

RANDOM HOUSE  BOOKS



Savage Surrender

Deanna Ashford

Contents

Cover

Title Page

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Copyright

Yasmin allowed the slave to massage the sweet-smelling cream into her sex as Rianna looked on, colouring with embarrassment. Yasmin lifted her hips and urged the slave's hand against her until she gave in to her climax. Determinedly Rianna concentrated on washing herself, pushing away the helping hands of the other slaves. Yasmin, pink-faced and happy, smiled at Rianna. 'Your upbringing has clearly denied you much pleasure,' she said.

'Life here is very different,' Rianna replied, wondering what other humiliations were in store for her.

Savage Surrender

Deanna Ashford



Chapter One

A SHAFT OF sunlight broke through the clouds, streaming in through the large, arched window at the far end of the great hall of the castle of Nort, home of Gerek, Protector of Harn. Golden rays pierced the gloomy interior, focusing on the raised dais in the centre of the great hall where a man and woman were standing.

‘It is not possible,’ Gerek, Protector of Harn said with controlled fury. ‘I’ve told you that any number of times before.’

‘So you have.’ Rianna glared at her father, her green eyes full of defiance. ‘But I refuse to accept that a woman cannot be named Protector of Harn. It is my birthright. I am your only child, yet you intend to name my spineless cousin, Otis, as your heir.’

‘Because I have no other choice,’ Gerek replied in frustration, high colour staining his weather-beaten cheeks. ‘The law clearly states that the Protector must be a man.’

‘Huh! Otis is no man,’ Rianna sneered. ‘He’s a coward and a fool. Harn will not be safe in his hands.’

‘Otis will be well advised by those that surround him. I have made sure of that.’

‘But I would make a far better Protector.’

‘Maybe so, Rianna,’ Gerek agreed. ‘But the law clearly states a woman cannot succeed.’

‘Then change it!’ she challenged.

Gerek sank on to his ornately carved throne. ‘Nothing is that simple. Even if I wanted it, the people would never accept such a change. Centuries of tradition cannot be

ignored. Here in Harn, men are warriors and masters, while women are homemakers and bearers of children.'

'But my mother was a warrior,' Rianna stormed, frustrated by his old-fashioned rigidity.

'And I respected Kitara's right to be a warrior – it was part of her heritage. But you are not your mother and you must defer to my wishes.'

'If only mother were still alive,' Rianna said sadly. 'She would make you see that I am right.'

'I would give everything I own to see your mother just once again. Nine years have passed since her death, but I still miss her.' Gerek's expression softened. 'You are so like her, my child.'

Rianna was the most beautiful woman in his kingdom. She was tall, almost as tall as Gerek, with long shapely limbs, and skin as pale and flawless as alabaster. Her large, green eyes dominated her heart-shaped face, their shimmering depths as beguiling as the deepest of forest pools. Long, luxuriant curls of a glorious golden-red framed her face, enhancing her delicate beauty. Rianna's striking looks turned the heads and stirred the loins of every man that laid eyes on her.

'Mother would never have made me marry a man I've never even met.'

'Your mother was well aware of the responsibilities that come with our position, Rianna. This alliance will ensure peace between Harn and Percheron. Your future husband is no ordinary man. Lord Sarin rules a land four times the size of Harn. He has a wealth and power I can never aspire to. Most women would be happy to be betrothed to him.'

Rianna proudly raised her head. 'But I am not most women. Only devotion to you and my loyalty to my country will send me to Percheron, nothing else.'

She had always known that her marriage would be arranged, but expected to be allowed some choice in the matter of her future husband. That was before Lord Sarin

had invaded a number of small principalities on the western borders of Percheron and Harn. If it had not been for her hasty betrothal, Harn might well have suffered a similar fate. Gerek's army could never withstand the military might of Percheron, and her marriage had been arranged many months ago. But the arrival yesterday of Chancellor Lesand, the personal representative of Lord Sarin, made her uncomfortably aware of what the future now held for her.

'I wish I could let you choose your own husband, Rianna. But I am sure you will grow fond of Sarin. Perhaps even one day you will come to love him as much as I loved your mother.' Gerek rose to his feet and moved to take Rianna in his arms, but she backed away from him.

'No, Father. Tender words of encouragement will not make me change my mind.'

'Neither will your protestations alter my position on this matter,' Gerek said harshly. 'In order to ensure the future safety of Harn, the marriage must go ahead. The final details will be settled and the marriage contract will be signed this very evening. In the circumstances, I suggest that you order the maidservants to begin packing. Chancellor Lesand wishes to depart before the end of the week.'

'Rianna! I have been looking for you,' Veba scolded, rising from her seat in the window embrasure just outside her charge's room. 'Where have you been?'

