

THE RETURN OF **FANNI HALL**

F

or Fanni, being blindfolded was inevitably an experience somewhat

FOURTH AND FINAL INSTALLMENT

BY

ROBERT BISHOP

INTRODUCTION

BY GEOFFREY MERRICK

This is a momentous occasion. After eight installments and ten years, the Fanni Hall adventure which started in 1977 with "Bunzie Gets a Surprise" is ending. Looking back on the complex story is amazing. There have been more than two hundred pages of text, and more than a hundred full-size Bishop paintings, some – about a half dozen – in color. It is a landmark in the genre, and those who possess a full set are lucky indeed. For those who don't, we are presenting as a side bar some highlights from previous episodes.

But, as the Doors once said, "This is the end, my friend." What started with the simple premise of a staggeringly good-looking girl with short, blond hair in a leather bikini getting kidnapped off a public beach is ending with all the complex plotlines as tightly bound together as any of the heroines. And what heroines: Alisha, the black beauty. Suni, the Asian lovely. And, of course, Fanni Hall herself – Bishop's ultimate fantasy woman. She's Emma Peel and Tracey Tailor all in one.

When last we left her, she was in the clutches of Bertram B. Bertram, the evil brain behind it all, being taken care of by the megalomaniacal millionaire's minion, Goord. In fact, almost everybody was in Bertram and Goord's clutches, including Fanni's old enemy, Madam, and Fanni's friends Alisha and Suni. About the only person not in Bertram's thrall was Suni's love interest, the MI6 agent Ian, who has Bertram's daughter Alissa in *his* clutches.

Get ready folks. It's showdown time.

akin to an OBE with a tether-her skin seemed, balloon-like, to expand out and away from her body and to grow tactile whiskers. Commonly referred to as a "proximity sense," the enforced blackness of the blindfold seemed to make manifest the sense as no other purely voluntary prodding's were capable of doing. Added to proximity sense might well have been added survival sense, she thought.

She was aware of the small crowd outside the door well before her ears picked up the sounds. Two or more guard-types. With company. Unwilling company. And she knew who it was.

After the guards had done their arranging's and dangling's and gone away, one vast and bovine presence remained, walking to each of the three ladies and inspecting the proffered lace-work. It was Goord. It had to be Goord. The three ladies in audience concurred. Blind and gagged they were; deaf they definitely were not.

Fanni's blinder went first. Alisha and Suni were instantly recognizable despite the muzzles and blinkers. Fanni was hit both with the relief that they were at least alive and (?) well and the disappointment that, like the eggs, they were all in one basket.

With relish as refined as it was lethal, Goord removed first Suni's blind-fold, then the band over Alisha's eyes. They were, the both of them, evidently, very surprised. And even more dismayed.

Goord's smirk had grown to the same proportions as the drawing on the Jammin' with Edward record album cover wherein the illustrated man's top half becomes detached from his bottom half. Fanni would have liked to play Nicky Hopkins. With a knife. Goord detached. Yum.

" 'Tis a great and distinct pity that I won't, alas, sweet gentles, be he who administers your last... rites... as it were. The Lord of the Manor has some rather specialized plans for you himself, it is rumored. I will, on the other hand, be there to observe and hopefully add to my repertoire."

With that cheery ending, he turned and left, closing and latching the door with smooth, deliberate care like one who has pried open a tin of caviar for a savoring whiff and then closed it with equal care to be gobbled later.

Fanni's eyes went back and forth between those of her two friends, eloquent in their fear and despair and not inconsequential pain. Fanni looked away, through the window, where dawn's light illuminated the lawn. Through the breach in the wall several hundred yards away, she thought she caught the flicker of a small child on a bicycle out celebrating its freedom from the rain. And here she was, laced up like a package, tired, sweating. Scared. It might very well be the last halfway decent thing she ever saw, she thought. She wondered how long the pigs intended to let them hang around like this. Especially Alisha.

The latter had been propped up on a low stool affair with her knees resting on the surface provided. The surface, though, had been rendered into a plain of small, sharp knobs separated from one another by about an inch so that her weight, rather than finding the true surface of the stool, was suspended some fractions of an inch above it. Her legs were never quite still as she desperately tried to find some way to relieve her knees of the daggering points.

In addition to that, her feet had been pulled up to touch her buttocks by a rope that then joined her wrists behind her back and shot to the ceiling, holding her upright on the stool. Another rope from her ankles came up between her legs in front, was threaded through a ring in the wall immediately before her, and then returned to a small attachment with her nose ring. Like her own previous position, Fanni, thought, it was instantly intolerable.

Suni wasn't quite so bad off, although Fanni found herself with no real enthusiasm for switching places. Suni's ankles had been crossed and tied, and her neck and face had been brought down into a strained union with them by a cord running over her shoulders and down to her wrists. Novelty, always one of Goord's trademarks, had been applied with a cord that ran from her ankles, under her bottom,



1977

Bunzie Gets a Surprise

and then up to the ceiling near Alisha's rope so tightly that her small rump had been lifted right off the floor and held there. Not comfortable. At all.

Fanni looked once more into the growing light and wondered when the goons would come. And what they would bring.

