

# Soul Mates

Turniphead

This fictional short -- relatively speaking -- story could possibly have fit in a few different categories. I considered 'first time' and, stretching things a bit I suppose it could fit into the 'mature' genre. But, ultimately I decided that it fit best in 'romance' as that seems to describe it best; a simple May -- September romance.

I wrote this some time ago and I like it for some reason; I hope you do as well.

Please feel free to comment. All constructive criticism is welcome. Negative criticism, while less palatable, is welcome also. I can't grow if I don't know where I'm weak.

"Friends will keep you sane, Love could fill your heart, a lover can warm your bed, but lonely is the soul without a mate."

~David Pratt

"There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." ~Bill Shakespeare

## Chapter 1

I fell in love when I was a thumb sucking infant and have been in love ever since, even though I had no idea what 'love' was any more than I knew what quantum physics was at that point.

A vision of a nice white-haired lady visited me in my crib and cooed to me softly as my dark room breathed and contracted with the Santa Annas that howled outside. I remember

giggling and feeling safe as she sang that she'd wait for me. She sang she'd always wait for me.

Years passed and although most dreams faded into the ether, I never forgot her face. I knew her but really didn't. I knew she was meant for me even though I didn't really yet understand what that really meant. I looked for her face everywhere. I had no inkling of who she was or where I might find her, but I somehow confidently knew that I would one day.

It wasn't until Mother and Father and I moved lock, stock and barrel to Coos Bay, Oregon, that I would gain some semblance of understanding of the dream that had plagued me so beautifully for so long.

That was a confusing time for me. I was eight and couldn't express what I was feeling in words, then. Even now, I have difficulty explaining it to anybody else.

Things clarified for me about six months after the move in a chaotic and really confusing sort of way.

My insides felt like they were melting every time she came into view. My heart did handsprings if she smiled at me, and, Lord God, if I was lucky enough to draw a hug from her, I was unable to think.

She seemed to understand and, when no one was looking, she'd often wink and smile down at me warmly as if to say, "I know."

It wasn't until much later that I was able to make sense of what was happening to me and it would be more than 13 years before my feelings for her spilled over and threatened to consume us both.

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Mother and Father moved from San Diego to Coos Bay, Oregon a month before I turned eight. For reasons then I was unable to fathom, I was excited by the move. I was leaving my

school and all my friends, but I was not at all upset. I somehow knew Oregon -- whatever 'or -- a -- gone' was -- was where I was supposed to be. As strange as that seemed to me at the time, I couldn't hope to begin to explain it to anyone else. I couldn't explain it then, and I can't really explain it today.

Father's father had passed away a few months previous and left him a relatively trendy restaurant on the waterfront and Mother and Father's intentions were to become restaurateurs.

In retrospect, they were fairly successful. Father's experience growing up working in the place gave him a unique perspective on how he felt it should be run. He made slight changes, mostly in upgrading the menu, and changed the name from 'The Lighthouse' to 'Oceanside.' I personally thought he should have left the name alone, given that the place looked exactly like a lighthouse.

He listened to me expound on why the name should stay the way it was and nodded, "I see your point, JP," His huge hand rested comfortably on the back of my head, "But your mother

and I want a newness...a fresh start. If it doesn't work, we can always change it back."

I was proud that he listened to me, despite declining to adopt my suggestion. Mother never listened to me.

The smartest thing that Father did was to recognize he wasn't a businessman. The dumbest thing he did -- although it wasn't recognized as such at the time -- was hire an old boyhood chum, Dan Gryzbowski, to manage the business side of running the restaurant. I disliked him for a number of reasons, but primarily for the way he looked at Mother when he thought no one was looking.

Father stepped into his roles as host and occasional fill-in sous-chef, and Mother stepped into her dual role as hostess and chief pain in the neck. Everything seemed to work for Father, despite Mother. The revamped, upscale seafood menu was a rousing success and the establishment was almost always booked solid, especially during summer evenings.

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Father, although he hadn't attended college, was a self-taught man. He was well-read and conveyed a certain sort of wisdom and intelligence. Father was my hero as a boy and became even more so as I entered my teen years. He was gentle and kind and patient. He found life lessons for me in almost everything and I hung on his words like they were purest gold.

"Always remember, JP, to guard your character well. Protect it. Polish it from time to time. It is the most valuable thing you possess." I looked up him nodding and absorbing his words, not really understanding him anymore than I understood plane geometry.

As nurturing and loving as Father was, Mother, by comparison, was a cold, conniving, and self-centered shrew. She played a good game for appearances sake, but out of the public eye, she withdrew from me and, I think, Father. She never touched me. She never talked with me about anything

besides her expectations of me. She never said "I love you." In her eyes I was to be seen and not heard.

I wasn't able to express the thought properly then, but even at eight I wondered how such a warm and gentle man like Father could be with an ice cube like Mother. I inanely thought perhaps he felt his warmth would thaw her.

For the first six months in Oregon we lived in an apartment atop the restaurant until they found a large Victorian house Mother liked on the edge of town in a good neighborhood -- not that there were many bad neighborhoods in Coos Bay.

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The day we moved into the new house is the day I met the lady from my long ago dream and my world took on a radically different light.

I was staying out of the movers' way, per Mother's instruction, and exploring the place, noting all the nooks and crannies that a boy of eight could claim as his; the cavernous space beneath the huge wrap-around porch, the natural branch 'tepee' beneath the large pine in the back yard, a dilapidated little tool shed. The possibilities were endless.

A fork in a large tree near the edge of the lawn in back looked perfect for a tree house and I made a mental note to see if Father would help me.

I was envisioning multiple levels and turrets and a fireman's pole to slide down when I heard Mother calling from the front. "Justice Parson, there's someone here I'd like you to meet."

I resentfully walked towards the sound of her voice. I hated when she called me Justice Parson. I had politely asked Mother and Father to please call me 'JP' on my last birthday because I didn't like my name. 'Justice Parson?' Who names

their child 'Justice Parson?' Father nodded seriously and tried hard to remember. Mother never even tried.

"We chose Justice for you in hopes that you would someday help right the injustices in the world." It was much later that I recognized mom often spewed liberal hippie claptrap.

As I rounded the corner my mental jaw dropped. Standing with Mother and a chubby, non-descript girl about my own age was the most stunningly beautiful person I had ever seen. I couldn't tear my eyes off her while I stepped up to where they stood. It was the white-haired lady from my dream.

"Justice Dees, I'd like you to meet Carla Smith." Mother said. I barely heard her. "Carla lives next door and she's your age. You're both in the same grade. And this is her mother, Jane Smith."

I mechanically extended my hand to the girl and hardly felt her limp and somewhat clammy handshake. I was mesmerized by her mother. In crystal clarity I recognized

her. I felt numb and light headed. My heart flopped around like a carp out of water inside my small chest cavity.

Jane Smith was approximately Mother's age but she didn't look the same by a long shot. Her hair was an odd and brilliant snow white. The bright blue ribbon that tied it back in a ponytail matched her sparkling blue eyes. Her complexion was smooth and tawny. Her facial features were, like the rest of her, tiny and perfect. Her smile was dazzling and warm. I had a shivering sensation of *déjà vu*.

I didn't have to look up too far to see her face. Jane was a true petite. I had no idea how tall she was then, but she wasn't much more than a foot taller than my own four feet. Slim and trim, she wore a white sun dress that contrasted sharply against her tanned and perfect arms and legs.

Blushing furiously, I took her proffered hand in mine and marveled how perfect and delicate it was. "It is very nice to make your acquaintance Justice Parson Dees." She smiled

down at me warmly. Her voice sounded musical and silvery.  
"I just know you and Carla will become the best of friends."

"And pigs might fly out of my butt." I thought to myself. In the few seconds I had looked up at her mother, I could see Carla astutely surmised she had lost the battle for my affections to her mother and looked at me like she wanted to punch me in the mouth.

"Please call me 'JP,' Mrs. Smith." I responded.

She nodded and winked and smiled at me, retrieving her hand from my sweaty palm. "As you wish, hon."

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In a lifetime of moments, that moment was one of the single most significant moments of my life.

Mother directed me -- she was always directing me -- to go into the backyard with Carla to play while she chatted with Mrs. Smith. As Carla led me reluctantly away from the vision that was her mother, I looked back and couldn't help noticing how utterly perfect she looked in comparison to my own mother. Mother looked like an overweight and unkempt water buffalo standing next to Jane.

Jane. Even her name was perfect.

Carla did punch me when we were out of our mothers' sight, although she punched my nose, not my mouth.

"Stupid head." She sneered down at me where I had fallen. Articulately she added, "I hate you."

She stormed off and pushed through the cedar hedge that separated the Smith yard from ours. I curiously examined the blood on my fingers. It was the first time I'd ever been hit and I decided I really didn't much care for it.

I also decided that I'd avoid Carla Smith as much as possible in the future.

I stopped the nose bleed with my tee shirt and silently crept beneath the porch and crawled to the front of the house on my belly and spent the next half hour surreptitiously gazing through the lattice at the angel that talked with Mother.

Besides the knowledge that this was the woman who had comforted me in my crib as the wind howled and Mother ignored me so long ago, I don't know exactly why I was so taken with Jane. It certainly wasn't about sex -- I had no concept of that particular subject. In later years I came to believe that it was nothing more than an appreciation of perfection, much like I admired a fine work of art or a spectacular mountain vista. Like an Ansell Adams photograph or a Norman Rockwell illustration or a Charles Russell Painting. -

Over the next several years, my obsession with Jane only grew. I couldn't help myself and I couldn't explain my fascination with her. Besides Father, she became my greatest influence. She was gentle and exuded kindness and was everything to me that Mother was not.

Fortunately, for whatever reason, Mother and Jane became friends -- it wasn't until later that I came to suspect that Jane may have had an ulterior motive because what she saw in Mother was a mystery to me. Regardless, Jane was often at our house having coffee or tea and I was just as often underfoot.

Why on earth would I want to go fishing with the fellas when heaven sat at my kitchen table?

Why would I want to play baseball when the nearest thing to paradise I was ever likely to see was under my very roof?

I am pretty sure Mother was oblivious and I was just as sure that Jane was not. She'd frequently wink at me and reach out

to touch my cheek, smiling softly. "Carla is not a very bright child."

If Mother happened to leave the room for a minute or two, Jane would often hug me close, as if sensing that my cold fish of a mother failed to provide the recommended daily allowance of hugs to a growing boy.

