

Coming of Age

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Something was up.

That was the sense I had, as I drove through the neighborhood with Marie at my side. On the surface she was her usual post-game self, chatting pleasantly while she came down from the adrenaline rush of winning a close one. I'd driven her home from lots of basketball games, so I was used to it.

But that night was different. Marie seemed more wired, for one thing. After forty minutes on the court she usually flopped into the passenger seat and made herself comfortable. That night she kept squirming in the seat while she talked, and her eyes seemed to be focused on something I couldn't see.

Other clues came to mind as well. Marie had taken longer than usual to emerge from the locker room that night; almost everyone else had been in and out and gone as quickly as they could. When I got into the car with her, I noticed a faint smell of perfume. Then there was the timing -- a Friday night in the early spring, the day after my 18th birthday. I didn't want to jump to any conclusions -- I'd been pretty adamant about not wanting to make a big deal out of the occasion, since I was the last in our informal clique to achieve the milestone -- but all the evidence suggested that a plan was in motion.

Marie relaxed a little as we approached her house. It was dark, and the street in front of it was empty of familiar cars. "Where are your parents?" I asked.

"Atlantic City," she answered quickly. "They'll be back Sunday sometime."

"So you get the house to yourself for the weekend," I observed, envious. "That's so cool."

"It's no big deal, really," she said.

I snorted jokingly. "That's because you're an only child," I countered. "If you had two obnoxious little siblings like I do, you'd kill to have a quiet house to yourself for a weekend."

Marie flashed a sly smile. "Then why don't you come in and enjoy the quiet for a little while before you go home?"

There was a touch of come-hither in her face, but I knew better. Marie and I were friends -- just friends -- and had been since junior high. We'd talked about being more than that, especially after my pre-Christmas breakup with Joanna Kempley, but we'd agreed it was probably better not to risk the friendship. That didn't stop us from flirting a little, like now, but it was all in fun.

So I went for it. "Sure, why not?"

I put on an unsuspecting face and followed Marie into the house. She closed the door behind us before hitting the light switch, and I did my level best to look shocked when a dozen people jumped out from behind the furniture and screamed, "SURPRIIIIIIISE!!"

Pandemonium reigned for a few minutes as people took turns slapping my back, shaking my hand, or kissing the birthday boy on the cheek. My pal Rick flipped on the stereo, picked up his air guitar and started jamming to *Happy Birthday* (the Beatles version, of course). He put on a great show, and we applauded wildly when it was over.

The crowd parted and I took a seat in a corner recliner. Paul, another friend of mine, came up to congratulate me. "You did it, Jason," he said, grinning. "Eighteen, man. The big one."

"Eighteen isn't that big a deal anymore," I objected with a mild shrug. "I still can't drive after midnight, buy a beer, or run for Congress."

"Congress is overrated anyway," Paul argued. "There's still plenty of cool shit you can do at eighteen, man. You can vote, and you can call 900 numbers, and you can ... umm ... "

"Get drafted," Rick offered.

"Oh, thanks," I grimaced.

Jessica, one of the basketball team, chimed in. "You can enter into a legally binding contract at 18. That means you can buy a car, get a credit card, things like that."

"And buy a gun," Paul added. "But do it quick, before the assholes ban them all."

"You can go to adult web sites now," somebody else suggested.

I winked broadly. "What makes you think I don't already?" That got everyone cackling wickedly.

"Bag the web sites," Rick said. "You can walk right into a club now and see live strippers."

"Not likely, dude," Paul pointed out. "Most of those places sell booze, so you have to be 21 to get in."

"Curses!" I scowled. "Foiled again."

Marie jumped in. "I have a better idea," she declared. Looking around the assembled crowd, she pointed to one of the other girls. "Stacy, why don't you come here?"

Everyone scooted back, leaving an open floor in front of me for Marie. Stacy came forward and exchanged a look with Marie, then glanced back at the group. "I think we're going to need a nice, strong guy," Stacy suggested.

Rick and Paul volunteered their services. Marie chose Rick and had him stand directly behind Stacy. She then had Rick put his arms around Stacy's waist and hold her. I was mildly envious -- I'd been harboring a quiet lust for Stacy for some time, but lacked the nerve to do anything about it.

