

Playing the Game

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MEET SEAN PORTER

You wonder, sometimes, how you get yourself into situations like these. Looking back, I have to believe that, somewhere along the timeline of my life, I was led to this point, that I would be here no matter how I led my life. But I digress...

Flash back to 1980. At that time, I was a fifteen-year-old jock, having spent the past several years honing my skills on sandlot baseball fields. At some point during the previous year, I caught the soccer fever that was just beginning to grip the American landscape. By the end of that summer I was playing on two teams, and earning a little side money as a youth referee. Since they had some trouble getting enough qualified adults to be referees, I had the chance to work games played by older kids than I otherwise would have been allowed to referee.

Typically, I would be a referee for the real young ones, say six to eight years old. These kids would play what I liked to refer to as

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“swarm-ball”. Every kid on the field, except the designated goalkeeper, would swarm to the ball like bees around a hive. No matter where it was on the field, they would kick at the thing as if it were a biting dog, all the time laughing, shouting, and having absolutely no idea where it was going to go next. The coaches and parents, meanwhile, would be screaming on the sidelines, as if the sheer weight of their voices would make little Kimmie or Matthew suddenly do a bicycle kick like Pele and score the game-winning goal.

A couple of times that year, I was given a game with older kids, usually in the under-fourteen girl’s division. These kids were usually fairly new to the game also, but they were a lot more coordinated in their athletic abilities. The older players could see how a play could develop, so they tended to play positions a little better than the young ones. Their games were a lot more fun to officiate, and the girls were a lot more fun for a perpetually horny fifteen-year-old guy to watch running up and down the field.

A lot of these kids were the little sisters of friends of mine, so I knew a lot of their names. On the soccer field, though, I began seeing them as individuals, instead of as that annoying kid who was trying to hang around with us older guys. At the first of these games that I officiated, I could see groups of girls huddled together, glancing over at me before the game started, talking and giggling. I thought of myself as an official however, and acknowledging that I knew some of them was beneath my dignity. During the inspection and instruction prior to the game, as I checked cleats and shin guards, a couple of the girls that I knew softly said hi to me, almost embarrassed to know me.

As the game progressed, I forgot about who they were and concentrated on the play. Some of the girls had been playing for several years, and others were just learning the fundamentals. Nearly all of them, regardless of skills or experience, played enthusiastically, and played hard. It was kind of a revelation to me to see these kids running hard up and down the field, heads down, shoulders and hips and feet fighting for possession of the ball, and sweating. Not

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“glowing”, not perspiring, but honest-to-God, hard-work sweating. My estimation of their commitment to athletics climbed, and I decided then and there that I would never again think of them as annoying little kids.

I learned a lot about those kids that day, and learned a little about myself, too.

I didn't have any idea then, of course, but I had a lot more that I would learn about them... and me.

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FIRST AID

It was a couple of weeks before school was supposed to start, and my friends and I were not looking forward to the end of summer vacation. I rode my bike over to my buddy Jake Lehigh's house, hoping to scare up enough guys for a pickup baseball game. I dropped my bike to the ground, walked up to the front door, and knocked. There was no answer, but as I was walking back down the sidewalk to my bike, I heard some noise from the field behind his house. I walked around to the back and saw Jake's little sister, Kayla, and two of her friends playing around with a soccer ball. Kayla was thirteen, and just learning how to play soccer. She had been on the field when I worked as a referee the previous Saturday, as had her two friends.

I was about to turn around and continue my search when Kayla looked over and saw me. She began waving and calling out to me.

"Sean! Can you help us?"

I sighed, and began walking back to the field. As I was approaching them, I looked again at the three girls. Kayla was about 5'4", slender and athletic, with long blonde hair that reached the middle of her back. Her hair was so pale it was almost white, and she wore it tied back in a ponytail. She was dressed in a loose-fitting tank

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top and short shorts that looked like they were tight enough to inhibit her circulation. I knew her fairly well, since she was the sister of one of my best friends, but it was like I was seeing her for the first time. *Damn*, I thought to myself, *this isn't the little kid I used to see hanging around.*

With her were Jaimie Jacks, who was fourteen, and Jaimie's twelve-year-old sister Tara, who lived next door to the Lehighs. Jaimie was shorter, barely five feet tall, but she had a more grown-up shape to her. Her hips were not boy-slim like Kayla's, and her boobs were much more pronounced. She had dark brown, slightly curly hair, cut just to her shoulders, with thick bangs brushing her eyebrows. Tara was even shorter, but much thinner than her sister. She was just developing and hadn't blossomed to Jaimie's proportions as yet. She had always kept her dark hair cut very short, but was in the process of letting it grow out. It gave her a bit of a wild look. Of the two of them, Tara was the more athletic, having played soccer and other sports since she was in kindergarten.

Kayla was trying to juggle the soccer ball, bouncing it on her knee, and not having much success that I could see. After it bounced away from her one more time, she turned to me and said, "Can you please show me how to do this? Jaimie and I are really having a tough time learning this."

Tara puffed up a little and said, "Yeah, these klutzes can't do anything. We were trying to pass the ball to each other without letting it hit the ground, and Jaimie and Kayla kept on missing it."

"Well," I said to her, "you've been practicing for a lot longer than they have, Tara. Just because they can't pass the ball in the air doesn't mean they can't pass the ball on the ground, does it?"

"No, not really, I guess," she replied. "But juggling skills are still important, according to my coaches."

"Sure," I said. "Juggling is good for your hand-eye coordination. Or should I say foot-eye coordination?" All three girls giggled. "But," I added, "I know lots of really good players who have a tough time

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juggling. It still comes down to different skills required to juggle compared to running and dribbling and shooting the ball."

At that, I lashed out with my right foot and kicked the ball out of the air as Kayla was attempting to juggle. The ball bounced off my laces, up in the air. I trapped it and dribbled away a few yards. Tara yelped as I kicked out, then ran after me to try to take the ball away. I called out to Kayla to get open, keeping my back between the ball and Tara, and whipped a pass across the field to Kayla as she sprinted past a startled Jaimie. Jaimie ran after her, and the game was on. It was two-v-two keep-away, a common soccer drill among many of the coaches in our area, Kayla and me versus Jaimie and her sister, Tara.

A few minutes into the game, I was just about to pass the ball off when I heard Kayla cry out, followed by a thud. We all stopped and looked over to see her rolling over onto her back, holding her leg and grimacing in pain.

"What happened, Kay?" Tara cried out as she ran over to her friend.

"I don't know," she said through gritted teeth. "I think I tripped over a rock and pulled a muscle in my leg."

"Let me see," I said as I ran up to her. Being the oldest, and having taken first aid as part of my referee training, I was naturally going to take charge of the situation. I knelt down beside her and asked her what muscle she hurt.

She hesitated, then, almost embarrassed, said, "My... thigh muscle, I think."

I held her leg at her knee with both hands and tried to straighten out her leg. She grimaced with pain, still holding on to her upper thigh. She could bend her leg without any discomfort in her knee, for which we were all grateful, though we could see that she was in some pain from her pull.

"Can you stand?" I asked.

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"I don't know, but I'll try," she replied. I held out my hands for her to grab, while Jaimie and Tara each grabbed an arm to help her to her feet.

"Oof!" She nearly collapsed against me when she tried to put some weight on her leg. I grabbed her around her waist and held her up.

"Here, Kayla, just hold onto me. I'll help you into the house," I said.

"You're going to have to help me walk," she said to me as she leaned against me. "I hope I'm not too heavy," she added.

"A little pipsqueak like you?" I teased her. "C'mon, squirt, I've got you."

I moved over to her bad side, grabbed her around her waist, and helped guide her as she hobbled toward her house. Because we had been running around, we were both a little sweaty. My grip kept on slipping on my hand at her waist, and she would slowly slide down a little at a time. The first time it happened, my hand just naturally found a convenient spot to grip, until it suddenly occurred to me that I was holding onto her small breast. I stopped, flustered, and readjusted my hold on her. My mind was aswirl with conflicting feelings. *This is Kayla, after all, the kid sister of my pal Jake. What am I doing copping a feel? And by the way, why don't I feel a bra on her? Uh-oh, what if she notices? What will she say? Will she tell Jake what I did while she was helpless? Christ, what a dilemma.* I wanted to help, but I didn't want to get into trouble here.

But then I felt her slip down again, and when she did, her breast slid once again right into my palm. I stopped again, pretending I was getting tired, and readjusted my hold on her once more. After I did, I thought I heard—or felt—her giggle softly. I could have been mistaken, though.

We made our way into their family room, and I set her down on the couch. I tucked some pillows behind her so she could sit up more comfortably. I went into the kitchen and got big glasses of water for both of us.

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"Where is everybody?" I asked her.

"Dad's at work, Mom and Jake went shopping for school clothes," she said. "Sean? Could you please massage this leg for me?"

She looked so hurt and vulnerable lying there. How could I refuse? I knelt down by her and started gently massaging her leg just above her knee. Her shorts were very tight, and they ended just an inch or so from the junction of her legs. Her skin was incredibly soft and smooth, and the big thigh muscles under the skin were pliant.

"Ooohh, that feels good," she sighed. "Go a little higher, please?"

Her head was back against the pillow, and her eyes were closed. I worked my way up her leg, from her knee up to mid-thigh.

"Where does it hurt the most, Kayla?" I asked.

"Up higher. I don't think it's a bad pull. I think I might just have cramped up. Do me a favor, Sean? In the upstairs bathroom, the one off the hall, there is a bottle of liniment. Could you go up and get it, and rub it into my leg for me?"

"Sure thing," I said. I ran up the stairs to the bathroom, and rummaged around in the closet until I found the liniment. I also grabbed a couple of towels and washcloths. I soaked one washcloth in cold water, and carried everything downstairs.

As I came back into the room, Kayla was sitting up, taking off her shoes and socks. Her loose tank top gapped at her arms, and I could clearly see her breast and her slightly swollen nipple as she untied her shoe. She looked up at me and smiled, causing me to blush and quickly look away. She got both shoes and socks off her feet, then settled back, taking her hair out of her ponytail and giving her head a small shake. I couldn't help but notice how her boobs pushed out her top like two small volcanic cinder cones. Her nipples were quite noticeable, accentuating the absence of her bra. The sight of this very pretty, very young, blonde girl lying there began to have its effect on me. I could feel the heat of my blood rushing to my crotch, causing me to stiffen. I quickly knelt back down, dropping my supplies on the

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floor beside me. I handed her the damp washcloth, and she gratefully wiped off her face and the back of her neck.

"Okay," she said, "I'm ready for you." She smiled, pretending not to notice my discomfort.

I poured a small amount of liniment into my hand, and started rubbing it into her skin. It seemed like her shorts were pulled up even higher than they were before. They were pulled up so tight I could almost detect her slit. Her entire leg, from her toes to the cheeks of her tight butt, was bare.

She had her left leg bent at the knee, and her injured right leg was straight on the couch, so I could rub the liniment around on the top, the outside, and the inside of her thigh. As I started to massage her leg slowly, trying to push the heat from the liniment into her muscle tissues, she spread her legs apart slightly. I slowly worked my way up from her knee once again, moving up to about mid-thigh, then back down again. Each time I moved up, my hands crept higher on the top of her thigh. Then I worked them around to the sides and down again. Once again, her head rested on the pillows, and her eyes were closed. I glanced up at her and noticed her tongue was slightly sticking out of her mouth, and there was a small sheen of perspiration on her upper lip. I thought she might have been breathing a little heavily, and every once in a while she let out a big sigh, never once opening her eyes.

My eyes, however, were wide open, and probably bugging out just a little bit. I had never been this close to a real live girl who was actually letting me touch her thigh before. Even though I was still thinking of this as a medical exercise, I was still a bit nervous—and intensely curious.

I massaged the oil into her skin with hard strokes, but then I couldn't resist lightly drawing my hand back down toward her knee, almost caressing her. I had never felt such smooth, supple skin before. I couldn't get enough of the feel of her against my fingertips. I could feel her leg quiver very slightly as I massaged her.

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She apparently couldn't get enough of the feeling, either, for I heard her whisper to me, "Higher. Higher, Sean." I looked up at her, but her eyes were still closed. She may not have even realized that she had spoken to me.

I allowed my hands to travel all the way up her leg along the long quadriceps muscle, activating the heat of the liniment. As I got to the edge of her shorts, I rubbed down along the outside of her leg with my left hand, and along her inner thigh with my right. As I did this, a slight moan escaped her lips, and her legs parted even more. I stroked down her thigh to her knee, and began kneading her muscle back up again. When I got up to her shorts this time, I again moved my hands to the sides, but this time I could not help but lightly, slowly, run my palm and my fingers gently down her leg. As I began this movement, her hips lifted slightly, again seemingly subconsciously, as if to draw even more feeling from my touch.

I was in turmoil. My dick was as hard as stone, sticking straight up in my shorts. I was sweating, and my breathing was shallow. I didn't dare even blink my eyes, for fear that I would break this spell, and our session would end.

I needn't have worried. As I caressed her inner thigh from her crotch to her knee, she whispered a single word that held my attention and caused my cock to jerk: "More."

As softly and gently as I could, I slowly ran my hands back up her leg. This time, I continued up onto the leg of her shorts before caressing down the sides. As I moved my hands down along the leg band of her shorts, my left hand caressed the cheek of her ass, then passed down off the material back onto her skin. My right hand brushed along the edge of her pubic mound, then down between her legs. As my fingertips passed down across her shorts over her slit, she jerked slightly, then pushed her hips up sharply into my fingertips, while moving her legs a little further apart. I pressed the material of her shorts into her pussy, feeling the heat she was generating radiating through her clothes. My right hand then slowly descended, down onto

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her skin. I spread out my fingers so that I was brushing against both legs for a brief time, then dragged my fingertips slowly back down.

What the hell, I thought to myself, *nothing to lose by trying again*. So I ran my hand back up again, teasingly slow, fingertips softly playing along her skin. Kayla was breathing heavily, and her nipples stood out sharply against the material of her top. Her chest was heaving, which caused me to nearly go off in my shorts without even touching myself. When I reached the juncture of her legs, she reached down with both hands and pressed my fingers hard against her mound through her shorts. She rubbed my hand up and down several times, pressing hard, along her slit. I tried to use my other hand to reach under the leg of her shorts, but they were too tight, so I had to content myself with moving my fingers along the leg band of the shorts, back and forth, in time to her rubbing against her center.

Suddenly, she stopped rubbing and just pressed my fingers hard into the center of her slit. She arched her back, and her hips bumped up several times. She softly cried out, eyes still closed, then collapsed back against the couch. She still held my hand against her, but the insistence was gone. She softly grazed her fingers over my wrist as my hand lay quietly against her cloth-covered pussy. I continued to rub the outside of her leg with my left hand, marveling at the soft, smooth skin.

Slowly, her eyes opened as she released my wrist and she looked shyly at me. She looked down, and then glanced up through her eyelashes at me. *Don't think badly of me*, she seemed to be saying.

For my part, I was in such a painfully rigid state I could not have stood if my life depended on it. I was also in a bit of a state of shock, realizing I had just fooled around with my best friend's sister. I was dreading seeing him next time, and I was dreading seeing Kayla next time, for fear of my reaction to either one of them. Even so, I desperately hoped that I would get another chance to be alone with Kayla once again, despite our age difference.

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Kayla sat up and threw her arms around me in a fierce hug. She whispered in my ear, "Thank you, Sean. That's the nicest thing anybody has ever done for me. Thank you."

Well, that sure surprised me. I figured that I was the one who should be doing the thanking, but who was I to not accept a little heartfelt gratitude? Especially when it came from a thirteen-year-old fox who was only recently putty in my hands.

I returned her hug, enjoying the feel of her hard nipples and small breasts against my chest. She looked up at me then, and quickly, softly kissed me. It was kind of a little-girl kiss, puffy lips and closed mouth, but I didn't care. I knew that, given an opportunity, I might be able to teach her what a real kiss could be like.

She lay back down on the couch, turned onto her side, and watched me as I busied myself cleaning up with the towels and washcloths. I fumbled around for a few minutes, desperately waiting for my boner to deflate before I ran out of things to do. Finally, I felt comfortable enough to stand. I gathered up the liniment and towels and stood up to take everything back upstairs. As I was climbing the stairs, I heard a car in the driveway. Jake and his mom were home.

They were surprised to see me, until Kayla explained about her accident. Her mom was effusive in her thanks to me for helping her out. Jake, meanwhile, had run upstairs to change into more comfortable clothes for baseball.

When I walked back into the family room, Kayla was watching TV while she was lying on the couch. I looked down at her and said, "Are you going to be all right, Kay?"

She looked up at me and said, "Yes, it feels pretty good now. Do you have to go?"

"Yes, I think I'd better. Jake will be down in a second."

She grabbed me around my leg as I was standing there, and pressed her cheek against my thigh. She looked shyly up at me and said, "I think everyone will be gone again tomorrow morning. My leg could use another treatment, if you are willing to play doctor with me

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again." She blushed, and let go of me as we heard Jake running down the stairs.

"Okay. Maybe I'll stop by tomorrow and see how you're doing," I replied softly.

She let go just as Jake ran into the room. He grabbed my arm and began pulling me toward the back door. "C'mon," he said, "let's find the guys and get a game in before it gets dark."

With that, he pulled me out the door, grabbed his bicycle and baseball glove from his garage, and we were off.

* * * * *

Late that night, I lay in bed thinking of Kayla. By the time my eyelids began to droop, I had practically worn blisters on my hand and on my dick from visions of such a willing and lovely participant in a young boy's inspired fantasies.

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KAYLA'S THERAPY

By nine o'clock the next morning, I was a nervous wreck. I didn't know what time I should show up at Kayla's house, or if I should even go at all. *What will I do if Jake answers the door? Or worse, what if Mrs. Lehigh is there, but Jake isn't? What would I say then? Can Kayla come out to play? I don't think so.* I thought about just blowing it off, rounding up a bunch of guys for a game of baseball or soccer, and considering her offer to be merely the fevered workings of a kid sister's overactive imagination.

But, in the end, I let the little head do the thinking (it has ended up being a major theme in my life, I suppose), and by nine-thirty, I was standing outside her front door looking around nervously to see if anybody was around to see me. I was so nervous, I was sweating bullets. But I was there, and I was not about to back out at that point. I rang the bell.

Nothing happened. Nobody came to the door, and there was no sound that I could detect from inside the house, other than the reverberation of their doorbell. I didn't know whether I should be

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relieved or pissed off. I rang the bell again, just to be able to tell myself that I did my part. If Kayla wasn't home, at least I tried.

A window upstairs opened. I looked up and Kayla was at the window. I couldn't see her very well through the screen, so I backed up onto the sidewalk a little ways. Just knowing she was there caused my stomach to flutter, and my dick to begin to harden.

"Sean!" Kayla called out to me. "Come around to the back door and come in, the door's unlocked. I'm having a little trouble with stairs, so I can't come down to let you in. Come on upstairs into my room, okay?"

"Okay, be right there," I said.

I ran around to the back door and went in. The house was quiet. I heard Kayla call to me down the stairs. "I'm up here."

I went into the front hall and went up the stairs. She was standing at the top of the stairs watching me, a nervous smile on her face. When I reached the top landing, she grabbed my hand and led me down the hall and into her room, leaving the door open so we could hear if anyone came into the house.

Her room still had a lot of little-girl décor in it, with a ton of stuffed animals on the bed, a few Barbie and Ken dolls on a bookcase against the wall, and pictures of horses and kittens on her walls. There was a poster of John Travolta from some movie on the wall above her small nightstand.

She led me over to the foot of her bed. Her hands felt as sweaty as mine for some reason. I looked her over. She was barefoot, dressed in a scoop-necked t-shirt and an old pair of gym shorts, and her right leg was bandaged above the knee with an elastic bandage. She sat down on the edge of the bed. I noticed that she already had the liniment and towels on the bed.

"I think I'm ready for you," she said. Her eyes got a little wider, as if she didn't really mean it to come out quite that way.

"Okay," I replied nervously. "Scoot back on the bed and let's get started."

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She lay back with her head on her pillow, and moved over toward the middle of the bed to give me some room. I glanced over at her as I folded the towels and washcloths. I noticed that her nipples were prominent on her small chest, and she was breathing fast. Her face was slightly flushed, and she clutched her hands below her chin while she watched me.

"Do you want me to take off the bandage now?" I asked her.

She looked at me wide-eyed, and nodded her head. She bent her leg for me, and I reached over to unwind the bandage from her thigh.

Oh my God, I thought to myself. Her skin felt even smoother and softer than I recalled from yesterday. Almost immediately, my erection began to rise. As I unwrapped the bandage, I couldn't help but notice that her gym shorts were very loose. I could see the bottom of the cheek of her ass. Unless she was wearing a pair of thong panties, a relatively new type I had only heard about but never seen, and a highly unlikely choice for a thirteen-year-old, she didn't seem to be wearing any underwear at all.

I threw the bandage onto the floor and grabbed the liniment. I poured a small amount into the palm of my hand, and rubbed my hands together. I started as I did the day before, rubbing the liniment into her thigh from the knee upwards. Again, I was afraid I might be receiving the wrong signals from this young girl, so, like the previous time, I stopped at mid-thigh, rubbed down to the inside and the outside of her leg, and pressed back to her knee. I did this five or six times without venturing close to her shorts, hoping for some encouragement from her.

As I massaged, I looked at her face. Unlike yesterday, she was looking down, watching me tend to her leg. Her eyes were very bright, and she was softly biting her lower lip. She looked up into my eyes, and my doubts were banished. She almost imperceptibly nodded, and then she smiled and put her head back against her pillow. On my next pass up her thigh, I allowed my hands to nearly wrap around her leg. Near the seam of her shorts, I let up on the pressure and gave in to the

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temptation of caressing her skin on her leg. I let my fingertips play on the outside of her leg as the palm of my other hand slowly, lovingly enjoyed the smooth, supple feel of her inner thigh, all the way down again to her knee. Her leg was small enough that, as I caressed her this way, my fingers were able to play along the back of her thigh at the same time.

As my hand moved down her leg, I could feel that she was slightly trembling in anticipation. Just like the day before, her chest was rising and falling with her fast breathing and there was a fine sheen of perspiration on her upper lip and her forehead. I straightened out her leg, and she immediately moved it away from her other leg. I massaged her thigh once more, this time moving my hands under the leg of her shorts. The fingertips of my right hand could feel moisture at the juncture, while my left hand moved underneath her shorts to caress the lower cheek of her tiny butt. I could feel the heat she was generating from her center, through my fingertips, into my brain, and directly to my cock. My fingers grazed down to the inside of her leg, then out from her shorts again, and down. As I did this, she moaned softly and spread her legs further apart. I couldn't take my eyes off the prize lying just beneath the material of her gym shorts as I ran my hand once more up her leg, softly this time, feeling the smoothness of the inside of her thigh. As I reached the juncture once again, I moved under the leg of her shorts and encountered her pussy for the first time. She bent her legs and spread them apart, then lifted up her hips to meet my fingers. By that time, the entire area around her pussy was soaked, including her shorts. The odor emanating from her was intoxicating, and I found myself moving up closer to her to take in more of that wonderful fragrance. My fingertips found her moist little pussy and began exploring. As I moved up her slit, her pussy lips parted and delivered their moisture to my fingers. My fingertips delved into the chasm of her center, reveling in the heat and the oily wetness. I could almost sense the taste of her through my fingertips. As I brushed across her tiny clit, she jerked and moaned once more.

Peripherally, I could see that she was clutching her hands on her boobs, squeezing them. I could feel that she had a very sparse amount of hair, and I pushed my fingers through until the little blonde hairs were tickling my hand as I cupped her mound. I then began the slow journey back down, into her slit again, to roll her clit between my index finger and my middle finger, causing her hips to rotate as if she was trying to capture my hand within her center. Her breath caught, and she gave over to the sensations washing over her.

“Ohhhhh, yes, Sean, that’s it, don’t stop,” she moaned.

I manipulated the tiny nub, standing upright like a soldier surrounded by a flood, then delved down to her tiny opening. I dipped a fingertip into her hole, then dragged it back up to play with her clit again. Two times, then three, my fingers made the journey from nub to opening, each time dipping further into her before returning to her pleasure point. On the fourth time, I slipped my middle finger all the way into her. My knuckles were resting against her as I rotated my finger within her. She was incredibly wet and hot, and as I twisted my finger, her hips bumped up and down, trying desperately to pull even more of my hand within her. I pulled slowly out, and then plunged back in again. She gasped, her eyes flew open, and she began to emit a soft keening sound. As I pulled my finger out of her and ran my fingertips through her gash back to her clit, she grasped my hand and held it tight against her nub, rubbing it up and down. Her back arched, and she began huffing and puffing. Her fingernails dug into my wrist as she experienced her first real orgasm.

She let go of my wrist as she slowly came down. She turned onto her side, facing me, and raised her legs up into a fetal position. She smiled and held her arms out to me. I lay down next to her and put my arms around her. She hugged me fiercely.

“Thank you, Sean. That was so wonderful. Mmmmmmm...” she murmured.

I lifted up her chin and bent down to kiss her. Her lips were amazingly soft and pliant as we kissed, then abruptly turned hungry.

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Instinctively, she parted her lips, and I slipped my tongue between them and gently touched the tip of her tongue with mine.

That was all it took to stoke the fire within her. Instinct seemed to take over. Her mouth opened wider, and she stuck her tongue all the way into my mouth in a fierce hunger I had not expected. Our tongues were wrestling each other, and she hung on tight to my sides as she rolled me over on top of her. We were laying together like a noontime shadow, my legs directly on top of hers, stomach to stomach, her small breasts crushed against my chest. I was just beginning to wonder if I was crushing her, when I felt her reach down and clutch at my ass, pulling my pelvis harder into hers, my cock a log running up her tummy. She spread her legs, and I slipped down between them. I could feel her heat directly on my rigid cock then, and the combination of the pre-cum from my tip and the flood from her pussy had soaked through my shorts as well as hers. As soon as she felt me pressing against her slit, she started rolling her hips, increasing and decreasing the pressure against her whole pussy.

Without breaking the kiss, I moved my hand from her shoulder, down her back, and across her waist onto her stomach. Her stomach muscles started quivering and jumping, almost as if I was tickling her. I moved my hand up under her shirt onto her ribcage. She squealed into my mouth, then grabbed my hand and moved it onto her unfettered breast.

My entire hand covered her small boob, the nipple trying to poke through my palm. I had never felt anything so sensuous, so soft, so pliant and alive. I knew at that moment that I was hooked forever on the sensation of enjoying a supple, willing female.

Without relinquishing my hold on her breast, I worked her t-shirt up with my arm and wrist. I was able to work it up over my hand, and up around her armpit and neck. I broke our kiss, and started in on her neck and throat, working my way down with my lips and tongue. I rolled a little to the side so I could reach her other breast, then dipped my head down and licked the underside of her left breast. She arched

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her back, trying to press her breast into my mouth. I licked her turgid nipple, all the while marveling at the feel and taste of her skin on my tongue. She moaned again, and began running her leg up mine while her hands found their way underneath my shirt, one shifting up and down my back and the other on my chest.

I sat up and tore my shirt off, then helped her to sit up while I removed her shirt. I gazed in wonder at her, looking for the first time on a live, nearly naked girl. The vision was stupendous. She lay back against her pillow, watching me, arms at her sides. I knew she was a little embarrassed, and she probably instinctively wanted to try to cover up, but she didn't. She was flushed and breathing heavily, but she looked a lot calmer than I certainly felt.

"God, you are so beautiful," I said to her. She blushed, and then smiled.

"No, I'm not," she said. "Look at me, I'm skinny and my boobs are too small."

"No, no, you're wrong," I assured her. "You are the most gorgeous creature I have ever seen. And your boobs are perfect, the best I've ever seen."

She smiled. "Oh, is that right, Mr. Smarty? And just how many have you seen?"

"Well," I said sheepishly, "these are the first I've actually seen live, but they're better than any pictures I've ever seen, too. Better than I imagined them."

She reached up to me then and said softly, "Show me how much you like them, Sean. I love it when you touch me."

She held me by the back of my neck and guided my lips to her breast once again. I lay down next to her, and pressed my hand against one small breast while I licked and sucked on the other. After a few minutes, I ran my tongue across her nipple, down the mound of her small breast, through the valley between her boobs, then up to the other nipple, which was standing at attention and awaiting my ministrations.

Playing the Game

I licked around the tip, and then sucked the nipple through my lips and into my mouth. I tried to get as much of her breast as I could into my mouth. I could feel her erect nipple on the back of my tongue as I sucked and licked. I heard Kayla moaning softly as she pressed the back of my head against her with one of her hands.

While I was engaged in the oral manipulation of her boobs, I allowed my hand to brush lightly down her ribcage and her stomach, to the elastic waistband of her shorts. I ran my hand under the waistband, then around across her hips to her ass, cupping her tight cheek. I brought my hand back up to her waist, and pushed her shorts off her hip, then slid my hand around her tummy to the other side, and pushed her shorts off that hip. She raised her ass up off the bed, and reached down to help me lower them down her legs, and then she kicked them off onto the floor. My fingertips gave her inner thighs butterfly kisses as I dragged them up her legs, causing them to spread apart as I approached her pussy once more. I cupped her mound with my hand, then took my middle finger and pressed it between her pussy lips, enjoying once again the heated flood of her juices as my fingers became coated.

Just as I dragged across her virginal opening, I felt her reach down to my shorts, clutching at the hardness there. She rubbed her small hand up and down my rigid cock, causing me to moan in unison with her. She tried to manipulate the button and zipper but was struggling with them. I took my hand off her mound and helped her to open my shorts. Together, we pushed off my shorts and underwear (*If only I had been thinking ahead like she had done*, I thought raggedly to myself), and she timidly, yet eagerly, touched the bare skin of my erect penis. She let her fingers explore gently for a moment, and then she grabbed it and pumped her hand, causing my hips to rock involuntarily. Apparently satisfied with my reaction, she then allowed her fingers to do a little exploring. She found the tip, and smeared the pre-cum that was oozing out across the head. She grazed her fingertips along the

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length, down to my balls. She lightly brushed her fingernails down along my sac, almost back to my asshole.

I very nearly lost it right then, but managed to hold on, vowing to myself to take my revenge on her most sensitive spots. As she lightly caressed my balls, I attacked her breast with renewed vigor, eliciting more moans of delight from her. I started plunging first one finger, then two, into her pussy, while occasionally dragging them out of her hole and up to the top of her slit to her engorged clit. I massaged her nipple in time to the ministrations against her clit, causing her to writhe and buck in pre-orgasmic arousal. She grabbed hold of the nearest firm object to help to ground herself in some sort of reality as the waves of sexual pleasure coursed through her. Unfortunately — or fortunately, if one must be honest — that object happened to be my cock, larger and harder than it had ever been in my life. She squeezed me as she approached her climax, which made the blood pulse and my cock jump in her hand in time to my rapid heartbeat. Finally, as I plunged my fingers back into her heedlessly, she shrieked, her hips bucked up hard against my hand, and she squeezed and pumped with her hand.

The sensations screaming in my brain were almost too much to accept. I was in danger of blacking out as my own hips pumped, creating even more friction on her hand as it surrounded my rampant cock. I grunted even as she shrieked, and I climaxed. And climaxed. And climaxed some more.

The cum pumped out of my cock, burst after burst, all over both of us. The first couple of spurts were so strong they projected semen onto her chin, her chest and boobs, and dribbled down onto her rumpled, sweaty sheets. Kayla's eyes flew open when she felt the first salvo, and she watched, wide-eyed, as I finished in her hand, until there was no more to give.

We both collapsed onto the bed, side by side, exhausted from our exertions. My arm was around her shoulder, and she turned and laid her head on my chest as we both waited for our breathing to regulate.

Playing the Game

Her fingers doodled in the mess on my stomach, rubbing the semen into my skin as if it were lotion. I raised my hand, still moist with her secretions, to my mouth and licked her juices off my finger. The taste was nothing like I had ever experienced before, and I wanted more. I scooped up some of the dripping white goo from her chin and from her breast, then pressed my fingers to her mouth. She closed her eyes and licked my fingers clean, then sucked each one gently. When she did this, I felt my spent prick twitch slightly.

Very quietly, I heard her say, "I've never done anything like this before."

"I know," I said. "Neither have I."

"Can we do it again sometime, Sean?" I heard a touch of worry in her voice, as if I would jump up and start blabbing to the whole school about how easy she was, or something. I kissed the top of her head and hugged her to me, delighting in the feel of a completely naked female body so close to mine, languid in the sensation of skin on skin.

"Don't you worry, Kayla. You're my first, best girl, and we'll keep it a secret, okay?"

I felt her smile against my chest, and she wrapped her arm around me and squeezed, mashing her delightful breasts against me. As I lay there, wondering at the odd turn that brought me to her bed, I might have felt the saline warmth of her tears against my skin.

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THE TREE

The next morning, I was scheduled to referee an under-eight boy's game. All during the preparations for the game, I kept on thinking of my morning with Kayla. It wasn't until kickoff that I was able to even begin to get my mind on the game. During the game, I felt a little disconnected from things, and afterward I almost went over to the two coaches and apologized. The game had ended in a 2-2 tie, so both coaches and all the players were happy. I opted to leave well enough alone, and ended up not saying anything to them.

Right after the game, I had to hustle over to the high school for team tryouts. I had played on the junior varsity soccer team my freshman year, and I had dreams of moving up to play varsity. It was a long shot, because our head coach usually only chose one freshman and a couple of sophomores for the varsity team, but I was determined to give it my best shot.

It seemed like there were about a hundred guys milling about on the practice field when I got there. I walked over to join a group of my fellow JV players, who were congregated near one post of the goal on the field, waiting for tryouts to begin.

Playing the Game

The coaches and the seniors on the varsity team divided everybody up into groups of five. There were circles of cones set up all around the field, and we had to work crossing passes in a star pattern among our circle of five. At the same time, we were to move counter-clockwise around the cones. The coaches were watching to see how we used our feet, both to move laterally and to trap and pass the ball. It was a fairly easy exercise for my buddies and me, but there were some kids who struggled. I could see, out of the corner of my eye, the coaches marking down comments on their clipboards. I concentrated on the ball, making sure it settled against my instep before I passed it off. I really wanted to make a good impression.

After that, the coaches put us through some conditioning tests, making us run the width of the field and back while dribbling a ball. Speed was a great advantage on the field, but speed without control was no good. We were being judged on our ball-handling skills as well as our speed and conditioning.

The last test they put us through was a shooting skill drill. Using both goals, they lined us up about twenty meters out from the nets. We were to make a crossing pass, leading the guy opposite us in line. That player, in turn, was to pass it back to us as we advanced toward the goal, using either a one-touch or a two-touch pass. Once we received the ball back, we were to take a shot on goal. We then rotated to the end of the other line, and waited our turn to go again.

I had three more days of tryouts before the first cut. We wouldn't find out the coaches' decisions concerning team makeup for a couple of days after that. By the time I was walking back to my bike after that first day, I was feeling confident I had done the best I could.

As I was bicycling home from the tryouts, I decided to ride by Jake and Kayla's house to see if anybody was home. Jake was bouncing a tennis ball against his garage door, playing an imaginary baseball game.

"Hey," I said as I rode up his driveway.

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"Hey," he replied as he whipped through a double-play, shortstop to second to first, against the garage door. "How was the soccer game?"

"Two-two tie," I said. I caught his liner off the panel of the door and spun it back toward him off the same panel. "How's Kay feeling?"

"Leg's pretty good, I guess. Better now than when she got up this morning. I think she's downstairs now, anyway, watching TV with Jaimie."

He threw the ball back at the garage door for me to catch. "Want to do something?" he asked.

"I guess," I answered. "What did you have in mind?"

"Come on, I'll show you something," he said. He reached for the ball, and put the ball and his baseball mitt into the basket on his bike, then climbed on. "Follow me. I found out something that I think you'll really like."

It sounded mysterious enough that he got my interest, so we pedaled off into the field behind his house, into the woods on the other side. We dropped our bikes down onto the ground, and he led the way along one of the many paths that kids of a dozen generations have made through the small patch of woods. He branched off the path and headed off toward the edge of the woods on the other side. Moving slowly through the woods, he came to a tree that had slats of wood nailed to it to make a crude ladder. Warning me to be quiet, he climbed easily up the tree trunk, and then used branches to climb a little further up. He motioned me up, so I clambered up until I was on a branch opposite the trunk from the one he was perched upon. He pointed in the direction of a house about thirty yards away, and leaned toward me around the trunk of the tree.

"What do you see?" he whispered.

I looked, trying to figure out what it was he was showing me, but I was stumped.

"Ummm... a house?" I asked.

"Yeah, idiot, a house. Whose house?"

Playing the Game

"The O'Toole house," I said. *Why is he asking me whose house this is? He knows as well as I do whose house it was.*

He looked at me as if I was the village dunce. "And who lives in the O'Toole house?" he asked, speaking slowly as if to a very dim child.

"Josh lives there," I said. Josh was another of our neighborhood gang, a good guy we both had been friends with since about the second grade.

"And?" Now Jake was getting just plain annoying.

"And..." The light bulb went on, and I felt just as dumb as Jake was thinking I was just then. "And Heather and Molly," we said together.

Of course. Heather and Molly were Josh's sisters. Heather was going to be a senior, seventeen years old and drop-dead gorgeous. She was a cheerleader, and one of the most popular girls at school. Molly, Josh's twin sister, was fifteen, just like us, and was a slightly younger version of Heather. I figured that Josh had to have been walking around his house with a perpetual boner for about the past three years, living with those two. He claimed, however, that they were just sisters to him, just as annoying as typical sisters were.

"So what are we looking at here?" I said to Jake.

"You see the window on the far left? That's Heather's room. The window on the right is Molly's. That window in between, the one you can see the mirror in, that's the bathroom they share."

"Yeah?" I said to him. "So what? The bedroom curtains are closed. How do you know?"

"Josh and I peeked into their rooms a couple of weeks ago," he said. "And just because the curtains are closed now doesn't mean they are always closed. Understand?"

I stared at him disbelievingly.

"It gets better," he whispered. "They never close the curtains in the bathroom. And the mirror you see just happens to be positioned advantageously in respect to the very branches in which we are perched," he finished with a smug little smile.

"Jake old pal," I said, "you are my new best friend."

"I thought I was your best friend already," he said.

"Well, you were, but you've just confirmed my good taste in best friends," I replied.

We made plans to meet later that night to check out the windows, and headed back to Jake's house. As we were riding back across the field from the woods, I couldn't help but notice (now that Jake had got me to thinking about windows and curtains) that Jaimie and Tara's bedrooms were at the back of their house, and they lived in a ranch house, so their windows were all on the ground floor.

The possibilities were staggering to a typical fifteen-year-old hormonally charged boy such as me.

Sometime after nine that night, Jake and I made our way back through the woods to the tree behind the O'Toole house. As quietly as we could, we climbed up the slats to the branches we had perched in that afternoon.

"Damn!" I heard Jake softly swear. "I meant to bring a pair of binoculars."

"That's okay, we're close enough for now," I said. I had to admit, though, binoculars would have been a great idea.

The mosquitoes were out in abundance, and Jake and I were getting bitten up sitting in the tree. There still was no activity in the windows we were watching. After about an hour, we both had had enough of branch sitting, and mosquito swatting, and dark house watching, so we gave it up and climbed back down. On the way back out of the woods, it occurred to us that maybe we should have called Josh to make sure they were home.

"Oh, well, so I'll call him tomorrow," said Jake.

We walked back across the field, and I glanced at Jaimie's house.

"Look!" I stopped Jake and pointed. Tara's curtain was drawn across the window, but there was a gap in Jaimie's. We quietly crept up closer to try to see into her room.

Playing the Game

Jackpot! Jaimie was there, sitting on her bed, brushing her hair. We could hear the faint sound of a record playing, and she was nodding her head in time to the music. She was wearing only a bra and panties, and her boobs stretched taut as she raised her arms to brush her hair.

"Oh, man, sweet!" Jake exclaimed. "Boy, would I like to get some of that."

"Why not ask her out, then?" I asked.

"I don't know," he whispered. "Maybe she's just too tight with my sister. I can't think that anything good could come of that."

"Aw, your sister's okay," I said.

"Easy for you to say, she's not your sister," he replied. I heard him sigh as he finally admitted, "I guess she's not so bad, but she's still a sister, you know?"

"Yeah, I guess," I said. Actually, I didn't know, since I only had brothers, but it was easier to just agree with him.

We watched as Jaimie got up and put on a robe, then left her room. When she came back in a few minutes later and hung up her robe, we could see she had changed into her nightie. She pulled back the bedspread and got in her bed, then turned out her light.

"Show's over," Jake said, and we started back toward his house.

"Hey, Jake, you want me to see if I can talk to Jaimie? Maybe I can see if she likes you, and then maybe you can get together with her."

"That's okay," he said. "I'll think about it. I don't know. Christ, why is this all so difficult? Oh, well, see you tomorrow." He headed into his house, head hanging down.

Yeah, Jake, I thought to myself, sometimes we really make it tough on ourselves.

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TRUTH OR DARE HEARTS

Two days later, Jake and I were over at his house playing on his Pong game in the basement. It was raining buckets outside, and we were bored. We heard the back door open, and Kayla and Jaimie came pounding down the stairs, laughing and shouting. They came bursting into the playroom and stopped suddenly when they saw us there. They obviously weren't expecting us to be downstairs. They were soaked through, hair plastered to their heads, and their T-shirts were nearly transparent. They both crossed their arms in front of themselves, and ran into the laundry room squealing. Jake and I started laughing and hooting.

"Come on, ladies, come out. Nothing to be afraid of out here. Come on!" shouted Jake.

"Hey, sissy girls, come on out! We promise not to stare too hard," I added.

We heard Kayla's muffled voice. "What are you doing here?"

"Just playing games. Come on out, we've got sodas. It's okay, I'm your brother, after all. It's not like I've never seen you naked before."

"I'm not naked. I'm also not seven anymore, brother dear."

Playing the Game

"So what, neither am I. It's okay, really," he insisted.

We could hear them talking to each other through the door.

"Turn the light out," said Jaimie, "and we'll come out."

Jake scrambled to his feet and turned off all the lights, but left the television on. He gave the girls the all clear.

The door opened just a crack so they could check to make sure we weren't fooling them, and then they came out and sat by us. They each had a towel to dry off with. Jaimie was using hers to fluff her hair, and Kayla had hers wrapped around her head. Jaimie kept on pulling at the front of her shirt, trying to pull the clinging material away from her boobs, very self-conscious about how wet her shirt was. Kayla, on the other hand, was pretty much unconcerned about it as she sat down next to me, though I thought I could detect the slightest trace of a blush on her face. The low light coming from the television set across the room gave us just enough light to see each other.

"Your leg's better, I see," I said to Kayla.

"Yes, it feels pretty good," she replied. "What are you guys doing?"

"Nothing much," said Jake. "Just sitting down here wishing the rain would stop. What were you guys doing?"

"Getting wet, unfortunately," said Jaimie. "And this was just from coming from my house to here!"

"So, what do you guys want to do?" asked Jake.

"I don't know. What do you want to do?"

I knew what Jake was thinking. He wanted to tell Jaimie that he wanted to rip her clothes off and jump her bones. He couldn't say it, though, so he just shrugged and tried to act nonchalant.

Kayla said, "How about playing Hearts? We could play Truth or Dare Hearts. Instead of keeping points, whoever ends up with the queen of spades has to do a Truth or Dare."

"Yeah, okay, why not?" We all agreed, so Jake opened the walk-in closet and found a deck of cards. We cut for the deal, and the first hand was dealt out. I had a great hand, and was able to pass off the

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queen of spades to Jaimie on my left. At the end of the hand, she was forced to eat the queen.

"Okay, Jaimie. Truth or Dare?"

"Ummm... Truth, I guess," she said.

With a smile on her face, Kayla said, "Truth, Jaimie. Have you ever French kissed a boy?"

It was Jaimie's turn to blush. "No," she said.

"Next deal!" cried Kayla. She was really getting into this game. I hoped it didn't backfire on her and get us both in trouble.

On the next hand, we passed to the right. I passed the ace of spades, the king of hearts, and the five of hearts. Jaimie passed me three diamonds, trying to void her hand. I didn't think I would be hurt, and play began. This time Jake ended up with the queen of spades. He chose *Dare*.

"Okay, Jake," I said with a grin. "Your Dare is to give Jaimie her first real kiss."

Jaimie looked as startled as Jake, but she was a good sport. Jake crawled over to her, put his arm around her shoulder, and kissed her on the mouth.

"No fair!" cried Kayla. "The Dare was a French kiss!"

Both Jaimie and Jake shot her a look, but turned back to each other. Jake reached out to her and kissed her again. We could see their mouths opening against each other, and Jaimie reached out to slide under Jake's arm to hold him for a longer kiss. When they stopped the kiss, they were both panting. Jake's shorts were tenting out from his sudden erection as he moved back to his spot on the floor. He looked a little shell-shocked as he sat back down, but quickly gathered his wits about him again, and shot me a quick grin.

"Let's play!" he said.

Jaimie lost the next hand, but it was a little suspicious. She played the king of spades over my nine, and Kay gave her the queen.

"Truth or Dare, Jaimie?" she asked as she played her card.

"Dare," she said defiantly.

Playing the Game

“Okay, here it is. Without using your hands, you have to pass this empty soda can from under your chin over to Jake, who has to grab it under his chin without the use of any hands.”

It seemed like a pretty innocent challenge, so Jaimie picked up an empty can and placed it under her chin. She leaned over toward Jake and tried to pass the can to him, but discovered that it was nearly impossible to do without rubbing up next to him. After several hilarious attempts at it, Jaimie’s nipples were visibly enlarged from rubbing against Jake, and Jake’s prick was stiff, once again tenting out his shorts. Finally, Jake ended up lying on the floor on his back, and Jaimie lay down practically on top of him before they were able to successfully pass the can. By this time, Kay and I were laughing so hard, we were rolling on the floor. Tears were tracing down both our cheeks, and our sides ached.

On the next deal, there was no passing of any cards. We had to play the cards we were dealt, and I had a loser of a hand. I ended up with the queen, which put a smile on Jake’s face.

“Okay, Seanster, what’s it to be?” he asked.

“Truth,” I said.

Jaimie jumped in with the question.

“Have you ever made out with a girl and done anything beyond kissing?” she asked with a big grin.

Here it is. I knew that, if I lost any more hands, I would have to go with *Dares*, because the next *Truth* question I would be asked would be to reveal the girl’s name, and I really did not want to do that.

“Yes, I have,” I said, “but that’s all I’ll say about it.”

“Awww, not fair,” said Jaimie, at the same time that Jake, looking startled at my answer, said, “Hey! How come I didn’t know about this?”

“Too bad, so sad,” I said. “Whose deal is it?” I asked, grabbing up the cards.

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On the next hand, Jake was forced to take the queen, even though he was really trying to make sure I got it. I knew he wanted the name of the girl.

"Dare," he said.

Kayla had a smug look on her face. "Take the person of your choice back behind the couch for five minutes. Nobody will peek, I promise. We'll come get you as soon as the five minutes are up."

If she expected him to be upset, she was disappointed. I had a feeling that Kayla had already figured out that Jake really liked Jaimie, and I was beginning to think maybe Jaimie was also interested in Jake. At any rate, Jake stood up and without hesitation held out his hand to Jaimie. They walked over to the small space behind the couch and lay down on the floor. Almost immediately, we could hear murmurs and the liquid sound of passionate kissing.

Kayla turned to me with an expectant look on her face, and reached over and pressed her soft lips to mine. I put my arms around her and pulled her tightly to me, and our mouths opened to each other. Our tongues met and tangled as we felt ourselves practically floating down to lie on the floor together.

Just as things were heating up, Kayla let go of me, looked at her watch, and called out "Time!" She jumped up onto the couch and looked over the back, hoping to catch her brother in a compromising position. Jake and Jaimie sat up, looking a little flustered, and came back out to the game. Jake was walking a little funny, and Jaimie's nipples were very prominent through her bra and shirt.

"Somebody deal the cards," said Jake as he sat back down. At this point, I think both he and Jaimie were going to try to lose. Unbeknownst to them, Kayla and I were just as willing to lose as they were.

Just my kind of luck, I got the queen.

"Dare," I said quickly.

Playing the Game

Jake looked a little disappointed he couldn't weasel the name of the girl from me, but then he realized what possibilities could lie ahead with my *Dare*.

Thinking they were giving us a punishment and themselves a treat, Jaimie said, "Your Dare is to take Kayla into the closet, lights off, for five minutes."

"Make it ten minutes," suggested Jake with a cheesy grin, to which Jaimie readily agreed.

Feigning reluctance, I stood up and grabbed Kayla by the hand and headed for the closet.

"Be sure to knock before you open the door," I said.

Jake looked dubious, but said, "Sure, whatever you say. Have a nice time keeping my kid sister company. Hah!"

As soon as we closed the closet door, we could hear giggling and shuffling noises coming from the room. Kayla moved up very close to me and whispered, "We've got ten minutes."

We fell to the floor and immediately our mouths and tongues found each other. As we kissed, I ran my hand up under her shirt to her small breast. As I squeezed her, she moaned quietly into my mouth, and sucked my tongue into her mouth. Her hands found their way under my shirt onto my back as my fingertips lifted up the bottom edge of her bra and caressed the soft skin of her bare breast. I teased her nipple with my fingertips, causing her to hug me tighter to herself and wrap her leg around mine. She rubbed her hip into my crotch and against my rigid cock as I manipulated her erect nipple.

It was a dangerous game, with her brother in the next room, but I was certain he was involved in his own pleasures. I knew this was a chance worth taking, as long as we didn't take it too far. We didn't want to be struggling to put clothes back on at the end of our ten-minute limit, so we tempered our enthusiasm by touching and caressing each other under our clothes. I longed to taste the flesh of her swollen breast and to suckle at her erect nipple, but knew I couldn't risk the chance of being caught.

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All too soon, there was a knock at the door. Kayla frantically reached up under her shirt to reposition her bra as I stood up, brushed off my shirt, and desperately willed my cock to deflate. As Jake opened the door, the timid light from the television set seemed bright after the darkness of the closet. Jaimie's hair was tousled, and Jake's eyes were slightly glazed. I was in no position to smirk, however, as I could not stand up very straight without revealing how painfully erect my cock was.

"Whose turn is it to deal?" Jaimie asked. "Never mind, I'll just do it."

She grabbed the cards, and without waiting for us to sit down, began to deal out the deck.

"Oh, never mind the cards," she suddenly said. She looked up at us with shining eyes. "Kayla, Truth or Dare?"

Kayla looked at her a little fearfully before answering.

"Dare," she said quietly.

"Show us what you and Sean were doing in the closet," said Jaimie.

"Why?" asked Kayla, showing a little irritation with her friend. "Why do you want to know?"

"I just do," said Jaimie. "I want to know if you two were fooling around in there."

"Oh, yeah? Well, what about what went on out here? Are you going to tell us about that?" Kayla retorted. "I know how hot you think my brother is."

She immediately regretted her words. Jaimie looked like she had been hit in the stomach, and Jake was standing there a little shocked himself. He never expected to hear that Jaimie might have the same thoughts about him that he had over her, after all.

Jaimie accepted Kayla's challenge, though, by standing up and walking over to stand directly in front of Jake. She snaked her arms around his neck and brought his face down to hers, and kissed him hard. After his initial shock, he wrapped his arms around her waist

Playing the Game

and pulled her tight against him, bringing a groan from Jaimie as they kissed. They slowly lowered themselves until they were kneeling, still locked together in a soulful kiss. They finally parted, breathless. Jaimie looked over at Kayla and I as if to say, *Well?* Then she bent back to Jake. They lay down together on the floor in front of the couch, and resumed their kissing.

Kayla shrugged her shoulders, looked at me, and raised her eyebrow. I sat down on the floor and pulled her down into my lap, wrapped my arms around her, and lifted my mouth to hers. As we touched, I felt her lips part and her tongue snake out to lick around my lips, and then enter my mouth to rub along my teeth. I glanced over at Jake and saw him clutching Jaimie's breast outside her T-shirt as they continued kissing. I lowered Kayla to the floor and hovered over her, then stretched out and pressed my full length against her. I was unwilling to do more with an audience in the room, but she sensed my hesitation. She had seen Jake and Jaimie, too, so she felt no hesitation or uncertainty. She grabbed my arm and moved it from around her waist, then held the back of my hand and moved it onto her breast and pressed it hard against her. I reflexively squeezed her through her shirt and bra, and could still feel her nipple rise into the palm of my hand. She moaned into my mouth as we kissed and caressed each other, and all thoughts of Jake and Jaimie escaped me for a time.

I moved my hand from her small breast down and back to the globes of her tight ass, and pressed her against me, rubbing her mound against my erection. She moved her hips back and forth, creating excruciating pressure on both of us, as our breathing got heavier.

After what seemed like a very short amount of time, we heard a door slam upstairs. It brought all four of us out of our euphoria, and we all looked around as reality came crashing back on us. I saw Jake pull his hand out from underneath Jaimie's shirt as they sat up, and Kay jumped up and straightened her clothes out as she headed over to the light switch.

