

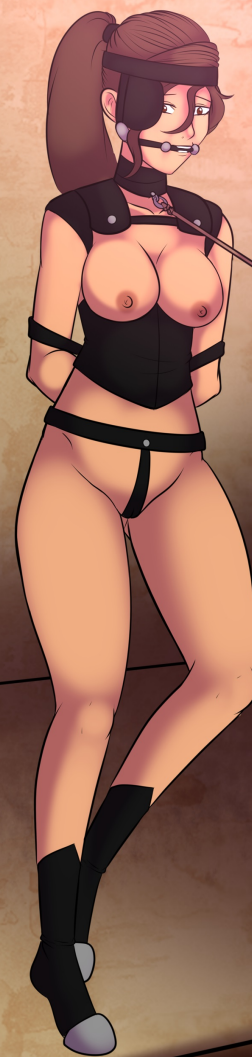
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REINS OF THE

TOMB RAIDER

- REMASTERED -

Chapter 4 : Raider Arrested

I awoke in Ivo's bed, holding my cousin's wife. He was holding mine, so it was a fair exchange – the sort of night we had not had since we were teenagers. We all four of us laughed about that, remembering our youth. The history of Parmistan was rife with such mischief, though we were careful never to get offspring from such unions.

Our good friend, the ambassador James Berners, Earl of Faringdon, rarely partook in such pastimes, and we all knew why. He mourned the lady that had walked away from him and broken his heart. We thought ourselves lucky in this, proving that with all bad things there must be good: yes, his heart had been shattered, but that shattering had brought him here, forged him, remade him into something stronger.

And today, this glorious day when spring gave way to summer, this day would see the wrong we had made right become still more right.

James joined us for our morning meal, bringing fresh cheeses from Routard, and we gathered together to laugh and smile, speaking of the harvest festivals to come when summer finally died. Ivo explained to our wives and children that there was work to be done and justice to be served, for the goddess Justita had turned her eyes to our proud country and was trusting in us to right crimes ignored by weaker countries.

“It's true,” James told our children. “Your people are the purest I've known.”

We made the proper offerings to Bacchus and to Neptune, then paused to look at the fountain of gentle Justita. James wondered why there was no offering to be made to her, and Ivo and I looked at one another.

“I work in the temple of Securitas,” Ivo said. “My offering to Securitas is my service. I am a priest of the god that keeps proud Parmistan safe. So it is also with Justita.” James nodded his understanding, and I clasped him on the back, knowing how hard it was for him to see beyond Jupiter and Mithras.

Such a strange world, outside of Parmistan.

We watched on the monitors as Lara's guide took her down the most treacherous of pathways, he seeking to exhaust her, but she was so much stronger than any of us had given her credit for. Ivo's guard were waiting close to the third place the guide demanded they rest, he breathing hard while she had only worked up a light sweat.

Ivo was dismayed by this. Originally, the plan had been to have her arrested when she was exhausted, but such was her fitness that had he not placed the guard ahead of her, we might not have caught her at all. Even now, having seen her capabilities in the Village of the Damned, he was unsure that the guard would be able to do more than slow her down. He had hoped fatigue and numbers combined would overwhelm her enough for them to use the chloroform they now carried.

“I have an idea,” said James, his eyes narrowing as his head tilted back. We listened to it, our smiles growing, and we both clasped his back while relying his instructions.

The guards revealed themselves earlier than they had expected to, acting as if they were on routine patrol. They stopped by the guide and spoke with him, looking bored as they checked Lara's passport. Lara seemed concerned at first, but as the guards paid less attention to her she relaxed somewhat. The guards passed around a bottle of water, the guide drinking from it, and in the moment that it was out of Lara's sight they dumped some of the chloroform into it.

When they handed it to her, she nodded and accepted the canteen, was bringing it to her lips when she detected something wrong. She frowned, breathing in to figure out what was wrong before throwing the canteen away. As she staggered back, wavering, the guards jumped on her, pressing a towel soaked with the chemical against her nose and mouth, kicking at her shins to make her breath in.

In the minute it took the chloroform to claim her, she fought like a Spartan. It was impressive, the strength of this girl, and I thought she would have made a worthy mate for my friend had she not been a criminal. As it was, she knocked one man down and gifted another with a black eye. As her strength faded, though, the guard surrounded her, four of the guard binding her wrists and ankles in chains as another tended to the wounded. It was the guide who found the armor in her pack, and once that was done they dragged her back to Parmistan for punishment.

It took most of the day to get Lara back into Candover. The chains slowed her down a great deal, and by the time she returned to the Temple of Justita she was as exhausted as the others. The ankle chains had an iron bar between them that was barely a foot long and kept her strides short and weak, while a similar bar rested on the roundness of her backside, keeping her wrists apart. The two bars were connected by a three-and-a-half foot length of chain, which limited her struggles, and a simple rope around her neck allowed the guide and guard to keep her on the right path once she was conscious again.

She spat and cursed the entire way back, but switches made of slim branches were whipped against the back of her thighs and calves and kept her moving all the way to the temple. There, we gathered, bringing our wives and select friends to watch as the thin neck of the English noblewoman was stretched, the rope pulled towards the ceiling by means of a clever pulley system. It forced her to stand straight, but did not choke her. This was not the time for punishment, that would come after the trial. For now we only wanted her to understand the severity of her situation.

