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ERIK THE REBEL

By Commander

PART 1 – SENTENCE

The session of the Court had been brief, as usual. Always when a rebel against the tyrannical rule of Duke William was tried, proceedings were quick. A rebel was not allowed any defense and his guilt was certain. And, as in the case of Erik, when the accused was just a simple farmer or fieldhand, and not an aristocrat or member of a wealthy family, a harsh sentence was a matter of course.

Erik stood in the middle of the Courtroom. He was 26 years old now. His posture showed strength and pride. He was wearing tall leather boots, his sole prized possession, rough breeches, and a wide cotton shirt. His hands were tied behind his back with ropes. Two of the Duke's grenadiers stood in escort behind him. Across sat the Duke, about to pronounce sentence.

The Duke let his eyes wander over the young man in front of him. He looked with interest at this blonde rebel, his handsome face and obviously strong, muscular frame. There was a slight stubble on his square, determined jaws, and some chest hair was visible underneath the wide-open shirt. He had broad shoulders, a slim waist and one could see his legs were strong under the tight-fitting breeches. A fine specimen, the Duke was musing.

Then the Duke pronounced sentence: "Erik, son of Bastian, you have been found guilty of rebellion and robbery. I therefore sentence you to servitude for the period of 20 years. You will be taken from here to the Island of Sant Angelo where you will serve your sentence on one of the Prison Estates. Guards, take this rebel from here!" Servitude! A chill went down Erik's back as he heard the sentence pronounced. He was to be a slave for twenty years, the best years of his life!

The Grenadiers laid their hand on his shoulders and marched him out of the Courtroom. As he watched the young rebel being taken away, the Duke motioned to his secretary: "Send a message to Captain Skinner, the commander of El Erebo Estate. He is to make sure this convict is sent there, you understand?" The secretary nodded smilingly. He knew his master's wishes well, and he knew how he enjoyed visiting that Estate. He could only feel sorry for that young rebel...

The Grenadiers took Erik from the Courtroom into the main yard of the Castle. There a wagon was waiting to transport the sentenced convict to the harbor, and from there to the Island of Sant Angelo, the place where the Duke sent off criminals, farmers who could no longer pay their dues, and especially the captured men who had the courage to stand up against the Duke. Erik had heard stories about the Island, and they were not good...

In the courtyard the soldiers who would escort him to the harbor were waiting. Their commander was a fat Lieutenant of the Guard. He ordered "Untie the convict!" The ropes were cut loose from Erik wrists, and he rubbed them to restore circulation. "Now convict, take off your boots and shirt!" Erik gave the Lieutenant a quick angry look, then bent over and removed his boots. His only possession of any value...then he removed his shirt and stood waiting.

From a high window in the Castle the Duke looked on the scene. He saw the young man, his bare feet planted on the earth, his muscular calves, and the sculpted torso now uncovered. His eyes went over the broad shoulders, the thick biceps, the veiny arms, the thick pecs covered with a light chest hair, the thin trail down a series of abs with deep ridges, the rough breeches riding low on the hips.

And he saw that handsome face, the strong-willed look, the curly blond hair. Then he saw how the blacksmith put leg irons, connected with chain, on the convict's ankles. Then wrist shackles, also connected with chain, were put on his wrists. The young man stood tall while he was being chained, his chest rising and falling with his breathing.

With supple movement Erik climbed onto the wagon, where his leg irons were locked with another piece of chain to the wagon. The Duke watched Erik's muscles flex with his movements, and he smiled. Yes, he would see this convict again, soon!

After the ship had docked at Sant Angelo Island's timber quay, Erik together with two other convicts was disembarked. They stepped onto land and were marched towards a small square between some buildings. The sun was burning hot, and Erik felt the relentless glow on his tanned skin. As they marched onto the square, he saw some people already gathered there, and groups of Grenadiers. To the left he noticed a wooden post, fitted with shackles at eye-level, and he could also make out that the post was covered with what seemed like rows of spikes, their sharp ends pointing outwards. He swallowed as he realized what this post was for: the punishment of convicts...

The convicts were marched towards the other side of the square, where a group of uniformed officers were waiting next to a wooden scaffold. They were made to stand behind it, and another officer came up to them. He walked past each of them, inspecting the new arrivals. He stopped in front of Erik and looked him over from head to toe. Then he squeezed his biceps and touched up his shoulders. "Hmmm, good muscle there. Finally, one that will last long." He took out a piece of parchment, looked at it, and said: "Listen up! Here on Sant Angelo, you will serve your sentences as labor convicts.

"You will obey orders at all times and work hard. You will be fed well, because the Duke wishes you to contribute long to the profitable enterprises at the Island, whether at the quarry, the mine, or at whatever other task you will perform. Any disobedience will be harshly punished. I have no doubt you have noticed the whipping post over there. If you wish to avoid being severely whipped, you do as you are told. "Now, you will receive a number which will serve as your name on the Island. Let's see. Tom the woodcutter: # 75. Janos, son of Kirk the farmer: # 76. And finally, Erik, son of Bastian: #77!" Erik hardly heard the officer's voice. Slowly his situation was getting clear to him.

He was going to be a slave, without a name, just a number, a numbered beast of burden used for his muscle strength, chained for the next twenty years. He had stood up for justice and freedom, to fight against poverty and exploitation. And now he was a slave to that hated Duke...he felt anger rising up inside him and he grabbed the chain connecting his manacles tightly. The officer stepped up to him. "77! on the block!" Erik looked up, giving the officer an angry look from his steel blue eyes. SLAP!

The officer slapped Erik hard in the face. "Are you deaf, 77? Move it!" Erik felt the urge to attack the officer, as he felt his cheek burning. He swallowed hard and restrained himself. Slowly he moved and climbed onto the block, getting a push against his shoulder from the officer. There he stood, feet planted wide, his body tense, his skin shiny with sweat, in the hot sun, his hands squeezing the chain. He felt the eyes of the officers on him, but he looked over their heads, seeing nothing.

The officer called out: "77. A fine specimen. Young, able bodied, healthy and strong. Sentenced to twenty years for rebellion. Capable to do hard work. Gentlemen, I suggest the mine or the quarry. Look at these hard muscles!" The officer poked Erik in the abs with his wooden club. Involuntarily he tightened his abs in reaction, showing the deep ridged sixpack. His jaws clenched tight, he felt deeply humiliated being put up like an animal for sale on the block.

Captain Skinner walked up to the block to take a good look. He smiled, as he understood why the Duke had ordered him to make sure this one was taken to the quarry he commanded. He was clearly a tough and strong young man, and he was clearly the type the Duke liked so much for his personal enjoyment. He stepped onto the block. "77, tighten your abs." Erik looked in the eyes of the officer. He saw hard, grey, even mean eyes. He didn't obey immediately.

THUMP! The officer punched his abs hard. Erik didn't see the punch coming, but his abs tightened instinctively to absorb the blow. With a deep groan he took the punch, bending his torso a bit, but standing tall immediately again. His chest was heaving with his breathing. The officer squeezed his right bicep to test the hard muscle. "You will do fine, 77. You are for the Duke's quarry. Prepare him for transportation!"

The officer in charge of the block dragged Erik off. He took him to the other officer's horse. There he attached a rope to the chain between his manacles and handed that to the officer. "He's all yours, Sir. Some advice, Sir? Beware of this one, I think he's trouble. All these young rebels are."

The officer smiled as he took the rope. "I will, I will. I have handled his kind before." He mounted and tied the rope to his saddle. He looked back at his prisoner. "I'm Captain Skinner, 77, your master at the Duke's quarry. That's where we are going now, your new home for the next twenty years!"

Erik swallowed, but said nothing. He just noticed the whip hanging from the officer's saddle. As Captain Skinner rode slowly away from the square, the next convict was put on the block. Erik followed the horse, walking as fast as he could with his ankles in irons, his arms stretched as he was dragged along. The heat made him sweat, and his broad back was shining as he strained to stay on his feet.

The dusty road from the harbor wound its way slowly upwards to the hills where the Duke's quarry was. Captain Skinner looked back every now and again to take a look at his prisoner, who walked with quick steps behind the horse. Dust was now starting to stick to the young convict's sweaty skin. The chains between his ankles were clanking as he moved, and the shackles had started to make his ankles raw. But his eyes still had that hard and determined stare he noticed in the harbor. Yes, he thought, this one is a fighter, good!

Then they came up to a wagon standing beside the road. One of the wheels had run off the axis. One soldier was standing next to it, and hailed Captain Skinner. He looked and stopped. "You need some help, soldier? I think I can provide that." He dismounted, untied the rope from the saddle and pulled hard. "Come on, 77. We need your muscles!"

Erik walked up to the wagon, his chest slowly rising and falling with his heavy breathing. "Come, boy. Lift that wagon, so the soldier can put the wheel back on!" Erik estimated the weight and swallowed. He doubted whether he could do this. He put his manacled hands at the wagon floor, planted his feet, and started to lift. As he strained his body, all his muscles flexed, and the veins stood out.

He managed to lift the wagon a bit, but not high enough. Captain Skinner took the whip from his saddle and took aim at the rippled broad back. CRACK! The whip lashed over Erik's shoulders and middle back. He gasped and threw his head back in pain. "Come on, 77, lift!"

CRACK! Another whiplash made Erik groan deep as he strained harder. He trembled all over in exertion. The wagon came up higher. CRACK! "AARGGHH" With all his strength Erik worked to lift the heavy wagon high enough, and the soldier could slip on the wheel. He let go, and took deep breaths, leaning against the wagon.

"See what the whip can do to make a slave work, eh?" Captain Skinner laughed. He pulled at the rope, dragging Erik back to his horse. He retied the rope to his saddle and mounted. Panting and sweating Erik had to follow, back on his way to the quarry. The lashes on his back were burning, it felt as if they were burning deep into his body. And the word 'slave' had lashed his soul. He fought against desperation, but the physical pain aroused his anger and his will to fight.

