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Captive Master



Jackie
Rose



Wands

Captive Master
Or: The Further Adventures of
Simon Legree

By

Jackie Rose

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The Captive Master
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Tarot Card: The Five Of Wands

The Five of Wands is illustrated by "five people of different colors fighting against each other." On the most literal basis, this naturally suggests a story of the Civil War. Even more tragically, in the Tarot language, the five people agree on their basic objective and are fighting merely over the ways to achieve it. In this case, the goal was freedom-and the conflict was between the states' rights to be free from the Union versus with the right of all people, of all colors, to be free from slavery. But the same card also carries a more hopeful message-that the battle will end with the combatants finding a better way of living together.

Dedication:

To the enthusiastic and knowledgeable volunteers at the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Maryland, who were always willing to answer questions like, “Did nurses wear uniforms then?” (They did not).

Captive Master Or: The Further Adventures of Simon Legree

So now, Simon Legree was the one in the cage. And all the good Christian Yankees in Washington City paid their pennies to come see me. And I owed it all to that lying Boston bitch.

All right, she is from Connecticut, not Boston, but it's the same thing. I could call her that lying New England bitch, but it doesn't have the same ring. Besides, I came from New England myself and only moved to Arkansas for the slave girls.

Or is that too obvious to bother writing down? With the money saved from my seafaring days, I could have stayed in Yankeeland and invested in a factory that would have been a lot more profitable than that run-down plantation I purchased.

Obviously, I did not own slaves so I could raise cotton, I raised cotton so I could own slaves. More particularly, slave girls.

Having had my share of Yankee ladies, I knew I could have had as many more, without paying a dime

for them. But there is something about sex with your slave girl--or, I suppose, with your owner, if you look at it from the other point of view--that carries a thrill of mastery, power, domination and total possession that no mere seduction could match.

It didn't even matter that, in my case, my favorite slave girl was about the least submissive female I had ever met. The very term 'slave girl' promises unbounded, unmatchable delights, making her well worth her price.

As we all know now, the price turned out to be a lot higher than anyone had foreseen. We are fighting for our freedom, as we say--yes, our freedom to fulfill every man's secret wish for slave girls. No dream ever led to a ruder awakening.

The bills for them are still coming in, as the death toll keeps mounting. Some predict that it will top a half-million soldiers by the time the war is over. And the invoice was handed to us by that lying Boston Bitch.

All right, so maybe she wasn't really lying about me, not entirely anyway. She was just repeating what I said at a party one night to her miserable brother. I admit I might have exaggerated my lust and brutality, to shock the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher out of his abolitionist senses.

But she was the one who wrote it all down, thus making Simon Legree into the name that will always stand for a brutal, lustful slavemaster, no matter how many books come to be written about our Peculiar Institution, and I suspect a great many of them will.

I have even heard a joke about the man who was

so mean, he read Uncle Tom's Cabin and thought Simon Legree was the hero. Ha ha. If I ever got my hands on her, I swore, I would make sure that she never writes anything ever again.

And I may have had to stand in line to do that. The Little Woman Who Started the Big War, as Mr. Lincoln called her. Every wounded Confederate prisoner who was brought here to the Armory Square Hospital probably wanted to thank her the same way I do.

The sightseers could pay ten cents to see them, too, by climbing up the platform overlooking the stockade, where the Yankees send the prisoners when they are well enough to live in tents. These captives, in turn, can see the Capitol dome, looming over them like a giant white bullet. Simon Legree cost an extra nickel, and for that they got taken to my private cage in the main building, where I have no view of anything but my visitors.

They seemed to feel they were getting their money's worth. "Is he really Simon Legree?" asked one young lady of about sixteen, who had come on a school outing.

"The one and only," I told her, with my most frightening glower. It must have been terrifying, even as helpless as I was, because she pulled back in alarm. Just to give her even more reason for fear, I added, "Everyone knows that I'm the worst slave master of all, and I deflowered every virgin I could get my claws on." To illustrate, I held up my hands, which really did look like claws, just as the Boston Bitch described them: large, hairy, sunburned, freckled.

"He even looks like an animal," her friend agreed, clutching her bosom, as though to protect it from me.

Having been there for a month, ever since the Yankees had captured me at Resaca, I was forced to agree. My bullet head, wide coarse mouth, large grey eyes, shaggy eyebrows and wiry sunburned hair (as the Bitch so carefully described them) made me seem like an animal even when I was running things. Now the hair was flying out like a lion's mane, and I really must have looked to them like some mangy, captured king of beasts as I stood glaring through the bars.

My fine grey uniform, as a captain of the South Carolina Artillery, now made me seem even more savage, since I had been living in it for more than a month. My only relief was taking it off at night. As I grasped the bars in those big hairy hands, I still showed the remains of that 'gigantic strength' that my un-authorized biographer had described.

So they gazed at me with terror--but mixed with horrified fascination and, I am sure of it, forbidden desire. Seeing that, I leered at them through the bars: They paid to see the Simon Legree of their dreams and nightmares, so I showed him to them. So many women, both slave and free, have exchanged such stares with Simon Legree.

