

Love At Sunset



William Kincaid



An "Adult Tv" Novel



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By William Kincaid

“That was most efficient inventory I have seen in twenty years,” Sandra Carlton, the manager of Charles Jewelry at the Costa Mesa Mall, remarked to Stephanie Hazlett, her assistant. “I am sure everybody is happy about going home early. I remember when I first started here we would go on until midnight. I hope you have something planned.”

“Just the usual,” Stephanie smiled.

“Enjoy it. You earned it.”

Stephanie hopped into her RAV-4 and entered onto the northbound 405, the traffic starting to thin out after rush hour. After fifteen minutes, Stephanie took the Beach Boulevard exit at Huntington Beach. The sun beckoned her forward as she fought the surface traffic, until finally she turned onto the PCH and glimpsed the Pacific Ocean to her left, giving an audible sigh of relief. She was home.

The RAV-4 crossed over a tidal lagoon, then pulled into a parking lot at Bolsa Chica State Park. Stephanie ducked into the ladies restroom and changed from her business suit and heels into a one-piece swimsuit and a purple micro fiber T-shirt. The breeze was cooling in the evening hours and she would need the shirt to keep warm. She retrieved a well-worn Los Angeles Dodgers ball cap from her bag, pulled her blonde hair back into a ponytail, and donned the hat. Even though she was in the heart of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim territory, her loyalty lay solidly with the Dodgers as in a way, she had been born near Chavez Ravine.

With a groan, Stephanie pulled her SUP board and paddle from its soft casing on top of the car and carried it to the water's edge. The outgoing tide pushed her quickly through the lagoon, but created some surface waves at the bar where the shallow waters met the Pacific. The paddle board bucked in the chop, but Stephanie ably steered it into the ocean and vigorously paddled through the surf, until she was in open water. The wind blew onshore, ensuring a leisurely ride back. Stephanie paddled for over half an hour until she felt the muscles burn in her back and her tanned thighs. She forgot about the long day and the annual inventory that she had been preparing her staff for for months and thrilled at being on the ocean. She loved the time spent paddling on the Pacific; in addition to the numerous marine birds that frequented the area, she would occasionally view dolphins and once saw a whale blowing at the surface.

With the wind at her back, Stephanie paddled towards shore and into the now calm entrance to the lagoon. Several surfers who had hauled out on shore called to her.

“They are cute, but I don’t think they would approve of the cock tucked between my legs,” she laughed to herself.

After a dinner of crab salad and merlot, Stephanie lay in bed in her apartment at Sunset Beach, a block from the ocean, snuggling with her teddy bear, Po. Despite Po’s reassuring presence, she wished she could be snuggling with a man, but the left side of her bed had been vacant for over a year.

While Stephanie sat in her warm bed, basking in the success of the inventory and snuggling with Po, a seventeen-year-old boy, Jeff Hazlett, tried to sleep in the seat of his new Silverado pick-up truck at a rest stop near Anadarko, Oklahoma. He was alone for the first time in his life, having been thrown out of his home in Michigan the night before. Jeff had driven west into the setting sun now for hours but had miscalculated how much gas it would take to reach the coast. In his first day of freedom he had foolishly spent \$200 at Bass Pro Shops in Springfield, Missouri, and now calculated that he had to live on five dollars a day of beef jerky if he was to pay for fuel. He would not be able to stay at a hotel. The endless expanse of the southern prairie frightened him as he had driven through Oklahoma, demonstrating the actual distance to his destiny. Before nodding off into a troubled sleep he looked at a postcard of the Huntington Beach Pier and turned it over to reveal his aunt, Stephanie Hazlett’s address and nothing more.

Stephanie Hazlett had been born Tim Hazlett, ten years after his older brother Peter, who never forgave him for stealing his parent’s attention as the younger brother. Tim, however, felt deep down, that he should have been Peter’s younger sister, and in his teens, developed a plan to address his feelings and become who he was meant to be.

After high school graduation, Tim moved to California and rented an apartment in Long Beach, but went north to Alaska to work the summer at a fish processing plant. He would establish residency and start to earn good money towards going to UCLA, which he learned had a student health plan that covered hormone treatments.

Tim actually enjoyed cleaning salmon and ground fish at the processing plant on Homer Spit. The work was easy after the first ten minutes and the pay was terrific for an unskilled teenager. Moreover, the view across Kachemak Bay to the snow-covered mountain peaks was the most spectacular site he had ever seen. After a grueling shift of working the slime line, Tim would groggily stumble to the steep beach at the end of the spit and cast spoons and spinners into the deep waters of the bay, refreshed by the clean air and the peaks glowing pink in the perpetual twilight of an Alaskan summer night. Tim caught king and silver salmon, Dolly Varden trout, flounder, Pollack, chicken halibut, and had once hooked a massive barn door halibut that felt as if he had hooked the kraken itself before it contemptuously snapped his line.

After a year of working at an REI store in which Tim used his discount to purchase feminine outdoor wear, he returned to Homer Spit for his swan song. On an August night, flinging lures into the sublimely beautiful bay and catching nothing, Tim knew his time was up, and that he would soon begin transitioning into Stephanie.

Tim came out to his family upon the completion of his freshman year and was immediately ostracized. His brother called him a pervert and a queer, and said that he needed to see a psychiatrist, while his father cut him off financially. Stephanie, however, was prepared for that contingency with her 'fish money',

and a new vocation. Heavily made-up and wearing a little black dress with matching stockings and high-heeled sandals, she calmly strutted through the lobby at the Hilton at LAX while a group of lawyers made wolf whistles and growling noises as they passed the cute, young transsexual. "They thought I was pretty," she cheerfully mused. Stephanie entered the elevator, thrilled at the men's approval which gave her new confidence, and calmly rode to the eleventh floor to sell her newly-feminized body.

The new part-time job provided a steady source of income and honed Stephanie's femininity as she stoked passion in her clients, and aroused herself to greater and greater heights of ecstasy. Embracing her true nature with zealous abandon, she quickly forgot about her masculine veneer that had trapped her for eighteen years, leaving it discarded like a fish carcass back at the processing plant in Homer.

Stephanie thoroughly enjoyed turning tricks well into her senior year, but at Christmas she took a seasonal job at the Charles Jewelry store mail room in Beverly Hills. The manager there recognized Stephanie's maturity and work ethic and felt that she had management potential. She referred her to her colleague at Costa Mesa, which had a managerial opening, and upon graduation, the well-transitioned young woman abandoned her prior employment and took the position as assistant manager.

Six years later, Stephanie would think wistfully of her halcyon days as a hooker. She occasionally went to TG-friendly bars in Los Angeles but had yet to really find Mr. Right, only Mr. Right Now, and she soon tired of the scene. Stephanie wanted to be someone's wife, not just a play thing, but most of the men saw her as not much more than the whore she once was. Nevertheless, she still needed a cock in her ass and

yearned for a man's intimate touch that her friendly teddy bear could not provide.

Two days after the inventory, Stephanie pulled into the parking lot of her apartment complex, noticing an unfamiliar truck with Michigan plates. She thought of her older brother who she had not spoken to in years, but immediately dismissed his memory.

A boy in a camouflage T-shirt and baseball hat, unwashed and unshaven, climbed out of the truck and approached Stephanie. She felt for her pepper spray canister and was preparing to wield it in the boy's face when he asked, "Aunt Stephanie? I'm your nephew, Jeff, Jeff Hazlett. My parents kicked me out of my house. Can I stay with you?"

"So why did my brother throw you out?"

"He found my stash," Jeff lied.

"I would have done the same, I can't believe he and I are in agreement for once."

"You can't just leave me here after I drove all the way to California. Besides, I'm starved. I haven't had a real meal in two days."

"But you found the money to shop at Bass Pro Shops," Stephanie observed, after seeing the shopping bags on the seat next to him. "Here, come on. Welcome to California. I won't tell you now go home, at least not yet."

Stephanie drove Jeff past the Navy base and through Seal Beach to the IN 'N' Out burger on the Pacific Coast Highway, a shrine to any good Californian.

“Wow, these burgers are really good,” Jeff exclaimed, eating his second Double-Double hamburger while the two sat on the terrace outside.

“Scorpion chowder?” Jeff asked in disgust two days later at the Taco Sands restaurant in Sunset Beach. “Are you kidding?”

“It’s not made from scorpions. It has shrimp and clams. It’s really good and hot.”

“I hate seafood.”

“Well, there are plenty of other things on the menu. The carnitas tacos are really good too. I like them.”

Jeff looked around at the surfer décor of the restaurant.

“So, do you surf?”

“No, I paddle board.”

“I thought everybody in California surfed.”

“That’s a cliché.”

“A what?”

“An over-generalized and overused statement.”

The two sat at the booth, eating tortilla chips and salsa while they waited for their meals. “Thanks, brother,” Stephanie thought to herself. “Now I’ve got to fix your problem.”

“So where are the weed shops?”

“The what?”

“You know, weed, ganja, herb. The stores that sell marijuana.”

“You are thinking of Colorado or Washington, and you’re too young anyway.”

“I thought you could legally smoke here.”

“Nope, not unless you have a medical card.”

“How do I get one of those?”

“By contracting cancer.”

“Well, do you know any dealers?”

“Even if I did, I wouldn’t tell you. And if I smell marijuana in my apartment, I will throw you out.”

That night, Stephanie called someone whom she had not spoken to in years.

“Hello,” a woman answered the call.

“Mom. It’s Stephanie.”

The woman on the other end paused for ten seconds, then responded, “I hope you are well.”

“Mom, I know you don’t like me anymore, but I’m calling to tell you that Jeff is staying with me in Sunset Beach.”

An audible sigh of relief could be heard. “Good. I’m glad he’s all right. So how is he?”

“The apple didn’t fall far from the shit-head tree.”

“Please don’t be that way.”

“Forgive me if am, but my brother made it very clear how much he hates me. It looks like he hasn’t changed much for the better either. My question is, why did Jeff come here, seeking me out, when he could have run to you, especially for something as stupid as a teenager with marijuana?”

“He didn’t tell you?”

“Tell me what?”

“The reason he came to you. He is just like you.”

Now it was Stephanie’s turn to remain silent.

“So, have you met anybody yet?” Stephanie’s mother asked in an attempt to carry on the conversation.

“Mom, don’t start with me.”

“I’m not starting with you. I would ask that of any daughter. Have you met someone special?”

“No. It’s kind of hard meeting nice guys at bars.”

“You never meet nice guys at bars. You need to go to church. That is where you meet nice men.”

“Like a church is going to want me?” Stephanie had tracked the religious backlash against the emergence of the transgender community and did not need to face it head on. She had created a good world for herself and didn’t need the hate.

“There are plenty of churches that will welcome a woman like you. I looked them up on the internet. They have what they call welcoming congregations. There is even one in Laguna Niguel. Promise me, you’ll go there.”

“Ok, Mom,” Stephanie answered, reluctant, but sincere.

“Oh, and Stephanie. I am very glad Jeff is staying with you. He could not have found a better person or a better role model, I’m sure.”

Stephanie teared, “Thanks, Mom.”

“You are welcome, Stephanie. Please call me soon, I have missed so much talking to you.”

“OK, Mom, I love you.”

“I love you too, and never stopped.”

Like his Aunt Stephanie, Jeff Hazlett had known from a young age that he was supposed to be a girl, and also knew he would run afoul of his mother and father if they ever found out about his true identity. His father had been Born Again when Jeff was three and had moved to rural Michigan where he could practice his religion among similar believers. His wife willingly embraced her husband’s religion, and they became highly respected members of the church and the community where Peter Hazlett worked as a police officer.

Jeff Hazlett inherited his father’s sense of self-righteousness and moral superiority which a habit of smoking marijuana could not erode. Everybody on the soccer team smoked dope so why should he be any different? Jeff, however, *was* different. At fourteen he had stolen some panties and wore them in bed, wishing he was a girl. At sixteen he started to surf the internet and began tentative online conversations with other young transsexuals. His downfall was buying several recommended books off Amazon about crossdressing and transitioning which his mother found squirreled away in his closet.

Jeff's parents had the books splayed on the kitchen table when he arrived home on an August evening. The looks on their faces could etch glass and Jeff knew he could not deflect or defuse their disgust. He listened to their tirade for over an hour, then went in his room to fetch his shotgun. The look on his parents' faces went from hateful to fearful, but he smirked when he walked past them, stowing the gun in his truck, and returned to pack his belongings. In an hour he was gone from the home for good, and he made the Illinois border by nightfall, guided by the postcard Stephanie had sent to her brother, a routine practice she had maintained every time she had moved which had been the only communication between the two of them.

"I'll let you stay here," Stephanie told Jeff as they ate eggs benedict in the apartment for breakfast. "I will also get you enrolled in high school."

"What about soccer?"

"We will try and get you on the team too. Have you thought about college?"

"Mom and Dad wanted me to go to Liberty."

"I don't think that is a good option now. I doubt there are a lot of pot smokers there."

