

Rebbecca and Luis

By Orblover

Chapter 11 – Tuesday Morning “A Little Organ Music”

*** Luis ***

I woke before the alarm without my normal erotic dream but with wood. Yesterday began to flood into my brain, but I put it on hold until after my run and morning routine. I started to grab my usual running outfit and said to hell with it. If the Greeks and Romans, even the Scots, could do it bare assed, I could. Socks and running shoes plus my music box in an armband.

After stretching, I headed out of the driveway at a comfortable pace. It was weird feeling the wind all over me as I ran, though real easy to keep a steady pace with the metronome bouncing out in front of me. Fortunately, it was a bit brisk so Junior's friends had retreated some.

I hadn't paid a lot of attention to my route, some mornings were like that. This morning was... WOW!! I had a selection of Bach organ music set up to time my run. E. Power Biggs. Fantastic. *Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor* (BWV 582) was playing as I noticed I was coming up on Becca's house. Jason was just coming out of the driveway and had turned to head the way I was going.

“Jason!”

“Hi, Luis.” He was running in place while I caught up. “Mind company?”

“If you don't mind being seen with a lineman.”

“I'd rather run with you than into you!” We ran on a bit at a good pace for both of us when he said, “nice outfit.”

“It's the latest. You should try it.”

“I just might tomorrow.”

Again, a comfortable silence as we ate up another half mile.

“You had a big impact on Bec yesterday.”

“Is that good or are you going to pound me?”

He gave a quick laugh. “Good. Very good.”

We both went back to our running and consumed another half mile.

“We all had a good talk when she got in last night. Actually, more of a joyous cry. She reconnected with our parents.”

“Fantastic.” Neither of us was winded. Good. We'd be in shape Friday.

“Be careful with her today, she might freak.”

“I will.”

“She's got it bad for you.”

I damn near tripped. Recovered from the near fall, another half mile gone.

“Time for sprints. See you at school, lineman!” Thank you, Jason. I needed time with my stories right now.

“Later, Jason.” He took off like a rocket. I went to full speed as well. I actually hung with him for about 30 feet, then he easily pulled away. When I rounded the next corner he was already out of sight. “I guess that's why he's a running back,” I mused out loud.

I misjudged the route I took and ended up going a couple of miles further than I had planned. That's a first. Maybe that would help the rubber legs I was experiencing yesterday. Half an hour later I was emerging into the kitchen from my basement hideaway.

“Morning, Momma.” We exchanged kisses. I stopped for a second when it hit me she only had on an apron.

“Morning, sweetie. Like my outfit?” She did a full turn and a modeling pose.

“You look great. New uniform for the restaurant?” I winked.

“You know, I might. This feels good.”

“Business would definitely pick up!” I faked a Groucho leer complete with raised eyebrows and pretend cigar. The Marx Brothers are very popular around our house.

“Just don't say 'grow.'” She used her fingers to make the quotes. It looked hard to do with a spatula in her hand.

“MOMMA!” I blushed. I actually blushed. Damn it.

“Sit and eat, tease.” She gave my arm a gentle pat as she handed me breakfast.

“Thanks for last night.” I sat and started on my calorie laden plate.

“It was my pleasure. I really like Rebecca and I meant everything I said. *Capisce?*”

“*Capisci.*” I sat and tore into breakfast. Poppa came in with the paper. Momma was overdressed by one apron. Benny Goodman was serenading us in the background. Big Band, breakfast, and good banter. Perfect.

“Morning, son.” He tossed me the paper.

“Hi, Poppa. I like your suit.”

“Latest in Board Room fashion.” He pretended to straighten his non-existent tie and then snapped his non-existent lapels.

Momma joined us with their breakfast, sans apron. We chatted about the world, as usual. The food slowly disappeared while topics flowed naturally. The World. Politics. The Economy. I loved this time of day with my parents. I was an adult in their eyes and treated as an equal.

“How was your first day in the Program, son?”

“I could say it had its ups and...” Momma hit me! She was laughing though. Margie's entrance broke up that conversation before it went too far downhill.

“Morning, sis.”

“Good morning, Really Big Brother.” She had gotten the memo about the uniform of the day.

“Is it cold in here?”

“Huh?” I pointed to her erect nipples.

She and Momma both hit me. “Ow! Poppa, save me!”

“Son, you dug that hole. I suggest you either get in it or start throwing dirt back at them.” They were still thumping me.

“Okay, Pax!” Margie and Momma looked at each other and they punched me, hard, in opposite biceps. “Shit!”

“Pax,” my sister quickly declared.

“Pax and watch your language young man.”

“Sorry, Momma.” I hung my head in penance.

“Back to my original question, now that sanity once again reigns in the Contadino household. How was the first day?”

Margie went first. Ladies first and all that. That's her story to tell. My take? She really enjoyed the experience (exhibitionist) and the support she received from her partner, Luke.

“Plus, Really Big Brother helped all of the females in the program.”

“How so, sweetie?”

“Well, Momma, the story around school is that RBB established early that twisting nipples half-off and unwanted insertions are...” She pulled herself up, voice went deep, “NOT REASONABLE.”

“More growl, please.” I insisted. They ignored me.

“The insertion guy apparently has a new temporary tattoo about the size and shape of RBB's hand as well.”

“Son, violence at school?” I hoped my scowl Friday is half as fierce.

“No Sir. I just removed his hand from Becca with emphasis. He went at her from behind, the coward. No request, just tried to cram into her dry.”

“Ouch! Is she okay?” Momma asked.

“She's fine. She had her hymen and it didn't break, but she was in pain for a while.”

“She HAD her hymen?” Margie's a smart girl. Too smart at times. Like now.

“Yes,” I felt myself turning red. Again. Or had I not bothered with fading?

“As in past tense?”

“Yes.” Is embarrassment terminal?

“And you and she...” She poked one finger in and out of a circle of fingers on her other hand. Hey, you know us Italians. Tie our hands behind our backs and we can't speak.

“Not yet.” Damn this girl. And my parents doing nothing to stop it. To think, a few minutes ago I liked them.

“Then how?” I could tell by looking at her face that I wasn't going to get by with simple answers.

“How what?” A little offense of my own. Lame, yes, but something.

“Would you just tell me how she lost her hymen?” She waved her fist at me.

“Let me see if I remember. Horseback riding? Nope. Gymnastics? No. Bicycle? Nah... My finger? Yep.”

“She didn't want Junior?” I arched my brows. How did she know the name? Oh, High School Rumor Mill. Duh!

My parents looked like they wanted to ask a question, so I blocked them by responding quickly. “I think she does, just scared. She wanted me to use my fingers to open her and get her ready.”

“Well, your fingers are bigger than most penises.”

“And how would you know, young lady?” Poppa asked.

“The Program.” That shut him up for a minute.

“Doesn't sound romantic.” So, Momma was getting into my sex life as well.

“It was, actually. She had just finished the painting she showed you last night. I made love to her with my mouth and hands. When she got to her peak, I broke right through. She barely felt it.” I can't believe I'm telling my family this! I know we're open with each other. But, this? Open is one thing. These are things I wouldn't tell my friends. I would share them with Becca, though.

“Well, let's hope the main event is more romantic.” Poppa said with slight grin and a faraway look in his eyes. Momma had a wistful look on her face as well.

“What was your first time like, Momma?” Margie asked, drawing Momma back from her memories.

“A bit awkward. Rushed. Fumbling. Painful at first. Confusing. Scary. At the same time, I knew I wanted to do it again.” She grinned at Poppa and turned to Margie. “Why don't you help the boy instead of teasing him?”

“Okay, Momma.” I watched as she shifted gears. Smooth. “Really Big Brother, make it special for her. Every girl remembers her first time for the rest of her life. Don't rush. Make sure she really enjoys herself. Lots of hugs and cuddles. Be patient. And, with that monster between your legs, be careful!”

“I plan on it. I don't want to scare Becca off. Not like other girls.” The sight of a date screaming in horror ran through my mind. Cindy.....something.

“Well, it's not like she hasn't seen it! Ever deflowered a virgin before?”

“Not that I'm aware of.” Had Momma left the oven on?

“Oh, you'd know, Mr. Big.” Thanks, Momma.

“Poppa, I've noticed that we're not dissimilar in size. Anything you can tell me?”

“Yes. Beware the overreacher.”

“Sir?” I admit it. I was confused.

“No need to be formal right now, son. Overreachers are those that think they can, but can't. And, when they can't they find a way to make it your fault.”

Before I could ask a question, Momma jumped in, “Luis, women are built to give birth. You are smaller than a baby, trust me!” We all laughed. “Even though, at times your father doesn't feel that way. That's when I know I'm not as ready as I should be.”

“Son, be patient and get your partner ready. That's the best advice I can give you.”

“Exactly. And, you need to be sure she's ready. She might be willing before then and it will hurt.” I let Momma's words sink in. My analytical self grasped the notion that I was responsible for my partner's pleasure. But, her preparation? Yes, I had to do my job. But, when would I know better than her when she was ready?

“Ditto,” Margie added. I added her comment without finding any resolution.

“Son?”

“Yes, Momma?” Pulling my attention back to the moment.

“Remember, the most sexual organ is the mind. Be empathetic.” Ah! Now it started to make sense. Some. I'd need to think on this and see.

“RBB, I heard another rumor that I didn't believe.” Great, what is Margie going to come out with now? Does blushing cause sunburn?

“What's that, sweetie?” Ah, women. They stick together. Although, Poppa was showing interest as well.

“I understand someone took Junior all the way down.” She giggled at me. Both ovens, the gas cooktop, hell – the grill must have been moved into the kitchen. I'd just run more than five miles and hadn't sweated like this.

“Junior?” Momma and Poppa both asked at the same time. Their question from before. They weren't in the High School network so of course they didn't know. Duh! Another private part of me gone.

“Ah... When I first started showering in the locker rooms, my team mates named my penis

Junior.” Poppa about fell off his chair laughing.

“Mine got nicknamed *Giovane*. Italian for Junior!” That got us all laughing, hard. My side was starting to hurt when I looked at Poppa and he nodded his head and we laughed harder. Okay, maybe not so bad as I thought.

When things settled into controlled chuckles and giggles, Momma asked Margie, “Take it all the way down. Does that mean what I think it does?”

“Deep throat?” Margie was turning a bit red, admitting she knew about it.

“*Dio Santo!* So young?” She got a faraway look in her eyes, then gave Poppa ‘the look.’ It bothered me thinking that my parents were going to have sex. They’ve been open with Margie and me, yet the thought of them actually doing anything...

“Okay, okay. I’m in the hole this deep. It happened when I asked for relief.” Perhaps, overnight my skin decided to be red instead of its usual Southern Italian, slightly olive complexion.

“You didn’t force yourself on her, did you?” Poppa asked, he was very serious suddenly.

“No sir!” So I told them about Susan, Shashana, and the Lottery.

I finally made it out alive and on my way to school early. We’d all still be there if Momma hadn’t had to get to the restaurant and Poppa hadn’t needed to prep for a conference call. Margie rode with me. When I hit the player in my car, appropriately Aerosmith’s *Livin’ On the Edge* came on. Yep. Sounds like my week so far. What could possibly happen now?

“So, Really Big Brother, how goes the week, for real?” I swear she can read my mind. Fortunately, she’s usually too busy to bother with me.

“Weird. And that’s one day. More hands have been on Junior than in my whole life. Plus, I’ve got a girlfriend. You?”

“Actually, I like it. I guess most people know you’re my brother, so it’s been respectful. Sometimes a little too!” She chuckled.

“Well, the girls haven’t been shy around me. Becca got upset yesterday afternoon because no one was touching her in the showers after PE. She’s come a long way in a day.”

“Maybe too far.” She thought for a second while I thought about what Jason had said earlier about Becca being fragile today. “She's really nice. You've done well. But, be careful today.”

We got to school and split up. I went to the gym for a hard workout on my upper and lower body since I'd been lax the day before. I was just getting ready to press 160 kilos when my spotter, Mike Holloway, asked, “man, what's it feel like?”

I lay on the bench and scooted under the bar and asked, “What's what feel like? 350 pounds? You've done it before.”

“No, dickhead. Going around naked all day.”

“Actually, it's not that bad.” I reached up for the bar and got a good grip taking the weight down my arms not my hands.

“What about... Junior?”

“Well, he seems to be the main attraction.” I planted my feet and settled my back into the pad.

“Yeah, thanks for setting that standard so high for the rest of the football team.” I realized he wasn't joking. Shit. I focused, exhaled, and lifted the bar off the supports. Slowly brought the weight down to my chest drawing in energy with my breath. Blowing out, I smoothly moved the weight up to full extension. Held it. Then did nine more reps. My arms were beginning to feel it on the eighth lift. I powered through. At the end of the tenth, I put the bar back on the rest. Mike, without a word, took 20 kilos off the bar. Silently I did another 10. Another 20 kilos off and a final 10. Mike wasn't talking. We usually traded friendly insults, talked football, or encouraged each other. SHIT. Not before East!

I got up and wiped the bench down for him. I set the weight back to 160 kilos as he chalked his hands and settled down on the bench. He pulled off the rests and fully extended. When he went down and kissed his chest, I put my hands on the bar. I didn't push down, but I didn't let him push up.

“What's eating you? We can't go into East like this.” I growled at him.

He was straining to lift 350 pounds of weight and me. Finally, he looked up. “Sorry man. Envy. Stupid, I know. But the girls were all over you because of Junior. I'm scared shitless

I'll be ignored when my time in the Program comes."

I helped him lift, two finger help that is. Encouragement without taking any of the weight. We did this for each other all the time. I talked him through each lift, like I normally would. We went through the same routine I had done. When he finished and stood, he put out his hand and we shook.

"Luis. Sorry." I could see sincerity in his eyes, yet a hint of bad energy was still there.

"For what?" I had more edge in my voice than I wanted. Breathe, Luis, breathe!

"Blaming you for my size." Why this week of all weeks?

"Dude, have you ever had a woman complain?" I looked at him hard.

"Ah, no."

"I've had 'em run away screaming when they see Junior for the first time. That's no fun."

"Shit, I never thought about that."

Still looking at him intently, our hands still gripped from the shake, I said, "Mike, right now, we don't need any bullshit between us. We've got a job to do this week. We have a goal to achieve. You and I can deal with this, I know we can. We just can't let the rest of the team feel it. Okay?"

He thought for a minute. He firmed up his grip. "Done. Let's get ready to crush those bastards."

We finished our workout carrying on as normal while others from the team joined us. While we set out for homeroom, that 20 wasted minutes every morning, I tried to get my head around this week. Prepping for a big game was tough enough. Having problems by being forced to be naked just added to the stress. Well, I could deal with it. I had to.

I walked out of the gym whistling and noticed it was the main theme from *Toccata and Fugue in D Minor* (BWV 565). The old horror movie organ music. How did that end up on my mind?

Chapter 12 – Tuesday Morning

“Foggy Mountain Breakdown”

***** Rebecca *****

I'm trying to get to my classroom, yet the hallway seems impossibly long. Hands are everywhere. Touching me. Squeezing my boobs and my ass. Pinching me. Poking my pussy and my nips. Stroking my clit, running in and out of me. There's a finger pushing on my asshole. It hurts and at the same time it feels good. DAMN!

It wouldn't stop! The hands. The fingers. Some of it feels really, really good. Some is painful and makes me want to scream, yet only sounds of pleasure and wanting more are coming out of me. My nipples are crinkled up so hard they ached. Every touch is sending bolts of pure energy to my core.

I'm right on the edge of a really, really, really big orgasm. Nobody will help me get there, and they are keeping my hands out to the sides, a hard cock in each. My core keeps getting hotter and hotter. Like a spring winding tighter and tighter seeking release. Fluids were leaking down my legs. My cunny is a lake.

“Damn it, I need relief NOW!” I moaned, but no one heard me.

There was a knock at my door.

“Becky, time to get up!” Mom shouted through the door. I heard her footsteps fade down the hall. The hands faded, the hall turned into my room. The memory of a twisted nipple and dry pokes at my vulva remained. Horny and confused, I opened my eyes.

I don't remember getting under the covers last night, but it feels nice. Damn. I was naked! The Program was real and I'm in it. I had a boyfriend! No, I had a mountain with wonderful caves. Yet, my house of cards was gone. And right now, I'm alone. Lonely. Horny. I'd never been horny before. Not like this. Was I turning into a slut? Would everyone know and make fun of me today?

As I got out of bed, I felt stiff and sore between my legs. I'd lost my hymen! A guy had driven me to some fantastic orgasms with his tongue and fingers. I had a boyfriend! And, I

wasn't hiding anymore. No more house of cards. Where is my muse?

I reached for my robe. "How silly," I said to the painting on the easel. "I'll be back to finish you next week, sorry." My art. Oh, my art. Suffering because of the Program. Stupid Program. Then I saw my painting of Luis and I felt calm. My core heated more. "God, my Mountain, I'm sorry. I'm a slut. I'm scared." I told the painting, hoping he could hear me and wrap me into my cave.

As I opened my door, I felt naked. Exposed. Oh God, and this was just at home! As I walked to the bathroom door, I couldn't get the picture of the hallway in my dream out of my mind. I felt the hands touching me. I felt my body responding. Would Luis still want me?

"You okay, Bec?" Jason had just come out of the bathroom. He was dressed like I was but his hair was damp.

"No," I squeaked. I hugged him and started crying. "I can't do this...." He let me cry. His chest didn't feel like my Cave, but it helped. "I'm... I'm... I don't know what I am. Scared? Confused?"

"You're doing fine, Bec—all things considered." I hugged my thanks. "I ran into Luis this morning."

"When?"

He chuckled, "well, I didn't run into him, literally. We ran together for a couple of miles. Look, I'll get you to school and to Luis, okay?" His arms surrounded me and comforted me. I felt safe. I nodded into his chest. My eyes were drying, finally.

"Jase, am I doing the right thing?" Was I using Luis, and him using me? Did I have any control over my life? Had I ever? I thought I had, but...

"What thing?" His voice was gentle yet concerned.

"Falling for Luis." Am I? I think so. Or...

"What do you mean?"

"I feel like I'm using him to get through the Program."

“You and he need to work that out, Bec.” He paused, “I don't think you are.” He collected himself and held me at arm's length. “Take your shower, dress, eat, and I'll take you to school.”

“I'd rather not dress and have to do the strip. I'd rather not go to school.” I'd rather just go back to the way I was before school yesterday.

“If you don't go, it's another week.” He paused. “Without a partner and without relief.”

“I know. I still don't want to go.” Breathe, Rebbecca, breathe. Just like Luis taught me.

“Take your shower. We can talk at breakfast.”

“Thanks, Jase.” I went into the bath. I tried to let the water wash my fear away. Fear. DAMN LUIS! Fear and stories. I liked my stories and my house of cards and hiding in plain sight and... Pull yourself together, Becky!

This seemed so simple yesterday. Now, dressing was deciding which pair of shoes that went with being prodded all day. Prada would be perfect – don't have any. Maybe I should splurge on a pair for this week. I grabbed my bags and went down to breakfast wearing comfortable Dr. Scholl's flats. Mom was dressed just in an apron. Dad was in his usual three-piece business suit, but not hiding behind the paper. Jase was still nude.

“Good morning, Becky. I'd be dressed in the uniform of the week, but I have an early meeting. Forgive me?” My dad asking me for forgiveness? Standing in the middle of the kitchen, I dropped my bags and started bawling. I didn't deserve their support. Not after the way I've treated them.

“I can't do this!” I wailed. Before my knees gave out, I was the center of three people huddling me, petting my hair, holding me up. Loving me. Another cave. They held me until I finally wound down to the occasional sniffle.

“Becky?” Mom got my attention. “We need to plan tonight. Okay?”

It was the right thing to say—a focus outside of my stories. “Okay, Mama.” The group got me to the table. There was food and juice in front of me.

Before I could shrink into myself, she asked, “What did you have last night?”

“We started with, I think they called it antipasti, and ...” I told about the rest of dinner while

staring down at my food. 'Buck up, kiddo.' Oh, hi Muse. When did you come back? 'When you started this oh woe-is-me BS. That is not us.' I felt her shudder right down to my core.

"Veal Santa Rosa?" Dad asked. Coming back to the moment, I nodded. "His mom is a chef?" I nodded again. "Helen, pull out all the stops. Luis's mom owns and is the chef at the best restaurant in town. We've been there before. *Cuccina Rosa*."

"Okay...." Mom really drew that one out—at least three syllables. "We have our work cut out for us. I can't out do her on the high end, so we should go with our family's best. Cozy, homey, good, and plentiful. That should appeal to a football player." My Mountain. Yes, that's how I'll get through the day. Focus on the mountains! I vigorously nodded my approval. Mom smiled.

"She told me she'd teach me how to make the veal." I was finally able to look up and engage.

"WHAT!?!?" My father almost fell off his chair. "Do you know that's a more closely guarded secret than the nuclear launch codes!?!?" His shrill voice made me flash to memories of my youth and being in deep trouble.

"Ah..." I was confused. What did I do wrong? I thought I had done well and that Carmella liked me. "She offered. Then Luis got upset..." My eyes started to mist. "Now you..." The mist turned to a river as my insides turned to mush and my brain went into overload. "I don't know what I did wrong!" I finally wailed.

My father gathered me in his arms. "Becky, I'm so sorry. I was shocked and reacted. I take clients there all the time and know how strongly Carmella protects that recipe. I'm actually very proud and honored she cares that much for you and trusts you. You must have made a significant impression. I'm sorry. Forgive me?"

Naked in school. Boyfriend. Parent's supporting me. Being called Becky again. Now... Now, my father apologizing to me? Pride? Honor? I'm so lost right now and need a safe place to think. God, where is my Mountain and his Cave?

"Yes, Daddy, I do. Thank you." The words came out before I realized it. It felt good to hear myself say it. "I love you." That got me a smile and another hug.

"Mama, I really need to get to Luis. Yet, we still have dinner..." Want. Need. Which one should rule?

“Becky, you go. I'll plan a good meal and get things ready. I'll pick you up right after Art and we can get everything ready. Does that sound good?”

“Thank you, Mom.” I gave her a big hug. I could really get accustomed to all this hugging. I whispered, “I love you.”

“I love you too, Becky. Now git!” She turned me towards the door and gave my butt a little swat.

“Let's go, Bec. We can catch Luis coming out of the gym if we hurry.” Jason, my hero of the hour. I was unaware of the drive. I was trying to sift through all that was happening to me. My father apologizing. And proud of me. My mother helping and asking if a plan was okay. Everyone being supportive. One minute feeling good, the next crying my eyes out. I know it's not about my period, that's a couple of weeks off. Thank goodness. The Program would really suck then. Did the Program suck? Or, was I really learning and growing and just didn't like changing? How am I going to look at this a year from now? Ten years? How am I going to get through today?

“Bec, we're here.” Jason's words pulled me from my thoughts. I gave him a quick hug and a kiss on the cheek. I was out of the car headed from the gym before he turned off the engine.

*** Luis ***

“Well, good morning Becca.” I'm sure my smile cracked something in my face. It felt bigger and wider than ever. A new sensation of warmth spread through me. Joy? Love? “What a wonderful surprise.”

“I guess.” She came into my arms and I hugged her to me. Breathe, kiddo. Breathe. Try to remember that women think differently. Way differently. Center! Hard to do with a beautiful naked girl in your arms whose breasts are pushed into your bare stomach.

“Is everything okay?” In through the nose, out through the mouth. Forget Junior. Yes you, Junior!

“No. No it's not.” Her anger surprised me. Breathe!

“Tell me what's going on, please?” Stay calm. Is she going to dump me after less than a

day?

“I left my old world behind. I’m scared that I’m using you. Just inventing another story as a way to survive this week. I don’t know. I’m scared. I don’t want to hurt you...” She started crying. I held her and let her wind down.

“You did blow up your world. You did a damn good job of it!” That got a little chuckle out of her. I remembered how different my awakening this morning had been. “Let me guess, you had weird dreams all night?”

“I went to bed happy and woke up scared in the middle of a bad dream.” I walked her to homeroom and found us seats in the back. Everyone left us alone. We talked quietly so no one could hear us.

“What was your dream?” I held her hands and her eyes.

“A long hallway filled with hands. Poking and prodding. Pinching and squeezing me. I was...” I’m glad I’m not the only one that blushes. She looked down, “I was also excited.”

“Excited?”

“Um... I wanted to, but I couldn’t...” She finally looked up at me again. “I couldn’t... I couldn’t get off.” I avoided a chuckle—somehow. Instead, I held her eyes.

“Which was worse? Being scared and not being able to get away from the hands or...” She cut me off.

“Yeah. The second part.” She looked down and got real quiet. “I think I’m turning into a slut.”

Oh, Shit. Breathe, Luis. Breathe. In—slowly. Hold. Out—slowly. Hold. Repeat as often as necessary. It was very necessary! “What do you mean by slut?”

“I... I think I’m starting to like sex too much and think about it all the time.”

“So, you’re becoming a guy?” I couldn’t help it. I had to laugh. She gave me a strange look. It was if I had just grown a tit in the middle of my forehead.

“I’m not a guy!” I couldn’t help it; I smiled and nodded my head. “Duh!” She lifted her tits up to prove it. I really hadn’t looked at them today. Beautiful. Full. Firm. I knew

from personal experience how they felt. Oops. Better come back to this conversation or Junior is going to make more of an appearance.

“What's wrong with being a slut?” I asked seriously and coming back to her eyes.

“Huh?” I do love how she knits her brow when she's uncertain or sorting her thoughts.

“I said, what's wrong with being a slut?” I lightened my tone a touch. She relaxed a touch.

“It's not a good thing.” She said this as if a statement. Flat—as if she was repeating the words of someone else and had no conviction about them.

“So, Rosalee is doing a bad thing by saying she is?” I watched her eyes and brow as she sorted her thoughts. Her brow did its dance. Knit one, twist two, flex three...

“Well, no. It's just an act.” With some certainty in her voice, but not conviction.

“Is it?” I kept relaxed. I'd found a chink in her armor and didn't want to wound her, just get her to think for herself.

“Huh? Well, why don't people talk about her... you know, rumors and stories and such?”

“Because, she doesn't care. No matter if what she proclaims is true or not, people can't use it against her.” She started her sort again and it appeared she was testing her outcomes. I love her face, eyes, and brow. I love getting lost there and watching her think. I could tell she was seeing something new.

“So, calling someone a slut, and meaning it in a bad way, is about power?” I know she saw my delight. Her eyes were doing a little dance like the one she had done around me the night before.

“Completely.” She was no longer wounded. Now open and relaxed.

“Explain.” How could I not love her and her ability to see beyond my façade and see into me so deeply, just as I could see into her? All we had to do was work out some of the language problems.

“Let me give you two examples. Do you remember Katie Jones from our freshman year?”

“Vaguely.”

“She left school after rumors spread about her being a slut.” I’m sure she saw the pain in my eyes.

“Oh. What I remember, she was a nice person.”

“Was and is. I still run into her. She goes to Catholic School now and lives just down the street. What’s stupid about the rumors is she’s still a virgin. She wouldn’t go out with a guy, so he started the rumors.” I paused. Should I say it? No need. She got it.

“To get even.” We shared a look of disgust.

“In a very nasty way. The guy that started the rumors left school as well. Seems he started having a lot of accidents.” I tried to hide the stories that flooded my mind. Not some of my proudest moments.

“Let me guess. Mountain climbing accidents.” That got a laugh from both of us. Yet, she did acknowledge my pain.

“What do you think of Maureen Johnson?” She easily shifted gears with me as I mentioned another member of our class.

“She seems like a nice girl. Prim and proper.” Her brow did a thing that could only mean confusion; she seemed to not know where I was going. I could sense that she wanted me to continue and not interrupt my story.

“She’s just very careful who she goes out with.” A caught a moment of fear cross her eyes.

“Have you?” It really wasn’t a question I could avoid—more of a statement seeking confirmation.

“Yes.” Junior twitched at the memory. I’m sure she caught it and the flash of lust in my eyes.

“That’s all your going to say, isn’t it?”

“Yep.” I said with a grin. She hit me. What is it with the women in my life hitting me today?

“So, be careful is what you’re saying.” She smiled in acceptance of my story and a hint of

something to hold over me later.

“It applies to anything. Either don't care and carefully construct a persona like Rosalee, or be discreet and only hang with people you know you can trust like Maureen does. Katie couldn't deal with it. Her protests of being a virgin were scoffed at.”

“Why?” We shared a moment of pain for Katie—a moment of compassion. Our eye language translations were improving.

“My guess is that people want to believe the nasty rumors. It makes their lives more interesting.” We shared a look that pledged never to be like that nor fall for it.

“Luis?” I looked deep into her eyes, again—a simply wonderful place. I'd rather be looking at her eyes than my favorite place in the universe—Barnard 33, the Horsehead Nebula. I love her eyes. “Will you love me if I turn into a slut?”

“As in you're gonna love sex and want it a lot, or you're gonna love sex and be indiscriminate?” I kept my eyes on her watching the play of emotions run through her.

