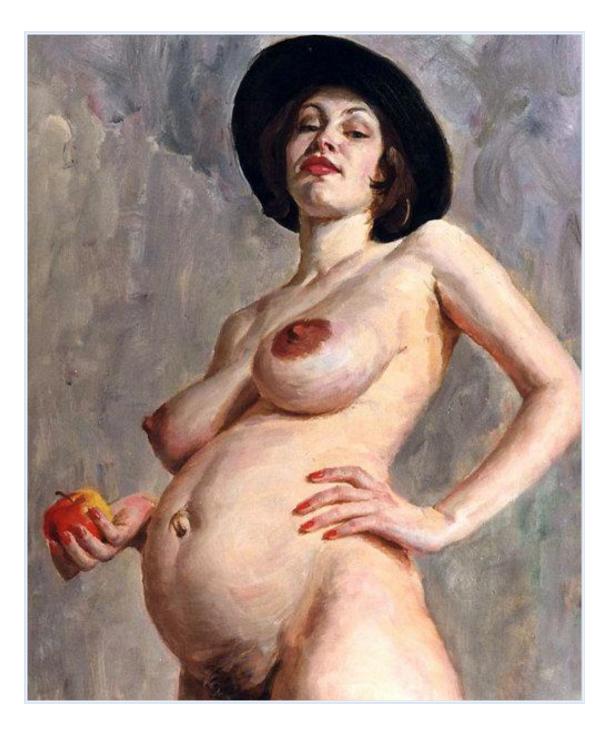
Small Expectations

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It was just as Wendy was leaving the classroom where she'd been attending her antenatal class that it finally became too much for her. Throughout the whole class, on whatever it was she'd already forgotten, her mind had drifted well away from the subject on discussion. She envied the self-satisfied expressions on the faces of the other mothers to be. There was just nothing for Wendy to feel smug about. Not for her, a husband or supportive partner. It was going to be left to her, and only her, to take care of her unwanted, but hopefully not to be unloved, future son or daughter.

Wendy burst into tears, unstoppable and unpremeditated, while waddling down the corridor, the weight of seven months or more of gravidity weighing on her as perhaps it had never done before. Her face collapsed into a display of utter despair as she put out an arm against the wall to prop herself up. Her legs, still so slender despite the extra fat elsewhere, weren't enough to take the burden of both a new life and her accumulated misery.

"You all right?" asked a kindly voice, putting an arm around her waist and taking some of the burden off her wobbling legs.

Wendy nodded pathetically and smiled piteously at her guardian angel. It was Woz. God only knows what that was meant to be short for. Another expectant mother, but one who still carried the smell of nicotine about her. So she obviously didn't pay too much attention to her antenatal classes either.

"Well, you don't look it. C'mon! Sit down! There's a bench or summink here."

"You really shouldn't bother yourself..." Wendy murmured unconvincingly,

but grateful nevertheless to be guided towards a bench that was thankfully only a few yards away.

The two women sat silently on the bench. Wendy gradually gathered herself together as the onrush of depression and anxiety subsided, while Woz supported her with one arm around the shoulder and the other holding her hand in a friendly and sympathetic squeeze.

"Shall I run along and get your husband to help you?" Woz mentioned at last. "He'll be outside with all the other hubbies, won't he? Just tell me what he looks like."

Wendy sniffed. "There is no husband," she said bitterly.

"Boyfriend, then. I don't give a toss what he is. Just tell me."

"There's no boyfriend, either. There's nobody. Nobody at all!"

And with that confession, Wendy broke down in another explosion of tears. Her head fell forward into her palms, through the fingers of which the tears seeped through and onto the cotton-silk fabric of the outfit she'd spent so long selecting in Pro-Nuptia.

Woz probably bought her clothes in Top Shop or Gap, and they were undoubtedly designed for a much slender woman. But she was concerned more to brush the tears off Wendy's face than off her clothes with the ragged paper tissue she had managed to locate in a zipped-up pocket of her bum-length denim jacket.