PART 2 – DUKE'S QUARRY

After a journey of three hours, they finally reached the Duke's quarry. Captain Skinner rode through the open gate in a high palisade, that closed off the quarry compound from the outside world. Erik saw a hill rising up at the far end of the enclosure, where the actual quarry was. The hill was slowly being mined for rock, and Erik could see a number of convicts at work in the distance.

At his right there stood a solid stone-built mansion, the main building inside the enclosure. The entrance was reached up some steps and a terrace. At the side of the building there were steps leading down to a heavy wooden door. To the left he saw some wooden structures, that looked like barns or maybe were used for the housing of the convicts or were a barracks.

Also, he noticed, in front of the mansion, another whipping post like the one in the harbor. Towards the quarry there stood a huge, solitary rock, in which he saw some chains fitted. Next to it there was what looked like a timber mill, with poles sticking out. Immediately Erik looked around to see how this place was guarded. He noticed that soldiers were at guard near the quarry, and also at the gate. It would be very difficult to escape from this place, and then, even if you could, how to get off the island?

Captain Skinner dismounted and untied the rope from Erik's manacle chain. "Welcome to your new home, 77. Let me make some things clear to you right away. You are a convicted criminal, and you will be paying for your crimes here. You will be worked hard, and life will be difficult. You will obey any orders promptly. Every sign of disobedience will be punished severely. The Duke is a firm believer in corporal punishments, and I agree with him. So, obey and work hard, and you can keep the skin on your back. Got that?"

Erik stood tall. He simply nodded at the Captain's words. SLAP! Captain Skinner slapped his face hard. "Answer with 'Yes, Sir,' 77!" Erik swallowed, his cheek burning. Again, he felt a rage surging inside, but he restrained himself. With difficulty he answered, "Yes...Sir."

Captain Skinner came close to him and pressed his whip against Erik's chest. "Let me tell you, 77, I will be waiting for the first opportunity you give me to have you whipped good and hard...and enjoy hearing your screams of pain..." He turned and called for Lt. Himsa, the head overseer. "Lt. Himsa, here is a new one. Put him to work!" With these words the Captain went to the mansion.

Himsa was a heavy-set man with a mean face. He carried a wooden club, and a four-tail flogger was hanging from his belt. He looked Erik over from head to toe, then poked his club into Erik's abs. "So, slave, listen up. You will work daily from 7 in the morning to 7 in the evening. Every hour you get water, you'll be fed three times a day. At the end of each day, you will have filled 10 baskets of rock. You fail to make that, and you get 30 lashes. Your number?" "77...Sir"

"Fine, 77. Let's go then." WHACK! Suddenly Himsa hit his club hard into Erik's abs. "UNNGGHH" Erik doubled over in pain.

Himsa grabbed his hair and pulled his head up. "That's to show you, 77, what you can expect here! Now walk!" Himsa pushed Erik onwards towards the quarry. An angry red welt slowly rose on his defined abs as he walked in front of Lt. Himsa.

In the quarry Lt. Himsa gave Erik a sledgehammer and a large-sized rotan basket. "Here's your tools, 77. You break rocks and fill up the basket. Then you take it to me before you empty it in the wagon. I mark off the basket and you get back to work, get it? At the end of the day, I need 10 marks behind your number, 77, don't you forget that! The day is more than half through, boy, so I suggest you start working. You have five baskets to fill before this day is over!"

Erik nodded and said, "Yes, Sir." He weighed the heavy sledge, his biceps flexing, then picked up his basket and walked over to the edge of the quarry. He took a space close to the edge of the hill, carefully placing his bare feet on the sharp rock. He gritted his teeth and started swinging the sledge. As he hit the rock, he felt his back and shoulders muscles absorbing the blow of the sledge's impact.

Soon he found a rhythm, swinging the sledge and letting it land on the hard rock in front of him. Soon, too, the hot sun made his body sweat all over. His strong muscles pumped; he presented an impressive spectacle. With every movement his sculpted body showed the ripped musculature, the veins on his arms standing out.

After about an hour he had filled a basket with pieces of roughly edged rock. Then two soldiers came by carrying a bucket of water. "Hey slave, water!" Erik dropped the sledge, and with the back of his hand wiped away the sweat from his brow. A soldier gave him a cup filled with water, he took it and drank. It was lukewarm, and a bit stale, but it was fluid, and he was very thirsty.

The soldier ripped the empty cup from his hand. "That's enough, slave. Now work!" Erik gave the soldier a quick angry glance, then with a groan picked up the heavy basket. He carried it over to the wagon, his back muscles rippling, where Lt. Himsa was sitting under a tent to protect him from the hot sun. Erik set his basket down.

"One basket filled, Sir." "Your number, slave? You expect me to remember all of you?" Erik swallowed. "77, Sir." Lt. Himsa looked at Erik. "For that you give me 50 pushups, 77!"

Again, Erik felt anger rising, and Himsa noticed. He took his club in his hand. "I warn you, slave. Just do as you're told!" Erik went down and started pumping.

Himsa watched his arms and back muscles flex while doing the pushups. He got up and stood next to Erik, then planted his boot in Erik's neck, pressing down a bit. "Come on, boy, go on!"

Erik had to press up hard against the boot, his teeth gritted. He felt his arm muscles trembling with every up movement. At he finally reached 50, Himsa pressed him down, his face in the dust. "Bite the dust, 77, under my boot! That's your place as a slave!"

Then Himsa lifted his boot and kicked Erik in the side. "Get up! Empty that basket and get back to work!" Erik groaned as the heavy boot hit his side, and he got back to his feet. He picked up the basket and emptied it in the wagon. His face and chest were covered with dust.

He saw from the corner of his eyes how Lt. Himsa grinned as he sat down again in the shade, and he felt the urge to go up to him and show him what he felt and thought. He was no slave! He would never be a slave!

Back at his place he picked up the sledge and smashed it into the rock, trying to divert his aggression into swinging the sledge and hitting the rock hard. His jaws clenched, his muscular body pumped, sweaty and dust covered, he had determination written all over him. He did not see how Captain Skinner observed him from the mansion terrace, an evil smile on his face as he slowly caressed the whip lying on his lap.

As the bell rang at 7 in the evening and the sun was losing its greatest heat, Erik lifted a final piece of rock into the basket. He was tired and sore, his hands had blisters, dust and dirt was sticking to his sweaty skin, his sweat soaked breeches were sticking to his body. He was the last to carry his basket over to Lt. Himsa's tent and he went as fast as he could.

"77, my 5th basket, Sir!" Himsa looked up at the young convict who stood before him, panting. "You are too late, 77!" Erik could not believe his ears. He had worked so hard, and now this! "But Sir, here, it is filled up..."

"Shut up!" Himsa kicked at the basket, and it fell over, the pieces of rock rolling out. "One basket short, 77" he said, grinning. "NO!"

Erik could not hold his anger back now. He clenched his fists and took a step forward at Himsa, but immediately two soldiers grabbed him at his strong upper arms. Himsa smiled as he motioned his head in the direction of the mansion. "Take him to the post and inform Captain Skinner."

PART 3 – POST OF TORMENT

The soldiers dragged Erik off, and he struggled back, but the soldiers forced him brutally to the whipping post. They made him stand up to the post, his chest towards the pins. They forced his wrists up and attached them to the rings at eye level on the post.

Lt. Himsa came up behind, as one of the soldiers walked over to the mansion. Himsa let his club run down Erik's broad back. "Now we will hear you scream, 77. The whip will teach you to be a good slave!" Erik pulled hard at the shackles, his biceps bulging. "I am no slave! I am a free man!"

"No, you are not!" Skinner's voice had a cold tone to it. "Lt. Himsa, report." "77 failed his quota, Sir." Skinner faintly smiled. "Well, well, a bad start for you, 77. Lt. Himsa, 30 lashes!"

Captain Skinner gave Himsa his whip. Erik grabbed the chains in his hands. His heaving chest was dangerously close to the pins sticking out from the post. He was filled with rage and braced himself for the pain. CRACK! The whip lashed his back and pain exploded from his shoulders. His mouth was open, but he did not scream. He arched his back in pain, and thereby scraped his abs against the pins.

CRACK! "NNRRGGH!" Another explosion of pain on his back and his body shocked, but now he could avoid being scraped by the pins. His fists clenched the chains. CRACK! "GGGRGGHH!" The whip bit into his middle back. He looked down his chest at the pins, so close to his skin.

CRACK! "AARGGH" He moved his shoulder muscles in an attempt to lessen the pain, the muscles flexing. CRACK! "AAAAGGH" The whip lash felt like a knife cutting into him, and again he felt his chest on the pins.

CRACK! "NNAAGHH" He threw his head back as he screamed out. CRACK! "NNNGRRGG" He could fight down the urge to scream now, even if again he felt the pins scraping at his chest and abs. He wanted to fight the pain, he wanted not to scream, because that was what his tormentors were hoping he'd do.

CRACK! "GGGGGRRRH" He managed to keep his upper body still, avoiding the pins. CRACK! "GGRRMMMPFFFF" His back felt like it was sliced open by the whip. He pulled with all his strength at the chains, his biceps flexing.

CRACK! "AAAAARRHH" His head thrown back again, he screamed, the veins standing out on his neck. Captain Skinner motioned Himsa to wait. he looked at Erik's back, now covered with 10 angry welts, crisscrossing his shoulders and middle back. He watched the young man's back muscles' play as his chest expanded with his heavy breathing.

Erik looked down his chest and saw some marks from the pins, and he saw the pins, their sharp points close to his skin. His abs flexed hard with his breathing, sweat running down between his sculpted pecs and the deep ridge between his hard abs, following the thin trail of hair. "Lt. Himsa, a fresh arm!"

Himsa nodded and passed the whip on to one of the soldiers. The interval allowed Erik to recover a bit from the first ten lashes. His back was on fire with the welts giving him a burning sensation. He moved his feet a bit to get a better footing, in order to get his chest and abs as far away from the pins as possible.

CRACK! "AAHHH" With fresh force the whip bit into the skin of his shoulders. His body contracted in pain, but he didn't move his torso. CRACK! "NNNGRRGG!" He pressed his chin on his upper chest, fighting to keep still.