She'd wrap her arms around my shoulders and pull me close, enveloping me in the most sinful of sensations. Jane couldn't have tipped the scales at more than 100 pounds, but she was soft and warm and wonderful.

"You're such a good boy, JP." She'd whisper, kissing my forehead before releasing me. "And you're going to be a great man...a special man. I can see it in you."

Even today I can still feel the wonder of her warm, soft lips brushing my skin, although my greatness -- or lack thereof as a man -- is somewhat debatable.

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Being much more perceptive than Mother, Father did observe my fawning infatuation with our neighbor. He never ridiculed me or made me feel bad in any way about my feelings, but he cautioned me in an off-handed sort of way.

"Don't ever do anything that would hurt the ones you care about, son. Always be aware of how your actions affect others." I worked out that he was telling me in his own offhanded and inimitable way that I couldn't -- or shouldn't -- have everything I wanted just because I wanted it.

Two thirds of the Smiths, Jane and her husband, Dean, were terrific neighbors and treated me as if I were one of their own. I think, now, that Father was cautioning me against saying or doing anything that would hurt our neighbors who always treated me kindly and welcomed me into their home. Father was the smartest man I knew and that he treated my obsession with Jane seriously and without mockery said volumes about

the man. That he advised a nine year old with such sage wisdom said more.

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Carla, on the other hand, had no compunctions about ridiculing me. When I toted her mother's groceries from her car to the house, Carla would sneer at me with contempt. When I helped Jane hang her laundry on the line in her back yard I'd hear Carla rage at me from her open second floor window.

'Retard' was her favorite insult. All of Carla's insults and abuse weren't enough to keep me away from just the merest possibility of being able to hold Jane's delicate underthings in my shaking hands.

Most of the time I was successful in not allowing Carla to get within striking distance, but I couldn't be on alert constantly. Although I had made a science surrounding 'Carla Avoidance,' over the years that we lived next to the Smiths, Carla managed

to occasionally catch me wool gathering and would pound on me for a while until I could affect an escape. She had grown much taller than I and in the sixth grade she easily outweighed me by 50 pounds. Fortunately, I was much quicker than she was and I was usually able to escape after only receiving a black eye or a fat lip.

Carla Smith was a mean-spirited and ill-tempered thing who enjoyed tormenting me at every opportunity. My only sin against Carla, as far as I could tell, was in preferring her mother to her. Who wouldn't?

Among her more creative and often repeated attacks on me occurred at lunch time in school and involved wiping boogers on my sandwiches or slices of pizza, or rinsing her snot covered fingers in my soup while I was trying to eat, and then laughing about it like it was the highest comedy.

I went hungry quite frequently between the third and sixth grades.

I never struck back, always heeding Father's words after I once confessed to wanting to return Carla's blows. "A man never hits a woman, son. Just walk away. If you look hard enough there is always a better way than raising your hand to the fairer sex."

That Carla was a slovenly and caustic and abusive demon from hell and not really a member of the fairer sex at all escaped Father.

But for every 'Carla Encounter' as I came to know them, I could count on dozens of heart squeezing encounters with her mother.

Jane meant as much to me in those years as Father did. She was always willing to listen to my problems -- albeit when Carla wasn't present. It was she who kissed my skinned knees all better and hugged me close when I so often needed it. Father was comforting when he was available; Jane was almost always available, unlike my own mother.

I gathered so many treasured memories of Mrs. Jane Smith that she became my best friend. One of Father's often repeated mantras was, "If you do something nice for someone, it shoots the tiniest little silken thread that connects you to them, and vice versa. With enough time and enough threads, the bonds you build are unbreakable."

I don't know where he got it from, but I liked it, and by the time I moved into my early teens, Jane and I had so many threads that connected us that nothing could separate us. Or so I thought at that time.

Among my favorite recollections of those years were the memories I gathered on the roof of the porch just outside my bedroom window. On some warm summer days, if the weather was right and if she was sun bathing, I'd slip out onto the roof with a book and pretend to read. In reality I was ogling Jane lying on a blanket in her back yard wearing a sexy if somewhat sensible pale pink bikini.

Her body was exquisite -- it was as if it were carved from the finest marble by a master sculptor. From that distance, if she had any imperfections I was unable to see them. I am sure, now, that her body didn't really have a golden halo surrounding it. Likewise, when I look back, I am confident that the world really didn't stop turning as I looked at her. Jane was just breathtakingly beautiful. Slim and trim and perfect. It made my heart hurt to look at her but that hurting never stopped my desire to do so.

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At a barbecue in the Smith's back yard one summer I managed to furtively snap a few pictures of Jane with my Kodak Instamatic 104. And I was elated when she actually posed once for me between the lilac bushes that grew on either side of the Smith's front gate. I was even more elated after the pictures were developed that, besides the posed snapshot, four of the other photos of her had no other people in the frame.

Despite Father's sagacious advice about my character, my pictures of Jane became the most valuable things I possessed.

On occasion, when I was feeling good and confident about myself, I actually dared flirting with Jane in an off-handed and innocent sort of way. Little compliments about how her clothes looked good on her, or how she wore her hair, or the particular shade of lipstick she was wearing. We watched 'To Catch a Thief' together one evening -- Jane's husband, Dean, was in his home office working and Carla complained through the entire flick -- and when I was saying goodnight to Jane on her doorstep, I quietly told her I thought she looked better than Grace Kelly, she snorted but blushed happily.

She looked at me with a bemused expression and smiled softly, "Try saying that to me when you're a little older and see what happens, JP."

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Things changed considerably after I entered puberty and learned some of the mysteries of sex.

I learned about the birds and the bees when I was fourteen -- from a somewhat older friend and a handful of bawdy magazines -- and my fantasies about Jane Smith took a marked turn. No longer were my dreams of her just innocent and pure.

Father always would say I should find something I enjoyed and practice it until it became second nature. Through my teen years I became somewhat of an expert in the area of auto-erotic stimulation, and Jane was the subject of every session I held either in the bathroom or huddled under my blankets in the dark of night.

Of course I know I was completely delusional. Jane was old enough to be my mother, and besides, she was very married to Dean, who -- with the exception of Father -- was quite possibly the nicest man in town. He always treated me famously and I liked him almost as much as I liked his wife.

I often wondered what Jane saw in him after I met him for the first time. He was dark and swarthy and looked like he'd been beat with an ugly stick. His nose was huge and hooked and he had no chin and I immediately saw where Carla got her looks from. After I got to know him though, I could see that he was just about perfect for Jane in the sense that he was just a terrifically nice man and I genuinely liked him.

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About the time that Mother and Father split up -- I was 15 -- I halfheartedly tried to stop my obsession with Jane by dating girls my own age.

The summer that Father caught Mother with Mr. Gryzbowski in the dry store room in the basement of the restaurant, I dated a handful of girls from school. Nothing ever happened beyond a little necking and some innocent petting.

The branching out to be with my own age group did absolutely nothing to drive Jane from my dreams. In fact, my fantasies, in reality, seemed to intensify due possibly to having experienced holding real live girls and kissing and touching them and I was able to draw from those experiences to provide substance to my fantasies of Jane.

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I wasn't there, and it took some time for me to ferret out exactly what happened from Father. One night, several years later, while deep in his cups he told me the whole sordid story.

Mr. Gryzbowski had taken a shine to Mother over the years and I do know Mother was fond of him as she often talked him up to Father.

One July morning, just after Independence Day, Father went to the basement of the restaurant to get clean table linens. He heard them long before he pulled open the door to the dry storage. Mother was on her back on a stack of three fifty

pound sacks of flour. Mr. Gryzbowski was between her legs and taking what belonged to Father. They were both screaming and panting as they rutted. Mother's legs were splayed and pushed up, hooked by her lover's arms.

Father simply said, "Make sure you turn out the light when you're done." He turned and left.

Mother screamed at him to wait, but he just sneered coldly and left the restaurant. One of the waitresses that were there told me, years later, that Mother raced after him, naked from the waist up, her big bosoms bare and flopping around for all to see. She was crying and pleading for him to stop. Father never even looked back.

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He tracked me down at the sandlot where I was playing ball with a group of friends. He motioned me over and rolled down the window of his International Scout. I could see there

was something different about him when he reached out of the cab and clapped my shoulder with his big, meaty paw.

"Your mother and I are splitting up." He didn't say why. "I'm on my way home to pack my things and I'm heading up to Portland. You have a choice to make, son. You can come with me or you can stay here with your mother."

I was shocked and somewhat discombobulated. That Father even suggested I might prefer to stay with Mother over him indicated I had failed in letting him know just how much I loved him. If Father was leaving, I was leaving, also.

I tossed my glove in the back of his truck and jumped into the passenger seat leaving my team short a second baseman.

At Father's instruction, I packed a bag and my pictures of Jane and scrambled down the stairs to go see her. I didn't know how long I had, but I had to see her before we drove away. Jane wasn't home. I pounded on her front door until my balled fist hurt.

I wept as I slowly turned to where Father waited for me in the street in his idling truck.

The only pause I had in leaving Coos Bay with Father was not that I was leaving Mother, but that I was leaving Jane.

It would be more than a handful of years before I was to see her again.

## **Chapter 2**

Six years passed although they didn't pass too terribly well.

Father and I temporarily settled in Portland until the divorce could be finalized. A small two bedroom apartment kept the rain off our heads but would never be called home. We didn't even have a television and, when it rained, which was quite

frequently, the rats paraded through the place like it was a thoroughfare.

Mother tried often during the divorce's pendency to persuade Father to give her another chance. I overheard one phone conversation he had with her when he thought I wasn't around.

"No, Marian." He kept his voice low and measured. Father never raised his voice. "You made your choice by cheating on me. The one thing I can not tolerate is infidelity. I was always faithful to you and you've shown I can no longer trust you."

Father listened for a minute or so and snorted, "No, Marian. As someone once said, 'Physical infidelity is the signal, the notice given, that all fidelities are undermined.' You are faithless and I can't do this anymore. In the future you may contact me through my attorney."

I could tell Father was crushed although he tried hard to pretend otherwise. His world had come undone and his

sorrow weighed heavy on his shoulders. He began drinking more than normal and nearly every night. His heart had been broken. I tried talking to him, but what did a punk-ass fifteen year old really know about anything related to the heart?

