

THE PIRATE'S LADY

by

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT
TITLE

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Dedication

To my ancestors, the Howards of old, who were pirates and paid the ultimate price for their chosen vocations.

Chapter 1

“You will be sailing from South Hampton for the New World in a fortnight, on the first ship available.”

Samantha Howard looked at her father in disbelief. “The New World? But why?”

“Of my twelve children you are my sixth daughter. To be frank, I cannot afford a dowry for you, to say nothing of the fact that you have had no suitors. I have always told you a gentleman does not want a wife who is more familiar with the stables than the kitchen.”

Sami hung her head. She knew how often her father had threatened that she'd remain a spinster for her entire life if she didn't act more ladylike. As a child, his threats fell on deaf ears. As a rebellious teenager she had proven her womanly talents with more than one of the stable boys. Although her attributes in that department remained a closed and guarded secret from her father, she enjoyed not only her trysts, but also the adventure in not getting caught.

To appease the old man, she had learned to cook and to sew, but only to the extent that she satisfied her mother and governess.

Over the years she had watched her older sisters and vowed never to be as prissy as they were. They had married the men Father told them to and found themselves in loveless marriages where sex was a duty. Their only enjoyment came

from the new dresses and hairstyles to be shown off at the various dinner parties they gave and attended.

How often had they come home only to complain about the agony of having to make love to their husbands? For Sami, making love was certainly no agony. Of course, if she were married to one of the local gentry it might be a different story. She found the stable boys to be fun and tried out each new one that her father hired.

She was careful not to become pregnant. Out of concern, she had spoken with the local mid-wife. Her tale was, she hoped, believable. There was a poor girl in the village that was doing things she shouldn't do and Sami was worried that such activities would end up in an unwanted pregnancy. The old woman had been very sympathetic and assured Sami that a tea made from a certain combination of herbs would keep the girl from conceiving.

Upon obtaining the proper recipe, Sami made and drank the concoction religiously each morning. It was easy to substitute her blend for the one the upstairs maid delivered to her room each day. Since Sami was known to like her tea brewed to her own satisfaction, the hot water was brought along with a tin of tea. Sami carefully measured out her usual amount of tea and put it into her handkerchief to be disposed of in the garden later in the day.

"I have a friend who has a plantation in the Carolinas," her father continued, causing her to listen more intently. "There is a sacristy of eligible women to marry his sons. I must admit I have been less than honest with him about your abilities, but he has agreed to pay for your passage and once you are there, I doubt he will send you home."

"You lied to get me a husband?"

"I bent the truth, slightly. I am certain Percy did the same about his third son, Brittmore."

"Brittmore! You are planning to marry me off to a man named Brittmore! Does this man have a last name or is he like the red savages I have heard live there?"

The veins in her father's neck stood out in anger. "Of course he has a last name! It is MacDonald."

"A Scotsman!"

"Not really. His mother is a fine Englishwoman. She was your mother's best friend. As for Percy, his mother was also English. You will find their home to be very civilized."

"I do not care! I do not want to go to the New World!" Sami stamped her foot in protest.

"You have no choice, daughter. You sealed your fate when you would not obey me. I am well shed of you. You will sail in a fortnight and you will do so with a smile on your face. Everyone will believe you are excited about your upcoming marriage and the prospect of sailing half way around the world to the arms of a man who loves you. This is the story we will tell not only our friends, but your brothers and sisters as well."

Sami could only stare at her father in disbelief. To drive home his point, he turned and stormed out of the library.

Her heart told her to throw a tantrum. Reason told her to accept this and consider it an adventure. Unwilling to contemplate either option further, Sami left the library. She would change into her riding habit and go out to the stables. A ride through the fields with Tommy, the newest stable boy to garner her attention, would not only clear her mind but also satisfy the ache in her womanhood. If she were to be leaving Howard Manor, she would certainly miss Tommy. He was, indeed, a talented lover.

She no more than left the book-filled room when she almost collided with her mother. "I thought I would find you bolting from the news your father had for you. Before you

jump to all the wrong conclusions, come and walk with me in the garden.”

Sami's self-composure drained as tears rolled down her cheeks. She knew her mother would assume they were because of the directive from her father, when in reality they were for the lost opportunity for an afternoon of delightful sex.

“How could Father do this to me?” Sami wailed, playing the part of the wounded daughter to the hilt. “How will I ever survive so far from home?” *At least this last question is truthful. I love everyone so dearly, how can I leave?*

“Much better than you think,” Melissa Howard replied. Taking Sami by the arm, she guided her through the open French doors to the perfectly manicured garden. Instead of sitting down on one of the garden benches, Melissa made her way to the heart of the maze.

Sami smiled at her mother's choice. As a child the maze had been Sami's favorite hiding place. While her sisters refused to set foot in the maze, Sami knew every twist and turn by heart. She knew there was a bench deep within the maze, but surely her mother did not know of it? This was Sami's place. She had dragged the bench back there years ago during one of her many acts of defiance.

Without hesitation, her mother made her way to the exact spot where the bench sat. “Did you think you were the only member of this family who has a relationship with this puzzlement of overgrown shrubbery?”

Sami could only nod.

“You and I are not so different. I was as unhappy about my marriage to William Howard as you are about yours to Brittmore MacDonald. This maze fascinated me from my first day at Howard Manor.”

“Did Father ever know?”

"Never. I am an excellent actress. You will become one too. I only hope you can hide the fact that your virginity is not intact."

"My what?"

"Do not play coy with me. I know your blood runs as hot as mine did at your age. Luckily, I was able to fool your father by telling him of a terrible riding accident I had as a child that took my virginity from me at an early age. I was able to fake the pain of our first lovemaking and lead him to believe that his was the first cock to find comfort within my body. How many lovers have you had, Samantha?"

"How can you ask me such a question?"

"Because by the time of my marriage I had bedded at least six of the stable boys in my father's employ. Of course, I was more discreet about it than you. I played the part of a demure young lady who enjoyed sitting with my sewing. My affairs were achieved when I was to be napping in the afternoons and while on long carriage rides. I do hope you were wise enough to consult the mid-wife about the proper precautions to prevent pregnancy. I do not know what your father would do if he learned of your worldly pursuits."

"Yes Mother, I have consulted the mid-wife. I drink a tea every morning to keep such a thing from happening. As for the number of lovers I have taken, the number is three, although I find that Tommy is the best of the lot."

Her mother smiled, mischievously. "I thought you might enjoy him. Martin and I discussed it before he was hired."

"The stable master? Have you been..."

"Darling, I've been diddling with Martin for years. It's hard to tell which of my children are from Martin and which from your father. You don't think I would give up great sex just because of a little thing like marriage, do you? Your father is a wonderful man and he indulges my every whim, but in

bed he is less than perfect. Martin, on the other hand, is as adventurous as I am. Since your father has kept a mistress in town for years, I see no reason why I cannot do the same right here at Howard Manor."

"I can hardly believe that you and Martin chose Tommy especially for me. I do wish I could take him with me. He is a wonderful lover."

"From what I am told you will not have to worry about a lover once you and Brittmore are married."

"You know the man father has bound me to?"

"Not personally, but his mother was once one of my best friends. Let me tell you about his mother, Bernadine MacDonald. Her father was a very dashing sea captain. We all lived in South Hampton at that time and I saw him whenever he was in port. She was fifteen years old when her mother died and her father took her away. She'd traveled with him for two years when she met Percy MacDonald on his way to the Americas. They fell in love and were married as soon as they arrived. Of her three sons, Brittmore is her biggest challenge."

"What do you mean?"

"He was eight years old when he first defied his father. Percy would have none of it and sent the boy to sea with his grandfather. Bernadine was devastated. Since then Brittmore has not been home for longer than a few days at a time. He took to the sea and has become as great a captain as his grandfather, God rest his soul. It was Bernadine who first suggested a marriage between Brittmore and one of my daughters. She is hoping you will bring her son back to her."

Sami contemplated her mother's words. Being married to a sea captain might not be so bad after all. He would undoubtedly give her a fine house and perhaps children when he returned home for infrequent visits. During the time he was

gone no one would fault her for taking a lover. Of course, she would have servants to do her bidding and a high social status. She wondered if such a position could be the catalyst for a rousing love life. The more she thought on the situation, the more she decided this forced marriage might not be so bad after all.

* * * *

The trip to South Hampton took the better part of a day. Traveling with Sami were her parents, as well as her siblings and their assorted families. Sami couldn't help but think of what a sight the great number of carriages traveling down the road made.

At night her father had arranged for them to have lodging at a local inn. Dinner had been a somber affair. Her sisters bemoaned the fact that Sami was leaving and would never be seen again.

For appearance's sake Sami shed the required tears but always ended such outbursts with a smile and the words, "I am leaving on a grand adventure to the New World. My future husband is a well known sea captain, and I am told he is very handsome."

Each of her sisters looked at her with a mixture of sympathy and jealousy. Their husbands could never be considered prizes. If Sami could believe what they said, they were all clumsy in bed and their attempts at lovemaking could be called ordeals, rather than pleasurable experiences.

"What is the first ship set to sail for the New World?" her father inquired of the Harbormaster.

"That would be El Lobo. She is set to sail with the afternoon tide."

"Where should I go to obtain passage for my daughter?"

"Your daughter? You would send a proper English lady on a Spanish galleon? Have you lost your mind, man?"

"Time is of the essence here. My daughter has been promised in marriage to a dear friend in the Carolinas. It matters not how she gets there, only that it be with great haste."

The man nodded and eyed Sami suspiciously. It was evident that he thought she carried a bastard child that her father hoped to pawn off onto some unsuspecting plantation owner in the New World.

"I will take you to the captain of El Lobo. I am certain your money will persuade him to take your daughter with him."

Sami turned to face her mother. "That man thinks I'm..."

"Let him. It will keep you safe on the voyage."

"But what if I don't want to be safe?"

"Then remember to drink your tea every morning. You did bring it with you didn't you?"

Sami nodded. This voyage could prove to be quite interesting.

After almost an hour of arguments Sami was able to board the ship. The sailors watched her with lustful eyes, but barked orders from the captain made them turn away from her.

She said her tearful good-byes to her family and stood at the railing until the ship caught the tide and sailed out of the harbor. As the English coastline disappeared from view, she let out a sigh of relief.

"Since you are traveling along, Senorita," the captain said in heavily accented English, "I have arranged for you to have a cabin next to Senora Martinez and her ward, Carmelita. Carmelita is going to the New World as a bride as well. Her betrothed awaits her arrival in San Juan. It is best if you have the protection of a chaperone. My men have not been with a woman in far too long."

The Pirate's Lady

“That is very kind of you, Sir,” Sami replied. *I suppose I can satisfy myself for the duration of this voyage. Once I am in the Carolinas I will have a husband to take care of my needs and as many lovers as I can accommodate.*

Senora Martinez was as sour as a lemon. Sami knew the moment she met the woman that she never smiled. Carmelita was equally prim and proper.

Chapter 2

Britt MacDonald braced his hands against the railing of his ship. He had been home for his yearly visit and as usual things went sour after the first week. If it were not for his mother, he would not bother with this torture.

As the American shoreline slipped beneath the Western horizon, he thought of her parting words. "Your father has sent to England for a bride for you. By the time you return next year, she will be waiting here with us."

Britt slammed his hand against the railing. How dare his parents try to run his life? He'd be honor bound to marry and provide for the wench, maybe get a child or two from her, but he'd be damned if he'd give up the sea to be a husband to her.

"Permission to strike the colors, Capt'n B," his first mate, Smitty, said, breaking into his thoughts.

"You know you don't need my permission. We're out of sight of land," Britt snapped.

"Aye, aye, Sir."

Britt immediately regretted his harsh words. Smitty had been first mate of this ship when Britt's grandfather acted as captain. It had been Captain Jack Brittmore who had changed the Merry Lady from merchant ship to pirate vessel. When

Britt had first gone to sea, Smitty and Captain Jack taught him everything he needed to know about sailing and pirating.

Now, fifteen years later, the Merry Lady belonged to him. As it had been with his grandfather, the Union Jack flew whenever they were in sight of land, to be replaced by the Jolly Roger when at sea. Following his grandfather's lead, he carried legitimate cargo and pirated only French and Spanish ships.

Out of habit, Britt turned to watch the Union Jack being lowered. The Jolly Roger soon replaced it. He breathed a sigh of relief. The symbol of his life upon the sea was also a symbol of his freedom. When he flew the Jolly Roger, he had no alliance to King or Country. He was a rogue of the high seas, free to plunder any ship that crossed his path.

He thought of his conquests in the past. His grandfather had instilled in him a love of the women who were quite often part of the spoils. Before they were taken to the ports in the Caribbean that welcomed white bed slaves, they graced his bed. He always took first choice, leaving the others to be enjoyed by his crew. He particularly enjoyed the hot-blooded Spanish women he had bedded. He found them far more adventurous than those of French descent.

Thinking about such things brought to mind the woman who would be waiting for him when he returned from sea. He knew his own mother's blood ran hot, only because of the legacy from her father, but what of this woman, this Samantha Howard? Would she grace his bed out of duty or would she pose a challenge?

Just the name brought to mind the pirate by the name of Howard, whom Britt had met when he first started sailing with his grandfather. The man was notorious for his cruelty and Captain Jack had warned Britt to take heed not to allow himself to fall into the same trap. It wasn't many years later

when they heard of how Howard had been captured and hung from the yardarm in Boston harbor. The list of his crimes included murder, not only of the seamen who opposed the takeover of their ships, but also of the captives, including men, women and children.

Britt was glad he had heeded the warning. He may be a pirate, but he certainly did not want the blood of innocent people on his hands. Spilling a virgin's blood in lovemaking was more of a pleasure than a dastardly deed. He certainly enjoyed such sport and knew the women he bedded were much better suited for their new positions than the ones he knew other pirates kept below decks, and never bothered to instruct in the fine art of bed sport.

Until a ship crossed their path, he could relax. Smitty and the crew could follow the course and keep things running smoothly, while Britt made entries in the log.

Back in his cabin, Britt opened the logbook and dipped his pen into the inkwell. With pen poised over the paper, his mind began to wander. His mother's description of the woman who was to be his wife bothered him. With all the eligible men in England, why would her father agree to send her to the Carolinas in search of a husband? Britt knew the answer all too well. She was either ugly as sin, or a willful wench who gave her family nothing but grief. Either way, Britt wanted nothing to do with the woman. Let his family contend with her. If he was lucky, she might decide to take a lover in his absence.

Chapter 3

Three days into the voyage, Sami had finally gained her sea legs. Being sick had drained her for the first two days but the bright June sunlight, and the fact that her stomach didn't threaten to rebel, had brought her topside for a stroll around the deck.

She'd dressed carefully, choosing a dress that accented her best asset, her heavy breasts. More than anything else, Sami wanted a romp with one of the sailors. It had been far too long since Tommy had thrust his cock into her velvety folds. She ached with a need only a man could fulfill. Luckily, Senora Martinez and Carmelita were still feeling the effects of seasickness. At least Sami wouldn't have to contend with the old woman scolding her in Spanish about the dangers of flaunting herself before the sailors.

"Buenos Dias, Senorita," the captain greeted her. "I am pleased to see you are finally feeling better. The sea is calmer today. Come with me and I will show you what I can see from my cabin."

The old leech probably has more than the sea to show me. I would prefer one of the younger men, but this one will have to do. Any port in a storm, as my mother would say.

Sami allowed the man to guide her to the most forward cabin. From there he had a magnificent view of the ocean that

spread before them like a blue carpet. Off to the side she saw fish jumping and sea birds swooping down to catch the unsuspecting ones for their morning meal.

"It is indeed beautiful," she said.

The words hardly passed her lips when she felt him snake his arm around her waist to pull her back against him. His full erection was enough to excite her as it pushed against her leg. She was glad the heat of the summer's day had prompted her to leave her various petticoats in her traveling trunk. This man may be old, but he was experienced and his cock felt like it was much bigger than Tommy's had ever been.

With her attention focused in the area the thought of riding him had ignited, she was surprised when his free hand easily slipped into the bodice of her dress and caressed her left breast.

"You are very beautiful, *Senorita*. Since you have not cringed at my attentions, I am led to believe you are not going to your marriage bed as a virgin. That is a good thing, at least for me. I will be able to enjoy you for our entire journey and prepare you for your new husband. He will thank me for the instructions I intend to give you."

The tone of his voice made her cringe. He was old enough to be her father. She preferred much younger lovers, but the size of his cock intrigued her. What harm would it do to have at least one romp with him? She could always seduce the younger sailors later in the voyage.

"Pirates!" The shouted word from beyond the closed door caused the captain to release his grip and remove his hand from her breast.

"Get below decks to your cabin and lock the door," he ordered. "We will have a fight on our hands, but we will defend you, as well as *Senora Martinez* and *Carmelita*, with our lives. If it is within my power, I will keep you from falling

into the hands of the pirates. I know what they do to young women. It is not a fate you even want to contemplate.”

Sami did as she was told. Before hurrying below decks, she looked in the direction of the ship that was bearing down upon them. Although the galleon was a large ship the pirate vessel was even larger. From the mast flew the dreaded skull and crossbones her father had referred to as the Jolly Roger.

Fear clutched at her heart as she ran down the steps leading to her cabin. All thoughts of her tryst with the captain were gone. Only her safety prevailed.

Once securely locked in her cabin, she contemplated her fate. She had often heard her father telling the stories of his uncle, who had been a notorious pirate. It was said he killed men, women and children. It was also said the women he did not kill were sold into slavery in the West Indies.

If these pirates were successful today would she become a bed slave to some planter, or would she lose her life before she had a chance to live it? Both thoughts terrified her. As much as she liked sex, she did not relish the thought of the severe punishments her father's stories alluded to.

The sounds of a battle brought fear to the forefront. Instinctively Sami fell to her knees and clasped her hands in prayer. To her horror none of the prayers or Bible verses the Vicar had drilled into her head as a child passed her lips. She could remember none of them. The only thing she heard was screams of agony and death from the deck above her head.

Instead of Godlike thoughts hers ran to the small woman's dagger her mother had insisted she keep with her at all times. Her fingers fumbled with her skirt until she lifted it high enough to remove the sharp knife from its hidden scabbard in her garter. At least she would be able to protect herself should the need arise.

More screams of pain sounded and she hoped they were those of the pirates rather than the well-endowed Captain, who had promised her delights beyond any she had ever experienced. Although he had said nothing verbally, his cock had said it all as it had pressed against her leg.

What am I thinking of? I should be praying that my life be spared and not thinking of the captain!

As soon as the thoughts crossed her mind, she heard footsteps in the narrow hallway outside her door. From the next cabin, she heard Carmelita scream and Senora Martinez curse in Spanish. It was evident that the members of the crew of this ship had not been the victors.

She prayed the lock on her door would hold, only to see the wood of it splinter into a thousand pieces as a man, naked to the waist, with a bandana around his head burst into the room.

Defensively she held her small knife. "Do not come near me, you vile person. I will not hesitate to use this to cut your heart out."

The man's laughter filled the room, as he easily disarmed her. Once she was defenseless he picked her up as though she weighed no more than a sack of flour and flung her over his shoulder.

"Put me down, you brute," she demanded, as she pummeled his bare back with her fists.

Her attack only brought on one of his own as he struck her bottom with his free hand. The layers of petticoats she had been so smug about not wearing earlier would have protected her from the force of his blow. She knew she would certainly have a bruise.

"Unhand me! Do you know who I am? I am—I am..." Another smack on her bottom cut her words short.

“Shut your mouth bitch or I will have to shove a gag in it. Capt’n B don’t like his captives sounding like magpies.”

“Magpies? How dare you? I am a well bread English lady who is on her way to meet her betrothed.”

“You ain’t nothin’ more than a bitch on her way to the slave market in Martinique. Capt’n B will have his fill of you before you get there. Trainin’ he calls it. More like a good roll if you ask me.”

The scent of sea air assailed her nostrils and she looked up from her protests to see they had arrived on deck. Unceremoniously the man dumped her on the deck, at the feet of the man she assumed to be Capt’n B. He had a shock of red hair that made him look more like a mischievous imp than a notorious pirate.

Sami glanced around. The captain lay dead on the deck, his lifeless eyes staring into the blinding sun. Several other crewmen joined in his fate, while those who were still alive were being loaded into lifeboats to be set adrift in the merciless Atlantic.

To her right, Carmelita stood, her hands tied behind her back and a gag in her mouth, her bodice ripped, displaying her breasts. Beside her Senora Martinez was in the same condition. Several of the pirates were already eyeing the two Spanish ladies. Sami could only cry silent tears at their fate. They were not like her. Such treatment would easily drive them to desperate measures. It was entirely possible that neither of these fine ladies would make it to Martinique—wherever that was—alive.

* * * *

Britt surveyed the damage the assault on the ship had brought. The crew had fought valiantly, some to the death. That was something he always regretted. It was much better to set them adrift in the lifeboats with the knowledge they

would be picked up by any one of the many ships that traversed the shipping lines. Death, any death, went against his principals.

“How many casualties have we had?” Britt asked.

“None dead, Sir,” Smitty answered. “Two of our men were injured though.”

