**Maragana Girl**

by EC

**Chapter 1 - Kim's Arrest**

Kimberly Lee and her two friends from high school, Susan Taylor and Tiffany Walker, had been touring Western Europe for nearly a month when they decided to expand their explorations into Eastern Europe. They looked through their tour book, finally settling on visiting Prague and Budapest. Almost as an after-thought Tiffany suggested a side trip to another small country called the Grand Duchy of Upper Danubia.

The three girls knew nothing about Upper Danubia, except for what they were able to learn from their tour-book. Apparently the country had a lot of architecture from the 19th Century and had not been heavily damaged during World War II. The local citizens were relatively friendly, and there were plenty of nature trails, parks, and very cheap restaurants. Best of all, the guidebook pointed out that Upper Danubia was known for having the world's lowest crime rate due to its unique justice system. Kim and the other two decided to go there for sure; it sounded like a really great place. They would visit the capitol Danubikt Mostk, and later spend a couple of days hiking at the Rika Chorna Reservoir before continuing on to Prague.

As they waited for the train to take them from Amsterdam to Danubikt Mostk (or Danube City in English), Tiffany decided to buy some extra marijuana from her lover in Amsterdam. The three girls had taken full advantage of Europe's lax drug laws to smoke marijuana to their hearts' content. Amsterdam was so cool, to sit in cafes and get high!

Kim, especially, had taken to smoking weed while in Amsterdam. She determined to have as much fun now before heading to college in the fall. Tiffany had turned Kim onto marijuana while they were still in high school, but now Kim was smoking it more than either of her two friends. Kim didn't realize it, but she was becoming addicted.

Tiffany casually stuffed the bag of marijuana in Kim's backpack and the three boarded the train. "Don't smoke all of it, Kim" she joked, "we gotta make this last until we get to Prague."

Fourteen hours later, the train arrived at the southern border of the Grand Duchy of Upper Danubia. It was obvious that Upper Danubia was not a particularly wealthy country, but everything seemed very clean and in good order. The train stopped as the border guards casually checked everyone's passports and pieces of luggage at random. The girls had a brief scare when a border guard checked Tiffany's backpack, but fortunately he skipped Kim's.

The train pulled to the Danubian side of the border crossing and passed a hill topped by an imposing stone fortress full of cannons. The surrounding area contained gardens and memorial statues honoring a series of battles that took place in 1754. The young women thought about getting out and looking around, but decided against it. Suddenly, as the train started to move, Susan gasped and pointed out the window at a sight that was much more interesting than any war memorial:

"Check it out! That guy's got no clothes on!"

Sure enough, at the far end of the station platform there was a naked young man selling ice cream out of a push-cart. The three girls were amazed that no one around him seemed to think there was anything strange about a naked guy selling ice cream. A few passers-by casually glanced at him, but that was about it. Kim tried to get a closer look at him. He seemed to have something around his neck, like a dark-colored collar, but he was too far away for her to have a good look at him.

The three girls now had something to discuss as the train completed the final part of the trip into the capital of Upper Danubia. Kim remembered that Upper Danubia had a reputation of being a traditionalist and conservative country, but obviously that wasn't true if guys could run around selling ice cream in the nude.

Danube City was very different from the bustling European capitals Kim and her friends had visited previously. All of the architecture in the downtown area was at least 100 years old, and the buildings were very clean. There was no trash in the streets nor graffiti whatsoever. There were no private cars on the streets; only trolleys, trolleybuses, and bicycles. Kim remembered from the guidebook that only farmers and merchants were permitted to own vehicles, since the Grand Duchy's territory was small and its government didn't want it filled up with cars and parking lots. As a result of the restriction, the smoke and constant beeping of the other European capitals was totally absent from Danube City. The traffic moved very silently and orderly.

Most of the citizens of Danube City were dressed in simple western-style clothing, except for a few women wearing traditional Danubian dresses. One detail they noticed immediately was that all of the city's women, old ones and young ones alike, had their hair carefully done up in tight braids wrapped around their heads. Children were dressed in standard school uniforms. Then there were the naked people. As the three Americans walked around, they noticed the occasional young man or young woman, working in a store or a restaurant, or riding a bicycle; moving about completely in the nude. All of the nude people looked like they were in their teens or 20's, and all of them were wearing metal collars.

When they stopped at a cafe, their waiter was nude. The young man seemed very shy and nervous. He didn't seem like the sort who would be at ease being in public with nothing on, and in fact appeared quite depressed. Like all the other nude people Kim had seen in Danube City, he was wearing a metal collar. While her two friends admired the waiter's body and made jokes about him, Kim began to worry. There's something going on here with these nude people that we need to know about, she thought to herself. She badly wanted to ask the waiter what was up with his collar, but he didn't speak English and she did not speak any Danubian. At the end of the meal Tiffany got a bit drunk and slapped the waiter hard on the ass. He gave her a sad look, but otherwise did not react.

By the end of their meal Kim wanted to smoke a joint. The urge was building up very quickly and soon the trio were looking for a place they could enjoy a good smoke in peace. They settled on the nature park behind Danube City's Temple of the Ancients. They found what seemed like a good spot, near a park bench in a picturesque spot that overlooked the East Danube River.

Tiffany rolled a joint and passed it to Kim, then lit the end and held it until Kim was smoking. Kim sat back and relaxed, as she felt the mellow sensation slip through her body. Tiffany and Susan decided to run behind the bushes and pee, then they would take a few drags off Kim's joint before rolling another. It was a routine the three had gotten used to, and today would be another lazy, mellow afternoon...

Suddenly Kim heard an angry woman's voice shouting in Danubian. She looked around and saw a young female Danubian cop standing only a few meters away from her. The cop was quite pretty, but had a very angry expression on her face. She was holding a service revolver in one hand and a radio transmitter in the other. Kim realized with horror what was happening, she was about to be arrested.

When Kim tried to stand up the cop screamed in barely understandable English:

"You! Maragana girl! You no move!"

The cop punctuated her command by pulling the hammer back on her revolver and pointing it at Kim's head. At that moment the cop's partner showed up, holding a rifle. He pointed it directly at Kim.

Tiffany and Susan came back a few seconds later, chattering in English. The male cop immediately pointed his rifle at them and started shouting at them in Danubian. They squealed with fright. The female cop, in her broken English, was the one who addressed them.

"You tourist?"

