

# Kelly's Adventures

My best friend in the world was Paul.

Divorced with 3 kids, I helped him out in his job as a salesman when I watched out for his kids when he had to go out of town on business. They were good kids, so it wasn't much of a problem. When his daughter, Jan, was in high school, I was watching out for them one time when I accidentally interrupted her while she was masturbating.

That one event led to changes in my life that I had never even considered: from getting her started on learning sex education on the Internet (she and Paul's other kids attended Catholic schools, where sex ed wasn't well thought of), things progressed to introducing her, and her best friend Kelly, to physical intimacy.

Then things progressed to teaching several of their other friends about love, and sex. When all was said and done, I'd deflowered a half-dozen girls before they even graduated high school - including Jan, with Paul's explicit permission. To top things off, the extremely intelligent and attractive Kelly had fallen in love with me, as I had with her, and moved in with me. After high school, she'd gone on to attend college, majoring in mathematics and philosophy. On graduation, she'd gone to work for me in my engineering business.

She'd been working for me for a little over a year when one of my customers (a loyal bunch - they knew that despite my rates, I was actually \*saving\* them money with my designs) let me know that they were seriously considering opening a manufacturing facility overseas - specifically, the Philippines. Knowing I'd spent time there while in the Navy, they asked me to take the lead on finding them a good site for their plant. After a few days of exhaustive discussions detailing what they needed, what they wanted, what they'd like to have, costs for land/labor/materials, and so on, I agreed. My job wasn't to actually sign any contracts or anything; rather, I was to narrow down the number of choices to a half-dozen or (preferably) less. That done, I'd go back with a few of their people to make introductions and get things started. From there, their own people could take over to make the final selection, and seal the deal.

As I pointed out to them, my knowledge of the Philippines and its people was limited, and likely years out of date. Their response was to observe that it was still infinitely better than anyone else's that they thought they could trust with the job.

With the details of who and what and when and where worked out, we signed a contract for my services: I was to go there for a period of four to eight weeks, returning with between two and six potential sites that met a checklist of requirements necessary to support their facility. I was also to return with the names of at least two lawyers to represent them, and a detailed list of the various legal and financial requirements they'd have to meet, as well as the names and titles of any government officials that they'd be

dealing with. It wasn't a small task, and they knew it - they didn't grumble in the slightest at the hefty fee I was charging them.

They were willing to pay Business Class airfare; I got a price quote for that rate to submit with my expense report, and then bought First Class tickets. Yes, ticket\*s\*. Kelly had made it quite clear early on that if I went on \*any\* business trip without her, I'd come home to a house without her in it. I didn't think she'd actually DO it, but she'd made her point. If I was going to the Philippines, I wasn't going alone. The departure date was for a good six weeks away - ample time to get passports for me and Kelly, get my other clients set up to deal with my absence, and make all the other arrangements. As always, my secretary worked wonders for me, and I made a silent vow to bring her something \*extra\* special from the Philippines.

Still, \*I\* had to deal with such things as doing some research on the Philippines as it was at the time, and contacting a company in the Philippines to arrange for a guide and driver. Then contacting that guide - a Miss Marlyn Ramos, age 32 - to let her know what I was going to be there for, and what places I wanted to visit, so that SHE could make the hotel reservations and such - ensuring that we got the best possible rates. From previous experience, I knew that given a chance, too many businesses there had Filipino (regular) and American (inflated to varying degrees) prices for about everything. She was also the one to make contact with the officials in the different cities that we expected to visit, ensuring that we would have access to them when the time came. At her suggestion, I agreed that she would be the one to hire our driver - so that he could also pull duty as a guard for us for increased pay. Americans weren't immune to the political kidnappings that happened there, and she assured us that our driver/guard would be there for more than mere appearances. With the knowledge of what we were there for, and the main places we wanted to go, I gave her authority to make additions to our itinerary, and take care of the sequence and scheduling. She even emailed us a brief description of her qualifications for the job, along with her description and a digitized photo we could use to help identify her at the airport. When Kelly saw it, she just looked at it for a while, without saying anything. We responded in kind, sending descriptions and digitized photos of the two of us, as well.

With that taken care of, all that remained was to try to ensure that the house didn't burn down and that our cat, Cat, didn't starve while we were gone. Jan and the others quickly worked out a system and schedule of who would be doing what, and when, to make sure things would still be there when we got back. Every last one of them flatly refused ANY kind of compensation or offer I made them to repay them for their help; I quietly resolved that they would NOT go unrewarded - I remembered the beauty and delicacy of the silverwork I'd seen in Baguio, years before.

The fateful day finally arrived. Paul took time off from work to take us, along with Jan and one of her friend, Sandra, to the airport to see us off. We were flying a U.S. airline as far as Los Angeles; from there it was Philippine Air Lines the rest of the way. We got to the airport in plenty of time, and didn't have any trouble getting our tickets in hand, or our baggage checked through. Kelly and I both kept a carry-on, though, with a couple

changes of clothes in it - while I expected our luggage to arrive with us, it wasn't something I was willing to bet money on. Paul and the rest kept us company as we made our way toward the gate - even going through the security checkpoint with us so they could stay with us as long as possible. Jan and Sandra were both terribly jealous of Kelly getting to go with me; Kelly was both frightened and excited at the prospect: her biggest adventure to that point had been when her parents had taken her on vacation to Canada one summer, when she was still a child.

Finally, it was time: Paul and the others gave us a final hug and kiss (okay, Paul only kissed Kelly) before watching us head down the jet way to our plane. As the plane backed up, we could see them watching us through the big terminal windows. We waved, and they saw us well enough to wave back before we lost sight of them.

The flight to L.A. was pretty typical. Granted, in First Class we got a little better treatment than the thundering heard in Coach. But really, at 30,000 feet and 400 miles an hour, what can you DO? Things improved somewhat after our two-hour layover in L.A., and we boarded the flight to Manila, via Hawaii and Hong Kong. Once airborne, the flight attendants (all young, female, and cute as could be) quickly began pampering us. When one of them brought us our drinks, I thanked her in Tagalog, the 'common language' of the Philippines - it being slightly more common than English, and a definite improvement over the multitude of local dialects. She looked surprised at my "Salamat po!" (honorific version of "Thank you"), and asked where I'd learned Tagalog. I told her that I'd been stationed there, and was going back on business. I added that my wife and business assistant - indicating Kelly - was going with me; her first trip outside the U.S. The flight attendant told us her name was Mhay, and that she would be happy to come back and visit with us. Kelly thanked her, and Mhay dimpled prettily before moving on to take care of some other passengers.

Kelly leaned over to whisper in my ear "She is such a \*doll\*!" then looking around and adding "They ALL are! Are all the women there this pretty?"

"Nope. Most, but not all. These are the cream of the crop, so to speak. They don't have any problems there about hiring practices, so the airline is free to hire only the prettiest young girls they can find. A job like this - travel, good pay, plenty of chances to meet eligible men - is highly desirable, so they don't lack for applicants."

Kelly poked me in the ribs, and said "No, really, what are they like?"

"I just told you. Think about it - do you think a businessman on a trip wants to look at the guy that served US on the way to L.A., or somebody that looks like one of THESE? Then think about WHY the airlines would hire that guy anyway."

She looked at me doubtfully, but thought it over, finally telling me "Okay, I can see your point. You mean this airline can really DO that? I mean, just hire the pretty young girls and no one else?"

"Sure. It's a fairly poor country, so the general attitude is that ANY job is better than NO job; and nobody's inclined to fuss at the companies that have the jobs. Besides, it's their country and their rules. If you don't like it bad enough, don't go there."

She gave me another doubtful look, and I went on to explain "Kelly, this is something that you need to understand, completely and fully, before anything else: we are going to a FOREIGN COUNTRY. It is NOT a suburb of Los Angeles or New York or anyplace else in the United States. It is THEIR COUNTRY, and THEY make the rules. \*WE\* ARE THE FOREIGNERS. I've traveled through a lot of Asia, without any problems, by keeping that in mind AT ALL TIMES. Give them half a chance and you'll probably find the people we meet to be friendly, courteous, and helpful - but never lose sight of the fact that it's THEIR country and THEIR culture. We can learn to get around in it. But if we're not careful, we run the risk of assuming we KNOW it when we don't - by getting too comfortable and confident - and making a mistake that gets us into trouble. When the stewardess gets back, I can give you an example."

Kelly looked surprised, but nodded her agreement. A few minutes later, Mhay reappeared, telling us "I have a few minutes before we start the meal, if you would like."

I assured her that we certainly WOULD like, and she took a seat on the armrest of an empty seat on the aisle. She looked at us expectantly, and I spoke up, saying "Mhay, this is Kelly's first trip outside the United States, and I am trying to help her understand that not all places have the same customs. If you would be kind enough to help me, I think I can help her understand what I am talking about."

Mhay assured me that she would be happy to help, and I asked her to show us how she would gesture for someone to come over to her. She nodded, then stuck her arm out before letting her hand drop toward the floor. Kelly looked at her quizzically, and I asked Mhay "Why do you do like that?"

She answered "Because that is the nice way."

I went on to ask her "You know how Americans do it, right?"

She nodded, and said "You can do that, too, but it is only for servants or like that. The other is the polite one."

I turned to Kelly, and said "You heard her. The way WE would normally gesture someone over, by crooking a finger at them, is the RUDE way. If you did that anywhere in the Philippines, you would almost certainly cause a problem. But doing it the RIGHT way - for the Philippines - would make people think you were polite. It's just the REVERSE of that old saying: different folks, different strokes." - making her smile at that last part.

We heard someone say something in Tagalog, and I saw Mhay turn her head and nod to the speaker. When she turned back, I asked her "You have to go back to work now?" She

smiled and nodded, and I thanked her for her help. She said it was her pleasure, and I asked her if she would be able to come back and help me practice my Tagalog, and maybe learn some new words. Her whole face lit up, and she assured me that she and the others would be happy to help however they could.

When she was gone, I told Kelly "You saw how she perked up when I asked her to help me learn more Tagalog?" Kelly nodded, and I went on "The one constant I found in my travels was that if the local people can see that you're at least TRYING to learn and fit in, they'll be happy to help you - sometimes even going out of their way to do it. You can mangle the language, botch a custom, or foul up a ceremony, and they'll forgive you - as long as they can see you're TRYING. If I asked Mhay or any one of the others how good my Tagalog is, they'd assure me it was fine - except that I already \*know\* my pronunciation is bad, and my accent worse. But I TRY, and that's what counts."

Kelly nodded her understanding, and I told her "While we're in the Philippines, you'll see me do different things, and say different things. CAREFULLY watch and listen, not just to me, but to the Filipinos we meet, and I think you'll get the idea. Until then, don't be afraid to explain yourself before answering questions, or asking for help before doing things. Don't hesitate to tell someone that you don't know how to do something the Filipino way. Even if you get it wrong, they won't be upset because you at least made the effort."

Kelly put her head on my shoulder and hugged my arm before saying "You sound like you had a lot of fun traveling around."

"I did. Made a lot of mistakes, got confused a lot, was \*constantly\* lost, but sure, I had a blast. Anyplace I went the first things I tried to learn was some key phrases in the local language."

"Such as?"

"Such as 'Hello', 'Thank you', and most important 'where's the bathroom?'" - earning myself a giggle. I continued by telling her "Actually, I did have a lot of fun. Met a lot of nice people, and visited a lot of pretty and interesting places. Learned a lot, both about the countries and the people in them - how their cultures worked, how they evolved, stuff like that."

"Ever get into trouble?"

"Never anything serious enough to get arrested for."

She tilted her head back to give me the fisheye; I was saved from having to explain myself right then and there by the reappearance of Mhay, who let us know that they would be serving lunch soon, and asking what we'd like, after detailing our choices. Kelly simply looked at me, waiting for me to decide for both of us: we'd been given a choice between braised beef and a Filipino dish, chicken adobo. It took me only a moment to

decide - we'd go with the chicken adobo. After Mhay left, I described what the meal would be to Kelly: essentially, a chicken 'stew' with plenty of vegetables, served over rice. Several minutes later, Mhay returned with our meals. After taking a tentative bite, Kelly's face lit up as she told us "This is \*good\*!" - and getting a smile from Mhay before she left to take care of her other passengers.

Shortly after Kelly and I had both removed the last molecule of the adobo from our plates, Mhay turned up again to take them back to the galley. With our trays cleared, she came back again to ask if there was anything else we'd like.

"Isang sarbisa, paki", I answered. A GI \*never\* forgets how to order beer, no matter WHAT the language.

Mhay nodded, and I continued "San Miguel?", and she nodded again.

Mhay waited patiently when Kelly asked me what I'd just ordered. When I told her I'd asked for a beer ("Isa is 'one', add 'ng' to the end for grammar; sarbisa is beer, paki is please"), specifically a San Miguel brand, she indicated she'd like to try one, too. I looked up at Mhay, and said "Dalawang, paki". She smiled her understanding, and left us to return a few moments later with two cold bottles of San Miguel, and two glasses. Kelly and I both carefully filled the glasses before taking a sip; again, Kelly's eyes lit up at the taste.

Kelly and I had both gone through about half our beer when Mhay showed up again, along with one of the other stewardesses. She introduced us, saying "This is my friend - kaibigan in Tagalog - Cherry". I could feel Kelly start to giggle next to me, and I discretely nudged her to indicate that it wasn't the time for that. She quickly got control of herself, and told Cherry "It's nice to meet you." followed by my own greeting.

Mhay told us "Cherry wants to practice her English - she already speaks Chinese - so she will be helping me."

I could see on Kelly's face that she was surprised that the cute little Cherry already spoke another language, and wanted to practice yet a different one. I assured both of them that we would be happy to help, and thanked them for taking the time to help US.

For the next couple of hours, the two of them coached both Kelly and I in pronunciation and expanding our grammar as we coached Cherry - who took our polite corrections in the good will that they were intended. A few times, Mhay and Cherry both laughed when Kelly or I (or both) badly mispronounced a word, and started to blush at embarrassing us - until Kelly and I laughed along with them, and assured them that we thought it was funny, too. As it sank in that we weren't going to play at being 'Important People', they gradually became even more friendly, and willing to correct our errors.

When they finally had to leave to take care of their other duties, Kelly and I both had a secure grasp on several key phrases, and had passable pronunciation.

When Mhay and Cherry were both out of earshot, Kelly leaned over to tell me "Never before in my LIFE have I heard anyone with the name 'Cherry' - I nearly laughed when Mhay introduced her!"

"I know - that's why I nudged you" - "Nudge, my foot; I thought you were going to cave in a rib!" Kelly exaggerated - "to let you know not to. Something else you need to know is that the country we're going to is roughly ninety percent Catholic; it seems like about two girls in three has the first name of 'Maria', so it's pretty common for them to use nicknames. There's no telling what you'll hear somebody called, so try to remember that no matter what it sounds like to YOU, it's somebody's NAME, okay?"

That sobered her considerably, and she thought things over for the next several minutes as I finished off the remains of the latest beer Mhay had brought me - my excuse being that I needed to keep my vocal cords well lubricated.

Finally, she spoke up again, telling me "It really *\*is\** different, isn't it? I really didn't understand what you were telling me about customs and cultures and all of that; at least, not until we got on this name thing. I started thinking about what you said, about people's names; and I suddenly realized that MY name could be laughed at, too - like in 'Kelly green'. I know *\*I\** wouldn't like it much, and that gave me a different perspective; it kind of put me in Cherry's shoes. Now I really DO understand that we're going to a different place with different rules. Before, it was still kind of abstract, but now it's REAL. If she comes back, I think I have to apologize to Cherry."

"I wouldn't do that, if I were you."

"Why not?"

"Because if you apologize, there's a real risk that she wouldn't understand what you're apologizing ABOUT - remember, to her, it's a perfectly reasonable name - and you might find yourself trying to explain WHY you thought you were giving offense. And like I told you, the Philippines is like 90 percent Catholic, and not particularly 'liberal' about such things as sex; the girls there are EXPECTED to be virgins right up to the time they're married, so your explanation would likely embarrass the hell out of her, if not outright offend her."

Kelly thought that one over for a bit, and said "I see your point. Better to just let it go this time, and learn from it."

"That's it. And just so you know, we're probably going to run into people with names that cause just the opposite reaction."

"Such as?"

"Such as we meet a girl - though possibly a boy! - called 'Baby'. She, or he, will likely be the youngest child, and that's what they've been called all their life. Doesn't mean

anything to them, particularly, but to us it's a different matter: Baby could be a term of denigration or endearment, and you might find yourself having trouble using it without adding the emotional value we Americans would give it."

I watched as she rolled that one around in her mind for a while before asking "So what do I do, then?"

"What I found works for me is to use my emotions as a kind of alarm system - if something hits me that brings up an emotion, I use that as a way to kind of 'flag' it for INTELLECTUAL processing, rather than just responding to it immediately. If I have trouble saying or doing something because of the way it makes me feel, I stop a moment to examine why - and deal with it then, rather than let it tie me up in knots. If I can't settle it any other way, I just remind myself that it's their country and their rules, not mine, and go from there."

Kelly nodded her understanding, and got thoughtful again. She stayed that way until a couple hours later, when Mhay and Cherry showed up again. Remembering our previous lessons, she greeted them in Tagalog, and thanked them in it when they told her she was doing very well.

Cherry and Mhay both gave us language lessons a couple more times during our flight to Manila; after Kelly and I had our talk, she was appreciably more intent on the language lessons, and much more willing to ask Cherry or Mhay the \*why\* of a certain phrase. She showed more interest in asking them cultural and situational questions - what do I do if..., how should I..., and so on. Being female as Cherry and Mhay were, Kelly thought of things that simply wouldn't have occurred to me - and I learned even more about the culture in the process.

We finally made it to Manila, and made it through Customs without any problems. Baggage in tow, we made our way out of the secure part of the airport to the receiving area for our flight. Tired as we were, it still didn't take us long to spot Ms. Ramos.

She seemed to recognize us about the same time, and moved to meet us as we headed toward her. Straight black hair to the middle of her back, a little button of a nose, full lips, dark eyes, and a nicely curved figure, she was a delight to look at with her smooth, clear complexion. Standing a full 5 feet, 2 inches tall, Kelly and I both towered over her.

"Mr. and Mrs. Marshall? Welcome to the Philippines."

"Mabuhai (Greetings)" I told her, followed by Kelly asking "Kumu sta ka?" (How are you?).

Ms. Ramos got a delighted smile on her face, and answered "Mabuhay! Mabuti!" ([I'm doing] Fine!).



She looked at both of us for a moment, and then asked "How is it that you know Tagalog?"

I explained to her that I'd been there while serving in the Navy (I saw what she thought of THAT), and that both of us had asked for - and gotten - language lessons from a couple of the stewardesses on the plane. Through a twist of fate, I saw Mhay and Cherry walking a little distance from us, and pointed them out to Ms. Ramos. About that time, Mhay happened to look in our direction and saw us. She smiled and waved at us, then nudged Cherry, who did the same. I was proud of Kelly when she remembered to extend her arm and let her hand drop to gesture that we'd like them to come over. Both readily changed direction toward us, and in a few moments, they were in an animated conversation with Ms. Ramos. When they were done, Mhay and Cherry both told us it was nice to see us again, and wished us well. Kelly and I reciprocated, and the two of them headed back the direction they'd been going while Ms. Ramos watched.

When they were out of earshot, Ms. Ramos told us "You pleased - and surprised - both of them very much with your willingness and ability to learn to speak Tagalog. Cherry in particular is grateful for your help in letting her improve her English."

Then she looked at me speculatively, and said "There aren't many U.S. sailors that come to our country that take the time or effort to learn our language, Mr.Marshall."

"Please, call me Dan - and this is Kelly. I'm sorry to say that I know that, Ms. Ramos." - "It would be Miss Ramos, but I think Marlyn would be better since we'll be together for a while." - "But the Philippines isn't the only country I spent time in, and I found that I LIKED to learn about the places I was lucky enough to visit. I also found that it was easier to get the help that I so often needed if I was able to speak at least a LITTLE bit of the language. I have no illusion that I am fluent in Tagalog; but I hope that I can at least be POLITE."

She listened to that, and when I was done, told me "Yes, I think that you were probably the kind of visitor that we LIKE to have here, Dan." Then she turned to Kelly and said "I was told that this is your first trip to our country. You impressed Cherry and Mhay very much with how quickly and well you learned the Tagalog they were able to teach you. And Mhay was *\*very\** pleased that you remembered how to show them you wanted them to come over here. It isn't often that we get visitors that take the time to learn OUR way of doing things."

Kelly answered her by saying "Dan was able to explain a few things to me on the flight here, and help me understand that *\*I\** am the foreigner, now. I am sure that I am still going to make mistakes, but I would hope that you would be kind enough to correct me, so that I don't make any more than I have to. This is a new place for me, and I know that I have a lot to learn - I don't want to be an 'Ugly American'".

Marlyn smiled at that, and told her "You are too pretty to be an *\*ugly\** American anywhere - but I understand what you mean. I'll be happy to help." She went on to tell us

"Your driver is waiting out front with the car. If you'll give me moment, I'll get him to help with your luggage. Please, wait here."

I assured her we wouldn't move from that very spot, and she smiled at me before heading for the door. True to her word, she was back in a minute or so with a very fit-looking middle aged man. When they were standing in front of us, Marlyn told us "This is your driver and bodyguard, Bhoy". I could see Kelly thinking \*that\* over as Marlyn went on "He is retired from the Philippine Army, and even served a tour in Viet Nam, so he really is qualified as a bodyguard. He works as a driver and guard only to have something to do, and to make a little extra money. I've worked with him before, and he is very good and very helpful. As I told you in the email, we won't be going anyplace where there is any real risk; he is here more as an insurance policy, I think you would call it."

I told her "I understand, and thank you."

She smiled again, and said "It is I who thank you, Dan. Ours is a poor country, so anyone who is bringing jobs for our people is someone we want to take care of. If you're ready, we can get you to your hotel now."

Kelly and I both indicated that we thought that was a fine idea, and Bhoy quickly moved to take command of the three largest of our bags, while Marlyn picked up a fourth. Kelly and I both tried to protest, since we were left with only our carry-on bags, but Bhoy and Marlyn both ignored us as they led the way out of the terminal.

Once outside, Kelly immediately knew why I'd 'suggested' (all but TOLD her to wear) light clothing for the flight: we were hit with heat and humidity that was happily very rare in our part of the U.S. I watched, too, as Kelly tried not to react to the varied smells that hit us - the combination of odors that any large city in the tropics develops: auto exhaust, decaying vegetation, and too many people - all leavened with heat and humidity. For someone who'd never been exposed to it before, it can be a real assault on the senses.

Once Bhoy had stowed the luggage, we all piled in. Bhoy drove, of course, while Marlyn took shotgun; Kelly and I were left with plenty of space in the back. I was more than a little surprised when Marlyn had Bhoy drive us past the monumental garbage piles near the airport as we made our way to the hotel. When Kelly saw it, I saw her turn pale and her expression change slightly when she saw the number of people digging around in it. A little farther along, we passed a shantytown, and Kelly saw the crude shacks that lacked even the most basic plumbing. I heard Kelly draw a breath, and quickly squeezed her hand to let her know to keep quiet. When she looked at me, I mouthed the word 'later', which she understood to mean that we'd talk about it in private. As we got closer to the hotel, Kelly started noticing the traffic - and I saw her flinch a few times when she thought we were going to have an accident. I suppose I should have warned her about the insane Manila traffic.

When we got to the hotel, the outside staff quickly got the van unloaded while the desk clerk (five feet of condensed cute) got us checked in. Ready to head up to our rooms, I

turned to Marlyn and said "If you don't mind, I would like for us to go over your plans for our trip this evening. I would be delighted if you would join us for supper in a few hours, after we've had time to rest from the flight, and clean up a little."

Marlyn answered "I was thinking the same thing, except for the dinner part - but I accept. What time would you like me here?"

I checked my watch to find that it was getting close to 3:00 PM. "How about seven o'clock, then?" I asked, and she readily agreed. I went on to say "I don't think we'll be going very far tonight. Do you think that we should ask Bhoy to stay?"

She thought it over, and answered "No, I don't think you need to. This is a good hotel, and there isn't any trouble around here. Just don't go more than a few blocks, and you should be fine - I think you know what places you will be safe in. Once we leave Manila, though, you will want to let Bhoy know what your plans are, since he can help you better than I can."

"Then that's what we'll do; thank you. We'll see you at seven, then?"

She nodded, and we parted company.

Up in our room, I tipped the bellboy when he'd unloaded our luggage, and he left happy - carefully closing the door behind him. Kelly and I both had a look around the rooms (it was actually a small suite) before both of us released a sigh of relief. I was the first to start undressing, but Kelly didn't hesitate to follow my example. In just a few moments, both of us were naked as we headed for the bed to lie down.

As the air conditioning dried the thin film of sweat from our bodies, Kelly looked at me and said "I couldn't BELIEVE that pile of garbage, and how all those people were digging through it! What were they doing there? And what about that place with all those shacks? I thought I saw some woman actually PEEING behind a bush!"

"That garbage pile is actually kind of famous - every so often, a chunk of it falls over and kills a few people. All the people you saw on it actually LIVE there; they dig through all the stuff trying to find things they can sell for food or clothing or anything else they need."

"But it's GARBAGE!"

"So? Haven't YOU ever thrown away something that was still good, just because you didn't want it any more? We recycle aluminum at home, but here, it's not so important - so there's plenty of aluminum cans and other stuff for them to dig out and sell. It's not fun, but for most of them, it's do that or starve. I know which one \*I'd\* prefer."

I went on to tell her "And that bunch of shacks we saw is a poor neighborhood, is all. The woman you saw probably WAS peeing behind a bush; damn few of those places have

running water inside, never mind actual toilets. But even the people in those shacks are better off than the ones at the dump, aren't they?"

She looked at me as though she couldn't believe I was saying all of that as matter-of-factly as I was.

I told her "Kelly, I'll tell you again: this is a POOR country. Up until the end of World War II, the Philippines was a U.S. possession that we got when we won the Spanish-American war. After that war, the U.S. government really screwed them over when they started fussing that they wanted to be their own country. Try reading up on the Philippine 'Insurrection' sometime. We didn't get around to 'giving' them their independence until after World War II. For the last couple hundred years, they've always been under someone else's control; it's taking them a while to figure out how to do stuff on their own. Shucks, OUR country had a tough time getting going after we got OUR independence from England."

She looked at me doubtfully, and I went on "It's true, Kelly. None of the countries that has had control over the Philippines has done them any favors. The Spanish laid the Catholic religion on them, and look what's happened: the Church doesn't believe in birth control, so they've got more people than they know what to do with here. There are only so many jobs and other work to go around, so the surplus population is left holding an empty bag - if they're lucky enough to have the bag. They've also got a corruption problem; I expect \_that's\_ a freebie from the Spanish, too - it seems to be a pretty common problem in ALL the countries Spain 'discovered'. So, because of the corruption, the people with power and money tend to get MORE power and money, while everyone else loses out. It's almost as though the average person *\*expects\** their politicians and government officials to be crooks; the only time anything significant happens about it is when it gets too blatant. Hell, look at what Marcos did here: when they got fed up enough to chase him out, he left the country with many, many millions of dollars - on a salary of a few thousand a year. Part - no, *\*most\** - of the reason Marlyn is with us is to help me figure out who has to be paid how much for what, if my client builds a facility here. Sure, my client is going to get tax breaks and all that - but they'll be paying some of it back under the table, you can bet on it. *\*I\** know it, my client knows it, and Marlyn knows it. The definition of an honest politician here is one that STAYS bought after you've paid him.

"No, it's not 'right', by our standards. But it's THEIR COUNTRY. It's up to THEM to decide what to do with it, and when. The only problems they have are the ones THEY recognize, and decide to change THEIR way. All we can do is offer help they're willing to accept: bringing in jobs and money to help them develop a larger middle class, and stabilize a shaky economy. We can come in, and when they let us, SHOW them the benefits of some of what we do; and help them recognize the problems they have, and show them possible solutions. But until THEY decide what changes they want to make, and how to make them, all we can do is let them run their country their way. We wouldn't like it if they started trying to tell us how to run OUR country, so we have to show them the same restraint in return."

I finished up by telling her "I'm not sure why Marlyn took us by those places; I KNOW there are other ways out of the airport. When we've gotten to know her a little better, I'll ask her - but I'm not really expecting any kind of real answer, either."

Kelly listened to all of this, and when I was done, I saw her give a small shudder as she thought about what she'd seen.

The only consolation I could offer her was to say "I know, Kelly. I don't like it, either. But by being here, we ARE helping; and if things work out, we'll have helped even more."

"How?" she asked.

"While we're here, we're spending money - good old U.S. dollars - that they didn't have in their economy before. The money we're spending is going into the pockets of the people here, more than the politicians. Marlyn has as much as a couple months of work while we're here - and the money she earns will be spent on things that make jobs for OTHER Filipinos. We've got a driver and bodyguard; he only has to work because he wants to - but the money we pay him will be spent to increase HIS life style a little. For all we know, he'll throw away enough aluminum and other stuff to feed a couple of those families on the garbage mountains for several DAYS. When we leave Manila, more of the money we spend will stay in the local economies - which means that they'll have that much more for things like schools and such; maybe some child will have a textbook that they wouldn't have if we HADN'T come here. If my client builds a facility here, they'll be hiring Filipinos - creating jobs that wouldn't have existed otherwise. The folks they hire will spend THEIR money, making jobs for the things other Filipinos make - who will spend THEIR money, and so on. Yes, a fair chunk of the money will be wasted because of the corruption. BUT, and this is important, most of it WON'T - there will be kids that are able to go to school and learn that it doesn't HAVE to be this way. There will be parents that don't have to spend all their time just trying to survive; and with more 'free' time, they'll be able to pay more attention to what's happening around them, and why it's happening - and change things, if they want. When they've had a taste of a better life for themselves and their kids, you can be damn sure they're not going to want to go back - which will put pressure on the corrupt politicians to actually DO something to help the people - if for no other reason than to stay in their profitable government jobs."

"It isn't much, is it?"

"No, not really. But it's SOMETHING."

"It won't happen very fast, either, will it?"

"No. But better to happen slowly, than not at all."

Kelly sighed deeply, and said "I guess when you've got nothing, ANYTHING is \*something\*."

A moment later, she looked at me and said "Promise me that if we get a chance, we'll do something more - even if it's just for ONE person."

"If we can, we will. You already know that."

She sighed again, and answered "Yeah, I know - but I just wanted to make sure."

By unvoiced agreement, we decided to let the subject drop in favor of a good cuddle. When Kelly saw my eyelids start drooping, she got up to dig out the wind-up alarm clock I'd brought along. She quickly set the time, then the alarm; after making sure it was fully wound up, she set it on the night stand and lay next to me again. I don't think that it was more than a few minutes before both of us fell asleep, exhausted from the flight.

---

It wasn't the alarm clock that woke me up, but the feeling of Kelly's warm mouth wrapped around my erect penis. When I looked down at her, her eyes gleamed as she released me long enough to tell me "This seemed like a \*much\* nicer way to wake you up than that damn clock!" We'd tested it before we left, and both of us found it an \*extremely\* effective - if unpleasant - way to wake up.

Taking me back into her mouth, she easily slid her lips down me until her nose was touching my pubic hair, before lifting her head again. After all the time that we'd lived together and been married, it still amazed and delighted me that she was so able to get me going like this. I watched her for a minute or so, enjoying the sensations she was creating, and the effect she was having on my libido - but it wasn't much longer than that before I wanted to return the favor. We'd been together long enough that she recognized the signs, and without prompting, started to move herself around so she could straddle my head.

When she got close enough, I helped guide her leg over me, and quickly lifted my head to sample the nectar that I still loved: spicy and sweet at once, it was a flavor I never got tired of.

With the taste of her on my tongue, I pulled my head back a bit to have a look at her womanly flower: thin vaginal lips fully extended and parted, framing the glistening entrance to her womanhood; her Mound of Venus covered with a dark, dense, but surprisingly short and soft pubic hair. At the top of her cleft, her larger-than-usual clitoris was erect, and clearly visible. No matter how many times I saw it, the vision of her sex always delighted me.

Lifting my head again, I ran my tongue between her labia to collect another taste of her essence before putting my mouth over her mons. Forming a rod with my tongue, I slid it into her opening as though it were a miniature erection, and started making love to her with it. I heard her moan of pleasure, and felt its vibrations in my erection.

Mischievously, I timed my penetrations of her to be OPPOSITE to the way she was sliding her lips up and down my manhood - as she was taking my penis IN, I was pulling

my tongue OUT, and vice-versa. I'd done that to her before, and she told me that it always made her feel as though she was at opposite ends of the same penis - and got her \*very\* aroused. As I'd expected, it had the desired effect this time, too - in less than a minute, I could tell that she was getting even wetter and hotter inside as she started slowly hunching her pelvis against my face, trying to get more of my tongue inside her.

Sadly, I couldn't hold my tongue like that for as long as SHE would have liked. I finally had to let my tongue muscles relax a bit, and moved my attentions to her clitoris to begin softly 'milking' it with my lips. That was something that she particularly enjoyed, and I felt her clitoris stand out even more from my attentions. I felt her deep-throat me a few times before she started dancing her tongue along the underside of my penis - she knew what \*I\* liked, too!

I continued tending to her nubbin for another couple of minutes before I felt the overflow of her essences touch my lip. Taking her clitoris between my lips, I softly sucked on it for a few seconds as I fluttered the tip of my tongue across it \*ever\* so lightly; and heard/felt her groan of pleasure as she pressed her pelvis against my face. When she paused to take a breath, I quickly moved to put my mouth over her opening again, and began lapping her secretions from between her vaginal lips as though she were the Flavor of the Month. Her response was to spread her legs more, inviting me to continue; which I gladly did. It wasn't long before I let myself start dipping my tongue into her again, delving into the source of her precious oils.

When I'd exhausted the immediate supply, I decided to stimulate production by taking one of her labia in my mouth and gently sucking on it as I softly pulled at it with my lips. She deep-throated me a couple more times, then went back to gently sucking on me as she let her tongue and lips wander along my length.

It didn't take much longer before the pleasure of what I was doing to her - and what she was doing to me! - began to have their effect, and I felt my scrotum begin to tighten up. With Kelly cupping it in her hand, she knew when it happened, too, and quickly increased her efforts to bring me to a climax. I didn't want to leave her 'hanging', and reciprocated by focusing my attentions on her still-erect clitoris by circling it with my tongue as I applied varying degrees of pressure to it. I knew my actions were having the desired effect when I felt her start a rhythmic thrusting of her hips against my face as I continued to stimulate her sensitive nubbin. Even as she was responding to MY actions, I was responding to HERS - I could feel myself getting closer and closer to my release as Kelly continued to use her mouth and lips and tongue to stimulate me.

I finally got her to the brink of orgasm, and held her there for several long seconds before pushing her over the edge with a rapid fluttering of my tongue across her clitoris. When her climax started, she pressed her mons against my lips, and I happily started a gently sucking on her clitoris in time with her spasms. What I didn't expect was the prolonged moan of pleasure she released, and how quickly it would push me into my own release - even as she was drawing a breath after the first wave passed through her, I was flooding her throat with my seed. It was a challenge for both of us to continue our attentions to the

other, but we managed; when it was over, Kelly all but fell off of me to lay at my side, both of us gasping for breath as we tried to recover from our pleasure.

Kelly was the first to move as she slowly managed to turn herself around so that she was lying head-to-head with me. I managed to roll onto my side, and ease myself over so that I was next to her. I laid my arm on her belly so that I could hold her breast in my hand; she put one hand on my arm and the other on my thigh before I said "Yup. That's \_definitely\_ a better way to wake up than that damn alarm clock!" Mustering what little enthusiasm she had left, she rapidly nodded her head in agreement before both of us started laughing. And we had an even harder fit of laughter when 'that damn alarm clock' DID go off.

But, as planned, it \_did\_ get us up, and moving - first to shut it off, then to make our way into the bathroom for a shared shower. I took the opportunity to caution Kelly to enjoy the hot water while she could - there wasn't any guarantee that anyplace we stayed at outside of Manila would have genuinely HOT water; more likely, we'd be showering in tepid water, at BEST. I knew she was paying attention to what I told her when she elected to enjoy it for an extra minute or two after I got out and started drying off.

Dried, rested, and again fit for public viewing, the two of us made our way down to the lobby. There wasn't any sign of Marlyn, so we elected to have a seat on one of the surprisingly comfortable couches available. When we first sat down, Kelly started to move to pull my arm around her; I pulled it back, and whispered to her "I'd love to - but the rules here are that public affection isn't a good idea; even for American tourists." Kelly smiled her understanding, but I could see the disappointment in her eyes.

We'd been seated only a few minutes when we saw Marlyn enter the hotel. Kelly and I both got up, and moved to meet her.

She saw us moving toward her, and changed direction to meet us halfway. Once we were close enough, Kelly and I both greeted her in Tagalog while she responded in English.

"It's been a long time since I was last in Manila, so if there is a place that you would like to recommend, or a place that you prefer, I would be more than happy to hear about it." I told Marlyn.

"There are several places near here that would be fine. DO you have any preference?"

Kelly told her "I \*loved\* the chicken adobo we had on the plane; so I'd like to try some more Filipino food, if you don't mind."

Marlyn smiled, and said "I don't mind, at all. Too many of the visitors I work for want to go to restaurants that feature THEIR food, so I seldom get to go to the better Filipino restaurants. I know just the place, and it is right on the next block over."



Kelly and I both voiced our agreement, and Marlyn started for the door, then stopped and turned around. Kelly looked at her quizzically, and Marlyn told us "Dan, I am sure you know what to watch out for, but I think I must tell Kelly. Tonight, in the dress you are wearing, you don't have to worry about it so much, but any time you are wearing \*anything\* with pockets, you have to watch out for the children. Many of them are pickpockets, and will steal from you. You will also see people begging. No one will stop you from giving them money, but I have to warn you that many of them are not as disfigured or poor as they look. I know that Dan will be watching out for you, and so will I. But if anything happens, and you find yourself separated from us, do NOT let \*anyone\* try to help you - just stay where you are, in a public place, and one of us will find you. Never, EVER go into a dark place without one of us with you. You are an American tourist, and it is not likely that anyone will bother you very much, except to try and sell you things for too much money; but sometimes, things happen. What is your expression? Oh, yes - better safe than sorry."

Kelly immediately looked at me, and I told her "She's right. Remember what I told you before?" - she nodded, and I went on "Now think about what it really means, and you'll understand. You don't have to be afraid, just careful, okay?"

Kelly looked at both of us, and told us "I'll do exactly what you say."

Marlyn smiled in reassurance as she told Kelly "Please, I don't mean to frighten you. I only want to make sure that you stay safe, and enjoy your time here."

Kelly smiled back, and Marlyn turned to lead the way to the restaurant. As she'd said, it was on the next block, though at the far end. Between the hotel and the restaurant, we were swarmed by a small army of children. As predicted, they tried to pick my pocket; I was ready for them, having wrapped my wallet in several large rubber bands to give it extra friction before sticking it in my FRONT pocket. It wasn't going ANYWHERE without my noticing. We also saw several different varieties of beggars, and were accosted several times to make a purchase from a street vendor. Kelly stayed right next to me, and Marlyn impressed me by walking on the other side of her, so that the two of us provided protection for her. Entering the restaurant, it was as though we were passing from a combat zone into public park, the change was so dramatic.

The hostess at the restaurant told us that it would be several minutes before she could seat us, and told us that if we would leave our names, they would let us know in the bar when a table was ready. Marlyn had a brief conversation with her in Tagalog, and then told me "They're busy tonight, so if you want to wait, you can get something to drink in the bar and they will come and get us."

I told her that was fine with me, as did Kelly (who, I suspected, wasn't quite ready to run the street gauntlet again). Another brief conversation between Marlyn and the hostess, and Marlyn was leading us toward the bar. Inside, a waiter quickly guided us to a small but comfortable booth. I ordered a beer, while Kelly and Marlyn both settled on a Coke.

The waiter had the drinks on our table in short order, and Marlyn chatted with him for a moment before he left. When he was gone, she told us "I just told him that we were waiting to eat. The drinks will be added to the meal."

After we'd all had a sip of our drinks, Kelly turned to Marlyn and said "I don't want to insult you or anything, but I'm curious to know where you learned English - you speak it very well; better than I do most of the time!", with a grin.

Marlyn smiled back, and said "I graduated nursing school here, and worked at a hospital in Houston, Texas for almost two years. It was there that I learned English so well."

Kelly stared at her, and asked "You're a nurse?"

"Yes, I was. A Registered Nurse, working in the emergency room at the hospital."

"You said 'was'. You're not a nurse any more?"

"No, not now. There was a problem at the hospital, and I had to come back here."

"If you don't mind my asking, what happened?"

Marlyn got a sad look on her face, and told us "I was working one night when we were very busy. An ambulance brought in a young boy, and all of the doctors were very busy with other patients, so one of them told me to take care of him. I checked him, and realized that he was overdosing on drugs. I ran some tests, and found out what it was - heroin. I treated him for it, and got him stable, even after his heart stopped. When I was done, I wrote in his records what I'd found, and what I'd done, just the way I was supposed to. The next day, I was called at home and told to come into the office immediately. I did, and was sent up to the hospital administrator's office. In there, there was a woman that the administrator told me was the young boy's mother. She was upset that I'd written down that her son had overdosed on heroin. I told the administrator what I'd found and how I'd known what was wrong with him. The symptoms could ONLY have been from a drug overdose, and the tests I did PROVED that it was an opiate, specifically heroin. One of the doctors that night was called in, and he verified my diagnosis. But the mother was the wife of an important person, and didn't want her son to have any record of ANY kind of drug usage. She insisted that I was wrong, and that the records be changed. I said that I wouldn't do that, and she got very angry. The administrator told me that I had done a good job, but that he thought I should change my diagnosis. I refused, saying that the tests I'd done, and the medications I'd used, would only be valid for a heroin overdose - that anyone who looked at those would know that my diagnosis was wrong. I told him that if they wanted to change ALL the records, they could, but that I wasn't going to change MY diagnosis. He got upset with me, and told me to leave. That night, when I got to the hospital, I was told that I had been discharged for working without the supervision of a doctor. The doctor that had been in the managers office found me, and told me that everyone knew that I had done exactly the right thing in treating the boy, and that I had only done it because another doctor had told me to take

care of it; I was only being fired because the boys mother was causing trouble, and that was the only excuse they had."

Kelly was horrified, and told her "That's TERRIBLE! Wasn't there anything you could do? Someone you could go to for help?"

Marlyn just gave her a sad smile and answered "No, not at that time. I was there under a professional visa, since the hospital needed nurses. When I wasn't working for them any more, I had to leave to come back here. And when I got back here, none of the doctors or hospitals would hire me because I had been discharged from the hospital in Houston; WHY I was discharged didn't matter. So I had to find different work, and I was lucky enough to get this."

"Wasn't there anything your family could do to help?" Kelly asked.

"My family is all gone - they died in a typhoon while I was in college here in Manila."

"Where are you from?" I asked.

"San Fernando. It is a few hours north of here."

I nodded; I knew - approximately - where it was.

Marlyn started to say something else, but the hostess for the restaurant approached to tell us that there was a table for us. I turned to Marlyn and asked her "How much should I leave as a tip for the waiter?"

She told me "You can leave him just a couple of pesos, if you want. He will also get ten percent of the tip you leave for the meal, too."

I fished a couple of 1-peso coins out of my pocket and left them on the table as the hostess started to lead Kelly and Marlyn into the dining area. I quickly caught up, and held Kelly's chair for her when she sat. Marlyn watched as I did it, but didn't say anything as she seated herself.

When we were all seated, I turned to Marlyn and said "You started to say something in the bar, before the hostess came in. What was it?"

She looked at me a little sadly, and answered "Oh, it is nothing. Don't worry about it", before turning away slightly.

I looked at her a few moments, and finally got her to look at me so I could tell her "Marlyn, I think there is something that you should know that will help BOTH of us - you AND me - while we're in your country. It is not my habit to ask people about themselves unless I am \*interested\* to know the answer. Kelly is like that, too - you saw

how she reacted when you told us what happened about your job in the United States. We really *\*are\** interested in your country, and in YOU."

When I finished, she looked at me intently for a few seconds, then seemed to reach a decision. She looked at Kelly, then back at me, before saying "I was going to tell you that the typhoon that killed my family didn't just take my mother and father and sisters and brothers. It killed almost everyone I knew. The only ones left were me, here in Manila, and my brother's daughter. She was only a few months old at the time, and they found her crying where she was trapped in some tree branches that were tangled together. It took them almost an hour to get her out."

