierce, began to throw buckets of sea water on the naked women and their shrill cries filled the air like the calls of seagulls. She noticed two women who did not struggle or hide their nakedness with their hands, and who obediently took up the bars of soap thrown to them and washed themselves from head to toe, as well the manner in which the taller one encouraged the others to do likewise. That one was a leader and possible competition. She determined to discreetly find out more about those two from Captain Pierce.

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Harry always performed this bathing ceremony on deck whenever he purchased a batch of women at sea. It tested the quality of the women and revealed their personalities. It was also a treat for the men and helped to allay the resentment they might feel. "Wash yourselves properly, every inch. And don't forget your cunts!" He shouted the last, playing to the crew and making them laugh.

He noted the different behaviour of the two girls that he had mentally marked and nodded to himself. "The sooner that all of you are clean, the sooner you will eat. You stay on deck and naked until the last one of you is clean to my satisfaction," he shouted over the splashing of the water and the high pitched noises being made by the girls. As he had expected, the tumult quickly subsided, and some of the girls even began to cooperate in washing each other's backs. He saw the slim redhead, who had been hard at work scrubbing the weeks of filth off right from the beginning, smile in amusement at the antics of the others.

When he was satisfied with their cleanliness, the girls were allowed to dry themselves with coarse towels and given simple linen tunics to wear. He nodded to the Quartermaster. "Have them shown to their quarters and fed, Quartermaster."

"Aye, aye, Captain. The Bos'n has reminded the men about the handling of the cargo."

"Excellent. First Mate, get us underway for Port Royal."

Harry had already worked out the course and given it to the First Mate, so men were clambering up the ratlines and into the rigging by the time he had reached the quarterdeck.

Cristina wrinkled her nose when he approached. "Pooh, you smell very bad, Captain Pierce."

Harry laughed. "The hold of a slave ship is not the place for those with refined tastes. I would have joined the women in their ablutions except that the men would have seen that as foppish and weak. Hardy sailors shouldn't mind a bit of smell." He waved her towards his cabin. "But what I do in the privacy of my quarters is none of their concern."

She watched while he handed his coat to a cabin boy to brush and air, stripped to the waist and washed himself with a cloth, soap, and a basin of water. "Should I exchange my dress for one of those smocks that you gave the others? I doubt many of your slaves wear such finery."

"What you wear will do for now. I want to show you off when we dock. After all, you are plunder and not trade goods like the others."

"As you wish, Captain. The other women may not see it that way."

"Afraid of their jealousy?"

She smiled. "I would be of little utility to you with my throat cut."

"The punishment for a slave who damages her owner's property is severe. I do not fear for your life, although some of the girls may be used to settling matters of rank with their fists. In that I cannot shield you without keeping you caged away like some rare and delicate bird."

Although she was frightened of those coarse screaming women she had seen on the deck, her pride prevented her from showing it. "I understand, Captain. The ladies of court in Madrid and in the Governor's mansion fight just as often and hard for status, if not always with their fists and feet. I shall have to fight for myself."

"Just remember that many of these girls have a deep hatred of the English aristocracy, and probably people of the upper classes of any other kingdom as well. The less you mention your family and social position the better."

She nodded. "I understand what you say, but I will not apologise for my blood and heritage."

Harry put his shirt back on and opened the door to shout for the cabin boy, but found him waiting outside with his newly brushed coat. He put it on and turned to Cristina. "It would be best if you spend the rest of the voyage with the other women. Follow me."

Despite her misgivings, Cristina did as she was bade and walked behind Captain Pierce as he headed for the hatch that led below. Since the Talon was a warship, the first deck below was a gun deck lined with rows of cannon, and when not in combat, slung with the hammocks of the crew. The accommodations for the slave girls was below that on the orlop deck just above the hold, magazine, and other store rooms. It was hot and often damp, but since the Talon rarely undertook long voyages, it was not as great a hardship as being in the slave ship. Because of their small numbers, the girls had much more space and comfort as well. The entrance to the holding section was sealed by a heavy iron-banded door with a hinged view port. There was no guard, and Harry unlocked the door with his key, copies of which were held by the First Mate and Bos'n.

The seven girls watched warily as Harry stepped through the portal, and there was a buzz of surprise when they saw Cristina come through behind him. Harry closed and locked the door, and then turned to regard the women, his hands behind his back. Even in the dim lighting of the room, the girls' appearance was much improved, as was their scent. "Have you all eaten?" he asked briskly. There was a confused chorus of replies, but he gathered that the answer was yes. "After the hardships of your voyage, I know you are all still feeling hungry despite your full bellies. I shall have more food and drink sent in a few hours from now." This announcement was met with happy smiles. They knew just as well as he, that too much food and drink after near starvation would make them sick and their bellies ache. He pointed at Cristina. "This is Cristina. She is a Spanish captive from the ship we took before we met up with your vessel. Her family is unable to pay a ransom, so she is now my property, just as you all are. She will be joining you in here until we reach Port Royal. She speaks English." He pointed at the two girls that he had talked to about his own desires. "You and you. If you haven't done so already, I want you to tell the others what I told you. When I return, I want those who have an interest in being my house slaves to make themselves known to me. Until then, ladies." He nodded to them, spun on his heel and let himself out of the room.

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Several of the women went to stand in a loose circle around Cristina.

"How come you have a dress instead of this?" one woman said, tugging at her tunic.

"I was wearing it when I was captured," Cristina replied, warily.

"Very fancy," said another, giving Cristina's skirt a tug.

"It was a present for my wedding."

"You married then?"

"I'm a widow."

"Then you'll not be a virgin then," said the first.

"I am. My husband died on our wedding night." Normally Cristina would not have answered such impertinent questions, but it did not seem wise to offend these angry looking women. Captain Pierce had mentioned that they were all from Ireland, but she knew little of that land or its people, except that most were good Catholics. Her reply drew a laugh from her inquisitors.

"Tis unlucky you are, to be sure. First a widow on your wedding day, and then a slave to an Englishman."

"So what gives you the right to come in here acting all high and mighty in your fine dress, when we were having to be naked in front of all the men?"

Cristina had foreseen this reaction and suppressed the urge to sigh. Captain Pierce could not protect her and she had to live with these women, at least until they reached Port Royal. "What would you have of me? As you say, I am a slave, just like you."

"You've not been naked before all of us and shown like a cow at market like we've been."

Cristina held out her hands. "Captain Pierce has seen me undressed and I was required to show myself to him. But if it would satisfy you, I shall disrobe for you right here."

Excited by their unexpected freedom from the slave ship, clean and with full bellies, the women were eager to grasp this opportunity to exercise power over another. Laughing and telling jokes in Gaelic, which they knew the Spanish woman would not understand, they gathered in a circle around Cristina, forming a small arena.

"Go on then, strip!" someone cried.

"Strip! Strip! Strip!" the women began to chant.

The scene reminded Cristina of the terrible events of her wedding night and panic threatened to overwhelm her. She found herself standing near the two women that she had noted on the deck, and was surprised and heartened when the slighter of the two spoke to her.

"You don't have to do this. It isn't right or decent. I'll stand by you if you choose not to."

The other woman nodded in agreement.

Cristina was sorely tempted, but she knew that to resist would only create trouble. She smiled at her unexpected supporters. "It's all right," she whispered. "But thank you." She moved back to the centre of the ring. The chanting grew louder as she took off each piece of her clothes. With no men about, the words shouted by the women were of such a bawdy nature as would make a dock hand swoon. She was glad that she could not understand half of the things that were shouted at her.

The shouting and taunts died down when she was wearing only her shift. The women fell silent, watching and waiting like a pack of she-wolves for the aristocratic woman to shame herself.

Cristina bent and gripped the hem of her shift and raised it to her knees. After all she had been through she felt little shame, especially since there were only women in the room. However, it still stung her pride to have to expose herself at the whim of these commoners. In addition, like hounds that had scented blood, she suspected that they would not be satisfied simply with her nakedness. However, any sign of reluctance would only give them cause for anger, so she straightened up, pulling her final garment up around her head and shoulders, and then off of her arms, leaving her completely naked. She was confident in her beauty and stood proudly before them. Let them stare, let them mock. What did she care? Captain Pierce had paid a huge amount in order to possess her, more than he had paid for all of these women together.

One of the Irish girls, a green eyed, blonde haired beauty saw Cristina's pride and confidence

as an offence. "Will you look at her? She do be thinking she's better than us," she shouted angrily, waving an accusing finger in Cristina's face. She spotted a stool at her side. Picking it up she dashed it to the deck, smashing it into pieces, leaving her holding one of the rounded legs in her hand, which she waved about like a truncheon. "I'll be betting she'll not be so high and mighty when the Captain discovers she's after losing her maidenhead."

Scared and angry, Cristina said, "Fool! Captain Pierce places little value on my virginity, but still it belongs to him and he will be greatly angered if you damage it. You will be the one to suffer, and the rest of you as well if you allow this to happen."

"Now the Spanish cow be calling us fools! Take her girls, and we'll be showing her a true Irish welcome."

Two of the women responded and jumped in to take Cristina by her arms and legs. They threw her to the floor and although she struggled wildly, they lifted her feet high and spread them apart. She wanted to scream in panic, but pride made her remain silent. She would not show weakness before these gutter sweepings, even though she knew there was a chance she might be seriously injured or might even bleed to death if the stool leg was jammed into her too hard. She saw the two girls who had been friendly towards her struggling with the others in an attempt to rescue her, but they were outnumbered and forced back by the threats of the angry blonde. The girl holding the splintered shaft of wood loomed over her, grinning viciously and Cristina fought with all her might to free herself, but although she twisted and writhed like a landed fish the tip of the stool leg inexorably approached her open cunt. She was completely dry and the flat tip of the truncheon ground painfully against the opening of her sex. She bucked and shook her hips from side to side but was unable to escape the painful pressure. She grunted when she felt the rough splintery tip lodge itself in her opening. Sweat ran into her eyes making her blink and she gasped when someone stamped a bare foot on her breast.

"Any moment now, you bitch," the blonde haired girl gloated as she gripped the end of the stool leg with both hands and prepared to throw her full weight against it.

A loud crash made by a table being kicked across the room made everyone jump in fright. "Odd's fish! What in damnation is going on here?" Harry roared with a voice used to being heard over the din of battle.

The blonde dropped the stool leg as if it was on fire and all the others guiltily stepped back from Cristina's supine form.

Harry gestured for Cristina to stand up and folded his arms across his chest. "What happened?"

Cristina felt all the women staring at her, waiting for her to bring Captain Pierce's fury down upon them. She was angry, furious that these common girls had frightened her and laid hands upon her. But she also knew that she had to live with them. "The ladies were playing a game to welcome me, Captain. I'm sorry if it became too boisterous."

Harry nodded thoughtfully and bent to pick up the abandoned stool leg. He noted the traces of blood on its end and tapped it against his palm. "You are all my indentured servants. Under the law, you are my property. Damaging my property is equivalent to theft." He spun and pointed the makeshift truncheon at the nose of the blonde. "You. What happens to thieves?"

The girl's face paled. "Th-they be f-flogged, Captain Pierce." She fell to her knees and began to cry. "Please sir, don't flog me. I'm sorry. I truly am," she begged.

Harry's face was stone. "I'm greatly disappointed in you all. I gave you a chance to avoid the hardships of being sold in the market at Port Royal. You should know there are whores in the town who would sell their souls to find a place in my bordello. I see now that you are not fit to work for me, so you shall all be sold at the market as soon as we dock." He pointed at the blonde. "You shall be flogged before you are sold." He spun on his heel. "Cristina, come with me." Behind him the rest of the girls commenced to sob and wail.

Cristina caught up with him just before he reached the door. "Captain Pierce. Wait. Please."

Harry stopped with his hand on the door and was still for a moment as if debating with himself. Slowly he lowered his hand and turned to face her. "What is it? I warn you, I am not overly

pleased with you for lying to me,"

The Spanish woman had not paused to pick up her clothes, so she stood before him naked. "I understand Captain, and I admit I deserve to be punished for lying to you. My only excuse is that I was trying to maintain the peace under your roof and not to be the cause of any discord, and I also admit I acted as much in my own interests as in yours."

He grunted. "We shall discuss your punishment later. What did you wish to say?"

"Not all of the girls misbehaved, Captain. Two of them came to my aid, while most of the rest simply watched. Surely it would be a waste of your time and money to lose all of them simply to punish a few? And how would it look to your crew if you are unable to control a group of mere women."

Harry raised an eyebrow. "You would play on my pride?"

"Not at all, Captain. I am simply trying to advise you, as is the duty of any good servant," she said innocently, all the while gently swivelling her naked body from side to side so that her breasts swayed gently before him.

He snorted in amusement. With two fingers he playfully tapped her breasts and said, "As fine as these may be, I am not some lust filled young lad dreaming of being allowed to sniff your arse. However, what you say has some merit. Which were the two girls who tried to help you?"

Cristina glanced over her shoulder. "The tall dark haired one and the slight redhead who stand near the larboard corner of the room."

Harry had already guessed the identity of the two and had no trouble finding them with his eyes. Striding back to the centre of the room, he put his hands upon his hips and looked around at the downcast girls. "Cristina has pleaded with me for mercy on your behalf. You and you, come here," he said, pointing at the two who had tried to help. "What are your names?"

"My name is Ceara, Captain," the redhead responded.

"And mine is Áine, Captain."

To Harry their names sounded much like "Cara and Anya", which was what he chose to remember, at least for the moment. "Cristina told me that the pair of you came to her aid. I also recall your sensible behaviour up on deck. Therefore the two of you shall not be sold or punished."

The two Irish girls sighed in relief, curtsied, and went to stand beside Cristina.

Harry studied the remaining four girls. "I know two of you did not actually lay hands upon Cristina, but condoning a crime is the same as committing it or near enough in this case." He watched the hope fade in their eyes and he crushed the temptation to feel sympathy for them. The world was a hard place, Port Royal was harder than most, and being a privateer captain necessitated the ability to be totally ruthless when the situation required. It was what a man did when his hand was not forced by circumstance that determined whether he was a man or a monster. The trick was to make his enemies think he was a monster even though he aspired not to be. "However –" He paused and watched hope rekindle in their breasts. "Upon calmer reflection, I am inclined to offer each of you a chance to redeem yourselves. Accept twelve strokes of the rod upon any part of your body that I may choose without being held or bound, and I shall overlook what happened. Refuse my offer and you will be sold." He pointed at the blonde trouble maker. "For you, twelve strokes of the rod on your cunt." Without waiting for her reaction he pointed to the others. "For the rest, twelve strokes of the rod, six on the arse and six on the breasts." He folded his arms. "Now make your choice." To his surprise, the blonde stepped forward first.

"I'm used to being called the most beautiful one. Seeing her, I was after being jealous. Mad with jealousy, I was, and I do be sorry. I'll be taking your punishment."

"What's your name?" Harry asked, trying to gauge her sincerity.

"My name's Róisín, Captain."

"Rosheen?" he asked, trying to twist his tongue around the unfamiliar sound.

This made her smile. "Near enough, sir. The mother told me it was a Viking word for 'horse'. I suppose it be appropriate since I'm after being sold like one."

Seeing Róisín's example, the other girls took heart and also asked to be punished rather than facing the unknown perils of the market.

"I shall fetch a suitable rod from my cabin. Take the time to prepare yourselves," Harry said, and then departed from the room, locking the door behind him.

The two groups of women silently studied each other, and then Cristina watched warily when Róisín crossed the space that separated them and navigated towards her.

The blonde girl stopped in front of Cristina, and then slowly raised her hands before her when she saw the Spaniard's wary expression. "I mean you no harm. I only be wishing to apologise for what I did, and to say I do be bearing you no grudge, no matter what becomes of me."

Cristina looked into Róisín's green eyes and saw no guile there. She nodded and said, "I accept your apology. I would that there be peace between us." She reached out and clasped the other woman's hands in hers. "The punishment set by Captain Pierce frightens me, and I would spare you such terrible suffering if I could. Perhaps if I –"

Róisín shook her head. "No. He would never be trusting me unless I prove my worth. But thank you."

"Perhaps it would comfort you to know that I am bound by my honour and my contract to accept with good grace any and all punishments of my womanly parts that might meet Captain Pierce's fancy."

Róisín's eyes widened. She pointed at Áine and Ceara. "And the two of ye as well?"

Áine grinned and nodded. "That's the truth of it. We were going to tell all of ye about it, but then you went after Cristina with that stick."

"Captain Pierce seeks special women who will see to his needs. Those he picks will live in his house and serve only him," Cristina explained. Before she could say any more, there was a sound at the door, heralding the Captain's return. As she turned towards the door, she saw a movement from the corner of her eye, and when she glanced quickly back over her shoulder she was surprised to see Róisín taking her tunic off and stepping forward to stand next to her completely naked.

Harry was also pleasantly surprised by the sight of a naked Róisín and he gave her an approving nod.

Although the sight of the flexible rod in his hand filled her with terrified anticipation, she smiled back, pleased that he understood and approved of her gesture of submission. Although headstrong and possessed of a fiery temper, Róisín was not a malicious or guileful person. Her attack upon Cristina had been driven by pent up outrage and anger over being captured like an animal and the cruel treatment she and the others had suffered aboard the slave ship. Cristina's fine clean dress and aristocratic appearance had merely been the match that had set off her rage. In fact, before her capture, she had often dreamt of escaping her life on the farm and sailing away to some far off exotic place and meeting a rich and handsome man. It was the reason that she had learned to speak English as well as she did. The realisation that at least part of her dream had come to pass almost made her laugh.

Harry tapped Róisín's hip with the rod and stroked it over the smooth skin of her thigh. "Let me deal with the others first, and then I'll take care of you." He made the other four girls line up in front of him and undress. He pointed at the first girl. "Bend over the table, reach across and grip the opposite edge, feet apart. If you take your fingers from the table all the strokes that came before will not count and I will start again."

Pale faced, the girl assumed the position, alternately biting her lip and clenching her teeth in fear, and she whimpered when the cool wood of the rod touched her buttocks. She knew that he was going to strike her with the full force of his arm as one might any criminal, and not as a child. She felt the rod lift from her skin. She wanted to scream in terror, but the rod struck before she could utter a sound, and then all she could do was moan.

Grim faced, Harry slashed the rod down six times in quick succession. This was a punishment and not a game

"Please! Mercy!" The girl wailed in pain and her feet alternately kicked in the air as she fought against the urge to clutch at her wounded buttocks.

Harry couldn't deny that the sight and sound of the punished girl aroused him, but he put all

lustful thoughts aside and completed her punishment as quickly as possible, allowing her little opportunity to lose heart and thus suffer greater pain or even fail entirely. When he was done, he set the rod down upon the table and helped the sobbing girl to her feet. He put his arm around her shaking shoulders and kissed her cheek. "There. You are done and forgiven. Go over there and rest yourself while I deal with the others."

Surprised by this unexpected kindness, the girl managed a watery smile and a confused bob of her head. "Th-thank you, Captain."

He dealt with the others in the same brisk fashion, his rod falling quickly and mercilessly across shaking white flesh, sometimes even drawing blood. He was well pleased when all four of the girls acquitted themselves well, earning themselves a place in his bawdy house. Then at last he was faced with the pale but determined visage of Róisín. "You have seen the fate of the others. What say you now?"

She knew that he expected her to be frightened by the sight of the other girls' suffering, but what she had seen was the kindness that he had shown them afterwards, and in her mind she was determined that he was not a mean or evil man. She had known other men who had enjoyed spanking the bottoms of pretty girls, so that did not shock her. She had also known many men who cared for nothing except their own satisfaction and profit. Over his shoulder she saw the aristocratic Spanish woman nod at her. It was possible that Cristina still sought revenge, but again she did not believe it to be so. "I say that I be putting myself in your hands. Use me as you will, Captain."

Harry nodded. In the case of Róisín, it was more a test of her mettle and sincerity than a simple punishment. "Get on the table and compose yourself in a manner best suited for a caning of your cunt."

Cristina noted the intensity with which Áine, the young red haired girl, was watching the preparations for the torture, for such a punishment could not be described in any other way.

Áine noticed the Spanish girl's stare and grinned, her expression tight and fierce, almost savage but without anger. "I've never seen anyone take the rod on her cunt before. This should be interesting."

"Interesting? I hope you realise that you too may soon suffer such a fate," Cristina said, raising an elegant eyebrow.

The frail looking girl shrugged. "I be knowing that when I signed on to the Captain's harem."

"Harem? An uncommon word for a girl like you to use." Cristina said with an amused smile.

The little fierce grin flashed again. "My father be a pastor, and he's after having a lot of books, so he does. Some of them not so very holy."

"You're not a Catholic? I thought all Irish were of the faith?"

"He be wanting to convert all of you Papists to the true church to be sure," Áine said with a laugh.

"But not you?"

"Me da says I'm bound for the flames below. I'm a wicked girl, me."

"You have stolen or blasphemed?"

This made Áine giggle. "Nothing like that. Me da walked into the house when I was not expecting, and what did he see but his daughter with her skirt up around her waist and busy rubbing away at her cunt while reading one of his naughty books."

Cristina covered her mouth to smother a laugh. "Truly?"

"Oh aye, that be the truth of it. And a right filthy book it was, it was. To be sure it was full of drawings of naked girls being whipped and tortured in all manner of fantastical ways. Me da said it be telling of the punishment of sinners in hell, but I knows better. The Captain would be liking it, he would."

"And you. You liked these pictures?" Cristina asked, fascinated by this strange young woman.

"That I did. Right away it was after making me feel all funny down there, between the legs."

Áine's confession was interrupted by the sound of the Captain's rod tapping on the table.



Cristina returned her attention to Róisín's plight and found the girl lying on her back with her arms wrapped around her knees, which were drawn up and apart towards each of her shoulders.

Áine had never seen a woman's cunt in such open display before in her life, and she took a step closer.

Harry noticed the movement out of the corner of his eye. "The view interests you?"

"Aye Captain, I'll not be lying to you, it does."

"Then if Róisín doesn't mind, perhaps you should stand here to my left where you may see as clearly as may please you."

Although it brought a flush to her cheeks, Róisín shook her head. "Not at all, Captain Pierce."

"And you Cristina. Do you desire a better view?"

"Thank you Captain, but I'm fine where I am." The suffering of others did not arouse her lust nor did it amuse her. She had been taught that cruelty to others should be a tool and not a pleasure. "I prefer to study the painting rather than the brush strokes."

"As you wish." He put his arm around Áine's tiny waist and then pointed at Róisín's cunt with the tip of the rod. "As one who possesses a cunt, how do you think it will feel when I strike her right here?"

Áine tried to imagine the rod striking her between the legs and felt herself growing copiously wet. She licked her suddenly dry lips and said, "I cannot speak for her Captain, but I be thinking that I might like it."

"Do you now? Then you and I are going to get along just marvellously."

She pressed her hip against him and pulled his hand up to her breast.

Harry pressed the rod against Róisín's cunt. "I'll do this one stroke at a time, just like a flogging, so that you have time to recover. I'll not blame you for moving so long as you present your cunt to the rod when I tell you to. Are you ready?"

Róisín nodded, feeling dizzy with fear. "Yes, Captain." She was determined, but she had never suffered such pain before and she feared that she would not be able to bear it. As he raised the rod, she wished that she was bound to a whipping frame. It was so much harder when she had to keep herself still. The falling of the rod caught her by surprise and she did not even have the opportunity to flinch before the slim flexible cane struck her cunt squarely just beside her slit. The pain was beyond her ability to describe and the muscles of her arms bulged as she hugged her thighs with a death grip to prevent them from closing the way they wanted to. She realised that she had managed to remain silent and she felt a glow of pride. If there had only been Captain Pierce in the room, she might have screamed the moment the rod touched her flesh, but with all the other women present, women who were competing for the Captain's favour, she could not bring herself to give up her pride so easily.

Harry leaned over to study the weal left upon the Irish girl's cunt by the cane, and he felt Áine pressing close to look as well. The mark was dark red and there was a trace of blood where the very tip of the rod had landed. He had struck hard, and he respected her strength of will. He stroked her cunt, as always enjoying the feeling of a pretty girl's sexual parts under his hand. "A good start. Remember, this is a punishment, so no one shall think less of you for crying out."

Even though he was her tormentor, his kind words made her feel better, and though the bitter pain in her cunt did not lessen, Róisín felt less fear when he prepared to strike her sex again.

The "crack" of the rod striking the girl's intimate flesh made all the other women in the room jump and wince. Ceara bit her lip in sympathy and squeezed her thighs tightly together.

For Róisín the world narrowed down to that small spot between her thighs. She didn't count the blows that landed or attempt to fight the terrible pain that burned like the touch of a hot iron on her cunt. She just clung to her legs with her arms with a grim determination to give her cunt over to the cane entirely and to please Captain Pierce. Like the other girls, she sensed that the usual feminine wiles, the flirting, pouting, and tears wouldn't touch the Captain. In ways of seduction, women were eminently practical, and if the suffering of her cunt was the way to earn the Captain's affections, then so be it. The rod landed exactly between the lips, burying itself inside her slit and

directly striking her clitoris. For the first time she screamed, although it was more a high pitched moan than a shriek, wrung from her by a pain that was beyond silent endurance.

Harry set down the cane and perched himself upon the table beside the girl, who was still gasping and moaning in pain. He couldn't resist laying his hand upon her badly swollen and wealed cunt to feel the heat even though he knew it would hurt her further. "It's done. And well done too. Consider your transgressions washed away. You have earned a place in my home."

"Th-thank you, Captain. And you be earning a place in my cunt," Róisín quipped, displaying a rough humour that made Cristina gasp in genteel shock.

When Harry slid his hip off the table and made to move away, Áine, who had been watching intently all this time, took the opportunity to get closer to the recently punished girl on the table. She leaned over and whispered in Róisín's ear.

Róisín gave her a startled look and then grinned. "Why not. Be doing as you please. I'll not be minding."

Áine thanked her and hurried around to put her head between Róisín's thighs, closely studying the sorely punished cunt.

"The sight seems to interest you greatly, Áine," Harry said. "Do you have a liking for women? Be not afraid. You can tell me."

The slim girl shook her head. "I've not thought much about it, but I would learn if it be pleasing you, Captain."

Harry laughed. "Is there anything lewd you wouldn't do, little one?"

She grinned back. "Not that I be knowing, sir. I was a sore disappointment to me da, I was." Then she nodded at Róisín's wealed cunt. "I be seeing so many pictures and words describing such games, and long have I dreamt to see it for real."

"And are you disappointed?"

"Oh no, Captain. It be tickling my fancy no end, it does."

Without warning, Harry gathered up the hem of her smock and slid his hand up her thigh to hold her cunt.

Áine gasped in surprise and then smiled saucily. "You'll be finding that I be as wet as a marsh, Captain."

"Indeed you are, my dear." The girl's irrepressible bawdiness and lack of concern for the social niceties appropriate to a young lady amused Harry greatly. His fingers did not have to search for long to find the promised moisture and he slid his fingers around and through her slit playfully. He noted that she showed absolutely no shame in being so intimately fingered in public and in fact seemed rather pleased. Her meek and bookish exterior contrasted excitingly with the wildness that hid beneath the surface and Harry looked forward very much to exploring this strange girl. He removed his hand from between her thighs and wiped the sticky moisture on her shift, something that she did not seem to mind at all.

Still grinning, he went over to Ceara. "You have remained very quiet during all of this," he said, curious to see how she might respond. "I would know your thoughts."

The tall dark haired Ceara looked down at the ground in embarrassment. "I be a simple girl, Captain. Before I was taken, I was content to someday be married and to tend to my husband and children. I fear I be too plain to be of interest you."

"But you would submit to the lash and rod?"

"Aye, and gladly if you are otherwise kind to me."

"And what of the arts of love?"

She blushed and wrapped her arms around herself as if feeling a chill. "My Mam was after telling me that when I married, I should do whatever my husband asked and be properly meek and obedient. In truth, that is all I know. I have seen more lewdness this day than ever before."

"Do you disapprove?"

"Never, Captain." She sounded shocked. "We all be yours to do with as you will, and you have been good enough to hear our opinions. Whatever you require of us is proper in the eyes of God and of the law."

"And if I told you to learn lewdness from Áine, the acceptance of pain from Róisín, and the wiles of courtly seduction from Cristina?"

"Then I would do my best to be learning those very things, Captain Pierce." She lifted her head and smiled shyly but happily at him, glad to have a purpose.

He caressed her cheek with the back of his fingers. "See that you do. I look forward to discover what you learn."

He returned to the centre of the room. "Well then, that's settled. We still have several days yet to go at sea. I advise you all to get to know each other well. And be warned, I expect no further trouble. I shall not be so kind the next time. Not kind at all."

None of his women had come along on this voyage, so Harry slept alone every night until they dropped anchor at Port Royal, although he did stop by to check on the women each day. Although none of the men said anything, he knew they appreciated his abstinence and self-control.

## Chapter Three

Harry's partner Sir Percy Reede was waiting at the dockside when Harry's boat tied up. "At least you have something to show for all that sailing back and forth and playing pirate," he said, waving his handkerchief at the prize ship. "Did it carry a worthwhile cargo?"

Harry was well used to his partner's disapproval and simply handed over the Quartermaster's list and estimate of values with a grin. "Worthwhile enough, Percy. It's been a long hard voyage, so why don't you go and haggle with the Governor's man about his share and arrange for the sale of that fine Spanish vessel."

"Fine vessel my eye! We'll be fortunate if the worms don't eat the wood before I can get it off of our hands," Percy grumbled, but he strode off eagerly enough towards the crowd of privateers and outright pirates in search of a ship who had gathered at the dock in response to word of a new prize ship anchoring in harbour, closely followed by the Governor's tax agent.

Percy had pretended not to see the gaggle of women that Harry had unloaded. He claimed that dealing in human cargo was beneath him, although he was always eager enough to sample the wares when they turned up wrapped in pretty dresses in the bordello. Harry grinned and waved at the assorted cheers and jeers from onlookers as he gathered up the girls for the trip back to the High Street where the better buildings were located. The buildings along the shore were mostly huts and shanties with only the occasional more solid construction housing taverns, whore houses, and merchants. However, these better buildings were coming up fast and he guessed that it would not be long before Port Royal looked as fine as any town or city in the Colonies. His little column was guarded by half a dozen armed seamen and he still carried his sword and pistols. More important was that he was known and respected, or sometimes simply just feared by the regular inhabitants of Port Royal. There would be no trouble over a small group of women, no matter how attractive. However Cristina did cause much speculation and gossip, her clothes and aristocratic air making her stand out. A runner had brought back two wagons and he helped the girls into them before taking a seat next to one of the wagon drivers. "Welcome to Port Royal ladies!"

Cristina in particular had heard many tales of the sinful town of pirates that terrorised the Spanish Main, and she looked around in great interest. She studied with particular interest the Spanish ships and Spaniards, who could be identified by their clothes and features, who were also moving around the port. Port Royal was the only source of many of the luxuries that came from England and the rest of Europe, so even Spanish merchants were to be found here, moving casually and mostly unmolested amongst the crowd of bloodthirsty pirates. "I had not realised that so many of my countrymen traded in Port Royal," she said to Captain Pierce.

"Does it embarrass you to be seen by them?" Harry asked.

"Not at all," she replied. Sensing something in his tone, she said, "Do you wish to shame me?"

"It is a tempting thought," Harry replied with a grin.

"All I have is yours, including my shame," she said calmly, even though her stomach roiled and her hands felt cold as ice.

"Very well. Unlace your bodice and bare your breasts. You will stay that way all the way back to the House." Unlike most great homes, Harry had simply named his the House.

"As you command, Captain," Cristina said, her fingers already working on her bodice. As soon as it was loose enough, she pushed her hands into her dress and scooped her breasts out to hang in the open, her nipples glowing like rubies in the bright sunshine. She sat very erect, head held proudly, and did not flinch even when she heard a Spanish voice call her a filthy whore.

Ceara, who was seated next to her said, "You be having very nice teats, to be sure" and pressed her hand over the Spanish girl's tightly clenched fist. Then she giggled. "They bounce right fine too."

The road was none too smooth, and the jolting of the wagon made Cristina's breasts jump and dance about most merrily, and after a second she was compelled to laugh as well. She felt much better when Captain Pierce turned in his seat at the front to gaze at her breasts and then winked and

smiled at her.

"For sure the Captain likes you, and that be no small thing," Ceara said.

"You are kind to say so," Cristina said with real gratitude.

"I'm thinking that we all need to look after each other," Ceara replied. "I be having nothing special to offer the Captain, and I expect I'll be seeing the worst of the punishment. Not that I'm complaining, mind you. From what the sailors told us, it be the girls who were left behind who have the worst of it, no matter what should happen to us, I'm after feeling the Captain is a good man at heart."

"Let us all hope so," Cristina said feelingly.

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A high whitewashed wall surrounded Harry's home, which was more a mansion than a house, rivalling the Governor's mansion in size and splendour. Tall cast iron gates imported from England guarded the entrance. They clanged shut behind the wagon and the gatekeeper slammed home a huge iron bolt and locked it with a big brass bound padlock.

A beautiful woman, completely naked save for a red silk ribbon around her neck, who looked to be closer to thirty than twenty, waved happily as the horse team drew the wagon up the driveway. "Harry! Home at last. I thought I was rid of you for sure this time."

Harry laughed and waved back. He jumped off the wagon before it fully came to a halt, and ran over to sweep the laughing woman off her feet and kissing her soundly. "Muirín my love! You're a glorious sight for this lonely sailor's eyes."

Muirín was Harry's most senior girl and had been with him for years. She had stayed on long after the term of her contract had ended, but at last she was going to leave, saying that it was too much hard work to keep up with the younger women. She was a good cook and planned to open a tavern with the money she had saved up during her time with Harry. She was totally devoted to him and would willingly have given her life to please him. As a senior girl, she was not required to go about naked, but she had wanted to greet him properly, especially since their time together was coming to an end. "I be wearing your gift," she whispered in his ear.

"Truly? But you said it hurt too much for walking around."

"I've been practising since you were gone," she said proudly. "See for yourself." Despite the fact that they were standing out in the open with an audience of guards, the new girls, and servants, Muirín placed a hand upon Harry's shoulder for balance and lifted one knee up high.

Aine gasped in excitement and pointed. "Oh look! She be having something inside her cunt she has, something shiny."

Harry reached between her thighs and touched the tip of the metal object that her obscene pose revealed, immediately forcing a gasp of pain from Muirín. Protruding from the opening of her cunt hole was a smooth gold cap like the head of a mushroom, and mounted upon it was a fine red ruby.

"Tis lovely, it 'tis," Ceara said.

Cristina raised an eyebrow. "I wonder what is holding it there."

Róisín giggled. "Nothing that feels good, I'd be betting."

With her raised foot braced against Harry's hip and her knee supported by his hand, Muirín began to moan and sigh as he continued to manipulate the golden knob. Unseen to the audience, rows of hooks and spines buried deep inside the woman's sex scraped and stabbed the passage to her womb with each tap and rub of the glittering ruby. But over the years she had learned, with great determination and considerable sacrifice, to not only endure but to enjoy the playful tortures that Harry inflicted upon her, even though she had never been so inclined as a young girl. Now that she was soon to leave, she was resolved to allow him the most extreme entertainments, even if it meant that her sexual parts might be harmed beyond recovery. She knew Harry would never deliberately inflict such severe harm upon her and that he constantly struggled to restrain his desires, so she resolved to conceal the actual degree of pain and injury she was suffering during the

remaining time they had together until the last when she would reveal the true extent of her devotion.

Harry had personally designed the device that Muirín wore inside of her, and he had a good idea of the pain she was feeling, and he was truly touched and amazed that the pleasure she displayed appeared to be completely genuine. Despite his concern for her well-being, he understood that she was proud of her accomplishment and desired to display her ability in front of the others, especially the new girls. He could not deny her this, so he continued to manipulate the golden knob even as he felt her cling to him, seemingly deriving strength from the touch of his body. "Are you ...?"

She silenced him with a kiss. "Hush my love. Let this be my gift to you."

Silently he continued to roll and twist the golden knob, knowing that inside the tight moist sexual tunnel this caused the complicated mechanism to move the hooks and points against her trembling flesh. Under his hands he could feel the sweat break out on her skin, and the scent that he had learned to associate with her pain rose from her body, but he also breathed in the musky fragrance of her lust and arousal.

Muirín's moans grew louder as the pain increased, and she would have fallen if she had not been clinging to Harry. She shuddered violently when she felt the hooks pierce her flesh and steel spines dragged their points over the rippling surface of her sexual passage, but her self-imposed martyrdom also stoked her lust in a way that the most skilled caress could not have done and her sexual heat was a ball of fire searing her belly and loins. Her clitoris was so swollen that it was as if she knew what it was like to have a man's cock. She could feel the oil of her lust flow freely from her hole onto Harry's hand and down her thigh. She knew the new girls would see it and she gloried in her shame. "Yes, hurt me, hurt me my love. Hurt me where no other man or woman has touched. Leave your mark inside my womanhood forever as I come for you." The steady pricking and stinging that Harry's manipulation of the golden knob created was driving her ever closer to her climax. She frantically kissed his face and rubbed her nipples across his chest. "Nearly, my love, nearly." She groaned deeply when Harry pressed the heel of his palm against her clitoris while his fingertips continued to work the golden clockwork torture device.

Harry knew she was coming when he felt her fingers dig into his shoulders and her body shake with strong rapid convulsions. He lifted his fingers from the gold framed ruby that nestled between her thighs, knowing that the contractions of her climax would continue to work the hooks and spines against her sex, but continued to rub the heel of his hand against her clitoris.

The agony in her sex and the knowledge that she was experiencing such a glorious orgasm in front of all these people was so marvellous that she almost swooned from the delight of it. Most wonderful of all was the way that Harry continued to hold, stroke, and kiss her as the golden glow of her climax slowly faded.

"Can you walk?" Harry whispered. When she nodded he said, "Go to my room and I shall help you remove the device, you silly girl." He kissed her again and watched as she walked proudly back into the house, hiding the ripping pain in her cunt. He clapped his hands. "All right. Now that we are done with that pleasant little diversion, all of you girls follow those servants who will see that you are properly washed and fed, and I will be in to make the necessary dispositions later."

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Harry slapped the bottom of a serving girl on his way to his office. "Have a platter of roast pork and bread sent to my office."

The girl squealed and giggled. "I'll tell Cook at once, Captain Pierce." She knew that unlike many employers, Captain Pierce did not take liberties with the serving girls, even the indentured ones, beyond a playful smack on the bum unless they indicated that they were willing and desirous of such attention. When he was in a good mood some of the girls earned themselves a tossed coin by lifting their skirts and daringly wiggling their bare bottoms at him. It was all a game, and he never carried it beyond a pinch and a joke.

Even though he was tired, Harry made it a habit to at least quickly go over the ledgers of his various businesses before seeking out amusements or his bed, or both at the same time. As always, his accountant Simon was waiting for him in the office. "Simon! How fares the faithful defender of my purse? Has Percy managed to fend off pauperdom in my absence?"

The bookkeeper shook his head dolefully. "The business trundles along as usual, Captain Pierce. A new fashion amongst the Spanish for the gold edged china ware brought in a few more coins than expected."

"But?" Harry prompted, knowing the tone in his accountant's voice.

"But Sir Percy made another loan from the business's coffers. His latest paramour has expensive tastes, or perhaps I should say more expensive than usual and his luck at cards has not improved."

Harry sighed. His partner criticised his purchase of female indentured servants to serve his pleasure and the way he looked after them even when their contracts ended, but he himself spent lavishly courting "decent" ladies, or as decent as could be found in Port Royal, and part of mixing with the Governor's cronies was the playing of cards for high stakes. Unfortunately for Percy, he had luck neither with women nor cards, so his borrowings from the business tended to become permanent. "How much was the loan?" When Simon showed him the number he whistled. "Perhaps I should talk to him," he said with a sinking heart. He knew Percy's pride would force him to respond with anger and recriminations of his own, real or invented.

The pretty young serving girl brought the food, letting her hip brush against his shoulder as she laid the platter upon the table. "Would there be anything else I could get for you, Captain?" she said suggestively.

He chuckled. "Don't offer what you can't deliver, girl."

Her firm hip pressed harder. "I've been thinking about it, Captain."

"I thought you had your eye on a particular young man, Lizzy."

"He's gone and signed up on account," she said sadly.

Harry nodded understandingly. Pirates made for poor husbands. There was little point in waiting for him, since most pirates did not live very long at all. Lizzy was English and wasn't indentured. Her parents had died of the flux, leaving her to find her own way. Harry had given her a serving job to tide her over until she decided whether she wanted to find a husband, or become a whore. Without possessing particular skills, there was little chance of her finding any other kind of occupation in Port Royal, not that London offered much better. There was also a dearth of good husband material in Port Royal as well. Most who made the difficult and dangerous journey to the Americas were adventurers or criminals. "Think carefully before you decide. You have my permission to talk to the girls in the Golden Siren, but don't allow their talk of free spending sailors blind you to the risks. I do my best but I cannot protect my girls all the time, and drunken pirates are dangerous men."

So far, Harry had been forced to kill two sailors who had used their knives on the girls, but his reputation and the threat of banning generally maintained order. Many of the patrons of the bordello complained about the non-availability of the group of girls Harry set aside to service only his crews. By doing this he reduced the prevalence of the pox amongst his men as well as the chance that a skilled and valuable seaman might be robbed and killed by a dishonest whore and her minders. He couldn't stop his men from visiting other taverns and whore houses, but those who did were banned from the Siren until after their next voyage, which gave a chance for the signs of the pox to manifest.

"May I also talk to Muirín and the others?" she asked boldly.

Harry looked into her eyes. "You may. But I make no promises."

She curtsied. "I understand, sir. I thank you for your kindness," she replied and skipped out of the room with a wide smile on her lips.

"The girl likes you, Captain," Simon said. "I mean to say she truly likes you a great deal."

Harry nodded. "I know what you're trying to say, Simon, but the courses open to her are few, and I would not abuse her trust in me ... unless you have an interest?"

The accountant grunted and waved a hand in a florid gesture. "I do hope you jest." Simon had no interest in women, although it was dangerous to publicly admit to such a condition, even in Port Royal.

Harry tilted his head. "A marriage might provide safe harbour for both you and her, my friend."

Simon shook his head. "I am not a man in her eyes, and neither of us would be happy living such a lie. She is a bold and good hearted girl. Let her make her own choice. As for myself, I have spread the rumour that I suffered an injury to the groin at the hands of a highwayman. A most ... delicate ... injury."

Harry laughed. "An excellent ruse! Just don't be caught while proving it a lie."

Simon bowed. "I shall be careful. And ... thank you, sir."

"I care not in which ports your cock chooses to drop anchor, just so long as my books continue to be kept well and I can be certain of my finances."

"And Sir Percy's loans, sir?"

"I shall keep an eye upon them, and on him."

"Yes, sir." Simon's tone was not very hopeful.

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The sun had set by the time Harry was done with the items of business that had built up while he had been away at sea. His dealings were many and wide ranging, and of late Percy devoted less and less of his time in the office, allowing the important decisions to accumulate pending Harry's attention. He yawned and stretched. "Well Simon, we seem to be done for the nonce. What have you planned for the evening, my friend?"

Looking slightly embarrassed, the accountant said, "I have recently made the acquaintance of the most charming young fellow, newly arrived from England. We have an appointment to meet over dinner."

Harry patted the man on the shoulder. "Enjoy your food and the company. And –"

"Be careful. I know," Simon said, chuckling.

With that, Harry headed deeper into the house, built to resemble a fine manor house of an English estate. Through the open windows he could smell the sea, the lifeblood of Port Royal. The dining hall was brightly lit, cosy and cheerful. Polished wood and silver shone in the candle light. He smiled when all of the girls rose to their feet as he entered. It was clear that Muirín had already been at work, despite the fact that her cunt must have been greatly distressing her. "Good evening ladies. I hope that you have all been made comfortable?"

Ceara curtsied. "Our lodgings be far finer than we could have expected."

Only the four picked girls remained including Cristina, the other four having been sent to the bordello after they had been properly washed and dressed. They had been bathed and their hair done up by the maids, and now wore fine silken robes fastened at the waist with a knotted sash. Beneath they wore only gartered silk stockings, tied below the knee and elegantly patterned shoes with fashionable heels. They had been told that they would be provided dresses and sturdier leather shoes if ever they were to go out. Other than Cristina, none of the others had ever worn such finery, and after the miserable conditions of the ship's hold, their present surroundings were palatial in comparison.

Harry went to the head of the table and waited. Muirín gestured and the girls went to stand behind a table setting, two to either side and Muirín at his right. Harry seated himself, paused, and then said, "You may be seated." He saw Cristina smile, plainly amused by this reversal of normal etiquette. On the other hand, servants seldom dined with their masters, so perhaps it wasn't so unusual after all, he mused. He picked up the glass of dark red wine and toasted his new "guests". "Welcome to Pierce Manor, ladies, more commonly known in Port Royal as the House."

All of the girls raised their glasses.

Harry looked around the table, smiling at each of the lovely women he had acquired. He



reached out and took Muirín's hand. He had grown exceedingly fond of the devoted woman, and was sad to see her go, but they both knew that the time was right for a change. She was still of sufficient youth and beauty to find a husband if she so chose, or to make her way in commerce as a courtesan or businesswoman. On his part, her unceasing desire to please was threatening his self-control, and he knew that if she stayed he would one day hurt her beyond recovery. "I shall attempt to dine with all of you like this as often as possible. I want you to feel at ease to speak your mind as much as good manners and the house rules allow. I presume that Muirín has explained the rules to all of you?"

The girls nodded and murmured their agreement. The rules were not onerous and were mostly aimed at preventing petty squabbling amongst the women and to suppress the temptation on their part to wheedle or nag at Harry.

"When Muirín leaves, one of you shall be appointed as head girl." He smiled at the immediate looks of speculation and excitement. "Before you get too excited, be warned that while the position of Head Girl awards some authority, it also entails many responsibilities. And with responsibility comes blame." His smile became a grin when their excitement became tempered by caution. "One of the Head Girl's duties is to maintain the service roster. This is the schedule according to which each of you will be required to attend upon me. To maintain fairness, this schedule will generally be followed, unless I call for one of you in particular." His gaze became stern. "Naturally, my desires shall take precedence. I will brook no complaints or argument on this matter." He pointed at a china bowl in the middle of the table, which contained six numbered brass balls. "Since this is the first day, I want each of you to select a ball. I shall then toss this dice which will determine the one winner. Since Muirín is recovering, I shall toss a second time if her number comes up."

The selection was made, and Áine was discovered to be holding the winning number. Harry bowed his head at the slim girl and said, "Now that that is settled, let us dine!" He nodded at the waiting servants, who bustled into action, and soon the smell of good hearty food filled the room.

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When the meal was over, Muirín ushered the other girls back to their chambers, leaving only Áine with Harry. He patted the seat that had been recently occupied by Muirín. "Come sit by me."

The redhead obeyed with a bouncing keenness. She grinned artlessly at him. "We were after betting that you would be choosing Cristina, we were."

"And are you disappointed to be chosen?"

"Don't be talking like that, Captain. All of us just be wanting to please you, we do." She covered her mouth with her fingers. "Muirín be telling us to watch our English. I'm after trying my best sir."

Harry chuckled. "I'm sure you are. Don't worry. I could barely understand Muirín when first she arrived, but as you see, she has managed nicely."

"Yes, Captain." She looked around. "Are we to be doing it here?"

"No, of course not. There are many rooms in the house designed for my pleasure and mood. Some are soft and comfortable, while a few are more ... stern."

"A dungeon? With chains and whips and the like?" she asked breathlessly, like a girl listening to a tale of witches and dragons.

"Actually, there is a room like that, but it is rarely used. I find that dungeons are generally rather uncomfortable, and there is little that cannot be done more comfortably and in more civilised surroundings."

Áine giggled. "You're after talking of whips and comfort at the same time?"

"And why not? Right now you are warm and cosy and sitting on a nice soft seat, dressed in a fine silk robe. If I were to slap your hand right now, your hand might hurt, but would you be any less comfortable otherwise?"

She nodded in agreement. "I suppose you're after having the right of it."

Harry stood up and held out his hand. "Come then, let us retire to a comfortable room where we may sport." He led her up the stairs and paused to select a room. "This one, I think," he said to himself. It was light and cheerfully decorated, and it seemed to suit this girl's character. To him, each girl was a singular thing to be tasted and enjoyed. He did not seek to mould them into indistinguishable bodies like soldiers lined up in the ranks.

Aine was delighted by the room, which was coloured in creamy white plaster mouldings, and warm lemon yellow wallpaper and matching hangings. Candles and lamps threw a warm glow of light over the furnishings, and the thick woolly rugs and polished wood of the floor. Off to one side there was a large bookshelf, and she laughed when she recognised some of the naughty tomes that her father had cherished. Others were in languages that she couldn't read, although she recognised the curly script of the moors in some. On the walls were paintings of nymphs frolicking with satyrs and nudes in all manner of poses. In the corners stood smooth china statuettes of more naked women whose features she recognised as oriental.

"Do you like it?"

"Tis wondrous!" she exclaimed, clapping her hands.

Harry studied the young woman, who with her vivid hair and pale complexion, looked like a statue herself. She appeared shy and delicate, and yet her words and actions had betrayed a fire and spirit beneath that intrigued him.

Aine saw him staring and blushed, but after a moment returned his gaze with unusual boldness. "You needn't be exceeding gentle with me, Captain. I may not have the shape of a woman – " she said, cupping her hands in front of her chest, " – but I can be doing all a woman does, and more."

He moved closer and brushed the line of her jaw with his fingertips. "I would not have chosen you if I did not find you fair." With both hands he lightly brushed the collar of her robe open to her shoulders, creating a deep plunging "V" in front that barely hid her small breasts." He tilted her chin up and slowly brought his lips down to hers. His hand felt the slightest hesitation, and then she raised her lips and pressed them to his in a kiss. It was a brief, almost chaste touching of the lips, but he sensed the eagerness that lay pent up within her even so. "I stared because I was thinking of how best to use you. One does not use a fine sword in the same way one uses an axe."

"And which am I, pray tell? The shiny toy or the workaday tool?" she said without rancour.

Harry took the fob watch from his waistcoat. "Perhaps like this watch. Simple and elegant of form on the exterior, but possessed of great complexity on the inside."

Aine laughed. "I fear you be doing me too great an honour, Captain." She surprised him by untying her sash and letting the robe slide down her arms and onto the floor, leaving her naked. She pointed and said, "I be thinking I'm like that plain wooden chair. Not a thing of great elegance or beauty, but comfortable, reliable and capable of any utility you may desire."

"Do you truly think of yourself like that?"

"Often have I been alone with nothing but my father's books and my dreams for company. I'm after learning that it excites me to think of myself like that."

"As something to be used for the sexual pleasure of others?" Harry said softly as he gathered her naked form into his arms.

She nodded. "Just so."

"And yet you do not seem like one who enjoys being subservient to others." He slowly slid his hands up and down the planes and curves of her back, going from her shoulders to her hips and back again, allowing her to become accustomed to his closeness and his touch.

She shook her head. "I enjoy being useful, not used," she clarified.

"Ah, I think I understand the distinction that you make." He lowered his head and brushed his lips over her shoulders. "Then am I right to say that you would rather stand still for a whipping than to be helplessly bound and whipped?" He felt a tremor of excitement run through her body at his mention of the lash, though he could not guess if it was prompted by fear or desire. He moved his hands to her slim waist and stroked her belly with his thumbs.

Pleased that he seemed to understand, she said, "Perhaps more than that. If you wish to cane

my arse, I be bending for you, and the same for every other part of me." Her blush darkened and spread to her throat and chest. "Will you truly be using the cane and whip on ... between my legs?"

"Does that frighten you?"

She put her hands upon his battle scarred arms and squeezed as she looked into his eyes. "I cannot lie. The thought terrifies me, but ... it is something I'm after dreaming about every day since I be seeing a picture of it in my da's books. Terrible, fearsome dreams they are."

But it seemed to Harry that by the way she spoke, there was something other than fear behind her words. "But?"

She smiled. "You're a sharp one, you are. But, every time I be waking from these dreams in the most terrible state, itching something fierce down below, if you be knowing what I mean." Brazenly, she took his hand and led it down between her thighs. "Ever since I was small, I be dreaming of having other people's hands right there, where your hand be now. At first it was just touching, and then slapping and pinching." She laughed. "When I learned I had a hole down there, I was after dreaming of having all sorts of things put inside."

"What manner of things?" Harry asked, his hand gently palpitating the soft mound of her cunt lips.

She kissed his chest, her breath warm and fast on his skin. "Anything you could be imagining. Fingers of course, sticks, stones, earth. As I grew older, the sticks became bigger, and there were the knives, and big long needles, and hot coals."

Harry's fingers were sliding in slick moisture now, and he was sorely tempted to ram his fingers deep into her. "What are the things you have put into it? Be truthful now."

She lowered her head. "Please don't be angry. Only my fingers, I swear. Often I was tempted, but still I be wanting for .... "

"For someone else to do it?"

She nodded stiffly, fearing his displeasure.

Harry lifted her chin. "Look at me girl. First, know that I am not displeased. And second, I would hear more about these interesting dreams of yours."

She looked up in surprise. "Truly? You don't mind that .... "

He shook his head slowly, a faint smile on his lips.

She threw her arms around him and pressed her cheek against his chest as she squeezed him hard.

"Come girl, let us take our ease and chat." He led her to a large sofa that could almost have served for a bed. It was draped with a fine linen sheet of a deep honeyed yellow to protect it from stains and was amply supplied with well stuffed cushions. On the floor at one end there lay a wooden sea chest bound with brass and polished until it shone. Inside were all manner of toys that Harry employed on the girls, ranging from the feathers of various birds for tickling, all the way to grim looking tools that could draw blood. At the other end stood a small table bearing a tray of refreshments. It was well shaped and stocked for the lustful games a man and a woman, or several women, might play. He pulled off his boots and quickly undressed, and was pleased when unbidden Áine assisted him and neatly folded up his clothes as he took them off.

She looked down at his loins and giggled, covering her mouth with her fingers. "I'm sorry. I've never seen a man's ..." she said, and pointed at the offending object. She cleared her throat and resumed a more modest and sombre expression. "How may I serve you, Captain?"

Harry sat down on the sofa and guided her to stand before him. He kissed her belly, holding her slim hips and then gripped her buttocks firmly. "I wish to hear more about what you did and imagined when you were alone. In particular I desire that you tell me all about the things you imagined being done to you here." He kissed the red triangle of hair that pointed to her slit.

Flushed with excitement, Áine revelled in the feel of the Captain's hands on her body. She knew that her behaviour would have disgusted her father, but she had long ago ceased to care what he thought of her. If he was right then she was already damned. If God was the merciful and understanding creator that others spoke of, then he would understand his own creation. Either way, after years of mental struggle, she knew that she could not change what she was, and at last she had

the opportunity to live out her dreams and deepest desires. Besides, the Captain was handsome, rich, and strong, and he owned her now, and that thought made her loins burn. She had always known that she wasn't the same as other girls, but her restrained manner and small stature kept her from notice until her father had finally caught her masturbating. He accused her of being an abomination and expelled her from his home. Now her world was once more turned upside down, but this time there seemed to be hope that someone might understand and accept her for what she was. In halting words, she recounted her sad little tale as she stood naked before this man who had absolute rights to her body and her obedience. The thought made her shiver deliciously. She held nothing back, describing in detail the times she had stood naked and examined her body in the mirror, touching herself all over and marvelling at the feelings her touches produced.

"Before I found my da's books, I was after imagining myself naked in the marketplace. Men and women would pass by and I would tell them it was all right to touch me anywhere they liked. Some would be kind and gentle, others were cruel and would pinch and hit me, but I would accept both with a smile and words of thanks. Then I became more daring in my imagining and I would ask the people to handle my breasts and nipples, that place between the cheeks of my bottom, and of course my .... "

"Cunt?"

She laughed. "Yes. My cunt. The women, especially the older ones, who were no longer so pretty, were the worst and exercised their spite upon me with hard fingered pinches and blows. Many would be demanding I part my legs wide and I would allow them to do whatever they desired to my ... my cunt, pinching and slapping and pulling the hair that grows down there until it came off. Of course in my innocence, I imagined my cunt as being just this – what you see." She patted herself between the legs.

Harry pinched a single strand of pubic hair and pulled upon it with gradually increasing force, but not quite plucking it out.

Áine sucked in her breath and bit her lip. "Oh yes," she breathed, almost reverently. It didn't really hurt that much, but knowing that he was deliberately causing pain to her cunt in that manner because of what she had told him was so arousing that she felt faint. "That's after making me so very wet," she half whispered.

"Show me. Show me how lewd and wet you are."

She squeezed her thighs together and quivered. She had imagined this situation so often that she hardly needed to think before her foot lifted onto the seat of the sofa and her knee turned outwards, parting her thighs widely. She had looked into the mirror so often as she had opened herself wide with her fingers in exactly this way that she knew precisely what the Captain would see, and her fingers knew just how to hold herself so that everything was clearly visible. It had taken much practise to find the best way to make the gateway to her womb open wide, and she was quite proud of it. In her quest to find the perfect way to display her cunt her father's medical books had been of great assistance. "There. Can you see it? Can you see everything?"

Harry reached to the side and snatched the candlestick that stood on the table. Placing it upon his lap, it illuminated her cunt perfectly, its warm glow giving her loins a particular charm. "Indeed I can. You appear to be singularly accomplished in the art of displaying your secret charms."

"Thank you, sir. Does the appearance of my cunt be meeting with your approval then?"

"That it does, little Áine. That it does. The very sight of it inspires me to all manner of rudeness."

"I do so very like rudeness when it is to do with my cunt. I am quite shameless in that respect and you shall have to restrain me when you are after wanting greater gentility."

"My word, you are indeed marvellously wet in there." He lightly placed the tip of his finger within her opening and tickled her there. "Pray continue with your tale."

She made a kitten-like wriggle. "Yes sir. Well, after I be learning more about sex and my body from da's library, my imaginings grew apace. Of course forcing all manner of strange items into my cunt became the order of the day. I could not be walking past a bush, vase, or even kitchen

knives without imagining having them forced into me. No, I misspeak. I be the one asking to have them put into me."

Harry pushed his finger deeper into her wet but very tight hole. "Into here?"

She gasped softly, shocked despite herself. No matter what her dreams, no one had ever touched her like that. But the shock speedily passed and a thrill as moving as a thunderbolt shook her being. "Y-yes, Captain. Just there."

"There appears to be a nice tight little hole here. Holes are meant to be filled, wouldn't you agree?"

"Yes, Captain it certainly does." The finger moved deeper, and it hurt, just a little bit.

"And what manner of things should I use to fill this impudent hole that grips my finger so snugly?"

She did not have to search for the answer to his question. "Anything. Anything at all," she said firmly. The tip of a second finger began to worm its way into her body, and her skin tingled as if she had been showered with tiny droplets of ice cold water. She could feel her cunt hole stretch, and it ached so very sweetly. She tingled even more when he ran the tip of his tongue from the edge of her cunt hair up to her navel at the same time as he shoved both fingers deep into her cunt.

Harry loved to have his fingers inside a woman's cunt, especially when he knew that she would uncomplainingly grant him complete access to her secret parts. His digits rudely searched and pressed as he looked into her eyes, testing her hard, although he did not deliberately attempt to cause her pain as yet, and he was much gratified to see her smile and sigh with every indication of delight. He delved with the tips of his fingers and found the slippery dome that was the mouth of her womb, which he knew was particularly sensible to the touch, and capable of producing exquisite pleasure as well as pain.

Aine inhaled sharply at this new sensation. "Ooh, you be touching my womb, or the very gate of it. 'Tis a strange feeling, to be sure." The fingers inside of her pressed harder against the walls of the narrow fleshy cavern while sliding in and out. It caused a dull aching sensation deep inside her belly, but the frigging felt good nonetheless. Unlike most women, she enjoyed being fingered and aroused while required to stand. It could be difficult, especially when her knees grew weak from the pleasure, but it made her feel that she was being used rather than just lying on her back and being serviced by a lover.

"Is this how you pleasure yourself?"

She shook head. "No, Captain. Mostly I would be rubbing my spot, that which the books call the "clitoris" whilst I placed fingers or other things inside, imagining all the while that they were much more dire objects." She shivered and laughed softly. "You cannot imagine how good it is to be able to speak of such things at last. At times I be thinking I might burst from keeping my silence."

"And you have never hurt yourself here purposefully?"

"No, never, as much as I be wanting to. But in my imagination, I was made to accept hot irons, terrible shafts covered with hooks and many sharp blades. In my mind's eye I have lowered myself onto bronze shafts bigger than your arm, and my cunt has served as the bowl for steaming hot stews and boiling soups."

"Make yourself come for me if you know how. I would see you do it."

For a moment, a vision of her father's face, angry and filled with disgust gripped her, and her feelings of pleasure and arousal dimmed. But the strength of character and the refusal to allow her spirit to be crushed that had made her fight to live thus far would not be extinguished. Captain Pierce was not her father, and it was clear that he found delight in her desires. The undisguised approval in his eyes warmed her and gave her strength. Now at last she would do in public what she had always done in darkness and secrecy. "Should I stay as I am or lie myself down?"

"I prefer that you stand. I find it reminds the girls that this is a performance and not simply self-pleasure."

She nodded with a grin. "I like standing too. I be imagining I be standing on a stage." She gasped softly when Harry pulled his fingers out of her with a wet plop, and then adjusted the grip of her fingers so that she could use her thumbs and index fingers to manipulate her clitoris while still

keeping her cunt well spread open. Even though she was giving Harry a show, the thought of faking her pleasure and climax never crossed her mind. As a matter of fact, she could hardly wait to climax for the first time in front of an audience. With her finger working in a familiar rhythm over and around her clitoris she said, "Is the view to your liking, Captain?"

"Very much so, my dear." Her red pubic hair provided a uncommon frame for the action, and he found the shape and form of her cunt very much to his liking. Some women took a long time to become sufficiently aroused, but he could see that Áine was not one of those and he could tell from her movements and the noises that she made that she was strongly excited by her situation and the knowledgeable touch of her fingers. Her wetness became a creamy flow, and he could see the pink mouth of her cunt hole opening and closing as if it would talk to him. Her apparent youth and studious appearance only served to enhance the obscenity and sensuality of what she was doing. He saw a tremor rock her body and her breathing grew in volume and frequency.

"It shall not be long before I come for you, Captain," she said breathlessly.

"Inform me before it happens, and you are not to move or change your stance when you come."

The rubbing of her clitoris grew in speed and violence and Áine moaned. "Aye, Captain. It shall be as you say." His obvious enjoyment and approval filled her with a burning joy and such feelings of lewdness that she had never known before.

Harry reached around her body with both hands to grip her tight buttocks, pulling her cunt closer to his face. Her hairs tickled his nose and he could smell her juices. The muscles of her forearms flexed and twisted as she ruthlessly manipulated her sex, and he could almost see her squeezing the sensations out of her cunt for his delectation. He slid a finger back into her hole, which action extracted a loud moan from her.

"I'm close, very close, I ... I'm going ... to ... come. Oh, oh, ahh! Watch me, Captain ... watch me as I —" Her body rocked and twitched with frightening intensity and she was unable to speak as the convulsions of her orgasm gripped her. Cream flowed from her cunt hole as she continued to rub after the contractions faded, even though her clitoris was actually much too sensitive and her nerves screamed at her touch, as she milked every last twitch and shudder from her cunt. To her delight, she discovered that because she had made her body climax as a service to her new master, the pleasure she felt was actually far greater than any she had experienced in the past when she was simply doing it for her own enjoyment and she almost shouted for joy.

Harry slid his hands down to the backs of the girl's thighs, feeling the heat and sweat and the subtle trembling. He knew that her legs had to feel weak and that she desired nothing more than to sit down. Instead he said, "That was beautiful and I commend you for your effort. Now spread your feet wider apart. Use your hands to show me your cunt again just as you did earlier. I know you feel tired, but you will do it because I wish it so."

The admixture of compliment and stern command filled her with renewed strength and vigour. Even though she longed to lie in the firm cradle of his arms, she forced strength into her limbs and renewed her grip upon the lips of her cunt, glorying in the knowledge that at last she could truly offer herself to someone to be used and even abused. Even though she had just come, she could feel the lust flowing from her loins undiminished and ready for more. His hand roughly patted her open cunt and the sensation was so intense that she almost came again.

Harry continued to pat her cunt, whilst gradually increasing the force of his blows, all the while carefully watching his new companion. He always took care never to push a new girl too hard and too quickly because he found that the early impressions seemed to last the longest in their minds. He wanted them to leave their first time with him feeling that they had been successful and confident of their own sensuality and ability to please him. He knew that most slave keepers did not agree, preferring to instil fear right from the start and accused him of being soft, but he did not care. The loyalty and affection that his girls displayed were proof enough of the rightness of his methods, which in large part he had adopted from his experience in training sailors. Soon he was slapping her cunt hard enough that each blow caused a brisk crack of sound, and yet the girl neither faltered nor flinched. In fact, she had begun to grin in enjoyment, even though the movement of her eyes and

lips indicated that she was far from unaffected by the punishment of her cunt. "My ill treatment of your cunt seems to please you."

"I did not lie, Captain. I cannot give you my soul, but my cunt is my womanhood, and it has long been my greatest desire to give it into the hands of one who will use it to the utmost, caring nothing for my comfort or fears."

Harry found it intriguing that Áine was much more sensual naked than when she was clothed, and even more so when she was so close to him that he could smell her skin and the musky scent of her sex. Her clear and complete dedication to eroticism only added spice to her allure. In fact, despite his vast experience with women, he had yet to meet one who was so devoted to lustful pursuits and it fascinated him. Bending his head, he placed his lips upon the lips that pouted from between her thighs and took them between his teeth. He felt her buttocks tense under his hands, but she did not pull away, even when his teeth began to close on her soft inner lips.

She had never felt anything so terrifying and yet so wonderful in her young life, not even when she was taken from the street and thrown on board the slave ship. In a fanciful corner of her mind she actually hoped that he would bite her so hard as to draw blood, although she feared that it such a wound might fester and spoil her cunt as the Captain's plaything. But what she did know was that she would never pull away no matter how fierce or terrible the pain. This very determination itself excited her such that she experienced a small, warm orgasm, which of course only made her cunt even more sensible to the crushing pain inflicted by his teeth. The pain grew and grew until she was forced to utter soft cries of distress, though not once did she beg for mercy.

Harry eased the grip of his jaws and softly kissed her swollen cunt lips when he judged that she had experienced sufficient pain to overcome any unrealistic fantasies she might have held regarding her ability and desire to experience punishment, but yet not so as to crush her delightful enthusiasm. She was panting softly when he looked up at her face, and he could see the sparkle of tears in the corner of her eyes. "Any regrets?"

She drew a deep breath, and then vigorously shook her head. "None, Captain. I be wishing only that you find joy in my body."

He wrapped his arms around her again and hugged her hips, pressing his cheek against her belly. "That I do, little one. Indeed I do. I greatly admire the way you pleased yourself. And I would have you do it often. Tell the others that I expect them to become as accomplished as you are in this particular skill. I shall call upon all of you to perform for me and perhaps selected guests."

She grinned. "It will be my pleasure Captain, truly it will. But the others may not be similarly pleased." Using two fingers, she delicately pulled the hood back from her clitoris, exposing her tiny pink pearl to his gaze. With all the toying and teasing of her sex, it had become greatly enlarged and swollen, almost double its normal size. "Do you like it?"

Looking into her eyes, he could see the invitation written plain in her gaze. "I surely do."

"If I may ask a favour?"

"Ask."

"I ask that you pay as much attention as you would like to this particular part of me," she said, licking her lips suggestively.

He frowned lightly. "Do you know what you are asking? I would not be gentle or kind."

She nodded quickly, both fearful and eager. "It is something I have long desired. I shall not disappoint you, Captain."

He held up a cautionary finger. "If I agree, I expect that from now on you will unhesitatingly offer that part of yourself up to me without the slightest hesitation and never to shield it from my attentions no matter what you imagine I intend to do. Fail and you will be severely punished until you are able to deliver that which you have promised."

She shuddered in dark and terrible delight. "I swear it."

Harry was greatly pleased and smiled at her. "I would be happy to listen to any ideas you may have regarding the subject."

Again she was quick to nod. "There be one that I have long imagined."

"Tell me."

"A ring that I would wear like this –" She drew a circle around her clitoris with the tip of her finger. "Held in place by string or chains, one around my waist and another two up between my thighs," her finger indicating how the lower chains would pass down into her slit and the inner lips of her sex, running to either side of her cunt hole. "It would produce a forced exposure of my clitoris while never obstructing your access to the hole of my cunt. Every touch or blow would thus land directly upon it, unshielded by the surrounding skin or hair. I would go about with my clitoris in plain sight at all times."

