

The Call of the Cuffs

Charlotte found it difficult to avert her eyes from the handcuffs. Not one, not two, but three pairs of seemingly identical shiny metal shackles, just sitting there on top of the bookcase. Each bracelet lay open and welcoming. It was almost as if they were trying to entice her; calling out to her:

"Come on, try me on, you know you want to."

And it was true that Charlotte did indeed want to feel those steel manacles closing down around her limbs. She kept glancing at them every few seconds. Even though the conversation had quickly moved on to other - to her mind, more mundane - matters, she still felt a thrill at the prospect of finding herself totally trapped and helpless in those tempting restraints. How would it feel? She had no idea, as she'd never had the opportunity to experience such delights before, although she'd often dreamed of scenarios in which she was kidnapped and held in inescapable captivity. More and more, as she stared at those curved fingers of steel with their short but sturdy connecting chain, she found the attraction too tempting to resist. She knew that somehow she had to get into those cuffs, even though she'd been forbidden to even touch them.

And now she was being ushered out of the bedroom and back to the living room by her friends, so that even the visual stimulus would soon be lost to her. She turned as she reached the door and managed one more despairing glimpse of her yearned for prize; the curled finger of one bracelet seeming to beckon her back towards it:

"Come to me" it seemed to say "Come and experience the delights of my unbreakable clutches."

Back in the living room, Charlotte found it hard to concentrate on either her friends' conversation or the television program that they were supposed to be watching. In her mind's eye she could clearly conjure up an image of the precise positioning of the trio of bondage accessories that had so entranced her. The voice in her head, too, seemed to be just as strong:

"Come back and place me around your wrists. Thrill to the sound of my ratchets slowly closing onto your flesh. Delight in the feel of my unforgiving clasp. Relish my cold caress of steel biting into your soft, warm skin. Come back, come back..."

Charlotte glanced through the open living room door. In the darkened hallway beyond she could just make out the bedroom door, now shut, behind which lay her heart's desire. The allure of the handcuffs was, for Charlotte, becoming almost unbearable by this point. But what could she do?

It had all started as just another ordinary day for the slim, attractive nineteen-year-old blonde. It was a Saturday in early summer and Charlotte, along with her two best friends Natasha and Alison, had spent most of the day shopping in town, broken only by a leisurely interlude for lunch. By late afternoon they found themselves back at the apartment that Natasha shared with her brother Jason. Jason, who was two years older than the three old school friends, was currently on a gap year from university, and had taken the opportunity to travel around the world. Right at this moment, Natasha had told her friends earlier in the day, he was somewhere in Asia.

It wasn't until the first bottle of wine had almost been consumed, that the events of the day started to take an exciting turn - at least for Charlotte. For some reason, the conversation had turned to cars, with Natasha informing her friends that one of her neighbors had recently purchased a new sports model. Charlotte had no real interest in motors - the details of the make and model, together with engine size and other technical specifications, had totally gone over her head - but Alison had seemed keen to see this new machine, and Natasha had said that the best place to view the vehicle was from the window of her brother's bedroom. So, with wine glasses in hand, the trio had left the living room and traipsed across the hallway into a room that Charlotte had never before entered. The room was in semi-darkness at first, but this soon changed as Natasha threw back the curtains to reveal an almost perfect view of the brand new red sports car in the apartment block's parking bays below. It was at this point, however, that Charlotte caught sight of something that would significantly alter the way she remembered this day...and also many days to come. For there, sitting on top of a

bookcase, were the three items which completely eradicated any thoughts of admiring some boring automobile.

The instant that her eyes alighted on the handcuffs, Charlotte felt a shiver of excitement shoot up her spine, and she made a beeline for the shiny metal objects. Reaching out her hand, she lifted one set from its resting place and gazed, almost transfixed, at the welcoming bracelets, which seemed to sparkle as the early evening sunshine played upon them. Her eyes immediately took on board the fact that these weren't toy or imitation cuffs with a safety release catch, like some that she'd seen in the past. No, it was obvious straight away that these were the real deal; bona-fide restraints that could only be opened with a key. But of this key there was no sign. Unfortunately, the rattle and clinking sounds that accompanied the lifting of the cuffs from the wooden surface had alerted Natasha to the fact that her friend had strayed from the window.

"Put those down Charlotte. They're Jason's, and he doesn't like people touching his things."