Marlyn looked at Kelly after that, and saw the sadness on her face as Kelly asked her "Is she okay, now? Where is she?"

Marlyn told her "She is fine. She had some scratches and was suffering from exposure, but nothing more. I could not take care of her, so she was put in an orphanage. I send them money whenever I can so they will take good care of her, but it is still hard on her - and me. I visit her often, but I still can't take her into my home; it is too small, and I don't make enough money to get a bigger one."

I asked "What is her name? How old is she now? Does she go to school?"

Marlyn looked at me again, and answered "Her name is Marilyn, and she'll be 13 years old next month. While I was working at the hospital in Houston, I was able to send enough money for her to go to school like she should; but since then, not so much. To help pay her expenses, she has to work at the orphanage, and doesn't have much time for that anymore."

Kelly saw me start to 'go inside' myself as I started thinking about what Marlyn had just told us, and told her "I'd like to see what she looks like, if you have any pictures."

That distracted Marlyn long enough for me to finish my thoughts, so I was ready when Kelly handed me the photo of Marlyn's niece. Looking at it, I saw the shy smile she was offering the camera. I could also see clear signs of the intelligence and humor in her eyes. There was a distinct family resemblance, and I didn't doubt for a moment that she was going to be a real cutie when she grew up.

I handed the photo back to Marlyn, and asked "If you don't mind my asking, what did it cost you to pay her expenses while you were in Houston?"

Kelly knew me well enough to give me a joyous look before Marlyn told me "I was sending them fifty dollars a month to pay for her expenses, and school supplies", as she looked at me curiously.

I looked at Kelly, and she nodded happily, before I asked Marlyn "Would you mind if Kelly and I sponsored her, instead?"

Marlyn looked stunned, and objected "But it is too much! And you don't even know her!"

I replied by telling her "No, it is NOT too much - we can afford that, easily. And you have already told us everything we need to know about her."

Still in shock, Marlyn started to say "But..."

I cut her off by telling her "'But' nothing. You and I both know that there are many organizations that sponsor orphans here - and some of them charge more than fifty dollars a month for a child. Fifty dollars is less than what we would have to pay if we were still in the United States, and in this case, Kelly and I would KNOW that ALL of the money was going to the person that needed it. And Kelly and I would both know WHO that child was, and why she is there. We would \*know\* that she wasn't just the child of a prostitute, or a poor family that couldn't take care of her, or anything like that - you have already told us that she is from a good family that she lost in a disaster. Looking at her picture, I think she is smart" - "She is!" Marlyn hastened to assure me - "and that is the \*best\* reason I can think of to help her go back to school."

Marlyn was still sitting there, dumbfounded, when the waiter approached. Marlyn absently ordered pancit; I told the waiter that Kelly and I would have some, too. I also requested refills for our drinks; by the time they arrived, Marlyn was able to speak again.

When the waiter had left, she told me "I am having trouble accepting your offer, Dan, because I don't know how I can ever repay you - or even thank you for your offer."

I answered "I don't remember saying anything about repayment. And knowing that that young girl will get an education that she will obviously benefit from is all the thanks I need, or want."

After a few moments, Marlyn suddenly looked at me suspiciously, and asked "Why are you doing this? REALLY?"

I looked her straight in the eye and answered "Because it's the \*right\* thing to do, and I \_can\_."

Still suspicious, Marlyn asked "You don't want her? Or me?"

I couldn't help answering "If all I wanted was a little girl, I could find one here in Manila. The same thing for a pretty Filipina. For extra money, both would be virgins. If \*that\* was all I wanted, do you think I would be talking to you like this? With my \*wife\* sitting right next to me?"

I paused to take a breath and continued "If you want, we can go back to the hotel right now, and I will give you five thousand dollars cash. You take that money, and have your agency send another guide. You have the money for your niece, and you don't have to see me again - ever."

We were all saved from any further conversation by the appearance of the waiter with the first course of our meal. All three of us ate silently, though Kelly and I shared a few Looks.

After the waiter reclaimed our dishes, Marlyn made a few false starts before she was finally able to tell me "I am sorry if I have offended you, Dan - and you, too, Kelly. I am so used to seeing the American men that come here on 'business' and only want to use our women, that I forgot about the other Americans that I met and knew in Houston. I also let myself forget that you aren't like the other American sailors that were stationed here, Dan, and I apologize. You do not have to give me the money, or find another guide. I will be happy to stay with you and show you my country. I am most grateful for your \*kind\* interest in my niece, and I accept your offer to help her - if you are still willing."

I wasn't particularly surprised when Kelly spoke up, telling Marlyn "I am glad to hear your apology, because I think you offended Dan, and I KNOW you offended me with your suspicions. But I know Dan well enough to know that he will still want to help Marilyn, as I do. When you get to know us better, you will understand that the LAST thing EITHER of us would do would be to force someone to do something, or to take advantage of them. You didn't know that before, but I think you will before we leave the Philippines."

There was another, longer, pause in the conversation when the waiter brought our main dishes. Kelly's face got a pleased look after she sampled her pancit (mixed vegetables and rice), and the side dishes that went with it. By mutual consent, all of us decided to let the matter of Marlyn's niece drop for a while.

When we'd finished eating, Marlyn reached into her purse and handed me a couple of folded sheets of paper. She told me "This is the itinerary that I would suggest. You can see that we are starting in the south, in Davao, and generally working our way north. I know some of the places fairly well, others not so much. There is enough time in the schedule that if you want to spend more or less time in a place, we can accommodate that. I also have the names of several lawyers here in Manila, as well as at least two more in each of the places on the list. I have had no contact with them other than to tell them that you are representing a company that is considering building a small factory here, to make sure that they are qualified for that kind of work."

I looked over the list Marlyn had given me, and saw that there weren't any real surprises on it - all of them were at least mentioned in the research I'd done as being potential sites for foreign investment.

I was just finishing looking the list over when the waiter reappeared to see if we were interested in dessert. Kelly and Marlyn both opted for ice cream while I settled on cheesecake.

After he left, I started talking to Marlyn about the places we were to visit - asking her questions about the areas to try and get some background on them. Even as we were

enjoying our desserts, we continued talking about the different areas, and what I could expect to find when we got to them.

When it was clear that we were done, the hostess quickly brought over the check for our meal. I again asked Marlyn how much of a tip would be appropriate. She told me that ten percent was sufficient, but that if the service had been \*particularly\* good, I could go as high as fifteen. I decided on the latter figure, since the waiter and hostess had both been prompt and efficient. I moved to help Kelly with her chair, and was surprised when the waiter quickly moved in to assist Marlyn, too. She politely thanked him, and he and the hostess both thanked US.

When we got close to the door, Marlyn told me "The waiters here know that they SHOULD help women with their chairs, but seldom do. But when YOU helped Kelly, he was ashamed not to do it for me, too. When they see the tip you gave him, perhaps it will help them remember to do it again next time."

We ran the gauntlet back to the hotel, and Marlyn again took station on the opposite side of Kelly so that we formed something of a shield for her. My size and broken Tagalog told most that I wasn't to be trifled with; they didn't even BOTHER with Marlyn. Again in the hotel lobby, I asked Marlyn if she would like to have a drink - alcohol, coke, or coffee, her choice - with us before she left. She thought it over a moment, and agreed. We went into the bar and I ordered a beer, which Kelly duplicated. Marlyn selected coffee, and the three of us settled into the booth the waiter had shown us to.

When we'd gotten our drinks, I asked Marlyn "How soon could Marilyn start going to school again?"

The subject surprised her a bit, but she readily answered "The day after the orphanage got the money for it."

Kelly asked "How much would they want to start?"

"Only the first month."

Kelly went on to ask "How soon could you get it to them?"

"If I called to let them know, I could telegraph it to them and it would be there in one day only."

Kelly looked at me, and then excused herself - I knew that she was going to go up to the room to get some money, and took the opportunity to discuss a few things with Marlyn.

"I would like to thank you for helping to watch out for Kelly, by walking on the other side of her from me."

To my surprise, Marlyn blushed slightly, and answered "She is too pretty and too young to let anything happen to her."

"When we get to the places we're going, will you be with me during the meetings?" I asked.

"Oh, no, that won't be necessary. All of the people you will be seeing are fluent in English."

"There is something that I would like to ask you to do, then, while I am busy during the day, if you would."

Marlyn looked at me curiously, and answered "I would be happy to, if I can."

"Actually, it is a couple of things, but one of them will be easy, I think."

She nodded for me to continue, and I said "First, if you can, I would like to meet the American managers of any companies in the area we visit. I think they can tell me things that only another American would think important. The second one is if you would keep Kelly company - show her different places, go shopping with her, and like that."

Marlyn smiled, and said "Yes, I think the second one would be easy. The first one, I will try. I don't know if a Filipina could get you an appointment, though - they might think that I am only trying to get someone else into their office."

"I suppose that's true. I'll give you some of my business cards; if you tell them why I'm there, and who I'm visiting, that should help convince them that it really is another American that wants to see them."

"Yes, I think that would do it. Is there anything else?"

"Only that I am interested to know *\*anything\** that you can tell me about the different places we're going, and the people that I meet. I have had a *\*very\** good business relationship with my client for a very long time, and I want to do the best job I can for them, and not send them to a bad place."

About then, Kelly made her reappearance with an envelope in her hand. She sat down with us again, and discretely slid it over to Marlyn, telling her "There is \$200 inside. That should cover the cost of the telegraph and the telephone call, plus what Marilyn will need. If you need more, don't be afraid to tell me, or Dan, and we'll see that you get it."

Marlyn sat there in stunned silence for nearly a minute before we saw her eyes start to tear up. Kelly quickly reached out to take her hand, asking "What? What's the matter?"

Marlyn took a deep breath, and told her "This." - gesturing at the envelope - "You are so kind to me, even after the way I talked to you in the restaurant. She is my only family,



and I feel so bad that I cannot help her more, and now I can because you are so kind." as tears started down her face.

Kelly quickly squeezed her hand, and said "Its okay, Marlyn. We're doing it because we want to help her."

"But you are still so kind to me, and to her, I don't know how I can thank you."

"You don't have to thank us. When she is able to leave the orphanage with an education, that will be all the thanks we need." I told her.

She looked at both of us gratefully, and carefully put the envelope in her purse. When she looked up at us again, she was sniffing a bit, and Kelly quickly handed her a couple of paper napkins. Marlyn thanked her, and started dabbing at her eyes, but not making much progress. Kelly slid from the booth, and took her by the hand, saying "I think you need some time in the ladies room". Marlyn slowly nodded, and made her way to stand next to Kelly. With a look to me, Kelly led the way toward the sign that indicated where the ladies room was.

Several minutes later, I saw as they made their way back to the booth; Marlyn once again looked like the composed professional she'd first appeared, while I could see that Kelly had shed a few tears of her own.

When they'd sat down again, I asked Marlyn "I saw on the schedule that we were supposed to leave for Davao tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. Would you like us to leave later, or even the next day?"

She hastened to assure me "Oh, no, we don't need to do that. I can send them the money tonight, and call them tomorrow morning before we leave."

Kelly told her "Marlyn, please, \*please\* don't hesitate to tell us if there's anything we can do to help."

Marlyn quickly told her "Oh, no, everything will be fine, really. It isn't a problem."

"Hindi malaking bagay?" (No big thing) I asked, teasing.

"Oh, no", she smiled.

Kelly looked at me, and I told her "We have a little drive tomorrow, a few hours, to get to Tacloban. Spend the night there, and another easy drive to Davao. Of course, the driving is always easier when it's somebody else doing it!" making both of them laugh.

A few minutes later, Kelly yawned, and I suggested that we'd better get some rest - that we still hadn't really caught up on our time zones. Marlyn seconded my opinion, and Kelly readily agreed. We all stood up, and I told Marlyn "If you want, you are welcome

to join us for breakfast tomorrow. If you will be busy, though, we'll understand. I thought we would be in the restaurant here in the hotel about 7:30." She said she'd try, but couldn't promise. I said that I understood, and she wished us both a good evening before heading for the lobby of the hotel. Kelly and I followed her as far as the elevators, and then made our way to our room. Both of us were again feeling the effects of the flight, so neither of us felt frisky enough to try any repeats of our earlier performance. I left a wakeup call, and Kelly again set that damn alarm clock. Sure that we'd wake up in time, the two of us made our way to bed, spooning as we fell asleep.

---

The next morning, the wakeup call from the front desk was enough to get me up and moving. I tried to get Kelly up, but she protested that it was still too early. With a wicked smile on my face, I set the damn alarm clock on the nightstand next to her before heading in to take a shower. Sure enough, a few minutes later, I heard it go off, accompanied by Kelly's muffled curse before she shut it off. A minute or so after that, she dragged herself into the bathroom; and after unloading the beer she'd had the night before, joined me in the shower. We had a fine time waking each other up with lots of soap and plenty of slippery fun.

Before we'd left, I'd shown Kelly a few things about packing a suitcase, so it didn't take us much to get ready for the trip. We made it to the restaurant in the hotel a few minutes before 7:30, and didn't have any trouble getting seated. We waited a little bit, but didn't see any sign of Marlyn, so we both went ahead and ordered breakfast - the waitress was used to American tourists, and had brought coffee on her first stop at the table.

We were just finishing our meal when we saw Marlyn at the entrance to the restaurant. The waitress saw her, and directed her to where we were seated. She joined us in a cup of coffee as the three of us discussed the day ahead. I remembered something, and told Kelly "While we're on the road, do yourself a favor, and just watch the scenery. If you watch Bhoy driving, you'll just get nervous."

Kelly looked at me suspiciously; Marlyn just laughed and told her "Driving rules here are MUCH different than in the United States. I think the best description here is that biggest and fastest has right of way."

Kelly gave Marlyn a look of disbelief, but let it go - I could tell that she wasn't quite sure if we were joking with her, or not. I didn't worry about it; she'd find out - one way or the other - soon enough.

When all of us were ready, we left the restaurant. I went over to take care of the bill while Kelly politely flagged down a bellhop. A few minutes later, and Bhoy was loading the van while Marlyn told us a little about the different areas we'd be passing through. Kelly had made sure to keep her camera out, and was anxiously looking forward to the start of her first real adventure. I had a look inside the van, and saw that someone had taken the time to load a small cooler with drinks, and then iced them down.

That reminded me of something else, and I discretely pulled Kelly to the side and told her "There's something else I forgot to mention before now."

"What?"

"About drinking here."

"I've already been drinking here. I had a beer last night, remember?"

"No, I mean about drinking for thirst. If it doesn't come in a bottle, or it hasn't been 'processed' somehow, DON'T DRINK IT. Coffee, sodas, hot tea, bottled water, beer, all that stuff is fine. Ice is 'iffy' outside of Manila; better not to actually put it IN your drink. They can't really afford the extensive water treatment systems we're used to, so there's a risk of there being something in the water. Nothing that would actually kill you, probably, but you might WISH you were dead. Okay?"

She gave me a Look, and said "I'm glad you remembered to tell me that BEFORE, instead of AFTER!"

I glanced around, and saw that no one was looking, so I gave her a quick kiss and said "Me, too!"

We looked around, and saw that the only thing missing from the van was us, so we quickly took our seats in the back.

Bhoy started the van, and then had a brief conversation with Marlyn. She turned to us and said "Bhoy wants you to know that if you want to use the seatbelts, he doesn't mind. He said that he knows most Americans feel better when they have them on."

I looked at the rearview mirror, where I could see Bhoy looking at me, and I told him "Why would I want to wear the seatbelt? That would just make it harder to get out after he crashes."

He just laughed, and put the van in gear as Marlyn smiled at my joke with him.

As I'd expected, Kelly couldn't HELP but watch Bhoy drive. After about an hour of feeling her dig her fingernails into my hand, I could see as she almost had to FORCE herself to look at the scenery instead. On the plus side, once she'd had a look at it, she didn't bother watching Bhoy any more - there was just too much for her to take in.

The van had air conditioning, but with the windows open a bit, and the speed we were doing, I didn't feel any need for it. Kelly was too wrapped up in watching things go by - and trying to take photos out both sides of the van at the same time - to think about it.

We made a brief stop about 12:30 for a light lunch, and then it was back on the road again. We rolled into Tacloban about 5:30, and made the hotel by 6:00. Once we'd gotten

our luggage into our room, Kelly and I shared a quick shower to rinse the road grime off. Dressed in fresh clothes, we joined Marlyn in the lobby so the three of us could go out to eat. Bhoy assured us that we didn't need a bodyguard for the places we planned to go to - all within a few blocks of the hotel - and left us to make his own way for the evening.

After supper, Kelly and Marlyn (with me along as load bearer) decided that a little shopping was called for - Kelly decided that she *\*really\** needed some lighter-weight clothes. Marlyn found a few bargains, as well, so I had my hands full by the time we made it back to the hotel.

Marlyn passed on my offer for something to drink, so Kelly and I enjoyed a cold beer in the bar after we (I) got the stuff unloaded in our room. We bought a couple of cold Cokes each to take back with us to the room, keeping them chilled with some ice the hotel provided.

After watching a little Filipino TV - and understanding about 1 word in 5,000 - it was time for bed.

Marlyn joined for an early breakfast the next morning, and when Bhoy showed up at the appointed time, we packed up and headed south to finish the journey. Kelly discovered that she didn't have anything even remotely like 'sea legs', even for something like the ferries that took us between the islands of Luzon and Samar, then later, Leyte and Mindanao. But she'd brought along some Dramamine, and hung in till the rides were done.

It took me only three days each to get the information I needed in Davao, then Surigao; both places were well-geared toward foreign investment. We spent only a day in Prosperidad; the officials I met were more interested in lining their pockets than attracting a factory that would create jobs.

Cebu took a little longer - but only because Kelly all but fell in love with it. I had *\*my\** work done in 4 days, but Kelly talked me into staying a couple more so she could look around, to Marlyn's amusement.

Ormos took nearly a week - they wanted the factory and jobs, but had something of an organizational problem. I finally did get to meet with everyone I had to talk to, but the confusion over my presence did little to reassure me.

Plaridel had a lot going for it, but I didn't think it had enough to make it to the finals.

We skirted around Manila, heading for Dagupan. There, I spent the better part of a week, slightly impressed with how ready and eager they were for foreign investment. It was while we were there that I noticed a certain wistfulness in Marlyn's face. I thought I knew what the deal was, but discretely checked a map to make sure: we were barely an hour away from San Fernando, where Marilyn was.

I knew I didn't even have to check with Kelly; the next meal the three of us shared, I told Marlyn "There is a side trip that I would like to make. I know it's not in the itinerary, but I think we have enough time for it. Heck, even if we don't, we'll MAKE time for it."

Surprised, Marlyn looked at me and asked "Where is it that you want to go?"

"Well, I think it's time we paid a little visit to a town north of here. Maybe you know where it is?"

"Perhaps. What is the town?"

"San Fernando."

Kelly just grinned as Marlyn sat there in stunned silence for a couple minutes before jumping out of her chair to come over and hug me - then blushing furiously in embarrassment. She quickly sat down again - blushed some more - and told me "You would do that? You would go there for me, so that I can see Marilyn?"

Kelly laughed, and told her "Of course we would. I didn't know he was going to do that, but it sounds like a FINE idea, to me!"

Marlyn suddenly got a crestfallen look on her face, and told us "I can't go. My employer would be upset with me if I went to that place while I am your guide."

"But that isn't a problem. It wasn't YOUR idea to go there, it was MINE. Kelly and I are going, and it is your job to keep us company, right?"

Marlyn nodded her head, still unsure, before I told her "Besides, \*I'm\* not going to tell your employer, and KELLY isn't going to tell your employer. Would Bhoy tell?"

Marlyn smiled, and said "Bhoy isn't even working for them, he's working for me."

"Then the only person we have to worry about telling them is YOU. So stop crying, and get to work."

She looked at me, confused, and I told her "If we're going to San Fernando, and it's not on the itinerary, you're going to have to find a place for us to stay, aren't you?"

She nodded, and with a happy smile on her face, told me "I know just the place, and you don't need reservations. It is a Filipino place, but very nice. I think you will like it."

"Good, then it's settled. What time do we leave tomorrow?"

"Ten o'clock will be good. We won't have to hurry to leave, and we will still get there in time for lunch."

I had a thought, and asked Marlyn "What are the rules for the orphanage? Does Marilyn have to stay there while you are visiting?"

"Oh, no. I am her family, so she can stay with me", she answered - then suddenly realized what I was getting at, and said "NO! You can't!"

"I can't what?"

"You can't let her stay with me in the hotel. It will be too expensive!"

"Too bad. I'm going to pay for it. If you want to waste the money, then that is up to you." I told her.

She started to get indignant until Kelly took her hand and said "Marlyn, I promise you - Dan will do *\*exactly\** what he just said. Dan and I have been together for over six years, and when he gets like this NO ONE can argue with him - not even me. So accept the gift he is offering, and enjoy your time with Marilyn."

The fire in her eyes told me that Marlyn didn't think the matter was closed - but *\*I\** knew it was. And when Kelly looked at me again, she knew it, too.

---

## Part Two

The next morning, while we were having breakfast, I asked Kelly to keep Marlyn distracted for a couple of minutes after Bhoy showed up. She asked why, and I told her that there was just something I wanted to talk to him about. She knew I was up to something, but didn't bother trying to find out what it was.

All of us were ready and waiting in the lobby of the hotel shortly after 9:30; little before ten o'clock, Bhoy pulled up in front of the hotel. We quickly had the luggage loaded, and Kelly and Marlyn took their traditional seats in the van. I stayed back with Bhoy, and when he closed the tailgate to the van, told him "There's something I'd like your help with, if you would."

He looked at me blankly, and I said "Bhoy, I know your English is better than you pretend. When we left Manila, you laughed at my joke, without Marlyn having to translate it for you. Since then, whenever I've asked Marlyn to have you take us someplace, I've seen that you were already starting to do it before she started telling you. If you want to pretend not to understand or speak English, that's fine with me - that's your choice. All I'm asking you for is a little help when we get to the hotel in San Fernando."

He didn't say anything, but didn't move away, either, so I went on to tell him "We're going there so Marlyn can have some time - a few days - with her niece, Marilyn. I'd like the two of them to have as much time together as possible, so I want to pay for her niece

to stay with her in the hotel; but I think she's going to try to stop me. The help I would like from you is just for you to listen while she gets our rooms, and if she doesn't include her niece, to let me know - I'll do the arguing with her."

He grinned at that, but didn't say anything as he turned to head for the driver's seat. I went around the other direction, and took my seat next to Kelly. Marlyn didn't seem to notice that I'd been anywhere \*near\* Bhoy, since the two of them were engrossed in conversation when I got in and closed the van door behind me.

An hour and a half later, we were pulling up in front of a smallish hotel in the suburbs of San Fernando. All of us got out and went into the lobby - Kelly and I stayed a little distance off while Bhoy positioned himself a few feet from her. I discretely watched Bhoy, and saw him use a Filipino gesture to indicate that there was something needing my attention at the desk. I made my way over to where Marlyn was and asked "So what is the damage?", inquiring about the rates.

She told me what it would cost for us to stay there for the 3 days we'd agreed on during the trip, and I pulled out my wallet. As I was counting out the money, I asked her "Is that including your niece?"

She immediately got the fire in her eyes I'd seen the night before, and told me "No! It is too expensive."

I counted out an additional 30 percent, and handed it to the manager. When he picked it up, I told him "There will be another person. Miss Ramos' niece will be staying with her, too."

Marlyn tried to protest, but I just stood there and looked at her until she finally ran out of steam. Next she tried to argue with the manager; he just looked at her as though she'd suddenly sprouted antlers. She was still aggravated with me, but had settled down when I told her "I've given him the money. The rooms are paid for. Now, let's unload our bags so we can go get your niece."

She tried to stomp off, but there simply wasn't enough of her for her to really pull it off - though it was still fun to watch. I moved to follow her, and as I passed Bhoy, I told him "salamat po!" - getting a grin and nod in return.

Half an hour later, we found ourselves in front of the orphanage. Bhoy, Kelly, and I all stayed in the van so that Marlyn could have some private time with Marilyn. We'd been waiting - patiently - for about an hour when we saw Marlyn coming toward us, her niece at her side. As it turned out, they weren't quite ready for lunch yet; rather, they wanted to show us around the orphanage. Kelly and I quickly accepted, while Bhoy passed in favor of a nap in the van.

I didn't KNOW what to expect, but had a fair suspicion of what we'd find. Kelly kept her composure, though I could see how much it hurt her to see the conditions the kids were

living in: crowded, barely adequate food, many of the younger ones dressed in third- or fourth-generation hand-me-downs. Even the clothing worn by the older kids was obviously worn.

Kelly and I both had plenty of time to take a closer look at Marilyn. She was clearly intelligent and fun-loving, even if she obviously didn't get much chance to enjoy herself. Roughly four feet tall and slender, she bore a clear resemblance to Marlyn. Though her dress was slightly too large for her, I thought I could see the first faint swellings on her chest and the slight narrowing of her waist that would soon define her figure. She was shy with both of us, me more than Kelly.

After we'd had our informal tour of the place, the staff readily agreed to let Marilyn stay with Marlyn - I suspected that they were just as happy to not have to stretch their meager food supply to include another mouth. The two of them had a brief conversation in Tagalog, and when it was over, Marilyn was clearly delighted to be able to stay with her aunt for a few days. As we made our way back to the van, I saw that Marlyn had decided to forgive me when she gave me a look of gratitude.

Bhoy was waiting for us, and greeted Marilyn as she got into the van - sitting on the other side of Kelly, away from me. She responded in kind, if a bit shyly. Apparently, the idea of two Americans in her life was somewhat overwhelming for her.

After leaving the orphanage, we quickly decided that some lunch was called for. Opinions were solicited, and we decided to go with Marilyn's tentative suggestion: a Filipino fast-food place with the improbable name of Jollibee's. Kelly and I were both pleasantly surprised to find the food rather good. While Kelly and I quietly talked, Marlyn and Bhoy were discussing something else. Marilyn was too busy wrapping herself around some spaghetti (Kelly and I were both amazed at how popular it was in the Philippines) to say anything.

When all of us were relatively full, I mentioned that I'd like to spend the next day at the beach. Kelly seconded the idea, and went on to say that Marlyn and Marilyn were both welcome to join us. Marlyn looked a bit hesitant, but Kelly quickly assured her that we wanted to get to know Marilyn, too. She thought it over a bit - getting some whispered input from Marilyn - and eventually agreed.

Kelly's next suggested that the three of them go shopping. Marlyn readily accepted THAT idea, though Marilyn looked a bit reluctant.

Kelly seemed to know what the problem was, and asked Marlyn "Does the orphanage accept donations?"

"Oh, yes!" was the answer, "That is often the only way they can get the things they need."

"Then I'd like to get some clothing for the children there - \*all\* of them."



Marlyn easily understood what Kelly was getting at, and told her "I think that would be fine. I know that they would appreciate it very much."

That settled, I tossed in my own thoughts: "I do *\*not\** want to go shopping with you three - I know who'd wind up carrying all the packages. How about if we find someplace where I can sit outside and drink beer, but is close to some stores? That way, when your arms get full, you can just put the stuff in the van, and go back at it while you leave me in peace?"

Kelly laughed, as did Marlyn, and both of them cheerfully agreed. I went on to say "Marlyn, if Bhoy wants, he's welcome to join me. I trust him not to drink too much, and I'm not looking for someone to talk to - just drink beer with."

Marlyn had a quick conversation with Bhoy, then told me "He says that sounds like a good idea to him, too - he doesn't want to carry packages, either!" with a laugh.

With our plans for the afternoon settled, we all decided that some ice cream was called for - Marilyn being the most happy at the idea. Kelly and I both suspected that she didn't get much in the way of treats in the orphanage.

Refreshed from the ice cream, we all again piled into the van - Marilyn still careful to keep her distance from me, though not *\*quite\** as shy. Marlyn directed Bhoy to a medium-sized shopping mall toward the center of town; across the street from it was a chain restaurant where Bhoy and I could sit outside and drink. Bhoy parked the van so that the shoppers could find it easily, and we all headed to our self-assigned duties.

Bhoy and I spent the next four hours sitting on the patio of the restaurant, drinking beer under the shade of a large patio umbrella. Between the shade and the light breeze, it was a pleasant way to spend the afternoon. Neither of us felt any obligation to say anything except to order another round from our exceptionally cute waitress - both of us were content to simply sit there and watch the world go by.

We were interrupted only once, when Marlyn came over to complain to me "Kelly is spending too much! She is buying clothes for *\*everybody\** at the orphanage!"

My only response was a calm "Okay". She looked at me closely, to see if I was drunk; seeing that I wasn't, she realized that I really didn't CARE how much money Kelly was spending, and gave up - to go shopping some more.

By the time the three of them came to get us, I was giving some thought to supper; when Bhoy and I got to the van, we saw that they'd obviously had a REAL good time shopping: there was barely enough room for all of us in the van.

At my suggestion - and with Marlyn's agreement - our first stop on the way back to the hotel was at the orphanage. There, we unloaded about 95 percent of the stuff from the van

- and becoming instant celebrities while the people that ran it repeatedly assured us that they would be praying for us. Marlyn told me that the rest would go back with Marilyn.

With a little more room for people, the ride back to the hotel was a bit more comfortable. I saw Marilyn watching us as Kelly quietly hugged my arm as thanks for letting her help the kids in the orphanage.

Back at the hotel, we all paused in the lobby as I told Marlyn "You and Marilyn are welcome to join us for supper, if you want. But Kelly and I will both understand if you want to have some time for just yourselves, too."

Marlyn nodded her understanding, and thanks, and I went on to tell her "We'll be leaving here for a restaurant about 6:30?" - the last a question to Kelly, who agreed - "If you want to go with us, we'll meet you here then. If you're not here, that's fine, and we'll see you in the morning."

When I was done, Bhoy said something to Marlyn, who told us "Bhoy says that there are several nice places to eat about two blocks from here, to the west. This is a quiet area, so you don't have to worry about any trouble. If you want to go someplace else, he will be happy to drive you."

Kelly and I shared a look, and I said "No, that will be okay. We can walk a couple of blocks. He can go ahead and take the evening off and have fun."

She relayed the message to him, and he left us with a smile.

Kelly and I started to head for our room when Marlyn reached out a hand to touch my arm. When I stopped, Kelly did too, and the two of us turned to face her again. Hesitantly, she told us "I... I wanted to thank you. Not just for helping me, but the orphanage, too. You have been very kind to me, and Marilyn. I think maybe TOO kind" - that with a reproachful look at Kelly, who ignored it - "It isn't often that I get to meet Americans that are as kind and generous as you are. And I understand, now, what you meant when you told me in Manila that you are not the kind of people that take advantage of others, or hurt people. So I want to apologize again for my suspicions that night - now I know how wrong they were."

Kelly responded by telling her "its okay, Marlyn. All that matters to us is that we're able to help."

Marlyn looked at both of us carefully for a few moments, then gave a small nod of her head before we all headed to our respective rooms.

Back up in our room, Kelly quickly moved to hug me after we'd closed the door behind us.

"That was \*so\* happy to see them together!" she exclaimed as she started to cry.

"Yeah, it WAS nice", I answered.

"Marilyn is so \_cute\_! You can look at Marlyn and just KNOW what she's going to look like when she gets older. But that \*place\*, that orphanage! I don't know how they manage to keep it going!"

"I know. But we'll be sending them money - and more than just fifty bucks a month! All the stuff we - you! - bought will help a lot, too. We're going to find out what else they could use right away before we leave, and see that they get it. After we get back, there are some other things I plan to send them, too."

"Marlyn tried to tell me that I was buying too much" - "She tried to tell me the same thing; I just ignored it." I told her - "but I could tell that she was still having fun. Did you see that dress Marilyn was wearing when we were done?"

"Yeah, I saw it. She seems pretty shy, so I didn't think I'd better say anything about it."

"Oh, she's shy all right - but just around you. She was SO happy while we were shopping - talking to Marlyn and me, both. I was surprised at how good her English is; we didn't have any trouble understanding each other. She didn't \*ask\* for anything, but I could always tell when there was something she really liked. Marlyn stopped me most of the time, but I still managed to get her a couple of special things, just for her. Marlyn told me that Marilyn thinks you're handsome - guapo, right?"

I nodded, and she went on "She wants to thank you for helping her, but she's not sure how. I told her that she didn't have to, but she \*really\* wants to. Is it okay if I tell her it's okay to kiss you? At least on the cheek?"

I grinned, and told Kelly "You know I'm always willing to accept a kiss from a pretty girl. Yeah, I think a kiss on the cheek would be okay here - she's still young enough that nobody would think anything about it. You should probably check with Marlyn, though, just to make sure."

"I will."

Both of us got undressed and went in to take a shower. As I'd predicted in Manila, we'd had far more showers in tepid water than hot - and a couple of them were outright cold. So we'd gotten into the habit of showering together so that we could eliminate the risk of one of us freezing when even the tepid water ran out.

We'd also learned not to dawdle in the shower - there was never any telling just how much water there was.

The net effect was that we had plenty of time to clean up and change clothes before heading for the lobby area. We got there about twenty after six, and gave Marlyn ten minutes past the agreed-on deadline before going out to eat. As Bhoy had said, there were

a number of places to eat just a couple blocks from the hotel. We talked it over, and decided that the fast food from lunch had hit a pleasant spot, so we settled on Kentucky Fried Chicken. It was most definitely a change of pace from the fresh-cooked, low-fat Filipino food we'd had the last few weeks. Not necessarily a good change, though - just a change.

There were a few stores nearby, and the two of us did a little shopping. I settled on a couple of nice Barong Tagalog shirts (similar to the Latin guayabera, a loose outside-the-pants shirt with embroidered designs) and a few carved wooden figurines. Kelly chose some pretty seashell jewelry that was surprisingly inexpensive.

By the time we'd finished our shopping, it was still relatively early, but we headed back toward the hotel anyway. Along the way, we stopped at a sari-sari store to re-hydrate with a Coke. I'd explained to Kelly on the flight over that a sari-sari store is essentially a small booth where the owner sold small quantities of a relatively few popular items at mildly inflated prices - think of an entire convenience store scaled down to half the size of a one-car garage. The owner never got rich, but seldom went broke, either; you could buy anything from a single cigarette to a kilo of rice, which made them fairly popular.

Once we were back in the hotel room, and had our purchases tucked away, we got undressed to enjoy the relative coolness of the room as we watched some TV. When it came time for the news, we shut the set off and snuggled up to each other. I didn't mind in the slightest when I felt Kelly reach down to take my penis in hand, since I already had a hand cupped around one of her breasts.

I kissed her softly on the cheek as I ran my thumb across her nipple, feeling it growing slightly under my attentions. Kelly responded by giving my penis a few gentle squeezes, then stroking it a bit as I began to grow in her hand. When I moved to kiss her cheek again, Kelly turned her head so that our lips met. From that initial contact, our lips soon parted so that we could duel with each other's tongues. I continued to grow under Kelly's tender care, even as I felt her nipple getting even longer and harder under my hand. After a bit, I moved my hand to her other breast to bring it up to speed with the first as Kelly continued to stroke me toward erection while we kissed.

We'd already made love several times during the trip, but this one was special. I knew that Kelly's desire for us to make love wasn't triggered by the money she'd spent. Rather, I'd encouraged her to express her concern for, and interest in, others; so she was physically expressing the love she had for me, just as we had used our hearts and pockets to show others our love and concern for them.

As I felt myself getting close to being completely hard, I let my hand ease its way down Kelly's body, ending up at the soft, dark cloud between her thighs. She readily spread her legs for me so that I could draw a finger between her wet and extended labia. As it passed over the entrance to her womanhood, I could feel how hot and wet she was inside. I repeated my actions a few more times; with each pass, I let my finger dip a little deeper into her. By the time I finally let my finger slide into her slick opening, Kelly was panting

slightly with her arousal and caressing my full-blown erection with more and more insistence.

When I knew she was completely ready for me, I slowly pulled my finger free of the clasp of her vaginal muscles. Despite all the times that we'd taken pleasure in each other's bodies, she still felt wonderfully hot and tight to me.

With my finger free of her intimate grasp, she quickly pulled my hand up so that she could take my finger into her mouth to clean her own juices from it. When she'd removed even the faintest taste of herself from it, she let me pull it free of her lips with a soft 'pop' before giving me a wanton, lecherous grin.

Kelly went on to put a hand on my chest to nudge me over onto my back; once there, she moved over me to start kissing her way down my body until she got as far as my penis. She locked eyes with me before slowly lowering her head to take the head of my penis into her mouth. To my surprise, she only held me there for a few seconds - just long enough to give me a thorough coating of her saliva before raising herself up again to straddle my hips. Once in position, she took me into her hand and held me in place as she lowered herself onto my still-glistening member. With only a couple of tries, she had me completely inside her, moaning her pleasure when she felt our pubic hair mesh.

After a few seconds, she leaned forward to make her breasts available to me. Firm as they were the first time I sampled them, her breasts were a delight to the eye: a trifle larger than a B-cup, they were smooth and without blemish. Her areolas were relatively small and puckered with her arousal. They, in turn, were capped by the hard pebbles of her nipples. I happily took the end of one of her breasts in my mouth and started sucking on it - which brought a soft moan of pleasure from Kelly. When I'd drawn her nipple and areola to form little volcanoes in my mouth, I switched over to do the same to the other. As I was doing all this, I was also letting my hands wander across her body - caressing her sides and hips, back and butt, legs and arms. I could never touch her without again marveling at how smooth and soft and clear her skin was.

While I was nursing at her breasts and delighting at the feel of her under my hands, Kelly started moving over me slightly by beginning a slow, short hunching motion on my penis. Moving barely an inch along my member, she was consciously using her internal muscles to clench herself around me - using her vagina to milk my erection the way a farmer would milk a cow: relaxing herself as she lowered herself onto me, then tightening around me as she lifted herself up again.

The sensations she was creating felt exquisite (!!), so it wasn't long before I was willing to release her nipple from my mouth and let her raise her body so that she was sitting over me again. I was able to reach up and cup her breasts in my hand while she slowly increased the extent of her movements over me; before long, she was sliding herself along my entire length, with only the head of my erection staying inside her. Her motions were still slow and languorous; I knew that I wasn't making love to her - SHE was making love to ME. Even as I was savoring the sensations she was creating around me, I

couldn't help but contemplate my good fortune that such a warm, loving, intelligent, and \*attractive\* young woman would choose to give herself to someone nearly twice her age.

For perhaps ten minutes we stayed like that, with Kelly's actions steadily increasing our mutual arousal and pleasure. She leaned forward several times to let me lick and suck on her breasts and nipples as she continued her self-impalements on my male spear. Only a couple of times was I tempted to contribute more to our excitement. Both times, I easily dismissed the mild urge; our lovemaking like this was Kelly's gift to me, and I had no desire to interfere. Instead, I accepted the love and affection and pleasure that she was offering me, in the spirit that she was giving them - and it only made me fall in love with her all over again.

Other than our soft pants of arousal and an occasional moan of pleasure, our lovemaking was silent - and somehow, the more personal and intimate because of it. The only way I knew Kelly was keeping pace with my own steadily increasing excitement was how she was getting even hotter and tighter around me. She was creating more than ample fluids to keep us lubricated: I could feel my pubic hair getting matted from the overflow of her feminine oils, and the room was thick with the scent of her.

Several more wonderful minutes passed, and I could feel myself slowly approaching my climax. I knew that Kelly was as aroused as I was - if not more - from the deep blush of arousal that started at her shoulders and ran all the way down to the upper slopes of her breasts. Too, I could feel her beginning to lose control over her internal muscles: rather than tightening herself around me only when she was lifting herself off of me, it was happening more and more often at other times, as well.

As she (and I!) got closer and closer to release, her actions on me lost some of their stately pace. Rather than ten or twelve seconds for her to complete a cycle of catch-and-release, it was now five or six - and ever so slowly decreasing. A few more minutes, and I could feel myself approaching the brink; it wasn't going to be much longer before I filled her with my seed.

Kelly seemed to \*know\* how close I was, and \_deliberately\_ slowed her movements again - both extending, and deepening, my pleasure. But there comes a point where there's no stopping the inevitable: Kelly lowered herself onto me again, and when she tightened herself around me, I couldn't help but start flooding her with my seed. Her eyes flew open when she felt it, and I saw as she clamped her mouth shut to stop from screaming her own release. Instead, she only emitted a long, deep groan of pleasure as I felt her insides start spasming around me while I continued to empty myself into her in long, powerful jets of ecstasy.

After the first tsunami of release had passed through her, Kelly let herself lean forward to put her hands on my chest. Using her arms to support herself, I felt - and watched - as a succession of powerful waves of orgasmic bliss took her over. Only after the fourth or fifth had run their course was there any noticeable decrease in their power as I felt myself deposit the last little bit of my available semen in her.

Gasping for breath - as I was - Kelly lowered herself to lay on me as \*relatively\* minor tremors rippled through her body. Despite emptying myself in her, I was still semi-erect - something that clearly pleased both of us.

When I'd caught my breath, I started giving her small, tender kisses as a way to help her find a solid point of reference. In a couple of minutes, she was recovered enough to start returning them; we spent the next little while content to be in such close contact with each other. Neither of us felt any need to talk: both of us had felt the deep intimacy and affection of our passion, so we were content to simply continue exchanging soft, gentle, LOVING kisses. Only when my penis softened enough to pull free of her did Kelly move; and even then, it was only so she could roll off of me to lie on her back next to me. I moved to lie on my side, and put my arm across her to give her a hug before simply holding her close.

Kelly had been the one to put the effort into our lovemaking, so I wasn't surprised as I watched her fall asleep. Careful not to disturb her, I went into the bathroom and got a damp washcloth and towel, bringing them back to the bed with me. I gently cleaned our combined juices from between her thighs, taking care not to disturb her, before drying her. I went on to clean myself up, and took the cloth and towel back into the bathroom before getting back into bed with her. I moved to lie on my side next to her again. When she felt me next to her, she woke slightly and lifted her legs a bit in invitation for me to curl up next to her so she could let them drape over mine - the effect being that she would be 'sitting' on my 'lap'. It was her favorite way for us to cuddle, and I quickly moved to do as she wanted. With a murmur of happiness, she wriggled a bit closer to me before I rested my arm on her body. I put my hand over her breast, and she made noises of contentment before falling asleep again.

I couldn't help but lay there for a little bit, watching her as she slept. I don't know how long it was before I joined her in the land of Nod.

---

She woke up the next morning to see me watching her. The situation had been the reverse often enough that she didn't offer any protest. Instead, she gave me a beatific smile before stretching; I was close enough to hear joints pop and muscles creak. Reinvigorated, she turned her head so the two of us could share a friendly good-morning kiss.

We were still in the same position we'd been when we fell asleep the night before - aside from my hand on her OTHER breast - and she told me "This has GOT to be the best way for ANYONE to wake up: snuggling with the person they love most in the whole world, after making such \*wonderful\* love with that person the night before."

I just smiled at her, and answered "Yup. Right pleasant, isn't it?"

I saw her get slightly distracted for a moment before she gave me another one of her patented I-Love-You smiles as she told me "You are \*such\* a dear to clean me up after last night. I was going to rest a minute after I laid down, but I fell asleep."

"I noticed" - she stuck her tongue out at me, so I kissed it before I went on - "I didn't want you to wake up 'icky', and I didn't have the heart to wake you up after you did all the work" - "It wasn't work, it was \_fun\_" - "so I went ahead and took care of it."

"Well, thank you anyway."

We stayed like that for maybe half an hour before Kelly noticed the time, telling me "I think we need to clean up and get ready to hit the beach, dear. Especially since I'm going to want a BIG breakfast so I can get my energy back from last night!"

I leaned over so we could share another kiss before I detoured to kiss the end of her breast - watching her nipple rise up in greeting when I did - before we managed to drag ourselves out of bed and head for the bathroom.

Cleaned, dried, and with out suits on underneath our street clothes, we headed for the lobby, where we found Marlyn and Marilyn heading for the door. Kelly got their attention, and when they saw who it was, smiled as they waited the few seconds for us to catch up. On the way to the restaurant area, I noticed that Marilyn seemed a little more relaxed around me - even to the point of being willing to actually walk NEXT to me, instead of on the other side of Kelly, or next to Marlyn. I gently nudged Kelly, and when she looked at me, I gestured toward Marilyn and indicated that Kelly should keep her busy. Kelly happily agreed, and started talking to her. I got Marlyn's attention, and she slowed a bit so that the two of us were a few feet behind where Kelly and Marilyn were talking.

I told Marlyn "Marilyn seems a little happier and more relaxed today."

