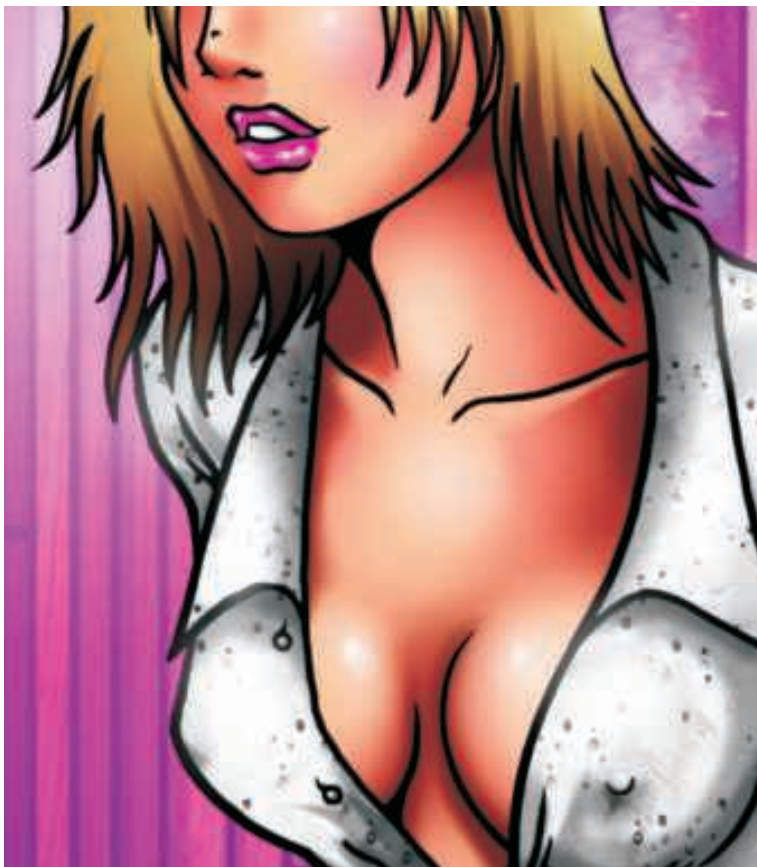




Reluctant Press presents:

Mandy Meets Her TV

Monica James



AN 'ADULT TV' E-BOOK

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Mandy Meets Her TV

By Monica James

Prologue

“Arnold, can you come in here a moment?” Serena said in her sweetest, most seductive voice. “We need to discuss our Profit & Loss ledger.”

The door to the executive suite of ‘Pinnacle Dot Com’ opened slowly as Arnold Pap came in. His eyes were glazed showing slight terror like a convict’s first glimpse of the gallows. Standing in front of the huge walnut desk, he waited and watched. “Yes, Ms Fleener,” he said trying to hide his nervousness.

“Relax, please,” she said with a note of disdain. “I have the figures for the close of the quarter and they are not pretty. I realize you are not the cause of our spiral into bankruptcy but I want to be certain I read this impending disaster correctly.”

Arnold Pap gathered his courage and cleared his throat. “Ahem! If I may, Ms Fleener, I know you have been busy but over the past two quarters plus a few months I’ve consistently shown you the disappointing results.”

Serena Fleener frowned. “All right! I admit I’ve not been as attentive as perhaps is required. When my dad died and left me this over-grown job shop he did not leave me the knowledge I’d need to evaluate these fluctuations. What has happened here?”

“I only know what Mister Fleener would have done, well, hopefully.”

Serena’s eyes flashed anger. “Which is, uh, exactly what?”

“He often scanned and product results in view of the costs and sales. When one item wavered, he went hunting for something to replace it. There are many opportunities for a shop like ours, well, yours to take on new concepts. He was a brilliant man, Ms Fleener.”

“Not according to his wife, my mother. She constantly told me my dad designed the donut. He was the asshole in the center of things.”

“Grossly unfair, if I may say so.”

She sighed and put her head back against the soft velvet of her chair. “This morning I received a call from our bank. We are running on almost total credit. They want a deposit to protect their investment. How do you see all this?” She drummed her fingers on the desk.

Arnold slid forward in the chair, licked his lips nervously. He began in a slow voice. "We cannot hope to remedy the bank's fears by ignoring the dilemma. First, I strongly suspect there is someone in our organization deliberately causing our production costs to skyrocket. This someone, or more I suppose possible, is in the employ of our competitor someplace. Secondly; that competitor is working both ends against the middle by invading our territory and running off with the orders even our old time sources once sent to us."

Serena's jaw dropped in amazement. "Can you document this or is it just a little fantasy of yours?"

"You asked my opinion, Miss," he answered in a near whisper. "Right now we need an influx of cash and some new orders for our shop. It's the handwriting on the wall."

She bit her lip. "That handwriting might be graffiti but we at least have some action indicated. How do we find this malcontent in our midst?"

"It's there in my quarterly summary submitted to you about six months ago. You did not reply. Briefly, I think we should isolate each order in process and make everyone involved accountable. That way we would have factors to evaluate. As for getting some new orders, Mister Fleener usually did that on his own. In all, Miss, it is up to you."

She stood up and came around the desk. Her near six foot in height towered over the humble man. She leaned her derriere against the desk and waved her knee from one side to the other. "You have been honest with me, Arnold, and I appreciate it. You set up the accounting changes as you recommended; I'll think this other part through. Wish us both luck. As for the cash, I can put up the Fleener estate as collateral. Our bank

would love the extra interest that might accrue doing that.”

Arnold Pap smiled, an impish grin and a seldom seen twinkle in his eyes. “Yes, Miss; may I suggest a rich husband with some technical knowledge?”

Serena smiled in spite of herself. She picked up the appointment book off the desk and threatened to throw it at him. She shook her head in wonder at her audacious head of accounting and watched until he closed the door behind him.

‘That’s all I need, a man to screw up my life,’ she thought casually. ‘What’s the saying? Oh, yes; “you have to go down on a lot of pretty girls before you find a transvestite’.”

I.

Mandy Alban rushed to open the door when she heard his footsteps on the stairway leading to their third floor walkup studio apartment.

“Welcome home, my lord-and-master,” she said in a cheery voice. “Any news? Is there a new reality out in the world like, perhaps, a job?”

Meta Petred frowned. “Lots of calls; no nibbles,” he answered, shoulders slumped reflecting his discouraged efforts. “I did talk to some other folks as broke as we are. There is a day labor office within walking distance. They do all kinds of jobs and pay when the day is over. It will keep us out of the queue at the local dole.” He tried to smile.

They embraced and she lingered on his kiss. “You seem to be having a difficult time selling yourself. You are not pretty enough. Shall I try starting tomorrow?”

"I know you are joking. With your elegant figure and talented hips you would be on your back in record time. But where could you find a spot on one side of the street? Competition is fierce; everyone is broke."

They sat at the small dining table. Mandy poured coffee. "I like the idea of a daily paycheck," she said slowly. "Do they allow girls?"

"All I have is the address and a rumor but it may work out. Do you want to come along to check it out?"

"No; you can do that well enough. I hate being bottled up here all day so I'll check the listings again in the morning. Maybe something will turn up."

He kissed her on the forehead as she began clearing the dishes. "Living together, being a team, was your idea. Are you still willing?"

She giggled. "No offense, but you are a much better partner than I'd find at home. Nothing there except trying to referee 'Friday Night at the Fights.'"

"It's settled then. Between the two of us we might get through a week without starvation rations. Anytime you want to call it quits, I' will understand."

#

Next morning, Meta put on a clean shirt and headed out the door to find the day labor office. Not far behind him, Mandy cinched her belt and pulled on flesh colored stockings.

She knew the route by heart to catch all the agencies to read the listings. About mid-morning she stopped to sit on a park bench for a rest. Looking around as if she

might be committing a criminal act, she slipped off her shoes to relieve her tired feet.

A tall, willowy, woman dressed like Saks Fifth Avenue, approached her. "Hello," the attractive woman said, "I've noticed you checking on the employment boards. What kind of work do you do?"

"My associate degree at the Greenbrier Community College left me with a stack of unpaid school loans and a routine question, 'Would you like fries with that?' Don't laugh; young people tend to be impulsive." She smiled up to see an interested, friendly face. She slid over to make space when the older lady sat next to her.

"My name is Serena Fleener," she said crisply. "Some special demeanor you have caught my attention. Are you married?"

Mandy squinted through a sudden shaft of sunlight from the small tree. "Uh, not married, ma'am. I do have a partner; he's also unemployed. Why are you interested? Are you hiring? Who do I have to kill?"

Serena smiled. "Oh, please; not ma'am. I'm hardly out of college myself but my dad died and I'm trying to take his place in a business I am nowhere near qualified to control. Can we talk about it?"

"You betcha!" Mandy answered with enthusiasm. "I can cook."

After asking a battery of questions, Serena was more interested. "Let me tell you what I have in mind," she said still speculating on the girl's naiveté. She waited to get her thoughts together and a relentless stare into the younger girls' eyes held them both. "You are very pretty," she said finally. "Also, in just these few minutes, you've exhibited a social skill perhaps unusual in one so young. When can I meet this young

man of yours? I'm not sure a guy and a girl will fit what I have in mind but, well, I am desperate."

Mandy smiled. "Despondent desperate or just anxious desperate?"

Serena laughed. "You are so quick; this may work out." Still pensive, she ran one hand along Mandy's naked arm enjoying the smooth flesh.



Mandy leaned slightly toward Serena and their eyes met. "Yes, Serena," Mandy said softly, her eyes belied the confusion she was trying to hide. "Can you tell me what this is about? If you don't need him, his name is Meta Petred, maybe you can team me up with someone else if two girls are needed."

Serena sighed. "Your innocence as well as your beauty is the asset we need. The job entails industrial espionage. You go to work for my company, no french fries, and let me know what you learn. We are in a serious bind right now because we suspect some sabotage but are unsure where and how to look."

Mandy put her hands in her lap. She turned her shoulders to face the imperious gaze the older woman was using on her. Trying to appear docile, she waited for whatever was next. "And my looks are going to make the crooks confess? Not likely or, in the vernacular, 'I don't think so.' I am willing to try. If nothing else I can be a loyal employee when it comes to work assignments."

Serena sighed. She fished in her purse. "Here is my card with the address. Talk this over with Mister Petred and call me."

"I don't have to get permission or anything. Is that why you asked if we are married?"

Serena stood up. "Consider it your first assignment, then." She snapped out a one hundred dollar bill and pressed it into Mandy's hand. "You said you would be loyal; you just received your first job." She turned to go. "Call me," she said and flashed a smile. She made the phone signal, thumb and little finger, and walked away.

‘Wow!’ Mandy thought as she tried to piece together all that the stunning lady executive had said. ‘Matters not; I want the job but I’ll wait until I talk to Meta.’ She walked slowly back toward their apartment. The crisp bill still held in her fist teamed with a growling stomach. She turned into the market.

#

Meta Petred came in late in the afternoon. He was near exhaustion from moving heavy boxes all day in a truck loading zone. “Do I smell food?”

Mandy kissed him with a spatula still in one hand. “Yes, a slight windfall so you get sirloin steak and mashed potatoes. A working man needs protein, n’est pas?”

He sat down and sipped the wine after she poured it. “Which side of the street are you working and is it a day shift?” he asked smiling. “And, do they need a piano player?”

“Don’t be silly; I have a possible job offer with a big company that makes widgets or something. The lady that owns it sat next to me on the park bench. She was interested and when she found me qualified for what she had in mind, made me a tentative offer. She gave me this card and told me to call her after I talked it over with you. She also bought your steak dinner, you lucky guy.”

“Why hesitate? I would have gone with the lady, you know that.”

“I am trying to play along as the innocent which is what I think she wants. Also, if this works out, maybe they will have an opening for you as well.”

He pushed the empty plate away and laced his stomach with open fingers. "That was great; thank the nice lady for me. I'm going to move boxes again tomorrow. Is there any steak left?"

She laughed. "One small issue I want to get your opinion on, well, maybe small. Anyhow, I think the lady who appears as rich as she is attractive made a pass at me. I'll know for sure as time goes on."

His eyes drooped giving her the message he was too tired to think. "Have you ever had sex with a woman?" he asked slowly.

"No; I know about it, of course. Most girls are curious, I suppose. I wanted your opinion."

He struggled to get up. He hurriedly endorsed his paycheck and handed it to her. "My opinion is that the lady has good taste. If it comes down to paying off the lady's interest with some sex in exchange for me moving boxes, what is the issue here? You are beautiful as you know. What you don't seem to know is that you are 'hot'. I don't see a problem unless you have some ingrained Victorian ethic that won't let you respond. That would throw us both out on the street."

"Yes, a matter of perspective." She punched the numbers into her cell phone.

She was waiting for him when he came out of the shower. Again she admired his masculine body and told herself he was cute with a towel wrapped around his head. 'Cute enough to be a girl', she thought.

"So, what did the lady say? Do you get a second interview?"

"We are having lunch tomorrow at the White Peacock. I know the place because I've applied for work there. The maitre d. liked me but the owner did not."

“Enjoy!” he said and headed for the bed. “Wake me about six; I can’t afford to miss the next job, whatever that is.” He was asleep when his head hit the pillow.

Mandy left early enough to be sure she would meet Serena at the correct time. She wore her best flowered skirt with the hemline at mid-calf. The lace blouse had belt pulls that, when she tied them tight, showed off her breast line, empire style. A simple ornament dangled from a chain around her neck.

She went into the restaurant lobby early for her appointment so she sat on one of the posh benches situated there for customers waiting for a table.

“Hello, again,” the man said approaching her. He smiled and folded his arms in front of him. “We filled that kitchen opening; sorry.”

She looked up at him, bewildered. “I have an interview appointment for one-thirty. It would be best if you do not say I was turned down when I applied for work here.”

He grinned. “I’m lucky to have this job so I don’t cause any trouble. It seems I can get into plenty of trouble without going out of my way to cause it. Who is expecting you?”

Mandy held the card fast in her fist. “Serena Fleener,” she said simply.

“Ah, you pick ‘em pretty and rich. What kind of job? I may need one the way this lunch business is thinning out.”

“Don’t mess me up, sir,” she said firmly.

“I won’t and my name is Griffes in case that comes up in conversation.”

When he turned to go, Serena swept into the lobby with a broad smile when she saw Mandy sitting so pertly waiting.

“Darling, you look wonderful. You wear youth and beauty like a knight wears armor. Was that Griffes you were talking to? Watch him; he has an eye for pretty girls.”

She stood up. “Yes, but I told him not to cause trouble as my time with you is very important.”

“I would expect nothing less of you.” They waited a few minutes before Griffes swept them up with a grandiose gesture and escorted them to the dining room. He held the chair for Serena, then next for Mandy.

Mandy held the luncheon menu daintily and admired with a longing look the many delicious selections. “This is already the nicest job interview I have ever had,” she said looking at the entrée stapled to the edge of the menu marked ‘day’s special’. She peered at Serena over the top of the menu.

“You are adorable. Pick out anything you wish, I’m on an expense account.”

They ordered and chatted like sorority sisters on a lark. Finally, Mandy could stand it no longer. “Is the job still open?”

Serena smiled as if there was some secret. “Yes and no. I took the liberty of checking your work history. Most of the agencies have you in inventory. Yes, we want you but, in discussing this with my in-house advisor, we think two girls will best suit the job. Did you talk to Mister Petred?”

“Yes; Meta urged me to take the job no matter what. He is doing day labor and thinks he can go back to looking for work full time if I can bring in enough to

pay the rent. He has a modest annuity left him from his grandparents."

"I see, thank you. Meta is also listed in all the agencies so I have a full picture of the both of you. Now, about his education; tell me that."

"He has one year left to complete before getting a degree in systems of some kind. He has been studying but, frankly, it is difficult for him in our present circumstances. I asked you yesterday who I had to kill for this job."

Serena giggled. "I do have a few people in mind but that is a bit drastic. Did you admit to him how well we met each other?"

"He was really wiped out doing labor to which he is unaccustomed. I mentioned that I thought you might have an intimate interest in me but I wasn't sure."

Serena reached across the table and pressed Mandy's hand. "You are sensitive as well as smart; up another notch in my estimation." She delayed as if thinking over what to say next. "I hope I can be candid with you. We do not need a guy to hire and for the job we expect of you, we feel we should have another girl. How willing is this man of yours to adapt to such a special need?"