“See to their care while I find out what cargo this ship holds for us.”

From below decks, Britt saw his men bringing up goods that were bound for the New World. These were all things that would bring him and the Merry Lady a tidy profit.

A woman's screams rent the air and Britt looked up to assess the rest of the cargo the galleon carried. He smiled to see a beautiful Spanish girl, along with her older chaperone. Since both of them were tied and gagged, the screams had to come from another source. Obviously there were more women aboard the vessel.

Although the young girl could prove to be a challenge, he kept his eyes trained on the hatch leading to the lower cabins. His wait was not long when he saw one of his men coming up carrying a woman over his shoulder. It was hard to distinguish anything other than the perfect curves of her ass as she kicked and screamed to be put down.

Once they were on deck the pirate, known only as Big John, put the woman down at Britt's feet. “This one will be a challenge, Capt'n B,” John announced loud enough so that everyone within earshot could hear him.

Britt apprised the woman who stood defiantly in front of him. Her blond hair had come loose from the stylish upsweep she obviously took the trouble to fashion earlier in the day. Her blue eyes were as cold as ice as they glared at him from her heart shaped face. Added to that, her heavy breasts

strained against the material of her low cut dress, leaving very little for his imagination.

"Well, well, well, what do we have here?" Britt asked as he took a step toward her.

"I am..."

"You are my spoils, the same as these other women. Now, I want to see for myself what you have so wantonly displayed for the pleasure of every man on this ship."

With one swift movement, he ripped the bodice of her dress as had been done to the other two women during their fight for freedom. It took little effort for the material to rip in two, displaying a full breast with a perfect aureole around her puckered nipple.

"Take this one directly to my cabin and do not let her get the better of you. From the look of John's back she is a wild cat. I will enjoy her company greatly on the remainder of our voyage."

"You will enjoy nothing," the woman shouted. "I am a highborn English lady on my way to the Carolina's to meet my betrothed. As such, I demand you treat me with respect. I'll not subject myself to the attentions of someone like you. If and when I decide to take a lover, it will not be because I am forced!"

"Respect!" Britt shouted. "You are my prisoner. I will train you for the slave markets on Martinique. Unfortunately, when I am done with you, there will never be another man who will be able to satisfy you again."

"This is an abomination. You have no idea to whom you are speaking. I am Samantha Howard and I am on my way..."

Britt pulled her into his arms and kissed her roughly. He had to shut her up. The name Samantha Howard echoed in his mind. If his men found out she was on her way to become his wife, he would never hear the end of it. Kissing her was the

only way he could think of to keep her from telling them she was on her way to become the bride of Brittmore MacDonald.

“Bind and gag her,” he ordered once he released her from his grip. “There is nothing in this world more irritating than a woman who cannot keep her mouth shut. When that is done, take her to my cabin and tie her to my bed. If I find you have harmed her in any way, I will have you drawn and quartered. Do I make myself clear?”

John and the others were quick to do his bidding and their nods of agreement told him Miss Samantha Howard would not be touched by anyone but him. At least for the time being he was in no danger of the rest of his crew learning her identity.

He enjoyed watching her struggle against the men who were doing as he had ordered. With the gag in her mouth her protests were little more than muffled gibberish.

Britt couldn't help but wonder how she happened to be on a Spanish ship. Was old man Howard so anxious to be shed of his daughter that he put her on the first ship to sail with the tide? If so, theirs could be an interesting union.

Chapter 4

Sami felt like a sack of potatoes. The pirate who had brought her topside now carried her in like manner across the plank joining the two ships and to the most forward cabin. After depositing her on the softest feather bed she had ever been on, he tied her hands securely to the headboard. Instead of removing the offending gag, he left it in place.

“Capt’n B will be along shortly. He will be tired after what we’ve been through today, but never fear, he will not be too tired to show you the pleasures he reserves for the ladies.” With a wicked laugh, he was gone.

I want none of his perverted pleasures! Yet, her body ached for the attentions of a man. The man that she had seen on deck promised delights far exceeding any Tommy had ever possessed.

Looking around the cabin, she realized this was a man who liked luxury. Even though it was cabin on a ship, everything was of the finest quality. Mahogany paneling lined the walls and a highly polished oak desk sat against one wall. She couldn’t help but wonder how it stayed in place when the seas were rough, or during a battle. She didn’t have to ponder on the answer, as she noticed heavy iron clasps bolted it to the floor.

Not knowing how long she would have to wait for her captor to arrive, she closed her eyes in an attempt to sleep. As soon as she did, she realized it had been a mistake. The image that assaulted her subconscious was that of the captain of the other ship, lying on the deck with blood pooling around his body and his sightless eyes staring into the sun. Would these pirates give him a proper burial, or would they merely sink his ship with him lying on the deck? It really didn't matter. The man was dead. One way or another his body would be committed to the sea. Did it make a difference if it was wrapped in canvas, as she had heard was done, or if it sank with the ship?

Rather than dwell on the man who no longer lived, she thought of home and the times she had spent with Tommy, as well as the others. She concentrated on the stolen moments within the center of the maze and smiled as her body reacted to her memories.

A thunderous boom jolted her to the reality of the moment. It was entirely possible that all of the plundered goods had been removed from the conquered ship and it was now being sunk.

For the first time she thought about Carmelita and Senora Martinez. Were they below decks anticipating the assault that was certain to come? Were they frightened or excited?

Sami knew the answer. They were frightened. She should be as well, but the thought of being the lover of someone like Capt'n B excited her beyond words.

The gentle sway of the ship told her they were underway. How long would it be before the giant of a man who dominated this cabin returned to enjoy the spoils of the battle?

* * * *

Britt watched as the last of the cargo from the El Lobo was carried across the plank joining the two vessels together.

With a glance toward the open sea, he saw the crew that he'd set adrift in the lifeboat was a safe distance away. The only people remaining on board were dead.

"May the Lord have mercy on your soul," he said, repeating the same phrase at each body. Once he left the last of the dead, he returned to the Merry Lady.

"Sink her!" he commanded.

A volley of cannon fire exploded in his ear. The projectiles hit their mark and soon the conquered ship was sinking beneath the waves.

As was always the case, his heart ached for the men who had lost their lives. It was inevitable, as men would always fight to the death for what they deemed was theirs, but it still upset him.

I'm getting too old for this. I think this may be my last voyage.

"We're ready to set sail, Capt'n," Smitty said, once El Lobo was no longer visible.

"That we are. I trust you to set the proper course. I will be going back to my cabin."

"Aye, Sir and I have no doubt you will keep yourself occupied for the rest of the voyage with that one. She is a beauty."

"That she is, Smitty. I trust the other women are secured below decks."

"Secured and already enjoying the attentions of your men. During the sinking of El Lobo the men drew lots. They are being careful not to wear the poor dears out though. We know that you plan to take them to the marketplace in Martinique."

Britt nodded. The two Spanish ladies would bring a good price, but what of the English girl in his cabin? It still puzzled him as to why she was aboard a Spanish ship in the first place. He knew of no self-respecting Englishman who would send

his daughter to the New World on a foreign ship. This Howard must either be an ass, or his daughter was a pain in the same area.

He realized he was only putting off the inevitable. If this were any other time, he would be in a hurry to enjoy the plunder that awaited him in his cabin. Before, the French and Spanish women had been terrified of him. At least they were until he took their virginity and taught them the beauty of lovemaking. It was the least he could do, since once they arrived in the Islands they would be sold at the auction block to the highest bidder. In the past, he had profited well from the women he brought to the block. Women he had deflowered and used were much sought after by those with the money to buy. As for the women who spent the voyage below decks, they brought a lower price, but netted him a good profit, nonetheless.

What makes this one so different?

He didn't have to think of an answer to his unspoken question. This woman was being sent to the Carolinas to be his wife. If he treated her differently from the other women whom he had brought to his cabin in the past, he would be forced to tell his men why. If he fucked her with a vengeance, he would regret it. Somehow, he had to make her come to love him before he married her.

You're being ridiculous. How can you take her to the Carolinas without letting everyone know how you and your grandfather really make your living? It would disgrace your father and embarrass your mother.

There has to be a way, but for now, I need to find out if this one is worth the bother.

* * * *

Sami could feel her heart pound within her chest as the heavy door opened and Capt'n B entered his cabin. Her mind

told her to scream and fight, but how could she with the foul gag in her mouth and her body trussed up like a Christmas goose?

"So, you are Samantha Howard," Capt'n B said as he crossed the short expanse from the door to the bed. "I think it is time to see what I have in my possession."

Sami squirmed away from him, all the time willing him to quench the fire that burned between her legs at the very sight of him.

"You can't get away from me, so there is no use in trying. Now, lie still like a good little girl so I can examine every inch of you."

To her horror, he stripped off his shirt and stood before her, his chest bare and his crotch bulging against his tight fitting britches.

He's going to rape me and there is nothing I can do about it.

A minute ago you were hot for him, her inner voice chided. Does it matter how he takes you as long as he is a satisfying lover?

But rape...

But nothing Samantha, once he finds out you are not a virgin, he will have no reason to be gentle. You've brought this on yourself.

Before she could formulate an answer to the irritating voice of reason, Capt'n B moved closer to the bed. As he did, she relaxed and studied his features. His face mirrored the same impish look it had when she first saw him. She wished he was clean-shaven, but instead his red beard only added to his allure. He looked like one of the magical little people she'd read about in the book her father had given her as a child. Long red hair brushed against his shoulders making her wonder how it would feel as it rubbed against her breasts. His chest was broad with more red hair forming a soft mat penetrated only by his hard male nipples.

To her amazement, he did not lift her skirts. Instead he gently removed the slipper from first her right foot and then her left.

"No stockings? Perhaps the weather was too hot, or was it you who was hot? Were you looking for a tryst with one of those Spaniards?"

She shook her head no, all the time remembering the hardness of the captain as he pressed against her backside.

"That is best. I hear they are a filthy lot. It would have been a shame if one of them had deflowered you before you reached your betrothed. Of course reaching him now could prove to be impossible. I cannot believe your father would have sent you on a Spanish galleon when it is well known they are preyed upon by more pirate ships than just mine."

All the time he spoke he massaged her right foot until she thought she was going to die from the pleasure.

"You do have exquisite feet, Miss Howard, especially your toes. Before I go further, I do believe they should be washed. I am not like your Spanish friends. I like my women to be clean."

He moved away from the foot of the bed to retrieve an ornate bowl and pitcher. She could hear the water splashing into the bowl and cringed at the thought of being cleansed with cold water.

When he returned, he dipped a cloth into the bowl and then applied it to her right foot. To her surprise the damp cloth felt soothing. More than likely the water had been standing in the heat of the day and thus become warmed.

"That is much better," he declared, once he finished.

She tried to ask what he was doing, but the gag in her mouth made the words little more than muffled grunts.

"Did you want to say something?"

She nodded her reply.

"Do you want me to remove your gag?"

Again she nodded.

"Ah, but that is something that I cannot do just yet. If I did, you would scream and my men would think I was hurting you. Now that's the last thing I want. I realize you will be hurt when I take your virginity, but that cannot be helped. It is as natural as breathing. That hurt will only be momentary and then you will be filled not only with me but also with pleasure."

Tears stung Sami's eyes. She remembered well the pain of losing her virginity. Even so, she knew it would be nothing compared to what this man would do to her once he learned she wasn't what her mother had taught her to portray. This wasn't a husband she could fool with a little chicken blood. This was a bloodthirsty pirate who thought he would soon be deflowering a virgin. Trussed up like this, she had no way to deceive him.

He gave her little time to think of what was to come, as he took her left foot in his hand and began the same sensual massage as he had done with her right foot. Instead of stopping to get more water, or anything else for that matter, he lifted her foot to his mouth and began to suck her toes. It was as though he was paying homage to each of the digits in turn.

The act sent shock waves throughout her body. Moisture pooled in the sensitive area between her legs. Never before had anyone made love to her feet. She could even feel her clit throb in anticipation of what was to come next.

Rather than move further up her leg when he finished sucking the little toe on her left foot, he took up her right foot.

If he does that to this foot as well I will definitely have an orgasm right here and now. Why doesn't he just rape me and get it over with? It's what he wants. That bulge in his pants attests to it.

This time he started with her little toe and worked backwards. When he reached her big toe she was squirming with desire. Once he put it in his mouth, he began to suck harder than he had before. As he did, he slid his free hand up her leg until he reached her drawers. Through the thin fabric he massaged her maiden's mound, then slid his hand to the crotch. The look in his eyes was almost wicked when he realized the crotch in her drawers was split so she could easily relieve herself.

After releasing her toe from his mouth, he removed his hand from her. Instead of bunching her skirt up around her waist, he ripped it from her body, leaving her with only her drawers covering the area from waist to crotch.

"Modest you are not my dear Miss Howard. Most women would be wearing more undergarments than you are. Of course, it was hot aboard that ship, but not as hot as you will be when I am done with you."

With one swift motion, he ripped the rest of her bodice open. Its twin now joined the breast that had been exposed for all to see when she had first been captured.

"The second is just as beautiful as the first," he declared. "All that is left for me to see is your nether regions. What a prize to be the first to gaze upon it."

It took only a moment for him to untie the drawers and slip them from her body. He even smiled when she raised her ass so that he could slide them down without tearing them to shreds as he had her dress.

"Ah, you are eager. We will see how eager you are when I take what your family has so jealously guarded for your entire life. Tonight, you will no longer be a virgin. By the end of the voyage, you will beg me not to sell you in the marketplace, but to keep you as my own personal love slave."

She vigorously shook her head 'no'.

"Oh, but you will. They all do. It matters not what language they speak. All women know the language of love and are pleased with my expertise in that area."

Lovingly he stroked the mound of blonde curls at the juncture of her thighs, until she thought she could no longer endure the pleasure of his touch. When she could stand no more, he slipped his finger into her moist cleft and found her clit.

"You see, I am not so bad as a lover," he crooned. "I have been able to make a virgin wet with desire. Just think what I will be able to do once I have passed your barrier and made you a true woman."

All the time he talked, his fingers were doing wonderful things to her. She wanted to scream out in delight, but with the gag in place, she could only moan. Tommy had never done anything like this to her before. To her horror, her body began to convulse and she was certain she would cum right in his hand if he did not stop soon.

As though he read her thoughts, he inserted two fingers into her cunt and moved them around.

"For a virgin, you are not very tight," he observed. "Could it be that your father sent you on a foreign ship in the hopes that you would be captured and punished for doing things best left for the marriage bed? Do you carry some man's bastard that you hoped to pass off on some unsuspecting bumpkin in the Carolinas?"

My God, this man thinks I'm pregnant. Does he think I would be so foolish as to not take precautions against such a thing happening? Does a pregnant woman have as flat a belly as I do?

Without further foreplay, Capt'n B got up from atop her and took off his britches. The magnificent cock that he released made her gasp in horror. Tommy was far from being as big as this man. With a cock like that he could rip her in half.

The Pirate's Lady

Could she stand it? Would she die from the very act of being raped by this man?

Chapter 5

It took all the restraint Britt could muster not to laugh at the irony of the situation. Here he was ready to forcefully take her virginity and it had been taken long before he even knew she was to be his wife.

For all intents and purposes, he should prolong her agony, but his own need overshadowed his desire to punish her for being a liar. His cock ached to be plunged within the velvety folds of her womanhood. He needed to take care of himself.

Considering the length of the voyage ahead of them, he would have many days to exact the punishment this woman deserved, without lessening her value on the open market.

She is to be your wife, Britt.

How can I marry a lying slut? I have no idea how many men she has prostituted herself with. It is no wonder her father was so eager to be shed of her.

And what of you? How many women have you bedded?

That is different. I am a man and as such I am entitled to many lovers. Women are supposed to be chaste when they marry, not already broken in by God only knows how many men.

The voice within his head became irritating. How dare his voice of reason argue with him about the beautiful Samantha Howard who was...

What is she Britt? She is a beautiful woman who will be a receptive lover. Is that not much better than a woman who sees lovemaking as a chore?

Britt had to agree. Making love to Samantha would be a challenge. He wondered how many new positions he could introduce to her. Would she be receptive to him? As hot as she was at this moment, it was entirely possible that their life together could be quite interesting, to say the very least.

Without further hesitation, he finished undressing. To his dismay, the dress was still covering much of her magnificent body. With one swift motion, he ripped the remaining buttons and exposed her to his scrutiny.

For a woman as petite as this one her breasts were indeed large, their nipples puckered in desire for him. In the future, sucking them while driving her wild in other regions would be a delight.

The aching in his cock drove all thoughts of delicious torture from his mind. It took only a moment to get in position to drive his randy appendage into her. The gentleness he reserved for virgins was gone. He knew there would be no pain involved in what he was about to do to her.

Muffled protests assaulted his ears as he pumped against her, sinking deeper and deeper into the moist channel. He knew if she were untied his body would be bruised by the pounding of her fists and the raking of her nails.

The urgency that took over his body was not sated with his ejaculation. Instead it was heightened to the point that he took her again and again, until he had cum five times in rapid succession.

When she ceased struggling against him, he did not know. All he knew was that his need had been satisfied. After the fifth assault, he finally gained the release he needed. His

cock did not grow within her and he was content to lay beside her in complete exhaustion.

To his delight, her eyes mirrored his satisfaction. She was a woman who was well versed in the ways of lovemaking. It could prove to be an interesting journey.

* * * *

Sami could not believe how wanton she felt. This man was as big as one of her father's stallions and just as randy. If he could drive her to the heights of pleasure with her being tied to his bed, what could he do if she were free to guide him as to what she wanted?

With all her might, she tried to say, "Untie me this instant," but with the gag in her mouth the words came out as mumbled grunts and groans.

"Do you want the gag removed, my dove?"

His dove indeed! His prisoner is more like it. Of course I want the gag removed you dolt. How else can I tell you what a beast you are?

"Ah, I see that you are more than ready to have your voice back. There is one condition. Once I have removed it, you are not to scream. In the first place, it will do you no good because no one but my men, and the other captives, will hear you and they will not care what I am doing to you. In the second place, unless a woman is screaming with passion it hurts my ears. Do you understand?"

Hurts his ears indeed. He has not begun to feel the pain of my wrath. I am a betrothed woman! Wishing for nothing more than to have the offensive gag removed from her mouth, Sami nodded her agreement to his terms.

She watched as he reached up toward the gag and held her breath in anticipation of having it removed from her mouth,

A loud knocking at the door stopped him before he could complete that which she so anticipated. "Capt'n we need you on deck."

Capt'n B got up from where he sat on the side of the bed. Without taking time to cover himself, he stormed to the door.

"What the hell is so damn important that you must interrupt me at a time like this?"

If the man who had interrupted them was shocked by his captain's appearance, he did not show it.

From her vantage point she could see both of the men who were engaged in conversation. The older pirate was having a little trouble keeping his eyes on those of his captain. First his gaze had been on Capt'n B's enormous erection and then he looked directly at her bared breasts, and the area between her legs that lay exposed with her skirt ripped from her body and her drawers removed.

Sami too, had trouble keeping her eyes from drifting to her captor's cock. Even when Tommy had been fully aroused, he could not match this man. Only moments ago she had felt him inside her and had marveled at how easily she had stretched to accommodate his size. If this situation were not so dire, she could come to enjoy making love with this man.

"Ah, well, I know how much you enjoy...and ah..."

"And nothing Smitty."

"Aye, aye Sir."

"Now that we are under sail, have some food brought to this cabin. I plan to be well occupied for the rest of our voyage to England. By the same token, I do not want to starve, nor does my prisoner. I would rather have her swoon from passion than from hunger."

My god, he plans to fuck me all the way back to England. Once we are there, what will he do with me? Will he demand a ransom of

my father? Well, if that is what he plans he is sadly mistaken. He would do better ransoming me to my soon to be father-in-law than my own father.

She heard the door close and turned her attention back to her captor. His erection stood out like a large tree limb in the back garden of her childhood home. It looked so large, she could almost imagine a rope swing attached to it and miniature children playing on it in the sunshine.

"Now, my dove, where were we?"

He again seated himself on the side of the bed and ran his hand over her exposed breast.

"Oh yes, now I remember, you wanted the gag taken out of your mouth."

Sami nodded.

Instead of removing the gag immediately, Captain B fondled her breasts until she thought she would die from the pleasure. When she knew she could stand no more, he traced a line from her breast up across her chest to her neck.

"You have a beautiful neck. My mother would call it an aristocratic neck."

You have a mother? Now that's hard to believe.

Even though she thought the words silently, she must have tried to say them aloud, as Capt'n B began to laugh. "I assume you want to say something. Perhaps it is best if I take away the gag so I can hear your melodious voice. I do pray that when you are not shouting at me I will be entranced by it."

He ran his finger up across her chin and proceeded to caress her right cheek. "One would think that trussed up like this, with your clothing removed, you would be blushing. Could it be you enjoyed my attentions? I do hope so, for I plan to lavish you with such attentions for our entire voyage. By the time we reach the West Indies, you will be well trained in

the art of bed sport and more than ready to be sold to the highest bidder in the slave market. I plan to turn a tidy profit, not only from you, but from the two women who are below decks."