The only thing I knew for certain regarding their breakup was that I would never forgive Mother for what she did to Father.

When the divorce was final and their assets were divided, Father had a decent chunk of change in the bank and we left Oregon for hoped for greener pastures.

Over the next five years we moved from place to place. One winter was spent in Omaha. Another winter we hunkered down in Galveston. We lived for a month in Detroit where Father's Aunt Hilda lived but neither one of us could stand the place. Two solid years we hung our hats in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Despite all the moving around, I managed to earn my high school diploma in Biloxi, although I was somewhat older than the others who graduated with me.

In Biloxi, Father's drinking became epic. He wasn't working. He told me his heart wasn't in it -- I don't believe he had the heart left for anything by that point -- but he had enough coin he didn't have to. He just drank. In retrospect, I think he was trying to drink himself to death.

I talked to him about it until I was blue in the face, but talking did no good. He just looked at me sadly as I flapped my gums impotently.

His heart was gone and it hurt me terribly that he acted like he had nothing left to live for.

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After high school I had no idea which direction I wanted to take my life. I was fairly good at math and the sciences, but my heart belonged to the written language. When I mulled my options, teaching English and literature almost always

rose to the top of the heap but higher education was out of my reach.

I took a few college courses at a local CC in season, and I worked summers at a convenience store just around the corner from our apartment. I dated occasionally, but never seriously. I was a virgin when I left Coos Bay with Father, and I was a virgin when I returned six years later.

The one constant in my life after leaving Oregon were the ever-present memories of a little bit of a woman thousands of miles to the west.

Despite the years and miles, my thoughts of her still made my heart race and my blood run hot. I compared every girl I ever dated to her and they all paled by comparison. My photos of her were tattered and faded but they were still my most cherished possessions.

No, leaving Coos Bay hadn't changed anything as far as my obsession with Jane was concerned. I once called her from Detroit. I couldn't speak when she answered the phone.

After her initial silvery "Hello." there was silence for several long seconds and then, as I lowered the handset onto the cradle I heard her say, "JP?"

I was torturing myself and never called her again.

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Unfortunately, Father succeeded in killing himself almost six years to the day after he left Mother. He began drinking the morning of July 4th and drank heavily all day. When I left to watch the parade with a casual girlfriend at noon, he was already beyond drunk. When I returned to the apartment a few hours later, he was dead. He had aspirated vomit, asphyxiating himself.

For many hours I just held his head in my arms, crying uncontrollably. He was only 48 years old.

I wondered, later, if he had heard me as I left the apartment that day, "I love you, Dad." I prayed hard that he had.

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Biloxi no longer held anything for me. I had Father cremated and held my own vigil for him. At sunrise on July 8th, I scattered his ashes in the gulf and whispered a fleeting prayer that God would hold the gentlest man I had ever known close and give him peace.

After Father's 'estate' went through probate, I was left with a good deal of money in the bank, his old notebooks, and a longing in my heart.

I got in my Ford Pinto and pointed it in a generally westward direction.

There was someone I had to see.

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Just about a week later I returned to Coos Bay. The city hadn't changed much at all that I could see. A few new businesses had popped up, but the old neighborhood seemed the same as the day Father and I left. I drove slowly past the restaurant. It had been painted a light sea foam green and a new sign read 'The Lighthouse.'

Things change.

I wept for Father and what might have been as I drove towards the old place. I had no idea if Mother still lived in the same house. Nor did I care. For that matter, I had no idea if she was still in town.

I wasn't back to see her, and if she was lucky, I wouldn't.

When I pulled up on the other side of the street from the Smith residence, I felt my palms start to sweat. The place hadn't changed at all, although it looked like it had been recently given a new coat of paint. The white trim and shutters contrasted nicely against the dark gray siding.

By comparison, Mother and Father's old place looked run down. There were bicycles and a variety of toys in the front yard, and the front lawn was nothing but hard-packed dirt, so I was confident that Mother no longer lived there, and when a pudgy and dark-complexioned little boy of about five waddled out onto the porch, I turned my attention back to 819 Sea Otter Drive.

A relatively new metallic blue Toyota was parked on the drive next to the house.

A stray dog ambled down the sidewalk, nose to the ground, dragging a length of frayed leash. He was apparently homeless. Like me.

The lilac bushes that guarded the gate in front of Jane's house were in full bloom and when I got out of the car and leaned back against the door, I could smell them. It had long been my favorite scent and I always associated lilac with summer and Jane.

I wondered then, at the wisdom of what I was about to do. I fully intended telling Jane I was in love with her, despite the fact that she was married. I planned to steal her from her husband, if I could. That was the moment I got back in my car and almost drove away.

Dean didn't deserve what I was planning. He was a good and decent man. I couldn't help recalling what Father was always saying about integrity and character. Besides, I wasn't at all sure Jane would do anything but laugh at me when I told her how I felt.

It was my favorite quotation from my favorite author that caused me to get back out of the car and stride purposely through Jane's front gate and up to her porch.

An English teacher in Biloxi was always fond of quoting Mark Twain and my favorite was; "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

I was pretty sure Mr. Clemens wasn't talking about the sort of thing I was about to attempt, but I didn't really care either. I couldn't live the rest of my life without making Jane aware of how I felt about her.

My heart was pounding in my chest like a trip hammer when I climbed the steps and pulled open the screen door. The morning sun was warm on my back but wasn't solely responsible for the beads of sweat that trickled down my back.

Jane later said that she sensed something out of the ordinary before she heard my knock.

I could feel her presence. My hand was shaking when I raised it and rapped my knuckles on the mahogany door.

An unbearable eternity passed as I waited for her. I started to leave. I felt like puking.

And then she was there.

The door opened slowly and she peered from behind its protection up at the uninvited intruder. It took a few moments for her to recognize me even after I managed to choke, "Mrs. Smith."

"JP..." She sounded like she didn't believe her own voice.

I nodded, unable to make myself speak again.

The door opened wider and she inched closer, squinting up at me against the late morning sun. "JP?" She whispered.

And then she was in my arms. She threw herself at me and shrieked happily, wrapping her arms around my waist and squeezing me tight. "Oh JP! Oh my dear God! JP!"

Just holding her in my arms again made what was wrong in my world disappear. I hugged her tight and closed my eyes against the tears that sprang to my eyes. "Jane." I sobbed against the top of her head.

I have no idea how long we held each other on her front porch. Nothing else mattered to me. I was where I belonged and my heart sang in my chest. My trembling disappeared, and every misgiving I had ever entertained about seeing her again drifted away on the summer breeze.

When she released me and slowly stepped back, gazing up at me she was beaming. Her eyes and cheeks were wet but her tears were belied by the broad smile that lit up her face.

She gently took my hand and happily asked me in, "Come in, darling. I've been waiting for this day for so long."

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I followed her into her kitchen and mused that, as a child and as a young teenager, I had looked up at her. At my full adult height of 5'9" I towered over her.

The years had been kind to her. She looked almost exactly the same as she had that summer so many years before. She had a few new laugh lines around her eyes and mouth, and there was a softness about her that I didn't remember. By my calculation she was 41 or 42 years old, but she was still easily the most beautiful woman I had ever laid eyes on.

She was wearing a light blue blouse and a pair of faded jeans that clung to her gentle curves. Her neatly coiffed and pure white hair was tied back in the old familiar ponytail. A pair of diamond studs adorned her ears.

"My God, JP, I can't believe you're really here." Her smile was radiant. Her large blue eyes stared up at me with what I can only describe as adoration. "Every day I've wondered about you. If you were happy? Where you were? What happened to you?"

I thought I'd feel awkward saying what I came to say, but I didn't. "Mrs. Smith...Jane...I've never forgotten you, either. The only thing I regret about leaving Coos Bay was leaving you."

We stared into each others eyes and, simultaneously, came together, our arms holding each other close. Jane lifted her face and kissed my chin. "I've missed you so much, sweetheart. Are you hungry? I'll whip you up something to eat."

It was almost as if we had a psychic connection of some sort. I was famished and nodded down at her. I reluctantly let her slip from my embrace and pulled a chair out from the table and sat down, watching her flit around the kitchen like a butterfly in springtime. She was graceful and fluid; her every movement seemed a dance step.

I was happier than I had been in a long, long time. My heart was singing again. Jane was positively beaming as she heated up left-over beef stew on her range. She cut big slabs of home-baked bread and set out a plate of watermelon cubes.

We chatted easily and normally as if the past six years hadn't happened at all.

"Carla lives up in North Bend. She had a baby her senior year and dropped out." A little sadness temporarily clouded her eyes, "She's not doing too well. I try to help when I can but she has a drinking problem and I think she's into drugs."

I shuddered at the thought of anybody having sex with Carla but grinned, "You're a grandmother?"

Jane laughed and wrinkled her nose at me, "Well, I don't feel like a grandmother."

"You sure don't look like any grandmother I've ever seen." I grinned again.

Her cerulean eyes sparkled happily when she set a bowl of soup in front of me and sat at the end of the table kitty corner from where I sat and just watched me eat.

When I told her about Father she took my hand in hers and sincerely said, "I'm sorry, JP. I truly liked him. He was a good and decent man."

"Is Mother still around?" I inquired, tearing a hunk of bread from a slab and dousing it in the stew.

"As far as I know she is." Jane nodded, "I haven't seen her in awhile, though. I believe she's living in a trailer park on the north side. The same one Carla lives in, I think. At least she was."

I finished my meal and pushed away from the table, rising to my feet. "That was good, Jane. Thank you so much."

She stopped me when I tried to clear my dishes. "Don't be silly, sweetheart. If you think I'm going to spend one second of the time I get to spend with you doing housework you're not as smart as I think you are."

Jane Smith, the mother of so many of my dreams, stood up and slipped her arms around my waist. "I want to hear about what you've been up to these past -- what has it been -- five or six year?"

In a rather truncated fashion, I gave her a rundown of my life over the past half decade. She listened raptly without

interrupting. "I knew that was you!" She exclaimed when I told her I tried calling her a few years back. "I knew it!"

When I finished my story with sprinkling Father's ashes in the Gulf of Mexico, she blinked away a tear and pushed up on her tip toes and softly kissed my cheek. For the briefest moment she paused and looked into my eyes.

"I've wanted to do this for so long, darling." She whispered, turning my face to hers with her gentle hand and pressing her lips to mine.

