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SLAVE OF THE OUTLANDS

By

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CHAPTER ONE

In just three weeks Jesalin would turn nineteen and then she would no longer be free. Like all adult females in the Colony up to age thirty, she would become sexual property, subject to ownership by a male of her own age group. After that, following her peak fertility years, she would be allowed to pursue a chosen career.

Such was the law and it was irrevocable. The best a young woman could do to improve her lot was to line up a master ahead of time, someone whom she found pleasing and could imagine herself serving as a slave. If this male accepted her then he would go to her Common House on the morning of her nineteenth nativity, make a formal statement of his intent to the House Mother and Father,

He would then strip her and put his collar on her in front of witnesses.

If a girl did not have such a champion to claim her by Moon's Peak that night she would be thrown from her Common House into the street, naked. She would then be subject to claiming by whichever male happened upon her first and was inclined to own her flesh. Those still unclaimed by the following dawn were put out of the gates into the Outlands.

Such an exile was a fate worse than death, and therefore young ladies in the Colony paid very close attention to what aroused and pleased their male counterparts. To this end, they kept themselves in fine physical condition, particularly at the times of year dedicated for the Fertility Festivals. From the age of sixteen onward, the young ladies were to be presented nude, to the titillation and often the giggling of the boys. Though no sexual contact was allowed as of yet, the boys-who remained clothed-were encouraged to practice their future position as masters, chasing after the girls with wooden switches.

A "captured" girl was made to grovel before her "master" till a senior keeper of the Festival came by to register the young man's accomplishment. It was a frustrating thing for the boy and girl not to follow the act of domination and submission to its logical, sexual conclusion, but the Colony had very careful rules. Breeding must occur at peak time, minimizing the danger of birth defect or stillborns.

Theoretically, the boys and girls were to be treated and educated in the same way through their eighteenth year courses, but it was difficult to keep the males from exploiting the inevitable. The most attractive and shapely of the girls were most at risk. Groping of their bodies in the hallways of the Colony Academy along with various other blatant acts of harassment were often reported but seldom acted upon.

From the age of sixteen, a girl in the Colony could expect a gradual loss of her freedom. Boys might demand they give them kisses, complete their homework or even prostrate themselves on all fours in their presence. For her part, Jesalin had made a policy of refusing all exploitation.

The time a boy tried to make her kiss his feet she knocked him to the ground and clamped her foot down on his neck till the teachers arrived. The word quickly spread that the

feisty redheaded girl was not worth the trouble. Many of the teachers speculated she would prove to be frigid, or at the very least an anti-social bitch. To Jesalin's way of thinking, she was protecting her rights, nothing more.

Jesalin's best friend was a girl named Teara whose outlook on life was very different. The blonde, busty Teara genuinely loved men and boys and pleasing them was in her blood. In fact, you could be sure that when it came to all those things the boys wanted to do to Jesalin but couldn't, Teara would always be right there to submit.

Not surprisingly, Teara pledged herself well in advance, submitting to a boy name Raro. Teara had three months to go till her Ripening Day when the slavery would be official, but Raro was already acting like he owned her. No longer was Teara permitted to dress as she wished or come and go as she pleased. Though she wouldn't admit it, Jesalin had a sneaking suspicion Raro was already taking a hand to her behind and making her suck his cock, too.

That wasn't technically allowed, but once her birthday came, it wouldn't matter, anyway. Raro would have complete power over her person. He would be able to use her sexually in any way he liked, dress or undress her to his specifications, imprison her in his home, even control her diet.

He could do anything at all, in fact, as long as he didn't kill her or interfere with her ability to make babies because that would be a direct threat to the Colony's future security.

Jesalin had frequently argued with her teachers that the Universal Enslavement Laws were cruel and unjust, but she'd been reminded that their function was to maximize breeding. Young, healthy females like Jesalin and Teara were needed as brood mares, producing the constant supply of humans need to keep the Colony going.

Survival in these harsh days following the Global Meltdown made for harsh choices, had said Instructor Gelar, her socio-civics teacher.

'But why can't females be free to pick their own mates and breed with them?' she'd asked.

'Too complicated,' he shook his head. 'And too time consuming. Love slows matters down. A brood slave can be kept almost continuously pregnant during her peak years of fertility. Then, when she reaches thirty, she is free again to pursue other means of service to the Colony.'

There was no arguing the needs of the Colony. Since the collapse of mechanized civilization and the subsequent ravages of disease, poverty and climate shift, life was no longer so easy for human beings. The Colonists managed to raise enough plants and animals to survive the harsh desert environs, but they were always facing the shadow of starvation. So, too, there were the Outlanders, the hordes of savages that threatened on a daily basis to pour in from the surrounding wasteland and overcome this last bastion of civilization.

Jesalin could not see this big picture. All she saw was her own life ticking away. What

good did it do to hear a civics lesson or be reassured that she would only have to do this for the next twelve years? She was a young woman with her whole life ahead of her. She wanted to be free, and equal. Free today to be a farmer, a soldier, a scientist or a teacher, just like the boys and post-bond women.

She hated the boys her age. They were arrogant and stupid. She could best them all in academics and sports as well. Why should she have to grovel naked and beg one of them to accept her as a cringing pet simply because she had a uterus?

She had half a mind to seek out one of the older men, a member of the Colony Guard or maybe even someone on the Council itself. Her body and face were above average and her long, copper curls were a rarity. Yes, perhaps a member of the High Council might pull rank and take her on. Then she'd be part of a harem. This had its own shames and humiliations, but it stood to reason she'd be abused less frequently than if she were a lone mate at the mercy of one of her horny classmates.

Jesalin wished she could have more opportunity to speak with some slaves in advance and find out what their lives were like. Generally, once a woman received the collar and mark, she was removed from the public eye. About six months ago she had had a rare chance to talk to Vonella, a girl a year ahead of them. She'd been a bright, bold female, well advanced over the boys in her studies. Everyone had wanted to own her. She had intended to strike a good bargain for herself, forcing the men to compete for her hand in advance. Her plan was to make a dowry for herself, a small fortune that would be hers when she regained her freedom.

She held all the cards at that point and her suitors had happily jumped through every hoop. She chose Brayl, a brown haired, muscular boy. Brayl was strong and handsome and also clever. Possessing of a silver tongue, he spun tall tales for her of slavery under his ownership. Poor Vonella's mind had been filled with laughable illusions of what her life would be like. Right up to the last day, she was bragging about how hers would be a consensual, equal union with her receiving every consideration from her mate.

Brayl had deceived her so well that she never saw the trap he was laying for her. As it turned out, Brayl had a secret plan of his own. As the first among his class, he wanted to be sure of getting the best female. So, too, he wanted to make a public statement of his dawning manhood, one that would be remembered when it was time to select future members to the Council.

For Vonella's official enslavement, a huge and unprecedented party had been planned. All her friends and fellow classmates were invited to attend. It was an elaborate affair, culminating in a ceremony of enslavement at her Common House. Enriching words were spoken by her Common Parents and pledges made. This was followed by the collaring itself. With nimble fingers-his new slave kneeling in her gown of white, a priceless creation of lace, off the shoulder and hugging her slender body deliciously-Brayl placed the steel band around her neck. As he closed the padlock, you could hear a pin drop in the room. It was official now; there was no turning back.

Brayl bid her stand and she did so, expecting a kiss. Instead, he backhanded her, sending

her sprawling to the floor. She cried out but he showed no mercy, ordering her to her feet again. When she was too slow in obeying, he yanked her up by her hair. Tears streamed from her eyes as Brayl ripped off the dress, piece by piece till the new slave was naked. Ordering her over one of the tables face down, he proceeded to use her in full view of her family. If the girl expected support from her House Parents or House Mates, she was to be sorely mistaken. No sooner did Brayl's immense penis pierce her maidenhood, then the chant went up.

'To fertility! To the new master, Brayl!'

As Brayl enjoyed his new property, sliding his cock in and out of her increasingly wet hole, the guests continued their dining. As was the custom for first time masters, the girl was shared immediately with his closest friends. This was important symbolically, as it reminded all present that true paternity rested with the Colony, not the individual master. Thus her body might carry the fetus of any one of the males. It made no difference to Brayl. Babies were given over to the Colony Nursery to raise anyway.

In Vonella's case, there had been difficulty in conceiving. Months passed without a pregnancy. The girl began to fear for her safety. An infertile slave was an albatross indeed to the community. As a last ditch effort to save her from exile, she had been staked out naked in the main square, available for any and all men to enter. It was considered a part of civic duty to lend one's penis to the occasion. Vonella was lying alone on her back, her body shackled to the X shaped cross when Jesalin spoke to her. It was a crime to speak to a slave, but Jesalin was far too curious to miss such an opportunity.

'What is it like?' she'd wanted to know.

Vonella looked up at her, as if Jesalin were the most foolish girl on earth. 'Look at me,' she croaked. 'There's your answer.'

Jesalin looked down on the lovely young woman, her cunt lips swollen, the come of a dozen men oozing out the crack between. Her belly was undulating still from the last fucking and her nipples and breasts bore evidence of having been bitten. Her once lustrous dark curls hung limply, matted with sweat and dirt. She wore a collar and her eyes were wild. She seemed a creature of total misery, face streaked with mud, totally degraded and yet Jesalin couldn't help but notice the arousal commingled.

Was this a turn on for the girl?

Jesalin stayed for a while, watching to see how Vonella reacted as new men came to her. Her next user was an agro-worker with large biceps and peach fuzz yellow hair on his head. He wore coveralls, which he unzipped to his waist, baring a bronzed chest, well tanned from his work in the Colony's wheat fields. Pulling it off his arms and down to his hips, he revealed a large cock, some ten inches in length.

There was no particular objection by the man to Jesalin observing as he maneuvered himself over the slave's face, making her take his semi-turgid between her lips. Sex in the Colony was not a private thing, nor was it viewed primarily for pleasure, though it was

certainly acceptable to enjoy the procreative act.

What would not have been allowed would be for the man to ejaculate therein. Unless a woman was either past prime fertility or else already certified pregnant by a Colony Medic, she must accept all semen in her vagina only. In this case, though, the farmer was simply getting himself ready. Jesalin stared in fascination as he pushed the big dick in and out, the blood gradually engorging it in response to her dutiful sucking. At last, when he was quite hard, the veins sticking out all lovely and purple, he removed himself from the gasping orifice and moved to his final destination.

Settling himself across her pelvis, sitting fully on her bowed white cradle, he reached for the convenient rag placed on a nearby stick. Dipping it in the water bucket beside it, he wiped the sweat from his forehead. The slave whimpered beneath him, the weight of the man obviously causing discomfort. She must have been thirsty, too, in the heat.

'Water, Master?' She begged.

The bronzed, square jawed farmer smiled cruelly. Putting the cloth over her face, he allowed barely a few drops to fall on her tongue. "You want more, you earn it," he said.

Vonella's breathing grew quicker. "Yes, Master."

It was at this point, as the man was just getting ready to mount and do his business that he turned to Jesalin. "What about you, little girl?" He mocked. "Ripening any time, soon?"

She stepped back, withering under his lustful gaze. The Ripening of a girl into a collared sex slave was something not spoken of with strangers, especially not ones who were busy fucking. No longer feeling safe, she ran from the courtyard, all the way back home.

She hadn't looked back, either. Never again did she think of Vonella's slavery, or the possibilities for her own either. As far as Jesalin was concerned, it was a reality that would never come to pass. Teara said she was being foolish. In Jesalin's mind, though, she was simply holding out hope for some miracle. Granted, with just twenty-one days to go to her birthday, the odds were getting slim. Even for miracles.

"Marax was by yesterday afternoon," said the Mother of Jesalin's Common House at breakfast that morning, a thin and pretty young botanist named Meya who was barely out of fertility bondage herself.

All eyes strayed surreptitiously to Jesalin. They were waiting for her response with baited breath even as they continued eating their grain porridge. Marax was three years older, a Colony Guardsman and touted by many to be a future member of the Council. Given that they had barely been aware of each other's existence during their time in school together, there was only one thing his visit here could possibly mean.

He was sniffing out Jesalin's availability as breeding stock.

'Marax is quite a catch they say,' hinted the House Father, a kindly, graying officer of the Colony Record Keeping Office. Like the other Common House parents, they had been

selected based on moral character and civic enthusiasm. There were two for each of the thirty-nine Common Houses in the Colony and none were allowed to marry, most especially not to each other. Their function was to provide live-in guidance for the Colony's young people until their coming of age when they were old enough to live with one another as master and slave.

Jesalin scraped her wooden spoon with deliberate vigor against the side of the wooden bowl as the Parents said their piece. 'They also say he keeps three slaves ... *threewomen* in a stable and treats them like horses. As far as I am concerned, Marax is no better than an Outlander.'

The table grew very still.

'Jesalin, do not speak that way, even out of your emotions,' said the Common Father sternly. "'To cast aspersions on the one ... '" he quoted.

""Is to threaten the whole,"" she completed impatiently. 'I know the Colony teachings as well as anyone. May I be dismissed, now? Teara is waiting to walk me to school.'

The Common Father sighed. 'Jesalin, we do not know what to do with you ... we are trying.'

Around the table, spoons were set down. It was a round table, of heavy oak, salvaged from before the time of the Meltdown when all mass production came to a halt. Jesalin knew from their actions what was coming next. The whole house, all ten of them, ranging in age from eleven to seventeen, plus the two Parents along with the House Custodian, were about to gang up on her, chastising her for daring to question in any way the greatness of a man like Marax.

Personally, the man made her sick. He made the mean eyed farmer who'd fucked Vonella look like an innocent baby in comparison. Yes, a male was allowed to accumulate slaves, based upon his feats of service to the community, but Marax was an exploiter of the system, not to mention an abuser of women. A female slave was still human. In fact, the women that today lived in his barns, eating slop and being ridden with saddles were destined to become the medics and farmers, even the Council representatives of tomorrow. How could he so disrespect them without disrespecting the whole Colony?

'I'm late,' she stood without permission. 'See you all at dinner.'

She found Teara outside, leaning against the side of the House-more of an extended cabin or a long hall from the days of Beowulf than a house in the more modern sense. Then again, it had its post-modern edge, too, with its patchwork of salvaged steel, aluminum and other scraps nailed up to re-enforce the wood.

"Hey, Jes," beamed her friend, the girl's long yellow curls well teased and pulled back into a loose hair band. "Sleep well?"

'Yes. How about you?'

Jesalin didn't mention her dream, the recurring one in which a mysterious masked man, dressed all in black leather comes to claim her at her Ripening.

'You have fooled the others,' he would say time and again. 'But I know you for the slut you are. The real reason you have resisted finding a master isn't because you hate the idea of being a slave, it's because you are afraid that once you become one you will never want to be free again.'

'Oh, I slept fine, thank you,' replied the blue-eyed Teara, who'd been Jesalin's friend since their days together in the Colony Nursery.

'The hell you did,' Jesalin grabbed her arm. 'Let me see your eyes.'

They were blood shot, big, heavy pockets underneath. Jesalin guessed at once their cause. 'It's Raro, isn't it? He keeps you awake all hours of the night.'

Teara looked about as though the Colony Guards might be spying around the corner. 'Hush, Jes. Do you want him to be arrested?'

'If he is trying to impregnate you before Ripening, yes,' exclaimed Jesalin. 'That would be too great a crime to ignore.'

'He has not been in my womb,' Teara said, though the tone of her voice left open other possibilities.

'He has polluted your mouth, hasn't he?' Accused Jesalin.

Teara looked away, eyes downcast. Jesalin tried to think of those pretty lips, that sweet, oval face contorted in a misguided effort to absorb and pleasure Raro's swollen cock. Did he make her take off all her clothes first? Did she have to kiss his feet and lick his balls? Did he pump his semen to the back of her throat and make her swallow? Or was it worse- could he be using her lovely, pear shaped behind, shoving himself deep like an animal, plundering her tight canal, making her whimper and beg and scream?

It was wrong, wrong, no matter how soon her birthday was, and even after, a woman had rights. What was the difference-eighteen, nineteen or fifty? No female should be kept in chains, deprived of clothing, forced to humiliate herself on a regular basis for male titillation, performing tricks like a dog, spreading her legs for constant impregnation, begging for scraps of food, being thankful for a place to sleep on her master's floor.

'Look at me,' Jesalin demanded.

Her friend had tears in her eyes. 'You act as if this will never have to happen to you, Jes, and yet you are going to Ripen before me. We are coming of age, we have to have masters, face it.'

Masters ... the very word sent chills down her spine. Masters wielded whips, masters held leashes, masters must be obeyed. Jesalin fought the tension in her body, the twinge in her nipples. What in this was sexy? How could it turn her on to think of a man looking at her as pet and animal and possession, making her crawl and fuck and suck on command.

'No ... I won't,' her voice strained. "I won't face anything I don't want to.'

Her friend laughed, a strange mix of emotions. 'This is not one of our exams, not a test at school or a game. You can't find a way round the rules. And you can't win. You are less than a month from slavery, Jes. In three weeks you will leave school for good and a man will own you. Does that mean nothing to you?'

'Sure,' Jesalin replied blithely, attempting to bury the wicked dread that lapped at her sub consciousness like a tongue to her pussy. 'No more homework.'

'I just don't want to lose you,' Teara choked up, her pre-slavery experiences already having made her weaker and more emotional. 'Do you know Vonella was exiled yesterday?'

Jesalin's breath caught in her throat.

'She was?' She tried to sound casual. Jes had actually been in the library all day, researching a paper on The Golden Age, the days of skyscrapers and gasoline and gourmet chocolate that had existed before the Meltdown, the ten year period of war, revolution, terrorism and climate shifts that had left the world's economy, not to mention it's great cities in a state of ruin.

