

----- by John Norman -----

Volume eighteen of the Chronicles of Counter-Earth

Chapter One

THE PTE

"There it is," said Grunt, pointing ahead and to our right. "Do you see it?"

"Yes," I said. "Too, I feel it." I could feel the tremor in the earth, even through the paws and legs of the lofty, silken kaiila.

"I have seen it only once before," he said.

I rose in the stirrups. The vibration, clearly, was registered in the narrow, flat-based rings. Earlier, dimounted, we had placed the palms of our hands to the earth. It was then that we had first felt it, earlier this morning, from as faraway as perhaps twenty pasangs.

"They are coming," had said Cuwignaka, happily.

"I am puzzled," said Grunt. "It is early, is it not?"

I sat back on the saddle.

"Yes," said Cuingaka, astride his kaiila, to my left.

The current moon was Takiyuhawi, the moon in whcih the tabuk rut. It is sometimes known also as Canpasapawi, or the moon when the chokechrries are ripe.

"I do not understand," said Grunt. "It is not due until Kantasawi." This was the moon in which the plums become red. It is generally the hottest time of the year in the Barrens. It occurs in the latter portion of the summer.

"Why is it early?" asked Grunt.

"I do not know," said Cuwignaka.

Our kaiila shifted beneath us, on the grassy rise. The grass here came to the knees of the kaiila. It would have come to the thighs of a girl.

"Perhaps there is some mistake," I suggested. "Perhaps it is not what you think."

"There is no mistaking it," said Grunt.

"No," said Cuwignaka, happily.

"could it not be another?" I asked.

"No," said Cuwignaka.

"These things are like the summer and the winter," said Grunt, "like the phases of the moons, like day and night,"

"Why then is it early?" I asked.

"Has it been early before?" asked Grunt of Cuwignaka.

"Not in my lifetime," said Cuwignaka. "In the old stories it has sometimes been late, but never, as far as I know, has it been early."

"Think," I said. "Can you recall nothing of such a sort?"

Cuwignaka shrugged. "I can think of nothing of that sort," he said.
"Can there be no mistake?" I asked Grunt.
"No," said Grunt. "It is here,"
"It looks like it is raining there," I said.
"That is dust, in the wind," said Cuwignaka. "It is raised by the hoofs."
"It is here," said Grunt. "There is no doubt about it."
I looked into the distance. It was like a Vosk of horn and hide.
"How long is it?" I asked. I could not even see the end of it.
"It is probably about fifteen pasangs in length," said Grunt, "it is some four or five pasangs in width."
"It can take the better part of a day to ride around it," said Cuwignaka.
"How many beasts are numbered in such a group?" I asked.
"Who has counted the stars, who has numbered the blades of grass," said Cuwignaka.
"It is estimated," said Grunt, "that there are between some two and three million beasts there."
"Surely it is the largest such group in the Barrens," I said.
"No," said Grunt, "there are larger, Boswell claims to have seen one such group which took five days to swim a river."
"How long would it take a group like this to swim a river?" I asked.
"Two or three days," said Grunt.
"I see," I said. The Boswell he had referred to, incidentally, was the same fellow for whom the Boswell Pass through the Thentis Mountains had been named. He was an early explorer in the Barrens. Others were such men, as Diaz, Hogarthe and Bento.
"It is an awesome and splendid sight," I said. "Let us ride closer."
"But let us be careful," said Cuwignaka. Then, with a cry of pleasure, kicking his heels back into the flanks of his kaiila, he urged his beast down the slope.
Grunt and I looked at one another, and grinned. "He is still a boy," said Grunt.

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We then followed Cuwignaka. It was toward neen when we reined up beside him on another rise. The animals were now some three to four pasangs away, below us.

"It is the Pte!" called out Cuwignaka happily to us, turning to look at us.  
"Yes," said Grunt.

We could now smell the animals clearly. My mount, a lofty black kaiila, silken and swift, shifted nervously beneath me. Its nostrils were flared. Its strom lids were drawn, giving its large round eyes a distinctive yellowish cast. I did not think that it, a kaiila purchased some months ago in the town of Kailiauk, near the perimeter, had ever smelled such beasts before, and certainly not in such numbers. Too, I supposed that there were many among such beasts, perhaps most, in fact, who had ever smelled a man, or a kaiila, before. Grit and dust settled about us. I blinked my eyes against it. It was very impressive to be so close to such beasts. I scarcely dared to conjecture what it might be like to be even closer, say, within a few hundred yards of them. Individual kills on such animals, incidentally, are commonly made from distances where one can almost reach out and touch the beast. One must be that close for the lance thrust to be made or for the arrow, from the small bow, to strike with sufficient depth, to the feathers, either into the intestinal cavity behind the last rib, resulting in large-scale internal hemorrhaging, or behind the left shoulder blade, into the heart.

"Is there always this much dust?" I asked. I raised my voice somewhat, against the sounds of the beasts, their bellowing and the thud of the hoofs.



















"I am a man," said Cuwignaka, angrily.

"That is known to me," said Grunt.

"I must fight him," said Cuwignaka.

"No," said Grunt. "That would not be wise. He is one of the finest of the warriors of the Isbu."

"Rise up, Mitakola, my friend," said Cuwignaka to me. "He is gone."

I rose to my feet, whipping my face with my right forearms. Grunt handed me my clothing and moccasins. I donned them. I again mounted my kaila.

Hci was now better than two pasangs away, at the finge of the kailiauk.

"Do you not wish to kill him?" aske Cuwignaka, bitterly.

I shrugged. "He was not attacking me," I said. "He was attacking Canka. " Too, I had accepted the collar. In doing thi, I had understood what I was doing. Hci, as would have been any other free person, had been fully within his rights. I had no delusions concerning my stauts. I was a slave.

"Do you not want to kill him?" asked Cuwignaka.

"No," I said.

"I want to kill him," said cuwignaka, bitterly.

"No, you do not," said Grunt. "He is of the Isbu, he is of your own band."

"But I do not have to like him," said Cuwignaka, suddenly, laughing.

"That is true." grinned Grunt.

I looked after Hci. He seemed to be a bitter, driven young man. This had come about, I gathered after his disfigurement. From that time on he had seemed to live for little more than killing and vengeance, not only against the Yellow

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Knives but against any enemy, or reputed enemy, of the Kaila.

"He is mad," said Cuwignaka.

"He is bitter," I said.

It interested me that Hci had taken the attitued he had towards his disfigurement. Many warriors would have been little concerned about such a mark, particularly as it did not impair them in any significant fashion. Others might have welcomed it as a sign of bravery, a revelatory token of courage in close combat. Still others might have welcomed it as a savage, brutal enhancement to their appearance. but not so Hci. He, like not a few of the red savages, had been excessively vain about his appearance. Indee, sometimes a young fellow will have his hair greased and braided, and will dress himself in finery and paint, and simply ride about camp, parading, in effect, before his fellow villagers, and, in particular, the maidens. This perhaps somewhat vain but surely splendid sight is not usual in a camp. But no longer, now, would Hci venture forth in such a fashion, displaying himself, and his kaila and regalia, in the impressive glory of such a primitive promenade. It seemed now he would scarcely show his face but to the men of the tribe, and, in particular, to his brothers of the Sleen Soldiers. The canhpi of the Yellow Knife had done more than strike flesh and bone; it had cut, too, deeply, perhaps unaccountably, or mysteriously, into the vanity, the pride and self image of a man. The difficulty of relating to the disfgurement had perhaps been particularly cruel in Hci's case because he had been, apparently, extremely good-looking before this. Too, of course, he had had five prospects, and had been rich and highly placed in the tribe. He was even the son of Mahpiyasapa, the civil chief of Isbu. Then it seemed he found himself, at least to his own mind, marred, irrevocably, in one bloody moment.

I could no longer see Hci now, in the dust from the kailiauk. Indeed, I could not even, yet, see the end of the great, long, moving mass of animals. Even at the speed at which the animals were traveling, it could take them between four and five Ahn to pass a given point.



















"No," I said.

"It is a pole," said Cuwignaka, "a great pole."

"Yes?" I said.

"Who, then, must begin its preparation for the great manhood dance?" asked Cuwignaka.

"I do not know," I said.

"A captive female," said Cuwignaka.

"Would a slave do?" I asked.

"That is ideal," said Cuwignaka, "provided she is not Kaiila."

"Has it been decided," I asked, "who will perform this crucial role in the ceremony?"

"Yes," said Cuwignaka. "A suitable slave has been selected."

In a few moments we had left the vicinity of the lodges and were making our way across the fields. We passed some kaiila herds. Too, we passed some small herds of stripped white women, huddled together. Each wore a beaded collar. These women were mostly brunets. They had been brought in by the Isanna, with their kaiila. They had not been regarded as being desirable enough to be displayed in the procession of the Isanna. Boys, mounted on kaiila, watched out over these herds, including those of the women. The boys carried rawhide ropes, and whips.

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### Chapter 3

#### THE POLE

"How beautiful she is," said Cuwignaka.

"Yes," I said.

My breath was almost taken away by the incredible beauty of the former Miss Millicent Aubrey-Welles, once a debutante from Pennsylvania. She was slender and lovely. She was fairly complexioned and had delicately beautiful and sensitive features. She was exquisitely feminine. The slavers who had originally selected her to wear a Gorean collar had known their business. She was dressed, and adorned, in all the colorful, glittering, striking barbaric richness, in all the impressiveness and splendor, in all the festive display, fit for feasts and dances, of a red-savage female. Even the daughters of chieftains, such as Bloketu, the daughter of Watonka, might have envied her the sumptuousness and glory of her raiment. Her long shirtdress of soft-tanned tabuk hide was almost white. Soo, too, were her knee-length leggings and moccasins. These things, too, were painted with designs, and fringed. Her hair, red, radiant in the sun, had been braided in the fashion of the red savages. It was tied with golden string. Necklaces of shells and beads, and ornaments and trinkets, and pierced coins, of gold and silver, hung about her neck. On her wrists, visible within the capelike sleeves of the shirtdress, were silver bracelets. To look at her one might not have thought she was a slave. To be sure, her wrists were tied behind her back, and on her thorax, leading to riders on each side of her, were two rawhide tethers. Detectable, but inconspicuous among all this finery, thrust up under her chin, above the tethers, was a beaded collar. It was Canka's. It was to him that she, in the final analysis, belonged.

"That is Cancega," whispered Cuwignaka to me.

A man was now riding slowly forward, alone, toward some trees a few hundred yards away. Lines of such trees, in the Barrens, and low, sloping geodesics, watersheds, tend to mark, often, the location of the tiny stream which occur











































work."

"Oh!" cried Bloketu. Iwoso, he rhead down, smiled.

"It is not enough to be merely beautiful," said Cuwignaka.

"At least you think I am beautiful," said Bloketu, somewhat mollified.

"That is not enough," said Cuwignaka. "If you were my woman, you would be worked well. If you did not work well I would beat you."

"I suppose," she said, "you think you could work me well."

"Yes," said Cuwignaka. "I would work you well, both outside the lodge and, even better, within it."

"Oh!" said Bloketu, angrily.

"Yes," said Cuwignaka.

"I am the daughter of a chieftain," she said.

"You are only a female," he said.

"Come, Iwoso, my dear maiden," said Bloketu, "let us go. We do not need to stay here, to listen to the prattle of this silly girl in the dress of a white woman."

"You might make an excellent slave, Bloketu," said Cuwignaka. "It might be pleasant to put you in a collar."

Iwoso looked up, suddenly, her eyes blazing. Then she put her head down. I did not understand this reaction on her part.

"Oh, oh!" said Bloketu, speachless with rage.

"Hold," I said to Cuwignaka. "It is Hci."

Riding up, now, coming through the tall grass, was the young Sleen Soldier, the son of Mahpiyasapa, the chieftain of the Isbu. "You are too close to the herd," said Hci. I doubted

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that this was true, from the tremors in the earth, the dust and the direction of the tracks.

"I have been insulted, Hci," said Bloketu, complaining to the young man. She pointed to Cuwignaka. "Punish him!"

"Her?" asked Hci.

"Her!" said Bloketu, returning to the tribally prescribed feminine gender of Cuwignaka.

"What did she say?" asked Hci.

"SShe said that I was lazy and slow!" said Bloketu.

"Oh?" said Hci.

"And that he could work me in his lodge, and well!" she said.

"Yes?" asked Hci.

"Too, he said that I might make an excellent slave, and that it might be pleasant to put me in a collar!"

Hci looked Bloketu over, slowly. She shrank back, abashed. Cuwignaka's assessment, it seemed clear, was one for which he thought there was much to be said.

"Please, Hci," she said.

He then turned his attention to the lovely Iwoso. "She should not be wearing leggings," he said to Bloketu. "Too, her dress is too long. It should come high on her thighs."

"She is only my maiden," said Bloketu.

"Where is her collar?" asked Hci.

"I do not put her in one," said Bloketu.

"She is no longer a child," said Hci. "She is a grown woman now. She is old enough, now, for the garb and collar of a slave. She is old enough, now, for a warrior."

Iwoso looked down, angrily.

"Yellow-Knife woman," said Hci, bitterly.



She looked up at him, angrily.

"A Yellow Knife did this to me," said Hci, pointing to the long, jagged scar at his chin, on the left side.

"He struck you well!" said Iwoso, angrily.

"I slew him," said Hci.

Hci then again, turned his attention to Bloketu.

"Punish him!" said Bloketu, pointing to Cuwignaka.

"Her?" said Hci.

"Her!" said Bloketu.

"I am a warrior," said Hci. "I do not mix in the squabbles of females."

"Oh," cried Bloketu, angrily.

I smiled to myself. It seemed to me that Hci had handled this business well. Surely it would have been beneath his dignity

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to meddle in such a business. Too, as a Sleen Soldier, on the day of a hunt, during their tenure of power, he had matters much more important to attend to than the assuagement of a female's offended vanity.

"The herd is too close," said Hci. "You are all to withdraw from this place."

We prepared to turn about.

"Separately," said Hci.

The hair rose again on the back of my neck.

"There," said Hci, pointing to the southwest, "is a fallen bull, a Cracked-Horns, of thirty winters."

"That is not good meat, or good hide," said Bloketu, puzzled.

"Attend to it, Bloketu," said Hci.

"Yes, Hci," she said. The two women, then, Bloketu and Iwoso, the travois poles making the grass behind their kaiila, took their way away. I watched the grass springing up behind them. In a few minutes it would be difficult for anyone but a skilled tracker, looking for broken stems, to determine that they had gone that way.