Marlyn smiled, and said "Yes, she is. This is the first time that we've really been able to spend more than just a day together - I told her last night that we would be here a couple more days, and she's very happy."

"She doesn't seem to be afraid of me so much, either."

Marlyn looked surprised, and said "Oh, no, she isn't afraid of you! You're just the first man to pay any attention to her - except those in the orphanage, and they aren't really \*nice\*. She was just very shy yesterday, is all. While we were shopping, she asked me several questions about you, and even told me that she thinks you're 'guapo' - handsome. She just wasn't sure about you. Last night, she told me that she saw Kelly hug your arm, and decided that if a nice person like Kelly cared for you, then you were probably nice, too."



By that time, we were close enough to the restaurants that Kelly turned to see if Marlyn and I were done talking. Seeing that we were, she got Marilyn involved in helping us pick out a place for breakfast. It didn't take long to make a decision - I think all of us were too hungry to fuss about it.

Inside the restaurant, I was mildly surprised when Marilyn decided that she was willing to sit next to me, across from Kelly. Marlyn smiled at me when I looked at her, and took her place across the table from me. Again, it didn't take us long to decide on what we wanted - and true to her word, Kelly ordered a fair-sized breakfast, surprising Marlyn and Marilyn. As Kelly was eating, she saw Marlyn watching her a bit, and turned so the two of them could share a Look. Marlyn quickly looked over at me when it was done, then blushed slightly. Apparently, Kelly had gotten the idea across that \*I\* was the cause of her increased appetite - and why.

I took the opportunity to try starting a conversation with Marilyn. Shy and hesitant at first, she eventually got used to my attention on her so that she was able to respond to me with more than short, simple sentences. Still, I was surprised when she took my hand as we were heading back for the hotel after breakfast. Kelly and Marlyn both noticed, and grinned at me when I looked at them.

Back in the hotel lobby, Kelly asked Marlyn if she and Marilyn had to change clothes; Marlyn answered that they had their suits on under their dresses - that there really wasn't anyplace to change at the beach itself. A few minutes later, Bhoy showed up with the van. We quickly went upstairs to collect our beach things before piling in for the trip to the beach. On the way, I cautioned Kelly about making sure she kept plenty of sunscreen on - relating how I'd fallen asleep near a swimming pool shortly after being stationed in the Philippines. After only an hour in the sun, I'd burned so badly that even the soles of my FEET had blistered and peeled. Kelly solemnly nodded her understanding, and started applying suntan lotion while we were still en route.

Once at the beach, it didn't take us long to get set up. The manager of the hotel had generously loaned us a beach umbrella, so we had a shady place to rest near the water. Bhoy had brought along his own things, and set himself up several feet away - close enough to help if needed, but far enough to not intrude. Kelly and Marlyn both looked shocked when he took off his shirt, revealing a torso that bore mute testimony to his military experience: I saw where he'd been hit by bullets a couple of times, and what could only have been a knife wound along his ribcage. Kelly looked at me, and I just shrugged before telling her "Marlyn told us he was retired from the Philippine army. Soldiering isn't what you could call a safe occupation." Kelly gave him another look before shuddering slightly.

While Kelly and I had been occupied, Marlyn and Marilyn had shucked their outerwear to reveal their choice in swimsuits. Both were modest one-piece numbers, though rather colorful. As I'd suspected, Marilyn's suit revealed the fact that she was in transition from young girl to young woman: there was a noticeable swelling at the top of her suit, with a corresponding narrowness at the waist. Her small, firm butt was set on a pair of long,

slender legs. For her part, Marlyn revealed that she was most definitely female: her bust was smaller than Kelly's, but on her smaller frame, it looked quite nice, as did the gentle curve of her waist and hips. Smooth, nicely-turned legs framed the slight mound of her mons.

Kelly followed their example, showing them that she was sporting a brightly-colored VERY modest bikini. I could see Marlyn looking at her a bit enviously; Marilyn was simply dumb-struck. I took off my shirt and dropped my walking shorts to show that I was content with a pair of boxer-type swim trunks. From the corner of my eye, I could see Marlyn giving me the once-over - to Kelly's discrete amusement.

Finally ready to get wet, I announced "Last one in the water is a rotten egg!" - and made a mad dash for the ocean. Kelly wasn't far behind me, while Marlyn and Marilyn got lost in the translation - but quickly got into the spirit of the thing to follow our example. I, then Kelly, dove in and swam a little ways out in the warm, clean water. When we looked back, we saw that Marlyn was keeping Marilyn company closer to shore. Kelly and I splashed around for a little bit, then swam back toward the others. When we were close enough, we got our feet under ourselves and walked over to where they were standing in the knee-deep (to Marilyn) water.

I asked Marlyn "Is everything okay?"

She smiled shyly, and told me "I'm not such a good swimmer, and Marilyn doesn't know how, at all."

Marilyn was staring down toward where her feet were during this, and I squatted down a bit to ask "Marilyn? Would you like Kelly and me to help you learn how to swim?"

She hesitated a little, before she shyly admitted that she would.

I squatted down some more, and told her "I think you are pretty brave. The first time I tried to learn how to swim, I was so afraid that I couldn't even move."

She looked up at me for a moment, and I nodded to assure her that it was true. I went on to tell her "I know it's kind of scary, but I'll be RIGHT HERE with you the whole time, okay?"

She smiled a bit, and nodded her agreement before I told her "If you want to hold my hand, we can go out a little more so we can get started, okay?" as I stuck my hand out.

She took it, and walked next to me as she, Kelly, and I slowly moved to where the water was a little deeper. She started getting nervous when it was hip-deep on her, and all but petrified when it was past her waist. I stopped us there, and told her "The first thing I want to show you is that you aren't in any danger, okay?"

She looked at me as though she KNEW I was lying through my teeth, but gamely agreed. I said "If you don't mind, I want to hold you in my arms to do it. Is that okay?"

She looked to Marlyn who was a few feet closer to shore, but could still hear us - Marlyn indicated that it was okay, and Marilyn told me that I could.

I carefully squatted down to take her into my arms, one behind her knees, the other across her back. Nervously, she put her arms around my neck, holding tight. I could still breathe after a fashion, so I didn't say anything to her about it. What I DID tell her was "That's fine. Do you feel how the water is kind of holding you up?"

She said she could, and I went on "What I want to show you is that the water will hold ALL of you up, so that you can breathe, even if you aren't actually doing anything. I'm going to squat down a little bit, and you'll feel the water holding you up when I do. I am NOT going to let go of you - you will still be able to feel me touching you. Okay?"

She wasn't entirely sure about what I was suggesting, but willing to give it a TRY. I slowly lowered myself in the water, making sure that she could feel my touch on her as she got lighter and lighter in my arms. Finally, she was floating, my arms barely making contact with her. She still had her arms wrapped around my neck, but she'd finally relaxed enough that I was able to breathe normally. We stayed like that for a minute or so before I began to stand up, taking her weight in my arms again.

Reasonably sure that she wasn't going to instantly sink to the bottom like a brick, Marilyn was considerably calmer by the time I was standing upright again.

We repeated the lesson a couple more times; with each iteration, Marilyn seemed that much more comfortable in the water - even letting go of my neck for the last pass.

Sneaky devil that I was, each time I took her weight in my arms again, I was taking another step into deeper water. When she let go of me for the last floating lesson, I figured she was ready for the final exam. I told her "I'm going to let go of you now, but I'm going to do it VERY SLOWLY, okay? I'm going to stay RIGHT HERE, and so is Kelly, so there's nothing for you to be afraid of. I just want you to try it once on your own, okay?"

She nodded her agreement, and I gradually lowered her into the water, careful to keep my arms under her so she'd know I was there. When I wasn't supporting any of her weight, I pulled my arms away so that she was floating on her own. She looked a bit apprehensive, but when nothing happened, she quickly got her confidence back. Kelly was watching all of this closely, so when she saw that Marilyn was reasonably comfortable, told her "See? Nothing to be afraid of, is there? I know it's a little scary, but that's only because it's something new."

Marilyn smiled her understanding, and moved to stand up - only to find that she was now chest-deep in the water - nearly all of her weight was being supported by the water. She

started to panic for a moment, but quickly realized that she wasn't sinking. I got a mildly reproachful look, but nothing more.

She turned to where Marlyn was with a look of proud accomplishment. Marlyn had followed us into slightly deeper water, and applauded her niece's progress.

Kelly moved over next to her to ask "Would you like to learn how to swim now?" - getting Marilyn's happy "Yes!" in return.

Kelly and I teamed up to teach her how to swim, starting with the dog-paddle. Kelly put her hands under Marilyn's body to hold her in place while I paddled around to demonstrate what to do. I added a few barking noises and panted like a dog, making Marilyn giggle. I also paused a few times to give Kelly a pat on the butt as I went by; she pretended nothing was happening, even when I stopped long enough to give one ass cheek a squeeze. All she did in response was to clench it in my hand before giving me a dirty look that Marlyn and Marilyn couldn't see. I just grinned at her, and paddled around some more.

In short order, Marilyn was paddling around with me, delighted to be able to move around and play in this wonderful new environment.

The last thing to do was teach her swimming - specifically, how to breath while doing it. For that, I was again the coach while Kelly did the live-action demonstrations.

Marilyn quickly got the idea, and was soon emulating Kelly's actions as I kept one hand on her belly and an arm under her legs to keep her from wandering off. There was a little initial sputtering before she got the timing right, but it didn't take much longer before she had a solid grasp on the basics. All that was left was practice, so I slowly turned loose of her - watching as she swam away from us toward the shore, without even realizing what she was doing. She didn't stop until she felt herself touching the bottom; when that happened, she quickly stopped swimming to discover herself almost ON the beach. She turned around to sit down, and saw the rest of us out in the water. She sat there in stunned silence while the rest of us just laughed at the dumbstruck look on her face. It finally sank in for her that she had just been swimming, and she didn't hesitate to dive back into the water and swim back out to us, stopping when she got to Marlyn. After a brief conversation in Tagalog, they hugged before moving into the deeper water where Kelly and I were.

When they were close enough, Marilyn paddled over in front of us, and said "Thank you, Kelly - and you too, Dan!" before lifting herself out of the water far enough to give me a quick peck on the cheek.

I told her "I was happy to help, Marilyn. But thank you for the kiss", making her blush slightly. Kelly and Marlyn just grinned.

I went on to tell her "There's only one part left, and that is easy."

Marilyn looked at me curiously, and asked "What is it?"

"Underwater" I told her.

She looked a bit hesitant, but I went on to tell her "Really, it is easy. If you don't know what else to do, just STOP. Your body will try to float to the surface if you aren't actually trying to stay under water. The second thing is: bubbles go to the surface, where the air is. Follow them, if you need to."

Marilyn thought that over for a bit, then smiled and nodded her understanding.

The lessons over, the four of us headed toward the beach so we could dry off and get something to drink. A while later, Marilyn decided that she wanted to go into the water again; I went along to keep her company (and safe). Kelly and Marilyn decided that they'd prefer to rest a bit more, and enjoy the cool breeze.

After a bit, Marilyn decided that she wanted to play, too; before long, we were engaged in a game of 'tag' that ranged quite a distance out into the ocean. I chanced a look at the beach, and saw that Marilyn seemed a bit concerned about how far Marilyn was going, so I decided to change the game over to something that would keep Marilyn closer to shore. When she got close enough, I grabbed her by the waist and tossed her as high and far as I could as she shrieked her excitement before hitting the water. It wasn't many more of those before I started to get tired of doing it on my own, and explained to her how she could make it even more fun by helping me. She happily agreed, and I think we set new records for height and distance for the Twelve-year-old Ocean Toss. I could see that Marilyn was relieved that the new game kept us close to shore; she and Kelly were both laughing along with Marilyn's delighted cries. After a while, I pleaded exhaustion, and Marilyn didn't hesitate to take me by the hand and lead me back to where Kelly and Marilyn were sitting. When I'd dried off, Kelly moved to apply some sunscreen to me - and with only a moment's hesitation, Marilyn started helping. Once protected from UV-A, UV-B, XY-Z, and any other rays that dared show themselves, I moved to lay down - only to have Kelly guide me over to rest my head on her lap.

As we rested, Marilyn rummaged around in the small basket she'd brought along before pulling out some assorted fruit. I happily nibbled my way through a fresh ripe mango while Marilyn introduced Kelly to the joys of green mango and salt.

The rest of the day went pretty much the same, with only minor variations. All of us had fun swimming and playing around at different times, and in different combinations. In between, we'd rest on the beach while downing cold drinks and fresh fruit. Even Bhoy got wet a few times.

As it got toward late afternoon, all of us realized that we were actually getting HUNGRY - despite all the snacks and drinks we'd consumed during the day. It didn't take long after that to call an end to the beach excursion. Bhoy saw us start to pack things up, and didn't hesitate to collect his own things and get the van ready for us.

Once back at the hotel, we settled on a time for supper - about an hour delay - and separated to get ourselves cleaned up and changed.

Supper that night was fast food - Jollibee's again. Kelly and I went for cheeseburgers while Marlyn and Marilyn settled on spaghetti. While we were eating, Marilyn got up to get a refill of her Coke. When she was out of earshot, Marlyn told us "Thank you, both of you, for such a wonderful day. I haven't seen Marilyn this happy for a VERY long time. And she is SO proud that she learned how to swim! She asked me how she could thank you for taking the time to teach her, and I didn't know what to say."

Kelly smiled and took her hand to give it a small squeeze before saying "She doesn't have to thank us. I know it made BOTH of us happy to teach her, and see how much fun she was having."

Marlyn smiled back, and said "I know that - I could see that both of you were so concerned with her while you were teaching her, and how much fun you had after. I told her she didn't have to thank you, but she really wants to. Is there *\*anything\** I can tell her?"

Kelly turned to look at me, and I had to think for a few moments before getting an idea. Looking at Marlyn, I asked "Do you think she would be willing to have us as her pretend aunt and uncle? Her American family?"

Marlyn looked positively delighted at the idea, assuring us "I'm *\*sure\** she would. I will suggest it to her, and let her ask you herself."

Kelly could hardly contain her excitement at the idea, and barely managed to keep a straight face when Marilyn got back to the table. We continued our meal, and a few minutes later, heard Marlyn and Marilyn have a not-so-short conversation - one that left Marilyn almost beaming with joy.

When the meal was over, Kelly and I carefully didn't notice as Marilyn made a few false starts at talking to us. When she was finally able, though, we gave her our full attention when she told us there was something that she wanted to say to us.

First, she thanked us for letting Marlyn come to visit with her, and all the nice things that we'd given the orphanage. We both told her that we were happy to do those things, since we didn't have children of our own yet. Then she went on to tell us that she was glad that we took the time to teach her how to swim, and that she wanted to thank us for our kindness - would we be upset if she called us her American family - her Tito (Uncle) Dan and Tita (Aunt) Kelly? Kelly started to cry, and both of us assured her that we would be *\*delighted\** for her to do that, and that we would call her our niece. Marilyn was so happy that she started to cry, which got Marlyn going, too. I have to admit that I felt a little tightness in my throat as I distributed paper napkins for them to wipe their eyes with.

We celebrated our new 'family' with a round of ice cream for everyone before starting back for the hotel. All the way back, Marilyn held hands with me and Kelly as she walked between us. We got a few looks from the locals, but when they saw how happy Marilyn was, they just smiled and went on with whatever they were doing.

In the hotel lobby, I told Marilyn "I'd like to take Kelly to Baguio tomorrow for some shopping. If you think we'll be okay with Bhoy, you're certainly welcome to stay here and spend the day with Marilyn."

She thanked me, admitting that the evening before hadn't really been enough time for her and Marilyn to have together. She went on to assure me that we'd be just fine with Bhoy - that my (limited) Tagalog was enough for him to understand what we wanted. I thanked her before Kelly and I wished both of them a good night; Marilyn insisted on kissing BOTH of us on the cheek before we left for our respective rooms.

Kelly and I had undressed and were lying on the bed listening to some classical music we'd brought with us when Kelly suddenly gave me a fierce hug and kiss. I looked at her in surprise, and she just told me "That's just for being you. You made that poor little girl \*so\* \*happy\* by letting her call us her Aunt and Uncle! I \*never\* would have thought to do something like that."

"I didn't know for sure whether it would work or not, myself. But I remembered how close family friends can take the place of missing family members, and figured it was worth asking."

Kelly hugged me again, and said "You are \*such\* a softie. I saw how she was looking at you - I'll bet it won't be a week before she's convinced herself that you really ARE her Tito Dan. I couldn't believe it when you got out of the water that first time, and she started helping me put the lotion on you - she got over being shy around you fast enough!"

"Just my rugged good looks and natural charm, is all", I teased.

To my surprise, Kelly just nodded her agreement before telling me "I know you're joking - but you really ARE good-looking, in a rugged kind of way; you're not Mel Gibson cute, but more Harrison Ford handsome. And I can personally vouch for your natural charm. Not the greasy used-car-salesman kind, but the open friendliness kind."

I wasn't comfortable with where this was going, and didn't say anything in response.

Kelly just looked at me for a few moments, and said "I know, you don't like talking about yourself like this. But what I said is true. If you weren't so darn \*picky\*, you could have about any woman you wanted. But you ARE picky, and you picked me - and made me the happiest person on earth. Now give me a kiss so we can listen to the music some more."

I did, and the two of us spent the rest of the evening just holding each other.

---

The next morning, Marlyn and Marilyn met us in the lobby as Kelly and I were getting back from breakfast. They and Kelly chatted for a few minutes while I went up to our room to make sure I had plenty of money for the shopping I expected to be doing. I hadn't forgotten my private vow to make sure all the girls at home got something to show them how much Kelly and I appreciated their help.

I got back to the lobby just in time to see Bhoy drive up in the van. Kelly and I went with Marlyn as she told him that we wanted to go to Baguio for some shopping. Helping Bhoy maintain his ruse that he didn't understand me, I told her that we *\*particularly\** wanted to get some silver things for some friends back home, but that we would be after other items, as well. Bhoy indicated to her that he knew JUST the places to take us, so Kelly and I took our customary seats for the trip.

Baguio - and particularly its silversmiths - was a popular enough tourist destination that they didn't seem to feel the need to gouge tourists too much. Kelly was both amazed and delighted at the quality and delicacy of the work she saw. I didn't have ANY trouble convincing her to buy a number of things for herself, and she was more than happy to help pick things out for everyone that we'd had to leave behind. Bhoy seemed to make it a point to stay with us, making it clear that we were NOT to be subjected to any thievery of ANY kind. A few hours later, and several hundreds of dollars poorer, we left to return to San Fernando. After a single look at us in the rearview mirror, Bhoy deliberately didn't notice that my arm was around Kelly as she snuggled into my side. Knowing that this was just a single-day side trip, she'd taken care to get all the photos she wanted on the trip there, leaving her free to sit next to me on the way back. Only when we got to the outskirts of San Fernando did she straighten up and let me pull my arm from around her.

Once back at the hotel, we turned Bhoy loose for the evening before heading up to our room. There, we set our packages down so we could grab a quick shower and change clothes before going out for Filipino food - we were both surprised at how quickly we'd tired of fast food.

We paused to buy a couple of Cokes each from the sari-sari store on our way back to the hotel; once in our room, we quickly undressed so we could cuddle on the bed as we watched a Filipino comedy on TV - laughing at all the right places, judging from the laugh track.

When it was late enough, we turned off the TV and went to bed, holding each other close as we drifted off to sleep.

---



The next morning found us in the lobby, trying to decide where to go for breakfast. We finally decided to try the one restaurant that claimed to serve American-style breakfasts; as we were leaving, we heard Marilyn's voice calling out to us. We turned, and saw the two of them walking toward us. We invited them to join us for breakfast, and they readily accepted. Marilyn again took my and Kelly's hands as we walked to the restaurant. I chanced a look behind us, and saw that Marlyn was as happy as she could be at the sight we presented.

When we'd finished eating - I'd gotten a surprisingly good omelet - and were enjoying our coffee, I asked Marlyn if there was anything else she could think of that the orphanage needed. She thought for a few moments, and answered "They can always use food - particularly rice." I told her that Kelly and I wanted to try and set them up with the things they would need until we could get back to the U.S., where we planned to take steps to help them even more. She nodded her understanding, and told us "Yes, food would be the best choice." Then she got an idea, and had a conversation with Marilyn. When it was over, Marlyn told us "Marilyn says they are always needing things for the children, too - toys, games, books, like that."

"If you'll help us, then, we'll go shopping again this morning." Kelly told her.

Marlyn happily agreed, as did Marilyn. I was particularly happy to see that - I expected that we'd need her help to figure out what kinds of toys and things to get for the younger kids. \*I\* sure didn't have any ideas!

As I'd expected, when it got right down to it, neither Kelly nor Marlyn had any idea of what to get for the kids. I didn't hesitate to tell Marilyn "We would like to get some toys and things for the others, too. I know that some of the toys we see are very pretty and look like fun, but I know you will remember that the things we buy will have to last for a while, too. Will you help us by showing us what things would be best?"

She solemnly nodded, and carefully led us through the toy section of the store we were in. I was pleased to notice that all of the things she selected were both durable, and sufficiently generic as to be toys for either gender: things like a set of blocks of assorted sizes and shapes, a few jump ropes and hula-hoops, assorted balls of varying sizes and colors, and so on. We went on to buy several boxes of coloring pencils, several reams of paper, pencils, erasers, and a couple of chalkboards with several boxes of chalk - white, and mixed colors. The final stop was a bookstore, where she guided us through the process of selecting about twenty pounds of books, running the gamut from learning-to-read to the experienced reader. Several times, she paused, as though waiting to see if she had selected too much; each time, Kelly or I would assure her she was doing fine, and to keep going. At both stores, she was wide-eyed to learn how much Kelly and I were willing to spend on the kids in the orphanage. Marlyn just stood there and tried not to cry.

Our last stop was at a market, where Marlyn went about selecting an assortment of fruits and vegetables, canned goods, and a hundred kilos of rice. The market was willing to deliver the purchase for free, once they learned that the destination was the orphanage.

It was shortly before lunch when we pulled up to the orphanage again. Marlyn went inside to get the head honcho while the rest of us stayed in the van. Once she'd gotten him outside, she showed him the things we'd brought; he all but collapsed on the spot in happiness that the children would have something other than clods of dirt and twigs to play with. He literally ran back into the orphanage, only to reappear a few minutes later with almost the entire staff - they, too, were overjoyed with the things we'd brought. I explained to them that we didn't want the children to associate US - Kelly and I - with the toys, so we didn't want to make a big production out of it. They understood perfectly, and assured us that the toys would be given to the children over a period of time. Then Marlyn told them that there was a food delivery coming, and what it was that she'd selected - and that Kelly and I had paid for it. A couple of the staff were literally crying in their joy at this sudden largesse, and all of them reiterated their previous assurances that they would be praying for us. About that time, the delivery truck from the market showed up; all of us chipped in to get it unloaded, and the food stored. I could see from Kelly's expression that she was as unhappy as I was when we got a chance to see how little was in the orphanage's pantry; even Bhoy looked distressed when he came out the first time.

As the truck from the market was leaving, a priest walked up to where we were all resting. It being fairly obvious that Kelly and I weren't Filipino, he politely asked in English what was going on. The orphanage staff all started telling him at the same time, in a mixture of English and Tagalog. After a few futile seconds of trying to listen to them all at once, he gave up and started telling them to be quiet; when they were, he asked the head honcho that Marlyn had brought out first. The telling of it didn't take long, and when the fellow was done, the priest came over to where Kelly and I were standing.

He told us "I am Father Villanueva, the priest that oversees this orphanage. I cannot thank you enough for the kindness and generosity that you have shown us today - and from what I've been told, the day before yesterday, as well. It is all too rare that we are the recipients of such wondrous gifts. May I ask who you are?"

Kelly and I introduced ourselves, then Marlyn spoke up to tell him who she was. He recognized Marilyn, and spoke to her for a few moments, making her smile. Bhoy hung back, trying to stay out of it.

When he knew who we all were, he told us "Dan, and Kelly, it is my honor and pleasure to meet you. Rest assured, all of you will be in the prayers of our congregation this Sunday."

I had a sudden idea, and asked him "Father, would you be kind enough to give me your name and the particulars of this orphanage? I know someone that might be able to provide you with more assistance than you are getting now."

He answered "I would be happy to, Dan. But who do you know that would be able to help us in such a way? Are you Catholic?"

I grinned and told him "No, I'm not Catholic, though Kelly attended a Catholic school. I've got a pretty good relationship with a Bishop; Bishop Ferguson, if you know him."

Father Villanueva shook his head, but seemed mildly impressed that Kelly and I would personally know a Bishop. I dug out one of my business cards and handed it to him; the orphanage manager (administrator?) provided a pen, and Father Villanueva readily wrote down the requested information. When he handed back my business card, I traded him for another one. He looked a trifle surprised, and I told him "If there's anything else I can do that would help the orphanage in the long term, please don't hesitate to contact me. And if I think of anything that might help, I will clear it with you before I do something foolish."

He looked at me, and said "Somehow, I don't think that you do many foolish things - but thank you."

We shook hands, and he started to leave; then turned back around to put a blessing on Kelly and I, then Marlyn and Marilyn - both of whom looked overjoyed at it - then a last one, long distance, on Bhoy. I couldn't see Bhoy's reaction, but didn't figure he minded.

The orphanage manager spoke a few words to the priest, and the lot of them headed inside so they could show him what all had been donated. The rest of us took the opportunity to make our getaway so we could get some lunch.

With our bellies full, Marlyn told Kelly and I that she would like to show us the sights in San Fernando. Both of us happily agreed; the rest of the day was spent learning more about San Fernando than Kelly and I suspected there was TO know.

After supper - at a restaurant OTHER than one from the cluster near the hotel - Marlyn told us that she wanted to treat all of us to a movie. From my time in the Philippines before, I knew movie fares weren't expensive and agreed. To my surprise, Bhoy even accepted, as well.

Marlyn asked if we had any preference on what kind of movie, I told her "I think anything would be fine - I don't know that Kelly and I will be able to keep up with the dialog, anyway!" - making Marlyn smile before telling us "I'll find one that at least has subtitles, then."

True to her word, Marlyn found a Filipino movie that had subtitles for us non-Tagalog-speaking visitors. A comedy, there wasn't much trouble keeping up with the action. The lot of us had a great time.

We stopped off for ice cream on the way back to the hotel, arriving pretty close to bedtime for ALL of us - but particularly Marilyn who couldn't help yawning every so often. We made arrangements for the next morning before heading to our rooms.

The next morning, we could all see that Marilyn was a little sad, knowing that she would have to return to the orphanage that day. We did our best to try and cheer her up and make it easier for her, but there simply wasn't any way of getting around the fact that she DID have to go back.

When we finally parked at the orphanage, we could see that Marilyn was fighting back tears. Marlyn wasn't doing much better, nor was Kelly. When we got out of the van, Marlyn and Marilyn had a short conversation, and we could see as she tried to pull herself together. When they were through talking, Marilyn turned to Kelly and I, telling us "Thank you again, for being so nice, and teaching me how to swim."

Kelly kneeled to give her a hug that she readily accepted. I kneeled as well, and after a nod of approval from Marlyn, she moved into my arms for a hug, too. She whispered in my ear "Thank you, Tito Dan. Mahal kital (I love you)."

I whispered back "You're welcome, Marilyn. Mahal kita."

When she pulled back from me, I gently held her by the upper arms to tell her "Don't be sad, Marilyn. I think maybe you won't have to stay here for much longer."

Kelly and Marlyn both looked at me as though I'd lost my mind - but I'd had an idea the night before. I wasn't sure if it was going to work, or not, so I didn't want to say anything about it to anyone else until I knew.

Marilyn cheered up a bit at that, and went over to hold Marlyn's hand as the two of them went into the orphanage. At the door, Marilyn turned to wave to us; Kelly and I both waved back, and from the corner of my eye, I could see Bhoy give her a little wave, as well.

When they were gone, Kelly turned to me and asked "What was that about her not being here much longer?"

I answered "Wait until Marlyn gets back; I expect she'll have the same question."

Several minutes later, we saw Marlyn reappear with tears on her face. Kelly quickly went to her, and the two of them hugged as they tried to console each other. When we were in the van, and on the way to my last business destination, Marlyn turned in her seat to ask me essentially the same question Kelly had.

I explained to her (and Kelly, who'd given me a dirty look) "I had an idea last night. I don't know yet if it's going to work, but if it does, Marilyn won't be in there but for a couple of months, or maybe a little longer."

Both of them immediately demanded to know what I was up to, and I just told them "I'm not going to say anything about it until I can check into it more. I *\*think\** what I have in mind will work, but I'm just not sure yet."

Kelly turned to Marlyn, who was about to protest, and told her "Don't bother trying to argue with him, or find out what he's up to. You could probably torture him, and not get anything more than he's already said. But you can trust him, \*whatever\* it is that he's up to."

Marlyn gave me her own dirty look, but turned back around in her seat. Kelly just watched me for a while, but when I didn't seem to notice, started her by then traditional picture-taking as we made our way to Laoag, my last stop.

Laoag pretty much had their act together, but as I looked around, it didn't look like their infrastructure was ready to handle the factory my client had said they wanted to build. It looked to me like the addition of the factory would put too much of a strain on the different systems - water, electrical, transportation, and so on. Still, I went to all the places I was supposed to, to make sure that they had every opportunity to show me they were ready.

Three days later, the majority of the job complete, we all headed back to Manila. Kelly and I got re-registered at the hotel we'd stayed in the first night, while Marlyn went back to her own home - visibly relieved that all the traveling was over.

I had to spend nearly another week in Manila, meeting with a number of government officials and visiting several of the lawyers that I'd been referred to. While I was busy with all of that, Marlyn and Bhoy showed Kelly the city - even taking her out to see the island the American forces had tried to hold out on at the beginning of World War II.

Still, there finally came the time when all my work was done - it was time for Kelly and I to head home. I called my client to tell them when I was leaving, and that it would be a couple of days after I got back before I'd have a report ready for them. They understood, and thanked me for being so thorough. The next call was to Paul, to let him know when we'd be arriving at the airport. He happily assured us that he'd be there - and cautioned us that he wouldn't be alone. I told him that I'd expected as much, making him laugh before we ended the conversation.

The last night before Kelly and I were to leave, Marlyn agreed to join us for supper. Bhoy even made himself available to drive us around if we wanted. Kelly and I decided that wasn't necessary, but thanked him for his offer, via Marlyn. I offered to shake his hand before he left us, and slipped him a couple of \$100 bills to show my appreciation for all his help and patience. When he got to the van, and had a chance to see how much I'd tipped him, he turned to give me a salute and smile - both of which I returned - before driving off.

We went to the Filipino restaurant that we'd visited our first night in Manila. This time, though, Kelly didn't really need Marlyn and me to run interference for her. Both of us watched in amusement as she demonstrated that she was QUITE capable of telling folks "Hindi (No)! Ako gumawa hindi magkulang sino man (I don't want any)!"

The restaurant was busy again (still), and we were directed to the bar to wait. As we were sipping our drinks, I asked Marlyn "When you took us to the hotel from the airport, we went by the garbage dump and a poor neighborhood. I know that there is at least one other way out of the airport that wouldn't go by those places. So why did you have Bhoy take us that way?"

Marlyn blushed a bit, and got very quiet before telling me "I am sorry for that, now. I did not know you then, and I thought that I had to show you how poor our country is. I thought that if you saw it for yourself, you would know how much the factory means; and that maybe it would make you a little more generous to my people."

Kelly and I both nodded in response - we could both easily imagine doing something similar in her position.

With the question asked and answered, we spent the rest of the wait simply chatting with each other. Marlyn was curious to know just exactly what it was that I did for my clients, so Kelly and I explained it to her. She understood quickly enough, and seemed mildly impressed that I could do that kind of work. She was equally impressed when she learned that Kelly had graduated with not one, but TWO college degrees - and was going to start on an advanced degree before long.

---

The next morning, Kelly and I got to sleep in, for a change - our flight wasn't until early afternoon, and both of us wanted to make sure we had plenty of rest beforehand.

When we got to the lobby, Marlyn was waiting patiently for us. Kelly went over to talk to her for a moment before snagging a bellhop to bring down our luggage while I got us out of debt. Happily, our luggage was the only thing we'd have to worry about. Every couple of days during the trip, Marlyn would take Kelly to a post office and the two of them would mail Kelly's purchases to our home - even sending the stuff airmail was cheaper than paying the airline's overweight luggage fees; never mind the hassle of additional stuff to carry around.

We got to the airport in plenty of time - this time bypassing the dump and poor neighborhoods. We got checked in for our flight easily enough, and after paying the departure taxes, airport taxes, and tax taxes, were ready to head for the gate. Marlyn, and even Bhoy, had stayed handy during all of this, so Kelly and I had a chance to wish them goodbye. Bhoy surprised me by sticking his hand out to shake with me; Marlyn dared let me give her a small - but chaste! - hug. Kelly and Marlyn hugged easily, and Bhoy stood still to let Kelly give him a kiss on the cheek and a happy "Salamat po!". Kelly and Marlyn both were leaking around the eyes a little when we parted company.

When we were finally in our seats and waiting our turn to take off, Kelly told me "I'm going to miss this place, and them. But it's nice to be going home, too."

I agreed with her as we felt the plane accelerate down the runway.

---

### Part 3

The flight home wasn't much different than the flight over - the stewardesses were just as cute (and helpful and friendly), the food as good, and we spent longer trapped in the little box at 40,000 feet - playing 'catch up' with the stopovers we were scheduled for as the planet below moved them away from us.

Still, we finally made it home - customs in L.A. hadn't been as bad as I'd been afraid it would, and the taxes and duties on the little bit of stuff we'd brought with us (mostly the silver from Baguio) wasn't TOO outrageous.

When Kelly and I finally got clear of the jet way, we found not just Paul, but Jan, Sandra, Robyn, and Susan were waiting for us with a big "Welcome Home!" banner. Kelly and I hugged and kissed all the girls, Kelly kissed Paul after I shook hands with him. Kelly and the girls started all trying to talk at once; Paul and I just chatted about the trip and what all had happened while I was gone as we made our way down to the baggage area in hope of reclaiming our luggage. For a change of pace, the airline decided that the passengers and their luggage should arrive at the same place at the same time, so it wasn't too long before the bunch of us could load up Paul's minivan. I rode shotgun so Paul and I could talk while Kelly regaled the others with stories of all the things we'd done, and all the places we'd been.

After we'd gotten away from the airport, Paul pulled into a convenience store; Robyn went in to get drinks for all of us, knowing that Kelly and I would be a little dehydrated from the flight. Kelly and I both thanked her; she just gave BOTH of us the Goober look (as if to say "You are \*such\* a Goober!"). The rest of the ride, Paul and I listened to Kelly telling the others about our trip.

At one point, Paul told me "Sounds like you had your hands full most of the time." I could only reply "That we did."

When all of us got to my house, all the girls wanted to come in with us; Paul was thoughtful enough to tell them "C'mon, ladies. They just got back from a dozen time zones away after spending almost an entire DAY on airplanes. They're probably tired, and need to rest and get over their jet lag."

All them quieted down at that, and Kelly told them "We really DO want to tell you all about it, but Paul's right - we ARE pretty tired. Can we do this tomorrow night, instead? You're all invited over for a pizza party, okay?"

They all cheerfully agreed, and apologized to us for not thinking of it themselves. I spoke up to tell them "It's okay, we understand. WE'RE still getting over the excitement of it, ourselves."

Jan quickly gave us a rundown on what all we'd gotten in the mail, and what the situation was in the house and with Cat, then didn't hesitate to take shotgun in her dad's car. The others followed suit, and after they'd welcomed us home again, they left.

Kelly held the door as I got our luggage inside, where Cat was enthusiastically welcoming us home.

We got the luggage into our bedroom, and decided that some rest was called for. Cat jumped up on the bed with us, and after tolerating a hug from Kelly, curled up on her belly to begin purring in contentment as Kelly rubbed her ears.

I woke up a couple of hours later to find Cat on MY stomach - though quieter - and Kelly curled up next to me, her arm on my chest. I hadn't any more than looked at Kelly when I saw her eyes open - and her smile as she realized we were finally in OUR bed in our own home.

She reached down to start petting Cat - who promptly started purring loud enough to wake the dead - before telling me "I'm \*starved\*. What's for supper?"

I thought about it for all of two seconds and told her "Barbeque. I don't think you want to cook; and I sure don't want to. We're having pizza tomorrow night, and it's been \*entirely\* too long since we had decent barbeque."

Kelly happily nodded her agreement before shooing Cat off of me so she could lie on top of me to give me a kiss. We lay like that for a few more minutes before my stomach growled; Kelly laughed and said "It sounds like you're pretty hungry, too. You order the food, and I'll get started unpacking. If we stick to it, we can be done by the time it gets here."

"Deal. I'll feed the appetite with fur while I'm at it, too."

Kelly grinned in response, and we managed to get ourselves out of bed and moving.

As I passed the den on my way to the kitchen, I saw that Cat had curled up on the end of the couch. I stopped to look at her, and asked "Would Your Highness like me to bring you your supper, so that you don't have to actually MOVE?"

Cat just looked up at me as though to say "Well, yeah, if you would..."

I got our order in to the barbeque place, then went on to open up some food for Cat. As usual, the sound of the can being opened up had her in front of her dish in a matter of seconds.



As Cat chowed down, I took the opportunity to make sure she had fresh water, then checked her litter box - and finding that one of the girls had been thoughtful enough to clean it out VERY shortly before Kelly and I had gotten home.

Everything taken care of, I grabbed a couple cans of soda from the fridge and went back to help Kelly get us unpacked.

We were almost done when Mabel, my home automation system, announced that someone was at the door. Kelly told me "You go ahead and take care of that, and I'll finish here; there's only a little left, so I won't be a minute."

Doing what I was told, I paid off the barbeque delivery guy and got things ready for supper. A couple minutes later, Kelly came into the den - stopping to eyeball the pile of packages off to one side and ask "Did we really send THAT much stuff back?"

I laughed, and asked "WE?"

Kelly laughed, too, and said "Yes, WE. Ninety percent is mine, ten percent is yours. So all of it together is WE!" as she sat next to me. I turned on the TV so we could get caught up on what all had been happening in the world while we were gone; Cat wandered in to sit in front of us as though to tell us "I'm not begging, you understand, but if you wanted to share some of that \*delicious\* food with me, I wouldn't object." Cat thought that any kind of tomato-based sauce was delicious - barbeque, pizza or spaghetti sauce, even just plain old ketchup were all welcome additions to her diet. We were careful not to let her have them very often though, and she'd learned - after being sprayed with water a few times - not to try to steal them.

When supper was done - Cat had been allowed to lick the barbeque sauce off Kelly's finger a couple times - I put the dishes and leftover food away as Kelly started going through the packages we'd sent back.

Cat thought the wrapping paper and empty boxes were a new toy, and delighted in playing in them - until she jumped on the couch and realized that there was even better stuff. She tried to lay down on some of the clothes that Kelly and I bought, only to be shooed back onto the floor. Ever the trooper, Cat promptly jumped back on the couch, and laid on the clothes at the first opportunity (when she thought Kelly wouldn't notice). Back on the floor, back on the couch, back on the clothes. Repeat. Again. And again. Kelly finally had to laugh, and say "Okay, fine. Here's something you CAN lay on!", and moved Cat to a different item. Content that she was laying on something new, Cat stayed there to watch us while Kelly and I got the rest of the stuff unpacked and arranged. We hauled everything into the bedroom, and put it away - making two trips each, and a third for Kelly when she displaced Cat for the last time. I got all the packing cleaned up - with Cat's expert 'assistance'. Both of us knew that there would be a few more packages, delivered over the next couple of weeks, but we'd have plenty of time and energy to deal with them then.

I went into my home office to see how many messages I'd received while I was gone; only to be pleasantly surprised at how few there were. Always efficient, my secretary had done an even better job while I was gone; there were only a couple dozen things needing my attention. It didn't take me long to tell her how to deal with most of them, and the few that were left were things that I'd have to take care of myself at my offices. While I was at it, I send an email to Marlyn, telling her that we'd gotten home just fine, and that we wanted to thank her for all the help she'd given us. Kelly came in as I was doing it, and gave me a hug and kiss when she saw who I was sending it to.

With most of our just-got-home stuff done, Kelly and I both realized that we were still tired - and most definitely jet-lagged. At her suggestion, we went in to share a shower, then went to bed - with Cat curled up next to Kelly's belly while I spooned with her back.

---

We slept in the next morning, and even took a nap the next afternoon - waking when Paul called to see what time they should all come over. A quick consultation with me, and Kelly told him that 6:30 would be fine.

Awake again, we got up and moving. We went grocery shopping to make sure we had enough drinks and munchies for everyone, with a side trip to get some supplies so we could wrap the gifts we'd brought back. We were just finishing when Mabel let us know that everyone ("Seven", as Mabel reported) had arrived. Kelly opened the door and invited all of them in - Paul, his boys John and Leo, Sandra, Jan, Robyn, and Susan. The girls came into the kitchen where I was getting the drinks ready; each of them gave me a more-than-friendly kiss before going back into the den where Kelly and the guys were.

Back in the den, Kelly was chatting with Paul and the boys; when all of them had our drinks and a seat, she started telling them about our trip - starting with the flight over - while I got some pizzas ordered.

By the time the pizza arrived, Kelly had gotten them as far as the start of our trip south from Manila - and laughing so hard they were almost crying as she described her reactions to watching Bhoy drive.

As we munched our way through the pizzas, Kelly and I took turns describing the different things we'd experienced. When the pizza was gone, I cleaned up as Kelly continued telling them about her adventures. With the trash put away, I stood in the background to listen as Kelly went on with her story. She had all of them completely wrapped up with what she was saying that they really didn't notice my absence. I gestured to Kelly, drawing a bow in the air, and raised my eyebrows. She understood that I was asking if she wanted to hand out the gifts, and let me know she did with a quick nod of her head.

I made my way back to the bedroom and collected some of the things that we'd brought back, then moved them to the end of the hall, but where they'd be out of sight of our

guests. I went back for the second trip, left the second armload with the first, and went back to where Kelly could see me, nodding to her when she looked at me.

She ended her current story, and told them that we had some gifts for them. Paul wasn't particularly surprised, and didn't say anything - nor did John or Leo. But the girls DID protest - but it didn't do them any good. When it suited her, Kelly could be \*almost\* as uncooperative as I could.

Once the fussing was over, it didn't take long to get everything handed out. Paul was delighted with the carved nameplate Kelly had gotten him, and the Barong Tagalog I'd picked out. The boys were in awe over the wall plaques I'd brought back that showed all the different types of weapons - mostly knives with blades of varying designs - that the Philippines had seen. The girls were all delighted with the embroidered blouses and seashell jewelry we'd brought them. Finally, it was time for us to give them the silverwork that we'd gotten them in Baguio.

Kelly and I took turns handing out the last gifts. Jan was absolutely overawed by the filigree bracelet we gave her. For her part, Robyn was speechless after she'd opened the box that held the white gold and silver earrings Kelly had helped me select - each of them an incredible work of art. Susan could only stare at the gift I handed her: a ring with an incredibly detailed floral pattern, fastened by a fine silver chain to an equally detailed bracelet. Last was Sandra, who started crying when she saw the delicacy of the silver mesh necklace Kelly had handed her - nearly two inches wide ("Five centimeters!" the salesman had assured me), the bottom side was fringed with incredibly small silver links, each smaller than a grain of rice. The four of them took a few minutes to ooh and ah over each other's gifts before the all decided that it was time to give Kelly and me a hug and kiss. I could tell from Kelly's reaction that the kisses she'd gotten had been as 'personal' as I'd received - I didn't expect that either one of us would have to worry about washing our tonsils for a long time to come. By this time, Paul had figured out that all the girls were more than 'just friends'; he didn't bat an eye at what went on. The boys seemed pretty sure that all the girls were just crazy, and didn't pay any more attention to them than necessary.

When they'd all sat down again, Kelly resumed telling them about her adventures; I picked it up after a little while, so Kelly could rest her voice. A bit later, Kelly took over for me, for the same reason. We spent the rest of the evening going back and forth as we replayed the highlights of our trip - except for the side trip to San Fernando. By unvoiced agreement, Kelly and I skipped around it; at least, until we knew what was going to happen with my idea.

By the time late evening came around, we'd covered about half the trip. Kelly was talking at the time, and saw the boys getting sleepy. She finished what she was talking about, and gestured toward them, saying that if everyone wanted to come over that weekend, we'd finish, and have photos to show them, too. Everyone - except the boys, who were too sleepy to be paying attention - agreed, and we set a time for mid-afternoon, with the promise of a cookout for supper.