His words did little more than irritate her further. *How dare he tell me he plans to sell me as a slave? I am a highborn English woman. It just happened that my father was thrilled to be shed of me.*

At last he removed the gag from her mouth. Before she could get a scream to pass her lips, he covered them with his own. She found them to be in direct contrast to the rest of his body. Instead of hard, they were soft and exciting. Even more exciting was the erection that lay against her leg.

When his tongue pushed past her lips and entered her mouth she wished it were his cock that was in her and not something as soft and delicious as his tongue. She tried to decide what he tasted like. *It has to be a mixture of rum, tobacco, and...* Before her mind could consider any other possibilities that tongue, that exquisite tongue, began to do things to the inside of her mouth she never thought possible. To her surprise, she found herself starting to shudder as though he was attached to another part of her anatomy, rather than her mouth. The withdrawal of his tongue from her mouth left her drained.

"Now, my dove, what was it you were about to say?"

It took a moment for Sami to regain her composure enough to speak. "Why have you done this to me? Have you no decency? When it is learned that the ship I was traveling on was attacked, my father-in-law will go to no ends to see you hanging from a yardarm in whatever harbor is close enough to where you are captured."

Instead of answering her questions or making comment on her threat, Capt'n B began to laugh. "You do prize yourself very highly. How well do you know your future in-laws?"

"We have never formally met, but my mother and the mother of my betrothed were childhood friends."

"Ah, I see. And your father, will he not want my head as well?"

"My father and I are not close."

"I surmised as much. No father who cherishes his daughter would ever send her to the New World on a Spanish ship. It is well known that most of the pirates who roam the Atlantic prey upon Spanish and French vessels, as they are of English descent and think too highly of King and Country to attack English ships. Perhaps it was his plan that you were to be taken prisoner and sold to the highest bidder. I doubt there is a family waiting anxiously for your arrival. Your father is well rid of you."

Angry tears rolled down Sami's cheeks. The man could, in all respects, be right. Before she said more, she sniffed in an unladylike fashion.

"Perhaps it is a handkerchief that you need, my love." He reached into a drawer and removed a white linen handkerchief and held it to her nose.

"What I need, you dolt, is to have my hands untied so that I can blow my own nose."

"Your wish is my command, my dove."

"I am not your dove. I am your prisoner. If it weren't for your crew, I would castrate you in your sleep, but of course that would do me no good when they throw me to the sharks."

"Castrate me? Now what would a highborn English lady know of castration? Could it be you are no more than a stable wench who spreads her legs for any willing companion? Perhaps you even killed your mistress, who was being sent to the New World, in order to take her place."

“How dare you make such accusations? My father had a large stable and I often went out there to ride. I know of castration, because I was not allowed to ride the stallions, only the geldings. When I inquired about what made the difference, I was told it was the castration.”

“And what else did you ride in the stable? There is no need for us to play silly games. I know I am not the first man to put his cock within your magnificent body. Was your first tryst with one of the stable boys, or one of your aristocratic friends?”

“H-how could you know?”

“Are you really as naïve as you are trying to make me think? I had but to touch you and you were hot for my sex to be driven into your body. No maiden’s blood stains my sheets, and you certainly enjoyed what I did to you. Your body told me as much. Now, why don’t you tell me how many lovers you have had and how long you have been spreading your legs for them?”

Sami felt defeated. The games she had intended to play on her wedding night had been impossible in this situation.

“I have had three lovers, the first when I was but fourteen years old. His name was Mickey. He was the head stable boy and much older than the others. He was a wicked man who thoroughly enjoyed doing what he did to me. When I complained to father about the way he abused the horses, he was sent away to find other employment. Once he was gone, I realized how much I missed what he was capable of doing to my body. That was when I met Patrick, his replacement. He was not much of a man. I tired of him after our first time together. I think he was slow in the head, as father sent him packing after less than a month. That was when Martin, the head stable man, introduced me to Tommy. We got along very well and

he was enchanted with my body. I think I may have been his first, but I doubt I will be his last."

"You are full of yourself. Not all men fall in love with you, my dove. You are no better than the ladies who ply their trade up and down the waterfront of South Hampton. The only difference is that you do not demand the amount of money they do. I would wager that you enjoy riding the stable boys more than you do the geldings."

"Why would you say such a thing? I am not a common whore."

"Perhaps you do not think of yourself in that way, but you are wrong. What do you plan to do when you are wed? Will you parade your lovers before your husband, or go behind his back?"

"My betrothed is a sea captain and will be gone much of the time. There is not a person in the world that would fault me for taking a lover, if I do it discreetly."

"No one, I would say, but your husband. Do you think he would keep you if you were found out?"

"And who would tell him? It would certainly not be me, or my lover. I am not fool enough to engage in an affair in plain sight of the servants."

Capt'n B began to laugh. "It is a pity you will not be allowed to carry out your deception. You will have many lovers, but as a bed slave in the Islands and not as the wife of a sea captain. If the man were ever to know what fate I saved him from, I am certain he would buy me a pint whenever and wherever we met. For now, my dove, I am sick of all this talk. I think there are better things you can do with that delicious mouth of yours than prattle on about your silly plans. Have you ever sucked a man's cock?"

"Have I ever what?"

"You heard me. Have you ever taken a man into your mouth and sucked on him until he fills your mouth with his cum?"

"Of course I have not. That is disgusting. I refuse."

"You forget, my dove, I am your captor and you are my captive. I plan to instruct you on many types of lovemaking. You will find them extremely pleasurable. In case you are thinking of doing anything with your teeth that would harm me, remember, I will have my lips on your cunt, and that area is just as tender for you as my cock is for me."

This man is terrible. I have no idea of how to do what he asks, yet the thought intrigues me. I've always wondered what a man would taste like.

Capt'n B climbed up on the bed and positioned his ass so that his cock brushed against her lips. Her resolve not to do as he said began to crumble as soon as he started to play with her cunt.

"Take me into your mouth, Samantha," he ordered, his voice hoarse with desire.

Unable to do anything but what he demanded, with the tip of his sex teasing her, she opened her mouth. She felt like a baby bird waiting for its mother to bring it a worm. Only this worm was more like a log. She had often times held the cock of her lover in her hands and marveled at its velvety smoothness. Never had she thought of what it would feel like to hold it in her mouth. She rolled her tongue around the tip of it and tasted the remnants of their last lovemaking. It tasted salty as well as tart, a bit like the vinegar her mother used in the kitchen. Yet at the same time it reminded her of the sweet taste of honey that she so enjoyed on her porridge.

When his tongue began to play games with her clit, she started to suck on him as a babe sucks on its mother's tit. With all her heart, she wished her hands were free so that she

could manipulate the balls that kept bumping against her nose. She knew she could do marvelous things to them with her fingers. As she sucked harder, he began to pump against her as though he was inside her hidden channel.

While she worshiped his cock, he did the same for her nether regions until she thought she had died and found pure heaven. His tongue licked, his teeth nipped, and his lips sucked, until she shuddered in release. To her surprise, at the same time her mouth became full of a warm sticky liquid. It tasted ten times sweeter than the droplets she had enjoyed earlier. This was indeed a pleasure she wanted to repeat again and again.

"I cannot believe you have not enjoyed this little game in the past. You are indeed adept at it."

Sami smiled at the compliment Capt'n B paid her. "I could be more adept with my hands untied." *I could squeeze his precious balls until he cried for mercy. He is not the only one who knows how to make his lover beg.*

"I think you are right. I should untie you. I have not paid homage to your lovely hands, and I am certain you would like to cleanse not only your body but also your mouth. Smitty should be bringing us our food soon. I cannot imagine eating it with your essence still lingering on my tongue."

Sami merely nodded. Although she knew she needed to cleanse her mouth, the thought of no longer tasting him made her sad.

Capt'n B untied one of her hands, leaving the other securely attached to the iron headboard of the bed. Once he held her free hand in his, he examined it as though he wanted to memorize every line on her palm. Expertly, he ran his calloused fingers over the length of it from wrist to fingertips. His thumb massaged her palm, sending shockwaves of delight throughout her entire body. Before he finished with her right

hand, he sucked on each finger individually, until she moaned in pleasure.

The thought of him releasing her left hand and doing the same thing sent her mind to spinning. How could she endure such pleasure so soon?

Before he could reach for the bindings, there was a knock at the door. As he had at the time of the first interruption, he answered it completely naked.

"I've brought ye some nourishment. From the look of your cock, I would say the lass has drained you."

"I'll thank you to keep your thoughts to yourself. When we are finished I will leave the bowls outside of the door."

The aroma of fish stew made Sami's mouth water in anticipation. She had had nothing to eat since she finished her breakfast and it was anyone's guess how long ago that had been. To her, trussed up like a Christmas goose, it seemed like a lifetime.

Before he allowed her to eat, Capt'n B gave her a stick like the ones she used at home to clean her teeth, along with a glass of tepid water. Once he finished, he produced a mint leaf from a small box on the desk that was situated to the left of the bed.

"Chew on this. It will refresh your mouth and allow you to enjoy the meal Smitty has brought for you."

Sami did as he instructed. She had not had mint since leaving her home. She always enjoyed the freshness it left in her mouth.

Once she finished with the mint, Capt'n B handed her a bowl of the stew. She tentatively tasted it and marveled at its flavor. It certainly rivaled anything Cook made. She couldn't help but wonder if it was as good as she thought, or if she was so hungry anything would taste good. If she hadn't been a lady, she would have considered licking the bowl until it was

clean. Instead, she scraped the sides with the spoon, getting every morsel that clung to the bowl.

"Now," he said, as he took the bowl from her hands, "it is time for dessert."

Dessert. The word rumbled through her mind bringing with it images of the delicious puddings, cakes and pastries Cook produced for every evening meal. As her mouth watered in anticipation, he took one of her hands in his and began to do that wonderful thing he'd done before. Shock waves of delight dissolved the thoughts of sweets from her mind.

To her surprise, after he paid homage to both of her hands he again tied them to the head of the bed. "What are you doing?"

"Making it possible for you to completely enjoy your dessert."

"But how can I eat with my hands tied."

"The dessert I have in mind has nothing to do with eating, my dove."

Once she was again trussed up, he produced a beautiful feather. Just looking at it and enjoying its exotic nature, made her wonder what he intended to do. He laid it on the bed next to her with its tip touching her legs. Before he again picked it up, he attached a strange looking thing to his cock.

"Am I allowed to ask what you are going to do to me?"

"You may ask anything before I start. Once I am engaged in doing marvelous things to your body, I am certain the only sounds coming from your mouth will be screams of delight."

Screams of delight, indeed. A lady does not scream during sex. It would be unrefined.

"This, my dove, is an ostrich feather. I acquired it after my first stop at a bordello in an exotic port in Africa. The mistress of the house said it was a favorite toy of her soiled doves.

I find it to be so with every woman I have entertained in this cabin.”

“And what is that thing you put on your cock?”

“That is called a French tickler. I found it in a bordello in Paris during one of my visits. I have another one for you to use when you are more comfortable with the dance of love that we will be doing for the remainder of our voyage. As for this one, it slips over my cock and is guaranteed to drive you wild with delight. I expect your screams to reverberate throughout the entire ship.”

“Then you expect a lot. I have trained myself to keep my sexual delights a quiet secret, not something to be shared with everyone in the household.”

“Then this should prove to be a unique experience for you.”

Sami could not help but look at the strange thing attached to his cock and wonder what he meant when he said he had one for her.

As soon as he finished his preparations, he picked up the feather. Gently he drew a line down the side of her jaw and then down her neck. The feeling was like nothing she had ever experienced. Inadvertently a moan escaped her lips, not unlike the purring of a contented kitten.

To her delight, he continued to trail the feather across her chest until he reached her breasts. As the tip of the delightful device of torture brushed across her nipples, she could feel moisture begin to pool between her nether lips. Her earlier soft moans were suddenly louder as she prayed for release. *This love play of his is nothing short of...oh what was the word he used...exotic.*

As if arousing her nipples was not enough, he traced the delightful feather down her belly until he finally traced it across her maiden's mound. It was then that he put the thing

away and began to play with her woman's soul with his fingers. Although she willed herself not to scream in delight, she could contain herself no longer. Soft moans became verbal cries of "take me, take me now before I explode from the pleasure."

"I knew you would see things my way, my dove. Allow me a little more pleasure before I show you what my little toy can do to you."

She watched as he slipped down to the end of the bed and buried his head within her woman's folds. As his tongue and teeth did marvelous thing to her enlarged bud of desire, his fingers kneaded the cheeks of her ass and then found their way into the opening between them. Never before had anyone violated that portion of her body. She wondered if he intended to put his enlarged cock into such a confined space and if he did, how it would ever fit.

Just when she thought she could stand no more, he changed positions and thrust his cock into her channel of pleasure. Whatever it was that he had attached to it drove her to heights she never thought possible. As he pumped against her she could feel every movement, every thrust with heightened pleasure. To add to her enjoyment, he had slipped something into her asshole that seemed to stretch it to the very limits of its capacity.

Her screams echoed off the mahogany walls of the cabin until she was hoarse from the effort. With the device he had used on his cock, she felt every drop of his essence enter her body. Never before had she experienced such a sensation.

"I do not have to ask if you enjoyed what we just did," he said as he lay beside her fondling one of her breasts. "The next time we enjoy each other, I will introduce you to a tongue tickler. I have one for me and one for you. I am certain it will prove to be an interesting experience for both of us."

As much as she wanted to ask questions, she was too exhausted to think of anything to say. Instead, she luxuriated in his touch. When she was just about asleep, he got up and brought a pan of tepid water to the bedside. With a gentleness she did not think him capable of, he washed the lingering remains of their lovemaking from her body.

Chapter 6

As much as Britt wanted to take Sami again and again, he allowed her to sleep. Before leaving his cabin, he untied her hands. Once he did she curled into a tight ball. After adjusting the blanket to cover her naked form, he pulled on his britches and prepared to go up on deck. As he walked out the door, Britt picked up the pipe he had packed just before the Spanish ship had been spotted.

To his surprise, the bright light of day was gone, leaving a velvety canopy of stars and the sliver of a new moon to guide their voyage.

"It is good to see ye taking some air," Smitty greeted him. "Never before have I seen ye take so long to deflower a virgin."

Britt could not help but smile at the thought of making love to Sami. "This woman is no virgin."

"So yer high born lady turned into a soiled dove."

"Not exactly. She claims only three lovers and they were stable boys on her father's estate. There is more to it than that, though."

"What more can there be? A fair-haired beauty like her will demand a high price in the islands. Ye should profit greatly from her sale."

"I do not think I want to sell her."

"But why?"

"I told you of how my mother arranged for my marriage."

"Of course ye did, but what does that have to do with the arrogant Miss Howard?"

"It has everything to do with her. She is the one who is to be my wife."

"Your mother arranged for you to marry that little wild-cat? From what I have seen, you would have done better with one of them black bitches the slavers carry."

"She captivates me, Smitty. I could easily fall in love with her."

"Have ye lost yer mind, Lad? It seems to me that her parents were well shed of her. Whatever her status in England, she would not be a fit wife for a fine gent like you."

Britt laughed at Smitty's statement. "A fine gent indeed. I am a pirate and I have deflowered more virgins that I can count on both hands. Somehow, I will find a way to get her to my parents' plantation. I will not allow her to be sold as though she was a common slave."

"And what of the women below decks?"

"I have no need to change my plans where they are concerned. I assume the men have been enjoying them."

The wicked grin on Smitty's face told him there was no need to ask further questions. He had undoubtedly shoved his cock into the recesses of the women below decks and would continue to do so for the rest of the voyage.

"Lower the Jolly Roger," he ordered. "We have no need for more plunder on this voyage. I only wish we were not bound for England. If we did not have this cargo, we could be on our way to the Islands. The only good thing about the length of this voyage is that I can get to know her better and devise a plan to send her to my parents and still not reveal my identity."

"Ye know ye are taking a chance, Lad. What if your parents somehow learn of your life at sea? I would hate to tarnish the memory of yer dear grandfather."

"That is what I hope to keep secret. I am certain Miss Howard will not want her future family to know of her capture at sea. The problem is, I must find a way to silence her once I return home."

"Ye have it bad, Lad. I fear ye are already falling in love with the lady. Be careful, for she may just make ye give up the sea."

Smitty left Britt alone with his thoughts.

If I do make Samantha my wife, will I ever be content to go back to the sea? Will I be able to continue pirating and doing the things I have done to her, to others? I doubt it. Besides, I fear I would not be able to leave her for months at a time, knowing she would be having men in my bed while I am at sea.

Lost in his thoughts, Britt stared out at the vast expanse of water until the first rays of dawn crept over the eastern horizon. Knowing he must get some sleep, he finally went back into his cabin.

Samantha still slept peacefully. He knew if he crawled into the bed beside her all thoughts of sleep would leave his mind. Instead, he sat down in the large chair that dominated the far corner of his cabin.

Sleep came quickly and with it dreams of all of the things he would be doing to the beautiful creature who now occupied the bed he wished he was in.

* * * *

Sami awoke and stretched like a contented kitten. To her surprise, she was no longer bound and was free to move about.

In the soft light of early morning, she noticed she slept alone in Capt'n B's delightful bed. A glance around the cabin,

coupled with his contented snoring, told her he was asleep in a large chair.

She knew it was silly, but she decided not to wake him. Instead, she got out of bed and went to the porthole. Through it she saw the smooth glimmer of the calm Atlantic. Looking out on it, she remembered Senora Martinez, as well as Carmelita. Did they spend a peaceful night, or had they had many lovers?

Sami knew the latter was more than likely true. She had heard their screams just prior to falling asleep. It was possible that they had been taken many times by the members of Capt'n B's crew. At least she had been spared that humiliation.

She walked over to where he slept. It would be easy to slit his throat, but why bring about a death sentence for herself? Somehow, she would have to find a way to get him to take her to the Carolina plantation of her betrothed, rather than sell her in the slave markets of the Caribbean.

It saddened her to see his magnificent body clothed in britches. She wished he slept in the nude as she had. It might be fun to waken him by sucking on that randy cock that had given her such pleasure just hours earlier.

Instead, she studied him closely. His beard, although full, was closely cropped. Did he keep it that way intentionally, or was it newly grown? Could it be that when he was not at sea he was clean-shaven?

Out of sheer curiosity, she reached out her hand to touch the hair on his face. She knew if she did, she could determine if it were newly grown or merely trimmed.

Her hand was only inches away from his face, when he reached out and grabbed her wrist. The snakelike quickness of his action caught her completely off guard.

"What do you think you are doing?" he demanded as he pulled her naked form down onto his clothed lap.

"I was merely curious," she squeaked, still too shocked to think of anything more to say.

"Curious? About what? How to slit my throat?"

Outrage brought sharp words to her lips. "It was a thought, but why should I do something that would bring about my own death? You hardly seem worth the trouble. I merely wanted to touch your beard."

To her amazement, he began to laugh. "Then I am in no danger from your delicate fingers, or were you perhaps thinking of scratching my eyes out?"

"The thought of such a thing is delightful, but again, what would I gain?"

His grip on her wrist loosened as he brought her hand to his face. Beneath her fingers the beard that fascinated her so felt like a soft mat of springtime grass. Even trying to envision him with his face clean-shaven was impossible. His red beard was as much a part of him as his magnificent cock.

"There is water in the pitcher," Capt'n B said, breaking into Sami's thoughts. "I feel in need of a morning bath."

"By all means, do not let me stand in your way."

"You have completely missed my point. I want you to bathe me."

"You want me to *what*? Do you not have servants for such a mundane task?"

"We are not in your father's house, Samantha. Here, all of the men of my crew are equal."

"But yesterday that vile little man brought us food."

"Smitty is far from a vile little man, as you call him. He runs this ship with an iron hand whenever I am unable, or preoccupied, as I intend to be for the remainder of this voy-

age. Now, you will pour the water from the pitcher to the basin and attend to my morning bath.”

“I am no man’s slave and certainly not yours.”

“That my dear Samantha is where you are sadly mistaken. Whenever you make love to a man, you become his slave. For the remainder of this voyage you are mine, body and soul. Once we arrive in the Islands, you will be worthy of whatever master buys you to grace his bed. At least you will not be like the women below decks who will be fit for nothing more than the dockside bordellos.”

“But...but they are high born women, just like me. Why would they be sentenced to a life of prostitution?”

“Because by the time we arrive in the Islands, they will be well used. You on the other hand will not only have enjoyed but one lover, you will also be well trained as a bed slave. You cannot tell me you have been displeased with my attentions.”

Sami thought of many tart answers, but held her peace. The voyage had just begun. From what she had learned, they were bound for England. From there they would, most likely, return to the Islands, as Capt’n B called them. The thought of his delightful lovemaking overshadowed the inevitable life he had planned for her once they docked at their final destination.

Resigned to her fate, she got up from his lap and went to the cupboard he had indicated contained the soap and towels needed for his bath.

As soon as she chose the things she would require, she realized the linens were of the finest quality and the soap carried the manly scent of a dense forest of pine. *This man has tastes unlike any I would expect from a pirate. Can it be he is as high born as me and as completely rebellious?*

After making her selections, Sami poured the water from the pitcher to the bowl. Although the temperature was not

warm like the water the chambermaids brought for her morning bath at home, she knew there was no alternative but to use it. A quick scan of the cabin told her there was no stove with which to heat it.

