**Maragana Girl**

by EC

**Chapter 19 � Fame and Humility**

Kim began her classes as a Danubian university student in the middle of January. She reduced her hours at the music store to her summer schedule, working only three days per week. She studied Danubian law, history, criminology, and the Danubian interpretation of sociology. Kim's self-confidence increased as she realized she was smart enough to master the somewhat difficult coursework in a foreign language. She was perfectly capable of studying hard and studying well, as long as she had a supportive environment and some help. Sergekt helped her with the history course, while Dukov and Tatiana helped her with the other classes.

Kim enjoyed the university environment, going three days per week with Sergekt on the trolley. She spent most of her non-class time studying in the university library with her fianc�e and his friends, but she also spent time with Dukov's secretary or in study groups from her classes. When she was with her classmates, Kim was the only naked person in the group, but that seemed not to matter very much. Her notoriety as one of the lead singers from �Socrates Mistresses� helped her overcome some of the distrust her classmates might have had against a foreign criminal studying Danubian law in their midst. Her classmates expected her to pull her own weight in the study groups, but as long as she did, they accepted the participation of the �Maragana Girl�.

One of Kim's first major projects was a comparative study of US and Danubian criminal law. Kim knew little about the US legal system and had to quickly learn, in part by spending hours on the phone with her sister Cindy. Kim had to learn enough about the US criminal justice system to be able to understand and explain it. As the research for her project unfolded, Kim realized the Danubian legal system was much more straightforward than the US legal system, and thus easier to understand.

The simplicity of the Danubian system partly resulted from the lack of institutionalized adversity between prosecutors and Spokespersons. A defense attorney in the US would not think twice about misrepresenting the facts to obtain an acquittal for his client, but in Upper Danubia it would be a serious violation of Danubian law for a Spokesperson to misrepresent the facts of a case or attempt to conceal evidence. Instead it was the Spokesman's duty to seek out mitigating factors that favored the criminal and present them in court. Kim's own case was an excellent example. Spokesman Dukov made no effort whatsoever to refute any facts or evidence, but instead concentrated on interpreting the information in a way that forced the court to give Kim a very light sentence.

Preparing the comparison project was a strange experience for Kim, because she had to study the US legal system from the perspective of a foreigner. However, to the US, Kim really had become a foreigner, because she no longer identified very much with the country of her origin. Kim's world was Danubian, and her perspective on life had become Danubian. Anyone who studied with Kim came to realize that, in spite of her foreign appearance, she really was not American anymore. She was a Danubian criminal, with an outlook that really was indistinguishable from that of any other female Danubian criminal.

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The push to pass Dukov's reforms in the Danubian Parliament intensified in February. As the moratorium against corporal punishments passed, the switchings were starting up again and there were increasing incidences of sexual humiliations and other abuses. Public support for the reform had peaked, so it was urgent that its supporters act to pass the legislation as quickly as possible. Vladim Dukov had a secret motivation for passing the reform as well. Kim's friends were due to receive a final switching in April, and he wanted to ensure the excesses of the previous April's punishment were not repeated.

The officers of National Police Force were bitterly divided over the reform. Most of the older members of the police force, as well as some of the more religious younger officers, supported the reform. The majority of the younger officers, as well as most of the supervisors, did not. At first the proponents of the revisions had been afraid to speak out, but by February they were quite vocal and contemptuous of the reform's opponents. As a result the police split into two hostile camps that quit speaking to each other. During the final push to pass the reform Officer Vladik Dukov and his partner were under tremendous pressure from the younger officers, the ones who wanted to continue punishing criminals by humiliating them. They ended up spending their time with the older officers, ostracized by most of their academy classmates.

There were several mass rallies in Rika Chorna Province and finally one rather large rally in Danube City itself. Vladim Dukov addressed a crowd of nearly 13,000 people in the bitter cold of Danube City's Central Plaza, exhorting his supporters to defend Upper Danubia's honor and morality by treating criminals with respect during their corporal punishments. He repeated his familiar argument concerning the need to re-establish harmony in the country's legal system.

The audience then was surprised by an unexpected speaker; the disgraced ex-officer Malka Chorno. Before she got on the speaker's platform, Malka stripped off her criminal's cape. As she stood shivering in the cold, her bare body distinctly white against the old Parliament building, the ex-officer reviewed her own career and her abusive behavior towards the criminals she had punished. She sought to make sense out of her own attitude by self-analyzing her misdirected thirst for revenge against the people who had kidnapped and killed her sister.

�I did things to criminals I should never have been allowed to do, and I think�had there been some restrictions in place, I would not have turned into what I became. I disgraced my profession, precisely because no one stopped me. I cannot change what I did, but I know that a standardized punishment regime will prevent other officers from following in my footsteps.�

Malka Chorno's speech had more of an impact than anyone at the time realized. The sight of a frightened, shivering, naked ex-cop, repenting and pleading for legislation that would have kept her own behavior under control, persuaded several important deputies in the Parliament to change their votes in favor of the reform. As a result, the entire opposition party delegation voted in favor of revising the 1780 Corporal Punishment Code, as did about a third of the deputies from the ruling party. The reform passed on the first vote.

Vladim Dukov was the man of the hour. As he stood in front of his cheering supporters, he was awestruck at what he had accomplished. He had changed the course of Upper Danubia's history and forced the entire country to examine itself. Dukov was not an aggressive or proud man, but he had a strong vision for what his country should be and what it should not be. Part of that vision now had become law.

There would be celebrations among the country's Spokespersons and an apology from the assistant police doctor who had scoffed at the idea Dukov could change the country's legal system. There would be mandatory re-training for the National Police Force and a series of promotions and demotions. Now the others would have to treat Officer Vladik Dukov with respect, whether they wanted to or not.

In spite of everything else that would transpire as a result of his success, Dukov's most important task was to address the people who would be most affected by his reforms, the criminals of Danube City. The night after the reform passed, Spokesman Vladim Dukov returned to the Socrates Club for the first time in several years, along with his wife and his client Kimberly Lee. He warmly shook hands with the old owner of the club and looked around at a place where he had spent much of his youth. It had not changed much, to his satisfaction. The club was filled to capacity with criminals eager to understand what the reform actually would mean for their sentences.

Vladim and Maritza may have been respected public officials, but they also were ex-criminals in a club with strict protocol about equality among the people attending. Vladim and Maritza undressed and surrendered their clothing before entering the main area of the club.

It was a bit of a shock for Kim and her friends to see Vladim Dukov step in front of the club's microphone, as naked as anyone else in the room. At that moment Kim realized how deeply her Spokesman's experiences from own his sentence were ingrained in his brain. In the Socrates Club Dukov saw himself more as a fellow criminal than as a public official.

Dukov began by explaining what the reform would do and what it would not. He went down a list of changes, the most important being the prohibition against sexual fondling. There were other revisions, including a standardization of the severity of the strokes, more authority for Spokespersons to intervene to prevent injury, and a new restriction against switching a criminal more than once every 60 days. Other provisions included not allowing a punishment to take place outside a courthouse or police station. For example, criminals never again could be punished at a school. They could not be chained and forced to march down a street. Nor could they be struck prior to the formal switching, for example they could not be kicked or beaten on the shoulders while waiting to be punished. There would be no participation in court-ordered punishments by anyone other than police officers. The days of medical students and girlfriends toying with criminals were over. Finally, there would be a time limit placed on the length of a switching. No judicial punishment could last longer than 50 minutes, one minute for each stroke.