"No boyfriend. No husband. Split up then?" she asked, as she daubed Wendy's damp cheeks.

"I don't know who the father is!" Wendy confessed. She placed a hand on her swelling belly. "It could be anyone. Anyone at all."

Woz laughed. "Me too! I don't know who this little bastard's dad is either. Not sure I really want to know, anyway. Probably a right cunt. So, how'd you get up the duff? You don't look the sort to be on the game. You look more like the sort to have an MPV and an account in House of Fraser."

Wendy sniffed and smiled despite herself. "Well, I do have a Scenic. It's parked outside. And I do have a House of Fraser storecard. You're absolutely right!"

"So what's the story, morning glory?"

Wendy frowned. "Sorry?"

"Song title. You don't know it?"

"I don't listen to anything much besides Classic FM," Wendy admitted.

"So, how come you've got a bun in your oven? Where've you been rolling the pastry?"

"You mean how did I get to be pregnant? It was at a party. I got a bit high. I mean I'd taken stuff before, but not a lot. A few pills, a few lines, you know, just before going to a club or something. But I had a bit more than usual and then I sort of had ... I just let ... I just don't know ... Somehow, there were loads of men ... They all had a turn at me ... I don't know who they were ..."

Woz chuckled. "Sounds like you had a good time, girlfriend. No gain without pain though. So whyn't you have it ... you know have an ... get it terminated?"

"Abortion? I meant to. I just never got round to it. I was going to. But I didn't

want to tell anyone about it. I didn't want my parents to know. Or my employer. Or my friends. Or anyone. I guess I hoped I might miscarry or something. But it didn't happen. And when I went to the doctor at last, it was too late. And now I'm stuck with it!"

And with that confession, a fresh flood of tears broke through the dam of Wendy's eyelids, gushed down over her cheeks, flowed into her mouth, cascaded off her chin and dribbled onto her Pro-Nuptia dress.

"Me too, dearie! Me too!" sympathised Woz, pressing the soggy mass of tissue onto Wendy's face. "So, you staying with your Mum then?"

"No! No! I couldn't face it. My mother still doesn't know. Neither does my father. They've divorced, you know. And I've given up my job, even though I originally got the flat to be near the office. I just live by myself. It's a small place, but it's okay."

"So, you sign on then?"

"No. I've got an allowance."

"Allowance? What's that? How'd you claim that?"

"Claim it?" Wendy was genuinely puzzled by Woz's remarks. But then it occurred to her that Woz came from quite a different social stratum where one didn't have independent means. A stratum where if one didn't work, one had to get money from the state. She shivered slightly as she studied Woz more carefully. She'd always known that Woz was one of the more common women in the antenatal class, not one of those she'd normally speak to at all. There was no subtlety about her at all. Her

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clothes were both too short and too tight. Her hair was a mess. And her make-up looked like she'd shovelled it on with a trowel. And that voice of hers. Every glottal stop just grated on her. But at the same time, she was genuinely grateful for Woz's show of kindness towards her.

"I guess I'd better be going back. Do you want a lift? Or do you live nearby?" Wendy hoped the last was true. She didn't really want to spend too much longer with Woz (and what was the name short for?), but she didn't want to be impolite either.

"Yeah! A lift'd be fucking fantastic. It's bloody miles to the bus stop and it's not so good getting on a bus when you're preggers. I hate standing. And there aren't many who'd give their seat up for you. Selfish cunts!"

"Indeed!" exclaimed Wendy, staggering to her feet, but feeling a little uncomfortable with the coarseness of Woz's language. She hoped that no one else could hear her using these dreadful four-letter words.

It was a long slow walk to the car park and Wendy's Scenic. Even though Woz was just as gravid as she, her new friend was the much stronger of the two, still taking half Wendy's weight, while also supporting her own weight. And that of her own unborn child. And finally into the car, two huge bellies swelling towards the dashboard. This was getting quite uncomfortable. Next time, Wendy reflected, she'd have to come to her antenatal class by taxi. She just hoped she could find a good taxi firm. Not one of those ghastly ones where the driver smoked while he drove.

