

Chapter 19

My birthday party Sunday evening was a great success, even though it rained depressingly all day. By party time the rain stopped and the sun came out, and though the ground in Sheree's and Tom's backyard was soaked, spongy and soft, the thick grass there mostly kept us from getting muddy. Too much.

A bunch of people came to the party. Everyone in the band, including Troy Dancer and Mel Howe; all my friends from the office, including Richie and Kim Boston, who'd been to Kerrilyn's birthday party; Rennie and Frank; Doug and Tim, the band's two itinerant 'roadies'. The party started on their back deck with the stereo blasting and plenty of beer and dope for everyone. Soon we all were feeling pretty good. Tom got the grill going, so by the time the munchies set in—and with a vengeance!—hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, coleslaw, et cetera, et cetera, were ready to eat. There's nothing better than good food when you're totally stoned out of your mind. Nothing!

In fact, there was a ton of food to eat, thanks to the party-prep expertise of Sheree and Kerrilyn, and our most excellent repast was soon followed by the required dosages of cake and ice cream. By then it was eight o'clock, but the party was just getting started.

Tom set up his volleyball net on the gentle slope leading down to the water, and after the remnants of the food were cleared away, the majority of the party crew reconvened down there to play. That left Sheree, Kerrilyn, and me as the only ones left sitting on the deck. Just bumps on a log, I guess.

Kerrilyn and I had been the first to arrive, and she had started into her scotch bottle and the dope almost immediately, and rather heavily. Of course, she became both very drunk and very stoned, so by the time the others bounced off to play volleyball, she was little more than a zombie—a zombie who had somehow managed to wrap herself around me on the

lounge chair where I sat—relaxing, toking, nursing a beer and talking to Sheree. Kerrilyn was (more or less) awake, though, and tried to listen in on our conversation. She said very little. I didn't mind her laying there with me, but she was much too warm, and considerably restricted our movements.

Tom was down in the volleyball game, acting both as coach for his team and as referee for the game. Troy Dancer, surprisingly, was actually playing volleyball, and appeared to get great delight out of stuffing the ball over the net. I hadn't pegged him as the athletic type, or the type to join in, but apparently I was wrong. That *I* wasn't the type to join in, I knew, but even so I felt I was going to have to eventually get up and go hit the volleyball around awhile. After all, it was my party. Kerrilyn, who had originally been in favor of the game, was just too far out of it to play. And finally Sheree, though easily the shortest person at the party, and for that reason probably not the best volleyball player on the planet, had for some reason felt compelled to keep Kerrilyn and me company.

I don't remember everything we talked about. The band had pretty recently been a popular subject of discussion, since we were getting better and better, but the 'good gigs' we'd been promised had yet to materialize. I was pretty frustrated, and I relayed that frustration to Sheree.

"Damn it, I'm tired of waiting."

"I know how you feel," she agreed, "Tom's been bugging that Bozeman guy to death, but all he still keeps saying is that he's 'working on it'."

"Well," I took a swig from my beer, "if we do go on the road, are you all right with Tom quitting his job at the studio?"

She eyed me, her slanted, almond-shaped pixie blue eyes telling so much. "I know I wasn't too jazzed about it, before, but I agree with him, now. We have to do it if we ever expect to get a recording contract."

It was this vaunted 'recording contract' that had been the hottest topic, of late. We all wanted it, and in the worst of ways. But first we needed the practice, the experience, and the exposure. In short, we needed the gigs out of town to put our name on the map. Without them, we might just as well stay with our regular daytime jobs and forget about ever making records.

Kerrilyn composed, and some of her stuff would easily have been good enough for an album. Dancer had a handful of his own songs he wanted to record, and the rest of us, though perhaps not as talented at writing songs, were certainly talented at *playing* songs, so wanted to get in on the fun—go along for the ride. We knew the band had the creativity, the talent, and the desire to succeed. It was just a matter of time, and of

having the right individual hear us at the right time. Collectively, we hadn't any doubts. We just had to get on the road. That was all.

"Do you think Dancer can get out of his contract with Bozeman?" I asked Sheree.

"No, unfortunately." She sipped her own beer, "Bozeman is *no* fool—at least not a complete fool—and I think he would do almost anything he could to hold onto Troy R. Danzinger. Why he hasn't leapt upon this band and gotten us the gigs he knows we need ... Well, I have to admit I'm totally clueless. I mean," she sucked a little more from her beer, "didn't he come hear us about a month ago? Didn't he tell us how good he thought we were? Didn't he promise he'd get us on the road just as soon as he could?" All her questions were completely rhetorical; all the answers were yes.

"Apparently it's taking longer than he thought."

"Apparently," she echoed, knowing the irony and frustration of it.

"Let's go on the road," Kerrilyn said suddenly, sounding more sleepy-comfortable than drunk.

"We will," I said, giving her a slight squeeze. Kerrilyn smiled, and her eyes closed, again.

"Wake up, Vix!" Sheree leaned over and shook Kerrilyn vigorously by the shoulder, shaking me in the process.

"I'm sorry," Kerrilyn apologized, smiling sheepishly, "It's so cozy and warm here. I can't keep my eyes open." She pushed herself up away from me. "I guess I better get up, now, or else I'll just be good for nothing later on."

"Later on?" I asked no one in particular. "*What* later on?"

"Just you never mind," Sheree warned, tapping me on the arm with her knuckles.

About ten o'clock the volleyball game began to break up. It was well after dark, and though we tried to keep playing after the sun went down, it hadn't worked very well. I had joined the crowd in the game right after Kerrilyn got up. The three of us had gone down to join the others, so therefore had gotten suckered into playing.

I say 'suckered,' since we were placed on the obviously losing team, and were pitted against the obviously better team, the one composed of Tom, Dancer, Mel Howe (who was *very* good at volleyball) and Kim Boston, five-foot ten, also good. It was just the four of them against seven of us, and though after about two games we insisted they take Kerrilyn (still too drunk to hardly play at all) it was still hugely one-sided. Basically, if Tom touched the ball, it was over the net and in your face.

Being six-foot two and an accomplished athlete has its advantages, especially in volleyball. We tried our best to win, and a couple of times we actually came close (after Kerrilyn stumbled over to the other side and proceeded to miss most balls hit her way, which we tried to do at every opportunity), but we ended up losing every game we played. No one on the other team would hear of trading players. Kerrilyn was as far as they would go to be fair.

So as I said, by ten PM the party broke up. Everyone else gradually deserted, and that left Sheree and Tom, and Kerrilyn and me. Tom and I adjourned to the deck, and while Tom uncovered the hot-tub in the corner and cranked up the water heater, I lit a joint. It was that time of year, again. The time of year for us to fire up the hot-tub and kick back with Mary Jane in the myriad, soothing clouds of warm, roiling bubbles. Why he had not uncovered it or mentioned it earlier, I didn't know, but then I thought he might just have been worried about keeping the party going a wee bit longer than planned. I understood completely, I would have been jealous of my right to keep my hot-tub to myself. To myself, my wife—and just maybe my two closest friends.

I noticed the conspicuous absence of the women. "Where are Kerrilyn and Sheree?" I asked Tom, who was on his stomach messing with something in the water at the bottom of the tub.

"Don't know," he answered, his voice muffled somewhat by the rushing roar of the jacuzzi jets. He turned them off. "Maybe they're inside changing."

"I suppose so," I said, but I didn't have much time to wonder about it, since just then the two of them appeared at the sliding glass doors and scooted through, both wrapped snugly in towels. I noticed, too, that Kerrilyn had pinned her hair on top her head. They both walked by where I was sitting, and I suddenly got the strangest vibe from Sheree. Maybe it was the way she looked at me, maybe it was the way she clutched at the front of her towel—almost modestly, protectively—I couldn't quite place it. Kerrilyn, though, seemed completely relaxed and under control. She only smiled at me in the sweetest and most innocent way as she followed Sheree to the far end of the deck and down the stairs. I stretched to watch the tops of their heads disappear as they silently padded barefoot out of sight.

Tom stood up. "The water's almost ready."

"Good!" I stood up, too. "But I didn't bring a swimsuit," I complained. "No one told me we were getting in the hot-tub, tonight."

"That makes two of us," Tom grouched, mildly. "Sheree only told me just as everyone was leaving. But, I probably got one you can wear,

though.”

Suddenly there was a loud crash from somewhere under the house. I jumped, but quickly realized it was probably just Sheree and Kerrilyn messing around in the storage shed. The house was built on poles—no basement—and they stored all their outdoor furniture and sports stuff in a small building down there. Tom ignored the noise, instead concentrating on rolling a second joint. I decided to investigate, however.

“What’re you *doing* down there?” I called to the darkness as I leaned over the edge of the deck rail. There was another crash, not as loud. A female voice muttered some disgusted-sounding obscenities. The other one laughed, then, apparently from somewhere far inside the shed.

“Hey!” I yelled, “What’s going on?”

“Nothing!” came the emphatic, annoyed reply.

Tom came up behind me, “Here,” he said, and handed me a lit joint.

I took a good, long hit, and held in the smoke while we listened to various banging and clanking, clunking and thumping noises coming up from below. What they were doing, I couldn’t guess, but I figured that whatever it was they obviously didn’t want our help. I half expected them to reappear any moment, but when they didn’t, we just went back and sat down again at the round redwood table. Tom turned off the deck lights and we sat in the semi-darkness and silently smoked the rest of the joint. It became a little quieter down in the shed, but there was still the occasional thump, bang, or crash. The tape had run out on the stereo, so while we chilled out, I went over to start another one. I found a tape of *Abbey Road*—the Beatles classic—and put it in the machine. Tom handed the joint back to me as the opening bass riffs of ‘*Come Together*’ filled the night air. We both played our ‘air’ instruments; him his air bass and me my air drums as we boogied back to our seats at the table. Meanwhile, strange noises still emanated occasionally from Fibber Magee’s storage shed down under the house.

In a few minutes the tops of our two women’s heads reappeared as they thumped back up the stairs. We just looked at them as they silently, but daintily walked over to where we sat. I wanted to ask what they had been doing, since all the noise had piqued my interest, but they didn’t give me the chance.

“You’re not ready to get in the tub, yet,” Sheree complained, looking us both over with obvious disappointment.

“I know,” Tom smiled, red-eyed, and leaned back. “So what?” He reached for his wife in order to pull her into his arms.

Cagily, she fended him off with her hands, “Uh ... why don’t you

take Marc-boy here inside and find him a swimsuit, hmmm? And while you're at it, how 'bout sharing that joint, too?"

"Do I have to?" he pleaded, facetiously.

"Yes!" she demanded, and pointed us in the direction of the house, "Go!"

Tom and I had no choice, then, but to obey. As I started to go through the sliding glass door to the house, I looked back at Kerrilyn, who had simply stood by silently. She only smiled and blew me a kiss.

We hurried to get into our suits, not wanting to keep the women waiting. I stripped very quickly, as did Tom, and waited impatiently while he rifled through a drawer for something we could put on. The swimsuit Tom found for me was a tight little bikini competition thing that looked as though it would probably fit me like the proverbial glove, and did, since I had to work quite feverishly to pry myself into it. It was a very tight fit—too tight, maybe—but I figured I was among friends, so ... in a spare few minutes we were suitably suited, and hustling back out to the deck.

At first I wondered where they'd gone—the women, that is—but then Kerrilyn called to me from somewhere in the vicinity of the hot-tub.

"Over here, buddy," she rasped. Both she and Sheree were submerged up to their necks.

"How is the water?" I asked.

"Purr-fect," she purred. "Get in, before you catch cold."

Of course I wasted no time, and slipped quickly and quietly down into the water. It was very warm and cozy against the growing chill of the night air. All that was lacking was the bubbling massage of the jacuzzi. Tom sat momentarily on the opposite side with his feet in the water and turned on said jacuzzi before sliding into the water next to Sheree. After all the 'hurry! hurry! hurry!' I felt quite ready to kick back, relax, and let the water jets do their thing. The others must have felt likewise, because we all just floated there, only our heads above water, and vegetated while Ringo sang '*Octopus's Garden*'.