Dukov explained his goal to keep the Duchy's corporal punishment system intact, but remove the excesses. �My desire is that, from this point forward, any criminal will know exactly what to expect from his or her sentence. What the judge orders will be what you must endure. There will be no unpleasant surprises from the police, nor from anyone else. Anything not specified in your initial sentence is prohibited.�

Dukov went on to discuss the only realistic alternative to Upper Danubia's judicial system, which would be implementing a system of jails similar to what existed in the rest of the world. Dukov explained why he thought jails were a bad idea, an opinion shared by everyone else in the crowded room.

Upon the conclusion of the Spokesman's presentation, there was a shout of �DOC-DOC VLADIM!� With that Vladim Dukov and his wife joined Kim and her friends at their table, along with the owner of the club and a couple of other older professionals. It was still a bit of a shock seeing Vladim Dukov as an equal in the Socrates Club. It was even more of a shock for Kim to see Vladim and Maritza dance together later in the evening. They were reliving their time spent as criminals, a full generation ago. Their bodies were aged and no longer attractive, but Vladim and Maritza Dukov looked perfectly at home on the dance floor of the old Socrates Club. They had returned to a world their hearts really never had left.

In time Kim would follow in Vladim Dukov's footsteps and take over his responsibilities. She would be a Spokeswoman herself, and hang her collar under a picture of herself and her future husband. Kim also knew that 20 years from now she and Sergekt, their bodies weathered by age, occasionally would return to this club and dance among a new generation of criminals.

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The members of "Socrates' Mistresses", along with 12 song writers who contributed music on a regular basis and 6 others who contributed sporadically, found themselves increasingly wrapped up in their music as March and April passed. They had been performing so much at the Socrates Club that they were well practiced. Recording sessions were not that big of a challenge, since everything the group sang they already had sung in public several times over.

The group's first CD sold out quickly after it was released. The company scrambled to produce additional CD's and speed up the release of "Socrates' Mistresses" second CD. The music became popular throughout Europe and parts of Asia. For some odd reason the CD became particularly popular in Japan and Taiwan. Slowly, very slowly at first, the music began to make headway in the United States among people looking for something relaxing to listen to that was different.

At first the group's music was classified as "New Age", although that description was not really accurate. When a music scene reporter asked Kim about how she thought her group's music should be described, Kim simply responded, "The music is Danubian, that's how you would place it. It's not New Age, or Folk, or 'traditional'...it's Danubian."

Eloisa tasked Kim to re-write five new songs in English. The task of translating the five new songs proved somewhat harder for Kim than doing the first four songs. Kim had provided the ideas for the lyrics of the first songs she sang in English, but the themes for the new songs had come from other band members. Still, Kim realized that Eloisa had picked songs that had universal appeal and would reach out past the cultural and language barriers that separated Danubian criminal society from the rest of the world. In the end Kim translated the five songs, practiced them late at night in her room, and presented the translations to Eloisa.

Once again Eloisa's sharp ears listened to the sounds coming from Kim's throat and assessed how well they sounded with the group's backup singers and musicians. In the end she dropped one of the translations and kept the other four, thus giving the band more songs with which they could appeal to English-speaking audiences.

Kim called the group's recording company to tell them the band had an additional 2 CD's worth of songs they would be able to record. The company responded by sending a team of recording studio employees and renting the best recording studio Danube City had to offer. The group's members spent the final weeks of March and nearly all of April recording one high-quality song after another, including the four English translations. Finally, one of the company representatives suggested that Kim sing a couple of very old English love songs that were hundreds of years old. The old English songs added two more non-Danubian songs to the music collection.

At the end of April the company's studio employees left Upper Danubia with enough recorded music to fill the two CD's Kim had promised. Later that year, a Hollywood producer making a movie about the fall of Gaul to the Romans was looking for music with a sad, haunting feel for the movie's score heard Kim's version of "That's all I'll ever be" on the radio. Intrigued with the song, he had a copy of the CD delivered to his office. As soon as he heard Eloisa's voice, he was hooked. He had found precisely the music he wanted for his movie.

As their music's popularity exploded across Europe, Kim's friends continued to live their modest lives in Danube City. The money from their efforts built up in their bank accounts, but the only person who was aware of that was Kim. Between their studies, their jobs, their personal relationships, and the restrictions of their sentences, Kim and her friends lived lives that were barely distinguishable from the lives of over 2,000 other criminals serving sentences in Danube City. They worked, they studied, and they fulfilled their social responsibilities to their families and future in-laws. They gathered at their usual tables at the Socrates Club in the evenings they were not recording, and they made love upstairs in the intimacy rooms. As criminals, they knelt in front of police officers and public officials, they shivered naked at the trolley stops, and they dreamt about July, when they finally could return to living normal lives. They were very humble, and very ordinary, people.

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Ex-officer Malka Chorno shaved her pubic hair on April 5, as she prepared to receive her second punishment with her own police belt. She announced to her exercise classes that she probably would be unable to lead the sessions until Monday of the following week. That night she sat quietly with Tuko at the Socrates Club, after repeating her announcement concerning the cancellation of her exercise classes to the entire club.

Malka had one last night of aggressive love-making with Tuko, and then cleaned up and took a trolley to the Central Police Station. It was quite cold outside, but Malka was naked except for her collar and winter boots. Like most other criminals she treated the criminal's cape with contempt, wearing it only when she expected to stand outside for long periods of time.

Malka Chorno was not scared in the same way that Kim or Eloisa were scared the nights before they faced being punished. Instead she was quietly resigned to her upcoming suffering. She had violated her responsibilities as a police officer, and now she had to pay for it. Malka did not see what was about to happen to her as unfair. She had inflicted suffering on plenty of people herself, and now it was her turn.

Deep down Malka had felt guilty about the way she had been treating criminals prior to her arrest. However, as she struggled with her internal conflicts, she became all that much more vicious to the criminals she punished. In a way Malka was relieved to no longer have that continuing internal emotional conflict within her soul.

The former police officer also was relieved that her life's punishment was happening now instead of taking place in the Afterlife. Danubians had a vague idea of heaven and hell, but their Church hierarchy taught them that the Afterlife was neither. Instead, Danubian priests taught their congregations that a dead person's soul endured the results of both good and bad actions he or she had committed while still alive. For a Danubian the Afterlife was a mirror image of a person's life. Malka had grown up with that idea embedded in her brain, and thus as a cop she had been very scared of what might happen to her spirit after she died. Now that she was a criminal herself, she was paying her debt during this life instead of later. She could die with her soul at least partially redeemed.

Malka arrived at Spokesman Dukov's office and knelt in the reception area, waiting for him to arrive. The secretaries came in and asked Malka if she wanted any tea. She shook her head and asked for a small glass of water instead. When Vladim Dukov arrived, Malka knelt at his feet and kissed his shoes. Following the normal procedure for a routine punishment, Dukov retrieved Malka's police folder and prepared several punishment certificates.

One of Malka's ex-coworkers entered Dukov's office to handcuff her and take her downstairs to the punishment room. Malka quietly walked downstairs, passing several of her former colleagues on the way down. Some of her ex-coworkers glanced at her with contempt. Others gave her sad looks, thinking that what had happened to her was not fair.

