

Redemption



William Kincaid



An "Adult Tv" Novel



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Love,

Ms. Chrissie
Editor in Chief

Redemption

By William Kincaid

11:21, Cindy's smart phone indicated. She knew exactly what time it was as she had looked at her phone five times in the last ten minutes. Her date was late.

"Typical," Cindy said to herself while sipping on an apple martini, her fourth. She would have been in no condition to converse with her date anyway, but she had known for an hour that he was not going to show. Being stood up had become the norm for Cindy. Her internet profile had certainly attracted men but the majority were immediately rejected as jerks with sexual hang-ups. Even the "nicer," more level-headed and mature guys regarded her as a free whore rather than someone to spark a meaningful relationship. They usually would be in a pre-existing relationship already, and would run back into their closet after they masturbated to the idea of being with her without actually consummating the meeting. The minority that actually met Cindy, she estimated one in twenty, would gush all over her, saying

she was more of a woman than their wives or girlfriends, but they kept her at arm's length after their encounter with the affectionate, blonde transgender woman.

Feeling the effects of the vodka, Cindy eased herself off the bar stool and nearly tripped on her four and a half-inch stiletto heels before regaining her balance. Even buzzed, Cindy knew how to walk in heels.

“Are you okay there, girl?” Ryan the bartender cheerfully asked.

“I’m fine. I can walk home, no problem,” Cindy responded.

“Stood up again, huh?” Ryan asked with sincere inflection. He was an experienced bartender and had seen the routine repeat itself often with the stylish and friendly young lady.

“You know it,” Cindy responded while putting on her khaki trench coat.

“I think you’re digging in the wrong place,” Ryan suggested.

“Find me a better one,” Cindy quipped as she turned and stalked out of The Tavern, a longstanding Philadelphia gay piano bar, the focus of what once was the gayborhood.

Cindy took the flagstone steps two at a time and then gingerly made her way down the brick alley. The March night was surprisingly warm and a gentle breeze rustled through the trees before she came to Locust Street and was overwhelmed by the busy Saturday evening traffic. She turned to the left and made

her way to her apartment on Pine Street, and in her agitated mind, contemplated her reality.

Cindy Renee Hawkins was twenty-six and worked as a Supervisory Park Ranger at the Independence National Park in her primary identity as Tim. Two years before, Tim had embarked on his journey as a transwoman, etching a blaze of glory in the annals of the gay bars and hotels in Philadelphia, New Hope, and New York. Cindy had lost count of the men she had slept with. She could walk into any drag bar in New York City, supremely confident that she would return to her hotel room on the arms of a male admirer, with the exception of Lips, which had become a trendy spot for bachelorette parties. On Saturday nights, Cindy would be the only transwoman there, other than the entertainers and employees. The guys were not to be found. "Stay for the food, not the action," she laughed.

The drag scenes in Philadelphia, her home town, and in New Hope, a gay friendly resort area on the Delaware River, were much more subdued. Most of the men she had met locally had been through the internet, and once the initial contact had been made, she would usually meet them at The Tavern, which had been the plan for tonight.

Now, with the blaze of glory dimming, Cindy pondered her existence as a transwoman on the walk home in the early spring evening and became increasingly angered. The scene all too often played out like it did tonight, sitting in the bar talking to Ryan, then snuggling in bed with Roosevelt, her teddy bear. Moreover, with a few notable exceptions, most of the men she actually did meet were not worth anything more than an expended condom in the end, as they saw in her nothing but an easy lay. They certainly did not care about the person she was, never probing be-

hind the feminine vision that she presented. After raving about the sex with her, they would disappear for months on end without any communication.

Making matters worse, Cindy did not have any companions who were transgendered and encouraging. She had reached out to several girls to party with, but often had been not too gently rebuffed for her efforts to befriend them. The girls she actually did meet usually had their own issues and could not reach out beyond themselves to actually be a true friend. When she had voiced her frustrations to them, they were indifferent and quickly changed the topic.

Cindy had been encouraged by the recent public appearance of trans celebrities in the media, but that had been seriously tarnished, and now she felt the backlash against all things trans beginning. Her workplace would be very supportive if she had decided to transition. "But transition to what?" she asked herself. "It's time to give this up this path to nowhere," Cindy resolved.

The sun shone beautifully through Tim's bedroom window the next morning; after a shower and a large glass of orange juice, his head cleared from the night before. In less than an hour, Tim had returned with three large plastic tubs from the Home Depot and began clearing the items from the Cindy closet. The styrofoam wig heads, makeup mirror, makeup bag, and purses came first. Tim rolled up his wigs inside out, placed them in cellophane bags, and added them to the pile, filling his first tub.

The shoe collection came next, high-heeled sandals, women's running shoes, knee-high boots, Oxfords, flats, and pumps. A girl's shoes always made a statement, but now it would be muted.



The hardest part of the purge came when Tim started pulling the clothes off the hangers. A wardrobe worth over \$10,000 was removed from the closet and irreverently placed in the bottom of a \$5.00 plastic tub. An evening gown with the price tag still attached was laid out among dresses, jeans, sweaters, blouses, and skirts. Tim then pulled his lingerie from the dresser including an unworn bustier and dumped sexual paraphernalia and an open box of condoms on top of it, spilling its contents in his haste. Finally, he remembered the six bottles of Taiwan Blue that he kept in the refrigerator. Placing them in a Ziploc bag, he threw them on top of the pile of clothes in the last tub, then sealed the tomb of Cindy Hawkins.

By noon all traces of Cindy had been erased from Tim's apartment and placed in storage at the U-Haul warehouse on Washington Avenue, with the exception of a shrine to the departed. The far corner of Tim's bedroom wall featured framed pictures of Cindy in happier moments, along with ladies' fashion posters, and portraits of Audrey Hepburn, Marilyn Monroe, and Natalie Portman that Tim had purchased from the art vendors at Central Park after nights of glamorous debauchery. Those women had been Cindy's inspiration. To celebrate Cindy's exile, Tim ordered take-out from his favorite Caribbean restaurant, curried goat roti, and savored the meal in his virtually transgender-free abode. The Cindy chapter was over. Tim would now turn the page and get on with his life.

"I can't believe Julie's shit," Kelly Waskow, Tim's office companion, and fellow supervisory park ranger complained. "She is really going to enforce the policy that allows transgender people to use the women's bathroom. This is PC stuff run amok, catering to a bunch of pervs who don't understand what sex they

really are. The tourists come here from all over and are not used to big city goings-on. They don't need an encounter with a trans person as the most memorable event from their visit to the park."

Kelly was in charge of park security, as she had attended West Point and served as a captain in the military police in Afghanistan, where she lost her left arm to an IED. Kelly had been fitted with a prosthetic arm but was very self-conscious about her appearance, and felt isolated from the civilian workers and the public who had not served in the military. She spent most of her spare time attending veteran's rallies, commenting on veteran's issues on social media, or going to the gun range, still being a proficient shot with her right hand.

Other than Kelly's occasional rant about transgendered people in the rest rooms, Tim got along great with Kelly. Besides, Cindy had been in the rear-view mirror for a little over a year now. It was no longer his fight nor his concern. The two cheerfully bantered about the Army-Navy rivalry. When Kelly boasted that she could shoot better than Tim, he responded, "So what, you can't fish." Kelly had served at Fort Drum at Watertown, New York, very close to where Tim's family had their summer cottage. The two had talked at length several times about the Thousand Islands Region, although Kelly had spent the majority of her time deployed to Afghanistan when she was stationed there, and would typically be home during the Arctic conditions of mid-winter.

Kelly did not like Julie Stevens, the Park Superintendent, who bled national park green in the same manner Kelly still bled West Point gray. Julie was a park service veteran of over twenty years, and was completely nonplussed by Kelly's open enmity. Even

though Julie had not served in the military, she had served as a park ranger for fifteen years at Yellowstone and Yosemite, and had been on countless search and rescues, or the more grisly version, search and recoveries, fought forest fires in the summer, and kept the roads open in the winter, all the time smiling at the hapless tourists trying to get a glimpse of America's last remaining wilderness.

One summer, Julie encountered a beautiful, dark-haired lawyer from Philadelphia who was staying at a lodge in Yellowstone to do some solo hiking. Julie instantly fell under the spell of Beth's smile and her quick wit, and soon requested a transfer to Independence Park where she could be close to her. The two were married in the Unitarian Church on 21st Street in Philadelphia, and between their work responsibilities were now raising a five-year-old.

Tim himself was a member of the Unitarian Church, and had been since he came out the first time as Cindy. His past was still his past; he could not go to a church that condemned his prior behavior, plus the congregation was very nice. There was a policy that no newcomer was to stand alone and be ignored. Today Tim was serving as a greeter after the service, which featured the sermon, "Sin Boldly, Life according to Martin Luther." An attractive brunette with dark brown eyes stood at the greeting table, eating cookies and sipping coffee.

"Hi, I'm Tim, I hope you enjoyed your first time at the church. I have been coming here several years and really like it."

"I'm Jessica, although my friends call me Jess. I must admit it is very refreshing to hear a sermon with the theme 'sin boldly'. It's not one I ever heard before."

“That’s the way I always sinned, that’s for sure,” Tim laconically declared, barely even thinking.

Jess’s eyes went wide, this clean-cut, nice guy was dead serious about his statement, but not in a manner that was trying to impress or hit on her.

The two exchanged pleasantries for another five minutes. Jess was originally from Idaho and had recently completed her first year at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School of Business. She had been raised in a fundamentalist Christian family, but was now trying to expand her sense of spirituality and really liked what she saw at the church. Tim told her that Martin Luther King had learned of non-violent resistance at this church when he was on seminary in Philadelphia, from a sermon about Gandhi.

“I would prefer to learn about Martin Luther and your sinning boldly, it sounds like a story there. Would you care to do lunch?”

“Sure, I know a good spot.”

Tim and Jess walked over to Walnut Street and then to Rittenhouse Square where to Jess’s surprise, Tim ordered lamb and rice from a street vendor and beckoned her to do the same. The two carried their food over to the stone wall surrounding the pool in the square. The day was beautiful and the trees were starting to bloom.

Jess laughed, “You couldn’t have picked a better spot, I’ll say. Now tell me about your sinful existence.”

Tim hesitated for a second. Cindy was in the past, but he had already committed, and Jess seemed incredibly cool. He pulled out his smart phone and

scrolled through his photos, coming to an album labeled 'Cindy'. He then scrolled over to Cindy's money shot, demurely sitting at a table in New Hope in a blue and red sweater dress, black stockings, and suede 4 ½-inch pumps, with a sweet smile on her face. "The sinning happened later that night."

Jess looked confused but stared at the picture for several seconds until the lights went on. Wharton students were typically pretty fast on the uptake.

"Oh my God, that's you. You're beautiful. Your makeup is excellent."

"Thanks," Tim said, chagrined at Jess's compliments.

"Can I look at your other pictures?" Jess asked hopefully.

"Sure, I would like that."

Jess seemed amazed at the pictures of the hot, confident blonde, including some very risqué shots.

"I guess you were with a lot of men?" she sheepishly asked.

"Too many, but most were not really worth it."

"That's a shame. So does this woman have a name?"

"Cindy. Cynthia Renee Hawkins."

"Very pretty."

"Thanks."

“We should go out sometime. I think hanging with you could be a lot of fun. It looks like you had a great time.”

“Well, truthfully, I retired from being Cindy over a year ago.”

“Why?”

“It was going nowhere. The men I dated wanted nothing more than a quick fuck. They certainly didn’t care about me, or the fact that I spent ninety-nine percent of my life as a guy. They wanted absolutely no knowledge of that.”

“If it makes you feel better, a lot of guys treat all women that way. Welcome to the club. I bet you did not put yourself out there as wanting a real relationship anyway.”

Tim smiled, “You got me there. But I didn’t even have any real friends when I was Cindy. I tried be-friending this one girl from Paoli, Sara, very attractive. She wouldn’t even admit to being transgendered. One night we were out at a club in New York City with a local drag queen, she went on that dressing as a woman was just her thing, and that all men had some kind of thing that they did; golf, fishing, gambling, auto racing, whoring, and that dressing as a woman and trolling for men to give blow jobs to was not an indication that she may be transgendered.”