"Y... yes, we, we're tourists. F... from America."

"You with girl?" The young cop pointed at Kim, who had her hands up and was shaking.

Tiffany nodded in terror.

The female cop then pointed at the ground about five meters away from the park bench. "You lay... lie! On tummy lie!" When Tiffany hesitated the cop pointed the revolver in her face. The three Americans scrambled to lie on the ground on their stomachs. Each in turn felt her hands being grabbed by the male cop and handcuffed.

By this time several local residents were standing around watching the arrest. The two police officers chatted with the bystanders in Danubian, explaining that these tourists had been caught smoking marijuana, on this Sacred ground behind the Temple of the Ancients, no less. The male then reached in Kim's pocket and pulled out her passport. He thumbed through it and found what he was looking for. "Amsterdam", he read aloud.

Two more police officers arrived, a man and a woman. The first female cop ordered the Americans to stand up and pointed at each of their three backpacks. "This one, who?"

"It's mine," mumbled Susan.

"... and this one, who?"

"Mine," responded Tiffany.

"... and this, you?" The cop looked at Kim. Kim sadly nodded her head.

The two new cops pulled out three large plastic bags to put the backpacks in, while the two arresting officers emptied the contents of the girls' pockets into smaller evidence bags. One of the newcomers filled out labels for the bags while the female cop snapped a picture of the spot where the crime had taken place. As an afterthought she picked up Kim's joint from the ground to put in a separate evidence bag.

With that the four cops loaded the three Americans and their backpacks into a van. Kim, Tiffany, and Susan were too stunned to be able to react to what was happening to them.

After a short ride to the Central Police Station the van pulled to a stop in a courtyard. The police unloaded the backpacks and then pulled the Americans out of the van. Next to where the van was parked was a slightly raised circular cement platform. The police ordered Tiffany to stand in the middle of the platform, and Kim and Susan to kneel next to the platform, facing away from its center. The cop with the rifle pointed it at Tiffany while the young female officer took off her handcuffs. She pointed at the ground.

"Costumes here, all!"

Tiffany looked dumbfounded, not understanding the order.

"YOU DO!!!" The officer once again pointed her revolver at Tiffany's head.

Tiffany screamed, but then an older man in a dark suit put his hand on the cop's arm and forced her to lower the weapon. He spoke to Tiffany in an educated-sounding accent.

"Young lady, you must undress, right away. You are now a prisoner of the Duchy, and you are not permitted clothing."

Tiffany started to cry. "No, please."

"It is our law, and you will obey. Take everything off and put it over here. If you do not, we shall punish you for insurrection."

Kim was facing away from her friend, but she listened with horror to Tiffany's crying and the sound of clothing sliding off her body and falling to the ground. Then she heard the rustling of plastic as a guard picked up everything from the platform and stuffed it in a bag. Then she heard the click of handcuffs as Tiffany's hands were once again secured behind her back. Tiffany was guided to kneel next to Kim. Kim glanced over at her friend's bare body and teary face.

Kim felt a hand grip her upper arm. The hand pulled her upward and helped the prisoner get on her feet. She could not bear to look at the officer helping her stand up. Kim felt the key enter her handcuffs and slide them off. With that the older man addressed her.

"You, place your clothes on the cement. Remove your jewelry as well."

Kim felt numb as she slowly worked to get her clothing off. She kicked off her shoes and slid her jeans over her feet. She dropped them on the cement with a dull clump. Next were her earrings and her necklace. A guard handed her a plastic bag to put them in. Kim then hesitated as she held her hands at the waist of her blouse. She held her breath as she pulled it up over her head, exposing her shoulders and breasts to the hot courtyard sun. The final item remaining was her panties. Slowly she slid them over her bottom and legs. She held onto them for just a second, hoping against hope that all this was somehow a nightmare and she would be waking up at any moment.

A guard yanked Kim's panties out of her hand and pulled her arms behind her back. Kim found herself handcuffed and kneeling next to Tiffany, the hot sun shining on her breasts and thighs. The rustling of her items being placed in a plastic bag signaled the final loss of her clothing and of her status as a free American tourist.

Kim knelt in numb horror as Susan undressed. Once Susan's clothes were off her body and bagged as well, the educated man shouted at his subordinates to get three carts to wheel the backpacks and other personal items to the examination rooms.

Three male guards led the three young women across the courtyard into the identification room. The police uncuffed them one-by-one, and then fingerprinted and photographed them. Kim thought to herself in terror, my God, they're going to take pictures of us naked.

Sure enough, Kim found herself standing in front of the camera with nothing on. The first shots were of her face; one from the front, one from the back, one from above her head looking down, one from each side, and two taken from different angles.

Next came the full-body shots: hands at her side... facing the camera, facing away from the camera, facing left, facing right. Then another series of shots, this time with her hands behind her head and her legs spread: front, back, left, right.

Kim watched intently at Tiffany and Susan were subjected to the same series of identification photos. In spite of her fear and depression, Kim was somewhat fascinated seeing her two friends forced to pose with their bodies fully exposed to both the camera and the cops standing around in the room.

The police then handcuffed the three girls and separated Kim from the others. A guard led Kim to an interrogation room. Once in the room the guard locked the door and unlatched Kim's handcuffs. He led her to face a table where three very stern-looking officials, two men and an older woman, were sitting. Kim's backpack was placed on the floor in front of her, along with the plastic bags of her clothing and jewelry.

The guard snapped at Kim in Danubian and tapped her body to force her to spread her legs and place her hands behind her head. Words could not describe the humiliation sweeping through the prisoner as she stood completely exposed, her arms and legs spread, in front of those three well-dressed officials and all those cops standing in the back of the room.

It was apparent that only the woman spoke any English, since during the interrogation only she directly addressed Kim and translated for her two companions.

"You are the American, Kimberly Lee?"

"Y... yes ma'am."

"And you were detained behind the Temple of the Ancients about two hours ago with two other Americans?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is this backpack your property, an item that you brought with you earlier today from Amsterdam?"

"Yes... ma'am."

"You shall understand that under our laws, you are solely responsible for the contents of the backpack you brought from Amsterdam. We shall now search your backpack."