Harry clapped his hands. "A most excellent notion! I shall have a jeweller commence work upon it this very night." He touched her still exposed clitoris with a playful fingertip. "But for now, let us essay one last game before you make me come for the very first time."

Her expression was as innocent as a child, even though she dutifully maintained the exposure of her clitoris. "I am your plaything, Captain. Use me as you will," she said as she rubbed her thighs against his knees.

Once again he picked up the candlestick and waved the flame in front of her smooth belly and arms, painting her skin in gold and red and gliding shadows. He smiled when his cock rose between his thighs to imitate the candle. "Are you ready?"

Seeing his intention, she shifted her grip on her cunt, using both hands to expose herself and leaving the way clear for the candle. She caressed herself with her thumbs, imagining the heat of the flame reaching for her clitoris. "That I am, Captain," she replied, her voice tight with lust and terror. His hand stroked her side, gliding down to tickle the back of her knee and up again to cup her tight firm buttock, the tips of his fingers easing between the cheeks. She pushed back against his hand, helping his fingers reach the pink grommet of her arse hole. She knew from her father's books that he could fuck her there and that many women found great pleasure in it. She had never been able to decide whether she hoped it would hurt dreadfully or make her swoon with pleasure. To hope for both seemed exceedingly greedy. Then the smooth waxy shaft of the candle touched her clitoris and she gasped when he slid it up and down, teasing and caressing. It felt marvellous, and the pleasure was amplified by the knowledge that at any second she might experience scalding pain from the flame or the molten wax. Then it happened. The shimmering, boiling hot wax overflowed the shallow bowl surrounding the flaming wick and ran down the shaft of the taper. Although much of it cooled and hardened on the way, a large liquid drop landed directly upon her clitoris, burning and scalding her screamingly sensitive flesh.

"Eeee!" The sound forced itself from between her lips, as a pain greater and more focused than anything she had ever before experienced exploded in her loins. For a moment it seemed as if all of her genitalia were aflame, and her cunt hole itself filled with boiling pitch that flowed towards her womb. And yet, before the rush of flame could overwhelm her, it retreated like the outgoing tide, leaving her clitoris and cunt aching and throbbing with delightful pain. She uttered a long drawn moan when Harry broke and rubbed away the hardened wax with a calloused thumb, preparing her for another wash of molten wax, and her knees flexed and trembled under the ungentle caress of her clitoris, bending inwards inelegantly but speaking eloquently of the unspeakable sensations that tore at her loins.

When the brisk rubbing stopped she saw him look into her eyes and raise his eyebrows. Inhaling deeply, she drew upon all her will and the simmering cauldron of lust in her belly to give her strength and proudly straightened her legs. She pulled back hard with her fingers and looked down over the modest mounds of her breasts at her clitoris and smiled when the candle fitted itself into the groove of her cunt once more and teasingly began to slide up and down, rubbing the slick, waxy surface against her sexual core while the flickering flame prepared a fresh dose of boiling hot agony. She held her breath when the candle slid lower and lower until the wick was barely an inch above the pink ridge that led down to the pearl of her clitoris. The stinging heat of the candle flame danced over her belly and she tightened the muscles of her arse cheeks in readiness.

With a deft movement of his wrist, Harry tilted the candle and neatly delivered the load of melted wax directly upon his target. Then even as her lithe body was stiffening in agony he set aside the candlestick and pulled downwards upon her hips, drawing her cunt down towards his waiting



cock. She was indescribably wet and open, and his hard erect cock plunged into her depths like a heated knife into butter.

Áine allowed her knees to collapse and she sat down upon his lap, impaling herself on his cock for the very first time. Remembering what she had read, she allowed herself to bounce lightly up and down, using her cunt to stroke her new owner's cock. Although she was so hot and filled with lust that she wanted to scream in pleasure, she forced herself to concentrate upon giving that pleasure to the Captain, employing her cunt as a tool rather than a receptacle as was proper for her status as an owned plaything. He scrubbed her clitoris once more with his thumb, and she felt the muscles of her cunt flutter and clench tightly around the invading shaft of his cock. When she heard him groan her smile widened into a grin of delight. "Do I feel good? Is it nice inside of me? Am I wet enough?" she asked in puppyish excitement as she continued to energetically bounce upon his lap.

It was not often that Harry laughed when he was so close to coming, but Áine's mixture of unquenchable sexuality and innocent obscenity tickled him irresistibly. He pulled her head down and kissed her soundly. "Yes, yes, and yes. Now I am going to come very soon, and I want to do it in your mouth. I'm going to be all covered with your juices, so I want you to be prepared for that."

"I be more than ready, Captain," she replied breathlessly, her words coming between gasps as she vigorously impaled herself over and over.

He felt the urgent, irresistible need fill his loins and he hurriedly lifted the slim girl off of his cock and helped her onto her knees in front of him. Her lips were wide open and he placed the head of his cock upon her waiting tongue. Her lips unhesitatingly closed around his shaft and with that he was unable to hold his seed back any longer. His body shook as the spasms took him, and his come spurted hard and uncontrolled into her receptive mouth. It was her first time, so he did not drive his cock deep into her throat, but instead moved it carefully in and out of the wet warmth, feeling her swallow, lick, and suck. He loved to stare into a girl's eyes as she drank down his come and suckled upon his cock, and it felt as if he could come forever.

Áine wasn't sure when she should release his cock, so rather than make a mistake, she continued to hold on with her lips. Even though he softened slightly, his cock did not seem to want to go down, so she patiently waited for his command. She felt dizzy and drunk with excitement, and would gladly have made herself come again or opened any part of herself up for further punishment. She wanted to laugh and dance and to hug him. Lifting her eyes, she tried to smile at him around his cock, and she wasn't certain whether she was glad or regretful when he gently pulled away. She licked her lips and allowed him to lift her to her feet. "Thank you, Captain."

This made Harry chuckle. "You're thanking me for coming in your mouth? I must admit that it is more often the other way around."

She leaned forward to kiss his chest. "Surely not. You be having your choice of women to give your seed, so it's I who should be glad to be chosen."

He put his arms around her and pulled her close, drawing her onto the sofa beside him. "I like the way you think, little one." He made her giggle by playfully worrying her nipple with his teeth. "Now tell me more about your dreams and imaginings."

"Well, I be having this fondness for the thought of tiny cuts being made on my cunt with a very sharp razor and ...."

## Chapter Four

The steel of the double edged side swords hissed and clashed, flashing in fast looping arcs and cunning twists. Harry grunted as his opponent's point almost managed to slip past his guard and drive into the hollow behind his collar-bone, but he managed a block and retaliated with a pommel strike towards the other man's forehead.

"Gut! Very good. You remembered. Every part of your sword is a weapon."

Johannes Meyer was a German mercenary soldier and sword master that Harry had hired when they had met by chance in a tavern. Most gentlemen had adopted the rapier or espada as the weapon of choice, but it was largely useless in the battlefield. In boarding actions it was possible to come up against everything from medieval broad swords to butcher's cleavers, and Harry wanted to train against as wide a variety of styles as he could manage.

However, the likelihood of a duel couldn't be ignored, so Johannes tossed a slimmer rapier to his student and assumed a sideways stance, back hand on his hip. "We work on your point skills now, ja?"

Harry caught the rapier with one hand and set down the larger side sword with the other. A movement at the door caught his attention and he held up his hand to his tutor. "You have an interest in swordplay, Cristina?"

"Good morning, Captain. A lady of the Court quickly becomes familiar with the finer points of swordplay. Courtiers are like stags, showing off their manhood at every opportunity. Besides, one of my brothers insisted that I be able to defend my honour, even though my father thought it was stupid and improper for a lady to learn how to fight." She curtsied to Master Johannes. "But please do not let me interrupt your lesson."

Harry waved his sword at a bench. "You're welcome to sit and watch, if it would interest you."

Although Cristina would not admit it, she still felt uncomfortable in the company of the other women, or perhaps it was the other way around, she told herself. She felt desperately lonely and isolated. Although Harry was her captor, he was also the most sympathetic and understanding person she had known for some time and she badly wanted him to like her or at least to enjoy her company. She smiled and nodded gratefully as she edged around the side of the room to the row of benches, which smelled strongly of male sweat and oiled steel. She watched silently as the two men came on guard, flat touching flat and totally still. Then steel hissed and clacked, the blades weaving glittering patterns in the air.

The sword master's dulled point flicked across his chest. "Blast!" Harry stepped back, recovering his guard with a rueful smile.

Johannes shook his head. "That's the third time I've caught you out with that move. You have to stop treating your sword like those butcher's blades that your sailors like to use, or you'll die the next time you fight a duel." He flicked the tip of his sword up and down. "You have developed a habit of following through just a little too much with your strokes. That's necessary with the heavier blades and when you're trying to penetrate armour, but with a duelling sword it just slows you down. Now again!" he snapped and stamped forward in a feinting lunge.

Harry did better this time, and the next, but each bout still ended with Johannes's point or edge touching his body. Finally he saluted his opponent and picked up a towel to wipe the sweat from his face and neck. "That's enough for today."

Johannes nodded and tucked his blade under his arm. "Put more work into it Harry. You are a good student and you're never late with your payments. I would hate to lose you." He bowed to Cristina and strode out of the training hall.

Harry smiled at the Spanish lady. "Still here?" He went over to the sword rack and picked up a pair of wooden rapiers. "Would you like to show me what you can do?"

Cristina stood up and gestured at her gown. "I'm not dressed for swordplay, Captain."

He grinned and went over to close and bolt the door. "That can easily be remedied."

She raised her eyebrows. "Do you mean –" Then she smiled, remembering her position. "Of

course you do," she said with a chuckle. "It is not the sort of play I had expected, but if it would amuse you ..." Without any further pretence of coyness or modesty she commenced to unlace and unhook her garments.

Harry flexed and stretched so as not to become stiff as he cooled off, but his eyes remained fixed upon the Spanish lady as she bared herself in the incongruous surroundings of the training hall. She had a physical elegance and grace that none of the other women possessed, largely the result of a lifetime of strict instruction and example. But unlike many, her haughtiness was more self-possession and confidence than blind belief in her natural superiority. When she was fully naked he tossed her a practise sword and nodded in approval at the way she caught it and gripped it with her fore-finger hooked through the looped guard and over the ricasso. It was clear that she had not been lying when she claimed to have some training with a sword. Although most would have said that Cristina was at a disadvantage because of her nakedness, he considered the distraction of her lithe form more than equitable compensation for her lack of protection.

Cristina saw the admiration and lust in his eyes and smiled as she raised her sword, weight on her back foot and left hand on hip. "En garde."

Harry met her sword with his, paused for one last moment just to stare and admire, then he initiated a basic attack, twisting his blade around hers to put her out of line and following with a half lunge. "Good," he said when she countered smoothly with a block, disengage, and riposte. It was a most unusual situation, and a highly erotic one. Her body moved smoothly in ways that made him want to use his other sword, but he did not allow his focus to waver from her point.

Cristina threw herself into the duel with all the intensity and energy she could manage. She had carefully watched Harry fight and the way the German sword master had bested him, and she thought that she was skilled enough to provide him with a challenge. She was not above using her nudity as a weapon, and allowed her breasts to sway and bob invitingly whenever she broke free from an engagement. However, as the combat continued, his point broke through her defences again and again to tap stingingly against her breasts and even between her thighs, leaving blushing red marks all over her pale smooth skin, although she noted that none of them left serious bruises or drew blood. Chiding herself for being over-confident, she pressed harder, sweat dripping down her face, back and belly as her bare feet stamped and glided along the floor and she worked her sword until the muscles of her arm burned. Suddenly she stepped back and signalled for a halt, a puzzled frown on her face. Then her eyes widened as she realised what had been bothering her. She had seen none of the faults in Harry's technique that had led to him consistently losing to the sword master. His defence was smooth and tightly controlled, each movement of his wrist and point only was wide as it had to be, while his attacks and ripostes darted it past her guard as fluidly as the rushing current of a river. "You were faking all along!" she exclaimed indignantly. "But why?"

Harry laughed and saluted her with his wooden blade. "Well spotted. It seems that you are more observant and intelligent than our good sword master." Tucking the practise sword under his arm, he stepped up to the red faced and glistening woman. He reached out to stroke the back of his fingers over her damp breast and smiled when she did not flinch or avoid his touch. "Why? Well, perhaps because a little bird tells me that Johannes has been taking coin in order to report upon faults in my sword skills and any other perceived vulnerabilities, such as my weakness for the company of women, even when I should be concentrating upon more serious things." He tapped his sword in illustration.

She put her hands on her hips and tilted her head at him. "You wanted me to come here this morning!"

Harry laughed and touched the fine line of her jaw. "Let us say I hoped you would." His fingers trailed down her long neck and back to her breast. He circled her nipple and leaned forward to kiss her lightly upon the lips. "I must say, you do cut a fine figure as a swordswoman."

"Especially naked?" she asked archly.

"Most definitely so."

"So what now? I have acted as your pawn, and you have misled your enemies. Shall I leave you to your affairs or .... "

"Or, we could make this a regular affair. It would provide me with a fresh sword partner and, truth be told, I find the vision you present strongly stimulating. It would give you something other than gossip and needlework to do, and an opportunity to employ your female wiles upon me."

"Oh? And what leads you to believe that I would do such a thing?" she asked sharply, stung by the truth in his observation.

"It is my experience that even the most timid or self-confident of women have an irresistible desire to be seen as attractive and desirable by a man who has power over them."

Pride made her want to argue, but her natural honesty made her smile ruefully. "I'll admit that the thought had crossed my mind."

He smiled back and pulled her wet body against his chest. "I'll not fault any woman for trying, so long as that is not the only weapon in her arsenal."

His closeness made her lick her lips. Softly she said, "You still haven't ... taken me. I had expected to be put on my back the moment you had me alone." She pressed her hips against his. "Muirín has given us all doses of the herbal draught which she says will prevent us getting with child, so you can use me without concern." She chuckled softly. "Does that count as using my womanly wiles?"

"You'll recall that I promised to abide by the drawing of the lots."

She nodded. "To determine who is to warm your bed. But this is ... something else."

"Such enthusiasm. I should be honoured," he said teasingly.

"Yes, you should be," she said haughtily, but then broke into giggles. "I feel absolutely ridiculous trying to be all stiff and proud while standing with my cunt waving in the air."

Harry studied the offending object and rubbed his chin. "Perhaps I should replace the Jolly Roger with a portrait of your cunt. My enemies are certain to quail at such an imposing sight."

She stuck her tongue out at him. "Are we going to play, or should I get dressed?"

"Perhaps I just want to look at you?" he replied, his voice suddenly cold.

Cristina paled and went very still. She realised that she had just overstepped the mark. "I ... I'm sorry, Captain. I did not mean to offend or assume upon your kindness. I would be glad to stand here all day if it would please you."

He folded his arms across his chest and studied her silently. "I had planned to take your maidenhead gently, but it seems that you have chosen to throw my kindness back in my face. Or perhaps you mistake my courtesy for weakness. Tell me, how do you think I should deflower you?"

She lowered her head and clasped her fingers together in front of her waist. She understood that he was giving her a chance to redeem herself in his eyes, rather than simply punishing her like a disobedient servant. It was up to her to impress him and to prove that she warranted more than simply being used like a cheap dockside whore. A part of her, the fine Spanish lady, screamed in rage and offence, but she was also trained in the realities of life in the Court. Pride was a luxury that could only be afforded by those with the power to enforce it. Right now, she was about as powerless as any person could be. Harry was offering her the means to take the first step back up the ladder. But there was always a price to pay. This she knew. She nodded and said, "I should pay in order to get back in your good graces, so I suggest that my ... deflowering be as painful and humiliating as possible as a rebuke for my presumption."

"Hmm. A good start. What would you suggest?" he said, slowly pacing around her dejected person, his arms still folded.

Cristina battled to think of a suitable method. She did not want to suggest anything that would permanently maim or kill her, so things like red hot pokers and boiling oil were out of the question, but she knew if she appeared cowardly now, she would be permanently out of his favour. Searching the room with her eyes, her gaze fell upon an unusual looking dagger set upon a display rack. "May I?" she asked, pointing in the direction of the rack.

Harry, who was not really as angry as he appeared, nodded. He was interested to see how the proud noblewoman would respond when her position in his household was threatened and so far he was well pleased that she was able to overcome her ingrained aristocratic pride, plus it seemed to him that she had a good grasp of the reality of power. But equally, she did not appear to be willing

to give up when faced with a setback. She truly had a fine body, and Harry considered her husband to be an idiot of the first water. From what he had seen so far, he was certain that she would have accepted almost anything he cared to do to her provided he showed her the respect and consideration due to a nobleman's wife.

Cristina walked up to the large, heavy looking dagger. It had attracted her attention because it did not have sharp edges, but instead was triangular in cross-section and the tip was not needle-sharp although it was serviceably pointed. Her father's master of arms had once shown her a similar weapon, which in English and French was called a Misericord. It was designed to penetrate the gaps in full plate armour in the days before muskets and pistols were introduced to the battlefield. She placed her fingers upon it and looked at Harry. "May I?" When he gestured in agreement, she picked up the surprisingly heavy weapon and held it up in front of her. Her lips felt dry and her throat tight and hoarse with fear, but she forced a smile and said, "What would you think of using this as the instrument of my ravishment?" Pacing slowly and gracefully across the room, she held the dagger out on both of her hands as if bearing a treasure. She almost smiled in genuine, albeit slightly self-mocking mirth at the realisation that she was still trying to use her "feminine wiles" upon him.

Harry accepted the old, if not ancient, dagger and hefted it in his hand. Despite its lack of sharp edges or point, it could easily cause her serious or even fatal injury if he was not careful, or if she made a sudden movement. However, the idea did appeal to him, especially since it had originated from Cristina's mind and not his. He ran his fingers over the smooth oiled metal of the blade, then wrapped his hand around it and slid the dagger in and out of the pipe formed by his fingers. It did not cut him, and the dagger was surprisingly well balanced. The feeling of the blade sliding past his fingers began to arouse him as he imagined it going into her cunt. He opened his hand and slapped the dagger against his palm. "This will do." He pointed at the padded mat that covered the floor. "Get down on the ground before me and prepare yourself."

This was the hardest part for Cristina, worst still than the thought of the suffering that she was about to endure. To grovel at the feet of this man was insufferable. And yet, suffer it she must because honour and necessity demanded it. The resolution was, as always, duty. She had given her word and placed her mark upon the contract, despite his dire warnings of the consequences. Now it was her duty to willingly obey, just as she had always expected her servants to obey and to be grateful for their jobs. Falling to her knees as if in prayer, she hesitated. "Should I lie on my back?"

"No. Remain on your knees and lower your head to the floor. You are an intelligent woman, so I'm certain you understand what is required."

Cristina did indeed. She lowered her upper body, supporting herself with a hand on either side of her head. She turned her head to one side and let her cheek press against the mat. Although Harry had not commanded it, she moved her knees apart as far as she could bear, so that her cunt should not be shielded in any way.

Harry knelt beside her and stroked his hand down the curve of her back. "Good, very good. You are a marvel to behold like that. Most men would be rendered witless by the very sight of you."

Listening to his compliments, Cristina realised that it was this very strength of character and the fact that he remained untouched by her body and face that made him admirable and even ... attractive to her. She had been taught to value strength in others even as a child. She suddenly became very aware of the way her cunt was thrust out and almost demanding to be touched and used. Although she did not enjoy pain or being subject to another's will, it did not make her unaware of the powerful sensuality of her situation, and she could not deny that she was strongly aroused by the man's commanding personality.

When it came time to play with a woman, it was always the little details that struck him as he touched and played with her body. The grime from the floor that darkened the soles of Cristina's feet, the small delicate hairs that formed a pattern on her skin that seemed to flow over the curves of her buttocks and into the shaded crevice. In this position, her arse hole blossomed beautifully, and he was surprised that it almost drew his attention from her cunt ... almost. The light from the many tall windows danced across her skin, giving it a pearl-like glow, but at the same time it did not hide

the faint tracery of veins and the pink glow of the blood underneath which made her look and feel enticingly vulnerable. With a fingertip he traced the fine crease lines in the skin that framed her cunt and separated it from her firm thighs, then brushing through the dark curly pubic hairs to her slit. Following that faintly moist valley upwards his finger landed upon the furled centre of her arse hole.

Cristina tried to keep her voice casual despite her strained position and extreme vulnerability. "It seems I may offer my virginity to you twice," she said, attempting to prove to him her remorse and willingness to do anything at all in order to satisfy him.

He circled his fingertip over the star shaped opening, enjoying the way she pushed her hips back to part her buttock cheeks for him. "Something I hope we may both enjoy in the future." Holding the misericord point down by its handle, he pressed the chill steel of the triangular blade deep into the moistness of her slit.

Cristina shivered from the chill, both of her body and her soul. The realisation that he could just as easily be pressing a normal dagger against her cunt plunged an icicle of fear into her heart. And yet, there was an unmistakable tingle in her cunt that was neither pain nor fear. She had always been a lusty girl, and she prayed that what she would suffer at Harry's hands would not destroy her ability to enjoy sensuality and the joys of the bedroom. Right now, what he was doing actually felt rather nice, the oiled steel sliding up and down along her slit and gliding over the tip of her clitoris. That last sensation was a bit too strong, but she was grateful for anything that was pleasurable at the moment, even if it made her toes curl by its intensity. The dagger continued to glide up and down as if Harry was attempting to saw her cunt in half and she began to breathe heavily in arousal while each movement of the weapon brought a fresh prick of fear that the point was going to drive into her cunt. Then the movement ceased and she clenched her fists. Slowly, tauntingly the point traced its way up her slit until at last it rested upon the damp, clenching hole that was the gateway to her womb.

Harry smiled at the copious moisture that bubbled at her entrance. While she was no lover of pain such as Áine, it was clear that Cristina was no maiden of ice. It would be difficult for one brought up as an aristocrat to be turned into a sexual plaything without the risk of breaking her spirit entirely, and Harry was being very careful. His fingers barely closed around the handle as he held the dagger in a horizontal position upon his palm and very slowly allowed the point to dip into her hole. Moving the tip in a tiny circle, he let the steel tickle her cunt hole, giving her time to get used to the sensation of being touched there. He saw her tense and then visibly relax and he nodded to himself. It was good that she wasn't going to fight whatever was going to happen. He rotated his hand in smooth circles while keeping the point inside the mouth of her cunt hole, making the tip of the dagger rub and press against her flesh, gradually easing it deeper and closer to her maidenhead.

She almost giggled when the smooth steel wriggled just inside her hole. It tickled madly, and made her want to piss at the same time. She imagined pissing upon Harry's hand and the urge to giggle increased. Then the grin disappeared from her face when the tip of the dagger slid in a little deeper and touched her hymen. Contrary to what most people imagined, the hymen was not a solid barrier like a drum head, but more often like a frilly lace trimming that edged the inside of the cunt hole or even shreds of it laying across the hole. But it was usually quite sensible to the touch, just like any piece of skin on a cracked lip. Having it poked by a pointed steel rod, however gently, most definitely hurt, though so far no more than the pricking of her finger when darning a garment. She made a soft sound just to let Harry know that he had hurt her.

"Felt that, did you?"

"Yes Captain," she replied, trying not to sound as if her words were a complaint.

Harry peered at her cunt. Her inner petals were quite small and neat, allowing her slit to close tightly, leaving only a slim pink line in between. "I cannot see what I am doing and I would prefer to only hurt you deliberately. Reach back with your hands and spread your cheeks."

It took a second for Cristina to work out what he wanted, the request, or more correctly the command, being so far outside her normal world. Her cheek bone pressed uncomfortably into the mat when she lifted her hands and uncertainly reached back and around her hips. She was actually

relieved when Harry's touch guided her fingers to the desired position.

"Now grip firmly and pull – hard."

The Spanish aristocrat did as she was told and bit her lip when she felt the way the outer lips of her cunt parted and spread. She could feel her cunt hole being drawn open, and his breath tickled right inside the depths of her cunt when he leaned over to check her work.

"Better. Much better. You have a most delightful cunt, by the way."

"Th-thank you?" she replied uncertainly. Any woman enjoys a compliment, but this was the first that she had ever received regarding her cunt, but after a moment's consideration she decided that she was pleased, as well as oddly aroused. It did funny things to her loins to know that a man was closely looking at and admiring her most intimate places, even if she did not know what a pretty cunt should look like.

"Now brace yourself, Harry said, tightening his grip upon the misericord. Her cunt hole was now a small but distinct circle, and by gripping the blade itself with his left hand he began to manoeuvre the tip around the rim and inner sides, where it was most likely to come into contact with her maidenhead. He felt the tip catch against something and Cristina cried out in genuine pain. This time he didn't stop but continued to circle her opening with the dagger while slowly introducing more and more of the blade into her cunt hole.

The destruction of her hymen was slow and relentless, and far more painful than the simple thrust of a comparatively soft and well-padded penis. Tears ran down Cristina's face both from the pain and the realisation that she was no longer a virgin, deflowered by a cold piece of steel. The dagger continued to work its way into her body and the thicker part of the triangular blade pressed and stretched her torn hymen even harder, making her body shudder and her feet rub hard against the mat. By the time the tip reached the very bottom of her hole and touched the tightly clenched dome that was the mouth of her womb, she was moaning out loud, all pride forgotten as her virgin cunt was ravaged by the knight-killing blade.

Harry worked the deeply buried dagger in a circle without moving the point, forming the shape of a cone with the blade, increasingly stretching her cunt wider and wider while completing the destruction of her maidenhead. Each circular movement of his hand brought forth a scream, and traces of blood painted the opening of her hole. He found the writhing and twisting of her hips and buttocks in time to the movement of the dagger to be immensely stimulating, and he was pleased that her knees still remained as far apart as they had been when he had started. His goal was to thoroughly demolish her hymen as an object lesson in obedience and submission to his will, but he had no desire to damage her cunt or her ability to feel pleasure, so he stopped twisting the triangular blade but left it buried within her cunt. A quick movement of his knees brought him closer to her head. He lightly brushed away a strand of her hair that had fallen across her brow and eyes. "So, do you hate me now?"

The dagger hung heavily and uncomfortably from her cunt, which burned as if someone was holding a torch beneath it and also heating up the steel of the blade. But the punishment had stopped, and it appeared that Harry was done with the dagger, at least for now. Despite the shameful noises she had made, she felt rather proud of herself and how she had behaved under the first true pain that she had ever experienced in her aristocratic life except for the occasional slaps and spanking given by her tutors. She pondered her answer for a moment. The lost virgin wanted to scream "Yes! I hate you, I hate you, you're a monster and I hate you!" She parted her lips to reply and then stopped. She could have asked to be sold on to the brothel, or changed her mind and chosen the life of the Convent and she believed that Harry would have obliged. She was starting to understand him a little bit and he had little time for women who did not want to be here with him, even if only because their alternatives were worse. And as for the misericord, it was she, not him who had chosen it. More thoughtfully she said, "I hate the pain and the humiliation ..."

"But?" he prompted, sensing the word in her hesitation.

"I find I cannot hate you. I should, but I don't."

He ran a finger slowly down the indented flowing line of her spine and made her quiver by drawing small circles at the base where it met her hips. "Nor am I one to hold an honest error of

judgement against you. I know you are in pain, but are you willing to serve me with your cunt right now if I remove the dagger?"

Her giggle possessed a trace of delirium. "What am I doing this for except to gain the opportunity to serve you?" She closed her eyes. "Umm, your touch feels so good,"

He kissed her bare shoulder. "Don't move. I shall remove the dagger now. It would be a shame to injure you by mischance."

She lifted her head to look back at him. "And what about deliberately?" Her smile revealed that she was being playful.

"Are you making an offer?"

With a slight, defiant toss of her hair, "And if I was?"

It seemed to Harry as if her recent ordeal had not dampened her spirit, or she was using defiance to hide her fear. He tapped lightly but briskly upon the end of the protruding handle of the dagger and made her gasp when the point jabbed at the mouth of her womb. "Don't let your pride make you reckless. There are times when I will be in the mood to simply take you at your word, and you will likely regret it."

She nodded. "I understand."

"Are you making an offer?" he repeated, giving her a second chance.

She shook her head. "No Captain. But I am ready to perform my duties." She hissed as the blade slid out of her cunt, hurting when it rubbed against the raw spots where her hymen was torn. She was surprised when she felt his lips upon her buttocks, and even more so when they landed upon her arse hole and then the sore hole of her cunt which her fingers still held spread. She had never been kissed, let alone licked on her cunt before, and the moist, tickling touch of his tongue around the opening of her cunt hole shocked her more than the kiss of the blade. It was something she had not imagined, but now that it was happening, it felt amazingly good. The knowledge that it was his tongue and not a finger or a feather, thrilled her. Not only was he caressing her, but he was tasting and smelling her cunt. The thought was so obscene that she felt a flush of heat to her cheeks, and a warmth and tension within her loins that she realised, to her surprise, was lust. The licking and kissing continued, moving all around her cunt and occasionally straying daringly to her arse hole. She began to moan again, but this time not from the pain, which was still there, dancing in the background. And when his tongue began to circle her clitoris, her groan rumbled deep and powerfully in her belly as her mouth opened wide and her eyes squeezed shut. She wanted more than anything to rub her cunt against his mouth, to be soothed and caressed and, yes, to scratch the sensual, sexual itch that was newly born in her loins. But she had erred once, and she was not about to fail again so soon, so she tried to accept his teasing caresses in stillness and with ladylike grace.

When Harry judged that she was close to a climax he took his face away from her cunt, grinning at the moan of disappointment that she was not quite able to stifle. He took a long, lingering look at her red and swollen looking cunt, sighed with regret, and said, "You may get up now."

When she had first fallen to her knees, she had not believed that she would ever feel any amount of regret when she was allowed to stand again, and her lips twisted wryly in self-mockery. Being noble and dignified was not as easy as it had appeared from watching others.

"Do you feel any serious pain that might tell of a severe injury?" Harry asked.

The pressing of her thighs together when she stood had made the soreness of her cunt increase until it was a definite thumping of her heartbeat echoing in her swollen sexual parts, but she knew that was not what he was asking. "No, I'm not hurt," she said, shaking her head and holding her hands out to her sides.

Darting to the side of the hall, Harry fetched a low three-legged stool, which he placed firmly upon the mat in front of her. He swiftly unlaced his breeches, freed his cock, and sat down on the stool. He held out a hand to her. "Come, stand astraddle my thighs. Place your hands upon my shoulders."

Cristina complied, once again powerfully aware of the way her cunt was positioned in front of his face. His hands lightly gripped her hips and it was obvious what he intended, so she allowed



him to guide her movements.

"I had truly not intended that your deflowering be as painful as it was, but I would do you no favours by not showing you the limits right from the start. Now let us complete making you into a woman in the proper manner."

His hands imparted a slight downward pressure, and she allowed her knees to bend. She was glad that dancing and riding had strengthened her thighs so that she was able to lower herself slowly without an unsightly trembling and shaking of her legs. She inhaled sharply when she felt the soft yet firm touch of his cock head against the lips of her cunt. One of his hands left her hip in order to guide his cock, and then she felt him press down upon her hip again and she obediently lowered herself, biting her lip as his cock pressed and stretched the sore mouth of her cunt, but her weight and the tiredness of her legs encouraged her to sink down upon his cock despite the tearing, pricking pain. Tears moistened her eyes again and she cursed her weakness even as her heart raced because it felt that her cunt was being stretched impossibly wide by his impaling cock and that she must surely be torn apart. But then it was too late, and she was sitting firmly upon his lap. It was strange and she felt filled to the brim, and yet it was so very natural. Even the pain of her torn and ravaged maidenhead felt right, if no less discomforting. She had some idea of what sex was about, and she wondered if she should move herself up and down, but when she tensed her legs to do so Harry held her down with a slight smile and shook his head.

"No, just sit on me and feel it. Feel me inside of you. It is not a possession, or an invasion, but a sharing. Can you feel me?"

She almost laughed at the ridiculousness of the question. Of course she felt him. She could feel little else.

"No, not just the fullness. Feel me. Feel my touch inside of you, and feel how you hold me with your body. Close your eyes," he said, luxuriating in the warmth and tightness of her virgin cunt around his cock as he stroked her back and sides. Making tiny rocking motions with his hips he teased the inside of her cunt and by spreading his knees and allowing her bottom to sink between his thighs, he pushed his cock a fraction of an inch deeper and pressed the head of his cock against the mouth of her womb.

Her lips parted with just the most minute of movements as she closed her eyes. Suddenly her attention shifted beyond the stretching and tightness, and even beyond the needle-like jabs of pain that glowed spark bright with each shifting friction of his cock against the tatters of her maidenhead. As her cunt gradually stretched and fitted itself around the new intruder, her alarm faded and she realised that she was not going to be torn apart after all. In fact, it didn't really hurt at all. To say that she suddenly felt a great surge of pleasure would have been a lie, but she could tell that once her virgin wounds healed, it was more than likely that what he was doing, and what she was doing, could feel – quite nice. It felt even nicer when he put his arms around her and drew her close to kiss her on the lips, her nipples tingling and growing stiff when they brushed against the fabric of his shirt. The movement created an interesting stirring inside her cunt and ignoring the soreness, she squeezed his hips with her thighs as if riding a horse – she had never been one to ride side-saddle – and the feeling of the muscles of her cunt tightening around his cock made her gasp.

"Mmm, that feels nice," Harry said, nuzzling the side of her neck.

The complement and his soothing touch affected her much more powerfully than it ordinarily would have because of the suffering and humiliation she had just undergone, and ultimately her fate still resided in his hands so she badly wanted him to be pleased with her. Pain and soreness forgotten, she concentrated on making the small erotic motions that seemed to be what he wanted. She still wasn't feeling very much other than the tightness and a feeling of warmth, but it did excite her to see the way her movements and efforts seemed to give Harry pleasure. While she genuinely wanted to serve him, she couldn't help but realise that it gave her something of value to offer him more than the beauty of her body. However, he seemed eager to have her to feel something, so she continued to look into herself even as she slowly, dreamily rocked herself upon his lap.

The feeling of having his cock buried deep in the beautiful aristocrat and having her warm

smooth body in his arms made Harry smile. The knowledge that her cunt was freshly raw and sore made his smile even wider. But he was not wantonly cruel. He was satisfied with that trace of pain that she had willingly suffered on his behalf. Now was the time for pleasure – his, and perhaps hers as well. He used his arms to guide the swaying of her body, and he murmured meaningless soothing words into her ear, all the while thinking of how his cock was working in the cunt of a woman who would not deign to spit in his face if they had met in her home. The rocking of her hips grew faster, and it was obvious that she was feeling more at ease with what she was doing.

Ladies of the Royal Court did not remain innocent of the ways of sex for very long. Sexual gossip was one of the mainstays of entertainment amongst the women. But actually doing it was quite different. Perhaps because she was not lying under a man as he grunted and thrust into her. Instead, this almost imperceptible rocking and sliding of their private parts against each other was both tantalising and incredibly intimate. When she began to hear moist squishing noises come from between her thighs her cheeks flamed. She leaned her torso back when Harry's hands eased her in that direction, and she hummed sensually when his lips closed over her nipples, first one then the other, like a bee dipping into flowers in search of nectar. This was pure pleasure, and she was not averse to it at all. It was as if a taper had been lit in a dark room. The glow of pleasure spread through her breasts like a wine stain on silk and then down across her belly and into her loins. Tightening her grip on his shoulders, she added a twisting motion to the movements of her hips and made her breasts sway by moving her shoulders alternately forward and back.

Harry placed a thumb over her clitoris, trapping it against the shaft of his cock. If they had been actively fucking it would have been hard to keep it in position, but their slow, almost teasing motions made it easy.

Cristina's eyes widened. "Oh! I ... I like that," she said, lowering her eyes at that admission.

"Move faster," he commanded. "Just a little."

This time she had no hesitation in complying and her hips assumed a visible rocking motion. A smile spread across her lips. "That feels very good, Captain. Does it feel good for you?"

In truth it felt exquisite, but all he said was, "Yes, you are doing very well", his words a subtle reminder that she existed to serve his pleasure and not her own.

She was quick enough to catch the reminder, but the smile didn't fade from her lips. She understood now that he was not averse to her feeling pleasure, and might even spend time and effort in giving it to her so long as she remained focused upon giving pleasure to him. With that thought she recalled what his pleasure really was. "Perhaps it would suit you to play with my ... my nipples, Captain." She still found it difficult to speak such intimacies aloud, especially while she was busily engaged in rubbing her cunt over a man's cock, which activity was feeling increasingly good.

Harry's opinion of her rose another notch, and he responded to her invitation by lightly pinching her nipples, just hard enough to get her blood pumping, but not so hard that it would shock her out of her present state of growing lust. "Fear not, I have not forgotten my plans for you."

Cristina rolled her hips in a passable if unknowing imitation of a tavern dancer's moves. "Then I take it that I have not totally lost your favour, Captain?" she said huskily.

"I believe that you have adequately redeemed yourself in my eyes. But what think you of the pain?"

She squeezed her thighs together, feeling her cunt tighten around his cock and she saw him grin. "Keep faith with me Captain, and you shall have all that a husband could have required of me ... and more." She rocked her hips and then squeezed again. "My cunt is now open, both to your cock, and to your lash."

"Ah, so you remember the lash, do you?" he said, gently biting her lower lip and pushing upwards with his cock, feeling it rubbing against the cushion of her womb's mouth.

"How ... could ... I ... not?" she replied, thrusting harder, her feet curled around the legs of the stool for balance. She was feeling real pleasure now, and it made her daring. She could feel the hard muscles of his shoulders under her fingers, and she suddenly imagined him naked and on top of her as her husband had been when he had failed to take her, and wetness flowed from her cunt. She was so very strongly tempted to explore her newly awakened lustfulness, but she curbed herself

sharply, focusing upon the need to give Harry pleasure. She sensed that talking about the lash would arouse him. "Have you whipped many women there? On their cunts?"

"Indeed I have. More than I can remember. Sometimes in play, and other times to in earnest."

"And did they all scream lustily as you punished them there?" Thinking about the subject and of what to ask him proved to be more arousing than she had expected, and it was a struggle for her not to bounce upon his cock as if riding her fine mare at home. The moist sound of their coupling grew louder and she began to revel in it.

Harry gripped her nipples but did not yet crush them. "Some. Many try to be silent, out of pride or to try to please me. And there were a few who did not cry out at all."

"Were they truly so brave then?" she asked, completely lost in the moment, the tearing pain of her deflowering almost forgotten. She understood that Harry could simply have thrown her on her back and used her like a tavern whore, or beaten her until she had to crawl, but instead had given her the time that she needed. Although it made no sense, she experienced an overflowing feeling of affection and gratitude, which added fresh kindling to the low flickering flames of her lust. Heat filled her belly, her breasts felt heavy, and all of her skin seemed to tingle and flush warmly.

Harry was becoming increasingly aroused as well, although as yet far from losing control. "A few truly desired the feelings of pain. Sometimes they see their silence as a form of rebellion and defiance." He thrust upwards into her hard enough to jolt her body in emphasis of the words "rebellion" and "defiance".

This time his thrusts did not seem to hurt at all, even though the soreness still hovered like a mist in the background, and she wriggled in appreciation. She was beginning to see how fucking could be like a sword match, each partner making a move that was met with a counter move by the other, and where subtlety was as important as brute force. "And you allowed this?" She gasped when his hard hands clapped against her buttocks, stinging them and at the same time driving her harder onto his cock. With a low moan, she started to rock her entire body in time to the impact of his hands against her buttock flesh, and for the first time she felt as if they were truly fucking. Driven upwards by the warmth of their connection and closeness, she inhaled the scent of her own cunt and her liquid arousal, which wafted up between their bodies. The smell wiped away the last traces of any reluctance she felt to express her own pleasure or to use every part of her body to give pleasure to Harry. Right then she was a naked woman sitting on a man's cock, a man who owned her completely. "Fuck me, Captain. Fuck me any way you desire. I am yours."

Harry grinned and gripped her hips, guiding her movements. "Like this. Short steady strokes, don't speed up and don't get tempted to grind down against me. That will feel good to you, but not me. Whose pleasure is important?"

"Yours, Captain," she replied as her bare feet pushed against the rungs of the stool and she concentrated on stroking his cock with her cunt in the exact way he desired. Using her cunt in this way actually gave her a renewed feeling of self-determination and it felt good. Very good indeed. Even the heavy slaps upon her buttocks ceased to shock her and became part of the overall experience. Like the drum beats on a slave galley, she used the blows to time the movement of her hips, up and down, up and down, and her belly began to ripple and tremble with strange and never before experienced contractions. She licked her suddenly dry lips and said, "I like ... this, Captain. I ... truly do."

Harry was not displeased by this declaration. "Even this?" he asked clapping his palm against her reddened buttock.

She was beginning to sweat from the effort of fucking herself on his cock, and was increasingly becoming lost in the haze of heated sensations. "I ... It does not disturb me, Captain," she replied cautiously. Given the way she was feeling, she was honestly not sure what she thought of the smacking of her bottom. Then she gasped loudly when he bent his head and commenced to suckle upon her nipples, while continuing the rhythmic punishment of her bottom. She closed her eyes tightly and the relentless sliding, rubbing, and stretching of her sexual parts became her entire

world. The muscles of her legs and hips worked in perfect timing to his blows and the heat in her cunt shook her entire body.

"Tell me if you are about to come. I shall expect you to always do this in future." Harry commanded.

"Come?" Cristina repeated dreamily. "Do you think I can come?" she asked, surprised by the very possibility.

Harry slid his lips and tongue up the slope of her breast, tasting the sea tang of her sweat, delved into the hollow behind her collar-bone, and then his teeth nipped gently at her throat. "Do you want to?" he whispered, keeping the focus upon her sexuality.

Her breasts moved visibly up and down, propelled by her heavy breathing and the bouncing of her body. Her buttocks throbbed as if she stood too close to a charcoal fire, and she groaned when his cock plunged deep once again. She nodded. "I think ... Yes, yes I do," she admitted.

Harry could feel her juices running down the base of his cock, over his balls and dripping onto the mat beneath them. The thought of a new kind of stain apart from sweat and blood on the mat made him grin. He was pleasantly surprised that beneath her aristocratic veneer, Cristina seemed to possess a powerful sexuality, and a laudable willingness to display that lust. "Keep your eye upon your duty," he said, his own lust making his voice rumble. "If you can find pleasure in it, then all the better."

A powerful, almost frightening spasm rocked her being and her hips shook and juddered in a manner she could never had deliberately imitated. "Oh! Oh! Uhhh. Y-yes, Captain. What ... what's happening to me?" she said, her vision darkening and her head spinning from a feeling in her loins and belly that was so powerful that she imagined she might be about to swoon.

He laughed and stopped spanking her, instead gripping her glowing red cheeks and using his hand hold to keep her hips moving in a regular rhythm as she recovered from her unmistakable orgasm. "I know it's hard, but keep going."

Cristina felt an overwhelming urge to put her arms around him and go to sleep, but carried out only the first half of that desire. She put her arms around his neck and pressed her cheek to his. Gathering her will and the strength of her rebellious body, she managed to continue the steady, maddening stroking of his cock with her cunt, although every movement of his shaft inside of her seemed to throw off bright sparks, and the sounds she made seemed ridiculous even to her. But she felt increasingly relaxed and comfortable in Harry's company and almost all of the stiff, prickly wariness had gone from her spine. She worked his cock as if it was something she had done all her life, and it thrilled her to realise that he was getting closer to a climax himself. For the first time in her life, the inside of her cunt was a reality to her, rather than just the source of vague discomfort when her moon blood came. Now it was something she could use and which could be used for purposes of pleasure. She did not doubt that it would be used to give her pain as well, but all women other than nuns lived with the knowledge and expectation of the screaming pain of childbirth, and she was growing to trust that Harry would not simply and selfishly hurt her and then toss her aside. There could be lustful enjoyment in it for her too so long as she held to her word and the spirit of her contract.

"Come for me, Captain. Come for me. I want to know the feeling of your seed inside of me. Hurt me if you must, but just come," she whispered, clinging to him with her arms as well as her tight wet cunt.

Harry was close enough that the urgency of her words was sufficient to take him over the top. He dug his fingers into her buttocks hard, knowing that he would leave dark finger marks in her flesh. His teeth fastened upon the smoothness of her bare shoulder, and his cock thrust home one last time.

Cristina felt Harry shudder and his heated breath bathe her shoulder. She was so acutely aware of her cunt and the cock that she cradled within it that she clearly felt him come. She fancied that she even felt the spurting of his come as it bathed the entrance to her womb. She didn't know when to stop, so she continued to fuck his cock with short smooth strokes, but feeling rather pleased with herself. She had made him come. Looking back, even her deflowering with the dagger seemed

erotic, even though it was nothing of the sort while it was happening. His grip on her buttocks guided her to a gradual halt, and she leaned against him breathing heavily, her entire body glowing hotly. The soreness of her cunt became more noticeable again but she realised that she liked feeling his cock nestling within her body as they clung together upon the stool. She felt very close to him at that moment, and she was grateful that he hadn't simply pushed her away after he had come.

Harry closed his eyes and sighed contentedly. She had redeemed herself well, and he saw the potential for much enjoyment with her. He held her in his arms, returning her hug, his cock still stirring lazily in the hot sticky embrace of her cunt. He had long ago overcome the powerful urge to sleep that most men felt after orgasm, and his mind was busy with imaginings of what he might do with her in the future. Although she must have been uncomfortable in her awkward perch upon his lap, she held her pose like an artist's model, silently awaiting his pleasure. As with Áine, he had a final test for Cristina. He told her what to do and watched in silence as she stiffly climbed off of his lap, his seed running out of her cunt in a minor torrent when his cock ceased to plug up her hole.

Cristina was acutely aware that he was watching her to see how she would respond to his command. Her husband had demanded the use of her mouth, and since his death she had often thought about how she might respond if she were ever given the opportunity to marry again and received a similar request from her new husband. For a while, anything that reminded her of her wedding night made her feel sick, and that was her first reaction even now, but she believed strongly in fairness and duty, and she knew her past misfortunes were not the fault of a future husband, or of Harry. He had every right to expect such a simple service of her, and every right to be angry if she refused. But unlike a husband, Harry had little to restrain his response to such defiance. Her body was stiff from her exertions and she stretched herself, raising her arms straight up into the air. She had performed this movement many times in front of a mirror to the amusement and knowing giggles of her maids and she knew it made her look very good. Carefully avoiding his eyes, she dropped in a smooth curtsy that continued until she was on her knees before him.

She placed her hands upon his thighs and finally lifted her head to meet his gaze. With her eyes looking into his, she allowed her hands to slide up his thighs until they framed his groin, not quite touching his cock and balls. She had always heard the men went soft and limp after they had delivered their seed, but Harry's cock had not lost much, if any, of its stiffness. She wondered if this was a tribute to her charms, and then chastised herself for the sin of pride. Then she remembered the earth shaking touch of his tongue upon her cunt and arse hole, and she smiled. If what she was about to do felt as good as that, she needed to search no further for the cause of his stiffness, and it gave her the impetus she needed to part her lips and lower her head over his slime covered cock. She cringed when her tongue touched the slick stickiness, but she sternly reminded herself that most of that glistening residue was her fault and not his, so it was only fair that she clean it up.

Harry didn't try to hide his sigh of pleasure, and allowed Cristina to lick and suck as she willed. He admired her determination and ingrained dignity, and found it extremely arousing. He had been truly fortunate when he had found her aboard the Spanish ship. He let her go on sucking him even though he knew she had to be tiring and her jaw aching, not out of malice but just to see if she would stop or plead for relief. He was almost tempted to let her go on until he came in her mouth, but in the end he brushed his hands against the sides of her head and told her to stop. He stood up, tucked away his still erect cock, lifted her to her feet, and led her to one of the benches that lined the side of the hall. "So, what did you think of your first time?"

She looked down at her hands, and then chuckled. "It was certainly better than what should have been my first night. And while the manner of my defloration was ...."

"Horrible? Disgusting? Improper?" he suggested.

The last made her laugh aloud. Impropriety was a deadly sin at any Royal court, at least if made public. She put her hand on his stockinged knee. "Let us just say it lacked in desirable qualities. Or at least it did for me," she said raising an eyebrow that was both accusative and questioning.

He placed an arm over her shoulder and felt her lean up against him after a hesitation that was so slight he might have imagined it. She was still looking at him so he gave her a tiny nod.

"Yes. It was both quite a novelty, and one I enjoyed." He was surprised when she looked pleased. He had expected anger or at least resentment.

"It is good to know that one's sacrifice is not wasted," she said seriously, as if discussing something as prosaic as a new dance step. Then she grinned. "My virginity should have perished long ago, and probably under even less pleasant circumstances. The pain was momentary, and I have obviously survived, so let's not discuss it any more," she said firmly. "Instead, tell me what I can do to give you pleasure. I would ask you to speak your mind and have no regard for my fears or weakness."

He kissed her forehead and reached across his body to cup her breast in his hand. "First, I would have you join me for sword practise every morning."

"Dressed as I am now?" she asked in evident amusement.

"Of course."

"Of course," she replied in playful mockery before gasping when his two fingers thrust themselves inside her still swollen cunt without warning. "Oh, touché!" she moaned.

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Whilst Harry was exercising with his swords, Percy had completed the sale of the booty from the latest voyage including the sale of the captured ship. He had been accompanied by the Quartermaster William Shawe, and together they had paid off first the King's tithe, and then the waiting crew. Witnessed by Shawe, he separated the remainder into equal shares, one purse for Harry and the other for himself. Unfortunately, his debts were such that even if he only paid the most pressing and most dangerous of his creditors, Percy knew that he would be left with but a pittance. Barely hiding his discontent, Percy mounted his horse and rode towards the Harry's mansion. His own lodgings were much more modest. He had once owned a mansion to rival Harry's but his cursed luck at cards had necessitated the sale of the fine home many months ago. But Port Royal was growing, expanding at an unbelievable rate, and Percy was certain that his luck at the tables would soon turn, what with all the drunken sailors filling the taverns and brothels. Their company was distasteful to a gentleman such as he, but gold was gold, no matter how grubby and calloused the hand that held it. There was always opportunity to be found in the dock-side taverns of Port Royal. He just needed a little help with his finances so that he could get back to the tables – which was why he was on his way to see Harry.

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"I'm sorry Percy. I cannot in good conscience lend you any more money knowing that you will only lose it over cards. You already owe me more than you could hope to repay without ruin and you know that. Please, Percy. We are friends, and I would not see you throw your life away."

"Friends? I doubt you know the meaning of the word, you who would turn your back on me in my hour of need for the sake of a few gold pieces, while you fling it away yourself in pursuit of those whores of yours!" Percy spat angrily, leaning his knuckles on Harry's table.

Harry sighed, trying to keep his temper for the sake of their friendship. "I did not borrow to buy those whores, Percy. Whores who contribute to the earnings of the bordello which in turn form part of the income that you squander with such abandon."

"And now would you call me a whore monger, Sir?" Percy cried, his anger overriding his reason and good manners.

Amazed and saddened by his old friend's seemingly addled wits, he attempted levity. "As I am, Percy. Have we not always shared and shared alike in all things?"

"By God you do call me a whore monger! For that I shall have satisfaction, Sir!" Percy shouted, spittle flying from his lips as he slammed the flat of his hand against the table, rattling the silver ink pot and pen holder. "Satisfaction, you hear me!" he continued, as he stormed out of the room.

Relieved that Percy had not actually spoken the word "duel", Harry hoped that after his friend had had a chance to cool his head, he would come to his senses and they could pretend this conversation had never occurred. If Percy had been in real need, he would have given him the money without a second thought. He only hope the man would not do something stupid in his anger and desperation.

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Overflowing with bile and frustration over his friend's perceived betrayal and insults, Sir Percy spurred his horse towards the Siren, the brothel that they co-owned but was managed by Harry. He refused to think of himself as a panderer, but as a major "investor" in the business, and no one would dare to ask him for payment if he went there for a drink and some relief for the ill humours that coursed through his veins. Unknown to him, Harry had arranged to pay the girls that Sir Percy used out of his own pocket. He rode up to the large gaudily decorated building which at night had a row of coloured lanterns stretched across the front of its façade, and tossed the reins of his mount to the stable boy. Everyone knew his face, so the boy simply bowed and led the horse off to be brushed and watered in the stable space reserved for him. His shoes thumped hollowly upon the wooden stairs that led up to the main entrance. The smell of rum filled the air like a fog even at this distance, but the usual stench of unwashed bodies, piss, and vomit, were absent or at least greatly less noticeable than in most establishments of this kind. Neither were there collapsed drunks, male or female, and no drunken trulls waved their bare teats at him from the windows or balconies. He grudgingly had to admit that Harry knew how to run a decent business, if a bawdy house could ever be labelled as "decent".

Going through the door with a nod to the watchmen, he passed through the cloakroom and entered the public section of the Golden Siren, which resembled an upper class tavern in London crossed with a gentleman's club. There was a bar, laden with sparkling bottles of expensive imported liquor and well-dressed serving girls, but those new-fangled beverages, tea or "cha" and coffee were also available, as well as fragrant brown chocolate, long held secret in Spain and only just reaching England.

The club wielding watchmen at the door ensured that only those who were decently dressed and sober enough to walk straight were allowed in. Swords and pistols had to be left at the cloakroom. Therefore, the public room of the Siren was as genteel a place as might be found in all of Port Royal, although that was not saying much given the places to which it was being compared. There were still strumpets aplenty, many lounging around with parts showing that could not normally be viewed in a public place and smiling enticingly at the gentlemen all around them. Others were currently plying their trade and sitting on the laps of or beside their paramours of the moment. Hands that were fondling breasts and under skirts froze and heads and eyes turned towards the newcomer. No matter the quality of the institution, this was still Port Royal and no one ever completely lowered their guard. Percy ignored the stares and headed for the table reserved for him and Harry, nodding at acquaintances. He hadn't paid all of his creditors yet, and the heavy purse in his coat pocket called out to him. He looked around to see if any of his regular card companions were about. If not, he would go searching for a game, once he had calmed himself with a drink or two and perhaps a quick cuddle.

The waitress came over to take his order. It was plain that Percy was not in the best of moods, so her smile was wide and sunny and she curtsied when she stopped in front of him. "What can I get you, Sir Percy?" She stiffened when his hand dived under her skirt and up the back of her thigh. Normally she would have simply twisted away and smacked at the offending hand, but Sir Percy could have her dismissed or worse, even though Captain Pierce actually ran the tavern and the entire brothel. So she continued to smile even as she cringed inside when his fingers closed over her buttock. "Your order, Sir Percy?" she asked, resisting the urge to grit her teeth.

Enjoying his power over the helpless serving girl, he continued to squeeze and manipulate her buttocks, grinning at the rage he saw in her eyes. However it would be embarrassing if she

began to protest or shout, so he let his fingers dart towards her cunt, but took his hand out from under her skirt before she could react. Grinning at her, his mood greatly improved, Percy raised his fingertips to his nose, sniffed, and said, "A bottle of your best Calvados. I'm in the mood for sweet." He sniffed again, chortling at the flush of outrage on the girl's face at the unmistakable implication.

At the bar the serving girl, who went by the name of Meg, pounded the bar top with her fist. "I'm going to kill that bastard some day. I swear it." She wasn't a whore and although most of the customers grabbed at her or tried to reach under her skirts, it was mostly in a spirit of jest. She was not over-modest, no serving girl could be and yet survive in the job, and she even tolerated a degree of manhandling by regular and generous customers. It was all part of the game, and in the privacy of her mind she even admitted that she enjoyed it. It made her feel pretty. But it was Percy's complete lack of respect that made it intolerable. Worse still, she knew she would have to return to his table and be polite to him. "Bottle of Calvados," she said to the barman. The man just nodded and brought out a bottle from under the counter. The owners didn't get served with ordinary stock.

Pasting a smile on her face, Meg turned around and weaved her way through the tables back towards Percy. For a moment she was tempted to keep the table between them, but she knew it would anger him to no purpose. Her skin crawling in anticipation, she placed herself beside his chair and leaned over to place the bottle and glass upon the table. As she had anticipated, his hand flicked up the hem of her skirt and made the journey up the back of her leg to her bottom once more. The bottle rattled against the glass as she set it down, her hands shaking in anger when his fingers once again delved between her buttocks and thighs. What made it worse was that all the other customers were watching, and it made it more difficult for her to refuse the same liberties to them. Even the expression on the faces of the whores showed little sympathy. Many of them felt that she saw herself as above them, too pure and moral to spread her legs for money, and as such enjoyed seeing her shame. It was a shock when she realised that in a way they were right. She was allowing Percy to do as he liked under her skirt for the sake of her job, for money. How then was she different from the whores? For a second she contemplated slapping Percy and pulling away, but such an act would be both financial and literal suicide, for Percy would never forgive such an offence. An evil pinch next to her arse hole forced a squeal of pain from her lips, and she almost broke down in tears when a nearby whore giggled.

"Feeling you up good is he, dearie?" the whore called out loudly, making the laughter spread across the room. She was young and beautiful, as were all the girls in Harry's employ. She lifted the hem of her skirts and pushed the hand of her current male companion beneath it. "We're not all too proud to take a gent's fingers up the cunt, are we?" She nodded and bowed to the shouts of agreement from the other women.

Percy's finger searched out her cunt hole and she bit her lip in panic. "S-Sir Percy! Please don't ... I'm still pure."

"Pure! A cheap strumpet like you? You lying cunt!" Percy shouted, his fingers undeterred in their attempt to search out her opening.

"Come now! Why exert yourself over a worthless serving girl. If she was any good in bed she would have been making money on her back like the others. Here, why don't you stop teasing that wench and play with a real woman like Colette?" The man who had spoken pushed a dark eyed, dark haired woman towards Percy.

The woman smiled knowingly at Percy as she somehow slid between him and the serving girl, and settled onto his lap. She pointed a slim finger at her bosom. "I am Colette, and you are Sir Percy, oui?"

Percy followed her finger to her décolletage and to breasts that seemed to float out of her bodice. His mean leer transformed into a lustful smile and his hand came out from under Meg's skirt to slither around the French whore's waist. "I am most pleased to make your acquaintance, Colette. Are you new? I do not recall having had the pleasure before."

"Oh I am certain you would have remembered having me, Sir Percy," she purred. "Yes, I am new. I arrived in Port Royal but a week ago from France." She completed her statement with a kiss on his cheek.



Percy turned to the man who had spoken. "And do I know you, sir?"

The man shook his head. "Regretfully we have not met, Sir Percy, but you have been made known to me by many acquaintances in Port Royal as a man of substance and respect. My name is Felipe. Felipe de Segovia, trader extraordinaire at your service." He bowed.

Percy puffed up in response to the flattery especially when Colette was obviously impressed. Then he frowned. "You are Spanish, sir?"

Unbidden, Felipe took a seat at the table. "Indeed I am, and proud of it. But although my King may be um, displeased with the activities of some of your residents, I am a businessman, as are the many other Spanish traders who buy and sell in this great English port. We men of the world understand how affairs of business really work don't we," he said with a sly wink.

Even though he was still uneasy, he had to admit that many Spanish traders did indeed operate peacefully and profitably out of Port Royal, and being called a man of the world made his chest puff up even more. "Well ah, yes, indeed we do," he replied, not quite certain what he was agreeing with but feeling compelled by pride to go along.

"I see you enjoy Calvados. A man of refined taste as well I see." He waved at the relieved serving girl, who responded eagerly to her saviour. "Another bottle of the same and a glass for me." Most taverns used wooden tankards or leather jacks, but most of the patrons of the Siren could be relied upon not to smash or steal their cups, so drinks were served in either glasses or pewter tankards.

As grateful as she was, Meg did not forget who paid her wages and protected her from real harm. "That Diego is being really friendly to that pig Percy," she muttered as she gave the order to the barman.

The barman nodded curtly. "Stay near and keep your ears open. You know Capt'n Harry will be generous if you bring him something useful."

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Meg took the barman's advice to heart and when Percy led the French woman upstairs, she found an excuse to follow shortly after. Although there were many rooms upstairs for the convenience of the patrons and the working girls, as part owner, Percy was once more privileged with a private and much more luxurious room. She had no idea what she was looking for, but something about the French whore and the overly friendly Spanish merchant did not sit well with her. She imagined herself going up to the rather handsome Captain Pierce and dramatically presenting him with ... she didn't really know what, but it would be important. And the Captain would be grateful. The room was at the end of the corridor and around a corner, designed so that others on the floor could not look into the room when the door opened. She looked around to make sure that she was unobserved and then slipped around the corner and pressed her ear to the door.

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"Are you familiar with the Spaniard?" Percy asked as the whore helped him out of his coat.

"Only as a customer, Sir Percy. He pays well and reliably and is not too rough. I was just trying to interest him in a little entertainment when he led me over to your table," she replied as she hung his coat up on the coat rack.

"And why do you think he was so obliging?" Percy asked, his eyes narrowing suspiciously.

"What merchant in Port Royal would not want to be able to say that he was able to do a favour for Sir Percy Reede?" Colette, who was still standing behind him, could almost see the man swell in pride and she smiled, her fingers stroking the back of his neck and the side of his face, with her hips pressed firmly against his buttocks.

"You said that he was not too rough. Do you object to rough then?" he asked, his tone casual.

Colette was not fooled. "Monsieur de Segovia paid me well to make you happy." She licked

his earlobe. "What would make you happy? Tell me. Let me make you happy."

He turned towards her, his expression suddenly a leer. "Happy? And what would you say if it made me happy to treat you rough, very rough indeed?"

The Spaniard had truly paid her a lot, and offered even more if she could make Sir Percy amenable to a friendship with him. "May I take my clothes off first? The dress is expensive and I would rather not rip or ... stain it. After that, I am at your complete disposal."

Sir Percy's leering grin widened. "Certainly my dear. I'm well past the age where ripping the dress off of a wench feels like sport." He folded his arms and waited, obviously not intending to turn his back.

There was a free standing partition in the corner for changing and undressing, but Colette ignored it and unlaced the front of her bodice as Sir Percy watched. Once the bodice had come off, the rest was quick to follow, and moments later she stood before Sir Percy clad only in her stockings and shoes. "Should I take these off?" she asked, hoping he would say yes. Finely spun stockings were expensive and she preferred not to tear them. She smiled with genuine warmth when he nodded absently, his eyes and mind occupied with the sight of her naked form. Relieved that her stockings would be preserved, she eagerly untied the bows that held them up on her thighs, slipped off her shoes and gracefully rolled them off of her legs, lifting one knee and then the other with perfect balance, completely aware of the way her full breasts swayed as she moved. Casually tossing her stockings aside she stood facing him naked. "Now then, I think we were talking about making you happy?" she said, silently bracing herself. She caught a blur of movement out of the corner of her left eye just before his hand slapped her face with a sharp crack. "Ow!" she cried, tripping over her dress and falling to the floor. Her cheek burned and she ground her teeth in anger, knowing her hair hid her expression from him.

When she climbed to her feet and tossed back her hair, Colette was smiling again. He had not hit her hard enough to bruise or break bone, but she knew the side of her face would be turning red from the blow. She turned her face so that the mark of his slap would show. "Just my face, Sir Percy?" she said teasingly with a wriggle of her body that started from her shoulder and flowed all the way to her toes. Although she was inviting further abuse, she wanted to draw his attention away from her face. Clients didn't mind a few bruises on the body, but a battered face was bad for business. For some reason the smell of the burning candle wicks and wax seemed particularly strong to her at the moment, and she could smell his sweat and the sweetness of the Calvados on his breath. "I'm told I have very nice teats, and my nipples like to be played with." She cupped her breasts with her hands, lifting and presenting them like the front of her bodice. A quick pinch and twist made her pink nipples stand to attention.

As the whore had intended, Percy's eyes were drawn to her breasts like ants to honey and he licked his lips. He had heard tales of Harry's girls and what he did with them, but he had always been too mean to pay the whores for such services. The few times he had lashed out at them anyway had resulted in screaming, clawing fights that had proven highly embarrassing. Although he would not admit it even to himself, part of his anger towards Harry stemmed from a secret envy of the man's ability to behave any way he chose without losing the respect of his peers. The fact that he was deadly with both sword and pistol undoubtedly had something to do with it. The thought of Harry made his anger flare and the last trace of hesitation evaporated like water on a hot stove. His hand reached out and the fingertips glided over the soft smooth curve of Colette's upper breast. His groin tightened in excitement when she nodded at him, her eyes wide and serious.

The "crack" of his hand striking her breast was almost as shocking as the explosion of pain, reminding her of the time she had been at sea and a crewman had fired off a swivel mounted falcon for practice. She was not accustomed to pain of this sort, although many of her clients were not gentle or careful. But this was of a different scale entirely. But she was strong of body and of will, and though she was forced to hunch her shoulders and her body rocked as she fought against the pain, she soon recovered, the way the surface of water flows back into place after a blow. She smiled like a saucy girl teasing a male admirer and placed her hands behind her back before twisting her shoulders so as to present her other breast to the red faced Sir Percy. Hidden from his

view, her fingers laced and gripped hard enough to make her knuckles pop, and the muscles of her shoulders and back rippled and tensed, rising in smooth flowing ridges.

Percy struck the proffered breast, a wide, almost foolishly happy grin upon his face. His fingers tingled from the impact and the feeling seemed to flow down his arm and rush into his cock. The woman's apparent willingness to accept the punishment only served to embolden him and he began to giggle as he employed both hands to slap at her rapidly reddening breasts.

Despite the intense and breath-taking pain, Colette was satisfied that she had successfully redirected his attention from her face. She was a true professional, and she felt no animosity towards Sir Percy since she had willingly accepted this commission, although it galled her to be helpless before this pig of a man. She was a woman with strong desires and a wild and lustful nature, which was why she was so successful in her chosen profession, and because of that, even through the pain, she was able to find the erotic nature of what was happening to her. Men – and women – sensed that in her, that she experienced true lust during the act and not just tolerated it. This was what made her so amazingly erotic and popular.

Even the normally insensitive Percy felt it as she swayed before him, her dark eyes blazing, a tiny challenging smile upon her lips, and her breasts deep red and bruised, covered with the marks of his hands. Waves of sensuality seemed to flow outwards from her being, and he was intoxicated, enraptured. His hands shot out and snatched at her nipples, crushing them in his grip and pulling her closer towards him.

Despite the burning agony, Colette took tiny mincing steps forward, her lips easing apart in a low throaty moan, knowing by nature and experience exactly how to best tease and excite Sir Percy. She allowed the pain to show on her face, but still gave him fleeting smiles and nods of her head to indicate her approval.

Percy unfastened the front of his breeches and freed his cock. Grabbing her arm, he pulled her over to a wooden chair, seated himself and drew her over and onto his lap with her buttocks raised high. He spanked her mercilessly, landing blows upon her thighs as well as her buttocks.

Even as she squealed and cried for mercy, Colette made sure to part her thighs wide enough that he could strike the soft inner parts of her thighs. She debated in her mind whether or not to invite blows upon her cunt, but decided that her open legs were sufficient invitation and would only spread herself wider if he showed an interest in such sport. Although he had a heavy hand, this was actually something that she was familiar with and even enjoyed to some degree. There were many men and women who enjoyed taking a pretty whore over their knee and she had long ago learned to find pleasure in having her bottom warmed. She closed her eyes and allowed the heat to flow over her. It was always easier when she was truly aroused, and she wanted to be at her best on this occasion.

He had spanked whores and other wenches before, but never a woman of this quality. Even the way she held her buttocks up to his hand spoke of lewdness, and his heart felt as if it might burst from his excitement. She did not struggle, even though he could feel the tiny starts of her body each time his palm landed upon her firm flesh with a degree of force that shook his arm. Out of breath, he paused his attack upon her posteriors and allowed his fingers to dally with the dark curls that peeked out and up from between her thighs. Following this enticing trail, his exploring fingers delved between her cheeks into the sweaty crevice that half concealed her most private parts. Percy was not one much taken with buggery, but it amused him nonetheless to search out and play with her clenched arse hole. He tickled it and watched as the dusky pink grommet contracted like a bashful blossom. Pressing a fingertip against the tiny orifice, he firmly pushed and grinned when he heard her inhale. He twisted his finger in a screwing motion, forcefully demanding entrance. He felt the muscles guarding her rear portal surrender, and his finger began to progress, first the tip, then the first joint, then the second. He stopped at that point, the quick panicky clenching of her arse hole around his intruding finger making him chuckle. "I wonder what we might fit into here," he mused aloud.

"My rear hole is receptive to whatever takes your fancy, Sir Percy," Colette replied from her inverted position, praying that he would not take her at her word.

Percy moved his finger in and out, watching her flesh cling to his digit. "I'm sure it is, my dear. I'm sure it is. But for the moment –" he pulled his finger out of her and delved and inch or so lower down. "– let's have a look here," he said as he drove his finger into her cunt.

