

## 4. the Moor's Task

Baseel Alcazar: Nombre de Dios, New Spain, September 1531

The surface of the New World heaved and swayed unpredictably beneath Baseel's feet, but he could have kissed it, he was so grateful to step onto solid ground. His land-legs would return soon. He much preferred land journeys to sea ones, even though everyone warned him that the trip over the mountainous, disease-ridden isthmus of Panama was more hazardous than the Atlantic crossing.

The wharf of the settlement at Nombre de Dios was much more primitive than that of Cadiz; the Moor watched as the ship's crane lowered the horses, passive and dispirited, onto the rickety pier. Cacho came last, *h Ya cghÜcZñ Ygjl "9`]Ug`k Ug`UfYUñrcb`UbXñ`a Yñ`|a "*

Baseel unpacked the bales that contained Don Luis Vaca's things. Their employer himself was already in the shorefront tavern, making arrangements for a guide to take them across the forty miles to Panama city. Pizarro had left that place many months earlier, but his partner Diego Almagro was said to be recruiting more conquistadors for reinforcements before they penetrated to the heart of the great empire of Peru. Don Luis did not want to miss this second wave of conquest.

The Moor sorted through the pieces of Don Luis' plate armor, a pair *cZ`YUñ Yf!UbXñ gWY a U` g`|fg`Zf` \ |a gY`ZUbX`9`]Ug`a cf|cb` \ Ya Yg` k |ñ` h` Yf` \ | \ `f|j` YñX`Wl` Wa` Vg`"6Yck` h` YgY`k` Ug` h` YDñ`WY`cb`g`H`W`.* caparison-style chain skirts for Cacho's chest and hindquarters, a bridle with protective mail attached to the headstall, spare horseshoes —and at bottom the item he sought, carefully wrapped against the damp.

*9`]Ug`YX`7UWc`ñ` h` Yd|` YcZ`Wf`|` cZ`Ug`k` cW`ñ` Y|` |` YX`Ug` \ |g` \ UbX`Yf`g`* He stared in surprise at the saddle in Baseel's hands. "How did Don Luis come by that?"

"It's on loan. His own was irreparably damaged just before we boarded ship." Baseel had been careful about weakening the framework so that it would break at just the right moment, when there would be no time for his employer to replace it. "So we had to bring mine." His emphasis on the last word slipped out unintentionally.

*9`]Ug`Wl` [\`h`|h`Ucñ`b`W`Í`=ñ` bchX`|g`di` h|b|` `ñai` f`f|` \ |h`=ñ` `i` g`ig` f`-`*prised you haven't sold them yet. They are worth a fortune, to the right buyer."

"I missed the chance when I was in Morocco." *The pain was still too new,* supplied the little voice of honesty in his head, which Baseel could

never quite get to go away. "Once back in Spain, revealing that I owned such things was hazardous, and prospective buyers hard to identify."

ÍBc`c`h`Y`f`Y`g`c`b`í`C`X`Z`h`U`i`9`]`U`g`g`c`i``X`U`g` `h`U`ie`i`Y`g`h`c`b`/`Z`f`U`  
g`W`b`X`h`Y`Y`k`U`g`g`c`a`Y`h`]`b`|`V`Y`|`b`X`h`Y`V`U`b`X`Y`d`f`Y`g`g`c`b`z`d`Y`f`U`d`g`U`U`]`W`-  
er of sadness.

Baseel was not in a charitable mood. "It was your rule, not to speak of her."

9`]`U`g`h`i`f`b`X`V`U`W`h`c` `h`Y`h`g` `c`Z`i`b`c`U`X`|`b`|`z`|`g`j`c`|`W`U`F`X`Í`B`c`h`|`b`|`  
has changed."