When she again turned toward Capt'n B she realized he stood naked before her. The tight fitting britches lay neatly folded on the chair he had occupied only moments earlier.

"If you want me to bathe you all over, you must be seated. I cannot possibly reach your face and neck while you are standing."

"You make a good point, but I do not intend to have you bathe my face."

"I do not see why not. I know father always said he did not grow a beard because they became dirty. Yours must be almost crawling with..."

"With what?"

"Vermin."

"I assure you neither the hair on my head nor on my beard is any more infested than the hair on my chest or crotch. Now, do as you have been told."

With her hands shaking, Sami placed the bowl on the floor then got down on her knees to begin to wash his most private area. As she did, she found she had an excellent view of the trouser snake that had given her such pleasure.

Never before had she seen a man's cock so close up. In all of her lovemaking, she had seen her lovers only from a distance, as they prepared to mount her. Once they finished with her they were gone. For the first time she could actually study the instrument of pleasure that made the difference between man and woman.

It sprung from its nest of red curls, like a hungry young bird awaiting its mother's return with food. Even though she

knew he was not in full arousal she had the feeling this delightful piece of flesh could satisfy her again, if she gave it a chance.

"Are you planning to just gape at me or are you going to do as I have instructed you to?"

Embarrassed to be caught studying him so closely, Sami immediately immersed one of the soft cloths in the water. Once she wrung it out, she worked the soap into a rich lather before applying it to his cock.

As soon as she touched him, he began to grow beneath her fingers. On an impulse, she ran her soap filled hands up and down the length of him. She knew it would be delightful agony, since she knelt in a position that was far enough away from him to be safe.

When he moaned in delight, she moved her hand that contained the cloth to his balls and gently washed them as well. Knowing he was straining to remain vertical and not drag her to bed, she slid the cloth from his balls to his asshole. With one finger draped with the cloth, she gently stuck it in the opening.

"Enough is enough, woman. What are you trying to do to me?"

"You asked me to bathe you. I thought you wanted to be clean everywhere."

"Clean is one thing, what you are doing to me is quite another. Just remember who holds who a prisoner."

With one swift movement, he bent down and pulled her to her feet. "You will have to pay for the things you have done to me, my love."

"Pay, with what? I have no money."

"There are other forms of payment I plan to extract from you. Since you have such expertise on your knees, I want you down on all fours. What I have in mind should be an interesting experience for both of us."

From the look in his eyes, she knew better than to argue with him. She had seen the cat o' nine tails hanging on the wall. If he were to use it on her bare bottom, she wondered if she could endure the pain.

To her surprise, once she trembled in anticipation of the first blow, she felt his hands on her waist and his erection pushing against her bottom. A fear of a different kind encompassed her being. *Could it be that he intends to put his cock into another opening within my body? If he does, he will surely rip me in half with the sheer size of it.*

Instead of the pain she expected, he pulled her body close to his. With his cock slipping into her channel of pleasure from this entirely different angle, she shuddered with delights she never knew possible.

As he rocked against her bottom, his fingers deftly wove themselves in and out of the curls at the juncture of her thighs until they located the bud of her womanhood. In this position every pleasure was magnified many times over. More than once she screamed out in release that could be found in no other way.

When at last he climaxed, she was left drained. His departure from her body made her go limp and collapse to the floor in delightful exhaustion.

She hardly realized when he picked her up and carried her to the waiting bed. Only the cool dampness of one of the soft clothes she had used on him earlier brought her back to reality.

"I never thought people could do it that way," she finally managed to say.

"Ah, my love, that is only one of the many positions I plan to introduce to you. For now, we both need to sleep."

The Pirate's Lady

No words of agreement could get past the broad yawn that escaped her lips. No matter what, she tended to agree with him completely.

Chapter 7

"We will be docking in South Hampton with the morning tide," Smitty said, as Britt stared out at the sea. "What do you plan to do with the women below decks?"

"The same as I normally do with such cargo. They will be bound and gagged until our men have unloaded the cargo I have to deliver. Once we are again loaded, they will be released and we will be on our way to the Islands."

"And what of the lovely Miss Howard? Do ye plan to return her to her family?"

Just the thought of not having Samantha in his bed made his cock ache in despair. "You know that is impossible. If I were to do that, we would all be swinging from the yardarm by nightfall. She will be treated no differently than any other such cargo I have carried over the years."

"Do ye not fear for yer life at her hands if ye try to bind her again? Ye have given her much freedom during this voyage. I could not believe it when ye had me bring her trunk to yer quarters."

"That trunk brought me many delightful pleasures, the extent of which you will never know."

Smitty shook his head, as he had so many times during the voyage, and left Britt to his thoughts. Once alone, his mind turned to the trunk of lovely things Samantha brought with

her. It gave him great pleasure to allow her the one thing she had begged him to bring her.

At first he had had thoughts of ripping the gowns from her body, but once he saw her dressed in the finery of a wealthy young woman he had refrained. Instead, he enjoyed undressing her, and discarding her clothing piece by piece in the process. He knew the act excited her as well, as she was always hot and ready for his sex when he finished.

It also amazed him that often she awakened him by sucking on his cock until the unruly member grew of its own accord and demanded satisfaction within the hidden channel of her body.

A breeze from the south threatened to bring rain before the first light of morning graced the sky. Rather than stay topside any longer, only thinking about the delights of Samantha's magnificent body, he returned to his cabin.

As soon as he entered, she looked up. She was wearing the blue dress that matched her eyes so completely. Did she know how the cut of the neckline affected him? It did not matter. Once he released her from the restricting garment, she would be his and his alone to enjoy for the entire night.

Sami heard Capt'n B enter the cabin, but did not move from her position at his desk. Earlier she had found a book and had lost herself within the context of its story.

Step by step he came closer to her, until his hands slipped into the recesses of the deeply cut neckline of her dress to fondle her breasts. As he did, she gasped in pleasure. As much as she had, at first, despised the man, she now found his attentions and expertise in bed exciting.

"What is your pleasure tonight my Lord?"

"I am no one's Lord, but I want to enjoy your body and have you enjoy mine one more time before we dock in South Hampton."

Thoughts of being sent back to her parents ran rampant through her mind. *Would he dare to send me back to Father? Could I endure the humiliation of having to explain all that has happened to me since I left home? Could I ever tell the story without reliving the enjoyment of being this man's captive?*

"Do you plan to ask a ransom for my return to my father's estates?"

"Hardly. I value my life too much to endanger it in such a way. You are worth far more to me in the Islands than the paltry amount that your father would pay for your return. As far as he is concerned, he has sent you to the New World and is free of you."

Capt'n B's words hit too close to the truth to bring her comfort. Her father would never pay a ransom for her. He was indeed thrilled to be rid of her.

"And how much do you think I would be worth to you in these islands you speak of?"

"Your blonde hair and blue eyes will demand a high price, much higher than your Spanish companions. Perhaps as much as two or three thousand pounds. Dark skinned slaves are commonplace in the Islands. I find that I can demand a higher price for French women than I can for the Spaniards, only because of their complexion. An English lady will be not only an oddity, but an expensive oddity."

Sami knew he paid her a high compliment, but his words still hurt. While she had been his prisoner, she had fancied herself in love with this handsome pirate. She could easily allow him to keep her from the man to whom she had been promised in marriage. Now, she learned he thought of her for nothing more than the profit that he could reap from her sale.

How can I ever convince him to take me to the Carolinas and the man who I have been promised to in marriage? If I can persuade him to do the right thing by me, can I go through with it, after having

been with this man? Will Brittmore MacDonald even want me after what I've been through?

"Tonight our lovemaking will be done in whatever way you desire. It is consolation for me having to bind and gag you before we dock."

"Bind and gag me? But why?"

"I cannot have you alerting anyone in authority of your presence. To do so could cost me, as well as my crew, our lives. The English government does not look kindly upon pirates, even if they do travel under the Union Jack as well as the Jolly Roger. Be assured, the women below decks will be restrained in the same manner. None of us plans to lose our lives because of the plunder we carry."

Although Sami hated the thought of having to be bound and gagged again after so many days of freedom, she had to agree with her captor. The very thought of him being hanged for his crimes at sea seemed a waste. She knew it would not be the same for her traveling companions, for they did not know the gentle lovemaking that she had enjoyed almost non-stop since her capture.

"If I am to be the one to decide upon our lovemaking, I will have you lay down on the bed and be *my* prisoner for the night. We will begin by me removing your clothing."

The smile on his lips told her he approved of her choice for their evening's activities.

Once his shirt and britches were removed, he lay down on the bed. She knew he wanted to take off her clothing, but allowed her to undress slowly so that he could enjoy every moment of her disrobing.

When she removed the bodice of her dress her breasts were at last free. Before continuing, she played with them until her nipples were hard in anticipation of a night of hedonis-

tic pleasures. By the look in his eyes, she knew he enjoyed watching her play with herself.

After she stepped out of her skirt and undergarments, she ran her hands down the length of her naked body. When her hands reached her maiden mound, she slipped her fingers into the crevice it guarded so jealously. When they were moist with her juices, she put them to his lips. Obediently, he took them into his mouth and sucked her essence from them.

The action made her all the more ready to accept him, but she decided to prolong his agony a bit longer. Climbing onto the bed, she straddled him, with her back to his face. Once she was comfortable, she took his cock into her mouth and began to suck it while she played with his balls. It took only a moment for him to part her legs further and suckle on her woman's nub while his fingers moved rhythmically in and out of her hidden channel.

When she could stand the pleasure no longer, she suckled long and hard before allowing his cock to slip from her lips. Once he was no longer inside the recesses of her mouth, she turned around and positioned herself on top of him.

As though she was riding one of the horses in her father's stables, she moved up and down upon his hard member. While she did, he reached for her breasts to fondle them.

Never before had she felt the complete penetration that she did this night. She had thought nothing could compare with when he took her from behind, but it paled in comparison to this. If only she could be with this man for the rest of her life, she would be completely happy.

Britt had never enjoyed a more adventurous partner. If only he could find a way to get her safely to his parents, he would gladly give up the sea for her. He knew it would break his heart to take her into the slave markets of the Islands. His only thought was how he could keep his parents from finding

out about his pirating, if he were able to somehow get her to their plantation.

Chapter 8

Britt walked the streets and alleys of South Hampton. By late afternoon his cargo should be unloaded and the new cargo that was waiting for him ready to be loaded. The meeting with the merchant, who had contracted for his goods, was set for four o'clock at one of the many pubs that lined the waterfront.

From the doorway across the street from him, a woman with breasts that nearly fell out of her dressing gown called to him.

"Capt'n, I have much to give to ye. I can ease the ache in yer cock. Too long at sea and a man can go stale."

"Don't listen to her," another woman called. "She has more bugs than the flour you have been using. I'm a clean gerl, I am."

Britt kept on walking. None of these women held the allure for him that they did for others. His mind was on the woman bound and gagged in his cabin on the *Merry Lady*. He could hardly wait for them to be at sea, so he could again enjoy the delights she had to give to him.

The pub he was looking for was located at the end of the next street. There he would meet with Cornell Blackmore and get the money he had been promised for the rum and tobacco he had in his hold.

"Britt, old man, it's good to see you again. I pray you had an uneventful crossing."

"We encountered no storms," Britt replied. *Unless you can count the storm that erupted in my cabin when I first brought Samantha there.*

"I am pleased you did not fall prey to the bloodthirsty pirates that roam the Atlantic these days. Just last week they caught a man with the name of Howard and hung him and his entire crew from the yardarm right here in South Hampton."

"Howard?"

"That's old William Howard over there in the corner crying in his ale. 'Twas his nephew who was hung. All of this came on the heels of him shipping his youngest daughter off to the New World. The poor bastard hardly had time to get back to his estate before he was summoned to return for the hanging. He's been coming here every day since and drinking himself into a stupor."

Britt glanced over at the man who could only be Samantha's father. William Howard was in pitiful shape. *The hanging of his nephew must weigh heavier on his mind than sending his beautiful daughter to a virtual stranger.*

Once Britt's business was concluded, he wandered over to the table where the old man sat.

"I hear you've had a bit of tough luck of late," he said, initiating the conversation.

"You could say that. My favorite nephew was wrongly charged and hanged last week. I grieve for my sister-in-law, as my brother was lost at sea years ago."

"You say he was wrongly charged? How could that be?"

"There are those in South Hampton who are jealous of the success he has had as captain of his own ship at such a young age. They were the ones who brought about the false charges against him."

Britt nodded. He had never worried about being caught before, but since meeting Samantha, the thought plagued him constantly. Perhaps taking her as his prisoner was the best thing that could have happened to him. If he figured out how to get her to Glenmoor, his parents' plantation, he would gladly give up the sea and his pirating. His life had suddenly become very precious. What kind of a hold did the witch have over him?

"I was told you sent your daughter to the New World. Why would you do such a thing with the amount of pirates that prowl the waters these days?"

The man looked up at him as if he had no idea what he was talking about. "Sami was always a willful child. I was unable to find her a proper husband among the sons of my friends."

"And why, prey tell, would that be? Howard is a respected name, or so I am told."

"Respected yes. My other daughters have all made good marriages, as they were well versed in the skills of running a house and doing their sewing. Sami, on the other hand, was more interested in the horses in the stable than learning how to run a household smoothly. Most young men don't want a woman who can ride better than she can cook."

"I can see what you mean."

Britt finished his pint then excused himself from Howard's presence to return to Cornell Blackmore's table. It was definitely evident that Samantha had kept her sexual liaisons secret from her father. Or, perhaps it was that the old man didn't care. He had turned a blind eye to the exploits of his beloved nephew, why shouldn't he have done the same for a daughter he did not want?

"Your men have been working feverishly, Britt. What is your rush to be away from England?" Blackmore questioned.

Although he knew the reason, he could not tell the merchant the entire truth. "With as calm a crossing as we have had I fear we could run into wicked storms before we reach the islands. I would hate to lose your cargo at sea. I've paid you a good price for the goods I've stowed below decks. It would be a shame for me to take such a loss. It would be even worse to lose my life in a storm that could easily come up on me with no warning. The sooner I am back in Charleston for an uneventful winter, the happier I will be."

"I can understand your concern. It *has* been a quiet summer, too quiet. Perhaps there is a storm brewing on the horizon. I wish you a safe voyage."

Britt shook hands with the man and left the pub. He wanted to check on the progress of his crew. With luck he could sail with the morning tide and with favorable winds be back in Charleston before the first blast of winter hit. Whatever cargo he picked up in Kingston would be housed safely in his warehouse until it was time for another crossing in the spring.

The thought of his warehouse in Charleston brought to mind another house. This one was in one of the most fashionable neighborhoods of the city and was furnished with only the most exquisite furniture money could buy. His grandfather had bought it for a woman he had fallen in love with before he went to sea, for what he said would be the last time. By the time he returned, the house stood as he had ordered, but the woman had become ill and died. His grandfather had never been the same after that.

Within a year of the woman's death, the Merry Lady belonged to Britt and his grandfather locked himself away behind the doors of the mansion he had built for his special lady. Britt's mother said her father had pined away for her in the same manner as he had for his first wife, Britt's grandmother.

Once the old man died, the house, like the Merry Lady, had passed to Britt. He loved the spacious rooms with their elegant furnishings. Whenever he was in port he stayed in the house, allowing the many servants he employed to cater to him as though he were a rich man who never had to work for a living.

If the truth were known, Britt could leave the sea today and never have to work again. Smitty could take care of the business of running the ship, leaving Britt to oversee the warehouses, as well as the import and export business.

By the time he reached the dock, he found his men hard at work. "How much longer before we are loaded?" he asked Smitty.

"We will be able to sail with the tide. I've never seen ye so anxious to leave port before. Does it have anything to do with the young woman in yer cabin?"

"It has everything to do with her. I just met her father. He does not mourn the loss of his daughter as much as he does that of his nephew. It seems the lad went to sea and became a pirate. He paid the ultimate price for his adventure. I would not like for such distressing information to reach the ears of a certain young lady until we are well underway."

Smitty's smile said more than any words. "Do ye fear that she will turn ye in for not only the reward that rests on the heads of all pirates, but also for the satisfaction of seeing ye swing?"

"That is a possibility. Be ready to cast off at first light. I want to be shed of England and the memory of William Howard. It is evident that Miss Samantha Howard will be much better off with that sea captain her parents sent her to wed."

"Are ye saying what I think ye are? Do ye plan to wed the lass?"

“Only if I can find a way to get her to my parents without letting them know how I came to be in possession of the woman they intended for me to marry.”

* * * *

Sami knew struggling against her bonds was fruitless. In a way, she could understand the reason behind her bondage, but it still irritated her no end that she was not free to move about the cabin.

What does that arrogant man think I would do, turn him in to the authorities as the bloodthirsty pirate he is?

As soon as the thought crossed her mind she remembered her father saying how the English authorities were dealing with the problem of the pirates that roamed so freely on the open sea. If she were free, she could turn Capt'n B in and watch him hang from the yardarm of South Hampton harbor. Was that what she wanted?

Of course it isn't what I want. This man is a good lover. It would be a shame to take his life and yet the fate he has planned for me is a terrible one. It would serve him right to hang, but not until he has allowed me to enjoy his attentions a while longer. Perhaps I will be able to throw myself on the mercy of the magistrates in Kingston, wherever that is.

She turned her head at the sound of the cabin door being opened. Had someone arrested Capt'n B for the pirate he was and come to her rescue? If she were to get on deck would she be able to see him swinging in the breeze?

A mixture of disappointment and delight filled her being when Capt'n B entered the cabin.

“Ah, my dove, it is wonderful to see you still here.”

Where do you think I would go, you dolt?

“Until we are again at sea I cannot release you, but I did think of you while I was in port. I brought you several gifts.”

From inside his coat, he produced a bottle that she knew contained fine perfume. She recognized the shape of the bottle and knew the fragrance it housed was one she enjoyed. He also dangled a slim golden chain with a diamond suspended from it between his fingers.

“When I saw this little treasure I thought of you and bought it immediately. It was the same with the perfume. As for the rest of my purchases, they were strictly for me. The wine will be delivered to the ship before we sail. I hope you enjoy fine wine as much as I do. It should make our voyage a pleasant one.”

Fine wine indeed. How do I know he hasn't stolen these things in the same manner he stole me?

“Ah, my dove, you are far too easily read. You think I would stoop to common thievery when I'm on the shores of King and Country. It is a known fact, I have never taken anything from an Englishman, with the exception of you. Of course, taking you was not what I had in mind when I boarded that ship. I was more concerned with the gold, wine and leather goods I know are usually found aboard Spanish ships. To be truthful, I had expected to find no passengers whatsoever, as the captain of that fine vessel rarely carries anything but trade goods to and from the New World.”

She watched as he seated himself in the chair opposite the bed and started taking off his boots.

“It has been a long day indeed, Samantha. My connection in port paid me a fair price for my goods and although I would usually stay for a few days of relaxation in the pubs, I decided it was in my best interests to return to my ship and sail with the tide. I have a precious cargo that needs to be delivered to the New World as soon as possible.”

Once his boots had been removed, Capt'n B began to take off the fine suit he had donned after binding and gagging

her earlier. It galled her to think that just watching him undress made her body react in anticipation of what he had planned for her once his clothes were discarded. Even more upsetting than that was the way he talked of his day in port. It was as though he was telling his wife of his day at work.

I am not his wife, and what he does can hardly be called work.

"I'm sorry I cannot free you for the lovemaking I have planned for the rest of the night, but I cannot take a chance of you turning me in to the authorities. It would be a shame for me to swing from the yardarm while you are returned naked to that drunken sot of a father I met in the pub."

Sami's eyes opened wide with surprise. *What is Father doing in South Hampton? He certainly doesn't have any more daughters to send to the New World. Could it have anything to do with my cousin James?*

"I see the mention of your father surprises you. Is it his presence in the city, or the state in which I found him, that startles you so? Whichever answer you give me, I am certain we will have plenty of time once we are at sea to discuss the matter. For now, my cock is ready for you and I would be a fool not to see that you are ready for me as well."

Once he approached the bed, he took the perfume from the table and pulled out the stopper. Scented liquid dripped from the tip of it and he allowed the cold liquid to drizzle between her breasts. The aroma that assaulted her nostrils could only be called delightful.

After he replaced the stopper, he dipped his finger into the pool of liquid that sat on her body and drew a line down her flat belly to the tangle of curls at the juncture of her thighs.

She could do nothing but wiggle against the teasing tickle of his finger as he made her hot with desire for him. It didn't matter that he was a pirate or she was his prisoner. She knew

within a matter of moments he would make her quiver with delight. Even being bound and gagged no longer bothered her. She was resigned to the fact that being in such a state excited her.

Obediently she spread her legs wide for him as he positioned himself to thrust his cock into her hot moist channel. Once he did, she raised her hips and rocked against him until she thought she would die from the pleasure of their lovemaking. No matter what her fate when they docked in the islands, she knew she would never find a lover that would match Capt'n B.