“As in will you love me if I like sex too much?” I'm positive she could see the joyous laughter in my eyes.

“Becca, I think I love you. I don't know, but it feels like it. It's kind of new for me.” She smiled and nodded. I knew she meant it was new for her and she shared my concerns. Outside our world, I'm sure there were the usual morning announcements as we worked on the eye language problem. We didn't hear them. “I do know that I will have very deep feelings for you no matter what. As for you loving sex a lot—I'm a guy!”

“Thank you. I think you know I feel the same way. About the feelings, that is.” She paused. Her eyes showed a thousand stories, and then cleared. Bright and loving. She squeezed my hand sweetly. “I want you to enjoy yourself this week.”

“What do you mean, Becca?”

“I want you to enjoy the Program and all the attention Junior gets. As a matter of fact, I'm not going to give you relief, during school, this week.” That hit me. But, looking in her eyes I knew it wasn't because she didn't want to.

“Why?” I asked softly.

“That should be private. Between us. Maybe in other circumstances, but not during class. Just don't forget me.” I could see she was thinking about Art, just as I was.

“How could I?” Her smile and her eyes were the kiss I needed at that moment. And, all I was going to get in homeroom! “Even Art?”

“Okay—one exception.” She squeezed my hand and we both chuckled. Junior started to join the conversation. Her nipples were paying attention as well.

“I want you to enjoy yourself as well. Please?”

“Let me get past being uncomfortable in the halls, first! Plus, get past that dream I had.” Her eyes held determination with just a hint of uncertainty.

“Fair enough! Do you want me with you in the halls?”

“Please.” I could see in her eyes she wanted me to be with her and help her but not keep things from happening. Just help her through it all. “I'm hoping something will happen in the showers after PE.” She said that very softly. I could see in her the frustration from yesterday and her dream this morning. I smiled at her and we squeezed hands.

The bell rang. Becca gave me a quick, discreet kiss, and pulled me out of my seat towards the door. She was quick enough that we got all the way into the hall before the first request came.

“Pose for us, Rebbecca?” She let go of my hand, handed me her bags, put a painted smile on her face, and her hands on her hips. She opened her legs a bit and thrust out her chest. I could see the worry in her eyes, but I smiled at her and she got lost in my eyes. Everyone played nice, and played nicely with her titties and that magnificent ass. It was enough to bring Junior to full mast—in a hurry. Soon, he had his share of hands worshiping him. I was too lost to notice if requests had been made and whether or not I responded. Everyone said thanks and drifted off to their next class. She took my hand again, gave me a small smile, and we headed down the hall.

“How was that?” I asked.

“It was... okay, I guess.” She walked a few more steps. “Did it bother you?”

I sorted through what I was feeling. “Well, I have to admit that seeing you being touched excited me.” I pointed down to Junior, still leading the way. “Yeah, it did bother me a

little.”

“Why?”

“Hmm... Part of it was that I wasn't the one doing the touching.” I sorted through all the feelings—some of them quite new. “And there was a little pang of jealousy.” I got a huge, wet kiss for that. I delivered her to her classroom leaving her with a quick kiss and a pat on the butt. I walked to AP Calculus. That's when it hit me; she's in Biology. Everyone knew the myths and stories about Program participants and Biology. Would she be able to handle that today? Oh, shit! Could I handle it? Double Shit!

Chapter 13 – Tuesday Morning

“Dazed and Confused”

\\\ Rebbecca ///

I walked into Biology with tons on my mind. Yes, okay... Stories. Damn his precious, darling heart. 'A pang of jealousy.' He was human after all. And, he really wanted to be touching me. I'd like that. A lot. I guess the requests and the trip down the hall hadn't been that hard. Well, Junior had been. Next time, I'll have to hold him as well. It took me a moment to see Ms. Carlisle waving to me. That's when I noticed she had three chairs sitting up front. Uh-oh.

“Rebbecca, up here please.” Caught! I'd heard about Biology classes and the Program. For the rest of the week I was the demonstration model. Why three chairs? Wait, she was adding a fourth. Tim and Shirley walked in hand-in-hand. Grinning. Naked. Looking more than a little flushed. Ms. Carlisle invited them to the front. We put our stuff down and sat, said hi to each other, and awaited our fate. The rest of the class settled down. Needless to say, all eyes were on us.

Ms. Carlisle turned to us and checked each of us out. With a little chuckle, she asked, “Anyone need relief?” Three negatives, so she turned and addressed the class. “We're not doing mammals yet, so no live demonstrations—this week.”

“That sucks,” said a male voice in the back.

“Mr. Allen?” Ms. Carlisle asked while raising her eyebrows.

“Yes, ma'am?” Will Allen, class creep.

“Since you want to participate, why don't you join us in the front, please.” I recalled that teachers could request anyone to participate in the class, naked, as long as they weren't exempt. And not many were. A few for religious reasons and one because of diplomatic status is all I could recall.

“Why?” His voice hard, defiant.

“Because I said so. And, I like having an equal numbers of males and females sitting here.”

“Naked?” Now I have a good reference for what incredulous sounds like. I filed this in my writing folder.

“Of course. Any arguments, you could find yourself finishing the week that way and doing your normal week later.” I remembered that punishment time in the Program didn’t count towards fulfilling your requirements for graduation. I was glad I was on the end with Tim and Shirley between me and the empty chair. Shirley didn’t look that happy.

Will was skinny with really bad posture, ragged clothes, bad acne, and he smelled. He didn’t often talk to us girls—he leered. When he talked to us, it was always rude or disgusting—focused on chests and other bits. When he stripped there were no cheers. No cat calls. Everyone looked at other things around the class.

“Class.” We all looked at Ms. Carlisle. “Will is not being punished. He’s doing this just for this class at my request. Unless this whole class wants to go naked for the rest of the day, you are going to show some appreciation and respect for Mr. Allen.” The class politely, and quietly, clapped.

Tim leaned across, looked at Will, and asked, “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, thanks.” His eyes actually showed appreciation. I gave him a thumbs up and Shirley patted him on the arm in support. He glared at each of us and didn’t say a thing.

For us nude people, the class passed almost normally. We just sat there naked, on display, instead of in our normal seats. We were expected to participate in class like everyone else. It was impossible to take notes, though. We weren’t allowed to cover ourselves, so no notebooks in our laps or laptop computers. I’d have to ask someone to email me a copy of theirs later. The new Electronic Classroom hadn’t reached our school yet, so no video, audio, transcripts, notes, and references online—yet.

About ten minutes from the end of the class, Ms. Carlisle took a different direction that shocked the four of us up front. “Okay, from now through the end of the year, we’re going to reserve the last ten minutes of class to question our Program participants. That is, when we have them.

“First, a question from me to each of you. Are you a virgin? Rebecca?”

“Yes, ma’am.” I looked down and felt myself turning really red.

“No.” Tim and Shirley answered in unison and then smiled at each other.

“Will?” Ms. Carlisle asked into the protracted silence.

“Ah, yeah.” I think he might have turned brighter red than me.

“Thank you for sharing. Fifty percent virgins is a little high for seniors in High School, about average for teenagers. This small a sample size might account for it.” She shook off the question about sample size and looked at the class. Her eyes showed true concern. “Anyone that is being pressured, think about that. You're really not alone.” She paused to let it sink in. “Okay, any questions from the class?”

Hands were raised and she pointed to a girl in the third row. Stacy? Amanda? I couldn't remember.

“Ah, Rebecca... Since you're a virgin... Do you still have.... I mean... Are you... intact?” She looked as embarrassed as I felt. Ms. Carlisle didn't say anything for a minute. I think it was a contest to see which of us could turn the reddest. Finally, she gave us a break.

“Being intact is having a hymen, which is the membrane that protects the vagina. Having, or not having a hymen is not an indicator of virginity. Even though many ignorant cultures have, and still do, consider it so.” Ms. Carlisle preached, and then turned waiting for me to answer.

“I was intact until yesterday.” I managed to get that out—somehow. My core responded with my recall. It heated and I felt the need to squirm. ‘Oh, God. Everyone will know I'm a slut.’

Tim turned and asked, “Because of what happened in the hall?” Concern written all over his face.

Now I was red all over and having trouble breathing, recalling the sudden pain. ‘Breathe,’ I recall Luis telling me. Good advice. “Almost. That hurt.” I said that?

“How?” Thanks, Shirley. Wait until your turn.

“Luis, at my request, took it with his fingers.” My core fluttered at the thought of his kisses and what his tongue had done to me. “I wanted it... gone.” I just gave them confirmation that I am a slut. I'm going to need a towel—soon! My hands look very nice in my lap.

Ms. Carlisle came to my rescue at that point. "Let me educate the two of you that don't know about what happened yesterday. Plus, correct the information most of the rest of you are carrying around. Rebbecca was assaulted in the hallway. A person—unknown—came up behind her and attempted to push their fingers into her vagina. Ram would be a better word." She looked over at me and saw the astounded look on my face. How did she know this? "Rebecca, I'm very aware of what happened. The teachers have as good a grapevine as the students. I hope better!" The class chuckled. "I totally agree with what Luis did—although not officially." She turned back to the rest of the class. "There is someone in this school sporting a new tattoo on their forearm today. It's temporary and resembles a bruise. Coincidentally, it is the size and shape of Luis's hand."

Will had been wearing a long sleeved shirt before he stripped. No one had paid attention to him then or since. However, as soon as Ms. Carlisle finished explaining, he tried to hide his right arm. The movement in the otherwise still classroom was like a beacon to a moth on a dark night. It caught everyone's attention. The bruise on the inside of his forearm was not so easily hidden by his small hands.

"Mr. Allen. Do you have something to add to this conversation?" When he didn't speak, she went on, measuring her words carefully. "The school's official position is that Luis acted within acceptable boundaries. In fact, the faculty and staff think he showed considerable restraint and maturity. The person that committed the assault has one, and only one, chance to do the right thing and show their maturity. Again, do you have anything to add to this conversation, Will?"

He sat. Not speaking. He just glared at her, then at me, then back again at Ms. Carlisle. Whenever he looked at me, my skin crawled. Ms. Carlisle let the silence stand for about a minute. It seemed like a month to me.

Will finally muttered something unintelligible.

"Excuse me, Mr. Allen. I didn't hear you." Ms. Carlisle sounded just like a Drill Sergeant in the movies.

"I didn't say nothin'." His tone and manner added the word bitch to the end of the sentence.

"Miss Keon, did you hear anything?" Ms. Carlisle asked Shirley. How is she doing this? She's so collected and together.

“Ma'am?” Shirley looked scared. Tim leaned over and whispered something to her. She straightened as a new resolve appeared in her eyes. “Yes, I did. He said, 'I'm gonna kill that cunt.’” Did he mean me or Ms. Carlisle? My blood ran cold.

The bell rang. No one in the class moved. Before Ms. Carlisle could say anything, Will jumped up and attacked me. Fists swinging! I fell off the chair trying to defend myself.

\ \ \ Luis ///

I was letting the differentials fade from my mind, not to mention all the hands on Junior as I walked to Becca's classroom door. Faint memories of Biology and the Program rattling around in my mind. Then, Susan walked by and gave Junior a tender, sweet squeeze.

“See you in History, Luis!” She smiled and gave me a wink. I stared at her ass as she walked down the hall. The way her dress swayed was... Interesting. What Calculus class? Biology? Oh! Yeah... Becca! Junior twitched at that notion.

The second bell rang. Nothing. It was too quiet. The door was still closed. Then I heard a scream followed by angry voices and more screams. The door was opening by my own hand before my brain registered that one of the screams had belonged to Becca. It was still trying to catch up to the moment when I found myself with a double handful of slimy flesh. It had been on top of Rebecca hitting her. She was curled up on the floor in a protective posture.

The thing in my hands, now high over my head, was screaming in rage and thrashing worse than an eel on a hook.

Ms. Carlisle was yelling in an attempt to be heard and restore order.

Shirley was backed up against Tim, screaming in terror. Tim looked shocked and was trapped from any action by Shirley.

Everyone else seemed frozen by the suddenness of it all.

“DON'T!” Becca's voice cut through the confusion. Her eyes held fear and determination. Her hair was a mess. Her arms red from the beating. “Don't do it, Luis. He's not worth it!”

My training had kicked in. I had removed the danger and done nothing more. Looking at

Becca, though, made me want to beat this little shit to a pulp. I didn't. Her eyes and voice kept me from doing it more than my training. I set him down on his feet. As soon as he got his balance, he swung at me. Idiot! I caught his fist in my hand, which made a sound like a wet rag hitting a steel floor, and squeezed until he was on his knees.

“Don't move,” I managed to get out of my mouth through gritted teeth. I was doing everything in my power to keep from just crushing his hand. “Becca, are you okay?”

“I... I don't know.” She was sitting up now. I breathed a slight sigh of relief.

“Shirley, check her out, please? I can't let this fool go right now.” Shirley, Tim, and Ms. Carlisle surrounded Rebbecca and began to check her over. I looked at Will and saw absolute hate in his eyes. They were wild with rage and not at all human. The same look I had seen once with a trapped, feral dog.

Dr. C came running into the classroom. Part of me registered that I had never seen him run before. He saw me holding Will down with one hand and that I was relaxed, not moving. He headed straight to Ms. Carlisle. They moved away from the crowd and had a quick, whispered conversation. I didn't think I was in trouble, not with things the way there are today. I remember Poppa telling me about “Zero Tolerance” and all the problems that caused. Under that system, I would have been expelled for what I did. That, along with the cultural notion of Personal Responsibility being personal, not legislated or regulated, had actually reduced violence in schools.

“Luis, escort Mr. Allen to my office. I expect him there in one piece, but get him there. Okay?” His eyes bored into me. I knew exactly what he was asking of me. Use only the force necessary to get him to the office. I nodded. “Mr. Carter, accompany him.” Tim got it and nodded. We both knew his job was to monitor me. “Miss Davis, I'd like you to go to the nurse's office and get checked out.”

“Dr. Cavanaugh, I'm okay. Just in shock. I'd rather be with Luis right now.” Her eyes held only a hint of fear. The rest was pure determination backed by resolve.

“Are you sure?” His voice much softer. Another thing that has changed, according to Poppa. In days of old, she would have been forced to go to the nurse so the school could avoid a lawsuit. She now had personal choice on her side.

“Yes.” My Becca had more than a note of defiance in her voice. Damn, I love that girl. Just took a beating, yet knew what she wanted and was going to get it. She got up, very slowly, and came to me. “I want to hold you and hug you. Right now you're a little

occupied. Later, please?" I winked at her, not trusting my voice right then, and blew her a kiss. I was so proud of her and the way she was handling all this. I twisted Will's arm a little harder. Reflex... Right! He yelped. Becca looked at me in a way that reminded me of one of Momma's scoldings. I let some of the pressure off of Will's elbow. Her eyes briefly flashed a smile.

Dr. C gathered up Ms. Carlisle and the front row of the class with a few glances and a wave. "If anyone else would like to share their observations of the incident, please let Mrs. Grant know and we'll contact you during the day."

The entourage headed out into a crowded hallway. Dr. C led the way and parted the seas. I was holding Will's hands behind his back with one hand, my other on the back of his neck propelling him forward. I kept him a little off balance without the danger of him falling over—so he couldn't use his feet as weapons. He was screaming a constant rant of obscenities and threats. I wanted to gag him, but neither of us was overdressed enough to provide materials to cram into his foul mouth. That's when it hit me that he was nude as well. Plus, I saw the bruise on his forearm.

A huge part of me wanted to waste him right in the hallway. Pull his limbs off, one by one, and roll his torso into a little ball and flick it into space. Then play soccer with his skull. He fought me every step of the way, which was all the excuse I needed to make sure his hands would remember this day for a very long time.

When we got to the office, Dr. C whispered to Mrs. Grant and then led the key players into his office and directed the rest of the troops to the seats in Mrs. Grant's domain—the Cavern.

"Mr. Contadino, please place Mr. Allen in the chair in front of my desk. I trust that you will not allow him to get up?" I nodded and walked him to the chair. Just as I released his hands to seat him, Dr. C went on. "I've instructed Mrs. Grant to call the police and..."

Will went nuts. He pushed the chair back into me as hard as he could using, what was to him, some superhuman strength. Then he slithered out from my relaxed hold on his neck and picked up Dr. C's letter opener from the desk. He attempted a roundhouse swing towards me. *Me* disappeared.

Mind registered the weapon and the need for prudence. *Body* did what it had been trained to do. It kicked the chair out of the way, moved into him, and let his hand go behind it. *Hand* met his wrist as *Body* turned away from him. Then *Body* levered him. Arm, hip, side, legs—only four ounces of force. Perfect T'ai Ch'i. He went upside down, dropped the

letter opener, flew across the room, and slammed into the wall with way more than four ounces of force. *Mind* was screaming for restraint and prudence. *Body* began advancing on the crumpled figure, very intent on finishing the job.

Dr. C stepped in front of *Body* trying to block its progress. *Body* reached arms out and grabbed him by the waist. *Mind* was aghast. *Body* proceeded to pick him up and started to move him out of the way of the target.

“Luis. Put. Me. Down. Now!” He didn’t raise his voice, yet it was the loudest command I’d ever heard. *Body* still moved him out of the way and set him down. As *Body* prepared to advance again, *Mind* heard him say, “LUIS!” His voice wasn’t loud. Emphatic, yes. *Mind* stopped my foot two inches from crushing Will’s skull. “Thank you. I’ll take over. You go tend to Miss Davis.”

We locked eyes. He saw *Body* begin to unwind the tension. He stayed with my eyes until I totally relaxed and *Mind* quieted. *Spirit* stepped forward to take control. “Thank you, Dr. Cavenaugh. I apologize.” I bowed my head and shoulders to him.

He shook my hand and held it. “You’ve done better than anyone could expect. Thank you.” He gave me a little head bow. He checked out my eyes carefully. He could see that my body had unwound, my mind was quiet, and my heart was running the show. For me, it was hard to hold his gaze. I was ashamed. And, quite frankly, I’m not used to looking up to another person. “Now, go tend to your girlfriend.” It was an order I gladly complied with.

I gave him another bow, from the waist this time. I worked on coming completely back to Center and focused on breathing deep and slow. Letting the air move the energy through me. Trying to wash the adrenaline out and minimizing the muscle shakes. Breathe into my Dantien – my Center. Well, mostly. The energy beginning to flow properly, Dr. C saw it and released my hand.

“Mr. Allen. I would advise you not to move. I’m not as gentle as Mr. Contadino.” Dr. C rearranged him carefully then put plastic cuffs on Will’s wrists and left him moaning on the floor.

I turned, took Becca into my arms, sat, and snuggled her in. “Are you okay, sweetie?”

She looked up, eyes full of tears. Fear and confusion on her face. She snuggled in tighter. I could feel her heart beating faster than a Gene Krupa drum solo.

“Hold me...” Was all I got out of her. I wrapped her into my chest. Losing her eyes, feeling her warmth and tremors.

“Are you hurt? Do you need a doctor?” I could feel her shake her head and borrow in deeper. She pulled herself into a little ball and disappeared in my arms.

About then, the police arrived. A couple of uniformed officers exchanged plastic for metal and escorted a slow moving Will out. They ignored me. A formidable female detective took charge. “We need to interview everyone, one at a time, and separately. Please go outside until you are called. Don't talk among yourselves about events. We'll start with...” She looked at her PDA, “Rebecca Davis.”

Becca looked up at me, pleading. I hugged her and looked up at the detective. “Ma'am, she's really freaked right now. She needs to calm down.”

“Who are you?” She studied me as if I had just arisen from the primordial sludge. I felt she knew everything about me, including the number of fillings I had.

“Luis Contadino.” She referred to her notes again. She must not know everything! I assume she had a wireless connection and was pulling my file. Why am I wasting time thinking about that?

“Mr. Contadino, if I were you, I'd be more worried about myself right now. I'd advise you to have legal counsel when we speak—later. And, since you're under 18, you need a parent here as well.” SHIT! WHAT! Breathe! Maybe Zero Tolerance wasn't completely gone.

“Ma'am, in the moment, I'm not concerned about myself. This girl in my arms needs help. I'm not letting her out of my sight.” Turning to Dr. C, “Could I ask you to have someone call my Dad, please?” I quickly put together a To Do list in my head.

“No problem, Luis. Already done.” Whoa! He used my first name and his tone was supportive. Almost friendly.

“Have Becca's parents been notified? Jason?”

“Her parents are on the way. Jason should be getting word about now.” Dr. C informed me. Two items off my list.

“Ma'am,” I directed towards the detective, “I need to stress that my girlfriend needs space, love, comfort, and support right now. I'd suggest you start with the others.” I turned my

attention back to the number one item on my list—the precious bundle in my arms. Her Cave as she calls it. She looked up at me with tear filled eyes, sobbed, and tried to say 'thank you' before she buried her head again. She was this tiny ball in the large expanse of my lap. A silly thought hit me—is this how big I'd be if I were Santa?

Dr. C stepped into the conversation. "Detective Alvarez, I know you have an investigation to do. We will not interfere. I can assure you this young man has done nothing more than protect someone he loves and has shown incredible restraint in the process. I suggest you start with the teacher and other witnesses."

"Doctor Cavanaugh, stay out of this." Can you say command voice? The coming battle of wills drew my attention.

Just as the 'conversation' heated and the tension rose, Jason burst into the room. "Bec? Are you okay? Where is she? What happened?"

The detective started in on who Jason was. Dr. C was trying to calm him down and answer the detective. I know he hadn't seen her yet, she was pretty well hidden in my chest and arms.

"Becca," I whispered to her. "Jason is here. We each need to talk to the detective, without each other, and then I'll be back with you. He can be with you in the mean time. Okay?" She shook her head violently and grabbed my arm. Damn, she's strong. "I'll stay as long as I can." She nodded and held me harder. I snuggled her tighter.

Jason, the good running back that he is, scanned the field for openings. He engaged the tacklers at the line of scrimmage effectively and broke through the Detective's questions. Scanning the secondary, he finally noticed Becca in my arms. He paused for a moment and made his decision. Dr. C and Detective Alvarez continued their debate. I couldn't hear it. Jason came over to me, he appeared a bit calmer. "How's Bec?" I wouldn't say he was glaring at me, but he was pissed.

"Physically? Okay except for some potential bruising on her arms. She's not bleeding. Little wimp isn't that strong."

"He's still alive?" Anger spilling out of his eyes all over the floor.

"Yes." I felt the need to apologize. At the same time, I knew I'd done the right thing. The need passed.

“Why didn't you kill him?” Becca started to shake her head and cry. He softened a touch.

“Following my lady's orders.” She nodded and clutched me. “Plus, I think she'd rather have a boyfriend she could see outside of prison visiting hours.” She violently nodded. “Jason, they want to question us separately.”

He looked me in the eyes, his anger draining away. He picked up on my thoughts. First things first. “Don't worry, Luis. I'll take care of her if they do that. Plus, Mom and Dad are on their way.” We gave each other a nod of understanding and agreement.

Jason sat next to me, ready in case he was needed. I returned my attention to Becca and tried to feel what she was feeling. Letting go of self, I opened to her being. First, I focused on her body pressed up to mine. In other times, this would be delightful. Right now, she was trembling, her heart beating way too fast, and her breath too rapid and shallow. I then tried to focus on her energy and pulled back a bit. Fear has a unique energy pattern and she had the strongest I'd ever felt. Before I let my own sympathetic reaction get out of hand, I went back to basics. 'Breathe!' I did. Ten deep, slow cleansing breaths. As I returned to Center, I realized how far off I had gotten. She must have felt my energy shift, for her breathing slowed some. Not enough.

“Becca?” She slowly pulled her head out of my chest and looked up. Once I had her eyes locked with mine, “I want you to breathe with me.”

Confusion crossed over her. I focused on yesterday and the two of us posing on the couch in Art. I let the feelings of love and peace flow over me. She started to feel it and her eyes changed. She nodded.

“Breathe with me. In through your nose, out through your mouth. Try to go slow and stay with me, okay?”

She may have been good at hiding in the past, but she never learned to have a poker face. As the war of emotions played over her—that cute brow doing its knitting again, she calmed slowly, and then nodded.

“Do you need to blow your nose?” Jason heard me and held up a box of tissues. She looked up with a 'huh?' look. “So you can breathe through your nose, silly!”

A look of hurt crossed over her face. I didn't give into it, instead held out my love to her through my eyes. After a couple of seconds, she smiled. When she tried to breathe through her nose she reached for the tissues. Between Jason and I, we had her sitting up in

my lap, tissues in hand, and honking away in no time.

Dr. C must have been keeping an eye on us as he continued his 'discussion' with the detective. He carefully nudged his trashcan in our direction with his shoe. Jason and I worked together as any good team with a goal. When Becca finished with one wad of tissues, it was out of her hand and into the trashcan. To be quickly replaced with a fresh batch. After five or six cycles, she began to breathe more freely through her nose. She looked up curiously trying to figure out where all the spoiled tissues had gone. Good. She's coming back to the world.

"Ready to breathe with me?" She hesitated only briefly then nodded. "It will help if you look into my eyes. Plus, I like it." That got a brief smile of joy.

"Breathe in slowly." I matched her and when I felt her coming to her peak, "now hold it." I let a few heartbeats pass. "Now, slowly let it out. It should take as long as it took to breathe it in." She did and emptied. "Now, push the last out and hold it." I could feel her tense as she pushed a bit more out of her lungs. "Good, now in slowly..." The breaths got longer and deeper. Slowly, the fear flowed out of her. She kept going even after I stopped coaching her. I looked deep into her eyes seeking the soul I found yesterday. Slowly the new Becca emerged. Not with the same brilliance as last night, yet it was still strong. She reached her hand up and stroked my cheek.

"Thank you." I could feel the depth of her voice in my body. At a loss for words myself, I just smiled and gave her a little squeeze. "What happened?"

"I..." Dr. C cut me off.

"Mr. Contadino, Miss Davis, I'd suggest you hold off on such conversations until after you finish your police interviews." He waited for us to respond. Something about his voice just makes you want to do the right thing. We both nodded. "Good. Now, we need to help the police sort things out. That means you two need to be interviewed, separately. Are you up for it?"

I looked back at Becca. Something in Dr. C's voice always drew your eyes to him. She looked at me as well. The sparkle was back in her eyes and she searched mine. I could see the concern for me in her face. I went inside for a second and checked myself over. Was I ready for this? Did I believe she would be okay? Did I need more strength from her? I took a deep breath into my Dantien. I pulled in to my limit rolling the energy ball as I did. Growing energy roots out of my feet into the Earth. On the hold, I let the energy spread through me. Breathing out I expunged the fear in me. I knew I couldn't fake an answer to

her. Was I ready? I took another deep breath. Was I ready to be so close to another? Before the stories got hold, an image of my parents came up—and their joyous life together. I knew our path was right. As I exhaled, I gave her a yes with my eyes. Hers said yes. A new strength shining through.

“Dr. C, we’re ready.” As I said that, Becca’s Mom came through the door. She saw Becca huddled to me and smiled, nodded her head, and turned to talk to Dr. C. Two minutes later, her Dad came in. He saw us and gave me a wink and a nod. He joined his wife in the conversation with Dr. C and Detective Alvarez. Becca reached her arms up, pulled me down, and kissed me. Hard. We broke panting. She locked eyes.

“My Mountain. Thank you. I can do this now.” I saw the strength in her eyes and nodded. She unfolded from my lap and stood. She took my face and kissed me again, then walked over and joined the group putting an arm around each parent. Dr. C looked at me and indicated the door with his eyes and a sweep of his head. I mustered all the grace I could and went out into the Cavern. I took a seat normally reserved for those awaiting punishment. How fitting.

I was oblivious of all the others around me and was just letting my stories start to bubble up when Momma, Poppa, and our family lawyer walked in. Momma sat on my left leg and hugged me. Poppa took my right hand and shook it, putting his left over it.

“You know we’re on your side, no matter what?” Momma said softly. I cried. I know, I know... I’m supposed to be the big, strong silent type. Too damn bad. With Momma and Poppa supporting me, I just let go.

Momma cradled my head on her shoulder. Poppa held onto my hand. Momma was whispering in my ear how healthy and normal it was to let my emotions out. “After all, we’re Italians.” Poppa agreed with her. I remembered to breathe. After ten good ones, I realized I was in a circle of love and compassion. It took five more to deal with having left Becca in the other room. I know I’d need a lot more to deal with my actions and the police. I was okay now.

Custis Coleman, our family lawyer, started in about keeping my mouth shut and blah, blah, blah, blah... Lawyer speak.

“Momma, Poppa, I did my best to protect Becca.” I went on to recount the incidents as best I could. “I could have stopped him by just taking the letter opener out of his hand. I didn’t. I wanted to hurt him. I threw him into the wall. Then Dr. C stepped in front of me...” Ten more breaths. I was ashamed of what I had done to him and let my parents

know as I related that part of the story. "I owe it to myself to tell my story without editing it and take whatever punishment they see fit."