'She was deemed intractable, and put out of the Colony gates,' said Teara somberly.

Jesalin hugged herself instinctively, shaking just a little. Intractable meant infertile. As for being ejected past the high stone, metal and wire boundary of the Colony into the Outlands, this was little more than a sentence of death. Or worse. She tried to picture the beautiful Vonella, alone and nude, hurrying across the cracked and unforgiving landscape in search of shelter.

If she were captured by Outlanders...

'We must go,' said Teara. 'We are going to be late for school.'

The pair walked on in silence down the wood sidewalk, made of fresh cedar planks. Busy citizens brushed past on their way to work. Shopkeepers rolled out awnings, making last minute checks on their wares. Most were homemade these days, though there were some who still ventured on occasion under heavy guard into the Outlands, seeking to recover useful items out of the treasure trove of finished goods left behind in the old abandoned cities. With the Colony having electricity these days, it was possible to refurbish more of those old gizmos.

The shops were an odd assortment, in terms of products and construction. Sheet metal was highly favored, pieces of old airline hangers, even airplane fuselages. And wood, too, some of which was still available from pre Meltdown times, along with the very latest, harvested from the small Colony tree farm.

Some of the old timers, who claimed to have seen millions of wonders in their day, had said the Colony was rather like a very large Wild West town, with multiple streets,

whatever that was exactly. The Colony Librarian, a tall and lovely woman of sixty whom Jesalin adored, laughed at this analogy.

'That isn't based on reality, just on the old moving picture stories they saw on their televisions,' explained the green eyed, gray haired curator, who'd herself served a term of slavery but wouldn't ever talk about it. 'Though towards the end of the Waste Age these were as real as anything.'

Jesalin wished the old woman would talk to her about her slavery, but like every other woman over thirty, she was bound by an unwritten code of secrecy. Strangely enough, the details of captivity were taboo, more intimate and potent than the sex act itself, which was mechanical and community oriented anyway.

They were just turning the corner onto the Street of Tomorrow, where the Academy was, when the three boys stopped them. Jesalin was more than a little disturbed to see that one of them was Raro.

'Good morning ladies,' he beamed, having just come to attention from the light post he was leaning against. 'And how are we this fine day?'

'Oh, it's fine all right,' said one of the others, Cereo, a tall, thin dark skinned youth.

Jesalin frowned, noting his attention was focused not on the clear blue sky than on Teara's ass.

'May I?' Cereo asked.

'Be my guest,' said the squat, muscular Raro, the grin on his face pure male.

Cereo ran his hand over Teara's buttocks through her tight yellow coveralls, the color signifying she was a senior girl.

'Nice,' he approved. 'Very nice.'

Raro, who wasn't half as bright as Jesalin, puffed out his chest. 'You come look me up, Cereo, after collaring, I'll see you get a nice big slice of her.'

Jesalin could not believe this; her friend was just standing there, having just been groped and offered out like a piece of meat. 'Teara, are you going to let them treat you like this? This is against the law!'

Teara's eyes were lowered to the ground. Raro stood beside her, possessively. 'Jes,' she whispered fiercely. 'Don't make trouble.'

The third boy, a known bully named Regio laughed. 'She was born to make trouble, this one. A little ironic to hear her quoting the law all of a sudden. Tell me, Red,' he addressed Jesalin directly. 'When's your birthday again? I want to get you something nice.'

Cereo and Raro laughed as the dark haired Regio cupped his hand meaningfully between

his legs indicating just what it was he would be bringing to Jesalin's Ripening Day.

Jesalin moved to fighting stance, ready to attack him, but thought better of it. She could defeat the boy with her superior martial arts skills, but what she needed to do right now was get Teara away, quickly and quietly.

'Come on,' she nudged her friend. 'Let's just go on to school.'

Teara seemed torn, her old allegiance battling the new.

'Why don't you let Teara decide for herself,' taunted Regio. 'Maybe she's tired of being your little puppet on a string.'

Jesalin clenched her fists. 'I hate you!' she exclaimed, the outburst quite out of character.

Regio blew her a kiss, undaunted. 'You'll hate me a lot more a month from now, sweetheart.'

The implications of the remark made her cringe.

'You'll never own me,' Jesalin spat through trembling lips. 'I'll go to the Outlands first.'

'Tell me, Jes,' he smiled cruelly. 'Is your crotch red, too, or do you shave down there? I like my pussy shaved, just so you know.'

'I'll cut your dick off if you ever come near me,' she swore.

Regio laughed, a private joke if ever there was one. 'Actually, it's not me you need to worry about at all. No, I have something more special in mind for you. After all, you're number one, right? Only the best for you.'

Jesalin steeled herself, refocusing. She did not have time to play word games with this impudent fool. For now, it was Teara she was trying to save. 'Tee,' she said to her friend, hand on her shoulder, leaning down to the smaller woman like she was a child. 'You know you don't have to tolerate this. We can walk away. If they try to stop us you can holler for a Guardsman.'

Teara's face was flush, the anguish showing. 'Jes,' she shook her head. 'I-I'm sorry...'

Raro snapped his fingers, calling Teara's name. His tone was clipped and commanding, much as one might use with a dog. Teara turned instantly, her eyes focused on him, her body at attention. Jesalin felt a wave of sick heat though her stomach as she realized the young man had already been training her.

'Would you like to stay with me or go to school today, Teara?'

'You have school, too, Raro,' blurted the angry Jesalin. 'We all do.'

'No one asked your opinion,' Regio spoke for him. 'And we're not going to either.'

Cereo snickered, egging him on. 'Nice one, Reg.'

Jesalin made a fresh assessment, reconsidering her non-violent approach. 'You talk big, Regio. Now let's see if you can match that with your fighting.'

Regio snorted. 'I don't fight slaves. I slap them down.'

Jesalin moved to demolish him but Teara blocked her path.

'Jes, don't. I want to stay. If you want to go, that's fine.'

'Good girl,' said the despicable Raro. 'Now I believe we were discussing the legality of your ass being played with. Assuming I want it to happen, tell me how you feel about it?'

'I want to please you,' Teara whispered, offering the simplest answer she knew to a quite complex question.

'Then ask for Cereo to touch you again.'

'Please,' she looked up at the thin black man, her lips slack with surrender. 'Touch me?'

""Touch my ass, Cereo, please,"" Raro coached.

Teara corrected herself.

'My pleasure.' The words rolled off Cereo's tongue. He was, among other things, a poet and musician. Jesalin could hardly believe such a gentle soul was willing to behave this way toward a fellow classmate. Then again, all men were the same in the end.

Teara released a small sigh as Cereo's hand returned to her flesh, this time more possessively, kneading the full, resilient mounds.

'I've taken her back there, you know.'

Regio was the first to break the stunned silence. 'You've fucked this bitch in the ass? With your dick?'

'That is the definition for it,' pointed out Cereo.

'Yes, I have and why not?' Raro said. 'She'll be mine in two months. I can't make her pregnant yet. Why waste a perfectly good body in the mean time?'

'She any good?' Regio wanted to know.

'Yes,' he assured them. 'She's very tight. Squealed like a pig the whole time. I use her mouth, too. Sucks like a vacuum. You should try her.'

'Oh, Teara,' whispered Jesalin, wanting to hold her. 'I'm so sorry.'

'Oh, Teara...' Mimicked Regio.

Raro called Teara by name again, a name, which if he so desired, could be changed upon collaring. Under the Universal Law, a slave's name was merely for the master's

convenience, which meant that so long as he fed and watered her and kept her fertile, Raro could call her anything or nothing at all. Jesalin tried to imagine the happy, healthy girl crawling on all fours, answering a summons of 'here, bitch,' or 'blondie, come.'

'Yes, Raro,' she replied, the word coming out very much like master.

'Beg Cereo to smack your ass, Teara.'

She did so, barely audible.

'Again. Louder.'

'Cereo,' she repeated much more clearly. 'I beg you, please smack my ass.'

Jesalin looked about. The street was fairly crowded. How would they get away with this?

Cereo's first attempt was a bit lackluster, though the girl jolted nonetheless.

'That's not how you do it,' complained Regio. 'Step aside, poet, and I'll show you how a man does it.'

As if Regio knew what it was to be a man. As for his belittling poets, he was simply too stupid to pen any lyrics himself.

'You watching, Red?' He winked, lining up his hand behind Teara's bottom. Using the other hand to brace her shoulder, he swung at her like he was rolling a ball.

The punished female whimpered slightly, but did not cry out.

'Ooh,' he looked at his palm. 'Nice and red.'

Again, he struck Teara, this time harder. She was wincing, indicating real pain.

'That's enough,' said Jesalin.

'Want me to stop?' He swung at her again, a crisp smacking sound filling the air.

Teara squirmed too much this time, inducing a warning from Raro to stay still.

'You want me to stop?' Regio asked Jesalin. 'Then you have to do something for me.'

Jesalin knew already it would be something perverted. 'I'm not playing games, Regio.'

'Yes you are. You're playing my game.' Regio let loose three times in succession, spanking Teara full force. The girl was crying by the second one. She wanted to go to Raro but he wouldn't let her.

'Please, no more,' Jesalin conceded. 'Tell me what to do.'

Regio beheld her, enjoying his moment of satisfaction. 'Show us your tits, Red, right now. That's what you have to do.'

Jesalin felt a hot flush from her cheeks down to her belly. She was confused. She ought to be resisting or running for help. With every second she delayed it was only getting worse. If only her own body wasn't making it so hard to be strong. If only a part of her was not so infernally curious as to what it might be like to give in. Completely. 'But ... we're out in the open,' she protested, her voice tainted with dark excitement.

'So? We're seniors practicing at master and slave. You think anyone's gonna interfere with fertility preparation rites?'

The hotness moved to a new place, directly between her legs. Is that what was really going on? Was Regio practicing to be her potential master? She would die before submitting to someone like him. And yet the thought of it was making her wet, opening the folds of her pussy in readiness for penetration.

It was rather like when she woke from one of her dreams, the ones with the man in leather. Every inch of her would feel violated used, and yet she would be hungry and thirsty for a man's touch, for his cruel pinches and bites and slaps, even. And whips. She wanted whips. In those cases, she could run to the Hygiene Cubicle, though, and sponge herself clean with carefully reclaimed water, putting away all her feelings of arousal and need for another day.

Here was different. Here was real and very much unavoidable. Unless she wanted to see Teara hurt anymore.

'You're wasting your time on her,' Raro said to Regio. 'That bitch has ice in her veins. I've had a devil of a time expunging her influence on Teara as it is.'

'No,' Regio defied. 'She'll do it ... won't you my little red haired demon seed?'

His eyes were on Jesalin but his hand was ready to strike once more at Teara's still twitching ass. Regio was right, she was going to obey, though she wasn't totally sure why. As if she were watching an image of herself in one of those old talking picture shows, Jesalin began to unzip her coveralls.

'More,' said Regio as she tried to stop halfway down to her pubic bone, somewhere in the vicinity of her navel.

Jesalin opened her garment the rest of the way. She had nothing on underneath, as was the fashion in the Colony.

'Ah,' sighed Cereo, working out the lyrics for a new poem. 'Such beauty, doth portend, full fruits, the sweet suckling of babes.'

'Pull your uniform down over your shoulders,' Regio instructed.

The peeling down of the garment left Jesalin's breasts entirely unencumbered, free to the male's gaze and their comments alike.

Regio, predictably, was less refined than Cereo. 'So you really are a milk cow after all ... and here we all thought you were a bull. Or are you still hiding a set of testicles under

there somewhere?'

Raro laughed, and Cereo, too, the action further lowering her respect for him as a decent human being.

'Females are good for one thing,' said Regio, who was forever looking for smaller, weaker creatures to order about. 'And it's not arguing about law. I hope you enjoyed your time at school, Jesalin, because soon you'll be crawling around naked like all your Colony sisters, pleasuring cocks and dropping babies. I bet those firm, round tits of yours will milk real good, huh?'

The muchly violated Jesalin clenched her teeth in fury. Nothing was worse to her in the whole of their insanely brutal way of life than the system of milking-the procedure by which the slaves must make milk for the babies they have produced but will never be allowed to hold, touch or even see.

Jesalin had witnessed the process once, having run away from her group at the Nursery. The brood slave was chained in place on her knees, suction devices attached to each swollen breast. Milk was dripping from her rosy red aureoles, spilling down a tube to a holding tank. A man was whipping her, making her produce the substance faster. The girl was moaning softly, her head back. At one point they made eye contact, the little girl and the big one. Jesalin saw the emotions in her eyes, fear and despair and beyond this a kind of hopeless arousal that had burned in her brain ever since.

For months Jesalin had nightmares, though she never told a living soul. The slave represented her future, Jesalin determined, though something in the girl's face told her she could yet escape, so long as she never forgot the horror of that with which she was fighting.

'I asked you a question, bitch.'

Jesalin flinched. Regio was raising the flat of his hand as if to strike her. What was the matter with her? She could handle a threat like this with ease. She was confused, though, and strangely weak. Her knees were rubbery, and seeming to get more so with the man's every word. Her breathing was quickened, too, and she was most definitely liquefied in her sex.

Regio laughed and lowered his hand to one of the pink nubs. "See?" He squeezed with his fingers. "You can be tamed like all the rest of them. It's in your blood. The only mistake we ever make is letting any of you go again, even at thirty. Do you know most women can't handle it? They secretly beg for marriage partners who will treat like how they're used to, like they need deep down. I have a couple of them who come to me. Your House Mother is one.'

Jesalin shook her head. It wasn't possible, not Meya the demur blonde botanist with the short, pageboy haircut who was forever doting over her and the other kids? Yes, she was only thirty-two, barely free again, but surely she had more self-respect?

'She comes to me once a week, to be whipped and abused. Watch on Thursday mornings,

see if she doesn't have a little trouble sitting down. Know what I like best? Making her lick my balls. She has an excellent tongue. I make sure to let them get sweaty and dirty for her before she comes. Would you like to lick them, too? We could have a party next time.'

Jesalin fought back the tears. His words hurt worse than the pinching. She was outraged and ashamed. Why would someone like Meya go to him and abase herself? She was so much better than him. How could she want or need such things?

Regio released her nipple, leaving it throbbing and distended. 'You remember all this,' he said, lifting her chin up to his face. 'The next time you look at me ... or her. There's a true order of things, male over female and people live it out, in secret if they have to.'

'Come on,' said Cereo, breaking the tension. 'Party's over. We need to go to school.'

'Fuck that,' Raro pulled back Teara's head, wadding her long blonde tresses in his fist. 'School's right here, isn't it, slave girl?'

Teara exhaled her agreement, her back painfully bowed.

'Sure it is,' he ran his other hand over her breast and down to the split between her legs. 'And Teara has a big exam coming up. She has to get ready for it.'

The blonde released a moan, her eyes sliding shut. He was manipulating her crotch, using her own sex against her.

'So far, she's showing great potential. She's really taken to the material.'

'R-raro,' she breathed. 'Oh, god...'

'Did you know,' said Raro to Jesalin, 'that a slave may not touch or pleasure herself under penalty of death? Her body belongs to the master, and to the Colony, not herself.'

'Very good, Raro. I see you've finally taken an interest in your studies,' Jesalin said sardonically, moving to zip her coveralls back up.

'Leave it,' said Regio harshly, compelling her to remain exposed.

Red faced, caught off guard, Jesalin dropped her hands. Her eyes fell, too, embarrassed for being spoken to like that and even more embarrassed for obeying. It was as if she were being punished for what she'd said to Raro, being put back in her place.

Raro laughed. 'Look at the little bitch obeying you like that, Regio. You'll have her eating out of your hand soon enough.'

'This one? Not my type,' he scorned. 'I like mine fair-haired with nice round asses like your slut. And sweet tempered-this one's more trouble than she's worth.'

Jesalin felt the white hot burn of rejection. It was insane to feel this way; she wanted neither slavery nor this man and yet the idea that he would not want her, that he would

prefer a girl like Teara just made her hate him even more, and her blonde friend for good measure.

'When I come up for Manhood four months from now,' Cereo said, stepping aside for a pair of wood workers attempting to cross the street. 'I am going to have myself two slaves. One for each hand.'

Grinning, he held out both of them, much to Raro's amusement. 'Good man, Cereo. You always did have style. Me, I'm already nineteen, so I'm going to take my slave here the minute she ripens and fuck her for a month straight.'

Teara was pushing up against Raro's hand. Somehow her zipper had come down, too, allowing his fingers to invade her naked pussy. 'Please,' she whimpered. 'I beg to come.'

'See, that's the really great thing about all this,' Raro addressed the others, ignoring the pleading girl. 'Nowhere in the law does it say a slave has to have an orgasm. Certainly a girl can be impregnated without one. I know Teara here will have to earn hers, by working very, very hard.'

Teara was shuddering. It was clear this was pure torture for her.

Seeing no way out on her own anymore and having seen any number of people pass by with utter indifference, Jesalin appealed to Cereo, the most reasonable of the three.

'Cereo, can't you talk to them?' She begged. 'Can't you make them stop?'

Cereo cleared his throat. 'Well, gentlemen,' he inquired, not without some amusement. 'Can I?'

'This bitch is mine,' Raro opened Teara's unresisting mouth with his hand. 'No one stops me doing what I like to her. And right about now I want to take her somewhere and shove my dick to the back of her throat and fuck her mouth till I come in it. And she's gonna drink it all down, every last drop and then she's gonna kiss my feet and beg for more.'