It was quite a long journey to Woz's council flat. Or seemed to be, although the mileage wasn't that high really. All those wiggly streets. And those one-way roads that sneaked up on one. And those small roundabouts. And as Wendy drove, everything became progressively rundown: boarded-up shops, houses with cardboard supporting the broken glass of the windows, dilapidated cars parked (badly) on the pavement, gangs of youths hanging around at street corners, a lot more blacks and Asians, rubbish just blowing across the streets and entangling in the wheels of Wendy's car. But finally they were there. A huge block of flats, wider than it was high, with graffiti sprayed on the walls and dogs rummaging around on the rubbishstrewn lawns.

"You wanna come in for a coffee?" asked Woz when the car stopped.

Wendy hesitated. Half of her just wanted to escape from this hellhole. And she didn't like the look of a couple of young black men who were leaning against a wall and smoking what she guessed were probably not cigarettes. But the other half had warmed towards Woz during the drive. She'd never known that there were so many good soap operas on television. That 'East Enders' didn't sound bad the way Woz described it. And these rock groups that Woz liked, Coldplay and Blur and the Gorillaz, maybe there was something worth listening to in music that was less than fifty years old.

"What about the car? I can't just leave it here."

"Course you can, Wen! Those kids are mates of mine." Woz indicated the two young men Wendy had noticed. "They'll make sure no one touches your car. No one would fucking dare, anyway! A friend of mine? No one'd risk it! C'mon!"

Wendy hesitated. But she was actually feeling happier now than she'd been for

months. Woz had somehow dispelled the huge cloud that had wholly engulfed her for almost as far back as she could remember. Perhaps back to the first day she knew for sure that she'd missed her period.

"Okay. I'll come. And then I'll have to get back."

However, the pleasure of Woz's company kept Wendy for much longer than she'd anticipated. Although the flat was pokey, it was, thankfully, on the ground floor and no real distance from where Wendy had parked. And after a while, Wendy didn't notice just how tiny the flat was, and even more cramped by having an ironing board and a massive wide-screen television filling up about half the living room. And the other half was jammed in by a huge sofa that had lost most of its bounce a long time ago. But Woz entertained Wendy with an unending series of cups of tea and coffee, spiced with the sort of rich biscuits and cake that, before her pregnancy, Wendy would have considered far too fattening. But now she was pretty fat anyway: no longer the slender Wendy who could squeeze into the tightest skirt and whose legs flattered any brand of stockings she might choose to wear. And somehow pregnancy made these sweet sugary things taste so much better.

"You don't like smoking, do you?" Woz commented, staring at a packet of Marlboro Lights she had on the table. "I guess I oughtta stop too. Being pregnant and all. 'S difficult though. But you done me real good. I ain't felt like a ciggie since we got here. I s'pose this gabbing's taken my mind off things."

"I suppose it must have done," admitted Wendy with a smile.

"I ain't had so much fun in ages, y'know. I'd never thought a posh bint like

you, y'know, with your university degree and all, and you having a private income, I never thought I'd enjoy rabbiting with you so much. I mean, I never thought anyone could actually *enjoy* that classical music stuff. And maybe there's more to theatre and things than I'd thought. Y'know we must meet up again."

"Yes, we must!" agreed Wendy, surprising herself by the genuineness of her response.

"You want another cuppa?" Woz asked, picking up the teapot.

Then suddenly the doorbell rang. It was a tinny clattering sound that Wendy had never before associated with doorbells.

"Scuse us!" said Woz, setting down the teapot and striding over to the door. As she walked by, Wendy regarded Woz in a more sympathetic light. Under all that thick make-up and those cheap flashy clothes, Woz was probably quite an attractive woman, not as slim as Wendy, but few women ever were. Her hair might be a mess, but those curls were thick and had a healthy shine. And like Wendy, her breasts had swollen as a result of pregnancy, but, unlike Wendy, Woz's breasts had clearly been a reasonable size before pregnancy. And she walked quite elegantly, despite the inelegance of her leopard-skin leather boots.