Jess laughed, a beautiful, lilting laugh. “I was raised a strict fundamentalist and I observed our teaching. But then I was married to a good Christian alcoholic and when I left him, I was the bad person. All my friends who knew me to be a good person

turned their backs on me. I had to get as far away from Idaho as I could.”

“Wharton is not a bad place to land.”

“I was pretty good in my undergrad.”

“I suppose so.”

“It seems like I can learn a lot from you. Why don’t we go shopping next week, and I would like a makeover if you are willing. You look incredible as a woman and I could definitely use some pointers. It would be fun.”

“I would like that.”

Tim met Jess outside a consignment shop on Chestnut Street the next Saturday to start her on her path of sinning boldly. She bought several short skirts and blouses, and some very nice dresses that would drop any man in his tracks. Jess then selected a tangerine dress with short sleeves in a size eight, two sizes too big for her.

“What do you think?”

“It’s gorgeous.”

“Great, I was hoping you would like it.”

“But it’s too big for you. They have a size six right over here in the same style.”

“It’s for you, dum dum.

But I’m not wearing dresses anymore.”

“I think you will soon enough. I don’t think you can resist not wanting to show this one off. I’m buying it.”

Tim then took Jess to the shoe store. “Look if you can’t rock a pair of heels, you can’t be a good sinner. They don’t call them Fuck Me pumps without cause.”

“I have heels.”

“How high?”

“Two, three inches.”

“I can dance all night in five-inch stilettos and once I walked two miles in New York in four and a half-inch pumps. If I can do it, you can. Conversely, my kind-of friend Sara, who I told you about, insisted on six-inch pumps that she could barely walk in. I told her, it’s not sexy if you can’t walk.”

The two concluded their shopping expedition at a cosmetic store, with Tim introducing Jess to a previously unknown device, an eyelash curler.

“Every fashionable young woman has one.”

“My life is now complete. I can’t imagine how I could have lived without one for twenty-five years.”

“Me neither, or never have a pair of heels worth a shit.”

Staring at the hot, fashionable seductress in the mirror took Jess’s voice away for a minute. This really was her in the short red dress, the matching high-heeled sandals, the daring eyeshadow, and lips that demanded attention. She licked and puckered her lips provocatively, practicing her technique, winked, and tilted her head back in a come hither

gesture. Jess then incorporated the rest of her body into her act, placing her hand on her hips, crossing her legs, bending over at the waist, and doing the notorious bend and snap.

Tim and Jess got a good laugh at the last one. Then she pronounced as she licked her heavily glossed lips, "I am going to get fucked tonight as there is no way I'm going to waste this look. I wish you could come with me. You would look great in that tangerine dress in your closet. I'll see you at church tomorrow."

As Tim watched Jess strut off in her high-heeled sandals, a vision in scarlet, certain of her imminent sinning, Tim wished in the deepest part of his soul that Cindy was accompanying her right now and that she would be fucked right alongside Jess by her own, nice, well-endowed guy.

Nice guys were very hard to find on the transgendered dating site on which Cindy revived her profile after a year of it lying dormant. Soon she had blocked over two hundred members. Luckily, most of the men had been very easy to block; dick pics, screen names with sexual innuendo or with the number 69 for men not aged forty-seven, all were immediately discarded. Then came the men who would have to talk about sex immediately, despite the fact that Cindy's profile expressly indicated she was looking for more than sex. Guys would throw little gems in the conversation, like "eat me," or "spit or swallow?" and get sent to the trash pile as well. Cindy had already had plenty of experience with businessmen in town for conventions or meetings, using the distance to step out of their closet, and knew that inevitably they would blow her off once they returned home. Finally, there were the guys that were afraid to actually talk on the phone to Cindy, despite acting more or less normal. Cindy figured that most of them appre-

ciated the fantasy of being with her, but after masturbating to that fantasy, pulled their pants back on and went about their business. And then, there was that one man in two hundred who separated himself from the pack.

Tim entered into the darkened lobby of Rabat, a Moroccan restaurant in an alley off South Street and removed his Smokey the Bear hat. The host politely greeted him, "Good evening, sir. How may I help you?"

"I am meeting a friend here at 5:30. Can I just wait for him at the bar?"

"Certainly, sir. Right this way. I am sure you will enjoy our restaurant."

"I'm sure I will, thank you," Tim smiled.

Ordering a mango lassi, Tim contemplated the surprising development. A 31-year-old African-American man, Lee Maxwell, had responded to Cindy's ad, and after a polite telephone conversation, suggested they meet at the Moroccan Restaurant which was only a ten-minute walk from Tim's office at Independence Park. Meeting at a restaurant was nothing out of the ordinary. Cindy would have felt comfortable at Rabat on a date, but Lee had requested that he meet Tim for dinner, something nobody had ever done before, never. But now he was patiently waiting for Lee to show.

Tim had arrived his customary fifteen minutes early, a practice ingrained into him as a naval officer. Belly dance music played lightly on the intercom, reminding Tim of an unfulfilled dream for Cindy. He basked in the reverie of that vision, and did not see the very large African American man approach from

his rear. So much for military-honed situational awareness.

Lee Maxwell towered over Tim, as he stood up from his bar seat. Lee was 6'6", 260 pounds of taut muscle. He had intense, dark eyes, and closely cropped hair that had already started to gray. He wore black slacks, a white button-down long-sleeved shirt, and a black leather jacket.

Lee extended his hand, and with a sincere and surprisingly gentle expression stated, "I'm pleased to meet you, Tim. Not many people would show up for this."

"Not many people would ask for a meeting like this. If you were anybody else, you would have turned around and ran away," Tim confirmed, remembering an eighteen-year-old crossdresser who sought Cindy's tutelage, and arranged for a meeting as guys to be more comfortable at the book shop just a few blocks away from Rabat. Tim waited for half an hour after the appointed time, then shrugged him off, laughing that he had broken one of the cardinal rules of being a trans, never get involved with anybody who is eighteen as they are not mature enough to deal with it.

Lee signaled over the host who led the two men to a darkly-lit table in the far corner from the door and sat them down on cushions. The host wished both of them a good dinner as he presented menus to the diners. After a short wait, the waiter took their orders, the two-person combination special, a five-course meal featuring a Mediterranean salad, rice wrapped in grape leaves, lamb kebabs, chicken couscous, and homemade pastries.

“The food here is fantastic,” Lee proclaimed. “I hope you like it.”

“I’m sure I will,” Tim smiled. “I spent six months at Turkey guarding American ships on the base at Golcuk. I love Turkish food and this is very similar.”

“Did you like Turkey?”

“From what I saw of it, yes. I loved it. Istanbul in many ways is more romantic than Venice. It has this energy of being at the boundary between Asia and Europe that you won’t find anywhere else. Plus sailing on the Sea of Marmara is like being back five hundred years in time with the old school fishing boats, and the Byzantine fortresses and lighthouses.”

“Glad you liked it. Maybe we can go some day,” Lee said hopefully, already warming to this short, clean-cut, blonde white guy.

“That would be nice. I will admit that I loved the belly dancing and wished I could get an outfit and perform some day.”

“Put it on your agenda,” Lee firmly stated.

“Is that an order?” Tim grinned.

“A suggestion. Let me rephrase, I would enjoy seeing you do a belly dance.”

“Then I will enjoy learning how to do it and to perform for you.”

“Thank you. So how does a transgendered person like yourself deal with being in the military?”

“Well, when I was in Golcuk and Haifa, Israel, I wished I would have had the guts to desert and escape to Paris, become a show girl and transition. But I stuck it out.”

“Good for you.”

“Actually, the second time I ever dressed as a woman in public, I was still in the navy. I looked smokin’ that night. I had a cute white off-the-shoulder peasant blouse that exposed my midriff, a denim skirt and white, high-heeled sandals.”

“Is your belly button pierced?”

“No.”

“Pierce it.”

“Is that an order?”

“Yes.”

“Noted. Well, like I said, I looked great, and my mentor arranged me to meet an off-duty cop on Broad Street on Friday night to see if sparks would fly. It turns out the Eagles were playing that night so the police were out in force looking for streetwalkers, and God knows I sure looked like one. So two officers in an unmarked pull up to me and start to question why I’m there. I was scared shitless. How do you explain to your command getting busted for transsexual prostitution?”

Lee did not answer. Instead he just smiled.

“My mentor talked to the cops and explained everything, more or less. They were all laughing and smiles and called me over. One of them said I looked

fantastic, and if he and his buddy weren't straight, they would both date me. I smiled, wrote my e-mail address on the cardboard on the back of a ticket sheet and kissed it with my lips. Sure enough, I ended up seeing both of those guys for a while."

"And the other cop, the shithead that asked you to meet him on Broad on game night?"

"He pulled up ten minutes later. I leaned over and talked to him in his car, making sure I held my ass high like any good street walker. My mentor was very impressed."

"Did you ever date that cop?"

"Yeah, but all he wanted was for me to play with his nipples. 'C'mon Cindy, play with my nipples, please.' Pretty much a turn-off, but cops are, for the most part, not good dating material."

"Did you ever date African-American men?"

"Plenty of times. They were reliable, respectful, and great in bed. The trouble is, all they want to do is fuck. That is great for two, maybe three times, but I want a man who will take me out on real dates and do real things, not just being their whore. Granted I did like the sex, but It was not enough to keep my interest."

"Yeah," Lee laughed, "the brothers can be that way. If it makes you feel any better, a lot of guys I know treat cis-women the same way."

"Cis-women?"

"Yes, I do know the vocabulary. I dated two transwomen. Fell in love with both of them, Angela

and Eileen. Both of them are now living and working as women, and Angela has two adopted children.”

Tim felt a sudden fear that his path had now been laid out for him, but he bravely pressed on. “So what are you looking for?”

“The same thing you said in your profile. The real thing.”

“And what do you like in a woman?”

“The whole package. She should be a wizard in the board room, a maestro in the kitchen, an angel with the kids, and a whore in the bedroom.”

Tim lost his breath and felt flush. He so wanted Cindy to become the big man’s whore. “I can’t cook,” he joked, “other than seafood and salmon.”

“No problem, I can. I work as a cook at the Clymer Diner.”

“Sorry, I haven’t been to that one, but I do go to the Jerk Hut two blocks over on South Street. I love their curried goat roti.”

“You love curried goat roti?”

“Doesn’t everybody?”

Lee laughed again, which resonated through Tim, he loved the sound of it. “So how long have you been a cook.”

“Four years, after I got out of prison at Graterford.”

Tim felt another shudder, which Lee detected. “I am not that man anymore, so don’t worry. Losing Eileen over it straightened me out.”

“Four years is a long time,” Tim sounded relieved.

“So it doesn’t scare you away?”

“Nope. Nobody ever asked to meet me as a guy before. Most guys I dated can step out of their closet very briefly and just want me as a woman until they can cum.”

“So how does a nice, clean cut white boy like yourself become such a hot woman?”

“Well, my Dad is a pharmaceutical engineer and my family lived in Brussels Belgium for two years when I was twelve and thirteen. There was this nightclub near my school that had gorgeous female impersonators. I was at first disgusted by it, until I came to realize that the disgust I felt was actually because deep down I wanted to be one of those girls. After that, pretty much every well-put together woman I saw, I wished I could be.”

“It must have been hard. I know it was for Angela and Eileen. What about your parents? Are they cool with Cindy?”

“They don’t know about her, and I like it that way.”

“Eventually you will have to come clean with them.”

“Yep, but for right now, I am not even dressing as a woman.”

“Why not?”

“Too much bullshit. The guys I met were for the most part idiots with a few exceptions. One guy I dated was pretty much Jason Bourne, special forces, CIA triggerman from what I could glean. He wasn’t scared of ISIS or Russian secret service but he was afraid of me. I’m pretty sure he fell in love with me but since I was living a double life I couldn’t commit to being his wife and raise his children. He just disappeared one day, no goodbye, no nothing. We were supposed to go for a weekend in New York City, and I already had my dresses packed. It’s funny, we started that relationship as a dominant/submissive thing but I could play along with that for all of three-quarters of a date. I then told him either treat me like your girlfriend or watch me leave. That stuff was just all too contrived. Slavery has been outlawed since Daniel Day Lewis got the Thirteenth Amendment ratified.”

