**College Girls**

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**College Girls Ch. 01**

Nearly midnight and still no sign of Kate.   
  
Susan yawned and decided to pack it in for the evening. She shrugged off her jeans, pulled on her cross-country team t-shirt and slipped into her narrow twin bed. The sounds of the dorm filtered through the thin walls: someone closing the refrigerator just outside her door, a stereo playing death metal, two people laughing loudly as they stumbled down the hall in her direction.  
  
She heard the door to her suite open and the laughter got a notch louder. Just like Kate to finally get back just as she was drifting off to sleep. Now she'd have to hear all the lurid details of her roommate's night out. No, Susan decided. Not this time. She turned onto her side, facing the wall, and closed her eyes. Kate could wait until morning to narrate her adventures. By then whoever Kate had met would just be another guy she'd be all gooey over for a week or two. Susan had stopped trying to remember their names.   
  
The bedroom door opened. Kate stopped in the doorway when she noticed that the light was out.  
  
"Oh. She's already asleep," Kate said. She stood there for a moment, evidently at a loss. "I was thinking that, well, she'd just excuse herself and go somewhere else."  
  
"Hey, it's okay," said a deep voice, a male voice. "I'll just head back to my place. I've had a great time ..."  
  
"You're not going anywhere," Kate said firmly. "Come on in. We can whisper. Susan'll sleep through anything."  
  
"Are you sure?"  
  
In response, Susan could hear the guy being dragged towards Kate's bed. Oh, hell, Susan thought. Now what am I supposed to do? I should probably say something; let them know that I'm really awake. But a moment later it was too late: she heard two bodies hitting Kate's bed, followed by a high-pitched, drunken giggle from Kate. Then it was quieter. There was some movement, announced by the old bed springs, and Susan thought she could hear lips meeting, although that could have her imagination overheating. Then a sigh from Kate.  
  
Damn, Susan thought. How do I get out of this one? She tried to let her mind wander, think about the chem lab that was due on Thursday. She heard a snap unfastening; then the sounds became harder to interpret – the rustling of clothing, shifting on the bed, indrawn breaths.  
  
"You're sure she's asleep?" the guy asked.   
  
His voice was deeply masculine, even as a whisper. Susan imagined a broad, muscular chest and dark hair. She wasn't sure why dark hair fit the voice, but it did. And he seemed to move confidently. There was nothing abrupt or crude about his motions – or was she drawing too many conclusions from a few muffled sounds? Suddenly, Susan wanted to know. Was he really as she imagined him? Tall and athletic and self-assured? Or maybe he was squat and nerdy. Or green and spherical. This was nuts. It wasn't any of her business. He'd be gone in the morning and Kate would give her the blow-by-blow, and that would be the end of it.  
  
But it was no use. She couldn't fall asleep. Maybe just a quick peek, Susan thought. To satisfy my curiosity; to see whether I can summon the image of an entire man from a few whispered words. She hesitated for a moment, then rolled over as silently as she could. Very cautiously, she raised her eyelids a sliver. She was facing across the small room towards Kate's bed. She'd been in the dark for a while, and her eyes had adjusted – Kate and her friend were visible on the bed, though only just. They lay on their sides, the guy with his back to Susan. Kate had her arms around him and she had pushed up his shirt so that her hands caressed the bare skin of his back. The couple seemed to be kissing enthusiastically. And he did indeed have broad shoulders and dark hair, just as Susan had known he would.  
  
Suddenly, Kate disengaged herself and pushed the guy over onto his back. She swung one leg over him until she was straddling his hips, her butt resting on his crotch. Susan was relieved to see that they both still had their jeans on. Kate giggled and worked on unbuttoning the guy's shirt. When she'd finished, she put both her hands on his chest and scraped her long fingernails along his skin. He gasped softly as she grazed his nipples. She leaned over and let her long blond hair fall across his taut stomach. Wow, Susan thought, as she watched Kate drag her hair back and forth, I wish I could do that. Susan kept her wavy chestnut hair short. She's gotten tired of her ponytail flopping up and down when she ran.  
  
The guy let out a deep "mmm" and reached up to rub his hands along Kate's bare arms. Susan tried to make out his face, to see if she recognized him. But the only thing visible was a faint reflection from his eyes. Kate sat up and reached for the hem of her tank top.   
  
Oh, no, thought Susan, she isn't ...  
  
But she was. Susan shivered and opened her eyes a little wider. The sounds outside faded; now all she could hear was her own pulse hammering in her ears. Her eyelashes still blocked her view a little, giving the scene a muddled sense of unreality. Kate moved in dreamy slow motion, drawing her shirt gradually upwards. Kate was a petite girl – at least three or four inches shorter than Susan – but the rising shirt seemed to expose more buttery, tanned flesh than Susan could take in: The smooth skin of her waist came into view first, then the slightly rounded stomach, then the sheer bra, already hanging askew. Finally, Kate wiggled her torso to get the top over her shoulders. Her face disappeared for a moment as she extracted her hair. Kate threw the shirt in Susan's direction, and Susan caught her breath. But Kate didn't notice. Her eyes were on the guy, savoring his reaction as the bra slid off her shoulders.  
  
Susan blinked. She'd seen Kate's breasts before, of course, but she'd always made a point of not staring. They were two cup sizes larger than her own (she'd checked), round and heavy, a little pendulous. Now in the diffuse light leaking in from their single window, they seemed other-worldly, almost glowing. The large nipples, stiff and puckered, rose from dark aureoles. Kate understood the effect her bare breasts were having on her captive audience perfectly. She looked down at him with a knowing smirk. He put his hands around her waist and pulled her towards him. Her breasts touched him first, her hard nipples flattening against the exposed skin of his chest. Their arms went around each other and their lips met again, more urgently this time. Kate's hair fell over both of them.  
  
Okay, thought Susan, I've seen enough. Quite a bit more than I wanted to, actually. She turned quietly towards the wall again, and closed her eyes.  
  
The sounds of bodies shifting grew louder, magnified by the small space and hard walls. Susan did her best to ignore them. Kate would surely come to her senses in a minute and send the guy on his way. But the scuffling continued. What was going on? Susan's heart pounded in her chest. She'd never seen real people doing anything like this. Her imagination supplied vivid images to go along with the sounds: lips meeting, hands fondling breasts, hips mashing together ...   
  
And then, gradually, without really meaning to, she turned back over.  
  
Her imagination had been a little over-active. But only a little. Kate was still stretched out on top of the guy, and her jeans had been pushed down to her ankles. So had his. Kate was wearing a thong of some dark-colored material, navy blue or black, so that, from Susan's point of view, she was naked from head to toe except for the thin waistband of her panties. The guy was running his hands along the curve of her bottom and over the backs of her legs.  
  
Susan tried to control herself, to calm her breathing. It seemed so loud. Could they hear her? Could they tell she was awake? They were so close – she could smell the excitement steaming off of their skin. Kate had begun to slowly wriggle her hips, grinding them against the guy's crotch. He groaned audibly. Abruptly, he put one arm around her shoulders and the other around her butt and flipped her onto her back. Kate giggled and lifted her head up to nibble at his ear.  
  
"Naughty boy," she whispered.  
  
He rolled off to one side, his back towards Susan once again. He scooted down a little so that his mouth was over her breasts. He leaned over and Susan saw his tongue flick out and swirl around one nipple. Kate gasped, and something inside Susan melted. A warmth flowed up from her center, making her feel light-headed and faint. She wrapped her arms around herself, trying to control the feelings. But her nipples had become painfully hard, and the contact with her arms felt like an electric shock. She subconsciously slid one hand down between her legs.  
  
The man pushed awkwardly at his boxer shorts. He lifted his hips and yanked the waistband until they began to move down, revealing a slim, muscular butt. Susan licked her lips nervously. He finally kicked his shorts off and lay on his side, wearing only his unbuttoned shirt. And then he disengaged himself from that as well, and he was completely naked. His dark, wavy hair lapped over his neck, down to where smooth muscles played under his shoulder blades as he pulled Kate towards him. His back blocked Susan's view of whatever they were doing.  
  
Kate's shoulder began moving rhythmically. Susan couldn't see her arm or hand, but she could guess what was happening. She surprised herself by feeling frustrated that the guy's cock was hidden, that she couldn't tell if Kate's hand was really sliding along its length. His cock must be very hard by now, Susan thought, slanting out from his body, its tip dark from the blood surging through it ...  
  
For a moment Susan's thoughts spun out of control. She saw herself pushing her covers aside and going over to Kate's bed, offering herself to them. She closed her eyes tight. What was wrong with her? She wasn't a voyeur. None of this had anything to do with her. If Kate wanted to ... to what? Susan shivered. Whoever this guy was, Susan was pretty sure she hadn't seen him before. Kate wasn't really going to ... to do it with someone she'd just met, was she?  
  
The guy was reacting to whatever Kate was doing to him. His breathing turned ragged and his head jerked back. Kate looked serious, as if this was taking all of her concentration. The muscles in the guy's butt tightened. Was he going to ...?  
  
Susan's breathing turned ragged. She'd never seen a man's body like this, so taut and lean, so excited and so completely in a woman's power. She couldn't help herself. She pushed her t-shirt up over her waist and slipped her fingers underneath the waistband of her panties until they lay against her pussy. Her folds felt swollen, slippery with moisture. Her eyes were wide open now. If Kate looked up, she'd surely know that Susan was watching her. It didn't matter now. She felt reckless, wanton, half-wanting Kate to notice. Would she invite Susan to join them? She could run her fingers over the guy's butt, touch the smooth skin of his powerful shoulders ...  
  
Susan clenched her teeth. No, no, no. She had more control over herself than that – even if Kate obviously didn't. Susan took a deep breath and removed her hand from her panties. Just then the guy rolled onto his back with a breathless grunt. A little bit of stray light outlined the hard planes of his face, but Susan still couldn't really see him. His cock, though – she could see that perfectly. Kate had let go of it, and it seemed to stand out a mile from his hips, rising at a steep angle to his torso, quivering slightly, the head swelling to form a bulb at the end. Then Kate's hand was covering it again, or part of it anyway. Either Kate's hand was awfully small, or the guy's cock was a lot longer than any of the limited selection Susan had dealt with in the past.  
  
Kate slid her hand along the shaft and then just brushed the head with her fingertips. The guy groaned loudly and bucked his hips upwards. Somehow, his cock had grown even longer. Kate just stared at it for a moment. Then she swept her hair over her shoulder, so that it fanned out across her bare back. Her face began to dip downwards.  
  
Oh, no, thought Susan. Kate, please don't ...  
  
But Kate didn't hesitate. Her tongue darted out from between her glossy lips and teased the skin at the very tip of the guy's cock. He jumped as if he'd been struck. Kate giggled at his reaction, then did it again. This time the guy's hips rose to meet her, and Kate moved her lips over his cock head and swallowed it halfway down. Susan's eyes picked up the smallest details: Kate's lips bulging outwards as they passed over the ridge that separated his cock tip from the shaft, the trail of moisture her mouth left behind, the tiny opening at the very end of his cock weeping a single sparkling drop of pre-cum. Their arousal filled the small dark room, saturating the part of Susan's brain that controlled her breathing and her body temperature. She was perspiring, her clothes and her bed covers unbearably hot against her skin. She had to get them off now.  
  
She fought for control over herself. Clothes off, she decided. Bed covers, not. She skinned her panties down her thighs as discreetly as she could and pushed her shirt up. Her hand went back between her legs. She was dripping down there. Everything was tender and slippery; she was almost afraid to touch herself, she was so sensitive. She bit her lip and slid her index finger along the outer lips of her pussy, picking up some of the moisture, using it to lubricate the passage of her finger over her clit. She knew that her breathing was too loud and that she was lying in a completely unnatural position as she struggled to see everything that was happening in the next bed. But it was obvious that Kate and her boyfriend weren't paying any attention to her. They were lost in their own little world. Kate held the guy's cock in one hand and swirled her tongue around the tip, pausing to nuzzle it with her lips. The guy grunted every time her tongue touched him. Kate was kneeling between his outstretched legs now, and her breasts swung freely each time she dipped her head.  
  
How much practice did it take to develop that kind of technique? Just as Susan wondered that, Kate sat up. Susan's heart skipped a beat. Had Kate sensed that she was watching? No. Her attention was still on her boyfriend. Or, more accurately, on his groin. She rubbed his cock head idly between her fingers. Then she crawled over him so that her hips were positioned above his. Susan felt an odd sense of relief. Kate was still wearing her thong. That should keep things from going any further.  
  
Kate hadn't let go of the guy's cock. In fact she held it firmly now. Susan's breath caught in her throat. Kate was ... she was pulling the crotch of her panties to one side and nudging the guy's cock towards the entrance of her pussy! Susan started to feel light-headed again. Kate closed her eyes and shifted her hips back and forth. Susan couldn't see the critical area very well, but it looked like he wasn't going inside her very far. With every forward movement, Kate let out a little high-pitched gasp. His cock head must be ... it must be hitting her clit, Susan thought. Her own pussy began to throb. She squeezed down on it with her hand, but that just made it worse, almost painful.   
  
Suddenly a quiver ran through her and Susan made a startled "oh" sound. She'd just cum, she realized. Normally her climaxes took forever to build up, but this one just happened all at once. Her body contracted, sending her fingers deeper into her pussy. What's happening to me?, she wondered. She felt almost as desperate at Kate, who was still wriggling against her boyfriend. Finally, Kate made a frenzied shift of her hips, and his cock moved inside her. His cock seemed so long and thick, Susan thought. He wouldn't fit all the way, would he?  
  
But he did. Their loins mashed together, Kate's tiny patch of blond hair scratching against his thick nest of black curls. Kate held still for one long, agonizing moment, then began to heave up and down. Her motions became more and more violent and her breasts bounced, changing shape, flattening on her chest as she crashed against the guy's hips.  
  
Susan was rubbing herself without any sense of restraint now. Her skin shone with a sheen of perspiration. She knew that anyone looking in her direction would know exactly what she was doing. But it didn't matter. She couldn't stop. Her breathing became louder and harsher, mirroring the sounds that were coming from Kate's bed. Susan shook as another orgasm hit her and a loud moan rose from deep in her chest.  
  
The guy reached up and put his hands over Kate's breasts. She leaned forward to intensify the contact.  
  
"Peter," she said breathlessly.  
  