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We started making some noise until we heard Mrs. Lehigh at the top of the stairs.

"Are you kids down there?" she called out.

"Yes, Mom," shouted Kayla. "Jake and I are here with Jaimie and Sean. We're playing cards." She looked at us and grinned.

"That's nice, dear," said Mrs. Lehigh as she turned from the doorway. "Dinner will be ready soon."

"What time is it?" Jaimie suddenly said. She glanced at the star-shaped wall clock hanging over the television. "Oh my God, I was supposed to be home twenty minutes ago!"

She hustled around, helping us to straighten up the room, then headed up the stairs.

"Wait up, Jaimie, I'll walk out with you," I said. I followed her up the stairs, then called back down, "Thanks, guys, for a fun afternoon!" All four of us chuckled, our little private joke.

Jaimie and I walked outside. It had stopped raining, and the sky was clearing. As we walked toward her house, I put my arm around her shoulder. She looked startled, and then relaxed and accepted it.

"So, I take it you like Jake?"

"Yeah. I've been hoping he would notice me. I only live next door to him, and have since I was six. You'd think he never saw me before today," she said quietly.

"Hey, it's nothing to worry about. He's a guy, and guys are pretty unsure about things like that. We really, truly don't have a clue about girls, you know."

"Not you. You seemed to pick up on Kayla's mood pretty quickly," she said.

"Don't believe everything you think you're seeing," I said. "Really, I'm just as clueless as Jake, most of the time. About girls, anyway."

By this time, we were in front of her house. I let her go, and turned to continue on home.

"Sean?"

I turned around and walked back to her.

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"Thanks."

"For what?" I asked.

"For not making fun of me, or of Jake... you know."

"It ain't nothing," I said to her. I'm not sure I followed her, but if she thought I deserved some thanks, I wasn't about to disregard it.

"See you tomorrow, Sean." With that, she reached up on her toes and gave me a sisterly kiss on the cheek. She smiled happily, and then ran up the stairs to her door.

I stood there for a moment, trying to figure it out. Finally, I had to admit to myself that I couldn't.

Girls. Go figure.

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LORI AND DAVEY AND KIP

The next day, I got a call from the lady who was in charge of assigning referees to the soccer games sponsored by our soccer association.

"Hello, Mrs. Dailey," I said. "Is there going to be a schedule change?"

"No, Sean," she answered. "I got a call from one of the parents at a game you officiated at last week that I need to talk to you about."

"Oh?" I asked with some apprehension. "Did I do something wrong?" I was thinking about that game that my concentration was not on after my experience with Kayla.

"No, Sean, not at all. This was one of your under-eight games from a couple of weeks ago. It seems you impressed some of the parents. This particular mom wanted your name and phone number to ask if you would be interested in giving some private soccer lessons to her children. Since it's not our policy to just give out telephone numbers, I told her I would call you and give you her name and number, and if

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you were interested, you would call her instead. She agreed to that, so I have her information if you would like it."

"That's great, Mrs. Dailey, I really appreciate it."

"You know, Sean, usually when I get calls from parents it's to complain about one of our officials. It's a pleasure to be able to pass along one of the few compliments we receive. You should feel good about the job you've been doing out there, and I for one really appreciate the work you've done."

"Aw, Jeez, Mrs. Dailey, you're embarrassing me, but thanks."

"You're very welcome, Sean," she said. "And thank *you*."

She gave me the information. The call was from a Mrs. Wilkinson, and she was interested in beginner lessons for her seven-year-old and eight-year-old boys. I called her and introduced myself, and we chatted for a few minutes.

"So, Sean, you were the referee at my son's game. I was really impressed with how well you were able to communicate with the kids. Kip is seven and his brother Davey is eight, and they both say they want to learn how to play better. Would you be interested in helping them? I'll be glad to pay you by the hour."

"Sure, Mrs. Wilkinson, I'll be glad to help them."

And so arrangements were made. The Wilkinsons lived about half a mile from my house, so I agreed to meet the boys that afternoon at their house to start their lessons.

After lunch, I loaded up my gear in a backpack and rode my bike over to their house. I rang the bell, and a lady answered the door.

"Yes? Oh, hi Sean. I remember you from my sons' game. I'm Lori Wilkinson. Come on in and meet the boys."

I was a little shocked that this person was really Mrs. Wilkinson. She looked to be barely into her twenties. She was about 5'6" tall, slender, with light brown hair cut just to her shoulders. She was very tan and looked thin, but quite fit. The halter-top she wore accentuated her small waist and made her top look bigger than it probably was, and the white shorts made her tan legs look like they were about a

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mile long. If she hadn't introduced herself, I would have assumed she was a college-age babysitter or something.

I followed her back into the house. In the kitchen, she offered me some lemonade, and then poked her head out the patio door.

"Kip!" she called. "Davey! Come in for a minute, boys!"

I heard them before I saw them. They were yelling and tumbling and practically doing somersaults over each other on their way into the house. They stopped for a second when they saw me by the kitchen table, and Mrs. Wilkinson introduced us.

"Are you going to teach us soccer?" asked Davey.

"You were the referee at my game," said Kip at the same time.

"Yes and yes," I answered. "Do you want to learn?"

"Yeah!" they both yelled. "I'm gonna play for the Chicago Sting!" shouted Davey.

"Oh yeah? Well, I'm gonna play for... for... the *Cubs*!" yelled Kip.

"You dope, the Cubs play baseball, not soccer," sneered Davey.

"Not by the time I'm playing for them, they won't be," insisted Kip.

"All right, boys, enough! Grab your soccer gear, and don't forget your shin guards, and follow Sean, all right? And listen to what he says, and no smarting off to him. He's the boss. Got it?" Mrs. Wilkinson pinned them both with a stern eye. "No trouble from you two hoodlums, okay?" she added.

"Okay!" they shouted in unison. And off they went to collect their gear.

Mrs. Wilkinson watched them go, and then turned to me.

"They're good boys," she said. "Just a little rambunctious. They'll listen to you. They really like to play soccer, and I think they really want to learn."

"Don't worry, Mrs. Wilkinson, we'll be fine. I like little kids, and your boys look like they know how to have fun. We'll have a good time, I know we will."

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"Thank you, Sean. And please, call me Lori." She poured us both a little more lemonade while we waited for the boys to come back.

* * * * *

I was right about Kip and Davey. They were very active little boys and we had a lot of fun. They were also happy to listen to what I had to say, as long as I didn't talk too much. A lot of soccer is learned by kicking and dribbling, not from lectures, so the boys and I had a great time at our first lesson working on basics. By the end of the first lesson, they were actually passing the ball pretty much in the direction they wanted it to go, and were running ahead of me as we made our way from the park back to their house. The kids were passing the ball back and forth and staying about five feet from each other, as I had taught them.

When we got to their house, they opened the door and burst in, shouting and yelling to their mother about their lesson. Lori came out from the back of the house and poured us all more lemonade as she listened to their excited chatter about all they had learned. Every once in a while, she would glance up at me and give me a big smile.

Finally, she clapped her hands and said, "Okay, boys, way to go. Everybody upstairs now, and wash your hands and faces. You guys are filthy!"

Kip and Davey slammed down their glasses and ran up the stairs, in constant motion. Lori refilled my glass and reached for her purse.

"Thank you so much, Sean. I really appreciate the time you took with them. I know they can be a handful sometimes."

"They're great kids, Lori," I said. "They're enthusiastic, they're friendly, and they really are interested in learning how to play soccer. They may be a lot of work, but they seem to be a lot of fun, too."

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"They are a lot of work, especially for a single mom. But you're right, they are fun. Anyway," she said, handing me the money, "here's for today. Can you come back tomorrow?"

"Sure, and thanks for letting me work with them," I said. We walked to her front door, and I yelled up the stairs to the boys. "See you tomorrow, guys! Good job!"

"Bye, Sean!" "See you tomorrow, Sean!"

"Goodbye, Sean. And thank you for taking such good care of my little guys." She touched my arm lightly as she said goodbye. I hopped on my bike and rode home, turning back to wave as I rode down the street. Lori was there, in her doorway the whole time, watching me ride away.

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UNTIED SHOES

When I got home, I took a shower and grabbed something to eat. I had another game to work, so I headed over to the soccer fields. I was working as a line judge for a girl's under-sixteen game. Working as a line judge was easy. Plus, since I was only working half the field, I could talk a little with some of the kids on the teams while they were on the sidelines. Since both teams, the Sting Rays and the Kickin' Chicks, were from our school, it was a friendly game, with the girls on both sides just as ready to joke with their opponents as try to steal the ball from them. Molly O'Toole was a midfielder on the Sting Rays team, and I saw Josh and his mom sitting in the bleachers watching the game.

After the game, Josh came up to me and said, "Sean, a bunch of us are going to the Dairy Queen. Want to come along and hang out?"

"Sure," I said. "Who all is going?"

"Oh, me and Shayna and Molly and Tessa and Jen and Sam and Toby and maybe some others. The girls want to shower and clean up from the game, so they are going to meet us there in about an hour."

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"Sounds good. Maybe I'll swing over to Jake's house to see if he wants to come, too," I said.

"Okay, great. I'll see you there, then," he said. He ran to catch up to his mom and his sister.

Shayna Gallagher was Josh's girlfriend, a rough-and-tumble girl who played soccer with abandon, heedless of injury. She had only been playing for about a year, but she had already earned a bit of a reputation as a player to be careful around. She would knock you down and run right over you without a glance. On the other hand, she would take a knockdown from an opponent without a second thought, considering it all a part of the game. Most other girls around our age tended to take rough treatment on the soccer field almost personally, instead of adopting Shayna's *laissez faire* attitude. She had bright red hair that she kept cut short, and was attractive in a tomboyish kind of way.

Molly, like her older sister Heather, was a real Irish beauty, with long, curly red-gold hair. I've heard people call her hair color strawberry blonde, and I guess that's an accurate description. She was on the junior varsity cheerleading squad during our freshman year, and was looking forward to joining her sister on the varsity squad this year. She was tall and slender, and looked really good in her letter sweaters and pleated skirts.

Tessa Navarrone was Molly's best friend, and was her physical opposite. Tessa was short and dark, and looked slightly overweight (a mistake her opponents on the playing field often made, to their dismay), with coarse black hair. She was a bulldog on the soccer field though, playing at the keeper position. She had two special attributes as a goalkeeper: she could punt the ball into the opponent's half of the field, and she was steadfast in her defense of a breakaway or a penalty kick. She tallied more shutouts than anyone else I had ever heard about around our area. She would often use her loud voice to move her defensive teammates around, or to rally her team to greater efforts, taking a leadership role on the defensive side.

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Jen Davies and her boyfriend, Sam Loggins, were both a year younger than the rest of us. Jen played forward for the Kickin' Chicks, and was their leading scorer. She was tall and gangly, excruciatingly thin, and could pump her long legs fast enough to leave everyone around her in her dust. I thought her ball handling skills were only average, but her speed made her a formidable player. She and Sam had been going together just since the spring, but all summer long you never saw one without the other being nearby. Sam was also very tall, well over six feet, and as a freshman was considered to be the future star of our high school basketball team.

Toby Mueller was the runt of the group, a practical joker and Energizer bunny. I always told him he was a perfect Ritalin kid, and he never disagreed. I thought he was as manic as he was so people wouldn't care quite as much about how small he was, and it mostly worked. He was smaller than Jaimie's sister Tara, even though he was fifteen like most of the rest of us. He even had to show his school ID when he went to a PG-13 movie. And in a bit of a perverse twist, I knew he really had a serious thing about Jen. Just the thought of six-foot Jen walking around with tiny Toby was enough to make me bust a gut. However, I kept his secret to myself, and didn't laugh even when he told me about his feelings for her.

I hopped on my bike and raced over to Jake's house. He was home, in the basement playing a game of Pong.

"Come on," I urged. "No time to waste. Let's go, now!"

I grabbed the controller out of his hand and threw it down, and practically pushed him up the stairs and out his back door.

"Grab your bike and follow me," I yelled as I took off across the field behind his house.

"Sean! Wait up!" I could hear him struggling to catch up to me as I dropped my bike at the edge of the woods.

"Come on," I yelled. "You're going to owe me big time for this!"

He finally rode up, out of breath, and I headed into the woods with Jake at my heels. I turned and put my finger to my lips, silently

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indicating to him to be quiet, as we approached the ladder on the tree behind the O'Toole house. We climbed up to our perches, and I pointed toward the bathroom window.

We didn't have to wait long. After a few minutes, a lovely and completely naked Molly stepped from the shower and into our view in the mirror. Her breasts were high and tight on her chest as she raised her arms to wrap a towel around her wet hair. We could just see a shadow of her reddish blonde pubic hair as she moved across our field of vision. We watched her take another towel off a shelf and wrap it around her, and she opened the door and stepped out of the bathroom.

Since the curtains to her room were still closed, Jake and I scrambled down and out of the woods to our bikes.

"Did you see that!" Jake exclaimed. "Un-fucking-believable! How did you know she would be there?"

I told him about the soccer game, and Josh's invitation, as we climbed back on our bikes and started back across the field.

"All right, I'm there! Let me just let my mom know where we're going, and I'll be right back out," he said as he dropped his bike and headed into his house.

We rode together over to the Dairy Queen. Toby, Sam, Jen, and Josh were already there, sitting around two picnic tables set up behind the building. Jen and Sam were holding cones and sitting together, and Toby and Josh were holding the other table for the group. Jake, Josh, and I went in and ordered, and by the time we got back out, the rest of the group had arrived. Jake looked at Molly, and immediately turned red and looked away. In my mind's eye, I could see her, as she was just a few minutes ago, damp and fresh as she stepped from her shower. I knew that Jake was thinking the same thing. Luckily, Molly and Tessa ran into the store, along with Toby and Shayna and Josh, to place their orders without noticing Jake's discomfort. By the time they came out with their ice cream, we were all back to our usual rowdy selves again.

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Sam, Jen, Josh, Shayna, and Toby were sitting at one table, and the rest of us were draped around the other one as we indulged in the delights that only can be had on a late summer day in the sunshine. Molly and I were on one side of the table, and Tessa and Jake were across from us.

"Hey, Sean," said Tessa, "I hear you're giving soccer lessons."

"Yeah," I said. "Where did you hear that?"

"I heard it," said Molly. "I baby-sit for Mrs. Wilkinson sometimes, and she asked me if I knew you."

"Wow," interrupted Toby as he hopped up onto our tabletop from his seat. He squatted down so that he was nearly eye level with us. "And she hired you anyway?"

We all laughed, and Tessa pushed him off our table. "Back where you belong, Monkey Boy," she said.

"Where I belong," he said, crouching on the ground, looking up at Tessa and batting his eyes, "is in your lap, sampling your considerable charms."

"Here, sample this," she shot back at him, flipping him the finger.

"See?" he said, standing and turning to his companions at the other table. "Completely and utterly charming." He shrugged and sat back down. Everybody at both tables threw wadded up napkins at him.

"What do you know about the Wilkinsons?" I turned to Molly.

"Well, you know Davey and Kip, right?" I nodded. "They're good boys," she continued, "but boy, are they ever active. I think Mrs. Wilkinson just has me come over so she can relax by herself for awhile and not worry about her kids."

"She told me she was a single mom. What happened to Mr. Wilkinson?" I asked.

"I don't know for sure," she said. "All I know is that he died, but I don't know what happened. She really misses him, though. Sometimes while I'm giving the boys a bath, I can hear her crying in her bedroom. It's really sad."

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"Boy, I didn't know any of that. I'll have to watch my mouth," I said.

"How often are you going over there?" asked Tessa.

"She wants me to come every day I can until school starts," I said. "So, unless it rains or something, I'll be there just about every afternoon for an hour or so."

"That's really great," Molly said. I felt her slide a little closer, until our legs were just barely touching. "Creating future soccer stars, I present to you, Sean Porter, Instructor of the Year!" She patted me on the back. Everybody applauded, with Toby and Jake adding whistles and cheers, while I bowed in mock humility as I sat there.

The sun was starting to go down and it was cooling off. We all split up, and Jake and I rode back to his house. As we rolled up to his driveway, Jaimie and Kayla came out of Jaimie's house. They stopped when they saw us, and put their heads together for a moment before coming down to us.

"Hey, Jake, you want to come over and watch TV?" asked Jaimie.

Jake looked over at me inquisitively. I gave him a small, quick nod.

"Sure," he said. He put his bike away and walked with Jaimie to her house.

"Do you want to come in for awhile and hang out?" asked Kayla, a small nervous smile on her face.

"Okay," I said. I propped my bike up against their garage. Kayla and I went into her house through the back door, and down the stairs into the basement. Kayla deliberately left the lights off while she turned on the television.

"Do you want something to drink?" she asked.

"Sure, anything is fine," I said.

She ran back upstairs, and was on her way back down in a few minutes with a tray with cold sodas and glasses of ice.

We sat together on the floor, leaning against the couch, and watched television for a few minutes while we drank our sodas. I was so nervous that I had no idea what we were watching, and I thought

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Kayla must have felt the same. I could hear her breathing heavily next to me. Almost by tacit agreement, we both put down our empty glasses at the same time and turned to look at each other. I stared into her deep eyes for a few moments, and then put my arm around her shoulder and pulled her to me.

We moved in slow motion as we leaned toward each other, our faces getting closer and closer, until I tilted my head and our lips touched softly. We pressed together harder as we kissed, until we could no longer hold the chaste kiss we began with. Our lips opened against each other, and our tongues met in the middle. She won the first battle, and her tongue invaded my mouth, tasting and exploring along my cheeks, my teeth, the roof of my mouth, and back toward my throat. She then sucked in, drawing my tongue into her mouth, and acquiesced as I explored her mouth, from lips to throat and cheek to gums.

She moaned softly, and I think I did, too. Without any warning, my clothes began to feel tight and confining. Kayla must have felt the same, because she was reaching for the hem of my t-shirt and pulling it up so she could run her hands on the bare skin of my chest and back. It seemed like a good idea, so I stopped kissing her long enough to grab the hem of her t-shirt and lift it off her, as well. We both threw the shirts back behind us and fell back into each other's arms, resuming our heated kisses. As I reached around her and brought my hand up to her small breast, I kissed and licked my way from her lips to her ear, then down her neck. I could detect her fast pulse as I nuzzled the hollow of her soft throat. My fingers reveled in the pliant softness of her breast as I hefted her mound in the palm of my hand before moving up to feel her rising nipple. I enjoyed the feeling of her nipple filling and rising in my palm before playing my fingertips across to her other breast and hefting it the same way. As I palmed her other nipple, once again feeling it expand as I held it, she pressed her chest into my hand, throwing her head back in pleasure. I dropped my lips to her breast, taking the nipple between my teeth before sucking on her tip,

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all the while playing with the other small boob. She was starting to gasp for air as the surge of pleasure moved through her nerve endings into her brain, and I could feel her legs start to squeeze together involuntarily as the sensations made their connection from her breasts to her pussy.

It was enough of an invitation for me. I was young, horny, and inexperienced and terribly anxious to get to the main event, so to speak, rather than, as I have since learned, enjoying the journey. I popped the snap of her denim shorts and pulled down the zipper before reaching down and cupping her mound over her soaked cotton panties. She groaned as I touched her, and she reached down and palmed my rigid cock through my shorts, rubbing her hand up and down my length. I worked my fingers under the elastic of her panties, down through her sparse hair and directly into her slit, searching for her hole. When I parted her pussy lips, I released a flood of her moisture, coating my fingers and soaking into her panties. Her legs jerked open and her hips bumped up as I found her vagina, and twisted a finger into her. The constriction of her shorts, combined with her natural tightness, prevented me from working more than half my finger into her, so I pulled it out. She groaned in disappointment, until she felt me tickle her as I slid up to diddle her clit. Her hips started gyrating and her stomach muscles twitched in sympathy, her breath was hitching in and out, and a fine sheen of sweat had broken out on her body. She clutched at my cock as she climbed toward her first release, wheezing and arching her back as she came.

It was a quick and sudden release for her. She collapsed back against the couch, and then slid down until she was lying on the floor. I sat up and knelt down next to her. I reached for her waist, and tugged at her shorts. She lifted up her butt so I could slide them down, and her underwear came off with them. I unsnapped my own shorts and pulled them off, so we could both be naked next to each other. I lay down next to her and snaked my arm behind her neck. She rolled over and put her head on my chest. I bent down and kissed the top of

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her head while she stared, fascinated, at my still painfully erect cock. She touched the moisture leaking out of the tip with her fingers, and spread it around the head of my cock, causing it to twitch in anticipation. She caressed up and down its length, feeling how the soft skin contrasted with the hardness of the musculature beneath, and delved down to explore my balls. My aching cock pulsed with the beating of my heart, and her explorations were heating me up. I ran my hand from her shoulder down her back and onto her small ass, amazed at the smooth skin I felt there. I reached further down, running my fingers through her crack, until I brushed across her tiny asshole and down into her slit from behind. She separated her legs again for me, as she spread more of my pre-cum around with her fingers on my cock. She grabbed me and squeezed as I fingered her pussy. I gently pushed her over onto her back and rolled on top of her. She spread her legs apart, and I slid down between them, the tip of my cock resting against her clit. I bumped my hips at her, connecting with her clit, and she pressed up toward me, trying to increase the contact.

My cock slipped down her flooding slit to the virginal opening of her vagina. I felt an increase of heat and pressure as the sensitive head of my missile encased itself in the opening petals of her folds and the silky walls of her tunnel. Suddenly, she pushed up at my hips with her hands, and said softly, "No, Sean, we can't. I don't want to get pregnant."

I kissed her soft lips as I lifted my hips off her and whispered, "Okay, Kayla, I'm stopping. I won't go inside you, I promise. Don't worry, I won't do anything you don't want to do. All you have to do is say 'Stop' and I'll stop. Trust me, Kay, I don't want to do anything that might hurt you."

She looked at me for a moment, worry in her eyes, then nodded slowly and said, "Okay, Sean, I trust you."

I slid down so my cock was removed from her open lips, and took her left breast into my mouth. My hand, at the same time, moved down her body until I found her clit. My fingertips played with it,

creating another wave of pleasure that coursed through her. I licked and bit first one turgid nipple, then the other, before licking my way down her tummy. I kept on sliding down until I was resting between her outstretched legs. My chin was on the floor as I stuck out my tongue and ran my tip down her slit, from top to bottom, directly tasting her for the first time. I tried to pay attention to the body language she was using, repeating things that seemed to make her jump or moan, and allowing her hands to guide my mouth to her pleasure points. While I was lapping up her moisture and licking around her inflamed clit, first one, and then two fingers, were plumbing her depths. She took me easily, her oily wetness easing the passage of my fingers into her. Each time I stroked into her with my two fingers, she lifted her hips up and churned them from side to side. Her movements made my tongue and lips rub back and forth across her sensitive tissues, which in turn created more movement in her hips.

Suddenly she screeched, and her whole body tensed as her orgasm washed over her unexpectedly. She grabbed my head and pulled my mouth hard onto her as she came, then collapsed back, still holding the back of my head. I gave her a few more licks, marveling in the taste difference as she came, feeling her twitch each time. Finally, she pulled me up to her, and hugged me to her breast as the waves of pleasure within her slowly subsided.

I rolled off her, leaving a slimy trail of my own pre-cum across her thigh as I lay down beside her, holding her close to me.

She sighed and opened her eyes, looking up at me with a small smile.

"That was unbelievable," she said softly. "How did you know what to do?"

"You were guiding me," I said. "You showed me exactly what you liked, so that's what I kept on doing."

"Well, it worked," she said. "I never thought that anyone would want to put their mouth there, but now I understand."

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With that, she bent down and touched my steely cock once again, nearly sending me over the edge. She softly rubbed the head with her fingertips, and looked up at me.

"Do you want me to try it?" she asked softly.

I groaned just thinking about it. "You might kill me if you don't," I said.

She smiled and looked back at what her fingers were doing. She started to stroke me up and down, her fingers damp from my exudations. My hips contributed to the movement as the excruciating pleasure flowed within me. I watched as she tentatively stuck her tongue out to taste me. When the tip of her tongue touched me, I jerked, causing the head of my aching cock to press against her tongue and lip. She naturally opened, allowing the head to slide between her lips, as her tongue continued to pass around the shaft, just below the ridge. I could feel her teeth lightly grazing along my sensitive skin as she took more of my rigid pole into her mouth. She worked her tongue and mouth up and down, sucking and licking, as her hand stroked me from my balls to her lips. I knew I would not last long as I felt the contractions start deep in my groin.

"Kayla," I squeaked with a panicky voice, "I'm going to... ahhhh..."

I never got to finish the sentence as my orgasm hit me. I bucked just as she was lifting off my cock, and the head slipped back into her mouth as I creamed. Her eyes opened wide in shock when the first wave landed in her mouth, and she jerked away from me as I contracted, pulsed, contracted again, and spewed several streams of cum straight up in the air. The second spurt hit her in the face before she could move out of the way, causing her to squeak in surprise. She kept on pumping me with her tiny fist as I came, unconsciously milking me for all I had. She watched, amazed, as the spurts grew steadily smaller, until I finally collapsed back, breathless and sated. She licked her lips, cleaning off the cum from her face with her fingers and licking them clean, as she stroked me. I finally had to grasp her

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hand and stop her from manipulating me as my cock began to shrink back.

"Wow, that was pretty spectacular," she said in wonder. "Does that much always come out?"

"No, not always," I panted. "I guess you made me pretty horny today, Kay."

She looked pleased with herself, but then she frowned and glanced down.

"Sean," she said haltingly, "I'm sorry I didn't let you... you know..."

"Hey," I said, lifting up her chin and wiping stray drops of my semen off her face, "we never have to do anything you don't want to do, you know that."

"I know, and I want to do it, but ... I'm afraid of... you know..."

"Don't feel uncomfortable about it," I insisted. "I'm speaking from intense personal experience here, Kay. Sure, I really, really would like to do it with you some time, but I can wait. Especially if you'll do what you did tonight," I said with a smile.

She giggled, and her small, delectable boobs quivered a little. I felt my cock twitch back to life at the sight. "You did seem to enjoy it a lot," she chuckled.

"I enjoyed it all a lot, and I think you did, too," I said as I hugged her tightly.

She nodded in agreement as she leaned against me, and then she knelt and began searching for her clothes.

"We'd better get dressed," she said as she turned away from me and reached for her shirt. Her tight little ass was sticking up in the air as she knelt there, and I just couldn't resist. I leaned over and gave her pussy one last, long, loving lick with my tongue, savoring her taste again.

"Mmmm," she sighed, "you really are bad for me..."

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She leaned back onto me a little, enjoying the contact for just a moment more before standing and moving away from me. She looked down at me and saw that my dick was standing up at attention again.

"Sean, you are not to be believed!" she said. She knelt back down and held on to my hard cock as she gave it a tender kiss, and then stood again. "That's all for now, you bad boy. Get dressed before my parents get home, pleeeeeeze?"

"Oh, all right," I sighed dejectedly. "You can't blame a poor boy for trying, can you?"

"No, I guess I can't. If you'd like, though, you can come back tomorrow and try again," she added with a giggle. Her words were a little muffled, since she was pulling on her t-shirt as she was talking.

I got slowly up and found my clothes. Grabbing some tissues, I cleaned up the remaining semen that had cooled on my body, and I got dressed without further interruptions. We were headed up the stairs when we heard the back door slam.

"Hey, guys, where are you?" Jake called out.

"Right here," Kayla said as we came up the stairs. "Where have you been?"

"Over at Jaimie's," he answered. "What have you guys been doing?"

"Oh, just fooling around," Kayla said without thinking. She turned red when she realized what she had said, but Jake had turned toward the refrigerator, looking for something to drink.

"That's great," he said absent-mindedly as he rummaged through the shelves of the fridge.

I noticed that his shoes were untied, and his t-shirt was on inside out, but decided I would save that information for another time, when I might need the ammunition. I chuckled to myself as I headed out the door, calling out good-byes to Kayla and Jake.

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AT THE DRUG STORE

For the next three days, I biked over to the Wilkinson house and took Davey and Kip to the park to work on their soccer skills. Every day, they came tumbling out of the house to meet me. Then, the two of them ran nonstop until I brought them back home an hour later. Lori Wilkinson always invited me in afterwards to have some lemonade, and we sat at her kitchen table while the boys ran upstairs to clean up after soccer.

Each time I took them out, I could see improvement in their skills. They still had the attention span of young boys, but they both loved to play soccer, and they loved kicking the ball to each other. By the third day, we were playing a game I called Heads-Up. The three of us were in a moving, revolving triangle, each about twenty feet from each other. We were constantly passing three soccer balls, first clockwise, and then counterclockwise. The exercise kept them moving (which they were prone to do anyway), and it helped to develop their passing and trapping skills using both feet. By the end of the day, they were both passing equally well with both the insides and outsides of their left and right feet, an accomplishment that not many kids their age

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could claim. It would give them a distinct advantage in their games very shortly.

The three of us dribbled our soccer balls back to the house from the park. One of my rules for the boys was that they couldn't pick up and carry a soccer ball. They had to dribble it wherever they went, except for crossing a street. They were running ahead of me, then turning and dribbling back to circle behind me before racing ahead again, using both feet to keep the ball moving. They were both anxious to show their mom what they had been learning, and I was very pleased with the way they had taken to the game with such enthusiasm. When we got to their front lawn, they both left their soccer balls on the grass as they raced each other, both trying to be the first to tell Lori about their progress.

"Mom! Mom! Come out and see!"

"Come out, Mom, and we'll show you what Sean's been teaching us!"

They were shouting and jumping as they hit the front door. In just a few seconds, each had one of Lori's hands and were both pulling her out the door.

"Watch this, Mom!" shouted Davey. "Kip, go over there, and I'll pass it to you!"

Kip ran across the yard, and Davey kicked a pass to him with his right foot, and took off running at a right angle. Kip neatly stopped the pass, turned and led Davey with a pass off his left foot. As soon as the ball left his foot, Kip started running back to where Davey had been, ready to receive the ball back from his brother. They wove in and out of each other's passing lanes for a few minutes, all the time shouting out directions to each other, proud to show off for their mother. Lori stood on the front steps, watching her boys with a big smile.

She clapped her hands as she said, "That's great, guys. I am really impressed!"

She turned to me and said, "You've done a truly amazing job with these ruffians, Sean. I can't thank you enough."

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"Aw, shucks, ma'am," I said in my best Southern drawl. "It twern't nothin'."

"Well, come on in, then, sheriff, and pull up a barstool while I serve you up some sarsaparilla," she countered as she opened the door and led us into the house.

The boys ran and jumped up the stairs to get cleaned up while Lori and I went into the kitchen for some lemonade. She set out a plate of cookies and filled four glasses with ice, and poured freshly made lemonade into two of them. She handed me a glass, and tipped hers toward mine in a silent toast before taking a sip. She sat down next to me at the table.

"Do you have a girlfriend, Sean?" she asked after a moment.

"Ummm... no, not really," I replied.

"I guess you know Molly O'Toole, don't you," she said almost to herself.

"Yes, I know her and her twin brother. She was telling me that she baby-sits for you sometimes."

"The boys just love her," she said. "She doesn't seem to mind at all when they get rambunctious on her. She handles them beautifully."

"I know I've mentioned it before, Lori, but it's really true. Davey and Kip are really good kids. There's no reason not to like them."

She sighed and said, "I know, but I worry anyway." She reached for her purse on the counter and opened it. "Oh, no, I'm sorry, Sean. I forgot to stop at the bank to get some money. Can you stop by later tonight? Or do you have plans?"

My only plan was to see if Kayla could get away to fool around. I figured I could stop by here first, so I said, "Sure, I can stop by. Or, if you want, you can just pay me tomorrow."

"Are you sure that's okay, Sean? I'd be just as happy if I could pay you tonight."

"No, tomorrow's fine," I said. I got up to go. "But thanks, I appreciate it. I'll see you tomorrow, Lori."

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* * * * *

"Sean! Hey, Sean, wait up!" Josh O'Toole was jogging across the park toward me as I rode by.

I stopped and waited for him to catch up. "Hey, Josh, what's up?"

"Not much," he said, trying to catch his breath. "I was thinking about going over to Lehigh Drugs. Come on along with me, won't you?"

I shrugged. "Sure, why not? What are you getting there?"

He leaned in closer and lowered his voice. "Condoms," he said. "Shayna wants to do it with me, but I've got to get condoms first."

"Wow," I said. "That's a big step, dude. When are you going to do her?"

"That I don't know yet," he said. "We were fooling around last night over at my house, and she says she thinks she's ready. I tell you, Sean, I nearly popped a nut on her right then and there, when she said that."

"Yeah, I'll bet," I said. "Then what happened?"

"Well, we're laying there on the floor, and I've got my hand down her pants doing the stinkfinger thing, and she comes out with this right as I'm trying to get her off, you know? And she's getting all squirmy and all, and she starts to cum all over my hand, and then she goes, 'Yes, yes, I'm ready', and starts calling my name, you know? Well, I thought she meant right then she was ready, so I tried to get her clothes off, but she pushes me away and won't even get me off or nothing, you know? She's really in a huff now, thinks I'm just trying to do her when she's, what did she call it? Oh, yeah, 'In A Weak Moment', she called it. I could almost hear the capital letters on the words, you know? Anyway, she says nothing doing, until I get us some protection, and until I do, it's no-go for anything. No frenching,

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no tittie, no nothing until I can prove to her that I really love her or something, I guess.”

“So, you’re going down to the drug store to get some rubbers, and that’s supposed to prove that you love her? That doesn’t make any sense, Josh.”

“Aw, hell, don’t I know it. She’s a chick, man, and that means she’s confusing. All I know is that my first mission is to pick up some condoms for the next time she says she’s ready. And who knows when that will be, you know what I mean? Anyway, the next time she says she’s ready, I’ll be ready.”

“That’s really fucked up, Josh.”

“Hey, it’s not my logic, dude. You want to come along? I don’t want to stand in that cashier line by myself holding a box of Trojans, you know? I could use the moral support. How about it?”

I was thinking about Kayla, and how we would never be able to do it ourselves without protection, and this was a perfect opportunity to supply myself. I, too, had not been looking forward to purchasing my first box of condoms by myself. Now, with Josh along, I wouldn’t have to.

“Yeah, okay, I’ll come along. Why not?” I said.

We had to go past my house to get to the drug store, so we dropped off my bike on the way and walked over a couple of blocks to the shopping center. When we got there, we were confronted with a dizzying array of prophylactics in the back of the store.

“Shit, man, what do we get?” complained Josh. “I just thought we’d be able to come in here, grab a boxful, and take off again. Why are there so many choices?”

“I don’t know. Lubricated, non-lubricated, ribbed, ultra-thin... what’s this? *Flavored* condoms?!?” I picked up a box.

A grown-up’s voice from behind us startled us, and I dropped the box of condoms I had been holding.

“Hello, boys, can I help you with anything?”

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I spun around in surprise, and my jaw nearly hit the floor. It was Mr. Lehigh, the owner of the drug store, and Jake and Kayla's father.

"Why, hello, Sean, I didn't expect it to be you here in the birth control aisle. Hello, Josh. Well, boys, I take it you are anticipating some adventures, right?" he said with a smile.

"Well... umm... just trying to be prepared, Mr. Lehigh," stammered Josh lamely. His face was bright red with embarrassment.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of, Josh, being here. It's a wise young man, these days, who thinks first about these things, instead of getting carried away in the moment, if you know what I mean," said Mr. Lehigh. "Now," he continued, "since this seems to be your first purchase, let me help you out. Try a box of these and see how you like them." He took a box of standard, lubricated condoms off the shelf and handed them to Josh. "You can always experiment with other options the next time around, but these are good, basic items that will give you the protection you want while you learn how to use and enjoy them."

"Uh, that's great, Mr. Lehigh. Thanks a lot for your help," said Josh.

"You're welcome, Josh. Any other questions, boys? Sean, are you getting some of these, too?"

"Ummm... yeah, maybe I will. Thanks, Mr. Lehigh," I said.

He handed me a twelve-pack like Josh's, then casually waved and moved off to wander the aisles, looking for customers with questions. I watched him walk away, and couldn't help wondering if he would have been so helpful if he had known that it was his own thirteen-year-old daughter who would be helping me to use these condoms up. Somehow, I didn't think so.

Josh and I paid for our purchases and walked out the door, relieved to be hiding our stuff in plain brown paper bags, just in case we ran into any more parents we knew.

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BEING PREPARED

It turned out that I was wrong about something else that afternoon, too, since it wasn't Kayla that I was with when I opened up my first condom.

Josh and I went back over to his house after we left the drug store. We went upstairs to look for a good hiding place for his rubbers, someplace neither his parents nor his sisters would look. He finally decided to open up the box and hide the packets in some of his balled-up socks in the back of his underwear drawer. He also tucked two into his wallet. "For emergencies," he pronounced seriously.

"Emergencies!" I howled, and laughed until I cried. "At least I know who I can come to in case of emergency," I said, wiping tears from my eyes.

"Hey, you guys," came a voice from the doorway. "What's so funny in there?" Josh's twin sister Molly stuck her head in the room. "Hi, Sean. What are you guys laughing so hard about?"

"Nothing," grumbled Josh. "Just some guy stuff you wouldn't understand."

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"Guy stuff? That sounds like a convenient excuse just to not even try to explain," said Molly with a grimace. "Come on, give it up. What are you guys doing?" She stepped into the room and stared us both down. She was dressed in a halter-top and shorts that left her midriff bare. *Why is it that a bare midriff on a fit, young female is such an aphrodisiac?* I couldn't stop looking at her.

To compensate for my suddenly tight shorts, I sat down on the bed, crossed my arms, and openly stared at her.

"Christ, Molly, why is it that only girls can have secret stuff to talk about? Sean and I were just bullshitting. Really. We weren't talking about anything in particular."

"Yeah, right," she replied sarcastically. "Just bullshitting. Well, I know that's what you're doing now, to me, anyway."

I decided that I would let the two stubborn Irish kids butt heads for a while. *No sense sticking my nose in and getting it bent*, I thought as I sat back to enjoy the fireworks.

I had known both Josh and Molly since about the second grade, and they both had flashpoint tempers that could go off at any time. Both, however, were just as quick to get over it, and to the best of my knowledge neither of them had ever carried a grudge away from any argument they had been a part of. Their fiercest fights were with each other, as was to be expected of brothers and sisters. But, they also were the first to jump to each other's defense if someone else was involved. It was a little complicated for a dumb jock like me to figure out, so I usually let these things run their course with no interference. I figured that if I kept my mouth shut, I couldn't get into any trouble saying the wrong thing. It worked more often than not for me, and it worked this time, too.

Besides, just sitting and watching Molly while she was otherwise occupied was pleasure enough for me.

So there I sat, not paying any attention to what was being said, letting their voices wash over me while I contentedly watched Molly's

skin flush with anger, when she suddenly reached out and grabbed the paper sack that held my purchase from the floor.

"Hey!" I shouted, reaching for the bag a fraction too slowly. Molly opened the bag and looked in, just out of my reach.

"And what do we have here?" she murmured as she pulled out the box of condoms. "Why, Sean, you little devil. Are these yours?" She looked at me coyly, with a big smile on her face.

"Sure," I said as bravely as I could. "They're mine. Of course, they're mine. Whose else would they be?" I sat back down again, feigning indifference that she had found them.

She looked at the sales receipt, and broke into a wide grin. "Well, well. It seems that you got these today, according to this receipt. And less than an hour ago, too." She put the receipt back in the bag and examined the box. "Hmmm... lubricated... medium... box of twelve..." She looked up at me, a gleam in her eyes. "How long do you think it's going to take you to use a dozen of these things? Or is this your yearly supply?"

I stood and grabbed the box out of her hands and roughly shoved it back into the bag. "Very funny, Moll. A year's supply, huh."

"Wait a minute!" she cried suddenly. "Now I understand! Josh, you are a sneaky one. If Sean just bought these, that means that you got some too, didn't you?" She walked over to his dresser and started opening drawers to search for them. "Where are they? Come on, Josh, show me."

Josh ran over and shoved his dresser drawers closed. "Cut it out, Molly," he said.

"I know you've got them here, Josh. Just show me where, I promise I won't tell anybody." She looked over at me, and moved toward me and leaned down to grab my hand to pull me up. "Come on, Sean, show me where he's keeping them."

I resisted, making her pull a little harder. Her halter top gapped at the top while she was bent toward me, giving me just the briefest glimpse of the pale shadow of her tan line at her breasts before the

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material tightened against her again as she pulled. She couldn't pull me up, so she dropped to her knees and clasped my hand to her bosom and batted her eyes at me. "Please, Sean? Show me? As a favor to me?"

A lot of evil thoughts played themselves out in my mind at her words as she clutched my hand to the swells of her chest. She was making it hard to think straight. I distractedly noticed that the tops of her tanned thighs were very lightly freckled.

"Molly, let him go. All right, I'll show you. Christ, but you're a pain sometimes," grumbled Josh.

Molly jumped up with a squeal, and hopped over to Josh as he opened his socks drawer. "They're right here," he said as he unrolled a pair of his socks. Four packets tumbled out, and Molly picked them up.

"Neat!" she cried as she turned the packet over. "How do these things go on?" she asked, almost to herself.

"Well, I'm certainly not going to show you!" huffed Josh, a shocked look on his face.

"I wasn't talking to you, brother mine," said Molly, punching him in the arm. "I was speaking hypothetically, anyway. I don't want you to *show* me, for God's sake."

"Oh," mumbled Josh. "Sorry. Well, you just roll it on, I guess."

"I guess," said Molly quietly as she examined the packet. "So," she said as she tucked the packets back into Josh's sock, "you think Shayna's ready for this?"

Josh shut his dresser drawer and sat down on the bed next to me. Molly sat down on my other side and leaned back on her arms so she could talk to Josh.

"She says she is," Josh said. "I just want to have everything set, anyway."

"Just like a Boy Scout, right? 'Be Prepared'. Who are you prepared for, Sean? I didn't know you were going out with anyone."

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"I'm not going out with anyone," I said. "But it never hurts to be at the ready, does it?"

"Well," she said almost to herself, "I guess not. It's just that I don't know if I will ever find anybody to be ready for."

"What's the matter, Molly, your love life got you down?" Josh didn't sound very sympathetic.

"What love life? I don't have one. I've never had one. I probably never will have one." With that, she shoved herself up and walked dejectedly out of the room.

"What's up with her?" I asked. "What did she mean by that?"

"Aw, she's just upset because she's never been out on a date, or anything. She sees me with Shayna, and she thinks something's wrong with her because no boy's ever asked her out or anything."

"You're kidding. She's drop-dead gorgeous, and she's never gone out? That's pretty strange."

"It's true, though. I get guys asking me all the time about her, but I guess they're just too shy or something to call her. She gets depressed about it sometimes, that's all."

"Wow, I never would have thought it. You just sort of assume that the really pretty ones are always out on dates, and chasing them away with a stick. Hey, but what about Heather?"

"Oh, Heather's a different story. She's been going out with Evan ever since sophomore year. I think that bothers Molly, too, that Heather found a boyfriend she's kept all this time while Molly has never had the opportunity."

"Man, I'm blown away. I never would have guessed."

"Hey, Sean, why don't you ask her out? I know she likes you."

"Oh, man, I don't know..."

"Yeah, go ahead. You two would get along fine," Josh said. "Just don't let me hear that you're planning on using these things on her, okay?" he added, kicking at my sack of condoms. "She is my sister, after all."

"Okay, Josh, I'll think about it. Calling her, I mean."

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"No, man, don't call her. Do it now. Go down and knock on her door and talk to her."

"Now? I don't think so. What if she says no? I'd rather do it on the phone."

Josh looked disgusted. "What a chickenshit. Go, Sean. Knock on her door and just talk to her for a little bit. I've got to call Shayna anyway, so while I'm on the phone, just go say hi to her."

He left the room to call his girlfriend, leaving me alone and nervous about talking to Molly. Finally, I decided that I really had nothing to lose by going down and just saying hello. I left Josh's room, went down the hall to Molly's room, and knocked on the door.

I heard her muffled voice call out. "What do you want, Josh?"

"Um... it's me, Sean. Josh went downstairs to call Shayna."

The door opened just a crack. "Oh, hi. What's up?" Molly asked.

"Uh, nothing... I just thought I'd come down and see what was up with you while Josh was on the phone."

"Sure, okay," she said, opening the door. "Come on in."

I walked into her room and automatically looked at her window. The blinds were up, and I could see the tree I had been in at the back of their yard. "Look, Molly, I'm sorry if Josh or I said anything to get you upset," I started.

"No, no," she interrupted, "it's not anything you guys said. Well, not anything you said, anyway, Sean. Josh just knows which buttons to push, though, and he loves pushing them. But don't worry about me. He's got buttons I know how to push, too."

I laughed, and she smiled at me.

"Hey, Sean, I'm babysitting over at the Wilkinsons tonight. You want to come over and watch TV with the boys and me?" she asked.

"Okay, sure. What time?"

"Come over about seven-thirty or so. The boys will still be up, and we can goof around with them for a little before they have to go to sleep. Mrs. Wilkinson will be out until about ten o'clock."

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“Okay,” I said. I got up to go find Josh again, mentally shaking my head. *Now why were you getting all worked up and nervous for nothing*, I thought to myself.

Sometimes life takes a right turn on you, just when you thought you were looking at a nice, straight road to travel.

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THE BABYSITTER

So there I was, ringing the doorbell at the Wilkinson house at seven-thirty sharp. I was freshly showered, and I had shaved off the peach fuzz from my chin. I looked presentable enough in my Chicago Sting jersey. When I rang the bell, I heard the pounding of small, active feet running inside, and the door flew open. Davey and Kip flew out and tried to gang-tackle me on the front steps, very nearly succeeding before Molly came out to rescue me.

"Davey! Kip! You're going to tear him in two! If you will just let him go for a second, he'll come in and play," she said laughingly.

"Sean! I didn't know you were coming over!" "Sean! We're making popcorn! Come in, come in!"

I let them pull me into the house, and we stumbled into the family room. They were getting ready to watch a movie called *The Bad News Bears*, and I could smell popcorn popping in the microwave. The boys jumped onto the couch while Molly went into the kitchen to get drinks for everybody, and I slipped the tape into the VCR. Kip and Davey were fighting for supremacy over one of the pillows on the couch, until I finally took it away from them both and plopped down on the

floor with it. Molly came in with platter loaded with a big bowl of steaming hot popcorn, and four glasses of ice with matching cans of soda. The boys each settled into a corner of the couch. Molly and I sat next to each other on the floor, leaning back against the sofa. I pushed the button on the remote, and the movie started as we dug in and devoured the entire bowl of popcorn.

After about forty-five minutes, I stopped the movie so the boys could get ready for bed. We promised them that they could watch the rest of it with us, as long as they brushed their teeth and put on their pajamas. They raced each other to see who could be the fastest. Davey, being a year older, ran down the stairs first, reclaiming his corner of the couch. Kip was right behind him, and when they both were settled, I started the movie back up. While the boys were getting ready for bed, Molly and I cleaned up the spilled popcorn and carried the dirty dishes and glasses into the kitchen. Molly rinsed everything off, and I took a dishcloth and wiped down the coffee table in the family room. When the boys came back down, Molly and I sat back down on the floor, our knees and shoulders just touching. By the time the movie ended, Molly had her head resting on my shoulder, my arm was draped around her, and the boys were fast asleep on the couch. We shook them gently awake. Molly and I each accompanied one boy up the stairs and into their beds, tucking them in and turning out the light. We shut their doors and went back downstairs to the family room.

We found a dark, black and white movie from the thirties on some channel and let that play as we sat back down on the floor. I was suddenly very nervous again, unsure of what to do with my arms or hands. Molly turned toward me, looking into my eyes, and I could see that she was just as nervous as I. Oddly, this had a calming effect on me, and I put my arm around her shoulder. She naturally, almost unconsciously, moved closer to me, her face tilted up to me. I lowered my lips to touch hers lightly, softly. Our first kiss was a tender, evanescent moment, experienced by both of us with our eyes wide

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open, watching each other. Finding no resistance on either part, we kissed again, and it allowed me to savor the fleshy, soft feel of her lips. She reached around to my neck and held me, turning a little more in to me. I reached around her waist with my other hand and held her lightly, undemanding as we kissed, the ghostly images of the old movie on the television playing across our bodies.

We stayed like that for a long time, kissing and nibbling and tasting each other as we hugged, warming slowly and steadily, until we heard a car pull into the driveway. Startled like two deer stranded on the side of a highway, we stared out the window, still clutched together, until the slamming of a car door shook us from our frozen state. We scrambled up, both secretly grateful that we hadn't gotten too carried away in the moment. Hurriedly, we moved to more chaste positions in the family room, ready for Lori to come in the house.

The back door opened, and Lori called out.

"Molly? I'm home."

"Hi, Mrs. Wilkinson," Molly said as she got up and walked toward the kitchen.

Lori stepped into the doorway, and saw me just as I was getting up from a chair. "Sean! I didn't know you were here."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Wilkinson," said Molly. "I should have told you, but I invited Sean over to watch TV with us. I hope it's all right. I know how much the boys like him, so I thought..."

Lori gave us both an appraising look. Molly was a little flustered, and she was flushed from our hugs. For myself, I was very self-conscious as Lori examined us.

Finally, Lori relaxed a little, apparently satisfied with what she saw. "No, Molly, it's fine, I don't mind. I just wasn't expecting to find him here, that's all. Sean, of course you are welcome anytime," she said, looking at me. "Did you have a good evening?"

"Yes, we did," I said. "We watched *The Bad News Bears* until Davey and Kip fell asleep. They'll probably be dreaming of baseball and popcorn all night."

"Just as long as they stay dreaming all night," said Lori with a small smile. "I hope they decide to sleep in tomorrow morning, so I can get some rest." She looked around the room absent-mindedly. "Grab your things, and I'll give you both a lift home."

"Oh, no, that's okay, Lori. I've got my bike here, so I'll just ride home," I said.

"And I live on the way, so I'll just walk with Sean, if that's all right," Molly added.

"Are you sure? I really don't mind driving you."

"No," we both echoed. "We'll be just fine," I added as we headed for the door. "Good night, Lori. Hope you're able to sleep in tomorrow."

Molly and I stepped outside. I picked up my bicycle, and we walked down the sidewalk, aware that Lori Wilkinson was watching us until we rounded a corner and moved out of her sight.

We walked slowly toward Molly's house, reluctant to part company. We talked quietly about the upcoming school year, about soccer, about nothing. When we stopped in her driveway, her house was dark.

"It doesn't look like anybody's home," I said.

"I guess not. Heather had a date, and Mom and Dad were going out with some friends, but I thought Josh would be home."

"Maybe he's over at Shayna's," I said.

"Maybe," she said. She looked over at me. "Do you have to go home right away? Or can you come in for a little while?"

"No, I can stay for a little," I said. We walked together around the side of the house. I set my bike down on the ground beside the garage, out of the way. Molly held my hand as we walked around to the back door and went in to her house. Her palms were sweaty, and I could feel just the faintest tremor in her hand.

"We can go upstairs and listen to some music," she said quietly as she led me through the darkened house. We walked down the hall to her room. She opened the door, but didn't turn on the light. Instead,

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she turned on the light in the closet and closed the door until just a sliver of light came through, keeping the room dim. She walked back to me, and unhesitatingly stepped close to me. She was only a couple of inches shorter than me, so she didn't have to raise herself up very far to put her arms around my neck and press herself close to me. I could feel the soft bulges of her breasts and the sharp tips of her engorged nipples against my chest. As I put my arms around her waist and pulled her close, I felt my cock rise and press against her between her legs. She felt it too, and pressed herself harder to me, opening her legs slightly and trapping me so that the pressure of my erection rubbed against her center as it rose and throbbed.

Our lips came together, but this was no chaste kiss. Our mouths were open, and our tongues snaked out to meet in a wet, sucking, high-pressure contact. I heard a moan, but I couldn't tell if it came from me or from Molly, nor did it really matter. We were both too wrapped up in our sudden incendiary feelings to care much beyond the immediate.

Her hips started moving of their own volition, side to side, creating exquisite contact at our most sensitive places. I was clutching her to me so hard her breasts were squashed against me, but that slight pain only served to increase the release of heat and moisture in her pussy. I could feel her soft hair brushing against my arms and hands as her head moved during our kisses. The combination of sensory signals racing through me created a nearly unbearable pressure in my chest and solar plexus, and animated itself in the throbbing of my painfully hard cock, still trapped between her legs.

Nearly simultaneously, she grabbed at the hem of my jersey while I found the buttons on the back of her halter-top. She pulled my jersey up and off as I raised my arms, and then she reached behind her and practically ripped her own top off, bra and all. Even in the dim light, just before she clutched me to her again, I could see a light pattern of freckles across her chest and down onto her lovely uptilted breasts. She pushed me back, forcing me to step backwards until I felt the edge

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of her bed against my knees. I sat down when she pushed, and she kept on coming, forcing me onto my back with her on top of me, her lips once more searching for mine. I held on to her with one arm around her, and my other hand moved to find her breast and pinch her turgid nipple. That time I knew that it was Molly who moaned, for her reaction was to reach down and roughly clutch at my straining cock, grabbing it through my shorts and pumping her hand up and down.

