

“Once More With Feelings”

A new story by Night Hawk
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Chapter 7: Patti Goes to School

“Holy Shit, Pete!” Cathy had said. “Don’t tell me you’re going to become a nun!”

She was partially right in her concern. Many of the girls who went to St. Ursula’s did so because they felt God had called them. Though why God would want a woman to go through life without experiencing the delight of an orgasm or getting ‘prettied up’ was totally beyond me.

Thankfully, I was practically forced into bed Wednesday after the ride home from the hospital. Ann really fussed over me and I guessed she wanted to get in as much mothering as she could before I left for school on Sunday.

I know, it’s a stupid day to start at a new school, but I had to get boarded there first which meant I’d have to spend Sunday night. As it was, I’d be starting two weeks late, but the advantage was that since I was going to a different school than the one this body had been destined for, I could pick and choose most of my own subjects.

Nine periods a day, one set aside for lunch, for 8 subjects per semester, or more commonly the girls did 7 and took a spare. I needed 70 half credits to qualify for university, so why waste a period when I was going to be up at night with little else to do but study?

Dad had picked up the class schedule and the curriculum for the grade nine students and aside from mandatory classes like religion (six half credits required), English studies (eight half credits required), math for an additional eight over the expected five year program, the rest were options with only one or two full credits required for graduation.

Religion was the first class of every day, and for the remaining seven classes I picked English Lit., English Comp., and another English option in public speaking. I took geometry and algebra for two other classes and decided on history and geology to round out my first semester. Of course, the history would seem like really ancient history to me and I would have to learn to keep my mouth shut about things that hadn’t been discovered yet.

Cathy was sitting on the end of my bed crying about how this would kill our friendship because Father Roberto (personally I think she had a crush on him) had made it that she and I would only be able to go out shopping and stuff like that in the two

weeks between semesters. I liked Cathy well enough for the short time I had known her, and especially liked the way she looked, but knew deep down it was just because she was the type of girl I used to fantasize about when I went to High School the first time.

I was starting to realize I had ambitions for the future. I wanted to have a better life than the disaster that was Patti's, and certainly better than what had been my own miserable existence. I wanted to make friends with people who had dreams and ambitions. Being a housewife and a mother, though being a noble life choice, just didn't appeal to me for a lifetime commitment. I had wasted my first life; I sure as hell wasn't going to waste this one!

Cathy had left promising to write every day, but I knew she wouldn't. I figured she might think of me as holidays came and went but she had her eyes on boys. Soon, I would be but a fond memory of her youth.

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Mike and Ann did all they could to make my last days of freedom pleasant, but the house was a strange environment to me. Nothing Einstein had told me had prepared me for this and for the most part, I just sat in bed reading or in the living room watching TV.

And trying on clothes! That was a bitch. As a man, I had mastered the art of undoing a bra in seconds flat with only one hand. It hadn't mattered whether they were front closures or back closures. I could get them undone.

Doing them back up, well I never worried about that, and now I was going to pay the price. I don't know who designed the damn things, but they had to have been sadists. I tried slipping it on like a vest, the one that had the front closure. That didn't work and I was getting a kink in my neck trying to do up the clasp, which strangely enough, I couldn't see. When I tried on the one that closed at the back, I thought I would go nuts! Stupid little hooks never lined up with the right catch and doing it behind my back not able to see what I was doing was totally frustrating. I didn't want to ask Mom how to do it; I figured it would only make her worry. Finally, I settled on doing it up around my waist where I could see the hooks and then spinning it around and sliding my arms through the holes and lifting it up. It was a good thing that I didn't have big boobs or I would never have gotten it up and over.

After nearly a day of experimentation, I discovered that once I had it spun around, it was easier to leave it down and slide my arms through and then slide the whole thing up. Then came the blouses and slacks.

At the hospital, I had worn t-shirts and not bothered with a bra, and the shorts had an elastic waist. Not even zippers to mess with. But now, I had to dress like a lady.

The first thing I discovered was that the buttons were all on the wrong side. This just proved to be awkward and I felt like a klutz. The slacks were a lot easier although a bit harder getting up over my hips. They also had zippers on the right hand side. Weird.

Dresses turned out to be my favorites as I could just raise my arms and they would fall down around me. It only took a few minutes to figure out how to do up the zipper at the back. Skirts weren't too bad either.

I had a full-length mirror in my bedroom and I spent quite a bit of time admiring myself. Okay, I wasn't exactly sexy, especially given the lack of bust, but I really did look pretty. I experimented with makeup, taking it easy, and kept working my hair every night: 100 strokes as Linda had taught me. It was starting to take to the new way I brushed it and the part had all but disappeared. Mom was so happy to see me looking happy and healthy she even bought me a bottle of nail polish. Now *that* was fun!

My hands were steady enough to apply the light pink tone she had bought for me, but I started to appreciate what women go through. First, I had to file my nails. I would have preferred to cut them short, but settled for something just a bit longer. I had to quickly become ambidextrous. To pass the time and just for the fun of it, I painted my toenails as well. That was easier than doing the fingernails on my right hand!

I discovered that I had a drawer full of pantyhose, but I so disliked wearing them that I just left them there. They were a struggle to get in and out of and I couldn't find one single reason to wear them when I had such beautiful legs. That was one of the advantages to being 5 foot 10. I had long legs that curved at the last minute to give me a nice tight butt.

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Ann tried to make all of 'my' favorite dishes for me in the few days, but as much as I smiled and oohhed and ahhed over them, and they were tasty, they were not *my* favorites!