Things broke up soon after that, with each of the girls giving Kelly and I another kiss before they left.

---

The next day, I went in to my office to take care of the few items that my secretary hadn't been able to deal with while I was gone. When she saw me coming in the door, she surprised me by getting up to give me a hug before welcoming me back. She was in awe at the craftsmanship and beauty of the bird brooch I'd gotten her in Baguio, and hugged me again in thanks.

A couple of hours later, Kelly came in after she'd taken all the film she'd used (over fifty rolls of 36 exposure!) to be developed. She got a greeting similar to mine, and had brought her own gift: a beautifully embroidered shawl that my secretary, Sarah, absolutely fell in love with.

Kelly and I quickly got ourselves organized, and started working on the first draft of the report my client expected. Sarah took care of organizing our receipts and expense claims, Kelly went through the forms that I'd completed (I'd taken the time to gin up a form that covered the details my client was after), and I transferred my notes from the electronic organizer Kelly had given me and got them into my computer. The rest of the day went by relatively quickly, with all of us thoroughly engrossed in our respective tasks. When Kelly and I finally left, Sarah again thanked us for the gifts before giving each of us another hug.

The next day, Kelly and I arrived together to see Sarah proudly wearing both the shawl \_and\_ pin we'd given her. She fairly beamed at us as we went back to drafting our initial report.

Kelly finished before I did, and came in to bring me a cup of coffee and a kiss as she watched me work. I looked over at her and said "Why don't you see if you can get us an appointment with the Bishop? Preferably for some time after we get back the pictures you took - say, next week?"

She got a happy smile on her face and kissed me again before leaving to make the call. Since she was in the room next to mine, and the door between was open, I could listen as she was quickly put in touch with Bishop Ferguson, and made arrangements for us to meet with him the following Tuesday. From there, she went into let Sarah know that we'd be out of the office for a while that day, and for approximately how long. She came in to see if there was anything else she could do, and I told her it would help if she could get started on getting the report ready to print. She agreed, and asked if tomorrow afternoon would be okay for the meeting with my client. I told her that would be perfect, and she asked Sarah to get it set up.

Kelly knew what was needed, and by the time I was finished with what I was working on, she had things set up and ready to roll. All that was left was for us to clean up any errors

from a spelling and grammar check, and we were ready to print. I told Kelly that we'd finish things up the next morning.

---

As I'd said, the next morning was mostly used for us to go over the work we'd done - we spell-checked it (unsurprisingly, it kept throwing up on Filipino words), then ran it through the grammar checker - which pretty much did the same. We carefully (!! ) went through the mistakes it thought it found, and corrected the very few genuine errors. That done, we printed out a copy so that Kelly and I could each proofread it one last time. Satisfied with the results, we printed the final copies and got them bound. We loaded them into my car, and went to lunch; our appointment with my client was for 1:30.

Once at my client's office, we handed over the copies of the report, reminding them that it was a preliminary copy - but adding that we didn't think the final version would have any significant changes.

That dealt with, we all went into one of their conference rooms so that I could go over the report with them; Kelly was there to keep notes for us (her and I), and help me keep track of where I was in the report.

It took nearly two hours to get through it - my client had a LOT of questions about what I'd found, and why I'd made the decisions and recommendations I had. I explained it all to them, and they were more than satisfied with how I'd come up with the things I had. When it was all over, they thanked me for my work, and said that they'd had a couple of other things occur to them while I was gone.

I asked what those things were, and they told me. First, they'd realized that they weren't quite sure how to go about deciding on whom to send, if they built the factory: the first people they'd considered were older, and married; they weren't sure that those people would appreciate being sent halfway around the world to a culture they'd never been exposed to before. They'd gone on to consider a few of the younger candidates, but they'd then realized that they didn't know if the younger staff would be able to handle the culture shock of it. Second, it had occurred to them that with such a remote site, they might have trouble keeping up with inventory, quality, and so on. Finally, they were having trouble deciding if they wanted a local person - a Filipino - or an American to be the primary person to handle the job of dealing with local officials and the public.

I told them that I'd be happy to provide any help I could, and they asked me - straight out - what they should do.

"On the first problem, I expect that you're right - your older managers, or anyone with a family, would probably have problems with moving there. I can't emphasize enough how different the country, culture, and people are from here", I told them.

Kelly discretely indicated that she'd like to add something to what I'd said, and I let her. She told them "This trip my first time ANYPLACE outside of the United States, and I can assure you, Dan is correct. Even with his help, I went through a considerable culture shock - and I was looking FORWARD to this! If you send someone that doesn't particularly WANT to go, I think you'll be setting yourselves up for a lot of trouble and expense."

To what she said, I added "By that, I think Kelly means that someone that isn't particularly interested in being there is likely to ignore the culture they're in, causing resentment not just against the factory, but your company, and even the United States. Of more direct impact, they will probably get tired of being there before long, and want to come back here - not a cheap proposition. Of course, that would also apply to any younger managers that you might be inclined to send. While it might be more expensive initially, I have a suggestion that would save you a lot of time and money in the long term. That suggestion would be to first select only those employees that expressed an interest in taking the job; second, I would recommend that you send the best candidates there for a short stay to see who was able to adapt to the new environment. Better to spend a little money up front, than a lot of money later on."

They said they could understand that, and agreed that it was probably the best thing to do.

"As for the second problem, keeping up with what's going on in the plant, that's a *\*relatively\** simple task. You've got computers. The plant will have computers. All you really need to do is establish a link between the two sets of computers, and you're set. At this point, it could even be added to the plant's design with no trouble."

I continued by telling them "As for a liaison, I had a similar thought after I got over there, and planned to bring it up when I got back. From my knowledge of the country and culture, I think that you would be better off with a Filipino doing the PR-type work. But I can easily understand that you would have concerns about the effectiveness of such a person. So I'll add that an ideal candidate for such a job would also have some knowledge of, and even experience in, the United States - enough to have an understanding of OUR culture, and thus be able to act as a mediator for the inevitable conflicts between our culture, and theirs."

Their manager told me "I should have expected that you would have thought of that, Dan!" with a smile. He went on to say "Do you have thoughts on how we could best go about finding such a person?"

"Actually, as it happens, I did meet a few people that would be good candidates. Most of them would require a little training here, to both get a refresher in our culture; and to learn your particular needs, such as how and why you manufacture things the way you do. Because of their culture, there would even be certain social benefits if such a person was female."

At that last part, I heard Kelly give a small gasp - one that nobody else seemed to have noticed.

As they thought that one over, I looked down to where Kelly was trying not to stare at me.

A few minutes later, the manager told me "It's pretty obvious that you've put a lot of time and thought and effort into this, Dan, and we appreciate it. As it stands right now, I expect there's a better than ninety-nine percent probability that we're going to go ahead with this project. If we do, we're going to want you on board, to handle the liaison details and help us find the people we'll need - not just there, but here, too. And of course, you'll be doing all of our I and C work, too. I'm *\*extremely\** happy with the results you've given us; you'll receive full payment the day we get your invoice - and there won't be any fussing from our accountants about your expenses, either."

I thanked him, then Kelly and I excused ourselves - it was clear to me that they were ready to make a decision and GO.

Outside, and out of sight of their receptionist, Kelly suddenly grabbed me and pulled me into a fierce hug before kissing me to within an inch of my life. When she turned loose of me, I could see that she was starting to cry before she told me "You! You had that planned the whole time, didn't you!?"

"Had what planned?"

"That bit about them hiring a Filipino - Filipin\*a\*! - to be the liaison between the company, and the government and everybody. You were thinking about that when you told Marilyn that you didn't think she was going to have to stay in that terrible orphanage for very long! You were going to try to find a way to get them to hire Marlyn for *\*some\** job, weren't you?"

"Hmmm. That's a good idea - I wish *\*I'd\** thought of it..." I answered.

Kelly just gave my arm a gentle slap, and told me "You DID think of it you big stinker! OH! You just make me crazy sometimes!"

Then she saw me grinning at her, and wrapped her arms around me as she said "You big softie. You're so devious with all your plans and schemes and all that - when all you're trying to do is HELP someone that deserves it. Sometimes I wonder why I stay with you."

I hugged her and said "Sometimes, I wonder why you do, too."

She looked up at me and replied "That's easy. Because I love you."

I hugged her again, and told her "I'm glad to hear that - because I love you, too."

That settled, we got into my car and headed home. On the way, Kelly used her cell phone to tell Sarah that she could leave early if she wanted - that we wouldn't be back into the office until the next day.

---

Around mid-morning the next day, Sarah let me know that I had a telephone call - and that it was from my client. Figuring that they just need clarification on some point or other, I took it, and said "Good Morning, Bill. What can I do for you?"

"You can start getting your bags packed, Dan. We're going ahead with the project."

Surprised (!! ) at how fast they'd reached their decision, I asked "Already? I figured it would be a couple of days, anyway."

"Nope. I told you before we sent you, we've had this on our minds for a while. What you brought back for us was all we needed to make the decision - we were there till almost ten last night, hashing it out, but we settled it. I've got two lawyers that are ready to make the trip, any time starting two weeks from today. Today and Monday, I'm going to see if any of our young go-getters are ready to step into the big leagues. If any of them are, they'll be going, too. How long would you need with them over there to see if they can handle it?"

"I think a week or so would do it."

"Take two, if you need them. You've always done right by us, and I'm going to trust you to let me know which ones are my best bet. I'll be making the final decision, but what you tell me is going to count for most of it. I'm also giving you authority to hire our liaison person. So how soon can you go back?"

"Let me get in touch with my guide over there, and see when the best time would be. Time zones and all, it might be tomorrow before I have an answer."

"That'll do. Aren't you going to ask what it pays?"

"I figured to scale it from last time, if that's okay."

"It'll do for now. But we're gonna be working you, Dan, and I expect to pay for it. This project is gonna save us a chunk of change, and it's only right you get some of it."

"Fair enough, Bill. I'll get things started, and we can haggle when I know more."

"Good deal. I'll be waiting to hear from you."

That ended the conversation, and I asked Kelly to come into my office. She did, and all but screamed when she heard the good news. Sarah came in to see what all the fuss was,



and surprised Kelly and I both when she did her own little victory dance - wearing an ear-to-ear grin.

I checked my watch, and realized that if we were quick about it, there was a chance of contacting Marlyn right away. Sarah hurried to her desk and made the call; she managed to catch them before they left the office. With a little begging, pleading, and cajolery on my part, they agreed to get a message to Marlyn before the conversation ended. All three of us waited anxiously for the next couple of hours - jumping every time the phone rang, until we were finally rewarded by the call we'd been hoping for.

The first thing I did was to give Marlyn the good news - Kelly was listening to the conversation, and we both heard as she started laughing and crying. When she'd calmed down a bit, I filled her in on the rest of the details: me, two lawyers, and an unknown - as yet - number of others that were being considered for the plant management job. She told me that she would be free to guide us when we needed her, and that she would be happy to get Bhoy to drive for us again. I said that there were a couple of other things that I wanted to discuss with her, but that they would have to wait until I got there - earning myself a jab in the ribs and dirty look from Kelly. Marlyn said that she'd get things started, and email me the details. I thanked her, she thanked ME, and that ended the conversation.

When I'd hung up the phone, Kelly gave me another dirty look and asked "Why didn't you just tell her that you had a job for her?"

"A couple of reasons. First, there's the off chance she might have her own reasons for not wanting the job, okay? Second, I don't know what it pays yet. I'm sure it would pay more than her guide thing, but how much I don't know - so there's no point in offering her a job when I don't know the gory details. Finally, I want to see the expression on her face when I tell her about it!"

Kelly just grinned at that last part before conceding that the other reasons were reasonable.

I called Bill, and told him the good news.

"Damn, you work fast. I'm sure glad you're working for me! Okay, here's the run-down. We got it narrowed down to three places. First choice is Dagupan. Second is Cebu, and Suribao to round it off. From what you said, I don't think we'll have any problems getting into Dagupan, but I wanted a couple of other options. Would you be able to come in here and give the folks going with you a little heads-up on the customs and language and all that?"

"I'd be glad to - I'd have offered if you hadn't brought it up. Of course, your people are going to need passports and all that; shots aren't NEEDED, but probably wouldn't hurt. I'll have some additional stuff for them to look over, too, so a week before we leave would be good. We can cover the basics in about half a day, tops."

"You've got it. I'll set the tickets up - I know the lawyers wouldn't be happy flying business, so I'll just send the bunch of you first class. Anything else?"

"The sooner I know how many, the better, is all."

"I'll email you the list first thing Tuesday. Will that work?"

"That'll be great, Bill. Thanks."

"No, it's me thanking you, Dan. I'll talk to you later."

With the end of the conversation, I went in to where Kelly was fine-tuning the analysis she'd done of the sites for the final version of the report.

Sitting on the edge of her desk, I told her "I'll be going back in just over two weeks. I'll be taking along a couple of Bill's lawyers to get them started, and riding herd on some of his people to see if they'll be able to fit in there like we need."

Kelly looked up at me, and said "And you're hoping I don't want to go."

Seeing the look on my face, she went on to tell me "Its okay, Dan. I know you'll be busy - a LOT busier than when we went there. And I know that if I went with you, you'd feel bad about not spending as much time with me as you wanted; I \*know\* you wouldn't do anything but the best job you could for Bill. So I'll stay here and hold down the fort with Sarah. I don't know enough to handle the design work you do, but I can sure ask the right questions so that you know what's needed when you get back. Besides, it'll only be a couple of weeks, tops, right? We were gone quite a while, and I need to get caught up with Jan and Sandra and all the others, anyway. So go ahead, and don't worry about it, okay?"

Once again, she'd reminded me of why I loved her so much. Smart enough to figure out the problem, but understanding and caring enough to accept the only proper solution. She looked surprised when I gently pulled her up out of her chair to give her a hug and kiss before telling her "Thanks, Kelly."

She kissed and hugged me back, then told me "Like I said, its okay. Besides, this just means that we'll be able to get Marlyn and Marilyn \_here\_ for a little while. And anybody that thinks they'll be staying anywhere but OUR house doesn't know what's what."

---

The next day, Saturday, Kelly and I were ready for Paul and everyone. We'd laid in a good supply of burgers and hot dogs, buns, chips, drinks, beer, and anything else we thought we might need. Kelly had picked up the film she'd dropped off, along with all of the resulting photos. We had time to go through them and write brief descriptions of the

where/what of each one. Her camera put the date and time on the film, which made the process a LOT easier.

Paul, the boys, and the girls all showed up at the agreed on time, and we were soon in full cookout mode. Kelly and I took turns toggling between driving the barbeque grill and telling the rest of them about our trip, supplemented with the photos. It was well into the evening by the time we finished. Everyone thought Marlyn was more than passably attractive, and that Marilyn was as cute as she could be.

When Kelly told them about what had happened to Marlyn, all were as offended as Kelly had been; they were also as horrified as we'd been when Kelly and I told them about the conditions we'd found in the orphanage - not so much the living conditions, which were passable, but the lack of stimulation for the kids and limited food supplies. It was Robyn that simply said "But of course, you fixed that." Kelly admitted that we had covered their immediate needs, but were planning to see if we couldn't get them some long-term help, too. Jan asked who we were going to get to help, and I told her "Well, my first stop is going to be Bishop Ferguson." All of them laughed before Susan said "Yeah, he'll help - if he knows what's good for him!" - prompting another round of laughter. The first contact between the Bishop and I had been after I'd threatened to sue the local Diocese. Since then, we'd become at least friendly, if not friends.

While I was talking, I saw Paul reach into his pocket and pull out his checkbook to start writing. When he was done, he handed me a check, saying "Here's a thousand dollars; you know how to get it to them. The food and clothes and even the toys were all things they needed. But I know there's other stuff that only money can help." The girls quickly went for their purses, and in just a couple of minutes, I had over \$1500 in my hand. Kelly started to cry, which got the others going, as I told them "The orphanage will have this in their hands day after tomorrow, at the latest." Paul just nodded as he put his checkbook away.

On that marginally happy note, the gathering started to break up. John and Leo accepted a hug from Kelly while the girls gave me a kiss. They went on to kiss Kelly while Paul and I chatted a moment; then Kelly gave him a hug and kiss on the cheek, embarrassing him slightly.

When they'd gone, I promptly made arrangements to wire the money to the orphanage, using the details from the business card the manager had given me. While I was at it, I bumped the collection up to an even \$2,000. With the money on the way, I called their office; the time zone difference worked in my favor, for a change, so I didn't have any trouble reaching them. It being early Sunday there, the only person in the office at the time was a secretary who readily told me when the manager would be back from church. I thanked her, and giving him a little extra time to return, called back. He was right there, waiting for my call: the secretary had gotten word to him in church that I'd called, and he'd hurried back to the office as soon as services were over. When I told him that I'd wired them some money, and how much, Kelly (who was listening too) and I heard nothing but silence on the phone. It was a full minute before we heard him say something

in Tagalog to the secretary, who promptly started crying in the background before he got back on the phone with me. He tried to talk to me several times, but was so excited that he kept speaking Tagalog. We finally heard him draw a deep breath before speaking to us in English, thanking us over and over again. When he finally started to run down, I interrupted to tell him that the money I'd sent was just a gift from some friends - I hadn't yet spoken to the Bishop, or made any other arrangements. We heard him say something to the secretary, who's crying promptly picked up, before he started thanking us all over again. Kelly just smiled at me, happy that we - well, Paul and the others - had been able to bring them so much relief and joy. When he gave me the chance, I hastened to assure him that it was our pleasure to be able to help - and that we would pass along his promise to include all of us in their prayers. I asked him a few questions which he happily answered before I thought I'd better close the connection.

When the call was over, Kelly hugged me before saying "It's amazing what a little money can do. Here, that two thousand would last a family of four a month, maybe two. How long do you think it'll last over there?"

"Six months, at LEAST. I wouldn't be surprised if they stretched it out to last a year or more, though; and you can bet they'll get every penny's worth out of it, too."

"What are you going to tell the Bishop?"

"The truth: that if they sent even ten percent of their charity money from here, it would do twice as much good as what they kept."

Kelly grinned, and told me "I'll bet that gets his attention. Especially coming from YOU!"

I grinned back as the two of us headed in to get some sleep.

---

Around midmorning the next day, we got a phone call - from Candice, who told us that she was on her way to an assignment for her paper. Kelly immediately told her that if she didn't spend the night with us, she was going to be in \*big\* trouble. Candice just laughed, and said that that was exactly why she called. I just asked her what time her flight came in, and she told me - late that afternoon. She didn't even bother trying to tell me she'd take a cab. The three of us chatted for a few minutes before Candice told us that she had to go. Kelly said we'd be waiting, and the connection closed.

Kelly immediately called Jan to tell her the good news; Jan told us she'd call the others, and asked what time they should come over. Kelly told her, and Jan said they'd be here.

At the designated time, Kelly and I were waiting at the gate where Candice's flight was to arrive. We stood back and off to the side, making ourselves easier for her to find. As I'd expected, she was among the last to appear; she'd told me before that after all the flying she had to do, she found it easier to just wait for the thundering herd to fight their way out

the door, \_then\_ get up and make her way off the plane with little fuss or aggravation. She hugged and kissed both of us, and we led her down to the luggage claim area. She told me what her bag looked like, and I easily recognized it: it proudly sported a number of stretch bands from all the luggage tags that had been put on it. Candice tried to take it from me, and I just gave her my Cat imitation: curling my lips and hissing at her. She laughed, and let me carry it for her.

Back at the house, I put her luggage in our bedroom - I knew that there wasn't any possibility of her sleeping alone that night.

Kelly and I took the opportunity to give Candice a proper welcome: she happily dueled tongues with both of us, and willingly reciprocated when we went on to molest her a bit. When we'd gotten properly reacquainted, the three of us sat down before Kelly told her that the rest of the crew would be over in a couple of hours. Candice thanked us for giving her a little time to catch up from the flight; Kelly just told her "Of course we did, you silly", with a mild version of the Goober look tossed in. Candice just smiled, and told us "Yeah, you would. I'm just not used to people thinking like that, is all." Kelly and I could see it as she visibly relaxed, knowing that she was home, after a fashion.

While the two of them chatted, I went in to get us all some drinks - Candice opted to have a beer with me while Jan was content with a soda. Candice had heard about our trip, so I went to get the photos while Kelly started telling her about it. Cat showed up to welcome Candice, lying in her lap to be petted while purring her happiness. By the time Mabel told us that Jan and the others had arrived, Candice was pretty well caught up on all that had happened during our trip.

I sat back and listened as Candice and the other four quickly got each other caught up on what had been happening in their lives. After Cat had gotten some attention from each of them, she disappeared under the couch for a nap. The others were wearing some of the jewelry we'd brought back - the silver from Baguio - and noticed that Candice kept looking at it. They finally paused long enough to tell her where they'd gotten it - which reminded Kelly and me that we hadn't yet given Candice HER gifts. We didn't waste any time before rectifying the situation; Candice was the only one surprised when Kelly and I handed her the wrapped packages holding the things we'd brought back for her. First to be opened was the batik scarf Kelly had found for her. Though Indonesia and Malaysia were better known as batik sources, it was an art/craft that was practiced in the southern Philippines, as well. This particular scarf was a brightly colored representation of a sunset; the scarf was of medium size, so it could be used over her head or as an accessory for other clothing. All of them made noises over it, and Candice looked delighted with it. Next was some seashell earrings and necklace that Kelly and I had picked out - the pastel colors of it served to emphasize her light skin tones.

The last thing to be opened was the belt I'd selected for her in Baguio - made up of small silver disks held together with fine silver links, it molded to her hips wonderfully when she tried it on. I was relieved to see that I'd had the silversmith add enough length to it to let the end of it hang down in front of her a little - emphasizing her curves most

delightfully. With the silver unpolished, it was just a shade or two different than her hair, setting a wonderful counterpoint.

From the noises the others made, Candice knew that it made her look good, but I don't think she really appreciated the effect - until Kelly took her into the bedroom so she could see herself in a mirror. When they came back into the room, Candice looked at me in awe before telling me "I'm going to have to take you shopping with me some time - you know what would look good on me better than \*I\* do!" - making the others laugh at her comment.

I asked if anyone was hungry, and learned that they all were. I told them to keep going, that I'd take care of supper. Kelly thanked me with her eyes before I went into the kitchen to warm up the leftover barbeque we'd gotten our first night back. We always ordered more than we needed for just one meal - the stuff was good enough that it tasted as good reheated as it did fresh. There was more than enough of it for us, so when everything was ready, I took it into the den. While the others were helping themselves, Kelly got drinks for all of us - sodas, by unanimous vote. Of course, the smell of the food got Cat's attention, and she made a reappearance to see if she could get a handout. She got a couple tastes of barbeque sauce, and even a small piece of pork. Satisfied, she went back under the couch to sleep it off.

It was closing on 10:00 when Candice couldn't help yawning. That seemed to remind the others that she'd changed a couple of time zones and almost certainly had a little jet-lag. They quickly made their excuses and left, after giving Candice their own goodnights - which seemed to require tongue duels and no small amount of reciprocal fondling.

When they were gone, Candice came over to give Kelly and I a hug, thanking us for letting her get caught up. We both assured her that she was most welcome.

I saw them giving each other a look, and told them "You two go on - I want to stay up a little while to think some things over." Both of them knew I was telling them to go ahead and have some private fun together, and both kissed me goodnight before heading back to the bedroom.

I actually did have things I needed to work out, so I stayed in the den and listened to music while I was thinking. I knew the two of them would be at it for a while, so I had plenty of time to get the things I needed to do all planned out. It wasn't until well after midnight that I finally decided that they were probably finished ravishing each other, and headed back to go to bed.

When I went in, I could see that Candice was dead to the world - her face still shiny from Kelly's juices, and a smile of contentment on her face. Kelly was half-asleep, as well, but woke up when she felt me getting into bed next to her. She woke up enough to tell me "Thanks, Dan.", and hear my reply of "Glad to, Kelly." When she saw that I was going to lay next to her, on the other side from Candice, she quickly pushed at me, saying "No, go on - lay between us. She'd love to wake up next to you."

As I started to lie down next to Candice, she rolled over onto her side, facing away from me. I didn't hesitate to lay on my side behind her, spooning with her as Kelly moved to do the same with me. I put my arm around Candice, cupping her breast; she gave a happy, contented sigh and moved closer to me.

That was how I fell asleep: my wife snuggled against my back as I held our dear friend and lover in front of me.

---

I woke up the next morning to find that I'd moved to my other side, and had Candice spooning against MY back. I could feel her firm breasts pressing against me, and the slight touch of her pelvic fleece against my butt. Candice must have already been awake, because when she felt me start to move, I heard her say "You don't have to leave if you don't want to, Dan. Its \*nice\* being able to hold you like this for a little while."

"Let me make a pit stop, and I'll be right back", I promised her. She pulled her arm from around my chest, and watched me as I made my way to the bathroom.

Back out again, I noticed that she watched me again as I made my way back to bed. When I climbed in, she indicated that she wanted me to lie on my back. When I did, she scooted herself next to me; continuing to lie on her side, she moved to rest her head on my shoulder as she leaned against me with her arm on my chest. I put my arm around her to hold her as I put my other hand on top of hers.

We were still like that when Kelly came in - dressed and bearing two cups of coffee. She smiled when she saw us, and told me "I already called Sarah, and told her you'll be in later. I'm going on in to finish up my work. The coffee is set up again, so Mabel can turn it on whenever you want. You two have fun, and I'll see you later." She set the coffee on the nightstand, kissed each of us on the lips, and left.

Neither of us had said or done anything while Kelly was with us; it was only when she was gone that Candice told me "She is \*such\* a dear - both of you are."

I gave her a gentle hug, and the two of us were content to just lay there for a few minutes - until Candice said "That coffee just smells too good. I think we'd better drink it before it gets cold."

I agreed, and she rolled away from me a little so we could both move up to lean against the headboard of the bed. She was closest to the coffee, so she handed me a cup first, then took her own. I lifted my arm, and she happily snuggled into my side, giving a sigh of content when I put my arm around her. Neither of us felt any obligation to say anything as we sipped our coffee. We were friends and lovers that both knew we cared for each other very much.

I finished my coffee first; when Candice saw me sitting there holding an empty cup, she took it from me and set it on the nightstand, along with her own unfinished cup.

With her hands free, she turned and raised herself to sit on my lap, facing me. I put my arms around her waist, and the two of us shared a good-morning kiss. When it was over, she leaned back a bit to tell me "I've missed you, you know."

"I've missed you, too, Candice. But I've seen you a lot on TV lately, too, at those political press conferences. I'm real proud of you; all of us are."

She grinned at me, and pulled my arms from around her so she could guide my hands to her breasts before telling me "Yeah, I think I make them crazy, sometimes. But after everything I've learned from you, I just can't STAND it when those people that are supposed to be working FOR us start acting like they're exempt from being decent, responsible human beings. If anything, they should be acting *\*better\** than the rest of us!"

While she was talking, I'd been caressing her breasts and running my fingers over her nipples, making them stand out. She closed her eyes and smiled at the sensations I was causing as I told her "You're right, they SHOULD. And I'm glad you're there to keep an eye on them, and ask them - in public! - the questions they don't want to answer. Just don't forget to let people know who the good ones are, too."

She opened her eyes to tell me "I'm not. In fact, that's what this trip is all about. I'm going to interview a State Senator that went public after some political opponents tried to blackmail him. He not only made his own announcement about being bisexual, but told everybody why he was holding the press conference, and who had tried to threaten him. He even released audio tapes of the blackmail attempt! A lot of his constituents are upset to learn he's bi, but a lot of them are impressed that he stood up to the blackmailers, too. Right now, it could fall either way about whether he keeps his seat after the next election. But the ones that tried to blackmail him are in even deeper than he is. Two have been forced to resign, and a third is under serious pressure to do the same. His private life is taking a back seat to the PROCESS, for a change."

By the time she finished, I had both nipples standing well out from the surrounding flesh and her areolas puckered in sympathy. She released a soft moan, and told me "That's enough about work. I want YOU, now."

I released her breasts to pull her into an embrace, caressing her back and shoulders as the two of us kissed - affectionately at first, then more and more passionately. With her breasts pressing against my chest, I could feel it as her nipples got even harder, gently poking my skin. She could feel it, too, and moved her torso around a little to let her nipples drag across my chest, stimulating both of us.

When she felt me starting to respond to our mutual teasing, she started arching her hips slightly to caress my penis where it was softly pressing against her labia. With the added stimulation, I started to erect even more. I returned the favor by gradually shifting the



focus of my hands down to her smooth, firm butt to begin caressing it and gently squeezing her ass cheeks. That seemed to get HER motor going, and it wasn't but a minute or so before I felt the change in how she was rubbing against me as her labia got longer and wetter, anointing my member with her oils.

A couple more minutes, and both of us were softly panting our pleasure and arousal. Feeling that I was completely erect under her, Candice pulled away long enough to tell me "GOD, how I've missed being with you like this!"

My only response was to take her in my arms again, and ease the two of us over so that we were lying down with her on top of me. After a minute or so, she lifted herself up on her arms, but before she could finish what she'd started to do, I lifted my head to wrap my lips around the end of one of her breasts. Even with my tongue, I could tell the difference between the flesh of her breast, and where her half-dollar-sized areolas started; as I sucked on it, her nipple erected in my mouth even more. By the time I switched over to the other breast, I'd gotten her little-finger-diameter nipple nearly half an inch long. She moaned softly as I went about giving the other breast the same treatment. Back and forth I went between them, until I had both nipples gleaming as they stood proud from my attentions.

I paused to admire my handiwork, and when I realized that Candice hadn't started moving again after a few seconds, I gently pulled her down on top of me again. Holding her steady, I rolled the two of us over, so that she was lying on her back with me next to her. I refreshed the look of her nipples, and then started kissing my way down her body. After a pause to play with the navel with my tongue for a little bit, I continued my journey. As I got lower and lower on her, she eventually moved her legs apart, knowing what I wanted to do - and welcoming it.

When I was finally between her legs and my face even with her pubis, I paused to look at the flower of her womanhood. What I saw was a pair of thin vaginal lips, parted and deep pink from her arousal and their inner surfaces were faintly shiny with her oils. Between them, I could see the entrance to her womanhood, glistening from the juices she'd released. Her labia slowly folded under the hood of her clitoris, which was peeking out at me. Her pubic hair was the same platinum blonde color as on her head, but since we'd last been together, she'd apparently trimmed it a bit - though still fine and sparse, it was a bit shorter than I'd remembered.

She looked down at me, watching as I slowly extended my tongue to take my first taste of her. I dipped my tongue between her labia, drawing a sample of her feminine nectar from its source. She moaned softly, and let her head fall back to the bed as she lifted her legs and parted them to make even more room for me.

With the tangy (but surprisingly pleasant) taste of her on my tongue, I went on to sample her again - quite a few times, in fact. By the time I was ready to move on to her clitoris, her labia had darkened and extended even more.

When she felt my lips contact her clitoris, she released a deep groan of pleasure as her pelvis moved up off the bed. I slid my hands forward to cup her ass and hold her there as I started a soft, rhythmic suction; she groaned again when I started fluttering my tongue across her clitoris, as well.

It didn't take long to get her well on the way to orgasm; but I knew that she would want us to be making love when it happened, so I gradually slowed, then stopped, my oral attentions. It still took her a couple of seconds to realize that I'd stopped, but when she did, she opened her eyes to see that I was moving up to position myself between her thighs. Watching my erect penis swaying as I moved, she got a delighted smile on her face before pulling her knees up to make more room for me.

When I was approximately in position over her, she reached between us to take me into her hand, stroking me softly a couple of times before saying "I've been missing THIS as much as I have all the rest of being here with all of you!"

She looked up to see me smiling at her, and went on to say "I know yours isn't so different than any other guys - but it's what you give to us WITH it that makes you so special. Every day, I realize how lucky \*all\* of us were that we met you."

After I lowered my head to share a kiss with her, she took hold of me a little more firmly to slide the head of my penis between her labia to coat it with her oils before positioning me at the entrance to her womanhood.

When she was ready, she locked her eyes with mine; and I pressed myself forward as she held me in place. With only a little effort, I slipped past the tight ring of her opening. After a brief pause to fine-tune my position, I pressed forward again; I saw the smile on her face widen even more as she felt me slide into her for nearly half my length. I pulled back a bit to get myself properly coated with her wetness, and pressed in again to the accompaniment of her soft moan of pleasure at having me fill her. With our pubic hair merged, I waited as I felt her flexing her internal muscles while she adjusted to my presence.

After a bit, I felt her lift her pelvis to press her clitoris against my pubic bone. Taking that as my signal that she was ready, I eased my hips back to slide myself out of her. I could feel her clasp at me as I did, but the ample oils she was leaving on my erection were enough to let me continue.

With the head of my erection pressing against the inside of her entrance, I went on to slip in back and forth through her opening, teasing her. When I heard her groan of frustrated arousal, I had mercy on her and pressed myself back into her to fill her again in a single stroke. She lifted herself in acceptance as she released a sigh of pleased contentment.

Over the next few minutes, I eased myself into a rhythm of pistoning in and out of her. First, it was nearly my entire length, slowly; then I gradually changed over to a more rapid movement that had just over half my manhood filling and emptying her by turns.

With that more rapid thrusting, I also let myself bump against her mons to apply a slight pressure to her clitoris with each inward motion.

It took only a few minutes of that before I felt her tighten around me as she gasped her way through a small orgasm. I continued my movement in her as I felt her body spasm under me several times. When it was over for her, she pulled my head down for a kiss as she spread her legs farther to give me even easier access to her womanhood.

With that, I backed off a little bit in our love-making; it had been long enough since the last time Candice and I had been together that I wanted to have as much time with her as I could - knowing that she wanted the same. So the next several minutes were spent with the two of us making slow, gentle love with each other: while I was moving inside her, she would lightly drag her fingernails along my sides and back; or I would lower my head to kiss her or lick and suck on her breasts and nipples; or she would raise HER head to do the same to me. All told, it was an exceptionally pleasurable and erotic time together.

But despite opinions to the contrary, I wasn't Superman - eventually, I started to tire from my actions, and holding myself over her. Candice saw what was happening, and pulled my head down for a kiss before telling me "You look like you could use a rest. Let me take over for a while."

I smiled and nodded my agreement, then slowed and finally stopped my thrusts in her. With an affectionate smile on her face, she reached up to wipe the fine sheen of perspiration off my face before I eased myself out of her. I asked her what she wanted to do, and she told me "Just lay back against the headboard. I'll take it from there."

I did as she told me, resting myself against a couple of pillows as she turned to move on top of me. With a wicked grin on her face, she delayed long enough to take me into her mouth - using her tongue and lips to clean her own oils off of my glistening erection. When all that was left was a coating of her saliva, she moved up to position herself over me. Taking me into her hand again, she held me steady while she lowered herself enough to position the head of my penis at her entrance. She locked eyes with me, and started to lower herself onto me, stopping only when her firm, smooth ass was resting on my thighs.

When she was in position, I cupped her breasts in my hands as she started easing herself up and down on me in slow, short movements. I watched as her eyes closed and her head tilted back in pleasure and arousal at having me inside her, and the way I was running my fingers across her nipples.

I looked down between us to watch my penis disappear between her extended labia, both of us shiny with the overflow of her liquid essence. After a bit, I let my hands slide from her breasts to rest them on her hips; when I did, she leaned forward to bring her breasts closer to my face - inviting me to lick and suck on her nipples, which I gladly did. It didn't take me long to get both of them hard and fully extended; when I reached again to

cup them in my hands, I could feel how tight and firm her breasts had gotten from the increase in her pleasure and arousal.

As I was doing all that, Candice's actions on me had slowly increased: rather than the leisurely self-impalement she'd started with, she was now hunching herself down on me in a quick, steady rhythm as she panted her increasing excitement.

I could tell that she was moving toward climax; but I could also tell that she was starting to get tired. Easing my hand between us, I collected some of her oils on the end of my finger before using it to begin softly circling her clitoris. When I did that, her eyes flew open in an unfocused stare as she moaned her pleasure at what I was doing. In less than a minute, I could feel the first fluttering of her internal muscles as she rapidly got closer and closer to her release.

The added stimulation seemed to be just what she needed. It took only a couple more minutes before I felt her suddenly press herself down on me, taking me as deeply as she could. Knowing that she was about to start her climax, I quickly strummed the tip of my finger across her clitoris so that her orgasm hit her like the proverbial ton of bricks.

I was well along toward my own release, so the feeling of her hot, wet sheath clamping down on me was more than enough to trigger my own climax. Even as I felt the first of her spasms pass, I started filling her with my inert seed.

When she felt the sudden addition of my hot semen, Candice's eyes flew open, and she all but screamed her pleasure. Back and forth we went: each clasp of her vagina as she orgasmed would be followed by my release of a spurt of my hot semen - which would trigger another spasm in her, and so on.

Finally, it was my male limitations that let the cycle die out: as my testicles emptied, the power and amount of my releases into her decreased - which let her responses taper off, in return.

When the worst (best?) of her orgasm had passed, Candice all but collapsed into my arms gasping for breath. She barely responded when I kissed her; it was something that sometimes happened to her when her orgasms were particularly strong, as we'd learned since the first time we'd made love. I quickly instructed Mabel to start the coffee, and continued to hold Candice. When Mabel told me that it had finished, Candice had mostly recovered from the intensity of her experience - but she was still a bit shaky when I gently lowered her to rest on the bed while I went in to get us some refreshment. I returned with a carafe of coffee and a couple of bagels, with cream cheese on the side. I set everything on the nightstand, and then lay back against the headboard. Candice was able to help me get her onto my lap, resting against my legs where I'd propped them up for that very purpose.

I poured her some coffee - about half a cup, since she still wasn't too steady - and handed it to her. She thanked me with her eyes, and lifted the cup to take a sip from it. I got my

own coffee, and waited while she got her wits together. By the time I was halfway through my coffee, I could see that she was in considerably better condition. I topped off her cup and lathered a bagel with some cream cheese before handing it to her.

When both of us had had a chance to reinvigorate ourselves with the food and coffee, Candice blushed slightly before telling me "I'm glad you held me like that. And I know that you'd \*never\* say anything about it, but I'm kind of, um, embarrassed to be sitting on you like this."

Mildly confused, I asked her "Like what?"

She blushed even deeper before answering "Like \*this\* - naked on you while I'm leaking all over \_both\_ of us."

I managed not to grin at her; instead, I looked down to what she was talking about and made a show of looking surprised and horrified before saying "You DID! You ARE! Oh my god, I'm gonna \*die\*!"

Candice realized that I was teasing her - and playfully slapped at me before saying "Okay, okay! I'll quit worrying about it."

Grinning, I pulled her into my arms for a hug and kiss; when I did, I could feel her relax in my arms as she whispered "Thanks, Dan."

We sat there a while longer before she moved to lean back against my legs again, patently unconcerned about any leakage resulting from our activities. We each enjoyed another cup of coffee, washing down the last of our bagels before I told her "I still have to go in to work today, but you're welcome to stay as long as you want. And of course, you're welcome to invite any of the others over, too, if you want." She nodded, and said "I was thinking it would be nice to spend a little time with Jan, if she has time."

"I'll bet she'd \*make\* time, if you asked her over." I told her.

Candice nodded at the truth of that before leaning forward to give me a kiss and hug. When it was over, I continued to hold her for a moment as I asked "Take a shower with me, so I can get to work?"

She nodded into my shoulder before pulling back to tell me "Just try and stop me!"

An hour later, the two of us hugged and kissed as I was making my way out the door to head to work.

Once in the office, I found that Kelly had nearly finished her detailed analysis of the places I'd visited. The results showed an even more favorable set of conditions for Dagupan than the initial draft of the report had included. Using historical data she'd managed to find, she'd come up with a formula that predicted a savings of over fifteen

million dollars over the course of twenty years, just in operating expenses. While she finished up her work before generating the final draft of our report, I went to work coming up with a lesson plan for the people that would be going with me to the Philippines. By the time the day was over, I'd finished it, and was pulling together additional information to include in the handouts that I planned to give them.

When Sarah checked to see if we needed her to stay late, Kelly and I both realized that we'd worked the entire afternoon without a break. I told Sarah that she didn't have to stay - that Kelly and I would be going home soon, as well. She wished us a good night, and went home. A few minutes later, Kelly and I had found our own stopping points, and closed the office down before heading home.

There, we found Candice tangled up with Jan - the two of them fast asleep. Knowing that Candice's flight wasn't for a few more hours, we let them sleep while we had sandwiches and chips for supper. About the time we were talking about waking Candice up, a naked Jan wandered into the den, telling us "She's in the shower, getting cleaned up for her flight. She'll be out in a bit."

Jan then moved over to sit on the couch, between us when Kelly and I both moved over to make room for her. I could see from Kelly's grin that she could smell as well as I did that Jan still bore the scent of Candice's 'fragrance' on her. Neither of us said anything about it; rather, Kelly just said "You look like you could use some nourishment."

Jan grinned, and said "Yeah, I could. I'll bet Candice could, too!"

Kelly grinned back, and got up to head into the kitchen to make something to eat for both of them. While she was in there, Jan leaned into my side and pulled my arm around her, holding my hand over her breast. She watched TV with me until Kelly reappeared with food and drinks; when she sat up to eat, she moved my hand down to rest on the inside of her thigh, while Kelly took the same liberty on the other side. By the time Jan had gone through about half her sandwich, Candice made her way in to join us. Jan didn't complain when Kelly moved over a bit before gesturing that Candice should sit on her lap, which she did. As Candice tucked away her own meal, random pairings of the three of them would share kisses between bites.

When the meal was over, I took the dishes back into the kitchen and loaded them into the dishwasher. Back in the den, I found the three of them snuggling with each other on the couch. Not wanting to intrude, I started for my favorite chair when Candice told me "If you don't come over here and sit with us, I'm going to be \*real\* upset." I smiled, and changed course to the couch, where Jan and Candice separated to make room for me as Kelly stood up. When I was seated, Kelly promptly took station on my lap while the other two snuggled into my sides.

A while later, I broke the news that if we were going to make Candice's flight, we had to get going before long. Jan told us that she'd said her goodbyes - Candice mischievously asked "Screams of passion are a way of saying 'goodbye'?" - and that she'd have to pass.

When Kelly said that she wanted to go, all four of us managed to get off the couch. I accompanied Jan to the bedroom - she to take a shower, me to collect Candice's luggage - before the three of us got in my car and headed for the airport. We got there in plenty of time, and Kelly and I kept Candice company as she waited for her flight to be called. Finally, with a kiss for each of us, we watched her head down the jet way on her way to her assignment.

Back at home, we found that Jan had already left - after getting the dishes cleaned and put away, then making sure we had fresh sheets on the bed.

It being a little late - and neither of us having gotten enough rest recently - we undressed and went to bed, holding each other close as we drifted off to sleep.

---

Bill sent the list as he'd promised; there were going to be a half-dozen people going with me, including to the lawyers. I got that information to Marlyn as quickly as I could, so that she would have as much time as possible to make the necessary arrangements.

Late the next morning, Kelly and I left the office to make our appointment with the Bishop. We got there a couple minutes early, and his secretary told us that he'd said we could go right in when we arrived. Inside, we found him reading something; he gestured we should have a seat and told us "I'll be with you in just a second."

When he was done, he poured us coffee from a carafe on his desk. After we'd all had a chance to taste it, he looked at us before asking me "Well, Dan, as always, it's a pleasure to see you. What can I do for you?"

"Actually, it's not me that you can do something for. Rather, it's some other people that Kelly and I had a chance to meet recently."

He got a mischievous smile on his face, and said "I'm thinking it's something to do with an orphanage in San Fernando in the Philippines?"

Kelly and I were both surprised, and I asked him "Yes, that's the place, exactly. How did you know?"

He picked up the sheet of paper he'd been reading when we came in, and told us "This is a little communication I received from the Vatican yesterday. Essentially, it's a 'thank you' to me and commendation for you two, from the priest you met there - Father Villanueva."

Kelly and I both nodded, and he went on "It isn't often that someone makes enough of an impression on a priest that he feels obliged to send something like this to the Vatican, via his leadership - all of whom gave it their whole-hearted approval, by the way. Whatever

you did there, it must have been something. But after \*my\* experience with you, I'd have expected that!" - the last part a gentle teasing about how we'd gotten to know each other.

Kelly and I both smiled at his jibe before I told him "Kevin, all I did was provide some much-needed temporary relief to them. What I'm here for is to see if there isn't some way to arrange something that would be both more substantial, and longer lasting."

He nodded, saying "I've never been there, you understand, but I've heard the stories; the Philippines is a poor country. What did you actually see that moved you so much?"