Marie must have seen some of that in my face, because she winked at me and said, "Relax, birthday boy; you're going to like this." She walked over to Stacy, right up to her face, and made eye contact. She put one hand on either side of Stacy's face, fingers poised to snap. "One ... two ... *three!*"

On three, she snapped her fingers sharply. Stacy flat-out collapsed: her eyes slammed shut, her head fell sideways, and her legs seemed to turn into jelly. If Rick hadn't been holding her by the waist, she would have hit the floor like a bag of sand.

"That's good, Stacy," Marie said in a smooth, flowing voice. "Deeper and deeper, letting go completely, knowing you're safe and among friends. Your legs are strong, Stacy. Strong enough to hold you up, so you can stand and support yourself even as you go deeper and deeper for me." Slowly, Stacy's legs straightened and she stood up on her own. Rick backed off a half step but stayed on the alert. Marie looked back at me with a wide, catlike grin.

I was way more surprised than I should have been. After all, I knew Marie had a thing about hypnosis: any time there was a hypnosis show anywhere near, Marie would go to it; she had at least a half-dozen books on her bookshelf -- not cheesy self-help books, mind you, but professional hypnotherapy manuals -- and they all showed signs of heavy use. She'd even talked once about finding a volunteer or two to practice on, but when I didn't offer to be one of them she never mentioned it again. I figured she'd given up on the idea.

Wrong again, Buffalo Breath, I thought to myself as I watched Stacy slide deeper and deeper under Marie's spell. I looked at her face, so loose and relaxed, and it stirred something deep within my own psyche. It also stirred something deep within my own pants.

Marie whispered something into Stacy's ear, then led her over to me. Marie stood beside and a little behind my chair while Stacy stood right in front, close enough to touch if I dared. Her eyes seemed aimed in my direction but they looked blank, like the eyes of someone lost in a daydream. "Stacy is going to do a very special dance for you now, Jason," Marie said. "Do you mind?"

I shook my head, wondering what was in store.

Rick turned on the stereo again, and we heard the opening strains of a Jeff Healey tune called *Cruel Little Number*. At the first sound, Stacy seemed to come awake. Her eyes flashed with recognition then locked onto my face. Her hips began to sway to the music and the rest of her body followed, beginning a slow, rhythmic sort of dance.

I tore my eyes away and looked around the room. The guys were staring openly at Stacy in obvious lust; the other girls were watching too, but with faces that suggested curiosity more than anything else. Stacy seemed oblivious to it all, her eyes remaining locked on me as her body movements became more and more sensuous.

Marie started talking softly into my ear. "See how focused she is? There could be a hundred people with camcorders trained on her, and she wouldn't care. All she cares about is pleasing you."

"You tranced her," I said, awarding myself the No Shit award for the night.

"Yes," she admitted. "She was in danger of being cut from dance company because she was having trouble learning the new routines. We made a deal: I helped her improve her concentration, in return for this little present for you. Are you enjoying it?"

My eyes were still on Stacy, noting how her hands slid lovingly all over her body. "It's very hot," I said. "Are you sure she doesn't mind?"

"Trust me," she replied, and I could almost hear that enigmatic smile in her voice.

The music changed to another Healey tune, *Baby's Looking Hot*, and Stacy's movements became even more intimate. Hands slid over breasts and squeezed, then moved on. She rubbed one hand over the front of her jeans and swiveled her hips in and out, as if she was finger-fucking herself. I was starting to get uncomfortable. I moved to get up, but Marie's hands began gently kneading my shoulders. "You're tense," she said softly. "Mind if I rub your neck and shoulders a little, to help you relax?"

"Okay." It felt nice; I settled back into the recliner and watched Stacy some more as Marie continued her commentary.

"See how locked in she is, Jason? She is still in deep hypnosis, totally focused on the dance. Relaxed, loose, comfortable, concentrating. Like an athlete, living totally in the moment. And having fun doing it."