Malka, her escort, and her Spokesman entered the punishment room. Malka's escort locked the door and then un-handcuffed the criminal. The chief of the Danube City Police Department, along with most of the section chiefs, were present and waiting to punish their former employee. Dukov took a quick look at their faces, trying to gauge their mood and attitude about their upcoming task. However, the stern, weathered faces of the commanders were inscrutable.

Because Malka was not a common criminal, some of Vladim Dukov's reforms did not apply to her. The police officials in charge of punishing her would not have dreamt of touching Malka sexually. However, there was no strict time limit placed on her punishment, nor any limit on the number of strokes she would receive. Malka's sentence stipulated that she would be beaten to the limit of her endurance.

Malka knelt, took off her police belt, and laid it flat on the floor in front of her. She then knelt forward, placing her forehead on the floor. Once Malka was in position and her Spokesman standing next to her, the judge spoke.

�Malka Chorno, from this point forward I will refer to you as Criminal # 99348, because a criminal is what you chose to become. It grieves me to see you like this, because I always thought you were a good officer, that is, until I witnessed your shocking behavior in this room last July. As of today, the convictions of four charges against you remain in place, two violations of Article 3 of Item 18 of the Grand Duke's reform of the Judicial Code of 1780, one violation of Article 4 of Item 18 of the Grand Duke's reform of the Judicial Code of 1780, and the violation of Article 9 of Item 5 of the Judicial Code of 1524, the crime of Insurrection. Do you have anything you wish to say to me before your punishment begins?�

�No, your honor. I was convicted according to the laws of our country and I am prepared to comply with my sentence.�

�Very well. Spokesman Dukov, you will release custody of Criminal 99348 for the duration of this punishment.�

With that the Chief of Police approached Vladim Dukov. The two men saluted each other. �Spokesman, are there any restrictions concerning the punishment of this criminal that I need to be advised about?�

Dukov answered: �No Chief of Police�no special restrictions.�

�Very well.� The Chief of Police then addressed Malka. �Criminal 99348, you will pick up your belt and present it to me.�

Malka complied by picking up her belt and handing it to her former commander. He doubled it and tapped her on the shoulder with the leather. Malka now was out of Dukov's custody. Malka leaned forward and kissed the Police Chief's shoes.

�I expect you to position yourself properly on the table. Make sure that pillow is under you correctly."

Malka picked up the hard tubular pillow and laid it across the table. She then climbed up and draped her body over the pillow, leaving her bottom high in the air and fully exposed. Malka extended her arms and legs to the corners of the table, exposing herself even more. She positioned her wrists and ankles over the straps that would immobilize her. The Police Chief buckled the straps himself, and then took his position near Malka's upturned bottom. He laid the belt across both bottom-cheeks and let it rest in that position for several seconds, mainly to increase Malka's anxiety. Finally he lifted the belt, took aim at Malka's bottom, swung hard, and delivered a tremendous CRACK! to both sides of her exposed backside. Malka gasped from the pain and shock of the blow, but remained quiet. A vivid pink strip marked the woman�s otherwise pale skin. Dukov looked on sympathetically, but it would be a very long time before he could raise his hand and halt the punishment.

The police chief used the same tactic as he used the year before, carefully laying a series of vicious swats, one right after the other, on the same place. After the first 10 strokes Malka had a searing red stripe marking her bottom, which was exactly as wide as the belt. The Police Chief paused, and then struck the bright-red stripe another five times. By the 15th stroke Malka was shaking from the pain and her efforts to not cry. The Chief of Police paused for a couple of minutes, as the bright red strip darkened and swelled. Finally Malka's former boss lifted the belt again.

CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!

The Chief of Police started punishing the rest of Malka's bottom, starting with the white skin immediate below the deep red stripe. As before, he punished viciously and methodically, expanding the red portion of her bottom by a belt-width.

CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!

The police chief worked his way down to the crease that divided Malka's bottom-cheeks from her thighs. He paid particular attention to the sensitive area at the base of Malka's bottom. He struck hard, determined to break Malka's resistance. Finally he decided to aim at the sensitive area between her spread legs.

He struck a couple of savage blows that made contact with Malka's exposed vagina. She grunted and gritted her teeth, determined not to give in. The police chief struck hard at the upper part of her bottom, then returned to the base of her bottom-cheeks, again aiming at the sensitive area between her legs. Finally Malka's voice cracked and her resistance broke. Her body began shaking with sobs, but still she was trying with all her effort to stay as quiet as possible.

After the 50th stroke the Chief of Police stopped. He saluted one of the section chiefs and handed Malka's belt to him. The new official took position beside Malka, and commenced striking her hard. However, the criminal�s second tormentor concentrated on her bottom and made no attempt to further torment her vagina.

CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!

After 25 methodical strokes from the section chief, Malka began crying out as each stroke landed on her bottom. Between the strokes she was sobbing as loudly as any other criminal. She had held up quite well, but there was no way she could expect to hold up under such a lengthy punishment without her spirit finally being broken.

The section chief handed the belt to one of the arraignment committee members for yet another 25 strokes. When Dukov raised his hand, Malka's bottom was deep red with purplish welts. As before, her bottom would be spared any further injury that day, but her legs still awaited punishment. At that point the Chief of Police did something rather cruel to his victim. He clapped his hands and ordered tea to be served to himself and his subordinates. Malka, lying immobilized and in agony, would be forced to wait before the final part of her punishment would be administered.

When the Chief of Police asked Dukov if he wanted some tea, he angrily declined.

�I want this punishment to finish. I do not think this is appropriate, nor beneficial to Criminal # 99348. I think you should exercise a minimum degree of sympathy.�

Dukov received an unexpected word of support from the presiding judge.

�I agree with the Spokesman, Chief of Police. You will continue this punishment or I will conclude it.�

Somewhat chastened, the police chief angrily set down his cup and stood up. He passed the belt to another section chief, who immediately began belaboring the disgraced cop's upper thighs.

Once she had received the standard 50 strokes on the backs of her thighs, the court guards unbuckled the restraints on Malka's wrists and ankles and roughly turned her over. When they restrained her facing upwards, the woman's legs were spread and her shaved vagina was rudely exposed to the judge and the other witnesses in the room.

As Dukov contemplated his one-time enemy and current client, he felt a twinge of sexual arousal. The sight of Malka's fit muscular body restrained and spread was intensely erotic to her Spokesman, as was her teary face and her helplessness. Dukov felt guilty about being excited by the view of his prostrate client, but his mind quickly jumped to the thought that her exposed pubic area might become a target of the belt unless he intervened. The Spokesman raised his hand.

�Your honor, I am requesting that you specifically prohibit that my client be struck anywhere other than her thighs. I would like that clarified.�

The judge paused for a second, noting the former police officer's exposed vagina. Yes, that part of her body was very vulnerable and it would be for the best to grant the Spokesman's request.

�I will make that clarification in your favor, Spokesman. Criminal # 99348 may be struck only on her thighs. A blow to any other part of her body will end her punishment.�

The section chief wielding the belt glared at the Spokesman. He had been looking forward to laying some hard strokes between the woman's spread legs and getting some good screams out of her, but now couldn't because of the judge's order. It was a small victory for Dukov, but a significant one for his client. The man sighed and began marking the criminal's upper thighs with reddish welts.

CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!� CRACK!

