

**Rackety Kate
and
The Pirates
by
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With the kind assistance of the Newsletter Readers of the deniserossetti newsgroup.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/deniserossetti>

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Chapter 6 Crime, Punishment and a Good Spanking

The story so far:

Jack accepts Kate's challenge, though she didn't really intend to make one in the first place, but that Irish temper... The Comte betrays the Duchess and Duka, Jack's First Mate, is mighty taken with her, though she abuses him roundly. When Jack decrees she be punished, Duka happily accepts the task of getting the haughty blonde to see the error of her ways.

Duka turned to Jack. "Now or later?" he enquired.

Jack pursed his lips in thought, his considering gaze fixed on the furious Duchess, squirming in Duka's grip, still gasping threats.

"Hang you, you bastard," Kate heard her mutter. "Draw and quarter..."

"Let's begin as we mean to go on. Punishment should always follow directly after the crime. Go ahead."

Duka's grin split his dark face. "Aye," he rumbled. "My pleasure."

Ignoring her shrill protests, he tugged the Duchess toward a barrel. Upending it, he seated himself and pulled her to stand between his spread legs. He stroked her cheek. "Can ye take it, sweetheart? Like the brave lass I know ye are?"

The Comte snickered. "She's better at dishing it out, in my experience."

Duka shot him a killing glare and he subsided. The black man smiled at the Duchess. "What's your name, darling?" he crooned. "Tell me."

"Go to hell," snarled the Duchess.

"It's Venetia," said the Comte. "I told you that."

"Aye, but I want her to give it to me with her own pretty lips. Your name, love?"

"Pig!" spat the Duchess, quivering. "Brute! Bastard!"

Duka looked pained, though his warm brown eyes twinkled. He gave a theatrical sigh that expanded his chest in a most delicious fashion, the slabs of muscle sliding under smooth mahogany skin. Acutely conscious of Jack's big firm body pressed all along hers, Kate caught the flutter of the other



woman's lashes as she flicked a glance at Duka's chest.

Jack bent his head and nibbled Kate's earlobe. "What do you bet me he can make her reach her pleasure?"

"No!" gasped Kate. "Not here, in front of..." She flailed a hand in the direction of the calendar of pirates, her heart hammering with a strange dark excitement.

"Oh aye," murmured Jack, nuzzling her hair. "That's just it. Here, in front of everyone, the weight of their eyes, the warmth of their breath, the hardness of their cocks, knowing how much they want you, but knowing you're safe because your man won't let them touch you. Unless you ask, that is."

The Hormone Harlots gibbered, engaged in some sort of meltdown between Kate's trembling thighs.

"She couldn't, she *wouldn't!*," she choked. "Stop it!"

"A kiss," said Jack. "We'll bet a kiss." Reaching out, he grasped Kate's hand and shook it solemnly. The he grinned, all wicked delight. "Done."

"It's a shame for so sweet a mouth to spew such filth," Duka was saying to the Duchess. In a single smooth movement, he captured both her wrists in one big fist and tugged her down across his knees. With his other palm, he smoothed lovingly over the luscious curve of her creamy bottom, pushing the vest out of the way.

Almost as one man, the pirates sighed with pleasure. With a choking curse, the Duchess pressed her thighs together, the pouty little slit between her thighs drawing all eyes.

Duka tilted his head to gaze at it. "Such a sweet tight little quim you have, darling. I wonder..." Very lightly, he slid a blunt forefinger between the lips and stroked gently. The Duchess yelped and her legs kicked. Duka chuckled and popped the finger into his mouth. "Hmm. Wet already. Delicious."

Without warning, he swept the hand down in a cracking blow across one buttock.

The Duchess yelped and Kate winced in sympathy. The big man wasn't holding back. When he lifted his hand away, he revealed a perfect imprint of his palm and fingers, rosy against the creamy flesh.

The first blow was followed by another, and another, and another. This obviously wasn't the first time Duka had spanked a bottom, he was nothing if not methodical. With each meaty smack, the Duchess writhed and swore and her legs jerked. When Duka released her wrists, she grabbed at his thick calves to steady herself. The big man moved his hand to rest on the small of her back, an anchoring touch. Gradually, he slowed the rhythm, until the blows were coming at measured intervals.

"You see?" whispered Jack in Kate's ear.

And she did. Through the swinging, tangled curls, she could catch glimpses of the other woman's flushed face. The Duchess had closed her eyes and tear tracks marked her cheeks. But she'd stopped cursing, her lips were softly parted and each time Duka landed a blow, she made a soundless, "Oh!"

Duka bent over the woman sprawled across his knees, his nipple rings flashing in the sun. "Your bum's so red, sweetheart," he whispered. "It's looks gorgeous." He skated a palm over the abused curves. "And it feels so hot." His voice dropped further, so that Kate had to strain to hear it. "They're all watching you know. Their cocks are as hard as pikes. They can't take their eyes off you, especially that pretty quim that's leaking all over your thighs."

"N-no," moaned the Duchess.

Duka chuckled, a low, mesmerizing rumble. "But yes. Spread for me, darling. Just a little if you're shy."

After an infinitesimal pause, the Duchess moaned again. But she spread her thighs, about half an inch. The pirates craned forward, eyes glittering.

"Shall I ask Peter for a wet cloth? He'll cool that bottom for you, and gladly."

"Oh aye," breathed Peter, grinning. He cradled the bulge in his breeches.

"No!" squeaked the Duchess. And then more softly. "No."

Duka slipped a thick finger between the pink wet folds that peeped from her plump slit. "Why not?" he enquired. "Don't you like him?"

The Duchess's fingers dug into the hard brown muscle of his calves. "Nngh," she said and her hips rose.

Duka's finger disappeared to the first knuckle and Kate could only watch, fascinated. The Duchess appeared to be fighting some sort of internal battle. Duka waited patiently, his generous lips curved in a fond half-smile, the teasing finger motionless.

Eventually, the Duchess whispered a single word. "You," she said.

Duka lifted his head and shot Jack a pleased look. "Told you," he said, with enormous satisfaction. He returned his attention to the Duchess.

"Me, is it?" He delivered a crisp slap, meanwhile sliding his finger deep. "Is it?"

The Duchess bucked, helpless. "Y-yes," she sobbed and her face went scarlet.