That suited Baseel. He did not want to remember the past. What would be the point? But his hands lingered on the rolled leather of the cantle. How different his life might have gone if he had never become entangled with the de Pazias! He tried to think what he had been doing, who  
Y`U`X`V`Y`b`z`V`Z`f`Y`Y`U`X`U`f`g`h`i`a`Y`h`h`Y`g`V`|`b`|`g`U`a`c`g`h`k`Y`b`m`m`U`f`g`U`c`"

Baseel Alcazar: Granada, Spain September 1513

With an enraged roar the camel snapped at the youth, who dodged out of her way. Her two remaining lower teeth barely missed his shirt. The animal pulled up short at the wall of the courtyard. She turned and stared  
V`U`Y`Z` `n`h`h`Y`f`|`b`h`b`X`X`j`|`M`a`z`W`b`g`X`Y`|`b`|`Y`f`b`Y`h`i`a`c`j`Y`

The focus of the camel's ire was a young man, his head shaved in the tonsure of the Dominican novitiate. He was breathing as hard as the camel, having done several laps of the adobe-walled courtyard at a dead  
f`i`b`k`|`h` `h`Y`V`Y`U`g`h`W`c`g`Y`c`b` `|`g` `Y`Y`g`" < |`g`c`b`W`U`b`Y`g`|`f`h`k`U`g`h`c`f`b`U`b`X`  
smeared with dirt where he had rolled from under her attempt to pin him,  
U`g`k`U`g` `|`g`Z`W`V`i`h`h`Y`Y`k`U`g`U`b`Y`d`f`Y`g`g`c`b`c`Z`U`Y`f`h`Y`g`g`c`b`|`h`f`U`h`Y`f`h`U`b`  
the terror which was typical of those put into the pen with old Fatima, the cantankerous dromedary.

Thirty paces in either direction limited the antagonists' movement; a large carob tree in the center had a watering trough on one side, which was the only obstacle for the youth to put between himself and the camel. Other than the solid doors that led to the stables, stoutly barred from the  
c`i`h`g`X`Z`h`Y`Y`k`U`g`c`b` `Y`|`h`V`i`h`U`h`|`b`m`U`F`W`k` `|`W` `Y` `U`X`b`c`h`V`c`h`Y`Y`X`h`c`  
Y`d`c`f`Y`"

Baseel gazed down on the scene from the balcony overlooking the enclosed courtyard behind the majordomo's quarters. The ground level below the balcony contained only the human and the camel, who was warily eyeing the whip in the youth's hand. Baltasar Cerra, the head of the trading concern in which the young Moor was rapidly rising, watched from above along with his new manager.

Baltasar chuckled as the youth dodged another blow from the foot of Fatima. "Ho, Jew! When you decide you prefer the life of a well-cared-for slave to that of a camel-boy, just let my majordomo here know," the mer-

chant shouted cheerfully down to the panting newcomer. "He will come onto this balcony morning and evening to see if you have changed your mind."

He walled space. He passed the arch again without a second glance, unlike the last two youths Baseel had watched. Had the captive investigated it, he would have discovered it gave onto a cave-like hole eight feet deep and a scant three feet high.

asked, adopting what he hoped was just the right air of professional detachment.

Baltasar smiled with satisfaction. "The best catch yet. Below you see a prize who was both the heir of Casa de Pazia and the most talented protégé of Abbe Matias of Holy Cross."

"De Pazia! Related to the woman who came recently?" Baseel studied the face below him. "Yes, I can see he has a Jewish look. This one seems older than the usual dispossessed rich brat sent by the Inquisition."

Cerra laughed, rubbing his hands. "Nineteen, I believe. The girl is his sister, who the most reverend Fathers gave us. But they most certainly did not send this one; in fact they are searching for him as we speak. I

"He was really very inept at this whole fugitive business, although I must commend him that he caught wind of the accusations and had the think I had made a mistake in taking his sister off the good Fathers' hands. marketable age. I had a few prospective buyers in mind. Until I found out g'Yk ci 'Xbchig' ]i'Gi hbc 'a UHf'G'Y\Ug'VYb'dfc'UHUY]Zcb`nrc' UMUg' i bk ]H]b[ 'U]hZf'h'g'Ug' "CbW\Y]g'd' ]UY=Ð' VYUYrc' Ug' UZfhi bY for the de Pazia name alone."

Baltasar undertook another moment of instruction for his protégé, now the new manager of the Granada arm of Casa Cerra. "Remember, our reputation depends on the cooperative conduct of our stock. Unwilling bodies do not fetch much of a price and the handling of them eats up the dfc'U'i'~]h]ghfU]bYXa ]bXgh'Uh'UFYfUYbXj'Ui'UVY' < Yh'fbYXrc' [c"Í8c' nothing; just wait him out. I will leave the affair in your hands while I am gone."