Perhaps, if she used her cunning to its best advantage, she could persuade him to allow her to become his, body and soul, for the rest of their lives. She could easily see herself as a lady pirate, sailing the seas and plundering the ships she and Capt'n B conquered.

Chapter 9

Britt got up from his bed. Samantha had long since fallen asleep but sleep was a stranger to him this night. In the back of his mind, he could see her unfortunate relative swinging from the yardarm in the South Hampton harbor. This was the fate that awaited him and for the first time, he was not ready to face it.

With great care he released her from her bonds and took the gag from her mouth. In a way, he hoped she would waken so that he could capture her delicate lips with his and shower her with the kisses he knew she deserved.

When she instinctively curled into a tight ball of contented sleep, he turned his attention to the porthole. From it he could see the lights of the harbor before him.

From the deck, he heard Smitty give the order to set sail. Relief flooded his body, along with regret that this might be the last time he would ever see this particular harbor. Suddenly, England had become a forbidden fruit, one that beckoned but could not be attained. As much as he loved the back streets and alleys of the city, he knew a future visit could mean his death. He had other ships that could safely carry the cargo to his backers next spring, but he would not be the one to man them. The Merry Lady would never again sail into this harbor.

The gentle lapping of the waves coupled with the rock of the floor beneath his feet to tell him he was free of the restraints of this port.

He watched until the lights disappeared from his view. Once the only light visible came from the full moon and the sky laced with twinkling stars, he turned to his desk. On it, his journal beckoned. Since he had left a lamp burning, he decided he would not disturb Samantha's rest if he added a few entries. For the time being, he knew there was far too much on his mind for sleep to come.

The Merry Lady sailed into the port of South Hampton in the afternoon. After hearing the distressing news of more men being hanged from the yardarm for the crimes they had committed against King and Country, as pirates, I wanted shed of the city as soon as possible. Although I took the money of my backers and promised them I would return next year with another cargo of rum, whiskey and tobacco, I fear it will be someone other than myself at the helm of the ship. With the situation as it is now, I doubt my return to England will be anytime in the near future.

As much as I love the homeland of my parents, I love my life more. I have bid good-bye to the civilized ports of England and long to return not only to the more rambunctious ports of the Caribbean, but also the Carolinas and the lure of my family.

The cargo of textiles I purchased should bring a good price in the islands and add greatly to my accounts, as will the sale of the women who reside below decks along with the plunder I have stored from the capture of the Spanish ship.

As for the woman who shares my cabin, I have not yet come to a decision about the enticing Miss Samantha Howard.

With the last word written, Britt placed his quill back into the inkwell. Once the ink on the page was dry, he closed the book and returned it to the locked drawer where it would be safe from the prying eyes of the woman who shared his bed, as well as any of his crew who may venture into his cabin. It would do him no good to have anyone even guess at his misgivings about the life he had chosen. In light of the events he had heard about in port, he knew something in his life had to change.

Even though he knew his mind was far too active for sleep to come easily, Britt crawled into the bed, being careful not to waken Samantha. Almost immediately, she turned in her sleep and threw her leg protectively over his body.

When his body reacted, as he knew it would, he was tempted to wake her and take his pleasure within her, but he refrained. There was too much on his mind for any lovemaking to be more than automatic.

When she again moved and entwined her arms around his body, he relaxed and took his enjoyment in the warmth she generated. For the time being, he luxuriated in the pleasure of being her prisoner. In this state it took him very little time to fall into a deep and restful sleep.

* * * *

Sami awoke, surprised to find her long leg thrown over Capt'n B's hairy one and her arm resting across his broad chest. Beneath her fingers his mat of red hair was as soft as the fleece from her father's prizewinning sheep.

Even with his back to her, she felt herself becoming aroused by the very closeness of him. How wonderful it would be to be loved by a man such as this for the rest of her life.

No matter what her parents told her, she was not convinced that Captain Brittmore MacDonald would be anywhere

near as young and virile as this man. In her mind's eye she had him pictured as older and stern, with his face weathered from years at sea. Could she be happy with a man who did not have a twinkle of mischief in his green eyes? Could a stern old Scott possibly satisfy her in the same way Capt'n B could? She doubted it.

She was unaware that she had been playing with his chest hair until he awakened and turned to face her.

"What are you trying to do woman, pull my hair out by the very roots?"

Sami giggled at the thought. "I was unaware that I was pulling on your hair, but if it gets this reaction from you, I will remember the act in the future, when I want to get your attention."

"Well, you do have my attention," he said, turning her onto her back and rolling on top of her. "I am very attentive and there is a certain part of my body that has been at attention all night with you draped over me like a comforting blanket. For keeping me from the rest I so desperately needed, I must punish you."

Without further foreplay, he imprisoned her hands and shoved his cock into the dark recesses of her woman's folds. Having just awakened, Sami questioned whether or not she would be ready for him. To her delight as soon as the tip of his cock touched the heart of her woman's soul, she could feel her love juices begin to flow.

As he began his rhythmic rocking, he released her hands from his grip and concentrated on her breasts, fondling them until she moaned with delight that came from the two overly sensitive areas of her body. When his release finally came, he relaxed against her. This time their lovemaking had not been for her pleasure but for his release.

Once he relaxed, he began to suckle her enlarged nipple. The very act sent tingles of delight throughout her body. This man was, indeed, a practiced lover. He knew all the right things to do to make her want to beg him for more.

When at last he finished worshiping both of her breasts he rolled to one side and lay, holding her close to him.

"I have come to a decision. For the remainder of your voyage, you will be able to go up on deck daily and get some fresh air. Of course, I would not want you doing so in your present condition, as it would be a great temptation for my crew. There are many men and only two women below decks to satisfy their needs. Therefore, I will insist that you are properly dressed whenever you leave this cabin. There should be many dresses within that trunk of yours that will be acceptable attire."

"What if you decide to plunder another ship? Will I be safe if I am allowed above decks?"

"There will only be certain times that you will be allowed to leave this cabin and never without my protection. As for the pirating, I will be doing none of that on this voyage. My cargo is too precious to risk anything happening to it. The flag we fly will be the Union Jack and it will be proudly displayed for all to see. It is common knowledge that the pirates that roam so freely on the open waters prey on the ships of the French and Spanish, rather than those of our English brothers. It is a shame that such bountiful cargos of gold and silver will not be at my disposal, but you are far more valuable."

As though to emphasize his point, he ran his finger down the length of her cheek as well as her neck until again he captured one breast and tweaked her nipple. "I would never put your lovely body, and the delicious things you do with it, in danger. On this I am a man of my word."

"Would you swear to this upon the Bible?"

"I would swear upon whatever you hold holy. Although I carry a Bible and consider myself a Christian, for comfort, I find my God above decks in the magnificent heavens, to say nothing of the sea. Here I am closer to Him than in any church, either in the New World or in England."

"Then I accept your oath and beg you to go back into the city so that I can prepare for my morning bath and decide which dress I shall wear this day."

"Your bath will be no problem, for Smitty will soon be bringing heated water. As for going into the city, that will not be a possibility as we sailed in the early morning hours with the tide."

For the first time, Sami noticed the gentle rocking of the ship. She had become so accustomed to it that she did not even notice they were no longer stationary, until Capt'n B brought it to her attention.

A knock at the door caused her to pull the sheet tight around her neck in embarrassment. The same could not be said for her captor, as he made no move to cover himself. She had seen his ease with nakedness in the past and was not shocked, although she was appalled that it did not bother him.

Once he opened the door, Smitty, as well as several burly sailors, entered the room carrying the tub as well as the buckets of hot water Capt'n B had promised her. A glance at the tub told her it was large enough to fit two people comfortably.

"I trust ye will be enjoying the delights of this tub with the lady, Laddie."

Sami could not help but see the sly wink Smitty gave Capt'n B. While they were engaged in conversation the pirates of Capt'n B's crew dumped the buckets of water into the tub, each one taking a moment longer than necessary to glance in her direction. She could almost hear their silent

thoughts. Each of them envisioned himself in the big bed that dominated one wall of their captain's cabin. Each of them undoubtedly wanted to be the one sharing the pleasures between her legs.

With the last bucket of water emptied, Capt'n B and Sami were at last alone. Excitement overrode modesty, as she got out of bed and went to test the temperature of the water. The delightful warmth of it made her anxious to indulge herself within its depth.

"It would be a shame to let this water go cold," Capt'n B said, holding out his hand to her. "Won't you join me? Even thinking about it has brought to mind some delightful things we could be doing."

She watched as he got into the tub, indicating that she should do the same.

"Have you never bathed with a man before?" he asked, when she hesitated.

She shook her head 'no' before getting into the tub at the other end so she could face him.

"Then you are in for a delightful experience. I must say, it is one that I found while visiting a certain bordello in the Islands. The women there are very talented when it comes to giving a man pleasure while attending to his bath. For this reason, and for this reason alone, I chose a tub of this size for my own personal bathing apparatus."

The hot water eased the tension from her body. If she had thought it would cause his cock to become just as relaxed she was mistaken. The tip of it jutted out of the water like an island beckoning her to come toward it for a pleasurable visit.

"Aren't you going to wash me, Samantha?"

"W-wash you? Of course I am, but won't the soap hurt it? I mean won't it..." She stopped mid-sentence. Why should it be any different to wash him in this tub? She'd washed him

while he stood before her, but then he'd been relaxed. It was only the act that brought him to full arousal. At that time, she had stopped what she was doing with cloth and soap in order to enjoy his delights. She wondered if the soap would bring unwanted stinging to his enlarged organ, as it did when she washed a cut on her body.

"Soap will not harm my randy cock. How do you think I wash the essence of you from it whenever we make love? I am not an animal who couples with many females without cleansing myself. I'm certain if you wash me it will heighten the pleasure for both of us."

Gingerly, she took the cloth from the side of the tub and worked the soap that lay beside it into a rich lather. She began washing his chest and shoulders before moving down the line of hair that led across his flat belly to the delights hidden beneath the water. With her hands hidden from view she applied the soap to the hair at the juncture of his thighs, working it into the tight tangle of red curls as though she were shampooing her own long locks. Finally she reached the part of him that had beckoned her from the water. He gasped in response to her touch.

Gently, she took his cock in her hand and began to lather it, being careful not to injure the very thing that could give her such pleasure. When she was at last pleased with her efforts, she moved the cloth down to his balls and lathered them as well. Before she could gently squeeze and manipulate them between her fingers, he encircled her wrists with his big hands and brought them to his lips. As he did, the cloth dropped from her hands and drifted silently to the floor of the tub.

"You are a minx. I am certain you have done this many times in the past with your lovers. I cannot believe that the one time you washed me would make you so adept. I want

you more than I have wanted you in the past. For that, you must be punished."

"Punished, but why my Lord? I have done nothing to evoke punishment."

"Nothing but drive me to the heights of pleasure. For that you must pay."

He released his grip on her wrists and grabbed her legs, swinging them effortlessly over his shoulders. The quickness of his movements shocked her. At least she had the presence of mind to brace her hands on the edge of the tub to keep herself from slipping beneath the water and drowning.

In this unlikely state, he thrust his cock deep into her and began to pump. Although at first the position was uncomfortable, she soon became lost in the ecstasy of their lovemaking to the extent that she gave herself completely to the enjoyment of what they were doing.

As in the past, they climaxed within moments of each other, leaving them both spent and happy.

"At least you will not have to wash the remains of my essence from your body," she whispered when at last he withdrew his cock from her woman's folds.

"No my dove, but you will. I expect you to pay especially close attention to my needs as I attend to yours."

Before she began to wash him, he gently removed her legs from his shoulders and placed them back in the water. It was then that he retrieved the cloth from the floor of the tub and, with the soap, worked it into a richly lathered piece. Without hesitation he washed her maiden mound and worked his way into the valley where his cock had brought such pleasure moments earlier. The cloth and soap made the way slick for his fingers as he worked the heart of her woman's soul with a circular motion before embedding them within her channel of pleasure.

In an unladylike fashion, she arched her back to allow him greater access. It came as a shock as she climaxed again and again from his touch.

"You are indeed receptive to my touch. So much so, I am afraid we have allowed the water to go cold. Before we catch our death, we should get out of here."

He got to his feet and pulled her up to join him. Once she stepped from the tub he wrapped her in a towel and dried the water from her dripping body. When he finished, she took another towel to dry him, but found that the warm air of the cabin had done the task for her. Instead, she dropped to her knees to kiss his cock and begin to suckle it in appreciation for what he had done to her while in their bath.

"As much as I love to have you suck my cock, I do have duties to attend to. I am afraid I must leave you, with only the memory of this delightful lovemaking to sustain me. If I do not show my face on deck occasionally, I fear for what will happen to my ship. While I am gone, perhaps you can find an appropriate garment in the confines of your trunk to heighten my pleasure when I return. For I do intend to enjoy you again and again before this night is over."

After guiding Sami to her feet and kissing her tenderly, he opened the drawer of his desk. From it, he brought the diamond pendant he had shown her while they were still docked at South Hampton.

"I saw this in the marketplace and thought of you. This deserved to be nowhere but around your beautiful neck. I hope you will enjoy wearing it as much as I will enjoy seeing it resting just above your lovely breasts."

The chain was light in weight, resting on her neck and collarbone as though it was nothing more than a feather tickling her skin. The diamond, although it felt cold at first, soon warmed against its resting place at the base of her neck. It was

as though the stone was reacting to the heat he could generate within her body.

Brushing his hands across her sensitive nipples, he kissed her one last time before turning to pull on his pants in order to go on deck and return to the duties that called him from her embrace.

Disappointment was short lived as she opened her trunk. After rummaging through its contents, she found the summer dress she wanted to wear. She couldn't help but smile as she pulled out the low cut frock that reminded her of the buttercups that grew in the meadow behind the stables. She looked at the stack of undergarments that society demanded she wear and dismissed them. Who here would care if she put on her pantalets or chemise, along with the myriad of petticoats her mother insisted that all proper ladies wore?

I ceased being a proper lady on the day Father put me on that accursed Spanish ship and sent me off to the New World. Did he do it knowing that such ships were often the prey of pirates or was he so anxious to be rid of me that he gave the matter no thought? Would he be pleased to think that I will become no better than the prostitutes that ply their trade on the waterfront?

Thoughts of her father brought on tears that she thought had dried up days ago. The things that Capt'n B had done for her since they left England said he cared, but did he care enough to forego his original plans for her future? She doubted it. It didn't matter that she was coming to love him with all her being. Unlike the stable boys she had bedded back home, Capt'n B was a man in every sense of the word. His expertise in bed brought her more pleasure than she ever thought possible, not to mention taught her things she had never imagined.

* * * *

"Now, do ye want to tell me why ye were in such a hurry to be shed of Mother England?" Smitty asked when Britt joined him at the helm.

"Pirating is not a safe business of late. There are many who would just as soon see all pirates hung from the yardarm. I do not relish such a fate."

"Ye have always known you could make a good living by being an honest seaman."

"A good living yes, but not as exciting a life. I am afraid, as an honest seaman, I would run the risk of not only becoming prey to all of the pirates that roam the Atlantic, but I would die of boredom."

"How could anyone be bored with a wife like the lovely Miss Howard gracing yer bed?"

"That is where the problem begins. How do I get her back to my parents' plantation without them knowing how she came to be in my possession? It is a touchy situation. My father and I do not see eye to eye as it is. If he were to learn of my pirating, we would have no reason to remain civil to each other and it would break my mother's heart."

"I think ye judge yer parents far too harshly. Yer father is a tolerant man. The fact that you are his son will surely outweigh what ye have been doing with yer life these past years. As for yer mother, she is a fine lady. There is none finer. I often heard yer grandfather tell of his pride in having such a daughter. They sent to England for a bride for ye, did they not? Tell the lass who you are and see if there is not some way ye can work things out. I can tell by lookin' at ye that ye love the girl. It is also evident that she loves ye. It is nothing but stubborn pride on both sides that is keeping the two of ye apart."

Smitty turned and left Britt to his own thoughts. He feared he did love Samantha. He never thought anything like

this would happen to him. Was it because she was the woman his mother had sent half way around the world to bring to him? That had to be the answer. In all of his voyages he had never felt this way about the women who had been brought to his cabin. If the truth were known, he had tired of their screaming within the first day of their captivity. He had always been more than ready to send them below decks for the entertainment of his men.

Why then was Samantha so different? Why had he brought her gifts when they stopped in South Hampton? *Was* he coming to love her, as Smitty said? Was that love the reason he was thinking of giving up the life he had led for so many years?

With no answers to his silent questions, he slammed his hand against the wheel of the ship in frustration. The act brought nothing other than pain as his hand struck the unrelenting wood of the wheel.

The only way to sooth the ache within my body is to take her again and again until I get her out of my system. If I am brutal with her, perhaps I will be able to send her below decks and forget she ever existed.

The thought barely crossed his mind than he dismissed it. He couldn't think of anything but tender lovemaking where Samantha was concerned. To even consider sending her below decks was out of the question. Somehow, he would have to find a way to make her his and his alone, without letting on to his parents the kind of life he was giving up for marriage.

Chapter 10

Sami stood on the deck and inhaled deeply. No matter how many times Capt'n B allowed her to leave the cabin, she still marveled at the scent of fresh air coupled with the panorama that spread before her. The sun sparkled on the water reminding her of the fire of the diamond pendant he had placed around her neck days earlier.

In the far distance, the sails of an approaching vessel caused her heart to lurch. *Should I stay on deck and wave furiously so that they can rescue me? Do I want to be rescued? If I am, can I turn him in as a pirate, to meet a terrible fate?* She was so lost in thought she didn't hear Capt'n B come up behind her.

"It is best if you go below decks. I will lock my cabin door behind you. No matter what happens, do not make a sound until I come to get you."

"But why? The day is far too beautiful to stay below decks."

He put his hands on her shoulders and turned her to face the far western horizon. "Do you see that ship?"

"Of course I do. Are you afraid I will signal them to gain my freedom? Or is it your sorry life you fear losing? The thought of you hanging from the yardarm of some harbor could prove intriguing."

"Intriguing is perhaps the wrong word. I do not fly the Jolly Roger. With it not flying, this ship is likely prey for any pirate that crosses our path. The fight we could become involved in would not prove as one sided as the one with your Spanish ship. I want you below decks so you will not be in harms way."

Sami immediately sobered. She had meant her comment as a tease. The prospect of a battle taking place with the victor someone other than Capt'n B frightened her.

"Surely you can outrun them."

"If we tried, they would have cause to attack us. If they are respectable Englishmen, they will leave us alone once they see our colors. No matter what happens, I do not intend to put you in unnecessary danger."

Sami glanced at the approaching vessel one more time. It looked no different from any of the sailing ships she had seen in the harbor before her departure from England. How could he be so certain it posed a threat?

"I feel questions are crowding your mind," he said, as though he had monitored her thoughts. "Perhaps you should see for yourself what is evident to me."

He handed her the spyglass and instructed her on its use. Once she became accustomed to using it, she immediately recognized the dreaded skull and cross bones of the Jolly Roger. The very sight of it sent a shiver of fear through her body. Before this day was over, she could be a captive of a more ruthless man than Capt'n B. Her fate could be that of the women below decks. She could not stand the thought and vowed then and there to take her life rather than be captured.

* * * *

Britt securely locked the door to his cabin. He had been foolish to leave England and cross the Atlantic flying the Union Jack. His fear of being caught and hanged as a pirate had

outweighed his common sense. Now, one decision could cost him not only his life and that of his crew, but Samantha's life as well.

"Do ye want to run or fight?"

Britt looked up at Smitty's question. "Neither. I am hoping the captain is an honorable man and will give us a wide berth once he sees our colors. If honor is not one of his virtues, I will be forced to engage in a battle I do not want."

Smitty nodded and hurried back topside. Britt had no doubt that should the oncoming vessel pose a threat his cannons would be primed, loaded and ready for the ensuing battle.

This is just one more reason for me to give up the sea. If I fly the Jolly Roger, I run the risk of losing my life to a zealous magistrate. If I play the part of an honest seaman, I become the target of any pirate like myself looking for plunder.

Britt shook his head to clear it of the unwanted thoughts. It would do no good to dwell on such negative things. All of his energy needed to be directed to the battle. Even concern for Samantha had to be set aside until the threat passed.

Once back up on deck, he realized how foolish he had been to spend so much time contemplating the future that might not come. The ship had closed the gap and was bearing down on them, its cannons looking menacing in the early morning sunlight.

"Fire a warning shot," he ordered.

No sooner had the command left his lips than his men opened fire, purposely missing the oncoming ship. When it continued on the course it had set, Britt realized a battle was inevitable. Would he be the victor, or would he forfeit his life, as well as Samantha's future, to this unknown enemy?

Shots were sent back and forth with both vessels shaking from the force of the cannon fire. Britt preyed that the Merry Lady would not suffer enough damage for her to sink.

With the enemy ship too close for the cannons to be effective, hand-to-hand combat began. The men who swarmed over his decks like a hoard of ants were not Englishmen. It was more than likely they were Spaniards, out for revenge on the British for the loss of Spanish vessels.

Swords rang as metal hit metal and Britt found himself face to face with the man he assumed to be the captain of the ship.