Duka said nothing, but he delivered another four blows, two to each burning cheek, meanwhile twisting the finger buried deep inside the Duchess. The woman shrieked and her legs thrashed and then stiffened.

For a sizzling second, the silence was absolute. Then the pirates exhaled, almost in concert. A masculine voice groaned, "Holy shit! Duka, you're killing me!"

The big man's teeth flashed very white in his dark face. "That's my sweet," he said, gently tipping the panting, red-faced Duchess the right way up until she stood trembling, close in the curve of his heavy arm.

She cast a single appalled glance at the circle of grinning pirates and whimpered, fixing a desperate gaze on Duka's face.

His expression softened and he drew his fingertip across the flawless skin of her cheekbone. "What's your name, little one?" He drew her even closer. "Whisper it."

Blushing furiously, the Duchess leaned in to place her lips against his ear. "V-Venetia. And I *hate* you!" But her arm had crept around his neck, her fingers caressing the shape of his shaven skull.

Lord, Duka was handsome when he smiled, like some exotic prince - no, not a prince, a king. "Jack, we're done here," he said.

Jack's arm tightened around Kate's waist. "Yes," he agreed. "I believe you are." He curled a lock of Kate's hair in one finger, laughing when she batted his hand away. "And you have a wager to settle, pretty Kate."

"In your dreams!" snarled Kate.

Ooooh, yes, yes! shrilled the Harlots.

Briskly, Jack snapped out orders. "Harley, you command the *Lady Meroe*. The Comte sails with you, Tom and the Duchess with me. Peter, ready the long boat. We'll transfer to the *Brazen Hussy*." He shot Kate a glance full of wicked mischief, his tiger eyes gleaming. "I long for the privacy of my cabin." The corners of his beautiful mouth tipped up and Kate bit her lip.

"Aye, Jack," said Harley, grinning like a bad boy with a thirst and a bottle of moonshine. "To the Isle?"

"Aye." Jack nodded.

Tap, tap, tap. The bloody Rossetti woman, the source of all her troubles. Kate growled under her breath. What did she want?

Aloud, she said, "The Isle? What Isle? Or is the Isle of Something?"

Tap. A pause. *Tap?*

Crazy as it seemed, the noise had an enquiring sound. Presumably, the Rossetti woman didn't know where they were going either. Hah! So she didn't know everything! Perhaps she was waiting for her readers to tell her...



Chapter 7

A Wager Claimed

The story so far:

Jack's giant First Mate, Duka, reduces the Duchess to a quivering bundle of submission with an expertly administered spanking on her bare bottom. Jack gives the order to set sail for the pirates' island home. But where is it?

Kate stood, blinking, in the centre of Jack Cavanagh's cabin on the *Brazen Hussy*. She didn't think she'd ever seen such a combination of luxury and order. Lord, this had to be the fruits of years of raiding. The rich patina of polished wood was everywhere, from the bunk - wide enough for two - to the magnificent antique mahogany desk beneath the porthole. Antique? What a joke! She was living in an antique dealer's wet dream.

Wriggling her toes, she dug them into what had to be a priceless rug, all cool silk pile under her soles. It felt at least six inches thick. Above her head, hung a pair of lamps in a fretted, Moorish style. Gazing at the soft brassy lustre, she wasn't at all sure they weren't pure gold.

Everything was scrupulously clean and polished, the papers on the desk arranged in two tidy piles, with a sextant and conch shell to hold them down. And he had an eye for colour as well as quality, Jack Cavanagh, because he would look beautiful in this space, she just knew it. She could imagine him lounging against the jewel-toned pillows heaped on the bunk, the vibrant colours enhancing his tigerish eyes, highlighting his auburn hair. And what they would do for his naked golden skin!

Keerrrist, yes! muttered one of the Hormone Harlots. Kate shook her head, puzzled. She'd never been able to differentiate between them before. They'd always been a duet. This voice was deep and a touch husky, contralto.

"Like it?" Jack leaned against the door, smiling that dangerous smile.

Her stomach doing flip-flops, Kate glared. She swept out an arm, indicating the furnishings. "Is this your booty, pirate?"

Unperturbed, Jack grinned, sauntering closer. "Indeed it is, pretty Kate." He stroked a finger down her bare arm and she shivered, jerking away. "And so are you."

"I'm no one's property."

Jack considered that, his head to one side. "Your heart and soul, that's your own. No one can take what you won't give. But your sweet little body, now..." He drew her closer, firm gentle hands on her upper arms. "About the kiss you wagered..."

Kate stared, mesmerized.

"You know, sweetheart, I haven't been so intrigued for a long, long time." He stroked her nose with a long forefinger and she felt her eyes cross. Hissing, she batted his hand away. Jack chuckled. "There are you, you see? You're all fire and quick wits, Kate. A challenge."

"Don't you dare patronize me, you thief!"

"I'm not." Jack's gaze grew intent. "I mean to have you, Kate, I'm going to fuck you every way I want, whenever I want and with whom I want. And more." When she gasped, reeling, his elegant mouth quirked in the neat beard. His slid one hand up under her hair to cradle the back of her neck. "Never fear, it will be what you want too."

Kate clenched her fists. She mustn't hit him, she mustn't. She couldn't afford to antagonise the man who had such power over her. *Such power*, sighed the Harlots, giving her clit surreptitious tug. Kate set her teeth against the surge. "You're very sure of yourself, Jack Cavanagh," she said.

Jack's eyes twinkled. "Some have called me arrogant," he agreed. "But I never underestimate an opponent. You're worthy of my steel, Kate." His teeth flashed. "So to speak. In fact...that's the whole point. I can't be entirely sure of your heart and soul, but I can be sure of this."



He bent his head and fitted his lips to hers.

Kate held herself rigid, not helping. Which didn't seem to bother Jack at all. He was taking his time, drawing it out, exploring one lick and nibble at a time. Oh God, her lips were tingling and her entire traitorous body yearned to shift forward an inch, to press up against all that muscled hardness and warmth. Everywhere they touched, little fires sprang up under her skin so that she trembled with the effort of ignoring them.

Jack murmured, "That's my girl, fight it." His lips curved against hers. He was smiling, the bastard!

