PRISON

It was a dark night in the Land of Guilt. Snow was falling heavily and wind was gushing through the forest as Janice, a girl of fifteen, huddled in an abandoned hut. She had come to the hut that morning when the sky was blue with not a cloud in sight, and now this. She was an orphan with no relatives and had to fend for herself. Life was hard and she was hungry. It was too wet and cold even in the hut to fry some mushrooms she had gathered to eat and to sell.

Suddenly, an old man appeared. Seeing Janice, he grabbed her, and as she screamed, he tried to rape her. She pushed

him off and he fell on the stone floor, cracked his skull and died. Janice, frightened and very cold, ran back into the City of Princes. She huddled in the doorway of a small block of flats in a poor area. A couple of policemen stopped in front of her. “Why are you crying, my child? He asked?” Tearfully, Janice managed to tell him. “I will go and bring his dead body back! He can be buried in the Prison yard. What a disgusting, wicked old man. “Here,” said the other policeman, “is a chocolate bar.” “Thank you, kind sirs,” she said gobbling it down.

Janice ran to the nearby Baptist church called Trinity Chapel. Mrs Jones, the minister's wife, had been kind to her as she sat begging alms from the congregation as they left. "Come, little lady and have lunch with me and my family after church on Sundays. As a result, Janice made many new friends in the church and came to know the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour.

The policemen jumped on their horses and were soon at the hut. They went in. Appalled they stared at the old man lying on the floor! "It's the Prince!" they shouted in unison. "That wicked girl was lying!"

Leaping on their horses they galloped back to the city and arrested poor Janice. “I didn’t kill him for his money!” she yelled. But they marched her off to prison to await her trial the in the morning. Sitting on the bare slabs of the cell, Janice sobbed, “Dear Lord Jesus, please, please help me!”

The next morning, Janice appeared in Court. The Judge, a fat, short and balding man said, “Because you are so young and an orphan, I will not sentence you to death but to life in prison.” Weeping bitterly, Janice was led into a small cell, with a bed, commode, and a

small, barred window overlooking the large parade ground. Opposite this was a door opening into a long passage lined with cells. She stared out of the window. The Commandant was holding a loudspeaker. “It is not a good day for prisoners Adam and Eva. They will be hanged at two this afternoon. When you are released, do not resume you bad ways, but start good new lives – go to church and be converted, and you won’t land back here on Death Row.”

One afternoon while Janice was sitting on her bed reading her Bible, a warder knocked on her door. “Prisoner Janice, King Peter is

here to speak to you." A young man walked in. He was tall, handsome with a kind face. She stared at him in amazement. Why ever is he visiting me?" she thought. "Good afternoon, Miss Janice," he said. "I have come to ask you why you protested your innocence so vehemently when you were convicted with no extenuating circumstances?" "Your Majesty," she answered, "it is because I am innocent. You see, I am a Christian and I would never tell a lie holding the Bible." "I am a Christian also," he said. "In fact, I am a minister of Trinity Chapel in the village called Truth. The King was a very distant relative of mine - but I was proclaimed King as I was his nearest relative.

I will do my best to sort this out. So, be of good cheer, if God be for us, who can be against us?" And he smiled at her and they fell instantaneously in love.

He returned to the Castle and called his best friend to visit hm. "Tom," he said, "Please help me to solve this mystery." And he told him of his visit to Janice. "She really impressed me. Her faith is genuine. I like her a lot. She's also pretty and has a sweet expression on her face. I am sure she would never lie."

Back at the Castle, he asked for Miss Hubbard who was the housekeeper. “Miss Hubbard,” he said, “This is highly confidential, but I have interviewed Janice, the young lady accused of murdering the former king. She impressed me as being very truthful, and so I want to search the Castle and see if I can find any evidence that my relative the King had been connected in any way with this girl other than meeting her in the hut in the woods where he went to find shelter and was killed.” “Maybe he just fell on the ground and cracked his skull open,” she suggested. “It’s quite possible,” replied King Peter.

He decided to search the Castle and asked Tom to help him because it was so large. They began in the Banqueting Hall and ended in the Kitchen causing chaos and delaying lunch for themselves and the staff. Their search had failed. They had found nothing. Miss Hubbard, heard of this and said to Peter and Tom, “The King had a secret bedroom in the attic. No-one knew about it and only the young maids were given a key to clean it.” “Thanks, Miss Hubbard, I supposed you were one of them all those years ago?” “Yes,” she replied, “I was.” Please give me the keys of the bedroom” he said. “Let’s get cracking,” said Tom. They stripped the bed, cut the pillows and

mattress of the huge bed open, turned out all the cupboards and bookshelves but found absolutely nothing. “What a disappointment” lamented Tom as they plonked themselves on the sofa their feet resting on a valuable Persian rug. Peter jumped up. He kicked the rug away. They stared at the floor in amazement. A square had been cut out of the wooden floor, and a ring was attached to it. Peter pulled it with trembling hands; it contained a notebook. On its cover was the title, THE 49 GIRLS I RAPED. The first name was Betsy Hubbard. King Peter gave all forty-nine women a hundred thousand dollars.

He proclaimed a National Feast Day to celebrate his marriage to Queen Janice, the love of his life.