So that was his name, Susan thought.  
  
"Yes, right ... there," Kate said. A hard jolt ran through Kate's body. Her butt slammed down again and again.  
  
For a moment Susan felt oddly disconnected, as if she was watching the scene from somewhere else – the naked couple on the bed, no longer making any attempt to keep their passion quiet or discreet ... the whole suite must be listening to their cries and their bodies slapping wetly together – the single girl a few feet away, eyes wide, panties down around her ankles, shirt pulled up to expose her breasts, a sheet only partly covering her super-heated body, long bare legs exposed now, pale in the dim light, one hand buried deep in her pussy. It all seemed to drift into slow-motion. The guy – Peter – moved his hand to grip Kate's butt. She scooped her hips forward and arched her back, her breasts thrust forward, nipples hard and swollen, long hair hanging straight down her back. She froze in that position, a trickle of sweat dripping between her breasts, across her stomach, and pooling in her belly button.  
  
Peter's body convulsed once, then again as he dug his fingers into the flesh of Kate's bottom, and he emitted a harsh, drawn-out "ahhh". Kate seemed to soften, drawing in her breath in a long sigh and collapsed slowly onto Peter's chest. Susan felt a flood of warmth against her hand. An unbearably intense sensation rushed outward from her center, spreading through her body. She knew she was breathing too hard, too quickly, but there was no way she could control what was happening to her. The warm, melting feeling filled her completely, flowing out into her fingers and toes until her skin burned and everything turned hazy and indistinct.   
  
\* \* \*  
  
A long time later, the room was much brighter and Susan felt groggy, as if she'd had too much to drink the night before. She came slowly to her senses, remembering what had happened after Kate had come back to their room. She looked over at her alarm clock and noticed that it was nearly nine AM. Okay, fine. Her first class wasn't until ten. If she got moving now, she'd have time for a shower and a quick breakfast. She'd have to wait a little longer to sort out what had happened the night before.  
  
She took stock. Her panties, wherever they were, were probably a lost cause. But if she pulled her t-shirt down no one would have to know about that. She rolled off the bed, bare feet landing on the cold tile floor, still trying to clear her head. It was another minute before it occurred to her to look over at Kate's bed. For some reason, she'd assumed that it would be empty. But Susan was shocked to find that both Kate and ... what was his name? Peter? ... were still there. Peter was on his back with Kate cuddled up against him, her head resting on his shoulder, her hair fetchingly disheveled. The covers were pulled up to Peter's chest, but both of them still appeared to be naked – a conclusion reinforced by the clothing scattered at the foot of the bed.  
  
As Susan stared at them, she felt a familiar tingling in her pussy. Just then, Peter opened his eyes. They looked at each other for a long awkward moment. Susan could see his face properly now. It was a pleasant face, a thoughtful and seemingly intelligent one, certainly not the brainless party dude she'd expected. And the wavy hair she'd seen last night was even darker than she'd thought, a deep, glossy black that went beautifully with his flinty gray eyes.

"Ah, hi," he said. "This is a bit embarrassing ... Could I ask you to, ah, throw me my clothes?"  
  
Susan smiled, despite herself. "Sure."  
  
She picked up his jeans, pullover and blue-and-white striped boxers and tossed them to him. "I'm heading over to the bathroom to take a shower. The room's all yours for fifteen minutes or so."  
  
"Right. Thanks. Look ... I hope we didn't disturb you last night."  
  
His voice was tentative. He evidently wasn't sure what she'd seen or heard. Susan shivered a little.  
  
"No," she said. "No problem."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan set the water as hot as it would go and let it stream down her hair and her back. She closed her eyes as the water ran over her butt and her legs. The heat and the water's smooth caress summoned images from the night before: Kate flipping her hair out of the way before she took Peter's cock in her mouth, the ripple in the flesh of her bottom as her body slammed down on his, the small high-pitched cries that came faster and faster ...  
  
Damn it, she thought, I'm burning up inside. I really don't have time for this right now. Nevertheless, she let her soapy fingers stray down between her legs, massaging her outer lips, the way she always liked to start when she touched herself. The she turned around and let the water sting her breasts and bead up on her rising nipples ...  
  
Oh, hell, she thought. I really have to get to class. She pulled her hand away with a sigh. Maybe later. She dried herself and dug through her duffle bag for a sweatshirt and the loosest pair of jeans she had. She didn't want anything pulling against her crotch today. It was going to be hard enough to stay focused on chemistry without any other distractions.  
  
She straightened herself up and walked back into the hall – and found herself looking right at Peter as he stepped out of the men's bathroom. They were practically nose-to-nose. They stared at each other for a moment, then they both started to laugh.  
  
"I'm Peter," he said.  
  
Susan smiled. "Susan."  
  
"Kate's still sleeping. Do you think I should wake her up?"  
  
"No, she doesn't have any classes for a while. Let her snooze. You wouldn't like her first thing in the morning anyway." Susan put her hand to her mouth. "I'm sorry. That was catty. I just meant that she's usually a bit testy when she gets up."  
  
They kept looking at each other. Neither moved.  
  
"Anyway, I've got to go," Susan said. "Nice to meet you."  
  
"Ten o'clock class?"  
  
Susan nodded.  
  
"Yeah, me too," Peter said. He hesitated, looking a bit unsure of himself for the first time. "Ah, do you want to get some breakfast first?"  
  
Susan's mind went blank. She couldn't think of what to say. She looked at her watch. "Okay. We'll need to be quick, though."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan blinked as the morning sunlight washed over her. The day was going to be chilly but gorgeous.  
  
"It won't be easy to concentrate on statistical mechanics on a morning like this," Peter said, mirroring Susan's thoughts. "I love the fall here. All the colors and the quality of the light, everything so clean and crisp."  
  
Susan looked at him. Who was this guy?  
  
"How did you meet Kate?" she asked, feeling the need to keep him grounded.  
  
Peter looked a little embarrassed. "Actually, she came by looking for one of my suite-mates. He wasn't around and there was this party she wanted to go to ... "  
  
"So you got lucky?"  
  
Peter actually blushed. "Yeah, I guess so."  
  
The thought crossed Susan's mind that maybe it was Kate who had gotten lucky. She wondered what the two of them had talked about. Probably not statistical mechanics. Okay, that was catty too.  
  
After another minute they reached the cafeteria. Susan got some yogurt and granola. Peter piled French toast on his plate.  
  
"Sit outside?" he asked.  
  
"Sure."  
  
They found a table and basked in the sunlight for a moment.  
  
"You're a freshman?" he asked.  
  
"Is it that obvious?"  
  
He shook his head. "Not particularly. It's just that I think I would have noticed you before now if you weren't."  
  
Susan smiled. "Was that a compliment?"  
  
Peter blushed again. It was sort of endearing, especially in a big guy like him, albeit a bit geeky.  
  
"Yes," he said. "Yes it was."  
  
He looked awkward, not at all the powerful, confident lover of the night before.  
  
"Do you know what you want to study?" he asked.  
  
Every guy she'd met since she started college a few months earlier had tried out that line. But, for some reason, she didn't mind it coming from Peter.  
  
"Astronomy, I think. Although everyone keeps telling me how dismal the job prospects are."  
  
"Hey, I'm in anthropology. It can't be worse than that. I started in economics, then urban planning. I can't quite make up my mind."  
  
That seemed odd to Susan, who had always valued focus and self-discipline ... last night not withstanding. "How come?"   
  
"I'm sort of interested in everything. And when else am I going to get a chance to study semiotics or industrial design or Nordic sagas? But it also means that I'll be stuck here for a fifth year."  
  
Peter knocked back his last slice of French toast. "I'm sorry, I really have to go. I've got a mid-term in my first class."  
  
Susan felt a little pang. She wasn't quite ready for breakfast to be over. But she said: "Sure, no problem. Good luck with it."  
  
"Yeah." He looked rueful. "I didn't get as much studying done last night as I'd planned."  
  
Susan laughed. "I'll bet."  
  
He stood up and was suddenly awkward again. "Look, this is a bit weird. But can I see you again?"  
  
Susan felt her cheeks flush. She should have seen this coming. Maybe she'd even wanted him to ask. But she couldn't, she just couldn't. This guy had been in bed with her roommate an hour ago.  
  
"No," she said. "I really don't think that would be a good idea."  
  
Peter stood very still. "Yeah. You're probably right. I'll see you around, okay?"  
  
"Sure," she said. "Thanks for breakfast."  
  
He nodded and was on his way, his tight butt moving quickly out of sight in the hubbub of the morning rush. Damn, she thought. And damn Kate for spotting him first. Susan shook her head. There are a thousand other guys on this campus just like him. She nodded resolutely, then wavered. Well, maybe not justlike him ...  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Once Kate started talking there was no stopping her. It was Peter this, Peter that. They were going to a club one night, a party the next. He didn't really seem like a club guy to Susan – that was probably Kate's influence. But despite all the narrative from Kate, Susan hadn't actually seen Peter since their hurried breakfast two weeks earlier. Kate was gone every other night it seemed, leaving Susan to herself more often than she liked. She'd go to sleep after some uninspired studying, half-hoping that she'd be woken up by Kate and Peter coming back to her room. She would lie half-asleep for hours, finally having to wake up and touch herself. She remembered how Peter's hands had moved over Kate's body, lifting the soft weight of her breasts, digging his fingers into the pliant flesh of her hips. But did she really want to see them doing it again? Would that make her feel any better?  
  
Susan lay back on her bed and stared up at the ceiling. She needed to get over this. Soon. Her work was suffering. She was losing sleep and moping around her room far too much. Her social life wasn't going anywhere.  
  
Her thoughts were interrupted by the phone. Her hand had drifted between her legs and she pulled it away abruptly and picked up the receiver.  
  
"Hello?"  
  
"Hi, is that Susan?" A male voice. "It's Peter. Remember me?"  
  
Susan smiled, despite herself. "Yes, Peter, of course I do. Do you want to speak with Kate? I'm afraid she's out right now."  
  
"No, actually, I was looking for you. I have a physics exam on Thursday and I was hoping you could study with us tonight."  
  
"Us?"  
  
"A study group from the class. We're meeting in my suite."  
  
Susan thought about it. It seemed okay to be with Peter as long as there were other people around. Kate couldn't really object to that.  
  
"Sure. What time?"  
  
"Most of the guys are showing up around eight, but whenever is fine."  
  
"Eight's good. I'll see you then."  
  
Peter thanked her and gave her his room number. After she'd hung up, Susan started worrying again. What should I wear? How formal was this going to be? No sense in dressing up, she decided; it wasn't a date. Although maybe some of the other guys might turn out to be interesting. She decided on a sweater and a soft denim skirt and sandals. At the last minute she put on a little lipstick. That was normal enough. Kate always did it when she went visiting, and when it came to that sort of thing, Kate's expertise was inarguable.  
  
Ten minutes later Susan was knocking on Peter's door. She took a deep breath, wondering what it would be like to see him again. In the last two weeks her image of him had coalesced into a sort of idealized male face and body, and she knew that the real guy couldn't possibly measure up to her transmuted recollections.  
  
But he did. The door opened and there he was, wearing a black t-shirt and jeans, his dark hair falling across flashing grey eyes that stared at her just long enough to make her feel uncomfortable.  
  
"Hey, Susan," he finally said. "Glad you could come. You look terrific." He finally stopped staring and looked a little embarrassed. "Come in, please."  
  
Susan stepped inside the suite's common room, which was more or less identical to her own, albeit with a larger television. The three other guys in the room were introduced as Vic, Paul and something Italian-sounding she couldn't remember. They were non-descript upperclassmen with nervous smiles and baggy sweatshirts. They weren't too helpful when it came to special relativity problems, either. She could see why Peter had wanted her around. The subject happened to be one she'd been interested in and studied a bit over the summer. She enjoyed showing off and acting wise and patient, and all the guys seemed grateful for the help. Peter was a perfect gentleman, getting her a Coke and sticking to business. But she did catch him sneaking looks at her once or twice (which wouldn't have happened if she hadn't been looking at him, of course).  
  
Susan was having fun, and she was a bit disappointed when one of Peter's suite-mates came in and said that he wanted to watch something on television. Vic, Paul, and whoever the other guy was decided to knock off for the night and watch with him.  
  
"Is that it, then?" Susan asked Peter.  
  
He frowned. "A couple more problems? We haven't done the stuff from the section on time dilation."  
  
"Okay, that's pretty easy. It's the same algebraic equation with a square root that you use for mass increase."  
  
"Let's go to my room. It's kind of loud out here."  
  
He headed down the narrow hallway before she could say anything. Peter opened a door and held it for her. She hesitated for a second, but what could she do? She went inside and didn't say anything when he closed the door behind them. The room was tiny, just a twin bed, a desk with a chair, a bookshelf, and a Bauhaus poster on the wall. This must be where Kate was spending so many of her nights recently, Susan realized.  
  
"You have a single," she said, stating the obvious.  
  
"There are quite a few of them in this dorm. Some compensation for the plumbing not working half the time, I guess."  
  
Susan pulled the chair out from the desk and sat down. Peter sat casually on the bed across from her.  
  
"I think you intimidated my friends a little," he said.  
  
"Yeah, I'm pretty scary," Susan agreed.  
  
The smiled at each other.  
  
"Time dilation?" she prompted.  
  
"Right."  
  
They worked one of the problems, but Peter had the equation upside down.  
  
"No, look," Susan said, getting up from the chair and sitting next to him. She drew the right graph in his notebook. "The total velocity can't ever be faster than light, okay? So the velocity term has to be in the denominator."  
  
Sitting so close, Susan couldn't help noticing that he smelled pleasantly of soap. He must have taken a shower right before she came over. Well, so had she. Their shoulders touched as she leaned over towards him. She drew back quickly. He looked up, his face only inches from hers. She knew that she looked frightened, terrified, probably. Then his face came even closer. She couldn't move, couldn't react. His lips touched hers, light as air, just a warm contact of pliant surfaces. His arm went around her and pulled her against him. His lips were so soft, the scent of his hair so clean. She was lost, collapsing into him, encircled by that strong arm.  
  
How had this happened? How had she ended up alone with him? Whatever was happening here, it had to stop. Somehow, she made her hands push against his chest, gently moving him away. She closed her eyes and collected herself for a moment.  
  