Teara's jaws were gaped wide. He was handling her like a horse, his fingers in her mouth, like she wasn't even human. Jesalin had to squeeze her legs together to fight the spasms. Raro was owning her, treating her like the slave she would soon be. And for some reason, the sight of it, the very idea of it was making Jesalin want to feel a man's hands on her, too. Harsh and commanding, like the man in her dreams.

Or like Regio, if he were to ever come to possess her.

She tried to push this thought away-shameful, hot and forceful as it was. Doing her best, she sought to focus on the conversation.

'Well, that's part of your answer,' said Regio, still pretending to take seriously Jesalin's question. 'You can't make Raro stop. As for me, I'm not about to take orders from a poet, either-no offense-so I guess the only one you can boss around is her.'

'Very well,' Cereo nodded. 'I shall. Woman,' he said to Jesalin. 'I claim thee for the day.'

Clothe thyself and we shall off to school to partake of fair learning's fruits.'

Regio howled with laughter. Hastily, Jesalin pulled her coveralls back on. Cereo had dealt cleverly with the bully to win her freedom, though she was really upset as herself for letting it get this far. She should have disposed of Regio immediately and kept walking with Teara. As it was, she'd half undressed herself in front of him and the others, displaying herself like a slut.

'Thank you,' she said to Cereo as they walked down the street a few moments later side by side. 'That was very thoughtful of you.'

'Who said I was thinking of you?' he mused, his hand sliding in place to cup her ass.

Jesalin shuddered slightly, but she made no move to break away. She told herself it was because she was in Cereo's debt now and it would not be wise to anger him. He could make trouble. For Teara and for her. But truthfully it was more than that. She was wanting the contact, the thrill. Her heart thundered in her chest. It was sheer adrenaline. It would not last, but for the moment, it ruled her, body and mind. A wicked desire, defying all reason.

'I could suck you,' she heard herself say as he brought her to the door of her first class. Jesalin was almost panting by now, the heat of his hand like a permanent brand on her posterior, promising things she dared not dream of. Things like discipline, obedience and control.

His fingertips brushed her cheek, straying down over a painfully engorged nipple. The touch made her body sing and cry. It was all she could do to keep from lowering herself to the floor and begging to be used.

'Your lips were born for greater things,' he murmured, declining the offer.

With that he gave her a kiss, deep and hot and soul stirring. It was her first and she pressed her body in response, making it clear what exactly it was he was doing to her.

'Farewell,' he smiled, breaking the contact just in time.

Jesalin leaned against the row of lockers beside the door to keep from falling as he walked away without another word. For the longest time, she did not move at all, but simply stood there, facing the incredible, terrifying truth.

Proud and free Jesalin the stubborn, steadfast refuser of males had come this close to begging one to make her a slave. It was a slip, she told herself, one that would not happen again. Or so she hoped.

CHAPTER TWO

A week later Regio met Jeselin as she was coming out of her socio-civics class. He was waiting for her in the hallway of the senior academic building, back against the wall, foot propped up. Her heart began to beat like a rabbit's at the sight of the dark haired, square jawed man in the blue jump suit, though she attempted to show no outward signs of emotion. She hadn't seen him at all since the incident with Teara and she'd frankly hoped not to either. But the Academy was small, even with their segregated classes. Besides, it was obvious he'd come sniffing her out.

'So are you gonna ask me or not?' he wanted to know.

Oh, stars and planets ... he wasn't going to start in about her slavery again, was he? Instantly his words burned in her ear, tormenting her now as they did in the dark hours every night. Cruel whispers in her ear, making her wet and horny, forcing her to masturbate through her tears. Mocking words, wormed deep inside, like a cock that has spurted its life giving semen, exercising its domination.

I have something more special in mind for you. After all, you're number one, right? Only the best for you.

The best as in the most brutal, degrading slavery possible. He'd said she didn't need to worry about him, so what the hell did he mean? It was her dream master who came to her at night, but soon it would have to be a real man. She must find one, a champion to collar her or else submit like a dog in the street. It was coming, she could not fight it. Hands on her flesh, steel on her wrists and ankles, cocks inside her, the pain of the whip, day after day, year after year. Begging, pleading ... submitting.

Regio's eyes were burning deep holes in her soul as he awaited her response. He was evaluating, testing, playing. Jesalin swallowed hard. She couldn't face this in the light of day, even if it was just two weeks away now. At this point, her plan was to hide in a warehouse or somewhere in the cornfields for the next twelve years.

'Regio, we have nothing to discuss with each other. Now if you'll excuse me...' she brushed past him, intent on escape.

The man had long legs, however, and determination to boot. 'What you need to ask me,' he kept pace along side her, 'is if you can buy me a cup of tea to say thank you.'

This stopped her dead in her tracks. 'What would I possibly have to thank you for?'

'Why for letting Meya go, of course. Assuming I decide to do that.'

'What are you talking about, Regio?'

'Your House Mother,' he smiled, quite pleased with himself. 'I'll wager you missed her for breakfast today.'

Jesalin felt the blood drain from her face. Meyra really had been absent this morning. Everyone assumed she'd left the Common House early to collect samples or check on her plants, though there'd been no note. She'd forgotten today was Thursday. What if she'd gone to him last night, as she usually did on Wednesdays only to find herself detained by the man?

'Here. Put out your hand.' Regio promptly delivered one of Meyra's jade rings. 'Is that proof enough? It could as easily have had the finger attached, but I'm not a violent man.'

Jesalin held it in her palm, stunned. 'This is madness,' she whispered. 'Don't you know the penalty for kidnapping or assaulting a fellow citizen?'

'The penalty is death.' He supplied. 'Except Meyra isn't really a citizen is, she? She's a slave, posing as one. Just like you and every other woman in the Colony.'

So he really was a madman, she thought, or at least one too full of hate to care any longer for the differences between right and wrong. Still, she must try and reason with him, make some attempt to win the freedom of the innocent botanist. The first step was ascertaining the facts.

'Is she hurt in any way? Does she require medical attention?'

He laughed. 'She's smarting, if that's what you mean. I've given her a good stiff caning and caged her for the day.'

'Regio, listen to me.' Jesalin implored boldly, knowing there was little left to lose, for her or her House Mother. 'You must let her go. You do not want to throw your life away. The Council will not merely execute you, they will torture you first.'

Regio grinned for but an instant before moving in to kiss her. It was far more potent than Cereo's and she was in no way prepared for the sudden pressure, the instant heat moving up and down her body. It was as if he were tugging on a set of four chains, connected to rings piercing each of her nipples and her sex lips, too. She was powerless not to push against him, softening and opening her body, draping her arms around his neck, awaiting his commands, whatever he might give her by way of pleasure ... or pain.

He wanted and received access to her inexperienced mouth. Employing his tongue like a tiny cock he introduced her to the concept of usage of the female by the male. She had no alternative but to moan as he exploited every inch, his hands moving to her waist, insolently, and, then, even lower. She received a harsh crack on the ass from his hand but this, too, did nothing except moisten her further.

By the time he released her, there was only one thing on Jesalin's mind; being had, the sooner the better, now if possible, by this man, and under any terms he dictated, regardless of her personal feelings for him ... or maybe even in part because of them.

Regio grasped her cheeks in his hand. She was scarcely breathing. He read the desire in her eyes, the transparent willingness, even eagerness to give in to his worst.

'Like I said before, too bad you're not my type,' he dashed the vessel of her feminine offering to pieces. 'You'd probably make a pretty decent lay.'

She wanted to hit him as soon as he pushed her away. But he was faster.

'I want Teara,' he grabbed hold of Jesalin's swollen nipple through her tight coverall, rendering her instantly docile. 'And you're going to bring her to me.'

'Yes,' she whimpered, the pain unbearable, so much greater than the other time. 'I'll do what you say.'

'Tonight, at Moon Peak, meet me in Warehouse Seven. It's one of the abandoned ones. You'll find it behind the grain silos. If anyone comes with you-especially that idiot Raro or his fool of a sidekick Cereo, I can promise you that the next dawn your House Mother sees will be on the outside of the Colony looking in.'

What did Regio mean? Was he capable of exiling people on his own? Did he have some secret tunnel under the wall? Everyone knew they probably existed but none had ever been found for real. Was there any substance to his babbling?

'I-I will,' she relented. 'Please ... let go.'

Regio smiled thin, humorless and dark. The expression of a man in love with his own power if ever there was one. 'Look at you,' he exclaimed. 'Wriggling and whining like a little girl. But you aren't that, are you? You're a nearly full-grown woman, ready for a collar around your neck. How many weeks left and still you fight it? You're an insult to every male in the Colony. And I have news for you, Miss Too Good For Everyone, as pretty as you are, no one is going to want you for much longer. Have you thought about that? You think a man wants a difficult, frigid bitch like you? If I were you, Jesalin, I would get down off my high and mighty horse pretty quickly and start learning to beg, otherwise it'll be a gang of Outlanders you'll be celebrating your Ripening with you. And I don't think they'll be so easily warded off by your haughtiness and knowledge of the law, do you?'

Jesalin, teeth gritted, shook her head no. He had hold of both nipples by now and there was no question at this moment he was the center of her world. Desperately, she fought the pain, trying to understand. He'd said he had someone in mind for her ... did he want her to beg for her new master so as to avoid the Outlands?

'There's a good girl,' he said soothingly. 'Now how about we let you start practicing. When I let go of you, you will fall to your knees, kiss my feet and beg me to become your master.'

Jesalin's head swam not only from the torture, but also from the awful scandal of what he was asking. Still, if this put an end to the torment, what had she to lose? There was no holding her up anyway as the blood rushed back into the suddenly freed nubs. She'd no idea this, too, would bring pain, as bad as what she'd faced already. Moaning, she sank to her knees in the courtyard of the Academy, just one more senior girl 'practicing her role.'

'I beg you,' she proclaimed hoarsely. 'To become my master.'

Regio's boot was dusty from the dry, unirrigated earth beneath them. There was no wasting water on any such frivolity as grass, and so it was dirt upon which Jesalin knelt and dirt she tasted with her lips. Such a far cry from the moist devastating heat of his mouth and yet so totally representative of the same system, the same reality.

'Be my master,' she repeated, her voice cold and mechanical, though still tinged with the residue of her pain and fear.

'No,' he pushed her away. 'Frigid bitch.'

Again he had managed to bring her low, render her broken and needy only to reject her. 'May I go?' she said, head down, her long lustrous curls hanging down to the dirt.

Regio laughed. 'See you at the warehouse,' he reminded. 'Moon's Peak. And whatever you do,' he added ominously. 'Don't be late.'

Jesalin stood watching as her friend performed the act. Raro was on his back, stripped naked on her bed—Teara's, mind you—his legs wide apart as he received the servile caresses. Teara, also naked, knelt between them, her ass in the air as she sucked him. Her head was largely swallowed by her cascading yellow curls, just as his cock was by her mouth. This was supposed to be a discussion about Meya's kidnapping, but Raro, as usual had turned the meeting into a display of his power over his soon-to-be slave.

Each day he was more bold than the last, and now it had reached the point of openly mouth fucking her in front of her oldest friend. Go on, Raro challenged Jesalin with his eyes. Report this. Raise a big stink now, why don't you.

'How do we even know he has her?' Raro asked, hands behind his head.

What a prick, she thought. I already showed him the ring. What more did he want? No one had even invited him here, anyway. It was only supposed to be the two of them. It was clear he was wanting to play with her head a little, make a little mileage out of her concern for her House Mother. Were all men really this bad? Was there any point even in going to the Guards, which was her next move if things didn't turn around here pretty quick.

'You've seen the evidence, Raro. I don't know how to make it any clearer.'

He reached down to pat Teara's head like a dog. The poor girl had been sucking him half a half hour non-stop and still he refused to come. What would it be like when she was fully possessed by him; when she must take up residence with him in an apartment for two fitted by the authorities with chains and whips and stocks and all the other devices needed to keep slave fertility at its highest edge?

There'd be no limits then, no boundaries. Except the master's whim. Damn it, Jesalin was getting damp again. This had been happening to her all day. It seemed as if every

moment, in one way or the other was sexually charged now.

'But why would he kidnap your House Mother? You heard him say the slut crawls to him and takes any abuse he gives. You sure Regio isn't just putting you on? You know he has it in for you.'

Jesalin stiffened at the insult to Meya. 'Yes, but you didn't see the look in his eye, Raro. I think he's crazy.'

She'd left out the part about Regio wanting Teara. This was something she hadn't worked out herself yet. If she told Raro this he'd never let Teara go to the warehouse, but if he didn't warn someone, then Regio might well take her hostage in Meya's place. Or even keep all three of them. There was no telling, with all the bizarre things he'd been saying of late. Her only hope was to somehow overcome Regio herself, but Jesalin's confidence had been shaken of late in this department.

All she knew for sure, the one thing she was focused on was the fact that if they did not do as Regio said, then he would throw Meya out of the Colony, leaving her to die in the Outlands. If Teara had to end up his slave in order to prevent that, would it really be so much worse for her than having Raro for a master?

Then again, if Regio were mad, what would he do to Teara? Moons and stars, she was giving herself a headache. The thing to do was to go forward, no more questioning. 'Raro, I'm begging you, please just let Teara come with me. If it's all a gag, there's no harm done right?'

Raro's eyes brightened. 'So now we're begging are we?'

Jesalin saw at once the implications. Raro had blackmail on his mind. Of the sexual variety. 'I just want to help, Meya,' she appealed to his sense of loyalty to the Colony. 'She's my House Mother.'

'If you want to help Meya then you'll take your clothes off for me.'

Jesalin felt a tightening in her belly. No male had seen her naked since she was five years old in the nursery, and that had been another five years old. 'Raro, what has this to do with—'

'Strip,' he said harshly. 'Or get out.'

'It's not even your room,' she protested.

'This is mine,' he tapped Teara's head. 'And all that comes with it. I've made my offer. Either do what I say, or I promise you, Teara will be nowhere near that warehouse.'

What could Jesalin do? Meya had done so much for her. Looked after her the way a flesh and blood mother might have long ago. She couldn't abandon her now.

She unzipped, as she had before, only this time she was going all the way. The zipper came down to her crotch. She had to take off her boots before she could step out of the

pant legs. Thanks to the simplicity of Colony dress patterns, she was nude in no time at all.

'You have quite a body, Jesalin. I think there will be fighting in the streets if you don't pick a master on your own.'

Not according to Regio, she thought bitterly.

'Just tell me what you want, Raro, so I can go somewhere and throw up.'

'Ah, yes,' Raro sighed. 'I'd almost forgotten, the one trait that makes you undesirable. Your tongue. Then again, maybe we can retrain it to better purposes. Get up, bitch,' he nudged Teara from between his legs.

The girl sat up. She was a mess. Her hair was plastered to her reddened face, she had spittle dripping down her chin and her forehead was slick with perspiration.

'What, no thank you?' complained her soon to be master.

'Thank you, Raro,' she said. 'For allowing me to lick and suck your cock.'

'My pleasure,' he nodded. 'I wonder if your friend is any better, though. Think I should give her a try?'

Teara looked as though she might say something. Unhappiness was registering as she looked back and forth between the other two.

'Is there a problem, slave girl?' Raro's voice had an edge to it.

She lowered her head instantly. 'No, sir.'

'Because if there is, I can choose another in your place. I don't come up for another three weeks.'

'Please, sir, don't do that.' Teara threw her head to his foot, kissing it wildly as she grabbed with her small hands. 'I want you for my master. Please, keep me as your slave.'

'I'll think about it,' he said coldly, pushing her away. 'Now get off the bed and let Jesalin in. If she's any good, maybe I'll take her, instead.'

Teara burst into tears, her fragile little world shattered. Jesalin had no idea until now how much of the girl's seeming bravery and acceptance was based upon her sense of security with this one man. If she didn't know better, she would actually say that her friend was in love with him.

'Stay away from me,' Teara wailed when Jesalin tried to comfort her. 'You've always beaten me at everything and now you're going to end up with my master, too.'

'No one's taking Raro from you. Raro, tell her how ridiculous this is.'

'The only ridiculous thing is you not doing what you're told. I want your mouth on my

cock now, or I wash my hands of both you bitches.'

'Now see what you've done,' cried the hysterical blonde, now seated in the corner, knees drawn up to her chest. 'You've ruined everything, Jes.'

Jesalin felt the strength drain from her limbs. She was tired of being wrong with everyone, hated for being too smart or too defiant, for not wanting a man to her master. And yet here, when finally one man did see her as one, still her best friend was angry with her.

She didn't want Raro. Didn't Teara see that? She just wanted to skip the whole thing, to be old like Dira, the librarian, with her flower boxes and her cloth bound books. Alone, in peace and quiet able to enjoy sunset after sunset in total silence.

And yet, there was a fire in her belly. Must be the child-bearing urge, she thought. Whatever keeps the woman coming to the man to be knocked up against her better judgment so she can be saddled down with a baby to raise. Again and again.

'Now there's a look,' chuckled Raro as Jesalin crawled up on the bed, red tresses half covering her eyes, enough to make her look sexy but not enough it seemed to conceal the emotions. 'Tell me what you're thinking, Jesalin. Tell me how much you hate this.'

'I'm thinking how one day the law will change. And women won't have to live like this.'

'But that day isn't today, is it? Today, you'll be wrapping your lips around my dick and sniffing my balls like they're your favorite new perfume.'

'You really are as bad as Regio, you know that? And Marax and all the rest ... maybe I should just take my chances with the Outlanders,' she defied, though in her heart she knew she never could. That would be far too terrifying.

'And you're going to swallow, too, Jesalin,' he ignored her outburst, dismissing it as though she really were a slave animal. 'You're going to take down my whole load, warm and sticky and gooey. Just like Teara does.'