CRACK! "NNNPPFFFF!" As he strained hard at the chains, breath escaped with a sharp hiss between his teeth. CRACK! "GGGGGRRGGHHH" He concentrated on not screaming but it was very hard to keep down the urge to scream out as the whip lashed into his back.

CRACK! "NNNNARGHHH" As he opened his eyes, he felt the stinging from salty sweat drops, so he closed them again. His fingers let go of the chain and groped the air. CRACK! "GGRRGGHHH" He could not help arching his back as the whip hit him with another biting lash, and his sweaty chest lightly scraped against the pins.

CRACK! "SSHHHARGHH" In an attempt to alleviate the searing pain, he expanded his chest and arched his back outwards. CRACK! "GGGGGRRRRRR!!!" It seemed as if with each lash his anger and hate got stronger, even as the

pain also increased with the whip lashing over already rising welts. It was this hate that gave him the will to fight back his screams.

CRACK! “NNNNNNNNHHHHHH!!!” Once more he felt his chest and abs pressing against the pins, causing a stinging pain. He looked down as he moved his torso back a bit. The skin was not broken, but many red markings were showing on his lightly haired chest and defined abs. CRACK! “UNNNNPFFFFFFFSSSS” The air was forced out from his lungs with another hiss as the whip bit into his tortured back.

Captain Skinner observed how the young man’s knees were bending slightly now and how he used the strength in his arms to keep himself up and away from the pins. He saw Erik’s flexed biceps bulging with straining. But he was not satisfied at the effect of the whipping: his victim was just not screaming enough. “Refresh him! No good whipping him if he can’t feel the pain to the fullest. And another fresh arm to continue!”

Erik was half standing and half hanging on the post, clutching the chains in his strong hands, the knuckles white with effort. His chin was on his chest, which rose and fell with his heavy breathing. The breeches around his waist were darkening with the sweat that run down his upper body. One of the soldiers took a bucket of cold water and threw it over Erik’s wetted back.

“OOHGGH” Erik’s muscles contracted as the cold hit him, and a shiver went through his entire body. He shook his head, which let drops fly from his hair and face. He replaced his feet once more, moved and then squared his shoulders, taking deep breaths. Then he heard Skinner’s voice: “Continue the punishment. Soldier, take a step forward and lay it on hard!”

Erik took another deep breath and braced himself, tightening every muscle in his body, expecting the next agonizing whiplash. A third soldier took the whip in his hand, took a step closer to his victim, and aimed. CRACK! “AAAARRGGHHH” Erik could not hold back a loud scream as the whip bit into him, and now wrapped around his ribcage, its tip ending on his abs.

CRACK! “NNNNAAAAGGHHH” The whip landed with more force than ever before and began to break some skin. The impact of the lash drove Erik’s upper body into the pins as well. With a deep groan he moved away from them, looking down his chest. He saw that they were causing little wounds on his chest and abs. His handsome face grimaced in pain.

CRACK! “AAAAAAHHHHHH” He threw his head back violently screaming as the whip wrapped around his side again, his body in a spasm of pain, his back arching, his abs again scraping the pins. A deep moan escaped him. CRACK! “AAAIIEHHHHH” The whip bit deep into his flesh, causing a bloody welt down his back. Again, his chest was forced on the pins. Through a haze of pain, he wanted to move his torso, but his reaction came too slow.

CRACK! “AAAAAAHHHHHH” The whip crisscrossed over his tortured back, tearing at his skin. His body convulsed, every muscle strained, and a fresh searing pain went through his chest as his pecs drove themselves deeper onto the pins.

Captain Skinner motioned the soldier to halt the whipping. He looked on intently as Erik looked down his chest again and began to tear himself away from the torturing pins. His teeth gritted, his face in a grimace he forced his upper body backwards, his biceps trembling. Rows of lightly bleeding wounds covered his chest and abs. He tried to regain his footing as Skinner said: “Continue!”

CRACK! “AAAARRGGHHHHH” The relief had been short. The cruel whiplash sent his body into the pins again. CRACK! “GRRRAAGGGHHHHH” The whip curled around his side, its tip biting into his abs. He lost his footing and was hanging from his arms, his chest and abs pressing against the agonizing pins. Sweat ran down his face, between the cleavage of his chest and down his abs.

CRACK! “AAAAAAAGGGGGHH” Erik lost the grip on the chains as the whip bit into his back and his body fell lower. He wounded his chest and abs more as his torso sank a bit, the pins still biting into his flesh. Instinctively he tried to regain his footing.

CRACK! "IIIIIEAAAGHHH" He had lost sense of where he was, there was only the searing pain on his back and chest. His arms stretched now, he hung from the chains, no longer having the strength to keep himself up. Deep moans escaped from his throat with every breath he took.

CRACK! "AAAAAAAAHHHHHHH" His fingers stretched out into the air, his entire body in a spasm of pain. More by instinct than anything else he threw his arms as much as he could around the post to keep his body up, in an attempt to prevent the pins tearing into him deeper.

Captain Skinner laughed as he watched how his young victim was practically hugging the instrument of his torture. He stepped up to him and lay a hand on Erik's left, thickly muscled shoulder. "Punishment completed, 77. I take it you learned a lesson!"

Erik didn't feel the hand on his shoulder, he only was aware of the agony penetrating every fiber of his body. But he heard the voice, and he understood them. Slowly he lifted his head, turning his sweaty, handsome, grimacing face towards Skinner. Between his slow panting he said: "...my...name...Erik..."

Skinner looked at the young man suffering on the post, his back and sides covered with bloody welts, his chest and abs leaning against the pins, his arms muscles flexed as he hugged the cruel post. He was surprised and amused at the same time at the convict's endurance and determination. Again, he thought to himself that the Duke had been so right in singling this one out. "Take him down, clean his wounds. Let him eat if he wants. He rests the first six hours of tomorrow." With this he turned back to the mansion. The soldier stepped up to take Erik down from the post of torment.

PART 4 – TREADMILL

In the next days, Erik recovered from the cruel punishment at the post. The wounds and welts on his back and chest healed rather quickly, and after a week practically all signs and marks had disappeared. He worked in the quarry, making his quota, and trying to avoid another whipping. Getting enough food, he soon felt strong again and the heavy labor primed his muscular body even further.

One morning, before work began, the prisoners were standing in line to receive their sledgehammers and picks. Erik was given his sledge, his biceps bulging as he held the heavy equipment in his hands. As he wanted to leave for the quarry for another day of sweaty hard labor, Captain Skinner came walking up to him. "Wait, 77!"

As the other convicts marched off to the quarry, Erik stood and waited, his body tense in anticipation. "Drop that sledge and follow me, 77." Erik obeyed and followed the Captain into one of the wooden shacks which lined the convicts' area. Inside were two soldiers, one of which held a bowl and a razor. "Now keep still, 77. We'll clean you up and shave your face. You need to look your best today!"

Erik was feeling uneasy. A soldier stood up behind him, pulled his elbows back and grabbed them tightly. The other soldier came up and dipped a cloth in the bowl, then he made Erik's one week stubble on his cheeks wet. Next, he took the razor and began to shave the stubble away, taking care not to cut the handsome face. Erik held his head still while the razor scraped over his square jaws and neck. Soon the soldier was done, and most of the stubble had gone, leaving a thin shadow.

The Captain nodded. "Good enough. Leave the rest, it looks good on him, and I am sure the Duke likes it this way. Now take him to the treadmill. The guests will arrive in a few hours." They took Erik outside into the hot sun again and marched him over to the heavy timber treadmill. The chain between his wrist shackles was connected to the push bar.

"All right, 77. Start pushing. We want those muscles well pumped when the Duke and his company arrive. Begin!" Erik gritted his teeth, put his strong hands on the bar, planted his feet firmly and pushed. The heavy mechanism groaned as his

muscle strength started to move the mill. His back muscles strained, his biceps bulged, his hard round buttocks flexed in his tight breeches. His jaws set tight, he began the strenuous task of turning the mill round and round.

Under the supervision of the soldiers, he made his rounds, but he was not beaten or whipped by them. Turning the mill at a slow pace, he had to use his strength to keep it moving, and soon his body showed the effects of the straining exercise. Sweating and pumped he performed his task, uneasily waiting for what would be next.

At noon the gates of the estate opened, and Erik saw an elegant carriage pulled by horses enter. It drove up to the main house and stopped. Servants held the door open and from it emerged the Duke and somebody else Erik had never seen before. It was a heavy set, overweight man, dressed in rich clothes, older than the Duke. Erik noticed how the man's gaze immediately searched around the square, to fix itself soon on him.

There was an exchange of words between the Duke and the man Erik could not hear, but he saw the Duke make an inviting gesture with his hands in Erik's direction. Two servants opened an umbrella each to provide a shield to the sun and held them over the Duke and his guest, as they slowly approached. They halted at the treadmill. The Duke said "Here he is, my dear friend, as promised! Tell me what you think..."

Erik set his jaws tight as he heard the voice of his hated oppressor. He grabbed the crossbar even tighter as his anger rose inside him. The Duke's guest looked at the young, half naked convict and his eyes went all over him, taking in the spectacle. He noticed the straining calves and the thickly muscled legs filling up the breeches, the athletic butt bulging under the sweat stained waistline. The breeches rode low on Erik's narrow waist. He admired the strong V-shaped back with rippling muscles, ending in broad thick shoulders, shiny with sweat.

As Erik turned the mill once more, he could look into the man's eyes, and he saw his gaze, appraising his body. He swallowed hard as he felt the lust in the man's look, and disgust at the man's unconcealed perverse pleasure gave him a slight shiver. As Erik now came towards him, the man took in the convict's muscular arms, the bulging biceps, the hairy thick pecs on his heaving chest, and the ridged abs sucked in with heavy breathing. Then the man said "Oh yes, my friend, this is indeed a splendid specimen! Look at those muscles! Wonderful!"