She wrinkled her brow. "I'm not sure I follow you," she said simply.

"Let me explain. Most important, I think working together will give us quick results. You probably agree. Secondly, I'd like you to ask him if he would object to dressing and acting as a girl so he would have access to areas restricted to girls only. Wait! Don't answer now. Talk to him. If he wants a good job with steady pay to

get away from the day labor, he might be willing to cooperate.”

She pursed her lips, thoughtful. “He is really cute. I can see him as a girl. Also, he is very smart and will probably really do well when he finishes school. He’s only looking for a chance.”

“According to his height/weight, it comes close as a young girl. Are you both, ah, devoted to each other? Might he go astray in the company of some pretty girls? Transvestites are a novelty some of the girls will respect.”

Mandy blushed and grasped the wine glass. She gulped and stared at Serena sitting blithely opposite her waiting for an answer. “I have to talk this over with Meta, of course but the way he tells me now he would be willing to do anything to get out of the rut we’re in.”

Serena grinned. “All right, it’s settled. Go to the employment office in the morning; tell them the Bentley Agency sent you. The HR manager will be expecting you but will act like you are a casual part time or some such. You must remain secretive with mouth shut. Do the job assigned. It will take you a while to get into the requirements. I think you can do it or I wouldn’t be making you this offer. You liked that hundred-dollar bill? In addition to your regular hourly earnings on the product floor, you will receive a salary twice a month of five of those lovely hundred dollar bills.” She hesitated. “And you don’t have to kill anyone. But, find the culprit and you’ll get a generous bonus. Any questions?”

“No ma’am; uh Serena, uh Miss Fleener.”

She laughed and signed the luncheon check.

The overcast sky began to aim rain drops at them mixed with hail as they left the restaurant. They both screeched, laughing at each other, and raced for Serena's car.

Once inside, Serena leaned over and pulled Mandy's seat belt across her lap. "Here, honey; don't want anything to happen to you. Too important." She stopped midway and stared into Mandy's eyes. "Are you afraid of me?"

Mandy took the belt and snapped it in place. "Afraid, no; maybe curious. Sometimes I feel giddy when I see you staring at me. I wonder if I should ask you what is on your mind."

Serena slid one hand across Mandy's shoulders. "I'm not sure myself so it is difficult to answer you. Maybe I'm cracking under the strain. I've not made our circumstances clear. If we don't get control of our costs and increase sales, the chance of closing is palpable. Just the thought eats away at me because my dad put such trust in me. I know this doesn't interest you but I want you to know I mean you no harm. The pressure is making me eccentric. I wanted some release but didn't know what until I saw you sitting on that park bench. Are you offended?"

Mandy closed her eyes tight. She opened when she felt Serena move one hand off her back to fondle her naked neck and shoulder. Her mind was racing with possibilities. She knew saying or responding incorrectly would cost her the opportunity. Her brain committee was barking at her: 'Are you nuts? She likes you; you like her. You want an engraved invitation?' She swallowed and touched the back of Serena's hand on her shoulder.

"I'm not offended," she said slowly. "If any issue, I should be flattered. No woman or girl has ever shown such an interest in me. I'm unsure what you want, exactly, but I'm not afraid and not upset." She turned her head to see Serena leaning toward her.

Serena cupped the young woman's chin with her fingers and gently brushed Mandy's cheeks with her lips. In the fraction of a second, Serena was giving Mandy the option. She waited. Mandy exhaled and brought her body forward until their lips were inches apart. Serena flushed a rush of joy as she came down with a tender kiss on Mandy's lips.

They embraced and Mandy nuzzled her face into Serena's neck. The rain and hail pelted the roof in a serene pattern. "I should confess," she began. "I've never gone this far with a girl. There have been many opportunities, I suppose but the strict glare of my mom turned me away from exploring. Now, with my dad gone, Mom is in a Florida condo. I feel free for the first time in my life."

"You are relying on me. What can I say? I know what girls do in the middle of the night when they want more from each other. Any girl can say that but few enter into such intimacy. Many might be tempted but often, as I see it, a motive is needed. You just gave me one."

Serena squealed and settled another kiss on Mandy's waiting lips. This time with more force. Mandy parted her lips when she felt Serena's firm tongue tip plowing her mouth from side to side. "It appears we are both due for a new adventure. Tell me, 'hot' girl with the pretty mouth, do you like my kisses?"

“Yes; I’m thrilled without knowing why exactly. What are you going to do?”

“You just agreed to let me touch you; be close to me. We both have to think this over before we get too complicated.” She moved her free hand to the top of Mandy’s head to twirl some strands of hair. Next, she caressed Mandy’s inviting breast line. They kissed again and Serena brought her tongue out flat to spread a wet swath along Mandy’s neck. When Mandy did not object, she settled for another kiss and moved her hand along Mandy’s hips onto her long shapely legs so well hidden by the flowery skirt. At the hemline tugging Mandy’s legs she slid her hand beneath and went higher onto the smooth inviting thighs.

At that point, Mandy erupted and threw both her hands between her legs to stop Serena’s progress. “Please, Serena. I’m sorry but this is moving too fast.”

Serena stopped but kept her hand on Mandy’s naked thigh. “I was going to give you a finger wave. Can you come that way?”

“Yes, ma’am but don’t rush me.” She continued to block Serena from going any higher. Their hands met and their eyes met. It was a tense moment.

Finally, Serena whispered softly, “If you want the job, you have to take me along with it. Make up your mind. I’ve decided already. I know what I want and intend to get it. Call it my being eccentric.”

“Your stated peculiarity has met my virtue. Tell me what to expect, please.”

Serena felt Mandy relax her hands slightly. She kissed again and tilted her head to whisper, “I want your mouth, Mandy.”

II.

"I don't think I heard you correctly," Meta said. "I had a fairly easy day today doing inventory. I came home to my sweet Mandy and asked this simple question. Do I get a better job or not?"

"I'll repeat the deal, Meta. It may seem outlandish but probably harmless. You get to dress as a girl so you can go where there is 'girls only'. It's not going to kill you and I'd rather have you doing that than working with a stranger."

"Explain, please," he said, hands on hips as if daring her to implicate him in some dastardly plot.

"You have to keep this quiet. There will be some expenses to get you dressed to pull this off. You were in the school play, right? Well, consider this as an acting girl. We get reimbursed for girl stuff we have to buy. There will be some medications I'm told but I don't know what that's all about."

"You must be crazy. I know what a transvestite is—chick with a dick. I'm a guy. Don't make me into someone I'm not. This is insane, Mandy. Why are you so insistent to embarrass me like this?"

Mandy had expected him to rebel. She carefully unfolded a piece of paper outlining the expected cash flow assuming the job lasts for six months.

"Just look at this and tell me you're not interested. Your vanity can be very costly. With this opportunity you can go back to school with a comfortable cushion. In addition, assuming I can hold this job, I can see you

in school without having to work on the side. We are in no shape to look a gift horse in the mouth."

Meta whistled in appreciation. "Well, Mandy, this does put a different spin on it. Start talking. This company, Pinnacle Dot Com, is well established. I checked that by asking a friend of mine who has a broker. You say this CEO is really smashing? How far did she get with you? I know you like oral sex. Is that what she gets from you? Is that how you ended up with such big bucks?"

Mandy was fearful at first she wouldn't be able to talk to Meta. She shoved out her chin in defiance and wiped the tears away that were coursing her cheek. "Nothing has happened yet. We did some kissing while waiting out a rain storm in her car. She bought me an expensive meal and we had lots to drink. When she gave me a finger wave I had an orgasm; not faked. The lady is skilled."

Meta went to the refrigerator, grabbed a cold beer and opened it. "She will do more than that, I guess you know. Has she told you 'up front' what she wants from you? Are you willing to go along with this bizarre travesty?"

"She gave me some time to think it over. In view of all that has been said, I've agreed to cooperate. I've never been with a woman; not even thought much about it, really. She says she wants my mouth."

Meta nearly choked on his beer. "Does she know we love each other? She must be supercharged for you."

"She says she has never been with a girl. She wants to experiment with me because she likes me and because she knows I won't refuse. Simple, isn't it? I start

work tomorrow morning. I've been through all the little hoops they use on part time early help. They need to find out who is causing such a downturn in profits. There has been a lot of discussion there. When I get the inventory clerk's job, I'll have to go through all the jobs, beginning to end, to do a cost analysis. Actually, Meta, you are better qualified for this than I am but it doesn't seem too far out."

Meta frowned. "So; where do I fit in? Why dress up like a girl?"

"You have to fit in with the production crowd; all women. When you get a feel for the product design, the cost estimates and such as the like, the girls will probably help you. A transvestite in their midst will spur them on. You will become a celebrity as soon as you are found out. How you keep all this together is up to you."

"Let me see that cash crop you just showed me?" He took it and did some arithmetic in his head. "Well, I'll have to move a lot of boxes to reach that high. What did you say about buying clothes or something? What medicines?"

Mandy leaped across the room and pinned him against the sink. She came down on his lips with a sexy kiss. "So you'll do it? Excellent; I can't wait to tell Serena you have seen the light and it is dollars. We can go this Saturday to get you some outfits. We'll start with Goodwill or the Salvation Army store. Only one 'dress up' set would probably be enough."

"It will take until Saturday for me to get over the shock."

Mandy gleefully accepted his arms around her. "This is going to be such fun."

#

Saturday, Mandy used her first salaried paycheck to buy jeans, sox, low-heeled sandals and form fitting shirts. Next stop, the beauty salon where Meta sat through a 'butch' cut. "Where to from here?" he asked.

They piled all their packages in a taxi and headed to the apartment. Climbing up the stairs, Meta was proud to show his physical condition by skipping steps two at a time. "Take it easy, Miss Meta," Mandy said in a teasing tone. "Even if you can duel with elephants you have to be ladylike." She laughed.

A package arrived and Mandy opened it carefully while Meta went to the shower to clean up for a dinner out.

The first set was a matching black lace. The bra was marked as an enhancer to show off breasts Meta did not have. Next, there was a matching control panty gaff. She sniggered at that. A quart size Ziploc bag had a set of tapered triangle breast inserts. She held the box upside down to be certain she didn't miss anything.

Meta came out of the bathroom with his butch-bob haircut gleaming from the grease they were given at the salon. "What's all the packaging?" he asked.

Mandy jumped up showing her joyful enthusiasm. "Wait! Try these on. You can wear them to dinner as a trial."

Before long Meta was dressed in gray slacks with a blue dress blouse open at the collar. The bra enhancer was barely visible even with the triangle inserts. He struggled at first with the panty gaff but finally mastered it.

“All right, you scheming witch,” he said putting his arms around her. “Are you ready to feed your abused, suffering and starving, transvestite?”

“And what is the price you are willing to pay?”

“camelcrap!” he spit out. “I’m not paying you; you’re paying me.”

They went hand-in-hand down the stairway to search for a taxi. “And what am I paying you, my gallant escort?”

“The way you are going with this Serena broad, it might be my last chance to get a lengthy blowjob. As for you, ‘hot’ lady, I think you are due for one as well. Of course this has to be administered by your loyal and horny transvestite here represented.”

She laughed and a taxi sailed to a stop. “White Peacock” she said to the driver. “This is the place I told you about. They wouldn’t hire me for the kitchen but they don’t mind feeding me. Relax, all this goes on our expense account.”

There was a short line but Mandy had made reservations. They waited their turn while several couples ahead of them went into the lobby. Mandy looked wistfully at the parking lot where she and Serena had had their first understanding. She remembered the brief orgasm at the touch of Serena’s fingers. Then she considered what had been said and she was momentarily despondent.

“Hello, Griffes,” Mandy said. “Can you feed a couple starving customers?”

Griffes took a deep breath to expand his chest. “I can do better than that; you get a private room with built-in entertainment.”

Mandy frowned. "You joke, right? Are you sure you don't want me to help you in the kitchen?"

He laughed and led them to a private room adjacent to the dining common area.

Serena Fleener and Arnold Pap sat at a large table made up for four. The elegant silver service, crystal glasses and fresh flowers decorating the center, elicited an astonished response. "Welcome, girls," Serena said with a broad smile.

"I had no idea you were up to such mischief," Mandy said. "Next time I want to be alone with my girlfriend, I'll not tell you about it."

They all laughed.

Arnold Pap shook Meta's hand and winked. "These gals know how to play games but not how to win. You do look splendid, sir," he said to Meta.

"I see you received the package I sent you. There is more to be done but I'm certain it will wait. Tonight, alas!, we talk business."

Meta fell under Serena's spell immediately. "I've been too harsh on you," he said to Mandy. "This lady is gorgeous. Now that I'm a girl, she might be an agreeable date for a meeting in the woods."

Serena giggled. "Keep your panty gaff on straight," she said lightly. She turned to Arnold Pap. "You have the floor, Arnold. These are our two operatives whom we hope will get us out of the road to bankruptcy court."

"Maybe we can charge them for the bank manager's heart attack. It happened when he barely made our payroll." He looked furtively around the table. "Our boat apparently has two leaks," he began. "First, the

trouble-maker someplace in our organization is piling cost on cost. Why is a mystery that we hope you two will solve. Next, as if that wasn't bad enough, we are keeping skilled workers on the payroll with nothing for them to do. We desperately need some new business. I understand, Mister Petred, you have a technical education. I'll explain: Pinnacle Dot Com is basically a job shop. We take up the slack when one of the large suppliers delivers substandard product which the customer cannot use. We have the skilled help to duplicate the product and put it in production. Of course, the cost is high but still not as high as shutting down some profitable operation somewhere. Do you get the picture?"

Meta nodded 'yes'. He glanced at Serena who was hanging on every word and across to Mandy whose face shown her pride in him. "I have an idea that might help but it will take some doing. If it works, maybe you will get me out of that girl's sorority you are running."

"Tell us about it," Serena said smiling but her eyes were darkly serious.

"We're listening," Arnold said.

"I had a friend in architectural drawing when I was a sophomore at State University. His name is Tom Colerain. He was president of the sailing club, as well as some other spinoffs. His complaint was that he needed a part, a tang I think he called it, for his sailboat and couldn't get it in time for some regatta he was looking forward to. His idea was to strip all the internet listings of parts usage for the major sailing craft and duplicate the items that always seemed to need replacement. That would be right in your sphere, would it not?"

Arnold was on the edge of his chair. "That is precisely what we need to keep alive. If such a plan works, we would have initial production and later, replacement or after-market activity. Do you have this plan well enough in mind to give us a prospective analysis?"

Meta frowned. "Well, sir. No; not exactly. I just recall Tom Colerain raving like a maniac because he couldn't enter some race or something with his boat. He was a sailing fanatic for sure."

Serena spoke up. "Can you contact this friend and get the plan in detail? We can probably promise a service and, if it works as well as it sounds, your Mister Colerain could get royalty from it."

"I'll look into it. Now that I think about it, we can give it the name, Colerain Kit. Maybe even, "Don't Leave Port Without It!" What do you think, Mandy?"

"I think you are a ruddy genius, that's what," she said bouncing on her chair.

Serena put on a happy smile. She touched Mandy's hand.

"Dear, I remember you told me this charming girlfriend of yours had an interest in mechanical gadgetry." She turned to face Meta. "Tell me now that you might be our resident genius, just exactly how does a slide rule work?"

Meta laughed. "Quite simple, actually. My dad explained it to me and I was so dense or otherwise distracted by a pretty girl like Mandy that he had to hit me with it several times. It's called a slip stick."

"I'm convinced," Arnold said in a droll tone. He called for their waiter and an iced bucket of champagne

arrived. They congratulated each other until the dinner order arrived.

As the party broke up, Serena leaned over and whispered to Mandy. "You've done a great service to Pinnacle Dot Com tonight if all this works as well as it seems on the surface. Actually, I'm delighted. Your foreman gave you a compliment at the production meeting yesterday. I pretended to not know who you are." She looked around to see Arnold and Meta in discussion. "Have you given any thought to our last meeting? It was a marvel to see you so aroused."

"Serena, please don't push too much. I like the company, the work and most of the girls are top class. I've not heard anything negative or gossipy about you so what you said about not being experienced is likely true. It is difficult to hide scandal in such a close knit group."

Serena's eyes blazed. "Answer the question! I'm being very patient but it is wearing thin."