Malka cried and screamed as the final 50 strokes of her punishment darkened her upper thighs. Dukov raised his hand a final time and the court guards unbuckled her from the table. She struggled to get off and maintain her balance once her feet were on the floor. She presented herself to the judge, who signed her punishment certificate. Finally came the concluding humiliation, having to kneel and kiss the shoes of each of the police officials who had punished her. Malka struggled to move on her knees from official to official, thanking each one for flogging her.

Suddenly, through the emotional haze of her pain and embarrassment, Malka remembered how she had treated Kimberly Lee at the end of the American's second punishment. She had forced Criminal # 98945 to repeat over and over her �thank you� in an effort to humiliate her. Now life had thrown that humiliation right back into Malka's face, as she was forced to kneel and say �thank you� over and over to her multiple tormentors.

With that the Chief of Police touched Malka's shoulder with the belt and saluted Vladim Dukov. Criminal # 99348 now was safely back in the Spokesman's custody. The Spokesman instructed his client to walk to the door ahead of him. She complied, although she was unsteady on her feet and had trouble keeping her balance. Once out the door Dukov put his arm around Malka and helped her get up the stairs.

When they entered Dukov's office Malka's situation finally hit her full-force. She knelt at her Spokesman's feet and began sobbing uncontrollably at the humiliation of her life. For the first time she truly realized what had happened to her. She had been flogged by the people she had worked under, and flogged with a piece of her own uniform.

Criminal # 99348's view of herself underwent a huge change at that moment. She knew, no longer suspected but actually knew, that she did not want to return to the National Police Force, in spite of Kimberly Lee's gesture of forgiveness. How on earth could she go back to being a police officer after having undergone the experience of serving a sentence? How could she ever face her superiors in uniform again after having been whipped by them? Did she even really want to? She now saw herself for what she was, a criminal. That realization devastated her.

Malka heard Dukov's voice from what seemed a great distance.

�Malka, please, you must stand up. You don't need to prostrate yourself before me. Your whipping is over, and you can go back to your normal life.�

Dukov put out his hand and his client took it. He helped her get up. Suddenly she put her arms around him and began crying into his shoulder. Dukov felt a bit uneasy having to hold her and comfort her, but such physical contact between a Spokesperson and a criminal was permitted immediately following a punishment. Some criminals needed to be comforted by being held. The Spokespersons' Code of Conduct had guidelines that permitted such physical comforting, as long as there was no sexual contact.

After a long time crying into Dukov's shoulder Malka finally quieted down, but she stayed pressed up against him.

�Spokesman Dukov, I don't know what 'normal' is any more. I don't know what my 'normal life' is, or what it should be.�

�I suppose your normal life is your responsibility to your gym classes and to your boyfriend. Right now those are your priorities.�

�But later�later what?�

�Only you can answer that question, Malka. Your life will become 'normal', but what 'normal' actually means is a matter only you can determine.�

**Chapter 20 � The Story of Two Final Punishments**

Kim's friends became increasingly nervous as the end of April approached. The reason was simple enough; they were due to receive the final switching of their sentences on April 25. The switching was the final major event of their sentences they needed to endure before their release in July, but that did not make them any less apprehensive about having to face the switching table.

Spokesman Havlakt lobbied hard to get the group's final punishment canceled. They had contributed greatly to Upper Danubia with their music, they had risked themselves during last summer's forest fires, they were in college, and they were leading productive lives. What good could possibly come out of making them suffer yet again, for something that really was not their fault to begin with?

The sentencing judge was sympathetic to the group's plight, agreeing there was no point in administering the final switching. However, the law stipulated that unless a criminal had performed some important service to the country or an act of personal heroism, a scheduled judicial switching could not be canceled. The reasoning behind that law was to prevent Spokespersons from filing routine petitions to cancel switchings and to prevent them from seeking special treatment for their clients.

Spokesman Havlakt and the sentencing judge sat down to examine several old cases, to see if there was any way to get around that law. Finally, just two days before the group was due to report to the Central Police Station, the Spokesman found a partial solution to the problem, which he presented to the judge. The judge would not be able to cancel the switchings completely, but he felt the court could justify reducing the punishments to 25 strokes, because the crimes had been committed when Eloisa and her friends were still under 18. There was one such legal precedent for such a reduction, from a case in the 1960's that was somewhat similar to the one resulting in the convictions against Eloisa's group. On that occasion the students had been sentenced to a year of wearing collars and to receiving three switchings. Like Eloisa�s group, the first switching was the standard 25 strokes for persons under-age. The second switching was 50 strokes, but the group�s final switching was reduced back to 25 strokes, the criminals being punished as minors, even though they were above 18. The legality of punishing adults as minors in the 1960�s case was never challenged. Spokesman Havlakt now had a legal precedent to request a reduction in the severity of his clients� punishments. The sympathetic judge read over the case and agreed with the Spokesman. He could use the old case as a justification to reduce the final punishment of Eloisa and her friends to 25 strokes.

That evening Spokesman Havlakt called Eloisa and her boyfriend and told them contact all the other members of the group. They reported to his office in the evening, all 28 of them. They knew their Spokesman had something important to tell them, or else he would not have had them report to his office at night.

"I have some good news for you. It's not as good as I would have liked it to be, but still, you may consider yourselves blessed. The sentencing judge and I were determined to see what we could do to eliminate your final corporal punishment. We could not completely eliminate your final punishment, but when you are switched the day after tomorrow, you will be punished as minors, not adults. In other words, each of you will receive 25 strokes with the switch instead of 50."

Eloisa and her friends looked at each other, visibly relieved. The Spokesman continued, explaining the case that led to the legal justification for reducing the punishment. He concluded. "I don't know if this case would have helped you earlier in your sentences or not, because its legality was never challenged. There won't be any opportunity for the prosecutor to challenge the legality of the case now because it will be used on you in just two days and on a single occasion. But once you have been punished the day after tomorrow, that will be it. A little over two months from now your collars will be off and you'll be free citizens. Keep your minds focused on that when you lie across the switching table this one last time."

The Spokesman then laid out the schedule for the group's punishments. His goal was to simply get the whole thing over with as quickly as possible. The police would be using two punishment rooms, 14 members of the group per room. The Spokesman decided to divide his clients into two sub-groups of 14, one of which would report to his office at 8:00 in the morning, the other which would report at 11:00 in the morning. He hoped to have the punishments completely finished no later than 2:00 in the afternoon.

Once 14 members for each shift were present, they would be divided between the two punishment rooms, 7 per room. Spokesman Havlakt would take one group downstairs, while Vladim Dukov would take the other group downstairs. They would be switched one at a time, each one then being released to return to the Spokesman's Office after his or her switching.

"I hope that, with just 25 strokes, you won't need much time to recover, but for any of you who do, I'll have my tables set up. I do expect you to stick together once you have been punished. Come upstairs to my office, or to Spokesman Dukov's office, and wait there until everyone from your group is done."

Finally, the Spokesman emphasized the changes under the new rules resulting from Vladim Dukov's reforms.

"What you must endure will be very straightforward. You will go downstairs in handcuffs, each one of you will be strapped down, you'll get your 25 strokes, you'll be let up, you'll thank the cop for punishing you, and you'll come back upstairs. That's it. No leg irons, no fondling, no hits on the shoulders, no kicks, no fingers up your bottoms. We got all that to stop. The younger cops aren't that happy about it, but that's just too bad. You're not here to give them playtime.�

Dima knelt and the others followed his lead. As the leader of the group he pressed his forehead on the ground at the feet of his Spokesman, and with that the group departed to the Socrates Club. The group was no longer afraid; they now simply looked at their final switching as the last unpleasant event that stood between the present and the conclusion of their sentences. For most of the group, their sentences really would end in two days. There were no more switchings scheduled, nothing to be afraid of during the final two months.