"You never know."

"I am also going to get you into an SAT prep course. I want you to retake the test. I suspect away from your mother and father you might do a whole lot better."

"OK."

“I also want you to get a job to help pay for food. It doesn’t have to be anything big, just a few days a week.”

“OK,” Jeff grumbled.

“And put on whatever nice clothes you have, we are going to church.”

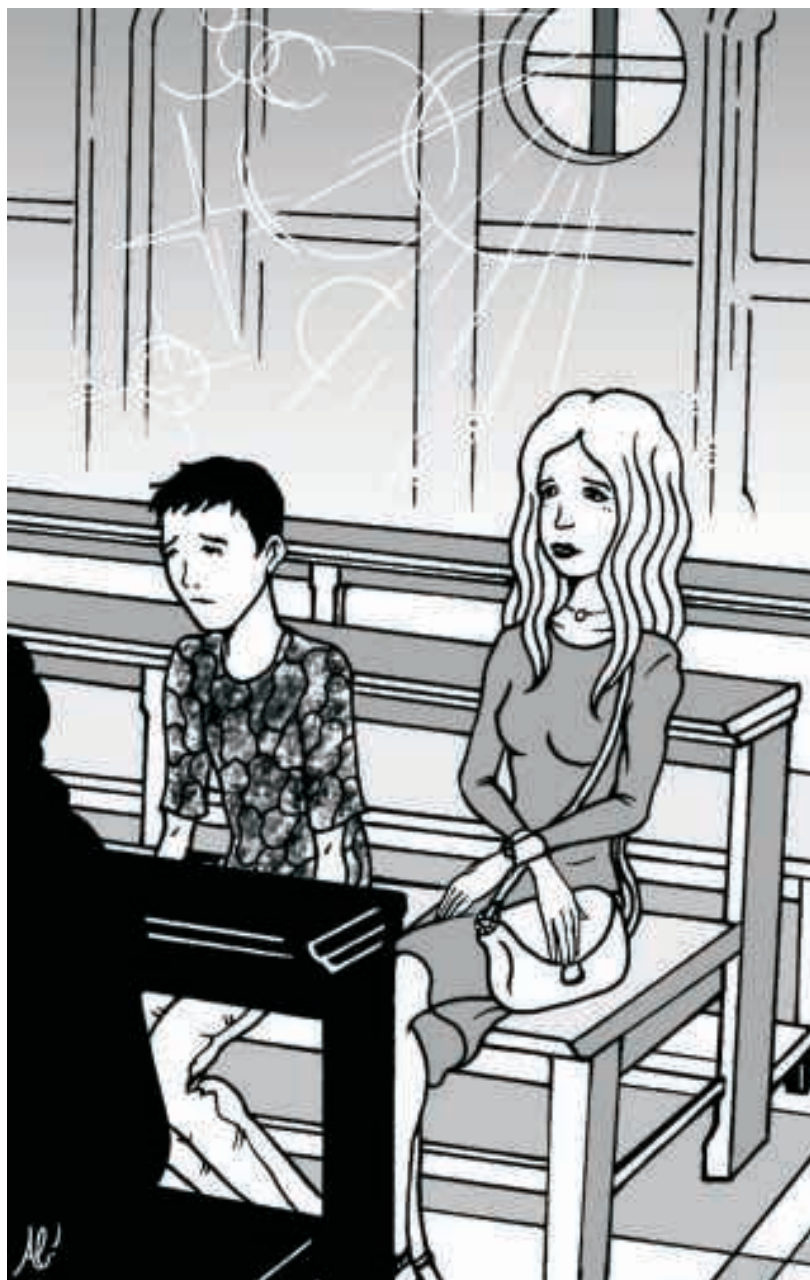
“Church? You?”

“Yes, at Laguna. Now get dressed.”

Stephanie wore a short beige dress with long sleeves and matching high-heeled open-toed pumps, prim and playful. Jeff wore a camo T-shirt and jeans, tactical and practical. Slightly uncomfortable in the church, the two sat in the next-to-last aisle of the congregation, but Stephanie stood up when newcomers were asked to introduce themselves.

After the service, a woman in her fifties approached Stephanie and Jeff and cheerfully introduced herself as Margaret Mitchum, the Director of Membership. Stephanie and Mrs. Mitchum talked animatedly for five minutes while Jeff looked increasingly bored. Soon his eyes wandered and he noticed an attractive petite brunette in a blouse, khaki slacks and flats, with a fiercely intelligent and mature look on her face.

Victoria Kauffman felt someone staring at her and she met Jeff’s leer, but immediately turned away. Her father, John Kauffman, noticed his daughter’s sudden movement and gazed in the direction of what caused it. He saw an immature young man accompanying an attractive and intelligent-looking blonde in



a cute beige dress and heels, smiling while engaged in conversation with Mrs. Mitchum. He studied her intently and felt emotions that he had thought were long gone.

Victoria noticed her father's staring at Stephanie, and looked at her with studied interest. "It's about time Dad started looking at women again," she thought.

After her mother's death when she was fourteen, Victoria had turned her sorrow into strength as she assumed the mantle of leadership. Her father was grief-stricken and Victoria kept the family together, raising her brother, Brian, four years younger, while avoiding her own pain through academic excellence.

John was a construction engineer and had traveled the world to help build skyscrapers. Her mother, Kelly, had been the brightest star in the constellation, an exceptional student, swimmer, and class leader, she encouraged her family to go to this church and insisted that they volunteer in the community to counter any sense of Orange County entitlement.

Now, Victoria hoped her father would rekindle the spark of life that had made him both rise to the height of his profession and devote himself with abandon to his family.

Something in her father came to life as he left his daughter and approached Stephanie laughing with Mrs. Mitchum, positioning himself behind the young woman while smiling and nodding to the middle-aged lady.

"Stephanie, I would like you to meet John Kauffman. He and his family have been members

since his children, Victoria and Brian were in diapers.”

Stephanie spun on her heels and her eyes lit up at the large man with the short hair and devilish grin.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Kauffman,” Stephanie said, taking his large hand in both of hers, “I do hope you will be here next week.”

“I will.”

“I’ll see you then.”

Stephanie again pivoted on her heels to hide her enthusiasm from John. She could not however hide it from Mrs. Mitchum, or from an incredulous Jeff.

Left alone to his own devices, Jeff trashed the apartment in one day while Stephanie worked at Charles. A pizza box filled with crusts lay on her coffee table next to a broken down shotgun; dirty clothes had started to escape from the bedroom while dishes were stacked in the sink. Stephanie could also smell the distinct odor of Humboldt County’s finest. In the midst of his splendor, Jeff magisterially lay in his boxer shorts on Stephanie’s couch. He already sensed that Stephanie’s threats were idle as she would not turn him out onto the street. She was way too nice.

True to her word, Stephanie did help Jeff get on the high school soccer team that was starting to practice, but his Michigan honed ball handling skills were soon exposed as insufficient to win him a starting position in California. He compounded the problem by hogging the ball and not working with the halfbacks or the forwards. Jeff started to lose confidence and knew he would be riding the bench for the first time in his life. The striker and team captain, Dave Martin,

a modest but highly skilled player, tried to work with him to get him to pass more often and advance the ball as Jeff's fresh legs would still be needed in the final minutes of the game when the starters were exhausted. Jeff remained obstinate and sullen in his newly acquired mediocrity.

Wearing a white flower print dress and short-sleeved blazer, Stephanie led Jeff into the basement of the church where the high school students met for their youth group. Jeff noticed Victoria but at least had the good sense not to stare. Also present were Victoria's brother Brian, and surprisingly Dave Martin, who was voted the group leader that day. Meanwhile, Stephanie sat in her accustomed spot at the back of the church with her legs crossed, when she felt a hulking presence sit next to her. Looking out the corner of the eye, Stephanie noticed that it was John, and her heart leapt.

She needed to be honest with him though and she wasn't sure he knew. They rose for the first hymn and shared the hymnal. Stephanie then took one of the membership cards and with the tiny pencil, and wrote on the back:

I'M A TS.

John took the cue and wrote on a card of his own:

???

Stephanie responded on her card:

I HAVE A COCK.

John paused for a minute and Stephanie heard his breath escape as they sat down after the first hymn. The spark of interest was nearly extinguished by the

revelation, but then flickered even brighter and hotter.

SO? SO DO I. YOU'LL LIKE IT.

CAD.

John then drew a smiling face with the right eye winking as the pastor read his first lesson.

Stephanie then drew a stick figure with long hair on her knees before a well-endowed stick figure standing above her.

SLUT.

Stephanie drew a smiling face with a left eye winking.

I LIKE THAT.

Stephanie then drew a female stick figure on all fours with another well-endowed male stick figure mounting her.

SCREAMER?

Stephanie then drew a dialog bubble with multiple exclamation marks.

8:00 THE END OF THE PIER.

I'LL BE THERE.

Stephanie was true to her word. Wearing a tan blazer, skirt and high top Chuck Taylor sneakers, as heels were completely impractical on the wooden

planks of the Huntington Beach pier, Stephanie strolled along its length into the setting sun. At the 1950s-style restaurant on the pier's end, John emerged from the shadows and smiled; she looked adorable. Stephanie picked up her pace and took John's hand in her own. The two continued to hold hands as they were seated at a table looking out over the pier railing and onto the Pacific.

After sharing the appetizer sampler together, John reached for Stephanie's hand again once she wiped away the sauce from a buffalo wing. He enjoyed the physical touch of a woman once more, and the smile it elicited.

"I like you, Stephanie."

"I like you too."

"So tell me about yourself."

"The G-rated version?"

"I'm a big boy, the R-rated version will be fine."

"Are you sure?"

"I really want to know. You surprised me today, and I want to know about you. Please, tell me."

"OK."

Stephanie told John about her past, her plans to become a woman, the separation from her family, even her career as an escort. She figured that she owed this man the truth.

"So why did you quit that?"

"I wanted to hopefully meet a nice guy."

“My kids and dog think I’m nice.”

“You can’t beat an endorsement like that.”

“And your nephew, Jeff? Does he like you?”

“He only likes himself.”

“Let me work on him some. I think he needs a good male role model.”

“He sure didn’t get that from my brother. So speaking of male role models, tell me about yourself, and I want to hear about everything, including your wife.”

“Where did you learn about Kelly?”

“Margaret Mitchum. I’m sorry about what happened, but if I am to fight a ghost. I would at least like to know about her.”

“Kelly was awesome, she had an incredible smile and a golden aura like the fucking sunshine. Animals in the woods came up to her like Snow White. They trusted her. She left medical school when she became pregnant with Victoria and never looked back, never complained. It was her idea to get the kids a Golden Retriever pup and surprised them when she put it on Victoria’s bed in the morning, after hiding it all night. They were thrilled. She also insisted on taking the kids to church and having them volunteer so they wouldn’t act like spoiled O.C. kids.”

“From what I see, you both did very well. If things were to work out between us, I want you to know that I expect you to never stop loving your wife.”

John started to tear up when the waitress came to take away the dinner plates and asked if they wanted anything else.

“A chocolate shake with two straws,” Stephanie requested.

“I always wanted to do that,” she winked.

Stephanie knew that she would be fighting a battle for John’s heart with the memory of Kelly Kauffman, who now had supernatural powers, but Stephanie knew she had an ace in her bra straps, carnality that only the living could deliver. She had waited for a man like John for a long time, and was prepared to fill the terrible void that the death of his wife had left in this family and John’s heart. She never felt more like a woman.

After dinner, the couple walked along the darkened beach.

“You know,” Stephanie pondered, “I have never stayed up for the grunion run. I guess the lure of free fish wasn’t enough to bring me out alone at night on the beach. Even at Huntington I was too scared and I haven’t found any friends to go with. I sure don’t want to go with Jeff, he would watch me clean them all and eat them himself.”

“Let’s go on the next run.”

“I would love to.”

“But bring Jeff and I’ll bring my kids. It will be fun. We will bring the food and the firewood too.”

“Great.”

“Just tell the grunion to be on time.”

“Huh?”

John swooped her up in his strong arms and flung her towards the surf, but caught her mid-throw.

“You asshole!” she breathlessly exclaimed, recovering herself, but then lost her composure again as she fervently kissed the big man.

John was definitely worth pursuing, Stephanie thought as she drove back to the apartment. He sincerely wanted to know about her, including the time before her transition, which was her litmus test for the ever-elusive Nice Man. Most men she had met would not have touched her prior existence with a ten-foot pole, but John had directly addressed it as part of the greater context of the person she was. She also had seen the depths of the love he had felt for his wife. “If he only loves me a tenth of what he did Kelly, I will be doing just fine.”

Upon returning home, John Kauffman stood alone on his porch and felt an acute sense of loneliness over the loss of his wife, who had been killed in an auto accident. Stephanie’s questions about Kelly had exposed a wound that had not healed in the four years since she had passed. Victoria and Brian were used to the routine but it had subsided about six months before. They knew not to disturb him and quietly watched television before going to bed. Already, John had downed three scotches on the rocks and was working on a fourth. It would be one of those nights.