Mandy looked at the carpet, eyes downcast in a shy gesture. "You have a strong case, Miss Fleener. Meta and I can see a light of freedom at the end of the tunnel. I am grateful to you." She looked up, eyes moist. "The answer is 'yes'.

Next working day, Mandy was totaling some production when Arnold Pap approached her. "Please bring those figures into the office. You can explain them so I can review."

"Yes sir," she answered and followed Arnold into the office. She put the sheets of paper on a worn table. "I haven't balanced yet, sir, but I should be able to update the job shop computer before the shift is over. Was there something you want of me?"



He moved closer and she stepped away.

“Young lady, I have to admit you have me in thrall as well as Serena. I have known Serena since she was a little girl so we are close even though we work to-

gether. She told me what it was about you that she found so fascinating. You have to agree."

"Oh, Mister Pap, please don't do this. I have a good relationship with Meta Petred. You wouldn't want to rupture that. He might well be a valuable asset to Pinnacle Dot Com."

"May I be frank, Miss?"

"Please do."

His eyes gleamed in lust. "I am aware of what young people do these days now that some taboos about oral sex have been removed. You have an exquisite mouth. I want it. I don't care if you agree or not; that's what I wanted to say to you."

She raised herself on the balls of her feet. She fought to control the anger swelling in her. "That's about as off-handed a compliment as I've ever heard. I don't care what you want. Stay out of my way." She stomped her foot, scooped up the papers and left the office.

Arnold Pap had set in motion the first step in a betrayal that thrilled him. Now, he thought to himself, I have to get to her vulnerable streak. That shouldn't be too difficult.

Mandy met Meta at the door that evening. "How was your day, desirable Mandy?" he said. But, one look told him she was seething with anger. "Uh-oh; you better tell me about it."

"And you better fix me a strong drink before I explode."

He frowned and returned with a tumbler of seltzer and vodka. "O.K. pretty lady. Out with it."

"Arnold Pap pulled me into the shop office this afternoon and propositioned me."

"All you sorority girls are alike," he said softly trying to put his thoughts in line. "You spend hours making yourself attractive and when some lusty guy or gal comes along to offer a liaison, you get angry. That Pap fellow is just horny. He's at that age, I think. Anyhow, at dinner the other night he propositioned me as well. I did not fly off the handle but politely told him I don't give head to anyone but my Mandy. He then made a strange statement."

"Which was?"

Meta rubbed his chin. "He said he didn't care how long it took for me to come around. He would wait but he usually gets what he wants. Something like that."

"He probably would have said the same thing to me but I didn't give him a chance. No matter; I got the message."

Meta kicked off his shoes. "Shall we order in Chinese?"

"How can you be so calm? Have you ever done that to a guy? Maybe Tom Colerain?"

"Don't blow a gasket, love. I have a much more liberal attitude than you do. I don't particularly like the idea but I will probably do it if I have good reason. Maybe when I get accustomed to being a girl, acting and thinking like a girl, some ape will tag me. Not likely, however."

"Oh, Meta," she said throwing herself into his arms. "Hold me."

Later as they snuggled together on the double bed, Meta drew her closer and fondled her breast through the flimsy negligee. "Don't let it get to you, darling. You are very beautiful and should be used to being sought after by now. What did you say to Serena?"

Mandy snuggled closer. "I told her you have better boobs than she does."

He roared with laughter. "So you like me as a girl? I'm flattered. What else did you say?"

"Nothing but that was when she said something strange. It unnerved me. She said, quote, 'You have to go down on a lot of girls to find a transvestite.' How does that strike you?"

"That's the old one about kissing frogs to find a handsome prince. Just a paraphrase. Do you read anything more into it?"

"Yes; she wants your mouth as well."

"This is a non-fatal obsession, love. Go to sleep."

III.

After several weeks, Meta Petred had found acceptance among the girls on the production floor. If any of them found 'her' peculiar, nothing was said. He continued to cost the jobs coming in and, when time permitted, followed each order as it progressed through the myriad steps.

Within three weeks he put together his proposal for the 'Colerain Kit', submitted it to Arnold Pap but did not hear anything more for several days.

Finally, Serena Fleener paged him. He went into her office and sat when she motioned to him. She was on the telephone and rapidly taking notes for something.

"Ah, Miss Petred," she said gaily. "Congratulations on pulling off such a grand act. The girls have come

and gone without a word about you inspecting, checking dimensions, whatever. It's a function traditionally assigned to the smartest girls. Are you happy here?"

Meta cleared 'her' throat. "That depends on why you pulled me in on such a busy day."

She smiled. "I've reviewed the 'Colerain Kit' product analysis and, frankly, I think it is brilliant. You made a cogent plan. Are you ready to put it into action?"

"So it's true," Meta said softly as if some secret had been revealed. "They want to get rid of me."

Serena chuckled. "Not so; the team leader has many positive comments about you. At first they resented a newcomer in their midst but when you showed them how to improve their work and do less of it at the same time, you've become something of a hero." She shoved a small box across the desk toward Meta. "This is for you. The disk gives you detailed instructions which you can follow easily. Arnold Pap, our chief from accounting whom you already know, has been lobbying me for a production foreman to direct the activities of the different team leaders."

"He thinks I can do that? The man is misguided."

She smiled. "You need to stay feminine to get the girls to listen to you. We tried last year to bring in a very astute guy but ended up with a near rebellion on our hands."

"I see," Meta said softly as he thought over the job. "Yes, I know enough about work flow now to oversee what needs to be done. But, aren't we getting ahead of ourselves? Mandy and I have been diligently working to uncover any negative activity with zero results."

Again, Serena smiled happily. "You just think that. As soon as you and Mandy began your routine analysis, our profit picture changed for the better. Whoever was sabotaging us has stopped because you two are getting too close. It comes down to this. As long as you and Mandy continue, we are coming out of the woods. I would venture a guess that if you both would leave, the same slump would reappear."

"So, it is still a mystery even though our protagonist has gone underground. You run a novel as well as a fair operation. You are well liked and respected. It is senseless to me anyone would want to wreck it."

"The plan is going together better than I thought. I know Arnold Pap has worked far into the night too often. I learned it from the security guard's log. An effective floor supervisor would take off some of the pressure."

"I'll do what I can," Meta said looking at the array of cosmetics when Serena tumbled them onto the desk.

"All these are for you. Before you run out, let me know and I'll get new. You have 'triple strength mammary', 'feminique', 'raw mammary tissue concentrate' and 'Estro-Glan'. Those are the topicals. Next you have a regimen called "TV Development". Take these as you would any medication. Start with the 'feminant', next the natural 'feminizer' and later you can probably drop the first two in favor of the 'femglan'. Any questions?"

"Yes, I'm astonished. How did you learn all these things? I'm not objecting, I like my feminine role here and I can see how this collection can be supportive. Mandy has me dressing in her lingerie. I think she does that to tease me. When I get a chance I'm going to get some evening dresses to wear when we go out. I do believe this is what you had in mind."

She snickered in delight. "We have set up a computer room for you across the hall. You can start the 'Colerain Kit' search. Once you have the process down, you can hire a geek/guru to take over so as not to remove you from the production function too often." She stood up and came around the desk. In one swift move she kissed Meta on the lips. "There! I've wanted to do that for a long time. You make such a cute girl."

#

Mandy had dinner waiting when Meta came in. "I saw on the bulletin board that they've added more work on you. What's that all about?"

"Serena tagged me this morning. I have my own computer room to start the 'Colerain Kit' function. There's more; don't go to sleep. Arnold Pap recommended me for floor supervisor."

She put her hands on her slim hips. "Well, aren't we the 'big shot' all of a sudden? My dad would say, we see the windup, where is the pitch?"

This time, Meta was ready. He handed Mandy a piece of paper similar to the one she used to urge him into Pinnacle Dot Com. It showed the dollar view he had summarized. When she saw that, she immediately was in his arms, kissing and rubbing her hips against him.

They kissed warmly and with tongues dueling. Meta kept one arm around her waist and they went into the kitchen to see about supper and to fix a pitcher of martinis. "What's the news about you and Serena?" he asked.

“No news; she has been very friendly toward me but nothing overt.”

“She kissed me today after giving me the promotion. She said I make a cute girl. What do you make of that?”

“She likes you. I think she has good taste.”

He held her close and ran one strong hand to cup her derriere. “Speaking of taste, have you told her you would or would not entertain her one of these nights?”

“Oh, you are crafty. It has been nearly a month since she brought it up. I told her ‘yes’ but she has not responded. Maybe that was all she intended to do from the start. Once I agreed, she lost interest. Strange but true or so it seems.”

“I’ve said not a word to her about it so you can’t blame me if you don’t get a stern licking from the boss.”

“That’s an ambiguous pun.”

“I plead guilty.”

“How about our man Pap? Does he still have the hots for you?”

Meta frowned. “Do you think I owe him for this promotion? If he thinks that, he hasn’t said anything.”

“You know what they say about sleeping dogs,” she answered.

“You are right, of course.”

“I thought for a while there we were going to have an orgy. Maybe in view of your promotion, it’s all on hold.”

“Are you disappointed? Did you really want that lesbian experience? Serena is a ‘looker’ as the Brits say.”

“I’m just as happy being here with you. Don’t give me a bad time or I’ll send you back to moving boxes.”

“Ugh! You’re right, of course. We’ll take what comes but it sure helps to have some money in the bank.”

“Don’t forget the steaks in the freezer.” She paused. “Meta, when will we be ready to move to a better place? I’m getting tired of climbing those stairs when my feet hurt.”

“You pick out what you want. I’ll move the boxes.”

She hit him on the shoulder with her tiny fist. “I’m going to snoop around if you say it is all right.”

“I say it is all right,” Meta answered.

#

Mandy huddled in the city bus shelter. The autumn weather was shoving leaves and cold air swirling around. She pulled her coat collar up and wondered if it was freezing; it certainly felt like it.

Serena’s car stopped and Serena rolled the window down. “Come on, pretty girl. This is no time to get frost bite. I saw you from the other side of the street when I was passing. You see, I felt sorry for you. No bus in sight. Mandy! Get in the damn car.”

Mandy pulled the door behind her and crouched to get the warm blast from the heater. “Where are you taking me?” she asked.

“Your girlfriend, Meta Petred, the resident genius, mentioned to me this afternoon about moving to a better place. A few phone calls and I have one to show you. Are you up to it or rather not?”

“Oh, let’s go. Meta won’t mind if I’m a little late.”

Serena checked the address she had noted, pulled into an empty parking place and stopped the engine. By this time, Mandy was warm enough to open her coat. “This is a fourplex,” Serena said. The stairway is in the center to the upper level. The vacant flat is on the street level. I hope that doesn’t bother you.”

“It doesn’t; let’s go in.”

The door was open so they walked right in. Mandy looked around and headed quick-step to the kitchen. “Wow! All new appliances. And a laundry room; no more Laundromat on Saturday mornings. Most of the furnishings from our present place will go in here. How much is it?”

Serena was standing in the front living room gazing out the window when Mandy came up behind her. She ran one hand inside Serena’s fur jacket.

“I didn’t ask but I wanted you to see it. Our quarterly report came out this afternoon. The bottom line was astonishing. There is a new entry for the ‘Colerain Kit’ with some sales marked WIP. Also, the Delphi job was completed ahead of schedule. We are finally in the black, Mandy. Arnold and I did a jig and credit you and Meta with our gains. If you like this place, Pinnacle Dot Com will pay the closing costs.”

“Closing costs? You mean this is for sale? Oh, Serena; this is too much.”

Serena spun around and embraced the excited girl. They kissed, light at first then growing in rapture. “It’s

a deal, Mandy. The rental from the other three flats will more than make the payments. You've arrived if you like it."

"Like it? Serena, you would not believe where we have been living. This is a palace in comparison."

They stood in the center of the empty living room and embraced. "Not the Taj Mahal but it does appear some lovers passed this way."

Mandy held on and opened her lips when Serena carefully forwarded her tongue to excite Mandy's mouth. She was nearly out of breath when Serena broke the kiss. "I want Meta to see this. I can't decide by myself."

Serena slid one hand inside Mandy's coat and cupped her breast. "The reason the company is picking up some of the cost is with the knowledge that you and Meta are not married. Real estate loans, even for a place as self-sustaining as this, get awkward when the purchasers are not legal. It is our law, as ancient as it may seem."

"I still want Meta to see it," Mandy said. She made no effort to remove Serena's searching hand on her breasts.

"I told him about it," Serena confessed. "He knows we are here now."

"Well, I think it is wonderful."

"It's a done deal, then," Serena said stepping away. "Come on; let's go back to the car. Better heater."

In the car, Serena stopped Mandy when the young girl reached for the seat belt buckle. They embraced and another French kiss was consumed in an erotic fog. "Serena, you and Arnold have been good to us."

“And you to us,” Serena said playing with Mandy’s lips with her errant tongue tip. “We were overjoyed at the quarterly results today. Right now, Meta is with Arnold going over some detail, I suppose.”

Mandy’s eyes lit with sudden awareness. “Oh, Meta told me what Arnold wanted. I think the transvestite caper makes for a special attraction.”

Serena slid her hand beneath Mandy’s skirt and pulled the hemline to bare the shapely legs. She moved on the smooth flesh with a tickling motion, lightly with her fingers. “Do you remember the night you wouldn’t let me do this? Now, I get to admire your pretty legs.”

Mandy raised her chin and they kissed again. She moaned when she felt Serena gently stroking her mons. “Oh, Serena; I’m glad you like my legs but you didn’t know that way back when on the park bench.”

They kissed again. “Let’s just say I had a hunch.” She kissed Mandy’s lower lip and sucked it gently. Next, she captured the upper lip and licked it. “Do you like me doing that? Do you know what it means when two women kiss like that?”

“Tell me,” Mandy said with an affected saucy tone.

Serena reached across to get Mandy’s seat belt. She worked it until it snapped. “Let’s go for a little ride. No, don’t pull your skirt down. I positively love looking at your figure. You shouldn’t hide it so well.”

“There are lots of girls, some very pretty, in your employ. Do you haul any of them off like you are doing now?”

“I wouldn’t think of it. You’ve demonstrated you can keep what we do in discreet silence. I don’t foresee any great disaster if the girls learn I love you but it is

easier to keep the neat stuff to ourselves. Do you agree?"

"Yes, surely; this is all so exciting, I'm trying to catch up. I don't recall being on this end of the city. Do you have a secret crash pad?"

"It won't be secret in a little while," Serena answered. "I have a big fireplace that could warm Grand Central Station. Our sofa comes equipped with a downy blanket and you can feel the warmth all across the room. It's the Fleener mansion; I grew up there. My mom is happier in Florida so it is just me all alone."

Mandy remained quiet until Serena pulled into the vast circular driveway. She pushed a button and the car slid easily into a double garage. The door closed when she was in with the engine stopped.

They kissed again. "You told me to tell you about the sensitive lip kisses," Serena began. "I thought you might guess since we talked about it some time ago."

"You are teasing me. I like it."

"Yes, I do things like that because I so enjoy your quick wit. Shall we go in?"

"I'm not sure; yes, I guess so."

Serena kissed her again. She caught one hand and shoved it against her breasts. "Do you like touching me?"

"You are very pretty. Is the reason you never married because you prefer girls?"

"That's what I'm learning. Being with you has been a grand gift. Um, that's nice, feel some more." She wriggled again and found Mandy's hand as it slowly was being withdrawn. "Don't stop there, darling," she said softly. "Do this." She waited until Mandy came to

grips with the impending clash of wits. She felt Mandy's hand under her tailored skirt, high to the tops of her sleek black stockings.

"You are so soft," Mandy said.

Satisfied for the moment, Serena led Mandy into the large house. They settled in the living room on the sofa facing the fireplace. "You fix us a pitcher of martinis while I start the fire." She fussed with the gas logs and was happy when they started to give off waves of heat. Before Mandy had a chance to sit down, Serena was kissing her again. She pulled off Mandy's coat and set it carefully on an empty stuffed armchair. "Your breasts are lovely," she whispered as she deftly unbuttoned Mandy's blouse. She drew the folds apart and lower to open a path for kisses along Mandy's throat, across her naked shoulders and pressed her tongue on the gentle rise up to the white bra cups. "Hold still," she said as she reached behind and released the brassiere hooks. She lifted the brassiere and gasped. "I was right; they are beautiful. Wait; I want, I want." She dipped her head and began a vigorous tongue massage on Mandy's waiting breasts. Mandy caught her breath and held Serena's head while the busy tongue licked, pushed and stabbed at Mandy's nipples, first one, then the other. "Lovely," she said in a quiet voice trying to hide her lust.