Reluctantly, Charlotte put the handcuffs back where she'd found them.

"I was only looking at them. And besides, Jason's on the other side of the world right now. What harm can it do?"

Natasha, however, was adamant.

"Just leave them alone. If you start messing with those he'll know, believe me."

Charlotte, however, wasn't about to let the matter drop. She didn't know Natasha's brother that well, but the fact that he possessed handcuffs was intriguing.

"So, what does he use them for?" she enquired as innocently as she could.

"Oh, he and his girlfriend used to experiment with them, I think. I didn't like to pry too deeply into what they got up to in this room, although I could often hear

them through the wall. All I know is that, some mornings, you could definitely see the marks on her wrists and ankles where she'd been chained up."

This information sent another wave of excitement coursing through Charlotte's body. She knew there and then that she simply had to try them on; and the sooner the better. But Natasha and Alison seemed uninterested and had both returned to the primary reason for entering the room; namely to look at some stupid car parked outside. Charlotte, however, found the cuffs too fascinating to even contemplate joining them at the window. Gingerly, she picked one set of cuffs up again, trying to avoid the inevitable clinking sound that accompanied this action. Unfortunately for her, she was unsuccessful in this regard and almost instantly Natasha was at her side, grabbing the handcuffs and forcefully placing them back on the bookcase.

"I told you to leave those alone!"

Charlotte decided to go into pleading mode.

"Oh come on, let me just try them on. What harm can it do?"

It did her no good, however, as immediately Natasha began guiding the reluctant Charlotte in the direction of the door; informing her as she did so that the handcuffs weren't toys, and that playing around with things like that could be dangerous.

So now, sitting back in the living room, Charlotte was hatching a plan. What if, she thought to herself, I was to excuse myself for a few minutes, pretend I needed the bathroom, then sneaked into the bedroom to try the cuffs on. The sticking point with this, of course, was that there had been no evidence of any key to release herself from her planned captivity. But at that precise moment, this seemed merely a minor detail for the inquisitive Charlotte. Her curiosity had been stirred and she found herself in a state bordering on sexual arousal at the thought of shackling herself up. There must be a key, she told herself, otherwise the cuffs would only be usable once before someone had to cut the wearer out of them.

So, although she'd been warned not to touch, Natasha would have to let her out, wouldn't she? Maybe, she considered, Natasha would punish her for disobeying her orders, and not let her out for a while. But far from putting her off her intended escapade, the mere idea of not being immediately released sent a shiver of pleasure coursing through her. An hour or two of helplessness would, Charlotte decided, be quite a turn on. Perhaps then Natasha would realise how strong her desire to be tied up actually was, and allow her to play with the handcuffs at will.

After plotting her sojourn into the realms of bondage heaven, Charlotte excused herself and left the room; deliberately closing the living room door behind her so that her destination would remain unknown to her two unsuspecting friends. Instead of turning left towards the bathroom, Charlotte headed right and carefully opened the door to Jason's bedroom. The hinges creaked slightly as the door swung open, and Charlotte froze lest this should alert her friends to the fact that her absence was not for the reasons she'd given. After a few seconds, however, when the only sound penetrating the walls came from the television, she breathed a sigh of relief.

The light outside had now faded into dusk and the room was in darkness, but the bookcase lay directly in line with the door, and the light from the hallway threw its beam onto the gleaming silver objects that had become Charlotte's Holy Grail. There was that voice in her head again:

"Couldn't stop thinking about us, eh? Well don't be shy. Now you're here, try us on for size. See how wonderful my grip on your lovely young arms feels. Rejoice in the security of my inescapable charms. Come on, try us before your friends come looking for you."

Charlotte switched the overhead light on and gently closed the bedroom door. How long did she have? How long before Natasha and Alison clocked the fact that she was taking far longer than the time required for a normal toilet break? As she approached the cuffs' resting place she realized that her heart was pounding wildly. Gingerly, she picked up the first set of manacles. She knew it was just her imagination, but as the tips of her fingers came into contact with the metal, what almost felt like a mild electric shock seemed to spread rapidly throughout her

being. Once again, that silent voice called out to her:

"Don't delay, place me around your wrists and feel the power that I can exert over you. You've come this far. Don't pull out now."

The television could still be heard faintly from the other room, but she knew it was now or never. If Natasha got wind of what she was doing, Charlotte would never find out how fantastic it felt to be shackled and helpless. Quickly she picked up all three sets of handcuffs and laid them on the floor.