I wanted Kerrilyn to get closer to me, but she was keeping her distance, not allowing me to touch her, and I began to wonder what she was trying to prove. Under the circumstances, I wasn't terribly insistent with her, and hadn't thought it important enough to say anything, but still, every time I reached for her, she would float lazily away, keeping just out of range. The tub was quite large, large enough for about eight people (if they're friends), so with only the four of us in occupancy, there were plenty of places one could go to avoid being handled, if one so desired. And apparently, Kerrilyn so desired.

Tom was opposite me, and had his arms spread out on the edge of the tub, head back—looking straight up—and he held the joint in his mouth. Every few seconds I would see the tip glow redly when he toked, and then just before the next hit I could see the thin cloud of smoke escape his lungs. He looked supremely content, and thoroughly oblivious to the rest of us. On the other hand, I was becoming more and more frustrated with the damnability of my girl, who was at that point floating somewhere out in the middle of the tub, nothing more than a head of piled-up hair in the center of a churn of bubbles. From time to time I would catch the twinkle in her eye as she seemed to find great humor in thwarting my advances. And I had all but forgotten about Sheree when ...

I felt someone come up alongside me, and lightly touch the side of my chest.

It was Sheree. "Hey," she said in a whisper, but one I easily heard. Her eyes were intent, though, and the message they imparted made me want to check on Kerrilyn—immediately.

I looked over to see where *the girl* was. There she was, slowly drifting away from me, backward. I could just make out her mischievous grin. Damn it! What was she trying to do? Get me in trouble?

"Don't worry about Kerrilyn," Sheree murmured in my ear, her mouth very close—almost tickling me—and voice pitched just loud enough to be discerned. "Just relax, babe. Everything is going to be fine." The sultriness of her voice made my scalp tingle. Sexy. Exciting. *Forbidden!* I had to pull myself back to reality a second, telling myself that I shouldn't be feeling this way about someone else's wife. *Especially* not Tom's. "Just relax, sweetheart," she soothed, "Don't worry about anything."

My arm was resting along the edge of the tub, and Sheree was next to me. She leaned back against my forearm, her hair lightly brushing the inside of my arm. It felt so ... odd ... I had to restrain the urge to move my arm away. Her arm was down by her side, and she rested it lightly against the side of my chest, and though my mind raced, I tried to keep a calm, relaxed exterior. I tried to take her advice and not think of anything, especially not anything of the moment. And I also kept my eye on Tom.

The boy still had his eyes closed, his head back, and the joint still glowing. He didn't seem at all interested in where his wife had gone. Or what she was doing.

I turned to look at the woman next to me. She was trying to smile, a little shyly perhaps, but as I made eye contact, she dropped her eyelashes and suddenly looked away. Her close presence gave me an exciting, almost dangerous feeling, and a taste of something else, too. Something heretofore *verboten*—strictly taboo. But I almost jumped in spite of my

presupposed coolness when she put her hand on my chest. It was small, warm, delicate, and most of all, *new*. She paused there a moment, then I felt her hand slide down my stomach.

I let out a long, ragged, nervous breath. I wished I had another joint just then, but I was already pretty wasted. I tried to relax, too. I certainly wanted to relax, but it did not quite seem possible under the circumstances. I was certain I had no idea what she had in mind, but at the same time I wanted to be ready for it. Whatever it was.

Before, I had never dared let myself even *think* about Sheree in any terms other than as the wife of my best friend, but with her right there and touching me, apparently, the prospect of experiencing something—someone—new ... well, it was becoming strangely attractive, and very, *very* exciting. So, once more I checked on Kerrilyn. There she was, still watching me, floating in the water next to Tom. Nothing of her was visible but a pair of green eyes and a jumble of reddish hair. I tried to evince a silent question toward her. *What's going on?* I think she must have seen my questioning expression, because I thought I saw her smile and give me a very slight nod. I could be wrong, but it looked like she was saying 'go ahead'.

Go ahead and do ... *what?*

Sheree was moving slowly and carefully, but her hand was beginning to stray much too near the edge of my painted-on swimsuit. Below that edge, I was desperately trying to suppress a growing erection, and I definitely didn't want her to discover it accidentally, especially if everything was just 'all in my head,' and I was about to get a monumentally embarrassing readjustment of my attitude. But, then I had to think, Sheree's my friend; she won't get too intimate; I can forget all this and relax, even put my arm around her if I want. And, even if I'm wrong about what she's doing, it's *still* something I'm allowed to do.

And I got a pretty good shock when I brought my arm down and wrapped it around her. My hand pressed in against her ribcage, fairly high up. Any second I expected to contact her bathing suit top, but can you imagine what I thought when my fingertips touched Sheree's bare breast? It sorta scared the shit out of me, that's what. But it kinda removed all doubt.

There was Kerrilyn, near Tom, but respectfully so, it seemed. Then slowly, as if to reassure me it was OK, Sheree directed my hand to more fully enclose her breast. She was small and soft, and very nice. There seemed little point in resisting, so I accepted permission to touch her, and while we lounged and I tried to maintain/regain my composure, I slowly, gently, and carefully fondled her. Then satisfied that I was going to get

into the swing of things, so to speak, she returned her small, slim hand to my stomach, and slowly began working her way down, again. In a little while she slipped her fingers under the drawstring of my swimsuit.

I had tied it rather tightly, and she had difficulty negotiating it, but it didn't take her long to find the knot and pull the ends loose. Furthermore, I was fairly tightly crammed into the suit, so it was toward the end of freeing me from my tight quarters that she then worked. Of course, then, in the midst of everything and while my penis was being gently pulled from its protective covering, I finally thought to ask, "What are we doing?" I kept my voice pitched low to keep my question private for only one set of ears—Sheree's.

"Think of it as your birthday present," she said, a smile in her voice, "from me."

"Why?" I wondered aloud, but then I thought, "For revenge? Against Tom?"

She had to think a moment. "No," and started to shake her head, but stopped. "Maybe." She looked up at me, seriously. "Yes," she finally decided, "Tom got to have Kerrilyn. I didn't get *anyone*."

"I would never have thought you were interested."

She smiled widely, but very gently, "Don't sell yourself short, sweetheart," and then she laughed. She had her small, deft fingers wrapped tightly around my raging, erect penis, and apparently there was some kind of joke there.

At Sheree's laugh, Tom noticed us. "How is it?" he asked, evidently referring to the quality of the water (or maybe the dope). He must have seen Sheree cuddled up under my arm, but if he had any thoughts, objections, complaints, comments, ideas, or et cetera, he kept them to himself. Presumably, both she and I were permitted to sit together, and put our arms around each other. Presumably.

I could only croak, "Fine."

Kerrilyn floated up alongside Tom, then, and whispered something in his ear. I couldn't hear what she said and Tom's expression didn't change, but Kerrilyn stayed over there next to him, close enough to touch, and be touched, as well.

I watched Tom a minute or two. He must have been stoned almost to the point of incoherence, since I felt he must be able to see that something was going on between Sheree and me, yet he didn't seem to either notice us, or care. I expected him to care, too, and a great deal, but he simply looked at us with a completely contented expression, and never moved an inch. And all the while, Sheree was masturbating me, slowly and expertly, under the water. For my part, I was absolutely determined to keep a

completely calm mien above it all. But it was getting harder and harder to do. No pun intended.

Sheree was challenging Tom, I think. She was quietly, but insistently nonetheless, doing something with me, in his presence, and quite possibly with his knowledge, as well. It was like she was daring him to say something, or do something—anything—so she could smack him in the face over his adulterous ‘adventure’ with Kerrilyn. I couldn’t possibly tell what (or if) he was thinking, but whatever it was he wasn’t making any moves to involve himself with the two of us.

Kerrilyn put her arms around Tom, and he lowered his arms to hold her to him. She’d kept carefully below water, but I could tell by his sudden surprised expression that he’d also discovered bare boobs on the woman he held. He grinned, then, very stonedly, and as if on cue, Sheree rose up out of the water and kissed me.

Our first kiss, there in the tub, was a simple, quick touch of our lips together. I had kissed her before, and that first kiss was of much the same caliber. Then, she brought her leg up and over my lap to face me, straddling my stomach. Fortunately, not anywhere near my throbbing erection. Closing her eyes and tilting her head, Sheree and I enveloped each other and really kissed, much the way lovers do.

My hands moved to the small of her back, hesitantly and gingerly, and while we each absorbed as much of the other’s attention as we could, my fingers simply had to stray downward. Once again, I expected to encounter a part of her bathing suit, and though she was straddling me, touching me across my stomach, I began to wonder where her suit bottoms were. My fingertips gradually led my hands to her shapely behind, and once there they encountered only smooth, slippery bare skin.

Almost without thinking, I kneaded her firm, small bottom, and felt the muscles in the backs of her legs tighten as she wrapped her calves around my waist. I was trying to hold her up, away from my erection, but she quite plainly had other plans, as she then pulled her mouth away from mine and began to scoot down, down, much closer to contacting the tip of my (now) aching cock. I tried to hold her away from me—to prevent her from slipping down onto me—but my attempts were either lacking in the necessary and proper motivation, or her insistence was superior to my resistance. In a few moments, while I tried desperately (if only in my mind) to avoid slipping into her, I did. Once started, she slid down fully, and snugly took all of me inside. Her eyes closed, momentarily, as a small, satisfied grunt escaped her.

She smiled, and spoke for the first time in some minutes. “Just relax,

lover." Her voice was soft, quiet—her expression both pleased and satisfied. "You know we both want this."

We do?!? "But—" I started.

"—*Shhh* ..." she stopped my protests with a fingertip to my lips "... I don't want to hear about it right now. Tell me later."

"Sheree," I moaned, breathless and breathy. I was feeling out of control—lost and losing, "I can't ... I can't ..." I panted "... *I can't* ... handle ... this."

Undeterred, she began moving up and down on me, squeezing and urging me toward a goal and in a direction I truly didn't want to go. "Shhh," she cooed, she soothed. "It's all right, lover. It's fine. It's fine."

"Sheree ... *please!*" I kept my voice hushed, subdued, but I was on the edge of a serious panic attack. Her strong and experienced muscles were holding me so tightly—so expertly. She clenched around me, and I could feel the tightness—the snugness of her—all the way to my face. It caused my neck to flush and elevated my blood pressure most precipitously.

"Come, sweetheart," she whispered, an exciting, sensual incantation, "come for me." The length and pacing of her movements began to quicken and take on a gentle exigency, demanding and compelling me forward. I had all but lost the battle. I could no longer hold back the climax she was urging upon me. She felt my pulse quicken, my breaths deepen as the forces pent in my body began to gather for a fiery, explosive release. In response, her pace increased once more, and finally, as if from a distance, I heard a light, almost girlish voice call out as my whole being tried to come loose.

I held her, bouncing and rocking, and panting and groaning with each fading contraction. Where the others were, what they were doing or what they were thinking—I had no knowledge nor did I care. My orgasm clearly had been tremendous, nearly engulfing me. That I could have harbored and held within me such energy and desire for this woman was both a surprise and a shock. What would Kerrilyn think of me? And furthermore, what would my old buddy Tom Germaine think? I mean, by this time he *had* to know what was happening—what had just happened. Any fool could have seen, and heard! Sheree and I had been so obvious. Too obvious.

My orgasm eventually subsided, and as it did she relaxed and came to rest. Her weight was fully upon my hips, light though she was, and for some moments she rested there most comfortably. Her womanhood, now relaxed, was cradling me comfortably, with warmth and slippery protection.

Purring audibly, she briefly pulled my head down to kiss me. "That was *wonderful!* That was great! I loved it!" She spoke the kinds of small, positive comments intended to help me feel more relaxed and self-assured. And it was working, too. I smiled, but felt it a halfhearted attempt. She smiled back, then winked at me. "That was delicious!" she purred again, and I felt her shoulders shudder involuntarily. It felt so good I almost came again, in sympathy.

We stole a look in the direction of the others, Kerrilyn and Tom. I don't know what I expected to see, but I don't think I would have been surprised to see them engaged in exactly the kind of sex that Sheree and I had just enjoyed. But Tom still sat where he'd been, both of his arms now back out of the water and hooked onto the edge of the tub, supporting his weight. Kerrilyn was beside him, half out of the water, and also appeared to be naked, as I belatedly noticed. They were kissing. Her arm was in the water, stretched to its fullest extent, and it looked distinctly as though she was masturbating him. *The girl* interrupted her kissing, looked toward us, smiling slightly, then returned her attention to Tom.