On Sunday, we, as a family, attended church together for the final time. St. John's would no longer be my church as regular services were held at St. Ursula's. I was thinking at least I wouldn't have to see Father 'Bob' again until I wanted to see him on my terms, but like I said, God has a wicked sense of humor.

After a long drawn out sermon, Father 'Bob' met us at the door as we shuffled out with the rest of the flock.

"And is Patricia feeling better now?" he asked. I could swear I heard the sneer in his voice.

“She’s still vague on a lot of personal memories,” Mom said, “but the doctor said her mind was very organized and she showed exceptional abilities. I just wish she didn’t have to go away.”

The prick had the audacity to put his arm around Ann giving her a friendly hug. “It’s all for the best, Ann,” he said. “Medical practitioners might say she is fine in body and mind, but we have to consider the soul, which is the most important.” He turned to look at me and said for the benefit of my parents that he was a regular rotation priest at St. Ursula’s and he would check up on me frequently. I wanted to backhand that self-righteous smirk off his face, but held myself in check. My day would come.

We went to the “Ponderosa” for a steak lunch. Ann didn’t eat much and I thought she would break into tears any minute. I pulled her to me and hugged her. “Don’t worry, Mom,” I said. “We can visit on the weekends and it’s only nine weeks before I get my first vacation and I’ll be home again.”

Mike was wrestling with his own demons. I could tell he thought this might be a mistake, and that I should stay in familiar surroundings to help recover my memory, but instead had bowed to the wishes of his wife and their priest. I couldn’t convince him that I really thought this was a good idea. Instead, I promised him that I would make him the proudest father in the entire city.

“You just watch and see, Dad,” I said. “This city hasn’t seen yet what a Johnson can do with good genes and determination. You two supplied me with the brains and the drive to really succeed in life, and you had better wear seatbelts, ‘cause when this Johnson starts to cut loose, the world is going to change.”

It probably sounded strange coming out of the mouth of a tall, gangly 14-year-old girl who couldn’t remember the names of her favorite Teddy Bears, but I was determined.

Ann and I had packed my bag before we left for church and after lunch we drove right to the school. There really hadn’t been much to pack since the school had a very strict dress code over and above the uniforms. No jeans of any kind, no halters or tank tops, and no slogan t-shirts - no band names or cute sayings. Mike had arranged for the full uniforms I would have to wear; they would be waiting for me at the school. All I had in my small suitcase was underwear, the bras I didn’t need and probably wouldn’t wear unless absolutely necessary, my toothbrush and toothpaste and a razor and shaving cream. I did pack a few loose t-shirts and slacks and shorts, and I had slipped in both bottles of the hospital hand lotion and the brush and small makeup kit Linda and Julie had given me.

I was turned over to a young nun and after a tearful goodbye, Mike and Ann left.

I didn’t really catch the nun’s name but I knew that just calling her “Sister” would suffice anyway. I tried to listen to the rules but knew that it wouldn’t matter if I heard them or not. They were all about behavior and what wasn’t allowed. Very typically

Catholic – no smoking, no drinking, no boys. I wasn't worried. I had no plans on smoking, wasn't allowed to go out anyway, so the risks with boys was nonexistent, not that I could bring myself to even thinking about kissing boys anyway!

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The main dorm rooms held ten beds each. Not the most comfortable beds from the looks of things, but at least in good shape. The bedding was straight institutional as were the small dresser and wardrobe beside each bed. The furniture was arranged so as to provide a little bit of privacy, turned sideways facing the bed. As I was escorted to the bed that would be mine, I noticed pictures and postcards taped and pinned to the back of the furniture of the next person. I could have done worse.

The nun was telling me that things posted on or in my furniture or that of the person next to me was allowed as long as it was in good taste. Anything deemed inappropriate would be confiscated while I was in class and a note would be placed in my personal record. Too many demerit points and I would have privileges taken away from me.

Ha! That was rich. What could they take away? My right to watch insipid TV programs? My library pass? Oh well, I had no intention of doing anything deemed inappropriate or immoral. At least that's what I thought at the time.

My bed was at the end of the room, next to the bathroom that served all the girls in this room. That's what you get for being the last kid on the bus. My new school uniforms were lying on the bed, including my personal nemesis, horrible dark blue pantyhose required for formal occasions, such as Sunday Mass.

I opened my wardrobe to hang the uniforms then unpacked my meager belongings. When the nun asked me about the hand lotion I easily fibbed and said I suffered from dry skin, and this was what they had given me at the hospital to help ease the itch. I was glad to see she accepted that without a fuss because I knew that I had an itch that would have to be tended to regularly.

I checked out the bathroom. It had two toilet stalls and a large vanity with two sinks. There was also a large shower stall with a frosted glass door.

Back in the main room I found a community study desk, actually more like a picnic table for six, except there were backs on the chairs. The nun explained that most of the girls did their homework during their spare period or in the library. Then she ran down the times for supper, 7:00, breakfast, also at 7:00 and lunch at noon. Wake up was at 6:00 and lights out at 9:00 except for Fridays and Saturdays. Friday nights we were allowed to stay up till 10:00 and could sleep in on Saturdays up till 9:00 if we didn't mind missing breakfast. Confessions were heard every Saturday, mandatory, and church attendance for Sunday services was also mandatory. Visitors were allowed after 2:00 and up till 6:00 on the weekends but no boyfriends.

There was nothing in the rules I couldn't live with, but I could see that Einstein would have had a hard time with the transition from home life to dorm life.

Finally, the nun called out for Wendy. As she explained, Wendy was to be my guide until I found my bearings.

Wendy was a shy girl according to the Sister, but she not only shared the dorm room I was in, but was also in my homeroom and many of my classes as well.

***To be continued...***