

Straits Academy

By

Alice Liddell

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Embrace the spank!

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ALSO BY ALICE LIDDELL

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The Harlot Bride : An absorbing and erotic tale of a powerful earl and his young bride, Miss Lucy Farquhar. In the Victorian era, a lady's reputation could not afford even a whisper of scandal. Raised in India but sent back to England when both her parents suddenly pass away, When Lucy's behavior causes social censure, she is married off and whisked away to the earl's remote country estate. Hardly a bride yet not a servant, her very strict husband trains her to humility and obedience through the frequent application of bare-bottom spankings, the strap, the birch...

Childebride Island: In Victorian England, there was a remote isle known to a chosen few as Childebride Island. Under cover of night, young ladies were spirited away from cities and town on the mainland and brought to the island for specialized training, preparing them for eventual placement in the homes of wealthy gentlemen with very specific tastes.

Guiding Alice: Life changes drastically for eighteen-year-old Alice when she is sent from Los Angeles to England to live with her very proper British uncle, a man with decidedly old-fashioned ideas about how young ladies should behave. Matters between them would have come to a head soon enough, but it is a sternly worded letter from the headmistress of Alice's new school that forces her uncle's hand.

Foreword by Anne Randolph

Alice Liddell and I have known each other for ten years. Since the earliest days of our both writing for Bethany's Woodshed, we have had an unofficial – and mostly unspoken – competition: who's the kinkiest?

No tame spanking stories for us. No mild little patty whacks through jeans.

With *Straits Academy*, Alice has just upped the ante and set a new standard, and the trophy passes to her – at least for now! *Straits Academy* is absolutely everything an erotic novel should be: just the right blend of romantic story, exotic fantasy, genuine mystery and of course, kink. Pure, unapologetic kink.

Want to pretend that a strict Uncle is giving our naughty young lady a bare bottom spanking while others look on? Want to read about a horribly embarrassing examination at the hands of a stern Scottish nurse? Look no further...

Alice's worlds are terribly edgy, and the one she creates in *Straits Academy* is unsurpassed by anything she's written before. Yet you can embrace the kink without guilt because Alice, through her beautiful writing, lets you feel everything Addy feels. Addy loves everything that's done to her... and you know it.

Adelaide Hartley is a perfect heroine, innocent but adventurous, and Drake our perfect hero: caring but also fully aware of his own proclivities, and if young ladies' bare bottoms fall into his path, so be it. And Madame Ong, with her lacquered fingernails, is simply the best villain ever to grace an erotic novel: Cruella DeVil with a strap.

We get a good glimpse of what Singapore's underbelly may have been like in the 1920s, and if there never was a real *Straits Academy*, you know there should have been. Because Alice Liddell makes it real for us.

This novel has been a long time coming. Alice first released the concept in a series of short chapters beginning in 2005. It's hard to believe it's been seven years – but I for one will say whole-heartedly – it's been worth the wait!

Anne Randolph
September 2012

STRAITS ACADEMY – ALICE LIDDELL

Prologue

Shortly after midnight, he heard the low knocking of a boat motor and crouched low in the bushes where he'd been watching since nightfall. It sounded like the boat was coming in from the north, which ran counter to the tip he'd received. His informant had said the smugglers would approach from the south.

The boat came closer and slowed, and the engine cut off. A half-minute later there was a small splash and the rattle of an anchor chain; whoever dropped it was trying to avoid making noise. He tensed, waiting for the next round of activity: a rubber raft hitting the water or the sound of oars, but nothing came.

It was impossible to see anything from shore because of the mist over the water and the clouds covering the moon. He couldn't even see the hands of his watch, so he started a silent count to keep track of the time.

After fifteen minutes, he took off his boots and set them by a tree trunk. He had come intending only to observe, hoping to confirm the island was a base for opium-smuggling so he could turn that information over to the customs police, but nothing was happening. Perhaps if he could get close enough to identify the boat, he could trace it to whoever it was at the top of the ring. That would be quite a coup, professionally, and extra wages from a promotion would be welcome once he and Adelaide were married. He removed his watch and shirt and left them atop his boots.

Bare-chested, he made his way to the water. He waded in until he could swim, moving forward slowly and silently while listening for the change in the small, choppy waves in the bay that would indicate a boat ahead.

When he found it, it was bigger than he expected. He felt the hull for lettering, but there didn't seem to be identification in the usual places. Halfway around the port side he bumped into a metal ladder and grabbed it, swaying with the rocking of the boat as he listened for sounds from above. When none came he pulled himself up and dropped onto the deck. It was reckless but he had come this far and was loathe to go home empty-handed.