Mr. Coleman started, my parents joined him. They all went round and round about what I should do instead. I let them go on for a bit then looked Momma in the eyes. "You taught me to accept the consequences of my actions." I turned to Poppa. "You taught me to be a man and stand tall." I looked at the lawyer. "Everyone says I showed restraint. All I know is that I wanted to kill him. But, I didn't. Then I picked up Dr. C. Only his voice kept me from really hurting Will." I took another deep breath. "I can only say what I did, take what comes my way, and accept it."

Momma hugged me. Poppa shook my hand and was busting with pride. Mr. Coleman was bursting at the seams and it wasn't pride!

The door to Dr. C's office opened.

Chapter 14 – Tuesday Morning

“Requiem”

Rebecca

“Why don't we sit?” Detective Alvarez indicated the conference table. The same place where my life began a massive change slightly more than 24 hours ago. “Are you okay, Rebecca?”

I nodded my head, somehow, and looked at my arms. No bruises—yet. The Detective's whole manner was so different than before. She seemed relaxed, yet just as much in control as earlier. It must have been some power play on her part.

“If you need to take a break at anytime, please do.” I nodded. “I would like you to see the nurse as soon after the interview as possible.” Again, I nodded. I needed to get The Shot anyway—thank you modern birth control. “Now, what happened in Biology class today?”

I related to her what I remembered from walking in until the attack. Yes, attack! She asked a few questions, drawing from me details I hadn't remembered the first time around. Well, nothing like a vicious attack to make me forget I was naked. Still.

“You're an artist, correct?”

“Yes, how did you know?”

“I have one of your paintings.” I looked questioningly. “Ms Rotella gave it to me. It's 'Sculptor #2.'” I was trying to figure out why Francesca had given her one of my paintings. “We're close friends.” I recalled the painting. It was part of a series I had done of Francesca starting with her examining a rough piece of marble to putting the finishing touches on the sculpture from that block of stone. Number Two was the most intense. The rough form of the statue was just emerging from the stone. Francesca was deeply focused on it and covered in marble dust. Her look had been overpoweringly sexual... Then I GOT IT! They had to be lovers. She gave me a discrete wink when she saw I had figured it out. “The reason I asked if you were an artist, I would like you to draw Will's face when he came at you. As accurately as you can. Are you game?”

I ran through the 'snapshots' of the event in my mind. Letting the artist take over and trying to stay uninvolved personally. When I got to the pictures of Will as he came at me, I shivered. "If I can have Luis with me," I answered softly. "Why?"

"Rebecca, there is only so much I can say." Her brow scrunched. I could see many things playing through her eyes. None of them were happy thoughts, not like her eyes when we talked about the painting. Just as intense, though. "Will has been known to us for a while." She studied her manicured hands. Clear polish. She looked up, locked with my eyes, and found my heart. "We want to see he gets the help he so desperately needs. Your pictures will help."

"What about his parents?" Mom asked. It did not break the bond I had with the detective.

"Mrs. Davis, that's the core of the problem." Her eyes never left mine. "I can't say more except his parents have yet to respond to his incarceration. Again." I suddenly felt like my legs had been swept out from beneath me. I had thought until last night my parents didn't care. Yet, they were always there.

"Damn!" Did I say that? A picture of a house came to mind. Suddenly, a blinding flash of light. The paint on the house blisters then the whole thing is blown away. So much for a "Universal Truth" that homes are safe.

Detective Alvarez pulled me from my thoughts and went on with questions, drawing out of me what I remember during and after the attacks. I wasn't too helpful since I had withdrawn almost completely. While tears were dripping down my face, I didn't lose it again. Where is my muse? Where is Luis? I needed my cave.

"Rebecca, are you sure you don't need to see a doctor?" She had real concern on her face. That brought me back to now.

I checked my arms. Amazingly, no bruises. Just a little red. "No, I'm okay. Still shaky, though."

"More than understandable. You're a very strong woman."

I stared at her. Strong? Me? How? I'm sure I looked bug-eyed and perplexed. I wish we had the bond we had shared before.

"Trust me. I've dealt with too many victims of attack. You've handled this well. Whatever you're doing, keep doing it."

“Luis.” It slipped out before I knew it. I felt myself heat up. Looking at Detective Alvarez, she had a knowing smile on her face. My parents had it too. Jase, when I looked at him, had a shit eating grin on his face and a wink for me. Christ! I'm naked. I've just been attacked. And, everyone knows I've got it bad for Luis.

I came back to Mom's face and stopped. I saw love, compassion, concern, and something I didn't quite understand. I felt my brow raise in question. She looked back at me with... Damn, I got it. She wanted Becky and Luis to work. I knew I had another partner and co-conspirator. I'm sure she saw thank you, and help, in my eyes.

I came back to the moment and looked at Detective Alvarez again. “I'll do the pictures you want. With Luis by my side. The memory...” I shuddered and wondered who had turned down the A/C.

“He protected you?”

“Saved me. But, not just that...” I thought of how wonderful he was and how he had melted my heart. How he could see into my soul. How gentle yet strong he was...

“Girl, you've got it bad.” She just chuckled.

We finished up and headed out of Dr. C's office. I introduced my parents to Luis's. I'd forgotten they already knew each other. Jason was being all formal and proper. Carmella would have none of it and it was hugs all around. Then we met Mr. Coleman. That was formal.

I snuggled into Luis's lap and felt the warmth and strength flow into me. Outside of checking on me, we didn't talk. It was amazingly comfortable not to. Just being with each other was fine. I was worried for him, what might happen. I knew I would stand by him no matter what.

Our parents and the lawyer were off in the 'who knows who' game. As I watched their interactions, I realized that this was not about status or one-up-manship. This game was about extending the networks in which we live. It's a way of being comfortable with new people. Wow! Not meaningless conversation, but akin to me looking at Luis's books and getting to know him that way. Finding common ground. I looked up at Luis and saw him watching them as well.

“Social lubrication,” he said when he noticed me looking up. “That's what my parents call

it. Adding oil to the social machinery to help it run smoothly. Weaving a comfort zone is what I just thought of.”

“Maybe it's both and creating a shared language with known reference points for context.” He looked down at me with a growing smile. “What?” I demanded.

“Beautiful. Not to mention a gifted artist. Now, I find out she's brilliant as well!” That earned him a kiss. Right there in the school office. Right in front of our parents, Jason, the other students, and Mrs. Grant. It wasn't a 'melt me to the core' kiss, but my pussy—YES! PUSSY!—responded. One more and I'd need a towel. When we broke and I looked at the crowd, I saw that my parents had big grins on their faces and were holding hands. Luis's parents were the same. Jason gave me a big thumbs up. Mr. Coleman tried to scowl, but had a grin in his eyes. Mrs. Grant had found something to do in another part of the Cavern. The other girls just giggled. The guys trying to be suave.

“Oops!” Who turned up the heat? I think I knew why my nipples were poking out. I looked up at Luis and saw he was blushing too.

“Did I mention you turn my legs to rubber?” He grinned again. Then, he got this mock serious look. “Were you sent here by East as some secret weapon?”

The others heard his comment and shared a good laugh. I could see in his eyes that it went deeper. He was really concerned. Lightly placing my hand on his cheek, I whispered, “What's wrong sweetheart?”

I swear My Mountain had an earthquake in that moment. A deep shudder went through him.

“I'm scared.” I waited for more. Instead of words, I felt another shudder. I realized I was breathing through my nose.

“Is it about today?” I pushed the air all the way out of my lungs, just like he had taught me.

A small nod. Another tremor.

“Friday?”

He closed his eyes and nodded. A 6.0 sized quake racked him.

I gathered up every ounce of love and strength I had. I was working hard to get the air into

my lungs. "Us?"

Saying the words made me have my own quake. Ever seen granite turn to water? I have, now. I don't like it. My Mountain is in pain and I love him. Time to act. I put my hands on his face and made him look me in the eyes. I did my damnedest to pour my love into them.

"I love you no matter what." I struggled. I wanted to kiss him. Himself wasn't there. I wanted to put my arms around him. I didn't have enough arm. I put my arms around his neck and pulled his head down, patting the back of his neck, making soft sounds into his ear. His body was shaking and tears were dripping onto me. Still, he put his arms around me and we rocked together.

Never underestimate the perceptive power of a mother. Let me say that again. NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE PERCEPTIVE POWER OF A MOTHER. Suddenly, both were there. Comforting Luis and supporting me.

And the fucking door opened. Yes, I said that. The fucking door. And the fucking detective was calling Luis for his interview. Thank God, or whomever, that the detective was a woman. She immediately understood the clatchc. "Mr. Coleman, are you representing Mr. Contadino?"

"Yes, Detective Alvarez."

"Please present your client and his parents for an interview in the next ten minutes." With that, she winked at me and the Moms then closed the door. The lawyer went into lawyer mode and wanted Luis to go in now. Stupid man.

I put my hands behind Luis's head and pulled him to my lips. The Moms didn't stop me. It started with me forcing the kiss. Finally, he opened his mouth to my invading tongue. I thought about him breaking through the offensive line. Silly game. I checked for cavities, carefully inspected his tongue for lesions, and probed for his adenoids. Nope, none. It took a few moments for My Mountain to come back to me.

The Moms helped by hugging us, effectively giving us some privacy. The quakes subsided. He started returning the kiss. Umm... Oh, wait... I'm here for a reason! Support. Yes. Definitely part of the granite was returning! I could feel Junior on my butt.

"Before you guys give me a grandchild, right here, we have other things to deal with." Thank you, Mrs. Contadino—Carmella. My mom hugged me tight and laughed hard.

“Seems like they’re working on at least twins!” Mom managed to say through her convulsive laughter.

Hmm... Yes. Babies. Junior is right there. That's what he needs. That's what I need! WHAT? Yes! But not here. Not now. My Mountain needs my support right now, not my lust. My 'social lubrication' is with me and supporting. No, make that 'life lubrication.' I broke the kiss and gently pushed him back. Reluctantly, I climbed off his lap and helped him up.

Luis and his parents, with their lawyer in tow, went into the office. My parents and Jason found a way to keep me from hitting the floor—somehow. I didn't even register the nurse checking me over or when she gave me the Shot.

Luis

I got up and headed to the office door. Mrs. Grant had a classical music station playing softly in the background. How appropriate. Mozart's *Requiem*. The Master's masterpiece and allegedly the amount of work he put into claimed his health and life.

As I walked into Dr. C's office—my execution chamber—Momma held my arm. Poppa had his hand on my back. The absurdity of everyone's dress hit me. Momma in her chef garb, minus the hat and apron. Those stupid, institutionally laundered, checkered pants. Comfortable black tennis shoes and her double-breasted chef's blouse with the top buttons undone. A thermometer in a pocket on her sleeve. Dad was in loafers, no socks (okay, so I'm not the rebel I think I am), and a golf shirt. Detective Alvarez in nice, upscale “street cop” clothes. A tasteful mid-calf skirt, silk blouse, and a jacket. Unbuttoned with the bulge of a very large handgun on her hip. Her badge holder on a chain around her neck. Mr. Coleman. Yeah. I swear he must sleep in three-piece pajamas! His Allen-Edmonds wingtips were polished to perfection. Dr. C in his stylish, tailored suit. Light gray with a subtle pinstripe. His tie was striped with his NBA team colors. And the condemned is naked. Absurd.

Detective Alvarez indicated we should sit around Dr. C's conference table. Just yesterday, standing at this table, I had begun a journey that seemed to become more bizarre by the minute. And, I'm facing East with my college career hanging in the balance. Not to mention criminal charges and school expulsion. Great way to start a career.

She started with the usual police show stuff—Miranda reading, introducing everyone. For some reason, the theme for “Cops” played in my head.

“May I call you Luis?” Detective Alvarez asked.

“Yes ma’am.”

“As you might be aware, I'm investigating the attack on Miss Davis. There are other officers and detectives interviewing witnesses. I think I have a very clear picture so far.” Had I missed all the traffic in and out of the office? I must have. Hell, a gaggle of three headed aliens could have gone by and I would not have noticed. “What I need to understand, more fully, is your role in this matter. You understand that your actions might lead to criminal charges?”

In through the nose, out through the mouth—although it is closed up, it seems. Breathe! “Yes, ma'am.” I managed to squeak that out somehow.

“Dr. Cavanaugh, is there anything you need to add?”

“Thank you, Detective.” He turned to me. “We have a low tolerance for violence at this school. I will be making my decision on your behavior as well. It could result in punishment, suspension, or expulsion.”

You pull the diaphragm down towards the Dantien. That forces air to enter the lungs. Shift the tongue so the tip touches the roof of the mouth near the soft palette. This pulls the air in through the nose. I felt every molecule of that air enter. It felt cold compared to the heat of my body. Chilling, raw as it made its way through my sinus cavities and into my throat. As the air made its way down past my larynx into my lungs, I realized how dry it was. The feeling was glass shards and needles. Just as my body was beginning to absorb the life giving oxygen in the air, I gasped. Expelling the air, needles, and glass shards. Somehow, I forced the next breath in and squeaked out, “Yes sir. I understand.”

I felt the warmth of Momma's hand holding mine. Papa's hand was on my other arm. I saw Becca, in my mind, hugging me and felt the love and warmth. Slowly, I fell into a regular, deep breathing rhythm. My vision normalized. I looked into Dr. C's eyes then Detective Alvarez's. “I'm ready.”

Mr. Custis Coleman, Esquire, began yammering about rights, protections of the law, legal loopholes, and whatnot. I just looked at him. Okay, it was more than a look. About the

look I give any offensive lineman that I'm about to remove one or more organs from. "I believe in honesty. I believe in consequences for my actions. I need YOU to ensure I receive nothing less than I'm due. And, no more."

Momma squeezed my hand. Pappa damn near hugged me. I could see nothing but respect in Dr. C's eyes. Detective Alvarez looked a bit off center. She recovered quickly. I gained respect for her in that moment. I was worried about the stroke that Custis was about to have. A vein on his temple was throbbing very hard as he tried to make words come out of his mouth.

"Tell me what you remember," Detective Alvarez stated. She relaxed a hair.

The same diaphragm that had been causing me problems began working properly. Cleansing air came through my nose, up to the crown point, down into my body into my lungs. Only my abdomen expanded as I took in five very deep breaths. "I was waiting outside of Becca's classroom when I heard..." I related the story from my perspective.

When I got to Will on top of Becca, my body tensed. My hands pulled into fists. I took time out to take ten cleansing breaths. I relaxed and continued. I had no muscular reaction to the letter opener attack. Okay, maybe a small one. I hadn't been concerned for my welfare at that point, only the others. I had no idea how much damage he could inflict; I just wanted to stop him from inflicting any more. I had to stop him. He had rushed my actions. I related all this to the group in front of me.

Then I got to where I picked up Dr. C and started to move him out of the way. I could only offer that I had and not why. I had stopped when I finally heard his voice. I felt only shame as I looked him in the eyes. "I'm so sorry, sir."

He held my eyes. Hard. No matter how many tears came into them from losing control, I held the eyes of the man I had the highest respect for.

"Thank you Luis, I accept your apology." My tears started to slow. I had to rebuild this relationship and earn his trust anew.

Detective Alvarez asked a few additional questions and I did my best to answer them. I struggled with how I had hurt those around me with one moment's loss of control.

"Thank you, Luis. Please wait outside." Detective Alvarez waved towards the door. Dr. C gave me a quick nod.

We trooped outside. Becca was still there with her family and launched herself at me. I do love this new chest ornament of mine! Should I say the sudden mass of delicious flesh that belongs to me? My heartthrob? I kissed her back as hard as I got. She brought me back to life.

Our parents headed down to the other end of the office. Mrs. Grant must have changed stations, there was some Sinatra playing softly in the background. *Fly Me to the Moon*. Becca definitely did that to me.

“Are you okay?” Her eyes probed mine. Her hands held my face towards hers.

“Yes.” Honesty, damn it. “Well, no.” Suddenly, her tongue was halfway down my throat. My hands had been holding her up by the ass when she jumped on me. They responded by squeezing and enjoying the feeling of her flesh. We paused.

“Thank you.” She started to kiss me again. I stopped her.

“No. Thank you for being here for me.” We both pulled back and looked into each other's eyes. “I love you.” WHAT! Who said that? Well... I did.

“I love you too.” The world vanished with the contact of her lips. I have no idea how long we were wrapped up and kissing. Eventually, I sat down with her in my lap. Carefully, I put her legs across mine, not around my waist. One temptation down! Our kisses slowed and we just snuggled. This felt different than when she is “in her cave” as she calls it. Delicious. Nice. WONDERFUL!

“Einstein said if you want to understand relativity, sit on a bench waiting for a bus. When you're by yourself, a minute takes an hour. When you're with a beautiful girl, an hour passes in a mere minute. Thanks for teaching me relativity.” I smiled at her.

“Only you could think about physics with a naked girl in your lap!” She smiled back. “The beautiful comment, though...” I began to wonder if addiction to her kisses might present health risks. How long can a male stay excited without doing damage? I know she had to be well aware of my state. Junior is difficult to hide when he's soft. He wasn't right now. Plus, the bastard was drooling a bit. Damn him.

As soon as Dr. C's door opened, Junior retreated. I could feel Becca tense. I was doing my best to stay relaxed. My best was not very good.

“Luis, come in please.” Dr. C paused, looked around. “Rebecca and both families as well,

please.”

We stood. I hesitated as I tried to figure out how to walk through the door with my arm around my sweetie. Hell, I barely fit through the door by myself. I didn't want to push her in front of me. It would be rude to go first. As I start working through the problem, she just grabbed my hand and dragged me along behind her.

“I know you're not chicken, come on.”

“No, just working out logistics.” She stopped and looked at me with an eyebrow raised. “No way we fit through that door side-by-side. I'm too much a gentleman to go first. I didn't want to appear to be a coward by not going first.”

“Looks like I have to be the woman!” She got a death grip on my hand and dragged me into the room. She had a big grin on her face. I just shook my head. Three hundred pound linemen have trouble moving me. She must be in charge!

Suddenly, I'm in the execution chamber. Again.

I walked up to Dr. C. Thankfully, my right hand was free. I might get my left back from Becca this year. I offered my hand for a shake. There was something my heart needed to say. He took my hand. “Dr. Cavanaugh, I want to offer my sincerest apologies for the disrespect I showed you. I consider you one of my role models and I failed to live up to the sterling example you've set.”

“Thank you, Mr. Contadino. Again, apology accepted. I hope we can build new and stronger bonds now.” His shake was firm, yet warm. There was a slight twinkle in his eye.

Detective Alvarez broke the moment and directed us all to the conference table.

“After careful examination of the statements of all the witnesses, plus the known history of Mr. Allen, I am prepared to conclude this investigation. Mr. Allen has been formally charged with felony assault and battery on Miss Davis.” She let the words settle in. “I'm assured by the District Attorney, who I just spoke to, that accommodations are going to be made and Mr. Allen will be receiving the treatment and care he so desperately needs.” She looked at both Becca and I. There was a question in her eyes. Did we approve? We both nodded. “Now, unless there are other police matters to be dealt with...” She looked at Dr. C. He shook his head. “Then, we're done.” She gave me the subtlest wink. “Now, I will leave you and let Dr. Cavanaugh have his say. Thank you all.” She shook our hands and moved to stand by the door, out of sight lines.

I'd always wondered about the literary concept of the pregnant pause. Now I understood it. That relativity thing again. Seconds as eons.

"As far as the school is concerned, the incident is over." He paused and looked at me. "Some of us have some work to do." I nodded my head. Contrite didn't begin to express how I felt. His eyes were serious, yet they had softened some, letting me know I had a chance. There was an opening and now it was up to me. I gave Becca's hand a squeeze and realized she had had a death grip on me the whole time.

I thought about what Becca must be feeling. No one was saying anything. Nobody was moving. I was still doing my deep breathing and had just peaked on an inhale. With that measured pause, I suddenly understood.

I stood as gracefully as I could. Extended my hand to Detective Alvarez. "Thank you, Ma'am. We appreciate everything you've done." She took my hand and gave me a firm grip back. Much stronger than her size would indicate. Her left hand covered the shake.

"You're welcome, Luis. You're a good man. Keep being that way, okay?" She gave me a smile and a wink.

I turned next to Dr. C and extended my hand. "Thank you Dr. Cavanaugh." While he took my hand, I held his eyes. "I want you to know that you have, as always, my greatest respect." His left covered our grip.

"Luis, twice today you've used my full name. I don't want to get used to it. Go back to calling me Dr. C." Our grips tightened. Not in competition, acknowledgement. "Now, when your adrenaline goes down, I'm open to seeing if you can pick me up again. Maybe on the wrestling mats in the gym?" His eyes were smiling. "After the football season, of course. I'd hate for one of us to get injured before then. In the meantime, I want to spend some time with you talking about leadership."

"Thanks, Dr. C." We smiled easily with each other. I had work to do, but an open path. It was time to move forward.

I thanked the suit. He, no doubt, would cause me to lose enough allowance by doing nothing while I repaid my parents the \$400 per hour for his time. I turned to Jason and he met me halfway. We hugged.

"Thanks for protecting Bec," he said.

“Thanks for being there for her. And me.” We broke the way athletes do with those lung rattling back slaps. I turned to Becca's parents. As I reached my hand out to shake Mr. Davis's, Mrs. Davis wrapped me in hug.

“Thank you Luis for protecting and caring for my daughter. And, thank you for bringing her back to me...” She started crying in my arms. Mr. Davis took my hand and pulled my eyes to him.

“Thank you, son. We'll talk later tonight.” He paused as he pumped my hand. “Thank you.” He pulled his wife into his arms, allowing me to move to my parents.

Formality disappeared. An uncle once told me, “for the joy of sex, read a book. For the joy of life, be Italian!” I was almost expecting the wine and antipasti to appear. What other culture in this modern world would form the Slow Food Society!

As the family celebration wound down, I turned to Becca. You know, if I'm going to beat East's offensive line, I need to work on these rubber legs. I wanted her. I could tell she wanted the same thing. Here? Our souls, through our eyes, were working on the logistics to satisfy our mutual desire. I couldn't wait. I just picked her up and wrapped myself around her. She wrapped herself into me. We just stared into each other's eyes. I fell into the infinite gravity well of her soul.

A few discreet coughs brought us back to reality. Somebody might have said something about a bucket of ice cold water.

“Ready for class, sweetie?”

Chapter 15 – Tuesday Midday

“Cheeseburger in Paradise”

Rebbecca

Am I ready for class? Am I ready to be at school? Can I possibly know the answer? That's the better question.

Let me see... Basket case this morning. So much so that my brother practically had to carry me to school. Comfort in My Mountain's cave for too short a period of time. Then the confusion of Biology class. Then, then, then...

It was so much easier to be hidden.

'Hi!' My Muse said.

'What are you doing here?'

'Getting ready to slap you upside the head you, because girl, you need it.'

'What? Why?'

'Because you're being stupid.'

'Wha...'

"Think about all the good things that have happened because you weren't hidden.'

'Like what?' I demanded of my Muse.

'Luis. Reconnecting with your parents. Your art – that painting of Luis was the best you've done. All because you're fully alive now.'

"Today, then?'

"To be cliché, bad things happen to good people. And, you're learning to be scared and

handle it. It's all about how you use the experience.'

I looked up from the floor and my hands, letting my arms relax, and found the sweet eyes of My Mountain. I didn't have to fake the smile that appeared on my face. "Let's go get 'em!" I grabbed his hand and pulled him towards the door.

"That's the girl I love."

We both looked at the clock, as did Mrs. Grant. "Only fifteen minutes left in class. Why don't you two go to lunch early? I've taken care of letting your morning teachers know. They've all communicated that there were no homework assignments tonight."

"Thanks, Mrs. Grant." We said in unison. That gave all three of us a case of the giggles. Okay, she and I did. Luis rumbled.

"Go on, you two lovebirds. I've got work to do." She made a motherly, shooing motion towards the door.

We strolled towards the cafeteria, hand-in-hand. I didn't feel the need to talk. With the hallways empty, no requests. I felt good, despite this morning. And, yes, I was still bloody naked in school! I just didn't feel weird about it. But, I did need to use the restroom.

I gave Luis a quick kiss and went into the boys' room, as per *The Program*. That felt really weird and made me feel how vulnerable I was. It was empty, thankfully. Dirty, but empty. A different dirty than the girls' room. Luckily, I had shoes on.

I splashed some water on my face and examined myself in the mirror. Who was this girl—no, woman—looking back at me? I suddenly felt tired. I dragged myself to the door and managed to open it. I actually looked up from the floor for a second. Okay, more than a second.

'My God, he's huge!'

'But, gentle,' my Muse said.

'Why me?'

'Because...' Yeah. Because... what? A column of cold, hard marble melted within me. I saw a new canvas that was destined to be me. Now was the time to own the brush strokes on it. I've emerged, now it was up to me to determine what I became.

A new warmth spread through me. I wasn't alone anymore. And this was a good thing. I felt my body move towards Luis, without the need to command it this time. It just followed my desire. Strong. A new resolution. A new self.

His eyes showed concern for a brief second. Then they shown with the infinite possibilities of love. Together. Each being us, while us was each.

I touched his face and gave him a quick peck between those muscular breasts he had. I felt his heat. I heard and felt his heart through my lips. I lifted my head towards the peak of My Mountain.

“I love you.”

He placed his hands lightly on my face. Yet, the power behind them... all directed towards my heart.

I think he said he loved me. I was too out of it to hear. The touch was enough. Two heartbeats passed, a thousand years—Luis calls it relativity—I said, “Let's go to lunch.”

“You sure you're okay?”

“More than!” I gave him a light pat on the chest and pulled him along.

The cafeteria was still crowded from first lunch. No one was in line, so that went faster than normal. Service was its usual surly self. When we emerged into the main room, it was just like in the movies. A sudden hush spread outward from where we were.

Tim Carter stood up. “Hey, Naked Table over here!”

A wave of laughter preceded the conversations starting again. Speculation? Rumor? Truth? *The Letter* by the Box Tops was playing at one table. Some *Shag* could be heard from the corner where kids would dance in sock feet, just like their parents did. As I looked around, I could feel myself getting red, embarrassed at the center of attention. More so after that incredibly intimate moment we had just shared. On display again. Naked.

“Chin up, sweetie. Be proud of your beautiful self. Be proud of making it past this morning.”

“Yeah, right,” I said to the floor. Then I rejected that. “Sorry, let's go for it!”

We paraded to the table and put down our trays. Luis stood on his chair, like he needed that to get attention!

“Folks!” He waited for things to die down. I had no idea what he was doing, so I just stood there. I'm sure I was catching flies with my mouth. At least I wasn't getting any redder. “Yo! People!” His voice was not shrill or angry. It was loud, deep, and... commanding? Yeah, commanding.

“I'm sure there are a ton of questions about this morning. Probably as many as the number of rumors.” His pauses seemed natural. A few voices agreed with him. “I figured.” That got a few chuckles. “Here's everything in a nutshell, the real story.” He had every eye in the place. Amazing, add orator to the long list of his good points.

“You all know Will Allen of the senior class?”

“Creep!” A few dozen voices volunteered.

“Weird!” Another contingent weighed in.

“Sick!” A small minority, but not silent.

Luis raised his hands and got quiet. I watched as he moved them slowly to his sides, palms towards the crowd, and he began speaking again.

“Yes, we called Will many names. Did any of us know him well enough to justify them?” He paused and let the crowd reflect. They stayed glued to him. “Did we even try to get to know him? Get past our own judgments, fears, and doubts?” Again, a pause. Just when tensions started to build into the silence, “I know I didn't try to get to know him. As a result, I didn't know about his problems. None of us did. His problems ran deep. They all came out today, trying to get the attention they needed.” He let that sink in.

“Rebbecca, this beautiful lady... My girlfriend!” That got a few hoots. He let them settle down. “She was the random target of his appeal for help. He didn't physically hurt her.” All eyes shifted to me. He reached a hand down and I automatically took his. As soon as my fingers were in his, I calmed. I stood tall and showed my forearms.

“No bruises,” I said confidently, albeit quietly. Yet, it carried through the room.

“He's getting help now.” He subtly dropped my hand. His arms, still at his side, palms out, rose slightly. He made eye contact randomly around the room. “Everything from that point to now has been addressed by all the parties involved, including Dr. C and the police. All the players, families, and authorities are okay with the outcome. So...” Again, he let the pot stew a bit. “So, that conversation is over. Period.” He didn't raise his voice; it just seemed to project through and around everything. His hands had slightly risen during all this.

“Now,” his hands came above his waist, “we'd like to go back to being just naked in school.” That actually got a few chuckles. “I would also hope you find it in yourself to offer thoughts and prayers for Will.” A few murmurs as he lowered his hands a bit. “I know I didn't feel compassion for him before this. I don't think anyone did. Instead of friends he could turn to for help, all he had were people that didn't care, people he couldn't turn to, talk to, seek help from.” Every eye was on him. Some were nodding. Everyone was looking serious. Everyone! Even a few tears! Damn, he's good.