Colette bit her lip at the sharp, intimate pain. Fortunately she was not entirely dry, although it hardly compensated for the rough unfeeling manner by which he had penetrated her cunt. But she made a very lucrative living selling access to that particular opening in her body to men and not a few women, many of whom were inclined to be less than gentle with her body. Oddly enough, it was often the women who were most unkind with her sexual parts, but although it was always unpleasant, she accepted it as simply part of her job, as the labourer accepts the blisters in his hands or the warrior the inevitable bruises and wounds of his trade, and in doing so, it had actually come to hurt less. So her thighs edged further apart and she uttered the giggles and squeals that Sir Percy expected to hear, and actually experienced a glow of pride in her skill. More fingers entered her, pumping vigorously in what Sir Percy fondly imagined was a sensual caress. Perhaps because she was as ruthless with her own body as she was in dealing with her clients, she actually felt some measure of pleasure as he continued to vigorously frig her cunt.

Percy felt her wetness and grunted. "You're a hot little filly, aren't you?" His eyes narrowed. "I wonder if you'd be so hot if I ..."

Colette knew the time had come, so she very gradually bent her knees and drew them apart and closer to her body, with the soles of her feet turned upwards. The small of her back curved down and her cunt lifted sweetly, fitting itself against his palm. "Yes, Sir Percy?" she asked innocently. "If you what?"

"If I do this –" he replied, ripping his fingers out of her cunt and bringing his hand down again in a brisk slap directly between her legs.

Even though it was not entirely unexpected, Colette was never able to get accustomed to the initial feeling of shock and outrage when her cunt seemingly burst into flame, and her entire body rocked on Percy's lap. But she recovered quickly and said, "I'm always hot for you, Sir Percy." And in a way, she wasn't lying. So long as she was being paid well, she was eager and willing to entertain Percy in whatever way he desired. She tightened the grip of her legs and feet on the chair and thrust her cunt higher. "Do it again, Sir Percy."

Percy obliged, his cock hardening at the feeling of his hand striking the whore's cunt, once, twice, and a third time. His finger sank into her slit and he grinned and waggled it about, feeling the slick moisture coat his finger, before resuming the beating of her cunt, a wide delighted grin upon his face. He had listened to Harry talk to his whores about punishing their cunts with envy, but right now he was proving that he was just as good with women as his partner. Colette was as fine a woman as he had ever seen and yet here she was offering her cunt to him to beat and hurt as he wished, all because he was Sir Percy, a man of consequence in Port Royal. With each blow to her cunt he felt his pride and self-esteem grow. But it couldn't last. Percy had never been one for restraint or to deny himself his pleasures, and the heat and pressure of her belly against his cock was too much. With an urgent grunt he pushed Colette off of his lap. "Get on the bed whore," he snapped.

He had lasted for a shorter time than even she had estimated, and Colette had to hide a sneer of contempt as she arranged herself upon the bed, her buttocks just at the edge of the mattress and legs up and apart for the man's convenience. She was used to men of power and iron self-control. From what she had heard, Sir Percy's partner Captain Harry Pierce would have had her begging for his cock before ending the game. But gold was gold, and she prepared to make Percy feel like a man and a great lover. "Come to me, Sir Percy. Fuck me, fuck the cunt which you have conquered – fuck me until I swoon." She gasped when Percy's weight fell upon her, his hands pushing her knees down onto the bed to either side of her head, the sudden bending motion forcing the breath from her lungs. She felt the head of his cock bump against her cunt, blindly seeking entrance. Eager to set him on his way towards his climax, she reached down with one hand to provide guidance while stroking his back and neck with the other. Her experienced fingers quickly guided his spear to its target and there was a concerted sigh of satisfaction when he drove into the wet and waiting depths

of her cunt hole. She murmured encouragement, endearments, and very convincing sounds of passion into his ear as he eagerly thrust and poked. Her hips rocked and thrust upwards with equal if not greater enthusiasm, making wet slapping sounds as their thighs and bellies repeatedly met.

Percy was in heaven, his eyes tightly shut, completely focused upon the feeling of his cock going into Colette's cunt. Her cries and the writhing heat of her body made him feel like a giant, a Titan, driving everything before him, the oaken shaft of his cock making the woman scream with ecstasy. He almost swore when he lost control and experienced the swooning rush of pleasure the heralded his climax, his cock spilling his seed into the whore's body. The thought of pulling out never occurred to him. It was her trade and she would have to take the risks of a swollen belly just as a trader risked the loss of his goods or money. He groaned in drowsy satisfaction when he was down and limp, and rolled off of her body and onto his back.

Ignoring the stickiness between her thighs, Colette lithely sprang off of the bed and went over to the side table that held a collection of bottles and drinking cups and glasses. She poured a generous shot of rum into an expensive crystal glass and strode quickly over to Percy's side. "You must be dry from your efforts, Sir Percy. Here, wet your throat with this."

Percy rolled up and onto an elbow and took the glass, swallowing the hefty shot of rum in a single gulp. He handed the glass back to her and wiped his mouth with the back of his sleeve before falling back onto the bed again. Moments later he was snoring.

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Meg had breathlessly watched the entire tryst through the large key hole, her hands braced against the heavy wood of the door and her breath creating tiny droplets of moisture upon the polished brass of the lock plate. Though she was herself a maiden, sex was no longer a mystery to her after having worked in the Siren as long as she had and being daily submerged in a veritable sea of erotic games. The whores spoke of nothing else, it being their trade, and neither did the men, for what else might they discuss in a brothel? She had seen everything from the discreet fondling of knees and breasts all the way to unabashed gropings and fingerings of cunts with the whores delightedly lifting their skirts and giggling drunkenly as fingers and other objects were thrust deep within them. Often the whores would catch her watching, and they would wink and smile at her. The men who frequented the Siren had heavy purses and were generous in their search for diversion and pleasure. The girls who were the most daring and willing to lend their bodies to the most obscene of games made the most gold, so the competition to be lewdest was fierce, all the while maintaining a thin veneer of gentility which made their antics and those of their clients all the more shockingly lustful. There were competitions to see which whore could best pick up coins using only her cunt, while others competed to see how many coins could be stuffed into their holes while they walked up and down the room without dropping them.

She had nodded approvingly at the French whore's masterly technique in her handling of that pig Sir Percy. Her eyes widened when Colette went around to Sir Percy's clothes and removed his purse from his coat pocket. Meg expected the whore to steal it and she prepared to flee if Colette looked like she was about to leave. To her surprise the French whore untied the purse strings and did a quick count of the contents before retying the purse and returning it to the coat. When Colette began to dress, Meg pulled away from the door, stretched to loosen her aching back, and then tiptoed down the corridor. But before she could make her way back down the stairs she heard footsteps coming the other way. She took a step backwards and darted into the linen closet that served the rooms of that floor. She knelt upon a heap of cleaning rags and once more peeked through the key hole. The door was thick and the hallway carpeted, so she gasped in surprise when both Colette and the Spanish trader appeared within her narrow field of view. She strained to hear what they were saying.

"Well?"

"He's fast asleep and grinning happily."

"I should hope so, given how much I paid you."

"Are you saying I'm not worth it?" Colette's voice replied, the affront clearly audible even to Meg in the closet.

"No, of course not. And what did you find?"

"As you suspected, his purse is light, despite receiving his share of Captain Pierce's prize this morning. From the gossip going around the port, he has many debts."

"Excellent. Now get back to Sir Percy and see to it that he ends up where I want him."

"It shall be done," Colette replied.

Meg saw the whore curtsey and grinned at the hint of mockery in her voice. The French woman clearly had a mind of her own.

The Spaniard apparently caught it too. "Have a care that you do not overstep, Colette. Even a useful tool can be replaced."

Meg saw him turn and walk away without waiting for a reply. She settled onto the floor with a sigh of relief to rest her aching legs, and then jumped in shock when the door to the closet was suddenly snatched open, the relatively bright light of the hall making her squint and shield her eyes.

"What are you doing in here, wench? Spying upon your betters are you?" Colette reached out and grabbed the serving girl by an ear. She pulled the frightened Meg to her feet by that painful grip and forced her out into the corridor. "Well? Answer me bitch!"

"Ow! Sp-spying, Mistress?" Meg said. "Spying on who, Mistress?"

"On me, you stupid fool!"

"You were spying, Mistress? I promise I won't tell anyone. I swear it. 'Pon my father's grave."

Colette's face turned red with rage and frustration. She decided to try a different approach with this half-witted drudge. "What ... were ... you ... doing ... in ... the ... closet?" she asked, speaking each word slowly and clearly as if talking to the village idiot, to whom this girl apparently was closely related.

"Closet, Mistress? This closet is it?"

"Yes! This closet!" Colette snapped, almost ready to scream.

"Why, sleeping, Mistress. I sleeps in the closet whenever I can. Nice and quiet it is."

Colette closed her eyes and inhaled deeply, calming herself. It would not do for Sir Percy to see her in such a state. She pointed at the stairs. "Get out of my sight, imbecile. Right now. Go!"

Meg bowed and curtseyed at the same time, appearing as if she was trying to sit down on an invisible chair. "Yes, Mistress. As you say, Mistress." She backed hastily away and scuttled down the stairs. The broad grin only spread across her face when she was safely out of sight and she chuckled as she wended her way back to the bar. She would show that French whore who was the stupid one here. She whispered to the bartender who, after studying her silently for a moment, nodded and jerked his head towards the door. She blew him a playful kiss and took off her apron.

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The gentle tap on the door made Harry look up from the nautical charts he was studying. "Come."

The door opened wide enough to allow Ceara, who was attending to him at the moment, to slip through and curtsey. "Someone be wanting to see you, Captain Pierce. Miss Meg from the Siren, she said to tell you."

"Thank you Ceara. Show her in."

His tone and smile made the Irish girl smile back happily and her curtsey was almost a bounce before she swivelled her hips in a marked manner and stepped back out of the room.

Harry chuckled softly. The girls definitely seemed to be settling in well and determined to make the best of their new situation. Ceara appeared to be softer and sweeter than the other two, but he did not make the mistake of thinking she was dull or lacking in spirit. His introspection was interrupted by the opening of the door. He recognised the serving girl from the Siren when she stepped nervously into the room. He had actually forgotten her name before Ceara had announced

her, but now he smiled and held out his arms in greeting. "Mistress Meg, welcome to my home."

Looking even more nervous, Meg curtseyed. "Thank you for seeing me, Captain Pierce. I ... I'm sorry if I've been impertinent." She had only seen Captain Pierce in passing and on the few times she had waited upon him when he had visited the Siren, and she knew little of his personality other than he was of great influence in Port Royal and that he had a reputation as a fighting captain at sea. Many men like him were extremely conscious of their dignity and were easily offended.

"Impertinent? Am I a lord that you should fear me? Are we not all in Port Royal to be free of the society that binds us like chains?"

Meg discovered that she could only nod dumbly and was furious at herself for her sudden lack of boldness.

Harry went around his desk and walked up to her, moving slowly in a way a man approached a frightened horse. He gently took her hand. "Come, take a seat, and we can discuss the reason you came to see me." He led her up to his desk and helped her into a chair before returning to the other side and placing his hands upon the high back of his own chair. "Now then. Are you comfortable?"

"Yes thank you, Captain Pierce."

Harry leaned his elbows upon the scrolled back of the chair and nodded. "In that case, tell me why you have come all the way here to see me. Speak freely as you would to a friend. We are friends, are we not Meg?"

Meg wasn't so sure of that, but she nodded nonetheless. "Yes, Captain Pierce. It ... it's about Sir Percy, sir." When Captain Pierce did nothing but smile encouragingly and nod, she took heart and recounted the events as she had seen them in the Siren.

Harry leaned forward, his elbows on the table and studied the serving girl over his steepled fingers, nodding slowly to encourage her. He grunted softly when she finished. "So they were mainly concerned with the size of his purse?"

Meg nodded eagerly, relieved that the Captain seemed to be taking her report seriously. She had cringed at the thought of being patted on the head and sent on her way like some demanding puppy. "Yes Captain. The Spaniard only asked that one question of Colette, the whore."

"What know you of Colette? Is she the kind that would slit a man's throat in his sleep?"

Meg looked shocked. "Oh no, Captain Pierce. Colette is well known and much sought after by the gentlemen of Port Royal." She only realised what she had said after the word had left her mouth and she paled. "N-not that you're not a gentleman Captain ... I mean, of course you are but –"

Harry's raised hand cut her off in mid-stream. "It's all right Meg. I would be the first to admit that I am not familiar with every one of the whores and courtesans in Port Royal, hard as I might try," he said, chuckling. "What I am, Meg, is appreciative of loyalty. And I reward it too," he said, lifting a gold coin from the drawer and sliding it across the table towards her. It was far too much to pay an informant, no matter the information, but he wanted her to understand that his gratitude was worth more than just words. Besides, she was surprisingly pretty for a mere serving girl.

Meg caught the gleaming coin, thunderstruck by his generosity. The fleeting thought that he might be trying to buy more than her information crossed her mind, but he had made no move to touch her nor made the slightest hint of lewdness, even though it would not have been wrong of him to assume that a girl of her station might welcome his attentions. Her mind treacherously paused to wonder what she would do if he did indeed suggest something sexual, and she was shocked to realise that she wasn't sure. "Th-thank you, Captain Pierce. This is much more than I deserve ...."

"You deserve what I say you do," he replied. "Besides, if I don't spend my gold on lovely women, what else should I spend it on?" He nodded dismissively. "Don't hesitate to come to me if you learn anything else. Or if you need help. Loyalty flows both ways."

Meg started to get up, and till the day she died she would never know why the next words came out of her mouth. "They say that you keep women here, and that you do whatever you want with them." She covered her mouth with both of her hands as soon as the words left her lips. She shook her head, as if denying what she had just done, and slowly began to back away from him,

towards the door, cringing in anticipation of his rage at her impertinence and presumption.

"Stop!" Harry said, the sound sharp and harsh as a whip-crack. "Come back here."

It never occurred to her to turn and run. There was nowhere in Port Royal where she would be safe from him. She walked back to the desk on trembling legs until her thighs pressed against the edge of the desk top. "I'm —" His curt gesture cut her words off like a headsman's axe.

Harry studied her in silence for a minute or two, watching her fidget and sweat. "That was a very impertinent and intrusive question," he said, tilting his head curiously. "But, tell me honestly what drove you to ask it, and I might forgive you if I like the answer."

Meg glanced from side to side as she frantically thought of an answer. The problem was that she really didn't know. It had been an impulse that had surprised her as much as it surprised him. "I ... I ... It sounded exciting, exceedingly so," she said, and once again she shocked and frightened herself. What was she saying? What devil had gotten into her all of the sudden?

Harry chuckled. "Does it now? And what part of being a slave appeals to you?"

Meg waved her hands before her, as if to brush away a fog or spider webs that obscured her view. "I'd not desire being a plantation slave, Captain. But .... "

Harry gestured at her seat and sat down himself, his elbows resting upon his desk. He nodded approvingly when she sat down again. "But there is something else that you do desire?"

She shook her head helplessly. "I swear I don't know, Captain Pierce. When I hear the tales of your ladies, I feel ... I feel ..." She shuddered. " 'Tis like an itch that cannot be scratched." She bowed her head. "I'm sorry, Captain Pierce. I must sound like a dolt. I swear I meant no offence."

Harry raised his voice and called out. "Ceara! Come in here please."

Barely a second later the door opened, proving that Ceara had been listening and waiting right outside. "Yes, Captain Pierce?"

Harry gestured at his side. "Come over here Ceara." Looking back at Meg he said, "Meg, this is Ceara. She is one of the ladies that you've heard about."

Meg's eyes widened. "H-hello."

"Good day to you, Mistress Meg," Ceara replied cheerfully. She suspected that she was about to be used as an example, but she found that she didn't mind. Captain Pierce had referred to her as a lady, and that tiny act of courtesy and respect for her as a person was like balm to her soul after the crushing impersonality of the slave ship. She felt his hand land upon her buttock and she looked down at him and smiled, trying to convey that she understood and was ready to go along. Her smile widened when he smiled back and his hand gave her a little squeeze.

"Meg here was wondering about my special women."

"Oh? And what might she be wondering about?" Ceara said brightly.

Harry raised an eyebrow. "Yes Meg, what were you wondering about? Feel free to speak your mind."

Meg began to blush, and she found herself unable to look the beautiful smiling woman in the eye. And yet she could not refuse to answer Captain Pierce's question, not after he had been so patient with her, and she suddenly realised that she did want to know more, that something drove her to find out, even if it was not what she had imagined. "Is it ... is it true that you do more than fuck your women?"

"Well Ceara, is that true?" Harry asked teasingly.

The Irish girl giggled. "In truth, Captain Pierce has yet to even fuck me." She saw the disappointment in the serving girl's eyes. "But, 'tis also true that I be knowing for a fact he intends to do much more than the fucking of me."

Meg's disappointment vanished like cannon smoke in the wind. "He does?" she said, her voice rising to a squeak. She coughed. "Beg pardon. May I ask what more he is going to do?"

Ceara looked down at Captain Pierce for permission, and when he nodded she said, "Salty things, I be thinking. Naughty things that a good girl should not be doing."

Harry could see that Meg was dying to inquire in more detail but didn't know how to start. He still wasn't sure what was going on in Meg's mind, but the situation amused him, and Meg was pretty, so he decided to humour her. "Ceara, lift your skirts up around your waist."



The Irish girl had been expecting something of this sort so her expression did not change, nor did she hesitate to bend down and take hold of the hem of her skirts. Straightening her knees and back, she gathered up her lower garments in the way the ships in the harbour furled their sails. This was the first time she had been able to be of service to Captain Pierce, and she was determined not to disappoint him. She didn't feel that she was as sexy as the others or as fiery. Áine had revealed her love of pain when they had sat talking, and she knew she couldn't match the small energetic woman in that either. But she could be willing and obedient. Everyone had always commented upon how good natured and happy she had been as a child. Genuinely happy that she was able to do something for Captain Pierce, she held her clothing above her waist and waited for her new owner to tell her what to do next.

Meg saw naked women every day, but the sheer unexpectedness caught her by surprise as she stared open mouthed at Ceara's cunt. The fact that the woman had so readily exposed herself upon command made a funny feeling move through her loins and belly.

"Is that what you had in mind, Meg?" Harry asked blandly. "Ceara my dear, what would you say if I said it would please me to flog the front of your thighs?"

Playing along, Ceara replied, "Would you like me to fetch a whip, Captain Pierce?" He smiled at the red faced serving girl. "Should I whip her thighs, Meg?"

Her head nodded before she could think and she covered her mouth with her fingers. "I mean no, not for ... um, only if it pleases you to do so," she said.

Harry stroked the tips of his fingers up and down Ceara's smooth thigh. Looking up at the Irish girl he winked and said, "No? You have some other spot in mind then? He ruffled Ceara's pubic hair. Here perhaps?"

Meg was both mortified and inexplicably excited. Surely Captain Pierce couldn't be suggesting what she thought? "I ... I ..."

"Still unsure? Ah, I see. You are a shrewd one. You wish to be sure of the quality of Ceara's cunt before you agree. I like that." He turned in his chair again. "Ceara my darling, our guest needs a better view of your pretty cunt. Kindly oblige her."

Ceara saw that he was testing her mettle as well as teasing Meg. She stepped sideways so that her left leg touched Captain Pierce's chair. She had long limbs, and her new straddling stance did not significantly lower her hips, so her cunt was still visible above the top of the desk.

Reaching up from behind her body, Harry's hand reached up to brush her pubic hair apart and to expose the pink filled furrow between the plump outer lips. "Isn't that pretty? Wouldn't you like to know what I do to it?"

Meg was totally entranced by the situation, and just nodded in response to his words.

"Well then, you'll have to tell me what you want first. It's just fair, is it not?"

Meg nodded again, and then realised what she had done. She realised that it was time for her to stop dithering. "I don't want to be a serving girl any more, but I don't want to be a whore either."

His fingers still toying with Ceara's cunt, Harry nodded, frowning seriously. "A difficult dilemma, to be sure. And I assume you have a solution to it?"

Meg finally admitted to herself that in the back of her mind she had been thinking about this ever since she had heard the rumours. She had seen Captain Pierce going about Port Royal and seen the respect and fear he commanded. She also saw his many women and the way the whores of the Siren responded to his jokes and smiles. If she remained in the Siren as a serving girl, she knew that one day she would spread her legs in exchange for coin simply out of desperation. Some girls might have been content to have a job that many considered good and well paying, but Meg had never been one to be easily satisfied. She was too intelligent and too independent of mind to simply serve drinks and be groped by the customers for the rest of her life. Gathering all her courage she replied, "I do. I want to be to you what she is." She pointed at Ceara.

Harry searched out Ceara's clitoris and pinched hard enough to make the girl stiffen, and he was pleased when she remained at her post and gently stroked the back of his neck with her fingers. "Unfortunately, even though you are a most lively looking wriggler, I have all the special girls I need at the moment," he said.

Meg's face fell, and seemed to shrink into her chair, miserable and embarrassed at the same time. "I... I'm s-sorry –"

"I did not say that I had nothing for you. I'm a busy man, and I would not have spent this time with you if you were not of interest to me."

The serving girl looked up, hope rekindled in her breast. "What is it, Captain Pierce? I'll do anything you want. You can be as cruel to me as you like, I won't mind, honest."

Harry laughed. "I can be cruel, but not that cruel. But one of the women who watches over the special girls in the Siren, the ones reserved only for my people, is with child and the father wishes to marry her. I need someone I can trust to safeguard my interests, but also watch out for the girls and won't be tempted by offers of money to break my rules. Would you be interested?"

For a moment Meg imagined that he was mocking her, punishing her pride and presumption by dangling a prize before her that he had no intention of bestowing upon a lowly serving girl. Then she saw that he was not laughing at her and was waiting for her reply. She felt giddy with excitement and joy. "Of ... of course I am interested, Captain Pierce. More than interested. I would give my right arm for such an opportunity." Then her naturally shrewd disposition reinstated itself. "What would be the price for your generosity, sir? Make no mistake, I will pay it, whatever it may be, but I beg to know before I accept." She let her eyes go to where Captain Pierce's fingers still held on to the other woman's clitoris, absently toying with it. She could not tell from Ceara's expression whether she felt pleasure or pain.

He had pinched Ceara several times hard enough that most girls would at least have cried out or asked for mercy, but she had remained calmly standing by his side, her fingers still delicately stroking his neck. She had told him that she was not a lover of pain like Áine, and he believed her, so her performance was all the more to be praised. He patted her thigh with his left hand and said, "A wise reply, and one which makes me all the more certain that you would be a good choice. Yes, there will be a price. Something obtained for nothing is not valued. Once a week you will come here and report to me regarding the goings on inside the Siren, and what the women are thinking. Don't think of it as spying, for I care for their well-being and their safety. The girls are allowed to keep all gifts of money or kind so you only need report if what is mine is stolen. And –"

Meg smiled. "And?"

"You are mine for the day – of your own choice. You do not desire to act like a whore, so I won't treat you like one. To stop you merely have to leave my employ and the Siren. Permanently. So, do you have the ambition and the courage?"

She realised that he had not told her what he might do to her. But she wanted the job so badly that her palms itched. "On the condition that you treat me no worse than Ceara," she countered daringly.

"On the condition that you comport yourself under my hand as well as Ceara," Harry riposted.

"Captain Pierce, you have not tested me yet. I might be after a sore disappointment to you," the Irish girl said softly.

Harry lightly pulled on her clitoris, pressing it harder between his fingers. "I have faith in your mettle. I just know that you won't disappoint me."

Ceara suspected that he was just flattering her to make her happy, but from what she had learned of Captain Pierce, he was no flatterer. He simply expected only the best from his men, and women. "I won't, Captain Pierce. 'Pon my oath, I won't."

Harry pressed his cheek against her bare thigh. "I know you won't." Still pressed against the Irish girl, he raised his eyebrows and looked at Meg.

Meg swallowed. She had followed the little byplay between the two of them and she guessed that Ceara would fuck the muzzle of a cocked and loaded pistol if the Captain said it would amuse him. But there was really no other answer she could give and yet live with herself. "I'm your girl, Captain Pierce – at the Siren, and here. I warn you, I am yet a maiden, and my skills in bed may be a disappointment."

Harry laughed, more pleased that he had found a replacement at the Siren for the departing

assistant manager than about the fact that he had found a new plaything, although he did not dismiss her charms. He suspected that she would be most diligent in both aspects of her duties. "Skills may be taught to the willing. Are you willing?"

She sensed that this was the point of decision. A wrong answer now could still end with her back in the Siren being groped and pinched by the half drunken crowd as she carried heavy trays of sloshing liquor and roasted meats. That mental image gave her the spirit to say, "I am willing to learn, Captain Pierce. I shall learn anything that you deem necessary, no matter how hard, or the effort it may require."

"Well said. But what about modesty, decency, or even self-preservation?"

Meg didn't hesitate. "Within the bounds we have agreed, those shall matter to me not a whit when serving your interests."

Harry gave Ceara's cunt a parting pat and stood up. He held out his hand. "Then welcome to my employ, Meg –"

"Turner, Captain Pierce. Meg Turner."

"Welcome to my employ Meg Turner." Her slim hand grasped his, and he was surprised by the strength in it, before remembering her occupation.

"Should I leave the two of ye alone?" Ceara asked.

Harry rubbed his chin. He wanted to see how Meg performed in the Siren before he had sex with her. "No, stay. Meg will be returning to the Siren in a moment, but first I want your opinion."

For a moment Meg thought that the Captain had changed his mind, but his smile reassured her. "Do you not want me to please you before I go, sir?"

"I greatly anticipate becoming more intimate with you, Meg. But I am even more eager to see if you will work out at the Siren. I need not tell you that there will be considerable jealousy that you were chosen." He reached out and took Ceara's hand. "With an abundance of beauty available to me, I have had to learn patience and restraint. However, I would not object to having a better look at you."

Meg was a little surprised to realise that she was more than a little pleased that he was not totally disinterested in her charms, and she would never have imagined that she would experience such excitement and keenness to bare her body for a strange man. "Would you have me disrobe for you, sir?"

Harry cleared the middle of his desk with the sweep of an arm, and nodded at the space. "Climb up here and take off your clothes. Show me what I have bought." He deliberately used words that would suggest whoredom to the girl in order to see how she would respond.

His callous words made her stiffen in outrage, but then the corner of her lips lifted. He was trying to anger her, to make her lose control. And to be fair, he had just bought her service and the use of her body as much as any whore. But the vital difference to her was that he would be the only man to use her in such a way. She kicked off her shoes and used the chair as a step ladder to climb up onto the table. This was not a seduction but an exhibition, so she undressed as quickly and neatly as she could. She felt another touch of anger, but this time at herself when her cheeks and neck heated and flushed, and her fingers trembled as her skirt slid down her thighs and she bent over to catch it and step out of the garment. She let her clothes fall off the front of the desk, leaving her standing alone and unhampered, like a painting of some Greek goddess. Though she had a great deal of pride, Meg was not painfully modest, so she felt quite cheerful about showing her body off like this and turned from side to side with a saucy sway of her hips. "I hope I don't disappoint you, Captain Pierce." She heard the tiny tremble in her voice and she mentally kicked herself for that sign of weakness. She wanted to look strong and capable for Captain Pierce. Not only was he offering her an opportunity that was not likely to ever come her way again, but he was showing more trust in her ability than anyone ever had, even her own parents and siblings.

Harry's gaze ran slowly along her body, starting from her feet, which were dirty. But then anyone not wearing boots in Port Royal had dirty feet. She had good straight legs, and the strong muscular calves of a woman who walked a lot and worked hard for a living. He wasn't one who admired only the soft pampered women of the aristocracy, and he liked the smooth curves of her

muscles. Other than her feet she looked to be clean, which was another point in her favour. His eyes continued up her thighs until they reached their junction, where to his surprise he discovered that she was hairless.

Meg realised what he was looking at and her blush deepened. Biting her lip, she moved her feet further apart to emphasise that she was not hiding anything. "I pluck the hairs down there. One of the whores taught me how to do it. It's easier to keep clean and lice free. I can grow it back if that's what you prefer."

Harry grinned. "No, I heartily approve, for the reasons you gave, plus the fact that it greatly improves the view."

It had truly not occurred to Meg that a man might want to simply look at her cunt rather than to touch or fuck it. "View? You desire to look upon me there?"

"Indeed I do. I find great pleasure in looking at a cunt – amongst other things."

Although the idea seemed a little strange and even amusing, Meg did not find the idea to be objectionable. After all, she enjoyed having men admire her features, and even the firm shape of her breasts, so why not that part of her that lay between her thighs. It certainly did her no harm to show it to him. "I ... I would be pleased to display it to you in any manner you desire, Captain Pierce."

"A most generous offer, Meg, and one I shall take you up on in a moment. But first, would you mind kneeling down right here," he replied, patting the table top before him.

She obeyed, first squatting down and then lowering one knee at a time, wary of toppling over in an undignified heap. The idea of the two of them laughing at her while she was naked was unbearable. She would rather be flogged. Captain Pierce was much closer now and she could see his eyes move as he ran his gaze over her breasts. She pulled her shoulders back, and when he nodded approvingly she smiled happily. Placing her hands upon her thighs she leaned her shoulders forward, bringing her breasts closer to him. From experience it seemed that men always liked breasts. Hers weren't huge, but there was enough of them to sway enticingly in this position.

He reached out with his fingers and let them brush across her nipples. When Meg didn't pull away he cupped his hand and captured one full breast, feeling the nipple press against his palm. "You are bold for an innocent virgin," Harry said, testing her temper.

"No serving girl remains completely innocent, Captain Pierce. But I have managed to keep my legs closed despite both threats and temptation," she said, her eyes were clear and guileless. "Until now," she added softly.

Rising from his chair, Harry slid his other hand behind her neck and tilted her head up. Bending over, he kissed her full upon the lips.

Meg was surprised at how gentle he was, and how tender his kiss. She felt herself melting against him and even enjoying the way he held her breasts. He was the first man who did not grab or take, and yet was filled with such strength that she knew deep in the core of her being that there would be nothing she could do if he had wanted simply to ravish her. She moaned deep in her throat and threw her arms around him. Perhaps she would never find romantic love in Port Royal, but for now, strength and kindness would do, it would do very well indeed. She felt all her reservations fade away like mist in the sun and she knew that she could do anything he wanted of her.

Harry felt the change in the serving girl and he guessed what it meant. However, he knew better than to take immediate advantage of it. He wanted her trust as well as her body. He continued to kiss her, gently easing her forward until she knelt at the edge of the table and had her body pressed firmly against his. He caressed her back, tracing the indentation of her spine down to the base, where his fingers drew slow lazy circles while his tongue dipped between her lips.

Meg was panting heavily when Captain Pierce pulled back. She licked her lips and cradled her breasts with her arms as her shoulders rocked back and forth, as if she intended to make a gift of them to him. "I – I had not expected this," she said, her voice thick with lust. "I'm not usually a lustful person –" She shuddered when his thumbs circled her nipples. "– but your touch makes me feel ..." Her words tapered off into a breathless moan when one of the Captain's hands moved down to her belly and the other gripped her nipple in a tight, but not quite painful squeeze. She almost opened her mouth to protest the discomfort, and then remembered that she had just traded the right

to hurt her body for a job. She changed the protest into a slow exhalation of breath and a nod of her head. He could have crushed her nipple and caused her agonising pain, but instead had just made her aware of her vulnerability. Now that the time had come to deliver what she had so brashly promised, she found herself questioning how she actually felt about it. Fear and apprehension, these were only to be expected, but would she regret her decision when the stripes began to mark her skin and the tears of pain blurred her vision? "Harder. Please do it harder, I need to know if –"

Harry understood that she was testing herself, questioning her own determination and strength. Unlike the other girls, she was not escaping an equally bad or even worse situation. Meg could go back to being a serving girl, and forget her ambitions. She could admit to herself that she was destined to be nothing more than a servant. But she needed to know the price. He nodded silently and then pinched hard, his hand twisting her nipple as if he would rip it off.

The pain was terrible, shocking. Meg couldn't prevent herself from uttering a high pitched cry of pain. Her hand gripped his upper arm, feeling the hard bulging muscle of a sailor and fighting man resist her fingers like a tree trunk. More than anything she wanted to do something to protect and sooth her hurting breast, but it was the one thing she knew that she must not do. He had tried to warn her, and she had told herself that she could bear anything the other women could – but it hurt so much. Did she she really want the job so badly? The answer came to her as she blinked away the tears. Yes. Yes she did. With that realisation, she gritted her teeth and slowly forced her body erect while relaxing her grip upon his arm. She moved her other hand behind her back where she clenched her fingers into a tight fist, digging her fingernails into her palm. His grip upon her nipple did not ease, but she managed to pull her shoulders back, proudly lifting her breasts and silently presenting her nipples to him. She told herself that she was not being punished or tortured. She was serving Captain Pierce with what he wanted just as she did the customers in the Siren, only in this case it was not rum or ale, but her body and her pain that he wanted. "I apologise for the unseemly noise, sir."

"Quite understandable, Meg." He released her nipple and smiled at her sigh of relief. "I don't demand stoic silence from my girls, merely an appropriate sense of decorum." He nodded at her other nipple. "Do you think you can manage that?"

"I know I can, sir," Meg replied steadily. She swallowed when his grip closed around the untouched nipple, but she knew what to expect this time. She had learned to endure pinches without dropping her tray or spilling a drink, and that skill served her in good stead now. The pain jolted her again, but this time she barely flinched. "Is that better, Captain Pierce?"

Harry patted the side of her breast. "That was admirably done, Meg. Now stand up and let's finish this so that you be on your way to the Siren."

Meg climbed to her feet, and without being told she shuffled her feet apart. She was a bright girl, and she had seen and heard enough to know what would interest the Captain. But still her heels lifted off of the table top when his hand glided up the inside of her thigh. It was very hard for her to remain still knowing that he was about to touch her there – at the join of her thighs. She was compelled to smile at her mental prudishness. The word "cunt" was not a stranger to her, and yet she had just shied from it. She inhaled sharply when his hand pressed itself firmly against her cunt, but to her surprise she did not find his touch to be as objectionable as the fumbings and gropings of the drunken customers at the Siren. There was such a feeling of confidence and authority to his touch that it almost seemed proper and needful. Very gradually she let her heels sink down again and consequently pressed her cunt against his palm. And indeed he had the right to touch her there, for she had granted it to him. With that thought, she smiled and moved her hips such that her cunt rubbed itself on his hand. What she had denied Sir Percy, she now gave willingly to Captain Pierce, and she was somewhat amused at how good it felt.

Harry made no attempt to hurt the former serving girl, but instead simply enjoyed the soft warm smoothness of her most intimate parts. Neither did he try to drive rude fingers into her cunt hole. There was no reason for haste, since he could now visit that secret spot whenever he wished. No matter how forthright or practical the woman, the first time her cunt was breached was always special in her mind, so he would not waste it. He felt a warm slickness coat his palm and he

grinned. He continued to rub her cunt until Meg was breathing heavily and rocking vigorously against his hand. Then he took it from between her thighs and held his hand up so that Meg could see his palm. "It appears you have seen fit to present me with a little gift."

When she saw that he was just teasing her, Meg managed a smile in return despite her blushes and said, "An offering that I am more than willing to repeat as many times as you desire, Captain Pierce." She was amazed by her own boldness and felt a rush of excitement and lust the likes of which she had never experienced before. She also realised that she spoke the truth and that she was by nature as lewd as any of the whores who so willingly spread their legs for their customers in the Siren, perhaps even more so. She simply valued what she had to offer more highly than those other women and set her price accordingly.

Harry wiped his hand dry upon her thigh and gave her hip a playful slap. "That will do for now. Get you dressed and return to the Siren. I shall draft a letter of appointment for you that will affirm your new post." He helped her down from the table and then squeezed her hand. "Do not tell anyone, especially Sir Percy what you have said today, and keep a keen eye upon the Spaniard and the French whore. Do not hesitate to come to me at any time, day or night if you discover anything you think I should know. And be careful. There are many who would not hesitate to slit your throat if you get in their way."

Meg placed her other hand upon his. "I shall not fail you, Captain Pierce." She hesitated, and then looked him directly in the eye. "And I look forward to our next meeting where I might ... please you better than today."

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"What think you of her, Ceara?"

"You desire my opinion, Captain Pierce?" she said, surprised by the question.

Harry stood and lifted her up to sit upon the heavy desk facing him, pushed her knees apart beneath her skirt and then seated himself again in front of her. With his hands on her knees he said, "I may take my pleasure from women and use them as I wish, but I am not so foolish as to imagine that women are stupid or that their thoughts are not worth listening to, especially when it comes to another woman."

Ceara tilted her head quizzically and then laughed. "You are a dangerous man, Captain Pierce. I find that very exciting."

He kneaded the flesh above her knees and slowly worked his fingers higher up along her thighs. "You have a liking for danger?"

"A woman likes to know that she is with a powerful man, even a ruthless man. It makes me feel safe, and when I feel safe I feel very sexy."

His fingers dug hard into the firm muscles of her legs. He suspected that there would be marks on her skin tomorrow. "Even when he is ruthless with her?"

She smiled serenely. "Even so." Her fingertips stroked the scarred backs of his hands. "What do I think of Meg? I be thinking she is ambitious, and strong willed. Unlike me, she will not make a good toy."

"You think I am mistaken to trust her?" He worked her skirt up and eased his hands beneath the fine linen.

Ceara shook her head. "I didn't say that. Treat her fair, and she'll be loyal, yes she will. And yes, she'll be opening her legs for you willingly enough, but only because she bargained it. She's no wanton."

Beneath her skirt, his hands had almost reached the tops of her thighs, and he closed his eyes as his fingers explored. "And you, Ceara. Are you a good toy?"

Her smile was warm and inviting. "Aye, Captain. That I am. I'm to being whatever you want me to be. I want to please, I be wanting to belong."

He shifted forward on his seat, bringing her crotch closer. Under her skirt his hand found her cunt. It was warm under her skirt. It was hot. His fingers roamed, searched, explored her cunt in the

darkness, his actions hidden by the veil of her skirts. "Then you desire to be a slave?" He found her clitoris again and he began to play with it.

Ceara bit her lip and inhaled sharply. He was not being gentle in his explorations under her skirt even though he was not deliberately trying to hurt her, and her clitoris had never been so rudely handled before in her life. When she was able to breathe again she shook her head. "I'm not wanting to be a slave. I'm wanting to have a place here, with you. And for that, I give myself to you. All of me, in any way it pleases you."

Unlike his touch, Harry's smile was gentle. "Are you a wanton then?" he said, but his tone was light and teasing.

She grinned. "If that's what you want me to be, Captain." His toying with her clitoris became more insistent and she opened herself to it. It didn't matter that she would have preferred a more gentle touch there. It was how he wanted to touch her, and it was upon her to accept it, and to enjoy it if she could. She pressed her thighs outwards, a physical symbol of her openness, and to her surprise, the discomfort eased although the intensity of what she was feeling made her shudder.

Harry discovered that he enjoyed reaching under her clothes in this manner. Not seeing what he was doing made everything seem even more lewd and enjoyable. He continued to toy with her, curious to see how her body would respond, and was pleased when she began to moan and rock her body against his fingers.

Ceara felt hot and rather faint. He was rubbing her too hard, and it seemed as if her bodice was laced too tightly, making it difficult to breathe. Her head shook slowly from side to side, but she silently told herself that this is what he wanted, which was all that mattered. Like an intense tickling, it was not something she could simply ignore or easily become accustomed to, and yet it was undeniably arousing and stimulating too. It made her want to kick and shout and to wriggle her body like a landed fish. But the very act of making herself gracefully endure and accept what he was doing unexpectedly caused a storm of lewd feelings within her such as she had never felt before. Her fingers gripped her thighs through her skirt and pressed hard enough to hurt. Her moans grew louder. "Oh, that be feeling so very good!"

He did not relent, working her clitoris as if he were trying to milk some magical elixir from her loins. Many women would have complained of pain by now, but Ceara seemed only to be getting more lustful. His experienced eye told him that she was no lover of pain, nor was she the kind that desired to be crushed under a loving heel. Meg was a most delightful little puzzle to toy with. "It would please me greatly if you were able to come while I played with you in this manner."

His words immediately filled Ceara with the desire to do as he said, to climax under his touch. She knew it would arouse him greatly, and it would be something that she could give to him, rather than just mutely accepting his touch. But she had never come before, and she wondered whether it was even possible for her to simply will such a thing to happen. She looked down at her skirt and the indecent rippling movements that rocked the smooth fabric. The feeling caused by his touch seemed even stronger than before, and if the desk had been lighter it would have been bouncing and rattling against the floorboards because of the way her body was shaking. She tried to imagine what he was thinking and feeling under her skirt. She pictured herself writhing before him, allowing him to touch and to play with that part that had been forbidden to all until now. Yes, that was it! Her lust surged and her belly tightened to the point of cramping. Her hands pushed at her thighs, as if to force them wider and to offer her cunt to him. She shuddered and saw the interest and excitement in his eyes. "N-not yet, but ... I'll do it for you. I promise I will," she said. She groaned when his thumb started to move in a tiny circle around her clitoris, rolling it, stretching it, filling her belly with fiery joy. Her hands flew up to her breasts and squeezed. Her moans grew louder and louder, and then she fell back onto the desk top. "Oh! Oh! Ahh!"

Harry's hands worked busily under Ceara's skirt, not giving her a moment of respite. He chuckled as he watched the young woman twitch and convulse while he rapidly strummed his finger over the tip of her clitoris.

Ceara imagined that she should be more sensual and lady-like as she came, but she felt like a puppet whose strings had become tangled, and her body did not seem to want to cooperate. It was

all she could do not to press her legs together as she gasped and shuddered on desktop. She was making all manner of funny noises and she blushed to imagine what Captain Pierce was thinking of her at that moment. Then she realised that she had come for him just as he had wanted, and her body trembled and shook again as another great wave of lustful feelings roared through her loins.

Harry gave her thighs a friendly squeeze, his fingers and thumbs forming a frame around her cunt. "Well done. You come very nicely. Perhaps it is something we can work upon, you and I together. We can discover how many times you can come and under what conditions. It has been a while since I had a girl who could put on a good show for me. Would you like that?"

Still very red faced and feeling very shaky, Ceara sat up and nodded. She was not terribly shy and she had enjoyed what had just happened, so she was more than willing to show herself off in the way he said if it would please him. She nodded. "Yes, Captain Pierce. It would be pleasing me greatly to do so." It was also something at which she might learn to excel and thus be of special consequence to the Captain.

Harry glanced out of the window at the sun. "It is past midday, and I have no pressing appointments today. Let us spend the afternoon together. He helped her off of the desk and patted her on the bottom. "Go you and arrange a luncheon for us. I hear cook has made some fresh meat pies."

Ceara brushed her skirt down and curtsied. "I'll do that thing Captain, and be right back."

He watched her tall womanly figure walk out of the room, and then Harry's mind went back to what Meg had revealed to him. The Spanish, or at least a particular Spaniard, was showing considerable interest in Sir Percy. Since Sir Percy was his partner, it was possible that the Spaniard's interest extended to him as well, or it might simply be a ploy to gain influence in Port Royal. In a city where negotiations were often made through a dagger in the back, Harry decided he needed to find out more about this Felipe de Segovia. The door suddenly swung open with a thump and his hand reached for the primed pistol in the drawer in front of him, but he relaxed when Ceara entered, preceded by a well loaded tray.

"I'm sorry Captain Pierce, I bumped the door too hard with the tray."

"You're supposed to use your bottom, my darling. Just like for a lot of other things."

Ceara grinned wickedly. "So you be having a liking for my bottom do you?" she said as she set the tray down upon a side table.

Harry laughed. "I've seen it in all its glory, remember. And it's a fine arse you be having, my girl," he replied, letting a touch of Irish colour his accent.

She threw back her head and laughed, looking every bit the healthy farm girl. "Don't be letting the other fine gents hear you or they'll have you banned from the best clubs."

"Since I own the best club in Port Royal, and the best bordello, that's unlikely to happen. Besides, they all know my sword arm isn't Irish." He realised that his tone had turned grim so he shook himself and smiled. "But a fine example of Irish womanhood you are. So much so that I've a mind to have you naked while we dine. Would that bother you?"

Ceara was clever enough to know that this wasn't really a question, although she appreciated the courtesy he demonstrated in pretending she had a choice. "Not at all, Captain." She started to turn her back to him, and then realised how silly that would be. With a rueful and apologetic smile she unfastened her bodice as quickly as she could and took off her clothes. For the Captain's convenience, none of the girls wore stockings while at home, so she quickly stood before him without a stitch upon her body. She already knew he liked her body, so she faced his scrutiny without anxiety or concern, but she did wish she had Áine's natural erotic nature. Being tall and strongly built, she had always felt clumsy and lacking in feminine grace. "I wish I was more elegant, like Áine or Cristina," she said.

"Nonsense! I had my choice of women aboard the slaver, and I would not have paid the master the ridiculous price he asked if I did not think you worth the money. The question is, do you have what it takes to serve me?"

Startled by this oblique praise, Ceara nodded and grinned. "I'll be guessing you will be finding out soon enough." She stepped closer to him at his gesture, and then squeaked in surprise



when he smacked her bottom.

"Go and fill a plate for each of us, while I consider what I shall do with you."

Ceara hurried to obey, glancing over her shoulder and wiggling her hips at him as she worked. Sex on the farm had been a very practical affair, both for the animals and the people who owned them. None of the lads who had winked and grinned at her as she had grown up had ever considered the kinds of slow, playful sex games that the Captain was obviously intent upon playing with her. To her surprise, she felt eager for the games to begin. When she turned, a full platter in each hand, she was surprised to find the Captain standing right behind her and jumped, almost dropping the plates.

Harry reached out and steadied them, then took one of the platters from her. "Thank you. Mmm, that looks delicious," he said.

Ceara saw that his eyes were looking past the food in his hand and at her. "Unlike the sauce upon that roast beef, what you're looking at will not be growing cold. Perhaps you should fill your belly first?"

"An excellent idea, Ceara." He dipped his fingertip in the rich wine sauce and dabbed it on her nipple.

She hurriedly moved her platter aside when his head lowered to her breast and his lips closed around her nipple. "Ohh, that feels good, Captain."

Harry took hold of her nipple and used it to guide her towards the desk. He drew his belt knife and cut up the food on both plates so that they could eat uninterrupted. "Go ahead, eat." He picked up a piece of gravy dripping beef and balanced it on her breast just above the nipple.

Ceara giggled when his mouth closed round the tip of her breast, and then gasped when his teeth closed around the base of her nipple.

He savoured the rich taste of the beef combined with the feeling of the Irish girl's nipple in his mouth. He bit down until he sensed her body shift in response to the pain. With a slurp, he pulled back and chewed on the beef, and chuckled when Ceara twisted her shoulders so that her other nipple was presented to him.

There had been fresh chicken pie as the Captain has suggested, and she popped a piece in her mouth as he applied another chunk of beef to her breast. Her other nipple throbbed and burned alarmingly from his bite, but she could see that no serious injury had been done to her, and she felt an unexpected sense of gaiety and mischief when she realised that he intended to use her body as a platter. His teeth nipped her other nipple and she gasped, the sensation making her squeeze her thighs together. She tried to hold very still, her hands braced against the table behind her, while he placed and ate more pieces off of the upper curves of her breasts, covering them with hot red bite marks. He also fed her pieces of pie and roast from her platter in between licking and biting her breasts.

"Turn over and rest your elbows upon the desk," he said, while playfully painting streaks of gravy on her chest and shoulders and licking them off.

She obeyed, and then moaned and gasped as he ate and bit his way down her shoulders and back, each nip of his teeth making her rise up on her toes and clench her fists. As the bites grew ever closer to her hips and bottom, her imagination began to create the most outrageous images of what, if anything he was going to do to her there. He reached the base of her spine and she felt him paint more gravy just above the crack between her arse cheeks. His tongue lapped at it and she shuddered. She had never imagined that she was capable of feeling such lewdness, and every bite mark on her body seemed to ache and itch maddeningly. Her legs moved apart of their own accord and she lowered her torso until her nipples kissed the polished wood of the desk. The thought of where he might bite next made her heart pound in fear, but it was countered by the knowledge that she was capable of pleasing him and that he truly found her desirable. His finger dabbed at the very top of the deep crease between her arse cheeks, and she felt his tongue lap. The muscles in her groin and deep inside her cunt clenched tight. She moaned loudly, and at the same time experienced a gaiety and playfulness that she had not known since she was a very young child, except that as a child she had not experienced such a flood of delightful lewdness. She realised that she liked being

used and played with in this manner, liked it very much indeed.

"Rest your chest upon the table and then reach behind you and spread these cheeks apart," Harry ordered, patting her buttocks so that she would have no doubt what he was talking about. He sampled the chicken pie as he waited and nodded in approval. "Umm, this is good," he said, leaning over her back and kissing her shoulder blade, smelling the blending of her natural scent and the savoury richness of the chicken and pie filling. Her crack had opened into a shallow valley now, leading down first to her pink, tightly furled arse hole, and then further down to the folds of her cunt and the deep moist cavity of her cunt hole. He flexed his knees and leaned closer to peer between her thighs. Her cunt was spread so wide that he could see her maidenhead, or what remained of it after the ravages of vigorous work and perhaps even riding astride a horse or donkey. She had sworn she was a virgin, and he had no reason to doubt her veracity. He knew enough about women to understand that not all girls arrived upon their wedding bed with an intact maidenhead, even if they had been completely chaste. He kissed the base of her spine. "A most delightful view indeed. Stay you like that until I say otherwise."

Ceara nodded, rubbing her cheek against the table. "That I will, Captain," she said. She had never felt so shamefully exposed in her life, but she was much too far down the path now to even consider turning around. Instead, she smiled to herself and said, "Do you be liking what you see, Captain?" She revelled in her lewdness and the desire to please him with every part of her body.

Harry placed a morsel of beef at the top of her crack and lowered his mouth to pick it up, letting his teeth scrape her skin as he did so. "Mmm, very much so, pretty Ceara."

She smiled and shuddered at the same time, and then opened her mouth in shock when she felt another piece of beef touch her skin, but this time right on her arse hole. She could understand him wanting to look at it, if only to shame her, but surely he wasn't going to –" Her arse hole squeezed tight when his lips pressed in a warm circle around it. The morsel of beef was sucked up, and then she felt his tongue tickle her. Her eyes widened when his teeth touched her skin. She made a soft, animal sound of fright, and then froze in terror when he began to bite. Her soft moan rose in volume and pitch into a wail as he bit harder and harder. The desperate urge to twist her hips and to pull away made her body shake, and she bruised her cheek against the unyielding table top. The strange crushing pain shot into her loins and she was in peril of losing control of her bladder. Then it stopped. Her relief was so great that she collapsed limply onto the table, her legs almost giving way beneath her. "Am ... am I bleeding?"

Harry noted that she was still holding her buttocks apart and chuckled. He tickled her arse hole with a small strip of beef. "You mean here? No, there's no blood, although I can see a nice set of marks."

"I almost gave up," she said in a subdued tone and feeling ashamed.

He kissed her arse hole and then both cheeks. "But you didn't, did you?"

She inhaled deeply and sighed in relief. "No, no I didn't. But –"

"But nothing. What you almost did matters not. You stood your ground most admirably, and most tastily too."

She giggled. "You're a terrible man, Captain Pierce. What you did was so ... so ...."

"Rude? Naughty? Improper?" he suggested while stroking her naked body, reminding her of her own condition.

Ceara imagined herself lying naked upon the table, her buttocks held wide open with her own hands, and laughed. "I yield, Captain. I am being a fine one to talk of propriety, aren't I?" Twisting her head and neck, she glanced over her shoulder. "Have you eaten your fill yet? Surely not? Or would you have your sweets now?" she said invitingly. She felt oddly light and giddy despite the heated burn of the bites that covered much of her body, and she could not deny that she was enjoying herself.

"And do you have a certain dish in mind, my Ceara?" He touched her hands to let her know she could let go, and then gently lifted her upright, kissing her on the side of her neck.

She turned to face him and put her hands on his chest. "We both be knowing what dish I offer and you desire to taste," she said. "And bite," she added a moment later, her voice very low,

but strong.

"Do we now?" Harry asked. He cupped her oil and gravy stained breasts and lifted each one to his lips. He felt her tense, but he only kissed.

"Allow me to show you?" she replied. When he nodded, she backed up against the edge of the desk and used her hands to lift herself up upon it so that she was seated at the edge with her long smooth skinned legs dangling. She leaned back upon her elbows, and then drew her heels up and apart so that they rested upon the very edge of the desk top, parting her thighs shamelessly wide. The hair covered mound of her cunt seemed to float in a sea of creamy skin, the dark curls glistening and stark in contrast. "There, Captain. There be my cunt, and it is yours. Áine tells me that a girl can find great pleasure from it, such pleasure that I might swoon of it, but I know little of these things. All I care is that you might take your pleasure from it, however you wish."

He stroked her dark pelt with soft brushes of his hand, smoothing the curls and brushing them apart on either side of her slit. Her straddle legged position caused the plump outer lips to ease apart and a ribbon of pink lay exposed, like the redness revealed when a properly cooked roast was sliced. Her unmistakable sincerity made it all the more inviting. Lowering his head, he kissed her inner thighs and then licked the taut lines of the great tendons that led to her cunt. By stretching his body to the side he was able to reach the heavy silver bowl of gravy that had been kept warm by the candle beneath it. He picked it up and brought it over to the desk, put it down, and dabbed his finger in it. The thick liquid was hot, but not boiling, and he grinned at the stinging heat. He wet two fingers with the gravy and quickly dabbed it upon her thigh about a hand's width away from her cunt.

"Ouch!" Ceara had not expected the heat, and for a moment it seemed as if she had been burned. But she could see that he had used his fingers, so the gravy could not be boiling. Her knees had moved inwards just a little and she quickly spread them out again. Sensitised by the heat, she moaned softly when Captain Pierce licked the gravy from her skin, the intensity of the delightfully ticklish feeling making her entire body tingle. She moaned loudly when he sank his teeth into her thigh. She jumped again when another dab of hot gravy landed upon her other thigh, and she hissed in delight when he licked her, and even the stinging nip of his teeth didn't spoil it for her. She was beginning to understand how he was playing with her body, first inflicting pain, and then giving her pleasure, never allowing her to relax or to just mindlessly endure, but keeping her nerves keenly alert. She decided that she liked it. The next dab was right in the crease of her thigh, bordering her triangle of pubic hair. She didn't jump this time, but rather she inhaled sharply, the breath hissing between her teeth. His tongue started low, perilously close to her arse hole, and then glided up the crease until it reached her hip, where his teeth pinched her skin. "Ohh that's so good," she whispered, and eagerly angled her hip when his fingers headed for the other side.

Harry was really enjoying himself. He had been concerned that Ceara would prove to be too subservient, almost bovine in her acceptance. But she was demonstrating an interesting degree of spirit and playfulness that went very well with her warm and giving nature. And now, he was going to taste her cunt – with gravy. The gravy was still hot enough to sting his fingers when he dipped them, but this time he held a sliver of roast beef. Moving quickly so that it would not drip, he pushed the gravy covered beef into her slit.

The burning sensation right inside her cunt made one of her heels slip from the edge of the table when her whole body quivered. It was like dipping too quickly into a very hot bath, and she gasped. Then she gasped even louder when his mouth descended upon her cunt and his lips and tongue searched for the beef and every trace of gravy.

Her pubic hair tickled his nose and made him blink, but he chose not to use his hands to aid in his quest, enjoying the way he was nuzzling and digging between her cunt lips in his quest for the savoury treat. Unlike elsewhere, the flavour of the gravy was different, tinged with a different taste, musky and yet sharp, which grew ever stronger as his tongue searched out every trace of the gravy that seeped into the pink folds. His lips found the beef and sucked it up into his mouth along with her inner lips, her labia minora.

Ceara sighed with delight. It was the first time anyone had kissed her there. In fact she had

never imagined that anyone, man or woman, would ever want to do that. But it felt amazingly good, so good that she had the strongest urge to beg him not to stop his licking. She felt his teeth touch her inner lips, but she decided that if she was to be true to her intentions, she had to trust him and to give herself over completely, even knowing that there would inevitably be pain. Thus she remained open and at ease while his jaws lightly closed upon her intimate flesh. There was a tiny pressure and a warning tinge, but then his tongue soothed and teased, and she made herself unclench her fists and to keep her breath steady. The pressure came again, lingering longer this time, but only slightly harder. It stung, but not much more than the daily bumps and scrapes, and she allowed it to come, so intent upon what he was doing to her that she hardly noticed the tiny urgent sounds she was making. His tongue returned and pleasure replaced the strange, almost sweet aching of his bite. It delved between her lips and wriggled up and down the moist slit of her sex before dipping like a butterfly's kiss into her cunt hole. She had never realised how sensitive she was there, or that such a light tickling touch could send waves of shimmering heat rippling up her belly. Aboard the slave ship she had dreaded the men's hard searching fingers and the thought of rape, but she had been spared that horror amongst all the others she and her companions had endured, but she had never dreamt that the first part of a man to search so deeply into that part of her would not be a finger or cock but a warm soothing tongue. She would have laughed at the thought, but the teeth came once more, and this time the deadly biting pressure grew and built until the pain was very real and all consuming. Her breathing grew harsh and laboured, but she did not cry out, all her attention focused upon keeping herself open and ... giving ... yes that was it, she thought, giving of herself and even of her pain. Her brows squeezed so tight that her vision blurred, the gold leaf patterns upon the plastered ceiling swimming before her eyes and she wondered if she was bleeding down there and, rather oddly, whether he would mind the taste of her blood.

Harry worried at her cunt lips with his teeth as hard as he dared, while his hands rested upon her thighs, his fingers reading the movement and tensing of her muscles, helping him to measure how much he was hurting her. Her pain was almost a thing in itself, something he could smell and feel and hear, and it was warm and seared his being like rum flowing in his veins. It made his cock hard like the stroking hands of ghostly maidens. When he judged that he was pushing her to her limit he eased the pressure of his teeth and lapped soothingly at her slit, running the tip of his tongue from the very base where he could taste a generous flow of her juices, all the way up to the little pink button of her clitoris.

Ceara continued to moan, but with a lower, earthier note to her voice. Although she knew the sudden change from pain to pleasure was deliberate, it was shockingly intense nonetheless, and before she knew what was happening, all the long slow teasing and biting suddenly culminated in a jerking, shuddering climax. Her head fell back and her belly rippled as if something moved within her body while her hips, driven by nature, made tiny fucking motions that threatened to make her slip off the edge of the table. The feeling of his tongue concentrating upon her clitoris was frightening in its intensity and power, and if he had been her lover she would have cried "enough". But he wasn't her lover but her owner, and it was not her place to tell him enough, even though she thought she might die from the pleasure. When he stopped, she felt as if she had just spent hours baling hay, so limp and trembling were her limbs. Her loins ached sweetly and her head was heavy and she longed to lie down and dream. But she knew it was not to be. Not yet. She could tell from the smile on the Captain's face and the gleam in his eyes that there was yet more to come. Her task was not yet done. Not until he was satisfied. She had to lick her lips before she could speak. "I ... that was the first time ...."

Harry kissed a line upwards from her clitoris and along her sweat slick belly. "And did you find joy in it?" He smiled when his tongue delved into her navel and she gasped.

Ceara nodded and smiled tiredly. "Aye, that I did, Captain, as I'm sure you know, and I thank you for it. 'Tis good to know at last why folk make such a fuss about carnal games." She looked down at her cunt. "But I be thinking that there is something you are wanting to bite, isn't there?" She smiled warmly to let him know that she understood and didn't begrudge him his pleasure. In fact, she realised she was coming to enjoy the feeling closeness and naughty intimacy that his

games were creating in her breast. More than ever she was coming to trust him and because of that she was able to give more and more of herself. "Do you truly be finding my cunt to your taste, Captain?" she asked, for the first time in her life deliberately intending the sexual double meaning of her words.

Harry used his thumbs to pull her cunt lips apart, and he gazed upon the exposed treasure with a happy smile. "I am exceeding glad to say that you taste very well indeed. Not all girls taste or smell the same even when they're clean, and a pretty girl may not taste better than a plainer one." He leaned down and dipped his tongue into her open hole, straitened and made a great play of savouring her taste, which made the Irish girl giggle. He smacked his lips and nodded. "Yes. Definitely a fine flavour."

Ceara giggled again, and then said, "It's terrible of me to say so, but I like it. I like letting you play with my body, my breasts, and ... I like very much having you play with my cunt the way you're doing."

"Even -" He bared his teeth at her.

She nodded. "Even that. Not the pain of it, mind you. That still hurts. But I can see you like me, like my body, and that makes me feel good." She glanced down at her open cunt and smiled. "Very good indeed. I would dare to say, good enough to make it worth any hurt that might precede it. It seems that I delight in being your toy, your plaything."

"I do so very much like you Ceara my dear. And increasingly so. But now, I would like to do something that might make you scream, something that will hurt more than anything so far. Are you ready?"

She nodded eagerly. "If it is biting my clitoris that you be planning, then I am well prepared for it. I want to do it for you and I'll not scream 'less I have to. Bite it, hurt it, do as you please with it, Captain. Let it be my greeting gift to you."

Both aroused and pleased by her response, Harry carefully adjusted his grip upon her cunt in such a manner that her clitoris was clearly revealed and unshielded. He stared at it and saw it twitch when Ceara nervously squeezed the muscles of her loins. He looked up at her face and she giggled and nodded, urging him on. He lowered his head swiftly, like a darting heron, but only touched her clitoris with his lips, kissing it warmly. Then he parted his jaws and allowed his teeth to settle around his target. He felt her apprehension and tension as he gradually bit down, and it aroused him greatly that she was able to keep her loins so still. A touch of his finger below his chin revealed that her juices were flowing like a mountain hot spring, wetting and running down his hand to his wrist.

Ceara stared in fear tinged fascination at the top of his head, and then gasped when his finger slowly began to slide into her cunt hole. There was a tiny twinge of pain as her cunt was penetrated for the very first time and she felt a confused rush of emotion. But the teeth pressed harder and a miniature lightning bolt of pain jolted her loins. She was surprised to find that mixed in with her fright was lewdness. He was holding the very core of her womanhood in his teeth, and the scraping feeling of his teeth seemed to reach into the farthest parts of her body. The finger delved deeper even as his teeth closed down harder. There was pain now, real pain, and it made her heart race with terror. She was panting, with each laboured exhalation being tinged with a high pitched whimper. Still the pain grew, and she realised that his finger was buried completely inside of her. The biting eased for a portion of a second and then returned, and then eased again, creating a drumbeat of agony that made her body rock and shudder against the table. It seemed impossible that she could feel so very aroused and lewd and yet be in so much pain. A moan escaped her lips, and then as if the dam of her will had suddenly crumbled, she commenced to utter hoarse choking groans that rapidly grew louder and louder until at last she screamed when it seemed that the Captain might have bitten her clitoris hard enough to sever it from her body.

With the scream still ringing in his ears, Harry pushed himself erect with his arms, untied the laces of his breeches and unleashed his cock from within their confines. There was a faint tang of blood mixed with the powerful scent of the girl's juices and a trace of the beef gravy upon his lips as he pulled back his foreskin and placed the bell shaped head against her very wet and open cunt hole. Her eyes met his and he saw her smile at him and nod. "Try to relax. This shouldn't hurt." Still

holding her gaze, he leaned his weight into her and sighed with pleasure as the head of his cock slipped into her and was enfolded by warm and very willing wet flesh.

Like many girls of marriageable age, Ceara had been told tales of horror regarding the first time and the pains of being deflowered, and she couldn't help but think of them when she felt his cock pressing for admittance at the gates to her cunt. And indeed there was a sting as the tip of his tool slipped into her cunt with a silent pop. Suddenly he was right there inside of her, and she was no longer a virgin. Her clitoris felt swollen and her pulse thudded achingly where he had bitten her, but all of it, everything they had done, that he had done to her, began to feel good. She was about to be fucked, and she suspected that she was going to like it.

Harry could see the way she was blossoming and warming to him and he was glad. Some women simply never accepted their roles and thus could never be happy, and he would be forced to find them a different place either in the Siren or with a new owner. But as his cock eased into her tightly gripping cunt, Ceara lifted her arms from the desk top and wrapped them around his neck and he chuckled as he lowered his lips to meet hers.

"Fuck me, Captain. Pierce me deep," she whispered and giggled at her own little joke before they kissed. She inhaled sharply through her nose when he pushed hard and drove his cock all the rest of the way in with a single stroke. And then there was no time for thought when he started to fuck her, slowly at first but then surging ahead like a ship whose sails had caught the wind. His thighs and belly slapped against her buttocks and the long teasing and playing had made her as lusty as the whores in the brothels lining the docks claimed to be. "Oh! Oh! Oh!" she chanted in time to his smooth, powerful thrusts, and for the first time since she had been kidnapped in Ireland, she felt that things might truly be all right as she lifted her heels off of the table and wrapped her legs around the Captain's waist. Once she understood the correct motions and rhythm, she threw herself completely into what they were doing, all the while watching his face for signs of approval or disapproval, barely thinking at all about her own pleasure or even pain. Her clitoris and the area around it was growing increasingly sore both from the bite and the irritation that had followed, but she realised that she truly didn't mind. It felt as if she was on fire with lust, and the way his cock stretched and pounded her cunt felt so very good. She liked everything, even the smell of her cunt mixed with their sweat, and she couldn't help but laugh at the sheer wonder of it. "You're ... fucking ... me!" she said, each word coming out as a joyful gasp.

"I am indeed!" Harry replied, grinning at her exuberance and obvious enjoyment. "Doesn't it hurt?" he asked, meaning both her defloration and her bitten clitoris.

She licked her lips and chuckled, her face red from effort. "Yes ... it ... does ... and ... I know ... you ... like it, therefore ... I do too," she said, rubbing her cunt against him as hard as she could from her position, perched on the edge of the table. She smiled and kissed him to emphasise her hearty approval of their copulation.

Harry returned the kiss with enthusiasm and then hugged her hard enough to crush her breasts against his chest as he neared his climax. He dearly wanted to come inside of her, but despite the herbal brew that they were given, which he knew to be effective, there was still a slight risk of impregnating her. So when he absolutely couldn't hold back any longer he pulled out of her cunt and lifted her off of the table. "Kneel!" he snapped, his body shaking with need.

Ceara unhesitatingly dropped to her knees and looked up at him.

"I'm going to come on your face. Open your mouth and keep your eyes open."

She wondered about his last instruction, but then there was no time. Her eyes nearly crossed staring at the head of his cock that was closer to her face than any cock had ever been before, and she watched in fascination as he rubbed himself with quick urgent strokes of his hand, finding it unexpectedly exciting. Despite her close attention, she was caught by surprise when the first spurt of his seed shot out and splattered upon her forehead and ran down into her eye. It burned, and she realised why he had given her the warning. She couldn't help blinking, but then held her eyelids upon even as more of his semen spurted onto her cheek and finally into her mouth. The come in her eye stung, and she clenched her fists as she struggled against the urge to close them. Her mouth was filled with a strange, unfamiliar flavour and tickling streams of sticky moisture ran down her face.

And yet she was filled with pride and gladness. She quickly extended her tongue when he forced the last milky white drip from the tip of his cock and she experienced a clenching tightness in her loins when his cock rested upon her tongue.

"Swallow."

She obeyed, almost choking on the taste and texture of what was in her mouth. His cock tapped her lips and she opened her mouth again, stretching her jaw wide when he pushed forward.

"Watch out for your teeth. I shall not be pleased if you bite me. I reserve that little pleasure for myself," Harry said with a chuckle. "And you may close your eyes now."

Tears were streaming from her eyes and the one with semen in it burned like fire, but Ceara kept her eyes open and looking up at him as she sucked and licked at the head of his cock, and it was only when he finally withdrew from her mouth that she squeezed her eyes shut and pressed her palms against them. She opened them again when she felt a touch on her arm to see Captain Pierce offering her a clean cloth and a bowl of water. "Thank you," she said, surprised by his gesture of concern. She had imagined that he would enjoy watching her eyes burn from his seed.

Harry guessed what she was thinking. "Such a petty infliction would be unworthy of me or of you. He waited until she had finished cleaning her eyes and face, and then he lifted her up and took her in his arms. "You demonstrate great promise, and you have a kind and happy soul. Although you and Áine are as different as night and day, I am greatly pleased with both of you."

"Even though I am weak and unable to laugh at the lash as Áine does?"

He held her damp face and kissed her on the forehead, the tip of her nose, and then upon the lips. "If it struck my fancy to whip your cunt right now, what would you say?"

She lifted her head and shrugged. "What would there be to say? I am yours now, in every way – and in that I am content. Go wherever you will my Captain, and I shall always be there beside you."

Harry laughed and gave her a large hug, lifting her from the ground. "You tempt me most sorely, Ceara. But for now, you should clean up and get some rest. There shall be time for us to play again. But the day grows old and I have things to do outside."