Eloisa and her friends shaved their pubic hair one final time the day before their punishments, but they did not wear the long faces they had worn previously. Tomorrow's ordeal would be painful and unpleasant, but not horrific and humiliating as it had been on previous occasions.

The following morning, at 7:45 am, eight young women and six young men knelt in the reception area of their Spokesman's office. They had split into two groups, four women and three men each. They would follow their usual routine of allowing the women to go first. Shortly after the group was kneeling Officer Vladik Dukov and his partner entered the Spokesman's office. The 14 criminals knelt forward, touching their heads to the floor. Vladik addressed the group in a very routine manner.

�Very well, you all know the routine, so I'm not going to make an issue out of it. I need all of you to stand up, in the order you plan to be punished. As I come up to each of you, you will turn your back to me and present your hands. Once I handcuff you, step into the main corridor and get in line. My partner and I will take you downstairs and we'll try to get this over with as quickly as possible.�

Once the fourteen criminals were handcuffed and standing in line, a second pair of police officers joined Vladik and his partner. They were somewhat older, a man and a woman. During that spring very few younger officers were punishing criminals, since most of the younger cops had to return to the National Police Academy and be retrained to punish criminals under the new guidelines.

Once the two groups were ready, Vladik tapped Eloisa's shoulder and motioned her to follow him downstairs. With that a group of seven naked, handcuffed criminals followed the two police officers to the first of the two punishment rooms to be used during today's switchings. The second group followed behind and disappeared into the second punishment room. Spokesman Havlakt entered the punishment room along with the two police officers and seven criminals. The police locked the door and removed the group's handcuffs. There was the usual reading of the charges and sentence conditions by the judge as the seven criminals knelt with their foreheads pressed to the floor and their bottoms high in the air. Once the official reading of the charges was over, Eloisa and her companions knelt upright. They no longer would be required to keep their heads pressed to the ground until their turn came up to be punished.

Vladik and his partner took their places close to the switching table and waited. Spokesman Havlakt tapped Eloisa on the shoulder. She struggled to her feet, stepped forward with her Spokesman, then dropped to her knees at Vladik's feet. There was the normal question from Vladik.

�Spokesman, are there any restrictions concerning the punishment of this criminal that I need to be advised about?�

�Yes, Officer, today there is a restriction concerning the punishment of this criminal.�

�What is that restriction, Spokesman?�

�The court has ruled that you will punish this criminal as a minor, in accordance with a precedent set in 1964 with the sentence of Criminal # 52298 and her five companions. The court has ordered that you are limited to delivering 25 strokes instead of the normal 50.�

�Very well, Spokesman, I will comply with the restriction.�

With that the two men saluted each other and Vladik tapped Eloisa on the shoulder. The exchange had been a formality, because Vladik already was aware of the ruling. Still, the court records needed to document that Vladik Dukov understood he was to give only 25 strokes and why. The same exchange would be recorded for each criminal in Eloisa's group, in each of the two punishment rooms.

Eloisa leaned forward and kissed Vladik's shoes. Again he tapped her shoulder with the switch.

�Criminal # 92870, rise and present yourself at the table.�

Eloisa stood up and for the last time in her life extended herself across the switching table. Vladik's partner secured her wrists and ankles with leather straps, then buckled the strap around her waist. Eloisa was immobilized and ready to receive her second switching from Officer Vladik Dukov.

Vladik Dukov tapped Eloisa's bottom with his switch and quickly struck her with a sharp, painful blow. He was not hitting her as hard as the law permitted. However, he had to strike her hard enough to leave a clear mark, or the sentencing judge could not count the stroke when he presented Eloisa's bottom to have her punishment certificate signed. Eloisa would have to have 25 clear switch-marks on her body for her switching to meet the minimum legal standard. This was, after-all, real punishment, not a formality. Eloisa understood that, and held no resentment against Vladik for hurting her. She knew that he was trying his best to keep her suffering to a minimum.

Eloisa gasped and tears ran down her cheeks as Officer Vladik Dukov laid one painful stroke after another on her exposed bottom. She was determined not to cry, however, during this final punishment of her sentence. Vladik tried to accommodate Eloisa's effort not to cry by moving as quickly as possible through the 25 strokes. He tapped Eloisa's bottom, laid a red stripe, tapped her again, and struck again. He was done within 10 minutes. Eloisa maintained her dignity and managed to stay quiet during her ordeal.

Vladik and his partner quickly undid Eloisa's straps and she struggled to stand up. A bit uneasy on her feet and her cheeks streaked with tears, Eloisa allowed Vladik and his partner to take her arms and present her backside to the judge. The judge counted 25 red welts on her bottom, and signed her final punishment certificate. Eloisa then approached Vladik and her Spokesman, and knelt to kiss the officer's shoes. There was a salute, and that was it. Eloisa was released back into the custody of Spokesman Havlakt, never to be punished again.

Eloisa left the room and struggled to walk upstairs. The pain from the strokes had actually increased a bit, but that was normal. She walked into the reception area of her Spokesman's office and past his secretary. The secretary put her hand on a recovery table, but Eloisa shook her head. She didn't need a recovery table. What she needed was to be alone for a while. The secretary nodded and opened the door to the Spokesman's back office.

�The others will be looking for me. Please tell them where I am, but not to bother me. I need�really need�not to be bothered.�

Eloisa entered her Spokesman's main office and closed and locked his door. She was alone, as she wanted, but was unsure what to do next. She walked to the window and looked out onto the street below. The trees were leafing out and people were walking around in the warm spring sunshine. Some of the younger women were wearing a new style of sun-dress that recently had come into fashion and that Eloisa really liked. She was hoping the style would still be popular in July, because a new summer dress was one of the first indulgences she wanted for herself once her sentence ended.

It's over�thought Eloisa to herself. This is finally over; at least the dread of the physical punishments was over. The only part of her sentence left was the waiting until July 2, and then, freedom. Eloisa knew that sometimes criminals looked back at the final part of their sentences, the weeks between the final switching and actual freedom, as the happiest time of their lives. The anticipation of freedom is very present in their minds, with none of the disappointments and hardships that invariably accompany a person's ability to exercise free will. Eloisa would have to be careful with her impending freedom, and was well aware of that fact.

Ever since her first year in high school, Eloisa's life had been one of personal hardship and psychological torment. In some ways her sentence had been far easier on her than the four years that had preceded. Her mind had suffered and her body had suffered. Suffering was what defined Eloisa; it was what made her who she was. She expected to suffer, and actually was somewhat frightened of having to live a life in which the only suffering she endured would be the torment of her own memories and her guilt. Maybe she could someday break free from all that, maybe she couldn't.

The searing pain coming from Eloisa's bottom continued to torment her. This had been by far the most lenient punishment she had received, but for some reason today she felt that day's welts more than she had felt any of the other switchings. She walked over to her Spokesman's full-length mirror and sadly studied the red lines marking her pale skin. For a long time she stared blankly at the carpeting at the foot of her Spokesman's desk, as the anguish inside her soul rose to the surface. Eloisa could feel it, rising from her gut to her chest, from her chest to her throat, that unbelievable torment embedded in her soul.