Naturally, they also wanted to see Cassy, no doubt so they could decide how they measured up to my famed chief concubine. The answer is probably no, unless they possess immense, expressive black eyes and lustrous black tresses flowing down to their waists, in irresistible contrast to her honey skin.

Yes, I did say honey. Cassy was an Octoroon, bred

to be beautiful, as she still is at forty-five, with her one black great-grandparent being just enough to qualify her for enslavement.

She is too busy to bother with sightseers, due to her nursing job. For feeding the sick and wounded soldiers, changing their dressings and writing their letters home, she gets \$12 per month, which is not bad for a former slave.

And, I might add, she owes her new career to me, and the time she spent nursing my slaves who had fallen sick or worked too hard or been disciplined or one thing or another. She carried all the keys to my plantation then, just as she carries the hospital keys in her pocket now.

All right, she is not just a former slave, she is an escaped slave, who emancipated herself about ten years before Mr. Lincoln got around to making it legal. Slave though she might have been, she was always, as I told you, about the least submissive woman I have ever met.

You might (thanks to the Boston Bitch) have read about the time I told her that if she didn't start minding me, I would send her down to the cotton fields. The next morning, she went down there of her own accord and harvested like a machine: more than any of my other hands, except for Uncle Tom.

Sambo and Quimbo, my overseers, were practically jumping with joy at seeing her down there with them, making them feel they had a chance with her at last, but their happiness didn't last long. The next day, I had to practically beg her to come back to the mansion and be my friend again, rather than

making Uncle Tom her new companion.

Who, as that story should tell you, was no Uncle Tom. He was a great big black man who really should have taken me up on my offer to make him an overseer, because he would have been scarier than Sambo and Quimbo put together. As a result, he could have easily succeeded with Cassy where those two barely dared to try. But he was still loyal to his wife in Kentucky, so Cassy was out of luck.

Actually, I admit it, Uncle Tom might have suited Cassy a lot better than I did. Married man or not, he would not have made her feel as guilty. She could have reveled in those great big muscular dark brown arms without thinking that she was betraying every moral law of decency and dignity. I was aware of the very same thing. I just didn't care about moral laws.

Even in that cage of mine, I would remember the things we had done together, and start believing that those slave girls were worth the price we are paying now.

As I entered her room, I would throw my palmetto hat on the nightstand, knowing that putting it on the bed would have brought me bad luck. She would sit up in her carved walnut bed, beneath the white-on-white embroidered cover she had created with her own dainty hand, as though I had been some intruder.

"Embrace me, Slave!" I would whisper, even as I pulled the coverlet out of her hands and threw it off the bed. Then I stared my fill at her exposed nudity, with my gaze traveling freely from her round, full bosom to her slim waist and the rounded thighs

below.

Finally, I forced her shoulders down onto the pillow and loomed up above her, straddling her with my knees. That left her struggling desperately to obey my orders, by winding her arms around my powerful shoulders and lifting her mouth high enough to meet mine.

After I had lowered myself far enough to let her succeed, I would thrust my tongue into her mouth and close my arms around her in a crushing embrace. When she felt me thrusting into her, she would moan and writhe and even gasp, "Oh, Master, Master, Master!"

Only it was not really 'master' she said, it was more like "MAY--aa--aa--sah," in about five syllables. With each one, she closed and opened around me. And with each contraction and release, she pulled me further, faster and deeper into that warm moist place that welcomed me.

But then it was my turn to collapse in exhaustion on top of her, so she could run her hands from my wiry hair to my wide shoulders, still whispering, "Master, Master, Master." And yet some people still wonder why we could not give up our Peculiar Institution, any more than an opium fiend can abandon his own precious poison.

Next morning she would be glaring furiously again and calling me 'Simon' as though it were a dirty word. Her great eyes flashed with a dangerous fire as she clutched her white linen dressing gown to conceal her red corset and the bosom beneath it: those creamy breasts which I had admired so openly the night

before.

There was no calling me 'Master' in the morning, though. When she faced me over the breakfast table, she said, "I wonder how much you had to drink, anyway, last night, Simon," if I happened to wince in pain because a servant had clattered my coffee cup against the saucer.

No one could have accused her of criticizing her master, as you may have noticed. She was merely stating an undeniable fact.

Needless to say, with a few cuts of the whip I could have stopped her from saying it. I do have a whip, as it happens, and enjoyed shaking it at the field slaves. I could even have let the bloodhounds threaten her, holding them inches away. Or, I could also have caged her, as the slaves were caged after auction, when their new masters were going to have lunch or something before taking them home. Lord knows she provoked me almost far enough.

But one fear always stopped me. If I had done any of those things to her, how could I have ever known if she was calling me master in a delirium of joy, or merely because she was afraid not to? So letting bad enough alone, I would merely mumble that she had had her share, even if she preferred brandy to whiskey. Tossing her head even higher than usual, she would pretend not to hear.

Naturally, it would be brandy. She was gently reared, you see, on a great Louisiana plantation, almost as a daughter of the family. They even sent her to a convent school in New Orleans, where she learned to write the letters home that, I admit it,

helped her to earn those \$12 per month.