The onlookers let out a sudden chorus of hoots. Stacy had just kicked her shoes off and started playing with the bottom edge of her tank top, lifting it and dropping it again. As I watched the hoots turned into surprised gasps: Stacy lifted the tank top one more time and yanked it off in a smooth, flowing motion, throwing it into the crowd. She was wearing a black push-up bra, and the effect was not lost on us -- every male in the room started jockeying for position, the better to stare down Stacy's cleavage. "Can you believe that?" I asked Marie without turning my head.

"Shhh," she admonished gently. "Don't talk. Don't even listen to me. Just relax and watch." Her hands continued to work the tension out of my neck and shoulders. It felt really good.

Stacy caressed herself through the bra, letting her hands slide smoothly over newly-exposed skin and satin, until every guy in the room was shifting around to accommodate a sudden hard-on. Then slowly, teasingly, she unzipped her jeans and shucked them off, too. The black thong she was wearing got her an extra measure of applause from the onlookers.

My head was getting heavy, so I let it fall back against the chair. Marie kindly inserted a pillow so I could continue watching the show while her hands worked their magic on my shoulders and chest. *This is the life*, I thought to myself hazily.

Meanwhile, Stacy got even closer, to the point where she was pretty much standing between my knees. Her legs brushed my thighs as she turned and swiveled, getting me and the onlookers even more stirred up. She unhooked her bra and let the straps fall, just holding the cups in place with her hands, teasing the guys with quick peeks of creamy white skin.

The music changed again, this time to *Evil and Here to Stay*. The beat was slow and ballsy, and Stacy got into it right away. She lifted her arms, showing off her round, perky breasts, and twirled slowly to give everyone a good view. The bra got flung into the crowd, where it wrapped itself around Paul's face. He pulled it off and stuffed it in his pants pocket, a shit-eating grin on his face.

Marie was still talking to me, and I think I grunted a semi-aware "yes" here and there, but between the crowd noise and the music I wasn't really hearing her that well. In fact, despite the show and the raging hard-on in my pants, I was feeling really sleepy and mellow. I decided to close my eyes, just for a second or two.

The chair creaked, and I felt someone climbing on top of me. I opened my eyes and looked up to see Stacy hovering over me. Her arms reached gently around my head and pulled my face into the valley between her breasts. I dimly heard a chorus of hoots and cheers, but I was too distracted by the sensations to pay much attention. Her hips moved, grinding her mound against the sensitive bulge in the front of my khakis.

It was the weirdest feeling I'd ever had. My head was spinning, and my body seemed perfectly content to sit there and let Stacy dry-hump me. A voice whispered in my ear, "You can touch if you want to." I wasn't sure if I wanted to, but my arms decided to take the initiative. My hands came up and settled on Stacy's hips, resting just below the string from the thong. Stacy responded by rising up and pressing herself even more firmly against my crotch. Her hands covered mine and guided them back, across her buttocks, then up the sides of her body. As my hands rose my cock rose too, and when I felt Stacy's hardened nipples sliding into my palms I thought for sure I'd passed out and was having a wet dream.

I heard Stacy -- or was it Marie? -- talking to me in a husky whisper. "You're so hard," she intoned. "So aroused, so ready to come. Do you want to come, Jason?"

"No," I heard myself say weakly. This was really strange.

Stacy's groin rubbed up and down against my quivering shaft, sending a shiver through me. "Are you sure, Jason? You feel so good. I'll bet I can make you come right here."

I tried to protest, to say that creaming in my pants in front of all of my friends was not my idea of a good time, but my mouth wouldn't form the words. Stacy cut off all further conversation by planting a long, hot, wet one on me. Her tongue slipped into my mouth and her hands squeezed mine over her breasts, and I just couldn't help myself. I came like a freight train, rattling and rumbling and groaning and totally out of control. Stacy rode me, gasping and squeezing, until I sank back into the chair with a heavy sigh. Somebody said, "Nap time, birthday boy," and I passed out.

I came to some time later. Probably not long, because the first thing I noticed was that Stacy was still standing around in just her thong. She didn't seem to be bothered by this; in fact, she made no attempt to cover anything up as she negotiated playfully for the return of her clothing. "See?" Marie said, reading my thoughts. "I told you Stacy wouldn't mind. She's got an exhibitionist streak a yard wide, and it runs vertically."

I had to swallow a couple of times before my mouth worked properly. "Before or after you tranced her?"