I almost fainted. My knees felt weak and the room slowly began spinning. To anyone watching, my first real kiss with Jane would have appeared chaste and dry. In reality, it was soft and warm and passionate. Our lips clung together so lightly and so delicately it took my breath away.

When she pulled her lips from mine we stood there holding each other, panting softly. I couldn't tear my eyes from hers.

Her own eyes were wide open and an odd light danced in them.

Words weren't necessary. We both wanted the same thing but I felt a weight on my heart.

"What about Dean?" I asked, brushing her forehead with my mouth.

She wriggled happily in my arms and held up her left hand. Her ring finger was barren. "We're no longer together, honey. I'm a free woman."

I wasn't sure what to say. I wasn't at all sorry but I thought doing cartwheels around her kitchen would seem oddly inappropriate.

"I'm...um...sorry..." I managed to choke without having it sound like I was doing a mental Snoopy dance.

Jane laughed, "Good Heavens, honey, don't be sorry. I'm not. Dean came out of the closet about three years ago. He and his lover live a few miles down 101 and they are happy together. In fact, I think Dean and I get along better now than we did the last couple years of our marriage. The alimony he pays me allows me to keep this place."

"Dean is a...a...homosexual." I mumbled eloquently.

"Uh-huh." Jane giggled happily. "When we agreed to divorce, the first thought that came to mind was that if you ever did come back here, I'd be free for you. I recently had been considering hiring a private investigator to track you down."

My head and heart were spinning. The realization that my worst fear had no legs was spirit lifting. My character could stay intact and unblemished. I clutched Jane to me and hugged her so tightly a small squeak squeezed from her throat.

I held heaven in my arms again and wasn't about to let it go. I smiled down at her and took her chin in my right thumb and forefinger and tilted her face up to me and kissed her slowly and thoroughly. She shivered in my arms as our lips slued together. We pulled our mouths apart with a loud smacking sound and stood there in the middle of her kitchen panting and staring at each other.

"JP..." She whispered as my mouth fell on hers again and I thrilled when I felt her tongue push against my lips until they parted and it slithered into my mouth. There was no hesitation on my part. My tongue met hers and in seconds our tongues were writhing and coiling together deliciously.

That opened the floodgates.

I had limited experience french kissing, but the moment Jane's warm little tongue slipped into my mouth, I knew that all others I had ever kissed had been merely practice. She only moaned when I lifted my right hand and palmed her left breast. She was sans bra and I could feel her hard little nipple

through her shirt. Like the rest of her, her breasts were small, but proportional. Her breast was the size of a small tea cup and my large hand engulfed it.

My penis was becoming erect and Jane had to feel it against her stomach. I only grunted when she reached around me and gripped my butt in her hand and pulled me roughly against her.

I had come back to confess my heart's truth and Jane was confessing hers.

Our kiss went on and on. Our lips clung and slued together, our hands touching and stroking and clutching at each other. It felt right and real and wonderful. It felt like coming home.

"Oh. My. Dear. God." She breathed softly when we peeled our lips apart.

I was fully erect in my chinos. My pulse was racing and I'm sure my face mirrored hers. Her eyes were hooded and lust-filled. Her tiny little nostrils were flared. Her cheeks were flushed.

Without words, my soul mate took me by the fingers and led me up the stairs to her bedroom.

We both wanted the same thing. In her bedchamber, we casually removed our clothing as if it were the most natural thing in the world. For the first time I saw Jane naked and I felt my penis surge even harder.

She was utterly gorgeous. Her body was magnificent. When she discarded her shirt I gaped at her bare breasts. They were perfect, as I always suspected they'd be. She was perfectly proportional. Her small bosom fit her perfectly. Round and proud, they stood up on her chest like they were molded porcelain. Her nipples were like small pencil erasers, pinkish and surrounded by small aureoles that were similarly colored and smooth.

Jane unfastened the snap of her jeans and pushed them off her hips along with her white panties. I bit my lower lip and tasted blood when she stepped towards the bed completely naked and completely unabashed. Her snow white curtains matched the rug. The large -- relatively speaking -- vee that covered her pubic mound was nearly as white as the hair that crowned her head. I wondered briefly if she were an albino, but then thought I really didn't care. I was in love and nothing else mattered.

Jane paused at the side of the bed as I divested myself of my remaining clothing. Her eyes widened as I stripped off my socks and moved to the other side of the bed.

I was 21 and reasonably fit. I had taken advantage of the gyms in the high schools I attended and ran a couple of miles every other day and I knew I looked fairly good. I was relatively lean and fairly hard with a lanky build and a washboard stomach. Very little research on my part let me know that my penis was at least about average in length at slightly longer than six inches. I wasn't overly proud of my equipment, but neither

was I disappointed. It was what it was and I just never did spend a whole lot of time dwelling on the subject.

And Jane didn't look disappointed either as she peeled back the floral comforter and we both climbed up onto her bed.

If I tried to explain what it felt like when I took her naked body in my arms and we sank onto her pillows I'd fail miserably. Soft and warm and pliable, yes, but she was so much more. She wrapped her arms around my neck and kissed me as we settled next to each other. Her skin was butter soft beneath my fingertips as my tongue explored her mouth. I felt her warm heat and silky pubic hair against my stomach. Her perfect little breasts were mashed against my upper chest as she tried to swallow me. Her scent was maddening.

She quivered in my arms when my hand cupped her petite little buttock and kneaded it firmly.

"I love you, JP." She panted heavily when we pulled our mouths apart. "I have been in love with you m...my whole life."

I stared down at her, memorizing her sheer beauty and kissed the tip of her tiny little nose. "I've loved you as long as I can remember, Jane."

She grinned evilly when she reached between us and gripped my erection in her little hand. "Mmmm..." She murmured, her fingers exploring my hardness. "Very, very nice, honey."

I busied her ear and sucked her lobe between my teeth. Somehow I just...knew what I was supposed to do.

I eased her onto her back and gently climbed between her legs. Jane spread herself for me and as I hunched over her, she pulled me down to her portal. She reached down with her free hand and spread her swollen labia and guided me into position. I looked into her eyes and found nothing but love and lust there.

I gently leaned forward and sank into her slick center.

She cried out as I eased into her, spreading the delicate tissues that grasped at me. She felt like hot, oiled silk. Deeper and deeper I pushed into her until, with a final gentle plunge with my hips, I was buried to the hilt inside her.

"Be gentle, my darling," She whispered up at me, "It's been m...many years since I've...been with a man."

We lay there panting softly. I could feel Jane's warm, moist breath on my chin. I had never experienced anything as exquisite as being inside her. Her pussy was wet and warm and so unbelievably tight. Her legs hooked around my hips, anchoring me in place.

I pushed up on my elbows and looked down at her. She was so short the top of her head barely touched my chin. She tilted her head back and looked up at me.

Her lips were trembling and tears flowed freely from her eyes. "Ohhhhh JP" She sobbed softly, "I d...dreamed about this for soooo l...long..."

I kissed her gently and thoroughly, my tongue exploring her mouth and sparring lightly with hers. Her arms around my shoulders clutched at me, her nails digging into my flesh.

Pausing to catch our breath we lay there together staring into each others eyes, joined at the groin and content to just be. I know I was where I'd always wanted to be and I wanted to remember everything about that moment -- about her.

"You feel so incredible." I whispered hoarsely. "You're so tight and hot..."

"Mmmm...you feel w...wonderful inside me like I always knew you w...would." She kissed the underside of my chin, "I've been w...waiting for you I think m...my whole life, my

d...darling. I always knew I'd find y...you and then when I d...did and I lost you I didn't panic. I knew you'd c...come back to me...s...someday."

I could feel her vaginal muscles relaxing around my thickness as we lay together. "Jane, I think I've loved you from the moment I laid eyes on you and I never stopped."

I reached between us and tilted her face up towards mine. I dipped my head and tenderly kissed away her tears. I kissed her eyes and nose and mouth. I shivered when she trailed her fingernails down my back. I nipped her throat. Her skin felt silky and warm beneath my lips.

Jane unhooked her ankles and let her legs drop to the bed. She gazed up at me and nodded softly.

I every so slowly drew back with my hips and grimaced as my cock slid from her silken sheath. I paused for a moment with just my helmet still lodged inside her and then eased back into her vagina. I watched her eyes roll back in her head and her

mouth pop open as I pushed myself into her. A low sougning moan leaked from somewhere deep inside her.

Other than in my fantasies, I had no experience. I was a novice of the worst order, but I had practiced with her in my head so often I felt like a card carrying journeyman. I found a long, slow tempo with my hips and began working my erection in and out of her as smoothly and as steadily as I could manage.

Jane's hands gripped me at my hips and pulled at me with each down stroke. Her vaginal walls grasped at me with each withdrawal. She was wet and hot and everything I thought she'd be.

A light sheen of perspiration covered us both and our bodies splattered wetly as we came together. Her pussy made delicious slurping sounds as we gave and took from each other. The bed seemed to be pitching and swaying.

Jane and I were both moaning softly as we made love and crying out our love for the other.

When I came it sort of sneaked up on me. Under normal circumstances I can tell when I'm about to lose it, but the sheer power and intensity of my climax slammed through me without warning.

Almost involuntarily, I slammed my cock as deeply as I could into her pussy and froze. My back arched and I screamed. It felt like the top of my head blew off when a violent explosion ripped through my body. Lights and sound and fury filled my head as the purest pleasure I had ever experienced in my life radiated out from my sex.

Every nerve in my body was standing on end and singing loudly as my semen erupted from my testicles and poured out of me into Jane. My body jerked and contorted over and over as streams of come pumped into her. My orgasm was starting to fade as hers was just beginning.

Jane squealed loudly beneath me as my thick syrup filled her womb and then she was coming herself. She clutched at my

arms and threw her head back and her torso lifted off the bed and every tendon in her neck looked close to snapping. She keened loudly and shuddered uncontrollably beneath me.

"Oooooohhhhhh ffffffffuck!" She cried out shrilly. She gripped my shoulders with her dainty hands and pulled me down onto her and bit the side of my neck as her orgasm overcame her. I could feel her muscles contracting on my penis. Contracting and releasing over and over, milking me dry.

When the last vestige of her orgasm ebbed away into the ether, we were left a huddled lump of shivering flesh, clinging together, panting softly, and sobbing quietly. We were one as we had always been meant to be. Neither of wanted to let the other go.