Later on, a white gentleman treated her almost as his wife, until he took a legal spouse who, unsurprisingly, wanted her sold away. And sold she was, going, as she put it, "from hand to hand." None of the others could handle her or even wanted to try. As a result, I got her from her last master in return for a good cook. He must have been as big a fool as her first one to let her go.

Then she stayed under this particular hairy hand for five years, even though she was thirty when we met and thus five years older than I. So I had a slave girl who was a fine lady while she had a master who was a savage brute. You would think this might have told her that we were meant for each other, but no such luck.

And do you think I would have dared to remind her, during the day, of how rapturously she had called me 'Master' the night before? She would have been gone by evening. Since she looked like the white woman that seven eighths of her was, it would have been pretty hard to find her.

When she did finally flee, it was because I had made the mistake of bringing home a new young Octoroon, thinking of all the fun the three of us could have together, with a sweet voice to whisper 'master' in each of my ears.

The Boston Bitch later assured her readers that Cassy had fled in order to save the poor young virgin from sharing her own disgrace. Do I really have to answer that? Not even her radical feminist abolitionist readers could have bought that line. Although, I

admit it, Cassy probably believed it herself. Anyway, go she did, taking Emmaline with her.

Emmaline was not, as it turned out, the only mistake I made. When I was brought into the Armory Square Hospital, Cassy pretended that she did not recognize me, even when she was changing the bandages on my shoulder. Indignant at first, I soon realized that she was trying to protect me.

Everyone here knew who she was, thanks to the Boston Bitch. If she had made a fuss over me, they would have figured out who I had to be: The one, the only, the infamous slave master of masters, Simon Legree. Although, as it turned out, due to me and Cassy, they didn't have to do any figuring at all.

At first, as I said, she took good care of me.

She even used those secret herbs that her friend Harriet Tubman had given her, to keep the wound from festering and help it heal fast. And she kept me as long as she could in that big, bright hall, with the wooden beams across the ceilings, right along with the Yankee wounded.

So when she took me into the little examining room to wait for the doctor, I naturally thought she wanted to pick up where we had left off. And believe me, even at age forty-five she left me more than willing.

In that stylish plaid taffeta dress with her hair pulled back neatly into a black string snood, she looked just like those fine ladies who volunteered for nursing, rather than a runaway slave who was paid by the Medical Bureau.

But this fine lady, in her rustling gown, was also my former favorite slave girl. From the perfect

hourglass contours of her figure, I knew that the frock she had purchased was hiding the red corset I had given her.

So as soon as we were alone in that room, I wrapped my arms around her and pulled her tight against me, rubbing my unshaven jaw with its wiry whiskers against that soft skin.

She now smelled faintly of scented powder and lip rouge, as a concession to the passing years, but that scent was a heavenly perfume after the weeks I had spent smelling the harsh hospital lye soap, which was fighting a losing battle against the stench of infections and dysentery.

"Call me 'Master' again, Cassy," I whispered. "I'm fighting a war for that."

For the moment, I must have forgotten that she was soldiering on the other side. I remembered it soon enough, when she pulled back and raked her nails across my face. I responded by slapping her with my good arm, so hard that she fell against the examining table.

At some point, I must have left my hat on a bed, because my luck started turning bad. That was the moment when the doctor chose to walk in.

"This Johnny Reb seems well enough to go outdoors," he said. "It's June, after all, so he won't freeze."

"But this is no common Johnny Reb, doctor," she told him, her eyes flashing with the fire that was all too familiar to me. "This is the man who once said he owned me, Simon Legree."

Now it was his turn to stare at me, as though I had

been, not only a lion, but some mythological beast.

The only answer I could find was, "Considering that I paid \$10,000, which could have bought ten good field slaves, it was the worst investment I ever made."

Her long moment of stunned fury was accompanied by the doctor's open-mouthed shock. Both reactions made me realize that was about the worst thing I could have said.

She could barely manage to gasp out the words as she retorted, "Those Johnny Rebs are a pretty poor investment, too. We are getting some money back by letting people see them in captivity, but we could get even more." Turning her face up towards him, trying her best to ignore me, she added, "We could charge extra for this Johnny Reb. Everyone has heard of Simon Legree."

He still stared at me as though I had suddenly been transformed into a dragon or a minotaur, showing me that he, at least, had certainly heard of me often enough.

"We can buy a cage from the zoo and put him in it, with a cot and a chamber pot," he finally decided. "So many people will want to see him, they are sure to repay the cost. But naturally your sweetheart can visit for free."

Of course, I thought, her sweetheart must be some Yankee soldier, and I was not surprised that he was an officer, too.

He must have had a few days' leave from his busy schedule of burning, looting and raping as he went marching through Georgia with his master, because Captain David Slocum, of the Grand Army of the

Potomac, escorted Cassy into my room late one night. His own hairy paw was clasped around her slim, delicate fingers, which emerged from the lace handkerchief she had neatly tucked into her plaid sleeve.

His soldiers guarded the door, to make sure that no one else joined us. I grudgingly had to give her credit, because he could have had any woman he wanted and, by all accounts, he had.

Cassy stood gazing at me, with her head on his shoulder. Since he wore his blue wool uniform, it must have been very uncomfortable for her, especially since she had to hold her head carefully to avoid his brass buttons. From that vantage point, she showed me a very unpleasant smile that he could not see.