'In the stables,' Rianna replied. 'I was seeing to Freya. Joab, one of the stable-boys, says that she is off her food.' The pretty white mare had been a recent gift from her father, and Rianna loved her dearly. 'You worry too much, Veba.'

'Worry? Why not?' Veba seemed agitated. 'Look at the state of you, child. Your dress is filthy and your hair is a mess.'

‘No matter, the gown is old.’ Rianna glanced down; the hem of her dress was damp and muddied. ‘I shall not be taking this garment with me. Father has provided me with many new gowns, and together with the ones –’

‘Hush,’ Veba interrupted. ‘You should not tarry here. The Chancellor is waiting in your chamber.’

‘In my chamber? For what reason?’ Rianna frowned. ‘Is that not a little improper?’

‘It appears that a short ceremony has to be performed before the marriage contract can be signed,’ Veba explained. ‘Chancellor Lesand wishes no delay. He intends to carry out the ceremony as soon as possible.’

Rianna was bewildered. No mention had been made of any ceremony during all the discussions with the Chancellor and her father. ‘Very well,’ she said with an irritated sigh. Beckoning Veba to accompany her, Rianna pulled open the heavy oak door and stepped inside her room.

The stone walls of Rianna’s chamber were hung with brightly coloured tapestries depicting the many flowers and animals of Harn. A number of large, cream sheepskins were sewn together to cover the cold stone flags. To the right, in an alcove set apart from the rest of the room, was a wooden four-poster bed, hung with lavish curtains of lemon brocade. There was little other furniture, only a couple of chairs and three carved oak chests which held most of Rianna’s clothes.

‘Lady Rianna,’ greeted Chancellor Lesand as he rose with graceful elegance from the chair in front of the window. ‘You have returned. I was becoming a little concerned.’

‘I was not aware you were waiting for me, Chancellor. After talking to my father, I visited the stables. I am sorry if I kept you waiting longer than necessary.’

‘It is I who should apologise,’ Lesand smiled cautiously. ‘I am intruding on your privacy, my lady.’

Rianna stifled her irritation at the intrusion. ‘No matter, Chancellor. I understand you wish to perform some kind of

ceremony?’

‘Indeed,’ he nodded gravely. ‘It is a necessary prerequisite to the marriage contract.’

‘It is odd the matter was not mentioned to me before.’ Rianna was very aware of the tangled state of her hair and shabbiness of her dress. Lesand had never seen her so ill-attired.

The Chancellor, as usual, looked immaculate in a long, blue velvet robe embroidered with gold. Although well past fifty, he was still an attractive man. Tall and slender, with a narrow face and rather prominent nose, he had the olive skin and dark hair that appeared prevalent among the men of Percheron. The soldiers who accompanied Lesand were all clean shaven, but he had a small, distinguished-looking, goatee beard.

Rianna found Lesand fascinating and so very different from all the other men she knew. Gerek and his courtiers never wore such elaborate garments or paid so much attention to their appearance, and the warriors of Harn did not pomade their hair or manicure their nails.

The Chancellor looked uneasy, perhaps even embarrassed. ‘A regretful oversight, I assure you. The ceremony is necessary to the wedding contract.’ He cleared his throat. ‘The prospective bride must be examined to ensure she has no unsightly scars or defects. Also it is necessary to confirm that she has not been defiled by another man. Above all else, Sarin’s bride must be a virgin.’

Rianna paled. ‘Does my father know of these requirements?’

‘He does,’ Veba confirmed, moving to her side and gently taking hold of her arm. ‘My child, most noblemen expect a virgin bride. It is not unusual for them to ask for it to be physically proven.’

‘That is so,’ Lesand added gravely.

The information did not make Rianna feel any better, but she knew she would have to submit to this indignity. Her

father would never forgive her if she refused the examination; it was even likely he would insist it was carried out forcibly.

‘And who will conduct this ceremony?’ she asked, doing her best to hide her discomfort.

‘I will,’ Lesand acknowledged, inclining his head.

‘You!’ Rianna exclaimed, her eyes opening wide in surprise.

‘Yes. The examination must be carried out by one of Lord Sarin’s most trusted servants. Therefore, he has assigned me to the task.’

‘But I thought only a woman . . .?’

‘In the circumstances that is not possible,’ Lesand replied with polite regret. ‘I assure you my lady, it will pain me as much as it does you.’

‘Then I have no choice?’ Rianna’s voice shook with emotion.

‘Come, my sweet.’ Veba tenderly led Rianna towards the bed as she whispered, ‘You are the daughter of the Protector. You must submit to this examination with royal dignity.’

There was nothing dignified about this, Rianna thought heatedly.