"Over there," said Hci, to us, pointing east by southeast, "there is a draw. In the draw there is a fallen bull, a Smooth Horns, no more than some six winters in age. Attend to it."

"Yes, Hci," said Cuwignaka, obediently. A Smooth Horns is a young, prime bull. Its horns are not yet cracked from fighting and age. The smoothness of the horns, incidentally, is not a purely natural phenomenon. The bulls polish them, themselves, rubbing them against sloping banks and trees. Sometimes they will even paw down earth from the upper sides of washouts and then use the harder, exposed material beneath, dust scattering about, as a polishing surface. This polishing apparently has the function of both cleaning and sharpening the horns, two precesses useful in intraspecific aggression, the latter process imporving their capacity as fighting instruments, in slashing and goring, and the former process tending to reduce the amount of infection in a herd resulting from such combats. Polishing behavior in males thus appears to be selected for. It has consequences, at any rate, which seem to be in the best intrests of the kailiauk as a species.

"There," said Hci, "your kaiila will be tired. Unharness them from the travois. Let them gaze. Picket them close to where you are working."

"Yes," said Cuwignaka, angrily.

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"Go now," said Hci, pointing.

"Yes, Hci," said Cuwignaka.































"Of course," said Cuwignaka, working the hide.

"How is it that Bloketu hates you so?" I asked.

"I do not know," said Cuwignaka. "Once we were friends."

"They are coming this way," I said.

Cuwignaka bent even more closely over the hide. There seemed now a subtle anger in his movements.

It is common, of course, for women to mock one such as Cuwignaka. Bloketu, on the other hand, seemed to take a malicious and peculiar delight in doing so.

"I had a dream last night about Bloketu," said Cuwignaka.

"Oh?" I said.

"That I collared her and owned her," he said.

"And when she was stripped did you put the quirt to her well?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, "and then I much pleased myself with her."

"A good dream," I said.

"Yes," said Cuwignaka.

"Oh, Iwoso," called out Bloketu, coming up, "here is that pretty girl we met on the prairie, you know, the one in the white-womans dress."

"I remember," said Iwoso.

"She had cut so much meat! The poles of the travois even bent!"

"Yes," said Iwoso. Iwoso looked behind her, as if she expected to see someone.

"But she was such a naughty girl," said Bloketu. "She disobeyed the Sleen Soldier and she lost all that meat."

Iwoso laughed.

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"What is her name? It is Cuwignaka, isn't it?" laughed Bloketu.

"Yes," said Iwoso.

"Ah, Cuwignaka," said Bloketu, "you are fortunate that you are not the woman of a Kaiila warrior. If you were he might have taken that white dress off your pretty little body and lashed you well. Thus might learn your lesson, not to lose meat again that way."

"It is he again," whispered Iwoso to Bloketu, looing behind her.

"Oh?" said Bloketu. She turned about, angrily.

On his kaiila, in his breechclout, his hair braided, without feathers, sat Hci. He looked down on the two girls, afoot.

"Are you following us about?" asked Bloketu.

"It is rumored that there may be peace with the Yellow Knives," said Hci.

"I have heard that rumor," said Bloketu.

"They are our enemies," said Hci. He looked at Iwoso.

"If you wish to court Iwoso," said Bloketu, "you may come to the lodge tonight and sit outside, cross-legged, playing the love flute. I will then decide whether or not I will permit my maiden to leave the lodge."

"You have not yet taken away her leggings, nor put her in a short dress and collar," said Hci.

"It is not necessary to flook Iwoso about like a panting sleen," said Bloketu.

"It is not for such a purpose that I follow her," said Hci. "If I want her, I will come to your lodge. I will offer a kaiila for her and bring a rope."

"That you are a Sleen Soldier does not permit you to speak so!" said Bloketu.

"This morning," said Hci, "Watonka, and you two, left the camp of the Isanna."

"He was spying on us," said Iwoso.

"You met other riders," said Hci. "I found the traks. What did you do?"





















red female. Usually, after a day or two of this, they beg to kneel again, head down, at the feet of men. In the summer most such girls, and others, too, being added to them, are put out again, with the kaiila. The Isanna is only the third largest band of the Kaiila. It is, however, indisputably, the richest. Its wealth, for example, in both kaiila and white females is well known on the plains. Boys, with ropes and whips, watch over the women. They may, of course, cut any women they wish out of the herd and use her.

"I myself," said Cuwignaka, "would prefer to keep slaves in my own lodge."

"There would be too many of them for the Isanna to do that," I said.

"They are pertentious, and vain," said Cuwignaka. "They do not need that many women."

"They sell off the herds in the winter," I said.

"But only to increase them again, in the spring," he said.

"That white females are herded by the Isanna, more so than with other bands, or tribes," I said, "has, I gather, something to do with the Isanna women."

"Yes," said Cuwignaka. "They do not want them in lodges."

"That is understandable," I said.

"But, in such things, the men should be the masters, fully," said Cuwignaka.

"That is true," I said.

"It is well known that Isanna women are insufficiently disciplined," said Cuwignaka.

"Bloketu is insufficiently disciplined, for example?" I asked.

"Yes," said Cuwignaka, "Bloketu is insufficiently disciplined. Bloketu needs discipline, severe discipline."

"It might be pleasant to administer it to her," I said.

"yes," said Cuwignaka, grimly.

I smiled. Fortunately for the lovely Bloketu she stood high among the Kaiila. If she were a foreign woman who had fallen into Cuwignaka's hands, I did not doubt but what she would learn discipline, well and swiftly.

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I watched the rear of the blond girl moving away, between the lodges. It moved well.

"You are hot," smiled Cuwignaka.

I did not respond. I was in misery.

"Winyela sleeps within the lodge," said Cuwignaka. "Why do you not whip her awake, and use her? She is only a slave. Too, she was sent to you to be disciplined."

"No," I said.

"One should not be too soft with female slaves," said Cuwignaka.

"I know," I said.

"It is Canka's will that you use her, and well," he said.

"Do you think so?" I asked.

"Of course," said Cuwignaka. "He is a red savage. Do not be culturally confused."

I shrugged.

"He will wish for her to be returned to his lodge a better slave than she left it," said Cuwignaka.

"Perhaps," I said.

"Lash her awake," said Cuwignaka. "Set her, without mercy, about her duties. Let her be in no doubt that it is men who are her masters."

"I think I shall let her sleep," I smiled.

"As you wish," said Cuwignaka.

"She has suffered enough for one day, I think," I said.

I looked at Winyela, on her stomach, n the dark robes.

I then, sweating, my fists clenched on the hide blanket, drew it back up, over her, to the middle of her back.

"I may be revealed," she said. "I am a slave."

I said nothing. I fought for my self-control.

She turned then, to her side, supporting herself on her elbow. This action cause the hide blanket to slip to her waist. "Thank you for letting me sleep," she said. "You were very kind."

"It was nothing," I said.

"I should like to thank you," she said. She reached her lips toward mine but I, by her upper arms, held her from me. "What is wrong?" she asked.

"The kiss of a slave can be but the prolongue to her rape," I said.

"Oh," she said, smiling. She then drew back, and then, on her side, lay down. She pulled the hide blanket up about her neck.

"You must get up soon," I said. "In a while it will be time to return you to the lodge of Canka."

"If I dally," she asked, "will you quirt me?"

"If I think you dally overmuch," I said, "of course."

"Could you do that?" she asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Of course," she said, "for I am only a slave."

"Of course," I said.

"Sometimes it seems strange to me," she said, "thinking of myself as subject to the whip."

"There is nothing strange in it," I said. "You are a slave."

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"That is true," she said.

"Master," she said.

"Yes," I said. It had surprised me, for a moment, that she had called me 'Master', but then I recalled that she had been given to me, for the afternoon. Indeed, for the afternoon, or, I supposed, until, within reason, I shose to return her to the lodge of Canka, she was, for all pratical purposes, my own slave.

"You have treated me with great tenderness and kindness," she said.

I shrugged.

"May I surmise from this," she asked, "as I know little of slavery, and am new to the condition, that there can be tenderness and kindness for a slave?"

"There can be tenderness and kindness for a slave," I said, "of course. It is not permitted, however, to compromise in the least the iron discipline under which she is kept."

"I see," she said.

I regarded her.

"I want to be kept under an iron discipline," she said.

"I know," I said.

It was hard for me to forget that she was naked under the hide blanket.

"Do masters ever love their slaves?" she asked.

"Often," I said. Indeed, a female slave is the easiest of all women to love; too, of course, she is the most natural, of all women to love; these things have to do with the equations of nature, in particular with thos of dominance and submission. To a man a female slave is a dream come true. A free woman, understandably, cannot even begin to compete with a female slave for a man's love. That is perhaps another reason why free women hate their vulnerable, imounded sisters. If a free woman would assure herself of a man's love she could not do better than, in effect, become his slave. She can beg of him, if she senses in herslef he true bondage of love, and enslavement

"Oh, yes," she whispered. "Yes!"

It would be important for her to convince him that she had learned something from her travails of the day.

"I smell cooking fires," she said, happily. She made as though to rise, but I thrust her, roughly, back down on the robes. "Master?" she asked.

"You are eager to return to the lodge of your master," I observed.

"Yes, Master," she said.

"But until I choose, within reason, to relinquish you," I said, "you are still to me as my slave, are you not?"

"Yes, Master," she said.

"Well," I said, "I do not choose, at this moment, to relinquish you."

"Please, Master," she wept.

"You are nude, and attractive," I said. "I am going to have you again now, and at my leisure."

"Please, Master!" she protested.

"Do you object?" I asked.

"No, Master," she said, frightened.

"And how will you yield to me?" I asked.

"With perfection," she said, "as my master ordered." She looked at me, and laughed. "You brute," she said. "You know you will make me yield with perfection, whether I wished to or not!"

"Perhaps," I said.

"Modest tarsk!" she laughed. "Oh!" she cried. "Oh! Oh!"

"It seems to be true," I said.

"Yes," she said, "yes!"

"You will, further," I said, "utter low-volume sounds, indicative of arousal."

"Yes," she said. "Yes."

This device, forcing the slave to furnish an audible analogue or correlate for her sensations, has three principal utilities.

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It helps to intensify the slave's responses, she responding in part to, and being in part aroused by, her own sounds of arousal. Secondly, the sounds, her helpless moans and cries, her whimpers, her sighs, her gasps, please, and can be stimulatory to, the master. Thirdly, the sounds aid him in his management and control of her. By means of them he can, in effect, map her beauty, guiding himself in his ownership of her, detecting the zones of her greatest sexual helplessness and, by varying the nature of his rhythms and touches, how they can be most efficiently and brilliantly exploited, the end in view, of course, being to produce the most yielding and orgasmically helpless slave possible.

"Ohhh," she said, softly.

"And when I am finished with you," I said, "I shall rise to my feet and snap my fingers. You will then, without further ado, rise to your feet and follow me, silently, humbly and unquestioningly, heeling me, as the mere beast you are, to the lodge of your master."

"Yes, Master," she said. "Ohhh. Ohhh!"

I smiled to myself. The little beast had tricked me. I thought my vengeance on her was suitable.

"Ohh!" she cried. "Ohh! Ohhhh!"

Yes, I thought, quite suitable.





































slave!"

"Yes, Master," she wept.

"Slave," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said.

"No impediment exists now," I said, "between you and your womanhood."

"No, Master," she said, frightened.

I dropped the quirt down near the robe. I then crouched down beside her.

"When I touch you," I said, "you will feel, deeply and fully, richly and beautifully, gratefully, joyfully and submissively, and later, when you yield, you will yield totally and completely, irreservedly, helplessly, holding nothing back."

"But then I should be naught but a slave," she said, "helpless in the arms of her master."

"Yes," I said.

She looked at me, frightened.

I knelt beside her. "Sit up," I said. "Put your arms about my neck."

She obeyed.

"Slave lips," I commanded.

She pursed her lips and then I, gently, kissed them. "That was not so fearful now, was it?" I asked, drawing back.

"What do men, truly, want of slaves?" she whispered.

"Everything," I said.

"And what must a slave give them?" she asked.

"Everthing," I said, "and more."

"I had feared, and hoped, it would be so," she said.

I smiled.

"You see," she said, "I am a slave."

"I know," I said. She was a woman.

"Have you read the Prition of Clearchus of Cos?" she said.

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"What is a former free woman of Ar doing reading that?" I asked. It was a treatise on bondage.

" 'The slave,' " she quoted, " 'makes no bargains; she does not desire small demands to be placed upon her; she does not ask for ease; she asks nothing; she gives all; she seeks to love and selflessly serve.' "

"You quote it well," I said.

"You have read it?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. I remembered the passage clearly. The girl had perhaps, at one tim, memorized it.

"I have always been fascinated with bondage," she said, "but I never expected, then, to find myself a slave."

"Kiss me, Slave," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said.

"Do you fear now," I asked, "as a slave, that you will be rejected?"

"I see now," she said, "as a slave, that it does not matter. It is not mine to fear such things, but rather to see to it that I am completely pleasing. If I am rejected, it matters not, for I am only a slave. As a slave I am nothing. I am meaningless and worthless. Thus what does it matter if I should be despised and spurned? I must then, only, try again, seeking anew, helplessly, to serve and love."

I did not respond to her. I did not think it necessary to tell her, and she would, in any case, soon learn it, that the least of the slave's fears is rejection. Rather she must fear quite the opposite. She must fear that the very sight of her will drive a man half mad with passion, and that he may not wish to rest until he gets his chains on her.

"In the Prition," I said, "Clearnus, of course, is primarily concerned with only one form of bondage, that of the love slave."

"That is true," she said.

"There are many slaveries," I said, "and some are doubtless quite fearful and unpleasant."

"Yes," she shuddered. she had heard, I gathered, of certain agricultural slaveries, and of slaveries such as those in the public kitchens and laundries. Too, she was doubtless familiar with contempt slaveries and vengeance slaveries. One form of vengeance slavery is the proxy slavery, in which one woman, totally innocent, is enslaved and made to stand proxy for a hate, at-least-temporarily-inaccessibly woman, even being given her name. The proxy, of course, being enslaved, is truly

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enslaved. Even if the hated woman is later captured the proxy is not freed. She is generally, merely, given away or sold.

