**Flesh**

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**Flesh: Sacrifice Ch. 02**

There was no path. Or, at least, there was no path they followed that Daniella D'Annunzio recognized as such. Growing up in the southern reaches of the Green Mountains, Dani had done her share of hiking before. Well-worn trails, blazes painted on trees to mark the way, bootprints in the dirt -- there was none of that here. In fact, Dani could find no evidence that any human being had ever been along their path before. But, whether they were following the occasional broken twig, or a constellation of specific trees, or other subtle cues that Dani was unable to pick out, the Huaca moved with purpose through the Bolivian swampland.  
  
Two of the younger men -- one of them "Achaku," Dani recalled, though she hadn't been introduced to the other -- led the way, silently scanning the jungle for their path. Taksa Kuchu was next, followed by Dani herself, with Benitez walking just behind her. There were two more young Indians, Qarachupa and Rukuku, and then a stark-naked Summer Monroe walking and talking alongside the elderly Qaray Puka. Asna Charapa and another man followed behind.  
  
What had she been thinking? Dani felt the bounce of her bare breasts as she walked through the jungle. How could she have made such a rash decision? Here she was, in the back country of South America, with people she'd met only the night before, walking topless into an Indian village. Her clothes were behind her, locked away in Benitez's abandoned Land Rover. Who was she, exactly? Because this was not the Dani D'Annunzio she'd come to know. This wasn't the Dani D'Annunzio who'd refused to go skinny dipping with her friends down at the Harriman Reservoir in high school. This wasn't the Dani D'Annunzio who'd held onto her virginity late into Freshman year of college. This wasn't the Dani D'Annunzio who'd spent the past two years covering her body with long, ankle-length skirts in tropical heat. This was someone else.  
  
But, as time passed, Dani stopped thinking about her naked breasts. She stopped processing Taksa Kuchu's bare chest the more she saw it, the Indian girl fitting right in with the other half-naked (mostly naked?) Huaca that were accompanying them to Aya Pampa. Benitez paid little attention to her bare skin, almost to the point that Dani wished he would -- she wanted him to make a joke about her being topless, or maybe say something about bringing along a spare sports bra, or something. But any tension about the Italian girl's toplessness was entirely Dani's own, and after a while, it began to lift.  
  
There were mosquitoes, dragonflies, and other assorted insects circling around them in the air, but the sapumpa fern necklace dutifully performed as promised, keeping Dani bug-free on the hike. She watched the ground beneath her feet, careful to avoid snarled roots and mud puddles. She did occasionally scan the trees around her, fearing that they'd stumble across a band of camera-wielding tourists waiting to capture her in all her glory. Or for a rival tribe of Indians who'd fall upon them with arrows and spears, have their way with the women, and feast on human flesh that night. Or wild animals, waiting to pounce upon them and tear them apart.  
  
They picked their way through the swamps, avoiding the mud and bogs as much as possible. The Huaca seemed to know exactly which direction to take, but Dani's feet and ankles were soon caked in dark, oily mud in any event. They moved steadily through the jungle, the heat and humidity taxing Dani more than she would have liked to admit. Benitez, behind her, was wearing more clothes than anyone else present, and was clearly sweating through them.  
  
They kept well hydrated, Benitez regularly sharing the water from his canteen with the three women. "Suya!" Summer called at one point. "Hold on!" Dani glanced back, and watched the naked blonde step just slightly off the path into a small patch of undergrowth. With the entire party watching, the woman squatted and relieved herself. Dani was aghast. Benitez awkwardly scratched the back of his neck and looked away. The Indians themselves chuckled. And Summer, though clearly unembarrassed by going to the bathroom in front of an audience, made a show of offering a sheepish grin, almost as if she was play-acting some sense of shame for Dani's benefit.  
  
But it was Dani's turn soon enough. They'd been in the car for three hours, and hiking for another two, and it was only a matter of time before Dani started to feel the pressure begin to build in her bladder. Still, she held off as long as she could, hoping that they'd make it to Aya Pampa before she absolutely had to use to the bathroom. What she was expecting there, Dani didn't quite know; it wasn't as if the Huaca would have running water this far out, but maybe there would be some sort of clearly delineated "ladies' room" somewhere away from the village. But another quick water break provided Dani with some sort of emotional cover -- three of the Indian men turned their back to the rest of the group and began pissing into the swamp, and Taksa Kuchu stepped away to do the same. Dani followed the priestess's lead, carefully choosing her footing off of the trail. She was hoping to at least duck behind some sort of tree, but was quickly admonished by Benitez.  
  
"Don't go too far," he warned her. "Greensnakes."  
  
Dani shuddered, and opted for the lesser of two evils. She was still in plain sight of the rest of the group, and she was sure that she was being watched by the Huaca men. But she kept her back to them, slid her thong and loincloth down her thighs in one motion, and squatted in the jungle a few feet from where Taksa Kuchu was doing the same. When she stood, she needed to re-tie and tighten the loincloth, doing so red-faced as she rejoined the rest of the party.  
  
Dani slowly lost track of time, the jungle becoming repetitive green background on her hike. Two, maybe three hours into the walk, the heavens opened and a cloudburst sent wave after wave of warm, tropical rain down upon them. The Huaca seemed to pay the rain no mind, their pace slowing but not altogether stopping. For them, a torrential downpour was a way of life, something they'd simply grown accustomed to. It felt good on Dani's bare skin, washing away the mud and sweat and grime she'd built up over the course of the trip. But her hair was soaked, and she dreaded the inevitable frizzy bird's nest it would become in the humid aftermath. And even more of a concern was the fact that while her animal-skin loincloth resisted the precipitation quite well, the same couldn't be said of the thong that Dani was wearing beneath it.  
  
The rain passed, the clouds cleared, and the sun returned in minutes, the only evidence of the rainfall the rivulets of water that now trickled down Taksa Kuchu's back in front of Dani. Benitez was drenched, and Dani now suffered from wet pair of panties beneath her loincloth, but the rest of the party was no worse for wear, and they plugged on without much comment.  
  
Dani smiled as she listened to Achaku laugh and joke with the other man at the front of the line -- his name was Kusillu, Dani had learned. The two men were happy and giddy as they picked their way through swampland, no doubt buoyed by the guests that they were leading back to Aya Pampa. To hear Taksa Kuchu explain it, the t'ojsiy ritual was part of a larger "phancha" festival, a celebration of blossoming and summer that was already underway. There would be food and drinks and partying throughout the night, all centered around the sacrifice that Summer was making of herself. And though Dani was still squeamish and uncomfortable with what she'd be witnessing, she couldn't help but derive some sense of vicarious happiness and excitement from the tones and facial expressions of Indians around her.  
  
Summer chatted with Qaray Puka, Taksa Kuchu joked and flirted with the other Huaca men. Benitez was occasionally pulled into conversations taking place in the Indian tongue around him, but for the most part, he was Dani's only link to the rest of group. Going back-and-forth in Spanish, Benitez offered the girl a quick tutorial on Huaca culture and etiquette, and started instilling in her a few quick phrases.  
  
"Imataq sutiyaki?" he asked.  
  
"Daniella sutiymi," Dani practiced. "My name is Daniella."  
  