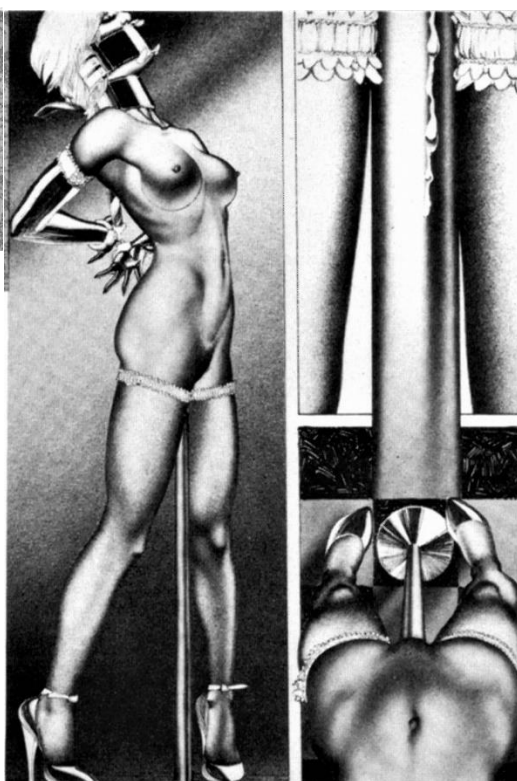
Right at that moment, however, Bertram B. was very hard and intent on listening to a small, cheap plastic tape cassette that a very agitated major-domo had delivered with somewhat less of the usual pomp and with a great deal more speed. The man had had a short listen-in to convince himself that it wasn't some cleverly camouflaged advertisement or another in the tedious string of crank calls put to tape that had characterized the electronics era. Her voice was instantly recognizable—he had been with her father long before her birth.

Bertram B. chewed on his lip as he listened to the rewind tape. The major-domo sunk back into the shadows and attempted to become invisible. It was her, all right. Alissa. The screams and pleadings were nearly incoherent, but it was her.

The goddamned Englishman in the cabin. The cabin that got nicely blown to smithereens with Dawnelle in it. Didn't anybody know what the hell they were doing any more? The English-man had gotten away somehow.

And the Englishman had demands. And then some. He knew that the Toothsome (and Troublesome) Trio were his pampered guests and he wasn't pleased about their no doubt sumptuous accommodations; he wanted them out and reasonably undamaged, or he had some highly entertaining plans for his daughter. Another squalling wail pegged the VU meter needle. The tape ended and the old man threw the whole machine across the room. It banged into the wall, rebounded, and landed square in the opening of the helmet atop the medieval knight's armored figure. A goon by the window had the impression that the thing was trying to eat the Sony and fought back a grin. "Out!" was the command.

"Out. All of you useless bunglers!" The old man was on his feet, pacing to his desk. The old flicker had to do some fast thinking, the goon thought. He glanced once more at the knight with its shiny new tape deck and then he did grin. Of course, Bertram B. couldn't see it with his back turned. The major-domo saw it, though, and thought to himself that the nice-



◀ Alissa Bertram, daughter of megalomaniacal millionaire Bertram B. Bertram, in big trouble.

looking young man couldn't have worked for Mr. Bertram very long, and quite probably didn't have much of a future with the company. Those small mirrors all over the place weren't there just for decoration.

Bertram B. sat and thought (the goon had been right about that, at least) and fumed. Profits and losses. What to do with the damn-able brat? On the one hand, she was more trouble than she was really worth, but on the other hand, Alissa had spunk. He had hoped the phony kidnapping by Madame's people and her subsequent "rescue" a la Hall would have knocked off at least some of the coltish perversity.

And now, here she was with a lunatic from Britain who was threatening her not merely with death, but with embellishments before the act. Her screams had been very genuine. Damn it! He knuckled his eyes and cursed some more. She was his daughter, damn it all, and with his son . . . his son! The black fury came back then, and he hunched into the huge chair and clawed at the arms like someone suffering the joys of terminal cancer. If nothing else, if for no other reason, he would get the Englishman for that. He picked up the phone and dialed for Burnside. At least he had one man he could count on. He would throw every damned thing he had into this affair. The sonofabitch would pay!

Gourd was pleased when he heard the news. A delay! More time to play with the new toys. Perhaps not as much as he would have liked, he sniffed, but then one doesn't question providence. Especially when the morsels are so ten-der. And vulnerable. He rubbed his palms

briskly together, smacked on some after shave, and strode from the room. A bright new day!

Fanni's appraisal of the turning of the clock wasn't quite so sanguine, but it was equally astute—she was still alive! The sun had been oozing into the still-wet lawn when the last of the stampedes arrived and yanked the ladies down from their respective perches and dragged them back down to the rather less genteel regions of the place.

And then Goord showed up, fat and happy. The sight of them "just hanging around" the day before had given him all kinds of ideas, and he intended to try his hand at as many of them as the Fates would allow, the Fates being manifest in the person of that skinny old anus upstairs.

They took turns in all the best traditions of participatory democracy: If one flailed away at the proffered targets of mandate or opportunity, she would in short order find herself under the self-same lash/cane/whip/prod/horse/rack, and on and on and on. It was the most fun Goord had had in his whole distended life. A pity the others didn't share his enthusiasm, although he harbored his private suspicions about the Asian. The Englander was a fool!

Wasting such an exquisite asset (especially when the lady herself would have been the chief beneficiary) struck Goord as being close to an out-and-out obscenity. He lavished extra attentions on Suni, recognizing somewhere in some very small part of his lecherous soul, as he did so, that he met few genuinely kindred souls in his perambulations, and that this one both loved it and hated him for doing it rather than the poor British boob. Sadly, he knew that he would never truly share the game with anybody but these unwilling (to put it mildly) broads headed for some lime-pit or someplace else similarly unhygienic. Goord felt something perilously close to guilt. No, not guilt. Loneliness, maybe? Ah, fuck it, he thought, turning back to Hall, wiping a slickish leather quirt with a chamois rag. There were better things to think about. And lots of better things to do.

The next tape came two days later. Different brand of tape, but just as cheap (and ubiquitous) as the first. The old man's people ran around like chickens with their heads cut off, but all the people working the counters of the drug store and discount houses and stereo stores just gave them blank stares and pointed to racks containing hundreds of the same cheapo cassettes.



◀ In even bigger trouble. With his airbrush Bishop dashes traditional all-female bondage—not to mention railroad tracks as the only fate awaiting a damsel in distress.

