

Release: Part 3

By Freida Theant

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“Spider,” Allen said.

“Precisely,” she agreed, pointing at the insect with her cigarette. “A disgusting, loathsome spider. That’s him.”

“No. What I meant was, there’s a spider on the wall near your shoulder. Be careful or you’ll brush up against it.”

She started, involuntarily backing into Allen. Instantly he wrapped his arms around her to keep their balance; the force of which bumped a shower of hot ash and sparks from the Pall Mall in his right hand, landing a few on her shorts. “Sorry,” he said, releasing her and brushing off the flecks from her firm thighs, before they could burn holes in the cloth. “But you might be right. That spider’s name might be Hanley... what did you say his name was?”

“Fitzroy.” She answered darkly. “Even here, we have him before us. What with me on bloody holiday, and all that. Is there no getting away from the bloody bugger?”

“Yes, this spider is a bugger all right. If by that you mean it catches bugs.”

“You bloody well know what I mean, Jack Tar,” she shot back. “Unnatural sex acts, with boys.”

“No I didn’t,” he said, “but if this is Hanley, Earl of West... whatever, I think we can get him drunked up.”

Her surprise eclipsed her fury momentarily, “How’s that? Get Hanley the spider drunk?”

“Yeah, bee keepers do it all the time. They smoke out a hive before they move the workers; it makes’em dopey and easier to handle. This is how you get’em drunk.” He pulled a concerted draft from the remaining Pall Mall, and projected the jet of smoke all over the arachnid.

The victim jerked a few inches away from the dense opaque fog, but did not flee.

“Let me try that,” she insisted, shouldering Allen aside. She released her smoke blanket more gently, rolling out the puffs in short billows and actually obscuring the creature.

This time, it jerked away more slowly, and did not travel so far, showing signs of wobbling.

“I think its working already,” Allen proposed, relieved that her thoughts could be diverted from that agonizing commitment. This time, he blew a milky gale so strongly that it shuddered in the blast. In response, the Hanley spider crab-walked a few uncertain steps to the left and rooted itself, as if preparing for the next blast.

“My turn,” she commanded, pulling Allen back by the shoulder more tenderly than before.

As short as her cigarette was now, it took much less pull to fill her mouth with the enriched fumes, and she could savor both its flavor and this game with far less effort. Just as she opened her mouth to mix in a swallow of air, a billow started to escape, but her inhale snapped it back into its warm, moist chamber. Her face brought to just inches above this fiancée surrogate; she opened her mouth full wide and forced the air from deep within her diaphragm to produce a

rolling blizzard of intoxicating opacity. As the fog in miniature lifted, the Hanley surrogate reappeared, motionless.

“Think it’s drunk, yet?” Allen asked.

“Why don’t we perform an experiment and find out? I shall provide a bit of a stimulus, and we shall see how our subject performs,” she announced, imitating her collegiate professor’s pedagogical tone.

Though her pull on this butt was brief, the lively coal hissed and crackled audibly as it glowed to momentary brilliance. She gave the victim a quick dusting with the exhale, tapped off the few loosely clinging ashes and then neared the lighted tip to Hanley. This illuminated the spider in sharp relief, and hinted at the intense heat it must have felt. Hanley responded with a few desperate retreating steps, but was too incapacitated to flee.

“I should say it’s working,” she announced proudly. Then addressing the victim, she challenged, “Why don’t you go and trundle off, you miserable, wretched creature! What’s the matter, can’t seem to move? Feeling a bit trapped, are you?”

To force the issue, she neared the flame closer but the arachnid could only wobble in reply. She lifted the wand and rolled the burning tip with a twisting motion directly on top of her victim, “There now, that should warm things up a bit.”

Instead of a response, the fibers of his legs curled up into balls of scorched, melting protein, followed by the barest hissing of boiling spider lymph from its body and a new column of mixed spider steam and tobacco smoke rising furiously.

In this semi-shadow, her eyes gleamed with a blend of dark joy, fascination and an element of nameless pleasure seated from within her; something akin to a climax. Her pulse quickened, and her fingers showed a hint of tremor. Then she jammed the butt, flame end first, over the victim and roasting and crushing it simultaneously.

"That's all for you, you nasty bugger," Nimbsy said, pressing the butt a second longer, and then turning to a frozen Allen, broadcasting his astonishment through his expression and posture.

"My God, that felt good" she said in breathy tones, almost purring, an octave below her speaking voice. "I haven't felt so much relief since I decided to come to Bermuda on holiday, to get away from all those wretched wedding plans, arguments over invitations, stuffy relatives, endless protocol and so on."

An orange streak leaving his hand and a shower of sparks on the gritty step signaled the fall of his butt, so an astonished Allen crushed it out with a twist of his leather sole. The waver in his voice betrayed him; his weak reply took effort, "Well, I'm glad you got that out of your system." A different sensation flooded him as the shock subsided; a feeling from below the pit of his stomach; one that commanded his bone to become royal. 'Fuckin hard on, now? What's wrong with me?' he asked himself in tortured thought.

Being on the step ahead of him positioned her face just above his, and with her hands at her side and slightly behind, inclined forward, "I can't thank you enough for this." She laid a gentle, casual brushing kiss over his tensed lips, but his hand rose to cradle that deep brown hair with a loving caress as he drew her face into his more firmly. His responding kiss spoke of more passion than she had just shown but her response was every bit as warm. Without a thought, her arms entwined him, and they shared breath between caresses. Her torso moved forward, to melt into him and there she felt his royal member crying for attention in its own rigid way. She purred a soft, guttural Mmmm but otherwise struggled to ignore his involuntary invitation.

