

# VENUS ASCENDANT

## Excerpt

### PROLOGUE

Women were not meant to be this way.

So convention insisted.

A part of her knew that and wished herself different.

But then the shadows would lengthen. Seducing the luminous with imagery filtered too frequently through youthful curiosity until it's inevitable hardening on the anvil of adulthood. Becoming eventually the force majeure she now wrestled with so unconvincingly.

Apart from small but crucial variations the visualised scene remained intact from her childhood. Before puberty and encroaching maturity insisted on the editing process that would transform her half-formed scenarios into storylines which left her, helped by a suspension of disbelief and her own hand, in a state of guilty satisfaction.

Before even that changed.

In common with most fantasies the law of diminishing returns was ever present. Hence the growing perversity of dreams that were perverse enough to begin with. Unable, and unwilling, to leave the fields of her imagination fallow she had sown and ploughed until the completion over which she obsessed could no longer be reaped within the confines of her own autonomy.

Leaving her no choice.

And a problem of an altogether different nature.

How blessed the person whose fantasy life fulfilled utterly throughout the duration of that person's existence. How fortunate (as well as stunted, she found herself thinking) to go cradle to grave content with unsated desires rather than find oneself at such a pitch of unrealisable anticipation that life itself became a numbing, by the numbers, passage between one routine and the next.

A depressing prospect and she said as much:

'Not for me, thank you.'

Instantly angry with herself as the sound of her own voice returned her to the moment.

She had spoken out loud.

Her first mistake so far.

This time.

'Stupid, stupid, stupid!' a slighted inner-voice berated. Sound, it knew, encouraged all kinds of familiarity. The one thing she had to be above.

At least for now.

In her general scheme of things of course, it was small beer; she knew that. Yet it was a departure from the script just the same. And she was growing less and less fond of departures.

As before, when excitement grew so uncertainty waned. At first, lingering germs of doubt had made her uneasy. How could one know, after all? What if the actuality appalled? One thing to dream; another to...

But now she did know. Knowing also that her chosen road permitted no U-turns. A fact she had found a little scary. That part of her still obdurate in its attachment to normality horrified; wanting nothing more than to turn away from the scene she had worked so hard to contrive and return again to the metaphysical haven of personal imagination. The hermetically sealed world of private desire.

She recalled reading that fear of the irrevocable was the only true definition of sanity. She also recalled finding that sage. So now, pronouncing herself nerveless, she could draw only one conclusion. And in the drawing felt uncertainty reassert itself.

'Calm, calm,' the same inner-voice warned as her eyes closed to conjure up the picture.

Her picture.

A glade. Backdropped by shimmering sea. Autumnal. Tranquil. Yellow leaves diffusing bright sunlight as a soothing breeze stirred the branches overhead into a natural musicality. A favourite place in a favoured season. Yet to be found wanting in times of mental turmoil.

Sang-froid returning she allowed her eyes to flicker open and wander the thick, white-painted, walls of the cellar; confidence in its sanctity total.

And calming.

Down here it was quiet. Preternaturally so. Not even the thunder of lorries, hurtling clockwise or anti around the motorway locals and equestrian-set alike had fought against so doggedly, penetrated.

This time, she bolstered herself, mood brightening, she did feel confident. This time it could be different. This time adjustment would take place.

The prospect raised her spirits further and she smiled. Optimism being a state of mind she relished. Reassuring her as it did that, after everything, she remained a human being still.

Not a monster.

As the flood rose to crisis so everything seemed to decelerate. Time itself succumbing to the arthritis it assigned to others with such insouciance. Near delirious with anticipation, smile fixed, she raised her arm above her; light from the naked bulb overhead deflecting from the stainless steel surface of the blade as she held the pose and savoured what was to come.

Before, seemingly independent of her own volition, Sheffield's sharpest began its downward arc towards the man strapped naked and terrified to the gurney anchor-bolted to the cellar's concrete floor.

An auto-pilot leaving her free to imprint incidental details to her memory for future reference.

Touch: free hand gripping him so tightly captive.

Sound: screamed, unintelligible, entreaties from behind the ball-gag.

Olfactory: bowels releasing through the hole cut into the gurney to drop to the concrete floor.

As the blade sliced through the tendons connecting his scrotum to the rest of his manhood she felt an unearthly rightness add itself to his muffled screams and the stratospheric, thought shattering, intensity of her own orgasm.

At that moment he ceased to be a named person with a history and a life.

As of now, she was his god.