Baseel, reveling in the coveted title of majordomo, watched from the balcony, sizing up the job ahead of him. Most youngsters new to slavery g]Ybhc'b`nUZk' hff]ÜYX\ci'fg'Wk'Y]b[ ]b'h'Y\c'YUk'UnZ'ca : U]a Ug' reaching neck or treed among the carob branches before they willingly agreed to any future rather than be killed (as they thought likely) by the menacing beast. Cerra's human chattel did not know that she would attack

anyone who held a whip—the one item of equipment always sent in with the captives—and she chased whatever ran from her.

9]UgXYDUh]UddYUFYXh\Uj Yg fa ]gYXh ]gUfYUXh< YXfcdYX the whip, lowered his gaze and turned slightly away. The camel hesitated. She seemed to be thinking this over, making a breathy roaring noise. He moved slowly to the center of the walled space, then shinnied up the carob trunk. Fatima eagerly snapped up the few pods which fell down. The young Jew composed himself to sleep in the tree while his tormentor settled herself at the base to chew her cud.

5 hci [ \ h ]gk Ugh YUfgh]a Y\Y\UXgYb h YbYk Wdhj YzH Ya U jordomo knew something of the sudden fall of Casa de Pazia. He knew that 9j Uzh Ycb nXU [ \ hfz\ UKVYb \ci gYX]b h YgYfj ]b[ kca Ybgei UfHfg for the last week. He had caught sight of her from a distance and knew what Baltasar was referring to. Her appearance was certainly unimpressive, and the cook had already told him that she was a weepy religious fanatic.

Well, that would have to change, Baseel thought. Almost any man who cared enough to pay would probably provide a better life than what she would suffer as a penniless waif on the streets of Granada.

Unless... But he put the uncomfortable possibility out of his mind. It was a last resort. What was important was that the handsome, educated brother, a much more valuable prize, had fallen into the merchant's hands.

< ]gZfa Yf'a Ugh XYUhb ]b UbndfcXi Wdh Uik ci `Xh fb`UdfcUh]b` the thriving trade along the Mediterranean coasts and he kept a select list of clients who were on the lookout for educated slaves; those who could fYUXUbXk f]hYk YfYa i W ]b Xya UbX]b h YCHca Ub 9a d]fY"9j Yb'a cfY Yl dYbgj Yk YfY hcgYk ]h` Yl dYf]YbWY ]b` \UbX]b[ `fYUXZ Ug 9 ]Ug'a i gh surely have learned under his wealthy merchant father. Youth and good looks increased the asking price.

But the Jew's salability depended on his cooperation. If Baseel proved himself capable in handling this prize and the Granada base prospered under his care, the future held great prospects.

#### Fatima: Granada, Spain, September 1513

Fatima vocalized loudly, a long, woeful roaring camel noise. She stopped and listened hopefully for the answer of another of her kind, but none came to ease her loneliness. It had been this way since Abdul, the last of her herd, had died. She moaned her loneliness again to the uncaring group of horses and mules stabled on the other side of the wooden door.

She was from the once-great royal stable of racing camels of the king-Xca `cZ; fUbXU": cf nYUfgZyei ]bYg\ UXWYl ]ghXk ]h` \ Yf`UbX` Yf'a UY as fellow grass-eaters of no particular interest. They had their kind, the

Wa Yg\ UXUW'ch YzUbXYI WdhZcf'h Ya cghUgWg Uf]b[ 'cZ]bZfa U  
 tion about possible danger or food and water sources the two species had  
 comfortably ignored one another. But since the death of Abdul, Fatima  
 had tried to join the horses for want of any better company. Without suc-  
 cess. They had shunned her.

Now she was shut off from even the unfriendly horses. She hung by  
 the gate, rubbing her head on it in the hopes the keeper would come and  
 let her out. She did not like these sessions trapped in the courtyard with  
 frightened, whip-bearing humans.