The fidelity of the recording (once the Sony had been pried out of the knight) was just sufficient to convince Bertram B. that he was getting a second helping of the first go-round. Wonderful. The boys had put up an Ensolite pad on the wall with a big X marked as the bullseye if the Man should decide to treat himself to another bout of Sling the Sony. And there was a picture. SX-70 stuff all the way: color shifted slightly to the nauseous, and image sharpness the figment of some Polaroid PR man's imagination, but once again, it was the daughter. Without a doubt. And look what that English sonofabitch was doing to his property... child!

It was some kind of warehouse, from the look of it: dirt and leached-out cardboard boxes and rats and more dirt. And Alissa. Impaled on some kind of stake sticking straight up out of a big crack in the floor that ran from frame to frame of the picture. Her legs were pulled wide and held there by ropes that ran from her ankles along a path roughly parallel to that of the crack that anchored the stake and, like the crack, disappeared off the edges of the frame. Her hands were around behind her back, presumably tied with more of the rope. He couldn't tell. A tight noose of the same rope encircled her throat and disappeared upwards towards the ceiling, holding her stiffly upright, as if the stake didn't do well enough at that task! Tears coursed down her cheeks and her expression was at a considerable remove from pacific contentment. Maybe the stake had splinters. Or was cold. Or both.

The Englishman was in the shot too. His face was away from the lens, but then again, the face wasn't what the old man was interested in. The whip in his hand was long and sinewy and curled completely around Alissa's little waist

and sunk into the smooth muscles of her belly almost to the point of disappearing. The crisscrossing welts all over her torso—and between her legs—said in mute but unequivocal terms that the blow depicted wasn't the only blow delivered.

The fury descended again, as deep and full as that which had characterized his rage at the news of Miles's small cranial expansion, and he felt himself sinking into it, almost welcoming the dark as a kind of respite from full realization of what was happening to his child. The grinning goon at the wall hopped up from his slouch behind the brocaded curtain muffling an entire wall and began a solicitous (but cautious) approach.

Suddenly, Bertram B. snapped upright as if somebody had just stuck a long thin stainless-steel rod from his rectum to his brain. His hands clutched at the edges of the photograph and a look of feral glee unlike anything the goon had ever before seen crossed the old man's face. And stayed.

"You!" he fairly screamed at the goon, pointing with one scrawny digit. "Get down-stairs and see if Burnside's got here yet! And then get him the hell up here! I want Burnside here, and I mean now!"

The old man was back on the other side of the room by now, pacing back and forth before the leaded glass like a leopard in a very small cage, clutching and unclutching the photo like some revered but loathed object. The English bastard had blown it!

Came a tapping at the door.

"What is it!" "Burnside, Mr. Bertram," said the grinning goon.

The photograph was in Burnside's hands before the door was fully opened. He glanced first at his employer, hot and sweaty and flushed, and filed it away for later reference. Boss-Man didn't customarily get this flustered unless he caught somebody stealing from the till.

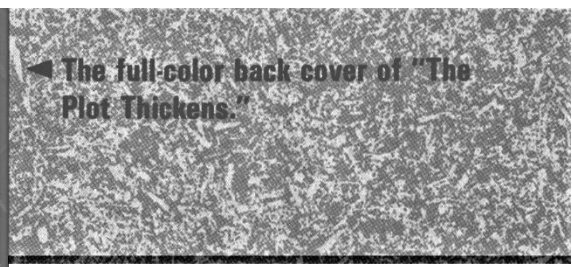
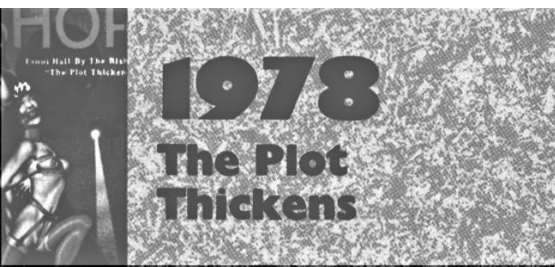
He finally glanced down at the stiff little rectangle of paper and plastic in his hand as the old man virtually hopped around the room like a kid that really has to pee. It was Alissa, of course, in some pretty considerable distress. The man was the Brit, of course; Burnside knew of the latter's professional reputation and was more than a bit suspicious of the seeming ease with which he'd supposedly been reduced to a red mist in the boondocks. His eyes also took in the rest of the shot.

"It's the boathouse. Anderson's. Across the river." He looked up at Bertram.

THE RETURN OF FANNI HALL

**Fanni
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The old man's head nodded in a jerk. "Precisely! We've got the bastard. He isn't going to risk moving her much with all the punishment he's giving her. He has to stay right in that area! Get your people, Burnside—your best people. I don't want any more bungling! Use the helicopters! We'll seal off the whole damnable—"

"Negative, sir."

Bertram B. came up short as if he'd been shot. Burnside raised his hands, palms first, in apology.

"Fact is, sir, that area has still got a few people in it, although it's gone mostly to hell. Going in like the 101st Airborne is going to raise lots of attention, and there's an Air Force base only a couple of miles away from there, and those people tend to get awful tense about casual flying around that close to the warheads. We'll have to go in with cars. I've lined up all the people we'll need. Besides, it'll be quieter that way. The dude may be fucked up, but he sure as hell isn't deaf!"

Instead of exploding, the old man slumped into a chair and rubbed his temples with fingers that had the faintest of faint tremors to them. He sighed and nodded. "You're right, of course." He yanked out a white handkerchief and swabbed his forehead. "All my frothing and screaming about bungling . . . that would have done it nicely." There was a short pause. "Do it as you see fit, Burnside. Bring me my daughter back. Alive!"

Burnside acknowledged with a curt nod and went out, closing the door behind him. The Polaroid sat on the coffee table next to the old man, its contents leering up at him. Such a tiny tidbit of information way in the background and badly out of focus, he thought, and the game ends up for the Englishman. He almost smiled to himself at the thought of the panicked surprise the bastard would have—before Burnside snuffed him out like a roach. Of course, the stupid bastard had no way of knowing that the whole damned boatyard had been one of his first forays into the construction business, back when he'd still possessed at least a modicum of business naivete/honesty. That had been a burden he'd shrugged off in quick order! He hoped that Burnside would at least have the presence of mind to explain the fool's downfall before he pulled the trigger. He glanced out the French windows; more storms were gathering offshore like buzzards sniffing a meal.