Eventually, though, gravity caused my flaccid penis to slither deliciously from her vagina. I rolled off and sprawled next to her on the bed. I reached down and retrieved my tee shirt from the floor and handed it to her.

Jane spread her legs and crammed the garment between them and let herself relax. The look on her face was amazing as she let our mingled fluids drain from her center. "Mmmm..." She smiled softly, "It feels nice."

She looked lovelier than I remembered. She seemed to glow. Her legs opened and closed slowly. The color was high on her cheeks and her eyes were hooded. When she tossed the shirt aside and turned on her side to face me, I couldn't help thinking I'd never seen a more beautiful woman.

"That was truly amazing, JP." She smiled warmly at me, running her fingers through my light dusting of chest hair. "You were as wonderful as I ever dreamed you'd be."

"Jane," I reached out to touch her face, "All I know is that I never dared dream anything could be so incredible. You are the one who is amazing."

She leaned forward and kissed my chest. "Then we're both amazing, darling, and that's alright. We can both be amazing for each other."

## Chapter 3

We lay there on her bed as the morning sun gave way to afternoon. Jane lay in the crook of my arm, her head on my chest. We talked and laughed like there was nothing out of the ordinary. We were naked but neither of us felt awkward. It felt natural and right. It felt like I was complete for the first time in my life. She was the yin to my yang in the sense that she made me whole.

Jane only giggled when I rolled her onto her back and told her I wanted to just look at her.

"Look away, my darling." She assumed a spread eagle position and tried to be serious as I propped up on an elbow and let my eyes take in her glory.

She was completely flawless, unless one counted being small a flaw.

I didn't.

Her skin was tan and smooth and supple with the softest down on her arms. It, too, like her mane was purest white.

"I've wanted to ask you this forever," I lightly trailed a fingertip over her stomach, "Why is your hair so white? I mean, it is so way cool, but I always wondered."

She wrinkled her nose and grinned, "Dunno. My doctor says it is a lack of melanin, but even he really isn't sure. All I know is it has been this way as long as I can remember. It wasn't as though I had dark hair and something happened to make it go white. It was white from birth."

I knew that from photos that were hung in various places on her walls. "I think it looks stunning on you."

She shivered when I let my fingers dance over her abdomen, stroking and touching. I was exploring her and trying to memorize every detail. She shivered again when I lifted my hand and delicately cradled her perfect little right breast in my hand. It was firm and pliable beneath my fingertips. My thumb and forefinger teased her hard little nipple. She actually purred when I leaned forward and sucked her nipple into my mouth. My dick was instantly hard and ready.

The hard, rubbery texture of her nub on my tongue was mind-blowing. Her right arm wrapped around my head as I began suckling and I could hear her gasping little cries. I lightly scraped her nipple with my teeth and she squeezed my head so tight it actually hurt.

With her tit being ministered to by my mouth, my own right hand, almost on its own volition, slid down her tummy and, hesitating a second, slid between her legs and covered her

vagina. Jane's legs parted instantly and her body shuddered as I lightly caressed the soft skin of her inner thighs with my fingertips before lightly covering her pubic mound.

Her moist heat almost seemed to be baking from her center. Her delicate little labial lips were swollen and when I slowly inserted my forefinger between them they actually seemed to clasp at me.

Jane was groaning and convulsing beside me as my mouth and fingers played her body like a violin. I began alternating from one breast to the other, sucking and mouthing her into a frenzied heat. My finger pushed deeper into her soupy vagina and I marveled how slick and tight she was.

Jane released my head from her death grip when I peeled my mouth from a breast and began kissing my way southward. Her stomach was so soft and warm against my lips. I paused, briefly, to slowly tongue her navel.

When I continued my leisurely journey towards nirvana, Jane knew what I intended and sort of stretched taut and relaxed at the same time.

"Oh God..." She whistled through clenched lips. "Oh JP."

When my pursed lips brushed through her pubic hair she grabbed a handful of my hair in both hands and tried to brace herself.

"Chrissssssst Jeeeeeeesussssss!" She sobbed when I snaked my tongue out and lightly caressed her labia. Her heady scent reached my nostrils and her salty, fishy taste was different than what I expected. It was delicious, but different.

I maneuvered my way between her legs and cupped her firm little ass cheeks in my hands as I began to graze in earnest. Jane nearly went berserk when I slipped my tongue between her slippery folds and plunged it as deeply as I could into her boiling cauldron. She pushed my face into her and ground her groin upward as I licked and sucked at her canal.

I didn't really know exactly what I was doing, but I figured by the way she was reacting I wasn't going too far wrong.

Somewhere over me I could hear her yelling my name and begging me not to stop. I had no intentions of stopping. I felt more powerful and more alive than I ever had. When I began using my teeth on her labia Jane almost came up off the bed entirely. And when I found her swollen little clitoris and coiled my tongue around it, she went crazy, screaming and crying something about something I couldn't hear properly.

The only words I could make sense of were 'fuck' and 'love.'

When she came, I covered her vagina with my wide open mouth and tried to lap up her free flowing honey. Her legs clamped down on my head and squeezed at me over and over. I had all I could do to keep my grip on her butt. She was contorting and crying and pulling at my hair.

Her orgasm slowly ran its course and her legs unclasped from around my head. She sort of melted onto the mattress. Her breathing was ragged and harsh. I pulled my mouth from her groin and loved that I had been able to bring her joy orally. I hadn't been all that sure I'd be able to before I started.

I slowly extracted myself from between her legs and slowly crawled up over her still shivering body. Her eyes were closed. Her cheeks were flushed and wet with tears. I smiled down at her when she opened her eyes.

"You're all mine, Jane." I whispered, "You're my soul mate...my meant to be. I'm never going to leave you again."

"Oh darling," She sobbed, "We are soul mates. We are m...meant to be together. I knew it the moment I saw you w...when you were...seven or eight. I know it sounds crazy, JP, but it's the truth. And even c...crazier still, somehow I knew who you were when I was a little girl. Don't ask me how -- I sure don't know -- but I remember dreaming of you when I was in kindergarten."

The tears that flowed from her eyes were happy tears -- tears of joy -- and I knew in my heart of hearts she wasn't making it up.

"Sweetheart," It didn't feel at all strange to call her that, "I love you and I'm here and if I have anything to say about it -- and I think I do -- I'm never going to let you go."

She reached up and pulled my head down and covered my parted lips with hers. Our tongues coiled together fiercely, hungrily. She moaned when she felt my erection brush against her belly. I wanted to swallow her whole. I wanted to absorb her into my essence. Jane apparently wanted something similar.

With a strength that seemed at odds in comparison to her diminutive size, Jane pushed me off her and onto my back. She clambered onto me and straddled my hips. She reached down and gripped my rigid erection and raised it up and in

one smooth motion, positioned herself over it and sank down, engulfing me.

We both grunted as my cock smoothly slid into her silken pussy. With one last wriggle of her hips, I was completely inside her. She was so hot and wet I could hardly stand it. With one mind, our hands came together and our fingers laced -- I couldn't get over how small and delicate her hands were.

For a beautiful eternity we froze that way, both of us enjoying our union. Jane's face was a mask of pure lust and love and I'm sure it mirrored my own. She gripped my fingers tightly and I could feel her flexing her vaginal muscles on my cock. She gently rocked her hips back and forth, stimulating her clit against me.

We wheezed and gasped and moaned softly in the close air of her bedroom. Jane extracted her fingers from mine and braced her hands on my chest and then showed me what a real woman could do with her body.

She leaned forward and I grimaced as three or four inches of my penis slid smoothly from her pussy. She paused momentarily and then lunged back down onto me. I grunted with pleasure as she began rocking back and forth over me. Firmly and with purpose, the love of my life rode me hard. I merely held her legs and let her love me.

Her tits were so firm and perfect they hardly moved on her chest as she thrust herself back and forth on my phallus.

Jane's eyes were squeezed tightly shut and she bit her lower lip and cried out softly as she used her body to give me pleasure. And, oh my God, it was pleasurable.

Her labia stretched out from her pussy each time she leaned forward, and retreated as she pushed herself backwards. A milky, creamy substance coated my thickness. I managed to incoherently smile at the odd contrast between her white pubic hair and my own that was jet black.

I reached up and encircled her narrow waist with my hands. I couldn't see, but I'm sure my fingers nearly touched behind her back. I raised my upper body and, holding her firmly on my cock, I kissed her hard. I could taste her salty perspiration on her lips. She was frantic as we kissed. Her arms wrapped around my shoulders and she dug her fingernails into my back as she ground herself against me.

The sensation of her perfect little tits against my chest was amazing. She bit my lower lip and I could taste blood. My only love sort of exploded. Her body went tight and she threw her head back and her shriek was piercing. Her pussy clamped down on me hard. She shuddered and convulsed on me, her vaginal walls squeezing my cock deliciously.

Sliding my hands around her and down, I gripped her ass cheeks and held her firmly impaled on me. I could feel that old familiar tingle in my nut sac and as Jane floated down from her orgasm, my come boiled up and blasted out of the end of my dick and coated her insides.

I cried like a little school girl as a seeming virtual river of sap pumped into her belly. I thrust up against her as hard as I could as my jism blasted into her. I jerked and shook beneath her as she whimpered her wholehearted approval.

The sensation of coming in the one I loved was simply stunning. I cried out as sheer joy wracked my entire being. My whole being was screaming loudly in my head. I thought I smelled smoke. The coppery taste of blood filled my mouth. The pure pleasure of coming in Jane jolted me to my very core. Lights burst inside me. Explosions in my appendages made motor control difficult.

Later, Jane showed me where my fingers had clamped down hard on her delectable little butt, leaving bruises in the distinct shape and pattern of eight fingers. She didn't do so in complaint.

As my orgasm weakened and then floated away like smoke on a breeze, Jane collapsed onto me. She still quivered and shook lightly as I slid my arms up around her and held her close. She

rested the side of her face against my upper chest and tried to collect herself. I kissed the top of her head and slowly stroked her back.

"I love you so much, sweetheart." I whispered against her snow white hair. It felt like the softest corn silk against my lips.

"Oh my darling," She sobbed softly. "I thought I knew how good sex could be but I didn't know it could be like this. Can it be that true love makes it that much better?" She sounded mystified.

"I don't know, my love," I answered, nuzzling her neck, "But I can't imagine it could be any better than it is with you. Loving you has been my whole life, and I have nothing else to compare our love making against, so I'd have to say yes, true love does make it better. But what do I know?"

