

# Taking steps to ascendancy

*by* Sandra Davies

It took a while, but when the crying stopped she reached out to the girl, grabbed her shoulder and shook her, fingers deliberately digging in, wanting her to know, without having to say it, that she was not fooled.

'I know you *say* you did your best, but given that we wanted this to be special you should have left it to me'

*And* you're overdoing the wallowing in self-recrimination, she was thinking, because she was pretty sure it had been deliberate sabotage, but in view of her sixteen-year-old step-daughter's barely-concealed hostility, she held her tongue, as she had done for the past ten days.

She stood and shaded her eyes, looking towards the horizon, yes she *had* seen a plume of white dust, swirling in the hot wind, he *was* on his way home ... pity that after a six hour drive all that was on offer to eat was charred, inedible steak.

She turned back. 'As soon as he arrives, and you've said hello, you can take the car and go buy some more, this time *I'll* cook them ...'

'But that'll take an hour or more by the time I get there and back ...'

'Yes. I'll have to find other ways to ... deal with his appetite.'  
Only slightly ashamed of herself - it had been a long ten days - she smirked. That made it, by her estimation, fifteen : ten to her.