His face was beyond unpleasant, though. He looked like the callow college boy he undoubtedly was, as he glowered at me from under his wild thatch of red hair, which matched his freckles. He obviously thought that that glare would intimidate me in my present condition. He was right.

"So this is the man who owned you, my dear?" he sneered.

"Until you rescued me," she assured him, taking her head off the blue wool uniform long enough to gaze up at him with a worshipping smile. "And you were the one, you know. When people tell me that Lincoln freed the slaves, I tell them they are wrong—Lincoln's proclamation didn't free the slaves, Sherman's men freed the slaves."

That brought a smile to his face, making it seem,

for the moment, as happy and innocent as a college boy should by rights have been.

"Well, wherever we went, your people did hail us as Moses," he smugly agreed. "But it's enough for me that we freed you from Simon Legree. Don't you want to reward me again? Let him see what I have taken from him."

"Yes, Master," she whispered, as her fingers reached up to toy with his epaulettes. If she had said those words to me, I would have been willing to go back and fight at Gettysburg single-handed against the Union Army. But he did not see it that way.

"Are you comparing me to those slavedrivers of yours?" he demanded in righteous indignation. "I am your liberator!"

"Forgive me, Liberator!" she whispered, cowering back, in a fear that was both deeper and more delicious than any she had shown to me.

"Make me forgive you!" he snapped.

Kneeling beside him, she bowed her head so deeply that her curls brushed against his boots, leaving them still more shiny. Gripping the rusty bars of that cage, I was barely able to keep from roaring with rage like the mangy lion I was. I might have done it, too, but I knew that that was just what they hoped for.

Grasping a fistful of that curly hair, he pulled her to her feet and crushed her lips against his. She reached up to wind her own arms around his broad shoulders, as his hand relaxed its grip. Their lips met and pressed against each other, so tightly that I knew their tongues were caressing each other's mouths as

well.

Then I wondered jealously why I had not made her kneel before me as well, brushing my shoes with her hair.

But after a moment, I realized that it would not have been the same. If I had asked her to perform that act with me, she would have seen it as a degradation forced upon a slave.

Not that she would have failed to enjoy it, mind you. This Yankee captain was patently not her master, though--on the contrary, he had saved her from masters like me--so whatever she did, to him or for him, was not subjugation but gratitude.

She could even have fallen to the floor and licked his gleaming black boots, which not even I would have demanded. That would still be square with her conscience, because, after all, those boots are smashing slavery.

She had only to remember not to call him Master, unless she wanted to get him angry at her--which, no doubt, she occasionally did.

Only one thing could make his triumph, and my humiliation, more complete, so of course he did it.

"So, where were you captured, Captain Legree?" he asked, while he took her hand in his.

"The Battle of Resaca," I muttered. The way this night was going, I knew what his answer would be.

"That was one of our victories!" he crowed. "Cassy, not only did I beat your master, I did it personally!" That called for another tight hug and long kiss before she opened her great black eyes to gaze up in rapture at him.

And that, I realized, as I watched them together, was another one I owed to the Great Bitch Who Started the Big War. But at least, I thought, I will not have to look at that old lady's hatchet face.

So, do I have to tell you who came to see me within the week? If it was not actually Harriet Beecher Stowe than it might as well have been. One of her most trusted lieutenants had come here, the leader of one of our national ladies' abolitionist and feminist societies. She was eager to help keep the troops' spirits up by making her visits and thus encouraging her followers to do the same.

As the wife of a stark raving anti-slavery Methodist minister, she was allowed to do what she pleased, while their five children were cared for by servants back in Iowa—paid salaries, to be sure.

So she and her crew served the war effort by writing letters home for the wounded soldiers—Union only, of course. Even in my cage, I could hear her sugary voice asking, "Should I write that you are proud to be fighting for freedom?"

Hell, yes, I thought, he was sure to be proud of that, especially now that he was out of the fight. Mary Todd Lincoln herself was doing the same thing for the wounded Yankees, so at least Mrs. Whitfield Morris was in bad company.

And by the way her military escorts kept fawning: "Did you have a pleasant trip, Mrs. Morris?" and "Do you like the Willard Hotel?" she might have been Mrs. Lincoln herself, or even Mrs. Stowe.

Although old Harriet, while, admittedly, still a good-looking woman, was not as pretty as this one.

And from the carefully respectful way the men had talked about Anne Whitfield Morris, I had never expected her to look as good as she did.

Even though she was obviously closer to forty than thirty, she remained a handsome woman, thanks to the high cheekbones beneath her tightly wrapped bun of wheat-blond hair. It seemed even more prim above her lace collar, the one hint of decoration in a black gown that she might well have chosen to symbolize the mourning that had gripped the entire nation, thanks to her literary heroine.

I, on the contrary, must have looked exactly as she had expected me to, since Mrs. Stowe had depicted me to perfection based on her brother's description.

But seeing me in person still must have been an overwhelming experience. All Mrs. Whitfield Morris could do was stare at me from her great blue eyes and say, "Oh, my. Oh, my. You really are Simon Legree!" Finally, she managed to add, "and you look just as Mrs. Stowe's brother described you." Considering that he had called me an ogre, I saw no reason to thank her.