While the Chancellor turned diplomatically towards the window to afford Rianna some privacy, Veba began to unlace the back of her gown. Once Rianna was naked, Veba helped her to lie down on the bed, then covered her with a white linen sheet.

‘Courage,’ Veba whispered. ‘Bear your discomfort in silence. Most noble ladies have to endure this.’

‘But not at the hands of a man, usually it is a midwife,’ Rianna muttered.

Veba said nothing more, just walked over to the Chancellor and advised him that her mistress was ready. Ordering the nurse to stay by the window, Lesand stepped

over to the bed, pointedly ignoring Rianna's expression of unease.

'I have told your maid she may remain as long as she does not interfere with my task,' Lesand said in a soft reassuring tone. 'Now please turn on to your stomach.'

Rianna rolled over, keeping a tight hold on the sheet. But there was little point in her display of modesty, for as soon as she was settled, Lesand pulled the sheet down to her feet, exposing the whole of her body to his view. She stiffened, pressing her face into her pillow. Her hands clenched at her sides. The Chancellor was examining her, looking for disfiguring blemishes or scars. The room was quite chilly, but Rianna felt hot with shame and embarrassment. She began to wish her body was less than perfect, that she had a birthmark or terrible scar. Then Lord Sarin would refuse to wed her and she could remain in Harn forever.

'You are beautiful, Lady Rianna.' He touched her back, running his fingers down the length of her spine until he reached the crack of her bottom. 'Your skin is as soft as the petal of a rose. My master will be well pleased with his bride.'

So far Rianna had managed to retain her composure. However, she could not hold back her gasp of horror as he pulled her buttocks apart, exposing her tiny nether mouth. The terrible intimacy made her want to shrink away from him, beg him to stop. She clenched her teeth, forcing herself to remain motionless while he stroked the small, puckered entrance to her anus. But then he pressed against the ring of flesh as if intending to force his finger inside. 'No,' Rianna gasped.

'Do not concern yourself,' Lesand said coolly. 'I have seen enough.' He removed his hands from her body. 'Now, please turn over so that I can complete my task.'

Reluctantly, Rianna rolled on to her back, knowing that her breasts and sex were now exposed to his view. She half-

closed her eyes, peeping at him through her long lashes, while a crimson flush of humiliation stained her cheeks.

Lesand leant forward, touching her lightly on the shoulder. His fingers slid caressingly over her creamy skin. Moulding his palms to her contours, he cupped her breasts and squeezed her tender flesh. The feel of his cool hands was not entirely unpleasant, and when he touched her nipples, rubbing them with his fingertips and plucking at the tiny nubs, they began to harden, growing into sensitive peaks.

‘Your body was made for love,’ he said huskily.

Rianna did not reply; she was too intent on steeling herself as his hands moved lower. He stroked her belly and ran his fingers through the red-gold curls at her pubis. Rianna swallowed, her mouth suddenly dry. Oddly enough the caressing touch had become almost pleasurable. She felt a sudden desire to relax completely, let her legs fall open and give herself up to the strange languor that was overtaking her limbs.

She gave a soft involuntary sigh as Lesand’s hands slipped between her thighs. He cupped her sex, pressing against her vulva with the palm of his hand. Rianna’s sex was hot, her pouting, pink lips swollen. He slid one finger into the warm moist opening, and stroked the soft inner flesh. As Lesand began to explore her secret valley, the heat of her embarrassment was replaced by another, more fiery warmth, deep within her belly. Gradually the compelling motion of his fingers became more and more enticing.

Rianna clenched her hands at her sides feeling confused by the amazing sensations that were building inside her. She no longer knew for certain if she wanted Chancellor Lesand to finish or continue.

‘Part your legs wide, then bend your knees and lift your hips towards me,’ he commanded.

Modesty overcame her again. She forced her limbs to move, her legs trembling as she did as she was ordered. The most secret parts of herself were being revealed to a virtual

stranger. An unfamiliar moisture filled her sex and she prayed that Chancellor Lesand would not detect her body's strange response to his touch.

'Don't be afraid, this will not hurt.' Lesand took a small porcelain jar from his pocket and dipped his finger in the sweet smelling oil contained within the pot.

Rianna tensed, biting her lip as she watched Lesand lean forward. He carefully peeled apart her swollen sex lips to inspect the deep pink flesh within. Moving his fingers along the valley he anointed it with the aromatic oil. The viscous liquid coated her secret flesh, polishing it to perfection. His oiled fingers delicately brushed the tip of her clitoris, the touch as gentle as a butterfly's wing. The sensation was exquisite, and sent a thousand bowstrings reverberating through her body. Rianna shivered and unconsciously pushed her hips up towards him.