Sitting down on the carpet beside her new-found playthings, Charlotte opened one bracelet and, without further thought of what would happen when she was discovered, placed the ring of steel around her left ankle. Although meant as wrist restraints, the young woman's legs were sufficiently slim for her to force her lower leg into the curvature of the metal arm and quickly push the other end down. A rapid click, click, click broke the silence as the pressure increased against the fabric of the tight wet-look leggings she was wearing. Instantly, she repeated the procedure with her right leg, and within no more than a second or two, her legs were clamped in close proximity to each other, with no hope of her wriggling her feet free. Her heart, already racing, seemed to quicken still further as she tested the restraining capacity of her leg bonds. If she had to, she would be able to get to her feet, she guessed. But walking was a different matter. She looked down at the two other pairs of handcuffs:

"Come on girl" they seemed to be saying. "Now that you've started, why not use us to our full potential. Go on, finish the job off properly."

Charlotte's initial plan had been simply to cuff her wrists behind her back and leave it at that; leaving the third pair of manacles unemployed. However, just as she picked up the second set to embark upon this course of action, the rattling chain that linked the bracelets together seemed to send out another message to her brain:

"Have you considered going all the way and putting yourself into a hog-tie? Think what fun that would be. Won't your friends be surprised when they see you completely helpless and unable to move at all? Go on, what harm can it do?"

The prospect of being even more trapped and helpless than she'd originally planned sent another shockwave of delight racing through her. But she knew that to complete this act of self-bondage she had to act fast. Rolling over onto her stomach, she placed her left wrist into the waiting ring of steel and pushed down with her right hand until the sound of the ratchet, together with the sensation of cold metal tightening to embrace her warm flesh, signaled that one wrist was now trapped. For a second she balked at what she had to do next, but the soft encouraging voice bade her continue:

"Come on now, you're so close. Doesn't that feel good already? Just think how wonderful it'll feel when you've completed the task."

Without another second's hesitation, Charlotte placed her hands together behind her back and maneuvered her free wrist into the waiting bracelet. Closing the second cuff proved slightly more difficult than she had imagined, and it took several fumbled attempts before a slow sequence of clicks told her that she had passed the point of no return. A quick pull on her wrists confirmed the fact that she was now stuck. She giggled. That felt good. Now for the final piece of the jigsaw.

Rolling onto her side, Charlotte felt around on the floor until the fingers of her right hand touched something metallic. Closing the first bracelet around the connecting chain of her wrist restraints was easy enough, but now she had to try to connect this to her ankles. Rolling back onto her stomach, she bent her knees back as far as she was able, until she could just touch her ankles with her outstretched fingers. Her first thought was to simply link the second bracelet around the ankle chain, but then a better idea came to her. What if she wrapped this last set of cuffs around the ankle chain and then pulled the second bracelet back up to her wrists? That would make the hog-tie much stricter and allow her even less room to wriggle around. This proved an easier task in her imagination than it actually turned out to be in practice, but after straining and stretching for

what seemed like hours - but in reality could have been no more than two minutes - she finally managed to correctly position the empty bracelet over the chain of her ankle bonds. Carefully, she pushed her hand between her calves, grabbed the one remaining open shackle and pulled it back between her legs and back down to her wrists. Wasting no time, she encircled the bracelet around the chain of her wrist restraints and triumphantly snapped the last ratchet into place to complete her captivity.

Charlotte indulged herself for several minutes in a struggle designed, not to get free, but to test the limits of her ability to move. The hog-tie was, she soon found out, much more restrictive than she'd imagined, as even rolling over onto her side was now a major operation. But that just added to her satisfaction. To all intents and purposes she was a prisoner here, and until Natasha or Alison discovered her, she would have to remain so. How long that might be, she had no idea, although she hoped that it wouldn't be for a little while yet. And as she writhed on the carpet, the chains relentless clinking seemed to turn to gentle mocking laughter:

"Got you! Now you can't escape me. You can struggle all you like, but you're mine now. Fell into my little trap didn't you?"

Charlotte giggled.

Charlotte must have wriggled and squirmed in a state bordering on ecstasy for around five minutes before the first warning reached her ears that Natasha and Alison were on the move. The sound of the living room door opening coincided with an increase in volume from the television. It also corresponded with the sound of voices in the hallway.

"Where's she got to?" She heard Natasha say.