Ceara picked up her clothes, but did not put them on as she walked towards the door, letting him see the marks he had made upon her skin as she moved away from him. She paused at the door, waved at him, and lightly smacked herself between the legs with a grin, an unspoken promise.

Harry shook his head in amazement and continued to smile as he dressed and buckled on his sword and slung his powder horn across his chest. He checked the priming on his pistol and then slipped it into his belt. When travelling the streets of Port Royal alone it was best to be prepared.

## Chapter Five

Harry's horse knew the way down towards the docks and he let it pick its own way as he observed the surroundings deep in thought, the reins held loosely in his left hand. Everyone knew that he ran the business side of things in their partnership, so what did the Spaniard hope to gain by dangling such a tasty piece of bait in front of Percy? There were a number of possibilities, none of them good. The road he was on would take him past the Siren, so he decided to stop in to see if Percy, the Spaniard, or even the French whore were there. He might learn something by simply looking into their eyes. Perhaps the whore might be willing to betray the Spaniard for the right amount of gold.

A stable boy recognised his approaching figure and waved, calling out. Several more boys came out and started running towards him.

Even more than serving girls, no one paid any attention to stable boys, and there was often interesting things to be found out from the conversations of the patrons of the Talon as they dismounted, and even from the state of their horses. The boys knew that there was coin to be earned by bringing useful news to their employer, and he never beat them or treated them as no better than vermin as most people did.

Harry called out their names and grinned at them as they ran beside his ambling horse, taking turns to shout scraps of gossip up to him. They gathered around him when he dismounted and waved. "Listen boys, ears open for news of a trader, a Diego, goes by the name Filipe de Segovia, and a French whore who's working for him. It's important. One of these for whoever tells me anything useful." He held up a silver coin and twirled it with his fingers. Then he tossed a few silver pieces, a piece of eight cut into bits, into the air and let the boys fight and scramble in the dirt for them as he strode towards the entrance to the bar and brothel that he shared with Sir Percy. Entering the drinking room he immediately noticed the new serving girl. The bartender nodded at him and whispered to the girl, who quickly spun around to smile at him, wiping her hands on her apron.

The girl curtsied. "Good evening, Captain Pierce. I'm Tess, the new serving girl."

Harry nodded. "Welcome to the Siren, Tess. Just remember that you earn your way here by serving drinks and not by opening your legs, and that I am the one who pays your wage. Bear these things in mind and we shall get along just fine." He saw that she had been intimidated by his words, so he lifted her chin with his fingertip and smiled at her. "It also means that you are one of my people. If you have any problems or anyone makes trouble for you, let me know and I will do my best to help. I mean that." He waited until she smiled back before he patted her on the shoulder and turned to the barman. Leaning over the bar he said, "Do you know where Percy went?"

The barman glanced around the room and nodded. "He and that Diego went off together about an hour ago. Looked like Sir Percy had made a new friend. Something about cards."

Harry nodded. "And the French whore?"

"Her too. You could see she had her claws in Sir Percy good and hard."

Harry slipped a silver coin across the bar and watched the barman make it disappear.

"Meg's taken up her new place upstairs. She's a good girl, that one," the barman said, nodding in approval. "Would you like a drink, Captain?"

"Later perhaps. I want to have another word with Meg before I go to check up on the state of Sir Percy's purse."

The barman chuckled and went back to wiping the bar top.

Harry made his way upstairs, going up the stairs two steps at a time, his hand pressed against the scabbard of his sidesword to stop it from rattling. A person learned to be sure footed and silent on the heaving deck of a warship. To his surprise, Meg came running towards him as soon as he turned the corner into the main corridor.

"Oh! Captain Pierce ... I didn't expect ... there's trouble ... he's beating her something terrible," she said in evident alarm.

"Show me!" Harry snapped, gesturing for her to lead the way, and not waiting for



explanations. If it was serious time would be of the essence. If not, there would be ample time afterwards to reprimand Meg. When they neared the section reserved for the crew of the Talon and other employees, the sounds of smashing furniture and female screams told him that Meg had not been exaggerating the problem. He checked with his thumb that his sword was sliding smoothly and stopped outside the door of the room. "Who's in there?" he whispered to Meg. He wasn't going to charge blindly into a room full of armed men.

"It's Mr Briars, Jeffrey Briars, your First Mate. That's why nobody .... "

Harry nodded. "I understand. Stay outside the door. Run and get help if things go wrong." Without waiting for her response he inserted the spare key that Meg had handed him. To his relief he was able to push the key on the other side out of the lock. He turned the key and shouldered the door open even as Briars' familiar voice shouted "Who the fuck is that? Stay out of this if you know what's good for --"

The door swung open, the door knob smashing into the wall. Briars angry words cut off abruptly when he saw who stood in the doorway. He was without his breeches and his cutlass was hanging from a hook on the wall. He couldn't help glancing at it, but he knew better than to try. "The bitch tried to steal from me!" he said, shaking a fist at the bloodied girl who was hiding in a corner of the room and waving a candlestick in front of her threateningly.

"Did not!" shouted the whore, spitting blood from her torn lip.

"You have proof?" Harry said to Briars, holding out his hand to silence the angry whore. The man had fought at his side, and he owed it to the First Mate to be as fair as he could be.

"I saw her reaching into my coat when she thought I wasn't looking!"

"You poxy turd, I was reaching for this, which was in my skirt under your coat," she shouted, holding out her hand, palm upwards, towards Harry. "Goose grease."

Harry studied the little cloth bundle in her hand and saw the glistening grease coating her palm. He nodded. "Just so that no one can say anything against you, I'm going to have Meg search your person." He held her eyes until he was certain that she would comply. "Meg, search her. Let no man or woman say she was able to hide any coins or jewels." Turning to the sailor he said, "Now you. Tell me how much you have in your coat. Quickly!" he snapped in the voice that made sailors jump to obey even when the enemy cannon were firing.

The First Mate squinted and then stuttered out a list of coins of various types and nationalities. "And I have a nice ruby I took from someone playing knucklebones. Can I at least put my breeches on? 'Taint right to be standing here with my tackle hanging out."

Shaking his head Harry said, "You were eager enough to get your breeches off a moment ago. You stay there against the wall while I check the contents of your pockets." He emptied the First Mate's coat pockets and the money pouch tied to the belt of his breeches onto the surface of the bed. Without looking over his shoulder he said, "Meg, you done there?"

Meg came to stand beside him, wiping her fingers on a wash cloth. "Nothing on her Captain Pierce. Nor in her either," she said with a chuckle. Although she was sympathetic to the whore's plight, as a serving girl she had been mocked and teased by the whores often enough that she was not above feeling satisfaction over the humiliating search of the whore's mouth, cunt and arse hole.

Harry pointed at the coins and gem scattered over the bedsheet. "All here, just as you recounted. What do you have to say for yourself?"

Briars shrugged sullenly, the rum making his face ugly. "It was an honest mistake."

The whore pushed out of her corner and pointed to her swollen face. "And this, you bastard. Was this a mistake too?"

"She's right. You know the rules here, Briars. No beating on the whores unless they agree and you pay for it first."

"How do you know she didn't agree?" Briars replied sullenly.

"Because your payment's not on her, because you didn't have to subtract what you paid her from your total, because you would have said so the moment I stepped into the room, and last because she knows she would be out on her arse if it was true," Harry said, tapping the hilt of his sword as he made each point.

The whore nodded in agreement. "If he had wanted to beat on me he could have just said so and paid up like all the rest. Cheap prickless bastard!" she said, shaking her fist. Life was not gentle or kind in Port Royal, and many of the pirates were hard, cruel men and most of the whores who chose to work in the city knew that. The "special" girls of the Siren were proud of their status and in turn worked hard to give value for money. But unlike in some other places, Harry always supported a girl's right to refuse a customer. Oddly enough, because of this, the girls seldom refused even the most bizarre requests.

Harry looked at the whore's face and body, frowned, and then picked up the ruby and tossed it to her. "I think that's a fair price, considering he didn't ask first."

She nodded, wise enough not to be greedy. "It'll keep me till I can work again."

"But—" Briars spluttered, pointing at the ruby.

"As for you, you are banned from the Siren for three months. Now gather your things, get decent, and get out." Harry's stance made it clear he was ready if his First Mate chose to object.

Despite his unmistakable drunkenness, Briars was a survivor, and he knew when not to fight. His face dark with anger and shame, he hurriedly gathered up his belongings and stormed out of the room, the leather sheath of his cutlass striking the door frame with a thump and rattle.

The whore straightened her hair and draped a blanket over her shoulders before walking up to her employer. "My thanks, Captain Pierce. I don't understand what happened with Briars. I've entertained him before and he's never been like this. He kept going on about how the diego was right, and he seemed angry about something, not just me."

"A Spaniard again! I'd wager he—" Meg saw the shake of Harry's head and went silent.

Harry placed his hand upon the whore's shoulder. "I shall have my physician attend to you. Rest and heal as long as you need." He could see she wasn't severely hurt, but it was good for the girls' morale to be shown that he would take care of them. His physician was another oddity picked up in the mad market that was Port Royal. The middle aged man had yellow skin and claimed to be from China, that near mythical Empire far to the East. He had been on a journey to Europe to see if there was any new medical discoveries that he could bring back to his homeland when his ship had been attacked by pirates. He had almost been killed until he had saved the lives of several of the wounded pirates from what everyone there had agreed were fatal wounds. Because of this they had brought him to Port Royal and released him to make his own way. For months the man had eked out a living on the streets performing minor healing for the poor and desperate who could not afford a proper doctor, until Harry had become intrigued with his story and sought him out. It turned out to be the best move he had ever made. The Oriental physician proved to have amazing skills and knowledge. Although his potions uniformly tasted foul and bitter, they had marvellous healing properties, as did his powders and poultices when used on wounds. Many of his men, and Harry himself owed their lives to the strange man's skills. His full name was unpronounceable, but everyone called him Chao, which he explained was his family name. He was also responsible for the draught that prevented Harry's women from constantly being with child.

Despite her battered appearance, the whore, who went by the name of Lily, was in good spirits and exceedingly grateful for Harry's intervention. "Don't be too hard on Briars. Like I said, he's never been like this before. And if there's anything I can ever do for you, Captain Pierce ..." She opened up the blanket to show her wares. "No charge, of course."

Harry laughed and kissed her unbloodied right cheek. "A most generous offer Lily, and one I shall certainly remember. Come, Meg. We have matters of business to attend to." He waved at Lily and then led Meg out of the room, closing the door behind him and handing Meg the spare key. "That Spaniard is definitely plotting something, but what it is eludes me as yet. Eyes and ears open Meg. It may be just money, but I fear the man means me and perhaps Port Royal no good."

"I shall, Captain. Did I do right to summon you earlier?"

Harry put his arm around her waist and gave her a squeeze. "Your judgement was sound. I'm pleased to see that you kept your head. I know it couldn't have been easy deciding what to do when the man involved was Briars. Have a care however if something happens that involves Sir Percy. If you can, send one of the stable boys to find me if that happens and stay out of Percy's way if you

can."

She nodded and put her hand on his shoulder. "I'm grateful for your trust in me, and for giving me this chance. I fully intend to repay you for it the next time I report to the House."

"I don't doubt that either, Meg," he replied. His hand went lower and closed over her firm buttock.

Meg smiled. "You need not wait. We could go to a room."

He squeezed and then patted her. "I keep my bargains. We shall play when the time comes."

A smile of bemused exasperation dimpled her face. She had been beating off men since she had grown old enough to have breasts, and yet this man had gently rejected her twice despite her practically throwing herself at his feet. She could tell he was attracted to her, and his hand on her buttock proved that, so his rebuffs perversely made her all the more determined to have him fuck her, and soon. She knew it didn't make sense, but she couldn't help what she felt. The way he had faced down Briars, the kindness he had shown towards Lily, and the whore's clear infatuation with him made her cunt wet. She wondered if she had gone mad or if this was all some extended dream. She had to bite back a sigh of regret when he took his hand away as they descended the stairs.

A familiar face greeted Harry as soon as he stepped off the stairs. After a second he remembered the man's name. "Captain Hopwood! Good day to you, sir." Hopwood and his crew were outright pirates, but he was one of the more gentlemanly of the motley collection of the men who had chosen to go "on account" and fly the Jolly Roger.

The pirate removed his tricorne and bowed with a flourish. "And a very good day to you, Captain Pierce. It's always good to be back in the Siren, especially when you have coin to spend," he said, patting his waist with a satisfied air.

"Ah, a successful voyage then? Allow me to buy you a drink in celebration," Harry replied, falling into his role as host. He led Hopwood over to the bar and signalled to the bartender.

"Me and the crew did well enough," Hopwood replied modestly. "But have you heard the news?" he said, his voice dropping to a more discreet tone.

"Which one?" Harry replied cautiously.

"Why, that Henry Morgan is gathering a fleet and intends to lead them on a raid!" Hopwood said excitedly.

"Where to?" Wheels commenced to turn in Harry's head and he began to feel a deep unease.

"He has not named the city yet, but one can guess," Hopwood said, signalling for another shot of rum. "But you need to keep this between the two of us. It's a secret."

"Indeed, a secret," Harry said solemnly. A secret that only half of Port Royal knew about. But as long as the exact date and target were truly a secret, then there was little the Spanish could do. They already expected the occasional raid, and could not concentrate their forces unless they knew where and when. Was this what the Spaniard was looking for? If so, who was this man and whom did he work for? And what did he want with Harry's friends and associates? After sharing another drink with Hopwood, he decided that he needed to see if he could find this de Segovia. At the least he might pry Percy out of the French whore's clutches.

He made his goodbyes, giving Meg a pinch on her bottom before heading out of the door. None of the stable boys were around, which surprised him. At least one was always ready to fetch the customer's horses or carriages. With a sigh of annoyance he headed towards the stables, which were separated from the Siren by an alley. He came to a sudden halt just as he had passed the alley when a bloodied figure staggered into sight from the other side of the stable building. "Briars! What in God's name happened to you?"

If he had not already been so suspicious of everything around him Harry might have missed the tiny sound of rustling fabric and the crunch of shoes on dirt. He spun, his hand reaching for the handle of his sword. There was a tug at his coat and a prickling sting in his upper arm that experience told him was a grazing knife wound. The actual pain would come a minute later. He rapidly back pedalled, slashing out as he drew his sword to keep his attacker at bay. His eyes darted from side to side to see if he was facing more than one opponent, but the back-stabbing assassin seemed to be alone. He was acutely aware of Briars behind him. If his First Mate was part of the

attempt on his life he was probably a dead man and the skin on his back crawled, anticipating the jab or slash of a blade at any moment.

Faced with a drawn sword, the assassin tossed his dagger to his left hand and drew his own long blade, which to Harry's surprise, appeared to be what would be called a "cuttue" in England, a hunting hangar. A single edged weapon with a slight curve, it resembled a cavalry sabre or cutlass, but was straighter and lighter. It was also a gentleman's weapon and not something a sailor or fighting man would carry. The man wore a kerchief across his lower face, but his clothing was expensive. People in Port Royal tended to wear a wide variety of dress, based on individual taste and sometimes on what they had recently captured so this indicated little. He gathered all of this in the time it took for him to regain his balance and draw his dagger. He bit back a hiss of pain that the movement caused him. His opponent's sword was light and fast, but his was longer and no clumsy broadsword either. With his index finger hooked over the cross-guard he took a quick shuffling half-step forward and engaged the assassin's blade, the dagger held out to the other side both as a guard and a secondary threat.

The assassin attacked, annoyed that his quick clean kill had failed. But he had wounded his target and he was confident in his own skill with a sword. His hangar darted out and he let his blade glide and dance with his opponent's steel, gauging his skill. He broke through Captain Pierce's guard and flicked the tip of his curved blade at the Captain's eyes. But the Captain's dagger guided his hangar aside and he was forced to skip back to avoid the return thrust of the Captain's side sword directed at his belly, but not before he struck with his own dagger and slashed the sleeve of the Captain's coat above his sword. An inch closer and he might have succeeded in disarming him and finishing the fight.

Harry's eyes narrowed as he concentrated. The man was good, but he was a duellist. Harry was a warrior, a survivor of countless deadly melees on the heaving, swaying decks of ships slippery with blood and obscured by the smoke of cannon fire. He feinted high and simultaneously slashed at the man's right side with the dagger.

The assassin flicked his hangar upwards with the blade horizontal, point slightly down and outwards, blocking but anticipating the feint and preparing to follow up with a thrust of his point into his opponent's throat, while his left hand went across his body with the dagger held vertical and point down to block the attacking dagger.

But both attacks were feints, and Harry's foot came up in a short, vicious kick to the side of the assassin's knee, which broke with a sickening wet crack. He almost laughed at the look of wide eyed outrage in the duellist's eyes, but that didn't stop him from stamping forward and cutting down and across at the assassin's arm which had instinctively stretched out to support his falling body. Harry's blade struck the assassin's forearm right at the sword's "sweet spot", cutting through fabric and flesh and smashing bone like a butcher's cleaver.

The assassin screamed in agony and lost his dagger as he tried to catch himself with his left arm.

Harry kicked the dagger aside and rested the point of his sword at the base of the fallen man's throat. "Who sent you? Tell me and I'll let you live." He reached down and pulled the kerchief from the man's grey, sweating face, but he didn't look familiar. With the ever growing number of people landing and sailing from Port Royal every day, that was hardly surprising.

"Don't ... know," the man said through teeth clenched tight in agony. "Stranger gave ... your name ... and money."

A sound made Harry glance quickly over his shoulder. It was Briars, but the man had fallen down on all fours and was vomiting onto the mixture of sand and crushed coral. He sensed a movement through his sword and his head whipped back dizzily to the assassin, who was in the process of pulling a small pistol from his coat pocket with his good hand. The man snarled up at him and Harry heard the click of the hammer being cocked even before the pistol actually cleared the coat pocket. Harry leaned on his sword and rammed the point into the assassin's throat, twisting the blade even as he felt the point grind against the man's spine.

The assassin's eyes widened as if in surprise and a whistling sound escaped from the gaping

hole in his throat as his dying finger pulled the trigger. Somehow the pistol managed to fire despite being tangled up in the rich fabric of the coat, the barking roar sending the ball into the man's own thigh. But it didn't matter, since he was already dead.

Relieved that his leg had not been shattered by the assassin's dying shot, Harry yanked his blade free and wiped the blood off of the shining steel on the chest of the dead man's coat and then turned to look at his injured First Mate. His boots crunched in the sandy surface of the road as he strode towards Briars. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the faces of several of the stable boys peek down from the roof of the stables. He waved at them, glad that they were unhurt. Stopping out of Briars' reach, he crouched down. "So, shall I have to kill you as well?"

Moving slowly and in obvious pain, Briars shook his head. "No Captain. I was drunk and stupid," he replied, his swollen lips making him slur his words. "I lost heavy over cards and this man said he'd forgive my debts and pay me if I'd do him a favour."

Harry nodded. "He wanted you to beat up a whore."

"Yes. And to make a show of it as a warning to others ... or so he said. Kept pouring me rum and told me to wait 'til he gave the word."

"So how did you end up like this?"

Briars slumped to the ground, sitting tiredly hunched over. "After you chucked me out, I sobered up some, and realised how stupid I'd been. Also began to wonder why he'd pay so much just to have a whore slapped around ... so I went looking for him. Found that one instead," he said pointing at the dead assassin with his chin.

"Would this generous gambler by any chance happen to be a Spaniard?"

Briars looked up on surprise and nodded. "That he was. How'd you know?"

Harry sighed, the pain from the wound in his arm really reaching him now. Blood ran down his wrist and the back of his hand, but he was close enough to home and he didn't feel like risking going back to the brothel when he had no idea whether any more killers were waiting around for him. "I've been seeing a lot of his handiwork lately. Stay where you are. I'll arrange for a carriage to carry you back to the house."

Briars nodded, cheered by the thought of a dose of Chao's pain killing draught. The mixture of poppy juice and bitter herbs made anything feel better.

Harry sheathed his sword and trudged tiredly towards the stables. The boys had come down from the roof and were running towards him, boyish voices shouting excited tales of the attack on Briars and their admiration for his sword skills.

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The girls came running out of the house when a servant spotted the blood drenched sleeve of Harry's coat and then the battered figure of Briars lying on a blanket in the back of the wagon. When Róisín saw the nature of the alarm, she turned and ran back into the house to seek out the man they had all been told was a healer and who gave them the medicine that was supposed to prevent them from becoming pregnant. Ceara and Cristina, who were taller, rushed to help Harry out of the saddle while the groundsmen armed themselves and peered out of the gate to see if their employer was being pursued.

"I'm just cut on the arm," Harry said, nodding at his shoulder. "Have them see to Briars. He's had a bad beating and may be torn up inside." Despite his protests, he swayed when his feet touched the ground.

The women ignored his protests and gathered around to help him into the house. Róisín appeared, followed by Chao, who carried his wooden chest of medicines and instruments. Unlike many healers, Chao was very reluctant to amputate a limb unless it was already a twisted wreck, and this made him popular, or at least less feared by the staff and other men.

"See to Briars, the man in the wagon," Cristina called out to him. "We will take the Captain inside and get his coat and shirt off."

Chao nodded his understanding and swerved towards the wagon.

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"Blast, I liked that shirt," Harry said as Ceara cut the blood sticky garment from his arm and shoulder with a pair of shears. Servants had already taken his coat away to clean and mend before the blood dried.

Áine and Róisín entered carrying a wooden tub filled with boiled water and a stack of towels, which Chao had insisted also be boiled and clean for this purpose, although no one understood his explanation of why this should be so.

"Your man Briars not hurt too bad. Many bruises, maybe crack in rib. No blood inside." Chao studied Harry's wound and shook his head. "Tell you many times, not stand in front of knife like roast pork," he said as he scooped some of the water into a bowl and stirred some brownish powder into it. He soaked a cloth in the mixture and began to clean the wound. Ignoring Harry's hisses of pain, he peered into the deep cut and pulled several strands of thread and other matter out of the wound with a pair of tweezers. "This stay inside, arm fall off," he explained. He washed out the wound again and then opened a small box which contained fine silver sewing needles and silk thread. He soaked the thread in the brownish mixture and held up the needle. "This maybe hurt. You want drink, stop pain?"

Harry shook his head. "I need to think. Just do it."

Chao sighed. "Very well. I use needle. No good you wriggle around like expensive whore." He unrolled a cloth bundle which held a row of incredibly thin gold needles in loops of thread. Selecting a needle, he dipped it in the brown liquid, shook it dry, and then looked out of the window. "Not yet sundown ...." His fingers searched Harry's scalp, and when he was satisfied, he inserted two needles at separate points on his patient's head and one more in the back of his hand.

Harry was used to his physician's unusual ways and sat silently under this strange treatment. Moments later he sighed in relief when the pain in his arm eased and the entire limb went numb.

Chao tapped the wound with a finger and when Harry didn't flinch he nodded. "Now we sew. Very pretty, like make dress."

The girls watched open mouthed as the strange Oriental physician neatly sewed up the wound and applied a pungent smelling paste on it before bandaging Captain Pierce's arm and shoulder, and then removing the gold needles.

"All finished. Tomorrow I change bandage. Tonight you no fuck. You break stitch I not use needles next time." He turned to glower at the girls. "No fuck tonight." Then he smiled. "Suck is all right. Slow, gentle. Understand?" He grunted in satisfaction when the girls all nodded in tandem. He turned back to Harry. "Man who do this, he go to see ancestors?"

Harry nodded, smiling in amusement at the doctor's bloodthirsty attitude. From what he gathered, in Chao's homeland, they did not believe in turning the other cheek. Not at all. He also knew the doctor was the fastest man with a dagger that he had ever seen, which was how he had managed to survive on the streets of Port Royal. "He won't be bothering anyone any more."

Chao raised an eyebrow. "But man who hire him still living."

It was apparent that Chao had questioned Briars while treating him.

"For now."

Chao smiled thinly and nodded. "For now."

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It had supposed to have been Róisín's turn to be with Harry that night, but Cristina had insisted on staying with him. "Those girls won't be able to say no to you. Besides, Róisín is a feisty little morsel and you want to be at your best, or at least better when you sample her for the first time."

"I'm surprised that you speak so favourably of her," Harry said, sitting comfortably upright upon his bed, his back supported by a pile of pillows. The Spanish woman had completed

undressing him and his only concession to modesty was the bedsheet that covered his lower legs.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, she carefully fed him from a bowl of savoury mutton stew. "Róisín is impetuous and strong willed, and I can't blame her for being resentful of those whose lives have been better than hers." She felt his hand creeping up under her skirt and tutted. "Señor Chao said you should not fuck."

"I'm feeling you, not fucking," Harry countered, lifting his chin to let her dab it with a napkin.

"Perhaps I should go and ask Señor Chao." Strong fingers pinched the lip of her cunt. "Ah. On second thought, perhaps not," she said with a grin. She continued to feed him the stew even as his finger wormed its way into her cunt. "I'm surprised you managed to earn so much money and captain a privateer when your mind seems wholly aimed at only one thing," she said, looking down at her loins.

Harry chuckled. "I'm a man of many talents."

She adjusted her legs and hips to permit him proper access and smiled. "So it would seem. I suppose I shouldn't say this, but you are being far more gentle and considerate of my pleasure than I had expected."

"Mmm, this stew is good. I'm starving, and after losing all that blood I certainly need something in my belly, even if I can't be in your belly." The feeling of her warm moist flesh clinging to his finger distracted him from the pain in his shoulder and allowed him to think of the situation.

Cristina playfully slapped at his head, although she was careful not to actually hit him. "Why do you think it is this Spanish trader de Segovia who is the one trying to kill you?"

Harry's finger stopped moving for a moment as he studied her. Then its slow probing movements commenced again as he told her about the trader's new friendship with Sir Percy, the rumours of a new raid to be led by Henry Morgan, and what Briars had told him.

She put down the empty bowl and knelt erect at his side, her hands lightly stroking his shoulder and arm, encouraging the fingering of her cunt. "That still doesn't explain why he would want to see you dead. Merely getting into Sir Percy's good graces would be enough if all he wanted was knowledge of Morgan's proposed raid." Pain suddenly flared bright under her skirt when he took hold of one of her soft inner lips and pinched, but she didn't allow her demeanour to change in any way. "What do you intend to do?" She smiled when he pinched harder and twisted her captive cunt lip. "About the trader, I mean. I already know what you intend to do with me, some way or another," she said with a chuckle. His hand went back to caressing her and she sighed softly. "Mmm, that feels nice."

"Once I am sufficiently healed up, I could find this trader and force him into a duel, although I suspect one of his henchmen would probably put an arrow or ball in my back, but that wouldn't tell me what he's up to. Perhaps it's not too late to talk to Percy, even though he's exceeding angry at me. I need to learn more about what Morgan is planning as well. Fortunately it will take Morgan weeks or more to gather a proper fleet and for everyone to get their ships and crews in shape for a fight, so we have time. Speaking of that, I suppose we had better get the Talon seaworthy as well."

Cristina rocked her hips, rubbing her cunt against his palm, knowing that he enjoyed seeing a woman demonstrate her own lewdness, as well as to reduce his movement and the strain upon his wound. "You need to get some rest. Lie back and let me help you go to sleep," she said. She helped him lower himself onto his back and then moved to kneel astride his legs. At any other time she would have faced his feet so that he could play with her bottom and genitalia if he so desired, but right now she desired to make him relax, not get more excited. She began a slow gentle sucking of his cock, even as her mind filled with thoughts of what he had said about the Spanish trader, and what it might mean for Captain Pierce and Port Royal.

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Three days past and Harry's arm was feeling much better. Chao had removed the stitches and the pungent paste had encouraged the wound to heal with amazing swiftness and lack of festering.

More people died from mortification of the flesh than the actual wounds. He raised his glass in salute. "It's good to see you up and about, Briars."

The First Mate returned the toast. "It's good to be able to walk without limping." Chao had said that none of his ribs had actually cracked, and he had stopped pissing blood on the second day of taking the foul bitter brew the strange physician had given him. "I want to get back out on the street and to find that bastard who tried to set us against each other and kill you."

"Patience, my good Briars. First we need to sound the currents and the bottom. Blindly dashing onto a reef won't do us any good. If you're up to it, I want you to ask some questions around town. Find out as much as you can about the diego and who his friends are. I've sent a message to Captain Morgan asking for a meeting and making sure that the Talon gets all the supplies, powder and ball that it needs. The Spaniard tried to turn you. It's possible he's been talking to others in the crew as well." When Briars had left, he rolled his sore shoulder thoughtfully. Cristina had joined him in a light round of swordplay in the morning. He needed to be sure that his injured arm didn't stiffen, even though it still hurt to move it vigorously. He had not told Briars, but he had also arranged for several trustworthy agents to sail for the Spanish Main and to discreetly ask questions about de Segovia. He needed to know who might be behind this man. Was he just an adventurer, or did he have more powerful – and dangerous – patrons?

A servant came into the study to light the candles and lamps. "Should I tell Cook to serve dinner, sir?" the maid asked, clearly trying to hide a smile.

"Yes, please do so, and then ask Miss Róisín if she would like to join me." Even though the indentured girls were legally of no greater status than the servants, it was Harry's choice that they were treated and addressed as at least senior servants like the Cook and the Steward. It gave them some pride and self-respect, but it also gave them something to lose by bad behaviour.

The maid giggled and then guiltily covered her mouth with her hand.

Harry frowned sternly at the pretty maid. She was pretty because Harry had the means and the supply of young willing women to ensure that all his female employees and indentured servants were pretty. "Does something amuse you, girl?"

Alarmed to be the subject of her employer's displeasure, the serving girl lowered her head and clasped her hands in front of her hips. "Yes, sir ... I mean, no sir ... I –" Realising that nothing she could say was going to make her situation better, she bit her lip and shook her head. "Please don't dismiss me, sir. I really like working here ... and ... and ... I try hard, really I do."

"You were rude and impertinent a moment ago."

She nodded. "Yes, sir. I have no excuse, but I'm really sorry, sir." She looked up at him. "Please, sir. Punish me if you wish, but don't tell me to go." She stared at him hopefully.

"You really wish that? I would not have it said that I used force upon any servant against her will."

"I do. 'Pon my mother's grave, Captain Pierce."

The girl was so earnest that Harry almost laughed. "Very well then. There is a cane in the corner behind the door. Fetch it for me."

The girl scampered across the room to fetch the desired implement and returned with it on both hands, smiling broadly.

"Are you not afraid of this?" Harry asked, taking the cane from her and flexing it with his hands.

She shook her head. "My father was a great one for the rod, even with his daughters."

"All right then. Six across your bare bottom, hard. Raise your skirts over your back and bend over that chair, hands on the seat."

Instead of being embarrassed or shamed, she giggled again and quickly lifted the rear of her skirts and placed her hands flat upon the seat. "I'm ready sir." From her posture, it was clear she had not lied about being familiar with the cane. Her legs were straight, and her feet about a foot apart. Her back arched well down, presenting her buttocks most temptingly.

Although he was strongly tempted, Harry made it a rule not to casually take sexual liberties with the servants, so he applied the cane briskly to her nicely presented bottom, six well-spaced



strokes that drew bright red lines across her bottom but did not break the skin.

The girl wriggled and moaned but did not jump up or try to shield herself with her hands. She held her bent over position after the last stroke. "My pa always said that I should stay like this to show everyone that I had been properly punished." She looked over her shoulder. "He liked to test the weals with his hand to be sure he had done a proper job," she said, and then looked straight ahead once more.

It was plain that the serving girl was trying to tempt him with her charms, which surprised him since she had never shown such interest before. He let his hand rest upon her red streaked buttock. "Tell me what it is you want – and speak the truth." He squeeze her sore flesh, making her gasp.

"I ... I seek a favour, sir. Nothing more."

He struck her buttock with the flat of his hand, producing a brisk clap of sound and making her jump in surprise. "What favour?"

Still looking ahead she said, "My brother ... he greatly desires to ... to sail with you on the Talon, Captain Pierce. He's a good seaman."

With his hand still on her body, he said, "Does he know you're doing this?"

Her head jerked upwards in alarm. "No! No he doesn't and don't you be telling him!" Then she remembered who she was talking to. "I'm sorry, sir. I meant to say, please don't tell him. He'd be so angry. But I thought I could ..." She twisted around, her face red with embarrassment. "I didn't think, did I? You must think I'm so silly, a serving girl like me thinking she has anything that you might want."

"I think it's good of you to want to help your brother. You're a very pretty young girl, and I wouldn't be so eager to offer this very nice bottom to evil men like me." He gently pulled her skirt down to restore her modesty and lifted her upright. "It so happens I'm having the Talon prepared for sea, and I could probably use a good crewman. Tell him to present himself to the Talon in the morning and to look for the Quartermaster Will Shaw. I'll tell Will to expect him. If he's hale and knows one end of a ship from the other, he should find a berth on the Talon."

The girl squealed and threw her arms around him.

"What's your name girl?"

"Maryan, sir. And sir, I owes you a great debt, and one I'm going to pay." She pressed her hips against him, making her meaning clear.

He gave her a hug and kissed the top of her head. "I'm glad to be able to help you Maryan." He pushed her back by the shoulders so that he could look in her eyes. "If you really feel you owe me, you can do two things for me."

She licked her lips and nodded, making her braids bounce on her shoulders. "Whatever you wish, sir. I'm willing and I even knows me letters."

He held up a finger. "First, you can grant me the right to reach under your skirt and to handle your pretty cunt whenever I wish." This way he could make her feel that she was serving him in a daring and sexual manner and yet not hurt her or take her virginity.

She giggled. "It shall be as you say, sir. Your hand shall ever be my guest beneath my skirt. And the other?"

He ran his fingers down her arms until he held her hands. "The second is something much more serious. Someone is trying to hurt me, and everyone who serves me." He saw her eyes go to his wounded shoulder and he nodded. "Do you know your letters well enough to read the letters of others?"

"Yes sir. My mother taught me well."

"Excellent. I would have you search the coats and belongings of any visitors to the house other than the officers of the Talon and Meg. That includes Sir Percy. Tell no one and let no one see you. Read any papers or notes that you find. Can you do this?" He squeezed her fingers firmly.

Maryan looked both proud and apprehensive to be entrusted with his confidence and such an important duty. She guided his hand down to her loins and nodded. "It shall be my honour to serve you in both things, Captain Pierce."

Such daring and initiative was rare amongst serving girls, and Harry stared thoughtfully at the door even after it had shut behind her. He almost never recruited his playmates from amongst the staff, considering it a temptation to poor discipline, but Maryan was very tempting. Very tempting indeed. He sat down, pulled out paper and quill pen, and began to write. When he was done he summoned a messenger boy. "Deliver this to the barman at the Siren. His hands only, understand?"

The young man nodded and took the proffered sealed letter. "No one else sir. I understand."

Harry held out another similarly sealed letter. "And this one to the First Mate on the Talon." He tossed a silver piece to the boy. "Another when you get back and tell me that they have been delivered."

The messenger grinned and bowed, then strode briskly away, eager to be about his tasks. Captain Pierce paid him well and treated him with uncommon respect, and he would have died rather than fail in his mission.

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By the time Harry had cleaned the worst of the ink stains from his fingers, the serving girls had set the dinner table, and Róisín was waiting for him. He responded to her curtsy with a courteous bow. "You're looking particularly ravishing tonight," he said.

She smiled as the servant seated her. "Am I ravishing or ready to be ravished?"

Rather than either end of the table, they were seated side by side with Róisín at his right. He placed his hand on top of hers. "Can it not be both?"

Róisín laughed. "My pride would be having me believe you, Captain Pierce. I do admit, all of us have been surprised at the gallantry that you have been showing us ever since we joined your household. Being the last to wait upon you, I've had much opportunity to hear of the little games you played with the others."

Harry tilted his head. "Forgive me for saying it, but you are more well-spoken than I had expected."

She laughed, with a trace of bitterness evident beneath the gaiety. "My father be owning a fleet of fishing boats. I don't come from landed gentry, but neither is my family poor. I grew up around fishermen and boat captains, so I can swear like a sailor. But my father saw to my book learning so that I could help my mother and sisters to keep the home and finances while he sees to the boats and men and the selling of the catch."

"Then why did you ask to join my household? In the Siren you might have found a patron to buy you out and keep you in comfort."

Róisín looked as if she wanted to spit. "And in the meantime act the fool and open my legs for every whoreson who has the gold for it?"

"So you'd rather open your legs for a single whoreson?" Harry asked and chuckled, amused at her vehemence.

She refused to lower her gaze. "I suppose I should be watching my tongue, shouldn't I? From what I hear, when I open my legs for you it will be more than a man's thing that will be visiting."

"And that worries you?"

The lean looking Irish girl shook her head. "I grew up around boats and storms, and men who's as soon knife you as shake your hand. But they all understood doing their job, no matter what because everyone's life depended on it. I'm no soft lily. I've worked the docks too when there was a need." It was her turn to tilt her head. "Why did you pick me? I'm no fine lady like Cristina, or a cute little minx like Áine. My hands are rough and some say I be having a body like a boy." Again there was that undertone of bitterness in her voice.

Harry judged that she would not be receptive to sympathy, so he shrugged casually and said, "You wouldn't be here if I did not find you attractive. But if it's pity you want —"

She stiffened in anger, a flush reddening her cheeks. "I need no man's pity," she snapped.

Then she recalled her situation. "I ... I apologise, Captain Pierce. That was rude of me."

He held up the roasted drumstick of a chicken and studied it. "Good. You'll receive little pity here. But appreciation and recognition of work well done, as well as much good honest lust, on the other hand is in no short supply."

This made her smile. "Lust, Captain?" she responded, her eyes following the movement of the drumstick.

Harry studied the curves of the chicken leg and then shifted his gaze to her body, making no attempt to hide his interest. "Oh aye. Lust," he replied, pronouncing the last word slowly and with relish before biting into the flesh of the chicken.

Róisín's cheeks reddened again, but this time it wasn't out of anger. For the first time since she had seated herself at the table, she felt the reality of his desire to use her body in a sexual manner. She had always imagined her first time with her lying on her back with the bedclothes drawn up to her chin and with her eyes tightly shut as her new husband had his way with her. But it was clear that it was not going to be that way at all, and she shivered, although she was not at all sure what it was she was feeling. Having lived amongst tough working men all her life and often working amongst them, she was used to coarse language and references to sexual matters. She was a strong, healthy woman and she had often wondered about the subject herself and felt strange stirrings within her body. The one thing she was not, was a delicate wall flower. She, more than the others, had thrown herself in his path, and she fully intended to pay her way. She dipped a crust of fresh baked bread in her bowl of fish stew and nibbled upon it thoughtfully. "I'm a simple working woman, not a fine lady nor even a gentle city bred girl. Just be telling me your will, and I shall throw my shoulder to the task, whatever it be."

"Whatever?"

She smiled. "I've spent many hours gutting fish and cutting off their heads. I'm not delicate or easily shocked. I've a good idea which parts of me are of particular interest to you, and the kind of things you got up to with the others." She indicated the dinner and the well decorated table and room. "I appreciate your kindness and courtesy, but you need not be worrying about my tender womanly feelings. I'm a strong girl and I don't have to be pampered."

Harry tapped his glass with his knife, making the crystal issue a clear, bell-like tone. "Well and bravely said. But a good captain knows how to raise his elbow with his crew in the tavern when the time is right. We are going to be spending a lot of time together Róisín, and I need to know you, just as I know my crew."

Róisín nodded, and her bearing visibly relaxed. "Truly spoken." She picked up her wine glass and said, "Then here's to many good and happy voyages on the good ship Róisín."

Her determined and good humoured attitude made Harry laugh heartily and he let his glass ring against hers. "You're an unusual woman, Róisín."

"I've heard that often enough, though I'm not sure it was always meant as a compliment." She suddenly stood up and a pace brought her to stand beside his chair. "I can't abide waiting, whether it be for the ships to come back or for the axe to fall. Would you like me to be taking off my clothes and sitting right here beside you. Then you might both eat and play with equal ease?"

Her forward manner disconcerted him for a moment, but he realised that she was being helpful rather than demanding.

When she saw his expression harden, Róisín feared she had overstepped, and then hid a sigh of relief when he smiled at her. She felt his hand delve beneath the hem of her skirt and she smiled back.

"An excellent idea. I find dining with a naked girl much helpful to the digestion," he said as if such an even happened every other day.

Róisín efficiently unhooked her bodice, and the rest came off without great difficulty since her hair was not done up in an elaborate court hair style. Like the others she had grown accustomed to public nudity aboard the ship, although she still felt a pang of regret after being decently clad again for so many days. Being the last, she had been given ample time to accustom herself to her new life, so she was not unduly disturbed to stand naked before Captain Pierce. She had spoken to

him at meals and had learned much about him from the other girls and the servants, so she felt none of the fear she might have felt with strangers such as the crew aboard the ship. "Many men have said I'm too lean, often to my face."

Harry realised she was genuinely apologising rather than seeking approval through feigned self-criticism. "Are you questioning my taste and judgement then?"

She was quick to pick up on his left handed compliment and grinned. "I wouldn't dare, Captain Pierce."

It was a fact that many men would have criticised the lack of womanly curves on her body and the darkening of the skin on her face, neck, and arms, but Harry found joy in her racehorse leanness and her forthright manner. He touched her knee and stroked the outside of her thigh and hip as if soothing a startled mare. He wondered how she would respond under the birch and lash. "Come, sit you down and let us enjoy the repast that Cook has set out for us."

Róisín moved her chair so that its side touched his and seated herself, letting her shoulder and hip press against him. "Sample what you will, and however you will, Captain Pierce." She picked up a piece of stewed sausage, popped it in her mouth, and sucked the gravy from each finger.

Harry did the same, and placed his arm around her shoulders. He leaned over and kissed the curve of her breast. He had been holding himself back of late, since all of the girls were new. He wanted them ready and willing, not terrified. But Róisín seemed different. She almost seemed to be urging him on to abandon. He let the fingers of his left hand close around her breast, and when she smiled and licked her lips, he gripped hard, digging his fingers into her flesh as he savoured the firm bite of the sausage.

"Umm ... yes! You've been wanting to do that, I can feel it." She leaned towards him, pressing her breast into his hand and kissed his cheek. His grip shifted to her nipple, and the pain doubled, tripled, and she moaned. Her own fingers searched the table and found the beef pie. She broke off a piece and brought it to his lips, even as the pain seared her breast. "Tell what you want most to do to me. What thought makes your cock be hard and your blood surge in your veins."

Harry considered lying or softening his answer but then with his throat tight with passion he said, "Your cunt. I desire to play with your cunt. "

"Play?" she asked softly, the question clear in her tone.

"Hurt then! I desire, nay long, to hurt your cunt. Whip it, cane it, burn it, do all manner of evil things to it. There! Does it satisfy you that I have revealed all of my dreadful demons that inspire me?"

She did not quail from the tinge of anger in his tone, nor from the description of his intent. Instead she smiled and pressed against him more firmly. "It satisfies me that you do not feel the need to be hiding your desires from me when I already knew about them." She turned slightly towards him and drew her right leg up and flat upon the seat, while moving her left knee out and to the other side, spreading her thighs wide apart. She reached for his left hand and pulled it towards her crotch. "There. Now you may amuse yourself while you dine. Is that not better?"

Harry laughed. "Better indeed. You are a surprising girl, Róisín."

Róisín sipped her wine, wetting and reddening her lips, and then chuckled deep in her throat. "I am but a simple and candid woman, Captain. One who has cast her fortunes upon your ship. Now I sail wherever you steer." Her smile widened when his fingers tangled themselves within the curls of her pubic bush and firmly tugged. "Ahh, the voyage begins."

He found her forthright attitude to be both amusing and refreshing, and he finished the meal in unexpectedly good spirits, the threats and dangers that had suddenly loomed threateningly over himself and Port Royal temporarily forgotten. He kept his hand upon Róisín's cunt as they ate, playing and caressing her with no attempt to cause her pain. She turned out to be as lewd as she was bold, the heat and wetness of her cunt demonstrating that she was not averse to the pleasures of sex. She had learned many ribald jokes and ditties from the sailors that had formed such an important part of her life, and she entertained him with them through the meal. She was also not loath to comment upon what his hand was doing between her legs, telling him what felt good and what did not with a most unladylike candour that somehow did not seem crude or shocking. Her maidenhead

was also a victim of her hard physical labour, and he was able to insert his fingers into her without more than a slight twinge of discomfort and he was able to enjoy the sensation of having his digits firmly gripped by the tight heated walls of her cunt hole.

Róisín had been prepared for screaming pain when he took her maidenhead, having heard other girls shrieking like banshees their first time, but to her surprise the touch of his fingers was gentle and it actually felt good when his fingers entered for the first time. There were little flashes of pain, but she was relieved at how natural it felt to have a man touch her there. She had heard sailors talking about a woman's wetness down there and she had wondered for years if it was like peeing and whether it would smell bad. Right now, she didn't care. It felt very good, and in a way that she had never known before. It made her want to make funny noises and her hips refused to stay still under his touch. She could feel that she was getting very wet indeed and the sounds his fingers were making confirmed this fact. "It gives you pleasure to do this? To have your fingers inside ... inside my cunt?"

"It does, pretty Róisín, it does indeed. And I would guess that you are feeling some joy of it too?"

"I'll not deny it, Captain Pierce. Nor would I complain if you made a habit of visiting my cunt in this manner," she replied with an urchin grin.

"Even in front of others?"

She only hesitated for a second before nodding. "If you consider it proper, then so shall I."

Harry slid his fingers out of her and lifted them to his nose and inhaled. "Mm. A fine scent. You girls have different scents you know." He moved his fingers and held them for her to sniff.

Childhood imaginings made her hold her breath. No matter what he had said, if she smelled foul she would die of shame. But realising that he was waiting for her, she clenched her fists and sniffed delicately, as if suspicious of the freshness of a fish. The scent made her senses tingle. It was undeniably the scent of a woman, an aroused woman. Somehow that knowledge came from deep in her being. It was powerful, stronger than the odours of the food or wine, or the burning fat of the candles. But to her relief it was not unpleasant, and it did not smell of piss. She almost pulled her head back when he brushed his finger under her nostrils, leaving the smell of her cunt and arousal on her skin.

"Learn that smell. Become familiar with it. You shall be coming across it a lot. On your hands, on mine, on my cock, on the fingers and bodies of the other girls. It is the smell of good clean lust. Be proud of it," his words clearly a command of one who expected to be obeyed.

His fingers dropped down and delved into her cunt hole again, making her gasp. But she was pleased at how easily his fingers went in, and the way it felt to be touched in this manner. He frigged her with his fingers, moving them smoothly in and out, while applying a rhythmic pressure upon her clitoris with the heel of his palm. She enjoyed the rest of the meal far more than she had expected and was giggling and stroking his arm by the end. They had washed their fingers in the finger bowls and the servants had cleared the table and discreetly closed the doors. "And now ...". He pulled her close and kissed her on the lips, tasting the wine she had just sipped. "And now, we play." He took her hand and led her towards the door. "You'll be the first to accompany me in the playroom."

Despite being naked, Róisín followed him out of the dining room, walking hand in hand and with head held high. She saw a serving girl peep around a corner and her cheeks reddened, but felt better when the girl winked and waved. She smiled back and decided that Captain Pierce was paying her a compliment by showing her off to the household, like a fine new dog or horse. She found the thought amusing rather than insulting, and wondered what lay in store for her in this "playroom". She had always been confident in her own abilities and she felt little apprehension over what he might do to her, but rather in main just curiosity.

Harry unlocked the door with one of the keys he wore on his belt and courteously ushered Róisín in.

"My goodness! This is ... impressive," she said, looking from side to side in an effort to take in all the features of the room. There was a large bed with tall solid corner posts that did not support

a canopy, as well as an abundance of benches and tables, as well as more sinister "X" and cross shaped fixtures upon the wall. There were tools and implements enough to supply a torture chamber, but there were also more playful items, such as large feathers and scarves. A cupboard held refreshments and there were robes and light silken gowns. There was also a table with a wash basin and fine glass mirror and a pile of wash cloths. A trusted servant had another key, and the lamps and candles were already lit. They were on the upper floor, so the windows were open, warded only by light white curtains which were kept in motion by a cooling breeze coming in from the sea. She skipped past the rack of hanging whips, making them sway with her fingers, stopping in front of a cabinet filled with dildos of all kinds and shapes, some smooth and made for pleasure while others were possessed of all manner of spikes, hooks, and protrusions, designed for torment. She ran her finger along each shelf, clearly fascinated. "Have you really used these on women? And did they survive?"

Harry came over to stand beside her, his arm around her waist. "Used with care, none of these is seriously harmful."

"Will you use them in me?" she asked softly.

He was surprised and turned his head to look at her face. "These are some of the worst of my toys. Are you sure you know what you ask?"

She nodded. "I've seen many beatings and been beaten, and it's hard to be thinking of it as lewd. But I've also listened all my life to sailors talking about putting things into cunts, and it has made me very ... curious. I remember a drunken captain telling other men how he thrust his knife into a cheating whore's cunt and how he made her scream. Everyone laughed, even the women, and that night I dreamt of a knife going into me, and in my dream it felt ... good. I know it's madness to even think the real thing would be the same but .... "

"If you are willing and determined, you can learn to take more than you can imagine into your cunt hole, and even find some enjoyment from it. If you wish, we can explore it together. Perhaps one day you can use everything in here."

She looked into his eyes. "Was Muirín –"

"Yes. Like you, at the beginning she was no lover of pain the way Áine is, but she learned, and we came to be very close."

"Then I would be wishing to try," she said, determination ringing in her voice. She had always strived to be good, if not the best in everything she did, and she had no desire to change now.

Harry turned her to face him and took her in his arms. Her back arched backwards as he bent over to kiss her slowly and deeply, and her fingers dug into the hard muscle of his shoulders. "Then try we shall." He licked the side of her neck and kissed her breasts and nipples, before releasing her and opening the glass paned doors of the cabinet. He selected several items, closed the doors, and held out his hand. "Come then, let us retire to the bed and ... play."

Róisín avoided looking at what he had in his hand and instead allowed him to lead her to the bed. There was a rattle and clatter when he put the selected items onto the side table, and then he swept her up in his arms again. They fell onto the bed and she noted that he did not simply throw himself on top of her or pry her thighs apart. His kisses and caresses were as ardent and skilled as any lover and he never gave any sign that he looked upon her as property or a slave who was his to use as he pleased, even though that was as near the truth as made no difference. She felt his hand rest upon her thigh and she allowed the pressure to move it aside. Suddenly she was intensely aware of her cunt, the way his fingers had felt inside of her, and the warmth that had filled her loins. When his fingers touched her there, an unexpected thrill shot through her body and her thighs spread wider seemingly of their own volition. She had chosen a path, and now she was eager to run down it, no matter what pitfalls or brambles lay along the way.

Looming over her Harry said, "First, you must learn to present your cunt to me. When you are on your back, your thighs should be parted wide. I will set you some exercises which shall make you more flexible and more able to both open and hold them apart." With his hand he adjusted her legs until her thighs jutted out from her hips at right angles to her body and each thigh as flat

towards the surface of the bed as was possible for her to accomplish.

At the moment the best Róisín could manage was a shallow "V" even though she strained until she thought the tendons of her thighs would snap.

Harry kissed her forehead and then stroked her inner thighs, running his hand from her knees to where her legs joined her body. "Easy, easy, don't hurt yourself. Already you present a most delightful vision." He gathered a couple of pillows and lifted her head and shoulders to place them beneath her. "There. Now you can see as we play."

Róisín giggled. "That is certainly the most unladylike position I've ever taken, to be sure."

Harry walked upon his knees until he was between her feet and looking up along her body. "Ah, but the view is spectacular, and every lady no matter how fine ends up in a similar position if she is ever with a man." He placed his hands beneath her thighs and bent forward to kiss his way down her belly, planting the final kiss right in the midst of her triangle of pubic curls.

Unable to resist, she said, "Do you be liking what you see then?"

"Without a doubt. But I am dismayed that you yet hide yourself from me," he replied with an expression of exaggerated sadness.

She laughed, making her belly jump and ripple most enticingly. "For the life of me I cannot see what it is I hide." Then her mind recalled a familiar memory of her hands pulling back the gill slit of a fish to check its freshness by the bright pinkness of its gills, and blushed deeply. "Oh! Wait, I be understanding your meaning." She smiled mischievously. "Heaven forbid that I should hide that from you."

Harry watching in amused approval as her head lifted, she reached down between her legs, and parted the lips of her cunt. "We shall work on the finer points later, but that is very good. Tell me, how does that feel to be so open. Some girls enjoy it, while others feel uncomfortable."

With a wide grin she said, "At the risk of sounding completely shameless, I have many a time imagined doing this while being watched by a band of sailors. And before you ask, yes it was I that did invite them to do as they wished with me."

"What did they do to you, these men of your imaginings?"

"Oh, terrible things indeed. In my imaginings all manner of objects were put into me, and I cried out for more. Do I disgust you?"

He saw that she was genuinely concerned that he might be repelled by her confessions. Instead of replying, he lowered his head to her cunt and placed a kiss directly upon her clitoris. "I would be a hypocrite indeed to disapprove of things that I dream of doing myself."

"I assure you, nothing has visited my cunt hole in reality, not even my fingers. My oath on it."

"You have not answered my question," Harry said, his fingers delicately tracing the pink complexity of her inner cunt.

She had to think for a second in order to recall his exact words. "How do I feel? After all that I have confessed, how can I say anything other than I find great joy in it. I am generally modest with my body, but when it comes to my cunt, showing it seems to light a fire inside my loins."

He lifted a finger and displayed the moisture that covered it. "Verily, it seems it does."

She shivered in a terrible excitement when he licked her juices off of his digit. She felt as if her darkest dreams were being enacted before her. She could feel her cunt getting warm and swollen.

Harry turned to the side table and picked up a slim smooth wooden stick, much like a pencil, only slightly longer. "Let's begin with this."

"Are you going to push it into me? It seems awfully thin for the purpose."

He chuckled. "No, I intend to beat you with it."

"I be not so very fragile. You needn't use such mildness," she replied, sounding almost insulted.

He tapped her lightly on the thigh with it. "Don't be so quick to dismiss my little friend. Your cunt is very sensitive, and this can hurt more than you might think. But 'tis a pleasant and mild looking introduction to what I shall eventually do. Take you your hands away for the moment."

Using the rod, he tapped his way down her thigh like a drummer boy beating time, leaving short vertical red streaks on her skin.

The quick jolting impacts of the stick possessed surprising power, and Róisín could feel the throbbing trail of heat on her thigh seemingly flow towards her cunt. But when it seemed that the stick would surely strike her cunt, it shifted to her other thigh and commenced the tattoo once more.

When Harry had done both thighs, he tenderly brushed the pubic hair away from her slit and made mental note to have all of the girls shaved and plucked. A shaven cunt provided much better access, eliminated the hairs in the teeth, gave a much nicer slapping sound under the whip, and showed the marks of his handiwork much better. Usually he allowed the triangle of hair on the mound above the slit to remain, decoratively trimmed, and denuded only the lips and the skin around the arse hole. He inserted the side of the rod into her slit and ran it up and down, slowly at first, then with increasing speed.

The stick rested directly upon the tip of her clitoris and the opening of her cunt hole, while being embraced between her inner lips, all those areas being tremendously sensitive. The surface of the stick was smooth and polished, so it did not grate, but the simultaneous stroking of those parts by the hard unyielding texture of the wood still made Róisín gasp and shiver, especially when it accelerated to a brisk sawing motion. The rod continued to slide through her slit and her moans grew louder and her hips arched and lifted off of the bed the feeling growing so intense that it was indistinguishable from pain. Her juices flowed liberally, running down the curve of her buttocks and making the wood of the rod shine. It was something straight out of her dreams and the lust in her was so strong that it seemed her heart might burst, especially because she was forced to keep her legs spread out in this extreme and completely shameful manner. The rubbing was making her sore, and it hurt more than it gave her pleasure, but she felt not the slightest desire for him to stop. She had made many boasts to Captain Pierce, and now it was time for her to prove that she was no braggart. The challenge aroused her even more, and she even welcomed the harsh friction of the rod against her aching clitoris which felt as if it might burst into erotic flame at any moment. She was not even aware that her body was shaking vigorously and glistening with sweat. She was determined not to surrender no matter what and she had the first orgasm of her life without even realising what it was. Without warning the sawing stopped. Through ringing ears she heard him say, "Spread your cunt. Open it up!" She let her hips fall back to the bed and raised shaking hands to her cunt. After a few seconds of fumbling, she managed to spread herself again even as her chest heaved and her breasts rose and fell in time with her panting breath. The enforced exposure of the inside of her very sticky and wet cunt only served to arouse her more, and her moans echoed in the room when the rhythmic tapping of the rod directly against the secret inner portions her cunt commenced.

With precise control, Harry slapped the rod against his tempting pink target, letting just his fingers and the weight of the rod provide the majority of the force, allowing his thickly muscled swordsman's wrist to pivot freely. Striking the soft moist tissues of her cunt produced a most singular sound, one which he found as sweet as the finest wine. Despite his fascination with what he was doing, he spared most of his attention for watching how Róisín responded to each succeeding blow to her cunt.

Although the blows of the rod hurt only a bit more than when they did on her thigh, the very sensitivity of that part of her made the experience completely different. Each touch of the rod seemed to send sparks of flame coursing through her veins and acted to illuminate another of the images hidden deep in the dark corners of her mind, images that her lustful imagination had painted over the years, from the simple, quite innocent ones of her early youth to the darker, vastly more erotic images of her often lust fevered adult mind. Half-heard words echoed within her mind as well – "pounded her cunt" ... "stuck it in her hard" ... "made her scream", many which she had had only half understood in her innocence. A secret, barely glimpsed fascination with having her cunt used by rough uncaring men suddenly blossomed into full existence. "Oh my god, yes! Do it to me! I wish to feel it ... feel you use my cunt!" she cried out, lifting her hips once more. The rod shifted from place to place, and without conscious decision, her thumbs moved to further expose her



clitoris, an unspoken invitation to the rod.

Harry noticed the movement and let the tip of the rod land below and to either side of the exposed bud, the regular snap, snap, snap, of the wooden rod ominously threatening her clitoris but not directly striking it.

The brisk slapping blows around her clitoris went straight to her head and made a deep pounding sound like a kettledrum inside her skull, rocking her being and creating waves of cramping lust in her loins and belly. She both feared and longed for the moment when the rod would strike her clitoris. Would it hurt too much, beyond bearing, or would it thrill her the way she had dreamt so often? Her fingers pulled hard on her sex lips and it felt good. It felt as if her clitoris was thrust outwards like a penis, reaching out towards the rod.

With a tight smile, Harry finally brought the rod down right on Róisín's clitoris, not with a hard snap, but with a rapid tapping motion.

"Ooooooh!" Róisín moaned her tone rising rapidly in pitch. Without warning, she climaxed, her mouth working soundlessly, the shudders and convulsions making her bounce up and down on the mattress while she fought to stay in the position he had commanded.

The undisguised pleasure of her orgasm was a delight to watch, but Harry had deliberately made her come for a reason. When the jerking and writhing of her hips slowed, he resumed the tapping of her clitoris and he grinned when she cried out in alarm. "It's very sensitive after you come, isn't it? But you are not here for your pleasure, but for mine. So having a climax does not relieve you of your responsibilities. Do ... you ... understand?" he said, emphasising the last three words with firm brisk smacks of the rod against her clitoris.

"Aaah! Aaaaah! Aaah! Yes! Yes ... I understand, Captain." It had taken all her self control to answer him clearly. The continued rapping of her clitoris made her want to grind her teeth and cry out in a surfeit of sensation. It was the hardest thing she had ever done to keep her thighs tautly spread and her cunt drawn open in the face of the continued attack upon her sex bud. She felt limp and drowsy, and wanted nothing more than to curl up and sleep, but it was clear that he had something far different in mind, and she was here to serve, and not to be pleased.

Harry nodded. "Good. Very good. Now look at me Róisín. Look me in the eye." He waited until she responded. "I'm going to hurt your cunt now. Not a lot, not unbearably, but it will be real pain. Show me your mettle. Prove to me how special you are."

Róisín barely had time to nod before the rod resumed striking her cunt, although the words were like a clarion call to her sensual spirit. She realised immediately Captain Pierce had been holding back until now. The tiny wooden stick smacked into her cunt with unexpected force and her knees bounced up and then down when she resisted the natural desire to bring her legs together. When she had a moment to recover from the shock, she realised that the pain was indeed very uncomfortable but by no means unbearable. It was simply the location and deliberate infliction of the punishment that made it seem far worse than it truly was. But it was also the realisation of a half-lifetime of fantasy, and after the rod had snapped against her open cunt just a few times, she was pushing her genitals upwards in obscene thrusting motions to meet each new crisp smack of the hard polished rod. When she realised that he really was keeping the pain of the blows to a level that was bearable to her, she was able to fully surrender herself to the experience, and in her mind she offered her cunt up to Captain Pierce as if she were stretched out on a sacrificial altar.

Harry used the rod to beat Róisín's cunt until it was visibly red and swollen, the inner lips thick and dark, with even the hood of her clitoris visibly engorged. She had responded magnificently so far, and he didn't want to push her beyond her limits on the very first outing. He dropped the rod and slipped his hands under her buttocks. Cupping the firm muscular mounds in his palms he raised her hips and kissed her hot cunt with feather-light touches of his lips. "So, what thought you of that?" He didn't require or desire her approval of what he did to her, but he was interested in what she felt and thought, even if it might be just to use it against her in future.

Róisín's mind was so filled with confusion and lust that she simply uttered the first words that came to her. "I would be happy to take that, to give you that, as often as you would wish, Captain." She shook her head. "Somehow, even though the pain was dire, it was ... good. Thank

you." She knew that he was not done with her cunt, and the thought made her clench the muscles of her cunt and loins in excitement.

Harry closed his lips around her clitoris and tickled it with his tongue, drawing a sigh of delight from her. Then he walked on his knees to sit beside her. With gentle fingers he stroked her arm and kissed her shoulder. "You did well. Many girls let their grip slip under punishment, but your ... display, let us call it, did not waver."

She glanced down at her cunt, then smiled at him. "Perhaps it is because I be liking it?"

He bent down and kissed her, smiled, and said teasingly, "Well I be liking it too." Extending his arm down her body, he brushed a work calloused fingertip over her clitoris, making her hiss. "Now that you've had a taste, do you still want to give me your cunt as my special toy? That means I shall go directly for your cunt every time we play." His fingers continued to toy with her clitoris as he waited for her answer.

Although the tickling, prickling feelings coming from her clitoris was making it hard for her to think clearly, she felt absolutely certain. She did not fear what he might do, and it called to a need deep inside of her being. She nodded. "My cunt shall ever be open to you, Captain. It is your plaything for as long as you want it. I'll not be lying. There be something dark and dangerous in my soul that longs for my cunt to be abused most savagely, even though I do not enjoy the suffering itself."

"And will you join me in playing with it, Róisín?"

She understood with a deep inner certainty that he meant much, so much more than masturbating or even fucking. Memories of her many fevered imaginings made her smile. "I shall, Captain Pierce. With all my heart, I shall."

"Then shall we try something else, something a little more challenging mayhap?"

She licked her suddenly dry lips and nodded. "I be liking challenges," she said emphatically. His finger had not abandoned her clitoris and a quick, shivering orgasm made her skin tingle as if she had been sprinkled with snow.

Harry produced a small hand-mirror and held it between her legs. "I need for you to change your grip. Draw your knees up higher, and reach around the outside of your thighs. That's it. Now try and spread your cunt again from that direction."

Róisín found that she couldn't part her lips near her clitoris the way she had before, but she could still easily reach the lower portion. Guided by the view in the mirror and his gestures, she reached into her crack and pulled as best she could. To her amazement, not only did the cheeks of her buttocks and her cunt lips move apart, but her cunt hole drew open in a gaping pink "O". She had never seen what was now revealed to her in the mirror and lifted her head to stare. She saw the Captain's finger come into view and heard him chuckle when it touched this fresh exposure. Where he touched her was surprisingly sensitive as well as being almost completely new to her.

"Isn't it pretty? And see how amazingly wide open you are. I want you to remember this position whenever I ask for your cunt hole. You can do the same while standing up and bending over." He dabbed his finger in her juices and rubbed the tip around and around just inside the blossoming pinkness.

Róisín gasped and stared into the mirror with heated fascination. "I shall not forget, Captain." Until now she had never truly thought of her cunt hole as a "hole", but now she could actually see it as an unobstructed opening, and the various dildos and toys, and worse, of her dreams became much more real to her. She vowed to practise daily so that she could open herself up wide whenever he desired it. Staring at it in the mirror, she suddenly realised that her opening resembled the Tudor Rose, symbol of the previous English royal dynasty, and it made her want to giggle giddily. She couldn't help glancing over at the table, and her eyes widened at the sight of several sharply pointed items, as well as something that had the appearance of a knife. The rush of lust to her head made her feel faint. "Now that it is open, are you going to ... to play with my hole?"

Harry took the mirror away, gathered a few fresh toys and resumed his post between her legs. "Do you wish me to?"

This time there was no hesitation. "I do. Indeed I do." It felt so familiar and right that she

wanted to laugh, and in her mind she could almost feel the Captain's many tools entering her body. She was still determined to accept and endure any infliction he might choose, no matter how hurtful, in a manner that would please him, in great part because that was the way she had always imagined herself behaving under these circumstances. To do otherwise would be to betray her very sense of self-worth, and if she didn't have that, what did she have? "Or rather I would join you in playing with those parts however it would most please you."

She was amply wet, so Harry simply inserted the first joint of his finger into her gaping hole and expertly began to stroke and caress her. First he desired her to know the intense pleasure that part of her could feel under the right touch.

"Oh, that's really ... umm ..." The purposeful exposure of her cunt hole appeared to double the intensity of the sensations that his touch created and Róisín's breath came out of her parted lips in a slow delighted moan. Her fingers worked to spread herself even wider and she wanted to beg him never to stop. She was one of the less common women who's lewdness was focused powerfully upon her cunt hole, and his light and teasing stroking was rapidly drawing another orgasm out of her loins.

Harry watched with a smile when she came again under his touch and her sexual opening clenched and soundlessly gasped, clutching at his probing fingers. The girl had not exaggerated about her liking for having the inside of her cunt touched. He couldn't wait to see how she responded to rougher treatment of that spot.

Róisín had the same thought. "If such a simple touch to my cunt hole can bring such pleasure, I would wager anything I have that any torture you might inflict upon me there would be equally effective," she said, her tone and expression revealing no fear or anxiety, but a strange, almost fatalistic certainty.

"Are you ready to find out?"

She nodded. "That I am, Captain, indeed I am. How would you have us start?"

"Would you like to rest your hands and legs first?"

The shake of her head was emphatic. "No, Captain. I be enjoying these naughty games too much to stop now," Róisín replied, and she was. She had imagined it often, but without someone to command her, it had always felt ridiculous when she had tried to do it in real life. But now, it was perfect. Her cunt fairly cried out to be touched, and she had never felt so aroused and lustful in all of her young life. She followed his movement with her eyes and her heart raced when she saw him select two things, what looked like a wooden pencil, except that instead of a lead, it was tipped with a shining steel point, and another pencil-like shaft, this one tipped with a wooden oval the size of a pigeon's egg, but covered with carved wooden spikes, which almost doubled its diameter. She couldn't think of anything to say that would not sound either fearful or boastful, so she bit her lip and watched in silence as the Captain settled himself down between her thighs with his face close to her cunt. He kissed the middle of her cunt just above the hole itself, and licked her clitoris, which made her giggle. She knew he was trying to make her relax, and despite this knowledge she felt some of the tension ease from her body.

Harry inserted the blunt end of the stylus into her hole and pressed it against the furled pink rim, first at one spot then another, slowly increasing the pressure.

"That doesn't hurt, just a feeling of pressure, of pressing. I rather like feeling something hard touching me there like that," Róisín said. She was wetter than she had realised, and experienced a touch of embarrassment when a clear string of stickiness clung to the end of the stylus when the Captain lifted it away.

He said, "Very nice. It is a delight to see such signs of true lust in a woman."

His approval made her feelings change to unexpected pride. Caught up in her thoughts, Róisín didn't notice the subtle movement of his hand and she jumped at the sharp prick half an inch inside of her sexual orifice. Such was the sensitivity of her cunt at that spot that itching, tingling sensations shot through her loins, along her spine, and all the way to her fingertips and toes. "By the Saints, that's even better," she said, sounding slightly breathless and flexing her toes. She marvelled at her own calm and how comfortable she felt presenting her open cunt to a man she barely knew

and who's declared intention was to torture that very part of her. The point sank into her flesh again and she writhed her feet, being the only parts of her free to move.