She heard Lesand make a sound from deep in his throat as his fingers circled the delicate bud. He stroked the tiny nubbin, then squeezed it gently and she jerked her legs in surprise. Why did she gain such immense pleasure when he touched that one small portion of her body? An unfamiliar, aching tightness was growing inside her that begged for release.

Suddenly, to her consternation, Lesand's attention moved away from the bud. She wanted to cry out and beg him to continue touching the tender spot, as the tiny, throbbing nubbin wept for his touch. Determinedly she held back her moan of disappointment and stayed silent, cursing her body's lewd immodesty.

She had known all along why Lesand was examining her, but she still tensed in surprise when he began to massage the tight ring of flesh that protected her womanly sheath. It gradually began to soften and relax, enabling him to slide two fingers deep inside her.

Soon his searching fingers discovered the fine membrane of her virginity. 'You are fortunate that the proof of your

chastity is intact, my lady,' he said with a faint smile. 'I hear that you are a great horsewoman. Exercise can often damage such a fragile barrier of flesh.'

Rianna expected him to withdraw his fingers from her at once, but they lingered inside her, gently stroking the velvety walls. She shuddered, relishing the unexpected enjoyment the intimate caresses were invoking deep within her feminine parts. Her inner flesh rippled with excited pleasure, and of their own accord, her hips began to move in an accompanying rhythm. The stretching and stroking sensations were leading her upwards towards the brink of something wonderful and unknown. Just as she was about to reach the summit, Lesand gently eased his fingers from her body, leaving her moist, throbbing and wanting. He looked down at her, a calm, unreadable expression on his face. Rianna blushed and clamped her legs together, feeling confused by her unbidden response and inwardly bewailing her unseemly behaviour.

'I regret I had to be so intrusive,' Lesand said apologetically. Pressing her legs down on the bed, he covered her trembling body with the sheet. 'Lord Sarin ordered me to gauge your sensitivity to matters of a sensual nature. Being a man of Epicurean tastes, he wishes to be assured that his bride will be a willing partner in the pleasures of the flesh.'

'Maybe so, Chancellor,' she said in an icy tone, her mind in total turmoil. 'But now this is at an end, I would be obliged if you would depart. I wish to be alone.'

Gerek strode into his bedchamber. Sunlight streamed in through the two, deep-set window alcoves, one each side of the large fireplace, the hearth of which was empty as the spring weather was uncommonly mild. Dominating the room was a large four-poster bed, with thick, red velvet bed curtains that could be tightly drawn in the chill of winter. A matching red velvet spread covered the bed, and thrown

across the top was a skin of creamy white fur. No one Gerek knew had ever laid eyes on such a pelt. Kitara had purchased it from a travelling merchant who claimed it came from a rare white bear that only lived in the frozen wastes of the far north, well beyond the borders of Harn. Other skins, mostly wolf or brown bear, were scattered upon the floor, almost totally concealing the cold stone slabs.

Gerek shrugged off his leather jerkin, dropped it on the floor and sat down on the bed. He had never met Sarin, but knew him to be a firm, sometimes brutal monarch, who ruled Percheron with an iron hand. However, he was also a patron of the arts, and worshipped beauty above all else. Gerek was certain that Rianna's loveliness would win his heart and perhaps in time Rianna would come to care for Sarin.

He wondered if Kitara would have agreed with his decision. Would she have been prepared to sacrifice her daughter for the good of Harn? Even now, after all these years, he still missed Kitara. He only had to close his eyes to conjure up a vision of her wondrous beauty. Her musky feminine scent had driven him wild with desire every time he had been close to her. After her loss he'd spent many hours just lying on his bed, holding her garments close, comforted by the lingering smell of her. But that sweet scent had long since faded from her belongings.

A vision of Kitara in all her naked glory filled his mind; long firm limbs, sleek hips, and a waist so narrow he could span it with his hands. Her breasts had been perfection itself, full and uptilted, tipped by dark brown nipples that begged for the touch of his lips.

Gerek sat down on his bed, his mind consumed by thoughts of Kitara. He would have given everything he possessed to once again touch the soft curve of her belly and the sun-kissed red fleece of her sex. His fingers ached to explore the secret pink crevices between her shapely thighs, to feel the moist welcoming warmth as he plunged

his manhood into her again and again, while she begged him to move harder and faster.

He groaned softly as the familiar heat of desire flooded his belly, forcing blood into his groin and filling his flesh until it expanded and grew firmer. His penis began to throb insistently, pressing against the constricting leather of his breeches. Gerek savoured the pleasure ache of his arousal, enmeshed in dreams of his lost love.

His private thoughts were interrupted by a cautious knock on his door.

‘Enter,’ he growled, irritated by the intrusion.