By the time that Dani noticed a more well-worn path, they had arrived at Aya Pampa. She guessed it was maybe two or three o'clock in the afternoon, but after a four-plus hour hike through the hot and humid Bolivian swamps, she was ready to curl up and go to sleep for the night. She had sensed they were getting closer to the village by the way their pace had quickened, by the tone of conversations taking place around her. Soon enough, she noticed a man-made clearing around her. They ascended a small hill, and then picked their way down a steep decline into a narrow little ravine packed tight with native huts.  
  
There were cliff walls on either side of the village, each perfectly vertical and covered completely by a blanket of green moss, sapumpa ferns, and strong, fragrant flowers. The walls themselves were maybe twenty-five feet apart at their widest point, and rose a good three stories above the village; Dani was reminded of some of the narrower streets and alleys of Greenwich Village. There was a little brook that ran haphazardly between the wood-and-bark houses, nothing more than a gentle trickle of water. It was dark, and damp, and cool -- but also so well-hidden and tucked away that Dani could easily see how the Huaca had avoided much attention over the prior centuries.  
  
As Dani met the eyes of the villagers, she suddenly became self-conscious once more about her naked breasts. It was true -- there were certainly more than a dozen women and girls similarly attired, their surprisingly firm breasts displayed out in the open as nonchalantly as on any European beach. But there were others wearing Western-looking tank-tops, animal skin-bras, and native-looking wraps that Dani thought resembled prehistoric tube tops. She kicked herself again for leaving her bra back in the Land Rover, allowing Summer and Taksa Kuchu to dictate to her the social norms of the Huaca people. Once they'd gotten settled, she planned on asking Benitez for the one stuffed deep in his backpack.  
  
Dani couldn't get over how many people were packed so tightly into the little ravine. The houses stood maybe a foot or so from one another, interspersed with jungle trees. And the path that followed the brook was, at most, maybe twice the shoulder-width of a full-grown man. Somehow crammed into this maze were maybe fifty to sixty people -- men, women, and children -- seated out in front of their houses, poking their heads from open doorways, gathered around gentle fires. Their faces lit up as the naked blonde entered their midst -- it would be another fruitful year, it would be another year blessed by Sipusiki, it would be another year marked by Summer's pornographic sex show.  
  
"Rap-hi! Rap-hi!" Summer giggled as she strutted through the center of town dressed in nothing more than her body jewelry. She seemed to know where she was going, and so she led the way, greeting the Indians along the path with a smile and a wave as if on parade. Taksa Kuchu and Qaray Puka followed close behind, a nervous Dani trailing with Benitez.  
  
At some point along the trail, Dani had become divorced from what would transpire tonight. She'd never fully forgotten her own toplessness, but she'd grown somewhat accustomed to it. Here and now, however, it all struck home. These people, these Huaca, were going to violate Doctor Monroe in an elaborate sex ritual to please some native fertility goddess. Summer was here to fuck their sacred silver dildo. And Dani was here because Summer wanted to convince her to do the same. The girl grew cold, and hugged herself around the chest.  
  
Towards the head of the little brook, there was a cave carved out of the rock wall, sitting a few feet above ground level and accessible by a dirt ramp that the Huaca had built decades earlier. Summer stepped up inside, and the rest of the group followed, Dani taken by surprise by just how elaborately the interior had been furnished. They had to push their way through a beaded curtain, and stepped not onto a hard, stony surface, but rather animals furs laid over some sort of reed mat. There were pots and pans and jugs and plants hanging from the ceiling, and a warm fire glowing in a pit at the center of the room. Paintings adorned the rock walls, with gold and silver dangling here and there throughout the cave.  
  
Four aging men sat around the fire, contemporaries of Qaray Puka. Summer found the chief immediately, a wizened, graying old man that made Dani think of Mr. Miyagi. "Uturunku," Summer addressed him, smiling all the while. She reminded the man of Taksa Kuchu's name, and Dr. Benitez's, and introduced the brunette standing topless with her.  
  
"Daniella sutiymi," Dani offered nervously, much to the delight of the old, Huaca men present.  
  
"Dah-nel-a," Uturunku sounded out. "Dah-nel-a."  
  
"Ma-na! Ma-na!" Qaray Puka laughed, and took a step closer to the topless girl. He gently took her by the shoulders, and turned her so that her back was facing the chief. Dani had no idea what he was doing, and looked to Benitez for guidance. The priest offered, "Qapila."  
  
"Qapila!" the chief replied. He laughed, and repeated, "Qapila!"  
  
"'Butterfly,'" Summer translated. "He likes your tattoo."  
  
"Qapila!" one of the other men repeated. Apparently, Dani had earned herself a nickname already.  
  
Uturunku may have been a little old man, but he had a presence about him that was undeniable. When he spoke, everyone else in the room fell silent. They looked to him for approval, looked to him for guidance. This was a chief who'd earned the respect of his people. He made eye contact with Dani, and gestured towards an open spot around the fire.  
  
"Sit and have a drink with him," Summer explained. "Chicha qullisara."  
  
Dani grimaced, thinking back to the high-proof corn liquor she'd downed at the Oveja Negra last night. Summer, sensing the hesitation, explained, "One ceremonial drink. As a show of his hospitality."  
  
Dani nodded, and took a seat around the fire. One by one, the other men got up to leave, allowing Uturunku to have Dani all to himself. Taksa Kuchu, thankfully, settled in next to the brunette, the bare skin of her arm touching Dani's own.  
  
"Qaray Puka is going to take me to get ready for the t'ojsiy," Summer announced, the medicine man already turning from the cave and beckoning the blonde. "I'll see you tonight. Afterwards."  
  
"Already?" Dani asked, shocked that they weren't going to be allowed a little more time to settle in.  
  
"It's tonight," Summer explained. "And we'll be leaving tomorrow morning. We're not here in Aya Pampa for very long."  
  
"And I'm going to make my rounds while we still have some sunlight," Benitez added.  
  
"Wait, what?" Dani asked. The only reason she'd come to Aya Pampa, the only reason she'd subjected herself to all this, was the possibility that Benitez might have a need for her -- taking water samples, leading health demonstrations, delivering babies or whatever. But more pressingly, she didn't want to be left here with Uturunku. "No, let me help."  
  
Benitez looked to Summer, and then over at the chief. He shook his head, and told the brunette, "No, stay here. Taksa Kuchu will stay here with you for now. Visit with the chief. You're a newcomer, a new guest. I won't be far."  
  
Dani frowned. Beside her, Taksa Kuchu had already engaged the chief, and was jabbering back and forth with him. Dani didn't like being left here in the cave, even if she did have Taksa Kuchu to translate for her. Not that she was worried about being overpowered or threatened by Uturunku in any way, but the whole thing was awkward and weird. She was topless, and seated alongside another topless girl, casually engaged in conversation by an old Indian man in a cave.  
  
Across the fire, Uturunku met Dani's eyes. He reached for a large, glass bottle, and began to empty the entirety of its contents into a bowl carved from a sizable green gourd. Chicha. More chicha than Dani cared to drink, truth be told. Everything she learned in the Peace Corps, however, told her to be open to new cultures, and Dani knew it would be unforgivable to not take a few sips, at least.  
  