Wendy could hear a man's voice in the small hallway that was barely big enough to stand a bicycle, but the conversation was mostly "yeah", "yeah" and "that's OK."

Woz returned, bringing the man in with her. He was a tall black man, with what looked like a nylon tea cosy on his head, with 'Tommy Hilfiger' written across it. He was smoking a cigarette and had a sickly grin across his face.

"Hope you don't mind, Wen sweetest," Woz said with an apologetic smile. "But a girl's gotta make a living. You can stay if you like. Trev won't be long, will you sweetheart? But if I know Trev, it won't be very quiet here for you."

"Not if I can fucking help it!" the black man commented with a self-satisfied smirk.

"Should I leave then?" asked Wendy, palpably disappointed.

"You don't have to, but you know how it is."

Wendy wasn't too sure in her mind what transaction was taking place, but she felt sure that Woz's flat was not a place she should stay a moment longer.

"I'll get going then."

"I'll see you to your car, Wen love. You behave, Trev. I won't be long. Get yourself ready."

"You wanna bet, darling. You don't have to ax me twice."

Woz and Wendy walked out together, two huge bellies leaning on each other for support, and spoke hardly at all as they crossed the road and Wendy lifted herself into the car, which, true to Woz's word, was perfectly untouched.

"You don't mind Trev, do you, Wen love?"

"No. Not at all," lied Wendy.

"I know what you think. You think I'm some kind of a tart. You know, a pro. But it ain't like that. It's just a bit of extra cash, like. I've never walked the streets or put cards in phone boxes or nothing. And I really enjoyed chatting with you today. We'll meet up again, won't we? Say yes. You don't know how much I mean it."

Woz looked positively pathetic, her face reflecting a yearning expression that Wendy found oddly appealing. But Wendy had no plans of returning to the neighbourhood. What a slum! And whatever Woz said, providing sexual services for money seemed to pretty well define her as a prostitute in Wendy's eyes. She couldn't very well consort with women like that!

"I will, don't worry!" Wendy said again, meaning it just as little as before, but nevertheless making a mental note of Woz's address.

And it was not too many days later that Wendy found she was already sufficiently missing her long conversation with Woz that she retrieved that address from the recesses of her memory, where it remained remarkably vivid, and called a taxi cab to take her there.

"I don't normally take people to places like this, love," commented the taxi driver as he let Wendy out of the cab. "There's all sorts round here. Real rough sorts. But you're a decent sort of gel. You got a mobile, love? Call us when you want to come back. Here's my card."

Wendy took the card with the telephone number on it, feeling suddenly incredibly alone in the road facing Woz's flat. She could see the hostile stares following her, not knowing whether they were alarmed by her pregnancy or just by the oddity of a woman wearing clothes so well-designed and so well-chosen for her current physical state. She had no choice after the taxi drove off. She strode across the road and pressed the doorbell. It rang. And there was no response.

She pressed the doorbell again.

Still no response.

And again. And again.

Shit! This meant she'd have to call the taxi back. And so soon! What a wasted journey. At least, she'd kept the card.

Wendy pulled her mobile out of her handbag, a glorious Prada she'd treated herself to on a trip to Florence, and was about to stab in the taxi-driver's number when the door opened. And there on the other side was not Woz, but a totally naked man, white this time, with a penis wobbling with a near-erection.

"Yeah! What is it?"

Wendy gasped, a hand involuntarily going up to her mouth.

"I ... I ... er ..." she stuttered.

"Who's there, Baz? It's not the fucking debt collector again, is it?" Wendy could hear Woz's voice from inside the flat.

"No. It's some posh bird. And she's preggers like you."

