

PRECIOUS BURDENS by Avery Sterling

EXCERPT

Sarafina paced the captain's room. Panic rose by the second, as did her fury. When the captain finally stepped in, she grabbed a water pitcher and threw it at his head. He ducked. She cursed and snatched up a silver candle holder and flung that at him.

He attempted to close the space between them, all the while dodging a variety of flying objects.

When she ran out of things to throw, she opened his desk and found a letter opener. She pulled it out, and he was suddenly behind her, his arms flanking her.

"I don't think so," he said, encircling her and reaching for the makeshift weapon.

She'd die before surrendering to the likes of her captor.

He tightened his hold around her and lifted her off the ground. She took advantage of the moment by bracing her feet on his desk and pushing off, and they flew backward, barely missing the windows. He grunted when his body slammed into the planks. "Drop the letter opener," he ordered in her ear.

With one arm still restricting her, he reached for the opener. He enclosed most of her fist in his hand and squeezed until she shrieked in pain. He released just enough pressure for her to drop the opener. "Are you finished?" he asked.

She eyed the opener on the floor as he kicked it across the room. She'd been defeated.

There was a long silence, only broken by their heavy breaths.