The staccato sputtering of a motor bike from the distant street shattered their mutual trance, and fear of intruding visitors parted the amorous pair. Her desperate look signaled the disappointment that she felt with this interruption, and his face showed an equal frustration, but he took her hand in his, and silently, except for the grating of the leather soles on the gritty stones, they descended the downward spiral interlocked.

Once again in the glare of the tropical sun, she shook her hair to fluff it up, reached into her purse, and reset her make up with the compact drawn from within. Finally, daring to comment, she said, "It's probably well that we stopped where we did. I can't imagine what that would have led to."

Allen could only reply with a philosophical but pained smile.

“I mean, we were in no way prepared for... Well, you know what I mean. It was hardly the time or place...” she said.

“Of course not,” but Allen’s tone contradicted the literal meaning of his answer.

“Of course not,” she echoed, unconvincingly. “Perhaps we should continue our walk, so that you get to tour the rest of the sights you wanted to see.”

Which is what they did, walking and exchanging autobiographical tales with the energy born from the tension of frustration. They took in the many birthday cake 18th and 19th century slate roofed buildings housing their period appointed chambers, halls and rooms, and, over the hours meandered toward Ft.St.Catherine. The sky was already recoloring herself in a palette of sunset hues as they paced the stone ramparts of the ancient guardian, and feeling hunger from the day’s activities. An unexpected delight awaited them when they discovered that the fortress’ gunpowder magazine had been converted into quite the elegant subterranean restaurant.

“Would you like to have dinner here, and then we can head back to Hamilton?” Allen proposed. “This time, I’ll get the tab.”

“I should like that very much,” she answered. “But you needn’t pay for my dinner. I can pay my way. After all, you’re on Jack Tar’s budget, which I imagine can’t be all that much.”

Descending the stony stairs they passed into a cavernous world, illuminated by candle lamps alone; first entering beneath the gothic portal, and into the chamber of vaulted ceilings and windowless rock walls. Allen was the first to comment, “I’ve never been in a dungeon before, but if I had, this’d be what I’d expect.”

“Well I have, and you’re precisely right,” she agreed. “This place is terribly ... well, private. Blocked off from the world. It will do, quite nicely. Shall we?” and she led them to the host, who positioned them at a table in a comfortably obscure corner.

The white jacketed host struck his match and dipped it down the glass chimney to light the wick of the wax taper, laid menus before them, proposed before-dinner drinks, which they declined in favor of ice water, and left them to ponder their choices. Both tourists checked the linen covered surface at the same time for the presence of an ashtray. Recognizing each other’s simultaneous thought brought smiles their faces, and Allen understood this to be time to plunk the more-than-half empty Pall Malls beside the bulky ceramic ashtray. She picked and tapped one down, removed the glass chimney and brought the candle flame to the tip. With a quick pull, she transferred the fire to the edge, squirted the waste puff out and with single-handed dexterity turned it over, moist edge first, offering it to Allen. He grinned his appreciation as he grasped her thoughtful gesture between his thumb and forefinger; she winked in reply, and candle flamed one of her own.

Tearing his eyes free and turning in his chair to inspect the massive enclosure he noted, “This’d make a pretty good bomb shelter. Now that China has set off their first atomic bomb, I got a feeling there’s gonna be more attention paid to this kinda thing.”

“I rather see our chamber here as more of a bastion of stability in a changing and dangerous world,” she suggested. “Since the official report from the Warren Commission was issued last week, it’s been in all the papers, and newscasts. There are rumors of all kinds that Kennedy’s assassination last year is part of a global conspiracy, Khrushchev was booted out and Kosygin is in; even your President Lyndon Johnson isn’t doing so well, what with that Gulf of Tonkin thing. It’s nice to duck into a cozy little cave like this for a bit, just to relax and reassure oneself that the world will somehow muddle through, just as it has always done.”

“Yeah, I know ... the world will somehow get through it all.” Allen drew on his cigarette vigorously, and then flowed the smoke out his nostrils in slender ribbons that turned feathery as they flattened and spread outwards on the tabletop in concentric tides of blue-white. “But that’s not what I’m concerned about,” he continued. “It’s you that worries me. Isn’t there anything you can do about this engagement? I mean, tons of engagements are broken every year, and life still goes on.”

She held her cigarette upright between her thumb and forefinger and studied the continuous

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plume wriggling up from the miniature furnace before answering, "As I told you earlier, it's not my choice to make." Seating the cigarette in her mouth, she took a studied hit and spoke, enveloping her words in thin, staccato clouds of exhaled smoke, "My grandfather is the Marquis of Waldshire." She expelled the last of the fumes, cleared her throat and tapped off the loose ash, "There's some kind of hold that Fitzroy must have over him, for he would never have insisted on this union otherwise." Again she patted the slender Pall Mall with her long finger nervously for there was no loose ash, and gingerly rolled the burning tip over the base of the ashtray, shaping the coal into a penis head. "I don't know what he has, precisely, but it's something akin to a blackmail situation."

"Is there some kind of advantage that this Hanley Fitzroy gains from marrying you?"

To be continued...