A thoroughly grungy Pacer slipped up the top of a small rise on a little used service road a quarter of a mile from the house and stopped. Its engine was switched off with the key and it gradually wound down in a series of jerking run-ons and farts and pops. Nobody got out, but the window facing the house was rolled down and a pair of binoculars sucked in a magnified image of the front gates. The elevation was such and the rain-cleaned air so clear that the rear portal was visible to boot.

Inaudible from the distance, the front gates whirled back and the leader of the two-car one-Blazer caravan whipped out through the opening and zoomed off down the road toward the border.

A muffled voice from the ratty Pacer said, "Burnside. It's on." The window got rolled back up and the engine was prodded back into life. As the last of the caravan disappeared from view, the automatic transmission in the watcher's car leapt into drive with a clank that the brakes were only barely able to keep in check and the wreck was off, albeit with considerably less of the boyish enthusiasm shown by the mounts of the boys from the manse. Age and prerogatives and like that. And for only fifty dollars a day. The Joys of the City. Bertram B., standing by the windows, thought he saw a car ambling along the narrow road that bordered the northern extent of his property, delineating the borders of his domain on the one side and an extensive tract of state-owned forest on the other. In fact, the route, seldom used and even less seldom maintained, belonged to the county, but in effect it was his. He encouraged Burnside's people to affect small and unpleasant surprises for the odd hunter who parked there or for the passion-wracked teenagers who cou-pled like mink in the back seats of their cars. The word had a way of getting around: Bertram's Road can be hard

on the health. The locals all knew this like they knew it was day-light when the sun was up. The car he thought he'd seen either belonged to an awful gutsy local or somebody who hadn't kept their ears to the grapevine. He couldn't see the damned thing anymore and turned back to the room and the pile of work on his desk. He wondered where Burnside was now.

"Here we are, sir." Burnside at the boatyard. The grinning goon next to him allowed the barest tinge of smugness to color his voice. At least he seemed to actually know what he was doing, unlike some of the other stooges. He even said "sir."

Burnside rather reluctantly put his ruminations on the infinite perversities of people who grow up on islands into the back of his mind and attended to the business at hand. Life with the old bastard was seldom boring, he grumbled to himself. It's just that in the old days' things had been a lot simpler. Ah well, that's progress for you. Shit. The goon was still grinning. Burnside thought he might send the lad in first to see if he could alter the expression's dimensions a bit. Yes, indeed.

Fanni was currently wearing the latest vogue in bring-your-own cells, a tiny cage that just barely surrounded her doubled-up torso and her head. Her arms and wrists were actually outside the cage proper, as were her knees. Her legs had been splayed with bars running behind her knees and her ankles crossed and fastened back safe inside the porta-dungeon. Her arms had been threaded through the bars and cuffed to a ring welded along the spine of the cage. Attachment points for a myriad of Goord's toys were scattered here and there in amongst the bars like toad stools after a hard rain, but the seemingly haphazard arrangement concealed a superb knowledge of female anatomy and a near genius for human/mechanical engineering. Fanni found two of her rather more substantial orifices... ummmm ...engaged by snug-fitting facsimiles of appendages normally found affixed to the other version of the species.

She decided that the experience—given all else that she had so recently been through—was more embarrassing than anything else. Goord had thought otherwise and had elected to allow her time to reconsider her opinion. This was after, needless to say, he had inserted something very large and chewy into Fanni's mouth. Goord's panoply of sayings included something that went to the effect of (Goordism #17, she thought): "A full mouth is a happy



◀ Fanni Hall—to the rescue?

being nailed in the act. Madame, quivering in her trapeze arrangement, might have laughed at the sight. Laughter, how-ever, hadn't been much in her purview of events over the last several days.

It was that goddamned English shit, the bastard. No sense of humor. When he'd finally pulled the gag out of Alissa's traitorous little mouth and the little bitch had spilled the beans (ungrateful little slut!), she'd expected a rage somewhere in the neighborhood of Mt. McKinley in height, but the swine just seemed to take it in stride, shooting her a mildly disapproving glare accompanied by a small shake of his head, and set about releasing Alissa from her restraints.

That done, he hustled to the door and pressed his ear to the wood as Alissa straggled into the clothes, he'd brought back for the both of them. Probably something out of a dime store, Madame thought. Mister Ye Olde England was casting a discernibly concerned eye at the elevator light now, his eyes flicking back and forth between the still dark lights and Alissa's floundering. He never looked at Madame once. She realized that he'd simply written her off, the pompous bastard. Goddamned glorified civil servant. Damn the blindfold, she frothed to herself. She could at least glare at the bastard before they left!

It was only when their shoes went from the pile of the carpet to the tile of the elevator that Madame could hear that they were well and truly leaving her to her own devices, such as they were. As soon as she heard the elevator doors close, she again launched herself off the couch and squirmed towards the general area of the little table. Five minutes later, the goons found her tangled in the leg-chain and screaming her frustration into the gag.

"Where did they go?" they had asked her.

Madame just shook her head. "I don't know. You've got to believe me!"

"There really isn't much time for this, Madame. Where did they go?"

"Goddamnit, I just told you! The Englishman came back up here after I called you people, and then Alissa told him about the call, and then I didn't hear much of anything else except that they left, together!"

"Mr. Bertram's daughter left. With the Englishman. Together."

"Yes. Yes, goddamnit!"

"After all the little numbers he did on her that you told us about... Yeah, sure, bitch!" The flicking slap snapped Madame's head back.

mouth." Fanni thought about it. She was still embarrassed.