"The common denominator," I said, "appears to be that the woman must be totally pleasing and, in all ways, is totally subject to the will of the Master."

"Yes, Master," she said.

"You may now kiss me again, Slave," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said.

I then lowered her to the robe. Her arms were still about my neck.

"Are you going to teach me to be pleasing?" she asked.

"Yes," I said.

"You will then," she smiled, "be improving, as you suggested, my master's property."

"Yes," I said. "But I am going to do more than teach you how to be pleasing."

"Oh?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "When I am finished with you, my naked, collared beauty, you will be quite different than you are now."

She looked at me.

"I am going to make you into a man's dream of pleasure," I said.

"Do so," she said.

"Please, please," she wept. "Do not leave me! I beg you! Touch me more, please! I beg you to stay with me! I did not know it could be anything like this! Please, I beg you, touch me again!" She clutched me. Her tears were on my arm and chest.

"Do you beg it, as a slave?" I asked.

"Yes, Master," she said. "I beg it as a slave!"

"Very well," I said.

"What a fool I was as a free woman!" she whispered.

"You were only ignorant," I said.

"I did not know what it was like to be a slave, the helplessness, the sensations."

I did not respond.

"I did not know such feelings could exist," she said. "I never felt anything like them. They are so overwhelming."

"They have to do with dominance and submission," I said.

"I was afraid, in my yielding," she said, "that I might die."

"It was only a small slave orgasm," I said.

She looked at me, wonderingly.

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"You were merciless," she said. "You made me speak as though I might have been a slave."

"It was appropriate," I said. "You were a slave."

"Even then?" she asked.

"Yes," I said.

She reached out her hand, timidly. She touched, and felt, the collar at my throat.

"You, too, now, are a slave," she said. "We are both the slaves of red masters."

"Yes," I said. "We are both perhaps fortunate to have been spared. It is their contry."

"Perhaps there could be a little tenderness between slaves," she said.

"I understad that you are now called 'Turnip,' " I said.

"Yes," she said. "I am Turnip."

"I am Tatankasa, Red Bull," I said. "I am the slave of Canka, Fire-Steel, of the Isbu Kaiila."

"You ahve at least a single master," she said. "We belong to the band, to the Isbu Kaiila."

"How are you faring?" I asked.

"What a silly question!" she laughed, rather pronouncedly. "I am faring very well, of course!"

"I am glad to hear it," I said.

"Becoming of the Waniyanpi has changed my life," she assured me, speaking clearly and a bit loudly. "I cannot tell you how fulfilled and happy I am. It has wrought a most wonderous transformation in my existence."

"I see," I said.

"We are joyful dung," she said. "We are sparkles on the water, making the streams pretty. We are flowers growing in the fields. We are nice, We are good."

"I understand," I said.

"I am now a convinced and happy Same," she said. "I am

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now not a not-the-Same. That must be clearly understood. I am not a not-the-Same. I am a Same."

"I understand," I said.

"I have fully and happily embraced the teaching," she said.

"It will not be necessary, as first it might have appeared, to put me out into the Barrens, without food and water. All is one, and one is all, and the same is the same. The teaching is the truth, and the truth is the teaching."

I glanced about, at the other Waniyanpi women kneeling near her. They were, I take it, her harness mates, resposible with her, I supposed, for drawing one of the travois.

"Are you happy?" I asked her.

"Yes," she said. "I am wonderfully and gloriously happy. That must be clearly understood."

"I understand," I said.

"Oh," she said, lifted in my amrs. I then carried her several yards away, among the lodges. I then lowered her to her knees in a quiet spot.

"Are we alone?" she begged.

"Yes," I said.

She began to sob inside her hood.

She reached out, desperately, and held me about the legs, I standing before her. She pressed her cheek against my thigh. I could feel the hood, hot and damp, soaked with tears, between her cheek and my leg.

"Save me from them," she wept. "They are lunatics. They foreswear the most

"Oh," she said.

"Being a slave girl is very different from being a free woman," I said. "From a free woman a man expects little, or nothing. From a slave girl, on the other hand, he expects, as it is said, everything, and more."

"I understand," she said.

"A free woman may be valueless and, if she wishes, account this a virtue. A slave, on the other hand, must be superbly pleasing. She must see to it, with all her intelligence and beauty, that she is her master's attentive, sensitive, skillful treasure."

"I would like to be such a treasure to a man," she said.

I did not speak.

"May I call you 'Master'?" she asked.

"Yes," I said.

"Master," she said.

"Yes," I said.

"When I was free, I was regarded as being very beautiful. Indeed, it was said by some that I was as beautiful, even, as a slave."

"A high compliment," I acknowledged. I recalled the first time I had ever seen her, on her curule chair, on her high cart, in the column of the Kurii and mercenaries. She had worn the robes of concealment, but only a wisp of diaphanous silk, presumably by intent, had feigned to hide her features. I recalled, even then, wondering what she might look like in the shimmering dancing silks of an enslaved female or, say, stripped and collared, crawling at men's feet.

"Master," she said.

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"Yes," I said.

How different, then, was that absurd pretense of a veil, that sweet diaphanous sheen of material, compared to the rude coarse sack which had now been tied over her head. How disgusting were the Waniyanpi.

"Surely I am no less beautiful now than I was then," she said.

"Perhaps," I granted her.

"And now I am a slave," she said.

"That is true," I said.

"Have me," she begged, suddenly. "Touch me. Caress me. Hold me. Take me!"

"But you are a Waniyanpi female," I said, "above sex. That has been decided by your masters."

"I am a slave," she said. "I need the touch of a man."

"But you have been rescued from sex," I said. "You have been accorded honor and dignity. You have been made identical to a certain form of male. That is supposed to be what you want. You are now, your nature betrayed and nullified, supposed to be happy and fulfilled."

"I am miserable," she wept.

"Interesting," I said.

"I am a woman," she said. "I need attention as a woman. Comfort me. Hold me. Be kind to me."

I did not speak.

"Whip me, beat me, if you wish," she said, "but pay attention to me as a woman. I am a woman. Let me, I beg you, be a woman."

"That is not permitted, as I understand it," I said, "to the Waniyanpi female."

"I have been put with the Waniyanpi," she said. "It was my punishment. But I am not one of them. Take pity on me. Have mercy on me. I am not truly a Waniyanpi female. I am a woman. I have the feelings of a woman. I want the sensations of a woman. I need the sensations of a woman. Have mercy on me,

"No, Master," she wept. "No, Master."

Hci was standing there, stunned.

"What are you going to do with her?" asked Canka, pleasantly.

Hci, I saw, had not planned on getting the girl, as Cuwignaka had speculated. He had not really thought about doing anything with her.

"My father wanted her," said Hci. "I will give her to him, for the Yellow Knives."

"That is a good idea," said Canka, warmly.

"Hci," laughed a man, "has to give twenty kaiila for a white slave!"

"I do not think I will let him do my trading for me," said another man.

"It is two jokes," laughed another. "Hci was fooled into thinking Canka would not trade, and then Canka outwitted him, making a trade much to his profit!"

"If only I could do as well in the exchanging of gifts!" said another fellow.

There was general laughter.

"Come, Girl," said Hci, angrily, to Winyela. He wished, clearly, to swiftly depart from this place where, suddenly, the tables being turned, he found himself, he, Hci, the sone of a chief, not only outdone but make to look foolish. This would mushly sting his vanity.

"Go with him," said Canka to Winyela.

she rose unsteadily to her feet.

Hci turned away. But he had not taken more than a stride or two before Canka called after him, "Hold, Hci, my friend!"

Hci, angrily, his hand at his knife hilt, turned.

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"This is the time of making peace," said Canka. "This is the time of feasting and dancing. This is the time of the giving of gifts."

Hci glared angrily at him.

"I give you twenty kaiila!" said Canka, lifting the lead rope of the kaiila. "They are yours!"

"I have nothing to give you worth twenty kaiila!" shouted Hci, in fury.

"I will take her," said Canka, pointing to Winyela.

"No," said Hci, suddenly. "I know now you want her. I will keep her!"

"Do so," laughed Canka. "But then," he said, turning to the crowd, "let it be told about all he fires how Hci lost his honor, how he did not participate in the giving of gifs, how he proved in this that he ws only a small and petty man, that he lacked the nobility and generosity of the Kaiila warrior!"

"I am a Kaiila warrior!" shouted Hci, in fury. "I an now small and petty! Hci is generous! Hci is noble! Hci is a generous and noble warrior! Hci is a warrior of the Kaiila! Hci does not lose his honor!"

"Oh?" asked Canka.

"She is yours!" said Hci.

"And the kaiila are yours," smiled Canka, handing the lead rope of the kaiila string to one of the Sleen Soldiers with Hci.

Winyela fell at the feet of Canka. I feared she might lose consciousness.

Hci regarded Canka with fury. His hand opened and closed at his knife sheath.

"I think Canka wants the woman," said a man.

"I think so, too," said another.

"Interesting," said another.

"There are three jokes," said one of the men. "Canka pretended not to want to trade, and then he traded, outwitting Hci, and then, wanting the woman, he again outwitted Hci, forcing him, against his honor, to trade her back."

I smiled. I myself thought the honors in this lively exchange would be more

"Of course," said Cuwignaka.
"Be serious," I said.
"I do not know," smiled Cuwignaka. "Maybe. Maybe not."
"Do all of your people believe such things?" I asked.
"Most, I would suppose," said Cuwignaka.
"What of warriors, like Canka and Hci," I said, "would they believe such things?"
"Of course," said Cuwignaka.
"Let us go to our lodge," I said.
"Yes," said Cuwignaka. "I must rest. Tomorrow I must dance. Tomorrow will be a glorious day!"

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Chapter 16

OIPUTAKE

"Master! Master!" cried the blond-haired girl, delightedly, seizing me by the hand.
She drew me happily behind a lodge. She was naked, save for her beaded collar. It was the morning of the day of the great dance. Behind the lodge she knelt down before me. I as a man. "I am so happy, Master," she said. "I am so happy!"
"Why are you not in the herd?" I asked, fearful for her. "You have not run away, have you?" I asked. The penalties for a girl straying from her herd, or running away, were not light. The first offense involved being turned over to the women of the red savages for days of torment and torture. The second offense was to be punished by hamstringing and abandonment.
"No," she laughed, on her knees before me. "I have been taken out of the herd! I am no longer in it!"
"Your collar is different," I observed. This was an attractive collar, with red and yellow beading.
"I have a new master," she said, proudly, happily.
"What happened?" I asked.
"Last night," she said, "I, with others, was exchanged in the giveaways. My former master, I think, thought he was ridding himself of a poor girl, but I, as soon as I found myself within the skins of my new master's lodge, began to serve him, delicously, and as a subdued slave. He was elated. I think he was much pleased with me. He said I was a marvelous gift. He even gave my old master an additional kaila. My old master was furious then, at having let me go. But he cannot do anything about it now. I now belong to my new master."
"Wonderful," I said.
"I now have a name!" she said.
"What is it?" I asked.
"Oiputake," she said.
"That s the word for a kiss," I said.
"Yes," she smiled. "And sometimes," she laughed, "I do not know when my master is merely calling me or ordering me to please him!"

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"As you are a slave," I said, "I do not think I would take chances in the matter."

"That is not unlikely," she said.

"But I have reason to believe that the three men with your father, the Yellow Knives, are not as they seem."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"I think they are not civil chieftains of the Yellow Knives," I said. "I think it is possible they are war chiefs."

"Lying slave!" cried Iwoso angrily, lunging at me and striking me. I tasted blood at my mouth.

"What is going on?" asked Watonka, looking towards us.

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"This slave is an amusing fool," laughed Bloketu. "He thinks our guests are not civil chieftains of the Yellow Knives, soon to be our friends, but war chiefs."

This was translated by Iwoso speedily to the three Yellow Knives. Their expressions did not change.

"That is absurd," said Watonka, looking rapidly about. "I vouch for these men myself."

"You could not know such a thing," said Bloketu.

"There is a slave in camp," I said, "a blond female who was owned my Yellow Knives for a time. It was she who recognized them. It was she from whom I learned this."

"She is obviously mistaken," said Bloketu. These things, and what follows, were being translated, quickly, by Iwoso for the Yellow Knives.

"The tongues of lying slaves may well be slit," said Watonka, angrily. He drew his knife.

At this point one of the Yellow Knives put his hand on Watonka's arm. He spoke, and his words, for all of us, were translated by Iwoso.

"Do not harm the slave," he said. "This is a time of happiness and peace."

I looked up, startled. The man must indeed be a civil chieftain.

"Dismiss him," suggested the Yellow Knife.

"You are dismissed," said watonka, angrily.

"Yes, Master," I said, getting up.

"Beat him," said Watonka to the two Isanna warriors.

Suddenly I was prodded with the butts of the two lances, and then struck viciously about the head, the shoulders and body. I fell to my knees, my head covered, my body shuddering under the lashing and jabbing of the wood.

"Let him go," suggested the Yellow Knife.

"Go," said Watonka.

I struggled to my feet and, my face bloody, my body aching, stumbled backward, and then turned, and limped away. I heard laughter behind me. I had been well beaten. No bones, it seemed, were broken. I had little doubt that my body was black and blue. I spit up, into the dirt. I almost fainted. Then I staggered away, laughter ringing about me, a humiliated and punished slave. I had done, however, what I could. I had brought Oiputake's information to the attention of one even so great as to be a civil chieftain of the Kaiila, to Watonka, the civil chieftain of the Isanna. It seemed to me I could not have done better unless I had managed to speak,

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perhaps, to one such as Mahpiyasapa. Suddenly I felt anger, irrationally, towards Mahpiyasapa and Grunt, and toward Canka, and even towards my friend, Cuwignaka. I had not been able to speak to them. In my sickness and misery it seemed almost as though it was they who, thus, had been responsible for my beating. Then I shook the foolishness of this from my mind, and made my way

back towards the lodge I shared with Cuwignaka.

It was at this time, I think, about a quarter of an Ahn until noon.

Chapter 19

I SPEAK WITH CUWIGNAKA

"Cuwignaka!" I cried, startled, entering the interior of our lodge.

He was sitting, cross-legged, within the lodge. His head was down. His head was in his hands. He lifted his head. "They would not let me dance," he said. "Cancega, himself, medicine chief of all the Kaiila, at the behest of Hci, refused me entrance into the dance lodge."

"You must have heard," I said, "of the alleged attack by Canka on Mahpiyasapa?"