"No. You're Kate's boyfriend, remember? I like Kate. She drives me crazy sometimes, but I like her. I don't want to hurt her."  
  
Peter looked at her intently. "Do you really think I matter to Kate? She's so ... I don't know. She has her toy of the moment, and it's me right now."  
  
Susan shook her head. "No. She likes you. She talks about you all the time."  
  
"Really?"  
  
"Really. And if you did break up – think how awkward it would make things between Kate and me if you and I started going out. And I have to live with her for the rest of the year, no matter what happens."  
  
Peter put his hand over hers. Susan could feel the subtle pressure of his pulse; her own heartbeat raced to keep up with it. He leaned over to kiss her again.  
  
"No," Susan said, pulling back. The vehemence of her reply startled both of them. "I don't want to have to lie to her. I hate lying." She took her hand away. "I don't think we should touch each other." She blinked back tears. "Not like this, anyway."  
  
"Just physics problems then?"  
  
She tried to smile. "You can't get much more platonic than that."  
  
"How about a foot massage?"  
  
"What?"  
  
"A foot massage. My sister is a physical therapist. She taught me a bit. But I could use some practice."  
  
This was getting a little silly. Where should she draw the line? Would Kate care if Peter wiggled her toes, or whatever? No. Her conscience felt pretty clear about that. And it would keep him off the bed at least.  
  
"Sure," she said. "That would be nice. Should I take my shoes off?"  
  
"I'll do it."   
  
Peter got down on his knees in front of her and unfastened the straps of her sandals. Then he began to run his thumbs along the inside edge of her left arch. She couldn't remember ever having gotten this kind of massage before. It felt just lovely. Maybe it wasn't the massage itself so much as the intimacy of the act. He drew his fingers across her sole.  
  
"Mmm," she purred.  
  
Would it feel as good if someone other than Peter was doing it? One of his non-descript roommates, for instance? No, she decided. She looked down at him, mostly seeing tousled dark hair. He was concentrating on what he was doing, his face – what she could see of it – was composed, serious. His hands were relaxed and assured, though. She liked that. Her high school boyfriends always seemed so rushed and nervous when they touched her. She felt as if she was missing something with them, like they were skipping the best parts, whatever they were. She closed her eyes and leaned back contentedly. He pulled methodically on all the little bones down there she'd never given a moment's thought to before now. He stroked the skin along her ankles. Someone was practicing an instrument somewhere. A clarinet? Or maybe an oboe? It was so faint she couldn't quite tell. Whoever it was had started with scales, but now had moved on to something soft and haunting, like a shepherd playing to himself on a still summer evening.  
  
Funny, when she'd first seen Peter he'd been rolling around on the bed with Kate, and he'd driven Susan almost insane. Now he was making her feel so completely different, so calm and dreamy. She was glad that Peter wasn't saying anything. Words, even his, would ruin the feeling. But the music was perfect.  
  
She looked down at him again. He seemed to feel her gaze and tilted his head up. Their eyes met. His hands stopped where they were, lightly holding her left ankle. The music rose into a high arabesque. She felt open, serene, totally sexy.  
  
She moved her legs apart.  
  
Peter's eyes widened. His lips parted and his tongue ran across them once. His hands released her foot and moved up along the insides of her calves, still gentle and unhurried. Susan closed her eyes again, listening, feeling. Smooth fingers caressed her bare skin, drawing little circles along its surface. It was as if every place he touched came alive. She was sure she was flushing: her face was getting warm; so was her upper chest.  
  
His fingers were brushing the insides of her thighs now. She was so sensitive there ... she could barely stand it, her flesh quivered with each touch, little prickles of heat radiated up her thighs to the place where they met, each one adding to the last until she was so warm and slippery she couldn't sit still. She wriggled her hips a little and Peter's breathing deepened. He inhaled her excitement and his hands grew bolder. He pushed upwards at the edges of her skirt. She didn't move at first, then she lifted her hips off the bed, just a little, and the skirt slid back, bunching up at her waist.   
  
Her panties were exposed now. They were lime green, sheer, but nothing special. She hadn't given them any real thought when she'd dressed that morning. But now ... they were damp with her arousal, almost translucent, and pulled taut against her swollen pussy lips. Could Peter tell how wet she was? She wasn't embarrassed. She wanted him to know. She slid forwards, stretching her panties tighter against her pussy. The thin fabric outlined her outer lips and dipped into the space between. Her little tuft of chestnut pubic hair made a small, soft bulge, and a few hairs escaped above the waistband.  
  
Peter's fingertips slid higher up her thighs, leaving faint pink traces. They found the bottom of her hip bones, and for the first time his hands hesitated. There was a new note in his breathing, a deep, animal rasp. Susan realized that she was making almost the same sounds. Peter's index finger trailed downwards across the front of her panties until it was directly over one of her outer lips.   
  
Susan began to tremble, and her arms suddenly seemed too weak to support her. She could feel her breasts heaving, the heat flowing from his hands up into her belly, her chest, her overheated face. She just had to take her sweater offnow. She leaned forward and pulled it over her head. Peter watched her, not sure how to react. She undid two buttons of her blouse, then shook her head. That was enough.   
  
Peter looked back to the dark place between her legs. He stroked her gently for a moment then pushed one finger against the moist fabric until it slipped between her folds. A tremor ran through Susan's body. She looked down and saw Peter's finger buried part way inside her, held back only by the thin cotton. Her rapid breathing was making her light-headed. She reached down and put her hand on Peter's cheek, then tangled her fingers in his dark, curly hair. He began to lean forward, to move towards her.  
  
No! That wasn't what she'd meant. She'd just wanted to touch him. But his face moved irresistibly closer to her pussy. She was about to say something, to let him know that this had gone far enough, when his lips brushed her inner thigh. She cried out so loudly she was sure someone in the common room must have heard her. Peter moved his hands so that they were holding her hips, his fingers sliding under the lower hem of her panties, digging into her bare flesh. He was kissing her thighs, moving closer to her center. Her hand was still tangled in his hair; she could easily push him away. But she felt his warm breath against her skin, saw his nostrils flare as he breathed her scent in. Now his tongue was tickling the straining fabric of her panties.

She spread her legs a little wider. On one side, the hem of her panties had slipped into the cleft of her pussy, exposing one outer lip. Peter roughly pulled her hips closer to his face. His tongue dragged along the silky skin at the very top of her thigh until he made contact with her soft fold, now slick with the moisture leaking from inside her. Susan inhaled sharply. She'd never felt anything like this. Her body went limp. Peter lapped at her exposed flesh, nuzzling it with his lips, licking up the moisture. Her panties dug into her pussy, almost painful.  
  
Then, abruptly, the pressure was gone. She looked down, a little dazed from the torrent of sensations. It took her a moment to understand what had happened. Peter had moved the crotch of her panties to one side. He was on his knees between her spread-open legs, staring at her bare pussy.  
  
Susan came instantly to her senses. She put her hand on Peter's and firmly removed it. She readjusted her underwear and smoothed her skirt back over her thighs.  
  
"No," she said, sighing. "I'm sorry. That's enough."  
  
Peter took a long, deep breath and stood up unsteadily. "I'm going to break it off with Kate," he said. "I'm seeing her tomorrow night. I'll do it then."  
  
Susan struggled to make sense of her feelings. Her pulse was still racing. She willed it to slow down.  
  
"No," she said. "That won't help. Kate is a little ditzy, sure. But she isn't stupid. If we start going out together, she'll know what happened. That will just make it worse."  
  
Peter rolled his eyes. Susan figured that she probably looked every bit as frustrated as he did.  
  
"We've never even been out on a date," she said, reasonably. "Who knows if we'll even like each other? But Kate's my roommate. That won't change. If she moves on to someone else – nothing personal, but she goes through guys every few weeks – well, that would be a different story."  
  
She could see Peter struggling to get himself back under control. He flopped down on his desk chair, just a couple of feet away. His hair was charmingly messed up, and a few of his shirt buttons had come undone, exposing a bit of broad, muscular chest. Well, she'd seen that before. But still ...  
  
"Give me your hands," he said.  
  
She looked at him quizzically, but put her hands out in front of her. He took them between his. She felt completely in his power.   
  
"We'll do it your way. I don't want to do anything to make you uncomfortable. But I want to see you. I want to spend time with you."  
  
She had said no the last time he'd asked. And she was still pretty sure that it was a bad idea. Things never seemed to go according to plan when he was around. But he was holding her hands, and she didn't know how to refuse him while he was doing that.   
  
She nodded. "That would be nice. But somewhere ... public. Not your room, okay?"  
  
He nodded. "Thanks for your help with the physics stuff."  
  
They looked at each other silently. Before she could stop herself, she leaned forward and kissed him on the lips. Peter pulled her close and his tongue found hers. Everything she'd felt earlier welled back up. Her hands found the sides of his face, and she wanted to fall backwards on the narrow bed, pull Peter on top of her ...  
  
But she pulled back and put her hands in her lap. "I'd better get back," she said.  
  
"Right."  
  
"I've got studying to do."  
  
She tried to stay serious, but failed completely. She started giggling. "Like that's really going to happen." She stood up.   
  
"Friends," she said firmly.  
  
He nodded. "Friends. I'll walk you back."  
  
She smiled. She felt safe with him. It was a good way to feel about a friend, wasn't it?  
  
They crossed the campus, not saying anything, listening to the night sounds. When he dropped her off in front of her dorm, she stood on her tiptoes and gave him a peck on the cheek, then ran inside. She needed a shower. Anyone who came near her would surely know what she'd been up to.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan got back to her room a few minutes later wrapped in a towel, and more muddled than ever. Kate was lying on her bed in her underwear. She rolled over slowly when Susan shut the door.  
  
"You're back late."  
  
Susan's heart suddenly started beating rapidly. "I was at a study session."  
  
Kate shook her head. "You really study too much. When are you going to have some fun?"  
  
Susan stifled a giggle. But she really didn't like being deceptive like this. It was exactly what she wanted to avoid. "Actually, I was in your boyfriend's suite. He and the guys there were studying for a physics exam."  
  
"Oh, yeah. I told him he should invite you. I figured you might meet someone while you were there."  
  
Susan shook her head. "Not really. His friends didn't make much of an impression."  
  
Kate rolled sleepily onto her back. Susan couldn't help staring at her body – the smooth legs, the feminine swell of her hips, the slightly rounded stomach, blond hair fanning out around her head, and, of course, those astonishing breasts. Even lying on her back they looked so soft and round, the dark nipples and large aureoles easily visible under her sheer bra. Did Peter really plan to ditch her? Susan wanted to believe it, but, looking at Kate, she couldn't quite. He probably wants both of us she thought ruefully. Isn't that how guys think? Hell, he'd probably like to have our whole suite in his bed.  
  
But Kate was saying something. " ... Friday night. Why don't you come?"  
  
Susan shook her head. "Sorry, I missed the first part of that."  
  
Kate grinned. "Not used to staying up so late? I said that Peter and I are going to an off-campus party Friday night. You should come."  
  
No, Susan thought. Bad idea. She really didn't want to see Kate and Peter together.  
  
"You might meet someone," Kate continued.  
  
"I don't think so," Susan said. "I really have a lot of work to do."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
But she went anyway. The alternative was another spending another Friday evening by herself, and she'd been doing too much of that lately.  
  
A car picked them up at 8 PM, already packed with party-goers, including Peter and his friend Paul (or was it Vic?) She and Kate squeezed in, Kate sitting carelessly on some guy's lap. Susan wasn't sure where they eventually ended up; somewhere in the hills above the town. She hoped that wouldn't be a problem if she decided to bail out early. The evening was chilly, and she certainly wasn't dressed for a long walk – not with the low-cut top Kate had talked her into wearing and the short skirt and heels. Of course, Kate's dress was even more daring: a powder blue number with a plunging neckline and a hem that barely made it below her butt. Nor were they overdressed, Susan decided once they'd walked into the big house at the end of a tree-lined driveway. The gathering was hip and sophisticated, at least for a college-age crowd. And the interior of the house was pretty grand too. The buzz was that mommy and daddy had bought it for one of their wealthy classmates.  
  
Susan met the wealthy classmate himself a few minutes later as he filled her champagne flute. He looked awfully stylish in a raw silk jacket and dark, slicked-back hair. Susan had to admit that he pulled off the silent movie star look pretty effectively. Mr. Smooth, she christened him before he'd had a chance to introduce himself.  
  
"I'm Ken," he said, eyeing her unabashedly from head to foot.  
  
It was actually sort of flattering, she decided, and, what the hell, she smiled back. "Susan."  
  
"Welcome," he said. "Can I show you around?"  
  
"Sure."  
  
They went downstairs first and Ken (Susan wondered if his parents named him after the doll – maybe that's where he got his hairstyle) showed her the wine cellar. She'd never actually been in one before. It was kind of cold and clammy, actually. There were racks of bottles all around and a stained-glass window at the back. Ken picked out a bottle after some deliberation.  
  
"It's a 1989 Margaux reserve," he said, holding it out for inspection. "Want to try some?"  
  
"Okay."  
  
"Let me decant it first."  
  
He made a little ceremony out of removing the cork and pouring the wine into a very spiffy-looking cut-glass container. Susan wished he'd hurry up. She was freezing. Not to mention that her nipples were stiff and very visible under her top. She hadn't worn a bra; she didn't own one that would work with what she was wearing. She wasn't sure that such a bra even existed.  
  
Ken poured them both a glass. He sniffed his, and Susan followed his lead. Wow. Just the aroma made her head spin. What did they put in this stuff? She smelled raspberries and licorice, wood smoke and half a dozen other things she couldn't quite put her finger on. It certainly wasn't anything like the jug wine someone was always sneaking into her dorm. She took a sip, and she wasn't cold anymore. It tasted like sunshine and orchards and warm summer afternoons.  
  
Ken was looking at her, amused. "What do you think?"  
  
"I've never tasted anything like it."  
  
"Not many people have. It comes from a single block of cabernet vines adjacent to the Garonne estuary. They only made one hundred cases that year."  
  
Susan didn't want to think about how much it must have cost.  
  
"Come on back upstairs." He put his hand on her bare arm and rubbed it energetically. "You're getting goose bumps. Or perhaps it's just my beguiling company?"  
  
This guy really is awfully smooth, Susan thought. I'm going to have to watch myself. "Sure, upstairs would be good. Besides," she added, because she could flirt with the best of them, "I'm not sure how much longer I can trust myself alone in the dark with you."  
  