“Not very submissive, huh?” Lee laughed his deep, mirthful laugh.

“Nope, but yielding. I would love to become your whore,” Tim said as he placed a slice of lamb in his mouth.

“We will see. You do make a very beautiful and sexy woman.”

Tim had heard that as Cindy enough times to be dismissive of the compliments and those giving them, but when Lee said it he felt deeply touched. “Thank you,” Tim stammered.

“Thank you, Tim Hawkins, for having the guts to show up tonight. I am thoroughly impressed. In two weeks my family is having a barbecue. My parents live in Germantown. I would like you to come, if you don’t mind being the only white person there.”

“No problem. Should I come as Tim or Cindy?”

“Since you haven’t started being Cindy again, come as Tim. My parents would be better dealing with you that way the first time, anyway.”

“So how are your parents?”

“My dad retired after twenty years as a Marine master sergeant. Now he works as a manager for a trucking company over in Conshohocken. Mom is a retired seventh-grade teacher.”

“Are they cool with people like me?”

“A lot of African-Americans aren’t, especially some in their church. Dad couldn’t stand me dating Angela, who originally was David. Couldn’t deal with it, until finally he saw us together. He was like, ‘You really love riding that ass, don’t you? Good for you. That’s my son, lovin’ to make a girl scream. I can see it now.’”

“Your dad will love me then,” Tim grinned wickedly.

“I know I will too. So are you up for it?”

“Onward and upward. I really am glad you invited me tonight. It was very different but in a good way.”

“I am glad you came, I am very interested and impressed by you, Tim Hawkins.”

Tim choked. A street-wise, mountain of a man was interested in him as a person. Answered prayers could be quite unnerving. “So what were you in prison for, if you don’t mind answering.”

“Not at all. I was a gangster, and a pretty good one too. But not so good as to not get caught in a DEA sting. But like I said, I am straight and clean now, and I guess I have gotten rid of my anger. I volunteer with Pee Wee football and with charity drives at my parent’s church, plus I tutor high school students in math and English.”

“And Eileen helped you get rid of your anger?”

“Yes, she was a lot like you, middle-class upbringing, college education, incredibly sweet, but a freak in the bedroom. She couldn’t stand me working as a gangster. When I got arrested, she sent me a loving letter saying she was moving on, and thanked me for helping her become the woman she was meant to be. She is very happy now, working as a reader in a publishing house in New York, and occasionally moonlighting as an exotic dancer for fun. Her husband loves it.”

“Would you love it if I did that too?”

“Yes.”

“Is that an order?”

“No, it’s an answer to your question.”

Both laughed at that.

“So tell me more about Belgium. My Dad spent his time either stateside or deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq.”

“Well, I loved the Follies, where I wanted to work, or at least the idea of the Follies as I never got to see a show. Just internet streaming. The Belgians were really cool. They have flower markets all over the place,



including a huge one in the main square. Some people buy a bouquet of flowers every day. I would love it if a man would do that for me.”

“I hear you,” Lee whispered.

The two finished a very sumptuous meal, and the check arrived. Despite Lee’s protests, Tim insisted on paying his share and handsomely tipping the waiter.

“I believe that in a relationship, the parties are equal partners.”

“I knew I liked you,” Lee solemnly stated while putting on his jacket. “I’ll see you at my parent’s place.”

It was hard to be seen as Lee’s partner at his family’s Memorial Day barbecue. First, the two felt very awkward about demonstrating a potential relationship with Tim presenting as a guy in a cranberry-colored polo shirt, blue jeans, and brown Oxfords. Second, Lee spent most of his time at the barbecue, preparing ribs and pulled pork for the assembled family and guests. Tim had made a favorable impression with Lee’s parents, John and Caroline Maxwell, gifting a bottle of Courvoisier to John and a gift basket from Fresh Market to Caroline. John was built like Lee and had a commanding presence and voice, compared to Lee’s more quiet nature. Despite her small stature, Caroline had an equally commanding presence, honed from thirty years as a teacher and mother of three boys, Michael, the oldest who was serving in the Air Force as a major, Sean who was an attorney at Drinker Biddle, and the youngest and hardest to raise, Lee, an ex-con and fry cook.

Caroline wore exquisite makeup that complimented her high cheekbones and she moved with the

grace of a lioness, carefully observing the goings-on of the crowd and approving what she saw. Michael was absent as he was in Texas, but Sean had numerous Alpha Phi Alpha brothers from his fraternity at Rutgers over for the barbecue. Couples from the African Methodist church in Germantown made certain that they were present as Lee's barbecue and potatoes were renowned in their circle. Children frolicked in the large yard or sat in lounge chairs playing games on their apps while the adults segregated into male and female groups, each with substantially different topics of conversation. Soul and Rhythm and Blues played from a stereo system in the backyard for the older crowd.

Although he would have preferred to talk ladies fashion and the vagaries of men, Tim could not join the group of women and sat himself in a lounge chair with his plate of barbecue and a red Solo cup of Dr Pepper. The group of men did not know what to make of Tim but were polite and let him join the conversation when it came to baseball or the military. Tim was completely at a loss when it came to football or basketball, and silently let the conversation pass over him.

Seeing Tim's plight, Caroline rescued him from the group and started to give him a tour of their three-story Victorian house with John, her husband.

"Thank you so much for your gifts, Tim. We really appreciate you visiting us. I'm sure you had other plans for Memorial Day," Caroline cheerfully stated.

"I was going to go fishing, but this is much more important."

“Where were you going to go?” John asked, pouring himself and Tim a glass of Courvoisier on the rocks.

“Thousand Islands, my parents have a place right on the Saint Lawrence. It’s a bit far but it’s beautiful and the northerns and walleyes will be biting. Every evening at this time of the year we can walk out on a rock and catch walleyes on Challenger stickbaits or Rogues. It’s like fishing for lunch.”

“Sounds great. I never much went there. I did a lot of fishing on the North Carolina Coast when I was at Lejeune. Bluefish, puppy drum, flounder and speckled trout.”

“I would love to take you and Lee fishing up there some time. In the fall, they get a great salmon run.”

“Lee doesn’t fish.”

“What does he like to do?”

“He likes helping coach football, but he could have been in the damn NFL, with his size and smarts.”

“Why didn’t he go?”

“He was recruited harder for something else.”

“Lee is also a terrific cook,” Caroline interjected, “and not just barbecue or the diner food. He really enjoys it.”

“I really liked the barbecue.”

“It is delicious. Let me show you our house. John and I have done a lot with it and we are very proud to show it off.”

Caroline took Tim on the grand tour of the house, engaging him in conversation on various topics, the military, his parents, his job with the National Park Service. The two could still hear the music emanating from the yard when the Stylistics song, “Make up to Break Up” started playing, causing Tim to solemnly remark, “I love this song. The guys started singing it on the bus ride to the plane taking us to the deployment in Turkey. It was kind of a watershed moment for me, being an officer and going overseas.”

“I love the song too,” Caroline responded, gaining a new respect for Tim which prompted her to broach the main topic at hand. “Are you on hormones yet?”

“No, not yet,” Tim stammered.

“Well you won’t get boobs or nice curves without them, you know that,” Caroline smiled.

“Yes, I know, but I haven’t dressed as a woman for a year now. I thought I could give it up and got really disappointed with the whole scene. But at least Lee was willing to meet me as a guy and learn all about me, kind of the backstage behind the feminine appearance.”

“Lee has a lot of experience dating women like you and had real relationships with both Angela and Eileen. You know both of those two are living happily as women full-time. I don’t see why you can’t either. Don’t do it for my son, do it for yourself. Both of those young ladies did. But I will say behind every good man is a good woman and I know you can be an exceptional woman for Lee.”

Tim gulped, “But it seems Angela and Eileen did most of the heavy lifting already.”

“Lee hasn’t dated since he got out of prison. He is very much interested in you and you are evidently very interested in him, otherwise you would not have attended our get-together. I am impressed with you as a person, Tim Hawkins, in many ways but next time you meet us, please wear a dress and heels. I am sure Lee would be proud to show you off and I would like to get to know you as the woman you truly are.”

“Yes, ma’am,” Tim choked, then smiled.

That afternoon, Tim left the Maxwell’s feeling a true warmth of companionship, the same he felt around Jess. He wondered, however, which would be the most difficult topic to broach with his parents, the fact that he was really a woman, that he was dating an African-American, or that Lee was a fry cook.

Emboldened by his experience at the Maxwell’s, Tim approached somebody he could confront, Kelly Waskow. He put a picture of him in drag in a gold party dress sitting at a bar stool next to Sara in New York in front of Kelly.

“Here. Would you keep the blonde on the left from using the men’s john?” Tim demanded.

Kelly looked puzzled. The blonde was stunning and very passable in the picture. Was she really a guy?

“Who is that?” Kelly quietly asked.

“Look harder,” Tim responded, channeling his best Rafiki from The Lion King.

“Oh shit, it’s you.”

“Yep, I’m more of a woman than you are in a lot of ways there, Captain,” Tim confirmed as he grabbed his hat and walked out of the office into the park.

Fifteen minutes later, Kelly found him at Carpenter’s Hall, the also-ran building for the American Revolution where the Continental Congress declared independence in 1776. Tim could see by the red puffiness on Kelly’s face that she had been crying.

“I am so sorry, you must hate me.”

“I don’t hate you Kelly, I know you’re a very good person, your record proves that. I just figured you were just plain fucking ignorant. I did get angry at you and I guess I finally had to call you out. Trust me, I don’t come out of the closet that often, only when I really have to.”

“I am sorry again. You’re right. I am ignorant and you look awesome, pretty fucking hot. I wish I could look as good.”

“It shouldn’t be hard. I could give you a makeover. It seems to have become a routine.”

“I would like that. So do you feel like a woman inside?”

“Pretty much every minute of every day, except when work distracts me. It’s like being a werewolf, I guess.”

“No shit?”

“No shit.”

“So, do you dress often as a woman?”

“I haven’t in over a year.”

“Why not?”

“Because it wasn’t going anywhere, but it looks like the worm has turned. I have a date Saturday night. I have to get my stuff out of storage in the morning and primp myself to be ready by 8:00 that evening. It should take most of the day.”

“I would love to hang with you on Saturday, if you don’t mind.”

“That would be nice.”

Jess and Kelly met Tim at his apartment at 8:00 Saturday morning and were greeted with a breakfast of sausage, croissants, and fresh fruit. Jess was now a blonde, resembling Kylie Jenner.

“I love your new look,” Tim grinned.

“I have already lost thirty IQ points. I love it.”

“I lost thirty for being a blonde and another twenty for becoming a woman, that puts me in the Forrest Gump region.”

“Run Cindy, run,” Jess laughed, eliciting a broad grin from Kelly.

“Let’s do this,” the former Captain commanded. “We are burning daylight.”

The dust was already so thick on the storage tubs that Kelly could write with her finger, “Cindy Hawkins 2016-???”. With the same reverence that a Medieval sarcophagus would be opened, Tim lifted the lid of the first tub and saw the past that he had



tried to run away from. On top of a pile of clothing lay the bag of Taiwan Blue bottles, spilled condoms, and a large sex toy in a clear plastic cylinder. Tim hung his head in shame at Cindy's sinful past. "Dummy, you knew what was in these tubs."

"What are these?" Jess asked, grabbing the plastic bag of Taiwan Blue, adding to Tim's purplish chagrin. Apparently, she already knew what the dildo was and what the condoms were for.

"Uh, it's for sex. It's Taiwan Blue, a nitrate. You inhale the fumes. It lowers your blood pressure and relaxes all your inhibitions. It turned me into a wild slut and eased the shock of penetration. Good stuff. Highly recommended."

"Sounds like fun," Jess said, opening the bag and snatching two bottles for herself.

The three sifted through Cindy's clothes, placing them on the hangers in the bedroom's second closet. Jess then came to a purple and black bustier with the tags still on them, lifted it up to her torso to model it and smiled broadly, "This was never worn. Were you waiting for a special someone?"

