

SEASONAL AFFAIRS

By Jasmine Jeffers



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

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VACATION IN MAIDINUSA

By Jasmine Jeffers

Chapter One: The Royal Treatment

Roger Berman could not suppress the smile that creased his face as he approached the check-in counter. Three weeks in Paradise, all expenses paid!

He wheeled his suitcases toward the nearest agent, a tall raven-haired woman. She wore the traditional garb of the Melamodian Archipelago to the south of Indonesia.

Of course, at 5 feet, many modern women looked tall to Roger — even this fair-skinned Asian race, from which his employer's family had descended. The agent bore a slight resemblance to Elonie Raksadian, his boss. The distinctive epicanthic folds near the bridge of her nose were the main similarities he decided. Elonie was blonde, however, and bore her 6 foot 1 inch frame with regal aplomb.

He started to protest as the agent transferred the bags immediately to the conveyer belt without tagging them. The flight would have a brief stopover in Manila where he feared he could lose them. The ticket agent paused to stare at him with amused disdain.

“Mr. Berman, as you know, Melam Air is a division of Raksadian International. Furthermore, you are bound for the company resort, Maidinusa, the sole destination of this flight after refueling in Manila. Now where else could your luggage go?”

“Humph,” he thought, *“she has the same patronizing, assertive nature that Elonie and her family displayed toward me.”*

He was rather pushy himself, because of his size and the need to defend himself his entire life. Perhaps that was why she had hand picked him from a pool of 100 junior account executives to be her executive secretary. Roger enjoyed the threefold increase in salary, although his new position lacked the freedom and camaraderie of his former male dominated department.

The other secretaries and clerks in the front office both reported to him and burdened him with the responsibility of incomplete work. He berated them but still found himself working late many Friday evenings and at least two Saturdays each month.

Elonie seemed to forgive the lapses of the young female assistants and refused to allow him to fire any of them. Yet, he was the first one to feel her wrath when a letter or report contained inaccuracies.

Every employee in the front office had already made the trip to the exotic and elegant retreat, except for him. All came home with radiant tans, wonderful stories, and wearing the colorful, original clothing and jewelry for which the Mela-modians were famed. Better yet, their attitudes usually improved dramatically following their return. Every woman in the office seemed to tread lightly around Elonie, treating her with rev-

erential awe and politeness bordering on obsequiousness. He could not put his finger on it but his work load had lightened so he dismissed it.

Now it was his turn. He had perused the lavish brochures for weeks. He knew about all the beautiful beaches, as well as the best places to eat and shop. The images of beautiful women being catered to hand and foot by smiling servants delighted him. Roger reserved a room at a five-star hotel. His only responsibilities in return for the complete package of travel, room, board, and \$1,000 in expense credits were to attend business and training seminars each morning from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., with weekends slated as “activities to be announced”. He figured the entertainment choices would be up to each guest to determine.

The seminar times struck him as a bit early initially. The sun came up at 6:00 a.m. in the tropics and considering the humid heat of the afternoons he realized that nobody could stay awake at afternoon business sessions. That would be an ideal time to hike through a cool jungle forest or explore rocky grottos at the beach.

He decided to press his advantage by demanding a window seat in a nonsmoking section. Before he could open his mouth, the agent handed him a folder with his ticket, and pointed to the corridor leading to the airliner.

“You may board immediately, sir. Enjoy your stay,” she stated before dropping her eyes to her work, her time with him at an end.

He walked down the ramp scrutinizing the ticket. The seat assignment box indicated R-2. At the cabin entrance, he met the flight hostess, who was dressed in a shiny red satin sheath, dark nylons, and red satin pumps. Her braided hair formed a French bun encircled with fragrant tropical flowers.

Roger looked beyond her shoulder with some confusion because the entire cabin was empty.

“Where is everybody? Is this flight leaving today?” he asked with a slight tinge of sarcasm.