Upstairs, the lights were low and loud music was playing. A few partiers were standing and talking in the spacious living room. A couple snuggled on a cushy love seat (what else?) Susan found herself in a conversation group that quickly surrounded Ken. They were talking about their upcoming winter-break ski trips and jaunts to the Caribbean. Ken held court comfortably, obviously used to being the center of attention.   
  
Susan used the opportunity to slip away. She couldn't help wondering what Kate and Peter were up to. She hadn't seen either of them since shortly after they'd all arrived.  
  
She wandered out to the pool. A few people she didn't know sat on deck chairs under a heat lamp. No help there. She went back inside and climbed the sweeping marble staircase that led up from the front entryway. It was a lot quieter at the top of the stairs and even darker.  
  
Someone, a slightly wobbly redhead in a seriously tight dress, stepped out into the hallway in front of her, the sound of a toilet flushing in her wake. Well, Susan thought to herself, I can always claim that I was looking for a bathroom if anyone asks. But she walked right past the door the redhead had just exited. There was another door farther down the hall that had light streaming out from underneath it. Susan stole a look back the way she'd come, then crept up to the door.  
  
A shriek of female laughter came from inside the room. It could have been Kate, but the sound was too muffled to tell for certain. Susan moved closer, until she could reach for the doorknob. Her heart was pounding. Why was she doing this? What Kate and Peter were up to was none of her business. She hesitated at the door for a minute, wanting to leave, her hand on the doorknob. Then, slowly, she began to turn it until door opened slightly. From where she was standing, she could see a little bit of the room, but mostly what she saw was someone's back – a woman's back. She was wearing a pair of form-fitting black pants and nothing else from the waist up. The woman had olive skin and shoulder-length dark hair. Obviously not Kate.  
  
Susan was about to step back when the dark-haired girl did a saucy little shimmy and began to push down on the waistband of her pants. The pants slid down over her hips, revealing a black thong and a pair of very tight buttocks. Then she began to roll the thong off as well. She bent over to step out of her clothes, poking her butt out temptingly in the process. In that position Susan could see past her to another, already naked body stretched out on a big bed. The denouement of the strip-tease elicited another shriek of drunken laughter from the person on the bed. Susan put her hand to her mouth. It was female laughter, the same voice she'd heard earlier. The dark-haired girl, now utterly naked, skipped over to join her companion on the bed.  
  
Susan swallowed hard, trying hard not to make any noise. She couldn't stop staring. For one thing, she recognized the woman on the bed from her English lit class. They'd studied together a couple of times. Now Susan wouldn't ever be able to look at her the same way again. Was this what college was about? She took a step backwards. She didn't really need to see this. As with Kate and Peter, it was none of her business. But she hesitated. Her only experience with lesbians was from watching girl-girl scenes in porn movies, and she was pretty sure that didn't have much to do with reality. The idea wasn't distasteful to her, exactly. She'd just never really been tempted, nor had the opportunity ever presented itself. She admired other women's bodies, especially lush, feminine ones like Kate's – so different from her own slim, athletic form. Maybe she could watch just a little, see what it was really like. She checked nervously up and down the dark hallway, then moved back towards the door.   
  
The two bodies were stretched out on the bed, arms wrapped around each other. There was nothing frantic about their motions. They were stroking each other, a hand running softly over the swell of a hip, a fingertip tracing the curve of an earlobe. It looked nice, actually. She wished she could meet a guy who would treat her that way. Her heart rate accelerated again. She could go in, offer to join them. It was a pretty good bet they'd happily take her up on it. If she didn't try things like this in college, when would she? It was the time in her life for experimenting ...  
  
Susan took a deep breath and shook her head. No. It looked sweet and comforting, but it wasn't what she really wanted. She wanted Peter.  
  
Maybe, Susan thought, I should use that bathroom after all.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
After a few minutes spent rinsing her face and getting herself together, Susan went back out into the hallway. Nothing else seemed to be going on in any of the rooms farther down. She felt oddly relieved. There was another stairway at the far end of the corridor, and she decided to head down. The stairs stopped at a landing, turned, then ended in what looked to be an office. There were bookshelves and a big desk and a leather couch that faced the stairs. Two people sat on the couch, tangled up with each other, a boy and a girl. The boy had tousled dark hair, and the girl was a blond.   
  
Peter and Kate.  
  
So, she'd finally found them. What had she expected anyway? That they'd be playing chess? She watched them for a moment, totally involved in one another. It wasn't hard to guess what would happen next. Susan sighed. She really should head back the way she'd come and leave them alone.  
  
The couple shifted on the couch, and Susan froze, holding her breath. Had they seen her? No, she decided. Nor were they likely to. They'd have to turn part-way around and look up into the shadows before they'd notice her on the landing. She almost laughed. This was just like the night Kate had brought Peter back to their room. Only, this time, it would be easy enough to just leave them to themselves. And that's exactly what I should do, Susan thought.   
  
She half-turned to go back upstairs, then stopped when she saw Kate lean over and undo Peter's belt buckle. Kate giggled as Peter started to push his pants down. He had to stop and remove his shoes before he could finish the operation. Despite herself, Susan had to smile at his frustration – he just couldn't get his shoelaces unknotted. Kate kept working his pants down anyway. As his boxers came into view, Peter's state of arousal became obvious. Susan's heart began to beat harder in her chest.  
  
Peter was still struggling to get his pants off, but Kate couldn't wait. She grabbed his shorts and pulled at them, growing more and more frantic as the fabric hung up on his erection. Finally, Peter reached up to help her and his cock popped free. Kate made a happy giggle and leaned over to take him into her mouth. Peter slid forward on the couch to give her better access.  
  
Susan felt paralyzed. She could see Kate's lips sink all the way down into the curly dark hair at the base of his shaft, then slide up until the tip came free. She licked around the base of the head, making Peter groan and jerk his hips upwards. Kate swallowed his cock again, lowering her head deep into his crotch. Susan hugged herself miserably. There was an urgency to their motions that stirred the now-familiar feelings deep inside of her. She felt the irresistible pressure building in her loins. Her face flushed crimson. She just couldn't stop watching them.  
  
The strain was showing on Peter's face too. His body stiffened. Was he going to come already? Kate must have sensed it too. She sat up, releasing his cock. Peter gasped, breathing hard, obviously disappointed. Kate leaned over and gave him a deep, languorous kiss. She broke it after a minute and pulled her dress up to expose her legs all the way up to her panties. She lifted her hips off the couch, reached beneath the dress and rolled her panties up and over her thighs until they hung uselessly around one ankle. Peter just stared as she spread her legs apart. Even from twenty feet away Susan could see the moisture coating her puffy pussy lips.  
  
Peter was still mesmerized. Kate lowered her body sideways until she was lying on her back, her wide-spread thighs gyrating slowly, her pussy dripping onto the couch cushion. Peter finally broke out of his trance and crawled awkwardly into a horizontal position between Kate's legs. He struggled to get out of his pants and shorts, and his shirt was still partially on as well. To Susan's disappointment, the shirt was just long enough to cover most of his butt. She wanted to see all of him, just like the last time. She doubted she'd ever get another chance.  
  
Peter aligned his hips over Kate's. She reached between them to nudge his cock head into position, and he pushed in all at once. Kate drew in her breath sharply. She wrapped her hands around his butt and pulled him all the way inside her. Susan hugged herself tighter as Peter began to move. Her own pussy began to throb in time with Peter's thrusts, begging to be touched. Not here, she told herself desperately. I can't. Not here. Not now.  
  
Kate began to lift her hips to meet his, and their bodies collided with loud, wet slaps. Again, Peter stiffened. His motions became jerky and he moved faster. Kate put her hands on his chest. She pushed him back onto the couch and wriggled out from underneath him. Peter almost collapsed. Poor guy, Susan thought. How much more of this can he take? But Kate knew exactly what she was doing. She got onto her knees at one end of the couch and bent her upper body over the arm. Peter just looked at her for a moment. His cock was slick with Kate's fluids and stuck out like a pole, the head a dark, angry red.  
  
Kate looked back at him, her expression a glazed half-smile. Her bare butt swayed in slow, seductive circles.  
  
"Come on," she whispered. "Put it back in. You know I like it this way."  
  
Her voice shook Peter out of his stupor. He knelt on the couch behind her and grabbed her hips. He positioned his cock and drove it in with a low growl. The sound penetrated deep into Susan's being. She couldn't move, couldn't even blink. Peter rammed into Kate's pussy, their bodies coming together harder and harder, Kate's voice rising in pitch with each stroke, Peter's partly-hidden buttocks tightening as he drove forward. Sweat was making his shirt stick to his back, and his hands dug into her hips ...

And then something was different.   
  
For a moment Susan didn't react; she couldn't quite make sense out of what was happening to her, couldn't drag her attention away from the primal scene in front of her. There was a pressure on her back, she realized, and on her shoulder. There was a tickling against her neck and a low voice whispering.  
  
"Shhh. Don't speak. It's Ken."  
  
She started to pull away, to scream, but Ken's voice calmed her.  
  
"It's just me. I didn't mean to frighten you."  
  
Susan began to shake, but she didn't answer. She was afraid of making any noise. She didn't know what to do. Ken was standing directly behind her on the landing, kissing her neck and stroking her arm softly. She'd been so wrapped up looking at Kate and Peter that she hadn't heard him.  
  
"I've been watching too. They're pretty amazing." Ken's voice was a low, seductive murmur. His hand kept stroking her arm while his other hand moved along her hip. His animal warmth flowed through the thin fabric to her skin.  
  
"I was just ... I got kind of lost," Susan breathed.  
  
"That's all right," Ken said.  
  
The pressure from behind increased. She felt a hard protrusion pushing her skirt between her buttocks. She tried to twist away, but his arms held her on both sides. Well, they were just stroking her, really. But, somehow, the contact, the rhythmic touch kept her where she was. Susan's shuddered, her heart beating so hard now she couldn't think. What should she do?  
  
"Look at that," Ken whispered.  
  
Peter had pushed Kate's dress up over her back so that almost all of her body was exposed. Kate was screaming now with each of his thrusts. Ken's hands stroked Susan's arm and hip in synchrony with the couple's motions, as if he were an extension of Peter's body.  
  
"Your skin is so smooth," Ken said.   
  
His hand moved from her arm and began to wrap around her. One fingertip brushed the bare skin above the top of her dress, where her breasts began to swell out from her chest. Her nipples were already as hard as pebbles. When he dragged his thumb across the fabric covering one of them, Susan jumped and had to bite her lip to keep from screaming.  
  
Ken kissed her neck again and nuzzled his lips along her ear. "You really are very beautiful," he said.  
  
The hand on her hip inched downward until it found the hem of her skirt. She should have worn something longer, she realized, fighting off panic. She should have worn a bra. She shouldn't have come to the party at all ...  
  
His hand moved under the hem and touched her leg, burning hot on her bare skin. It slid upward along her outer thigh until it came to rest on her hip. Susan was breathing so hard it hurt her throat.  
  
"Look at them," Ken was saying.  
  
Peter had finally pulled his shirt off, and Susan could see the muscles working in his back as he pumped into Kate. Their bodies were moving together smoothly now, their rhythm steady, sweat trickling along Peter's shoulder blades and shining on Kate's butt.  
  
Maybe they could just stay like this, she and Ken, watching together, his hands holding her ... almost gently. Susan started to relax a little. She felt ... she wasn't sure how she felt. It was okay somehow to watch if there were two of you. It seemed more like an intimate act, less of a violation.  
  
But Ken's hands didn't stay still. The one roaming across her chest pulled one strap of her top down off her shoulder. He pulled it lower still until her right breast came free. Susan's body turned rigid. Anyone walking by could see her! The smelly guy she'd squeezed in next to on the ride over, or Peter's stupid friend. Or Peter himself – all he had to do was to turn towards the stairs ...  
  
"Lovely," Ken said. "You're even more beautiful naked."   
  
He put his hand over her breast and stroked her lightly. The nipple was so sensitive – every brush of his fingers sent a jolt through her that made her back arch. She whimpered and her legs began to wobble. She had to lean further back against him just to stay upright, driving the bulge in his pants deeper into the crevice between her cheeks. His lips kept kissing her neck and her ear. His other hand began to play with the waistband of her panties.  
  
It all seemed so unreal – Peter and Kate in their endless liquid rhythm, the big dark house, Ken whispering in her ear, the rigid cock jammed against her bottom. Was any of it really happening? She noted absently that Peter had pulled out of Kate and had sat back on the couch. His eyes were closed and he was trying to catch his breath. His cock stood up from his lap, wet and shiny and quivering slightly. God, he looked hot, Susan thought.  
  
Kate must have thought so too. She stood up, shook back her hair and straddled him. Peter groaned, and Susan wondered if he was really ready for the next act of their performance. But Kate was insatiable. She lowered herself a bit and tilted her hips until they were lined up properly, then settled down onto his lap with a soft cry. She put her hands on Peter's shoulders and began to slide her hips up and down. Susan could see the thick shaft of Peter's cock as Kate rose up and his balls at its base, stretched tight.  
  
God, Susan thought, I can't watch any more of this. Just then Ken's fingers slipped under the waistband of her panties and began ruffling the soft patch of hair above her pussy. His hand paused, waiting to see if she would resist. But Susan couldn't move, couldn't speak. Too many sensations were flooding into her head. She kept trying to sort them out as Ken's fingers went lower, until his palm covered her pussy and his index finger began stroking her swollen outer lips.  
  
Now, Susan thought, I have to do something. I have to ...  
  
But she couldn't stop staring at Peter's thick hard cock and the flesh of Kate's butt as it jiggled with each wet impact. And all she could think about was where she wanted to be touched next, where she was the most sensitive ...  
  
He was playing with her pussy lips now, pushing them apart, smearing them with her own moisture. He was teasing her, toying with her, and she just couldn't wait any longer. She rotated her hips reflexively ... and suddenly his index finger slipped inside her, brushing against her clit as it sank deep into her most private place. Streaks of light arced in front of her eyes. Her legs trembled and then gave way. Ken's arm steadied her, but she couldn't remain upright. She was down awkwardly on one knee, breathing in gasps; then she was lying sprawled on her back on the carpet of the landing, her legs spread, her skirt bunched up at her hips.  
  