Show him, screamed the Harlots in chorus. *Go on, show him how it's done!*

When Jack pulled her closer, so that her unfettered breasts pressed into his wide chest, Kate broke. With the Harlots yelling their encouragement, she growled into Jack's mouth, surging forward with such force that if he hadn't been braced, she would have knocked him back a step.

When he chuckled, she seized the opportunity to stroke his tongue with hers. Jack froze and her heart soared. Got you! She nipped his lip, then soothed it with a sweeping lick. Burrowing even closer, Kate pressed her hips against his, feeling the hot ridge of his erection, fat and wicked. And all for her.

Suffer, she thought. *If you can do this to me, I can do this to you.*

Her fingers clenched in his hair and she gave a wanton wriggle, rubbing against his cock, feeling it kick against her belly. Her brain spun with triumph and white-hot lust.

Abruptly, the initiative was wrested from her. Jack reached down, slid both hands beneath her buttocks and lifted. He took two steps. The next moment, she was seated on the desk, the wood cool under her bottom, one leg wrapped around Jack's trim waist, so that she was splayed open, the nightdress riding up on her thighs. The kiss became ravenous, carnal, Jack growling continuously, deep in his throat, his cock flexing against her clit, driving her insane.

Control? She no longer had control. Hell, she couldn't even think. Jack was orchestrating their pleasure, his tongue fucking into her mouth, by turns demanding and tender. All she could do was hang on and try not to faint.

Or come.

Her vision was hazing when he finally pulled back, but he did it slowly, as if he could hardly bear to leave. While she gasped, fighting for air, for sense, he dusted tingling kisses and delicate nips across her jaw and down her throat.

"God almighty," he said. When she opened her eyes, Jack was gazing at her, his face flushed, his hair ruffled. His tiger eyes were wild, full of hard golden gleams. He stroked her cheek with the back of his knuckles, his hand trembling.

"I changed my mind," he said, his chest heaving. "I will have your body, pretty Kate, but I swear I'll own your heart and soul as well."

"What about--" Kate wet her lips and his eyes darkened. "--you? Your heart and soul?"

"Mine?" He laughed. "Why, I don't--"

"Cap'n! The mist's on the starboard bow!" Duka's deep voice.

Jack turned his head. "Coming!"

He turned to a leather chest with brass corners and flung up the lid. "Here." He pulled out a shirt and tossed it to Kate. "Not that you don't look perfectly edible the way you are." His eyes danced.

Kate squeaked, slammed her knees together and slipped down from the desk. As she thrust her arms into the sleeves, she said, "What about one for the Duchess?"

Jack shook his head. "Duka takes care of his own." He held out his hand. "Come see the magic, sweetheart."

Automatically, Kate slipped her hand into his. "What magic?"

But Jack just led her up on deck. "Look," he said, pointing ahead, over the bows.

She'd never seen anything like it. Reaching from the sea all the way to the horizon was a rolling wall of mist. It should have been threatening, but it didn't. Instead, it looked like cotton candy, flushed pink and gold, soft and fluffy. On the threshold of hearing was the rhythmic rumble of surf.

"What is it?" she whispered, because somehow, it didn't seem appropriate to raise her voice.

"The Sweet Sisters' Mist," rumbled a deep voice from behind.

Kate turned. Duka leaned one massive forearm on the wheel, his dark face fierce with concentration. On his left, the Duchess sat primly on a coiled rope, her knees

together, one fist clutching the vest closed. Her mouth was pinched with fury, but Kate noticed she didn't take her gaze from the First Mate, not even to glance at Jack. Which was quite an achievement on Duka's part.

"The Mist surrounds Sweet Sisters Isle," said Jack. "We're the only ones permitted through and even then, we have to ask nicely."

"But--" Kate bit off the words. Life didn't work this way. It *couldn't*. Any reputable court of law would have her certified in sixty seconds.

Tap, tap, tap. It sounded almost reproving. *Tap, tap, CLATTER!* Oh yes, definitely a rap on the knuckles.

"All right, all right," Kate muttered under her breath. "Willing suspension of disbelief. I get it."

"Port four points, Duka," said Jack, and as he spoke the *Brazen Hussy* entered the mist and everything went quiet, save for the far-off surf.

The Mist wasn't wet, as she'd expected. Instead, it sparkled on Kate's skin, decorating Jack's slashing cheekbones with glimmers of phosphorescence, limning Duka's brown muscular biceps. "Oh," she breathed. "How pretty."

With every inhalation, Mist entered her lungs, spreading like laughter through her body, tickling and caressing. Her blood fizzed and she felt buoyant, as if she might float away. She giggled.

Jack drew her to his side, grinning. "You're Mist drunk," he said. "Don't float away now. Two points to starboard, Duka."

Kate laughed. "Is there a hangover?"

He dropped a kiss on her hair. "Not unless you count the magic in your blood. Magic is the gift of Sweet Sisters Isle, but the results can be...somewhat unexpected." He pointed. "There it is."

As the *Brazen Hussy* slipped through the water, the sea shaded from indigo, to azure, to aqua. A scented breeze caressed Kate's cheeks, carrying with it the sweetness of tropical blossom and the salty tang of salt. God, it was gorgeous, like something from a travel brochure, so perfect the photo had to have been airbrushed.

Rising high above a white-sand beach, twin peaks rose, clad in a clinging garment of verdant green. Kate stared. They were perfectly matched, voluptuously curved and atop each one... She narrowed her gaze.

"Nipples," agreed Jack.

She hadn't realized she'd spoken aloud, nor that she was still clutching his hand as if it was a lifeline. Immediately, she dropped it. And then didn't know what to do with hers. She stuck it on her hip.

"They can't be real."

"I assure you they are. That's Pleasure on the left and Pain on the right. The Sweet Sisters."

Kate choked. She turned wide eyes to Jack.

"Whatever you need to learn," he said gravely. "The Sweet Sisters will teach you. Are you ready, pretty Kate?"

Congratulations to INGRID, who suggested the Sweet Sisters!



Chapter 8

The Next Trembling Step

The story so far:

One kiss and Jack swears he'll have Kate's heart and soul as well as her delectable little body. The Brazen Hussy sails on through the magical Mist protecting Sweet Sisters Isle, home of the pirates, and Kate's eyes open wide...

Kate gazed into the translucent blue depths, marveling. She could see all the way to the sandy bottom. Shoals of small fish nosed about the stout wooden piles of the dock where the *Brazen Hussy* was moored. Smiling, she watched them darting back and forth, like a cloud of living jewel-toned sweets.