The camel caught a concentrated odor on the dawn breeze that  
 VfcI [\h'Yf'lc UHh]cb. 7UcV '@cc\_]b[ 'UfcI bXzg\YgUk hYmci b[ 'a UY  
 human from yesterday's encounter coming towards her across the court-  
 nUFX"< YkUgh Ygci fWcZh YUddYh]b[ gWbh'GHZUñ\Yf'c'X'c]blg'dfc-  
 testing at every move, she got up and shambled in his direction. He had  
 taken off his upper clothing and tied it in a bundle from which came the  
 smell of carob pods, normally hanging high above her reach. They were  
 not feeding her enough.

The youth held up a hand with one pod, and she accepted it grate-  
 fully while he clucked at her softly. She nosed the cloth bundle unsuc-  
 cessfully trying to get at the contents. The human clucked and gave her  
 another pod. The lonely old camel's heart warmed toward this person. He  
 did not smell of either fear or anger, as all her handlers had of late. He had  
 not brandished the whip threateningly. He gave her carob. She butted his  
 shoulder gently. The human clucked and gave her another pod. She had  
 had no congenial company for a long time.

Cj Yf'h YbYl hgy YfU`Xngz: Uha UWa Ylc'i bXYfgLbXhYfi `Yg'  
 cZh YbYk [Ua Yh Uih]g'hk c! Y[ [X'Wa dU]cb'k Ug'd'Uhb[ 'k]h`Yf.'  
 When she did what he wanted, he made the clucking sound, ever fainter,  
 and gave her a carob pod. It made her remember all the pleasant and stim-  
 ulating things she used to do in the company of humans. She enjoyed the  
 WU`Yb[YUbX`Uj]b[ 'gca Yh]b[ 'lc'Xc'Yj Yb'a cFYhUb'hYfYUg"9j Yfmi  
 day he added some more complicated move; even the hated whip became  
 part of the play. It was good to have a herd-fellow again.

#### Baseel Alcazar: Granada, Spain September 1513

Baltasar Cerra watched the camel run after his latest prospect for  
 dfcUhb'h Ywi fhmFXVYck"5 hci [\9]Ugk UgXUg]b[ ZghYbci [\ VY-  
 tween the tree and the refuge hole, there was something lacking in Fati-  
 ma's ferociousness. "And he has not yet begged for mercy?"

"Not yet." Baseel followed his employer's glance. "I think old Fatima  
 may be a little slow this evening," he said. "She's always more energetic  
 before noon." Technically, this was the truth, but not in the way that Cerra  
 assumed. Baseel had been covertly watching all week, fascinated, while

9`J`UghfU]byXh YcbW! ]bWff[ [JVYWa Y"< YX[Xbch\_bck k`m`Yk UgfY-  
luctant to tell his master that the camel now did only the youth's bidding.

Í-h]g`lc`VY`l dW`X`h Uh`h ]g`cbYk ]`c`X`ci h`cb[ Yf`h`Ub`a`cg`h`  
the merchant said, waddling within and settling his bulk on the divan in  
his majordomo's sparsely furnished study. "If he's anything like his father,  
he's as stubborn as the camel. But he will soon learn where his advantage  
lies."

"Are you so sure the Jew can be made cooperative?"

Cerra had an idea. "We should make better use of the sister. After all,  
if he hadn't tried to rescue her, we wouldn't have caught him. Bring the girl  
here to your quarters for a while, and keep her miserable. In your case,  
the face alone should be good for a few tears. Let him see and hear her now  
and then. Then promise to better her condition when he capitulates."

Baseel ignored the reference to his scars. Many people bore the  
a Uf\_g`cZga U`dcl ž`h`ci [ \ `]g`k`fY`a`cfY`l`fY`a`Y`h`Ub`a`cg`h`?`bck`]b[`  
the strict morals of the Jewish Converso middle class, he supposed the  
a YfY`XU`cZk`U`h`a`[ \ `h`VY`U`d`Y`b[ `lc` \ `]g`g`h`f`k`ci`X`VY`g`Z`U`M`b`h`  
persuasion for their purposes.

"I presume that I should be careful that her harem sale value re-  
mains intact?"

"Don't bother," Baltasar made a sour face. "That was why taking her  
was a mistake. I have since been informed about the dark side of the fam-  
ily history. Old Yacov, like his father, had a fondness for young girls."

Baseel was shocked. "Surely not his own daughter?"

"Really vile," Cerra agreed. "Though he told me that he thought him-  
self cuckolded. Why else send his only heir to be a priest?"