The Duke grinned. "I am glad you like him. And I am sure you will find that he will provide excellent entertainment. As you see he is very strong and in perfect health. And what's more, Skinner tells me he has a lot of fight in him." "I say, indeed, perfect...perfect..."

Erik hated to be talked about like this as if he was some prize animal. But also, he felt some nervousness as he heard the men speak about entertainment. No doubt they had some nasty plans for him, to satisfy their sadistic desires. His knuckles whitened as he directed his aggression to turning the treadmill.

The Duke took his guest by the arm and said: "Well, let us go inside now and have some refreshments, my friend. The heat must have made you thirsty. In the meantime, I will have Captain Skinner prepare him." Reluctantly the Duke's friend walked away from the treadmill and from the sight of the glistening body of that handsome muscular convict, straining to keep the mill moving.

After the Duke and his guest left, Captain Skinner ordered the soldiers to unchain Erik from the treadmill. They then marched him around the Mansion to an area Erik had not been to before. The back of the Mansion had a big, roofed terrace which overlooked a slope that ended in a steep rock formation, against which the waves of the ocean now and then crashed. The slope was in full sunlight, and the heat seemed to radiate the air.

Then he noticed an enclosed area, which was dug into the slope just beneath the terrace, of about 30 by 30 feet. Wooden beams driven into the rocky ground closed the square area off, which was filled with sand. Then Erik heard that hated voice from the terrace above: "Ah, there he is. Good. Captain, he can have some water and food before we start. I want him in good condition."

Erik looked up and saw the Duke and his guest seated on the balcony, in the shade. Between them was a low table carrying exquisite foods, fruits and wine. As he looked away Captain Skinner handed him a small bowl of thick porridge and a cup with water. "Here, 77. For you." Erik drank and started eating. He had to use his fingers to stuff the porridge in his mouth.

He felt the eyes from the balcony on him. There the two men were sitting comfortably in the shade, in their rich garments, sipping their wine and picking from the fine foods. Beneath them Captain Skinner and two soldiers in uniform, standing guard. And there was the young convict, the only one who was scarcely dressed, just wearing the breeches.

Erik was acutely aware of the stare on his muscular body, tanned by the sun and primed by the hard work in the quarry. He felt humiliated, having to stand near naked to the lustful gaze of his oppressors, who watched him as he ate with his fingers. "Captain, that's enough for him. Now prepare him for the sport!"

Captain Skinner took away the near empty bowl from Erik's hands. A soldier approached with a wooden yoke and placed it on Erik's broad shoulders. In the middle and at the ends the yoke was fitted with an iron collar and shackles. The soldier snapped the collar around Erik's thick neck and lifted his arms one after the other to secure his wrists in the shackles. The yoke was about 5 feet long, so Erik's arms were bent, which made his strong biceps bulge.

Then Captain Skinner pushed him forward and into the enclosed area, shutting the gate after him. Erik took a few steps and felt the hot sand under his bare feet. He looked around and now saw that the man-high wooden beams on the inside of the enclosure were fitted with spikes, the sharp ends pointing inward.

He looked up at the balcony, from where the Duke and his guest had a clear view of the enclosure. The Duke had an evil grin on his face as he said "Now, rebel, you will provide us with some interesting entertainment. I expect you to do well for my esteemed guest, who has high expectations of you! Let the games begin!"

PART 5 – PRIVATE ARENA

Erik tensed up at these words and his breathing became heavier. His muscular hairy chest rose and fell, and his ridged abs stood out. Then from the Mansion he heard deep barking and some whining, and he felt a shiver run down his back. Soon the gate opened, and Erik saw a soldier with two of the Duke's big Doberman dogs on a leash.

The dogs pulled aggressively at their leash, growling and barking, showing their sharp fangs. "Show us how you handle yourself against my pets, rebel! Oh, and do not worry, my soldiers will take care they will not kill you. Set one free!" The soldier obeyed and let the first dog free from its leash. The dog growled and ran into the enclosure, and the soldier closed the gate behind it.

Erik flexed every muscle in his body as he anticipated the attack of the vicious dog. He saw its shiny fangs and the sharp nails at its paws. There was nothing he could do to protect his body from the animal, except use his legs and maybe the yoke itself, to which his wrists were shackled. Immediately the dog began its attack on the young man, jumping up at him with the fangs ready to sink into unprotected flesh.

With a desperate kick Erik tried to defend himself, and he was able to avoid the fangs, but the heavy dog's attack made him falter a bit and he took a few steps back. Being kicked the dog got even angrier and viciously jumped up at Erik again. He could not avoid the fangs now scraping his left forearm, and he felt nails digging into his abs. With a quick sideways movement, he escaped the full bite, but his backward movement made him touch his back against the spikes. "ARRGH"

Again, he kicked the dog, now hard in its ribcage, which made it retreat with a high howl. Panting Erik stepped to the middle of the enclosure, ready for the next attack. From the balcony the Duke and his guest watched intently, leaning forward not to miss anything. They enjoyed seeing the young muscular convict fight off the dog's attacks. They admired the flexing muscles under the glistening skin.

A cruel smile appeared on the Duke's face when Erik scraped his back against the spikes and uttered a raw scream of pain. As he saw the first blood drawn from the scratches on Erik's shoulder blades, he took another sip from his wine. The Dobermann dog did not immediately attack Erik again, and he understood that he had a chance. His fighter spirit and intuition made him take action himself, and he ran at the dog to kick it full force against its head.

Howling, the dog reeled back a bit, stunned by the kick, and Erik immediately bent down. With all the strength in his torso he made a supple swinging movement and crashed the end of the yoke into the dog's head. A high whine escaped from its muzzle, and it went down. As Erik saw that he had succeeded in bringing it down, he raised his body and looked up at the balcony, a defiant stare in his eyes.

The Duke looked down on the sweating and panting yoked man and took in the flexed muscles. "You did well, rebel. Let's see what more you can do. The next dog!" Erik's eyes radiated with anger. "Damn you, Duke! Damn you!" Grinning the Duke raised his wine glass to Erik as the gate was opened and another Dobermann dog was sent in.

Erik turned and braced himself to face the attack of a fresh growling dog with vicious fangs. The dog went straight for its victim. Erik could just in time raise his left leg to protect himself, but the dog jumped and sank its teeth in his upper leg. If it would not have been for the breeches, deep wounds would have been the result. Now the fangs did not go in very deep, but the bite caused Erik to utter a raw scream of pain. The dog's weight made him lose his balance, and he fell on his back.

Like steel claws the dog's teeth were set in the thickly muscled upper leg, and as it tore and shook its head, growling viciously, Erik groaned hard. Desperately he tried to get back to his feet, but the yoke and the dog hanging on his leg hampered his movements badly. Ignoring the pain, he tried to shake off the dog by moving his leg, but that only made him yell again in pain.

On the balcony both men watched intently how the young man beneath them struggled desperately, his face contorted in agony, his sweaty body getting covered with dust and sand as he writhed. They no longer concealed their excitement at this sadistic spectacle and the mix of canine growling and human groaning rising from beneath them.

At last Erik could get to one knee, using the yoke to prop him up, and then he could even get to his feet, while the dog's fangs clung to his leg. Grimacing he stood to catch his breath, his chest rising and falling, his abs ridged to the max with his panting. As he could not shake off the beast from his leg, he saw only one other way out of this. With difficulty he began to take steps towards the side of the enclosure, each time having to drag the dog with him, and each time uttering an agonized scream doing so.

When he reached the beams, the dog's violent movements made him falter, and he caught himself with his shoulder against the beams and the spikes. A stinging pain went through the thick shoulder muscle, but he tried to ignore it in the attempt to free himself of the worse pain on his leg. Getting a stronger foothold, he then bit down hard and raised the tortured leg, to make a swinging movement. "GGRRAGGHHHH"

He lifted the heavy dog leaning backwards and used all his strength to make a fast swing with his leg and smashed the dog into the beams and spikes. Whining loudly the dog let go of Erik's leg as the spikes dug into its side. His instincts of survival made Erik follow this up with an immediate hard kick into the dog's body, and as he used his strength and agonized anger the forceful kick caused some of its ribs to break.

Then he staggered backwards to recover and watch whether the dog would attack him again. Looking down at his leg he saw the breeches torn and some blood emerging from the rags. Although painful, he could still use his leg to stand and walk, even if the pain made him limp a bit. The Duke bent forward a bit to look at the dog, and he saw it was badly hurt and did not make an immediate new attack on the half-naked convict, who stood panting and obviously suffering in the middle of the enclosure.

Dust sticking to his glistening body and some blood trickling from the wounds on his back, shoulders and leg, Erik was still alert, breathing heavily, his eyes fixed on the dog, all his muscles taut in anticipation. With a grunt the Duke called for the

guard "Guard! Get that dog out!" The soldier entered the enclosure and put the leash back on to the Doberman dog. As Erik saw the danger was over, he sank to one knee, exhausted.

"Again, a good show, rebel! You provide excellent entertainment. What do you think, my friend?" The Duke's guest had not taken his eyes from Erik for even a second, fascinated as he was with the spirit and determination of that strong young man. "Yes, my friend, excellent indeed! I must say you kept your promise: this one is remarkable, truly. So, I look forward to my, eh, special request..."

The Duke smiled, looking down at the heaving figure of Erik. "Ah yes, but of course! I have not forgotten, do not worry. You will have your wishes fulfilled. We will give him some time to recover, and then proceed with this delightful spectacle. Captain Skinner! Refresh the rebel and prepare as I ordered this morning." "Yes, My Lord."

The gate was opened, and Captain Skinner entered with two soldiers carrying buckets. Still panting Erik looked up at them, and then further at the two men watching him from the balcony. He had heard their words and wondered what the special request of the Duke's guest would be. Without a doubt it would involve more suffering for him.

Captain Skinner dipped a cup in one of the buckets and offered it to Erik, holding it in front of his face. "Drink, 77." Gratefully Erik drank from the cup, quenching some of his thirst. Then Captain Skinner made him stand up. "On your feet, 77. Let me see those wounds."