A strong hand fisted in the back of the shirt she wore – Jack's shirt. Speak of the devil... "Don't tumble in, pretty Kate."

Ooooh, yes, chorused the Hormone Harlots.

So masterful, sighed one.

Kate frowned. This voice was languishing and soft, ultra-feminine. The one she'd heard in the cabin had been a husky contralto. So there were two of them?

Uh-huh. They spoke together.

A spotted ray flapped past below, the tips of its wings furling up and down like a heavy tablecloth in a breeze.

"You picked a beautiful spot," she said grudgingly.

"Aye." The silk of Jack's beard brushed the side of her neck. "I have excellent taste."

"All's shipshape, Cap'n," rumbled Duka, looming behind them.

"Good." Turning, Jack raised his voice. "Who's for home, lads?"

At the chorus of enthusiastic shouts, he grinned, so like a boy that Kate's heart did a flip-flop. Ridiculous thing.

With a rebel yell, blond Peter dived neatly over the side and stroked through the gentle swell to the shore. Spectacles clutched in one fist, he rose up out of the water like a piratical version of Mr Darcy. Kate sighed. Heavens, he was sweet! Look at those shoulders in the wet shirt. And that ass in the wet breeches, and...

"Enough," said Jack crisply.

The world swung, then steadied as he scooped her up in his arms. Kate clutched at his shoulders. "Will you stop doing that?"

"There are other ways." Jack glanced back over his shoulder as he started down the narrow gangplank. He reached the dock and lowered Kate until her feet hit sun-warmed wood. "Like that, for instance."

Turning in his arms, Kate followed his gaze and gasped.

Duka had wrapped his belt around the waist of the Duchess. There was at least a foot of leather left over. He had the tongue of the belt in one huge fist so that the Duchess had to stumble along the deck behind him, almost trotting to keep up with his long stride. With a delicious little shock, Kate realised the other woman's wrists were secured together with a length of rope.

But when the First Mate set foot on the narrow piece of timber that did duty for a gangplank, the Duchess balked, the angry flush fading from her fair cheeks until she was pale as milk. "No," she whispered.

Slowly, Duka turned, the plank bowing under his considerable weight. "What was that?" he enquired mildly.

The Duchess went scarlet. "Ye great stupid git," she hissed. "I'll fall. And I can't swim."

Meditatively, Duka flexed his knees and the plank bounced and twanged.

The Duchess cursed like a guttersnipe.

"Look at me, sweetheart."

The Duchess growled something under her breath and stared down at her bare toes.

"*I said, look at me!*" The tone rang like a big brass bell, bit like a lash. Duka tugged the belt and the Duchess took an involuntary step forward. Her gaze flew to his and her knuckles whitened on the rail.

The First Mate smiled, his dark eyes warm and twinkling. "What you mean is you don't trust me to keep you safe." His voice dropped half an octave, which meant it became positively subterranean, rumbling like a small earthquake in his huge chest. "But I can. I will. I take care of what's mine." Extending one arm, he offered a huge brown paw. "Two steps, little love, and you can take my hand. Come on, that's my girl."

"Am not," muttered the Duchess, tossing her head so her hair gleamed like spun gold in the sun, but Kate noticed she never took her eyes from Duka's.

"Let go and take a step," said Duka softly. "Just one."

The Duchess shook her head, her eyes as wide and as blue as the tropical sky.

"Now, Venetia!" Duka gave a sharp tug, the Duchess shrieked, took three wobbly paces and landed smack bang up against the First Mate's broad brown chest. Duke wrapped his massive arms around her, swung her up and stepped down onto the dock.

"There you go." His teeth flashed in a delighted grin, then he cradled her head in both big hands and fastened his lips to hers.

"Mmpf!" protested the Duchess, wriggling furiously.

Fascinated, Kate leaned her head back against Jack's firm shoulder. "She's going to bite him," she breathed.

"Hope so," said Jack, with enormous interest.

"Nngh!" The other woman's pink heels thrashed. The noises she was making changed, the indignant growls subsiding to shocked gurgles.

One big palm drifted gently over the blonde hair and rubbed soothingly up and down her spine.

"Mmm, mmm." Her head tipped back and her shoulders relaxed, so that she was hanging in the First Mate's grasp and he was supporting her whole weight.

Lord, that was sexy. And kinda sweet, in its own incredibly kinky way. Tears prickled at Kate's eyes, even as she pressed her thighs together, her breath coming fast. She *ached*, her sex as slippery as butter in the sun.

"God, he's good," said Jack, his breath stirring the hair at her temple.

"Yes," agreed Kate in a shaky whisper.

Now Duka was dusting light-as-air kisses across the blonde's eyebrows, her eyelids, her forehead, stroking her cheek with the back of his index finger, crooning nonsense all the while.

Jack's arm tightened around Kate's ribs, all that muscle a warm bar just beneath her breasts.

"What will he do next?" she whispered.

"You mean, will he fuck her?" Jack sounded amused.

Kate gurgled, unable to prevent the blush that singed her cheeks.

Now that the drama was over, the remaining pirates snapped out of their paralysis. With various boxes and bundles in their muscled arms, they padded off the dock and disappeared down various paths into the bright green of the tropical forest. Two of them shoved Tom in front of them, his hands bound behind his back, his brow thunderous. The First Officer cast Jack a filthy look as he was hustled away.

"Not yet." Jack answered the question Kate refused to ask. "She's not ready. He'll make her beg for his cock. And when she does, he'll fuck her before witnesses." He chuckled. "To drive the lesson home."

Hung like a horse, muttered one of the Hormone Harlots, the husky one.

God, yes, fluted her sister.

"Witnesses?" croaked Kate, her imagination seared by a vision of Duka's magnificent girth spreading slick pink folds, making them stretch and flutter in panic. God, like being fucked by a tree trunk, all brown and thick and satin-barked. She wasn't at all sure the Duchess would survive it. She knew she wouldn't.

"Sometimes he chooses the whole crew." Jack grew thoughtful. "But not this time, I think. I've never seen him so, ah, involved. She's a rare challenge, the Duchess." When he nuzzled Kate's ear, gooseflesh rose all down her spine.