I'm damaged, and I don't see how I can be fixed. Eloisa used the Danubian word "poganachoa� to describe herself, which meant "broken beyond repair." What if that was true?

The memories came back, full force. All those horrible things that teacher made her do...and those pictures. And on top of all that, an unfair sentence that dragged her friends, and even some students who barely knew her, into her problems�How could she ever find peace after all that had happened to her? Over and over she repeated the damning phrase from her life...

"Ya dek poganachoa! Ya dek poganachoa! Ya dek poganachoa!"

Eloisa began crying. After all these years, she needed to cry. Not cry from the pain of a sore bottom, but cry from the pain of her experiences in life. She sank to her knees and rested her elbows on one of the office chairs, burying her face in her hands. The young criminal's entire body heaved with sobs. She had been brave; she had done everything possible to live as honorably as she could, given her circumstances. She had repaid the society that had so cruelly mistreated her with kindness and the gift of her music. She had fulfilled her social duty to the friends who had sacrificed for her by becoming successful and making many of them successful. Now however, there was one thing that Eloisa needed. She sobbed on and on, louder than she had ever cried before. She had seven years of intense pain built up in her soul, and finally it had to come out.

By the time Eloisa started crying and making such a scandal in the office, all of the group's women had finished with their switchings. The women had prepared some tea and were nursing the welts on their bottoms. They were extremely upbeat, due to their relatively mild punishments and the knowledge they now were done with the physical portion of their sentence. However, their good mood was disturbed by the sounds coming from the other side of their Spokesman's door. The seven young women clustered around and became increasingly worried about what was happening on the other side.

Eloisa was confident the thick wooden door of her Spokesman's inner office would muffle the sound of her crying. Normally it would have, but she was crying so loudly that her fellow ex-classmates could hear her quite clearly in the outer office. They heard her screaming �Ya dek poganachoa�, but none of them could understand why she would be saying that. The crying went on and on, continuing as the six male students from the first punishment group came up the stairs to join their eight female classmates.

Several members of the group debated getting the key from Spokesman Havlakt and opening the door. It was Spokesman Havlakt who came up with one final important detail to that plan.

�If you really want to disturb Eloisa, then you need to call Kimberly Lee and have her go into that office by herself. She knows Eloisa better than any of the rest of you, and I think she's the only one who can get her to calm down.�

The others immediately jumped on the idea of having Kim try to talk to Eloisa, since it was true Kim was much closer to Eloisa than anyone else in the group. One of the group's back-up singers made a quick call to the music store.

Kim excused herself from work and sped to the Central Police Station on her bicycle, arriving within five minutes. She darted up the stairs to the complex's top floor and the Spokespersons' office area. She entered the office, took the key from Spokesman Havlakt and eased the door open. She found Eloisa lying on her stomach on the floor, her body still jerking with sobs.

Kim was reluctant to disturb her friend, knowing that Eloisa needed the emotional release she was experiencing. At the same time, Kim suspected Eloisa also needed comforting. She knelt next to her friend and laid a hand on her shoulder. Eloisa continued to sob. While their other friends were baffled by the statement �I'm damaged beyond repair,� Kim did understand what Eloisa was saying. She addressed her friend in Danubian.

�Tebe negat�Eloisa. Tebe negat poganachoa��

Kim tried to fill her friend with hope, with the idea that she could, and would, get past everything that had happened to her over that last seven years. She helped Eloisa stand up. Eloisa, still sobbing, hugged Kim tight, almost intimately, to the point the American felt a bit uncomfortable. Kim felt Eloisa's naked body pressed tightly against her own, her companion�s breasts flattening against her chest. Eloisa pressed her head on Kim's shoulder, which quickly became wet from her friend's tears and saliva. Kim said nothing more�she just held Eloisa for a very long time while the other women and Spokesman Havlakt watched nervously through the doorway. Eloisa sobbed and tried to speak.

�I'm sorry! I'm so sorry!�

�There's nothing for you to be sorry for! You didn't do anything wrong! I want you to understand that! You didn't do anything wrong! Do you think so many people would have stood by you if you had?�

Eloisa stopped sobbing, but she continued to hug her friend tightly and cry quietly. She looked up at the doorway at the collection of concerned faces.

At that moment Eloisa realized how lucky she truly was to have such loyal friends. She realized she had one final debt to pay to them, and to herself. She had to put her awful memories behind her. She had to move forward and begin changing, to find something else to define her besides her past suffering. She would have to find happiness, or at least come to terms with herself and find inner peace. Eloisa admonished herself. If Tuko's crazy policewoman girlfriend could change, put her torments behind her, and find inner peace, certainly Eloisa could.

Eloisa was leaning hard on Kim, in a manner that made the American realize she was completely exhausted. She guided Eloisa to the Spokesman's sofa, which was covered with a clean linen cover to accommodate the office's naked clients. For a long time Kim held Eloisa, until the group's lead singer went to sleep.

Kim finally eased herself out from under her friend and gently laid her down. She would have wanted to cover Eloisa, but she knew that was prohibited. In theory a criminal was not allowed to use bed covers at all, but of course at home no one bothered to enforce that rule. In a public office however, the rule about no covers had to be obeyed.

Kim studied her friend�s lovely bare figure and sleeping face. Asleep, Eloisa's face looked peaceful, free from the tormented expression she often carried with her when she was awake.

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Tuko was among the guys being switched in the second group. His turn was right after Sergekt, so he watched Sergekt's punishment with deep interest. Tuko's emotions were in turmoil. He was happy this was his final switching and that the punishment had been cut in half. He also was happy about the new restrictions and not having to be humiliated once again in front of the students of his ex-high school. No more being forced to kneel spread and on full display to hundreds of jeering female spectators, no medical students shoving their fingers up his bottom, no forced erections, no male cops fondling and squeezing his testicles. However, it was precisely because the severity and much of the nastiness had been deleted from the corporal punishment he faced, that Tuko saw eroticism in what was happening to the seven young men in the punishment room.

A middle-aged female cop saluted Spokesman Havlakt and asked the usual question if there were any special conditions she needed to be aware of before punishing Sergekt. As he already responded 11 times, the Spokesman answered yes and cited the 1964 case and provisional ruling. Sergekt kissed the cop's shoes and went over the punishment table.

The punishment for Sergekt was an unpleasant experience, but in comparison with what he had endured previously, it was quite mild. He had not been groped, he had not been kicked, and his shoulders were not covered with welts before his formal switching began. He had not been forced to march down the street in chains, nor forced to stand on a stage with his erect penis on display to a shouting audience. All he had to do was face about 15 minutes of intense pain, and then it would be over�this three-year nightmare would be over. Sergekt held his breath and winced each time the switch made contact with his bottom. He gasped between strokes and sweat trickled down his face, but he never was in any danger of crying.

As Tuko studied the growing collection of red lines on his friend's spread bottom, he felt increasingly aroused. The detail that most got to him was the sight of Sergekt's testicles and exposed bottom-hole, on full display to his tormentor and to everyone else in the back of the room. His girlfriend Malka used to do this�she used to have guys strapped down and spread, naked and completely defenseless. She punished without mercy. Tuko suddenly developed a guilty fantasy. He imagined that he was strapped to the table instead of Sergekt and that the cop was Malka. He fantasized that Malka was about to punish him.