In the depths of the night waiting for the grunion to spawn at the water’s edge, even Jeff enjoyed himself helping tend the bonfire and patrolling the beach until he heard the cry of a gull and saw the silvery wisps squirming on the wet sand. The group gathered half a five-gallon bucket of the smelt then split it between them, before collapsing in exhaustion in the early morning hours.

Victoria had enjoyed the evening as well, watching her father and Stephanie make eyes at each other and hold hands like a pair of teenagers. She had even started to warm to Jeff, who had revealed a better side to his personality than what she had seen at the church youth group, where he had been very stand-offish in the discussions. She asked what he thought of California and got him to talk about leaving his parents. Victoria expressed how hard that must have been and told him that he was lucky that he had Stephanie to go to and hoped he would learn to like it here.

That evening, John prepared a heaping plate of grunion with cole slaw for his family.

“Guys, I have something to tell you about Stephanie. I am really starting to like her a lot, and I want to continue dating her.”

“What?” Brian asked.

“Stephanie is a transsexual and has been living as a woman since she was nineteen. It doesn’t bother me, but if it bothers either of you, I will stop dating her. She understands.”

Victoria sat silent for a minute, thinking of the right answer. As the de facto leader of the family, she would play the decisive role. Victoria, however, did not rush to pass the final judgment.

“Do you really like her, Dad?”

“Yes, I do. She is really smart and nice.”

“Mom taught us to not to judge people, and we learned in church that everybody, including gay people and transsexuals, are all right. If Stephanie makes you happy, I say go for it.”

John called Stephanie from his bedroom after the kids went to sleep.

“Victoria gave you the green light. You are now officially my girlfriend.”

Stephanie laughed with joy, “I am glad I am now stamped with the Kauffman seal of approval. Was it the grunion that did it?”

“Brian was impressed that you were getting all wet and slimy.”

“I enjoyed it. Thank you. I always wanted to do that.”

“Anything else you always wanted to do?”

“With a nice man like yourself Mr. Kauffman? My list is endless.”

“You have to start somewhere.”

“Let me think,” Stephanie answered, deep in thought.

“I love this place, darling,” Stephanie smiled, holding John’s hands at the Page Museum at the La Brea Tar Pits on Wilshire Boulevard.

The couple casually strolled through the exhibits of Ice Age fossils, with John amazed at Stephanie’s excitement at viewing the long extinct smilodons, lions, mammoths, and ancestors of the condor. She was like a kid in a candy store. Viewing the exhibit case of dozens of dire wolf skulls, Stephanie leaned against John. “He would have had my back, back in the day, from the marauding wolves or saber tooth kitties when I would be wearing an animal skin like Raquel Welsh with a great tan and perfectly coiffed

hair. Him Tarzan, me Jane,” she laughed to herself. She then slowly pinched his strong buttocks, and saw a jolt of electricity shoot through her man. “He’s got great reflexes. Definitely a mighty hunter.”

John gorged on a filet mignon at a restaurant in Beverly Hills that night, much to the approval of Stephanie. She had ordered a fresh fruit plate for an appetizer, and still had a few strawberries and blackberries left after she finished her entrée of roast duck. Meeting John’s eyes with her own, she plucked a strawberry from the plate, gently bit down and twirled it in her lips. She then swallowed it to a hungry smile.

Instantly aroused, John took the final strawberry on the plate and hovered it an inch from Stephanie’s mouth. She snatched it up like a smilodon cub and purred for the rest of the night.

“Tonight will be the night,” John thought a week later, standing on his porch looking at the ocean, feeling an intense power rise within him, like the Pacific’s surf building during a coastal storm. He and Stephanie had engaged in an intensely passionate kiss after their date to the tar pits, but Jeff was watching television inside the apartment and she bid him good night. Even in the dark, John had seen the look in her eyes. She wanted him.

Now Stephanie looked ravishing in a little black dress with lacy long sleeves, the same outfit she wore for her first trick at LAX. She waited with her legs seductively crossed at the bar in the Hawaiian restaurant at the base of the Huntington Beach pier, Kona Don’s. When John saw her, he knew she was his for the taking.

The couple shared a lomi-lomi salmon appetizer and then each had a large helping of kalua pork,

which took their minds off their carnal attraction for ten minutes.

“We need to go to Hawaii some time. With the kids.”

“Even Jeff?” Stephanie joked.

“He is coming around.”

“And you? Are you coming around?” Stephanie cooed, fully knowing the answer while sliding her high heel sandal up John’s leg.

“But where can we go? We can’t go to either of our places. Besides, getting a hotel room is silly when we both live here.” John and Stephanie had the same problem that every pair of overly amorous teenagers had in Orange County.

The windows on John’s Mercedes SUV had fogged up as it sat in a remote section of parking lot south of the pier, allowing the two lovers to release all their inhibitions. The friction and intimacy created inside Stephanie started to remove their loneliness and John’s seed washed it entirely away.

The house in Laguna was quiet and dark when John returned after midnight.

“Thank God the kids are asleep,” John laughed as he slowly opened the door. He felt like a high schooler himself. The aging family golden retriever, Maximus, rose up from his bed in the kitchen and greeted John with a quick woof.

“Quiet, boy,” John whispered, “the kids are asleep.”

The lights in the living room flicked on.

“No we’re not,” Victoria joyfully announced. ‘And where have you been? You know curfew around here is eleven. You need to be grounded.’”

“That only applies to you two.”

“I don’t remember that. If I remember right, you said the family curfew is eleven on school nights. You blew it, Dad. So what have you been up to?”

“Oh, nothing.” John was getting nervous.

“You have Stephanie’s lipstick on your lips.”

“Yeah, and your shirt is hanging out the back,” Brian added.

John thought he had wiped away Stephanie’s lipstick in the car after their final kiss good night, but his hand immediately shot up to wipe his lips while he turned around to examine his shirt tail. It was perfectly tucked in and the back of his hand didn’t reveal any lipstick.

“Ha, made you look,” Brian laughed.

“Busted. What will Grandma and Grandpa think? You carrying on like this.”

“I don’t think we have to tell Grandma and Grandpa, if Dad takes us to Big Bear,” Brian hopefully suggested.

“Big Bear my ass. He is going to take us to Tahoe.”

“You kids get to bed now.”

As Brian walked defiantly to his bedroom he sang a little ditty, “Dad and Stephanie sitting on the

beach, F U C K I N G. First comes love, then comes marriage.”

“Get to bed now, Mister.”

The next morning John interrupted the usual breakfast preparations by taking over the kitchen and cooking scrambled eggs and sausage for the three of them, relieving Victoria from her usual duties. While he cooked, he absentmindedly bellowed out “My Angel Baby” in an off-key baritone, occasionally being joined by Maximus for the chorus.

“Stephanie is a screamer, just like she said,” John thought gleefully to himself as he pounded into her doggy style on his bed. The kids were both away for Friday night, allowing the lovers to be together at John’s home. She was every bit a woman as she took him deep within her, stoking his fire to burning intensity.

“Fuck me. Fuck me, darling. I love your cock, your big fucking cock,” Stephanie shrieked when the glow of headlights could be seen in the driveway. One of the kids was home early.

John pulled out and scrambled to put on his clothes.

“My dress and heels are in the living room,” Stephanie said alarmingly as she slipped on her panties and bra.

John dashed into the living room and returned just as he heard the front door open and Victoria’s voice greet Maximus. Stephanie’s RAV-4, however, was blocked in by Victoria’s Volkswagen in the driveway, and she shamefully looked down, avoiding eye contact with John’s daughter as she waited for her to move her car.

“My Dad sings all day and smiles again, he even makes us breakfast. Keep up the good work. You’re doing awesome.”

Stephanie raised her head and made eye contact with the poised young lady.

“I am happy my Dad met you,” Victoria asserted before moving her car.

The next weekend, Stephanie and Jeff met John and his family at the Huntington Beach Marina just below the Navy Weapons Station at Seal Beach. John’s partner, Ted Wilson, was taking his son, Randy, an NROTC midshipman at UCLA, along with John, Brian, and Jeff fishing on his 54’ Hatteras Yacht to Catalina Island, some twenty miles distant.

At the pier, John had read Jeff the riot act, how he was not to mention marijuana, and how he was to help out as much as he can and keep the boat clean. Stephanie and Victoria waved the fishermen goodbye as the boat pulled away from its mooring, passed under the bridge by the Navy base, then disappeared from view as it turned into the protected harbor. The two women went to the kayak rental in Sunset Beach and rented Victoria an SUP board for the weekend, for which the young attendant at the store was very willing to secure on the roof for her.

After a morning paddle boarding at Bolsa Chica, Stephanie and Victoria visited a spa in Seal Beach. A massage relaxed their back muscles that had tightened after the paddling and now the women sat with their feet in a tub of warm water for an osmotic cleaning.

“I can’t believe my body had so much filth in it,” Victoria exclaimed, horrified at the cloudy, sediment-filled water.

“Eat more antioxidants,” Stephanie encouraged the girl, “and drink a lot of water. No more beer for you.”

“No brewskis?” Victoria stated in mock alarm.

“Nope.”

“And I guess you will tell me no more Pineapple Express.”

“Please, you are not Jeff.”

“So, when is Jeff going to start transitioning to be a woman?”

“Huh?”

“When is he going to start becoming a girl? He is a transsexual. Isn’t he?”

“Did he tell you?”

“No. But it’s obvious.”

“How?”

“He wouldn’t have sought you out for any other reason after his parents kicked him out.”

“It’s his decision. He has to make the call on transitioning. Besides, he is still a minor until February. I’m not his legal guardian or anything.”

“If anybody needs a guardian, it’s Jeff.”

“Touche,” Stephanie raised her glass of ice water in a mock toast. Victoria was an incredibly smart and mature young woman.

In completely unfamiliar waters, Jeff was thoroughly enjoying himself. The Hatteras cleared the harbor and the no-wake zone and Mr. Wilson immediately put the throttle down, revving up the big diesel engines and lurching the boat forward so rapidly that Jeff lost his balance and had to be caught by Randy before he fell over the stern transom.

The boat sped by the numerous oil derricks in the channel, then reached deep blue water. Standing on the port side looking forward, Brian pointed towards several dark lumps 200 yards off the bow. Whales, including a baby whale, basking in the morning sun.

Jeff ran to the port side and caught a glimpse of them before they disappeared beneath the surface.

“That was pretty cool,” he stated to John, who was standing next to him.

In a few minutes the whaleback shape of Catalina could be seen rising above the horizon, and numerous smaller boats plied the rich waters of its rugged shoreline. A harbor became distinctive, with yachts moored at buoys, and colorful houses on the hillside.

“Avalon,” John said.

“Like in King Arthur?”

“Yeah, I guess you’re right. Ted is going to take us to the pier so we can load up on anchovies and sardines.”

Mr. Wilson ably positioned the boat alongside the large pier and Randy and John quickly tied it off on the cleats. Randy then gave Brian and Jeff a five-gallon bucket each to go to the live bait tank at the end of the pier.

The pier was full of activity with fishermen, sailors and sightseers. Brian noticed a pretty blonde about his age while he carried his empty bucket to the tank. He caught her eye and she winked at him.

“Here, cover for me.” Brian gave Jeff his bucket while they loaded up with bait fish and approached the cute girl.

Jeff looked confused for a second, then agreed. He saw the girl Brian was interested in and had a fleeting thought how much he wished he could be like her. Jeff did that with most girls his age.

Carrying both buckets full of bait fish back to the boat, Jeff saw Randy and John rigging fishing rods.

“Where is Brian? John asked.

“He’ll be here in a minute. He was trying to meet some cute blonde.”

“We can wait a few minutes, can’t we Ted?” John asked his friend.

Ted laughed, “a few. Here, Jeff. Let’s get these little beauties in the live well.”

“Have you ever used a bait caster?” Randy inquired of Jeff.

“Yeah, for bass and pike back home in Michigan. I even went muskie fishing once on Lake St. Clair.”

“Great, here is your rod, we don’t use any weight in the kelp beds. We just hook an anchovy through a gill or a sardine through the nose and let it do the trick.”

“OK.”

In ten minutes, Brian returned. “Her name is Megan, she’s fifteen, doesn’t have a boyfriend, and lives in Pacific Palisades. I have her number. She is on the boat, Clarion’s Call, and will be moored here tonight.”

“See, Ted, it was worth the wait.”

“OK,” he smiled, “now cast off.”

Twenty minutes later, the boat was anchored near a large expanse of kelp. The fishermen cast their baits to openings in the thick weeds and Brian quickly hooked up.

“It seems to be Brian’s lucky day,” Ted remarked.

The group fished for hours in the soft September sun, catching numerous calico bass in the kelp forest and halibut on a sandy bottom. Jeff even caught a dark, elongated fish with a huge mouth and sharp teeth that excited everybody, especially Mr. Wilson. It was a lingcod, and twenty pounds. “Poor man’s lobster,” he said. “We are going to eat well tonight.”