"Well the bathroom's empty. Maybe she left the flat."

"Why would she do that without saying something? Anyway, the safety chain's still on the door, so she must still be in here somewhere. Check in the kitchen."

The sound of the kitchen door opening was followed by Alison's report that the missing woman wasn't there. Charlotte knew that there were now only two rooms left for them to check; Natasha's bedroom and Jason's. She felt butterflies swarm around in her stomach at the contemplation of imminent discovery.

"She's not in here. That just leaves Jason's bedroom. But why would she be in there?"

Natasha's question was answered two seconds later, as the door creaked open.

"Charlotte?! What the hell are you playing at? I thought I told you to leave those alone!"

Charlotte felt her face redden. Both Natasha and Alison stood frozen in the doorway, dumbfounded at the sight that greeted them. During their brief silence, however, Charlotte began to blurt out the explanation for her state of bondage.

"I'm sorry Tash, but I had this really strong craving to test your brother's handcuffs out. I know you said not to touch, but I just couldn't help myself. Don't worry though, you don't have to let me out just yet. I'm quite happy to spend an hour or two like this. It's quite fun actually."

"Don't have to let you out?!" Natasha almost shrieked. As well as finding her voice, she also regained the movement of her limbs, and rushed to where the helpless woman lay. "Charlotte, I can't let you out. I don't have the keys. That's why I told you not to play about with these things."

To make certain that Charlotte knew what she meant by "these things", she pulled on the handcuffs that linked her ankles to her wrists.

Charlotte giggled again. If Natasha wanted to pretend that she didn't have any means of releasing her for a while, then that was alright with her.

"Yeah, whatever Tash. You can play all the mind games you like; it doesn't bother

me. Like I said, I'll be fine here for a while."

Natasha lay down beside her bound friend so that her eyes and Charlotte's were no more than six inches apart.

"I'm not joking. I really don't have the keys. Jason keeps them on his key-ring at all times. And as you know, he's on the other side of the world at the moment."

She started to get up.

"So you see Charlotte, you really are in a bit of a tight spot."

Charlotte laughed again, thinking this pun was meant as a joke. However, when she looked up at Natasha, then over to Alison who had remained in the doorway all this time, neither of them had even the slightest hint of a smile registering on their faces. The penny suddenly dropped.

"You're serious aren't you?"

"Of course I'm being serious. Why do you think I told you earlier not to mess with things that don't concern you?"

Charlotte tugged at her restraints in earnest for the first time. She really was securely chained and restrained. She looked up at her two friends, who seemed to tower over her.

"So how are you going to get me out of this then?"

Natasha's annoyance, which had clearly been simmering just below the surface, now erupted.

"How are WE going to get you out? May I remind you Charlotte, that it was YOU who decided to disobey my orders. And it was YOU who trussed yourself up and decided to play at being 'Little Miss Bondage'. And now you're expecting US to find a solution for this mess you've ended up in? I don't think so. You can stay

there while we decide what to do with you."

Natasha moved towards the door, followed immediately by Alison. As the thought of being stuck there indefinitely hit her, Charlotte shrieked.

"YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE ME HERE!"

Natasha turned and looked back to where Charlotte lay.

"Perhaps you should have thought of that before you sneaked out and did this to yourself. Now you're going to have to learn the hard way"

The door slammed shut and Charlotte was left alone with her thoughts.

For what must have been an hour, or maybe longer, Charlotte waged a battle against her bonds that she knew she couldn't win. She still wanted to believe that the alleged lack of a key was all just a lie that Natasha had concocted to punish her, and that she and Alison would return soon, unlock the cuffs and tell her not to do anything so stupid again. But deep down she knew this wasn't going to be the case. Deep down she realized that she really was stuck here, and the only way out was to be cut free. But how long would it be before they'd consider this option?

After exhausting herself in her futile fight for freedom, she resigned herself to waiting until her friends decided that she'd learnt her lesson. Being so securely hog-tied was becoming uncomfortable, and every few minutes she tried to ease her aching limbs by shifting her position. And each time she did so, the rattle and chink of metal on metal seemed to form into whispered words, mocking her gullibility:

"Did you really think that I'd just let you go? You're completely at my mercy now. Do you really believe that struggling will get you out of my clutches? You're here to stay, my girl."