The bait was too much for the little blonde to ignore.

'Raro ... master, please let me take your load. Please, let me swallow you; I'll be so good, so much better than her. She's never even done this before!'

'Teara were you given permission to speak?'

'No,' she replied, much subdued.

To Jesalin's way of thinking the girl hadn't been forbidden to either, but apparently that was a moot point.

'Go and get your hairbrush. Stand in the middle of the room.'

Her sob was more than a little piteous. Did Raro have some punishment in mind?

'I'm not feeling the love, Red,' Raro chastised, drawing Jesalin's attention back to his cock.

The young man's thing was so much larger and more intimidating up close. Jesalin wasn't sure she could take it down. Then again she had no choice.

'I have my brush, Raro,' said Teara softly.

'Fifty strokes,' he told her. 'Make them good. And I want to hear the count.'

'Yes, sir,' she replied.

A moment later Jesalin heard a loud thwacking noise.

'One,' cried Teara.

Jesalin looked over in time to see her swinging the brush again. She was beating her own ass, and leaving red marks to boot.

'Two,' whimpered the punished the punished girl who had forty-eight left to go.

Raro grabbed Jesalin by the hair. 'Get distracted like that again and I'll double her sentence.'

'Three,' grimaced the naked blonde, her body and behavior both under the perfect control of her impending owner.

Jesalin opened her mouth wide, just in time to have it meet with the top of the tall, curved penis. The man was feeding her his cock outright, having grown tired of waiting.

The first thing Jesalin wanted to do was to gag.

'Fight the urge,' he said. 'Relax your jaw muscles.'

She thought of Vonella, staked out under the hot sun, the shaft of the lean, muscular agro worker stuffed deep down her throat. How many cocks had she taken like that? Only she was not allowed to swallow. Not until she was pregnant. Then her master could use her as he wished, and anyone he put there in his stead.

But Vonella would not take the cock of her master or any other man in the Colony. She had been exiled. Walked naked into the desert to face a new day as an Outlander. It was said that hordes of Outlander savages kept watch over the Colony gates, watching for just such occasions, pretty young maids thrown out, just like sheep to wolves.

'Twenty one,' called Teara, standing there, beating herself black and blue, desperately trying to please the man she wanted for her master so that she, too, might not face exile.

And what of Jesalin herself? Should she start begging as Regio had suggested? Should she not be searching for a man, a cock to worship?

'That's it,' Raro hissed. 'Oh, you are good. A fucking natural. Take it deeper, slut. Yes,

slurp it down.'

Jesalin obeyed him, enjoying the secret, wicked feeling of doing something so against her moral principles. She'd be a citizen again once he'd shot his load, but for now she would be his little slut. His cock-sucking slut.

'Teara, hurry it up you stupid cow, I've got another job for you.'

'Y-yes, sir.'

The count persisted steadily, the numbers falling one after another, the pitch of her voice indicating ever-higher amounts of pain. Jesalin's own ass twitched in the air, exposed, expectant. Exactly what was Raro going to have the girl do next? What 'job' could he have in mind?

'Fifty,' she gasped at last.

'Get over here, Teara. I want you to pleasure Jesalin. Give her an orgasm.'

'But ... but sir...'

Raro growled. 'Teara, I swear, one more act of disobedience and I will rescind my contract with you,' he warned.

Gone were the last shreds of the girl's will, not to mention her dignity. 'No, master, please. I will do as you say. Always.'

'Get over here and lick out your friend's hot little pussy, then,' he said, managing to put it in the most humiliating terms possible. 'I know she wants an orgasm bad.'

Jesalin's cheeks turned crimson. She did need release, but not like this. Or did she? Teara's small, crafty tongue went right to work. Jesalin's sex was stretched quite conveniently, as was Teara's before. Only three times before had Jesalin ever reached climax. Each time had been alone, in the silent hours well past Moon Peak, under her homespun covers, her nude body pressed between the sheets. On her back, pretending to lie in wait for a lover. The man in black leather who would come with his whip, his shackles and his commands. The first she would obey in anticipation.

Legs spread. Wide. Wider.

Teara's little tongue was bringing her back and opening her mind wide. Wide as her mouth swallowing this dick. Moon and stars, Teara had found her clit. Talk about being a natural. Or had Raro made her do this kind of thing already?

'Oh ... yea...' hissed Raro pushing his pelvis into her face. 'Eat it, bitch.'

His muscles were tense, tight as cables. He had her head in his hands. He was fucking her skull and she was taking it, along for the ride, the pussy licking fueling her own fires, allowing her to meet him thrust for thrust, to bend and mold herself, to suck without breathing, to ingest his cock, the balls whipping her chin, her hair painfully knotted in his

hands, her ass bucking, her mind ready to fucking blow straight out the Colony gates, bright enough to light the whole Outland, scaring the shit out of every punk, monster and demon that might be out there.

Raro groaned like a man delirious with the Toxic Fever. He was shouting out his orgasm, his possession of the young woman's mouth, and her cunt, too, vicariously through the mouth of Teara. Jesalin felt the first rumblings of her own climax just as the long promised liquid, thick and salty, hit the back of her throat. It was the first spurt, the first of many.

'Take it,' he kept saying. 'You glorious bitch, take it.'

The orgasms from Teara's tongue rolled over, the first into a second and then a third. She behaved accordingly, submitting herself, opening and relaxing every muscle to accept the waves of pleasure. The trouble was, she couldn't swallow fast enough. She did not wish to displease him, but there was simply too much of it. Desperately, she worked her tongue and lips, though in the end it didn't matter, because he had something else in mind.

'Look at me,' he ordered, taking aim with his dick.

The come was squirting on her face, however much was left inside him. She took it, a hot, white rain, marking her flesh. He managed to cover her entire face: her cheeks, her nose, her chin and a couple of places in her hair.

She drew ragged breaths, each new landing place bringing fresh pinches of joy to her dripping wet sex. It went on like this for what felt like hours, till at last, when his ejaculation was complete, he ordered Teara to stop servicing Jesalin.

'Clean off her face,' he said, requiring Teara to lick his come from off of Jesalin.

The two girls knelt facing each other in complete subjugation. There was no mistaking now their status, their complete submission to the will and pleasure of a man.

'So sorry,' mouthed Jesalin, though she wasn't sure for what.

Teara put her hands behind her back and fell to work, making no response. Her large, pretty breasts pointed out, straight and proud as she arched her back. She was all slave now, performing an act at the whim of her master, one designed for his enjoyment and his alone.

Jesalin regarded her almost as a stranger, realizing that all too soon they would be such to one another and to the world. A single man would rule the life of each, providing them with everything needed for their animal survival and nothing more. Would they know each other after twelve years of such an existence? Or even after one year, should they somehow meet up that soon?

Jesalin cringed only a little at the touch of her dear girlfriend's tongue on her cheek. It was not so bad, not so bad at all.

Raro laughed. 'You like this don't you, Jesalin? Figures-you get to be the man. Go on, then. Touch her.'

Jesalin reached for those luscious tits she'd watched develop from tiny buds. They felt good in her hands. She wanted to caress them, squeeze them and pinch them. She might even want to bite and slap them, in the right setting. For the moment all she wanted, though, was to show her friend how she could live without a man. Yes, she sighed. That was it exactly. The true path to freedom.

'Kiss her,' ordered Raro, and Jesalin did so, pretending it was not an order but her own free will.

Teara's lips felt good, so much softer than Regio's and more understanding. They were women's lips, pliant, delicate. It was a sweet fit, but she saw at once, female-to-female, there must be a leader, to make up for the absence of the male. She tried to fill that place, to feel the hungriness. But it wasn't quite enough. She needed more.

Another command, perhaps?

'You bitches are hot, you know that? I think I'm gonna have you fuck each other.' Raro was sitting up, cross-legged, his hand on his cock, massaging it back to life. 'Ever fantasize about that, huh, school chums? Ever dream about dipping your slim little fingers in each other's pies? Wrapping those lips around each other's nice round titties?'

Jesalin saw no reason to answer. The questions were rhetorical, designed to provoke and arouse the girls, and above all himself.

'Teara, don't be shy, play with Jes's tits, too.'

The blonde licked her lips. She tried to focus her attention just on what her hands were doing and not look at Jesalin's face. Oh, that felt good, her touch so smooth and feather light, treading circles around the edges of her mounds and working there way inwards concentrically. No wonder women might want to be with one another-who better than another woman to know and respect what breasts were about. What they needed and how they could ache and hurt. But Jesalin was not sure she could live like this. Would not the lightness, the teasing make her need after awhile the harder edge, the stimulation and, yes, even the abuse that only a man was capable of doling out?

'Mmm,' sighed Raro, his prick hard as a rock again. 'I'm gonna have to work real hard to get the credits for a second slave-this is way too much fun not to enjoy every day.'

Teara made a sound of frustration, barely audible. She really was jealous. Did Raro have any clue what the little blonde felt for him? Then again, what difference would it make if he did? One couldn't love a slave with any more devotion than he could a freshly cobbled pair of boots or an antique automatic weapon salvaged from the ruins of some city or other. All were commodities, useful to an end.

'All right, bitches,' he announced. 'Time to lie on each other's faces and make monkey love.'

Jesalin slid down onto her back, taking the bottom position, with Teara settling in lithely and dutifully on top of her, head to foot. Raro grunted his immediate approval as the two girls began to pleasure one another, pink tongues inserted in squeaky pink slits, perfect matches all the way around. All was going to plan for the winning of Meya's freedom.

Now if only Jesalin had some plan to insure her own.

CHAPTER THREE

Jesalin and Teara were silent on the way to the warehouse. Unlike in the mornings and in the afternoons after school, the streets were empty. The Colony was sleeping, save for a few night workers and the Guardsmen patrolling along the walls, keeping vigil with their electric lanterns and death dealing side arms. Attacks from the Outlands were rarer these days, thanks to many hard pitched battles, but the Colonists could never afford to let their guard down.

The girls kept to the shadows, careful to avoid detection themselves. There was a curfew for those not about on Colony business and it would not go well for two such valuable commodities as themselves to be found wandering about loose. There were many who thought females should be kept under lock and key at a younger age even than nineteen and Jesalin had no wish to fuel the fire of their arguments.

What she did wish at the moment, above all, was that she could find something comforting to say to Teara. They had spoken not a word to each other all afternoon. The change in their relationship was simply too much at the moment to bare let alone to speak of. Only this morning they had been two innocent friends, school chums, as Raro had put it, and now, they were lovers, partners in very grownup sexual acts. Granted, their session of groping and licking and mutual pleasuring had been a command performance, but it was still quite real, as real as the orgasms each had experienced at the other's hands. And mouth.

Jesalin could only imagine what was on Teara's mind, as she considered the security of her position with the man she'd been yearning to call master for the better part of their senior year at the Academy. Raro had deliberately cultivated doubt in the girl's mind as to whether he would still accept her as a slave. He had continued to do this even after her devoted lesbian performance in his honor. Ordering the girls to get dressed, he'd told Teara to go with Jesalin on her 'fool's errand' as he put it and to be prepared to start all over again in the morning proving her worthiness to be his slave.

This behavior of Raro's angered Jesalin. Teara was a sweet girl and she deserved better from him. All she'd ever really wanted was to find the right master. Since they were fourteen she'd been drawing little hearts in her notebooks, scribbling the names of different boys she thought might, to her naïve mind, make interesting owners.

Things like "Master Beelo and Slave Teara," and "Teara loves Master Siomo." Jesalin had to listen to the lessons for both of them and it was largely due to her influence that Teara was going to make it through her studies at all, achieving her Senior Certification.

Awarded on the student's nineteenth birthday, it was a bittersweet accomplishment in the case of the girls. For the boys it meant immediate entrée into an apprenticeship or trade program, while for the girls it was a rolled parchment that would sit on a shelf for over a decade while they served the Colony on their backs and knees, treated little better, or in some cases worse than a horse or pig.

Why could not the young women make the babies and still be citizens; that was the question Jesalin had been asking for years. Some responses were indignant, others absurd. The socio-civics teacher quoted statistics and historical example. Once she had asked Meya while she was helping her tend the strawberry plants.

The lithe blonde, in some ways so much older than her years and yet never far from the glow of youth, had given her the one answer she could not argue with, even if she could not accept it.

Smiling enigmatically, looking across the greenhouse with her trowel in hand, she'd said, 'Life has a way of confounding our desires, Jesalin, and in their place, you have to find other ones to fill the empty spaces. The best thing in the mean time is to survive, then later you will have a chance to understand.'

But what could Jesalin understand now, skulking in the dark, going to meet a crazed young man who'd imprisoned Meya, taking advantage of the desires in her heart, to be whipped and mastered? Survival, yes, that she could relate to. But understanding-no, that would never come.

For the rest of the way, she concentrated on simply getting them there. Twice they had to hide from passersby. The first time it was a dairy worker, on his way to the barns to milk the cows for morning and the second it was an old man, well past the age of prime work and deep into his time of secondary service. He was moving fairly quickly, walking off insomnia, perhaps, or tending to aching, calcified bones. Over his left shoulder was slung a uniform cloak of red with stitched insignia marking various campaigns. He was a war veteran; no one would trouble him on these quiet streets tonight.

The warehouse area was located beyond the residential area. Some of the Common Houses in this area were quite new while a couple were older and in the process of being refitted. The Council was debating several plans to this end, including the opening of a new kind of house for the growing number of older persons in the population.

The grain silos cast their monster shadows, giving them an easy path across which to scamper the rest of the way. Like mice, they darted across the open areas, passing between the rows of buildings, looking for the elusive number seven.

It was the moon that served as their guide-the few pole-mounted electric lanterns in the area being, for one reason or another, out of service. Like all her people, she was muchly thankful for its silvery light. To them it was as important as the sun and they marked its peak each night as a bastion in the often terrifying darkness. In the time of the Meltdown, when everyone it seemed had gone mad, burning their own cities, shooting their own fellow citizens, it was the moon that gave them something to hold onto.

The few. The survivors. Those strong enough to grasp the meaning. That there was a light stronger than men and which no amount of war or chaos could extinguish.

'Here,' whispered Jesalin, seeing the large red number painted on the side of the metal. 'This is the one.'

Teara moved to enter the open door, zombie-like. Had she already guessed the truth? Had she sensed the fate they were moving towards even before Jesalin herself?

'Wait.' Jesalin no longer resist holding off telling her the rest of what she knew. 'There's something I have to tell you. Neither you nor Raro has asked why Regio wants you in particular to come here tonight. I guess it's because you think I'm making the whole thing up anyway, but the truth is, he intends to make you his slave. He thinks he can trade you ... for Meya.'

'I don't care,' said Teara, her pale oval face lit up like a ghost in the silvery light.

'But what about Raro?'

'He will own me, if that is nature's will. If not him, then another.'

This sudden detachment in the girl was more than a little surprising to Jesalin. And a bit unnerving, too. 'But ... you've made plans. In your heart I think you even love Raro.'

Teara's sad smile held a note of pity for her long-time friend. 'You know, Jes, for so long I was jealous of you. You are so pretty and smart and whether you know it or not, every boy would pick you first. But that's your curse, isn't it? Everything seems possible for you, so how can you ever know your limitations? In just a short time I will ripen and then I will have the greatest privilege in the world. I will be able to offer myself wholly and fully to the service of the Colony. I will give pleasure to the men who keep our Colony strong and I will make the babies who will be the future of our Colony. Its not about being a slave and it makes no difference in the end who I call master, so long as I am serving. This occurred to me while we were with Raro. For so long I thought only of him, but now I see he was right to put me in my place, to humiliate me like he did. He was teaching me the real meaning of slavery. For too long I was acting like we would own each other, but that is not how it works, I see that now. I know this is probably a simplistic way of looking at things and you'll be able to poke a dozen holes in my argument in no time at all, but this is how I view my life. It's the only way I know how to anymore.'

For once in her life Jesalin was stunned to silence. Tears in her eyes, she embraced her friend. 'Oh, Teara, it's not simplistic. It's full of wisdom ... if you only knew how much. And you should never be jealous of me. I should be jealous of you.'

Teara clasped her in return, their bond unbreakable. 'Oh, Jes, I love you so much.'

'I love you, too,' Jesalin replied, feeling a sense of peace she'd never known before.

Like all good things in life, however, it was destined to be short-lived.

'Bravo,' called the voice from within the warehouse, the jovial bass tones reverberating against the high tin ceiling. 'A finer performance I have never witnessed.'

It was Regio, sounding more demented than ever. 'Do come in fair ladies; let it not be said the Great Regio allows his guests to linger unattended.'

'Come on,' Teara grasped her friend's hand, suddenly the braver of the two. 'It will be all right.'

The first thing Jesalin saw in the light of the electric lanterns was Meya, suspended off the floor, her wrists shackled above her head. She was naked, her lean body criss-crossed with brutal marks. Thin red stripes from a whip as well as angry welts and deep bruises from some type of cane or stick. They covered her skin, across her rib cage and over her hips and around to her ass. Even her lovely, depending breasts were swollen and mottled.

The pink nipples were facing tortures of their own, turned to red, each imprisoned by a clamp, attached to weighted chains, heavy enough to distend the savaged nubs, pulling them towards the floor.

Her head hung limply and she was biting down on a wooden dowel secured by straps that fit over her head and behind her neck. Unable to swallow, she'd been left to drool. It must have been a while now, as the saliva had managed to coat her breasts and belly alike. Her breathing was ragged, slow and labored, tiny tremors passing up and down her svelte form.