Jeff had the good sense not to tell John’s partner that he hated seafood.

Surprisingly, Jeff learned that he actually liked seafood. Never having lobster, Jeff didn’t have a reference point for the lingcod filet, but it was tasty. The group had prepared the catch in the galley of the Hatteras. Ted and John even passed around Sierra Nevada beers to Brian and Jeff although they were underaged. “You act like adults, you can drink like adults,” John confirmed.

Meanwhile, Stephanie and Victoria enjoyed dinner together at a Caribbean restaurant in Laguna, Stephanie ordering the jerk chicken while Victoria

had the blackened salmon. Both ladies sipped ginger beer after an enjoyable day of girl bonding.

“So what can you tell me about sex?”

Stephanie nearly spit out a chunk of seasoned and now masticated chicken.

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me, what can you tell me about sex? My mom passed away before we had the big talk. Since you are going to be my mom soon enough, I would like to hear it from you rather than from the internet or my friends.”

“How are you so certain I am going to be your mother?”

“The way Dad looks at you, the way you look back. He is going to ask you to marry him in less than six months and you are definitely going to say yes. So back to my question.”

“Well, Nostradamus, as your prospective mother, I officially take the position that you are not to have sex until you are thirty, have graduated medical school and completed your residency, and even then you are not to like it, and do it only in the dark of night, with your eyes tightly shut.”

“I’m serious.”

“So am I.”

Victoria looked extremely hurt, “I am eighteen. I was hoping we could have an intelligent discussion.”

“Ok, first, whatever a boy your age says about love, commitment, relationships, future plans, et-cetera, he really only has one thing in mind.”

Victoria grinned, “Let me guess, sports?”

“Touché, again.”

“Is that all?”

“No. Any sex that you can walk away from smiling and laughing is a good thing.”

“But you told me today you were an escort in college.”

“I laughed all the way to the bank and I enjoyed learning how to be a woman. As soon as I couldn’t laugh or smile after a tryst, I gave it up and went straight.”

Victoria smiled and Stephanie continued, “Don’t rush into having sex. First, you only lose your virginity once. Make it memorable with roses, a good dinner, a great guy, and sex that you will remember for the rest of your life. Also, never rush to have sex in a relationship. Like I said, a guy will have it anywhere, anyplace. Don’t feel pressured to do it but at the same time, make sure the guy knows that you will when the time is right. You call when and where. The sex is better that way and the guy will respect you in the long run.”

Victoria nodded.

“Here, this is a lesson about love not sex, but I should tell you this one too. It might be the most important thing I ever teach you.”

“OK.”

“How do you hold someone you love?”

“I don’t know.”

“Hold out your hand, palm up.”

Victoria did as instructed.

“You hold someone like this. You support that person, but you don’t grasp them. If they want to fly, they can. Let them. If they love you back, they will return.”

“Where did you learn that?”

“A long time ago, from a really nice client.”

“Anything else?”

“Always be safe.”

“I am going to like having you as a mom.”

“Finish your fish before it gets cold, young lady.”

“Yes, Mom.”

The early morning sun’s rays started to beam through the sport fisherman’s windows, causing the sleeping men to stir. The boat had a shower but Ted insisted on Navy showers; a wet down, a lather, and a rinse. in order to make the fresh water last for five men.

John and Jeff prepared breakfast, halibut and eggs over easy, while Brian regaled them about his encounter with Megan on the pier that night after they had finished eating. She was nice and he hoped they would start dating. Randy sat quietly eating his

breakfast, bemused at the young man's bravado but then he was certain he was that way at fifteen.

Ted positioned the boat on another kelp bed and the fishermen quickly began casting to the openings. Jeff was at the front of the boat and was casting to the end of the kelp when his rod bent double with something much larger than the Calico Bass he had been catching the day before.

"Fish on, and it's huge!" he shouted.

John thought Jeff was overreacting until he saw the bend in the rod and heard the fish ripping line against the drag. At the edge of the kelp a huge boil of water erupted.

"White Sea Bass," Randy shouted. "Hold on, don't let him get buried in the kelp."

Jeff put as much pressure on the rod as he could and thumbed the reel to slow the fish. The line burned his thumb, which immediately blistered, but he prevented the five-foot long bass from getting too deep among the kelp stalks. The gargantuan fish then switched direction and ran into open water.

"We got him now, just let him run."

The fish spooled off over one hundred yards of line, then bulldogged in fierce lunges as Jeff attempted to bring it to the boat. After twenty minutes, the sea bass lay wallowing at the surface.

"Do you want to keep it?" John asked.

"No. Let it go. It's too cool to kill."

Randy took a pair of pliers; with a sharp tug, he removed the hook. He and Jeff then steadied it until it

swam away with an authoritative slap of the tail. Randy gave him a high five. Jeff finally felt like he belonged in California.

The victorious boat chugged slowly through the channel back at the harbor leading to the Huntington Beach Marina. As it turned to starboard and entered the lagoon, the men caught sight of two attractive women in swimsuits on SUP boards. The men waved to the women who whooped back. As the boat passed the ladies, Randy caught Victoria's eye.

"She is very cute," he thought.

The fishermen stowed the gear and cleaned the boat and Jeff gave Mr. Wilson his sincere thanks. John then cornered him on the dock.

"You did really good these last two days and my partner was impressed. You need to step it up at home with Stephanie, for right now, you are the man of the house and she needs your help."

"I will, I promise."

"He's finally starting to grow up," John thought.

On the practice field the next day, Jeff broke through his funk and when passed the ball from Dave, he found an opening behind the fullbacks and broke for the goal. The goalie charged him but he gently flicked the ball to his weak side and into the net. Jeff had scored.

For the rest of the scrimmage, Jeff and Dave worked in complete synchronicity. It was almost as if they could read each other's minds. Dave had scored three goals by the end of practice, each assisted by Jeff at right wing, and Jeff had a thunderous shot on goal that bounced off the crossbar.

Even though Jeff and Dave repeated the performance the next day, Jeff was not the starter for the game on Wednesday. The score was tied at 1-1 in the last five minutes when an exhausted Dave went to the coach and demanded that Jeff be put in. Jeff sensed that Dave was tired, and adjusted his game, taking the lead. Receiving the ball from his halfback, he passed to Dave, then sprinted towards the goal. Dave passed the ball long, but Jeff beat a defender to it and took a shot on goal from thirty yards. It went just wide.

The other team scored in overtime, but Dave sought Jeff out after the game. "You got one of the few shots on goal we had all day. You should get lots of playing time from now on. Nice shot."

On Friday night, a well-worn Stephanie came home to find an immaculate apartment and a well-stocked refrigerator.

"Thank you, this looks great but where did you get the money?"

"I just sold my truck and my shotgun."

Jeff played almost half the next game and they won 4-1 with him getting two assists. After the game, still wearing his grass-stained soccer uniform, Jeff sat waiting for Stephanie to come home from work with a pizza at the table ready for her.

"Hi, Jeff. How was the game?"

"We won, and I got two assists."

"That's terrific."

"Can I talk to you, Aunt Stephanie? I got us a pizza."

“Sure.” Stephanie took a slice of pizza and started eating. “Are you OK?” Stephanie sounded sincerely concerned.

“Yeah. I’m doing good. Aunt Stephanie, I’m like you. I want to be a woman. That’s why I came to you. My parents found my transgendered books in my closet and kicked me out. Not because I do weed.”

Stephanie breathed deeply. “Well, I’m glad you told me, and I’ll give you all the support I can. Honestly, I am tired of fighting you. I can’t get you on hormones as I am not your guardian, but I will petition for that. I will schedule you to start seeing a therapist after soccer season. I really don’t think it’s wise to transition in your last year of high school but you can dress as a girl all you want on weekends and at night. I will help you all I can with your look. Let’s plan on you transitioning, if that is what the therapist recommends, after you graduate and before you go to college. It’s hard enough without having to bear the disapproval of your classmates, and there are still plenty of people who will make a stink about you using the ladies room. But first things first, let’s finish this pizza.”

While Stephanie and John held hands in the sanctuary during the church service, Victoria baited Jeff in the youth classroom by commenting about transsexuals. The group took up the discussion and most people professed their profound ignorance other than what they had seen on reality TV.

“It’s time to come clean,” Jeff thought to himself. Hesitatingly, he announced that he was a transsexual, and immediately hung his head low.

“So do you really want to be a girl?” Cher Berkowitz asked, not unkindly.

Unable to speak after his revelation, Jeff could only nod yes, while biting his lip.

The discussion stopped and the room grew deathly silent. Victoria then got up from her seat, walked over to Jeff, and gave him a deep embrace. "I am so proud of you. That took incredible courage."

Surprisingly not surprised, but similarly impressed, Dave then went over to his teammate and grabbed his shoulder. "Like she said. You have a lot of balls. More than I have."

At that everybody congratulated Jeff, and said if he needed any help, to give them a call.

After their last victory, the soccer team was in the regionals, a place where they had not been in over ten years. Jeff still wasn't a starter, his ball handling wasn't good enough, but his playing time had increased exponentially and he and Dave had become a formidable pair in the second half of the game.

With the score 0-0, Jeff took a pass from his half-back and sprinted down the line, looking for an opening to cross the ball. The defender was good, however; he forced Jeff into the corner and finally put the ball out of play, creating a corner kick situation. Jeff would take the kick.

Dave ran over to him as he keyed himself up for the kick which could decide the game. "Biggest balls I ever saw, now do this."

Jeff took a deep breath and watched Dave resume his position, then ran towards the ball and gave it a beautiful lofting kick towards the goal, Dave's at-

tempt at a header just missed and the goalie barely punched it clean, or so he thought. The other forward, however, took a volley kick and shook the back of the net with the ball. They were going to win this game.

Dave went to Jeff as they reassembled for the other team to put the ball in play. “Awesome cross, now go be a girl like you’re supposed to.”

Stephanie, Jeff, Victoria, and Cher from the youth group entered Nordstroms at the Fashion Island Mall in Newport Beach to shop for Jeff’s new wardrobe. The sale of the truck gave him a good budget as he now drove a used Toyota Corolla. Cher turned away the sales girl, stating that they were well in control of the situation, in order to protect Jeff. His new wardrobe quickly expanded to include dresses, skirts, blouses, shorts, tight jeans, heels, sandals, and a one-piece bathing suit.

Cher then modeled a purple and black trim bustier for Jeff. “You are going to need one of these eventually, you know that, Girl.”

Jeff looked hopefully at Stephanie, who only could shrug to herself. “It looks like I’m going to have to have the talk with him as well.”

Jeff and the two girls modeled lingerie from the racks, until he had selected two baby doll nighties, a garter belt and bra combination, and the bustier that Cher had shown him. Victoria surprised herself by purchasing a bustier herself.

“Please don’t tell my Dad,” she urged Stephanie.

“Like you said, you are eighteen now. We will keep this between us girls.”

Relieved, Victoria smiled, "Thank you."

"I am sure you will look very pretty in it."

"Thanks, Stephanie," Victoria beamed.

Stephanie smiled, "She is finally learning to relax a little."

For the next phase of the transformation, the girls sat at the dinner table eating Chinese food while Jeff used an entire tube of Neet on his legs and ass to get a smooth, feminine look. Stephanie recommended Neet over Nair, as it wasn't as harsh and didn't leave her ass and crotch with bumps. The girls finished their takeout and were watching Too Cute when a smooth-bodied and clean-shaven Jeff emerged from the bathroom wearing short shorts and a girl's T-shirt.