"Perhaps he also felt it would help him buy safety from the Inquisi-  
tion," Baseel suggested.

"No doubt. Not that it availed him, in the end. He was too obviously  
prosperous." Cerra looked with approval at the plain dress of his major-  
domo. The Granada compound of Casa Cerra was well-cared-for but Spar-  
tan; it revealed nothing of the assets of its owner.

Baseel had to admit it was a good idea, especially as the camel threat  
was now useless. "By your leave, I'll just make a good pretense. Just in case  
your information is wrong." He faced enough revulsion without meeting  
it in bed.

"Oh, it's accurate enough. I just hired one of their former servants,  
and he tells me that it's generally known in the Casa de Pazia that her  
prime value has been lost long since." He eyed the Moor with a frown.  
ÍH`]g`]g`h`Y`b`l`h`g`h`d`Z`f`n`ai`ž`]Z`n`ai`U`fY`lc` \ `Ub`X`Y`g`U`Y`g`X`]f`Y`M`i`n`i`M`i`  
U`fY`g`]` \ `lc`g`Z`h`M`i`b`Y`X`lc`d`f`U`M`]W`k` \ `U`i`= \ `U`Y`H`U`[ \ `h`n`ai` . U`d`Y`cd`Y`  
are just another kind of animal, to be used judiciously and trained to the  
purpose. If the girl objects, she will learn what her future role is from the

Y dYf]YbWZUbXnæi k ]` [ Yicj Yf næi f Zc` ]g` gYbhja Yblg`-h]gbch[ ccXlc`  
VYlcc gYf]ci g`fYU UbXHU Ynæi f`d`YUg fYk` \ YfYnæi ÛbX]hí

The wisest course with the merchant was to agree. "So after I take the girl under my 'protection', what conditions am I authorized to give her brother?"

The merchant waved his hand. "Use your discretion. Without her virginity, she is hardly worth the cost of handling. Promise to marry her cZZhc` gca Ya YfWUblz]Zk YWb ÛbXcbYlcc HU\_Y` Yf` < Yf ZW]gUg`HbbYX as a commoner's, she has a prominent Jewish nose, she's used goods, and VnU` UWi blgzc`ZUXfYfny] [ ]ci gX]gdcg]hcb`"H Ydfc`UhZca XYDUhUg` son will compensate for what I lose on his daughter."

Baseel considered the task before him in the light of last week's observation of the youth. "Do I have a free hand to manage both siblings as I gYYÛh` \ YUg` YXWl hci g`nî

Í6nU` `a Yubgí` 6UH]gUfYd` ]YXY dUbgj Ynîf`=k ]` VYgdYbX]b[ `a cghí of my time in Malaga now, where I can better arrange the most advantageous sale for de Pazia. Don't worry, the Jew will come around if he is [ ]j Yb`g` ZUMbh]bWbhj Y`5ZM` U`z]h]gUdUa dYfYXUbXd]j ]`Y`YX`]Z`CZ Wbg]XfUV`Y]bÚ` YbW` \Y]gVY]b[ `cZfYXÉZf`a cfYgc` h`Ub`]b`h`YWi`fWz` UbXk ]h` `YggdfYHbg`"5 Wj Yf`UbXWfYZ` `g`U` YWb`k ]YX[ fYU]bÚ` YbW` and power, even be made a freeman once he proves his loyalty."

"Indeed," Baseel agreed, "Who would know that better than I?" With the sister's fate as added incentive, reasoning with the young man would be more effective than threatening him with a camel.

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A knock on the door as Baseel ate his solitary meal heralded the arrival of the de Pazia girl. She was shoved unceremoniously inside the entry; the majordomo acknowledged receipt of the goods. The guard made a few suggestive crudities, and as they were ignored, he took the hint and left.

Baseel looked down at her covered bent head with annoyance. A long day of handling trade correspondence had put him in no mood to deal with a weeping and frightened female. Baltasar Cerra thought this would be good for him; as though he needed somebody else to manage his private life! Well, she could sleep in the storeroom.