Goord's happy hum bumbled by the slightly open door (Goord liked to keep an at least intermittent look-in on all his little charges) and continued down the hall toward wherever he'd stashed Suni and Alisha. Nice to see somebody happy at his work, she thought. Still, though, she thought further, a bit of quid pro quo would be nice, but then she gave it up at the thought of the cage that would be required. It'd still be portable, she guessed, but you'd need a Kenworth and a flatbed to move it.

As he usually did—when Bertram B. wasn't around—Goord stopped at one of the doors. He moved his nose to within inches of the glass and turned to the object so conspicuously arrayed in the center of a single beam of light. The woman was lithe and tanned. Her jet-black hair was gathered into one long tail and pulled taut above her like an enormous spike. Her wrists were widely splayed at acute angles from her body and supported most of her weight. Her legs, similarly, were spread wide (damn near asunder, he mentally corrected) and held by more ropes. She looked taut enough to have hummed like a string, if plucked. And oh, the weals. Oh boy oh boy oh boy.

He licked his lips with a thick pink tongue and examined the handiwork with professional eyes. Whoever was tanning this morsel sure knew what the hell he was doing. And then some. Each time he peeked, Goord was treated to another "still life," as he referred to them. The not-so-small risks he took were more than offset by the tender tableaux he'd been privy to witness in the recent past. He had high hopes for more of the same. Much more.

A small clicking way down the hall was enough to send Goord scurrying like a hedge-hog. He reached his destination door and slammed it shut behind him, leaning on it and panting from his exertion (he'd run all of 30 feet) and panic at

THE RETURN OF FANNI HALL

**A tiny cage
contained
Fanni's
doubled-
up torso
and head,
with her
arms and
knees
outside**





1978

Further Complications

"Where is she!" The man's eyes were beginning to glitter like the glass beads they put in dime-store monkeys.

That was when the bitch Hall had reappeared. Oops. You said it. Oops. The elevator doors simply opened and there she was, in all her glory. With a tight sweater/skirt on and her pants down. She was violent, she was capable, but she had a terrible sense of timing, in addition to being not stupid. Bertram B.'s men took her, they took Madame, and they brought them to the bowels of Bertram's palatial manse where Goord got to polly-woddle-doodle all day.

Goord fiddled while Bertram B. burned. He couldn't get all the fucking irritations out of his mind. As hard as he tried to work (white heat, no distractions, total concentration, Zen business, "iai" corporation management, slicing the opponent on the draw), all his emotional frustrations nudged him. Alissa, the bitch. That beautiful, beautiful bitch. The face of a corrupt angel. It was the smooth young face of her mother's. Bertram felt his late wife's skin again. He smelled her hair. He felt her loins wrapping his: the warmth, the tingle, the thrill, the joy. The only real joy of his triumph-filled career.

Hall, the bitch. Seemingly so stupid, so hap-less, so incapable. But every time he had her under lock and key, every time they "saw" to her with tortures and punishments which would reduce any other woman (fuck that, "any other person") to a pile of lobotomized protoplasm, there she'd be again, sticking her perfect nose in, thrusting her perfect chest out, pulling the trigger on a variety of high caliber phallic symbols.

But at least these bitches were known. Who was the fucker in the car? In the shadowy, non-descript car on his road. On his road! Who'd have the balls, the ignorance, the chutzpah to drive on his fucking road during the worst day of his life? Who'd have the gall to go down his road on the one fucking day when he had no stooges, hoods, thugs, or goons to send after the vehicle? All his people were across the waves, about to put an end to the Britisher pig. No mistakes this time. They'd cover that boat-house like all-weather paint. They'd lay down a sheet of lead like a wall-to-wall carpet. The English pus-ball wouldn't so much be killed as perforated. Eradicated.

Bertram B. grinned just thinking about it. But then the grin froze. The grin in his mind's eye wasn't his. It was a face he didn't recognize at first. It was the face of a young, good-looking



man. An impeccably dressed, young, good-looking man. The young man who had gotten Burnside for him. The young man who had been with the major-domo. The young man with the crescent-shaped scar beside his eye. Bertram B.'s meaty hand slammed down on the intercom. "I want the staff downstairs. I want the entire staff rounded up and brought down to the dungeons—now!"

The grinning goon slammed the thin knife into Burnside's neck.

It was so quick and so simple that Burnside, consummate professional that he was, didn't have time to react or defend himself. The grinning goon merely lifted his hand, drew the blade out of a scabbard on his neck, and plunged it into Burnside's throat from the side. Burnside saw the movement in his peripheral vision, but thought the grinning goon was scratching his neck. But then the knife was in his neck, cutting a major artery. The blood pounded the ceiling and the door as Burnside writhed and gurgled.

But the grinning goon was already outside, in the sunset, walking toward the throng of stooges who stood ready to lay the boathouse low. They were anxious, sullen, intense, just waiting for Burnside's signal. What did they care about the boss's daughter? Their mission was to get the Englishman, and if truth be told, they figured the boss would be secretly revealed if his darling Alissa should happen to be mor-tally wounded—by the Englishman, of course—during the course of human events.

The grinning goon surveyed the angry mob. Tsk-tsk, he thought. A finer bunch of subhuman Neanderthals he had rarely seen. Or was that a

◀ The full-color centerspread of "Further Complications."

redundant phrase? The grinning goon had to think this way, to deal with the group this superficially, in order to accomplish his subsequent goal. The grinning goon took the big square box he had hauled out of the back seat just as he slipped from the car and lifted it atop the tripod he carried in his other hand. It looked easy, but took all the goon's remarkably lithe strength to pull off with such apparent ease. It was completely necessary for him to work this casually so none of the gathered creeps would become suspicious.

As more and more of these creeps began to turn toward him, facing the car (and away from the boathouse) in the deepening orange light of sunset, they noted that the device the grinning goon was setting up looked very much like a camera. The kind of camera photographers take centerfold photos with (they had all seen them on the Playboy Channel). So, as they stood on the dock, the water lapping nearby, the refreshing smell of salt in their lungs, no one started to scream or bolt.