“I'm a football player. A jock. I'm also a budding physicist and a lover of music.” He took my hand again. “Rebecca, who until yesterday was damned good at hiding, is a brilliant artist, a serious student, and my girlfriend.” He was beaming more than me, I think. “We're both naked, so we're unable to hide our bodies, yet no one in the past two days has bothered to look into our minds or souls. Just touch and feel our bodies.”

He looked around the room. Catching eyes and holding them until some connection was made, then moving to the next. “I want to offer a challenge to you.” I'm beginning to learn the power of a pause. “Find out something new and nice about everyone you interact with today. For the rest of the week, even. Do that, and I'll make sure we beat East.”

“Luis, that's no challenge. You're going to beat them anyway!” The crowd laughed with the lone male voice.

“Okay. What then? What would you want to be nice for a week? Connect with each other for a week? Be a better school for a week?”

“You naked for the rest of the year!” That voice was definitely female.

“And Rebecca!” A male voice. Whoa! WHAT! Yet... Yet... I looked up at My Mountain. I took his hand and we talked with our eyes. I gave him my trust and permission. He gave me his power and love. Support, too! Definitely agreement! I nodded my head slightly. What have I just done?

"The right thing,' my Muse said.

"You're on!" Whoops and cheers until My Mountain raised his hands over his head. The room slowly quieted. There is some kind of magic with his hands.

"Here's the deal. Becca and I will stay naked after this week until one of us sees people being ignored, disrespected because they're different, or abused. We stay this way until... Hell, I'm not sure. Let me think about this, talk to Dr. C and others, and we'll work out the bet. Plus, he'll choose how to oversee this and monitor it. Is that sufficient?" The volume of suggestions and debate was overwhelming. The agreement on the concept was universal. This was going to happen. Part of me wanted to close up and run away. Luis looked me in the eyes. He could see that I was scared shitless and, at the same time, open to the adventure. He took my hand, that was all the support I needed. His eyes let me know that it would be okay. I told him that I was proud of him and wanted to make a worthwhile change to things.

When we finally sat at the Naked table, everyone joined in and volunteered to be part of forming the bet and taking part in it.

"Why don't all of us Nakeds this week talk with Dr. C and see what we can arrange. Ms. Carlisle should be part of it, since she is the Program Sponsor. I'll have Mrs. Grant ask the Nakeds to come to the office when it is set up. Does that work?"

Everyone agreed. Damn, my man is good. He's found a way to make this whole mess a positive. I looked up at him and my eyes began to water. When he felt me and looked down, my eyes were running rivers. His first look was alarm, then joy. Then, he looked deep into me. I definitely felt it.

"I just realized how much I love you and how proud I am of you, My Mountain." As our look deepened, I could feel his heart through my eyes. His eyes misted with tears of joy as well. Less than two days, yet a lifetime. Maybe there was something to not wearing clothes! Well, not hiding either. I realized in that moment I had known him all my school life. He was not one of my tormentors when my boobs started growing. I suddenly knew that he had been distant with me in fifth grade because he had a crush on me and didn't know how to approach me. I could see in his eyes and soul he knew that I knew. His smile got bigger.

"Okay, guys. Get a fucking room, would ya'?" We all broke up on Margie's comment. She turned to her brother, "something honest and personal about you, then, My Really Big Brother. When did you first fall in love with Rebbecca?"

That got everyone's attention. I'd just discovered the answer, let's see what he says. Damn, am I testing his integrity? Well, he is male. Of course I am!

"Margie, I don't have a simple answer to that." Luis turned to his sister and got a very thoughtful look on his face. "We met in first grade. Somehow, I knew she was different and special. When I got to the point of 'liking' girls around the fifth grade, I was really interested. But, I didn't know what to do. How to approach a girl. Anything like that. Then something happened to her and she... Disappeared is the best way I can describe it. Yesterday, it all came back and blossomed into something more than I ever imagined. We're still discovering what it is..." He looked at me with a big smile. I felt warm and loved. I think I smiled back. We melded. Spoke without speaking. Kissed without touching.

Margie cleared her throat, pulling us back to the moment.

I turned to her, "I'd like to talk about the other side of the story. What happened in fifth grade was I grew boobs. Obviously!" I cupped my hands under them and hefted the twins. "The comments and abuse I got I didn't know how to handle. So, I chose to disappear. Did a damn good job. Yesterday, when we stripped..." I looked him in the eyes and they said to go on. "He hesitated before pulling down his boxers. I think we reconnected then. I knew he was worried. The story in my head was he felt he was too small..." I hadn't realized my hand was on Junior, which made me laugh when I looked down and notice. The laughter of the group just made me laugh harder.

"When he finally flashed it—Okay, I was—shocked? Surprised? Scared! Oh. My. God! Could that thing fit in me? Me, technically a virgin?"

Shirley asked, "Technically?"

"Totally, until yesterday afternoon. Intact and all."

"Now?"

"No longer intact, thanks to the wonderful mouth and sweet fingers of my gentle mountain." I looked him in the eyes again, promising the future.

"And?" Shirley, ever the journalist.

"Ask me at the end of the week."

My Mountain stuck his nose in. It's a cute nose. Looks like it has been broken a few times.

“Sorry Shirley, no press allowed. It's personal. Strictly between us, if and when it happens. I think it should be special.” He looked at me, deep. I melted into him again. Some sauce from his meal had dripped on his chest. With a grin and an evil thought, I licked it off. Oh! I like the feeling of my tongue on his swarthy skin. He just groaned a lovely sound of pleasure.

Another clearing of the throat. I don't know who this time.

“Okay, Margie-the-curious. My turn. First question, and sorry for seeming so selfish, tell me how your Really Big Brother treats you away from school.” I challenged her.

The Damn, Stupid Bell rang!

“Later,” Margie said as she got up, “I promise to tell you.”

Luis

I was still coming down from the intensity of the morning. The physical aspects were nothing compared to the emotional. I really wanted to hear Margie's honest answer while still processing Becca's comments. As the table cleared except for the two of us, she looked at me. I melted into her eyes again. Damn, I can feel her heart. Feel her energy flow. Her essence is before me in vivid detail. I've had crushes before, even thought I was in love once. It was nothing like this. WOW!

“Why don't you finish lunch quickly, then before the next group gets settled in, go talk to Dr. Cavanaugh.” I could see the grin as she read my face, “okay, Dr. C. He likes that from you. I think it's okay for me to say that to him as well. Anyway, get everything set up. I'll hold the 'Naked' table.” She paused. Her look said everything, but she spoke it anyway. “I love you. I trust you. I'm yours. Now, go!”

I shoveled another five thousand calories into my mouth. Okay, us jocks had special meals. High protein, high fiber, and tons of complex carbs. It would be well digested and fueling me by the time I got to the practice field this afternoon. Someone at the next table had Jimmy Buffett's *Son of a Son of a Sailor* album playing. Ah, for a simple cheeseburger and being with Becca is paradise.

I kissed her again when I got up. Damn those time distortions in the Universe! Thank you Albert for explaining relativity. Two relative seconds for a two minute kiss. Two hours in

the hall for a two minute walk. Okay, the walk took a bit longer. I hadn't realized how hard Junior was. Seems everyone in the halls knew and "helped" him. I was too focused on my mission to pay much attention. That is until Susan stopped me.

"I have a request, Luis." She was grinning at me and batting her eyelashes. Damn! She was sexy. Junior thought so too. She wrapped her fingers around me.

"Hi, Susan. Any request, as long as it's reasonable." I tried to focus on her while thinking about the Bet, getting to the office, and back to lunch.

"Well, it is to me. It's a repeat of what we did yesterday." Her smile broadened and her eyes started to smolder. My cock jerked at the prospect. Yet, I did need to get to the office. And there was this thing about Rebbecca...

"But, I asked for relief then." She squeezed Junior and I felt it all the way down to my toes. Then she licked her lips. Damn!

"Well, now is my turn to ask you." Her smile and eyes were getting to me. I was starting to melt.

"Ah..." Smooth, Luis. Ever the sweet talker and glib person. Her hands were stroking my cock just right. As one hand came off the crown with a little squeeze, the other would wrap around the base and start its movement. "Ah... Erg..."

"So, you agree to my request?"

"Erg..." I was turning to mush. Where was I headed? Why? Who? Reb... Eck... Argh... Susan was using her thumb to spread my precum over the head. Oh. My. God! Lightning bolts were shooting right through me.

"Ah..." Pull yourself back, Luis. Think Becca. Finally, I could see straight again and looked into her eyes. "Susan, a reasonable request is to touch and explore. Anything more intimate..." Shit! She started the thumb pressure thing on the underside. Think, Becca. You slug! Think Becca. In-through-the-mouth... "Anything more depends on... other... factors—and may not be reasonable."

"Factors? Like a girlfriend?" Her eyes flared.

"Yes," I said as calmly as I could. "Rebecca."

It felt really good to say that.

“We'll see!” With that, she turned and stormed off. Oh, well. Get yourself back together. Bet. Program. Becca. Yeah. Ten deep breaths. I settled into my feet, my energy roots descending to the center of the Earth. I walked on. Still forcing my breath, calming slowly.

When I got to the office, Ms. Carlisle was there. Perfect. One of the first really good things to happen all day. *Under the Boardwalk* by the Drifters was playing a little louder than normal.

“Ms. Carlisle, I have a request that has to do with the Program.”

“Oh, I thought I was supposed to make the requests.” Her grin was disarming. She gave Junior a quick glance. When she looked up, there was a twinkle in her eyes and a grin on her face.

“Got me on that one.” I chuckled as Mrs. Grant walked away with a snort of suppressed laughter. “The current 'Nakeds' would like to meet with you and Dr. C to talk about the Program. I'm sure by the end of third lunch, you'll know what I offered as a bet. Becca bought in, so did the first lunch Nakeds. We think it is a way to make the Program more powerful. We still need to work on it some, though. Could you and Dr. C give us some time after the lunch periods?”

At first, it looked like she wanted to ask me about the bet. Then she must have seen the commitment and passion in my eyes for the changes we wanted to propose. About the same level of commitment I saw in hers to make the Program work.

“Luis, I'm going to trust you. When?”

“Anytime after third lunch. I need to get back for second. Oh, Mrs. Grant? Rebecca and I will need excuses for third lunch so we can stay for that and talk to those Nakeds.” Ms. Carlisle nodded to Mrs. Grant.

“Luis, do us proud. I know you will,” Mrs. Grant said as she handed me two notes.

In a flash, I Got It—Leadership. This is what my parents do. What I do on the gridiron. We lead, not demand. We ask others to come on our journey with us. We find a compelling reason, build trust, and go.

I took both their hands, “Thank you. Thank you both for believing. I promise I will not let

you down.”

Mrs. Grant came across the desk and kissed my cheek. She actually blushed and said, “You've always been my special son. Go. Do!”

Ms. Carlisle, Jean in the moment, looked at Mrs. Grant. As Mrs. Grant turned away, I had a wonderful, mature woman pressed fully against me, pulling my face down and kissed me hard.

“For my warrior champion.” She smiled at me when she broke the kiss.

“I know. Come home with my shield or on it.” Only deserters and losers lost their shields. Winners always kept theirs, even if they paid the ultimate price.

“With it, please!” Her smile lit up the room.

I got back to the lunchroom a few minutes later. Now what? I was winging this and needed a plan. I needed a compelling goal as well. Approaching the table and the collection of Naked this week, I couldn't ask for a better group to help and do something amazing. Dr. C had done well, his strategy was working, I realized. *Be Young, Be Foolish, Be Happy* by the Tams drifted over the table. Must be *Carolina Beach Music Day!*

“Hi, sweetie.” I gave Becca a quick kiss. I noticed she was doing sketches of Will. God, she was good. Damn, she can sit there so calmly while remembering something that intense coming at her? I suppressed a shudder and hung on a smile.

“Hi, stud!” She watched my reaction and laughed. “Gotcha!”

“Well, not your stud, yet!” That got a laugh from the table and made Becca turn red.

“I filled everybody in on this morning and the bet. Well, more like your declaration and the bet.”

“Thanks, sweets.” I turned towards the rest. “What do you folks think?”

We talked, explored, planned for twenty minutes. About then, people started leaving lunch. Speech time. I made the same basic one as before but left out details of the bet. I did tell them the current Naked were meeting that afternoon with Dr. C and Ms. Carlisle.

When I was done, the first lunch Naked joined us. Shirley leading the group as they

approached us.

“Luis, we talked about it. We're in and thought we should be here and next period. We believe you can pull off something really good and want to support you.”

“Shirley, we all can do something good. This can't be just about me. Or Rebbecca. Or any single person. It has to be about the Program and making it work the way it should.”

“That's why we're here. By the way, we got notes for everyone to stay through third lunch.”

“Just like you Yanks,” said Paul Templer. “Fomenting a little revolution. Well, looks like I'm on your side this time! Up the rebels!”

“Here's to the Naked Revolution!” Who else but Rosalee. “Tits and Ass will rule the world.”

After we calmed down from Rosalee's demonstration of Tit-artillery, we got down to some serious discussion. I found my role to be interesting. An idea would be proposed. I'd make sure everyone contributed to the discussion of it. All sides were heard, all options considered. Then, I'd summarize what I'd heard. We'd record it and move to the next. Actually, my obsessive-compulsive, over organized, and incredibly cute sister took on the role of recorder.

As the lunchroom emptied, I knew we had about fifteen minutes before the next lunch was in full swing. Instead of working through the noise as people got settled, I thought we could use a break.

“Why don't we spend a few minutes practicing what we're about to preach?” I declared and everyone agreed.

“You go first, Luis. Tell us something.” It didn't even register who said it. I'd been expecting it, though.

“That would be fast and easy. Yet, would we accomplish our goal of finding ways to personally connect with others?” After a few seconds, they got it. Instead, we had a fifteen minute long free-for-all which, thankfully, led to promises to spend more time one-on-one and in small groups. A promise was made to set the best example possible.

The rest of the Nakeds had joined us and were brought up to speed by the group. That left me free to see the next steps. The path was easy to see, now.

“A commitment is a good thing. Yet, without making a commitment to a specific person, it lacks power and purpose. That's why on the football team, we each make a commitment to Coach McFarlan. He makes a commitment to each of us, individually. We also make individual commitments within the team.”

Chris Flanagan looked me dead in the eyes, “Coach Contadino, I commit to you to find a way, every day, to make deeper connections. Not only within the Naked team, but within the school and my community. I'm open to any standard you set as my coach. I expect it to be beyond my comfort zone, yet something you see in me that I can achieve.” He held out his hand to me and we shook.

“Chris, you're on. Let's meet before school at the strippers' entrance and I'll set the standards.”

“Done, Coach L.” Chris's grin was infectious.

Becca took my hand, looked me in the eyes, and said, loud enough for everyone else, “Sweetie? Help me out. Explain coaching, commitments, standards, and such. Obviously, you and Chris understand it from sports. Help the rest of us.”

God, I loved her. The Invisible Woman has definitely come out of hiding! I kissed her, not as hard and as long as I wanted. A quick nibble on her ear and I whispered, “thank you, my love.”

“Thank you, my love... and my coach.” She nibbled a bit and then pushed me back. “Coach, time to go to work!” She took some of the heat out it by placing the sweetest, most delicate kiss on my lips.

“As Chris pointed out, teams are formed around a purpose and a set of standards. There is one person that sets them. Every other member of the team commits to that person under the conditions framed by the purpose and standards.”

Luke Nguyen spoke up, “so, we need a team leader, a coach. Someone that has the passion, skills, and respect to make our revolution work. Okay, I'm with Chris. I'll meet my coach tomorrow morning.” He pointed his finger at me, “you!”

“Luke, thank you. Chris, thanks.” Before I could get another word out, everyone at the table agreed. I was the coach, the team leader. We'd work out the details by tomorrow morning.

Before the two thousand pound weight could hit me in the chest, my Becca grabbed my hands. A butterfly kiss on the nose, then a hard kiss on my lips. She pushed back, got my full attention with her eyes. "Hi Coach! Lead us to your dream."

SHIT. It is Tuesday, at lunch, and this week is already out of control. What's next?

Chapter 16 – Tuesday Afternoon

“Cha-Cha-Cha-Changes”

Rebecca

Okay, maybe I am lovestruck, but I can still see. Well trained observer, you know. My Mountain is a natural leader. He didn't ask for the job, yet he was given the job of Coach unanimously. Then he let his team go to work while he went to work managing the team. But, his happiness was dimmed, I could see it in his eyes and feel it in him. My Mountain was in pain. What was causing it?

This was definitely the most interesting lunch I'd ever had at school, naked or not. Naked! Oh-My-God! I'm still naked! Only a day and a half of parading my naked ass around school and I was getting used to it.

When speech time came around, he asked Tim if he would do the honors. He wasn't getting out of something, but deploying the best person for the job. Tim didn't hesitate. Shirley and Sherri had already written an outline and presented it to Luis. He'd made a couple of suggestions. The Ss went to work on their brand of magic and Tim ran with it. I felt My Mountain's energy shift through the spectrum—pain to joy and part way back to pain. What was it?

I have a whole new respect for actors. Tim studied the script for a minute. He nodded, stood, and gave as impassioned a performance as Luis. Sorry, soon to be lover, Tim was better. He was flawless, yet it felt as if he was speaking off-the-cuff—metaphorically, since he was naked. I was in awe as he presented for the team and still managed to speak so deeply from his heart. I felt My Sweetie settle into himself. Accepting. Growing stronger. WOW!

At one point, Tim had Luis and me stand. Needless to say, My Mountain towered above me. He casually grabbed my waist and held me up! When Tim was done with us, Luis spun me around and gave me a very wet, sloppy, public kiss before setting me down. I heard a splash of music just as I sat. Flock of Seagulls or Phil Collins or something like that. Not as good as Luis's selections.

I was in shock from the suddenness, wobbly from the intensity, embarrassed by the public

display, and very horny from the show of strength. Yes. HORNY. I don't want an orgasm, I NEED one!

I managed to sit again. My Mountain sat next to me. I offered my hand to hold, which he readily took. Then I placed it between my legs and pressed it to my very wet pussy. Yep. I can still say pussy. Not cunny, pussy!

“Sweetie? I need you to get me off, please? Now?” I swear I found myself batting my eyelashes at him. Who was this strange person that had taken over my body?

“Get you off? Off of what?” He had a completely innocent look in his eyes. That was about the time he gave my clit a little squeeze.

“The puddle I'm about to be sitting in when you keep that up!” I tried to muster up my innocent face. I think I achieved wanton.

“Well, knowing how vocal you are, are you sure you want me to do this? Here?” Right as he said that, he thrust a finger into me. Phil Collin's was saying something about in the air tonight. With his thumb, he teased around and occasionally attacked my clit. When his finger tip inside hit the soft ridges, that was it. Lightning bolts!

I really, really, really did my best to be quiet and composed. Honest. I did. I'm not sure who was driving the car, though. If Tim hadn't made a point that drew a lot of comments and applause, everyone in the cafeteria would have known what I was doing.

'Oh, what are you doing?' My Muse asked.

'Ah... Um... Watching the world disappear into this... Ah... huge fireworks display, then go quite black. Oh, shit!'

'And, why?'

'Leave me alone, Damn it! Ah... YES!... Right there... I'm having the best cum of my life.'

'Hope no one slips on the puddle!' My Muse said this with a giggle just as I blacked out.

When I came back to the cafeteria after a tour of the known universe and a short meeting with my creator, I found myself in the arms of My Mountain. On his lap. Deliciously snuggled in. In the background, Zeppelin was talking about the juice running down a leg and lemons. No lemons. Lots of juice running down my legs.

Tim was speaking to the crowd. "She's fine. Just the stress of today finally caught up to her. Luis is taking good care of her..."

There was another hand on my face. A soft, female voice penetrated my fog. "It's okay, Rebeccca. We've got your back. You needed that. We're taking care of you."

"And the puddle!" Luis actually chuckled. Note to self: take the Charles Atlas course. Put on two hundred pounds of muscle and punch him. For the moment, I'll just snuggle here and love him.

That was just his finger. What about when we make love the first time? It had better be in a bed and I have to plan on not moving for a few hours. YES!

"Sweetie?" I said more to his chest than his face. It was like chiseled marble, but warm and alive.

"Yes, Becca?"

"Just putting you on notice. Before dinner tonight, I already know what my appetizer is."

"Notice?" He's cute when he is confused. He scrunches his brow and bites the corner of his bottom lip. Yep. Cute.

"I'm going to drain Junior's balls down my throat."

"You don't have to." Junior let me know his opinion with a healthy twitch.

"I know, sweetie. Just warning you. I'm going to make you feel like I do right now." He actually shivered. Yes. GIRL POWER! No... doing my man proud. Okay. Something. I just wanted Junior in my mouth. I wanted him to give me his essence. I want to taste and savor it. I just don't know how!

Promise to self: I'm going to take him all the way down, eventually. I don't know how or when. I've never had a penis in my mouth, why now? Whatever the reason, I need to learn. I know a potential coach. Now to find Shashawna and learn!

Okay, that would mean both of us using Luis or someone else. Was I that committed to share? That comfortable? That loving?

YES!

I want this for my love. I want this for me.

“God, I'm so envious of you, Rebbecca.” The voice from the fog was back. Rosalee.

“Why?” I felt hurt. Envy of me?

“You've got that marvelous cock now.”

I reached out and found her face. Held it, pull her close, and kissed her closed lips. “No need to be envious. I believe in sharing.”

She put her hands on my face and looked in my eyes. “Why?”

“Because I love him. I want to please him. And... I don't really know how.”

She stared me in the eyes. Her eyes misted. The tears leaked out. “I'll do anything I... can.”

“What's...” I almost said something wrong. “What's going through your head right now? Honesty, please?”

“Seeing what Luis is doing, for all of us and for Will... Well, it has me thinking. Then, you and Luis. There is so much love there. And you not wanting to impede his happiness. I'm blown away. Plus, I find you... Oh, hell! I find you attractive.”

“Wow!” She was attractive. Was that post orgasmic bliss speaking, raging hormones, or real interest?

“Would Luis share you? Would you want me?”

I stroked her face, gently. “I can't answer for Luis. As for me, I honestly don't know. I've never thought about it. Of course, I never really thought about boys either! Look at me now!”

“I can't believe Luis did that to you at lunch!”

“He didn't start it.” We both giggled. Okay. I said it. Giggled. Better than snorting.

“Well, aren't you the little slut.” She had a twinkle in her eye. From anyone else, I would have been insulted.

“Scared of the competition?” The music in the background drifted into focus for a second. David Bowie agreed about changes. So I turned and faced the stranger—well nearly a stranger—and winked at Rosalee.

“Not really. The more the merrier!” Her grin was infectious.

“So, you are your act?”

“I try to be. I am discreet, which is why there are no stories about me other than the ones I spread.”

“Smart girl.” That got me a quick kiss. Soft. Sweet. Completely different than Luis's. Not better, different. I kissed her back. Her lips parted. Mine weren't far behind. She tasted nice. My eyes closed, melting into the feeling. She put one hand behind my head and one more on my waist. It felt so good and so right. I did the same to her. We kept exploring each other's mouth. No hurry. No pressure. *“This is ground control to Major Tom...”* drifted through my head when I felt a very large, strong arm across my back.

“You two look very good together,” Luis whispered in my ear. SHIT! I'm caught cheating, with a girl, after less than a day of being his girlfriend. I'm a slut. I tried to pull away. Luis wouldn't let me, neither would Rosalee.

“It's okay, sweetie. Finish what you started.” He held us together with a loving hug. Rosalee went back to the kiss. Who was I to refuse, after all, I am a slut. Rosalee took it up a notch, her hand slid up from my waist and cupped my boob. She was tender and gentle. I was... stimulated. I got lost in her kiss and Luis's arm around me. I had his approval, at least in the moment. Oh, to hell with it. I'll worry about him in a minute. In the now, I moved my hand up and touched my first female breast other than my own. I explored, experimented. Felt the tightening of the aureole, the hardening of the nipple, and the rise in heat. Damn, no wonder guys like to touch us there. It's nice, both ways.

“Before anyone else notices, I'd suggest we take this elsewhere.” Luis's voice penetrated into my new playground.

Rosalee and I broke apart. I opened my eyes and looked into hers. “Thank you.”

She smiled, “You're welcome. Thank you.”

“I'd like to do that again.” WOW! I can do better than that. I need to be seducing her. WHAT?

“I know this sounds weak, but... me too. That was incredible. Thank you.” Her eyes were soft, sweet, and loving. A Rosalee I had never seen before. I felt that few ever saw this side of her.

“That WAS incredible, thank both of you!” Luis's voice again invaded our private little world. Yet, it wasn't an intrusion. His lips touched my ear, “Thank you, sweetie.” He leaned over to Rosalee's ear and whispered something. Her smile warmed my heart.

We completely separated with a quick kiss with promises. We both kissed Luis.

“Sweetie, I'm so sorry...” I started.

“Luis, I apologize...” Rosalee said over me.

“Whoa!” He put his arms around both of us and hugged us in close. “Becca, did you discover something new about yourself?”

“Yes, but...” I hung my head, ashamed. Disgusted with myself for being so self-centered and such a little slut. He lifted my head gently with one finger on my chin and looked me in the eyes.

“Fantastic!” Wha...? The positive energy he was sending—confirmation, validation—overrode my building feeling of guilt. God, I could cum just looking into his eyes. Appropriate.

“Rosalee? How did you feel?” He lifted her chin up with his other hand. I could feel the positive energy he sent her way. For a second, I could see her through his eyes and him through hers. As quickly as that happened, it went away. Yet, I felt the love and, while I can't explain it, it felt right.

“Attracted. I'm sorry, Luis. I came on to her and...” She didn't finish, but looked down.

“So?” She looked up surprised. I could feel the love for me in his touch and see the compassion for her in his eyes. “Did you force her?”

“NO!” I almost shouted, then remembered where we were. Luis patted my back.

“Did you enjoy it?”

“Very much!”

“So, why is anybody apologizing to me?” We both attacked him. “Thank yous.” Kisses. Lots of kisses. A few were just between Rosalee and me.

Rosalee held Luis's massive head in her petite hands. Hands that had recently been driving me wild while she played with my nipples. She bored into his eyes with her look and had his full attention. “Take her. Soon. Be as kind, loving, and gentle as I know you will be. Make it incredible. Then, can I have my turn?”

“Me or her?” He managed to squeak.

“Yes.” We both answered.

“Together.” Rosalee added with me nodding my head.

“Why?” My Mountain asked. A Paesano in the headlights!

“Coach, you talked about making promises—commitments. Finding ways to team, grow. Am I right?”

“Yes.”

“Honesty, as you both have asked me?”

“Yes.” We both said.

“I know the joys and pleasure of sex. Yet, I see in you two love. If I can learn anything, that's it. I also see something else. What you, both, did for Will, what you've done for everyone around you...” She sobbed. Tears were flowing down her face.

I took her in my arms. Luis's wrapped around both of us. Something inside said I should be jealous. My Muse appeared, pulled out a gun, and shot the feeling.

‘You're doing great!’ It seemed she was grinning and blowing the smoke from the gun barrel.

“Rosalee, Luis and I have talked about this. I want to explore. You asked if Luis would approve? Yeah.”

I turned to him, “Thanks, sweetie.” He kissed me thanks.

I turned back to the very cute Rosalee. “Yes, I want to. I want you.”

Luis, in that moment, sealed it. “Then go for it.”

Rosalee looked at both of us. “After Luis and you. Not before.”

A fine example of Nakeds we were being. Slobbering happy tears everywhere! Yet, that's what we were being! Being open. Being honest. Exploring. Luis has added compassion. I want to understand all this deeper. Much deeper.

“Later.” All three of us promised each other.

Eventually, the group came back together and the conversations of the Program began again. After rattling around a bit, it was Rosalee that brought up a critical point.

“Something I want to ask all of you. What is a Reasonable Request? I mean, the rules are vague. At best! I want to understand the limits.” She looked more serious than I've ever seen her. Troubled.

“Rosalee,” I asked her softly, “did something happen?”

“No one thing. It's the whole hallway scene. Look, I don't mind someone coming up to me, asking, and then feeling me up. I do mind uncaring, rough, anonymous hands. Worse, penetration without permission. I enjoy sex, but that's not. It's loss of control and, quite frankly, an invasion of my person.”

“I had something like that happen not long ago,” My Mountain said. That made my head snap around and I'm sure my look was not as loving as it should have been. Did he mean me and Rosalee? He looked at me, saw my expression, and gave me a quick kiss. “In the halls between lunches, I was headed to the office. I got stopped for a request and refused it.”

“What was the request?” Rosalee beat me to it. I realized I had jumped to the wrong conclusion. Leapt, actually. I need to listen first and then use compassion.

'Yep!' Thanks, Muse.

"To cum on them." He looked a bit disgusted. Talking about it seemed to drain the pain from him. "It made me feel like a machine to be commanded for someone else's entertainment or pleasure. It was not about learning or exploring together."