Marie came around and perched on the arm of the chair. "Before, of course," she told me. "Otherwise I could never have persuaded her to do that lap dance, hypnosis or not. All the trance did was give her a little extra motivation."

"How was that?"

"I suggested that you were the sexiest guy in the room, and that she would derive a lot of personal pleasure from making you come."

"Oh, shit!" I exclaimed, looking down at the dark, damp spot in the front of my khakis. "I can't walk around like this."

Marie giggled a little. "A lot of that is from Stacy," she assured me. "But if it will make you feel better, you can borrow my shower and I'll wash those for you."

That didn't need much thought. "You're on," I agreed.

"Okay. Let's go now, while everyone is still gawking at Stacy." She led me quietly up the stairs by the hand. I followed in silence, my mind slightly distracted -- I'd walked behind Marie many times, but until then I'd never noticed what a really nice ass she had. Maybe it was the warmup suit she still wore.

We stopped in her parents' bedroom while she pulled a red tartan-patterned bathrobe from the closet. "My dad's," she explained, "but he never wears it. You can borrow it while your clothes are in the wash." Then we went to Marie's bedroom, which had a private door leading to the hallway bath. She stayed in the bedroom doorway. "Leave your clothes in here," she directed me. "I'll come in for them once I hear the shower running. If you need anything, I'll be right outside guarding the door." She pulled the bedroom door to, leaving it open just a crack, with her on the outside.

I peeled my clothes off, emptying my pants pockets and putting the stuff from them in a little pile on her night stand. It occurred to me that Marie might be watching through that little crack in the door; then it occurred to me that I didn't entirely mind if she was. Seeing Marie drop Stacy with a finger snap had brought up a dozen wet dreams I'd had, most of them involving Marie doing the same sort of thing to me. What would have happened, I wondered, if I'd let her practice on me?

"You okay in there?" Marie asked from behind the door, jerking me out of my reverie.

"Fine," I stammered, realizing that I'd been standing naked in her bedroom for several minutes and now had a hard-on again. "I'm going into the bathroom now." I slipped into the bathroom and closed the door. It didn't have a lock, I

noticed. I started the shower running, gave it a few seconds to get to a decent temperature, then stepped into the spray.

I tried to concentrate on cleaning up and getting out, but my mind kept wandering back to Marie. Was she really just outside the door? Would she come inside on some pretext and sneak a peek? Was she waiting to see if I'd invent a reason to ask her inside? Why was I even thinking this way? My cock stayed hard, which admittedly made it easier to rinse off but also made it harder to think clearly.

It wasn't until I'd turned off the water and started toweling off that I realized I'd left the bathrobe on Marie's bed. I looked at my reflection in the mirror and chuckled at the ridiculousness of it all. Marie was going to think I was *trying* to come on to her. With my towel wrapped around my waist and what I hoped would be a disarming smile on my face, I opened the door and marched into the bedroom.

The bathrobe was gone. I stood there, lost, for a breath and half before I spotted Marie standing by the closed door, wearing the bathrobe. "Looking for this?" she asked as she turned the lock button on the bedroom door.

I just stared. She was toying with the sash that held the robe closed around her. There was no sign of the warm-up suit she had been wearing when I'd gone into the shower, or of my own clothes. Marie approached me slowly, smiling that knowing smile, and untied the sash. She let the robe fall open and dropped it on the floor.

My eyes took in her naked form with a surprising hunger. Marie had a great body, firm and lean but very definitely female. I became slightly dizzy as the blood rushed out of my head and concentrated in my crotch. Marie took the final two steps and pulled me close, warm arms encircling me as our lips met in a soft kiss. My arms closed around her, feeling the softness of her back as we embraced. The kiss grew hotter and more insistent. Tongues danced together, and little moans started coming from both of us.

Marie stopped kissing long enough to say, "I don't think we need this." Her hand snaked between us and pulled on my towel until it came free. She gripped my stiff member in her palm and massaged it, making my knees get weak. She steadied me as I started to fall and guided me to the bed. "Lie back," she told me. I was in no position to argue.