Then suddenly I noticed that Sheree had slipped off me. She slid down, floated to the side of the tub, and was immediately up and out into the cool night air. I swiveled my head around to look up at her.

She came to stand there on the deck above me, water streaming off her very naked body, shimmering and shining in the half-light coming from the dimly lit living room. Her breasts, just moments before so warm and protected by the surging warmth of the tub, awoke in the chill briskness of the night air and came alive, her small, petite nipples puckering and extending hungrily to greet the coolness. The pale, smooth skin of her arms and abdomen soon followed suit, erupting in waves of goose pimples as she quickly wiped the cooling water from her skin. My eyes, drawn down by the rushing flow of the water, were taken to lingering in the dusky shadows of the V between her hips. She had been my friend Sheree, but now she was fully a woman to me. I thought she suppressed another brief shudder as she extended her hand to me.

"Come on, lover," she offered. I looked, then, up to her face. She smiled and crooked her head in the direction of the house, winking, "Let's go upstairs to the bedroom."

What an invitation! I turned around to look toward Kerrilyn and Tom. "What about them?" I asked, as if they couldn't hear us. Since they hadn't paused in their activities, it was apparent they were paying no attention to us, whatsoever.

"I'm talkin' about them, too, silly." Her voice was husky and hush-quiet, and the sound tickled my scalp. Almost on cue, my eyes drifted

back to gaze into Sheree's faintly moist lower abdominal region, again. Yes, it was still there, and nearly as naked as the day she was born, except perhaps for the baby-soft, wispy hairs that curled around it. "Let's go," she repeated more loudly, more insistently, and I noticed her voice was growing noticeably more husky, too. This time when she extended her hand, I took it, and allowed myself to be drug up out of the womb-like envelope of the water and exposed to the crispness of the evening air. Well, if I wasn't going to be in the water where it was oh-so warm and cozy, then I would surely much rather be inside where it would be warm and almost as cozy. I just hoped everyone else would feel the same way.

I watched while Sheree went over to break up Kerrilyn and Tom. This she did by bending down and literally interposing her face between theirs. By his expression, I think Tom was at first fearful that he'd been 'caught,' or something, but Kerrilyn seemed quite relaxed about the whole affair, and without so much as a word, stopped her stroking activities and hoisted herself up and out of the water. With some amusement, then, I watched as Kerrilyn's baby gumbdrop nipples exhibited the same sudden excitement at the cold. What a wonderful show! She wiped most of the excess water off with her hands, too, then scampered over, jiggling nicely, to where I stood.

She smiled sweetly, almost smirking. "Hey there."

All I could think to say was, "How are you?"

I don't know what she thought she saw in my expression, but she looked at me rather sheepishly. "You're not mad at me, are you?"

I put my arms around her to reassure her (and get warm, too). But at her touch my knees suddenly felt wobbly, my balance wholly suspect. I sighed, "No, Kerr', but you could've told me." Electricity raced through my body. She was incredibly alive to my touch. And this was heaven.

She relaxed then, and snuggled against me. "Yeah, but it was a lot more fun this way." She seemed to twinkle, then, and another jolt of her energy hit me. "Don't cha think?"

I felt dazed beyond all coherence. All I could say was, "Mmmm-mm."

Kerrilyn turned toward the two of them. Tom was just dragging himself out of the water. I noticed he had quite a hard-on (no surprise, there), and as he stood the water that was streaming off his body then streamed off the end of his penis and made it look like he was peeing. Sheree ignored the water and strained up to kiss him, and so he could kiss her more fully and easily he reached down and hauled her quickly up into his arms. She giggled when she felt his hard cock slide under her, a low, hoarse, clearly sexual sound, and as they then kissed deeply she reflexively wound her legs around his waist so she could hold onto him

better. They kissed, tightly and intimately, her head tilted to the side and mouth wide open. His arms seemed to crush her body to him. And then seeing this open display of their lovemaking made me feel as though we had become eavesdroppers or voyeurs on a private scene, something that should be taking place, perhaps, in the privacy of their bedroom—while they were alone. I found I was both embarrassed for them and then strangely excited, too, by their unabashed frankness and openness.

I couldn't be too sure what I was seeing, but it looked very much like Sheree reached under herself to position Tom's erect member against her for a more comfortable entry. He held her body in front of him, his hands firmly planted on her hips as she made sure she was lined up, and then once they were both satisfied and without any further hesitation at all, he suddenly penetrated her. I heard a small grunt from Sheree, not too dissimilar to the sound she'd made when I had pushed into her, and then we watched while Sheree and Tom made love. Right there on the deck. Standing up. In the cold. While we shivered. He held her hips with the surety and skill of long practice and familiarity, and moved her carefully and rhythmically up and down on the proper shaft of his manhood. She threw her head back and maintained that most propitious of pelvic angles by hanging onto his shoulders, leaning back as far as her short little arms would allow. "Come on, baby," she called, imploring him, "Come for me, baby! Come for me!" I felt a strange, reminiscent tingle at her words.

She pushed and he pumped and their pace quickened, becoming intent and insistent, the force of his thrusts bringing short grunts of satisfaction with each downward surge. "Oh, oh, oh ..." she timed and paced his movements, "oh, oh, oh ..." urging him with each plunge he made into her very soul.

I should have been too embarrassed to watch, but we were watching them, anyway. Their lovemaking was clearly the most fundamental of all human celebrations, but still I held a small disquiet in the back of my mind. Sheree's slick, bare back and shapely behind were the most normal and natural of things. Tom's hard cock was a proud symbol of his gentle strength and sure, secure masculinity. No shame did they feel in allowing us to observe them. No hesitation or indecision was allowed to mar the heat and energy of the moment. It was as amazing as it was wonderful, if only I could let my uneasiness go.

A climax was nearing, and I felt my own arousal growing in concert with their pulsing movements. But Kerrilyn, whom I had completely forgotten by then, saw this arousal in me and then helped me to become more 'in tune'. She began to stroke me with her fingers. Their slick slipperiness and almost preternatural warmth I noticed and welcomed

with a slight smile. Sheree's pace then heightened, suddenly and dramatically, because something was about to break free ...

Tom let go with everything he could muster, forcing himself deep within her. She took all of him, and reveled in that intensely satisfying feeling, that one of being filled so utterly and completely by his love. She panted, "Yes, yes, yes! ... Oh, yes! ..." as he pumped into her with all his strength and energy, driving deeply, fully, forcefully, with consummation complete. I could almost feel the snug slickness of the woman around my own member, but then I suddenly realized it was *Kerrilyn* who was providing me with the needed physical stimulation, timed to match the candid act before us. And it was almost effective enough to make me come, again, too. Gradually Tom's strokes slowed and relaxed, calming and lengthening. In a few moments he stopped. Then, completely at rest but panting, heaving, and sighing, Sheree clung to his chest both reverently and fervently in a last-ditch effort to keep from becoming separated from the strong, resounding presence of his manliness.

Though I was raging and close to the edge again, Kerrilyn slowed the pace of her fingers and brought me, aching and trembling, to rest. I squeezed her body tightly against me, leaning down for a deep and lingering kiss, which she returned in kind. Her hand didn't leave my stiffened, ready-to-burst penis, but held me, tightly, possessively, warmly. I had to work mightily not to think of abdominal muscles gripping; of sheathes enclosing; of intimate, physical closeness; of release and culmination. I looked at Kerrilyn, my breathing heavy.

She only smiled, sweetly. She knew.

In time, Sheree came down off Tom's cock, sliding slowly until her diminutive feet touched the wooden deck. He too seemed fairly staggered by her loving, but when she then grabbed him by the hand, he *was* able to walk, well enough. Without hesitation she pulled him past us and pushed him toward the door. Only then did she stop and look back to us. We were just standing there, meekly and foolishly, naked as babies and shivering in the cold, my arms around Kerrilyn's shoulders. Her hand, thankfully hidden, still encircled my cock. And rather tightly, too.

"Let's go inside and get out of the cold," Sheree said, looking from me to Kerrilyn, Kerrilyn to me. "OK?"

Kerrilyn looked up at me, her normally bright, emerald eyes looking almost like glazed jade pottery in the light. "Is it OK if we get in the bed with them?" she asked, quietly. She was asking *me* that question? As if I could possibly make that decision, right then.

I was stoned. Wasted. Actually, I was *very* stoned, and I had also just been pretty nicely fucked and Kerrilyn-girl-handled, too. But Kerrilyn's

bare skin did feel icy cold as I ran my hand down her back. Her rear end was still damp, and now quite frigid in the slight night breeze. Well, it was obvious we were going to have to either go inside, or get back in the water. But the water didn't seem nearly as inviting as it once had. So, if we were going to go inside anyway, we might as well just go on upstairs to the bedroom, where we could *really* get warm.

"OK," I agreed, grinning idiotically, stupidly. "Let's go."

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I thought it was a really cute trick that Sheree and I played on Marc for his birthday. We had made the arrangements for the party, invited the guests, cooked the food, and even managed to keep our special 'secret present' completely secret.

It had been Sheree's idea from the very beginning. Since I'd already stepped way over the line with Tom, she pretty much just put it to me this way—"I want to make love to Marc for his birthday. Tom will be OK with it, I think, as long as *you* keep him busy." I was maybe a bit taken aback by her flatly adulterous and downright tawdry suggestion, but I knew in my heart I'd done so much more—and so much worse, too. So I agreed, and promised to take care of her Tommy boy while she occupied herself with my Markie.

The plan was accepted. When the party was over and everyone else had gone home, Sheree would ask Tom to heat up the hot-tub. She and I would get undressed, and get in the tub while the boys were inside changing. In the dark, we figured no one could see that we were naked, so it was just possible to spring our plan on them without either of them finding out ahead of time. And that's pretty much just the way it worked out.

Once in the tub, Sheree played it real cool. She took her time, waited for the right moment, and when the boy was ready, she flat fucked his brains out! I could tell how much the two of them enjoyed it, but I never had a jealous moment, or felt as though I was missing out on something. What did surprise me a little, though, was that she finally decided that we all should go inside, and up to their bedroom. Well, I guess it wasn't *really* that much of a surprise, since there had been a point in the 'early planning stages' when we were supposed to somehow get the two men upstairs and into the bed, but that scheme had eventually been ditched in favor of the 'fuck Marc in the hot-tub' plan, as it was called. At the time,

suggesting they both get in bed with us had seemed a little forward—if not a little bit too *obvious*—and Sheree sure wasn't going to take Marc upstairs alone by herself, to give him her 'present'. She really wanted Tom to watch, or at least be there so he could see them, and the only way she could think to accomplish that was if we all got in the hot-tub together. But afterward, while I was still working on Tom, she decided to amend the plan. I guess she wanted to be the one to bring Tom off, maybe, or maybe she just couldn't resist the temptation of jumping on his hard cock. He certainly didn't complain about it, in any event. All things considered, our little subterfuge and subsequent lasciviously libidinous activities worked to consummate perfection.

I think I was the first one up the stairs, but I didn't immediately jump in bed, because even before I could, Sheree was calling up to me, 'Don't you get that bed wet, girl!' and I was forced to wait. I did call back, 'What am I supposed to do?' and she replied, 'Get a fucking towel!' Oh. That's pretty obvious. There are towels in the bathroom, aren't there? So ... I retrieved as many fluffy clean towels off the bathroom shelf as I could get my hands on, and taking one out of the stack for myself, tossed the rest on the bed. Marc was there, then, to join me in the bedroom, and he began to towel off as well. By the odd way he looked at me I thought maybe he was going to say something (and spoil the fun), but he only looked and toweled, and looked and toweled. I couldn't help but grin, since I was stoned (and pretty drunk, still) and feeling no pain. But ... I hadn't yet received *my* orgasm—not yet—and that was what was making me grin. Someone, *I was sure*, would be getting me off before the night was over. I was plenty slippery inside, (and not just from the hot-tub, either!) and in the mood I was in, I really didn't care *who* would be the one doing it. Maybe Marc (perhaps he made me the most slippery), maybe Tom (less slippery, but still not bad), or maybe, even Sheree! (Double secret slippery!)

Who knows?