Hard as all this was to bear for Jesalin, it was not nearly as painful as seeing what Regio had done to her head. In place of her short, playful, straw-colored locks there was nothing but bare skin.

Jesalin's House Mother had been shaved bald.

'Take me in her place,' Jesalin begged, falling to her knees, ripping feverishly at her coveralls. 'Take me naked as your slave, beat me, anything but let her go ... please.'

Regio regarded her with utter contempt. 'I already rejected you once. Have you become that much of a simpleton this close to your Ripening?'

She had her head in her hands, shoulders shaking with the sobbing.

'Oh, stop being such a crybaby,' Regio chided. 'I found you a master all your own, and you will be in his arms soon enough.' Pointing to Teara now, a wolfish grin on his face, he said, 'It is you I want. Come to me, girl.'

Teara stood her ground, hands at her side. 'You should know, Regio, that I have decided I will pledge myself to no one. On the morning of my Ripening I intend to put my life in the hands of fate, walking naked out of the door of my House, to be taken by the first man who comes upon me and is strong enough to keep me.'

Regio feigned shock. 'What? Is this our little Teara I hear? Sweet little Teara, all grown up, tough and strong?'

'I am seeking to submit myself to slavery in the deepest way I know, that is all.'

He picked up the whip at his feet. It was a long, leather one, like a coiled snake. The Council used such things as punishment for minor offenses. In the wrong hands, however, it could be a hellish device.

'In that case, allow me to be of some assistance.' Regio reared back, pulling the whip back over his head. Snapping his wrist expertly, he let the coils unfurl in the air. The tip of the whip landed like searing fire, ripping open a hole in Teara's coveralls. It was a horizontal swath across her belly. Beneath the torn material lay a bright red line where her skin had been cut.

Teara cried out, her body undulating like she'd been struck by lightning.

'Come to me,' he repeated, sounding like a man willing to do this a hundred more times if need be to get the message across.

Teara staggered across the room, allowing him to rub his hand over her cheek.

'There now, was that so hard?' he murmured.

Trembling in fear and pain, Teara gave no response. It was one thing to be made to whack herself with a hairbrush by Raro, but this was domination of an entirely different order.

Regio smiled at her cowed silence. 'Open,' he ordered, placing the whip handle at the seal of her lips.

She turned her small mouth into an oval, permitting him to thrust the leather shaft deep inside. Regio was harsh, pushing it back far enough to make her gag. 'Take it,' he said.

She gurgled obediently, beginning an enthusiastic sucking motion as he commenced thrusting the makeshift cock in and out of her mouth.

'Hold still.' Regio unzipped her ruined coveralls and pushed them down over her shoulders. When her hands were completely free of the sleeves, he told her to put her hands behind her head, fingers interlaced.

Jesalin marveled at the man's power. He had Teara helpless and exposed, suckling a whip, obeying every command and he'd accomplished the task in the shortest interval of time. The fact that he'd had experience with females, with slaves, was obvious, but it begged the question. How exactly had an eighteen year old learned so much about handling slaves?

And for that matter, how exactly did he plan to force Meya outside the Colony walls? It was a not insignificant question, as the gates were guarded night and day. He must have accomplices somewhere, among the guards or else some other secret means at his disposal. One of those clandestine tunnels. The ones smugglers were rumored to use.

'How does that feel?' He ran a finger over her wound. 'Oh, I forgot, you can't answer.'

Teara gurgled, wide eyed, the pain evident in her eyes and in her shallow breathing.

'Did you think your little speech would impress me, girl? Did you expect me to lie down and worship you for your impudence? You are not a man but a girl, remember that. Pride, even in your slavery, is not an option for you. You can and will be made to do anything at

all, simply because it pleases your owner. And never ever try to give your owner something he wishes to take from you by force, either. That, too, will win you swift punishment.'

Regio's eyes remained locked on hers. He was soaking in her fear and pain, and her arousal, too. It was this last factor he identified for himself, pulling the coveralls down over her hips. Teara's sex was fragrant and ripe to the touch and as he masturbated her very gently, her gurgling turned to distorted moans.

'Come,' he said coldly, no warning given.

Jesalin felt her own pussy flood in response at the girl's helpless shuddering response. With his voice alone, with a look in his eye and the merest touch he had pushed her body over into spasms. She was indeed orgasming for him, just as he'd ordered.

'That's it, girl, writhe for me.'

Teara's body danced the climax to its conclusion, her pelvis thrusting forward in the most humiliating way. The whole time the man stood there, holding his hand against her. She was utterly powerless, hands locked behind her head, breasts exposed, mouth stuffed.

In those few minutes, Jesalin learned more of the reality of slavery than she'd known previously in her whole life. Compared to this, Raro and the others were mere children. It was no surprise now why a woman seeking out secret bondage experiences would come to him, even a woman of Meya's age.

Teara whimpered as he pulled the whip handle out of her mouth, simultaneously denying him her hand. She hadn't quite finished and was clearly wanting more.

'Strip,' he ordered calmly. 'And lay on your belly.'

The blonde pulled off her boots and coveralls and put herself down onto the dirt floor of the warehouse.

'Master,' she croaked, crawling unbidden to his boots to lick them.

Regio reared back his arm cracking the whip on her soft, exposed ass. The flesh jiggled, another mark, fire red now gracing her smooth, young body.

'Were you given permission to do that?'

'No,' she cried softly. 'Master.'

'Do not presume to give,' he repeated. 'What the master wishes to take.'

Teara sobbed, feeling the lessons deep in her tortured body.

Jesalin could stand no more. She had used up every ounce of emotion, every ounce of strength. She was powerless to save any of them, Meya, Teara or herself and they both knew it. Whatever he was going to do in the end, she just wanted it over with. 'We've

come here, Regio, just as you said. Now why don't you let Meya go like you promised?'

Regio uncurled the whip, letting the business end roll out onto the dirt floor. Legs apart, ready to strike, he stared her down. She stared right back, coveralls still unzipped, cheeks stained with tears, her insides ... strangely empty.

'I'm not afraid of you,' she said, though really she had every reason to be. 'You're just a bully, nothing more.'

Regio laughed. 'That always was the difference between you and Teara. She was born to be bullied, while you ... you've always hankered after something bigger. Something worthy of that inflated ego of yours. Would it surprise you, my girl, to find that you are the guest of honor tonight, after all? It's true. These other two are props. I used them to get you here on my terms. Plus I thought it would be more interesting to have these two dear friends of yours present for your Ripening Ceremony.'

'Ripening? What are you talking about?' He was spouting nonsense again making Jesalin think about desperate measures, like trying to rush and overpower him before he could knock her to the ground with that bullwhip.

'Oh, it's all prearranged, don't worry. Although I do hope you appreciate the trouble that's been gone through on your behalf. Bayto!' He called out. 'Bring in our suitor.'

Jesalin heard the clanking of chains, thick heavy ones and with it a low growl.

'Stop your fussing,' said a man, his voice back in the shadows behind Regio.

A stifled howl rose up and more clanking. A large figure was being pushed forward into the light. Jesalin took a step backward, not wanting to believe her eyes. This wasn't possible. Was there some chance she was dreaming it?

'I can see you're impressed,' Regio said. 'Quite a specimen, isn't he? Of course they say he's a piker by Outland standards. Yes, yes. Never let it be said I am not a man of my word. Only the best for our Jesalin. Our star pupil at the Academy.'

The creature before her was nearly six and a half feet tall. Every part of its dirt covered body rippled with muscles. It was human, but not like any human she had ever seen. The hair on its head was long and shaggy and matted black, the one side caked with blood from some kind of wound. Its chest was mammoth, hairy and covered in self-imposed scars, composing some kind of hash mark design. There were similar marks on the thighs.

The eyes showed vestiges of human intelligence, but there was much there that seemed animal, too. She wondered if it was capable of speech behind the gag that had been placed in its mouth-a large wooden dowel similar to the one being worn by the helplessly dangling Meya.

It was wearing a cloth about its midsection and a necklace composed of dried and leathery human ears. Most interesting, from a sheer anthropological point of view, was

the metal disk mounted on the Outlander's stomach and secured with leather straps. Jesalin recognized it from her studies as being of pre Meltdown design, a motor vehicle adornment known in the Waste Age as a hubcap.

Whether this had any special totemic significance to the man or if it served merely as personal protection, she wasn't sure. The same could be said of the machine-tooled chains wrapped around the upper arms, which at one time must have belonged to a bicycle.

All of this would have been a hundred times more frightening were it not for the fact that the Outlander's neck and wrists were secured in a heavy wooden yoke. She was further reassured by the presence of a Colony Guardsman, his one hand holding a heavy chain wrapped around the Outlander's waist. In his other hand he held a pre-Meltdown weapon of great killing power known as a machine gun.

'This is Oog,' Regio introduced the barbarian. 'We named him ourselves. You'll have to forgive him his poor manners. He's not so used to civilized persons. Least of all fine ladies such as yourself.'

Jesalin found her voice, having sufficiently calmed her pounding blood. 'Regio, this is beyond madness. How can you bring a creature like this inside the Colony? And you...' She scarcely knew where to begin with the bearded, gray uniformed man, his chest emblazoned with the silver lion's head, the symbol of Colony unity and honor. 'You are a complete and utter disgrace to your order. This Outlander is more of a gentleman than you will ever dream of.'

'I'm glad you feel that way, Jeselin,' said Regio, still enjoying himself immensely. 'Because you are going to be paying your respects to our visitor, not to mention offering him full use of your body as his slave.'

Jesalin's heart seized in her chest. So this is what he'd meant. About saving her for the best. But surely not even a man like Regio could be this cruel. 'No,' she tried to hold herself steady. 'That's not possible.'

'It is possible,' Regio assured her. 'And quite soon it will be real. I've planned this for quite some time you see, with you in mind. Three years ago I began surveillance of the Colony walls, watching the comings and goings of the Guards. It is a known fact there is contraband coming all the time from the Outlands. Who better to smuggle such items than the Guards themselves? I discovered Bayto here and his little gang quite by chance. Collecting my evidence quietly, I soon found myself in a position of blackmail. Not being a greedy fellow, I allowed my silence to be bought off for occasional small favors-this being the greatest.'

Jesalin looked at the Guardsman who was maintaining a judicious silence. 'And you went along with this ... with this outrage,' she gestured to the creature they had humiliatingly called Oog, 'just to save your petty smuggling operations?'

The one called Bayto addressed Regio directly, ignoring the girl. 'You have a half hour to finish. So get on with it.'

Regio seemed disappointed. 'We'd agreed on an hour.'

The Guardsman bared his teeth, his feathers ruffled a bit, perhaps by Jesalin's diatribe. 'You'll take what I give you,' he aimed the black metal weapon at Regio. 'And be thankful I'm looking the other way.'

'Very well.' Regio sighed heavily. 'We shall dispense with the formalities as it were. Citizen Jesalin, of the House of the Third Moon. Do you accept this man, Citizen Oog of the House of the Outlands as it were, as your master, for the duration of your fertility...' He rolled his hand, indicating a fast-forwarding of the sham ceremony. 'Blah, blah, blah ... I therefore pronounce you Master and slave. Oog, you may fuck your woman.'

This was more than even the corrupt Bayto could stomach. 'That wasn't in the deal, Regio. You said a little kissing and fondling, maybe a blowjob, but sex with an Outlander? That's an abomination.'

'Oh, very well,' conceded Regio. 'If you insist.'

'I do insist,' Bayto puffed out his chest. 'And furthermore—'

Regio's kick, a full and brutal roundhouse, caught the Guardsman entirely by surprise. The mechanized weapon flew into the air as the man stumbled backwards. It was Regio who recovered it, taking prompt aim with it at the man's head.

'Don't even think about it,' he warned as Bayto moved for the pistol strapped to his waist.

Bayto did think about it and Regio shot him, riddling his midsection with bullets.

'Oh drat,' deadpanned Jesalin's tormentor as the man crumpled, choking on his own blood. 'Now we'll have to find another witness to the ceremony. Although on the bright side, now we have all the time we like.'

Jesalin felt the panic well and with it a strange dark thrill. It was real now. Really real. She was going to be used ... sexually ... by this beast of a man. This figure out of the nightmares of every Colony child. 'Regio,' she whispered. 'If you cross this line, there won't be any going back.'

He laughed dismissively. 'I'm not crossing the lines, my dear, you are. And about three months from now when you begin to feel this creature's spawn stirring in that sexy little belly of yours you'll have to make a decision-assuming you haven't already run off to raise the child with its own kind or killed yourself out of self loathing for letting an Outlander come inside you.'

Jesalin used all her remaining will to keep from collapsing. In fear ... in desire. How big would the cock be? What would it feel like? She would be like Vonella and all the others of her kind thrown to these monsters, except in her case it would happen here. Within the very walls of the Colony itself.

'I'll denounce you,' she said. 'To the Council.'

The smile turned to a blatant smirk. 'After tonight, my love, you won't feel so anxious to address the Council or anyone else for that matter. Your haughty little self will be quite ... changed. Now get on your knees, Little Miss Know It All. Take out Oog's dick, rub it till it's hard and put it in your mouth.'

Regio pointed the gun, the one he'd already shown himself more than willing to use. For once in her life, she knew there were no words to change her fate. She would have to do as this man commanded, or die. Slowly, she took a step forward, approaching the Outlander. At once the confined man-animal began to growl menacingly.

'Take your clothes off first,' Regio decided. 'Let it see that you are a sex toy, here to pleasure it.'

The words made Jeselin weak and tingly. Fingers trembling, her breathing quick and erratic, she pulled down the suit, down over her shoulders and past her hips. Her pussy ached at the feel of the night air. She could hardly keep her thoughts together as she took off the boots and slipped the yellow coveralls off her trim ankles.

Barefoot on the dirt floor, she tried again to approach the yoked barbarian. Again, from behind his dowl, came growls of displeasure.

'Regio, please,' she begged. 'Even without its hands, it could kill me. Stomp me, kick me to death.'

'That's a chance we'll have to take. He's your master, Jesalin, you can't leave him unsatisfied. Perhaps if you crawled to him,' Regio suggested helpfully. 'Indicating your submission.'

Jesalin felt a hot release between her thighs. Automatically her nipples were hardening. If she were to do this, she would be abasing herself before a being that her people considered an animal. What in turn could that make her but a lesser animal?

Still, there was no holding herself up anymore. She felt the moist earth now on her knees and between her dug in toes, too. The barbarian was watching, very closely. Had it already guessed the intent of the small, attractive female? Would it accept her this time?

Her pulse racing, her mouth dry as the desert in which this Oog lived, Jesalin moved a single knee, sliding it over the cool, gritty surface. The barbarian said nothing. Encouraged, she moved her second knee. Still nothing. On the third motion, however, she heard the familiar low rumbling. Her heart sank. Sure enough, with the next one he was back to a full growl.

'That's not enough,' Regio told her what she already knew. 'It's still not convinced.'

Jesalin must do more. She must abase herself further. There was nowhere to go now but down to her belly, like Teara was, poor quietly suffering Teara forced to wait this all out, her exposed, whipped ass vulnerable to whatever mayhem might befall it.

Jesalin squirmed her way down, pressing her moist pussy to the even moister floor of the

warehouse. Her swollen nipples were also pressed, making her feel deliciously wicked and completely slutty. She was soaking up the sensations, her dirty belly, her hair soiled, and the very, very filthy acts that lay ahead of her. This time the barbarian let her approach. Her heart hammered in her chest as his shadow fell across her wriggling, snake-like body. She was between his legs. One movement of his sandal clad foot and he could crush her head like a melon.

Eyes clamped shut, she waited. When nothing happened she lifted her head, hoping to get as quickly as possible back to her knees. At once the barbarian began to make noises, this time fulfilling his worst fear by lifting his foot. She thought it was the end, but he pressed the sole of his sandal not down on her head but on the corona of her hair, fanned out around her.

Jesalin had to fight the urge to pull at her hair and try to free herself. She thought of bald Meya and of losing her own hair. She lay there, and began to weep. Then it dawned on her, this barbarian was not so dumb after all. It had her right where it wanted, and if she hoped to get up again, she would have to play by its rules.

Cautiously, making sure the intent was clear, Jesalin puckered her lips and arched her neck very slightly. The barbarian did not move. Dabbing with her tongue, squirming, she touched the sole of the sandal, covered in Outland dirt, in a decay no Colonist would dare look or touch let alone lick. And yet lick she did, and kiss as well.

So her here was slavery, thought Jesalin. Her intelligent lips, full and proud, abased and slavish, begging silently for the right to come up off her belly, to kiss her way upward to his manhood.

At last the mighty foot slid aside. Jesalin followed it, squashing her breasts as she stretched to reach. Without removing her servile mouth, she began to scoot up on her knees once more. This put her ass in the air, in a position to move higher as he allowed. Jesalin was so wet and thirsty between her legs, her untried hole begging to be filled, the walls throbbing, greedy to clench on a man's member. Any man. Even one without speech or proper clothing. In fact maybe that was best, to be taken as an animal by one whom she'd been raised to believe was himself one.

It was all about symbols now, about sending messages. She felt such a primal connection; never had she tried so hard with every fiber of her being, with every tiny movement to please another, to put them at ease. Really, this was a man. He had the skin of a man, the heart of one, and she was sure the feelings of one, too. What must it be like for him to be here, to have been taken from his environment by strangers with strange weapons and put into bondage for purposes of entertaining a man as sick as Regio?

Did this barbarian have a woman back home? Maybe more than one. He seemed used to the sight of female submission. Perhaps he had slaves. She could understand that-in a land as harsh as his. In so many ways, this fellow was one she could respect more than the hypocrites among her own kind. Men who allowed their females to be slaves sometimes, who pretended it was for social purposes and not just for their own selfish reasons, allowing them to control the bodies of the youngest, most desirable females and

rejecting the older ones.