"Come sit here," He ordered brusquely, pointing to a chair near the table. She obediently sank into it, looking frightened but composed. So far, she had kept her head down; Baseel waited the inevitable moment k` \Yb`g` Yk`ci `X`cc`\_i` d`Uh` ]g`ZWU`bX`g`Y`h` Yf`U` U` Yg`h` U`h`ga` U`dcl` \`UX` left. As Cerra had unkindly pointed out, his appearance alone would probably be enough for their purpose.

< Y` \`X`VcfbY`h` Y`l` hf`Ya` Y`g`Wff]b[ `g]bW` \]g`ÛZYbh` `nyU` UbXVni now was resigned, sometimes even amused, at the reaction of people when

h YnÜfghVY\YX\ ]gXLa U YXWi bhbUbW"K Y`zVghc [ Yhh UidUfhcj Yf with. "Are you hungry?" he asked, indicating the cold meat, fruit, bread, and cheese.

She shook her head, looking towards him at last. To his surprise, the girl did not give the usual gasp of horror, nor stare, nor quickly avert her eyes as many did. Her gaze met his and seemed to look past the ravaged skin, as though she were peering inside his head to see what it contained regarding herself. It was surprising, especially for one who was clearly still frightened—and had been given every reason to be. Intrigued, Baseel returned her scrutiny, appraising her potential asking price.

She was too plump for his taste. Her most noticeable feature was a too-large, very Jewish nose, although wide-spaced green eyes helped distract from it. A dark auburn curl escaped from the unattractive head cloth, which despite the severe tying did not hide that there was a mass of unruly \Uf i bXfbYU\ "< Yf Wa d`Yl ]cbzi b`\_Y\ ]gzk Ug\ YUhn mUbXi bgWffYz Vi hg b`Yl dcg fY [ U Y`Yf Uk YUhn cZFYW Ygh Uha UX\ Yf UddYU`ck Yf class and would hold down her market value. She was dressed in a baggy gray Spanish surcote of some coarse fabric that resembled a nun's and did \Yf`Ü]i fYUbXWcf]b[ `bc Zj cfg"

"Drink a little wine," he ordered, pouring some in a pewter goblet. The girl obeyed, although she could not keep her hands from shaking. 6UgY`k Ug]ff]HUXU\ Yf`cVj ]ci g`Yl dYUW]cbg"

He knew his reaction was irrational, considering the pretense under which she had been sent, and concluded that it was knowing how old de Pazia had used his daughter that made the comparison to himself so redi`gj Y`< YÜ`YX\ ]gck b`[ cVYhUbXXfUb\_zhfn]b[ `lc [ Uh Yf\ ]ghci [ \lg" The sooner her brother was persuaded, the sooner they were both released from this awkward situation.

H:ghUfhk ]h`z`Yg`ci`XÜbXci hk\Uig\Y\_bYk "Í7Ub`nai [i Yggk`mi you are here?"

She spoke hesitantly, surprising Baseel with the steadiness of her soft low voice. "I am not sure. The priests took me to the women's quarters of Baltasar Cerra, who used to do business with my father, after the of-ÜWfg`cZh Y=bei ]ghcb`WbÜgWYXci f`YgHngf` < Yf`fYgfj YVfc`YzUbX she slipped from her chair to kneel before him, pleading. "I beg you, send kcfXlc`a mVfch`Yfz9`]UgXYDUh]U"< Y]g`gi Xn]b[ `Ui< c`m7fcg`UbX\Ug powerful friends in the church, even though our father betrayed the faith. He will recompense whatever Cerra has paid on my account."

Baseel looked into the hopeful upturned face, whose eyes were still bchÜ]YfHXZfca` \]g`Wa d`Yl ]cbzUbXa UX`Uei ]W`XW]g]cb"G`YgY`a YX remarkably straightforward; he was no actor himself, and would prefer to conclude this distasteful business without violence.

He had a fair offer to make, a better future for both of them than

anything Spain would allow the destitute children of a condemned Jewish apostate. His tactics would be plain and direct. "It is about your brother that we must speak. Sit, please," he said, waiting for her to get up off the Úccf"

"I am afraid he too has fallen out of favor with the Dominican order. He is accused both of practicing Judaism and of secretly conspiring with the Devil."