With that, Kelly and I took turns telling him about the conditions we'd found there, and what we'd done in response - accentuated with some of the photos she'd taken. When we finished, he looked greatly troubled, and told us "Yes, I can see why you would be so inclined to help them. What is it that you would like my help with?"

"Kevin, the vast majority of parishioners in this diocese are relatively affluent, and I've come up with a couple of ideas that I think would let the membership help not just this one orphanage, but several. And all with little or no strain on the members."

He looked intrigued, and asked "What are your ideas, then?"

"First, I think that you could organize periodic collections of things that the orphanages need: clothing, toys, school supplies, that sort of thing. We throw away far too much stuff in this country that these people could use; I can't think of a single reason it should be like that."

He nodded, and I went on "As was pointed out to me over the weekend, there are some things that only money can help with - utility bills, food, and such. If the diocese can see it's way to parting with some of the funds collected locally, and forward them to the orphanages, it would be of tremendous benefit: as I told Kelly, even if it was only ten percent of what you collect, the money sent over there would do twice as much good as all the rest of the money that stayed here."

He looked doubtful, and I explained to him "This past weekend, a FEW friends got together with Kelly and me. When they heard about the orphanage, they came up with over fifteen hundred dollars. I added some of my own money to bring it up to two grand, even. I wired the money to the orphanage, and was assured that that two thousand dollars would cover ALL of their utilities - electric, water, and so on - for at LEAST a year, with plenty left over for other needs. Can't the diocese spare that much on a yearly basis?"

He looked surprised at how much could be accomplished with the money I'd forwarded, and answered "Yes, I expect we could, easily. What else?"

"I expect that they would also benefit from some supplemental items, such as multivitamins, baby goods, and so on. Keep in mind, it's an ORPHANAGE - all they deal with, really, is \*kids\*. And kids being kids, they have their share of scrapes and



scratches, babies need diapers and all that, and what kid \_anywhere\_ wouldn't benefit from a vitamin supplement each day?"

He nodded at that, and I finished by telling him "I'm not suggesting that the diocese cut back on local programs - just that some of the fat be trimmed. All I'm asking is that people that aren't in any position to really help themselves aren't forgotten along the way."

He looked at Kelly, then me, before saying "You make a good case for helping these people. Even better, you don't just ask us to help them, but offer substantial suggestions on HOW we can help. My only question is, once we get these things together, how do we get them to where they're needed?"

It was my turn to smile before I told him "I've got an 'in' with a local company that's getting ready to set up a factory over there. I'm willing to bet that I can get them to let you 'piggyback' your supplies in with their shipments, for free."

He laughed, and told me "Yes, I'd bet you could, too. Okay, you've got my support. I've got to run this up the line, but I don't doubt that it'll be approved."

Kelly and I both thanked him, and he told us "I should know better, by now, but it never ceases to amaze me at how much you can accomplish when you get going, Dan! I'm just glad you're on our side, and helping people."

We thanked him again, and the three of us stood. He shook hands with me, and accepted a kiss on the cheek from Kelly before we left his office.

---

The rest of the time between our visit with Bishop Ferguson, and my departure for the Philippines was filled with doing everything we could to get ready for the amount of work we knew was coming. My client got their architect to send me a set of plans for the new facility; once I'd made some basic engineering decisions, Kelly was knowledgeable enough about what was needed to take over from there, which freed me up to take care of the things that only \*I\* could do.

At the designated time, I was in my client's conference room to give the people going with me - including the lawyers, surprisingly - an introduction to where we were going.

I spent nearly two and a half hours giving them a rundown on the country, from its history to its culture. The next hour and a half was spent answering questions, and with Kelly's help, demonstrating some of the things they needed to watch out for when dealing with the people, along with some basic Tagalog. I also gave everyone - including Bill, who had explicitly asked for one - a hefty booklet that included additional Tagalog phrases, along with plenty of pictures and other materials.

When I was done, Bill invited me to his office so we could go over a few of the other details for the trip. When we were done, he thanked me for all my time and effort. I assured him that I was glad to be able to help, and asked if I could ask for HIS help on something. He assured me he would if he could, and asked what the problem was. I told him about the orphanage, and how the diocese was going to start collecting things for it. Then I asked if it would be possible to include the items from the churches in with the materials he shipped to the Philippines - assuring him that his help was needed only between his facilities.

"Shucks, I thought you were gonna ask me something \*hard\*, Dan. We can do that, no problem - we've always got space left over in our shipping containers, and the stuff you're talking about won't add squat as far as weight is concerned; we'll just absorb the added cost - it won't be enough to fuss with, anyway. Heck, I'll even go you one better: you have that bishop call me, and I'll take care of picking the stuff up and getting it here, too - and getting it to the orphanages at the other end."

Then he picked up a phone and dialed a number. While he was waiting for the other person to answer, he asked me "How much did you say you and your friends sent them?"

I barely had time to reply before he told the person that answered "Shirley? Bill here. Listen, I need you to get a check to Dan Marshall before he heads off. Yeah, make it for ten thou. Charitable donation. Yeah, that's fine. Okay, thanks."

I was sitting there, surprised, when he turned to me and said "I expect it's gonna be a couple months before they have something ready to go. And it'll be a few weeks after that before the stuff gets there. Until then, those kids are still gonna need food and clothes and lights and water and all that. You take that money with you, and see that it gets to who needs it."

I tried to thank him, but he just waved it off, saying "I told you, Dan, we're gonna do right by you - and these people, too."

When Kelly heard what he'd said and done, she just sat there and cried.

---

The rest of my time before the return visit was busy - getting things started for Kelly to help keep things moving while I was gone, fielding questions from Bill and his people, and so on.

The trip over wasn't appreciably different from the first time, except for the company I was keeping. The lawyers pretty much stayed to themselves, apparently discussing strategies. The other four were amazed at the attractiveness and grace of the Filipina stewardess we had. One of them had the courage to ask for help with his Tagalog, and the stewardess he asked for help was delighted to do it. Once he'd asked the question, a

couple of the others joined in. Following my example, even the lawyers opted for the Filipino fare during meals.

As promised, Marlyn was waiting for us in Manila, once we'd cleared customs. All of them greeted her - haltingly - in Tagalog, pleasing her. I watched all of them reacted to the scent of Manila, shortly followed by the environment. Bhoy got the luggage packed into the large van he'd brought, and it was off to the hotel - using the same route we'd followed before, as I'd arranged with Marlyn. As we passed the garbage dump and shanty town, I explained to everyone what they were, and about the people. NONE of Bill's people failed to react. The lawyers tried to play it cool, but the same fellow that had asked the stewardess for language lessons looked horrified while the others simply looked relieved when both places were out of sight. I told Marlyn, in Tagalog, that I needed to speak with her. She didn't answer directly, but with a Filipino gesture, indicated that she understood.

After we'd all gotten settled into our rooms, I went down to talk with her while the others refreshed themselves after the trip. Once we had a seat in the hotel bar and gotten something to drink ordered, I told her what I wanted to discuss with her.

"Marlyn, the other four people with me are candidates for the job of managing the plant here. I've already got my own thoughts on who I think would be good for the job, but I would like your help - and Bhoy's."

She looked at me quizzically, and asked "How can we help?"

"I'm not asking you or Bhoy to spy on them, or anything like that - but I would appreciate it if you would just kind of watch what they do, and let me know what YOU think of them. Are they polite? Do they seem interesting in the country and people? Do they seem to like it here? Do they look comfortable here? Those kinds of things would be of interest to me."

She looked hesitant, and I told her "Please understand: you will not be making the final decision. You will only be telling me about things that happen when I'm not there to watch them. Even \*I\* won't make the final decision about them, their boss will - but he is counting on me to give him advice about who the best one would be; neither one of us wants to send someone here that would be an Ugly American. We want someone that the people LIKE having here."

Satisfied that she and Bhoy would only be helping, she said that she would be happy to help, and thought that Bhoy would, too.

It kind of threw her off-balance a bit when I next asked "If you don't mind, I would like to ask what your salary is when you are working as a guide."

She thought it over for a moment, and then told me - I did the currency conversion in my head, didn't like the answer, and did it again to get the same result.

I completely stunned her when I asked "My client wants to hire a local person to be their liaison between the workers and the American manager of the plant. Would you like the job?"

She could only sit there for a couple of minutes, looking at me doubtfully, before finally saying "That is not a funny joke, Dan."

"It isn't a joke, Marlyn. It was something that my client brought up after I got back - but I had the same thought while I was here, and was going to suggest it to him. He needs someone that can explain American ways to a Filipino, and Filipino ways to an American. He needs someone that can help the American manager and Filipino workers solve any problems that come up if - when! - the two cultures have differences. You were a nurse in an American hospital for several years, so you understand our ways - but you're still Filipina. \*I\* think you would be perfect for the job."

She still seemed doubtful, but less so, when she objected "But I don't know anything about a factory."

"We thought of that, too. My client knows that you would have to learn something about what they do, and why they do it; so they would want to bring you to America for two or three months to both refresh yourself about our ways, and to learn why they do things the way they do in their factory."

It was finally sinking in to her that I was serious - and that the opportunity opened up a LOT of options for her.

Hesitantly, she asked "What about Marilyn?"

My answer was "Bring her with you, if you want. I expect you'll want to get her out of the orphanage if you take the job, anyway. If my client doesn't want to pay for her airfare, then \*I\* will - you know Kelly would want to do it."

She gave me a slight smile at that, and said "Yes, she would. Forgive me, but what is the salary?"

I gave her a salary that was near the middle of the range I'd been authorized - it was roughly a dozen times what her guide job paid. With that news, she just sat there - stunned again.

When she was finally able to speak again, she was crying when she started thanking me in a mixture of English and Tagalog. I just grinned and asked "You accept the job, then?"

She managed to laugh before saying "Yes! I take the job! Thank you!"

I laughed, and said "Don't thank me, yet. You are going to be a very busy Filipina for a little while."

She looked at me questioningly, and I told her "You are going to be on the payroll effective tomorrow morning; it's up to you if you want to quit the guide service. Over the next several months, you're going to be helping my client - your boss! - pick out a company to build the factory. You won't be dealing with the contracts and like that; your job will be to find out what companies do good work so Bill Emerson - he owns the company - can decide who is his best choice. After you get to the U.S., you'll be working hard to not only learn what they do and how they do it, but WHY - so you can explain it to the workers that YOU will help pick out. Bill knows that he's going to have to train a lot of people to do the kind of work he needs. Again, you won't be making technical decisions; you'll be there to help figure out what applicants are there just for the money, and which ones are there to WORK. You'll be helping Bill and his people in dealing with local officials. You'll be helping deal with all the news people that want to know about the new factory. You'll be helping deal with any people that decide that they don't WANT a factory near where they live. This is YOUR country and your people - Bill is going to expect you to offer advice and suggestions, and just generally be there to help in dealing with anything Filipino."

Once again, she looked doubtful, and I told her "Really, I don't think you're going to have any problems. You worked in an emergency room, right?"

She nodded, and I went on "Then you can do it. In the emergency room, you sometimes had to \*tell\* the younger doctors things when they were going to do something wrong, right?"

She smiled, and I continued "And you had to deal with the younger nurses that didn't know as much, teaching them? And I'll bet you were even involved in hiring a few nurses, too." - she nodded - "Then you can do this. It's not in an emergency room, but you'll be doing the same things. Bill is the new resident, and your job will be to watch out for him while he's learning."

That put it in terms she could relate to, and she smiled her acceptance and understanding.

"Tomorrow morning, I'll give you the papers that you need to fill out and sign.", I told her, shortly before she got up to come around and give me a hug and whispered "Thank you, Dan!" - with no concern about who was watching.

Once she was seated across from me again, I told her "I need to go up and get freshened up and rested, myself. Would you go with us to dinner?" She happily agreed before the two of us stood up to leave.

---

Later, when everyone was gathered in the hotel lobby, we discussed our dinner options. The guy that had taken the in-flight language lessons was up for Filipino food. A couple more were willing, but cautious. The fourth wanted to go out for American food. The lawyers didn't seem to care, either way. I was happy to see that all of them had paid

attention to my earlier warnings: none was wearing a watch, and I could see the bulges of their wallets in their front pockets. With tag team lectures from Marlyn and me, the eight of us headed out for Filipino food - a different place than Marlyn had taken Kelly and me. The specialty of this place was lumpia - kind of like a small burrito, only in a \*much\* thinner and crispier wrapping, with a sweet-and-sour sauce. All of them seemed to think it was pretty darn good - particularly when washed down with fresh San Miguel beer.

By the time we got back to the hotel, the full bellies and liquid refreshment had everyone ready for some sleep - none of us was quite recovered from the trip.

Knowing what we were there for, Marlyn had planned things in such a way as to give us plenty of time to recover from the flight. It wasn't until late the next morning that we got loaded into the van and made our way to Dagupan. As with Kelly, none of them could resist the temptation to watch Bhoy drive - until they realized that there wasn't a darn thing they could do about it, and settled on watching the countryside along the way.

After we'd gotten checked into our hotel in Dagupan, all but the lawyers wanted to go out and do a little exploring. With admonitions from me to be careful and pay attention to Bhoy, they left. The lawyers opted to prepare for the next day in their rooms, which left Marlyn and I free. She surprised me by offering to take ME to dinner, and I accepted. She led us a few blocks away to where there was a small hole-in-the-wall looking place. Inside, it turned out to be a bright, cheery place; clean and small, with a friendly staff. We were quickly shown a seat, and Marlyn told me "This is a place that Bhoy recommended. He says they serve the best steak in the Philippines here."

Marlyn and I chose to follow Bhoy's lead, and ordered the steak, with French fries and cold San Miguel (me) and Coke (Marlyn). Our conversation was quiet and pleasant as we enjoyed our meal. I couldn't say that it was the best steak in the Philippines, but it was certainly the best \*I'd\* had in quite a while - I remembered several places I knew of that could take lessons from them.

When we'd finished our dessert, I told Marlyn "Once the lawyers get started tomorrow, I'd like to show the rest of them around a little bit. The first place I'd like to go is the orphanage, if we can. There's something I have to do there."

Marlyn looked at me curiously, but said that she and Bhoy would be happy to take us.

Back at the hotel, I managed to get a phone connection to the U.S. and had a nice talk with Kelly, who assured me that she missed me already. I answered that she couldn't miss me as much as I did her, and brought her up to date on how things were going - including Marlyn's acceptance of the job. Kelly was delighted to hear it, and seconded my offer to pay Marilyn's fare. When the conversation finally ended, I settled myself in with the couple of Cokes I'd bought from the sari-sari and the book I'd brought along - most definitely a poor second choice to having Kelly with me.

The next morning, Bhoy got the lawyers to their Filipino counterparts - a meeting that none of the rest of us wanted any part of. When he got back, we piled into the van for our side trip to San Fernando.

At the orphanage, Marlyn and Marilyn showed the others around while I paid a visit to the office. When they saw me, every female in the place started crying again, and wanted to hug me. When I asked if Father Villanueva was available, one of the secretaries told me that he'd be there in just a couple minutes - then got on the phone to call him. It wasn't five minutes later that he arrived, welcoming me and thanking me profusely.

I explained to him about my talk with Bishop Ferguson - they were all awed that I not only \*personally\* knew a Bishop, but could arrange a meeting with one - and that they would be getting additional support from the diocese. I also told them about my conversation with Bill, and how he was going to take care of transporting the donations. They were thrilled at the good news - but when I handed Father Villanueva the money Bill had sent along, it stunned them into total silence: I'd brought the money in cash, knowing that dealing with checks and such was a major aggravation in the Philippines - particularly when the funds were drawn on an American bank that didn't have a presence in the Philippines, never mind locally.

Even Father Villanueva could only sit there, looking like a fish as his jaw worked up and down without any sound coming out.

When he finally got his wits about him, Father Villanueva made the Sign of the Cross over me, and started saying a prayer for me in Tagalog. That woke the others up, and they could only watch in awe.

When he was finished, Father Villanueva assured me that the money would be wisely spent; I told him I was sure it would. He went on to ask me if there was \*anything\* they could do to show their thanks and appreciation. I gave him Bill's address, and told them that if they wanted to send him a letter, I was sure he would be happy to receive it. I was assured that the letter would go out that very day - the manager would \*personally\* take it to the post office.

When I got back to where the others were, Marilyn had been laying in wait for me: Marlyn had told her about the job, and she didn't hesitate to wrap her arms around me to give me a hug, and pull me down for a kiss on the cheek. I was pleased to see that the orphanage had done as they said they would: the children responsible enough to take care of them were dressed in the new clothes Kelly had bought; and all of them were playing with some of the toys that we'd given them. In a different part of the orphanage, where the sponsored children were able to go to school, I saw that all of them had paper and pencils to use; and that the books we'd bought were proudly displayed on new bookshelves that someone had built. The woman teaching them saw me, and came over to thank me for my generosity; I assured her that it had been my pleasure.

Back outside the orphanage, I asked the guys what they thought of the place. One - Jack Sanders - allowed that it was better than nothing. Another - Gus Williams - thought that it was dirty and had smelled bad. A third - Ted Grady - wanted to know if there was anything he could do to help. The fourth - Mike King - agreed with Jack. Then I told them that what they saw was the results of my previous visit, PLUS the two thousand dollar donation I'd wired. They looked surprised, and I went on to tell them that I'd just given the ten thousand dollars Bill had sent along to the priest that oversaw that orphanage and three others. Ted Grady looked pleased at the news of Bills donation. Jack and Mike didn't seem to care, either way. I heard Gus mutter to himself that there went everyone's bonus.

Marlyn moved in to say that the rest of the day, she wanted to show everyone the rest of her country. Jack and Mike looked interested, Ted looked pleased, and Gus didn't seem to care.

---

Back at the hotel later that afternoon, Marlyn indicated that she wanted to talk to me for a moment. When we were by ourselves, she told me "Bhoy told me this morning that all of them went drinking last night. The other three were nice, but the tall one - Gus? - picked up a bar girl and left the bar for a little while." I could see that she was bothered, and I told her "I don't like it either, Marlyn - but if it's any help, Gus has already lost any chance of coming here to run the factory. Between the way he acted on the way over here, and last night, and today, I know that I wouldn't send him \*anywhere\* without an adult to take care of him."

She just smiled at my description of Gus, and nodded her understanding. I told her "Thank you for telling me, though - and thank Bhoy for me, too." She assured me that she would, and we headed up to our respective rooms.

The rest of the week was spent showing the four of them around Dagupan. Since I wanted to know what they'd be like when they were essentially alone in the Philippines, I didn't go along - it was just them and Marlyn, with Bhoy driving. I spent my time working on some of the designs for the new plant - I knew I was going to be busy enough with all the other things I'd be involved with, and wanted to take maximum advantage of every bit of time I could get. Marlyn would let me know how she thought they were doing - with the exception of Gus, who we'd both written off as a lost cause.

After a couple days, I got together with the lawyers, just to find out how things were going. They knew I didn't have any involvement with their work, so they just let me know that things were going well - that they thought they might be finished in another week. I thanked them, and they even let me buy them each a beer. \*A\* beer - they didn't want any more to drink than that while they were still working, not wanting to risk a hangover or anything else that would impair them.



It wasn't but a few days before Ted adopted to local conditions, and started wearing a Barong Tagalog. A couple days later, Mike and Jack had followed his example. Gus, on the other hand, stuck to the sports shirts he'd brought. The lawyers, of course, never varied from their three-piece suits.

There finally came the day that the lawyers told me that the next day would be the end of their part - they expected to sign all the necessary forms and documents to get things moving.

I broke the news to the others, and with Marlyn's help, we made arrangements to head home.

---

Kelly was there to meet me as we got off the plane; Bill had made separate arrangements for the others - all of them looking relieved to be back.

As we were waiting for my luggage, Kelly asked "So, what did you bring me?", with a grin.

I just looked at her and said "Me?"

She smiled brightly, and said "Great! \*Just\* what I wanted!" before planting a kiss on me that let me know - in no uncertain terms - what was waiting for me when we had some privacy. The other folks in the baggage claim just looked on in a mixture of amusement and jealousy.

As she drove us home, Kelly asked me "So what about Marlyn and Marilyn? When will they be here?"

"Anything from a couple months with luck, to six months or more. Depends on how cooperative our respective governments are about processing their paperwork."

She didn't look pleased at the answer, but let it go - she knew that there wasn't anything \*she\* could do about it.

As I'd expected, I got one \*helluva\* welcome when we got home. It \_almost\_ made me want to make the trip again. ALMOST.

---

Bill was grateful for the \_verbal\_ report I gave him about his people. My recommendation had been to send Ted for the job - he'd been the most interested and adaptable of the bunch. Bill was considerably less than impressed with Gus, telling me "I was kinda worried about sending him - he just hasn't done much to impress me with \_anything\_ he's done. Well, I guess I'll just start easing him out, then. Only reason I've

been keeping him around was to see if he'd pick up some with time, but I can see that isn't going to happen. Mike and Jack were long shots - not real go-getters, neither one. Both of them are hard workers, but not much in the way of initiative or imagination. I kinda figured Ted had the best shot, but wanted to make sure; the rest went along just to make sure they got their chance."

He was also appreciative of the letter he got from the orphanage, telling me "I called them, and they said it was you that suggested the letter. Yeah, I can use it to prove that it was a charitable contribution for taxes, but I wasn't worried about it, either way. I'm just glad they're going to put it to good use."

The next several weeks, I was busy as the proverbial one-armed paperhanger. Just over a couple months after my return, I got a call from Bill one day.

"Good news, Dan. Marlyn just called to let me know that she'd got her paperwork in hand. She's ready to come here as soon as we can get her on a plane. It seems that our lawyers there were able to get the government to issue her a new passport in close to record time. I kinda beat up on our Senator to nudge the State Department into doing the same at this end. She'll be here the end of next week - along with her niece."

"That IS good news, Bill. Thanks for moving things along, and covering the niece's fare, too."

"Glad to do it, Dan. You know I take care of my people, and this one's definitely a keeper. I'm not going to have her here worrying about the only family she's got left."

"Well, thanks again. I'll give her a call and see if there's anything she needs."

"Yeah, she said she wanted to talk to you. Well, I gotta get back at it. I'll talk to you later."

When he hung up, I immediately called the number Marlyn had given me in an email. She answered after only a couple of rings, and sounded pleased when she heard my voice.

"So, I hear you and Marilyn are getting ready for an adventure", I teased.

"Yes, we are, thanks to you. You were right, they \*have\* been making me work hard - and I love it!"

"Bill said that you wanted to talk to me?"

"Yes, I wanted to ask if you would be MY guide when I get there. I don't know what would be a good hotel, or anything like that."

"Marlyn, you are *\*not\** staying in a hotel. You and Marilyn are more than welcome to stay with me and Kelly. In fact, if you don't, BOTH of us are going to be in a lot of trouble!"

I heard her hesitate before she answered "Are you sure? It won't be a problem?"

"Only if you *\*don't\** stay with us. You know that Kelly loves Marilyn AND you, and I can promise you that you would be most welcome. We have a second bedroom with its own bathroom, so you will have as much privacy as you want - or you are welcome to spend as much time *\_with us\_* as you want, too. Kelly and I would both be happy to spend time with Marilyn while you're at work, and if Marilyn gets tired of us, we have plenty of female friends that would be delighted to spend time with her - all of them just fell in love with her when they saw her picture."

I could hear the relief in her voice when she told me "If you are sure that we won't be a bother. I was worried that we would have to stay someplace where she wouldn't have anything to do while I was working."

I laughed, and said "Marlyn, *\*that\** is something you don't have to worry about."

Reassured, Marlyn told me "Thank you, Dan - and Kelly, too. Marilyn is *\*so\** excited about this. And I was so happy when Bill told me that she could come with me before I could even *\*ask\** him first!"

"I told you, Bill is a good person to work for. You've been doing a good job for him, and he appreciates it. He takes good care of the people that work for him."

"He does! When he found out that I was living in Manila, he sent me some extra money, telling me that it was for relocation expenses, so I could move from Manila to Dagupan. It was enough that I found a place big enough for Marilyn and me while I try to find a house."

We spent a few more minutes talking about her trip and what she'd need here. I also got her promise that she would tell me what her flights were. She said that she would, and that ended the conversation.

---

Marlyn was surprised, and Marilyn delighted, to find Kelly and I waiting for them when they cleared customs in Los Angeles. Neither one hesitated to give Kelly or me a hug and kiss with their greeting. When we went to get our seat assignments for the last leg of the flight, Marilyn insisted that Kelly and I sit on either side of her, leaving Marlyn to sit on the other side of the aisle.

With the flight to and from L.A. being only a few hours, and plenty of time in between to rest, Kelly and I had decided to drive ourselves to the airport; so after we collected

Marlyn and Marilyn's luggage, it wasn't long to get them home and settled in. Talking with Marlyn, we'd added a single bed to the double that was already in the spare bedroom, so that Marilyn could have her own place to sleep - once we'd rearranged the furniture a little.

After we got their bags in the bedroom, they joined Kelly and me in the den to catch up on what was happening in the Philippines, and about the factory. Before they could start, though, I gave each of them one of the digital keys for the house, and showed them how the door would open for them when they put it in the matching receptacle. Both were amazed at that, so I had to go on to explain to them about the house, and Mabel (Machine Access By English Language), the home automation system I'd built into it. Marlyn mostly understood it; Marilyn seemed convinced that it was some kind of magic - particularly when she discovered that she could talk to the house and get lights to turn on and off.

Both of them readily agreed when I asked if they wanted to meet some of Kelly's and my friends the next evening. It hadn't been any problem getting Paul, his two boys, Jan, Sandra, Susan, Robyn, Bill, and my secretary Sarah and her husband Al all over for a cookout - all of them wanted to meet Marlyn and Marilyn.

It wasn't very late when Kelly and I saw both of them starting to yawn. Kelly suggested that to them that they should go ahead and go to bed - and to sleep late the next morning, if they wanted. After only a little hesitation, both decided that Kelly's idea was pretty good, and went back to try and recover from all their time in airplanes.

The next morning, Kelly and I were both up and moving around well before Marlyn and Marilyn found their way into the den. Kelly asked if they were hungry, and both admitted that food sounded pretty good. Kelly ran down the list of options, and both decided to give bagels and cream cheese a try - and loving it with their first bites. Marlyn joined us in having coffee while Marilyn was delighted to have orange juice. Marlyn looked a little perturbed at Marilyn's request for a third glass; I hastened to assure her that both of them were welcome to as much of anything in the house as they wanted. Marlyn looked a little doubtful, but I reminded her that things like orange juice were relatively cheap in the U.S. - and that it was good for Marilyn, anyway. She finally smiled and admitted that she'd forgotten how plentiful such things were in America.

The rest of the day, we pretty much just lazed around after showing Marlyn and Marilyn the rest of the house, and getting them both started on learning how to control Mabel.

Late that afternoon, people started showing up for the cookout. We'd asked all of them not to show up at the same time so as to not overwhelm Marlyn and Marilyn with too many new faces at once. They'd all understood, and agreed that the 'start' time was a vague suggestion, not something carved in stone.

The result was that Robyn and Susan showed up first - giving Kelly and I both their usual 'hello' hugs and kisses. The ones they gave Marlyn and Marilyn were considerably less

personal, but no less sincere - and both of them fell in love with Marilyn all over again on seeing her in person.

Twenty minutes or so later, Sarah and her husband arrived - surprising Marlyn and Marilyn both; Black people weren't that common in the Philippines (other than the indigenous Negritos, who generally lived in fairly primitive villages). But Sarah's gentle disposition soon won them over, as did Al's good humor (despite his rather large muscular frame). They were just as surprised that all the girls were apparently perfectly fine with the idea of giving him a kiss on the cheek and accepting a hug from him in greeting.

Next to show up was Sandra, whose greeting to Jan and I was a trifle less demonstrative than Robyn and Sandra's - as was her welcome to Marilyn and Marlyn.

She was soon followed by Paul and the boys, along with Jan. Paul absolutely flummoxed both of them by taking each of their hands to kiss.

Last was Bill, and his wife - both of them absolutely delighted to meet Marlyn and Marilyn after so long.

With everyone present, I got the grill fired up while Kelly got things ready to make a salad. Bill and his wife happily accepted the house rules for the cookout: it was strictly a self-serve operation. The informality of that surprised Marlyn, but she quickly got into the spirit of the thing. The whole deal was a first time for Marilyn, and she seemed willing to accept pretty much anything that happened - though she was initially a bit shy with everyone, it didn't take her long to get over it, and start having fun.

After perhaps an hour, Marlyn indicated that she wanted to talk to me a moment, away from the others. We moved to the kitchen, where she told me "All of Kelly's friends - Sandra, Susan, Robyn, and Jan, they all wanted to know if it was okay with me if they came over here to spend time with Marilyn, or took her to different places to show her the United States! They are being so nice to us!"

I smiled, and told her "Marlyn, they are my friends, too. But yes, they are being nice to you - that is the kind of people they are. I told you, they really do like you, and they all just love Marilyn, and want to spend time with her. She is like a little sister to them, even though they just met her."

"But why? I don't remember Americans being so friendly, when I was here before."

I just smiled again, and told her "Those girls are different than most Americans. You are my and Kelly's friend - so to them, you are THEIR friend, too. They know that Kelly and I both love and care about Marilyn, so they feel the same way about her."

She looked at me quizzically, and asked "Why is that?"

"That's because all of us have a \_special\_ kind of friendship. It is like being family, only closer. You'll see, I think."

Happy that Marilyn would have so many people to spend time with, and watch out for her, Marlyn didn't seem inclined to question her good fortune. Instead, she just accepted the answers I'd given her, and went back to where the others were.

A little while later, I watched as Marlyn listened to Jan, Susan, Robyn, and Sandra as they playfully argued over who got to spend how much time, and when, with Marilyn - all of them wanted to be first to spend ALL their time with her. The final decision was that Susan got to take her shopping, first. Then Robyn and Sandra would take her to a local amusement park for the day. Jan would round things up by taking her to our area's children's 'discovery' museum - where the kids were \*encouraged\* to play with the exhibits. Then all four of them were going to take her to a swimming pool for the day (I pitied any male lifeguards - the four of them in swimsuits would give a guy eyestrain, trying to watch the rest of the crowd AND them at the same time). At that point, Marlyn tried to talk them out of giving up so much of their time to be with her; they just looked at her as though she'd lost her mind. Then she made the mistake of trying to pay for some of the activities - and found out what the Goober look was. She came to me for help, and I just told her that if she managed to get her way about anything with any one of those four, she was doing better than I ever had.

By the time the evening was over, Marlyn and Marilyn seemed pretty comfortable with all of them - particularly Jan and the others. Paul and his boys were the last to leave; when they were gone, Marilyn came over to where Kelly and I were standing to give both of us a hug and thank us for finding her some friends in the United States. We both assured her that it had been our pleasure before she and Marlyn headed back to their room to get some more rest.

---

As Kelly and I headed for the kitchen to get some coffee the next morning, Saturday, we heard giggling coming from the den. We looked at each other, and said "Cartoons!" knowing that it could only be Marilyn in there. When we joined her, we found that she'd discovered a channel that featured older cartoons on Saturday mornings, and was in near-hysterics at some old Tom and Jerry. Keeping her company was Cat, who was lying on her lap and purring loudly as Marilyn continued to pet her, even during bouts of giggles. Cat had taken to Marilyn on first meeting: Cat liked laps and being petted; Marilyn had a lap, and would pet Cat as long as Cat was in it. Perfect match.

All of us were surprised when Mabel announced a visitor about mid-afternoon. I told Mabel to show us who it was; when Kelly and I saw that it was Bishop Ferguson, we just grinned at each other before Kelly went to let him in. All four of us had been in the den, reading while trying to listen to music over Cat's purring (Marilyn would even rub Cat's ears while reading). When Kelly brought the Bishop in, Marlyn and Marilyn were both quick to put away what they'd been reading to meet him - then stunned when Kelly told

them who he was. She showed him a seat and asked if he'd like anything - he said that as warm as it was outside, a beer sounded pretty good. Kelly looked at me, and I nodded that it sounded pretty good to me, too. She went into the kitchen, and then came out a couple minutes later with two beers and sodas for the rest of them. After taking a swallow of his beer, the Bishop told them that he just wanted to stop by and meet them - particularly Marilyn, who was embarrassed to be the focus of such high-powered attention. He told them about the charity drives that the diocese had started, and whose idea it had been - getting me looks of awed appreciation from both of them. He went on to tell them that they were both welcome to attend any Mass or other services that they wanted - and that if they needed a ride to get to the church, he would make sure they had it. Both were almost overwhelmed that a Bishop would take such steps to help them, and thanked him profusely. He waved it off, telling them that it was his pleasure. He went on to ask both of them if they would have any objections if he made mention of the fact that Marilyn was one of the children from the orphanages, so that the membership could see what kind of people they were helping. Marilyn was embarrassed at the idea - not because of having been in the orphanage, but simply because of the attention; but both of them agreed, if he thought it would help. He assured them it would.

With a mischievous twinkle in his eye, Bishop Ferguson turned to me and asked "Dan, have you told them how we came to know each other?"

Kelly grinned to see me on the spot, knowing what was coming. I just told him "No, it didn't seem pertinent, really."

He laughed, and said "I'll bet" before turning back to start telling them about how I'd threatened to sue the Church. I got the appropriate dirty looks at the right points in the story, while Marlyn and Marilyn looked at Kelly in something akin to awe to learn she'd been Valedictorian of her class. As he got to the end of the story, and how I'd gone on to help the Church, I was granted provisional forgiveness. By the time he finished, they'd apparently upgraded me to full absolution, judging by the expressions on their faces - I could see on Marlyn's that she understood that I had actually helped the Bishop, despite the rough start to our obvious friendliness. That he could tell it the way he did, joking during the story, did a lot to help.

He chatted with them for a little while longer, telling them when different Masses were held, asking them questions about the Philippines and the orphanage, and so on. It didn't take him long to get both of them relaxed at being in his presence.

When he'd finished his beer, the Bishop got up in preparation to leave. Marlyn looked at him and asked "Your Grace?"

He looked at her, and in response to her unspoken question, nodded. She and Marilyn both quickly moved to kneel on the floor, where he made the Sign of the Cross over them, and spoke a blessing for them. Both looked very happy with what he'd done when they stood up again.

I got up to show him out, and when I returned, both of them were in animated conversation with Kelly who was explaining to them that neither she nor I were actually Catholic - that we'd come to know the Bishop only by way of her attendance at a Catholic school. That seemed to amaze them even more than the simple fact that we knew him.

Sunday morning, Marlyn and Marilyn were both surprised and overwhelmed when it was Bishop Ferguson that came to give them a ride to Mass. He assured them that it wasn't a problem, and that he just wanted to be sure they knew they were welcome to attend any one of the churches in the area. Marilyn was embarrassed by all the attention she received, but stuck it out for the sake of the other children still in the orphanages. They were a little late getting home because so many of the membership wanted to welcome them to the U.S., and chat with them - by the time they made their escape, neither one doubted that they were welcome guests.

Monday morning, we started a pattern that was to last the rest of Marlyn's visit: I took her to my client's office, and one of the employees would bring her home at the end of the day. In between, any one of the eligible young men in the company was more than happy to take her to lunch, or even bring something back for her if she was busy - as she often was. The person she went out with for lunch the most was Ted; with the two of them going to be working together in the Philippines, it made perfect sense.

At home, any one of Kelly, I, Jan, Susan, Sandra, or Robyn would spend at least a few hours a day with Marilyn. Her particular favorites were the other four, but she was perfectly happy with the time and attention that Kelly and I showed her, as well. I got her started on one of my computers, showing her the Internet and all the things she could do on it. Between that, all the books Kelly and I had, our stereo system, and cable TV, she didn't mind spending a little time by herself, either. Her favorite thing, though, seemed to be reading - particularly with Cat on her lap. When Jan found out about that, she took Marilyn book shopping - coming home with about fifty pounds of assorted books that Marilyn had chosen. To everyone's surprise, they covered everything from trashy romance novels to literature to science; there didn't seem to be anything Marilyn DIDN'T have an interest in. Marlyn worried about all the books; she didn't want to have to tell Marilyn she had to leave them behind, but couldn't see how to get them back to the Philippines. I did some checking on the Net, and found a relatively local place that handled what were called balikbayan boxes - essentially, the customer could fill the box with whatever they wanted, and the box would be sent along with a lot of other balikbayan boxes to make up a bulk shipment that would travel by surface freighter. As long as the box didn't contain anything perishable, it seemed to be a pretty good system. Using the boxes, Marlyn was able to send all the books when Marilyn finished them - as well as a number of other things that she knew would be difficult or expensive to get in the Philippines.

After they had been with us couple of weeks, Kelly took a call one evening from Candice. She was calling to let us know that she'd handled the assignments her editor had given her, and was on her way home - and wanting to know if she could spend a couple nights with us a week later. Of course, Kelly assured her she was more than welcome; but



that introduced a different problem: when Marlyn heard that we were having another overnight guest, she was ready to double up on the sleeping arrangements, sharing her bed with Marilyn so that Candice would have a place to sleep. Kelly and I talked it over, and finally settled on letting Kelly tell Marlyn what the situation was - and if Marlyn wanted, explaining it to Marilyn, as well. I was just as glad that it was a conversation that \*I\* wasn't going to have to be a part of.

Kelly made arrangements for Jan and Sandra to take Marilyn out for a movie, so that she would have both the time and opportunity to have her talk with Marlyn.

I stayed in the den while Marlyn and Kelly had their talk - which lasted well over an hour. When it was over, I saw Marlyn give me a Look as she headed back to her bedroom, while Kelly rejoined me in the den.

"So, how did it go?" I asked.

Kelly made a face, and answered "Better than it could have, I suppose. She's not real happy about the idea of Candice sharing our bed - she didn't say it, but I just got the impression she doesn't think as much of us, now. Once I got started, there really wasn't any way around telling her that it wasn't just you, but ME and Candice, Sandra, Jan, Susan, and Robyn, too. Of course, she was worried about Marilyn - again, she didn't come out and say it, but I think she's worried that one of us is going to 'do' something to her. I could almost \*see\* her thinking it, and I tried to reassure her about it without actually having to talk about it; she's really uncomfortable about the idea of two women together. She wasn't as bad about you being with Candice, for some reason."

I sighed, and told her "It's something in their culture - it's not uncommon for a married man to have a mistress. That idea is something she's familiar with, so even though she doesn't much like it, she can understand it after a fashion. Two women, that's something else - even though male homosexuality over there is pretty much accepted. Shucks, there are even annual 'bakla' - or Benny Boy, as we called them in the Navy - parades. They draw pretty good crowd, too!"

Kelly tried to smile at that, but her heart wasn't in it at the moment. After a moment, she went on to tell me "Anyway, she knows why she and Marilyn won't have to double-up in her bed. I also told her that she was welcome to talk to you, or any one of the others about it, too. She's going to think about it, and let me know if she wants my help explaining it to Marilyn before Candice gets here."

I could only nod, and reply "You did what you could. I love both of them, but not at the expense of losing our love and friendship with the others. If it gets to be a problem, or she decides she isn't comfortable here, then we can find her another place to stay - and hope that we don't lose the friendship. She's a trained nurse, so I know she's got intelligence - we can only hope that her innate good sense kicks in before things get too bad for her. All we can really do is treat her as we always have - with respect and affection."

Kelly released her own sigh before telling me "Well, I suppose I'd better call Candice and let her know that the reception she gets from Marlyn might be a little on the cool side."

"That's probably a good idea - I'm sure she'd appreciate the warning." I answered.

That finally managed to get a smile out of Kelly before she went to make the call.

When Jan and Sandra brought Marilyn back, I could see that they were surprised at the reaction they got from Marlyn - but both played it cool and didn't indicate that they noticed anything out of the ordinary. When Marlyn took Marilyn back to the bedroom, Kelly and I explained to them about Candice's upcoming visit, and the talk that Kelly had had with Marlyn. Both immediately understood the problem, and assured us that they would continue treating both as they always had - and that they'd get the word to Robyn and Susan about the situation, as well.

---

It was a couple days later that Paul invited all of us - Marlyn and Marilyn included - over to his place for grilled steaks. Marlyn had maintained appearances with Kelly and me when Marilyn was around, but both of us could tell that she was still troubled about our relationships with the other girls. But she'd developed a liking for, and trust in, Paul; and didn't hesitate to go with us.

After we'd been there an hour or so, Paul pulled me off to the side to ask "What's up with Marlyn? She talks to you and Kelly okay, but I can see that it's kind of a strain on her."

I told him about Candice coming to visit, and Marlyn's reaction to Kelly's explanation of our relationship. He asked if I needed or wanted any help with the matter, and I just told him "If you think you can add something, go ahead."

A bit later, supper was ready, and we all sat down to eat. As was tradition at Paul's place, we held hands as he said a prayer before the meal. Out of respect for his beliefs, Kelly and I always bowed our heads, too, while he spoke.

Paul had gently guided Marlyn to sit next to him, and while the rest of us were chatting among ourselves, I heard him quietly tell her "You know, Marlyn, Dan is a good friend of mine. We've been friends for nearly twenty years now, and he has always been there when I needed his help - whether it was with something simple like my computer, or harder like watching out for my kids when I had to travel. I know Dan, and I trust him - he's shown me that he has more good sense and more honesty and integrity than any three other people that I know. I don't agree with all of Dan's ideas and such - but more than anything else, I *\*respect\** him. I know that he would never willingly hurt another person, unless it was to protect someone else. When Jan was having a sleepover with some of her friends one time, he stood right here in this back yard and *\*fought\** to protect one of those girls from an old boyfriend. Sent the boyfriend and his two helpers to the hospital doing it - then went over to the girls to comfort THEM. Jan doesn't go to church

much, any more, except to join me and the boys on special occasions. I'm sad to see her like that; but I'm even MORE happy that she has friends like Kelly and Dan and all the others. I know that they're more than just 'friends' - that they're lovers, too, and I'm okay with that because I love Jan; and know that she's a better person for having them as friends - and even lovers. I'll bet you didn't know that it was Jan that told me, right here on this patio, that she wanted to give DAN her virginity. But \*Dan\* didn't want any part of it - he tried to find ways to keep it from happening. As much as it bothered me to know that my own daughter wanted to lose her virginity, I loved HER more. And I knew that Dan was the only one I knew and trusted enough to make it as easy and painless and loving as I wanted it to be for her. I trusted him enough, and loved her enough, that \*I\* told \_him\_ it was okay with me.

She looked surprised at all of that, and Paul went on.

"Marlyn, you know I'm Catholic. As much as the Church teaches us about sin and all that, this was one thing that I had to disagree with them on. I LOVE my daughter, and I don't think that a man and woman making LOVE is a bad thing. That was something that I've taught Jan and my boys. I wasn't happy about what she wanted to do, and I tried everything I could think of to convince her not to - but when everything else was said and done, there was ONE thing that I \*knew\*: that I could trust her with Dan - that he'd be as gentle and caring as I'd want for her. I know that she still goes over there sometimes, and the two of them make love - and that she makes love with Kelly, too. The Church teaches us that things like that are a sin - but honestly, I have a hard time with that. I see what a good person Jan is, and how happy and everything else she is. I just can't see how it can be a \_sin\_ for two people to show love and affection for each other, whether they're the same sex, or not.

"I told you that I didn't agree with all of the things that Dan does and believes. Jan has tried to explain it to me at different times, but I guess I'm just too old, or been a Catholic for too long. But one thing that I \*do\* like about his ideas is what they do to people. I used to worry about Jan - that the bad things in the world would hurt her, or that she just wasn't strong enough. But since she's been with Dan, I've quit worrying - I've SEEN what kind of person she has turned out to be, and I'm proud of her. And I'm just as proud and impressed with all the other girls that Dan and Kelly and Jan have as friends - I've know them since they were in high school, and I've SEEN what good people they've turned out to be. Just look at what they've done with their lives: Jan is teaching kids at the same school she graduated from; Robyn graduated with a Criminal Science degree, and is a police officer, \*helping\* women and children that have come from abusive husbands and fathers and families; Susan is a \_lawyer\_, helping some of the same families that Robyn does. Sandra is about to graduate as a psychologist, a \*doctor\*, and she plans to specialize in helping kids with problems; Candice has a Journalism degree and works for a newspaper, helping keep our politicians honest.

"Marlyn, \*every\* \*last\* \*one\* of these young girls that I knew has gone on to college, and graduated to work in an honorable profession. I don't think it's a coincidence that this all happened AFTER they became involved with Dan. So if they want to keep making

love with him, or with each other, I'm not going to worry about it - for all of the good work they do out here with the rest of us, I can't fault them for any pleasure they find with each other in private."