With that one of the male officials raised his hand. A guard opened up the backpack. The very first item he pulled out was a full sandwich bag of marijuana. He handed it to the three officials, who examined it and placed it on a scale. Kim nearly fainted. She had forgotten the group's entire stash of marijuana was being kept in her backpack. The three officials took notes as the guard emptied out the rest of the backpack. He found Tiffany's rolling paper and her marijuana pipe. He placed both items on the table in front of the officials. He found a colorful t-shirt with a marijuana emblem on it. Finally he pulled out Kim's traveling cash and placed it next to the bag of marijuana and the other items on the table.

The panel looked over the items the cop had placed on the table, and talked quietly among themselves. One of the men talked to the woman, apparently giving her some instructions. Finally she addressed Kim:

"Young lady, according to your passport you entered our country at 9:00 this morning. Unless you are able to present evidence to the contrary, this panel is convinced that you entered our territory with 432 grams of marijuana. This panel is also persuaded that the cash in your possession was raised from the sale of marijuana, either in this country or in the country from which you departed to come here."

Kim felt like she was about to throw up. The spokeswoman continued.

"At 13:30 hours this afternoon, two uniformed officers of the law and three common citizens witnessed you smoking marijuana in the Sacred Grounds behind the Temple of the Ancients. Do you deny smoking marijuana in that location at that time?"

"No, ma'am, I don't deny that."

"Are you aware that the Grand Duchy of Upper Danubia's legal system is separate and sovereign from that of the Netherlands and that all mind-altering substances are illegal here?"

"Yes, ma'am, I understand that."

"But you made a conscious decision to violate our laws by bringing marijuana into our country and smoking it. Is that true?"

Kim sobbed. "Yes, ma'am, it's true."

"And that you intended to raise income by selling and distributing marijuana in this country?"

"No! please! That part isn't right! We just wanted to have enough in case we couldn't get any in Prague! Please! We weren't trying to sell it!"

The woman picked up the bag of tightly packed marijuana and waved it up and down slightly. Her voice took on a very cold tone of skepticism.

"400 grams? For personal use? This panel finds that hard to believe."

"Ma'am! Please! We... "

"That is quite enough from you! You can give your side of the story at your trial tomorrow. This panel will recommend that you face charges of importing marijuana into our territory, possession of marijuana with intent to distribute for illicit gain, use of marijuana in a public location, and violation of the Sanctity of the Ancients."

The leader of the arraignment panel stood up and drew his fist across his chest, which was the Danubian way of saying "this meeting is concluded". One of the guards took Kim's wrists and handcuffed them together while another photographed the spread-out contents of her backpack.

With that Kim was led down a long corridor to a medical examination room. The hallway was quite busy with cops, public officials, and ordinary citizens running back and forth. Most of the people in the hallway had never seen an Asian girl close-up before, so they carefully looked over Kim's body and face as they passed her. A group of schoolboys shouted something rude to Kim in Danubian, only to have the guard escorting the prisoner yell at them and make them scatter. Kim never felt so vulnerable in all her life, completely exposed in front of dozens of strangers and her hands cuffed behind her back.

Far up ahead Kim thought she saw Tiffany and Susan being escorted together, but she only caught a brief glimpse of them.

Kim was taken into a large medical exam room in the basement where an older doctor and a group of medical students were waiting for her. By this time she badly needed to pee, given she had not had the chance to go to the bathroom since before she was arrested. To make sure she had to pee, the doctor ordered her to drink a large glass of water. Then, in front of 20 medical students, he positioned Kim over a bedpan and ordered her to squat. It was obvious that he expected her to fill the bedpan in front of the students, all of whom were looking at her intently.

The unhappy prisoner, in spite of the intense pressure in her bladder, simply could not open up in front of the class. The doctor shouted at her, but still she couldn't go. Kim started to cry. The doctor gave the prisoner a look of disgust. Finally he walked over to his desk and picked up a leather switch. He slashed it across her shoulder blades mercilessly. Kim screamed and lost her balance. She righted herself and shook with terror and utter humiliation as her bladder finally released its contents into the bedpan.

While Kim silently stood in front of the medical students with tears running down her cheeks, the doctor conducted a series of tests on her urine, showing the results to the group. He put the test samples on an overhead projector, and repeated the word "maragana" over and over, which of course was Danubian for "marijuana". Apparently he was teaching the students how to test for drugs. He then ordered a student to divide up the contents of the bedpan into 20 lab dishes and passed out drug testing strips. 20 students dipped 20 testing strips into 20 samples of urine. All 20 strips tested positive.

Kim's humiliation in front of the medical students was not over. The doctor ordered her to sit on an examination table. He drew four large needles of blood from Kim's arm and passed them to four of his students. The students then split up the blood among themselves to run tests on it. Over and over Kim heard the word "maragana" around the classroom. The students finally turned in their test kits and crowded around the examination table.

For the next hour the students took turns measuring Kim's pulse and heartbeat, turning up her eyelids and shining lights into her eyes, shoving fingers and swabs into her mouth, and worst of all, forcing her to submit to several pap smears and rectal exams. Kim was a real-life drug user, something very rare in Upper Danubia. The doctor was not about to pass up this chance to give his class hands-on experience with examining and testing a subject for drug use.

Finally the horror of Kim's medical demonstration passed. The doctor ordered her to shower in the bathroom adjacent to the examination room. There was no shower curtain, but it didn't matter. By now Kim was so broken emotionally that she didn't bother to object to showering in full view of 20 medical students. Kim left the shower and quietly allowed the guard to cuff her hands behind her back yet again, for yet another walk down the crowded police station corridor.

With that the most horrible day of Kim's life came to an end. The guard opened the door of a tiny holding cell that contained nothing but a mattress with a medical bed sheet on top and a chamber-pot. Kim crawled onto the mattress and cried herself to sleep. Just 24 hours ago she had been sleeping on a train with her friends, and now here she was, naked and alone in a Danubian holding cell, cut off from everyone and everything she had ever known.

Kim realized she was in a lot of trouble. Why... why did she go along with coming to this horrible country, not knowing anything about it? Why didn't she pay more attention to that voice inside her that was telling her something was very wrong about this place when she saw naked young people wearing collars on their necks? And what about Tiffany and Susan? What was happening to them?

As she lay crying, trying to force herself to get to sleep, Kim would have been even more horrified to know that even as she was wondering about them, Tiffany and Susan already had left Danube City on a train headed for Prague. They had been released and expelled from Upper Danubia, partly because of extremely good luck, partly because of Danubian law, and also partly because of Tiffany's betrayal of her friend Kim.