The feeling of blurry unreality returned. Maybe it had something to do with her breathing so hard. She thought about her panties. She knew Ken could see them, the way she was lying with her legs so far apart. They were soaked; they must be nearly transparent. But that didn't really matter, because a moment later he was kneeling over her, pulling them down her legs as Susan lifted her hips to help him. She was happy to be rid of them. She liked the feeling – the cool night air against her bare pussy.  
  
She raised her head a little. Ken had positioned himself over her, his weight on his elbows. Mostly what she could see of him was the top of his head and lots of well-groomed brown hair. His head dipped down and she could feel his tongue tickling her exposed breast, licking little circles around the nipple. Then he sucked the whole breast into his mouth. Susan choked back a cry. No one had ever done that to her before, and it put her senses into overload. She couldn't keep anything in focus. Now he had the nipple between his lips and was flicking it with his tongue. She reached down, wanting to run her fingers through his hair, to pull him closer, but suddenly he wasn't there.  
  
The sensations ebbed, and Susan tried to collect her thoughts. She raised her head again and found that Ken had moved down between her legs. He breathed in deeply, inhaling her scent. His tongue nuzzled her inner thigh and lapped at her pussy lips, licking up her moisture. He made a deep growl as he tasted her. Peter had tried to do the same thing just a few days earlier, and she'd stopped him. But she couldn't stop Ken, she couldn't stop herself. Not tonight. She loved the way his lips felt on her skin, caressing her, exploring her, drinking her ... Her hips bucked up; and then his mouth was everywhere, probing inside her, nibbling on her inner lips, searching for her clit. Susan tried to stay quiet, but she couldn't. She began to moan as he swirled his tongue around inside her; she could feel her clit swelling, the tip of his tongue moving against it ...   
  
And then, suddenly, nothing else mattered. There wasn't a psychology paper due on Monday, or a boyfriend she wanted but couldn't have, or a roommate who drove her crazy. There were only Ken's lips and her breath coming fast and hard and a rising orgasm she couldn't control. Her hips thrashed, jamming into Ken's face.  
  
"I want ... please, I want you to ..." She couldn't catch her breath long enough to finish. But Ken already seemed to know what she wanted. His tongue began to churn around her clit, licking over the top of it, pushing it back and forth. His hands slipped under her bottom, gripping her buttocks. The molten pressure in her loins built unbearably ...  
  
Then Ken let go of her. Susan groaned in frustration. She wanted his fingers there, squeezing her flesh, digging into her. But then his hands were back on her thighs, forcing her legs farther apart. She was completely open, completely exposed. His thumbs worked her pussy lips farther apart, allowing his tongue to reach even deeper. Susan whimpered and her hips bucked uncontrollably against his face. Her hands grabbed at the carpet. Then Ken's lips surrounded her swollen clit and sucked it hard into his mouth.  
  
Susan screamed as her orgasm ripped through her. Her body spasmed and her legs pulled up against her chest as she twisted to one side. Ken's head was trapped between her thighs, his face still buried in her crotch. His lips kept lathing her clit and lapping up the moisture that flooded out of her.  
  
"Stop," she managed to gasp. "I can't stand any more." She was almost crying. "Ken, please ..."  
  
But his tongue kept moving against her, his lips nibbling, caressing. Another orgasm hit her. The wine, the two women on the bed, Peter and Kate, Ken's voice and his hands and his lips. She just couldn't help herself. She let out a long wail as her body shook and tried to turn inside out.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan blinked. There was a face above her, looking concerned.  
  
"Susan, are you okay? You just sort of went limp."  
  
She took a deep breath. The face was Ken's. She liked the way his voice sounded. More like a real person; less like a talking doll.  
  
"I guess I passed out for a second. Wow. That's never happened before."  
  
Ken grinned. "I'm flattered."  
  
Susan blushed. "Yeah."  
  
She reached up and put a hand on his cheek. It felt nice. Warm and freshly shaven. She leaned forward and kissed him lightly on the lips. "Can you give me a ride home?"  
  
"Of course."  
  
Susan's head was clearing. She sat up and looked around. They were alone.  
  
"What happened to Kate and Peter?"  
  
Ken looked confused for a moment. "Who? The couple on the couch? They scooped up their clothes and left – pretty quickly. I think they got a little spooked. We were sort of ... noisy."  
  
"You mean I was noisy."  
  
Ken looked a little embarrassed. That's sweet, Susan thought. She leaned over and kissed him again. The kissed started off as playful and friendly, but then Ken's arms came around her shoulders and her lips parted and their tongues found each other.  
  
After a minute, Susan pulled back, breathing hard. "Lie down," she said. "On your back."  
  
Ken looked uncertain, but followed orders. Susan got up onto her knees and began to unbuckle his pants.  
  
"Hey," he said. "You don't have to ..."  
  
"I want to," she whispered, her voice suddenly low and urgent.  
  
She noticed for the first time how excited he was. His loose linen trousers bulged impressively. Her fingers felt clumsy. She couldn't get the belt undone at first, and then she struggled with the button at the top of his fly. She took a breath to steady herself and finally managed to work the button loose. The zipper was easy, and Ken lifted his hips so that he could pull his pants down. He was wearing blue-and-white striped boxers, the fabric pulled taut by his engorged cock. She just stared at his crotch for a moment, wondering if she had the nerve to go on. She could see the tip of his cock outlined beneath the thin material, straining to get out. A fat dome with a slight cleft on the inner side and a prominent ridge where the head met the shaft. As she watched, his cock twitched a little and a small wet spot began to form above the tip.  
  
Susan ran her tongue across her lips. Her hands were still shaking, but she reached down and stroked the head of his cock through his shorts. Ken inhaled sharply. Susan liked the feeling of his warm, firm skin beneath the sheer fabric. She stroked him again, this time trailing her fingers down further so that they outlined his balls. Ken twitched again, and the wet patch on his shorts spread. She took a deep breath. Now or never.   
  
She grabbed the waistband of his shorts and lifted it gingerly. Again, Ken raised his hips. Susan maneuvered the boxers over the end of his cock and tugged them down to his knees. She giggled to herself. He sure doesn't look much like a Ken doll now. His cock stood straight up from a nest of brown curly hair. It was thick and sturdy with a dark, pulsating vein running up its length from his balls. The circumcised head was flushed a dark red. She just gaped for a moment, feeling a little faint.  
  
She steadied herself and put her hands on his thighs, moving them upwards towards his balls and touching him so lightly that she could feel the rustle of his fine brown hair against her palms.  
  
Ken sighed. "That's really nice."  
  
She stroked his thighs again, letting her fingers linger for a moment at the bottom of his scrotum. His cock twitched hard. Was she tickling him, she wondered? No, that was something else, something more powerful. The skin around his balls was meltingly smooth and almost hot to the touch. She traced the shape of one testicle, then the other before drawing her finger up the shaft along the vein. She could feel the blood thudding inside it. Why did that excite her so much? And the feel of the skin along the ridge that separated the shaft from the head – it was like velvet.  
  
Susan couldn't wait any longer. She leaned closer, near enough to smell the need that steamed from his groin. His musk filled her head. She was fascinated by how alive his cock was, blood-filled, straining up towards her. There was a bead of clear liquid oozing from the very tip. As she watched, the tiny slit pulsed and more liquid dripped down into the cleft in the head.  
  
She couldn't help herself. She swirled her tongue over the tip and licked up the pre-cum. It tasted like ... she wasn't sure what it tasted like. Like nothing. Like sex. The little taste wasn't enough. She leaned down further and covered the entire tip with her mouth, pushing the little slip open with her tongue. Ken groaned, and his body jerked upwards, shoving more of his cock into her mouth. Susan gagged and pulled back, struggling to catch her breath.  
  
"Hey, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to do that. It's just that ... the thing you did with your tongue ... it just ... wow."  
  
Susan smiled. So she could surprise even this sophisticated preppie.  
  
"Could you ... you know, do it some more?"  
  
Yes, she thought, I definitely can. Susan had always been intimidated by blowjobs. There was such a mystique surrounding them. And her high school boyfriend hadn't been very complimentary about her efforts. But she really wanted to do it now. His cock, slick with her saliva, exerted an almost magnetic attraction. She moved around so that she could get a better angle and leaned over again to surround the head with her lips. She could feel his heartbeat below its smooth surface. She ran her tongue along the big vein. The skin felt a little different there, it gave more when she pressed the tip of her tongue against it. The rest of the shaft was so firm by comparison. Her lips just molded around it, sliding down so smoothly that the tip hit the back of her throat before she was ready for it. She loved that feeling, his cock touching her everywhere, his musk filling her nostrils, her nose nuzzling his pubic hair.  
  
She felt Ken twitching and, a very long way away, heard his groans. She reached down to hold his balls. Semen was building inside; the sac stretched tight.  
  
"Oh, God," Ken groaned, and a shudder ran through his body. His cock seemed to grow bigger in her throat, pushing deeper. He held him there, sucking air through her nose. She felt the first blast, white-hot and slippery. She swallowed hard, trying to stay with him, but she couldn't. There was just too much of it. She sat up, releasing his cock from her mouth wetly. Ken groaned again and his body twisted as another spurt flew towards her. Susan watched in fascination as he emptied himself, his hips bucking, grunts escaping from him with each burst.  
  
Gradually, his orgasm subsided and his labored breathing eased. Globs of cum coated his stomach and his partly unbuttoned shirt, and some of it had even ended up on his pants and shoes. His cock had jumped around like a fire hose after she'd let go of it. What a mess.  
  
Ken looked a little sheepish. "I should ... probably change before I drive you back. Is that all right?"  
  
Susan leaned over and kissed him lightly. "Of course. I'll wait."  
  
"Are you sure you don't want to stay over tonight? I whip up some mean blueberry pancakes ..."  
  
Susan frowned. Mr. Smooth was threatening to return. "Maybe next time." She kissed him again and stood up. "I'll be downstairs."  
  
Ken struggled to his feet, holding his pants up with one hand. "Right," he said, hobbling off. "I'll be down in a minute."  
  
Susan tried to return to reality as she straightened out her clothes. She had no idea where her panties had ended up. Well, never mind. They were a hopeless mess anyway. More consequential was the thought that she'd have to face Kate and Peter at some point. What had they seen? Did they realize that it was her on the landing? Or had they just seen a pair of bare legs wrapped around Ken's head? And even if they had recognized her, what difference did it really make? What had happened was her own affair. She didn't belong to anyone.  
  
But it did bother her. She couldn't help it. She wanted Peter to think well of her. She didn't want him to think that she'd spread her legs for any smooth operator who handed her a nice glass of wine. And that wasn't really what had happened. There was more to Ken. She was sure about that. Pretty sure, anyway. Not that it mattered – she was under no illusions that she'd ever see him again. But watching Peter and Kate go at it – that would blow away anyone's inhibitions. Even after cumming harder than she could ever remember doing in her life, she could feel a pressure building again in her loins just thinking about Peter's butt tightening as he plunged into Kate from behind, his skin shining with sweat. Stop it, she said to herself. It's time to go home. Long past time.   
  
But she knew it wasn't over. Things couldn't just stay the way they were.  
  
Susan took a deep breath, composed herself, and walked downstairs.

**College Girls Ch. 02**

The morning was chilly, but Susan still felt like having breakfast outside. Almost as soon as she'd sat down she heard someone coming up behind her. She looked up from her yogurt and saw Peter standing nearby, shifting nervously from one foot to the other.  
  
"You know my habits," she said, smiling. "Join me?"  
  
Peter shook his head. "I'd love to, but I'm kind of late. I was hoping that I'd run into you so that ... I could invite you to dinner on Thursday." The last part came out a little too quickly.   
  
She smiled again. She liked it when he was shy and uncertain. She hadn't seen Peter since the party at Ken's house the previous week, and ... well, she missed him. She missed him a lot. He'd said that he wanted to spend some time with her; and she'd been waiting with increasing impatience for him to ask. But she needed to be clear.   
  
"Just dinner?"  
  
Peter nodded. His confidence was returning. "Yes, just dinner. But there's something I'd like to show you afterwards."  
  
Susan giggled – she couldn't help herself. "Nothing of yours, I hope?"  
  
"I wish. It's cylindrical and enormous, but it belongs to a friend of mine."  
  
She played along. "I hope you'll introduce me."  
  
"Well, he'll be out for the evening. But I'm looking after it for him."  
  
Susan shook her head. "I give up."  
  
"Good. 7:30?"  
  
\* \* \*  
  
They picked a restaurant where they weren't likely to see anyone they knew. Susan had to take a cab to get there, which was extravagant. But that was her fault. She had wanted to do it that way. Peter was waiting in a booth at the back, looking dapper in a black button-down oxford shirt. Susan looked around, a little furtively. An older man, out with his wife, eyed her appreciatively. But there wasn't anyone she recognized.  
  
"It feels like we're having an affair," she said. "But without any of the good parts."  
  
"We could fix that ..." Peter said hopefully.  
  
She gave him a scowl that was only partly playful, and he dropped the subject. They chatted comfortably after that, like old friends. Susan felt unexpectedly happy. It was because she didn't feel any pressure, she realized. There was no place their relationship was supposed to go, nothing she felt she should or shouldn't do or say. As Peter told her about the anthropology field work he'd done the previous summer, Susan relaxed even more. Maybe they really could just be friends. She'd like that.  
  
By the time dinner was over, Susan was giggling at everything Peter said, even if it wasn't meant to be funny. She was still a little giddy as they left the restaurant and got into his car. He drove into the hills north of town. For a moment, Susan was afraid that Peter was going to suggest they park on the ridge up there that looked out over the city lights and make out like high-school kids. She tensed up at the thought. But no, he kept on driving, and Susan felt oddly disappointed.   
  
They reached an elegant-looking house with a large open yard behind it. The house was dark and had that slightly creepy no-one's-home look. Susan glanced at Peter a little suspiciously, but he just pointed towards the back yard and a small round building a little distance from the main house. Peter seemed to have a key for it. Her first impression of the dim interior left her more puzzled than ever. They'd stepped into a small room dominated by a desk laden with computers and humming electronic equipment. There was a big, comfy-looking couch against the opposite wall and a door that presumably led deeper into the building.  
  
Susan leaned close to Peter, conspiratorially, and lowered her voice. "So you're a spy? Is that it? I'd always suspected as much."  
  