"Prepare to die, you English dog. When this battle is done, your cargo will be mine and so will your life."

* * * *

The deathly stillness of anticipation reverberated through the cabin, making Sami's stomach roil in fear. As much as she wanted to peer out the porthole, she refrained and dropped to her knees instead. The need for prayer far outweighed her curiosity.

Although she had never been overly religious, she uttered every structured prayer she could remember. Once she exhausted them, Sami allowed her words to ramble, begging for any intervention that could save her life, as well as that of the handsome pirate who held not only her body, but also her heart, captive.

The explosion of cannon fire shook the very floor beneath her trembling knees, and also deafened her. Having no idea which ship fired the first volley, she prayed for it to have been Capt'n B.

More volleys followed before the silence was broken by the shouts of men engaged in the heat of battle. The sounds of the wounded and dying brought tears of frustration, fear and concern to her eyes.

It took very little time for the smell of smoke and death to reach her nostrils. If this ship were on fire would she be overcome with the smoke before she drowned? Would her body be burned, or eaten by the sharks she had seen swimming through the water beside the ship?

The sounds of battle were deafening. Then suddenly, all was deathly quiet. Sami didn't realize she had held her breath in anticipation of what would happen, until the click of the lock on the cabin door caused her heart to beat a maddening tattoo.

Her fear of the unknown turned to joy at seeing Smitty. Her joy was short-lived as terror once again returned when two of the crewmembers carried Capt'n B into the cabin.

"I-is he..." she stammered, unable to say the word dead.

"He is badly injured, Lass. Once I patch 'im up, he'll be better. I've seen him through worse."

"The other ship?" she asked, trying to avoid the horror of Capt'n B's wounds.

"She was set aflame and sunk. Those of her crew that were left alive were set adrift. I think they were surprised when we fired upon them and then won the battle."

Sami nodded. Smitty's description brought back memories of the battle that had ended with her imprisonment.

"This ain't the time for talkin', Lass. If we want to save the lad's life, we need to get to tendin' 'im."

Sami's stomach churned as she turned her attention to the deathly still form on the bed. Blood flowed freely from a wound slashed across his belly.

In an attempt to be helpful, she swallowed down the bile that rose in her throat. At home she had been sheltered from the wounds that occurred in the normal running of the estate.

Someone shoved a basin of water into her hands. As though they thought she could work miracles, Capt'n B's crew stepped aside to give her room to work.

"I trust ye won't do more harm than ye do good, Lass. My lad deserves the best care ye can give him. Once ye have the wound cleaned, I will bind him up. Then it will be up to the good Lord to bring about his healing."

With so much blood spilling from the wound, the water in the basin was red almost as soon as she began. Without having to say a word, the basin was replaced with one containing clean water.

At last the wound was cleansed and the flow of blood stopped. Once her task was completed, Smitty pushed her aside as though she had done nothing at all.

The gentleness of the old man's touch, coupled with the tears that stood in his eyes, gave Sami the impression he was treating a beloved son rather than his captain. When he finished, Smitty dropped to his knees, his head resting on the edge of the bed and his hands clasped in prayer.

"Do pirates believe in God?" She hadn't realized she spoke aloud until Smitty got to his feet.

"Any man who makes his living on the sea is a fool not to pray to Odin, Poseidon or any other God that rules the lives of men. It is the belief in something that makes the difference. Since the lad believes in the Christian God, that is the one I prayed to."

Sami bowed her head to avoid the old man's gaze. Inadvertently, she had learned more about Capt'n B in the short exchange with Smitty than she had during all of her time in this cabin with the man.

When she finished her own prayer, she looked up, surprised to see only she and Smitty remained in the cabin.

"The lad is feverish. It is best if ye keep bathing his face with cool water."

Feverish. The word Smitty just uttered echoed within the confines of her mind. She remembered the concern of the household when her father had become feverish after he broke his leg in a hunting accident. Even with Capt'n B's wound cleansed and bound, an infection was possible. He could easily die before her very eyes.

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Cool water bathed his face. Around him, a woman's soft sobs mingled with Smitty's coarse voice. Thoughts of the pleasures he had enjoyed with Sami in his bed filled his mind. *Why is she sobbing? Why has Smitty invaded the privacy of my quarters?*

As soon as he moved an unbearable pain cut through his midsection. *What did the bitch do to me? Did she use my own sword on me? Has she tried to kill me and now is pleading with Smitty for her very life?*

"His fever has been gone since early this morning, Smitty. Why doesn't he awaken?"

If she did this to me, why is she so concerned? Is it but an act to get the old man to spare her life? If it is, she is sadly mistaken if she thinks it will work.

"I have no answers for ye, Lass. What I can tell ye is that the lad has never been bested in a fight before. Perhaps this time his mind was not so much on the fight, as it was on other things."

"If the other thing you refer to is me, I can assure you that his only concern is the fat purse I will bring him in the slave market. I don't know why I have even wasted my time in caring for him."

"Ye don't mean what ye say, Lass. I have told ye repeatedly to rest, but being a stubborn woman ye pay me no heed."

Whenever I doze off, I wake to find you still fussin' over him."

With great effort, Britt opened his eyes and forced one of the questions that burned on his mind to become spoken words. "What happened?" His voice was hardly more than a hoarse whisper. More surprising than the weakness of his voice was how much strength it took just to speak.

"Yer God has answered our prayers, Lad. Do ye not remember the battle with those Spanish pirates?"

Spanish pirates? Britt shook his head in disbelief.

"The Capt'n of that ship had his mind set on cuttin' out yer heart. Had I not bested my own opponent and saw what was happening, he would have killed ye for sure. Before he could deliver the fatal blow, I ran him threw from behind. The Lass and I have been carin' for ye for the past three days."

"Three days? I've been asleep that long?"

"More like on the brink of death," Samantha said. "At one point the crew wanted to turn back to England, but Smitty told them it was closer to make a run for the Islands. I agreed with him."

That surprises me. Is she so anxious to be sold in the slave market?

"I know how yer mind works, Lad. The lass is only concerned for yer safety. The crew is too, but they could see the prudence in not returning to England. I think they fear for their lives there."

"We'll have plenty of time for this conversation, Smitty," Samantha said. "Since he's awake, bring me some broth so that he can start getting back his strength."

Britt felt helpless. Samantha was giving orders as though she was the Captain of the Merry Lady and to make matters worse, Smitty was obeying her.

"I'm still the Captain of this ship," he growled.

"Of course you are." The tone of her voice was not unlike that of his mother when she was patronizing him.

"As soon as I am well, my dear Miss Howard, I will show you who is the Captain of this ship *and* the Master of your fate."

"That is one pleasure I will look forward to. For now, I plan to bathe you and change the dressings on your wounds."

Britt could feel his ire rise. No one had bathed him, against his will, since he was a child. Then it had been his black nursemaid. The very thought of letting the beautiful Miss Howard do the honors was maddening and at the same time, intriguing.

He closed his eyes for a moment, only to open them again in surprise as she ran the soft cloth, lathered with soap, over his chest and arms. The feeling was not at all like the prostitutes along the waterfront who vigorously lathered his body while he sat in their large tubs. Instead, her touch was feathery light and made his lower body respond in anticipation.

When she rinsed out the cloth and then returned her touch to wash the suds from his body, he reached out to grab her hand. It pleased him that the longer he was awake, the more strength he regained.

"What are you doing to me woman?"

"I am washing you. While you burned with fever I bathed you constantly to bring it down. Once it broke, you sweated profusely and left your body covered in the foul odor of the fever that drained from you."

"Are you saying I stink?" He tried hard not to give in to the smile that threatened to cross his lips.

"As a matter of fact I am. Now allow me to do that which must be done."

"I'd prefer if you would wash my cock instead."

His words caused her to scrub harder on the matted chest hairs and sensitive male nipples.

"You are much too ill to be thinking of such things. I will get to the region you speak of in due time, but for now, I will concentrate on your upper body. I am certain you will not find my attentions to your cock pleasurable, as it must be washed thoroughly and not with the loving care of a mistress. As you recall, I am your *not* mistress, and I plan to inflict the punishment you deserve for such vile thoughts while you are on the brink of death."

Britt couldn't help the smile that crossed his lips. He prayed it showed her that he was seemingly enjoying her little jest. Inwardly he wondered what punishment she had in mind.

Once she finished washing his chest, she removed the bandages. He knew this would be the ideal time to assess his wounds but did not have the strength to raise his head from the pillow.

As soon as the air hit the sensitive healing skin, he drew in a breath. The pain was almost unbearable.

"Are you certain you have not already punished me? How do I know your story of an attack on this vessel is exactly what happened?"

Her laughter filled the cabin. "Do you think I would be alive to be nursing you back to health if I were the one who had sliced open your belly? Your crew would not have hesitated to throw me to the sharks, if that were the case. Now, hold still while I wipe away the dried blood and apply fresh bandages. At least you will be of more help this time than you were the last. I had to have two crew members lift you, so I could bind your wounds."

Without looking at the gaping cut to his belly, Britt raised his body just enough to allow her to remove the soiled bandages. The strips of white cloth were soaked in blood, his

blood. It was no wonder that he felt as weak as a newborn babe.

Once they were removed he relaxed, but only for a moment. The sting of the water against his injured skin made him want to cry out in pain.

"It is healing well. I predict you will be back to normal by the time we reach the Islands. I honestly don't know how you have done it, as my nursing skills are limited. It must be all of the prayers Smitty and your crew sent heavenward."

"Smitty prayed?"

"Indeed he did, as did every member of your band of cut-throats. I felt as though I was in the country church back home, rather than your prisoner."

"What about you? Did you pray?"

"What kind of a fiend do you take me for? Of course I prayed. The only difference being that I prayed that God's will be done, not for your sorry life. From the extent of your wounds, I did not know if it were better to beg for your life...or your death. It is evident that the good Lord decided to spare your life. Perhaps he had something important left for you to do."

She's right. The thought entered his head before he drifted off to sleep. There is something important that I have to do. I have to find a way to get her to the Carolinas and my parent's plantation. Once she is safely there, I can return home, claim that which is mine, and start a new life in Charleston, running the shipping business from the house Grandfather built. Never before have I wanted to give up the sea. It is this woman who has changed me. As my mother always says, there are no accidents in this life.

Chapter 11

They had been at sea for several days and Sami could never remember being happier. Capt'n B had made a miraculous recovery. Each day he had become stronger, until now he was able to be on deck for long periods of time.

Sami enjoyed the freedom his recovery gave her. She often stood at the railing as she had on the day the pirates attacked them. Although always watching for ships on the horizon, she enjoyed the sight of fish jumping out of the water and the dolphins that seemed to follow the ship, as though they were faithful dogs.

Today, as she enjoyed the sea air, to her left she saw Capt'n B giving orders as though nothing had ever happened. At night he reveled in his healing by making love to her in many positions that did not require him to exert much energy. Although not as vigorous as their lovemaking had been when she first became his prisoner, it was just as satisfying. Even the peacock feather had changed hands. She found that she could exact moans of delight from the fierce pirate by using it on his cock. At first, she had used it as the punishment she promised him for his thoughts of lovemaking while his life still hung in the balance. Now, it had become a game they both enjoyed and looked forward to engaging in.

The bright sunlight of day soon gave way to the showers of evening. It had been a particularly beautiful day, marred only by the rain that now beat a steady tattoo on the roof of Capt'n B's cabin.

Sami had dressed in a blue summer frock and admired the diamond in the mirror over his washstand. She wanted this night to be special, although she had no idea why.

When Capt'n B entered the cabin, he looked first at her and then the table, where dark red wine filled the glasses she had found earlier in the day.

"Are we entertaining the Queen tonight?"

"Hardly. I found these in a cupboard and thought it would be a nice change from the way we usually take our meals."

He looked at her as if she had suddenly grown two heads. For a moment, she feared for her safety. She had snooped into the cupboards where he kept his own personal treasures. Had she been at home, her father would have taken a strap to her for being so nosy. Would this man take off his belt, or would he use the cat 'o nine tails on her bare bottom in retaliation for her behavior?

His scowl turned to a mischievous smile as he picked up one of the glasses and tasted its contents.

"This does make for a nice change, although I did have another use in mind for this wine. But I trust there will be plenty of it left over for what I have planned."

Although his comment puzzled her, she said nothing. All through their dinner, he watched her as though he was looking at a rich dessert, and just waiting for the meal to be over so he could indulge in it.

"You are a beautiful woman, you know. I envy the man who will have you once our voyage is over."

His remark brought to mind the fate that awaited her in the Islands. Could he do such a thing to her? She had ceased

being his prisoner when they left England and he placed the pendant around her neck. He had given her the freedom to roam his cabin and go on deck. Had she become too comfortable with her new position? Would she become merchandise to be sold once he put into port?

Unwilling to pursue the subject further, she brought up a long forgotten comment he had made. "You said you saw my father in South Hampton and he was drunk. Are you certain it was my father?"

Capt'n B nodded his head. "He was pointed out to me."

"What was he doing in South Hampton?"

"I do not think that is proper dinner conversation."

"Well, I do. Did it have something to do with my cousin, James? Did he get caught and punished for being a pirate?"

The look on his face spoke volumes. "Yes. He and his entire crew was hanged from the yardarm at South Hampton. Your father had just returned home from putting you on that blasted Spanish ship. Is that what you wanted to know?"

"It does not surprise me. I am certain my father denied James' activities, but I have known of them for years. He enjoyed telling us of his exploits when he came home for the Christmas holidays. I have been concerned for his safety."

"Would you be concerned for my safety?" Capt'n B asked, as he put his finger beneath her chin and raised her head so he could look into her eyes.

She thought back to the hours she spent tied to the bed while he was in South Hampton. At that time she would have gladly watched as he was hanged by the neck until he no longer took breath. Now, after nursing him back to health, she was no longer sure that was what she wanted at all. The man was a gentle lover and had not treated her badly, with the exception of when they had first met and the time they spent in South Hampton's harbor.

Am I falling in love with this rogue? Will I be sorry to leave his company?

Yes, yes, yes! If only things were different. If only I had made it to the Carolinas and met the man I was promised to. If I had not met this man, I would have been content with my fate. Now I know I will never love a man the way I love him.

"Yes, I would be sorry if you were captured and hanged. Are those the words you wanted to hear?"

"You know they are. I think we have had quite enough dinner. I am ready to devour you in every way possible. From the scent of you, I know you have used the perfume I bought you and it is driving me crazy with desire."

Without further words, he pulled her to her feet and started to unbutton the bodice of her dress. Due to the heat she had not bothered with undergarments, for she knew they would only be in the way when he was ready for their love-making.

In like fashion, she unbuttoned his shirt and ran her hand over the thick red mat of hair on his chest. When her fingers touched the hard nubs of his male nipples, he took her hands and put them to his lips.

"In the past you have learned that you can turn the tables on me by driving me beyond control. Tonight is mine, to do with you as I please. I trust I will not have to bind your hands in order to do so."

"Tonight I am yours. But why is tonight so different?"

"Tomorrow we will be docking in Kingston. There I will sell the majority of my cargo. Do not get any ideas about trying to escape from me. Kingston is a wild port and much harm could come to you. I will lock you in my cabin, but I will not bind you. Even your screams would not bring anyone in authority, as all know what cargo captains like me carry below their decks. Once we are finished there, I will be sailing for

another of the open ports, where I know what I have to sell will bring a high price.”

So, he does intend to sell me. He gives me no option but to comply with his wishes. I will enjoy whatever it is he wants to do to me tonight and allow the memory to sustain me for the rest of my life. I pray it will be a short one, for I fear I could never accept a life of captivity and multiple partners after having been loved by this man.

Without protest, she allowed him to finish undressing her before she lay down on the bed. *I will push all thoughts of anything but the delights he promises me this night from my mind.*

Once she lay on the bed, she was surprised to see him pour another goblet of wine. *Does he plan to get drunk in order to make love to me?*

Instead of drinking more than a sip, he dipped his finger into the goblet and then inserted it into the opening he would soon fill with his sex. Again and again he repeated the action, until she became accustomed to the cold sticky liquid that filled her.

When he was finally satisfied with what he had done, he drizzled the wine down the length of her torso. The action surprised her, but not as much as he did, when he started to lick the wine from her body. The act reminded her of a kitten lapping milk from a bowl. His tongue did a delicious dance across her body and sent shock waves of delight to her very core.

Once his mouth reached her maiden mound, she shuddered with delight. To her surprise, he did not continue further, but dipped his cock in the wine instead. When he again returned to the bed he lay at her side so she could suck the wine from his cock while he did the same to her channel of pleasure.

In the past she had become accustomed to the taste of him, but mingled with the wine she experienced an entirely

new sensation. The things they were doing caused her love juices to flow and her entire body to tingle.

Britt couldn't help but smile at how easily he had aroused her. With all his might, he prayed he would be able to find a way to get her to his parents safely and with the required amount of security. It would do none of them any good if the truth about what he did at sea leaked out to his parents. He was already outside the good graces of his father and to alienate his mother would devastate both of them.

He turned his attentions back to Samantha. If his plans failed, how could he stand to sell her, as he planned to do with the women below decks? She was far too special. *Admit it old boy, you've fallen in love with her. What a marriage you could have with this one. Every night would be one of excitement.*

In his mind's eye, he could see the children they could produce together. Little blonde girls who played with little boys who carried his red hair, crossed his mind. *Damnation, I have to find a way to make this work. I cannot, I will not, give her up!*

Her teeth raked across his cock and brought his mind back to the delights between her legs. He had long ago licked off the last of the wine and was thoroughly enjoying the love juices that took their place.

Unable to stand more of the pleasure she doled out he pulled away from her and then assumed a more natural position. He liked the way she moaned with pure delight when he thrust his length into her anxious body. How could she make every time seem like the first?

"Is something wrong?" Samantha asked, breaking into not only his thoughts but also his rhythmic movement within her.

"Wrong? Why would you ask such a question?"

"You seem different tonight, almost pensive, and you are not as lusty in your lovemaking as you usually are. Could it be you are still healing from your wounds?"

"My wounds have healed quite nicely, thanks to you and Smitty. If you must know, I was thinking how I will miss having you in my bed. I was also pondering how you always make me feel as though it is the first time we have ever been together."

"That is something I cannot answer for you. I know no other way to make love to a man than what I have been doing. As for my leaving you, that is something only you control. I would be content to grace this cabin forever, not as your prisoner but as your equal. I think being a pirate could be quite exciting."

Britt laughed at her comment. "Exciting? Perhaps it would be, but only until they slung a rope around that lovely neck of yours. I do not think you would make a pretty sight swinging from some yardarm for the crime of being a pirate."

"Is that what will happen to you someday?"

"Only if I am caught. Being anything but an honest seaman these days can end in only a tragic death. But even honesty can be dangerous, as we both know from past experience."

"Why would you pursue this, if the end is inevitable?"

"Because, my dear Samantha, there is a certain amount of excitement, as you call it, involved in this profession, to say nothing of the wealth it has brought me. As an honest seaman I could never dream of making in a lifetime what I have in the few short years I have been pirating."

"What good is wealth if your neck is stretched and you can never spend it? I am certain that my cousin felt the same way and what did it get him? I will tell you what. It got him an early grave and a grieving family. Is that what you want?"

“Want? No. Deserve? Yes. For tonight, let us not think of such terrible things. For this night there is no one or nothing in the world as important as you and me.”

Although many questions crowded her mind, Sami agreed with him. Tonight would end the fantasy of what lay ahead for her. If she couldn't persuade him to give up his plans of selling her in the Islands that lay just ahead of them, she would never know freedom again.

Chapter 12

Capt'n B awakened Sami with sweet kisses and tender lovemaking. When he was finished, he washed her body with tepid water, allowing her to do the same for him.

As much as she wanted to cry and throw a fit, she restrained. It would do her no good to show her emotions at this point. His mind was made up. She would be sold, as had been his plan all along. She had been a fool to think that her expertise in lovemaking could change his mind.

She watched as he dressed. He donned a fresh white shirt and tight fitting britches. She was certain every prostitute in the harbor would be anxious to get him out of them. Would he pay for their pleasures or would he return to the cabin and make delightful love to her before sailing for the next free port?

Once he left the cabin, Sami got up and dressed for the day. Having become accustomed to not wearing the under garments that society deemed necessary, she pulled on her summer dress and slipped on the soft slippers that her mother had given her just before she sailed from South Hampton.

The sounds and smells of the harbor drifted in through the open porthole. Out of curiosity, she stood on tiptoe in order to see what was going on.

Black skinned men unloaded the cargo that Capt'n B had taken on in England. Were they unaware of the women below decks, or of her for that matter? Were the women who had been taken prisoner with her tied and gagged, or were they no longer willing to beg for their freedom from any who might hear their cries?

Capt'n B entered her line of vision. Immediately many of the whores who plied their trade on the docks came up to him, only to be rebuked. His gesture made her smile. It was entirely possible that he did care for her and selling her would hurt him terribly.

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Britt could feel only disgust when the whores descended upon him as they always did when he was in port. The stink of their bodies from their many lovers stood in direct contrast to Samantha's clean and perfumed body that waited for him in his cabin.