While Kim was standing before the arraignment panel, Tiffany and Susan had the good fortune to be placed in a holding cell together. It was only for a few minutes, but that gave Tiffany enough time to think of a strategy to get herself and Susan out of trouble at the expense of Kim.

In a quiet panicky whisper she spoke to Susan.

"Quick question, do you have anything in your backpack?"

"Uh, no. I think I put it all in the bag that Kim took."

"You don't have your pipe anymore?"

"No, I lost it last week. Don't you remember?"

"No paper?"

"No, I gave it to you."

"... and I put it in Kim's bag. So you don't have anything, nothing."

"No, but what difference does that make? They got Kim... "

"It makes a lot of difference, Susan, don't you get it? Now you listen to me and you listen good. No matter what they say or ask you, tell them you don't know what's in Kim's backpack, get it? You don't know. You didn't know she was smoking pot."

"But we all were smoking pot."

"No we weren't. Kim was smoking, you and I were taking a piss. We didn't know about the pot. You don't know shit about it."

"But, what about Kim?"

"Kim's fucked. There's nothing we can do about it. But if your backpack is clean and you stick to not knowing about Kim's stash, I think you and me can get out of this. My backpack is clean. I know that for a fact."

"Mine is too, but we can't do that to Kim."

"Oh we can't? I sure as hell can. Look, you saw how they treated us, you want to stay here in Nudie Prison?"

Susan sobbed, "No."

"Then you do what I tell you. You don't know shit. You're totally surprised. Never realized that Kim was capable of hauling pot. And one more thing. Don't mention anything about pot or Kim until they ask you. Don't bring it up yourself or they'll nail us."

"But... "

"Look! Do you want to stay here or not?"

"No."

"Then... "

The cell door opened and Susan was pulled out to appear before the arraignment panel. Tiffany prayed that her friend wouldn't screw it up.

In the end the prosecutor decided not to file any charges against Tiffany and Susan. He didn't believe they were innocent, but there was no evidence nor any witnesses to refute their claim that they knew nothing about the marijuana Kim had with her. Their stories matched, so in the end the prosecutor simply decided to order them out of Upper Danubia and prohibit them from ever returning. Instead he would concentrate on charging Kim and try to get a maximum sentence for her.

Tiffany and Susan felt hugely relieved as they got dressed and were taken to the train station in the police van. When they got their passports back they opened them up to the latest stamp. In English, German, and Danubian it read:

Bearer of this passport is strictly prohibited from entering the territory of The Grand Duchy of Upper Danubia under any circumstances during this lifetime.

No problem with that for either Tiffany or Susan. Neither had any intention of ever coming back.

**Chapter 2 - Kim's first punishment**

Kim was emotionally drained the following morning. She kept on hoping everything was somehow an awful nightmare and at some point she would wake up. She used the chamber-pot and then sat sadly on her mattress wondering what horrible things would be done to her today. That panel the day before had mentioned a trial.

The cell door opened. A guard cuffed Kim's hands behind her back and led her down the long corridor, which once again was filled with people. Once again dozens of eyes looked over Kim's exposed body as she was led down the hallway. The guard took her up two flights of stairs to the reception area of a small office. He then forced Kim into a kneeling position in front of two young secretaries and left her there.

The secretaries quietly talked to each other about the young American prisoner as she silently knelt in front of them. The two Danubians didn't do or say anything to deliberately humiliate Kim, but the embarrassment of having to kneel handcuffed and naked in front of two women her own age and be the subject of their discussion was overwhelming.

After about five minutes the door of the main office opened. A well-dressed middle-aged man appeared. He had a quiet, determined appearance about him, and an expression that was kinder than the expression of anyone else Kim had talked to since her arrest.

"You are Kimberly Lee, the American?"

"Yes sir."

"Very Well. My name is Vladim Dukov. Allow me to assist you."

With that the man pulled out a key and unhooked Kim's handcuffs. He helped her stand up.

"Let us go to my office."

A secretary entered ahead of them and spread a small towel on a padded chair facing a large desk. Next to the chair was a small table with some breakfast rolls, a jar of jam, several pieces of fruit, and a pot of tea. Kim suddenly remembered she had not eaten for nearly 24 hours and looked longingly at the food.

"That food is for you. Please. Sit and eat."

The Danubian official sat quietly watching Kim while she ate. Once the prisoner had eaten the majority of the food on her table Dukov remarked: "A man does not think well on an empty stomach. Is that not true for a woman as well, Kimberly?"

"Y... Yes sir, that's true. Thank you, sir."

"Good. Now pour yourself some tea and we can discuss what you must confront today."

Once Kim poured the tea the Danubian official spoke again.

"As I stated before, my name is Vladim Dukov. My title is translated as 'Spokesman for the Criminal', although you might understand it better if I told you I am a public defense council and parole officer. Under our law there is a difference, but you need not be bothered with that detail right now. However, you will understand that under the laws and protocol of my country, my colleagues and I must be referred to under our title 'Spokesman', or "Spokeswoman', as appropriate. The title in Danubian is 'Advokakt' or 'Advokaktna'."

"Sir, uh... Spokesman, you're going to defend me... like, in court?"

"In a matter of speaking I will defend you, in court. My responsibility to you is to explain to the judge any circumstances or facts that contradict the arguments presented by the prosecutor. Any facts that contradict the statements made by the prosecutor must be considered by the judge. It also is my responsibility to present any facts in court that would promote leniency in your sentence. You, Kimberly, have a difficult, but very interesting case."

Kim fought back the urge to cry. "Sir, Spokesman, uh... Mr. Dukov, I was just smoking a joint! That's all I was doing! It was just some pot, that we got in Amsterdam!"

"Kimberly, please. First of all, allow me to ask you: are we in Amsterdam right now? Do you think this country is part of the Netherlands?"

"No... no Spokesman Dukov. It's not the Netherlands."

"You are correct, this is not the Netherlands. The Dutch can do as they see fit. If they choose to destroy themselves with drugs, so be it. We, the citizens of the Grand Duchy, have chosen a different path for our society. All drug use is severely punished. Now, young lady, another question for you. Where were you smoking your 'pot' as you say it?"

"In the park behind the old temple."

"That is your second problem. That land is not 'just a park'. It is the Sacred Ground of the Guardian Spirits, the spirits of the ancestors who have protected our land for 5,000 years. You defiled our country's ancestors by choosing that location to commit your crime."