Uturunku took a swig from the gourd, smiled, and passed the chicha to Dani. Nervously, the brunette tipped her head and knocked back a mouthful for the liquor. Not unlike the previous night, when a cold Paceña had been just the thing after a tortuously long bus trip, the chicha seemed to hit the spot, to warm her up from the inside out, to buoy her spirits after the hike through the swamps. Dani, though, was a bit worried about the alcohol's effects with an empty stomach.  
  
As Uturunku asked a question of Taksa Kuchu, Dani found herself listening to the sounds from outside the cave. There was an excited murmur that had overtaken the village of Aya Pampa, and though Dani was unfamiliar with what the village was like on a day-to-day basis, there was electricity in the air, not unlike one of the cold, Green Mountain Christmas Eves of her childhood. No matter how vulgar or amoral what Summer planned to do was, it was clear that the Huaca did not share Dani's sense of disapproval.  
  
"He wants to know about snow," Taksa Kuchu translated for the chief, pulling Dani's attention back inside the cave.  
  
"Snow?"  
  
She quickly warmed to the gentle Uturunku. She had wanted to villainize him, villainize his entire tribe, for what they were planning to do to Summer, what Summer hoped that they'd do to Dani herself. But this was not a lecherous old man, or some sort of sexual predator residing in the jungle. Uturunku was warm, welcoming, and seemed to try his best to put Dani at ease. A few more rounds of chicha certainly didn't hurt, but Dani found herself drawn to the old man in a way that she might have to a goofy old uncle at a family picnic. There was an occasional, casual glance at Dani's chest, but Dani quickly rationalized that she might be more uncomfortable if he didn't, that a relaxed and cursory once-over of her breasts was better than avoiding them and risking over-sexualizing them. He did the same to Taksa Kuchu, and following the votary's lead, Dani paid no notice to the chief's attention.  
  
He laughed and joked with them, asking Dani questions of the outside world, and drawing parallels to the things he knew about in his own. He told stories about his wives - Dani gathered that he had four, and when she gently teased him about keeping so many women happy, Uturunku mimed wiping flop sweat from his brow and admitted to the two girls that having one wife, the way the Americans did, would be much, much easier. He talked to them about the history of his village, and the flowers and plants that grew along the little ravine's walls. He asked Dani about Vermont, and about school, and about the food and wine she had back in the States. And, once he'd discovered that she'd spent the past two years living among a native tribe in Honduras, Uturunku was enraptured.  
  
Soon enough, the outside world faded away. Dani had probably drunk too much chicha already, but the gourd continued to be passed around the little circle, Taksa Kuchu and Uturunku each taking their sip before passing it back to the brunette. Whatever Benitez was doing, whatever the Huaca were doing to Summer, seemed less important than the bonding that Dani was doing in the cave. She laughed along with the aging chief, engaged by his stories and his presence. She realized that, in two years, she'd never spent this much quality time with any of the Kwirku -- their relationship, perhaps tainted by an earlier Peace Corps volunteer, had started out as almost adversarial and contemptuous in both directions. A sliver of doubt began to appear in Dani's thinking -- she could, finally, understand what Summer was doing here among the Huaca, even just a little bit.

Uturunku did his best to explain the curse, and to explain how Summer fit into their particular world view.  
  
Some years ago, long before the Ambrosia Pharmaceuticals group had been sent from New York, the Huaca had been governed by a warrior king in Yapamantataq. Though the Huaca lived in little villages stretched across the Valle de los Reyes, Hatun Puka was chief among chiefs. But one day, he grew sick and passed away, and his first-born son ascended to throne. This, however, displeased Sipusiki. For, you see, Uru Kuchi was not, in fact, Hatun Puka's son. Betrayed by his wife Apasanka, Hatun Puka had been poisoned by his closest advisor, Chimpilaku, who was Uru Kuchi's real father. Having staged a coup to overthrow chief-among-chiefs, Apasanka, Chimpilaku, and Uru Kuchi had damned the Huaca in the eyes of the fertility goddess.  
  
Sipusiki cursed the Huaca people throughout the valley, and they were unable to have children. Aya Pampa, Uca Pacha, Wasi Wasi -- the story was the same from village to village to village, and the elders soon began to worry about whether the Huaca would survive. Huaca medicine men performed the t'ojsiy time and time again, on animals and Huaca women alike, sacrificing them to Sipusiki. But Sipusiki was not pleased, and so long as Uru Kuchi sat on the thrown in Yapamantataq, the Huaca were doomed.  
  
Uturunku's eyes lit up as he got the next part.  
  
And then, in the small, outlying village of Hanan Pacha, Sipusiki blessed Chaqiska. An outsider, a doctor, a woman named "Monroe," Sipusiki decided that the Huaca could only be saved by the gracious sacrifice of a non-Huaca, as the Huaca women themselves were cursed. Walking alongside her in spirit, and possessing a part of her, Sipusiki became Chaqiska, Chaqiska became Sipusiki. The t'ojsiy was performed, and Chaqiska's "liberation" became the liberation of Hanan Pacha as a whole.  
  
One by one, Chaqiska visited village after village, and marched on Yapamantataq with the High Priestess of Sipusiki, overthrowing Uru Kuchi and ensuring the blessing of Sipusiki once more. Chaqiska's sacrifice having pleased the fertility goddess once, she continued to return to Hanan Pacha, to Yapamantataq, to Wasi Wasi, to Aya Pampa each and every year, ensuring the birth of a new generation of Huaca people.  
  
Dani scratched her head. She had a difficult time envisioning Summer Monroe staging a coup of her own here in the Oriente, but it was clear that her presence had played strongly into the beliefs and magicks of the Huaca people. Unfortunately, it seemed that they'd almost become too dependent on the outsider, almost as if they were unable to "please Sipusiki" or have children on their own without her presence. Or, barring that, without the presence of some other non-Huaca girl, which was why Dani was here in the first place.  
  
The fire flickered against the walls of the cave, and Dani realized that she'd completely lost track of time. From the hours in Benitez's Land Rover to the hours in the swamps to the hours in the cave here in Aya Pampa, imbibing shot after shot of chicha, Dani was baffled when she glanced through the beaded curtains to find that the sun had already gone down.  
  
"Phancha!" Uturunku announced happily, apparently noticing the same thing. "Phancha! Phancha!"  
  
"The Blossom Festival," Taksa Kuchu translated. "It's time to celebrate."  
  
The little village had been transformed by the time that Dani emerged, weak-kneed and more than a bit tipsy, from the chief's cave. Torches were everywhere, and all of Aya Pampa was bathed in the soft orange glow of their light. Streamers made of flower petals hung overhead, and the entire ravine echoed with laughter, cheering, and rhythmic drumbeats. There was singing somewhere up the little stream, a silly song from what Dani could tell, but a song of absolute joy. Faces were painted, hair was done up, and the Huaca seemed to be dressed in the "Sunday best," clean clothes and loincloths all around.  
  
Uturunku wrapped his arms around an approaching girl, maybe eighteen or nineteen at the oldest. She smiled broadly as he gave her instructions, glancing in Dani's direction all the while. She, like Dani and Taksa Kuchu, was wearing nothing more than an animal-skin loincloth. But, unlike the drab brown that the two visitors sported, she was wearing a brick-red loincloth, speckled with alternating white stripes and white dots. Dani had a difficult time believing that such a design could have come from an animal naturally, but Taksa Kuchu later explained Bolivian tapirs did have such coloration when they were young.  
  