From the corner of my eye, I could see that his little spiel had given Marlyn something to think about. But having said his piece, Paul didn't belabor the point; the next thing he started talking to her about was how things were going with her job, and what her plans were when she got back to the Philippines.

---

By the time Candice arrived, Marlyn seemed to have come to grips with the 'closeness' of the relationships between all of us. She even seemed to accept that the relationships the girls had with each other wasn't something she had to worry about affecting Marilyn, and was soon again welcoming their time with her.

The first meeting between Candice and Marlyn could easily have turned into a fiasco - but Candice's warmth and openness quickly dissolved any residual fears or concerns Marlyn had about accepting her friendship.

The first evening, it was just the four of us: Robyn and Susan had invited Marilyn to spend the night with them, a kind of 'sleepover', to which Marlyn had agreed. They'd come to collect Marilyn a couple hours after Candice's arrival, so that Marilyn would have a chance to meet her before leaving. Marlyn had initially been nervous about Marilyn being around Robyn's pistol - until she'd learned that Robyn was even more concerned about it, and kept the weapon inside a locked case when Marilyn was present, with the sole key to the lock being on a chain around Robyn's neck.

When Candice yawned as a result of the time zones she'd been through, Kelly and I urged her to go ahead and go to bed. She initially declined, but after doing it again a couple minutes later, grinned and said that she thought she'd better take our advice.

Kelly went with her, leaving Marlyn and I alone in the den. Marlyn and I watched them heading down the hall, and saw when Kelly reached down to put her hand on Candice's butt - and when Candice respond in kind.

Marlyn looked at me in curiosity, and asked "You don't mind?"

"Not at all." I told her, before continuing "I love both of them. If that makes them happy, then I am happy FOR them - the same way that each of them is happy when I am with the other one."

"How can you love both of them? You are married to Kelly."

"If you were married, would you love ONLY your husband or ONLY Marilyn?"

She shook her head, and I went on "I can love both of them because I care about both of them. If I was married to Candice, and it was Kelly that was visiting, it would still be the same."

Intrigued despite herself, Marlyn asked me "Why?"

"Because they are both good people. They are both smart, they both have good hearts, and they are both honest and sincere. The same with Jan and Susan and Sandra and Robyn."

"But they are all also very pretty."

"Then that is my good luck - but not the reason that I love them. What matters to me is what is in their hearts and minds, and even their spirit - their soul, if you like. All of them will get old and wrinkled - but I will still love them for what is inside."

"But what they do..."

"What they do is bring each other pleasure and happiness and joy. Why should it be wrong to do that for someone close to your heart?"

"But the Church says it is a sin."

"You know that we are not Catholic, so we do not worry about what the Church says. Besides, hasn't the Church said other things that aren't always true?"

I could see that she had to mull that one over, and got up to make my own way to bed - leaving her there, deep in thought.

---

I managed to get up and moving the next morning solely through the necessity of getting Marlyn to work. Kelly had played a secondary role to the activity between Candice and me; I knew that she and Candice would have their own time together after Marlyn and I were gone.

Kelly got to the office around mid-morning, and after giving me a kiss and whispered "thank you", went to work. The nature of what I was doing meant that Kelly and I had to stay pretty close to the same point in our respective tasks. I left the office about an hour early that afternoon, while Kelly said that she'd stay a little longer to get caught up. We shared a kiss before I headed home - where I was surprised to find Marlyn sitting in the den, and no sign of Candice.

Marlyn smiled at the expression on my face, and told me "There was a small problem on the production floor. It was going to take a little while to straighten up, and there wasn't anything I could do to help, so Bill told me I could go ahead and go home if I wanted. I

didn't want to bother you or Kelly, so I called here, and Candice said that she would get me a ride home. I was very surprised when Robyn stopped at the factory in her police car to give me a ride! It was the first time I have ever been in a police car, and I didn't know before how much happens while she is working, and all the things that she has to do. On the way here, she told me that if I wanted, I was welcome to ride with her while she is working some time - she says that they do that all the time."

After a small grin, she told me "I think I would like that. The police here are much different than in the Philippines, and I would like to see how it is here, and what she does."

I told her "I think that you would like it, too. I can promise you, it will be a lot different than anything else you have done before!"

She laughed at that before seeming to remember something. She sobered again, and said "Dan, I would like to talk to you."

I replied "Of course", and took a seat at the opposite end of the couch from her.

She sat there thinking for a few moments, then looked at me before saying "When I got here, Candice was still here - and we had a chance to really \*talk\* to each other. She told me how all of them met you, and how they tried to tease you and make you a little crazy the first time all of them were together with you, at Paul's house. And she told me how you behaved toward them - that you were polite and friendly, and that you never did anything to make them uncomfortable. She told me about Kelly's family, and how you were the one that helped her so much and made her so happy.

"Then she told me how all of them were so unsure and afraid about themselves, physically. It was something that I could understand; when I was growing up, before I went to school to be a nurse, I was worried about things like that, too. She told how Kelly and Jan had a kind of party for all of them - and how you and Kelly and Jan explained things to them, and helped them feel better about themselves. I didn't like that at first, but she made me understand that it was all Kelly and Jan's idea - that you were there ONLY because \*all\* of them wanted you to be, and that you were always careful not to say or do anything to any of them. The thought of that was very surprising to me, and bothered me a little; even though I knew you were so careful with them, I still didn't like it that all of you were naked at the same time. But then I thought about it like a nurse, and I understood that you had done a good thing: by helping them with their fear, you were giving them knowledge - and strength. While I was learning to be a nurse, and after I got here to work in the hospital, I saw too many young girls that had problems because of their ignorance about themselves, and boys.

"When I understood that, I knew, a little, what you meant about loving them the way you do - that you would only do something like that with them and for them if you really \*cared\* about them."

I nodded, and she went on "Then Candice told me that you made love with all of them, except Susan. I was upset again, but Candice told me that making love with you was THEIR idea - and that you didn't want to make love with ANY of them until they could prove to you that they were adult in their hearts and minds; that even then, you were willing to only do as much as each of them wanted. She told me how both of you were naked while she was on your lap, and that all you did was to put your arms around her and hold her before the two of you were physical with each other - she told me that that was the first time in her entire life that she felt so happy and \*loved\* by someone. She said that even when she was on your lap like that, she knew that she could trust you because all you did was to hold her - except for the kiss you gave her on the shoulder. She explained that when you gave her that kiss, she KNEW that you were willing to be with her like that because you cared about her for what was in her heart and mind, not her body; and she knew that she loved you, too, for the same things.

"She said that after you kissed her like that, the two of you talked a little bit - and she told me a little bit about how she realized what kind of person you are, and understood why you do the things that you do. She told me that before she understood that, that you were willing to just help her learn about physical pleasure, without actually being inside her. I had trouble believing that, but she helped me to know how you could do that. I was still surprised when she told me that after she understood you, it made her \*want\* to make love with you - that she \*wanted\* you to be with her like that. Then she said that she was so happy when she was with you - she wasn't afraid to let you see her naked, and let you look at her that way; and that she wasn't afraid to look at you like that, too.

Again, I just nodded for her to continue, which she did: "She finally told me how kind and gentle and patient you were - and how you had HER be the one to be in charge of how you were inside her the first time, and how very happy you made her."

She took a breath, and went on "That was when Sandra came, and Candice let her in. Candice told her what we had been talking about, and Sandra told me the same things that Candice had. She was very specific that when you were with them, you did not take their virginity; she said that it was each of them that GAVE it to you - but only after you were certain that they understood the choice they were making. Sandra tried to tell me about how you talked to her, and how she realized that you were someone that she wanted to be like, but I couldn't understand very much about it. But she told me about how she bled a little bit after you were inside her - and that you were so concerned about her that you were still willing to stop, even then, if she was in pain. She said that she had to convince YOU that it was okay to go on. That is \*not\* the kind of thing that I am used to hearing about! I have heard too many other women, in the Philippines and here, talk about their first time; almost none of them said that the man was as gentle and caring as you were with her."

She finished by saying "After they left, I really thought about what they told me - and what you said to me last night. I remembered how all of them look at you and Kelly, and how you look at them. I can see that what is important to all of you is what is in your hearts, and what kind of people you are - and that you really do LOVE each other. I

understand that what you do with each other is done from love, not lust, and I can accept that. I don't know that I could ever do it, but I will not think badly about you because of it. If Marilyn asks me why there are three of you in a bed, or why the girls kiss each other so much, I will only tell her that you are sharing your love with each other. If she wants to know more, I will tell her that it is for you to choose how to share your love, not us."

"And if she says something about the Church?" I asked.

"Then I will say that you are not Catholic, and that you don't think it is wrong. She has met enough people that don't belong to the Church that she can understand that, I think."

I responded by telling her "Thank you, Marlyn. Kelly and I - and all the rest - care about you and Marilyn very much, and we don't want to lose our friendship with you. I think you will see that what we share with each other IS love - perhaps more love that you thought people could have for each other. It doesn't matter if you think you could ever do anything like we do - none of us would *\*ever\** say or do anything to make you think we wanted you to do something you didn't want to do. If it happens that you decide you are willing to share our love, then you are welcome to join us as much or as little as you are comfortable with; it is not our way to push other people to do things they don't want to do, or are unhappy with."

Marlyn smiled at that, and said "I know that. I thought about the way that I have seen all of you kiss each other - but when you kiss me, or anyone else, it isn't so much."

About that time, Candice and Sandra came back - and a few minutes later, Robyn (still in uniform) and Susan showed up with a very happy, very excited Marilyn - who promptly started telling Marlyn about all the fun they'd had the night before. While the two of them were talking, the girls and I went into the kitchen for a few moments to get something to drink - and while we were there, I briefly told them about the conversation I'd just had with Marlyn. All of them seemed happy and relieved to know that she'd accepted our relationship.

When we got back to the den - with drinks for Marilyn and Marlyn, too - I could see as Marlyn looked at each of them in such a way as to let them know that what I'd told them was true. Each of them gave her a small nod, and smile of thanks.

While Marlyn listened to Marilyn's detailed account of the previous evening, I saw the others go into what I called one of their huddles: while not obviously excluding anyone, someone that knew them could see that they were hatching something. After some whispering and head nodding, it broke up - I knew that whatever it was they were planning, they weren't ready to put it into play yet. I only hoped that it didn't have anything to do with me - anyone else was going to have to watch out for themselves.

After a little time, Robyn and Susan said their goodbyes - and were as amazed as I was when Marlyn dared to wish them farewell with a kiss on the lips. Granted, it was very chaste, but the change from kissing their cheeks was still surprising.



When Marilyn finally ran down, and headed to the bedroom to put her things away, Candice and Sandra asked her if she and Marilyn wanted to go shopping with them the next day, Saturday - Candice had decided that she could stay for the weekend, and wanted to spend more time with all of them. Marlyn looked hesitant, but they didn't have much trouble getting her to agree - particularly when they said that they thought Jan and Kelly would be going, too, making it a "Lady's Afternoon Out" as Sandra put it. When I heard that, I got my first hint of who their plan was directed at - but couldn't quite figure out what it *\*was\**.

When they'd gotten the time set up, Sandra said her goodbyes - getting her own kiss back from Marlyn, and another on the cheek from Marilyn who showed up just in time. Marilyn busied herself with cleaning up the den; on her own insistence, she'd taken charge of light cleaning - which included cleaning out Cat's litter box. Candice took the opportunity to sit on the couch next to me before pulling my arm around her waist. Marlyn didn't bat an eye, other than to move to a chair so that Candice and I would have room to stretch out a little bit. Marilyn didn't seem to notice or care. Kelly was her Tita Kelly, I was her Tito Dan; she seemed to think that anything either of us did was just fine - with the possible exception of human sacrifice.

We were still like that, watching TV, when Kelly came home an hour later - giving me a raised eyebrow when she saw Candice with my arm around her, and Marlyn sitting across from us while Marilyn lay on the floor. When she came over to kiss us, I whispered to her "later". Candice and I watched in amused anticipation when Kelly went over to kiss Marlyn, too - and her surprised reaction to what Marlyn had in store for her.

Later that night, Candice and I explained to Kelly about the discussions she'd had with Candice and Susan, and then me. Kelly was obviously pleased by the change in Marlyn, and had a smile on her face as the three of us settled into bed.

The next morning, I woke up to find myself spooning with Candice - who was spooning with Kelly. From the bathroom, I made my way into the kitchen to get the coffee started, then on into the den with the morning paper. Late, when everyone was awake, it was pancakes for everyone (Marilyn's favorite) - followed by a morning of cartoons. Marlyn tried to object that we were spoiling her, but quieted down when I softly pointed out that she'd have to do without all of it, soon enough.

The three of them were dressed and ready when the others showed up at 1:00 for their afternoon together. I was still in my robe, and got discretely groped a couple of times as they said their goodbyes before leaving.

After an afternoon of reading and listening to classical music, I was ready when they got home in early evening.

It was when I saw the bags they were carrying that I realized that Marlyn and Marilyn had merely been targets of opportunity for their plans - *\*I\** was apparently the ultimate goal. I didn't doubt that it was going to be an interesting evening when virtually

everything in their hands carried a logo with a common theme: Victoria's Secret, Lingerie by Linda, Boudoir Essentials, and so on.

Kelly distributed her packages to the others and came over to where I was sitting in my favorite chair. The others - except for Marlyn and Marilyn - just giggled as they trooped back toward the bedrooms. Planting herself in my lap, Kelly told me "We had a *\*really\** nice time this afternoon. We all had a really nice talk with Marlyn, and she really is fine about all of us - and even you. So we celebrated with some shopping, and we're going to show you what we bought."

I gave her the fisheye, and she laughed before I told her "From the logos on those bags, I've got a pretty good idea what you bought."

She just grinned, and said "Yeah, but we still want you to see it. On us."

"And Marlyn is okay with this?"

"Well, she was a little nervous at first, but we reminded her what a gentleman you are, and she decided that she wanted to do it, too. I think it's her way of saying thank you for being so patient with her about all this. And even Marilyn is joining in. Of course, they didn't have any stuff like ours in her sizes, but we went to some department stores and found some *\*really\** cute stuff for her."

At my raised eyebrow, Kelly told me "Really, she wants to. I don't think you understand how much she loves you - it's like she almost worships you, and she's SO happy when you compliment her about something. You're the only real guy in her life that's been nice to her. Marlyn understands that, and she knows you'd never *\*do\** anything with Marilyn, so she's fine with it. So just sit back and enjoy the show!"

There wasn't anything else for me to do but tell her "Just remember: if I have a heart attack, YOU have to explain to the coroner how it happened!"

Kelly just laughed and gave me a kiss before joining the others in whichever bedroom they were in.

I went in to get myself a beer, and had barely settled back into my seat when the bunch of them flowed into the living room.

The rest of them had remembered the advice I'd given them about selecting things for themselves from the first 'fashion show' they'd given me - and apparently relayed it to Marlyn, and even Marilyn.

Candice, Jan, Susan, Sandra, Kelly, and Robyn were wearing an assortment of teddies, bustiers, camisoles, negligees, panties, thongs, g-strings, and anything else they could find - and between the six of them, the stuff couldn't have weighed more than a couple of ounces. If beauty, sexiness, and pure desirability had been the only criteria, I couldn't

have picked just one of them if my life had depended on it. Marlyn's outfit was somewhat tamer - but not a lot. It was clear that she had small, dark nipples capping her firm breasts; below, the small dark smudge of her pubis was obvious. When she saw me looking at her, she blushed - but didn't turn away or try to conceal herself. She visibly relaxed when she saw me smile my appreciation of her physical charms. Marilyn was shyly waiting her own turn for my perusal - happily sporting a soft, thin cotton outfit that made it clear she was female: it fit snugly enough that I could make out the shape and color of her nipples where they distorted the fabric of her bra. Her panties were molded to the shape of her mons, hinting at the cleft behind them. With more and better food available to her, I could see that Marilyn had added a couple of necessary pounds to her frame, softening its gentle curves. Both of them were delighted when I said "Dalawang maganda Filipinas!" (Two beautiful Filipinas)

With what could only be the first of several rounds over, each of them stopped to give me a kiss before heading back to the bedroom - and getting a pat on the fanny in return. When Marilyn kissed me on the cheek, I kept my hands to myself, only to see a look of mild disappointment on her face as she left. Marlyn's reaction was the same, if less obvious, when I showed similar restraint with her.

Several minutes later, they came in to show off their next set of outfits. Kelly paused by me long enough to whisper "they're feeling left out" - then putting her hand on one of her ass cheeks as she walked away. It took me a second before I realized: not only Marlyn, but Marilyn, would welcome a pat on the butt from me. I gave Kelly a discrete nod, and she smiled back before I looked them over again.

All of them had changed into different outfits, of course - but the net effect was the same. The others were as beautiful and sexy to me as they always were; but it was Marlyn - and even Marilyn - that truly caught my eye.

Proudly sporting a camisole that did precious little to hide what was under it, Marlyn was a vision. Her nipples were clearly erect, the filmy material of her top revealing just how firmly her breasts stood out on her chest. Below it, her panties were cut high on her legs - pulling the thin material of them tight against her pelvis. I could barely make out the sparse patch of her small pubic triangle, but not the cleft I knew was underneath.

Marilyn was smiling as she showed me the bikini swimsuit she'd gotten. The halter couldn't hide the swelling of her developing breasts, or the places where her nipples dented the fabric. The bottoms barely covered the mound between her thighs, and served only to accentuate the round firmness of her ass.

I mimed applauding all of them, a big smile on my face, before they made their way back to the bedrooms again. This time, each one of them got a pat on the butt when they kissed me - Marilyn started, but looked delighted; Marlyn didn't respond physically, but I could see the pleased smile on her face as she left.

It was the third (and last) round of the evening that really got my attention.

Kelly and the others had gotten themselves outfits that seemed to consist primarily of dreams held together with cobwebs - I didn't doubt that even a blind person would know that they were female, and willing. I could see in their eyes that all six of them understood when it was Marlyn and Marilyn that drew my attention.

The teddy she was wearing did nothing to hide the treasures it covered - her dark nipples were almost achingly erect on her breasts, which stood proudly out from her smooth, blemish-free body. Below it, the matching g-string revealed just how sparse her pubic hair was - I could easily see the cleft of her womanhood; and unless I was mistaken, even the edges of her vaginal lips and hood of her clitoris.

Marilyn looked familiar, for some reason - then I realized that she was wearing a smaller version of the panty and bra set that Jan had once modeled for me: the material was the approximate color of smoke, and little more dense than air - all held together with something that looked more like dental floss than anything else. The panties were barely large enough to cover her mons - and did nothing to prevent me from seeing the few faint wisps of hair growing there as her body made the transition from child to woman. Above, the size and shape of her developing bust was proudly on display - I could see from the way her small dark nipples stuck out that Marilyn was starting to have her own 'feelings'.

I thanked each of them with my eyes, then smiled and bowed my head in appreciation for their beauty. All of them smiled their pleased delight before starting back to the bedroom. Again, each kissed me; but this time, I took the time to return the kiss with a loving caress of their butts - even for Marilyn, who seemed particularly happy at my touch.

The last ones were Kelly and Marlyn; Kelly told me "I think Marlyn has something she wants to say to you" - then casually guided a hesitant Marlyn onto my lap before collecting her own kiss and caress, then disappearing toward the bedrooms.

I carefully kept my hands on the arms of the chair - I could see that Marlyn was nervous to be on my lap that way; particularly when she could obviously feel my involuntary reaction to the sight they'd all presented me.

But when I made no moves - other than to take a swallow of my beer - she gradually relaxed; then went on to move herself into a more comfortable position.

Even after she was comfortable on my lap, she sat there for several seconds, just watching me. She finally realized that I wasn't going to touch her in any way, and that I was willing to sit there patiently for as long as it took; when that happened, I saw her surprisingly shy smile as she took my hands to hold them in her own. I gave them a gentle squeeze of reassurance, but did nothing more - and that, more than anything else, seemed to convince her of my benign intentions.

Taking a breath, she finally started speaking to me, saying "Thank you, Dan."

"You're welcome. But what for?"

"For just being you, I think."

Seeing my slightly perplexed look, she went on "When we first met, there in Manila, I thought that you might just be another American businessman, coming to the Philippines to take advantage of our poverty, and perhaps our women. But you showed me, in many different ways, that you aren't like that. Even when I made mistakes and thought badly about you, you did not get angry with me - you only showed me how I was wrong, and then forgave me. Even more, you went out of your way to help me - not just by going to San Fernando, but by doing all the things you have for the orphanages there, and particularly for Marilyn. After you gave all those things to the orphanage, I would have slept with you if you had asked me to, to show you my gratitude for all you did. But all you did was to continue treating me with courtesy and respect - the same as Kelly did the entire time we were together. That is a very rare thing for visitors to my country to do - particularly men, and even more, those who were there while in the military."

I started to speak, but she released my hand to put her finger on my lips to silence me as she went on "Then you came back, not just to help my people with the factory and jobs, but to help ME by offering me this job - and doing it again with courtesy and respect; and even more, your friendliness and concern. You have been a much better friend to me than anyone else that I can think of; even my Filipino friends.

"When I learned that Candice would be sleeping in your bed with you and Kelly, I was very much bothered by that. But you did not get upset or angry with me. You just let me find my own way, by talking to Paul and the Bishop, and all the others. Even when we talked that night, you did not tell me what to do - you only told me what YOU thought, and asked me questions that made me think.

She took my hand in hers again, then said "Tonight, I wanted to show you my gratitude for all that you and Kelly have done - not just for me, but for Marilyn, and the other children in the orphanages, and even the people you will hire for your factory. But I also wanted to learn something. I wanted to learn if what Candice and Sandra and the others told me was true. And I found out that it is - that you are not the kind of person to take advantage of others, or to try to make them do things for you. Just now, when I sat your lap, I could feel you under me; I know that you felt physical desire from looking at us. But you didn't say or do anything with me - you just waited until I was comfortable. From what you said, and the way you looked at us, I know that you think Marilyn and I are pretty; but you were still nice - even when you touched us on the bottom. It made me understand that you thought I was pretty, and that you were doing that to tell me - but that was ALL you were doing.

"Marilyn is very much in love with you. I think that it would be very easy for you to do what you wanted to with her. But I know that it is good for her to trust you, that you wouldn't do anything like that. And I know that \*I\* can trust you, too. For a Filipina, I am too old to be unmarried - but it makes me feel good inside to know that someone still thinks that I am pretty, and maybe even make love with me if you wanted."

She let me pull my hands from hers, and I held her face in my hands as I told her "Thank you for your trust - your trust in me, and that you trust Marilyn WITH me, and the others. Yes, I find you pretty. But like I told you before, what matters to me is what you are like in your heart and soul - and it is the things THERE that I find most pretty about you. No, I will not do anything with Marilyn. Even if she comes to me about something like that, I will not let it happen - I know that she is still young, and has too much to learn about the world before she is ready to make a decision like that. She is very cute, and I am always happy to have a pretty girl on my lap - but right now, that is ALL she is: a \*girl\*. I think that she is going to be very pretty and very sexy when she is older, and becomes a \_woman\_. But now, no: she is still too young.

"\*I\* don't think that you are too old to be unmarried; and I understand a little bit about the reasons you are. But you are old enough to decide for yourself if there is someone that you want to make love with - whether it is me, or Kelly, or anyone else. But the decision for that is not up to us; it has to be YOURS. None of us is going to 'test' you to see if you want to make love with us. You are an adult. If you want to make love, you have the words and the ways to let us know that. And even that doesn't have to be all or nothing. If you only want to kiss us, any of us would be happy with that; if you wanted to touch and be touched, THAT is all we would do with you. You have to understand that we understand about such things - we only do as much with people as they are comfortable with. You told me yourself that you know the way the girls kiss me is different than the way they kiss you - and that is different than the way they kiss Paul. If you wanted to walk around this house naked, none of us would try to touch you, or say anything to you, in a way that was more than YOU had told us was okay. Did the girls tell you anything I said to them when we first made love?"

She nodded, and said "They all said that you told them that you would only do as much with them as THEY wanted, and that it was up to them how fast things happened."

"And that is how I am - and how THEY are, too. Because they have been in \*exactly\* the same position you are now, they understand that you might be worried or afraid or nervous. And that is why none of us will do or say anything to make you or Marilyn unhappy or uncomfortable. The same way that I was willing to let you get comfortable on my lap, they are willing to let you get comfortable with THEM."

With that, I let my hands move to the arms of the chair, waiting to see what her reaction would be.

I watched her as she looked into my face while she thought over what I'd just told her. Several minutes went by before she seemed to reach a decision.

She reached up to take my face in her hands, and leaned forward to give me a kiss on the lips. From the way she kissed me, I knew that she meant it to be nothing more than affection and thanks - and responded in kind. When it broke, she looked into my eyes, and saw that I was perfectly willing to let her move at her own pace and toward whatever goals she set for herself. She seemed content with that, and smiled at me before moving

to stand up, saying "I think that I should talk to Marilyn about all this. I am the only mother she has ever known, and I think she is old enough to hear some of the things she must know."

I told her "You know that Kelly and I, or any one of the others, will be happy to help you in any way we can."

She nodded, and turned to head for the bedrooms - then gave me a smile when I gave her ass a gentle caress before she left.

---

Over the next couple of weeks, all of us watched in amusement as Marlyn became truly \*comfortable\* with all of us. In fits and starts, and with a few periods of retreat, she gradually managed to rid herself of many of her inhibitions. Kelly and the others reported that her kisses with them were progressively becoming friendlier, as were Marilyn's. To no one's surprise, it was Marilyn that first adapted to the idea of 'be comfortable' by wearing only her panties and bra around the house. Marlyn wasn't overjoyed with it at first, but soon realized that none of us particularly cared. That seemed to help Marlyn with her own shyness, and it didn't take her much longer to follow Marilyn's example. It wasn't that any of us were making any particular effort to be so casual; rather, it was more a case of not taking the time to put more clothing on.

Then when they found Kelly making breakfast dressed only her panties one morning, they decided that even bras were overkill; both of them opting to do without within a matter of just a day or so. I was careful to stay behind them in shedding clothes; only when I could see that they were really comfortable with each stage of undress did I follow their lead. The first couple of days of watching me walk around in my underwear, neither one of them could help looking - but when neither Kelly nor I expressed any interest or concern, they easily adapted to it.

Of course, there were the times when I would involuntarily start sporting an erection. Whenever it happened, I just continued with whatever I was doing - despite the stares I would get for Marilyn, and even Marlyn.

After perhaps a half-dozen such events, Marlyn approached Kelly about helping her give Marilyn the birds-and-bees talk. Kelly told that she was perfectly willing to help - then went on to tell Marlyn about the 'anatomy lessons' that all of them had gotten. Marlyn was initially surprised, but her nurse training kicked in easily enough, and she saw the benefits of it: why fiddle around with nobody-looks-like-that generic drawings when she had real live examples to work with? Just for the sake of variety, Robyn agreed to join them for the feminine part of it. The class was held early one Saturday afternoon - while all of them were in the bedroom (for Marilyn and Marlyn's benefit); I stayed in the den, reading a book in my underwear.

When they were done with their part of it, the lot of them - still nude - came into the den. Kelly got my attention, and asked if I minded if they used me as the male demonstration. I told her that was fine, and stood up long enough to drop my underwear before lying back down to continue my book. Marlyn, of course, knew the whole thing had been carefully scripted - with sole purpose being to get the idea across to Marilyn that nudity wasn't a shameful thing, and that there wasn't anything inherently mysterious or 'dirty' about the genitalia of either sex.

So I carefully didn't notice - and certainly didn't pay any attention - as Kelly, then Marlyn, described the various parts and functions of the male anatomy. Nor was I distracted when their manipulations resulted in an erection - after all, they'd all seen me with them before, right? Instead, both Kelly and Marlyn took the time to explain to Marilyn that a male erection was just the result of any one of several kinds of stimulation - that just because it was hard, that didn't mean that I had to *\*do\** anything with it; and particularly not with a female, such as herself. When they were done, Kelly and Marlyn both thanked me, and they headed back to the bedroom. As they were leaving, Marilyn turned around to watch as I casually put my underwear back on, and went back to my book - apparently indifferent to what they'd just been doing.

A little while later, Robyn stopped by for a kiss and a little mutual fondling before she headed home. Right before she left, she told me "I told Marlyn that I wished someone had taught *\*me\** like that when I was Marilyn's age, and she just smiled and thanked me for my help. I could tell she was a little nervous at first, but she joined in with the rest of us like a trooper, and didn't hesitate to show Marilyn that she's a virgin, too. Right now, they're in there explaining to Marilyn the rest of it - you know, how a baby is made, and how it grows inside the woman. You should have *\*seen\** the expression on Marilyn's face when they told her that the man's penis has to be inside the woman to make a baby! She couldn't believe that something your size would actually fit!" - the last part with a laugh. "But she knows that a guy getting hard doesn't necessarily mean anything, and that it *\*definitely\** doesn't mean that she has to do anything with it. I don't think Marlyn has to worry about her getting into trouble with guys by accident; if she gets pregnant, it'll be because she knew what she was doing, and *\*wanted\** to."

Robyn and I shared another kiss, and she was out the door.

It was getting to be late afternoon by the time Kelly came into the den to sit on the couch with my head on her lap. We were holding hands when she told me "Thanks, Dan."

"What for?"

"For this afternoon. I knew you'd do just exactly what you did, but I just wanted to thank you for it, anyway."

For change, it was MY turn to give HER the Goober look - and she couldn't help but laugh at the irony of it. She went on to tell me "Marlyn will be thanking you, too - you did a lot to help us get Marilyn to understand that even though sex isn't something dirty,



it IS something \_special\_. I don't think she's going to want to make love with you - yet! - but I wouldn't be surprised if she didn't ask you to teach her other stuff."

I looked up at Kelly in surprise, and she said "Yeah, me, too. But when we were done, she was comfortable enough to tell us that sometimes she touched herself, and it felt good. I could see that Marlyn was having a problem; the nurse in her was fighting with the Catholic about what to say to Marilyn about it. So I bought her some time by telling Marilyn that doing that wasn't bad, but that she shouldn't do it too much - I figure Marlyn should decide what's 'too much'. She asked me if it felt good when you and I made love, and I told her that it did. Then she asked if it felt even better than when she touched herself. I looked at Marlyn, and she just nodded that I should go ahead and tell her, so I told her that it did. She said that she wished she could know what that part was like. So don't be surprised if she asks you to help her feel good some time."

"And what does Marlyn think about that?"

"I really don't know - I think she's torn between wanting Marilyn to not be afraid of stuff like that, her faith telling her that it's bad, and trusting you not to hurt Marilyn. I was really surprised to find out that Marlyn is still a virgin. I mean, I know you told me about what their culture was like and all that, but she's over thirty, now, and I would have thought that she'd have made love with *\*somebody\** by now. And I don't think she's ever really had an orgasm, either - she just seemed too unsure about what I was telling Marilyn."

"So what's going on now?"

"When I left, the nurse part of Marlyn had kicked in, and she was explaining to Marilyn about the other changes that were going to be happening to her - how she was going to start having periods and such before long. You know, I kind of feel sorry for Marlyn."

"How's that?"

"There she is, a trained Registered Nurse. She had to learn the anatomy and what happens when, and all that other stuff; she *\*knows\** that there's nothing physically wrong with stuff like masturbation - but being raised Catholic, she's been taught that it's a sin, too. As a nurse, with her education, she knows that birth control is safe and effective, and that a smaller population in her country would help with a lot of the poverty and other problems they have - but the Church keeps telling her that birth control is a sin, while they can't do enough to help all the extra people that result."

I sighed, and answered "I know. I've always thought it was ironic that the reason Adam and Eve were kicked out of the garden was because they ate fruit from the tree of *\*knowledge\**."

Kelly squeezed my hand in response, and the two of us just waited there, thinking.

Over the next few weeks, Marilyn gradually increased her physical intimacy with me. When she first arrived, her most adventurous act would be to give me a kiss on the cheek, or hold my hand. But after the clothing started coming off, and she had her little 'talk' with Kelly and Marlyn, things started heating up. She went from laying or sitting by herself or with Marlyn, to sharing the couch with me - then on to actually sitting NEXT to me. From there, things progressed to having her actually touching me - first, just a hand on my arm, then it was to snuggle next to me, and on to actually taking my arm and putting it around her. She never did interfere with anything any of the other girls were doing - but if no one else displayed an interest, Marilyn would.

Kelly and the others watched all this happening with amusement. Even Marlyn seemed to find it acceptable - until late one evening when Marilyn went so far as to actually put my hand over her breast and hold it there. I could feel her trembling slightly, and knew that she was waiting to see what reaction there would be to her boldness.

I feigned inattention and indifference; but from the corner of my eye, I could see Marlyn start to say something. Kelly got her attention, and gestured that Marlyn wait a bit - that we could talk when Marilyn went to bed. Marlyn wasn't real happy, but indicated that she would. A couple of minutes later, I turned to look at her, and indicated that it would be only a little longer.

After perhaps fifteen minutes, I took my hand off Marilyn's breast so that I could stick both arms out and stretch. When I was done, I rested my arm on the back of the couch behind her, and suggested that it was time for her to go to bed. She reluctantly agreed, and gave me a kiss on the cheek before heading toward the bedroom. As she went by, I gave her our by then traditional pat on the butt as I wished her good night.

By the time she was gone, Marlyn had had time to calm down and think.

The first thing Marlyn did was try to apologize. Kelly and I both waved it off, assuring her that we didn't think Marilyn had done anything wrong; and that we'd both known that she was going to do \*something\*, sooner or later.

Next, Marlyn tried to tell us that she would talk to Marilyn. Kelly and I both told her that even that wasn't necessary. Marlyn seemed unsure about it, until Kelly simply asked her "Marlyn - do I look like it bothers me? Does Dan?"

She shook her head, and I told her "Instead of being upset about any of this, I think that maybe you should think about what to do when she finally decides that she wants something more from me."

Marlyn looked at me in curiosity for a moment, and then realized what I was getting at. At the expression on her face, I told her "No, I don't think she'll want to go \*that\* far -

but I don't think that it's going to be very long before she wants to know how much better it feels when someone else touches her, instead touching herself."

THAT gave her something to think about after Kelly and I wished her a good night, and kissed her before going to bed.

---

Having gotten my hand on her breast once with impunity, Marilyn was that much more willing to try it again. And with each success, her confidence increased, as did her willingness to do it again. Each time she saw it, I could see that Marlyn was bothered by it that much more - but between times, all of us could see that there was something else on her mind, as well.

It was on a Friday night, after Jan, Susan, and Sandra had picked Marilyn up for a sleepover that things came to a head. Kelly and I were both dressed casually after going out for fast food; we were in the den, watching TV from the couch when Marlyn sat in a chair across from us. At first, we didn't pay any attention to her; but when she didn't say or do anything for a couple minutes, I realized that something was up - and gently nudged Kelly. Both of us looked over to where Marlyn was sitting, and saw that she was quietly crying.

Kelly immediately got up and went over to comfort her, and start trying to find out why she was crying. I stood and went into the kitchen to get her a small towel to cry into - and drinks for all of us for when she was done.

I set the sodas on the table, and handed the towel to Kelly after Marlyn didn't seem to notice it after several seconds of looking at it.

Kelly finally got Marlyn settled down enough to accept the towel, which Marlyn used to dry her eyes and wipe her face as Kelly continued to speak soft words of comfort to her. As Marlyn got control of herself, she gradually got to the point where all she was doing was sniffing. Only then did Kelly give her a hug, and move over to sit next to me before asking "Marlyn, would you like to tell us what's wrong?"

After a few more sniffles, and blowing her nose, Marlyn nodded. Kelly and I waited patiently for her to start.

Finally, taking a deep breath, Marlyn told us "I'm sorry for troubling you like this. But every time I see Marilyn put Dan's hand on her breast, I know that she is getting closer to asking him to do something for her."

She looked directly at me when she said "I trust you, Dan. I know that if she asks you such a thing, you will not hurt her, or do anything that would make her unhappy. But I know that you would be more comfortable if you knew what \*I\* wanted for her."

She looked at both of us before lowering her head to say "The problem is that I don't know what I want for her about that. For myself, I have never wanted anything like that - until I came here. Before this time, I was happy with my work, and being able to visit Marilyn and spend a few hours with her. I was sad that I could not keep her with me, but I knew that I did not have enough to make a good home for her. But you helped me very much, and now I have a \*good\* job, and I can keep her in my home with me, and send her to school.

"She is so smart and so pretty it makes me proud of her. But I must also be her mother, now - and I am not sure how to do that. I want so much for her, but I am afraid that I won't be able to help her have all the things that I know she SHOULD have. She has had a very hard time in the orphanage. She was always so brave with me, but I could tell that she was unhappy and sad about that place. I want to do everything I can to make her happy now that she is with me."

She looked up at me again, and said "Dan, I know that she loves you very much. Please forgive me, but you are like the father that she never had before. And Kelly, you are like another mother to her - and all the others are the sisters she never knew. She loves all of you, with all of her heart - and I know that she is going to be very sad when we have to leave. But I also know that she will take all of you with her, in her heart and memories, and that will help keep her happy when we are home again."

She paused to dry her eyes again, and continued "Both of you have made ME very happy, too. Now I \*know\* what good people all of you are - but mostly you, Dan. I see how all of these nice people started to love you because I am loving you, too - because of the good things inside you, like you said YOU look for. You share your wife with other women, and she shares you with them, too; and I understand now how much love all of you have for each other that you can do that."

She took a deep breath, and went on "But that doesn't do anything about Marilyn. I don't want her to be afraid of men, like I have been, and my sisters and friends were. When all of them married, they did not know anything about men, or what it was like to enjoy making love. The men hurt them the first time because these women did not know better, and I don't want Marilyn to have to do like that. But there is something else, and I am ashamed about it."

With that, Marilyn stopped speaking, choosing instead to stare at the floor as she started to cry again.

Kelly and I looked at each other, and I indicated to her that I thought she should be the one to speak to Marilyn. She understood that I thought Marilyn would respond better to another woman, instead of me, and quietly asked "Marilyn, what is it that you are ashamed about?"

Marilyn started crying a little harder, and Kelly told her "Marilyn, it okay to talk to me. You are my friend, and I care about you. Even if there is something that you are ashamed

about, I know that you are still a good person, and I want to help you if you will let me. You know that I would not lie to you, and I will promise you right now that I will not think you are a bad person if you want to tell me what it is that is really bothering you. I care about you, and want ONLY to help you."

With that, Kelly reached out to take Marlyn's hand in hers, holding it softly in reassurance.

After a bit, Marlyn's crying slackened, and eventually stopped. She'd barely dried her eyes again when she suddenly moved from the chair she was in, to sit next to Kelly, hugging her fiercely. Kelly hugged her back, softly, as she gently rubbed Marlyn's back, calming her again. It was muffled from her face being in Kelly's shoulder, but I heard it clearly when Marlyn finally told her "I am ashamed because I am jealous of Marilyn. She will know the pleasure of a man's touch and affection, and I won't. I have never been with a man, and I have never known the pleasures that the others told me they have had with each other, and with Dan. So I am jealous of Marilyn, my only family, because she will know these things, and I will not."

Kelly turned her head to look at me as she continued to rub Marlyn's back. I didn't want to speak and disturb the bond Marlyn and Kelly had; so I mimed looking around for someone, gestured toward Marlyn, and raised my eyebrows in question. Kelly understood my actions: who was Marlyn looking/waiting for?

Going along with my silence, Kelly asked Marlyn "Is it Dan that you want?"

Again, I could easily hear Marlyn's response: "Yes."

Kelly looked surprised, and asked "Why don't you just tell him, then?"

"Because I am afraid."

"Afraid of what?" Kelly asked.

"That he will say no. Or that I will not know what to do, and make him unhappy. Or that you or the others will be upset with me because he is yours. That I will be too afraid, and not be able to feel pleasure."

All of the reasons she gave Kelly were things that Kelly knew how to deal with.

"Marlyn, I know Dan. If you wanted to make love with him, he would be happy to do that - as much or as little as you wanted. Don't you remember what all of us told you about him? That he refused us ONLY until he was sure that we knew what we were asking? The ONLY reason he did that was because all of us were so young. I know that if YOU were to ask him, he would be happy to do that for you, without question."

Marlyn said something that I didn't quite catch, but Kelly apparently did when she said "Yes, I am sure. I think Dan knows that you are a virgin. But even if he doesn't, all you have to do is tell him, and he will help you to \*learn\* what to do. The first time any of us were with him, WE didn't know, either - but he taught us. Patiently and gently."

Kelly then told her "As for the rest of us, I think that you are forgetting something: we \_already\_ share him with each other. And he is able to make all of us happy. He gives all of us more love than we know what to do with - and he still has plenty to give to other people. He is already giving you and Marilyn his love, and he STILL has enough for me and Jan and all the others. Do you really think that if he gave you even more of his love, it would hurt any of us? When WE already love you and Marilyn so much?"

Another garbled comment from Marlyn, and Kelly responded by saying "No, I don't think you have to be afraid. You know how kind and gentle he is. You know how patient and understanding he is. You trust him not to hurt Marilyn; why would you think that YOU have to be afraid of him? Think again about what all of us have told you: he brought every single one of us pleasure - more pleasure than we thought was possible. All of us were nervous to be with him; but we trusted him, and he showed us that we were right to do that. I have been with Dan for over six years, and he has NEVER, EVER failed to bring me pleasure when we were together. If anything, sometimes he makes me TOO happy!"

Kelly finished by telling her "Marlyn, there is \*nothing\* for you to be afraid about. If you have the courage to tell him what you want, he will do everything he can to show you what you have been wanting. And he will do it with the support of all of us, because we love him and we love YOU."

I saw Marlyn's head start to come up, and quickly turned away, pretending that I hadn't heard a thing because I was too busy counting air molecules. I turned back to look at them only when I heard Marlyn's tentative "Dan?"

When she looked at me, she must have seen the care and concern on my face, because she suddenly seemed to draw strength from inside. Her voice was strong and clear when she asked "Dan, would you make love with me?"

"Marlyn, if that is what you want, then I would be happy to." I answered, as sincerely as I could.

Though pleased, she was still a bit hesitant when she told me "I have never been with a man before. I am a virgin, and I don't know anything about making love."

I opened my arms to her, and with Kelly's encouragement, she came over to sit on my lap. I put my arms around her, chastely, before telling her "You know the important part, already."

She looked at me doubtfully, and I went on to tell her "The important part about making love with someone is to love them first. When you have that, then the rest is easy."

Hearing that, she visibly relaxed in my arms as she started smiling.

My eyes locked on hers, I told her "Marlyn, this is YOUR time. What we do, and how we do it, is up to you. You told me that you want us to make love. When the time comes, that is what we will do - IF you still want it then. If you change your mind, or don't want us to do that for ANY reason, then we won't. It is YOUR choice, not mine. I had a vasectomy long before I met Kelly, so you don't have to worry that I will make you pregnant. We can use our bedroom, which has a larger bed, or yours - whichever you would prefer. If it would make you more comfortable, Kelly can stay with us; or if you want it to be just you and me, then she will not bother us. If you want it to be just us, then she can be with us later, if you want her to. This is YOUR time, and it is YOU that decides for us."

She could see, and hear, my sincerity as I told her those things; I could see as she relaxed even more, and got some of her confidence back. She looked at Kelly shyly before telling us "I would like it to be just me and Dan, first. But you have been so kind, Kelly, that I want to be with you, too - and find out what a woman's love is like." she added, shyly.

Kelly just smiled, and told her "That's fine, Marlyn. I understand. You and Dan have fun; when you want me, I'll be right here."

Kelly's casual acceptance of her decision and obvious willingness for us to be together, boosted Marlyn's confidence even more; assuring her that she really was the decision maker on the matter.

Marlyn turned back to me, and I simply told her "Whenever you are ready."

To my surprise, she reached down to take my hand and press my palm against her breast over the dress she was wearing. She then looked into my eyes before saying "I am ready now."

I nodded my head in acceptance of her decision, and she stood up next to the couch. I stood up next to her, and took her hand. When I didn't move after several seconds, she realized that I was waiting for HER. I could almost see it as the rest of her confidence fell into place before she led the two of us down the hall.

With only the briefest pause, she led us into 'her' bedroom. Neither Kelly nor I had been in it since her arrival; I was surprised to see how neat and organized she kept it.

After both of us were inside, she released my hand to close the door behind us; I could see as she debated whether or not to lock it - before choosing not to. I knew that Kelly would never know if it was locked, or not; it simply wouldn't occur to her to do anything where she would find out.

When Marlyn was back in front of me again, both of us just stood there for several moments, looking at each other - she, to see if I was going to be aggressive in any way; me, to let her know that I wasn't.