"I guess so."

"Hopefully Lee is your man."

At the bottom of the pile, Jess encountered the unworn long-sleeved evening gown with deep purple sequins, gold bugle bead trim, and an inviting slit up the left leg. "This is beautiful," she breathlessly gushed. "We have to get you into this sometime. You would look fantastic, wouldn't she, Kelly?"

“Yes, I guess so.” Kelly was out of her element as Cindy’s wardrobe was revealed. “Can I go get us some lunch?” she asked. “How about pizza?”

“That would be great,” Jess beamed, “but only a medium, Cindy here has to watch her figure.”

Removing the clothes from the plastic tubs, Tim made sure that he located the white peasant blouse, denim skirt and white high-heeled sandals that nearly got him arrested for being a streetwalker. He would wear that for Lee.

After the pizza was devoured and the clothes restored to the closet, Tim suggested that Jess and Kelly go out to a movie or something. He would painstakingly remove the jungle of hair that had grown on his once-smooth body, do his makeup, dress, and meet them at The Tavern at 6:00 for drinks as Cindy before Lee showed at 8:00. Four hours would be needed to get everything in order and be presentable again.

Finally, after a year hiatus and wandering in a straight man’s wilderness, Cindy Renee Hawkins emerged smiling in the late spring evening. The sun was still out and cast the sky with a golden glow with fuchsia accents as it started to set beyond the Schuylkill River. Cindy was thrilled that her gait in high heels had not been at all diminished by the long absence. She could still kill a pair of heels and practically skipped her way to the Tavern to meet her friends. “Friends,” she thought. “I guess I am starting to get lucky.”

At 6:15 the fashionably late young blonde transwoman entered into The Tavern. Scanning the crowded room, Cindy saw her friends seated at an elevated table near the piano bar. She cut through the

crowd effortlessly but when she approached Kelly and Jess, she became nervous and looked down.

“Cindy? Is that you? You look fantastic,” Jess affirmed, and then hugged her new friend.

Cindy then looked Kelly in the eyes and said with her best feminine voice, “Well, am I a woman?”

“As far as I am concerned, yes, you are. I’m pleased to meet you, Cindy.”

“I feel in a celebratory mood. How about a glass of champagne, or sparkling wine from California?”

“You got it.”

Kelly went to the bar to get three glasses of champagne, while Jess gushed about Cindy’s appearance. “Girl, you are positively glowing. You have that look nailed.”

“Thanks,” Cindy beamed.

“I love the belly button piercing. Is that an L?” Jess wickedly grinned.

“Yes,” Cindy smiled, looking like a ten-year-old who got caught stealing cookies.

“Awesome. I’m sure Lee will love it. Most men would.”

Cindy breathed deeply, “I’m counting on it. It has been far too long.”

“Do you have the Taiwan Blue?”

“Always, a girl needs to be prepared to become a wanton slut and I am incredibly tight after all this time.”

Kelly returned with three glasses of Korbel. “This is really a nice place, everybody here is so friendly. Did you hang out here a lot?”

“Yes, I did.”

“Sinning boldly, I presume,” Jess muttered with a broad grin which fetched a knowing glance from her friend.

“Here’s a toast to Cindy Hawkins, for having the courage to be herself.” Kelly lifted her flute and the glasses clinked. “I have learned so much in the past week about somebody I thought I had already known.”

The three girls sat at the table, ordering a round of martinis after the champagne was downed, and giggled like little kids. Cindy’s resurgence coupled with Jess’s ongoing sexualization brought an exuberant mood to the conversation. Even Kelly was caught up in its infectious spirit. She was having real fun with girlfriends who embraced their femininity and sexuality. Instead of taking in a movie, Jess had convinced Kelly to go shopping and now Kelly showed off her new attire, several hot new dresses from Bebe and jewelry from Macy’s that someday she hoped to have the courage to wear in public.

Standing a head taller than the crowd, Lee spotted the three girls at the table near the piano bar with shopping bags lying at their feet. Cindy wore her peasant blouse and denim skirt, and provocatively showed off her smooth legs. A blonde with straight hair wore a long sleeved black and red lace dress cut

so high that it would have revealed the young woman's goods if her legs weren't crossed. A brunette wearing a blazer and tight jeans with navy blue flats completed the trio. Lee smiled, at least Cindy was developing real girl-friends.

The crowd easily parted for the large but non-menacing African-American and soon he was standing behind Cindy who was so engrossed in the conversation with her friends that she failed to realize his presence. Lee lightly tapped her on her bare shoulder and loudly cleared his throat. The young woman turned around and her blue eyes sparkled as lustrous as any sapphire.

"Hello handsome," she purred. Lee was wearing khaki slacks, a white shirt and a slate gray sport coat.

"Hello gorgeous," he smiled, revealing perfect white teeth.

"Girls, this is my friend Lee. Lee, this is Jessica Mitchell and Kelly Waskow, my friends."

Lee extended his large, strong hand to each of the girls. "It is a pleasure to meet you. I am so glad Cindy has some hot, cool friends," he joked.

Beaming, Cindy stood up on her heels and still Lee towered over her. She embraced him tightly, in the same manner as she did her teddy bear whom she snuggled with nightly. "I am so glad you made it."

"Shall we?" Lee asked.

"We shall," Cindy responded, presenting her hand to him. The two then proudly walked downstairs to the restaurant on the lowest level, not seeing Jess

and Kelly high-fiving each other as they disappeared down the steps.

Arriving at their table, Lee pulled out Cindy's chair. She delicately sat herself, while watching her date place his large, muscular body across from her.

"I hope you don't think I'm too underdressed," Cindy asked. "I was hoping you would like the look."

"You look adorable, sweetheart."

"Sweetheart, I like that," Cindy smiled.

"I like saying it."

The couple enjoyed dinner, making eye contact, smiling, saying very little, and enjoying the force that drew them together. "Magnet and steel," Cindy happily thought.

Lee ordered a bowl of fresh strawberries and cream for dessert to share with Cindy. She delicately licked the cream off a large strawberry, then slowly pursed her lips on it, maintaining eye contact with Lee. Inspired, Lee took another strawberry and hovered it an inch from Cindy's crimson lips, then fed her as he would a pet kitten with four more strawberries.

"I think it's time to go," Cindy stammered, nearly overwhelmed by the lust she felt coursing through her body. She wanted Lee. Taking out her compact mirror, she freshened up her lipstick while she waited for the check.

On the way home, Lee alternated between holding hands and fondling her bottom, bringing her to new heights of anticipation. She could not talk, and instead purred delightedly as she was pawed by her

wonderful man. Cindy bit her lip to keep from hyperventilating and struggled to unlock the door as she felt Lee's hand slide under her skirt to caress her panty-clad bottom.

Cindy finally got her man inside and seated on the couch. She then retrieved two glasses of water from the kitchen, turned off the lights, and started playing Ooh Shama Lama by Otis Knight, feeling the heat rise in her. "You are beautiful, my love," Lee smiled as he removed his clothing while Cindy gazed wild-eyed in wonder.

Hosanna in the highest, Lee was as massive as could be expected. His engorged cock proudly stood a full eight inches from his groin and had almost a two-inch diameter. The head was imposing, beautiful, and already leaking pre-cum. Lee was clearly turned on by Cindy, who did her best Katsumoto. "A woman could suck and ride that cock her entire life and it would be very well spent."

"Make me proud, girl," Lee quietly commanded.

Cindy got to her knees and crawled over to her man. Only by stretching her jaws fully, could she bring his massive head into her mouth. Tasting Lee's pre-cum, Cindy pushed onward until she gagged on Lee's massive length and girth, spewing bile into her mouth.

"Easy girl," Lee laughed. "Just do your best."

Encouraged by Lee's humor, Cindy reorganized her attack on his girth, licking his head with her tongue, then covering it with her lips, creating a powerful suction. She traced the length of his ebony shaft until she heard him moan deeply with pleasure, a primeval sound that resonated to her very core.

Focused on Lee's cock, Cindy didn't realize for a second that she was elevated off the floor, being lifted by Lee's muscular arms. Lee cradled Cindy like a child and kissed her deeply, soulfully, melding their mouths as one. Cindy then broke the bond and breathlessly whispered, "Second door on the left."

Lee carried his treasure to her bedroom and gently placed her on the bed. Cindy then crawled over to a bed stand and retrieved a large bottle of lubricant and a slender blue bottle of premium nitrate.

"Lubricate, lubricate, lubricate," she joked.

"Always good policy," Lee affirmed. "So you are into Rush?"

"Yes," Cindy said.

"I like that in a woman, unafraid to let herself go."

Cindy then moved to the edge of the bed, positioned herself on all fours and presented her ass to Lee. He removed her panties, leaving the cute denim skirt still on, but exposing her terrified rosebud.

"How long has it been?"

"Way too long."

"Gotcha."

Lee lubricated his large middle finger, then slowly, inexorably, pushed it through Cindy's resistance to her deep moaning. He swirled his finger along her walls which caused her to squirm and writhe against him. Cindy clawed at the comforter, panted and moaned, and thrust her body against the violating finger. Her lover soon had three more fingers inside

her, which astonished him. He had never been able to do that with anyone before. Now Cindy was in a frenzy, begging him to fuck her. He did not anticipate getting this far with her tonight but she seemed pliable enough to go for it.

While Lee lubricated his incredible cock, Cindy unscrewed the cap off the bottle of Taiwan Blue which she had been holding in reserve for the moment of truth. Holding her nostril closed with a rose-red, manicured fingernail, she inhaled the chemical fumes deeply, which pushed her into virtually another realm.

“Fuck me, fuck me hard. Shove that beautiful cock in me.”

Lee laughed, there would be no shoving with his so designated cock. Even with the preparation of Cindy’s hungry little ass, she could not take the pounding that her body craved.

Gently and slowly, Lee entered Cindy, pushing into the elasticity of her rosebud. Cindy gasped and moaned, and Lee backed out. It would take days to break in his new girlfriend, but he might as well start now. Lee would enter Cindy, feeling her stretch, than back out, repeating the process for twenty minutes, until she collapsed in ecstasy. A half-hour later she was ready for more and Lee continued the reconnaissance of Cindy’s resistance. After two additional sessions of probing, Lee was finally able to briefly enter Cindy to the hilt. She felt a cascade of endorphins flood her body upon his exit.

“Holy shit. Wow. Holy shit. Wow,” Cindy blissfully exclaimed. “That was amazing.”

Feeling an incredible burst of energy and a ravenous appetite, Cindy staggered off the bed and limped to the kitchen, returning to the bedroom with two heaping bowls of butter crunch ice cream. Lying on the bed and looking into the deep, dark eyes of her lover, Cindy gorged on the creamy goodness, and seductively licked the residue off her spoon after each bite.

“Girl, I can see you are going to be trouble. Can I see you on Tuesday night?”

“If you don’t, I will either die immediately or become a nun.”

“In two months you would have the sisters turning tricks and doing pole dances.”

“The cute ones, I would. Besides, what could be a better cover for a brothel?”

“Wow,” Tim exclaimed to Jess over the phone on Sunday morning. Neither had the energy to make it to church that day.

“Girl, I am so happy for you. You positively glowed last night. It was great to see you so happy. Plus Lee looks like a terrific guy. Do you mind if I steal him from you?”

“You can try, but I think I can keep him.”

“Fair enough.”

“So, how do you like Kelly?”

“She’s really cool once you get her to loosen up. She was incredibly impressed by your courage at reviving Cindy and then being willing to have a man

like Lee as your boyfriend. Kudos on many counts. She even liked The Tavern. I was kind of surprised, actually.”

“Glad she liked it.”

“Yeah, well about twenty minutes after you left with Lee I noticed two guys in the corner looking at Kelly and me. Out-of-towners.”

“Yeah, and?”

“I suggested to Kelly that we invite them over, that they could be fun. She got all nervous and started stammering, so I say, fine. I’ll take both.”

“You go, girl. Being a blonde is great, isn’t it?”