"Sir... uh, Spokesman Dukov... I didn't know."

"Yes... yes. You are an ignorant foreigner, how could you know? You Americans do not know very much, do you?"

Kim's heart sank. Even her defense attorney was disgusted by her actions.

"You have a much bigger problem, Kimberly. There were 432 grams of marijuana stored in your personal backpack. That is a significant amount."

"Spokesman, it belonged to all three of us, and Tiff's boyfriend. But we weren't selling it, honest. We just wanted to make sure we didn't run out before we got back to Amsterdam."

"We, meaning..."

"Me, Tiffany, and Susan."

Dukov's expression changed slightly at Kim's last comment. She noticed him looking intensely into her eyes, as though trying to gauge how honest she was being with him.

"So, that marijuana belonged to all of you."

"Yes, Spokesman."

"Who conducted the purchase of the marijuana, in Amsterdam?"

"Tiffany, Spokesman... uh, actually it was her boyfriend."

Again Dukov looked hard into Kim's eyes, as she returned his stare with a puzzled expression. Dukov's demeanor suddenly became very irritated. He quickly picked up the phone, dialed, and started talking rapidly in Danubian. Kim made out the words "amerikanki", "pasporti", "Tiffany", "Susan", "Amsterdam", and "maragana". The Spokesman made another call, waited impatiently, and then spoke a few lines in Danubian. His tone of voice became very exasperated as he snapped:

"Nad Pragu?! Yak onetta idalak nad Pragu?!"

After he angrily hung up, Dukov called in his two secretaries and issued several orders. He then wrote a series of notes. Finally he calmed down, folded his hands and addressed Kim again.

"Kimberly, you must understand the facts of the charges against you before we enter the courtroom. I will make no effort to refute that you were smoking marijuana behind the Temple. That fact is indisputable and for that you will be sentenced and punished. Also, a city police officer retrieved 432 grams of marijuana from a backpack that you acknowledged belongs to you. You acknowledge that you knew that marijuana was present in the backpack when you entered the Duchy. That fact is also indisputable and for it you will be sentenced and punished. However, I will challenge the other charges. I also will tell you the prosecutor has behaved irresponsibly in this case, and I will discuss his failings in court. On your behalf I will attempt to use the prosecutor's failings to seek leniency for you."

"Spokesman, what... "

One of Dukov's secretaries entered at that moment with several folders. Dukov took them and turned to Kim.

"That is enough, Miss Lee. Now you must clean up and prepare yourself for trial. The criminals' bathroom is over there. You must shower. There is an unused toothbrush on the sink. Use it."

Once Kim was cleaned up she wrapped her hair in a towel and her body in another towel. She entered Dukov's office, expecting that he would have some clothes ready for her to change into before they left for the courtroom. Instead Dukov looked up at Kim with a very irritated expression.

"Remove those towels. Immediately."

"Spokesman... "

"It is prohibited. You are violating your status as a prisoner of the Duchy. You may not cover your body."

Kim gasped as she let the towels fall to the floor. "Sir, what about my court appearance? I can't... "

"You will be naked at your trial, Kimberly. That is the custom in our country. It has been that way for over 1,000 years. You shamed yourself by choosing to commit a crime on our soil, and that shame will be there for the world to see."

The naked people! The ones with the collars! So there was the answer to Kim's question, they were convicted criminals! And she was about to go on trial... and be convicted!

"Oh my God... Spokesman... Mr. Dukov... please, I can't... "

"Kimberly, that is enough from you. You are now a prisoner of the Duchy. You face conviction on two charges, and possibly more. This reality is now your life, and you must accept it. I will seek leniency, but I cannot change the fact that you violated our laws and must now face the consequences."

One of the secretaries poked her head through the door to tell her boss that the court guard had arrived to take Kim to her trial.

"Kimberly, you must now kneel and present yourself to the guard. When he takes you to the courtroom, Tatiana and I will accompany you."

With that the guard handcuffed Kim and led her out of the police station. The courthouse was on the other side of a large plaza. Kim felt sick as the guard led her across the open area and dozens of passersby stared at her in the open sunlight. Alongside her walked Dukov and his secretary Tatiana. About halfway across the plaza Kim had a slight shock, she ran into the naked waiter from the restaurant where she had eaten the previous day. He stared at her in amazement, wondering what she had done to be going on trial, just 24 hours after she had been a customer at his restaurant.

The guard led Kim into an ornate 19th Century courthouse and into a huge chamber full of police officers, medical students, law students, reporters, cameramen, and various witnesses. Kim recognized the onlookers who had been present at her arrest, as well as the doctor and his 20 students who had analyzed her urine and blood. The three members of the arraignment panel were sitting near the judge's chair towards the front of the chamber, as were the cops who had arrested Kim and searched her belongings. There must have been at least 200 people in the room altogether.

About 5 meters in front of the judge's chair there was a raised platform. Kim rightly assumed that once the trial began she would be ordered to stand on it.

The guard led Kim to a worn spot in the ornate carpet covering the floor about halfway between the back door of the chamber and the platform. He unhooked her handcuffs and ordered her to kneel. Dukov stood next to her, holding several folders in his hands.

Kim looked around. To her horror she noticed two television cameras pointing in her direction. Several reporters flashed their cameras at her. It was obvious this trial was going to be a sensation, because Kim was an American. Dukov swallowed and cleared his throat. Kim could tell that he was somewhat nervous. He had not expected the trial to draw so much public interest. He bent down and spoke to her:

"Kimberly, when the judge comes in everyone will stand and salute him, except you. You must kneel forward and put your forehead to the carpet. You will stay that way until the judge orders you to step forward. You will climb the platform and assume the prisoner's stance. That means you must stand with your legs spread and your hands behind your head. No matter who else is talking, you must remain in that position, facing the judge. I will translate anything you need to know or any answers you need to provide the court."

Kim nodded and choked back her tears. She couldn't believe this! It just kept getting worse and worse! The only shred of hope she clung to was her no-nonsense defense attorney, who seemed genuinely interested in helping her as much as possible.

The judge entered the chamber. The entire room shouted "Doc-doc Danube!" and everyone put their right fist against their left shoulder, the Danubian way of saluting a public official. As instructed Kim knelt forward and placed her hands on the worn carpet, her forehead touching the ground. She felt the cool air of the courtroom blowing against her exposed vagina and bottom. The tears rolled down the bridge of her nose and onto the carpet.