It took a moment to think of an answer to that, while I stared at her so boldly that she had to look away. Finally, I responded, with a bitterly twisted smile, "I am glad that I am so memorable."

She was standing so close to me, I was able to act on my impulse to grasp her hand and bow over it as I kissed it.

The Union soldiers moved towards me angrily but I stood my ground, knowing they could not accuse me of any wrongdoing. Then they followed her as she

all but fled for the door--or as close as any woman could come to fleeing, in the hoops that held out her gown, making the dark silk around her like the waves of an angry sea. No doubt, I thought, she would flee straight for the Willard Hotel and a long bath to wash away the stain of the Devil's lips.

That might have been the end of it, if another old friend had not come to visit me, and one whom I had known even longer, and possibly better, than Cassy.

* * * *

No question, Sambo is one scary colored gentleman. I would not have wanted to see him leading a bayonet charge towards me at the head of his 54th Massachusetts Volunteers, better known as the colored troops and/or the Glory Brigade.

He and his partner Quimbo were also among my former slaves who could thank me for their rank in life.

As a Union sergeant, Sambo must make it his business to be intimidating. When he was my overseer, I taught him everything he knows on that score. All right, I admit, my teaching might not have been that useful if he had not been about six feet tall, dark chocolate brown, and with arms that were almost as massive as mine. But no matter how big he is, a sergeant must know how to shout out orders, and that he learned in my cotton fields.

One thing I did not teach them was how to betray their master who thought they were his friends, by taking off the moment the Yankees marched past the

fence, although I saw no advantage in mentioning that to him now. Naturally, the rest of the crew followed their lead. Since their owner was off with the South Carolina Artillery, this left no one to stop them from abandoning the entire Palmetto State.

All right, I admit, I could probably not have stopped them anyway and would have been pretty foolish to try.

My former slave overseer Sambo was in Washington City on leave. Hearing that his erstwhile master was on display, he naturally came to see me. And, rather to my surprise, he had not come by to gloat. On the contrary, he arrived so early in the morning, he knew that no one else would be there to witness my final humiliation or overhear his remarks.

"Master Simon!" he said, striding towards me. "How are they treating you?"

"Not too badly," I assured him. "I am getting full Yankee rations, which is more than I can say for my fellow Johnny Rebs. And it's nice of you to care. I'm glad to see that you're all right. I hope Quimbo is, too."

His face turned to hard ebony wood then, giving me the answer even before he spoke. "Quimbo was killed at Olustee, four months ago," he said.

"I'm sorry," I answered. "You know, when I think of it, the two of you were the closest I ever had to friends."

For once, I had said just the right thing.

"I saw Cassy, and she said that the Yankees want to send you to Elmira. She tried to talk him out of it, but he would not listen. I will do the best I can to send

you food."

He lowered his eyes, so as not to see the horror in mine.

"You won't have to send it long," I answered, trying to keep my voice from shaking. "I will probably be dead within a month. They don't call it Hellmira for nothing, only it is a Hell on Earth where not even this Devil can survive.

"Even if I can live through the summer there, I won't survive the winter, especially when they find out who I am. You can't let those Yankees kill me, Sambo. You've got to help me escape." In my panic, I forgot that I had once been a Yankee myself, before I had heard the siren song of the slave girls.

"But I am a Yankee now," he pointed out. "The Yankees are the ones who freed us."

Seeing him turn to leave, I knew that was my last chance to stop him with my desperate words.

"And I am a Johnny Reb slave owner, but I would not have done this to you!" I told him. "I would never have sent you to your death."

As he hesitated, I pressed on, "How could I, when I remember the fun we had, all sitting around the parlor, drinking and singing and dancing together?"

"You sang and we danced for you," he responded dryly.

"Well, yes, I admit that, but we all drank together. And don't you remember how you said you needed a woman, so I brought Lucy home as a surprise for you? She kept begging me to let her go home to her old man in Kentucky, but I threw her at your feet instead."

"Yes, Master Simon, those were the good old days." And he started to smile, remembering. Then the smile faded as he told me, "But I am a Christian now, so I don't drink. And I stopped being so mean to Lucy, too, trying to force her to give in to me by making her pick cotton until the middle of the night."

He had become a Christian at the urging of Uncle Tom, who was now indisputably in Heaven, having died of an illness while in my domain, which Mrs. Stowe had, of course, blamed on me. Once again, I saw no reason to raise that sore subject with him.

"Instead, I went to her cabin. I told her I had found Jesus and begged her to forgive me for being so mean. Then I asked her to kneel and pray beside me, and one thing led to another."

"I can imagine that it did."

"Well, I'm not sure you can," he retorted. "When our first prayer was over, we prayed again for God to forgive the wrong we were doing to her Old Man, because slavery had broken them apart and she knew she would probably never see him again."

And considering that she called him her Old Man, she probably wasn't all that heartbroken at the loss, I thought--not when she had my big strong scary Sambo to comfort her.

"I don't suppose you ever prayed with Cassy or any other woman before you made love," he reproached me, interrupting my cynical thoughts.

"No, I can't say I did. Perhaps I should try it some time."