She was an animal, out of control, and not to be denied in her quest toward satisfaction. I didn't know if it was because she liked me or if it was just a case of being in the right place at the right time, but the moment she grabbed my aching cock my mind quit functioning rationally, so the momentary pondering of such a question was no longer possible. I surrendered to the sensations we were both experiencing, cause and effect. If I pinched this swollen nipple like this, the reaction was an increase in pressure of her hand on my cock. Or, if I ran my hand down her back and under her shorts to feel the globes of her ass, the reaction might be demonstrated by a more insistent presence of her tongue into my willing mouth. Cause and effect, action and reaction.

At one point, she finally lifted her face from mine. She sat up, grabbed at my shorts, and pulled them from my body. Only after I was naked did she stand up and yank her own shorts off, pulling down her soaked panties with them. She held up her shorts, reached into a pocket, and withdrew a small, familiar-looking packet. She concentrated as she tore it open.

"I stole this from Josh this afternoon," she said seriously. "I wanted to see how it worked. Now's a good time to find out."

With that, she took out the condom, placed it on the leaking end of my cock, and rolled it down. I involuntarily spread my legs a little as she was fitting me, and she bent over me, examining me as she put the condom on my cock. She caressed my balls, sending thrills of pleasure rocketing up my nerves and into my brain.

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With virtually no preliminaries, she straddled me, grabbed my cock, and rubbed it back and forth across her flowered pussy lips. When the tip brushed up against and across her extended clit, she paused, throwing her head back in sensual pleasure. I grabbed her by her waist and ran both hands up her body to her tight breasts. The combined assault on her nipples and her clit was enough to send her over the edge. She whined, her breathy exhalation climbing the register until it disappeared, and I felt a rush of moisture on my crotch and balls as she came.

She wanted more, however. Once her first orgasm passed, while she was still clutching my throbbing cock, she rubbed herself again, back and forth, clit to vagina, spreading moisture across the sensitive tip of my cock. Finally, she settled onto me, allowing the head to nest at the entrance to her virginal opening. She paused with just the tip within her, getting used to the feeling, and placed her hands on my ribcage for balance. My hands slipped down to her waist to rest on the flare of her hips. I could feel the intense heat coming from within her, centered on the tip of my dick. Fortunately, the condom had desensitized me, or I probably would have gone off by then. I was watching her face, and I could see she was biting her lower lip, her eyes glazed, as she concentrated on her mission. She sat up slightly, and flexed her legs. Her torso dropped, and she impaled herself upon me.

I had felt the unique pressures of a mouth around my cock before, and had marveled at the experience, but nothing could have prepared me for the first time I was nestled inside a girl's vagina. I knew, in that final second when Molly's body was sliding smoothly over my instrument, that I had found my own personal source of true happiness. All I had to do was figure out how to do this over and over.

For her part, Molly looked like she had found her own source of pleasure, also. Her eyes opened wide, unseeing, as she slid down upon me that first time, and she broke out in a huge grin when she felt her pussy being filled with my warm presence. Her eyes focused, and she

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looked at me, still grinning, as I bottomed out in her. She paused and sat up, her tight ass resting on my thighs and her hands on my waist as she balanced on my pole. We both looked down to where we were connected. Her gash was exposed and drooling, her clitoris was poking out, and our sparse pubic hair, mine dark and hers dusky in the dim light, were intertwined. I could not see my cock, but I surely knew where it was from the feel. She was impressively tight, and the environment I could feel through the latex was boiling hot and wet.

"No cherry," she whispered. "Gymnastics and cheerleading must have broken it."

"Umph," was all I could manage to say. All other thoughts, all existence outside of pure sensation centered on where we were attached, was not possible.

She moved. Slowly, excruciatingly, she lifted up, up, until just the helmet of my cock was buried in her. Then down, slowly, she allowed herself to return. Each time she lifted up, each time she buried me again, created a friction I did not think was possible. Faster she moved, sometimes just a little, sometimes all the way. The oils from her center kept lubricating us, allowing her to improvise her movements in such a constricting atmosphere. A couple of times she rose up so fast, I popped out of her, my rigid dick flopping down on my belly and bouncing back up. She would grab hold of it with her fist, position it back at her opening, and pound back down upon me until our pelvic bones met.

And then, suddenly, it was time. "M... M... Molly," I stammered. Without volition, I shoved my hips up as she was descending, until I was buried in her at my deepest. She collapsed down on me, blindly reaching with her mouth to find mine, grinding her lips against mine just as she was grinding her clit against my crotch. She screamed into my mouth as she came, and my balls pumped and flexed, pumped and flexed until the condom was filled practically to overflowing, each jerk of mine matched by a flexion of her hips against me to drive me as

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deeply into her as possible in an attempt to prolong the sensations of our orgasms.

I hugged her to me as tightly as I could, and we broke our kiss so we could breathe again. Her whole body collapsed like a rag doll, and she rested her head against me. Her back was sweaty with her exertions, as was her forehead, and her strawberry blonde hair was sticking to her. All in all, I had never seen her more beautiful.

She lifted up her hips, and my deflating cock slipped from her. She lay back on her side next to me, her arm around my chest, as she came down from her orgasms.

"Mmmmm..." she hummed, "if I had known this is what it all was about, I'd have found you a lot sooner."

I kissed her forehead. "It was pretty spectacular, wasn't it? I really didn't know what to expect, either."

She looked at me, a little startled. "You've never done this before, either?" she asked.

"No, not this," I admitted. She nestled back down against my side, purring in her contentment.

"I'm glad it was with you," she said quietly. "And I'm glad your first was with me. It makes things even better."

My eyelids were getting very heavy. Just as I slipped off to sleep, I briefly wondered if Jake was up in the tree outside, watching.

It seemed like just moments later when I was awakened by a sudden noise. I looked up, momentarily confused about where I was, until I felt Molly's naked body next to mine.

"Oh, shit," I mumbled, looking desperately for a clock. It was after midnight. I could hear mumbled voices downstairs. I shook Molly, waking her, and motioned for her to be quiet. Her eyes were big and round, and she looked scared as she realized where we were. Her bedspread was rumpled, and there was a huge wet spot on it. The room reeked of sex, her scent and mine commingled. She slipped out of bed and locked her door. She tiptoed over to her window and

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opened it quietly to let in some fresh air, and then came back over to lie next to me.

"Stay quiet," she whispered in my ear. "When they've gone to bed, I'll help you sneak out of the house."

We huddled together for what seemed like hours, knowing we were going to be caught. Somehow, we weren't. We heard footsteps tromping up the stairs and down the hall, and then the house was quiet. We waited another thirty minutes before getting dressed, sneaking out of her room, down the stairs, and out the back door. As I stepped outside into the cool night air, Molly grabbed my arm and pulled me back. She gave me a hard kiss, and whispered into my ear, "I love you, Sean." She whirled and closed the door before I could react.

I walked my bike through her neighbor's back yards before venturing out onto the street. I hoped I could sneak into my own house as easily as I snuck out of Molly's. Meanwhile, my mind whirled with distractions, images of a blonde thirteen-year-old intertwining with images of Molly, sweat-slicked at my side, in post-coital languor.

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THE MOTORCYCLE PROMISE

By the time I dragged myself out of bed the next day, it was almost noon. I had a soccer game to play. After that, I was supposed to go over to work with Davey and Kip again. I called Molly while I was eating a bowl of cereal for breakfast.

"Hi," I said when she answered the phone. "How are you feeling?"

"I feel great," she said. I could almost hear her smile in her voice. "A little sore, but even that's going away. How are you?"

"I'm a little tired, but I'll be okay. I've got a soccer game this afternoon, and then I have to go over to the Wilkinsons. Are you doing anything tonight?"

"I was going to go over to Tessa's. Want to come along?"

"Sure," I said. "What time were you going?"

"We're going shopping this afternoon, but we should be back around five. Ummm... Sean?"

"Uh-huh?"

"Bring along a couple of those... things you got yesterday, okay?"

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It was a good thing I was sitting down, because my knees turned to water as soon as she said that. "Yeah, of course," I said. "Anything you say."

"Good. Just remember that, and you'll get along with this Irish lass just fine," she said with a laugh.

The soccer game was a laugher. I was playing with a club team that consisted of guys from all over our area, not just from our community. The team we were playing was just a pickup team thrown together for the summer league, and they were not very good. All summer long, I had played just about every position on the field, including keeper, but I was learning that I really liked playing defense, and especially right-side defense. My coaches discovered that I had a knack for stealing the ball more often on the right side, and I would streak up the sidelines until I was past the centerline. Depending on how my opposition reacted to this intrusion, I would either continue down the field, switching positions with my right midfielder, or I would loft the ball across to our offensive players in the middle, and let them take over. Against teams with weak midfielders, I could make it almost all the way down to the penalty line before crossing the ball, and a couple of times I was able to waltz the ball in and score from the side when the defense was still scrambling around trying to cover all our players down the field. At any rate, the coach pulled most of his starters, me included, for the entire second half, because we were already up 6-1 by halftime. Even so, we ended up winning 9-3, and I was feeling pretty good.

I went right from the game over to meet Davey and Kip. We warmed up and stretched, and played Heads-Up for about fifteen minutes. After taking a drink break, we started on a game of Keep-Away with me in the middle. The boys were still prone to standing still and waiting for the ball, instead of moving to it on a pass, and I hoped that Keep-Away would make them see why they had to move on the ball. Passing into open space, give-and-goes, and leading the receiver were still too advanced for these little guys, but they were

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working hard toward being better soccer players. I knew that when the fall season began, they would be more skilled than most of the other kids in their age group.

We ended up our session by playing Heads-Up on the way back to their house again. As we got there, Lori opened the front door to let an older man out. He was dressed in a dark suit, and was wearing a loud pink and yellow tie. He shook her hand, walked down to his car parked at the curb, and drove away without a second glance at the boys or the house. Lori, as usual, invited me in for lemonade while Kip and Davey ran upstairs.

"I hate having to do some of these grown-up things sometimes," she said, almost to herself, as she poured four glasses of lemonade over ice.

"What do you mean? Is it something to do with that guy who just left?" I asked.

"That was my insurance man. He was dropping off more papers for me to look over. Just when I think I'm healing, something comes up to open up old wounds," she muttered. Tears were starting to form in her eyes, and her lower lip was trembling.

I stood up, alarmed, and put my arm over her shoulder. "What's the matter, Lori?" I asked concernedly.

She dropped her head to my shoulder and sobbed. Her shoulders were shaking, and I could feel, underneath the weight of her hair, that the skin on the back of her neck was hot to the touch. After a few moments, she collected herself, straightened her shoulders, and gave me a quick peck on the cheek.

"Thanks, Sean, for your support." She moved over to the counter and pulled some tissues from a box and wiped her eyes. She stepped back to the table and sat down heavily.

"My husband died last year," she said quietly. She was looking down at her hands as they methodically tore apart the tissues. "He was in a motorcycle accident just about a year ago, over Labor Day weekend. Massive head injuries, internal bleeding, broken leg, two

broken arms, punctured lung. They had him on a... m... machine for five days, until they finally said that he was brain-dead and would never recover. I... I told them to pull the plug, and he died an hour later. He was twenty-eight years old."

She looked up at me then, and the tears started running down her face. "Don't ever get on a motorcycle, Sean. Promise me. My boys think the world of you, and I won't have them go through something like that ever again, if I can help it. Promise me, Sean."

Her eyes were pleading as she looked at me miserably. It wasn't a real big stretch for me to make such a promise, since my mom and dad already had forbid my older brother Michael from ever riding one. I knew my turn for the "No Motorcycle" lecture at home was next.

"I promise, Lori. No motorcycles."

She looked at me for a moment more, perhaps gauging my sincerity, before finally nodding, accepting my promise. She picked up the scraps of tissue to wipe her eyes, until she finally realized that she had torn them into useless bits. She got up and took a handful more from the box on the counter, and crossed over behind me, and wrapped her arms around my neck, hugging me fiercely from behind.

"Thank you, Sean. I don't know what I'd do without you. I can't tell you what a huge difference you've made for me. And for my guys," she added. She let go and came back around to sit at the table again. Her eyes were still red, but she was much more composed now. "Anyway," she continued, "since then, I've had to do more of the grown-up things that Tom used to take care of for us, and I don't like it. But I do it, because the boys need me to do it. But really, Sean, I'm still just a kid at heart. I'm really not that far from being a teenager myself, at least in my own mind," she said with a rueful smile. "I know you probably think of me as being older, but I'm really not."

"Actually, I don't. When I first met you, I thought you were the babysitter or something, maybe a college kid working for the summer," I said.

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She blushed just a little. "Thanks, Sean. Even if it's a little white lie, I appreciate it. Are you sure you don't have a girlfriend?" she asked teasingly. "I may just claim you for my own, then."

Now it was my turn to blush.

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INTO THE WOODS

By the time I got over to Tessa's house, it was nearly six in the evening. Molly and Tessa were sitting on the front step with Kristina Mendoza, a slender Hispanic girl who was fairly new to the neighborhood. She lived just down the street from Tessa, and she and Tessa had become friends right away. Kristina played soccer for the Sting Rays, and brought a considerable skill to the team. Her family had moved here from Texas, where she had played soccer year-round, practically since she could walk. I didn't really know her very well, but Tessa and Molly both liked her, and the three of them had hung out quite a bit of the summer together.

"Hi, ladies," I said as I walked up the sidewalk.

"Hi, Sean," they echoed in answer. *Is it my imagination, or are Tessa and Kristina looking at me funny?* I couldn't really tell. Molly stood up and came over to me. She grabbed my arm and pulled me over to sit by her on the bottom step.

"Have you eaten dinner yet, Sean?" asked Tessa. "My dad's going to barbeque some burgers and hot dogs for us pretty soon."

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"Hey, that's great," I said. "You're sure it's okay with your parents if I stay for dinner?"

"Sure," she said. "Kristina and Molly were already staying, so one more won't matter."

"Even if it's a boy with an appetite?" I asked. "Between my brothers and me, we eat everything we find in the house. My mom is always complaining about how often she has to go food shopping for us."

"I don't think even you could out-eat my dad," said Tessa. "He eats more than anyone I've ever seen or heard of."

"It's true," confirmed Molly. "I've never seen anybody eat like Mr. Navarrone. My brother Josh eats a lot, but nothing like your dad, Tessa."

"That's right," added Kristina. "When we first moved here, Tessa's parents invited my family over for a cookout, and Mr. Navarrone cooked a whole huge turkey on the grill. Do you know that there was no turkey left by the end of the meal? And then, after dinner, your mom brings out all these pies and cookies and stuff, and we practically finished them off, too!" She started laughing at the memory of that meal.

"So," I said, "I don't have to be polite and not eat very much then, is that what you're telling me? Yum, I can't wait!" I rubbed my growling stomach in anticipation.

Tessa instructed me on where I could find a telephone in their house. I went in and called my mom to let her know I was staying for dinner.

"You're sure it's okay with Tessa's parents, Sean?"

I favored her with a big, theatrical sigh that I was sure she would be able to hear over the telephone. "Yes, Mom, I'm sure."

"Make sure you thank them when you're done," she reminded me.

"Yes, Mom," I answered dutifully. "I will, I promise."

"Okay, then, have a nice time," she said. I hung up the phone and ran back out to the front to be with my friends.

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In a little while, Tessa's parents called us into the back yard for dinner. It was quite a party, with the four of us, Tessa's parents, her two sisters and two brothers, plus an assortment of their friends, totaling about twenty people. We were spread out throughout the back yard, finding space on the deck, or at one of several tables, or on a retaining wall across the back of their yard. There was plenty of food, lots of sodas and iced tea, and Mr. Navarrone ruled it all from in front of his gas grille, cooking up a storm of hamburgers, hot dogs, bratwursts, and barbequed chicken. There was also corn on the cob, baked beans, salads, Jell-O, cold pasta salad, and chips, followed by homemade cookies and a chocolate cake with ice cream for dessert. By the end, I had downed two hamburgers, a bratwurst, and a huge mound of beans and pasta salad, and still managed to squeeze down a piece of cake and a couple of cookies. Molly, sticking by me throughout the meal, kept up a running commentary for her friends on my progress through my meal, until both Tessa and Kristina finally begged her to stop.

"Enough!" cried Kristina. "I'm going to be sick just hearing what he's eating, Molly!"

"Between you and my dad, Sean, you could clean out this house of food," complained Tessa good-naturedly.

"Someone is challenging me to an eating contest?" rumbled a gravelly voice from the other side of the yard. "Who's eating so much over there?" said Mr. Navarrone.

"It's Sean," cried Lisbeth, Tessa's youngest sister.

"What? That skinny little kid?" said Mr. Navarrone. "Where are you putting all that chow, Sean? In a hollow leg?"

"I'm a growing kid, Mr. Navarrone," I called out. "Besides, I'm just trying to be a good guest by cleaning my plate. It's not really my fault."

"A good guest? Hah! How about a bottomless pit?" said Molly with a laugh. "Aren't you afraid of getting too fat?"

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"Nah," I said. "Not with all these beautiful women around here to chase. I'll work it off somehow."

Everyone laughed, and Molly slugged me in the arm in mock anger.

"If you're planning on chasing all these beautiful women," said Mr. Navarrone, "then you probably need one more cookie for sustenance. Some of them can run pretty fast, after all. Tessa, come get the plate of cookies for Sean, would you please?"

The last laugh was on me after all, when Tessa loaded up a plate with cookies and pieces of cake and brought it over to me. She handed it over with a flourish.

By the time we were done eating, it was dusk. The streetlights were buzzing and flickering to life, and porch lights throughout the neighborhood were switching on. Lightning bugs were making an appearance, and we all chased them around, catching them and putting them in each others' hair and on our clothes. As the darkness closed in, Kristina, Molly, and I said our goodbyes to everybody. We thanked Tessa's parents for dinner, and then the three of us wandered down the street toward Kristina's house.

"Do you guys want to come in for a little while? Maybe there's a good movie on or something," said Kristina as we got to her house.

Molly and I looked at each other and nearly simultaneously said, "No, thanks, I've got to be getting home." We waved and continued walking toward Molly's house. Nervously, we reached for each other's hand, as if we were near strangers on a clandestine mission.

When we got to her house, she led the way down her driveway, and into the garage. "I've got some blankets stashed in here," she whispered. She went in through a side door and came back out again, carrying some folded blankets in her arms.

"Let's go back here," she whispered. "I'm not sure who's home, so we need to keep quiet until we get to the clearing."

She led the way to the back of the yard, and into the trees. About twenty yards in, there was a small clearing, with a picnic table, an old

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fire ring, and a couple of bent and broken lawn chairs. It was obviously a long-time neighborhood hangout, but I hadn't realized it was there.

Molly knelt down and spread out the blankets on the ground, and sat down facing me. Silently she patted the ground next to her, beckoning me. She was wearing a sleeveless shirt that buttoned down the front, and a pair of tight shorts. She reached up and took her reddish-blond hair out of the ponytail, letting it fall down her cheeks and spread across her shoulders. I moved over to sit beside her, reaching around to put my arm around her shoulder, and felt the weight of her hair against my arm as she moved into my embrace. We kissed, fumbling to find each other's lips in the dark. As we connected, we lowered each other down onto the blanket until we were lying on our sides, facing each other, lips locked together and arms entwined. I felt her hand running up and down my back, and I did the same, my fingertips sensing the soft cotton of her shirt, the bumps and ridges of her spine, and the extra thickness of her bra beneath her shirt.

Her tongue insinuated itself into my mouth, searching and tasting, as our mouths opened wider against each other. The pressure of her hands turned more insistent on my back as we kissed, shifting our heads this way and that to try to get an even better contact. Her tongue played along my teeth as if they were piano keys, one side and then the other, before fleeing back into its own cavern, chased by my own tongue.

I dragged my hand down onto her beautiful, tight ass, blindly searching for the hem of her shirt. The pressure of my hand on the small of her back and on her butt caused her to move her hips closer to me, until her crotch was rubbing against my rigid dick. I slipped my hand under her shirttail and brushed along the soft skin of her back, feeling the muscles underneath the skin flexing and relaxing with the unconscious movement of her hips against me. As I moved up her back, my arm pushed her shirt up until it started to bunch up under her arm. It must have irritated her a little, because she let go of me and

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started to unbutton it. I tried to help, but it's easier working buttons when they're on you, so I ended up fumbling around until she finished the job. She shrugged out of her shirt and settled back against me, reaching once more for another wet, open-mouthed kiss. I put my arms around her again, and enjoyed feeling her back tense and relax as I tickled up and down along her spine. Molly, in the meantime, found the hem of my shirt and started rucking it up my body, duplicating my movements.

I didn't have a lot of experience with the hooks and eyes of bra straps, but I managed to unhook Molly's with one hand after wrestling with it for a few moments. As soon as it was loose, I ran my hand around her, to her left tit, and pushed her back just a little so I could play with it better. I pressed her whole breast with the palm of my hand, feeling her nipple expand against it. I was gently squeezing and releasing it, still amazed at the sensation of this soft, sensuous place on a girl's body that differed so much from mine. The contrast of her hard ribcage, topped by her amazingly tender breast, tipped by this flexible and sensitive nipple, was a constant source of joy and discovery for me.

I wanted so much to give her an inkling of the pleasure she was imparting, so I left her lips and tongue and trailed soft kisses and licks down her throat, under her ear (boy, did *that* cause a reaction!), and down her body to her boob.

She arched up, trying to move her breast and nipple into my mouth as I got closer. However, I sensed that a slower buildup would lead to a more interesting conclusion, so I took the longer, winding path to her treasures. Molly was moaning in frustration, rolling around on the blanket in an attempt to increase the contact, until she finally grabbed me by the neck and forcibly pushed my face onto her. She sighed in contentment and arousal as she felt my lips enclose her swollen nipple. I sucked on her, drumming my tongue across the swollen nub, and brought my hand over to squeeze and play with her right breast as I was feasting on her left.

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Unwilling to show any favoritism, I transferred the attentions of my mouth to her right breast, sucking hard on her. Each time I rubbed her nipple with my tongue, her breathing got rougher and deeper and she hugged me tighter to her, so I figured I was doing it all right. Taking my cue from her, I continued. *Small reaction, try something else. Big reaction, do that some more.* That plan worked out even as I was sucking on her right breast and reaching down her body toward her legs. As I rubbed up her thigh and between her legs, she moaned even harder, her hips started wriggling more, and she started reaching for my crotch. I took this to be a good sign.

Her shorts had an elastic waistband, so it was a simple matter for me to reach in and slip my hand down between her shorts and her panties to caress her. Her panties were silky to the touch, and were soaked through, which created a greater sense of urgency within me. My cock got instantly harder, something I didn't think was possible. Molly, meanwhile, was pulling at the snap of my cutoffs, yanking on my shorts until they unsnapped and unzipped in one quick motion. She snaked her fingers through the gap in my shorts and grabbed me. She held my twitching cock tightly, and began to pump her hand up and down on me, a purely unconscious reaction on her part to the sensations rolling through her.

I started to push her shorts down off her hips, and she apparently thought this was an excellent idea, because she did the same with mine. We kept getting all tangled up, trying to undress each other, so we wordlessly sat up together. She knelt beside me, pushed me back so I was lying down, and worked my shorts and underwear off. She stared at my cock, pulsing with the beating of my heart, for just a moment before laying back herself and lifting up her hips in invitation. I sat up and pulled her shorts down, and then pulled her panties off. I could smell her excitement, and it pulled me toward her. As I leaned down toward her, she put out her hands and stopped me.

"Did you bring them?" she said quietly, her eyes shining in the dark.

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I nodded, and scrambled over to where my shorts lay crumpled in a pile. I dug into my pocket and pulled out one of the little foil packets, and I tore it open. My fingers weren't working properly, and I felt a little frantic as I took the condom out of the package and tried to put it on.

"Come here, I'll do that," she whispered with a giggle. She sat up, her small breasts jiggling provocatively, and knelt down in front of me. I handed her the condom, and had to hold my breath when the sensations of what she was doing to me suddenly hit me like a giant wave.

Molly grabbed my stalk and pumped me just a little bit. Drops of pre-cum oozed from the tip and dribbled down the side and onto her hand. She used that moisture to slide her hand up and down my cock, from tip to balls, her fingers straying down to explore my sac before grasping my length again. More liquid escaped and coated the head. Curious, she stuck out her tongue and licked it off the sensitive tip.

That was nearly all it took. I started shaking and gasping.

"M... M... Molly... I... I... don't think..." I stammered. Panicky, I tried counting backwards by fives from one hundred to take my mind off my impending climax. She looked up at me, startled, and stopped what she was doing. I looked down at her, into that beautiful, pale, slightly freckled face, and watched as she savored the taste of my fluids, licking her lips and running her teeth across her tongue. That, by itself, nearly brought the crisis back, just watching her.

After a moment, the feeling passed. I nodded to her, and she rolled the condom on me without too much further excitement. She lay back down, knees bent and legs apart, and held out her arms to me. I crawled between her legs, and put my arms around her as I lay on top of her, conscious of keeping my weight on my knees and elbows. I could feel the heat emanating from her pussy through my covered cock, drawing me ever closer, like a bee to clover.

I made contact. Her pussy lips slipped open as the tip of my cock touched her and the flood was released. Through the latex, I could feel

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the hot moisture from her center as it coated me, coaxing me into moving further into her. I felt the head slip into her hole, and she arched and moaned, her head thrown back, at the sensation. Her legs moved around me, and she crossed her ankles on the small of my back, opening up her whole self to me.

Her flowing oils eased the entry, but she was tight against my cock, so tight. She flexed her legs, moaning continually, trying to pull me further into her. I pushed until I felt the need to relieve the pressure, and pulled slowly back out a little. Then it was back into her again. This time I was about halfway in before I needed to stroke out. I continued this, finding a rhythm, stroke in, stroke out, each stroke in giving me a little more penetration than the last, until, finally, I felt her pubic hair tickling against mine. I stopped moving, and we both gasped with the sensation of being fully inside her. I grinned down at her as I flexed my cock inside her. Her eyes opened wider and she smiled, concentrating on contracting her pussy muscles against me, watching my reaction.

My reaction was to very nearly cum in buckets, right then. I heard myself whisper, "Oh, God, oh, God," in a mantra to keep from spouting immediately. I knew though, it would be only a matter of a few moments before my climax would overcome me.

I pulled slowly out until just the tip was embedded in her. Then, I thrust with what energy and force I had left back deep into her. Again, and again, and a fourth time, and I was done.

Molly's eyes were open, but she wasn't seeing anything. She was concentrating on the sensations flowing through her from our point of contact, nearly ready to go over the edge herself. However, I was too quick, too overwhelmed, too young to know how to pace myself.

I came. I was deep inside her, as deep as I could get, and her walls squeezed and milked me. Six, seven, eight times I pumped and jetted my seed into the latex, until there was no more to be pumped. The well was dry, the boy was finished. I collapsed on top of her, surrendering to the physical exertions. She remained still, except for

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her hips and legs, which were still clenching me, trying to milk the last sensations from our union.

Molly started giving me small, quick kisses on my cheek, my neck, my ear. It got me out of my reverie. I lifted my head up off her and looked into her smiling eyes.

"How're you doing, Molly?" I asked uselessly.

"Pretty darn good, Sean Porter," she replied. "But you're kind of heavy. Do you mind sliding off for a minute?"

"Okay," I said. It felt like my brain still was not functioning at much more than half capacity, so I was tracking her a little slowly. I lifted my hips to pull out of her, and rolled off to lay next to her. I reached down to remove the spent condom from my softening cock and threw it off into the woods. I thought I heard a noise from that direction, but I thought it must have been a squirrel angry at our intrusion. "Did you cum?" I asked Molly, turning back to her and reaching for her swollen breast.

She hesitated. "Um... no, not really," she admitted. "But I really enjoyed it, anyway," she added quickly.

"Hmmm..." I said, looking at her and smiling. "What can we do about this? I wonder..."

She reached over and gave me a playful slap, and rolled over into my arms and gave me a scorching kiss. I could feel my sleeping cock twitch awake, willing to pay attention to whatever Molly wanted. Distractedly, I wondered where she learned to kiss like that, since she never had a real boyfriend. Very quickly though, I could not concentrate on anything beyond what was being inflicted on me by my companion on the blanket.

She was reaching down, snaking her hand between us, to grasp my dick. As soon as she touched it, the blood started to flow, and she held it in her hand as it grew to nearly its full length.

She stopped kissing me long enough to whisper, "That's pretty amazing, how it does that," and returned once more to lock her lips on mine and send her tongue in to do battle. She started stroking me

gently, the moisture from my ejaculation providing glide. She dropped her hand down to my balls and explored. She gently squeezed, manipulated, and tickled me from my asshole to the base of my now rigid cock, enthralled at finding something so foreign and yet so attractive to her.

I returned to further explore my own favorite body part, her pert breasts with their engorged nipples. I kneaded them, I hefted them, I ran light concentric circles around them until my fingertips encountered the distended nubs of her nipples, standing up and begging for attention.

Finally, I pushed her back again, and lowered my head down to take her nipple between my teeth. She never relinquished her hold on my cock, stroking and squeezing me as I suckled on her breast. I licked her breast, leaving a trail of saliva down the mound of her left tit and across the valley between, and up to the other breast, and continued my oral ministrations on that one. When I felt that I had her sufficiently paying attention, I scooted down, planting small kisses down her sternum to her belly button as my hand dipped further, encountering her wiry, thin patch of reddish pubic hair. My fingers brushed through the hair and encountered the heat and moisture of her slit, slipping between her rubbery pussy lips to the folds beneath. As my tongue explored the cavity of her navel, my fingers explored the cavity of her pussy, two fingers dipping in her flowered opening, thumb finding her engorged clit. Knuckle deep my index and middle fingers went in, and I continued licking my way down, through her hair, until my tongue discovered the flavor of her oils.

By this time, she stopped contorting herself and finally let go of my cock, surrendering to my willingness to impart pleasure. I studied as I had before, doing things to her that caused big reactions, moving on to something else when I only created small reactions. I found out she really liked having both fingers in her vagina, stroking slowly and gently (one was not enough, I found out, and three was too many). She also liked the sensations caused by my tongue flicking against her clit.

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She went completely over the edge, however, when I inadvertently did them both at the same time.

"Iiiieeee!" She cried out into the night, her orgasm hitting her swiftly and unexpectedly.

Then, when that had passed, she grabbed my head and said, "Stop, Sean, please. It's too sensitive right now." She pulled me up to her and gave me a searing kiss, and then pushed me back. "Let me see what I can do to you now," she said, smiling. She knelt up and over me, grasping my steely cock in her hand. She watched as, again, pre-cum dribbled out and coated the tip, and, like before, she stuck out her tongue to lightly taste it. She was familiar enough with the taste by then that she continued bathing my cock with her tongue, holding it like an ice cream cone and licking the top. She looked up at me for a moment, and, without breaking eye contact, opened her mouth and allowed my cock to slip between her lips. I groaned at the sensation of her tongue and mouth around my prick, and the vision of the beautiful Molly O'Toole with my cock in her mouth was nearly enough to send me off again. If I hadn't cum once already a few minutes ago, I would have busted my nut into her mouth right then. I held fast though, and ran my hands through her hair as she concentrated on taking as much of me into her mouth as she could. I could feel her tongue rotating around my length as she stroked me in and out from between her lips. Her hand was caressing my balls at the same time she was sucking me. I brushed my hand down her back as she knelt there, to her gorgeous ass, and down her crack until I found her swollen pussy lips. I pushed my fingers into her, and she lifted off my cock and arched her back, nearly coming just from that small touch.

She turned her hooded eyes toward me and whispered, "Did you bring another one?"

I nodded mutely. She reached over me to my shorts, searching pockets until she found her prize. She tore open the package and took out the condom. She bent back over me, concentrating on rolling it

down my cock. She swung her leg around me, straddling me, and grasped my dick with her hand. She rubbed it up and down over her pussy lips, getting the head oily and slippery, before placing the tip inside her vagina and sitting down, impaling herself completely in one stroke. She paused for a moment, reveling in feeling me filling her up, and then she started doing her deep knee bends, stroking herself up and down, moving me in and out, each stroke moving easier and slicker into her. She was still incredibly tight, but the combined moisture flooding from her pussy and the lubrication of the condom eased the passage of my sword into her scabbard. Her perfect tits bobbed with her exertions, and I couldn't resist reaching up with both hands and fondling them as we fucked. I squeezed them and held them as Molly did all the work, her skin glistening in the soft moonlight. I then simply held my hands still as her body worked up and down, and the friction against her nipples, along with the way my stem worked against her clit in this position, sent her over the edge and into a powerful, overwhelming orgasm. She opened her mouth to scream, but nothing but a rush of air came out. When she came, the walls of her pussy contracted against me, triggering my own climax. I pushed up against her instinctively, trying to get as deep into her as I could. When I did, the base of my cock must have rubbed up against her clit, because she set off again, hunching rapidly up and down and gasping for air, nearly in a panic to prolong the extreme pleasure that was washing over her.

At last, as I had done before, she collapsed down on top of me in exhaustion. She was sweaty and tired, with her hair sticking to her back and neck. I softly caressed her back with both hands, trying to will away her weariness as she lay comfortably on me. We were still joined together, her legs splayed out to the side. The pressure of her pussy kept me partially hard, but I could feel my cock starting to soften within her. As her breathing eased, she lifted up her head and stared at me for a moment. She dropped down and softly kissed me on the lips and said, "I really, really liked it like that."

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I burst out laughing. "I could tell," I told her between gasps. She looked at me as if I had lost my mind, and then started laughing herself as she lifted up her hips. My well-used cock, now deflated to about half its previous size, slipped out of her, landing with a soft plop against my belly. The reservoir of the condom was filled nearly to capacity. I stripped it off and tossed that one into the woods, too. Molly snuggled up next to me, my arm around her shoulder, both of us naked and unashamed in the darkness of the clearing. I could feel the softness of her breast as it pressed against my ribcage, a feeling I wouldn't mind getting used to.

"Sean?" she asked quietly after a few minutes.

"Molly?" I answered groggily. My eyelids were getting heavy.

"Will you be my boyfriend?"

That snapped my eyes open. I should have known that the things we had done the past two days would lead to this, but I hadn't been expecting it to come up right then. I thought about Kayla, and Jake, and Josh, and Kayla again.

"I'll try, Molly. But I'm not sure I know how," I told her.

She was silent for a moment more. "That's okay," she said. "I'm not real sure about how to be a girlfriend, either. But we can try, can't we?"

"We can try," I agreed.

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FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Two days later, I was riding my bike down the sidewalk when I heard someone call out my name. I looked over and Jake Lehigh came running up to me, just as I was stopping. He looked really mad as he reached me. I was off-balance, in the process of stopping my bike, when he shoved me down and off my bike.

"You *asshole!*" he shouted. "What the fuck do you think you're doing?"

I jumped up and got right back into his face. "What are you talking about, Jake?"

"I saw you and Molly."

Uh-oh, I thought to myself. I had a sick feeling I knew where this was headed. I couldn't back down, though, not to Jake.

"Yeah? What did you see, Jake?"

"I was in the tree the other night. I saw you and Molly walk back into the woods, so I followed you. I saw the whole thing."

"The whole thing?" I asked. "So you were peeping at us like a perv?"

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"A perv? Me? Damn it, Sean, you almost hit me with that first condom you threw into the woods!"

I looked at him, not sure I heard him correctly. Just the image that conjured up in my mind was enough to make me bust out laughing. Jake looked at me as if I was crazy. Then he must have realized how funny it all was, because he just started laughing with me, until finally we were both sitting on the ground, our arms around each other's shoulders like the best pals we really were, laughing until the tears were racing down our faces.

I looked at him out of the corner of my eye. "Splat," I said. That started us going all over again.

By the time we were finally calmed down, we were lying on our backs on the ground, my bicycle still blocking the sidewalk as it lay on its side.

"Okay," wheezed Jake, "enough of this. What the fuck's going on? And, by the way, where did you get the protection?"

Well, that nearly got me going again as I described my trip into his father's drug store with Josh to buy the condoms.

"No shit, my dad helped you guys out? Man, I wonder what he was thinking," marveled Jake.

"It took us by surprise, believe me," I said. "I really didn't know what to say to him."

"Yeah, I'll bet," said Jake. "So, Sean, what are you going to do?"

I sighed. I knew exactly what he meant. "I don't know, man. I mean, I really like Molly, and I don't want to hurt Kayla's feelings, because I really like her, too. But she's still in middle school, you know? We really can't be, like, going out or anything, can we?"

"Well, she's my sister and all, but you're right. Besides, Molly is a supreme-o hot babe. And I got to see her naked, which is even better."

"Yeah," I said, sitting up. "It's much better. But you've got to stop spying on us, Jake. I'm going to get the willies thinking about you being out there somewhere. Promise me."

"You really know how to spoil my fun," muttered Jake as he stood up and brushed himself off. "Okay, no more spying. But you've got to share some of your rubbers in exchange."

"What do you mean, share?"

"Hey, I can't walk into my own dad's store and just buy the things, can I? Besides, you still have a bunch. If you keep me supplied, I'll pay for the next boxful, okay?"

"Wait a minute, I smell a story here. What's going on, Jake?" I asked. I had a feeling things had progressed between he and Jaimie.

"Well... yeah, I need 'em," he admitted. "Jaimie and I... well... we kind of... um... did it the other day..."

"You *did*? Man, tell me!"

"Well... it was uh, let's see... the day after we ran into Jaimie and Kayla coming back from the Dairy Queen. You remember that day? Jaimie and I went over to her house and you and Kayla were watching TV at my house? Anyway, Jaimie and I met at her house again the next day, and one thing led to another, and... uh..."

"And?" I prompted.

"And... we did it. Twice. On the couch in the family room."

"Twice? You dog you!" I slapped his arm companionably.

He looked a little uncomfortable about his confession, but then he looked up at me and smiled.

"Oh, yeah," he said, grinning. "But you know how it is, I saw you do it with Molly twice that night."

"Oh, yeah, indeed," I said, grinning back at him like an idiot.

"Anyway, Jaimie got a severe case of the guilts afterward, and won't hardly talk to me right now. Maybe, if I can show her I've got some condoms, she'll at least talk to me. So that's why I need them."

"Okay, pal, come with me. I've got them stashed at home. You can have a few, but if you get caught with them, you didn't get them from me, all right?"

"I won't get caught," he said. "You know me better than that."

Yeah, right. Famous last words.

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So we went over to my house and up to my room. I thought that hiding them in rolled up socks, like Josh had done, was a pretty good idea, so I had done the same. I unrolled a pair of soccer socks and handed Jake four packets.

"Here you go, Jake. Two nights' worth, at your rate." I snickered just a little. Already I was down to six condoms left. And I had the feeling Molly was going to find a way to use them up quickly. Not that I was complaining, of course, but I hoped I wouldn't encounter Jake's dad if I had to go back for more too soon. He would really wonder what was going on then.

"Thanks, Seanster, you're the best. Oh, by the way, my parents are having a bunch of neighbors over tomorrow for a cookout and stuff. They're setting up softball and volleyball in the field behind our house and I think there's a scavenger hunt after dark. Why don't you come over after you're done at the Wilkinsons?"

"Sure," I replied. "Sounds like fun. I can do that."

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LIGHT AND SHADOW

I got over to Jake's house about three in the afternoon, just as the big softball game was being organized. Most of Jake's neighborhood was there, totaling about ten families, so there were lots of adults and kids running around. There were big galvanized garbage cans filled with ice and sodas, and a couple of coolers with beer and wine for the adults. Most of the moms were not going to participate in the game, but all the kids and a lot of the dads were already out there, setting bases and marking the field for the game. Jake was standing out in right field with Jaimie, Kayla, Tara, and a couple of the younger kids from the neighborhood. Everyone was drinking sodas and waiting for teams to be chosen. Jake saw me first and waved me over. When Kayla saw me, she smiled and leaned over to whisper something to Jaimie, who laughed out loud, glancing up in my direction.

I grabbed a can of soda and ran out to where they were standing. Jaimie was wearing a tight t-shirt that accentuated her high, firm breasts. She kept on standing up straight, shoulders back, to make them stick out even more, and kept on glancing over at Jake to gauge his reaction. His reaction was to be a little nervous about having those things thrust at him when his parents and his sister were around.

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Tara, Jaimie's sister, was apparently in some sort of competition with her, since she had on what looked like a man's shirt, the top three buttons left open, and the shirttails tied around her to leave her flat tummy bared. Combined with a pair of shorts that were so short and tight I could almost make out her pussy lips, she exuded a sultriness that was far beyond her years

Kayla, on the other hand, looked fresh, young, and delicious in a tank top and soccer shorts. Her long hair was tied back in a ponytail that cascaded down her back, and the almost white color set off her tan beautifully.

The group of us walked back toward the sidelines, where the teams were being chosen. Mr. Lehigh and Mr. Jacks, Tara and Jaimie's father, were the team captains. They made sure each child was chosen for a team, starting with the youngest, before any adults or teenagers were picked. Jake and I were on opposing teams, Jaimie was on Jake's, Tara and Kayla were on mine. We had some really small kids, four and five years old, playing on both teams, and Jake and I both helped our players when their turn at bat came up. We ended up playing two innings before the younger ones got bored and wandered away. The older kids and the adults kept on playing, and the game got more and more competitive. Finally, in the seventh inning, the whole game deconstructed on a double-play, a fly ball caught in left field and a runner picked off at first. The batting team called the runner safe, the fielding team called the runner out. After about ten minutes of arguing and discussing the play, the only conclusion that could be drawn was that everyone was hot, tired, thirsty, and hungry. We all decided to call it quits, and everyone headed in to the sidelines, where all these problems could be solved.

Jake and I each grabbed a couple of sodas and plopped down on the ground, sweaty and tired. The three girls came over to sit by us, each with a soda of their own. For some reason, Tara bent over right in front of us to brush off the grass, giving Jake and I a peek down her

shirt as it gapped open. Her developing breasts were dimly visible, unencumbered by a bra.

I leaned over to Jake and whispered, "What's up with Tara and her getup?"

He looked at me quizzically and shrugged. *You know as much as I do*, his expression said.

"Tara," Jaimie warned quietly.

Tara looked at her sister, who was scowling at her. Her face turned an angry red, and you could tell she was closing in on herself as she stood up, looked down on Jaimie silently, and turned and walked away. She tried to sway her boyish hips as provocatively as she could as she headed back over by some of the younger kids.

"Who is she trying to be grown-up for?" Jake asked.

"I really don't know," said Jaimie. "The past few days she's really been in a strange mood. I hope she snaps out of it soon, it's getting on my nerves."

"Oh, forget her," said Kayla. "She's probably just PMSing and taking advantage of it."

"Maybe," admitted Jaimie. "I just hope she gets over it soon, or I'm going to have to give her the 'big sister' cure."

"And what's the 'big sister' cure?" asked Kayla.

"That's the cure where I sit on her until she promises to lighten up," said Jaimie. "It's kind of like that fax joke that my Dad has hanging in his office that says, 'The Beatings Will Continue Until Morale Improves'."

We all laughed at the thought of Jaimie sitting on top of Tara until her mood improved. I thought she'd have to sit there for a long, long time.

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After dark, when some of the parents had taken the little kids off to bed, Mrs. Lehigh gathered the older kids around to announce the Grand Scavenger Hunt.

"Okay, kids," she said as she handed out the sheets of paper with the items to be collected. "Here are the rules. All these items must be collected within this neighborhood. All the parents know about the scavenger hunt, so you won't be surprising anybody by ringing their doorbell. No going to any stores or outside this area. You have ninety minutes to collect as much of the list as you can, and then you have to meet back here. There will be prizes awarded for the most items found, the quickest back to headquarters here, and maybe a couple of other prizes to be named later. You must buddy up. I don't want any kids going off by themselves, so pick a partner before you go. All set, everybody? Ready, set, go!"

All the kids started picking buddies to go out with and running off with their lists. Kayla grabbed my hand and said, "Wait a second, Sean." She made sure everybody else took off, and then led me in a different direction, bags and lists in hand.

"Where are we off to?" I asked.

"Shhh... just follow me," she said secretively.

She kept us in the shadows, sneaking around the outside of the house while holding my hand and tiptoeing through the grass. She peeked around the corner to the front of the house to make sure the coast was clear, and pulled me behind her as she crossed the front yard to the front door of her house.

She opened the door into the dark house. We went in, back to the kitchen, and downstairs into the basement. She closed the basement door and led me down the stairs in the inky blackness. I was blind in the darkness, but she moved through the basement without hesitation to the couch.

"Sit here, Sean. I'll be right back."

I sat on the couch, wishing there was even just a pinprick of light to see something by. I heard Kayla on the other side of the room,

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rustlings and the soft whisper of cloth heard only due to the increased concentration on sound I was experiencing, thanks to the loss of use of my eyes.

“Kayla?” I whispered.

“Shhh...” I heard from across the room. I thought I heard a door quietly creak, but I couldn’t be sure.

There was a small line of light coming from the frame of the closet door. As my eyes adjusted to this minimal amount of light, I slowly became aware of what was around me. It was a familiar room, so the furniture and walls quickly gained their proper place as I got used to the light. I could just make out the shape of Kayla standing over by the closet door.

“Can you see anything yet?” she whispered.

“Not much,” I said. “What are we doing down here? We’re supposed to be on a scavenger hunt.”

She reached for the doorknob and opened the closet door just a crack. Light from inside the closet seemed to flood out of the opening, and suddenly I could see Kayla standing there, the light seeming to focus on her features.

She was completely naked, her pale hair loose and falling down, spreading across her shoulders. Her small breasts, white landmarks on her tanned chest and stomach, were poking out of their hiding place behind her blonde hair, her nipples rosy and erect. The light cascaded across her waist and narrow hips, highlighting her hipbone, swathing her navel in highlights and shadow. Her pubic hair, nearly as pale yellow as the hair on her head, was but a deeper shadow at the juncture of her legs. She reached up and, with just one finger, brushed her hair off her forehead above her eyebrow, the gesture less one of unconscious habit as one of sensuous anticipation.

I was speechless. I was riveted to the couch, and could not move so much as an inch, so enthralled with the vision she presented was I. She stared at me for a moment, motionless. The image of Kayla standing there, innocent and beautiful, seared itself into my mind for all time.

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She walked over to me, the light haloing around her body, and sank down onto the couch and into my arms. We kissed, a wet and soft joining that spoke of promise and fulfillment.

"I found my mom's list of the scavenger hunt items in her desk, so I've already collected most of the items," she said softly. "We have about an hour to ourselves."

"You are a sneaky little devil," I murmured into her ear.

She chuckled throatily. "Oh, yes, I am," she agreed.

Her head stretched back as I nuzzled her soft neck, my arms around her and my hands reveling in the feel of her soft skin. She twisted in my arms, crossing her leg on my knee. My hand fell quite naturally down onto her hip. It was a natural progression to let my hand stray from there to her tender butt, and as I caressed her, she squirmed against me in anticipation.

She impatiently lifted up my t-shirt, anxious to remove the barrier of my clothing. I helped her take off my shirt, and we both reached for the snap of my shorts. Kayla undid the snap, I lowered the zipper, and she grabbed the shorts and tried yanking them down. I kicked off my shoes and lifted up my ass to help, and the shorts slid down my legs. As I was kicking them off my legs, Kayla was reaching for my underwear and pulling them down. She giggled as they got hung up on my stiff cock. Finally, she got the various parts untangled, and the underwear down and off. Almost immediately, she reached for my handle, grasping it in her small hand and pumping it up and down. She leaned over me, pressing me back into the couch, and hungrily reached for my mouth with hers, connecting with me in a dance that is as old as humanity.

She rolled over on top of me, still holding on to my swollen cock. I slipped down under the assault until I was on my back on the couch. She was still holding my swollen cock as she straddled my leg, and as she lightly hunched herself against my thigh, I could feel the droolings of her hot pussy. She stopped sucking at my tongue and dropped down to my chest, leaving me breathless and a little overwhelmed. She

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licked and sucked on the skin of my chest, and moved down to tickle her lips and chin against the soft hair sprouting below my belly button. I tried to sit up, but she kept pushing me back with her head as she lowered herself down on me. I felt her blow softly on the head of my raging cock, cooling and drying the oozing pre-cum she was jacking from me. My cock throbbed in her hand, anticipating warm and wet contact.

Kayla did not disappoint. She licked the tip tentatively, creating a delicious fire in my loins. My hips jerked up involuntarily, trying to find a receptacle for my aching dick, but she was not quite ready to provide that yet. Her fingers found my sac and began exploring as she licked at the helmet of my cock more enthusiastically, holding my cock nearly vertical with her other hand. I didn't know what to do with my hands, since she was bent over and examining my middle, so I let them run along her shoulders and get tangled up in the fine mass of her long pale hair. I could feel one turgid nipple poking me on the top of my thigh, leaving a trail of scorching heat back and forth as she moved on me. It felt like my eyes were rolling up in my head from the intense pleasure she was giving me, and she had me groaning from the pressures being inflicted on me by her tongue and her hands. She licked around and around the head of my throbbing cock, occasionally wrapping her lips around the stalk. Saliva and pre-cum provided lubrication for her pumping hand, moving slowly up and down. My cock was so hard the skin was stretched tight around it, so the moisture kept the feeling of abrasion down as she worked her hand tightly on me.

Each pass of her tongue across the sensitive head created a series of twitchings in the sympathetic musculature of my lower abdomen, from stomach to thigh. She must have been fascinated by the reaction she caused, for she repeatedly returned to that spot to concentrate her tongue's ministrations, leaving to explore further afield, but always to return to the scene of the most intense reactions. She was practicing

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the same strategy I used earlier: small reaction, move on; big reaction, hang around a while.

Finally, she took a sort of pity on me and engulfed the entire head of my aching member in her small, hot mouth. My eyes bugged out with the feelings as she sucked hard, her tongue in constant motion around the intrusion between her lips. She slowly, agonizingly, lowered her mouth further down on me. I could feel the heat of her mouth encasing my sensitized cock down, lower, until she engulfed most of me. Lips locked around me, she slowly raised her head up and off me, until just the tip was inside her mouth. She concentrated, still holding my balls in her soft hand, and dropped back down on me. The heat built up again, and her tongue continued to lick and caress as she sucked. She moved faster on my cock, her mouth, tongue, and lips working to bring me to climax. Her head bobbed up and down, taking my hands for a ride, as she alternately sucked hard, licked softly, and sucked hard again. By then, my hips were doing a dance all on their own, and I could feel the explosion building.

"Ahhh... Kay... I'm... ahhh..." was all I could say before I felt the contraction and pulse, releasing my pent-up essence. She took it all, kept on sucking on my spewing cock, accepting my load into her mouth. She swallowed, and the action created even more of a vacuum in that hot, tight space that I could feel against my most sensitive parts, and off I went on another series of contraction and pulse, contraction and pulse, back and hips and thighs and stomach tensed as the pleasure washed over me.

Finally, I collapsed back against the couch, spent. I could feel my abused cock soften slightly, even as she was trying to coax the last of my cum from me with her lips and her hands. She lifted up her head to look at me, my cock sliding out of her mouth with a soft pop. Her eyes were shining in the dim light, and I could see her smiling as she swallowed the last of my load. She shimmied up to lie on top of me, and I hugged her close. I lifted up her chin and kissed her softly on the lips. I whispered, "Oh my God, Kayla, you didn't have to do that."

"Didn't you like it?" She looked at me, a little crestfallen.

"Oh, God, I loved it! I just meant that... um... you didn't have to... um..."

"You mean swallow it?" she finished with a giggle. "I like it, Sean. Well, I mean, I'm not crazy about the taste, you know, but I like doing it, and it just seemed like the right thing to do. Besides, I've heard that guys really like it when girls don't stop when they cum," she said.

"Oh? And where did you hear that from, missy?" I looked at her, amazed by what she knew and what she had learned in the past couple of weeks.

I thought she blushed a little. Her body language, from the slight hunching of her shoulders to the way she looked up at me through her eyelashes, pointed to a mild case of embarrassment. "Never you mind," she said with a smile.

I held her in my arms and flipped over on the couch, pulling her around so she was lying back on the couch and I was over her. She shifted her legs apart to accommodate my body. I pressed my right knee up against her hot pussy, feeling her oily lubrication leaking out and coating my skin where we touched.

"Yeah? And did your friends tell you about this?" I asked as I tweaked first one nipple, and then the other, with a fingertip. They immediately jumped to attention.

"No, I don't remember them saying anything about that," she said with a sigh of arousal.

"Or this?" I asked as I bent down and grasped one nipple between my lips and flicked it with my tongue. At the same time, I slid down the couch a little so I could run my hand up the inside of her thigh and brush against her flowered pussy lips.