She finally spoke again, telling me "I... I don't know what to do next."

"Would you let me kiss you?" I asked.

She gave me a happy nod, and let me take her hand to lead her over to her bed (I figured the one with the stuffed animals was \*probably\* Marilyn's). Marlyn seemed a bit apprehensive, at first; but I simply sat on the bed, and opened my arms in invitation for her to sit on my lap; she barely hesitated before doing so.

I looked at her for a couple of moments, and she gave me a shy smile in return. I carefully put my hands on her face, cupping it softly, and then guided her face to mine. I saw her eyes close, and kept mine open only long enough to make sure we didn't bump noses.

Our first kiss was soft, and gentle - and chaste. When it ended, she pulled back from me slightly, looking into my eyes to see what was there - and apparently found only the love and concern I felt for her, because she didn't hesitate to move toward me for another kiss. Our second kiss was as chaste as the first - but appreciably more emotional. When we parted lips again, I could see the tears in her eyes; but I could also see the happiness on her face, and knew that they were tears of joy.

Her face was still cupped in my hands, and I used my thumbs to brush away her tears as I smiled at her.

She quickly got control of herself, and when I'd brushed away the last of her tears, I slowly and deliberately put my arms around her waist - holding her loosely enough that she would know I wouldn't hurt her, but still tight enough that she would know they were there - and why.

I wouldn't have done anything to rush her, anyway; but two things were always in my mind. First, I had some understanding of the culture she came from: THIS kind of sexuality was a very delicate subject. Second, she was a thirty-plus virgin; whatever had kept her from doing all this before, or even having orgasms, was something that only she could turn loose of - and even then, I knew it would happen slowly.

Several more times, we kissed - and each time, she was able and willing to get more involved in it, and release a little more of the passion I could sense in her. But I was always careful not to push her; I responded to each of her advances with ONLY as much intimacy and passion as she showed.

It was when I finally felt her tongue hesitantly touch my lips, and I responded in kind by opening my mouth to her, that she finally loosened her hold on the desire she felt inside.



Even as our tongues were dueling, I felt her take my hand to put it on her breast again. I held it there for only a couple of seconds before her hand squeezed mine, inviting me to explore those delightful symbols of her femininity.

In only a few seconds, I could hear as her breathing increased, and the passion with which she was kissing me intensified. I matched her oral passions with my own, and continued letting my hand take the measure of her bosom. Even through her bra and dress, I could feel her nipples harden under my touch.

When our kiss finally broke, she was panting slightly; I could see the desire in her eyes as she looked at me. When her breathing slowed a bit, she removed my hand from her breast - but only so she could stand up in front of me and say "I... I want to feel your hands on me."

I simply smiled, and said "I would like that, too." - and watched as she slowly, deliberately went about taking her clothes off in front of me. She didn't do it as anything like a striptease; rather, it was more like she was doing it just as she would any other time - but doing it THIS time for ME. Somehow, that made it all the more intimate, and erotic: she was deliberately choosing to share what was - for her - a very personal and private activity.

As I sat there, not moving, she stayed in clear view to me - neither trying to hide, nor show, any particular part of her body; she didn't turn toward me, and she didn't turn away. First to hit the floor was her dress, leaving her standing there dressed only in a soft cotton bra and panty set. Next were the stockings she was wearing - her legs were smooth enough, and the stockings fit well enough, that she didn't need anything like a garter belt to hold them up. She then reached between her breasts to unhook the bra before removing it and letting it drop on the small pile of her other clothes. As she moved, I could see the faint swaying of her breasts; her nipples again hardened under the ever-so-slight breeze caused by her movement. Last were her panties - small and high-cut, they barely covered her pubis and very little of her small, curved ass. She bent over to slide them down her legs. As she stepped out of them, her legs lifted high enough for me to see that her vaginal lips were extended and slightly parted.

When she stood erect in front of me again, I couldn't help noticing that the hood of her clitoris was peeking out at me from the cleft of her sex.

I moved my eyes to her face, where I saw that she was looking at me with a mixture of desire, invitation, and fear. I let her see as I let my eyes wander across her curved form - slender, muscular legs; nicely curved hips; trim waist; smooth, firm belly; full bust; and a graceful neck. Her skin was clear and smooth; the only hair on her was a small, sparse patch on her mons, and the short, straight style on her head.

When I met her eyes again, I could only smile and tell her "Isang malaking maganda Filipina!" (One big/very beautiful Filipina) with all the sincerity I could muster.

Reassured that I found her attractive (!), I saw the fear disappear from her eyes - which left only the desire and invitation. As much as I wanted to pull her to me, I waited for her to move, instead. And after a few seconds, she did - to stand between my legs, leaving her breasts in front of me in open invitation.

She didn't move as I reached out to put my hands on her hips, and willingly moved with me as I pulled her closer so I could fasten my lips around the dark brown tip of her breast. I heard her breath catch in her throat when I first licked, then started sucking on it. I could feel it responding in my mouth; the areola puckering as her nipple got longer and firmer under my tongue. After a minute, I started to slowly move my hands on her; she didn't object, and it wasn't long before I was memorizing her body as a blind person would - solely through my sense of touch. From her knees to her shoulders, she willingly let my hands wander her body as I continued to nurse first at one breast, then the other.

After only a couple of minutes, I could easily identify the smell of her arousal - musky, yet somehow sweet and spicy as well. While I let my lips and tongue and mouth wander randomly across the flesh of her breasts, I let one of my hands drift between her legs, tracing the inside of her thigh. Lightly, almost casually, I let my hand brush against her mons, and felt the light touch of her vaginal lips. Even when she felt my touch there, she did not move, except to put her hands in my hair and hold my head to her breast as she panted her increasing excitement.

A few more minutes of that, and I could feel her starting to get a little unsteady on her feet. I slowed, and finally stopped, what I was doing - accompanied by a small moan of frustration/disappointment. When she looked down at me, I simply told her "Why don't you sit down, before you fall down? Then you can watch while I take my clothes off, too."

It took her only a second to agree; and she didn't have the slightest objection or reluctance about letting me help her. She did opt to lie down, though - on her side, so she could still watch as I undressed.

I took my clothes off the same way for her as she had for me - as though I was doing it alone; and as she had, I kept myself where she could see me, but didn't do anything to show or hide any particular part of my body. The only difference, really, was that I heard her gasp slightly when I pulled my shorts down, revealing my semi-erect penis. She'd seen it before, of course - but under considerably different circumstances.

When all I was wearing was a smile, I stood again to let Marlyn have her turn at looking ME over.

She seemed to give me the same careful examination she'd gotten from me - and seemed just as pleased with what she saw. From the expression on her face, I wasn't surprised when she took my hand, and guided me to lie on my back next to her.

She tentatively reached out to put her hand on my chest, letting her fingertips drift through my sparse chest hair. She was surprised when I took her hand; but smiled at me when I kissed the palm of it, and put it back on my chest.

I made no move to touch her as she moved her hand around my body - testing the firmness of my muscles, the texture of my skin, curious and amused at the fine hair she found on my arms and legs. A couple of times, she started toward my penis, but moved away again. I felt her start to reach for it again, and I told her "Marlyn, its okay. You can touch me, if you want."

She blushed slightly, but finally let her hand come in contact with my penis. When I didn't do anything, she let herself take hold of it, lifting it up to feel it's weight and size. Her curiosity finally got the better of her, and she raised up to move her head closer, examining it closely as she moved it in different ways, and even pulled the foreskin back to examine the head. I grew slightly with her manipulation, and she felt me get larger in her hand - but when I didn't make any other movement, she knew that she could continue for as long as she wanted.

When she was finally satisfied with her examination, she lay back down again, on her back. I turned onto my side and lowered my head to kiss her - moving slowly so she would know that I still wasn't any kind of threat to her, even though we were both nude.

With only a couple of kisses, her passion and desire reached their previous levels - and as our kisses continued, exceeded them. I put my hand on her breast again, and softly ran my thumb across its nipple; she released a soft moan into my mouth, where our tongues were dancing.

We continued kissing for the next several minutes; as we did, I continued to gently squeeze her breasts and run my fingers across her nipples, feeling them erect and lengthen under my touch. Marlyn's desire and arousal increased with each moment, and it didn't take her long to let her hand drift to my penis again, where she started caressing and gently pulling on it. From the expression on her face, she was delighted to feel me growing in her hand in response.

When I was nearly completely erect, I started letting my hand drift lower and lower on her body. She didn't seem to have any reaction to what I was doing, until she felt my touch on her mons. At that contact, she broke our kiss to look up at me in concern; I smiled, and told her "Its okay. I'm not going to do anything to hurt you."

She didn't seem entirely sure about that, but when I just held my hand still, she seemed to decide to let it go, and closed her eyes for me to kiss her again. I did, and continued to let my hand rest on her as I waited for her to relax again - I could feel that she was slightly tense. When I didn't do anything to 'push' her, she finally accepted that I wasn't going to move any faster than she was comfortable with. And with that acceptance, she finally let herself relax under my touch. I gave it a little longer, though, just to make sure, before I

started caress her again. She didn't have any objections or fears when she felt my touch expand slightly, to include the area between her legs, and even the insides of her thighs.

When I finally let my finger brush across her labia, I felt her tense slightly; but when I just let my finger drift farther along, she relaxed again. We went through the same thing again a few moments later, with the same results.

I slowly broke our kiss to gently tell her "Marlyn, you do not have to be afraid - of me, or what I am doing. I am not going to hurt you. I am not going to do anything that would make you not a virgin. ALL I want to do is to help you find out what I can do that feels good to you. You told me that you are a virgin, and that you don't know anything about making love. What I would like to do is to help you learn - about making LOVE."

She looked at me shyly, and answered "I know that, Dan. But all my life, I have heard the stories from other women about what it was like for them the first time they made love, and they always said that it hurt."

With a reassuring smile, I told her "I believe that they told you those things. But I *\*don't\** believe that it has to be that way. The last thing that I would want to do to you would be to hurt you like that. All that I am doing is trying to find out what I can do to make it *\*easier\** for you, and to bring you pleasure. I know that if I do some things, it would hurt you - so I am NOT going to do them. Do you remember when I told you that we would make love only if YOU wanted us to?" - she nodded, and I went on - "Do you remember that I said I would stop if you wanted me to?"

She nodded again, and I asked her "Do you think that I would lie to you?"

Confidently, she answered "No, Dan. I know that you would not lie to me."

"Do you think that I am the kind of man that thinks only with his penis?"

She smiled, and shook her head, before I told her "Marlyn, I love you, just as I love Kelly and the others. Just as I would not hurt them, I will not hurt you. It is your choice if you want to give me your virginity - I will *\*not\** take it from you. If you want, I can help you find pleasure while we are together like this. But how much pleasure you feel from this is up to you - I can only help you find the most pleasure if you trust me not to hurt you while we are together. If you are afraid, I will understand, and I will not be angry or upset; I will only be sorry that you don't know the joy of making LOVE."

With that, she finally seemed to understand what Kelly and the others had told her - that in no size, way, shape, or form was I going to do anything to rush her, or hurt her. She *\*knew\** that I would stop if she told me to - or even asked me to; and KNEW that if she did, I really *\*wouldn't\** be upset or angry with her - only sorry that she would miss out on something so special.

It took only a couple of seconds before she told me "Dan, I DO want to make love with you. And I DO trust you." With those words, I could feel her relax even more next to me - and felt it as her legs parted slightly.

I lowered my head again, kissing her softly on the forehead and both cheeks before letting my lips touch hers. Our kiss was one of love - and trust.

With that kiss, I moved my hand up to rest on her belly; as we kissed again, she took my hand to put it on her breast again. I didn't hesitate to go back to caressing her - gently squeezing and fondling her breasts between periods of letting my fingers trace the outlines of her areolas and running my fingertips across her nipples.

In short order, she was again nearly as aroused and excited as she had been before. When I again heard her soft panting, I slowly eased my hand slide down her body to begin softly stroking her hips and thighs. It was a little longer, this time, before I let my fingertip graze across her labia *\*ever\** so lightly; when she didn't tense under my touch, I knew that she was ready for what was to come.

As I continued to softly stroke her thighs, I gradually increased the frequency that my fingers brushed across her vaginal lips. After several such contacts, I thought I could feel a difference in how they felt - they seemed slightly longer and thicker. Remembering how she'd responded when I sucked on her breasts and nipples, I thought that the next part would be easier on both of us if I did it again.

Between the next few kisses we shared, I took the opportunity to kiss her on the shoulders, her throat, her neck, and even along her jaw. With the change in my attentions to her, she let our kisses taper off so that I could continue this new activity - then expand it to include the upper slopes of her breasts. Over the period of several minutes, I was able to carefully transfer the focus of my attention from her neck and shoulders to her breasts; when I again took one of her nipples in my mouth, her hands quickly took hold of my head, keeping my mouth on her breast.

With so much of her attention focused on her breasts, it was much easier for me to begin my explorations of her pubic area. By being able to let my hand contact her mons and labia more, I was easily able to determine that I'd been right - her labia WERE getting longer and thicker - ample evidence that her passion and arousal were increasing.

She was so focused on what I was doing to her breasts and nipples, that she didn't have any noticeable reaction when I let my finger finally dip between her labia - where I found her entrance incredibly hot and wet. Several more times, I drew the end of my finger between her vaginal lips; making sure that I had enough of her hot oils before I made contact with her clitoris. With that first light touch on her nubbin, her thighs flew open as she loudly gasped her pleasure at the contact.

When I traced my finger between her vaginal lips to collect more of her ample fluids, she noticed for the first time what I was doing - and raised her hips as I got closer to where

her clitoris was peeking out from under its hood. With this acceptance of my touch between her thighs, I released her nipple from my mouth, and lifted my head so we could share a kiss. I was pleasantly surprised at the passion that she put into it; and I happily matched it even as I continued my tender ministrations to her womanhood.

It wasn't long before my actions were almost entirely centered on her clitoris, dipping my finger to her vaginal opening whenever I needed to transfer some of her more than sufficient supply of lubrication. Over the next couple of minutes, her arousal quickly increased as what I was doing had its effect on: her head started tossing back and forth, her breathing got rapid and shallow, and she started muttering a number of unintelligible - but obviously passionate - words and phrases in Tagalog. The only part of her that wasn't in constant motion was her pubis - IT was anchored in place, under my touch.

I'd been softly fluttering my fingertip across her clitoris for less than a minute when she suddenly froze - not a muscle moved for several long seconds; then her thighs clamped together as she gave long, loud cry of release. I saw her body start spasming next to me as she tried to breathe between moans of pleasure; I didn't bother trying to do anything to make it more intense for her - I simply didn't dare.

Only when the worst/best of it was over for her did her thighs loosen around my hand, leaving me free to move it up to rest on her belly as I looked down at her. When her breathing had mostly stabilized, I saw her eyes open - but she wasn't able to focus on anything for several more seconds, when she suddenly seemed to realize that it was ME looking down at her. She managed to grab my wrist, and started to say something, but all that came out was a weak croak. She looked at me accusingly, and I asked "Would you like something to drink?"

She nodded, and I said "I can go get it, or Kelly will be happy to bring it here. Do you want me to go?" She shook her head, and my next question was "Kelly will bring it here, then. Is it okay if she comes in here?"

Marlyn thought about that for a second, and gave a hesitant shake of her head.

"That's fine, we can do that." I told her, before getting Mabel into it.

"Mabel!"

"Yes, sir?"

"Message to Kelly."

A pause, then "Recording."

"Kelly, if you would, we need some drinks in here. Club soda with lime, I think. If you could just set it inside the door, I'd appreciate it. End message."

Kelly, of course, would know that \*I\* wouldn't care about how she brought the drinks; so she'd know that Marlyn didn't care to be seen in whatever her current state was - and take care to respect Marlyn's concerns.

"Message stored. Locating Kelly."

"That's all", I finished.

"Thank you, sir."

For the next couple of minutes, I just laid there, my hand on Marlyn's belly as I smiled at her in reassurance that everything was just fine. Finally, there was a knock at the door, and a few seconds later, it opened part way. Marlyn and I watched as a tray with several bottles of club soda and a small plastic container of lime juice was slid into the room, followed by Kelly's voice telling us "There you go." I called out my thanks, and we could hear Kelly's "That's okay - glad to help" in response.

When the door closed again - neither of us saw more than Kelly's hand and part of her arm - Marlyn released her hold on me. I got up and brought the drinks over to where I could reach them from the bed, then sat next to Marlyn. I asked her if she'd like to sit up, and she nodded. I gently reached down to lift her up before moving to rest my back against the headboard. Marlyn understood what was next, and was able to help me ease her backward until she was resting against my chest, sitting on the bed between my legs. She watched as I squirted a little lime juice into one of the open bottles, and then handed it to her. She took it, and surprised me by downing nearly half of it before coming up for air.

When she did, I softly asked "Feeling better, now?"

She turned her head to give me a reproachful look before answering "Yes, much better. Why didn't you tell me it would be like that? It felt so good, but there was so MUCH of it!"

"Marlyn, how could \*I\* know what it would be like for you? You seemed to like what I was doing" - "Oh, I liked!" - "so I just kept doing it."

Slightly mollified, she took another drink - half of what was left - and said "Still, it was so \*much\*! I didn't know I could feel like that!"

"Marlyn, dear, that was your first climax - your first orgasm. If you want, you can have as many of them as you choose."

"Like that every time?" she asked, hesitantly.

"I don't know. That depends on you - if you want them to be, they can. Or not so much; it's up to you."

She finished her drink, and leaned over to trade it for another - and suddenly seemed to notice the odor of her arousal in the air. I heard her sniff before she blushed and turned to me to ask "That smell - that's me?"

I kissed her forehead, and answered "Yes, that's you."

She blushed again - even deeper - and got her drink before leaning back against my chest. I put my arms around her, and told her "Marlyn, don't be embarrassed or ashamed about that. It is what happens any time a woman becomes sexually aroused."

"I think maybe it doesn't smell good."

I softly laughed, then hugged her before saying "Marlyn, I promise you: it is something that any man likes to smell - especially when it is coming from a woman he loves. It tells him that she likes what he is doing to her, that she is happy, and that she loves him, too."

She didn't seem to want to believe it, so I just told her "I told you what I think about it as a man - but if you want to, you can ask any of the others what THEY think about it. I will bet that they will tell you the same thing - that it is a GOOD smell."

She got quiet for a few moments, and then suddenly gave a start in my arms. She turned to look at me and say "You... you didn't do anything. I mean, you just touched me; you weren't inside me - not even with your finger."

"No, of course not." was my only reply.

She looked surprised, and asked "Why?"

"Because I promised you that I wouldn't. I want you to know it if I do those things so you can tell me if you like them or not. I know that you trust me not to hurt you. But I am also here to help you find out what things you like about making love."

"How can you do like that? Be so patient with me?"

She could see the surprise on my face when I told her "Because I love you, Marlyn. You told me that you don't know anything about making love - so I know that you don't know what would make you feel pleasure like that. I love you, so I want to help you learn what pleases you. All I ask is that you are willing to try new things, so that you can know if you like them or not."

Curious - but unafraid - she asked me "What new things?"

"There are many ways that a man and woman can bring pleasure to each other. You just learned that I can use my hand; you can do the same. The man and woman can use their mouths to bring each other pleasure. The man and woman can be in different positions



while they make love - one position may please the woman more, and another may please the man."

While she started thinking that one over, I got my own drink, and the two of us sat there in silence for a little while.

After I'd put my empty on the tray, Marlyn did the same before pulling my hands up to her breasts. I was softly squeezing them and gently pulling on her nipples when she told me "I was thinking about what you told me - about trying new things."

"So what did you decide?"

"I decided that you are right. Before now, I could not believe that it would feel so good just to have a man touch me the way you did. That was new to me, and it was very nice. So I think that maybe other things will feel nice, too. I know that I will be a little bit afraid - but I know that you will not hurt me. And I know that I can trust you - that if it doesn't feel good for me, you will not be upset or angry with me. Dan, I \*want\* to know what will feels good for me - and even how I can please a man. If you will teach me, I want to learn."

With that, she took one of my hands from her breasts and lifted it to her lips - where she lovingly kissed my palm.

In return, I kissed her softly on the shoulder; she turned her head to face me and we shared a gentle, loving kiss.

That kiss lengthened - then grew to one of arousal, then passion. When it finally broke, her breasts were firm under my hands, her nipples erect.

She moved away slightly, and then turned to face me - and I could see the trust and certainty in her eyes as she told me "Dan, please - teach me. Help me learn."

I opened my arms to her, and she happily moved into them, hugging me fiercely. When we separated again, she willingly let me guide her to lie on her back next to me. I saw no fear, no hesitation, and no worry in her eyes when I moved over her; indeed, she readily spread her legs to make room for me between them.

We kissed again, ratcheting her arousal and passion even higher before it broke. I moved myself down her body slightly, so I could take one of her nipples in my mouth and draw it out even more from the surrounding flesh. Back and forth I went, from one breast to the other, teasing her nipples to even greater length and hardness between applying gently suction to random places on her breasts. She buried her hands in my hair and started softly moaning her pleasure at what I was doing.

When I had both of her nipples fully extended and glistening from my saliva, I started easing myself farther and farther down her body, blazing a trail of soft kisses on her skin

- when I wasn't gently nibbling at it with my lips. There wasn't a square inch of her smooth, firm belly that wasn't subject to my attentions before my lips brushed the fringes of her sparse pubic hair.

Before moving any further, I looked up at her, and saw only trust and confidence in her eyes - which were hooded with her desire. When I moved to kiss her lower, on her mons, she readily spread her legs further; and pulled her knees up to open herself to me as much as she could.

A few more kisses, and I was the first man to be graced with the sight before me: an unimpeded look at the core of her womanhood. Her thin pubic hair did nothing to hide the cleft of her pudendum; within that cleft were her labia, flowing out from under the hood of her exposed clitoris, continuing on to bracket the entrance to her vagina before fading into her perineum. Smooth and soft, they were also parted slightly, the area between glistening slightly with dewdrops of her essence. The aroma of her womanhood was musky, but with a slight spicy/sweet overtone.

Without hesitation, I extended my tongue to draw it up between her inner lips - collecting the full flavor of her oils and finding them to be as delightful as I'd expected. When I did that, I felt her tense under my hands \*ever\* so slightly - but when I repeated my actions to taste her again, the tension quickly left her.

For the next few minutes, I delighted in being able to fully sample this treasure that she so willingly offered me. I lapped at her vaginal entrance as though it were an ice cream cone. I took her labia into my mouth to softly suck on them, and feel them get longer and thicker in response.

It was when I let my tongue find its way to her clitoris that I felt her reach down to take my head in her hands. Lifting it so she could look into my face, her head and shoulders were flushed with her arousal as she told me "I... I want to do like that to you, too."

I smiled, and nodded my acceptance before moving to get to my knees. Looking down at her, I could see that she was uncertain what to do. I reached down to take her hand, and she readily let me guide her to her knees, too. Once there, she hesitated only briefly before kissing me - and when her lips met mine, she wasn't the slightest bit reluctant to open her mouth so our tongues could dance in each other's mouths. I knew that she was also getting a slight taste of herself when she paused for a moment - but it was only for a moment, and she quickly went back to letting me know how much passion she had been holding inside.

With the end of the kiss, she pulled back slightly. When she saw me looking at her, she blushed slightly, and asked "That is what I taste like, there?"

I smiled, and told her "Yes."

She shyly smiled back before telling me "I think that I can understand why you like to do that. It is not a bad taste."

I kissed her again, softly, and lay down on the bed, on my back. She looked at me quizzically, and I simply guided her to straddle my head. Understanding what was next, she leaned forward to put her hands on the bed before lowering herself so that my erect penis was within her reach. With only a little adjustment, we were soon positioned for what we were about to do.

I lifted my head slightly, so that I could extend my tongue to take another taste of her female essence; she responded by tilting her head slightly and licking at the shaft of my erection. I licked at her labia a few more times before shifting my attention to her clitoris, which was erect and clearly visible. When my tongue softly drifted across its surface, she released a low moan of pleasure, and moved her focus to the head of my erect member, licking at it as I had done to her labia just a short time before.

As I continued to apply my tongue to her clitoris, she finally opened her mouth to take me inside - letting her lips wrap around me just behind the head. With that hurdle passed, she soon started using her lips and tongue to explore my length, for as far as she could get me into her mouth. I was pleasantly surprised when she never did anything that actually hurt me. She tried a few things that were uncomfortable, but she seemed to understand what the problem was when they happened, and readily changed what she was doing.

As her arousal increased with my attentions, so did her enthusiasm, and willingness to try different things. After a couple of minutes, she released me from between her lips so she could catch her breath and pant with the excitement I was bringing her. When she was ready to take me into her mouth again, I could feel that there was a drop of pre-cum on the end of my penis; with only a moment's hesitation, she stuck her tongue out to lick it off - and apparently found the taste acceptable, if not pleasing, judging from the way she started hungrily - but gently - sucking on me.

She didn't have any experience or technique; but she MORE than made up for those shortcomings with her enthusiasm and willingness to experiment. It didn't take her but a few minutes to get me as hard as I'd ever been, and move me along toward my climax.

Not wanting to leave her behind, I applied myself to bringing her as much stimulation and pleasure as I could: taking her clitoris between my lips and softly 'milking' it with them; circling her clitoris with the tip of my tongue, varying the pressure and speed at which I manipulated it; placing my mouth over the entrance to her vagina, and softly sucking on it to draw out her womanly nectar; and finally, forming a rod with my tongue, and sliding it into her, accompanied by her deep moan of pleasure and arousal.

My plan had only one flaw - a fatal one. With each increase in her pleasure, she seemed all the more determined to please ME, in return. The sheer enthusiasm she showed for her self-appointed task was doing more to move me toward MY climax than what I could do to bring her to HERS.

There came the point where I knew it was a lost cause; even as I felt my balls tighten up, I managed to gasp out the warning "I'm going to shoot!"

She barely had time to pull her lips free of me before the first load of my semen rocketed out the end of my erection as she watched. As I found out later, it hit her on the chest, and dribbled down to drip off one of her nipples; in the mean time, she quickly wrapped her lips around my glans again, sucking on me in time with the pulsing of my erection in her hand. As her mouth filled with my inert seed, I could feel her rolling it around on her tongue, as though savoring the taste before swallowing it to make room for more.

As the last of my juices trickled out the end of my deflating erection, Marlyn greedily lapped them up before starting to lick my penis clean. When she started doing that, I quickly resumed the activities I'd been happily performing for her before - sliding my stiffened tongue into her hot, wet womanhood for several thrusts before fluttering my tongue across her clitoris for a while, and then returning to penetrate her with my tongue again.

With her attention fully on her own pleasure, it didn't take but a couple more minutes before I felt her start to tense over me as she got closer to her own release. As I felt her tension increase, I slowed my actions, easing her toward a more powerful climax.

When I felt that she was on the very edge of another orgasm, I all but threw her into it with a furious but soft fluttering across her clitoris with the tip of my tongue. She tried to push her entire pelvis into my mouth as her thighs clamped down on my head again; her deep-throated cry of release let me know that this orgasm was even more powerful than the first.

Her entire body went through cycles of absolute rigidity, alternating with periods of near-collapse. With each wave of her release, I would softly suck on her clitoris in time with the spasms passing through her - then drink in the musky oils that overflowed from her vagina.

Again, she all but collapsed when enough of her orgasm had passed. I was expecting it that time, and quickly moved to ease her off of me, and onto her back on the bed. Her eyes were still closed, and she seemed pretty far out of it, so I carefully pulled her onto my lap. Getting her legs outside of mine, I eased both of us toward the head of the bed; where I got a couple of pillows in place to prop myself up with. She was starting to come out of it by then, and weakly tried to help me as I pulled her a little higher on my lap, so I could bend my knees to form more of a 'seat' for her.

When she was lying against my chest, I carefully reached over to open and flavor a bottle of soda. I brought it to her lips, and she took a few sips of it as I held the bottle before weakly pushing my hand away. I took a drink myself, and then offered it to her again. This time, she was able to hold my hand to guide me as she managed several swallows of it.

A minute later, she pulled my hand up so she could finish the bottle, which I set with the others. When I turned back to her, she slapped my arm and exclaimed "Oh! You!"

"What?" I asked, confused.

"You! You did that on purpose!"

"Yes, me. Did what on purpose?"

"Made me do that again, only more!"

It took me a second before I understood that she was talking about how I made her orgasm again, and made it stronger than the first one. I put my arms around her, and answered "Yes, I did it on purpose. I wanted to thank you for what YOU did!"

Hearing that, she surprised me with a shy grin, and said "I liked to do that for you."

"I could tell." I teased.

She blushed slightly, and replied "When you told me that you were going to - shoot? - I wanted to see what it looked like. When I tasted you before, it was a little salty, but nice. So after I saw what you did, I wanted to know if the other one was like that, too."

"And?"

She grinned at me, and said "It was nice, too. Different, but still nice! You liked that?"

"I liked that very much. You made me feel very good when you did that."

Her grin got even wider, and she said "I liked it, too. Is the taste always like that?"

"I don't know. I think a little bit, but I'm not sure. I know for women the taste is a little different, but a little bit the same, too; so I think it is probably like that for men, too."

She smiled, and nodded in understanding before leaning back against my chest again, pulling my arms tighter against her body.

A couple minutes later, she leaned over to get us each another bottle of soda, adding a healthy dollop of lime juice to each. When we'd both finished our drinks, she got off my lap to put the bottles on the tray. She hesitated a moment, then picked up the tray and left the bedroom with it, returning a couple minutes later with cold ones. She also had a big smile on her face, and after she closed the door, she told me "I saw Kelly, and she helped me in the kitchen. While we were there, she gave me a big kiss and told me I smelled good!"

I smiled back at her, and said "I'm surprised she didn't tell you that you smelled good enough to eat."

Marlyn got a mildly confused look on her face, and I went on to explain the joke - when she got it, she blushed furiously, but grinned.

She set the tray on the nightstand, then climbed back onto my lap to take the same position she'd been in before. She didn't hesitate to put her legs on either side of mine, and I could feel the touch of her mons against my penis - and knew that she could feel ME, in return.

For perhaps a half hour or more, we sat there - with Marlyn doing most of the talking as she told me about her childhood, and what it was like for her growing up.

As she talked, she got more and more animated; her increased movement on my lap, coupled with my recovery from the climax she'd given me, started my penis growing again.

When I had gotten large enough, she noticed the increased pressure against her mons. She looked down to see what was happening, and then looked back up at me with a wide grin on her face before saying "You are ready?"

"Not quite - but close." I answered.

She got a mischievous gleam in her eye, and said "I will be the one to do that!" before moving to turn around on my lap and scooting back toward my feet. I felt her breasts pressing against my thighs even as she wrapped her hand around my stiffening penis. Lifting it up, she didn't hesitate to wrap her lips around the head and start gently sucking on me.

I watched her for several moments, and saw her pleased smile when I finally said "I want to touch you, too."

She didn't delay in pivoting herself around where my penis was buried in her mouth; bringing her small, tight ass within my reach.

I reached out to cup one of her ass cheeks in my hand, marveling at how smooth and firm it was before I traced a line down to start softly caressing the insides of her thighs. When she felt my touch getting closer to where her vaginal lips were clearly visible to me, she readily moved her knees apart to give me room to start slowly stroking the cleft of her sex.

As before, I ran my fingertip between her vaginal lips to collect some of her lubrication - then moved on to caressing her clitoris. At my touch, she spread her legs even farther apart; I could easily see that her labia were getting longer and thicker as I drew gentle circles around her nubbin. In only a couple of minutes, it was obvious that she was fully

aroused: her vaginal lips were fully extended and parted slightly around the entrance to her womanhood.

The area between her inner lips was glistening slightly with her essence; when she started a slow, almost involuntary hunching of her hips, I thought that it was finally time to explore the last part of her that I didn't know: her vagina.

Moving slowly and carefully, I started moving my finger through her cleft, letting it brush \*ever\* so slightly across her opening before moving on. I repeated my actions several more times, and with each pass across the entrance of her female core, I pressed marginally harder against it. There finally came the time when I simply laid my hand along the length of her mons before curling my finger to place the tip of it at her opening. I pressed against it, firmly but gently, letting her know what I wanted to do; but doing so in such a way that she would have time to stop me if she wished, and making it clear to her that I was not going to hurt her.

When she felt it, she released my saliva-shiny erection from her lips to turn her head and tell me "It's okay, Dan. You can do that."

Still, I watched her carefully as I took my finger - thoroughly wetted with her oils - and gently twisted it as I eased my way past the tight ring of her entrance. I could tell that she was slightly nervous, and as soon as I knew I was a little way inside her, I stopped. I waited a few seconds to make sure she was still okay with what I was doing, before easing my finger out of her a bit to make sure it stayed wet with her oils. Then I pressed it into her a little farther, as far as my first knuckle, and stopped again. Another wait, back out a bit, then in again. Just before I got as far as my second knuckle, I felt the ring of tissue that made up her maidenhead - and I immediately stopped again before asking her "Are you okay?"

She nodded, and said "That was my hymen, yes? I could feel it when you touched it - like a small pressure, but nothing more."

"Yes, that was it. You didn't feel any pain?"

"Oh, no, you were very careful! It feels strange to have something in me like that - but it feels good, too."

"If you want, I can try to find out if it will be difficult for you to have me inside you the first time. Or I can just leave it alone, and only have my finger in you this much. It is up to you." I told her.

"If you think it will help, then you can do that. I know you will not hurt me."

"I will not hurt you on purpose - but if it hurts you even a little bit, I will stop."

She smiled at me and said "I know" before turning back to take me into her mouth again.

I wasn't about to violate the trust that she was showing me, and took the time to make sure that my finger was well-coated with her juices before daring to begin my investigations.

She was hot inside - incredibly hot. Compared to how cool her skin felt, she was almost a blast furnace inside. And amazingly, wondrously tight. I'd barely been able to get my finger past the phenomenally tight ring of her entrance; what lay behind it was barely any larger. Had she not been as wet as she was inside, I know that there wouldn't have been any way for me to do what I was. I knew that if I didn't do something to loosen her up a bit inside - and stretch her opening a little - there was no way she was going to be able to take me inside, no matter HOW close I was to being of average size.

But the first order of business was to find out how much trouble we would have getting past her hymen.

To help loosen her up a bit, and make further explorations easier, I slowly and gently slid my finger in and out of her several times - getting it thoroughly wetted with her lubrication. As I did, I could also feel her relaxing slightly around my digit, stretching to adjust to this new presence in such an intimate area. Her only reaction to all of this was to pause a few times to moan softly as she slid her lips up and down my manhood.

Only when I could move my finger relatively easily did I press into her far enough to come into contact with her maidenhead. She didn't show any trace of fear or nervousness - she really did trust me not to hurt her. I couldn't even feel what her lips and tongue were doing to my erection: all of my attention was on the end of my finger as I carefully and gently probed at the very essence of her virginity.

I gently and carefully examined and tested her hymen with my finger - and finally concluded that it was still soft and thin enough not to present TOO much of a barrier, if she really did want to experience everything about making love.

After reaching that decision, I spent the next several minutes trying to get her ready to have me inside her, if that was what she wanted. When I was able to move my middle finger in her with ease, I expanded my efforts to use my ring and little fingers - those two together not being too much larger. By the time she was able to take those two fingers easily, she was moaning almost constantly from the stimulation; when she felt me remove them, she released my penis from her mouth before turning to sit up next to me.

With a wicked gleam in her eyes, she reached to take hold of my hand and lift it to her face - where she promptly started sucking on the fingers that had been inside her, cleaning them of her juices. When she was done, she released my hand to say "Masarap!" (delicious), a big grin on her face. I grinned back as she swung one leg over me, and sat facing me on my lap - my erection pressed firmly (!) against her mons. Pulling my hands up to cover her breasts, she looked deep into my eyes and said "This has all been very nice, and makes me feel *\*very\** good. But there is one more thing, and I want to know THAT, too. Will you make love with me?"



I ran my thumbs over her nipples one more time before putting my hands on her hips and telling her "Marlyn, I would be happy to make LOVE with you. But I want to remind you that you can still tell me to stop, at any time, and I will."

She blinked at that, and after a moment said "Yes, I think you would. But you won't have to. Now I know what it is that I have been waiting for: you. I *\*want\** to do this now, even more than before - because I know that you will be patient and gentle with me. I could feel you inside me, and I think *\_maybe\_* it will still hurt - but only a little bit; and I know that you will show me pleasure when the pain is gone."

With that, she leaned forward to hug me, and I hugged her in return. When it was over, she leaned back again, and asked "What do we do now?"

"We make love, if you want."

"I want!" she declared.

I smiled at her enthusiasm, and explained what I wanted to do. She nodded happily, and moved off my lap to position herself on her hands and knees, looking back at me. I couldn't help but pause a few seconds to admire this new view of her, before getting to my knees and moving behind her.

Holding my erect, and still slick, penis in my hand, I moved forward to position it at her entrance before sliding the head between her labia to wet it some more with her hot oils. When I was sure that I was wet enough with her juices, I rested the head between her vaginal lips, pressing slightly against the entrance to her vagina. I put one hand on her hip, giving it a caress, before I started pressing my hips forward.

I could *\*feel\** it as she consciously tried to relax her opening. Millimeter by millimeter, I could see as the glans of my erection disappeared between her labia. After a few seconds, I suddenly felt myself pop through, and immediately stopped - before Marlyn even had time to gasp her surprise at my invasion.

Even with the effort I'd put into stretching and loosening her before, she was still *\*tight\** - not just where the ring of her entrance muscles were clamped down behind my glans, but inside, as well. She was so tight around me, it was almost painful - so I was more than happy to give her as much time as she wanted to get used to my presence, and to stretch around me.

I could hear her panting as she tried to get used to having even that much of me inside her. It was easily a couple of minutes before I heard her breathing slow and felt her loosen around me *\*ever\** so slightly. Another couple of minutes, and I could feel that she had stretched enough to make further action possible - but I continued to wait for her to let me know that SHE was ready.

A little longer, and I finally heard her say "Okay. I am ready."

One hand still on her hip, I used the other to keep myself 'on track' as I pushed myself into her a little more - perhaps an inch, before I thought I should stop again. Again, I could hear her panting as she let herself get used to my additional presence. This time, the recovery didn't take as long, and she simply told me "Okay."

I eased myself out of her until only the head of my erection was inside her. I paused a few seconds, and then pressed myself back into her, slowly, for about half of the previous gain. I stopped, and backed out again; I was not only making sure I stayed well-lubricated with her wetness, but making sure that she was completely used to having me in her as far as I was before I tried to go any deeper in her.

A couple of cycles of that, and I pushed myself into her a little farther - only to run into the obstruction of her hymen. Of course, I immediately stopped, waiting to see if I'd caused her any pain or discomfort. When she didn't say anything, I repeated the previous cycle: backing out of her until only my glans was inside her, then pushing in to gently bump her hymen.

After perhaps a dozen such strokes, I pressed in again and bumped against her maidenhead - and then on past it for perhaps half an inch. When it happened, Marlyn gave out a small squeak, but didn't try to move away from me. I held myself still inside her, and leaned over her to ask "Marlyn, are you okay? Does it hurt, or do you want me to stop?"

She drew in a ragged breath, and answered "Yes, I'm okay. It hurt a little bit, but just for a second. It's okay now, really."

"Do you want me to stop?"

Her vehement reply was "NO!", and then a bit softer, "No, you don't have to stop. Just hold still for a little bit."

I did as she told me - except that I reached forward to put my hands on her shoulders and give them a brief massage to help relax her. When I felt the tension leave her muscles, I started caressing her - back, sides, hips, the outsides of her thighs, anyplace I could reach.

Perhaps a minute later, I felt her press herself back against me - in apparent invitation to continue. I eased myself out of her - I saw the traces of blood on my penis - and slid myself into her again. Over the next couple of minutes, I repeated the pattern, and each time I entered her, it was a little deeper, and a little more easily. Sooner than I'd have expected, I felt myself 'bottom out' in her - the head of my erection was pressing against the deepest part of her vagina, filling her completely. There was still a little bit of me that wasn't inside her; but I knew that when she'd stretched a little more, I would have my entire length in her; her woman's sheath would completely cover my male sword.

A couple more slow, gentle strokes, and it happened: the last of my manhood disappeared inside her, even though I could still feel the deepest part of her touching the end of my erection.

When that happened, she raised her head and turned it to look at me with a smile of absolute radiance. It took her a couple of tries, but she was finally able to speak, telling me "It... it feels so \*good\*! I feel so FULL - like there was something missing from me, and now I have it!"

With that kind of reaction from her, there wasn't anything else for me to do - but to empty, then fill, her again. As I did, I could see on her face how much pleasure I was bringing her with that one, simple act. I was so inspired by what I saw that I did it again. And again. And again.

It didn't take long before I was pistoning in and out of her in a slow, steady rhythm that was clearly bringing her more pleasure than she'd ever experienced before. She quickly developed an aroused blush that started in her face, but soon spread to include her shoulders, and from where I could see them, the tops of her breasts as well. As her arousal grew, so did her passion and pleasure. In only a few minutes, she was moaning her pleasure between gasps for breath. After a bit, I leaned forward to cup her breasts in my hands, feeling their weight shift in response to my thrusts - her nipples would drag across my palms, making them harder and harder as the sensation increased her excitement. When my back started to tire, I released them to straighten up again; when I did, I heard her disappointed groan before she used one hand to replace one of mine on her breast.

Looking down between us, I could still see traces of blood from the loss of her virginity - but I could also see ample liquid evidence of her arousal and excitement: she was wet enough that not only was I thoroughly coated, but the excess had gone on to coat her labia before our contact spread them even further to saturate my pubic hair and give her entire crotch and pelvis a glaze. I watched as her vaginal lips alternately stretched and disappeared in response to my movements in and out of her - they would clasp at me as I withdrew, only to be tucked back in with each inward movement of my penis.

In the rare, brief silences between her impassioned cries, I could hear the liquid sounds of our union - with my added presence in her, she'd gotten even wetter inside, and I could hear the squishing noises as I moved in and out of her. She was still incredibly hot inside, but had stretched enough that she took my presence readily - from being nearly painfully tight at first, she was now 'only' amazingly, wonderfully tight around me. If anything, she felt so good around me that she was bringing me far more pleasure than I'd expected - I didn't want this to end too quickly, and knew that if I didn't do \*something\*, it would.

I leaned forward slightly, and reached around her to where we were joined. There, I quickly and easily found her erect and slippery clitoris, and began to softly rub it in time with my thrusts in her. That brought about the anticipated reaction: in only a couple of minutes, her cries and breathing had escalated dramatically; from the way her vagina was

clasping at me, I knew that her orgasm wasn't far off. A minute or so later, her vagina suddenly clamped down on me as she released what could only be described as a scream when her climax hit. I could feel how she tightened down on me all along my length in a single action; a few seconds passed, and she just as suddenly released me - only to repeat the cycle (minus the scream, thankfully) a second later. A few seconds, and she relaxed again, a brief pause, then another wave of it would overwhelm her. Several more times, we went through the process; each time, it was a bit milder than the time before; but there was never any doubt that she was having an orgasm; a BIG one.

After several such exhausting spasms, Marlyn finally started to collapse onto the bed. I caught her, and carefully guided her down to make sure she didn't get hurt, and that she would be comfortable. Keeping myself over her on my elbows and knees, I was a kind of 'living blanket' for her while she got her senses back. Surprisingly, she didn't seem to have 'lost it' like she had before - I could see that she was awake and alert, if somewhat exhausted from the experience.

It was a couple of minutes before she really got her breath back; when she did, she realized that she was thirsty, again. She started to move under me, and suddenly realized that I was still hard, and still inside her. Her eyes turned the size of saucers before she turned to look at me and ask "You're still like that? You didn't... shoot?"

I kissed her cheek, and told her "Yes, I'm still like that, as you noticed. No, I didn't shoot."

"Why not? Did I do something wrong?"

"Oh, no, you did everything just fine. I didn't shoot for a couple of reasons. First, you already helped me have a climax; that makes it easier for a man to wait before he has another one. Second, I wanted to wait before I climaxed again - I thought that you might want to make love some more. You seemed to like what we were doing, so I thought you would want to do it some more."

She just looked at me in a mixture of awe and gratitude before saying "You can do that? Wait to have climax?"

"Yes, a little bit. It's easier when I've already had one, like I said."

"And you thought that I would want to make love more, and you did that for me?"

"Of course" I answered, surprised.

She started to cry, then, and there wasn't anything for me to do but ease myself out of her - she shuddered as I did - and lay on my side so she could hold me as she cried.

When it was down to sniffles and hiccups, she pulled away from me a bit. I told her "Wait here - I'll be right back", and got up to head for the bathroom.