There was light coming from a porthole in a cabin a few yards ahead. The cover was open on a latch, so he crept forward, staying close to the wall, until he was close enough to peer in. The light was from an oil lamp on a table next to a door, but the wick was turned so low that most of the cabin was in shadows, and from his angle he could see barely half the room. He was about to reposition himself for a better view when the hairs on the back of his neck rose, alerting him to a presence nearby. Adrenaline shot through him, sharpening his senses and allowing him to make out that there was someone on the bed. He could see only a man's legs, which were muscular and crossed at the ankles.

There was a knock and the cabin door opened. A man with a gun slung over one shoulder entered, prodding a girl in a white nightdress toward the bed. She was barefoot and her hair was loose around her shoulders, and she looked bewildered, as if she'd just been awakened.

The man on the bed said something; he couldn't hear what. The girl made a curtsy and pulled the nightdress over her head, letting it drop to the floor; she was wearing nothing on underneath. The man with the gun withdrew, closing the door behind him.

From the porthole, he blinked in disbelief. Now that she was naked it was clear that this was no child. Her breasts were small but fully developed, with large nipples circled by dark areolas. She had well-shaped legs with the dark, full thatch of an adult woman. Yet moments before, when she was in her nightdress, he would have sworn she was barely in her teens. He couldn't put his finger on anything specific but he had a clear feeling that she had been affecting the mannerisms of a young girl.

She climbed onto the bed and positioned herself face down across the man's legs. The man put a hand on the small of her back, caressing. Then he began to spank her.

The woman stayed quiet, even as her bottom jiggled and reddened, but if it hurt she must be enjoying it as well because she worked herself enthusiastically against the man's leg. After a minute or two, she turned a little to the side, raising one knee up and out. It was an invitation and the man responded, redirecting his hand to spank her sex with the tips of his fingers. She moaned and slipped a hand under her belly.

He was so transfixed, watching from outside the cabin, that he didn't sense the danger until it was too late. Strong hands seized him from behind, pulling his elbows back painfully. When he tried to twist out of the hold, one of the men used a heavy boot to stomp on his bare foot, shattering bones.

His bellow of agony brought the man out of his cabin. He stood on the deck, closing a robe around himself, staring at the intruder held by two of his best men.

"Who is this? Have you seen him before?" The men shook their heads. "Take him below and find out what he knows. Then get rid of him."

Chapter One

1921, approaching the free port of Singapore in the Straits Settlements of British-controlled Malaya.

Adelaide Hartley was on deck bright and early, holding her hat against her curls so the wind wouldn't blow it into the sea. A number of her fellow passengers were clustered nearby because last night at dinner the captain had promised an unforgettable entrance to port.

"The approach into Singapore is one of the most beautiful in the world," he had told those invited to his table to celebrate the last night of their voyage. That favoured group included Adelaide, the youngest at the table and also the prettiest. Since she was unaccompanied, the captain had seated her immediately to his right.

"Truly, only Rio de Janeiro and Sydney, can compare," the captain said in his booming voice. "Hong Kong, in my opinion, must be disqualified on account of its frequent fogs. Half the time you can't even see the Peak."

The captain smiled at his guests, watching carefully as his steward poured the champagne. The man was on standing orders to give the ladies a little extra and the captain made sure that was done. When everyone had been served, the captain took up his glass and finished his thought in the form of a toast.

"If you can find it in yourselves to be up early after our revelries this evening..." he winked broadly, "...I promise you will be rewarded. No one has seen paradise until they've sailed into Singapore!"

Everyone raised their glasses and with cheers of "Hear! Hear!" and congratulations all around, the evening was off to an excellent start.

Adelaide stopped after two glasses although the champagne was the best she had ever tasted. She slipped out before the dancing began in earnest and was back in her small but pleasant cabin well before midnight, which allowed her to rise before the sun. She washed and dressed her hair. She pressed her good dress, and repacked her trunk and bag. And when at last she went above decks, she felt very fine indeed.

She greeted the other early-risers and found a place by the railing. In truth, Adelaide was less interested in pretty views than she was anxious to begin this new chapter in her life. She had traveled a long way and been on the ship for almost three weeks. And finally, in just a few hours when the ship docked, she would meet the man she was to marry.

His name was Arthur Fitz-Bowman and he was a good and decent man. She knew this because he came recommended by his cousin, a vicar in the parish next to hers, and also because she had exchanged weekly letters with him for nearly a year now. She had his photograph in the drawstring handbag around her wrist and his letters in a bundle in the trunk. They planned to marry just as soon as she arrived.