“Yes sir. Welcome. You are traveling Royalty Class with us, so we like to get you comfortable before we board the business and economy passengers. They are clearing customs as we speak. We are on schedule for departure in 90 minutes. *Mari inya Rica, ustazi renoto!*” the hostess replied, clapping her hands.

Roger's poised complaint about the scheduling stopped in his throat as two women materialized from the steward's compartment. The tall, lithe females were dressed in the brief garb of Melamodian servants. Red silk halter tops cradled their modest breasts. Flimsy silk skirts in bold geometric prints rode low on their hips, rising from a point 4 inches above their left knees to a knotted bow above the right hip. Underneath, he recognized the short silk bloomers that ballooned to exaggerate the hips, yet provided coolness and modesty. An elastic ruffled hem held them tightly below the rump, allowing a full view of their legs, clad in nude sheer to the waist pantyhose.

Elaborate necklaces of concentric silver rings imprisoned their throats, intertwined with lengths of gold chain embedded with semiprecious gems. Similar bracelets with tiny bells covered their wrists and ankles. They wore comfortable peach colored satin slip-on slippers with ankle ribbons and open heels.

Mari and Rica were immaculately coifed, displaying identical hair styles that made Roger think of Japanese Geishas. Black bangs dropped to long arched eyebrows. Shiny ebony curtains cascaded over the ears, falling forward to sharp points in front of the ears. Black lustrous straight hair fell to the base of the neck where it rolled inward to a gentle curl. It was the silk scarf knotted into little origami-like shapes of butterflies and birds that arrested his attention for a moment.

Thick kohl eye liner framed their almond eyes. Bright red lipstick and blush broke their long thin faces and aquiline noses. Despite their ultra feminine attire and giggling self consciousness, Roger noted that both women were 5 to 6 inches taller than himself. Their long arms and legs displayed a sinewy toughness in contrast to his desk bound pudginess. Their exotic beauty caused an immediate erection that he attempted to hide by holding the carry on bag in front of his lap.

The hostess let fly a sharp series of commands in the strange melodious language sending the attendants into action.

Mari grabbed his carryon bags.

Rica took his hand firmly in hers, pulling him down the aisle.

“We take good care of you, Yankee boy,” she grinned with a toothy smile as she shuffled along, bracelets tinkling.

She led the way to the front of the plane, through a metal hatch that was sealed behind him.

He passed five curtained compartments on his left side. He heard people talking and moving about behind several of them. The right side of the aisle appeared to be a separate room with a single door entering just to the right of the sealed entry hatch.

The girls stopped at the second compartment from the front. Mari had opened the curtain and beckoned him inside.

The luxury of his accommodations took his breath away. A single recliner seat sat by the window. Teak paneling lent an aura of wealth. He could see that he had his own video screen above the chair. A compact disc player and headphones were available in a nearby panel. A small table and swivel chair anchored to the floor available for meals or work nestled in one corner.

Rica opened an overhead panel to store his luggage.

Mari removed some clothing from a tall narrow closet and laid it out on the chair.

Roger recognized some of the items of traditional Melamodian attire that included the loose, belted, knee-length caftan worn by men and the full cut bloomers worn by the women.

Roger felt Mari's firm hands fall onto his shoulder tops, gently massaging them.

“Time to get you comfy, Berman,” she stated, pushing him toward the chair, apparently confused by his first and surname, “take off shirt and shorts.”

“That's Mr. Berman, and what are you talking about. I'm perfectly comfortable in these clothes,” he said indignantly.

“Seventeen hour flight, Yankee boy! Melamodian clothes much easier. Where you going to run to in those, anyway?” she asked, pointing to his Nike high tops and white socks.

He looked down at his shoes, considering her words for the first time.

“Besides,” Mari began, suddenly grabbing the rear waistband of his shorts and pulling up, “jockey shorts ride up in airplane seat, see?”

“OUCH!”

Rica loomed in front of him and began to unbutton his sport shirt. Her smile and intense eyes disarmed him. Her arms and torso undulated like a charmed cobra.

“Please, relax deeply, and have good time. You the boss, we treat you nice, you treat us nice, too,” she said in throaty tones. She had his shirt off in ten seconds. “You like this trip, it is very dreamy.”