She sat up abruptly and both women faced each other mere inches apart. Mandy stared into Serena's eyes and did not waver. "I know this isn't right," she said in a thoughtful tone. "One day I'll look back on this and try to judge. It won't work, will it?"

"What? You mean this intimacy? We are two human people exploring the depths of our feelings for each other. You might one day dismiss all this kissing

and caressing as something you were led into and could not avoid. Your lips are so soft they add meaning to every touch. Are you ready to touch me, Mandy?"

Mandy winked back a furtive tear. She admired Serena's straining bust covered in a soft lace. Gazing farther, Serena's skirt had pulled up bunched around her waist. The elegant legs sheathed in fishnet stockings topped off at the milky thighs. She accepted another French kiss and pushed back with her tongue. That was when Serena's hand on the top of her head was urging her forward. Long sensitive fingers entwined in her hair. Slowly, she yielded. Serena's breast cleavage came closer. She poised, lips and tongue ready.

"Yes," she whispered. "How can any woman refuse?"

Serena quickly reached to one side and released her brassiere catch. Her breasts tumbled free as Mandy responded to the modest force until she caught the firm melon-mounds with her tongue and lips. "Go ahead, darling," Serena said watching in fascination. "You know you want to do it. Yes, that's exactly right. Oh, let me see your tongue. You absolutely shatter every sexual thought I've ever had." Feeling slight fatigue, she put both hands on Mandy's face, covering her ears and forcing her beautiful face against the other breast. She reveled in the sight of Mandy's willing lips greedily licking and sucking.

They stretched out together on the wide sofa. Serena kicked off the light coverlet, pushed one knee between Mandy's legs and watched and waited for Mandy to give in. She began a slow rocking motion as her thigh stimulated Mandy's sexual center with a soft tribadism. Mandy's eyes flew open wide.

“Serena; what are you doing? Why am I so thrilled by this?”

Serena kissed her again while keeping up the gentle rocking. “Remember when I kissed each of your lips one at a time?” She watched Mandy nod ‘yes’, her eyelids heavy with passion. “It was a message. I was doing to your pretty lips what I intend to do to each side of your pussy. No man’s cock can touch the incredible rush of lust in a sexual rut reaching for a new orgasm. You can now imagine what it will be like when you open your gorgeous eyes to see my head buried between your thighs. It’s what I really have wanted to do but did not know it. Are you afraid?”

“Terrified,” Mandy said in a throaty whisper tinged with passion. She lifted her hips to allow Serena to remove her panties. “I don’t know what to expect is all. Oh, yes; I want you to do it to me.” Her body shook with pleasure.

“Your imagination is all used up, darling.” She stared without wavering as Mandy watched the wandering tongue lick a path through her copious bush until she went into sexual ecstasy as Serena pulsed and licked and sucked sending the innocent younger woman into erotic throes of abandon.

They both lost count of the orgasms.

Mandy woke in the early hours. Her first thought was Meta. He might be worried. Then she realized Serena had told him they would be together. Be that as it may, she was aware Meta was with Arnold Pap. Her situation was probably far from his thoughts at the moment. It was difficult for her to realize what her transvestite boyfriend was doing with the insistent man.

She swung her naked legs out from under the covers. The room was warm and she felt a surge of pleasure remembering what she and Serena had done. 'How long will this last?' she thought idly. 'I hope I didn't make a fool of myself jumping and bumping like that. It was so tremendous.' She went to the double doors that opened to a balcony that faced east.

Dawn was breaking with shimmering shafts of first light.

"Do you enjoy first light?" Serena asked coming up behind Mandy.

She jumped. "Oh, you startled me. It is peaceful here; hard to imagine you having any family discord in such surroundings. I was thinking of Meta. No, I was worrying about him being with Arnold Pap. I hope that went well."

Serena wrapped her arms around the half naked girl. "Don't worry; Arnold likes to get someone he admires to give him head. I'm not aware if he ever engaged in anal sex. Of course, I could be wrong. I do know your transvestite friend is a cute girl; no question about it."

"I suppose that means he admires me because he asked me to, uh, do that for him. I refused and ran away. It was in the shop office. Has he asked you as well?"

"No; I can fire him if he displeases me."

"Arnold is always so courteous; he seems at cross purposes, conflicted. Yet, there is something about him, not sure what. He is often just fine, helpful and interested. But he seems ruled by some issue that is eating at him. Anger or resentment perhaps. I'm talking nonsense, I know."

Serena moved one hand off Mandy's shoulder onto her breasts. "Don't worry about it, darling. I can handle him. Maybe he needs an occasional blow job to steady his nerves. That's not my department."

"Yes, I suppose. What now, Serena? Are you happy with your first fling with a girl last night?"

"Very happy. Ecstatic actually. How about you? I know you found a deep satisfaction. It was beautiful to watch and even more so to be part of it. Thanks to you being the special person you are, I know now that what I need cannot come from the good offices of some horny man anxious to dump his sperm into my throat. Ouch! What an awful thought." She shuddered.

"Uh-oh; I might have said something wrong. Do you take Meta's cock in your mouth? Do you like thrilling someone you admire or love by doing that? I know I already told you but I didn't know then how strong my desire is. Will you come back to bed with me?"

Mandy turned swiftly on one foot. "You want me to do it to you; am I right? Is that why you asked me several times if I was afraid? Do you believe you can get a girl so worked up in an erotic cloud of lust that she will gladly go down on you just to satisfy her own incomplete feelings? Am I saying that right?"

"Yes, very eloquent actually. I have already stated my case. I wasn't as accurate when I said I wanted your mouth. The stark reality is that I need it; there is a big difference."

Mandy sighed and walked back to the huge bed with Serena. "I think all day yesterday, from the time you felt me in the empty living room, to the moment I fell asleep this morning, I knew I was going to do it. Would I be totally selfish to refuse now after you've given me so much?"

“You don’t dare refuse, you fussy little tart,” Serena said with a bright smile and flashing eyes. “It is time and you know it. You want to do it. What frightens you occurred to me as well. I was afraid I would like doing it too much. I jumped through that hurdle and ate you with complete abandon, demented like a mad rabbit chasing lady love. If you leave this room only partially fulfilled you will never forgive yourself.”

Mandy shook off a feeling of depression. “I know you’re right but I don’t like being forced.”

“You may think that now but last night I forced you to take my breasts with your tongue and lips. You loved doing it. Maybe I didn’t force you. How do you remember it?”

Mandy blinked and sat on the side of the mattress. “You guided me; it’s different from force.”

Serena pushed one of Mandy’s knees aside and stood between her legs. She pulled Mandy’s head forward to rest against her flat tummy. “Take off the lace covering my pussy. It is already dripping wet just thinking about you.” With a gentle urging, she held Mandy’s head and wriggled her hips to get in position. She raised one knee. “Do it now, darling; one quick lick and we will end it later. I need it and so do you.”

Mandy looked up at Serena standing so majestically over her, looking down with an impervious air. She started to cry. As tears coursed down her cheeks, she pursed her lips, brought out her tongue and began licking. Serena moved one knee aside to give the distraught girl more space. Just as she predicted, Mandy kept the awkward position until she gathered every sexual nerve in Serena’s body into a smashing orgasm. Then she released the girl and strode off to the bathroom.

#

Meta Petred closed out his computer for the day and checked off some names he had established as contacts. There were others but he had other issues on his mind.

Serena had stopped in to tell him about the real estate and that she intended to bring Mandy to see it. If Mandy liked it, Serena promised she would proceed to take advantage of Mandy's gratitude. Meta nodded; he knew what would happen. He just didn't know when.

Going back to the empty apartment did not appeal to him so he decided to stop by the neighborhood tavern for a round of billiards or darts. That was when Arnold Pap came in to chat.

"Hi, as I live and breathe, the junior boss has arrived. Welcome, sir. I'm just finishing up for the day. Had some interesting contacts." He waited until his computer screen registered restart. He stood to go.

The two men shook hands. "You are picking up my bad habits keeping such hours," Arnold Pap said. "I noticed your light so wondered why you were still here."

"Then you don't know about Mandy and Serena visiting the fourplex."

"Yes; I know. Serena and I discussed it in detail. By now they are getting along famously. Do you understand our offer?"

Meta turned on his wan smile. "Offer? No, bring me up to date."

“Shall we stop off for a drink? You don’t owe this company any time if you want to sleep extra in the morning. I will feel better if we can have a chat.”

Meta’s eyebrows went up to the inquisitive arch. He was well aware of Arnold’s interest in him though he could not understand the reason. “Well, sure, Arnold. What did you have in mind?”

“I have a favorite tavern out on the east end of town. Let’s go there. I have my car so I can bring you home whenever you wish.”

In Arnold’s car, a sleek late model sedan, Meta sat back and relaxed. “If you have a favorite watering hole, you probably have a bevy of friends to go along with it. But, before we get too involved socially, what is the offer you mentioned?”

Arnold reached over and pressed Meta’s thigh but kept his eyes on the road. The streets were dark. “I have a confession to make,” he began. “You make the cutest girl in the company in your neat outfits. I can’t help wondering what you will look like in a dress, high heels and high fashion by some coiffeur. Maybe one of these days we can all go out on the town. Really, Meta, our business prospects are looking very good. In addition to an increase in processing efficiency, we are beginning to see the ‘Colerain Kits’ coming through. I think there are three on the shelf now awaiting shipment. Your handling of that was brilliant.”

Meta yawned and quickly covered his mouth. “Sorry; long day. You were telling me about an offer.”

Arnold pulled off on a secondary road. “It is simple. Serena and I are aware of your relationship with Mandy. That’s all well and good until some legal beagles start questions that raise interest rates on your

purchase. The place is very livable as you will see and the other three flats will bring enough in each month to meet a mortgage payment if we can keep the interest rate down within reason."

"Are you making noises like wedding bells? Mandy and I have not discussed this at all. We are happy being who we are to each other."

Arnold chuckled. "Amusing thought, right? No, to bring the cost and the investment under control we have arranged to pay the 'up front' costs and any points imposed at the time of the sale. It is expensive but will serve to keep you both in our employ which is our primary interest."

"How will buying a house guarantee that?"

"You are too quick for me. We will put up the cash as described but float a balloon note at the end of the schedule. If you two decide to leave us for some reason, legitimate or not, we will foreclose with the final note which will be our agreement going in. Understand?"

"Yes, crafty. Thinking this through, if we take the place on your terms but the ownership falls on either or both of us, we will have a nice place to live and a tax deduction for interest especially in the early years. You can't stop us from leaving if we so desire but that might get awkward in that we might not want to accept such a loss."

Arnold wheeled off the road and stopped in a bleak parking lot. A neon sign missing a letter blinked on and off. "Dom's Tavern", it said.

"Well, here we are. I hope we have worked up a thirst." Seeing Meta starting to get out of the car, Arnold touched his arm. "One moment, cute girl. You

missed the good part. In signing on the line with this real estate, you will relinquish proprietary ownership of any and all creative work while in the employ of Pinnacle Dot Com. To make a short story, the 'Colerain Kit' patents will be held in the company name. You will receive dividends as will Tom Colerain as long as the venture remains profitable. If you leave the company, all bets are off as they say in Vegas."

Meta frowned. "Did you check this out with the patent office? Tom Colerain didn't mention any such copyright protection."

"Yes, everything I've told you is clean. Now, shall we go in?"

The rundown tavern was well-worn from years of neglect. A few patrons at the bar turned to see them when they entered. 'What's with this place?' Meta asked. "What a dive."

"They know me here so I can be myself, drink with friends, and so on. It is far enough from our beaten path that it isn't likely anyone from the company might stop by. That goes especially for girls."

Meta stopped. "Arnold, wait. Is this a gay bar? I've never been to one but they can see you are bringing a girl in here, me."

Arnold laughed. "No danger, I assure you." He waved at the bartender with two fingers in the air. "I just ordered for both of us. Come on, let's sit down over here. We can talk without fear of being overheard."

Meta was not assured but the bartender's quick service convinced him to stay. "Double scotch neat for you and the lady," the bartender said.

Arnold sipped the drink. "Ah, perfect," he said. Again Meta felt the influential man press his thigh with strong fingers. "You are a really attractive guy. Being the sexy girl you portray makes you doubly desirable. Have you been with a man?"

"Not until just now, sir," Meta answered and looked away embarrassed that someone might see Arnold's advances. "Is this why you brought me here? We seem to be the only 'couple' on the floor. Maybe later they will expect some patrons." He knew he was grasping for something to say to avoid acknowledging Arnold's hand creeping up the inside of his leg.

"I don't mind admitting, cute girl, you totally turn me on in that smashing outfit you are wearing. Do you mind terribly? I mean about being a transvestite to keep your job with us?"

"At first I did but I to please Mandy I went through with it. Now I have something of a wardrobe plus special creams and medicines to make me, well, voluptuous would be a word."

Arnold grinned. "All the creams in the cupboard will not enhance your sexy mouth. You are stunning. Mandy is a lucky girl. Do you go down on her?"

"When she wants that, she asks me. I comply. She is very talented at oral sex which is a sort of bond with us. If I walk out of here right now, will it be so difficult for me in the morning at the plant?"

"You are far too intelligent to pull a dumb stunt like that. You know very well we can corner Mandy and send you packing. She is just beginning to see a new life for herself. As much as you two share, you have to ask if she would go with you should there be a choice."

Meta was lost in thought brooding over what Arnold had said. "It appears you have all the face cards in this game, Arnold. I have learned to enjoy my life as a transvestite and the allure of the challenges at work. I believe I am contributing to the well being of the company. I see things to do and do it. It's a masculine trait, is it not?"

"Please Miss Petred. We can relax here, be ourselves." He raised his arm to signal the barman for two more. "Is what I'm suggesting so bad? Will letting me have my way for a short time actually harm you? I don't think so."

"All right; you are right," Meta said quickly and took the tall drink when the bartender served it. He gulped a hefty doubled ounce of whisky. "You want us to come to an understanding; I can see that. What do you think is happening with Mandy and Serena right now?"

Arnold glanced at his watch. "My guess is as good as yours. Your lovely partner is no doubt on her back getting her fill of Selena's marvelous mouth. Cunnilingus as an art has first to be motivated. Mandy is 'hot' and their affair should be, well, fruitful. Does this bother you, cute girl?"

Meta became irritated. "Quit calling me that. You know I'm not a girl even if I fit some oversized fantasy of yours."

Arnold was delighted. He began rubbing Meta's crotch until he felt a rewarding stirring in response. "I see you don't mind me doing this; how nice. I had a hunch we would get along famously. Now, give me your hand, please."

He took Meta's hand and shoved it in a brutal twist until Meta was suddenly aware that the aroused man was carrying a boner. He could also feel the huge cock struggling to get out of the trousers. He stroked with his fingers and looked quickly at the beatific satisfaction on junior boss's face. "Is this how you get your kicks?" Meta asked without including route sixty-six. "Is it some special thrill to push people around? Don't you have a girlfriend stashed somewhere?"

Arnold continued working until he could feel enough of an erection. "Come along with me, please."

"Now what?"

"Just come on; you haven't had so much to drink you can't climb a short flight of stairs."

Arnold led Meta to a staircase at the back of the large barroom. They went up and Meta followed him into a well-furnished bedroom. There was a large double bed, shower and lavatory. Arnold sat on the edge of the bed and curled his finger at Meta.

Meta approached. In a twinkling, Arnold had Meta's feminine slacks open at the front. His eyes lit up with joy when he pulled Meta's near flaccid cock out into the open. He ran his hands along Meta's legs from the knees up around his firm buns. All the time he kept stimulating until he could feel Meta getting hard. "Don't give up," Meta said. "I'm getting there."

"Just put your thoughts on what the beautiful Mandy will look like with her head between Serena's legs. That should help."

Meta leaned in closer and Arnold deftly slid the semi-erect cock into his mouth. He stimulated with his tongue all around the corona while jacking the shank with one hand.



“Oh,” Meta whispered in a guttural voice. “That does feel good.”

Arnold slid the slacks all the way down to Meta's ankles. "Step out of these," he demanded. "Now, sit."

When meta sat next to the aggressive man on the bed, he soon had his torso bared of clothing while Arnold caressed with loving touches.

"Shall I suck some more?" Arnold asked.