The words seemed to go around and around in her head, as if on a tape loop, until after a while she could stand it no longer. The television could still be heard in the other room, but there was no sign that either Natasha or Alison had any inclination to return. So she decided that she would have to make them come to her.

"Come on girls! Please help me get out of here. These handcuffs are hurting me...."

Intermittently, Charlotte repeated her pleas for assistance until, after several minutes, her persistence paid off. As soon as the two women appeared in the doorway, Charlotte began her apology.

"Look, I'm sorry I went against your wishes Tash. It was a stupid thing to do and I'll never do anything like that again. Now please can you find some way of getting me out of this? Can't you cut these things off me?"

Natasha's reply, however, offered no hope of an early resolution to her predicament.

"Well firstly Charlotte, I don't have the means to cut through metal chains. And secondly, I don't think Jason would take too kindly to having all his sets of handcuffs ruined. No, you got yourself into this, so you can stay like that for the time being. I'll email Jason to see if he's got any ideas of how to get you out. But, to be honest, he's only picking his emails up every few days, so it might be a while before he replies. Until then, you'll just have to sit tight and wait."

At the notion of being trapped like this for days on end, Charlotte found herself starting to panic. She began to scream. This, she was soon to discover, was a big mistake.

It was Alison who initially came up with the idea, but Natasha immediately saw the value in following her friend's advice.

"You know something Tash, you're not going to get a minute's sleep tonight with

Charlotte screaming and whining the whole time. Maybe you should do something to keep her a bit quieter."

Natasha thought for a few seconds then suddenly seemed to have an idea.

"Don't go away Charlotte, I'll be right back."

She left the room, but was back within thirty seconds carrying a pair of tights in her hand.

"I was going to throw these out, as they've got a ladder in one of the legs, but now I think I've found another use for them. Sorry they haven't been washed since I last wore them."

Before Charlotte knew what was happening, Natasha had bent down beside her and began stuffing the tights into her unsuspecting mouth. This made her scream even more, although as her oral cavity filled with the foul tasting fabric, the amount of noise she was capable of producing diminished rapidly. As soon as the gagging material had been forced behind her lips in its entirety, however, Charlotte began making a concerted effort with her tongue to push it back the way it had come. And to a degree she was successful in this respect, although the downside of this minor triumph was that Alison and Natasha were both aware of what she was trying to achieve, and instantly realized that measures would be necessary to prevent the tights being completely ejected.

"Push them back in her mouth and make sure she doesn't spit them out again, will you Ali? I'll get something to ensure she can't do that again."

Natasha was gone slightly longer on this occasion, during which time Alison reinserted the tights back into place and held her hand over the still squealing woman's mouth. When Natasha did return, she was carrying a reel of duct tape; which left Charlotte in no doubt as to what was coming next. But all the wriggling, struggling and general evasive action could do nothing to stop her lips being sealed. With Alison pinning her down firmly on the carpet, Natasha placed the end of the tape over Charlotte's right cheek and smoothed it over her mouth,

despite the latter's despairing efforts to halt the process. Then, with Alison gathering up the still protesting captive's long blonde hair and holding it out of the way, Natasha wound a complete circuit of tape around Charlotte's head. Just for good measure, she repeated this process three more times, before finally cutting the tape and firmly pressing the end down so it stuck to the layer beneath.

"There, that should shut you up. I'm surprised you didn't think to do something like this to yourself Charlotte. Gags usually go hand in hand with bondage. At least that's what Jason tells me."

With their mission to silence Charlotte now complete, Alison and Natasha beat a hasty retreat from the room, despite the muffled begging sounds emanating from the floor.

For what seemed an eternity, Charlotte writhed around in her bondage. Eventually, however, the constant rubbing of her body against the rough pile resulted in carpet burns beginning to develop on her breasts, stomach and shoulders; her flimsy blouse and skimpy bra offering scant protection in this respect. The discomfort this engendered, plus the fact that her efforts were sapping her energy, caused her to desist from her relentless yet ultimately futile search for an escape.

After maybe two more hours, Natasha and Alison re-entered the room. Alison informed Charlotte that she was off home soon, and wished her a pleasant night's sleep. Both Natasha and Alison found this amusing, and it occurred to Charlotte that Natasha's fury had now subsided, and that both girls were now rather enjoying her misfortune.

"Oh, before you go Ali, help me get my house guest up onto the bed, will you?"

Natasha turned to Charlotte.