‘My lord,’ said a nervous-looking page as he entered the room. ‘Chancellor Lesand bade me bring you this.’ The page moved cautiously towards the bed. He was carrying a large pewter tray on which reposed a heavy green bottle and a silver goblet. ‘Wine from Lord Sarin’s vineyard.’

‘Pour me some.’ This was a rare treat for Gerek; usually he drank ale or mead, both of which were produced locally. There were no vineyards in Harn, as the weather was too inclement, so wine was uncommonly expensive and only drunk on special occasions.

He watched the page place the tray on a carved oak table and carefully pour a generous measure of wine into the goblet. ‘Bring it here,’ Gerek ordered.

‘My lord.’ The page carried the goblet over to the bed, his hand shaking slightly as he handed it to Gerek.

Gerek took a large gulp of the rich red wine, feeling its smooth warmth slide down to his stomach. It tasted good, of warm sunshine and ripe summer fruit. ‘A fine wine. Send my thanks to the Chancellor. Your name, boy?’

‘Adan, my lord,’ the page stuttered.

‘Adan, I wish you to seek out the maidservant known as Jenna. It is likely you will find her in the sewing room at this time of the day. Bid her come to me.’

‘Yes, my lord,’ Adan replied.

‘And hurry, boy,’ Gerek growled.

After Adan departed, Gerek drained the goblet in a few gulps and let it drop to the floor. Of all the castle maidservants who regularly shared his bed, Jenna was his favourite. She wasn't exceptionally beautiful or fine of figure, but she had a wild uninhibited approach to lovemaking that pleased Gerek. The other maidservants just lay there and let him do what he wanted. Jenna, on the other hand, took the initiative and guided his pleasure to even greater heights.

The wine increased the fire in his loins, and Gerek shifted position, easing the tight leather of his breeches away from his swollen shaft. Doubtless Jenna would not take long in coming to him, as she was always ready and eager for sex whatever time of day or night he sent for her.

He listened to the familiar sounds drifting in through the open windows; the idle chatter of servants, the clatter of horses' hooves on the cobblestones, and the distant clash of metal upon metal as his men-at-arms practised their swordplay. Life in Harn was good, he reflected. He had a comfortable home, food in his belly, servants to do his bidding, and a number of willing wenches to share his bed.

Moments later, Jenna entered the room breathless from running, her cheeks flushed, her hair awry.

'Protector,' she smiled. 'You sent for me?'

'I have need of you.' Gerek hoped Jenna's passions would help him forget his concerns for Rianna's future. It mattered not how bad he felt, he told himself, her fate was set and there was nothing he could do to change it. 'Come here and take off my boots,' he ordered.

Jenna stepped forward, and knelt to ease off Gerek's long leather boots. The first slid off easily, but the other proved more difficult. She turned her back to him, knelt astride his lower leg and closed her sturdy thighs. Gerek braced his bare foot against one cheek of her round bottom, while she pulled at the heel of the boot. The boot seemed reluctant to forsake Gerek's leg, but eventually it came off, leaving his

foot still between her thighs. With a husky laugh he pressed it upwards, trying to rub her crotch through the thick worsted of her skirt.

‘What is your desire now, lord?’ she asked as she rose to face him.

‘Need you ask?’ He grinned wickedly. ‘Remove your dress.’

Jenna’s work-roughened fingers reached for the small bone buttons at the front of her blue wool gown. Usually she took her time, unfastening them slowly and seductively in order to heighten his arousal. Today, she seemed eager to be rid of the garment. She pulled her bodice apart, ripping the buttons from their fabric loops, heedless of the damage to her gown.

Jenna never bothered with undergarments, and her large breasts spilt temptingly from the opening. They jiggled slightly as she unfastened the rest of the buttons to reveal her softly curving stomach. Thick curly brown hair, even darker than the hair on her head, covered her mound. It brushed the juncture of her thighs, which she kept firmly pressed together. Gerek knew what delights she was concealing; her secret flesh was rosy and inviting, the colour deepening when she was fully aroused.

The other maidservants smelt of soap and little else. Jenna, however, always smelt of spring flowers and fragrant herbs. Many times she had fed him some strange concoction brewed from herbs to help enhance their lovemaking. Jenna’s mother was a midwife and healer, as her mother before her had been, but Jenna’s interest in herbs extended no further than their use in prolonging pleasure. Once, she had rubbed a handful of strange leaves all over his penis. The skin had stung and his shaft had become so hard it had felt as it might burst. It had remained erect for hours and hours, and they had made love all night.

Jenna let her dress drop to the floor and slipped off her sandals. Her breasts were full and pear-shaped, the tips

drawn out somewhat and ending in large reddish nipples, surrounded by aureoles of a deeper reddish brown.