"Tutakuru," Taksa Kuchu introduced the girl. "Uturunku's niece. She's here to prepare us for the ceremony."  
  
Dani blanched. "No, no, no," she stammered, backing away and waving her hands. Looking to Taksa Kuchu, she yelped, "No! No! I'm only here to observe. That's what Summer said."  
  
Taksa Kuchu nearly keeled over laughing, and after she explained Dani's concerns to Tutakuru and Uturunku, they did the same. "It is fine," Taksa Kuchu explained. "You are not being prepared for the t'ojsiy. That's much more extensive than this. Tutakuru just wants to do our hair, and maybe apply some make-up."  
  
Dani was unnerved, but breathed a quick sigh of relief. The last thing she wanted was some sort of misunderstanding in which she got penetrated and violated in Summer's stead. That may have been Summer's intention in bringing her here to the Oriente, but it was nothing that Dani had any interest in. But, despite reassurances from Taksa Kuchu and a shaking of the head from Tutakuru, the brunette was still on edge -- she scanned the crowds for any sign of Summer or Benitez, looking for a more familiar Western face.  
  
Not seeing either, Dani dutifully bid Uturunku adieu, and followed Tutakuru and Taksa Kuchu through the labyrinth of Huaca and Huaca houses that made up Aya Pampa. She was stared at, sure enough, but not because she was topless. If anything, the arrival of Phancha that evening had spurred many of the more modern-dressed Huaca to resume their traditional garb, and there were even more women topless than when Dani and her party had first entered the village. But she was different and out-of-the-ordinary, with Mediterranean features, big brown eyes, and paler skin -- though admittedly not as pale as Summer. But she was an outsider, like Summer Monroe. And if Summer were blessed by Sipusiki, would Dani be the same?  
  
Among the Huaca people, Dani doubted more than a handful of them might ever have even seen a white-skinned person. They probably had run-ins with the local Benianos, Quechua and mestizos alike. And there were probably a few people of Spanish descent who made their way out into the yungas. But if even Taksa Kuchu, who seemed worldly by comparison, had never gone further than Rurrenabaque, Dani doubted that Uturunku or Qaray Puka or Tutakura had ventured much further.  
  
Dani's novelty was driven home as she ducked inside one of the small, wooden huts, following closely behind Tutakura. As she entered, she was stared at, giggled over, and pawed by a collection of teenage girls who looked about the same age as Tutakura herself. The chief's niece did her best to introduce those present, but Dani quickly forgot most of their names -- an almost indistinguishable collection of t's and q's and u's.  
  
"Dani sutiymi," Dani introduced herself, much to the delight of the chattering teenagers.  
  
"Ma-na," Taksa Kuchu giggled, and gestured at the butterfly tattoo on Dani's back. "Sutiyas 'Qapila'!"  
  
"Qapila!" the girls shouted in unison, one of them being so bold as to touch the colorful little design on Dani's back. Dani herself shrugged -- if Summer was okay being "Chaqiska," it wouldn't hurt for Dani to play the part of "Qapila."  
  
Dani and Taksa Kuchu, it seemed, had stumbled into some sort of bath house, and the assembled girls were preening themselves as if readying for the prom. Dani supposed it was the closest equivalent in Huaca society. The Kwirku had gone all out for the Harvest festival, and maybe Phancha, representing the Spring and blossoming and fertility and planting, was held in the same esteem among the Huaca. Every single girl was topless, and some of them wore nothing at all. Like Summer and Taksa Kuchu, they were pierced here, there, and everywhere, silver protruding from navels and nipples and more intimate places. And, like the guides who'd hiked into Aya Pampa with them from the road, the girls also were adorned with intricate, Inca-inspired scars and brands, none terribly intrusive upon their natural beauty, but present nonetheless.  
  
Tutakura beckoned one of the other girls, and the two immediately went to work on the American girl in their midst. Dani hadn't showered since that morning -- before the car ride, before the hike through the swamps, before the afternoon in the smoke-filled cave -- and soon found herself being scrubbed clean by Tutakura's companion. The girl was rough, positioning Dani in ways that allowed her to better clean the girl's back and underarms. And Dani, still being a bit more drunk than she'd intended to be, had no choice but to do as she was instructed. She offered the occasional expletive as her bath maid scrubbed a bit too hard, or pushed her too roughly to her knees, but otherwise rolled with the punches.  
  
Dani was on her hands and knees when she heard a squeal from Tutakura, and she knew she was in trouble. She glanced back at her hips, finding that Tutakura had hooked her thumb under the waistband of Dani's black thong, and was screaming in delight at her friends, all of whom seemed to be laughing at Dani's expense. Dani glanced to Taksa Kuchu for help.  
  
Unlike the American girl, the Huaca priestess had been left to tend to herself. More accustomed the ways of the Huaca, and probably well-versed in the ways of the Phancha, Taksa Kuchu was squatting on the dirt floor naked, her loincloth having been hung on the bathhouse wall for the time being. She had washed up, and was now carefully applying a thick red paste in simple designs on her forearms. "They like your panties," Taksa Kuchu translated.  
  
"I can tell," Dani answered squeamishly. "But...wait! Wait!" Before she had an opportunity to fight Tutakura and her friend, her thong was being tugged down her thighs and out from under her loincloth. She tried to fight them, weakly, but she was no match for the Huaca girls in her inebriated state, and resigned herself to pleading with them to give her underwear back after it had been completely stripped from her.  
  
Dani watched in horror as Tutakura slithered across the bathhouse and slipped the black thong on herself. The chief's niece, like Taksa Kuchu, had completely undressed, and as she put Dani's underwear on, she was wearing the black lace material and nothing more. Taksa Kuchu simply laughed along with the other girls at the sight of Tutakura in Dani's panties, and gave Dani a sheepish look, as if to say, "We tried to warn you."  
  
Having had her fun, Tutakura shed the black thong, and guiltily offered it back to Dani. Dani took it back, but hesitated before putting it back on. Leaving aside the fact that it had just been on another woman, a stranger, Dani thought that she maybe she was being a bit ridiculous in wearing the thong in the first place. She was surrounded by a room full of naked and half-naked girls, none of whom were wearing any more than their own loincloths and body jewelry in preparation for tonight's ceremony. Perhaps the underwear was going to make her even more of a spectacle out in the village than she'd be without it, doing her best to just try to fit in. She grimaced, balled up the panties in her right hand, and refrained from putting them back on. At least for now.  
  
Dani winched at Tutakura's friend reached for the knot on the side of her loincloth, but she didn't fight this time. Tutakura and the other girl continued to scrub, and though Dani insisted that she was more than capable of washing herself, her offers to help went ignored. She jumped a bit when Tutakura's hand found her pussy, but the teenaged girl was doing nothing more than rubbing a damp washcloth over it, and Dani bit her lip and looked the other way.  
  
Gentle hands found the heart-shaped pendant that hung from Dani's belly-button, and Tutakura posed a question to Taksa Kuchu, gesturing at Dani's breasts. "She's offering to pierce your nipples," Taksa Kuchu translated slyly, knowing full well what Dani's reaction would be.  
  
"Thanks. But no thank you."  
  