Once dry, however, Marc didn't seem to know what to do with himself. I saw he was in some kind of dilemma, and though I thought I knew what it was, I stopped myself just short of teasing him about it. You see, he didn't know whether to simply stand there, his dick sticking out conspicuously for everyone to see; sit on the bed and look as though he was looking forward to something, anticipating something; or actually get *in* the bed and cover up his 'private parts,' and then risk looking even more like he was expecting something to happen. Well, for my part, I pretty well *knew* something was going to happen. If not, then I was both

willing and able to be the one to make it happen! But instead, the fool only wrapped the towel around his waist.

"Take that damn thing off!" I ordered, shaking my head. "You look stupid with that towel around you, especially since there ain't no one else here." He simply scowled at me. Maybe I found that button on him that kept him from speaking. Maybe I embarrassed him, shamed him so he wouldn't talk back to me. Maybe all those things, but he still didn't take that damn towel off. So I grabbed it before he could stop me, and threw it over the railing out into the open air of the living room.

Sheree called up, obviously with humor, "Hey you two! What's goin' on up there? Y'all better not be doin' anything before we get there. Y'all better wait, or I'm gonna be real pissed!"

I called back, loudly, "Don't worry, Sheree! He was just bein' foolish."

"Hah! Just hold on, we're comin' up," she said, and then moments later the two of them, Sheree and Tom, appeared, breathless and panting, in the bedroom doorway.

How *does* a guy stand around naked, and look like it's natural? Does he just let himself hang out, or hang down, or something? For that matter, how does a girl do the same thing? I've seem women hug themselves around the waist, not covering any of their more intimate parts, maybe just trying to keep warm. Maybe if your tummy doesn't show, then you can pretend that nothing else shows, either. I don't know. I don't think I ever thought about it too much, before, but I suppose somewhere along the way I had had to learn how to be totally naked in the presence of relative strangers, or maybe only a single relative stranger. By that night there in the bedroom, of course, being in the nude didn't seem uncomfortable, at all. Standing there totally exposed, all by my lonesome as both Sheree and Tom came in the room, being naked seemed the most natural way to be. Marc held another towel in front of him, hiding his privates from the rest of us, and though Tom wasn't either holding or wearing a towel, he likewise appeared to have some (not inconsiderable) embarrassment at his own nakedness. His eyes seemed not to know where they were allowed to look, and I noticed that he especially seemed hesitant to look at me. But Sheree was being more like me. She didn't seem the slightest bit ashamed or embarrassed by her nudity, and most casually came around the bed to the side where poor Marc stood, absurdly protecting himself with the towel.

I thought she winked at me. She was certainly smiling most devilishly as she pulled the covers down on their waterbed. "Hey, boy," she pointed toward the opposite side of the bed, directing Tom to help her. "How about a little help, here?" He was in no position or had any inclination to

argue. They both pulled the covers down and without another word, Sheree jumped onto the bed. She crawled on hands and knees more or less to the middle, the waves in the water causing the mattress to rock and sway, and then came to her knees, balancing with some no small difficulty. She folded her arms, and slyly cocked an eyebrow at me.

I didn't just jump on the bed, since it would've probably knocked Sheree for a loop, but I did take the cue and crawled carefully out to take my own barely balanced place on my knees beside her. The bed was wobbling more, now, and we were both soon brought to giggling, girlish laughter as Sheree was knocked into me, and we were both tumbled over. She then seized the disruption as an opportunity to tickle me, making me jump and squirm with each jab. But I know how to fight back, and very soon we were both forced into a tense truce. I was bigger and stronger, maybe, but *much* more ticklish. I could probably hold her, but she could inflict more damage. Whew! What to do?

We came to rest finally, facing each other on our sides, panting heavily, and each carefully watching the other. Then, without warning, she quickly leaned in and kissed me. Full, on the lips. Then, just as unexpectedly, she pulled away and clambered roughly around on top of me. I don't think she intended to tickle, but I was still nothing but a bundle of raw nerve endings, and I writhed and fought at her while she wrestled herself around some more, finally coming to rest with her armpit in the valley of my waist, just above the hip, and facing away from me—toward my big bare butt. She kissed me on the hip, very deliberately but very quickly, a gesture I couldn't help noticing, then shook her damp hair out all over. Drops of water sprayed me, fairly sizzling in the heat of my body. "Better!" she declared. Then almost as an afterthought, she glanced back at me, probably to see if I was still there, I suppose.

I can't describe the look she gave me, but she wasn't tickling, so I was relaxing. In a few moments, I placed my hands lightly on her back. It seemed only natural to stroke and massage her tender skin, which I did, with some pleasure. I could feel her strong, steady breathing and the strength of her heartbeat against me. She was very friendly, very comfortable, and this was fun.

"Y'all wanna get in this bed?" Sheree looked first to Tom, then to Marc. It was an open invitation from a naked lady, and I decided to make the invitation unanimous.

"Yeah! Why don't you two manly guys get your asses in gear, and come love some of this naked girl-flesh that's just layin' here, waitin' to be loved." I was referring, of course, *to me*. Sheree had already been fucked—twice, even! But sure enough, the boys *were* starting to move, though

maybe still a bit too slowly for my tastes. Meanwhile, I got a sneaky idea. Sheree wasn't paying any attention (to what I was doing) so I most casually found the smooth, delicate curve of her behind, and before she realized what I was doing, slid my fingers down, reaching under her to touch ...

Yep. *Oh boy!* Did *she* jump like I'd goosed her! (Which of course, I had.) There seemed no need for inhibitions, especially since Marc was finally crawling toward us. But Sheree retaliated, anyway, smacking me viciously on the ass with a loud *crack!* It did indeed sound like a hand smacking bare skin, but I didn't jump at the sharp sting. It felt too good. I almost asked for another.

Marc crawled to sit next to us, but didn't seem to know what to do. I just wanted to roll on my back and have *all* of them make love to me. I didn't know if I had enough orifices or appendages to love them all back adequately, but if they were willing to please me, I was willing to give it my best shot. But, first things first.

I pulled Marc's face down to mine. We kissed, and he scooted down so he could lie next to me, and kiss me better. Since I was still on my side, and he was essentially behind me, it meant I had to twist my neck almost all the way around to reach him. This isn't going to work, I thought, so I carefully turned my body until I was lying more comfortably on my back. Above me, with her small hand lightly touching the inside of my thigh, (oh, my! how had it gotten *there?*) Sheree was locked in a tight sweet kiss with her own man. So I turned, and closing my eyes to more fully absorb the sensation, kissed my Marc.

In some moments, he was down and nibbling on my nipples. He moved between them, licking and teasing, bringing each to full attention, then tweaking them. The sensation was almost like pain, but one of the most sensually erotic pains I know. I just allowed my arms to fall out to my sides and urged my body to relax, to submit to his ministrations. Sheree was still kissing Tom, her tongue hungrily exploring his mouth; his lips; his eyelids; his forehead—and his neck. She bit at him savagely, helping him and causing him to get a little more actively involved in the newly building mood. He had his hand on her breast, and through my slitted eyelids I saw how he handled her; roughly, passionately, and how she responded to his roughness; her fingernails drew white-centered red lines down his arm. Small gasps and moans escaped her as she scraped sharp teeth across his heaving, sweating chest. And still her hand was shyly, but conspicuously, lingering between my legs.

I felt ready to gush forth at any second. I'd only just thought about the prospect of having the three of them make love to me, and here it was

... *happening!* Maybe Tom wasn't touching me, but I felt very sure at any moment he would, because ...

"Touch me," I moaned, to no one in particular—maybe to *everyone*. Marc, who was having a most wonderful time with my breasts, redoubled his efforts on my poor nipples, causing me to gasp and squeak with almost unbearable sensory overload. Each nip of his teeth, each forceful, hungry suckle brought me ever closer to total nerve-induced-pleasure-center brain annihilation. All that was left was for *someone* to find that part of me that was being neglected, and pay a teensy-weensy bit of attention to it. Then would I be completely destroyed. Mmmm!

Sheree (whose cute behind was still well within my reach) was still leaning on me and over me, but her hand was now squarely palm-flat on the bed, the edge of her forearm between my thighs almost ready to contact the hardness of my pubic bone. She pushed off and back, and came to her knees next to me. She had spread her legs widely, probably for better balance, but I only took her stance as an opportunity to explore another's body, myself. She seemed to be busy with Tom, momentarily, so I brought my hand up until I was touching her in the very same spot where she had just been touching me—the soft, sensitive, tender skin of her inner thigh, not more than two inches from the sweet, swollen, aching folds of her girlhood. I just touched her there, nothing more, letting my fingertips accustom themselves, and then laying still. But still no one had thought to touch *me*, and I was growing more and more frustrated and insistent at my continuing neglect.

"Oh, please! *Touch me!*" I begged. "Someone, please, *please* touch me!"

Tom, then, seeing my distress and not really wishing to have it remain so indefinitely, saw the opportunity before him, and started lowering himself to me. But Sheree stopped him with, "No, love. Let me."

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I hadn't been sure who would take the lead in bed, but when it became apparent that Kerrilyn had assumed the role, and had brought us all around her, to touch her and love on her, I was not the least bit surprised. What did surprise me, perhaps, was what I saw Sheree do in response to Kerrilyn's impassioned cries that someone *touch her*.

Tom looked like he was going to go down on Kerrilyn, which I think she was certainly hoping *someone* would do. I know I had wanted to do it since I knew I could bring her to climax pretty easily, but in the moments

that I was preoccupied terrorizing and tantalizing her breasts, Sheree beat all of us to it.

Kerrilyn let out a long, breathy gasp as Sheree's tongue found its mark. 'Yes-ss-ss! *Yes-ss-ss!*' she moaned. That was her word, all right. Whatever you did; she only said 'yes!' Her hips began to rock; to pulse with the sensation; her whole body to writhe. '*Yes-ss! Yes-ss!*' she cried in an insistent whisper, voice growing louder with each drawn out sibilant. This was getting interesting! So I stopped what I was doing, and watched the show.

Kerrilyn was fully *on*—absorbed completely in what she was doing, and more importantly, what was being done *to* her. Another woman, my best female friend Sheree, whom I had always thought of as being a plain old, straight heterosexual, just like Tom—just like me—was using her tongue most unchastely and immodestly on my Kerrilyn. Using her tongue in the most sensitive, private, intimate places to be found on any woman. I watched her, lapping and licking, probing and then tormenting, only wishing it could be me going down on my love. Only me savoring her sweet aromas and heady, pungent fluids. Kerrilyn's rhythmic undulations and mindless, mewling moans were enticing and familiar. I wanted to tell Sheree just how and where to touch Kerrilyn so as to bring on her climax sooner. I wanted to show them both how excited and exciting my love could be.

Sheree, face down in Kerrilyn-hood, was still on her knees, legs spread; her small, shapely bottom tipped up and in full view; her drenched, blood-engorged and distended red-pink pudendum fully exposed to the open air, and also to my (by then) wholly unabashed gaze. Could I take advantage of this fortuity, this inspired revelation before me, even with Tom there to see me and unquestionably know what I was doing?

I imagined she'd positioned herself expressly for my benefit. I mean, why not? Tom was in the wrong position to observe her salacious display, though if he'd been paying more attention to her suggestive posturing he might have guessed what she might be revealing, and to what she might be drawing my attention.

So, *so, many times* we think too much; we hesitate and then lose. Too many times I have been compelled to step back and evaluate (calculate!) before making my move, never realizing that the crucial moment to act may be at hand—*praxis*, as the Greeks called it, the time to act—until the initiative has already slipped through my fingers like the finest silvery sand. So ... OK, Huffman, you've simply got to do this. You can't stand the pressure in your aching groin, any longer. You have to act. (*Praxis*,

indeed!)

I looked to Tom, maybe for permission or approval, but he only proffered an arched eyebrow at me, glancing briefly toward Sheree's bouncing derrière, then back to me. I had received positive acknowledgment, if not full endorsement outright. He remained where he was, on his haunches next to Kerrilyn, and took in the entire wet exhibition from that angle, and most approvingly. Was he jealous or concerned that his dearest sweetheart, his partner, his soul mate—his wife!—was eating out her best friend? At that moment, I didn't think so. I think the show she provided him was too enthusiastic, too energetic, too infused with desire—for him to think of anything but what wondrous charms a woman must possess to inspire such lavish excesses. Ah, what a disappointment it must be for him only to have the privilege of *watching* as Kerrilyn prepared herself for launch into high orbit. Such a stinging loss to be denied the enormity of her rapturous ecstasy, not to be burned up by the white-hot, luminous heat of her ascension. I had to smile. *I knew*.