"That floor must be getting a bit uncomfortable for you. I wouldn't want anybody to say that we didn't offer you a bit of luxury during your stay here - however long

that might be.

Alison grabbed her legs, whilst Natasha nestled her hands in Charlotte's armpits. Within seconds they had hoisted her up onto the mattress. The soft bedding was a great relief after so long on the hard floor, although the downside was that the spongy nature of the padding made it more difficult for her to roll over and change position.

After watching their friend test the comfort of her new environment for a few minutes, Alison left the room, followed closely by Natasha. For a minute or more Charlotte heard hushed voices emanating from the hallway, although she was unable to make out what was being said. The sound of the front door opening was followed by Alison shouting "Goodnight Charlotte". Then the door slammed shut once more.

Several minutes elapsed after Alison's departure before Natasha returned to the bedroom. She informed Charlotte that she had just sent off an email to her brother, but reiterated her warning not to expect a reply any time soon.

"You never know where he might be. Last time I heard from him he was in Kathmandu. He only checks his emails when he can find an internet café. He might be out trekking in the Himalayas and not pick up his messages for several days, so don't get your hopes up of an early release. When he does get in touch, I'll abide by his wishes as to what he wants to do. If he says cut the handcuffs off you, then that's what I'll do. If he says that it serves you right and to leave you there until he gets home, then I'll go along with that. If he does decide on the latter course of action, it looks like you're in for a long stay here..."

Natasha yawned.

"...Anyway, I'm going to get some sleep now, and I suggest you do too."

Charlotte tried to protest that it was inhuman to just leave her like this; that she'd replace Jason's handcuffs with new ones if Natasha would just cut her free; and

that she promised not to make any noise if her host would just take this foul tasting gag out of her mouth. Whether Natasha didn't understand the message that Charlotte was trying to impart, or whether she understood only too well but chose to ignore her friend's pleas, Charlotte wasn't sure. She had a sneaking suspicion that the latter might be the case, however.

Natasha turned the light out and closed the door behind her, leaving Charlotte in no doubt that she had no intention of returning until morning. The blackout curtains allowed no chink of either moon or street-light to penetrate from outside, and the only illumination in an otherwise black void came from the green digital numbers on the bedside clock, which informed the helpless woman that it was approaching midnight.

Charlotte knew that she was in for a long night as she mulled over the events of the past few hours. She had made a grave error in her eagerness to live out her fantasies and lock herself up so tightly without first ensuring that she could get out. How could she have been so stupid?

Every attempt to ease her aching legs and arms met with no success, such was the strict nature of the self-inflicted hog-tie. And each movement was accompanied by the gentle jangle of chains straining to their limits, which seemed to endlessly mock her:

"You'll never get away... you're here to stay... you'll never get away... you're here to stay..."

This monotonous rhyming couplet seemed to run through her head incessantly; minute after interminable minute, hour after endless hour, until finally, against all odds, she drifted off into a light but disturbed slumber.

Charlotte slept fitfully throughout the night and woke with a start. The room was still in complete darkness, but the sound of birdsong coming through the window suggested that it must by now be light outside; a fact confirmed by the clock display which showed that it was 7:44 am. Outside the bedroom door, she heard

the floorboards creak; a sure sign that Natasha must be up and about. She tried to communicate her unhappiness at being abandoned all night, but her gag soaked up most of the outgoing sound. For half an hour she sporadically tried to attract Natasha's attention, until finally, the sound of the door creaking open corresponded with a shaft of light piercing the blackness of the room. This soon gave way to an intense brilliance, as the light was switched on.

When Charlotte's eyes managed to focus in the unfamiliar brightness, she could make out the figure of Natasha standing motionless only a few feet away from her. She had a smile on her face, and it occurred to Charlotte that she was taking a great deal of pleasure from Charlotte's ongoing misfortunes. After a few seconds, she came forward and knelt down beside the bed, within inches of her captive friend's face. Immediately she began picking at the end of the tape, before starting to unpeel the layers from Charlotte's mouth; letting her in on the latest developments in the continuing saga as she did so.

"I've got some good news and some bad news for you Charlotte."

She paused for a second or two, as if letting this pronouncement sink in.

"The good news is that Jason's replied to my email."

Another pause ensued, seemingly for dramatic effect.

"The bad news, however, is that he's requested - no, demanded in fact - that under no circumstances am I to ruin his handcuffs by cutting them. Quite frankly, Charlotte, he's furious with you for messing around with his property, and - what were his words now? - oh yes, something like, 'she got herself into this mess, so she can stay like that'."