She was working her way up his shin now with her kisses. He did not stink as much as she'd thought at first. There was a musky smell to him, very masculine, and the smell of the desert, the same smell that came in on hot afternoons as Jesalin would stare out her window across the expanses of the Colony to the wind blown horizon, shaped stone, covered in sage brush and the occasional profiles of tall, multi-armed cacti in the sandy dunes below.

The barbarian's shaft was erect by the time she reached it. Squatting, her legs apart, her sex lips swollen with need, she pulled aside the loincloth. The sight of his cock made her swoon. It was immense. Raro had nothing in comparison. Fascinated, she reached out to touch it. The man made a low-pitched noise, not the same as the growl from before. His muscles were tensing. The chain rattled. How cruel it must be for a man to wear restraints at a time like this, when there was a female at his crotch, needing direction to know how to please him. Still she was thankful at the diminution of his power. At full strength was not at all sure she could handle him.

Running a finger underneath, she felt the vein protruding thickly. She knew from her classes on sexuality that this was a sensitive area and that stimulation there was bound to send rivulets of pleasure up and down his spine. She also knew a strong man did not like to be teased.

Jesalin kissed the head of the Outlander's cock, then pushed her tongue into the tiny opening at the end. He was making more of those noises and she knew it was time to take him in her mouth. He was massive. The head alone filled the front of her mouth. Mustn't gag, she thought.

Wrapping her hands around the base, she worked him in and out, taking as much as she could. He was clean now, nice and fresh from her spittle and she was greedy for more of the taste and feel of him. As much as she could fit, as much as she could handle.

Jesalin was just about lost in the sensations, and so was he, when Regio intervened.

'That's enough, we don't want that lovely seed wasted down your gullet, do we?'

Reluctantly, Jesalin gave up the object of her desire, exposing his glistening shaft once more to the open air. The barbarian took it worse than she did. Growling with a completely new menace, he moved in the direction of Regio, whose finger tensed on the trigger of the gun.

'One more move and "pow",' Regio threatened. 'You understand "pow"?' He pointed to the dead Guardsman. "'Pow,'" he repeated as if he were talking to an imbecile. 'All dead? All gone ... you. Yes?'

The barbarian took another step and Regio blasted the earth in front of him.

'Don't hurt him,' cried Jesalin.

'Well, well,' beamed Regio, ecstatic at this emotional turn of events. 'Has our little redheaded man-hater finally found a specimen worthy of her? How ironic, to think, when at one time you could have had any boy you wanted in the class, you finally feel emotion, and it's towards an animal. Too precious, my dear. And way too ironic. Oh, but I have played with your pretty little head terribly, haven't I?'

Jesalin's mind lit with recognition. So that was it. He was trying to get a reaction out of her. Of course, why didn't she see it before? In the same way Teara had seen her love for Raro go unrequited, this one had felt the sting of rejection from her. All those times she had put him off and he pretended not to care. All these years he'd said he'd been planning this—he must have loved her all along. To whatever extent a man as unstable as Regio could be said to love anyone.

The question was, could she turn his own twisted thoughts against him?

'Yes, but it's not enough for you, is it? And it never will be, either. There's your really big irony. You've set up the rules to a game you can't win. You can make me beg, you can make me do anything at all, just like a real slave, but you can't make me love you. Or want you. Because no gun can do that, no force or trick in the world.'

Regio scoffed though she was pretty sure she'd scored a bull's eye. Whether that would ultimately help her and the others or put them in even greater danger was hard to tell.

'Stick to cock sucking, my dear. Psychology is not your strong suit.' He pulled back a lever on the gun, presumably to employ it once again, this time against her and the barbarian. 'This is more tedious than I'd expected. Time to say good night, my angel.'

'No, wait. Let us fuck each other. It's what you wanted to see.'

'What a slut you are,' he sneered. 'I can't believe you had people so fooled.'

'I am a slut,' she agreed, stalling for time. 'And I want sex, with him.' Jesalin was going to have to get this message across to the barbarian. She needed him inside her, taking her virginity and saving both their hides. Regio wouldn't kill them in the act of lovemaking; that would be cheating himself of his great victory, watching her receive the ultimate humiliation.

Jesalin lay back in the dirt, knees drawn up, arms reaching out, beckoning the warrior. But no—he couldn't mount her like this, not with his hands secured in the yoke. From behind, perhaps? Switching to all fours, she thrust her ass up at him. 'Fuck me,' she cried. 'Damn it, don't you understand?'

'He understands nothing, Jesalin except for death.'

'No, Regio, do you hear me? I won't let you—'

A single shot ran out, though Jesalin did not think it came from the weapon of her captor. A moment later Regio dropped to his knees and she was sure of the fact. Someone had killed the killer.

From out of the shadows emerged a new figure, a caped man of quite normal Colony dimensions. He was uniformed as Bayto, in the gray of a Guardsman. He was bearded, too-another sign associated with that special class of society. She knew him, too, beyond this, by the shock of black hair and piercing blue eyes.

It was Marax, the young man who had come to inquire after her at the Common House.

'Are you all right?' he asked, ignoring the implications of her nudity and obvious state of sexual arousal.

Jesalin scrambled to her knees hugging her breasts. 'I am unharmed. But Meya, she needs attention.'

Marax frowned, his pistol trained on the barbarian, who was panting, fallen himself to his knees. Had he been about to attempt the act of penetration with Jesalin?

'This thing must be destroyed first,' said Marax, the prospective future Councilman who kept three women in a stable and treated them like horses.

'No! You mustn't!' Jesalin threw herself at the barbarian, shielding him with her body.

'You are in shock, Jesalin. You are not in your right mind. Move aside, now.'

'Marax, you don't understand-he did nothing wrong.' Jesalin did not know why she felt so strongly for the life of this being that she had not even considered human a short while ago. And yet at this moment, protecting him seemed the most important thing in the world.

'Jesalin, this is a savage. An enemy, a direct threat to all we hold dear. You will remove yourself or I will shoot you both.'

'You can put him back outside,' Jesalin exclaimed. 'He will pose no threat on the other side of the wall.'

'''Him''' is it? You two have gotten on rather personal terms,' he noted her use of the male pronoun.

'We've not had sex, Marax, if that's what you're implying.'

'That is fortunate, as I would have to kill you in such an event. At any rate, re-patriation to the Outlands is not a possibility. This creature has been led here by some secret means. It would know how to find its way back. With an army at its back.'

'So you admit intelligence then?'

'I am not playing word games, Jesalin. We all know you are the smartest in your class, but this is real life.'

'There is another way.' Her brain was whirring now at full speed. She'd no idea if the idea was good or bad, but it could save the barbarian's life. 'You could keep it as a slave.'

Marax laughed.

'Why not?' She challenged. 'You could present the beast, along with the story of how you saved us, all while eliminating a dangerous smuggler. I will back your story. Your success will be legendary.'

The Guardsman had a glint in his eye. He was entertaining the notion, the implications for his career. 'It is true, some interrogation might serve to further a wider investigation,' he speculated, pretending to a more altruistic motive.

'And you would have in your stable a magnificent beast-a playmate for your slaves.'

Marax licked his lips. She could see the sadistic excitement on his handsome face. A male animal to fuck his female animals. 'Very well. But I hold you responsible, Jesalin. Any trouble from the creature, and I will come for you. And trust me, girl, mine is not an easy harem.'

'I understand,' she replied, though in reality she had no clue what she might be letting herself in for. 'And I promise, you won't be sorry.'

He smiled thinly. 'Of course I won't. I intend to win no matter what.'

Marax left her to contemplate the meaning of his darkly delivered words as he went to attend Meyra. She had the strangest urge to embrace the barbarian. Either that or run from the warehouse to the wall, begging to be let out into the desert where at least she could breathe the honest air of life and death.

Teara came to her instead, sparing her of either option. Weeping in each other's arms the girls felt it, deep and heavy, bittersweet. They were ripening to womanhood. Before each other's very eyes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Jesalin was down to just six days. The pressure was almost unbearable now. With each passing hour, the males treated her with less and less respect. Her situation was complicated by the incident in the warehouse. Despite the official account, rumors had spread that Jesalin had had sex with an Outlander. It should have been obvious to everyone that the Council would never allow her continued presence among them if they had even the slightest suspicions in that regard, but rumors are never logical.

Jesalin was thus in the unenviable position of having to defend herself for not seeking out a master while at the same time being told she was unworthy of ever having one.

Teara wanted to fight for her, and she had even managed to enlist the help of Raro, with whom she'd been reunited in a tearful show of love, but Jesalin did not want to drag either of them down in what was essentially her own mess. She'd chosen to defend the barbarian, just as she'd chosen to defy the system by refusing to pledge herself as a slave. Therefore she alone would pay the price in terms of public shame.

Much of the abuse came in the form of notes slipped into her locker or stares in the hallways. Horrible names, it seemed, were being invented hourly just for her unique situation. She had nearly forgotten her own name, so accustomed was she now to being called, 'slut', 'animal fucker', 'Outland whore' and a hundred more besides. It had become too wearisome to complain or fight back. Besides many of her teachers seemed just as disgusted by her as the students.

The boys took turns sitting behind her in her classes, finding every opportunity to lean forward and whisper in her ear or touch her body. The dirty talk made her wet, which rendered her all the more vulnerable to sexual manipulation and exploitation. They would tell her what they were going to do to her after school and what she was going to do to them, and before she knew it, things were really happening. She was following meekly gangs of boys to suck their cocks. She was pressing against hard surfaces, bending over for spankings, she was taking hard, round objects up her ass and begging for more. Still, she refused to surrender her status. She was not a slave, she would never be one. Someone would save her.

Her strength would come back, the clock would reverse, stop, something. There were nights she even dreamed of the tall, dark barbarian, imagining him coming for her, sweeping her off her feet and carrying her from the Colony on the back of a fine white horse from out of the stable of Marax.

She had not seen the man Regio had named Oog since that one and only time. Marax, predictably, had gotten the maximum political mileage out of the capture. The rest of the smuggling ring was exposed and several Guardsman were convicted. Marax was moved to a senior rank and given the auspicious job of "Caretaker" for the Outland hostage. It was agreed studies could be made in the future and that in the mean time, the beast would be kept under lock and key in Marax' stable.

Oh, how Jesalin regretted now giving Marax all those ideas, about making the fierce, proud barbarian a slave and using him to taunt and tease his slave women. Not only would the females suffer, but him, too. And for some reason, Jesalin did not want him with any other women. It was a strange, protective sensation that at times looked and felt like jealousy. Though this was not possible. A Colony woman could no more love an Outland slave than Marax could turn over a new leaf and become a humble librarian.

Still, there was no denying her feelings. And every time she allowed herself to be put to her knees, she imagined it was his cock she was servicing. And every time she groveled, it was him she offered her body to. Even the punishment she took, all this was for him.

Real tears did she shed, wondering was he suffering, did he miss his people? Did he even have people or was he all alone in the world? Alone like her.

Instructor Gelar must have sensed Jesalin's despondency when he called her to him after class. 'I should like you to come and pay me a visit today,' he said. 'After school. You may join my slave and I for dinner.'

Jesalin blushed at the invitation. Instructor Gelar was a ruggedly handsome man of forty, with a square jaw, a short, bristled brown haircut and intelligent, brown eyes. He wore his black teacher's overalls with great dignity and pride, and he filled the uniform out well, giving hints of a strong, lean body beneath. A retired Guardsman, he had participated in numerous battles himself and was said to hold all of the top medals for valor awarded by the Council.

He never spoke of such things, though, preferring to keep his lectures pursuant to the topic of the class. The one thing she did know was that he was one of the few men his age granted the privilege of having a slave girl all his own. Though past prime fertility age, he was deemed worthy of taking comfort from a young, vibrant female. Not to mention passing along his genetic composition as many times as possible.

'I should like that, sir,' said Jesalin, unable to focus on his eyes.

'Good,' he nodded in his usual fashion, precise and military but not unkind. 'I'll expect you at Sun Fall, then.'

Jesalin spent the rest of the day in eager anticipation. She'd no idea what to expect precisely, but she knew this was a great honor. Instructors rarely involved students in their personal lives, especially not one such as her, with the sort of reputation she'd managed to acquire.

Like the other instructors, Gelar lived in a special apartment in the north section of the Colony. They were duplex units, single story composed of adobe, the bricks brightly painted to reflect the heat. They were among the oldest structures, having been built prior to the reclamation of metal and wood from various pre-Meltdown locations. At the height of the Waste Age, such materials were plentiful and easily obtained, but now they were precious. Gelar shared his particular building with a mathematician, a quiet fellow who seldom spoke save in the language of his trade.

'Welcome,' Instructor Gelar smiled with uncharacteristic warmth as he opened the door for his guest. 'We are delighted to have you. Won't you come in?'

'Thank you,' said Jesalin, crossing the threshold of the tidy apartment. The first thing she noticed, in addition to the numerous painted desert landscapes and objects from the Aboriginal period decorating the place was the pretty raven haired girl kneeling, her head to the terra cotta tile floor.

'This is Tyla,' said Gelar, seeing Jesalin's obvious interest in the slave girl. 'She's been my cherished property these past twenty Moon Cycles.'

Jesalin felt a tug at her heart. Never had she heard a man speak so affectionately of his slave. 'I am pleased to know you, Tyla.'

'I don't allow her to speak without permission,' explained Gelar.

She regarded the female, her black hair tossed over her head, fanned out on the floor. A free woman would be quite vain about such things, but this girl had no choice. As evidenced by the circle of steel at her neck, hammered silver.

'That is a beautiful collar,' Jesalin observed. 'Is it specially made?'

'It is. Do you like it?' He snapped his fingers. 'Tyla. Heel.'

The silent, raven-haired beauty rose to all fours in a fluid motion, crawling prettily to the side of her master.

'It was crafted for me by a metallurgist who himself trained under a Master from the Waste Age. He had the blood of natives in him, as you can tell from the turquoise. It is hard to imagine how pieces nearly this beautiful could actually be mass produced.'

Indeed, the slave's ornamental collar was very nearly jewelry, with its swirled patterns and stunning blue stones. There was no mistaking the metal loop on the front, however, to which could be attached a leash. Too, there was the fact that she could not remove the thing save by his will.

'I shall never understand it,' remarked Jesalin, ignoring for the moment the visceral effect of seeing a woman nearly as young as her posed as a pet, naked and servile. 'Humanity had everything going for it. On the verge of so much. Space travel, the Internet, cures to so many diseases. How could they let it all slip away?'

Indeed this was the great question to which her people devoted themselves when not actively engaged in the task of survival. Some said it was a matter of system overload, a critical mass of complexity beyond which humanity could not evolve. Others spoke of a kind of mass regression, a sudden turning back to ancient tribal and religious loyalties as over and against the possibilities inherent in a new, truly global techno-culture. Still others emphasized the effect of climate changes engendered by that very techno-culture. What was known for sure is that somewhere in the second decade of the twenty first century, order began to break down in a major way. Natural disasters, water shortages,

ethnic violence, class warfare, economic turmoil and ultimately mass anarchy. Because the societies were so far advanced they were all the more vulnerable. Without their mechanized support and appropriation systems, whole populations found themselves on the brink of starvation in a matter of months. Remaining authorities, increasingly desperate, unleashed massive firepower, leading to further decay and ruin. Cities were unlivable, ruthless gangs took control and once again, after nearly two hundred thousand years of unquestioned supremacy on the planet, it was once again the lower carnivores that ruled the day. The dogs. The rats. Even the humble cockroach.

'It is a matter of the lowest common denominator, I believe,' Gelar speculated, stroking his girl, allowing her to rub her nose on his trouser clad leg. 'A civilization is as strong as its most primitive elements. If the lower tier falls too far below the aggregate then the system will fall, no matter how advanced or brilliant its leaders.'

'And what of ours?' She asked impulsively. 'We have slaves, in large number. Does that not make us just as weak?'

Gelar nodded his approval. 'The teacher surpasses the student,' he employed the ancient proverb. 'The answer to your question lies in the future. We can only hope the right lessons are learned from the past. It is a matter of choosing which problems to solve and hoping the solution does not engender greater ones.'

'So you oppose slavery?'

Gelar laughed lightly. He was used to Jesalin's keen mind and even keener debating style. 'There is still much for you to learn,' he pointed out. 'Such as not badgering your host too much; at least not till after dessert.'

Jesalin flushed pink. She had not meant to be rude. But why was it the truth seemed always seemed so out of step with propriety?

'I am only asking questions, sir. Is that not what students do?'

'Indeed they do. And Instructors answer them. Stand, Tyla.'

The girl rose to her feet, hands at her sides, her slender body at attention. She had pale blue eyes, which at the moment were focused far away, somewhere past the sky blue wall, trimmed with a clayish color red.

'Tyla,' he addressed the girl. 'Who are you?'

'I am a female, age twenty. A breeding slave for my people.'

He caressed her smooth belly, which was slightly distended. Jesalin noted, too, that her breasts were a bit heavy for her frame. She was lactating.

'To whom do you belong?'

'To the Colony, Master.'

'And this,' he pressed his splayed fingers very gently over her womb. 'To whom does it belong?'

'This is a child of the Colony. Which I carry as the duty of my slavery.'

'And the purpose of this?' He moved unabashedly to her mound, which was cleanly shaven.

'To access the seed of Master, and secondarily to give pleasure to Master or anyone he so designates.'

'And how many babies have you produced?'