Kim heard the prosecutor's voice as he read the charges against her. Then she heard the judge's voice and Dukov's response. The Spokesman tapped his client's shoulder and pointed at the platform. Kim walked to it and climbed the steps, finding herself standing about a meter and a half above the ground. Reluctantly she spread her legs and put her hands behind her head. Four spotlights shined on her from different directions. She heard the murmurings of the spectators and saw the flashes of reporters' cameras.

At first the only people speaking were witnesses for the prosecution. The female cop who made the initial arrest and her partner spoke first, followed by other witnesses from the Temple area. Then came testimony from the police doctor and three of his students. Finally the arraignment tribunal members spoke, the woman holding up the damning bag of marijuana and Kim's t-shirt with the marijuana insignia. The prosecutor seemed quite smug and at ease with his case, while Dukov stood quietly scribbling furiously into a notepad.

After two hours, Kim's body was starting to cramp badly, and she wondered how much longer she could stay in her position. Just as Kim felt like she was going to faint, the judge stood up. Suddenly Dukov whispered desperately "Kimberly! Quick! You must kneel!" Kim just made it to the platform on her knees when the entire room exploded with "Doc-doc Danube!"

Dukov ordered Kim to get up and passed her a glass of water. Kim felt despair that Dukov had not yet said anything to contradict the witnesses, but she drank and tried to regain her composure.

"Spokesman... Mr. Dukov... how come you're not saying anything?"

"Kimberly, those witnesses are telling the truth as they saw it. I am not here to refute the truth. I am here to confront the prosecutor's mistakes."

"What mistakes, Spokesman?"

"The two most important witnesses are missing, your two friends. They left the country last night. It is quite unfair you should go on trial and they should not."

"What!? They were released? But, why them and not me?"

"Because they told the arraignment panel the same story; they knew nothing about the marijuana you were carrying."

"But, but it was Tiffany who bought it! She... she was the one who put it in my backpack!"

"That is the folly of the prosecutor. He released her and your other friend based on her statement, and did not talk to you first."

Suddenly Kim felt even sicker. Tiffany and Susan had left her! They lied to the Danubian police, just to save themselves at her expense! No wonder she was facing charges as a drug trafficker!

"I was very angry when I found out your friends had been released," continued Dukov, "very angry indeed, because I was unable to talk to them about you. Neither the prosecutor nor the arraignment panel consulted with me about your friends. If they claimed you were the only one carrying the drugs and then were allowed to leave, I needed to know."

"They actually said that I was the only one?"

"What they claimed was they did not know what was in your backpack, and that neither of them knew you smoked marijuana. That they were very surprised."

"No! They couldn't have done that! We're friends!"

"Well, the fact remains, you are here on trial and they, by now, are in Prague. How else do you think they made it out?"

Kim felt like she had been punched in the chest. She had known Tiffany and Susan since middle school. They had spent the last five years together constantly. She had shared things with them that she never could share with anyone else. And now they had done this to her! Kim sat crying while Dukov reviewed his notes.

"Doc-doc Danube!" Kim scrambled to get into her kneeling position on top of her platform as the rest of the room saluted the judge. The judge read over some procedural issues and then ordered his client to stand. Dukov relayed the order in English and Kim resumed her position on top of the platform, legs apart and hands behind her head. The judge then called the Spokesman for the Criminal to speak up on her behalf.

Dukov spoke at length, consulting his notes and several folders. Kim heard the words Tiffany, Susan, and Amsterdam mentioned over and over. The crowd started to murmur, and out of the corner of her eye she could see both the prosecutor and the arraignment panel fidget uncomfortably. The judge asked the prosecutor several questions, which he answered sullenly. The judge did not appear satisfied with the prosecutor's responses, and shook his head. The judge then looked at Kim and directed a question at her. Dukov translated.

"They are about to pronounce the sentence. He wants to know if you have anything to say to the court. If you do, get on your knees before you speak."

Kim did have something to say. She knelt and spoke in English: "Your Honor, the only thing I have to say to this court and to the people of this city, is that I am very sorry for what I did behind the Temple. I have insulted your ancestors and I ask you and them to forgive me."

After Dukov translated there was a murmur of approval from the audience, at least this ignorant foreigner was willing to recognize her mistakes.

The judge made some notes and finally pronounced the verdict, which Dukov translated. Due to the negligence of the prosecutor and the premature release of Tiffany and Susan, the court was unable to convict Kim of drug trafficking. As expected, Kim was found guilty of possession of marijuana and the public use of marijuana. However, the judge surprised the entire court by declaring Kim innocent of violation of the Sanctity of the Ancients.

"She has sought the forgiveness of the Ancients, and I believe that request was sincere. For that trespass she repented, and the Ancients will hear that request."

Dukov was enormously pleased when he heard Kim's sentence, while the prosecutor tightened his lips in disgust. For a drug conviction in Upper Danubia it was extremely lenient.

"Item One: The American Kimberly Lee will wear the criminal's collar for two years. The collar will identify her as a criminal, monitor her movements, and alert the police should she try to leave this city. For the next two years the American Kimberly Lee is prohibited from traveling more than 10 kilometers from this courthouse."

"Item Two: For the duration of her sentence the American Kimberly Lee is prohibited from covering any part of her body with any article of clothing. She has disgraced herself and our city with her actions, and the American Kimberly Lee's disgrace will be shown to the world as a result of this sentence."

"Item Three: Finally, the American Kimberly Lee will receive four vigorous punishments on the naked buttocks with a standard leather switch. One of the punishments will be given in this chamber immediately at the closing of this hearing, the others will be given on this date in the Central Police Station six months from now, 12 months from now, and 18 months from now. The arresting officer will administer all four punishments."

Kim gasped as Dukov translated the court's punishment to her. When he noticed her horrified expression he tried to reassure her.

"Kimberly, this sentence is very lenient, almost nothing. Under our laws you could have been sentenced to five years of wearing the collar, plus a switching every three months for the possession charge. Had you been convicted of drug trafficking, you would have received 20 years, plus the switch every 30 days."

Two years of wearing a collar? Two years in the nude? Four "vigorous punishments on the naked buttocks"? That was lenient? No wonder Upper Danubia has no crime, thought Kim to herself.

"Kimberly, you are now convicted and sentenced. You must come down and kneel before the judge's table."