“Oh, yeah. They were fun, too. A pair of country boys from up around the Delaware Water Gap in the big city, don’t even remember their names. They said they were bi, but they were very interested in me. I took them back to my place. That Taiwan Blue that you gave me is incredible stuff. I was a complete slut with it. I saw a part of me I didn’t even know existed. I love it.”

“It’s pretty scary isn’t it, but in a good way?”

“Yes, it is.”

“I am going to start going to call you J-Mitch, a hot blonde about town needs more of a cachet.”

“J-Mitch, cool. So how was Lee?”

“Everything I was hoping for.”

“Awesome.”

Tim received a constant stream of texts from Lee on the next day at work. Lee sent three pictures of lingerie that he had purchased for Cindy on eBay, and made several attempts at finding the right nickname for his paramour, settling on “baby doll” while Tim responded with “darling.” He could barely concentrate on work, a fact which Kelly happily noted, until finally the day was over.

May was always beautiful in Philadelphia, rain or shine, and that afternoon was no exception. The trees were in full bloom and picnickers were out in Washington Square to enjoy the gentle, balmy weather. Walking home, Tim never felt so joyful, hoping that Cindy had found what looked like a real relationship, a hope that was confirmed by the bouquet of flowers left at his doorstep with a note, “Every Day, L.” Tim placed the flowers in a vase, then smelled the fragrance. He went to the freezer and consumed the remains of the butter crunch ice cream directly from the carton, remembering the incredible evening with Lee.

Tim almost sprinted home the next night, Tuesday, Lee’s night off, snatching the bouquet from the doorstep, and placing it in a glass tumbler next to last night’s still fresh flowers. Not typically one to display flowers, he was already out of vases and had to improvise. Stripping out of his park ranger uniform and placing his hat on the dresser, Tim entered the warm shower. He alternatively lathered up his arms, armpits, legs and ass, shaving the insistent hairs that had already started to grow back from his smooth skin. Emerging from the shower, Tim meticulously ran a razor over his face until he could not feel any roughness. The canvas was now ready for the masterpiece.

Applying makeup with an inspiration he had never known, in twenty minutes Tim had transformed into Cindy, with a daring eye makeup and a deep burgundy lipstick that would match her lingerie. Cindy removed the tags from the purple bustier with black lace trim that had been placed in the tubs unworn, loosened the laces, placed it around her torso and then retightened it. “Damn, this looks good. This needed to be shown off.”

Next in order were the thigh-high stockings which Cindy fastened to the bustier with the free swinging garters. She loved the gartered look and typically bought ensembles that featured them. Next came a series of strategic tugs and tucking as Cindy positioned the matching purple and black g-string over the vestige of “Tim” until she presented a smooth front. Cindy completed her look with elbow-length gloves, hoop earrings, and her long blonde wig, combing out its luxurious body. Cindy then strapped on her black, high-heeled sandals and strutted into the living room just as she heard the doorbell ring.

Fifteen minutes later Cindy’s high heels pointed skywards for the continuation of her breaking-in. Lee continued his probing, knowing full well that she still had a ways to go before she could accept him fully within her. He would repeatedly push the head of his cock up against her resistance, then back off and try again. After an hour he felt that her rosebud had started to yield and that more of his cock was buried inside her, seeing the high water mark had moved back to about four inches. It wasn’t the length but his expansive girth that Cindy had to adjust to. She smiled throughout his ministrations, sensing a deep bond to the big man forming in her soul, and he smiled back at her. Lee decided to quit while he was ahead and withdrew from Cindy’s ass.

“Are you done?” Cindy asked.

“Only for tonight.” He reached down and picked up Cindy and pulled back the covers to her bed. Lee then gently placed her on the bed and tucked the covers under her chin. “You are adorable. I could easily fall in love with you. Now sleep well, Baby Doll.”

Cindy smiled, never had a man been so gentle with her. “I will, Darling.”

Very reluctantly the next morning, Cindy scrubbed her makeup and removed her bustier. She did not want to revert back to Tim after such a wonderful evening, but duty called. Tim showered and shaved and donned his uniform, and soon enough he was scrolling through his Outlook account reading e-mails at work.

“How was it last night, Ace? You have a thousand-yard stare,” Kelly demanded.

“Hopeful,” Tim paused, “yeah, that’s it, hopeful.”

“Hopeful enough for you to transition?”

“I am definitely considering it. We just have to get over a hump together.”

“So when are we going to see Julie?”

“We?”

“I’m your friend, I wouldn’t want you to do that alone. I suspect you have been alone on way too many occasions. I’m sure Julie will be cool with everything but I think you would like somebody else there with you.”

“Thanks. You don’t know how much that means to me.”

“You’re welcome. Now it’s a gorgeous morning, so let’s go do our rounds together.”

“You lead the way.”

“Always.”

For the remainder of the week Kelly observed Tim and noticed a disturbing trend. The farther he got away from the transcendent events of Tuesday night, the more she saw the persona of Tim return to the foreground in the demands of his work. Supervisory Park Ranger Tim Hawkins would not conveniently disappear. Tim had spent ninety-nine percent of his life living and working as a man, and after a wild and exciting weekend as Cindy would return to that existence. That existence had included a college education, a commission in the military, several deployments, and a whole life living as someone other than Cindy. If Cindy did not incorporate the substantive parts of Tim’s existence, she would not be a complete person in the same manner that attempting to walk away from her had left Tim incomplete, with a hole the size of the Grand Canyon in his soul. Moreover, Tim would eventually resist and delay the transition once Cindy encountered resistance, and Lee would move on.

Kelly stared at Tim’s desk and noticed the pictures he had displayed on both the desk and the wall behind him and caught her inspiration for helping migrate Tim’s past into Cindy’s future. When Tim returned to his desk, Kelly confronted him. “You always talked to me about your parent’s place on the Saint Lawrence. Let’s go next weekend, we should bring Jessica too.”

“You mean J-Mitch, that is what we are calling her now. More cachet for a hot blonde. You know there is not much to do up there other than fish and chill.”

“Yeah, I figured that. Cindy needs to take baby steps and that would be easy for her.”

“What?”

“Us three girls chilling and fishing in the Thousand Islands, drinking wine slushies, eating fried fish. Sounds like a plan to me.”

“We’ll do it. How about us three girls at Longwood Gardens this Saturday? Lee has suggested that for a date and I asked if my friends could tag along. It should be lovely this time of year. Jess is coming and I was hoping you could make it too, if you aren’t too busy. I didn’t know if you would like it.”

“I was planning on going to a rally, but I will be there.”

“Thanks.”

Until her trip to Longwood Gardens, an extensive estate originally owned by the crazy DuPont family, Cindy had lived her life in the same way as Count Dracula led his, almost exclusively venturing out at night. Cindy, however, preferred to meet men in bars and to suck their cocks rather than their blood. Now she was thrilling to the daylight without turning into dust, wearing khaki slacks, a white t-shirt under a pink open mesh sweater, and brown Oxfords. Being a member of a larger group gave her more comfort and ease. She was just one of the girls, although it was clear to any observer that she was the tall African-American man’s girlfriend, as they would hold

hands as they strolled along the garden's brick paths.

Lee thoroughly enjoyed being seen in the company of the three young women, although the way J-Mitch dressed, people could have mistaken him for her pimp. J-Mitch wore tight jeans with a pink Bebe t-shirt and white heeled sandals, whereas Kelly wore looser blue jeans and a long-sleeved gray USMA t-shirt with running shoes. Lee actually appreciated J-Mitch's provocative apparel as everybody's gaze turned to her rather than to Cindy, who for once wanted to blend in, rather than being the center of attention.

Placing his large body on a secluded grassy spot, Lee unpacked the backpack that he had been carrying on his back, a picnic lunch for the four of them. Lee had made pulled pork barbecue, potato salad, and a key lime pie, accompanied by a bottle of Cabernet. Cindy crowded up to Lee's leg, regularly stroking it between bites while watching J-Mitch flirt with passing men.

"Sin boldly my friend, sin boldly," Cindy laughed beneath her breath.

"What are you laughing at," Lee queried?

"Oh nothing, just enjoying the day and the companionship. It is great to do this. I am glad you came up with it."

"Let's just say I enjoy showing you off."

"Thank you," Cindy beamed, and gave her man a hug.

The four gathered up the paper plates and food containers, then walked towards the entrance.

“Well, are you glad you started back up as Cindy again?” J-Mitch asked.

“So far it has been amazing, beyond anything I could have expected,” Cindy affirmed as she was passing a large fish pond with ducks quietly resting along its banks.

“It is like seeing you as a whole new person,” Kelly added. “You are so different than what I see as Tim, but in good ways. It’s like you switch gears and go into a higher drive when you are who were meant to be.”

“A whole new person,” Lee repeated, grabbing Cindy in his powerful arms. “Then you are going to need another baptism.” Lee carried Cindy over to the edge of the fishpond, and despite Cindy’s frightened pleadings, reared back and flung her towards its waters. As Cindy was flying in the air towards a dunking, he caught her and pulled her back towards him.

Breathlessly, Cindy shouted “You asshole!” as Lee held her in his arms. She then leaned upwards and kissed him deeply on the mouth to the smiling glances of J-Mitch and Kelly.

The group parted company with J-Mitch catching the eyes of a well-dressed man driving a Jaguar in the parking lot. “She will have a busy night,” Cindy thought. “But then so will I.”

Cindy quietly sat next to Lee in his Mercedes SUV, a relic from his days of easy cash money. He would glance over at her often and smile, then hold her left hand with his right as he steered along the traffic of

the Schuylkill Expressway. Lee surprised Cindy by turning off at the art museum and driving down a darkened Kelly Drive. He had frequented this area often during his time as a dealer, and knew every turn off and secluded area, but now wanted to return on a better note.

“You know, Kelly Drive was named after Jack Kelly, Grace Kelly’s brother. He lost his mayoral campaign because he openly dated this very attractive blonde transsexual named Harlow.”

“No, I didn’t know that. I don’t think I will lose my job for dating you.”

“I hope not.”

Lee turned the Mercedes off into a darkened parking lot, and the couple walked hand in hand along the banks of the moonlit river.

“That girl J-Mitch is out of control, a slutty blonde like that at Wharton will go far.”

“Yep, I guess I am the person that corrupted her. Less than two months ago she was still a good fundamentalist Christian woman looking to expand her spirituality.”

“Good job. I know some guys who would love to have her working for them.”

“I’ll ask her, I’m sure she will say yes. She is trying to be a good sinner.”

“I won’t. I want nothing to do with those guys anymore.”

Lee led Cindy off the river path to an ancient Aztec statue surrounded on three sides by a wall constructed of stone pillars and a stone railing. He picked up Cindy and placed her on top of the wall, then moved close to her, stroking her thighs and reaching around to feel her ass.

“You are breaking in nicely, Baby Doll. Maybe tonight will be the night.”

“We can go back to my apartment and find out. I would love that.”

“All in due time.” Lee then leaned over and kissed Cindy. “You are one beautiful lady, both inside and outside.”

“You bring out the best in me.”

Lee did not respond, but kissed her again deeply, and lingered in her mouth for ten minutes. He then picked her off the stone wall. “Let’s go home.”

Cindy just nodded and let him lead her back to the car.

Arriving at the apartment, Lee presented Cindy an unopened package. “It’s one of the things I bought you. I’m sure you will look adorable in it.”

Cindy smiled, “I’m sure I will.”

Wearing a black and white bustier with garters and gloves, Cindy presented her leg to Lee who was happily sitting on the couch. He fondled her bare thigh above the stocking and then pivoted her so that she was facing away from him with her ass in his face. He stroked her panty-clad bottom until she started to purr and writhe.

“They say the third time is a charm,” Lee huskily stated.

“I’ve heard that too.”

“Let’s see if they are right.”

“Lead me on.”

For the second time in a week, Cindy’s heels pointed to the sky. Lee had positioned Cindy on her back on the edge of the bed, holding her stocking-clad legs in the air with a pillow underneath her backside, elevating her rosebud for easy entry. No entry, however, was easy with Lee’s cock, but Cindy loved a challenge and offered Lee her body to make his own. After liberal doses of Taiwan Blue, the couple’s patience was rewarded with Lee thrusting into Cindy while he stared at her broadly grinning face. Thrilling to Lee’s powerful assault, Cindy counter-attacked, and started thrusting her ass to meet his advances. She had never felt anything so amazing in her life and she screamed in joy, her voice carrying through the open window to Pine Street below. Cindy had always been a screamer, and proudly so, but the people walking by her apartment on Pine Street thought a porn movie was being filmed on the second floor.