Before I could ask who, the group started debating Reasonable Requests. Everyone one of the Nakeds had something to contribute. Some incident that stood out or a general feeling like Rosalee's. Everyone but Ginny. Before lunch came to an end, all we could decide was that something needed to be done, but not exactly how.

"Would all the participants in this week's Program report to the office." The PA system blared in Mrs. Grant's voice.

As a unified group, we got up and headed towards the cafeteria doors. Margie was giving Luis a rundown of our discussions. Shirley and Sherri were handing him hand written pages of notes and points. Tim was giving advice on presentation. My Mountain was trying to process everything but becoming agitated.

"Margie, what are the key points?" I asked while I squeezed his hand with all my love. That shut everyone up. She listed them.

"Shirley and Sherri – on the top one, what do you have?" They gave him the spin points and arguments.

"Tim, recommendations on how to present it?" He helped Luis with how serious, how light, and how forceful to be while suggesting hand movements, posture, and such.

By the time we got to the Office, we'd walked through every point, the spin, and strategies to present it. When we got to the door, I stopped us. I stretched up and grabbed My Mountain's head. I could see in his eyes, he was ready. Centered, he calls it.

"Go get 'em Tiger." And I kissed him, hard. Shirley and Sherri followed my lead, although their kisses were a bit more reserved. They'll learn, he kisses great! Rosalee laid a scorcher on him that caused MY toes to curl. Tim grabbed his hand, then changed his mind, and hugged him. That turned into a group hug with sixteen naked people. Then a light went on in my head. Team. Unified. We have a purpose and a goal. We had some measures for progress and a commitment to develop more. There were consequences, both for succeeding and failing. We were a team and committed to something larger than any one of us. And, we could make it happen. I felt a feeling of fullness and pride.

We entered the Office, Luis leading the way. Mrs. Grant smiled and pointed towards Doctor Cavenaugh's office. She winked at Luis and said, "Go right in. Best of luck."

We filed in, taking our positions from the morning before with Dr. C at one end of the table and Ms. Carlisle at the other. Doctor Cavenaugh started, "I believe you have something to present to us?"

He was looking right at My Mountain. I now understand the word pride. It was flowing out of me and didn't seem to empty me at all.

Luis

Breathe, Luis, breathe! Let the positive energy flow from the ground and through the body powered by the pump in my core. Let my breathing turn that pump and expel the poisons within my body including negative thoughts. Come down into center, feel the roots move into the earth, deep. Breathe...

I opened my eyes and scanned the table, recalling all that had been said at lunch. Feeling the commitment of each member of the team; playing each comment over in my head. When I looked down at Becca, I felt awe at the incredible job she had done getting us organized as we walked down the hall. A hidden talent? Damn, she was good.

Pretty as hell, too! That make out session with Rosalee... Better not go there. Junior was already a bit full.

No, I don't mind sharing. When I look in her eyes, I know what we have. I have no fear there. Nothing to generate jealousy.

Looking around the room, it was just like yesterday morning, yet so different. I felt different, I assume everyone else did as well. Becca was a whole different person, more than I had ever hoped for. I knew I loved her without reservation.

I also had a new level of respect and admiration for everyone at the table. Plus, a new sense of closeness with them. A growing love for each of them as a person. As I went from one to the next, looking them in the eyes, I thought of something I wanted to say to each and ask about each. It all felt very positive, until I came to Ginny. I felt her pain and in an instant knew we all had to do something to help her. I just knew this group was the

key to unlocking some door to her heart and allowing her wounds to heal.

At that moment, I came back to center. I knew that what we were embarking on was not only important, it was crucial to us, the school, and the program. For once, there was no song in my head. Just the moment.

“Thank you, Dr. Cavanaugh and Ms. Carlisle for seeing us.” They chuckled. As I realized what I had said and how we were all dressed, I blushed. Damn it! Settling down and breathing again, “We know today has been a trying day for everyone. We,” I swept my arm around to all the Nakeds—thanks Tim—they all nodded like some wave, “would like to take the incident this morning and turn it into something positive.”

I could see Dr. C wanted to say something, so I nodded to him. “Luis, we've heard what you said at lunch and, later, Tim carrying on the message. I want you all to know the Allen's have heard as well. They wanted me to convey their thanks. The school does as well.”

My heart soared with this news. It made me feel stronger and closer to this team.

“Thank you, Doctor Cavanaugh.” He gave me a look but nodded to the formality. “I know I have some work to do before I regain your respect. Be assured, I will.”

He looked stunned. Almost as if I'd hit him!

“Luis, you have my respect. To be honest, all I am is a bit rattled. I have never felt physically intimidated by anyone before. I'd just ask you to reserve that for East in the future.”

“Will do, Dr. C.” We shook and I could see in his eyes we were okay. They twinkled with joy.

“I understand a bet was proposed today?” He was back in School Mode, but his tone was light, fun.

We all chuckled. “Yeah, me and my big mouth.”

“Everything is big about that boy!” Count on Rosalee. “Even his heart.” That wasn't expected. I blinked back some moisture in my eyes. Becca squeezed my hand in support. I caressed her shoulder in acknowledgment. We both turned to Rosalee and simultaneously blew her a kiss.

Before anyone could react, I came back to the moment.

“I've declared I would stay naked until everyone developed some real, serious connections with everyone else in this school.”

“We've declared.” Tim, Rosalee, Becca, and Margie all spoke at the same time. Everyone else agreed.

“We need some help setting up the bet and monitoring it.”

“Your thoughts?” I could tell from his eyes and posture he was being open, receptive. Not in the least trying to shut us down.

“The goal is to make sure that every student has a real connection, several in fact. That would be highly costly to measure with any degree of accuracy. Yet, our resident expert on Freud,” I looked at Becca, “suggested that a random sampling made throughout the day of how well two students know each other would allow us to set a baseline and measure progress.” No one but Becca and Ms. Carlisle got the twist of my statement. Freud was not statistically oriented at all!

“What would this sample entail?”

“You or Ms. Carlisle would randomly stop two students. You ask Joe Doe if he knows Mary Smith and if he'd care to share something about her. Based on the reactions of both students, rank the meeting as a zero for don't know each other at all to a five for best friends. Both names and the score would be entered into the model and a weekly analysis would be generated and reported.”

“This model. Developed by?”

“All of us.” I swept my arm around the Naked. “We all have unique skills, talents, and interests. Everyone wants to contribute.”

“The reasoning behind this?”

“Social networks are the basis of human interaction.” I looked at Becca for confirmation. I got such a nice smile that I almost forgot what I was saying. Damn, here comes those rubber legs again. Breathe!

“Once we understand the size and power of individuals in their connections to others, the network will emerge and be measurable. We need to do a lot of research and some of it is in the optimum size and strength of connections for a healthy community. That's the foundation. We figure that everyone should have a very close network made up of best friends and lovers. They have a wider circle of friends they consider close, but not as close. Then, they have a much wider circle of acquaintances. The goal is to expand and diversify the close circles. Those are the kind of networks that could have been there for Will.” I paused for a second and went for it. “Or, Becca before yesterday morning. Who knows how many others.”

Gathering strength from the team through their eyes, processing it through my “pump” and letting it fill my heart, I continued. “Or, provide a safe place to learn about love.”

I looked at Rosalee. She got it and nodded. “Like Rosalee is seeking.”

I let the next wave wash through me, giving me the strength to continue. “And, someone you know that needs help, but isn't so public...”

I watched Dr. C's eyes. After a second—that Relativity thing again—they flashed and I saw Ginny in them. A second later, he smiled.

“Well, I'd say you, and I mean all of you, have come up with a very noble project. I'll also confess my spies informed me after first lunch. Before I say anything else, Ms. Carlisle, do you have anything to add to this?”

“Thank you, Dr. Cavanaugh.” She turned to Becca and me. “First, let me say, when we put this group together, we had hopes for some good to come out of it. Now, I'm blown away and can't wait to see what unfolds.

“To help, I already have a stack of research in my office and a bunch of references for more on social networks. Since I'm the Program Sponsor and this does involve the 'Nakeds' as well, I'm going to sponsor this initiative. Dr. Cavanaugh and I have already talked. Based on the performance, which means research, theory, testing, modeling, math, analysis, and so forth—we will award extra credit in related classes.”

I looked around at my team. Yes! Team! I connected with each set of eyes. What I saw was resolve to do our very best and I also saw delight at the rewards and recognition. Beyond I saw a glow of awe. That we, as a team, could do this, do it well, and really make a difference.

“We thank you, Ms. Carlisle. That was more than we were expecting. We will not let you down.”

“All I want to add is that you have the school's full support. I would like to be an advisor on the project as well.” Dr. C looked positively proud at that moment.

“Thank you,” I said. “Before we end this, we also started talking about Reasonable Requests and where the boundaries are.”

Both Dr. C and Ms. C looked guarded. She ventured into the minefield first. “What about Reasonable Requests?”

“There are a lot of things happening in the halls that have nothing to do with the spirit of the program. When there are requests, many are not reasonable.” I could see the responses coming, before they did, I held up my hand and went on. “We know the program is about discovery, learning, growing, and being open. But, does being put into the position of just being a sex toy for someone else fit with it?

“It's one thing to be there as a tool for learning. Or, even being compelled to learn. It is quite another to be there as an unwilling actor in someone's fantasies or a victim of their hormones—or worse, their frustrations. At the far end of the scale, it is unconscionable that we are required to be the object of other's desire to abuse, control, subjugate, or rape.”

Ms. Carlisle thought for a minute. “I can see what you are saying. Perhaps the rules are a little too open and it has strayed from the goals. But, tightening them down...”

“We don't necessarily have to tighten the rules, but maybe change the enforcement.”

“Explain,” Dr. C said.

“We talked about this, briefly, at lunch. In just a day and a half, each of us has felt invaded, subjugated, and humiliated. All of us have had to perform with no request. While being open is a good thing, at what point do we surrender ourselves?”

“Hmm...” Dr. C stroked his chin with a massive hand. Yet, the action was slow, deliberate, not at all an act of power. “What do you suggest?”

“I think it ties to networks. We'd like to work with you and Ms. Carlisle to help put both reasonable and request into Reasonable Request—without undoing the purposes of the Program.”

“Okay, let's tie them together, that okay with you, Joan?” Ms. Carlisle nodded. We all agreed and started getting ready to go.

“Good. Now, if we hurry, I can make it to my next class, which a few of you are in. I'll stop by my office and bring the materials. I expect something from you by Thursday that we can announce to the school at the Pep Rally that night.”

I checked with the team using my eyes. Everyone seemed willing, yet looked at Margie. Okay, I need to get to know the Tornado better this week. Another commitment! Shit! Physics, Math, Football. Political Science. Trying to get laid, okay—make love. Now, so many more. Girlfriend. East. Program. Scholarships. Leader. Grades. Classes. Family. Friends. ARGH! Yet... Becca! Worth it!

Margie did some scribbling, looked back at each person on the team, got nods, then looked at me and smiled, nodding her head. She also gave me a thumbs up.

Did I trust this team to perform and succeed? Yes. I turned to Dr. Carlisle. “Done.”

To my delight and wonder, everyone nodded in agreement.

As we were moving to the door, Dr. C stopped me. “Luis, one thing I have to know. Could you have picked me up without the... stimulus?”

“Sir?” Where was he going with this?

“Could you lift me now?”

“Sir, I leg lift over twelve hundred pounds. I bench press over four hundred.” I down played my peaks.

“Just lift me, okay?” Damn.

As gently as I could, I latched on to his waist. My breath automatically fell to my center. Two seconds later, he went up two feet in the air. I could have easily put his head through the ten foot ceiling. I gently turned 45 degrees and set him down.

“Sorry.” I really felt bad about what I just did.

“Why? With your strength and you character, East doesn't stand a chance!”

“I just need time this week to get ready.” It really hit me when I said that. Today was my last day to torture my muscles to make them stronger. I needed time to rebuild after breaking them down. I was behind in my program.

“Coach, who is also my Really Big Brother, your job this week is to beat East. When we need you, we'll call you.” Everyone started to agree.

“And take care of Rebbecca!” Thank you, Rosalee. That got a kiss from Becca for her and me. Plus, more than a couple of catcalls. Hell, even Dr. C and Ms. Carlisle were beaming and laughing. Becca was turning beet red. Somewhere in what little functioning brain I had left, it registered that if my blood pressure got any higher I might have an aneurysm. Not good for football or my love life.

Then a thought hit me and I said in my best caveman speak, “Beat East. Love Becca. Prevent attacks. Ugh.”

After the initial round of laughter, the team tried to pick me up. Even with that small failure, we walked into the halls in high spirits.

Despite our positive mood, my joy was clouding. East... Susan!?! Becca!!! Rosalee... College? Scholarships... Future... East. Ginny?? The Bet...

My heart was bursting with joy. My head was clouding with worry. My being was glowing with love. My body becoming weary with doubts.

I squeezed Becca's hand, suddenly realizing she'd been holding it the whole time. I smiled and did my best to send her my love. Yep, the big, dumb jock being mushy.

She and Rosalee were holding hands as well. As much joy as I felt looking at them, I knew I was just in the eye of the storm. I felt the wall of wind and rain approaching.

“On to Ms. Carlisle's class!” A very happy Becca said, pulling me down the hall as she and Rosalee began skipping along.

Chapter 17 – Tuesday Afternoon

“Brownian Motion”

Rebbecca

The Nakeds broke up outside the office. As we did, Margie handed out a list of 'to dos' for each of us based on our conversations. It also had her email and cell phone number. On the bottom half of the page were the commitments we'd each made or identified that needed to be made. Some had initials for the person holding the promise and the person doing the commitment—requesters and performers in her lingo. At the very bottom was a note to email her our contact information and she would distribute a full list to the team. How had she had the copies made that quickly?

“Team!” Coach Contadino called the meeting to order. “I want to thank each of you for your commitment.”

With that, he hugged each of the Nakeds, whispering something in everyone's ear, which produced a look of pride on each person's face. I was last. The hug was one of thanks and appreciation, not like our normal.

“Becca, thank you. Your insights into psychology, your creative talents, and your love of your coach will make this a success.”

“Coach Contadino, I am committed to this. You will lead us to victory!” We broke the formal hug and gave each other a quick smile, trading love.

“Team, huddle around.” We quickly formed a loose circle. Luis stuck out his hand, palm up. Chris, Luke, and Paul immediately laid their hands down in a stack on top of Luis's. The rest of us caught on and added to the stack.

“Nakeds on three.” Luis growled, his field voice I assumed. “One... Two... Three...” The stack dipped down then flew up, driven by Luis's strength.

“NAKEDS!” Resounded through the halls. We broke up and headed to our classes. All the Clotheds looking at us strangely. Not a surprise, there were no requests and only a little bit of anonymous fondling.

"To hell with it!" I thought as I failed to get my arm around Luis to snuggle to him as we walked. So, I grabbed Junior and 'held hands' with him. He was a real gentleman because he rose up to greet me. Luis, not to be left out, put his arm around my shoulder and fondled my boob.

"Not that I mind, teenage boy after all, but what's gotten into you?"

"Well, My Mountain, the best answer to that is me is finally me." I started slowly stroking Junior as we walked. "And, I'd like this to be in me, soon."

I swear, he stopped walking. That almost cost him Junior and me my book bag because I didn't stop right away. He leaned his head back and just roared with laughter.

As he tried to get his breath, he looked at me. He tried a couple of times to get the words out, but would start laughing all over again. Tears were starting to stream from his eyes. Finally, he calmed enough.

"I just had a vision of us going at it... and... Junior popping out of your mouth." He went back to laughing, hard. It took me a second to get it. Okay, I want to go on the official record that I do NOT snorkel-snort every time I laugh. Just when Luis gets to me this bad.

Damn that man. I'm really not used to laughing so hard, so free.

"Do I need to steal some towels?" He managed that with a perfectly straight face and a slight bow like a waiter.

As I was almost ready to double over and ask for the towels, Ms. Carlisle walked between us. She slipped her arms through ours and said, with a wicked little grin, "Ah, a happy student is a good student! Good students belong in class."

Her arm was very warm and she smelt really good.

Luis and I stole glances at each other and started laughing all over again as soon as we made eye contact. I have to be acting like this because of my newfound freedom of self. Just as I thought that, it hit me that Luis probably is as well. Yeah, he smiled and stuff before, but I don't think I've ever seen him melting with unrestrained laughter.

"Well, Ms Carlisle, you'd better separate us in class so we can continue to be good." He managed to say that with a perfectly straight face and a perfectly horizontal Junior. Okay, slightly angled upward!

Damn! I'm with a teacher. Okay, breathe. I should be...

Ms Carlisle doubled over as she cracked up. My stifled laughter turned into a snort-snort-snort. Luis just bent in half and was laughing so hard he couldn't inhale. He actually slapped his knee and it sounded like a cannon blast in the empty school hallway.

Ms. Carlisle recovered the quickest, "Okay, kids. We need to get into the classroom now."

She was still looped arms with us. Tears starting to stream down her face from laughter. Face flushed. She felt nice and I don't mean just the physical contact.

Luis opened the classroom door and we went through as a unit. Me first. Damn, it's hard to suppress a good laugh. Even when you don't always understand why you are.

Luis and I tried to break away, but Ms. Carlisle held on and led us to the front of class. This is a senior class so Tim Carter and Shirley Keon were there. Directing the two of us, she waved Tim and Shirley up as well. Asking for four chairs, they were produced in a heartbeat.

She huddled with the four of us. "The Program is about exploration, pushing barriers. Do you agree?"

"Definitely," my mouth said as my brain tried to catch up. I caught general agreement from others as I turned my affirmative over in my head. Yes, I did agree with it.

"I'm going to do the standard and ask if any of you need relief. Then I'm going to ask you to participate in class. I'm going to ask. I want to make that clear. Let me add two things. First, I'm not going to time relief." She let that absorb. "And, if you tell me you'd like relief alone or in any combination in private, I'll send you off for supplies or whatever. On the other hand, if you want to explore and experiment in front of class, feel free." She put her hand out and we all stacked on. "On three, Nakeds. One... Two... Three..."

"NAKEDS!" There was again that feeling of unity. Commitment. More importantly, choice.

Oh! My! God! I'm so used to living within self. This was so strange! Yet so wonderful. Having the support of a team is... awesome. Overwhelming, yet awesome.

I looked at My Mountain. Did we want to get supplies? Play together? Alone? Or did we

feel okay experimenting? What did I want? Strangely, I was feeling open. I had discovered real, powerful orgasms and I wanted to find out more. Plus, it really is kinda fun watching a guy shoot. I guess I wanted to be happy. I know Luis made me happy. I wanted to make him happy. Yet, I wondered, could other people make me happy and feel good? I wanted to find out with Rosalee. Ms. Carlisle's—Joan's—arm had felt really good. Did I want to explore that? YES! In public? With Luis? But, what if it was with another guy?

“Do you want to experiment some?” He broke my spinning thoughts. Do you know how much I love this guy?! I nodded.

“Here or in private?”

“Right now, I'd like you to be around and here. Maybe another time apart, in private. Okay?”

“Go for it, sweets! Do you want me to participate, just watch, or do my own thing?”

“Um... All of the above?” I felt my heart beating.

“Tell me your dream.” Did I say love? YEP!

“We pick a person to give relief to both of us.” There. I said it. Now, time to get really nervous. What's he going to say? Is he going to pick? Breathe! Breathe! Trust. Breathe. Love... Whoa! Oh, yeah! Wait a minute. I proposed this. I asked the question. I didn't tell him, honestly, what I wanted. Was I trying to set him up?

I looked him in the eyes, only to realize I had been the whole time. He had a really kind and cute smile in his eyes.

“There's more?” was all he said. Could he read my mind? I hoped so.

“You're not upset with sharing me?” As I asked, I saw a bit of... hurt?

“Share? I don't own you, do I?”

“NO!” I think I said that too fast and too loudly.

“You've met my mom, sampled her food. If I go and have Chinese some night, am I cheating on her?”

“Ah, no.”

“Will I love her any less or she me?”

“No.”

“And?”

“I want to share.” His eyes practically glowed.

“Thank you for being honest. How?”

“We could pick someone. What if I wanted to pick a guy?”

“Remember, I chose the Lottery with guys in line. Don't rule it out.”

“And, if...” His eyes cut me off. Decide, they said. He'd support me, no matter what. It was only my questions (and stories) getting in the way.

Ms. Carlisle asked us, privately, if we had decided.

“Yes,” I answered while checking with Luis again.

“Supplies?” She asked, seeming to think that we wanted privacy.

“Nope. We want relief in class.” Surprise crossed her face for only a second. Nodding her head, she then went and checked with Tim and Shirley. I looked over at the classroom clock and was amazed how little real time had passed since we walked in.

“Would any of you like relief?” Ms. Carlisle was back in teacher mode. Luis and I nodded, I gave his hand a loving squeeze. Tim and Shirley shook their heads.

“Okay, then. Tim, I need you to get this list of supplies for me.” She handed him a list and then grabbed a stack of papers off her desk and handed them to Shirley. “Would you deliver these to the office, please?”

They both nodded and headed out to “run their errands.” While all this was going on, Luis and I talked with our eyes.

“How would you two like relief? Each other?”

Luis nodded for me to answer. Decision time.

“We'd like to find one person willing to help both of us.” There. I said it. Shy, hidden me. I didn't know whether to giggle or run and hide. Crying felt like an option. Then My Mountain gave me hand a gentle squeeze. Damn him. He goes and makes everything okay with one little squeeze.

“My I ask why?” We seemed to be surprising Ms. Carlisle a lot today.

“Sure.” I looked up to My Mountain's eyes. His smile nearly melted my being. A slight nod of his head, and I continued. “We feel like this week is about discovery and exploring. While we've connected and it is something we hope lasts a long time, we still want to... explore.”

“I agree with Becca. I know we have something... powerful is the best word I can come up with.” He looked at me and gave me another core-melter of a smile. “This week we're discovering each other and with the Program, we have a chance to explore beyond ourselves.”

Okay, I wanted to crawl all over My Mountain at that point.

“How do you want to pick?”

We scanned the room and noticed a lot of interest. The comments were hard to miss as well. Seems playing with the two of us was popular. We didn't need to talk, we knew. “The lottery.”

Before Ms. Carlisle could say anything, a line was forming. Already eight girls and two guys had lined up for the drawing. Every time Ms. Carlisle thought she had the right number of marbles, she'd look up and find the line had gotten longer.

“Okay, that's it. No more volunteers!” A couple of last minute deciders groaned, but sat back down.

The line began to move forward. Who is it going to be?

Am I ready for all this? When is Becky going to crater and go back to her old self?

Luis

What's happening to me? Yesterday morning, my biggest concern was rebuilding my body and beating East. Okay, get some studying done too! Now, I'm sitting naked in front of class with my girlfriend. Damn, that sounds nice. Girlfriend. Plus, I'm getting ready to have someone get my girlfriend and me off. I don't know if it is going to be a girl or a guy. This is an interesting week to let the world know I'm probably bi. That should go over in the locker room like itching powder in a jock strap. This 'not fucking with my leadership of the team' is about as likely as the weight bench taking itself on a couple of flying laps around the stadium.

WHAT THE HELL AM I DOING?

I looked at my sweetie and I knew. The right thing. For some reason, I also thought of my parents. They lived their life with love and compassion. At the same time, they didn't let the naysayers get them down. Their passion for life was boundless. Papa told me once, 'The best revenge is living better, and longer, than your enemy.'

It was up to me, then, to deal with my choices. I just needed to remember my parent's dignity and grace. Their passion didn't hurt either.

Plus, having a loving partner seemed to help. I looked at Becca again and smiled at her. Yep, gotta do something about these rubber legs. Our eyes were pulled apart when we heard an ear-piercing scream of joy.

Alice Murphy was bouncing up and down holding the black marble. When she bounced, it was a whole body kind of thing. Long, black hair going every-which-away, arms and legs moving in a fashion physicists would call Brownian Motion—completely random. While people say she has 'A Great Personality,' she really does. While not a beauty, not really even cute, she was in no danger of scaring little kids. She has an energy that is infectious.

"Oh-my-God, Oh My God! Oh! My! God!" She charged towards Becca and me, pulling up short, and still jiggling everywhere. "Thanks, you guys. This is way Kewl!"

"Hopefully, our pleasure," Becca beat me to the punch. "Are you ready?"

"Ah, guys... Ah... Umm... I don't really know what to do." She looked down at her shoes. In a softer voice, "I'm like... completely inexperienced. I mean I want to..."

Both of us hugged her at the same time. Sweetie surprising me, yet making me proud, Becca took the lead. "No problems, we'll help you and make it fun for all of us. Okay?"

Alice looked up, beaming. She nodded her head so strongly, she started the whole body-jiggling thing again. It felt really neat holding her while she was doing it.

"Luis or me first?"

"I... Ahem..." Alice turns redder than I do.

Becca took her hands and waited until she looked up. "Do you masturbate?"

Alice sputtered, started to deny it. "Everybody does," I added, while trying to project calm—in spite of my red face.

Alice finally collected herself, some. "Ah... Yes..."

"Then why not start with me? At last I've got plumbing you're familiar with." Wow! Where did I find this gem? Shy? Hidden? Wallflower? HA!

Alice looked into Becca's smiling, calm face and seemed to relax some. Suddenly, she looked at me, questions in her eyes.

"Alice, relax. Enjoy yourself. Learn. Explore." I felt the love flowing between Becca and me. In the moment, it seemed to wrap itself around Alice like a warm, fuzzy blanket. She relaxed and her excited, jiggly self returned.

"Play with my nipples, if you want to. You could even kiss them..."

"Ah... Luis... Would you help me?" Her eyes pleaded. I smiled at her and winked. I knelt down beside Alice and put my hand on the small of her back.

"She really likes to have her nipples teased. Touching, rolling, light squeezing." Alice slowly hefted Becca's beautiful, left breast. Carefully, tentatively at first, she began exploring the orb with her fingers and teasing the nipple. I watched, fascinated, as Becca's nipple puckered and hardened. I looked up to see Becca's eyes were closed—she was already headed to her special place. The place where her really good orgasms come from.

"Alice, if you'd like to explore more, I'd suggest going south. She's already about to blow."

“Already?”

“Oh, yes. Look at her face, the blush on her chest. Look how her hips are moving without thought, seeking. I'll be she's really wet right now.”

“Would you mind... I mean... Could I... Like, taste her?”

“Why should I mind?” She looked at me, smiled, and literally dove between Becca's legs. How wicked is this, I've got a front row seat! I had one hand on Alice's back, lending my moral support. My other arm was around Becca's waist, feeling her energy build. I studied Alice's technique. If she's a beginner, she's learning quick. She moved her tongue from side to side, brushing... pushing... stretching Becca's nether lips. She seemed to tease at the top with light touches, and grind at the bottom. Randomly, her tongue would slip inside Becca. Probing. Seeking. Pulling out juices and savoring them. Becca's energy turned to squirms and jerks. She did her best to look down to see what was happening to her. Then Alice would touch her clit and her head would shoot back on its own.

Becca was unusually quiet, from what I've seen so far. Her breathing was sharp, panting at times. Occasionally, a rumble would escape from deep inside. Her whole body began resonating with Alice's tongue movements and some special, inner song. I wished I could see more of what Alice was doing.

After a particularly viscous tongue thrashing, or so it seemed to me, Alice sucked Becca's clit deep into her mouth. The resonating, vibrating girl I had my arm around turned to hot marble. Frozen. Eyes clamped shut. Mouth wide open in an unheard scream. Breathing stopped, muscles locked while Alice continued trying to deep throat Becca's clit. Then she pushed in a couple of fingers.

A good friend, when I was growing up, was an epileptic. Becca out did the wildest Grand Mal seizure I've ever seen. I don't think she was trying to swallow her tongue, though. No breath, no sound. Just random and violent muscle firings all through her body. Every muscle was playing the game.

I started to pull Alice away, but Becca had already trapped her head with both hands and wasn't about to let go. About the time I thought I'd need to get EMTs for both, Becca collapsed. She didn't relax, the marble that came alive just turned to a mass of protoplasm and melted onto the chair. Thankfully, I had my arm around her and kept her from oozing onto the floor.

Alice came up sucking air, but with a grin that would melt Pluto. I could only look at her

with awe. She kissed me on the nose, and then fed me her fingers.

“For you!” Ah, essence of Becca with a slight hint of Alice. Delicious.

Ms. Carlisle came up behind Becca and supported her.

“If we have to wait for her to recover, it will be the end of the next class.” I heard more than one giggle from the class. Alice looked at me, with Becca's juices on her face. She looked perplexed.

“I don't know what to do for you.”

Ms. Carlisle jumped in. “Explore. Right, Luis?”

“Alice, it's okay. Just explore. I'll help and I'm sure when Becca returns to the land of the living, she'll help too.” That got a chuckle from Alice and Joan. “Just have fun. I'll answer any question that you have. I'm sure Ms. Carlisle will contribute as well.”