'Two, Master.'

Jesalin could scarcely believe her ears. This girl just one year her senior had already birthed two children?

'And these,' he touched one of her large brown nipples. 'What is their function?'

'They are cow's utters, to feed the young and secondarily to pleasure my Master or anyone whom Master chooses.'

'They fill with milk, do they not?' He rubbed his finger lightly, making her sigh.

'Yes ... Master.'

'And if they are not milked, what happens?'

Pretty, aroused Tyla registered her dismay. 'Master, forgive me. I don't understand the question.'

'What happens to you, to your breasts?'

'I-I start to leak. And it hurts, too.'

'Badly?' He persisted.

Jesalin knew he was leading up to a point, she just couldn't see what.

'After a while, Master.' She answered cautiously, uncertain as Jesalin where this was going.

'So if you were denied relief, you would beg?'

'Yes, Master. I would beg.'

'And there you have it,' he said to Jesalin. 'The function of slavery. Just as the milk swells in these glands, so do certain desires in males and females. Attempting to ignore them only breeds resentment, sterility and violence. The base desire of the male to conquer her mate and for the female to submit cannot be ignored. The result is disaster.'

Our society may have come upon the ideal solution. Harnessing the brute impulse and using it to maximize the vital function of reproduction.'

'You make it sound so ... academic. So cut and dried.'

'It's not, Jesalin. Not by any means.' Turning to the slave, he clasped the back of her neck, pulling her towards him for a kiss. Unabashedly, showing no care at all for what Jeselin might think, she raised herself to tiptoes, pressing her naked body to him, begging his touch, his attention. Gelar made her do most of the work, forcing her to prove herself worthy of his love.

'What do you want, Tyla?' He asked her at last.

The girl looked at him, breathless, moist-eyed adoration in her eyes. 'I want you, Master...'

It was said without reservation, without proviso or hesitation. Jesalin swallowed hard. If this was a demeaning relationship, if Gelar were a brutal exploiter, there was no evidence of it in the slave's behavior. In fact, she seemed downright ecstatic in a way that made Jesalin more than a little jealous.

If one had to become a slave, this was the way to go, she decided. Was a man of his rank entitled to a second slave? But what was she thinking-this was the one she was counting on to help get her out of slavery, not become her master.

'Go and finish preparing the supper Tyla.'

'Yes, Master.' The girl had discipline indeed to leave the presence of this man she obviously wanted so very badly. She moved quickly, lightly on her bare toes.

It really was as if she were born for this. And yet every woman was expected to give all this up and become a citizen at thirty, a fully functioning and equal member of society. It was a wonder they didn't go mad from the experience. Especially given the taboo against sharing the experiences with another living soul.

Females might not fight Outlanders or man the lonely midnight walls, Jesalin decided, but it could hardly be said they had no crosses to bear for the Colony.

Tyla had prepared for them a chicken stir-fry, made with an assortment of Colony vegetables. Noting that there were only two chairs at the dining room table, Jesalin had naively wondered where she would sit. It was the slave, though, who would have no seat. When not busy fetching from the kitchen, she remained on the floor, kneeling back on her heels, in readiness.

Jesalin tried to keep from staring. Tyla's legs were open, blatantly displaying a pair of lovely gold rings through the lips of her labia. Her sex was swollen and moist, still showing her earlier arousal. It seemed cruel for her to be left in this state, but then again, that was the nature of captivity. Her pleasure was tertiary, behind the Master's and the needs of procreation. Soon that belly of hers would be quite swollen again and she would

deliver yet another child. On and on, till release or ... death in childbirth.

Which was something else no one spoke of. Another taboo of slavery.

'Tyla,' said Instructor Gelar midway through the meal. 'Were there not to be chunks of celery in the stir-fry?'

He took a sip of the white wine from his cup, not looking at the slave. Tyla went a shade paler. Jeselin could see the distress on her face. 'Master, I meant to, but I got distracted pulling up fresh onions from the garden and—'

'Tyla, are you making excuses?'

She lowered her head. 'Yes, Master.'

Gelar was using his pedantic voice, the one he employed in the classroom when he was correcting a recalcitrant student. 'I didn't ask you why there weren't any chunks of celery, I merely wished to confirm that there weren't. This constitutes an act of disobedience on your part, does it not?'

'Yes, Master,' replied the naked kneeling girl.

He took another sip of his wine, his eyes still focused on his meal. 'And what should be done about this, my careless slave?'

'I must be punished,' she said softly.

'Speak up, girl.'

'Master, Tyla must be punished,' she said with aching clarity.

'More wine,' he held out his glass.

She scrambled to retrieve the jug from the table and refill his cup. The light, sparkling wine gurgled into the clay receptacle.

'Enough,' he said as the liquid reached the top. 'Run and fetch the cane.'

Tyla did run, quite literally.

'Jesalin, if you do not wish to witness this,' said her teacher, 'you may excuse yourself to the living room.'

'I'll stay,' she heard herself say.

'Very well.'

Tyla presented the bamboo rod on her knees, holding it up to him in her outstretched hands, head lowered. 'Master, I beg you to punish me for my transgression.'

Instructor Gelar stood, looking suddenly intimidating in his black coveralls. Taking the

cane from her hand he ordered Tyla to place the rough wooden chair in the center of the room.

'Assume the position,' he said, and at once she draped herself, waist bent over the back of the chair, her hands grasping the seat. It was an exquisite position, exposing both her pussy and her asshole, and of course her smooth white cheeks.

Jesalin saw now that there were scars upon those cheeks, lines from other beatings she had suffered. So this was a regular part of her life, then, just like the nudity and the groveling and whatever else Gelar might do to her. She tried to imagine sex between them. He would be forceful, she knew that much, and manly. And Tyla would respond, surely, with moans and deep, multiple orgasms.

'Since you have elected to stay for this, Jesalin, we shall make this part of your lessons. There can be no slavery without corporal punishment. It is the duty of the Master to correct, as it is the privilege of the slave to suffer. You have asked as to the value of this institution to our Colony's well being. The fact is, discipline is the lifeblood of the Colony. Without it we would all perish.'

She felt like telling him that it was one sided, since the men wielded the canes while the women felt the crack of them on their behinds, but she doubted it would accomplish much, except maybe lengthen the poor girl's sentence.

Still, Jesalin could not resist the allure ... imagining herself in Tyla's place. Naked, about to be brutally punished for the tiniest of oversights. What kind of life was this? To know such fear? And the arousal. Was Tyla constantly wet, the way Jesalin was now?

'I take it by your silence you are thinking. This is good,' he acknowledged. Lightly he brushed the side of the cane against his target. Tyla tensed, as if already struck. 'Soon you will be thinking even more.'

Gelar swung the rod with practiced perfection, landing it precisely in the middle of Tyla's ass. It was a nasty blow, raising an instant welt and jiggling her ass cheeks visibly. Tyla grunted slightly, but she did not cry out.

'This will be one of the last times I will be able to cane Tyla for quite some time,' explained Gelar. 'Because of the advancement of her pregnancy. In the future we will have to resort to other punishments, such as the nipple clamps, or the pins. There are many things to cause the mother discomfort without bringing harm to the baby.'

'How thoughtful of you,' Jesalin could not restrain herself. 'And I assume the reasons for those tortures will be as absurd as this one?'

Gelar reared back his arm and landed another perfect blow. 'What do you mean by absurd?'

Tyla was breathing quickly, channeling the pain.

'I mean that the poor thing didn't do anything except forgot your precious celery. She's

three months pregnant for Moon's sake. Would you like to be beaten for every mistake?'

'Nature beats me,' he said. 'Continuously, punishing me for every minute I feel the responsibility of another human life knowing that I am not worthy.'

Jesalin did not know what to make of this answer. Instead she watched him cane his slave twice more, raising two more angry welts. She was releasing soft moaning sounds now and Jesalin was on the verge of asking to take her place. The beating, however, had come to an end. Jesalin drew a sharp breath. Was he going to fuck her now? Or maybe thrust himself deep into her mouth, making her appease him with her soft caresses. A part of Jesalin wanted this to happen ... to Tyla and also to her. But another part did not. And this part would resist fiercely to the end.

'You may go to your mat,' said Tyla's Master. 'I will chain you shortly.'

The girl lowered herself to all fours, crawling to the kitchen. Perhaps it was part of the ritual or else she was simply tired from her ordeal. They watched Tyla's brightly colored ass twitch out of sight, after which Gelar asked his guest if she would like some coffee.

Ordinarily Jesalin did not care for coffee, but she knew this was a special occasion, and plus it would have been impolite to refuse. Given the scarcity of many goods, one can assume that when a person offers to share it is a sign of affection, or at least an offering of extraordinary graciousness.

'Yes, thank you,' she attempted a smile, remembering what Meya had taught her about the importance of putting others at ease in social situations and how that is the job of the female.

Naturally she was wont to debate her House Mother on such points, though recently she had come to respect ever so much more Meya's gentle wisdom. Never once reflecting negatively on her terrible ordeal with Regio, she had returned to being her old self, even more so. Jesalin had been dying to ask her if she would seek another man to fulfill her masochistic desires in his place, though she'd yet to work up the gumption.

'Have you given thought,' asked Gelar, fetching the coffee himself in place of the resting slave. 'Of how you shall confront your Ripening?'

She liked that word confront. It was perhaps the most honest and realistic description she'd yet heard. 'I only know what I will not do, sir. Or rather what I cannot do. And that is allow myself in good conscience to pledge to anyone in advance. That would be acquiescing to something I do not believe in.'

Gelar sat down, employing the very chair over which the slave had stretched herself for her beating. Thoughtfully, he sipped his coffee. 'So you will allow yourself to be seized by whichever male stakes a claim?'

She smiled sardonically. 'As I understand it, they won't exactly be standing in line. Actually, sir, I rather expect I will be making a trip to the Outlands in the very near future.'

'You do not seem very frightened by the prospect.'

'I have met one of them already.'

'Indeed, so we have heard.'

'He is a man, Instructor, like any other. No, I take that back, he is not like our men. He is human, but freer somehow, more honest.'

'I should not let anyone on the Council hear you speaking such words, or you will not live long enough to face exile.'

'A society is as strong as its ability to endure criticism. You taught us that.'

He swallowed a smile along with more of the coffee. 'Did I now? Must have been in my more rebellious youth.'

'It was three months ago, six days and ... approximately ten hours ago, actually.'

'Hmm. I'd forgotten your keen memory.'

'I remember what is important.' Like the feel of the barbarian's skin, she thought, and the exhilarating freedom promised in his eyes.

'This Outlander you encountered,' inquired Gelar. 'Am I to assume he made an impression upon you?'

She flushed slightly. 'He was of interest, yes.'

'I see. In that case, you might wish to consider something.'

'What is that, sir?'

'He is currently being held in the stables of Marax. One would assume he is under guard, chained and so on. But if he were to manage to obtain his freedom, he shouldn't have too much trouble escaping back out the way he came in. I have it on good authority the smugglers had a secret exit through the wall, one no one has been able to locate, not even the Guardsman.'

Jesalin's pulse quickened as she let the implications sink in.

'And there is another thing,' he added, even more enticingly. 'If a certain young lady about to be exiled to the Outlands anyway were to find her own way there, with a formidable protector, it would give her rather a new lease on life, might it not?'

Jesalin beamed catching his meaning. 'Assuming the young woman were to find such a one ... an Outlander already in the Colony needing to escape.'

'And so the argument comes full circle.'

'Sir, I wonder if I might be excused?' she asked, her brain suddenly abuzz with

possibilities.

'Be my guest,' he nodded. 'I have a slave who needs a sponge bath and a massage, anyhow.'

She was at the door, having thanked him a dozen times on the way when he called out over his shoulder. 'Oh, by the way, this certain young lady ... she's never actually talked to any of her teachers about this, has she?'

'No,' she grinned. 'She hasn't.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Jesalin crept past the sleeping stable keeper. He was sitting down on a stool, arms folded. His head back against the wall. So far, breaking into Marax' stables had proved frighteningly easy. The only challenge, it seemed, was going to be finding the particular barn where the Outlander was being kept. There were five in all, long and wide, each containing potentially dozens of creatures.

The first was empty, save for a tack room with whips and saddles and bridles. She felt a tingle down her spine as she noted the scaled down size of the items. They had been fitted for human use, specifically for the backs of female slaves. So the worst of the rumors were true. Marax really did use his women like mares in every sense of the word.

Jesalin shone her small electric lantern in every nook and cranny, her shoes crushing the thick coating of hay on the floor. It smelled vaguely of manure and she wondered what sort of animals had been in here most recently.

The next barn was far from empty. There were pigs in it, about two dozen, oinking and snorting, their snouts digging into a layer of soft mud mixed with hay. They had a trough for food, filled with slop, and another for water. The water was murky, a filthy color brown. She moved the light over the small herd, fascinated at seeing so many animals together at one time. They were still somewhat of a rarity in the Colony. Marax was indeed a wealthy and connected man to have so many of the beasts to his name. He had managed to curry much favor with the Council, winning himself numerous awards and grants in his relatively young life.

Perhaps more questions should be asked as to exactly why this was the case and what services he might be performing in exchange, she thought. Jesalin drew a shocked breath now as the circle of her light settled on a different creature, one that was most certainly not a pig.

The woman jerked her pretty head toward Jesalin, her eyes lit with confusion and discomfort. Her face was covered in brown, the residue of the water trough out of which she'd been drinking. She was on all fours, a leather collar around her neck attached to a heavy steel chain. Jesalin traced the line of it to an eyebolt on the wall. The woman had been shackled, forced to lie like this in a sty of pigs.

She was shapely and beautiful. If the mud and slop were cleaned from her body and her short brown hair, she would have the appearance of an angel.

'Are you all right?' Jesalin asked quite foolishly.

'C-can't talk,' shivered the humiliated girl.

'You mean you're not allowed?'

The frightened slave put her head to the floor, burying it in her hands. 'M-master ... beats me.'

'For star's sake, lift your head out of the slop.' Jesalin found a rag hanging on a hook from the wall. 'Wipe your face,' she tossed it to the soiled girl.

Timidly, she wiped her face.

'There, isn't that better? Now who are you? What's your name?'

'Master calls me Brown Sugar,' she croaked, repeating what was obviously a slave name, chosen to demean her and make her even more into an animal.

'No, I mean what is your Birth Name, the one given at the first Moon's Rise after your coming into the world.'

'Seea,' she whispered, pronouncing it as it was a word she had neither heard nor uttered in quite some time. 'I was called Seea.'

'You still are Seea,' Jesalin insisted.

'No,' Seea shook her head, sitting amongst the herd of pigs. 'I am Brown Sugar. I am Master's property.'

Jesalin regarded her with a combination of wonder and horror. 'What could he have done to you to make you ... accept this?'

Her eyes were bright, trance-like. 'Master trained me,' she said. 'He made me female.'

'You are going to escape with me,' Jesalin decided. 'Tonight.'

Seea covered her collar protectively. 'Please, I do not wish to leave.'

'But you are being abused.'

She slid back to the wall, grabbing her chain. 'Brown Sugar stays,' she said defiantly. 'Leave now or Brown Sugar will scream.'

Jesalin saw the determination, the strangely misguided will. There would be no fighting this. Not without the help of persons much stronger than her. 'Very well,' she bargained. 'Tell me where I can find the barbarian and I will leave you be.'

Her eyes widened, indicating knowledge. 'I do not know, I am sorry,' she lied.

'If you do not tell me the truth,' threatened Jesalin, 'I will break you free of this chain and force you to come with me.'

'Please, no,' she wept. 'Please leave Brown Sugar be.'

'Then tell me. Where is the barbarian?'

'Two barns over,' she sobbed. 'In a locked room. No one goes in or out.'

'That had better not be a lie, Seea, or I will come back.'

'I swear, it is not a lie,' she implored. 'Now, please, go before Master finds me like this, talking to a stranger.'

'Don't worry. My lips are sealed. He'll never hear a thing from me,' Jesalin quipped, already intent on the exit.

If she did ever speak to Marax, she would do more than talk. She would scream at the top of her lungs. Jesalin counted over two barns and slid open the large red door. Her heart was beating quickly. Soon she would see him again, her enigmatic barbarian. Only one more door to separate them. She could only hope he was in a condition to travel and that the wire cutters smuggled in her pocket would be enough to free him from whatever bonds might be holding him.

There was no logic to this, she knew. That is why she'd told no one what she was doing, least of all Teara. The girl would have wanted to come with her and that would only slow her down and if they were caught, it would be the end of Teara's dreams, all her happy hopes of life with Raro.

No, this was a one-way journey. Either she would traverse the black line of life and death or else face the even murkier and scarier barrier between her world and the Outlands. What if the barbarian did not want her? This was not a possibility she had entertained. He might well have a better woman or even many of them back home. If that was the case, she would beg him to kill her before he left, giving her a quick and dignified death instead of the lingering end that Colony slavery would bring.

She would not stifle naked and in chains in a barn or an apartment and she would not suffer at the hands of men who hid from the true pains and joys of life. A man like Marax had no honor, no appreciation of a woman. Gelar did, but his was a sad, isolated existence. He could not speak his true beliefs. Could not ask the questions; only try as best as possible not to lie to those who asked.

She might almost wish to be his slave, in the place of Tyla, but she knew in time they would only grow to hate each other. Their roles twisted and confused, their passions darkened by the contradictory requirements of the Colony that a female be smart and trained at one time, subservient and animalistic the next.

The barn was quiet and dark. She resisted calling out for fear of rousing any other creatures that might be inside. Sure enough, there were two sleeping women-Marax' other two slaves, presumably, lying on their sides in the hay. They were naked, and chained, their mouths fully bridled. Lines of spittle ran down her chins and onto the hay.