After an intense rapture that short-circuited her body and mind, Cindy blissfully lay in her lover’s strong embrace, his seed deep within her. She contemplated the millions of Lees swimming inside her on a futile search to find her ova. No matter, she was Lee’s woman now. “I love you, Lee,” she whimpered.

“I know that. I knew it when I saw your belly button pendant on our first date. It showed commitment.”

Cindy laughed, “Do you like that?”

Lee kissed the back of Cindy’s neck, gentle but firm. “And I love you too, Ms. Cynthia Renee Hawkins. I couldn’t help myself. It’s easy to do that with you.”

Cindy grasped his forearm. “You have made me a very happy woman.”

“You are all mine, Cindy, all mine.”

“Perfect.”

With the dawn’s light streaming into her room, a wildly energized Cindy freed herself from Lee’s strong, heavy muscular arms, took a shower, quickly did her makeup, slipped on a short, white, flower-patterned silk kimono and buff, four-inch open-toe pumps and made her man breakfast, scrapple and eggs with toast and raspberry jam that she had purchased in anticipation of their lovemaking the day before at Reading Terminal Market. Carrying the tray of breakfast to Lee, she paused at the threshold to her bedroom and lovingly admired him. For the first time, a man had held her after sex. And what a man he was, rippled, taut muscles, beautiful dark chocolate skin, with a pile driver between his strong thighs.

Lee smiled at Cindy’s approach. “Good morning, Baby Doll.”

“Good morning,” Cindy beamed and leaned over to kiss her reclining boyfriend deeply on the lips.

“I’m the cook, shouldn’t I be making you breakfast?” Lee asked, sitting himself up against a pillow.

“I hope you like.”

Lee took a big bite of scrapple. “It’s very good, thank you.”

“My pleasure.”

“Mine too.”

“So, was I enough of a whore for you last night?”

Lee laughed, “Baby Doll, if you were a professional, there would have been no way I could have afforded you last night. Not many men could. You were a total freak the way you were screaming. I loved it.”

“Never have I been so inspired.”

Lee had to leave at ten to be at the Clymer Diner for lunch. Sunday was a work day, as typically he had off Saturdays and Tuesdays. He lifted Cindy in a bear hug that took her breath away as he departed for work, completely melting Cindy’s soft chocolate center of a heart.

A week later, Cindy drove her Highlander across Oneida Lake on I-81 and felt her typical sense of relief after the long drive from Philadelphia. She was finally in the North Country and soon enough would arrive at her parent’s summer home near Alexandria Bay on the Saint Lawrence River. Tim had called his dad to ask whether they would be up there this weekend. When he confirmed that his parents were staying home, he and Kelly requested a vacation day, and similarly J-Mitch got a day off from her internship. Tim’s clueless dad was thrilled when he let slip that he was going up there with a couple of girls. Finally, he would meet a nice girl and settle down and raise a family.

Tim's father also advised him that their sixteen-foot Lund aluminum fishing boat was in the shop and would not be available. Disappointed that he would not be able to take J-Mitch and Kelly fishing for yellow perch, which was easy, engaging, and produced an excellent dinner, Tim apologized to the girls in advance. The girls, however, were nonplussed. This was a weekend to be Cindy in a familiar environment.

The early morning sun gleamed on the river when Kelly hauled Cindy and J-Mitch from their beds, insisting that they get in an early morning run along the river road. Cindy's two friends had taken her shopping for more casual and active wear for the weekend; runner's tights, New Balance running shoes with pink and purple accents, long sleeve pull-overs, and a purple headband. The three girls generated a lot of interest among the locals, raising three shout-outs from passing motorists, and two friendly beeps of the horn.

"Is everybody up here horny?" Cindy giggled, trying to keep her breath at the pace Kelly had set. She was relieved that she was not read as a man. "Just one of the girls," Cindy thought. It was so much easier to hang with a group of girlfriends as people would default to the belief she was just another girl. Besides, Kelly and J-Mitch were so attractive, they would immediately attract attention away from her.

Shopping in the resort towns of Clayton and Alexandria Bay brought no greater scrutiny to Cindy, wearing blue jeans, suede, open toe heels with broad straps over her ankles, and a purple pullover that matched her headband. The girls stopped at a tacky souvenir shop in among the art galleries and purchased a pink hoodie-sweatshirt with purple text stating "The River." Cindy immediately donned it to

wear on the tour boat that cruised the Thousand Islands and stopped at Boldt Castle, the Nineteenth Century fantasy that a Philadelphia self-made millionaire constructed for his sweetheart but never occupied due to her untimely death.

The girls thrilled to the majestic beauty of the rocky islands and deep, clear blue waters. They then toured Boldt Castle, observing a wedding party gathering among the stone ramparts.

“A princess should be married in a castle, and I never got to be a princess,” Cindy thought to herself, buoyant with the possibility. She and her friends were touring the grounds when Cindy announced, “I am going to be married here, and you two are going to be my bridesmaids. I am going to give my new husband a blow job right over there, behind that wall, because you two will cover for me for fifteen minutes.”

“That’s a girl,” J-Mitch chirped. “I love it.”

Cindy observed the wedding party now that her decision had been made, but felt uneasy. Who would fill up her side of the aisle? J-Mitch and Kelly would be her bridesmaids naturally, leaving her side empty whereas Lee’s side would be filled with friends and relatives.

“I really don’t feel comfortable in this,” Kelly complained about the revealing thong bikini that J-Mitch had secretly bought her at the souvenir shop in Alexandria Bay. It would reveal fully her artificial arm.

“Come on, nobody is going to see you that close anyway, besides you look hot.” The girls were going to lay out in the yard sunbathing and drinking cherry daiquiris made from local produce. Cindy wore a one-piece bikini that covered her groin area. Even

though nobody would observe her, she wanted to look as passable as she could, while she obtained a woman's tan line.

"You will look even better when you have been on hormones awhile," J-Mitch let out while the three girls basked in the afternoon sun working on a tan and a buzz.

"Fine, I'll go on hormones next week. I want to do that before I talk to my parents, anyway. My therapist has given me the go ahead."

"Trust me, you'll love your breasts, and guys will love you for having them."

"It beats falsies any day."

"So how is Lee?"

"He's nice."

"That's not what I was asking."

"He is exactly what you would imagine."

"I don't know, I can imagine a lot."

"Let's just say it took three nights before I was woman enough to take him."

J-Mitch gulped, her bravado gone. "Wow."

Perch was on the dinner menu, high-priced perch from a cheese and gourmet shop in Clayton, and J-Mitch and Kelly loved it.

"We need to go fishing tomorrow, the three of us," Kelly suggested. "I saw a flier for a boat in Clayton

that takes walk-on passengers. It's right here, the Thousand Island Princess. How auspicious a name is that?"

"Do we need licenses?" J-Mitch asked.

"It says you can purchase them at the boat."

"I already have mine," Cindy said ominously.

"Good."

"You don't get it. I got it last year, as Tim, and I don't have any official ID that says Cindy."

"Well, officially you are still Tim Hawkins, they can't fault you for the way you dress. Besides, some charter boat captain is not going to give three women a hard time."

"Nope," J-Mitch agreed.

Before Cindy would go fishing with the girls tomorrow afternoon, she had to fish alone. It was Tim's favorite thing to do and it had been that way since he was in diapers. If ever Cindy was to enjoy life fully, she needed to be able to enjoy fishing. Cindy retrieved an expensive spinning rod and reel from the shed, tied on a soft plastic swim bait which she smeared with artificial scent and marched to her favorite rock where she could reach deep water with a long cast.

Ziinng, the line sang from her reel as the lure sailed out into the distance. Cindy knew from experience that the fish would often bite as the lure sank to the bottom at the start of the cast. The walleyes and the northerns would only start biting after dinner when the boats had gone in for the night and the

gulls started to roost on shore. The northernns would only be available for a brief time before the sun set, but the walleyes would continue biting into the night, if she was lucky.

Observing the setting sun, Cindy continued to cast and in doing so, felt like she was casting away her long standing identity as Tim and retrieving her identity as Cindy. The setting sun seemed symbolic as Tim's existence should be coming to a close now that she had decided to finally take hormones. She continued to cast, casting away her identity as Tim and retrieving in hope for her future as Cindy.

The sun set below the horizon but its light continued to make the sky glow. "Hope," Cindy thought, and remembered her comment to Kelly after her second date with Lee, when she had not been fully rammed. Hope is what she had obtained through her friendship with J-Mitch and Kelly and her passion with Lee, and was what she lacked in her previous foray as Cindy. She now had enough hope that she could confront her parents, knowing full well what the outcome would be.

At that moment, she felt a strike on her swim bait. Cindy reared back on the rod to set the hook and felt the reassuring weight of a fish on the end of her line. Line peeled off the reel in several strong but brief runs, confirming to Cindy that she had a walleye. She reeled it to the rock, seeing its golden glint, then backed off the rock so that she could land it on shore.

"What is that?" J-Mitch asked.

"Dinner," Cindy grinned, showing off the fish. "Now I will show you how a girl cleans a fish."

Boarding the Thousand Islands Princess, the girls flashed the mate their fishing licenses, color-coded for the year. The mate, a young man in his twenties held his gaze on Cindy causing her alarm, but did not bother to read the name on her fishing license. It was turquoise like all the others.

Cindy found the girls a comfortable spot on the starboard side of the boat and pulled three fishing rods from the rack, spinning rods like she had used the night before. She demonstrated to the girls how to use the rods, much to the disappointment of the mate who wanted that task, and told them what to do in the event their bobber was pulled under. The Princess would not be fishing for walleye, but would instead be drifting live minnows under a slip bobber for northerns and bass over the river's rocky reefs.

Once over their first drift, Cindy baited the three hooks with squirming minnows, much to the disappointment of the mate, who also wanted *that* task. The first drift was successful as the three girls each caught fish and started whooping it up and high-fiving each other. Several of the male fisherman started complimenting them in a patronizing manner, but the girls let it slide over them and stared at their bobbers floating in the clean waters of the Saint Lawrence.

Two more drifts were unproductive and the girls were starting to chat absentmindedly when Cindy's bobber went down and stayed down. Cindy reared back on the rod but felt nothing but dead weight. "Bottom," she thought, disappointed. Cindy lowered her rod in order to break the light line but the bobber popped up again, then went under. Cindy actually had a fish, and by a judge of the weight, a large one.

“Fish on,” she shouted in her best girl’s voice, bringing the mate over. Nobody shouted ‘fish on’ aboard the Princess. Everybody was a tourist.

“What do you have?”

“I don’t know, I haven’t seen it. It is barely moving.”

Seeing the bend in the rod and the drag start to slip, the mate discerned, “Muskie.”

“Oh shit,” Cindy exclaimed almost reverting back to her male voice.

“Just keep your rod up and let it take line when it wants.”

“No problem, I have caught salmon before at Oswego.”

“Good, it’s nice to see somebody who knows what they’re doing.”

Just then, the fish took off in a scorching run that made the line scream with pain. The rod and reel were well-balanced, however, so it didn’t break. Cindy knew enough to let a large fish do basically what it wanted as long as she kept tension on it.

The mate left Cindy’s side and went to the captain who announced over the intercom, “Folks, the little lady on the starboard side has a muskie on if you would like to watch her fight it. I am going to have to keep the boat close on it.” The captain was not going to forego the public relations opportunity of having pictures of a muskie caught by one of his patrons plastered all over his website and new flier. The other guests would just have to wait until it was caught.

After twenty minutes of runs alternated by inactivity when the fish lay still, using its weight to hold position, Cindy finally glimpsed a long greenish shadow in the water that became a four-foot muskie thrashing on the surface ten seconds later.

“Oh my God, it’s huge,” J-Mitch exclaimed.

“Hang in there, girl,” Kelly encouraged her friend.