There was a pause. And then when Wendy heard Woz's voice again, it had an unambiguous tone of delight in it that somehow pleased her more than she would ever have imagined possible. "That'd be Wendy. She's a mate of mine from the clinic. Bring her in! Don't let her stand out in the street, Baz. Be a gentleman for the first time in your fucking life."

"Yeah. Orlright love! You heard the lady. You coming in?"

Wendy nodded, feeling rather dazed. She'd not seen a naked man since ... since ... Well, not since the day she'd been inseminated. And then she'd seen rather a lot of them. Although what she mostly remembered were the smells, the tastes and, most of all, that insistent pounding into her vagina as man after man queued to take her. She was giggling and laughing and hating herself at the same time as she was loving being fucked by so many different men, most of whom she'd never seen before in her life. She followed Baz into the living room, where she could see Woz wrapping a thin red bathrobe around her, the swell of her belly being far too great to be decorously accommodated.

"Hi there, Wen love!" she said, kissing Wendy on the cheek. "I hope you don't mind. You caught me doing a bit of business. You don't mind waiting another five minutes or so, do you? Baz has nearly finished. Ain't you, love?"

"I can't be so fucking sure about that!" Baz retorted.

"Well I can," said Woz in a lower voice. She held Wendy by the arms and gazed at her straight in the face. She had a strangely muted expression, almost like a little girl. "You *will* stay, won't you Wen sweetheart? I was scared you'd never call back. And I didn't have your phone number or nothing. Baz won't be long. You can make some tea. You know where the kettle is."

Wendy nodded and watched with mild disgust as Woz and Baz made their way back into Woz's bedroom. And she felt even more disgust as she heard the raw animal sounds of the two of them fucking in the bedroom, while she stood in the kitchen waiting for the kettle to boil and hunting out the milk and teabags. We need better tea than this! Wendy thought to herself with alarm, looking at the breakfast blend tea in circular teabags, which was all that was available. No Earl Grey. No Darjeeling. No Assam. And the milk was full fat. Goodness! Her domestic thoughts were partly a shield against the grunting, panting, thumping noise emanating from the bedroom. Woz certainly seemed to be enjoying herself. And the man! Well, he was grunting and snorting pretty much as loudly as Woz.

Wendy reflected on the remembered image of the man, but all she could really remember was that penis. Fat, slobbery, slightly sticky. And that was what was sliding in and out of Woz at the moment. What a disgusting thought!

But it was a thought that wouldn't leave Wendy's mind, even after the thumping stopped and the grunting subsided, and all she could hear now was a kind of muttered conversation between the two people in the bedroom. And uppermost in Wendy's mind was an image of Woz in her bathroom gown, open at the front because her belly had outgrown it, and under which Wendy could see one huge swollen nipple and under her belly, but hidden by the size of it, what was surely the vagina into which Baz had been thrusting his penis.

After a few minutes more, Baz left the flat and Woz wandered back into the kitchen, this time in jeans and blouse, her huge belly swelling out bare and naked between the two items of clothing.

"Sorry 'bout that, Wen!" said Woz with a flushed face, somehow hotter and stickier than Wendy imagined it should be. "But you know how it is."

Wendy smiled sympathetically, passing Woz a cup of tea. "Not really," she

admitted.

"No, I guess you wouldn't," sighed Woz sadly. "You must think I'm a real slut, don't you? Fucking men for money and all."

Wendy nodded. She had thought enough about Woz's illicit source of income over the last few days to develop her opinions.

"What surprises me most," she said as diplomatically as she could, "is that you can continue to have sex when your pregnancy is so advanced."

Woz grinned cheekily. "Yeah! You'd a thought I'd go off it or summink. 'Snot quite like that. I mean I probably wouldn't do it so much if I didn't need the money. The payments on the telly don't come cheap! But I sorta like it just as much in a way. I didn't think I would. And I charge the punters extra. They actually like doing it when you're pregnant. Funny, in't it? If you're fat all the time, it sorta turns the punters off. Fat cows do crap trade! But if you're fat 'cos you're about to pop, well, it's like an extra premium or summink. I just don't really understand men. But bless them. They pay the bloody bills, don't they?"