She moaned as my fingers touched her folds. "Mmmmm... no, they didn't mention it..." She lifted up her chest toward my mouth as I suckled on her nipple. She pressed her hands into the back of my neck to push me further onto her breast, her anticipation building. My arm was around her, lifting her at the small of her back. I was thoroughly

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enjoying feeling her skin against mine as I sucked her nipple and rubbed its nub with my tongue. I tried to suck as much of her small breast as I could into my mouth, nearly covering her boob with my lips. At the same time, my fingers were dragging through the pool of her pussy, coating themselves with her oily moisture as I kept peeling open her petals, from clit to the opening of her vagina. Her legs were splayed open, giving me complete access to her most sensitive tissues, and her hips had begun an involuntary quiver as her arousal grew.

I lifted off her boob and dragged my tongue across her chest to lick and nip at her other breast, savoring the salty flavor of her skin all around the soft mound, working in concentric circles toward her swollen nipple. As I clamped down on it with my lips, I plunged my middle finger deep into her. She cried out softly, her hips lunged up trying to increase the depth of the intruding finger, and I felt her pussy leak even more moisture out and onto my hand. I pulled my finger out, ran it up her hot folds to the delicate nub of her clit, around and back down to plunge back into her. I started a rhythm as I finger-fucked her, timed to the movement of her hips, matching the rhythm with my tongue across her turgid nipple. Her breathing was getting shallower, and there was a fine sheen of sweat across her chest. As I looked up into her face, she moaned again. Her face was flushed, and her eyes were squeezed shut as she concentrated on the intense pleasure coursing up from her center into her overcharged brain. I kept on using my finger on her, occasionally adding the tip of my index finger to slide just inside her hole for added stimulation. At the same time, my thumb found her engorged clitoris and rubbed back and forth and all around the nub.

I slid down her body, her fresh odor guiding my nose directly to her pussy. I inhaled deeply, her pheromones speeding up my blood to make my revived cock even harder. My mouth was watering in anticipation of tasting her. I had found that I really, really liked licking and tasting girls, and the signals racing down my nerves from tongue, nose, fingers and skin inflamed my sensory receptors and diverted

blood flow directly into my already swollen cock. I reached out with my tongue, the tip just grazing along her flooded canal. Her hips jerked up at my touch, and she gasped for air, her hands clutching me painfully by my ears. I lapped up all the nectar between her folds I could find, moving from swollen clit to vaginal opening and back again, circling around her rigid nub. Each time I flicked her clit with the tip of my tongue, she huffed and puffed, hunching up her hips to my mouth. In an effort to increase her pleasure, she was also using her hands to push my head down onto her for greater contact. She was losing control quickly, which of course was my goal, so I covered her pussy lips with my mouth, stuck my tongue as deeply as I could into her hole. Then I pulled back and started trilling against her clit, while I plunged two fingers into her and rotated them within her.

She lost it. I'm not sure how else I could describe what happened to her, other than to say she lost it, big time. She screeched, the breath being forced out of her. She arched her back as she surrendered to her orgasm, her small body lifting me up with her. I never lost contact with her clit or her flooding hole as she came, my tongue and my fingers doing double duty as she bucked under me. She was practically pulling my ears off as she tugged my head harder onto her, working the sensations that triggered her climax. I kept on licking and sucking on her clit, her engorged lips, and her inner folds all during her orgasm. Her hips kept on churning as she plummeted over the edge, gasping and straining, working the sensations to their maximum effect, until she collapsed back, exhausted, her hands finally leaving my ears to caress the back of my head.

My tongue needed a break, so I stopped licking her, and shimmied back up to lie next to her. My fingers kept up their sly manipulations, playing among her sensitive tissues and dipping occasionally back into her heated center. Each time I let my finger explore her hole, her hips rose to meet it, but I thought that this was purely an involuntary reaction of her body to the excitations of her nerve endings. Her brain

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had pretty much shut down during her climax, and she was just now trying to grind the gears to get it going again.

Finally, she opened her eyes to look at me. My face was wet and shiny with her juices, and my ears hurt so much I was sure they were red from being twisted and pulled. I looked into her eyes, and saw the moment when it registered in her mind that I was not done with her quite yet. She suddenly was aware of the swaying motion of her hips as they cruised along to the tune my fingers were playing on her instrument. She wrapped her arm around me and pulled me up to give me an open-mouthed kiss as she reached down to grasp my steely cock once again.

She licked her lips, tasting herself from our kiss. "I'm not sure I like that taste," she whispered, "but you certainly seem to."

"There's nothing better in this entire world," I assured her. I wiped my face off with my hand, though, before leaning down to kiss her again.

Our lips stayed connected, and our tongues began their searches against each other again as I could feel both our temperatures climbing. It was obvious to both of us that we weren't quite done yet.

Her hand on my dick got more insistent, while at the same time my hand in her folds became more demanding. I was using two fingers on her, plunging them in and out of her more roughly than before. I rolled over on top of her, but she pressed up on my hips with her hands and stopped me from going any further than that.

"No, Sean," she gasped.

"I've got some protection, Kay, if you want..."

"No. I can't do that, Sean. I'm too scared. Let's just do it like we were doing, okay?" She was whispering, a little quaver in her voice that nearly broke my heart.

"Whatever you want," I assured her. I rolled back off her and onto my side, still using my fingers on her. She resumed her actions on my cock after abandoning it momentarily. The couch cushion, her entire crotch, the tops of her thighs, and my hand up to my wrist were all

soaked with her lubrication, and my fingers moved easily within her. At the same time, my pre-cum was flowing from the tip of my cock, and she spread this moisture all down the length of my rigid stalk. She bent her neck over to reconnect with me. She opened her mouth and let her tongue snake out to lick my lips before pressing harder to strengthen the seal. Her tongue wrestled with mine, thrusting and retreating in an echo of what she was feeling from her sopping center. We stayed that way, each heating up the other, until, finally, she could take no more. She broke our kiss and gave herself up to her pleasure. She threw her head back in ecstasy, eyes closed, gasping for air, as all her muscles began to contract and relax in a rhythm designed to throw her over the cliff of her extreme pleasure.

She came, spectacularly. She clamped her legs together, trapping my hand, and her fist, unbidden, squeezed and pumped on my steely dick as the waves washed through her. I felt my own muscles cramp in sympathy, one hand trapped between her legs and the other arm wrapped around her neck. The waves of pleasure she was experiencing washed from her into me through our mutual connections, my fingers being squeezed within her pussy and my cock being roughly manipulated by her pumping hand, and I came along with her. I spurted harder than I thought possible, four times, five, then six times, splattering her from breast to hip with my seed. Finally, groaning, I fell back against the couch cushions, and gently pulled my fingers out from her swollen pussy lips. She collapsed back, too, releasing my cock to cross her arms across her breasts to hug herself. I pulled her over toward me, and she rolled over to rest her head below my chin, oblivious to the milky white semen dripping from her.

"Oh. My. God." She whispered tiredly.

"Times two," I added.

"Any more and I don't think I could survive it," she said.

"I'm not sure I survived this one," I answered. I was so tired, my eyelids were threatening to droop.

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"You survived," she said. "I definitely felt a glimmer of life in you." I could feel her smile against my chest. She lifted her arm and doodled with her fingers on my stomach as we lay there together.

"That wasn't me. That was my evil twin brother. He killed me and took my place. Sean's too fragile to survive something like that."

"Oh, yeah? Well, evil twin, get up. It's late, and we have a scavenger hunt to complete." Kayla sat up and swung her legs down. "Uh-oh," she said. "We really made a mess here." She was looking down at her spattered body.

"It's even worse down here," I said, struggling to sit up. "We should have put a towel down or something. Look at this cushion."

"Ewww. It's a good thing my mom doesn't come down here very often," she said as she stood. "I'll go get some washcloths so we can clean ourselves up a little." She walked toward the laundry room, her narrow hips swaying just slightly. If I hadn't already cum twice, both times explosively hard, I might have felt my poor used cock twitch back to life. The contrast of light and shadow played on her backside, first revealing and then hiding her tan lines across her lovely bottom and the white band across her back. This created an image for me of just how lovely and sensuous a young girl can be without even thinking about it. At fifteen, I was thinking of myself more and more as a man of the world, and I couldn't think, at that point, of anything that could be more precious than the sight of Kayla walking away, blissfully innocent and unashamed of her nudity and her sexuality in my presence.

But I had a real problem, and I knew I had to face it soon. Kayla and Molly, unbeknownst to either of them, were battling for my attentions in my own mind. As much as I enjoyed the affections of them both, I was not happy about the deceptions that I had inadvertently created. It was a conflict that I knew I had to resolve before too long.

I stood up and stretched, reaching for my t-shirt and shorts. I heard water running in the laundry room, and a few minutes later Kayla

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returned, dressed once again, and carrying wet washcloths. She threw one at me.

"Here, Sean. See what you can do about cleaning up that cushion before it dries and stains the fabric." Kayla walked around the room with an air freshener, spraying the room to rid it of the odors of our passion.

I wiped my hands and face, and began on the cushion. How to break the subject?

"Kay?"

"Hmmm?"

"Ummm... I need to talk to you..."

"Okay, Sean," she said. She walked over and flipped on a light by the television.

"You know... uh... Molly O'Toole..."

"Sure," she said. "I know Molly and Josh, but I don't know Heather very well."

"Yeah, well... ummm... Molly and I..."

"Are going out? Yes, I know."

I sat down on the couch, a little stunned. "You know?"

"Sure. I heard Jake talking to Jaimie. I think it's great, Sean. You and Molly would make a really cute couple."

"What?" I couldn't believe what I was hearing. "Are you serious?"

Kayla came over and sat down beside me, taking my hand in both of hers. Her eyes were glistening in the pale light of the table lamp. "Sean, if I could, I would claim you for my boyfriend. But I know I can't. You're in high school, and I'm still in middle school. I love you, and I love what we've been able to do together. But I can't compete with Molly O'Toole, not with her being able to see you every day at school and all. I'm glad for you, Sean. I really am. Molly's a nice girl, and I like her a lot. Go out with her, have a great time. Just don't forget about me, okay?"

At that, tears started to spill down her cheeks. I really felt like shit as I watched her give me her blessing. She wiped her face with one of

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the damp cloths and sniffled a little. She stood up, looking down on me.

"But next year, when I get to that high school..." She left the rest of her comment unsaid, but I understood perfectly. All bets were off next year.

I stood up and gathered her into my arms and gave her a tight hug. She pressed her face into my shoulder and put her arms around me, clinging to me tightly.

"Come on, let's go upstairs before they send out a search party for us," she said. Her words were muffled as she pressed against me. "I've got the bag of scavenger items in the garage." She let go and took my hand, leading me toward the stairs. I followed along, numbly accepting direction from her as I tried to digest all that she had said.

I will never ever understand girls, I thought to myself as we left the house by the front door and snuck around to the garage.

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VARSITY SOCCER

School was starting in a few days, and the fall sports teams were busy practicing. Football was practicing in the mornings, soccer and tennis in the afternoons. Josh and Jake had both tried out for the football team and had made the junior varsity team. I was on the varsity soccer team, playing my right defensive position behind Skip Horvath, a senior and one of the stars of our team. Skip was chosen for All-Conference honors as both a sophomore and a junior, and was second-team All-State last year. Given his reputation and skills, I wasn't planning on a lot of playing time this season, but I knew he could teach me a lot about the game. Even though I wasn't a starter, I was happy to be playing on the varsity team with Skip as my mentor. I knew that the position was mine for my junior and senior years, as long as I didn't screw up somehow.

When I got to the first practice, I was surprised to discover that I was one of only two sophomores on the varsity team. In addition, one of the backup keepers was a freshman I only knew slightly. He was Kristina Mendoza's brother, Jorge. Like Kristina, he had been playing year-round soccer for years in Texas. The other sophomore was Eric

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Johnson, a teammate from my club soccer team. Eric won nearly every foot race he ever ran in, from grade school through middle school. He ran on the track team in the spring, but he preferred soccer to cross-country in the fall. Because of his speed and stamina, he usually played midfield. He wasn't especially skilled with the ball, but he was so lightning fast that, like Jen Davies, he left his opponents in the dust, making him very tough to defend.

Part of the first day of practice was spent introducing everybody, from players to coaches to equipment managers, as well as getting the schedules handed out and assigning lockers and uniforms. The rest of the time was spent running on the track. We did a one-mile run, rested, a half-mile run, rested, and finished with wind sprints. Eric and I were in pretty good shape from playing so much during the summer, but some of the kids were pretty wiped by the end of the afternoon. After the last sprint, we all pretty much collapsed on the grass of the soccer field, gasping and sweating. A couple of guys crawled over to the sidelines and threw up, something the coaches duly noted.

The coaches ordered us in to shower up. We all stood up to walk into the school to the locker room. Three or four teammates were a little wobbly and needed support, and a bunch of others were still breathing very hard long after Eric and I and a few others had managed to catch our breaths. We straggled along, glad the day's practice was finally over.

As I was sitting on the bench in front of my locker removing my soccer shoes, socks, and shin guards, Skip came over and sat down beside me. He had already removed his gear and thrown everything, including his sodden t-shirt, into a pile.

"You came out of that torture in pretty decent shape," he said. "I take it you played a lot this summer."

"Yeah," I said. "I played on a recreational team this summer, and I also played on a club team. As a matter of fact, we have our last game on Wednesday morning. I was wondering if I can get out of team practice that afternoon."

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He chuckled. "This is varsity soccer, Porter. No excuses for missing practice. You're gonna get your fill of running by the time you're done on Wednesday. Anyway," he continued, "we're having a little soccer team party on Saturday over at my house. Kind of a get-to-know-your-teammate party. You going out with anybody?" I nodded. "Bring her along. I've got a pool, so bring a suit and a towel. I'm telling people to get there anytime after about one o'clock in the afternoon. We'll throw something on the grill for dinner, but you'll need to provide your own drinks. No booze. Okay?" He got up and walked away without waiting for an answer.

A senior talked to me like I was an equal! And not just any senior, it was Skip Horvath, one of the best-known and most popular kids in school. Now I felt like I had really made the team. I went home to mow our lawn, dog-tired but happy.

* * * * *

The next morning, I rode over to the Wilkinson house to work with Davey and Kip. I had called Lori and let her know about my schedule. She was kind enough to let me switch to mornings with the boys.

We went over to the park and began stretching. I told them that I could only work with them on the weekends now that school was starting.

"But will you come watch our games?" asked Davey.

"Sure I will," I said. "Remind me to get a copy of your game schedule from your mom when we get back to your house, okay?"

"Are you gonna be our coach during the games, too?" asked Kip.

"No, sport. Your team already has a good coach. I'll just be there to cheer for you."

"Oh. Will Molly be there too?"

"Maybe. I can ask her, if you'd like," I said.

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"Molly's a good soccer player, isn't she?" asked Kip.

"Yes, she is."

"Well, why don't the two of you be our coaches, then?"

"I think it's because you're supposed to have grown-ups for coaches, Kip. Molly and I are still kids, too, you know."

"Really?" He had to think about this one. "I guess you are, if you are still going to school like Davey and me. But you look pretty grown-up to me, Sean."

I laughed out loud. "Hey, thanks, pal. But I really don't feel grown-up. I like being a kid, you know."

Davey looked at me as shrewdly as an eight-year-old could. "Yeah," he said, "being a kid is really all right, isn't it?"

"Come on, you guys, get up and get running. I think you're just saying this stuff to keep from working too hard," I said with a laugh as I climbed to my feet. "Ready? Last one to that willow tree over there has to be the monkey in the middle!" And off we dashed, running and laughing as we dribbled our soccer balls over to the tree.

I wanted to try to teach them about timing and space. I had Davey play defender while I had the ball. Kip was about twenty feet to the side, counting in seconds as the drill progressed. Davey started about forty feet up from me, and on my signal started running toward me to take the ball away. At the same time, I dribbled up toward him, and passed the ball to Kip when Davey got near.

"How many seconds did you count, Kip?" I asked.

His eyes were big and round, hardly believing his own counting. "Only two!" he said.

"How many seconds did you think it would take before Davey got to me?"

"About twenty," he said.

"That's how fast you have to look around for a teammate, watch your defender, and make a decision on what to do with the ball. Two seconds to do all that. Can you do it?"

"Yes!" cried Davey.

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"No!" cried Kip.

We did the exercise again, and Kip was closer to being right than Davey was, but I wasn't disappointed. It's an extremely hard physics concept for little kids to grasp, time and two bodies in motion. I'd had teenaged teammates who couldn't figure it out. Nevertheless, I thought that if I could get them to at least acknowledge the difficulty, then they would be another step up on nearly every other kid their age on the soccer field. After several frustrating tries at it, I finally had to make the defender start out nearly a hundred feet away from the player with the ball. This gave them four or five seconds to make their decision, and that was more workable for both of them. We worked on this problem off and on during the whole lesson, even going so far as to chant during our water breaks, "One potato look, two potato pass. One potato look, two potato pass."

Two hours later, we were headed back to their house. We played our Heads-Up game with three soccer balls, but kept up the chant all the way home, passing the ball as we said the word "pass".

Lori was on the front steps waiting for us when we got to the house, standing by the front door. She watched as we completed our last passes as we came past the driveway and onto the front lawn.

"Who are these boys, Sean?" she asked. "They are too organized to be my Davey and my Kip." She looked down at the boys with a smile on her face. "Who are you, and what did you do with my sons?"

"It's us, mom, really it's us," yelled Kip. He ran up the steps and hugged his mother around her waist.

"I know it is, Kip, I was just teasing. I hardly recognized you is all, you guys were so good at passing the ball!" She looked at me, eyes twinkling. "Come in and get something to drink, boys." She held the door open for us, and we filed in to enjoy our customary glasses of fresh lemonade.

"So this is the last summer lesson, I guess," Lori said as she refilled our glasses. The boys had run upstairs to get cleaned up and I was hanging around for a few minutes before going home for lunch.

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"Yes, it is," I said. "I've got a game tomorrow morning, and school starts on Thursday."

"Kip and Davey don't start until Friday. This summer really flew past. It seems like it was only yesterday that it was Memorial Day weekend."

"I know. I've been so busy this summer with soccer and stuff that I almost feel like I didn't get a vacation, and now school's starting again. Ugh!"

"Ah, but you did have a vacation," she reminded me. "You got to sleep in almost every morning, didn't you?"

"Well, yeah," I said sheepishly. "But those days are gone now."

"I'm not going to feel that badly for you, Sean," she said with a smile. "I haven't gotten to sleep in since the boys were born."

It was time for me to go. I stood up and carried both our glasses over to the sink and rinsed them out while Lori rummaged in her purse for my money for the lessons. When she handed me the bills, there was an extra ten dollars folded into the middle.

"What's this for?" I asked.

"It's for being so good with the boys," she said.

"No, Lori. I can't take it. They've been really good, and I've enjoyed..."

"Forget it, Sean," she said, "you're taking it." She wrapped my fingers around the money and then stepped in to me, pressing herself up against my chest. She kept her eyes open as she kissed me softly on the cheek, her face slightly flushed. I could feel the bumps of her breasts against me. *Why hadn't I noticed before?* I thought to myself. *She's a couple of inches shorter than me.*

She stayed next to me for a moment more, and reached up and gave me another kiss, this one on the corner of my mouth. Her dark eyes were serious, depthless pools of brown and black. She reached up with her left hand and squeezed my arm before stepping away. She seemed a little flustered, and I knew I was feeling the same way.

"Thanks, Sean," she said quietly. "Thank you for everything."

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YELLOW CARD

That afternoon, the combined varsity and junior varsity soccer teams drilled together. It had turned into a cool, cloudy day, and I felt like I could run forever. We did really boring passing drills, we did three-man weaves, we did three-on-two defensive drills, we did four-on-two offensive drills. We ran laps around the field three times, once during warm-ups, once just before our water break, and as a final exercise. The coaches called it a “warm-down”, but we got sweaty all the same. Having played on two teams most of the summer, I quickly got tired of drills and skills tests, and was anxious to scrimmage and play games. About half the varsity team, and a few of the guys on the J.V. team, were of the same opinion, having played most of the summer also, but the coaches were going to do what the coaches were going to do, and no amount of interference from the players, especially underclassmen, was going to change their minds.

From our point of view, certain players on the teams had played together for such a long time, they knew what to expect in a game situation. But the coaches, not having watched us all over the past couple of years, were starting near ground zero. They had to evaluate each player according to their position, their skills and weaknesses,

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and their teammates. The learning curve was much larger for them than it was for us. Even so, there were a substantial number of guys that I was not familiar with, as far as their soccer playing was concerned. By the time we played our first game, still more than a week away, I knew that I would have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of most of the players on both teams.

During our lap runs, we tended to run with our classmates or former teammates. The juniors and the seniors tended to ignore us underclassmen, clumping together as if for protection. During the drills, however, Skip made sure I was partnered with him most of the time. He kept up a running commentary on defensive maneuvers as we drilled. It was his final year as a high-school player, and he was being very generous in sharing his time and his experience with me. I knew most of the other guys at least by name, but after practice ended, Skip took me around to nearly all the upperclassmen and introduced me to them. Eric's eyes nearly bugged out when he saw that, and he began laughing almost uncontrollably. I shot him a look, but he kept on laughing and making quiet comments to Jorge and some of the other younger kids.

That evening, I called Molly and talked to her for about an hour. I told her about the team party at Skip's house, and she put the phone down to ask her parents if she could go. She came back on the phone, slightly breathless.

"They said I could go, but I have to leave the phone number with them, just in case," she said.

"Great. I'll get his number and give it to you tomorrow, okay?"

"Okay. I can't believe that tomorrow's the last day of summer vacation, Sean. I'm not ready to go back to school."

"I'm not either. I could live on summer vacation all year long."

"So, if tomorrow's our last day of freedom, can you come over?"

"I don't know, Molly. I've got an away game in the morning, and then team practice in the afternoon. I'm going to be pretty wiped out by the end."

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"Too wiped out to see me?" She sounded disappointed, and maybe a little angry.

"No, no, not too wiped out to see you, but I'll probably have to be home pretty early. What did you want to do?"

"I don't know, maybe go to a movie or something? Or we could just watch TV with some friends. I just don't want my last night before school to be wasted."

"I know, I agree. Tell you what. I'll call you when I get home from practice, and we'll figure something out, okay?"

"Okay, Sean. Goodnight. Dream good dreams of me tonight."

The huskiness in her voice sent sudden signals through my bloodstream, connecting my ear to my awakening cock. Her wish was going to make it difficult for me to get to sleep that night, at least without relieving some pressure beforehand.

* * * * *

The next morning was cool and rainy, one of those gentle summer rains that gets you wet but doesn't make you wish for shelter from the storm. Our team all piled into cars and vans driven by our three coaches, and we drove the thirty miles to our last game of the season. I rode in the car with Mr. Reyes, our head coach.

On the way, Eric Johnson kept on pumping me for details about why Skip was having me tag along with him.

"Come on, Eric, I've told you all I know. If you want to know more, ask Skip yourself."

"Fat chance he'd even talk to a lowly scrub like me," he complained. "Why you, Porter? Are you the anointed successor?"

"Oh, give it a rest, would ya? I don't know, I don't care. I just want to play the game, you know?"

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“Maybe he don’t like black soccer players. Maybe he’s got a thing for your skinny ass. Maybe he’s just setting you up for some elaborate joke. Maybe...”

“Maybe you could just shut up about it, okay?”

He gave me a big, theatrical sigh and rolled his eyes, as if I were the mosquito buzzing around his head, instead of the other way around. I mentally shrugged my shoulders and stared out the window, ignoring everybody else in the car.

We finally got to the field about a half hour early. We all scrambled out of the cars and unloaded our gear. Balls were passed out, and we all set up for warm-up drills without the coaches needing to tell us what to do. Another game was being played on the field, and there was a good local crowd filling about half the bleachers lining one side of the field. There was some enthusiastic cheering going on, despite the rain.

Just as the other game ended, we took off at a slow run to lap the perimeter of the field once, and then picked up the pace for a faster run for one more lap. We then took the field and rotated around to pass out to a player, who then took a shot on goal, warming up our keeper.

The referee blew the whistle, and the starting lineups took the field. We had lost the coin toss, but with no sun, no wind, a light rain, and virtually no lengthwise slope to the field, there was no real advantage, other than psychological, to winning it. Our opponents, named the Stingers, elected to take the ball on the kickoff. The timers started, the whistle blew, and the game was on.

The Stingers tapped the ball forward, and then immediately passed the ball back to their center midfielder. It’s a basic maneuver for a kickoff, designed to keep possession of the ball (a key part of the game). If our opposing coaches and players understand the wisdom behind the play, they will continue to pass the ball back or across, keeping the ball and waiting for an opportunity to advance it up the

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field. If, however, they are performing it as a drill simply because they know they're supposed to pass it back, we knew how to counterattack.

It became immediately obvious to us that the midfielder for the Stingers didn't understand the play. He trapped the ball, looking for an immediate pass up the field into our territory. It was a classic mistake we saw often from unsuspecting teams. We had a play designed for just this type of kickoff, a play that rarely failed us. Our forwards raced in a triangulation toward the hapless midfielder with the ball, effectively cutting off any forward passing lanes. At the same time, our midfielders moved down the field, switching with our forwards, blocking any possible crossing passes to their defenders. We were confident that we would shortly have possession. We defenders moved up to cover their other midfielders, leaving all of their forwards racing toward our goal with no ball and no prospects. If, by some slim chance, a pass was able to get through us to them, all three of their forwards would be hopelessly offside.

Their coaches were on the sidelines screaming at the players to get back and regroup, but it was too late. Our forwards stripped the ball and lofted a pass over to Eric Johnson, who was on the left sideline. He trapped the ball, juked the defender, and crossed the ball about fifteen meters in front of the goal, and it was booted in past the goalkeeper with no problem. This all happened so fast that the Stingers barely had time to react. They were caught with five of their players on our half of the field, while eight of ours were attacking their goal. Less than twenty seconds into the game and we had our first goal.

They were a good team however, and not prone to panic. Instead, they got mad. They controlled their next kickoff and started an offensive set that was tenacious, if unimaginative. They didn't get a good shot off against us, but on the other hand, they didn't give up the ball, either. Every time one of their players got trapped, they managed to pass the ball back, sometimes all the way back to their defenders, only to start another offensive sequence.

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Finally, at about the ten-minute mark, the ball came over to the midfielder on my side. We were kind of caught out of position, so my midfielder dropped back to defend while I moved up to meet the ball handler. I dropped down, slide-tackling at the ball, but I missed the ball and ended up cutting the midfielder's legs out from under him. I hopped up, wet and muddy, only to be faced with the referee charging at me, fumbling at his pocket before blowing his whistle and waving a yellow card at me.

"You're kidding," I said. The ref scowled and reached for his pocket, perhaps intending to pull out a red card, which would have forced me to leave the field, and our team would have to play short. I held up my hands to him and backed away, shaking my head. Our coaches, on the far sidelines, were going nuts about the supposed infraction, while in the stands on the near side, the parents and friends of the Stingers were howling for my blood. I backed off the required ten meters, and the referee moved me back even further before allowing the free kick. The midfielder tried to center the ball to his forwards, but the small delay allowed us to position ourselves to cover everybody, and we took possession of the ball and drove down to the other end of the field.

The seesaw battle continued until about the twenty-five-minute mark. We took the ball and got it out to Eric Johnson on the left side, and he started running down the sidelines with the ball. The ground was a little slippery, so he didn't feel like he could run full out, and the Stingers defender had the angle on him anyway. The defender caught up to him, lowered his shoulder, and knocked Eric completely out of bounds and on his ass, skidding and rolling on the wet grass of the sidelines. The defender took the ball and moved it back up the field, all the while knowing that the whistle that we fully expected for the foul would never come. Again, our coaches and players on the sidelines started yelling and complaining to the referee, until he called a time-out, on our possession, and trotted over to our bench. He stopped in front of our head coach and pulled out his yellow card and waved it in

his face, calling him for a violation. We were dumbfounded, and Mr. Reyes looked like he was going to have a stroke. But he kept his mouth shut. The referee restarted the game, awarding possession to the Stingers on the infraction, and the game continued, getting rougher and muddier and less organized as time ticked on.

By the end of the first half, it was obvious that the Stingers were focusing on Eric, apparently with the intent of getting him out of the game. They roughed him up at every opportunity, and by the halftime whistle, he was bruised, muddy, and gasping. One of our assistant coaches jogged over to the referee as he was standing on the sideline talking to one of his line judges, intending to lodge a complaint about the rough and uncalled-for treatment that Eric had put up with, but to no avail. He came back over to our bench, shaking his head ruefully, and let us know what was going on.

"It's a hometown ref making hometown calls, boys," he said. "Let's whip their asses, then beat it out of town. We are not going to get any fair calls in this game, so don't look for help from any of the officials. Just play your game. Got it?"

We all nodded.

"Eric," Mr. Reyes said, "do you want to sit out the second half? I know you have school practice this afternoon. Maybe you'd better just rest."

"No, sir," said Eric defiantly. "I'm playing. This is the last game, and I am not going to let them drive me off the fucking field. Sir."

"Watch your language, Eric. And get in there and play tough, if that's where you want to be. I'll sub you out for a rest at about the fifteen-minute mark."

I looked over at Eric. He stared back at me, a look of determination in his eyes. I nodded at him, and he nodded back. After a last pull from my water bottle, I stood up, held out my hand to Eric to lift him up onto his feet, and we all trotted out to the field even before the ref blew his whistle.

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The second half of the game started out right where we left off, rough-and-tumble, but we knew more about what to expect now. The first time Eric touched the ball, their midfielder came barreling over to knock him down, but he was not expecting Eric to be as quick as he was. He did a neat sidestep, and the midfielder skidded out of bounds, waving his hands to try to keep his balance. Eric slid right past the charging defender and ran full out at an angle toward their goal. Their keeper came spidering out to cut off Eric's targets at the goal, arms out and head up, until suddenly he dropped and dived headfirst for Eric's knees, intending to at the least knock him out of the play, and maybe do some bodily damage in the process. Eric used the outside of his right foot to pass the ball neatly to our center forward, and then he leaped high in the air, allowing the keeper to slide underneath him. He landed on his feet nimbly, goal-side of the keeper, and watched with pleasure as our forward walked the ball in past the last defender and touched it into the back of the net.

That goal finally took the wind out of their sails. We ended up scoring four more times, and Mr. Reyes, true to his word, subbed for Eric at about the eighteen-minute mark. He let him sit and recuperate for the rest of the game. During the last five minutes, the Stingers managed to score a cheap goal on a corner kick that we deflected right to a startled Stingers forward. It bounced off his shin guard and skittered into the corner as our keeper vainly dived for it. By that time, I was sitting on the bench next to Eric, watching the end of the game from underneath a towel draped over my head.

At the end of the game, we lined up to congratulate the other team, and the coaches all shook hands. Mr. Reyes, our head coach, normally a very polite, conscientious, and somewhat formal man, pointedly walked away from the referee without shaking his hand, a gesture I had never before seen from him. It probably didn't bother the ref, since he didn't know Mr. Reyes or our team at all, but I know that Mr. Reyes thought long and hard about the snub before allowing himself to deliver it.

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We stopped for lunch on the way home, and that revived everyone. We were soaked and muddy, tired and exhilarated. It was our best moment as a team. It was too bad it was also the last moment of that particular team.

Mr. Reyes dropped Eric and me off at the school for our team practice. We were late, but it was obvious to our coaches why, since we were still in our muddy uniforms. We barely made it through that day's practice, finally holding each other up as we stumbled through our final lap around the field at the end of the afternoon.

I had time to eat dinner and take a long, hot shower before getting on my bike to ride over to Molly's. The rain had stopped hours ago, and the skies were clearing, promising a spectacular sunset. Heather and Josh were both home, too, so the four of us ended up in the family room watching a movie on HBO. Heather and Josh were on opposite ends of the couch, and Molly and I were sitting together on the floor, leaning back against the sofa. Somewhere in the middle of *An Officer and a Gentleman* I fell into an exhausted sleep. My friends let me sleep until the end of the movie, then roused me enough to push me out the door. I biked home and fell into bed, not even bothering to take off my clothes or brush my teeth.

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THE HOT LAZY SATURDAY

Saturday morning dawned hot and sunny. Molly and I met Lori at Kip and Davey's soccer game just before ten o'clock at the park where the boys and I had drilled. We all sat together on the sidelines and watched as the boys tried out some of their newly learned skills. We cheered and hollered every time one of them touched the ball, shouting out encouragement. Kids that age tend to drift back into the habits of the group, and Davey and Kip were no exception. It was swarmball at its ugliest, but everybody on both teams was having a ball, so it was all okay.

At halftime, the boys came over carrying offerings of orange slices from the team's halftime treat supply. Davey crawled up onto Molly's lap, and Kip, following his brother's lead, jumped into mine.

"Ow!" I complained good-naturedly. "No bouncing, okay?"

"Okay, Sean," he grinned. He gave me one last, small bounce for good measure anyway.

"Do you guys know what you're supposed to be doing out there?" I asked.

"Playing soccer?" replied Kip.

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"Sure, playing soccer, and having a good time. But how are you supposed to be playing soccer?"

"Oh, yeah," said Davey. "Move to where nobody else is, call for the ball, one-potato-look and two-potato-pass."

"There you go," said Molly. "Just remember what Sean has been teaching you, and you'll have even more fun out there."

At that point, the boys' coach called his team over to give them second-half instructions. He read off his starting lineup to the players, and as their names were called, they left the sidelines and took their positions on the field. Davey was playing center midfielder, and Kip was right forward.

Just that little reminder at halftime was enough for them to recall their lessons. They stayed at their positions for the rest of their playing time that day, instead of rushing to the ball wherever it might be on the field. It paid off for them toward the end of the third quarter, when the ball squirted out of the pile of players into Davey's area. He scooped up the ball, dribbled down the field for about three steps, then passed it up to Kip. Kip tried to take the ball in to the net, but was caught up in traffic when he fumbled a little on his trap, and he lost it in the scramble around him. Even so, I was happy to see them work on their positioning and their passes during a game. I hoped that they would be able to see the worth of their drills, even at their young age.

After the game ended, the boys each grabbed a hand and dragged me over to meet their coach, a man they only knew as "Coach Bill".

"I'm glad to meet you, Sean," said Coach Bill. "Davey and Kip have been bragging about you almost nonstop."

"Well," I said, somewhat embarrassed, "I've been trying to help..."

"No, no, don't get me wrong," Coach Bill interrupted. "I really am glad to meet you. You couldn't see it very well today in the game because none of the other boys have caught up to them yet, but both Davey and Kip are light years better than they were in the spring. Some of that improvement can be attributed to being a little older and a little bigger, but it's obvious that the time you've spent with them

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this summer has been beneficial to them. I especially liked that play down by the goal, when Davey passed the ball over to Kip. Very neat."

"Yeah, I saw that, too. Too bad it didn't work out to be a score," I said.

"Well, yes and no," he replied. "At this age, the score of the game doesn't really matter to these kids. The parents care more about wins and losses than the kids do, I'm afraid. All the boys know is they're out there on the field, running and having a good time. A goal is just that: a goal to aim for. Scoring gives them a good feeling right then at the time, but by the time they restart the game afterwards, they've practically forgotten about it. In a couple of years, it might start to matter to them, but for right now, it's just one more thing for them to worry about. And I'm all for giving them less to worry about. I'm happier when they execute a good pass, or can clear the ball out of the pack, or make a good interception. That's enough for them to worry about at this point in their soccer lives."

"That's true, Coach," I said. "I've officiated games at this level, and a lot of the time the kids are more interested in what the halftime treat is going to be than in what is happening on the field."

Coach Bill laughed. "Yes, and this team is no exception. I just wish the parents could have the same attitude. Some of them get so competitive through their kids!"

"It only gets worse as the kids get older," I said. "I've got friends on my rec team who are already getting pressure from their parents about playing well so they have a chance for scholarship money for college, and these kids are only thirteen or fourteen years old."

"Well, Sean," he replied, "play the game for fun. If you're good, the rest will find its way to you." He shook my hand, and then walked over to talk to some of the parents.

* * * * *

Heather dropped Molly and me at Skip's house that afternoon. We could hear sounds of the party wafting over the neighborhood as we got out of the car and found our way to the back yard. There was a large wooden deck attached to the house off the kitchen, and Skip was there, his girlfriend Maggie Wiggins by his side, holding court among some of the members of the team and their girlfriends. I knew all the guys, and most of the girls I knew at least by sight. I stopped to say hello and introduced Molly to the group.

"I know you," said Skip. "You're Heather's sister, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am, but I prefer to think of her as the sister, not the other way around," shot back Molly with a smile.

"Watch out, Sean," Skip said as he turned to me. "You've got a firecracker here."

"Don't I know it," I said. I dropped our pack of sodas in a corner.

Most athletes tend to date athletic types, and soccer players are no exception. Most of the girls at the party played on one team or another at school, or were members of the coveted groups such as cheerleaders, student council, or poms. The surprising exception to this was the girl hanging onto the arm of Theo Jameson, a senior forward on the team and one of Skip's best friends. Her name was Allison Moseley, and her main claim to fame was her voluptuous figure, along with the way she flaunted it. Even here, at a pool party with lots of skin showing on lots of fit bodies, Allison managed to draw attention to herself. She wore a startlingly bright orange bikini, maybe two sizes too small, so that her fleshy breasts practically spilled out over the top. To accentuate the effect, she had grabbed on to Theo's arm and was squeezing her boobs against him, creating an impressive amount of cleavage, and reveling in the stares from many of the boys on the deck.

Molly yanked on my arm and guided me toward the stairs leading down from the deck.

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"You're going to start drooling in a minute," she said quietly. We headed for the coolest spot in the yard, the swimming pool. We jumped into the shallow end and waded over to where Jorge Mendoza was lounging. Surprisingly, he had brought his sister, Kristina, along to the party. Kristina was wearing a black one-piece suit that really showed off her trim form, and made her darkly tanned skin shine. Beads of water seemed to glisten off the shoulders and arms of both Jorge and Kristina. We said our hellos, casually splashing water on our shoulders to cool off. I looked up at the crowd on the deck, just in time to see Eric come out from the kitchen with Keisha Prescott. Eric's eyes practically popped out of his head when he almost bumped into Allison, who giggled and squeezed even harder against poor Theo. Keisha grabbed Eric's arm and pulled him away. He stumbled a little, then spotted us watching him from the pool, and stopped to say something to Keisha. She glanced over, and they both stepped off the deck and jumped into the pool by us.

"So, Eric, did you get an eyeful?" I asked.

"Oh, he got an eyeful, all right. And pretty soon he's gonna get an earful," said Keisha.

We all laughed. Molly stood in front of me, about six inches away, and said, "I noticed that you paid particular attention to her chest, too, Mr. Porter. What do you have to say for yourself?"

There was a glint in her eye that warned me to be cautious, or I could be expecting some pain. I craned my neck around her to glance up at the deck, then deliberately looked down at her lightly freckled chest. "You know, Molly, you are much more tanned than Allison is. In my eyes, that means that she pales in comparison to you."

Molly smiled, a look of delight on her face, as she gave me a light tap on the chest with her forearm.

"Nice save," murmured Jorge, next to me.

There were a few kids trying to get up a volleyball game out in the yard, but it was just too hot, and the pool was too refreshing. Eventually, we worked up enough enthusiasm to set up the net across

the pool so we could play water volleyball. Even that deconstructed into a free-for-all after a couple of games. Some of the guys were diving down, ostensibly to chase after the ball. What they were doing underwater, though, was swimming close to the girls, sometimes swimming between their legs. A few of the older, braver boys went so far as to lightly brush up against a bikini-clad bottom with a hand or a foot, furtively copping a quick feel as they swam by. Molly was the unhappy recipient of one of these touches by one of the guys. She jerked and jumped in my direction, glancing over her shoulder to see who might have swum by.

"That's rude," she complained as she grabbed my arm.

"Come on," I said as I waded toward the side. "Let's just go down by the shallow end and sit on the edge for awhile."

Eric, Keisha, Jorge, and Kristina all joined us, and for the rest of the afternoon, and into the evening, the six of us lounged near the shallow end of the pool.

Skip and Theo fired up the grill and threw hot dogs, bratwursts, and burgers on to cook. Maggie and Allison shuttled back and forth from the kitchen with bags of chips, plates of sliced tomatoes, onions, mustard and ketchup, and bowls of potato salad. A real production line got going as everyone suddenly realized how hungry they were. Skip and Theo were kept pretty busy for the next hour or so, cooking up grub for the rest of us. Every so often, either Allison or Maggie would hand them cold cans of soda, and one time Maggie stuffed a hot dog in a bun into Theo's mouth as he was flipping burgers with one hand, and turning brats with the other. He hardly missed a beat, chewing and flipping hamburgers at the same time.

Just as we were leaning back in satisfaction, having downed an impressive amount of food, the girls came out with a huge pan of homemade brownies and a five-gallon tub of ice cream.

It was an effort, but we all managed to clean all that up, too. By the time everyone was done, there were just a few brownie crumbs left,

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and the bottom of the tub was barely covered with the last melting remnants of ice cream.

It was starting to get dark out by the time we finished eating. Skip lit some torches that were placed around the yard, and turned on the lights in the pool while turning off all the other lights in the back of the house. The swimming pool, now empty of activity, was a calm, iridescent rectangle of blue-green liquid floating in the middle of the yard. The flickering light from the few torches, along with the reflected light from the water, cast shadows everywhere, dancing and playing across the furniture and bodies in repose around the property.

Skip and Maggie, their duties as cook and scullery maid done, made their way around the deck and pool, stopping to talk for a few moments with each group of kids. When they got around to the six of us, still grouped around a table by the end of the pool, Skip plopped down in an empty chair in mock exhaustion. Maggie stood behind him, casually rubbing his shoulders.

"So, Porter, did you get enough to eat?" he asked.

Eric snorted in amusement, and Molly and Kristina laughed out loud.

"This boy eats more than I ever thought was possible," Molly said.

"Well, don't eat so much you're going to get fat, Porter. Don't forget you're riding the pines this season, not running your ass off in the games," he said with a grin.

"Don't worry about me," I shot back. "That's only true if you stay in shape. Don't forget who's gunning for your position."

"Hey, do I look scared? You're good, Porter, I'll give you that. You're just not good enough yet." Skip stood up, stretched, and draped his arm around Maggie's shoulder. "Come on, babe, let's mosey."

The two of them wandered to the next group, and Eric muttered, "'Let's mosey'? Since when did we land in the Wild fucking West?"

Keisha laughed derisively. "Yeah, what an arrogant prick. And he's gonna be captain of the team, right?"

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"Aw, Skip's not so bad," I objected. "He's just had a lot of press lately about how good he's going to be this year. I think he's operating under a lot of pressure, much more than he's showing."

"Yeah, well," said Eric, "it's all right if you want to defend him, since you've got to live with him during practices and all. If it's all the same, I'll just not be his best friend, okay?" With that, he reached behind him and pulled another soda out of the cooler.

After the brutal heat of the day, the air felt very cool after the sun went down. We all slipped on t-shirts and shorts, and started gathering our stuff together. Mr. Mendoza had already picked up Jorge and Kristina, and Eric and Keisha were leaving very soon. Molly went into the house to use the phone to call Heather to pick us up, and then came back and started helping Maggie clean off the remains of the food from the table. I struggled up and started picking up empty plates and soda cans and carrying them over to the trash cans. Keisha came over to say goodbye, giving Molly a brief hug, while Eric genuflected to Skip. They headed around the outside of the house toward the front, giving us a wave as they disappeared around the corner.

A few minutes later, we heard a car honking its horn. Evan and Heather were there to pick us up, so we thanked Skip and Maggie, said goodbye to the stragglers still lounging around the yard, and made our way around to the front, where Heather and her boyfriend were waiting impatiently.

As we threw our gear into the trunk and climbed into the back seat, Molly said, "Don't give me that look, Heather. It's not like you didn't volunteer to give us a ride."

"I know I volunteered," Heather said. "I thought you'd be ready to come home a lot earlier, is all. We're going to miss the first part of the movie."

"So what?" Molly spat back. "You probably weren't going to see the last part, anyway, were you? I've heard about the back rows at the movies, you know."

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“Very funny, little sister. Very funny.”

The rest of the ride took place in uncomfortable silence. When we got to Molly’s house, we clambered out of the car, popped open the trunk, and grabbed our stuff. Evan and Heather took off without a word as soon as they heard the trunk slam closed, and we were left there in a blue-white cloud of exhaust. I looked at Molly. She just shrugged, as if to say, *I don’t know what’s wrong with her*, and we headed for the rear of the house.

We put our backpacks and the cooler down by the back door. Molly slipped into the garage to grab a handful of blankets, just like before. We walked toward the woods, hand in hand, not saying a word. I could feel that her hand was a little sweaty. It was good to know she was nervous too, since I had butterflies doing bodily damage to themselves inside my stomach.

We got to the opening in the woods and spread out the blankets. I lay down on my back, and Molly snuggled up in the crook of my arm, her arm draped across my chest and her head nestled against my neck. I languidly ran my hand up and down her body, from shoulder to waist, as we relaxed together. Her hair smelled slightly of chlorine from the pool.

I kissed the top of her head, and she lifted up to give me a soft kiss on the mouth. Her lips were pliant and warm, slightly parted, as we held the kiss. Without breaking contact, she twisted in my arms, rolling over so she was lying partially on top of me, her leg insinuating itself over my knee, and the kiss got harder and hotter. She reached up with her hand and held the back of my neck, pulling me harder to her as her lips parted and her tongue flicked out to touch the tip of mine. I opened my mouth a little more, and she took advantage of the breach and attacked all out, her tongue exploring the recesses of my mouth, teeth to tongue, gums to palate.

This sudden onslaught had a real effect on other parts of me, as well. She was running her leg up and down mine, pressing her knee into my crotch, then stroking down, with her foot brushing down the

inside of my calf to my instep. Every time her knee made contact with my balls, my cock gave a jump and got harder, and my hips did an involuntary grind against her knee.

I reached down and ran my hand up under her t-shirt, up her back, and under her bikini strap. Pressing the flat of my hand against the middle of her upper back, I could feel the interplay of her muscles and shoulder blades as she moved her arms and her leg. The hem of her shirt was rucking up under her, so she broke our kiss momentarily, lifted herself up, and pulled her shirt up around her. She dropped back down onto my mouth right away, unwilling to be denied the heat and moisture she was finding so entrancing there. I closed my eyes, allowing her to take charge of the force of the kiss. My hand found the clip that held together her bathing suit top, and I fumblingly managed to slip the cloth from its clasp. The strap separated, and Molly twisted her upper body around as my hand slipped around her, giving me unobstructed access to her firm breast. I held her against my hand, and felt her nipple warm and expand against my palm. I flexed my fingers against her, marveling in the buoyancy of her flesh. Her tongue, in sympathetic reaction, thrust itself into my mouth, matching its thrusts to the actions of my hand on her breast.

I felt her hand at my waist, searching for the hem of my t-shirt, finding it at last, and stroking the skin of my belly, back and forth, just above the waistband of my swimming trunks. My stomach muscles started spasming, quivering at the touch, and my hips, still in motion from the stroking of her leg, hunched up higher, trying to coax her hand lower and her knee higher.

Finally, she took some pity on me, and slipped her hand beneath the elastic waistband, her fingers brushing down to comb through my pubic hair. The back of her hand rubbed against my upthrust dick, setting off the first set of fireworks in my head. She continued to push her hand down, her fingers separating into a V, the stem of my rigid cock slipping between them, until she could go no further. She bent

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her fingers, lightly brushing her fingertips across the sensitive skin of my balls, driving me nearly insane with pleasure.

I broke our kiss and gasped, hardly able to navigate through the sensations racing up and down my nervous system. Almost unconsciously, I reached down and sucked on her tender throat, and then kissed and licked my way down to her swollen nipple. I grasped the turgid nub in my lips, and sucked as hard as I could, trying to draw her entire breast into my mouth. I heard her sigh, and her hand slid up to firmly grasp my stalk in her fist. She began a slow, steady pumping motion, and I set up a tempo with my mouth on her breast in time with her pumping: suckle and release, suckle and release, as we prepared each other.

I ran my hand from her chest down to her hip, slipped beneath her shorts, and felt the elastic waistband of her swimsuit bottoms. I let my fingers crawl under the elastic, feeling the heat emanating from her center as I descended, across the firm globes of her butt, to the moist and heady delta that was my destination. Oily moisture was oozing from her, soaking the crotch of her suit. I rubbed my fingertips through her swollen lips, releasing a flood of her lubrication. My fingers were quickly coated, and I carried that moisture up through her flowered folds to the swollen nub at the top, my fingertips circling, teasing, coaxing.

We were in a rhythm together, her hand on my cock and my mouth on her breast, her hips surging against my fingers in her center, in danger of sending each other over the precipice. I could sense the impending explosion within me.

"Molly... wait..." I gasped. It was enough to make her pause. She looked into my eyes, a questioning look on her face, as we both stopped our manipulations.

She let go of me and sat up. She stripped off her shirt and bikini top, and lay back down to shimmy out of her shorts and swimsuit bottoms. She lay there, naked and beautiful, unashamed as she watched me take off my shirt, rip off my shoes without untying them,

and shed my trunks. My handy little foil packet was in the zipper compartment of my suit. My fingers felt fat and uncoordinated as I fumbled with the packet, anxious to continue with our play. I glanced over at her in consternation. She was watching me, a small, amused smile on her lips and unconcealed passion in her eyes. Her chest was flushed, her breasts and nipples swollen with desire, and she was breathing deeply. My subconscious brain picked up the scent of her. The sun-dried sweat of her body gave off a faint musky odor, and the secretion from her drooling pussy was a tang that made my mouth water.

Finally, I managed to tear open the package and roll the condom on my straining dick. I crawled over to her and leaned over her to kiss her again, my balls and sheathed cock waving below me. Her small hand wormed its way down my body to caress and fondle my balls, and I groaned into her mouth in anticipation.

She pushed me back and over, so I was on my back, and swung her leg over me to straddle me. Her hand moved from my balls to my cock, grasping it and positioning it against the heated opening of her vagina. She paused for a moment, just the tip of my straining cock embedded within her, drawing out the anticipation, before she began to crouch down on me. Slowly, slowly, she lowered herself onto me, impaling herself on my blunt weapon. Inch by inch I felt the heat of her cavern engulf my cock, surrounding and squeezing me. She pushed herself lower, twisting occasionally to ease the accommodation. I wanted more than anything to thrust completely into her in one massive effort, but I gritted my teeth and let her take charge of the initial penetration.

The latex covering was deadening the sensations for me slightly, so I was able to watch her as she took me into her body. She was balancing herself by pressing her hands against my shoulders. Her hair had half escaped from her ponytail, and was arched over her forehead on one side, casting part of her face in darkness. Her eyes were slitted open, there was a slight sheen of perspiration on her nose

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and upper lip, and her tongue was just peeking out from between her teeth as she concentrated on maximizing the sensation of seating me within her. When she twisted her hips, her boobs would jiggle slightly, swaying provocatively above me.

Finally, she gave a sigh as she felt her pubic bone meet mine, and she slowly let herself collapse into my arms. The pebbled points of her distended nipples brushed against my chest just before she allowed her full weight to rest on me, her boobs flattening against my ribcage. She rested there for a moment, reveling in the heat and pressure of our connection, and then she began doing... something. I'm not sure, even to this day, what it was that she was doing. However, without any seeming effort, she was using her hips and legs, her glutes and quads and lower back muscles, to slide her vagina up my cock, nearly to the point where I was going to flop out of her, then slowly slide back down upon me again. She accomplished this without moving her upper body a bit, her eyes now closed as she bent to the task at hand. I could just feel the bump of her engorged clitoris rubbing against by cock as we moved. She continued to flex and relax, flex and relax, occasionally giving her hips a little twist when I was as fully inside her as I could get, giving her overcharged clit another twinge.

Finally, just when I thought I could not hold out against the onslaught any longer, I felt her shudder. It started with a spasming of her contracting vaginal muscles, fluttering against my cock, and worked its way up through her solar plexus and into her core. She started gasping, arching up off me to try to draw air from above us. Her eyes were squeezed shut as she huffed and puffed and let the walls come tumbling down upon her. I could feel a small flood of hot oily moisture leak out of her, around my upthrust cock, trickling into the tangled mess of our pubic hair.

That was all the trigger I needed. My hips bumped up against her, trying in vain to drive my iron cock even deeper into her, and I came. The pump contracted and pulsed, contracted and pulsed, filling the end of the condom with my hot seed. I pressed my hands against the

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small of her back, trying to get deeper into her than I had ever been, as I let loose jet after jet.

As my contractions weakened, so did hers. She collapsed back on top of me and let her head flop onto my shoulder as she tried to catch her breath. For my part, I was luxuriating in the feeling of a warm, naked girl completely covering me from crotch to neck, amazed still by the contrast of soft feminine curves overlaying hard athletic muscle.

Finally, she lifted her head tiredly, looked me in the eye, and gave me a soft kiss, all buttery and warm, both a thank-you and a promise of times to come. She rolled off me and we separated, my still mostly hard cock plopping out of her. As soon as the warmth of her body was removed, it began to shrivel. I reached down and pulled off the full rubber and flung it into the woods. I chuckled at the thought of Jake out there, dodging another missile.