"He'll include me, as his Captain and his friend. And, pretty Kate, I'll — mmm, keep wriggling, I love it when your ass moves against me like that."

Kate froze.

Unperturbed, Jack went on, "I'll beg an invitation for two, shall I, sweetheart?"

"I. Am. Not. Your. Sweetheart." She got it out between clenched teeth.

Jack took her by the shoulders and spun her around, staring down into her face. The tiger eyes gleamed gold with a predator's intensity. "You kissed me like you were."

Tap, tap, tap.

Kate ignored it. "That was...an aberration."

Jack arched a brow. "Really? I—" He looked up, his eyes narrowing. "Harley's done well. There's the *Meroe*."

Kate followed Jack's gaze. The pink Mist still filled the horizon and through it shone the pale sails of the *Lady Meroe*. As the ship grew closer, Kate could see her cutting gracefully through the sparkling blue water, a white wave rippling at her bow.

Something fizzed in Kate's blood, a bubble of intoxication. Magic?

Hell, no. She resisted the urge to bang her head against the nearest brick wall. Lawyers didn't believe in magic. Did they?

"The entertainment won't start until after sunset." Jack laced their fingers together and led Kate from the dock. The sand was warm and powdery under her toes. "What would you like to do?"

"Do? But I thought—" Kate pressed her lips together.

Jack grinned, the emerald in his ear lobe flashing a deep green as the sun struck it. "Then you thought wrong. There's a gorgeous cove beyond that headland." He gestured. "A curve of golden sand and deep cool clear water. Shady palms. We could strip off and swim. You *can* swim, can't you, sweetheart?"

"Well, of course I can—"

"Or I could show you the Pendant."

"The what?"

"We call that path the Cleavage." Jack indicated a sandy path that disappeared into the forest between Pain and Pleasure. "It ends at the Pendant— the closest thing we have to a town. We could find you something to wear, take a bite to eat. I'd feed you with my own hands."

Kate brightened. Real clothes. Real food. She hadn't realized how hungry she was.

Jack's voice dropped to a beguiling murmur. "Then there's a bath, Kate. A real bath, with hot water and perfumed soap. I've got a hot spring big enough for two."

Kate bit her lip. Oh, to be clean again! She refused to think of Jack, all relaxed and indolent, his golden limbs rippling under the water. But she wanted to see the rest of Sweet Sisters Isle, she wanted to swim in the beautiful sea and let the bright little fishes nibble her toes, allow the breeze dry her skin.

Damn.

Tap, tap, TAP.

Uh-oh. Rossetti was getting impatient. Kate set her jaw. If she could only work out what the dratted woman wanted her to do, she'd do the exact opposite. She sagged a little, watching a gull wing past, pure white against the azure sea.

Tap, TAP, THUMP!

Hell. "All right," she snapped. "Will you stop with the bloody tapping! I've decided."

What has Kate decided to do?

- A. Go swimming with Jack in the secluded cove.
- B. Visit the Pendant with Jack to eat and go shopping.
- C. Take a bath with Jack in the hot springs.



Chapter 9

Harlot Heaven

The story so far:

Having arrived at Sweet Sisters Isle, Kate is finding it difficult to fight the buzz of magic in her blood, let alone cope with Jack's distracting, sexy presence or the sight of Duka mastering the Duchess. To her surprise, Jack gives her the choice as to what they do next. And she thought he only had one thing on his mind...

The path through the jungle was as lovely as everything else on Sweet Sisters Isle, deeply shaded, the deep, fine sand pleasantly cool between Kate's bare toes. Every now and then it narrowed, and she had the guilty pleasure of watching the flex of Jack's muscular buttocks, swinging along in front of her.

Great ass, observed the husky-voiced Harlot. *Biteable.*

The air shimmered at the edges of Kate's vision, as if a large dragon-fly had just whisked out of existence. She jerked around, but there was nothing to be seen, only the feathery fronds of jungle plants – and what was that? An orchid?

Smiling, Kate reached out to stroke her fingertips over the thick, creamy petals. The lilac coloured throat emitted a low mewl of pleasure.

"Aaargh!" She jumped back, and Jack's arms slid around her waist from behind, reassuringly strong and solid.

"Relax, Kate," a deep voice purred in her ear. It's just the magic."

"But it made a noise!"

"So what? It likes you." He nuzzled her cheek. "You're a vortex for the magic. It's drawn to you. I can see it swirling all over your head and shoulders. Rather like a halo." He gave a decidedly devilish chuckle. "One I intend to tarnish, good and proper."

Before Kate could think of a suitably scathing reply, he took her hand, lacing their fingers together, tugging her along. "C'mon, just a little further."

A narrow path branched upward and Jack took it at a rapid pace, his hand strong in hers.

The air grew warm and steamy and the chuckle of water falling on stone filled the air. The vegetation grew positively luxuriant – rampant vines looped over silky tree trunks, flowers bloomed profusely, everywhere she looked, in every possible shade of pastel, gleaming in iridescent tones from cream to violet and back again. And it smelled – God, it smelled absolutely divine!

Despite herself, Kate's eyes filled with tears. When she saw Jack had turned to stare, she dashed a hand across her eyes. "Don't say it," she snarled. "I'm a sentimental fool."

Jack said nothing, but he bent his handsome head and pressed a gentle kiss to her brow. Then he ushered her through a tumbledown arch made of honey-gold stone.

All the breath punched out of Kate's lungs.

They stood on the lip of a pool of clear water, as green as jade. It lay like a jewel in the dappled sunlight, tendrils of steam drifting above the surface in slow arabesques. For all the world, it looked as though a team of ancient Greek sculptors had completed half the coping and then become bored and wandered off, leaving the rest to Nature. Marble steps descended into the translucent depths, and a statue of a gracefully bending maiden emptied an urn into the pool, the long stream of falling water as smooth and beautiful as the finest Venetian glass. Rather to Kate's surprise, the maiden was decorously clad in a flowing tunic that left one stone shoulder bare.

"Do you like it?" Jack smiled at her and for a moment, Kate thought she could glimpse the boy in the man.

She could only nod, lost for words, her eyes still stinging with an emotion she didn't understand.

A warm palm rubbed gentle circles over her spine. "You need this, pretty Kate. Think of it as the gift of the Sweet Sisters — peace, at least for a little while."