Harry pricked her cunt hole again and again, selecting each fresh spot with care and enjoying the many subtle ways her body responded to the slight but highly personal pain. She clearly didn't enjoy the pain as Áine did, but instead found pleasure in presenting her intimate parts to him in an act of defiance and courage, like some sailors who took mad risks amongst the rigging simply for the thrill of it except that she derived erotic pleasure from it too. He jabbed the shining steel point into the smooth moist walls of her cunt hole hard enough to leave dark red points, bruising but not quite piercing the skin. This kind of precise, delicate torment of a girl's cunt was something he particularly enjoyed, and he was hoping that Róisín would handle it well. "I like doing things like this to a pretty cunt like yours," he said, and waited upon her response.

She winced and bit her lip when he pricked her hard, but then smiled widely. "No one has ever told me that I have a pretty cunt before. You have a honeyed tongue, sir." She hissed when the point bit into another spot. "You can do it harder if you wish. I can bear it, have no fear." The truth was that she was feeling increasingly aroused the more they toyed with her cunt. "Is it going to be whipped?"

"Is what going to be whipped?"

She stuck out her tongue at him. "Is my cunt going to be whipped?"

"Why do you ask?"

"If I was playing with a girl's cunt I would whip it. I would make her spread it wide open, and I would whip it until it was red and bleeding. It would be such a lovely thing to see .... "

Harry laughed. "I see that I shall have to be careful for both of us."

Róisín's face was rueful as she chuckled. "The result of too many years of very naughty dreams. I be finding I'm getting carried away by the possibilities."

He held up the drumstick-like item and frowned. "I had been planning to use this, but a cunt whipping is always entertaining."

She nodded. "I'll probably scream like a little girl, but I truly wish to have a lash used upon my woman's parts." The thought of spreading her cunt for the whip made her nearly swoon with lust and excitement. "Are we to try it in truth?"

Harry gave her cunt another quick kiss and rolled off of the bed. "Allow me to fetch a whip and we can test how well your ability matches your desire."

"Is that a challenge?"

"If you wish to take it that way," Harry replied from across the room. His eyes fell upon the whip he wanted and he lifted it from its hook. It was one of the lighter single tail whips, but still looked like a real whip and not a toy. "Are you certain? If I bring this over, I'm going to use it."

Róisín thought of what she had seen in the mirror and her muscles clenched. "I've never been as sure of anything in my life," she replied and her fingers worked to open herself as best she could as she watched him approach, the whip swinging from his hand. The chill of fear only served to make her heart beat faster and increased her desire to expose her sexual parts. She moaned in passion and lust when he drew the smooth leather tail over her cunt. "Oh my god, yes!" The leather ran over her cunt lips and clitoris like an amorous snake, and she felt her moisture drip out of her open hole and down her buttocks.

Harry took a moment to play with her cunt again before moving back until he was barely within range, taking into account the length of the fairly short whip. He winked at Róisín's curious look. "I'm very good with this," he said, flourishing the whip. "Stay very still now —"

Almost too fast for her to see, the whip shot out in response to a flick of the Captain's wrist. Only the tip smacked into her cunt and it felt like a combination of a bee sting and jab with a pointed stick. It landed just above her cunt hole, just missing her pee hole by a fraction of an inch. The shock hit her like a bucket of ice cold water. The pain was vastly different from the pricking of the stylus or anything else anyone had done to her, even though she had been slapped around by the ship's crew during the voyage. It was frightening to have her most private and intimate parts hurt like this, but it was so powerfully exhilarating that she never for a moment considered shielding her

cunt from further blows. It was like standing on the prow of a ship as it sailed into a storm and having the wind and spray lash her face. The very thought of risking injury or even the destruction of her woman's parts always made her feel so sexually alive and filled with lewdness. Even though her teeth were clenched tightly, she grinned at her torturer. The whip flickered, and with blinding speed, bit at her cunt again. She had a fraction of a second to admire his accuracy before the pain made her throw her head back and kick at the air. The tip of the lash had snapped directly against the stretched circle of her cunt hole and flame speared deep into her cunt.

All too aware that he could do her serious injury if he was careless, Harry wielded the whip with all his skill, letting the tip of the lash bite and snap at her cunt and marvelling at Róisín's nerve and endurance. He saw her jump when the whip caught her clitoris, sweat breaking out all over her body, but her thighs remained up and spread and her fingers did not ease or slip. Because he wanted it, but also because it was unmistakable that she wanted it with an even greater fervour, he attempted to place most of the darting, cracking strokes immediately upon the winking pink circle of her cunt hole.

She had never imagined that her cunt would hurt this much from what she could see was a light whipping, but working on a fishing vessel provided ample opportunity for a crew member, even a woman, to be injured, and she had learned to be tough as she had grown up, and she made use of that toughness now. Like the fishing boats, she had chosen this, and she would not shrink from the consequences. She could see that the Captain was impressed and she realised it excited her greatly. It might have been nothing but foolish pride, but that made her feel good, very good indeed. The blows stopped after the sixth time in a row that the whip bit into her cunt hole, and she realised that she was panting hard, as if she had been running or hauling on a fishing net. Her thighs trembled uncontrollably, but her fingers were steady, and she knew that her cunt was still wide open and nicely offered to Captain Pierce. She was also sure that the punishment of her cunt was far from over.

Harry settled down between her legs to better study the effect of his handiwork. He was pleased to see that he had not torn her skin, not even the delicate tissues of her cunt, although there was some visible swelling and it was sore in appearance. He planted a kiss directly on the mouth of her cunt, and then on the petals of her inner lips. "Does it hurt very badly?" he asked, his tone more one of curiosity than sympathy.

She was tempted to sally a jest, but she unsure how well the Captain would take her words, so she decided upon the plain truth. "As bad as I have ever felt before."

"And yet you seem to bear it well."

"I was ever one for a challenge, Captain."

Harry studied her for a minute, but she seemed to be sincere in what she said. "And could you bear more?"

She grinned. "Do you be challenging me, Captain?"

He was forced to chuckle. "I admit I am sore tempted to make your cunt bleed. My self-control has been a heavy shackle around my neck the past weeks."

"You purchased us to ease your days and nights, not to make them more burdensome," Róisín said with a suggestive glance at her waiting cunt. She realised that teasing him and urging him to hurt her cunt was wildly exciting to her, even though it would likely result in her screaming in pain. She was simply unable to resist the temptation, especially when she finally had her legs spread wide in front of a man she admired in reality rather than in a mere dream.

Harry raised the whip. "Very true".

The crack of the whip was like a pistol shot and Róisín screams alternated with each reverberating explosion of sound and agony. Every blow landed on or near to her cunt hole, and she was certain that blood had to be flowing. But her cunt did not close and her hips actually lifted higher. She was in an almost ecstatic state, and each impact against the torn and bloodied tissues of her inner cunt were like the roaring of triumphant angels in her skull.

Although he had allowed the whip to ravage her cunt much more severely than before, the blood was limited to crimson droplets that mingled with her clear glistening juices and the bruising

and swelling had only made her intimate parts puff up slightly rather than with little ugly blue and purple marks. Her screams and sobs of agony were undiluted with any pleas for mercy, and although her hips twisted and writhed, he had no trouble directing the whip into her cunt. Her cunt hole was gaping wider under the pressure of her fingers and possibly because Róisín was willing it, and the pink and crimson rimmed hole was now wide enough to allow two fingers to enter without difficulty. Which meant that if he was skilful it would be quite possible for the tip of the whip to actually enter and strike the inside of her cunt hole. Two snaps of the whip missed the hole but not her cunt, forcing high pitched screams from her, but the third buried the tip right inside of her before the force of his hand and wrist cracked the whip, seemingly creating an explosion inside of her cunt.

This was too much even for Róisín's determination, and her knees slammed together as she rolled over onto her side. But as soon as the raw throated scream left her lips she was saying, "I ... I'm sorry! ... I'll have it ... open again in just –" With a grunt of effort she rolled once more onto her back and pulled her trembling thighs up and apart with her hands. To her surprise she felt his hands on her thighs, gently supporting them.

"Hush ... it's all right. You did just fine, Róisín." He lifted her calves onto his shoulders and kissed the insides of her knees, his hands stroking her thighs tenderly.

Róisín shook her head. "No, I'll not be giving up that easily. The next time I am required to bare my cunt for the whip I swear by all that's holy I shall not move an inch." She realised that he was naked and her smile returned. "Are you going to be fucking me then?"

"If I do, your first time will be a very painful one. Are you sure you want that?"

In her mind the truth burned bright. "I want you to be using my cunt. I've never expected it to feel good," she said firmly.

The prospect of fucking her freshly whipped cunt hole made his cock harden painfully and he eased her knees apart, holding them firm against the shaking of her thighs. After a moment he felt her resistance fade and he pushed them wide. The sight of her bloodied cunt and her smiling face was irresistible, and he drew her hips towards him. With the length of his cock resting upon her cunt, he lowered his shoulders down until he could kiss her on the lips. Her arms went around his neck as their lips locked together.

This unexpected tenderness stoked the lust and passion within Róisín's body to white heat the burning pain in her cunt only serving to remind her of how open and vulnerable her cunt was to him, and she shuddered in lewd delight. She wanted to feel him inside of her, even though it would doubtless bring even greater suffering. In fact, she wanted it, wanted the pain because it would be a completion of her imaginings, the fire of the shining blade entering her body as she watched. She felt the head of his cock touch, and she inhaled sharply through her nostrils when he pushed, her lips still sealed against his. Her legs went around him, and she braced herself. With all the blood and juices, it didn't take long for the head of his cock to enter her. She strained with all her might to hold her cunt rigidly still, not easing the pain by adjusting the position or angle of her hips. Her cunt was his to use. It was up to Captain to find his way in and to determine his own pace as he fucked her whipped and bloody cunt.

The swelling made her virgin cunt extra hot and tight, but the drops of blood making it wetter, so it felt absolutely marvellous as his cock sank slowly into her hole. He noted how she was holding her cunt steady for him and he knew just how much it had to be hurting her to be fucked right now. Resting upon his elbows, he slipped his arms under her shoulders to embrace her and kissed her neck. "That's it Róisín, give me your cunt. It feels so very good to use it like this," he whispered passionately into her ear, knowing those words would further stoke her lust.

His words made her shiver and her heart pound wildly in her chest. Her nipples rubbed against him and it felt as if his cock was covered with something rough such as tree bark, scratching and scraping at her cunt hole as he entered her. Using the pain in her cunt, she imagined herself squatting upon the table of her dreams once more, the drunken sailor raising his knife towards her crotch, the point touching ....

Harry felt her cunt suddenly tighten around his cock, and spurred by the sensation he started

to fuck her. Thrusting hard and without mercy, he drove deep, slapping his groin against her before pulling out again as if trying to ram her into the mattress.

It hurt so much, and yet it felt so very good. She turned her head to the side and pushed a thumb between her teeth, biting down hard upon it as she came over and over, her pulse roaring in her ears and her cunt feeling as if it was being ripped apart, which only made her smile in lewd joy.

The wild convulsions of Róisín's orgasms were irresistible, and Harry came hard, his seed feeling like molten lead as it shot out of him like the broadside of the Talon, a rolling, crashing explosion of heat and flame.

Captain Pierce lay heavily upon her, panting and drained from his climax, but Róisín didn't mind. His cock was still inside of her, and she liked the way it felt, even though it still hurt. Perhaps she enjoyed it because it hurt and it required a deliberate effort in order to remain open and welcoming to him. Idly she wondered if she was mad, but she would not deny that treating her cunt as a thing to be abused gave her pleasure. Since the Captain clearly enjoyed it too, the pair of them were well suited. "Do I please you, Captain?"

Harry touched his lips very lightly to hers. "You are a delight. What are your thoughts about playing with your cunt, now that you have experienced the reality?"

She pursed her lips thoughtfully. "I'm pleased that I'm able to deal with the hurt as well as I did in my dreams ..." Her smile was wide and genuine. "And I be thrilled to pieces that I enjoyed giving my cunt to you as a plaything even more than I thought possible." The inescapable picture of the knife sliding into her cunt made her shudder. "Whatever you be after desiring to do with it Captain, you shall never hear the word "no" fall from my lips."

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At breakfast, Harry gazed at his little collection of beauties in satisfaction and admiration, since they had all turned up at the table with their bare breasts showing. He sighed happily. "That is the most splendid sight I have seen in a long time."

Áine grinned cheekily. "I'd be wagering that you'd be even more pleased if we had found a way to show you our cunts at table."

"Knowing that your cunts are all present and ready for action is already a pleasure beyond words," Harry said, bowing to the gathered women, causing them to titter and hide their mouths with their fingers. "Regretfully, I shall be deprived of your company for most of the day. I intend to ride to Captain Henry Morgan's estate and seek a discussion regarding his plans." He turned to the Spanish woman. "Cristina, I have a task for you, if you are willing to undertake it. Because of its nature, I shall not require it of you should you object."

Puzzled and intrigued, Cristina nodded. "You have but to ask, Captain Pierce."

"I'm having difficulty in finding anyone amongst the Spanish in Port Royal who will talk about this so called trader who seems to have taken a liking for my head. I'd like you to go down to town and see if you can learn anything. They might be willing to talk to you. A fellow countrywoman and a beautiful one to boot, makes a combination that is hard to resist."

Cristina looked down at her hands and was silent for a long moment, and then she looked up. "Thank you for giving me a choice, but I am yours now. Of course I shall try my utmost to help you."

"Excellent. You and I shall ride out after we are done here. I've never asked – do you ride side-saddle or astride?"

The Spanish aristocrat sniffed. "I always ride astride", prompting giggles from the other girls.

Harry nodded, hiding his smile. "Astride it shall be. I would have sent you out with a driver and carriage, but the lack of a witness might be more ... discreet." He lifted his mug of hot spiced cider. "With that settled, let us enjoy the delights of this table," he said, his eyes on the bared breasts and not the food.

## Chapter Six

Captain Pierce had escorted Cristina up to the junction where the crossroads led both inland to the estates of the plantation owners and out towards the harbour and the core of Port Royal. After he had kissed her hand and rode away, she headed first for the Siren, to meet the employees, and to familiarise herself with the place and the way it ran. She took care to let herself be seen in the bar, and to introduce herself to the bar keeper. She could feel the eyes of the customers on her as she moved around, like feverish fingers reaching under her dress. She had deliberately picked one with a low cut bodice and a skirt with soft clinging fabric with no underskirt suited to riding. It would help to enforce her identity as a helpless sexual plaything, and to distract the men she hoped would eventually talk to her. She was about to leave the Siren when one of the whores bumped into her and pushed a piece of paper into her hand. When she got outside she unfolded the rough scrap of paper and saw the words "The Naked Mermaid" written on it in pencil lead.

Unfamiliar with the streets, Cristina had to ask directions several times before she found the tavern bearing that name. Her expensive clothes, Harry's crest on the saddle, and her general air of confidence kept the men in the street away. The streets of Port Royal were generally safer than many parts of London for the followers of the more successful Captains and the large traders like Captain Pierce. Those who offended him soon found it impossible to sell their booty, which was the financial kiss of death, or were found with their throats cut and floating in the harbour, dead in fact.

To her relief, the Naked Mermaid was one of the more respectable establishments that lined the dockside, despite its naughty name, and its customers were mostly masters of merchantmen, traders, and the more successful privateer captains. That did not mean it was a genteel tea house, and a blast of loud male voices, female shrieks and giggles, and the scratching of a fiddle greeted her when she stepped through the door. She deliberately allowed the scrap of paper to dangle from her fingertips as she paused just inside the doorway, looking around as if seeking a friend. Then she saw him. From his appearance and dress he was unmistakably Spanish. She smiled thinly and made her way towards him.

Filipe de Segovia stood up and bowed courteously as if greeting a lady and not a bond-slave. "Señorita Cristina Rodríguez de Aguilar I presume? I am delighted that you chose to accept my invitation." He took her hand and kissed the backs of her fingers. "I apologise for the theatrics, but we both understand the necessity for ... discretion."

Her eyebrows arched. "We both know that I have nothing left to be discreet about, Señor ...?"

His smile was faintly mocking as he bowed again. "Filipe de Segovia at your service." He gestured at the chair across from him. "Nevertheless, I believe that discretion would be best ... for now. Have no fear. All the tables around us are occupied by ... friends."

"Then how may I be of service to you, Señor?"

The trader's smile became cruel. "You realise that your um, patron dangles you as bait, do you not?"

"Expensive bait. Is there something in the water worth catching?"

The man's eyes narrowed, as if trying to read Cristina's soul.

But this was a game she had played all her life and she stared back guilelessly, her face betraying nothing of her thoughts.

He shrugged and nodded. "I find myself at odds with your patron. But he is a skilled and cautious man and I haven't been able to present my argument to him in person so far."

Cristina's smile widened. "Your latest argument proved ... less than persuasive. In fact, Captain Pierce seems more determined than ever to discover your true intentions."

"Which is why I could use your assistance."

"Why should I risk my life to assist you?"

"Because I am an agent of the King of Spain, and I am authorised to grant you what you most dearly wish."

Cristina had suspected it, but it was still a shock to hear it confirmed by his own words. "Do



not play with me, de Segovia. What do you offer?" she snapped.

"Your life back. The King will accept you as his ward and invite you to court. I will pay you enough to keep you for the rest of your days and protect you from your father." He leaned across the table, his eyes burning with sincerity. "I offer you salvation."

Sitting very stiffly erect she said, "I am not a murderer."

"I don't expect you to be. I have professionals for that. What I want you to do is simply to spy upon your ... master, tell me what he knows, and when the time is right, help me to lure him out of his shell so that I can rid myself of him once and for all."

"I gave my word to him. I swore," she said, her voice low and pensive.

"I wager you said nothing about forsaking your King and country when you made your oath."

She smiled. "I'd forgotten how good we aristos are at finding excuses for lapses in honour."

He shrugged. "The peasants don't understand our problems. So, what is your answer?"

Very aware that if she said no, it was likely that someone would be waiting to slit her throat in the street, she said carefully, "It would be good to see Madrid again, rather than spend my days in this – " She made an encompassing gesture with her hands.

"Good. I'm glad you are going to be sensible. I would have been sad if something unpleasant were to happen to such a beautiful lady."

She remained impassive in the face of his not very subtle threat. "Enough of the pleasantries, Señor. What do you want me to do? Simply watch out for useful information?"

"I think you will not need to wait or watch very long. My people tell me that Captain Pierce is meeting the pirate Henry Morgan today. When he returns, he should have details of Morgan's plans. You will discover what they are and give that information to me."

"How am I to contact you again? Should I come here?"

He smiled. "That would be unwise for both of us I think. I have prepared another, more private meeting place. Here are the directions." He handed her a folded note. "I need not tell you to be careful with that."

"I will expect payment and a letter of introduction to the King before I hand anything over. I will not be played the fool."

The Spanish agent bowed. "Of course, dear lady. It shall be as you say." He watched silently when she stood up and walked away without further courtesies. His smile was not pleasant when the French woman Colette came to his table and sat down.

"Did she fall for your scheme?"

"Of course she did. She is clever enough to know that she could not have left this meeting alive otherwise."

"But can we trust her?"

This made him laugh. "I trust her to do what I need her to do."

"And then?" There was a hint of eagerness in her voice.

"Then, my venomous pretty, you can have your pleasure with her."

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Captain Pierce was already back when Cristina arrived at the House, her mind spinning from her clandestine meeting with de Segovia. Anxious to advise him of what had transpired between her and the trader cum agent, she hung her cloak on a hook and placed her purse on the table outside of his office. She inspected her skirt for mud, grass seeds, or twigs before knocking. When the Captain's voice said, "Come in," she turned the knob and opened the door wide enough for him to see her. "May I speak with you Captain?"

"Of course. Come in Cristina, and close the door behind you." He indicated that she should be seated and then said, "I assume you have something to tell me? Something about de Segovia?"

Cristina settled in her chair and then went on to describe the secret note and her meeting with de Segovia.

"Were you tempted?" Harry asked casually.

Cristina lifted her head a fraction higher. "Of course I was. He was offering everything I could want. But I don't go back upon my word."

Harry opened his mouth to ask another question but was interrupted by a tapping on the door. He frowned. "What is it? I'm busy at the moment. Can't it wait?" The door opened, and to his surprise, it was Maryan who peeked into the room.

"I'm sorry Captain, but I have something extremely important that I need to show you," the serving girl said. The movement of her eyes indicated that it concerned Cristina, who couldn't see her from where she sat.

"Very well. I hope it is important – for your sake."

The serving girl hurried across the room and around the table to stand beside him with her back to Cristina. Using her body to hide her actions, she held up a piece of paper for him to read.

Harry's face darkened when he read the words on the paper. His hand reached into the drawer beside him and lifted out a loaded pistol, which he placed upon the table in front of him, the muzzle pointing at Cristina. "Maryan, go out and summon one of the guards. Go now."

"Captain, is something wrong? Have you received bad news?" Cristina asked in undisguised concern.

"I have, and it grieves me greatly. Does this look familiar to you?" He held up the note.

Cristina's face paled. "That is the ... Captain, I can explain ...."

"Explain why you have a second meeting arranged with de Segovia? Explain why you didn't tell me about it when you had the chance?" His hand rested upon the pistol. "I don't think you need to explain anything. Were you going to kill me? Slit my throat when next you lay in my bed? Betray Morgan's plans to the Spaniards?"

"No! Captain Pierce, I swear –"

He cut her off with a slash of his hand. "I've already seen what your oath is worth. Not another word, or by God I will shoot you where you sit." Over her shoulder he saw a guard come running into the room. "Take her away and lock her up. Bind her hands well. She is not to have the chance to kill herself until I have put her to the question."

Tears streamed from Cristina's eyes and she looked shocked and stricken as she was dragged none too gently from the room by the grim faced guard.

Harry saw Maryan's face hovering anxiously outside the door. "Come in and close the door. I would speak with you."

Maryan did as she was bid, and then came to stand in front of the desk, her hands clasped nervously before her hips. "I'm sorry, Captain. I only did –"

"You did nothing to apologise for. In fact, you have done me a great service. Tell me, where did you find the note?"

"In Cristina's purse, Captain. I saw it in the hallway and searched it as you instructed me to do. The note was right there. As soon as I saw the signature I knew I had to show it to you."

Harry nodded. "Indeed, you have served me well, and for that you shall be well rewarded for your actions. For a start, I shall instruct that your brother be accepted aboard the Talon."

Her face lit up with joy. "Oh thank you, Captain. Thank you so much. I cannot express my gratitude. If there is anything I can do ...?" Her eyes lowered modestly, but her fingers tugged gently at the fabric of her skirt as if to lift it up.

His lips twisted in a lustful smile. "Perhaps there is. But first I need to ensure that Cristina is properly secured and give some instructions regarding her treatment. I need to get the truth from her even if I have to break her body. Wait here for me and I shall be back shortly. Do not touch anything while I am gone."

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Maryan sighed in relief when the door closed and his footsteps faded away. Then she grinned and stood up to hop around and wave her fists in triumph. Then she noticed the naval chart

lying upon the desktop and her expression became serious. It was obvious that Captain Pierce had been studying it before Cristina's arrival. It had to be from Captain Henry Morgan. She darted around the table to take a better look. The map was held down by a large silver inkwell, which she gingerly moved aside. She didn't know how to read the details of the chart, but a red "X" over the Spanish city of Cartagena de Indias in Colombia and the hand drawn curving arrows on the blue sections leading towards that city were obvious. Leaning closer, she managed to make out a date near the section of land marked "Port Royal". A quick mental calculation told her it was about two months from the present. A sound from the hallway made her hurriedly replace the inkwell and return to her seat. She had just tucked her skirt into place when Captain Pierce entered. The door shut with a thump and she turned around as if startled.

"My apologies for keeping you waiting," Harry said cheerfully, his eyes focused upon her cleavage. He moved to stand behind her and placed his hands upon the bare skin of her shoulders to either side of her neck. "Now then, what were we discussing before I left?"

She rubbed her cheek against his forearm like a kitten. "We were discussing how else I might ... serve you."

He made her gasp by suddenly shoving his hands down the low cut arc of her bodice and gripping her breasts. "Perhaps like this?" he said, digging his fingers into her creamy white flesh.

"You like my bosoms, Captain? And what would you do with them? We serving girls sometimes overhear things by accident and it is said you enjoy taking a strap to a girl's ... parts."

"And what if I did?"

Her hands came up to press his into her breasts. "I have often wondered what it would be like to feel the strap upon my breasts," she replied boldly.

"Just your breasts?"

She giggled. "It's true then? Ceara and the others ... you beat them between their thighs?"

"Does it shock you? Do you fear that I might do the same to you?"

Her head shook slowly from side to side. "It is a strange thing to contemplate, but if it was you who wielded the whip, I might not be so afraid."

"I—" Before he could speak further, there was another knock on the door, the heavy thud of a man's fist this time. "What is it?" Harry responded in a tone of annoyance, his hands still cupping Maryan's breasts.

"A message from the warehouse, Captain. They need you there urgently. Trouble with the latest shipment."

Harry sighed and pulled his hands from Maryan's bodice. "It seems our discussion shall have to be further postponed."

Maryan straightened her dress and smiled. "Of course Captain. I shall await your pleasure." She curtsied and walked away, her hips swaying in a manner that was not usually seen in a serving girl.

Harry's smile faded and he quickly slipped his baldric and sword over his head and pushed a pair of pistols into the broad loops on his belt. Picking up his riding gloves he headed for the door himself. In the hall he shouted, "Ready my horse! I'm headed for the warehouse."

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As soon as Captain Pierce was out of sight, Maryan stepped out of a side door, a wicker basket hanging from her hand. If asked she would say she was picking flowers and fragrant herbs. She strolled casually down the path towards a stand of trees. The grounds to the House were generous, including stables and store houses and expanses of well-maintained gardens and shaded walks. There were several service gates through the surrounding wall, and she headed for the nearest one. She glanced back over her shoulder, and when she didn't see anyone, she rapped on the sturdy wooden door. When she was replied by two quick raps, she pulled the bolt back and pushed.

"You released the pigeon. I assume you have something?" The speaker was a man wearing a shapeless wide brimmed hat, and a light scarf wrapped around his lower face as if to shield it from

the dust and sun. His sword and pistol looked well used although his clothing suggested that he wasn't a sailor or servant.

Still looking around nervously, she nodded. "I have the date that Morgan's fleet sails and its destination."

"Well?" the man snapped impatiently.

"My money?"

"You stupid cunt. Do you think I would be walking around Port Royal with a purse full of gold? You'll be paid at the time and manner agreed. Now tell me what you know, or it will be the worse for you." His hand moved to rest upon the hilt of his sword.

Although she still feared that she would be cheated of her payment, Maryan knew she had no choice. Every moment she remained here was a risk. "All right. I managed to see the map Morgan gave to Captain Pierce –" She went on to describe what she had seen and read.

Although his lower face was covered, the man looked to be smiling. "Excellent. Well done. You will be well rewarded, have no fear."

Then Maryan remembered Cristina's imprisonment. She described how she had discovered the note in Cristina's purse. "Captain Pierce was greatly angered by Cristina's betrayal. He has seen the note with the address, and it is likely that he or his men will go to the meeting place in search of our patron. You had best warn him."

This made the man laugh. "Foolish girl. After you told us that you were to search the belongings of all who came and went, we made sure that there would be something for you to find. Your discovery would put you in his good graces, and it allowed us to set another trap for Pierce."

Maryan gasped. "The meeting place is an ambush!"

"Indeed. Pierce and his men will go there hoping to capture or kill Señor de Segovia, but instead, we shall be waiting for him!"

She nodded. "A cunning stratagem. When should I leave this place and collect my reward?"

"After the trap is sprung. If it fails to catch Pierce, your services may be needed again. You can come to find us when Pierce is dead or we tell you to leave." He noticed the reluctance in her mien. "You are being generously rewarded. Be warned that we do not tolerate betrayal or cowardice. Fail in your duties and we shall find you and deal with you."

Maryan looked over her shoulder and then nodded. "I will not fail you. Now I must go before my absence is questioned." She closed the door and pushed home the bolt. From over the wall she heard the sound of a horse moving away through the bushes and onto the road. She adjusted the basket on her arm and turned, only to squeak in fright at the sight of the sword point inches from her breastbone. Her face drained of blood. "C-Captain Pierce!" Knowing her only chance was to brazen it out, she forced a smile. "What are you doing here? I thought you were at the warehouse." She started to brandish the basket but froze at a tiny movement of the sword point. "I was ... g-gathering flowers and ... and herbs for –" she went silent when Captain Pierce raised his finger to his lips.

"We heard everything, Maryan. It's too late for lies now."

"We?" A sound to her side made her turn her head, and her eyes widened in shocked surprise. "Cristina! I thought .... "

Cristina smiled. "I know what you thought. Unfortunately for you, the Captain believed in my honour more than he did your lies."

Knowing that further pretence was useless, her face twisted in hate as she stepped back and flung the basket at Captain Pierce's face, then turned and threw herself at the gate. She screamed in shock and anger when strong hands grabbed her hair and yanked her backwards, tumbling her onto her back. Her tail bone and shoulders slammed painfully against the ground, which, fortunately for her, was grassy and fairly soft. Her head was saved from cracking against the earth by the hands that still held her hair, and she would have screamed again in pain and fury if the breath hadn't been driven out of her lungs by the impact. With her eyes turned skywards, she saw that it was Cristina who had both hands tangled in her hair. But before she could move a heavy boot slammed down upon her belly and the point of the Captain's sword pressed against her chest, just above the collar

bone.

"Move again and I shall pin you to the ground," Harry said, emphasising his threat with a slight pressure on his sword with broke her skin and drew a welling drop of blood.

Grinding her teeth, Maryan became still. She could see in his eyes that the Captain was completely serious about thrusting his blade through her shoulder. "You're too late. The Spanish know Morgan's plans. They'll be waiting for him if he sails, and his reputation will be wrecked if he is forced to cancel the raid."

Four guards came pounding down the path with their swords drawn, but they sheathed them again when they saw that the Captain had everything in hand.

Harry nodded down at the turncoat serving girl. "Take her inside. Bind her arms and legs and stuff a rag in her mouth. She is not to be allowed to talk to anyone or to kill herself. At least not until I have had a chance to question her."

Maryan's face turned pale as she was dragged to her feet and hustled away. But she found the spirit to spit at him and say, "You're a dead man. The Spaniard will have your balls. You don't know the things he has planned for you."

Harry shook his head. "Stupid girl."

When the guards were out of sight Cristina put her hand on his arm. "Thank you for trusting me."

He swivelled on his heel so that they were face to face and pulled her into his arms. "I did trust you, but I also trusted that you were smart enough to realise that he could save the King the social embarrassment and gold by quietly disposing of you when you had served your purpose."

She chuckled and pressed her hips into his. "You could have believed me and still kept me locked up, but you didn't. Whatever reservations I might have had in the past, they are gone now. Take me and use me as you will, I am yours for as long as you want me." She lifted her lips and was rewarded with a heated kiss which she returned with a passion that had an immediate effect in his loins, and she laughed. Pushing her cunt against his hardness, she said, "Is this because of me, or because you are going to put Maryan to the question?"

"In truth I would say both."

"May I assist you?"

Harry leaned back and looked into her eyes. "Really?"

"She was willing to see me condemned to the same fate and for nothing but gold. I wish to express my appreciation." Her smile was feline and cruel.

"Seems fair enough. Just don't let your feelings, anger or sympathy, get in the way. Or a weak stomach."

Cristina simply pressed her body to his and smiled.

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During the time that Maryan had worked in the House, she had often cleaned and dusted this room, but had never seen it being put to use. It was not a torture chamber as such, there was no rack or breaking wheel and the room was much better appointed than she imagined any torture chamber might be. But now that she was a true captive, naked and her arms tied to the arms of a huge wooden cross and her jaws held open by a twisted length of cloth that went around her head, it certainly felt as dreadful and terrifying as the torture chamber of any fortress. Only the balls of her feet and toes were touching the ground and the strain on her arms made it hard to breathe. The fear and physical strain of her circumstances was already making her sweat, and moisture ran down her face and sides of her chest, stinging her eyes and making her skin itch. She tried not to look at the whips and other instruments of torture hanging from the walls, as well as the many ropes, chains and pulleys installed all over the ceiling, walls and even the floor of the chamber, but she had cleaned the place often enough that her imagination could supply all the necessary details. It seemed as if she had hung there alone in the terrifying silence forever and she began to wish that someone would come, even if it was to torture her. Surely anything would be better than this nightmare of

fear and awful anticipation. Then the bolt of the door rumbled and thunked, and her heart raced. Fear gripped her and she shook her head as if she could deny the reality of what was about to happen.

The door swung open on smoothly oiled hinges to stop with a thud against the wall, and Harry entered, with Cristina close behind him. He smiled when he spotted Maryan. "Ah! Excellent. I see the men have made you comfortable." He untied the gag and pulled it free of her teeth.

Despite her fear, Maryan feared de Segovia's wrath even more. Captain Pierce had some scruples, while the Spaniard had none, especially where a mercenary Englishwoman was concerned. "You can go straight to hell. I'm not going to tell you anything. You don't scare me."

"But the Spaniard does?" He saw the confirmation of his guess in her eyes. He sighed. "It's true that I would be reluctant to pull out your intestines and make you eat them, but the threat that de Segovia presents to me and Port Royal are serious, and I cannot allow my softer feelings to interfere. Fortunately, I have someone to keep the wind in my sails and steer me in the right direction. He gestured at Cristina who was smiling happily at the bound girl.

"No!" Maryan whispered, her hands unconsciously twisting against the ropes.

"Yes, Maryan dear. You and I are going to have a great deal of fun together. Unless you wish to talk to Captain Pierce, of course?"

The serving girl bit her lip and shook her head. If she kept her silence, she could still earn the payment and avoid de Segovia's wrath. She watched Cristina approach her helpless body apprehensively and gasped when the Spanish woman ran a fingernail down her tautly stretched belly.

"You were willing to get me killed, perhaps tortured to death. I'm not feeling extremely charitable towards you at the moment." She leaned close. "And Captain Pierce has given me leave to do anything I like, so long as it makes you talk," she hissed. "So I do so much hope you are very stubborn." Her fingers gripped several strands of the serving girl's pubic hair, and with an evil grin she ripped them out with a single fierce tug of her hand.

Caught by surprise, Maryan uttered a breathless squeal of pain and indignation. "Fuck you, bitch!" She tried to spit, but the effort changed to a choking gasp when Cristina punched her in the stomach.

Cristina looked at Captain Pierce, and grinned when he nodded in approval. "Can we change her bonds? The cross shields too much of her the way she is now." She pointed at the rope and pulley that was attached to the ceiling in the middle of the large room.

Harry agreed and picked up a light spreader bar with leather cuffs attached to each end. Carrying it, he went over to the cursing, struggling figure of the serving girl. He untied one arm, and despite her struggles, easily fastened the cuff around it. With Cristina holding the bar steady, he untied her other arm.

When Maryan tried to kick, Cristina subdued her with a second punch to her stomach. She aided Captain Pierce in dragging her over to the suspended rope which he fastened to an iron loop in the middle of the bar.

Harry went to the other end of the rope, untied the securing knot, and hauled upon it until Maryan was tautly erect, but with her feet still flat on the floor. He didn't want her fainting from lack of breath or to dislocate her shoulders. When the suspended girl started to curse and swear, he picked up a cane and without warning slashed it hard across her buttocks. "I don't want to keep gagging and ungagging you, so instead, each time you say something unnecessary or disrespectful, you will receive one of these. Do you understand?"

Maryan had gone pale from the shock and unexpected pain, and nodded sullenly. Then she screamed when the cane cut across her buttocks again.

"You will answer every question put to you by me or Cristina. Now, do you understand?" He tapped her wealed and bloodied buttocks menacingly with the cane.

"Yes! Yes I understand ... Aaaah!"

"Politely."

"Yes I understand, Captain Pierce!" she shouted.

He smiled. "That's better." With that, he handed the cane to Cristina.

"Anything to tell us?" Cristina asked pleasantly, flexing the cane with both hands.

She chuckled when she saw the girl bite back a curse. "No? Perhaps a little encouragement –" Her daily sword practise paid off when the cane cracked precisely across both of Maryan's nipples twice in quick succession even though the serving girl tried to dodge the second stroke.

Maryan discovered that she couldn't effectively scream and twist her torso at the same time and paused in her pain maddened struggles in order to empty her lungs. This proved to be a mistake as it allowed Cristina to lay a third stroke across her rapidly swelling nipples. Short of breath, she uttered a series of agonised yelps and kicked wildly in all directions with her legs until Cristina brought the cane down upon her shin. Maryan groaned and shuddered, the blow to the bone making her want to curl up into a ball.

With the cane pointing down at a sharp angle, Cristina tapped the girl's other shin. "Are you going to behave?"

Maryan's nods were forceful and unhesitating.

"Who hired you to spy upon me?" Harry asked. He already knew the answer, but he wanted to get her talking.

The cane struck her nipples again with a vicious whack, and blood began to trickle down the lower curve of her breasts. She screamed and struggled wildly against the cuffs gripping her wrists, bruising and tearing her skin, but to no avail. "You can go straight to hell! I'm not going to tell you anything," she shouted hoarsely.

Harry grabbed her sweat slick buttock and squeezed. "I don't see why you're so upset. Did you not offer this very pleasure to me not so long ago?"

"Fuck you, you bastard!"

Cristina's eyes seemed to glow with anger and hate. "I think it's time we gave Captain Pierce what he wants," she said, grinning like a wolf. "Let's start with a little caning before we move on to more ... interesting methods. Spread your legs for me, Maryan dear. And before you tell me to fuck myself, let me tell you that each time I ask and you refuse, I'm going to cane your breasts five times. Like this –" Before the tormented serving girl could realise what she intended, Cristina struck. "Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!" The cane visited the girl's breasts in quick succession, landing all over her breasts and not just the nipples this time.

The pain was too great for Maryan to scream, and she uttered harsh whining, grunting noises as her breasts danced under the kiss of the rod.

Cristina waited until intelligence returned to the girl's eyes. "Do I have your attention now?"

"Y-yes ... please ... don't ...."

"You know how to stop this. Tell Captain Pierce what he wants to know."

Maryan shook her head. "I ... I can't. He'll kill me," she said, although in her mind was still the thought of the promised payment. She had already suffered so much, and it would all be for nothing if she betrayed de Segovia.

"I was hoping you'd say that," Cristina said. She lowered her hand and forced it between the girl's thighs. "Spread wide. Up on your toes. Unless ...."

Maryan glanced down at her heavily wealed breasts, torn between two horrors. But the agony in her breasts was more real and immediate, and slowly her feet started to edge apart. A tap on her nipples with the cane made her hurriedly shuffle them apart until she stood only on her toes, the muscles of her arms and shoulders straining to support her weight. She whimpered in fear when the cane rose up between her thighs and she felt the cool smooth wood touch her cunt. "Please don't ..."

"If you close your legs, I shall simply beat your breasts until you open up again," Cristina said, ignoring the girl's plea. She rubbed the cane over Maryan's cunt and smiled when she saw Captain Pierce's undisguised interest. The tip of the cane fell as if it had suddenly become unbearably heavy, paused for just a second, and then came up again, cutting through the air with a tiny whoosh. When it struck the serving girl's cunt, the sound was little more than a muffled smack coupled with the humming of the flexing rod. However, Maryan's response more than made up for

that lack of drama.

A harsh vibrating cry of pain was ripped from the suspended girl's lungs. The thick rope that held the iron bar creaked when Maryan lifted both of her knees up, her bare pink feet leaving the ground. When she had flirted and tempted Captain Pierce she had hinted at punishing her cunt, but she had never thought that she would ever actually have to endure such a thing. It was horrible, terrible beyond belief. Her mind silently cried out that no woman should have to endure such a thing. Then her eyes met those of Cristina, and she realised that this woman had suffered similar punishment before and would willingly allow Captain Pierce to do it again any time he wished. Her heart turned to ice at the realisation that Cristina knew exactly what she felt, and how to inflict the worst possible pain upon her helpless cunt. Her feet dropped back to the floor, her muscles unable to hold the curled up position. Her shoulders burned in pain from the strain, and she knew that she would not be able to repeat the move more than a few times.

Cristina studied the girl curiously. "It's a very special kind of pain, isn't it? At first you think you might die of it, but you won't. You wouldn't even be seriously hurt if I continued to beat and whip your cunt all day. The Captain taught me that." She stepped closer to the shaking, moaning girl. The smell of her sweat and fear was strong, and it made Cristina clench the muscles of her cunt in excitement. "In a minute I'm going to do things to the inside of your cunt. Things that will make you scream and cry like you never thought you would. And I'm going to enjoy every moment of it."

Even though rage and defiance still burned fiercely in her breast, she couldn't manage a spoken response because of the effects of the pain and she just shook her head, making the damp fringes of her hair fly around.

Cristina patted her on the cheek. "Good girl. I knew you wouldn't let me down. Now show me that pretty little cunt again. Nice and wide."

For a moment Maryan was torn between the two horrors, but the thought of another five strokes on her breasts was too much to even contemplate, so her trembling legs slowly edged apart once more.

"Wider, girl. I want to see some enthusiasm. Unless you need some encouragement .... "

"No!" Maryan managed with a gasp of fear. Her biceps bulged and she spread until she was up on her toes again. In her mind she cringed as the tip of the cane moved into position directly between her feet. The strain made her entire body quiver and shake, her breath coming faster and faster as the tension built inside of her. She almost wanted to shout "Just do it!" but she couldn't work up the nerve.

Cristina watched the girl sweat, waiting until she looked ready to explode before she snapped the cane upwards with all the strength of her trained arm and wrist. The impact vibrated like thunder down the length of the cane and into her hand and she smiled widely when she saw the tip of the springy rod bury itself in Maryan's slit. Laughing, she took a step back to avoid the wild kicking of the serving girl's legs, the girl's manic scream of agony music to her ears. She jumped in surprise when the Captain came up behind her.

"Enjoying yourself?"

She nodded and flicked the cane as if it was a sword. "I must admit that I am surprised how much pleasure this gives me. I understand now why our cunts are your favourite target. I shall remember when next I spread my legs for your whip or tools. And speaking of instruments, may I .... "

Harry put his hand around her body and cupped her breasts. "Whatever you desire. Just make her talk," he said, and kissed the side of her neck.

The Spanish noblewoman twisted her body and neck around so that their lips could meet. "Thank you Captain. You shall not find me ungrateful." She felt his hard cock pressing into the crack of her buttocks and she pushed back against him, slowly rolling her hips. Only when he released her breasts and stepped away did she look around the room for something that suited her fancy. Her eyes fell upon an unusual item and a smile spread over her face. "Aha! This looks interesting."

Maryan tried to twist around to see what Cristina had selected, but her position didn't allow



it. She could have spun her entire body around, but she was fairly certain such an action would earn her even more punishment, so she was forced to wait in frightened ignorance. She jumped when a metal bar fell with a loud ringing clang of iron against stone in front of her legs. Terror seized her at the thought that Cristina intended to break her legs. Then she saw the leather cuffs at the ends and she realised that it was another spreader bar.

"Kick me and I will cut your nipples off," Cristina warned, pinching one of her victim's nipples hard.

Maryan's nipples were already raw and bleeding, and the pinching fingers felt like red hot tongs. "Aaagh ... please ... I won't ... kick ..."

Cristina patted a weal covered breast. "Good girl." With the Captain's assistance, she quickly had the spreader bar attached to the serving girl's ankles, holding her legs wide apart. The rope holding her suspended had to be adjusted so that her feet touched the ground again to prevent her from slowly spinning around. With her back to Maryan, she held up her chosen implement.

Harry chuckled. "A fine choice. I haven't had the opportunity to try it out myself. It should be interesting."

What Cristina held in her hand resembled a crude necklace made up of thick wooden rings threaded onto two lengths of sturdy waxed string and possessing a steel loop handle at each end. One string was knotted to hold the segments apart and attached to the last segment at either end. The second string was unknotted and attached only to the rings at either end. If the user gripped the last wooden segment and pulled on the steel ring, the segments locked smoothly together, forming a solid shaft about two inches in diameter from the tips of the thorns or bristles, the knotted string fitting into carved cavities in ends of the segments. This allowed it to be easily inserted into a cunt or even arse hole. The wooden sections had different shapes. Some had a ring of stiff horse hair all around, while another had carved copies of huge rose thorns, some curving towards one end and some towards the other, ensuring that some "thorns" were always moving point-first. When fully inserted, the rings could be pulled out one at a time by gripping the end segment. She pulled on the ring and then turned to show Maryan the seemingly solid rod, studded with hooked spines and hard bristles.

As soon as she saw what was in store for her, the serving girl began to frantically struggle against her restraints.

Harry stamped upon the centre of the spreader bar that held her ankles from behind, making Maryan shout in pain when the stiff leather cuffs bit into the skin and tendons around her ankles and locked her feet to the floor. "Be still," he growled. His fingers dug into her buttocks and pushed her hips forward and making her cunt stand out in front. "Take your torture like a good little girl."

"Damn your eyes, you –" Maryan's profanities were abruptly cut off when Cristina jammed the end of the segmented rod into her cunt and pushed hard. "Aaaagh!" Needle-like bristles and claw-like spikes forced their way into her desperately clenching cunt.

Teeth bared in a demonic grin, Cristina used both hands to ram the thick shaft into her betrayer's cunt, grunting in satisfaction as each segment went in, accompanied by the serving girl's pain maddened screeches of agony. When the girl's cunt resisted, she hammered on the base of the rod with the heel of her palm, driving it in like a stake being pounded into the ground.

It felt as if her cunt was being torn apart, even though she could see that the thing had no metal blades or hooks, and she couldn't help screaming with each segment that was forced into her, even though it galled her to give the damned Spaniard the satisfaction. But even though she kept telling herself that she was not going to talk, the knowledge that they could continue her torment for as long as they wanted ate away at her strength like the searing touch of oil of vitriol. Even more terrifying was the anger and hatred in Cristina's eyes. There would be no pity for her here. She screamed again when the end of the shaft slammed against the bottom of her cunt hole, punishing the very entrance to her womb. Pain seared her innermost feminine parts, forcing tears from her eyes in torrents.

Cristina stood up, leaving the instrument of torture buried deep inside the girl's body. She stroked her hands and fingers over the sweating, shivering serving girl's body, enjoying the feel of

her pain and terror. She looked over Maryan's shoulder at the Captain's smiling face. She could see that he had his cock pressed against the girl's buttocks. Reaching down, she slapped the end of the shaft which protruded obscenely from Maryan's cunt, which made her hips jerk backwards and rub her bare buttocks against Captain Pierce. Then she had an idea and darted around to whisper in his ear before returning to the punishment of the girl's cunt.

The Spanish girl's suggestion made Harry chuckle as he pulled his cock out of his breeches and pressed its length into the crack of Maryan's arse. She was sweating so heavily that his cock slid smoothly and deliciously along her crack. When he was ready he nodded to Cristina.

"Now then, let us together give the Captain some entertainment, shall we?" On her last word, Cristina released her grip on the steel ring handle and pulled on the protruding wooden end.

The first segment was a circle of very stiff horse hairs similar to a hair brush, and for the first two inches of its movement it scraped and tickled in a way that made goose pimples break out all over Maryan's skin, the combination of irritation and pain making nerves all over her body quiver and tingle, and her hips shook uncontrollably.

Harry groaned when her buttocks tightened around his cock and rubbed it seemingly in all directions at the same time. The heat of her body and slickness of her sweat was marvellous, especially knowing that it was caused by the suffering of her cunt. He grabbed and crushed her bruised and bloodied breasts with his hands, pulling their bodies into even tighter contact.

Cristina pulled again, and this time the second segment was also forced into movement. This one had large carved thorns with points sharp enough to tear at the skin of the victim's cunt but not actually dig itself into the flesh. Because it was moving as an independent segment, the muscles of her cunt actually squeezed harder and tighter around it than when the entire joined shaft had entered, and the cruel effect of the hooks was far greater.

Maryan would have thrashed like a landed fish if not for Cristina's foot on the spreader bar and how widely her legs were parted. It felt as if the insides of her cunt were being ripped out and she screamed lustily while her fingers clawed fruitlessly at the air. Segment after segment was drawn into motion inside of her, the horse hair bristles now dragging across broken skin and raw flesh.

Cristina put her other hand against Maryan's pubic mound and jerked hard at the wooden segment that served as a handle. "Is that nice? How are you enjoying what you would have condemned me to for nothing but money, you bitch!" The scream that answered her question and make the serving girl's belly vibrate against her palm made Cristina grin. A segment popped out of the suffering girl's cunt, the bristles stained red. "Don't worry dear, it only feels as if your cunt is being torn apart. This is but the mildest of the toys. Wait until you feel the one that is made entirely of steel and has blades instead of wooden thorns." She pulled and another segment popped out, interrupting anything Maryan might have been about to say with another desperate scream. The motions of the girl's hips grew more frantic and the Captain's groans grew louder. It was as if she was fucking him with the girl's body and it made her laugh. "That's right Maryan, you keep doing that and I'll keep doing this --" She ripped another segment out with vengeful force, and then the last joint as well as the handle at the other end popped out, the steel ring decorated with shining ruby droplets.

The tormented pounding, thrusting motion of Maryan's hips made Harry come, and he shouted in triumph when his come spurted upwards to paint her spine with sticky, creamy streaks that slowly trickled back down towards her buttocks, some of it disappearing between her cheeks.

Seeing Captain Pierce step back, Cristina took advantage of the extra space to swing the chain of wooden cylinders between Maryan's legs. She stepped to the side and grabbed the other end when it slapped into the serving girl's cunt and then curled upwards against her buttocks. With a wooden grip in each hand, the device stretched out to full length. Cristina pulled upwards hard with both hands, pulling the beaded line taut against Maryan's cunt and working it into her slit. "I'm going to be nice and give your poor insides a little rest. Aren't I sweet?" When the gasping, panting serving girl didn't respond, she shrugged and without another word began to pull the wickedly barbed wooden links through her slit, sawing at her crotch as if trying to cut the girl in half from the

crotch upwards.

The bristles and savagely hooked protrusions on the links tore at Maryan's inner labia and the entrance to her cunt hole, first in one direction and then the other. The girl shrieked, lifting her joined ankles up off the ground in an effort to close her legs. "In the name of God! Nooo, please no, don't ... aahhh! Her feet slammed back against the ground when Captain Pierce stamped upon the spreader bar, almost dislocating her shoulders.

Cristina pressed her face up to her victim's, breathing almost as heavily as the serving girl. "You're not going to like this," she said gloatingly. By bringing her right hand, which was in front of Maryan's body, close to the serving girl's belly, it also drew the tortuous segments up against her clitoris.

"No! No, no, no, don't —" Her pleas were abruptly cut off when her tormentor sawed the bristles and fang-like wooden teeth over her clitoris and the almost as sensitive flesh hood around it. The pain was so intense that she was unable to scream, gagging and choking in between gasps for breath and wailing sobs.

Blood was dripping from between the girl's legs onto the stone floor when Cristina started in surprise at the touch of Captain Pierce's hand upon her shoulder.

"That's enough for the moment." He waited until Cristina had stepped back, the blood slick instrument of torture hanging from one hand. He twisted his hand in the sobbing girl's hair and pulled her head back. "Haven't you had enough? What can be worth this suffering? Just tell me what you know, I promise I will allow you to live. Refuse, and I shall allow Cristina to tear your clitoris from your body with iron pincers and fuck your cunt with red hot irons. When your cunt is utterly destroyed we shall move on to the rest of your body. This can go on for days, weeks, even months. Don't be a fool. Save yourself." When she didn't speak he stepped back and looked at Cristina. "Fetch the tongs."

"No! I'll talk! I'll tell you everything I know!" Maryan cried out bitterly.

Harry nodded in satisfaction. "Before you speak, remember that I will leave you here under Cristina's care. If your words are false or I do not return .... "

Maryan shuddered. "I'll tell the truth, I swear it. Just ... don't hurt me any more. Please, I beg you."

Cristina patted the girl's cheek. "I am glad for Captain Pierce, but my vengeance still calls out for more. Remember that when you tell your tale."

The serving girl nodded, shivering in terror. "I was hired by one of de Segovia's men on ..."

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At the rear of the House was a large bathing room, containing several massive tubs large enough to hold several bathers at the same time, with shelves built into the sides for drinks and food should the bather be so inclined. Unlike in England, the climate did not require a constant supply of hot water to make the baths comfortable. The questioning of the treacherous serving girl had been hot work, and Harry was pleased to take his ease in the cool water, which was scented with fragrant essences and flower petals. Leaning against the side of the huge tub, he studied his companions with unabashed approval and lust.

Cristina smiled when she caught him staring at her half submerged breasts, and teased her nipples to hardness with her fingers, which she knew was something that he liked.

In the meantime, Áine scrubbed his body with fragrant Italian soft soap, a distinct luxury, more often than not using her own body to accomplish the scrubbing. She had been informed of the capture and interrogation of Maryan and was able to actively participate in the conversation. Being literate and well read, she was far from being an ignorant country girl despite her accent, which most Englishmen interpreted as a sign of stupidity and foolishness, one prejudice that Captain Pierce did not share. "So the address that the diego gave to Cristina is a trap?" she asked as she soaped her cunt and used it to scrub the Captain's arm. The harsh soap stung her cunt, especially when she had used it on many other parts of her owner's body, but she didn't mind. Combined with

the rubbing, it was making her feel incredibly lewd.

"It would seem so," Harry replied, trying hard not to be distracted by the touch of the petite girl's cunt, and only partially succeeding.

Cristina giggled when Áine winked at her. "But we also have the other address that Maryan gave us. Perhaps we can capture de Segovia there."

Harry made Áine gasp and squeal by lightly biting her wet thigh and snapping his teeth at her cunt, but he was bested a moment later when she pushed her hips forward, offering her cunt to his teeth. He kissed her there instead, as he didn't want to put bite marks on her cunt right at that moment. Bringing his attention back to business, he said, "Do you honestly think de Segovia is going to pay a serving girl that much gold when a knife across the throat would be much cheaper and safer?"

Cristina frowned. "But if he killed all of his pawns, he would have a hard time finding people to work for him."

Harry pushed three fingers into Áine's cunt, the water and soap easing his way. "So long as he looks after his main hirelings, like the man who met with Maryan, he won't have any trouble. Nobody expects someone like him to care about minor pawns such as our traitorous serving girl."

"Then we still don't have anything," Áine said, wriggling her hips and working her cunt against the fingers buried inside of her with evident enjoyment.

Harry held out his other arm, drawing Cristina to his side. He pulled his fingers out of Áine's cunt, much to her disappointment, and pulled her to his other side. With a girl in each arm, he closed his eyes and thought. "The man said that he might have more for Maryan to do. I think I know what that something might be. It may be a good thing that I didn't break that faithless cunt's neck after all." Then he kissed both of the women and sighed happily. "But enough serious talk. Let's dry off and retire to bed for some proper fun and games."

Áine squealed happily, while Cristina contented herself with a dignified and enigmatic smile.

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Harry tumbled onto the bed with his two delightful companions, who were giggling and laughing like much younger girls. He had not seen this side of Cristina, and he was glad that she was able to let her guard down as much as this. He was willing to use the girls in any way necessary for his pleasure, but that did not mean that he cared not for their happiness or well-being as far as it did not conflict with his own needs. He was also happy to see that the two girls were quite comfortable with each other and were not averse to kissing and touching each other's bodies as well as his. He joined in and submerged himself in the smooth fragrant softness of their lips and bodies. The marvellous thing about literally owning the girls was that he never had to hurry or worry that what he was doing wasn't exactly what they wanted. He could indulge his desires in any way he chose. He kissed his way up Cristina's thigh while Áine teased him by spreading the Spanish woman's cunt open and playing with the exposed pink parts.

"Isn't this nice? Wouldn't you like to be playing with it? See, she's getting wet already," Áine said lasciviously. "Or has Maryan given you a fancy to be hurting a cunt?" She parted her own thighs and turned herself so that the Captain could see her cunt.

"By thunder! Both of you are hairless," Harry exclaimed in sudden realisation.

Both girls laughed. "I hope you're more observant when you're at sea, Captain," Cristina said, tapping her newly bald cunt with a slim finger.

Lying on his side, Harry rested his head upon her thigh and gave her lust swollen open cunt a lick and kiss. "Hmm ... it seems as if someone has been enjoying herself," he said accusingly before continuing his licking.

"My God that feels good," Cristina said, sighing happily. She pushed herself closer to him, which brought his cock within the reach of her lips and tongue, which she employed with great enthusiasm.

"And what can I do to make you feel good, Captain?" Áine whispered into his ear. "You don't have to be so careful of my feelings. Use me however you will."

He lifted his face from Cristina's wet cunt and looked at the cute, waif-like face of the Irish girl. "Why don't you find something interesting for me?"

She nodded eagerly and rolled off of the bed.

With his cock engulfed by Cristina's lips and mouth, Harry returned his attention to the Spanish woman and her cunt. He had held and caressed her many times before by now, but he sensed a difference in her. It felt as if a final wall within her that he had not even noticed until now, was gone. Her entire body and being seemed to welcome his touch, and when he pressed his lips to her cunt it was like it blossomed and opened up to him completely.

Cristina took her lips from his cock and said, "My cunt is yours, Captain. Completely and without reservation. Ceara told us how you used your teeth on her —" She raised her upper leg higher and gently rolled her hips, moving her cunt in front of his face. "Use whatever you like on mine." He had trusted her and taken her side when it mattered the most, when his very life depended upon it. No one, not even her parents had done that before, and she felt something so strong, so primal, that she was unable to express it. All she knew was that she wanted to be with him no matter what the cost. She would not leave even if her contract was to be destroyed tomorrow. She felt his lips kiss her cunt and heard him say "You have a place here so long as you want it, Cristina." She returned the favour by taking his cock deep into her mouth and throat, almost choking herself before she was forced to pull it out in order to breathe.

Áine returned to find them busily sucking and licking each other. She set down her choices of playthings and sat down on the bed to watch with deep interest. All things sexual fascinated her and she began to masturbate while pinching her nipples hard, her eyes wide and excited.

Harry had already come once today, so he decided to conserve his energy. Cristina's smooth and hairless cunt was a novelty and he delved into her fragrant sex with a will. It was obvious the woman had been greatly aroused by the torture of the serving girl, and it did not require extraordinary effort in order to bring her to a vigorously shuddering and moaning climax. He grinned when her thighs squeezed tightly around his head. He captured her clitoris between his lips and ran the tip of his tongue over it as if he was trying to polish the little pearl, and before too long the thighs sprang apart.

"Enough! Eeee, please, no more ... I can't stand any ..." She rolled onto her back, limp and panting when Captain Pierce finally stopped working on her clitoris, which tingled so hard that she imagined that it was emitting showers of sparks like a burning fuse.

Áine clapped her hands and cheered the Spanish woman's orgasmic performance. Her own cunt lips and fingers were wet and glistening with her juices, and she was more than ready for anything Captain Pierce might have in store for her. Freed of all restraint, her imaginings had grown to such proportions that she dared not even describe most of them to her companions, although she longed to tell the Captain about them, if only for his amusement. But for now, she had to be satisfied with more modest entertainments. Of all the girls, she was the only one who truly enjoyed the sensation of pain, especially when applied to her cunt. It excited her beyond all reason, and now that punishment at the hands of the Captain was near, she was ready to explode with lust. Being naked in the bed with another woman did not bother her either. She had grown accustomed to all manner of humiliations and the sharing of intimate functions with the other women aboard the slave ship, and although she had not expected to, she had discovered that she liked the aristocratic Spanish woman and her elegant beauty, even though it made her feel like a child by comparison.

Harry grinned at Cristina's lustful writhing and then held out his hand towards Áine. "So, little one, it seems that you are as hot and lewd as ever."

Áine impulsively threw herself into his arms and wrapped her arms and legs around him. "Are you going to play with me today, Captain Pierce?"

"How could I resist?" he replied, letting his hands wander all over her small, sleek body. Although her breasts were not large, her small size made them appear larger than they were, and like the rest of her, they were slightly pointed and youthfully high set upon her chest. He suckled

upon her nipple while his finger found its way to her arse hole which he tickled and pressed.

Áine kissed his lips, face, and neck. "My cunt has been waiting for you, Captain. It aches and itches for your touch."

Harry realised that he had actually been very tense and anger had been bubbling just below the surface of his calm, but now he felt it melting away before the Irish girl's irrepressible personality and her love of all things sensual and lustful which made the most salacious sailor seem meek and modest by comparison. The fact that she was so well read and educated, especially in all things erotic, made her a whirlwind of lewdness that blew away the darkness of spirit that had plagued him. "Even if my touch isn't gentle?"

"Especially if your touch isn't gentle," she replied gaily.

Cristina snuggled against him, resting her head upon his shoulder, and reached up to pat Áine's firm bottom in greeting.

Áine waved her fingers and said, "We girls have been talking about the things that we can do to please you and that would be amusing for us as well, and we wondered if you would enjoy watching us play with each other. Or ... hurt each other," she added slyly.

"That does sound interesting," Harry said, turning his head to look at Cristina who nodded, and then back at Áine.

The Irish girl scooted up his body and knelt to his other side. She took his hand and pulled it between her legs. "We also discussed ... or I discussed... doing things to my clitoris. I just love the idea of it so much."

"It's all she talks about," Cristina added with a chuckle.

"Show it to me," Harry said, his voice taking on a tone of command.

Áine shuddered with excitement and edged her knees out further, her fingers working eagerly on her cunt lips to peel them apart and at the same time to lift the hood back from her clitoris. "There! Can you see it? Can you be seeing how swollen it is?"

Cristina whispered, "She truly desires you to hurt her there, as badly as you dare. It's all she talks about," she said, urging him on.

Harry reached out and gripped Áine's proffered clitoris firmly. "She does, does she?" His finger and thumb squeezed. "Should I crush it?"

"Oh yesss," Áine said, her voice high and breathless. The pressure on her clitoris increased and the muscles of her thighs rippled in response.

Without releasing her clitoris Harry said, "Show me what playthings you chose."

Trapped by his grip on her genitals, Áine twisted around and stretched her arm out for the things she had placed on the side of the bed, but she was forced to lean over, pulling against the merciless grip on her clitoris. She smiled and allowed more and more of her weight to be supported only by his gripping fingers, the pain making a red haze spread across her vision. But she did not rush, and calmly gathered up the items she had chosen, even though it felt as if her clitoris might be ripped from her body. She straightened up, and although she was breathing heavily, her pert breasts rising and falling rapidly, she grinned triumphantly at the Captain, pleased that she was able to demonstrate her ability and willingness to hurt her cunt to please him, besides which she actually enjoyed it. His fingers still gripped her clitoris when her eyes met his and she licked her lips slowly and sensuously before giggling. "Perhaps you might fit a leash to me there and lead me around by my clitoris."

Her sincerity was unmistakable, and Harry felt a jolt of lewdness flow through him and into his cock. "I might very well accept that offer. We could go for nice long walks."

Her cheeks reddened. "Outside the grounds ... naked?" she asked hopefully.

Her enthusiasm was infectious, and even Cristina laughed, shaking her head. "Remind me never to compete with you with regard to lewdness." Her eyes went to the Captain's hand. "Or pain."

Áine's voice was high pitched and slightly strained. "But I could never be as elegant and charming as you." It seemed as if the Captain was determined to rip her clitoris right off. It felt as if her loins were on fire, but it only made her more determined to endure even more punishment,

while glowing alongside the hurt was a swirling cloud of erotic pleasure that was like nothing she had ever known. Relief warred with disappointment when the Captain's fingers finally released her clitoris, but she knew it only heralded a fresh punishment and she awaited his next choice with pleased excitement.

Harry selected a slim, short, leather strap. Thicker than a belt, it was firm enough not to droop when he held it out as if as a pointer. "Cristina, get behind her. Kneel with your knees between her calves. That's right, press yourself tight against her back and reach around her hips with your arms." When the Spanish woman was in position he said to Áine, "Help her find your clitoris and guide her fingers so that she can expose it for me."

Both girls immediately understood what he wanted and it only took moments for them both to find the right placement for Cristina's hands and to force the Irish girl's clitoris into bold prominence.

Harry studied the results and nodded. "Good. Very good. It's not that I don't trust you to do that yourself, Áine, but I want to be able to strike just your clitoris with the tip of this strap, and for that I need you to be very still. Cristina will help you do that." He tilted his head and studied their co-joined pose, and then placed Áine's hands behind her and gripping Cristina's hips, further bracing the Irish girl's body.

After the torture of Maryan, Cristina realised that she enjoyed helping the Captain in this manner, and found it extremely erotic to press her breasts against Áine's smooth naked back. She couldn't see what her fingers held, but the feeling was sufficiently familiar to be able to envision what Captain Pierce was seeing. She kissed the side of Áine's neck. "Please don't blame me for what I do," she said.

Áine chuckled. "I can tell you be enjoying it, but I don't fault you for it. If there is pleasure in this for you, all the better."

"And you?"

"Can you not feel it?" Áine said.

Cristina realised that she could. "It really excites you to be treated in this way, doesn't it?"

"I be thinking that we are not so very different in that," Áine replied, grinding her buttocks against the woman who embraced her.

"But I don't –"

"Deny that you are aroused by serving the Captain and letting him use your cunt," Áine demanded.

"I'm ..." Cristina chuckled ruefully. "It is hard for me to admit, but it is true. I am aroused beyond all reason when I give myself to him to use as he will." She saw that the Captain was tapping the strap impatiently against his palm and tightened her arms. "I believe the Captain requires your attention," she stage whispered.

Áine smiled at the Captain. "My clitoris awaits your pleasure."

Harry studied the erotically positioned women and shook his head slowly in wonder. "I am a most fortunate man." He held out the stiff strap and touched it to Áine's body just above her clitoris. He intended to strike only that tiny bud and it required far more accuracy than the average whipping. He smiled when she sucked her belly in to give him more room to swing. The strap was heavy enough that he only needed to use his wrist and fingers. Like a miniature executioner's axe, the flat narrow slab of hard leather rocked up, paused, and came down with a tiny swish of air. The tip was travelling at such speed that despite the size of the target it slapped against her clitoris with a sharp, rapping impact.

It felt as if a nail had been driven into her cunt, but somehow erotic as well. If it hadn't been for Cristina's support, Áine would have toppled over on the bed. Even as it was, she jumped violently and dug her fingers painfully into the Spanish girl's bare hips even though she actually liked the searing pain, especially because it was her clitoris that was being hurt. In her mind she recalled her many fantasies in which her clitoris was cut or crushed and this felt closer to the reality than anything ever before. "Oh yes ... hurt my clitoris ... make me bleed there."

Cristina heard the girl in her arms hiss, and her back suddenly became slick with sweat,

making their bodies glide against one another. Áine almost threw the both of them onto the bed, but Cristina manage to hold on and they writhed against each other like female lovers. Knowing the cause of the movement, Cristina found it unexpectedly arousing and her own clitoris tingled in sympathy. She was quite certain she would have been shamefully crying and rolling around on the floor if she had suffered such a blow. The pressure of Áine's buttocks against her crotch was highly stimulating even though it was a woman who was pressed against her, and she couldn't resist rubbing her cunt in tight circles against the girl's tight muscled rear.

Even though he thought he understood Áine's liking for and ability to bear pain, he was impressed by the way she had taken that first stroke. In fact, he had struck with more force than he had intended, fooled by the weight and momentum of the leather strap. Peering closer he could see that her clitoris was already starting to swell and bruise, as well as an area about the size of a small coin around it. But Maryan's torture had awoken the most powerful urges within him to inflict pain, and he was going to satisfy himself even if Áine suffered more than he might have ordinarily wished. He brushed the hair from the Irish girl's eyes and kissed her lips. "That was beautiful."

Áine had recovered sufficiently to control her breathing, so she smiled and said, "Thank you, Captain. I ... don't you be worrying about me. Take your pleasure with my cunt however you wish. I want it too. I truly do." In fact, she was more aroused and lustful than she had ever been in her life and she could hardly wait for the beating of her cunt to resume. She could feel from the way Cristina was rubbing against her that the Spanish girl was enjoying it too, but she didn't mind in the least. Then the strap touched her clitoris again and she brought her full attention back to her burning loins.

Cristina saw it too and made sure that her fingers were properly baring Áine's clitoris to the whip. The tension in the Irish girl's body seemed to flow into hers and she held her breath when she saw the Captain prepare to strike.

This time the Captain didn't hit her clitoris quite as hard, but on the other hand, he didn't stop. Instead, the strap struck with almost metronomic regularity, smack, smack, smack, hitting only her little clitoris with each swing, creating stabbing bolts of pain that shot into her body and set her entire cunt on fire. "Ah! Ah! Ah!" she cried, the agony of each blow igniting a rumbling thunder of erotic pleasure that expanded from her belly and made her body vibrate with lust like a beaten kettle drum. The pain grew even worse because of the way the bundle of nerves that filled her clitoris became increasingly sore and swollen from the repeated blows, all of them focused upon an area smaller than the tip of the strap itself. But as the hard, blindingly painful blows continued, Áine stopped screaming and instead began to utter deep, shuddering moans.