Once Kim was kneeling on the floor, the judge issued another command. A man in a white doctor's gown walked up to Kim and put a measuring tape around her neck. He checked the pulse of her jugular vein and wrote down the measurement from the tape. He left and shortly returned with a device that looked something like an enormous pair of salad tongs. He slipped the tong-device over Kim's head and closed it around her neck. He checked to make sure the device would not pinch the criminal's skin, and then clamped it shut. There was a faint hiss and a dull click. When the man opened the device and moved it away, Kim had a criminal's collar around her neck. The collar would be the only item she would be permitted to wear for the next two years. She now was marked as a convicted criminal by a collar that was virtually indestructible.

Kim's hand involuntarily went to her neck. She fingered the collar, the cruel item that now set her apart from who she had been before her arrest. The uncompromising feel of the cold metal on her neck echoed Dukov's words earlier in the morning: "This reality is now your life, and you must accept it."

The final part of Criminal # 98945's appearance in court was to be a "vigorous punishment by a standard leather switch" on her exposed bottom. Several court attendants opened the sides of the prisoner's trial platform and collapsed it, revealing a very solidly built table. The table had several straps attached to its top and legs. Kim glanced over at it in terror. Momentarily she would be bent over that table, with her arms and legs immobilized by those straps.

Dukov spoke again to the judge, who answered and nodded. The Spokesman then turned to his client.

"Kimberly, I managed to reduce the number of corporal punishments you will receive to four, but right now you must submit to one of those punishments."

"Yes... Spokesman Dukov"

"I will explain to you what will happen. The officer who arrested you will strike you with a leather switch. You will receive 50 strokes. Usually those strokes are concentrated on the criminal's bottom, but the officer also has the right to punish the criminal's thighs or shoulders. I will witness the switching. If I believe you risk injury I can order the officer to redirect the punishment to some other part of your body. That is the only way I may assist you. I am not allowed to order the officer to reduce the severity or number of strokes."

Kim sobbed and nodded.

"You must understand that the arresting officer is the one who decides most of the details of your punishment. She can take as long as she wants to administer the 50 strokes, she may humiliate you, and she is allowed to touch you where she pleases. My only authority is to prevent any serious injury."

Kim shook with terror. Perhaps Dukov had gotten his client leniency by reducing the number of times she would have to face the switch, but that would not make the remaining switchings any less painful. The Spokesman continued:

"The judge will ask the officer if she is ready to administer your punishment. She will say yes, and once she does, I will bring you to her. She will touch your shoulder with the switch. That is the signal you must kneel before her and kiss the toes of her shoes. Once you have done that, I will release custody of you to her. Then she and her partner will strap you to the table and she will whip you. What happens after that is entirely up to the officer, as long as I do not think you risk injury."

Kim remained silent.

"Kimberly, do you understand all that?"

"Yes Spokesman."

"Once you have received your 50th stroke, the officer will undo your straps and order you to stand up. She will bring you before the judge and present your backside for him to verify that the punishment was properly administered. Once he certifies the punishment was properly administered, you will kneel before the officer and thank her for disciplining you. Once you have done that, she will release you back into my custody."

Kim nodded. She looked up at the officer and her partner. The Danubian woman's eyes shined with anticipation. She had a wicked smile on her face. This was her big chance, the public punishment of the first American in Upper Danubia in over three years, and the punishment of the first Asian girl ever. Oh yes... she would show this spoiled little rich drug-using American a thing or two.

The cop and her partner stood at attention before the judge. The judge raised his hand and the two officers shouted "Doc-doc Danube!" at they moved their right fists to their left shoulders in salute of the official. The face of the young Danubian cop was bursting with enthusiasm. The judge asked the cop if she was ready to administer the sentence. The cop responded by pulling the switch from her belt and slashing viciously through the air. "Doc!"

With that Dukov took his client's arm and guided her over to where the two police officers were standing. He and the female cop stood face-to-face and saluted each other. He stepped back and the cop stepped directly in front of Kim. She had a truly wicked smile on her face and cruel look in her eyes. She touched the criminal's shoulder with her switch. As directed Kim knelt and kissed the officer's shoes. The officer then tapped her shoulder with the switch to signal that she needed to stand up.

Again the officer looked into Kim's eyes with her evil expression. She flexed the switch in her hands.

"Now I hurt you, Maragana Girl. Now I much hurt you. You much cry."

Kim was more terrified than ever, but suddenly she felt a strong desire to not give that bitchy cop what she wanted. There was something about the cop's sadistic behavior and terrible English that irritated Kim, something that made her want to fight and resist as much as possible. I will not 'much cry', thought Kim to herself, no, I won't give her the satisfaction.

The two cops took the criminal's arms and guided her over the platform. They buckled the straps that immobilized Kim's wrists, and then secured her waist and ankles. Kim closed her eyes and tried to nerve herself for the ordeal that lay ahead.

The cop did not begin the switching right away. She was fascinated by the soft brown skin of Criminal # 98945's exposed bottom. The two cops ran their hands over Kim's bottom-cheeks and up and down her thighs. The female reached between Kim's legs to fondle her vagina, then she stepped back to let her partner explore that part of her. The female then pressed her hands to Kim's bottom and forced her bottom-cheeks apart. The two cops took a good long look at the American's exposed bottom-hole.

Kim looked over at Dukov. He was not pleased by the cops' treatment of his client, but there was nothing he could do about it. Because he had formally released custody of Criminal # 98945, the cops were perfectly within their rights fondling and humiliating her.

Finally the initial part of Kim's punishment ended when the cops grew tired of exploring and fondling her body. The female cop put her face close to the American's and whispered into her ear:

"Maragana Girl, you now much cry."

The female stepped behind Kim, moved to her side, tapped her bottom lightly with the switch, and laid a vicious stroke across her bottom. Instantly the pain seared into Kim's body and rapidly intensified. Criminal # 98945 gasped and gritted her teeth, but managed to suppress a scream. She breathed heavily, but stayed quiet. The cop was surprised. She had struck the American with one of her best strokes but did not receive the scream she had anticipated. The American was resisting!

The female cop traced the rising welt marking the foreigner's bottom with her fingertips. She then stepped back and delivered another vicious blow, immediately beneath the first welt. The girl's entire body shook and she was breathing hard, but still she managed to stay quiet. The cop struck a third time, and a fourth. Kim bit her lip hard and the tears were rolling down her cheeks, but still, she had managed to stay quiet.