"For sure, you should," he answered sincerely. "When we were done, still kneeling, we hugged each

other and then lay down together. She fell asleep that way, because she was so tired from working all day and night, so I just let her sleep and held her in my arms, looking down at her beautiful golden face. It wasn't too comfortable for me, lying on that dirt floor, but I kept holding her anyway, until I fell asleep.

"And then, when we woke up in the morning, the first thing we saw was each other. So I said good morning and she said good morning, and then we started kissing each other. The next thing I knew, I was pulling at her skirt and she was unbuttoning my trousers.

"Then I was on top of her, and she spread her legs as she saw that my manhood was as hard as it could be. I pushed it into her slowly, because her hole was opening and closing the way it does, and I wanted to be sure that she was open for every inch I had. All the time she was gasping for breath, faster and faster and louder and louder, until she finally gave this loud sigh of satisfaction."

I had to stop myself from groaning. Telling me about his love life now, in my current position, would have been incredibly cruel, but he was, Heaven help us, trying to lead me to Jesus, and that made it all right.

"Is she still with you now?" I asked, changing the subject the best I could.

"She is married to me. Because she and her old man were both in slavery, they could not wed legally, so we got married as soon as we were free."

"So, you were gentle and patient and thought about her pleasure," I mused. "I have to try it that

way." Then my thoughts plunged all too sharply back to my present dilemma.

"But, Sambo, you know that I will never be able to try that or anything else, if they send me to Elmira," I begged. "If you want to keep me alive, sending me food will not be enough. You have to help me escape."

When he still hesitated, I went on, "And I think Cassy wanted you to help me do it. Why else would she tell you that they were sending me there?"

At that, I saw him weakening before my eyes. Lucy was his beloved wife now, but he could never forget Cassy. What man could?

"She's got all the hospital keys," I urged. "She's got to let you borrow just one of them."

"Well, Master Simon," he answered, "you'd better just pray that she will."

Now, everyone knows that I am not a praying man, but I was able to hope, at least, that Sambo would pray enough for both of us.

That left me thinking about the five of us. Simon Legree, with his pale grey eyes and sun-bleached hair--Cassy, with her great black eyes and pale-honey skin--Sambo, such a deep brown--Lucy, with her golden complexion--and this college boy with the wild red hair--Five people of different colors, swept into this desperate fight we called the Civil War, and all thanks to that Boston Bitch.

It soon turned out that my own little lady was still on my side, after all. Cassy was the one who led Sambo back to me, carrying a doctor's supply box. It proved to contain a Glory Brigade uniform, a pass

and a jar of brown shoe polish. And it carried one other thing, too: the key to my cage, which my own darling Cassy had given to my friend.

So Simon Legree was going to escape from a Yankee prison disguised as a colored soldier. Never mind Harriet Beecher Stowe: Not even Dr. Jonathan Swift could have imagined anything that fantastic for his Dr. Gulliver.

At the time, though, only Sambo seemed to see the humor in the situation.

"You sure make a fine colored gentleman, Master Legree," he said, with a laugh, as he worked the brown coloring into my hair.

"What do you think, Cassy?" I asked.

"I think you'd better stop talking and keep rubbing that stuff on yourself," she said. "You've forgotten your nostrils, and there's a white space right under your jaw. No, a little more to the left--no, I'll do it myself."

Leaning forward eagerly to feel the touch of her fingers again, I pulled back at the last moment. "Use a rag, Cassy," I warned her. "If the Yankees figure out what happened, they will be looking for the evidence on your fingers."

"It should be a while before they start looking," she said. "I am going to tell them that I heard you were transferred to Elmira."

"Won't you get in trouble that way?"

"I will only say that I heard it," she answered, with a shrug. "And when it turns out I heard wrong and someone asks me about it--well, I will just get angry and remind them of what I am to one of General

Sherman's own captains. They will not want to cross me then."

At that, I could not keep from smiling. "Isn't that the damnest thing?" I mused, as I placed the key back into her fingers. "Back in South Carolina, if anyone crossed you, you would just remind them about what you were to Simon Legree."

At that, Sambo stopped smiling, no doubt remembering how often Cassy had fended off his advances just that way. Seeing that, I hastily asked him to give my best to Mrs. Sambo.

"That isn't what they call her," he informed me. "We are taking our former master's names. So we are Sambo and Lucy Legree."

Again, I could not keep from smiling.

"And Cassy, you are--"

Like the Queen of England, our Cassy was not amused.

"You'd better stop talking and go now," she said, as she carefully placed the key back in her pocket.

I thought of kissing her goodbye, but knew I could not have stopped with that. Seeing Sambo standing beside her, I thought it was best not to start.

* * * *

Under the circumstances, I was not offended when white soldiers called me 'boy' as they demanded to see my pass. Often enough, they muttered about how those colored soldiers always managed to be somewhere else when the fighting was going on. It showed me how well my ruse was working.

I knew I had to become a white man, again, before I even tried to enter the Willard Hotel the next morning. With the help of a handy hidden horse trough behind the Capitol building, I was able to do it.

That other Boston Bitch (all right, New York) had written the Battle Hymn of the Republic there. "As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free."

These were words to stir a Yankee Christian's soul, but hardly enough reason for him to let his colored countrymen through the front door.