Jesalin nearly swooned at the sight of their 'tails,' soft silken tassels hanging out of their behinds and attached to impaling rods. They had 'hooves' as well, leather boot-like shoes on each hand. Jesalin pictured them covered in sweat, trotting around a dirt-covered circle, looking and acting the part of horses. It made her insides twinge and throb. Did their Master throw them down and shove his hard cock inside like this, becoming so aroused at the sight of their animal bodies? Did he lust for them, as he raced them and whipped them and punished and chained them? Moons and stars, it was all she could do

to keep from thrusting her hand down her coveralls to reduce the sweet, overwhelming ache. She wanted to lie with them, roll in the hay, and feel all the things they felt.

The tension, the anticipation. The bittersweet waiting. For the master. For the horrid Marax. Jesalin cringed. She must pursue her objective. Exploring the barn, inch by inch. At first she saw no signs of any locked rooms. There was only a row of empty stalls and bare wooden walls. Could it be the woman had misled him after all, or perhaps operating with out of date information? There was no telling how long she'd been imprisoned with those pigs.

Something shiny glinted in the light on the far wall. She had nearly passed it by. A closer look revealed it was a recessed lock, a bolt with a metal pin through it. Fortunately all that was required to open it was to slide the pin aside. The door was heavy. She had to set down the lantern and pull with both hands.

Shining the light inside she explored the dank cell. The barbarian was chained to the wall of it by the wrists. He was in a sitting position, his head slumped down. They had stripped him naked, removing his breastplate and chains and sandals. His magnificent chest was covered with bruises and numerous slash marks from whippings. Burn marks on his arm indicated they had tortured him as well. So much for the so-called civilization of the Colonists, she thought dryly. Setting down the light she fell to her knees before him.

Softly, gently, she sought to rouse him. She feared he might be catatonic or in some kind of shock but at last his great mane began to shake. He jerked his head upright, pain registering immediately. She sensed his shame, too, at having been treated in such a way by these enemy males. It must have been especially difficult for him to be seen this way by a female.

Instinctively, she lowered her head to kiss his thigh, indicating that she, for one, still respected him as a man. She felt a knot in her stomach as she saw the man's cock inflate. Her act of submission was turning him on.

'First things first,' she said, examining the chains on the wall.

Damn. They were bolted to the wall. The metal was at least a half-inch thick. She would never be able to cut through with her pathetic little tool.

'Pull,' she said, miming the action with both hands. 'Can you pull the chains loose?'

He looked at her, perplexed.

'You don't understand a word,' she sighed. 'Do you?'

The barbarian grunted a sound, surprisingly distinct and articulate to her way of thinking. Interesting. Could it be he had a language of his own? Applying the pliers like a stabbing tool, she attempted to chisel him free. She struck at the bonds till the cutters themselves broke in two.

'So much for that,' she muttered.

Again the barbarian repeated the noise, and this time he looked directly at his mammoth erection.

'I don't understand,' she shook her head.

This time he growled the sound, looking from her to his shaft and back again. Jesalin felt a hot weakness in her belly. Could it be he was telling her-ordering her to pleasure him?

'You want me to ... ?'

The loudest growl yet, enough to chill her blood. 'But ... but we have to escape.'

Then again, they weren't going to escape, were they? Not with these chains to cut through. Why not give the man his wish, then? Why not let him be a man, one last time? For that matter why not be a woman herself?

Jesalin stood before him, smiling. Untying her hair, shaking out the fiery red tresses, she began to unzip. Moist lips, eyes never straying, she opened the coveralls, peeling them off like a skin. In moments she was naked, standing on the hay, exposed, completely at risk for capture. Not to mention on the verge of losing her virginity to a chained Outlander.

Falling to her knees, she put her head to his foot. 'I beg you,' she said, though their languages were mutually incomprehensible. 'Allow me to please you with my body. Take my maidenhood. Honor me with your seed.'

He made the noise again, and now she was sure of his intent. Kissing her way up his leg, she found the cock that was so familiar to her, and so delicious. She wished he were unbound so he could do as he wished, but there was no mistaking the pleasure he was feeling, the arching of his back.

This was it. She was going to impale herself on the pole of a man. She was going to surrender to her first lover.

'Sir,' she looked up, wanting to confirm each step of the way. 'May I?'

His breathing was steady as she swung across his lap, mounting him. The cock was so large. She could scarce imagine taking it all. But she would try. She would fit him in that dripping hole, she would let him ease the fire that had burned so long unslaked.

'Oh, yes...' she groaned, feeling the freedom, the fullness, the pressure ... this was it; she was about to become an untouchable. 'So fucking good.'

Jesalin gasped as the barbarian's member ruptured her membrane. She felt a small warm release of pure, red blood and then she started sliding, down further and further, the shaft pushing its way up into her womb. She bit her own lip against the sensation. A little more pain, a tiny bit of pressure and then she was feeling the first waves of pleasure. As she reached maximum absorption, her pelvis resting on his she released a tiny moan.

Finally, she was being fucked. Jesalin, the redheaded problem child of the Colony was a woman for real. Nearly nineteen and copulating with an Outlander. If only her teachers could see her now. They would have heart failure, every last one of them. Except for Instructor Gelar who seemed to know something about her heart and desires, if not her fate that she did not.

'I am yours,' she gasped, putting her hands behind her head, desperate to feel herself in bondage to the man. 'I give myself ... I yield ... oh, moon and stars, I don't even know your name.'

Jesalin began to bounce her ass, increasing the friction for both of them. The chained Outlander groaned in pleasure, his cock thrusting upward into her all the way to the limits of his position. They were moving together with fevered fury wanting to climax at the same time, wanting to seal the bond of all they had been through. His sex was so incredible, the smell of him the rounded feel of his perfect cock against her tight, virginal walls. Faster and faster they moved, till she was gritting her teeth trying to keep from screaming aloud.

'Going to ... come,' she hissed. 'Can't hold back...'

She wanted to ask permission, wanted to be able to have him command her, but she did not know any words in the Outlander's tongue. She was sure now that he had one, though, and she was determined to learn it. Beginning with every dirty word in the dictionary. And the one, perhaps, for Master.

The barbarian's fists were clenched. He was straining at the chains. The man had incredible strength. It was no wonder Marax and his cowardly accomplices had shackled him like this. He would tear them limb from limb if given half a chance. The sinews in his neck stood out, too. Greedily, she fell against him, clenching his naked body, clutching at his sweaty torso. She could feel his surging power. She sucked at his nipples, and then moved to his neck, pressing, squashing her own poor breasts against him. Her body was dwarfed by his, naturally subsumed and conquered, too.

The orgasm hit like a tidal wave for both of them. She felt the sperm spout up into her, filling her womb. Fertile man sperm to impregnate her and make her heavy with his baby. What tighter bond could there be?

On and on the spirals went, ripples and waves and aftershocks till she settled on his spent and happy body. 'I love you,' she whispered in his ear.

'How touching,' sneered Marax from behind.

Jesalin froze. The man had entered by stealth, out of the shadows. A specialty of his, it seemed.

'Don't bother turning around,' he said. 'And don't get off, either. Not on my account.'

The barbarian was making low hissing from the back of his throat. His heart was pounding something fierce. It was a new reaction in him and she was quite sure it was not

one of friendliness toward the man who had beaten him and thrown him naked into a horse barn.

Jesalin brushed the cheek of her lover, seeking to soothe him. 'Haven't you heard of knocking, Marax?'

'You seem to forget whose barn this is,' he countered. 'And whose slave it is you are molesting.'

'He seems a lot happier with me than he is with you.' She observed.

'What a happy coincidence for you both, since you will shortly be dying together. First, however, I should like to see you profane yourself one more time. You will continue fucking your new friend until he comes again.'

Jesalin noticed something interesting out of the corner of her eye. The entire plank to which the barbarian's shackles were attached appeared to be loosening in the corner. Given enough pulling power he might pull it from the wall entirely. 'Why should we obey you?' She asked, working out the details of a plan in her mind. 'If you're going to kill us, anyway.'

'It's true I can't use that as leverage. I do, however, have the option of employing pain.'

Jesalin heard the snap of a whip, a long one. Her nerves stood at high alert. Not being able to see what Marax was up to was making the ordeal ten times worse. 'What are you going to do?' she asked, though it was perfectly obvious.

'I'm going to watch you having sex. Starting now.'

The bullwhip cracked between her shoulder blades, erupting pain and agony throughout her flesh. Tears flooding her eyes, she began the fucking motions once again.

'Faster,' said the man, whipping her sideways across the ass.

The explosions of pain began to give way to other sensations as the barbarian met her thrusts. He was hard again, aided it seemed by his current rage. Jesalin heard the creaking of the board. The barbarian was threatening to break free. Marax seemed oblivious to the danger posed to his person. He was enjoying too much the spectacle of the naked writhing bodies, under his utter control.

Jesalin's clitoris rubbed hard against the Outlander's cock, her bucking spurred on by the torturesome whip. Again the dreaded black snake danced through the air, a tongue of anguish delivered this time across her buttocks. She raised her hips obediently, performing like a bare skinned slut, no less a slave than the woman chained in the pigsty or his two manufactured horses.

Whimpering, she buried her head in the Outlander's strong neck, craving his protection and what she hoped might even be love. He seemed to draw strength from this self-offering, the male finding his purpose in defending the degraded female. She was again close to orgasm, even as the barbarian tightened the muscles in his chest and made one

last, awe inspiring flex of his biceps.

The wood behind his head splintered as if struck by lightning. Jesalin rolled off the man's shaft turning herself in time to see Marax drop the whip and level the pistol with deadly intent. The Outlander, however, had devised a weapon of his own, hurling one of the sharp pieces of the shattered board like a missile. The spike tipped projectile sunk itself deep into the chest of Marax. His eyes went wide and he made a sickening sucking noise.

He was still aiming the gun, however, looking to bring one or both of them down with him. This time the Outlander used one of the chains that had been holding his wrists. Snapping it like a whip of his own, using the whole of his upper body strength, he knocked away the gun and much of Marax' hand with it.

'We have to get out here,' said Jesalin as the man's lifeless body hit the floor. 'We have to escape the Colony-do you understand? Can you take us to the place you came in? Past the walls?'

She could only hope he comprehended her meaning quickly enough. It would only be a matter of time before someone came looking for Marax. And once the alarm was raised, there would be no way to slip past the Guardsmen.

He made a low rumbling noise. He seemed intent on something. 'Awww...' He said. 'Aw ... ut.'

'Awut?' She repeated the word enthusiastically grasping his huge hand. 'Out? Do you mean out? You can get us out?'

He squeezed her fingers confidently. 'Awut,' he nodded.

She gave him a hug, raising herself up on tiptoes to kiss his cheek. 'Yes, awut, you big brute. Awut, indeed.'

He led her from the room and out of the barn. It was quiet outside. Marax must have come out here alone. Whether he'd found them by accident or was simply too arrogant to get any backup she couldn't say. The stable keeper on the stool was still sleeping, which was another lucky break. Jesalin could only hope the escape point was not too far away and that it was still undiscovered, as Instructor Gelar had suggested.

Behind the stables were the Colony's fields and they soon found themselves running between rows of corn plants. The thick, black soil was cool beneath their feet, the productive of years of careful nurturing. At the end of the field was an open space that was being reserved for future building. To the rear of this was a small mud brick working operation. The mud and straw were mixed here in a huge crater with giant tamping sticks. Around the edge were crates of various sizes and mounds of sand.

The Outlander took Jesalin's hand, leading her on a zigzag past various mounds till he found the place he was looking for. Kneeling down on the ground, he rapped with his knuckles in one particular spot. The sound was hollow, metallic. He cleared the thin layer of dirt revealing a metal disk-shaped covering. Underneath was a perfectly round hole in

the ground.

'Awut,' he said somberly.

The barbarian climbed down first, making use of the vertical ladder. He helped Jesalin down after him, depositing her on the ground of a wide, expansive tunnel. It was dark, but there was an electric lantern on the wall, which she pulled off the hook and turned on. The Outlander took a few moments to pull the disk back over the hole-yet another sign of his native intelligence.

Jesalin was amazed as they proceeded. The tunnel was some eight-foot high and about four feet across. She could only imagine the immense effort taken to construct it. Such a blatant defiance of the Colony's security, she thought. One could only wonder how long it had been here.

It felt like they had been walking forever, though in truth it was probably no more than ten minutes or so. Finally the tunnel came to a dead end. There was a metal ladder leading upward, of obvious pre-Meltdown construction. The Outlander indicated he would go first.

She watched him climb up. There did not seem to be any opening, but as he pushed on the roof she heard the creaking of metal. A circular piece of iron gave way and she saw starlight once again. The air felt cooler and more raw on this side of the wall, though it was likely her imagination.

'Awut,' he stretched down his hand, employing his favorite new word. She smiled, finding him rather charming.

A moment later they were standing together on a bare plain, their skin equally bare, the portal to the tunnel having been covered back over by the tall barbarian.

'Ko-low,' he pointed to the west.

Jesalin did not take his meaning at first, but as she looked to the horizon she saw the gleaming of the razor wire, the white and gray bricks and the numerous guard towers of the Colony. There it was, from the outside looking in. The place of Jesalin's birth, the place where everyone she'd ever known and lived would spend the rest of their days.

'Ko-low,' he said again, and she realized he was trying to say 'Colony.'

'Yes,' she whispered softly, a tear in her eye. 'The Colony.'

The Outlander took both her hands in his, the expression on his face more tender than anything she had ever seen among her own people. 'Jessa-' he said in a clear attempt to pronounce her name.

The tears switched to drops of joy. 'I am Jesalin,' she affirmed. 'If only I knew your name.'

The Outlander touched his bronzed chest, marked with Marax's cruel whip. 'Vrashasa,'

he said.

'Ra-sha-sa,' she repeated as carefully as possible.

He leaned back, opening his mouth in exclamation. She realized he was laughing, at her pronunciation. She slapped his chest, teasing back.

The warrior called Vrashasa seized her wrist, bringing her swiftly to her knees. Jesalin felt a liquid rush. She had forgotten the terms they had begun to hammer out between them. Terms based very much on their gender differentials.

Held as if by steel, Jesalin moved in the only way she could, rubbing her cheek against his cock and balls, still stained from their mutual juices.

'Vrashasa,' she said, commencing to clean him with her tongue. 'Is Jesalin's master.'

He allowed her to wash his genitals clean, then pushed her head down to his feet. 'Jessa,' he said, giving her his foot to kiss.

Jesalin felt a surge of heat in her belly, concomitant with a flash of recognition in her brain. He had just given her a new name-Jessa was to be her slave name.

'Oh, yes, Master,' she said breathless, pressing her lips with utter devotion. 'I am your Jessa ... and you are my Master Vrashasa.'

Vrashasa uttered another of his words, which she soon learned corresponded to a sexual position with her lying, cheek in the dirt, knees drawn up and her ass in the air. Another word meant come and when she was too slow to respond to his masturbating fingers, he spanked her hard, indifferent to whatever pain she might be feeling from her whipping.

Jesalin, Jessa now, did not care, however. She was too busy feeling things, absorbing all the sensations, the delicious glow that came with really and truly belonging to someone. She wanted more of this, and she would follow her new master to the ends of the earth to get it. He was training her and she was so grateful for it and for him. She would crawl and heel and learn commands, she would be like a pet. Only he would love her, too, this much was clear in his eyes.

Slowly, agonizingly, he took her, imposing her slavery with his cock. Ears straining, fighting every impulse she waited on him, waiting for the proper command this time.

'Please,' she begged. 'Please, Master. Let your slave come. Let Jessa come.'

Vrashasa took his time, insuring that every scrap of pride was stripped from the girl. There was to be no mistaking the change between them, the final dispensation. Jesalin the woman had been penetrated, but only Jessa, the possession would climax. And from then on, everything about her, every thought and feeling, every inch of her would be his. Without mercy, without reservation.

When he finally gave her release, she screamed his name, orgasming with the force of a volcano her ass thrusting against him, fresh and warm from her spanking. His hands held

her breasts, his body rigid above her. He was making her come alone, a total act of subjugation.

At last he moved her to all fours and took her in the ass. She cried out from the pressure, but he had lubricated her with her copious juices and besides she was property, which meant the man had the right to use her how and when he wished.

This reality made her pant, her own heat all too quickly rekindled beneath the black, silver specked sky of the Outlands.

'Use me,' she cried. 'My barbarian master.'

Vrashasa seized her by the hair, doubling her pain. It was no idle thing, she quickly learned, to beg one's Outland master for usage. Grimacing she took his cock, deeper and deeper.

I am his, she thought. As Teara is Raro's, as Tyla is Gelar's. I am slave. Property. And not only for twelve years, but for as long as my master keeps me. How ironic that the greatest rebel should become most completely enslaved.

Vrashasa took his pleasure, plowing her thoroughly, mercilessly. He was not touching her sex, but still she came once more with him, spasming pitifully even as his rock hard shaft released its hot issue deep into her tight and narrow channel.

It was a vanquishment, a domination, complete and total. After a few seconds, the man rose, full of strength, while she could barely move.

'Master,' she murmured as he stood over her. 'No more. Please.'

Placatingly, she licked his foot.

Vrashasa lifted her in his arms like a rag doll, letting her rest her sleepy head on his shoulders as they began the walk, off to his home, his world, a place she had never seen and yet which lived already in her heart. It was the place of dreams, the place of Ripening.

She knew she belonged there and she would be happy. Finally and forever.

THE END

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