Sergekt's punishment was over just as Tuko's fantasy was getting under way. His penis had stiffened somewhat, a detail that caught the attention of everyone remaining in the room. Sergekt gave his friend a perplexed look as he nursed his marked bottom and walked out of the room.

It was Tuko's turn. He relished the preliminaries of his punishment, the kneeling, the kissing of the cop's shoes, the getting up and lying across the punishment table. All that time he was imagining that it was Malka who was wielding the switch.

The female cop lined up her switch on Tuko's bottom, but she did not strike right away. She saw quite clearly that this criminal was sexually excited. She would not have fondled him even if she had been allowed to, but she did rub the switch over his bottom to raise his anticipation. As he felt the cruel hard strip of leather momentarily caress his bottom, Tuko's became even more aroused. By now his penis was quite hard, as he closed his eyes and imagined that it was his beloved Malka who was about flog him. He relaxed his bottom and tried to shift it out, wanting to expose it even more to the woman in the uniform.

The cop was fascinated by the criminal's display of arousal. Very well, young man, if it's a severe punishment you want, than that's what you'll get, she thought to herself. The cop pulled her arm back and struck Tuko full-force. The stroke landed in the sensitive lower part of Tuko's bottom, just slightly above the crease that separated his bottom-cheeks from his upper thighs. Tuko gritted his teeth as the pain seared into him, but the fantasy that it was Malka who was punishing him bore into his brain even more. He wanted to surrender himself to her, to have her completely control him.

The cop struck again, a second cruel line of pain placed immediately above the first one. Again Tuko gasped, all the time imagining that it was Malka, wearing her police uniform and her cruel smile, who was tormenting him. He imagined a full punishment of 50 strokes, laid on his bottom so hard that she would be forced to finish on his thighs and back.

The cop rubbed Tuko's bottom with the switch, touched it across the spot she planned to strike next, and struck precisely where she indicated. Again Tuko gritted his teeth and gasped, but the gasp was not entirely from the pain. A third thin reddish line took its place right above the first two.

Tuko's punishment took nearly twice as long as the switchings of his companions, almost half an hour. The cop was determined to see how far she could push the criminal while limited to 25 strokes, curious to see if full-force strokes would break his arousal. Rarely had she encountered a criminal who actually was aroused during punishment, and of the few who started out aroused, most quickly snapped out of it once the first strokes started landing. This criminal was different. He seemed to become more aroused, not less, as the pain mounted in his bottom. The cop had no way of knowing this young man was the disgraced Malka Chorno's boyfriend and that he was imagining it was own lover who was beating him instead of a stranger.

Tuko was shaking and covered in sweat when the cop finally finished with him. His bottom was severely marked; clearly showing the difference between stroke laid at the minimum legal force the others had received, and the maximum legal force. The cop and her partner unbuckled Tuko and he stood up, his penis fully erect and bobbing slightly.

The cop and her partner grabbed Tuko's arms and presented his backside to the judge. Tuko's bottom was badly marked up and there was no question his punishment was valid. The judge, however, was more concerned about Tuko's sexual arousal.

�Turn that criminal around.�

The two cops complied, forcing Tuko to face the judge with his erection pointing straight at him. The judge gave Tuko an annoyed look.

�Young man, you will explain to this court this indecency. Whatever is in your head, I expect to hear it.�

Tuko stammered �Y�your honor�My girl�girlfriend used to be a�a cop�and I�I had this fantasy.�

�You're Ex-Officer Malka Chorno's boyfriend?�

�Yes�yes your honor.�

�Then maybe, once she finds out about your disgraceful behavior, she'll use some of her old punishment skills on you, which obviously you clearly need. In the meantime, you will stand next to the bench in the prisoner's stance, facing the rest of the room. You will stay in that position until that disgusting erection is gone.�

Having to stand with his hands behind his head, with his legs spread and his bottom throbbing, seemed only to accentuate Tuko's state of intense arousal. He stood quietly, with his knees shaking and his penis continuing to bob up and down. In the meantime, the group's final criminal, Dima, was strapped to the table and punished. The cop had exhausted most of her remaining energy punishing Tuko and was in no mood to exert herself on the group's leader. Dima, after having been the most harshly punished criminal in the group during all of the previous switchings, today received the lightest punishment. The marks barely met the minimum legal standard and the he did not even have any tears in his eyes when his punishment ended.

Tuko remained standing in the criminal's stance after Dima was released and left the room. Right after that, to Tuko's horror, his girlfriend Malka entered, having been summoned by one of the judge's assistants. Malka took a quick look at her boyfriend before dropping to her knees and touching the floor with her forehead.

The judge ordered Malka to stand. She stood crisply at attention, in exactly the same way she had been taught to stand when she was still a cop. The difference, of course, was that now she was completely naked except for her collar and her police belt. The judge addressed her.

�I expect you to teach this young man some manners. He seems to have a fantasy about you punishing him, and because of that fantasy, he disgraced himself in court today. What I expect is for you to turn his little fantasy into reality. He only has two months left on his sentence. During that time I expect you to make sure he's properly disciplined.�

Malka gave Tuko another quick look.

�Yes, your honor, I'll make sure he is properly disciplined. I'll need to borrow a switch.�

�I'll have the old one from your uniform given back to you as soon as we adjourn. Keep in mind you may only use that switch to comply with my order. You are not to use it for any other purpose.�

�Yes, your honor.�

A few minutes later Malka and Tuko left the punishment room together. Malka was holding Tuko's hand with one hand and carrying her switch with the other. The naked couple made a rather odd sight as they walked to the Socrates Club, Malka with her switch and Tuko with his welt-covered bottom. By this time his hard-on finally had subsided, but the combination of fear and intense sexual arousal still was very much present in Tuko's mind.

They entered Malka's gym, which was empty at the time. Malka's first exercise class of the day had passed and her martial-arts class was not scheduled to begin for another hour. Malka ordered Tuko to assume the prisoner's stance in the middle of the exercise area. She then gently caressed his penis and testicles with the tip of the leather switch. He went hard immediately.

�Very well, Tuko. I love you, but the judge is right. You do need discipline. I've thought about that for a while and wanted to bring it up with you, but now the judge has done that for me. Having an erection in court, and then saying it was my fault! What on earth were you thinking?�

�I�I was fantasizing that it was you who was punishing me, Malka. I don't know why, but I kept imagining you instead of that other cop.�

�Well, whether you like it or not, it's no longer a fantasy. As soon as your welts heal, I'm going to punish you again, and punish you for real. In the meantime I want you to keep shaving.� She tapped the cleanly shaved area right above his penis with the switch. �Since I need to discipline you, I expect you to be properly shaved at all times. Now lie on the floor on your back.�

Tuko complied, wincing as his welts pressed on an exercise mat. Malka knelt beside him and took his erect penis in her hand.

�You really are a bad boy. I don't think any of us realized how bad you are until today. Well, I plan to fix that.� She gently massaged his penis and caressed his testicles. �So, Tuko, do you think you're a bad boy?�

�Yes, Malka, I'm bad.�

�That's right Tuko, and bad boys need discipline.�

Malka straddled Tuko and lowered herself onto his penis. She gasped and moved on top of him as she climaxed. The thought of punishing her young lover, precisely at the moment she felt him inside her, drove Malka wild with sexual desire.