He grinned. "Yes, well, I knew I'd have to tell you sooner or later." He looked insufferably smug. "Actually, this is called the 'warm room'."  
  
"Implying a cold room somewhere nearby?"  
  
He indicated the inside door. "Right this way."  
  
They stepped through the door and into a larger and even darker space with a concrete floor. It was indeed quite chilly. As her eyes adjusted, Susan could make out a metal framework that formed a large cylinder mounted at an angle to a steel pipe. She nodded, finally getting it.  
  
"An observatory."  
  
"Right. One of the biggest private ones in the state, apparently. Built by a friend of mine named Jason. If you ever meet him he'll tell you all about it. Just make sure you don't have anything else planned for that evening. Anyway, you said that you were interested in astronomy."  
  
Susan looked around, trying to take it all in.  
  
"Of course," Peter continued, "if I had his money, I'd probably buy a Lamborghini instead ..."  
  
"That's because you're shallow and narcissistic."  
  
"Right. I love you too."  
  
Susan let that one slide. "How does it work?" she asked, pointing to the telescope. "Can we look through it?"  
  
"That's why we're here. You can control everything from the warm room, if you want to stay, you know, warm. But then you'll just be looking at a computer screen. It's just not the same. It's like looking at a photograph of someone instead of the real person."  
  
Peter studied her for a moment and smiled. She smiled back. "Not that I wouldn't mind having a photograph of you," he said.  
  
"Later. How do you turn it on or whatever?"  
  
Peter sighed. "I don't know the details. Jason just left it set up in idiot mode for me. Any favorite objects you'd like to look at?"  
  
She thought about that for a second. "Sure. How about the Andromeda galaxy? Can you do that?"  
  
"I'll try."   
  
He walked up to a small display screen at the base of the telescope. He typed something and the roof of the building slid open slowly. Very cool, Susan thought. I want one of these for my bedroom for warm summer nights. The telescope slewed around and settled into a position pointing almost straight up.  
  
"I guess Andromeda is near the zenith at the moment." He peered into the eyepiece and nodded. "Have a look. You might have to re-focus."  
  
Susan studied the instrument for a moment. There was a big camera attachment off to one side. Otherwise, it looked like a lot like the little telescope she'd pestered her dad to buy for her when she was fourteen and all her friends wanted ponies. She had to lean over quite a bit to get her head lined up properly with the eyepiece. She noticed Peter taking advantage of her position to admire the way her black pants stretched over her rear. She smiled to herself and ignored him. She tweaked the focusing knob until ...  
  
"Oh, my god, there it is!"  
  
A swirl of stars filled her field of vision, brilliantly clear and surprisingly colorful. She'd seen photographs of this galaxy – she even had an astronomy book that had it on its cover. But Peter was right. Really seeing it ... It was like going to Paris and actually seeing the Eiffel Tower or the Mona Lisa.  
  
"I guess this is why people have telescopes," Susan said. "Normal people, I mean. Not scientists."  
  
"Well, I'm not sure that Jason fully qualifies as normal ..."  
  
"You're just jealous. How long have you known him?"  
  
"About a month."  
  
"Just a month? And he lets you use his observatory when he isn't around?"  
  
"I think he sees me as a kindred spirit. I'm not sure that's an entirely good thing."  
  
Peter was grinning, though. He fiddled with the keyboard again. "Here's a globular cluster Jason showed me. I like all the purples and blues. But, really, you can point this thing just about anywhere and it's one wonder after another."  
  
They traded smiles as Peter moved the telescope around. The ring nebula in Lyra was wisp of blue vapor, the crab nebula like the chaos of a Jackson Pollock canvas. Susan felt like a kid in a candy store. But there was something Peter had said that was bothering her.  
  
"You just met Jason a month ago? About the same time we met?"  
  
"The next day, actually. You told me that you were interested in astronomy, so I asked my physics professor if he knew any amateurs in the area who had telescopes. He introduced me to Jason."  
  
"Wow. Just so you could take me here?"  
  
"Pretty much, yes."  
  
"What would you have done if I'd told you that I was interested in lion taming?"  
  
Peter looked at the floor. "Are you angry?"  
  
"No. Not at all. I think that was really sweet. I'm just ... surprised, I guess. That you'd go to that much trouble."  
  
"No trouble at all. I think it's just as cool as you do. Okay, cool isn't the right word. It's really pretty nerdy. But it got me alone with you in a dark room, right?"  
  
She nodded and took a step closer to him. "Yes. It did. So what are you going to do about it?"  
  
They were facing each other, only a few inches apart. The invitation had been as clear as she could make it. She hadn't planned it this way. Exactly the opposite, actually. But something had changed. Her reservations had evaporated the instant she'd looked into the eyepiece. Why? Were galaxies and nebulae erotic? There was no time to wonder about that. A heartbeat later there was no distance at all between them. Peter lifted her chin and kissed her. Her arms went around his neck, pulling them even closer together, and his warmth flowed into her, dissolving the chill of the observatory.  
  
After a long time, Peter broke the kiss. "There's a couch in the warm room," he said.  
  
Susan nodded, barely able to speak. "Okay."  
  
Her legs began to shake as she followed him into the small room, and she had to sit down on the couch. Her hands were clumsy as she tried to undo her blouse; the buttons on her sleeves took three or four tries. She kicked off her shoes, unzipped her pants and shimmied out of them. She was wearing her prettiest underwear – light blue, sheer and silky. The high cut of the panties exposed the sides of her hips, and her nipples, hard as pebbles, were easily visible through the filmy fabric of the bra. Without admitting it to herself, she was thinking this might happen when she'd dressed that evening.  
  
"These stay on," she said, indicating her wispy underthings. "'Cause, you know."  
  
Peter sighed. "Yeah, I know."  
  
He wasn't doing much better than she had with the buttons on his shirt. She waited, sitting nervously on the edge of the couch, looking down, her hands in her lap, feeling very vulnerable and exposed. The rustling of clothes seemed to go on for a long time. When she finally looked up, Peter was standing next to her, completely naked.  
  
"Oh," she said, flustered. She'd expected him to leave his shorts on, to sort of keep things even. She thought about asking him to put some clothes back on, but that seemed a little ridiculous. And ... well, she really wanted to look at him. When she'd seen him before it had been so furtive, through half-closed eyes in her dorm or across that dark room in Ken's house. But here he was, right in front of her, all of him: the smooth columns of his legs, the neat rows and columns on his taut stomach, the muscles playing in his arms as he reached for her. And his cock sticking straight up, long and pale and quivering slightly. She wanted to wrap her hands around it; she'd wanted to since the night she first saw him, and now there it was, just a few inches away ...   
  
But she couldn't quite bring herself to do it, not yet. She reached out tentatively and laid one hand on his chest instead. He stood still and let her caress him. His skin was soft, but she was always aware of the muscles beneath it, tough and vital. She ran her hand down his stomach and along his hip. Without exactly meaning to, her arm brushed against the tip of his cock. Peter shuddered.  
  
Susan pulled her hand away quickly. No. She couldn't do it. She couldn't touch him there. Being half-naked like this was all right, somehow. But that would take her somewhere else, somewhere she couldn't let herself go.  
  
Peter hesitated, then sat down beside her on the couch and leaned over to kiss her. That was better, much better. She let the kiss swallow all her thoughts until she was completely lost in it, her eyes closing, her body bending towards his. She realized vaguely that his hands were on her bare shoulders and without meaning to she was falling slowly backward until she was lying on her back. Peter shifted his body until he was alongside her and his lips found hers again. So much of him was touching her; what they'd done before had been so fleeting, a quick kiss, a few touches. This felt so much more complete. They could take their time, explore each other.  
  
He lay between her thighs now and the hair on his legs tickled her sensitive skin. She put her hands on his shoulders tentatively and ran them down his back, bumping over his ribcage, wanting to feel the firmness of his butt. She'd been dying to touch it since she'd watched him from behind, pumping in and out of Kate as she lay bent over the arm of Ken's couch. Susan moved her fingertips a little further down, to where his buttocks began to curve up from his lower back. Peter's kisses became more urgent; his tongue probed deeper into her mouth. Susan's pussy throbbed so badly she could barely stand it. Peter shifted down a little until his cock, brutally hard now, pressed against her mound. Oh, god, she thought. I have to have him.  
  
His hips shifted back, easing the pressure for a moment. Susan tried to catch her breath. And then suddenly she felt the head of his cock pushing the fabric of her panties into her pussy. The tip, all of it, strained at her opening. If it weren't for that little bit of cloth he'd be ...  
  
Peter grunted and jerked his hips forward, desperate to drive himself deeper inside. Susan's body didn't know how to react, the wanting him and not wanting him left her paralyzed, her eyes wide, her mouth open. Finally, Peter took a deep breath and willed himself to stop. He lifted himself onto his elbows, his chest heaving, sweat beading on his forehead.  
  
"I'm sorry," he said. "I just lost control ..."  
  
"I know," Susan said thickly. Me too."  
  
He collected himself for a moment then leaned down to kiss her neck. She closed her eyes and let her fingers stray across his butt, following the curve of the taut muscles. His lips grazed her skin, his breath warming each spot. He kissed her along the edge of her bra strap, stopping as he reached the top of one cup. Then he surprised her by pulling the strap down until the cup had peeled partway back, exposing the top of her breast and a sliver of pink aureole. Susan saw his nostrils flare, his eyes move down her chest.  
  
I'll stop him if he pulls it any lower, she thought, not sure if she really would. But he didn't. He just dragged his tongue across the flushed, sensitive skin below her neck. His hand moved between their bodies, stroking her belly, tracing the edge of her hip, teasing the skin above her panties.  
  
And then he did it again, grabbing the top of her panties and pulling them down. Susan gasped when she realized what had happened. The waistband was now halfway down her hips, freeing a puff of pubic hair. The protection her minimal clothing provided had become even more ephemeral. Peter looked down at her, his eyes lingering on the remaining triangles of fabric. He moved his head down until he could kiss the newly exposed skin just above her bra. She let out a sharp cry as the tip of his tongue moved across the boundary that marked where the darker-pink skin of her aureole began. The tiny bumps offered more resistance than the smooth skin of her breast, and the infinitesimal friction sent sparks through her entire body. She couldn't stand it. If he were to rip the rest of her clothing off right now she wouldn't stop him. She wanted to beg him to do it now, to suck her whole breast into his mouth, to slip his fingers into her pussy. But she couldn't, she just couldn't. He kept licking along the edge of her bra. He wormed the tip of his tongue under it until he found where her nipple began to rise, the skin there pulled tight, painfully hard and blindingly sensitive. He tickled and nuzzled and worried the tiny bit of flesh until she ground her pussy against his thigh and let out a sharp moan.  
  
Peter pulled back, startled at the violence of her reaction. Susan let go of him and lay back, her eyes closed, her barely-covered breasts slick with perspiration. She wanted his mouth back on her skin; she wanted him to kiss her everywhere, on every inch of her exposed flesh. And tonight, at least, he seemed so perfectly attuned to her unspoken desires that he did exactly that. His nose tickled along the gentle curve of her stomach, his tongue flicked into her belly button. He stroked along the insides of her arms and blew gently on her inner thighs, setting all of her alight, leaving her buoyant and breathless.   
  
She wasn't sure how much time passed. His lips and his tongue never seemed to tire of her. As he worked his way closer to her center, Susan realized that her panties had been pulled awry and the narrow strip of fabric between her legs had sunk into her pussy, leaving her swollen outer lips exposed. The same thing had happened in his dorm room. But this time she didn't have the strength to fight it. She just sighed and let her legs move a little further apart. She felt Peter's breath at the junction of her thighs and then the gentle rasp of his tongue, exploring the bare, puffy flesh, flushed pink now and fragrant with her juices. He licked her everywhere, sucking the folds between his lips, teasing along the edge of the bunched fabric that just barely blocked his access to her deepest recesses.  
  
Her arousal deepened like a cat's purring, like the electric hum of the equipment in the room, steady and powerful, saturating every part of her. She hardly noticed when Peter moved back on top of her and their limbs entwined. He had so many different textures, his neck so soft, the muscles in his chest so dense, and his cock ... it was like silk, like horn, like iron, burning hot and sticky-wet at the tip. Then their lips met and that felt more like sex than anything else they'd done so far. All the touching, the licking, that was just ... playing, fooling around, something friends might do together if they'd had too much to drink or just felt closer than usual. She'd kept her clothes on, sort of. But their lips were naked, completely naked. The way he was kissing her – she couldn't just tell herself that it was innocent. She couldn't talk to Kate about it. She had to stop.  
  
She pulled away, out from under him, until they were lying side by side. Peter didn't say anything. He knew as well as she did that they were about to cross a line, the real line. He'd been a gentleman, keeping his hands out from her underneath her clothes, mostly, anyway. And she hadn't touched him ... not on his private places. That was how it needed to stay.   
  
She thought about it for a moment then shifted around on the couch, crawling down until her face was just opposite his cock. She let her hair brush against the shaft, let the head glide along the smooth skin of her cheek and her neck.  
  
"Susan," he whispered. "Don't."  
  
"Shh," she said. "It's all right."  
  
Her hand stroked his inner thigh, stopping just as she could touch the pubic hair around his balls. Peter's cock jumped, brushing against her face, almost as if it was seeking her lips. She inhaled his sharp musk and stared at the pulsating vein that ran along the underside, following it up to the helmet-shaped head, blushing crimson now. She brushed it with her forehead, with her nose. The skin seemed so smooth and elastic, so supple. She breathed gently on it, enjoying Peter's reaction. The feeling was starting again, the pressure building in her loins. She didn't have the patience he did. She needed more of him now.  
  
She sat up and pushed on Peter's shoulder until he rolled onto his back. She admired his recumbent form for a moment, the broad chest and flat stomach. Then she swung one leg over him until she was sitting across his thighs, his cock nestled against the front of her panties. She readjusted them to give him a smoother surface, then began shifting forward and back, rubbing his shaft through the furrow between her pussy lips. She loved the warmth of his skin against the backs of her thighs and her butt, the feel of him sliding against her. Peter reached up and cupped her breasts with both hands, pushing her stiff nipples hard into her chest.