Scrubbed clean, with the sweat washed from her back and her neck, and the swamp mud washed from her feet, Dani was set back, sitting up with her legs bent under her. The sapumpa fern necklace had been removed, and in its place were a series of new fronds, carefully woven into Dani's long, brown hair by Tutakura. A new girl, meanwhile, who'd apparently finished getting ready herself, joined the chief's niece in preparing the American girl, and squatted down in front of Dani was a small bowl of the foul-smelling red paste. As Dani sat still while Tutakura played with her hair, this new girl reached up and painted a single red line down the length of Dani's front, from between her breasts all the way down to the start of her pubic hair. There were two more, one on either side, starting from just under each breast and stopping at the brunette's pelvis. A similar pattern was painted on Dani's face -- a long, red line running down the center of face from her forehead to her chin, with another pair flanking it on either side, from just below her eyes to her jaw line.  
  
The girl was not quite done yet, however. In contrast with just how non-sexual Dani's toplessness had been since arriving in Aya Pampa, the girl reached up and twisted each nipple. Dani gasped, both out of surprise and for the shiver the act had sent shooting up and down her spine. She was loathe to admit it, but she'd become a little turned on by all the attention she'd been receiving, with so many hands running up and down her body. By no means was she a lesbian, or even somewhat curious, but Dani's nipples had been standing straight out before being tweaked, and now there was no hope of them subsiding before she left the bath house. They were, however, now a deep, crimson red, coated in a darker shade of the paint that Dani's wore over the rest of her body. For her final act, the girl pushed Dani forward, and back onto her hands and knees, with Tutakura taking a break from the sapumpa ferns in Dani's hair. Covering her entire hand in an orange-yellow paint, the girl place an upside-down handprint on Dani's right buttock.  
  
Nudity and panty-stealing and body-painting were not in Dani's original agreement to come with Summer. But Summer was nowhere near by. Benitez was off somewhere else in the village. And only Taksa Kuchu was with her, and Taksa Kuchu was Huaca herself, and apparently saw nothing strange in the way that Dani was being treated by her tribeswomen. Like she had so many times since arriving in San Eduardo the previous night, Dani relented and rolled with the punches.  
  
Taksa Kuchu collected the loincloth that she'd loaned Dani that morning, and Dani herself was offered another by one of the older girls in the bathhouse. Like the tapir-skin that Tutakura had been wearing when she was first introduced, the new loincloth was decidedly more ornate than the simple brown one Dani had been wearing. It was shorter, only long enough that it looked like it might stop at her knee, but had been made from a spotted jaguar. Given where the jaguar ranked in most South American cosmology, Dani decided that it would be an insult to turn the gift down, even if she was going to look like something out of Tarzan, or maybe Sheena, Queen of the Jungle. Apparently, however, it wasn't a loan, or even a straight-up gift -- the girl looked expectantly at Dani's right hand, which held her own balled-up black lace thong. Dani again glanced to Taksa Kuchu for help, but again found none coming, and decided to relent. She had more underwear back at the Oveja Negra, and another pair in Benitez's backpack should she decided that the loincloth was simply too revealing. If anything, Dani wondered if she was shortchanging the Huaca girl by trading a pair of mass-produced Eve Intimates-brand panties for genuine jaguar fur.  
  
Her sandals were the next upgrade. Dani had worn a pair of sporty, Teva-like sandals through the swamps. Summer, Taksa Kuchu, and their Huaca escort had all been barefoot, but Dani was not so sure-footed that she'd felt comfortable traipsing through the jungle without something on her feet. Along the way, they'd gotten caked in mud and dirt and sand, and by the time she'd taken them off to enter the bathhouse, they'd been almost unrecognizable. To her rescue came one of Tutakura's friends, who arrived late but carrying a pair of strappy, straw-colored Spanish espadrilles that looked as if they'd been purchased from a high-end shoe store somewhere in New York. Dani couldn't believe her eyes -- they were the sort of shoes that American girls dropped small fortunes on, and they were here, in a remote jungle village on the Western edges of the Amazon.  
  
Apparently, Taksa Kuchu explained after hearing the story herself, the girl's husband had traded with one of the local Benianos, but the girl, unaccustomed to the high-heeled wedge, had been unable to wear them. Where the Beniano had procured the sandals was a source of mystery in and of itself, and Dani guessed that the story of their journey was no less interesting than her own. Unlike the loincloth, these were offered gratis, as a gift, as the Huaca girl had no interest in them, and Dani had nothing more on her person to trade.  
  
When they were all done, Dani followed Taksa Kuchu and the wide-smiling Tutakura out of the bathhouse. Taksa Kuchu had donned the same, familiar loincloth she'd been wearing since they left the Land Rover, while Dani herself was in the newly acquiried jaguar skin - which, unfortunately, was a bit shorter than she'd expected, falling only a little more than half-way down her thighs on both the front and back. She was extremely aware of just how exposed her pussy was, out in the open for anyone who happened to glance her way as she walked. While she had longed to be in Benitez's reassuring company for the better part of the afternoon, she was second-guessing herself now -- she doubted she'd last long in his presence without asking for her spare pair of panties. She was naked, after all, nothing but two narrow animal-skin panels protecting her from complete and total exposure. She wore the espadrilles, as well, the straps climbing up her calves and holding themselves in place. She was a bit of a sight, she knew, walking around Aya Pampa in a pair of heels, but damn if she didn't look good. If she were going to be this naked in front of Benitez, she at least didn't want him to recoil at the sight of her. Her hair was pinned up, bringing the senior prom metaphor to a head, woven through with sapumpa fern as a practicality to keep mosquitoes away.  
  
They found Benitez playing a shell game just upriver, the omnipresent walls of the ravine flickering in torch light on either side. He did a double take when he saw Dani, and Dani smiled to herself, knowing that all the primping and body-painting had had their desired effect. She felt a bit stupid, covering in paint, decked out in jaguar-skin, and wearing high-heeled sandals, especially given that Benitez himself was still wearing the same outfit he'd worn all day. Oh well, Dani thought to herself -- it wouldn't be the first time that there were different rules for men and women.  
  
As Dani approached the shell game, however, and with all eyes on her, she felt a horrifying tug at her hip, and sensed the jaguar-skin loincloth begin to slide from her hips. She shrieked, much to the joy of the crowd, and managed to catch the loincloth before it completely slid off -- but not before she was sure she'd exposed her pussy to Benitez. Redfaced, she carefully retied the loincloth, and reassured herself that Benitez was both a doctor and a gentleman.

"They coaxed you out of your underwear?" Benitez laughed.  
  
Dani put a hand over her eyes in a combination of mock and genuine shame.  
  
"You wouldn't be the first," he went on. "Huaca girls like to get their hands on Western clothes."  
  
That explains the espadrilles, Dani thought to herself. "Okay, okay, you guys were right. I should have just started off this way." She took a seat on a log next to Benitez, extremely careful about just how she sat.  
  
Benitez shrugged. "When in Rome..."  
  
Dani scowled. "So where's your loincloth?" she teased. "Where's your nipple piercings and body paint?"  
  
"Believe me," Benitez smiled, "if these people had any interest in me for their ritual, I'd be done up in traditional garb the way you and Summer are."  
  
Dani swallowed hard. "I'm not...?"  
  
"No," Benitez laughed. "No. A million times no. That's what Summer is here for."  
  
"Just making sure."  
  