"Yes," he said, bitterly. "Hci has won," he said. "Hci has won all."

"I am sorry, my friend," I said, "about the dance. I am sorry." I sat down, cross-legged, near him.

"If I am not permitted to dance," asked Cuwignaka, "how can I prove to them I am a man?"

"I am sorry, my friend," I said. In these moments, in my sorrow for Cuwignaka, I forgot my own bruises and pain. I knew that Cuwignaka, for years, had dreamed of entering the lodge of the great dance, there to test and prove the manhood from which his people seemed determined to preclude him. It was there, too, perhaps, in the loneliness and pain of the dance, that he wished himself to learn the truth in this secret and momentous matter.

"Tatankasa," said Cuwignaka, suddenly, "what is wrong?"

"Nothing," I said.

"You are hurt," he said, concerned.

"It is nothing," I said.

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Cuwignaka crawled over to where I sat. He put his hand at the side of my head. "Your head has been gashed," he said.

I winched. "I was beaten," I said.

He went then to the side of the lodge and brought back a cloth. He wiped blood away from the side of my head.

"Who did this?" he asked.

"Two men, warriors of the Isanna, on the command of Watonka," I said.

"What did you do?" asked Cuwignaka.

"It was foolishness," I said. "I meddled in matters in which I knew nothing. I should have known better."

"But what did you do?" he asked.

"It is nothing," I said. I did not want him in his great disappointment, to concern himself with my foolishness.

"Tell me," he said. I took the cloth from him and folded it, and held it against the wound, to stanch the flow of blood.

"I am sorry about the dance," I said. "I know how keenly you desired to enter the lodge."

"Why were you beaten, my friend?" he asked.

"This morning," I said, "converse did I hold with a blond slave, after amusing myself with her. I had used her before. She was formerly a herd girl. A woman once of the high city of Ar, she had been captured by Dust Legs and suitably enslaved. She was later traded to Sleen who, in turn, traded her to















"They must not!" I said.

We saw a rider on a kaiila racing towards us. Then, suddenly, he reeled from the back of the beast. He struck the ground, rolling, scattering dust. We ran to him. I lifted him in my arms. His back was covered with blood, filthy, now, too, with dirt. "They are in the camp!" he gasped.

"Who?" demanded Hci.

"Yellow Knives!" said the man. "Hundreds. They are among the lodges!"

"They have come from the west," said Cuwignaka, grimly.

"Watonka must die," said Hci.

I put the body of the man down. He was dead. A woman fled past us, a child held in her arms.

Hci rose from our side and went into the lodge of the Sleen Soldiers. I looked upward. This section of the camp was no longer under direct attack. The primary interest of the tarnsmen, I had little doubt, would have been the council lodge and the area about it. The lodge itself, because of its size, would be conspicuous. Too, they had doubtless been furnished with a description of it by Watonka or those associated with him. It was no wonder he was not eager, this day, to enter the lodge.

"I am going to Grunt's" I said. "My weapons are there. He has kept them for me. Too, Wasnapohdi is there. She may need help."

"There is a lance in my lodge," said Cuwignaka.

"We will get it on the way," I said. This was the same lance which had been fixed, butt, down, in the truf beside Cuwignaka near the scene of battle several weeks ago. He had been staked down naked, to die. About the lance, wrapped about it, had been a white dress. It was that which he now wore. I had freed him.

We saw two men running past.

"Let us hurry," I said.

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## Chapter 22

### CUWIGNAKA REQUESTS INSTRUCTION

"Use the lance!" I cried.

We had turned, startled, not more than a few yards from our lodge, from the interior of which Cuwignaka had recovered the lance.

The rider on the kaiila, bent low, his lance in the attack position, charged, dust scattering back from the pounding paws of the kaiila.

Cuwignaka ducked to the side, lifting and raising his arms, the long lance clutched in his fists. There was a shiver of wood as the two lances, Cuwignaka's on the inside, struck twisting against one another. The point of the other's lance passed between Cuwignaka's arms and his neck. The man was taken from the back of the kaiila by Cuwignaka's lance. The kaiila sped away.

"He is dead," said Cuwignaka, looking down.

"Free your lance," I said.

Cuwignaka, his foot on the man's chest, drew loose the lance.

"It is safer in such an exchange," I said, "to strike from the outside, finding his lance away, trying to make your strike above and across it."

"He is dead," said Cuwignaka.

"If he had dropped his lance more to the right you would have moved into it," I said.

"I killed him," said Cuwignaka.















enough for the carrying force of the small bow not to be dissipated; it must be made from a distance sufficient, given the spacing of the riders and the sound of the kaiila's paws, to cover the sound of the string. I then fitted another arrow to the string.

"They will not know for a time that they are now only four," I said.

"Leave it," I said. But Cuwignaka was at the body. "I do not want it," I said. Cuwignaka thrust it in his own belt, dark and bloody against the white cloth of the dress he wore.

"We need kaiila," I said.

"We will get them," said Cuwignaka.

"Oh!" cried the woman, one of two, nude and bound, sitting on the ground, their legs widely apart.

The Yellow Knife with them whirled about but only to meet Cuwignaka's lance.

The woman screamed. Cuwignaka jerked his lance free. She began to sob, frightened, hysterical. "Be silent, Slave," snarled Cuwignaka. She looked up at him, frightened, sobbing. He struck her alongside the head with the shaft of his lance. Such things slaves understand. Her outburst might have alerted other Yellow Knives. Her blubbering too, might convey to them that something unusual had occurred. She lay on her side in the dirt. She looked up once at Cuwignaka and then, quickly, averted her eyes from his. He was looking down at her, angrily. She trembled. Whereas a free woman may often make a man angry with impunity, she being lofty and free, this latitude is seldom extended to the slave. When a slave makes a man angry she knows that there may very

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well be consequences to her action, that she, vulnerable and owned, subject to discipline and punishment, may ver well be held to account, and, indeed, is quite likely to be held to account, and strictly, for any dissatisfaction which she may have engendered.

"There are no kaiila here," I said. I was not clear why Cuwignaka had stopped here.

"This either has been, or is intended to be, a collection point," said Cuwignaka. He gestured to the two women, one sitting on the ground, her legs widely apart, the other lying on her side, her arms, too, in their particular tie, largely between her legs.

"You think, then," I said, "that girls are either to be brought to this place, or are to be taken from this place?"

"Yes," said Cuwignaka, "and judging from the tie, which does not suggest that they are soon to be marched away, I would think they are being brought to this place."

"I see," I said. Thusly, presumably men would come with kaiila, either to bring more women, or to herd these away. We, then, would be waiting for the. "We should not be waiting too closely to this spot," I said, "for those coming in may be looking for the guard."

"We will look for tracks," said Cuwignaka. "I do not think it will be difficult."

"It is interesting that there was a guard here," I said. There had not been one at the other point.

"That indicates, I think," said Cuwignaka, "that we may, at last, be closer to the center of Kaiila resistance."

"It is some five Ahn until dark," I said.

"By that time it is my hope to have kaiila and join with the resistance," said Cuwignaka.

I nodded. If a flight from the camp, with refugees, was to be made,







a clear shot. In the second passage Cuwignaka darted to his right. His opponent cried out in fury, unable to clear the neck of his kaiila with the lance. Cuwignaka's upward thrust, however, was easily turned by the Yellow Knife's stout war shield, of rawhide thickened and hardened by shrinking over heated stones, from the neck, between the shoulders, or the humped back, behind the head, bearing the trident of the bull kailiauk

Again I lowered the bow, cursing, furious, changing my position.

The kaiila again spun about, scratching, snorting, with an explosion of dust.

The rider brought the lance over the beast's neck, inside of the shield on his left arm. In this position, the enemy to the left, the rider affords himself the protection of the shield. this is commonly regarded as more than adequate compensation for the somewhat reduced fanlike ambit of play, that between the shield and the neck of the kaiila, then open to the lance. The kaiila was a trained beast. Its left ear was notched. It would doubtless maneuver in such a way as to keep Cuwignaka on its left in its charge, even changing its attack trajectory, if necessary, to do so.

I tried to get to the rider's right. Already he had charged. I heard the two shafts crack together, Cuwignaka fending the driving point away, and then, to my dismay, I heard a swift, striking sound, and saw Cuwignaka struck from the side of the kaiila, and reeling and staggering backwards, then sprawling, his lags loose under him, to the dust, struck by the passing shield, the weight of the kaiila and rider behind it, his own lance spun from his grip. With a trained kaiila, the animal aligning itself in such a way as to optimize the play of the rider's lance, there is little defense against this sort of thing. Being close enough to sturdily fend the blow brings one, if one is afoot, and shieldless, normally, close enough to risk the strike of the shield. The blow was such that I feared, for a moment, his head struck to the side, that his neck might be broken. The rider spun the kaiila about, to his right, keeping his shield between himself and my arrow. Cuwignaka was on one knee, half risen, shaking his head. His weapon was a dozen feet away. The rider dropped his point for the kill.

"Down!" I cried.

Cuwignaka hurled himself headlong under the paws of the kaiila and the lance thrust down, driving into the dust. The kaiila almost atop Cuwignaka then turned again, and again, the lance thrust down. Cuwignaka desperately seized it and it,

braced under the Yellow Knife's arm, lifted, pulling him to his feet, skidding and half dragged in the dust. The rider cried out in anger. Cuwignaka clung to the lance. There was blood at the side of his head and run into his left eye. I was now only a few feet from the rider. The rider was bent down, struggling to retain control of the lance. Cuwignaka was between him and my weapon. The rider, not unaware of my presence, jerked the kaiila about, bringing his shield once more between us. The rider jerked at the lance and it tore against the palms of Cuwignaka's hands, blood at the wood. Then he swung the lance down and against the side of the kaiila and Cuwignaka lost his balance and the lance, rolling under the paws of the beast. The Yellow Knife, with a whoop of triumph, brandishing the lance, sped his kaiila forward, to turn it for another passage. I loosed my bow. Cuwignaka was on his feet, sprinting after the rider. I smiled. He would, if the Yellow Knife did not vary his pattern, have time to make his desperate connection. The Yellow Knife jerked his kaiila to a halt, it rearing up, fighting the jaw rope, clawing at the air, and Cuwignaka, almost at the same time, leaped to its back, behind













considerable striking force in saberlike trajectories and light enough to have something of the swiftness and play of the foil. They are long enough to outreach a dagger-armed opponent and short enough, and maneuverable enough, to work their way, beating and thrusting, behind the guard of longer, heavier weapons. They are not, however, a good weapon for use from either the back of a kaiila or a tarn. That sabers are not used more widely on Gor is, I think, a function of the tendency of many mounted warriors to rely too exclusively, in my opinion, on their skills with the lance. The scimitar of the Tahari, a useful weapon

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from kaiilaback, is an interesting exception to this general tendency. Here and there, some leaning awry, thrust in the dirt, were lances.

I rode to one and, sheathing my sword, took it in hand. It was also a Yellow-Knife lance.

I turned about on the kaiila and saw the girl who had been running through the men and beasts. She was standing still, bewildered, shuddering, a few yards away. I rold the kaiila to where she stood.

"Do you understand Gorean?" I asked.

"Yes, Master," she said.

"Are you the slave of Yellow Knives?" I asked.

"Yes, Master," she said.

"You are mistaken," I said. "You are the slave of Kaiila."

"Yes, Master," she said, shuddering.

"Open your mouth," I said, "widely."

I laid the point of the lance in her mouth, well in her mouth, depressing her tongue. She looked at me, frightened. The slightest thrust would drive it through the back of her neck.

The young man whom I had protected rode up beside us. She regarded him in terror, her eyes wide, unable to move, her mouth about the lance.

"I think you know this woman," I said to the young man.

"Yes," he said. "We met recently."

"She is now a Kaiila slave," I said.

"Yes," he said.

"You understand how she was used, do you not?" I asked.

"Yes," he said, bitterly.

"It will now be decided, my dear," I told the girl, "whether you will live or die."

She whimpered piteously, her eyes wide, unable to speak, the lance point depressing her tongue.

"Do you find her of intrest?" I asked the young man.

"Yes," he said.

"What is your name?" I asked.

"Cotanka," said he, "of the Wismahi." As is often the case with the names of the red savages they do not translate simply and directly into a different language. The expression 'cotanka' usually designates a fife or flute, but it may also be used more broadly to refer to any wind instrument whatsoever. Given the cultural milieu involved and the narrower understanding of that expression within that milieu perhaps the

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best translation, supplying connotations familiar to the red savages, might be 'Love Flute'.

"It seems," I told the girl, "that you may be permitted to live, at least for a time."























to discourage night combat.

One may, as in many such cases, then, wonder whether night combat is discouraged because of such beliefs, or whether such beliefs may not have been instituted to discourage night fighting, with all of its confusions, alarms and terrors. On the other hand, there is no doubt whatsoever that many red savages take such beliefs with great seriousness. The life world, and consciousness, of the red savage, it must be clearly understood, is quite different from that of, say, a secular rationalist or a scientifically oriented objectivist. One of the most common, and serious, mistakes that can be made in crosscultural encounters is to assume that everyone one meets, is, in effect, very much like oneself. Their personal world, the world of their experience, their experiential world, may be quite different from yours. If it is not understood in its own terms, as he understands it, it is likely to seem irrational,

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eccentric or foolish. Properly understood, on the other hand, his world is plausible, in its terms, as is yours. This is not to say that there is nothing to choose between life worlds; it is only to say that we do not all share the same life world.

"Why are they not going away?" asked a man.

"It will soon be dark," said another.

"They must have very strong medicine," said another.

"Perhaps," said another, uneasily.

I saw Hci struggle for a moment to again control his shield. Then, again, he had steadied it.

"What are they waiting for?" asked a man.

"Thier ranks are opening," said a man.

"Something is coming through them," said another man.

"It is a sleen," said one man.

"No," said another.

"It is on all fours," said another man.

"Surely it is a sleen," said another.

"It is too large to be a sleen," said another.

"Aiii!" cried a man. "It is rising to its feet. It is walking on two feet!"

"It is a thing from the medicine world!" cried a man.

"It is a medicine helper of the Yellow Knives!" cried another.

Almost at the same time, from behind us, thee were cries of consternation.

"Riders!" we heard. "Riders!"

We wheeled our kaiila about. At the back of the camp, thee were screaming and the sounds of numerous kaiila, squealing and snorting, their clawed feet tearing at the grass. At full speed, pennons flying, lances lowered, bucklers set, in sweeping, measured, staggered attack lines, waves of riders struck the camp.