She moved her hips faster and changed the angle a little so that his cock head bumped against her clit at the end of each stroke. Everything down there was so wet that they just slid together frictionlessly, and she made small sighs every time he stroked her nipples or pushed the straining fabric of her panties a little deeper into her pussy. Suddenly Peter twisted under her with a sharp groan and grabbed her bottom, slipping his fingers down under her waistband, almost pushing her panties off altogether.  
  
"Watch out," he croaked just as the first spurt erupted, flying up and forward to land on his chest. She pulled back to get out of the way, but it didn't help. Cum went everywhere, onto her, onto him, onto the couch. Before she could think better of it, she grabbed his cock with one hand, covering the head to catch the last few bursts in her hand. As he calmed and his hips sank back into the couch, Susan kept holding his shaft, feeling the blood leaving it, feeling his pulse slow and diminish, entranced by his cock's transformation back into ordinary flesh. She let it settle back onto his belly, still partially erect, shiny with their fluids. And something about it made her feel that she'd left things unfinished somehow. Not just because she hadn't cum herself. That was all right; it wasn't what their relationship was about. And she'd insisted on staying dressed, sort of. But ...  
  
She leaned over and licked along the shaft, just cleaning his cock off a little. Peter groaned and arched his hips up towards her. She let the head linger between her lips for a moment. Then she sat up, satisfied. That wasn't really sexual, she thought. It was affectionate, like straightening his collar or a hug at the end of the evening before going home.  
  
"It's really late," she said. "I'm hoping there's a bathroom we can use?"  
  
Peter nodded and indicated another door nearby.  
  
She kissed him lightly. "Me first, okay?"  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Walking quickly across campus, Susan stopped suddenly enough to cause a distracted-looking Asian student to bump into her. He brushed his hair out of his eyes and blinked at her.  
  
"Sorry," Susan said. The student nodded vaguely and kept walking.  
  
Kate was sitting on a bench under a tree. She wore a thin cotton blouse and jeans and she had her head down. A cold wind sliced across the quad, stirring up leaves. She must be freezing, Susan thought. But Kate sat inertly, her arms at her sides. The fact that she was by herself was odd enough. But the absence of her usual vivacious energy was a sure sign that something was wrong. Susan was late for a class, but she walked over and sat down next to her roommate.  
  
Kate looked up blankly. Her eyes were red-rimmed; mascara dripped. "Oh, hi Susan."  
  
"Hey, Kate. What's the matter?"  
  
"Nothing."  
  
Susan felt a hollow space in her stomach, a sudden ominous premonition. "Come on," she said. "Talk to me."  
  
Kate sat still for so long Susan wasn't sure she'd heard.  
  
"I think Peter is seeing someone else," she said, finally.  
  
Kate was quiet again. Susan didn't push it.  
  
"He hasn't called. He was out somewhere on Tuesday night. He told me he was going to be studying in the library. But he wasn't. I went there and looked for him."  
  
On impulse, Susan put her arm around Kate and pulled her close. Kate stiffened for a moment, then buried her face in Susan's shoulder. She started to sob softly.  
  
"Hey," Susan said. "I'm sure it's okay. Didn't you tell me that he had some big project due this week? He's probably just really busy."  
  
"But why ..."  
  
"Shh. Guys can be thoughtless like that. They get distracted easily. You know he'd never leave you. Where would he find someone else as beautiful as you?"  
  
Susan's voice had taken on a sing-song quality, and she rocked Kate gently against her shoulder. I'm turning into her mom, Susan thought. She sighed. I've got enough problems of my own. I'm not signing up for that gig. She looked down at Kate. A small suspicion about her popular, sexy roommate began to grow inside her head. Maybe Kate was always ditching guys so quickly because she couldn't handle it if one of them ditched her first.  
  
"How about if I talk to him?" Susan suggested. "I'd be casual about it. Catch him at our physics class and mention that I haven't seen him around – something like that."  
  
Kate looked up at her, eyes big and round and redder than ever. "Could you? That would be great."  
  
Susan squeezed her shoulder and gave her a sisterly kiss on the forehead. "I've got to go, okay? I've got a class."  
  
Kate nodded, smiling bravely. She seemed very child-like and helpless. "Okay."  
  
Susan smiled back. "I'll see you tonight." She got up and nearly ran across the quad, needing to get as far away as she could before Kate thought to ask Susan where she had been on Tuesday night.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
"You lied to her," Susan said.  
  
Peter looked miserable. He took a gulp of his coffee and winced: too hot. There were sitting across a small table from each other in a café off-campus.  
  
"Yeah," he admitted. "She called right before I left to meet you. I didn't know what to do. I told her I'd be in the library."  
  
Susan sighed. "This isn't going to work, is it?"  
  
Peter looked up quickly. He seemed stunned. "What do you mean?"  
  
"I can't let you hurt her. Us, I mean. I can't let us hurt her." She felt around clumsily for the right words, feeling every bit as wretched as Peter. "I thought you and I could just ... be together, a little bit, you know, like we were the other night. But we can't."  
  
He tensed for a moment and leaned closer to her. Then he slumped back into his chair. "You're right. I was being really thoughtless. Selfish, I guess."  
  
"Try cowardly." It came out a bit more forcefully than she'd intended. "Sorry, I didn't mean ..."  
  
"No, you're right." Peter looked like he wanted to take her hand, then thought better of it. "I was hurting both of you. I wasn't thinking. I was ... just stupid. Stupid and selfish. Sorry, I'm repeating myself."  
  
His sincerity nearly destroyed her resolve.  
  
"So what do we do?" he asked.  
  
Susan was ready for that one. "Nothing," she said. "What happens between you and Kate is your business. But you and I ... I was right the first time about our seeing each other. We just can't."  
  
He sat very still for a moment. Then he nodded and got up, not really looking at her. "Okay. I should go. I'll see you around."  
  
He hesitated for a second, then leaned over and kissed her on the cheek before walking off.  
  
She stayed where she was, staring into her cooling coffee and wondering how she could feel so proud of herself and so miserable at exactly the same time.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Cross-country practice had ended, and the coach had long since sent everyone back to the locker room. But Susan had built up an angry energy after her conversation with Peter that the tough ten-mile workout hadn't burned out of her. So she kept running, up the big hill behind campus she usually hated doing, and onto the potholed streets of the sleepy suburban neighborhood on the other side. She needed to wear herself out, to clear all the tangled-up stuff out of her head.  
  
Twenty minutes later she was still so self-absorbed that she didn't notice the sky darkening until big, cold raindrops began stinging her face. Oh, hell, she thought. I'm probably three or four miles from the dorm. But there was really no help for it. She didn't have her cell phone with her, and there wasn't anybody around she knew. She was just going to get wet.  
  
She picked up her pace, dispirited, trying to stay under trees where she could. Before long, they started to drip too. She splashed through a puddle she hadn't seen and swore to herself. Now her shoes were wet. She put her head down, gritted her teeth and kept going.  
  
Suddenly she heard a shout.  
  
"Come on, get in."  
  
She looked over towards the voice. There was a blue BMW rolling along next to her. She looked away, annoyed. Sure, like she was really going to get into some strange guy's car.  
  
"Susan, just get in. You're going to catch pneumonia."  
  
She looked back at the car, startled. How had he known her name? She bent down a bit until she could see the driver: Ken.   
  
She slowed to a stop. He stopped too and leaned over to push the passenger door open.  
  
"I'll get you car all wet," Susan said.  
  
"Okay, never mind then. I'll just send flowers."  
  
She looked completely flustered.  
  
"Susan, don't be an idiot. Get in."  
  
It was raining steadily now. Water dripped down her hair and into her eyes. She sighed and brushed futilely at the seat of her damp sweatpants before finally crawling into the car. The interior was marvelously warm and dry.  
  
"How did you know I was here?" she asked. "I didn't know I was going to be here."  
  
Ken shrugged. "I called your room and your roommate answered. Kate is it? She has quite the sexy voice, by the way. Anyway, she told me that you'd probably be at practice. So I drove over to the gym and asked around. One of your teammates said that she'd seen you heading in this direction, looking 'kinda fierce' in her words. And here I am." He bowed modestly. "Actually, the hard part was figuring out who you were – you never told me your last name. I spent the last few days asking everyone who'd been to the party if they knew you."  
  
Susan put her hand to her mouth. "I'm sorry. I wasn't thinking very clearly by the end of the evening." She looked down at herself. "I'm afraid you're not seeing me at my best right now either."  
  
He laughed, as if she hadn't actually meant it. "No worries. You really look quite fetching with your hair like that. So, can I offer you a cup of coffee?"  
  
Susan shook her head, trying to clear it. She was still adjusting to not being rained on, and it all felt a little surreal. Suddenly guys were going to a lot of trouble on her account. Peter with the telescope, Ken tracking her down in the rain. She didn't quite get it.  
  
"Thanks," she said, "but what I really need right now is a shower and some dry clothes."  
  
"No problem. I'll take you to my place. You can shower while I throw your stuff in the wash."  
  
That put her on her guard. "No, it's okay. Could you just drop me off at my dorm? I really appreciate your picking me up though."  
  
"Hey, I've got a terrific espresso machine. It's from Italy; it has an eagle on top."  
  
Of course he has an espresso machine from Italy, Susan thought uncharitably. A glass of wine, a cappuccino. Does he really think I'm that easy? She looked over at him, searching for the inevitable hidden agenda. But it wasn't there. His face was completely open, friendly. Some of his brown hair fell endearingly across his forehead. This was the version of Ken she liked. No sign of Mr. Smooth. And it really had been awfully nice of him to pick her up. She wasn't sure why she was giving him such a hard time.  
  
"Okay," she said, brushing rain out of her eyelashes. "Espresso from a machine with an eagle on top sounds nice."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
"There's a robe and a hair drier in there," Ken said. "Help yourself."  
  
He kind of hung around, but Susan shooed him out of the bathroom. She wasn't quite ready to undress in front of him, the night on the stairs notwithstanding. She stripped, opened the door a crack, and handed the damp bundle of her clothes to Ken, who was still standing in the hall, probably hoping that she'd change her mind.  
  
Susan had to admit that the shower felt wonderful. It had some sort of European sprayer thingie that detached. She took it out of its holder and held it close to her chest. The spray stung her nipples, and a little shiver ran through her body. She aimed the water lower until it tickled her belly button. Mmm. So that's what these things are for, she thought. The more she learned about the adult world, the more she realized that it was all about sex. She spread her legs a little and tilted the sprayer until the water splashed against her pussy and beaded up on her pubic hair. She'd never felt anything like it. Her skin tingled and she held it a bit closer. It didn't feel like someone was touching her exactly. It was more like a million tiny fingertips brushing against her skin, half-tickling, half-teasing. I should stop now, she thought dully. Ken will wonder what I'm doing in here. Well, just another minute, until the wet chill is gone. She moved the warm spray in slow circles, until every part of her sparkled and all her senses felt heightened, ready. The minute she'd given herself passed.  
  
She turned the water off, regretfully. Ken had left her a towel, very fluffy, and an equally luxurious robe. She dried off and enjoyed the sensation of the robe sliding on over her bare, flushed skin. She found the hair drier and organized her chestnut hair into its usual soft flip. It looks particularly stylish this afternoon, she thought. She smiled at herself and stepped out into the hallway. For the first time in days, she realized, she wasn't thinking about Peter.  
  
Ken wasn't in evidence, but she heard activity downstairs in the kitchen. She followed the clatter of cups and saucers and the hiss of steam and found him turning knobs and adjusting nozzles on a gleaming device that did indeed sport a copper eagle on the top. He was wearing jeans, a ribbed t-shirt and loafers – regular-guy clothes. She'd only seen him in his Ken-doll outfit at the party, with his hair slicked back. She liked this better. Still, she felt a little vulnerable in her bare feet and wearing just a robe while he was fully dressed. The thought evaporated when he looked up and smiled at her, relaxed and assured, as always.  
  
"Just another minute," he said. He patted the eagle fondly. "I love this thing. The milk foam is like velvet. He poured a small chrome pitcher of coffee into an elegant cup and mixed in some steamed milk. "Sugar?"  
  
"Just a little."  
  
He handed her the cup and their fingers touched for a moment. She took a sip. The smoothness of the espresso-streaked foam lingered on her tongue. Sublime.  
  
"Shall we take these into the living room?" he asked. "Your clothes are in the washer. They'll be a while yet."  
  
She nodded and followed him into the same high-ceilinged room where they'd first met. It made her feel microscopic.  
  
"Do you live here by yourself?" she asked.  
  
"At the moment. I was sharing the place with a couple of friends, but one's in Botswana at the moment, collecting something – snails, I think. The other fellow moved in with his girlfriend over the summer. I keep thinking that it won't last, so I've kept his room for him." Ken stopped and looked around a little wistfully. "It is pretty gloomy, isn't it?"  
  
They looked at each other, and then they both laughed. Ken was sheepish. "My parents' idea. I hate it, actually."  
  
"Well, it's a good party house. Better than mine, that's for sure. I always got so embarrassed when my friends visited my folks' place. The scrimshaw collection, you know?" Susan shuddered.  
  
She looked around the room. Two armchairs and a couch formed a grouping around a coffee table. Susan sat down in one the chairs. It was big and plush, but there was no way it was going to accommodate two people. Ken settled into the couch and sipped his coffee with no evident sign of disappointment. Susan carefully rearranged the bottom of the robe over her legs feeling somewhat relieved.  
  
"So do you get to keep the place when you graduate?" Susan asked.  
  
"God no. Actually, I don't get to keep anything except the shirt on my back. My dad decided that I should learn to make it on my own." He waved his arms to indicate the house and all its contents. "Once I leave college, poof, it's all gone. So if you're in the market for a rich husband ..."  
  
He actually sounded apologetic. Susan wondered what sort of girls he normally invited over.  
  
"The thought never entered my mind," she said firmly. "I only want you for your espresso."  
  
Ken smiled warmly. His eyes really sparkled when he did that, she noticed.  
  
"So you probably aren't in a big hurry to graduate."  
  
He leaned forward. Mr. Smooth was nowhere in sight now, no pretenses, no polished manners. "I have mixed feelings about that," he said slowly. "It isn't easy – having successful parents, parents who have such high expectations."  
  
Susan shook her head. "Forget them." She waved at the living room and its vaulted ceiling and track lights so far up that she could barely see them. "You don't even want this. How long have you been hiding out here anyway?"  
  
He looked a little embarrassed. "Five years."  
  