"What's so funny, Sean?" Molly asked languidly. She was laying back on the blanket, one knee bent, her arms resting behind her head.

"Nothing," I said. I flopped down on my stomach next to her. "I was just remembering something somebody said once about finding stuff in these woods."

"I'm glad our grove was empty tonight," she said. "I'm kind of surprised that Josh hasn't thought of it yet."

"Maybe he and Shayna have their own little spot already picked out."

She sat up. "I don't think so," she said. "There's still the same number of condoms in his room."

I frowned. "You go checking out his room? How smart is that, Mol? If he finds out, he may just start checking out your room."

She laughed softly. "Oh, he's already tried that, and gotten caught. When I was thirteen, and Heather was fifteen, Josh got curious about girls, I think. Anyway, Heather found him in her room, pawing through her underwear drawer. Mom and Dad never found out about it, but Heather never let him forget it, either. He still breaks out in a cold sweat if he even has to walk by her closed door, I think."

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Ah, I thought to myself. More ammunition, just in case I need it. But I didn't say a word about that to Molly.

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THE BULLS

Our first varsity soccer game was at home on Friday against one of the smallest schools in our conference. According to our scouts, they didn't have a very talented team, so I was hoping for a little playing time in the second half.

The stands were not even half full. Not many kids at school cared much about soccer yet, but we hoped that would all change as we tore through our schedule. Even before our first game, we were whispering about going on to sectionals, and maybe even the state playoffs. We were cocksure, confident we could beat any other school head-to-head. Only a fluke could keep us from our destiny, the playoffs.

And that fluke nearly happened during our first game. The team from Rockland High School won the toss, and elected to take the ball. They tapped the ball forward and passed it back to their midfielder, who passed it over to their right midfielder. He immediately launched a booming pass all the way across the field toward the left sidelines. Our right midfielder, Kevin Soranno, went up for the ball, intending to head it up the field. At the same time, Rockland's left forward also elevated. Everybody on the field heard the loud crack when their heads hit, and Kevin went down like a sack of potatoes. The ball went

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soaring back toward the middle of the field, where it was picked off by a Rockland player. He trapped it, dropped the ball down to his right foot, and launched a rocket at the far right post of the net. Our keeper was one step too slow in following the play, but the ball hit the post and bounced back out to our striker, who promptly cleared the ball out of bounds. By that time, Kevin was on his knees and holding his head with both hands, and the Rockland player he collided with was about five feet away from him, standing with his hands on his knees. I knew he was trying to clear the cobwebs out, having just gotten his bell rung, but at least he was on his feet.

The referee stopped the game and trotted over to check on the fallen players. Both of them shook their heads when asked if they wanted to come out. Kevin climbed to his feet and jogged a few steps, making sure all the parts were in working order, then walked over to shake hands with the Rockland player.

Rockland took the throw-in, and the game continued. Neither team wanted to test the right side of the field yet, so the ball pretty much stayed away from Kevin and Skip for the rest of the half. Even so, by the time the half ended, we were up 4-0. Rockland never got close to our goal after that first unlucky shot.

We started the second half by playing a little more defensively. Our offense was powerful, but we didn't need to score on the hapless Rockland team any more. They were done for, and they knew it just as well as we did. Skip showed a little razzle-dazzle the few times he managed to touch the ball, but mostly we were just playing keep-away with them. Finally, with about four minutes left to play, the score was 6-0. Our coach made some wholesale substitutions, so the benchwarmers got to play the last few minutes of the game while Skip, Theo, Kevin, and many of the other starters came out.

At the final whistle, we subs had hardly broken a sweat. The team went into the locker room to shower and change. We were in a great mood, that first win under our belts, glad to finally get the season underway.

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Our head coach, Mr. Neville, was a history teacher, so many of his locker room speeches contained obscure references to battles and soldiers from the past. Half the time, I didn't understand what he was talking about, but that night we interrupted his speech several times with good-natured cheering.

* * * * *

The next week, school was back to being a full-time grind. Some of my friends were really smart at school, breezing through on a combination of charm and native smarts, but I had to work hard just to maintain a B average. Molly and Tessa both seemed to get their homework done fast, while it seemed like I struggled just to stay in the same place.

Finally, on Tuesday, the last bell of the day rang. The halls were crowded with kids jostling each other, everybody anxious to get outside while the weather still held. It was a beautiful late summer day, and it seemed like everybody, students and teachers alike, was chafing at having to spend such a great day inside. The physical education teachers were the lucky ones on days like this. They could take their classes out to the track or to the football field, enjoying the good weather while their co-workers were stuck in their classrooms.

I met up with Jake and Josh on the way to the gym. We were taking the scenic route, leaving school by the front door and walking around the building to enter the locker rooms from the outside. We rounded a corner of the school and saw a small gathering of some of the rougher kids from our school, a group of about seven or eight guys with their hair slicked back and greased up, leather jackets with the collars pulled up, chrome chains and rings hanging from jackets and jeans. They were a group of troublemakers who called themselves The Bulls, I suppose in homage to their leader, a tall, gangly kid with a bad

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complexion named Richie Del Toro. Richie and his gang were standing in a loose semicircle around the wall. Their body language spoke of somebody inside their circle who was regretting being there.

The three of us stopped as we took in the scene. We glanced at each other, and silently agreed that we should take a closer look. Without a word, we started walking toward the group. When we were about fifteen feet away, I could see two smaller bodies trapped inside the semicircle, their backs against the wall. Between the gaps in the crowd, I was surprised to see Jorge and Kristina Mendoza were the ones surrounded.

Richie was the only member of The Bulls standing inside the group. He had a cowlick sticking straight up on top of his greasy head, an errant lock of hair that refused to be controlled by anything Richie put on it. He was derisively known as Alfalfa behind his back, and occasionally to his face.

"I'll betcha you're a hot little tamale, aren't you? Are you a hot one, Conchita? *Como esta* blowjobs?" Richie was saying. He tentatively reached out toward Kristina, who flinched away.

"Leave her alone, you piece of dog shit," yelled Jorge.

"Close it, Jorge. Whore-Hay. What the fuck kind of name is that, anyway?" The group around them tittered as if they were witnessing a star performance on *The Tonight Show*. Richie loved playing to the crowd, I noticed.

"It's a better name than 'Alfalfa', Alfalfa," retorted Jorge.

Richie lunged at him, perhaps intending to slap the smaller freshman around, but Jorge was too slippery. He ducked under Richie's arm and moved behind him. *Big mistake*, I thought. Almost immediately two of Richie's pals grabbed him by the arms and held tight. Kristina was pressed against the wall, her hand covering her mouth, eyes wide and scared.

This was just too much for me. The three of us pushed our way into the circle, and I grabbed Richie by the shoulder. He was about six inches taller than me, so I had to reach up to grab him, but at that

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point the size difference between us didn't matter much to me. I was mad.

Richie whirled around as soon as he felt my hand on his shoulder, intending to teach whoever was touching him a lesson in manners, Del Toro style.

"Well, if it isn't the Three Musket-Queers." There was that idiotic twittering again, coming from his pack of hyenas. "What the fuck are you doing here, Porter?" he spat. "Or do you want a little of what we're gonna give to this puny ninth grade spic greaseball?"

"What have you got against ninth graders, Richie?" said Jake. "You seemed to like freshman year so much you went through it twice, if I remember right."

The Bulls all got very quiet when they heard Jake. Apparently, Richie didn't like being reminded of how he was held back.

"What did you say?" he asked dangerously, staring daggers at Jake.

"What's the matter with your hearing, Del Toro? I heard him just fine all the way back here," said a voice from beyond the fringe of The Bulls. Richie whirled around to confront this new intrusion, and the crowd parted as Skip, Theo, Eric, and Kevin all walked up.

"He asked what you had against ninth graders, since you seemed to love it so much before," said Skip. "Or are the crops you must be growing in that dirt in your ears making you deaf?"

Richie's face turned an angry red, and he took a step toward Skip. Eric, Theo, and Kevin on one side, Josh and Jake and me on the other, all moved in closer to Richie and his gang.

Suddenly, the odds didn't look quite so good to Richie and his cohorts. They began backpedaling away from all of us, muttering the whole time among themselves. They let Jorge go loose and pretty much forgot about Kristina. I walked over and put my arm around her shoulder protectively. She flinched slightly at the touch, but then sighed audibly and hung onto me, grateful for the support.

When they were a safe distance away, Richie turned back to us.

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"Don't worry, *Conchita*. I'll be back for that *el blowjob* sometime soon, okay?" The group of them guffawed at Richie's sparkling wit.

Kristina burst into tears and buried her head against me. Jorge came over and hugged her from the other side. I could feel him shaking from the adrenaline rush that must have coursed through him during the altercation.

"Thanks, guys. You got here just in time, man. I thought we were goners." Jorge looked around at all of us, the appreciation shining through his dark eyes.

"We're a team, man. We've gotta stick together," said Skip. "I'm just glad we spotted you when we were over by the corner."

"You've really gotta watch out for them guys," said Eric. "They'll always look for an opportunity, but they won't do anything if they don't have numbers. You know?"

Jorge nodded his head. "I'll remember that. Thanks. I'll also remember that I owe that greasy slimeball a big one."

"You can owe it to him, but don't go trying to pay it off by yourself, Jorge," warned Josh.

"I won't. I know better than that," said Jorge. "Kristina, can you stay on the sidelines while I'm at practice? I don't want you walking home by yourself."

"Good idea," I said. "The group of us can all go that way together."

"Okay," she said. "If you don't mind my watching you guys." She looked around at all the guys around her and blushed a little.

"No, of course not," said Skip. We all started walking to the back of the school. It was time for us to be getting to our respective practices.

The coaches were on the sidelines, going over their notes, so Kristina walked over to one of the benches by them as we all filed into the locker room to change. She stayed there, studying most of the time, but occasionally setting her book down to watch us scrimmage. Her

eyes followed each of us in turn, the five of us from the soccer team, plus her brother, who willingly stood up to her tormentors.

* * * * *

A couple of days later, I was walking down the hall to my third period class with Jake and Eric. I saw Jorge and Kristina just ahead of me, walking slowly in the same direction. I didn't think a thing of it, until I happened to see Richie Del Toro walking with a couple of The Bulls toward us. He was engrossed in his conversation, oblivious to all around him. Unlike almost all the other kids in the hallway, Richie carried no books or papers, but instead strutted down the hall with his hands in his jeans pockets. It was to be his undoing.

I saw Jorge move to Kristina's right side, so he would be between her and Richie when they passed. Richie was paying absolutely no attention to anything going on around him, confident that people would move out of his way. As the two parties met, Jorge stopped for just a moment and waited until Richie was two steps behind him. He whirled around, dropped to the floor, and swept Richie's legs out from under him in a classic soccer slide tackle. Richie's feet flew up into the air, and he landed square on his backside, his hands still in his pockets. There was a loud thump as he hit, and an echoing thump when his head met the tiles. He started yelling in pain. His friends just stood there and goggled at him, too shocked to take any action. Jorge hopped up, and then knelt down on Richie's chest while he was still flat on his back. He grabbed Richie by his greasy hair.

"Do you know why your eyes are so brown, Alfalfa? It's because you are so full of bullshit. Do you hear me?" Jorge was so angry, I thought sparks would fly out of his eyes as he talked softly to Richie. "We have a new word now in Spanish for bullshit, Alfalfa. We call it Del Toro Poo-Poo."

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With that, he hopped up, looked quickly around, and grabbed Kristina by the arm and walked swiftly away, never once looking back.

Jake, Eric, and I all burst out laughing. Soon, the whole hallway was clapping and cheering just as a couple of teachers came out to see what the commotion was all about. Richie was still on his back, groaning in pain, and everybody just walked around him, without offering to help him in any way. His two cohorts were nowhere to be seen, having abandoned Richie to his own fate. The three of us ambled on, our day suddenly much more pleasant.

At practice that afternoon, the entire soccer team, varsity and JV alike, gathered around Jorge and heard the story all over again. When he got to the part about Del Toro Poo-Poo, everybody whooped and laughed. Jorge was a little embarrassed being the center of attention, but everybody enjoyed hearing about the fall of Alfalfa, now better known as Poo-Poo.

"So, what was Richie's reaction later in the day?" asked one of the younger players. "Anybody got him in a class in the afternoon?"

"I do," said another of the junior-varsity players. "But he wasn't there. I don't think he went to any of his classes afterwards."

"That's odd," said Theo. "I wonder why?"

"Maybe he was just too embarrassed to show his face," said Kevin.

"Yeah, maybe," I said. "And maybe not. Watch yourself, Jorge."

"I will, *amigo*. Don' worry. I'm a Latin lover, not a fighter," he said.

We all laughed at that. Just then the coaches called us back out to continue with practice, and we all just kind of forgot about poor Poo-Poo for the rest of the day.

The next day at school, I saw Richie first thing in the morning. He was moving slowly and carefully, like an old man. He was a little hunched over, and he was taking small, shuffling steps. People were not quite as careful about staying out of his way as they had been just the day before, but he was concentrating so hard on his walking that

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he barely noticed. There were beads of sweat on his forehead, and his errant cowlick was waving all over the place.

Between first and second period, Josh came walking up to me.

"Can you believe it?" he said excitedly. "Del Toro's got a broken tailbone. He can't hardly walk, he can't stand up straight, he can't even sit down without hurting, and he's in pain, man. It's just too funny!"

"A broken tailbone? No shit. Well, I guess he won't be bothering Jorge and Kristina anytime soon, will he?" I said.

And so Richie became known as Del Toro Poo-Poo, or Poo-Poo for short. And nobody was afraid to call him that to his face. I thought that our troubles with him and The Bulls were over.

I was wrong.

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THE GAME OF LIFE

The next few weeks went by in kind of a blur. There were tests and quizzes to study for, and there was soccer practice every day after school. Our games were every Friday after school, and my weekends were taken up with watching Davey and Kip play soccer on Saturday mornings, doing my chores around the house in the afternoon, then meeting up with some of my friends Saturday night. Sometimes Molly and I would hook up with Tessa, Kristina, Jen, and Sam and we would go to a movie, or sometimes we would hang around and watch television with some of our friends. Other times, I would get together with Jake or Josh, and we would go to the mall to play video games. It turned out that Josh never did get to use his condoms with Shayna. She broke up with him right after he got them, and now she wouldn't even speak to him. It hurt him, but he wouldn't talk about it at all, and no other girl we knew attracted him that much at the moment. *Let it run its course*, I thought to myself. *It will all work itself out.*

Jake, on the other hand, pretty much walked around with a smile on his face all the time. He wouldn't talk about why, either, but I was willing to wager hard-earned cash that he and Jaimie were finding a way to use up the condoms he got from me.

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Our soccer team remained undefeated, winning our games by an average of four goals. Scouts from Division One schools were showing up at our games to watch Skip play, and as a nice side benefit, Theo started getting some good mentions in the local press, too. He was also drawing some scouts to our games.

Coach Neville, always mindful of the future, played his subs as much as he could toward the end of the games, when the outcome was certain. As a result, all of us got a little playing time each game, including our tested tough freshman backup keeper, Jorge Mendoza.

By the time Sunday rolled around, I was usually pretty exhausted. I was able to sleep in, sometimes not rousing until noon or after. My dad, my brothers, and I would sit around and watch football on TV, and Sunday evenings would be catch up on homework time, from immediately after dinner until bedtime.

Things changed, beginning on the last Saturday of September.

* * * * *

Molly, Tessa, and I went to Davey and Kip's soccer game in the morning. Each time I watched them play, I could see the results of our lessons taking hold. More and more of their teammates were starting to play positions on the field, and the swarmball mentality lessened. The most obvious result of this change was that they were winning a lot of their games now that they were able to control the ball more. Possession is a great defensive tool, Mr. Reyes used to say, and he was right. If your team held the ball for most of the game, the other team couldn't score. It was simple strategy, easy to teach but very tough to learn.

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Lori sat next to us on the sidelines. She was looking a little tired herself. Molly was supposed to baby-sit for her later that night, and I had been invited over to watch a movie with Molly and the boys.

Coach Bill came over after the game to chat with us.

"How's your team doing, Sean?" he asked.

"Undefeated. I just wish I could get a little more playing time."

"You'll get your chance. And I know you'll make the most of it when you do," he said. "I've got a favor to ask. I'm going to be out of town next Saturday. Could you stand in as coach for me for their game?"

"Sure, I'll be glad to," I told him. I was surprised he didn't ask one of the parents to do it, but it made me proud that he trusted me with the team.

"We're practicing tomorrow afternoon right here. Can you make it? I'll introduce you to the rest of the team then and explain to them what to expect next game day."

"Sure, that's fine. Is it okay if Molly and Tessa come along, too?"

"Of course. As a matter of fact, I was going to ask Tessa if she could work with my keepers a little bit anyway, so that works out great." He paused. "If that's all right with you, Tessa. I didn't mean to be presumptuous."

"That's fine, Coach," said Tessa. "I'll be happy to help."

It was turning into a beautiful fall evening. I rode my bike over to the Wilkinson house after dark. The leaves on the trees were just turning into their amazing annual display of colors, and some were just starting to fall. I could hear the crunch of dried leaves underneath my tires as I rolled along the street.

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I dropped my bike on the front lawn and climbed the steps to the front door. I opened the screen to knock on the door, but it opened before I had a chance.

"Hi, Sean!" "Hi, Sean!"

The two boys were nearly identical echoes of each other as they jostled to be the first to grab my hand and pull me into the house. The aroma of freshly popped popcorn came from the direction of the kitchen, and I could hear the rattle of ice in glasses from there.

"Come in, Sean. We're going to play Life!" cried Kip.

"What's Life?" I asked with a smile. It was a line in an old song I heard my mom singing occasionally.

"It's a game!" shouted Davey. "Don't you know about Life?"

"I guess not," I answered. "What's it all about?"

"Come on, we'll show you." And off they dragged me, into the family room where the board game was set up on the coffee table.

The three of us sat on the floor around the table. Davey and Kip had already chosen the pieces they would be playing with, and they started running the little cars around the board, following the painted road around and over the bridge and back to the starting point again.

Molly came in with drinks and popcorn. She favored me with a very warm smile as she set out the glasses and cans of soda. She put the big bowl of popcorn on the end of the table, nearest the boys, and sat down on the floor to my right. She was wearing black jeans and a baggy black sweatshirt that set off the golden red highlights in her hair.

The next couple of hours were spent in the pursuit of careers, families, education, and retirement funds, as we played game after game of Life. We laughed and yelled and threw tiny little blue and pink pegs at each other, and generally had a great time.

Finally, it was bedtime for Davey and Kip. Molly hustled them up the stairs to get ready for bed. While she was supervising brushing teeth and washing faces and hanging up clothes and putting on pajamas, I cleaned up the family room. I carried the dirty glasses and

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empty pop cans into the kitchen, threw out the remains of the popcorn, and put the game back into its box. I straightened up the pillows on the couch and crawled around the room, picking up bits of popcorn from the floor. By the time I was finished, Molly was turning out the lights and closing the doors of the boys' rooms, whispering a wish for a good night to each of them in turn. She came down the stairs slowly, walked over to the end table to turn off the lamp, and collapsed onto one end of the couch. As she slouched there, she beckoned to me with one lazy arm, a come-hither wave to her fingers. I knelt on the couch next to her and leaned toward her. Her arm, still hanging out there, snaked around my neck as I bent down to kiss her softly.

"Mmmmm..." she said, her eyes closing. I could see the cares of the world washing out of her face as she relaxed and let the pleasures of the evening begin to work on her.

"Come here," she whispered, pulling me down for another kiss. As our lips met, I felt her open her mouth slightly and her tongue dart out to tease my mouth. I let my tongue peek out to touch tips, poking and teasing and tasting for a few moments.

I was still kneeling over her, so I shifted one knee between her slightly spread legs. I was leaning on my left elbow with my hand resting on the top of her head, and my other hand was at her soft throat, tangled in her hair.

She pulled me closer, and opened her mouth a little more, inviting my tongue into her mouth. The kiss got harder and wetter, and my internal thermostat kicked up several notches. I had vivid memories of what her leg had done to me the last time we were in the woods, and here I was in an advantageous position to return the favor. I settled in a bit and began a slow ascent up the inside of her leg with my knee, making sure my foot and ankle kept contact with her. My knee stroked its way up the inside of her thigh, and her legs moved apart to accommodate me. Simultaneously, my foot traveled up her calf and stopped at the inside of her knee the same time my knee reached the

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juncture of her legs. I pressed against her just for a moment, and allowed my leg to descend at the same slow rate.

When I pressed against her pussy, she moaned into my mouth and squirmed a little under me. She used her arms to pull me even tighter to her as we both heated up. I let my right hand drift down, caressing her ear, and then her throat. I felt the rough cotton of the neck of her sweatshirt and brushed down the top of her shoulder, around to her back, and then down, slowly, slowly, to her waist, where I let my hand rest for a moment. At the same time, my leg was continuing its own exploring of her lower half, stroking up, then down, then up again, each time pressing just a little more firmly into the seams of her jeans.

My fingers found the bottom hem of her sweatshirt and wormed their way underneath to the soft skin of her lower back. Her skin was hot to the touch, burning with an inner fire I could only know second-hand. (*The knee moves up, so slowly*) I played with her skin, tinkling with my fingertips, letting her furnace warm my hand. (*The knee presses against her, she thrusts her tongue into my mouth and then retreats, daring me to follow*) My fingers spider-walked up her back an inch at a time, acknowledging the play of the lateral muscles they were encountering. (*The knee begins its slow move back down her thigh; the foot caresses the calf from top to ankle*) Halfway up her back I could feel her begin to quiver in heat, desire, frustration. My fingers tiptoed a little higher up her back. Where I would normally encounter a bra strap across her back, there was nothing but unencumbered skin. (*The knee stops, pauses, and ascends to approach the portal once more*) My heart rate quickened with the realization that I didn't have the intricacies of the hook-and-eye maze of a bra to worry about as my hand continued its upward journey, wrapping itself around her bare shoulder in a digital hug. (*The quiver has reached her center, just as my knee presses once again against her; her hips now are engaged, pushing her heated mound against me*) I could wait no longer, and my hand left her shoulder to caress down a little, to just under her arm, and around to the soft mound of her breast. (*My knee, instead of moving back down her leg, presses harder*

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against her; I can feel her shaking in anticipation, and I can faintly smell her excitement) I squeezed as my hand completely covered her breast. I could feel the nipple heat up and expand against the tender skin of the palm of my hand. With an audible smack, the contact of our mouths broke, and she threw her head back in pleasure, sighing my name. I bent down and kissed that hot spot just below her ear, just in back of her jawline, and licked up into her ear. She squealed breathlessly and held me tightly to her, her hips bumping up at my intruding knee. Even through two pairs of jeans I could feel the heat emanating from her middle.

I tried kneading her breast, followed by tracing concentric circles with my fingertips from the soft, sweet underside, around the outer diameter, and in toward the turgid nipple. I finally gave in to temptation and began teasing and pinching that swollen tip, then running my fingers across her chest to her other breast. I repeated my ministrations, not wanting to favor one over the other, but treating them both like they were my very best friends. She reached down and found the edge of my shirt. A little frantically, she began pulling it out of my jeans and running her hands up and down my back, scratching lightly with her fingernails. Shivers followed wherever her nails scratched, giving me a hollow feeling inside, a feeling of suspense and anticipation.

I sat up and lifted up the edge of her sweatshirt. She sat up a bit, lifted her arms, and allowed me to shuck it off her. Her hair swept up with the movement of the sweatshirt as it popped off her head, then fell back down in a swooping arc to swirl softly across her bare shoulders. Her chest was flushed, her freckles almost dancing as she breathed deeply. Her breasts moved with her breathing, the nipples red and swollen and inviting. I bent down to pay homage to her wonderful body, licking and softly biting at her nipples and breasts, caressing and squeezing and worshipping. She pulled at my shirt, making me sit up while she pulled it over my head. She tossed my

shirt to the side, and then settled back once again to accept more of my attentions to her sensitive boobs.

After a few more minutes concentrating on her breasts, I dragged my tongue down, from the valley between her tits to her belly button. My hands stayed on their prizes, her swollen nubs, while I licked around and down into her sensitive navel, sending up a renewed quivering in her stomach muscles. Finally, I trickled my hands down, down to the snap of her jeans. I pulled it apart, and grasped the tab of her zipper and pulled it down. Her jeans parted to reveal the pale blue of her underwear. The musky tang of her juices reached my nose, sending another flare up my spine to reverberate in my nearly empty skull. I tugged on her jeans, pulling them down from her hips, and grabbed the waistband of her panties at the same time. She lifted up her beautiful bottom and helped me push her pants down and off, lifting up each leg in turn so I could remove them. She settled back down against the couch, legs akimbo, in anticipation.

I tried not to disappoint. The tricks I had learned previously came in handy now. I bent down and applied tongue and fingers to the task. I licked, I probed, I suckled, I caressed. I spread oily moisture from source to fingertips, and brushed the oily fingertips around and through her folds and crevices. I found her tiny clitoris first with a finger, then with a tongue, and played with it like it was a favorite toy. Her nether lips swelled and parted, opening the way to her overheated cavity, and my fingers delved there for a time, followed by a probing tongue. Her body language told me what I should do, from the quiver of her sympathetic muscles to the way she grabbed my head to pull me tighter against her. Her legs were splayed out by then, one leg on the couch and the other on the floor, and her hips kept up a nearly continuous undulation and hunching motion as I pleased her. I tasted, probed, sucked, waggled. I used my fingers in places my tongue was ignoring, then let them switch duties. I was rewarded with an increasing flow of lubrication from her, and I eagerly lapped it all up.

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Finally, just as my tongue was tiring, she pulled my head up and off her. I looked up at her. She was smiling, and her eyes were shining.

"Come here," she whispered.

I shimmied back up her, my hand still trailing behind to dip and delve and keep the fire stoked. She pulled me up and kissed me hard, eyes open and an amused look on her face, her happiness and arousal plain on her gorgeous face.

She grimaced. "Is that what I taste like?" she whispered.

"Don't worry about it, it's much better direct from the source," I replied.

"Yuck. Well, as long as you like it..." she said.

"The elixir of life," I said. Still, I wiped off my face and mouth before kissing her again.

She reached for my belt, suddenly anxious to continue our pleasures.

"Did you bring any? I brought one, just in case you forgot," she said.

"Are you stealing from poor Josh again?" I asked. She was bent down, concentrating on the unfastening of my belt and jeans. Her struggles caused her perky tits to jiggle slightly, tempting me to caress them again. I reached down with one hand to hold one boob lightly.

"He doesn't seem to be using them anyway, and I didn't want them to get old and stale," she said.

My scrambled brain went suddenly dead for a moment as she parted my jeans and reached in to grasp my steely rod. *What was I about to say? Oh, yeah.*

"I think it takes a long time for them to get old and stale," I said.

"Can't take any chances," she muttered as she yanked my jeans down. They fell around my ankles, and she abandoned them in favor of the prize still hiding in my underwear. She grabbed the elastic and pulled them down, her eyes wide and bright as she unwrapped the gift standing straight and proud in front of her. I used my feet to fumble my jeans and underwear off. She pushed me back onto the

couch and looked at what her hands were holding. One hand was wrapped around my rigid cock, and the other was exploring my balls. I reached down to get the condom out of my jeans pocket, holding it until she was ready.

It didn't take her long to get ready. I handed her the foil packet. She ripped it open with her teeth and removed the latex ring. Now that she was a little more experienced, she was quicker in rolling it onto me. I was unsure whether that was a particularly good thing, having enjoyed her fumbling tries immensely on our previous encounters. Be that as it may, Molly was in a bit of a hurry for herself, too. She put her hands on my shoulders and swung her leg over me. She grabbed my latex covered missile and held it straight up, pointed at the silo of her center. She crouched down just a little, rubbing the head up and down her flooded slit to transfer some of her lubrication to the tip, giving herself a shivery moment of pleasure at the same time when she bumped me against her swollen clit. She forced the head harder against her, pushing open her flowering petals, until she felt the helmet rest at the opening to her ready vagina. She paused to prolong the feeling of anticipation, and then dropped slowly, oh so slowly, impaling herself on me. The entry was tight and excruciatingly hot, the pleasure nearly overwhelming as she dropped, lifted up to relieve the pressure momentarily, then dropped more. Over and over she lifted, dropped, lifted, creating a delicious friction between us, until, finally, I felt her settle down on me, completely imbedded.

She sighed, surrendering herself to the pleasure she was experiencing from her center, and bent down to impart a hot, open-mouthed kiss. I put one arm around her neck, and the other hand found its way to her soft breast. When I pinched her swollen nipple, she squealed into my mouth and hunched faster on my cock, instantly sending bolts of heat through every nerve. She broke the kiss and stretched her head up in ecstasy, arching her back and pushing her boob harder into my hand. I reached up with my head and captured her other nipple in my mouth and sucked hard on her. I felt the tip of

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her breast slip into my mouth, until the nub of her nipple was firmly against the middle of my tongue. I rubbed it back and forth, all the while sucking more of her boob into my mouth, and she started bouncing hard on me. She let out a breathy moan as she lifted up, paused, crashed down on me, and ground her pubic bone against mine. She was in high gear, gasping for breath, as both our heart rates climbed into the red zone.

She rode me hard, there on the couch, wringing every last mote of pleasure to be had from our joining. Finally, she pushed herself down on me hard, impaled to the hilt, and ground against me. She kept on grinding until she was swept over the edge. She collapsed bonelessly on top of me and surrendered to her climax, her hips twitching and her sensitive walls pulsing against my iron cock.

That surrender propelled me to my climax within her. I pushed up against her hard, trying in vain to bury even more of me in her warm and inviting heat, and that last effort set the pump in motion. I contracted until my stomach and thigh muscles nearly cramped, and then shot stream after stream of hot seed out of me and into the latex reservoir. I hunched and pumped, each one after the first few a little weaker than the one before, until there was nothing left to give her. I was done for, and could have happily died right then.

I weakly put my arms around her, brushing her sweaty hair out of her face, gazing at the lovely aspect of Molly, passive and staring ahead at nothing, lost in the afterglow of her orgasm. We lay there together just like that, warm and comfortable as lovers should be, until the end of time. Well, at least until we started to cool off, our sweat-slick bodies slippery against each other, my still hard cock buried where it belonged.

She groaned and lifted herself off me, releasing me from her hold. My dick flopped down to rest like a defeated dragon against my belly, the slippery latex frothy from the churning of her juices. I slowly sat up and slipped the condom off. I stumbled over to the bathroom to flush it away. I heard Molly stirring, then I heard her talking to herself.

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"What is it, Mol?" I asked as I came back into the room.

"You've got to hurry up and get dressed," she said. "Mrs. Wilkinson will be home in about fifteen minutes, and we've got to straighten up this room and check on the boys." She was half dressed already. I watched with regret as she pulled her sweatshirt over her head and down, hiding once again the vision of her perfectly formed breasts. I longed to kiss them one more time, but it was not to be on this night.

I grabbed my clothes and hurriedly dressed while Molly found some air freshener and ran around the room, frantically spraying the air. I straightened up the cushions on the couch, and she ran upstairs to make sure Davey and Kip were still fast asleep.

"Everything's quiet," she reported when she came back downstairs. We turned on the TV and settled back, finding an old Laurel and Hardy comedy on a channel. We snuggled up together, arms wrapped around each other, giving each other small, soft kisses on cheeks and lips, as we waited for Lori to get home. She teasingly put her hand high on my thigh and let her fingers tease up and down, causing me a little discomfort as my expanding cock found itself confined in my jeans, until I finally put my hand on hers and held it still.

Right on time, we heard Lori's car in the driveway, followed by her key rattling in the lock at the back door. We stood and came out to the kitchen to greet her as she came in. She looked very tired, but she was smiling easily, something that was missing too often in her life lately. She paid Molly for babysitting, and bid us both a good night as we headed out the door.

Molly and I talked of nothing on the walk back to her house, and I left her at her front door after giving her one last kiss and an embrace. Those luscious boobs pressed against my chest, almost getting me started again. She turned and went in to the house, and turned off the porch light as I got on my bike and rode home.

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I was tired but very happy as I got home, thinking of Molly and our evening together. I still had three condoms left, so I felt like a rich man. I dropped my bike by the garage and tried to be quiet as I opened the back door. I stepped into the kitchen. All the lights were on in the house, something that had never occurred before at this time of night.

"Sean? Is that you?" I heard my mother call out my name from the other room, not a good sign. Suddenly concerned, and too conscious of the smell of sex surrounding me, I walked into the family room to find my mother, my father, and my brother Michael sitting there, staring at me.

"What's the matter?" I asked nervously. I was not sure I really wanted to know.

"Son, there's a phone number here for you to call. They said to call as soon as you got home, no matter what time it was." My dad handed me a piece of paper with a telephone number written on it. I looked up at each of them, but it was obvious that they had told me all they knew. It was obvious they were concerned too, since they had waited up for me to make sure I got the message. But the message, such as it was, was worrisome, to be certain. I didn't recognize the number.

I walked over to the telephone on the end table by the couch.

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SKIP AND THEO

I picked up the phone and dialed the number on the slip of paper. An unfamiliar female voice at the other end answered after three rings.

"Hello? This is Sean Porter. I got a message to call this number when I got home."

"Just a minute, Sean," the voice said. There was a thump as the phone was set down on the other end.

"Hello, Sean?"

"This is Sean. Who is this?"

"Oh, I'm sorry. It's Coach Neville, Sean. I've been on the phone with so many people tonight, I forget who I've talked to and who I haven't."

"That's okay, Coach." I was puzzled. *Why is Coach Neville trying to contact me this late on a Saturday night?* "What's up?"

"Sean, this is very hard." He paused for a moment. His voice sounded gravelly. "There's been a terrible car accident. Skip and Theo..." He paused again, perhaps to collect himself. My own heart was beating like a triphammer, and my palms were suddenly sweaty. "Skip and Theo were on their way to pick up their dates earlier tonight, when they got into an accident. Another car was involved;

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Theo's car got pushed off the road and into a tree..." His voice was rising in pitch, his emotions raw. He stopped to take a deep breath. "Sean, Skip was killed instantly, and Theo is in very serious condition at the hospital."

"What?" My knees gave out, and I hit the floor with a thump. "What did you say, Coach?"

"Skip is dead, son, and Theo is very badly hurt. I'm trying to contact everybody on the team to let them know. I've talked to almost everyone by now. I've been over to the hospital to meet with Theo's family, and Skip's parents were there, also. It's all so unreal. I don't think anyone realizes quite yet what's happened. Anyway, I've already talked to the principal at school, and he is arranging to have counselors available to anybody on Monday morning. I would like you to get to school early on Monday if you can, and we'll meet as a team, varsity and junior varsity, in the locker room for a few minutes before school starts."

"Okay, Coach. Is there anything else I can do?"

"Not right now, Sean. Just pray, pray for Skip's family, pray for Theo and his family. I'll be at the hospital as much as I can tomorrow."

"I'll be there, too, as early as I can."

"Thanks, Sean. It's going to be a very sad week next week, I'm afraid." With that, he hung up the phone. I sat on the floor, the dead receiver forgotten in my hand, until the dial tone brought me back to the here and now. I struggled to my feet, hanging up the telephone, and turned to see my mother and father, and my brother Mike, all looking at me, concern on their faces.

"We heard sirens earlier tonight. Is this something connected to them?" My mom stood up and came over to wrap me in her arms.

I nodded, not sure if I could speak quite yet. My eyes were burning, and my vision was blurred.

I sniffled a couple of times, and got myself under control. I let them know what had happened, and about Coach's plan to meet early on Monday morning. We sat up together, the four of us, for about an

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hour, talking about the accident and how much our town was going to be affected by the tragic news.

Finally, exhaustion set in, and I slowly found my way to my room and shut the door. I needed a shower. I was hoping the hot water would wash away the last hour, clean it up and present it again with better news. I spent about twenty minutes standing there, just letting the scalding water rush over me. The water started cooling as the water heater ran out, so I finally turned the water off and stepped out to dry off. I flopped into bed, the lights off, but it was many hours before I finally drifted off into a troubled sleep.

I was feeling pretty awful when I got up in the morning. My sleep was fitful and restless. I couldn't remember any of my dreams but they left a bad aftertaste, a lingering sour discomfort. I wanted more than anything to cancel soccer practice with Coach Bill's team, but since I didn't have any of their phone numbers, I steeled myself to go and do the best I could. I called Molly as early as I dared, but their house was already up and aware of the bad news. Heather and Evan had heard about it almost immediately. The two seniors ended up at the hospital, where they stayed until the nursing staff finally kicked them, and about half the rest of the senior class, out. She had come home shortly after I had dropped Molly off and awakened the family to give them the news.

Molly said she would call Tessa, and the two of them would meet me at the park. My brother Mike dropped me off at the park with my gear about fifteen minutes early, saying he would pick me up after practice.

The girls got there a few minutes later. While we were waiting for the team to show up, Coach Bill explained to us the drills he wanted to work on today. It was hard to pay attention to him, as distracted as the three of us were on that Sunday morning.

The boys on the team started straggling in to the park. Some of them walked, parents dropped others off. Lori came with Davey and

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Kip and immediately walked over to me and wrapped me up in a warm hug.

"I heard about the accident," she said. "I'm so sorry, Sean."

"Thanks," I said, "but I'm not sure I should be the one to be accepting condolences."

She kept on holding me tightly, as if the sheer strength of her arms could hold off the relentless stroke of the clock.

"I'm sure," she said. "Just because you aren't a blood relation to those boys doesn't mean you aren't hurting right now. They were friends and teammates, and anybody that close is suffering."

"Maybe you're right," I said, and I hugged her back. I did appreciate her concern.

We set the boys up in a four-way criss-cross passing pattern around one of the netless goals in the park. There was a line of four boys at each goalpost, and two lines about twelve meters out and ten meters apart. The balls were kept at the posts and passed across to one of the boys outside, who would trap it, pass it over to the other boy in the other outside line. That player would take the pass, dribble two steps, and take a shot on goal. There were three boys on the team who divided up the goalkeeping duties for the team, and each of the three took a turn in goal, with Tessa there the whole time to give them tips on how to prevent the score. There was mass confusion to start with, and the outside lines tended to drift closer together, but with Molly, Tessa, and I coaxing them on, the drill started to run smoothly. The boys were kept moving from position to position, sometimes passing and sometimes shooting.

When that drill started to wear down, we set up a drill known as World Cup. We divided the team into groups of three, with one keeper. There were sixteen players, so it worked out well for five teams. We threw out four balls, and the five teams scrambled for a ball. The object of this drill was to practice moving into open space, and communicating with teammates. Any team that scored a goal came off the field, and the remaining teams restarted with one less

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ball, until there finally there were just two teams left, battling after one ball.

By the end of practice, the boys were sweaty and puffing from the drill, and feeling pretty good about how they had performed in the World Cup drill. Before Coach Bill let them go, he talked to them for a few minutes about what we had worked on that day. I hoped the lessons would carry through to their next game day.

Michael picked us up after practice, and we dropped Tessa and Molly off at their houses before going home. I wanted to take a shower and get something to eat before I went to the hospital to see Theo.

That afternoon, my dad willingly gave up his NFL jones to drive Molly and me to visit Theo. He waited in the lobby the whole afternoon while we waited our turn to go in and see Theo. The waiting area was milling with teammates and school friends of Skip and Theo, the boys standing around trying to be stoic and strong, and the girls weeping and hanging onto each other for support. It was no surprise to me that Maggie, Skip's girlfriend, was not there, but I did notice that Allison, the girl hanging on Theo's arm at the pool party, also did not make an appearance.

When it was finally our turn to go into Theo's room, we found that it was nearly as crowded as the waiting room. His parents, brother, two sisters, grandparents, and Coach Neville were all there, surrounding the bed. Theo was in a drug-induced coma, tubes running everywhere, scary machines crowding the walls. He was in traction and had multiple internal injuries. Coach whispered to me that the long-term prognosis was favorable, but they didn't know if he would ever run again until they could bring him out of the coma and get going on his physical therapy. Theo looked so small and frail there, and Coach was sunk in on himself, keeping going by sheer willpower. I felt nearly as badly for him as I did for Theo's family.

Later that evening, we finally left the hospital. Dad drove us slowly past the spot where the accident occurred. There were long skid marks on the road, and the tree they had hit was badly scarred.

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There were dozens of flowers and candles, tributes to Skip and prayers for Theo, scattered around the tree. It gave the area a look of peace and tranquility, a far cry from its reputation from that day forward.

By the time I got home, I was completely wiped. I barely had the energy to undress before I crawled between my sheets and fell almost immediately into a dreamless slumber. The start of one of the toughest weeks of my life was just ahead.

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THE LONGEST DAY OF SCHOOL EVER

On Monday morning, the teams assembled in the gymnasium before school. Coach Neville stood in front of us, looking tired and worn.

"You know, of course, what has happened," he began. "I do have more information now, and the news is not good. As many of you know, the accident was a hit-and-run. The police have now found the car that pushed Theo's car off the road and into the tree. Unfortunately, it belongs to another student here at the high school, Richard Del Toro."

That set up quite a buzzing in the room.

"Apparently, he and three of his friends were out joyriding, and for some reason they ran Theo and Skip off the road. Richard has been arrested and his car impounded, and they're still looking for Harold Barnes and Vincent Arilio, two of the boys who were in the car with him. The fourth young man, Joey Amonte, is also being held in jail on pending charges."

Harold, Joey, and Vinnie were all members of Del Toro's Bulls. I turned to Jorge, sitting next to me, and whispered that they had all

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been part of the group that had been hassling his sister and him that day. He just nodded.

"Quiet, now," said Mr. Neville. "Dr. Osgood, our principal, will make an announcement during first period about the accident. He will also announce that school will be closed tomorrow in deference to Skip and his family, so that his friends and teammates can attend his funeral. I will expect to see you all there. As for the team, obviously we have some reorganizing to do, which the coaching staff will be working on today. In the meantime, I've got these to hand out."

He reached down and pulled out a box from underneath the table and opened it up. He pulled out black armbands and started handing them out.

"As a show of team solidarity, I would like you all to wear these today. This is a very difficult time for all of us, gentlemen. In light of the events of the weekend, I think we should consider dedicating the balance of this season to Skip and Theo."

There was a murmur of assent from all of us. Nobody on the team even considered disagreeing with the sentiment. Coach Neville asked for a show of hands, and it was a unanimous decision that we would play the rest of our games for our two fallen players.

"Thank you, gentlemen," said Coach. "I'll see you after school for a short practice session."

We all slipped the armbands over our sleeves, and the team quietly shuffled out of the gym to their first period classes.

"Mr. Porter, Mr. Johnson, could I see you two for a moment?" Coach tapped me on the shoulder, and caught Eric by the sleeve as we were about to leave.

"Sure, Coach. What's up?" Eric asked after everybody else had left.

Mr. Neville took off his glasses and started absent-mindedly wiping the lenses on his tie.

"Despite the circumstances," he began, "I've still got to think about the team and how to salvage this season. I've lost my top two players,

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and I have to make some fast changes.” He paused to collect his thoughts, and put his glasses back on. He looked hard at Eric and me.

“You two have been in my thoughts lately. Eric, your speed on the field is exceptional, and we’re going to need speed. But your ball handling could use some help. I would like you to work before school with a friend of mine, if you’re willing. He might be able to jump-start your skills in a short amount of time.”

Eric didn’t look too happy about the prospect of getting to school early just to learn how to juggle a soccer ball better, but he wisely kept his mouth shut for the moment.

“In return,” continued Coach, “I will be willing to offer you a starting position in the offense, to replace Theo. But,” he added, before Eric could answer, “the one depends on the other. If you aren’t willing to improve your soccer skills, you won’t get the starting nod. Think about it for a moment,” he said, and turned to me.

“Sean, Skip and I have been grooming you to take his position after this season. Unfortunately, circumstances have forced me to throw you into the fire. I need you before I think you’re ready. Can you play the right defensive spot, knowing you’re going to be trying to fill some big shoes?”

I didn’t have to think twice about it. “Yes, sir. I’ll do my best.”

“I know you will, Sean. I just wish you weren’t playing under these conditions.” He nodded, as if making up his mind about something.

He walked us both to the door of the gym just as the first bell of the day started ringing.

“I’ll see you both after school for practice,” he said. He put an arm around each of our shoulders, as if he was trying to protect us from the ravages of the real world. In retrospect, I guess that’s exactly what he was trying to do, in his way.

“Eric, let me know what you want to do by the start of practice today, please. Your decision affects what I will have to do on the whole left side of our team,” he said as he opened the door for us.

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"I don't need to wait, Coach. I'll be here tomorrow morning to work on my game. You can count on me." Eric had that same determined look on his face I had seen during our last club game a month ago. It now felt like a lifetime ago.

"Okay, good. Then I will let the rest of the team know about our realignment this afternoon. Thanks, boys. I knew I could rely on both of you. Just remember this. Play the game according to the rules, but play your own game. Both things are possible."

He patted us both on the shoulder, then gently pushed us out into the hall and on our way to our first classes of the day.

As I walked down the crowded halls toward my first period class, it was eerily quiet. Everyone was closed in on his or her own thoughts, and those few clusters of kids who were gathered together were talking in hushed tones, as if any undue noise would awaken the sleeping monsters. I got to my classroom just as the final bell rang and sat down at my desk next to Jake, who just nodded to me in greeting, sympathetic to the mood of everyone around him.

The intercom speaker in the corner of the room crackled as the last dying reverberations of the bell were fading, and Dr. Osgood's voice came over the intercom.

"May I have your attention please." He paused as usual, probably to wait for the hubbub in the classrooms to die down. Today that wasn't necessary. "As you are no doubt aware, a tragedy has visited us this weekend. Senior class members Charles 'Skip' Horvath and Theodore Jameson were involved in a traffic accident on Saturday evening. Theo Jameson is in the hospital in serious condition, but is improving. Sadly, Skip Horvath was pronounced dead on arrival. I have spoken to both families, and have extended the school's sympathies and best wishes.

"I have arranged to have grief counselors available all day in the nurse's office. Any student who feels the need to talk to a counselor may do so at any time. Teachers have been instructed to write hall

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passes to any student who wishes to speak to a counselor during their classes.

"Our school will be closed all day tomorrow so that students and faculty can attend Skip Horvath's funeral. Information concerning visitation hours and time and location of the services for Skip will be available by the fifth period, and may be picked up in any classroom. School will resume as scheduled on Wednesday morning.

"I am truly sorry I had to interrupt your classes this morning with such terrible news. Thank you for your attention."

For the first time I could recall, there was complete silence both during and after Dr. Osgood's announcement. Usually, announcements concerned only a small group of students or teachers, and everybody else took the opportunity to visit with friends sitting nearby, but today's broadcast was different. The silence was so different than usual, a few kids were looking around bewilderedly, as if they were trying to figure out what was wrong.

All day long, each class was the same. Teachers set aside their lesson plans for the day and tried to get their classes to talk about the accident. Richie Del Toro's involvement was well known by lunchtime, and none of his Bulls were in attendance that day, probably a good idea from a self-preservation standpoint.

By the end of the school day, everybody I saw looked the same way I felt. Ground down until there was nothing left, was how Josh put it. Even Toby Mueller, the school's practical joker, was subdued and distracted.

At soccer practice after school, Mr. Neville made no mention of his lineup changes, in deference to the mood of the team. We sat around the locker room while he talked to us, individually and as a group, and he led us in an informal prayer before taking us out to the field. We ran a couple of laps, and then did some desultory shooting drills just to stay loose and warm. Finally, after what seemed like about five hours, Coach blew his whistle to signal the end of practice. He

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gathered us all together and asked us to meet as a team at the church before the service, so we could all sit together.

By the time I got home and sat down to a dinner I didn't want to eat, I felt like I had just lived through the longest day of school ever.

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AFFIRMATION OF LIFE

Skip's funeral was scheduled for eleven o'clock on Tuesday morning. My brother Mike, who was living at home while he was attending our local junior college as a freshman, took the day off from his classes to attend the services, since he knew a lot of the seniors. He drove me to the church, and we got there a few minutes early so I could meet up with the team.

Coach Neville was gathering everybody just outside and I walked over to join my teammates. I saw Molly, Heather, and Evan go into the church with a large group of seniors, and I gave Molly a quick, small wave.

"Is everybody here?" asked Coach. "Okay, good. Kevin, John, and Sean, I have a request."

He looked for the three of us. Kevin Soranno was the senior midfielder who played directly in front of Skip on the field, and John Pennington was our starting keeper, also a senior.

"The Horvath family has requested that you three teammates serve as pallbearers today. Unless you have a strenuous objection, I have accepted already on your behalf." Coach looked from one to the other of us, receiving each assent in turn. I was surprised and humbled to be

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included in this group. "All right, good. Someone will signal you when it is time for you to perform your duties. Shall we go in, gentlemen?"

With that, he led us all in to the sanctuary for the beginning of the service.

The next couple of hours were some of the saddest I have ever experienced. Skip's family was nearly inconsolable, and Maggie Wiggins, Skip's girlfriend, was a wreck. Most of the girls, and many of the boys, were sniffing and blowing their noses all during the service. Suddenly, we were not nearly so invulnerable as we were just a few days ago.

Toward the end of the church service, a representative from the funeral home quietly motioned the pallbearers forward, and the three of us, along with Dr. Osgood and two of Skip's cousins, took our positions by the closed casket. At a signal from the funeral director, we grasped the shiny brass handles and wheeled Skip slowly down the center aisle of the church. When we reached the front steps, we were instructed to lift the casket up and carry it down the steps to the hearse.

I have never lifted anything quite so heavy as that casket and its contents. Later, at the cemetery, we lifted the casket back out of the hearse and onto a wheeled cart, and it was not nearly so heavy. That first experience with such a burden was very surprising, and startlingly difficult.

After the brief graveside service, the funeral director announced that the family had reserved a banquet hall in town for the afternoon, and invited everyone to join them in a celebration of Skip's life. Lots of kids from school, and many of the faculty I saw there, were opting not to attend the luncheon, but the entire soccer team was planning on going. Michael agreed to drop me off at the banquet hall, and I said I would call him if I needed a ride home.

The mood at the banquet hall was noticeably lighter. It was crowded with Skip's extended family, with family friends and co-

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workers of his parents, and with the kids and teachers from school who were closest to Skip. There was a large buffet set up against one wall, and there were lots of tables to seat from four to twelve people. Coach Neville commandeered a couple of large tables for the team, and there was plenty of room for everybody.

We all got in line for the buffet. Skip's family had set up bulletin boards on tripods by the first table of salads, and had pinned pictures of Skip, baby pictures and more recent ones all jumbled up, for people to look at while they were in line. We recognized a lot of us in the pictures, and spent a good deal of time chatting with friends, pointing out pictures, and remembering good times that had been recorded by somebody's camera. Molly came over to be with me in the line, and we grabbed plates as we got up to the first table. We made our way through the salad and bread table, to the entrees and vegetables, filling our plates. There was a dessert table also set up, with separate plates, so we opted to go back to sample the desserts later. We carried our plates over to one of the team tables and sat down next to Eric and Keisha, Jorge and Kristina, and some of the other players.

The banquet hall had been reserved for the afternoon and evening, and since there was no real hurry to leave, we didn't. After everyone had eaten their fill, Coach Neville called an impromptu team meeting, inviting anybody in the room to sit in if they wished. Skip's parents were in a corner with consoling relatives, but his sister Ashley, a freshman at school and a good soccer player in her own right, sat in with us, looking for a comfortable place to feel like she belonged. Kevin and John scooted over and made room for her between them, and she pulled her chair in close to listen in on the meeting.

"Can I have everybody's attention, please," called Coach Neville. He waited a moment for the kids at the tables around him to quiet down. "Thank you. Okay, as you know, we have dedicated the rest of this season to Skip and to Theo. We still have some unfinished business, however. First thing, we need to elect a co-captain to serve in Skip's absence. I would like to suggest that we consider Mr.

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Pennington, currently serving the team as defensive captain, for the position."

"So moved!" called out Kevin, sitting at the same table as John.

"Okay, I have a motion. Do I have a second?" asked Coach.

There was a general shout of "Seconded!" from the whole team, and John Pennington was elected Team Co-Captain.

"All right, next on the agenda is our new lineup. Trent," he said, turning to Trent Abbott, a junior who started as our left midfielder, "I would like you to start in Theo's forward spot." Trent nodded, pleased to be moving into more of a scorer's position. "Starting in Trent's midfield position will be Mr. Eric Johnson."

The team's collective eyes turned to our table and to Eric, who seemed to be blushing under his dark skin. Keisha was smiling broadly, patting him on the back. There was a smattering of congratulations from all around toward him, and then everybody quieted down. There was still one position, Skip's, to be covered.

"Starting at the right defensive position," announced Coach, "will be Sean Porter."

There was another smattering of applause, mostly led by Eric and Molly, and I felt a lot of hands patting me on the back and shoulder. The announcement was not a real big surprise to anybody on the team, but it kind of cemented the fact that we didn't have Skip to rely on in the backfield anymore.