At first, Cristina was alarmed by this change and almost cried out for the Captain to stop. Then she realised that the alarming sounds the Irish girl was making were sounds of unspeakable pleasure and that she was almost delirious with lewdness.

But Harry knew, and even though the delicate skin around her clitoris was raw and starting to bleed, he did not cease or even ease the force of his blows. The torture of a girl's clitoris was something that he particularly enjoyed, and his lustful delight was on a par with hers, making him feel drunk and giddy from the dark sensual thrill of whipping her there with such abandon.

Each hard ripping impact against her clitoris was like a flaming sword being driven into her cunt, and Áine was in more pain than she had ever known in her life. But it was a most special kind of pain, inflicted in that very special place that she had dreamt of feeling it all her life. Suddenly she cried out as if in sheer terror. "Don't stop! Don't stop, I beg of you! Just ... a ... unhhh ... little ... bit ... moooore!!!" She uttered a high pitched wail. Her body rocked and shuddered so hard that she almost threw Cristina off of the bed. "Oh ... my ... lord ... I'm --" Her convulsions at last threw both girls onto the bed, with Áine kicking wildly and clawing at the bed hard enough to rip the fine linen.

Cristina watched the girl's display of utter abandon and lewdness in shocked admiration. She smiled at Captain Pierce and shook her head. "She is a treasure beyond price." She watched in approval as the Captain leaned over and gently took the quivering girl in his arms, pulling her onto his lap. She smiled when Áine gasped and clung to him, kissing his chest and flat hard belly with



desperate passion. Seeing the blood that trickled out from between the girl's thighs, Cristina rolled off of the bed and went to fetch a small towel which she moistened in the wash basin. Returning to the bed she eased the Irish girl's knees apart and gingerly dabbed at her swollen and badly bruised cunt.

Áine hissed in pain, but managed a warm smile. "Thank you. Your touch feels good." Curled up against his chest, she reached out to touch the Captain's rigid cock. Stroking it slowly, she said, "That was after being so wonderful. At first I be fearing that I would not enjoy it the way I had hoped. But it was good ... even better than my dreams." She kissed his nipple and rested her cheek against him. "There are so many marvellous things you can do to my cunt, and so much wonderful pain for me." Lifting her head she looked up anxiously. "Was I good enough? I was so afraid that I would disappoint you. I be ready for more right now if you –"

Harry silenced her with a long, slow kiss. "You were fine, little one, all that I could expect. We shall play many games with your cunt, you and I." His hand went out to cup her swollen cunt.

Áine bit off a gasp of pain and turned it into a genuine sigh of pleasure. "Yes. Play with me ... use me ... use my cunt. It's all so marvellous." She moaned loudly when his fingers entered her, even though every movement of his hand cause a fresh jolt of breath-taking pain. "You can fuck me if you like. I won't break." She giggled. "I may be after screaming a little bit though."

Cristina licked the girl's ear, making her flinch and squeal. "Don't be greedy. Leave some for me," she said, worried that the girl would encourage the Captain to hurt her to the point of real injury. Looking him in the eye, she allowed her thighs to fall apart and traced her fingertips invitingly over her hairless cunt. "My cunt has barely a mark on it. It's just not fair."

It wasn't hard for Harry to see what Cristina was trying to do, and he actually agreed that Áine at the least required a rest. Besides which, he wanted to play a little more with the beautiful Spanish woman. He kissed Áine, gently set her down upon the bed, and then held out his hand to Cristina, who crawled towards him. When she was close enough to sit up and take his hand, he pulled her close and embraced her. "So, what shall we do with you before I come, eh?"

Cristina leaned close and whispered, "Captain, could I please have some marks on my cunt such that the others can see?"

"Ah! I understand," Harry replied. Despite how well she was getting along with the others, she was still a Spaniard and an aristocrat. It would be all too easy for the other two girls to assume that Cristina had allowed Áine to take all the punishment. He held up a finger and grinned. "I have just the thing. He gave her hand a kiss and hopped off the bed, only to return a moment later with several birch branches, glistening wet with the salt water they had been soaking in to keep them flexible. The rough irregular shapes of the twigs and the small hard buds that dotted them made them ideal for a controlled but painful flogging that would leave clear marks but would lack the deep bruising impact of a cane.

The birches were tied into a bundle at their base with a ribbon wrapped around them to provide a convenient handle. Cristina recognised the birch rods, which many parents still used to punish disobedient children. She pointed at the tip of the birch bundle with a quizzical smile. "Isn't that a little too large for your chosen target?" she said, looking down at her cunt.

Harry held up a finger and then quickly untied the ribbon, dropping the loosed bundle of birch rods to fall upon the bed. He selected one rod and held it out to Cristina as if presenting a sword. "Better?"

The young Spanish aristocrat smiled and tapped the rod with a slim finger. "Much better. So, should I lie upon my back again?"

He shook his head and threw a large down stuffed pillow against the corner post at the end of the bed. "Seat yourself here, back against the post. Allow your right leg rest upon the ground."

Cristina's legs were long, but the bed was high and her foot just managed to touch the floor, which required her to stretch her legs wide apart. Obeying the Captain's guiding hands she bent her left leg and tilted her knee out to the side, increasing the spread of her thighs. When the Captain moved to stand by her shoulder she was quick to notice that her leaning posture placed her head almost level with his crotch. She turned her head and gave his cock a peck with her lips to show

him that she understood the significance of the way she had been posed. She smiled and opened her lips when he pushed the head of his cock towards her, taking the entire knob inside her mouth and just lightly holding it there, enjoying the sensation and letting him know that she enjoyed it. She felt the prickly sensation of the birch touching her cunt but she just nodded her head and continued to hold his cock with her lips and stroke it with her tongue. She guessed that he would prefer her not to use her hands to caress him, so she used them to brace and steady herself against what was to come.

The feeling of his cock inside her warm moist mouth was delightful and Harry was smiling widely when he began to tap lightly at her beautifully presented cunt with the birch rod. Almost immediately the smooth soft skin of her cunt lips began to redden, thin irregular red streaks showing up starkly against the creamy white of her skin. After the example of Áine's incredible ability to endure punishment, he was tempted to lash Cristina's cunt hard, hard enough to snap the birch rod, but he restrained himself, striking only when he was certain that he had not succumbed to temptation. But he was not being gentle by any measure, the birch making a faint whistling sound as it cut through the air, and creating a crisp "smack" on impact. Her jolting reaction was transmitted to his cock, which only made the exercise feel even better.

Cristina understood what he was doing too and allowed the jolting pain from the birching of her cunt to rock her body all the way to her head. This punishment was not heavy, but stung and prickled intensely, and to her surprise she found it arousing. She found herself pushing her hips upwards to meet the birch as her cunt grew hot and ached in a strange sweet way. She realised that the strokes of the birch were getting hard, burning her cunt fiercely. She could feel his excitement flowing through her lips, and it made her cunt clench and itch with lust despite the constant biting kiss of the birch rod. Some of the birch tips darted between her cunt lips into her slit and the pain they caused flared up brightly, glowing sparks amidst the hot shimmering embers and red licking flame. But she was doing her duty as honour required, in the service of a man who deserved her respect and fealty, and from that she felt an unexpected satisfaction and even pleasure. The movements of her hips assumed a more rhythmic and sensual nature as she opened herself up more and more to the Captain's searing caresses.

The woman's fervent sucking and licking of his cock sent waves of pleasure flowing through Harry's body like warm golden honey, and only his iron self-control had prevented him from coming. But the sight and feel of the birch striking Cristina's clearly willing cunt was too fine and erotic for him to want it to end just yet. When he saw her hands move towards her hips and cunt, he knew that he had been right to wait. When her fingers came dangerously close to the snapping birch he paused in his whipping of her cunt, and was rewarded by the beautiful sight of her cunt lips being spread apart. "Are you certain you want to do that?" Again the erotic nodding of her head with his cock cradled by her lips. "Since you offer it, understand that I expect you to keep it open until I am satisfied, no matter the degree of pain you experience." The cock shaking nod came again and he smiled. "Good girl."

Cristina continued to be surprised by how warmed she was by his approval and more importantly, his respect, and for all her pride and dignity, she found that it was something she wanted very much, so much so that even the intimate pain of a cunt whipping became insignificant by comparison. When the thin prickly tips of the birch touched her inner sex, she found herself opening up, blossoming in response, rather than shrinking from it.

Áine had come up on her other side and she rested her chin upon Cristina's knee and she lightly wrapped her arms around the Spanish woman's bent leg. Peering down she said, "Your cunt looks bloody lovely."

Cristina quivered when the birch tips trailed through her open cunt, brushing over her cunt hole and all the way up to her clitoris. Then the birch tapped her inner lips and cunt hole once, just lightly, and she knew it was a warning to brace herself. She knew Áine must have seen it too, because the girl's arms tightened around her raised and bent leg. With her head turned she didn't see the birch move, but the faint swish of air warned her just before it struck. She inhaled sharply and hummed deep in her throat and around the Captain's cock as she absorbed the pain. Then she nodded briskly to let him know that she was all right. Once again the birch caressed her wide

splayed cunt with its fine scratchy touch, making the soles of her feet itch, before it quickly lifted and snapped down again. The birch painted a jagged pattern of fire over the pink surfaces of her soft inner cunt lips, one bud catching her pee hole with a searing kiss.

When Cristina managed to continue sucking, Harry used the birch to pepper her open cunt with swift snappy blows, which in turn made her mouth move over his cock. Áine's grinning face urged him on and he reached down to tangle his fingers in Cristina's hair, making sure she remained at her station as he beat her cunt with gradually increasing force.

The pain grew rapidly in intensity, and it felt to Cristina as if the birch was ripping at her cunt with tiny hooks. She was grateful for Áine's grip upon her upper leg which allowed her to focus upon giving the Captain pleasure with her mouth despite the swirling storm of pain between her thighs. Buoyed by Áine's touch and murmured encouragement, she allowed the lashing of her inner cunt to guide and inspire the way she sucked his cock, and finally her oral efforts were rewarded by an urgent moan and the tightening of the Captain's grip upon her hair. Suddenly his seed was flowing into her mouth and the birch was scrubbing over her cunt instead of beating it and she uttered a cry of alarm through her nostrils. With her cunt so badly wealed and raw, the scraping and rubbing of the rough and prickly twigs was unbearably intense, although not entirely unpleasant. It did make her swallow rapidly, and judging from the Captain's pleased reactions, that was the right thing to do. His cock slipped out of her mouth and the birch lifted from her cunt at the same time. She licked her lips and smiled, feeling happy and unexpectedly aroused, although with the state her cunt was in, she wasn't sure what she could do to satisfy it.

Harry sat down beside her on the edge of the bed and put an arm around her shoulders. "Very nicely done, both of you." He kissed Cristina on the top of her head. "What did you think of your first proper cunt whipping?"

She laughed ruefully. "I wish I could say that it was nothing, or that it had felt good the way it does for Áine, but I confess it did hurt most fearfully. However ...."

"Yes?" Harry saw Áine subtly nod towards Cristina's cunt and make a licking motion. He was surprised that the Irish girl would volunteer for such a game, but it seemed her love of things sexual went deeper than he had imagined. He raised his eyebrows, and then nodded.

Cristina closed her eyes as she tried to express her thoughts and emotions. "It was something I wanted to give you, and things of value always have a price. I could see it excited you, and because of that it aroused me too, even in the midst of all the pain. It became ... necessary, important, and therefore I can enjoy the result if not the process. In a way it's like embroidery. It requires dedication and much effort, it creates sore and pricked fingers, and yet the result can be a source of pride and joy."

Turning around to sit facing her, he placed a hand on the other side of her body and leaned over to kiss her, almost pressing her upper body into the bed. "Perhaps there may be more joy than you expect," he said as his lips came close to hers. He kissed her hard and deep, showing her that he felt no disgust for the fact that he had recently come between those same lips.

Cristina felt something moving between her thighs, but the Captain's face and body blocked her line of sight, and a moment later she was too engrossed in clinging to and kissing him. She stiffened when something touched her very sore cunt, but the Captain stopped her when she tried to twist around to see.

"Just relax and pay attention to me. That's an order," he said with a little amused smile.

"Yes, Captain," she said, accepting that whatever it was, it was something he wanted, which was sufficient reason for her. She allowed her thighs to relax and focused on embracing and kissing him. There was a sting of pain when something touched her cunt again, but it was light and gentle and also tickled very nicely. Her eyes widened when she realised that it was Áine's tongue. The girl was licking her cunt! She started to protest, then remembered that the Captain desired it. It still felt wrong, but she had no choice but to accept.

Harry felt her relax. "Good. Now focus on me. Áine's hands are my hands, her lips and tongue are mine –" He kissed one cheek, and then the other. Arching his neck he kissed the tops of her breasts.

Cristina obeyed, sighing and moaning under his caresses. Her body arched up when Áine's tongue found her clitoris. Each of the Irish girl's oral caresses was tinged with pain, like the bite of pepper in a stew, but it felt better and better as the girl's busy tongue danced over her swollen cunt.

When he was sure that Cristina would stay still, Harry pushed himself up and off of the elegant noblewoman. He took her hand comfortingly and caressed her breasts and nipples as he watched Áine lick the Spanish woman's cunt.

When nothing terrible happened and the momentary disgust at the thought of having another woman kissing her cunt had been banished by the greater need to please and obey the Captain, Cristina realised that it actually felt extremely good, despite, or perhaps even because of the freshly birched condition of her cunt. She smiled at Captain Pierce who was looking down at her to let him know that she wasn't going to resist Áine's lovemaking. She freed her hand from his grip and searched his lap until she found his cock, which was still moist and sticky to the touch, and explored it with her fingertips. Except for several frightening seconds with her former husband, she had never caressed a man like that, and to distract her mind from the idea that a woman was busily licking her cunt, she moved her fingers over and around his cock, trying to find the touches and movements that he seemed to prefer.

Harry was surprised when he felt Cristina's fingers stroking his cock, but he shifted his hips closer and allowed her to explore however she wanted. She had a delicate touch and he silently guided her fingers, showing her the places and movements he liked. She was a quick learner and was soon masturbating him with very creditable skill.

Cristina couldn't help but grin in triumph when she felt him grow hard and rise again. She then realised that while she had been busy with the Captain's cock, her hips had taken on a life of their own and were writhing and rocking to the melody of Áine's tongue. Even the soreness and pain from the birching was good now, and she could recognise the fact that she was well on her way towards an orgasm. She lifted her head to look at Áine. Although she still felt a trace of uneasiness, she met the red head's eyes with a smile and glanced towards the Captain's renewed cock in her hand. She would have gladly sucked him again, but she suspected that he would prefer something different, and her own cunt was already occupied.

Áine had no difficulty in following Cristina's line of thought and without hesitation she reached back with one hand and patted her bottom. She knew from her reading that a girl's arse hole could be fucked just as easily as her cunt, although it often was very painful, especially the first time. Her cunt hole was not injured so he could fuck her there too, even though it would be agonisingly painful because of her swollen clitoris. Both possibilities made her shiver with pleased anticipation.

"Áine has some holes that are eager to accommodate this," Cristina said, playfully shaking the Captain's cock.

"Why, so she does!" Harry said with a tone of mock amazement. He walked on his knees to Áine's smooth creamy rear, which the girl raised high and waggled enticingly. Her arse hole and cunt were glowing islands of pink amidst the sea of white, especially her cunt, which was redder than normal even though the actual punishment had been concentrated around her clitoral area. Her inner lips were swollen and erect, and her cunt hole wet and gaping. "Choices, choices," Harry murmured to himself, his hands stroking her tight rounded buttocks. In the end, the soreness of her cunt and the knowledge of her fantasies tipped his choice in favour of her cunt. Brisk slaps of his hands on her inner thighs adjusted the spread of her legs to a suitable width, and he groaned in delight when his cock sank deep in her hot and moist cunt hole.

Áine moaned into Cristina's cunt. The cock entering her well beaten cunt felt as if it was a blazing oak shaft, every touch and push multiplied tenfold, both in pleasure and pain. This was but the second time a cock had entered her cunt but it hardly mattered at that moment, but this agonising penetration was the culmination of years of frustrated and sometimes frightened desire, and deep satisfaction filled her being. It hurt badly, but that was exactly what she wanted, what she had always dreamed of. She didn't shrink from it in the slightest, her female nature eagerly accepting the Captain's cock. Neither did she flinch when he filled her completely and his body

pressed against the dark red and blue flesh around the blood encrusted nub of her clitoris. In fact she pushed back firmly even though her thighs and buttocks quivered from the strain. Driven by a wild, deeply seated lust she sucked and licked madly at Cristina's cunt, making the Spanish woman respond with flailing, writhing passion even as she was being agonisingly fucked herself.

Like a chain of linked barges, Harry watched the two women's bodies sweat and shudder, his fucking carrying through Áine's body to drive Cristina's lust. The Irish girl had to be in tremendous pain, but she responded as though she was experiencing the greatest pleasure of her life, and perhaps she was. He was certainly enjoying himself more than he had in a long time, and once more he allowed all the plotting and danger to fade from his mind, to be replaced by raw lust and appreciation of the feminine loveliness laid out before him. He watched Cristina writhe in confused passion and lust while his cock slid in and out of Áine's tight cunt, knowing that he was both pleasuring and tormenting her in the most intimate way possible.

Áine's world was filled with bodies, sex, pain, and delight. She felt ... no, not content ... she felt free. Free of hesitation, of doubt, of longing and frustration. She didn't care where her path took her now, but just knew that she intended to stride along, taking in every new experience, thrill, and delight that it offered. It felt so good to have the Captain's smooth hard cock driving into her hole, pleasuring her, hurting her, both in equal measure and both equally welcome. He was using her cunt hole for his pleasure and she liked being used. In fact she liked it a lot. She wished she could tell the Captain that, but her mouth was busy with something more important. This was also the first time that she had ever kissed a woman's cunt, and she was pleased to discover that it was not as unpleasant as she had feared. She could sense that Cristina was near to coming and she wanted to feel the Spanish woman come under her lips and tongue. Knowing that the cunt she licked had been freshly birched only added spice to her efforts. She was pleased and somewhat surprised that she was close to coming herself ... and just like that every muscle in her body seemed to go mad and she shook and shuddered as if she had the ague. Pleasure so intense that it made her want to scream struck her like a thunderbolt.

Cristina jumped in shock when she felt Áine's teeth close on her clitoris, locking it in place with a terrifying grip while the Irish girl's tongue lashed her trapped pink bud mercilessly. Seconds later she came again, the jolts of irresistible pleasure lifting her head up off of the bed and her fingers crushing her breasts with their grip. Instinct overcame rational thought and her thighs slammed together, trapping Áine's head between them as she rubbed her cunt against the girl's face.

The explosion of female lust and passion slammed into Harry like the recoil of a ship's cannon and his orgasm roared in his mind like the firing of a great black gun and he could almost see his seed blasting out towards Áine's womb like a charge of canister shot. His fingers dug into the Irish girl's hips and he rammed his cock deep one last glorious time and held it there, shouting and groaning victoriously.

## Chapter Seven

Harry tapped the map of Port Royal and its surrounds with the tip of a dagger. "The address they gave Cristina is obviously bait. If we don't at least sniff at it, they'll know something is wrong."

Jeffrey Briars frowned. "But whoever does the sniffing will be walking into a trap," he said eyeing his captain suspiciously.

Harry nodded. "I'll have to be there, or they'll know something is wrong. We need to draw them out, and for that to happen they need to feel confident that I fell for Cristina's supposed betrayal," he said, nodding at the Spanish woman who was sitting across from him together with the other girls. In honour of the expected visitors they were all wearing simple dresses with light front laced bodice corsets. He couldn't help smiling when Róisín adjusted her skirts whenever no one else was looking, giving him a flash of what lay beneath. "But that doesn't mean their trap has to go exactly the way they planned it."

Briars and the other chosen crew and guards grinned, their expressions reminiscent of sharks anticipating a meal.

"When their net fails to snare their intended target, namely me, they shall be forced to employ their little spy in my household once more."

"So that's why the bitch still lives. I was beginning to think – " Briars reconsidered what he was about to say and shook his head.

Harry's eyes hardened. "That I'm growing soft? That too many cunts have made me weak?"

All the men stiffened in alarm and Briars shifted uncomfortably. "No Captain. I never meant to say –"

Harry held up his hand. "You spoke your thoughts, First Mate. I would not fault you for that. We're not at sea and not in front of the crew, so I shall not take exception to having my decisions being questioned – this time."

Briars understood the silent "but" in his Captain's words. "Thank you Captain."

"But it seems more important than ever that I lead this little journey into the hornet's nest. Everyone get ready. We set out in an hour."

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As could have easily been predicted, the address given to Cristina was an abandoned house inland of the main area of Port Royal on the road leading to the plantation areas. Harry and his men approached it as if a Spanish town. When they were about a mile away, he sent the two local hunters he had hired to scout the surroundings.

When the hunters returned they reported that there were only two guards outside of the small house.

"They looks half asleep," said one of the hunters.

"Could've slit their throats without waking 'em up," the other said, spitting on the ground to show his disgust at their carelessness.

"de Segovia probably hired a bunch of out-of-work pirates," Harry said. Such men would be hard and ruthless, but more at home on the deck of a ship than in the woods. "All right, this is what we'll do." He pointed at one hunter. "You go and keep an eye on the guard at the far side of the house. We want a survivor to escape and report what happened to de Segovia, and to let him know I was here but survived the ambush. Only hurt him if he looks like he's going to be a problem." He turned to Briars. "Get the granadoes ready. I'm not going to risk the lives of any of the men for this lot." He saw the men nodding at each other in approval.

Harry pointed at the other hunter. "When we get closer, you will silence the other guard. Take one of the men with you just in case of surprises."

The hunter looked slightly disgruntled to have a comparatively noisy and clumsy companion assigned to him, but he realised the sense of it in case he was spotted by someone in the house or by the guard.

Pointing at Briars, Harry said, "You lead the men with muskets across the road and take up position opposite the house. Kill anyone who tries to run or ride away. Spare the horses if you can."

"And you?" Briars asked, although he already had a good idea what Captain Pierce intended.

"I'll lead the rest of the men towards the house. They'll take up position just short of the clearing around the main building, and I'll toss a granadoe through a rear window. That should take care of most of them. Me and the men will go in the back while you can handle any that survive the blast."

Briars stepped closer and gripped the Captain's arm. "You don't have to do this. Let me –"

Harry chuckled grimly. "You know the men won't follow a Captain who won't risk his own skin or they think is losing his nerve."

The First Mate nodded silently. "Be careful. The Talon isn't a pirate vessel. We can't just elect a new captain, and Sir Percy ..." He didn't need to complete his sentence.

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Everything went as planned until it didn't. The men took up their positions and the hunter killed the guard in near complete silence. Then it was Harry's turn, and he moved towards the house from an angle so he couldn't be easily seen from any of the windows. He managed to avoid betraying twigs and made his way right up to the rear window, which was beside the back door of the house. He extracted the granadoe from the bag slung across his body, set it on the ground, and dug into the bag again for the fire-starter. He cocked his head to listen for any sounds from the window, checked the fuse on the granadoe, and then stroked the steel against the flint. He winced at the tiny rasping sound and cursed when the tinder didn't catch. Sweat trickled down into his collar as he glanced anxiously towards the window and door. Then he tried again. Sparks flew and he sighed in relief when a tiny wisp of smoke rose from the tinder. He nursed the glow until it burst into a real flame, and quickly held it to the tip of the fuse, which immediately began to hiss and burn. He shut the tinderbox and dropped it onto the ground as he scooped up the granadoe with both hands.

That's when everything went to hell. The back door swung open with a loud groaning creak and a man stepped out, fumbling with the front of his breeches. He stopped dead and gaped in amazement at the totally unexpected sight, his eyes focused on the burning fuse and wide with horror. Then his paralysis broke. He shouted an incomprehensible warning and groped for the handle of his cutlass.

For a fleeting moment Harry stood frozen. The alternatives roared through his mind like a near miss by a cannon ball. Whatever he did, he stood a good chance of dying within the next few seconds. But as an experienced captain of a fighting ship, he was used to making life or death decisions under the mad conditions of a sea battle. With a convulsive jerk of his arms he hurled the granadoe through the window. He was still turning back towards his opponent when the man struck. The impact and sickening pain made Harry think that he had been cut in half at the waist, but as he ripped his own sword from its scabbard, he realised that the man, probably a sailor, had hacked at him with his heavy cutlass rather than risking a thrust or cut, and the blade had landed on the heavy canvas bag hanging at his side, cutting the bag open but failing to cut into Harry's body. Leaning against the wall for support, he staggered back and away from the window. Clutching his side, he managed to deflect an angry downward stroke of the cutlass that would have shattered his collarbone and cut deep into his torso. The point of his rapier flicked out with a back hand stroke and scored the man's belly just above his belt. He took a moment to wish he had worn his heavier, side sword with its half basket hilt rather than the light duelling sword as he blocked a series of whirling cuts from the cutlass that made his fingers tingle from the impact.

Then the granadoe exploded. Dust and sand flew out in a cloud, mixed with the familiar sulphurous black smoke of burning gunpowder. The mud brick of the house held up under the pressure of the blast, but a hot, almost solid wall of air struck both combatants. Harry had been expecting it and was largely unaffected. Unfortunately his opponent was not stunned or distracted

either.

But with the blast coming at him from the side and rear, the cutlass wielding man was unable to prevent a flinch and his attack slowed, just for a second.

That second was sufficient for Harry to regain his balance and footing, and to go on the offensive, which was what he had to do if he didn't want to be beaten down by the greater weight of his opponent's blade. He half stepped forward and feinted a thrust at the man's forward leg, forcing an awkward downward block. Harry's point flicked up and shot forwards in a lunge and he grunted in satisfaction when he felt his blade hit flesh.

The unknown man twisted sideways, but too slowly and he snarled in pain when the slim steel point plunged into the right side of his chest, ripping the pectoral muscle before his movement pulled him free. He managed a horizontal slash with his cutlass which drove his bomb throwing opponent back, but he had to grit his teeth from the pain caused by the violent motion. He stepped back towards the house, hoping that one of his companions had survived the explosion and would come to his assistance.

But Harry had no intention of giving him the time for a rescue or escape. He trusted his men to take care of the others and focused entirely on finishing his present opponent. A spiralling sweep of his sword drove the cutlass out of position and a quick angled thrust drove his point over the cutlass's bowl shaped guard and into the man's forearm. He must have hit a nerve because the man cried out in agony and almost lost his grip on the cutlass. But his opponent was not ready to give up yet and Harry was forced to dodge when the pirate drove a furious two handed swing at him, severing the strap on his already destroyed sling bag, which fell to the floor, and slashing his shirt. Harry felt a burning sting and guessed that he had not entirely escaped the edge of the cutlass. But instead of moving further back to resume his guard, Harry swiftly glided forward before his opponent could recover, blocking the man's arms with his left hand and punching him in the face with the guard of his rapier, a move that would be seriously frowned upon in a duel. The man's head rocked back, exposing his throat. A flick of his wrist brought the edge of Harry's rapier against the man's neck, and when he stepped back he drew the length of the sharpened forward edge across his throat, the slim blade sinking deep and sending a fountain of blood spraying onto the ground between them. But fighting in battle had taught him never to take chances. His legs bent and pushed, and he lunged, driving his point forward like a spear into the centre of the man's chest and into his heart. Blood splashed his face and lips as the man sank to his knees and pulled himself free of Harry rapier's before falling onto his face.

All of this had only taken less than a minute, and Harry's men ran past him shouting cheers and into the house as he wiped the blood from his rapier on the dead man's back.

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The dead pirate's shouted warning had given three of the men waiting inside the house time to spot the granadoc and dash out through the temptingly unlocked front door before it exploded. A fourth was framed by the doorway when the explosion caught him and rammed a broken table leg right through his body before flinging him several feet forward into the dust of the path.

Across the road, the deep muffled thump of the granadoc warned Briars and his men, and they raised their muskets just as the three men ran into view beside the road. Whatever pity the First Mate might have felt for their plight was crushed by the knowledge that these men had been waiting to kill anyone who turned up at the house. "None of them is to escape. No quarter! Take aim." He watched the muskets level and steady before raising his own to his shoulder and easing back the hammer with a smooth oiled click. "On my command ... fire!" Although the muskets didn't go off in the single huge bang of trained infantrymen, they were close enough, and a hail of musket balls slammed into the hapless men standing out in the open.

One man went down immediately, crumpling with the limpness of death, another staggered and clutched at his side, while the third seemed completely untouched and raised his own pistol to fire back.



Briars had not fired his rifled hunting musket exactly for this eventuality, and his muzzle smoothly tracked the pistol wielding man. Both firearms went off at almost the same time, and the twin clouds of smoke obscured Briar's view. He heard the sound of smashing timber behind him where the pistol ball met the trees. At this range, only sheer bad luck could have allowed the man to hit him with a pistol. But his long hunting rifle was a different matter, and when the smoke cleared, the man was spread-eagled on his back, blood soaking into the sand around his head.

"Sir?" One of Briar's men pointed to the remaining wounded man who was trying to stagger away in the direction of the trees beside the house.

"Finish him."

All the men had reloaded by now. As a group they took two paces forward, aimed and fired in a ragged volley.

Several balls must have hit and the wounded man was swept off of his feet as if hit by a club.

Remembering his part in the plan, Briars shouted, "Anyone hurt over there? Is the Captain all right?"

"Captain Pierce has suffered severe injuries!" one of the men with the Captain shouted back.

Briars winced at the wooden delivery of what was obviously a prepared speech, and signalled for his men to follow him across the road.

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The hunter grinned and slowly uncocked his rifle, which was perfectly maintained, unlike his own scruffy appearance.

The sentry had gaped in horror at the sound of the shouts and explosion, but had the good sense not to go charging into the fight. When he heard the exchange between Briars and the other man, he carefully withdrew into the trees and silently sneaked away.

To the hunter the man's retreat sounded like a cow crashing through the bushes, but he allowed the man to depart unmolested once it was clear that he was bent only on escape and not revenge. He followed for a distance, and then made his way back to the house to report.

Harry was examining the shattered interior of the house and the four dead bodies, or at least the parts of them, that were the ambushers who failed to escape the granadoe. "None of these is de Segovia, and from the barren look of the place, this was nothing more than a trap and perhaps a temporary hide out for his little band of cut-throats. He saw the hunter approaching and raised an eyebrow.

The hunter rested the butt of his musket on the ground in front of him and nodded at the Captain. "He's gone, Captain. Pretty sure he heard you were bad hurt before he made off."

"Well done, the both of you." Harry tossed two gold coins to the hunter, who casually snatched them out of the air with a grin and nod. Harry looked down at his slashed and blood stained shirt. "Let's finish searching this place and go home."

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The girls were gathered anxiously at the main door, and Ceara cried out in alarm when the bloodied and slumped-over figure of Captain Pierce came through the gate, escorted by his grim faced men. "Oh my god! He's hurt!"

Harry staggered into the house supported by two men, looking only semi-conscious. But when the door slammed shut behind him, he suddenly stood upright and took his arms off of his men's shoulders and slapped them on the back. "My thanks for your assistance," he said jovially.

The men grinned. "Well done Captain. You looked like you was at death's door," one of them said before heading to the back of the house.

Ceara came up to him and studied him in confusion. "You're not hurt?" she asked, her voice trembling with emotion.

Harry grimaced and pulled the tear in his shirt apart to reveal the slash across his chest caused by the cutlass. "I wouldn't go so far as to say that." He rubbed his side and winced. "And I'll wager I have one monster of a bruise to my side. That brute with the cutlass was strong as an ox." He looked around. "I hope somebody has called for Master Chao."

Cristina smiled, realising his ruse. "Ceara sent for him the moment she saw your rather dramatic entry. I gather you were successful?"

Harry nodded and grinned. "We set off the trap without serious consequence to ourselves, and with luck the enemy thinks I am sorely wounded." He saw Ceara's expression and his face softened. "I'm sorry if I frightened you. Any of you. But I needed your reaction to be real in case we have watchers outside or more spies amongst our people." He brushed Ceara's cheek with his fingers. "Your concern warms my heart."

Ceara sniffed angrily. "I was merely pretending in aid of your deception." Then her stiffness collapsed and she threw her arms around him, heedless of the blood that was staining her dress. "I was so frightened ..."

Harry ignored the pain caused by her rubbing against the long wound in his chest and hugged her tightly. "I'm sorry. I really am," he whispered, kissing the side of her neck and the corner of her jaw. Then her face turned towards his and their lips met. When the kiss ended he saw the other girls grinning at him over Ceara's shoulder.

"Aren't you supposed to be injured?" Cristina asked tartly. She nodded in the direction of Master Chao, who had just come upon the scene.

"Still haven't learned not to get cut," the Chinese physician said tutting. Gently pushing Ceara aside, he examined the wound and took the Captain's pulse. "Not bad but much blood. Better we go to kitchen. Easier to clean. Come, we go."

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It was still early in the day and Harry had not felt like sleeping. Master Chao had not insisted he take one of the bitter tasting potions that would have forced sleep upon him. Most of the wound had been shallow and required only a few stitches, while the salve the Oriental applied had both stopped the bleeding and numbed the pain, so he had retired to his office to consider the possible consequences of the raid. He looked up when the door opened and Ceara entered, bearing a tray.

She nodded at her burden. "Master Chao says you need to eat and drink to replace the blood you lost."

Harry continued to silently stare at her with raised eyebrows.

Ceara smiled impishly and turned slightly from side to side, displaying her naked body. "Oh, this? I thought you might like having something other than the walls and those musty books to look at while you eat, and perhaps some light entertainment afterwards." She set the tray down upon a small table and carried it over to where he sat on the sofa, her breasts swaying enticingly as she walked. "This is beef stew cooked in wine, fresh bread, cheese, and a jug of ale."

After all the exertion of the morning and the loss of blood, Harry did indeed feel hungry, so he set to eating with a will. His eyes followed Ceara's naked form as she moved to the centre of the room and started to sway and turn as if dancing to a tune that only she could hear.

Ceara's hips rocked and swayed in a most enticing manner and she made certain that he always had a good view of all the intimate parts of her body as she moved. "Cristina has been showing me some of the dances of the tribal peoples of her country," she explained. Her hands lifted high, joining at the wrists as her entire body writhed in sensual serpentine movements that started from her fingers and rippled down all the way to her toes. Because of her unusual height, the movements were particularly impressive. It was clear that she had been working hard. She was slightly slimmer than before and muscles rippled on her belly, thighs and buttocks. Turning to face him, her feet shuffled apart and then she continued to dance, her cunt in clear view now, rocking invitingly towards him.

Harry had never seen a woman dance in such a manner before, and he was unable to take his

eyes from her even as he shovelled mouthfuls of stew between his lips with pieces of bread and chewed appreciatively. "That is as lewd a dance as I have ever seen. Not even the whores in the harbour taverns can hold a candle to that."

Ceara chuckled. "I shall take that as a compliment, Captain. Cristina is an excellent teacher." Her hands came down and glided over her body, tracing the curves of her breast, over the flat planes of her belly, down her hips and thighs, and up to frame her cunt before rising up again to repeat the performance. She was working hard, and her skin glistened with a fine sheen of sweat that only served to make her appear more erotic. Her knees moved apart and she slowly lowered her body while her hips continued to rock from side to side, exposing ever more of her crotch to his view. Her fingers moved from her knees to her cunt in sensuous stroking motions, and when she was almost squatting they brushed over her cunt lips, making them briefly draw apart, showing him a flash of pink. She did that again and again, each time spreading herself wider, until at last she held her lips apart and froze in that position, eagerly displaying the innermost secrets of her cunt.

Harry clapped his hands. "Marvellous! You are indeed a wonder to behold."

Ceara blushed, embarrassed by his lavish compliments. "Many would have less complimentary names for what I did."

"Bah! The world is filled with fools. What could be better than natural beauty and talent combined with dedication and the willingness to work hard."

She lowered her head. "All the others are so sexual and have lusts that match that of yours so well. But I ... I am so, so common. Pretty girls may be found at every corner, and all the poor work hard if they wish to eat. I wanted to give you something special of my own. I thought that I could dance for you while you employ the lash or other playthings upon my body ...."

Harry moved the table to one side and gestured for her to come nearer to him. Her body was flushed pink and glowing from her exertions and he thought she had never looked more erotic. He took her hands and kissed her belly, tasting the salt of her sweat. He smiled when she slid her feet apart and pushed her hips towards him. He rewarded the action with another kiss on her smooth hairless pubic mound and he heard her sigh in delight. Looking up at her face he said, "It is true that each of the other girls has a special attribute, a unique sensuality. But you have something too. I saw it on the ship when you offered yourself to me. You are not Áine, but I know you are not completely averse to a little sensual pain." He saw her cheeks redden even more as she nodded. "And though you do not have within you the wild, almost angry lust of Cristina, you are a hot blooded woman nonetheless." He let a finger delve into her slit and it came out with clear evidence of arousal.

Ceara's smile widened, and she made no attempt to hide her agreement. She licked her lips when he kissed her cunt again. "I ... I'll not deny that."

"And your lovely dance has shown me that you have a taste for allowing others to admire your beauty ... all of your beauty."

This made her chuckle. "No, I'll not deny that either. I had not realised that about me until Cristina started to teach me."

He kissed her once more, his lips touching her just above the start of her slit. "And last, but not least, you have a giving nature and enjoy bringing comfort and pleasure to others. One day you may make a fine wife and mother. But for now, you are my treasured companion and playmate."

She rocked her hips, deliberately teasing him with her cunt. "And what manner of games do you have in mind for your playmate?" She eased her thighs even further apart and pushed her cunt towards him, offering her sexual parts with a wickedly deliberate motion. The success of her dance and his praise gave her a feeling of confidence that she had never known before. She had never begrudged him her pain or feared it, but she had always felt inferior to the others and shied from pushing herself forward. But after her performance something had changed within her, and she eagerly anticipated his touch upon her cunt, even if it was to torture her.

Harry ran his hands all over her body, stroking everywhere he could reach without standing up. An idea came to him and with a mischievous grin he said, "Show me your clitoris."

Ceara complied eagerly, feeling the muscles in her loins clenching with sweet excitement. Her clitoris was already swollen and ripe with lust and she could hardly wait to feel his touch.

He broke off a piece of crusty bread and dipped it in the savoury stew. "Don't move," he said and began painting the area around her clitoris with the coarse improvised brush.

Ceara gasped and bit her lip as the crust scraped over her clitoris. It wasn't too bad because of the moisture of the stew but still the sensation sent pin pricks darting up and down her spine and legs. Then his lips closed over her clitoris and his tongue licked up the savoury sweetness of the stew from her skin. His hands closed over her buttocks and she was glad of the support because her knees felt weak from the combination of feelings that made her moan loudly and unashamedly. It was good, so very good ... the flashes of pain as the coarse edges of the bread rasped her clitoris, and then the searing delight of his lips and tongue. He repeated the process, over and over as if determined to consume all of the stew in this manner. Her fingers lightly touched his hair, afraid to grip his head although she longed to do so. "You'll make me come if you keep doing that," she said breathlessly, her throat tight with passion.

"If you do, you'll do it without moving. And don't expect me to stop my meal to accommodate you," Harry said gruffly.

But Ceara saw the smile and the twinkle in his eyes and knew he was just playing with her and testing her ability to give of herself. "Yes Captain," she said meekly. The Captain resumed his "meal" and she resumed moaning. She stretched her arms up high and then grabbed her breasts when she felt the fluttering contractions of her inner muscles announce the imminent arrival of her orgasm. Despite his mock fierceness, she felt him suck and lick harder at her clitoris as her entire body tensed and flexed like a bow being drawn. "Yes, oh yes, it's ... I'm ... oh god, oh god ..." Despite the urge to flail and kick and to batter at his face with her cunt, she tried her very best to remain still and unmoving as the irresistible contractions battered her like howling storm winds. But this forced stillness and obedience only seemed to increase the power of her climax like the barrel of a cannon channelled the force of the exploding gunpowder. Her mind went completely blank for a moment in what the French called the "Little Death", her lips drawn back in a tight rictus of unbearable sexual delight.

Harry pulled his head back and watched her orgasm in amused satisfaction. He was kind enough to give her almost half a minute to gather her scattered wits, and then he picked up a crust of dry bread, grinned to himself evilly, and commenced to scrub it over her swollen and visibly twitching clitoris after ordering her to expose it to him again.

Ceara bit the inside of her cheek in an effort to suppress the scream of shock and oddly sensual pain, whimpering through her nostrils as the torture of her unbearably sensitive clitoris proceeded. And yet, although it seemed that he demanded the impossible of her, she experienced a strange deeply felt joy and pleasure at the way she continued to offer up her clitoris in sacrifice to his lewd and sadistic desires. The pain did not matter, nor did the intolerable burning need to shudder and scream at what was being done to her. What did matter was the beautiful, sacrificial giving of herself which fulfilled and completed her in a way nothing else had ever done.

Harry used up piece after piece of hard bread crust in the torment of her clitoris until he saw that she would begin to bleed if he continued. Regretfully, he stopped, but only after one last forceful flick of her clitoris that made her stagger. He gave the sore and much abused bud a gentle kiss of thanks, and said, "Shall we try something else?"

Ceara took a deep breath and nodded, feeling nothing except eagerness despite the burning soreness of her clitoris. "What would you like?"

"Well, I have quite a lot of stew left. But it seems to have gone cold. I wonder if there is any way I could warm it up without taking it to the kitchen." His finger searched between her legs and dipped into her very wet cunt hole.

It was not hard to guess what he was thinking, even though it was the most outrageous thing the innocent Irish girl had even imagined. She smiled. "Perhaps I can help you with that, Captain." Moments later she was lying upon her back on his large solid desk in the now familiar posture that best presented her cunt and arse hole to him. Her fingers held her cunt lips wide apart and she took particular care to draw open her cunt hole, working her inner muscles such that her feminine opening was indeed a round open hole. "I am ready to heat your stew for you, Captain," she said

warmly, feeling an undeniable eagerness to have her cunt used in this unorthodox manner.

Seated comfortably in front of her cunt and holding the bowl in one hand, Harry began to ladle the stew into her cunt hole with the silver spoon. In went lumps of beef, cubes of carrots, pieces of onion and potato as well as a generous portion of the rich gravy.

It felt strange, but undeniably arousing to feel all those things going into her cunt hole along with the chill smooth touch of the silver spoon, and she had to resist the urge to squeeze her muscles and squirt the stew back into the bowl or worse, into the Captain's face. The thought almost made her chuckle, which would have had the same effect and she bit her lip. Then she heard the bowl clunk against the table and she knew that she had managed to take all of it.

Harry patted her thigh. "Let's leave the stew to warm a bit. How does your clitoris feel?"

"It's sore but I'm sure it can take lots more if that's what you want," she said gamely.

He nodded and smiled. From the way her clitoris looked he knew it had to be hurting a lot more than she was willing to admit. "Why don't we try this?" He lowered his lips to her brimming cunt hole and then searched for her clitoris with his fingers. Sealing his lips tightly against her cunt, he gave her clitoris a firm flick of his finger. As he expected, the sudden twinge of pain on that sensitive spot made her jump and her muscles contract, squeezing a mouthful of stew into his mouth. He chewed thoughtfully and detected a distinct new flavour, which he decided went rather well with the dish. "A distinctly exotic taste," he said to himself.

Ceara watched him eat the stew that had been ejected from her cunt with a mixture of disgust and fascination. It seemed rather dirty to her, and yet the idea that he would be willing to eat from her cunt was at the same time madly arousing. When he scraped her raw clit and made her jump again, she began to feel more comfortable about it. After all, she didn't mind when he licked and sucked on her cunt. She began to imagine all the different foods that could be put inside her and how they would feel. The stew had been cold, but there was nothing to stop him from putting hot things into her cunt ... even boiling hot things. This thought made her hold her breath and her heart raced. Surely he wouldn't? But would she let him if he wanted to? He could force her, tie her down, but would she voluntarily open herself up for something like that? Her ruminations were interrupted by another stab of pain from her clitoris and the feeling of more stew moving out of her cunt. But the sensations suddenly seemed more vivid, much more intensely exciting, and then she realised that she had her answer. The very thought of boiling soup or tea being poured into her cunt brought her close to coming, not because of the pain it would cause, but because she knew that she would allow ... no, more than that ... she would do her utmost to help him do it and would probably be having a chain of orgasms until the boiling liquid made that impossible. His lips touched her again, and this time when he flicked her clitoris, she came – hard.

Harry was surprised by the tight forceful jerking of the woman's body and the tightening of her thighs around his head, even as the last of the stew flowed into his mouth, bearing a fresh flavour, one he recognised as the juices produced by a woman's orgasm. He bit down with carefully controlled force upon her inner lips and felt her stiffen and then groan and convulse in yet another orgasm. He paused to wipe his mouth with the back of his hand, and then realised that at some time his breeches had come off and that his cock was hard and ready. Using his hands, he helped Ceara turn on the table to lie lengthwise and then hopped up onto it himself. Careful not to kneel upon her hair, he positioned himself so that he was kneeling astride her head, and then lowered his torso on top of her. He smiled when her lips and tongue immediately began to work as soon as his cock and balls came within her reach. He planted a kiss on her belly and made her giggle by tickling her navel with his tongue. His hand reached out and picked up a freshly sharpened quill pen. Supporting himself upon his elbows, he gave her cunt a playful slap. "Open up."

Without a second thought, Ceara's hands went to her cunt. Even though her clitoris hurt and even her cunt hole was sore from the unusual use it had just been put to, she still felt an undimmed eagerness to please him and to give him every possible access to her body. His thick cock filled her mouth and she sucked and licked with vigour. She even enjoyed feeling his weight upon her body. Rather than feeling confined or trapped, lying under him gave her a feeling of pleasure that she found hard to describe, and opening her legs and cunt for him without knowing or being able to see

what he was going to do was particularly thrilling and despite having just come, the warm heat of lust still flowed strongly through her loins. She wondered which part of her cunt would be next to feel his attentions and she felt a strong urge to rub and stroke herself while he watched. She made a mental note to ask if the Captain would like her to play with herself more often. Then an idea struck her, and her heart seemed to skip a beat from the excitement of it. Perhaps the Captain would like to see her hurt herself, and especially her cunt. It would be giving of herself in such a special way, and none of the other girls ever mentioned it. A sharp painful prick on her cunt made her jump, and it prompted her to take her lips from his cock and say, "May I be trying something, Captain?"

Even though he was surprised to hear her request coming from beneath and behind him, he replied, "Of course, Ceara. What do you want to do?"

"If you can be holding my cunt open, I could hurt myself, hurt my cunt, for your pleasure," she said, kissing his cock lovingly as she spoke.

"Are you certain you want to do this? I shall expect real pain from you if I allow it, pain that I can see."

Ceara fervently kissed the head of his cock and nodded, even though he couldn't see her motion. "Allow me to be trying, Captain. I promise you won't be disappointed."

He kissed her cunt in return. "I'm sure I won't be." And in truth he was more concerned that the inexperienced girl might seriously hurt herself in an attempt to impress him. "But be careful in what you do. You have a lovely cunt and I would like to have the pleasure of playing with it in the future."

His obvious concern made Ceara smile and made her more determined than ever to impress him with her earnestness. "I shall. Now relax and allow me to entertain you." She felt him press what she guess was a quill by its shape, and then felt his strong fingers draw her cunt lips apart. She tested the tip of the quill upon the ball of her thumb. It was quite sharp and yet possessed a degree of flexibility that wood or iron would not have. She felt at her cunt with her free hand, tracing its shape and seeking out each spot. Her fingers touched one of her inner lips and on impulse she pinched it tightly between thumb and finger and lifted it up, stretching it until the soft delicate lip was taut. A rush of excitement poured through her body as she positioned the quill, and then began to jab at her lip with the hard, ink stained point. It stung, and her fingers hesitated for the first few jabs, affected by her natural fear of pain. But she could sense that it was not enough, and she made her hand jab harder. The result made her moan around the cock that filled her mouth and throat, and she knew that she had done it right. With a mad joyful determination, she commenced to stab at her helpless cunt lip with the quill, driving the point into her sexual flesh over and over as she sucked on his cock. When she felt a stiffening of his shaft between her lips and a quiver of interest move his body which rested upon hers she knew that she had captured his interest. She continued to jab her lip until it felt like every fraction of an inch was on fire, and then she switched to the other lip. Fortunately she was quite handy with her left hand, so she was able to grip the quill with her left and her inner lip with her right, thereby duplicating the pricking of the inner side of her lip. She sucked hard on his cock when the jabbing resumed. For some reason it seemed to hurt even more, but she persevered, stabbing the quill into her flesh again and again, nothing in her mind except the thought of how much the Captain must be enjoying her display of self-torment.

She was not wrong. Harry watched her strong fingers busily work to inflict pain upon her cunt lips and it seemed as if every prick sent a tingle directly to his cock, which she was sucking with pleasing skill and enthusiasm. Without taking his eyes from the darting quill, he lowered his head to kiss her smooth belly and forearms. It was a beautiful sight, and he knew that he would not be long in coming.

Ceara felt the change in the movement of his hips and cock and guessed that he was close to his climax. She wanted to give him something to help him over the edge, and she was tempted to use the quill upon her clitoris. But with such a tiny target, her movements would be so small and subtle, and lacking in drama. Knowing how much the Captain enjoyed playing with their cunts, the girls had been spending much time examining each other's cunts, taking turns to serve as the model. Except for Áine, the others had little idea of what a cunt even looked like to another person, let

alone how to caress – or torture – one. Now the memory of the round pink shape of the mouth of Róisín's cunt hole came to her mind and she knew what she would do. She gestured for the Captain to spread her cunt hole open wider, and once again felt around to locate her intended target. She gripped the quill tightly and brought it down until she felt the tingling prick of the point touching the folds of her cunt hole. She inhaled through her nostrils as she gathered her courage, and then began to stab herself in the cunt hole with the point of the quill. It hurt badly, each jab of the flexible point driving a spike of pain deep into her loins and making all the sensitive nerves of her cunt burn in sympathy. Unable to see the effects, she wondered if she was piercing her skin and if she was bleeding, but did not allow her apprehension to stay her hand. She silently swore to herself that she would continue to torment her cunt in this manner until she was rewarded with the taste of the Captain's seed in her mouth.

The sight that she presented to him was both impressive and immensely arousing, and Harry groaned in pleasure as he watched the quill repeatedly dive into her hole to stab at her shrinking flesh, each touch of the point leaving a sore red mark. Her self-punishment did not cease although her body writhed in obvious pain beneath him, and this sustained self-martyrdom finally drove him over the top. He cried out as if in mortal pain, and his cock jerked with such force that he fancied that he might drown her with his come.

Ceara sucked vigorously, as if nursing at the very fountain of life, while her hand continued driving the quill against her cunt flesh, determined to continue hurting her cunt for him until the very last shudder of his orgasm was done. At last it was Harry's grip that stayed her hand, and she allowed him to take the quill from her shaking grip. Her cunt was a mass of pain, and she gasped when she felt his lips press gently and gratefully against the battered orifice, and despite the hurt she welcomed his touch and opened herself willingly to him. She quivered as the tip of his tongue stroked delicately over the spot that had recently suffered so much for the sake of his pleasure, and a warm contentment filled her being.

## Chapter Eight

The signal came the next morning. A guard came running up to the house bearing the slim branch, freshly ripped from a bush and twisted into a crude knot. This was the sign that Maryan had confessed was a sign that her true employers desired to meet with her at the side gate. Harry studied the simple artefact with savage satisfaction. Twice the Spaniard had set traps for him. It was time that he returned the favour.

Maryan, cleaned and properly dressed again, walked nervously up to the garden gate. She was painfully aware of the four men with muskets hiding around the gate, their muzzles aimed directly at her. Although Captain Pierce had not told her, she guessed that he had more men stationed outside of the gate as well. If Harry saw anything he saw as suspicious, both she and the Spaniard's agent would die before they could take a single step. The Captain had asked if she possessed a code word by which she could give a secret warning and she had said no, which was the truth. The Captain had warned her that in any case she would be kept constantly under guard and upon the slightest sign that anything had gone amiss, the guard would have instructions to cut her throat. Terror gripped her as she opened the latch with shaking fingers. Cristina had whispered in her ear and what the Spanish woman had promised to do to her should she fail made her want to piss in fear. The door eased open and Maryan allowed her face to be seen through the gap.

"What took you so long, woman? I can't be standing around here like some lazy shepherd."

"I'm here now. You summoned me, so what is it you want?" Maryan hissed.

"Our ambush failed to kill Pierce," he replied, pronouncing the Captain's name as if it were a curse.

"I could hardly miss that fact, since I saw him riding back with my own eyes," Maryan said dryly.

"It is said he was injured though. What news of that?"

"I haven't been called upon to serve him. Only those whores of his, the guards, and that strange foreigner, the Oriental, are allowed in his room. But from the gossip, he was seen to be bleeding heavily and had to be supported by two men. I would guess that since he has not been seen outside of his rooms, his wounds are far from minor."

"Good. I wish the bastard would die of them. But we cannot leave it to chance." He handed her a note. "Here is a time and date. Upon that time, you will ensure that this gate is unlocked, as well as the nearest side door to the house," he said, pointing at the building.

Maryan gasped. "You're going to attack the House? But it's full of people! Servants like me. They'll get hurt too."

"So long as you are safe and get paid, do you really care?" the man asked contemptuously.

She saw his eyes narrow and she realised the danger she was in. Shrugging casually, she said, "Too many deaths will attract a lot of attention ... and a lot of questions. I'm just worried about my own neck."

This seemed to satisfy the man, who nodded. "Just make sure the doors are open and stay out of way and you'll be fine. You know how to reach me if something changes that I need to know."

It was her turn to nod, and then she firmly closed the door in his face. She drove home the bolt and slowly leaned her forehead against the weathered wood with a sigh of relief. When she finally looked up again, she turned and saw Captain Pierce gesturing at her from near to the house, a rifled hunting musket leaning against his side. There were soft sounds of movement to either side of her. She knew that even now if she tried to cry out to warn her associate she would be cut down before a sound could leave her throat. Her shoulders slumped and she resignedly made her way towards the Captain. She held out the scrap of paper. "This is when they are coming. I've done as you asked, now what is to happen to me?"

"For now, imprisonment. If things go as I plan, I shall have the time and inclination to consider your future. Make any trouble and you shall suffer for it."

The Captain's eyes were bleak and cold as a rocky cliff, and Maryan shuddered. She cursed



the avarice that had prompted her to set herself against this man. "I shall behave. I beg that you be merciful."

Harry sniffed in disgust. "You have just plotted to get everyone in this house killed. If you had not been caught, this betrayal would have been real. Simply by preventing the people around you from tearing you limb from limb I am already being merciful." He waved his hand impatiently. "Take her away. She is to be stripped naked again, and her hands secured so that she cannot hurt herself or others."

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According to the note, the Spaniard's men and perhaps de Segovia himself intended to attack the following night, or more accurately, early morning. Harry spent the rest of the day making plans and making sure that all of the servants and slaves would be moved to safety at the last possible moment so that no chance of another spy amongst them could reveal his plans. Certain corridors and entrances were locked and barricaded, as were the tops of the stairs. He also made sure there were barrels of water and sand laid out at convenient places in case the assassins decided to resort to fire or the curtains and furnishings caught fire because of the muzzle flashes of the guns that would be fired. He met with Briars in private and informed him of the final part of the welcome he planned for their anticipated visitors. They shook hands and he watched Briars ride away. By the time he was done, the sun was low in the sky.

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Even though the weather was still comfortably warm, he had the servants prepare a heated bath. Because of the heat in these climes, bathing was much more popular than it was back in chilly England. Right now, he wanted to soak in hot water to loosen his muscles and to help him relax. The wound across his chest still ached and he just wanted to close his eyes and relax in the tub. When he arrived at the bath room, he was surprised to find Áine waiting beside the large wooden tub, and despite the presence of the servants who were still pouring buckets of hot water into the tub, she was completely naked. He watched as she sprinkled flower petals into the water and added scented oils.

"Your bath awaits, Captain," she said with a welcoming smile. She glided gracefully towards him and helped him undress. She studied his wound with close concern. "It does not seem to be festering."

"When treated by Master Chao, wounds seldom do. Although I admit I don't understand when he explains his people's ideas of medicine, I do know from first-hand experience that they do work, and better than those butchers that claim to be healers in London."

She kissed his chest. "I'm glad." She helped him climb into the tub and stood ready to scrub his back.

Harry splashed the water in the huge tub. "Come in. There's plenty of room and you can keep me company."

Áine grinned and threw her leg over the high wooden edge, but instead of swinging her other leg over, she straddled the narrow wooden edge and let it press against her slit.

Harry noticed what she was doing and turned on his side to watch, his hand stroking her slick wet thigh.

Áine held out her hand to him. "Help me balance, and I'll show you something."

Harry had a good idea what she was going to do, so he held out his hand and braced his legs against the sides of the tub so he wouldn't slide when she pressed down on his hand. Her crotch was about two feet from his face so he had an excellent view as she lifted her feet off of the ground and let her entire weight rest upon her cunt, driving it hard against the wooden edge.

Then Áine discovered that she could maintain her balance by pressing the soles of her feet against the side of the bath, one inside and under the water and one outside. She took her hand from

the Captain's and clasped both of them behind her neck, arching her back and lifting her breasts. "Does the view please you, Captain?" she asked lightly, betraying none of the crushing pain that the very narrow edge cutting into her cunt caused her.

With a grin Harry replied, "The view is spectacular, and I am not unappreciative of the effort you are taking to provide it."

"It is my pleasure, Captain." She winced and laughed softly. "Well, not literally my pleasure, but it does give me pleasure nonetheless."

"I know the army sometimes employs the "horse" to punish soldiers who have offended the regulations or more likely their officers, but I have never employed it myself. How does it feel? I ask because I trust you to provide me an honest answer."

Áine tossed her head as if she could shake off the pain and looked down at her cunt. "It feels like an enormous ache, or if I be having my finger crushed under something heavy. Honestly it is not very sexy, other than for the fact that it is my cunt that is being hurt." She smiled teasingly at him. "It does feel good, but only because I be hurting for you."

Harry let the tip of his erection rise out of the water like some ancient sea monster and took one last admiring look at the fiery haired Irish girl's painful pose and then held out his hand. "Come down from there. I'll reserve that punishment for when I am desirous of being particularly mean to you. I'm sure that together we can come up with something more interesting to do with that pretty cunt of yours."

Áine lowered her foot into the water and groaned when she took the pressure off of her cunt. "Ow, ow, ow! Getting off hurts even more," she said, rubbing herself ruefully. But she quickly lowered herself into the warm water and snuggled up against the Captain. "Let me wash you, and then we can go to bed and ... play."

Harry pulled her close with a splash and kissed her soundly. You're a fine girl, Áine."

She grinned. "I be knowing that. Aren't you the lucky one to have me?" She cut off his reply by lowering her head and taking his cock in her mouth. In truth she felt that she was the lucky one, for no one in her staid home town would ever have appreciate what Harry obviously saw as being valuable skills.

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Áine ran giggling into the bedroom, drops of water still sparkling on her skin and threw herself onto the bed, rolling about and showing off her naked body in all manner of obscene poses. With her face on the bed and her hips raised high she wagged her bottom at the Captain, who watched her antics with an amused smile.

Harry was drawn closer when she used her hands to pull her buttock cheeks apart and open her cunt hole into a deep and mysteriously shadowed pink tunnel. He loved the sight of women's cunts, and for some reason Áine's cunt possessed an air of sweetness and innocence in his eyes.

Áine felt his breath on her cunt and smiled to herself. "Do you like it, Captain? Does the sight of it be giving you naughty ideas?" She rocked her hips, waving her cunt at him.

Harry reached into the bedside drawer and pulled out a short length of tanned leather in the shape of a boot lace and began to snap it at the tempting target that she offered while she continued to rock and sway.

"Missed! And yet again!" she cried. Of course the leather string had not missed, the snapping tip merely hadn't landed right in her cunt hole. The biting stings of the little whip made her lust boil and her desire to have her cunt hurt glow bright like a signal fire. In her mind she remembered all those rainy afternoons curled up with one of her father's obscene books and imagining that she was the girl in the story and feeling so aroused that it hurt. "Yes!" she shouted gleefully when the Captain managed to snap the leather strip directly into her cunt hole. The sharp pain felt so good, better than food or wine, better than fine clothes. Best of all, she knew that the Captain understood and did not condemn her for it. In fact, he valued it and that made her incredibly happy. So happy in fact that she almost laughed when his next snap of the wicked leather string

caught her clitoris. It was a "miss" according to the game they were playing, but she liked it because it hurt more, and wondered if she dared to ask him to aim for it. She subtly shifted her fingers to try and expose her clitoris more, but it was difficult from that position. On the other hand, more and more of the quick flicking strokes were snapping right inside her cunt hole and she wanted to shout with excitement. Even she couldn't explain it, but having the inside of her cunt hole hurt felt wonderful even though it didn't make sense when she put it in words. She prayed that he would do something more extreme to her this time.

Harry could see that Áine was getting tremendously aroused by what he was doing, and this in turn aroused him. She was the most enthusiastic and playful of the girls, and although she wasn't significantly younger by age, she acted and spoke as if she were, and he guessed that perhaps it was because of her more secluded upbringing. But she was certainly blossoming now and he found her company invigorating. It was clear that what he was doing was only teasing her, but he enjoyed the precise snapping impact of the light whip upon her cunt hole and he kept at it for several more minutes, during which she never flagged or tried to avoid the intimate punishment. In fact, she seemed to be offering her cunt to him with more vigour than ever. He forced himself to stop when he saw visible bruising and swelling of the flesh surrounding her cunt hole. Leaning forward he planted a kiss upon her cunt, at the same time inhaling the aroma of her sex mingled with sweat and the natural scent of her body. "Thank you. That was delightful." He felt her press her cunt back at him as if returning the kiss with that pair of lips, and the thought made him grin.

Áine had been lost in a cloudy, stormy dream world of floating joy mingled with crackling lightning bolts of pain, and it took her a moment to find her voice. However his kiss on her cunt thrilled her. Everybody liked to pretend that a girl's cunt didn't exist, and the Captain's obvious and undisguised enjoyment in every aspect of her cunt was such a joy to her. She loved thinking about it, looking at it in the mirror, touching it, and of course imagining all the shivery terrible things that could be done to it, and it was becoming increasingly clear that the Captain shared her fascination. For that alone she would have made herself his permanent slave – or married him – without the slightest hesitation. When he climbed up onto the bed beside her she rolled onto her side facing him, with her upper knee cocked and raised so that he could easily see and touch her cunt. "That was very nice," she said with girlish enthusiasm, as if he had just given her a piece of her favourite fruit. "I love your skill with that lash and how you could make it snap right inside the hole," she said, tapping the spot in question with a slim fingertip. The soreness made her gasp and grin. "It be so wondrous sore," she said in explanation.

He held out his arm and she seemed to flow towards him pressing herself into his embrace and throwing her leg over his, pressing his thigh against her cunt. "You're an amazing girl."

With her head resting on his arm she rocked her hips and rubbed her cunt against his thigh. "My father says I'm the spawn of the devil."

"Your father obviously doesn't appreciate the finer things in life."

She smile coyly. "I be one of the finer things?" Her wetness had spread to his thigh and her cunt glided most delightfully against him. She felt him press his thigh into her crotch and she grinned.

"Most definitely. Something to be savoured, like fine whisky."

"I'm good as whisky? I'm flattered," she said archly.

"You should be if you knew how much work, care, time, and love went into making it."

Being from Ireland, she knew how much good whisky was treasured and decided that she had in fact been complimented. "Want another taste of me?" she asked, rubbing her nipples against him. She was rubbing her cunt harder against him, and her breathing was getting faster and more strained. Being in his arms and the way he was talking about her drove her wild with lust. She wanted to come so badly, but she also wanted him to continue playing with her cunt. "Please!"

"Please what?"

"Please play with me some more." A stroke of her clitoris along his thigh made her shudder.

"Please hurt my cunt again. I need it so badly," she said in a voice that was almost a moan.

His hand went to her cunt and held it, feeling the warmth, the softness, and the wetness. He

ran a fingertip up along her slit and her long slow sigh warmed his neck. "There's a polished wooden case, flat like a pistol case, in that drawer over there. Go and fetch it and we'll play."

She kissed his chest and rolled off of the bed, landing on the floor on all fours like a cat before springing up to go over to the drawers. Unlike Cristina, she seemed totally unaware of her nakedness and skipped along making her buttocks jiggle interestingly. She returned with a polished walnut case held in both hands. "Be this the one?"

Harry nodded. "That's the one. Put it on the bed and open it."

She obeyed and gasped. "By the saints! That's ... just beautiful," she said, eyeing the collection of items neatly arrayed inside both the lid and body of the case. Some items were hard to identify, but several were clearly dildos, but dildos that were clearly designed to be uncomfortable if not extremely painful when inserted or pulled out. After a moment, she realised that some of the oddly shaped metal items were meant to be attached to the dildos, creating metal ridges, spikes, hooks, and even blades. She shivered with excitement even as icy tingles of fear ran down her spine.

Harry pulled the case towards him to allow her to return to her place beside his body. He was surprised when she threw her arms around him.

"They're so ... so ... amazing!" she said, breathless with excitement. "It's as if you had been there in my dreams and imaginings for all those years I spent in the library."

He had hoped that she would be accepting of what was in the case, but her unrestrained enthusiasm was still a surprise to him despite what he had learned of her character. He didn't insult her by asking if she was sure, but instead lifted the base of a dildo, little more than a handle with a screw socket at the top and various grooves and indentations to allow for attachments, from the case. Next he selected a top half, one that was shaped like a penis, but instead of the smooth mushroom head, it was covered with short wooden spikes. He held it up for Áine to see and smiled when she nodded and licked her lips. He carefully screwed it onto the base and an inlaid catch locked it in place. "I keep this set separate from the collection in the cabinet due to the dangerous nature of some of the parts."

"Should I raise my legs or get on my belly?" Áine asked, her thighs and feet rubbing together in anticipation and completely undeterred by his oblique warning.

"No, lets go slowly. Stay beside me, but I want you to put some fingers in your cunt and stretch you hole out a bit so that this will go in more easily." He drew her close with her head resting on his shoulder, a pile of pillows beneath their heads and shoulders. He watched as her fingers dipped into her cunt hole and began to work, and kissed her forehead and then her lips. Using the arm that was around her shoulders, he plucked and toyed with her nipple, gently one moment, then briefly pinching her the next.

Áine moaned and writhed against his body. She returned his kiss, her tongue reaching to dance with his as her fingers worked industriously inside her cunt hole. If it had been left to her, she would have preferred the girl, herself in this case, to be tight and unready as possible, but she didn't question the Captain's experience and knowledge. If he wanted her cunt to be wet and ready, that is what she would give him. Besides, it felt very good, especially with him watching her do it. She guessed that he wouldn't want her to come just yet, so when she felt that she was as hot and ready as she would ever be she said, "I'm ready. You can be putting it in," she said. She realised she was trembling with excitement. She felt the spiky head touch her cunt.

"Open yourself up," Harry said. He didn't want to bruise or tear her inner lips.

Her fingers were still near her cunt, so it was easy for her to ease her lips apart and to help the dildo's head move past her moist lips and press against her hole. "It's at the hole." She saw his gaze upon her and she moved her head in a tiny nod of encouragement. She pressed herself against him tighter and dug her heels into the bed and held her breath when she felt the dildo press against her cunt. She felt as if she was preparing to run a race, and so incredibly alive. She knew pain was coming, but she felt no fear at all, or at least not of the pain. She did fear that she would not be good enough, brave enough, strong enough, not just for the Captain, but for herself. She had lost her father, her friends, the village she was born in, all because of something she knew that she needed,

and now she feared to discover that it was nothing but a dream, a child-woman's fantasy. The dildo pressed harder and the spikes dug into the taut flesh of her opening. It hurt ... it hurt a lot ... and then it came. The indescribable something that changed the hurting into a lewd, shimmering fire in her loins. Suddenly she could breathe again, and she grinned as the pain grew and grew while the large spiked head of the dildo forced her hole open with polished wooden claws. Her thighs opened rather than closed, and she pushed her hips and cunt against the hard intruding object, embracing it, embracing the wonderful pain it brought. She saw his bicep bulge as the Captain continued to push, and she clenched her teeth as her cunt hole was stretched and the stubby spikes shouldered their way into her tightness heedless of hurt or damage. Countless imaginary scenes from feverishly consumed books describing agonising penetration floated past the eye of her mind and were now brought to screaming life by the beautiful pain that filled her cunt. Her mouth opened wide as the hurting climbed to a new peak, and then suddenly the spiked head was inside, tightly gripped by the walls of her cunt hole. "It be in!" she said with a gasp. She turned her head towards the Captain and kissed him, moaning passionately. She felt the dildo stir inside of her. "Oh yes, fuck me with it. Fuck me hard!"