How many times had Kerrilyn left me there, nothing more than a burned-out, charred husk of a man, as she took herself away from this earth—this planet—to meander happily among the faint, distant stars? How many times?

Poor, poor Tom.

Sheree only hesitated in her ministrations the briefest moment when she felt herself entered from behind. She had paid no attention to me as I had circled Kerrilyn's head to come around to approach her on my knees. The waterbed sloshed and undulated uncertainly under us as I steadied myself, my hands gingerly touching her hips. She was bouncing with the lazy oscillations of the bed and rocking with the motions of her head as she tried to keep in contact with Kerrilyn and her own rhythmic undulations. I only synchronized my movements to hers and then, before she could react—I pushed inside.

Sheree only stopped long enough to register that someone had interrupted her libidinous concentrations, then resumed. She was too busy eating out Kerrilyn's sweet love nest to exclaim or complain about the treatment she was herself receiving. But I was gentle with her, and savored every snug inch that she was able to contain me. Kerrilyn was sweet, and Kerrilyn was wonderful, but Kerrilyn was a much roomier fit than little Sheree. I even surprised myself how quickly I came, again.

Then, we were *all* surprised when Kerrilyn came.

She was loud, as always. Every part of her was behind this orgasm, including and especially her lungs, and I swear Tom almost jumped back

when he heard her call out, “*YES-SS-SS-SS!!!!*” She fairly screamed as she came, and clutched at the bed sheets; at me; at Sheree. Kerrilyn bucked and rocked against Sheree, and Sheree licked and lapped and probed and tortured poor Kerrilyn even more, and as I slid out of Sheree and into a ragged heap on the bed, Tom’s eyeballs seemed almost to be popping out of his head.



Late in the night I awoke, with a raging thirst and a not too insignificant headache. All the others, Marc, Sheree, and Tom were sleeping soundly, if the rhythmic noises of their breathing and the occasional grunt or grumble were any indication. The bedroom was dim and still, despite the quiet susurrations of their sleep. I needed to get out of bed for some aspirin and some water, but I was really most effectively hemmed in. Tom was to my right on the outside, and slept heavily, with his broad back to me. Sheree, small and warm to my left, was curled against me trustingly, almost like a child. Marc must be on the other side of Sheree, then—yes, there he was—sound asleep, his hand on Sheree’s waist.

I had to get out of the bed but didn’t want to risk waking anyone. I felt far too badly to want any involvement with other human beings, not feeling all that humanly myself, but the thin blanket I was under seemed to be anchored all around me like a cloying, cottony cocoon. How to get out?

Slowly, I slid my butt upward toward the head of the bed until I was sitting, only my legs still covered. I brought my knees up, again very slowly and carefully, and once my toes were free of their sheath, I very cautiously crawled on all fours toward the foot of the bed. Better to go straight off the bottom than try to crawl around Tom. He’d awaken for sure if I did. The floor creaked as I put my weight down on my foot, but just I held my breath, and tiptoed to the bathroom for my requisite aspirins and glass of water.

I found both of them in the dark easily enough, but as I was finishing my second cup, someone put their hand lightly on my shoulder, from behind. I jumped, suddenly shocked and afraid, but I also quickly remembered my surroundings, and calmed myself before I made any loud, embarrassing, yelping noises. It could only be one of three people, and I knew all of them quite well.

"I'm sorry I scared you," he whispered. It was Tom. I could barely see his face in the dark.

"That's OK," I whispered back, but I could have smacked him for surprising me like that.

He asked, "You feel all right?"

"I have a headache." I just let it go at that. But he seemed about to say something else. I thought I might know what it was, but felt in no shape to pursue either the conversation *or* the subject of the conversation. Then, thinking what he must be thinking about me, I felt like a slut. It was a sudden shameful pall that fell over me, but once I realized it, it was suppressed. It was an odd, old, almost familiar feeling. Better forgotten than relived. "I have a headache," I repeated, the hidden message plain.

"OK," he said. Of course I couldn't be sure, but that word seemed to confirm what had been on his mind. He finished the very short discourse with, "Let's go back to bed."

But that last, at least, didn't come out sounding as though he wanted to fuck me.

Chapter 20

Tom woke me early the next morning. And it was much, much too early. "Hey, man," he said, standing over me, frowning slightly, coffee cup in hand. "C'mon, get up."

"What? What for?" I asked, trying to sit up in the bed (which wasn't that easy) and rub the sleep out of my eyes, all at the same time. "What time is it?" Somewhat self-consciously, I pulled the blanket around my waist when I realized I was still naked. Then I noticed Kerrilyn, sleeping a few feet away with her face buried in her pillow, was completely uncovered, and Tom was getting a completely uncensored, and quite undignified look at her rather nicely shaped bare behind. I looked up at him and frowned, but he only smiled faintly in response. Obviously he liked looking at her rear end. I tossed a flap of the blanket over her.

"Eight-oh-five," he replied, though I'd already completely forgotten I'd asked him the time. "C'mon, boy, let's get out of here. It's a really nice day out, and I wanna play some golf."

"Golf?" I parroted, still not more than partly coherent. "You sure?"

"Sure, I'm sure. Come on." He turned, "I got coffee made, and my clubs—both sets—are in the back of the van. If we leave now, they promise we can get an immediate tee time. Some group of executives canceled at the last minute, and they have a temporary hole in the schedule."

I shook my head, coming around, somewhat, and immediately realized that I had more than a considerable headache. "Man, have I got a hangover!" My eyeballs felt dry, scratchy, almost bruised.

"Me, too," he agreed. "Drink some orange juice and take some aspirin. When we get out on the course, I promise you'll feel better. Certainly much better than if you lay around here all day. No telling what might be on the minds of these *women*."

I teased him, "You don't mean, like, more group sex, or something?"

He seemed to eye me. "Hard to tell. Something like that, I suppose."

But I hoped he was kidding, like I had been. Maybe he was, but he sure sounded serious. "What's wrong with that? I thought you'd probably be the first one to vote in favor of *that*." I was, on the other hand, being quite sarcastic. He just shook his head at me, smiling very slightly—or was he grimacing? But, despite how badly I felt, I was much more in favor of getting out awhile rather than staying at the house—in bed, or otherwise. The reality was that Tom and I had not had much of an opportunity to simply hang out together, for months, it seemed, and it was something I suddenly realized I missed. And greatly.

So I agreed, "OK, let's blow this pop-stand."

Then he was all grins, and as excited as a puppy. We grabbed my clothes, and as I got dressed in the second bedroom (so Kerrilyn wouldn't wake up), he gave me a running commentary:

"Man, you're gonna like this place ... plenty of hills ... not too much water." (He was an incurable slicer, despite his physical prowess. Water hazards always made him nervous.) "We can stop and get an Egg McSomething-or-other, if you want ... but we need to hurry."

"When do we have to be there?" I asked.

"They got three tee times between eight twenty-seven and eight forty-one."

"How far away is it?"

"Fifteen minutes, or so."

So I did some simple math. It was ten after already, so we had less than five minutes to hit the road, or we'd be late. "Then we better get out of here," I commented.

"No shit," he replied.

"Are the women going to wonder where we are?"

"No. I told Sheree we're gonna play golf this morning. You don't think Kerrilyn will mind, do you?"

"She probably won't even be conscious for another three or four hours. And even then she'll probably be so hung over she won't know who she is. Besides, she ain't got me on a hook, you know."

He grinned, "You sure?"

I slipped my tennis shoes on, not bothering to tie them. "We're *not* married, or anything. She's not like Sheree, leading you around by the nose all the time."

"Hey," he pointed menacingly, but he still smiled.

I folded my arms. "Hey—what?"

But he didn't say 'what'. Instead, he said, "Hurry up, Huffman. We gotta go." And with that, we hit the door at a trot.

If I hadn't been a witness to what had happened the night before, I would never have believed it. Hell, I had been a *part* of the whole surreal scenario, and perhaps that was the most unreal and unbelievable aspect of it. Just where had the fun ended, and the serious fucking began? Somewhere, I'm sure, between the time we all went upstairs, and the time I decided to take Sheree from behind. I couldn't decide whether to be 'proud' of myself, or mortified at the complete licentiousness of my behavior. I had no excuse to offer. I'd known what I was doing, I knew what I'd done, and it was completely outside the boundaries of what I considered 'normal' for myself. I'd done a lot of things in my life, maybe, including some sexually 'adventurous' ones, but nothing that could quite compare to the magnitude of the steps that we'd taken the night before.

Sheree Germaine, a *very* good friend of mine—and Tom's *wife!*—had conspired with my girlfriend to make love to me in their hot-tub. I didn't know what else could be said about that. Certainly nothing coherent until I had a chance to talk to Sheree. I'd not stopped her, of course, but she'd *done it*. I'd seen Kerrilyn masturbate Tom, as well. *That* almost seemed nothing, by comparison. If that had been the only thing that happened, it would have been something we would likely have wrestled with for weeks, if not months. December's 'little indiscretion' wasn't much more serious than the hand-job she'd been obligated to provide (it seemed not to matter that she'd not made him come), and back then that had nearly torn *everything* apart. That I could conceive of some sexual impropriety on the part of my hormone-over-endowed girl as being only 'something to wrestle with' said a lot about how I'd adjusted my thinking of her. Said everything, maybe.

Then, still outside on the deck, Sheree had interrupted Kerrilyn and Tom so she could avail herself of her husband's cock, herself. Nothing very remarkable about that, except that it had been the first time I'd ever witnessed them make love. Married couples tend to keep that sort of thing to themselves, which is how it should be. I didn't think the enthusiasm of their lovemaking excessive, at all. We were all stoned, and I have a pretty good clue everyone was as horny as I was. And I was pretty fucking horny.

Then we all went upstairs to the bedroom.

Kerrilyn was demanding. No surprise there, Kerrilyn was *always* demanding. She was perpetually horny, even when not stoned (well, she was always drunk, it seemed, but the general level of her libido seldom dropped below 'critical mass,' even if she was about ready to pass out). That and the fact that she'd been asking for someone to pay her some

attention was no less than I expected. Perhaps I should have moved more quickly to service her needs, but Sheree (there she was, *again*) seemed to have other plans. Little Sheree Germaine had not only fucked me, but then fucked her husband, and then still had enough energy left to fuck Kerrilyn. Orally, maybe, but I'm beginning not to care about the niggling details. Fucking is fucking, no matter what orifice or appendage is used for the task. *Ahem*. My best female friend and the wife of my very best friend, period, had gone down on my girlfriend while we all were there to watch, and participate. Once you can get past the patent unbelievability of the four of us getting in bed together, it almost seems *required* that the two women should make love to each other. In the real world, though, does this kind of thing actually ever happen? How many of us can say we've ever done anything like this? How many of us can say we even *know* someone who's done anything like this? Not very many, I'd venture.

But is it significant? I ran the logic processes in my mind. If Sheree had thought casual same-sex love activity *de rigueur* in a multi-couple orgy, and there really wasn't anything more to it than that, then ... there wasn't anything more to it than that. Had she expected Tom and me to go at it? Hard to say, I guess, but it wasn't anything I was interested in. Tom either. On the other extreme, maybe Sheree really has a 'thing' for Kerrilyn and had simply used the excuse of an impromptu foursome to realize it. No, impossible to believe. Lesbian and Sheree in the same sentence simply didn't compute. There had been nothing, ever, in all the years that I'd known her, to suggest she could be 'otherly-persuaded,' and I considered myself an expert (on otherly persuasions). My favorite sister had been famously, almost flamboyantly gay, and to say the least, Sheree was *nothing* like Suzanne. But, before you think I'm being naive or over generalizing that all lesbian women must therefore be as butch as Suzanne, I must say I know quite well that sexuality and sexual preference runs a complete, smooth gamut from one extreme to the other. I doubt there's even a defined 'breakpoint,' where, if you're to the left, you're gay, and if you're to the right, you're straight. I'm sure there are people all over who may be more or less to one side or the other, but yet don't express the same desires as those in the same general sexual 'location'. (I know, I'm being way too analytical, but it's in my genes to be that way.) But, this is really the long way of getting around to this statement; I couldn't think of Sheree as being gay. She likes boys, plain and simple.