All of those abolitionist ladies were getting telegraphs from God. Julia's message had informed her that He was busy touring the Union encampments, urging Billy Yank to execute His righteous judgment against the Johnny Rebs. More personally, Harriet's missive had told her clearly "Legree going to Hell stop," and this Mrs. Morris had certainly believed her.

Well then, I thought, as I crossed the portal--still wearing the Glory Brigade uniform--in the absence of Mrs. Stowe, I will lead Mrs. Morris there along with me.

With its cape swirling behind me, that uniform was enough to get me through the marble columns in the lobby and past the front desk. There, the clerk respectfully told me how to find Mrs. Morris's room. I had come to take care of her, I explained to the desk clerk, and that was true enough.

Once again, I told the truth, or part of it, when she called out "Who is it?" in response to my knock at the door. It was, I called out, a white man who was proud

to share the uniform of the Glory Brigade and had come to take my turn guarding her.

"I'm not decent," she called back. I know that, you Radical Feminist Bitch. Shrew, I thought. But, aloud, I said only that I would wait. And wait I did, for fifteen long minutes while she fastened her corsets and pulled on her dress, as I clutched that forged pass in my pocket.

When she pulled the door halfway open, I pushed it the rest of the way, then slammed it shut behind me. Gazing up at me in horror, and fearing that I had come to execute my own un-righteous judgment on her, she fell to her knees in prayer.

Her black silk billowed around her, even without the hoopskirts that she would have worn in public. With her eyes closed and her face turned up that way, as her thin lips moved frantically, she looked softer and prettier than I had ever thought possible. I hauled her back up to her feet.

She stared down at the hand that clutched her shoulder. "My fists always seemed to fascinate you feminist ladies," I reminded her. "Your Mrs. Stowe said they were like iron." My right fist shook her arm. "And she talked to me directly in her book, I was the only one who had that honor. Of course, she did it in order to tell me I was going to burn in Hell, but I knew that anyway. Perhaps I can take you with me, as her good friend, for a few moments at least."

As I kept shaking her, the tightly coiled wheaten hair was falling in tendrils to her shoulders. And that, combined with her helpless upward gaze and clasped hands, made her even more beautiful. "Are you going

to kill me, Legree?" she asked, tears running down those high cheekbones. In growing rage, I realized that she was addressing me the same way that Mrs. Stowe had done, in that infernal fairy tale of hers.

Actually, I had thought more of raping her: a crime that would have shamed her more than it did me, so I knew she would not have dared report it. But as I gazed down at her, I thought of an even crueler revenge.

"What if I made you my concubine instead?" I leaned down to whisper, breathing her clean smell of unscented lye soap. "Didn't you feminists always dream of being Cassy? Isn't that why you all hated me so? 'He was her owner, her tyrant and tormentor. She was, as he knew, wholly in his hands.' Your Harriet wrote those words herself: Didn't they arouse you?"

She must have thought of that question often enough, lying awake on her narrow Yankee bed, perhaps with Uncle Tom's Cabin still clutched in her hand and her husband never dreaming of why she kept re-reading it, over and over again. Her high, sweet voice became lower and calmer as she finished the quotation for me. "Yet the most brutal man cannot live in constant association with a strong female influence and not be greatly controlled by it," she recalled. "Didn't that excite you, Legree?"

"Well, that was Cassy, right enough," I admitted. "But I would never deny it."

"And I don't either," she said, surprising me so much that I let go of her arm. "Yes, I have dreamed of being Cassy, to my undying shame. But I have tried to atone for my sin, by fighting against slavery."

At that, I relented still further. "Some say that all women dream of enslavement," I told her. "That it is the natural law."

"I know all about the arguments for slavery based on natural law," she retorted sharply, showing me, finally, one of those fiery radical feminists and abolitionists who had started the Big War. "As you may remember, Mrs. Stowe used that very phrase in her book, or rather her good slavemaster George Shelby did. He said that he knew all about the arguments from natural law and the Bible, but he still believed that slavery was born in Hell. And it was, where our animal instincts are formed. We are meant to fight our base desires, Legree, not surrender to them."

"Then surrender to me," I snarled, as I grasped her shoulders and pulled her against me. "Surrender to your monster, ogre slavemaster, Simon Legree." My left hand grasped that tight bun of blond hair at the nape of her neck and pulled it backwards, turning her face up to me. That large, coarse mouth of mine crushed her thin lips beneath it.

For a moment she struggled frantically, her little fists beating against my chest and her pointed shoes kicking vainly at my army boots. Then, closing her eyes, she flung her arms around my neck in rapturous response.

Once again, my lips crushed hers and her lips opened beneath it, so that my tongue could invade her mouth. With a gasp of surprise, she writhed against me, then responded by pushing her tongue against mine. As my tongue went deeper and deeper,

forming its circles more and more frequently, her own tongue circled it in turn.

At that moment, she was mine. No one would have believed me if I had told them that one of those radical feminist abolitionists had, at last, submitted rapturously to Simon Legree. But we would keep the truth between us.

"Not yet," I whispered, as I pulled my face back from hers. "First you must beg me for it. Beg me, Anne Whitfield Morris. Beg to be the love slave of Simon Legree."