"You were a virgin?" Jane raised her head and her blue eyes stared into my baby browns.

I nodded and grinned foolishly. "I was saving myself for you."

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Sometime later we were in the kitchen again. Jane slipped on a pair of lacy panties and pulled on a white terrycloth robe and I was down to my tan chinos as my tee shirt was a sodden mess, having collected the secretions from both of our sessions. I had clean clothes in my car, but frankly didn't care enough to retrieve another shirt. Besides, Jane seemed to like me bare-chested.

The love of my life objected to my suggestion that I prepare lunch, but I shut her down with a kiss and a simple, "Shush, you."

She sat patiently at the table as I surveyed what ingredients were available. What I found would do nicely. I whipped up open-faced crab, artichoke and ripe tomato sandwiches on

toasted sourdough, sprinkled with grated Parmesan and drizzled with a fairly good balsamic dressing. One talent I possessed, having spent enough time under Father's tutelage in the restaurant, was creating good combinations of food.

When I placed her plate in front of her she looked up at me in wonderment and then dug in ravenously.

"Oh my dear God." She smiled broadly when she was finished, "That was amazing. It...tasted like ambrosia should taste like."

I finished my own sandwich and leaned back in my chair. "It's just a matter of finding the right combination. Some foods compliment each other naturally, like ham and Swiss or peaches and cream. That's one of the things I learned from my Father."

"He taught you well, JP." Jane reached out and patted my hand, "That was delicious. I might keep you around just for your abilities in the kitchen. Your talents in bed can be just an added bonus."

"I think I'll stay around because of your talents in bed, sweetheart, but if it makes you hap..."

The sound of a car running on three cylinders and no muffler cut off my thought. I leaned over the table to look out the window and saw a decaying Dodge Aspen station wagon in the drive behind what I assumed was Jane's Tercel. I watched a behemoth squeeze from behind the wheel and extract a toddler from the back seat. Empty Rainier beer cans clattered to the tarred drive as the monstrously big demon woman yanked the child from the car. I immediately wished I had taken the time to retrieve a clean shirt from the car.

Carla tugged the screaming tot up the walkway and I know it was my imagination, but as she wobbled up the steps onto the porch she seemed to block out the sun. How, in the name of God, did something like Carla spring from the loins of someone as delicate and perfect as her Mother?

She knocked on the door but didn't wait for an answer. She bulled her way into the entryway and as the child she lugged behind her wailed loudly Carla wedged herself into the kitchen.

Her bleary eyes fell first on her Mother and then located me. Recognition was almost immediate. Her face screwed up in anger the moment she recognized me and I knew there wasn't going to be an "I'm sorry about all the shit I pulled as a kid" speech.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" She snarled viciously.

Time hadn't tempered Carla's temper much.

"Carla!" Jane stood up and dared her daughter to say another word.

"Mom!" Carla ejaculated. The little girl eclipsed by Carla's girth continued to wail and was beginning to get on my nerves.

"JP is here as my guest and I won't have you make him feel unwelcome." Jane looked tiny in comparison to her daughter.

Carla had continued to grow since the last time I saw her. As she stood shaking in anger in her Mother's kitchen, she was easily three and a half bills. Each of the breasts that were ill-concealed by a dirty and threadbare orange tee shirt that aptly read 'Fuck You' was at least as large as Jane's head. The shirt didn't quite cover the broad expanse of her belly. She stood at least a head taller than her Mother and the dirty and torn purple sweat pants she wore had no hope of covering the swell her shirt failed to cover.

Carla's face was swarthy and sweaty. Her eyebrows had grown together and her eyes were small and piggy. She had inherited her Father's nose and her chin was weak.

"How in all that's holy did the woman I love manage to produce this mutant?" I thought as Carla rudely brushed her Mother aside, knocking her into the refrigerator.

When Jane fell to the floor I stepped up, and for the first time in my life I hit a woman. In seeming slow motion I swung my right fist and put all my weight behind it and repaid Carla for all the beatings she bestowed upon me over the years. I thought of Father as my fist mashed her already bulbous nose and she went down with a yowl and a curse. Fortunately, Jane's granddaughter was still in the entryway or she would have been so much pâté.

My childhood nemesis looked stunned. Apparently nobody had ever had the cajones to stand up to her before. I know I never had as a kid. I figured it served her right and it was just karma coming around to right the record.

I helped Jane to her feet and together we watched Carla try to stem the blood that flowed from her nostrils. I just wished her

still-unseen daughter would shut up. 'Fetal Alcohol Syndrome' flitted through my thoughts.

Jane reached over Carla's hulking body and lifted a beautiful little girl of perhaps four into her arms and rocked her slowly as she sang 'Hush Little Baby.'

Fortunately Jane's granddaughter derived most of her genes from Jane. The baby had pale blond hair -- just slightly yellower than her grandmother's -- and finely chiseled features. Her eyes were piercing blue and she looked to have all ten fingers and, I assumed, all ten toes.

She apparently was just terrified of her mother because as Jane swayed with her and cooed to her, the child rested her head on Jane's shoulder and her crying ceased.

I never loved Jane more than I did at that moment.

"Mom..." Carla whimpered plaintively from the floor.

"As I said before, JP is my guest and he is going to be around here for a long time and you better get used to it, Carla." Jane was brooking no arguments. "We're in love and we're going to get married." She looked up at me and smiled as I nodded emphatically.

"Mom!" Carla blurted. The blood oozed from between her fingers. "You can't! You're twice his age! Christ, Mom! What the fuck?!"

"What did I tell you about swearing around Missy?" Jane barked. "I won't have you corrupting her like you've corrupted everything else in your life."

Carla looked sheepish. "But Mom..."

I started to say something but Jane shook her head. She patted the child's back and whispered a soft lullaby. "Carla," Jane spoke softly to her daughter, "I don't expect you to

understand, but your not understanding doesn't change a thing. JP and I are in love. We've always been in love. We're soul mates and we're going to be together for the rest of...my life, at least. If you can accept that and try to understand it then you are welcome in my home. If you can't, don't bother coming back here."

Carla managed to pull herself to her feet. She was wobbly and unsure of herself. One of her hated enemies was going to be her stepfather. I could see her struggling with the fact as she wrested little Melissa from her Mother's arms. Missy immediately began crying again.

"Oh fuck a duck." Carla muttered thickly as she pushed her way out of the house and waddled down the sidewalk to her car.

-

"We're going to get married?" I smirked after Carla's smoke belching chariot lurched down the street squealing and complaining.

My heart's beat looked up at me in abject wonder and grinned broadly. "Got a problem with that?"

I laughed and swept her into my arms where she belonged and said, "No...no, not at all. I guess I would have liked to have gone the traditional route and been the one who asked is all."

She kissed my chest and laughed long and loud. "Screw tradition. Do we really seem traditional to you? Besides, I didn't ask. I just made up my mind. You don't have a choice, my sweet darling."

I already had decided that I wasn't going anywhere. I knew that the moment Jane led me into her home that morning. The moment we hugged I felt like I found myself; like I was safe at home at last.

"Mmmm..." I sighed against the top of her head, "Do I have to change my name to yours, too?"

She giggled and shook her head, "No. I've had the idea for quite some time that I like the sound of Mrs. Jane E. Dees."

"E." I tilted her face up to mine. "What does the 'E' stand for?"

Jane blushed and wrinkled her nose. "You think you hate your name? Try Edna on for size. I got it from a great-aunt."

"Jane Edna Smith." I mused, kissing the tip of her nose. "It isn't..."

"Melodic. Pretty. Harmonious." She finished my sentence for me.

"No, dear heart," I kissed her eyes, laughing softly. "It isn't as bad as Ethel."

-

After we washed and dried the dishes, Jane led me by the hand up the flight of stairs to her bathroom. She stripped off her robe as casually as she ever did anything and hung it on the hook by the door. I couldn't tear my eyes from her as she slid open the shower stall door and turned on the water.

She was wearing only a pair of white lacy panties and was completely nonplussed about it. She stepped up to me and, winking, slipped her dainty fingers beneath my waistband. She fumbled with the snap on my pants and unceremoniously pushed them off my hips along with my underwear.

My penis hung heavy with blood and canted slightly to my left as it awoke from its siesta and almost seemed to yawn and stretch as it roused for business. Jane smiled up at me when I

rolled her panties down her legs and gathered her in my arms as the lace garment fluttered to the floor around her feet.

The differences in our height caused my groin to press into her belly just south of her navel. She rested her arms on my biceps and leaned back in the circle of my arms, staring raptly into my eyes.

"I love you so much, my darling." She whispered as my lips brushed hers.

Softly, sweetly we kissed. Our lips clung together lightly as the tips of our tongues greeted each other and began a slow, slippery dance. She wrapped her arms around my neck and moaned when I reached down and slid my hands over the curve of her ass and pulled her against me. I thrilled at the sensation of her pubic hair against my leg.

The small bathroom was filling with clouds of steam as we kissed. I couldn't get enough of her. She was light and lively and so giving in my arms. Jane hugged me close, her body

molding to mine, almost as if she was trying to become one with me.

My penis was fully erect and ready for battle when we peeled our mouths apart and just stared at each other.

She wriggled her tummy against my cock and giggled impishly. "It seems somebody likes me."

"It seems somebody loves you." I breathed softly, still mesmerized by how beautiful her face was.

"Let's get cleaned up, honey, then I'll help take care of that big ol' thing for you." She slipped from my arms and guided me into the stall.

-

Showering with Jane gave a whole new meaning to the phrase 'personal hygiene.' It was like I was bathing with a relatively

large, sexy, and wriggly bath toy. I was captivated by the sensation of hot, soapy flesh and hands touching me. She never stopped touching me. I loved watching the suds course off her body, following the curves of her bottom before flowing down her legs.

The sheer eroticism of holding her wet, slippery body in my arms had me in a frazzled state. My penis was so hard it actually ached.

After rinsing each other off, we stood together under the shower head. I held her tight and she leaned back against me. I spread my legs slightly so that my hips lowered and we both grunted at the wonder of my erection wedging snugly in the crack of her ass cheeks. She wiggled her hips and pushed herself back against me firmly. I kissed her shoulder and neck, nibbling softly.

"What do you say, darling?" She whispered quietly. "Do you want to go back to bed and let me take care of this for you?" Jane wriggled her butt against my erection pointedly.