Cindy pulled back on the rod and then reeled until the muskie was alongside the boat. The mate placed the net in the water and Cindy led the fish to the net. In a second, the massive fish was in the boat.

Cindy could not say anything, but just smiled to the cheering and congratulations. She had never been one to strut or pose after landing a salmon, and the muskie was no different. If anything, she wanted the celebration to end quickly so this wonderful fish could be safely returned to the water. Photographs were taken, including several featuring a smiling Cindy, J-Mitch, Kelly, and the unnamed muskie. The fish was then gently placed back in the water. It soon strongly kicked off away from the boat and submerged out of sight, its fifteen minutes of fame gladly expended. That week the local newspaper ran a story headlined “Little Lady, Big Fish,” reporting Cindy Hawkins of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as the lucky fisherwoman.

“You must make an ugly woman,” Tim’s dad asserted. The coming-out was going well.

Tim did not respond and he did not want to show his father any pictures of Cindy.

“The thing is you are not even swishy, you don’t even act like a woman. I don’t see it.”

“I do when I am being Cindy,” Tim thought.

“So how can you be so sure of any of this shit. I think you are just trying to get attention. You are always trying to get attention.”

Tim knew that wasn't true either. Usually he avoided the limelight, like with the muskie.

“I don't want to hear any more of this shit,” Tim's dad asserted. “It's all bull.”

Finally, Tim responded, “I am twenty-seven years old, have a job, have been a naval officer. I think you ought to know that I'm transgendered.”

“How do you know?”

“I just do. It has been with me since I was twelve.”

Tim's father was becoming increasingly enraged, so Tim turned away to leave. There was no use having a conversation under these circumstances.

As Tim was walking up the stairs to leave, his father jumped on his back and pushed him against the steps. Tim turned around as his father shouted, “I'll kill you!” His father's hand was against his face trying to gouge out his eyes. Tim pushed back but couldn't budge his father, who outweighed him by seventy pounds. The pressure on his skull increased when Tim freed up his left hand and hit his father on the side of his head, the surprise causing him to break his grip. Tim used the temporary retrieve to push himself back onto his feet.

“You know where to find me. Don't bother calling my boss, Julie. She knows all about me being

transgendered. Not everybody in this world is as bigoted as you.”

“You look incredible, girl, twirl around, let us get a good look at you,” Caroline gushed at Cindy at the Maxwell’s Fourth of July picnic. Cindy wore the tangerine dress that Jess had bought for her, with nude high-heeled sandals. She twirled on the heels and struck some modeling poses for Caroline and John.

“Damn girl, you do look hot. Lee sure knows how to pick ‘em,” John stated while he sipped at his Courvoisier. “Maybe you are the woman he has been waiting for this whole time.”

“I hope so.”

Cindy and J-Mitch strutted up to Lee who was at his accustomed spot by the barbecue pit, slaving over his ribs. Cindy embraced her man and gave him a polite kiss on the cheek for all the world to see and hopefully approve. She was Lee’s woman, and he was her man.

J-Mitch could have had a man accompany her, Todd MacDonough, a finance specialist at the firm she was interning at and who was very much enamored by the hot blonde. J-Mitch had suggested to him that he accompany her. She was truly interested in him, and not just as a potential Friday night ride, but when he discovered that Cindy, J-Mitch and himself would be the only Caucasians at a family get-together in Germantown, he balked. J-Mitch immediately dumped him, and decided to go stag.

The group of men were much more conversational with Cindy, and J-Mitch talked freely. The women opened their ranks to the two ladies who engaged in conversation about fashion, makeup, and the highs

and lows of the men they had known or were now in a relationship with. Cindy and J-Mitch held their own with the ladies, who were impressed with their knowledge and experience.

Cindy went to fetch two more Mike's lemonades for her and J-Mitch when Sam Cooke's "We're Having a Party" started to play over the din of the crowd. Returning with the Mike's to the group of women, Cindy felt a tap on her shoulder from behind. Lee had left his lair by the barbecue and was smiling at her.

"Care to dance?"

"I would love to. I'm not that good though."

"Just follow my lead."

Cindy rushed over to J-Mitch, handed her the drinks and returned to Lee, who grinned at her return. She held out her hands and he pulled her close in, whispering in her ear. "You are gorgeous in that dress. Like I said, follow my lead."

She did as ordered. Luckily, Cindy had begun to take belly dance lessons with J-Mitch and Kelly at a studio just off South Street, so she was light on her feet, even in heels. Cindy danced well enough that nobody noticed her inexperience. Instead they saw a very attractive couple that was obviously in love.

Observing the two dancers, John gestured at Caroline, "That is the first time I have seen him smile in years."

"Yes, I was thinking the same thing."

The song ended, and another Sam Cooke hit, "Workin' on the Chain Gang," started to play.

“They are playing your song,” Cindy joked with her man.

“Yes,” Lee laughed. He started moving his woman to the new beat, but holding her closer to him, so that he could feel her breath and sense the beating of her heart through the tangerine dress and foam-padded bra.

From the other side of the backyard, J-Mitch watched her friend dance, and was amazed that only two months ago Cindy had been exiled to a storage room on Washington Avenue and now she had eclipsed Tim and found true love with Lee. Sometimes you just had to live life boldly and not care what others thought.

Sam Cooke then belted out “Twistin’ the Night Away,” and Lee looked over at his woman, who nodded yes, she would try to keep up. By then, numerous other couples had joined in the dance, so that Cindy did not feel the center of attention and could relax and enjoy the moment. Lee played Cindy like a maestro, anticipating her moves and guiding her through the steps. She looked and felt fantastic, pushing herself to turn and pivot, and raise her leg once to be held briefly by Lee.

“Thank you, that was lovely,” Cindy said to Lee at the conclusion of the dance and a change to the music. Cindy went over to J-Mitch and the other women and drank her Mike’s with one prolonged gulp and sat down, deeply contented. Lee went inside to go the bathroom and was accosted by his father. “She has a nice ass. Fuck her hard tonight, son.”

“Thanks Dad, I will.”

Cindy and Lee snuggled on the couch at her apartment watching TV and eating ice cream on Lee's next night off. "You are a terrific cook, you know that? Have you ever thought of applying for a job at a different restaurant or taking a cooking course?"

Lee instantly pulled away from Cindy and spat out his words. "Why? Is my being a fry cook not good enough for you or your family? Am I just some guy with a big cock that you like to fuck?"

"Breathe, girl, breathe," Cindy thought to herself to pause before she answered him. She then stood up and looked him squarely in the eye. "I thought you enjoyed riding me as much as I enjoyed being ridden by you. If you were to ask me to marry you tomorrow," Cindy paused her conversation to pound on the wall twice, hint, hint, "I would say yes in a heartbeat. I love you and have said that to you and the only people I have said that to are my parents, you, and my teddy bear. As far as you being a fry cook, everybody who matters to me knows you are, so I am not hiding it. I don't think working at the Clymer Diner is what you had in mind for what you wanted to do but I certainly respect the fact that you are doing it. A lot of guys would have gone right back onto the street."

"You are not going to talk back to me, and what do you know about the street?" Lee shouted as he stormed outside and onto Pine Street.

Cindy remained shocked for several minutes and didn't move a muscle. She then softly padded off in her bare feet to pull Roosevelt, the true love of her life, off her bed. Roosevelt was her Steiff teddy bear she bought at Macy's in New York one time while shopping for dresses. She snuggled with Roosevelt every night she was alone which was basically every night, and he kept her engaged with mock conversation

about current events or his desire to share the apartment with a kitty.

Snuggling with Roosevelt on the couch where she had recently snuggled with Lee, Cindy thought about the incident and about her life. She had done nothing wrong and was not being condescending or patronizing. She felt that Lee could find a better job. He definitely deserved it, but if not, she would gladly become the wife of a fry cook. Cindy then remembered a floor show at Lips, the drag bar in New York, in which a singer riffed on "It's All About the Bass" by changing the lyrics to "It's All About the Dick." The singer then went on a monologue about dick to the embarrassed laughs of the audience.

Yes, she enjoyed Lee's dick. It was amazing and needed its own zip code, but she enjoyed who it was attached to even more. Lee was the one man out of two hundred that she would even date after her resurgence. He was also about the only man around who would meet her as Tim before going out with her as Cindy. Most men were content with the fantasy and would run for the door with their pants halfway up their legs after cumming. Lee was one of a kind, but if it wasn't meant to be with him, she would find another one-of-a-kind.

Standing up to Lee as a woman had finally crystallized Cindy's identity. It had become like a hardened piece of clay bisque, with the proper size and shape but capable of being broken by hand. Now she had emerged from the fires of the kiln, strong and hard. It was time to live the life she was meant to live as the person she was meant to be. She would talk to Julie tomorrow so that she could transition as soon as possible. "Thanks, Lee. You brought me farther than I could ever have done by myself."

Walking vigorously through the Philadelphia night, Lee thought about many things. Yes, he knew about the street but he was not originally from there like most of the members of his gang. He had grown up on military bases until his dad moved to Germantown, his original home, on his last tour of duty to serve as a recruiter. Lee had resented his dad for his repeated absences for deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan. Becoming a thug was a way of getting back. His father was right, he could have played for the NFL. He could have also have gone to Princeton or to Penn as they had recruited him. But no, he had to hang out on the street to prove something, his manhood, he guessed, when actually being a man meant getting an education and a job, and Cindy.

Lee's walk carried him to Rittenhouse Square, a place he rarely frequented as it was a favorite spot of middle-class white people who did not buy drugs. Noticing the row of upscale restaurants, Lee started reading the menus.

"I can do that, and that too," he mused, a smile forming on his darkened face. He would apply for positions at these restaurants. If they had a problem hiring an ex-con, no problem, he would start cooking the items he just read as the daily special at the diner. His boss gave him free reign in the kitchen, and if the food budget wasn't too bad, Lee could cook what he wanted. Why stop with what he read on the Square? he could learn almost everything on his own without having to take a class. Lee then crossed the street and entered the Barnes and Noble where he was warmly greeted by an elderly African-American at the door. Directed to the gourmet section, Lee purchased several books, including French, Italian, and Chinese cuisines. The diner could be a lot more diverse in its special menus, Lee laughed.

It was getting past Roosevelt's bed time and Cindy was about ready to turn in when she heard a knock at the door. She opened it and started to say something when Lee placed his finger over her lips, "Shh, there is nothing you need to say. I'm sorry."

Lee grabbed Cindy in his arms and gave her a heartfelt embrace. He then led her over to the couch, pulled off her athletic tights and, after lubricating his cock but without saying a word, entered her.

"So you are serious about this?" Julie Stevens asked Tim. "I thought you had given up on the idea after you two came to me back in May. I am glad you're doing this."

"That makes two of us. It is time. I am set to lose two weeks of vacation at the end of the fiscal year if I don't use them. I would like a week off to give everybody time to adjust to the idea, and me to work on my transition."

"Sure, of course."

"Thanks."

"And I will be sending out a memo to all staff that Tim Hawkins is transitioning to becoming a woman known as Cindy Hawkins, and as of whatever date, they will treat you as such, and isn't it wonderful that we at the National Park Service can be accepting of people of diverse natures and that we are to applaud Tim for his courage."

Quietly listening to the interaction, Kelly was never more proud of anywhere she had been, including West Point and her military police battalion.



Accompanied by J-Mitch and Todd, Lee and Cindy climbed the steps to the Philadelphia Art Museum, the same steps that Rocky Balboa charged up, signaling his readiness for battle. Neither Cindy nor J-Mitch could run up the steps very well as both wore shorts and heels as the August heat was oppressive.

J-Mitch had allowed Todd one more chance to date her after the Fourth of July debacle. He had never expected to be so summarily dumped, especially by the hot blonde who owned her sexuality so well. J-Mitch, however, had said she could date him, provided he accompanied her with Lee and Cindy to the Art Museum. She knew most men would balk at the idea of the Art Museum, so if he could man up and pass this test, she would attack him tonight back at her apartment.

The two couples sat on the stone perimeter of the fountain at the entrance to the museum, feeling its cool spray and enjoying the view of the Avenue of the Arts. Holding Cindy's hand, Lee fished into his backpack and pulled out a Tiffany blue bag, presenting it to Cindy.