The cop was both irritated and embarrassed that Kim was resisting her. She had been under the impression that the foreign drug addict was a weakling and that the slightest touch of the leather would set her off screaming uncontrollably. Instead the "Maragana Girl" was holding up very well, as well as any Danubian criminal. The cop struck again, and then decided to change tactics.

In rapid succession the cop laid five vicious strokes on the criminal's right bottom cheek, then five vicious strokes on her left bottom cheek, concentrating the full force of the switch on one bottom-cheek at a time. As the pain mounted Kim's face became discolored with pain and her expression distorted from the agony she was enduring. Her entire world was reduced to the savage sensations coming from her exposed bottom, but her hatred of that cop and her determination to resist drove her to stay silent. Kim pressed her forehead against the surface of the table in an effort to suppress her screams. Her loud breathing and shaking body indicated that she truly was suffering, but still she managed to resist.

The majority of the court bystanders now sympathized with Kim. The young criminal's simple and heartfelt apology for the Temple incident warmed many hearts to her, and her determination to resist her punishment only increased her audience's liking of her. Kim did not realize it, but already, on the very first day of her sentence, she was well on her way to thinking like a Danubian.

Ultimately, however, everyone in the courtroom knew that at some point Kim would have to break. She had received only 15 strokes out of 50, and the cop had all the time in the world maximize the effect of the remaining 35. She could continue to rub and fondle Kim as much as she wanted. Kim would break, it was just a matter of when.

The cop decided to change her tactics yet again and laid a series of 10 strokes across both of Kim's bottom-cheeks, waiting a full minute between each one. The cop waited patiently for the mounting pain and exhaustion to wear down Kim's resistance. Kim was shaking violently and quietly groaning. The cop smiled slightly. She was close.

Once again the cop stopped to fondle Kim's badly marked bottom and allow the most recent welts to rise. The press photographers present zoomed their lenses on Kim's backside, to get close-ups of the first Asian bottom ever to be punished in Upper Danubia.

The cop resumed with her slow succession of blows, laying several across Kim's already punished bottom and causing ugly blood blisters to form. At that point Dukov moved in closer to watch, to make sure the cop did not break his client's skin. The cop proceeded to whip the upper parts of Kim's thighs. Then she struck hard at the base of her bottom three times.

Kim's resistance broke at the landing of the third stroke in that sensitive spot. She screamed loudly and collapsed into a series of violent sobs. Once her resistance broke, she was quite loud during the remaining part of her punishment. She screamed every time the switch landed, and sobbed violently in between the strokes

Kim was in too much agony to realize it, but she had gained the respect of everyone in the room, including the punishing officer. The cop had not managed to get the American to cry until the 33rd stroke, which was far better than most Danubian criminals, men or women.

After the 45th stroke Dukov raised his hand. There was no way that Kim's bottom could take any additional strokes without risking the skin being broken. Dukov pointed to Kim's shoulders. The cop would have to finish on Kim's shoulders. Kim screamed five times, as five vicious parallel strokes marked her shoulder blades.

After the fifth stripe was laid across his client's shoulders. Dukov again raised his hand. The cop turned to her partner who verified that yes, indeed, the last stroke was the 50th and Kim had completed this part of her punishment. For a minute the two cops left the sobbing American in place, but finally they unbuckled Kim's leg and wrist restraints. Kim buried her face in her hands and continued to cry, remaining bent over the table. The pain in her body seemed to be getting worse, even though the punishment had ended. Kim couldn't believe that a punishment could hurt like this.

Finally Dukov walked up to Kim and laid his hand on her arm. "Kimberly, you must stand up now. The policewoman will present you to the judge, and then you must thank her for punishing you."

Kim struggled to get up. The cop grabbed her arm and took her before the judge. Again she saluted the judge and then forced Kim to turn around to show him the American's badly marked backside. The judge nodded and signed the punishment certificate. Kim was still crying, but slowly regaining her composure.

"Kimberly, one final thing before the policewoman releases you back to me. You must kneel before her, kiss her shoes, and thank her for punishing you."

"W... what d... do I need... to say... to tell her?"

"In Danubian?"

"Yes Spokesman."

"Spakeebo dakub moigu."

Kim repeated "Spakeebo dаkub moigu."

"Not bad. It can be understood."

With that Kim knelt before the officer and again kissed her shoes. She raised her head and repeated, "Spakeebo dakub moigu".

The female cop again touched her switch to Kim's shoulder, to indicate that her punishment had ended. Dukov and the cop saluted each other and with that Criminal # 98945 was released back into the custody of her Spokesman.

The judge then clapped his hands. Dukov again lead his client to a kneeling position in front of the court. The judge had a few final words for Kim, which were translated by Dukov.

"Criminal # 98945, you are released from this courtroom to begin your sentence as a convicted criminal and identified drug user. As such you have many obligations, which your Spokesman will explain to you. You are reminded that you may not travel more than 10 kilometers from this court. If you do an alarm in your collar will be set off and you will serve a full five-year sentence for marijuana possession. All roads and streets beyond 10 kilometers are clearly marked with yellow warning signs, so you have no excuse for claiming you do not know where the boundary is located."

"Yes, your Honor, I understand."

"Within 48 hours you must return to this court with a certification of gainful employment. Your position as a criminal restricts what you may do. You must accept employment that maximizes the exposure of your body to the public. Any outdoor employment is suitable, as would be retail sales or customer service. Examples of jobs not suitable are indoor positions such as working as a typist or stockroom attendant. Your Spokesman is responsible for helping you find suitable employment."

"Yes, your Honor, I understand."

"Finally, you are responsible for reporting to the Central Police Station on this day six months from now for the second of your four corporal punishments. The conditions and severity of the next corporal punishment will be the same as the conditions and severity you endured today."

"Yes, your Honor. I... understand."

With that the court was adjourned. Once again came the shout "Doc-doc Danube!" Once again everyone's right hand thumped against their left shoulder. Everyone, that was, except for Kim. As a criminal, she was denied the right to salute. Instead, she dropped to the floor on her elbows and knees, touching her forehead to the ground.

There was one final indignity waiting for Kim at the courthouse. Immediately following her switching, she had to pose for a series of photos for her official sentencing certificate. The certificate included two photos of the criminal's face, now complete with her collar, and three shots of her body, with her welts on prominent display. Criminal # 98945 sadly turned around for the camera, her spirit totally broken.