As Malka's weight pressed his welts hard against the floor, Tuko's excitement mounted. The fear and anticipation of being punished by her took control of Tuko's soul. He relived his half-hour bent over the switching table, feeling both intense pain and intense arousal. Tuko no longer was fantasizing. He would be strictly disciplined as soon as his welts healed. He suspected he would spend most of the rest of his sentence with his bottom constantly healing from the latest set of welts from Malka's switch. That thought, combined with the intense pain from his bottom and the intense pleasure from the feel of being inside his future disciplinarian, drove Tuko to have the best orgasm of his life. The moans and gasps of the two lovers filled the gym, as did the intense smell from their sexual excitement and their sweat. Malka definitely would have to air-out before her next class.

Malka, however, was not finished. Her strong sexual drive demanded yet more satisfaction, plus she needed to establish her dominance over Tuko. She rolled on her back and spread her legs.

�Tuko, I'm a mess. You need to clean me up before my next class. Start licking. I'll tell you when you can stop.�

Tuko studied Malka's shiny vagina and the pubic hair surrounding it, which had partially grown back since her last punishment. He had to clean both his own orgasm and Malka's orgasm off of her skin and surrounding hair, using his tongue. He had no choice but to submit. He had brought this on himself.

Tuko licked the area around Malka's labia first, trying to clean her up as best he could. He was somewhat disgusted by the taste of the combined orgasms, but at the same time excited by being forced to follow his lover's commands. He moved his face between her legs and gently licked around her vagina. Malka was getting wet again, so Tuko moved to her clitoris and began gently massaging it with the tip of his tongue. Malka involuntarily shuddered with anticipation. She began to sweat, a sign she was about to climax. Tuko became excited as well, his active sex drive having recovered from his most recent coupling. He moved over Malka, who complied by raising her legs. He entered her and thrust hard, the pain from the welts in his bottom somehow giving him that extra edge. Once again the gym filled with the sounds of the two lovers and the strong smell of their sex. Tuko kissed the ex-cop, smearing some of the remains from the previous orgasm on her face.

The two finally recovered from their second round of orgasms, only for Malka to realize that her martial arts class started in within 10 minutes. Malka dashed out the door to the main building of the Socrates Club to take a shower, leaving orders with her boyfriend to clean up the mats and try to air out the gym. Tuko complied, opening the windows and wiping down the exercise mat. He picked up Malka's switch and set it on her worktable. Tuko's hands trembled as he touched the black leather handle. He knew he would be seeing, and feeling, a lot of that switch over the next two months.

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Eloisa recovered during the afternoon in her Spokesman's office. Finally she got up with a new resolve. She had to face her fears and overcome them. She would go to the Socrates Club tonight, try to re-live what happened to her, and try to repair herself. Within two months she would have her freedom back, and she felt an urgent need to be ready to face the challenges of being a normal citizen.

That night, with all 27 of her high school friends present, along with Kimberly Lee and the group's miscellaneous girlfriends, boyfriends, and fianc�es, Eloisa stood on the stage of the Socrates Club to talk. She discussed her thoughts about being damaged beyond repair and openly speculated whether or not she could ever lead a normal life. There was hope, however.

�For the first time in my life, I feel there is some hope. Maybe someday I can find happiness. I didn't think it could happen, but I now I believe it's possible. I want to say one more thing. The only reason there is even hope in my life is because you�� she turned to face her friends at the table, ��were there for me. The ancients chose to inflict suffering on my body and my soul. However, they also gave me the friendships that I needed to survive my ordeal. And they gave me one special person�the one man in this city who could understand me�who fought for me�who has waited��

Eloisa broke down crying. Her boyfriend approached the stage and took her hand. She collapsed in his arms, as the rest of the club sat in respectful silence. They left the stage, with Dima expecting to take her back to her seat at the group's table. However, a strange resolve had built up in Eloisa. After four years of knowing him, she wanted to try having sex with her boyfriend. It would be the most difficult thing Eloisa would do in her life, but she had to break through that barrier. For some reason she couldn't understand, she felt that tonight was the one night she might succeed in re-claiming that portion of her life. She quietly took Dima aside and asked him to take her upstairs.

He reacted with doubt and fear�what if this didn't work? What if�? But perhaps she knew something he didn't. Perhaps this was the one opportunity to break through her psychological wall of horrific memories and internal torment. So, to the amazement of their friends, the couple slipped through the back door of the main hall and headed for the stairs. Their hearts pounding, they found an unoccupied intimacy room. They slipped inside, but suddenly Eloisa's resolve began to falter. She didn't know what to do next, being totally fearful of being hugged sexually.

Dima figured out how they needed to approach breaking through the sexual barrier. He couldn't take her. The moment he held onto her in a sexual manner she would start having flashbacks. She would have to take him, go at her own pace, and stop where and when she needed to.

�Eloisa, I am going to lie on the bed. You're going to get on top of me. That's the one thing he didn't make you do, is that right?�

�I�I was never on top.�

�Then that's how we'll do it, me underneath and you on top. You will be in control. I will do whatever you tell me to do. Take your time. There's no rush. And if you can't�well, we'll try again later on.�

Dima lay on the bed on his back. Eloisa nerved herself to approach the bed and sat down next to him. She started moving her hands over his, and then ventured to massage his chest. Eloisa nervously moved her hands to the area right above his penis, exploring the shaved spot where his pubic hair had been a couple of days before. She took a deep breath and touched his inner thighs, looking intently at his penis and testicles. She had seen his body on a daily basis for nearly three years, but never this close and never from below. Finally curiosity overcame fear, and Eloisa began exploring her lover's most intimate regions with her fingertips.

The reaction was immediate; he became hard right away. She had touched him�there�and not recoiled in horror. Eloisa's heart raced as she ran her fingers up and down his stiffening penis. She was fascinated by the change, never having seen her boyfriend have an erection before. So far�so good�no flashbacks.

�What�What do I do now?�

�There's a tube of gel in the dresser drawer. Hand it to me.�

Eloisa complied, and watched as her boyfriend dabbed the end of his penis with lubricant.

�I'm ready. The rest is up to you.�

Eloisa clumsily positioned herself over him, trying to line up her vagina and his penis. It was a bit difficult, and he had to help guide himself inside her. The experience for Eloisa was not altogether pleasant, because no one had entered her for nearly four years and her muscles were tight. Her vagina hurt as the flesh was forced to open up, but she knew that particular pain would only be one time. The next time would be better, and less painful.

In spite of her lack of an orgasm, Eloisa was not disappointed at all. Quite to the contrary, an immense happiness swept through her as she felt her lover pulsating inside her. She was able to concentrate on the sensations of the moment, not on what had happened to her four years before. Because the position her fianc�e had chosen there was nothing to associate her current efforts to have sex with anything that had happened to her in the past. The experience was far from perfect, but they had done it! They had managed to make love!

Eloisa's healing process began in earnest three nights later, when once again she straddled Dima. By the second time she had lost some of her fear and was much less tense. She moved more naturally on top of her lover, more relaxed and feeling more pleasure from his body. Finally her own body opened up. For the first time in six years she had an orgasm, a release of pent-up sexual tension. As she gasped and squeaked on top of her lover, Eloisa's body experienced sensations she had not experienced since she was 14, since the day before her teacher took the first pictures of her as a teenager.

The long-suffering lead singer of �Socrates' Mistresses� lay next to her lover once they were done. She caressed his hand and held it to her chest as hope rose in her soul. Maybe I'm not broken beyond repair after-all, she thought to herself.