Erik stood tall, avoiding looking up at the balcony, but he knew the eyes of the men there were fixed on him. How he hated them and their sadistic pleasures! Captain Skinner looked at Erik's back, shoulders and the scratches on his abs and arm. Then he tore open the breeches on his leg a bit more, and inspected the wounds left by the dog's bite. Then he looked up at the balcony. "My Lord, the leg might need some attending to. The rest is just slight injuries. The convict is fit and able for more, My Lord."

The Duke nodded. "Very well, Skinner. See to it." Captain Skinner filled the cup again with water, and now added vinegar and salt. He drenched a piece of cloth with it and held it close to Erik's leg. "Here it comes, 77. For your own good." He pressed the cloth on the leg wounds and rubbed them clean. Erik set his jaws tight but could not help hissing through his teeth as his upper leg muscles flexed in pain.

Then Captain Skinner pressed the cloth tightly on the wounds, and bound another piece around the thick upper leg, fixing the salted cloth underneath.

"Captain Skinner, see if the rebel can walk." With a push against Erik's shoulder, Captain Skinner said "Walk, 77."

Erik shrugged his broad shoulder and started walking. The leg hurt, but he could use it well and just showed a slight limp. As he went around the enclosure he recovered more from his fight with the dogs and his panting became less and less. He held his body upright, his pride and self-esteem the only thing left to him.

On returning to where Captain Skinner stood, he was stopped. Then the soldiers emptied their buckets over him, washing away the dust and sand from his skin. The water refreshed him. He planted his feet firmly on the sand and took a deep breath, filling his lungs, expanding his muscular chest. Then he glared up at the balcony, strength and determination written all over him.

Once more the gate of the enclosure opened and twenty soldiers marched in. As they positioned themselves in two rows in the middle of the enclosure, Captain Skinner grabbed Erik by his right arm and pushed him on to stand right in front of the balcony, the soldiers behind him. He looked up at the two men. As he had been instructed by the Duke, Captain Skinner stepped next to Erik and said, "My Lord, platoon and prisoner ready for punishment!"

The Duke rose from his seat and turned to his guest: "My dear friend, all is prepared as you requested. The rebel will walk the gauntlet for your pleasure, and it is my pleasure to offer you this gift of exquisite entertainment. I leave the decision on the number of repetitions to your discretion."

The heavy-set man looked down at the yoked convict beneath him. Once again, his eyes wandered over that strong muscular body, the hard muscles defined under the taut glistening skin. He hesitated before he answered, and Erik could see that he trembled lightly from excitement. Finally, he said, "The number of repetitions will be...no less than eight! And your men must lay on with a will!"

Grinning the Duke sat down and said, "Well, well, a heavy sentence! So be it. Captain Skinner, eight repetitions and maximum severity!" The Captain nodded in acknowledgment of the harsh verdict. He turned and barked orders "Sergeant, issue the men with bamboo sticks and position them in facing rows! Fix the bayonet on your rifle!" Anger and hate rose inside as Erik heard the verdict. He was sentenced to suffer for the pleasure of that pervert!

Behind him the orders were quickly followed, and Captain Skinner pushed him towards one end of the double line of soldiers. There he stood, looking down the space between the soldiers, who were carrying a bamboo stick each that they were going to bring down hard on his naked skin each time he passed them. In front and facing him stood the Sergeant, holding his rifle with bayonet fixed, the sharp end pointing at Erik's chest.

Erik tensed up as he braced himself and took a deep breath. As he exhaled, he flexed his biceps and his abs sunk in. The Sergeant lowered the rifle somewhat, and carefully placed the point of the bayonet against the undulations of the abdominals. Enough to make clear that he would be deciding the pace, which no doubt would be slow, to make sure the maximum amount of pain could be inflicted. "Begin!"

The Sergeant took a step back, and Captain Skinner pushed Erik forward against his broad shoulder. Erik took a step carefully, as the bayonet pressed lightly against the hard wall of his abs. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAHHHH!" A yell of pain escaped Erik as two bamboo sticks hit him full force, one close after the other, over his shoulder blades. Instinctively he wanted to step forward more quickly, but the bayonet held against his ridged abs forced him to walk slowly, step after step.

THWACK! THWACK! "NNNGGGHHHH!" Again, the bamboo sticks swished and landed hard on Erik's naked broad upper back. He arched his torso in pain as he was allowed to take another step. THWACK! THWACK! "SSSSHHHRRGG" Erik fought hard not to scream and had to slow down as the bayonet lightly pricked into him.

THWACK! THWACK! His head thrown back, his mouth open, but no sounds escaped. But his contorted face told the Duke and his guest that the young convict was suffering... THWACK! THWACK! "NNRRRGHHHH!" Gritting his teeth Erik took the next step. THWACK! THWACK! "SSSSSSHHHHHHHTTTTT" THWACK! THWACK! "GGGGGRRRRHH"

Erik shook his head violently, his fists clenched tight as the bamboo sticks lashed into his back. THWACK! THWACK! "HHHNNNGGHHHH!" Driven in pain Erik wanted to take a bigger step, but the bayonet nudged painfully against his abs muscles, slowing him down. THWACK! THWACK! "NNNNNAAGGHHH" Nearly at the end of the lane, Erik braced himself for another set of lashes.

THWACK! THWACK! "GGGGGGRRRRRRRR!" Erik stepped out of the line of soldiers, his shoulders ablaze with pain. He stood panting, and moved his big shoulders, flexing the muscles, to ease the pain out a bit. "Proceed Captain! And remember, your men must use the sticks with force!" The Captain acknowledged the Duke's order, and shouted "Lay on harder, men! The rebel must scream!"

The Sergeant turned Erik around and again took position in front of him, placing the bayonet lightly against the now glistening set of ridged abs. A push against his welted shoulder made Erik take the first step between the lines of soldiers, for a second passage of suffering. He gritted his teeth as he stepped between the soldiers, ready for more pain. The

soldiers obeyed the orders of their commander and swung their bamboo sticks even harder into Erik's broad shoulder blades and middle back.

THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAHHHH!!" Erik threw his head back as he yelled in pain. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAARRHHH!!" The Duke's guest half rose up from his chair, so excited did he get with the cruel spectacle that was put up for him below the balcony. His gaze was fixed on the young musclebound prisoner, his sweaty torso twisting, a sharp bayonet pointing at his ridged abs, while the soldiers swished their bamboo sticks and landed them viciously on their victim's unprotected naked shoulders and back. As the sticks came lashing down, the handsome face contorted in pain, and a manly scream of agony escaped the suffering captive.

Having reached the end of the line of soldiers again, Erik stood still, his broad hairy chest rising and falling with heavy breathing. His shoulders were on fire, and heavy welts were visible on his back and sides. Letting him just a few seconds or respite, Captain Skinner turned him around again, facing the Sergeant, and pushed him forward for the third repetition. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAIEEHH!!"

The Duke looked sideways at his guest and noticed how the man's hands clutched the end of the armrests, his knuckles whitening. At every scream of pain emerging from below the man's body jerked a bit, and his eyes were locked on the scene of suffering beneath him. It pleased the Duke that he could provide this pleasure for his friend and have the enjoyment of making his former enemy suffer. His eyes went back to Erik. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAAHHHHHH"

For the third time Erik had completed his walk between the soldiers, but he was still on his feet. Quickly he looked up at the balcony and saw his tormentors and their obvious pleasure and excitement. Through his pain anger rose up inside him, and as he was turned around and pushed forward once more, he shouted "You bastards! Freedom will..." THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAHHHH!!" The searing pain of the bamboo sticks lashing into him made Erik scream out.

THWACK! THWACK! "AAAARRGGHHH!!" Erik's outburst had irritated and humored the Duke at the same time. He did not wish to be reminded of the ever-growing resistance against his rule, but still, this young rebel had a lot of fight in him, which was a good thing. He could make this one suffer for a long time! With eyes he followed the slow, painful progress of his prisoner, his fists clenched above the manacles on the yoke, his face and body sweating profusely.

But no sweat drops were allowed to moisten his shoulder blades and back. Those areas were welted and colored with an angry red, here and there a trickle of blood emerging. The continuous lashing of the sticks made it seem that that part of his strong body was not sweating at all. At the end of the fourth passage Erik felt his knees getting weaker, but he could still stand on his feet. He lifted up his upper body and filled his lungs with air, expanding his muscular chest. Within moments, however, he was turned around and pushed forward roughly, for his fifth walk down the gauntlet.

THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAHHHH!!" As the Sergeant held the bayonet close to Erik's ridged abs, it seemed as if it took longer and longer to get through to the other end. Erik screamed out his pain every time the bamboo sticks lashed his back and landed on the already tortured skin. Sometimes he arched his back, but that had the danger of pressing his abs into the point of the bayonet. Already a few little wounds were showing on his undulating abs muscles.

THWACK! THWACK! "AAAARRGGHHH!!" With another jolt of searing pain on his shoulders Erik suddenly felt his knees go weak, just as he was close to the end of his fifth passage. He stumbled forward, and the Sergeant with a quick movement withdrew his rifle. Erik fell on his knees, bending forward, his welted and bleeding back curved. Captain Skinner stepped forward, but a voice from the balcony stopped him "No Captain, proceed with the punishment! Let him get up on his own!"

THWACK! THWACK! "AAAHHHHH!!" The bamboo sticks lashed out, and Erik screamed, still on his knees. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAARRGGH!!" The same two soldiers brought their sticks down on the young man's wounded back between them. Groaning deep Erik struggled to get back to his feet. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAGGHHH!!"

As Erik rose, the Sergeant positioned the bayonet again and Erik started walking. Before he reached the end, another two lashes hit him, and yelling out he fell again to his knees, right before Captain Skinner. The Captain grabbed his hair and

pulled up his head, showing his grimacing, sweaty face up to the balcony. "On your feet, rebel! You're not done yet!" Panting and gasping for air Erik struggled to get back to his feet, pulled up higher by his hair.