Wendy smiled, only half-comprehending what she heard. She'd never thought of ever doing anything for any reason other than choice. Financial necessity was not something she'd ever had to worry about.

"Shall we sit in the living room, Woz? My legs are really aching!"

"Yeah, sure, Wen! I make a fucking useless host, don't I?"

"Hostess'," Wendy corrected automatically, but grateful just to get away from the cramped space she'd been squeezed into in the kitchen, between the fridge and the kettle, just by the window with its view onto a rat-infested garbage disposal unit outside.

Wendy's visits to Woz became much more regular occasions. Although the poverty of the council flat horrified her, and the surrounding area appalled her even more, the time Wendy spent alone in her own much more spacious apartment, even surrounded by the comforts of her much more expensive and luxurious furnishing, somehow didn't compare to the pleasures of companionship she felt when sitting with Woz, on the ragged, worn sofa, under the dusty glow of the electric lights and accompanied by the constant background murmur of Kiss FM or BBC Radio One.

What it was she enjoyed about her time with Woz, Wendy wasn't sure. Perhaps it was nothing more than the pleasure of the company of someone who wouldn't and didn't condemn her predicament in the subtle unspoken way that her other more affluent friends had done, and which had made it so difficult for her to enjoy spending time with them. Perhaps it was because she was also pregnant and understood better than most exactly how she felt, at least in the physical and hormonal sense. Or perhaps there was something more to Woz that Wendy liked.

"Who's this girl you've got so many pictures of?" Wendy asked, glancing idly at a photograph just above the stereo player.

"You mean Tray?"

"If that's her name. Is she your sister?"

"Why'd you say that? Do I look like her?"

"No, not really," admitted Wendy. In fact, the girl was quite short, slightly

plump, with cropped black hair, wearing a green tee shirt. "She just doesn't look like one of what I'd imagine your friends might look like."

"No. S'pose not!"

Woz sighed and fiddled with the sleeve of a Chemical Brothers CD. She bent her head down as if in thought, and then, as if she'd made some kind of decision, she abruptly raised up her head.

"She doesn't look like a friend 'cos that's not what she was."

"What do you mean, Woz?" wondered Wendy, whose mind was really on other things. She'd only mentioned the photograph because their previous conversation about nightclubs had run dry.

"You won't think me funny, will you, Wen? She wasn't my friend, 'cos she was my lover. We were sort of lovers for ages."

"Lover?" wondered Wendy. "Does that mean she's a lesbian? And are you one, too?" This didn't bother Wendy too much. Several of her friends from university were gay or bi, and she'd never been that troubled by it.

"Well, she's one. I'm not really. I like blokes, too. But I loved her, Wen. I loved her more than anyone I'd ever known. And it wasn't 'cos she was a girl. It was 'cos she was Tray. D'you know't I mean?"

"I suppose so," said Wendy, but not really meaning it. Although she'd often had sex with men, and had even had a few steadies, she'd never really loved them as such. It had never really bothered her, either. Part of her had never really been engaged in any of the sexual or romantic liaisons that had passed through her life. "She left me for another woman. She said she was fed up of me fucking about with blokes as well. She said I'd have to make my mind up what I was about and be serious about things. By which she meant, being serious about her. And I didn't care too much at first. I just fucked around a lot more. But I've sort of got to miss her more and more, you know. It's fucking weird."

Then Woz burst into tears, and this time it was Wendy who had to daub away the tears as her friend sobbed and sobbed, with a face expressing more abject misery than Wendy ever imagined a face could.

"I never talk about it with anyone, you know, Wen. You're the first, ever. None of my girlfriends'll talk about it. They just think it's good that I don't hang around with a dyke no more. And the blokes. They just think it's kinky and all. But you, Wen. I can talk about it with you. You're different!"