‘Loosen your hair,’ Gerek said hungrily, as the fire in his loins increased.

She lifted her hands to unpin her long hair. As she strained her arms upwards, her breasts were raised high on her ribcage, making them appear even fuller and more rounded than usual. The skin tightened and her nipples swelled provocatively, turning into two firm cones, begging to be touched.

The small dark tufts of hair in her armpits were revealed, and Gerek recalled how Lesand had told him that, in Percheron, women believed such hair unattractive and removed it from their bodies. He wondered what Jenna would look like totally denuded. When she opened her legs, the swollen pink lips of her sex would be easily visible; such a sight he would find immensely arousing.

Hairpins scattered across the floor as Jenna shook her head and her long hair cascaded down over her shoulders and back. Strands of hair fell over her breasts, almost covering them, apart from two hard nubbins peeping enticingly through the brown curls.

Gerek went to unfasten the ties that held his white linen shirt together. ‘No, lord. Let me attend to that.’ Leaning forward Jenna pushed his hands away.

Letting his arms fall limply to his sides, Gerek watched Jenna undo the knotted fastenings. Her hair fell forward, sweetly scented strands brushing his cheeks, while her voluptuous breasts jiggled enticingly in front of his eyes. He could not resist touching one, cupping the generous globe in his palm and feeling its weight. He squeezed the soft flesh, hearing her indrawn hiss of pleasure as he began to knead it gently.

Gerek’s hands were toughened by many years of training with the sword, axe and bow. The tips of his fingers were now as hard as old leather. He rubbed the pad of his thumb

over her nipple, grazing the sensitive nub which grew in size, jutting out obscenely. He milked the tiny teat, rolling it between his fingers. Jenna quivered with pleasure and gave a breathy moan. Straining his head forward, Gerek went to pull the nipple into his mouth.

‘Not yet,’ Jenna implored. ‘Let me undress you first, my lord.’ She pressed her palm down hard on the mound at his groin.

‘Hurry!’ he groaned as his pleasure ache increased. His cock throbbed excitedly, the swollen end pulsing, but it could grow no bigger, confined as it was by the tight leather.

Smiling, Jenna removed her hand. ‘Not too quickly,’ she whispered huskily.

She eased off his linen shirt to reveal his broad, well-muscled chest. His skin was deeply tanned and marked by scars from wounds received in battle. A thick mat of crisp brown curls covered his chest, descending in an arrow towards his flat belly. Sinking to her knees, she ran her hands through the springy hair, caressing the raised ridges of his many scars. His iron-hard stomach was banded by a wide leather belt. Jenna fumbled with the ornate silver buckle, struggling to unfasten it, but her eyes kept straying to the swollen mound of his sex where the soft brown leather of his breeches was stretched drum-tight over the engorged flesh.

Gerek groaned, his senses aroused to fever pitch. The musky scent of desire seeped from Jenna’s body, and he could hardly bear to wait a moment longer; his sex screamed out for the touch of her lips and fingers.

‘I can see your need is urgent.’ Jenna unfastened the buckle, letting the belt drop to his sides, then she tugged at the laces of his breeches. The thin cords became tangled as she tried to unfasten them. She cursed under her breath and pulled harder, snapping one of the cords in her eagerness to release Gerek’s phallus from its confinement.

At last the laces gave way, allowing her to pull his breeches apart. Gerek's engorged cock reared out of the opening. The stem was rigid, the bulb at the top hard and a dark purplish red, while a tiny bead of moisture dangled like an enticing dewdrop from the narrow mouth at its tip.

'Pleasure me, now,' Gerek demanded.

Jenna licked her lips, pleased with his swift arousal. Almost three weeks had passed since he had last sent for her, and she'd begun to think he was tiring of her company. She comforted herself with the thought that he had sent for no other maidservant and slept alone, eventually convincing herself that his lack of desire was only caused by his concern over the imminent marriage of the Lady Rianna.

'Yes, lord,' she said softly, as Gerek raised his arms above his head. The muscles in his chest stretched, his belly tightened, and his penis jutted upwards even higher.

The sight of him dressed only in the form-fitting leather breeches with his sex exposed was powerfully erotic, adding an extra facet to Jenna's pleasure. Trembling in her eagerness, she jerked his breeches apart even more, pulling the tight leather away from the base of his cock. It reared from its bed of pubic hair, which was much thicker and coarser than that on his chest. Gently she eased his soft seed sac from its hiding place. Every month that he bedded her, she hoped that one of his seeds would take root within her body and grow into the son Gerek had always desired, but her prayers had remained unanswered.

Placing her hands on his thighs, Jenna pushed his legs apart as wide as they would comfortably stretch and stepped between them. She leant her head forward, allowing her long hair to fall across his chest and belly, so that with every movement of her head the soft strands would tantalisingly stroke his flesh.