"P-peace?"

Jack cradled her cheek in his palm, the tiger eyes grave and calm. "All your life you've been working, arguing, battling haven't you? Brave, busy Kate. Always bustling, always running."

"That's not true, I've —"

"You deserve this, Kate. Time for slow pleasure, fast pleasure, a feast of the senses. It's why you were brought here and it's why you'll stay here for as long as it takes for you to learn the lesson." His lush mouth tipped up into a grin. "God, I hope you're a slow learner."

His thumb brushed hypnotically over her cheekbone and Kate fought the urge to let her eyes fall closed, lean into his touch. Slowly, Jack drew her forward, until she could lay her head against his chest.

Take a minute, whispered the soft-voiced Harlot. *Rest.*

Yeah, agreed her sister.

Their voices were so clear, it was as if they sat on her shoulders and murmured into her ears.

Kate gave up. Amazed at herself, she slid her arms around Jack's trim waist and leaned her whole body against him, her breasts pressed into his hard chest, his thighs against hers. She could feel his erection, hot against her stomach, but he held her carefully, crooning deep nonsense words in her ear.

It took a little while for the sense of what he was saying to penetrate. "I'm going to leave you here for a few minutes, sweetheart. Just to get towels and a change of clothes."

Kate blinked, her thoughts slow and dreamy. Why, she could escape, run, go...

A dark chuckle. "There's nowhere to go, pretty Kate. Except into the pool. Come now, kiss me goodbye."

Long fingers tilted her chin. "Lord, your eyes are so blue, so clear."

His lips descended.

So soft, so warm, so...gentle. This was nothing like the kiss in his cabin. It was an exploration, a getting-to-know-you kiss. He licked her lower lip, exquisitely slow sweeps, almost experimental. When she moaned, he deepened it, a fraction at a time, and his palms wandered up and down her spine, his long fingers finally closing over her nape.

Beneath her clutching fingers, the fabric of his shirt bunched, the skin beneath as hot and unyielding as the sun-warmed marble all around them. Kate rubbed his booted calf with her bare foot and his cock twitched.

Jack began to kiss her face, feathering licks and nibbles over her jaw, her cheeks. When he moved to her throat, Kate's head tipped back, as languid as a tropical flower after a rainstorm. The silky brush of his beard sent tingles to the pit of her belly, made her nipples bead. When he withdrew, she had to press her lips together to smother the moan of protest.

His chest was rising and falling with his hard breaths and the gold-shot hazel of those tiger eyes looked a little cloudy. "I won't be long. Strip and get in, Kate." He took a step backward, then he whirled and ran into the jungle.

For a long minute, Kate stared after him. Then she gazed at the pool, at the tranquil expression on the stone maiden's lovely face.

If she stripped, she'd be naked when he returned. Well, of course. Her stomach cramped. Bare. Defenseless.

But oh, how she wanted the water!

Gingerly, Kate set her foot on the first step. The water was warm, blood-heat, it swirled silkily about her calf. God, that was good. Damn Jack Cavanagh and his orders, she'd do this *her* way.

Still clad in her shift and Jack's shirt, Kate descended, a step at a time, until she was submerged up to her neck. The garments alternately clung and bellied around her, but oh Lord, the water felt divine! She rubbed the back of her neck, trying to ease the returning tension.

Pop! A sound like a small firecracker, or the snap of displaced air.

Kate opened her eyes. Nah, couldn't be. She shut them again.

You're being ridiculous, you know.

A feminine figure about ten inches high stood on the maiden's urn, arms crossed and legs spread in tight black leather. Kate's mouth dropped open. A miniature biker chick, right down to the revealing tank top, the tattoos on her smoothly muscled arms, the multiple piercings in each ear. Incongruously, a pair of magnificent silvery wings stirred the air behind her.

"Nngh," said Kate.

Dark eyes heavily rimmed with black raked her up and down. *Whatcha got to hide, huh? You wanna to see Jack in the buff, doncha? Me too.* She grinned.

Surely she knew that voice? Kate moistened her lips. "Who? Who are—?"

Well, it ain't Tinkerbell, honey.

Another *Pop!* Kate's eyes crossed. Now there was a second figure, this one reclining gracefully on the maiden's shoulder. The same silver wings, but dressed in a flowing pink negligee and high-heeled mules with feathers on the toes. She was as fair as her companion was dark, with huge blue eyes and pouty, pink-glossed mouth. Her creamy cleavage expanded with the depth of her sigh. *Kate dear, you know who we are. You've always known. Now take off those things, you look silly.*

Such was the gentle command in her voice that Kate was halfway out of the shirt before she could collect her thoughts. Light dawned. "I must be insane, but you're the...the..."

The Hormone Harlots, of course, said the blonde. *I'm Ess and this is my sister with no manners, Tess.*

Tess gave Ess the finger. Ess shook her head in apparent sorrow, but her eyes laughed.

"B-but," stammered Kate. "How?"

Get nekkid and we'll tell you, growled Tess.

Kate looked from the blue eyes to the black. Squeezing her own eyes shut, she pulled off the shirt and the shift together and let herself slide completely under the water. When she couldn't hold her breath another second, she surfaced with a flurry, gasping and pushing the hair off her face.

Holy shit, they were still there.

It's the magic, said Ess. *The magic of Sweet Sisters Isle that makes us manifest.*

And lets us play, said Tess with a dark chuckle. *Spread ya legs, hon. Get that nice warm water where it's gonna do us all some good.*

Automatically, her brain reeling, Kate opened her thighs. Her groan echoed around the glade. Everything softened, swelled, as if the water had loving clever fingers, or a broad wet tongue. Her back arched and the pool caressed her ribs and her breasts, her nipples stiffening.

Oh yeah, said Tess.

Oh my, said Ess.

Leaves rustled and Jack stepped into the clearing. He stopped dead and his eyes blazed. "Christ!" Dropping the bundle he carried, he gripped the hem of his shirt and ripped it straight off over his head.

Time seemed to slow, like molasses. Conversely, Kate was preternaturally aware of every beat of her heart, measuring out the seconds of her life. Oh, he was so beautiful, so dangerous, staring at her nude body beneath the rippling, translucent green of the water, his hunger naked on his face.