Rica had found the drawstring to his canvas shorts and loosened it. With one smooth move, she slid the shorts along with his white cotton briefs down his legs.

“Hey!”

Rica pushed firmly on his chest. Off balance, he fell back onto the recliner chair. Both women tackled his shoelaces, quickly pulling off his shoes and socks. Roger stared at his sexy attendants in disbelief. They had stripped him in less than a minute.

Rica crossed the room to pick up a duffel bag.

Mari held up his briefs with a smirk on her face.

“How does Yankee Boy fit into this?” she asked with a giggle, pointing to the front pouch. She giggled, holding her thumb and index finger about two inches apart for Rica to see. “Oh. I see.”

“Melo man never squeeze into that baggie,” winked Rica, moving her hands about ten inches apart.

Mari tossed the briefs into her hands. The clothing disappeared into a sack.

“Where are you going with my clothes?” asked Roger, his face turning beet red in a combination of anger, embarrassment, and alarm.

“We do your laundry. We’ll iron shirt and bring back later,” said Rica, tossing the bag into the aisle.

“Stand up, Mr. Berman. I’ll dress you for your flight,” said Mari, easily pulling him to his feet.

He squirmed uneasily as the bloomers slid up his legs. They were similar in style to Mari’s, hot pink in color with black lace framing the leg openings. A black satin ribbon threaded through the material at his waist. Mari cinched the ribbon in back and tied it into a bow with the streamers falling across his rump. She fluffed out the shirred material on all sides.

Roger appeared to be embedded in a pink pumpkin. He could not even see his feet. The airy feel of the silk floating over his naked skin excited him despite his sudden loss of control over his surroundings.

Mari continued to fuss with the hems and ribbons of the garment, lightly brushing his testicles, inner thighs, and rump with the backs of her hands and fingers.

He became fully erect. To his relief, the puffiness of the bloomers hid his condition.

“Sorry, Berman boy. Melamodian male batik would fit you like a hot air balloon. This is a woman's small size. Not to worry though, I have a small man's caftan to cover you up,” said Mari, reaching for the folded clothing on the arm of the chair.

“Listen,” began Roger exasperated by her maddening forms of address, “please call me Mr. Berman, sir, or if you can't handle that, Roger is fine.”

“Roger, Roger,” quipped Mari, “now lift your arms, over and out!”

Sighing and rolling his eyes, Roger Berman allowed his attendant to slide the garment over his arms and head. The oversized open sleeves with a hanky hem fell to a point beyond his fingers. The square bodice drooped low to display a section of hairy chest. An elastic band encircled his torso, midway between his chest and navel. The loose, cool robe dropped almost to his ankles, lifted out by his batik, almost as if he were wearing a petticoat.

A pattern resembling pheasant feathers, alternating strips of pink satin and dark purple velvet overlaid the translucent white silk. The deep pink hues of the batik bled through the fabric.

Mari wrapped a long, wide sash of purple silk around his waist and knotted it above his right hip.

The men in the brochures wore a simple satin cap that fit closely to their heads, running from mid forehead around above the ears, and along the hairline in back. He assumed that this was protection from the tropical sun.

Mari put a cap that matched his robe atop his own head. “There you go, all done. Now isn't that feeling nice, Melomita?” asked Mari.

Roger admitted that the new costume felt loose, cool, and comfortable. True, the oversized garb swallowed him, making him feel like a child playing dress-up in adult clothing. He didn't want to know what “mellow meata” meant. He took a seat. The chair was roomy and molded instantly to his curves. He looked over to notice that Rica had removed a tray of food from a portable refrigerator.

Mari snapped a tray across his lap from its wall position beneath the window. She tied a long linen napkin around his neck and went to a small sink next to the table to wash her hands.

Rica served a plate filled with beautiful tropical fruit, cheeses, rice balls, and wedges of bread. A colorful drink with a small parasol and straw accompanied the plate.