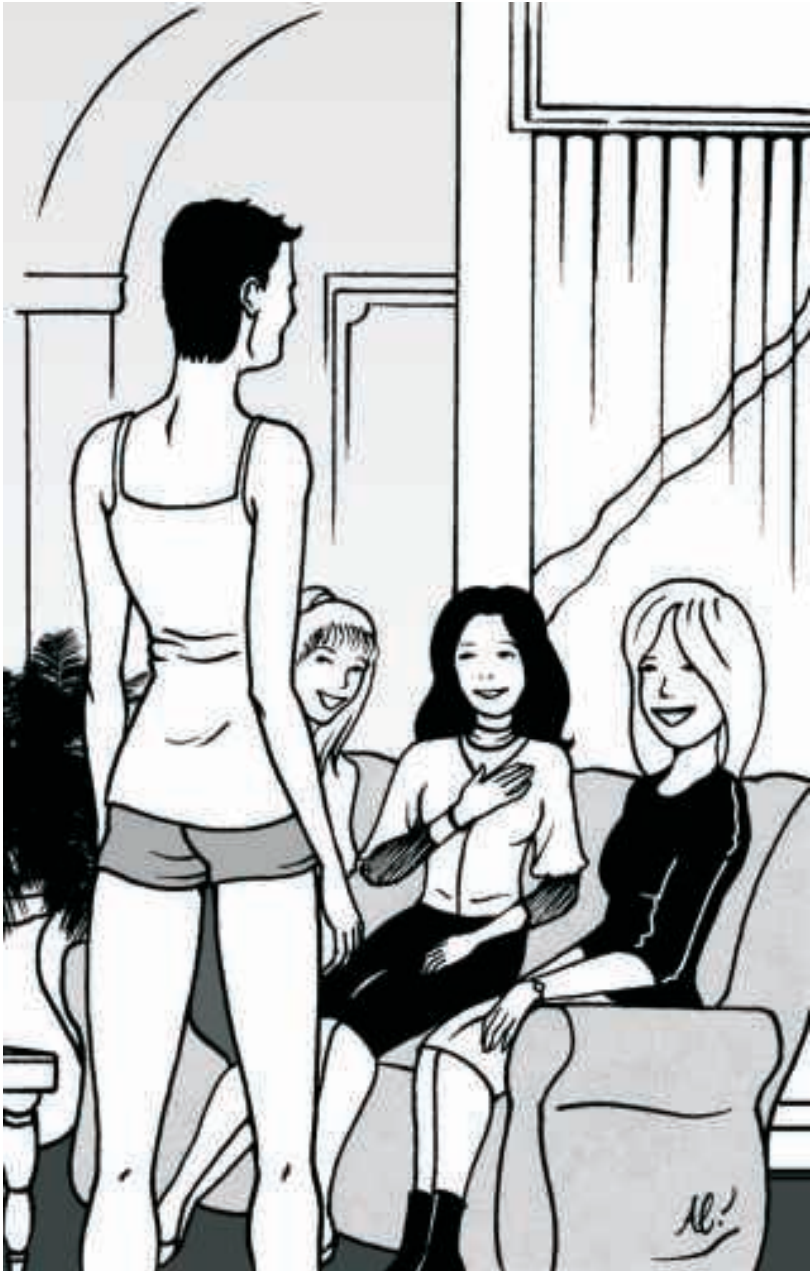
Stephanie had set up a makeup station at the dinner table and sat Jeff down in front of the mirror. After an hour of using her well-honed skills, Jeff looked very cute and was ready for the crowning glory, a straight, blonde wig worthy of any good California girl. Stephanie secured the wig to Jeff's head, then clipped on some gold hoop earrings.

"Look at yourself now, Girl. You look adorable."

Jeff couldn't do it yet, and looked to Victoria and Cher for reassurance. They both smiled their approval, and he gazed at the mirror and saw Nikki staring back.

"Holy shit!" Nikki exclaimed. "I look great."

Stephanie smiled, "Yes you do, and in time you are going to look so much better."



The rest of the evening was spent teaching Nikki to walk in heels, sit and stand as a girl. Stephanie had CDs for speech lessons that Nikki would integrate into her homework every night, until her voice was naturally feminine, without any affectation.

Victoria and Cher had brought futons for a sleepover and Nikki joined them on the living room floor. Stephanie went to bed early so Nikki could continue bonding as a girl with her friends. The three girls talked for hours until finally they drifted off to sleep, with Nikki wearing her baby doll nightie, and a smile on her face. She was never happier in her life and would soon live fully as she was meant to live.

“If you want to be a girl, you are going to have to go out in public. Besides, the whole class is expecting to see Nikki,” Stephanie said to her tired niece the next day in the church parking lot.

“Come on, Girl, we got your back,” Cher encouraged Nikki, who finally emerged wearing a dress with a short skirt and heels to enhance her femininity.

“You look great, Nikki,” Victoria grinned. “You’ll be fine.”

The four women entered the church and immediately went to the class room. When Nikki entered, her classmates rose in thunderous applause, making the girl blush before she took her seat. She crossed her legs according to Stephanie’s instructions. Observing Nikki’s smooth legs in the short skirt and heels, Dave felt an undeniable stirring in his groin. “Holy shit, I didn’t expect that.”

That night, Nikki lay in bed in her other baby doll nightie. She had placed her wig on its styrofoam head, and had removed her makeup with cold cream, but she didn’t want the day to end. Nikki thrilled to

her shaved legs and silk nightgown and wanted to fall asleep as a girl. Tomorrow she would wake up and have to play-act the role of Jeff at school but the tides of her life had turned.

Nikki had learned from the time at the beach with Stephanie catching grunion that the California tides were relatively modest at Bolsa Chica, but just as inexorable. The tidal shift was barely perceptible and the current change slight at its initial stage, but it gathered speed and became strong and insistent. Coming out to Stephanie had been Nikki's tidal shift. She would gather more momentum each day and never again would try to suppress her true feelings and true identity. Jeff's persona would soon disappear like beach foam in the sand, leaving Nikki ascendant.

In Laguna, Victoria couldn't sleep either. She enjoyed helping Nikki shop for clothes but a door opened today to a part of her personality she did not know she had. Modeling the lingerie with Cher and Nikki had made her feel sexy. Victoria knew she was an attractive young woman, but at eighteen she was still a virgin. Having to assume the leadership role in the family had distracted her from dating and had given her a maturity that made the high school boys seem like children with hard-ons. Stephanie had confirmed as much, and Stephanie knew a lot about sex. Even though she had been an escort, Victoria knew of no nicer woman than Stephanie and hoped she would soon become her step-mom. Victoria fell asleep understanding that sex didn't make a woman bad. It was what was in her heart, not in her pussy, that made a woman bad.

"Mom?" Stephanie answered her iPhone at Thanksgiving.

“I am just calling to say hello. I saw Jeff’s Facebook updates in the last few weeks. I saw that he has been accepted to UCLA and that his soccer team won their regionals. I also enjoyed talking to you and was hoping you were doing well.”

“Well, I am dating a very nice man with two great kids from Laguna.”

“Did you meet them at church like I suggested?”

“You were right about that one, Mom.”

“What’s his name?”

“John, John Kauffman.”

“And how is Jeff doing?”

Stephanie hesitated.

“Stephanie, you can be honest with me. Seeing what your brother did to Jeff has made both me and your father take a hard look at how we treated you. It kept me from you for almost ten years. I don’t want you that distant anymore.”

“And Dad?”

“He hasn’t said anything but I know he feels the same way I do. So how is Jeff?”

“I became his legal guardian and he is seeing a doctor to determine whether he should transition.”

“Please tell Jeff that whatever decision he makes, I will stand by him, and tell him I love him.”

“I will, Mom.”

“And Stephanie, I love you too.”

“You told me that the last time we talked.”

“I haven’t said it often enough in the last ten years.”

“I love you too, Mom.” Stephanie’s life had blossomed ever since Nikki had shown up as Jeff at her door like a stray cat desperate to be rescued.

Stephanie donned khaki slacks, a blouse, with cute tan oxfords while Nikki wore blue jeans and leopard spotted flats for the Christmas Festival at Balboa Park in San Diego.

“Why can’t I wear heels?”

“Because you are going to be walking all day and I’m not going to listen to you complain about your feet hurting, plus we are going to be walking in grass a lot. Trust me, you look very cute. Maybe you’ll even find a guy.”

Nikki became silent. She had always hoped that she would find a man someday, but until now that just seemed to be an ethereal fantasy. Now Stephanie’s words gave it a new reality. It was possible that she would find a man that would take her as a woman and make her *his* woman. She had to work at it now, just like any girl.

John and Stephanie agreed that the Christmas Festival would be an excellent place for Nikki to spread her wings in public. For a weekend, the numerous museums in Balboa Park were open free of charge while numerous concerts and exhibits were staged on the green. Accepting Stephanie so readily in his bed, John had absolutely no problem with Jeff’s new identity as Nikki. He actually tried to start

filling the fatherly role that he knew she had been denied. Stephanie's love had rekindled his spark of life and he had reasserted himself as Victoria and Brian's father; they were thrilled at his new strength and leadership. A good sport, he had booked a week at South Lake Tahoe for the three of them to go skiing with Maximus. Then the Kauffmans would be back in time for Christmas to spend it with Stephanie and Nikki.

Nikki enjoyed the Christmas Fest and started to relax, sticking close to Victoria and Brian while Stephanie and John held hands and made an embarrassing number of PDAs. The museum crowd was not looking for transsexuals and even if they had read her, would not make a deal of it. Stephanie was right, however, flats made much more sense in walking through the museums and flower gardens of the park than spiked heels.

Nikki's reverie was disturbed when she spotted Ted Wilson, his wife, and their son Randy, joining the crowd for a presentation of classical Christmas favorites on the lawn. The three approached and John warmly greeted Mrs. Wilson, his partner's wife. "Merry Christmas, Beth, this is my girlfriend Stephanie."

Stephanie beamed and took Beth Wilson's hand in her own.

"It's a pleasure to meet you."

"The pleasure is all mine, it's wonderful to see the old John back."

"It just goes to show you can't keep a good man down," Stephanie answered, thrilled to be bragging about her lover.

“And who is this young lady?” Mrs. Wilson asked.

Nikki looked like a deer in the headlights; she tried to speak but was afraid that her voice wasn't feminine enough. Moreover, Ted and Randy knew her as Jeff from two days on a boat.

“This is my niece, Nikki Hazlett, she is staying with me her senior year. She just got accepted to UCLA. Please excuse her, she has had the flu the last couple weeks, but we did want her to come to the Festival. It's too much a tradition to pass up.”

“Nice to meet you, Nikki. Congratulations.”

“Thank you.”

Meanwhile, Victoria had distracted Randy by introducing herself. “We never met in person, but I was the girl on the SUP board in Huntington Harbor.”

“I remember, and Nikki?” Randy asked, incredulously.

“She's my friend, any more questions?” Victoria's tone hardened.

“Nope,” Randy smiled, “a friend of yours is a friend of mine.”

Observing the interchange and watching Stephanie and Victoria defuse the situation, John and Ted smiled. “She is good for you, bro. You're smiling again.”

“Yep, and Victoria was accepted to Wellesley and Berkley.”

“Which will it be?”

“Wellesley. She wants to go to the east coast and I think she likes the old school prestige.”

“Don’t tell Randy that,” Ted said, observing his son carrying on an animated conversation with Victoria.

Stephanie looked gorgeous for New Year’s Eve in a deep purple evening gown with gold trim and a gold beaded collar and bare back. Nikki wore a pink party dress and matching heels and was going to meet Victoria and Brian and the rest of the youth group for a New Year’s Eve party at a house in Newport Beach. Megan promised to come down from Pacific Palisades to meet Brian for the celebration. John and Stephanie had planned for an evening dining and dancing at a club and then being together in the late night to celebrate the New Year as a loving couple. Stephanie had a roller bag packed with a red and black bustier and matching marabou mules to start the New Year in the right way. She yearned for her man and smiled when she thought of him naked and erect.

A text came from Victoria’s phone, PLZ COME, WE NEED HELP.

“Let’s go.” Stephanie ordered.

“But I’m not done with my makeup.”

“You are going to have to do it in the car, any good woman can.”

Nikki and Stephanie grabbed their purses and left.

A half-hour later, Victoria greeted the two women at the door in tears with mascara running down her cheeks. “He’s never been this bad,” she sobbed.

Stephanie saw Maximus cowering in a corner, shaking, and Brian sitting on the couch with his tux-

edo blazer off, nursing a shiner that was darkening and swelling his eye shut.

“Dad threw a scotch bottle at Maximus. Then when Brian went to him to calm him down, he got hit in the face.”

“Where is your father?”

“Outside, on the porch.”

Stephanie glimpsed his form standing alone in his pain overlooking the ocean.

“It makes sense, Auld Lang Syne and all that. If on any night the ghost of Kelly Kauffman was to come back, it would be tonight,” Stephanie thought to herself.

“What was your Mom and Dad’s song?”

“Their song?” Victoria asked.

“Their song, you know.”

“No, I don’t,” Victoria looked confused.

“You know everything, damn it, what was their song?”

“Boys of Summer.”

“It figures,” Stephanie thought, “knowing those two.”

“Do you have it?”

“I think we have the CD.”

“Play it, now.”

Victoria and Brian hunted for the CD while Nikki looked on, distressed at the scene.

Brian found it and put it in the home entertainment center.

Stephanie now spoke calmly to the three. "You kids go and have fun. Your dad will be all right. Megan will fall all over you with that black eye. Nursing wounded men is what we women do. Go. I've got this."

The kids departed as ordered, leaving Stephanie standing alone in the living room with a terrified Golden Retriever and Don Henley's haunting lyrics moaning over the speakers.

John emerged, looking distraught, and Stephanie immediately went to him in her evening gown and hugged him without saying a word. After a minute, John embraced her back. They stood listening to the song for two hours, sensing Kelly's presence throughout the home. Finally, the two heard party horns and fireworks. The New Year was here. Stephanie fetched her iPhone from her purse and started to play Stephen Bishop's "On and On", about smiling when you feel like crying, and standing tall in the loss of a lover.