When the harbormaster engaged him in conversation concerning his cargo, Britt made certain to turn so he could look at his ship. It didn't take long to locate the porthole that belonged to his cabin. He wondered if she was watching him. With the bright Jamaican sun, seeing inside was impossible. All he could make out was the dark hole, even though he knew she was there.

"You've brought me a fine cargo, but is there not more that you would like to sell here?"

"Everything that is for sale is being unloaded as we speak."

"Even that which you hold below decks?"

"Now why would you think I would have more cargo?"

"It is no secret that once the Merry Lady is out of sight of land she is a pirate vessel. Surely you carry a female cargo that would grace our docks."

"Do you see the Jolly Roger flying?"

"Of course I don't, but you would be a fool to fly it here, as there are British magistrates everywhere these days. They would like nothing more than to catch a captain such as yourself unaware and stretch his neck from the nearest yardarm. I was hoping perhaps to buy your cargo privately, away from prying eyes. By the darkness of night what you have to sell could easily be unloaded and brought to my warehouse."

"I told you before, what I have to sell has already been unloaded. It has been a long voyage, one marked with an attack on my ship by the very pirates those magistrates hunt so vigorously. I carry the scar of the blade of their captain. What I crave the most is a pint of ale and some conversation with the captains of the other ships that are anchored in your harbor before I have to sail with the tide."

Britt turned and walked away from the harbormaster before more words could be exchanged. He wanted a drink and wanted one badly. He did not want the expensive wine he had shared in such interesting ways with Samantha. Instead he craved the ale and rum he knew could be found in the taverns that dotted the area of the docks. Perhaps there he could run into James Player.

He and James had been friends for years. They both knew every secret there was to be known of each other. Of all the people he knew, it was James with whom he could share the secret of the beautiful Samantha. It was James he could trust to deliver his precious cargo to his parents' plantation unharmed.

"Britt, old man, you're the last person I expected to run into in Kingston," James greeted him when he walked into the first tavern. "I've been stuck in this godforsaken hole for almost a week, waiting for the repairs to be made to my ship. In all that time, there hasn't been one person with whom I can

have a civilized conversation. I will be sailing with the tide tonight and up until now I was anxious to be shed of this port."

"I too am sailing with the tide. I was hoping to find you here when I saw the Queen's Grace anchored in the harbor. I have a great boon to ask of you. Is there somewhere we can talk privately?"

James looked around the tavern. There would be no privacy found within these walls. Britt knew all too well that even the very chairs that they sat upon had ears and would tell stories best left untold.

"Come back to my ship. With the repairs, my crew has been spending most of their days in the beds of the whores, who are more than willing to take their money. I must admit, they have taken quite a bit of mine in the past week. None of my lads will be back on board until early this evening."

Britt nodded. "Let me have a pint of ale first. I find that, and the rum they make on this island, to be the only civilized reason for stopping here. That, and of course the fine profit I can make on the goods I bring from England."

James gestured for the serving wench to come over to their table. She smiled broadly when she saw his companion was Britt. He had been here in the past and had enjoyed her favors on many occasions.

"Why Captain MacDonald, this is a pleasant surprise. What can I bring ye today?"

Britt turned his head, his mouth almost colliding with the girl's full breasts. He knew if he pulled one of them from the bodice of her blouse and began to suckle on it, she would have set herself on his lap and slipped her hands down his pants. On other occasions he would have gladly indulged in such pleasure, but not today. The fate of the woman who had shared his cabin all during the voyage weighed too heavily on his mind.

“Just bring me an ale, Matilda. My thirst for the brew that you serve outweighs my body's hunger for you.”

Matilda threw back her head and laughed heartily. “Did ye hear that lads? The good captain would rather drink my ale than suck my tit. Is that not what ye said?”

Not waiting for an answer, she pulled her breast from her blouse and pressed her nipple against his lips. So as not to draw undo attention to himself by refusing, he pulled her down onto his lap and sucked noisily on the tit she offered. It didn't take her long to slip her hand into his pants and begin massaging his cock.

Britt cursed the reaction of his randy cock to her expert manipulations. He wanted the feeling she generated reserved for Samantha. Instead he was growing unbelievably beneath her fingers.

“There will be time for you to sink your cock into the folds of every whore in Kingston once we have finished our business,” James said, coming to his rescue. “You said you had something to discuss with me and I don't have time to sit here watching her make a fool out of you. Ale or no ale, you are coming with me and you are coming with me now.”

Britt silently thanked his friend for an excuse to get away from Matilda's attentions. Instead of getting to his feet quickly, he made a big production of prolonging his last suck of her breast.

“My friend is right, darlin'. I do have business to attend to. I will return and we can take a roll in that expensive bed of yours. That is, if my friend does not drain me of my resources first.”

Disappointed, the girl got up from his lap and put her breast back into her blouse. It didn't take long for her to find another willing sailor to give her a suck and undoubtedly be

lured to her bed, giving up much of the coin in his purse into the bargain.

"I almost hated to break that up," James confessed as they made their way to the Queen's Grace. "I know how you enjoy Matilda's company. You could have had a good roll for yourself. From the look of your cock when she pulled it out of your pants, you need it."

"I need nothing of the kind. Once we are aboard your ship you will know the reason why."

"Ah, you have yourself a cargo that is slated for one of the slave islands. Are they French or Spanish this trip? I know you have enjoyed both, but you've never told me which was the best."

Britt merely shook his head. After being with Samantha, none of the women he had bedded in the past could compare.

When they were finally aboard the Queen's Grace, Britt looked around to be certain none of the crew was listening to what he had to say. To his relief, they were completely alone.

"I have had an interesting voyage, but not because I spent it with either a Spanish or French woman. This time my spoils were an English girl, bound for the Carolinas, and the bed of her promised husband."

"You took an English ship? Are you out of your mind man?"

"The ship I took was Spanish and the one who was out of his mind was the girl's father. He was so anxious to be rid of her he sent her out on the first ship that sailed from South Hampton. He made her easy prey for any pirate on the high seas."

"And so she was. Did you enjoy her?"

"You know I did, but not for the reasons you think. The man she planned to marry is me."

"YOU! But how? Why?"

"Before we sailed my mother told me of the arrangement she and my father had made with the girl's father. It seems she and the girl's mother were childhood friends. William Howard wanted shed of his youngest daughter and my parents hoped to get me to quit the sea. At the time I was appalled to think they would do such a thing. Since then I have come to care for Samantha deeply."

"So what do you plan to do with her now? Surely you can't march into your parents' home with her on your arm and say, 'I took her as the spoils of a pirate's raid'."

"You know I can't. It would break my mother's heart to know how not only I, but also my grandfather, have made our living. That is where you come in. Since we are both sailing tonight, we will go to my ship and you will take her from me. We will do this under the cover of darkness, so that no one will see her. We will tell her that I lost her to you in a game of chance. Once you are safely out of the harbor, you will be able to easily persuade her to tell you where she was heading and why. Take her to my parents and tell them how you rescued her from the pirates who were holding her prisoner."

"And what do you plan to tell your parents when you arrive home and she recognizes you?"

"I pray I will be able to stop her from telling my parents of my vocation once I have had a chance to talk to her alone."

"I will agree to your plan. If I were not your friend, I would enjoy the delights that have you looking like a lovesick pup when you talk about her. Instead, I will pledge my loyalty to you and allow no harm to come to your lovely hostage. To assure that no one sees us we will take a dingy from my ship to yours and transport her in that manner."

Britt nodded. He knew he could rely on James to help him get Samantha to his parent's home unharmed. With any-

one else, he would have had doubts, but James would be true to his word.

* * * *

Samantha jumped at the sound of the lock on the cabin door being opened. The oppressive heat of the Jamaican summer had sent her to the bed in anticipation of Capt'n B's return.

"I don't know how I could have been so unlucky," Capt'n B growled, as he entered the room.

"It's not your lack of luck, but my skill, that won me the prize. I trust you will not go back on your word."

Sami looked up to assess the man who had entered the cabin with the man she had come to love.

"For God's sake cover yourself, Samantha."

She looked down at the open bodice of her dress that showed off her breasts. She had purposely left it unbuttoned so that she would be ready for his return.

"W-who..."

"It's not your place to ask questions. I had the bad luck to loose you to this devil in a game of chance. He has robbed me of the fat purse you would have brought in the slave market."

"You bet me in a game of chance?"

"That he did, Miss Howard, and he lost. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Captain James Player. You can be assured you will be safe with me and since I am not a black-hearted pirate I will not be selling you in the next port."

Sami turned her glance to Capt'n B. "How can you send me off with him? I'm not a piece of property. I thought..."

"That is your problem, Samantha. You tend to try to think and it is beyond you. The only thing you are good for is to grace the bed of a man. Captain Player is more than honorable. He will take you to that blasted sea captain you've been talking about ever since I took you off that Spanish ship. I hope

he finds out that you are taking a lover while he is at sea and beats you within an inch of your life. It is exactly what you deserve. As for me, I will have to be content with the money I get for the two bitches below decks. It will not come close to what I could have gotten for you, but it will have to do."

Before she could protest, he grabbed her roughly and pushed her toward the man who had come into the cabin with him.

"Take the bitch and her belongings. Get her out of my sight before I beat her myself. She has caused me nothing but grief since the first day I laid eyes on her."

"Why are you doing this to me? I thought you loved me."

The man who had come in with Capt'n B put his arm around her protectively. "A man like that does not know the meaning of the word love. I am pleased that I was able to best him and rescue you from the terrible fate he had planned for you. I have a dingy waiting and we will be on my ship in time to sail with the tide. The sooner you are away from this monster, the better. With luck, the next port he enters will have a magistrate ready to stretch his neck, which is what he deserves."

Sami looked into the green eyes that had told her he loved her on so many occasions. Instead of love, all she could see was cold hatred. Her own eyes filled with tears as she turned away from him. Any illusions she had of sharing her life with him had been shattered. Her life would never be the same. Even her thoughts of taking a lover for when her new husband was away at sea were gone. No one would ever compare to Capt'n B in her bed. For the first time, she cursed him. He had spoiled her for any other lover, even if all she meant to him was the money he could get in the slave market.

Without further words, she allowed Captain Player to escort her from the cabin and help her get into his dingy.

As they rowed away, she vowed she would make a life for herself and be happy, even if she never saw Capt'n B again.

She turned for one last look at the ship she was leaving behind, and perhaps a glimpse of Capt'n B, before they were both swallowed by the Jamaican night. She wondered if it were her imagination or if Capt'n B was standing at the railing watching her depart. If he did watch her, were his thoughts those of relief to be shed of her? Or regret that he would never see her again? She knew where her thoughts lay. The cold cruelty of his parting words had broken her heart. Just as he had spoiled her for any other lover, he had, at the same time, turned her love to hate.

Turning back, she saw the outline of Captain Player's ship. It looked bigger than the ship she had just left behind. Did he carry passengers as well as cargo? If he did, would she be safe from the pirates that surely would be more than willing to take her prisoner? Would she ever see the plantation her parents had told her about?

Once they arrived at the ship, Captain Player easily climbed the rope ladder that led to the upper deck. When he was on deck, two seamen descended the ladder and helped her to her feet and steadied the ladder so she could climb up. Thoughts of falling from the ladder and drowning in the water of the harbor caused her to shake uncontrollably.

When she was safely on deck, Captain Player, put his arm around her shoulder and guided her away from the railing. "I will take you to my cabin. It would be my pleasure to have you share dinner with me."

"What else do you intend for me to share with you, Captain?"

"Only your company. By the time our dinner is ended, your belongings will be in your cabin and we will be out to sea. Within the week, we will be arriving in the Americas.

Once we are there, I will take you to your original destination and these last few weeks will be nothing but a bad dream."

Although he ate dinner with gusto, Sami barely touched the fish that had been put before her. Any thoughts of an appetite had disappeared.

"Is the fish not to your liking?"

"It is perfect. I am not very hungry."

"Perhaps you would enjoy conversation more than food. Where in the Carolina's were you headed when you had the misfortune to encounter Capt'n B?"

"It's a plantation owned by the parents of my betrothed, called Glenmoore. The family name is MacDonald and the man I am to marry is Brittmore MacDonald."

Captain Player nodded. "I know the family well. Britt and I are old friends, having gone to sea at almost the same time in our lives. He is a good man. He will make you a good husband."

But he will not be Capt'n B. At least he is not an ancient, if he is the same age as Captain Player. I will learn to love him if it is the last thing I do.

"It has been a very long day. I would like to go to my cabin and go to sleep."

"Whatever you wish, my lady. Your cabin should be ready for you, as I am certain my men have delivered your trunk by now."

Sami allowed Captain Player to take her arm and escort her to the cabin that was located right next door to his. She found it to be adequate, although not as spacious as the captain's quarters she was used to.

This ship was definitely equipped for the comfort of passengers. The bed looked inviting and an ornate washstand was bolted to the floor. The basin was made of metal so that it would not break if there should be a storm and rough seas.

After washing her hands and face, she turned to bolt the door and then prepare for bed. With no one to see her, and the oppressive summer heat making the cabin stifling, she removed her dress and lay down naked on the bed.

Once she did, she could feel Capt'n B's hand's running across her body. Memories of their many nights of lovemaking crossed her mind and made even her breasts ache just thinking about it.

Bitter tears stung her eyes. *How could he have done this to me? How could he have wagered me in a game of chance?*

The answer to her questions was all too clear. He did it because he was exactly what Captain Player said he was, a black-hearted pirate.

Perhaps it is all for the best. If he had not lost me in that game of chance, he would have sold me in the next port. Had that been the case, I would have led a life of terrible pain and humiliation. At least now I will have a chance at a proper life, with a husband, even if it is not one I love.

Chapter 13

Britt watched as James rowed the dingy away from his ship, taking Samantha out of his life. What would he do if something happened and she didn't arrive at his parents' home? After this last voyage, giving up the sea was inevitable. He couldn't risk his life in another pirate attack, any more than he could with the magistrates. For the first time, he wanted to live more than he wanted the adventure his chosen lifestyle promised.

"Is the lass gone?"

Britt turned at the sound of Smitty's voice. "Gone and hopefully on her way to Glenmoore. Once I return there I will make her my wife."

"And she will be more than eager to tell yer parents of yer life at sea. Are ye prepared for the uproar that will cause?"

"Of course I am. I hope I can find a way to quiet her before she tells everything she knows. If I cannot, we will leave Glenmoore. I do not have to live off my parents' generosity. Grandfather's house in Charleston is fully staffed and more than adequate for my needs. By living there, once the storm with my parents blows over, we will be close enough for them to visit and yet far enough away so that we do not have to answer to them for our actions."

"But what of the Merry Lady?"

"I trust you will run her to my satisfaction. I am not ignorant of the shipping business. We will each turn a tidy profit. It matters not if you run her as a pirate vessel, or an honest merchant ship. Either way, your life is in danger. I trust you will take good care of my investment."

"Aye Lad, that I will."

"Good. Now get us out of this port. Once we are at sea bring the tub to my quarters and have it filled. Then bring me the two women from below decks."

"Does yer cock miss the lass so much it will take two women to fulfill yer desires?"

"At this point that is none of your concern. Just set our course for San Juan."

"San Juan? Are ye out of yer mind takin' them to a Spanish port? Ye will lose your life for sure."

"Not if what I have planned works. Now do as I say."

Britt turned from his oldest friend and went back to his cabin. The absence of Samantha's trunk mingled with her perfume to bring delightful memories of the weeks they had spent in this cabin, in this bed, to mind.

The cold words he had spoken just before she went with James burned on his tongue as though he had eaten a bowl of the hot peppers he had tried on his last stop in Mexico. From the look on her face, he knew they hurt her, but he had had no choice. It was the only way to get her to go willingly with James. Now his only problem would be silencing her before she could tell his parents what pirate had taken her prisoner.

A knock on his cabin door brought him out of his mental wanderings. When he opened it, he saw his crew bringing not only the tub, but also enough warm water to fill it. Behind them were the two women he had not seen since their capture. The sight of them surprised him.

He remembered Senora Martinez as a sour old woman dressed all in black and spouting Spanish curses at him. As for Carmelita, in the weeks below decks, she had gone from the quiet mouse he remembered to one with sparks flying from her brown eyes.

Once the crew left he stood facing them, trying to find the right words to tell them of his plans. The younger of the two women was indeed a beauty, but the older intrigued him. Her long black hair hung around her shoulders. He was certain once it was washed, along with her body, she would be almost beautiful.

"I have heard," Carmelita began in less than perfect English, "that you are a better lover than any of the men we have had since you took us prisoner. Are you planning to take us both on at once?"

"Hardly," Britt replied, using Spanish instead of English. He certainly did not want his meaning to be misinterpreted.

"That is a shame, as I have wondered what it would be like to be with you," Senora Martinez replied.

The demeanor of the women shocked him. He had expected them to beg with him for their freedom. If not that, he'd expected them to rail at him for the treatment they had received at the hands of his men. He could not imagine that their time aboard the *Merry Lady* had not been as delightful as it was for Samantha.

"As you know, my first intent was to sell you in one of the free ports as slaves. Much has changed since your capture. I now intend to take you to San Juan. In exchange for your freedom and a fat purse, I want your promise that you will tell the authorities that I saved you from the pirates who took you, and have brought you there so you can be returned to the man you were sent there to marry."

Both women looked at him in amazement. "We will take your fat purse, but you will not take us to San Juan."

Now it was Britt's turn to be amazed. He was offering these women their freedom, and to be taken to their original destination, and they were turning him down. What could they be thinking? Were they planning to turn him in to the authorities and allow him to swing?

"But why would you not want to go to a Spanish port?"

"Allow us the privilege of indulging in this bath and we will explain everything."

Britt stood aside as the women got into the tub. While they scrubbed the grime from each other's bodies, he again answered the door. This time it was his men bringing the trunks that belonged to the two women.

Once they were both dry and dressed in clothing they produced from the trunks he poured them each a glass of wine and prepared to hear why they did not want that which he had offered.

"When we left Spain," Senora Martinez began, "we were both being punished. My husband had died and I had taken a lover. When the men in my husband's family learned what I was doing they immediately made plans to send me to the New World with my niece. It seems she had been caught in the loving embrace of a man which her parents found unsuitable. I know the man she was being sent to marry well. He was a friend of my husband, and as cruel as the man I had spent so many childless years with. I hated the fate set for Carmelita but could do nothing but play the part of her chaperone and pray that I would find a new life in the New World."

"I, too, knew of the man my parents were forcing me to marry, and I feared for my life," Carmelita added. "My Aunt Rosa told me many stories of the treatment she had received

at the hands of my uncle. I did not want that kind of a life for myself. When we were first taken prisoner, I did fear for my life, but your men are all healthy lovers. Not one of them ever struck me, nor did they treat me with the contempt that I am certain I would have had to endure at the hands of my promised husband. Although the conditions were not as ideal as they could have been in the hold of your ship, they were not completely unpleasant. I think Aunt Rosa has become quite fond of the older man who visits her bed and treats her as a cherished lover, rather than a possession."

Britt smiled at the girl's description of Smitty. He knew the old man could be a charmer with the ladies. It was evident he had completely entranced the woman who now sat across from him.

"So, if I do not take you to San Juan, what is your plan?"

"We have talked of this often," Rosa said. "To be certain, slavery was not the perfect solution to our dilemma, but it was better than the fate Carmelita's parents had in mind. From what I know of slavery, if a bed slave does as she is told, she can expect to receive relatively good treatment. At the hands of that bastard of a future husband Carmelita could expect to be beaten without reason at any given moment. I know I was while my husband lived. I thank God every day for his death."

"What my aunt is saying is that if you take us to a port other than San Juan, we will take your money and not make accusations against you to the magistrates. With that money we will buy a small house and there entertain many lovers with fat purses."

Britt was shocked. These women were telling him they intended to be whores. What had he done? "Are you certain that is the life you want to lead?" He could not get the picture of Matilda from his mind.

"Would we have suggested it if we were not certain?" Rosa asked. "I know you think of whores as less than human, but they can pick their companions, and if one of them is abusive they can refuse to be with him again. We will garner more respect and freedom practicing the oldest profession, than we ever could with the man to whom Carmelita was promised. I can assure you, he would have found a way to take both of us to his bed. I have lived through one such life and I do not anticipate doing so again. If being captured by pirates could be described as such, I would gladly tell anyone and everyone that you were our savior."

"So, where would you like me to take you? I doubt I could take you back to Kingston and leave with my life. Since you do not want to go to San Juan, how do you feel about one of the French or Dutch islands?"

"Either would be fine," Carmelita replied, "but since Aunt Rosa and I do speak French one of those islands would be preferable."

"We will change course immediately, but only if the terms of my original request are followed. I have no desire to lose my life, if I am giving you your freedom."

"Your terms will be followed. No one will know that you are the pirate who took us prisoner. Now, if we can ease the ache in your manhood, we would be more than happy to accommodate you. Two for the price of one you might say."

Britt laughed at Carmelita's comment. "I do not plan to take either—or both—of you to my bed. From this day forward there is only one woman that I desire and I have just sent her away with my best friend."