"They are white men!" cried a man near me.

I saw a woman, running, caught in the back with a lance, between the shoulder blades, flung to the dust, the lance then withdrawn. It had been professionally done.

"White men!" cried another man near me.

I saw another man toward the rear, an archer, discharge an arrow, and leap to the side, to avoid a rider. He was hit by the next rider, one of those in the succeeding wave, its riders staggered with those of the first. In this type of formation, given the speed of the charging kaiila, the distance between successive waves is about forty to fifty feet. This is supposed to provide the next rider with a suitable response interval. If the first rider misses the traget the second, thus,

master.

Grunt, I noted, had drawn on his broad-brimmed hat. He had not wished to be seen as he was before the young warriors.

"That is Waiyeyeca," I said to her.

"Yes, Master," she said, tears in her eyes. I understood now why she had hidden from him in the camp. She feared her feelings. There was no doubt now in my mind, nor, I think, in hers, that she indeed did love him, In her eyes, and in her voice, and in the way in which she had said 'Master' to him, I saw that she still, in her heart, regarded herself as his slave.

Grunt, too, a shrewd man, had noticed this.

Wasnapohdi rose to her feet, looking after the riders. She put out her hand. Tears were in her eyes.

"Let me follow him, Master," she said to Grunt. "Please!"

"Have you recieved permission to rise, Slave?" asked Grunt.

She looked at him, startled. Then Grunt, with a savage blow of the back of his hand, struck her to the grass at his feet. She looked up at him, disbelievingly. There was blood at the side of her mouth. Her hands were then taken before her body and he wrists, crossed, were, at one end of a long tether, tightly tied. She was then jerked to her feet. "You do not belong to him," said Grunt. "You belong to me."

"Yes, Master," she said, tears in her eyes.

Grunt mounted. He looped the free end of her tether three times about the pommel of his saddle. "If we survive," said Grunt, "you will discover that your breach of discipline has earned you a superb lashing."

"Yes, Master," she wept.

With all her heart she wished to run after Waiyayeca, but

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she would go with Grunt. Her will was nothing. She was a slave.

"I was too much absorbed with myself," said Grunt. "Sometimes I let things bother me too much. I thank you both, my friends, for bringing me to my senses."

"Ride," said Cuwignaka. "It is nearly dark. Hopefully many will be able to escape from the camp, riding or afoot."

"Surely you will come with us?" said Grunt.

"No," said Cuwignaka.

"The fighting is the business of warriors," said Grunt.

"We are warriors," said Cuwignaka.

"I wish you well," said Grunt.

"We wish you well," I said.

"Oglu waste!" said Cuwignaka.

"Oglu waste!" said Grunt, "Good luck!"

He then moved his kaiila away, through the gloom. We saw Wasnapohdi cast an anguished glance over her shoulder, in the direction in which Waiyeyeca had ridden. Then, by the wrists, weeping, stumbling, the tether taut, she was pulled along, by the side of Grunt's kaiila.

"He is the only man I know who has survived that," said Cuwignaka.

"In itself," I said, "It is not likely to be lethal. It is only that it is commonly done only to the dying or dead."

"You are right, of course," said Cuwignaka.

"Grunt seems rather sensitive about it," I said.

"It saved his life today," said Cuwignaka. "He should be pleased."

"I suppose one could get used to it," I said.

"It is hideous," said Cuwignaka.

"To be sure," I granted him, "it is not likely to start a fashion."

"I do not think so," laughed Cuwignaka.

interesting question whether or not such competitive belief systems can be replaced with truth; truth, like the belief systems, is irrefutable, but its irrefutability is not a function of emptiness, of cognitive vacuity, but of its rectitude.

Truth, you see, has reality on its side. Truth's problems do not derive primarily from the complexity of nature but from the simplicity of people. It is always more convenient to adopt a slogan than conduct an inquiry. Too, the often cold and flinty nature of truth may, to many people, understandably, constitute a poor substitute for the comforts of self-deception. Harmless lies, perhaps, improve the quality of human life. They do not, of course, improve its nobility or grandeur. I suppose a choice, as in many matters, must be made. Some will sleep late. Others will seek the stars.

"Fear nothing," cried Mahpiyasapa. "The medicine of the Yellow Knives is false medicine!"

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"What manner of medicine beasts are they, those portrayed on the masks?" asked a man.

"I do not know," said another, uneasily.

"I have never seen such things," said a man.

"Surely such things could exist only in the medicine world," said a man.

"Such things would surely be fearful and invincible medicine helpers," said a man, shuddering.

"The medicine of the Yellow Knives is false medicine," said a man, "Mahpiyasapa is right."

"Suppose it is not," said another man.

"Such things do not exist," said another man. "They do not exist even in the medicine world."

"Whence, then, came the visions for such masks?" asked another, uneasily.

"If they did exist in the medicine world," said the first man, "they would not favor the Yellow Knives."

"True," said another man.

"What if they did?" asked another.

"Then," said the first man, "we would be doomed."

I leaned forward on the kaila. I could now see, reasonably well, the visages portrayed on the masks. The hair on the back of my neck rose. The visages, clearly, were those of Kurii.

"Hold your lines," I begged the men about me. "Hold your lines, no matter what happens!"

"Your medicine is false," cried Mahpiyasapa to the Yellow Knives, though doubtless they could not understand him. "We do not fear it. It is only wood and leather!"

A horrifying sound came then from the ranks of the Yellow Knives and soldiers. It was a long, howling cry. It must have struck terror, too, into the hearts of the Yellow Knives and soldiers. The sound was unmistakable. I had heard it on the rocky slopes of Tovaldsland, on the sands of the Tahari, in the jungles of the Ua.

Emerging then from the ranks of the enemy came a gigantic Kur, some nine feet in height, some nine hundred pounds in weight. It carried a huge shield and lance, the accouterments of a man. Behind it, on each side, similarly armed, came others.

"Aiii!" cried a man, turning his kaila.

"Hold your lines!" cried Mahpiyasapa.

But the lines, men screaming, kaila wheeling about, were shattered. Fear became flight, and flight rout, and rout

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small reconnaissance," I said.

"Yes," said Cuwignaka.

"She is now fetching for Iwoso," I said.

"Yes," said Cuwignaka.

"Do you think she will make her a good maiden?" I asked.

"Of course," said Cuwignaka.

"Does it outrage you to see her as a female slave?" I asked.

"She betrayed the Kaiila. No," said Cuwignaka.

"She now returns and kneels before Iwoso, head down, handing her food."

"That must be very pleasant for Iwoso," said Cuwignaka.

"She does it well," I said.

"Good," said Cuwignaka.

"She appears to have been much beaten," I said.

"Good," said Cuwignaka. "That will accustom her the more quickly to her new condition."

"Do you think she will make Iwoso a good slave?" I asked.

"I think she will make anyone a good slave," said Cuwignaka.

"She seems to be the only red slave at the feast," I said.

"We know there are other red slaves," said Cuwignaka. "We saw several."

"Do you think the fact that she is the only red slave at the feast, the only one among all the white slaves, is deliberate?" I asked.

"Of course," said Cuwignaka. "That is done to humiliate her. It is a stroke of worthy of Iwoso's high intelligence."

"You have noted, also, I suppose," I said. "that she is one of the few slaves who wears a collar and that she is the only slave, or one of the few, whose ankles are not thonged."

"That her ankles are not thonged is intended as a further humiliation," said Cuwignaka. "That suggests that she, though red, is of even less value than a white female. In any case, of course, escape is impossible."

"Yes," I said.

"The collar is doubtless Iwoso's" said Cuwignaka.

"Doubtless," I said.

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"Iwoso must have recieved much pleasure in secrelty preparing it for her," said Cuwignaka, "and again when she first put it on her."

"Iwoso's triumph seems complete," I said.

"Yes," agreed Cuwignaka.

"Look," I said.

"I see," said Cuwignaka.

A warrior had seized the red slave by the hair and pulled her, twisting her, to her feet. He then held her before him, bent backwards, examining the sweet bow of her beauty.

Iwoso leaped to her feet. She shouted something, angrily, at the man. He, laughed, hurled the red slave away from him, a dozen feet away, into the dust.

"The lance dancers are approaching," I observed.

"Iwoso does not want the slave to learn the pleasures of men," said Cuwignaka. "Doubtless she fears it will spoil her as a serving slave for a woman."

"She is right," I said.

The dancers, then, were swirling about the fallen red slave, weaving and spinning, in spiraling, swiftly moving circles about her. Some of them merely laid the cold metal points of the lances, or the sides of the lance blades, on her flesh. Others jabbed her, dancing, with the points. She lay in the dust, her hands over her head, her knees drawn tightly up, small, shuddering and trembling, helpless under the points.

as it seemed ot, that I, someone you seemed to regard, somehow, as a foe of some sort, of lovely enemy, was to be sent to a Waniyanpi compound, you have now had your wish. I will never forget the horrors of my esceriences there. You may now, if it pleases you, take me from it, as I beg you. Too, now you, too, have fallen slave. You, now, are no more than I. Perhaps a salve, then, may see fit to accede to the pleas of another slave, rather than dismiss her petition as causally, as thoughtlessly, as cruelly, as might a free man. Also, you being a slave, too, perhaps you have been denied the use of women or deprived of their caresses, or perhaps, not being free, you have not been permitted to use them with the same liberal audacity as a free man, or as frequently as you might desire. If that is so, I might be of somewhat greater intrest to you now than I was before. Lastly I would no longer be an encumbrance to you for I am, obviously, no longer a free woman. No longer am I an inconvenience and a bother, something to be concerned about and watched out for. Now I am only a property that begs to love and serve you."

"You seem a different woman than before," I said.

"I now realize that I am a slave, Master," she said.

"If I accept your use," I said, "you must understand that I do so-- unconditionally."

"No strong man accepts a woman on any other terms," she said. "I would not have it any other way."

"Do you understand what it is to be a man's total slave?" I asked.

"Yes," she said.

"Speak," I said.

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"The slave is totally subject to the master in all ways, and in all things. She is his to do with as he pleases. She depends on him for her food and the merest scrap of her clothing, if any. She is subject, completely, to his discipline, to his abuse and his whip. She is owned, like a sandal or saddle. She may be slain even on a whim, if her master wishes."

"Are these, other such conditions acceptable to you?" I asked.

"Yes, Master," she said.

"I accept your use," I said.

"Thank you, Master!" she cried. She seized me about the legs and kissed me. I felt her tears through my tunic.

"Stand," I said.

Joyfully she stood.

"Do you think your lot with me will be easy, Slave?" I asked.

"No, Master," she said, happily.

I went to the travois on which Hci lay. On it, too, were various articles and supplies. I cut a length from a narrow, raided rawhide rope.

"He is going to put her in a collar!" said one of the Waniyanpi women, excitedly, awe in her voice.

"Yes," said another, breathlessly.

"Come away!" said Radish to the women and men. But the women would not budge. The men too, their eyes cast down, save for furtive glances, seemed loath to leave.

I took the narrow rope, then, and looped it about her neck, three times. I then knotted it and ran my finger about, under the loops, making sure that they were unslippable and snug, but not in the least uncomfortable. The point of the collar is to mark the woman as a slave and, in many cases, by means of devices such as particular kind of knot, a tag, and engraving on metal, or a plate attached to it, to identify the master, not to cause her discomfort. Most of the time she will not even be aware she is wearing it. She may always, of couse, be reminded. And if she is in doubt, she may always touch it. It is

"When?" I asked.

"As soon as you had me kneel before you," she said.

"Interesting," I said.

"I am a woman," she said. "We can tell such things."

"Interesting," I said. How subtle and deep was the intelligence of women, I thought. How much they know. How much they can sense. How simple and crude, how naive, sometimes seems the intelligence of men compared to the inelligence of women. What deep and wonderful creatures they are. Who can truly understand the emotional depths and needs, eons old, of these flowers of nature and evolution? How natural, then, it is, that hte truly loving man will concern himself not with her distortions and erversions, ultimately barren, but with her emotional and sensous truths, ancient and deep within her, with what might be called her biological and natural fulfillment. Then I shook such thoughts from my mind, for she was simly a slave, and was to be treated as such.

"Oh!" she said.

I cinched the strap closely to her body.

"Master is rough," she said.

"Be silent, Slave," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said, smiling.

"What, now, is our destination?" I asked Cuwignaka.

"We will go north," he said. "We will then proceed north and west of Coucil Rock, into the land of the Casmu Kaiila. There is a place there I know. It is a camping site favored by Kahintokapa."

"I wonder if he survived," I said.

"Let us hope so," said Cuwignaka.

"What sort of place is this?" I asked.

"It is secluded," said Cuwignaka. "There is wood and water. Game is generally available in the vicinity."

"Do Kaiila, generally, know of this place?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "We are generally familiar with one another's camp sites. This is important if we wish to gather the

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bands. It can also be important in the winter. Sometimes there is food in one place and not in another."

"Various survivors, then," I said, "might possibly have gone to this place."

"That is not unlikely," said Cuwignaka.

"Let us then be on our way," I said. I picked up the other strap, the rigged harness, the trace, and slipped it over my shoulder, about my body.

"It is we who will pull the travois, is it not?" asked the girl.

"Yes," I said. "We are slaves." Acually I wished Cuwignaka to rest. he was still weak from the dance. Four times in the last five days the wounds on his chest had begun to bleed.

"I am pleased to be harnessed with you, to pull with you, Master," she said.

"Do not slack," I said, "or you will be severly beaten."

"I shall not," she said. She looked behind herslef, uneasily, at Cuwignaka. "Master," she said, "I am bare."

"I am well aware of that, my lovely harness mate," I said.

"Will he whip us?" she asked, in a whisper.

"He will if he wishes," I told her.

Sh swallowed hard.

"When I give the signal," I said, "lean forward and step out with your left foot. Lengthen your stride somewhat, and I shall shorten mine. I shall set the pace. If you cannot keep it, beg for its reduction."











He extended his hand to me. In it was the small cake of pemmican which he had just seized up from the grass. "I took this, just now," he said.

"You are male," I said. "It is yours."

He looked at me, puzzled. "I am not a male," he said. "And she is not a female. We are Waniyanpi."

"That is all over now," I said.

The girl was looking at Mira, fascinated. "Turnip," she asked. "is it you?"