The party seemed to develop all around them. Bottles of chicha and corn beer were all around them, and Dani, sobering up somewhat from the afternoon in the cave with Uturunku, developed a taste for a sweet, fermented fruit juice that was made from something called a "carambola." There was cheering, and laughing, and singing, the villagers each stopping by to shake Benitez's hand and meeting Dani. "Qapila sutiymi," Dani introduced herself, eliciting a raised eyebrow from Benitez.  
  
"It's easier being Qapila," Dani explained. "Daniella D'Annunzio would have a hard time with all of this."  
  
"You're not 'Qapila' quite yet," Benitez joked. "You're still 'Sika Sika," a caterpillar in her cocoon." He gestured up the river, vaguely in Summer's direction somewhere out of sight. "She's the Qapila."  
  
Dani chose to ignore the comment. If what Summer intended to do was necessary in becoming a butterfly, Dani was happy to remain "Sika Sika," thank you very much. Instead, she asked, "Where is she?"  
  
Benitez looked up the river again. "Up the river somewhere." He shrugged, and wrinkled his brow. "Maybe out in the jungle? There's probably a little altar or something where they're readying her for the t'ojsiy."  
  
"Aren't you worried about her? Don't you want to know where she is?" Dani asked, wondering if there was anything worse that the Huaca could do to her that she hadn't already volunteered for.  
  
"I used to be," Benitez answered. "When I first started traveling with Summer, I was. But she'd been doing this for years before I showed up on the scene, and she knows these people better than I ever will. She trusts them, trusts them absolutely." He took a sip of his corn beer. "And so I have to, too."  
  
Benitez nodded in Uturunku's direction as he joined the party, and Dani offered a little wave. Behind him was Tutakura, who made a b-line across the little clearing and grabbed at Dani's wrist.  
  
"The chimaychi," Benitez explained. "She wants you to dance with her."  
  
Dani had no interest in dancing. She'd certainly drunk enough chicha and carambola wine in order to dance if she were back in New York, but back in New York she never had to worried about the way her tits bounced around in the open, or whether her loincloth was going to fall aside and expose her once more. But Tutakura was insistent, and no amount of head-shaking from Dani seemed to get her lack of interest across. Benitez was no help, laughing at her protestations, and Taksa Kuchu had already joined a number of the girls from the bathhouse in a long line of skipping and hopping dancers.  
  
As it turned out, there wasn't much to the chimaychi dance, at least not in the one-step, two-step nature of the waltz or the tango. The more important thing, Dani realized, was that the dancer display unbridled joy, and so long as her hips and shoulders shook in some relation to the rhythm of the jungle drums, Dani would be all right. She felt like a stripper, jiggling around in nothing more than an animal-print loincloth, and her breasts seemed to move independently of the rest of her body. But, aside from Benitez, she was surrounded by men and women similarly attired, similarly undulating in beat with the music, and similarly looking ridiculous. So long as she was able to forget that the Argentine doctor was there, Dani was able to cut loose a little, to forget her current state of undress, and to have a good time.  
  
Dani, as it turned out, wasn't the only one to lose her loincloth that night. There was a man in his late twenties who lost his while dancing to the beat, and the gathered crowd burst out in laughter. It was all in good fun, however, and the naked young man smiled sheepishly, retied his loincloth, and rejoined the chimaychi line with no lingering bad feelings. Dani had laughed along with everyone else, and so when the knot holding her own loincloth slipped and dropped down her thighs once more, all she could do was laugh at herself. Unfortunately, she was careening around a small fire at a fairly high speed, and the sudden exposure was enough to trip her up, and start a small collision of bodies as she fell to the ground and grappled for her only clothing.  
  
"I think we've seen just about enough of that," Dani wheezed as she returned to Benitez and his log bench. She reached into his backpack, felt the cup of her lace bra, and managed to lay her hands on the red thong beneath it. Stepping into it, she wriggled the panties up her thighs and under her retied loincloth. And, as it was a thong, it did little to shield the orange-yellow handprint that Tutakura's friend had placed on her backside.  
  
"Maybe I'm tying this wrong..." Dani wondered allowed as she sat back down next to Benitez.  
  
"I'm sure it's fine," Benitez offered absentmindedly, glancing up the river. He was paying the girl no mind. In front of him was a large banana leaf, covered in some type of fresh fish and rice. As she fiddled with the knot at her hip, Dani leaned over and helped herself to Benitez's dinner.  
  
"Is it true?" Dani asked. She'd just quickly relayed the story Uturunku had told of Summer and the High Priestess of Sipusiki overthrowing Uru Kuchi and his mother.  
  
Benitez laughed heartily. "Yeah, Summer led a real insurrection," he offered sarcastically. He took another swig of beer, wiped his mouth, and explained. "This is years before me, but it's all wrapped up in the tall tales and mythology that the Huaca have for Summer.  
  
"So she gets back from Hanan Pacha, the first place she'd ever done this little rite. And in less than twenty-four hours, she becomes the talk of the entire valley. Somehow. Somehow, a people with no telephones or proper writing and spread out over two departments manage to communicate gossip faster than any people on Earth. And so Summer's camp starts getting bombarded with requests, invitations to come perform the t'ojsiy at these little villages thoughout Huaca country -- Beni, Pando, Santa Cruz, and even into Brazil. And she's still a little freaked out about what she'd done in the first place, so naturally, she says "no." She just wants to get back to her work.  
  
"But they keep coming. And begging. And pleading. And Summer gets so guilt-ridden about their plight that she agrees to go with them -- just once more. She's already done it once, so really, how much more would they be asking of her? It's not as if anyone from back home will ever know what she was doing. And, you know, after working in a lab for long, and helping some god-awful pharmaceuticals company come up with the next beauty secret or face cream or breast enhancer or whatever, she's struck by the opportunity to have a real impact on the Huaca. If not for her, maybe the whole way of life disappears.  
  
"So if she's going to do what she's going to do just one more time, she decides that she better do it in Yapamantataq, which is more or less the capital of the Huaca world. Like, five days into the jungle, completely hidden from the Western world, plucked from way back in time -- you've got to see it some day, it's amazing. It's like an old Incan city, if the Conquistadors had never come. And so she goes to Yapamantataq, she meets the High Priestess and she meets this fat, fat 'king' -- Uru Kuchi.  
  
"Now, bear in mind, Summer has no idea the underlying history of the Sipusiki curse -- she just thinks that it's this self-propagating myth that needs to be extinguished for the Huaca's own good. And, of course, the revelations about Uru Kuchi not being Hatun Paka's son, and the poisoning and all else -- that didn't come out until afterwards, even if there were whispers among some of the elders. But Summer goes in, gets pushed to the limit in that way that only the Huaca can do to a volunteer, and then performs the t'ojsiy. Uru Kuchi gets so turned on, panting and clutching his chest and what-have-you, that he just drops dead."  
  
"So Summer....?"  
  
Benitez nodded. "Killed him with her orgasm." He chuckled a bit. "So Summer's freaked out, naturally, but the truth starts trickling out. Apasanka had cheated on Hatun Paka. Uru Kuchi was actually the son of Chimpilaku. Chimpilaku poisoned Hatun Paka. And so on and so on. The High Priestess hands the throne to Hatun Paka's next oldest son, Sipusiki's curse is lifted, and so on and so forth."  
  