9j Ug ZWfY |ghfYXgbWfYX|ga UñÍC\`bcz h Uh |g`U`jY`9`|Ug`lg` UHfi Ygcb`cZ h YWi fW" 6ch`cZi g` \UX ci f`ÚfghWa a i b|cb`k |h` h`Y a cghF yj YfYbX 6|g`cd` < YfbUbXc` HUj YfU`K` \Yb` h`Y`Z h Yfg` Y Ua |bY him they will discover that they are mistaken, and they will restore him to his place."

6UgYYg` \Yf h k Ug i bY dYWXnrk fi b|` h` Uh UbnVcXnrk` \c` \UXVYb` through what this girl had endured in the last weeks could still believe so naively in the institutions of her family's borrowed religion. To guard against pity, he made his voice rough. "He has already been tried *in absentia* and condemned to be burned for heresy as your father was."

9j Ug HfYXU\` |a ž` Yf ZWVYWa |b|` k` \ |h`i bXf h` YZYW` Yg` H` Yb` tears began to course down her cheeks, and her head bowed. "It is my Zi` h`9` |Ug` h`c` k` |` X|YZf` a` ng|b` I`

Well, it was a good start. Baseel suppressed another twinge of sympathy and pressed on. "As it happens, because of his fondness for you he has one chance to stay alive. In trying to locate you, he fell into the hands of my master Baltasar Cerra. I am the majordomo of his Granada operation, and you were given to me in the hopes that you might care enough to help him."

< cdYU` \YX` \Yf` Yl` dfYgg|cb` UbX` g` Yg` fi` [|` \YXZf` Wa` dcg` fYž` a` cd` d|b|` \` Yf` ZWk` |h` \` Yf` g` Yj` Y` I9` |Ug` |g` \YfY3A` Uñ` g` Y\` |a` 3`

"Not just yet. First there are some harsh new facts of life which it is needful for you to understand." Baseel paused, measuring her and try- |b|` |h` WccgYk` cfXg` h` Uk` ci` XdYfg` UX` ÍM` i` f` Vch` Yf` k` |` \` UbXbc` g` UZ` places in Spain or Portugal, now that he has been tried and found to be a heretic. In fact, since the inquisitors have mounted a special search for him, we will have to smuggle him out of Granada.

"The one hope he has is the same route many Spanish and Portu- [i` YgY` >k` g` \U` YHU` Yb` VZcfY` \]a` . |h` [c` |h` YCHca` Ub` 9a` d|fYžk` \YfY` educated men are valued. Unfortunately, such a journey is costly. The only thing of value the church has not taken is himself."

Baseel paused, watching the girl for her reaction. She sat perfectly still, the occasional tear still escaping, hands tightly clasped in her lap Ug` h` ci` [ \` |h` \_` Yd` h` Ya` Z` ca` |h` Ya` V` |b|` " < YbchX` h` Uh` h` Y` Ub` |` Yf` g` k` YfY` capable and the nails work-roughened; not the sort of hands one would Yl` dYMcZUXYDUh` U` H` |g` |` |f` k` Ug` i` bi` g` U` cb` a` UbnW` i` blg` "DY` \` Udg` g` Y`

might be more understanding than the typical pampered daughter of a wealthy merchant.

"Since your father and the church have taken such great pains to make him skilled in languages and writing," Baseel continued, "My master has a [ [ \hVUYUhc \UbXUd\UWZf'9 ]UgUgUj Ui YXgUj Y]b'cbYcZH Y great trading houses of the east."

Í9\]UgUgUj Y C\zbcZUbnh]b[ \Vi hñUñ'9j UgYa YXhc Zf[ Yh\ Yf own circumstances in the horror of this new revelation.

"Anything but that, in his case, would be an agonizing death," Baseel said brutally. "Your brother, for all his learning and intelligence, knows nothing of making his way in a world without privilege and position. His ]bY dY]YbW dfUW]W nXfcdYX\]a ]bhc'ci f\UbXg"=Za nra Ughf\UX not captured him, the Inquisition would have broken your brother on the rack by now. But Baltasar Cerra did not become wealthy because of his WUf]HUVYbUi fY< Yf dYUg]hc fYU]nYU\UbXgca YdfcUñf' "

She frowned slightly in concentration. Good. She was intelligent and was working this out. It was time for a more gentle tone. "Slavery is not g WUVUXZH YZf'cbYcZ\]gHUYbg"=bYXZñ YXUñhc!XUñY ]gYbWcZ a learned slave can be much better than that of many freemen. I speak as cbYk ]h \Y dY]YbWñ \YUXYX XfññÍ bZfhi bUñmZf'U`WbWfBYZ 9 ]UgbYXg]hc VYWbj ]bWXCZH ]g"< ]g'UW'cZUWdHbWk ]`bchWUb[ Y the fact of his slavery, only the conditions of it.