Harry gripped her shoulders with one arm both for his own support and hers, and with his outstretched arm, drove the dildo into the petite Irish girl's cunt. The spikes that covered the bulbous head were forced against the tight walls of her cunt, the points poking and dragging against the sensitive inner parts of her sex, ploughing their way into her body until at last colliding against her cervix.

Pain rippled through Áine's belly, which she arched up into the air before landing back on the bed with a muffled thump. Even though sweat made her brow glisten, she kissed his shoulder and said, "I'm fine, I am. Go on then, do it as hard as you be wanting." Although this was the first time the inside of her cunt had been hurt like this, and though she was close to being a virgin, it didn't feel wrong or bad at all. She closed her eyes and rocked her body in time to the slow sliding of the dildo in and out of her cunt, all the while raking her insides with the ball of spikes at its head. She was getting wetter and despite the spikes the dildo was moving with increasing smoothness along her cunt hole. The Captain did not pull his hand when it reached the end and her cervix was receiving more than its share of punishment from the spikes. Showers of sparks like the burning flash of a pile of gunpowder exploded behind her eyes each time the spiked tip rammed the gate to her uterus as if it intended to smash its way through into her womb. Her suffering was the worst she had ever experienced in her life – but so was her delight.

Harry had risen to sit beside her, allowing his hand and arm to move with more freedom and force. He had been stroking her belly and breasts with his other hand until he felt her hand touch his, and then their fingers intertwined as if they might go for a walk. He felt her squeeze his hand when the dildo plunged deep and he squeezed back. "You're beautiful," he said. He pulled the dildo out until only the head was embraced by the most sensitive part of her cunt hole and forcefully twisted.

The sudden explosion of pain caught Áine by surprise and scream was almost silent, gagged by the amazing pain that gripped her throat, her entire body going momentarily rigid as agony flooded her being, and then her legs kicked out straight and stiff as she came. Her hips bounced uncontrollably up and down, working the spiked head even harder against the bruised and raw walls of her cunt hole and making the bed shake and creak alarmingly. The additional pain stoked the fires of her orgasm and she came even harder, her cries and moans a long continuous chant of mindless lust.

Harry carefully withdrew the dildo and set it on the case, then he pushed her quivering legs apart and brought his face down to her cunt. He pressed his lips to her cunt, tasting the juices of her come and a faint tang of fresh blood. He opened her gently and examined the reddened, swollen orifice and nodded in satisfaction when he saw only a few tiny abrasions. He kissed her again and ran his tongue over her heated cunt, making the panting girl coo in pleased delight. Then he returned to his position beside her and stroked her cheek with the backs of his fingers. "Are you all right?"

Áine grinned and threw her arms around his neck, hugging him tightly. "That was so very good. I thought I might die from the joy of it, indeed I did."

"I feared that the pain would be too much for you."

She licked his lips teasingly. "Never. Whatever you would after be doing to my cunt, I be liking."

He licked the tip of her nose. "Have a care what you say girl, for I may take you at your word."

"Pick your game and my cunt shall be ready. And while you decide —" She wriggled agilely around so that her face was level with his cock. Holding his hardness with her hands she commenced to lick upon it as if it had been dipped in honey.

Harry rested his head upon her lower thigh and stared at her wet sticky cunt, enjoying her enthusiastic if not very skilful oral tribute to his cock. Staring at her swollen inner lips and even more swollen clitoris a sudden fancy came upon him. The very thought of it made his cock twitch and harden.

Áine noticed it immediately and kissed his knob. "You've thought of something. Pray tell me what it is," she demanded with a renewed feeling of anticipation and excitement. "I know it must be something cruel, but tell me, I be begging of you."

Harry leaned forward and tickled her clitoris with the tip of his tongue. "There is an addition to the dildo that was made for me by a watch-maker, designed to punish this little beauty. I warn you, it is quite severe."

She laughed. "Your warning be only making me more eager to experience it, as I'm sure you be knowing. My clitoris is at your disposal, Captain." She kissed his cock as proof of her earnestness.

With his cock hard and aching in anticipation, he scooted over to the wooden case and began assembling a more complex arrangement on the dildo. Everything clicked and screwed into place with precise smoothness like the lock of an expensive pistol or a fine watch. When he was done, the dildo sported a strange extension that protruded from its side consisting of several sliding and hinged steel rods that all came together at a circular metal shape like a large thumb ring. But it was a ring that also sported several attached leather buckled straps.

Áine frowned and shook her head in puzzlement. "What the Devil be that thing?"

"Get up on your knees and I shall show you," Harry said, amused by her confusion. When she was kneeling with her thighs well apart, he brought the tip of the dildo to her cunt. "First this goes in, and I'll need you to hold it there for me."

Watching in fascinated interest, she nodded and helped him insert the smooth rounded head of the dildo into her cunt. There were no spikes this time, so it went in with ease and actually felt rather good as it filled her cunt hole with its solid bulk.

"Now pull back the skin from your clitoris so that it is as well exposed as you can make it," Harry said, holding the circular metal device in front of her loins.

Well intrigued now, Áine did as he asked, feeling a tingling thrill as her clitoris was bared and it became clear that it would be the focus of the apparatus. She shivered when he placed the cold metal ring over and around her clitoris. The ring was over a quarter of an inch thick, so it completely and menacingly surrounded and concealed her clitoris.

"Hold it in place while I attach the straps."

It was obvious he was referring to the ring shaped device, so she pressed it against her loins with her fingertips. The straps went around her waist and around each thigh, so that when he was done the ring was held firmly in place around her clitoris, and because of the swivelling metal arms, it also prevented the dildo from completely coming out of her cunt hole.

"There! We're nearly ready. Brace yourself now. I'm going to put my cock into your rear hole."

This announcement came as a surprise, but Áine had been prepared for him to demand entry into that other hole ever since she had arrived, so she just meekly said, "Of course, Captain, and right welcome you'll be."

He placed a dab of grease between her buttocks from a little jar that was in the case. With a hand over and around her shoulder to help her balance he said, "Pull your bottom cheeks apart for me."

"Yes Captain," she said, the rushing tides of lust beginning to flow within her loins. The pressing of his cock against her arse hole was a shock, but she bit her lip and leaned back, accepting the feeling of pressure and the stretching of her tightly clenched arse hole. She tried to make herself relax, and was greeted by a certain degree of success and the smooth sliding of the very tip of his cock into the pink orifice. Her mouth opened wide as the stretching increased until she would have sworn her arse hole was going to tear like a piece of old fabric, but to her surprise she felt his cock pop into her hole, and her muscles close tightly around it. She realised that she was quivering and panting, but she felt well and truly pleased with herself when his cock sank into her body until his loins pressed firmly against her buttocks. "Ooh, I thought I was after screaming I was, but there you are right inside of me. Is it good in there?"

No girl had ever thought to ask him that before, and he chuckled and kissed her shoulder. "It feels very good indeed, Áine. Hot and very tight. Does it hurt?"

It was her turn to laugh. "You be knowing it did, Captain, and 'tis wicked of you to be asking, just to hear me say it. But aye, it hurt something fierce at the start, but not so much when you got right stuck into me." But what of the thing you have stuck on the front of me?"

He kissed the back of her head and said, "Inside the ring surrounding your clitoris are a number of small metal arms, thin and flat like pieces of watch spring and mounted on a hinge at one end. Each has a little spring and a latch that holds it in place against the inner side of the ring. Once I press a catch at the base of the dildo and push it up and into you, it will start a second ring behind the little arms spinning. A tiny hook attached to this inner ring will cause each of the arms in turn to snap out on passing, striking your clitoris smartly before returning to its position against the main ring. There are six of the little spring arms, so your clitoris will be struck from a slightly different angle each time and this will continue to happen driven by the weight of the dildo as it falls out of your cunt hole. Once it has fallen to the limit of the connecting arms, I or you merely have to push it back in to start the arms moving again.

"And I'll wager you'll be after fucking my cunt with the dildo until you come in my arse, amn't I right?"

"That you are, my little Irish beauty. You are a clever one."

"Then you'll best be fucking my arse, shouldn't you?" She said with a tight grin. "Let me be taking care of the dildo for you."

Harry licked the base of her neck, gripped her hips firmly, and began to fuck her arse hole.

Áine reached down and pushed the dildo all the way up into her cunt until the tip bumped against her cervix. Looking down she saw the metal arms bend at their hinges, and then she took her supporting fingers away. The heavy wooden dildo immediately began to slide and fall, causing a faint mechanical whirr inside the thick metal ring. There was a tiny metallic snap and she jumped. "By the saints, that – " There was another snap before she could finish her utterance and her clitoris was smacked again, from a slightly different angle, and then again, and again, like the steady rhythmic ticking of a clock. The stinging pain made the muscles of her cunt contract, forcing the dildo out of her hole and driving the punishing mechanism that slapped her clitoris with tiny metal flails – Snap! Snap! Snap! The pain was frighteningly intense and concentrated in one tiny spot, like the stinging of an endless row of bees one after another. At the same time she was strongly conscious of the dildo slowly sliding out of her cunt hole, in addition to the sweetly aching sensation of the Captain's cock fucking her arse. It felt like her clitoris was being torn apart a tiny bit at a time, and the agony made her dizzy with pleasure. "That be so ... so ... fucking good ..." she moaned, her hands crushing her breasts. She wished she could see the Captain's face and that he could see hers as she suffered and delighted in the pain for him.

Harry's cock felt as if it was in the grip of the most skilled hand in existence, and her entire body constantly shook and shuddered in time to the faint clicking and snapping of the torture device adding to the delight that his cock experienced. He wrapped his arms around her waist and began to

fuck her.

Áine felt the dildo stop falling, and with an incredible effort of will, reached down and firmly shoved the dildo back into her cunt, fucking herself with it and starting the cycle of clitoral torture once again. Oddly, the fucking of her arse no longer hurt. In fact she was enjoying the firm slippery feeling of his cock inside her arse, just as she opened herself to the way her clitoris was being hurt by the device. Her moans were almost musical, like a Gregorian Chant, filled with fervour and longing. Her mind and thoughts became lost in the beautiful pain and the joy of being sexually used by the skilful hand of the Captain. The steady flashes of pain flickered bright behind her eyes and filled her being with erotic lightning. It was like the pleasure of an orgasm brought to unbearable levels of intensity, so strong that she thought she might die of it.

The knowledge of her pain, and the tangible evidence of it that he found in her body gave Harry a pure burning delight, and he too moaned and grunted as he drove his hardness in and out of her almost painfully tight arse hole. He realised that she was saying "It hurts, it hurts, it hurts ..." over and over endlessly, but in a strange, rapturous tone that made his spine tingle.

Her hips and buttocks thrust and ground in perfect harmony with his plunging strokes, two bodies working in ecstatic harmony, both driven by the torment being inflicted upon that one tiny spot in her loins and the nearly explosive joy and pleasure that roared through her body. Her breasts felt hot and swollen, and her cunt gripped the wooden dildo so hard that she expected the hard dark wood to crack and splinter under the pressure. So eagerly did she push the dildo back into her dripping wet cunt each time it reached the bottom of its stroke that the whirring clicking punishment of her clitoris barely paused, the tiny whips flailing her clitoris with relentless mechanical precision. She had come at least twice, and the thrusting of his cock into her arse hole was a fiery delight. She idly wondered if her clitoris was going to be permanently damaged, and she realised that she didn't care because it felt so good.

The experience was far too intense for him to last very long, and Harry cried "I'm coming! Oh fuck I'm coming." He drove his cock into her arse as if he was trying to push it completely through her body and he jerked so hard that he almost knocked her off of her feet when his semen poured into her arse in a wild spray of cream. He grabbed her wrist when he realised that she was going to push the dildo up into herself again. "That's enough Áine, that's enough."

"I don't want it to be stopping," she replied urgently, maddened with need.

Harry gently hushed her and reached around her hip to disconnect the spring mechanism by pressing the catch at the base of the dildo. The tiny metal whip arms fell silent and he kissed her shoulders and neck as he unfasten the straps from around her waist and thighs. Holding on to a strap he allowed the dildo to fall from between her thighs and carefully lifted the bulky metal ring from around her clitoris. "Stay still and let me see how you are." He moved around to her front and knelt down to examine her clitoris. As he had expected, it was badly swollen, red and bruised, and appeared almost as if it had been skinned. No other woman had ever suffered such an intense session with the device and he had feared that there would be more damage than he wanted, but to his relief there was nothing that care and time would not heal. He hesitated, and then pressed a gentle kiss against her clitoris. He heard her hiss, but then she pressed her cunt firmly against his lips, showing him that she still welcomed his touch.

"That was the most incredible thing I have ever be after experiencing," Áine exclaimed, her voice full of wonder and excitement. "Is the injury severe? When can I be doing it again?"

Harry felt his cock give a twitch of returning life at her words. "You would really do that again if I didn't force you?" he asked as he stood up and put his hands on her shoulders.

Her smile told him even more than her words. "I be ready to don the device right now ... if you are," she said, mischievously glancing at his dozing cock.

He made her squeal in shock by taking her in his arms, pulling her down onto the bed and tickling her mercilessly.

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All the arrangements and plans had been made to greet their uninvited visitors who were due to come within hours. Harry stood facing the four girls in their private quarters. "Remember, there will be guards in the corridor. When I leave I want you to barricade the door with that set of drawers and not to open it until you hear my voice again. If I am unable to come to you –"

The girls all cried out in horrified protest but fell silent at his determined gesture.

"– If I am unable to come, Briars will come in my place. Although it is highly unlikely, if we are driven from the house and the Spaniard's men come to the door instead, I have brought you these." He lifted the wooden chest onto the table and opened the lid. He smiled when he heard Cristina make a sound of satisfaction. "I am not asking you to fight to the death, but there is a chance that they will seek to harm you in order to spite me. I shall leave it to you to decide whether to choose surrender or to fight. These are to help you should you choose the latter." Inside the chest were eight light pistols such as men might carry in their coat pocket or women in their purses, along with powder horns and a pouch full of balls. "Merely firing one might cause them to retreat." Next he picked up the sheathed rapier leaning against the wall. It was the one that Cristina had been using during their morning practise and suited to her height. Silently he handed it to her. He was glad when the girls all nodded soberly rather than making hysterical declarations of loyalty.

Cristina touched a pistol's oiled metal. "I am no longer pure and in the eyes of the Church I am an adulteress. My father would never suffer such a shame. If captured I would not live to see Spanish territory. Most likely they will rape me and then throw me overboard, or worse. I shall not allow myself to be taken alive."

Aine took Cristina's hand. "I chose to be here, and I do not regret that decision. I'll not be ravished and made a plantation slave."

The others nodded their heads in agreement.

Harry looked at Róisín. "You feel that way too?"

She nodded again. "I might not have chosen this life at first, but I am yours now, and they are my sisters and I will be standing by them."

"Let us hope that all goes as planned, and you can busy yourselves planning a victory celebration instead." He went around and kissed each of them before walking to the door.

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When the girls had managed to push the heavy cabinet against the door, Cristina lifted one of the pistols from the chest and checked it. As she expected, it wasn't loaded. No one in their right mind carried around a case of primed and loaded flintlocks. "Does anybody not know how to use a flintlock?"

Ceara and Róisín were farm girls and had used firearms before, but Áine held up her hand. She said, "I be after reading a book on duelling, but I've never actually used a gun before."

Cristina had suspected as much. "You two pick a pair of guns each and load them, while I show Áine what to do." She took the elfin girl over to the window and showed her how to load and fire the empty pistol and then loaded one of the pair slowly before allowing Áine to try.

The red haired girl quickly and efficiently loaded the pistol, smiling at Cristina's surprise. "I already be after knowing the theory from my reading. Once you be after showing me how it worked in reality, it wasn't difficult."

"If God smiles upon us we shall never have to use them," Cristina said, crossing herself, followed by the others.

## Chapter Nine

Filipe de Segovia, trader and sometimes agent of Spain raised his hooded lantern and counted the men gathered around him and examined the gate leading into the grounds of the home of Captain Harry Pierce. He would finish the Captain's meddling in Spain's affairs tonight and at the same time ensure that his plans for Port Royal would go ahead unimpeded. When he was sure that everyone had made it safely to the wall he handed the lantern to another man and slowly reached out to touch the gate. He had not realised that he was holding his breath until the gate silently moved under his touch. Standing to the side, he drew his sword, pushed the gate with its point and waited for the gate to swing open. When the action was not greeted by cries of alarm or a blast of musket fire, he led the way into the darkness of the garden. With the man bearing the lantern leading the way through the inky blackness, he headed for the house. When the pale vertical whiteness of the house's exterior walls became barely visible, the top of the roof cutting a black line across the stars, he tapped the man in front of him to halt, and once more he silently waited for his men to gather around him. He had gone over the plan in detail before they set out. So long as they didn't get lost in the garden, everything should work out as expected.

The men split up into two groups, the larger one standing behind de Segovia, and a smaller group of four led by Luis, the same man who had met with Maryan, split off and headed for the side of the house.

When de Segovia was satisfied that Luis was headed in the right direction, he whispered a command and headed for the side door that the girl should have left unlocked for him. If she had failed in her task he would find her and make her scream for a very long time before she died. At the door he waited for another couple of minutes to allow the other team to get into position, and then he very carefully tried the door. He could feel the tension of the men behind him and he could only hope that no one would carelessly shoot him in the back if they met with resistance. But once more the door opened silently and the hallway and corridor behind it seemed to be unguarded. He smiled. This was going to be easier than he had hoped. The fool Pierce was indeed blinded by the prospect of cunt, and Maryan was a very tasty morsel indeed. He had picked her with care and had made sure that she was well motivated to cater to Pierce's every whim. He suppressed a chuckle at the thought that Pierce might be bedding the girl at this very moment, or at least sleeping beside her. That would be convenient, since he would be able to rid himself of both of them at one go. With Pierce dead he had no further use for the girl, and he had no intention of actually paying her all the gold he had promised. He mentally reviewed the map of the interior of the house that Maryan had drawn for him and compared it with what he saw. He did not entirely trust Maryan, which was the reason for the second group of men. He pointed with his sword. Pierce's bedroom would be down the corridor and up a flight of stairs. Most of the rooms and doors in this part of the house were closets and storage areas, so there was little chance of meeting a servant until they were closer to the centre of the house. With a rapier in his right hand and a pistol in his left he set off down the poorly lit corridor towards the glow of lamps and candles at the other end where it joined to the main hallway and staircases.

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Harry nodded in approval when the observer who had been appointed to watch the side door had seen it start to open and then had run across the main hall and into the dining room where Harry and a group of his men were waiting.

"They come, Captain," the man reported, panting from the sudden dash. Sailors were strong and good climbers, but seldom engaged in much running.

Harry looked back at his men. "Remember, no one moves until they are all in the hallway and headed for the stairs. We want all our rats in the trap before we spring it." He peered through the hair-thin opening in the door and his fingers tightened around the grip of his pistol when the first of the raiders or assassins stepped into the carpeted and well lit hallway. At this range they would

only have the chance to unload a single volley of two pistol shots each before closing to finish the affair with blades. He frowned when more men stepped into the open with no sign of de Segovia. Maryan had been unable to tell him how many men the Spaniard would be bringing, and he began to worry when man after man continued to appear and spread out around the hallway. It would not be long before one of them decided to check the dining room and forced his hand. "Get ready boys," he whispered. Harry heard footsteps and pressed his eye back to the thin crack. A large, heavily scarred man with a cutlass and pistol was walking directly towards the door and him. He carefully cocked his pistol, holding it level at his waist and prepared to step back and pull the door open. But if he was forced to fire before all of the invaders were inside the hallway they might scatter, resulting in a running fight all through the house and grounds. The man was now so close that he almost blocked Harry's view and he was staring suspiciously at the door. Then over the man's shoulder Harry saw de Segovia finally step into the open. He had never met the Spaniard, but he had seen the man around Port Royal. Harry stepped back, pulling the door open. He saw the approaching man's eyes widen in shock as he raised and extended his arm, thrusting his pistol muzzle into the would-be assassin's face and pulling the trigger. A tiny hiss and flash was followed almost instantaneously by the much louder thunder of his pistol firing. A ring of black smoke and a spear of flame shot out from its muzzle, searing the unfortunate man's face and eyes even as the heavy lead ball crashed into his open mouth and sending a spray of blood and bone flying out from the back of his head. Harry raised a foot and kicked the already dead man's body clear of the doorway. "Up and at them! No quarter! Kill them all!" he roared as he dropped the pistol and pulled the second one from his sash while charging out into the hallway and stepping to the side.

Harry edged along the wall in search of de Segovia while a volley of pistol shots and the boom of a blunderbuss blasted out from the room he had just vacated, musket balls and smaller shot from the blunderbuss smashing into the confused group of invaders. More of his men charged out of the door opposite to the one he had come from and the two groups formed into a double row blocking off the front of the house and the front door. Unlike most pirates and privateers, Harry had hired a grizzled ex-soldier to train his men, and they displayed much more discipline than most fighters from Port Royal. The front rank aimed, fired their second pistols and knelt to reload, while the men at the back fired their second volley.

Confused and panicked by the ambush and being caught in the open without a shred of cover, the invaders cried out in dismay when they finally spotted the barricades at the top of both staircases. This left them only one route of escape, which was the wide corridor leading to the rear of the house. At least three of the invaders were dead or dying and several more were bleeding. A few braver men stopped to fire back, but their shots mostly went wide and only one of Harry's men cried out and fell. Then all of them turned and made a concerted dash for the corridor. The men in the front were half way down the corridor when they saw what was waiting for them and skidded to a halt, screaming in panic. But the ones at the back couldn't see and continued to push forward, resulting in a panicked jam of men. Then it was too late.

Harry's men knew what to expect and dived to either side and onto the ground, throwing themselves heedlessly on top of their comrades. Then the first of the small falcon cannon, dismounted from the Talon and seated on a cart packed with bags of sand fired, the roar shaking the house and hurling a hurricane of lead shot straight down the corridor. The leading men in the confused mass of invaders were cut down like wheat by a scythe, parts of bodies and innards flying back in a gory storm to slam into the surviving assassins. Trapped between two dooms, the men dropped their weapons and screamed for mercy.

But there would be no mercy this night. Harry's men knew these men in the employ of the hated Spanish had intended to massacre everyone in the house while they slept, and their hearts were cold. The men rose from the ground, their pistols reloaded and charged forward in a growling mass.

Even as the screaming began, Harry realised that de Segovia was not amongst the dead or soon to be dead. The last to enter the hallway and shielded by his doomed men, the Spanish agent had managed to retreat back the way he had come, and Harry ran after him. It would have been

suicidal to blindly charge into the garden, since de Segovia might have been waiting to shoot him down. He dived through the side door and when there was no shot, began to make his way through the bushes and trees in the direction of the gate, listening for movement in the darkness. He began to run when he heard the metallic clack of the gate's bolt being hurriedly thrown, followed by the sound of running feet. But by the time he reached the gate he heard the sound of retreating hoof beats. The Spaniard had escaped. Harry spun around at the sound of a pistol shot coming from an upstairs window. His face twisted in horror when he realised what it meant. The women were under attack! He started to run, ignoring the clawing branches and obstacles in his way.

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The girls had been listening in trepidation to the noise coming from downstairs, and Cristina only realised something was wrong when the grappling iron clunked against the stone and wood of the balcony.

Róisín stared at the steel hook in puzzlement. She stepped towards the balcony and leaned out to peer towards the ground. "What is that..."

"Róisín! No!" Cristina cried, reaching out to pull her back. A second grappling iron thudded into the rim of the parapet at the other end of the balcony just as there was a muffled bang of a pistol shot and Róisín staggered back into Cristina's arms, blood pouring from her head. "Help me!" she hissed to the others, who shook off their horror and helped to drag Róisín's frighteningly limp form back into the room. She let the others attend to the injured girl while she overturned a heavy table and placed it across the far corner of the room and added another cabinet. "Get her in the corner behind the table," she said, snatching up a pistol and aiming it at the first grappling iron. She fired when the top of a man's head appeared, the recoil tilting the muzzle up towards the ceiling. There was a cry of alarm and the head disappeared below the edge of the solid brick and plaster of the parapet, but she couldn't be sure whether she had hit anything. She blinked furiously, dazzled by the brightness of the muzzle-flash, and exchanged the empty pistol for a loaded one. She shifted her aim towards the other grappling iron, and waited for someone to appear. A man's head and shoulders popped up along with a hand holding a pistol. Panicked by the sight of the gun, Cristina forgot her shooting experience and let her finger snatch at the trigger. She knew she had missed as soon as she fired, but to her surprise the ball struck the edge of the parapet, braking off a piece of plaster and brick which in turn struck the man's extended arm. She gasped in relief when the pistol fell from the man's grip, teetered on the parapet, and then tumbled out of sight. Saved from near certain death, she put down her useless pistol and snatched up the rapier.

The man saw her coming and propelled himself over the parapet with arms powered by fear and the desire to live. He rolled over the edge and dropped on all fours to the floor of the balcony. He sprang to his feet and managed to snatch out his cutlass just in time to divert Cristina's thrust, which pierced the sleeve of his coat rather than his chest, but with the parapet behind him and caught off balance his wild sweeping block left him open to the rapier's swift darting blade and he swore foully when the woman freed her blade with a quick twist of her wrist, stamped forward and sank her point into his shoulder just below his collar bone. He tried to step back and clear of her blade but was brought up short by the parapet. A flick of the rapier cut a bleeding slash across his cheek and panic gripped his belly with icy claws.

Cristina glided smoothly back when the man wildly slashed at her with his cutlass, the slim blade of her rapier dancing out of the way and guiding her opponent's sword out of line and opening his belly to a fatal thrust. Then she caught the trace of a smile on her opponent's face and saw his eyes glance over her shoulder, and realised that she had been tricked. There had to be another man behind her, and the muscles of her back and shoulders tensed in anticipation of the smashing agony of a musket ball. If she tried to turn to face her other opponent the man in front of her would cut her down. She snarled, twisted her wrist to free her point and lunged. The rapier drove straight into the surprised swordsman's belly and up into his heart. At the same moment there was a sharp double crack of a pistol firing behind her ... no, two pistols she realised even as a searing line of fire cut

across her side and something tugged at her sweat soaked dress. The musket ball hit the dying man in front of her, smashing into his thigh and knocking him down to the ground, pulling the rapier from Cristina's hand.

Clutching at her side, Cristina whirled around and her eyes widened in surprise at the sight that greeted her. The man who had tried to shoot her in the back was draped over the parapet hanging limply like fresh washing, dripping blood instead of water. Her eyes shifted to the arched doorway opening onto the balcony where Áine stood in a perfect left handed dueller's stance, right hand behind her back and her left extended straight out from her shoulder, the pistol forming an extension of her hand. "Áine! You saved me!" She ran over to embrace the slim girl, transferring her rapier upside down to her left hand and gripping it by the unsharpened ricasso.

"It worked. I did exactly as the book instructed, and by God it be working," Áine said wonderingly as she returned the Spanish woman's embrace. They both turned in horror when they heard a sound from the parapet above the dead swordsman that Cristina had killed and one more man appeared, pistol in hand.

Cristina threw herself at Áine, tumbling both of them to the floor. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Ceara crouched over Róisín across the room, a pistol in her hand, but she would be unable to see the side of the balcony where the man was taking aim at them. She squeezed her eyes shut, knowing that there was no escape this time. The pistol fired and she flinched violently and cried out. Then she realised she wasn't hurt. She opened her eyes and frantically studied Áine for wounds, but the girl was looking at her in wonder too. Unable to stand the suspense, she rolled over and sat up, only to see Captain Pierce's relieved and smiling face. He was draped over the dead man's buttocks as if he was penetrating his arse hole, and Cristina giggled.

"Don't you dare, young lady," Harry said warningly, waving his discharged pistol at her. He had arrived at the top of the knotted rope just in time, but with the dead man in the way, he had been unable to shoot over the edge of the parapet like the attackers had done and was forced to throw himself on top of the corpse to get a clean shot and free his hands. He finished climbing over the low wall and looked around. The dead men were obviously dead. Then he frowned. "Where's Róisín?"

"Over here. She's bleeding badly!" Ceara called from behind the overturned table.

Harry ran over and took the still loaded pistol from her hand, carefully lowered the hammer, and set it aside. He vaulted over the table and knelt down to look at Róisín. All the blood seemed to be coming from the side of her head, and her hair was soaked and matted with it.

"Is she dead?" Áine asked.

Harry placed a hand upon Róisín's chest and after a moment felt her heartbeat and her slow breathing. "She yet lives, but I need to examine the wound. Fetch a light."

Just then the door splintered and crashed in, flinging the drawers across the floor. The guards who had been out in the hall dashed in with guns and swords at the ready and gaped in amazement at all the blood and dead bodies, and with even more amazement at the presence of Captain Pierce in the room.

"Don't just stand there gaping man! Go and fetch Master Chao. Now!" His probing fingers found the wound in Róisín's scalp. "Her skull seems intact. She was very lucky. The ball must had ricocheted off something and struck her head at a glancing angle.

The Oriental healer came running with surprising speed and agility. "Righten that table. I may need it to work on her," he snapped without greeting or asking questions. He knelt and felt the girl's head and neck. "Her spine is not broken." He slipped his arms under Róisín's limp form and stood up, lifting her with apparent ease. "Is the table ... ah!" With great gentleness he placed her upon the table and set to examining her wound, followed by feeling her wrists, and then checking her eyes. "She will live, but her —" he pointed at his own temple.

"Brain?" Áine suggested.

"Yes, yes, brain. Maybe brain is hurt. I treat her, give her medicine, but only when she wakes, then we know."

Harry had seen this kind of injury before. Some woke with no more than dizziness and a

headache. Others lost their wits entirely. He sighed and looked around the room. "You girls put up a good fight. I'm sorry, I'm to blame for placing you all in harm's way. Maryan must have told them where you were quartered and they picked it as a safe alternate entry to the house."

"Then it is her fault that Róisín is like this," Cristina said grimly.

Áine nodded in agreement, her normally happy face dark with anger. "She knew, and said nothing."

Harry went to retrieve his pistol and then headed for the door. "We shall deal with Maryan in due course. First I have a Spaniard to hunt down."

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He wanted to push the horse into a gallop, to charge after the murdering Spaniard, to ride him down like a rabid wolf, but even though he thought he knew where de Segovia's lair was, Maryan had already proven that she couldn't be trusted even when her own life was at stake. So caution and cunning were more important than speed, and rage had to give way to strategy. He glanced to either side to see Briars and Cristina riding beside him. He wondered if he should have brought more men with him, but it was still possible that he would be out foxed and that de Segovia could somehow mount a second attack on the House. Briars would not be left behind, and Cristina had claimed the right to be there at the death, and he could not refuse either of them.

They stopped by the Siren and learned that the French whore Colette, who rented a room at the brothel, had suddenly left carrying baggage less than an hour past. Harry had hoped to speak to Percy, to warn him, but his partner was not to be found either.

"This could be another trap you know. That diego is as poisonous as a viper," Briars said, as they remounted, his eyes searching their surroundings for signs of an ambush.

Harry stroked the neck of his horse. "It could be, but Maryan had no way of knowing whether I would send someone to scout out the place beforehand. She might be willing to die if it meant my death as well, but she is not one to throw her life away foolishly. On the other hand, after tonight de Segovia must suspect that she has been taken and has talked. The question is how many more men he has at hand to give teeth to his trap. None of the dead men back at the house were familiar to me, so it is likely de Segovia brought in trusted people especially for this job. They might even be Spanish sailors or marines."

The farm house was near the coast on the other side of Port Royal. The shortest way would have been to ride through the main streets of the city and out the other side, but de Segovia was bound to have someone watching that obvious route. Instead, Briars led them around the outskirts of the city. "There. On the other side of that stand of trees. We should be able to see if there is anyone at home from that rise."

They tied their horses and made their way through the trees on foot. Cristina had changed into a dark green blouse and leather riding breeches so she had no trouble keeping up with the two men. All three carried muskets, pistols, and swords. She had her rapier, while Briars preferred a cutlass, and the Captain had the fine sidesword he wore while at sea.

Harry held up his hand to signal a halt as he peered around the last row of trees. The farmhouse was in clear view and only about a hundred yards away. There were only two saddled horses and a horse and cart in front, and no movement in the surrounding land. There were bags and wooden boxes loaded into the cart, and the horses looked ready to go as well. "It looks like de Segovia intends to run instead of fight."

"The farmhouse could still be stuffed to the gills with men," Briars said. He pulled out his spyglass from the leather case on his belt, extended it and brought it up to his eye. "I can see movement, but no more than three people. One looks like a woman."

"Colette. It must be," Cristina hissed.

Harry pointed to the side wall of the farmhouse, which had no windows and was covered with searching strands of creeper vines. "We can approach from that direction without being seen. Come on, before they depart." The undergrowth wasn't heavy, so he was able to make his way along

the tree line to the blind spot quite easily, and soon he was pressed up against the wall with Cristina behind him and Briars watching their back. Peering around the corner he saw movement at the door, and he saw a figure walk out towards the horses. From the rear it didn't look like de Segovia, although it was hard to tell as he was draped in a heavy cloak. Then he inhaled in surprise when he realised it was Sir Percy. "Watch the door for the Spaniard," he whispered over his shoulder. Even though it looked bad, Percy was an old friend and his partner. He had to try to warn him about the kind of man de Segovia was. He darted around the end of the cart, putting it between him and the farmhouse. Crouched over, he crept towards Percy, who seemed to be checking his saddle bags. He prayed that the cart horse was not the nervous type as he stepped out from behind the cart and alongside the stolidly waiting horse. "Percy! It's me, Harry. Come over here. I have to speak to you about de Segovia. He isn't the person you think he is."

Sir Percy turned and smiled amiably and walked towards the cart horse. "Harry! What the devil are you doing out here? I was just talking to de Segovia about you."

Harry straightened up and moved towards his friend. "That man is a Spanish agent, Percy. He tried to kill all of us just this morning."

"Oh Harry, you wound me, you really do. It saddens me that you really think so little of my intelligence. Of course I know he's a Spanish agent. I'm the one who insisted that he kill you. How else would I gain control over the business and the Talon. Your men are distressingly and foolishly loyal to you after all, so you simply had to go." He sighed dramatically and drew his sword with a flourish. "But it seems that I shall have to attend to that little task myself." Fop and hedonist though he was, Percy was also a skilled and deadly swordsman.

Harry felt numbed by the betrayal of his oldest friend, although he had to admit that he was not completely surprised that Percy had more to do with de Segovia's plots than being a mere witless pawn. He took a step back, and then froze when he heard the sound of a footstep to his right. A quick glance confirmed it was de Segovia, who was pointing a pistol at his head.

"How dashing – and foolish – of you to ride out here to confront me on your own, Captain Pierce," the Spanish agent said reprovingly.

"The Captain's no fool, Spanish dog – er, sorry ma'am," Briars said, his own pistol pointing at de Segovia.

"No offence taken, Mr Briars. In this instance I quite agree," Cristina said. She had a pistol in leather holster on her left hip positioned for a cross draw, but her hand rested upon the hilt of her rapier.

Silently de Segovia swivelled around to point his pistol at Briars, his left hand resting on the other pistol that rode on his right hip.

This byplay had allowed Harry to recover from his surprise and disappointment at Percy's betrayal and he smiled. "Now who's the fool, de Segovia?"

Sir Percy waved dismissively at the Spanish agent. "This matter is between us, Harry. Are you gentleman enough to settle this properly? If I lose, you can do what you wish with him and his pet whore. If I win, I promise to allow Briars and the woman to go free."

"Your word on it?" Harry demanded.

"You have my word that they shall be allowed to leave unharmed."

Harry nodded. "Briars, Cristina, you heard that. If I go down the both of you will leave and not do anything foolish."

"Be careful Captain Pierce," Cristina said calmly.

Harry drew his sword and stepped sideways away from the cart. The ground in front of the farmhouse was dry and flattened by the pressure of many feet, well suited to sword play. He raised his blade in salute when Percy unfastened his cloak and raised his rapier, and then faced his friend over their blades. He had never fought Percy, even in practise, although he had seen him fight. Unlike in practise, they did not immediately close and exchange strokes. A single mistake could bring death in a real fight, so he made small testing moves with his point and watched as Percy responded, while his opponent did the same.

Then Percy took a quick gliding step to his right and forwards, his rapier darting out towards

Harry's forearm.

Harry turned his body and parried, steel hissing over steel, point down pommel up, then spun his side sword, pivoting on his wrist to cut at Percy's elbow, which Percy parried in turn. A flurry of attacks and counters ensued, Harry occasionally attempting a cutting stroke with the full sharp edges of his sword, while Percy focused on his point work, trying to weave it past Harry's guard and into his body.

Showing surprising speed, Percy deflected a diagonal cut at his neck and lunged, cutting through Harry's sleeve and driving towards his belly.

Only a forceful twist of his body saved Harry from more than a grazing cut along his ribs. He riposted with a backhanded cut at Percy's hamstring.

Percy was forced to skip back and only the point of Harry's sword grazed the back of his thigh.

Breathing heavily, Harry faced his former partner again, point to point.

"All that hacking and slashing on the decks of ships has dulled your style Harry. You're facing a real swordsman now, not some scurvy seaman. This is getting tiresome. Fight like a proper gentleman for once, and at least you'll die like one.

Harry snarled and stepped forward, engaging Percy's sword. Their blades spiralled and twisted, almost continuously in contact, each trying to penetrate the other's guard. It was almost like the practise sessions with Johannes, their swords hissing and clicking against each other in an almost musical rhythm. Then he realised that it was exactly like duelling with Johannes. His sword master had been teaching Percy too! He attempted another of the special attacks taught to him by Johannes and Percy countered the move with a smoothness that could have only come from total familiarity.

"What's the matter Harry? Not as skilled as you thought you were?"

Percy's rapier slipped past Harry's defence and he grunted when the point sliced the side of his neck. Harry roared in anger and threw himself into attack, but Percy's defence seemed impenetrable, and he suffered several more minor cuts and slashes before he could break free and resume his guard. He staggered back, bleeding and panting in exhaustion.

"Give it up, Harry. Accepting the inevitable is better than this humiliation," Percy said, shaking his head as if schooling a particularly unintelligent child.

Harry wiped away a trickle of blood that was running into his eye, spat, and raised his sword point again in preparation for a renewed attack. It had not been until he had begun fencing regularly with Cristina that he had realised that not only had Johannes been reporting on his weaknesses to someone, but he had actually been working very subtle flaws into Harry's technique, both in attack and defence. Now he knew who Johannes had been actually working for and why. Suddenly he saw it. The move that Johannes always used when he wanted to prove his superiority over Harry's swordsmanship and always ended up with the sword master's point resting upon Harry's breastbone. Only this time it was Percy who was using it, and he knew that this was what Johannes had been building up to all this time. He had taught Harry that he was helpless to defeat this particular attack, drummed it into his student's mind over months until Harry's hand and wrist almost moved in concert with the attack, like a bad dream that came every night. In his mind he already saw Percy's rapier plunging into his chest and skewering his heart. Their swords twisted and circled, and he felt the subtle pressure on his blade, trying to force his guard out of line. Without thinking, his wrist and arm resisted, but the resistance wasn't there.

Percy felt Harry's blade push back just as Johannes had told him he would. A smile of victory formed upon his lips as he suddenly dropped his point and raised it again in a tight "U". He shifted his feet and prepared to lunge when Harry's point overshot to the side as it always did, as Johannes had secretly trained him to do. His smile faded into an expression of shocked incomprehension when Harry's point followed his rapier's movement and flung his blade up and to the side, almost twisting it from his grip. He felt a crunch and impact against his chest. Looking down in incomprehension he saw Harry's heavier sword piercing his coat and disappearing into his body. "Wha...?"



Harry twisted his hand and rocked his body back, pulling his sword from Percy's chest and leaving a deep sucking hole. Blood and gore stained almost a foot of his sidesword's blade, but he held it level and on guard in case Percy managed a riposte. But his former friend's face had gone pale, and he watched as Percy ever so slowly sank to his knees, the rapier falling from his fingers. Harry took a further step back and gave his sword a practised flick that flung the blood drops from the polished steel. "You're a good swordsman Percy, perhaps better than I. If you had relied honestly upon your skill rather than attempting to steal your victory through guile and deceit, I might have been the one dying this day. Did you honestly think I wouldn't realise what Johannes was doing?" He didn't mention how recently it was that he had realised the trick Johannes had tried to play upon him, or Cristina's part in that realisation. And in any case it didn't matter. He watched as Percy's eyes glazed over and the nobleman fell forward onto his face. The cracking explosion of gunfire to his side brought him back to the moment and his left hand reached for one of his pistols even as he turned and crouched.

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The Spanish agent had not allowed his attention to waver from the true threat in front of him even though his arm began to burn from remaining extended and level with the heavy pistol in his hand. When Sir Percy fell he saw Briars' attention waver for just a second. He immediately ducked, fired his pistol, turned and sprinted away without waiting to see if he had hit his target.

Briars cried out in pain, clutched at his thigh, and fired his own pistol at de Segovia's retreating back. "I think I hit him!" he shouted to Captain Pierce, pointing towards the Spaniard, who was visibly limping. He tried to run after de Segovia but groaned and sank to one knee, blood running down and soaking his breeches.

"Tie something around that. I'll take care of the diego!" Harry shouted, breaking into a run as he drew his own pistol. He swore when he saw that Cristina was running too. He tried to wave her back but she was totally focused upon the fleeing man. Still running he fired, but the ball went wide.

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Running hard, Cristina drew her pistol and fired. She saw de Segovia duck his head, but she was sure she had missed even as she ran through the dirty grey cloud of gunpowder smoke. She dropped the empty pistol and forced herself to run faster. She caught sight of him again and she snarled in satisfaction when she saw that he was limping harder. She saw him slow and then turn, and she stopped running, catching her breath as she walked towards him, her rapier resting upon her right shoulder.

"This isn't your fight, slave. Turn around and go back to your cage before I'm forced to hurt you," de Segovia said, his voice still calm, urbane, and faintly mocking.

"Bastard! Whoreson! You intended my doom from the day we met," she spat.

"And you intended to betray me all along, just as Colette said you would," the Spanish agent said, keeping an eye on the approaching Captain Pierce. "I see us as being equal."

"I was true to my oath, unlike you, pig!"

He sighed. "I would have spared you, but since you insist on playing the foolish pawn, I will oblige you," de Segovia said, drawing his sword. "Even injured as I am, you can't beat me you know."

Cristina laughed. "I might surprise you. And even if I can't I only need to keep you here until Captain Pierce catches up." She dared not to turn her head, so she really had no idea if the Captain was even coming, but she displayed nothing but confidence as she smiled at the Spanish agent.

"Help me escape and the life in Madrid may still be yours."

She laughed even harder. "I would have to be truly stupid to believe anything you say now."

Instead of replying he lunged, hoping to catch her by surprise.

But Cristina had been expecting it and now her weeks of practise with the bigger, stronger Captain Pierce paid off. Their rapiers kissed and she deflected his thrust with smooth confidence, at the same time gliding back half a step to maintain separation so that he couldn't use his superior strength against her. The agent was the better swordsman and normally she would have been quickly overwhelmed, but his leg wound slowed and weakened him just enough for her to hold her own, at least for the moment. She timed her attack so that he was stepping back onto his injured leg, feinting high and then suddenly dropping her point low, going for his groin.

He could see Captain Pierce rapidly nearing, and while the woman didn't frighten him, he had to break free before the enraged English pirate arrived. He couldn't run, both because of his wound and because he would get Cristina's point in his kidney as soon as he turned his back. He had to finish her quickly so that he could face Pierce undistracted by the bothersome woman. He was still stronger than her, and he used that advantage now, putting greater force into his parries, jarring her sword and knocking it out of position or driving it back into her face.

But Captain Pierce had taught Cristina how to deal with raw force, just as he often had to do during boarding actions and fighting men armed with cutlasses and even falchions. The trick was never to meet the attacking blade head on or to be underneath it. Her body rocked and twisted from side to side, deflecting and redirecting de Segovia's heavy blows. The vibrations and impact of his fierce strokes jarred and numbed her hand, and she knew that she couldn't maintain this pace for long. On the other hand, neither could de Segovia. His rapier whistled past her face, missing by inches, but a light tap of her blade added to his momentum and opened his guard just enough for her to attack and she thrust at his groin again, and then again. He blocked her strokes with growls of anger, the second block harder than the first. She thrust again, but this time it was a feint, and when his rapier lashed down and across in defence of his groin, she lifted her point and lunged, and she shouted in triumph when she felt her point pierce the flesh of his left shoulder. But her victory was short lived, and her shout turned into a choked cry of pain when de Segovia punched out with the guard of his sword. She managed to lift her left arm in time to save her face from being smashed, but she stumbled back with a cry of pain, her left arm hanging limp at her side.

Harry finally arrived, just in time to see and hear the crunch of de Segovia's punch crash into Cristina's arm. It didn't look as if any bones were broken, but he guessed that her arm would be useless for a while and had to be hurting her badly. "Is using and killing women all you're good for de Segovia? I might have expected that from a Spaniard."

The Spanish agent sneered. "At least I wasn't betrayed by my best friend."

This hit home and Harry flushed red in anger. "Perhaps. But he's dead, just as you are."

Spitting on the ground between them, de Segovia said, "What is that English expression about counting chickens and eggs?"

Harry had been watching Cristina from the corner of his eye, and unlike de Segovia, he didn't underestimate what she was capable of, so instead of immediately attacking the Spaniard, he had distracted him until Cristina had recovered from the crushing blow. He smiled when she straightened and stepped forward again, her rapier held steadily in front of her. "All I see is a chicken who's about to be plucked."

The Spanish agent gasped and snatched up his sword, barely in time to parry a thrust to his throat and then hissed and gritted his teeth when Cristina's point slashed a gory line along his forearm instead. "Bitch!" Determined that if he was going to die, he would take his disgraced countrywoman with him and he attacked with fresh energy.

It was as if she were fighting two men at the same time and it was all that Cristina could do to keep his blade from her skin. Then his blade broke through her desperate defence and she threw herself backwards in the futile hope of avoiding being impaled upon his rapier. But to her surprise the point barely pricked her left breast after passing through her riding coat and blouse. She realised that de Segovia's injured leg had finally betrayed him and buckled under his weight when he lunged. Without wasting time questioning this apparent miracle, she twisted her blade over and around his in a hissing spiral and thrust, driving her point in the hollow behind his left collar bone and down through his lung and into the heart. She was forced to release her grip on the handle of

her sword and hopped back when de Segovia made a final raging slash with his fading strength.

Blood gushed from the Spanish agent's mouth and his lips moved silently as his hand blindly reached for the rapier buried vertically in his torso. But before his fingers touched the handle, he toppled over on his side and rolled onto his back, his legs still bent beneath him.

Cristina stared at her dead opponent, hardly able to believe that it wasn't her lying dead. She slowly turned her head to look at the Captain, who was smiling at her. She realised that he had been waiting to intervene if it looked like she was going to lose or to avenge her if she had been killed to quickly for him to save her. "Thank you ... for letting me ..." she tapered off, unable to find the right words.

"You're welcome." He nodded at her breast. "You're bleeding."

She looked down at her blood stained shirt. On an impulse she ripped the front open, baring her left breast. "Like it?"

Harry grinned. "It's beautiful – as always." With a grunt he pulled Cristina's sword from the corpse, wiped it off on the dead man's shirt and handed it back to her. Then he offered her his arm and they started walking back to where Briars was waiting.

"You're bleeding too you know. Why did you wait so long to kill Sir Percy?"

Harry chuckled. "Percy was really an excellent swordsman. If he had not allowed fear to drive him to cheat, he might just have beaten me. And to be honest, despite everything I found it hard to kill my oldest friend."

Cristina understood. Sir Percy had been driven by pride, but Captain Pierce valued honour and loyalty above all else.

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Briars grinned when the dirty stained and bloody pair walked arm in arm back towards him. "I presume he didn't get away?" He raised an eyebrow at Cristina's bared breast.

"The Spanish king will be needing a new spy in Port Royal," Harry replied.

Cristina smiled boldly. "I was injured and Captain Pierce was examining my wound."

Briars bowed to her, eyeing her blood stained breast closely in the process. "I'm sure the Captain knows what he's doing."

She made no attempt to hide her breast and chuckled. "I'm sure he does."

"Ahem. While you were taking a walk, look what I found," Briars said, pointing towards the farmhouse door.

Harry glanced inside and when he saw Briar's surprise he laughed. "Mademoiselle Colette! What a pleasant surprise to see you here, and under such unexpected circumstances."

Fastened securely to a chair by Briars' seaman-like knots, Colette bowed her head in place of a curtsy. "The pleasure is all mine, Captain Pierce. I am familiar with your name and reputation, although we have not been introduced." She spoke as if they were meeting in a tavern or at a party rather than as a captive.

"And I yours, Miss Colette." Harry bowed politely, ignoring her bonds.

"Since you understand that my company is available to whoever can afford my prices, you should also understand that I am innocent of whatever offences Sir Percy and the late Señor de Segovia, I assume that he is late, might have committed against you. And with that understanding, I would suggest that you might remove these rather coarse ropes from my wrists and ankles, and we can go our separate ways." She batted her eyelashes winningly and smiled hopefully at him. "Or if you consider that I owe you some recompense, I'd be glad to discuss some reasonable settlement in the form of my services."

Harry looked at Briars and Cristina, who was bandaging his thigh with strips torn from her already shredded blouse and sprinkling his wound with a healing powder created by Master Chao from a parchment packet he had given her. "What do you think? Does Colette owe us recompense?"

Briars glared at her. "When someone joins a crew, they are entitled to their fair share of the booty, but they also bear their share of the blame when things go bad."

Cristina nodded in agreement. "de Segovia did not exempt me from responsibility for performing the duties I owed you as your indentured servant, Captain."

Harry turned back to Colette and shrugged elaborately. "It seems you do owe us all recompense."

The French whore licked her lips nervously. "I ... I would gladly compensate all of you with the only currency I possess."

"I doubt that she was working for free, Captain. From what I hear, her company does not come cheap," Briars said, wincing when Cristina tightened the knot on the makeshift bandages.

"If you would rob a working girl of her pitiful savings, I suppose I –"

With a tone that was like the cracking of a whip, Harry said, "I would rob you of nothing, whore. You enriched yourself by seducing Sir Percy and convincing him that he should turn against me. You were part of a plot that would have had me murdered, along with many of my loyal people, including Briars and Cristina. What price would you set on that?"

"Since I'm not already dead, there must be a price that you would accept. All my money is in that chest in the corner. We, Señor de Segovia and I, were preparing to leave Port Royal. The key hangs around my neck. Take it."

Harry lifted the key, which hung on a string around her neck, over her head and free of her hair. He opened the chest, looked inside and found bags of silver and gold. "She spoke the truth. Briars, make arrangement to share this out amongst the men who fought at the house." He tossed the key to Briars. Whatever she was, Harry had to admit that Colette was no coward.

"What else would you have of me? I am very good in bed, with both men and women," Colette said, smiling at Cristina.

The Spanish woman stood up gracefully and went over to whisper in the Captain's ear, her eyes never leaving the French whore's face.

"I like it," Harry said to her. "Cristina has given me a suggestion. We shall give you a chance to earn your life and even your freedom."

"There's a bed in the back room," Colette said with a smile, her confidence returning. This was a game she understood well. Or at least she thought she did.

Harry rubbed his chin. "Since we're sharing out the spoils, it's only fair that all of us get to see the prize. If I untie you, will you remove your clothes without a struggle?"

Colette's smile widened. Her beauty and sensuality always got her what she wanted in the end. "It would be my pleasure." She sighed with relief when the coarse rope fell from her wrists and ankles, but she was careful not to move or look as if she might attempt to escape. She could see Sir Percy's corpse through the door and she had no intention of joining him. She looked to Captain Pierce for permission to stand up, and rubbed her wrists as the circulation returned to her fingers. Removing her clothes was a skill that she was greatly practised in, and all her garments were tailored for quick removal and donning. In less than two minutes she was completely naked and preening herself in front of her trio of captors. She cupped her breasts with her hands and held them up to Captain Pierce. "I'm told that I have very fine breasts. Do you like them?"

"I think you are mistaken, Mademoiselle. Neither I nor my companions intend to fuck you. But we are willing to offer you a chance to leave this place alive."

The smile faded from her face, and her arms crossed protectively over the breasts that she was so gladly displaying a moment before. "Don't toy with me. What must I do?"

"You make your living pleasing others with your body. Satisfy our desire for vengeance and you may live. Fail, and I shall hang you from these rafters like the criminal you are."

"You –" Colette was a realist and a survivor. It was clear she had chosen the wrong side and worse still, she had been caught. All that mattered to her now was to survive. She wasn't even a pauper. She had more gold hidden away in other places in Port Royal. Slowly she nodded. "Very well. You shall have your vengeance. Do what you will and I shall not resist provided I have your word that I shall not be killed or maimed, and that you will let me go at the end of it."

Harry shook his head in amusement at the way she still attempted to bargain even when she was completely helpless. "You set a great many terms for one in your state."

She smiled bitterly. "I am yours to torture as you will. I cannot stop you. But consider, would it not be even more satisfying if I am complicit in my own punishment? Sir Percy enjoyed hurting me, and I played many very painful games with him, much to his satisfaction. I can do the same for you."

Harry twisted his head to look at Cristina and Briars. "What say you?"

Briars said, "My wound is not grave, and Cristina's attentions have staunched the bleeding and reduced the pain. It would be satisfying to see this whore properly punished."

Cristina smiled evilly. "You already know my choice."

"Then you have my word. You will not be blinded or crippled. Accept your punishment well and I swear that I shall let you go," Harry said.

Colette nodded stiffly. "I always give satisfaction. That is why I am so successful in my chosen profession." Her hands came away from her breasts. She knew that a woman's breasts were a favourite of torturers and executioners. Even now she could not resist trying to appear seductive and she rested her hands upon her hips and stood up straight, emphasising the smooth curves of her fine body.

Cristina found a leather worker's awl on a work table, and she went over to the stone fireplace that served as a simple kitchen. Like most homes, the fire was kept constantly burning. She added some firewood, and then placed the tip of the awl in the glowing embers. There was also an iron hook and a fire-blackened pot suspended from it, filled with steaming water. Hanging beside the fireplace was an iron ladle with a wooden handle. It would all do nicely for what she had in mind.

While Cristina made her preparations, Harry selected a broad strap of leather from the same work table where Cristina had found the awl. He slapped it against his palm and nodded in satisfaction. "Hands behind your neck. Push those teats out. They will do to warm you up before Cristina is ready to get you really hot."

Sick fear made Colette dizzy, but nevertheless she pushed her breasts out proudly. "Have a care not to miss my nipples, for they are greatly sensible to pain," she said lightly, as if recommending a dish or choice of fabric. She lifted her nose proudly, unwilling to crawl before her captors despite what they might do to her. She knew they had good cause to be angry and she could expect little mercy, especially from the woman. However, Captain Pierce had given his word, and he was known to be an honourable man. They could still leave her horribly scarred and marked. She mentally shrugged. She had enough money to retire and return to Paris – plus she had one last secret to sell once she was free of these people. She just needed to get through what was coming. She bit her lip and her head jerked upwards when the heavy leather strap struck her breast with a harsh "Crack!" It hurt a lot, but she had been beaten before, and she refused to give him the satisfaction of looking down at herself. Her torso rocked when a back-handed blow struck her other breast, making it swing and bounce wildly and leaving a dark red imprint on her perfect creamy skin.

Unlike when he played with his women, Harry did not stay his hand this time, and he allowed his anger and frustration to direct the strap as he savagely beat her breasts. He felt a hot, raging satisfaction with every wince and grimace that he wrung from her perfect visage and gloried in the terrible bruises that he inflicted as he made her breasts dance beneath the strap. He paused for a moment to savour the sweat that dripped down her skin and the way her body trembled uncontrollably from the pain. "Remember, if you falter, you die."

Even though she was screaming in agony within her mind, Colette nodded calmly with a self-control that she had painfully learned through years of seducing and manipulating men. "Take your pleasure as you will, Captain," she said, surprised by the steadiness of her voice. She kept her eyes facing front when he slowly paced behind her although she couldn't help tensing the muscles of her buttocks in anticipation.

"Feet apart," Harry commanded, drawing the strap through his fingers while he studied her buttocks. While they were undoubtedly fine, he thought he preferred Cristina's tighter, rounder cheeks. Nevertheless, he would definitely enjoy beating them. Once again he struck hard and without warning and grinned when the leather sank deep into her flesh.

It was harder to control herself when she couldn't see the blows coming, but she managed to restrain her response to a tight hiss when the strap crashed against her buttocks. Even though the beating filled her buttocks and hips with flame, she knew that it was only the prelude to the real pain when the Spanish woman was ready to torture her. But in the meantime, she did her best to impress and arouse Captain Pierce in the hope that he could be persuaded to feel just a little bit of sympathy for her. When the beating of her buttocks stopped, she took a deep breath in order to steady her breathing and then said, "If I know women, my cunt is going to suffer greatly when she gets started. Perhaps you would like to have your fun with it before she makes too much of a mess of it." She shuffled her feet even wider apart and bent forward slightly, arching her back and offering a better view of her crotch. She was not shaved below, but she was fastidious in trimming the hair on and around her cunt and slit so that nothing was hidden. She smiled when she felt his fingers touch her cunt, but her smile faded at his next words.

"I shall take great pleasure in seeing what Cristina has in store for this treacherous cunt. I am tempted to beat it bloody, but I do not want to spoil Cristina's pleasure." Then he spotted a long stiff branch broken from a bush or tree. It was sun dried and all the leaves had shrivelled, leaving only a crooked stick with jagged, splintered ends. He tossed the strap aside and picked up the branch. It was stiff and inflexible, but not brittle or crumbling when he tested it with his fingers. He tapped her cunt with it. "Open up that hole of yours."

She had seen what he had picked up from the ground, and if it was not for his promise she would have felt panic. The stick was thick and strong enough to seriously hurt, possibly kill her. But Briars was grinning at her discomfiture, and her pride would not allow her to show fear. "It would be my pleasure, Captain." Almost casually she reached down between her legs and parted her sex lips, long experience telling her exactly how to do it so that her cunt hole would open wide. The splintered tip of the branch touched her tender sex flesh and she clenched her teeth.

Harry saw her body tense when he inserted the stick and smiled at this sign of nervousness. Her cunt was dry, and he was interested to see how she would handle being penetrated by the branch. Without any attempt to ease it in, he pushed hard.

Cristina heard the French woman cry out and looked up from her preparations with a grin. She saw what the Captain was doing and chuckled. "I see you're keeping her busy, Captain. Give her womb a good poking for me."

The stick ripped its way up and into Colette's cunt and the pain was awful, horrible. She was discovering it was very different to be tortured for punishment instead of as part of sex.

When the stick was firmly buried within her cunt hole, Harry released it and moved around to the French whore's front. "Straighten up." He waited until she was fully upright and noted the angle at which the stick protruded from between her thighs. If he held it at too steep an angle it might pierce the wall of her cunt hole and make her bleed to death, which was not what he wanted. "Put your hands upon my shoulders. Get a firm grip." Then he wrapped his fingers around the thick end of the stick, holding it firmly in place. "Now fuck yourself. Fuck yourself hard. I want to feel it hit bottom with each stroke. Fuck as if your life depended upon it – which it does." He looked into her eyes when he felt her grip on his shoulders tighten. "You make your living by fucking, well then show me how good you are."

The inside of her cunt hole was already hurting badly from having the stick roughly shoved inside of her, and the thought of fucking it and ramming the mouth of her womb against it made her shudder. But she could see that he was quite serious, and there was no mercy in his eyes. This was much harder than simply enduring. Her mind and body screamed for her not to do it, but like most people she would do anything in order to survive, even if just for another few minutes.

"I'm waiting," Harry said, giving the stick a twist.

Colette gasped when the coarse bark and splintered end scraped her cunt. The muscles of her jaw and shoulders rippled and then she eased her hips forward. The stick ground its way deeper. It hurt a lot, in a terrible and intimate way. Even though she tried not to, her mind insisted on dwelling upon the image of the stick ripping its way into her womb and destroying her womanhood. Her thighs trembled as she made herself push harder. The tip of the stick scraped and tore both going in

and coming out, although the inward thrust was much worse, especially when the tip stabbed against the mouth of her womb. Her spinning, agony racked mind took a moment to be grateful that the Captain was holding the stick in his hand rather than bracing the base against something solid or the impact against her womb which would have been far worse. She realised that he was giving her a chance to survive intact, but that his kindness might not last if she didn't display the proper enthusiasm in punishing herself. Understanding that she had no choice but to throw herself entirely upon his mercy, she shuffled her feet an inch closer to him and with her knees splayed out to either side of her body, began to fuck herself vigorously with the stick, driving her cunt onto it as if it were the cock of her best paying lover. The agony almost made her swoon, but she persisted, the muscles of her back, buttocks, and thighs rippling as she impaled herself over and over upon the thick unyielding stick, mindless of the damage she might be doing to her cunt and uttering a low unending moan of pain and effort.

Although Harry was not ordinarily a vindictive man, he didn't deny that he could be a cruel one at times, especially when given reason. He did not ignore or forgive Percy's treachery, but he still blamed this woman for being the one who had fanned his partner's jealousy and ambition to the point that Percy had even turned traitor to King and Country, and he took an unholy delight in seeing her suffer, and especially knowing that she was being forced to hurt that very part of her that she had used to lead his friend astray. The wide eyed look of horror upon her face, and sensuous movements of her body, amplified by the tearing agony in her cunt, made his cock rock hard and his heart thunder as if he was standing upon the deck of the Talon and watching his ship close into cannon range with a fat Spanish merchant ship. "That's right whore, show me what a good fuck you are!" It would be so easy to rip her insides apart with just a twist and thrust of his hand, but he controlled himself and the force with which the stick tore at her cunt. He finally allowed her to stop when he felt a trickle of blood run down the branch and onto his hand, making his grip on the stick slippery.

The Captain yanked the stick out of her with a sudden jerk of his arm. Her knees buckled and she would have fallen to the ground if not for her grip on his shoulders. To her surprise she felt his hands on her waist, holding her up. "Thank you."

Harry looked at the blood on his fingers and the naked woman before him. He made a half bow with his head, respecting her nerve and determination. A glance at Cristina told him that she was ready. "I doubt she is going to be as gentle with you."

Colette smiled. "Women never are." She did not have to say that she was relying upon his word to prevent Cristina from killing or maiming her.

Cristina had filled a smaller cast iron pot with hot coals from the fire, and a number of metal implements including the awl protruded from the glowing coals. "Get up on the table and sit with your cunt at the edge. Legs up and apart. I'm sure you know the position."

Colette did indeed and her cold terror returned. Even the raw pain in her cunt faded, overwhelmed by her fear of what the Spanish woman was going to do to her. She looked at the Captain for comfort and it was his nod that gave her the strength to obey. The work table was narrow and when she lifted herself backwards onto it she found that she could comfortably rest her shoulders against the wall with her hips at the edge and her heels resting upon the table on either side. Her cunt felt terribly vulnerable, and she wondered if the wetness she felt was blood or her juices. Every instinct told her to bring her knees together, but she knew that it was her cunt that Cristina wanted, and she didn't want the humiliation of being told to open her thighs so she spread herself as wide as she could, just as if a client was about to lick her cunt. She wondered if any man would want to even look at her cunt after Cristina was done with her. She would have begged if she thought it would do her any good. Oddly enough, her intimate exposure and having so many people staring at her cunt was arousing, and even the horror to come gave her a wicked thrill. She had always been extremely sensual, which was one of the reasons why she had been so successful as a whore.

Cristina carried the iron pot of coals over to the table with the handle wrapped in a rag against the heat, the various implements protruding like some manner of strange growths from the

ashes. Placing the pot on the floor to one side, she pulled a low milking stool up to the table and seated herself. This brought her face almost level with Colette's cunt and perfect for her purposes. She looked up at the French woman's face and smiled. Most people would have said it was a pleasant smile, but they would have missed the gloating and triumph behind it. She lightly ran her fingertips over Colette's cunt lips. "So, here we are."

Colette's professional mask was back on her face and her smile was almost gracious. "Yes, here we are." She glanced down at her cunt and then looked into Cristina's eyes. "I never did anything to hurt you, you know."

Cristina shook her head. "You tried to hurt Captain Pierce. He is mine, although he might say I belong to him. Therefore you tried to hurt me. And now you're going to pay for it."

"Care to tell me what you're going to do?"

Cristina chuckled. "I think that would be fairly obvious. But ... I think it would be more amusing if you had something at stake more than simple survival. Show me your clitoris."

Surprised and wary at this demand, Colette braced her shoulders against the wall and brought her hands between her legs and with an experienced motion pulled the top of her slit up and apart, drawing the clitoral hood back and baring the tiny sensitive nub. "Like this?"

"That will do nicely. Is it sensitive?"

"Very."

"And do you enjoy touching it?"

Colette hesitated for a second, trying to understand where this was going, and then shrugged and said, "Yes I do."

Cristina touched the woman's bared clitoris with a fingertip. "I could burn this little thing so badly that you would never feel any pleasure again. In fact, you might be in constant pain for the rest of your life."

Despite the icy claws of fear that gripped her heart, Colette nodded. "You could. Is that what you are going to do?"

"What would you do for a chance to save it?"

Colette didn't hesitate. "Anything."

"Then here is my offer. I am going to use these hot irons on your cunt, wherever and however I please. In exchange for my sparing your clitoris from total destruction, you will hold your cunt open and expose the insides of your cunt to the irons without complaint or hesitation." She held up her hand when she saw that the woman was about to speak. "Plus – plus you will not scream or struggle. In fact I want you to beg me to hurt you more and suggest such places for the irons to touch that will in your opinion hurt you the most."

Colette's face paled. "I ... I am willing to try, but not to make a sound I fear is beyond human ability."

Cristina nodded. "I want to give you a reason to really try, so I will accept moans and sighs, but no sounds that might alarm others if you were in a tavern or brothel. That is my price to spare your clitoris. I don't promise not to hurt it, merely leave it in such a condition that you will be able to find pleasure from it in future. So, do we have an agreement?"

Once again Colette didn't hesitate. "We have an agreement," she said. If she felt any anger, her tone did not reveal it.

"Excellent!" Cristina exclaimed cheerfully. "Now rub yourself, play with your cunt as if you would prepare yourself for a lover."

Even though her cunt hole was greatly sore, this was a demand that she had often entertained, and it was her proud boast that she had never faked her lewdness. It did not take long for her to bring her cunt to a state of unmistakable arousal, the soft inner lips growing firm and blushing darker, and her clitoris growing visibly larger and twitching in apparent eagerness. A trickle of sexual juices flowed from her cunt hole, although it was mixed with threads of crimson blood. She smiled defiantly at the Spanish noblewoman. Even the threat of the hot irons had not managed to dim her sensuality. She moistened her lips and smiled invitingly at Cristina. "Since you're going to play with my cunt, you are my lover," she said. If this was her last performance, she



intended to play it to the hilt, especially with the Captain's eyes on her. She knew he liked what he saw, and she wanted him to remember her like this.

"Ask me to burn your cunt with a hot iron. Ask me nicely," Cristina said as she reached for the wooden handle of the awl.

It was both galling and terrifying, but now she had a very immediate objective to inspire her, namely the protection and preservation of her clitoris. Speaking as if she was asking for some treat or gift, Colette said, "I would be greatly obliged if you would burn my cunt with your hot iron."

With a predator's grin Cristina replied, "It would be my very great pleasure." She lifted the awl, its tip momentarily glowing red before it faded back to the slightly blackened sheen of steel. The slim spike was too small to hold the deadly heat of a branding iron, but it was still burning hot nonetheless. She brought the needle sharp tip up to the French woman's cunt and waved it in a little circle. "Now where should I start I wonder?" Without warning she briefly touched the scalding hot metal against the edge of an inner lip. "How about there?"

Despite being braced for it, Colette's body twitched violently a moment later and she inhaled sharply when the pain of the burn reached her awareness. Even though the pain was not much worse than being struck with a cane, the knowledge that her precious cunt was being burned made it much more frightening and in turn it magnified the pain that she perceived. Knowing that nothing she could say would reduce her suffering, she smiled. "That was very nice. Could I have some more?" The awl touched her other lip and this time lingered a moment longer, leaving a small but definite burn. The shocking pain left her breathing heavily, but before she could respond, it touched again, the red hot point pressing into her lip and searing a tiny red dot into her flesh. The back of her head bumped against the wall as she fought back a shout of pain.