At first, I thought she was sure to submit, despite herself. Her lips and eyes both opened wide as she gasped with surprise, at the height of the shameful delight the proposal brought her.

I felt her belly thrust against me from beneath its whalebone corset, as though it had its own mind and will and was following their commands. If she fell with child she could always blame the good Rev. Morris, so we need have no fears on that score.

Then she shook her head violently. Her lips set into a thin line again as she made a final violent effort to pull herself away. It surprised me so, my hands fell open to let her escape.

"I can still fight my evil desires, Legree, even if you cannot!"

But I saw how she was still panting, gasping, almost writhing in her longing to have me overpower her, thus granting those evil desires while taking the sin on my powerful shoulders, where so many sins already lay.

Then I saw what the true revenge would be: To

take her at her word, say I respected her feelings and leave the room. No one would have believed her, even if she had told them what had happened there.

But I was not that cruel. Not cruel enough to either ravish or her leave her unravished. For one thing, I did not want her running around raving to every wild-eyed ranting Methodist, either about how I had defiled her or, alternatively, how God had rescued her from defilement.

So I used those fingers--large, hairy, sunburned, freckled, just as her favorite fiction had described them. I wrapped them around her thin shoulders and hurled her to the floor. Once again she gazed up at me as her hands closed in prayer, but I pried her fingers apart. In horrified fascination, she stared up at the fists that imprisoned them.

"Do they look as you imagined them?" I demanded. "Are they still huge and hairy? Then kiss them, Anne Whitfield Morris. Kiss the fists that showed my power as I beat my slaves to death, in that woman's overheated imagination at least--kiss the fists of Simon Legree."

As she bent her head to do so, I thrust the knuckles against her lips. Rather than flinching, she only pressed her mouth harder against them, as though she wanted my heavy fists to make her thin lips bleed.

When finally she raised her head, it was to ask me, "Did you force Cassy to do this?"

"Of course not," I answered, with a twisted smile. "I never treated Cassy like a slave. She was one. So you are the first to kiss the fists of Simon Legree, and

willingly. I wish I could unbutton my breeches and make you kiss something else as well—that other huge and hairy thing, the one she probably really dreamed of, when she described my hands that way instead. But I am afraid I would not have time for that, and it would embarrass both of us greatly to have the Union army catch me in your bed.”

I had expected some violent answer from her--accusations, denials, apologizes or even pleas for me to take her, despite all the risks, as she imagined that I took my slave girls. And I will always believed that she longed with all her being to have me do just that. But, to my surprise, she was thinking about my safety rather than her own soul or even her reputation.

“Yes, you had better go,” she said. “They must be looking all over Washington City for you by now.”

“They think I am in Elmira,” I answered, with a twisted grin. “But you are right, I had better start heading the other way. Perhaps I’ll be able to find a ship that will let me be a sailor again. Of course, you know I will never tell anyone about this. No one would believe me anyway.”

“But I still know it is true,” she answered sadly.

“Well then, the next time you embrace the worthy Rev. Morris, if you have one, you can pretend that he is your slavemaster Simon Legree.”

Gazing steadily at me, she replied, “I already do.”

Now it was my turn to stare in amazement. That admission—which, coming from a good Yankee lady, might as well have been one of adultery—may have been the most surprising event of all. So in one of my rare generous moments, I decided to do something

that would convince her that her soul was still in fine working order, to the point of saving mine.

"And here's something else that no one would believe," I said, as I took her shoulders to help her to her feet. "You can tell your good friend Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe that you have made an abolitionist out of me, after all."

"Are you poking fun at me?" she demanded.

"Not at all," I assured her, my hands still on her shoulders. "I don't have to buy women to win them. Come to think of it, I must have had a pretty low opinion of myself, if I ever thought I did. But you have taught me otherwise."

I leaned down and kissed her once again full on the mouth. Her parted lips reached up to meet mine as, once again, our tongues circled each other in a final kiss.

She stood perfectly still as I left her, following me with her eyes.

I would have seen much more in them--sadness, pride, guilt or all three together and more--if I had given her my other reason for renouncing slavery.

Thinking of the Armory Square Hospital, the Elmira Prison Camp, the Battlefields of Gettysburg, Manassas, Resaca where I had been wounded and Olustee where my friend Quimbo had died--I realized that the price of slave girls was going to be higher than anyone had imagined, before it was paid in this Big War that the Little Lady had started.

But damn it, when I remember Cassy, who was my slave girl and Anne Whitfield Morris, feminist and abolitionist, who had secretly dreamed of taking her

Captive Master



place, I still can't keep myself from feeling that it was all worthwhile.

About the Author

Living in Northern Virginia, Jackie Rose indulges her passion for history by touring restored colonial homes. A resulting newspaper story on historical re-enactors led to a Virginia Press Association first prize. This was the first of five VPA prizes she earned during her ten years of feature writing for area newspapers.

This region also provided many of the settings for Simon Legree's story: most notably, the displays in the National Museum of Civil War Medicine.

Her husband David shares her love for history, travel, cruising, Walt Disney World and their son Frank. He also supports other hobbies: working out with Jazzercise and buying the latest Vera Bradley pattern handbags.