The grinning goon finished, taking a last glance back at the car. Somehow the windshield had been tinted scarlet. Oh well.

He looked back to the bunch of armed hoods, who were all looking at him. They were waiting for the word, the green light, the go. The expressions on all their faces said that the grinning goon would give it to them.

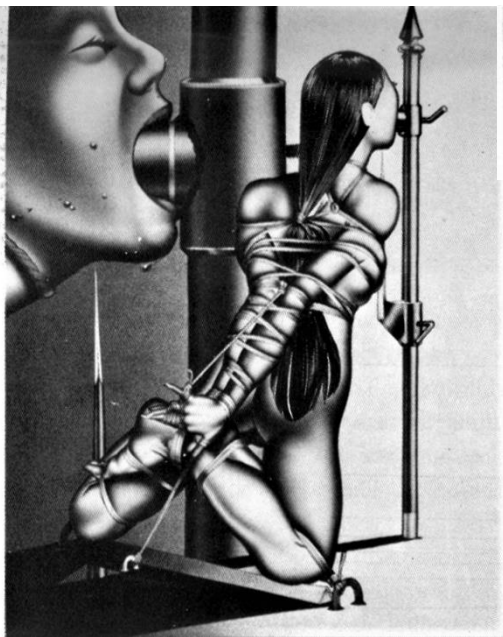
"But first," said the grinning goon, "Burn-side says 'say cheese.'"

He pushed down a button. The button. The modified Claymore Mine went off.

Ouch. Major ouch.

The grinning goon twisted away from the detonation and went down to the wet dirt face first. The box erupted, leaping into the air, following the goon to the ground. But it did its devastating job. Hundreds of silver balls sped out in a net formation, gaining speed and spin. All of them were touched by it: Adams, Janes, Quayles, Mays, Davis, the others. All of Bertram and Burnside's hand-picked heathens had a ball with their names on it. It erupted internal organs, cracked skulls, and terminated perverse, corrupt, evil lives en masse.

It was the only way Tyler, the grinning goon, knew of working. No playing around for him, in the Fanni Hall style. But then again, Fanni Hall was a hero. Not he. He was just another Bertram B. Bertram with no emotional ties—no hate. What do you send to kill a monster? Why, another monster, of course.



◀ **Suni Ling, aide-de-camp de Fanni Hall, enters the picture—most uncomfortably.**

Some stooges got away from the modified Claymore. The ones closest to the boathouse wall. They were saved from the hail of metal death by their pounded comrades, that wave of flattened criminal flesh. They did what came naturally: they ran into the boathouse—the empty boathouse.

That is, the almost empty boathouse. For, as soon as their feet started pounding the wood floorboards, Ian came erupting out. He had undone two planks and had squatted, waiting, beneath the waterline, beneath the boathouse floor, for the mine/cannon to do its work. Now he rose, Uzi in hands, to cut low any survivors. Mr. Tyler had convinced him some time ago that prisoners were not advisable in this particular battle.

The Uzi chattered, and the remaining stooges went down, twisting, their falls cracking floorboards and raising clouds of dust, like mini-apocalypses in the sunset-shafted drama of the boathouse interior.

Soon all was quiet, save for the lap, lap, lap of the water on the blood-stained shore. Ian, feeling ill, looked away from the slaughter. He looked down to the tiny snorkel poking out of the water between his feet. A very good-looking blond was on the other end of that snorkel.

Alissa Bertram had come full circle. She had started this incredibly labyrinthian mess as a cock-tease in a leather bikini on a public beach. She ended it as a naked sea nymph, bound to supporting pylons just below the water's surface. Ian could take no chances that her little mewls might alert the killers, so he gagged her with the entire ocean.

Her arms were spread, tied to two separate pylons. Her legs were parallel, her ankles and toes wired together and attached to a weight which held her body down and her head just below the surface. The snorkel in her mouth not

only let her breathe, but kept her from blow-in bubbles as well.

It had all been the grinning goon's idea. Ian was disgusted by him, but had to admit that he knew his job very, very well.

"No time to contemplate our place in the universe," he heard. Ian looked up to see Tyler standing amid the bodies, before the swiss-cheesed front wall of the boathouse. "The army's gone, but the General still rules the Stalag."

"The General," as Tyler had called Bertram, was twisting Alisha's tit as if tuning an inter-national band radio. Not lost on him was the similarity between her name and his daughter's. But that was not where the comparison ended—not in this case. For Bertram—angry, upset, enraged Bertram—had decided to visit upon Alisha what had been visited upon Alissa. So, the black beauty stood—had to stand, if she didn't want the steel impaling invasion to rupture a goodly portion of her internal anatomy.

She stood tall, chest out, little beads of sweat hanging outside of every visible pore, like beads on dark rubber. The pole wasn't the only thing that made her straighten. The shoes helped—gold, strap-on high heels. Kinda like resting one's weight on a deeply sloping platform held up by a five-inch pin. Yes, the heel itself gave new meaning to the word stiletto. There was no getting around it. The thing had thin gold straps which tied around her ankles, then around her heels, and even around her toes.

Speaking of tying, her arms were otherwise occupied as well. They were twisted high up her back and held there by unbearably tight, thin cords, which then dug around and into her shoulders. Goord so wanted to attach them to Alisha's hair, but her close-cut, kinky Afro denied him that luxury. So, instead, he had to noose her neck and attach it to the ceiling to keep her chin up.