First, she just touched the rigid shaft, gauging his readiness for fulfilment. The skin was tight, but not as yet

taut as it could be. When it was fully engorged the surface was stretched so hard that the skin turned smooth and shiny. Curving her hand around the base, just above the root, she began to pump up and down, moving only half a finger length at first, not wanting to bring him to a climax too swiftly. With slow precision she slid her hand higher, until she was milking the shaft in a smooth erotic rhythm.

Gerek's eyes closed, and his mouth parted in a series of breathy moans. He rolled his head from side to side. 'Yes, oh, yes,' he groaned.

His penis grew iron-hard, while the tiny bead of moisture at its mouth elongated and increased in size. Eventually it became too heavy to remain where it was, and rolled slowly down the side of the head. Jenna stopped it with her finger, rubbing the salty moisture all over the domed tip.

Gerek shuddered, his stomach muscles trembling. 'Pump harder,' he grunted through gritted teeth, pushing his hips up towards Jenna. 'My need is great. I have denied my body for too long.'

'For far too long,' Jenna replied huskily.

Lifting the seed sac, she gently stroked the velvety skin. The sac had increased in size, the balls it contained hardening into two firm stones. Employing just the tip of her tongue she licked his sex head. When it was shiny with her saliva she pursed her lips and slid them smoothly over the glans. She began to suck, pulling at the inflamed flesh, running her tongue around the rim until she heard him groan softly again.

With one hand she pumped the shaft, while the other stroked the root of his sex, the bag of his testicles, and the tender ridge of skin just behind it. She slid her lips further down the stem, taking more and more of it into her mouth, until the head of his cock hit the back of her throat.

Gerek stretched his body, arching his back and pushing his hip upwards, trying to force all of the stem into her mouth. Jenna accommodated as much of his shaft as she

could, while she squeezed her thighs together. The heat of her own desire was throbbing richly inside her sex. She was still savouring the sensation when she felt Gerek's organ pulse and his muscles tense. She acted swiftly. Pulling his penis from her mouth, she placed her thumb on one side of the rim of his cock head and two fingers the other side, then she pressed them hard together for a few seconds.

'What!' Gerek gasped, opening his eyes.

Jenna knew his urge to ejaculate had vanished. Almost simultaneously his erection began to subside. Grey eyes, which had been glazed with pleasure, hardened in fury. 'Forgive me, lord. You will recover in a moment,' Jenna said, scared by his sudden anger. 'I just wanted to extend your pleasure, and prevent you from finishing too swiftly.'

'Wench, you forget yourself,' he growled. But he made no attempt to push her away as she ran her fingers over his gradually softening organ. Jenna took that as a sign he was willing to overlook her audacious actions and wanted her to continue.

'Let me show you,' she whispered, touching the wrinkled skin of his shaft with the tip of her tongue. She began to lick its entire length, employing long leisurely strokes, while her hands caressed his chest and played with his nipples, squeezing and pinching the tender buds.

Jenna's moist warm tongue lapping at his penis, and the growing ache in his nipples soon served to excite Gerek and revive his arousal. He drew in his breath. 'Do not presume to do such a thing again without my permission,' he warned, but it was obvious that his anger was slipping away as his desire began to grow once more.

His cock, glistening with her saliva, stirred. Life flooded back into Gerek's flaccid flesh. The shaft began to harden, slowly growing rigid again. Jenna pressed gentle kisses on the stem, watching the skin gradually stretch into tautness, and the bulb swell until it was firm and shiny. His cock reared into the air, straight and proud, whereupon Jenna

began to smack it around the root using just the pads of her fingers. The colour of the stem deepened to a rich red, while the plum turned a darker purple. With each rhythmic smack, it jerked in unison, the skin stretching back so tight that it looked ready to burst.

Gerek's muscles were hard and knotted, the tendons in his neck stood out, and sweat beaded his brow. He groaned imploringly, making Jenna shiver with pleasure, the heat in her belly growing stronger and stronger. Her only desire now was to be impaled on his thick shaft of flesh and to feel its thrusting deep inside her vagina. Moisture seeped hungrily from her sex, contributing to the increasing stickiness between her legs.

'Let me feel you inside me,' she begged. 'It has been so long since I have been filled with your manhood. My body aches for the joy of it.'

'Wilful whore,' Gerek said harshly as he pulled her towards him, lifting her body atop his.

Jenna eased her hips downwards until the tip of Gerek's penis slid into the opening of her honey pot. She then slowly sheathed herself on his sex, pushing down until he filled her completely and the head of his cock nudged the neck of her womb. Jenna sighed contentedly as his body stretched and filled her secret flesh.