Natasha had by now finished stripping the tape away from Charlotte's head and was helping her expel the rolled up tights from her mouth. As soon as these had been extracted, Charlotte voiced her displeasure at this latest revelation with an outburst that bordered on hysteria. It came out as a parched cry of disbelief, of frustration, but mostly of dread.

"YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE ME HERE FOREVER!!!"

Natasha, still smiling that mocking smile, put her hand to Charlotte's lips and bade her calm down. Unscrewing the top from a bottle of mineral water, she allowed her prisoner to take a few sips of the refreshing liquid.

"Actually, there's more good news, Charlotte. Jason has the keys with him, and he's promised to mail them back here as soon as he can get to a post office."

By now Charlotte was becoming wary of the pauses that punctuated Natasha's announcements, and she was almost certain that this latest break in her steady stream of proclamations was a sign that more bad news was on its way. And so it proved.

"The problem is that he's in Thimphu at the moment."

The name meant nothing to Charlotte.

"Where?"

"Thimphu. It's the capital of the Kingdom of Bhutan, way up in the Himalayas. Jason says he's not sure how good the postal service between there and the UK is, but he reckons that it'll take at least two weeks to reach us - possibly even longer."

"BUT I CAN'T STAY TRAPPED LIKE THIS FOR TWO WEEKS!! YOU'VE GOT TO GET ME OUT OF THIS. PLEEEAASE, I'M BEGGING YOU."

Natasha sighed wearily.

"I was expecting you to say something along those lines Charlotte, but Jason has decreed that the cuffs aren't damaged, so what can I do? My hands are tied...oh no, sorry, it's your hands that are tied, isn't it?"

Natasha seemed pleased at her attempted humor, although Charlotte failed to see the funny side.

"So" Natasha continued "I'm guessing that you won't simply take this lying down...although, obviously you can't do very much else except lie down at the moment, can you?"

She smiled at Charlotte; waiting, it seemed, to see if she would rise to the bait. Charlotte bit her tongue, however, fearing that her anger and frustration might boil over and result in her saying something she later regretted. When Charlotte failed to respond, Natasha continued:

"Which means, of course, that I'm going to have to take action to keep you from causing too much of a disturbance. We can't have the whole neighborhood knowing about the mess you've got yourself into, can we?"

She retrieved the rolled up pair of tights, still wet through with Charlotte's saliva. As they came towards her face, Charlotte tried in vain to avoid the inevitable by wriggling away to the other side of the bed. But alas, in her inhibited state she was incapable of moving at anything other than a snail's pace and powerless to halt the gag being rammed forcefully back into her mouth. Fresh tape soon sealed her remonstrating lips. Charlotte watched in impotent fury as Natasha stood up and gazed down on her helpless friend; the smug grin on her face leaving Charlotte in no doubt that she was enjoying every moment of her predicament.

"Relax Charlotte. Try to think of this as your summer holiday for this year. You know, there are a lot of similarities. No work, no responsibilities, nothing to do but laze around all day doing nothing. That about describes your situation at the moment, doesn't it?"

The subtleties of Charlotte's protestations, that the two were in no way comparable, were lost within the muffling properties of the gag and came out merely as random sounds. Natasha, however, seemed to have caught the gist of her objections.

"Of course they're the same. Just imagine, two weeks of what every girl wants from a holiday - 'Sun, Sea and Sex'."

She must have seen the confused look on Charlotte's face. Crossing the room, she swiftly pulled back the curtains. The bright morning sunshine streamed in, almost blinding Charlotte with its intensity.

"There, you see? Sun."

She turned around and pointed to a shelf on the wall, on which stood Jason's tropical fish tank.

"And then there's the sea. I know it's not quite the real thing, but its water and there are fish in it, so you'll just have to use your imagination."

She seemed pleased with herself at these comparisons.

"And of course, the fact that I have to come in here to give the fish their food once a day will mean that I won't forget to feed you at the same time."

Suddenly, however, she frowned slightly and seemed lost in deep thought for a few seconds.

"That just leaves the sex..."

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All of a sudden, a brainwave appeared to hit her. She snapped her fingers in triumph.

"I know! Don't go away, I'll be right back."