The new song burst John's dam. His tears flowed warm and fast, like no river in Southern California, except maybe the aqueduct. John's large body trembled enough to measure on the Richter Scale. Stephanie said nothing, but held him tight to her body. The river dried up after half an hour, and then the two started to slow dance, until finally John gave Stephanie a heartfelt kiss. Flesh and blood had finally defeated a phantom.

The men lined up in a column that snaked through Charles Jewelry on Valentine's Day. "Typical dudes," Stephanie thought, "waiting for the last minute." She went to the back room to look at her reports and did not see John enter. John avoided the line-up of guys buying trinkets of their affection and went to Fine Jewelry.

"Can I help you?" a young lady asked.

"Yes, I am looking for an engagement ring, and I have to come here."

"The blue box says everything," the girl coyly responded.

"So my girl friend tells me. She's Stephanie Hazlett."

"Our Assistant Manager?"

"Yes."

"You want me to help you pick out a ring for Stephanie?" All coyness escaped from the girl.

"Yep."

"Let me get Sandra, our manager. She probably knows best."

The entire Fine Jewelry sales staff converged around Sandra who finally selected a solo diamond, elegant but not ostentatious.

Stephanie emerged from the back room five minutes later and saw John standing next to Sandra with a stupid grin on his face. All eyes in the store turned to her.

“So you waited for the last minute for Valentine’s Day like all the other men, knowing the store would bail you out. I’m not so impressed with the blue box you know. I work here.”

“I think you will like what’s inside this one.”

Stephanie could not refuse that proposal, especially once John got to his knees and the sales staff burst out in applause. Even the men standing in line took notice of the right way to do things.

For her birthday, Cher and Victoria took Nikki shopping at the Fashion Island Mall. Summer was coming and she needed to update her wardrobe. They spent the day at the mall trying on clothes and flirting with the guys at the food court. Nikki had gained a lot of confidence since her encounter with Randy and Mr. and Mrs. Wilson at Balboa Park at Christmas. She acted naturally as a girl, so much so that the salesgirls did not object to her trying on summer dresses. Nevertheless, Nikki was a bundle of nerves by the time they ate their frozen yogurt for lunch.

“You ought to come work with me nights at the ice cream parlor. We just lost a girl for failing to show up on time and I think you would like it,” Victoria suggested. “It would help you get out more and be more confident. You noticed that none of the salesgirls made an issue about you.”

“Yes,” Nikki answered.

“Besides, you need to bring it up a notch anyway. Dave has the hots for you,” Cher remarked.

Both Nikki and Victoria were shocked.

“Yeah. I see the way he looks at you at church. I know when a guy wants to fuck me, and I know when one wants to fuck one of my friends.”

Nikki thrilled at hearing Cher’s words. A nice guy wanted to do her as a woman. This was unexpected news on her birthday, but very welcome.

“So, what do I do?”

“Ask, Cher. She has more experience dating than I do,” Victoria said, suddenly feeling inadequate about matters of the heart.

“Well?”

“Oh, so you *do* like him. I can see that. It’s easy. That pink dress you just bought, the one with the short skirt and off-the-shoulder sleeves, you wear that next week and when you sense Dave looking at you, you turn to him and wink. Sooner or later he will ask you out.”

The three girls drove back to Stephanie’s apartment to find John’s SUV parked in a visitor’s space. They walked up the stairs and into the living room to be greeted by cheers of “Happy Birthday, Nikki” from Stephanie, John, Brian, and Megan. A birthday cake festooned with candles was proudly displayed on the dining room table, and numerous wrapped presents addressed to the birthday girl sat on the couch.

Nikki went to her room to drop off her jacket and purse, and lost her breath. While she was away, shopping at Fashion Island, Stephanie and John had changed her room entirely, to that of a young woman. They had placed fashion posters on the walls, a jewelry box on her dresser, along with her makeup mir-

ror and assorted accessories, and organized her growing collection of shoes and dresses in the closet. The bedspread and pillowcases had a floral pattern, and Stephanie had purchased an adorable plush beaver that greeted the young woman. At least she would have that kind of beaver, unless she took the final step in transitioning, which is entirely her call, Stephanie had joked to herself.

After viewing her newly transformed bedroom, Nikki unwrapped her packages. One package, with the blue box from Charles and with a card from Victoria particularly moved the young woman. She unwrapped a silver, heart shaped necklace with the word "Sister" hand engraved on the back. Seeing the engraving, Nikki gave Victoria a deep hug and a sincere thank you.

"Stephanie, can you tell me about making love as a woman?" Nikki asked that night, basking in the afterglow of her birthday celebration.

"Oh, so what brought this on?"

"Cher told me that Dave is attracted to me."

"Dave? Cute, nice, clean-cut Dave? Your team captain, Dave?"

"Yes," Nikki looked chagrined.

"Awesome."

Nikki shyly grinned.

Stephanie gave Nikki the same talk that she had given to Victoria about love and sex but had to modify it with two salient provisions.

“You must promise me, never, ever, try to have sex with a man that doesn’t know the score. I mean it, do *not* do that. You are asking for a one-way trip to the morgue if you do. I worked as an escort for three years and met some real winners, but I never felt threatened or got beat up. Please promise me that you will do as I ask. It’s very important.”

“I promise,” Nikki solemnly vowed. “Is there anything else I need to know?”

“Yes, lubricate, lubricate, lubricate.”

They both laughed.

Armed with Cher and Stephanie’s advice and wearing her cute pink outfit, Nikki felt confident when she flirted with Dave at church the next morning. After the wink, he sat next to her at the table for discussion and she lightly brushed her hand against his leg when nobody was watching. Dave was electrified at the touch, and could barely keep his composure. He was also fully aroused and had to sit at the table for several minutes to calm down after the group broke up.

Nikki was on her way to Stephanie’s car when Dave jogged up to her.

“Nikki, would you like to go to Balboa Island next weekend?”

“With you?” Nikki coyly smiled.

“I’ll pick you up at 9:00.”

Dave lay in bed that night, only half-believing that he had invited Nikki on a date to Balboa Island, an amusement park at the entrance to Newport Harbor. He had noticed with great interest Nikki’s emergence

from her cocoon and was undeniably attracted to her. Worse, she turned him on. At least he called her she, otherwise he might be gay. Dave thought about that prospect for several minutes, then laughed. What did it matter whether he was gay, straight, or bisexual? They were just labels. He was attracted to Nikki and wanted her as his girlfriend. The church that his parents had dragged him to all these years from Huntington Beach had been a stalwart in gay rights, and several of his classmates had already come out as gay. Well, he was going to come out to them as Nikki's boyfriend if things went right at Balboa Island.

Nikki looked adorable in short shorts, sandals and a blouse. She confidently threw her bag over her shoulder and gave Dave a quick peck on the cheek before she sat next to him in his Versa. Nikki smiled to herself, Dave really brought out the girl in her.

Observing the whole interaction, Stephanie wished them a good time at Balboa Island. She then went to the refrigerator and poured herself a glass of chardonnay. "She did it, Mom. She did it."

Dave and Nikki had a fabulous time together, and both of them felt proud to be with their companion. They rode the carousel, then held hands on the Ferris wheel, observing the activity in the harbor and the Pacific. Dave took Nikki to a shooting gallery, and she proceeded to channel Annie Oakley, winning a raccoon that would soon become friends with her beaver. She proudly carried the plush 'coon around the island and noticed the other young couples holding hands, kissing, or just having fun. Nikki felt like she was one of them, and was never happier than in Dave's presence.

"So what is this?" Nikki asked, as the two stood in front of a frozen fruit stand.

“It’s a Balboa Island tradition, a frozen banana. It was invented here.”

“Cool.”

Nikki looked around with a wicked twinkle in her eye to make sure nobody was paying attention to the couple, then she put her lips seductively around the hardened banana and slid it deep into her throat, never breaking her gaze from Dave’s eyes. She was a girl now, and had to work at getting her man.

“OMG.”

Nikki then pulled the banana almost out of her mouth but shoved it back down her throat even deeper this time, to a mesmerized Dave. She then pulled it out fully and started to chew at it normally.

“A California tradition, huh? I hope you are interested in taking me out a second time.”

“We’ll go to Los Angeles. There are some cool restaurants in West Hollywood that I’m sure you will like. I looked them up on Yelp.”

“Sounds delicious.”

Nikki looked radiant in the candle light on the porch of the West Hollywood restaurant that Dave had taken her to. She wore a dark, burgundy corset dress with ballet skirt, and matching gloves and pumps. Stephanie had worked for an hour perfecting the girl’s makeup. After dessert she looked in her compact mirror and touched up her foundation and lipstick. Dinner had been superb, and Nikki had enjoyed a braised lobster.

“You can really make a good choice in restaurants. To think that I once told Stephanie that I hated sea-

food. I was such a jerk back then, and so fucking stupid.”

“We all grow up. Are you ready for Graumans?”

“Please lead the way,” Nikki smiled, confidently rising on her heels and offering her arm to her man.

Dave and Nikki walked arm in arm outside Graumans reading the cement inscriptions memorialized in the sidewalk.

“That’s not a woman,” a female voice said from behind the young couple as they strolled up the Walk of Fame.

“How can you tell?” a man’s voice asked.

“You can always tell a faggot,” the woman confirmed.

“Just keep walking,” Dave said, sounding alarmed.

Nikki said nothing, but tried to keep up with Dave’s quickened pace in her heels.

“Hey faggots!” another man’s voice shouted at the couple. “Yeah, you, faggots.”

Nikki could hear their pursuers gaining, so that Dave had to turn and confront them.

“What is your problem? We aren’t bothering you.”

“Yeah, you are.”

“This is Hollywood, get over it.”

“Fuck you,” the man shouted.

“Yeah, fuck you, you faggots. Holding hands like you two are doing now makes me sick.”

“Look, we are leaving.”

One of the man shoved Dave, and the women yelled “Kick their asses” when Nikki pulled out her can of pepper spray and shot an aerosol burst into the face of the man who was shoving Dave. He paused for a second, surprised, but then his hands shot up to his eyes that were on fire.

“Motherfucker. Damn. Damn, does this hurt!”

Nikki then turned it towards the other two people, “I will use this on you if you come a step nearer to either of us. Now leave us alone.”

The two backed down, helping their friend walk while his face burned in agony.

An hour and a half later, Dave and Nikki were sitting in a parking lot by the ocean, back in familiar turf at Huntington Beach.

Nikki had been composed at the time of the incident, but she had become more and more distraught.

“Who am I trying to kid? I am a man, trying to be a woman. I’m nothing more than a dude wearing a dress,” Nikki cried in an entirely feminine voice.

“That’s bullshit.”

“Bullshit? You saw what happened. You saw how they looked at me. Like I was some pervert.”

“They saw what they wanted to see, what they made themselves see. When I look at you, I see nothing but a woman.”

“You’re kidding yourself.”

“A hard-on doesn’t lie.”

“Really?” Nikki calmed a little.

“Yes, you turn me on. I really wanted to fuck you tonight at dinner. You were adorable, and completely feminine. I did not see any bit of Jeff there, only Nikki, and I knew you as Jeff.”

“Do I really turn you on,” Nikki asked.

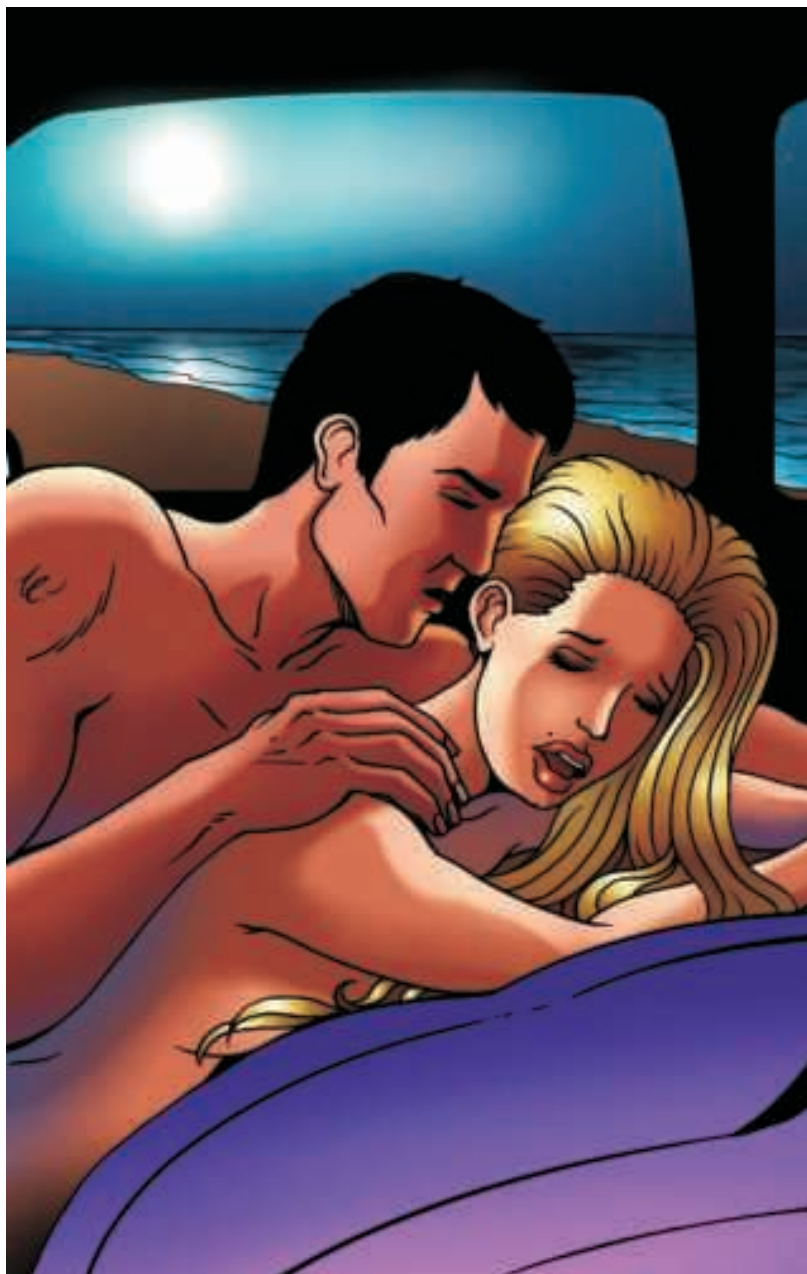
“Yes.”