"I think I'd like that very much."

Outside the stall, she stood still and allowed me to dry her off with a huge, fluffy towel and then patiently waited as I dried myself. She ran a brush through her hair and pulled it back on her head. I wiped the mirror and ran my fingers through my tousled mop of dark hair and managed to tame it into a presentable mess.

She squealed happily when I swept her up into my arms and carried her from the bathroom. I tried estimating her weight and sort of hefted her a few times to try to guess. My best guess was 100 pounds.

Jane laughed when she realized what I was doing. "103 pounds the last time I weighed myself."

## Chapter 4

I crawled up onto her bed and set her gently in the middle. I was in no hurry. I just adored looking at her and touching her. I lay down next to my picture of loveliness and rested my left hand on her stomach. She seemed to glow in the dimness of her room. Her eyes, although lust-filled and hooded, fairly sparkled the bluest of blues.

"Jane?" I asked quietly.

"Mmmm..." She responded as she reached out and gently clasped my stiff penis with a tiny little hand.

"Ughn...tell me what you...um...like in bed." I shivered as her warm fingers danced over me.

"Mmmm..." She was transfixed by my penis.

"Please tell me, Jane." I pleaded. "I want to know so I can...uh...be good for you."

She released my dick and laughed loudly. "You're kidding, right?"

I mentally scratched my head and shook it, not sure where she was going.

"JP...darling...lover...you have to know that being with you...making love with you was beyond anything I'd ever experienced in my life." She put her hand over my heart and continued, "I've not exactly been around, you know. Besides Dean, I have only been with...two other men and one of them is you. Trust me, darling, sex with you was far better than it ever was with anyone else I've ever been with."

"But..."

She cut me off. "If you mean what positions do I enjoy or what sorts of things do I like in bed, then that's different. If you're

concerned about your performance, dear God, don't be. You're a wonderful lover."

I blushed happily and nodded, laughing. "That's good to know. I love hearing that I'm good for you, but I was wondering about positions and such. What do you like?"

It was her turn to blush sheepishly. "Oh." I watched her eyes turn inward and she smiled up at the ceiling. "I am not a huge fan of the missionary position because I'm so little and I feel like I'm being smothered. I guess I like to be on top or be mounted from behind. If I had to choose a favorite, I'd say cowgirl, especially now, because I like to look at your face when you look at my body. It makes me feel powerful and sexy to know you like the way I look."

"I've always loved the way you look. You are utterly gorgeous." I lifted her hand to my lips and lightly kissed it.

Jane looked at me shyly and wrinkled her nose. "I like oral, too, both giving and, as you probably discovered a few hours

ago, receiving. Honey, there isn't much I don't enjoy about sex, except maybe anal. Dean and I attempted it once years ago but it was too painful." She paused and asked, "What about you? What do you enjoy?"

I shrugged my shoulders and grimaced. "Don't know. I'm learning as we go. When I find those things I especially enjoy, I'll let you know."

"Mmmm..." She brushed my hair from my forehead. "One of the things I truly like is just being with a man...naked...together...no barriers...nothing to hide. It makes me feel...nice...natural."

I could see by the set of her eyes and tone of her voice that she was getting aroused. I leaned forward and covered her mouth with mine and pushed her onto her back. Her lithe arms wrapped around my neck as my tongue darted and probed her mouth. The bottoms of my feet tingled when she lightly clamped her teeth on my tongue and gently began sucking on it.

She eagerly parted her legs when I slipped my hand between her thighs. I ran a trembling finger along her drooling slit and felt her shudder beneath me. Her reaction was forceful and immediate. She pushed up on my shoulders and squirreled out from under me.

Her eyes blazed with hungry passion as she rolled over and rose up on her hands and knees and lifted her butt as high as she was able.

"Fuck me, darling." She ordered. There was no wiggle room in her demand.

I groaned heavily and pushed up onto my legs and sluggishly crawled into position behind her. She looked so hot as she impatiently waited for me. Her ass was smaller than my spread hands. Her body looked as perfect as any I'd ever seen in any adult magazine, just in miniature. She had all the right curves in all the right places but she looked...delicate as I towered over her on the bed.

Jane looked at me over her shoulder and managed to smile as I spread my knees to lower myself. I reached beneath her and briefly fingered her drenched pussy. She didn't need any more foreplay.

Gripping my dick in my fist, I pushed it down and guided my swollen helmet to her treasure. She grunted when I rubbed it up along her wetness and then cried out when I positioned it at her portal and leaned forward.

My erection sank easily into her, parting her like a hot knife through butter. Her entire body was quivering at my ingress. I slid deeper and deeper until with a gentle little nudge of my hips I was buried to the hilt inside her.

"Oh JP!" She sobbed as I gripped her at the waist and pulled her more snugly against me.

It was as though her body was made just for me. Her pussy was hot and wet and I could feel her silky tissues convulsing around me. Her butt was somewhat flattened against my lower abs. For the longest time, we were frozen in that position panting softly. I couldn't focus on anything but the woman who freely gave herself to me. The walls in the bedroom faded to black. The bed seemed to be slowly spinning.

My heart was hammering hard in my chest cavity as it celebrated my new found happiness.

Jane whimpered softly as I eased back and drew myself from her wet center. I paused with an inch or two still inside her and just as deliberately pushed my cock back inside her.

"Ohhhhh..." She gasped, "That f...feels so good...so g...good..."

I found a slow, steady tempo and began working my cock in and out of her. As if measured by a metronome I rocked back and forth behind her. We were both grunting with pleasure as

I plumbed her depths. The warm wetness of her canal felt incredible on me. I lightly stroked her back with my right hand as we fucked.

"JP...JP...oh my JP..." She panted over and over.

My thoughts were fractured and scrambled. I couldn't think. The love I felt for Jane was all consuming but it almost paled by the pure lust I felt for her. My lust coursed through my veins burning me up. It blazed out of control inside of me. I had wanted her for so long, nothing else mattered.

Gradually, almost without even being aware of it, I had increased my tempo and I was pulling Jane vigorously back against me with every forward plunge. I watched my cock slide out from her pussy, her labia stretching out slightly, and then watched as it penetrated her. I was coated with her slippery fluids and a collar of whitish froth had collected at my base.

The watching was almost -- but not quite -- as hot as being inside her.

Jane's panting cries had changed to a long and blended litany of incomprehensible profanities and a shrill keening. Her head wobbled back and forth on her neck. Her entire body was convulsing.

"Oh...fuck...ohhhhh...wonderful...so good...so fucking g...good...so fucking...JP...your c...cock..." She wept and yowled.

I gripped her at the hips with both hands and shifted into overdrive. I speared her hard and fast, almost slamming into her. Our bodies slapped together loudly with each drive of my hips. Jane jerked hard every time I buried myself in her grasping pussy.

And then we were coming.

Jane achieved orgasm just a step or two before I did. She raised her head and bellowed loudly and I could feel her vagina squeezing me over and over. Her arms collapsed and her upper body fell to the sheets. She shook and shivered and wailed with her release.

As she embraced her climax, I continued stroking myself into her as fast as I was able until I felt that familiar tightening in my testicles.

I sank myself into her as deeply as I could and threw my head back and yelled loudly as my load boiled up from my balls and spewed deep into Jane's belly. The pure pleasure that exploded inside me filled my body and I screamed, "Jane!"

The lights in my head burst like so many fireworks. Over and over my body jolted as I deposited steam after stream of my come inside her.

Finally, with a whimper, my orgasm ended leaving both Jane and me wheezing for oxygen and fused at the groin. For the

longest time, we didn't move. Jane looked up at me with one eye and I could see the smile on her lips. She looked sated and happy. I am sure I looked the same to her.

I slowly withdrew my softening penis from her sex-slicked vagina and, rolling to the side, I pulled her down onto the bed next to me. She turned her face to mine and kissed me quite thoroughly.

"Please get me a bath towel or some TP or something or we're going to have a mess." She grimaced after she pulled her mouth from mine.

I grinned evilly, "Just let it out. How big of a mess can it make?"

She laughed and said, "Okay, buddy boy, but if I do I'm not sleeping in the wet spot tonight."

She lay back and I watched her relax. She giggled as our come drained from her groin. "It tickles."

A minute or so later she moved her bottom and I was mildly shocked at the volleyball-sized wet spot she left behind.

"Maybe I should have gotten you a towel, huh?" I laughed as she slipped from the bed and traipsed to the bathroom to cleanse any remaining residue from her butt.

-

We slept, then. Jane was cradled in my arms and used my chest as her pillow. Neither of us was subjected to the wet spot. The intensity of our mutual release left us both drained and completely satiated. I slept better than I had ever slept in my life. My heart was happy as I drifted off into slumber. The last thing I remembered was the exquisite sensation of Jane's warm breath on my chest as she snored softly in my arms.

I dreamed of a wedding. Father was there as my best man. Jane's maid of honor was Mother, despite my objections. "You

need to forgive her, sweetheart," Jane kissed my cheek, "For your own sake, if not for hers."

Elmer Fudd officiated the ceremony in his typical hunter's garb. He looked at Jane and me and began. "Dewly beloved, we aw gathewed hew togethew to join this man and this woman in holy matwimony."

Jane burst into gales of laughter at Elmer's speech impediment. She laughed so hard tears sprang from her eyes and set everyone in the audience to laughing. Bella Lugosi hooted with James Dean. Anthony Perkins hugged Patrick Moynihan. Moe Howard bonked Curly on the noodle. Carla Smith punched Grace Kelly in the mouth.

I managed to keep Jane from falling to the carpet but both Father and Mother collapsed and rolled down the steps leading to the altar. Father picked Mother up and, grinning at me, pile drove her head first into the hardwood floor.

Pope John Paul II stepped out from behind a curtain and kicked Elmer aside and with a wave of his hand, brought order to the proceeding.

Jane collected herself long enough to stand beside me in front of the pope, despite the fact that neither of us was Catholic. She put her finger to my lips and grinned up at the pontiff. "He says 'Yes,' dude. I agree. Let's get this shindig on the road."

The pope laughed and nodded, "Kiss her you dad-gummed fool. Yer hitched."

I did and as I kissed her slowly and thoroughly, Grace Kelly head butted Carla and Father body slammed Mother.