Meta looked up at the ceiling as Arnold's skilled fingers worked him to a full erection. "I'm enjoying this," he said. "Maybe it's the Scotch whisky or the lace underwear or both."

After a long continued session, Arnold relaxed back and shoved Meta down onto the bed. "Feel me," he said and forced Meta's hand onto his firm cock. "Good; now put it in your mouth. Go ahead; you want to do it. Lips and tongue; yes, that's right. I've waited for this ever since I first saw you flaunting your sexy body in front of all those girls."

Meta looked up to see if the man was satisfied. The large cock was difficult for him to handle. "After this I'm going to go home and wait for Mandy. This can't have an easy end for either of us."

"Just stop talking and concentrate on what you're doing."

"Ulp! Ugh!" Meta exclaimed as Arnold coated his tongue and throat with streams of semen.

"That was wonderful; beautiful actually," Arnold said. "Relax a while if you wish." Meta sank back with his head on a pillow. He stared at the ceiling. He dozed for a moment and came back full awake to review what had happened with the junior boss. 'Not all bad,' he thought. 'What will Mandy think when I tell her we are circus freaks?'

Arnold returned with more to drink. He stretched out on the bed next to Meta. He was soon snoring lightly.

Meta dressed and went down the staircase to the bar. "Another double Scotch," he said to the bartender. "Put it on my friend's tab."

#

Meta made it home with Arnold's help. He climbed the three flights of stairs fighting a severe weariness. He was sound asleep when Mandy came in.

At breakfast, each of them waited for the other to speak so nothing was said about the escapades of the night before.

IV.

Several months passed which saw Meta and Mandy moved into their new flat so much more roomy and convenient. They bought a used car to get to work and back because the bus hours were so flexible they rarely could catch a ride.

Serena walked with her usual elegance out of the executive offices onto the floor. She had on a tailored maxi-dress, full length, with an eye-appealing slit on one side that flashed flesh when she walked. She smiled and looked around.

"Ah, Mandy; here you are," Serena said.

"Did you want me?" Mandy asked. "I was just finishing up that big aircraft engine bearing order."

“No, dear; just go right ahead with what has to be done. I did want to inquire if anything seems amiss. Our balance sheet is different this quarter than last. Something isn’t right.”

Mandy made an entry on her clipboard. “You see it in the product recovered column. I see that somehow my projections are off. I think we might be on the right track in correcting our costing or processing.”

“Oh? Did Meta cost that job? It was expensive but we finished on time so the customer is happy.”

“I mentioned to Meta that the cost accounting we originally set up for the job didn’t move right. It’s as if the original estimate was way off. I know that sounds silly but for once we have a questionable specimen to study.”

Serena watched a fork lift truck scoop up a load and trundle off to the shipping area. “We may both be right. Make a list of all the steps that job went through, each start and transfer time, the cost additions and the final dollar.”

“I have all the data recorded. That ‘hot shot’ production supervisor set up a better system to allow us to keep track of each job going through the shop.” She smiled knowing Meta would love to hear the CEO’s praise.

That evening at the end of the shift, Meta looked for Mandy. He found her in the little control booth in the wash area. “Hi, kiddo; anything new?”

“Not sure but Serena was out here a while ago saying the profits took a nosedive this quarter. I see the possible reason but the total picture is a mystery.”

“Let me see; yes, I remember costing this job a month or so ago. Was I that far off? Did we have to work some overtime perhaps?”

Mandy studied the original cost estimate. “Does this look right to you, Miss Supervisor?” Her eyes sparkled in amusement to see Meta struggling to catch his own error. Nothing showed to explain the cost over-runs.

“Well, we lost our tail on that one. It knocked the whole system out of balance because of the high dollar amount. Hum; wait a minute. What’s this?” He pointed to an unfamiliar initial that had obviously been entered after the original person’s ID was erased. “Who is this?”

Mandy studied it. “Don’t know who that could be. Well, we can find out. We know who transferred it and who received it. I’m really curious now.”

That night, Mandy came out of the shower and plopped down on Meta’s lap. “Don’t be so morose,” she said lightly. “We have our own bank account to watch, don’t forget.”

“I know but something like this gets under my skin when it doesn’t make sense. It’s almost like someone had their hand in the cookie jar. Well, the till. We need to take a closer look tomorrow.”

Mandy disappeared into the kitchen. Soon her Yankee Pot Roast was ready to serve. She poured a rich red wine for each of them.

“You know something?” Mandy asked in an off-hand way. “We never discussed what happened on that night with Serena and Arnold Pap.”

Meta snapped up the serrated knife and sliced off a generous portion. He put it on Mandy’s plate. “What-

ever was in our destiny is wrapped up in the games those big wheels play. I've noticed we are more in tune with each other since. Of course, getting settled in this pad and buying a car happened along about the same time. What is your feeling?"

Mandy poured more wine. "I think back on it a lot. I have wanted to tell you what happened to me but hesitated because I don't want you to feel obligated to tell your side of it. As long as you can stay comfortable with your real self, that's the way it's best to leave it. In either event, you don't seem the worse for wear and I do not sense even a shred of tension when I go into the executive suite on an errand or whatever."

"Has Serena asked you out on a date?" Meta asked.

"No; nothing has been said unless I missed it along the way. We've been super busy with so much new business coming through."

"Yes, we can thank the 'Colerain Kit' for most of that. It caught on right away. We ship sometimes twice a week to different manufacturers. You are prettier now than ever I can recall. If this delightful turnabout has some meaning tracing back to that night so long ago, we should probably leave well enough alone."

Mandy cleared the table and went into the kitchen.

Meta took the rubber band off the Wall Street Journal and settled in his favorite chair. When he looked up, Mandy sat across from him quietly sobbing. Her lithe body shook with some trauma he did not understand.

"Sorry," she said in apology for disturbing him. "I think I brought it up at dinner because I'm bothered by it. I want to tell you what she did and what I did and

what it means now. I do not want you to make it a contest of sorts."

Meta put the paper down and embraced the distraught girl. "Take it one step at a time, darling. You know I don't judge. Tell me what is bothering you."

Mandy sniffed and tugged at a tissue to dab her eyes. "I know and I trust you. Serena was in high style that night. She prodded some, pushed some, talked a lot and became more daring as she caressed me. We kissed a thousand times and eventually went to bed to consume what we each thought was a unique lust unknown to any woman, anywhere, any time in history or the present. Silly, isn't it?"

"It must have been beautiful; that's not silly."

"I mean our mutual fantasy. A few times she acted rather coarse, almost abusive when I didn't say or do what she thought I should. She went down on me and stayed there for an eternity. I had a series of orgasms like a chain link fence. Each connected to the one before and the next. Incredible."

Meta kissed her to comfort the tender moment. "I said beautiful; I stand with that. I agree Serena is a gorgeous woman; how could you resist her for very long? You couldn't."

Mandy sighed. "I've thought a lot about how much pleasure we each had that long night. How many times have I asked myself if I wanted to do it again? Each thought brings me closer but I'm afraid."

"Sensible; we are comfortable here. Nice home, good jobs, money in the bank. Don't forget the one issue that gives each of us an edge."

"What's that?"

"I love you. As long as you accept that, I'm happy."

Mandy snuggled closer with her head in Meta's neck. "Since you are most often a girl now, I think it is O.K. if I love you as well." She kissed him on his neck and touched the soft span with her tongue tip.

"What does that mean? An almost girl?"

She grinned and sat up. "Not sure. A little while ago I said Serena and I were a fantasy that night. Can you and I be a fantasy some time?"

He shoved his newspaper aside. "I like it. I would welcome an occasion to wear that new cashmere pull-over I couldn't resist."

"Now who is silly?"

Meta jumped up and knelt on the carpet next to her. Mandy's wide smile told him she was ready for anything. "This isn't childish; it's time to make up. I'm asking you on a date this Saturday. First a gourmet dinner at the White Peacock. Next the concert in the park; we can get a reserved table. Then what say we go dancing until the stars go home?"

She sat up and applauded, clapping her little hands as her pretty face opened to a broad smile. "And what then?"

"I'll be the woman you want in your bed for the rest of the night."

"It's marvelous living with a transvestite." Next, she frowned and pouted in a theatrical pose. "What might you want from me after all that?"

"I was going to ask if you want to dress as a guy. We would be a normal couple."

"What's normal, you rascal?"

“A couple is what other people see when walking down the street. Man with woman is supposed to be normal. Two guys holding hands sets up the ridicule pattern. Two girls giggling and looking very self-conscious. You see, pretty girl, it takes all kinds.”

“That’s what we are,” Mandy broke in. “All kinds.”

They both laughed.

The next morning, Meta rapped softly on Arnold Pap’s door. “Ah, Meta; how nice. Come in. How is it you look neater and more desirable every day? What’s on your mind?”

“It was when you kissed the blarney stone. I see Serena isn’t in yet so I thought I should report to you. Both Serena and Mandy are bothered by what appears to be an irregularity. If you don’t mind, I’d like to see your raw accounting figures for the past, oh, about three weeks.”

“It’s all in your computer for everyone to see. What is irregular?”

“I’m not sure but there seems to be a serious cost discrepancy on a couple recent jobs. We are not dealing in disaster, Mister Pap. But figures don’t lie.”

Pap stood up and walked around his desk to stand gazing out the window. “True enough but liars sometimes figure. Look into it; you’re the supervisor so it is your responsibility. Let me know what you find out.” He smiled and gazed at Meta’s well-kept body. “You carry yourself very well, you know. Are those real breasts?”

Meta smiled. “They are, you old lecher. If you want to know how it’s done, ask your partner. She has all the answers.” He left to check the costs on parallel jobs run-

ning during that same time window. All seemed proper.

Meta caught a whiff of expensive perfume. "Ah, Serena. I knew it was you before turning around. You look enchanting. What brings you onto the production floor? Not lonely, I hope."

"Don't be sarcastic. Pap told me you are looking into an apparent leak in our cash flow. What have you learned?"

"Nothing yet," Meta replied in a respectful voice. "It is baffling."

She stepped away to go back to the offices then stopped. "I see you are using the meds I gave you. Looking real good."

Thanks, Serena. I'm feeling on top of things as well. We will all work together to plug that leak and get back on track."

Serena sniffed the air as if suspecting a fire. "Tell Mandy I said hello; remarkable girl."

"That she is, Serena."

He joked with a couple girls on their way to the break room before going to his office to study the paperwork. 'It has to be here someplace,' he said to himself. 'If I could just find it.'

#

"Mandy Alban, telephone call..." the intercom spread her name all through the company.

Mandy hustled to the small booth on the wall of the break room. "Please come to my office," Serena said.

“Bring your production records. We are having a skull session trying to get this stopped. Latest figures indicate we are headed for financial disaster.”

She gathered an armful of rough cost records and headed for the office at the end of a long corridor which she and Meta called the Elephant Suite because of Serena’s inept memory for recalling the wrong issues.

Entering, she was faced by Serena sitting sternly at her huge desk. Arnold Pap and Meta sat in the two captain’s chairs with expectant looks on their faces.

An accounting clerk sat at a small table against the wall. A new face Mandy had not seen before was introduced as Serena’s administrative assistant. She sat with legs crossed, a stenotype pad on her lap.

“All right! Meeting to order! Serena said in commanding tones. She pressed a button next to her desk middle drawer. The ‘Power Point’ screen came down. She set a template on the viewer and the discussion began. Everyone reviewed the cost data as the work-in-process moved from one area to the next. The data gave the dollar value at each point, the number of pieces, the initials of the employee involved and the time of pickup and transfer. It was a complete view of the work at the beginning and end of each machine operation. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

Next, a discussion was launched so everyone present could give an opinion. The meeting droned on without conclusion. Finally, Serena threw her pen on the desk and called for attention. “We are getting nowhere,” she said with a sigh. “The only plausible explanation is that the job was cost incorrectly. That still leaves some questions. Please, everyone, keep these

notes in mind and watch for present and future processing that may exhibit similar irregularities."

The meeting broke up with a murmur of low voices. Meta, fully aware that it was his responsibility, left shaking his head in wonder.

"Mandy, just a minute," Serena said. Mandy stopped and waited until all the team members were gone. "Now; what do you think? If this was only a small cost accounting error, the value analysis would not look like this. My conclusion is that someone, for reasons yet unknown, has been beating the system in a way for which we cannot account." She smiled at Mandy.

"I'm as much in the dark as anyone. I've studied all this and come up with nothing. There was that one entry on the raw data that intrigued me. Someone erased an initial on the original document and entered an ID nobody knows. Does our founder come back from the family crypt and play games with us? I don't think so."

"All right," Serena said and pushed her swivel chair away from the desk so she could stand. "I trust your judgment." She smiled with a warmth Mandy had not seen in a long time. Worry lines spread from her mouth and her eyes seemed glazed.

"Is it really that bad? For me, the dollar figures don't spell disaster. I'm probably missing something." She watched warily as Serena settled behind her. The same fingers that had aroused her to heights of ecstasy began playing with her hair, touched her face and pressed her shoulder. "If you are trying to confuse me, Serena, you are doing a good job."

Serena chuckled. "I just wanted to take a moment to relive that night of sex we both enjoyed. It has been too

long and, as we discussed, there is no call for a wave of gossip to further complicate life here." She took a deep breath and exhaled loudly. One hand crept inside Mandy's blouse to touch the gentle rise of her breasts. "Are you and Meta happy in your new place? You seem so full of life these days."

"Yes, we're fine, for certain. We are both grateful for you for making it all possible. We've discussed several times asking you over for dinner perhaps on a holiday weekend. It seems we rarely have time."

"You are sweet. I noticed Meta's conversion from a transvestite to a trans-sexual is going along fine. Any problems there? My research mentioned a possible mild trauma due to hormone imbalance. I have the name of a counselor if Meta needs a professional review. Most follow the Benjamin Standards of Care should the need arise."

Mandy lowered her eyes but made no effort to avoid Serena's intimate caresses. "If the issue comes up, we know where to turn; thank you." She tried to smile but was not successful. "Why are you feeling me like that? I'm not objecting but you have hardly said hello to me these several months. I have considered that I did an awkward injustice of some kind that night."

Serena sighed. "That was a night of destiny. More than ever, I now know I want a steady affair with a girl; one as perfect as you would be nice."

She raised her head and turned slightly in the chair. "Sorry; I can't help you there. Maybe I should say I'm not in that business."

Serena chuckled and removed her hand. "Each day I have a chance to secretly admire some girl that has a

trim figure or shapely thighs or, of course, a thoughtful turn of her lips. Lately it has become an obsession. Do you have the same attitude?"

Mandy leaned forward and uncrossed her legs. She squared her shoulders and gazed levelly into Serena's eyes. "Yes; sometimes. Truthfully, it would tear me up to be that girl you just said you wanted. You turn hot-and-cold too fast for me. Our time together was not only a marvel experience but also showed me a different approach to being a woman. I've not discussed any of this with Meta. He is wrapped up in his job and explores ways to enhance his femininity. I mention that so you won't say anything along these lines that might upset him. He is a great partner and creative lover so, no, you can't have him."

They both laughed. Serena took a serious turn of mind that showed in her face. "This company problem has been the cause of what you call ambivalence. I did hire the young girl you saw because she is so voluptuous. Of course, I've not made any moves on her."

"Of course and 'yes' she is very pretty. Looks don't guarantee how she might act in bed. Don't worry; you'll probably never know. Having a delicious morsel like that to admire every day, however unrequited, might be adding to the tension you are feeling. What do you think?"

"Think? I don't care. Even if I can't sample the sugar in the candy shop, I can still admire it and remember."

"So be it!" Mandy said and smiled.

Serena went back to her desk. "One small issue which I think we've covered before. Our able assistant, Arnold Pap, is feeling the same pressures we've dis-

cussed here today. He has mentioned more than once how much he would like to have your exquisite mouth. I've not encouraged him and have tried to make it clear you are happy with Meta and interfering with that might have long term difficulties."

"Arnold and Meta were together that same night we were involved at your home. Ah, that fireplace! Anyhow; don't be surprised if Arnold makes another play for Meta. He seems absolutely totally obsessed."

Serena smiled. "Arnold is a good sort and we do need him to stay on board. He never complains. I'm aware he has had a chance to build a large nest egg not ready to hatch yet. He can buy what he needs on any street corner but I do not think that is his style."