Nikki then embraced Dave and opened her mouth and gave him a deep, adoring kiss, which he responded to by licking her tongue with his own.

The couple’s passion burned at a white hot fever as the events of the evening were lost in the ardor of kissing. Dave then guided Nikki’s manicured hand to his crotch, and she felt the affirming hardness of his manhood. She would soon become a woman.

Nikki unzipped his khaki slacks and freed Dave’s cock from its confinement. She then used the technique demonstrated on the banana to have it reach its full potential, to the accompaniment of Dave’s soft but happy moaning.

Dave then gently relieved Nikki from her duties and guided her onto her stomach. He reached underneath the seat and released the latch, sliding the seat all the way back, stretching Nikki’s legs to the fullest and giving himself room to maneuver. Dave straddled Nikki, then slid her panties down her smooth legs and over her pumps.



“There is a tube of lubricant in my purse,” Nikki softly whispered.

Dave found the bottle of clear gel and applied it to his fingers. He had recently watched several porn downloads on the internet that featured anal sex with a transsexual so he knew the importance of loosening up his lover’s asshole, especially a virgin like Nikki. He guided his index finger past her soft cheeks and felt the tight muscles of her rosebud, beckoning to be deflowered.

“Ohh,” Nikki said in shock and surprise as Dave thrust his finger into her. He then started to swirl his fingers around her soft walls.

“Mmm, this feels so fucking good,” Nikki purred.

Dave kept pleasuring his woman for several minutes, then in rapid succession thrust a second, third, and forth finger into Nikki’s willing ass.

“Fuck me, fuck me, please, make me your woman. Please fuck me.”

Dave replaced his fingers with his hard cock inside Nikki, who shrieked.

“Oh God. Oh God.”

With his cock buried in his woman, Dave felt a burning ferocity and started to thrust brutally into the girl, who took each thrust with a shriek.

“Stop, stop. Please. Stop.”

Dave knew she didn’t mean it, not at this point, and instead increased the intensity of his thrusting, which made Nikki scream, “God, yes! I’m a woman. Shove that cock in me, baby. I’m a fucking woman.”

Overcome with lust, Nikki then thrust her ass onto Dave's cock and soon the two were in complete unison until Dave ratified her womanhood with a baptism of his seed.

Nikki still felt Dave's essence in the crotch of her panties when he dropped her off at the apartment in Sunset Beach. It was well past midnight and the lights were all turned off. Hearing her niece's quiet footsteps in the living room, an awakened Stephanie gave her teddy bear a warm embrace. "Well, Po. Our little niece Nikki is now a woman, I'm sure of it."

"Girls are like that." John and Stephanie were sitting next to Brian at the dinner table of the Laguna house. Megan had broken off the relationship that night and John and Stephanie were trying to console him.

"But I really liked her, Dad. I was hoping she would be the one. She was really cute and nice."

"Look, Megan lived all the way up in Pacific Palisades. It's a long way for her to come down, or you to go up, and I'm not having you drive on the 405, even when you turn sixteen."

"But she said she liked me, and I would take the bus."

"You're fifteen, a very decent and handsome young man," Stephanie interjected. "You will find somebody else soon enough."

"Yeah. I had my first love when I was your age. Cassandra Rios, from history class. We had a wonderful summer but broke up over I-can't-even-re-

member-what. I loved her then, but I ended up with your mother in college, when I was twenty. You will be fine.”

“There are more than enough young ladies who will want to date you, Brian. Now I want you to transfer all your photos of you and Megan from your Samsung to your computer. Start the slate clean, but never forget her. Your Dad will never forget your Mom because he loved her with everything he had. You don’t have to erase Megan’s memory, but you will have to move on. Now let’s go out for dinner.”

Brian smiled, “OK. I want In ‘N’ Out.”

“You got it, sport,” John smiled.

While John and Stephanie were trying to help Brian get over his heart break, Victoria and Cher were driving up to the UCLA campus where Randy had invited them to a dorm party. Seeing Victoria, Randy immediately went up to her and gave her a hug and a kiss on the lips. She wasn’t suspecting that, but she kissed him back.

Cher left the couple alone as she hunted for an available college man to be with who wasn’t too drunk. She eventually found a freshman, Robert, and was easily able to lure him away from his buddies as the party wound down and people started to pair off. Robert’s roommate had already claimed his bedroom so he led Cher to a darkened lounge where couples often made out after hours. Opening the door to the lounge, Cher immediately glimpsed Victoria kneeling before Randy, his cock in her mouth and a hungry look in her eyes. “She was thoroughly enjoying that,” Cher thought. “It’s about time Victoria came down from her podium and got on her knees.”

Robert positioned Cher on the floor on the other side of the lounge, but she could still hear Victoria's slurping on Randy's cock. Robert unzipped his pants and soon Cher was imitating her friend.

Two weeks later, Victoria sat with Stephanie at the spa in Seal Beach, removing their body impurities with an osmotic cleaning.

"Randy didn't invite me to their Navy Spring Ball, he is going with someone else," Victoria said dejectedly.

Stephanie mused to herself, "Victoria is an incredibly intelligent and poised woman, but she still has a lot to experience about love and sex."

"He's nineteen and in college. He's playing the field. Remember what I told you, guys want to fuck all the time, anywhere. They would fuck in a slaughterhouse or on a sinking ship."

"But I gave him a blowjob," Stephanie shamefully admitted.

Stephanie smiled and gave Victoria a reassuring pat on her back.

"Remember what I told you about holding off on sex? You committed way too fast. He thinks you're easy, and guys lose respect for that. It's what they say they want, but that is when they are thinking with their dicks."

"I never thought I would be easy."

"You're young and you were trying too hard. But you have to keep it classy."

“But I loved sucking his cock.” Victoria looked like she would shrink and swim in the filth of the osmotic tub.

Stephanie laughed, “Of course you did. There is nothing like sucking the cock of a guy we like, or, hopefully, love. You are a woman. It’s in your makeup. The guys think that they have the power over us once we are sucking on their cock, but really we have the ultimate power by temporarily surrendering control. Bravo to you. It’s a balancing act, however, keeping a guy interested and satisfying ourselves. You are very smart. You will soon find your balance. Just keep it classy, like I said.”

“And Randy?”

“Don’t call him. Don’t text him. If he’s really interested, he will call you.”

“You are one terrific Mom for only being twenty-eight.”

“You inspire me, now let’s go get some chili dogs at Wienerschnitzel. You need to get back on the horse.”

Victoria laughed and smiled a broad smile as she started to dress back into her street clothes.

Victoria and Nikki were exhausted after a busy evening at the ice cream shop. The weather had finally gotten warm and people started flocking to the beach and the shops around the pier. Victoria gave Nikki a reassuring wink. She had settled in to her new identity and job, and as long as she smiled warmly with the customers and was efficient, they didn’t pay much attention to the fact that she was transgendered. The hormones that Nikki had been regularly taking had now started to bear fruit, in the shape of small melons, which she excitedly noticed

one day in the shower. She was like a kid in the candy store, telling Stephanie of her new breasts.

Just at closing, two boys walked in, one in blonde dreadlocks, and both crusted in salt and smelling of marijuana, surfers with the munchies coming for ice cream.

“We are closing.”

“Oh, you will stay open for us, please.”

“Make it quick.”

“I’ll have a pole smoker flavor,” one of the fried surfers requested from Victoria.

“Sorry, we don’t carry that in the store. Can I recommend some chocolate or butter pecan.”

“Do you carry that flavor out of the store?”

“Maybe,” Victoria couldn’t believe she just said that.

Nikki looked at her in alarm and called her friend over.

“Are you crazy?” Nikki harshly whispered.

“Probably, but they are harmless, and not too grungy.”

“I can’t believe this is coming from you?”

“Neither can I.”

“What about me? They will kill me.”

“Oh, so you’re turned-on too?” Victoria smiled wickedly at Nikki.

“Yeah, but...”

“But nothing. They are too high to figure it out. It’s just blowjobs, like they said.”

“And Dave?”

“He doesn’t need to know about this. Do this for me. I want it. I want to be bad. If only for an hour.”

An hour later, sitting on a bench overlooking the ocean and sharing a large cup of rocky road ice cream to take the taste of ganja and spunk out of their mouths, the girls couldn’t stop smiling and laughing.

“You two look fantastic,” John exclaimed as Victoria and Nikki emerged in their prom dresses. Victoria had a long emerald gown with a slit up the side, while Nikki had a short fuchsia dress that showed off her legs. The girls had taken Stephanie’s admonition to keep it classy to heart, and had avoided some of the more risqué numbers their friends had chosen. Victoria had also taken Stephanie’s advice about avoiding contact with Randy to see how things developed. Now Randy sat in the living room with Dave, both young men holding a bouquet of roses, and both stunned at their dates’ beauty and elegance.

Tonight would be the sole high school function that Nikki would attend. Her purgatory as Jeff while in school was about to be terminated and she could live as Nikki for the rest of her life, like she was supposed to. Nikki and Dave had continued dating, and made several forays back to Hollywood, including leaving where they had left off on the Walk of Fame.

Nobody bothered them that time, and they again fucked in the parking lot at the beach by the pier.

Nobody would figure out that the young woman attending the prom with Dave had been the student they had known as Jeff Hazlett until it was too late. Some of the students eventually would put two and two together, but by the time they did, they would end up with zero as Jeff would already have graduated and disappeared from the face of the earth.

Dave and Nikki went to the country club where their high school was holding its dance, while Victoria and Cher went to a hotel in Newport Beach where their high school was having its senior prom. Regardless of the location, their dates could not have been more proud of the young ladies who stood at their side or danced with them, smiling, with stars in their eyes.

The three couples then met at a suite at the Newport Beach hotel that they had reserved for the evening without either John or Stephanie's knowledge. Victoria had decided that tonight was a special enough occasion to lose her virginity, and she would be with her best friends when she did.

While the young men anxiously waited in the suite's living room watching on-demand porn, the three young ladies changed from their prom dresses into lingerie and retouched their makeup for an intensely provocative look. Taking confidence from each other, they strutted into the living room, posed at length for their men, and then gave themselves to them, willingly and wantonly.

"I can't believe they lied to us like this," John said to Stephanie as she lay in bed next to him wearing a lavender baby doll nightie.

Stephanie kissed her man.

“I can’t believe Victoria is growing up the way she is, now. I still see her as a little kid with a puppy.”

“Darling,” Stephanie said, giving John another kiss, “she is eighteen now, and is a young woman. She made an adult decision. Here, hold out your hand, palm up.”

“What?”

“Just do it.”

John did as requested.

“This is the way you hold somebody you love. You support them but don’t grasp them. When they want to spread their wings and fly, you let them. If they love you, as I know your daughter does with all her heart, they will return. But in this case, since Victoria and Nikki do live in our house by our rules, there is nothing wrong with grounding the two of them.”

“I love you, Stephanie.”

“I love you, too, but right now I could use some lust.”

That night Victoria had spread her wings and exuberantly flew into the heavens. She had earned the grounding that she knew would come.

“Is that them?” John asked an apprehensive Stephanie, as a middle-aged couple descended down the long escalator to baggage claim at John Wayne Airport.

“Yes, that’s them.”

Nikki's grandparents had come to see her graduate, but today, Nikki dressed as Jeff for one of the last times. Nikki would take it easy on her grandparents and introduce herself after graduation.

Mr. and Mrs. Hazlett approached the group. Stephanie broke ranks and immediately went to them, giving her Mom a hug, and tearing for the meeting that took almost a decade to occur.

"It's so good to see you, Mom."

"It's so good to see you," Stephanie's mother answered, while holding her daughter tightly.