Dani let this all sink in. She was a bit worried about Benitez casually slipping in the part of about the Huaca pushing their volunteers; she sat there in nothing but a loincloth and her red thong, and could relate. But she was curious about something else. "Sipusiki's curse gets lifted? So then...what're we doing here?"  
  
"Tradition," the doctor answered. "The t'ojsiy used to be performed every year, as a part of the Phancha festival. Usually on an animal. Sometimes on one of the village girls. But then here's Summer. And she seems somehow blessed by Sipusiki. Like Sipusiki's possessing her, or Summer's channeling Sipusiki, or something. It's a bit mixed up."  
  
A beat passed. Dani, scratching her forehead, asked, "Then why am I here? Why has she been trying to recruit other girls? Wouldn't she be only one able to perform the ritual?"  
  
"Well, a ritual's a ritual, right? Summer gets inserted into the Huaca cosmology, and suddenly things get a bit more complicated. It's not as important to the Huaca that it's Summer, exactly. But just that it's not a Huaca. The only girl that Summer was ever able to get to actually do this, to actually get to perform the rite, was one of her graduate students back in La Paz, this girl from Montevideo. And yeah, there a few hoops to jump through at the beginning when she and Summer got to that first village, but...you know...it worked itself out."  
  
"And she's the one who went native?"  
  
"Yeah," Benitez answered solemnly. "Never met her myself, so I can't really speak to it as well as Summer might be able to. But it wasn't anything nefarious or mind-controlling or anything like that. She was somewhere out by Porto Velho, and just decided to stay." Benitez looked out across the dancing Huaca. "It's not such a bad life. Simple. And getting treated like some sort of goddess on top of that? I can understand the temptation."  
  
There was too thin a line between goddess and sexual plaything for Dani, but she supposed that she could understand someone falling for this life. There were a few modern t-shirts and tools scattered about Aya Pampa, and Dani recalled a pick-up truck being mentioned in Summer's first story. But for the most part, Dani guessed that the Huaca were living as close a life to their pre-Spanish ancestors as possible. They weren't caught in some kind of bastardized half-life in the way that the Kwirku were. And while she hadn't talked to Benitez about the medical situation, and guessed that the abundance of fruit and food and liquor were in celebration of the Phancha that evening, she guessed that she, too, could understand the temptation. After all, hadn't she signed up for the Peace Corps, in part, to get away from the Western World for a while?  
  
The Argentine and the American were interrupted by one of the guides from earlier in the day. Qarachupa, Dani recalled. He greeted them both warmly, and joked with Dani -- through Benitez's translation -- about dancing the chimaychi and wearing the "chupika" paste on her body. Red panties aside, Dani herself had gone even more native than she'd intended.  
  
But Qarachupa introduced Dani and Benitez to his wife, Turuschu, and his two-year-old daughter, whom he'd named Chaqiska in honor of Summer. And then, a short while later, Dani met another little girl named Chaqiska. There was a ten-year-old named Hatun Chaqiska. A five-year-old named Tumpa Chaqiska. There was a Lunku Chaqiska. Even one of the little boys, less than a year old, was introduced to Dani and Benitez as Inti Chaqiska. And though Dani wondered at the wisdom of naming half the young girls in the village Chaqiska or some variant thereof, she was starting to fully understand the impact that Summer Monroe had made on these people's lives. Total degradation notwithstanding, maybe there was more to Summer's sacrifices to the Huaca.  
  
Could Dani actually go through with this? Could Dani actually do what Summer wanted her to? Less than twenty-four hours ago, she'd screamed and cried about even coming this far. Just that morning, she'd thrown a fit about what Summer and Benitez and Taksa Kuchu intended her to wear. And yet she found herself in the middle of Aya Pampa, laughing and singing and dancing with the Huaca people, surrounded by children whose parents were so thankful for what Summer had done for them that they'd been named in her honor. She was already in her underwear, and had exposed herself twice already to Benitez and the village as a whole -- and that didn't even include the girls down at the bathhouse. She'd already been "violated" by Tutakuru, having had the chief's niece run her hand up and down her pussy while being "washed." And, after all, wasn't Summer about to do something in front of these people that they'd seen dozens of times before? No matter how debased and vulgar Dani may have viewed the t'ojsiy, these people looked upon it less as a sexual rite and more as a religious rite.  
  
But this was all in the abstract. Dani would have liked to help the Huaca in any way she could...in the abstract. She might be willing to consider taking part in the t'ojsiy...in the abstract. The real world would prove to be far more real than she was willing to bear.  
  
"It's starting," Benitez announced, turning from his conversation with one of the village elders.  
  
Dani, who'd been standing beside him, pondering her own sexual will as the doctor jabbered on in the Huaca tongue, turned up river, as well.  
  
The drums had slowed, but continued to beat in an ominous, steady rhythm. The drinking, the talking, the laughter -- it had all come to an almost immediate halt. There was shouting somewhere up the river, a voice that Dani recognized as Qaray Puka's, the village's medicine man.  
  
When the crowd first parted, and Huaca carried Summer past, all Dani could think of was Jesus on the cross. For lack of a better term, that was more or less what Summer was splayed out on, completely naked, and held in place by leather binding at her wrists and ankles. It was a large, wooden "Y," built out of some sort of local wood, and it was being carried on the shoulders of a half dozen strong Aya Pampa men. Summer's wrists had been bound together, and tied above her head on one end -- the bottom of the Y -- while her legs had been spread, and secured far apart at each end of the top of the Y. Her pussy, shaven bare and glistening the torch light, was full exposed, her own crotch open at the crotch of the Y-frame.  
  
"Oh my god," was all Dani could utter.  
  
Dani had been painted with the chupika paste, but where Tutakuru had applied a simple, basic design, Summer had been covered in blues and reds and purples. She was very clearly naked, but her entire body painted in an ornate design, similar to those that the Huaca themselves had carved into their own skins. Her breasts heaved, each nipple as red as Dani's own, but encircled by blues and pinks that extended out from the areolae. There were square-little motifs that started at each hip and petered out, repeating designs of dots and lines and triangles. There was a lighting bolt on one thigh. There was a ray of sunlight on the inside of the other. And, around Summer's pussy, someone had painted diagonal lines, as if to guide the sacred dildo into its destination.  
  
The procession moved past them, and down river, but it was quickly evident that nowhere in Aya Pampa would be open enough to accommodate everyone. The Huaca clamored for a better view, but as much as they pushed and jostled each other, they were careful to allow Benitez, Taksa Kuchu, and Dani through.  
  
To look at her eyes, Summer was somewhere else. Or maybe she was more here than Dani was, more in the moment, more in the now. God knew what Summer had been doing these past few hours, while Dani was knocking back shots with Uturunku and feasting with the Huaca, but she looked like some sort of wild animal. She wasn't laying still, but rather heaving and panting on her the Y-frame, as if she were already in the throes of ecstasy.  
  
"Oh my god," Dani repeated, her lip quivering in horror.  
  
At Qaray Puka's instruction, the men came to a stop. They were each standing calf-deep in the trickling brook that ran through Aya Pampa. Upon orders from the medicine man, they began to tilt the Y-frame, so that Summer was head-down and pointed towards the little river, her legs open and pussy directed up into the air. They settled the top of the frame -- or bottom of it, given its current perspective -- into the water, so that Summer's fingertips, sticking up from where her wrists were bound, just disappeared beneath the surface. Two of the men continued to hold their ends of the Y-frame, the two men who had the two branches for each leg. The frame rests on their shoulders, and thus Summer came to a stop, positioned at a forty-five degree angle in relation to the ground.  
  