She climbed up on the bed next to me and pulled my head to a breast. I suckled lovingly, playing with the erect nipple with my tongue, reaching up with a hand to play with the other one. I also managed to snake a hand between her thighs and start probing her slit. She shifted a little to make it easier for me, then cupped my balls in one of her hands and started petting them. My hips started flexing involuntarily, and I knew I was about to come.

"My eyes, Jason," Marie said gently. "Look into my eyes."

I did, and I felt myself sliding back a little from the edge. I lost myself in Marie's deep, delicious eyes. My body became still, my mind a little fuzzy.

"That's better," she said. "Let's finish this together." She swung a leg over and straddled me, still maintaining eye lock. I felt her envelop me and slide down, giving a contented sigh as she took me inside her. "Stay with me," she told me, pointing to her eyes. "Focus right here, and let your body respond when it wants to."

My perception narrowed to two things: the sensations in my cock as our hips moved in and out together, and the deep, dark brown of Marie's eyes drawing me in, holding me closely to her. My cock tingled and grew, and I knew it was not a question of if I would come, but when. I hoped I could hold on long enough to ensure Marie's pleasure.

Marie's breathing grew more labored and our hip movements more insistent. Finally, when I knew I could hold it in no longer, Marie's eyes closed. With a loud cry, she flung her head back. Her muscles clamped down on my rod and that was it for me -- I burst inside her, clenching time and again, for what seemed like an hour. We slowed together, and Marie's eyes found mine again. "Nap time, birthday boy."

Everything faded away as my eyes closed.

When they opened again, the room was dark. I was still naked, but underneath the bed sheets. Marie was with me, holding my head to her chest, her breathing slow and even. *Guess I didn't dream it*, I thought.

Then I had a much less pleasant thought. I lifted myself enough to read the alarm clock by the bed: it was after 11:00pm. "Oh, shit!" I jumped out of the bed and looked around frantically. "Marie, where are my clothes?"

Maria stirred. "In the dryer, just waiting to be gathered up. What's the matter?"

"It's after eleven," I said. "My folks are gonna go apeshit."

"No they won't," she assured me. "I called your mom two hours ago and told her we'd duped you into a surprise party. I also told her that several of the gang were sleeping over, and that you were already sacked out upstairs. She said you could stay the night."

"Wow," I said, surprised that my mom agreed to a mixed-gender sleepover without even lecturing me on sexual abstinence first. "So now what?"

Even in the dim light I could make out the sparkle in her eyes. She threw back the covers and held her arms out to me. "Now, you get back in here and make love to me again."

It was an offer I couldn't refuse.

The morning sunlight was pouring in through the windows when I woke again. Marie was still with me, cuddled inside me like spoons in a drawer. I fondled a breast absently and felt the nipple respond.

"You trying to start something?" Marie asked playfully.

"More like trying to figure out what happened to us last night," I answered.

She rolled over and kissed me. "Nothing we didn't both want to happen," she said.

"True. But I didn't realize how much I wanted it until it was already happening. How did you know that Stacy's lap dance would be the way to get me into bed with you?"

She chuckled deeply. "You still don't realize it, do you?"

I just looked at her blankly.

"Stacy's lap dance was a ruse," she explained. "A distraction. The whole purpose of it was to get your conscious mind watching her instead of paying attention to me. Then, the things I said to you while you were watching went straight to your subconscious."

I felt like an idiot for not realizing it sooner. "You tranced me! And you didn't even ask permission first."

Marie shook her head vigorously. "I asked, all right. Each step of the way, I asked if you minded. You always said it was okay. Your conscious mind was too busy watching Stacy to realize it, but you gave me the green light all the way. The final sign was when you left the bathrobe on the bed -- I told you that if you had any reservations about having sex with me, you should make sure to bring the robe in with you. You didn't, so I knew you wanted it as badly as I did."

"Pretty sneaky, Marie," I said. "What about our agreement not to risk the friendship?"

"We're not," she replied. "As well as we know each other, Jason, we can always go back to being friends if we want. But without trying, we'd always be wondering in the pits of our minds how we could have been as lovers."

I felt her fingers slide up my leg and find my cock, which was already growing erect again. I pulled her in closer, letting my hands explore her softness and warmth again. "I guess we're going to find out."

We did, and we were never sorry.

-wg
3/22/01