Jack wasn't massive, like Duka, he was lean and graceful, every muscle smooth and shapely, from the slabs of his pectorals, dusted with the lightest sprinkle of silky gold-brown hair, to the swell of firm biceps. And – oh God – two small gold rings winked in the sun. Both his nipples were pierced.

Their eyes met and held.

Hubba, hubba, said Tess, quite distinctly.

The breath returned to Kate's lungs in a panicky rush. "Shut up," she hissed.

Jack exhaled and the rings on his chest glittered. "I didn't speak," he said slowly, his voice husky and raw. "I may never be able to speak again. Don't move, Kate." He sat on a rock and pulled off his boots, while Kate floated, the pulse drumming in her ears, throbbing in her clit.

He stood, his gaze never leaving hers. Then he put his hands to the waistband of the breeches.

Tess gave a rebel yell that reverberated around the clearing. *Yeegah! Now we're gettin' to it!*

Jack looked up, straight at the stone maiden. And the Hormone Harlots.

Now then which harlot-y option would provide us with the most fun and general healthy entertainment?

- A. No one can see the Hormone Harlots except Kate.
- B. Only Jack and Kate can see the Hormone Harlots.
- C. Everyone on Sweet Sisters Isle can see the Hormone Harlots, including Jack.

Actually, I think this vote is truly, deeply crucial. *cough, cough* Just think about the ramifications, the plot possibilities, depending on who can see - and feel, for that matter - Tess and Ess. Hmm... *evil chuckle*



Chapter 10 Out of Her Depth

The story so far:

Jack takes Kate to an exquisite hot pool in the jungle, where he proceeds to kiss the life out of her. When he leaves briefly to collect a change of clothes, Tess and Ess, the Hormone Harlots, pop into being - as a couple of the oddest fairies Kate's ever seen. She's still recovering from her astonishment when Jack returns...

Jack's eyes narrowed and his hands fell to his sides. "Who the hell are you..." His gaze shifted from Tess to Ess and back again. "...two?"

Ess batted her eyelashes, reclining gracefully along the statue's shoulder. "We're Kate's -"

"They're with me," said Kate hastily, directing a glare at Ess from under her lashes. *Don't you dare simper*, she thought as loudly as possible.

Jack's brows rose. "I haven't seen the Sweet Sisters magic work so hard since Tinkerbell. You **are** a surprise packet, pretty Kate."

Tinkerbell? thought Kate, scrambling to catch up. What -

"Forget the surprise packet," said Tess. She put her hands on her leather-clad knees and leaned forward. "Let's see the package, big boy." A tiny pink tongue crept out to lick her lips.

All thoughts of Tinkerbell fluttered straight out of Kate's head. Three pairs of eyes dropped to stare at the healthy bulge in Jack's breeches. Above the trim beard, his cheekbones pinkened, but his chest rose and fell with his harsh breath and he scowled. Kate felt her lips twitch. Bloody Jack Cavanagh, the scourge of the seas, irritated by a couple of tiny fairies. Well, well, well.

"You're not invited," he growled at the Harlots. "Turn your backs."

Tess and Ess just stared, their silvery wings gently stirring the warm air. Jack stared straight back, implacable, every inch the pirate king.

Kate's mouth watered. *Do it*, she thought at the Harlots. *I'll tell you everything later. I promise.*

Ess arched a delicate brow, Then she sent Kate a sly wink. Her pretty face fell into a charming pout. "Well, really," she huffed. "Come on, Tess dear. We know when we're not wanted. She tugged on her sister's elbow, and finally, with obvious reluctance, Tess turned until they both faced the forest. Two sets of wings beat softly in the air, the set of

their shoulder somehow eloquent of both offence and injury. Kate suppressed a smile. They were very good.

"Right." Jack dug his thumbs into his waistband and peeled off the breeches in one smooth motion. Tossing them aside, he dived neatly into the pool.

Kate blinked in disappointment. He'd moved so swiftly all she'd got was the merest glimpse against the dazzle of the sun – the impression of an all-over golden tan, a nest of auburn curls and the intriguing jut of his arousal.

A lean golden shape shimmered through the green water. Jack surfaced right in front her, laughing, the water streaming off his face and shoulders, his hair a dark brown as he slicked it back. The emerald in his earlobe caught the sun and steam rose in lazy tendrils from the water behind him.

He leaned into Kate to clamp both hands on the stone edge of the pool, effectively caging her in. Their legs tangled together under the water, the tips of her breasts brushing his chest.

"Hullo, pretty Kate," he said softly. Mesmerised, Kate stared into his eyes, the gold flecks very evident in the hazel. God, why did he draw her like this?

Oh, that's right. It was all a dream, *Jack* was a dream. He had to be, because he was so absolutely perfect - dangerous enough to strike sparks off her soul and keep her blood simmering, but perceptive enough to see right through her tough façade. His tenderness disarmed her, but it was his domination that tempted her unbearably. Oh, to give herself over to his keeping and know she could trust him to guard her heart!

But she couldn't.

He was a pirate, a thief, a figment of her imagination. And besides, she had an appalling track record with men, an unquenchable fascination for beautiful bastards. Jack Cavanagh qualified on both counts.

She would *not* cry.

Slowly, she lifted one hand and cradled his cheek, the beard wet and silky under her palm. "You're a dream," she said. "No consequences. I can do anything I like with a dream."

Jack's expression was intent, unreadable. "Touch me and find out," he said, drifting closer. Automatically, Kate let her legs float open and he came up flush against her, chest to chest, belly to belly. His body was hard and hot and smooth, almost as unyielding as the stone step under her bottom. The root of his cock pressed against her mound, his thighs were solid against hers. Kate ran the sole of her foot up his calf, curving one leg around his hip. Jack grunted.

She ran her hand down over his neck, his shoulder, the bone dense and hard, covered with satin skin.

Jack's eyelashes fluttered.

Oh, he liked that.

Kate leaned forward and nuzzled the side of his neck, his throat. She gripped his biceps, moving on to explore the intriguing planes and curves of his back. The skin

either side of his spine was slippery with water, so smooth, resilient with healthy muscle. "Kate..." he said warningly.

She ignored him, sliding her palms further. Oh My God. What a fabulous ass. Her fingers clenched in taut flesh. "Let's get out," she growled, nipping the point of his shoulder. "I want to taste you all over."

Every muscle in Jack's body went rigid. "That's my line."