Kerrilyn, I felt certain, could be 'persuaded' by nearly anyone. I couldn't really say why I felt that way, just that in the context of everything I knew about her it was the one thing that made a perverse kind of sense. But, Kerrilyn hadn't gone after anyone. She had simply laid

back and asked everyone to come to her. And, we had obliged. With a vengeance. *Oh, boy.*

But, back to Sheree's logic processes. I know I covered the two extremes of all the possible answers, but had I covered *all* the possibilities that lay between? On the one hand, Sheree may have only done what she thought was expected/normal. She'd established her preferences (as if those needed establishing), and then had simply allowed her natural love and loving nature to extend to her best female friend. Only natural. Right? Maybe Sheree had made up her mind to make love to all her best friends, for some reason, and Kerrilyn was just the last piece (so to speak—ha, ha) of the hat trick.

Her motivation? Did she not want Tom to get to Kerrilyn, again? If I had been more assertive and johnny-on-the-spot, would she have yielded Kerrilyn to me, so then I wouldn't be sitting in Tom's van the next morning, letting my coffee get cold while I pondered her sexual bias? Who knows?

She would *not* want Tom to make love to Kerrilyn. That made perfect sense. To her way of thinking, he'd done it once too often, already. I didn't particularly want Tom doing something with Kerrilyn, either. It simply made me feel too uncomfortable. In that, Sheree and I could certainly agree. Kerrilyn should be off-limits to Tom, under almost any circumstances. Given the choice, I would definitely rather have had Sheree make love to Kerrilyn, than Tom. And considering that I was allowed (invited?) to then make love again to Sheree while she was doing Kerrilyn, it could almost be viewed as if I'd made love to Kerrilyn, by proxy. (You know, my love extending through Sheree and into Kerrilyn. A very warm and oddly exciting thought.) The conscious thought of making love to petite little Sheree, however previously forbidden, *was* unquestionably exciting. It's not that I could ever prefer Sheree to Kerrilyn. It's just that I'm male, and as a male, I also have the hormones that give all of us the capacity/drive to mount as many females as we can. We are expressly able to fuck anyone, anytime. And considering the circumstances (I do keep saying that, don't I?), I certainly was able to fuck nearly anyone.

But, let's turn this around and look at Kerrilyn. What about *her* capacity/capability to accept as many partners as she can? Without other evidence to the contrary, I believe she has the ability to make love to anyone. December proved that much to me, at least. I believed Kerrilyn was in love with me, and I knew I was in love with Kerrilyn, but with the distinct risk of appearing hypocritical, my definition of love did not extend to letting her screw anyone she wanted. I don't care how good a 'friend' they might be, I wanted her all to myself. But then, that stipulation

came with the unsaid assumption that she should only be interested in 'screwing' someone male.

OK, let me ask this question of myself. What if I'd been in her position? That is, what if I'd been the one laying under all those naked bodies—the one as yet unsatisfied—the one who was so unendingly horny? What if the closest naked body to me had been my best same-sex friend, and what if that same-sex pal had gone down on me? What would I have done? In other words, would I have stopped him? Truly a tough question, but if I were to name the same-sex buddy 'Tom,' then the toughest part of that question would be believing that he'd suck off another guy—because I don't think he would. But if he did (hypothetically speaking), would I push him away? I don't know. If I was horny enough, and stoned enough, and in the right mood ... probably not. Had Tom actually done it, I think I'd have to think it was just 'what you did when you were in bed with another couple' and nothing else. I'd have to extend the definition of our friendship to include the possibility (if only an outside one) that we could love each other—physically. We'd have to talk about it. I'd have to know how he felt about it, unequivocally, but I could accept that it could be something we could do. Trust me, I wouldn't want the pressure of thinking that I'd be obliged to reciprocate, but again ... in the right mood, I almost could.

Just don't tell anyone, OK?

Kerrilyn hadn't acted last night; she'd only received. Tom had wanted to act, but he'd been usurped by Sheree. Sheree was the one who'd suggested the tryst initially and who'd begun the festivities by wrestling on the bed with Kerrilyn. She'd certainly been familiar with her friend, the way she crawled around on top of her, but unless I asked, I still couldn't be certain if I'd seen anything suspicious. At least, nothing overt. I suppose the next step would be to ask Sheree about her intentions when she'd been naked in bed with Kerrilyn. Only then could we know what was going on. But alas, Tom, essentially only interested in getting out and playing golf, didn't seem the least bit curious or concerned about what had happened the night before.

What did he know that I didn't? Maybe nothing, but wasn't he at least *curious*? All I could say was that *my* curiosity was practically killing me.

• • •

By the time I awoke it was well into the morning, sometime after ten-thirty, by the clock. I was also completely alone in the huge waterbed. The bedroom itself was only dimly lit and tomb-quiet, as seemed the whole house, curtains still drawn across the windows to keep it fairly dark. Sunlight sneaking between the living room curtains sent diffuse, striated yellow streaks across the dark, hardwood floor, providing the room's only true illumination. The air was still, almost dusty seeming. It was a comfortable, peaceful quiet, but a wholly unfamiliar one. I never expected to awake (apparently) alone in Sheree's and Tom's house. Surely someone was around, somewhere.

Slowly and carefully, I slid toward the edge of the bed and swung my legs over the side, sitting up. Even though it seemed I was alone in the house, the cool stillness seemed to want to remain hushed, causing me to keep my movements quiet, mouse-like. Cautiously, I pushed off the bed's wooden sideboard and stood. The floor creaked, slightly, and I swear I almost winced at the sound. How foolish! Who's there to hear me?

Where would they all go, to leave me here all alone? Where was Sheree? I could have understood the two boys taking off to do something, but I surely would not have expected Sheree to abandon me, as it appeared she had done. For some reason, I expected Sheree to be there.

Do I call out and disturb the gloomy silence, or do I quietly venture out to explore the house myself without making any undue noise? I made myself become very still, straining my ears for any humanly identifiable sound that would indicate someone's presence, but though I even held my breath, no sounds could be heard. The place must be deserted, then. Why did they just leave me here, all alone? I frowned, pouting. I wanted to see Sheree, and she wasn't there! Well, fuck it all, I decided to make some noise.

"Hello?" I called. Hmm, not loud enough. More loudly, "**Hello??**" Better. I listened. Not a sound in reply. Even the house was ignoring me. "Where the hell *are they?*" I asked the silence, aloud, and was I surprised when someone answered me!

"They're gone," said Sheree from the vicinity of the bedroom doorway. Had she been there all along?

I turned toward her in sudden shock. "Where have you been hiding?" I was very embarrassed that I'd been 'caught' talking to myself.

"Oh," she shrugged, "I was just in the other bedroom, here, looking at an old photo album." She smiled, also a bit embarrassed, too, maybe. "I'm sorry. I didn't hear you wake up. I must have been daydreaming, or something."

"That's OK." I looked down, and it was then I noticed my nudity. Of

course, I had been naked when I'd fallen asleep, and so *of course* I was still naked when I woke up.

Sheree, though, was wearing (at least) a large, floppy white T-shirt, which (for some reason I couldn't possibly identify) made me feel suddenly *very* naked—exposed—in her presence. It wasn't how she looked at me, specifically, since in her relaxed gaze it seemed as though my nakedness were the most natural thing in the world. Her pretty blue eyes were calm, even, not shy or averted. I tried to think the last time she'd seen me like this, but of course, it had only been the night before. We'd undressed together in this very bedroom, then taken off our towels to slip into the warm water of the hot-tub. Later, then, we'd paraded around wet, shivering, and naked in the icy cold night air while we all made the move to the bedroom, here, where then ... we'd all gotten quite intimate.

I'm hardly ever nervous or ashamed of being unclothed. In my former profession it was a requirement (nakedness, that is) so that in time you simply get used to it. All your customers see you naked, most of them complete strangers, so the idea of one more person seeing you could hardly be considered unique or noteworthy. So, since that was the case, why was I focusing so acutely on the fact that I was standing in the cozy dimness of their bedroom in my birthday suit?

"Are you hungry?" she asked, breaking my silly train of thought.

But still a bit self-conscious of my nudity, I sat back down on the edge of the bed. Was I actually embarrassed? I shook my head, both to her question and to my (unsaid) assessment. "No," I said aloud. "I hardly ever eat breakfast."

"It's *almost* lunch time you know." Sheree raised her eyebrows, finding humor in the thought of my significantly late arrival into the day.

"Breakfast, lunch—whatever. I'm not very hungry, right now."

She had no comment to that. Instead, "It's a beautiful day, outside."

"Is it?"

"Oh yeah. It's probably 80°, already."

"Feels pretty cool in here."

"It should. We have central air."

I knew that, I think. I changed the subject, "Where did the boys go?"

"Tom said they were going to play golf." She leaned against the doorjamb, shaking her head. "They split out of here pretty early this morning, a few minutes past eight."

"Oh. Marc never said anything about them playing golf, today."

"I don't think he knew. I think Tom just decided they needed to get out of here, and golf was probably as good an excuse as anything."

"They say when they would be back?"

"Nope." But she didn't seem too upset by that. Well, neither was I, I suppose. "Tom does have to work tomorrow, but if I know them, they might not be back till late afternoon. And even then, they'll probably be drunk." Then she had a thought. She grinned, and winked, "I guess that means we got the whole place to ourselves."

Relieved, I went along, grinning, too. "Sounds like fun."

But she squashed the mood with, "I don't know whether it'll be fun, or not, but we're definitely all alone, here."

I got a sudden sinking feeling. "Is there anything wrong? Was Tom mad about last night, or something?"

"Well, we did have a little 'talk' after y'all fell asleep. The boy was a little upset, maybe, that he didn't get to take his 'turn' with you." Her tone of voice indicated she found the idea somewhat offensive. She cleared her throat, "I told him he shoulda probably fucked Marc, instead."

I wasn't sure if she'd meant that as a joke, or not. "I'm surprised you didn't tell him to go fuck himself."

She shook her head, with an ironic laugh, "Oh, I've paid him back, plenty, I think, for that shit he pulled with you."

Oh. That. Meaning, there's no need to rub it in, I guess. "I'm sorry."

But she didn't comment on my apology. "Last night was just my turn," she explained, then looked away momentarily. She cleared her throat, continuing her thought, "He wanted to go down on you, I think, but I got in the way."

Yes, you did. You went down on me, instead, didn't you? And it had been *very* nice. But, should I say something about it? It made me nervous to bring up something so personal and so intimate, but why? "I really enjoyed it."

She spoke slowly, "I thought you might," then smiled slightly.

"Are my clothes where I left them?" I asked nervously, changing the subject.

"I'm sure they are." She pushed off the doorjamb and adroitly walked across the bedroom to the opposite wall. As she bent over next to her dresser, I noticed her white, flowered underpants, but then she straightened with my neatly stacked pile of clothes in her hands. "Here," she held them out for me, smiling so sweetly, "just as you left 'em."

"Thanks." I took the bundle and laid it on the bed next to me. Unaccountably, I felt quite tense.

Sheree, on the other hand, seemed totally relaxed, because she instantly scooted past me, almost knocking me over, and then crawled rapidly out into the middle of the huge, slowly sloshing waterbed. Then

she changed her mind and did an abrupt about-face, crawling just as rapidly back to stop, teetering, by my side. Deciding finally that she was where she wanted to be, she drew her legs up under her and found wobbly purchase still on the water, at the edge of the bed.

"Are you through yet?" I asked, bouncing slightly. "I'm about to barf, here." The slosh made me positively queasy.

"Yes," she said, and before another syllable could escape her mouth, pulled her T-shirt up over her head and tossed it on the floor.

Stupidly, I asked, "What was that for?"

"I dunno." She looked herself over with cold, clinical appraisal. "I felt like it, I guess." She studied my breasts closely, leaning forward to carefully assess their size and shape. Then she regarded her own much smaller ones, cupping them almost dolefully with both hands. "No wonder men like big boobs."