It certainly pleased Wendy that Woz had such a high regard for her that she could entrust her confidence. And she sat and listened for hours while Woz spilt out the story of her love for Tracey, and how she'd not really properly appreciated it at the time. It was well into the evening when Wendy eventually called the taxi to take her back home.

It was inevitable really that Woz's confession would fundamentally change Wendy's feelings towards her friend. But as they innocently kissed each other goodbye while the taxi purred away outside Woz's flat, the only hint of the change was a strangely wild look in Woz's eyes. Wendy knew exactly what it meant, but she pretended not to notice and somehow dismissed it from the forefront of her mind. But when she visited Woz the following day, bringing with her a cake she'd bought at Marks & Spencer, she saw that her friend had been thinking much harder about their conversation than she had.

She sat opposite Wendy, her brow troubled and furrowed, dressed rather more smartly than she usually did, although her dress sense was still a bad match with the bulge of her pregnancy. Her hands were clasped together between her knees and her eyes were both seeking out Wendy's own and glancing shyly away.

"What's wrong, Woz?" Wendy wondered.

"You know we were talking about Tray 'n' all, yesterday, Wen?"

"Yes."

"And what I felt towards her. And how I'd never felt like it with anyone 'cept her before. And how there's never been no one like her."

"I remember."

"Well, that weren't strictly true. 'Cos since I known you I've been feeling a bit like I did with Tray. I just didn't sorta see it as the same thing."

Wendy blinked. Woz was confessing her love for her. Somehow, it didn't shock her. Perhaps in the back of her mind she'd been expecting it. And she wasn't certain what she felt. Not displeased, that was for sure.

"Are you saying that you feel the same for me as you did for Tracey?"

Woz nodded sadly. She lifted herself up from the sofa, her huge distended belly grotesquely ahead of her.

"Yeah! That's it! That's exactly it! You won't think I'm weird, will you? I

mean, we can continue as friends, can't we? I'd mean, I'd hate it to be otherwise."

Wendy stood up in front of Woz, their bellies very nearly touching.

"I don't see how we can continue to be friends now, Woz," she said.

"Oh! Wendy!" sighed Woz, a genuine tear of distress seeping out of her eye.

Then from somewhere inside her, Wendy behaved more positively than she imagined she ever would, more positively than on any of those other times she'd consented with a man, her expectations of whatever she could get from sex being normally so very small. She leaned over, with some effort over the massive bellies, and kissed Woz on the lips.

"That's because we can be lovers now!" Wendy reassured her friend.

And indeed so they were.

It was awkward, of course. Even the business of locking their lips together was made more hazardous by the mass of stomach between them. But Wendy felt more pleasure, more erotic delight, than she had ever imagined possible. Far more than she'd ever had before with a man. And just as much excitement, in a way, as the day she'd lost her inhibitions so foolishly at the party where she'd been impregnated.

The clothes came off with just as much gracelessness as every other action, but when finally the two girls were on the bed, naked and exploring each other with their tongues and fingers, it seemed right and predestined. There was even more pleasure gained just from the fact that the one partner was as pregnant as the other. Wendy thought that her advanced state would have diminished her desires, and perhaps this was true in some sense, but her desire for Woz was so strong that it defeated any hormonal adjustment. She'd never applied her tongue to a vagina or its vulva before, and had never before suspected that there was so much complex detail in something she herself possessed. But as the smells of Woz's arousal regaled Wendy's nostrils, it just felt right. Just as it also felt right as Woz licked and tongued and poked Wendy's own vagina, using the skills she'd surely gained from her love affair with Tracey.

As the two girls collapsed after more hours of pleasure than Wendy had ever had in a single session before, interrupted briefly when Woz turned away a prospective male client, Wendy contemplated, as she put an arm around her lover, how things might be in the future. Their babies were due so soon. And they would need nurturing. But now there would be two people to care for two babies, perhaps helping each other. And as Wendy trailed her fingers over the huge belly beside her, she wondered what it would be like to make love with Woz when she was restored to her original size.

That was a pleasure, Wendy decided, that would be worth waiting for.