“Ah... Thanks, I guess.” She reached out and put her hand around Junior, feeling his weight. “Why are you so big?”

Before I could answer, Joan jumped in. “Alice, just as you have no choice about the size of your clitoris or nipples, Luis has no choice about his size.”

“But... He's HUGE!”

“Yes, he is.” Joan paused for a minute. “Alice, think about this. A woman's vagina comes in different sizes as well. They are short, average, and long in length. Just like a man's penis. With Luis's size, over 80% of the women in the world would not be able to rub pubic bones with him without experiencing discomfort, if not outright pain.”

“Oh!” Alice's eyes got really big. “So, how does he fit? My fingers feel huge when I put them in.”

“I imagine most women would find him uncomfortable on entry, no matter how well lubricated they are. A large percentage of women wouldn't be able to comfortably adjust to his girth.” Before Alice could say anything and before I completely lost my erection thanks to the 'good' news, Joan went on. “Now, think about Luis and how he feels. So much pleasure denied him.”

“Oh!” Alice's eyes got big as she looked into mine. I'm sure she felt my pain. I couldn't help but brighten up as I looked into her eyes. So eager to learn—yet so unsure. Yep, about like me.

Joan continued, “You have a unique opportunity to touch, feel, measure, and stimulate a very unique specimen. Why don't you heft it the same way you did Rebbecca's breast and start from there.”

“How big is he...? Excuse me, Luis, how big are you?”

“Alice, I don't know. I've never measured him. Junior has actually ended most of my relationships just because of his size.”

“Scared?” Joan asked. I noticed that since the kiss I thought of her as Joan, in private. Always Ms. Carlisle in public. I need to be careful.

“Oh, yeah. Too much to go into right now. Alice wants to explore. Alice?” She looked up. “Have fun. Okay?”

She nodded her head and put her hand around the crown. God, that felt nice. The warmth was overwhelming. Joan took her on a tour by suggesting places to touch and different ways of touching. Alice's hand was stroking the whole time while she explored with another. When student and teacher got around to hefting and exploring my balls, I almost lost it. I wanted to give Alice more time, so I forced my mind to think about the Cosmological Constant and how the notion and definition has changed over... Shit, that feels good. Over time, that is. Oh, God! She's kissing her way down the shaft now. Think of something else. East's big center. Yeah. Hairy bastard. And she's got an inch of me into her mouth now. Oh, yeah... Ummm.... Okay, bench-pressing 600 pounds... that would be easier than trying to get my mind off Alice sucking on my cock.

She's swirling her tongue on the head and teasing the spot at the base of the crown. I want Becca to share this with me. If I could only open my eyes. I have... TO... HOLD...

Alice started jacking my shaft harder and faster. SHIT. SHIT. FUCK! I could barely hear Becca whisper in my ear, “Do it, My Mountain. Give it to her.”

Just before my moans and grunts blocked my hearing, I heard Joan telling Alice to be ready. “Don't stop stroking, whatever else happens.”

A lightning bolt came through the crown spot at the top of my head, my toes met my heels,

my balls must've retracted because I couldn't feel the hands—yes, hands—on them anymore.

There were whispers I couldn't make out. The voices sounded familiar. A moan from a third person that rattled my very core. Just as the first surge started its journey, a finger found my prostate and pushed. I shot—not spurted—shot. I shot again and again. The world went black, yet was filled with explosions. A few millennia passed. Slowly, Becca's voice entered my dreams.

“Thank you, My Mountain.”

“WOW!...” Cough, cough, “is there... always...” Cough, cough, “so... much?”

“Alice, I'm sorry. I pressed on his prostrate.” Was that Joan's voice?

Becca was nibbling lightly on my ear and cooing. Someone was still gently stroking Junior. An occasional lick sent shivers up and down my spine. Was that applause in the background?

“Ugh... Augh...” I think I was uttering. My vision was slowly returning.

“Hmmm... My Mountain has marked another love slave.” Becca whispered in my ear as I finally managed to pry my eyes open.

“Thank you, Alice...” Breathe. Remember. Breathe. “That was wonderful!”

She beamed. Marked was right. She had a small stream running out of the corners of her mouth and puddles on her blouse.

“Thanks guys!” Ms. Jiggles started up again. I couldn't help but smile as she talked rapid fire without breathing. “Luis, that was so neat! And, Rebbecca... WOW! Thank you, so much. I can't believe I did that. To both of you. This is so cool. Awesome. And, Ms. Carlisle. Thanks for your help and teaching me and making this just so wonderful...”

“Breathe, Alice.” I managed to get out. Hell, I was running out of breath listening to her.

“Alice, my pleasure.” Becca assured her.

“Mine, too.” I smiled at her. Whoever connects with her is gonna be in for a treat. She's just so nice and eager!

“Thank you for the wonderful gift.”

“Me too.”

“Okay, this could go on all day. Let's get class started for real.” Ms. Carlisle handed towels to the three of us. Alice proudly turned hers down. Becca cleaned me as I cleaned her. I kinda like that! Ms. Carlisle indicated that Becca and I should stay in our chairs up front. Alice was welcomed to stay up front, but declined and proudly strutted/jiggled back to her seat. Tim and Shirley had returned. Judging by the smiles on their faces (and Shirley's glow), they had done an excellent job of mutual relief.

The rest of class was a discussion of the Program, moderated by Ms. Carlisle. Pretty standard stuff, but she did lead it around to our role as seniors. She left us with the charge that we were the role models others should emulate.

Our walk to Art was quiet. A welcome break from the day. Becca and I held hands and she seemed to be content not to talk. I was just enjoying being with her and the calmness of the moment. This day has been a whirlwind.

Just as we got to class, she spun in front of me and wrapped her arms around my neck. Okay, I had to bend down, but who am I to complain!

All my thoughts disappeared when her lips met mine. We were doing a decent mutual oral exam with our tongues when Francesca walked up.

“Well, there's no public around, so I guess this isn't PDA.” We broke our kiss and tried to look ashamed. I think our grins gave us away. “More kissing, less war. That's the way the world should be.”

“Hugs are good too!” I held out my free arm to Francesca. Becca did the same and we enjoyed a brief three-way hug. There was more than one chuckle shared.

“Luis, I want to release you from your promise to pose—this week. If I can have you pose from time-to-time during the year.”

“I'd appreciate that. Any Wednesday during the season and whenever you'd like after.”

“Deal.” She held out her hand. I shook it, and then hugged her before she went into class.

“I was looking forward to posing with you today.” Becca looked downhearted.

“I was too, sweets. But, today is my last day to build strength before Friday.”

“Why?”

“After the workout I need to do, it will take my body three days to recover. I'll be at my physical peak for the game.”

She reached down and grabbed Junior. “Seems like you've already peaked today.”

“Keep doing that and I will again! Plus, I'll be worthless in the weight room.” Ah, the sacrifices I make for sport.

She gave me a mischievous smile. “Later, then. See you at seven?”

It took me a minute to shift gears. Dinner! Her house! “I'd be there with bells on, if I had any place to put them.”

“Just take a shower and bring your appetite. Both of them.” With a wink and a kiss, she went into the studio. This was not the same girl I watched hesitantly strip yesterday morning!

I practically floated to the gym. I went through the girls' locker room, just because I could. Damn! No one there. My smile disappeared as I walked into the weight room.

Coach McFarland was standing there with two assistants. They didn't look happy at all. Coach Mc stared into my soul with a look of absolute disgust.

My bowels started to turn to water as I realized the only time I had ever seen that look from him was when he was getting ready to throw someone off the team for some great crime. Something like drugs, being arrested, or other bad shit. What had I done?

The two assistants pointed to the weight bench and said, in stereo, “Sit!”

Coach Mc took one last look at me, turned and walked out of the room. As he was leaving, he waved to his executioners to take over.

Chapter 18 – Tuesday Afternoon

“Trading Secrets”

Rebbecca

When I walked into art, I tried. I really, really tried. I had so looked forward to posing with Luis. Something magical happened when we posed together. With everything else that has happened today, well... Damn it!

“Rebbecca?” Ms. Rotella's voice cut through my pity party. “I have a project for you today.”

I think I stared blankly until I saw the warmth in her eyes.

“Yes, ma'am?” I really wanted to go hide and be miserable. I'm really good at that.

“I want you to produce a series of sketches for me today. I want you to do Luis's eyes when he looks at you.”

At first it felt like a punch in the stomach. She was going to make me dwell on what I wanted to have right then and there. Just as I started to work up a combination of anger and pity, the creature that lives within me took over. I had thousands, no, millions of mental snapshots of Luis's eyes.

“If you'd like to do a canvas, I'll accept that.”

It took me a minute to process what she said. “Thanks, Francesca. Oops. Darn. Sorry, Ms. Rotella.”

“Rebbecca, that is the kindest thing you could have said.” Her smile was soft and warm.

“I'm having him over for dinner tonight.” I don't know where that came from.

“Well, you should get out of here and go get ready, then.” Her eyes lit up. I think she was happier about what was happening than I was!

“Mom's not picking me up until after class.” God, I couldn't even get fired up about

getting closer to being with Luis.

“So, call her.”

“Thank you.” I hugged her, then called mom. She'd be there in five minutes. What the hell?

“You might want to take this home as well.” She handed me the portfolio she'd been helping me prepare for college.

I'm sure I did the perfect John Belushi with my eyebrow. Yes, my parents had *Animal House* and had insisted I watch it more than once.

“Don't you want to show Luis?” She feigned perfect innocence.

In that moment I found something. I don't know what. It was burning inside. A new... growth? Whatever it was, there was a lightness that came with it.

“Then how could I attract him in here to use the divan?” I swear the person driving my body batted my eyelashes.

Francesca patted my hand and said with a delightful chuckle, “You'll do just fine.”

Okay, I hope so. In a daze I left the studio, Francesca's little chuckle bouncing around in my head. When I got into the car with mom, I tried to evaluate where I was, who I was, and what was going on. She had the radio on, tuned to one of her Classic Rock stations. I had no idea what the song was. Something about a white room at some station, I think. It was the same music that Luis liked. He has such broad tastes. I haven't seen much current stuff in his collection—the kind of thing I blindly listen to without really hearing.

“Hi, Becky. Ready?” Oh. My. God! It felt so good to hear that.

“Hi, mom. I think so.” I tried to brighten my smile.

“You've had a day, haven't you?”

I think this new thing growing in me took over. Or, maybe I just let it out. One way or the other, I told mom about my day. Everything, including getting relief and my disappointment over not posing with Luis. I tried to explain the weirdness I was feeling. Mom listened with only the occasional question to get me to explain or amplify.

Now, the market where we shop is a fifteen-minute drive from school. Yet, here we were already.

“Becky, thank you.” She hugged me. I hugged her back and started crying.

“Mom, what's going on with me?”

“Becky, I wish I could give you a simple answer that would make you feel good. You're just doing a whole lot of growing up, real quick. It's confusing. It's scary.”

“Why does it hurt sometimes?”

“It always does. You're just finding ways to talk about it. That's part of growing up. Now, let's prepare dinner for your monster.”

“Mountain, mom, My Mountain.” She was chuckling, having said that just to get a rise out of me. I laughed with her. Then, one of the 'Oh, Crap' moments. “Oh, God, Mom! I don't know what to serve him!”

“It's okay, Becky. I've been feeding a football player for years, plus I talked to Jason about what he knows about Luis's diet. Stop worrying. Let's go shopping.” She hooked her arm in mine and practically skipped towards the store. Okay, why not? Why? I stopped her.

“Mom. I'm confused... Lost? Yeah, lost. What's going on?”

She stopped, took me by my shoulders, and looked me in the eyes. “Becky, I'm a bit lost myself. I got my daughter back last night and I don't want to lose her again.”

“Mom, I promise I won't push you away again. It was all so stupid. I got lost—confused—and decided that no one could help, so I just disappeared.”

“You did it well. You pulled into yourself and dove into art and writing. You pretty much stopped having anything but necessary contact with people. I am glad that you kept a relationship with Jason, though.”

“You know about that?”

“I'm not blind! I've always had an idea of what you were up to. I never gave up on being your mom. I just knew I couldn't push you.”

“I really convinced myself that you and daddy didn't care. I even told Jason that yesterday morning.”

“Hopefully, that's the past.”

“It is.” I gave her a hug and a kiss on the cheek. When I pulled back, I had to ask, “You know, mom... I'm standing in a store parking lot. Naked. And... I don't feel strange. Why?”

“I'm really not surprised. That's the old you.” She had a grin on her face and looked like she was repressing a chuckle. I'm sure I was doing the John Belushi thing again.

“Huh?”

“I had trouble getting you into clothes. Then I had trouble keeping you in them.”

“I don't remember that.”

“Oh, yeah! My little nudist. You probably don't remember the long, family vacations we used to take.”

“Vaguely. I remember I got the top bunk because Jason was too young.”

“Do you remember that it was a nudist resort?”

“WHAT?”

“We'd go in June for a month. I'd spend the rest of summer trying to get you back in clothes.”

“No, I don't remember... Really??”

“Oh yes! Becky, my exuberant nudist!”

“So... This is like reverting? Escaping. Isn't that bad?” I guess all my study on psychology was helping. At least with the terminology.

“Do you think it's escapism? I don't. I see the positives of the 'old you' coming out. You're required to go nude at school and that's just awoken something that's been sleeping

too long. That person was very comfortable with her body.”

“Then... does that explain why I'm suddenly so comfortable in my skin?”

“That and all that has happened in the last two days. You haven't had much time to really think about it, have you?”

“No. I guess not. It seems I've had too little time for a lot of things.” I thought of Luis. We had only spent a couple of hours alone last night. I wanted more time with him. Alone. Just to be with him. Not sexual, just being with him. Talking, snuggling. Okay, the occasional kissy-face break!

I was still bothered about the nudity thing, though. “I just keep waiting for the freak-out to happen, though.”

“If you wait for it, it might very well. If you just live in the moment, it won't.” God! She sounded just like Luis. Which is not a bad thing, is it?

“I love you, mom.” I kissed her, put my arm through hers, and started to skip into the store. “So, what are we shopping for?”

“Well, not Italian food! There is no way I can compete with his mom.” Mom is actually a very good cook, but I understood what she was saying.

“After last night, I have a whole new appreciation of food.” She giggled with me. Yep, there was that silly, girly sound. It felt really good, though. “So, what are we going to fix?”

“We're going to have my grandmother's leg of lamb with fresh vegetables and some homemade bread. For dessert, an old fashioned English pudding.”

“Ooh... We haven't had the lamb in a while. That sounds so good.”

“Well, I'm going to teach you how to make it.”

I stopped. “Really?” Can we say dumbfounded? Family secrets?

“Yes, my sweet, lovely, precious, beautiful, smart, talented princess.” Okay, my eyes got moist.

“Thanks, mom.”

“I love you, Becky.” Okay, more than moist. Part happy tears, part regret. “Now, let's go talk to the butcher. I called this morning and he has a few choice legs for us to look at.”

We were going to look at legs and I guess the butcher was going to get to look at more than legs! I tried to decide if I liked that thought or not.

‘What's not to like?’

‘Oh, hi Muse.’

‘You're a beautiful girl. He should enjoy looking.’

‘You're biased.’

‘Yep! And don't you ever forget it!’

I learned all about legs of lamb. Broken bone and unbroken bone. Shanks and such. The quality and thickness of the sheath and... And... And not to buy frozen. He had some locally grown legs that were fresh. One was a monster that, by my guess, could feed a family of twenty. Or, as mom pointed out, three normal people and two football players.

Lambie-pie in the cart and we were off for the veggies. I learned which should be hard, which should be soft, or which should be ‘just right.’ How smell really mattered. What worm holes looked like. How to look beyond the outer leaves of some. What bruises looked like on the outside and how to avoid them. A graduate course in veggies.

“Mom, Luis got me to eat anchovies last night. I really liked them on a thin slice of sweet onion. What can we introduce him to that I can feed him?”

“Appetizer?”

“Yeah, I guess.” We talked strategy, family history, and spent more time than we should have finding the perfect things.

We rushed home and I learned how to cook. Okay, I began to learn how to cook, really cook. It is part art, part science, and a whole lot of experience. Spending time with mom was great. She even stripped and found aprons for both of us. Mine said, ‘*Kiss the Cook*’ and hers, ‘*It's My Kitchen/I Have Knives/Questions?*’

I never realized how much there was to learn. It really is an art with a lot of science, just like painting. You don't just chop each vegetable the same way. Instead, you have to treat each as a unique individual and find a way to bring out its flavor.

The leg of lamb preparation was part religious ceremony and part arcane science with strange incantations. We worshiped for about fifteen minutes. I kept thinking how I wanted this to be perfect for my new boyfriend.

Best of all was the way mom and I were interacting. Two nude females—am I a woman yet? Well, two almost nude females working together in the kitchen. Mother teaching daughter new skills and family secrets.

“Thank you,” I hugged mom, just before we put the leg in the oven.

“Becky, I...” Sniff. “Love...” Sniff. “You, too.” We enjoyed a mutual, happy tears fest.

“So, do tears add flavor?” I asked, trying to wipe the tears off my cheeks.

“The best. This will be our secret ingredient.”

We put the leg in a very hot oven and set the timer, then took a break.

“Secret ingredient?”

“Becky, my mom was... Let's sit, we have nothing to do but talk for fifteen minutes.” We sat next to each other at the breakfast bar. She put her arm around me. “Honesty?”

This honesty thing seems to be a two-way street. WOW!

“Sure, mom. If we can't be honest with each other...”

“Well said.” Mom collected herself. “Your grandmother was a total bitch. She wanted to control every aspect of my life, including the way I thought. I hated her. Her mother, for a while, was my only savior. So, when you changed... I'm so sorry.” Tears streamed down from her eyes.

“It's okay, mommy. I made my choices, not you.”

“I know sweetie. But I let you because of my mother. I should have talked to you, understood you, instead of abandoning you. There was a middle ground I didn't see

between the controlling bitch I grew up with and the hands-off mother I became. I fucked up.”

“MOTHER!”

“Yes, Becky, I fucked up. I gave you the freedom I thought my grandmother had given me without realizing how important all the talking we did was. I let you stop talking to me. I'm so sorry.”

“Mommy, I didn't give you a choice.”

“Oh, but I did have choices. I left you to it, figuring you would come out of it. Five years later, you hadn't. I insisted you be in the Program.”

My arms and my mouth went into independence mode because my arms ended up wrapped around my mother's neck and my mouth saying, “Thank you!”

Who is this person driving my body around? Well, after two days of... Yeah, two days of! Actually, I kind of like her and I think I'll keep her.

'Good idea.'

'I'm glad you agree, Muse.'

“I really mean that, mom. Thank you for putting me in the Program.”

“I know you do, sweetie. It's been tough, yet...” She struggled to find the words.

“Me, a writer, and I can't come up with the words either.” I hugged her tighter than I ever have. I could feel our mutual happy tears on my shoulders and chest. “This is what you mean by the special, secret ingredient? Love.”

“Yes.” We added an extra helping.

My father walked in and did the most perfect thing. He laughed. Not mocking. Trust me, my observer is well attuned to that. No, just pure joy and love.

And the stupid, fucking timer went off. Oops. I hope I kept that one to myself.

Dad's laughter and the well-intentioned timer were a catalyst. Mom was laughing and

chuckling as she tended to the leg. I was trying to suppress a snorkel as I started prepping the veggies. Daddy hugged and kissed us. I noticed that the one he gave mom was more like what I'd do with Luis. That put a big grin on my face. Mom whispered something about later to him, and then he headed out to change, shaking his head on the way and still chuckling.

I never realized how much fun cooking actually was! Mommy taught, I learned. We talked the whole time. We laughed; we cried a bit more. To me, watching the food we bought a few hours before become a feast was awesome. I hoped My Mountain would like it.

“Becky, think of it this way. I watch you create with a brush or a pen. No matter how hard I try to learn and how patient you are as a teacher, I'll never be able to do what you can. This is my canvas. I'm not as talented as Ms. Contadino, but I ain't half bad!” I felt like I got it.

“Cooking is more like what Francesca does when she sees a block of marble. I cheat, in a way. I don't worry about the painting the canvas wants to have on it, or the story the paper wants to tell. I see that cooking is listening to the food and what it wants to become.”

“That... You amaze me Becky. You're so smart. But, you don't cheat. You see a picture in your head and can make others see it as well.” She paused and dabbed at her eyes. “When you say it that way, it is the same with relationships. It's about two people finding the best in each other and finding ways that build on that to make a strong relationship.”

As I said, we talked. We laughed. We cried a little bit more. Not that we were being weepy females, just five years of shared tears that needed to come out. As mom pointed out, finding the best in each of us. I had ignored her and closed myself off from her. Now I felt deeply connected to her.

The dinner hour slowly approached. The meal only needed occasional tending. So, we prepared the dining room. Even daddy pitched in to make it right. When mom started talking about the meal in the store, I knew how the dining room had to be. After all, that's my gift—light and texture. They followed my direction without question.

Mom told me that she'd already asked Jason to pick up a flower arrangement for the table. I was impressed the way my family was jumping in to help. Daddy even ran out and picked up the finishing touches. While he was gone, mom and I talked about attire and our presentation. We traded time for showers and prepping ourselves, she also gave me advice on makeup and hairstyles. We even raided each other's closets and dressers looking for the right things to almost wear.

Quarter to seven rolled around and Jason came home. Right according to plan. Mom and dad briefed him on the evening and attire while I tended to the feast in the kitchen. The smells were wonderful. So good, in fact, that my tummy growled impatiently. Fortunately, no one heard it.

Then we waited for My Mountain to come to the Maiden. Or should that be the Virgin Princess?

Nervous? Me? Without mom's help, I'd have locked myself in my room and dove into a painting for about a month. Instead, here I stood in the kitchen, of all rooms of the house. I'm wearing high heels, sash, and one of mom's hats. Waiting.

Waiting and hoping that Luis and I could find some time to be alone. I just wanted to snuggle into him and feel him next to me. I want to get lost in his eyes. Hell, I just wanted to see him again.

Luis

Coach Ames, the defensive coordinator, and Coach Hammer, the offensive coordinator, just stared at me. They didn't move. Just examined every pore on my face and, from the way they were looking, the detestable, fetid sewer beneath.

My bowels churned.

“Charlie,” Coach Ames asked his counterpart, “where did I go wrong with this one?”

“Scott, I'm sure you did your best. Some of them just ain't gonna get it.”

“Do you think this one can be salvaged?”

They pulled out their microscopes again and examined every square inch of my soul with their eyes. I couldn't tell if there was a change in their assessments. If I had had the nerve, I'm sure I would be shaking.

“Well, maybe. Might be more work than it's worth.” Coach Hammer turned his head and spit into his Styrofoam cup—always in his hand. He loved his Red Man. I felt like the bottom of that cup.

“Let's see if we can purge the devils out of him. It seems he likes to lift heavy objects. Think we can find his limits?”

“Either that or we break him.” They both grinned. It flashed through my mind how Lucifer must look as he got ready to torture a new soul for eternity. I think they outdid him.

“What do you think, Olympic lifts?”

“Yeah, I think he needs to burn a little energy. Snatches first?” They just chuckled as they loaded the bar with weight. One of them hit the button on the boom box. Donna Summers, later followed by the Bee Gees and other alleged scions of the Disco era blared out. Oh, they knew how to torture every part of me! At least it wasn't Abba or most of the current crap clogging the airwaves today.

The two assistant coaches kept me in the weight room for over two hours. From the snatch to the clean-and-jerk, then on to individual muscle group lifts. Penance for my sins? Atonement for my mistake? I paid the gods in sweat and muscle mass. Free weights the whole time, setting personal bests for each exercise and got close to Olympic records on the snatches. It never seemed “good enough” for the coaches as they continued their discussions about me while ignoring me.

Then the bench. I swear they sat on the bar or brought in the whole team to do it. They certainly offered no positive feedback or spotting support. They were at least positioned to keep me from being too crushed should my hands or arms fail.

They didn't talk to me after the opening “SIT”, yet kept up a constant chatter between themselves. They talked about the interior offensive line of East. They mentioned, more than once, what an honorable man Dr. C was. Respect was the common theme. There seemed to be a constant, underlying theme of how some good people can turn out to be pure scum.

When it seemed I couldn't raise a thought, they brusquely dismissed me. I don't think I've ever been so glad to stagger out of the weight room. I'd rather have Becca's version of rubber legs than the rubber body I had at the moment. Somewhere in the process, they had removed all the bones and just left a deflated, pulverized mass behind.

Dressing for the rest of practice was easy, at least in terms of logistics. The actual process was hell on Earth. Tuesday's were padless walk-thrus. Pair of socks, cleats, and my helmet

and I was dressed. And, I wanted to die. When I got onto the field, one of the equipment managers helped me into a mesh vest indicating I was playing defense on the first string. It was a good thing I had help. Lifting my arms seemed the insurmountable obstacle at the time.

Coach Ames was all business as he walked the first string defense through formations and plays with the second string offense pretending to be East. I was secretly pleased that many of the maps I had done the night before were being used. Every now and then, Coach A would call me over to discuss and tweak one of them. No mention was made of the weight room, Dr. C, or Coach Mc's opinion of me.

For the moment, I could only assume I was still on the team. Perhaps in a bit of the doghouse—okay, the doggie basement, but still on the team.

After a bit, I came out of the exhaustion induced fog from the weight room. It dawned on me that no one was making contact with me. Normally, there was a fair amount of banging about in the walk-thrus. I pulled the defense together.

“Guys, is it bothering anyone the way I'm dressed?”

I got the expected denials and bullshit.

“Do you want East to win just because I'm in the Program?” Some head shaking, at least. “Well, if we don't get fucking serious, right now, you're gonna find out I can hit you a lot harder than those wusses from East can.”

Grumbles.

“What, if you touch me, you might be a fag? That's bullshit and you know it.” Nods from most everyone this time. “Let's show this offense that we mean business. Let's lay these little puppies on their asses this next play. Maybe the next play they'll want to get serious too.”

Less grumbles, but a long way from enthusiasm.

“Okay. Here's the deal. This week I'm in the program. Next week, any one of you might find yourself this way. Get past it. Yeah, this is the first year they've targeted football players during the session for the Program. Let's show them it doesn't matter.”

That got their attention.

“Let's lay them out.” Thanks, Marcus—our wrecking ball of a middle linebacker. After the next play, not a member of the offensive unit was standing. Coach's whistles and the phrase “next week it could be you” were heard all around the field.

As the center came up to the line for the next play, I said, “Just think, next week you could be showering with the cheerleaders.”

Things straightened out after that. We got serious and people forgot I was naked. Hell, so did I. I'm sure it was because of the attitude my parents had about it. While we're not formally nudists, clothing has never been an issue around our house. Well, maybe not in the moment. I was too worn out to think that deep. Maybe not!

I was doing good getting through plays at half speed after my “little” workout! We spent the last few minutes of practice in the gym running through our secret plays. Out of the sight of scouts and spies for East and the other schools we would be playing this year.

When practice ended, the coaches called us over. They covered our game plan for Friday and reminded us that tomorrow was media day. The juniors and seniors would have to stay late and handle questions from reporters. Standard stuff and necessary for getting more players onto All-Conference and All-State teams.

They dismissed us, but indicated I should stay behind. I think my bowels were too tired to churn this time. How I was standing is still a mystery to me.

“Your head on straight, son?” Coach Mc asked me, staring hard in my eyes.

“Yes sir!” I looked back, but was not challenging him. I don't think I was pleading through my eyes. Take it like a man. Bullshit. I just wanted to find out where I stood.

“Good. Now, don't cause me any more problems.”

“Will do, Coach. And, I apologize.”

“Accepted. Now, take 5 laps before you hit the showers.”

Off I went. Even with the relief of being fully on the team, it took every ounce of energy I didn't think I had left to pick up foot, move forward, pull body over top of it, repeat. For twenty-two hundred yards. Sixty-six hundred feet. Ten billion steps, or so it seemed.

I was so dead when I got to the girl's locker room, the sight of all the naked cheerleaders did nothing for me. Junior would not even respond to the reasonable (and unreasonable) requests in the showers. Their bloody music didn't help. Aren't they a little old for the Hanna Montana types? I finally managed to escape estrogen hell and found Jason waiting for me outside the door.

"Are you ready for dinner tonight?" He looked at me with real doubt in his eyes. I know I must look like hell.

"Jason, right now, I just want to crawl in a hole and die." Where's the nearest shovel. Could I get Jason to dig the hole?

"They work you hard today?" Here's your sign, I thought.

"No shit, Sherlock! If I had the energy, I'd punch your arm."

"I'll take a rain check. Look, I've got to stop by the florists on the way home. Some stuff for the table, apparently. Did you want me to pick up anything for you?"

My oxygen-deprived brain finally started cranking and managed to get up to snail's pace. On crutches.

"Damn, I didn't even think about that."

"After your day today, I'd have been surprised if you had."

"Could you pick up something for me? Something for Becca and your family? I'll pay you for it."