"What do you mean?"

"You have very nice breasts."

"So?"

"I dunno." She lifted her own breasts rather critically, propping her hands under them to evaluate their very slight heft. She sounded disappointed, "Mine are almost nothing in comparison."

"So? Small boobs won't end up down around your waist when you're older. Trust me, Sheree, they're better."

She ignored what I'd said. "I guess I can understand why Marc likes you." She was still pondering the 'wonders' of my breasts. "Tom, too."

Uh-oh. "What do you mean, 'Tom too'?"

Eyebrows went up. "I think you know what I mean by 'Tom, too'."

"That was *months ago*. Believe me, nothing like that is ever going to happen again."

"I know." She looked up at me, "I know," she said.

I saw in her face a mixture of things. First was a definite look of regret. I could understand regret, since I myself have had much experience with that particular emotion. For me, regret has accompanied the aftermath of so many things that it's perhaps the one thing I can say I fully do understand. Things not done that should have been. Things done that would have been better left behind. That she would regret Tom's and my actions in December—that I certainly understood.

Next I saw closeness. Sheree felt very close to me. Her gaze was unguarded and unabashed, displaying a companionable frankness that was both reassuring, and yet the specific source of my anxiety. It had nothing to do with what her closeness might imply, but what her closeness might *require*. Intimacy is reciprocal. Could I be so relaxed and

honest in return? That I would have to be honest with her, at any point, caused me great stress.

Then I saw affection. Affection differing from closeness in that I could see she actually seemed to *like* me. I imagine it helps to like someone before you can become close to them, but as near as I can tell they are two completely different things. Sheree's affection toward me was obvious, but still difficult to comprehend.

"You really do like me, don't you?" I asked. It seemed like the right question.

"Of course," she replied.

"I mean, you *like* me."

She leaned back, distancing herself slightly. "I'm not sure what you mean by that." It wasn't quite the answer I expected. She seemed to be evading me.

I slid back from the bed's edge, until I could cross my legs in front of me on the gently rocking mattress. Never mind anymore that I wasn't dressed. It seems I'm *never* dressed when I'm supposed to be.

"Something's been bothering me about you for a while, now."

She encouraged me openly, boldly, "Like what?"

"Like, why you always seem to want to get so close to me, all the time."

She frowned, "I don't do that."

"Sometimes, you do."

"So what?" More evasiveness.

"What the hell are those little 'love taps' you give me, all the time?"

"I do that with *everyone*. It's my way of being friendly. Don't you like my being friendly?"

"Of course I do, but I've never seen you do it with anyone else."

"So? That doesn't mean anything."

"What about last night?"

"What *about* last night?"

"Sheree, is there something going on between us?"

"I dunno. *Is* there something going on?"

"I dunno, either. I haven't done a thing."

"Have I?"

All right. Had she? "Have you?"

But she countered, "I asked first."

"Quit playing games! I want to know if there's something I should know."

"There are probably a lot of things you should know. Where do you want me to start?" She seemed to be having some great fun, here, and all

at my expense.

But I countered, too, "Let's start with last night, here, in this bed."

"What about last night?"

"Don't start that shit again!" I was becoming a little exasperated by her continued evasiveness. She wasn't allowing anything even resembling a direct assault, and it was frustrating. So ... I decided to change tack. "It's all right, Sher'. You don't have to tell me. I think I can figure it out for myself, pretty well." But she didn't go on to ask what I thought I could figure out. She only sat there in her pretty little-girl-flowered underpants and looked at me, while I, in the meantime, tried to think how I could ask her what I wanted to ask her, and not make a complete fool of myself.

But really, I thought, *would* it be so bad if I did? We're the very best of friends—we are. I can tell Sheree things that I wouldn't tell anyone, not even Marc. Sheree understands the shame and abuse I've endured, because she, herself, has endured some of the same kinds of abuse. (And shame.) She escaped it, and now I've escaped it, and even though I nearly ruined everything (I can't avoid thinking about how utterly *stupid* I had been to think I could suck off her husband without her finding out about it) she's still here; still with me. She's still here, we're still best friends, and she's just sitting there with the most wonderful, gentle, kind, understanding—and patient—expression on her face.

So why is this problem all mine? Why isn't she making a move? She should. I'm ready, I think. *She's* ready, I can tell. We're both ready for it, and this is certainly the right time. We're alone, and it's so peaceful and quiet here. We won't be disturbed for hours—maybe the whole day. All she has to do is make a move, and everything will be settled. There'll be no more long looks, no more love-taps that lead off to nowhere, no more missed opportunities to be wondered over, forever. All she needs to do is ask, and I will be there.

Oh God! What am I talking about? I must be completely nuts! Why am I thinking this way? This can't be what I think is happening. There's nothing—no evidence at all—to suggest that there's something else, something beyond just two friends spending some time together in a friendly, intimate atmosphere. I should relax. There's nothing imminent, here. There's nothing lurking just outside my comprehension that's going to suddenly come in and change everything. Nothing waiting to change. I don't have to be worried or nervous for Sheree, since there's nothing going on with her that I should be so nervous about. Nothing at all.

She smiled. "Why are you so nervous?" Odd thing to ask, because it wasn't odd at all.

"I'm not nervous."

"Hell you are! You're as jumpy as a long-tailed cat."

"That's appropriate." I'd often viewed myself as cat-like. Jumpy, too, maybe.

She thought a moment. "If there's something you want to ask me, you can."

But, "I don't know what you're talking about."

"It's no big deal. I just thought that if there's something on your mind—because it certainly *looks* like there's something on your mind—you should go ahead and ask it."

"I'm cold." It was true. The cool air of the bedroom was beginning to send goose bumps down my back.

"You want to get under the covers? I'm not cold, but if you are ...?" her statement trailed off into a question.

"That's OK." I waited, because ...

She sighed. "Kerrilyn—" she began, but stopped. OK, she's ready now. She began again, "This is difficult."

"It's OK—"

"—I know." She held her hand up, stopping me. "I know why you're nervous, probably."

"You do?"

"I think so. Yes."

"Why?" Was she going to say it?

"It's about last night." Not a question. I only waited, without speaking. "Last night was pretty unusual." (I'll say!) "I did some things I've never done, before. Hell, thinking about it now, I can't even imagine what I was thinking." Her eyes bored into me, momentarily. Then she changed the subject, slightly. "Why did you let me make love to Marc?"

I understood the question. I answered, "It seemed only fair."

"Didn't you feel anything when you saw me sitting on his lap? Weren't you jealous, or angry? Didn't you feel *betrayed*?"

That was fairly easy to answer. "No." I thought she might ask me another question, but instead waited for me to elaborate. OK, I could elaborate, some. "Sheree, you were never trying to take Marc away from me. I was never worried that you were going to steal him from me, or anything. All you did was make love to him. You were very gentle, and sweet, and loving, and he really enjoyed it."

"That doesn't bother you?"

That seemed rather curious. "No, should it?"

She laughed, ironically. "It would bother me."

"Why?"

"I think most women are pretty insecure when it comes to holding on

to their men. Most of us aren't very confident when it comes to sex."

"Oh."

"You don't seem to suffer the same problem, but it afflicts the rest of us pretty regularly."

I replied, "I'd say most men are pretty insecure about sex, too. I don't think I've met more than a half-dozen you could say were confident about how they performed in bed. And even those guys weren't all that good."

"How many guys have you been with?"

That's a pretty personal question. "A few. Some." I exaggerated a little on the low side. By a couple hundred, maybe.

She seemed to accept my answer at face value. "I know I can list the number of men I've been with on one hand. It used to be three fingers, but I've extended that, a little, since then."

"Since last night, you mean."

"I'm certainly not an expert when it comes to making love."

"You must be pretty much OK, 'cause Marc sure liked what you were doin'."

"Thanks *so much* for the vote of confidence." She was being sarcastic. Completely.

"That's not what I meant. Sheree, I wouldn't worry so much about how 'good' you're supposed to be. Being good in bed can only take you just so far. If you want to do it for a living, then, I suppose, it counts for something, but otherwise—"

"—*You* seem pretty experienced."

"I do?" My heart rate soared, suddenly.

She noticed my increased stress, it seemed. "You don't have to be ashamed, with me, you know."

"Ashamed of what?" Even I could hear the strain in my voice. I feared she knew. Somehow, she must know.

"Whatever you've been, whatever you've done, it's OK with me."

I allowed my face to slowly fall while I thought about whether it had been 'OK,' or not. I decided not. "No. It *isn't* OK. I can't deny it, but whatever it is, it's definitely *not* OK."

She was silent for a long time. So was I.

"For the longest time, now, I've been wondering how to tell you," I began, finally. "I've been wondering how I could possibly tell *anyone*, but ..."

She waited. I loved her for it.

"I don't know how to say this."

She leaned forward, placed her hand on my knee.

I had to let my breath out fully before continuing, "I don't know any

way to say this, but to just say it.

“Sheree, I was a prostitute before I met Marc.”

She seemed to take that statement in stride, for the moment. “You were a hooker?”

“A call girl, yes. I was some pretty high-priced stuff.”

Then she was incredulous, “You’re *serious!*” As if I might make up something like that.

But my expression gave her the answer. “There are a *lot* of things you don’t know about me.”

Her eyes went wide. “Apparently.” Then narrowed, “Does Marc know?”

“Absolutely not!”

But she was still gentle, “Don’t you think he should?”

“What do you mean? Sheree, I don’t have any idea how I could even *approach* this subject with him.”

She accepted that at face value, but, “Kerrilyn, prostitutes can get diseases. What if you’ve given something to Marc? Doesn’t he have the right to know if he’s got some disease?”

“Sheree, I don’t have VD, if that’s what you’re asking. I used to get myself checked all the time. I was *always* very, very careful. It was my business to be careful.” I shook my head. “I was no street corner slut. The men I went out with were mostly well-to-do businessmen—men with money. They don’t have time to worry if the woman they’re seeing is carrying a disease, or anything. It was simply expected that I would take care of myself, so they wouldn’t have to worry.”

She said nothing. Waiting.

“I got myself checked out, again, about three months ago.”

“Oh. Were you worried about Tom?”

That hadn’t occurred to me, though. “No! Just in case.”

“And?”

“I’m clean. Like I told you.”

She seemed to relax then, some, or was I imagining it? She changed the subject back to the real issue at hand. “Prostitution. Hmm ... that’s a pretty heavy-duty secret to lay on me.”

“I can’t believe I even said it.” I had to look away. Shame, you know, hits all of us. “But it’s done, now.” I looked back. “I can’t imagine what you’re thinking about me, now.” Hits some of us, hard.

She only looked at me. Was there a change in her expression? Did I see something more, or less than I’d seen before?

“That’s OK,” I said. I started to get up from the bed.

She stopped me, “No, no. Don’t get up.”

"Why not? I think I may as well leave, now."

"Why do you think I want you to leave?"

"Because I'm a whore."

She smacked me hard with the flat of her hand across the shoulder. It made a loud noise, and it hurt, too.

"What was *that* for?" I asked, rubbing my shoulder to ease the sting. But I did sit back down.

"For calling yourself a whore."

"It's true. Why shouldn't I?"

"Because it's *not* true."

I could only shrug, and hang my head.

After some time passed in silence, I said, "I don't see how anyone can love me if they know what I've done. I don't want to lose what I've got. If anyone finds out I was a prostitute, they'll kick me out of the band, for sure. Marc will throw me out of his apartment—I'll lose *him*. I'll lose *you*."

But she disagreed, quickly, "I'm still here. You ain't lost me."

"Sure. You say that now, but tomorrow it'll be different."

"It won't be different, but I guess you'll just have to stick around to find out."

"You don't hate me, now?"

"No!" She was adamant. "Why should I?"

"I don't know. Because ..."

She was gentle, "Kerrilyn, I forgive you. I don't think you're still doing—what you used to do—and I'm not someone who believes we have to keep paying for the mistakes we've made. It's all in the past." She eyed me, though. "But I do have to admit that when you told me, I had a really *bad* moment when I thought of the possibility that you might have given Tom something he didn't bargain for ... and so now *I* would have it, too. But I really *do* believe you when you say you're clean." She then had a realization, "But of course, *we've* made love, now, too." It was as if the thought had suddenly occurred to her. It had been practically the only thing on my mind, all morning. "If you have any kind of disease, I surely have it, now." She sounded almost resigned.