The wooden frame of the bed creaked as Jenna lifted her hips until almost the entire length of his slick shaft was revealed, then she plunged her body down again, grinding her pelvis against his.

Gerek groaned and dug his fingers harder into the soft flesh of Jenna's waist as he felt her vagina tighten. She began to wildly pump herself up and down on his phallus in a frenzied dance of seduction. Soon her face was flushed, and her body wet with perspiration. At each thrust, she rotated her hips and arched her back. Gerek found the contrast in

pressure highly erotic as his cock followed the movements of her silken sheath.

The musky odour of her pleasure filled Gerek's nostrils. He inhaled the sharp scent, his fingers straying towards the crack in her bottom. With each welcoming movement he pulled the fleshy globes further apart, the rough pads of his fingertips grazing her sensitive inner flesh.

Jenna's excitement increased. Her body jerked, and her breasts bounced up and down in front of his eyes. Juices flowed from her vagina, generously coating Gerek's phallus, and contributing to the soft sucking sounds of flesh upon flesh. She ground her pelvis against Gerek's, lifting herself to repeat the frenzied movement again and again.

Lost in his own haze of pleasure, Gerek was barely aware that his thumbs were pulling at the ring of skin that guarded Jenna's bottom mouth. The tip of one ragged nail scraped the sensitive barrier, making Jenna gasp with wanton bliss. Her vagina throbbed, milking Gerek's engorged shaft. He lost control completely, his cock pulsing as the seed surged from his body. Pleasure came to them both in wave upon wave, taking them over the summit and into the chasm of ecstasy.

Rianna lay on her back, looking up at the sky. When she was younger she had spent hours staring at the clouds, seeing in them the shapes of dragons and other mythical creatures. But she was in no mood for such flights of fancy today.

After Lesand left, she had not allowed herself to spend time wallowing in misery. Instead, she'd changed into the breeches and jerkin she always wore for riding, and run straight to the stables where Joab had Freya waiting for her. She had ridden to this clearing in the woods at the base of the hill on which the castle of Nort stood. Just behind her was a small wooden hut which her father had built with his own hands. Gerek and Kitara had come here when they wanted to get away from the pressure of royal life. Now it

was derelict and abandoned, and only Rianna came to this secret place.

Masses of bluebells carpeted the leafy glade, filling the air with the smell of spring. Rianna sighed – she would miss the contrasting seasons they had in Harn. Percheron lay in the far south and it was warm all the year round.

When she first met Chancellor Lesand, he had told her of the luxurious life that awaited her in Percheron. The castle of Nort was tiny compared to Lord Sarin's marble palace, with its miles of corridors and hundreds of elaborately decorated, high-ceilinged rooms.

And what of her bridegroom, Lord Sarin? She reached into the pocket of her jerkin to pull out the miniature Chancellor Lesand had given her. It was oval in shape, a little bigger than a hen's egg, and surrounded by a gold frame studded with precious stones. She stared at the portrait, trying to seek out the true measure of her future husband. He was undeniably handsome, with striking, rather angular features, olive skin, jet black hair, and dark piercing eyes. There was a coldness to the set of his thin-lipped mouth that she found oddly compelling, but also a little unnerving. Soon she would share a bed with this man, and be obliged to submit to his sexual demands.

Yesterday, Veba, her elderly nurse, had spoken at some length about the duties of a wife. Rianna had listened carefully, finding it strange that Veba had mentioned nothing about the physical side of marriage. Rianna was not a total innocent, she had watched stallions mate with mares. It had always seemed reasonable to conclude that a coupling between a man and a woman was much the same – a hasty, rather uncomfortable event that had to be endured. But since the humiliating examination by Chancellor Lesand, Rianna had been forced to reassess her opinions. When Lesand touched her secret feminine parts, Rianna had found the experience surprisingly pleasurable. The contact aroused strange desires and filled her head with

visions she did not yet understand. She found herself looking at Joab in a different light when she spoke to him in the stables a short while ago. Never before had she realised how attractive he was, how broad his shoulders were, and how tightly his breeches clung to his sturdy thighs. She noticed that the bulge at his crotch was enticingly large, and for a moment she paused to wonder what he would look like unclothed.

Even riding here on Freya felt different. The smooth movements of the mare, and the feel of the hard saddle pressing against her sex had rekindled the strange heat in her groin. Perhaps lovemaking with her husband would turn out to be a most pleasurable experience.

Rianna shivered and turned on to her stomach, still staring at the portrait of Sarin. Her breasts felt fuller and heavier than before, and she was left wanting, craving the feel of hard male hands caressing her body. She wished she was more knowledgeable about what went on in the marriage bed. If only her mother was here to advise her, life would be so much simpler and far less daunting.