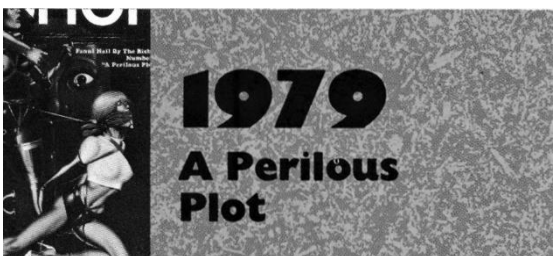
So, the rich African lovely had to stand for Bertram's molesting and the inanimate rape of the impaling pole which sunk deeply into her womanhood. Any complaints were lost in the prod-pad buckled around her head, forcing her lips to their widest aperture and filling her mouth with what felt like an entire hot-air balloon.

Goord smiled a benign smile, appreciating what the black girl was going through. It was easy for him to smile benignly. After all, his own hands were filled with porcelain-colored flesh, topped off with a cherry tab. He ground Suni's breasts in his muscular fingers (about the only part that was muscular, besides his brain) as she did the best she could to resist. Considering what the

THE RETURN OF FANNI HALL

**The Uzi
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◀ Alisha, Fanni's black friend, gets introduced to the joys of perildom, proving that Bishop is an equal opportunity artist.

wart had put her through, any movement at all was impressive. At least her tits were the only appendages he could get to. Almost all the other positions were filled.

Her mouth was around a big, solid rubber penis which was forced in by a tightly buckled strap. Every few seconds she would stretch her mouth off it in a terrible grimace, allowing drool to pour from the corners, where her lips met. That, in turn, soaked the sponge glued to the inside of the strap. A twin dildo remained snug in her snatch, kept there by the same strap which held the butt plug in place. That was the only covering on her hips. It attached to the belt around her tiny waist. Otherwise, she was awash in second-skin acrylic.

There was the black shirt, lacing up her back, with lacing cut-out portions on the sleeve so her smooth flesh could peek through. There was no collar to speak of, just a turtleneck which doubled as a choker. There were no pockets either, just two round holes which revealed her breasts perfectly. Her molested, kneaded breasts with the nipples acting like erect buttons. There were more laces at the cuffs, only these didn't lace up; they laced her wrists together behind her. Then there were the laces which went to the ceiling, bending her over a bit, keeping her off balance on the nasty red boots.

The boots held snugly on her thighs, the four-and-a-half-inch heels keeping her on her toes. She periodically moaned as each step vibrated the various dildos and pulled on her arm/shoulder muscles. Goord certainly didn't help matters as he expertly teased her.

Fanni watched it all through drooping eyelids. It was taking all her energy just to remain conscious in the nifty new position Goord had put her in. "Just to keep you out of trouble," he had said. Fanni was literally above it all. She was not attached to the ceiling; she hung from it. Her ankles were tied to her thighs. Her wrists were tied to her ankles, behind her. Ropes went from the wrists and ankles to the ceiling. Her hair was pulled back and knotted to ropes holding her elbows together, so her head was up.

That only served to help her keep her mouth wide, which she needed to do because it felt as if they had stuffed the entire linen closet between her lips. The sensation was weird and definitely unfun. The only thing keeping what felt like an entire parachute in there was one thin wire, which went around her head so

snugly it felt as if it had been placed there when she was a child and Fanni had grown into it.

That one lousy wire did its job, however. Somehow it defeated her every attempt to dislodge this months' worth of linen from her oral cavity. Well, at least they had the decency to dress her. Actually, decency didn't enter into it. They gave her this clinging ribbed knit mini-dress, but cut slices in it wherever it counted.

So Fanni had to just hang in there, most of her hanging out, as the staff of Bertram B. Bertram's palatial digs gathered nervously among them. It was just another meeting for them. The master's—ahem—shall we say, extra-curricular interests, were already accepted by the hired help. In fact, Fanni felt some unwanted fingers probing where the moon don't show as the myriad and sundry servants surrounded her. Bertram stopped his Alisha attention just long enough to survey the crowd with a baleful eye. "Bundy!" he roared. His voice echoed through the low-ceilinged cavern as the help shifted nervously, looking at one another.

"Mr. Bundy isn't here," said a calm voice, with not even a "sir."

"Where's the major-domo?" Bertram growled.

"The major-domo isn't here either," said the same voice. Those gathered gasped. Who would dare not show up?

"Well, where are they?" Bertram bellowed, filling the dungeon with sound. "With that Madame woman? With the other captives? Where are they?"

"They're where the lilies bloom, Mr. Ber-tram," said the voice. "They're where the buffalo roam and the skies are not cloudy all day."

"Who is that!" Bertram shouted, shaking with anger. "Who dares speak to me this way?"

"Who dares, wins," said Frakie, slowly emerging from the crowd, his 9mm automatic casually pointed directly at Bertram's chest. "I was surprised how easy it was to drive up. How

empty the place was. You must want the Englishman and the girl very badly."

"She's my daughter!" Bertram practically screamed.

"You taught her well," Frakie said sardonically. No one else moved. There was something about Frakie that said "don't move." Maybe the smell of all those people he assassinated in Southeast Asia was still with him. Maybe the servants could intrinsically tell that he killed the Cong as well as any American commander who went off the deep end. It mattered not whether this was true. What mattered is that no one moved.

No one, that is, except Goord. He had an instinctive ability to tell when the jig was up. Keeping the bound and gagged girls between him and the gun, he skittered to the far door. Where he was hit in the face with the butt of Ian's Uzi.

Goord went down, his stomach shaking like a bowl full of jelly, crimson cream splashing from his nose. All three female captives snapped to attention as two more visitors entered the room.

"What an entrance," said Tyler, bringing up the rear.

"What timing," said Frakie.

"As usual," replied the grinning goon with the crescent-shaped scar by his eye.

"What is this?" Bertram exploded as only a man who has spent his life-giving orders which were unquestionably followed can. "Some sort of shakedown?"

Tyler shook his head sadly, holding another 9mm automatic in his hand. "No," he countered. "Some sort of conclusion. Some sort of climax. Some sort of ending."