We watched, taking seats in the room next door while the iron bar between her legs was then chained to the ground and the guards left her. She could not see us, the room made of one way glass that showed her only herself and the room around her. With her was a table, and behind the table, a chair. Tied as she was, her breasts stood forward and her body tensed as she struggled in vain to free herself.

Ivo and I framed James in the other room, holding his hands as Lara Croft was admitted into the Parmistan justice system. He squeezed, a low sound thrumming from his throat and into the air.

“Wait here, please,” Ivo said, the words meant for James, but all the while he was looking at me. “We need to make sure that this is fair and right. We are in the Temple of Justita. Will you all bear witness?”

“We will,” we all said, James answering quicker than the rest of us. We could see and hear everything as Ivo went to meet Lara.

“Miss Croft, good evening,” Ivo said, greeting her. Her pack and the things she had stolen had been placed on the table in front of her, a table that Ivo now sat on the other side of. “My name is Ivo Paley, and I am the chief of security here in glorious Parmistan. You stand accused of lying about your intent when entering this great country, providing false identification, trespassing in the Village of the Damned, assaulting the people that live there, endangerment of yourself and others, stealing important historical artifacts, attempting to smuggle those artifacts out of the country, and assaulting our guards while resisting arrest. How do you plead?”

“This is ridiculous!” cried Lara. She had to struggle to look at Ivo, curving her back. “I’m a foreign national. You can’t do this. I have diplomatic immunity.”

“We will contact your embassy and let them know what is happening,” Ivo said, nodding sympathetically. He stood and walked around the table, resting a hand on Lara’s hip as an offer of

comfort. He had always been such a kind man. "I assume you are entering a plea of not guilty?"



"Bloody damn right!" Lara hissed, bucking her hip in a failed attempt to dislodge his hand.

"Very well," Ivo said. He patted her hip, moving away from her, taking her things and leaving the room. He flashed a smile in my direction, but James had eyes only for Lara.

The guard returned, six of them. A needle was injected into the back of Lara's neck, and she kicked and struggled until the muscle relaxant took its toll, leaving her weaker than James had been when he'd first come here. The guards then untied her, two of them holding her up while another unwound the pulley and allowed her to come to earth.

Gently, gently, they guided her down to the floor, unwinding her bonds from her. She tried to move but

her muscles were unresponsive, the drugs doing their work, yet still each of her limbs was given to one guard as the other two looked at one another and licked their lips.

The first moved towards her top, peeling it away from her toned midriff, up her chest and over her shoulders. This garment was folded and placed in one of two boxes the guards had brought with them. Her sports bra followed, the elastic pulled off her firm breasts, her nipples hardening in the cold of the room. Wide-eyed, she managed to shake her head and tried to kick, but even her jaw and tongue were numb – she could not even curse the guard, not even scream.

As her bra and shirt were folded, catalogued, and boxed, the other free guard sat on her thighs, working her belt clasp undone, worming it through the loops around her waist. He handed the belt to the first guard, then unbuttoned her pants, deft fingers working button and then zipper. He then manipulated her hips to work her pants down her legs, the guards holding her keeping her steady as first one leg was revealed, and then the other.

The pants were folded, cataloged, boxed. All the guards lifted the woman, careful not to bruise or hurt her, placing her stomach down on the table, tying her wrists to opposite corners. Her panties were worked down her thighs, knees, ankles, and away, leaving her naked and helpless, her bum jutting out like an invitation.

James growled, deep and low.

“Patience,” I told him, clapping his shoulder. “She is still a person and not a prisoner. She has yet to go to trial.” He nodded, understanding.

Her ankles were then bound to opposite table legs. One of the guards put on a pair of gloves, adding grease to them, and Lara's eyes went wide and she tried to fight again as she realized what must happen now. Still, she squeezed her eyes shut, doing her best to scream as the guard worked her hand past the strong tightness of Lara's holes, pausing only to exchange gloves before doing so.

Perhaps, when the guard was wrist deep inside Lara's rectum, she was grateful for muscle relaxant.

When she was deemed to be safe, a second box was opened and her prison clothes were removed – a pair of black panties and an orange button-up short-sleeved shirt. The guards untied her and pulled her off the table, and though she did not have the strength to struggle so soon after what had been done to her, she did twitch as they dressed her and helped her stand.

“You will be taken to a cell now,” Ivo said, returning from our room to that one. “Your things will be held for you, to be released upon the proof of your innocence or your release, whichever comes first. I have contacted the Emperor and your trial has been set two days from now. Your embassy has been contacted also, and once you are in your cell we will allow your ambassador to speak with you. Do you understand?”

She managed a passable nod, her eyes glazed and cheeks stained with tears.

The guards carried her to her cell, a simple stone room that was a six foot cube without window, excepting a mere pit for waste and some straw for sleeping. She was bound before being put into the cell, again with a foot long iron bar between her ankles and then between her wrists, the bars connected by the same three foot length of chain. She was helped into the room, the guard doing their best to make her comfortable on the straw before leaving her to curl into herself and snuffle.

“Lara!” James said, coming into the room with her. She could only just adjust her body to look up at him, but he set down his lamp and went to her, holding her, stroking her hair and trying to comfort her. “What did you do?”

The drugs in her system mangled whatever response she might have had.

“It's going to be okay, Lara,” James promised her, pressing his lips to her temple, careful not to touch any of her exposed areas. Such a gentleman my friend is. “We're going to get you out of this.”

Lara turned so her face pressed against him, and then she wept.