Mandy stood to go. "Thank you for these words of comfort. I have been wondering and have not gone into any detail with Meta. Our man Arnold once approached me and I sent him packing. He said one thing that has bothered me since. He said that one day I might need him for some consideration, whatever. He told me point blank what to expect when that day comes. Kind of scary."

She let herself out of the office and closed the door gently until the lock clicked. She took a deep breath, inhaled, raised her chin and headed for her work space at Pinnacle Dot Com.

V.

Meta came home later than usual and burst through the front door with enthusiasm. "Ah, Friday at last. This has been the week that was or something. I stayed at the office and finished

some details so we can enjoy our weekend as we discussed.”

Mandy went into his embrace and lingered on his kiss. “So what have you planned for our amusement that has you so worked up?”

“Planned? Listen to this. I called Griffes; we have a reservation at the White Peacock for dinner. I next secured a reserved table and decanter of Napoleon Brandy at the concert-in-the-park. After that, we are off to the Crystal Ballroom for some dancing.”

Mandy was impressed. “And you did all this on company time? Shame on you.” She laughed. “You don’t owe them any time, that’s for true. Is this the same discussion we had about your new cashmere pullover dress? I’m certain you will look stunning. Beware any girl trying to interest you. I’ll pull out her blonde hair by the black roots.” She raised her chin for another kiss. “Now! It being Friday we have trout amandine, some mushrooms sautéed in olive oil and heart healthy veggies. I forgot about your fondness for Napoleon Brandy. I’ll be more detailed next time. You will have to settle for this cheap Chateauneuf du Pape.”

He kissed her again. “I know it isn’t cheap. Maybe I haven’t forgotten the near financial disaster last year when you were thinking of working on your back, legs spread to all paying customers. Thankfully, Serena spotted your neat figure as you rubbed your sore feet on that park bench.”

Mandy fussed setting the table and lit the stubs of candles still left over from the night before. “Speaking of Serena. After the meeting today, she asked me to stay for a chat. She made a pass at me and I told her to

take up any such notion with you. Naturally, she knows how to press my buttons to turn me on. Sometimes I'm too vulnerable but I escaped without harm. Oh, one item; I did invite her to visit us some day for a meal and some drinks but did not make a date. Was that all right?"

"Completely; this is your house as well as mine. Also, I would not intrude on your cooking skills. You are the chef de cuisine." He watched her expertly setting the table and preparing their meal. He thumbed through some mail and stopped with their bank statement. He ran the letter opener through and spread it out to check for any interesting entries. "Hey," he called to Mandy. "I think the bank made a mistake. Or, maybe not. Did you deposit \$800, uh, a couple weeks ago?"

Mandy looked over his shoulder. "No but don't complain. I think there was a similar entry last month. I didn't pay that much attention. We have a growing balance which means you will probably purchase another Federal Bond."

Meta shook his head. "It's a mystery; Pinnacle Dot Com is losing money and we are gaining. Strange."

After the meal, Meta headed for the shower realizing how fatigued his body was after the burdens of his busy job. Yet, he mused on who his possible good fairy might be adding substantially to their bank balance. After putting on his Terrycloth robe, he gathered his soiled lingerie together and tossed it all into the hamper.

He found Mandy finishing up in the kitchen. A wisp of hair escaped from the clamp holding the bun tightly together on her head. He found it a cute sight and he wondered at that.

“Too many unexplained events and feelings, Mandy,” he began thoughtfully. “I must be cracking up. Maybe we need a vacation to sort out our lives unless you haven’t told me you are keeping a rich benefactor someplace. It would have to be on your mother’s side, right?” They both laughed. “Still, my curiosity is aroused. I think I’ll call the bank Monday. They have been friendly toward us since we keep a nice balance.” He glanced at Mandy who had a perplexed look on her face.

She approached him and pushed a lock of hair off his forehead. “Two unexplained money miseries seems a coincidence when one is over and the other is less. Oops! Meta; do you think?”

Meta caught his breath. They both had the same thought at the same time. Goose bumps ran rampant on his arms. “Darling, could there be a connection? The deposit times match but the amounts differ. There is a pattern here.” He stood up.

“Where are you going?” Mandy asked in alarm. “You can’t do much grave digging now with everything closed for the weekend.”

Meta went to the small secretary style desk and pulled out his bank file. He quickly opened up the past several months and put them in sequence. “Right! Here are some more entries; small but spaced about right. This makes absolutely no sense. It appears someone is taking money from Pinnacle Dot Com to make our accounting controls look faulty. It’s called embezzlement.” He felt suddenly dizzy and sat down on the easy chair. “On the analysis, with this money data, whoever is doing this can accuse us of stealing from the company. Since no cash is changing hands in our losses of work-in-process; a method has been worked

out to create a loss, accrue some cash and make us look like thieves.”

Mandy shuddered. “Omigod,” she said. “If this is what we think it is, we can’t tell anyone because it would be tipping off the culprit. Send for Perry Mason!”

“Most important,” Meta said. “We have to act like we are completely unaware that this is going on. We need some time to investigate thoroughly. It can get complicated but who, please tell us, is doing this and why?”

Mandy was near tears. “It seems to me all we’ve worked for is in jeopardy. Since we have strong evidence we can at least protect ourselves. Can you possibly imagine how this can go on right under our noses?”

Meta sighed. “Not under our noses, exactly. It is tied up in the work being completed. By removing a substantial portion of finished product, two events are glaring. The dollar units multiplied by the number of pieces in inventory gives a faulty signal in the cost accounting program. Secondly, these valuable items have someone’s name on them. I just can’t see how or who. Wow!”

“We need to think on it,” Mandy whispered as if the walls had ears. “Monday we can take a fresh view. Meta, I’m scared.”

“Me too,” he answered.

Neither of them slept well that night but the next day they carried out their plans for a gala evening to put on an innocent show in case they were being watched.

Meta insisted on dressing in secret, away from Mandy's interference. The cashmere fit perfectly. He snugged the pussy gaff up tight, pulled on the flesh colored stockings and attached them to his garter belt. The mid-heel pumps matched the belt and neck scarf. His recently shaved legs, he knew, was to show off. When it was all over, he came out to find Mandy waiting. "Ta-Da," he said twirling to show off his legs. His breast line had grown to define a tantalizing cleavage by diligently taking the medications and topical creams Serena had offered. When the charade was complete, Meta was a stunning woman by any standards.

At the White Peacock, Griffes met them and did a second look. He confessed to having seen Mandy before but the 'sister' was new. He regained his composure quickly and seated them near the picture window so they could enjoy the view, the garden and ducks frolicking on the pond. They enjoyed the meal though their concerns weighed on them.

The concert was a 'Pops' program with a variety of composers Meta enjoyed. Mandy studied the single sheet program and wrestled with some of the names. Rachmaninoff and Tchaikovsky tripped her up so she remained with Barber and Ferde Grofé. She showed her good nature when Meta teased her.

The brandy set them both aglow and they ended up holding hands while seated adjacent. If anyone noticed, they weren't aware of it.

At the Crystal Ballroom they kicked up their heels and enjoyed each other. Meta, appearing as the 'sister', had a strong lead but they didn't win any prizes.

That night, getting ready for bed, Meta kissed Mandy long and with searching lips. "You were the

perfect date tonight," he said and pulled her shapely body next to him.

"And you sir, gallant escort, caused more than one handsome male to sit up and take notice."

He chuckled. "Wouldn't any one of those guys be surprised to find out I have the same equipment between my legs as they do? Funny but in our circumstances, no joke."

"I'm waiting," Mandy said as she lay her head on his chest. "You did promise me or have you forgotten?"

"You are a tart and I love you. Will it go better for you if you close your eyes and concentrate on your escort for the evening rather than little ol' me?"

"Makes no difference. I know who you are and what you can do. You want it and so do I."

"You are a hard task-master," he said and began a lengthy foreplay insisting she fondle his breasts with her tongue while he did the same for her."

"Maybe I'll write a book about my adventures," she said smiling. "I'll call it love with a transvestite."

"Good luck, pretty lady of mine."

#

Monday morning amid a group of hung over employees, Meta and Mandy went directly to the small office and collected the accounting data. Meta had outlined his findings and entered amounts of money on the brief workup sheet. It matched and they needed no more evidence to confirm their suspicions.

Later that day, Serena called Mandy into the office. When she arrived, Serena dismissed the assistant to give them a chance to chat. "Any ideas about our finances over the weekend?" she asked.

Mandy relaxed in the captain's style chair and held her knees together. "We did discuss the mystery but came up with very little. You should actually be talking to Meta; he is the brains as you well know."

"I'll do that," Serena said and moved away from her desk to sit next to Mandy. She ran her fingers lightly along Mandy's naked arm. "I couldn't get you out of my mind all weekend. I know I sound like a lovesick juvenile but the more I thought of you, of us, of our wonderful sex together, I knew I had to ask you for some sympathy."

"Which you spell 'affection'; am I right? I thought we covered all this on Friday. Could it be you are overwrought because of the trouble the company is having?"

"Yes, possibly. I almost called you to take you up on the dinner invitation but that old nagging feeling protecting Meta from my interference won out."

Mandy smiled. "I told Meta I had asked you over though we had not set a date. Anyhow; as luck would have it. We went to the White Peacock for a gourmet dinner. After that we caught the pops concert and went dancing. It was a fun evening but we were subdued because of our concern about your company."

Serena slid one arm across Mandy's shoulders. Mandy faced her and they indulged in a warm and gentle kiss. "You are so butch," she said before forcing another kiss. "I want to ask you for a favor. The more I thought about this the better I like it."

“Well, you are the boss around here. Do you have something for me to do that will take me away from our investigation of the missing money and parts?”

Serena looked shocked. “Money AND parts? Explain that, please.”

“Again, you should talk to Meta. He is developing a theory but it doesn’t lead anywhere significant. Up until now we have separated the number and value of the parts involved. By scrutinizing the data, there should be a pattern. That’s what we’re working on now. What is it you wish of me that is important enough to focus on something else?”

“Do you find my new administrative assistant attractive?”

“Whoa!” Mandy said leaning away from Serena’s embrace. “If you are thinking what I’m thinking the answer is ‘no’. And, as for your comment, I am not butch but femme if we need some distinction.”

Serena grinned. “I learned she is getting a divorce which did not come up in the employment process because nothing is settled yet. She is very good in her work and I’m happy to have her here. That fine body does provoke me as you can well imagine but I’m powerless if I stay the course we discussed regarding causing a gossip avalanche. All I’m asking is you take her in tow and listen to her troubles; show her the plant, all the dreary stuff. Later, when you think she is ready to be seduced, we can swear her to secrecy.”

“What’s this ‘WE’ stuff? I don’t have any more experience at this than you do unless you’ve been scouting out-and-about. I’d like to help you but with the work demands and my home life; it’s tough.”

“Talk it over with Meta, then. He understands.”

“You will have to make this an assignment. I don’t want you or Arnold knocking me around for exploiting the poor girl. Uh, it doesn’t have to be in writing. I trust you.”

Serena frowned. “You have to trust me. In view of all you and Meta have gained here, I would think you might be more cooperative.”

“Crap, Selena,” Mandy countered. “At the moment I am trying to track down the mysterious initials that nobody knows about. I’m meticulously going through our files and trying to get a match.”

Serena perked up. “Wonderful. You can get Mary Lou to help with that. There is nothing pressing here at the moment and I can always call her when needed.”

“Mary Lou? Is that her name? Omigod, Serena; is she from Kansas or someplace like that?”

“Common, I know but don’t judge. If you want to take her out for lunch, put it on the expense ledger. You should know now she is sorely needed and I am confident you can handle the assignment.” She grinned openly but Mandy could only catch the Cheshire cat image.

“All right; I’ll do it but not if Meta objects. He knows about my interest in girls. He also knows I am in no way going to rock the boat on the happy seas of our neat crash pad.”

Serena leaned over the desk and snapped the intercom. “Mary Lou, come in please. I have someone I want you to meet.”

Mary Lou came in smiling. She had on a smart business suit with a white linen blouse with lace folds around her throat. Her long brown hair framed her

face and the picture she presented made Mandy wonder that this tender morsel needed a divorce."

Serena explained the personnel records search and abruptly left the two girls while she scooped up her telephone.

"Do you drive?" Mandy asked.

"My car is in the parking lot. Why?"

"My partner had to go to the bank to clarify some transactions and our peerless leader has asked me to show you through the plant to get acquainted. We can start with lunch. Do you have any special place you like to go. We're not in a rush; no timetable."

"How nice," the girl said smiling. "This really is a good place to work. I'm glad I beat the competition to get the job."

Mandy sighed. "With those legs, you couldn't miss."

"I don't understand."

"Private joke; grab your lipstick and let's go."

"You're kind of crazy, aren't you? I like you already."

Mandy and Mary Lou went out to the parking lot and soon were at the Lakeside Café and Lounge seated on the narrow porch where they could enjoy the breezes off the water. They ordered a modest lunch, salad and sandwich, and bribed the waitress into serving some white wine.

The wine greased the young girl's voluble nature and Mandy carefully listened to all the emotional troubles the pretty girl had bottled up inside.

Another glass of wine and the first clue tumbled out.

“My husband and I met in high school; we were ‘going steady’. I liked him a lot but all he liked in me was to demonstrate his sexual prowess. Does that make sense?”

“It certainly does. I do believe it is the status quo of womankind the world over.”

“You are so understanding. My husband comes from a decent family, has a good job in his dad’s firm, all the right sides. I was convinced once he got married and settled down he would make a fine partner. I was wrong.”

Mandy touched the girl’s hand. “What do you have against sex?”

“Oh, it’s not like that. From the honeymoon on we had some good moments. He does tend to drink too much at times and that disturbed me. He had all his buddies in for poker or a ball game and told me to get lost, not interfere. You would have reacted the same, no doubt. I went to my little sewing room/ den/library and didn’t bother them. This went on for several months, maybe a year. One time, without me knowing it, I was the ante in the poker game because my husband had a strong hand. A friend we both knew from school had a winning hand. He came into my room, closed and locked the door and raped me.”

“Ouch! What an asshole!”

Mary Lou looked askance fearful someone might have overheard. She drained her wine glass. Mandy ordered another.

“So, to continue the story. I wanted nothing to do with those shenanigans after that. I don’t blame the

friend with the winning hand. I learned they all wanted my, uh, favors."

Mandy rested her chin on both hands, elbows on the table. "I'm not knocking the male animal but what happened to you is not so far out from reality. I have a partner that is gentle, kind and caring who loves me. I'll introduce you if we catch up with, uh, her this afternoon."

Mary Lou registered the expected shocked surprise. Her? You mean you live with a woman and have sex? That's interesting. Some girls at the sorority have 'that' sort of relationship and to my knowledge are quite happy. With my experience, I tend to lean toward a safe and secure partnership. I sure don't want a man in my life setting me up for rape."

Mandy waved at the waitress, paid the check and stuffed the receipt in her breast pocket. In Mary Lou's car returning to the plant, she decided to clear the air if she was going to make any progress at all. "Listen, honey; there are very few men in the Pinnacle Dot Com operation. It is because women have the traits the company needs to do this type of work. One of the popular games on the production floor is to bet which girl is sleeping with some other girl. A lot of it is nonsense, of course; there are many happily married employees. I just want you to be aware to avoid any unpleasantness."

"I noticed that Miss Fleener is unmarried. Is she, ah, I mean, does she have alternative preferences?"

"That's a good way to look at it. I think you'll get along fine. After a while, if you wish I'd like to ask you over for dinner one weekend evening. Meta and I don't have a deck of cards, just each other. I'm the chef. We balance that well because Meta likes to eat."

Mary Lou smiled. "You're joking, of course. But I think someone with that name was in the meeting last week. Meta; Meta who?"

"Meta Petred, supervisor. Meta is very busy and has earned the respect of the bulk of the production employees. I think you will like Meta. Relax, honey; nobody is going to rape you if I have anything to say about it."

At the small office, Mandy collected the personnel records and showed Mary Lou the specimen initials they were trying to find. To make the new girl comfortable they went to the break room and spread the papers out on a table next to the wall. Mary Lou jumped into the task with enthusiasm.

On the way out at the end of the day, Serena caught up with Mandy. "How is our new employee coming along?"

"Too early to tell but I'm of the opinion I can serve her to you on a silver platter in a week or so. Any new developments in the financial crunch"

"Not so far; I really appreciate what you are doing with Mary Lou. She went out singing when it was time to go home. Whatever you did or said probably worked."