Natasha was absent from the room for about a minute, during which period Charlotte tested her vocal chords by screaming as loudly as she possibly could. Unfortunately, it was obvious that her severely muted state would make the prospects of contacting some unsuspecting passerby in the outside world

extremely poor.

Natasha strode back into the room, a length of white rope in her hand.

"I'm afraid I can't guarantee you a whirlwind holiday romance with some guy you meet in a bar, but this will have to do instead."

As Charlotte watched in bewilderment, Natasha pulled her up so that she was kneeling on the bed, balancing on her knees and toes. Swiftly, she found the midpoint of the rope, held the two ends together, then wrapped the double cord around her unwilling subject's waist. She then threaded the ends through the bight, created reverse tension and pulled the makeshift belt as tight as she could. But if the reason for these exploits had bemused Charlotte, Natasha's next action found her squealing with surprise. For no sooner had the rope constricted around her waist, then she found it being pulled down over her stomach and Natasha's hands could be felt threading the ends between her legs. Seconds later, she found herself being pushed forward so that her face once again crashed down into the mattress. Although she could no longer turn her head sufficiently to see what Natasha was up to, she felt the rope suddenly become taut and pull snugly up into her crotch. The next thing she knew, it was being secured to the rope belt at her back, and then wrapped around the chain of her wrist restraints, before once more retracing its path back down her butt crack and again being passed between her legs. Once this had been accomplished, she found herself being hauled onto her knees for a second time, before the ends were wound around the waist rope again and secured with a knot. Again she found herself plunging face down into the soft bedding.

"There you go, Charlotte. 'Sun, Sea and Sex', as promised. Any time you get bored in the next few days, all you'll have to do is give a few tugs on that crotch rope and you'll be instantly transported to the realms of ecstasy. I'm sure you'll make good use of it."

She stood up and admired her handiwork for a few seconds.

"Anyway, Charlotte, I can't stand around here talking all day. As you can see, it's a

lovely day out there, so I'm off to make the most of it. Shame you can't join me."

She reached the door and turned back to where Charlotte lay.

"Enjoy your day. I'm sure you will when you start experimenting with that crotch rope. Remember to keep a count of the number of orgasms you have while I'm gone. You can tell me all about it this evening."

Without further ado, Natasha left the room and closed the door behind her.

Too numb to scream, Charlotte simply lay in wide-eyed disbelief, as the enormity of her situation sunk in. Was she really going to be stuck like this for two weeks or more? The prospects seemed too daunting to even contemplate. Awkwardly, she rolled over onto her side and stretched her legs to the limit of the handcuffs' endurance. As she was expecting, the soft clink of metal on metal seemed to transform into that now familiar voice; mocking and tormenting her:

"See what you've got yourself into now? Bitten off more than you can chew, haven't you? You're mine forever. You'll never escape."

Charlotte reluctantly had to concede that every word was true. And the worst thing about it was that it was all her own fault. How would she ever get through this ordeal?

Remarkably, an answer to this question was soon to present itself.

For as she stretched her aching arms, the slight movement of her hands away from her body caused the crotch rope to dig deeper inside her and, to her utter amazement - despite the bleak outlook for her immediate future - she felt what could only be the seeds of sexual arousal course through her. Maybe Natasha's idea wasn't as absurd as she'd first thought. Tentatively experimenting with this unexpected phenomenon, she found that the feelings increased in line with the amount of energy she expended on pulling at the rope. Building up in intensity, Charlotte's body rose and fell in a rhythmic frenzy, and she found that reaching

orgasm was easier - and far more satisfying - than she imagined it would be under the circumstances. Finally, after a few minutes of utter pleasure, during which she moaned with sheer delight into her gag, she relaxed back into the mattress; her energies spent and her mind reeling from this truly beautiful experience. But her most vivid overriding memory of these few moments of sheer ecstasy was the almost poetic sound that seemed to accompany the rhythm of the cuffs as she romped and frolicked on the bed. No longer spiteful, the voice had now taken on a cajoling and encouraging tone:

"Go on girl, you may as well enjoy yourself. You might not be able to get away, but at least you can get off any time you like. Now doesn't that feel good? Not so keen on getting loose now, are you?"

All of a sudden, the remembrance of why she'd first become entranced with the concept of being firmly and securely shackled came flooding back to her. Perhaps, she thought as she relaxed in the blissful afterglow of her climax, being here for two weeks or more wasn't going to be such a bad thing after all....