Cristina smiled in satisfaction. She had discovered that she enjoyed hurting other women while questioning Maryan, and she revelled in her freedom to torment the French woman's cunt now, especially with the Captain's approving gaze upon her. She replaced the tip of the awl in the pot of coals and drew out a second tool which was like an awl but had a curve in the tip which made it useful for searching out the folds and wrinkles of her cunt. She wasted no time in pressing the fiery hot tip against Colette's inner sex lips, burning a row of dots all along the edges. The French whore was sweating profusely now and her agony was painted clearly over her face despite her admirable silence. The woman's slow painful writhing was a joy to behold and Cristina squeezed her thighs together, quivering from the erotic pleasure as she changed back to the freshly heated awl. She burned closer and closer to the woman's clitoris and she laughed when she saw tears in her eyes. "Tell me to burn away your clitoris and I'll spare the rest of your cunt any more punishment," she offered mockingly.

Colette shook her head, her teeth tightly clenched. "No ... thank ... you," she managed to say, her throat thick with unshed tears.

"Remember, I said I wouldn't destroy your clitoris. Well the iron is cool enough not to seriously burn now. I'm going to hold it in front of your clitoris and I want you to press it against the awl and hold it there as long as you can bear. Be warned, if I think you're not doing your best I'll use a hotter one and do it myself."

Colette nodded stiffly, biting her lower lip until it bled. She looked at Captain Pierce for reassurance, and saw him nod in approval. Unable to bear the gloating look in Cristina's eyes, she waited until the awl was in position and then locked her gaze with the Captain's as she rocked her hips forward the fraction of an inch required to press her clitoris against the burning hot metal point. The pain was worse than anything she had experienced so far and a scream of agony almost escaped from her lips. Her shoulders shook uncontrollably and her toes clenched so hard that they popped in their sockets, but still she held on, clinging to the look of fascination on the Captain's face. She told herself that she was doing it for him, to please him, the way she had pleased other men and women since she was a young girl barely into her womanhood. After what seemed like a century, Cristina pulled the awl away with a grunt of grudging approval. Colette almost fainted with relief, even though her entire cunt was a mass of burns that stung and ached worse than any toothache or beating she had ever taken. She looked down at herself and saw that some of the burns were severe

enough that they would leave permanent marks like the brands made by an executioner, but on the other hand, she was relatively intact and wouldn't be very ugly after she healed. She was sure that Cristina wasn't done, but just for the moment she even managed to find a trace of lewdness in her situation. The Captain's narrow eyed focus upon her cunt and the fact that he didn't seem disgusted by what he saw aroused her. She had always liked men and sex, and even this horrific torture held an echo of lust. She was sure that Cristina would not be satisfied before she had somehow injured her womanhood so badly that she would never fully recover, but she clung to every last moment of her sexuality. She wished the Captain would touch her cunt, just once, before it was too late.

Cristina set aside the pot of coals and went over to fetch the pot of water that she had set to boiling over the fire. There was a large iron ladle and a cone shaped brass funnel which had probably been used to fill bottles or jars. The end of it was large, but not so big that it wouldn't fit securely into the French woman's cunt hole. She guessed that she would be able to pour the boiling water right onto her womb. When she was done the whore would not show any serious scars or injuries, but she would no longer be a woman. She brought the brass cone and the ladle over first, then carefully wrapped the handle of the small cauldron and carried that over. She grinned when she saw the terror on Colette's face. "You should be grateful I'm leaving you your clitoris. A flick of a knife and that could be gone too."

Despite the rage and almost mindless fear that swirled around her like a blizzard, Colette knew she couldn't afford to provoke the Spanish noblewoman. She didn't want to die, and she had to save her clitoris at any cost, so she just nodded and said, "I ... I am g-grateful." Tears began to stream from her eyes as she watched the preparations to destroy her womanhood. Worse yet, she would be expected to assist in the process.

Cristina resumed her position on the stool and between Colette's legs. She held up the tarnished brass funnel and said, "Open wide! This has to go into your filthy little cunt. The deeper it goes the better for you."

Colette understood that the funnel itself would shield her cunt hole from the scalding hot water and the deeper it went, the less of her flesh would be exposed to it, especially when it went in and was at its hottest. Despite how much it hurt to touch her burned sex, she started to work and stretch her opening with her fingers, hissing in pain as her fingers rubbed the scrapes caused earlier by the branch.

"All right, that's enough of that," Cristina snapped, knocking Colette's fingers away with the end of the funnel. "Open you cunt or I'll just hammer it in."

Biting her lip, Colette helped spread her hole as best she could, wincing as the hard sharp edge of the funnel pushed and stretched her cunt. She tried to relax her inner muscles as well and to draw the chilly metal cone into her body and not to force it out. Cristina would take her hands away when she poured the water, and if the funnel popped out of her cunt at the wrong moment her cunt and loins would be scalded, leaving her terribly disfigured.

Cristina gave the funnel one last twist and tap of her hand and peered into the wide circular opening. "Oh, so that's what we look like inside." She pushed her hand into the funnel and prodded the whore's cervix with her finger and giggled. Reaching down and to her side she gripped the wooden handle of the ladle firmly and filled the large spoon with ominously steaming water. "Brace yourself. This is likely to hurt."

When she saw the steaming ladle rise above her loins, Colette's nerve finally broke. "No! Wait! Captain Pierce, I h-have something that you want! Something w-worth a great deal. Millions of g-gold coins!"

Cristina wanted to ignore the French woman's pleas and to fill the funnel with boiling water, but she glanced towards the Captain. She sighed when he gestured for her to stay her hand. "You better have something good or I'm going to pour this right on your cunt," she said, returning the ladle to the cauldron.

Shaken and broken by overwhelming fear, Colette's teeth chattered as she tried to speak. She nodded convulsively, her fingers still holding her cunt wide with the funnel buried threateningly in her cunt. "I ... I kn-know where y-y-you can f-find it."

"Find what Colette? You better not be –"

"A treasure ship!" Colette shouted. "When they f-found out about Morgan's raid, de Segovia advised the Governor to place the next collection of tax gold and treasures belonging to the Crown and the Governor himself on a s-special, unscheduled treasure ship bound for Spain. It is a secret. Not even the Spanish Navy knows about it. It will sail alone, not in convoy because de Segovia and the Governor were afraid Morgan's fleet might be big enough to intercept an armed convoy."

"And how did you learn about this, if it is such a secret?" Harry asked suspiciously.

Colette giggled hysterically. "I'm a whore Captain. Nobody notices a whore after she's been fucked. I've learned all manner of useful things that way. That's how I learned about Sir Percy's discontent in the first place. He likes, er liked, to talk to himself when he was in his cups." She nodded towards a folding writing table that looked strangely out of place in the farmhouse. "That belonged to de Segovia. I saw him mark a chart with the course of the treasure ship. He told Sir Percy that when you were dead he would require the Talon to sail as escort for it, guaranteeing safe passage through the waters patrolled by the pirates of Port Royal and Tortuga."

"So the captain of the treasure ship is expecting to see the Talon?"

Colette nodded. "That is what he said to Sir Percy, hence the urgency to see you dead." Now that she had started talking, she was eager to tell all. "I also heard de Segovia boast that he already had a man aboard the Talon."

Briars cursed. "Maryan's supposed brother I wager."

Harry rubbed his chin. "Providing what you say is true, you have done me a service."

"It's the truth, I swear it. That was why de Segovia was so desperate to get away. He wanted to warn the Governor that Maryan had been captured and that Captain Morgan might be warned." Colette nodded at her cunt. "I am still at your mercy. Why should I lie?"

"Very well. If what you say is the truth, I shall spare you the worst of your punishment," Harry said, looking at Cristina as he spoke.

"Is she to escape unscathed, with no more than that slight tickling of her cunt?" Cristina asked, obviously disappointed.

"I said she would be spared the worst. I did not say unscathed."

Cristina's smile returned. Reaching out she adjusted the funnel so that it was only in the French woman's cunt hole deep enough to make it gape wide.

Colette began to protest but shut her mouth when the Captain held up a warning finger. She bit her lip and subsided. She had nothing left to bargain with, and if she annoyed him, the Captain could change his mind and allow Cristina full reign.

"Now then, where were we?" She half-filled the ladle again and patted the French woman on the thigh. "Don't worry. I think it's cooled enough not to burn you ... too badly. Remember, no moving, or I'll pour this on your clitoris instead. Now hold the funnel still for me."

For a second, panic almost overcame her. But she knew she had to trust that Cristina wouldn't disobey the Captain. With her eyes wide in horror and her thighs trembling she watched the ladle slowly tip.

Cristina smiled in bliss when the small splash of hot water flowed into the funnel and the French whore screamed in pain.

The hot water scalded the inside of her cunt hole and she feared that Cristina had lied and poured a mass of boiling water into her body, but even so, she had no choice but to accept and endure for she knew they were all waiting for an excuse to kill her. The scream was ripped from her throat by the extremity of her terror and pain, and yet contradictorily she remained perfectly still and posed, as if she was an artist's model posing for a particularly obscene painting, only her head and neck moving to express her suffering. However, when the pain died down to a heated throbbing, she realised that she felt little pain deep inside or in her womb. It could only have been a few drops that had been allowed to fall into her obscenely stretched hole. She managed a shaky smile. "Thank you for not ..." She knew it was unnecessary to finish the sentence. Instead, she braced her heels and pushed her knees further out to emphasise her openness. "Go on. Take your pleasure and hurt my cunt as you will. I pay my debts and I give honest value."

Despite wanting to continue watching Cristina torture the French woman with the hot water, Harry recovered the chart and noted the dates and times scribed on the parchment. He turned to Briars. "We need to sail with the morning tide. Are you fit to get the Talon ready for sea?"

Briars grinned. "For a treasure ship and a chance to repay the Spaniards for what they have done to us? I would be shipshape and ready even if the ball had taken off the entire leg and not just gone cleanly through. Besides, Master Chao's powders have done their work and the bleeding has already stopped. I can ride back to the ship and get their lazy arses moving right now." He pointed at Cristina and the screaming French woman. "That was quite a show. I have never seen the like. Perhaps I shall start a collection of cunts myself."

Harry laughed and slapped Briars on the shoulder. "Mary would kill you if you tried. Take the cart. No one here will have a use for it and it will go easier on your leg."

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Harry instructed that dinner was to be held that night in the girls' common room rather than the dining room. He was not in the mood for formality after the events of the day and wanted just to be surrounded by warmth and beauty after the ugliness of having to kill two men, one of them his best and oldest friend. He had a few more stitches and smelled of Master Chao's potions, but none of his wounds were serious. To his surprise the Oriental physician had nodded approvingly.

"Sir Percy not good man. Much ... how you say ... jealousy in his heart. Small man with big mouth. Good you kill him before he put knife in your back. He ask me if know how make poison that cannot be seen. I say no."

"Why didn't you say anything to me?" Harry asked, shocked by this revelation.

"Who you believe, old friend or funny foreigner?" Master Chao asked, raising one eyebrow.

Harry looked down, embarrassed by the truth of the man's words. "I'm sorry. You've saved my life more times than I can count."

Master Chao smiled. "Be careful is good thing. Live longer. Maybe if Sir Percy offer many beautiful Chinese girls, I make poison, eh?"

Harry realised that the physician must be very lonely with no one who spoke his language and no women who would look at him. "Perhaps I can find you a nice Oriental girl."

"Chinese girl. Not Japanese. You white men cannot tell the difference. Maybe I make poison for you, if she is pretty," Master Chao replied with a grin.

Harry suddenly realised that he knew very little about this man other than his curative skills and the odd fact that he had never seemed afraid even when he lived on the streets of the town. "You never told me why you left your homeland, Master Chao."

The Oriental laughed. "Now you ask?" He hesitated, gathering his thoughts, and then nodded. "You are my patron. You have right to know. China now ruled by Emperor who is not Chinese – a Manchu. Many Chinese fight, still fight. Many Manchu die. But many people just want peaceful life, not care who sit on Dragon Throne. I kill many many Manchu. Everywhere Manchu soldiers look for me. So I run. I come here, other side of world. One day I go back, kill all Manchu."

Harry stared at Master Chao in surprise and shock. He had never thought of the quiet, unassuming man as a killer, and he realised that if Sir Percy had succeeded in recruiting the Oriental to his side, he, Harry, might very well be dead instead of sitting on the treatment table. "It seems we have more to talk about, Master Chao. But for now you have my gratitude and respect."

Master Chao silently smiled and bowed, clasping his hands in an unfamiliar gesture in front of his chest.

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Róisín delicately licked her fingers clean of the rich sauce of the lamb she had been eating. "You certainly have an interesting household, Captain Pierce," she said, after he had told them about the events of the day and of Master Chao's revelations. Although she still felt a slight dizziness if

she moved too quickly, she had largely recovered from her head wound and insisted that she was fit to join in the private dinner party. She was naked, as were the other women, even though Harry had not insisted upon it. She was cuddled up against him with Ceara pressed beside her. After their experiences on the ship, none of them were worried or embarrassed about being close to other naked women, and ever since they had realised that Captain Pierce enjoyed seeing them caress each other they had done much more than that. At first it was just Áine, who would do anything sexual as long as the Captain liked it, and Cristina, who felt honour bound to be the perfect sexual plaything. Róisín had watched as the pair had gone from kissing and stroking to touching each other between the legs, until at last Áine had pressed her lips to Cristina's cunt and brought the Spanish woman to moaning climax. Then Ceara had approached her and they began to fondle each other too, and although Ceara had been willing, she had taken several days before she could work up the nerve to touch the tall woman between the legs or kiss her there. But now she concealed any remaining reservations and joined in with the others as if she had been a tribade all of her life. It made it easier that the Captain was there and she could touch his body as well.

Seated on a pile of cushions on the floor and surrounded by the odour of good food, fine wine, and the scent of aroused womanhood, Harry was able to relax at last. Those who would kill him were themselves dead, and the opportunity to make himself and his men wildly rich was in the offering, although of course he could be killed by a particularly spiteful cannon ball or gutted by a cutlass as he boarded, but those were risks that he lived with and accepted as part of his life. He smiled and winked at Áine, who was between Cristina's thighs, kissing teasingly around her cunt but all the while looking up at him.

Áine glowed with happiness, knowing that he understood and appreciated what she was doing and that she was doing it for him, not out of her own lust. It was confusing and contradictory, but the very fact that by making herself do sexual things with women when she really only like men excited her because of the very perverse nature of the act.

Ever considerate, Ceara whispered to Róisín. "I be knowing this still discomfits you. Let me do your cunt. All you have to do is relax and be trying to come."

Pressed up against Ceara's back, Róisín kissed the other woman's shoulder. "No. None of us may be eschewing our duties, or jealousy and rivalry shall arise and be after destroying the sisterhood we have created. I agreed to this and you shall not find me lacking in ardour." To illustrate her commitment she commenced to kiss her way down the other woman's arched back, turning herself until she was upside-down in relation to Ceara. She licked the base of the woman's spine and then drew her tongue along the crack of her buttocks.

Ceara drew her knee up and across the Captain's lap, parting her buttocks and allowing him to see what Róisín was doing. He was stroking and caressing her breasts and nipples with surprising gentleness and she bent her head to kiss his arm. "That feels very good," she said to him.

Harry lightly pinched a nipple and said, "This or that?" He nodded towards Róisín, whose tongue was drawing ever nearer to Ceara's arse hole.

"Both?" she replied with a giggle.

He looked around himself and smiled at the beauty that surrounded him. "I am truly sorry that all of you were put at risk. I should have sent all of you away the other night."

Cristina, who was stroking Áine's hair while the slim redhead kissed and licked at her clitoris said, "If we had all left, it might have alerted de Segovia's men to the trap. You had no way of predicting that they would do what they did. You trusted us with weapons, and in the end you risked your own life to save ours, to save a group of slaves. If anything, it is we who are grateful to you. Even more than before, we are yours in every way. There is nothing that we would not do for you, or let you do to us for your pleasure."

All the other girls nodded in agreement.

Áine lifted her head from Cristina's cunt, grinned and said "Anything at all – especially if it be hurting my cunt."

Cristina playfully slapped at the girl's head. "You're terrible." She kissed the Captain's shoulder. "But she be right. We've been thinking of all manner of things that you might do to our

cunts, or that we might be doing to ourselves or each other. We are all accepting and comfortable with the thought that our cunts should be used and displayed for your amusement ... and that their ability to experience pain is as important as their ability for pleasure."

Once more all the other girls nodded solemnly, or in Áine's case enthusiastically.

Harry looked into each of their eyes, and then silently held out his arms. He hugged and kissed each one of them in turn, marvelling and delighting in their warmth and beauty.

The girls moved the low table bearing the remnants of their dinner aside and Áine knelt before him. "You be needing to rest and recover from your wounds, and you go to sea in the morning, so you should not extend yourself with us. But we could not allow you to go into battle without a right proper send off, so tonight we shall entertain you while you be after taking your ease. Each of us shall take turns attending upon you, while the other three will put on an entertainment."

Áine moved closer on her knees and pressed her face into his crotch. "Since I'm being here already ..." Because the Captain was as naked as the rest of them, she was able to take his cock in her mouth unhindered by his breeches. She held the head of his cock between her lips, her eyes wide and shining.

The other three girls looked at each other, and then Cristina smiled. "I'll go first." She pulled a pouffe over so that it was right in front of Captain Pierce, and then draped herself over it on her back with her hands and feet on the ground and the pouffe supporting her buttocks, raising her cunt up in perfect exposure.

Ceara and Róisín position themselves to either side of the Spanish woman, each holding a narrow leather belt. They grinned at him, their intentions unmistakable.

Cristina lifted her head higher to look over her breasts at the Captain. "We decided that you might enjoy seeing our cunts well whipped without having to exert yourself, so each of us will receive fifty strokes upon our open cunts before changing over to the next girl. We'll keep on like that until you tell us to stop."

Harry understood why she had wanted to be first and winked at her. She had led the defence of their bedroom, and had gone along with him and Briars to hunt down de Segovia, and she was concerned that the others would think that she was trying to elevate herself in his eyes at their expense. She was taking a terrible risk that the others would take out their jealousy upon her helpless cunt, but he didn't intent to interfere unless it got out of hand. In the meantime, he intended simply to enjoy their offering – as well as the talented and enthusiastic lips of whoever was attending to his cock at the time.

One of the girls had pushed another pouffe under her head and shoulders so that she could lift her arms from the floor. Thus freed, Cristina pushed her thighs wide apart and with her forearms upon her hip bones, she pulled her outer cunt lips apart with her fingers keeping them well out to the sides of her cunt. The whipping of her cunt would be bad enough without having the back of her hands struck as well. She, like the others, had practised enough that she could be sure that her grip ensured her clitoris was well bared of all protection and would receive its share of the whipping, a refinement that she was certain the Captain would appreciate. Her cunt hole was widely opened as well, and having tried it in the privacy of their shared bedroom, she knew the tip of the whip was likely to curl right inside when the persons wielding the whip were standing above her like this. She couldn't claim to be free of fear, but she was no longer the lonely and desperate woman that the Captain had found aboard the ship. She was confident that she could and would endure the whipping and she trusted the women who were going to do it, even though they might be tempted to strike her harder than even they planned. But even if they did she would not be angry or feel betrayed. She wanted their trust and acceptance and part of that was showing she trusted them. She looked at their faces and nodded.

The lashes immediately began to fall upon her, the tips of the belts snapping angrily upon Cristina's open cunt and biting at the delicate inner flesh of her sex. Through the haze of pain she heard the girls alternately counting, 1, 2, 3, 4 .... Every fresh whipping of her cunt felt like the worst, but at least she now knew that she could bear it, and her neck muscles strained when she

lifted her head to look at the Captain's face. Even though she knew her face was twisted in pain and hardly beautiful, she managed a smile to show him that she welcomed and accepted this punishment of her sexual parts because it was her gift to him. The whips darted in from either side of her body, flickering in the air between them, each jolting snap of leather against her inner sex lips and clitoris hitting her body like a sudden blast of furnace hot wind and making her sexual nerves burn and sizzle with a dire excess of sensation. As she stared into his eyes, it felt as if he was somehow caressing her cunt from where he sat, stroking her with fire. And it felt good and right. She discovered that by rhythmically tugging upon her cunt lips and the fleshy hood of her clitoris she was able to stimulate herself, timing the movements of her fingers between the thundering cracks of the lashes slamming against her sexual parts and even daring to dive into the deep hole of her womanhood. She doubted that she would ever truly enjoy pain the way that Áine did, but it seemed her mind and body had come to an accommodation with it. She had been trained since birth to do whatever duty required, whether it had been the wearing of tight stays, dancing until her feet bled, riding elegantly when her thighs had been rubbed raw by the saddle, or submitting to the demands of a violent and possibly insane husband. This was just one more duty, and one that she realised she was glad to perform. She truly wished that she could scream with pleasure as the lash ravished her cunt, but at least she could accept the punishment with grace and unfeigned acceptance. As the count slowly climbed towards fifty she forced the pain to the back of her mind and concentrated upon the thought of the Captain's eyes on her cunt and that it was her duty to have an orgasm for him. The lustful feelings grew stronger and more insistent, and beneath the jolting of her body beneath the lash, she began to quiver and tremble. Her thumbs worked the hood of her clitoris, pulling it back and easing it forward, riding the ripping agony of the whip kissing her cunt. She could feel it rising within her loins, strong and sure as the count approached its climax. "45, crack, 46, crack, 47, crack – " When the whip landed upon her open cunt the forty-ninth time, she began to scream, but with pleasure, not pain. Every muscle in her body tensed so hard that she feared something might break. The final stroke cut precisely along her slit, catching her clitoris, slamming down between her inner lips, and curling right into her cunt hole. She screamed, long and hard, and her body shook and trembled so hard that she almost fell off of the pouffes.

Áine lifted her head from laving the Captain's cock with her tongue and exclaimed, "Bye the Saints, she's coming! Well done, Cristina, bloody well done!"

Harry clapped his hands as Cristina was hugged and kissed by her erstwhile tormentors. "Very nice. By George, very nice indeed!" he cried.

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Everyone gathered around Harry again, and he took Cristina's hot and sweating body in his arms. He kissed her soundly. "Well done. You managed to surprise me." He didn't insult her by asking if her climax was real. He knew that she would not demean herself by faking her pleasure.

Cristina giggled. "I surprised myself. I just wanted so much to be perfect for you and somehow my body just did its duty. I can't promise I'll be able to do that again in future, but I'll certainly try."

Áine, who was still slowly and lovingly licking his cock said, "So who's next?"

To Harry's surprise, Róisín held up her hand. "I want to try. Cristina be setting us a goal, and I could never resist a challenge. I'm after coming while my cunt is being whipped even if it kills me."

Harry reached out and pulled her close to kiss her nipples and then her lips. "I would rather that you didn't die in the attempt. You are much too precious to me for that."

Her smile was a mixture of surprise and delight. "Truly? I'm precious to you?"

"You are. You and the others are family. We have lived, loved, and fought together. You are mine and you will always have a place here as long as you desire it." He tapped her nose. "But do not allow my praise to swell your head. I shall still play with your bodies in whatever way it suits me."

She stuck her tongue out at him and then grinned. "We would not be having it any other way." She turned to Cristina. "If you are recovered from your exertions, be so kind as to whip my cunt." She assumed Cristina's former position on the pouffes and spread her cunt wide, inviting the Captain to examine her intimacy with her smile. Róisín enjoyed showing her nakedness off, so this was no hardship to her. So long as he was watching her, neither was the whipping of her cunt. Her head lifted when the lashes fell upon her inner sex and her grin was almost feral. It was so exciting to put herself on display this way that she was already on the way to orgasm when the first stroke of a belt touched her cunt. Each blast of pain stabbing into her cunt made her feel more aroused and exhilarated because the Captain had seen her take it. The pain barely mattered to her. It was like music that allowed her to dance, to perform for him. He liked to see her body, her lust, and her pain, and she liked nothing more than to show it to him. She barely made it to the twentieth stroke before she came. "Don't stop!" she cried as she twisted and writhed lewdly upon the pouffe, enjoying the fact that the Captain was watching her come even more than the orgasm itself. It finally took fifty-two strokes to bring her to a third and final orgasm, and her throat was hoarse from screaming by that time. She slumped limply upon the pouffes, so still that Ceara became alarmed and went to check on her breath. "I'm all right," Róisín said and slowly sat up with the other girl's help.

Harry applauded and held out his arms to her. He hugged her hot, sweat slick body when she fell somewhat unsteadily into his embrace and kissed her deeply, their tongues twining and gliding over each other. Once more the girls gathered around him, partaking of refreshments and catching their breath.

Cristina touched Áine on the shoulder. "Allow me to take your place. You should have a turn at wielding the lash."

Áine much preferred receiving the lash to wielding it, but she realised that she shouldn't monopolise the Captain's attention, so she nodded her thanks and exchanged places with the Spanish girl.

Harry examined Róisín's cunt and then compared it to Cristina's to see the effect that the whipping had upon them while the girls discussed how it had felt. He had long known that cunts were surprisingly resilient and capable of absorbing a great deal of punishment without ill effects, and he stroked and caressed their redly swollen cunt lips, delighting in the way they felt and looked, and how willingly they allowed him to handle their undoubtedly sore sexual parts. In fact, both of them looked positively pleased to feel his touch between their legs.

Cristina felt his pleasure reflected in the stiffness and movement of his cock against her lips and grinned. Ever since the attack on their room, the battle and the Captain's courageous rescue, all of them had felt a growing feeling of closeness both to each other and to the man who legally owned them. She kissed his cock lovingly and winked at Róisín.

Then Ceara went around behind the Captain, fed him a sweetmeat, and then kissed his cheek. "It's my turn now. Know that what I do now I do because your pleasure is my pleasure."

He turned his head and kissed the side of her breast. "I do understand, sweet Ceara, and it warms my heart, as well as my loins."

She chuckled at this and turned to walk towards the pouffes, her hips swaying enticingly.

Harry shook his head in amazement at the creamy length of her legs as she lay down, and an erotic thrill ran along his spine when she parted her knees and spread her cunt lips wide with her long delicate fingers. The slit of her cunt was long too, and when she parted the outer lips, it created a bright crimson slash amidst the white of her skin, which was porcelain fine, showing traces of blue veins, like delicate brush strokes glazed into fine china. He saw her whisper to the other girls, and watched them bring another pouffe and some cushions to support her greater height and lift her head and shoulders so that she was almost sitting up. Then he saw her fingers move, and he realised that she was playing with herself as Róisín and Áine positioned themselves with their leather belts, and her cunt became a darker shade of pink before his eyes and the light glistened off of fresh moisture seeping from her open cunt hole. Her lips moved and he realised she was silently mouthing "For you".

Then the lashes began to fall, hissing and cracking against her cunt with a steady and



remorseless malice. It was hard, but Ceara remained ... not impassive, but rather serene, like a swan gliding through a rain storm, letting the pain wash over her and thinking only of how she was pleasing the Captain with her cunt. The idea of being needed and wanted made her happy, and being desired aroused her. Each stroke of the whip that tore into her cunt seemed only to impress his ownership of her into her being and allowed her to demonstrate her willingness to be his. His eyes met hers and suddenly the agony of her whipped cunt turned into heat when he nodded in approval of her performance. This was not punishment but an opportunity to give of herself, and she did, welcoming every stroke and every burst of pain as if it were a caress. In truth, by her mind they were his caresses, each crack of the whip into her cunt a touch of his hand and will, and because of that, as welcome as any gentle kiss. Like the others, she had come to her own accommodation with the Captain's love for punishing her cunt, and now was able to find joy in it. Even though each stroke caused her to shake and gasp in pain, she pushed her cunt out towards him again almost immediately after, offering herself with a delight and sweetness that aroused even the other women. Her climax was not as dramatic as the others but her gentle moans and the strong jerking movements of her hips were nonetheless undeniably real and heartfelt. She came before the final strokes, but she bore the last strokes on a cunt rendered even more sensitive by her orgasm with sweet smiling grace.

Both Róisín and Áine hugged her afterwards, with Róisín kissing away the tears of pain that moistened her cheeks and eyes.

Harry turned to the side so that he could hug the tall woman. When they kissed he could feel the strength of her emotion and happiness. "You were beautiful. Thank you for that gift."

Feeling as light and playful as a young girl, Ceara blushed. "A gift that you be more than welcome to take as often as you be pleasing, Captain," realising the absolute truth in what she said.

Cristina took her lips from the Captain's cock and said, "You should have felt how hard and ready he was during your whipping. I should be jealous." Her grin showed that she held no such feelings.

Ceara felt the Captain's fingers lightly exploring her cunt lips and she parted her thighs and pressed his hand firmly against her cunt. "Go ahead and be feeling me. I'm after being just a little sore." In fact her cunt felt as if it was on fire, and his touch was like pressing hot coals to her flesh, but she would not have denied him even if the pain was such as to make her swoon. Her cunt hole was only badly sore around the opening so it still felt good when his fingers entered her, although it hurt when his knuckles pressed against her bruised inner lips. She bit the inside of her cheek and rolled her hips, moving her cunt around his fingers. She sighed happily when he kissed her belly just above her pubic mound. She had never imagined she could be happy under such circumstances, and aboard the ship she had thought that she was bound for hell, but despite everything she would have not exchanged her circumstances for anything, even though she couldn't have explained why if her friends back in Ireland had asked her.

Áine stood up and pressed a hand between her thighs. "My turn now," she said with a wide grin. "By the Saints, I'm after waiting for it!" She held up fingers wet and glistening with juices and was greeted by cheers and friendly mocking calls from the other girls. She skipped over to the pouffes and wiggled her bottom when she sat down, moving her bottom to the very edge. She also chose to have cushions under her head, and there was no doubt at all of her arousal and lustfulness once she opened her cunt to view. She openly played with herself, even putting fingers inside her hole and rapidly fucking herself with them.

There was a moment of silence when Ceara raised her whip for the first stroke. The slim redhead had stretched her cunt open so widely that even her inner lips were drawn tautly apart and her hole gaped wide and her pee hole peeked out boldly amidst glistening ruffles of pink. She knew that Áine would not thank her for being gentle, so she took careful aim and drove the sinuous length of leather down hard, her arm, wrist and fingers working as one.

The vicious crack of the whip made everyone jump, and despite her prodigious ability to bear sexual pain, Áine froze in exquisite agony, her toes pointing accusingly at the ceiling and a fine sheen of sweat springing up on her skin like magic. The tip of the whip had left a small dark bruise

between her inner lips just above her cunt hole, where it had expended its full fury. But the agony seemed to slide off of her like water from a duck's back. She shook her head and exhaled in an "ahhh" that managed to sound sensual. Even her cunt seemed to respond, growing a brighter pink and blossoming, her inner lips unfurling and extending like the petals of a rose. It seemed that the rain of whip lashes had to crush the delicate crimson beauty, but after each shocking smack of leather against moist flesh, her cunt sprang up again, fresh and pink as before. Áine's cheeks flushed bright and a pink glow spread down her neck to her breasts, but she did not wilt. It seemed impossible that anyone could find joy in such terrible punishment, but although the two girls wielding the whips were panting and dripped with sweat, tiny red haired Áine refused to scream, but instead moaned with fierce passion that defied both fear and pain. She remembered her times in her father's library, pressing her thighs together as she avidly read every story of lust and torture. Somehow it was always the stories of women suffering terrible punishments inflicted upon their cunts, and each time she had imagined herself as the character and how beautifully she would accept the torture of her cunt. There were times when she had questioned her ability and courage, and feared that she would beg and cry at the smallest touch of pain. But now her legs were spread wide, as were her cunt lips, and real, very solid whips were kissing her cunt with fire – and it was glorious! She might even have laughed if not that she feared seeming to belittle the true courage and suffering that the others had endured. It was so very good, her every dream and fantasy come true. The strangest thing was that the pain was still very very real. She knew she ought to be nearly mad from pain, but instead it was as if a bright light was shining inside her mind, and fuelled by the pain that light flowed down her spine back to her loins in the form of molten lust, a lust so powerful as to be nearly unbearable. The need to come was a pressure that made her cunt and womb rumble and clench so hard that she thought her hip bone might crack. Then the last stroke fell, and she still hadn't come. Terror gripped her heart. No! She couldn't bear it if she didn't come. She would die of frustration and disappointment, she just knew it. Then through misty eyes she saw the Captain hold out his hand and Ceara toss her whip to him. She saw him raise his arm and the searing pressure grew to the point of bursting.

"Come for me, Áine!" Harry commanded, and he slashed the whip down. It struck her cunt with a force that drew blood.

The tip of the whip bit at her clitoris like the fangs of a serpent, and Áine screamed. And she screamed again when the Captain's cock drove into her cunt like a spearhead. She felt him come, buried deep inside of her, and she came too, still screaming like a banshee and clinging to him tightly as if her climax might fling her into the skies.

When Harry gently pulled out of Áine's cunt, each of the other girls knelt to lick his cock, and then pressed their lips to her cunt lips, drawing a share of his come into their mouths, blended with Áine's blood.

They fell asleep in a great huddle of warm, satisfied bodies, Harry already dreaming of a great Spanish galleon filled with gold.

## Chapter Ten

Briars smiled and shook his head at the sight of the four women waving at them from the carriage at the dockside. "How do you get your women to be as loyal as hounds and yet not snapping and biting at each other?"

Harry smiled as he waved back. "Perhaps because I don't treat them like hounds?" Most captains would have felt it beneath their dignity to wave back to a wife or girlfriend, let alone slave girls. But he didn't care, and neither did his crew, who would have broken the head of anyone who dared to sneer. He laughed when the girls all stood up in the carriage and lifted their skirts up to their waists. They were at the edge of the shore, so no one on land could see what they showed, and the bulk of the Talon blocked them from the rest of the harbour.

But the crew saw and raised a great cheer, drowning the creaking of the main and jeer capstans and grunts and shouts of the men working to raise the anchor.

Briars roared, "Get back to work you motherless bastards. You can get your own cunt when we return to port."

"Not if Petey's wife has anything to do about it!" a sailor shouted. This raised a fresh laugh, but all the men were at their stations, and the Talon pulled smoothly away from land, the masts and spars creaking as more and more sail was hoist to catch the wind. The men knew that this was not an escort voyage, which meant the chance of a share of plunder, so they worked with a will. The wind was brisk but with only light fleecy clouds in the sky. Harry turned his eyes out to sea. Time to focus his mind on business. Maryan's supposed brother had silently disappeared overboard the previous night, aided by a cannon ball tied to his ankles and wrapped in an old cargo net. Put to the question the man had confirmed the course of the treasure ship and the course that he was supposed to navigate for Sir Percy and de Segovia in order to meet it. Harry's smile was grim. He intended to meet it all right, but the Spaniards would not be pleased with the result. "Mr Briars! Gunnery practise for the gun-crew as soon as we're far enough out to sea. We'll get one chance because of surprise, but the treasure ship will be large and heavily armed. We need to dismast it first time. Then we can force them to strike or sweep their decks clean of living souls." Once the enemy ship was crippled and unable to make way they could repeatedly sail the Talon across the enemy's stern and fire grape shot, canister, and even ball, down the length of the upper deck sweeping it clear of crew with little risk to themselves. Since they couldn't risk sinking the treasure ship, he couldn't afford a broadside to broadside battle. If the first attack failed, they would have to attempt a boarding action from small sail boats after shredding the enemy's sails with chain shot, which would be costly in the lives of the crew.

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Eight days out to sea, a crewman in the tops cried out "Sail Ho!" Harry squinted into the brightness of the horizon. The timing and location seemed right, although it was hard to be precise at sea with even the best of charts and navigators. It could just be an inconvenient coincidence. The last thing he needed was a chance meeting with a Spanish warship or a French buccaneer out of Tortuga foolish enough to attack the Talon. He sent more men with the best eyesight up into the tops, and then waited. de Segovia's papers had not named the treasure ship possibly in the interests of secrecy, but they had described the flag that it would fly as identification, and the one that the Talon needed to fly in turn. He faced Briars. "First Mate, Have the gun crews stand to, but gun ports are to remain closed until I give the order. I'll keel haul anyone who even lifts one to peek. The boarding parties to draw arms but to stay below the bulwark and out of sight. No musket men up in the shrouds. Surprise is everything." He clapped Briars on the shoulder. "I know I'm telling you what you already know."

"Never hurts to be sure, Captain. The men won't fail you. The Spaniards will think we're friendly until it's too late."

"But remind the men that they'll all have to move more smartly to get into position once

we've shown our hand."

"Aye Captain."

Harry judged they were near enough and extended his telescope. It took a moment to find the Spaniard in the long tunnel of the glass, and then he saw it. "It's them. Raise the signal flag. They'll be looking too." He turned to look along the ship. "This is it boys! Do your jobs well and we're going to be richer than you've ever dreamed!"

The cheer was subdued but viciously heartfelt. The men were in a killing mood and were priming themselves to receive cannon fire and to face the mad swirling hell that was a boarding action. The sharpshooters who would climb up into the shrouds and shoot at the Spanish officers and leaders would themselves be hanging out in the open, targets for anyone who cared to shoot back and exposed to the enemy's cannon-fire aimed at the masts and sails.

Harry ensured that the identification banner was flying and stepped up to the gunwale to wave at the Spanish ship. The next few minutes would tell if their ruse was successful. Even if they saw through it, the Talon was still the faster ship, especially unburdened as it was with cargo. It would be a long stern chase, but he would catch them in the end. Watching through the looking glass, he saw the finely dressed figure he assumed was the Spanish captain wave, and he waved back. It was still much too far for speaking trumpets and human voices. "Come on, come on," he muttered to himself, his fingers tapping the gunwale in rippling succession.

"She's taking in sail, Captain! She's slowing to let us catch up!"

"Silence! They might hear us," Briars barked, forestalling another cheer from the crew.

Harry stood calmly upon the quarterdeck, careful not to make any alarming moves. He was acutely aware that they were likely watching him and his crew from the other ship. The Spanish Governor would have picked the best captain and ship he had for this mission. They would not be careless or stupid. It was strange that for once the name of his ship, the word "Talon" painted in gold upon his ship's bow would actually be an aid in sneaking up upon his prey. He chuckled. "That bastard de Segovia must be rolling in his grave, knowing that his own ruse was being used against him." He laughed loudly at his own poor joke, both for the benefit of the watching Spaniards and his own crew. They wouldn't know what he said, but they would see his laugh, and take heart from his apparent confidence.

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Half an hour later, the Talon's bowsprit was almost level with the stern of the Spanish ship, the San Buenaventura. Using a speaking trumpet Harry shouted, "Ahoy, San Buenaventura. I am Captain Sir Percy Reede of the Talon." The sea was relatively calm, and he knew his voice would carry well enough, even over the cracking of the sail.

Briars was listening through an ear trumpet and repeated the shouted reply from the Spanish ship. "He is ... Captain Hernando ... de Avilar. He greets you and asks ... the whereabouts of Señor de Segovia."

Harry had been expecting that question and had his answer prepared. He bowed with a flourish of his hand, and then lifted the speaking trumpet to his lips, bracing it against the pressure of the wind against the wider bell end. The helmsman was gradually edging the Talon into a close parallel course with the Spaniard, and he only had to carry on this charade for a little longer. "The Señor was injured ... hurt. He is resting below!" he bellowed through the horn. He saw the other captain frown. Still smiling and speaking calmly, Harry said to Briars, "He's suspicious." Glancing forward, he saw that they had achieved the desired course. This was as good as he could hope for. "First Mate, steady as she goes. Set fighting sail. Gunners, on the upward heel, fire as we bear. And raise our true colours."

"Aye, Captain!" Grinning widely, Briars began to repeat his captain's commands and adding his own detailed ones as he saw necessary. The deck rumbled as the gunners raised the gun ports and ran the cannon out into firing position while the gunners blew on their matches, making them glow red.

Harry saw the sudden stir of alarm aboard the other ship when they spotted the opening of the gun ports and the raising of the Talon's own version of the Jolly Rodger. Harry and his men were privateers, not pirates, but the difference was often slim especially to the Spanish prey, so flying the Black Flag served to terrify and dishearten the enemy. His personal flag bore a large skull impaled on a spike above crossed pistols. The Talon surged ahead, bringing the first battery into position to fire. The cannon roared, spitting a long tongue of flame towards the enemy and filling the air between them with ominous black smoke. Gun after gun spoke shaking the ship, ripping holes in the Spanish ship's sails, and sending lines and sheets whipping madly in the air and across the deck.

Caught totally by surprise, the enemy's gunners were still struggling to get to their guns and not a single shot was fired in retaliation, although some of the deck crew and marines fired pistols and muskets at the Talon. One of the Talon's crew hiding behind the bulwark lifted his head to peek and was flung backwards, the middle of his face a raw and bloody mess, smashed by balls fired by a small swivel mounted falcon on the rail of the Spanish ship. Briars swore foully and shouted, "Keep your heads down, you blasted fools!"

Suddenly there was a loud crunch and crack of splintering wood when a round of bar shot struck the main mast mid-way up its length, sending a mass of sail, rope and timber tumbling towards the deck. The cheers of the Talon's gunners could be heard rising from below deck between the pounding thuds of the guns.

Harry was beginning to hope that they would get a clean pass at the enemy when there was a more distant boom and a cannon ball smashed through the edge of the gunwale amidships, sending a storm of splintered wood blasting out across the deck in front of it. Men screamed in agony and one who happened to be right behind the spot where the ball struck was ripped in half. The ball rolled across the deck seemingly harmless until it touched the ankle of a sailor and ripped his leg off at the knee. More balls whistled through the rigging and sails, and one bounced off the thick wood of the Talon's upper hull. A musket ball struck the railing next to where he stood and a splinter ripped across his cheek. Harry barely felt the wound and pounded his fist on the railing when a round of chain shot from one of Talon's guns snapped the Spaniard's fore mast cleanly in two. "Yes! By thunder. That's done for her," he shouted even as faint screams floated across the gap between the ships as the falling mast crushed more Spanish sailors.

He had been hoping that the enemy captain would strike his colours after such a devastating attack, but he could see men cutting the fallen rigging free and clearing the deck. Their standard still flew and it was obvious they still intended to fight, knowing that he would not want to sink the treasure ship. "Bring us round to cross their stern," Harry shouted, waving at the sailing master, and Briars repeated and confirmed the command. His crew were well trained and men were already clearing wreckage from the deck, removing body parts and washing down the blood, while others attended to the wounded who looked to stand a chance of surviving. It would take time to bring the ship around in a large circle so that it would sail across and perpendicular to the enemy's undefended stern. From that position he could have the Talon's guns sweep the deck with case shot as well as fire at the Spaniard's rudder, which would completely cripple the ship if it was damaged or destroyed. Until the turn was accomplished, it was the strange fact of war at sea that both ships would sail serenely on, undisturbed by the other. He had a sailor keep an eye upon the San Buenaventura, hoping that the Spanish captain might yet strike his colours and surrender, as well as for any signs of fire on the enemy ship, that most dreaded of occurrences which could send it to the bottom, killing all of the crew and robbing both sides of the treasure. If there was a fire, he might even have to call for a truce so that they might try to fight the flames together and only to resume combat when that great enemy of all sailors was defeated. He turned when he heard the footsteps of the First Mate approaching. "What's the cost?"

"Four dead, five badly wounded, Captain. The Quartermaster will make sure of their shares," Briars replied. The dead and crippled were entitled to extra shares and it was the Quartermaster's duty to see that they or their families received it. "There are no holes beneath the water line and the ship's wholesome. Ball and shot are a plenty, and the powder's dry. Fresh barrels are being brought to all the guns."

"Excellent. Biscuits and watered rum to all the men. If they don't strike after the next pass we'll have to board her."

"Aye Captain. The men'll be ready."

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Despite the Spanish ship's efforts to prevent the Talon from crossing its stern, the loss of two masts and the damage to its rigging was too much of a handicap, and Harry watched in satisfaction as the helmsman brought them into position for an attack. This time all the gun ports were open and the gunners were peeking out of the ports and adjusting their aim. The Spaniard's stern was higher than the Talon, but comprised of relatively fragile structures. Their cannon balls and even canister would smash right through. Other gunners checked the tightness of their wadding as they lowered their muzzles to strike at the enemy's rudder. Light cannons began to fire at them from the stern but did little or no damage as they inexorably glided closer and closer across the dark water.

Any sensible captain would see the hopelessness of his situation and strike his colours at this point, but their flag remained stubbornly flying. The captain appeared determined to fight to the end. It was possible he hoped to inflict such casualties during the boarding as to drive the Talon and its crew away. Many pirate crews would not risk severe casualties.

But Harry and his men knew full well what was at stake, and his crew were not as volatile as one belonging to a pirate. They couldn't vote to replace the captain and were trained as well as any Royal Navy ship. In addition, they considered Harry a "lucky" captain as well as a fair one, so when the time came they would go across to the other ship without hesitation and knowing that their captain would be with them.

Harry's lips thinned into a grim line. "Gunners fire as they bear."

"Gunners fire as they bear," Briars shouted down to the gun deck and nodded when he heard the command being echoed down and through the ship.

Three minutes later the first cannon spoke, its roar drowning out the shouts and the softer thumps of the Spanish crew and their falcons and muskets. Harry felt the deck vibrate beneath his feet and inhaled the whiff of sulphur from the burning gunpowder. His eyes narrowed and he nodded in satisfaction when the gilded wood of the treasure ship's upper stern exploded in a shower of splinters when the canister shot smashed into it. Then the next cannon spoke, the spear of flame pointing this time towards the vertical shape of the rudder. The cannon ball punched into the wood, missing the rudder and punching a ragged hole in the stern. However, even a miss would be wreaking havoc inside the ship smashing men and ship impartially. The cloud of smoke from the burning gunpowder was starting to blur his view of the enemy ship, but it didn't matter at this range. Over the thunder of the guns he could hear the screaming of injured men floating across from the Spanish ship, as well as the louder and closer screams from his own crew, hit by musket balls fired both by marines and by the small cannon mounted on the rail of the enemy's stern and fired at a slight downward angle into the deck of the Talon.

A shout of elation from the crew made Harry's attention snap back to the Spanish ship, and his teeth bared in a feral grin. A ball had smashed directly into the shaft of the enemy's rudder. "Cease fire!" he shouted. The Spaniard was crippled and wasn't going anywhere now. Surely their captain would strike his colours now? "Yes!" he cried, pounding his fist on the stained wood of the ship. The enemy's flag was coming down, indicating their surrender. "Mr Briars, bring us around and prepare for boarding!"

The men were cheering and clapping each other on the back. There would be no bowel loosening boarding action and they were all going to be rich men. They clustered around the bow, waiting for the moment when the front side of the Talon would approach the rear side of the Spanish ship and they could toss grappling irons and lines to lash the ships together.

Even though the enemy had surrendered, Harry was not going to bring the ships side by side. More than one pirate had been surprised by a broadside from the prize's cannons even though they had surrendered. By touching the bow of his ship to the enemy's rear side, they would be safe

from the Spaniard's cannon fire as they boarded. Once more the Talon made a great circle in the water, but this time the helmsman had a near stationary point to steer for. As they approached the Spanish ship again he could see the captain standing on the quarterdeck, ready to surrender his ship. He allowed Briars and the sailing master to handle the final approach, and then went forward to the forecastle when the men began to haul in the lines, bringing the ships together. He stepped up to the gunwale to jump across to the other ship, and then paused, his eyes narrowing. He noticed that the Spanish captain had two pistols stuffed into his sash on the same side. This was uncomfortable and normally only done when about to go into action. He was certain that they hadn't been there the last time he had seen the captain as they were striking their colours. That could only mean ... "Treachery!" he shouted, drawing his own pistol, "It's an ambush!"

Seeing that his ruse had failed, the Spanish captain drew his sword and shouted a command. Men sprung up from behind the bulwark of the treasure ship and other concealments.

Harry fired at the same time as the Spaniard. He saw his ball pluck the plumed hat off of the man's head. It seemed as if the Spaniard's shot would strike him, but instead the crewman standing beside and behind Harry cried out in pain, clapping his hand to his shoulder. Both of them had missed. "Follow me men!" he cried as he threw himself up onto the rail and sprang onto the deck of the other ship, followed moments later by the crewmen who had been prepared to help him secure the surrendered ship. They threw boarding planks across the gap and charged across the perilous bridges, others leaping or swinging on lines.

However, many of the Spaniards leapt in the opposite direction and onto the deck of the Talon at the same time, and moments later a mad melee of hand to hand combat broke out on both ships as their crews boarded each other's vessels. Steel clashed with steel, pistols hissed and cracked, wood thudded sickeningly on flesh and bone, and everywhere the screaming of men gripped by fury or agony rose up like a chorus. Mercifully no granadoes were thrown as the two sides were too mixed for them to be risked, but men died and fell everywhere, soaking the decks with blood.

Harry emptied his second pistol into the belly of a giant of a man charging at him with an axe raised high over his head and hastily skipped aside when the dying body continued forward and the blade of the axe smashed into the deck inches from his foot. A shout of "Ware!" made him duck and a belaying pin swooshed through the air and took his hat off, dropping strands of hair over his forehead. He swivelled, his knees still bent, his slashing sword cutting into the belly of his attacker, sending the man staggering backwards in shock, his hands clutching his opened belly. Spotting the Spanish captain, he dodged past several clumps of struggling men and strode towards him. The man had also emptied his guns and Harry waved his sword at him in challenge. To his surprise, instead of responding, the man spun around and began to run. The Spaniard had shown no signs of cowardice so far, so Harry assumed that he had to be up to something bad, so he followed.

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The silence and stillness of the lower deck was shocking after the chaos and destruction. Harry had silently followed the captain down here, making his way carefully through and around the stacked and netted cargo and barrels of salted beef, pickled onions, and hard biscuits. After traversing almost the length of the ship he was beginning to worry that he had somehow passed the Spaniard, who might be sneaking up on him instead. But just as he was about to turn around he heard voices. He hurried forward as best he could in the inky darkness of the hold until at last his dark accustomed eyes caught the faint glimmer of candle light.

"Captain, what are you doing?" The voice was female, speaking in Spanish, and sounded confused and frightened.

"I'm protecting your virtue. Isn't that what you convent girls prize above all? Your virtue? Isn't the purity of your loins and your good breeding what makes you worth the handsome donation your intended husband made to the Church?"

"But ... is that not gunpowder in that barrel?"

"Indeed it is. The bastard English have double crossed us. I hope that sucker of goat cocks de Segovia is dead or busy screaming in some dungeon in Port Royal. My life is worth nothing if I return to Madrid without the treasure and your intact maidenhead, so I intend to see to it that the Englishman Sir Percy doesn't benefit from them either."

Harry peeked around the corner of a stack of gunpowder barrels covered in sheets of heavy tarred canvas to protect them from stray sparks and flame and saw the captain finish pushing a fuse into the bung hole of a small barrel of gunpowder. That minor explosion would set off the rest of the powder and send the ship to the bottom, and likely the Talon as well. Apparently the treasure ship's crew had not been consulted regarding this plan, given the way they were fighting instead of trying to row away in whatever boats they could launch. He stepped into the open and he saw the woman's eyes widen. He held a finger to his lips and raised his eyebrows.

The woman was young and very attractive, dressed in a severe black dress that resembled a nun's habit. She appeared to consider the situation for a moment and then smiled and nodded.

Harry smiled too. It appeared that she preferred living above preserving her purity at all costs. He took a step forward and extended his sword in front of him. "Surrender Captain. Your cause is hopeless and I will run you through if you try to light –" The Spanish Captain must have heard him approaching, because he spun around like a top and flung the burning candle in his hand into Harry's face. Harry reflexively batted the candle aside, giving the Spaniard time to move to the side and draw his sword. It was almost impossible to use their swords effectively in the crowded space, and Harry parried, stabbed and slashed at his opponent in the shadowy gloom of the hold.

"I'm going to kill you, Sir Percy and then send both our ships to the bottom of the sea. Let the sea serpents enjoy the gold and her cunt."

The girl hissed in shock at his crude obscenity.

Their swords locked and they came to a standstill, both of them feeling out the other's strength and balance, seeking for an advantage. "One problem with that – I'm not Sir Percy!" Harry said, and with a grunt of effort pushed the Spaniard's rapier aside and lashed out with his booted foot. He felt the tip of his boot hit the other man's thigh, and when the Spaniard stumbled back he cut downwards with both hands like an axeman.

The Spaniard blocked the stroke by raising his rapier horizontally above his head gripped in both hands, and then deflected Harry's sword to the side, using the Englishman's momentum against him.

Harry threw himself forwards in a dive just in time to avoid the rapier's thrust to his kidney. He rolled onto his back and blocked another thrust at his belly as he scrambled backwards until he came up against another pile of cargo, which turned out to be strings of onions. He grabbed one and flung it at the Spanish captain's face, which gave him the opportunity to spring to his feet, but at the cost of a slash across the front of his thigh. Their swords touched and spiralled, oiled steel sliding, he saw an opening and thrust. It should have earned him no more than a minor wound in his opponent's shoulder, but to his surprise the Spaniard lurched forward and Harry felt his point sink deep into the man's chest. With a twist of his wrist he pulled free, rocked back, and then lunged, driving his sword's point into the Spaniard's sternum, slipping under the rib cage and piercing the man's beating heart. When the man's eyes glazed over and his legs collapsed beneath him, it revealed the woman standing behind him holding a large and long dried sausage in both hands like a club. It was her blow, he realised that had cost the Spanish captain his balance – and his life. "Thanks for your assistance, my lady. Now I advise that you go back into your cabin until the fighting is settled and I come for you."

"You seem very sure that you will be victorious," the woman said in English.

"I'm sure of my men," Harry replied. He saw the glint of gold inside the cabin and realised that it was also the strong room for the gold and silver. Which meant that her cabin was also a prison. "Are you travelling to Spain of your own choice?" he asked, nodding at the thick locking bar and padlock on the outside of the cabin door.

She smiled ruefully. "I was not consulted. My family made the arrangements, and I found out when the Mother Superior summoned me to her office." She raised an elegant eyebrow. "Is that



not the way of your English women?"

Harry nodded. "Some. Especially the old and rich noble families. No one cares what the poor do."

"And your women? Or are you faithful to your wife?" She had noticed his eyes studying her features and figure.

He bowed with a smile. "I am not wed, and I ask my women. Once."

For some reason this made the girl smile as she returned to her cabin and closed the door.

Harry placed the lock bar across the door and secured with the padlock. He looped the key around his neck, picked up the Spanish Captain's sword and headed topside. Pausing at the top of the ladder he cautiously peeked out of the hatch. The fight on the Talon was over, with only its own crew still standing. The remnants of the Spanish crew were gathered in a tight group clustered near the base of the mainmast and against the port side of the ship. There were several of his crewmen standing with their backs to him and he didn't want to be accidentally cut down when he stepped out into the open. He called out several names and waited until he was recognised and then came out onto the deck. He pushed his way towards the desperate Spanish crewmen and marines. "Your captain is dead!" he shouted in Spanish, holding up the dead man's sword. This caused a groan of dismay to rise from them. "Surrender now and I give you my word that you will be set free in boats with food and water and a compass. Otherwise you will all die. You have my word on that too."

The Talon's crew growled angrily, remembering the treachery of the Spaniards. Fighting after striking the colours normally meant that no quarter would be given on either side, and the English sailors wanted blood, or more of it.

Harry raised his arms. "Men, there's no need for anyone else to die today. This ship, this treasure ship, is ours!"

Reminded of the plunder, the blood of the English sailors began to cool, and men began to nod in agreement. The trapped Spaniards would fight, and the casualties wouldn't be all one sided.

"Well? Do you want to live?" Harry shouted in Spanish, and then in English so that all of his men could understand.

For a long minute the two parties stared at each other over their weapons, and then suddenly a Spanish sailor, an officer from his dress, tossed his sword onto the deck. "We have your oath Captain?"

Harry nodded. "You do. All of the crewmen shall go free." He saw Briars glance at him upon hearing these words.

The man, the officer nodded. "Very well. We surrender." The relief amongst the Spaniards was palpable, and weapons began to fall from their hands.

The English rushed forwards to pick up the weapons and to push the prisoners into a line against the port side gunwale.

For the second time today, the crew of the Talon felt the sweet taste of victory. Briars lifted his hat. "Three cheers for Captain Pierce! Hip hip —"

"Hoorah!" roared the crew. There was nothing that sailors loved more than a lucky captain who brought victory and prizes. By now they all knew this was a special treasure ship and they knew that they were all rich men. "Hoorah! Hoorah!"

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A servant boy came running into the sitting room. "She's back! The Talon's back! The watch has spotted her coming into harbour!" the boy cried excitedly. Cristina looked up from her sewing, crossed herself and uttered a quick prayer. "Come on then ladies, let us get to the dockside. We saw him off, now let's welcome him back."

Aine giggled. "The same way?"

The others all nodded, and Cristina grinned. "The same way." She turned to the boy. "Tell them to get the carriage ready. Quickly now!"

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The girl's name had turned out to be Marina de Morales, and Harry had spent much time in conversation with her as they had sailed back to Port Royal. At first he tried his best to reassure her of her safety and that she would be returned to her intended spouse as soon as her ransom was paid. Since the treasure had been even larger than he had hoped, he even assured her that the ransom was simply a matter of form, and that he would not demand an exorbitant amount. But after a few days he discovered that she was far from frightened. In fact she was intelligent, well educated, and had strong opinions of her own. Being raised and educated by nuns, she had visions of a life beyond being a political pawn, brood mare, or even a political power behind her husband. In return, he told her about his life, and of the little group of women he had collected.

Marina had been sad and a little angry that women should be used as nothing but playthings. The daughter of an aristocrat, her life was very prescribed, but she still felt that she had more to say about her life than that.

Amused, Harry played the Devil's advocate and argued in support of the lives of Cristina and the others, compared to the lifelong restrictions that Marina faced. "Do you know anything at all about your fiancé?" When she described his family and background, he said, "But do you know anything about him as a man. His likes, dislikes. Do you know how he will treat you in bed?"

This made her flush. "A proper lady should not be concerned about such things."

Harry laughed. "At least each of my ladies had the chance to see what I looked like. I told them exactly what I expected of them with regard to carnal relations. I gave them a promise of eventual freedom from my dominion with the means to live a comfortable life. And most important of all, I gave them the chance to say no. Can you say you have had the same?" Marina had been silent and withdrawn for a day after that, and Harry assumed that she had been offended and no longer wished to talk. But he was surprised when she had tapped on the door of his cabin the next morning. He had welcomed her in and invited her to share his breakfast.

As they ate, Marina said "I have been thinking about our previous discussions. I ... I have come to see that there is more truth in what you say than I was willing to admit. I was sent to the nunnery even though I cried and begged to be allowed to remain at home. The nuns are very ... strict." She blushed at this.

"Do you mean they —"

Marina nodded. "The rod is part of our learning. It is applied to our persons without ...."

"Covering?" Harry suggested politely.

She giggled. "Yes, covering. We have been talking so intimately these several days, and after all I am completely at your mercy —" She lowered her eyes in a way that should have been modest and innocent, but rather seemed to suggest something else. "I feel that you know me better than just about anyone. But to return to the subject, yes we were punished ... bare."

"That seems most severe," Harry said, carefully keeping his tone level and serious.

"Indeed sir, it was. Especially since the good nuns saw no need to spare any ... part of our persons." She looked up at him, her eyes huge and dark, waiting to see his response.

"Señorita Marina, I have tried to be a good host, and not to impose upon your ... circumstances."

"Indeed you have, Captain Pierce. And I am most grateful for your forbearance."

"But it seems to me that you are suggesting something. Something that could decisively change our relationship. Therefore I desire to be very clear as to your meaning."

She nodded. "That is only fair. What I am saying is that although my ... body is innocent and pure, the same cannot be said of my thoughts and intentions. Whether by design or accident, the good nuns have by their teaching and discipline imparted certain ... feelings to their humble pupil."

"Go on," Harry said, surprised by this turn of events, his mind sent whirling by the possibilities.

She shook her head. "My thoughts are still not clear on this. Please give me more time to ... to think."

Harry saw her again the next morning, when once more she tapped upon his door. He was startled by her appearance as she stood in the doorway, wearing a black hooded robe. Her fine pale features still showed clearly, but otherwise she was as well covered as any cleric. She seemed to glide into his cabin, the hem of the robe brushing the floor. He wondered if she had regretted her earlier disclosures and this was her way to return their relationship to propriety.

Without preamble, she said, "The nuns taught us that the frailties and lusts of the world must be scourged from our bodies in order that we might face our Lord with pure souls. I regret that I was never able to purge myself of my evil, lustful natures. In fact, the more that they forbade it, the greater the desire grew. However, I discovered that in the scourging of my body, I did achieve a certain ... relief from my base natures. I fear that if I were to continue under their guidance, I would either lose my battle against my own nature, or be discovered and hung as a witch. Since my capture and through my discussions with you, I have come to realise that I require another hand, a stern but loving one, to guide me and rein in my base natures so that I may live with them without harm to myself or others." With a gentle shrug, the robe slipped from her shoulders, falling like a stream of inky blackness to the floor and revealing her completely naked body, glowing ivory white with traces of blue veins showing mysteriously through the porcelain fineness of her delicate skin. Her hands were clasped in front of her as if in prayer, but instead of a cross or rosary beads, they held a long handled scourge, with long silk lashes bearing hard knots at each of their tips. "After much prayer and deliberation, I have chosen you to be that person ... if you will have me, of course."

"But —"

She bowed her head. "I realise that you are not of the Church, and that you would have certain ... expectations of me. I give you my solemn oath that I shall carry out all of your commands and to serve you, body and soul, without hesitation or care for my own modesty, comfort or desires."

Amazed and somewhat confused by this turn of events, Harry stepped up to her and lifted her chin with his finger. He had expected to see apprehension, shame, perhaps even fear, but what he saw on her face was raw, unbridled lust. At this close distance he saw that her nipples were hard and crinkled. "May I touch you?"

"However you please, Captain," she replied without hesitation, and she did not flinch in the slightest when his fingertips touched her smooth belly.

Though his eyes remained locked with hers he saw her nostrils flare when his hand slid lower and touched the edge of her tightly curled pubic triangle. They dipped even lower, and he did not ask her permission nor did he order her to move her legs apart. He forced his fingers between her thighs and pressed them against her cunt lips and her slit. As he had guessed, she was dripping wet. He lifted his fingers and showed the slick, sticky moisture that coated the digits to her and saw her lips tremble in the ghost of a smile. He held them under her nostrils and watched as she inhaled deeply and a tiny tremor ripple through her body. Finally he held them to her lips. "Lick."

The tip of Marina's tongue appeared from between her lips and she languorously lapped at her own juices like a cat licking cream.

"You are not disgusted, repelled?"

This time her smile was a real thing, tight, mysterious, but unmistakable. "How can it be wrong or repellent if you wish it?"

He nodded at the scourge. "Has that ever been used upon you in earnest?"

Her nod was slow and deliberate. "The nuns were very familiar with the sinful natures of a woman's body, and they took great pains to punish those parts that might give rise to sinful thoughts."

"And did that rid you of ... sinful thoughts?" he asked, even though he thought he knew the answer.

"No they did not. But they did ease the demons of lust within my breast ... for a little while. Unfortunately they would soon return, often with greater strength than before."

"Show me how the nuns would ... punish you."

She licked her lips, a slow sensual movement of her tongue. "For most of the girls, a scourging on the back would suffice. But the nuns said that the evil within me was strong, and only the scourging of the root of my sin would suffice." With that she handed him the scourge and lowered herself gracefully, spreading the robe beneath her like a blanket before lying down upon her back. Without apparent shame, she raised her legs, bent her knees and with her arms touching the insides of her thighs, she gripped her ankles and pulled them towards her shoulders with no visible strain. "This was how I was taught to prepare myself for purification."

There was no mistaking which part of her body was the intended recipient of the scourging. Standing above her head he looked down along her body and saw a ribbon of pink showing between the dark curls that covered her cunt lips. He looked at the scourge in his hand. Although the strands were silk and not leather or rope, silk knots were hard and the instrument could be very harsh if employed with force, especially on sensitive parts such as the breasts and cunt. There was still the possibility that her tale was something she had made up in order to seduce her captor, and there was only one way to find out the truth. He flicked the strands of the scourge over his shoulder, his fingers gripping the long, wand-like handle firmly. He realised that incongruously she was praying. He focused his attention upon her cunt and lightly flicked the scourge forward, letting the lashes fall gently like black rain upon her cunt, noting where the knots fell upon her body. Having confirmed his aim, he tossed the knotted strands over his shoulder again. He saw her fingers tighten their grip around her ankles, her knuckles whitening. He brought the scourge down hard. To be gentle would not have been merciful in this case. He needed to know if she spoke the truth, and he needed her to know what he was capable of doing to her. The nuns had done their work well and the lashes kissed Marina's cunt with deadly precision. No one hearing the thwack of the knotted lashes against her cunt could possibly have doubted the intensity of the blow.

Marina's body tightened, but her prayers were uninterrupted except for a slight change in the loudness of her voice the moment after the scourge struck her cunt. But when he did not strike her again, she tilted her head back to look up at him and said, "I am strong and healthy. You need not stop out of concern for my welfare. I understand that the scourging of my mortal body is for the good of my soul. The nuns would examine my woman parts carefully after each round of scourging. They were often displeased with what they found, which meant I was scourged more often than any of the others, particularly on that spot."

Harry took her words to be both a suggestion and permission, so he knelt between her thighs and made a careful inspection of her cunt. After only one stroke there was little swelling or bruising to see, but the knots had each left their mark, dark red and trimmed with a painful looking blue. Some had drawn blood. "Your cunt must have been in a sorry state after the nuns were done with you," he said, touching her gently.

"A scourging that does not draw blood is an offence to our Lord, I was told."

Harry stood up and indicated that she could rise as well. He helped her with her robe, and soon she was as modestly garbed as before.

"You are not pleased with what you saw?" she asked, and for the first time there was concern in her voice.

"I was very pleased. Very pleased indeed. But right now you are a free woman, and it is not right that I lay hands upon you. If you are sure this is what you desire, I shall draw up an agreement of indenture such as the one I gave to Cristina. Once you and I sign it, you shall be mine. I shall hold the value of your contract in trust for you. You may draw upon it at any time, or wait until the term of your indenture is up."

"Is it possible to increase the term of my indenture?"

"Of course, but it would be more fair to you to offer a new agreement when this one – " He stopped when she reached out and touched his chest.

"Twenty-five years. I desire to know that I shall be guided and controlled for at least that long. I am young. Surely my beauty should last at least that long. If my person no longer holds any interest for you after that, I can always find someone to end my life for me." Being a good Catholic, she could not contemplate suicide.

He was unable to fathom the mind of this strange woman, but it seemed that she was determined to cast her life into his hands or else to die. "Very well. Twenty-five years."  
She smiled and lifted his hand to her lips and kissed it. "Thank you, my lord."

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"Look! The Captain! I can see him," Áine cried, waving and hopping up and down, rocking the carriage.

Róisín shaded her eyes. "But who is that figure in black standing next to him?"

The Talon rapidly glided across the calm water of the harbour towards them. "A captive from the treasure ship perhaps? What does it matter? Let us get ready to greet him ladies!" Áine exclaimed, grinning widely.

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"Those are the ladies you described?" Marina asked quietly.

"Indeed they are. And it seems that they intend to give me a special greeting," Harry said with a chuckle.

"What manner of greet... oh!" Marina's words were cut off by the sight of the four women raising their skirts high, bearing their bodies from their waist downwards.

Harry laughed and blew kisses towards the impudently exposed women.

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"Wait, is that a woman standing next to him? It's hard to tell with that hood," Róisín said as they stood with their skirts lifted high. They might have felt ridiculous, except for the enthusiastic smiles and waves that the Captain was giving them, along with the quick furtive whistles and cheers coming from the crewmen of the Talon whilst trying, mostly unsuccessfully, to conceal their impudence from Briars, who lashed at them rather half-heartedly with a length of tarred rope.

Suddenly the question became mute when the robed figure quickly pulled the black robe apart revealing a shapely and very naked female body, before just as quickly hiding it again. Cristina began to laugh. "It's a woman! Only Captain Pierce could go out after a treasure ship and come back with another naked woman trailing after him."

The girls dropped their skirts and began to wave and call to their new sister.

Marina suddenly smiled. "I think I'm going to like it here." She touched the Captain's sleeve. "Do you think they might want to scourge me too? The good sisters seem to have left a taste for women in me. If you don't object, of course." She looked at him anxiously.

Harry chuckled. "I think that Cristina and Áine are going to like you very much indeed." He reached down to the deck and lifted a huge, gem encrusted gold chalice and lifted it over his head. "Treasure!" he shouted.

The crew roared in approval, and soon cheers were rising from the gathered privateers and pirates lining the shore.

Resting the chalice upon the railing, Harry slid one hand down Marina's back and down to grip a firm buttock cheek. There was more than one kind of treasure, and he had returned with both. He turned his head and saw she was smiling at him, welcoming his touch. "Treasure," he said to her firmly.

**The End**