"Sometimes a few kind words linked with a couple glasses of potent wine will do wonders. Good night, boss lady."

#

"Meta, for heaven sakes don't do this to me. What happened at the bank?"

Meta yawned and stretched. "The plot thickens. I showed the head clerk the bank statements and had the deposits in question highlighted. They ran the numbers and came back with some interesting results. The deposits are all legit but they were in cash. There is no record as to who did it. Also, more interest, the deposits were not all made at the same branch. Whoever is putting that money in our account knows our names and in some way came up with the proper account numbers. Not difficult when making a deposit; just a bit tacky making withdrawals. There can be no doubt we are onto something or someone. How was your day? Word is out that Serena has a new girl and you are training her."

"Don't be jealous. Serena wants to get the girl between the sheets. I am the track 'also ran'. She is a sweet girl, recently divorced or separated, and when I hinted that girls sometimes prefer girls she was ready to roll. Strange as it may seem, she is well educated, poised, has a good work ethic and shapely legs. What more could Serena want?"

"Serena wants you and this gal has come up second best."

Mandy guffawed. "Where did you get that? I told Serena I would not seduce the girl unless you agree to allow it. I'm not taking any far out risks for anybody, especially Serena, I can say for sure."

"Is she exciting? Do you want her?" Meta asked.

"it's more what I don't want which is to avoid complicating our life any more than it already is with this financial undercurrent. Anyhow; when I objected to take on the girl until I had a chance to talk to you, Serena firmly made the job an assignment. She really has the hots for this chick. I didn't come anywhere near

a discussion of transvestites or transsexuals. It would have blown her away, I do believe.”

Meta sighed. “The financial trail is top priority. We don’t want it to get cold. We do have to have an understanding about this girl or, for that matter, any girls that interest you. You would ask the same of me if I had a bisexual nature. No girls without proper introduction, and so on. That means no ‘one night stands’ without very strong reasons. Do we agree?”

“Darling, we agree. Right now all I do is look and often enjoy rapping with some chick with a sensual mouth. What do you want me to do tomorrow on our priority project?”

Meta was serious. “I think about that a lot. Put the shoe on the other foot. Suppose we were out to get someone by discrediting an individual in this way. We would succeed and reap whatever benefit launched the program in the first place. Now; here is the tough part. If we make a mistake and let on that we are aware there is a thief in the woodpile. I would guess the adventuresome team, if that’s the case, would get rough. Secrecy is absolutely imperative.”

“You mean there is physical danger? If that might be the scenario, wouldn’t we already be behind the proverbial eight ball? I think there is a strong ulterior motive. The violence you warn against could happen if the thief’s plan might be uncovered and legal action brought in. By that I mean the cops. We are supposed to have legal protection in this country.”

“In my opinion, you are thinking correctly. You better concentrate on Serena’s assignment with the sexy girl. Let me take the risk.”

“She went through a big pile of personnel records today. She turned up some likely specimens which I checked out. All were clean; janitors, clerks, purchasing, like that. We still kept copies of the records, however. When these are finished we’re going to raid the work-in-process files and look for a match. I don’t hold out much hope there but one never knows. We need to be thorough.”

Meta embraced Mandy. “Have I told you lately I love you?”

“Yes; if that’s so you won’t object to me balling this pretty girl named Mary Lou from Kansas.”

“Kansas? How do you know?”

“I don’t but it seems likely the state of Kansas will have a large portion of hot girls named Mary Lou that don’t know the value of what they are sitting on every day.”

Meta laughed. “You are so butch,” he said.

“Second time I’ve heard that today. I’m sticking with you if that’s all right.”

“It’s all right. Come to bed. I want to talk to you.”

She chuckled. “I do like your choice of topics for conversation.”

VII

The high volume aircraft bearing job was finished and Meta dug into the final accounting. With what he had learned, a simple count of finished product plus what had already been shipped left a deficit amounting

to about a trailer truck load which would include the pallet.

“Anything new?” Serena asked as Meta headed into the executive offices.

“We have to talk,” Meta said.

“Good; then talk.”

“We have a thief in the house that by all accounts has been successful in filching the cookie jar leaving us the crumbs. I’ve finally learned how it is being done but have not yet a clue as to who it might be or why.”

Serena’s face dropped in dismay. “Better start at the beginning, Mister Petred. I think we’ve all known from the get-go that a saboteur is taking aim at us. The identity has to be someone in the pay of our competition or, perhaps, a person unknown with a motive for wrecking this company. But, please; I interrupt too much. How is it done?”

Meta sighed, walked to the door and closed it. He threw the bolt lock. “There will be more inviting products in the jar in the near future. There is no sense in risking discovery until we have time to set a trap. The cat may have eaten the canary but there are no feathers to announce the bird’s demise.”

Serena smiled. “Mandy is right; you are crazy.”

“Do you hear me arguing? As each pallet load gets washed and ready for shipment, someone is skimming off the top layer. That means, over a fairly short period of time, another load is being built, one package at a time. Nobody would notice because every load is piece-meal at some stage in the final handling.”

Serena stifled a yawn. “Go on; I’m listening.”

“At the back of the washer, as the loads are rebuilt and stacked, I’ve located an in-process shed which in itself is quite benign. Someone with access to our manufacturing floor is going in the back of the shed and moving the completed load out the side that is used for delivery only. At that point someone has to set the load on a truck. This would have to be done after hours. During the day would be far too obvious.”

Serena sighed in relief. “You’re talking about that green metal box, a portable shelter the workers in heat treat call the dog house. It hasn’t been used in years.”

“When the load is delivered to the destination which is no doubt proper as the parts are in demand, payment is made. Hold your hat on your pretty head. This is the beautiful part. The thief hustles and makes a cash deposit of only a partial amount of the take. What is astonishing is that we found one of the depositories being used.”

Serena was on the edge of her chair. “Great, if that is known, we have the thief. Who is it?”

“You aren’t going to believe this. Mandy and I couldn’t either. A series of relatively small deposits showed up over the past several months in MY checking account. The plan, it appears now, is to discredit me and Mandy while at the same time putting Pinnacle Dot Com finances in near ruin. The next question is for you to answer. Who in a trusted position in this company hates us? Who would have the know-how and access through security to come onto the floor when the load is ready. From there, anyone driving a fork lift truck could grab the load now worth many thousands of dollars and hustle it onto the receiving dock. It’s a simple matter to set it down, close the truck doors and wave goodbye. Just answer the question. Who is it?”

"I don't know," Serena said in a solemn voice as she ticked off any number of employees that would fit the description in her mind. "You are right, we have to set a trap, a rat trap it would be."

"With your permission then we will proceed to do exactly that. This morning I did a cost analysis of a rejected load of overflow tubes with a check valve in the end to protect from back flow. It is fairly simple and will no doubt sail through our plant fairly fast. We need only to partially disassemble it, place the check valve in its proper spot and repack it for shipment. With such a large number of fairly small items, our industrious thief will probably build a thousand dollar load quickly. At some point the transfer has to take place. Since we know where but not when, maintenance is installing a video camera like the ones used in department stores and banks. It works on a proximity switch. The only people involved in the theft are the mastermind, the team leader in assembly and, of course, the truck driver. We can call in the authorities any time you say to get a warrant to check the deposits of likely people involved. It should be fairly easy."

Serena let out a long breath. "Well, I'll be damned. So this is the reason we were doing so well when you and Mandy first began monitoring the work in process. The thief merely stopped stealing until he could get his greedy hands on some items worth the risk."

"Correct, that part fits. Shall we go ahead with this?"

Serena was pensive. "Yes but don't put all this on your shoulders. We will have to bring in someone trustworthy without such a dastardly motive. Placing a rent-a-cop on the delivery dock will soon tip off our culprit so we can't do that."

Meta moved to stand. His face reflected the intense strain he had been nursing over the past several months. "If you don't find someone in whom you have confidence, I'll take the job. After all, I've been targeted so protecting my skin should be proper."

"We have a couple days; I'll let you know."

Meta nodded and left the executive office to avoid watching old man Fleener's daughter break down in tears.

Mandy hurried to catch up. "Meta, what's all the commotion? Do we let the firing squad go?"

"Yes, it's the gallows for our crafty culprit. Nothing is coming down right now so please act your usual crazy self. Is it lunch time? I'm starved."

Mandy grinned. "Mary Lou and I go out for lunch at the Lakeside Café. Care to join us? Serena is buying."

"Nice of you to ask me along."

"Not at all; you get to drive."

He laughed. "You have no pity on over-worked female supervisors. I'll meet you out front."

With most of the pressure lifted, Meta joked and entertained Mandy and Mary Lou as they drove to the lake. Meta found the charming girl he understood was from Kansas was not from Kansas and was a sparkling wit in her own right. "This girl is really Sam," he said pointing at Mary Lou who gave him a quizzical look.

"My name is Mary Lou and I'm not from Kansas. I don't know how that got started."

Mandy and Meta laughed. "Mandy, in your search for initials, did you check the guard shack on the delivery dock?"

“Delivery? No. Why? We checked the shipping documents most carefully.”

“When we get back, do the delivery shack next. Be sure all the pages are on the clipboard. They are not usually numbered so you get to use the dates.”

“What’s that all about?” Mary Lou asked.

“Meta is good at dreaming up work for us,” Mandy answered grinning.

After returning from lunch, Meta stalled going back in. Mary Lou trotted in and went right to work on the project she had been assigned. “Mandy,” Meta said watching the attractive girl go in, “I owe an apology. Your Mary Lou is absolutely charming.”

“I really like her; fun and honest. Odd combination.”

Meta grinned. “You may as well enjoy her. The poor girl is at a crossroads in her life. She seems drawn to you.”

“Well, she is Serena’s project. Just my assignment but she has several times hinted she is wary of Serena. She confessed recently she does not like our boss and does not trust her.”

Meta frowned. “That’s wild; Serena is a good sort. Well, she has to be considering what you two had that one time.”

“I’m glad it happened but I’ve decided I don’t want a repeat ride.”

“Re-rides are only fifty cents, you know.”

“And you’re right; this place is a big amusement park.”

Before leaving for the day, Meta wandered out onto the delivery dock. Mary Lou was talking to the swing shift guard about the sign-in sheets. "Everything all right, Mary Lou?" he asked.

"Yes ma'am, we found the initials we wanted. See? Plain as day."

Meta stared with owl-eyes suspicious of the guard. Mandy arrived. "So, I caught you trying to run off with this pretty girl. Is that the way it is?" Mary Lou blushed showing in one quick flash she liked Meta Petred.

Meta handed Mandy the clip board. "This doesn't make any sense," she said. "Why are the mystery initials on the swing shift delivery dock record? The product code is correct; it's the right work-in-process."

The guard spoke up. "Miss Petred, I don't know what this is all about but several times rather than start a new sheet we just note the activity on the work record. I admit to being somewhat lazy but we get busy here especially early on."

"Don't worry about it," Meta said softly. "Do you happen to recall which truck came along about this time on your shift?"

The guard scratched his chin. "Oh, yes; sure. That's the truck over there." He pointed at a half-ton truck parked in a vehicle storage area. "It doesn't get much use; just once in a while."

"Didn't you think it peculiar, you being the guard, that shipments were being routed through the delivery dock?" Meta asked.

The guard held up one hand. "Scout's honor, Miss Petred. I never saw that truck used. I thought it was surplus."

By this time Mandy had noted the license number. "Not Perry Mason," she said cheerily. "Closer to Sherlock Holmes."

Mary Lou was waiting for them to dismiss her though she had no place to go of any interest. "You two talk in riddles all the time. When did they release you from the asylum?"

"Is there anything more I can help with?" the guard asked.

Meta made a mental note of the guard's badge number and turned to go. "Nothing now; thanks for your help."

"Yes ma'am," the guard said as the three of them walked away.

In the parking lot, Mandy and Meta walked Mary Lou to her car. Seeing her safely in, they held hands going to their car. Meta turned to look at Mary Lou's car which was still in the parking space. "Do you want to invite Mary Lou over for dinner?" Meta asked. "The poor girl seems lost all by herself."

Mandy whirled quickly and ran to catch Mary Lou. She rapped on the window. "Follow us if you want another free meal. It's Friday so we don't have the usual hustle and there is plenty to eat." She waited a moment until Mary Lou turned to face her. She had been crying. "Yes; I'd like that," the girl said and started her car.

Finally at home, Meta and Mandy parked. Mandy quickly pointed at a parking space marked 'visitors' so Mary Lou could park there.

"This is really elegant," Mary Lou said coming in.

Mandy looked at Meta and shrugged. "I know your home is much nicer than this but we like it and we like

you. Come on in. You get to mix the drinks while Meta sits in the easy chair and frowns at us. It's his usual thing."

Mary Lou wasn't ready for that. "His?" she asked.

"Oops! Sorry; you can tell we don't get guests very often. When we get here in the evening, we drop all pretension. Meta is a guy."

Mary Lou dropped heavily onto the sofa. Meta smiled. "It had to happen sooner or later. We should explain to Mary Lou so she won't turn us into the funny farm."

Mandy sat next to the girl and took her hand. "Listen; it's all right. My, you are positively white. Let me tell you how this works. First of all, though I haven't said anything, you've nothing to fear from Meta. He is a gentle soul. I know you had a traumatic experience with your husband and his friends. It isn't like that here." She peered at Mary Lou. After that she explained why Meta had to be a transvestite to get the job at Pinnacle Dot Com; even a part time position. When she finished, Mary Lou felt better and walked with heavy steps to the bar next to the kitchen that served as a breakfast table. She mixed a pitcher of martinis and forced a smile when she poured for them all. "I know I'm a burden," she said, "but you both have been super nice to me. I don't know why."

Mandy raised her glass as if to toast the young divorcé. "Because we like you," she said softly, her eyes moist and sincere. "And because Serena asked us to help you adjust."

Mary Lou blinked. "Did you just say Serena hired me because she finds me attractive? I knew I had a reason to distrust that lady. This is terrible!"

Meta sat on the end of the sofa being careful not to interfere. "Serena is a bit, well, eccentric but, she is the boss and she gave us an opportunity to straighten out our lives which we are still trying to do."

"I see; thank you for being so patient with me. Shall I make another pitcher of martini's?"

They all laughed. Mandy returned to the kitchen to portion the meat loaf left over from the night before. She heaped carrots and string beans onto the plates. "Come and get it," she called.

Mary Lou's nervousness began to disappear on her fourth martini and a hearty meal. She next was willing to listen to Mandy explain Meta's wardrobe, the growing breasts and how a pussy gaff functioned. She went into detail telling stories like their evening out and the fun they had. But, she avoided telling Mary Lou about the night of lust and passion, which was a first experience. Mary Lou did not ask any questions so she let the complex parts slide.

The two girls chatted on the sofa like old friends. Another pitcher of martinis went dry and the evening wore thin. Finally, Meta went into the bedroom and returned with a light spread, a sheet and a pillow. "This is for me," he said gallantly. "I get the sofa tonight which means nobody is going to put their elbows or knees in my worn out frame." The girls giggled and allowed the tired supervisor to get a decent night's sleep.

Mary Lou stood in the doorway looking quite forlorn. When Mandy finally realized why, she hurriedly pulled down a pair of pajamas and handed them to Mary Lou. "Don't let Meta see you in these. He likes to look at girls with pretty legs. Now, don't be upset. I am joking."

Mary Lou nodded and went self-consciously into the bathroom to change.

“Do you have everything you need?” Mandy asked.

“I’m fine, thanks. I feel guilty putting Meta out of his bed. I should have taken the sofa.”

“Nothing doing; if you need me, I’ll be here. Meta can fend for himself.”

The climate was friendly and Mary Lou all but crept into bed as if avoiding broken glass or a mine field.

“Good night, Mandy,” she said softly. “I think you’ve given me a new lease on life. I’ll be just as happy if I never see that awful house I live in again.”

Mandy propped her body up by her elbows. She leaned forward and brushed Mary Lou’s cheek with her lips. “Get some rest, dear girl. Maybe tomorrow we can find some mischief to get into.”

Mary Lou shook her head at the wonder of it all and closed her eyes.

#

After midnight, Mandy woke to the irritating jangle of their telephone. She opened one eye and peered at the clock. “What in the world?” she said and picked it up. “This better be important or there is going to be a homicide.”

By then, Mary Lou was awake and she sat up in bed.

