

# A Passage to Britannia

## EXCERPT

### Prologue

When I, Aadhaya Bahl, look upon myself today, in the present, I see no connection to either the child I recall from my schooldays or the young woman that child became before the inevitable dissatisfaction with the non-feeding stage of the pupa and the happy coincidence of events that would see her predatory and controlling nature take centre-stage.

That '*predatory and controlling nature*' being the one constant connecting me to my former existence and the very qualities – yes, I truly regard them in such an exalted light - responsible for the position I hold in *his* life now.

A position that must, I know, surprise and torment the man who once thought himself the master of his lowly Indian domestic; the complete reversal of our roles in relation to each other something that would have seemed to him no more than the most outrageous fantasy had he – unthinkable for one possessing his suspicion and contempt of all things *not* Northern European – consulted a Romany fortune-teller and been informed of what awaited him in his future.

That '*what*' being me.

As I stand before the mirror of the master-bedroom and take in the contours of the full and womanly body that had been so influential in my progression from servant to master; I correct myself.

There is indeed another connection to my past and it is staring back at me with the same strength of purpose but lack of beauty with which it has always stared back at me.

You see, in distinct contrast to my body, with its Rubenesque curves and large shapely breasts with narrow and natural décolletage, my face was never, I was told cruelly, likely to be my fortune.

Though that same body, I was also told, might go some way towards making a fortune for another.

I was left, on more than one occasion, in no doubt as to which profession the kindly soul informing me of my facial lack felt I was best equipped to follow and was at an age that ill-equipped me to retaliate against such a disgusting insinuation – even if I was old enough to promise myself that the man who would set himself up as my pimp had yet to be born.

And if he had and possessed the nerve to try, I remember promising myself, he would not be partaking of the joys of life for long.

The face staring back at me now, the instigator of much petty cruelty aimed my way over the years, has been described in many ways.

As strong and purposeful, by the more kindly or diplomatic.

And as avian and off-putting – to quote one of the more acceptable put-downs – by others less caring of the feelings of another whose unthinking cruelty stirred in me a lifelong need to punish and correct those of a similar mindset.

Mostly men.....