“In Melamodia, women are matriarchs of society. They are like queens and princesses. On this flight, we treat you like royalty. We feed you and cater to your every

comfort and desire. What would you like to try first?" asked Mari, standing beside him again.

Roger reached for a slice of fruit.

Mari gently slapped his hand away and put it into his lap. "No, no, I will feed you. Your hands are much too important for something as simple as eating. Rica, begin foot massage. Relax, Melomita, this is your vacation."

Roger did. Bracing against the cultural crosscurrents, he fell into the sublime sensual pleasures of being fed and catered to by his lovely attendants.

Oiled hands caressed his feet and later, his hands as the beautiful Mari plied him with food and beverage. She wiped his mouth with the napkin occasionally, caressing his chin and cheeks with soft fingers tipped with gleaming red nails.

A fullness and drowsiness replaced his unease.

He opened his eyes. The food tray and attendants were gone. His kidneys were full. A seatbelt prevented his exit from the seat. In addition, a strange harness crisscrossed his chest. He could not find the release mechanism. Roger found the "attendant call" button and pressed it.

Rica appeared instantly.

"Rica, what kind of seat belt is this? I have to use the bathroom and can't get out."

"Sure thing, I'll help you," she said, rushing behind the seat to hit the release button. Rica ran to the closet and pulled a pair of slippers out that matched hers. She knelt down and slid his feet into them, securing them in place with the ankle ribbons.

Roger felt lightheaded as Rica helped him from his chair into the corridor. She directed him left through the compartment door near the entry hatch.

Inside were a complete women's lounge and salon. He walked past a massage table, a barber/beauty chair, two stalls that contained small tubs with hand held shower attachments, two sinks, and two private toilets. In his sleepy and needful state, he went straight for the commode.

The bulkiness of his costume presented an immediate problem. Wrestling the caftan above his waist, he realized that he could not untie the satin ribbon holding his batik in place.

From behind, he felt Rica's fingers in action followed by the garment sliding to his ankles.

"Turn around and sit down, Yankee boy," instructed Rica, "while I hold your caftan over your head out of the way."

"Sorry, I'm not used to these weird clothes," mumbled Roger, blushing with chagrin, feeling the need to defecate.

"That's okay, I am at your service," said Rica with selfless calm.

The service included a complete cleaning with a hot, soapy washcloth. After drying, fresh scented powder applied to his genitals and posterior, with a splash of garde-

nia cologne made him feel especially feminine. He stood beside a sink with the caftan pulled over his head during the treatment.

Humiliated, his face glowed beet red.

By the time he returned to his seat the seatbelt signs were flashing. Roger felt a surge of excitement, now tinged with anxiety as the jetliner lifted from the tarmac. He turned his attention to the media and books that he brought along. He watched a video explaining the ancient matriarchal culture and then turned to his phrase book to practice the local language. A definition of the word “melomita” riveted his attention:

mel-o-mita: (mel o meeta') n. {Old Indo-Poly/Mod. Mela-modia):1. Feminized servant boy, usually a man with stunted growth whose tasks are relegated to the duties of the princesses' dressing and boudoir; is often castrated and dressed in a batik or other female dress. 2. Harem eunuch concubine. 3. (derisive) Effeminate boy, sissy.

“That Mari is infuriating,” he fumed.

The jet, tracking the setting sun, soared over the vast blue Pacific through white fountains of cloud.

As the sun set in a bank of pink and yellow foam, Rica served him a delicious meal, with another rum laced tropical cooler.

He was vaguely conscious of the second trip to the bathroom, this time with Mari.

Mari simply removed his clothing before seating him.

The hypnotic drugs in the cooler had taken effect. Roger was now in a compliant state, fully able to walk and move, his nerves alive to the slightest stimulation. In his euphoria every sight, sound, scent, and touch was a pleasurable gift from heaven. His centers of logic and reason had shut down totally.

He floated to the massage table at her request. He melted into the warmth of the oil, feeling her strong hands reducing him to a limp mass of flesh. Roger cared not that two other semi-comatose males, and three vibrantly awake female passengers passed by.