"She was once Turnip," I said. "She is now Mira, a slave girl. She cannot respond to you. I have not given her permission to speak."

The girl looked at me, in awe.

"Turn over on your side, Slave," I said. "Show them that your hands are thonged."

Immediately Mira obeyed. The young man and woman saw that her wrists were tightly bound with thongs.

"Be now as you were before," I said, "up on your elbows."

Immediately Mira obeyed.

"What is that on her neck?" she asked, referring to the narrow, dark, braided rawhide rope, looped three times about the slave's neck and knotted before her throat, the two loose ends dangling between her breasts.

"It serves as a slave collar," I said.

"I see," said the girl, stepping back a bit. She put down her head. She drew a quick breath. She blushed.

"You may lie down," I told the slave.

She lay back in the grass, naked and bound, near our feet.

"You two are far from your compound, are you not?" I asked.

"Yes," said the young man, putting down his head.

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"We were recently at a Waniyanpi compound," I said. "It was Compound Eleve, I believe."

The young man did not respond.

"That was your compound, was it not?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"We heard there of two young people who were put out of the compound, a young man and a young woman," I said. "Doubtless you are those two."

"Yes," admitted the young man, not raising his head.

"You followed us here, from its vicinity," I said.

"Yes," he said.

"Why?" I asked.

"We hoped you would lead us to food," he said. "We did not know what else to do."

"Your crime, as I recall, was to found touching one another."

"No," said the young man. "No!"

"Kneel down," I told the young woman, "before this young man, and strip off that foolish garb."

The young man looked at me, startled. "Do not avert your eyes from her," I told him.

The girl pulled up the long, clumsy dress, to her knees, and then knelt before the young man. She then drew the dress over her head and put it on the side. In this way she was on her knees before him, as she bared her beauty to him.

"Do not avert your eyes," I warned the young man.

"Ohhh," he said, softly. "She is so beautiful."

"Does it now seem to you so shameful, or horrifying, to touch her?" I asked.

"No," he said. "No!"

"No longer are you Waniyanpi," I said. "She may now be touched freely, however and as often as you wish."

"I cannot believe such freedom," he said. "It is so different! It is glorious!"

"It is your freedom, not hers," I said.

"What?" he asked.

"Do not forget that she is a female," I said.

He regarded me, puzzled.

"She seems hungry," I said. I had noted that she was eyeing the cake of pemmican in his hand.

"Forgive me, Strawberry!" he said. "I am so thoughtless!" He quickly broke the cake of pemmican in two.

I put my hand on his arm. "You are the male," I said. "It is yours, not hers."

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"I will share it with her, of course," he said.

"She has not yet begged," I said.

He looked at me, startled. Then he, in confusion, looked again upon the girl.

"I beg for something to eat," she said, smiling.

He quickly gave her half of the tiny cake of pemmican and she, on her knees, naked, swiftly, ravenously, ate it.

He then, musingly, regarding her, finished the remaining part of the cake of pemmican.

"Hold still," I told him. With a knife I cut away much of the long, gray skirt of the Waniyanpi garb he wore. I cut the sleeves away, too. Then, with a part of the material, I made a belt. I belted the garment then, tunicwise, about his waist.

"How strong your legs look," said the girl, softly, admiringly, looking up at him, "and your arms!"

"You are permitting her to speak?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"Very well," I said.

The girl put down her head, smiling. Whether or not she would be permitted to speak had been discussed.

"The camp is quite close," said Cuwignaka. "Let us be on our way."

"You are welcome to accompany us," I told the young man, "and you may, if you wish, bring the female."

"I want to bring her," he said.

"Very well," I said.

Again the girl smiled. It had been explicitly discussed, whether or not she would be brought with us.

"I will conceal, as I can, the signs of our encampment," said Cuwignaka.

"I will load the travois," I said.

"Are you truly a slave--Mira," asked the girl.

Mira cast a glance at me.

"You may respond," I told her.

"Yes, I am a slave," said Mira, "totally."

"What was he doing to you, before?" asked the girl.

"You watched?" asked Mira.

"Yes," said the girl.

"he was enjoying me and using me as what I am, a slave," she said.

"Are you embarrassed?" asked the girl.

"No," said Mira. "A slave is not permitted modesty."

"You seemed ecstatic with pleasure, overcome with gratitude and joy," said

The young girl rose to her feet and went and knelt before the young man.

"What are you doing!" he cried, startled.

"I am kissing your feet," she said.

"That is a slave's act!" he cried.

She lifted her head, proudly, definitely. "Yes!" she said.

He shrank back, frightened. "We are Sames," he said.

"No," she said, "we are not. You are a man and I am a woman."

"No," he cried. "No!"

"I would be a slave," she said.

"No, no," he cried. "No!"

"Do I displease you?" she asked. "Am I not attractive? Am I not desirable? Am I not beautiful? Do you, truly, not wish to own me?"

"Of course I want to own you!" he said. "Just to look at you is to want to own you! For years I have wanted to own you!"

"Own me," she said.

He cried out in misery and bent over, clenching his fists.

"What is wrong?" she asked.

"It is the thought of owning you," he said. "It is so overwhelming. It would mean such power, such joy!"

"Own me," she said.

He looked down at her, trembling.

"There is something to be said for the idea." I said, "particularly if you are not going to leave her behind."

He looked at me, puzzled.

"She is a white female," I said. "Few white females, if any, in the Barrens are free. We are going to an encampment of

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red savages. She is attractive. If you do not want to enslave her, I have little doubt but what someone else will do so."

He looked down at her.

I went to the travois and freed the coil of narrow, braided rawhide rope I had used for Mira's collar. I cut off a suitable piece. I then replaced the balance of the rope on the travois, securing it in place.

"Stand," he said to the girl. She stood.

I handed him the length of rope. He stood there, looking at her, the rope in his hands.

"You understand, do you not," I asked the girl, "the meaning of this?"

"Yes," she said.

"You may freely enter into the state of bondage," I told her, "but you may not freely leave it. This thing, once it is done to you, is, on your part, irreversible. It is not then within your power to break, alter or amend it in any way. You will then, you see, no longer be a free person, but only a slave."

"I understand," she said. She then turned to the young man. "I am ready," she said. "Make me a slave."

He then looped the dark, narrow, braided rawhide rope three times about her neck. He adjusted it so that it was snug and not too tight, and the ends were even. He then tied the two loose ends together, closing the collar. He jerked the two loose ends, sharply, snapping them in contrary directions, making the knot tight. A narrow, inverted triangle of flesh showed between the first two coils of the collar, wrapped closely about her neck, and the knot. He released the two loose ends of the collar, below the knot, and they fell lightly, dangling, as was the case with Mira's collar, between her breasts. The subtle touch of the leather on the breasts of a slave can be useful to a slave, particularly when she is naked, reminding her that she is a slave. Also, as I

deeply of slavery under my tutelage. She would learn it well.

"There," said Cuwignaka, standing on the crest of the small hill, in the deep grass. "below is the camp, nestled in the trees, by the small stream. You can see some lodges."

I stood, stock-still, on the crest of the small hill, beside Cuwignaka. I scarcely glanced into the shallow valley, at the trees along the stream, the lodges hidden among the trees.

It was something else which drew my attention. It was on a rise behind the camp.

"What is wrong?" asked Cuwignaka.

I could not speak. My blood began to race, my heart to pound. I began to breathe swiftly. I trembled.

"What is wrong, Mitakola?" asked Cuwignaka.

"There," I said. I pointed to the rise overlooking the camp.

"What?" he asked.

"There!" I said. "There!"

On that rise there were two trees, white-barked trees, some fifty feet tall, with shimmering green leaves. They stood within some thirty to forty feet of one another and both were outlined dramatically against the sky.

"What?" asked Cuwignaka.

I stared, trembling, at the lonely pair of trees. "The trees," I said. "The trees." They were Hogarthe trees, named for Hogarthe, one of the early explorers in the area of the Barrens, usually growing along the banks of small streams or muddy, sluggish rivers. Their shape is very reminiscent of poplar trees on Earth, to which, perhaps in virtue of seeds brought to the Counter-Earth, they may be related.

"It is from those trees," said Cuwignaka, "that this place has its name."

"What is the name of this place?" I asked.

"Two Feathers," said Cuwignaka.

"I thought that was a name," I said.

"It is a name," said Cuwignaka, "the name of this place."

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"Who is high man here?" I asked.

"It would be Kahintokapa, One-Who-Walks-Before, of the Yellow-Kailla Riders," said Cuwignaka, "if he survived."

"He must have survived!" I cried.

I began to run wildly down the slope toward the camp.

"Wait!" cried Cuwignaka. "Someone is coming!"

"Tatankasa!" cried Canka, rushing towards us from the camp. But I ran past him. I ran as though mad. He, and perhaps Akihoka, who had gone to fetch him back from hunting, must have made contact with fugitives from the festival camp and then, with them, come to this camp.

"Master!" cried Winyela.

But I ran past her, too.

"Wait!" I heard Cuwignaka calling out behind me.

But I could not wait. It was late afternoon. This would be the time for the sunning of shields, hanging on the shield tripods behind the lodge facing west.

Woemn looked up, startled, as I hurried through the camp. "Tatankasa!" cried more than one.

"Tatankasa!" called out Mahpiyasapa.

I, a slave, fell to my knees before him. He was chief of the Isbu Kailla.

"You live!" he cried. "My heart sings!"

"Master," I cried. "Where is the lodge of Kahintokapa!"

"There," said Mahpiyasapa, puzzled, pointing.

"My thanks, Master!" I cried.

















sod and, when the handle is held in the right hand and the right blade is supported with the left, it may be used, also, rather like a shovel, to move dirt.

I then tied one end of a rawhide rope about her right ankle. The rope was about fifteen feet in length.

"Get into the pit," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said.

I then followed her into the pit and, within it, we sat down, facing one another. The hobbling log was on my left and on her right. I looped the rope on her right ankle twice about the hobbling log. A much stouter rope was already tied about it, with its loose end, several feet in length, coiled atop it. Other ropes lay near us in the pit.

I looked up, through the opening in the pit. It was about eighteen inches square. A similar opening, somewhat smaller, was at the other end of the pit. It had its purpose. I could see the sky through the opening, and the clouds.

"We now wait," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said.

## Chapter 37

### WHAT OCCURRED IN THE PIT

"You are a pretty she-property," I said.

"Thank you, Master," she said.

"Perhaps I will feed you," I said.

"Thank you, Master," she said.

"You may approach," I said, "on all fours."

"Thank you, Master," she said. She crawled toward me, on all fours, in the narrow pit. I put small pieces of pemmican in my hand. She fed from my hand. I put more pemmican in my hand. I then lowered my hand. I felt her kissing, nibbling and licking at my hand, taking the pemmican from it. I put more pemmican in my hand and the lowered it still further. I felt her hair on my body. She nibbled and kissed at my hand, delicately removing pemmican from it, her head following my hand, as I lowered it yet further, and then, with extreme delicacy, with tenderness and gentleness, she nibbled and kissed at my body. "Master desires his slave," she whispered.

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"No," I said, restraining myself. I thrust her back. "Go to your place, Slave," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said, and returned to her place.

"I must remain alert," I said. "I must keep my senses sharp."

"Yes, Master," she smiled.

I noted that she knelt now in her place, rather than sat there. I did not effect anything critical. I had merely ordered her to return to her place. I had not specified that she was to sit there.

I threw her the water bag. She kissed the spike, softly, tenderly, watching me. Then, unexpectedly, mischievously, she quickly swirled her tongue about the spike, and kissed it again. She then took it deeply into her mouth and lifted the bag, holding it with both hands.

"It is not necessary to drink like that," I said.

She put her head back yet further, and drank more.

Holding the water bag as she did, high, with her head back, arched her back











I held the object before her. She regarded it with dismay. "I have already chewed the sip root within the moon," she said.

"Open your mouth," I said.

"Yes, Master," she said.

I then thrust the object into her mouth.

"Chew it well," I said, "and swallow it, bit by bit."

She grimaced, at the barest taste of the object.

"Begin," I told her.

She began.

"Not so quickly," I told her. "More slowly. Very slowly. Very, very slowly. Savor it well.

She whimpered in obedience.

She did not need the sip root, of course, for, as she had pointed out, she had had some within the moon, and, indeed, the effect of sip root, in the raw state, in most women, is three or four moons. In the concentrated state, as in slave wine, developed by the caste of physicians, the effect is almost indefinite, usually requiring a releaser for its remission, usually administered, to a slave, in which is called the breeding wine, or the "second wine." When this is administered she usually knows that she has been selected for crossing with a handsome male slave.

Such breedings commonly take place with the slaves hooded, and under the supervision of the master, or masters. In this way the occurrence of the breeding act can be confirmed and authenticated. Sometimes a member of the caste of scribes is also present, to provide certification on behalf of the city. Usually, however, in cities which encourage this sort of registration it is sufficient to bring the papers for stamping to the proper office within forty Ahn. Such rigor, however, is usually involved only in the breeding of expensive, pedigreed slaves. Most slave breeding is at the discretion of the private master or masters involved. Slaves from the same household incidentally, are seldom mated. This practice is intended to

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reduce the likelihood of intimate emotional relationships among slaves. Furthermore, male and female slaves are usually kept separate, female slaves commonly performing light labors in households and male slaves working in the fields or on the grounds. Sometimes, to reward male slaves, or keep them content, or even to keep them from going insane, a female slave is thrown to them. This is sometimes a girl of delicate sensibilities from the house who has not been perfectly pleasing; she then finds herself thrown naked to work slaves. In slave matings, since most crossings do not take place within the same household, a stud fee is usually paid to the master of the male slave. The active ingredient in the breeding wine, or the "second wine," is a derivative of teslik. In the matter of bitterness of taste there is little to choose from between raw sip root and slave wine, the emulsive qualities of the slave wine being offset to some extent by the strength of the concentrations involved.

"I have finished it," gasping the girl, shuddering.

"Open your mouth," I said, "widely."

I forced her mouth open, even more widely, with my thumbs and forefingers. I examined her mouth, closely. The sip root was gone.

She still held her wrists crossed, touching, behind her. She was still bound, as it is said, by the master's will.

"You are unbound," I told her. She removed her hands from behind her back.

She looked at me, knowing that I was her master.

"Lick and wipe your mouth," I told her. She ran her tongue over her lips, and wiped them with the back of her right forearm.