"I'm sorry, Sheree."

Instead, she said, "Kerrilyn, I'm in love with you."

It seemed only natural. "I know."

That might have surprised her, but she went on, "If you've brought something into this four-way relationship we all've now got, there'll certainly be hell to pay for it."

"I know."

"I don't know about you, but I'm gonna see my doctor as soon as I

can.”

“That’s OK, Sheree. I deserve this.”

“**No!**” She shot forward—smacked me on the knee. “It’s not because I don’t trust you, or don’t believe you. It’s because we’ve had completely unprotected sex, and I really don’t want to have to tell my parents that I caught VD while I was married.”

“Tom could have given it to you.”

Her eyes flashed with sudden anger, “**Tom probably did!**”

“Sheree, you got to believe me, I’m clean!”

She let out a huge, hard sigh, leaning back almost tiredly. All this was a tremendous burden for her to have to bear. I know. I’d been bearing up under it for *months*, and it was *very heavy*. She closed her eyes and tilted her head back. Almost like she was fighting off a headache. “I’m so sorry,” she whispered.

“Me, too,” I replied.

“Well, I *still* love you,” she said.

In time, I scooted myself under the covers. Sheree, who was still sitting there with her eyes closed and leaning back on her arms with locked elbows, didn’t seem to notice my movements. I simply let her have her thoughts and her privacy, while I made motions to warm up my frigid skin. I found a nice cozy spot in the bed, facing her, not too close, but yet not too far away, and pulled the thin blanket up around my neck.

To me, the situation felt completely hopeless. The burden of knowing my past was *not* something to be shared, it was for me alone. I should have known this—I knew this already!—but yet I’d opened my big mouth and spilled it all to my girl. Just another example of why I’m nothing but a stupid, *fucking* cunt. You finally get something nice, and what do you do? You blow it all to hell and gone. You just can’t leave it alone. You always have to open your mouth and ruin the very thing you’re trying so hard to keep. The pressure that Sheree might actually be in love with you—a girl in love with you—was just too much for you to handle. You have to go and ruin it with her just so you won’t have to deal with her feelings. And you didn’t even know that that’s what she was going to tell you. You never waited long enough to be certain that she was going to confess her love to you, and now you’ve shut that off, forever.

Was it even something you wanted to hear? Kerrilyn, you’re a heterosexual. You have (had?) a relationship with a man, and you want it to stay that way. You don’t really want to add a bisexual relationship to the mix, do you? Never mind that it could be something you could ‘handle’. Never mind that you’ve made love (had sex?) with women,

before. You've never had a relationship with a woman, before. (And you don't have to add that you've also never had a relationship with a man, before, either. Not really. Not really one that counts.) What makes you think you can handle having your best friend also be your lover? What makes you think that's even what she's thinking, anyway?

Not what she said, of course. She said, 'I'm in love with you'. That should be plain, but it's not. She said, 'I love you,' but you don't think that means anything more than the hundred *other* times she's said that very same thing. Hell, you've even said that to her, once or twice. Remember? You even called her 'mama,' once. That definitely sticks in your mind, because it really does mean something to you. It really does mean you love her, and she probably knows it does, too.

Is that something to be so ashamed of?

I had closed my eyes, hoping to make the demons go away, when Sheree finally spoke, "I was worried I wouldn't find the nerve to tell you."

"Tell me what?"

"I guess you aren't the only one with a secret, 'round here."

"If you say so."

"Did you tell me all that—stuff—so I would be more comfortable talking to you? Did you know what was on my mind—that I was having trouble finding a way to talk to you—and tell me all that so I would have to then tell you?"

"I don't know." I was a little confused, "I don't think so."

"You're pretty smart."

"I don't think so."

"Babe, I *have* to tell you, you know."

"OK."

"I'm really worried that Tom will be suspicious of us. Or, should I say—of me?"

"Why would he be suspicious?"

"You know. What happened, last night." I nodded, but she wasn't looking at me. She still faced away from me, looking out into the space of the living room, and the sun-stripped golden gloom there. She went on, "He was positively *hot* to get between your legs. Man, he would have beaten back twenty guys to get to you, but yet he couldn't even defeat one little lady. I was probably the one person who could have told him to lay off, and have him actually do it. But I didn't want Tom to have you. *I wanted to have you.*"

"Is that why we did it?"

"Why I got us all up in this bedroom, when I probably should have just left things alone? Should I have let you just jerk Tom off like we had

planned, and not gotten in the middle of things?"

"We never actually planned that I should 'just jerk Tom off'. I was just supposed to keep him 'occupied' while you *fucked* Marc. I just assumed that that's what you wanted me to do."

"You assumed right. I didn't know what you'd do, but I was hoping you wouldn't just jump on top of him the moment my back was turned."

I wasn't offended, though. "If you were worried, Sheree, you should have said something to me. Clarified it a little."

She shrugged, "I trust you."

"That much?"

"What you did back in December still gets to me, sometimes, but I'm not particularly worried that you're trying to steal my husband." She paused. "I'm much more likely to lose him all by myself, than from *anything* you could do."

"What do you mean?"

She turned toward me for the first time in a long time. "I wasn't kidding when I said I was in love with you." She swallowed, "I never thought it would be easy to tell you, and I was right. You have no idea what this means."

But I did. "So, why don't you come tell me," I said, patting a spot next to me on the bed.

"You want me to lay down with you?" As if it were impossible to believe that I wasn't simply ready to throw her out of the room, in disgust, or something.

But of course, I wasn't. "Aren't you getting cold?"

"Yes. All this feels *very* cold."

"Then get under the covers, here, and tell me what's on your mind."

"... I was never sure what I was feeling. I like boys; I mean I always thought I *should* like boys ..." she shrugged "... I mean I married one, anyway."

"You never tried to experiment?"

"No!" Her eyes got very large, very white. "This is not something that you'd want to just 'experiment' with."

"Why not?"

"Kerrilyn, the feelings I have toward women—toward *you*—don't just involve sex. In fact, sex is hardly even a part of it."

"It's not?"

"I can't explain how I feel. I simply *like* being around women. If I want to relax, then I'd much rather it was with a friend—a female friend—than with some guy. Tom really isn't as bad as I've made him sound,"

(and she had certainly made him seem less than perfect—but of course, who isn't) "but given the choice ... I'd rather be with you, I think."

"You're with me, now."

"I know." She held her hands out for me. "Here, feel my hands. Can you feel how much I'm shaking?"

I touched her hands. And it was the first contact between us, as well. We were lying next to each other, each facing the other, snuggled up to our necks under the covers, but we hadn't touched each other. Until then.

Sheree was shaking terribly. It hadn't come through in her voice, that I could tell, but she was very obviously shaking like a leaf. And I thought I had been nervous! Not even close. But, touching her, I was suddenly not nervous or anxious anymore. Her truth had been as important as my truth, and in learning it I became as calm as if I'd known of her feelings all along. Probably, *had* known how she felt, but was either too stupid, or too occupied with my own sucky life (as it was) to notice.

"You *are* shaking." I held her hands tightly. Her hands, usually warm as mine, were icy—clammy almost. Her secret was out—she'd told me—but still she was nervous. "Your hands are ice cold."

"I know."

It had come time to say it. "Sheree, I'm not going to reject you."

"But you can't love me."

"How do you know I can't?"

She pulled free of me, jerking back in anger, "I should never have told you anything!"

"*Why?* Isn't it what you've been trying to do—forever—like you said?" I pleaded, "I told you my secret and you didn't throw me out. Why do you think that if you tell me your secret I'll do anything any different?"

"Because my secret *is* different."

"It is? How so?"

"Because I have confessed my love to another woman, that's how!"

"But that woman accepts your love."

"Do you? *Do you?*"

"I do." I suddenly felt like we had exchanged vows. She says, 'I do,' I say, 'I do,' and we live happily ever after. *Hardly.*

"You're not gay, Kerrilyn. Hell, I don't even know if this makes *me* gay. I don't know *what* to call myself. All I know is that I have an attraction to some women, sometimes, as well as being attracted to some men, sometimes. I like Tom; I like Marc; at first I even liked the guy I dated before Tom and me got together ... I don't know." She finished, "I like you."

"You ever like any other women?"

She just shrugged. Yes, the answer seemed to be, but she wouldn't admit it.

"You ever tell any of them how you felt?"

She was definite. "No."

"Not till me?"

"Just you." She looked away. "Just you," she repeated.

"What did you think I'd do when you told me?"

"I wasn't sure I was ever *going* to tell you." She made dismissive hand gestures, explaining, "You're in love with Marc. You're only interested in men. We're friends, maybe, but I was sure having a lesbian relationship wasn't something you were looking for." She stopped herself, suddenly. "Jesus, I said it."

"Said what?" I asked. I guess I hadn't caught it.

"I called myself a lesbian."

But I was skeptical. "Is that what it is? Is this what you'd call a lesbian relationship? Does this mean that neither of us will ever love another man, ever? Does this mean you're going to divorce Tom and decide you only want women? Well, I can tell you this *doesn't* mean I plan to get rid of Marc."

"I haven't decided anything." Of course not.

"Well, neither have I."

"So, what are we going to do? Where do we go from here?"

And I answered, shaking my head, "I don't have a fuckin' clue."

I was holding Sheree in my arms, but we were not touching in any intimate way. It's important I make that clear, because *so much* is made of the sexual angle to things, when in reality ... it's like Sheree said. Sex hardly even enters into it.

I'm not sure I was even attracted to her. Certainly not like my attraction to Marc, anyway. Maybe it was just the vulnerability she was feeling—the very *unsexual* position she'd placed herself in—that made me also want to respond in a completely asexual manner—lacking sexual overtones. It was new for me. New for her, perhaps, too.

She spoke very softly in my ear, all that was necessary, "I was afraid we would consummate this thing too fast."

"What?" I was baffled, "First you say you're afraid to tell me, and now you're afraid I was just going to fuck you like nothing had ever happened?"

"You have such a nice way with words. I didn't use the word 'fuck'. I said 'consummate'."

"Doesn't 'consummate' mean pretty much the same thing?" I hate feeling ignorant.

"When a couple is said to 'consummate their marriage,' it *doesn't* mean they've fucked."

"I beg to differ, Ms. Germaine. That's *exactly* what it means. Besides, if you didn't mean that we would prematurely pursue our purely prurient physical relationship, then what *did* you mean?" I almost had to grin at my alliterative, perhaps propitious choice of words.

She sighed, not taking the giggle bait, "That, I guess."

"Don't worry, Sheree."

"I'm not worried." Uh-huh. Her worry was everything.

"We don't have to do anything if you don't want to."

She looked into my eyes. *Uh-oh*. She said, "What if I wanted to?"

"Do you?"

She lowered her eyelashes, modestly, demurely. Coyly, maybe? "I don't know." Then she suddenly flipped off into another universe. She pushed away from me, and with force. "**I don't even know why I let myself get into this!**" she literally screamed. She pushed backwards toward the side of the bed, actually misjudging the distance significantly, because she suddenly toppled over the side and hit the hard wooden floor with a bone-crunching, solid *flump!* And I had to wince at the pain she must be feeling. The pain, and the embarrassment, too.

"You OK?" I asked. It was funny, maybe, but I knew better than to laugh.

"**No!**" she shouted up from the vicinity of the floor, anger still evident. Her tone told me she wasn't hurt, maybe, but she *was* embarrassed to have fallen so ungracefully out of bed. Especially *this* bed. This bed has a hard, wooden border around it that's actually higher than the surrounding mattress. You got to work pretty damn hard to fall out of this puppy. Then she laughed, herself, certainly not angry anymore. "Will you please come help me up?"

"Certainly," I replied, and tummy-slid over to the edge, where I regarded her with large, owl's eyes over the bedside. "You look pretty damn together down there, Ms. Germaine." Grin. "I'd almost think you planned to fall out of the bed, just so you wouldn't have to make any more fuckin' excuses."

"*Fuck you!*" she called up, from flat on her back, boobs and knees in the air.

"OK," I said, grinning some more, "but do we hafta to do it on the floor?"