Kate laughed. She ran her fingers over his chest, the hair rasping her fingertips. She thought she heard Tess whisper in her head, *You go, girl*. Or it could have been the wind in the trees.

Grasping a nipple ring, she tugged, very gently. "Did it hurt?" she asked. "Having them done."

Jack's eyes went dark and his cock twitched against her belly. "Aye, but I wanted it." His lips quirked. "It's a pirate thing."

"Oh, I don't know," said Kate. She flicked both rings simultaneously. "I think it's a pleasure thing myself."

Jack set his jaw. "Kate, don't. I'm right on the edge."

"Really?"

Kate snaked a hand down between them and his erection practically leaped into her palm. She squeezed. Hot satin over a steely core. Oh God, perfect. Big enough to be delightfully threatening, not so huge as to be impossible.

Jack made a soft deep sound in the back of his throat. Bracing his knees on the step, he gripped Kate's buttocks and lifted her, tilting her at the perfect angle. Smooth dense flesh slid thrillingly over hers. He was hotter than the water. "Put me inside you," he rasped. "Now, Kate."

Her heart did a ridiculous flip-flop in her chest. When it resumed a regular beat, the rhythm was frantic and so loud she could feel it throb in her loins, in the quivering folds of her sex, even in her thighs, behind her knees.

In the end though, he needed very little help at all. Her hand shaking, Kate notched his eager weight at the soft sucking entrance to her body.

Jack entered her, slow and steady, inexorable as true love. As his cock forged through delicate tissues, he kept his eyes on her. She couldn't have looked away, not even to save her life. His eyes had gone almost completely gold. He looked utterly intent and a little wild, a tiger focused on its prey. Despite the warmth of the water, the heat of his body thrusting into hers, Kate shivered.

Her flesh was stretching to accommodate him, snug and tight around his girth, rippling with a mix of delight and panic, delicious and terrifying all at once.

"Christ," muttered Jack as he sank balls-deep. "That's good." He leaned forward the small distance necessary to brush her lips with his own and Kate wrapped her arms around his neck, her knees rising. When he thrust another impossible inch, her nerves tingled for his entire length and she hissed her pleasure into his mouth.

"I said..." Jack pulled back. Thrust, withdraw. "I'd have your body, pretty Kate." Thrust. "And so I do." Thrust, withdraw. "Next..." He sped up slightly and Kate moaned. Thrust, withdraw, thrust. "...it's your heart..." He was rocking into her now, changing angles so he was hitting her clit full-on with every plunge, the water frothing around them in blood-hot eddies. "...and soul."

His beautiful mouth sealed over hers, so that she couldn't help but give him every gasp of pleasure, every whimper of ecstasy. He surrounded her completely, with his strong, hard body, his indomitable will. Kate could almost swear she felt her brain unhitch itself and slink away. She couldn't form a coherent thought, but deep inside, where she kept her essential self, she was softening, opening wide to his invasion, like her willing flesh. Oh God, another few minutes of this and Jack Cavanagh really would own her, heart and soul. After everything she'd said, how hard she'd fought. Oh God, oh God, she was in l—

The Harlots saved her.

C'mon, Katie, don't just lie there! Fuck him back, why doncha? yelled Tess, the strident tones echoing inside Kate's head.

Go on, urged Ess. You were doing so well.

Kate's hips rose, she crossed her ankles in the small of Jack's back and sank her fingers into his shoulders. She began rising to meet him, taking her pleasure the same way he took his, strong and unafraid. Ruthlessly, she tightened her internal muscles with every stroke.

Jack ripped his mouth free. "Fuck, Kate!" His buttocks flexed with such power, the green water surged all around them. "When you— Oh, God." He hammered into her, like a conquering king—no, like a pirate, a freebooter.

Kate gripped so hard his flesh dimpled under her fingers, her teeth bared in a wild grin. "I'm a...pirate too," she panted. She nipped the side of his strong neck, right over his thundering pulse, breathing in the feral scent of male arousal, the salt and spice of Jack. "I...take what I want."

And she did.

Until the water seethed and surged, waves slopping over the coping of the pool, as turbulent as a pocket hurricane, a whirlpool as hungry as she was. Their flesh came together bruisingly hard, only slightly cushioned by the water. Their harsh breathing, Jack's grunts of effort, echoed around the clearing.

Kate flew.

She'd never fucked like this—in a frenzy so ferocious it was more like warfare than love. God, it was glorious, it was sublime, it was...

Jack slid a hand down over her belly and into her curls. "Sorry," he gasped. "Can't..." With the pad of one finger, he pressed, rubbed.

The resulting explosion of sensation was so intense, so extraordinary, Kate was only vaguely conscious of his dark groan, of the way he jammed himself deep inside her, and froze, shuddering. Writhing, she rode the release as it were a long-tailed comet, streaming and glittering across the sky.

"We won, we won!" shrieked the Harlots. Blearily, Kate forced her eyes open to see a flock of brightly coloured birds take off with a clatter of wings.

His chest heaving, Jack twisted to look over his shoulder. Tess and Ess had joined hands and were tumbling about in midair. Kate laughed out loud. It made her dizzy to watch them, but in a very good way.

Jack's expression flickered from satisfaction to annoyance and back again. Kate giggled. She felt euphoric, so light she'd float across the pool if it not for the welcome weight of Jack's body.

"They helped you," he said accusingly.

Kate met the tiger eyes. "No one steals my heart and soul," she said, "not even a pirate."

"We'll see," said Jack, a trifle grimly. He frowned. "Did I hurt you?"

Kate rubbed her cheek against his jaw. "Of course not, but I think I'm beginning to wrinkle."

"Oh no, you don't." When she would have shifted beneath him, he simply leaned forward. Kate gasped. He was hardening inside her, thickening and lengthening, exerting a delicious tingling pressure.

His eyes danced. "I am not so easily defeated, pretty Kate. We've got fast and hard out of the way, let's try for slow and sweet."

God, no! Tenderness would destroy her. "Jack, I—"

Something rustled in the jungle. Out of the corner of her eye, Kate saw fronds tossing against the sky.

Who, or what is out there in the jungle?

- A. The rest of the pirate crew - the calendar guys, remember them?
- B. The Hormone Harlots dancing a wild fandango on a tree branch
- C. Duka