It mattered little then, that the tingling pink foam that Mari spread across his entire body below his neck dissolved all traces of his body hair — it did not register.

He smiled happily at the short, young male in the tub next to him and waved at the slender man in the beauty chair as Mari scrubbed his body with a soft-bristled brush, shampooed his hair, and shaved his face. The follow-up treatment that included application of soft, fluffy towels, scented powder, and vanilla perfume caused him to embrace Mari with utter joy.

She pried him loose. With a sharp swat across his nude bottom, she sent him scurrying to a chair beside a mirror. He submitted to a pedicure and manicure, with the addition of nail tips and light pink lacquer. Mari plucked dozens of his eyebrow hairs, leaving a thin arched line.

Mari stopped short of applying make-up. Many hours would pass before the sun rose and he was to be returned to his seat. Following her supervisor's approval, she could go off duty. She cleaned the salon quickly, then slipped out of her uniform. She

donned a pink, toga-style nightie with matching batik in sheer chiffon and returned to Roger who dozed lightly in his chair. She pulled him to his feet, ordered him to stand straight and pressed a button. Mari dropped to her knees with head bowed and waited.

Roger smiled brightly as the hostess entered the salon. She was dressed for bed in a long sleeveless gown, her hair now cascading across her shoulders. She walked around him, inspecting him carefully for a minute. Satisfied, she tapped Mari lightly on the head, signifying approval, and lifted a slippered foot to her lips.

Mari received the foot gratefully in both hands and kissed it.

“Very nice job, Mari. Dress him and put him to bed. Then report to my quarters you darling melomita.”

Roger stirred in his seat, awakened by the vibration of the reverse thrusters firing. He opened his eyes feeling groggy and disoriented. Leaning toward the window, the breast harness prevented him from seeing below until the jet banked sharply to the left. A necklace of deep green gems curved through an azure sea. A white ring of barrier reef and breakers surrounded each jewel. An overhead speaker crackled.

“This is Captain Paksintar,” announced a female voice, “we have been cleared for landing on Maidinusa, the crown jewel of the Melamodian chain. It is a sunny 85 degrees with light winds from the west. Local time is 2:30 p.m. Enjoy your stay, ladies and gentlemen.”

“*God, was that really seventeen hours?*” wondered Roger, straining to recall the details of his journey. His mouth felt cottony. With a start, he saw that he was still dressed in the caftan, batik, and slippers. He scrambled to press the attendant button.

“What's up, Mr. Roger, speak,” came Rica's peppery voice over the speaker.

“I'm thirsty, that's what, and I'm still in these damn clothes,” he blurted toward the ceiling.

“Can't help now, Yankee boy, all strapped in for landing. See you on the ground.”

Twelve minutes later, the huge jet thundered onto the impossibly small strip of tarmac bordered by cane fields east and west, and crashing surf to the North and south.

Roger's spirits surged at the sight of the swaying sugar cane, palm trees, and strip of large hotels behind them. In the distance, blue-green mountains rose sharply to cloud-banked heights.

Mari entered his cabin and served a tall glass of ice-water.

He eagerly closed his lips around the white straw and sucked the contents dry.

She took the glass away quickly and told him to open his mouth. Mari had a toothbrush ready and proceeded to brush his teeth, gums, and tongue vigorously. As he spat into the small bowl, he noticed that the handle of the brush and the white suds were stained pink.

“What's that am I bleeding?” he asked in consternation.

“Sorry sir, don't know my own strength,” laughed Mari who had refilled his glass for him to rinse with.

He saw a telltale pink ring on the straw.

“What's going on here? Where are my clothes? Why am I still stuck in this chair?”

“Whoa, slow down, Roger, you're in paradise now. Don't be so uptight, relax. You have to go to the bathroom?”

He admitted that he did. Released from his chair, he saw his hands for the first time. He blinked twice at his fingernails that seemed to have grown at least an inch and now had a slight pink color. As the sleeve fell away from his wrists, he wondered what had become of the hair on his arm.