It was a nice if somewhat bizarre dream that faded into the heavens as my eyes fluttered open in the gathering darkness. Jane still slept; her soft snores were even and rhythmic. Her breath was warm and moist on my skin. She sort of snuggled into me and her left arm reached over me and held me close in her sleep,

I couldn't imagine being happier than I was at that very moment. The woman I loved was in my arms and everything else was somehow less important.

Falling back into the inky blackness, I was only aware of holding Jane close and knowing that she was all that mattered.

-

Save for a nightlight plugged into an electrical outlet, Jane's bedroom was black when I again surfaced from my slumber. I was alone in her bed. I squinted at her bedside clock and was mildly shocked that it was 2:18 in the morning. I oozed from the bed, pulled on a pair of boxers and wandered down the short hallway and down the stairs. Halfway down I stopped to peruse a half dozen framed photos on the wall, some I had seen when I was younger; some I had not.

Her white hair made it easy to identify Jane in every one. In one, she looked to be about four or five. She was seated in a half tire swing and smiled radiantly at the photographer. It was déjà vu all over again and it came back to me in a rush. I felt light headed as I recalled dreaming of a little blond haired girl swinging in a tire swing when I was in the first grade in San Diego.

Another photo, framed in pale oak, showed Jane as a teenager in a light blue prom dress. She was as tall as she was ever going to get. The boy who appeared to be her date looked dazed. His acne stood out sharply against his pale skin. His bow tie looked entirely too tight.

I skipped a few photos as I descended the stairs and paused at the last one. An ornate frame framed a picture that was taken probably only months before Father and I left Coos Bay. Jane and I were seated at the table in her back yard. Her arm was around my shoulders, mine held her loosely at the waist. Her head rested against my shoulder.

We were best friends and it showed. What was odd about the photographs on Jane's wall was that Carla wasn't featured in any of them.

On the last step, I heard Jane talking. I stopped long enough to overhear her prayer of thanks.

Jane was knelt by the coffee table in the living room, her hands clasped beneath her chin. Her eyes were closed and her head was bowed. Her voice was almost inaudible.

"Thank you for bringing him back to me. Thank you for answering my prayers. You gave him to me, Lord, and I will be eternally grate..."

The stair creaked as I stepped into the family room and she turned to look at me. She smiled weakly and wrinkled her nose. "You weren't supposed to hear that."

"It's alright, sweetheart." I grinned, "I said a very similar prayer when I woke up yesterday evening with you in my arms."

-

The side door crashed in with a bang and the sound of breaking glass. Jane whirled around and clutched her robe to her throat as a large retarded looking man strode into her house followed by a smallish weasely looking fellow. Carla stood in the fractured doorway and pointed at me. Her nose was purplish and swollen.

"That's him," Her grin was about the purest evil I had ever seen. "Get him."

Retard reached for me with a big oil-stained hand. I recall thinking, 'You really need to clean your nails.' as I kicked him in the crotch. He slumped over and his cry reverberated through the house. He was so large the entire place shuddered when he collapsed to the floor, his hands covering his groin. As he fell, I stepped in front of Jane.

Ferret-face pulled a small pistol from his waistband and idly pointed it towards us.

I was as afraid as I'd ever been, especially when I saw the gun wielding dude eying Jane who peered at her daughter and friends over my shoulder.

"What do you want?" I demanded, trying to hide my fear.

"I want you to shut the fuck up." Ferret-face sneered, nudging retard with a silver tipped snake skin boot. "Jug? You okay, Jug?"

The behemoth moaned gutturally and tried to roll over. "Holy shit c...cakes." He mumbled. "My nuggets hurt so bad."

The little guy with the gun laughed softly and looked at me much like I imagined a viper would consider me before striking; cold, calculated and utterly deadly. "We were just

going to lay a whupping on you to convince you to amscraay. Now, I suspect Jug here might want a pound of additional flesh...or a couple of balls, anyway."

Jug sluggishly pushed up onto his hands and knees and then rose up to look at me with accusing and teary eyes. "What ya wanna do that for?"

I was terrified for Jane when the weasel with the gun gestured for her to move from behind me. "You, lady, over there."

Jane tried to protect me and slipped in between the gun and me. "No. If you all leave now I won't even call the police."

His face pinched tight and he stepped up to Jane, raised the gun over her head and pressed the muzzle against my forehead. "Don't make me ask again."

My adrenaline was running hot. Fight or flight. My hands shook noticeably as Jane slowly walked across the room. At

least she was out of the line of fire. Ferret-face lowered the blue steeled revolver and grinned evilly at me as Jug rose up beside him.

"My friend here is going to make your life a little uncomfortable." Weasel actually giggled as he stepped aside and grabbed Jane's arm. "If you try to fight back, we're gonna hurt the lady, too."

I knew that I was going to have to take a beating. Hopefully Jug would leave my testicles intact. In the doorway, looking drunk and stupid, Carla was conflicted by her hatred of me and concern for her Mother.

"Leave her alone, Kyle." She evidently had human compassion buried somewhere deep inside her gargantuan frame. "That ain't what I hired you two bastards for."

"Shut the fuck up, bitch." Kyle was in control. He stood behind Jane, an arm around her neck. He held the gun up near Jane's

head, pointed toward the ceiling. "I fucking told you if we did this we were gonna do it my way."

It was clear Kyle was going to take perverse pleasure in my destruction. Jug the retard looked at me with an even emptier looking expression than Carla's. He rose up to his full height and clenched his fists into two meaty hams. "You oughtn't had done that, buddy."

Strangely, whether he was unable to generate anger, or he was just bored with me, Jug looked disinterested. I wasn't at all comforted by the thought, especially when he raised his left arm and I saw his knuckles whiten.

Fortunately, Kyle chose that moment to make an uncalculated mistake. His libido apparently was kicked into overdrive by the woman in his grasp and the possibility of violence. He giggled again and reached down to squeeze Jane's right breast through her robe. Jane cried out and Jug turned, concern flooding his dim visage.

Jug might have pounded me into a senseless pulp, but he had a sense of honor that seemed to hold that women shouldn't be harmed. With a sentence that could have been authored by Father -- if he had been really, really drunk, Jug lugubriously shook his head at ferret-face and brought the proceeding to a screeching halt. "You ain't gonna hurt the purty lady, Ky. I done a lotta things for you but I ain't gonna allow it."

Carla, also, had become a little concerned and sidled into the house. She looked a lot like Jabba the Hutt in the entry way.

"I'm running this show, you fucking dimwit." Kyle snarled, sliding the hand that held the gun down Jane's abdomen and slipped the revolver between the flaps of her robe at her groin. "Take care of him and maybe I'll let you have some of this twat when I'm finished with her."

The considerable differences I had with Jug at that point vanished into grudging admiration as he stood his ground. "No, Ky. This ain't right. Pap allus told me never to hurt wimmin and I ain't gonna let you do it neither."

"Kyle," Carla seemed to be aware that her would-be plan had spun wildly out of control. "Let's just go. He isn't worth it."

"Fuck you!" Kyle's pinched features tightened and his face flushed with anger. "A hundred bucks each to kick the shit out of him isn't enough. I'm taking my payment from this piece of trim."

A cold rage filled me as Jane's terry cloth robe parted briefly as the slimy weasel rubbed the barrel of the gun up and down the front of her panties. Pure terror showed in her eyes and mirrored my very real fear that made thought difficult.

The roar that Jug let out caused Kyle momentary consternation. The pistol's pseudo-sexual motion against Jane's crotch ceased. His hand dropped from her chest. His eyes widened as he realized that he was no longer in charge of their little operation.

"No, don't!" Ferret-face shrieked as both Carla and Jug rushed him. They closed on him like a pack of rabid hippos, pushing him and Jane to the floor under nearly a half ton of punching, biting and clawing flesh.

I heard the gun fire once and panicked, thinking only of Jane. My fear was replaced immediately with pure relief when Jane squirted from beneath her daughter and Jug like a watermelon seed. She was uninjured.

I helped her to her feet and held her and together we watched Jug and Carla pummel an already unresponsive Kyle. Carla bit his arm hard enough to draw blood. Jug's mammoth hands squeezed Kyle's throat.

Holding Jane close, I sidled over to the side table by the couch and picked up the phone and, keeping an eye on the voracious mound of wild and snarling beasts that were pummeling Kyle, I called the police.

911 had not yet reached Coos Bay, so I looked for a phone book until Jane pointed to the emergency card beneath the Bakelite phone.

Jug -- Bruce Horst -- and Carla rolled off of a non-responsive Kyle and sat on either side of him like two drunken hobos as if unsure where they were or how they had got there. I gave the address to the dispatcher and hung up the phone. I temporarily left Jane alone and retrieved the gun from between Kyle's legs.

The single gun shot had pierced the fleshy part of Carla's left bicep and she looked at it stupidly as blood soaked the sleeve of her 'Fuck You' tee shirt and coursed in rivulets down her arm.

Jug just looked confused.

Kyle was still breathing. That much I was able to see as I held the gun on the trio and waited for the police. Jane stepped

close and slid her arm around my waist and shook her head at her daughter's blubbering but otherwise silent plea.

"No, Carla." Jane intoned quietly, "This time you went too far. I'm not going to bail you out of this one."

I almost felt sorry for Carla as she sat there crying and whimpering. Almost.

Jane looked up at me and whispered, "I'll be right back, darling. I've got on check on something."

She slipped out the caved in door and was gone only a few moments before returning with an obviously exhausted Missy clutched in her arms. Carla hadn't even had the good sense to find a sitter before trying to ruin my evening.

Epilogue

Kyle did survive, as did Jug and Carla, although all three were guests of the Oregon penal system for some time having been convicted of a variety of charges that included assault with a deadly weapon, breaking and entering, conspiring to cause bodily harm, and just generally being stupid.

Jane and I, married a few months, filed to terminate Carla's parental rights and simultaneously petitioned to legally adopt Missy. The court granted the petitions without objections being filed.

The years with Jane since our reunion have been wonderful in every respect. She made me whole and, as much as I despised Missy's biological mother, I came to love Missy as if she were my own.

I never did see Mother again. It seems the previous summer she met and married somebody passing through on vacation and had relocated to South Carolina. It was just as well, because although I did eventually find forgiveness for her in

my heart, I wasn't sure that that forgiveness would prevent me from kicking her in the crotch.

Father had shown me how to be a man and father, and while I'd never be the man he was, I had a wife and daughter who helped me be the man I am.

I try hard each day to measure up to his example.

THE END