"Luis, you get at least two sacks and shut them down up the middle and it's on me. When I score with those plays you came up with, that will be gravy."

"Deal." We sealed it with a shake.

I ran by the house, changed into my "semi-formal/better than causal" attire for the evening. A pair of nice, leather sandals and a silk scarf around my neck. At two minutes to seven I was knocking on Becca's door.

Mrs. Davis answered the door. She was wearing a very stylish, wide brimmed hat, a matching sash, and matching gold high heels. Being around nudity for a couple of days, it

took a moment to realize that is all she had on. She looked damn good. I could instantly see where Becca got her beauty.

“Luis, welcome. Please come in.” She gave me a friendly hug, or tried to. She's a little shorter than Becca and with the correspondingly shorter arm reach.

“Thank you, Mrs. Davis. I brought these for you and your family.” I presented her with a nice arrangement of flowers that Jason had left outside for me. He has good taste, if I do say so myself.

“Why, thank you, Luis. You didn't have to bring anything.”

“Ma'am, hopefully my parents taught me better than that,” dodging the fact that Jason reminded me. “Besides, unexpected gifts...”

“Yes, they are the best. The flowers are beautiful. They'll be perfect in the dining room on the buffet so we can all enjoy them at dinner. Now, before we go any further, call me Helen.”

“Yes ma'am.”

“No, Helen.” She was smiling, though. If nothing else, my parents had drilled manners into my thick skull. Another form of social lubrication, my father said. Plus, a sign of respect. She led me into the living room while we chatted aimlessly.

“My husband, James Davis. Jim, this is Luis Contadino.” He was in proper attire as well. A nice pair of dress, but casual, slip on shoes. No socks. No pants or shirt either. He had a silk tie on—maroon with gold stripes. Harvard, if Poppa had taught me right. Looking a little closer without staring, I noticed the little 'HBS' stylized initials throughout the fabric – Harvard Business School. You done good, Poppa!

“Mr. Davis, a pleasure to meet you. My mother and father send their best to you and...” She caught my eye. “Helen.”

“Please, call me Jim. If I'm correct, we're going to be seeing a lot of you around here.”

“Thank you... Jim.” A little trick my father had taught me. Look 'em in the eye and hesitate. If they want you to be informal, the eyes will let you know. He looked genuinely pleased.

Helen produced glasses of wine. "Is it okay?" She asked before handing me the glass. They indicated a wing chair for me while they sat close on the couch. In the background, they had some Haydn playing—*Cello Concerto No. 2*, the *D Major*—down right cheery for a Concerto. I glanced around the room and noticed a huge collection of CDs and Vinyl. Plus, a sound system made up of individual components with what looked to be a VPI turntable—absolutely top of the line and worth four times what my car was!

"It's pretty standard on our table. My parents have been trying to teach me about wine for years." It was a nice little white with a delicate fruit bouquet. Not too sweet. Perfect. "This is wonderful, thank you."

"I've worked with your father for years. He's one of the most brilliant economists I know. And, your mother... Well, let's hope that you enjoy our modest fair this evening." Jim's words belayed the pride he took in his wife's cooking.

"Jim, Helen, I'm sure I will. After all, I have to eat my own cooking five nights a week." We shared an easy laugh.

"Do you plan on following in either of your parent's footsteps?" Jim asked.

"Well, as you can imagine, *The Economist* and *The Financial Times* are required reading around our house. Momma has also made sure I know my way around the kitchen and don't poison myself and others. Yet, they've let me find my own path." The Concerto had reached the *Rondo (Allegro)*. "Pardon me, Jim. Is this Haydn the one by Pablo Casals?" No doubt, one of my favorite Cellists. Right up there with Rostropovich.

"You have a good ear. It is an enhanced copy from the original 1917 acoustic recording." Jim had a big smile on his face.

"Lovely. I've only heard copies from 78s, scratches and all." This version was flawless.

"Well, later we can look through my collection." Jim looked like a little kid wanting to show off his toy collection. I understood his pride.

"That would be wonderful. Thank you." Helen had been patient with us until now.

"Becky has said something about Physics or perhaps coaching football?" Helen inquired. Pulling us back from Toyland.

"Ah, she already knows too much. Guess I'll have to keep her." That cracked her parents

up. “I know I want to pursue physics at some level, I just don't know exactly the field. It will definitely include cosmology, though. As for coaching, or even playing after this year, it all depends on how it meshes with physics.”

“As I understand, you could have a very promising football career if you choose.”

“Jim, I play football because I enjoy it. It has never gotten in the way of my studies. Yet, if I could put physics and football together, that would be heaven. MIT, Cal Tech, and Princeton don't exactly have powerhouse football programs, though.”

“Who is recruiting you?” It was the peak of high school recruiting time. I've been getting stuff since May of my sophomore year and calls since the first day allowed by the NCAA—the guardians of young student athlete's morals, I guess.

“I've made four official visits so far and have gotten calls at one time or another from almost all the Division One and some Division Two coaches. What I'm really doing is shopping academic programs and professors to give me a solid foundation for my graduate studies.”

“I didn't realize high school recruiting was so formal. I guess we should learn something about it.” Jim looked thoughtful. No doubt considering Jason's future.

“Definitely. It isn't a matter of choosing the school that offers the best car.” A laugh all the way around. “The NCAA is very strict about how colleges can approach high school students, what can be discussed, and when. It wasn't until May of this year that I could actually talk to the coaches directly or even talk about possible offers. Then I've got until signing day in February to decide. They are also very strict about how athletes can make money or what gifts they can accept, even before college.”

Just then, the *Rondo* ended. Jim grabbed a very nice looking LCD remote and started keying it. He just smiled at me as he made his selection. As the music started, he looked at me with a challenge. I listened to a few measures, settling on the one it had to be.

“Too easy, Jim. Wendy Carlos, *Switched on Brandenburgs...* Number 6, the Allegro.”

“If you play football half as well as you know music...” Jim was shaking his head as he turned the volume back down to a more comfortable background level for conversation.

“Official visits?” Helen's patience once again strained, brought us back from Grown Up Kid Land.

“Poppa and I travel to a school for the weekend. Meet with some of the players, the coaches, and, in my case, the professors in the physics department. I also have a workout where the coaches see what I can do on the field. At the end, so far, there's been an offer of a full ride scholarship and a chance for a place on the team at all four.”

“Which four?” Jim was now back into the conversation.

“Illinois, Stanford, UT Austin, and Georgia Tech.” I ticked them off on my fingers.

“Damn good schools all around. Any non-football schools?”

“Well, the top three I mentioned have all let it be known that an academic scholarship would be no problem. Even if I don't play football for them.” I couldn't help chuckle thinking of playing football at MIT. “I can see the score of an MIT game – Pi to E.”

Jim laughed with me; Helen just gave us that patient look all women seem to give men when sports is brought up. We sipped our wine, each lost in our own thoughts for a minute.

“Luis, I don't envy the decision that you're going to have to make. I'd be willing to be another sounding board for you if you want.”

“Thank you, Jim. I will take you up on it. I know the decision is mine and mine alone to make. At the same time, it impacts a lot of people around me. I haven't even had a chance to talk to Rebecca about it. I don't know what her plans are. As we grow together, that has to be a part of it.”

As if scripted, the subject came into the room looking radiant. Jim and I both stood. I didn't get a chance to check out his reaction. I'm sure my eyes were as big as basketballs and my tongue was mopping the floor. Oh, God! Junior was taking notice as well. Not now! I'm tired, I'm exhausted. I needed to keep telling him that. His response was that he hadn't worked out that afternoon and now he was with his favorite person.

I could face an offensive line without hesitation or fear. I had no problems fiddling with the mysteries of the physical universe. I could prepare a fine meal. I could hold my own in current events and economics. Yet, my Becca walks into a room and I turn into a blithering idiot. An idiot with the beginnings of an erection.

Magnificent was too weak a word to describe how she looked. She had on high heels, a

diaphanous material as a waist sash, and a large brimmed hat. Exactly like her mom, except in a ruby shade that set off her complexion, hair, and those beautiful eyes.

Helen went and stood by her daughter, linking arms. What a tableau they made. Helen's breasts were slightly fuller with a slight sag. She had that wonderful curve of a mature woman in her tummy, where Becca's was flat and tight, thanks to Yoga. Becca was a bit taller and Helen's nipples a bit larger. Jim came over to me and put his hand on my arm.

“As one man to another, wow! As a father to one and the husband of the other...”

“If I had Becca's artistic talents... No disrespect, sir, but I've got a new definition of the word beauty now.”

“Luis, the disrespect would be to not capture this. Let me get my camera.” When he left, I found myself with an arm full of Becca and a set of wonderfully soft and hot lips on mine. I couldn't help but pick her up and spin her around. When Jim returned, it took a couple of coughs and one ahem to get our attention.

Finally separating from Becca, we set about taking pictures of our goddesses. We each had a turn with them while the other took more pictures. The women took turns behind the camera to get pictures of their men, as well. Eventually, the head goddess informed us that any more picture taking and dinner would be ruined. I got a quick kiss from Becca before she left.

“Missed you, My Mountain.” She smiled and touched my face. God, I could just fall into her eyes and live there.

“Missed you, too, My Goddess.”

“I can't wait until later. I want some serious snuggle time with you.”

“At your service. Milady.” I bowed and kissed her hand. I very much enjoyed the view of her walking away.

Jason joined Jim and I as we headed into the dining room. He was dressed in the uniform of the day and sporting a natty bow tie. Cheryl, *sua regazza del giorno*, was on his arm and dressed like the other women: floppy hat, high heels, and a sash. She had a glow to her that I doubt was 100% embarrassment. I snuck a peek at Jason's cock and noticed it looked tired and well used. Good for them!

The dining room was a trip to earlier times. No electric lights, just candles. Pewter plates and goblets at each place. The room had a very Colonial feel to it. I felt as if I'd walked into a tavern in Williamsburg. I almost expected a young Thomas Jefferson to be joining us for supper. Becca and Helen had donned small aprons, as if they were serving wenches. Well, they didn't have the long skirts nor the accentuated cleavage, I wasn't complaining.

The assault on my nose made my mouth water and my mind started picturing luscious eats. The view was having its effects as well—Junior was beginning to rise to the occasion. I sensed that all three males were feeling the same way, yet we stood there waiting to seat the ladies. Jim had selected modern classics for the background music. King Crimson was telling us about *The Court of the Crimson King*. It wouldn't surprise me if he had some old Pink Floyd queued up, like *Ummagumma* or *Saucerful of Secrets*.

Becca and Helen curtsied and said, in a very wench like voices, "Aye, our heroes are here. Let the feast and debauchery begin."

I carefully seated My Goddess and managed some degree of near grace seating myself. When Becca draped a linen napkin across my lap, she took a moment to fondle and stroke Junior. Nervously, I looked around to see if anyone noticed. Helen appeared to have her hand in Jim's lap. Just as I started to look away, he looked at me. Oh, shit. Busted. Then, he grinned and gave me a little nod.

Crap, shit, fuck! My girlfriend's father is acknowledging that his precious daughter his giving her boyfriend a handjob while he's getting one himself. Looking at Jason and Cheryl, I could see they were enjoying the temporary freedoms at the table.

The food was arrayed across the table in a most attractive way. There were nuts, fruits, and sweets for nibbling on. A wonderful looking round bread, rolls, and steamed veggies. Typically Southern relishes of miniature sweet pickles, pickled watermelon rind, and spiced peaches. And the lamb! Oh, the lamb! Being a basic carnivore, it looked fantastic! And, bless their wonderful hearts, not a speck of mint jelly anywhere.

Helen began passing dishes around while Jim carved the lamb, setting the pieces on a platter. I couldn't take my eyes off that wonderful meat, even with Becca entertaining Junior. Eventually, dishes were coming our way and my appendage lost his friend.

My Goddess popped a piece of watermelon rind pickle in my mouth. "Try this, sweetie."

I enjoyed the sweet, yet tart flavor, "Thanks, Becca. That's one of my favorite kinds of pickle."

“Drat. I wanted to find something you hadn't tried before!” Her smile faltered.

“Around my house, that would be tough. Momma has us try everything.”

“Well, I'll have to keep looking then. A challenge, I love it.” Her smile returned full force. Damn, I love those eyes.

Helen poured wine for each of us. A deep ruby merlot, if I wasn't mistaken. As we settled into our food, the conversations began again. After praising the cooks, it drifted off into little subgroups. The girls talking about school, shopping, clothes, and whatever. The guys into sports and apparently my career.

I guessed right, the music shifted to *Ummagumma* and “*Careful With That Axe, Eugene.*” An interesting song for a meal. Fortunately, it was playing very softly.

“So, Luis. Should you go to, say, MIT. Would you still have an interest in football?”

“Actually, that scenario has come up. Apparently MIT and Boston College have some joint undergraduate programs. I could focus on physics at MIT, get my liberal arts and play football at BC. The only downsides, I'm not a real fan of Boston—it's too cold—and I'd have to take a lot of hours at both schools to be a full time student for my degree at MIT and be eligible for football at BC. The same with Cal Tech and either USC or UCLA.”

Jason looked at me, “I didn't realize you were being recruited so hard. What's it like?”

“At first, it's fun. I mean, having that many head coaches interested in you and pitching their schools and everything. Then it starts to get a bit old. By now, the word is out on who I'm generally interested in, so the Division II schools aren't calling anymore and anyone not in the top 30 last year has stopped as well. Jason, you and your dad need to read up on the NCAA's recruiting rules—soon.”

“What generated all the interest, Luis?” Jim asked. I hesitated. I just play the game to the best of my abilities. All the awards and stuff are the results of my coaches campaigning. They had a lot to do with who was recruiting me as well. Jason jumped in.

“Luis doesn't talk about it, but he was All Conference his freshman year, unheard of for a lineman. Then All State his sophomore year. All American last year and is rated one of the top defensive linemen in the country, according to Rankings.com.”

“You're right, I didn't realize that. Quite impressive.” Jim was truly impressed. I don't remember if he was at the end-of-year banquet last season. I don't remember if Jason was there. Hell, I barely remember being there, especially after I got the unexpected All American award.

“I just enjoy the game and try to play it well.” Here comes that artificial sunburn again.

Jason laughed. “Well? I wouldn't want to run into a line with you on the other side. But, what's all this talk about non-football schools?”

Jim saved me. “Luis was telling me earlier that he is split between studying at a school that focused on physics versus one where he could get his undergraduate grounding and still play football.”

“What about the NFL?” Jason asked. A sophomore and already thinking Pro!

“Too far down the road.” I said. This conversation was going places I didn't want it to go.

“Jason, when Luis and I were chatting before dinner, he was expressing concerns about the decision for college. So thinking about the Pros is a bit premature. It is a long way to get from college to the NFL.”

“Yeah,” I said, feeling the wind leave my sails. I'm sure Becca noticed Junior getting soft. “The horns of the dilemma I face. My mind and a huge part of my heart want to focus on physics. Yet, a big part of me also wants to continue in football as far as I can and one day coach. I don't see any way to do both. That's my problem in a nutshell.”

What had happened to my carefully scripted week? Now I was opening a door that I didn't want to open yet, but I knew I had to soon. All that on top of today and the Program! Conversation had stopped. Becca had moved her hand to my thigh and was patting it lovingly.

“Luis, I apologize,” Jim said sincerely. “I've turned a festive meal into a serious life conversation. I apologize to our two wenches as well, who have done such a magnificent job putting on this feast.” He took a deep breath, held it, and let it out slowly while he settled. I found myself trying to do the same thing. “Now, before we move this party back on to track, I'll make my offer to you again to be a resource for you. Yet, those conversations should be done over brandy and cigars in the study. And, not tonight. But, soon.”

“I'd be delighted to take you up on that. I need to decide within the next two months.” The complexity of the choices was still flooding my head. That's the real reason I kept putting it off, because I didn't have a perfect solution. Now, I also had a new complication to it. She was sitting right next to me. I took her hand and squeezed as much love into it that I could. I got a very loving squeeze back. I turned and blew her a discreet kiss and got a radiant smile in return.

“Well, that's decided. I suggest we go back to enjoying this delightful meal and allow the ladies to tell us how they plan to spend our fortunes.”

“Hear, hear!” I said a split second before Jason, as we raised out goblets in a toast. Becca chose that moment to whisper in my ear.

“I want my dessert directly from Junior tonight.” I missed Jim's goblet and almost made a mess with the wine. He looked at me with concern until he saw Becca at my ear. He broke into a shit-eating grin.

“To the ladies!” Was all he said, but with a chuckle in his voice. Junior was again rising to the occasion when she whispered again.

“Maybe you'd like some of my hot, cherry pie for dessert?” Corny? Yes. Effective? Hell yes! Junior went to full periscope height. If Becca hadn't pulled him forward when she started this round of stroking and whispering, he'd be above the tabletop trying to look around.

When Becca got up to help her mom clear the dishes, she released her grip on Junior. He sprang up and hit the bottom of the table with a resounding thud. It was more embarrassing than painful. Becca immediately dropped to her knees, grabbing Junior rather tightly. She pulled him out from under the table so she could inspect him.

“Oh My God! Oh! I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to hurt you. Poor Junior. I didn't mean to kill him!” She was nearly wailing.

Helen got up to see what the fuss was. When she looked down and saw her daughter with a death grip on my inflated cock, she stopped dead in her tracks. Mouth open. Eyes fixed.

Mr. Davis got up to see why his wife stopped and what was happening. I hoped his middle name isn't Eugene. When he saw what his daughter was doing, he roared...

Chapter 19 – Tuesday Evening

“Teach Your Children”

Rebecca

“I'm so sorry! I'm so sorry!” I pleaded with Luis to forgive me. I held on to Junior for dear life, afraid he might fall off or something. Junior's head was turning dark purple. Oh My God! I did that when I banged him on the table! NO!

I can't believe it. I've killed Junior. I heard my parents and realized what I was doing. I was on my knees, holding my boyfriends penis! Looking up, I first saw Mom. She was frozen, mouth opened. Shocked no doubt at the slutty behavior of her daughter. When I looked at Daddy, I was in tears and couldn't see well. Surely he is going to yell and scream. Then he's going to throw Luis out and ground me for life.

Even in my panic I realized I was hearing sounds I didn't expect. My Father was roaring with laughter. My Mother let out a few squeaks and started laughing hard as well. What? Then I heard Luis start to chuckle. Did you know, he rumbles when he chuckles?

What is going on here?!? By now, my parents are falling all over themselves. I could tell they were trying to suppress their laughter, yet every time one would calm down, the other would start right back up again.

“Like mother, like daughter.” My Father got out between fits, earning a smack on his arm from Mom.

“What's going on?” I heard Jason ask.

“Nothing.” My Mother choked out. “Why don't you and Cheryl step out for a minute, okay?”

“Whatever.” Apparently Jason and Cheryl got up to leave.

“Honey, you might want to lighten your grip. You don't want to break it off.” Mom said, still chuckling.

“But, I think I killed it.” I started crying big time. Mom was instantly by my side

whispering love into my ear.

“It's okay, Becky. Everything is fine.” She kept reassuring me. After I started to calm down, she suggested I let off the pressure.

I looked up at Luis. He had a really freaked out expression on his face. As soon as I realized it was probably my death grip on Junior, I relaxed and let go. I've killed Junior! I was playing with his penis in front of my parents!

I'm a slut.

I wanted to run to my room. I wanted to hide in my art. I wanted to get lost in my writing. I wanted to put clothes on and hide. I really wanted to let go of this world and bring back the world I owned. Being naked didn't matter, but I can't hide that way. I let the curtain of my hair do its best for the moment.

After Jason and Cheryl left, my Father spoke to Luis. “Stand up, please.”

“Sir?” In less than a second, a thousand emotions ran across My Mountain's face. I know I was as confused—no, perplexed.

“Please, just stand up and trust me.” Dad's voice was gentle, yet commanding.

CRAP! Sorry.... NO! It's the way I feel. Damn, damn, damn! What is Daddy doing?

Slowly, Luis stood. His face red. His eyes didn't contain fear, but a wariness. His hands automatically trying to hide Junior. He wasn't fully hard, but still obvious, even with the size of those hands. His wariness turned to sheepishness.

“Luis, hold your head up. You have nothing to be ashamed of. You got an erection. I imagine that you had some assistance. Personally, I don't want to know the details.” Luis tentatively nodded his head. “Son, your cock is the envy of most men and I imagine it has caused some problems in the past.”

“Yes sir, it has.” My father said cock? I better go place a bet on a snowballs chance!

“Look, it's what you've got—what God gave you, don't ever be ashamed of that. And, don't ever be ashamed of getting an erection. Okay?”

“Yes sir.” Some of the wariness returned to My Mountain's eyes. As if he were waiting for

the other shoe to drop. D-do my parents think that's the only reason I love him?

“Don't worry, Luis. Actually, Helen and I are quite amused. That is, if you're okay.”

“I'm fine. Actually, the treatment was almost worse than the injury.”

“Did I hurt you? I'm so sorry!” My eyes teared up again. The stairs are just around the corner, across the hall...

Luis wrapped me up into his arms and pulled me to his chest. “No, sweetie, you didn't.”

I was so relieved. I snuggled into him, My Cave. I didn't even think when I said, “Good. I didn't want to kill Junior before I had my way with him.”

Luis's chest started shaking like he was trying to suppress a sneeze or something. Behind me, I heard some snorts and snickers. OH. MY. GOD! My parents heard that! My eyes flew open and I looked up.

That did it. All three burst out laughing. I really wanted to hide! My face must be scarlet by now. Appropriate for a slut. Maybe I should brand the A on my forehead.

“Sweetie, it's okay.” Mom said. “Think about all you've been through in the past two days. How much has changed in you. You saw your boyfriend in distress, forgot all of us, and tried to tend to his cock.”

“MOTHER!”

“What? Can't I say cock? How about penis? Or, wanger? Wand? Johnson...”

“Tallywacker, rod, one-eyed trouser snake...” My Dad jumped in with.

“Willy, the one-eyed wonder worm...” My parents, at least I think it was them and not pod people, started laughing uncontrollably again. Even Luis was shaking with laughter.

“Sweetie, don't you think we know this stuff?” Mom was red-faced trying to control her laughter. She took my hand and pulled me out of My Cave. Dad took Luis into the kitchen while Mom and I sat. “Honey, have you and Luis had sex yet?”

“MOM!” I know my jaw hit my lap, my eyes must be the size of the dinner plates, and I could feel myself turning as scarlet as the letter.

“Honey, I’m not prying. Really. It’s important that we talk. Talk about everything. We need to be completely honest with each other and trust each other. Sex is the most hidden topic of all. If we can be honest and feel comfortable telling each other about it, all else will be easy.” Mom’s voice was loving—caring. She was holding my hand the whole time.

“I’ll try, okay?” Mom nodded. “To answer your question, no, not yet...” I choked up a little.

“Becky, what’s the matter?”

“I-I... I’m a slut.” And the tears started.

“What!” Mom hugged me into her. “You’re not a slut. Your hormones just finally woke up.”

“F-finally?”

“It was only a matter of time. I’d guess that part of your hiding was repressing them.”

“But...”

“Honey, have you felt like dragging anyone but Luis into the bushes?”

“Well...” I thought about PE and the shower yesterday and today. The looks I got from boys and girls. How those looks excited me. I remember, clearly, the look I had received yesterday and today from Rashad, a quiet boy in my art class. Then, I thought of the kiss today at lunch. “Yes. Rosalee.”

Mom actually giggled, then got serious again. “Does Luis know?”

“Ah—yes.”

“What did he say?”

“Go for it.”

“And Rosalee?”

“After L-luis and I-I... consummate.”

“Experimenting doesn't make you a slut.” She said that with authority. Perhaps from experience?

“W-what if it's not an experiment?”

“Then you'll know something you didn't know before.”

“You wouldn't be upset? I-I mean, another girl...” Mom got a brief look of wistfulness in her eyes.

“If it makes you happy and doesn't hurt anyone, how could I be upset?”

“Thanks. I love you.”

“I love you to. Now, what about you and Luis... when are you going to 'consummate'?” She giggled while she did air quotes.

“Ah... Soon?”

“I thought so. I thought it wouldn't be a long wait.” She gave me a wink and a smile.

“Not if I can help it.” Damn! When I open up, I open up. Maybe I'm the pod person.

“When?”

“Tomorrow night.” Mom's eyebrows went up, yet she gently squeezed my hand.

“You sound pretty sure about it. It's a big step. Are you ready?”

“More than. I talked to Mrs. Contadino last night. She doesn't mind me spending the night there with Luis. S-she... encouraged it.” Finally, my sniffles were going away. “I know that a football player in season doesn't have many nights during the week, so tomorrow night seemed the best time.”

“It doesn't seem that way for Jason.” She chuckled, “After seeing him at the start of dinner...”

“MOM!”

“And? Honesty, remember?”

“I know, Mom.” We shared a little giggle. “Seriously, apparently the physical demands on linemen are a lot different. Mrs. Contadino was telling me that it takes Luis most of the weekend to recover from a game. Often on Saturday, he never comes out of his room except to eat.”

“I can see that. His body must take a terrible pounding.”

“I'll find out.” I took a deep breath and thought about the week. “That's what worries me about Friday's game. I think I'm a distraction and he might not be ready for it.”

“Well, for the game, we can sit together and worry together. I've gotten gray hairs in every game Jason has played in. As for you being a distraction... that's something you and Luis need to work out. As long as you two communicate and be honest with each other, it will work out.”

“Thanks Mom. I'm sure sitting together will work. As for being honest, Luis insists on it.”

“Good. Now, back to tomorrow night. Are you sure?”

“More than I've ever been about anything.” I knew it at the core of my being.

She raised her eyebrows and just searched my face for signs. I was so positive, I knew in my heart so strongly, that I wasn't even blushing.

“Two things, then we'll get back to dinner. First, enjoy teasing Luis tonight, but be a little more attuned. Okay?” She looked like she was fighting down a chuckle. I couldn't blame her and managed a giggle myself.

“Attuned?”

“Slamming his penis against the table...” She was starting to loose it now. “God, that was priceless! And your reaction!” I couldn't help laughing with her, even while blushing.

“Damn, girl. You almost ripped that thing—Monster—off in concern.” She gasped, howled, and gasped again—trying to get herself under control.

The horror of what I had done, hurting him, flooded over me. I started to cry.

“Becky, it's okay. Really. It is okay. One thing you will learn, the penis is tough and tender.

Just like a male ego.”

I think I managed my best poleaxed steer impersonation.

Mom just laughed at my expression. It was a gentle laugh, not at all mocking. “With experience, honey, you’ll understand. That, and you can always ask me about it.”

“I’ll try, Mom. I will.”

“Don’t say try, Becky. Either do something or don’t. You either succeed or fail. Try doesn’t exist. I’m here to help you. Sometimes, that will mean picking you up when you fall, like tonight. Okay?”

“Thanks Mom.”

“Now, the second thing. Are you prepared for tomorrow night?”

“Prepared? Huh?” That stunned bovine was back again.

“Prepared. First, are you protected?”

“Yes, I got the shot yesterday.” She gave me a grin and a wink.

“Good. Aside from being responsible, that should help you with your periods as well.”

“MOM!”

“That’s part of being open. And periods are part of being a woman.”

“You’re right. It’s going to take me a while.”

“I know, sweetheart. You’re doing great so far.” The squeeze of her hand confirmed the warmth and love in her eyes.

“Thanks Mom.”

“Now, what about wardrobe?”

“Huh? I’ve been going around naked all week, if you hadn’t noticed!” We both giggled at that.

“Trust me on this. If you walk out of the bathroom in something special, you'll really arouse him. Plus, you give him the joy of undressing you.”

“Huh?” I seem to be saying that a lot these days. Well, the last two days, anyway.

“You're going to remember tomorrow night, or whenever it happens, for the rest of your life. Trust me on this. You only get one chance to make it special.”

“O-kay.... What do you mean 'if it happens'?”

“Nature has a way of changing your plans. I hope everything goes as planned, you just never know.”

“I can buy that. Now, what do I wear? I haven't a clue.”

“I'll help you tomorrow, if you let me.” I could see the faraway look in her eyes and a flash of a special time in years gone by.

“Thank you!” I stood and helped her up. We hugged. Damn, did that feel good. I'm convinced now that hugs are addictive and good for you.

“Still feel like a slut?”

“Ah-mmm...”

“You're not.”

“What about Rosalee and Alice?” I had told her ALL about my day while we were shopping and fixing dinner. Or, maybe that was the pod person.

“It sounds like Alice was experimentation. Rosalee.... That's something you, she, and Luis need to work through. Soon.”

“I guess. It's... It's weird.”

“You have a big heart. You'll do the right thing. I wouldn't worry about it. You know I'll support you no matter what you do.”

“Thanks.” I got one of those hugs I've become addicted to.

“Well, shall we let the others back in so we can finish dinner? I'm sure you want to show him your etchings later.”

“MOM!”