"Ladies and gentlemen, please," called out Coach one more time. The shuffling of chairs and the clatter of glasses and cups stopped once again. "I would like to remind you all that we still have half our regular season to go. And, if we are very fortunate, we will advance into the sectionals and the playoffs. We have a lot of hard work ahead of us, and there will be a lot of adjustments in our game that we will need to work hard on, but I know that you all will pull together to make this team work." He lifted his glass of water and held it out in front of him. "To Skip, and to Theo."

We all raised our water glasses.

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“To Skip. To Theo.” We all took a sip and sealed our bargain.

Coach Neville closed our team meeting, put on his coat, and stopped by to pay his respects to the Horvath family before leaving. A few others left, but a lot of Skip’s friends decided to stay, taking advantage of a homework-free, practice-free day.

A little later, small triangles of sandwiches, snacks, and cookies were brought out and set up on the buffet tables for those of us who had stayed. There was a small garden area out the back of the banquet hall, with a gazebo tucked in a corner, half hidden from the sliding doors of the patio area. Molly and I grabbed a plateful of food and slipped through the door to watch the sun go down from the patio. We brought out our jackets, since it cooled off quite a bit as soon as the sun started getting low in the afternoon sky.

As we were sitting at one of the garden tables on the patio, I thought I heard voices coming from the area of the gazebo, though in the gloom I couldn’t see anyone back there. I got up and tiptoed down toward the back, trying to be quiet and careful in the dark.

As I got closer, the sounds separated into two voices. Eric and Keisha were sitting on a bench inside the gazebo, away from the glare of the lights from the patio door. They had their arms wrapped around each other as they talked softly, their hands busy moving under their unbuttoned coats. I ducked back behind a tree and made my way back to the patio, where Molly was waiting. I put my finger to my lips and motioned for her to follow me.

“What?” she said a little impatiently.

“Shhhh!” I whispered. I motioned for her to follow me down toward the gazebo. She sighed dramatically, but came down behind me, back to behind the tree. As we got closer, we could hear the tiny movements betraying the couple. I exaggeratedly tiptoed forward so Molly would get the idea to be very quiet, and pointed toward the dark area where Eric and Keisha could just be seen. Molly placed her hands on my shoulder and peered around me as I crouched down.

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There was no talking going on now. Eric had Keisha wrapped up and pulled to him, his arms inside her coat. They were engaged in a hard, open-mouthed kiss. From the movement of their mouths and cheeks, it was plain that their tongues were fully engaged with each other.

Eric pulled her over more, and Keisha knelt with one knee on the bench, and the other between Eric's legs. She scrunched down on him without breaking the contact of their kiss, until her crotch was pressing firmly on his thigh. I saw Eric's hands slide down out of the bottom of Keisha's coat to grab a round globe of her butt in each palm. He squeezed her cheeks and pulled her forward and back, with her help, creating friction along her pussy against his leg. She humped his leg in rhythm with Eric's clenching of her ass, until she could take no more. She lifted her mouth off of Eric's and arched her back in pleasure, throwing her head back and moaning. Eric reached down and lightly bit the tip of her breast through her clothing as she was arched back, causing her to hump even harder on his leg. Finally, I heard a breathy moan escape from her, and she held herself against him tightly, her hips rubbing back and forth just a fraction to prolong the pleasure she was generating from her middle. She held his head to her throat, eyes closed, as she slid down from her sexual high. Finally, she collapsed against him, resting with her head on his shoulder. Eric whispered something, and I heard a low, throaty giggle come from Keisha.

Molly and I backed out of view silently, back to behind the tree. We stayed off to the side of the garden area, out of sight of the gazebo. Molly held my arm close to her as we huddled together in the cold.

"Wow," she whispered. "That was really something."

"Yeah," I answered quietly. "They were really getting into it."

"That's kind of taking a chance on getting caught, though," she said.

"Maybe it adds to the thrill," I suggested.

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She looked at me for a moment. In the dim light, I couldn't read the expression on her face.

Just then, we heard Eric and Keisha walking back toward the banquet hall, arm in arm, talking quietly to each other. Just before they slid the door back and stepped through, I heard Keisha's tinkling laughter as Eric teased her about something.

A moment later, Molly was dragging me by the arm toward the gazebo.

"Come on," she whispered. "It's our turn."

Those words were enough to get my blood racing, and I stumbled after her, suddenly aware of a tightness in my dress pants. She dragged me by the hand up the three steps into the gazebo, and into the corner so recently occupied by our friends. She pushed me down onto the bench and sat on my lap, grabbing the sides of my head and pulling herself down to kiss me. Her mouth immediately opened, her tongue darting out to challenge and joust, and she wrapped her arms around my neck.

Our tongues and lips did battle for a time, reveling in the simulation of another act in a warm and wet environment. Molly reached down and fumbled with my belt, suddenly in a hurry. She practically ripped the snap off my pants in her eagerness to get to what lay inside, grasping the corners and yanking them apart to lower the zipper. Her hand was cold as it reached into my underwear to pull out her treasure. She pumped on me a few times, just to make sure I was awake and paying attention, and then she let go momentarily to reach up beneath her skirt to pull her panties to the side.

She was more than ready. She knelt over me and settled her skirt around us, hiding the actions of her hands as one hand grasped my stalk and the other kept the crotch of her panties out of the way.

"Molly? What are you..."

She smiled. "Shhhh," she cautioned. She glanced down at where my cock was resting. Then, staring into my wide-open eyes, she

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crouched down, settling the tip of my rigid pole against her open lips, and let her weight carry her down and onto my cock.

I could do nothing but accept it. In an action reminiscent of Eric's, I slid my hands under her skirt to grasp her straining buttocks, lifting her up and down upon me. Her hands were on my shoulders, riding along with her rising and falling. I longed to taste of the reddened tips of her breasts, but it was not to be on this occasion, so I concentrated, instead, on trying to angle myself just right so that her pleasure points were properly stimulated.

The elastic of my underwear was chafing and binding around my balls, which helped to stave off my release. Molly, on the other hand, must have been energized by the sight of Eric and Keisha, for it didn't take her long before she started panting and moaning, straining toward her orgasm. She bounced down on me, hard, three or four times, then ground down so that her engorged clit was mashed against the base of my cock. That was enough to send her over the edge. She cried out softly into the night, the steam from her breath warming my face. I could feel the increased flow of lubrication from her, seeping down around my rock-hard cock still imbedded in her, keeping her passageway slick and warm for me.

After she had recovered a bit, I started moving her again. Slowly at first, just slightly up and then back down again. On each pumping of the piston the stroking got just a little longer, until she rediscovered the rhythm and began to adjust herself so that she was using all of her to stimulate all of me. Up, until just the tip was still imbedded in her, then down, until I was fully encased in her sheath. Each time I was completely inside her, she would sit for a split second, and then twist in my lap before ascending once again. It only took a dozen or so of these strokes and twists before my own climax was impending. It was I, now, who was panting and staring at nothing, concentrating instead on the intense pleasures being generated by our joining.

"M... M... Molly..." I managed, just as I felt the first contractions signaling my discharge. I lifted her up by her clenching ass, and she

popped up and off me before I could squirt off inside her. She crouched down in a catcher's stance, grabbed my red and swollen cock in her hand, and bent down to take me in her mouth. She pumped me, still slippery with her juices, and took the helmet between her lips. She sucked on me hard, her hand working to drain me.

I came. I came as hard as I'd ever come in my life. It was only the second time she had ever taken me into her mouth, and it thrilled me to know she was tasting me, just as I had tasted her.

She swallowed the mouthful I gave her without losing the seal around the head of my spasming cock. Each time I felt her tongue work my juice to the back of her throat, each time I felt her hand jerk on me, I contracted and pumped again in sympathy, until, finally, there was no more to give. When she felt me soften slightly, she stopped her ministrations and lifted her head up off me. My overworked cock popped softly out from between her lips. She kissed the tip once more, then looked up at me, her eyes shining and happy, a smile on her lovely face. *How'd I do?* she seemed to be asking, already knowing the answer.

I reached down gently with both hands, wrapping them in the soft curls of her reddish-blond hair, and pulled her up to me. I kissed her softly, a sincere thank-you for her efforts on my behalf.

It was cold out, so we took a moment to tuck and rearrange before settling back down on the bench, arms around each other, silent in the dark together. Her head was resting on my shoulder, comfortable and comforting. Despite my misgivings about our unprotected adventure, I was as happy as the day would allow me to be, and I never wanted the moment to end.

At the time, I thought it was kind of weird that we were so intense in our lovemaking on such an occasion and in such a place. The advantage of time has since given me, however, a more proper sense of the motivations behind not only our actions, but the directions we observed Eric and Keisha traveling.

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It was, of course, the affirmation of life, even in the shadow of the certainty of death in which we had so recently walked.

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BUSTED

The next day our teachers really made up for two lost days of school by piling on the homework. It was close to dinnertime in the Porter household. I was upstairs in my room trying to comprehend my algebra, without much success. My mom was in the kitchen getting dinner ready, when I heard her calling up the stairs to me.

“Sean!”

I opened the door to my room and called out.

“Yeah?”

“Sean, I’ve got to run to the grocery store for a moment. Your dad should be home in just a few minutes, so we’ll plan on eating in about a half an hour. Okay?”

“Okay, Mom. I’ll just be up here studying until then.” I closed the door and sat back down on the floor. *I’m never going to understand these formulas!*

A few minutes later I heard footsteps on the stairs, but didn’t think anything of it until the door to my room opened. I was surprised when I looked up to see Molly standing there. She was still wearing her sweats from cheerleading practice, her hair tied back in a loose ponytail.

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"Hey, Mol. What are you doing here?"

She closed the door and sat down beside me.

"I just saw your mom leaving in the car. Isn't anybody else home?" she asked.

"Nope, just me. And now you."

"Good," she growled as she jumped up and wrestled me to the floor.

"What are you doing?" I asked, taken by surprise. I was pretty much caught. She had my wrists trapped beside my head, and her weight was pressed onto her hands as they held my arms down. I probably could have bucked her off, but I had the feeling that would have spoiled the fun for her.

"Oh, I just thought I'd come over and jump on you this afternoon," she said. "I missed you today. I was thinking about you last night and all day today in class. I got all itchy and stuff, so I decided to come over to see if you knew how to scratch my itch."

"Mol, it's really not a good time..." She got a dangerous gleam in her eye when I said that, so I decided not to continue with that train of reasoning.

"I'm going to let go of your left arm," she said. "Don't try anything funny. Just reach into my jacket pocket and get your present out."

"A present? What for?" *Uh-oh, did I miss a special day or something?* Now I was worried.

"For just because. Go ahead, Sean." She let go of my left arm. I slowly reached up and wiggled my hand into the pocket of her jacket. There was a paper bag with something in it in there. I pulled it out.

"Here," she said, reaching for the bag. "I'll hold the sack, you reach in and get your present."

I reached in and pulled out a familiar box.

"Condoms!" I exclaimed. "Molly, you are full of surprises sometimes. Where did you get these?"

She let go of me altogether and grabbed the box.

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"I stopped at the drug store on my way here. I knew you had to be just about out of them, and I need to replace the ones I stole from Josh. So I bought them. No big deal. Besides, I want you to always have one with you. We can't afford to be caught without one when we might need one, like last night, you know?" She ripped open the box and pulled out a handful of packets and stuffed them into the paper bag. She wadded up the top of the bag and shoved it into her jacket pocket. "You take the rest of these and keep them safe."

She stood up to let me get up and stash my supply. When she saw where I was keeping them, she laughed.

"Your sock drawer? You, too? Not very original, Porter."

"Hey, when I see a good idea, I'm not afraid to rip it off," I retorted.

"Hmmm... speaking of ripping it off," she said quietly as she moved up behind me and put her arms around my waist. She hooked her thumbs in my belt and drummed her fingers lightly, setting up a sudden throbbing in my head.

My mom's voice came floating up the stairs. Molly had me so distracted, I hadn't even heard her come home.

"Sean! Dinnertime!"

"Sean! Dinnertime!" Molly echoed softly in my ear, her fingers keeping up their insistent drumming.

"Okay, Mom, be right down!" I shouted out. I turned around, still encased in her arms. "I've got to get downstairs, Molly. What are you going to do?"

"Oh," she said nonchalantly, "they don't know I'm here, so I guess I'll just stay up here in your room until you're done eating."

"Okay," I said, a little flustered. "I'll try to hurry."

"You do that, Sean Porter," she said. She grabbed my hand and guided it up under her sweatshirt to her bare breast. "You hurry back," she said.

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Now I was a complete wreck. I stumbled to the door, dimly aware that I was walking a little funny due to the sudden pressure of my inflating member in my tight jeans. *What the hell was going on here?*

Molly sat on the edge of my bed. "Go on, dinner's waiting," she said with a smile. She made a little shooing motion with one hand.

I went out into the hall and closed the door. I was tempted to turn back and make sure she was really there, and not just a product of my fevered imagination, but I didn't. Willing my half-hard cock to deflate, I started down the stairs to the kitchen.

Everyone was just sitting down at the table when I walked in. Mom had all the food out, Dad was just reaching for the platter of vegetables, my two brothers were already digging in. I sat down in a kind of a daze.

"Hiya, Sean. Studying hard?" Stephen said innocently. I looked over at him, but he already had his head back down, shoveling in food as fast as he could. He was twelve years old, and just starting to really grow fast.

I grabbed a piece of fried chicken and started eating it distractedly.

"Uh... will you excuse me for just a moment?" I didn't wait for an answer, but instead got up from the table and ran upstairs to my room and opened the door.

No Molly. Maybe I did imagine it.

Just as I was turning to go back downstairs, I heard a slight noise from my closet. I walked over and peered in. Molly was there. She had taken off her sweatshirt and taken one of my dress shirts off a hanger and put it on. She had the tails tied around her bare waist, and the shirt was unbuttoned, showing a healthy gap of bare skin from her throat almost to her belly button. She just looked at me quizzically, one eyebrow raised, not saying a word.

I just shook my head, turned around, and went back downstairs. I wasn't imagining it.

"Is everything all right, Sean?" My mother sounded concerned.

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"Everything's fine," I said. "I... I just wanted to make sure I turned off my tape player."

I made it through dinner in nearly record time, and excused myself from the table.

"The teachers really loaded it on me today, I'm afraid. I'll be up doing homework the rest of the night," I told my dad.

I walked upstairs and knocked softly on my door before opening it. Molly was back in the closet, and peeked out when she heard the door close. She still had on my shirt, but had taken off her shoes and socks and her sweat pants, leaving only her panties on. When she saw I was alone, she jumped up into my arms. I automatically caught her when she jumped. She put her arms around my neck and kissed me as I held her. I backed up until my knees hit the bed, and I sat down, with Molly still in my lap. She reached down and undid the knot holding the shirt together, and the two halves parted, revealing her body in its glory to me.

Again, she took one of my hands and placed it on her breast, pressing it there before dropping her hands down to my lap to work at my belt. I felt her nipple expand as I held her. Almost without volition, I squeezed and kneaded the pliant flesh.

In the meantime, she put both her hands to work on undoing my jeans. Molly managed to loosen the belt and unsnap them before standing up and pushing me onto my back. I reluctantly let go of her soft breast as I lay back, lifting my ass up off the bed so she could pull my jeans and underwear down and off.

She bent over me to examine what she had unwrapped, and it occurred to me that she really hadn't ever seen a naked boy in the light before. She held my swollen cock in her small hand, pulling it toward her and looking it over. She squeezed it, eliciting a moan from me, and brushed the fingertips of her other hand across the sensitive skin of my balls. I jerked involuntarily under her ministrations, closing my eyes and surrendering myself to the pleasures she was imparting.

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I felt a warm wetness against the underside of my throbbing cock, and opened my eyes to see my Molly savoring the taste she had transferred to her tongue from my skin. She looked up at me, eyes smiling, and licked me again, never breaking eye contact. My cock jumped when her tongue touched the shaft. She looked down at what she was doing, still holding my stalk in her hand. She ran her tongue around the tip, licking up some of the leaking pre-cum that was drooling out, and a strand stretched itself from the tip to her tongue as she backed away.

She bent back to her task, this time taking the tip of my painfully hard cock between her lips. Her hand dropped from the base of my cock onto my balls, which she held and played with gently while she was using her mouth on me. She sucked hard on the helmet, rubbing her tongue around the ridge, and then dropped, ever so slowly, until her mouth was full of me, and I could feel the back of her tongue on the tip of my cock. She exhaled through her nose, and the movement of the air tickled my pubic hair. She backed off my cock slowly, keeping the suction as much as she could, until just the tip was still encased between her lips. She opened her mouth to take a deep breath, resting her teeth on me, and then sucked back down on me hard. She started working her head up and down on me, alternately sucking and loosening, running her tongue around and then up and down, adding saliva to help to lubricate, creating friction with her lips and tongue. She was relentless in her attack, and I could only collapse back, eyes closed, and suffer the consequences.

The consequences were not long in coming. I could feel the start of the sequence deep in my loins. My hips were rising as she was dropping onto me, unconsciously trying to bury more of me into her mouth as I prepared to distribute my seed.

"Uh... uh... M... M... Molly..." I tried to warn her of the impending explosion, but she was still caught by surprise when I bumped up, pushing my cock a little further into her mouth than she was expecting, and shot off my first salvo.

She choked and coughed, eyes watering, then managed to cover me with her mouth once more to catch the last spurts of my jetting spunk, swallowing it down as it squirted into her mouth.

At last, the well was dry. My dick began to slowly lose its rigidity, even as she tried drawing one last spurt out of me. But there was nothing left to give her, despite her efforts. She scooted up to lie by me, tucking herself in next to me. The shirt she was wearing fluttered open as she lay down, teasing me with a momentary vision of her small, perfectly formed breasts and lightly freckled chest. I couldn't resist the temptation, and reached around and slipped my hand beneath the shirt to hold her soft boob. She, in turn, kept her hand down in my crotch, alternately cradling my balls and fingering my shrunken cock.

We lay like that for several minutes, not talking, until the recuperative powers of youth and the persuasive powers of a luscious young girl combined to send a rush of blood back down into my dick. She held me gently in her hand, feeling me expand and fill her palm. I squeezed and played with her breasts, alternating from one to the other, as my internal temperature climbed once again.

"That's really amazing, how it does that," she whispered to me, marveling at how quickly my cock went from shriveled to stiff. "I love holding it when it does that."

"We need to get off the bed so it doesn't make noise," I suggested. She didn't want to let go of me, so I slid down and off the edge, all the while staying on my back so that she could keep her hand on my cock. I slipped down to the floor, and Molly knelt next to me, holding her prize. I ran my hand down her side to the elastic of her panties, gripping the waistband in an effort to get them off her. She reluctantly let go of me long enough to shimmy out of them. She reached under the bed for one of the foil packets she had hidden there earlier, anticipating this very moment. My fingers found her drooling pussy while she was reaching under the bed, and she knelt back up and spread her knees out for me as she tore open the packet. I parted her

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folds and released a flood of her moisture, coating my fingers and spreading down the inside of her thighs. She got suddenly anxious to complete her task, and her fingers shook a little as she positioned the rolled-up condom over my steely dick. She rolled the latex down smoothly, and then leaned on her arms, allowing me to continue with my manipulations in her center. I had two fingers plunging into her, and my thumb was rubbing across her engorged clit. Her hips and thighs started quivering to the rhythm I was playing on her.

Finally, with my fingers still buried in her, she lifted her leg and straddled me. I slowly removed the two fingers that were deep in her, reached down for my cock, and positioned it against her. She dropped down onto me, and in one smooth, slow motion sank me completely into her. She collapsed down on me for a moment, savoring the feeling of fullness and completeness, and then sat up and went to work.

I reached up with both hands and held my palms flat against her upthrust boobs, letting the movement of her body rub her swollen nipples against my hands. She pressed her body closer, increasing the contact against her breasts, threw back her head, and lost herself in the pursuit of her pleasures.

Since I had already come once, I was able to hold off the crisis until Molly was ready. It didn't take her long. She tensed, ground herself against me, and stepped onto the road to completion. She bounced on me, and the tip of my covered cock hit her cervix. She leaned forward and scraped her swollen clit against me, and that took her over the cliff. She shivered, the spasms traveling from her thighs up through her torso and back down to her middle, and gave herself up to her orgasm. She collapsed down on me, seemingly unable to catch her breath, as I pumped up at her and experienced the triggering of my own spasms, mindlessly sending my hot seed deep into her womb, only to be captured by the encasing latex.

We were both completely spent. We were sweating and breathing hard as she rolled exhaustedly off me. Our bodies separated, hot

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liquids that had been there for our joining spread and cooled, and we relaxed against each other in post-coital languor.

My brain, disconnected from rational thought long ago, tried to get back on track.

"How did you manage to get here?" I asked. There was a vague thought that she had accomplished some sort of devilry to show up at my house tonight.

"I told my mom I would be studying and eating dinner at Tessa's tonight. Tessa said she'd cover for me."

"Oh." That was about the limit of information I was able to handle for the moment.

Something else occurred to me. "How are we going to get you out of here?" I asked, more talking to myself than to Molly.

She sighed contentedly. "I didn't think that far ahead. It's so comfortable here, maybe I'll just stay." She snuggled closer to me.

I sat up, suddenly aware of where we were, and the precarious position we were in.

"Get up, Mol. We've got to get you out of here."

She gave me a sour look, but got up and stumbled to the closet to gather up her clothes. I threw my shirt and jeans on and slowly cracked open the door to see what was going on in the world. I could hear the television on downstairs in the family room, my mother and father laughing at some antic being pulled on a comedy they were watching. There was no sign of either of my brothers.

"Come on," I whispered, motioning to her to follow me.

We snuck down the stairs and into the kitchen without being seen. I opened the back door and let her out, thinking that we had escaped. As I was closing the door, though, I heard the front doorbell ring. I walked to the sink and got a glass of water, wondering how I was ever going to get my homework done, when I heard some familiar voices from the living room. I headed toward the front of the house.

Mr. and Mrs. Lehigh were there, talking to my parents. Standing between them was Jake, who looked like he wanted to be anywhere

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but there. I had a sinking feeling in my stomach when I saw them. Jake looked up, saw me, and turned away sheepishly. *A bad sign*, I said to myself. *A very bad sign*.

"Sean?" My dad called over to me. "Perhaps you should come over here and hear what Jake's parents have to say, son."

Well, the short form was that Jake and Jaimie got caught with their pants down, literally speaking. In a panic, Jake blurted out to his parents that he had gotten condoms from me, which triggered a memory in Mr. Lehigh's brain, namely seeing me and Josh in his store, picking out rubbers with his help.

"Is this true, Sean?" my mother asked.

"Well... um... yeah, I guess it is," I admitted. "I did go there with Josh, but I was just trying to provide a little moral support for him. It's not like I'm needing them for myself," I bluffed.

"Is that so?" asked my dad. "Maybe we should be calling the O'Tooles and asking them, too." I had a bad feeling that my bluff was about to be called. "I assume you still have that box somewhere in your room, Sean. Bring it down and let's see it."

I was about to protest, about to pull out all the stops about trust, and constitutional rights, and why do you think I'm lying to you? But I saw by the look on his face that I wasn't going to win any of those arguments. Muttering under my breath a blue streak along the lines of what I was going to do to Jake once we both got out of our respective jails, I trudged upstairs to try to salvage the situation.

Just as I opened my door, I remembered. *Molly!* She had left me with nearly a full box of condoms, just that evening. I yanked open my socks drawer and pulled apart my special pair of soccer socks. A dozen foil packets spilled to the floor. *I'm saved!*

I scooped them up and ran downstairs. I held out my cupped hands in triumph, showing the dozen condoms to the Lehighs and my parents. *Accuse me, will you?* I thought to myself.

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Mr. Lehigh bent down to look at what I held out. "Interesting. But these are two different types," he said, picking out two similar but definitely different condoms and holding them up for everyone to see.

I looked at Jake. *We're both busted*, he seemed to say to me. Unfortunately, I could only silently agree with him.

A half an hour later, the Lehighs were finally walking down the sidewalk to their car, and I was facing the music in front of my parents.

"I'm very disappointed in you, Sean," said my mother. "I thought we had raised you better than this."

I kept my mouth shut, hoping that my silence would be taken as contrition.

"You've given us no choice, son," said my dad. "I think you've set a new record in this household tonight. None of your brothers has ever gotten anywhere near being grounded for life before. But you've managed it. From now on, until further notice, you are to come straight home from soccer practice. You will not leave the house except in the company of one of us, and you will not have any friends over without getting our permission first. And especially, you will not be here with any girls, including Molly O'Toole. Am I clear?"

"Yes, sir." I tried to sound as sincere as I could. At that point, I fervently hoped Molly didn't try sneaking into our house again.

My precious stash of condoms was confiscated, and I was sent to my room under threat of doom if I so much as sneezed wrong for the foreseeable future. I was under house arrest, and I had no idea how long my sentence was going to be.

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CONTAINED GRIEF AND ANGER

The arrangement my parents worked out was that my dad was going to drop me off at school in the mornings and my mom would be waiting for me at the end of soccer practice in the afternoons. I climbed out of my father's car the next morning and walked dejectedly into school, about five minutes before my first class was to start.

I sat down next to Jake and growled at him.

"Thanks a lot, pal. 'I won't get caught. You can count on me,'" I mimicked him derisively. "I guess I know now what your word is worth," I added disgustedly.

"Look, Sean, I'm really sorry. But we really got caught red-handed. When Jaimie's dad found out about it, he was really pissed, you know? Going on and on about how I stole his daughter's innocence, I could go to jail for rape, all sorts of shit like that. I panicked, okay?"

"That's great to know, Jake. That makes me feel a whole lot better."

"Yeah, well, you at least didn't have to face Mr. Jacks. He was so mad, I didn't think I was going to leave the room alive." He seemed to shiver at the memory. "You know, Jaimie's sister Tara has been spying on us, I think. She may have been the one who ratted on us."

"Why would she do that, Jake?"

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"Ah, hell, I don't know. She's really been acting weird lately. Remember the picnic? She hasn't gotten any easier to be around."

"That's just too freaky. Okay, Jake, maybe I can understand why it happened. But that doesn't make my situation any better."

"Yeah, I know. All I can say is that I'm sorry, Sean. I really am."

* * * * *

I quietly told Molly what happened when I saw her at lunch. She was very upset that she was only seconds away from being caught in my room, but that feeling passed very quickly. She got a bright look in her eyes.

"You want to live dangerously, Sean Porter?" she whispered. "I might have another plan to come visit you one of these nights."

I nearly choked on my soda. "Christ, no, Molly! Are you nuts?"

She chuckled. "Maybe I am," she murmured. "Maybe I just am."

* * * * *

True to her word, my mom was there to pick me up after soccer practice. It was a cold, silent ride home, and a cold and silent evening spent in my room, catching up on schoolwork. No radio, no stereo, no noise was allowed during my incarceration. I went to bed early, a little scared that I would hear the door creak open and see Molly standing there. But fortunately, nothing of the kind happened.

The rest of the week was more of the same. I talked to my friends at school, but had no contact with anyone after I got home. It helped that I was trying to work myself into exhaustion during soccer practice. Coach Neville had put a lot of pressure on me as Skip's

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replacement, and I wanted to do the best I could do. I was messing up a lot during practice, and it was making some of my teammates nervous and a little mad. My attitude was that I could mess up during practice, as long as I played well in the game. My goal was to play well when it counted, and not worry too much about how practices were going.

The only truly bright spot to the week was on Thursday afternoon, when Coach Neville announced to the team that Theo had been brought successfully out of his coma, and was awake and alert. That news cheered everybody up considerably.

Finally it was Friday, game day. This was to be our first game without Skip and Theo, and it was a home game. There was a general announcement at school in the morning, asking the student body to support the team. We were expecting standing room only at the game.

I was sitting in the locker room with my teammates, half listening while Coach was giving us some last-minute instructions. I was nervous as hell.

"Now, remember, people, this team will probably test our right side early on." Coach Neville looked over in my direction. "So, Sean and Kevin, be ready for anything. Sean, you're an unknown quantity to our opponents, so don't be afraid to show them what you're made of. Kevin should be able to head off some of their attacks, and our sweeper and keeper will be watching out, so just go out and play your game."

I nodded, and looked over at Kevin. He was sitting with his head down, lost in his own thoughts. *Thinking about Skip and Theo, no doubt.*

Finally, it was time to take the field. We trotted out and began our warm-ups. When the starting lineups were announced and my name was called, it still startled me. I was still half expecting Skip to show up and take his accustomed spot on the field.

We took our positions, and the partisan crowd in the stands gave us a standing ovation as the referee blew his whistle to start the game. It was a great show of support for the team, and we appreciated it.

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Just as Coach Neville had predicted, the Hamersville Lions did try our right side at the first opportunity. Now that the game was underway, my nervousness was gone and I could see how their plays were designed. I'd been in baseball games when the ball seemed like it was the size of a grapefruit and I couldn't miss hitting it. For me, this game was just like that. The soccer ball looked to be about the size and weight of a basketball, moving in slow motion across the field. I seemed to have plenty of time to get into position to make a play on it without any interference from the Hamersville midfielders or forwards. I was trapping the ball and moving it up at will, dribbling forward or passing it up to Kevin whenever the Lions worked it over into my area. Three times, then four, they deliberately tested our defense on my side. Each time, they were soundly rebuffed. Finally, they gave up on the maneuver and tried our left side. They were no more successful there either, and by the halftime whistle, we were up 2-0.

The first forty-five minutes of the game went by incredibly fast. I was still feeling very energetic, almost hyper. I trotted over to the sidelines with the rest of the team, grabbed a paper cup of water and poured it over my head. I reached for another one to drink. Kevin was there, handing me a cup, a huge smile on his face.

"You're playing great, Sean. I don't think they're going to be trying to get by you anymore this game."

John Pennington chimed in. "That first steal was incredible, Sean. Way to go. I guess I don't have to worry about that side of the field after all, do I?"

"Oh, yes, you do," I said. "It's probably just beginner's luck, so don't go falling asleep on me, okay?"

"All right," said John with a laugh. "You just keep playing the way you're playing though, and we'll be fine back there with nothing to do."

I was jittery with all the adrenaline pumping through me, anxious to get back on the field. I hopped up and down, pacing the sidelines,

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wishing the whistle would blow soon so I could start running again. I looked down the bench and saw Coach and Trent leaning over a dismayed Eric, both of them talking intently to him at the same time. Eric looked from one to the other, nodding at each of them in turn, a towel over his head and an untouched cup of water in his hand. I didn't notice anything in the first half that should have caused them to be yammering at him. Then again, I was so intent on protecting my own turf that once the ball left my area, I just tracked it down the field instead of paying attention to who was doing what with it.

The ref blew his whistle to start the second half, and we all trotted out to take our positions.

The full forty-five minutes of the second half seemed to move in some sort of dreamlike state. On the one hand, the time flew by so quickly, it seemed like I was out on the field for about seven or eight minutes. On the other hand, it was like everything was moving in slow motion. I had plenty of time to get to the ball, and each time I would pass long, the ball would arc majestically through the crystal air, taking its sweet time to land just where I wanted it to land. It was a magical, very scary evening, full of contained grief and anger. Grief conflicted with awe, being able to play this game contradicting the raw fact of our fallen teammates, sparked a hidden well of anger at Richie Del Toro and his band of rogues. I felt it in me, and I thought I could detect it in my comrades on the pitch. It heightened my senses, throwing me headlong into something resembling a dreamlike state. I rode the feeling throughout the second half, letting my emotions manifest themselves in my play. At the end of it all, in a denouement that was only reluctantly admitted, we won the game by a score of 4-1.

After the game, as I was sitting on the bench with the rest of the team, the adrenal glands finally shut down and out of production. I went into a severe case of the shivers, so bad that I could hardly stand. Eric, Jorge, and Kevin helped me back to the locker rooms and sat me down on a bench. Eric ran out to get my father, who came in to find me almost comatose, shivering and exhausted from the emotions of

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the game. My dad took one arm, and Eric took the other. They guided me out into the parking lot and into the back seat of my dad's car. Once there, I finally just collapsed and pretty much passed out.

I vaguely remember the car doors slamming, the car starting up, and the tires crunching through the gravel of the back parking lot. My mom and my dad were talking about me on the way home, but it all sounded like a huge hive of bees in the car, buzzing and hovering around my ears. I couldn't make out a word they were saying, and I just didn't have the energy to care as I lay there, mostly unconscious and completely wasted.

* * * * *

The next week was a very strange combination of sadness, euphoria, and grinding boredom. Our tiny local paper had covered the game, and the Metro Times picked up their report on Monday for their High School Sports section. The human-interest side of the story, about our first game after Skip and Theo's accident, was the focus, but they did also have a write-up about the game itself. Eric Johnson was singled out as "the new speedster in the midfield" and praised for scoring a goal on his first start. They also painted an entirely too flattering picture of our defense in general, and Sean Porter specifically, bantering about phrases such as "playing exceptionally well under extraordinary circumstances," and "a surprisingly volatile defensive style," whatever that meant. I thought that, if they had seen me in my dad's car after the game, they probably wouldn't have been so complimentary.

Coach Neville announced to the team that Theo was having difficulty coping with the results of the accident. He suggested that we make an effort to stop by the hospital and visit with him sometime that week to try to cheer him up.

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Poo-Poo was arraigned on manslaughter charges and was still in the local jail. The others who were with him were released on bond. The rest of the Bulls had changed their ways, in light of the troubles facing their leader and friends. They were back in school, but they were making an effort to separate themselves from Poo-Poo. They were sporting a new look, dressing preppy in new clothes, with their hair cut and clean, and in general, keeping a very low profile. It didn't work very well. They were still hazed and harassed for their association with Del Toro.

Another interesting factoid surfaced during that week. It seemed that Allison Moseley, the buxom ditz who was hanging on Theo at the pool party, was the object of Vinnie Arilio's affections. He was so enraged when he heard about Theo doing her that he may have convinced Richie to go out looking for Theo that Saturday night.

I was still under house arrest myself. Dad dropped me off in the mornings but by the end of the week, he was getting pretty irritated with the routine. Mom picked me up in the afternoons. I spent the rest of the time at home, either up in my room doing homework or watching TV with the rest of the family. Fortunately, Molly's better instincts kept her from trying to sneak into my house. I missed kissing and holding her though, and I knew she was missing me, too. On Wednesday at lunch, she told me just how much she missed being with me.

We were sitting together at one of the long tables in the cafeteria with a bunch of other kids. Like cafeterias everywhere, it was noisy and boisterous in the large room. Molly was wearing a plaid wraparound skirt with a big brass safety pin as an accessory holding it together, and a fuzzy sweater that fit her very well. She leaned over to whisper something in my ear.

"I really miss you, Sean," she breathily said.

"I miss you, too, Mol," I answered.

"No, Sean," she said. "I really, really miss you." She flicked her tongue against my earlobe.

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I flinched back. "What are you doing, Molly?!?" *God, not here in the lunch room*, I thought, panic-stricken.

She grabbed my hand and pressed it to the inside of her thigh, under her skirt. She kept her hand on top of mine to keep me from jerking it away.

"Trying to let you know how much I miss you, silly." She tried to move my hand up further on her leg, but I was nearly frantic in my efforts to look calm while I tried to yank away from her. As it was, I wasn't going to be able to stand up anytime soon because of her.

She nipped my earlobe between her teeth and bit down lightly, sending shivers through me. "What if I told you I wasn't wearing any panties?" she whispered. That sent even more shivers through me. She grabbed my wrist with both hands and pulled my hand up further on her leg. I felt the bottom seam of her underwear as my fingers brushed against her damp pussy. I sighed, but whether in relief or in frustration, I wasn't sure.

She chuckled throatily as she let me go, her skirt falling back in place under the table. "You're just too easy to flip up, Porter," she said. She turned back to her lunch as if nothing had happened.

"Molly, I can't help it if I'm grounded. I wish I wasn't too, you know."

"Well, you'd better figure something out soon. I'm really getting... itchy." She wadded up her wrappers and stood up to leave. She gave me a wink and sauntered away, hips swishing her skirt from side to side, knowing I was watching her.

I groaned in frustration. I was done with lunch but I still couldn't stand up without embarrassing myself. *Damn her*, I thought to myself. She was really going to get me in hot water some day.

* * * * *

Playing the Game

Our game that Friday was an away game. We took a school bus to Rockton Heights High School while a convoy of kids from school followed us to the game. This game was against our toughest rival in our conference, and we were all worked up about coming away with a victory. There were only three more games in the regular season, and we wanted to be playing at our peak for the playoffs. This game would be a good test for our realigned left offense, as well as our right defense.

Practice this past week had gone well, especially after our win the week before. We worked on plays and made mistakes galore, knowing that it was all a learning process for us as a team. I hoped that the mistakes would be left on the practice field again.

The game was surprisingly emotional. Rockton Heights asked their fans to give a moment of silence in honor of our fallen players. Their entire team came over to our bench and shook our hands before the starting lineups were announced. It brought a lump to my throat, and I don't think I was the only member of our team who suddenly had blurry vision.

The game was every bit as tough as it was hyped to be. Their defense was strong, and they had one of the best forwards in the state on their team, playing in the middle. Their left forward, playing on my side of the field, was a cagey senior who was not going to let a sophomore like me get the best of him. He was trash-talking at me through the first half, taunting and daring me to challenge him, both on and off the ball. Just before the end of the half, he took a give-and-go from his midfielder and tried to end-run me, but I slid down and managed to knock the ball out of bounds. On the throw-in, Rockton sent most of their players up, leaving only two defenders and the keeper back, trying to make the most of a scoring opportunity. I saw that they were going to throw across to the middle, so I signaled to Kevin to switch, and I raced over just as the throw was made. I got there in time to step in front of the intended receiver, trapped the ball, and headed upfield as fast as I could go. Their defensive midfielder

angled over to cut me off, but I saw Eric streaking down the middle, wide open and calling for the ball. I passed it over to him and took off past the startled defender into the open space on the side. Eric trapped the ball, took two steps with it and rocketed it back over to me. The last defender was caught between us, undecided about who he should cover. Eric and I made his momentary hesitation cost him. He ran toward me, leaving Eric unguarded, so I crossed the ball. Eric then powered it into the back of the net unobstructed. I ran over to him, yelling and screaming, and he jumped up into me, knocking us both to the ground. We got up just as the rest of the team rushed over to us to congratulate us on the goal. We trotted back over to our side for the kickoff. A moment later, the whistle ending the first half sounded.

The second half didn't go quite so well. Rockton made some adjustments to their game, and scored two quick goals in succession before we could figure out their changes. The game see-sawed back and forth from then on. First Rockton took the offensive, and then we tried attacking. No one scored until a hand ball was called inside the box on one of their defensemen. We scored on the penalty kick, and time ran out in regulation with the score tied, 2-2.

We played a ten-minute overtime period scoreless, and had one more overtime period to play in sudden death. If nobody scored, we would have to go to a penalty-kick shoot-off to decide the game. This was something neither side wanted.

We were on the bench trying to catch our breath before the start of the second overtime period. The batteries were just about drained on all of the starters. Coach was considering substituting some of his players in favor of fresh legs. In the end, he opted for experience on the field at that crucial stage.

It was a mistake. Rockton did substitute, and their fresh players were able to control the ball while we were always one step behind, because of our weariness. In the sixth minute, they had a corner kick against us, and they made the most of it. The kick came out to about eighteen meters from goal. Kevin made a play on the ball but

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stumbled as he went for it. The Rockton midfielder passed it back to the kicker on the side, angling out from the corner, who fired it in at the goal. He was mine to cover and I didn't get to him in time. John tried diving for it, but was a fraction too late. The ball hit the back of the net and made it flutter. Rockton had defeated us in the second overtime period, 3-2. We congratulated them, trudged over to the bench to pack up our gear, stripped off our shoes, sodden socks and shin guards, and stuffed them into our bags.

We walked dejectedly to the bus and climbed on for the long ride back to our school. On the way back, as we were sucking down water from a big cooler set up in the back, Coach tried to put a positive spin on the game. He congratulated us on our play and admonished us that one loss so far in the season was of little consequence. We were all too tired to do anything but sit there and listen to his words wash over us, each drawn in on our own thoughts about where we might have done better during the game.

By the time we got back to the school, the caravan that had gone to support us at the game had already arrived. Instead of leaving to go home, nearly all the kids and parents had stayed in the school parking lot to wait for our bus. They were applauding and cheering us as we stumbled out and onto the blacktop of the parking lot. To a man, the entire team was surprised and gratified at the show of support. I saw Molly, and Heather and Evan, and Toby and Jen and Sam, and Jake and Kayla, and Josh, and everybody else there, standing around us in a semicircle as we gathered our gear and moved off into the crowd. My parents were there, too, with my brother Stephen. My dad grabbed my bag and carried it to the car as my mom put her arm around my shoulder, heedless of the grime and sweat. She held me close as we walked slowly through the parking lot. I crawled into the back seat and lay back, my head lolling against the rear cushion.

As he started the car, my dad said, "You played a great game tonight, son. We're very proud of you."

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I had nothing to say to that. Exhaustion leaked from every pore. Finally, I managed to mumble, "Thank you."

"You know," continued my father, "your mother and I have been talking about you. We think you might have been grounded for long enough. We'll talk about lifting at least part of your sentence in the morning."

"Okay," I mumbled, too tired to say more.

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TRICKS AND TREATS

I was indeed paroled. I had a certain amount of my freedom back, but I had to call my parents and let them know where I was and what I was doing at all times. It was a pain, but it was better than it had been.

The next Monday, the Metro Times carried an even bigger story about our game, even though we had lost. I was embarrassed to read that I was being touted as “the defensive specialist who is also a scoring threat”, after my assist in the first half.

I didn’t want all the attention I was starting to get. Hell, I was only fifteen years old. I wanted to just go out and have fun playing the game.

By the end of October, the Rockton game was our only loss. We would be seeded first in the conference playoffs, and Rockton was seeded second. We might have a chance to play them again for the conference finals, with luck.

I still wasn’t allowed to go out and hang out with just Molly, and we weren’t able to wangle any time alone. Molly was complaining more and more about being unable to scratch her *itch*. I was beginning to think of her as being much more sexually driven than any other kids I knew, which was saying a lot. I was worried that the boyfriend-

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girlfriend relationship was suffering because of our inability to have any intimate time together. Besides that, I was getting pretty horny too, and her complaints didn't help much.

Around two weeks before the end of October, Molly and Tessa decided they would have a costume party at Molly's house on the Saturday before Halloween. I asked my parents if I could go. They called up Molly's parents to find out if the O'Tooles or the Navarrones were going to be there to chaperone. Since both sets of parents were planning on being at the house during the party, my parents reluctantly agreed to let me go. Now, I had to come up with a good costume.

In the end, laziness won out over creativity. My dad had a cowboy outfit, complete with holster and cap gun, tucked away in a closet. I pulled it out and tried it on. It fit well enough, and with a cheap felt cowboy hat that I found scrunched up and stuck in a corner of the closet, I was set for the party.

I got over to Molly's early to help the girls get the basement decorated. The Navarrones and the O'Tooles were all there, except for Heather, busy getting sodas packed in ice, black lights hung up, streamers and fake spider webs strung. Mr. and Mrs. O'Toole were creating a mini haunted house in the laundry room, with a mannequin's head painted to look like it had been decapitated from a body, a bowl of peeled grapes for eyeballs, and rubber bats and spiders hanging all around. Lisbeth, Josh, and Tessa were hanging streamers from walls and ceilings. I helped Mr. Navarrone get the drinks and ice set up, along with paper cups, napkins, and garbage baskets placed in the corners of the large room. Molly was in the kitchen getting snacks ready, chips and popcorn and nuts in big bowls. Later on, they would be ordering pizzas to be delivered for everybody.

We were just putting the last of the decorations up when kids started showing up for the party. Mostly ninth and tenth graders were invited, but these things had a way of expanding sometimes. Josh and Molly ran upstairs to their rooms to change into their costumes and

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came down just as the doorbell started to ring. Josh was a monk of some sort, wearing a hooded robe with a rope for a belt, his bare feet in sandals. Molly was a hippie girl, complete with a huge afro-style wig and rose-colored glasses. They greeted kids at the door as they came up.

The first to arrive were Jen and Sam, dressed like the American Gothic farmer and wife. They were both thin and tall, so it was a natural for them. Sam wore bib overalls and carried a pitchfork, and Jen had on a gingham dress that buttoned to her throat, her hair pulled back tight on her head. Toby, nearly the smallest kid in school, came in a Superman costume, complete with cape, which made us all laugh (which was, after all, the point for Toby). Eric was a priest, Keisha a nun. Jorge took the easy way out and came in his soccer uniform, but Kristina went all out, dressing up as Catwoman, just like Eartha Kitt. Jake was a pirate, with a hook for a hand and a stuffed parrot glued to his shoulder. Jake was still barred from seeing Jaimie, so Kayla came with him, looking absolutely amazing as Jeannie the Genie, complete with billowy balloon pants with elastic at the waist and ankles, a pink halter top, and a little cap with a wispy veil that fell behind her head.

All in all, there were about thirty kids at the party, more girls than boys. We had the music playing loud and there was a strobe light pulsing in a corner of the room. Some kids were dancing occasionally, mostly just standing in one place and jerking around. Some kids brought their disco moves with them and were working it out. Most of the lights were out, with just the strobe on one end and the black lights on the other, but either Molly's parents or Tessa's parents were circulating almost constantly, coming down from the kitchen with plates of snacks and chips, refilling the ice chest, checking on drinks, emptying filling trash containers, and keeping a sharp eye on the proceedings.

Mr. O'Toole stationed himself in the haunted house, where all the lights were off. He took great pleasure in guiding each kid around and through the spider webs, to the bowl of peeled eyes, and then to the

severed head, where he switched on a spotlight to illuminate it in all its gruesome glory. Each time he did that, he got a very satisfying scream from every girl, and a few of the guys even jumped back at the sudden sight of it. I could tell he was very pleased with himself. After all the partygoers had gone through the room, he closed the door and went upstairs to join the other adults, leaving just the spotlight on the head as a deterrent to mischief.

After a couple of hours, it was apparent to the adults that we were reasonably well behaved. We had not brought any alcohol or drugs, and we were having a good time despite their presence. Our good behavior lulled them into coming down less and less to check on us. Molly and Tessa were still making occasional trips up to the kitchen for more snacks or sodas, so there was little reason for the parents to come down anymore. Besides, we were making enough noise. How much trouble could we get into? I know ... I know ... *Stupid question...*

Somebody suggested a variation on the old spin-the-bottle game. Since it was a big basement, there were two doors leading to the utility area, one by the furnace and one in the laundry area. After some negotiation, it was decided that all the boys would sit in a circle by the laundry room door. All the girls would be at the other end of the large room, sitting on the floor by the furnace door. There was a soda bottle in the middle of each circle. It was decided that there would be two spins of each bottle. The first spin would determine who would meet at the laundry room end, where the haunted house had been set up. The second spin would determine who would meet at the furnace end, where there was virtually no light at all.

There was a lot of squealing and giggling going on from the girls' end of the room as we guys gathered around in our circle, laughing and joking about who would end up with whom. When Molly gave the go-ahead, I grabbed our bottle and gave it a spin at the same time Tessa twirled the bottle by the girls. We weren't supposed to let the

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other circle know who was going to each area. Everybody wanted it to be a surprise.

The bottle ended up pointing at Toby first. He got up and went in the door to await his partner. I spun the bottle a second time, and it ended up pointing at Eric. He went through the door at our end and headed toward the furnace side. We could hear more giggles and low talk coming from the other end of the room. The agreed-upon time was the length of the next full song on the album playing on the record player, which was loud enough to be heard anywhere in the basement (and probably the whole house). The rest of us spent the time refilling glasses and grabbing another piece of pizza while we waited for the song to end.

At the end of their time, Toby and Eric came back out to our group. Eric had a smile on his face, but Toby looked absolutely shell-shocked.

"Who were you back there with?" asked Josh.

"Kendra," said Eric, grinning. Kendra was a sophomore at school, medium height with a plain face and mousy brown hair. She had, in Toby's words, "big bazooms", though, and she was, it was rumored, generous with her favors. She had come to the party in a tavern wench costume, with a fair amount of cleavage showing to spark the interest of us boys. "She told me she liked chocolate," he added with a smile.

We whooped and hollered at that information, glad that the current activity had gotten off to such a good start. We turned to Toby and asked him about who he had ended up with. He hesitated before answering.

"Ummm... it was Jen," he said sheepishly. Everybody else started laughing at the thought of tiny Toby alone with tall Jen Davies. He glanced at me with a sad look in his eye though. I was the only one of his friends who really knew how he felt about Jen, and I knew it hurt him to be the butt of this particular joke. I wondered if Jen had said anything bad to him. *Hey, it's nothing*, he seemed to say to me as he shrugged and sat back down again in the circle. He grabbed the bottle and gave it a spin.

This time, Jake was picked to go to the laundry room side and I was on the furnace side. As I passed by him, I heard the door at the other end open, and Kayla was walking toward me, heading for the laundry room. She stopped and smiled at me, and then, making sure I was blocking Jake's view, she lifted her pink halter to flash me a glimpse of her small, delectable and completely naked breasts. She let her top drop back into place, and swished by me with a murmured "Excuse me, Sean."

As she brushed by me, I turned to stare after her and almost fell down when I bumped up against a metal post. Embarrassed, I continued down toward the furnace, just as the door opened again, and Tessa walked in.

We sat down and leaned against the plywood wall, my arm comfortably around her shoulder in a friendly manner. We chatted for a couple of minutes about nothing at all, until Tessa turned to me and said softly, "Molly says you're a good kisser."

I was a little surprised, but I wasn't so dense that I couldn't pick up on the hint. I bent over and kissed her softly. Her hand sneaked up and wrapped itself around my neck while we kissed, her fingers tangling in my hair. It was a sweet, noncommittal, friendly and brief contact, and we stood up together and moved apart just as the song was ending. We each headed for our respective doors, and this time when I passed Kayla, she just smiled at me and continued on her way.

"Okay, who were you guys with?" asked Eric.

"My sister," replied Jake disgustedly.

"I was with Tessa," I said. Nobody had much to say about either of those, so we sat back down and Jake spun the bottle.

We kept on playing like that for about a half an hour, with some of the guys coming back with tales of kisses and hugs, others with no activity to report. Josh came back out one time looking very sheepish, saying only that he had been back there with the legendary Kendra. At the same time, I thought I heard an increased volume of whispers and giggles from the other side of the room.

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Finally, the bottle landed on me again, sending me back to the furnace side. Scott Taylor, costumed as a doctor in scrubs, was chosen for the laundry room side, and we walked through the door together. As I headed down the dark room, Molly was walking toward me. She stopped when she got to me, reached up and put her arms around my neck, and pulled herself up to give me a very wet kiss as she pressed her body against me. My internal connectors burned away as the heat she suddenly generated burst forth.

"Just a little reminder of what you've been missing," she whispered as she backed away from me. She smiled, and continued on toward the other side of the room.

I saw the far door open once again, but couldn't see who came in. I made my way down to the furnace area, until my foot bumped up against the leg of whoever was sitting there, leaning back against the wall.

"Who's there?" I whispered.

There was no answer, but I did feel a small hand grasp mine and pull me down, urging me to sit beside her. I sat, and the person still held my hand but now pressed my palm up against her bare midriff.

"Hi, Sean," Kayla whispered.

I was still in a minor state of arousal from Molly's kiss, and Kayla's voice activated more burners, stoking the fire. I slipped my arm around her shoulder, and she naturally moved in and raised her face for our first kiss in months. I could make out the almost white radiance of her fine hair as she moved closer to me, and I closed my eyes as our lips met. She clutched both her hands to my wrist on her belly, pressing my hand harder into her stomach as we melted into each other. Our first soft kiss was followed by a much hungrier one, mouths open and tongues frantically searching.

We were pretty much lost together, unaware that our song had ended until a small shaft of light fell across us as the door opened. We stopped kissing and looked up, startled. Molly was staring back at us,

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frozen in the act of opening the door as she saw Kayla and me, holding each other.

Oh, shit on a stick, I thought to myself. *I have just opened a large, economy sized can of worms.*

The game went on for a few more spins, but my heart really wasn't in it anymore. It really didn't matter because the bottle never pointed at me again that night. The room had gotten noticeably quieter, so much so that it was noticed even upstairs. Soon, one or another of the parents started making quick trips down to see what was going on. They were ostensibly walking around checking on snacks and stuff, but they were also quietly counting heads. The game stopped and kids began milling around again, sometimes dancing, sometimes just grouping and yakking.

A slow song began playing and Molly slipped her arm into mine, guiding me out into the middle of the room so we could dance close.

"What was that with you and Jake's little sister?" she asked quietly. Too quietly.

"It was nothing, Mol. I was just playing the game, you know?" I whispered. I dropped her hand and put both arms around her waist.

"It looked like you were enjoying playing the game a little too much, Sean."

"Hey, come on, give me a break," I pleaded. "I kissed Tessa, too. I'm sure she told you about it. Besides, don't try to tell me you didn't give Scotty a little peck on the cheek."

"Okay," she admitted. "I did kiss him. But I also heard the song end, which is more than you can say."