Chapter 14

Sami sat beside James, as he insisted she call him, as he drove the carriage from the docks of Charleston to the plantation he called Glenmoore. For most of the voyage, from Jamaica to the Carolinas, she had stayed in her cabin, too sick to enjoy the bright sunlight of the Caribbean summer. At first she had thought it seasickness, but immediately dismissed that idea. She had been at sea for many weeks and not experienced anything of the sort since the first few days out of South Hampton on the Spanish vessel. She finally attributed it to a broken heart over the loss of Capt'n B.

"You will like Percy and Bernadine MacDonald. They are wonderful people."

"If they are so wonderful, what happened to their son? It seems to me he could have found a wife right here without having to send to England for someone he has never met."

"Believe me, Britt has his share of admirers, but none of them have made him want to settle down. His father undoubtedly thought an English girl would be the answer. If I were Britt, I'd give up the sea in a heartbeat and run the family shipping business to be with you."

"Since you know him so well, what is he like?"

“Ah, if I were to tell you all of his secrets, there would be none for you to seek out and learn. Those things are best left for the two of you to discover on your own.”

Sami nodded. It didn't matter what Brittmore MacDonald was like. He would never be Capt'n B and that was the man who had stolen her heart.

A white board fence ran along the right side of the carriage, beyond it fields of a strange looking plant, as well as pastures with fine horses.

“That is Glenmoore to your right. They raise some of the finest tobacco and horses in the area. I think you will be very happy here.”

Sami wanted to scream. He thought she would like the MacDonald's and be happy on their plantation, when all she wanted was to be in the cabin of Capt'n B's ship, making delightful love to him.

Ahead they saw a break in the fence with a gate that was swung wide open. From the road she had seen several small houses and realized they belonged to Glenmoore. Now she was able to get a better look at them and deemed the place to be rather shabby. Where was the beautiful manor house like the one she had grown up in? All she could see were these shacks and fields—many, many fields. Were there no gardens?

“Up ahead is the house,” James said, pointing away from the smaller buildings.

“Then these buildings aren't...”

James' laughter cut her short. “Those are the cabins for the slaves. For a plantation of this size it takes many slaves to do the work. They have to have a place to live.”

Sami breathed a sigh of relief when she focused on the large house at the end of the drive. It stood three stories tall

with gleaming white pillars guarding the wide veranda that surrounded the front of the house.

Once they stopped the carriage, a young black man came running to take the horse to the stables. "There is a trunk that is coming on a freight wagon later, boy. Be certain that it is brought to the house immediately. It contains Miss Howard's belongings."

The young man nodded and led the horse away.

"You were not very polite to him," Sami accused.

"He is a slave, Samantha. I spoke to him as I would have spoken to any slave on my parents' plantation. You are living in a slave society now, not with the gentility of those of the manor. Even the peasants are above this one, as he is bought and sold at the whim of his master. He is nothing but property, has no education and can expect no better treatment than the animals for which some of them care."

Sami held her tongue. If it weren't for James, she would have shared the same fate as this poor man. She couldn't help but wonder how Senora Martinez and Carmelita were adjusting to such a life. Sami could not envision a life where no one respected you. She was too used to being of the Manor born.

As soon as the thought crossed her mind, she began to smile. When she had first been captured, Capt'n B had not considered her mind. For that matter, the captain of the Spanish ship had been more interested in what lay between her legs rather than between her ears. At least as the wife of a well-respected ship's captain in Charleston, she would be more than a bed partner. She would run her own household and...and what? What else would she do with her days while her husband was at sea?

"Does Captain MacDonald have slaves in his household?"

"Britt own slaves? The thought is almost laughable. That is the reason he went to sea in the first place. His father thor-

oughly enjoys being the master of Glenmoore, while Britt questioned the concept of slavery. They clashed over it many times before his grandfather suggested he go to sea with him. The life has suited him well, but I agree with his parents for bringing you here. There is a time to leave the sea and for Britt that time is now."

"What do you mean?"

"The pirates that prey on honest merchantmen who sail between England and the New World are becoming a great threat. Since that is his trade route, he could easily lose his life on any given voyage. Hopefully, you will be able to convince him to stay in Charleston and let others command his ships."

"Can he afford to do that?"

"Britt can afford to do anything that he wants. He is a very wealthy man and his warehouses in Charleston attest to it. He will give you a comfortable life."

A woman appeared on the veranda and waved to them. "James, is that you?"

"You know it is, Bernadine. I have come to deliver your new daughter-in-law to you."

"So your messenger said, when he came here yesterday. Please do come in. Percy and I have been expecting you."

Once Sami stepped up onto the veranda, the woman embraced her. "You so favor your mother that I feel as though I am a young girl again. I know we will become fast friends."

"Thank you," Sami said, unable to take her eyes from the face of the woman her mother considered nearest and dearest to her.

Bernadine ushered them into the foyer of the house and then into the sitting room. Her husband stood by the fireplace, as though he wanted a good look at the woman who would be joining their family. "You are as beautiful as your fa-

ther told me you were. Do come in and tell us of your voyage. To be truthful, we expected your arrival weeks ago."

Thoughts of the raid on the Spanish ship, as well as the one on Capt'n B's ship, crossed her mind, making her weak. She could not understand the dizziness that accompanied them.

"Perhaps it is best if I tell you of Samantha's fate," James said, coming to her rescue.

"Fate? Of what do you speak?"

"Let the girl sit down, Percy. Once she is comfortable, I am certain James will be more than happy to enlighten us."

Sami seated herself on a settee and at Bernadine's insistence put her feet up on the upholstered seat. Immediately a big black woman appeared with a glass of cold lemonade while a child brought in a large fan and began to move it back and forth so that Sami could enjoy a cooling breeze.

As James began to tell of how Sami's father had sent her to the America's on a Spanish ship that was attacked by bloodthirsty pirates, Sami felt as though she was listening to a far-fetched story of someone else. Capt'n B had been anything but bloodthirsty. He had been a gentle lover of which she knew she would find no equal.

"It was by the grace of God that I met up with the man in Jamaica and engaged him in a game of chance. After taking him for all of his coin, I suggested he wager part of his cargo in order to get his money back. Imagine my surprise when he wagered a highborn English woman who was slated for the slave market in the next free port. With my skill as a gambler, I was able to relieve him of that precious cargo. It was even more surprising when she turned out to be Britt's bride-to-be. She has been through much as a captive on the dreaded ship. I do hope you will not hold it against her."

Bernadine dabbed at the corners of her eyes with her lace handkerchief. "Oh, my dear sweet child. What a terrible ordeal! No matter what happened to you on that wretched ship, you are with family now. My father was a sea captain for many years and I know well the things these terrible men are capable of. It is indeed by the grace of God that you have made it to our home. We are forever indebted to James for bringing you to us."

"Indeed we are," Percy commented. "I have wanted Britt to give up the sea for a long time. A woman of your courage and strength will be the perfect match to his wild nature. I think you will be able to convince him that a life within Charleston society will be preferable to one on the high seas, where death could come at any moment."

Sami nodded. All she could think about was the attack of the pirates that almost took Capt'n B's life. She could certainly understand Britt's parents' concern for his safety while at sea.

"Please stay and join us for supper, James. You will have time for a ride while Samantha refreshes herself with a well deserved nap."

Bernadine's offer of a nap was a welcome one. Sami knew she wanted to bathe and put on a fresh dress, providing her trunk had arrived by the time she awoke.

Chapter 15

Britt inflicted his surly mood on everyone. It was no wonder the servants breathed a sign of relief when he left the Charleston house and prowled the docks like a discontented house cat.

He'd remained hidden when he saw James finally leave the Queen's Grace with Samantha. As much as he wanted to run to her and take her in his arms, he refrained. Everything had to be right or she could announce to the world what he did for a living once the Merry Lady was out of sight of land.

The Merry Lady was quite another thing. He was now put in the awkward position of having to find a captain before she sailed again in the spring.

After much discussion, the two Spanish ladies decided they did not want to go to any of the French Islands but to New Orleans instead. The wide-open French port was exactly where they wanted to start their business. Britt had been more than willing to take them there, as he would not have to backtrack to any of the French islands. That way he would be home, and in Samantha's loving embrace, sooner rather than later.

To his dismay, Smitty came to him just before they pulled into the harbor at New Orleans and told him he had decided to give up the sea and stay with the ladies. In a ceremony

unlike any he had performed before, Britt joined Smitty and Rosa in marriage. He decided it would be a strange union, as Rosa made it clear she planned to entertain lovers, and Smitty said the prospect did not bother him at all. He would help run the house, reap the profits and not have to live in fear of having his neck stretched in each port he entered.

The age of pirates is coming to a close. Perhaps it is a good thing I have decided to give up the sea.

It was almost dark when James finally returned to his ship. Before he could board, Britt stopped him.

"Where in the hell have you been?"

"What do you mean? I just returned from taking your intended to Glenmoore."

"That's not what I meant and you know it. I've been in port waiting for you."

"Come aboard with me and we'll have a brandy. We can discuss this like civilized human beings and not out here where anyone could overhear us."

Britt reluctantly followed James aboard the Queen's Grace. Once in his cabin, Britt looked around. Had Samantha spent the voyage in James' bed as she had his for so long? Did she find James a better lover?

"I know how your mind works. Your intended spent the voyage in her own cabin. As much as I would have liked to have her in my bed, she was having none of it. She was too busy cursing you for sending her away. At this point she does not know if she loves you or hates you. Is that what you wanted to hear?"

"Partially. I want to know what took you so long to get here. I've been in port for nearly a week waiting for you to arrive. I thought perhaps you had run into another storm and your ship had sunk."

"The only storm I encountered was the one prior to meeting up with you. Kingston was not the port of my choosing, but with the storm I had little choice. Contrary to what you might think, I did have a destination in mind and I needed to get there. The storm blew me completely off course and so I had to go first to San Juan and then to Cuba. I had cargo for both. If that had not been the case I would have had my surly passenger to Glenmoore much earlier than this."

"How is she?"

"If you ask me, she's pregnant and carrying your child. She was sick for most of the voyage and then today she almost fainted. Your mother attributed it to the fact that she was overly tired from her ordeal at the hands of that terrible pirate who captured her. Of course, being the lady she is, Bernadine told Samantha that all of that was behind her and she could expect a bright future being married to you. After seeing you tonight, I fear for your lovely lady's safety. You certainly are in a mood."

Britt took a drink of his brandy. "I am not in a mood. I miss Samantha and am anxious to make her my wife."

"And what about your ship?"

"I am giving up the sea. There is more than enough to keep me occupied in port. My only problem is that now I must find a captain for the Merry Lady. She is going to become an honest merchant ship, like yours."

"What about Smitty? I thought you told me he was to take over the Merry Lady."

"I thought he was, but he decided it was time to settle down. It seems he has fallen in love with one of the ladies we held below decks. They turned out to be practiced lovers to my men. After I sent Samantha with you I offered them their freedom and said I would take them to San Juan and Carmelita's waiting husband-to-be. They politely declined but said

they would take the money I offered them and passage to a French port, where they could open their own bordello. It came as quite a shock, but not so much a one as Smitty declaring that he would stay with them. I performed the marriage ceremony between Smitty and Rosa myself, on the open seas."

"So, that old pirate is retiring from the sea to marry a whore. How fitting. And what about you?"

"Now that Samantha is safely at my parents' plantation, I will return home, get her to remain silent about who and what I am, and marry her as soon as the service can be arranged. If she is carrying my child, I will *not* have it branded a bastard by the good people of Charleston."

James laughed heartily and poured Britt another brandy. "To marriage and a settled lifestyle. May it set with you better than it would with me."

* * * *

A light rap at the bedroom door woke Sami. To her surprise the large Black woman Bernadine had referred to as Mandy entered the room.

"Good morning, Child. Miss Bernadine sent me up to see to your bath and to bring you a light breakfast. She said that there would be a larger meal served later this morning. Mr. Britt sent word that he is on his way home. She wants you to be all clean and ready to meet him."

"Do you know him, Mandy?" Sami asked, while the woman helped her with her bath.

"Know him? I diapered his bare behind from the day he was born until he learned not to mess his pants. He was such a sweet child. I cried the day he left for the sea. He just couldn't understand why his daddy insisted on having slaves."

"Neither can I. My father runs a large manor with only the peasants, and they are paid for their labors."

"You'll have to learn that things is different here. I do love Master Percy and Miss Bernadine with all my heart. They are just like my own children. You will come to love them too. As for Mr. Britt, there is no way nobody could not love that boy."

Sami couldn't help the tears that formed in her eyes. How could she love anyone when Capt'n B dominated her thoughts and dreams?

"If you be thinkin' bout that pirate who put that baby in your belly, put him out of your mind."

"Baby?"

"Ain't you figured it out, Child? All I had to do was look at the nipples of your breasts and I knew. How long has it been since you've had your woman's bleeding?"

Sami stopped to calculate. It had been before she left home. Could she be pregnant? If she were pregnant, how would her new husband take the news that she was carrying a pirate's bastard?

"You ain't the first fine lady to be taken by pirates and you won't be the last. Until they rid the sea of those devils, no one will be safe."

"But I—I—"

"You only think you love him. Mr. Britt will change your mind. Now hurry and finish your bath. We have to find a suitable dress for you to wear. One that will make my young man fall in love with you immediately."

* * * *

Britt took one last look into the mirror that was attached to the coat rack in the hall.

"How many times do I have to tell you that young woman won't be able to resist your charms, Captain?"

Britt turned to face the man who ran his household with an iron hand. Charles had come with the house. When his

grandfather first built the mansion on the hill, Charles had left the sea to oversee the running of the place in the old man's absence. He was the only one who knew what Britt did as soon as he left sight of land.

"Do you think she will know who I am?"

"Not if you do not speak. With your beard gone and your hair tied back you look like an entirely different man. Of course, the clothes help to disguise you as well."

Britt turned back to the mirror and assessed his appearance one last time. The suit his mother had insisted on giving him for Christmas in preparation for his new life away from the sea fit him perfectly. The emerald green shirt, as well as the emerald stickpin, accented it well.

After thanking Charles, Britt hurried out to his waiting carriage. The reins felt alien in his hands. He would have much preferred the feel of the ship's wheel in them, but he knew those days were gone. Not only because of the fear of hanging, or being killed in another attack, but also because going to sea would put too far a distance between him and Samantha.

The road to his parents' plantation, although familiar, seemed much longer than usual. Was it because of the woman who waited for him at the other end or the possibility that his parents would somehow learn of the life he had spent at sea for so many years?

At last he pulled into the driveway and up to the main house. As expected, a young black boy hurried out to care for his horse. Without stopping to thank the lad, Britt took the steps to the veranda two at a time.

"Mr. Britt, you look so handsome," Mandy greeted him as she pulled him into her ample embrace. "You're goin' to love that woman your folks sent all the way to England for. She is a beauty!"

"I have no doubt that she is, and you are as lovely as ever."

"You go on, Mr. Britt. There are times I think you're more of an Irishman like that Mr. Dooley down the road. Your mama says he's full of blarney and I think you are too."

"Not blarney, Mandy, just pure fact. Now, where will I find my parents?"

"They be in the parlor. Your papa is quite pleased with himself about this young lady. I know you is gonna be just as pleased. She is a rare beauty."

"I have no doubts about that."

After kissing Mandy on the cheek, Britt hurried to the parlor. Once there he found his parents waiting, but not Samantha. Where were they hiding her? Had she had second thoughts and declared her love for James? If that were the case he would think nothing of cutting out the heart of his best friend to win her back.

"So where is this woman you have decided I will marry?"

"She only just arrived," his father advised him. "Mandy told us she is getting ready to meet you as we speak."

"She is a lovely girl, Britt," his mother continued. "She will make you a perfect wife. Then perhaps you will be content to settle down and run your business, as is only proper."

"She could be ugly as a witch with a wart on her nose and you would call her lovely, Mother. As for settling down, I do believe the time is right. This last voyage was very stressful, as we were attacked by pirates, and were it not for Smitty I would not be here with you today."

"Is that old seadog in Charleston? I would like to thank him personally."

Britt turned to face his father. "Smitty met a woman and decided it was time to give up the sea. I did the honors of marrying them at sea."

"You had passengers?"

"Ah no, but I did sail far enough out of the harbor for it to be legal. He was completely happy when I left him."

"That's more the shame, for I would have liked to shake his hand, even though we have had our differences in the past."

"Oh, Samantha, do join us."

His mother's statement caused Britt to turn in the direction of the doorway. Samantha looked ravishing. The dress she wore reminded him of springtime sunshine. He couldn't help but notice the diamond pendant that she wore around her neck. Did she wear it because she loved him, or because she loved the randy pirate who had taken her prisoner? He didn't care which. He had given it to her because he loved her. He knew that now. His only problem would be in persuading her to keep his secret.

* * * *

Sami came down the stairs and was met immediately by Mandy. "My boy is here, Miss Samantha. He is in the parlor with his mama and papa. Now let me look at you one last time before you go to him."

Sami endured Mandy's appraisal of her dress, hair and even the diamond pendant that hung just above her breasts.

"You're as pretty as any picture. My boy will fall in love with you as soon as he sees you."

But can I pretend to love him, when I love Capt'n B?

With Mandy's scrutiny complete, Sami made her way to the doorway of the parlor.

"Oh, Samantha, do join us."

Bernadine's greeting took Sami by surprise. She had hoped for more time to watch the three people who were engaged in conversation without being noticed.

The man who turned to face her was strikingly handsome. His tanned cheeks denoted the hours he spent at sea and his broad shoulders attested to the hard work his lifestyle dictated. He was clean-shaven and his hair was neatly tied back with a green velvet ribbon. It was evident he had recently shaved off a full beard, as the skin on that portion of his face was strikingly white. It was no surprise, as she had seen that none of the men of Capt'n B's ship shaved. She assumed it was because it would be more of an annoyance than a necessity.

The suit he wore fit his large frame and looked as though it had been tailored especially for him. The emerald green shirt, as well as the large gemstone that graced the lapel, accented his coloring perfectly.

It was evident that he favored his father, while she could also see traces of his mother's looks in him as well.

Her heart skipped a beat as, without saying a word, he left his parents and walked calmly to her side. Once they stood eye to eye, he took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly. She could only compare it to the first time she had met Capt'n B and he did the same thing.

"I'll explain everything later," he whispered in her ear. "For now, we are two strangers meeting for the first time."

Sami's mind spun. Capt'n B and Britt were one and the same. The man who had stolen her from the Spanish ship and become her tender lover was the man she was supposed to marry. With all her heart she wanted to throw her arms around his neck and tell him how much she loved him. Instead, she stepped back and assessed him one more time.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Mr. MacDonald."

"It is indeed a pleasure to meet you as well, Miss Howard. I can see that my parents have good taste in choosing wives."

"Now that's a relief," Bernadine said, causing them both to turn to look at her. "I was afraid that terrible pirate James told us about was someone we did not know. By your reaction to each other I now know you were the pirate who captured her."

The look on Britt's face was one of shock. Sami, too felt a bit weak, especially in light of his whispered warning moments earlier.

"You knew?" he gasped.

"Of course we knew," Percy said. "I knew what your grandfather was when I married your mother. I knew what you would become when you went to sea with him. Why do you think I sent to England for a wife for you when stories of pirates being hung for their crimes started reaching my ears? No matter what our differences, I much prefer you to be a captain of commerce than one of the sea."

Sami watched as father and son embraced. She wished her own father would have been equally concerned with her safety.

With tears in his eyes, Britt turned back to face her. "What began as a pirate's conquest has ended with me finding a woman I love beyond all others. Is it true you carry my child, Samantha?"

Sami could only nod mutely. Since she had learned of the child only hours earlier, she'd had little time to adjust to the thought of motherhood.

"That makes today doubly important. How soon can you plan the wedding, Mother?"

"I was hoping for a week from Saturday. It will give Samantha time to adjust to being here. It will also give me time for the preparations, as well as getting used to the idea of becoming a grandmother again."

Before Sami could say another word, Britt scooped her into his arms and carried her to the settee.

"From now on, my love nothing will ever part us. The past weeks with you on James' ship have been the loneliest time of my life. I will never let you out of my sight again."

"And what if I decide to take a lover?" Sami teased, remembering how she told him she would cope with his long absences while at sea.

"There will be no reason for that. I have given up the sea. There is enough in Charleston to keep me content, especially with you and our children to keep me occupied at home."

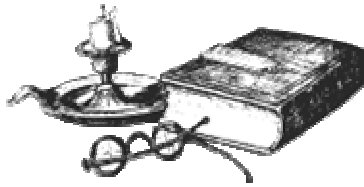
Without further comment, Sami, threw her arms around his neck and allowed him to kiss her again and again. It mattered not that his parents watched what they were doing. It had been their idea to bring the two of them together and she would be eternally in their debt. In the whole world, she knew there was no man who could ever equal the one who, within the span of just over a week, would be her husband.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

By day Shari Dare is a wife, mother and grandmother who works her buns off at her day job. In the wee hours of the morning, she is at her computer tapping out stories she hopes her readers will enjoy as much as she does.

After finding out how much fun it is writing for Whiskey Creek's Torrid Romances, Shari hopes readers will look for more of her books to come in the future.

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