Though blood was sure to be rushing to her head, Summer complained not at all. It was impossible, Dani knew, but from her vantage point a few yards from the Y-frame, she swore that she could smell the other woman's pussy. Or, feeling a sensation between her legs, maybe it was her own.  
  
Uturunku made some sort of speech, but even if Dani had been able to understand what he was saying, she doubted she'd be able to pay him much attention. What Summer had described, what Benitez had told her that Summer had been doing in these little villages, what La Iniciativa expected Dani herself to do -- it had all been stories, it had had all been something that Dani hadn't even been able to relate. Five minutes ago, Dani had even been talking herself into taking part.  
  
Not now.  
  
"Is it always like this?" Dani stammered.  
  
Benitez grimaced, and answered, "Not always. Each village tends to have their own variation on the concept, but it's more or less the same." He paused. "But maybe we shouldn't have started you off with Aya Pampa."  
  
Uturunku's speech drew to a close, and the people of Aya Pampa began to chant. Again, Dani had no idea what they were saying, but there was a profoundly religious, powerful tone to it that seemed so distant from dildoing a woman off. But that was before Dani saw the dildo.  
  
It was long, but it was the girth that fascinated the brunette. Dani simply couldn't get over how fat the silver dildo looked. Summer would later tell her that Aya Pampa's particular "qollqephichilu" (literally, "silver penis") was nothing in terms of what she'd taken in other villages, but Dani simply had no concept of how anything could be bigger than what she was now looking at. It was less a sex toy than it was a small sword, complete with a hilt for Qaray Puka to hold on to.  
  
In her moment of shock and horror at seeing the qollqephichilu for the first time, Dani took an involuntary step back -- as if it would come to get her. As she did so, the knot at her hip slipped one more, and her loincloth began to slide down her hips again. Had she not been transfixed by the goings-on in front of her, Dani may have wondered if she'd traded away her black thong for a defective loincloth. She was wearing her red panties beneath, however, and absentmindedly grabbed the loincloth with her right hand, holding just tight enough in her balled fist to keep it from falling again.

Qaray Puka found Summer's body with his right hand. Resting his fingers on her bare pubic mound, he used his thumb to gently flick at the jewel on her exposed clitoris. The silver, if not the pussy juices on the girls lips that glinted in the torchlight, but the little jewel positively sparkled, casting little rays of light on Summer's inner thighs in the same way that Dani's mother's engagement ring had done in some distant world. The blonde woman's entire body shook with sexual expectation, and Dani's quivered along with her. Though he seemed to be able to insert his thumb with considerable ease, the medicine man decided that Summer wasn't quite wet enough, and spat slowly and carefully into her slit. Gently at first, but then more and more roughly, he continued to tease her clit piercing once more, until Summer's loud panting had become a low, animal moan.  
  
Dani was turned on. There was no escaping it. She was a late bloomer, not losing her virginity until her freshman year of college. And, though she considered herself to be fairly liberal, she'd never watched all that much pornography in her life. Suddenly, though, she could understand the appeal. She was watching Summer, but she was also putting herself in Summer's place. An entire village of strangers was staring at her naked body, an entire village of strangers was watching a strange old man play with her clitoris. There was something about the bindings, something about the way that Summer was completely powerless, something about the way that she would just have to give in to the qollqephichilu.  
  
Dani had never cum without some sort of clitoral stimulation, be it orally, with her own fingers, or just rubbing up against her partner's pelvis when she was on top. And, though Qaray Puka was slowly building Summer to a crest time and time again, before keeping her from cumming, by rubbing the jewel at her clit, it was fairly apparent that she'd be expected to orgasm entirely through vaginal stimulation. The qollqephichilu didn't seem to suggest otherwise. Dani doubted that Summer suffered from a similar problem.  
  
The crowd continued to chant. The drums continued to beat. The blonde continued to squirm and writhe half upside-down on the Y-frame. Qaray Puka rubbed and rubbed until she was about to peak, and that back off. As she composed herself, he ran his hands along her inner thighs, he traced the lines and designs that had been painted on her body. Satisfied that Summer was not going to cum too soon, and having the mastery of this girls body like a musician, Qaray Puka went to work on her clit once more.  
  
And, just when neither Summer nor Dani could take the expectation any more, Qaray Puka inserted the silver dildo.  
  
It shimmered in the light, coated in pussy juice as Qaray Puka pulled it from girl's open cunt. If Dani had expected Summer to have any difficulty with the dildo's girth, she was proven incorrect. Qaray Puka drove the toy in once, and then twice, and then a third time, Summer emitting a shriek of total carnal pleasure on the last thrust.  
  
She hadn't cum. Not yet. But she pulled on her bindings. She begged for it like a mad woman. Qaray Puka entered again. And again. And again. She thrust her hips up to meet the dildo, taking as much of it in as she could. She screamed and screeched and wailed, letting loose some sort of primal instinct as she was pounded by the medicine man and his qolqephichilu.  
  
Dani was hypnotized. It wasn't Summer up on that Y-frame. It was Dani herself. It was Dani being penetrated by the silver dildo. It was Dani who'd had her pussy played with by the medicine man. It was Dani who was writhing, naked, in front of a crowd of chanting Huaca.  
  
And it was too much for her.  
  
It was easy to get lost in the moment, easy to slide down the slippery slope as to what was normal and acceptable among the Huaca, easy to forget the world beyond this little ravine. She was Daniella D'Annunzio, not Qapila or Sika Sika or Summer Monroe. She'd grown up in rural Vermont. She had a degree from NYU. She'd spent the past two years of her life adorned in conservative, ankle-length dresses in the Peace Corps, teaching an indigenous tribe about public health. Had she really been thinking about doing what Summer was doing now? Had she really put herself in Summer's place? Was she -- and this was the worst of it -- getting turned on by the very thought of being in Summer's place?  
  
She backed away from the river, absentmindedly dropping her loincloth altogether, and stumbled through the tightly-packing Huaca crowd in no more than her sandals, necklace, and thong. The orange-yellow upside-down handprint was visible to anyone behind her, the series of red stripes on her body and face to anyone in front of her. Which wasn't to say that any of the Huaca were paying her any mind -- even dressed and decorated as she was, she was no match for the allure of the writhing and thrusting blonde on the cross behind her.  
  
She fell to her knees, threw up her dinner, and began sobbing in the relative privacy behind one of the Huaca huts. She felt Benitez behind her, his hand absentmindedly placed on her naked back in an attempt to comfort her. "Do you want water?" he asked, and she shook her head.  
  
"I can't," Dani cried to Benitez, staring blankly ahead. "I can't. I can't do this."  
  
"Ssshhh," Benitez soothed her. "That's okay. I understand. She'll understand, too."  
  
Dani sobbed loudly. "I just can't..."  
  
Over the chants of the Huaca, the steady beat of the drums, Summer screamed one last time, and the crowd erupted in cheers and jubilation. She had reached her climax. She had cum. And the village of Aya Pampa had pleased Sipusiki once more.  
  
"I can't..."