Captain Skinner turned him round, and he was facing the Sergeant again, and in front of him the rows of soldiers, holding their bamboo sticks high, ready to lash out at him once more. With trembling legs, he started walking, following the shiny bayonet held at his abs. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAAAAHHHHH!!" With uncertain steps he proceeded, his upper body arching and twisting under the relentless blows of the sticks.

THWACK! THWACK! "NNNAAAAARRGGHHH!!" He nearly fell sideways, losing his balance under the hellish pain. A soldier caught him before he fell and pushed him back to the middle. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAAAAAGGHHHH!!" His fingers clawed the air as he screamed out his agony, getting close to the finish of his sixth passage of torturous punishment.

THWACK! THWACK! "AAHHAARRGGHH!!" With a deep guttural scream he fell down on his knees again at the end of the lines of soldiers. He bent his body deeply and rested by placing the right end of the yoke on the sand. His glistening torso heaving with heavy breathing, his back covered with angry red welts, small trickles of blood ran down his ribcage from his back. Captain Skinner looked up at the balcony and said: "My Lord, the rebel will probably not be able to walk himself anymore. Your orders, My Lord?"

The Duke looked down at Erik, and he said: "Two of your men will support him. Proceed with punishment!" Then the Duke's guest swallowed and whispered something to the Duke. He grinned and said "An excellent idea! Captain, two men will support him, but for the final two passages, turn him round and lash his front!" The Captain acknowledged the order and appointed two soldiers. "You heard His Lordship! Lift him!"

Two of the soldiers dropped their bamboo stick and each grabbed one end of the yoke from behind. They ignored the suffering of the young convict, even when they saw his bloodied and welted back, his heaving torso, his fists clenched in pain, and heard his moans. As he was roughly dragged up, Erik groaned and bared his teeth. The Duke and his guest now got a full view of Erik's magnificent chest, the thick rounded pecs covered with a thin fur, and the trail running down between his defined set of abs. Erik felt himself drawn backwards and soon he was between the rows of soldiers again. Now he could see the bamboo sticks coming down on him...

THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAAAAAGGGGHHHHH!!" The sticks landed viciously on his pecs, causing a fresh searing pain in a part of his body as yet unmarked. THWACK! THWACK! "IIIEEAARRGHH!!" The bamboo sticks lashed into his abs and ribcage, and instinctively Erik flexed his muscles tight to absorb the blows.

"Oh yes! My noble friend! Oh, this is so wonderful...!" The Duke friend could no longer restrain himself and stood up from his chair. His hands clutched the balcony as he bent forward to be as close to the cruel abuse as he possibly could. THWACK! THWACK! "AAAAIIIEEEAAHHH!!" Mercilessly the bamboo sticks came down on Erik's naked chest and abs, and on his ribcage. His glistening body twisted in pain, all the muscles flexed and standing out. But the soldiers held him tight and made sure that Erik's front remained an open target for his tormentors.

As he was turned for the final passage, the Duke's friend called to Captain Skinner "Captain, have your men target his nipples!" Captain Skinner was loyal to his master, and believed in harsh discipline for convicts, but this order he considered exceptionally cruel. The young rebel was in awful pain already and this meant that pure sadism was what this man wanted. But he saw the Duke nodding, and so he instructed his men accordingly.

THWACK! THWACK! "IIIIIEEEAAAHHH" A high shriek of pain escaped from Erik's wide-open mouth as the first blows lashed his pecs and nipples. He shook his head wildly, his body twisted, but the soldiers dragged him on. THWACK! THWACK! "AAHHAWWW!!" The Duke's face showed an evil smile as he heard Erik's desperate shrieks and screams, and he felt his groin react.

THWACK! THWACK! "NNIIIEEEAARRRHHHH!!" Erik sensed only pain, and a red haze blurred his vision. He lost all sense of place and time, and just wished this hellish torture would end. But all that happened was blow after blow landing on

his pecs, and many of those lashed into his nipples. THWACK! THWACK! “AAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!” Finally, his ordeal was over, and the soldiers let go of the yoke. Erik collapsed on the sand and fell on his back.

There he lay, panting, moaning, suffering. His eyes closed, his fists clenched, his tortured chest heaving with his heavy breathing. His pecs a deep angry red with nasty welts concentrated around his nipples. His glistening, welted, bleeding body twisting slowly in agony. The Duke turned to his guest with an evil grin. “Well, my friend, I trust this was to your satisfaction?”

The Duke’s friend slowly sank back into his chair, himself sweating, and all he could do was nodding, his eyes still focused on the tortured young man below. But the Duke could see in his eyes how much this display of sadistic torture had pleased his friend. “Captain Skinner! Tend to the rebel and refresh him. We need him again tonight!” With these words the Duke poured more wine for his friend and himself, and they toasted each other as Captain Skinner dismissed his men and went over to Erik.

Captain Skinner undid the shackles and neck chain, freeing Erik from the heavy yoke. Moaning Erik curled up in the sand. Captain Skinner ordered two of the soldiers to lift the young man up and take him away. The soldiers took Erik by one arm each and lifted him up, taking his spread arms on their shoulders as they carried, and half dragged him out of the arena. Captain Skinner followed behind.

PART 7 – PAINFUL DINNER

They took Erik to one of the shacks next to the villa. In there they laid him down on a wooden bunk, covered with some old straw. Groaning Erik turned himself on his left side, in order to keep his tortured back and front free from the bed. He was exhausted: the forced fight with the dogs and the cruel long punishment had taken a heavy toll on him.

Captain Skinner dipped a cup in a bucket filled with water and handed it to Erik. “Here, 77. Drink.” Gratefully Erik accepted the cup and drank the fresh water. Then he dropped the cup to the dry mud floor, overcome by exhaustion and pain, and with a deep sigh fell asleep. Captain Skinner laid his hand on Erik’s shoulder. “Now rest some, son. You’ll need it. I come back later with some food and some ointment for your wounds.”

He lightly squeezed Erik’s thick muscled shoulders and noticed again the hard and solid muscles of the young convict. He sighed as he realized that the Duke would have him tortured again soon for his perverted pleasure. According to Skinner any convicted rebel should feel the whip, but he was not a sadist like the Duke. He got to his feet and with a final look at the half naked convict on the bed, he left the shack. The two soldiers were ordered to stand guard.

At about 4 in the afternoon Captain Skinner returned to the shack. He entered and found Erik just waking up and drinking some more water. He gave him a deep plate with the convict’s porridge, a simple but healthy food, and a spoon. Erik sat up, winced lightly as he felt his aching and sore body, took the plate and spoon, and started eating. Skinner watched him and noticed the contraction of Erik’s thick biceps each time he brought the spoon to his mouth.

Erik looked up at Skinner. “What will happen now, Sir? You know?” Captain Skinner shrugged his shoulders. “My orders are to bring you inside the villa tonight, to the dining room.” Erik looked down to the floor. It was clear to him that he would not be invited to sit at the dinner table as a guest. No doubt his presence there would serve a very different purpose. He stretched out his upper body, grimacing as he felt the pain from the beating. He returned the empty plate and spoon, and without speaking he wanted to lie back down.

But Captain Skinner produced a small pot with ointment. “Wait, son. Let me put some of this on you. It will ease the pain and help you heal.” He took some ointment on his fingers and started to rub it on Erik’s skin. He worked meticulously but at the same time a bit roughly, causing Erik to wince every time he worked on an especially painful welt or bruise. After finishing he left Erik alone again, to wait for evening.

Erik had not slept anymore, but just rested on the wooden bunk. He was anxious. He had no doubt that the Duke had something bad in mind for him. How he hated that man! Now more than ever he was determined to fight and never give up. But how to escape from this hellish island? After it had become dark, they came for him. Captain Skinner and four soldiers entered the shack. "On your feet, 77! The Duke wants you. Get up and clean some of that dirt away from your body. Now!"

Erik got up. His body ached and was sore, but he tried to ignore the pain. Using the water from the bucket he cleaned himself, washing his face and rubbing down his chest, arms and abs. Captain Skinner nodded, and a soldier did the same to his back. Then his wrists were forced behind his back and tied. They left the shack and Erik was escorted to the villa.

They entered by the hall. Erik saw the rich and luxurious furniture and had just time to be reminded of the harsh bunks and holding cells of the convicts. He was pushed on and they entered through double doors into the lavish dining hall. In the center stood a lavishly decked out table with two armchairs. A gold candelabra from the ceiling and many candleholders shone brightly. In the fireplace a woodfire burnt.

But they pushed Erik on beyond the table and made him stand between two thick solid wooden posts, about 4 feet apart, secured in the floor and in the ceiling. At 6 feet high the posts were connected by a heavy crossbar, strongly secured to the posts. At floor level and at the connection points of the crossbar chains with shackles were prepared. The soldiers forced Erik's bare feet wide and secured the shackles on his ankles. Then they untied his wrists. They grabbed his arms and forced them up, so they could secure the shackles hanging at the corners of the crossbar to his wrists.

Erik stood upright; his arms not fully stretched out. Immediately he pulled at the chains, only to discover that he was securely chained. There was no escape. The soldiers took their guard positions at the four corners of the dining hall, and Captain Skinner left to bring word to the Duke that convict 77 was prepared. Erik did not have to wait long. Soon Duke William and his guest entered, both in rich dinner suits.

As before, the overweight guest's eyes immediately sought out the half-naked and chained young man standing between the posts. Both of them walked over and stood in front of Erik. The guest came closer. The contrast between the two men could hardly have been greater. One was an older and overweight man, richly dressed, his lustful eyes going over the prisoner. Erik was in the prime of young adulthood, athletic and muscular, fit and strong, dressed only in torn breeches riding low on his hips, his upper body naked.

While the Duke watched grinning, his guest began to feel up Erik's body. His fleshy fingers probed the thick biceps, then the thickly muscled shoulders. Then he felt the hard muscled and lightly hairy pecs, his fingers tracing the muscle. He paid special attention to Erik's nipples and the welts crisscrossing them. Erik gritted his teeth. "Does it hurt, boy? Yes?" The hands of the guest went lower and meticulously his fingers followed the ridges between Erik's abs. Everywhere he let his finger follow the welts and marks on the young man's punished skin. "Such a fine body! What strength!"