Adelaide felt exhilarated, standing at the railing. She was confident in her decision to leave England and start a new life in the Empire's most flourishing colony. There were opportunities there: fortunes in tin and rubber, of course—that much she knew from the newspapers—but also in trade, for Singapore was a free port, which meant

that goods could pass through the port free of tax and subject to very few restrictions. Arthur worked in the colonial administration and had explained all this in his letters.

Adelaide's mind was so full of such thoughts that she scarcely registered the views the others were discussing until the moment when the sun burst forth over the horizon, sweeping a wash of bright pink light as far as the eye could see. Adelaide's breath caught in her throat. She marveled at the light and colours, and the exotic contours of the small green islands which dotted the surface of the sea. It was incredible to discover a part of the world this beautiful, a feeling made all the more compelling as she knew that this would now be her home.

The closer the ship came to port the more traffic there was around them. Most of the boats were tiny fishing crafts, the people on them looking up in wonder at the huge passenger ship. Adelaide waved excitedly to a little boy sitting with a basket on the back of one of the boats, and laughed in delight when he waved back. Soon the colonial buildings came into view, the roofs sparkling in the morning sun, and then finally they could see the wharf at which they would dock.

Her trunk would have to be unloaded by the porters, but she had carried her carpetbag with her so she wouldn't need to return to her cabin. When the sound of the welcoming band could be heard across the water, she slipped with her bag towards the gangway so she might be among the first to disembark.

Adelaide watched excitedly as the ship slowed and bumped against the wharf. While the lines were thrown and tied to the great mooring posts, she scanned the crowd, searching the upturned faces for her intended. She knew his face from his photograph, but he had also promised to wave a red cloth so she could spot him as soon as the ship came in range.

Judging from the throngs on the pier, the arrival of the S.S. Grimberg—the very latest in passenger ships—must be something of an occasion in Singapore. Everyone was pushing and shoving to get closer to the ship. After weeks of nothing to look at but monotonous waves, Adelaide took in this colourful display of humanity hungrily, searching all the while for Arthur and his red cloth.

At last the gangway was laid and Adelaide was among the first passengers to disembark, her face flushed with excitement. She looked happily from side to side as she proceeded down the ramp. She saw Englishmen in fine suits and hats and elegant ladies holding parasols against the morning sun. She saw dark-eyed Indians in turbans and Chinese men in resplendent robes and black pigtails. But she didn't see Arthur.

Adelaide slowed as she approached the end of the gangway. She was a small woman and if she went any farther, she knew she'd end up swallowed by the crowds and unable to see a thing. She was jostled roughly by passengers coming from behind and would have fallen had someone not caught her and steadied her before pushing around her to continue on their way.

She edged to the side of the gangway and found a place where she could stand more or less out of the way of the other descending passengers. She reached down and rubbed her ankle, which had turned painfully when she'd been bumped. Now and then someone grumbled that she was impeding traffic but she managed to keep her position. Five minutes. Ten minutes. A suitcase bumped her leg. Fifteen minutes. At least here she could see and be seen, she thought.

Arthur had been so attentive in his letters; surely he would have been waiting before the ship even arrived. He must know on which ship she would arrive; it was he who had booked her passage. Adelaide was by nature an optimistic person, but by now, it was impossible not to entertain worried thoughts.

There must have been some error in communication. Perhaps he'd been delayed by an urgent matter at the office. She rose up on the tips of her shoes until her calves ached, watching as one by one her fellow passengers found the parties meeting them. Where was Arthur? Where was the red cloth?

By the time the last passenger disembarked, Adelaide's natural bravery had drained away. A cold perspiration formed on the back of her neck and her chemise grew damp and clammy under her dress.

Unwillingly, she recalled every story she had ever heard of women deceived by distant suitors. She flushed with shame at the thought of having to return to England a jilted woman. What had she been thinking, traveling so far to marry someone she had never even met?

Someone touched her hand where it rested on the railing of the gangplank.

"Miss Hartley?"

It was a man's voice.

She spun toward it; never mind that he was late, he'd come! In her relief she stumbled blindly off the gangplank towards him, her arms rising of their own accord, eager to embrace him. She raised her eyes to a tall man dressed in a very good suit. He had wavy black hair and deep blue eyes and a good strong chin. She drew back, confused; this was not the face in the photograph in her bag. Whoever this man was, he was not Arthur Fitz-Bowman.