Bertram's eyes bulged. He couldn't believe it. These few men must have taken care of his army of stooges. It didn't seem possible—maybe they had diverted the thug platoon—but there was no misunderstanding their expressions or attitudes. They were not the expressions or attitudes of three men who had to get their work done and get out quick before the calvary showed up. These guys had all the time in the world.

It was over.

Tyler raised his gun and fired.

The bullet went neatly through the knots holding Fanni's arms and legs and the ceiling together. She fell on a bunch of servants, who served as a lumpy safety net. They all groaned and collapsed to the floor where Fanni followed, ripping off her bondage as she went.



◀ At the end of Bishop's fourth magazine, Fanni was bending over—backwards—to save the day, save her friends, and figure out the incredibly convoluted plot.

She grabbed the cloth on either side of the gagging wire and pulled, forcing the things out of her mouth.

"Whew," she said sarcastically, extricating herself from the butlers and maids. "Thanks." She quickly stood and kicked Bertram in the balls. Actually, she didn't so much kick as bury her calf as far up between his legs as her gam would go. Then she brought her fist and forearm down across his face.

Bertram was not made of stone. He doubled over, his face getting red, going purple and green. Then he went down.

Tyler raised his eyebrows. "I didn't think you were that kind of girl," he said mildly.

"What kind of girl did you think I was?" she flared, racing over to extricate Alisha from her pole as Ian struggled with Suni's bondage.

"The masochistic kind," Tyler said quietly as the lithe and lovely brunette went by.

"Who are you?" Bertram said weakly from between split lips. Tyler shrugged helplessly.

"Get out of here," Frakie told the servants. He didn't have to ask Tyler what to do with them. They hadn't attacked him en masse when he appeared. They only liked Bertram for his money.

"And take everything with you," Tyler said with a smile. A roar went up from the exiting throng, just before they started taking Bertram's palace apart like Greek banshees.

"Are you all right?" Ian asked Suni as soon as he got her free.

Tyler approached, shaking his head. "Trust the MI.6," he said. "Clichés for any occasion." The ex-white slaver took the Asian's hand in his and gently gave her his gun. Then he motioned to Goord. "He's all yours."

Ian was surprised by the look on Suni's face. "Darling, no. Don't. You wouldn't."

"Leave us alone," Suni said quietly, only looking at the fat, bleeding man on the floor.

"Just a little while." She looked as if she was about to say something more, then just stared at Goord, the gun pointed at his pointy little head.

"Suni," Ian started, then felt Tyler's hand on his shoulder, turning him away, leading him out.

"You don't know the girl at all, do you?" the grinning goon said out in the hall. "Must be emotion blinding you. You don't know what they've been through, do you?"

"I know!" Ian spat intensely, holding up his fingernail-less hand (the remnant of a torture session some assignments back).

Tyler marveled at the soft fingertips for a moment, before his smile grew even wider.

"Not even close," he advised. "Lucky you. You haven't a clue." Tyler shook his head. "Stay in espionage, Englishman. Where things are emotionally and psychologically simple. Where you can be tortured in body. Here the torture is to the being." He put his hand on Ian's arm before he returned to the room. "Bad news, Englishman. I know the look. If you want to keep your Oriental friend, you're going to have to keep her."

Bertram B. was dead when he reentered the room. The expression on those remaining told nothing as to who did the honors. Maybe all of them. Maybe Bertram did it himself. Better death than disgrace and all that. "Oh, now!" Tyler mock-complained. "What is little Alissa going to do with all Daddy's millions?"

"She'll think of something," Frakie said flatly.

"Who are you comedians?" Fanni said irritably.

"The white slavery Abbott and Costello?"

"Interested third parties," Tyler said quickly, doing a quick survey of the room, making sure there were no loose ends. "This damn saga was becoming the best WSN entertainment since Gone with the Wind. Bertram was becoming so obsessed, all his allies deserted him. The OMO was just waiting for the smoke to clear before they came in to pick up the pieces." He smiled directly at Fanni. "Couldn't have that. See you to your car?"

The place was already in a shamble by the time they got outside. The servants were looting the place like veteran slum dwellers on a hot city night. Tyler managed to find some halfway decent wardrobe for the ladies before they emptied the rest of the cells. All the captives were free—except one.

"You're just going to leave Madame there, aren't you?" Tyler finally asked as he stood beside his Volvo-like car.

"What would you have me do?" Fanni asked back. "Release her? Kill her? No, better to let sleeping bitches lie. She'll get away herself. She always does."

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"And maybe team up with a vengeful Alissa Bertram," Tyler mused. "I was right—you are a glutton for punishment." Fanni smiled. Without opinion. It was the first use of her mouth muscles which didn't require something shoved between them. It revitalized her, opened up her whole personality, which had been tied down for what seemed like a decade.

Tyler opened the car door. "Drop you someplace?" he inquired.

Fanni looked him over carefully. Suni was with Ian. They had a lot of talking to do, among other things. Alisha was with that Frakie character. She had a lot of recuperating to do. Among other things. Fanni looked at Tyler's face. Among other things. Suddenly she put her arms around him and planted her lips on his. Among other things.

"Well, it's about time!" Fanni whooped when they had finished. "Who would have thought?" Her smile was completely natural by now. "Someone who knows how to kiss."

"Among other things." Fanni mused with her arms still around Tyler's neck. "You going anywhere specific?" she finally asked. "I mean, can I get home from where you're staying?"

"I can stay anywhere," Tyler said.

"Hmmm," said Fanni. "Yes. I'll tell you the truth, mister. I've had so much rubber and plastic shoved up my gym-crack, I'm beginning to forget what flesh feels like. And that would be a shame, don't you think?"

The goon just grinned. Mildly, without much irony.

"And, if the truth be known, Mr. Sardonicus," she continued, "I'm so hot after all this that I could fry a shrimp on my barbie."

Tyler just shook his head. "You are, indeed, a glutton for punishment," he said, opening the car door for her.

"Keep that in mind," Fanni Hall said as she got in. "Home, James."

The End