"Hey, she's just a kid. It was probably her first time kissing a boy. I just wanted to give her something to remember, that's all."

"I'll bet it wasn't her first time kissing a boy," Molly muttered. But she let it drop at that, for which I was silently grateful. Even so, I had the sinking feeling that this was not the last time this subject would come up between us.

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Molly seemed a little distracted the rest of the evening, but I figured it was because we were at her house, and she and her brother had a lot of work to do for the party.

Maybe that was it. Then again, maybe it wasn't.

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THE PLAYOFFS

We entered the conference playoffs as the team favored to win. Our local paper was helping to fuel the interest by featuring pictures and biographies of each of the starters in the week prior to the first game of the playoffs. I got a lot of razzing at school the day after my picture and bio appeared. I was pretty uncomfortable with all this attention, but I was in the minority from my teammates. Most of the rest of the guys on the team were really enjoying their moment in the spotlight.

We waltzed through our first playoff game against the eighth seeded team, winning 5-1. John Pennington's defensive adjustments on the field were solid, and Kevin and I stopped just about every ball that came our way.

Our second round opponent gave us a tougher game, but the result was still a win, this time 3-1. By this time, the big-city newspapers were paying attention too. The Metro Times had us rated in the Top Twenty in the state, a huge boost for us. Their small article about our win in the second round also pointed out what their reporter considered to be a major flaw in our game, however. He

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wrote that he wasn't sure we had the depth to win against Rockton Heights, the only team to defeat us in the regular season.

Coach Neville made sure he read that article to us during our warm-ups the next afternoon. He posted copies of it on every locker as a reminder of what was expected of us. He wanted us to confound expectations, and he had every confidence that we could.

Since we were seeded first in the tournament, we had the home field advantage. Rockton came to us to play the championship game, and we made sure the stands were packed with fans. We wanted it loud and we got it. The cheerleaders, normally only required to perform at football games in the fall, voluntarily showed up to lead the crowd. They cajoled people to slide over closer to each other so that more people could sit down. They worked the crowd until there were no gaps to be seen at all. Heather O'Toole even went so far as to climb up into the stands and act as a traffic cop, moving people around and filling in spaces. She got a lot of laughter and no small amount of applause for her efforts as she picked her way back down to the sidelines, her golden-red ponytail swishing back and forth.

And it was all very much worthwhile. Rockton Heights came into the game a little overconfident. We capitalized on that, scoring our first goal within the first ten minutes. By the final whistle, we had trounced the toughest competition we could find in our conference, beating them 6-1. I even scored a goal, only my second as a varsity player, and it was very satisfying to get that goal in the conference finals. We were conference champs, the first team from our school to win the title in soccer.

Sectional playoffs didn't start until the next weekend, so we had Saturday and Sunday off from practice. This gave our scouting and coaching staff time to prepare for an unfamiliar opponent. We would enter the sectionals seeded fourth out of eight conference champions. The winner of the sectional tournament would go downstate for the State Tournament, again a single-elimination tournament for the eight winners of sectionals from around the state.

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The Monday Metro Times ran a big story about our conference win. The story traced our season from the beginning that had held so much promise, the schools that had been scouting Skip, and our wins up until the accident. Then, the article continued with how our team's makeup had changed so much because of the loss of our top two players, the struggles, and ultimately the triumphs of the team. Surprisingly, they assigned a large amount of our team's success to "the quiet sophomore with the loud game, defensive standout Sean Porter." There were quotes from some of my teammates about me, and Coach Neville was quoted extensively in the article. There was even a picture taken of me during the Rockton Heights game for the conference championship, frozen just at the moment the ball left my foot on a pass upfield. I hadn't even been aware of a reporter talking to anybody, so it all caught me by surprise.

By the time the Friday of the first sectional game dawned, the Times had come out with their picks for All-Conference honors for all the metropolitan conferences. I was shocked when I got to school and was informed, via an announcement over the intercom by Dr. Osgood, that I had been selected as one of the All-Conference defensemen for our conference, despite the fact that I had not begun the season as a starter for our team.

A college about an hour's bus ride away was hosting sectionals. We were nervous and tense on the ride down. Again, a caravan of cars containing kids and parents supporting us followed our bus to the host field.

Because of the All-Conference selection, and the article in the Metro Times, our opponents started focusing on me a little more. They were double-teaming me and making an effort to pass the ball into the middle of the field before I could get to it. That was fine by me. I sure didn't want to trip myself over my own two feet in an attempt to save the game. If the opposing team was accommodating me by keeping the ball out of my area, so much the better. The end result of that strategy was that when the ball got down into our half of the field, the

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available playing area, from our adversary's point of view, shrank down in width by a third. It worked just fine to our advantage, especially since we then were presented with an open side when we cleared the ball, the side that Kevin and I patrolled.

On one opportunity, John Pennington picked up a weak rolling shot, ran up a few steps, and rolled the ball over to me on the right side. There was only one guy by me, so I let the ball pass me and took its momentum up the field. I was to the midfield stripe by the time anybody came close enough to challenge me, and by then, our offense had a set play in position. I lofted a pass up to the middle, and the play developed just the way it was designed, with a Trent Abbott goal and our first sectional win the result.

Each successive sectional game was against tougher opponents, but we made it through, winning our three games 1-0, 3-2, and 3-1. We were State Tournament bound.

The next weekend, we left by bus on Thursday for our game downstate on Friday. Once again, there were eight teams in the tournament. The first two games would be played Friday and Sunday, and the Championship game would be held the next weekend.

In our first game, we played the Planey Warriors, a team that was very experienced, having been here the previous year. They put together some play sets that were completely different from anything we had ever seen before, led by their senior All-American forward, Jesse Wilhoit. They moved the ball in to Jesse every chance they got, and Mike Evanson, our junior sweeper, along with both of us defensive players, were hard put to keep him from scoring at will. As it was, he collected three quick goals within the first twenty minutes of the first half. We were in real trouble of being blown out for the first time all season.

Finally, we dropped our defensive center midfielder back, so in effect we had left and right sweepers, and that seemed to stymie the Warriors. We managed to neutralize Wilhoit with the new

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arrangement. Any time the ball came down into our end of the field, we were able to clear it back out to midfield.

At halftime, we were down 3-1, but we were feeling much better about how we were playing than we did during the first few minutes of the game. Eric and Trent let us know that the Warriors had a weaker player on defense on their side of the field. If we could clear the ball up to them, they felt they could make a play on goal.

A few minutes into the second half, their confidence was rewarded. The ball cleared to Eric on the left and he lit his afterburners. He torched the defenders, streaking down the sidelines and angling in toward the middle. Trent dropped over to cover the left side as Eric charged the middle. At the very last possible moment, he passed the ball over to Trent, who stepped toward the ball with his left foot, and launched a high bullet at the far post. The ball just slipped under the top rail and clanged against the back post of the goal. It was now 3-2, and the Warriors were on the defensive.

About seven minutes later, a similar play developed, but this time Trent gave Eric a give-and-go past the defender, and it was Eric's goal that tied the game.

At about the seventy-five-minute mark, Kevin and I switched positions on an errant pass by the Warriors. I took the ball up toward midfield. Our opponents were so worried about Eric and Trent, on the far side, that they made the mistake of letting me advance the ball. Their midfielders were holding their positions, which meant I just had their left defender in front of me. I faked a pass into the middle, giving myself a looping pass around their defender, picking the ball up again behind him. I came in toward the goal just as their sweeper and goalie decided I was a threat, but it was too late. I threaded a pass in to Trent, who tapped it in for the winning goal. We were advancing to the semi-finals, winning the game 4-3.

On Sunday afternoon we were facing the Rock Falls Lions, another perennial soccer power from downstate. We were pretty tired from the

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game on Friday, but we figured the Lions would be tired from their win on Friday, too.

We were wrong. This was our first trip downstate and emotions played a huge part in our win on Friday, leaving us pretty drained for Sunday's game. Not so the Lions. They had been here before and knew what it meant to leave it all on the field in the first game. They didn't make that mistake this year. They razzled us, they dazzled us, they embarrassed us. We went down in flames. We got trounced, completely and thoroughly beaten. We walked off the field after ninety minutes, knowing we still had a lot to learn about tournament play. The final score was 7-2.

Our season was over.

The only true bright moment after that humiliating loss was the following Monday, when the Metro Times announced their All-State Team. Of course, leading the team was Jesse Wilhoit, the All-American forward from Planey. But, to my surprise and my team's delight, I was chosen as a second-team All-State selection on defense, only the second player in our school's history to be chosen. The first to have been so honored was, of course, my mentor, Skip Horvath.

And I truly was honored. All I had wanted to do was go out and play the game, and here I was, being recognized for playing it my way, just as Coach Neville advised. My hard work, and the hard work of Coach Neville and Coach Reyes and all my other coaches and assistants and teammates, had paid off dividends I had never even dared dream of.

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A WALK IN THE SNOW

Ever since the All-State selections had been announced, my parents had fallen back onto their old parenting ways, pretty much letting me be a teenaged kid. As long as I didn't get myself into trouble again (or found myself being dragged, kicking and screaming, into trouble, such as what Jake did to me), and as long as I kept my grades up, they were willing to pretty much stay off my back.

All during the playoffs, from the conference tournament all the way to the state playoffs, Molly was acting funny around me. It was as if she was distracted or something. And to tell the truth, all during that month I was plenty busy. The homework load didn't ease up just because we were still playing soccer and our games were no longer local affairs. We were traveling longer distances to play and the further we got in the tournaments, the further it seemed we had to travel. As a result, I didn't have any time on the weekends to spend with Molly, and during the week all I could spare was a quick phone call occasionally.

She was still really friendly during school, but it seemed like she was distant and distracted whenever I called her. Monosyllable answers to my questions, no prompting from her to help the

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conversation along, and uncomfortable silences were the norm. It got so that I didn't like to call her at night, content just to see her at school instead.

Finally though, the soccer season ended. I had a weekend free, so when I saw her at lunch on Wednesday, I asked her if she could do something on Friday night.

"Ummm... I don't know for sure yet," she evaded. "Call me tonight, okay, Sean? Look, I've got to go. I've got a meeting set up with my adviser. I'll talk to you later."

She abruptly got up from the table and threw the rest of her lunch away and left the cafeteria, leaving me feeling awfully alone among a sea of students.

That night, after dinner, I dialed her number. Josh answered the phone.

"Dude, what did you do?" he asked.

I was puzzled. "What are you talking about?" I asked.

"Man, she's really in outer space tonight. She was snapping at all of us at dinner, and even yelled at the dog. I laughed at her when she did that and almost got my head handed to me."

"Great. I wonder what the hell is going on?"

"Well," he said, "I hope you can figure it out before she gets on the phone. But you did something to piss her off, Sean, bet on it."

There was a loud clunk as he let the handset drop. *Great*, I thought to myself. *I'm in trouble, and I don't know why.*

I heard Josh calling Molly to the phone. A few moments later, she picked up the handset.

"Hello?"

"Hi, Mol. It's me."

"Oh. Hi."

Silence. *Uh-oh.*

"Um, you said I should call," I prompted.

"Oh, yes. That's right, I did." She took a deep breath. "Sean, I need to talk about something, okay?"

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"Sure, go ahead," I said. My heart started beating a little faster, and my stomach was doing tricky things. I wished I had gotten myself some water or something to drink before I dialed. Maybe that would have helped calm me down.

"It's about us, Sean. I think we've got problems we're not talking about."

"What problems, Molly? Besides, we're talking now, aren't we?" I knew they were weak arguments, but they were all I had at the moment. I was still trying to wade through the minefield of this conversation.

"We haven't been talking before now though. I'm just not comfortable right now with where we are, Sean. I know you've felt it, too. Ever since the costume party..."

"Wait a minute. The costume party? You mean the one at your house?"

"Of course the one at my house." She sounded exasperated with me. "What other costume party have you gone to? Never mind, I don't want to know."

"Molly..."

"Shut up for a minute, Sean, and let me work this out. Ever since the costume party, when I saw you kissing Jake's little sister..."

"Molly..."

"I saw you kissing Kayla, Sean. And you both looked like you were enjoying it."

"Molly..."

"And you were both enjoying it. I can't get that image out of my mind, Sean."

"But you kissed Scotty..."

"Didn't you hear me? I said you were both enjoying it. That's the part that has been really bothering me, Sean." I could hear the tears just starting on the other end of the phone. My stomach dropped into my toes.

"Look, Molly..."

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"Just let me talk for a minute, okay?" She took a deep breath to get herself back under control. I tried it, too, but it didn't work for me. "I'm afraid you're not taking this relationship very seriously, Sean. I thought you loved me. I thought you were committed to me. But ever since that party, I haven't been able to convince myself that you are in this with me one hundred percent." She stopped again. I could just detect a sob trying to work its way out of her and into the open. "I think we're going to have to stop seeing each other for awhile," she whispered.

"Molly..." But I had nothing to say. She had said it all. When I didn't respond, the sob that had been waiting for its opportunity finally escaped. Without another word, she set the telephone down and broke the connection. No slamming it down in anger, just a quiet click. The thunderous sound of that click seemed to drop an entire wall of bricks onto me.

Shit.

The whole next day at school, I walked around numb. At lunchtime, Molly found somewhere else to sit. I ate with Jake and Eric and Keisha and Toby, but I just couldn't track any of their conversations. I thought Josh had probably clued in Jake about Molly and me, so he at least was a little sympathetic. Even so, I really didn't want to spill out my personal problems to the table, so I endured some good-natured ribbing about my long face. It was a long day, but at least I could go home right after school and try to bury myself in homework. It was one of the few times I was grateful to my teachers for piling it on.

Friday was a little better. I had gotten over the shock of Molly calling it off, but it still hurt. I understood more now how Josh must have felt when Shayna broke up with him back in September. I thought I would make it through the day pain-free.

No such luck.

It all began around lunchtime. I was walking toward the cafeteria with Jake, when Toby came up and grabbed my arm.

"Man, you're not gonna believe what I just heard," he said as he tugged on me. Out of the corner of my eye, I could see Jake frantically waving his hand at Toby, trying to get him to shut up about something. I turned toward him. His hand dropped like it suddenly weighed about fifty pounds, and he got this innocent look on his face that immediately made me suspicious.

"What?" I asked sharply.

"Who, me?" he asked. By the look on my face, he realized how stupid that sounded, so he dropped the act. We made our way to some empty seats at our usual table and sat down.

"Okay, guys, what gives?" I asked.

Toby and Jake glanced at each other.

"Okay," said Jake. "You're probably going to hear about it from somebody else later today anyway, so you might as well hear it from your friends first." He glanced around to make sure someone wasn't listening in, as if it mattered.

Toby leaned in close and spoke quietly. "Molly's going out with someone else on Saturday."

I stared at him, then looked at Jake. He gazed back at me solemnly. "She's got a date?" I asked stupidly.

Jake nodded. "Scotty asked her out. She said yes. They're going to some party that Tessa knows about somewhere. Hey, I'm sorry, Sean."

I nodded mutely. I told myself we had broken up, she was free to go out if she wanted. It didn't help. *It's only been two days!* I was still trying to assimilate our conversation from Wednesday, and she was already going out with someone else? It didn't make any sense to me. And she told me she didn't enjoy her session with Scott in the laundry room.

Or did she really say that?

I started running our conversation back through my mind. *Hold on, there's something wrong here. She was upset that I seemed to be enjoying kissing Kayla, but she never said she didn't enjoy kissing Scott that night.*

Maybe there was more to this breakup than she was telling me.

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Not that, ultimately, it was going to make any difference. Whether she and Scott were going out because of the costume party or not didn't really matter. Whether there was an attraction there before our breakup really didn't matter, either.

But this news really did hurt.

And Josh and Toby were absolutely right. I heard from five or six other friends that Molly was going out with Scott on Saturday. *Bad news travels fast*, I thought to myself.

Then, just before my last class of the day, Jake found me in the hall.

"Sean. You're not going to like this news at all, but I just heard from somebody who saw them together, that Molly and Scott went to a movie together last weekend. While you were at the state tournament, she was already going out with somebody else. Man, I'm really sorry to have to bring you this news, Sean."

He looked as sorry as he sounded. I would have felt sorry for him, but I was busy feeling sorry for myself, and couldn't spare any for my friend.

Now I really felt like crap.

Friday night, Josh and Jake and I met at the mall, and I lost myself in a maze of pinball and arcade games, dumping quarter after quarter into the machines. Air hockey, I discovered, was a very good outlet for anger and frustration. Even when you were winning, you were slamming the puck as hard as you could, trying to break that little disk into a zillion pieces. I felt oddly better after about a half dozen battles at the table.

On Saturday, I tried to lose myself in chores around the house. The grass wasn't growing, but there were leaves to rake, gutters to clean, and the garage to sweep out. I finished the afternoon by taking my soccer ball back behind the garage and kicking it against the back, chasing down the rebound and dribbling back to an imaginary line and firing the ball against the wall again. It was getting pretty cold out, but by the time I was done, I was breathing hard and sweating from my exertions. I just wasn't tired enough to stop thinking about Molly

going out with Scott that night, though. It was like a splinter in my thumb. I had to worry it and pick at it until it throbbed, so I could be unhappy about how much more it hurt now that it was getting infected.

I trudged into the house and stripped off my soaked sweatshirt and t-shirt. I dumped them in the laundry basket in my room, and headed for the shower. The sky had just started spitting little wet clumps of snow flurries. *Oh, good*, I thought to myself. *Now the weather is turning bad on me, too. What next?*

I spent the next several hours looking at the television, but not really seeing anything. I would switch to one channel, watch for a few minutes, then get up and walk over to the selector on the TV and switch to a different channel. I would sit back down, only to get up a few minutes later and go through the motions again. Nothing grabbed my interest enough to stay with it. I got more and more frustrated as I continually flipped through all the channels, only to start all over again at the beginning.

Finally, I decided that taking a walk in the freezing weather suited my mood. Maybe I could walk far enough to tire myself out so I could just go to sleep. I slipped on my letter jacket, slapped a baseball cap on my head, made sure I had gloves in the pockets, and trudged out the door.

I walked aimlessly around the neighborhood, not paying any attention to where I was or where I'd been. I just walked through the building snow and slush, head down, hands thrust in jeans pockets, staring at where my next step would land.

Eventually, I found myself stopped on the sidewalk by Jake and Kayla's house. No lights were on, but it didn't matter. I didn't want to see anybody anyway. I walked up their driveway and around the garage into the field in back. My body was on autopilot, my mind switched off. I was letting my feet take me where they wanted to go, or so I thought.

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I shuffled through the accumulating snow all the way across the field, and into the stand of trees. The snow was reflecting what little light there was outside, and my feet found the worn path through the woods easily. My body stopped, and it was a few minutes before my brain reconnected. I was standing on the path, shoulders hunched against the cold and wet. Ahead of me was the tree Jake and I had climbed so long ago. I mentally shrugged, telling myself it was a lesson in futility to even think of going up there, but my feet began to move again in that direction.

I pulled out my gloves and put them on, and reached up to climb the tree. The branches and limbs were slippery and wet as I climbed higher. I got to the branch I had sat on months ago, and glanced at the back of the O'Toole house. No lights were on here, either.

Wait a minute. There was a dim glow coming from one window. I slid over to the branch on the other side of the tree and stood up on it to try to peer into the window. I knew it was Molly's room. *She probably just left a closet light on or something,* I told myself. *She's not there. She's out with Scotty,* I reminded myself. *She's not there.*

My eyes adjusted to the light coming from the window, and standing on the branch allowed me to see most of the room. The faint light was coming from her bedside lamp. It was so dim because she had thrown a dark t-shirt or something over it to cut down on the glare. Scott and Molly were lying on her bed together, kissing and holding each other. As I watched, my eyes grew more accustomed to the amount of light available coming from her room. I saw Scott's hand move tentatively up from Molly's waist, brushing along the nap of her sweater, to softly grasp her breast. I saw Molly arch her back a little, making her chest raise up, pushing her boob harder against his hand. Her mouth opened as she kissed him harder, and she pulled him tighter to her, keeping her upper body turned just slightly so that he didn't lose contact with her sensitive breast.

I saw him drop his hand down and urgently scramble for the hem of her sweater, anxious to slip beneath the sweater. I saw the fabric of

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the sweater rise into a ridge as his hand and arm slid up, eager to reclaim possession of her breast.

I stayed there in the tree, unaware of the temperature or the snow or anything else surrounding me as I watched Molly push Scott away for a moment so she could sit up and pull the sweater over her head. Her bra was askew on her, one cup pushed up over an exposed breast where Scott had wormed his fingers underneath. She reached behind her and unfastened the bra, pulling it off her shoulders and tossing it onto the floor. She lay back down and pulled Scott back to her for a kiss. He took the advantage Molly was giving him and grabbed at her breast clumsily as he was brought back down to her.

I continued to watch as Molly took charge of an apparently very inexperienced Scotty. She rolled him over so she was partially on top of him, slipping her knee between his legs as she rose up slightly, guiding her swollen breast to his lips. He licked and kissed her turgid nipple, but it looked like he wasn't sure what she wanted. He let his hands slide down her bare back as he suckled at her breast. He tried to slip under her jeans and onto her ass, but her pants were too tight. He contented himself with grasping the globes of her ass over her jeans, squeezing and pulling the pliant flesh.

I stayed there the whole time. I watched Molly unsnap first her jeans, and then Scott's. I saw her pull out his dick and hold it in her hand, playing with it and pumping it up and down while he was frantically trying to dig his fingers into her cunt, all the while staring wide-eyed at what Molly was doing to his hard cock. I saw him jerk practically off the bed, unexpectedly shooting his seed straight up into the air as she jacked him off. I saw her giggle, her boobs quivering, as she rubbed her fingers in the mess on his stomach and chest with one hand, hanging on to his re-inflating cock with the other. I could only stand there and watch as Molly kissed him hard as she held onto him, swinging her leg over to straddle him. I watched as she held the tip of his hard cock against her drooling slot, knowing what he was feeling, dreading what I was about to see. I saw her drop down on him, letting

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go with her hand as she imbedded herself on him. I felt the knife go into my chest and slice down to my stomach as I saw her move, her hands now on his shoulders, her head back in pleasure, her eyes closed in concentration. I watched her fuck him, I watched as he watched her, unable to believe his luck. I saw her open her eyes and say something to him, saw her reach down and take his hand, saw her press it to her breast as she moved up and down on him. I watched it all, hardly able to blink, as she rode herself nearly to completion. I saw Scotty tense up, saw his hips working up and down frantically. His movements were inhibiting Molly's, keeping her from cresting, and I was glad to see it, in a perverted way. His eyes opened wide as his climax came on him unexpectedly, and I saw Molly jerk herself off him just as he started to spurt. His hips thrust up into the air, his spasming cock searching in vain for the warmth of Molly's encasing walls, as his cum came spilling out of him, puddling on the bare skin of his twitching stomach.

I couldn't bear any more. I closed my eyes against the vision, and then concentrated on getting out of the tree. I did not want to look at the window, so I turned to face back into the woods as I climbed down. I dropped to the ground, slipped in the accumulating snow, and fell on my ass. I leaned back against the tree as I felt the sting of tears in my eyes. I intensely regretted coming to the tree, and I was miserable and cold and wet and suddenly very tired.

I dragged myself up to my feet and shuffled back out to the path. As I was making my way back toward the field, my subconscious noted, for future consideration, something that I did not register at the time: another set of footprints in the snow, feet quite a bit smaller and narrower than mine, paralleling my path through the woods.

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THE FLYING MENDOZAS

Even while it seemed like my personal life was going into the crapper, my soccer-playing alter ego was flourishing. In the two weeks since my selection as an All-State athlete, even snooty upperclassmen were saying hello to me at school. It was an odd juxtaposition. On the one hand, Molly and Tessa were barely speaking to me. On the other hand, I was becoming something of a BMOC, a Big Man On Campus. The other jocks in school, football players and basketball players and track and field guys, finally were accepting the fact that soccer could actually be a real sport. The members of the varsity and junior varsity soccer teams were finally being accepted into the Fraternity of Sweat.

The next weekend, my family and I were invited down to the State Capitol for a reception for all the All-State honorees. Soccer still wasn't a first-tier sport, so the Governor wasn't going to come, opting instead to send the Lieutenant Governor in his place. We checked into the sponsoring hotel on Friday evening. There was an informal party for the All-Staters in one of the conference rooms that night after dinner. It was a chance for the players from around the state to get together socially, so we could try to get to know each other. Parents and families would be there, but were only invited to the formal dinner

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and ceremonies on Saturday night. Friday night's party was reserved for the athletes.

I walked into the room a little nervously. I only knew a couple of the guys by sight, having played against them during the tournaments. I hadn't ever met any of them before, since there wasn't anybody else from my school, or for that matter from my home conference, that was selected. I saw Jesse Wilhoit, the All-American forward from Planey, standing with a couple of other guys near the soda bar. He glanced over at me, leaned in to his group to say something, then started walking toward me.

"Sean Porter?" he asked as he came up to me.

"Yeah," I answered. "You're Jesse Wilhoit, right?"

"Right," he said. "We played against each other a couple of weeks ago. You torched me pretty good that game, Porter."

Suddenly embarrassed, I quickly replied, "No, I didn't. I think you scored three quick ones on us early in the game, didn't you?"

He grinned. "Yep, I did, but then your guys on defense shut me down. That was a cute trick, using a double sweeper. Didn't hurt your offense any to do that, either, did it?"

I smiled. "No, I guess it didn't."

"And, if I remember right, you got the assist on the winning goal that game, didn't you?" he asked.

"Well," I said hesitantly, "yeah, I guess I did."

"See? You did torch me." He laughed. "Set on fire by a sophomore! Boy, that felt good, let me tell you." He started steering me toward the group he had left to come talk to me.

"It felt good?" I asked. It was a puzzling thing to say.

"You betcha. I was way too big for my britches all season long. I was headed for a fall. I'm just glad it happened now, when I was still playing high school soccer. I've got a full ride to the University of Florida next year, and I would have really been in deep shit if I had walked in there thinking I was King Soccer, and then have somebody

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there kick my ass like you did. So, you see, you did me a big favor in that game," he finished as we stepped up to the others.

"Okay, if you say so," I said doubtfully.

Jesse introduced me to Wayne Phillips, a senior keeper, and to Harlan Corwin, a junior forward, both from Rock Falls, the state champions.

"Jesse's been telling us about your game against Planey," said Wayne. "I'm glad you got that out of your system before you played us."

"Well, we were on a high for Friday's match, but by the time we got to you guys reality had set in," I replied. "Besides, your team was really good. You deserved to win State."

We fell quite naturally into an easy friendship that evening, and I relaxed and enjoyed meeting all the guys. There was just one other sophomore on the All-State team, a midfielder from South High School in the city named Spencer Goldman. I saw him standing near the door, looking uncomfortable, so I excused myself from the group and went over and introduced myself. I insisted he come over with me, which he reluctantly did. Jesse, Wayne, and Harlan treated him with the same respect they had showed me. It made me realize that these guys were all here for the same reasons, because they loved the game they played, and they were recognized as being good at the game, just like everybody else in the room. It created a real sense of camaraderie among all of us.

The next night at the banquet, Jesse made sure we sat with his family at a large round table. My mom and dad and my brothers, Michael and Stephen, were falling all over themselves over the fact that they were sitting at the table of the state's only soccer All-American. Jesse and I just laughed at the absurdity of it all. Jesse introduced his parents and his younger sister Anna, a pretty, dark-haired freshman with shiny braces on her teeth. She had to be embarrassed by those braces, because she rarely smiled. When she did smile though, her whole face lit up, and she turned from merely pretty

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into something extraordinarily precious, and I couldn't help staring at her in awe.

Later on, after dinner and dessert, and after the Lieutenant Governor had given his speech and handed out plaques to all the players, a band over in the back corner of the room began to play. Jesse, having noticed the effect Anna was having on me, amused himself by insisting I dance with her. After cajoling me mercilessly, joined in by Michael and Stephen, I finally got up and asked her if she would like to dance. Her face turned beet red, but I was rewarded with one of her radiant smiles as she nodded and stood. She was nearly as tall as I was, and very self-conscious as we walked to the dance floor and found a space. It was a fast song, so we shook and jumped all over the place together, hidden in the middle of the crowd. Her hair bobbed up and down as she danced, and even though I tried not to stare, I couldn't help but notice that her small boobs jiggled just a little bit as she moved. Unfortunately, all that did was remind me of how much I had missed warm female companionship, now that Molly was getting her itch scratched somewhere else. I certainly wasn't going to try anything with Anna, especially with her big brother around, but it was apparent that I was a horny young man who was temporarily smitten.

I tried to concentrate on watching Anna's face, but I still found my eyes sliding down occasionally. I would notice where I was looking, and jerk my eyes back up to her face. A couple of times she noticed, but was too nice to slap my face or anything. She would just turn a faint pink again, smile at me, and continue dancing.

To my surprise, I found myself having fun with Anna. We ended up staying out on the dance floor, shaking and shucking to the fast songs, box-stepping to the slow songs, and even standing there, side by side, watching the band play on those occasions when the beat was one of those in-between rhythms that I have always found it hard to dance to. She was comfortable staying by my side, and I fell into an easy association with her. By the last set, we were holding hands in

between dances, neither of us willing to go back to our table and possibly break the spell.

Finally, though, the band played their last song. Anna and I were just about the last couple left on the dance floor, and we stayed there, dancing close, until the echoes of the last notes bounced off the walls and faded into quiet. Only then did we reluctantly turn to walk back to our table. Jesse and Michael were still sitting there, paying absolutely no attention to us. Apparently, they were becoming good friends, from the look of things. Wayne and Harlan and a couple of other All-Staters were also there, sitting in on their conversation. When Anna and I walked up, she dropped my hand before her brother could see her and say anything. We sat with the others, until a few minutes later it was clear that the party was breaking up. As we all walked toward the banquet hall doors, Anna and I delayed as much as we could, lagging behind the others on the way down the hall toward the elevators. Jesse managed to herd everybody into one elevator, and, with a little smile on his face and a twinkle in his eye, pressed the button to close the door just as Anna and I got to them. He winked at us just before the doors closed, leaving us to get our own elevator. Anna's cheeks turned red, and she shyly reached for my hand once the coast was clear. We stood there, hand in hand, as we waited for the next elevator.

An older couple got on the elevator with us, so we stepped to the back corner, silently holding hands, until we got to the fourth floor, where the Wilhoits were staying. I walked her to her door, which was left open a crack. We stood facing each other silently, each of us nervous about what might be expected of us by the other, until I finally slipped my arms around her and pulled her to me. She put her arms around my neck as I kissed her softly on her lips. I could feel the heat radiating from her cheeks as she flushed, so I let her go and dropped my arms, stepping back.

"Goodnight, Anna," I said quietly. "I'm glad you were here tonight." I turned to go back to the elevator.

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“Sean?”

I turned back to her.

“Thank you for tonight. I’ll remember it always,” she said. She had one hand on the doorknob, the other at her throat. I tried to memorize how she looked in just that moment, so I could recall the vision she presented as she stood there, shy and smiling her dazzling, beautiful smile, shot through with white and silver.

* * * * *

Back at school on the next Monday, I very quickly fell back into the routine, and only occasionally thought about calling or writing to Anna, until finally, I hardly thought about her at all.

Around Valentine’s Day, our school held its annual Turnabout dance. Back when my parents were going to school, a turnabout dance was themed around Sadie Hawkins Day, a fictional holiday created by cartoonist Al Capp. They dressed up like hillbillies straight out of *Li’L Abner* and Dogpatch, his comic strip creation. By now, though, our school had dropped the Sadie Hawkins name, the bib overalls and blacked out teeth and hay stuck in your hair had been abandoned in favor of casual, comfortable clothes, and the event was moved from mid-November to February. It was still a turnabout event though, with the girls asking the guys out, asking the guys to dance, all that stuff.

The bunch of us decided to go to the dance as a big group, instead of putting ourselves through the pressure cooker of finding dates. Josh had been going out with Andrea Coulter since just before Christmas, and they were going to be joining Toby, Jake, Jorge, Kristina, Ashley Horvath, Becky Steinman, and me at the dance, and at a local restaurant afterwards for desserts and sodas.

The dance was held in the school gym, and it was decorated Dogpatch style, with hand painted banners and signs, bales of straw,

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and crockery jugs marked “XXX” with magic marker, I suppose as a sop to the old traditions.

I met up with the group at the dance and we wandered slowly around the gym, stopping to catch up with our friends, checking out who was with whom. I stopped and traded backslaps and lies with some of the kids I knew. I happened to glance over toward the double doors of the gym and saw Kevin Soranno and John Pennington come in the door with their dates, and there was a big crowd gathering around them. Jorge, Kristina, Ashley, and I headed their way, intending to say hello, when the people standing around them parted momentarily. I got a glimpse of a wheelchair being pushed through the door by a man who looked like he was somebody’s father. As we got up to the edge, John and Kevin spotted us and waved the group back to let us through, just as Mr. Jameson was able to wheel Theo into the room and to the side. Theo saw me and smiled, all the while nodding and waving at all the well-wishers gathering around.

“Porter!” he called in a surprisingly strong voice. “Damn, boy, it’s good to see you. I’ve been reading about you, and these guys here,” he said, jerking his thumb at Kevin and John, “can’t seem to shut up about you. Congratulations!”

“Thanks, Theo. We all have been thinking about you, too, obviously. How are you feeling?”

“Pretty damn great right about now, but I think that’s because I’m living better through chemistry. I’ve got a whole damn drugstore running through my veins right now.”

“Wow, it’s really good to see you. This is such a surprise.”

“I don’t think I’m going to get out on the dance floor tonight, but I’m getting closer,” he said with a smile. He looked over my shoulder and saw Ashley Horvath standing behind me, peeking around to see Theo sitting there. His face kind of crumpled.

“Oh, Ash, I’m sorry, I didn’t see you there. How are you doing?” Seeing Skip’s sister wasn’t something he was expecting, and it was affecting him.

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Ashley could see it, too, and rushed over and knelt to give Theo a fierce hug. "I'm doing okay, Theo," she quietly whispered to him. "I'm glad to see you're doing better, too."

"Yeah," he whispered back to her, "I'm doing better. It's been really tough. But it's been tough on everybody, especially you. You sure you're doing okay? Say, you didn't bring this sorry excuse for a soccer player, did you?"

She looked up at me, and her face tinged pink. "No," she said, smiling. "I just came with along with Sean's friends, that's all."

"Well, if he tries anything, you come look for me. I'll give him what-for," he said as he let her go. His eyes were shining with unshed tears, for Ashley, for Skip, for himself.

"Thanks, Theo. I will." She turned then and walked away quickly. I thought she needed a moment to compose herself, so I shook Theo's hand, assured him I would come talk to him later, and handed him back to John and Kevin before going off to catch up with Ashley.

She was still slowly walking away, staying close to the wall, when I jogged up and put my hand on her shoulder.

"Ash?" I asked gently. "Are you okay?"

She turned and melted into my arms and sobbed. "I miss him so much, Sean," she cried. Her face was buried in my shoulder, and I could feel the sobs wracking her.

"So do I, babe," I whispered. "So do I."

She got herself under control and stood up on her tiptoes to kiss my cheek. "Thanks, Sean," she said. "Thanks for being a friend."

"Aw, cut it out," I said. I wiped the last of her tears off her cheek with my fingertips. "Go fix your makeup, kiddo. I'll be right over there," I continued, pointing to where Jorge and Kristina were standing, waiting for us.

"Okay," she said. She headed toward the girl's restroom. Kristina saw where she was going and met her on the way. She started chattering to Ashley as they pushed open the door. I knew Kristina was trying to distract her, take her mind off her dead brother with idle

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gossip. She was very perceptive about other people's moods and feelings, a sympathy that came naturally to her. I walked over to Jorge to wait for them to return.

"She's upset about Theo and Skip?" asked Jorge.

"Yeah. She really misses her brother. Hey, Jorge, why don't you work on getting her to dance with you? When they do the Men's Choice dance, you should ask her," I suggested.

"You t'ink?" he asked. "I dunno, man, I don' wanna get shot down, you know? I t'ink you da man in her eyes right now, Sean."

Well, that surprised me. I hadn't thought of Ashley in that way before. In fact, I really hadn't thought of any girl in that way too much since my split with Molly, except maybe for Anna Wilhoit. Sure, like any red-blooded teenager, I was in lust with nearly every girl I saw, but I was also a bit of a romantic. *Me and Ashley? Nah.*

The girls came out of the washroom together. Ashley was laughing at something Kristina had just said, and was turned to her, hand on Kristina's arm, as they sauntered our way. I looked at both of them a little more closely. Ashley had on a skirt and sweater. She was very slim, barely five feet tall. She had light brown hair cut just to her shoulders, and when she smiled, her silver braces flashed. She was extraordinarily cute.

Unfortunately for Ashley, she was walking next to somebody who, I suddenly realized, made her look thin and drab in comparison. Kristina, walking beside her, was devastating. She tended to dress either in black or in white, which set off her coloring very well, and tonight was no exception. She had on a sleek black dress that was very modest at the hem and neck, but tight enough to show off her very fit form. Her hair was jet black and long, almost to the middle of her back, and she had thick bangs that were cut below her dark eyebrows. Her skin glowed, and her eyes flashed with amusement as they glanced our way. I noticed that she seemed to almost glide across the floor, instead of walking with a stride like Ashley.

Damn, I thought to myself. Have these two always looked this good?

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That was the moment that I realized I might be completely over Miss Molly O'Toole.

The four of us wound our way across the gym to the rest of our group, now congregated against the folded-up bleachers. As soon as we walked up to them, Becky grabbed my hand and dragged me out to the dance floor. Becks also played soccer, but only recreationally. I had acted as referee for one of her games during the summer, but I didn't get to know her until school started. She was almost my height, with dark blonde, almost brown hair that she almost always wore in a short ponytail. Tonight, however, her hair was down, just touching her shoulders. We were dancing fast to an old Chuck Berry song. Her hair was swinging back and forth across her face, first hiding and then revealing her features as she moved. It was almost hypnotic in its metronome sway. By the time the song ended, I was a little lightheaded just from watching her hair fly around. We held hands companionably on our way back to the group.

Just as the next song, a Beach Boys record, started up, Ashley took my hand and led me back out. I was still trying to get used to this sudden popularity, but I was willing to ride the ride as long as the wheel went around. Ashley was gyrating around, moving her hips while keeping her feet nearly still, and I smiled to myself as I danced with her. She was such a quiet, shy girl; it was odd to think that she was actually swinging her hips to and fro like this, in public and everything.

By the time we made it off the dance floor and back to the group, I was breathing hard. Dancing with these girls was hard work. Fortunately, a slow song came on, and I was just breathing a mental sigh of relief when Kristina beat Ashley to me, reaching for my hand and wordlessly leading me back out to the dance floor. She flowed into my arms effortlessly and seemed to mold herself to me, resting her head on my shoulder as we box-stepped around the floor. I was sorry when the song ended and Kristina slipped away from me, leading me back to our group while still holding my sweaty hand.

The next fast set began and Ashley pulled me back out for another dance. When that one was done, Josh's girlfriend Andrea came my way as Becky took Josh out. I pleaded exhaustion, so she took Jorge out to boogie. I watched all the kids grooving and jiving out on the floor. Out in the middle of the crowd, I could see Molly dancing and shimmying with Trent. I looked around, and saw Scotty leaning against the wall, looking sourly out toward Molly and Trent. He looked very unhappy. *Welcome to the club*, I thought. I raised my paper cup to him in a mock salute, but he wasn't paying any attention to me. *Just as well, probably.*

My eyes kept on dragging back to Ashley and to Kristina. There was quite a contrast between the two, but they were both very attractive girls. Ashley was swaying back and forth with Toby, who had his hands on her hips as they danced together. I thought they looked good together. I glanced over at Kristina, who was gliding around Jake, her lithe body moving with all the grace of a leopard. As I watched, she glanced over at me. Our eyes met, nearly stopping my heart, until she dropped her gaze, moving around Jake in a sinuous move to the music.

Becky grabbed me for another fast song. Strands of her hair were getting matted with sweat as she swung her head back and forth to the beat. I led her more toward the middle of the floor, thinking I might catch a glimpse of Molly dancing with someone, but I didn't find her.

The song ended, and almost immediately, another slow song came on. This time, Kristina didn't even wait for us to get off the dance floor. She met Becky and me at the edge, and Becks wordlessly stepped aside, in what almost felt like an unspoken agreement, letting Kristina slip her hand in mine and guide me back out. This time I put both arms around her waist and held her to me. As she laid her head on my shoulder, I felt her take a deep breath and pull me even tighter to her. The feel of her body against mine triggered some rather dirty thoughts in me, creating an unfortunate blood flow into an appendage that I didn't want awakened in this situation. It was too late to stem the tide,

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however, so I did the best I could under the situation by slowly sticking my butt out so that the girl in my arms wouldn't notice my swollen prick. I was certain she would be upset if she knew the reaction she was creating. After all, she was a quiet girl from a large, close-knit family, and the last thing I wanted was to insult her or her brother by rubbing my private parts against her during a simple dance.

Just when I thought my strategy was working, Kristina moved somehow, and I found myself pressing against her flat tummy with my boner. I scrunched my pelvis away from her again, but she took a natural step in our dance and ended up close to me again, my now completely hard and painful cock standing up between us again. Once more, I sidestepped to remove the pressure, and a moment later, she stepped into me again. This time I could have sworn I felt her hips shift ever so slightly as her tummy rubbed against me, creating just a hint of friction between us. I resigned myself to my fate and did not try to move away again, but attempted to minimize the rubbing and stimulating for the rest of the dance, hoping against hope that it would deflate by the time we walked back to our group. In an effort to buy some time, I maneuvered us into the middle of the dance floor, so that when the song ended, we would have a little extra time in the crowd before my condition might be revealed.

My strategy worked. The song ended, and we were right in the middle of everybody. Without letting go of me, Kristina looked up into my eyes wordlessly. I could have sworn she was waiting for me to kiss her, but that couldn't be. *Could it?* A fraction before the hesitation turned into embarrassment, she turned, releasing me from her arms, and slowly made her way back toward our side of the gym. She held her hand behind her and wiggled her fingers at me, confident enough not to turn around to see if I was following her. I took the hint and held her hand as we walked, and she didn't let go until we were back within the circle of our friends.

Jorge looked at me silently. I shrugged at him, at which he rolled his eyes, as if to tell me that I was the densest fool he knew, and turned away to say something to Jake. Ashley said she wanted to go find Theo and roll him around the dance floor and took off to look for him. I heard the opening samba beat of Santana's *Oye Como Va* start up, and Jorge leaped up, grabbing Kristina by the arm, and the two of them practically ran out to the dance floor to do some cutting to the strong Latin beat.

And dance they did. I didn't know Jorge had those kinds of moves in him, but he was absolutely sensational out there, putting on a real show for everybody. All the boys' eyes however, were on his sister. She was swaying and pouting, dipping and twirling, stalking and stretching like a cat and practically purring with pleasure all during the dance. It was unlike anything I had ever seen before, and I was enthralled. In fact, most of the other dancers out there stopped to watch in appreciation, marveling at the two Mendozas showing 'em how.

As Kristina and Jorge flowed together across the floor, I had the distinct impression that, even though Kristina was concentrating on dancing with her brother, her focus was toward me. There was nothing she was doing that I could say with any certainty was aimed at me, but I still had the feeling that she knew exactly where I was all the time. Her sudden exhibitionistic fervor was for my benefit. Whether it was a conscious effort on her part or not, it had a definite effect on me. I could not tear my eyes from the dance, nor did I want to stop watching. And when the final notes of the song echoed into the gymnasium, the two of them stood there in a pose, oriented toward each other, arms upraised, still as statues while their schoolmates, having seen a side of them that had been unknown up until just that moment, broke into applause and cheering for the display. The sudden barrage of cheering and clapping seemed to snap them out of their trance and they looked around them, somewhat embarrassed over the attention they were getting. Panting and sweating from their exertions,

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they dropped their arms, turned and smiled at each other, and then walked back toward the group of us. We were standing there, mouths agape in awe, having just witnessed a true transformation among kids we all thought we knew pretty well.

Everything after that was denouement, since the music stopped a couple of songs later. We all gathered our coats and headed for the door and the restaurant, laughing and teasing each other easily. Ashley rejoined us by the door, having spun Theo around for one song and standing by him while they watched The Flying Mendozas. We all piled into a couple of cars and headed out.

When the evening finally ended after an hour of ice cream and pop and cake and coffee, our rides were showing up to pick us up. Mr. Mendoza drove up to take Jorge and Kristina home, just as my brother Michael rolled up to take Jake and me home. Just before she ducked into the car, Kristina took my arm and pulled her lips up to my ear.

"Please call me, Sean. Please," she whispered. Without another word, she ducked into the car and pulled the door shut behind her. I knew saying those words cost her a lot. I promised myself that I would do my best to not disappoint her.

And I did remember. It was late the next day, Sunday, when I finally got up the nerve to call her house. Jorge answered the phone.

"It's about damn time, Porter," he admonished me.

"What are you talking about, Jorge?"

"She asked you to call, man. No, she din' tell me, but I know her well enough. She did ask you, right?"

"Yeah, she did, and..."

"And nothin', man. She been on pins an needles all day, waitin'. I knew she was nervous about somethin', and I finally figured it out. If you wasn' gonna call soon, I was gonna come over there an' kick your ass, man."

"What the hell are you talking about?"

"Kristina, man, what choo think? You know how hard it was for her to grovel like that, asking you to call? You better do the right thing

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wit' her, man." He sounded as serious now as he did when he was sitting on top of Del Toro that day in the hallway.

"Just get her, will you? And don't worry, man," I tried to assure him. "Of course I'll do the right thing."

"I know you will, Sean. I just wanted you to know how much this means to her, thass all." He set the telephone down and went to get his sister.

A quiet voice. "Hello?"

"Hi," I said. Then, as an afterthought, I decided I had better introduce myself, since she probably didn't recognize my voice over the telephone. "It's Sean."

She giggled. "Of course it's you," she said. I could hear the smile in her voice, and it made me smile, too.

We talked about nothing for about twenty minutes, until I could hear a heavy voice rumbling in the background.

"I've got to go, Sean," she said softly. "Thank you for calling."

"Uh, wait a minute, Kristina," I said hurriedly. "Do you... I mean, would you... uh... maybe we could... what I mean is..." Boy, was my tongue ever getting tangled now. *Where did I suddenly get this attack of nerves?* I took a deep breath and started all over.

"What I mean is, would you like to do something next weekend with me?" I finally finished.

"Sure," she replied quietly. "What would you like to do?"

"Well, maybe we could go to a movie or something."

"Okay," she said. "I'll ask my parents and let you know tomorrow at school. Is that all right?"

"Uh, sure, that's fine," I said dumbly. "See you tomorrow, then."

"Goodnight, Sean. Thank you for calling." She hung up the phone, leaving me standing there stupidly, a dead line humming in my ear, resonating in a sonic harmony with the memory of the sweetness of her voice.

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RESPECT

On Friday night, Michael drove me over to pick up Kristina. We were meeting Josh and Andrea at the mall, and then we were going to go see a movie.

I knocked on the front door and Mr. Mendoza opened the door. He stepped aside, gesturing me in. He was not very tall but he was substantial. I could see just how Jorge would look in twenty years, looking at his father.

I stepped into the hallway. Mr. Mendoza held out his hand and in a heavy accent said, "Welcome, Sean. Kristina will be here in *uno momento*."

The smaller Mendoza children, four all told, were peeking at me from doorways, whispering to each other and giggling. I felt like I was on display as I shook Mr. Mendoza's hand.

Jorge came out of the kitchen, his mother trailing behind, and came over to me.

"Hey, Sean," he said with a smile.

His father turned to him and said something in Spanish.

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Jorge turned back to me, a grimace on his face. "My father has asked me to translate for him. He says that he is very glad to meet you. He also said he wishes to say something to you."

"Okay," I said, suddenly apprehensive. This was a new one on me.

Mr. Mendoza looked at me as he spoke, and I stayed facing him as Jorge translated.

"He says that Kristina is his oldest daughter and so is very special to him, just as his oldest son is special to him." Jorge's voice was expressionless as he spoke. I saw Kristina, dressed in a simple black sweater and cotton pants, just coming in from the hallway. I glanced at her and smiled before turning back to her father. She looked a little embarrassed but said nothing.

Her father glanced back to see her standing in the doorway, then turned and continued.

"We have tried to raise our children to respect all others, even when we ourselves have not been shown that same respect," Jorge continued translating. "It is a sad fact of life that not all people have been taught how to respect others."

Jorge stopped, firing off a burst of Spanish to his father. It sounded like a question, or maybe a complaint. His father answered back implacably, and Jorge, resigned, continued translating.

"He says that he expects you to treat his daughter with all the respect she is due. If you do not, he will know, and he will have words with you about it."

He did not look like a man I would want to have "words" with, particularly alone in a small locked room. Still facing him, I composed my reply before opening my mouth.

"I give you my word that I will give Kristina every consideration I can. I think of her as a good friend, and Jorge is a good friend, and I would do nothing to harm either friendship."

Jorge translated for me. Mr. Mendoza nodded, held out his hand, and shook mine to seal the deal. He smiled then, and turned and held out his arm, as if presenting his daughter to a crowd. Kristina came up

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to him, kissed him on the cheek, and we headed out the door to Michael's car.

It was always awkward when you had to be driven around because you were too young to drive yourself. Picking up a date was even more so. We solved the problem by squeezing into the front seat with Michael. It was crowded, but I certainly didn't mind. As a side benefit, Mike didn't feel so much like a chauffeur, either.

"I'm sorry you had to go through that with my father," Kristina said as we started down the street.

"Hey, it's just fine," I assured her. "I know he worries about you and wants to protect you, and all that..."

"Yes, well, he's decided that the best way to get his point across is to speak Spanish and have Jorge translate. In reality, he speaks English nearly as well as we do. He's just trying to make an impression on you," she said with a smile.

"Oh, he made an impression on me, all right," I said. "He scared me a little," I added.

"He'll be glad to know that," she said with a laugh. She shifted a little, and the contact I felt with her, up my side and my arm, from my hip and down my leg, got just a little more substantial. We stayed in unacknowledged close contact with each other, just like that, all the way to the mall.

Once we met up with Josh and Andrea at the mall, thoughts of the punishment Mr. Mendoza might be planning to wreak upon me if I got too improper were banished, and we had a great time together. When we got to the movie theater, we settled in with popcorn and sodas, into one of the side rows of the auditorium. Andrea and Kristina were sitting between Josh and me. By the middle of the first reel of film, our hands had found each other's. We spent the rest of the movie in awareness of each other, maintaining contact with clasped hands and knees just touching.

On the way home, Kristina and I once again squeezed into the front of Michael's car, and Andrea and Josh climbed into the back. We

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dropped off Andrea first and Josh walked her to her door, giving her a long kiss goodnight before trudging back to the car for a ride back to his house.

Kristina's house was our next stop and I walked her to her door, also. I wondered if Mr. Mendoza was watching through the curtains, making sure I treated his daughter properly. I looked at the windows nervously. Kristina probably guessed my thoughts, because she had a small, secret smile on her face as she stood there, waiting for me to make up my mind about what to do. Finally, she took both my hands in hers and turned me to face her.

"Good night, Sean. Thank you for a very nice evening." She leaned in toward me just a fraction, watching me. I bucked up my courage and bent toward her, and our lips touched softly for just a moment. She turned toward the door and opened it, flooding the landing with light from the hallway.

"Kristina?" I suddenly asked. She turned around and looked at me quizzically. "Did you really have a good time tonight? What I mean is, would you go out with me again?"

She smiled her secret smile again. "Yes, Sean, I would love to go out with you again."

The pressure I had been feeling, but had tried to ignore, dissipated into vapor, to my immense relief. I headed back to the car, my feet barely making contact with the sidewalk.

The whole next week at school, I didn't have much of a chance to talk with Kristina. I kept on telling myself that it was just one date, not a lifetime commitment, and to chill out about it. It didn't help. I called her on Tuesday evening, but her father said she couldn't come to the phone. I called her on Wednesday, but she wasn't home. I called her on Thursday, very near panic. She had me thinking that I had done something wrong, that she didn't want to see me again, that she was evading me. She answered the phone on the second ring.

"Si, hello?"

"Kristina? Hi, it's me, Sean."

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"Oh, Sean, I was hoping you would call," she said. She sounded happy, not upset. *Did I worry all week for nothing?*

"You were?" I asked before I could think about it. "I thought maybe you didn't want to talk to me."

"Why would you think that, silly?" She sounded amused.

"Well... ummm... I called the other night, and then again last night..."

"Oh, that," she dismissed. "My father just told me tonight that you had called. He wouldn't let me call you back. He says it's not ladylike to be calling boys."

"That's okay," I said, relieved. "I just wasn't sure if I was making a pest out of myself or not, that's all."

She giggled, a tinkling sound that sent shivers up and down my spine. "You can be a pest, if you'd like," she said softly. "I won't mind."

"Um, would you like to do something this weekend with me?"

"Of course. What did you want to do?"