“This is the guard at Pinnacle Dot Com. Is Miss Petred available?”

Mandy bounded from the bed. "Sorry to interrupt your beauty sleep," she said to Mary Lou. "Those guys would never call here unless they have a good reason." She spoke quickly. "Hang on, please. I'll call Miss Petred to the phone."

By that time, Meta was standing in the doorway. He looked so awkward in the ill-fitting pajamas that Mandy wanted to hug him. "Phone is for you, cutie pie," she said and switched on the lamp on the bedside table.

Meta listened intently. He deduced it was the same guard they had spoken to earlier. He paused, thanked the man and sank down into the old stuffed chair Mandy sometimes used for her sewing machine hobby. "Our suspect came and drove off in the truck," he said softly. "No product was loaded according to the guard. This is really fishy." He dressed quickly. "Damn; we might have been here all evening swilling martinis and missed our only chance to nab this guy."

"Should we call Serena? It's her play, you know."

"I think not. This might be simpler than it looks. If the truck wasn't used at the dock we have been watching, the transfer obviously took place elsewhere. I need to go out there right now and get a peek at whoever is trying to wreck us all." He turned to see Mandy hurriedly dressing. "Where do you think you are going?" he asked. "This is my show. Defenseless little girls are not allowed."

Mary Lou went to the kitchen. "I'll make the coffee," she said.

Meta grinned. "There is a thermos on the top shelf over the stove. Fill that with coffee. This might be a

long night though I truly think we have missed our only opportunity. The guard, not knowing the details of our interest, may have said or done something to interrupt the plans. But, he said he didn't see anyone approach the dock. Weird!"

The drive to Pinnacle Dot Com was brief with such little traffic in the middle of the night. Mandy said, "I have an ill-feeling about this but, one way or another, we are sure to learn something."

Meta formed a plan. "Mandy; you check the inventory to see what is missing, if anything. You are more familiar with that than I am. I'll look for the truck and check the three gates, delivery first. Keep your cell phone handy and call me as soon as you learn something."

Mandy was out of the car and sprinting for the entrance as soon as Meta set the brake.

Meta saw immediately that the truck was gone. Even with an assumption about the truck's role in the simple robbery, it was his only clue to action. The guard was leaving to go home.

"My relief isn't here yet," the guard said. "He sometimes is late which is O.K. because the other man is on the receiving gate. We are covered to trip the alarm in case of fire or whatever. The truck that I pointed out earlier disappeared about an hour ago when I was on rounds."

"Thanks, guy; have a nice evening," Meta said. "Appreciated your call; this may be an important development. I don't have time to go into it now."

The guard glanced at Meta's nearly exposed breasts and as quickly looked away. Meta was amused and

buttoned up his shirt. He had not taken time to put on the halter he usually wore.



Mandy knew precisely where to begin looking for available inventory so ripe for the taking. She mentally ticked off the different lots scattered around the area which had been left at the end of the day shift. Nothing! 'Where o' where can you be?' she thought as she headed for the lighting panel. 'Maybe I'll need some more light; might be missing something.'

Passing the rickety shed called the dog house which was used when the bearing order was hijacked, Mandy hesitated and peeked inside. There was the usual odor of grease and sweat, nothing more. She walked to the far side.

"Hello, Mandy; nice of you to call."

Strong hands grabbed her from behind and twisted her arm. "Ow! Who is it?"

Forced forward as the man continued to pin her arm to her back, she staggered in the darkness, helter-skelter, into the store room.

"This is the expected pleasure I've been waiting for," he said.

She couldn't see his face in the shadows formed by the shelving racks and a single bulb. "Who is it?"

He fumbled with the duct tape and she heard it rip when he had enough to cover her mouth. That done, she felt him wrap both her wrists behind her.

"All right, little lady," he said gloating.

At last she recognized the voice. 'How can I have missed it?' she asked herself.

It was Arnold Pap.

"Of all the bad luck, our trusty truck broke down. Probably something minor. We have to wait here until

it is repaired. Are you together now? I know I must have startled you but I couldn't chance you screaming your pretty head off. Shall I remove the gag?"

She vigorously nodded her head 'yes'.

"Promise to behave?"

More 'yes' gestures. She caught her breath when he tore the tape from her face. "Oh, that's better," she said. "You have some explaining to do."

"Time is on our side, little lady. The parts we came for are under a tarpaulin on the delivery dock. The team leader put them there late today. Everything done around here is routine; nobody took notice including you and Meta when you were there."

"Meta will be looking for me. You bête have a good story."

He stood behind her, collected her bountiful head of hair in both hands and let the ribbon fall to the floor. He ran one hand inside her blouse and caressed her breasts. "No bra?" he said teasing. "You might have at least visited me in proper dress." He chuckled.

"You can explain to me," she said having regained her composure. "You have no reason to act like this that I can see." She ignored as much as she could the exploring hands on her body. She cringed when his thumb and forefinger caught her nipple.

He touched her hair and her lips. "You are indeed beautiful. Such a waste on that deviate you live with. I do hope he satisfies you regularly. As I recall, Meta is, ah, well endowed though the recent changes in his body might have altered that somewhat."

"None of your concern, sir," she said in a pleading voice. "One way or another, this is the end of the line

for you. If you are going to run off with the company money and leave us to pick up the pieces, at least tell us why."

He leaned down until his face was inches from hers. His breath reeked with the odor of garlic. "Do you remember that I told you a while ago that one of these days you could do for me what your partner does so well? That moment, alas, is upon us."

"All right but don't hurt me. I'm only human after all."

"Oh, you are much more than that. You doubtless have a talented as well as exquisite mouth I've lusted for since first meeting you. I once hoped that my brief event with Meta would perhaps make you a reality. No luck there."

"So, why all the subterfuge, Arnold? Having sex with me, no matter your fantasy, does not add up. How did we ask for this?"

"Your beauty put you in this spot. The rest goes back a long way." He set a storage tray on end and sat next to her so he could fondle her legs as he talked. "It's like this," he continued. "When old man Fleener planned for his retirement, he intimated he would turn this business over to me. His role as consultant was in his mind. With our verbal agreement, I had to promise to see his daughter, the lovely Serena, through school and situated. Hopefully, he said, with a good husband and grandbabies." He chuckled and cleared his throat before going on.

"I see the picture," Mandy said softly. She began to feel sorry for him even in such strained circumstances. "His untimely death must have upset you. It was the will, wasn't it?"

His remarks were less sarcastic and he smiled. "Where there's a will, there's a relative. I challenged it in court pleading my case but without evidence to the contrary, the entire company, property, real estate, all of it, went to Serena. I'd no option but to rally in her support but in the back of my mind, what I really need was revenge. You don't understand resentment until it totally governs your life."

"So I see," she whispered. "How does behaving like this satisfy your outlandish vendetta?"

"You already know the rest. I've been milking this company for a long time to amass a quite substantial nest egg—cash, negotiable securities, many investments to keep me comfortable. The passing joke is I get to lay on the beach in Tahiti with the thousand dollar whores."

Even with the tight tape on her wrists cutting off circulation, she managed a smile. "You'll have plenty of company, Arnold. Mobsters, gangsters, union stewards, politicians, assorted other crooks to name a few. It is likely your paradise will be closer to purgatory on your travel down the road to disastrous destiny. It appears to me you've no way out. The dye is set."

He gleefully unbuttoned her blouse, opened it and whistled in appreciation when the bra clasp was loose. "Very pretty," he cooed. "I can already see my big cock spiriting between these." He fondled them roughly using both hands. "Don't be impatient, there is more." He pulled his cell phone off his hip and punched the number. The conversation was brief. "It will be a bit longer, pity, isn't it? They are putting a rebuilt carburetor on as we speak. I've no doubt Meta Petred is frantically trying to locate the missing truck. His efforts are laughable with the truck in an all-night repair shop and the

'take' nestled securely on the delivery dock as if waiting for the next shift. Too much! In the face of disaster, I am pulling off my last heist. Revenge is sweet."

"Not if your revenge is meant to heal an old wound. You know well it will not happen. You may as well kiss the corpse of this dying company."

He leaned down and slipped off her shoes. "Perhaps," he answered. "Time is the final judge, is it not?"

"What are you doing?" She watched as he set her shoes and socks off to one side.

"You can't run from here in bare feet. The place is like a field of razor blades. Hasn't been swept in ages." He reached behind her. "Your secure wrists must be hurting by now. I'll release them if you cooperate."

"I'm not sure what cooperate means but, yes, undo me."

She massaged her throbbing wrists and hands. "That's better; thank you."

"All in the service. Stand up."

She stood when he lifted her with one hand under her shoulder at the arm pit. Naked feet on the cool floor made her shiver. She next watched in horror as he opened her belt and tugged her bulky jeans off her hips.

The milky, elegant thighs were erotic and inviting at the same time. He leaned down and ran the flat of his tongue along her legs. From there he nuzzled and fondled her breasts. The nipples of her breasts set in the pink aureoles were captured by his firm lips. "You are indeed a sexy wonder," he whispered and looked into her eyes. The hostility there did not deter him.

"I've often thought of how beautiful it must have been with your pretty face buried between Serena's thighs."

"She thought so, as well," she answered. In the quiet moment as the lecher gained his prize of flesh and feeling, she began to put it all in perspective.

'The longer he takes with all these liberties, the sooner he will have to stop.' She mulled it over in her mind. 'The truck will return for him or, ulp, us. Also possible, he might fritter away his time until Meta comes looking for me.' She put that together and a final thought alarmed her. She had not remembered to activate the telephone locator button Meta would need to find her. The storeroom was not a logical place to look for valuables destined to be sold at bargain prices. She stopped chasing ideas when she felt his hand between her legs stroking her mons with a loving, adoring touch.

"Take it easy, big boy," she said with a firm tone. "I'm only a little girl, you know. I'm glad you like me."

"And I'm happy I will finally be getting what I've longed for. Oh, relax, love. I'm not the only one. You go around this plant bouncing your cute behind to the entertainment of dozens of hot girls. You are probably the top topic of lustful cracks in the break room. Um, these are luscious." He grasped her breasts with both hands and lifted them gently as weighing them.

She became wary when he forced her back onto the chair. "What now?" she asked.

"Give me both hands; it's time you earned your keep." He moved her hands to his belt. "Let me see your nimble fingers open my trousers. Well, go ahead."

Trying not to show off her nearly unlimited practice in accessing the throbbing male ego encased in a firm

cock, she soon had both hands around it, grasping with her fingers and stroking. "Control yourself, Arnold," she said looking up at him. "I know what to do." In one swift move she squared her shoulders and pulled his hips forward. The sensitive cock slid between her lips without effort.

"Ugh! Yes!" he called out. "Finish me, swallow it all."

She continued until she sensed her skilled fingers and lips were capturing his lust. The familiar onset of power, of the female over the needy male, overwhelmed her.

He held her head with both hands and positioned her to revel in the glorious sight for which he had longed for so long. She swallowed more to keep from drowning than in any show of gusto. When he pushed her away, she glanced up to see an evil smile on his face. His fist came down with a crunch on the side of her head. She was out like the proverbial light.

VIII

Mandy awoke in the back of the truck. She was sitting on a green blanket of the type used by movers. There was no sound other than the expected hum of the engine, moaning snow tires and passing traffic. She laid back down and tried to escape the throbbing in her head where the man had punched her.

Next she frantically searched for her cell phone without success. Memory told her she had the phone with her. She concluded Arnold had taken it so she

wouldn't call for help. Her clothes were in a clump next to her so she dressed. It was awkward with the speed of the truck weaving in and out.

She raised the tarp on the load of contraband next to her. She was able to identify the reworked valves she had seen in the shop earlier in the week.

'This is cute; even a bit scary,' she said to herself. 'I can't see out so I've no idea what time it is.' There was just a dusty dome light forward near the cab.

She dozed for awhile and idly wished for some water to drink and maybe an aspirin.

The jolt of the truck and screeching tires wakened her from deep slumber. When she realized the truck was at a stop, she tried the door but saw it could not be opened from the inside. There were voices outside and she sat up. Instinct told her to hide so she scrambled behind the load of parts and tugged at the tarp in an effort to cover herself.

"Mandy, are you in there?" It was Meta with panic in his voice.

When the hue doors swung open, Mandy blinked in the bright morning sunlight. She squinted and saw a burly Highway Patrol officer looking at her. A team of Emergency Medics climbed in to check her vital signs.

That done, she fell sobbing into Meta's arms. "It was Arnold Pap," she said controlling her voice. "We might have known all the time but he was ever so innocent."

"We have him; he's over there talking to the police. We needed this truck

and that load of valves for evidence. And, we needed you for a witness."

“Thanks a lot,” she said with disdain. Then she smiled and kept the

embrace a little longer. “I can tell you the whole fantastic story.”

“Not now, honey but we know most of it.”

Confused, she produced a wan smile. “How did you know to find me?”

Meta held her close and then guided her to some shade on the side of the road. “Luckily, you had left your cell phone on ‘send’ to my phone which, in our haste, we left at home. You probably mistakenly hit the ‘send’ key instead of the locator when you went into that dark place. I thought you would be in the dog house but there was no sign of you there. The other guard caught up with me and handed me his phone.”

“You are talking too fast and none of it makes sense.”

“Yes, it does. Mary Lou heard voices and had presence of mind enough to put my phone on loudspeaker. She heard everything and was able to fill in the blanks. When she realized she was listening to a crime in progress, she called Serena Fleener who in turn called the police. From there it was procedure, not guess work.”

Mandy sighed and wiped her eyes. A medic prepared an ice pack and she pressed it to her bruised face. Glancing around, she saw Mary Lou and Serena standing close by. They were both grinning happily. “So it was Mary Lou who had enough going to figure it out. Well, we can pick ‘em; aye?”

The ambulance crew cleared them and busily made their report. Meta climbed in the back seat of Mary Lou’s car after Mandy got in. “This is special luxury in

payment, she says, for a fine dinner, a gallon of martini and friendship."

Serena reached in and patted Mandy on the shoulder. "Good job on your assignment but you didn't have to get yourself killed." She went to her car and left.

Mary Lou drove them to Pinnacle Dot Com so Meta could get his car. Mandy struggled to the front seat and put her head on Mary Lou's shoulder. "I'm glad to learn everyone from Kansas knows how to think."

Mary Lou chuckled. "Thanks but I'm not from Kansas."

"I know," Mandy said. She reached up and touched Mary Lou on her cheek. "I think I'll take you there someday."

"All right but who is going to keep Serena Fleener out of trouble? Certainly not me. She needs a talented transvestite with a gorgeous side kick."

"Did we really sleep together last night?"

"Yes but it wasn't last night; at least a century has passed since then."

"Tell me I did not embarrass you by cuddling you in my sleep."

"It was all right. I'm aware you have that marvelous Meta Petred to irritate all night. It just amused me, afterward, to think of the surprise you would get if you climbed between my legs only to find what you needed wasn't there."

Mandy roared with laughter.

#

Meta had called a doctor to be certain Mandy was not seriously injured. The doctor gave her a sedative and instructed Mary Lou to put the patient to bed and keep her there.

Once assured Mandy was O.K., Meta went directly to Pinnacle Dot Com and to a meeting in Serena's posh office. They discussed all the information that had been gathered, however piecemeal, and Serena made some temporary changes until she could sort it all out.

Meta Petred emerged from the office and went down the long corridor that had once terrified him. He had a spring in his step. 'Assistant to the CEO' was a title he could live with. It occurred to him how few transvestites might ever be fortunate enough to climb from a temporary part time job to the lofty role of CEO's assistant.

Once the plant was through discussing the scenario, work started humming again. Meta went home at the usual time and, though tired from the anxiety and running frantically to rescue Mandy, came in inquiring about dinner.

Mary Lou smiled and pulled a platter out. She set a sizzling steak in the center and a helping of parsley new potatoes on one end balanced by curried rice on the other. When she set the meal in front of the amazed man she leaned over and whispered though there was nobody to hear. "She is asleep and likely to stay that way. I'm leaving the decision up to you. Do I get the bed or the sofa?"

#

As Meta pulled the covers over him and punched the sofa pillows, he closed his eyes and blithely recounted to day's events. Something Serena had said to him at her office startled him. They had been discussing the betrayal of the unhinged Fleener family friend, Arnold Pap. Offering him the promotion, she touched his arm. "You can close your mouth now. All in due time, it's a lesson to be learned."

The End