Mari took his extended hand and pulled him roughly into the corridor.

When she lifted his caftan and removed it, he howled in sudden rage and disbelief.

They had dressed him in a pink silk halter top that matched his batik. His batik was already at his ankles and he landed on the seat courtesy of Mari's strong arms. She shushed him by covering his mouth with her palm.

Rica had joined her.

“Listen, Yankee boy, we tired of your mouth. We told you two days ago that you were flying Royalty Class. We tell you that in Melomodina, women are like royalty. Therefore, we give you royal treatments and pamper you big time.”

“You mean that only women usually fly in Royalty Class?” asked Roger, desperately trying to assess his situation.

“Usually,” said Rica, “only this time they put three of you Yankee Boys up here for first time. Too much work, you ask me. You done yet?”

Roger nodded, bewildered by the import of this information. He was yanked to his feet and pulled to a sink. He shuffled along hampered by the batik that bond his ankles. Unlike the four other times when he had been under the influence of the hypnotic drinks, he was acutely aware of being washed, powdered, and perfumed!

Mari pulled up his batik and tied the black satin waist ribbon into the oversized obi styled bow that fell across his rear end.

He was led to a full length mirror. His knees trembled, nearly buckling at the sight.

His roly poly body had been shaved clean. He stood there in his halter top, silk bloomers, and sandals, staring at his face and head. Roger Berman's face had been transformed with make-up. His eyes were lined with black kohl, his lashes lengthened with black mascara. A taupe eye shadow on his upper lids was clearly visible whenever he blinked. His pale cheeks held a soft pink blush that matched his lips. His eyebrows were now dark brown expressive arches.

With trembling hands he touched the blond ringlets cascading out from his cap. His wavy brown hair had been cut, dyed blonde, and permed into short, stiff curls. He fingered the ruby colored studs that penetrated his freshly pierced ears not once, but in two places on each ear.

“I didn't ask for this,” he said in a weak, cracking voice on the verge of tears. He couldn't get over how soft, white, and helpless he looked compared to his frowning, lithe attendants.

“What, you don't like my best efforts?” asked Mari, a touch of hurt in her voice.

“Does this mean we don't get tip?” growled Rica.

“No, no, you were only doing your job, of course, I have money in my wallet, ... where are my pants, and...”

“Oh, bad idea, Yankee boy, you not going to put on shorts and sports shirt looking like this, I hope. Melamodian men very macho, big, and mean. You very small and girlish. We think you better off disguised as Melamodian miss. Even wearing caftan and cap make them very angry.”

“Yeah, maybe once you get to safety of hotel room, you can change back,” Rica suggested.

“Uh, well, do you really think so?” asked Roger, suddenly feeling defenseless, in a foreign land, thousands of miles from home.

“We have some extra clothes between us,” said Mari.

“We could let you share them — for a price,” added Rica, eyes glittering.

“Oh, all right, thank you,” he agreed, still dubious, shocked and fearful.

“I'll get the things,” offered Mari.

“I have a plan — will talk to lady passenger,” said Rica.

Both of his attendants left the salon.

They returned quickly. A white silk triangle of fabric covered his left thigh and was knotted above his right hip. Pink satin fringe edged the skirt that matched his attendants' in design, displaying most of his legs and batik.

Rica tied a white silk scarf on his head, centering it at the base of his hairline and pulling it over his head, tying it above his curly blond bangs. The tips of the scarf, also pink were skillfully twisted into a cute origami bunny with one long crinkled ear that perched atop Roger's head.

Mari was swiftly attaching jewelry to the embarrassed, squirming man.

Large earrings, concentric loops of silver filled one of the new piercings in each ear. A constrictive necklace, like the girls were wearing was fastened to the back of his neck. Clanging brass bracelets slid over his wrists. Ankle bracelets, laden with bells larger than those on his attendants jingled loudly when he lifted his feet.

Rica picked up a bottle of 30 SPF and coated his exposed skin with a thick layer of the gardenia scented lotion.