Stephanie then looked at her father.

"Dad," she said guardedly.

"Stephanie, I might as well say it now. I was wrong the way I treated you. I'm sorry for what I did and the way I acted."

Stephanie went to her father and gave him a deep hug, "It's okay Dad. I forgave you long ago."

After graduation, Dave winked at Jeff wearing his cap and gown and holding his diploma. He knew that this would be Jeff's last night on earth, and that soon he could get back to fucking Nikki hard and long, just the way she liked it. Nikki winked back, then sought out her family coming down from the stands.

Back at the apartment, Nikki gathered up all of Jeff's clothes, put them in three garbage bags and unceremoniously deposited them in the dumpster. Nikki had spent far too long in her purgatory as Jeff for the last semester of high school to have any sentimental feelings for a discarded and erroneous identity. She stripped off her remaining male clothes, put

them in another garbage bag, then put on a cute dress and heels, did her makeup, accessorized, and donned her wig. She confidently walked into the living room and introduced herself to her grandmother and grandfather who congratulated her a second time on graduating.

Two days later, Nikki wore a bridesmaid outfit at the church in Laguna as one of Stephanie's bridesmaids. Ted and Brian were part of the groom's party while Victoria stood on the groom's side, radiant in a peach suit and heels with a flower in her hair.

Stephanie's mother observed her daughter approach the altar accompanied by her father. She looked ethereal in her wedding gown and veil, and Mrs. Hazlett knew then that Stephanie was destined to be a bride, and could not have found a better man than John Kauffman. She also knew that Nikki was destined to be a bride someday as well and wondered if she would marry that nice young man, Dave Martin.

Nikki's odds of marrying Dave increased mightily when Stephanie threw her bouquet to the assemblage of young women. Victoria, Nikki, and Cher all lunged for the bouquet but Nikki leapt on her heels and snatched it. She then winked at Dave.

Later that night, Nikki pulled on her panties, smoothed out her bridesmaid dress, and gave Dave a deep kiss.

"The coach talked to me yesterday," Dave said hesitantly.

"Oh."

“There is a scouting camp next month in which scouts from almost every team in Major League Soccer are going to be.”

“But you said that you were going to play for UCLA.”

“Yes, but this is a huge opportunity. Coach said with some work I could actually make a team. They are trying to recruit more American players rather than pull guys from Europe.”

Nikki hesitated, but remembered Stephanie’s advice. If you love someone, support them, don’t grasp them. “Do you want to do this?”

“Yes, I really do.”

“Then tomorrow we start working you hard.”

Nikki removed her panties for the second time that night. “Fuck me now, there is going to be no sex after tonight until you rock the camp.”

Dave kicked a series of soccer balls into the net at the park, then saw his girlfriend, looking more beautiful than ever, approach him. She wore a Women’s USA international team soccer jersey with Mia Hamm’s name and number on the back, and her old soccer cleats, but now with pink laces.

“You look adorable,” Dave said as he hugged Nikki and gave her a kiss.

“There is no time for that. I made out a training regimen for you. Let’s get going there, stud.”

Nikki drilled Dave intensely, having him do wind sprints, traps, shots on goal, and headers. She then scrimmaged against him to work on his ball handling

and tackling. He had to display as many skills as possible to impress the scouts. In the mornings and evenings Dave would run on the beach with Nikki waiting for him at the finish line with a bottle of water, a smile, and a kiss.

The two kept Dave's training regimen up for the month, increasing his repetitions every other day, and his distance runs every third day. The two shopped at Trader Joe's to make sure he was eating healthy; plenty of fruits and vegetables, and no junk food.

Finally, the day arrived and Nikki rode with Dave to the UC-Irvine soccer field. She gave him a tremendous hug, "I know you are going to make it, I love you, Dave."

With newly-spoken words of love from his girlfriend, Dave played in the zone for the entire practice session, and scored two goals in the scrimmage they had arranged. Nikki was jubilant, Dave had to be a sure thing after that. Her man needed to be treated to something special after such a performance.

Nikki reserved a hotel room for that night at Newport Beach and after a steak dinner she took her hero back to their room for dessert.

"Sit down and make yourself comfortable while I change into something I know you will like," Nikki cooed.

Dave relaxed in the suite, kicked off his shoes and massaged his aching feet. Nikki was a slave driver, that was for sure.

Half an hour later, Nikki emerged wearing a bustier and garter combination with stockings and pumps.

“I have driven you hard, now you can do whatever you want with me tonight, I am all yours, stud” she grinned.

Dave had Nikki fondle herself and lick her budding breasts while never breaking eye contact. She then bumped and grinded for him, until he pulled her tight and ordered her to dance in his lap. Grinding against Dave’s crotch, she felt his hardened manhood, then he nodded towards the ground.

Nikki knelt before him, unzipped his fly, and breathed a deep sigh of joy. She licked the head of Dave’s cock, tasting his pre-cum and engulfed his shaft deep into her throat. She ferociously bobbed up and down on Dave’s maleness until he exploded in her mouth. Like a good girl, she swallowed every drop. The session continued for the remainder of the night, with Dave cumming in Nikki’s ass four times before the dawn.

“Coach just called,” Dave said to a very tired Nikki who lay next to him in bed. “Columbus wants me. They want to discuss the contract with me this afternoon.”

“That’s wonderful,” an exhausted Nikki moaned, then drifted back to sleep.

Dave and Nikki sat at a seafood restaurant overlooking the ocean that evening.

“I would like you to come to Columbus with me.”

Nikki shuddered, “I was afraid you were going to ask that.”

“Why? You said you loved me.”

“I meant it and I still love you. It’s just that I am going to be going to college in a few months. I don’t want to give that up.”

“Even if I married you? We are both eighteen. We could stop off in Vegas on the way.”

“Please don’t tempt me. I am going to let you go to Columbus. I will start school and you will become a star soccer player and soon enough we will be married. I know it in my heart of hearts. I will cheer for you in the stands and we will raise a family together. I believe every bit of it.”

“And believing it is good enough?”

“I was kicked out of my parents’ home and came to California and Stephanie believing that what I sought was here, and it is right here looking at me in the face. Believe in what I told you and it will happen. I am going to buy a wedding dress today to wear only for you. I still have some money saved up. That is how much I believe in my dream.”

“I love you, Nikki.”

“I know you do. Your cock tells me that every time you cum inside me.”

“Dad, Mom, some people are at the door that want to see Jeff,” Victoria called one evening after an incessant knocking interrupted the family dinner.

“Who is it?” John asked.

“I don’t know, they look like a couple of hicks going to Vegas.”

“Oh shit,” Stephanie muttered.

Stephanie got up from the table and went to the door trailed by John.

“We are eating dinner,” Stephanie said to the couple. “Could you come back in an hour, or preferably not at all,” Stephanie said to her brother and sister-in-law who she had not seen for ten years.

“Can’t we come in?” her brother-in-law asked in mock friendliness.

“No.”

“Come on, you can let us in.”

“My wife said no,” John growled. “That means no. We are eating now, come back in an hour.”

“We are going to stay right here.”

“Then you are trespassing on my property and I am going to call the police. Stephanie tells me you are a cop, so go and explain a criminal trespassing charge to your boss back in whatever Michigan hole you came from.”

“We will be back in an hour.”

“Aren’t you going to let us in?” Stephanie’s brother asked for a second time after showing up at the door forty minutes later.

“No, I think not,” Stephanie responded. “So what are you here for, other than to leave a pile of shit for us to clean up afterwards?”

“We are here to get our son,” Stephanie’s sister-in-law responded, “to take him back with us and stop him from living this lifestyle.”

“What lifestyle are you referring to?”

“Living in sin in a way God did not intend. Give us our son.”

“Do you have a court order?” Stephanie asked.

“No.”

“Well then, legally Nikki is not your son. You disowned him almost a year ago, or did you forget? Plus Nikki is eighteen, she can make decisions for herself now as an adult. I really don’t think you care about Nikki anyway. What I think is that now that Mom and Dad disowned you, you want to get back in their good graces somehow. If you really cared for your child, you would not have kicked him out and even after that you would have attempted to make contact.”

“Let us see Jeff, let him make the decision.”

“Sure, but Nikki is out in town. Let me call her and see if she wants to see you two.”

Stephanie called Nikki on her cell phone and half an hour later, Dave drove her up in his car. A poised, intelligent, confident young woman emerged from the passenger’s side and marched directly up to her parents with her head held high and her eyes ablaze.

“Mom, Dad, welcome to California, now go home.”

Nikki then turned around and walked back to the car and drove off with Dave.

“You heard your daughter,” Stephanie said to her brother, “welcome to California, now go home, there is nothing for you here.”

Stephanie’s brother lunged for her but John blocked him in the doorway.

“Like I said, trespassing. I’m sure you don’t want assault added to the charges I will file.”

The couple turned and walked away in the twilight of a Pacific Coast evening, never to be seen or heard of again by Stephanie or Nikki.

That night, after a long and happy life as the family dog, Maximus joined his namesake and Kelly Kauffman on the Elysian Fields. Victoria went to move the prone dog the next morning but soon realized he had passed. She broke down in the tears that she had kept inside of her since her mom’s passing almost five years ago. Seeing Victoria’s distress, Stephanie went to her new daughter and held her close while she squatted on the floor, saying it was all right, that she could cry all day if she needed to.

John picked up the deceased dog, rolled him in a blanket and carried him to the back of SUV. That afternoon he returned with the ashes of Maximus in a plastic tub. Victoria had composed herself after bawling for two hours while in the comforting embrace of Stephanie.

The entire family gathered on the cliff overlooking the Pacific that evening, Victoria holding the tub of Maximus’s ashes while John held an ornamental urn from a funeral home, the mortal remains of Kelly Kauffman. Brian stood next to his father while Stephanie and Nikki stood to the side in silence. The wind had shifted back to sea when Victoria and John released the ashes into the breeze and watched the

fine dust quietly settle into the surf and sands below. At that moment the sun dipped below the horizon of the Pacific Ocean. The family then went back inside and into their future together.

The future of the Kauffmans could not have looked any brighter from the vantage point of that summer. Nikki was deeply in love with Dave and would be starting her freshman year at UCLA while Victoria would be starting her college career at Wellesley. Her relationship with Randy never caught fire, although she had incredibly fond memories of her prom night. They liked each other and now respected each other, but that wasn't enough to kindle a lasting relationship. It did not matter anymore to Victoria as she was on her way to Wellesley, where her family was confident she would excel. Sooner or later she would find Mr. Right, hopefully somebody a lot like her father.

The family packed the Mercedes SUV with Victoria's belongings and towed a small U-Haul trailer with some furniture for the dorm room. In traveling east they reproduced in reverse Jeff's earlier desperate trek towards California and salvation. Now Nikki calmly studied the wide open spaces that a year before had caused her such dread.

"Dad, can we stop in Anadarko?" Nikki asked. "The last time I was there, I was too poor to even eat."

"Of course we will, sweetheart," John responded. He had accepted Nikki as one of his own children now that he and Stephanie were married. She now referred to him exclusively as Dad, but continued to refer to her aunt as Stephanie. John took the exit off I-40 and the family checked into a Spartan but clean hotel.

"Do you know a good restaurant?" John asked the Indian hotelkeeper.

“There’s a good family place on Main Street,” the man recommended. He was entirely correct as the barbecue was sublime.

A day and a half later, John asked Nikki if she would like to head to Michigan.

“There is nothing there for me now, and nobody I want to see,” she emphatically responded.

The family did stop in Columbus, timing their trip to coincide with one of Dave’s soccer matches. Nikki proudly wore the Martin number 21, Dave’s sole fan in the crowd, but stardom would come eventually. She joyfully stood and applauded when Dave was substituted at striker for the last four minutes of the match, and again erupted into cheering when he took a shot on goal, which unfortunately went a foot wide.

Stephanie grinned at John. Nikki was deeply in love with Dave.

The family continued on the next day, connecting to I-90 and eventually the Massachusetts Turnpike. Finally the SUV arrived at the Wellesley College campus in Boston. In an hour Victoria was unpacked and ready to begin her freshman orientation. She had met several of her dorm mates already; they seemed to like and respect her quiet but relaxed maturity and she already seemed on good terms with her roommate. Before heading back to California, the Kauffmans had dinner together at an oyster bar, but when they dropped Victoria back at her dorm, Stephanie broke down in tears. She was proud of Victoria even though she could claim only a small role in her upbringing. She would miss her dreadfully for the upcoming semester until Victoria returned for Christmas.

Seeing her new mother's distress, Victoria embraced Stephanie.

"Here, mom, hold out your hand, palm up."

Stephanie did as requested.

"Now, how do you hold somebody you love?"

"You support them, but never grasp too tight. You let them fly on their own and if they love you, they will return," Stephanie answered.

"Exactly. It's time I started to fly on my own, but I do love you, Mom. So you know that I will always return to you and Dad."

"I love you too, Victoria, and remember, stay classy."

"I will Mom, I will."

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