"A cooperative slave of your brother's ability and learning is worth a fortune. Uncooperative, he is just another rebellious body, useful only for chain labor or the galleys. And there is another reason you should help me persuade him. His cooperation could buy your freedom."

GAYU]bWYXUbX\ Yf YñYgk Ybñi bk ]`]b[ ññc h YWfH]bYXUFW h Ui partitioned the bedroom from the salon. She turned a greenish color under her tan, and swallowed several times in barely-controlled fear. Baseel pointed hastily. "There is a privy off the entry!" One hand clamped over her mouth, the girl disappeared in the direction indicated.

After such a refreshing and unanticipated beginning, the plain statement on his lack of attraction stung. In spite of his scars, there were women who welcomed his advances. He did not need or want this girl.

When she came out she was composed again, and her face was set like the condemned. "I deserve death," she said. "You may do what you kUbhk ]h'a Y]Z]hk ]` \Yd'9 ]Ugñf'

"You are no use to either your brother or my master dead," snapped Baseel, annoyed at being cast in the role of a 'fate worse than death'. "Tomorrow I must leave at dawn to meet a shipment of spices from Tangier. I will give you until I return to consider how you can persuade your brother to see reason, and if you have questions you may ask me then."

Baseel indicated the door to a small storeroom. "You will make your-

self a pallet in there for now, and I will have someone attend to your needs tomorrow." He paused at the door with a last thought. "Until I return, the compound, but the gate-keeper will not let you outside it. It will go badly for you if you put him to the test."

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Baseel made a point of detouring past the Casa de Pazia when he gave him new insight into why the Inquisition had pounced so fast on de Pazia's heresies. He could well imagine the life of ease that had gone on behind those walls; it was the life of his childhood in the Alhambra, where even the palace slaves had leisure within their servitude. Until the mountains, the Alcazar family had watched comfortably from the sidelines while the rich amused themselves.

But in the impoverished circumstances of defeat, life for the slaves had been quite different. Baseel's thoughts hardened. When Granada was when forced to choose between his wealth or his faith, had gambled on the former. And it had been his downfall; the money was no good to him where he was now and his descendants would not even own themselves.

The place was deserted. On the elaborate iron gate which hung open onto the formal courtyard was a paper with the seal of the Inquisition. Dismounting to read the charges against the family, Baseel started at a movement from across the street. A woman darted out from the side gate of a nearby villa, a servant by her dress. "Señor, you work for Casa Cerra, yes? Do you know what has become of the daughter of this house?"

Baseel's curiosity was piqued. "I might know. Why do you ask?"

"I have her guitarra, and she will be wanting it. It is a little damaged, but I hid it for her, when the priests came."

Baseel was surprised. Anything to do with the Inquisition involved risk, and the woman would have been accused of stealing if she were caught. What astonishing loyalty the girl inspired! "Were you her nurse?"

"No, I just worked in the kitchens," the woman mumbled, embarrassed. "But if you see her, please tell her that Old Juana is well, and has found employment with the Casa Lorenzo, and that I will bring her instrument if I may."

"Why would the daughter of a rich merchant care about the fate of her kitchen servant?" Baseel asked.

not be asking that. We don't grieve the father or his majordomo, but it was hard to lose the young mistress." She looked over her shoulder. "I must

return to my work. Is she still at Casa Cerra?"

Baseel was alarmed. If the de Pazia girl had people who were loyal to her, right here in Granada, she could easily escape and disappear. And how would that make him look? "I know she was sold into slavery, and is probably on the way to the coast now," he said brusquely. "She will not be needing the instrument. Sell it, or keep it yourself." He mounted again and hurried towards home, wishing he had not been so lenient in setting  
9j Uq Vci bXUf]Yg'UbX\cd|b[ 'h Uig\Y\UX'bchU\_Yb'h ]g'cddcfh b]mhc' vanish.