I came out a minute later with a couple of hand towels and a warm, damp washcloth. I handed one of the towels to her, and then started to use the damp washcloth to clean the mixture of blood and vaginal lubrication off her. It took her a couple seconds to react; when she did, she tried to sit up and take it away from me, saying "I will be the one!"

I gently eased her back, saying "No, \*I\* will."

She started to object, but when I didn't pay any noticeable attention to her as I continued cleaning her off, she settled down again. When I was done with her, I just as gently and carefully went about drying her off. When I was finished, I took the towel and washcloth into the bathroom, and after rinsing the cloth out, used it to clean myself, as well.

Back out in the bedroom, she watched as I made my way to the bed. When I was lying next to her again, she just lay there looking at me for several seconds.

I finally asked her "What is it?" and she answered "You are a very different man than the ones I have known before."

"How is that?"

"There isn't a man in my country that would do for a woman what you just did for me. Yes, they would take her virginity - but they would brag to all their friends about it, and not worry about HER. Even the men I heard about here would be more than happy to make love with a woman, but they would not care whether she felt pleasure, too, as you did with me. And they would DEFINITELY not try to wait for their own climax because they thought she would want to make love some more. I think that you are a very special man, Dan - here as much as the Philippines."

With that, she started to cry again, and I pulled her close to hold her as she sobbed into my shoulder. When she'd slowed down again, I asked her "What was that about?"

"I was thinking about all of my friends, and how all of them were hurt so much the first time they made love - and how you were so gentle with me. How almost none of them say that they LIKE to make love; they think that it is only something that a wife must do for her husband. They don't know the pleasure they can have from it. I am so sad for them - in this one night, I have had more pleasure with you than all of them have had during their entire marriage!"

There wasn't anything for me to say in response; all I could do was give her a hug, and hold her closer as she cried out her sadness about her friends.

It took a few minutes, but she finally got her sadness cried out. When she'd dried her eyes and blown her nose, she got up to put the hand towel in the bathroom laundry hamper to be washed. When she got close to the bed again, she said "You were right - I \*do\* want to make love more" before pointedly looking at my semi-erect penis.

I grinned, and told her "I don't know if it is broken, or not. Is there anything you can do with it?"

She grinned broadly in return, and said "I think I can fix it!"

And she did, too.

First, she took it in her hand and gave it a few gentle squeezes before stroking it slightly. The response to her actions convinced her that my penis was, in fact, still functional. A few more strokes, and I was almost fully erect; when she got me to that point, she quickly leaned over to take me into her mouth and start a soft sucking as she used her tongue to caress the underside of the head.

In only a minute or so, she had me fully erect; I was glistening with her saliva when she finally released me from between her lips. When I reached for her, she willingly let me guide her to lie on her back. Then I moved over her so the two of us could share a kiss before I started to again kiss my way down her body. She spread her legs to make room for me when it was clear that I was working my way to her pelvis. When my body was between her thighs, she spread her legs even more before lifting her knees to open herself to me completely.

Looking at her, I could see that the area between her vaginal lips was still wet with her juices, though her clitoris was hiding under its hood. I let my head drop, so that I could put my mouth over as much of her opening as I could before I extended my tongue to press against her opening. She gasped her pleasure as she felt it slip between her labia and ease its way into her vagina; she welcomed my penetration by raising her hips and tilting her pelvis as she tried to fill herself with as much of my tongue as she could. It took only a few moments before I could feel her wetness increasing as she was taken over by her arousal at what I was doing to her.

When she started a slow thrusting with her hips, I knew she wanted more - but to make sure that she was ready, I moved my attentions to her clitoris. Taking her erecting nubbin between my lips, I softly sucked on it as I circled it with my tongue with a gentle pressure. In less than a minute, she was again moaning and gasping her pleasure and arousal. I continued what I was doing, though, until I heard her impassioned "Please! I want you in me again!"

Ever the gentleman, I did as she asked: releasing her from my mouth, I raised my body enough that I was able to move myself over her again. She kept her legs parted as I moved, so that she was ready for me when we both felt my still-slick erection resting against her mons. She reached between us to take my erection in her hand, and slide the head between her vaginal lips a couple of times, coating it with her ample lubrication before she positioned me at the opening to her vagina.

Somehow, she managed to spread her legs a little more before tilting her pelvis up; her actions were enough to wedge the knob of my penis against her entrance. Looking up at me, she said "Please - make love to me again."

I gently hunched my hips, and felt it as I slipped into her again. With a few back-and-forth strokes to make sure her lubrication was well distributed, it wasn't long before I was again buried in her - and could again feel the deepest part of her touching the end of my penis.

I started with a slow, gentle movement in and out of her, letting perhaps half my length slide free of her before moving to fill her again. She was still deliciously hot and tight inside, and her ample supply of feminine oil was more than sufficient to make our love-making easy. Over the next couple of minutes, I maintained the pace of my actions in her, but gradually increased the length of my strokes until nearly my entire length was sliding in and out of her.

When I would pause to let the head of my erection slip back and forth through her tight opening, she would moan her frustration, and try to arch her hips up to recapture me - but I would move with her, and continue my teasing for a few more moments before filling her again in a single, rapid thrust that always brought a deep groan of satisfaction from her.

A few more minutes, and I could see that she was starting to get a little tired from holding her legs open for me. Her eyes opened to look at me when I paused in our lovemaking, but she understood why I'd stopped when I moved to put my arms behind her knees to hold her legs up and open. She smiled her appreciation, then closed her eyes and started moaning again when I again started pistoning in and out of her. With the slight change in her position, I was entering her at a slightly different angle - and able to penetrate her deeply enough that my pubic bone would bump against her clitoris with each of my thrusts. It didn't take much of that before her head was tossing back and forth as she started muttering unintelligible - but obviously passionate - Tagalog again.

Knowing how aroused she'd gotten when I sucked on her breasts, and how she'd responded when I'd stimulated her clitoris while we were making love, it was inevitable that I would try a different combination. Lowering my head, I took one of her nipples in my mouth and started sucking on it; when I did, she nearly went wild underneath me: hunching her hips toward me, her head whipping back and forth, and the increased volume of her voice as she continued announcing her pleasure and arousal.

Even when all I did was softly suck on her breasts, she enjoyed what I was doing - but when my attention was on her nipples, and particularly when I was sucking on them, it was clear that *that* was what she liked best. As I was switching back and forth between her nipples, giving each of them a thorough cleaning and nursing at them, I was surprised to feel Marlyn's vagina start claspng at me again as she got closer and closer to another orgasm.

Figuring "what the hell...", I just kept going: maintaining a steady pistoning in and out of her as I continued to suck on her nipples, and softly bite at her puckered areolas. A couple minutes later, I wasn't surprised when she suddenly clamped down on me again as she released a long, loud cry of release. By that time, she had stretched enough inside that I was able to keep thrusting in her as I continued sucking on her nipples - apparently making her climax that much stronger, and drawing it out even longer as she gasped and shuddered and moaned her way through it.

As her climax tapered off, I slowed my movement in her - but didn't stop it. After what turned out to be the last of her spasms passed through her, her eyes suddenly flew open as she looked up at me in surprise.

"You didn't climax?" she asked, concerned.

"No, not yet. But next time, I think." I answered.

"You... you aren't unhappy with me?"

I smiled in reassurance, and told her "No, not even a little bit. You make me feel VERY happy. I like to make love with you like this, and I wanted to do it some more, so I waited is all."

Comforted that she wasn't doing anything wrong - and was actually pleasing me - she closed her eyes again as she enjoyed feeling me inside her.

I was starting to feel a little warm and tired; a drop of sweat trickled off my face and landed squarely between her breasts. She opened her eyes at the sensation, and looked up to see what had caused it. When she saw that I was hot and sweating a little, she quickly reached up to wipe the sweat from my face - and went on to see that I was getting tired, as well.

"You said that we could make love with me on top of you?" she asked.

"Yes, that is one way." I answered.

She smiled, and said "I think I have made you tired. You lay down, and we will make love that way, now."

I lowered my head so the two of us could share a kiss before I pulled myself free of her. As I did, I could feel her pelvis rise up as she tried to keep me inside her for as long as she could.

When I was able to move, she guided me to lay down on my back, then quickly moved to lie on top of me with a leg on each side of me. A little adjustment of her position, and she reached between us again to lift my erection so that the end of it rested against her opening. Pressing back, she readily took me inside again; easing herself backwards a bit,



she soon had herself wrapped around my erection as she lay on top of me. She lifted her body to support herself with her arms, and started a slow rocking motion that easily moved her up and down my erection. Satisfied that she was doing it properly, she lowered her body slightly so that her erect nipples dragged across my chest as she moved. After a couple of minutes of this, she experimented a little more, and found that if she arched and straightened her back, she could move herself on me while keeping her head steady - allowing us to kiss as we made love.

It also brought her breast within reach; I cupped them in my hands, feeling their delightful weight as I ran my thumbs over her hard nipples.

After a while, she raised up again, sitting straight over me as she raised and lowered herself on my stiff member. I looked between us, watching as the core of her womanhood alternately hid and revealed my manhood. She leaned forward slightly, to brace herself with her hands on my chest. That left me free to caress as much of her body as I could reach while I watch her breasts as they swayed in slow counterpoint to her self-impalement.

Over the next several minutes, Marlyn gradually sped up the pace with which she was moving over me - and the force, as well. It wasn't long before I heard a frustrated whimper from her when she tried to take my entire length inside her again. I had felt a few of the fluttering sensations she made, and knew that she was getting close to her climax. The increased force and speed that she was using as she moved over me were having an effect on me, too - so I was more than willing to help her with her problem.

I put my hands on her hips to slow her down, and then stop her. When she looked at me, I told her "You aren't in a good position for that. If you will get on your feet and squat over me, I think you will be able to do what you want."

She nodded her understanding, and put her weight on her arms as she carefully - so as to not pull free of me - moved to get her legs under her. That left her squatting over me, as I'd suggested, and she was easily able to lower herself far enough to get all of me inside her again. She got a delighted smile on her face when she felt me completely filling her again, and seemed even more pleased when she found out that the new position also let her raise and lower herself onto me more quickly, as well. In less than a minute, she was moving on me even faster than she had been before - and I could feel it as the fluttering of her vagina increased, as well.

It was only a few minutes more before I felt my balls tighten up - the combination of how she was moving on me, the way her vagina felt around me, and the feeling of 'bottoming out' in her with every stroke finally combined to bring me to the edge of release. A few more seconds, and I knew it was going to happen; I gasped out "I'm going to do it!" as she was lifting herself off of me. When she lowered herself again, it happened - the first pulse of my hot semen jetted out the end of my erection to immediately wash the depths of her womanhood. I knew she could feel it when her eyes flew open, and she got a distant stare on her face that was focused on a point about ten light years into space.

Even as I was flooding the deepest part of her with the second spurt of my seed, I felt her tighten around me as she cried out the arrival of her own release. I was already in her as far as I could go, but she still pressed herself down on me, trying to get as much of me inside her as she could while I continued to fill her with my jism. I couldn't stop myself from reaching up to squeeze her breasts and firmly pinch her nipples while she continued to cry out with each wave of her climax.

I was the first to finish, and I could feel our mixed juices being forced out around my still-erect penis by the clenching of her vagina. Only when the duration and frequency of her spasms dropped off did she finally come back to our planet long enough to all but collapse on top of me with my erection still buried in her. Even then, there were still a few more flutters that passed through her - but they were aftershocks from the main event.

Her head was resting on my chest, and I could feel her breath on my sparse chest hairs as she panted her way back from her release. Both of us were covered in a thin film of perspiration, and the gentle air currents from the ventilation system helped cool us from our exertions - doing more for Marlyn, than me, because of her position on top of me.

After a couple of minutes, I could feel that Marlyn's breathing had slowed and stabilized, so I wasn't surprised when she finally moved. What did surprise me, though, was the ferocity of her hug when she tried to wrap her arms around me, and the frequency of the kisses that she applied to my face and head and chest and shoulders. I was even more surprised, though, when I felt what could only be her hot tears splashing onto my chest when she rested her head on it again.

I gently rubbed her back as I asked her "Marlyn? Are you okay?"

"Oh, yes!" was her happy reply.

"Then why are you crying?"

"Because I'm so happy! Because you made me feel so \*good\*!"

I understood then. Not that I actually understood \_why\_ any better than the myriad of times that Kelly had cried because she was happy; but knowing that they were tears of happiness - that, I could deal with. So I just continued to rub her back and hold her as she cried.

After a bit, the tears stopped, and I felt her reach up to push away the small puddle of them that had developed on my chest as she laughed. When she did that, I hugged her gently, and gave her a soft kiss on top of the head. She tilted her head back to look at me, and I took the opportunity to kiss her again, on her little button of a nose. She smiled, and let her head tilt forward again, content for us to be laying there as we held each other.

It wasn't until my penis shrank enough to pull free of her - releasing a small flood of our combined fluids - the she moved again: giving a small start when she felt it starting to happen, she tried to get off of me. I put my arms around her and held her steady, telling her "its okay, Marlyn. That's what happens. It doesn't bother me, if it doesn't bother you."

She relaxed against me again for a little while, but eventually pushed herself up again, apologetically telling me "It is making me feel cold, and sticky."

I smiled and told her "If it's making you uncomfortable, then go ahead. Do you want me to do anything to help?"

She shook her head, saying "No, I can do it. You stay there."

She quickly made her way to the bathroom, reappearing a little later with an obviously damp washcloth and a towel. The first thing she did was to wipe ME off, then - without hesitation or shyness - cleaning herself between her thighs. When she was done, she again took care of me before drying herself and taking the towel and washcloth back into the bathroom.

When she came back, she seemed uncertain about lying on top of me again; I simply raised my arm to indicate that she was certainly welcome to lie next to me if she wanted. She did, and happily lay on her side to snuggle next to me - her head on my shoulder, one leg across mine, and her arm on my chest. I had an arm wrapped around her, and softly caressed her from hip to shoulder as she all but purred in response.

We lay like that for quite some time. Only when I felt Marlyn shiver slightly did I realize just how long we'd been there. When I suggested a shower, Marlyn readily agreed - and welcomed my offer to join her. She looked hesitant for a moment, and I told her to go ahead and use the bathroom first; I'd join her in a little bit. She smiled shyly, and climbed over me to make her way to the bathroom. When she'd closed the door behind her, I got up and changed the sheets on her bed - I didn't think she'd be sleeping there that night, but didn't want to leave a mess for her, either.

When I was done, I knocked at the door, and heard Marlyn's muffled "It's okay". I went in to find that she'd already gotten into the shower - it had taken her all of two days to get spoiled by having \*hot\* water for bathing. I emptied my bladder, and opened the shower door to join her. Together, we had plenty of friendly play as we got each other cleaned off, and dried.

When we got out of the bathroom, Marlyn saw that I'd changed the sheets for her, and gave me a hug before thanking me with her eyes. She started to put on her panties, but when she saw that all I did was collect my clothes, she took them back off again. I told her "I'm just going to put these away; I'll be back in just a moment", and she nodded her agreement before bending over to pick up her own things.

A minute or so later, I gently knocked at her door, and she opened it to join me as we both headed - naked, and unashamed - for the den. When we got there, Kelly was sitting on the couch, watching television. When she saw us, she just smiled broadly at Marlyn as Marlyn blushed slightly. Kelly got up, and asked if we were hungry or thirsty; Marlyn allowed that she was a little hungry, and I confessed to thirst. Kelly said she'd take care of it, and headed for the kitchen - AFTER guiding Marlyn to sit on my lap on the couch and giving her a kiss.

When she got back, Kelly had a bagel with cream cheese for Marlyn and a Coke for me. She waited patiently as Marlyn got herself wrapped around the food. When Marlyn finally wiped the last trace of cream cheese from her lips, Kelly teased her by saying "I'm going to trust that you had a good time - I could hear it clear in here!"

Marlyn blushed furiously, and started to say something, but Kelly interrupted her to say "No, its okay, Marlyn. I was just teasing you. I'm \*glad\* that you felt so good while you were with him, and that he was able to make you feel that way."

Marlyn looked at her, and said "I'm glad - because he DID make me feel SO good. He was kind and gentle and patient with me, and he made me feel so happy while I was with him. I did not know that it could FEEL like that to be with a man! I cried, I was so happy with how I felt; when we were... finished, he made me feel so good when he just held me, and touched me like he cares about me."

Kelly smiled, and told her "That's because he \*does\* care about you - just like I do, and all the rest of us. You are our \_friend\_, and we love you. That's all that really matters to us."

Marlyn seemed content with that for the moment, and didn't even seem to notice what she was doing when she leaned against my chest and pulled my arms around her - at least, not until she saw Kelly's amused smile, and realized what she'd just done. Before she could move or speak, Kelly leaned over to give her a kiss, and say "That's fine, Marlyn. You're welcome to have him hold you as much as you want."

When Kelly went back to watching television, Marlyn tilted her head back to look at me. I just smiled and nodded in agreement with Kelly; that seemed to be all she needed for reassurance, and she gave a contented sigh as she leaned against me again.

It was a couple of hours later when Marlyn eased herself off my lap to go stand next to Kelly. When Kelly looked up at her, Marlyn asked "Kelly, is it okay if I sit on your lap, too?"

Kelly assured her that she was most welcome, and opened her arms in welcome to Marlyn. Marlyn hesitantly sat down, and Kelly didn't delay in giving her a hug and kiss. Kelly could see as well as I did that Marlyn was a trifle nervous about being in such close contact with another woman, and after her initial greeting, didn't do anything else to Marlyn. It took a little while, but Marlyn finally realized that Kelly was going to treat her

the same way \*I\* had - by letting Marlyn move at whatever pace she was comfortable with, and not trying to push her in \_any\_ way.

With that realization, Marlyn finally took the initiative, and kissed Kelly during a commercial. Kelly, of course, kissed her back - and from what I could see, with only the same feelings that Marlyn was kissing her. A little later, Marlyn kissed her again, with a little more passion - which Kelly returned.

After a bit, I heard Marlyn tell Kelly "You have such beautiful breasts."

Kelly's response was to thank her, and say "I think that yours are, too."

Marlyn looked doubtful, and said "I think they are too small, sometimes."

I saw Kelly smile as she told Marlyn "No, I think they are just the right size - for YOU. If you had larger breasts, you would not be as pretty as you are; right now, you have just the RIGHT shape."

Marlyn didn't seem too sure about that, and Kelly turned to me to ask "Dan, do you think Marlyn's breasts are too small?"

I looked over at Marlyn, and asked "Why? Don't they fit?" - making her laugh at the joke.

Kelly laughed, too, and told her "He said something like that to Jan, and even me, when we asked him questions like that. It's his way of telling you that what you have is what you have - and that it's right for YOU \_because\_ that's what you have. May I?" - the last with her hand over Marlyn's breast. Marlyn slowly nodded her acceptance, and Kelly cupped her breast, feeling its weight and firmness before saying "I think your breasts are just fine. If they were smaller, there would not be enough of them to enjoy this much. If they were larger, they would sag down. They are firm and soft at the same time - just right."

Kelly didn't remove her hand, and Marlyn looked up at her questioningly. Kelly nodded in response, and Marlyn put her hand on Kelly's breast in return - feeling its size and weight and texture, much as Kelly had done with her.

Hesitantly, Marlyn told her "I... I have never touched another woman's breast like this. I mean, I touched them while I was a nurse, but that was different. This is more... personal."

Kelly smiled, and told her "You don't have to be afraid to touch me. I know that I am pretty, and that I have a nice shape. If you want to touch me \_anywhere\_, you are welcome to. I know that I would like to be able to touch, you, too."

With that, the two of them shared a Look - one that made it clear to Marlyn that Kelly was inviting her to be as intimate as she wanted; and that Kelly was happy with the idea of doing the same.

Shyly, Marlyn said "When we were telling Marilyn about sex, and showing her about a woman's parts, I was surprised to see how much hair you and Robyn had - there, between your legs. It's so much more than I have, and even more than almost all of the Filipinas I know."

Kelly eased Marlyn off her lap long enough to stand up and remove her panties before sitting down again. Seated, she turned to face Marlyn, and said "What I have, and what Robyn has, isn't a lot in this country. When we were all still going to school, we had to take physical education - gym - and at the end of the class, all of us had to take showers together. We saw all of the other girls in our classes, too - some of them had only a little bit of hair, like you do. Other ones had a LOT of hair - it looked like they had little hairy animals between their legs!" - that last making Marlyn smile.

Kelly went on to tell her "If you want, any one of us would be happy to let you look at us naked, so you can see that you don't have to be concerned about how you look. Every one of us has different breasts and nipples, and different hair than the others - we're even different in how we look between our legs. But like Dan has told us: we have all the right parts in all the right places, so nothing else really matters. You heard about the nightgown contest we had for Dan, right?"

Marlyn looked over at me, then turned back to Kelly and nodded. Kelly told her "You know we tried \*very\* hard to make him crazy, but it didn't work - he is too much of a gentleman. But when it was over, he told us something that I have always remembered."

Marlyn looked at her in anticipation, and Kelly went on "He told us 'I can promise you that for each and every one of you, there is a guy somewhere that thinks you look absolutely perfect, and even more that think you look pretty good, and even more that think you look just fine, as part of one or more of the groups that they find attractive'. That was after he told us that there are guys that are attracted to different sizes and shapes of breasts, pubic hair, butts, and all that other stuff. So there is NO reason for you to be worried about how you look."

With that, Kelly leaned forward again to give Marlyn a kiss - one that Marlyn willingly returned - and escalated when she put her hand on Kelly's breast again before moving it up to start teasing Kelly's nipple. Kelly responded in kind, and in short order, each of them had both hands on the other's breasts as their kiss deepened and lengthened.

When they finally parted, both were panting slightly; and from what I could see, I was willing to bet that there were not just one, but TWO sets of erect female nipples on the couch.

Kelly took Marlyn's hand, and asked "Would you like to continue this? Maybe someplace more private?"

Marlyn turned to look at me; I just smiled and nodded my encouragement before she turned back to Kelly and said "Yes. I think I would like that."

As they passed, both leaned over to give me a goodnight kiss, and got a pat on the butt in return before they made their way down the hall.

I stayed there in the den, watching TV, to give them as much time as they wanted. It was perhaps half an hour later when Mabel let me know that someone was at the door. I checked the camera, and saw that it was Robyn - in uniform. I quickly went to let her in, and then led her to the den.

Once both of us were seated, I asked her what brought her by so late. She told me that they'd had a murder right before she went off shift, and that she just needed some company for a little while. I quickly moved to sit next to her, and took her in my arms, holding her as she started crying into my shoulder in deep, wracking sobs. Despite the handle of her revolver poking me, I continued to hold her, rubbing her back and softly speaking words of consolation as she cried. When she'd gotten most of it out of her system, she pulled back from me. I patted her hand, and told her "Sit for a minute. I'm going to get something to calm you down." She nodded, and I went into the kitchen to mix her a stiff drink. When I got back to the living room, Cat had made an appearance, parking herself on Robyn's lap - purring loudly as Robyn softly petted her. I handed Robyn her drink, and she took half of it in a single swallow - then gasped when she realized just how strong I'd made it.

After a bit, I asked her if she'd like to stay the night. She looked around, and realized that Kelly wasn't with us. She looked at me quizzically, and asked "Where's Kelly?"

I simply answered "With Marlyn."

It took her a few seconds, but Robyn finally got the implication, and asked in a surprised tone "Kelly? And \*Marlyn\*?"

"She decided she wanted to try girls, next."

A few seconds went by before Robyn asked "'next'? As in she tried something, uh, someone, BEFORE?"

"Yup. Me."

"You? And Marlyn?"

"Kelly's helping her find out about girls. I helped her find out about guys."

Robyn just smiled, and said "Good! That's the best news I've heard all night. I \*know\* you didn't leave her disappointed; and I don't believe for a minute that Kelly will, either."

About that time, the Universe smiled down, and we both heard a cry of release echo down the hall.

Robyn and I just looked at each other; at least, until I said "No, I don't think she did!" - with that, both of us started laughing, almost hysterically. Cat got miffed at the disturbance, and jumped down to disappear under the couch.

When we'd gotten our breath back, Robyn said "Yeah, I think I would like to stay tonight. The murder was some woman that decided she was tired of her boyfriend beating her up, and having sex - rape was more like it! - with her thirteen year old daughter. She waited until he was asleep, and shot him in the crotch with a shotgun. She called us right after she did it, and was waiting for us when we got there. The only thing she was worried about was that her daughter would get help."

She sighed, and said "So, yeah, I could use some company tonight. I'm really not in the mood for making love, but having someone I love to cuddle with would be just the ticket."

With that, she let me take her hand, and after she'd finished off her drink with another grimace, let me lead her back to the bedrooms. When we got close, I could see that the door to my and Kelly's bedroom was half-open. I led Robyn inside, closed the door behind us, and had her stand next to the bed as I slowly got her out of her uniform. First to go was the belt and holster. I knew that SHE knew no one would bother her pistol, but I also knew she'd be more comfortable knowing where it was, so I set it on one of the dressers, where she could easily see it. Next, I unbuttoned her uniform blouse, and removed it to reveal the bulletproof vest she wore underneath. That was held in place with hook-and-loop fasteners, and was easily set to the side, revealing the sports bra she had on underneath. I cupped her encased breasts for a few moments before reaching between them to unfasten the bra and remove it. With it gone, her breasts swayed a bit as her nipples erected slightly in the cool air of the bedroom. Next, I knelt down to untie and remove the light boots she wore. Those were followed by her uniform slacks, which left only her plain cotton panties. I slipped those down her legs, and held her steady as she stepped out of them. Before I stood up again, I leaned forward to give her a soft kiss just above her pubic hair - letting her know that I still found her sexy without making any requests or demands of her.

Taking her hand again, I guided Robyn to lie on the bed, and then moved to lie down as well. She rolled onto her side, and I moved next to her, spooning with her from behind. She wiggled herself back against me, content only when she got my penis wedged between the tight cheeks of her ass. Sighing happily, she reached back to pull my arm around her, holding it on her breast as she told me "Thanks, Dan. This is just what I need tonight."



I simply kissed the back of her neck, and gave her breast a soft squeeze to let her know I cared. She lifted my hand to kiss it before putting it back on her breast. We fell asleep like that, holding each other, comfortable to simply be together.

---

The next morning, Robyn and I were sitting naked in the kitchen, drinking coffee when Kelly and a *\*very\** relaxed looking Marlyn made their way in to join us. Kelly readily moved into my arms for a good-morning kiss; with only a moment's hesitation and a small blush, Marlyn followed her example. Kelly went on to kiss Robyn, and again, Marlyn duplicated her efforts.

Once we were all fed, Robyn borrowed some of Kelly's clothes so she wouldn't have to wear her uniform, and headed home. That left me, Kelly, and Marlyn to lounge around the den until Marilyn got home. It was when Marlyn went to kiss Sandra, Jan, and Susan that they knew that *\*something\** had happened with her. When she left to see to Marilyn, all three of them looked at Kelly, then me, before Susan asked "Okay, I'll play - what the hell happened to Marlyn? When she kissed me, she tried to clean my tonsils!"

Kelly laughed, and told them "You can probably expect to get even more interest from her. Last night, she asked Dan to make her a woman - and he did. Then she wanted to find out what a woman was like - and I helped her with that. I don't know what Dan did to or with her, but he apparently opened her up to a LOT of new things. Personally, *\*I\** can vouch for her willingness and enthusiasm! She was a little sore this morning from Dan, but that's the only thing left from her life before. I think ALL of us will be pleasantly surprised by how loving and affectionate - and even passionate! - she can be. She's still learning - but she's willing and enthusiastic about it."

Sandra asked "All that? In just one night?"

Here, I reminded them "Why should that be surprising? I seem to remember that all of YOU seemed to experience some pretty radical changes in just one night." - reminding them about the 'party' (orgy was more like it) where I'd deflowered nearly all of them within a 24-hour period.

I went on to add "Besides, what happened to her has been building inside her for a while. Things were a little shaky at first, and when we were alone, we had a chance to talk about some of the things that were bothering her. I think she's pretty close to having her head on straight about a lot of stuff, now - what she's going through now is probably just some overcompensation for what she's missed out on before. Remember, she was still a thirty-plus virgin up until last night; it's not surprising that once she was past that, she'd be so gung-ho about finding out what else she's been left out of."

That made sense, and all three of them nodded their heads in understanding before Jan told us "Well, as much as I'd like to stick around and find out what *\*else\** she wants to learn, I still have some other stuff I need to get done."

Sandra agreed, and Susan told us "It was a blast having Marilyn last night. We stayed up late, watched hunky-guy movies, ate junk food, and basically did all the stuff \*I\* remember doing at her age. It kind of made me sentimental, actually" - with a laugh at the end.

Kelly and I thanked all three of them with a kiss before they left.

---

That night, as expected, Marilyn took the opportunity to park herself next to me on the couch. And to no one's surprise, she pulled my arm around her shoulders, holding my hand on her breast. Finally knowing that Marilyn was okay with it, I eventually let my hand start caressing her. I started with a soft squeezing of her breast, which resulted in a small gasp that no one else seemed to have heard. When she got used to that, the next step was to play my fingers across her nipple; in short order, I had her squirming slightly next to me as what I was doing got her juices flowing - literally, unless my nose was lying to me.

Of course, it was all casual - when I changed position, it was only natural that I pull my arm away to rest it on the back of the couch. But when I went in to get drinks for all of us, and sat down on the other side of her, well, it was just as natural that she should pull THAT arm around - and eventually get similar treatment for the other breast, with similar results. At least, until I shifted position on the couch again, resting my arm on the back of it.

We continued like that for the rest of the evening; Marilyn would pull my arm around her, or put my hand on her breast, whenever it was 'reasonable'. I didn't fight it, but I was just as 'reasonable' when I pulled my hand or arm away to do something else with them.

After Marilyn went to bed, I turned to Marilyn and told her "She's getting braver. I don't think it's going to be much longer before she comes to me - a couple days, tops."

Marilyn expressed her agreement, and I went on "So, you don't have a lot of time."

Marilyn looked surprised, and asked "Time for what?"

"Time to tell her what already happened between you and me, and you and Kelly."

"Why do I do that?"

"Because if you don't, it's a pretty safe bet that after SHE finds out what it can be like, she's going to come to you and want YOU to find out about it, too. If that happens, you'll either have to lie to her, or tell her what already happened. If you tell her that it *\*already\** happened, she's going to wonder how and why. As much as she depends on you, I think that might bring up questions that I don't think you would EVER be able to really answer to her satisfaction."

She nodded at that, and blushed slightly before asking "Why do I tell her about me and Kelly?"

"She's seen Kelly and all the others kissing and even touching each other. Don't you think that she's going to wonder what happens with them, after she's been with me?"

I could see that she hadn't really considered THAT part of it. She thought it over for a few moments, and said "I'm not sure what to tell her."

"If I could make a suggestion?" I asked.

"Please!"

"Make sure you tell her that you did it deliberately - that you didn't do it out of just a moment's passion, or because you thought you 'had' to. Tell her WHY you did it. When she asks questions, answer them honestly. That doesn't mean that you have to tell her what you and Kelly or I did in detail - but don't be afraid to tell her in general terms. YOU are her mother now; and she is going to look to you for guidance. Do for her what you wish had been done for you, and I think you'll be all right."

That gave her plenty to think about as she got up and headed back to the bedroom.

---

Kelly and I spent the next day on a drive in the country. Marlyn had passed, and asked Marilyn to stay with her, to Marilyn's regret.

When we got home, Kelly and I both knew that Marlyn had had her talk with Marilyn - Marilyn looked at both of us considerably differently than she had before. Both of us pretended not to notice.

As I'd expected, it wasn't but a couple of days before Marilyn came into the living room one evening where the rest of us were watching TV. Wearing only her panties, she found a spot on the couch with Marlyn; Kelly was in my lap in my chair.

After an hour or so, Kelly got up to get everyone drinks, and then sat down in one of the other chairs. When Marilyn saw that, she looked over at me. Kelly and Marlyn were both aware of what she was doing: they were waiting, as I had been, for Marilyn to finally 'make her move'. So none of us was surprised when she got up and came over to stand next to the chair before asking "Tito Dan, is it okay if I sit on your lap?"

I told her that would be fine, and she happily planted herself before pulling my arms around her to watch TV with me.

A while later, during a commercial, she turned slightly to look at me and asked "Tito Dan, would you make love with me, like you did with my momma Marlyn?"

I'd expected her to ask about helping her 'feel good'; but THAT request left me stunned for a few seconds - as it did Kelly and Marlyn. Both of them were alternating between staring at Marilyn, and me. When I got my wits about me again, I got Kelly's eye and gestured at the TV, which she promptly turned off as Marlyn sat there, stunned to immobility.

I could see that Marilyn was somewhat embarrassed by the sudden attention she was getting, but she easily responded when I guided her around on my lap to face me.

Taking her hands in mine, I told her "Marilyn, that is a very special thing you are asking me."

She lowered her head and said "I know. But you do that with Kelly, and she told me that it makes her feel even better than when she touches herself. And you did it with momma, and she told me that you made her feel good, too."

"But there is a very important difference, Marilyn. Both of them are grown women, and you are still too young."

She lifted her head to look at me defiantly, and declared "I'm not a little girl! I have breasts, and even hair!"

I put my hands on her hips, and answered "I did not say that you are a little girl. I said that they are grown women, and that you are still too young. Yes, you do have breasts, and hair. But you are still young - too young to make love. I know that you aren't a little girl, any more. But you aren't a woman, yet, either. There are still too many things that you have to learn and experience before you are ready to make love."

I saw the tears well up in her eyes as she told me "You don't think I'm pretty enough."

I cupped her face in my hands and guided her down to where I could give her a kiss before saying "No, Marilyn, that is not the problem. I think that you are very pretty - even sexy, \_for your age\_."

"Then why won't you make love with me?!"

"Because like I said, you're simply too young."

She looked at me doubtfully, and I asked "Marilyn, you're thirteen years old. Do you still like to do the same things as when you were eight?"

She shook her head, and I went on "Do you even like to the same things as when you were ten years old?"

Again, she shook her head.

"So you have been growing up - as you have gotten older, the things you know and the things you like to do have grown with you. It is the same thing, now. In the next few years, you are going to learn more, and experience more - and FINISH being a woman. From when you were eight years old until now is only five years. Five years from now, you will be eighteen - and you will change even more in the next five years than you have the last five. If you don't believe me, you can ask Kelly, or Jan, or any of the others, and I will bet that they will tell you the same thing. Right now, you are a \*young\* woman; the difference between you and Kelly and Marlyn is that they are GROWN women, and you are still young - too young to make love. I love you very much, just as your momma Marlyn does. And it is because I love you so much, BECAUSE I'm your Tito Dan, that I won't make love with you. What you are asking is something \*very\* important, and I know that you aren't yet old enough to understand just HOW important it is. I know that you aren't happy now that I must refuse this; but I also know that there will be the day that you will be happy that I did."

With that, the waterworks went into full production - tears streamed down her face as she started quietly crying in earnest. She resisted only slightly when I pulled her into my arms, rubbing her back as I tried to comfort her. Marlyn got it together enough to get Marilyn a small towel, then sit next to her on the chair as the two of us tried to comfort her. Finally, her crying slowed, and eventually stopped. When she'd dried her eyes, I could see that Marilyn was embarrassed at having made such a request, and having it refused. I pulled her into another kiss, and told her "Its okay, Marilyn. I still love you. So does Kelly, and so does Marlyn."

Slightly reassured that she hadn't done anything fatal, she quietly told me "I think I want to go to bed now."

"That's fine." I told her. When she got up, she leaned down for a goodnight kiss, and even smiled when I gave her a soft pat on the butt before Marlyn went back to the bedroom with her.

Several minutes later, Kelly and I were still sitting quietly when Marlyn came back into the den with us. I could see that she'd shed a few tears of her own, but she appeared calm enough when she sat down.

She gave me a wry smile, and said "Thank you, Dan. I know that was not an easy thing for you."

"How is she?" I asked.

"Disappointed, a little. But I think relieved, too. We talked a little bit, and now both of us understand each other. She knows how much all of us love you, and thought that because she loves you, that she should make love with you, too. But she understood what you told her, and she's willing to wait, now. But don't be surprised if she asks again in a few years!"

I could see in Kelly's eyes that she thought I should give Marlyn a little more emotional support, so I patted my lap in invitation. Marlyn didn't hesitate to accept the offer, letting me hold her until it was time for bed.

It was a few days later that Marilyn surprised all of us by hesitantly asking if it was okay if she slept with Kelly and me that night. Marlyn was behind her, and though surprised, indicated that she didn't have any problems with it. Kelly and I said that it was fine with us; when we went to bed later, we found Marilyn sound asleep in our bed, with Cat lying on her stomach. After shooing Cat out, Kelly and I got into bed with Marilyn, one on each side. She woke up briefly as we were getting situated, and turned on her side to put an arm around Kelly. I turned to lie on my side as well, and spooned with her as the three of us fell asleep.

---

That event was enough to make Marlyn comfortable with the idea of sleeping with us, too - though for much different reasons.

Every few nights, she would want to sleep with one or the other of us - inevitably for a little fun and frolicking. Whether it was me or Kelly that got selected, the other would go in to share a bed with Marilyn - who was delighted with the company. Between visits from Marlyn, Kelly and I had plenty of nights alone for our own pleasures. The only exception was the night that Marlyn went out on patrol with Robyn, when Marilyn again slept with Kelly and me. The next morning, when Marlyn returned, we could see that she was fairly impressed with all she'd seen and done that night; she reported that she had a \*much\* greater appreciation for the difference between American and Filipino police.

It was a system that seemed to work pretty well, and we kept with it for the rest of their stay with us.

Quite a few times, one or more of Robyn, Jan, Susan, or Sandra would invite Marilyn over for the night. When that happened, it was just as likely that one of the rest would ask Marlyn over for their own 'sleep over' - though it was doubtful that there was much actual sleeping involved.

As all good things must, there came the time when it had to end: Bill reported that Marlyn was completely up to speed on factory operations and that he needed her to go back to the Philippines and help start hiring people.

A couple weeks before she was to leave, she announced that SHE was going to make supper for all of us - Kelly and me, Paul, the boys, Bill and his wife, Sarah and her husband, Bishop Ferguson, all the girls, and even Ted. Everyone accepted her invitation for the following Friday evening - and Bill told her to take the day off, so she could prepare. And prepare she did. When Kelly and I got home, we weren't entirely sure we were in the right house because of all the delicious smells coming out of the kitchen. Kelly and I could both cook, after a fashion, but neither of us had any illusions. What we

were smelling was \*far\* better than anything either of us had ever managed. When we tried to investigate, Marlyn laughingly chased us out, telling us that it was going to be a surprise.

So we waited in the den, almost literally drooling in anticipation.

Starting a little before the designated seven o'clock, people started arriving; by 7:15, everyone was there - and eagerly looking forward to sampling whatever was causing the delightful scents emanating from the kitchen.

It was perhaps a half hour later when she came in to tell us that everything was ready. We went into the kitchen to find that she'd prepared a number of different Filipino foods - pancit, lumpia, a couple different kinds of adobo, and several others. Throughout the meal everyone kept complimenting her on how good it all was. She'd prepared plenty of everything; but by the time we'd all sampled all of it, and gone back for seconds on the things we'd particularly liked, there was precious little in the way of leftovers.

---

A little over a month after Marlyn and Marilyn got back to the Philippines, I got an email from Marlyn, letting Kelly and I know that she'd found a house for the two of them. She also told me that the factory was nearing completion, and that she was accepting applications for jobs - but she wasn't quite sure what she should be looking for in some of the technical people, though.

I replied that I thought Bill would be sending me back to help with that part of it; it was only a couple days later that I got a call from him asking if I'd do just that.

Kelly went with me for that trip, and Marlyn naturally insisted that we stay with her and Marilyn. Without hesitation, things between all of us picked up pretty much where they'd left off. The big difference was that Marilyn was back in school - a grade AHEAD of where she would normally be, apparently due to all the reading she'd done in the U.S.

We did manage a side trip to the orphanage, where Father Villanueva was waiting for us. He cheerfully showed us the other orphanages that he managed, and told us about the improvements each of them had experienced before he took us in to visit the head of all the orphanages in the area, Bishop Magsalay - who thanked us profusely for all we'd done.

Kelly and I were there only a couple of weeks; when we left, I'd hired a half-dozen engineers for Bill. They were going to be his top-level 'working' engineers, and responsible for hiring the people that would be working for them. They people THEY hired would be responsible for training the factory workers to do the needed jobs at the needed quality and consistency. That was one thing that had gotten me my first job from Bill: my insistence on doing consistent, quality work. The engineers I hired for Bill were

made well aware of the standards that they would be expected to perform to, and the quality of the finished product that was demanded.

A few days before Kelly and I were to leave, Ted showed up, too - armed with a couple of lawyers and an accountant to help set up the local bank accounts. The majority of the facility money would stay there in the Philippines; only when the funds exceeded a certain amount would a fixed sum be sent to the main accounts in the U.S. Ted met the engineers I'd hired for him, and after talking to them, heartily endorsed my actions. All six of them were to go to the main plant for two months worth of \*intensive\* training and familiarization before they came back to start doing their 'real' jobs.

Almost two months after we got back, Bill asked me to make one last trip to supervise the installation of the Instrumentation and Control systems I'd designed. I'd figured it to be a month's work - Marlyn, Ted, and the other people they'd hired surprised me with the quality and motivation of the people I had to work with: I got back home \*exactly\* a month after I'd left, and ahead of schedule.

As things fell into place more and more, and people starting taking over their proper jobs from Marlyn, she was able to focus on doing HER job - and loving it. There had been some initial complaints about the facility, but she squashed them in short order through the simple expedient of a standing offer to provide guided tours for any group of ten or more. When someone claimed the outflow water from the plant was poisonous, she AND Ted filled glasses with it, and drank them - before explaining that the water that left the plant was CLEANER than what it took in. When another group complained that children were being hurt by the increase of traffic in and out of the plant, Ted and Marlyn opened the plant clinic to treat anyone in the area. After a minor surge in treatment to the complainers, the clinic quickly returned to it's near-zero activity - safety was highly emphasized.

She and Ted worked very well together, and the employees were delighted with the jobs: they didn't have the back-breaking labor they'd known before, and were paid a more than fair salary. Salaries were quoted in U.S. dollars, but paid in Philippine Pesos at the current market rate. That one, simple act did more than anything else to make the facility as popular as it was: by keying salaries to a 'hard' currency like the dollar, fluctuations in the Philippine economy were automatically compensated for: a salary increase or promotion actually meant getting ahead, instead of just catching up with losses. More than anything else, it was the happy and satisfied employees that countered any complaints about the plant.

In just a few months of operation, it was running smoothly and efficiently - a situation that it maintained for many, many years.

---

That all happened several years ago. I had to go back once to supervise a slightly complex upgrade to their systems; Kelly went with me, of course.



A few months after the plant got going, Ted and Marlyn were a Couple. A couple years after that, they were married - with Ted adopting Marilyn as his own before he and Marlyn had their own son, named Daniel for some strange reason. Ted still lives there, running the plant; he hasn't expressed any desire to return to the U.S. - he's simply too happy where he is. Gus was gone from Bill's company before the year ended - pretty much to everyone's relief, I think.

Marilyn finished high school, and is attending college here in the States. The college was initially a little hesitant about accepting her, but handwritten letters of recommendation from not one, but TWO Bishops, the owner of a major business, and an independent engineer convinced them she was a good risk. She's majoring in economics, with a minor in political science. She's got definite plans about returning to the Philippines and eventually running for government office - AFTER she uses her education to help the people there, first.

Kelly and I walked away from the whole thing with a check from Bill in the amount of \$925,000 - and a nice chunk of stock in his company. That assured us of enough retirement cushion that we finally agreed to Bishop Ferguson's request that we teach at the high school. It's only one class, each, per week - but they seem to be pretty popular classes, and the Bishop is happy.

Bill's company has grown, of course. Even with all Ted and Marlyn have done to keep the plant popular there, it's still a lot more efficient and profitable for him to manufacture there than here - but he's keeping his plants here open and running, too. Like I told Marlyn, he *\*does\** take care of his people.

Kelly isn't an engineer by training, but she's picked up a lot. I still have to come up with the initial design, but she's quite capable of taking anything I give her and running with it. She even came up with a way of mathematically modeling the designs, to try and find potential troubles and determine the system's reliability. She tested it against one of my early designs, and almost matched what I'd experienced with it, point for point. She's going to save me - us! - a LOT of money and trouble.

Me? I'm still trying to figure out how I got this lucky.