Erik noticed the lustful stare in the man's eyes as they went over his naked upper body. He felt disgust as the sweaty hands and fingers were all over his body, tracing the undulations and outlines of his muscles. He pulled hard at his chains, which made his muscles flex and strain. "Oh yes! Yes! Look at those muscles, William!" The Duke laughed. "Yes indeed, my friend! And soon those muscles will be flexing again, when he feels the pain and he screams in agony. That will be what you really like, am I right? Hahaha!"

The Duke put his arm around his guest and led him to the table. They sat down, and servants started to bring in the dishes for the dinner. Others served the two diners wine and fresh water. Soon the dining hall was filled with the smells of fine food, available in plenty for the Duke and his guest. They started eating and drinking, laughing and talking. The smells of the fine food and the sight of the two men dining make Erik acutely aware that he was hungry and thirsty.

There he was, chained to the posts, right across a table with plenty of food and drink, close to what could still his hunger and quench his thirst. The Duke's guest noticed how Erik looked at them. "Look at him, William. Look at those eyes. He seems hungry!" The Duke looked up at Erik. "Do not worry, my friend. The convicts get good food, it keeps them strong. But

not too much food, otherwise they would get lazy and less well able to work hard. Keep them a bit hungry, is my idea. And look at him! He certainly does not look underfed now, does he?"

The Duke got up and took a piece of roasted meat. He approached Erik and held it close to his mouth, but not allowing him to eat. "Smell, slave. Smell. Like it? Smells good, eh? But this food is too good for you, dog! We will keep you strong on slave's porridge! Hahaha!" Angrily Erik pulled at the chains holding him. "Yes, boy, yes! Pull at those chains! Show us your muscles, eh? Good!"

In angry frustration Erik shut his eyes tight, all of his body taut. His strong frame helpless and defenseless, chained between the posts. The dinner went on. The Duke and his guest tasted from the exquisite dishes and the wine but left most of it. Before his eyes the hungry Erik saw the good food, smelling so good to him, on the table and taken away by servants.

During conversation the eyes of the Duke's guest returned to Erik again and again, and he could not stop looking at that handsome half naked young man. He watched the strong biceps, flexed against the chains. He watched the muscular chest rising and falling with his breathing. He watched the ridged abs. And he watched the many angry welts and bruises covering Erik's upper body.

As desserts were served, a knock on the door announced another arrival. The Duke called to enter, and the door opened to allow Lt. Himsa to enter the dining hall. The Duke greeted him. "Ah, Himsa. Good, you are just in time. The moment is there to involve our convict in the evening's festivities. Did you bring the equipment I ordered?" As Erik tensed up, he saw Lt. Himsa show the Duke and his guest what he had brought with him.

"Yes, Your Grace, I have here the leather whip, the star-pointed pins, the iron sharpened currycomb and the cat's paw, Sir." Himsa put the instruments on display on the table: a 4 feet long leather whip, two iron pins with points ending in a sharp star, a currycomb used to comb horses, and a vicious looking three-pointed iron catspaw. Erik swallowed hard and gritted his teeth.

The Duke's guest took the instruments of pain in his hand, one by one, and his eyes went from them to Erik's unprotected naked upper body. "Oh William, you spoil me! Do you think he will still last long after his punishment of this afternoon? I do hope so, you know." The Duke nodded. "Do not worry, my friend. This one is a very strong. It is true, he took a lot already today, but I can assure you he can take much more. And of course, should he lose consciousness, Lt. Himsa here will revive him. The most interesting part of this is precisely to see how much more pain he can take, is it not?"

Erik tensed up even more. He was to be tortured again. It seemed as if his body all of a sudden ached more and as if his welts started burning again. At the same time a slight shiver went down his spine as he realized that his naked upper body would be the target of the torture instruments. These men would sit back and enjoy seeing him suffering!

PART 8 – FESTIVITIES

The Duke walked over to Erik, explaining to his guest the plan of the 'festivities.' "Now here is what is going to happen. We will start with the whip, on his back. That back is pretty crisscrossed with welts and very sore from this afternoon's punishment with the bamboo sticks in the gauntlet. That means that the whip will cause some good extra pain when it hits that back, my friend!

"Then, we move to his front, especially that fine chest and yes (here the Duke played with Erik's nipples a bit), especially these nipples. The star-pointed pins will be used for that. After making him sufficiently scream and howl, we then proceed to his sides and ribcage, as you can see still relatively intact. The sides are a sensitive area, my friend. We will put first the currycomb to good use here (The Duke let his hand run down Erik's ribcage). Then, over those welts and scratches, will go the cat's paw! And over his chest and abs also, I am sure. And finally, the whip will return and lash his tortured upper body! What do you say?"

The guest had seen Erik wince slightly when the Duke's hand and fingers had touched his naked body. And the description of the tortures to be inflicted on that fine strong young man had made him well excited. "Oh yes, yes! What a feast! Promise me that when he loses consciousness, you will revive him, right? Promise!" The Duke laughed cruelly. "But of course, my friend! I promise you he will feel all that is done to him to the maximum!"

The Duke picked up the leather whip from the table and moved slowly around Erik, to position himself behind his back. Erik tensed up, and clenched his fists, pulling once more in vain against his bonds. The Duke let his eye roam over his victim's broad, strong back, covered with welts and bruises from the cruel beating with the bamboo sticks earlier that day. He smiled as he let the whip run through his fingers, while carefully taking aim. Then he moved his striking arm back and up, and let the whip come down with full force.

WWWKSSH "NNRRGHH!" Erik arched his back in pain as the whip hit his back hard, and he could just hold down a scream and let go a deep groan. He could see how the sadistic guest had his eyes glued on the muscled body and its pain reaction, and how the man involuntarily moved his hand on his crotch... WWWKSSH "ARRNNGH!" Again, the whip bit hard into his already tortured back. Erik pulled hard against his chains, his biceps bulging.

Right before the whip lashed into his back again, he could see the guest getting up. WWKSSH "SHARRGHH!" The guest moved in front of Erik, close up. WWKSSH "AAAGH!" As his body arched the guest laid his hands on Erik's pecs. Erik's eyes gleamed with anger and pain as he felt the thick sweaty fingers on his skin.

WWKSSH "GRRNNGGH!" The guest looked with lustful eyes into the eyes of the tortured young man. He saw pain in those eyes, but also strength of will. He placed his hands on both of Erik's biceps. WWKSSH "AAHH!" The guest felt the thick biceps flex as a reaction to the pain of the whiplash. He moaned with pleasure.

The Duke stopped the whipping and looked at the results of his work. Fresh welts were showing on Erik's broad muscled back. He could also see that a few of the earlier welts had now opened, and a bit of blood was showing. Also, the skin was starting to glisten with sweat. From the front the guest looked at Erik's grimacing face, his flexed biceps, his heaving chest and his abs flexing taut with his heavy breathing. His finger touched Erik's left nipple. "Can I use the pins on him?"

The Duke smiled. "So, you want to do it yourself? Why not, go ahead. We can whip him more later." The guest picked up one of the star-pointed pins from the table and moved in front of Erik. He placed the pin high up on his left pec and let it run down through the pec hair. Erik felt the sharp scratch, and his pec flexed in response. He gritted his teeth. Then the pin reached his nipple, and he winced lightly as the pin slowly ran over the sensitive nipple.

The guest then placed the pin on his nipple, the star-point lightly pressing. As Erik felt the sharp pressure, he clenched his fists and spit at the guest. In anger the guest immediately pressed the pin into Erik's nipple. The star-end was driven into the nipple but did not break skin. Erik's whole body flexed as the pain exploded in his nipple and pec. He threw his head back... "AAAAAARRHHH."

The Duke lay his hand on the guest's arm pressing the pin into Erik's nipple, to make him stop. "My dear friend! Wait! I understand your anger, it is justified, and the convict will pay the price for it! But please, let me show you how to use the pin properly, so you'll see how much more suffering it can produce." The Duke took the pin away from the guest and pulled it off Erik's nipple. With a gasp Erik relaxed his muscles, and he took a deep breath to recover.

The Duke now placed the pin on Erik's other nipple, the one on his right pec. "Now, pay attention. You must increase the pressure slowly and let the pin find its way slowly. The nipple anatomy has a kind of thin channel, and it is that you need to take advantage of. Press the pin slowly and deep, and move it around, twist it lightly as you press. Search for the spots that cause the most pain, observe the convict's face, his muscle movements, his groaning and screaming. Find the one that hurts most, and then increase pressure!"

As the Duke explained, he also handled the pin. Its star-point was pressed into Erik's right nipple, and with a jerk he flexed his muscles as the pain hit. He gritted his teeth as he felt how the Duke moved the pin around bit by bit, putting ever so little

extra pressure as he let the sharp star-point search for the extra sensitive spots. Erik tried not to show his pain, but the fight was uneven. Relentlessly the pin was moved, until a particular spot was pressured. Erik's body spasmed, his biceps flexed, his chest heaved. "GGRRRAARRGH!"

And at that moment the Duke pressed harder, forcing the pin deeper into Erik's pec, precisely at the point just found. Erik threw his head back. "AAAAAAAHHHH!!!!" His body jerked and twisted, but the Duke was experienced and able to keep the pin in its cruel place, and even increasing the pain because of Erik's involuntary body movements. AAAAAAARRHH!!!!"

The guest watched with his mouth opened. The spectacle of that strong young man, chained half naked between posts, being evilly and mercilessly tortured on his nipple, screaming his pain out, his body jerking and twisting, left him lost for words. The only thing he could do was touch himself in his crotch... Finally, the Duke pulled the pin back, and with a deep moan Erik slumped, hanging from his wrists. He gasped for air.

Triumphantly the Duke turned towards his guest. "There, see that? Now, I am sure you want to try this yourself! Hahaha!" The guest approached Erik again, and first lightly touched his left pec and nipple. He pulled back as Erik winced and as he saw a little blood on his finger. He swallowed and then slowly lifted the pin towards Erik's nipple. He placed the star-point on the nipple. Erik lifted up his head and looked the guest square in the eyes. "Bastard...coward...you'll never break me..."