Finally he was handed a sheer chiffon wrap that looped around his shoulders. He clutched it modestly in front of his halter top with his left hand.

“Come along, we running out of time,” said Mari, pushing him toward the door.

His last impression of himself was that he was one of three Melamodian servants leaving the salon. His embarrassment multiplied exponentially as he passed the first compartment, the curtains now open.

“Hello, Roger!”

The amused voice belonged to Amanda Riverton, the head of the data processing division of Raksadian International!

He had seen her many times at work, where she oversaw the implementation of new data systems. He had worked briefly with her husband Dan, an account executive.

He stepped timidly inside the room.

She looked fresh and radiant, in a long flower imprinted mu-mu. She sat in one of two recliners next to the window.

“Looks like we'll be next to disembark,” she observed brightly, “you look so delightful, Roger. I would never have guessed that was you if I hadn't seen you yesterday. Are you here for the Clerical Training Seminar?”

“Er, yes,” said Roger, at a loss for words or action.

“Well, I'm here for pure pleasure, but Dani is here for the classes,” she indicated with a delighted nod to a point behind him, “you know one another is that correct?”

He turned to face what initially looked like another attendant. She wore a baby blue batik with a light lavender overskirt, with the same headgear and jewelry. The shape of the face and eyes belonged to his one time coworker. His friend's eyes met his, but the smile cracked and the head dropped.

Mari pulled on his arm.

“Not to be impolite, Madam, but we more stuff to take care of. Roger, here, wants to pay us big tip!” laughed Rica, but taking care to drop to her knee, as did Mari before leaving.

They returned to his cabin to retrieve his bag. Roger emptied his wallet of cash, almost \$100.00 American dollars.

They smiled, patting his bottom appreciatively, and took him to the next curtained section and knocked.

“Please enter.”

Roger stared in awe.

A shapely brunette female smiled at him from her seat. She was dressed in a black bikini top and flowing skirt printed with banana leaves and clusters of bright yellow bananas and toucans.

She looked vaguely familiar, somebody he might have seen in another department or perhaps in the elevator of their massive midtown complex. She stood up and approached him. It somehow did not surprise him that she topped five feet ten inches in height.

“Hi, you must be Elonie's secretary. I'm Gillian Akashin, director of personnel at Raksadian International. I'm here for a vacation and to observe a new phase that's being added to our vacation/training seminars. We've found that lavish vacations, combined with a little learning does wonders for morale and work output back home. The servants tell me that you have a slight problem?”

“I didn't know that this section is for women,” he blurted, “and you can see what they have done to me. I can't go out there in my shorts and shirt looking like this because the Melamodian men might beat me up.”

“Oh goodness, you are a man! I wasn't sure until I heard your voice. Elonie never mentioned it. I was hired after you were transferred. Calm down, Mari and Rica have suggested a plan, and I'm more than happy to help.”

“Plan is very simple, Roger — you pretend you are servant girl to Miss Akashin until you get to hotel. After that, it's up to you two,” explained Mari.

“That's fine with me,” grinned Gillian slyly, “he is rather cute, except that I can see a trace of beard line under his foundation. Do the women in your culture ever wear veils?”

“Yes, during funerals, and some religious ceremonies. But melomitas wear them often. I have several in my quarters,” said Rica, bowing deeply.

“Please fetch me one,” ordered Gillian.

She returned moments later.

Tiny clips attached the translucent white chiffon to loops on his earrings on each side. It covered the lower bridge of his nose. Horrified, he felt a metal ring holding a single bell penetrate his nostrils to hold the veil over his lips. A row of tiny bells tinkled along the bottom hem below his square jaw, holding the veil down in windy conditions.

“The Royalty class may now disembark. Please proceed to the waiting howdahs at the bottom of the stairs. You shall be transported to your luxury accommodations from there,” announced a voice from the ceiling speaker.

The overnight bags and carryon luggage burdened his shoulders and filled his arms.

“Follow several steps behind your lady, bow your head, and obey her every command,” warned Mari.

“Have a nice stay,” winked Rica.