"Well, Eric and Keisha were thinking about going out to the bowling alley on Saturday night. It's something about using glow-in-the-dark pins, or something. Would you like to try it?"

"Okay. What time?"

"I'll call Eric and find out and call you back," I suggested.

"No, don't call back tonight. Just tell me tomorrow at school, or call me tomorrow night. I'll ask my parents if it's okay, but I'm sure they will say it's fine, as long as I don't stay out past eleven."

"I'll talk to you tomorrow then. Bye."

"Bye, Sean. Thank you for calling." The telephone clicked in my ear as the connection was broken.

Eric, who had just gotten his driver's license, picked me up Saturday night for our dates. It was so wonderful having a little more freedom, instead of relying on older brothers or parents for rides. My birthday was coming up soon and I could hardly wait to take my driver's test and get my license.

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We picked up Keisha and then drove over to Kristina's house. I thought I must have passed some sort of test with her parents, because she came bounding out the front door and down the sidewalk, waving back toward the house as she headed for our car. I didn't have to go through a grilling from her father this time. Maybe he figured he had scared me sufficiently that first time, which was true, or maybe he had come to trust me a little bit. I hoped to be trustworthy, not only in his eyes, but in Kristina's too. She climbed into the back seat with me and as soon as we were down the street and out of sight of her house, she scooted over to sit next to me. I took her hand and held it in mine, glad of even that little touch.

At the bowling alley, most of the lights were out. There was a disco ball rotating above the alleys, with a spotlight shining on it scattering shattered rays of light all over the interior. Some of the bowling pins had been painted with fluorescent colors, and there were blacklights shining down from the pinsetters, making the pins glow at the far end of the dark alleys, giving the place a surreal feel. There was loud music playing, the pulse of the bass was thumping and reverberating through the floor and into our bodies.

Kristina was a terrible bowler. She had only gone bowling once before in her life and the challenge of trying to knock the pins down in the dark was beyond her. Nearly every time she whipped the ball down the alley, it ended up in the gutter, usually within about ten feet of the foul line. She didn't care though, and neither did the rest of us. We were laughing and joking about how awful we all were at this game. On the rare occasions when Kristina actually managed to knock a few pins over, she would jump up and squeal excitedly, hands in the air in triumph, and then she would run over to me and jump into my arms joyfully. I loved it every time she did that, being able to hold her tightly with a crowd all around us. It really felt special to me.

On the ride home after we finished bowling, we snuggled up in the cold back seat, her arms threaded through mine as we waited for the heater to kick in. Keisha and Eric were pointedly ignoring us, so I took

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the opportunity to lift up her chin and lean toward her. Her eyes were wide and solemn, an infinitely deep pool of brown and black, with her lips slightly parted in anticipation of this moment.

I kissed her. Softly, oh so softly and gently, I paid homage to her soft and sensitive lips. Her eyes closed and she pressed toward me for more. I turned in my seat and slipped my arm around her waist as we continued kissing. I was getting very warm but it had little to do with the car heater. I was hoping she was feeling the same.

She was wearing a long coat that buttoned down the front with four large buttons. I stopped kissing her and gazed into her eyes as my hand found the coat button near her waist and fumbled to open it up. I wanted to be closer to her, but I didn't want her to be cold. I just wanted to slide my arm inside her coat to hold her closely. I finally was able to push the button through the buttonhole, and as I slipped my arm inside her coat, my fingers accidentally brushed against the bump of her breast, barely hard enough to feel. But I saw her eyes widen and she jerked a little. By then of course, my hand was on her waist and she understood that it was an accident. However, I was afraid the damage might be done. She relaxed though, and moved to kiss me again, a soft and tender touching that washed away all worry.

We stayed just that way until we pulled into her driveway. We walked to her front door but this time the light didn't come on. I pulled her to me.

"Are you okay?" I asked quietly.

I thought she might have blushed just a little. "Of course I am. Why wouldn't I be?"

"Um... well, it's nothing," I stammered.

"Look, Sean, I... There was a boy I liked, when we lived in Texas." She paused. "I was only thirteen, almost fourteen. We... he and I... he is the only other boy I've ever kissed, Sean, besides you."

"It's okay, Kristina..."

"No, I just want you to know... that I have no... experience... in this."

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Tears were just starting to well in those deep, dark eyes.

"So," she continued hesitantly, "I'm a little frightened sometimes, Sean. If you don't want to see me anymore, I understand... but..."

I was devastated by her words. "Don't you want to go out with me, Kristina? I thought you liked me."

She hugged herself to me. I instinctively held her tight, trying to understand what she was saying.

"I do like you, Sean, and I do want to go out with you. It's just... I mean... I can't... you know... I can't be like some of the other girls, and... if you don't want to be with such an... inexperienced... person..."

"Hold on a minute," I said. I pushed her away from me a little, so I could look in her eyes. "You think I won't like you, just because you're not like Molly or someone?" She didn't move, but her eyes told me the truth. "That is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard you say, Kristina. I like you because you are *you*, not because of anything you might or might not have done in the past, or for any... um... favors you might give in the future."

"Really?" The tears started spilling, but I thought it might be from relief instead of sadness.

"Really. Don't get me wrong here, Kristina. I would love to share something beyond a few kisses with you. Hell, I'll come right out and tell you that I lust after you." She finally smiled, a very good sign. "I would jump your bones in a heartbeat, if I thought you would be willing. But I know you're not, and it's all okay. I like you for who you are, and your innocence is all a part of you. If you want to wait, I'll wait. Maybe some days I'll be a little impatient, but just tell me to back off and lighten up, Kristina, and I promise I will. And that's no lie."

She sobbed and crushed herself to me, holding me as tightly as she possibly could.

"Hey," I said. She looked up at me, her head still against my chest. "Would you go out with me again?" I asked.

Eyes shining, she lifted up and kissed me, pressing hard against my lips with hers.

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"Yes, of course," she said happily. She gave me one last quick kiss before turning to the door. "Thank you, Sean. Thank you for understanding. Call me?"

"Maybe even tonight, when I get home," I threatened, even though we both knew I wouldn't. Her parents would never let her talk on the telephone this late.

My feet never touched the sidewalk at all as I strolled back to Eric's car.

Over the course of the next week, I called her so we could chat in the evening a couple of times, and she even managed to call me once, a very short, whispered conversation. I was impressed, since she apparently managed to sneak that call in to me, a huge accomplishment considering there were seven other family members in her house at the time.

In the back seat of Eric's car the next weekend, we were snuggling and sharing small kisses again. This time, when I brushed against her as I put my arm around her waist, she didn't flinch or look upset at all. In fact, she kissed me hard, and opened her mouth just a little, allowing her tongue to slip out and brush lightly against my lips. Encouraged, I let the tip of my tongue touch hers, and the contact was electric. Her mouth opened a little more, her tongue got a little more daring, and she was making small noises deep within her as she felt her passions begin to escalate. As we kissed, her body turned slightly away from me. My hand at her waist was moved from her side to her tummy, over her sweater.

I was so involved in enjoying the development of our new way of kissing, that the change in her body language didn't register with me at first. Finally, one of those odd contact switches in my brain clicked and it occurred to me that this was her silent signal to me that it was probably okay to take our physical relationship up another step. I slowly, cautiously, allowed my hand to move up the outside of her sweater, ready to call an instant retreat at the first sign of discomfort. I felt the nubby cotton of the knit of her sweater, and then I could feel

the harder edge of the bottom of her bra beneath. Still no sign of hesitation came from her; in fact, her kissing got hotter and wetter as my hand moved further up, finally cupping her small breast through the layers of clothing. I caressed and lightly squeezed her, and then slid over to pay attention to her other breast, treating it the same. I could just feel her expanding nipple under my palm as I pressed my hand against her, squeezing and rubbing and stimulating.

Unfortunately, it was a short ride to her house, and we arrived way too soon for my liking. But arrive we did, so we scooted out of the back seat and I walked her, as usual, to her door.

This time, her goodnight kiss held quite a bit of heat, no doubt left over from our activities of a few moments before.

"You are a surprising young lady," I said as I held her there.

Again, I thought I could detect a blush. "I don't want you to think I'm cold," she whispered.

"Hey, I've seen you dance. You are anything but cold, sweetie." I kissed her again.

"You ain't seen nothin' yet," she said. "My momma taught me a dance..." She stopped talking abruptly, and this time I knew she was blushing fiercely. It made my blood race a little faster through me let me tell you.

"Will you dance it for me?" I asked teasingly.

"Oh, maybe some day," she replied coquettishly. "If you're a very good boy." She pecked me on the lips and turned to the door. "Good night, *mas querido*. Sleep well."

Sleep well, she said. It would be a very long time before I could get the image of Kristina Mendoza, her cinnamon skin naked and glowing as she danced alone just for me, out of my mind enough to be able to fall asleep. By that time, my hand was sore, but satisfaction was still a long, long way away.

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TRUST BETRAYED

Tryouts for the girl's varsity and junior varsity soccer teams were held at the beginning of March. Jen, Ashley, and Molly ended up on the JV team, while Kristina and Tessa both made the varsity team. Practice was every day after school, starting about the second week of March. The girls were doing a lot of running laps, out on the track when the weather cooperated and in the gymnasium when it didn't. The girls did a lot of good-natured complaining about it, but they knew the benefits of all that boring running of laps would pay off once the season began.

Because of her practice schedule, I couldn't see or call Kristina much during the week. Her parents were very strict anyway, and with so much of her free time taken up with soccer, she only had time for homework after dinner. No time for poor Sean.

I had a plan, though. My sixteenth birthday was coming up the first week of April, and Toby's was the same week. We came up with the idea that we should have a combined birthday party to celebrate. My parents offered to host the party, so all our friends were invited over to my house on the first Saturday of April. Toby and I asked Ashley and Kristina if they could come over early in the afternoon to

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hang out with us while we got the basement ready for the party, which they did. Toby and Ashley had become something of an item, ever since the turnabout dance in February. They discovered a remarkable compatibility together that began on the dance floor and expanded from there. I was really happy about it for Toby's sake, because it meant that he was finally getting over his serious crush on Jen Davies, who still was madly in love with Sam. Ashley was a better fit for him anyway, since she didn't tower over him by a foot like Jen did. The four of us had a great afternoon getting set for the party, watching TV, and gossiping about our friends.

Most of our friends were at the party. The music was loud, but there were some quieter, darker corners for the couples (though my parents made sure they patrolled those areas frequently). Drinks were spilled, chips and dips were consumed in huge quantities, and everybody seemed to be having a very good time.

At one point during the height of the party, Eric came over to me.

"How's it going, Sean? Another year older, huh?" he said.

"Yeah, the time's really flying now," I replied. "One day, you're a fifteen-year-old punk. The next thing you know, you've got your driver's license and you've got a bunch more new friends needing rides."

"Don't I know it. I got my license and all of a sudden, I had to start driving my younger brother and sister around all the time. Got old pretty quick," he complained. I could sympathize. My brother Michael was more than happy to see me get my license, since that meant that I could drive our younger brother Stephen around now, instead of him having to cart the both of us. "Hey, have you heard the rumors going around about your old girlfriend?" he asked.

I shook my head. *This oughta be good*, I thought to myself.

"You know she broke up with Scotty, right?" he asked. I hadn't known, but then I wasn't paying a lot of attention to what Molly was up to lately, either. "Well, Scott's been spreading some dirt about her.

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About how she was putting out for him so easy at first, but then shut him out after awhile. Calling her an ice bitch, things like that."

"You're kidding."

"Nope. Ask Keisha. She's really been getting the down-and-dirty from the rumor-mills in the girls' johns at school. Anyway, the story that Keisha picked up is that Molly was two-timing Scotty with Trent, then dropped them both and jumped on Mikey Evanson for a poke."

"You have got to be shitting me, Eric. Molly is doing this? What the hell is wrong with her?"

Jake walked up, just in time to hear my question. "You guys talking about Molly 'I'll Do Anything For a Long Hard One' O'Toole? Yeah, I heard, too," he said.

"I don't believe it," I said, shaking my head at the news. "What the hell is she trying to prove?"

"I don't know, but her brother better not find out about it," said Jake, glancing over in Josh's direction.

"On a happier note, man, it looks like you and Kristina have got things going," said Eric. "You're a lucky dude. She's one of a kind."

"Yeah, well, my track record for keeping women happy is a pretty dismal 0-1 so far," I said. "I'm trying, but who knows how successful I'll be."

"You know the secret to keeping a woman happy, don't you?" asked Eric. Jake and I looked at each other questioningly, then both said no.

"Just repeat after me: 'Yes, dear, Of course it was my fault, anything you want, my little love-muffin,' and everything will be hunky-dory," he said.

We all laughed.

"Lessons in life we could all learn from," said Jake.

As a birthday party treat, my parents agreed to let me drive Josh and Andrea and Kristina home after the party. I was using my mom's old car, a '75 Buick Century with a split bench seat in the front. Josh and Andrea got into the back, and Kristina slid over next to me as I

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started up the old beast. We were barely out of the driveway when I heard giggling and kissing noises coming from the back. Kristina looked at me and smiled, taking my arm and holding it as I toiled down the street.

In almost no time at all, I was pulling into Andrea's driveway. I stopped the car, throwing it into park while we waited for them to disentangle from each other and walk up to her front door. While Josh was kissing her and saying goodnight, I slipped my arm around Kristina's shoulder. She tilted her head up, and I bent down and kissed her tenderly and softly, just the way I knew she liked to be kissed.

The back door opened and Josh climbed back in.

"All right, you guys, that's enough," he complained good-naturedly. "Can't you see I'm lonely back here? It's bad enough I don't have my girlfriend here, I have to watch you two and your disgusting public display of affection?"

I took my arm back from around Kristina's shoulder and put the car in reverse. As I was looking through the back window, backing out of the driveway, I glanced at Josh.

"It's not exactly a public place here, I don't think. But we'll stop anyway, because we are sensitive to your loneliness," I said.

"Thank you very much," he shot back. "Thank you from the bottom of my bottom."

"Josh! That's gross!" Kristina complained, but I could see she was smiling as she said it.

I drove through the side streets to Josh's house and dropped him off. I was reluctant to drive straight to Kristina's house, wanting to spend as many minutes with her as I could, so I turned in the opposite direction, intending to just drive around for a few minutes with her by my side.

"Good, I don't want to go home just yet," she whispered when she saw that I had turned in a different direction.

We drove slowly down the street.

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“Stop over there,” she said, pointing to a dark area in the middle of the next block. I pulled over to the curb, in front of a new house under construction. There were no lights around us as we came to a stop under a tree, the streetlights on the corner too far away to afford much light here in the middle of the block.

It was chilly out, so I left the car running with the lights off. I turned to her and put my arm around her once more. She turned into me, slipping her arm around my back as she tilted her face up, inviting me to kiss her. I bent down and pressed my lips to hers in a soft, warm and tender kiss. I planted lots of little kisses on her lips, the corners of her mouth, her cheeks, and her chin, receiving lots in return. I didn’t want to rush her in any way, so I contented myself to nibbling and kissing her softly. Finally, her lips found their way to mine, and I could feel her trembling as her mouth opened just slightly and the tip of her tongue just touched my mouth. My lips parted, and my tongue slipped out to meet hers, tip to tip, before retreating and breaking the kiss. I nuzzled her throat, feeling the heat radiating from her skin just below her ear, and returned for another kiss. Her lips and tongue were bolder now, being guided in their explorations by her rising temperature, until, after several brief darting jabs at each other, our mouths finally opened and our lips sealed onto each other as our tongues intertwined in our first truly hot, wet, demanding kiss.

She moaned into my mouth and twisted her body so she could hold me tighter against her. My hand snaked around her waist to hold her tightly to me. My knee was pressed against hers, our torsos twisted around as I struggled to get even closer to her around the steering column of the car. She reached up and threw her arm around my neck as we kissed, and I could feel her sweater inch up from her jeans, so that two of my fingers were resting against the hot skin of her lower back.

Just that small touch of her soft skin lit the afterburners in my body, and my blood raced through me, making me feel flushed and swollen. My fingers slipped under her sweater, still at her waist, and

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rested there, reveling in the feel of her incredibly smooth skin. My hand warmed from the touch, my fingers tingling, as I pressed my palm hard against her back.

She moaned again, and pulled me even harder to her. I took that as a good sign. My hand on her waist, almost on its own, began to slide up her side under the sweater, tracing the hidden musculature just under the soft layer of skin. My fingers felt the rough cotton and elastic of her bra, and quite naturally followed its path under her arm to cup her small, round covered breast under the sweater. She was making lots of small sounds into my mouth, and she twisted just slightly, giving my hand a little more room to caress her. I gently squeezed the soft mound, feeling her true shape for the first time, and wondering all over again at the miracle of the female form. My hand followed her bra back around under her arm again, intent on finding the key to releasing the treasure. Without seeming to move, her body language spoke of disappointment that I had abandoned her boob, but I had better plans in mind for both of us. I fumbled at her back, fingers searching for the complicated hooks and eyes I had encountered a few times before, and found none.

I think I might have panicked as my hand scrambled around, scratching and searching for the secret to her confining bra. She stopped kissing me for a moment and giggled slightly as she reached under her sweater in front of her. The tight strap mysteriously came loose on her. As she reached back up to pull me down to resume our kissing, she whispered, "It attaches in front."

She opened her mouth against me again, her tongue intruding and exploring the recesses of my teeth and gums, as she twisted just a little away from me in my arms, giving my hand a hint as to where she wanted it to go. I obliged by slipping under the now loose bra, back to her front, to gently grasp the bare skin of her pliant breast. I pressed my palm against her, feeling her nipple expand against it, and then lightly pinched the swollen nub to stimulate it even more. I hefted the

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small weight of her boob, held the whole thing in the palm of my hand, felt the heat emanating from her.

We stayed like that for a time, kissing each other while she held the back of my head and I held her breast like a precious work of art, until the headlights of a car turning down the street from the corner interrupted our reverie. We both glanced at the clock on the dashboard.

"I've got to get home," she said regretfully. "Jorge is probably already there, and my parents will be worried that I didn't come home with him."

I reluctantly let go of her, and she reached under her sweater and put her clothes back into place, lifting up on the seat to pull her sweater back down. I watched her sadly, wishing fervently we could have continued, but I had made a promise to myself that she would guide me. I would only go as far as she was unhesitatingly willing to go and would not push her to go beyond. I could see now, though, that it would not be an easy promise to keep.

Two minutes later, I was walking her to her door. The porch light went on just as soon as we stepped to the door. She reached up and kissed me lightly on my cheek just before the front door opened, and she stepped inside.

"Thank you, Sean," she said. "Good night."

It was a long time before I finally fell asleep. That night I dreamed of a raven-haired beauty, dressed all in black, dancing a samba just for me.

* * * * *

Just as soccer practice had started for the school teams, the recreational teams for all ages were starting to gear up. I got a call from Davey and Kip's coach, Bill Pinella, asking if I would be his

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assistant coach for the spring session. To help seal the deal, he had asked Lori Wilkinson to call me, too. She told me that the boys were clamoring to see me again.

"It seems to them like it's been years since they saw you," she said.

"Well, it's been since the fall sometime," I recalled.

"So, will you do it? Will you help out Bill with his team?"

"Sure, Lori, I'll be glad to," I said.

Bill and I met a couple of times at his house to go over some drills he had in mind for the team. He was going to be out of town for a couple of games and he insisted on letting me make up my own lineups for those games.

The first couple of practices we held were just information gathering exercises for us, watching the boys kick the ball around, timing them as they ran up and down the field, and asking each one which position he liked to play best and why. They still had plenty of soccer left to play before they got locked into a specific position or even being labeled defense or offense, so we didn't take anything they said too seriously, knowing full well how changeable kids that age could be.

After the second practice, I recruited Jorge to come along to some of our practices. We had a core of three boys who were most interested in playing keeper, so Jorge took those three aside for about thirty minutes each time and worked with them on punting, blocking, and moving their defensive players around the field. The three keepers got more and more enthusiastic about trying out their new knowledge in a game, so we dedicated the last half of each practice to scrimmaging, dividing the team in half and playing either a half-field game or a full-field scrimmage. Sometimes we drew lanes on the field with flour, making them stay within their lanes. Some days, the lanes had about ten feet of space between them, sometimes we drew them so they overlapped, but the rule always was don't step out of the lane. We knew that when it came to game time, they would follow the ball anyway, but we were trying to convince them that if they played

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positions, they would be able to move the ball better. Some days it worked, some days it didn't.

Lori came down whenever she could to watch at least the last half of practice. She asked if I could work with the boys again on the side. I was gratified, as I had been looking forward to helping them out again. She also mentioned that Molly was still babysitting for her occasionally, but she had noticed that she was pretty unhappy lately and asked if I knew anything about it.

"Nope, I don't," I said. "Molly and I haven't really spoken much since around November."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Sean," she said. "I thought you two made a really cute couple together."

"Well, at the time I thought so too, but what can you do," I replied.

She could tell I really didn't care to talk much about it, so she dropped the subject.

A couple of weeks after my birthday, I borrowed my mom's car and picked up Kristina for our Saturday date. It had been a warm and sunny day, the first real promise of the summer to come. We decided to forego the movie we were going to see and instead drove to Silver Lake, a town close to us that had built up around its namesake body of water. There was a public promenade all around the lake, with park benches and gazebos and a band shell. We parked the car at dusk and just started meandering around the lake, pausing and sitting when we felt like it, walking and holding hands when we got tired of sitting.

It took us a couple of hours to make our way all the way around the lake, and we were chilled by the time we got back to the car. Ours was the only car left in the lot as I started it up and threw the fan and heater on high.

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"Ohhh, I'm so cold," she complained as she scooted over to nestle up against me. I put my arm around her and pulled her tighter to me.

"Snuggle up here, I'll warm you up," I said as I wrapped my arms around her. She twisted around to press more of herself up against me, trying to take advantage of my body heat. I unzipped my light jacket and pulled it around her as she shivered against me, her face tucked under my arm and her arms drawn in to her.

I felt the beginnings of heat coming from the floorboards. "It's warming up now," I said. She just shook her head and burrowed deeper into me, now snaking her arms around me, inside my jacket, to hold me around my waist.

"You could probably safely come out now," I said as I felt my feet begin to warm. She shook her head again, staying right where she was. "Come on, you can do it," I said encouragingly. Again, she shook her head, and pulled even tighter on me. I grasped her shoulders and gently pulled her out from her warm cocoon. She lifted her head and smiled at me, then moved up closer to me. I bent down and kissed her softly. She practically purred as I kissed her, her pleasure and contentment obvious, even to me.

I felt her lips open slightly, her signal that she wanted more. I let the tip of my tongue peek out and touch her warm lips, and they parted a little more as her own tongue came out to meet mine, tips touching and caressing, exchanging information on a cellular level.

My own internal temperature climbed, and I stopped kissing her long enough to reach for the zipper of her coat. She watched me solemnly as I slowly lowered the tab and opened her coat so I could slip my arms around her. When I did, my hands encircling her waist. She closed her eyes and lifted her face up to kiss me again, opening her lips a little more and becoming more daring with her tongue in my mouth. She suddenly thrust her tongue as deeply as she could into me, and the resultant flare that shot through me almost made me cry out.

My hand found its way to the hem of her sweatshirt, and my fingers wormed their way underneath, encountering the soft skin of

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her tummy. I could feel the depression of her belly button, but that particular area was not my goal at the moment, as my hand slipped up her sternum to find her small breasts. I grasped one and squeezed, slid my hand over to fondle the other, then moving back to the first, almost as if comparing the roundness and firmness of her feminine charms. Her tongue continued thrusting into me, taking my breath away, as I found the front clasp of her bra, having learned from my previous session. I managed to fumble with the clasp until the encasing material magically parted to allow me access to her hot, desirable flesh.

As soon as I released her swelling breasts and touched her engorged nipples, she moaned and opened her mouth as wide as she could, inviting my own tongue in to invade and explore. I was so confused, my brain so addled from the fires raging in me, that I didn't know where to concentrate my efforts. I really wanted to lift her sweatshirt off so I could pay proper homage to the treats in the palm of my hand, but that was impossible. Instead, I let my tongue do its exploring within the moist confines of her mouth while my fingers played with the exquisite treasures of her boobs.

My cock was painfully swollen, caught in the seam of my jeans. I reluctantly abandoned her soft breast for a moment and took my hand out from under her sweatshirt so I could make a minor adjustment of my own. Her body language spoke of disappointment that I seemed to be done with her sensitive nipples, until she realized what I was doing. Of her own volition, she dropped her hand onto mine as I adjusted the position of my steely cock. As I twisted in the seat and repositioned my shaft, her hand stayed on top of mine, feeling what I had done. I slipped my hand from beneath hers, and felt her hesitate when her hand dropped onto my hard cock, feeling its length and girth for the first time. She allowed her hand to lie there, passively holding me, creating even more blood flow into the area. I was afraid I might go off in my jeans if she did start to hold me, but it was a chance I was willing to take. Her actions made me bold enough to reach back for her waist, but instead of gliding up her body back to her delightful

breasts, I moved my hand to the snap of her jeans. She was not quite ready to take that large step, however, and she abandoned my crotch to grab my wrist, stopping me.

I placed my hand flat on her tummy, and she returned to exploring my cock through my pants, taking up where she had left off. After a few moments of letting my hand rest there, I tried rubbing her through the layers of her clothes, at first lightly and slowly moving from the snap of her jeans to between her parted legs, and then progressively pressing harder on her as she allowed this intimacy. Finally, I was pushing against her covered pussy hard and I could feel her legs quiver as they lay open for me. Her kisses were very hot and wet, and our tongues were squirming and darting, licking and tasting without reservation.

Judging that she just might be ready for more, I took the tab of her zipper and tried to lower it without undoing the snap on her jeans. As I struggled to slide it down, her hand on my cock stopped its rubbing as she paused, waiting to see what I was going to do. Her zipper parted, and I slipped my hand into the opening, encountering the silky fabric of her panties.

I felt hot moisture soaking her panties as my fingers moved lower. Her jeans were too tight for me to be able to reach the source of the heat, but I could just detect the crinkle of her pubic hair through the thin fabric of her panties with my fingertips. I felt her hips move up slightly off the seat, and her legs parted just a little, and suddenly there was a bit more room for my fingers. I pushed a little harder, and my fingertips found where her hot oils were coming from as I pushed the crotch of her panties into the top of her slit, soaking up more of her smooth, hot liquid. I pressed against her, vainly seeking her clit and her opening through the fabric, trying to wish away our clothes.

Kristina broke our kiss, panting and gasping at the sensations rolling through her. Her hand was now clutching at my rock-hard cock, creating a monumental pressure within me. I pulled my hand out to scramble for the snap of her jeans, intending to invade the

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barrier of her panties and claim the prize my fingers wanted, but that tripped a circuit breaker in her. She froze, and grabbed my hand, stopping me from continuing.

"No, Sean, please. I can't." She was still breathing very hard, and I knew that what she did was nearly as difficult on her as it was on me, but I couldn't deny her. I looked into those huge brown eyes, looking so longingly at me, and took my hand completely out of her pants and pulled her by the waist to me. I lowered my face to her and kissed her soft lips, bending to her will without reservation. We kissed and cuddled for a time, lost in our own thoughts of wishes and acceptance, unspoken longings and unfulfilled desires balanced by the unreserved respect of our individual silent vows. Our kisses became more and more chaste, until finally they were as we had started, soft and tender and loving.

* * * * *

Two weeks later, I had a very busy weekend planned. The girls had their first game on Friday night, and I was going to watch the varsity team play. There was a pizza party planned for after the game, and Kristina and I were going to go. On Saturday morning, she was coming over to my house to work on a project we were doing together for our English class. We had the same teacher, but were in different classes, so the assignments were the same for both classes. Then, later in the afternoon, Davey and Kip had their first game of the season. I was hoping that the lane drills we had been using would pay off during a game situation, and was anxious to see how it worked.

The weekend started out great. The girls played hard on Friday, winning their game 3-0. Tessa tallied her first shutout as a varsity keeper, and Kristina scored the final goal, powering a shot in from just inside the box after taking a crossing pass.

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After the game, we all went to a local hangout and ordered pizzas and sodas, talking about the game and laughing over some of the little errors that didn't affect the outcome at all. Most of the team was there, along with a bunch of friends of the team, including Jorge, Molly, Toby, and Ashley. Tessa had decided, sometime over the course of the spring, that maybe I wasn't the Devil incarnate and was back to being relatively friendly to me again. Molly still didn't talk to me much, but we weren't enemies either, so everybody at the pizza place was comfortable and happy that they got their first win under their belts. I ended up driving Jorge and Kristina back to their house afterwards. Jorge, in his usual considerate way, quickly slipped out of the car as soon as it was stopped, giving Kristina and me a moment together so we could share one quick kiss. It wasn't nearly enough, but it had to do.

On Saturday, Kristina's mother dropped her off at my house so we could work on the project. Mrs. Mendoza came in for a moment and chatted with my mom in the kitchen. I'm sure she wanted to make sure Kristina and I hadn't just cooked up a plan to be alone, but we really did have homework to do. My brother Michael was home, too, coming in and out of the house for drinks and snacks as he washed and waxed his recent purchase, a 1977 Honda Accord.

After about an hour, my mom called us in to the kitchen for lunch. As we were eating, she said, "I hope you guys don't mind cleaning up after lunch. I have to go to my bridge club this afternoon."

"No, Mom, that's all right," I said.

"If you need anything, Michael is working on his car in the driveway," she added.

"Okay, no problem. We'll just be working here." We were set up in the family room, and had the stereo going. Kristina went back in to continue working while I cleaned up the kitchen after lunch.

When I got done in the kitchen, I walked into the family room to get back to work. Kristina was lying on the floor on her stomach, one leg bent up into the air, writing in the journal we were creating. It was

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a warm spring Saturday, and she was wearing a short t-shirt that had ridden up just a little to leave a thin strip of skin showing above her shorts. She looked absolutely delicious, so scrumptious that I just couldn't resist. I knelt down next to her and kissed the gap between her t-shirt and her shorts. She squirmed a little.

"Stop it, Sean," she said, but she really didn't sound like she meant it, so I did it again.

"Sean!" she complained, but there was a laugh in her voice. She pretended to keep on writing as I scooted down and kissed the back of her bent knee. She squirmed again, but it wasn't to get away from me. This squirm had a definite hint of excitement in it, especially when she straightened out her leg for me. It seemed like an open invitation to me, so I did it again, this time eliciting a humming "Mmmmmmm" from her.

I kissed my way up the back of her thigh, all the way up to the hem of her shorts, and worked my way back down again to the back of her knee. Her leg was silky smooth on my lips, and I could feel the fires begin to stoke within me as I continued. I worked my way slowly back up her thigh, nibbling and kissing along one leg and running just my fingertips, so lightly I was barely touching her, up her other thigh. Her legs parted slightly, an involuntary reaction that I didn't think she even realized was happening. She laid still, the journal forgotten as she concentrated on the signals being transmitted through her nervous system.

I began to caress just a little more with my fingertips, still reveling in the silken feel of her skin on my lips and tongue and fingers. I kissed and caressed up and down her legs, each time a memorable journey of discovery. Finally, as I approached the hem of her shorts, I grasped the material in my teeth for a moment, and then stuck my tongue up the leg of her baggy shorts as far as I could. I pushed up the material with my face as I traced along her skin, until I got to the edge of her panties covering her tight butt, tasting the salt on her skin from her thigh to the crease along the bottom of her ass. I was beginning to

catch the faintest whiff of her excitement, a rush of pheromones that entered my nasal passages and raced directly into the core of my brain.

She was still propped up on her elbows, her head back and her eyes closed as she concentrated on the pleasures she was experiencing. As I was kissing and chewing on the edge of her shorts and panties, I traced a line from her knee, up the inside of her thigh, with just one finger. Her legs parted more, anticipating and unconsciously encouraging further explorations of her most sensitive areas. I let that finger slide beneath her shorts and trace the line of the edge of her panties, along the flare of her ass and to her damp crotch. I felt along that route, back and forth, without delving to her damp center, building up pressure and expectation in her, wanting to make her first experience of another's caress within her female flesh one of pleasure and, hopefully, release.

Her legs were splayed apart now, and I used my hand to push up the material of her shorts and her cotton underwear, exposing as much of the soft globes of her ass as possible to my lips and tongue. I continued to caress her, now able to explore more of her. Finally, I was able to delve into the crack of her ass, encountering heat and moisture coming from her drooling slit. I touched her soft pussy lips for the first time, coating my fingertips with her oily wetness, gently exploring her folds.

I held her open with my fingers as I knelt between her legs and reached into her center with my tongue, tasting her for the first time. She jerked when she first felt me lick her, but then she moaned, accepting and enjoying the sensation.

It was a little difficult to work around her clothes, so I reached up and grasped the elastic waist of her shorts and tried to pull them down. They didn't want to come off easily, at least until she hunched up, taking her weight off, allowing me to slide them down her hips. I scrambled out of the way and pulled them the rest of the way off. Her eyes were still closed, almost as if she didn't want to see me seeing her so naked and vulnerable as she lay there, still on her stomach. I

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grasped her slender hips and gently tried to roll her over. Without opening her eyes even a fraction, she allowed herself to be rolled over onto her back. She tucked her hands up under her chin, arms tight to her chest, as I knelt beside her. I caressed her soft thigh again with one hand, touching her knee and letting my fingers explore the inside of her leg, all the way up to the pink flesh of her flowered pussy. As my hand went further up, her legs parted for me, opening the way for me to continue, until they were wide apart. I lay down between her legs and kissed her legs where my fingers had been, starting once more at her knee, and moving up with soft nibbles and kisses, until my lips met her opening. I felt the tickling of her sparse hair brushing up against my nose as I let just the tip of my tongue explore her inner recesses, from her flooding hole to her engorged clit, tasting and licking and loving her the best I could.

Her hips started contributing to the motions, moving of their own volition to guide my lips and tongue as I tried to lap up as much of her deliciously tangy moisture as I could. I reached up with one hand, running it under her t-shirt to grasp her bra-covered breast. She moaned even louder, and her hands scrambled to release the front catch of her bra, lifting it up and out of the way before grabbing my hand and pressing it hard to her swollen breast and sensitive nipple.

She was panting hard, and there was a little nearly breathless screech at the end of each exhalation as her hips began to bump up against my face. One of her hands was still holding my hand to her boob, and the other was tangled in the hair on the back of my head as she unconsciously pushed me harder into her as I licked and probed. Finally, I began to trill on her swollen clitoris, using my tongue to bat it like a boxer's speed bag, while at the same time I plunged my middle finger deep into her vagina. I could feel her walls pulsing and spasming around my invading finger as she was driven over the edge, and my taste buds were rewarded with a small flood of her hot juices bathing my tongue. I lapped up what I could as she came, panting and crying out softly, her back arched in ecstasy, until, finally, she

collapsed back to the floor. I took one last, loving caress of her deepest folds with my tired tongue, and then scooted up to her, putting my arm around her to hold her tight.

Her eyes were still closed, tears leaking out from under her lashes, as I hugged her to me. She put her arms around me, and, unseeing, reached up to kiss me. Her tongue poked out to lick at my lips as she kissed me, and she encountered the taste of her own pussy for the first time. She was enthralled with it. She began to lick my mouth and cheeks, finding all evidence of her juices and lapping it up, cleaning me from nose to chin, cheekbone to cheekbone. When she could find no more, she rolled over on top of me and kissed my lips as hard as she could, forcing my mouth open so she could invade my mouth with her tongue, trying to find the last remnants of the taste she had come to love.

I let my hands wander down her back to grasp the cheeks of her lovely ass, pressing her harder against my raging cock. She nestled down on me, pressing against my hardness with her lower body. Her hips flexed a little, creating delicious friction against me. I could feel her pussy drooling, leaving a spot of hot, oily moisture on my shorts. I was about to suggest we go up to my room, away from the possibility of discovery by my brother, when the telephone rang.

"Shit," I muttered. I scrambled up from under her, my cock still achingly hard in my pants, and reached for the phone.

"Is Kristina there, please?" It was her mother's voice. *Oh, great*, I thought. *A hell of a time for her to be calling.* I didn't say anything, just handed the phone over to Kristina, who was struggling to put her clothes back on and in order.

"Hello?" She paused, listening. *"Si, Mama. Si. Adios."*

She turned to me after hanging up the phone. "My mom is coming to pick me up. I'm sorry, Sean." She looked crestfallen, but I thought she might have been a little relieved that we didn't have more time to go even further than we did. I, on the other hand, was not relieved at all. In fact, I was in some discomfort, having been left in the lurch, in a

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manner of speaking. I wondered if there was any factual basis behind the theory of taking a cold shower.

Looking at the clock, though, I realized I might not have time for even that cold shower. Davey and Kip's soccer game was starting shortly. As soon as Kristina's mother picked her up, I would have to borrow Michael's car and get to the game. Frustration mounted on frustration. It wasn't Kristina's fault that her mother called, and I had to be going anyway, but I still felt like I had been put through the wringer by circumstances beyond my control.

We picked up our study materials in silence. Kristina's shoulders were a little hunched, and she kept on glancing at me with a worried expression. I knew she had detected my mood, and it was upsetting her, but I couldn't find the right words to say to her to ease her mind. I just wasn't in an easing frame of mind, so I let her suffer a little.

A car honked from the driveway. Kristina headed for the front door, books and papers in her arms. I opened the door for her. I still couldn't think of anything meaningful to say to her.

"I'll see you later," I said lamely.

"Okay, Sean." There was a hint of tears in her eyes that I tried to ignore. "Good luck at the game this afternoon. Will you call me later?"

"Sure, I'll call you tonight after I get back home," I said. Maybe by then I could come up with the proper words to tell her how much I cared for her, words that just escaped me now.

I closed the door and sighed, disgusted with myself, and trudged upstairs to change my clothes for the game. I did have just enough time to test out that cold shower theory.

It didn't work.

Michael was going out with some buddies that night, so he let me borrow his nice, clean car so I could get to the soccer game. I got there

with just minutes to spare, so I ran out onto the field to give Coach Bill a hand with warm-ups. The referee came over to inspect the team, and patiently explained to the young boys about how the game was to come to a stop whenever he blew his whistle. He also talked for just a moment about throw-ins, hand balls, and other fairly common things that were bound to come up in the course of a game, explaining how he would be calling the infractions he saw. The information was nothing new to Bill or me, but it was good to have the boys reminded of the rules of the game by someone in a uniform.

We took the boys over to the sidelines and talked to them briefly before giving them their positions for the start of the game.

"How shall we play the game today, boys?" asked Coach Bill.

"Zones and lanes!" they shouted.

"Right! Okay, remember that your lanes overlap. That means that you, Justin," he said, pointing to the boy who would be playing center forward, "can move a little bit into Joey's lane on the left, or into Davey's lane on the right."

"Oh... *kay!*" shouted Justin.

"Now, Joey," he said, turning to his left forward, "can you go into Justin's lane?"

"Yup," said Joey.

"Right. And can you go into Davey's lane?" asked Bill.

"No way, Jose!" Joey yelled. All the kids started laughing.

"That's right," called out Coach Bill. The boys quieted down a little. "Play your lanes, and pass the ball."

Davey called out our passing chant, "One potato look, two potato pass!"

"Exactly right!" exclaimed Bill. "Are you ready? Okay, team, go out there and show them how this game is played!"

They all jumped up and down, shouting and hooting as Bill called out their names and sent them out to the field to take their positions. Davey was playing forward on the left, Kip was our center midfielder. We had three boys in reserve to substitute where we needed them. We

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were playing twelve-minute quarters, and I knew by the end of the game, some of our kids would be dog-tired. We would be able to substitute nine of the twelve players during the game, which meant that three boys would have to play the whole game. We mapped out a plan so that those three would rotate into the goalkeeper's jersey for one quarter each, so at least they wouldn't be out running the entire time.

We were playing a newly formed team, and their coach was one of the dads who had been "volunteered" for the job. He was willing, but he really didn't know the game very well. Our team, on the other hand, was almost entirely intact from the fall session, so they were more experienced. Coach Bill had let me introduce some new drills to our practices, many of them techniques I had found to be particularly useful when I was learning the basics of positions and ball handling. We felt we had a pretty talented team on our hands by this point. Bill and I stayed on the sidelines, shouting out encouragement and moving our players up or back on the field as we saw how the game was developing. We made sure we were on the opposite side of the field from where the parents were sitting, reasoning that our instructions could be separated by the players from the general noise and hubbub coming from the spectators' side.

It all worked beautifully. Our boys pretty much played their lanes, with just a few excursions back into swarm-ball soccer, while the opposing team's players all followed the path of the ball in a mob. The end result, forty-eight minutes of game time later, was our first win of the season, 7-1. Davey had scored three of the goals, Justin scored two, and Joey and Kip each had one goal. After we were up 4-0, around the middle of the second quarter, we even pulled one player off the field, willing to play short for the sake of fair play. We stayed that way through the entire second half, and still, even playing down one player, outscored them 3-1 during that time.

All of the moms and dads of the boys on our team were going nuts on the other side of the field, getting louder and crazier with each goal.

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When the referee blew his whistle to end the game, they all came rushing out onto the field as if we had won a major championship or something. Bill and I just watched from the sidelines as our boys were overrun by the mob of parents washing onto the field to congratulate them.

Somebody suggested that everybody could meet at a local pizza parlor for a victory celebration. Since it was late in the afternoon and everybody was hungry, it was agreed that we would have a team dinner.

As Bill and I were packing up our equipment, Lori Wilkinson came over to us, Davey and Kip at her side looking upset.

"Bill, I hate to ask you this, but I can't go to the pizza party tonight. I'm meeting some friends for dinner, and I have to get home and get ready. I've got a babysitter scheduled to be there in just a few minutes, but the boys really want to go with the rest of the team." She looked at the two of us and smiled. "Do you think I could impose on you to drop them off at our house after the party?"

Davey and Kip's eyes lit up at hearing that. How could we refuse?

"Of course, Lori. I'll be glad to," he said.

"I have my brother's car here, too," I added. "If it's okay with you that they ride with me, I'll take them over to the party so you don't have to drop them off."

"Oh, Sean, that would be lovely." She turned to the boys. "Okay, you guys, listen up. Sean and Coach Bill are in charge. What they say goes. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Mom!" "Yes, Mom!"

"And wear your seat belts. No excuses!" she added.

"We will, Mom." "We always do, Mom."

"All right," she said, giving each of them a hug and a kiss before walking off toward the parking lot. She turned and waved at us as she crossed the field.

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By the time we got all the pizzas, it was later than we had anticipated. Most of the boys were starting to fade, and Bill kept looking at his watch worriedly.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"My kids are home alone. My wife is working tonight, and I've got to get home and take care of them," he said.

"So go," I told him. "I know where the Wilkinson house is. I'll drop off Davey and Kip for you."

"Are you sure, Sean? I mean, Lori asked me to take them, but..."

"I'm sure. Everything will be fine. Lori's a friend, I know she'll understand. Go, take care of your own kids."

Bill thanked me and took off for home. I waited until the boys were stuffed full of pizza and sodas and herded them out to the parking lot. They scrambled into the back seat of the Accord and fastened their seat belts. By the time I carefully pulled out into the street, they were nodding off.

They were fast asleep by the time I got to their house. I pulled into the driveway and got out of the car. I reached into the back seat and unfastened Davey's seat belt first. I picked up the dead weight of the sleeping boy, hitched him up so he was kind of draped on my shoulder, and trudged up to the front door. I was holding him up with both hands, so I kicked at the door, hoping that the babysitter, if she was still there, would hear me and open the door for me.

I wasn't too surprised when Molly O'Toole opened the door. I remembered hearing about some sort of cheerleading competition that was going on that weekend, and Molly standing there in her cheerleading skirt and letter sweater reminded me of it. She must have come here directly from the competition, instead of going home to change first. When she saw me, her eyes widened, until it registered that Davey was asleep in my arms. She held the door open for me so I could carry him into the house. I climbed the stairs and set him down on his bed and then went back down and out to the car to get Kip. Molly had followed me upstairs, and she was able to wake Davey

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enough to help him get into his pajamas and climb under the covers of his bed. As soon as his head touched the pillow, he was back asleep.

I waited downstairs, pacing back and forth in the family room, as Molly got Kip into bed. I was uncomfortable being there, but I didn't want to be so rude as to just simply leave without a word. There was an artist's pad and colored pencils on the couch, and a bowl of wax fruit on the coffee table. It looked like Molly was making good use of her time waiting for the boys to show up by working on some art homework. I picked up the pad and looked at it. It wasn't bad, even for a half-finished drawing, but the perspective of the curve of the bowl looked wrong to me. *Not that I could do any better*, I reminded myself. In fact, I had trouble drawing a stick figure, so I really had no right to criticize Molly's work.

I put the pad down as I heard her come down the stairs.

"Not bad," I said, indicating her drawing.

She just shrugged. "I'm not real happy with it," she said, sitting down on the couch and picking up the paper. "See? I just can't get this bowl right." She flipped over the pad to show me some previous attempts at the still life. She was right. She was struggling with it, but each subsequent drawing was better than the previous one.

"Don't worry about it, you'll get it," I said. I flopped down in the easy chair. I suddenly realized I was nearly as tired as the boys. It had been a long day.

Molly picked up a bunch of wax grapes, their finish red and dusky, and let them roll from one hand to the other absent-mindedly.

"I could get how the grapes are round," she said, "but that bowl is really tough." She held up the bunch, looking at them critically. "Most of these fruit have a curve to them. Why is the bowl so difficult?"

She tossed the grapes back into the bowl and picked up an artificial banana.

"Even this," she said, looking at the yellow fruit, "has a shape I can handle."

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She glanced at me then, and held the end of the banana lightly against her closed lips. My tired mind registered how her pupils dilated slightly, but the recognition didn't bubble up to the conscious areas of my brain until, still holding the tip to her lips, she said, "I like bananas." Her lips parted slightly, her eyelids drooped just a little, and the banana seemed to slide into her mouth a fraction.

My brain may have been befuddled, but my body certainly recognized the signals. I felt a little light-headed as contacts closed, synapses fired, and blood flow was suddenly redirected to my rapidly inflating cock.

"Do you like tasty fruit, Sean?" she whispered. "I know you do." Her fingers were sliding slowly up and down the wax banana as she held it close to her mouth and played with it. I was frozen there, my hands nailed to the arms of the chair, my legs out in front of me, as I stared at her uncomprehendingly. I was just peripherally aware that my now rock-hard cock was jumping up in my sweatpants, pulsing with the beat of my heart. It was big and obvious, and Molly's eyes were naturally drawn to my crotch.

"Oh, yes, I see that you do," she whispered as she stared, eyes shining, at my rearing stalk. Her legs parted slightly as she sat up, leaning in toward me just a little. She dropped her hands down to her lap as I watched, riveted there. I watched and did nothing as she slowly lifted up her skirt, sliding the hem up her thighs until her pale blue underwear was showing. She still held the banana with her other hand, and once her legs were fully exposed to me, she slowly rubbed the banana across her panties, between her legs. When the tip of the wax fruit touched her covered cunt, she sighed, leaned back and slitted her eyes, watching me all the time she was turning us both on.

"I've missed you, Sean," she whispered hypnotically. "Have you missed me?" Could I detect just a trace of dampness soaking through the crotch of her panties as she rubbed the banana back and forth?

Maybe so. I wasn't sure. My brain was seriously disconnected from all that was happening.

"I've missed you a lot," she whispered. She leaned forward, dropped to her knees on the floor, and crawled over to me. She put a hand on each of my knees and pushed them up along the tops of my thighs, letting them pause at my pelvis. The crude monument of my dick stood up, proud and straight, between her hands on my thighs. She was looking into my face, her eyes now bright and shining and confident, as she reached for the elastic waistband of my sweat pants. She grabbed the sweats and the elastic of my underwear at the same time, and pulled them both down, exposing my raging cock to the air, pulsing and blood red, before grasping it in her hot hand and pumping me.

I sank even further into the chair and groaned, closing my eyes as the sensations raced through me like a tidal wave. *It's not going to take long to bring me off, considering my frustrations of earlier in the afternoon,* I thought disjointedly. My crotch humped up into her hand, desperately seeking the completion that I could not bring to myself, already dangerously near to that climax. I felt something warm and wet engulf the head of my oversensitive cock and looked down to see Molly with a different sort of banana, a fleshy appendage instead of a wax substitute, in her mouth. She was still looking up at me as she blew me, and now her eyes looked amused. When she saw me watching her, she opened her mouth so I could watch her tongue lave and drool all over my swollen cock, kicking up my temperature even more. She clamped down her lips on me again and sucked hard on me, still holding my fevered gaze. My hips rocked once, twice, three times, trying to get more of me into her hot mouth, and then I went off.

I came in what felt like buckets, filling her mouth with my hot seed. She swallowed, creating more suction, and I spasmed again, giving her another taste of my spend, and she swallowed again, ready for more. She took all I had to give, working her lips and tongue and fingers to coax as much out of me as I could give her, swallowing each spasm and going for more. I collapsed back even further into the chair, drained completely, my eyeballs trying to roll back in their sockets. I

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felt her lick at me some more, until finally I began to lose my hardness. Still she held me in one hand, while with the other she grabbed my arm, pulling me up and out of the chair.

I stood on wobbly legs as she shucked my sweats off. I lifted one leg at a time and allowed her to pull them down and off my feet, pulling my shoes off with them. When I was naked from the waist down, she coaxed me down onto the floor, never once relinquishing her hold on my rubbery cock. I lay down on my back, arms at my sides. When she had me positioned just right, she finally let go of me so she could stand and reach under her skirt to take off her soaked panties and toss them aside. She pulled off her sweater, undid her bra, and joined me on the floor, straddling me. My half-hard cock dangled onto my stomach, and she sat on me so that her drooling pussy was pressing on it. She leaned down and fed her swollen nipples to me, and I suckled on her as she wanted. My brain was screaming at me, *NoNoNoNoNo*, even as my lips were exploring her luscious breasts.

My hands found their way to her tits, and I hefted them, feeling their weight and substance, caressing the soft undersides. I noticed that I could feel a filling sensation in my crotch as blood started flowing into my dick again. Molly noticed, too, and reached down to hold me in her hot little hand as I inflated and hardened.

“God, I love feeling it get big,” she murmured to herself as I got to my full length with her help. She lifted up her hips and positioned me against her opening, and sat down on me. She was as tight, hot, and wet as I remembered her. I let my hands rest on her hips as she rode me up and down, taking her pleasure, her skirt hiding our coupling from view.

I pressed my palms against her boobs as we fucked, feeling her sensitive nipples slide up and down my hands with her movement. She leaned into my hands, pressing her breasts harder against me, making a rougher connection on her swollen nubs. She was panting, and there was a sheen of sweat on her forehead as she concentrated on humping herself to her own completion.

I was still pretty much out of it. My hips started hunching up as she was powering down on me, each of us trying to bury my shaft into her to the hilt. I didn't even think about what we were doing when I started spurting within her again, while at the same time her pussy was spasming around my pulsing cock as she reached her own orgasm. She was screeching, I was grunting, and we pushed each other to crashing climaxes. I came so hard, it felt like I was being turned inside out. It wasn't until she finally collapsed down on top of me that it occurred to me, much too late, that we were unprotected. I had come inside her. In fact, I was still buried in her, fluids seeping out from our joining to coat both of us, our pubic hair intertwined and damp with her oils and my seed.

That thought, more than anything, snapped me out of my funk. I pushed her off me and felt my spent cock slip from her warm tunnel as I rolled away from her. I stood up and looked down at her in disgust. She didn't shy away from me, but looked boldly back at me, lying there on the floor, a small smile on her face as if to say, *I've won you back after all.*

I turned away from her, nauseated by the smell of our coupling, sick to my stomach at what we had done, furious at myself and at her. I found my clothes and put them on as quickly as I could and slipped my shoes on my feet without tying them. I had to get out of there.

Without a word, I ran out the door and jumped into my car. I started it up and backed out into the street without looking, jammed the car into gear and took off for home. My house was dark when I got there, but I didn't want any lights on. I ran upstairs to my room, tears burning in my eyes. I stripped off all my clothes, scrubbed on my crotch with my sweat pants to try to remove the feel of Molly, to no avail. I stumbled down the hall naked, to the bathroom. I turned on the shower and crawled in. The water was scalding as I sat huddled in the corner of the shower stall, shivering and miserable. Tears were coursing down my cheeks as I recoiled at what I had done. To myself, to Molly, to Kristina. I hated myself at that moment. I stayed there,

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miserable and wet, as the water pounded down on me, slowly getting cooler and cooler, until it was icy cold. Only then did I manage to reach up and shut it off, but I could not move from the cold floor of the shower stall. I stayed there for a long, long time, convinced that I was the most amoral, evil, worthless person I knew, utterly without virtue or value.

And I was absolutely devastated at what I had done to Kristina and her trust. I could never face her again. I never wanted to face anybody ever again.

I think I passed out there, amid floating images of a cinnamon-skinned innocent, a cunning strawberry blonde vixen, a lovely dark-haired angel with braces, and a temptress with white-blonde hair dressed in a genie's costume circling and harrowing my tortured mind until blessed unconsciousness claimed me.

THE END