“Don't give me that, young lady. I expect you to take him to your room tonight and let him know how much you love him. He can stay the night if you want.”

“Wow! Thanks. But, I don't think so tonight. I know he's got to be dead on his feet. Jason says they put him through the ringer today. Twice.” Was that the pod person or the shock stunned one?

“Your call, dear. Now, let's get our men back in here so we can go back to fondling their cocks.”

“MOTHER!”

“What? You think you were the only one? Even Cheryl was playing the game.”

“Huh?” That damned bull with the headache was back.

“For someone that is normally so observant you are missing so much! I think you're head-over-heels, aren't you?”

“Huh?” Pod or poleaxe?

“Let's just get everyone in here and finish the main course. We'll have lots of time to talk. Okay?”

“Okay... I think.”

“Trust me, Becky.”

“I will, Mom.” We hugged again, fiercely. I did trust her, completely.

We walked into the kitchen and hugged our significant others and led them back to the dining room.

“Jason, see if Cheryl will let you up so you two can join us for the rest of the meal.” Mom

couldn't keep a straight face when she was yelling into the darkened family room. We all laughed.

"Just... A... Minute... Mom..." Was Jason's breathy reply. He must be lifting weights. Yeah, about 120 pounds worth! Damn. I blushed and got excited at the same time. I'm glad we had put towels down on the dining room chairs.

Walking back into the dining room, I had a chance to check out the table for the first time. We had been so busy getting ready, I hadn't had the chance before now. Everything did look perfect, even though we had already dug in. The platter of lamb was perfect. Everything had turned out the way I saw it my head. Inside, I clapped my hands and did a little happy dance.

I really have to ask Luis about this music. It really flows, but there is an abstractness to it. Maybe Daddy can help me and I'll surprise My Mountain. If only I hadn't tried to put my boyfriend out of commission! I put my hand on his leg—near his knee, when he sat down after doing the gentlemanly thing for me. My Mountain. My Knight. Literally, my savior and protector.

"I'm sorry for hurting you. I promise to be more gentle in the future. Forgive me?"

"Becca, I love you. Nothing to forgive." He kissed me. With his hand on the back of my head, I did my best to devour his tongue.

"Get a room, you two!" Jason demanded. I laughed with the rest, although I did sort of blush. I get so wrapped up in Luis that I blank everyone else out. I hadn't heard Jason or Cheryl return.

Conversation started again, as if nothing had happened. It seemed more relaxed now, it flowed. The music... Oh! I know this! Crosby, Stills, and somebody. About teaching your parents, I think.

The food was wonderful. Our secret ingredient really did make the lamb. It was a marvel watching My Mountain and Jason inhale the food. My hand was near enough to Junior, that I could feel him pulse every time Luis had some of the lamb. I think Daddy spent most of the meal carving more for the boys than eating his own food.

As the food disappeared, Daddy got our attention. "Helen, Becky, such a wonderful feast. The lamb is perfection. The beauty of the presentation, and our serving wenches... it is beyond the worthiness of us mortal men. Gentlemen, I think a toast of appreciation is in

order. Luis, would you do the honors?"

"Err—Thank you, Jim." My Mountain rose and raised his goblet. "To Helen, for passing down a tradition from her family. To Rebbecca, for learning it, well. To Cheryl, for adding her beauty to our Outreach. To our fair lamb... We've enjoyed you almost as much as the beauty and grace of these fine women. Thank you all." He raised his goblet.

Daddy and Jason stood, "Here, here!"

They each offered to clink—does pewter clink or clunk?—with their significant others first, then each of the other fair maidens. Finally, they clunked—okay, stick with clinked—their three together. Fair Maidens. In that moment, I knew a painting I had to do of Luis. The Great Warrior preparing for battle. His nude form coated with oil, his armor arrayed around him. His concubines (I almost thought odalisques, but those are virgins and these girls aren't) beginning to dress him. The muscles pumped up, yet relaxed. The glow of an orgasm radiating from him. And, them.

Conversation stayed light until the last knife, the last fork was resting on empty plates. Mom even agreed to share the lamb receipt with Luis, less the family's secret ingredient.

"Helen, you can trust me with your family secret." My Mountain said pleadingly.

"Luis, I trust you with my daughter, but this... Talk to Becky about it. She's the new keeper of the family secret." I only half-listened to the continued buttering up. Mom had just entrusted a family secret to me? As I digested that, I looked over at her. I saw the love and affection in her towards me—connection.

"Luis, My Mountain, I promise to make this for you, sometimes. I may even let you help. But, the secret ingredient? Well, that's not mine to share outside of the family." I gave Mommy a wink and a smile. She beamed back at me. I reached over and gave Junior a gentle tug to distract my man.

Males!

It worked.

"Luis," my Father said with mock seriousness, "I was thrown out of the kitchen while they were making this... this..." he looked at the remains of the lamb with a sad look. Oh no, he didn't like it! "Masterpiece!"

Good, no need to dig his grave tonight. Mom signaled her agreement. Although, keelhauling for teasing was still a possibility.

I let the conversation swirl around me while I thought about my erotic dreams. The music was helping me drift. My dad sure has strange tastes. Good, but strange. The current song has something to do about knights, satin, and the moon.

My hero was always based on a larger-than-life character who swept me off my feet and took me—ravished me. Here I am, sitting next to my larger-than-life hero! He's swept me off my feet, now it's time he took me. I reached over and gave Junior a little squeeze. My Mountain looked down at me and smiled. I melted, oozing over the sides of the dining room chair.

Mom caught my eye. Loving is the only way I can describe her eyes. I saw a glint of moisture, a small tear forming at the corner. I could feel the happiness and love she wanted me to find. I felt our secret ingredient forming in my eyes as well. Discreetly, she wiped the corner of her eye and winked. I wiped mine and gave her a wink back. My hand found its way back to Junior.

My mountain was in such trouble! With the backing of two incredible women... No, add Francesa. Oh, and Ms. Carlisle. And Mrs. Grant. Rosalee! I had an Army! Wow!

Mom and I served dessert and pleasant noises were made all around. I fed Luis and he attempted to feed me, but I didn't give him many chances. I was so lost in thoughts of tomorrow night and giving myself to him that I can't even remember what we made! That, and I kept falling into his eyes. Dark and deep. Gentle and intense.

As the meal wound down, Mom and I attempted to get up and clear the table. Daddy stopped us.

“My Fair Ladies, you prepared this perfect meal. It is only right that your warriors now step forward to battle the kitchen.” With that, the guys tackled the dishes and carried their plunder off. Mom topped off her wine and mine, giving Cheryl a token half-goblet.

Mom broke the silence at the table. “I like the Program. Best family meal I've had in a long time.”

“I feel... special? No, honored! Yes, honored to be, like, here and share this.” Cheryl said.

“How are you and Jason doing now?” Mom asked.

“Much better now. Me being gone most of the summer and then, like, when I get back, he's off to football camp. Like, that almost killed us.”

“He's over it now?”

“Yeah, and I'm almost over his...” I faded out. I thought I was close to Jase. Well, he was closer to me than anyone else before this week, yet I didn't know about Cheryl. God, I've really been selfish the last few years. My hiding was just another excuse to be self-centered. I had been alone not because no one would have anything to do with me. I had been alone because I had pushed everyone away.

“Becky?”

“Uh, yes, Mom?” Internally, I shook the pity-party off.

“Any advice you can give Cheryl about dating a football player?” She discreetly winked at me.

Our conversations earlier rolled over me. Apparently, Jase and Cheryl had hooked up off-season.

“Cheryl—”

“Please, call me Cheri.” I smiled and winked at her. Chair-ee... Bim-Bo. The lights are on and no one is home.

“Cheri, you have to understand their week and the different demands on them.”

“Yeah, I think I do. They, like, play games on Friday and have practice until dinner time during the week.” And the giggle. Oh my!

“Yes, and...?” Something I learned from my Father.

“Well, like, what's with the rest of the week?” Do we females really whine like that? Am I coloring my perceptions of her with my own stories? The music answered my question. All that hammered in was round-a-bout.

“What do you mean?”

“One day he's got more energy than, like, a nuclear power plant, the next day he's, like, wiped out. There are days he hurts for no apparent reason.”

Yes! I got it! I understood! I can help! She's not really a bimbo, just tuned into her peers and not into Jason! She's going round-a-bout. Stuck! “Let me walk you through the week, okay?”

“Yeah, I guess.” I could see the act in the feigned reluctance now that I knew what to look for. Interesting. Want to see a bimbo, see one. Want to look past it, then you see the person.

“Cheri, it is real important. I grew up with Jason and now Luis—I have to survive the week with them.” Although she was nodding, I could tell the Vacancy sign was 'like' still on. “On Monday's, they get up early and start their first serious work out since the game on Friday. Jason gets up an hour earlier than I do, Luis even earlier. They run. They run over five miles. Luis lifts weights. Then, about the time we're struggling with the day, they get ready and go to the gym before school starts for more of a workout. So, while we're working hard to not surrender to our sleep, they've already had more physical activity than I'm going to have in a month.”

The vacancy light was starting to flicker like a cheap neon sign.

“I've seen Luis's home weight set, I couldn't lift the bar by itself, much less with weights on it. He says it's a light set compared to what he uses at school. They both eat breakfasts that would kill us normal humans.” Mom grunted in agreement.

The sign was now flashing on and off in a regular beat.

“Monday afternoon is a team meeting. They review their plays from the Friday before and look at what their opponents have been doing.”

“So, it's easy or something.” She said with certainty. The light was staying on more than off, suddenly.

“Not physically. Um... ever had someone film a mistake you made and then show it over and over again?”

Ah, back to a uniform blinking now. Her eyes were starting to round. I was actually getting through! Plus, freaking myself out that I was putting all this together. Thanks Mom, I tried... no, attempted to tell her quickly with my eyes.

“Now, imagine in that room is the head football coach, the assistant coaches, and all your teammates. And they show the clip of your mistake over and over and over. Commenting, critiquing the whole time.”

Her perfectly round eyes and open mouth mirrored the way I felt inside, living through this for the first time with Luis and looking outside myself. I realized that strength is not always on the outside. 'In and around the lake...' echoed in my head.

“On Tuesday, they do the hard workouts. An athlete in excellent condition takes three days to recover from a strenuous workout, which will give them greater strength and stamina. Tuesday is their day. Both boys ran over eight miles together this morning, then hit the gym for a workout before school. After school, Luis spent two hours being tortured in the weight room, then practice. In practice, they walk through plays over and over. Plus, for some, a special practice in the gym. Jason went through something similar, but probably not as brutal. I know Luis has to hurt right now.”

“What... what about Jason?” Her voice beginning to quiver as the Vacancy sign finally turned off.

“You'll have to ask him. I imagine he does. I know he sleeps like a log on Tuesday nights.”

“The rest of the week?” She was... crushed? Becoming attuned? Hmm...

“The next two days are pretty much the same, without the brutal workouts. They'll wear full uniforms for the next two days and push a little harder tomorrow. But, not much. They don't want anyone injured during practice.”

“I don't think I understand all of it. The practices, at least.” Looking into her eyes, I realized she's not a bimbo after all. No way. She seems pretty smart. I'm glad Jason is not dating a complete airhead like he has in the past.

“Ever work on dance moves?” She nodded. “You practice the moves over and over until they become automatic. You don't have to think about them, right?”

“Yes!” Understanding dawning bright in yon window. I've got to stop reading so much Shakespeare.

“Football is like a complex dance. The offense, Jason's side of the team, is trying to create moves that Luis's side of the team, the defense, can't match. The defense is trying to do

the same thing to foil the offense. They practice against each other all week, then we get to see how well they've done on Friday."

"I see it now. Wow!" She processed it for a moment. "How did you get so smart about football?"

"I grew up around it and just absorbed it."

Mom spoke up, "We've always gone to each of Jason's games and he talks about it all season."

"I don't know a lot, just what I've observed and heard. Luis is the real student of the game. I like the games, it is a great way to see muscles in motion." We all giggled at that, I'm sure for different reasons. I was thinking about studying muscles for art. Then I remembered the last two days. Okay, maybe we were giggling for the same reason! I felt my cheeks warm and was again glad for the towel on the chair.

"So, like anything, if you want to be good..." Cheri started.

"Practice, practice, practice!" Mom and I said at the same time. We all broke up at that.

Cheri, Mom, and I drifted off into taking about classes, colleges, and—pinch me—girl stuff. After missing the last five years, I was catching up on clothes, boys, music, boys, makeup, boys, hairstyles, boys, dance moves, boys, gossip... Mom was right on top of it too.

For the first time in my life, I felt like a normal teenage girl. I liked it. No! I reveled in it.

Luis

Jim, Jason, and I cleared the dishes and tackled the kitchen. Jim directed his troops and in short order the place was squared away. In the process, we prepared tea, coffee, and brandy, which we placed on a silver serving tray with all the necessities. Jason was "volunteered" to carry it in to our ladies.

Jim looked at me after Jason left. "Are you okay?"

"Yes, si... Sorry. Yes, Jim. Just tired. Today was 'kill me to make me a better lineman and

person' day. I think a good portion of it was penance for what I did to Dr. C.”

“I'm sure you'll sleep well tonight.”

“I'm already dreading moving when I wake up. And, then, a long run to loosen up! Argh!” Jim shared an easy, sympathetic laugh with me.

“Luis,” he turned very serious. “I meant what I said earlier.”

I think I had my clueless look on. That one that comes from having your brains sucked into a black hole. Addled-Brain Syndrome (ABS).

“About being available to you to help with your future. I've known your father for years. I see in you all the things that make him the best in his profession—a quick, disciplined mind plus the ability to synthesize as well as analyze.. I also see in you your mother's dedication, hard work, and passion for life.” He paused and a bit of moisture appeared in his eyes. “In two days, you've given Helen and I our daughter back.” He visibly pulled himself together. “I would help out of respect for your parents. Now, I want to out of respect for you.”

“Thank you, sir.” I thought about that for a microsecond. It was proper. There was more than a bit of moisture in my eyes. “I'm going to take you up on it. After this week?”

A smile split his face and total understanding illuminated his eyes.

“Deal!” We shook hands.

“I see the way you look at my daughter.” The sands of the Sahara washed through my mouth. I'm sure fear covered my face. My mouth stopped working for a second.

“It's the same way I think I look at Helen. I know Becky looks at you the same way Helen looks at me. Are you ready for it?”

“It?” Can you say confusion? ABS! Damn that black hole. I just wished it would suck up the moisture building in my throat. That flood before you void your stomach.

“A very serious relationship.”

I relaxed, my chest actually heaved in relief and I chuckled internally. Just once. “Yes sir. More than ready. I wasn't until yesterday. Now, I know in my heart I'm more than ready.”

He thought for a moment, nodded his head, and gave me a playful punch on the arm. "You'll do just fine."

I know I still had that vacuous cranium look, 'cause that's how I felt. Breathe, you dumb jock, breathe!

His chest shook with a few internal chuckles. "All I can say is pick your advisors well. Your parents for one. I'd be honored. Helen would be another good choice. I'm sure you've got some trusted friends as well. We can all help make it work."

It had been one hell of a day. I was physically hanging by a thread. Emotionally, I was everywhere.

"Thanks." I think I got out. My body suddenly felt like a plate of jelly in a microwave. His smile told me he took pity on me.

"Come to any of us. Questions. Concerns. Advice. You'll figure it out. We're here to help."

My brain was still vacuum addled at this point. Yet, when I looked him in his eyes, I understood how he had gotten to his position in life and why Poppa respected him.

"Jim, thank you." I stuck out my hand and we shook again. His other covering mine.

"Let's go treat the ladies with the love they deserve." The twinkle and energy in his eyes looked just like Poppa's. It was contagious.

"Charge!" It was all I could think of. Yep, there's that Contadino wit bursting forth again.

"Into the fray for God and Country!" He chuckled as we headed back into the dining room with Jim's excellent collection of classic 70s rock playing. The Moody Blues were on. Same album as *Knights in White Satin*. Kewl.

We had a comfortable and, fortunately, short after-dinner conversation. I had a cup of Darjeeling tea, as did Becca. Jim and Helen had snifters of brandy and cups of coffee. Jason and Cheryl sipped water.

I couldn't help it. It snuck up on me. I yawned. Big! No way to hide it. Of course, my yawn triggered Jason. His triggered my second one, which triggered his second one. All those yawn-neutrinos bouncing around causing others to join in.

“Becky,” Helen got her attention, I was in mid-yawn, trying not to expose the Grand Canyon to everyone. “You wanted Luis to see your portfolio?”

“Mmm... Yeah.” She looked a little sheepish; her cheeks turned a bit rosy. Damn, I love looking at her.

“Well, before he falls asleep...” Becca got it. She grabbed my hand, “helped” me up, and led me to the stairs. As we got to the first tread, my energy picked up. To be allowed in Becca's room, to see her paintings, and to make out a bit. I know I hurried her up the steps. Her ass cheek fit perfectly in my hand. Not to mention how good it felt. Yep. Male. Subspecies: teenager. Distinguishing behavior: horny while breathing.

She stood in front of her door and made no move to open it. I could see fear and doubt in her eyes. A glint of moisture. She hung her head and her hair became a curtain closing over her face.

“My Becca, it's okay. We don't have to do this.”

She melted into me. “I want you to see my work, I'm just...”

Do all males have the stupid gene? Or a missing gene? Maybe it's that missing chain that makes us a Y instead of another X. “You invited me upstairs to see your etchings.”

Dumb. Stupid. REALLY DUMB. I wanted to reach out and pull all those words back.

Instead of being upset, she cracked up! She looked up from her Cave. “You say the sweetest things.” And, she kissed me. No. She KISSED me. As in make the world go away and curl my toes.

Okay, what's going on? Before I could even think about it, she opened her bedroom door and propelled a suddenly weightless me in. If East's line only knew!

My knees weakened. Her art was everywhere. I was bombarded like a loose ball on the playing field.

The first sketch I saw made me want to laugh. It reminded me of a Marx Brothers movie that my parents had forced me to watch and I came to love: “A Day at the Races.” I felt it in my bones. Dr. Hugo Z. Hackenbush right in front of me. Yet, the sketch had nothing to do with the movie or the Marx Brothers!

My eyes were next pulled to one that made my muscles relax. I felt myself automatically drop into my center, combat mode. It was a simple sketch of two people in a bare room.. I just knew, though, a fight was imminent.

The next was just the face of a little girl, but it brought tears to my eyes. My throat closed in sadness and pain. I pulled my eyes away.

Then I saw the painting on the easel. It immediately drew me in. Captivated would be a good word. Enthralled? How about mesmerized? The rest of the room melted as I went through a series of emotional releases. I wanted to cry while leaping with joy. I wanted to dance in the moonlight and wail at the Wall. Becca saw my face and hugged me.

“Thank you,” was all she whispered.

“Becca... That is... WOW!” Tears were streaming down my cheeks. My heart was leaping, skipping, running with joy.

“You've just given me the best compliment anyone could.”

Tears of joy and sadness, hope in my heart, questions in my mind. I was still whirling when I managed to pull Becca to me. “Thank you...”

My throat closed. My eyes watered. The girl that knows how to draw and paint like this loves me? My knees started to buckle. Becca seemed to effortlessly carry me to her bed.

“Wow! I didn't... realize... how... good... you are!” Her mouth touched mine. The shock through my system woke me up more than a can of energy drink and a shot in the arm.

I felt every part of her lips. The heat. The moisture. The little valleys and ridges. When her lips opened, she effortlessly parted mine. Her tongue came out and began to tease my lips and teeth. Her hand snaked around my head and she pushed me into her. My world became her lips, tongue, breath, and her heartbeat. Her warmth flowed through me.

The kiss deepened. Instead of feeling sexual, it was a deepening expression... love? Our hearts started to beat in the same rhythm. I felt her heart more than my own, the energy running through her and into me. Even though I was bending over to reach her mouth, it wasn't uncomfortable at all. She melded with me, her body pressed into mine until we became one.

As our kiss broke, we still gave each other little kisses, refusing to pull away. No talk. No need. What we had went beyond words. I knew in that moment why poets struggled to say what couldn't be said. The compelling need to say it and impossibility of limiting the feeling with mere words.

We finally pulled away from each other, keeping eye contact.

“WOW!” I'm not sure how I found the breath.

“Yeah, WOW!” With her words caressing my ears, I could fall into and live in her eyes forever.

“Becca, I love you.” Our hearts still beat as one. No lightning bolts from heaven... or hell. Just 'tis.

“And, I love you, Luis. Now and forever. No matter what happens.” Our world swirled into a kaleidoscope of infinite possibilities. Together. One.

“And I you.” What else could the dumb jock say? We melted into a second kiss.

This kiss deepened, yet I was very aware of her physical presence. The hardening of her nipples, the warmth hidden behind her pubic hair—the building moisture as well. The complex, beautiful curve of her breasts and hips flowed beneath my fingers. The soft, yet strong feeling of her ass as I cupped the cheeks. The smoothness of her flesh and how the muscles underneath rippled and seemed to be following my fingers and hands.

While our breathing and hearts synced, I could feel my hands on her as if I were her. I felt her inside me feeling her hands and fingers on me.

Coherent thought ceased.

Einstein, Feynman, and Hawkins would be proud. We stopped time.

Again, when we broke, those wonderful, intimate little kisses. I pulled back a little bit so I could see her face. “If today had been different...”

More little kisses. Fingers touching, exploring the other half of the new self.

She smiled. “And, if today hadn't been 'Kill Luis' in the weight room, I would attack you!”

“You mean?!?” ABS Alert!

“I told you yesterday. I meant it. I live with a football player, though, and know the weekly routine.”

“And, you want to?” Smooth, Luis. Smooth. Taking the remedial fuckwit class next week? And you spell it m-o-r-a-n.

“Luis, you may want to become a rocket scientist, but you are such a dweeb at times. What do you think? What did you feel in our kisses just now?”

“Love. Absolute. Oneness. The infiniteness of the universe and the singularity just before the Big Bang.”

“Imagine how that's going to be when Junior is inside me.” I shuddered. She melted. “Tomorrow, My Mountain, My Love. Tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow?” The Addled Brain Alert was now a five alarmer.

“Trust me.” I found myself filled with her love. I did trust her. Completely.

We melted into another of our now patented kisses. When we broke, I knew what I wanted right then. “Show me your art, please.”

She looked up at me. Every fiber of my being wanted to join with her—wanted to make sweet, gentle love to her. I didn't know how. My experience to date was frustration. It all came flooding back. The few times I'd penetrated another... the pain, for both of us. The frustrations. The emptiness. I needed more strength than I had right now.

We were still connected. One energy.

“Sweetie, it's my first time too.” I felt her fear, doubts. I heard her words. Our joint energy melted both of our concerns. Our hearts were one. One energy. One mind. No fears. Fullness. One.

We shared another deepening with our lips, arms, naked flesh, breath, and souls.

“Tomorrow, my love.” After a quick kiss that lingered on my lips, she turned on some music and took me on a tour of her art. We went through her portfolio for college admissions—we needed to talk about that, soon.

“We will,” came into my head without words. The connection still there.

I took a minute to find another station. One where the songs were based on more than two guitar chords. She smiled when I did.

Then her other active projects, finally the Inspiration Wall, as she called it. Instantly, I fell in love with one of the sketches. It was a self-portrait.

“Sweetie?” I nuzzled her neck, “If you choose to archive this, may I have it?” Her eyes moistened with my request. In this one sketch, I could see what she had hidden all these years, her very soul. Now that I had felt it, I wanted this sketch. I needed that for a daily reminder, a reconnection. Either that, or the finished product. No, the rough sketch was perfect. Greatness to become. Like us.

She looked at me very seriously, “I think I know why, but tell me.”

I studied her eyes and saw her soul, again. “Because, when I look at this, I feel you, like I'm seeing you now. And I want to keep feeling that, everyday.”

Three nanoseconds later I had a warm, huggable girl in my arms and we were deeply involved in another of our special kisses. I'd picked the perfect radio station. *Just my Imagination* came flowing through and into our kisses.

Two, maybe three, millennia later, when we did our “come back to the moment” kissy routine, I had to say, “Just like I feel your soul when we kiss.”

She hit me in the chest! My eyes popped wide open. “Bastard!”

If she hadn't had one hand around my neck, I might have gotten upset. Instead, I kissed her. Just a short one and then looked into her eyes again.

“Is that wrong of me?” I asked her.

“Yes!” And, she started to cry on my chest. So, I wrapped her up into our Cave. Yes, it works for me too. Oh! Did her definition of the Cave work for me too! My Becca snuggled into my chest, our hearts touching? Definitely, YES!

“Is it wrong that I feel your heart beat and I want to feel it when I'm not around you? Is it wrong to see the hidden you, the real you, and us together in that one piece? Is it wrong to

be overwhelmed by it?"

She pounded my chest.

"Why... do... y-you... see me... s-so well?" Amidst her crying, she snorkeled.

I couldn't help it. I chuckled. I got hit on the chest again, she snorkeled again. I chuckled more. She snorted.

"Should I get a towel?" I put an image in my mind of a waiter bowing. We both lost it and collapsed together. Laughter pushed tears and tension right out the window.

"Now, show... me... your etchings." I managed to get out around my laughter.

"Better etchings than a puddle." That just got us going again. She rammed a finger into my ribs attempting to tickle me. I took the softer approach with light fingertip touches. We were successful in producing copious quantities of laughter, but not the accident. Our connection grew stronger.

We made a half-assed attempt to finish going through her work. I really wanted to be fresh and be able to focus for her. Somewhere around her third stifled yawn, I made up my mind and pulled her to me.

"Sweetie, why don't we do this another time when we're both fresh. We're both wiped out from today."

"I'm sorry..." She was interrupted by yet another yawn.

"It's okay, love, believe me. They nearly killed me in the weight room. I know only part of that was getting ready for East."

"The rest because of this morning?"

"Yep." She snuggled as we sat on the floor of her closet. I didn't want to leave, but I had to. I knew how I would feel in the morning already. Plus, I had to do some homework, stuff for the Naked Project, and some things for the game.

Do you know how hard it is to get off a closet floor with a girl snuggled into your chest? Wearily, we made our way down the stairs. The yawn-neutrinos were bouncing everywhere. Her parents were in the family room enjoying a movie. Helen hit pause when we came in.

“So, what have you kids been up to?” Jim asked, with a sly grin on his face.

“Becca was showing me her etchings.” I managed that with a straight, but tired, face.

“I haven’t heard that in a while,” Helen said. That caused her and Becca to crack up.

Jim and I shared a look that simply said, “Women.”

For some reason, we all laughed.

After calming down, we all went through the pleasantries, thanks, and goodbyes. I got a very sweet kiss that was pure love and a promise of a wonderful future. Then, out the door.

The rest of the evening was a bit of a haze. When I dragged myself in the door, my father didn’t even ask me to sit and talk, just bid me on my way. In honor of the earlier kisses, I hit my Motown mix when I got downstairs. I finished a paper in PoliSci, which, thankfully, only needed a few minor changes. Then I drew up the play changes based on today’s walk-thrus. I handled a few Naked Program emails, but really couldn’t focus that well.

Bed called. Junior told me I wasn’t Becca and to leave him alone. I fell asleep while my head was still moving towards the pillow. The *Temptations* sliding away.

Rebecca

As soon as the front door closed, I yawned again. Luis’s sweet taste still on my lips. His scent lingering in my head. I managed to stumble into the family room and sat on the sofa next to Mom.

“Long day, huh?” She said as she brushed the hair out of my face and gently rubbed my neck.

“Too long.” I felt like purring at her touch.

“Some days happen like that,” Daddy said. His voice full of love and support.

“So, when's the big moment?” Mom's gentle massage was turning me into putty. I didn't even care that my father was in the room.

“Tomorrow night. I'm spending the night at his house.” Wow! I guess the pod person running my life had made a firm commitment!

“Are you ready?” It wasn't a challenge, just a check-in.

“More than ready. I wanted to tonight when I was...” I yawned again.

“Showing your etchings?” Daddy finished with a chuckle.

“I can't believe I'm having this conversation.” I yawned again. Mom's fingers were performing pure magick. I was totally relaxed. I could feel every bone in my body turning to jelly.

“I'm glad we can support you, Becky.” Mom's love poured out and washed over me.

“I was a fool...”

“Becky, no regrets. No recriminations. Move forward. Learn from the past, don't live in it.” Daddy's voice just flowed through me and made me feel so loved and supported. I laid my head back as my neck totally relaxed. My eyelids suddenly weighed more than Luis.

“I love the both of you.” I couldn't open my eyes. Then, I couldn't think of a single reason to. Mom pulled my head to her lap and worked on my shoulders and back muscles.

I vaguely remember Mom and Dad tucking me into my bed and kissing me. I smiled and got all squiggly inside when they both said they loved me and called me Becky. How I got there, I don't know.

I pried my eyes open and looked at my likeness of Luis. “Night, Sweetie. Love you.”

I sank into a deep, deep sleep. Scotland would have to wait... again.

*** End of Chapter/End of Part II ***