Suspecting what it was, Cindy lost her breath, but pulled out a small blue box with the white silk ribbon. "It's just as it is supposed to be," she thought. Cindy unwrapped the ribbon, lifted the cover on the box, pushed aside the tissue and looked on a round, solitaire diamond that sparkled in the summer sun.

"Cynthia Renee Hawkins, marry me."

Cindy slipped the ring on her finger and watched it dazzle in the sunlight. It wasn't a particularly large stone but it was a Tiffany and it was beautiful. She threw her arms around Lee's neck. "Yes, yes, yes, of course I will."

Lee took his right hand and knocked on the stone retaining wall of the fountain, knock, knock, then laughed.

“Well, are we going to go inside or just stay out here in the sun?” J-Mitch asked. “You can show off your new fiancée in the museum.”

“Ok, let’s go.”

J-Mitch then turned to Todd. “See, that is what a real man looks like.”

Proudly wearing Lee’s engagement ring, Cindy drove into the suburbs wearing a navy-blue blazer and skirt with matching blue pumps, the consummate professional woman, enough to make both J-Mitch, Julie, and Kelly proud. As a means of alleviating the tension and as a show of good faith to her estranged parents, Cindy had agreed to meet with an ex-gay therapist. She would at least hear him out before she continued upon her chosen path.

Cindy found Dr. David Parker’s office in a strip mall near Plymouth Meeting; apparently middle-class suburban kids were his bread and butter. She checked her makeup in the mirror, touched up her lipstick, then marched into the good doctor’s office.

“Mr. Hawkins, it’s a pleasure to meet you. Please have a seat, we have much to talk about.”

“Do I look like a mister to you, doctor?” Cindy asked while crossing her stocking-clad legs.

Dr. Parker was highly experienced in the give and take and did not rise to the bait. “Well, you are genetically and biologically a man, that is undeniable.”

“And yet I have lost count of how many men I have been with who say that I am more of a woman than their wife or girlfriend. My fiancée,” Cindy paused to show off her ring, “my fiancée sees me very much as his woman and I fully intend to live as his wife.”

“But like I said, objectively, you are a man.”

“That only works on the cosmic scale, which honestly I could care less about.”

“But if everybody was like you, society would crumble.”

“But very few people are like me. I think society will somehow muddle through if I and everybody else like me were to live the life they really wanted to.”

“Yes, and sexual immorality has led to the decline of many societies and empires.”

“Doctor, I served in the military supporting this country, so have many even braver transgendered people before me. Besides, can you name any society where sexual immorality led to its decline? The Egyptians were very open and free about sex, yet their society lasted for millennia. Young girls were even sent to parties to become sexually experienced.”

“The Romans were very immoral and look at them.”

“The Romans were very immoral for a long time before their society started to decay. The British Museum has a whole storage area for Roman porn that it was too prudish to display, lest people get the wrong impression about the nature of civilization. And look at Byzantium, at its peak Theodora was its empress, and she was a hoe.”

“A person should not live an immoral life. You are perverting your true nature.”

“I suck cock and take it in the ass. That is pretty vanilla stuff compared to what everybody else is doing out there.”

“Look, Tim, you appear to be very intelligent, but you have no scientific basis for your belief that you are a woman. There is no gay gene.”

“They haven’t found one but they haven’t been looking for that long, and even if there isn’t, it doesn’t make me any less trans. Many of our characteristics aren’t genetic, some of them probably form in the womb. Some people are just born assholes and you can’t change that, either.”

“Your parents want you to live as a man. They loved you as Tim Hawkins, the name they gave you at birth, not whoever.”

“The door is still wide open for my parents to love me for who I am. Everything I was as Tim, I still am except a man. Everything I did as Tim is a matter of my personal history, and that can’t be taken away. The fact that the door is still wide open after what my Dad did shows that I am trying to be the better person.”

“Do you really think you could be happy living as a woman?”

“That is rich coming from you, Doctor, since you would make my life as miserable as possible and deny my very existence. I think I will do just fine marrying my fiancée and adopting children that the straight world was too lame to care for.”

Cindy got up from her chair. “Tell my father I met with you. If you had offered me a modicum of respect, we could have had a legitimate conversation. It still wouldn’t have changed my decisions as I am happier now than I have ever been. And as far as immorality goes, come on by the Esquire Gentleman’s Club on Veteran’s Day night. My friends and I are performing in honor of those who served.”

J-Mitch walked the U Penn campus, savoring the early fall weather after a torrid summer, most of it inside. She had sinned boldly many times and loved the sense of empowerment being a highly sexualized woman gave her. Being a sex object was a rush, especially when combined with Taiwan Blue. She had the good sense and maturity to know that she needed to back that side of her life with substance, in the same way she and Kelly had helped make Cindy a more rounded person with real substance behind her. When she looked at her friend now, she saw a confident, intelligent, and capable woman who was deeply in love with her man.

“Love,” she laughed. She would find it at her own leisure. She had rushed into marriage, and would not do that again. She was enjoying her time as a high-powered slut and never felt better.

J-Mitch was dating Todd again but also several other men, and for now she was happy playing the field. She didn’t however, want to give something back to Cindy for showing her a path she would have never known, and in a moment of profound lucidity, she concocted a plan that would help both her and her best friend. “This is going to be good,” J-Mitch smiled wickedly, going over her plan while she strolled to class, making eye contact with the men, searching for potential partners.

“I can’t do this,” Kelly said to her friends and Lisa Branca, their dance instructor who was performing with them as part of Task Force, the girl’s burlesque act for Veteran’s Day.

“You couldn’t do the belly dance routine either but you are here now and you are gorgeous,” Lisa affirmed to Kelly. “Besides, look at how far Cindy has come. She is barely recognizable from when she started aerobics with the two of you back in May. She is even growing breasts now. Besides, a lot of people, including a lot of veterans, are here to see us perform. If you don’t do this for yourself, do it for them. This was your idea anyway.”

“And now, The Esquire Club presents the ladies of Task Force, in a tribute to the American service men and women, past, present, and future. Let’s give a big hand for these ladies.”

The applause rang out in the crowd as the four women strutted on to the stage, each representing a branch of the armed forces; Lisa, the Marine Corps, J-Mitch, the Air Force, and Cindy and Kelly the Navy and Army respectively, the branches in which they had actually served. The girls wore dress uniform blazers or leather flight jackets with visored combination hats and aviator sunglasses, but wore garter belts with stockings and heels to show off their legs. They looked fantastic and the men were instantly aroused.

Each of the girls were introduced to the crowd when the anthem of their service was played. The veterans who had served in the branch cheered the loudest, adopting the girl as their own. The girls remained fully clothed for the first song, “The Yanks are Coming,” and started to languidly strip during the second song, “Moonlight Serenade,” the Glenn

Miller favorite for World War II. By the time “On the Watchtower” by Jimi Hendrix played, the girls were in their panties and bras. Lisa and J-Mitch tossed their brassieres to the crowd and were flaunting their pasty-covered nipples. J-Mitch and Lisa were squatting, licking their lips and showing off their g-string covered groins, but Cindy and Kelly still stood partially clothed.

Kelly was too frightened to remove her uniform blazer. The men would see her artificial arm. Cindy came over to her and whispered, “I will show off my flat chest if you take off your blazer.” In unison the two girls stripped. When the crowd saw and understood the implication of Kelly’s artificial arm, it roared in applause. Here was the real thing, a wounded veteran showing off her body despite the loss of her arm. Watching his fiancée perform, Lee noticed several veterans tear up when they saw Kelly remove her blazer. “I am proud of her,” Lee mused. “It takes a lot of guts to do that.”

The girls then mingled with the crowd until the announcer called out that they would be giving three free lap dances to any veteran or active duty service member in the Champagne Room. Soon, the line was twenty deep for veterans waiting to paw the beautiful and patriotic young ladies.

Emboldened by her sex acts, Kelly faced an even more daunting task the following weekend: meeting with Cindy’s father, Thomas Hawkins. She had obtained his contact information from Cindy easily enough as she had met him several times when he visited Independence Park to visit Tim. He had stated his respect and admiration for her. Now, she sat with him at a Starbucks in Easton.

“Cindy told me that you thought she would make an ugly woman. Well, let me disabuse you of that.” Kelly handed Mr. Hawkins her smart phone that showed pictures of Cindy with her two friends at the Thousand Islands. Intensely scrolling through the images of three attractive women, Mr. Hawkins came to rest on a particular image.

“Did Tim catch this muskie?”

“No, Cindy did.”

“We have fished that area for a long time and never even hooked a muskie.”

“You could have been there for that if you had accepted Cindy as the person she really is. I had my own prejudices and hang-ups against transgendered people but I got over it. If you want to be a part of Cindy’s life, then you will have to face up to yours. Otherwise, she will grow apart from you with her new friends and family and you will be left with nothing.”

“I can see that you are a good friend.”

“She is worth being a friend to.”

At the conclusion of the fall semester, J-Mitch met with Cindy and the Maxwells for a celebratory dinner. She had received an A on her business project and wanted to show it to them. The project had multiple folders and binders but she read from the executive summary. J-Mitch had prepared a business and financing plan for a restaurant for Lee to manage and had even identified the building, a Nineteenth Century railroad station off Broad Street with ample area to park, something few Center City locations could boast. J-Mitch had prepared an offer for the real estate and had obtained a grant to renovate the

historic building as part of urban renewal. Continuing with her plan, she had prepared loan and grant applications for minority-owned businesses, met with a public relations firm to prepare a marketing plan, and had conducted surveys on what menu items would be the most popular. She even suggested a name, The Phoenix Restaurant, to symbolize Lee and Cindy's rising from the ashes of their past existence to create something beautiful.

Lee's parents listened with rapt attention until J-Mitch's presentation was over.

"We better get free meals at your place," was their response, not even leaving the proposal up for discussion.

"But of course." Lee was sold on the deal as well and did not need his father's go-ahead. "I don't run away from a good thing anymore, especially when it is presented on a silver platter." Lee turned to his fiancée. "Well girl, are you in?"

"You know it. You could use a good hostess on weekends. I have plenty of dresses to wear."

"And I will love to see you in them."

Lee was dumbstruck when six months later he saw Cindy emerge on the flagstone steps from her dressing room in her wedding dress. It featured sheer sleeves, a brocaded front, and a tasteful veil. Cindy took her position at the back of the aisle and surveyed the crowd on a perfect June day. The groom's side was full to overflowing, as would be expected. Her side, the bride's, however, was not empty by any

means. Julie Stevens and her wife were there, as well as several other National Park rangers and employees who had liked Tim before and now liked Cindy even more. J-Mitch's new boyfriend, Ross Anderson, sat next to Kelly's fiancée, Brian Clarke, who could not take his eyes off the gorgeous bridesmaid. He had met Kelly at The Esquire Club and specifically sought her out for the lap dances, being a former army officer now diagnosed with PTSD. Kelly was impressed at his respectful and gentle demeanor and purposefully sought him out after her performance in the Champagne Room. Most important, Cindy's mother sat in the front row to watch her lovely daughter betrothed to a wonderful, respectful and ambitious man.

"Are you ready?" Cindy's father asked.

"Yes, Dad, I am."

"You look lovely. I am so proud of you, and I am sorry for everything."

"Don't be, Dad. We already discussed this. It's in the past. But we do need to start moving forward," Cindy whispered from underneath her veil as the bridal march commenced on the organ.

The ceremony was beautiful. Cindy felt incredibly blissful after she had become Mrs. Lee Maxwell. J-Mitch, Kelly, and Lisa, however, accosted her and led her to a secluded room in the castle where her husband waited for her, not knowing the reason.

"A vow is a vow, girl, now get to work. We can't keep the crowd at bay for more than fifteen minutes," J-Mitch ordered with a wicked grin on her face.

Kelly added helpfully, "I brought a blanket for you to kneel on. I don't want to see you stain that dress."

Cindy smiled, went to her knees, and unzipped Lee's tuxedo fly. Fifteen minutes would be all she would need to create a memory of a lifetime for both her and her new husband.

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