"Into the pit!" I cried. "Hurry!" There had been no mistaking the urgency in her voice.

"I cannot move!" she cried. "I cannot move!"

I threw myself half out of the pit and with my right hand seized her right ankle, and then, with my left, seized her left ankle. She screamed, throwing her hands before her face. Bodily I dragged her down beside me. Almost at the same instant, flashing over the opening, I saw immense, extended talons closing, and the rushing passage of a huge, dark shape, the grass leaping up and seeming to almost torn up, almost uprooted, following it.

She clutched me, shuddering.

"You have not been pleasing," I told her. I then thrust her from me.

"Is it gone?" She begged, sobbing.

"It will be back," I said. "Stay near the opening."

I unlooped the tether on her left from the hobbling log. She watched me, frightened. The other end was still tied tightly on her right ankle. I then went to the other end of the pit, where the smaller opening was, and uncoiled the line which lay there, formerly atop the hobbling log.

"What do we do now?" she asked.

"Wait," I said.

She lay down in the pit, making herself as low, and small as possible.

We did not wait long.

We heard a sudden, striking, thudding sound. It was almost as though half of a kaiila had been suddenly dropped to the earth. It was a sound which, when one has once heard it, one is not likely to mistake it for another. The vibrations were felt through the walls of the pit.

"It is here," I said.

The girl, looking up, suddenly screamed with fear. A large, bright, round eye peered through the opening in the ceiling of the pit.

A beak, yellowish, some two feet in length, scimitarlike, poked into the pit.

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It withdrew.

We heard a taloned foot cutting at the sod and poles over our head.

"We are safe here!" cried the girl.

"No," I said.

The beak again entered the pit and pushed downward. It poked against the girl's body. She screamed. It snapped at her and she shrank back, to the opposite end of the pit, covering her head, screaming. This excited the predator. Half of its head thrust into the pit, after her. Then it screamed, too, a shrill scream, and, withdrawing its head, it began to cut and tear at the roof of the pit. I saw a talon emerge through the sod roof of the pit. I saw a talon emerge through the sod roof. I saw poles lifting and splintering.

In this moment, its attention fastened on the girl, on tearing away the obstacle which lay between him and her. I thrust through the smaller opening and, with a swirl of rope and two hitches, fastened the hobbling log on its right leg. I then screamed and thrust at it, and it spun about. I fended its beak away with my forearm.

"Well done!" cried Cuwignaka, springing up from the grass. He interposed himself, and a lance, between me and the predator. The beak snapped the lance off short. Hci, swinging ropes, crying out, emerged, too, from the nearby grass. Cuwignaka and I backed off. The bird, smiting its wings, darted towards us but, screaming, fell short on its belly in the grass, feathers flying about. It only then realized it was impeded. It turned about, wildly, the leg, and rope, turning under him. Cuwignaka struck it on the beak with the shaft of the lance, distracting it. Hci, running up, struck it with the coils of rope

in his hand. The bird, then, rising up, wings beating, took flight, jerking the hobbling log from the pit, tearing it up through the sod roof and poles.

"Strong! Strong! Marvelous!" cried Cuwignaka.

He had not understood the strength of such a creature.

Struggling, wings beating, screaming, the bird, lunging and falling, and climbing again, fought the weight. It struggled to perhaps a hundred feet in the air and then, bit by bit, the log swinging, fighting, it began to lose altitude. Cuwignaka and Hci ran beneath it, in the grass. I wiped sweat from my forehead. I was elated.

I returned to the pit, its roof now half torn away. In one end of it the girl crouched. I leaped down into the pit beside her. "On your belly," I told her. I then pulled her right ankle, to which the tether was still tightly attached, high, up behind

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her. With some of the tether, close to the knot on her right ankle, I tied her hands together behind her back. I then looked down upon her, she now on her side, with her wrists tied behind her, fastened to her right ankle, pulled up, closely behind her. She was well secured. I then, with extra ropes taken from the pit, went to aid Cuwignaka and Hci.

Chapter 38

A SLAVE IS PUNISHED

"It is a splendid catch," I said.

Ropes bound the beak of the bird tightly shut. It lay on its side. Its two feet, too, were bound together. Ropes, as well, encircled its wings, binding them to its body. Already we had put a girth rope about it, of the sort beneath which the Kinyanpi, in flight, inserted their knees.

It was now late afternoon.

We had transported the bird to this grove of trees on a travois, drawn by two kaiila. It was only a pasang or so from the pit, which we had rebuilt.

The bird struggled, and then lay still.

"A splendid catch," I said.

"We must try again, tomorrow," said Cuwignaka.

"Yes," I said.

We then turned about, and walked to another part of the grove. It was in this part of the grove that we had our kaiila tethered, and had made our camp.

There, near our things, stood my slave, who had once been the lofty Lady Mira, of Venna, an agent of Kurii.

I looked at her. She lowered her eyes.

"Fetch me a coiled rope," I told her. "And then get on all fours."

She did so.

"You ran twice," I told her.

"Forgive me, Master," she said.

"Then once, frozen with fear, you needed to be dragged, perforce, into the pit."

"Forgive me, Master," she begged.

"I am not pleased," I said.

"Forgive me, Master!" she begged.

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their slaveries!"

I smiled.

"What lucky, soft little thngs they are," she said, "being sold naked off sales blocks to the whips and chains of strong masters, with little more to worry about than the heat of the kitchens, the steaming water of the laudering tubs, the dangers, from young, prowling ruffians, of shopping in the evening! How warm and safe they are locked in their kennels at night or cuddling, in furs, chained at the foot of their masters' couches! What need have they to fear sleen and tarns! They need fear only thier masters!"

"The lot of a slave girl in the cities is not always easy," I said. "Most are owned by one master, alone, and must share his compartments with him, in complete privacy. There, as slave girls elsewhere, they are at the master's mercy, completely."

"It is not so different in the Barrens," she said, "when one is alone with the master, when the lodge flaps are tied shut, from the inside."

"Perhaps not," I smiled.

"And in the cities," she said, "it is so beautiful, the towers, the bridges and sunsets, the people, the flower stalls, the market places, the smells of cooking."

"Yes," I said, "the cities are beautiful." Some of the most beautiful cities I had seen were on Gor.

"I lived in Ar for a year," she said. "Not far from my apartments there was a pastry shop. Marvelous smells used to come from the shop. In the evening, when the shop was closing, slave girls, in their brief tunics and collars, would come and kneel down, near the hinged opening to the open-air counter. The baker, who was a kind-hearted man, would sometimes come out and, from a flat sheet, throw them unsold pastries.

I said nothing.

How amusing I found that at the time," she said. "But too, I sometimes wondered if the pastries I bought at that

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shop tasted so good to me as those the girls had begged did to them. They seemed so delighted to receive one. It was so precious to them."

I said nothing.

"If I were a slave in Ar," she said, "and I were permitted to do so, I think I shold go to that pastry shop and, in my tunic and collar, knel there with the other girls, hoping that I, too, might receive such a pastry."

I smiled. How beautiful she was, and how helpless, a slave.

"In street shopping," she said, "I was always heavily veiled. The backer would not recongnize me."

"Perhaps some of the other girls were former customers as well," I said.

"Perhaps," she smiled. "That is an interesting thought."

"The transition between a free woman and a slave girl can occur suddenly on Gor," I said.

"I am well aware of that, Master," she smiled. Somtimes a girl is captured in her own bed, raped and hooded, and carried to a market, all in the same night.

"But, on the whole," she said, "how I scorned slaves, how I hated them!"

"Oh?" I asked.

"Do you know the slaves I hated the most, those I most despised?" she asked.

"No," I said.

"The pleasure slaves!" she said. "How I hated them! They were so beautiful and desirable! Sometimes I would take a whip into the streets and deliberately jostle one, and then make her lie down and whip her across the legs!"

"The same thing, now, could be done to you," I said.
"I know," she said.
"Why did you hate them so?" I asked.
"They were lucky enough to be in a collar, and not me!" she said.
"It seems, then," I said, "that you hated them because you were jealous of them, that, in reality, you envied them."
"Yes," she said, "I was jealous of their beauty and desirability. I envied them their happiness."
"Did you know this as a free woman?" I asked.
"Yes," she said, "but I do not think that I would have freely admitted it."
"Deceit is freedom of free women," I said.
"But it is not a freedom permitted to slave girls, is it, Master?" she asked.

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"No," I said.  
"Every woman, in her heart," she said, "longs to kneel before a strong man, to be subject to his whip, to be owned, to be mastered, to know that she has no choice but to give him total love and service."  
"The master will not permit the girl to give him less than everything."  
"And the slave desires to give the master everything," she said, "and more."  
"Are you happy," I asked, "being a slave?"  
"Yes, Master," she said. "I have never been so happy before in my life."  
"You are now in your place in nature," I said.  
"Yes, my Master," she said. She kissed me.  
"No longer, now," I said, "do you need to envy slave girls."  
"No longer do I envy them their slavery," she said, "for now I, too, and a slave. In my bondage I am rich and favored as they."  
"But surely," I said, "you are aware of the miseries and terrors which may occasionally characterize the lot of female slaves."  
"Of course," she said, "for we are at the mercy of our Masters, in all things."  
"Yet you are not displeased to be a slave?" I asked.  
"No," she said.  
"Why?" I asked.  
"That we may, at our master's whim, be subjected to miseries or terrors, even to torture and death, if he wishes, makes clear to us that we are truly slaves, that we are truly owned, that the domination to which we are subject is truly total and absolute."  
"I see," I said.  
"We would not have it any other way," she said.  
"I see," I said.  
"but we know," she said, "that though we are in one sense fully without power, that in another sense we may do much to control the happiness and quality of our lives. We need, generally, only be absolutely obedient and fully pleasing."  
"That is generally true," I admitted.  
"Too," she said, "in bondage we find that we live our truth. How else could we be happy and fulfilled?"  
"I do not know," I said.  
"And I think it is obviously true," she said, "that men

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desire us, treasure us, and love us, as well as command us, in ways that a

"He fears that it could only have been the work of Wakanglisapa," said Cuwignaka.

"Wakanglisapa?" I asked.

"Yes, Wakanglisapa, 'Black Lightning,' the Medicine Tar," said Cuwignaka.

"That is foolish, Hci, my friend," I said.

"I do not think so," he said. "While I crouched in the grass, awaiting the landing of the tarn, I found something. I would like to show it to you."

Neither Cuwignaka nor myself spoke. We watched Hci return to the place in the grass where he had waited, bow ready, for the landing of the tarn. In a moment or two he had returned to where we stood.

In his hands he carried a large feather.

"It is black," said Cuwignaka.

"There are many black tarns," I said.

"Consider its size, Tatnkasa, Mitakola," said Cuwignaka, in awe.

"It is large," I granted him. It was some five feet in length. It could only have come from a very large tarn.

"It is the feather of Wakanglisapa, the Medicine Tarn," said Hci.

"There is no such beast," I said.

"This is his feather," said Hci.

I said nothing.

Hci examined the skies. "Even now," he said, "Wakanglishapa may be watching us."

I, too, scanned the skies. "The skies seem clear," I said.

"The beasts of the medicine world," said Hci, "may appear, or not, as they please."

"Do not be foolish my friend," I said.

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Hci thrust the feather down, like a lance, in the dirt. I looked at it. Its barbs moved in the wind.

"Let us draw the travois ourselves," said Hci. "It will save time."

"Cuwignaka and I will draw it, after we have tied the reins of this tarn to one of the poles," I said. "You go ahead, to fetch the kaiila, and then meet us."

"I think it will be better if we all remain together," said Hci.

"You feel there is danger?" I asked.

"Great danger," said Hci.

"We shall wait then, too, for the slave," I said.

"It is well, unless we wish to risk losing her," said Hci.

"Let us not risk losing her," I said. "She may be worth as much as a kaiila."

"Yes," said Hci. It seemed not improbable that the former Lady Mira of Venna might bright that much in a bartering.

In a few moments the slave had joined us. She had worked swiftly. She had not needed to be hastened with blows.

"It is not necessary to tie me by the neck to a travois pole, Master," she said.

I slapped her, snapping her head to the side.

"Forgive me, Master," she said.

"It seems you still have much to learn about being a slave," I said.

"I am eager to learn," she said, her head down.

"I will help," said Hci.

"No," I said. "Your wound might open."

"I will keep watch on the skies then," said Hci.

"Good," I said.

"What are you doing?" asked Hci.

"Bring me a kaiila," she whispered. "Help me escape. I will make you rich among the Yellow Knives!"

"What of her?" I asked, indicating Bloketu.

"She is only a slave," said Iwoso. "Leave her. Let her face justice."

Bloketu regarded her, piteously.

"Do not even dare to speak, Slave," said Iwoso.

"Forgive me, Mistress," said Bloketu. On her neck, thrust up, over the ropes holding her neck to the post, she still wore Iwoso's collar. Cuwignaka had not seen fit to remove it from her.

I regarded Iwoso. She stood before me, roped to the post, absolutely helpless in her bonds.

"I am sorry," I said. "My sympathies are with the Kaiila." I then turned away.

"Warrior," called Iwoso, ingratiatingly.

I paused.

"Please come back," entreated Iwoso.

She had called me "Warrior" though I still wore Canka's collar, though I was still a slave. She meant, thus, to flatter me. Iwoso, I conjectured, did little without purpose.

I turned about. "Yes," I said.

"I am tied tightly," she said. "Can you not loosen my bonds, but a little?"

I looked at her.

"Please, please," she said.

"You are beautiful," I said.

"Roped and stripped as I am, handsome warrior," she said, "if I should indeed be beautiful I could never hope to conceal it from you."

"That is true," I said.

"Please," she wheeled.

"Perhaps," I said.

I crouched by her ankles. "Oh!" she said. I then stood up and attended to her wrists. "Oh, oh!" she said. I then attended to the rope at her belly and then to that on her neck. "Oh! Oh!" she said.

I then stood back.

"You have not loosened my bonds!" she said.

"No," I said. "I seem, rather, inadvertently doubtless, to have tightened them."

She looked at me, angrily. It was not easy for her to do so now, her head held back so closely against the post. "Beast! Sleen!" she said.

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I turned away again.

"Oh, Warrior, Warrior!" she called, desperately, softly.

"Yes?" I said, returning to where she might see me, though, by intent, with some difficulty.

"How does the council go?" she asked.

"What council?" I asked.