As his anger rose again the guest pressed, and the pin was pushed into the already tortured nipple. Erik flexed all his muscles. The guest proceeded with care now and as instructed, pressed more deeply very slowly, letting the star-point find the most sensitive spot. Erik fought against the pain, trying not to show when the pin was hurting him most. He groaned deep, flexed against his chains. The Duke looked on and deeply enjoyed this spectacle. The guest pressed, twisted and moved the pin in Erik's nipple.

Erik struggled not to scream, a sweat breaking out over all his body. But then it happened anyway. "AAAARRGHH!" The guest smiled and pushed harder on the spot found, combining it with some twisting. "AAAAAAGHHHH!" Erik jerked and twisted in his chains. The guest pressed harder. It seemed like minutes to the suffering Erik. "AAAAAAHHHHHH!"

Finally, he pulled back the pin. As Erik slumped and was hanging from his wrists gasping for air, the guest exclaimed: "Oh my, that was incredible! Did you see how I made him scream?" The Duke laughed and picked up the whip. "Hahaha! Yes indeed! Excellent. Now let's see how my ability with this whip is..." The Duke whipped at Erik's left pec.

WWKSSHHH! "AAAAHHH!" The cruel leather bit into the muscled pec and striped the tortured nipple. WWKSSHHH! "AAAAAAGGH!" Now the right pec and nipple were lashed, and Erik screamed, his upper body twisting in pain. The guest applauded with enthusiasm.

The Duke put down his whip and picked up a pin himself. He beckoned his guest. "Come, my friend, now we will combine our efforts. Let's see how much he can take, and not stop until he begs or loses consciousness. What do you say, eh?" With eagerness the guest approached, holding his pin ready. Erik took a deep breath as the two men approached him, and he pulled himself up. His eyes went to both of them. "You sick bastards! You are not men! You are even worse than beasts!"

But before he could continue his two torturers simultaneously placed their star-pointed pins on Erik's nipples and lightly pressed. As the cruel instruments bit into his sore nipples, Erik flexed once again as the pain with double force attacked his chest. He gritted his teeth, but with the increase of pressure and with the attempts by his torturers, twisting their pins, to find the most painful spot, Erik threw back his head.

"AAAAAARRGHH!" First the guest was successful, judging from Erik's grimacing, louder scream and pull against the chains. He steadied the pin and then pressed deeper. "AAAAAAAHHHHH!!!" Erik's body twisted wildly, and the guest had some trouble to keep his pin in place. In the meantime, also the Duke's pin had hit his spot. Again, Erik's body jerked wildly. The Duke knew how to read the signs, and he pressed.

"AAAAAHHHH!!!"

his biceps flexed to the max as he pulled against his chains. His face was contorted with agony. It felt as if his skin was slowly, bit by bit torn from his flesh. The horse comb continued to scrape him. He threw his head back and screamed.

“AAAAAAHHH!!” The guest watched with excitement and amazement how Erik suffered, and he massaged his crotch while watching. Then he walked over to the table and took a horse comb for himself. He looked at the instrument, and with his finger he tested the sharpness of the studs. Although the touch was only very lightly, he immediately withdrew his finger. Then he smiled cruelly as he realized how the effect of all the studs combined would be on the naked skin of the helpless young man, chained between the posts in front of him.

He stepped up to Erik, and with an approving nod of the Duke, he put his horse comb on Erik’s other side. Then he pressed and pulled down slowly, at first carefully, but soon with more vigor. Erik took in a deep breath as the second comb began to scrape his skin. His agony increased. The pain became even more intense. “AAAAAARRRGH!!!” His tortured torso twisted as far as the chains allowed, but it was of course not far enough for him to escape the two combs being pulled down over his sides.

Deep scratches, and blood, emerged. Erik screamed and cursed, his voice hoarse. The Duke had reached Erik’s hip, and immediately he lifted it and moved it back up, to his armpit. He pressed it in and began pulling down again. “IIIEEAAAHHH!!” “Hahaha! Yes, my boy, scream! Louder! Suffer, you dog!”

Both the Duke and his guest now tortured Erik simultaneously. Erik had lost all sense of time and place. He just experienced the most horrible agony, and he screamed, until he could not scream any more. His mouth wide open in a silent scream, all he could do was writhe his torso and shake his head. Then he took one deep breath, and an animalistic, brutal roar emerged from his throat. “GGGRRROOOAAAARRRGHH!!!!” Then his chin fell to his chest. He lost consciousness.

The Duke and the guest took their torture-instruments from Erik’s body. They stood and watched. Erik was hanging from his wrists, his knees bent, his torso stretched. His upper body was covered with the marks of the tortures he had endured all day. He was unconscious, but his face was still contorted in a grimace, witnessing the pain he had felt at the moment he lost consciousness.

The Duke’s guest stepped up to Erik and began to feel the strong muscled body up. His fingers traced the marks and small wounds. His hand cupped Erik’s stubbled chin, and he lifted his head up. “Is he dead?” The Duke took the smelling salt phial. “I do not think so. He’s a tough young man. Let’s see if we can make him continue to suffer pain.”

He opened the phial and held it under Erik’s nostrils. At first nothing happened, but then all of a sudden, a jerk went through his body, and he regained consciousness. Slowly he came to. His breathing became stronger. A deep moan escaped from his open mouth, and he half opened his eyes. He did not really focus yet. The Duke smiled. “Good! The dog wakes up! Like I said, he is tough.” He held the pen phial again under Erik’s nostrils, and now the reaction was stronger.

He groaned and lifted his head, his body convulsed, he flexed his biceps as he pulled himself up a bit. Now he came to more fully, and immediately the awareness of pain returned. He moaned as he shook his head. He muttered. “...water...” and the Duke went to the table and filled up a cup with fresh water. “Of course, my boy, here, drink, it will do you good! Haha!” The Duke put the cup to Erik’s mouth, and let him drink. The water refreshed him somewhat, but only to become more aware of the pain in his body.

The guest let his hand rest on Erik’s abs. He felt the hard muscles flex with Erik’s heavy breathing. “My friend, do you allow me to use the Cat’s Paw? Yes? Please!” “But of course, my dear friend! I gladly give you opportunity to torture this rebel further. Go ahead!” The guest picked up the Cat’s Paw from the table. A horrendous piece of torture equipment: he held it by its handle, and moved to Erik, holding it in front of his face. “Look, dog! Look and see what I am going to use on you now!”

Through his half-open eyes Erik saw the Cat’s Paw: under the handle was a short iron bar, and it ended in a split of five hooks, each ending in a sharpened point. He saw the instrument, and looked away, swallowing hard. The guest placed his

free hand on Erik's abs and let it run downwards over the light hair covering the hard mounds and deep ridges of his abdominal muscles. "Fine set of abs, dog! Let's see how you like them caressed by the Cat's Paw..."

The guest placed the instrument high left on Erik's abs and let the sharp ends of the claw sink lightly into Erik's skin. Intuitively his abs flexed as the pain made itself felt. Then the guest started to pull... "NNNNNAAAARRHH!" The points tore at Erik's flesh, even if they did not go in deep. They caused scratches that started to bleed. Erik threw his head back and gritted his teeth. The Claw tore open his upper left ab, then sank into the ridge, and began to tear at the middle abs.

"AAAAAHHHH!" Erik shook his head, then let his teeth sink into his left bicep, biting down as the pain penetrated his abs. Now his middle abs were scratched, and then the Claw went through a ridge again, only to begin scratching the right lower abs muscle. The points sank in...and tore... "AAAAAAAHHHH!" Erik's torso jerked and twisted under the Cat's Paw. A red haze of pain clouded his eyes, and he suffered.

The Duke and the guest, on the other hand, had the highest degree of pleasure. They were excited and laughed. Their eyes were fixed on Erik's suffering body; his screams were the most attractive music to their ears. They had what they wished for most in their lives: a muscled young man, chained and helpless, subjected to tortures of their doing. The guest took the Cat's Paw from Erik's body. The sharp ends were lifted from his lower abs.

Erik moaned deep, and looked down his chest, to see the five parallel bleeding tears on his abs. Then the Paw entered his vision again! Now it was directed at his upper right abs. The sharp ends were placed on his skin, and pressure was made...the ends bit into his flesh, and the slow pulling began. "AAAAAAAHHHH!" Every muscle in Erik's body flexed as the agony started again. The Claw began its cruel path, causing a second set of five parallel tears to appear as his skin was scraped.

He shook his head wildly, his upper body twisted and jerked, but there was no escape from the hideous torture. "AAHHHAAAWWW!" He lost every sense of time and place again. All he knew was the deepest agony. The pain was even too much to mouth the words to ask for mercy. His body screamed for the pain to end, but the pain was too deep for his mind to react with reason. All he could do was scream.

"AAAAAAIIIIIEEEEEHHH!" The Paw continued its path until the very end, slowly but certainly. Five parallel tears crisscrossed the first set. As the Paw was removed finally, Erik hung from his wrists, his breathing irregular. But what satisfied his torturers most, was to see that tears were running from his eyes down his stubbled cheeks. The guest caressed Erik's cheek. "Look! The dog finally cries! Oh, what joy! This truly is magnificent!"

Even the Duke sensed that a tear had filled his own eyes, from a perverted sense of the sublime. He put his hand on the guest's right arm. He swallowed. "Enough, my friend. Enough. He has had enough. We don't want him to die now, don't we?" The guest agreed. He put the Cat's Paw back on the table and sat down, slumping in his chair.

His eyes were on Erik, as he was hanging between the posts, his naked upper body covered with the marks of torture of a whole day. "A remarkable young man indeed, my friend! I must say, remarkable!" The Duke nodded, and then called for Lt. Himsa. He ordered him to take Erik down and bring him to sick bay. There he could recover and be treated. In a week he should be ready for work in the quarry again.

THE END...