"The great council of the Kaiila, of all the remnants of the Kaiila," she said. "of the Isbu, the Casmu, the Isanna, the Napoktan and Wismahi?"

"The council?" I asked.

"That being held now," she said.

"How did you know about the council?" I asked.

"You mentioned it," she said, "in the Yellow-Knife camp, in my lodge."

"Oh," I said.

"Too," she said, "do you not think I could see all the lodges when I was being brought to the post?"

"I suppose it does not make any difference that you know about it," I said, "as you are a prisoner. It would not do, of course, for beasts to learn of it, or the white soldiers of your people, the Yellow Knives, or the Kinyanpi."

"No," she said, "for they might take you here, surprising you and surrounding you, you being isolated in this place, you being, for most practical purposes, trapped with little possibility of escape on Council Rock."

"It is doubtless well," I said, "that our gathering here, this council, is a closely guarded secret, that our enemies know nothing of it."

"Yes," she said, "else the work begun at the summer camp might for most practical purposes be concluded here. The Kaiila might, for most practical purposes, be wiped out."

"Fortunately," I said, "our enemies have no way of knowing where we are."

"We were days in our hoods," said Iwoso. "They were lifted only a bit, at irregular intervals, I think to permit the placing of food in our mouths, the holding of a wooden bowl of water to our lips. It was difficult to keep track of time."

"I understand," I said. The hood often tends to produce spatial and temporal disorientation. This is regarded by man as one of its values. Some slavers use hoods to considerably reduce a girl's taming time. Hoods, of course, have many values. One of them is to teach a girl that she is helpless and dependent. Another is punishment.

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"Could you tell a poor free woman, one bound as helplessly as a slave, handsome warrior," she asked, "what is the day?"

"I suppose it could do no harm," I said.

"Please, handsome warrior," she begged.

"It is the last day of Canwapegiwi," I said.

"Ah!" she cried, elated.

I smiled to myself. Had she not seen the dust as yet? It had been there, visibly, far off, in the west, for better than a quarter of an Ahn. The movements of the white soldiers and the Yellow Knives, even from the time they had crossed the Northern Kaiila, for days ago, had been under surveillance by our scouts.

"You seem pleased," I said.

"It is nothing," she said.

Did she truly think that it was a mere accident that she and Bloketu had been brought to the posts this morning, interestingly, on the last day of Canwapegiwi?

Without seeming to Iwoso then began to scan the terrain below, doubtless with some anxiety.

"Are you looking for something?" I asked.

"No," she said, quickly, "no!" She looked back at me.

"Oh," I said.

I then, turning away from the ledge, not facing the west, began to coil some rope which was lying about, one of several such lengths which seemed, purposelessly, to be scattered near the edge of the escarpment. When I was behind Iwoso I looked at her again. As I had thought, she had returned to her scrutiny of the surrounding plains. I wondered how long it would take her to detect the dust. I had seen it when I had first come to the edge of the escarpment but, to be sure, from the scouts. I had known where to look. It was obvious, but not dramatically so.

Then I suddenly saw her body move. She had then, I was sure, registered the dust.

"Are you sure you don't see something out there?" I asked her, coming up behind her.

"Oh," I said, and turned again to the prairie.

"Yes!" she cried. "Call Hci!"

"You wish to lick and kiss your captor, as a slave might?" I asked.

"Yes!" she said.

"Do you beg it?" I asked.

"Yes," she said. "Yes!"

"Very well," I said. "Hci!" I called.

Hci, interestingly, was not very far away and, in a moment or two, he was approaching Iwoso's post. I winked at Hci. "This woman," I said, "has begged to like and kiss her captor, as a slave, at the post."

"Well?" asked Hci. He stood quite close to Iwoso. She turned her head to the side, that her lips might not brush his. She began to tremble. I think that, as a mature female, she had perhaps never been that close to a male, and certainly not in this fashion. Hci was stripped to the breechcloth, and Iwoso shrank even further back as the handle of his knife, thrust in its sheath, touched her above the belly on the right.

"Well?" said Hci.

Timidly Iwoso turned her head to him and their lips, gently, touched. She then kissed him twice, timidly, on the cheek. He did not move. Iwoso, then, frightened, but more boldly, began to kiss him softly about the mouth and face.

These kisses, now, clearly, I saw, went beyond the feigned obedience ingredient in her strategem; some of these kisses were like questions, after which she would wait to see how he might react; others were like tiny explorations or experiments, testings or tastings, to satisfy her female curiosity; others were like small, tender placatory submissions; others were like gentle, moist offerings, hoping that he might be pleased. Iwoso, I saw, doubtless contrary to her original intentions, was actually kissing Hci.

"Lick, as well as kiss," said Hci.

Iwoso, softly, then, complied.

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I was reminded of the girls at the training stakes in the pens of slavers, in the cities. One of the first things a girl is taught to do is to like and kiss under duress. One of the next things she is taught to do, in her training chains in a furred alcove, is to make love instantly, at so little as the snapping of fingers or the barking of a command.

"Here," said Hci, pointing to the hideous carring at the left side of his mouth.

Iwoso regarded him.

"A Yellow Knife did that," said Hci. "I killed him."

Softly, then, Iwoso began to lick and kiss at the rugged, whitish tissue at the side of Hci's face.

Then Hci drew back his head. He looked deeply into Iwoso's eyes. He was disturbed, I think, at what he saw there. They were wide, and deep, and tender and moist.

"You pretend well," said Hci, sneering.

Tears sprang into Iwoso's eyes.

"Slave lips," said Hci, angrily.

Iwoso looked at him puzzled.

"Purse your lips, as a white female slave," said Hci.

Iwoso did so.

"Now kiss," said Hci, angrily.

Iwoso did so, fully upon the lips, as a slave girl.

"I suggest that you do so more fervently," said Hci.

Iwoso complied, pressing her lips more desperately, more helplessly, more







initiated your clever, diversionary strategem."

"Knowing that," she said, "you let me behave as I did!"

"Yes," I said.

"It was pleasant seeing you pretend to sexual need, pretty Iwoso," said Hci.

She looked at him, aghast.

He took her chin and held her head. "You pretend well to sexual need, Iwoso," he said. I saw that she shuddered, Hci's hand controlling her. Then, angrily, he thrust her head, in its neck bonds, to the side.

"The Yellow Knives approach incautiously, anxiously," said Cuwignaka. "Doubtless they fear some might escape.

"Yes," I said.

"Things go well," said Cuwignaka.

"Yes," I said.

"They are at the foot of the trail!" sobbed Iwoso, looking down, "You cannot escape! You are lost!"

The Yellow Knives now, to be sure, swirled about the foot of the trail, that leading to the summit of Council Rock. This trail ranges generally from about five feet to ten feet in width. Some were even now urging their kaiila upward, doubtless desiring to be the first to count coup. Others, jostling and milling about, in dust and feathers, pressing and gesticulating, fought for a position on the narrow upgrade.

"It was I who brought them here!" cried Iwoso.

I did not think it wise that the Yellow Knives were urging their kaiila so speedily upward, and in such numbers, on so narrow a trail. To be sure, they were eager. Also, of course, it is sometimes difficult to separate the red savage from his kaiila. This sometimes renders his strategies somewhat inflexible. The tactical situation, in my opinion, called for an assault on foot. But the Yellow Knife would not be likely to think in such terms, at least not immediately. He, like most

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of the red savages, seemed to be a born cavalryman. They would learn, swiftly enough, of course, that the trail, here and there, abruptly narrowed. Indeed, in places, usually about blind turns, we had artificially narrowed it.

"You are finished now, Kaiila sleen!" cried Iwoso.

"Are you proud of yourself, and of your role in this?" asked Hci.

"Yes," she cried. "Yes!"

"Interesting," said Hci.

"Now you will all be killed!" cried Iwoso. "Now even your women and children will be killed!"

"There is not one woman or child in this camp," said Hci.

"What?" she asked.

"No," said Hci.

"All the lodges!" she cried.

"There are mostly empty," said Hci. "The women and children are elsewhere, and safe."

"I do not understand," said Iwoso.

"This is a camp of warriors," said Hci.

"But the council!" cried Iwoso.

"There was never a council," said Hci.

"But what are you doing here?" asked Iwoso.

"Waiting for Yellow Knives," said Hci.

"We have had them under surveillance for four days," said Cuwignaka.

"I do not understand!" said Iwoso.

"You have played your role well," said Hci.

"--Master," she added.

On the trail below, only some twenty feet or so below the ledge, charging upward, Yellow Knives, four or five abreast, mounted on painted kaila, swept toward the top of the trail, some hundred feet or so to our right.

But a moment before the fanguard of his charging force could attain the summit the high, heavy structure of timbers and sharpened stakes was thrust into place. The stakes, anchored by the timbers, were tied together like fierce wooden stars. Kaila, screaming, unable to check their forward momentum, plunged onto the stakes. Impaled and torn, pressed from behind, filling the air with hideous noises, they reared and twisted, throwing riders and biting and clawing at one another. More kaila rushed forward, charging behind them, striking into the bloody, halted mass. Riders slipped down among the animals, screaming. More kaila, from behind, pressed forward. Dozens of animals and may riders were forced from the trail, sliding and plummeting down the steep face of Council Rock.

I saw one of the war chiefs of the Yellow Knives, whom I remembered from the summer camp, in his kaila slip over the ledge. Still more Yellow Knives, not clear on what was ahead, were trying to force their way upward on the narrow trail. Men fought to escape the edge, cutting at one another even with knives. But those at the edge, often, other Yellow Knives pressing forward, were thrust, even fought, from the trail.

The air was rent with screaming, that of beasts and men. Bodies, thos of kaila and Yellow Knives, slipped from the edge, plummeting downward. Lances snapped against the stone and the barricade, halted in their charge, seeing the impossiblity of advance under the current conditons, were trying to back their beasts from the barricade. This forced other beasts and men from the trail. Others, wildly, fought to turn their beasts. Some of these, successful, began to try to force their way back down the trail.

There was much shouting as well as screaming. I saw the movement of battle staffs. Their visibility, of course, was minimal, given the twistings of the irregualr, tortuous trail. More efficient were the blasts of war whistles. The trial then,

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long and winding, visible in many of its lengths from the height of the escarpment, seemed choked with Yellow Knives. It was like an odd, upward-moving, arrested river of beasts and men, suddenly stopped, immobilized, in its flow. We could have even see many Yellow Knives, puzzled, milling about, near the foot of the trail, hundreds of feet below. The trail, within its narrow boundaries, the rock on one side, the fall on the other, consituted a suitable trap, or slaughter channel, for our paralyzed, bewildered, confined enemies.

"No!" screamed Iwoso. "No!"

Lodges, with their poles, were thrown back and men energed, dragging at the ropes of small travois, heavily laden with stones. Others, with their hands, and levers, began to roll larger stones, even boulders, toward the edge of the escarpment.

"No!" cried Iwoso.

"Shall we gag her?" asked Cuwignaka.

"no," I said. "Let her cries, if they will, distract our attackers."

To this point we had struck not a blow. Yet I think taht more than a hundred and fifty Yellow Knives might already have perished, victims of that steep, dreadful trail, crowded from it, driven from it, trampled upon it, and some even falling under the weapons of their own fellows, fighting for space on the rugged ascent. Then began the leathal hail of stones, hundreds flung from above, dozens rolled and toppled over the edge. These stones, striking



























































































Grunt's part. I do not think that Waiyeyeca, now having come again into the ownership of his former childhood slave, would ever be likely to let her go again.

"I shall miss my former master, though," said the girl. "Though he was strict with me, as is fitting, for I am a slave, he, too, was very kind to me."

"He saved your life at the summer camp," I said, "putting you on a tether and enforcing slave sanctions upon you, to lead you to safety."

"I know," she said.

"Doubtless, Slave," I said, "you are on an errand. That you not be whipped for dallying I permit you to be on your way."

She put down her head and, tenderly, kissed my feet. Then, with a smile, shouldered again the roll of kailauk hide she was carrying, she leapt up, and sped on her way. She was going toward the lodge of waiyeyeca. Something, I supposed, had been exchanged for the hide. Perhaps it would be used to repair one of the skins in Waiyeyeca's lodge. He had a woman now to attend to such matters. He had recently purchased her.

I continued on, then, toward my own lodge.

"Hurry, hurry, lazy slave!" I heard. I heard then the hiss of a switch and a girl, carrying two skins of water, cry out in pain. She was a white female slave. She was naked, collared, red-haired and large-bosomed. She belonged to Mahpiyasapa. One of Mahpiyasapa's wives, with a switch in her gnarled, mutilated hand, the woman with whom I had once spoken outside of his lodge before the attack on the summer camp, was supervising her in her duties.

The large-bosomed, red-haired girl looked at me. My face was expressionless. Then, crying out, she hurried on, struck twice more by the switch. She was now called Natusa. 'Natu' designates corn silk, or the tassel on the maize plant; it can also stand for the hair on the side of the head. These things,

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of course, are all silky and smooth to the touch. 'Sa' stands for red. The name, accordingly, has no precise translation into either Gorean or english. "Red Silk" will not do as a translation because corn silk, or the hair at the side of the head, is quite different from silk, the cloth. Similarly, the expression 'red silk' in Gorean, tends to be used as a category in slaving, and also, outside the slaving context, as an expression in vulgar discourse, indicating that the woman is no longer a virgin, or, as the Goreans say, at least vulgarly of slaves, that her body has been opened by men. Its contrasting term is "white silk," usually used of slaves who are still virgins, or, equivalently, slaves whose bodies have not yet been opened by men. Needless to say, slaves seldom spend a great deal of time in the "white silk" category. It is common not to dally in initiating a slave into the realities of her condition. The translation "Red Corn Silk," too, does not seem felicitous. The best translation is perhaps "Red Tassel," the tassel being understood as that of the maize plant, prized by the red savages. The connotation in all these cases, with which the red savage, in the fluency and depth with which he understands his own language, is fully cognizant, and to which he responds, is that of something red which is pleasant to feel, something that is soft and smooth to the touch.

It was no mistake or coincidence that the red-haired, large-bosomed Natusa had come into the ownership of Mahpiyasapa. Canka, as a portion of his loot from the Yellow Knives, had taken five hides of the yellow kailiauk. These he had given to Mahpiyasapa, as a gift, in a sense, but also, in a way, as a payment for his earlier acquisition of Winyela, whom Grunt had brought originally into the Barrens as a property for Mahpiyasapa. In taking these