The same as Peter, she thought, but for different reasons.  
  
"It's not so bad out there, you know. You should give it a try."  
  
She'd said it lightly, but Ken was looking at her with a dead serious intensity. This conversation really mattered to him.  
  
"Are there people like you out there?" he asked.  
  
She nodded slowly, meeting his gaze. "Yes."  
  
He didn't say anything. He just looked back at her with his soft brown eyes, flecked with green.  
  
Susan put her coffee cup down and unfastened the belt on her robe. The hem slid across her thighs until the two sides hung down on either side. The upper part of the robe pulled open and scratched across her very stiff nipples. She could see Ken's breathing deepen and felt his eyes travel down her body from the flushed skin at the top of her chest over the swells of her breasts, their inner curves fully exposed, small pink crescents of her aureoles peeking out tantalizingly from the edges of the robe, down to her smooth stomach and the dark circle of her belly button, and finally to the patch of chestnut pubic hair. Her thighs were together, preventing more intimate scrutiny, and Ken looked up again, his eyes more intense than ever.  
  
"Open your legs," he said.  
  
Susan's heart raced. Her limbs felt numb, unresponsive. She tried to drag her eyes away from his, to look down, or away or anywhere.   
  
Ken waited, not speaking.  
  
Her legs began to shake. She stared at them, willing herself to calm down. But the harder she tried, the less control she seemed to have. Her knees moved apart. Her pussy lips spread, puffy and glistening, revealing soft pink folds within. She bit her lower lip and looked up. As she did, the edges of her robe, pulled further apart by her spread thighs, strained for a moment against her nipples then fell away, leaving her breasts completely bare. The flush on her chest spread downward into the rounded valley between.  
  
Ken leaned forward. "Touch yourself," he whispered.  
  
Her eyes widened. "Ken!"  
  
"It's all right," he said. "There's nothing to be ashamed of. You look beautiful."  
  
His voice had the power she remembered from the first night she'd met him, calm and controlled, irresistible. She felt as if she were stepping into darkness, into a place where she didn't know her way. She hesitated for a moment, and then moved her hand down between her legs, the heat radiating from her pussy seeming to draw it closer. She slid one finger tentatively across her outer lips, smearing moisture, then spiraled it inward until the tip was lightly circling her clit.  
  
This is how it had started, Susan thought, that night in her dorm room: moving her fingers awkwardly under her panties while Peter and Kate went at it on the next bed. But she'd been the audience then, hidden and anonymous; now she was center stage. That made a difference.   
  
"I want you to undress too," she said.  
  
Ken smiled slightly and nodded. He pulled his shirt over his head, unzipped his jeans and pushed them down along with his shorts. He kicked off his loafers then bent forward until he had worked his pants off completely. When he sat back up he was naked.  
  
Susan rubbed harder on her clit and she trembled deliciously. She could see Ken's tongue move nervously between his lips. She looked at his body, taking her time, making a long, leisurely appraisal. She'd never felt comfortable staring at a man this way before. But it seemed all right here; it was what they were doing together – instead of watching TV or studying or something more normal. His face was handsome in a classical sort of way, a straight nose and high cheekbones. But there was a little sadness around his eyes. She liked that. She wanted to know why. And he looked ... sculpted, the planes and angles of his body accentuated by the tension in his posture. He wasn't as muscular as Peter, but toned and smooth-limbed, almost hairless on his chest, a fine down of light brown hair on his legs and around ... around his cock. Once her eyes had strayed down to it, she couldn't look away. She'd seen it before, of course, even tasted it. But it was different now, more dangerous somehow. He was thick, not as long as Peter, round at the end (did that mean he was uncircumcised?) Like a blunt object in a mystery novel. Susan shivered just looking at it. She imagined it going inside her ... no, she just couldn't. She took a deep breath. It was a relief, actually, to make her mind up about that now, to know where things were going – or (she couldn't help giggling) not going in this case.

She slid one finger inside her pussy, then a second one. Ken inhaled audibly. She did it again, and Ken's hand moved down to his cock. It was even harder now, and it seemed to have grown in girth rather than length. She settled into a rhythm, stroking in and out of herself. It wasn't what she normally did, but she could tell that it aroused Ken. She stared mercilessly into his eyes, daring him to look away. The friction of her fingers kept her at a seething pitch of excitement. She couldn't stop now if she wanted to. The motion of her hand over her mound, of her fingers moving in and out was like breathing, like an engine's smooth purring idle. Her lips parted slightly. The muscles in Ken's neck pulled taut.  
  
The room became dream-like, its colors muted, everything except Ken's body blurry and indistinct. Susan stood up, almost floating . Ken's movements slowed and then seemed to stop completely, his hand stalled half-way up the shaft of his cock, the tip of his tongue paused between his lips. His eyes followed her hips as she walked towards him, the robe's edges alternately covering and exposing her pussy. She stopped directly in front of him and put one knee down on either side of his thighs, straddling him. She leaned forward until her chest pressed against his and the head of his cock nestled in her pubic hair. Then their lips came together. They hadn't ever kissed, really kissed, she realized. His cool detachment dissolved as his arms went around her and their tongues explored each other.   
  
He reached inside her robe, one hand on her back, the other cupping her bottom. The contact there sent her over the edge. She'd never felt so aroused, so grateful for a man's touch. The hard, cold run, the steaming shower, the rich crema of the espresso, the thick robe, Ken's lips, his hands, his skin, his thick, hard cock, her nipples burning into his chest – there were too many sensations coming one on top of the other. She just abandoned herself to them; she couldn't do anything else. She reached for his cock and rubbed a sticky bead of pre-cum across the tip with her thumb. Ken groaned and reached between her legs and ran his fingers through her dripping folds. He smeared her moisture everywhere, on her thighs, her stomach, and finally on her outer lips so that his fingers could rub them and caress them and slide effortlessly between them until he was deep insider her. Susan threw back her head and bucked her hips against his hand. She felt a molten pressure building at her center. Ken moved his fingers – two of them? three? – in and out. His thumb rubbed across the top of her clit. It was swollen, throbbing with her heartbeat, unbearably sensitive.   
  
She broke the kiss, wanting to tell him to stop for a moment, to give her a chance to catch her breath; but he leaned forward and sucked one nipple into his mouth, and suddenly all she could do was whimper. The pressure built, rising into an irresistible wave that swelled and paused agonizingly at its crest and finally broke and swept through her, turning her body turn rigid and driving her hips down onto his fingers. She inhaled hard, but still couldn't get enough air. She began to feel faint; the room wheeled around her. Ken's free hand stroked her hair and the side of her face. He kissed her shoulder and her neck and the spot between her breasts until her shivering calmed and she could breathe again.  
  
She was still holding his cock, she realized. She let go of it, stroking the shaft gently. Ken kept running his hands along her over-heated body. He was hard to figure out, she thought as she nestled her head on his shoulder. He could be smooth and manipulative sometimes; a rake, really. Then, at other times, he could be sweet and understanding. Just like Peter was awkward and geeky one minute, then forceful and confident the next. It was like having four different lovers. Too many to keep straight. She felt constantly off-balance.  
  
Literally in this case. Too late to react, she realized that Ken was lowering her off of his lap and onto the couch. He laid her on her side and snuggled in next to her, until they were both stretched out, face-to-face. He rearranged the robe like a blanket so that it covered both of them. He kissed her again, more gently this time; and she suddenly felt very close to him, to this not-really-rich guy who lived by himself in a big, empty house. She moved closer still, until her breasts pushed against his chest. His skin felt so warm and smooth and yielding. She wanted to feel more of it; she wanted all of his body against hers. She wrapped one leg behind his, pulling him against her, until their hips met. The tip of his cock nudged against the top of her pussy, brushing the hood and dragging across her swollen clit. She gasped softly and dug her fingers into his arm. She was still over-sensitive there after cumming so hard a minute earlier, and she shifted her body up a little to relieve the pressure. Now the head of his cock was lower, no longer directly against her clit, nestling instead between her well-lubricated folds. That felt better, more comfortable. She could lie this way with him forever.  
  
He pulled back and looked at her, surprised. He put one hand around her butt and tilted his hips slightly, lodging the tip of his cock just inside her. Susan's eyes went wide. No! That wasn't what she had meant. She'd just wanted to ...  
  
Ken's breathing was harsh now. She could feel his heart beating rapidly in his chest, the blood throbbing in the tip of his cock. He raked her bottom with his nails. He found her sensitive spot again, and the contact sent jolt after jolt of electricity through her body. His cock head pushed her apart, straining the walls of her pussy. Her breath caught in her throat; she couldn't speak, couldn't react, couldn't move.  
  
And then he pulled out of her.   
  
Susan exhaled slowly, relaxing a little. She brushed his hair out of his eyes and kissed him on the cheek. She felt strangely disappointed, but relieved that he understood that he wouldn't be able to ...  
  
But he didn't seem to understand at all.   
  
He leaned forward, pushing into her again. And she was so wet and slippery that the head just ... just slid all the way in. Susan made a high-pitched cry, and they stared at each other, their faces an inch apart. Her hands shook so badly she had to hold on to Ken to keep them still. He shifted his hips forward again, and now she had to bury her head in his shoulder to stifle her cries. Her pussy lips folded inward, and she dug her fingers into Ken's flesh so hard they turned white. She felt her belly fluttering, her legs trembling.  
  
He paused for a moment. She held her breath; she knew what was coming this time. But she was wrong again. He leaned back until he could look at her. Tears glistened on her cheeks.  
  
"Hey, it's okay," he said. "Do you want me to stop?"  
  
She looked deep into his soft, sad eyes. She still couldn't speak. So she just shook her head.  
  
Ken didn't move right away. Susan tucked her head back on his shoulder. She could feel his muscles tense, then his hips tilt forward. She bit her lip, but her body had learned about him, and she opened up, further then she'd ever imagined she could, surrounding him, drawing him deeper, until she felt his pubic hair scratch against hers and his balls slap the junction of her thighs.  
  
They stayed like that, holding each other, their bodies melting together in a thousand new places. Then he began to move slowly, just his hips working and his cock sliding smoothly in and out, the slightly thicker ring around the base of the head forcing her apart just a little further with each stroke. When their loins met, a wave of sensation swept over her, each one merging with the one before until she couldn't absorb them all and her body just responded automatically to grinding of his hips and the pressure of his fingers on her flesh. The robe that was covering them had become unbearably hot. She struggled to pull it off. Ken stopped for a moment, confused. The he sat up next to her, sweat glistening on his skin, his hair stuck together and falling in front of his eyes. He threw the robe onto the floor then roughly turned her shoulders until she lay on her back. He pulled her legs apart and spent a minute staring at her swollen pussy and the moisture coating her thighs and her matted pubic hair.  
  
She knew she must look frightened and helpless. But her body betrayed her need; her hips tilted upwards, wanting to be closer, wanting him back inside. Ken ran a finger down between her breasts, over her stomach, slick with perspiration now, dipping into her belly button, bringing a sigh from deep in her chest. She raised her head until she could see down between their bodies. Ken's cock hung there, huge and potent, almost purple with blood. While she watched, he positioned it at her entrance.  
  
Her eyes squeezed shut. "Ken, please ..." she whispered.  
  
She felt his weight come down on her, smoothly, irresistibly. She made a soft 'oh' sound as he sank all the way in and their hips met again. She hadn't realized that she could take all of him like that, she had no idea. It felt ... it feltperfect. The way they fit together, her thighs spread wide, her pussy stretched so tight, their hips meeting again and again ...  
  
Suddenly her body froze as another orgasm welled up from her center, the exquisite pressure swelling and bursting open and flowing through her. She wailed and held him tight, her breasts squashing against his chest, her nipples like points of flame. Her hips bucked and twisted and Ken jammed his cock as deeply into her as it would go and there was a molten rush inside her and another and another as his body spasmed and lifted and then went gradually limp.  
  
Time passed. Susan's breathing returned gradually to normal. Her grip on Ken's back and shoulders relaxed. He lifted his body up onto his elbows and kissed her, their tongues playing together until her pulse began to quicken again. But he took a deep breath and stopped. He pulled his now-soft cock out of her and sat up on the couch. She realized how she must look to him. Naked, hair in disarray, one foot on the floor, her other knee raised, and their mingled fluids dripping from her pussy.  
  
She closed her eyes and raised her arms, stretching luxuriously, and a slow smile spread across her face. "I'm going to need another shower," she said.  
  
He nodded. "Yeah, me too. Can I take you out to dinner after that?"  
  
"Would you please? I am so hungry." She sat up and continued her stretch, making her breasts ride up a little higher on her chest. "But just pizza or something like that. All I've got to wear is my running stuff."  
  
"Oh, right. It's probably dry by now. I'll go check."  
  
But he didn't move.   
  
"What is it?" she asked.  
  
"I can't stop looking at you." There was an apologetic note in his voice, and a trace of that sadness he had.  
  
Susan smiled. "That's all right. I like it when you look at me. It's sweet."  
  
He kissed her, which took a while, and finally stood up. Susan admired his lean butt as it moved away from her. She retrieved the tangled robe from the floor and put it back on. I've got a boyfriend, she thought to herself. I think I do, anyway. He isn't the easiest guy to get to know. But I'm going to try.  
  
She went upstairs and found the bathroom. She stepped inside, hesitated, then closed the door behind her. It was strange, but she still wasn't comfortable with the idea of showering with him. It seemed so intimate, even more than what they'd just been doing. She wanted to know him a little better first.  
  
She adjusted the shower and stepped in. She started to soap herself, enjoying the tingle of the spray and the pressure of her fingers. It felt so good she started to worry. How much of this do I need? Am I ever going to get back to the way I was?  
  
Then a sudden intuition made her look over towards the bathroom door. It was open a crack; more than a crack, actually. She looked away, trying to seem casual. She was tired and hungry; she really needed to get cleaned up and dressed and get something to eat. But ... she could wait a few more minutes. She leaned her head back, letting the water run through her hair and down her back, feeling it flow over her butt and the backs of her thighs. And she turned slowly under the warm spray, turning all the way around, making sure that he could see all of her.

**College Girls Ch. 03**

Kate wanted to ride shotgun, which meant that Susan would be sitting next to either Peter or the other guy, Luke, for the next few hours. Neither seemed like a good choice. Luke was one of Kate's ex-boyfriends – Susan remembered him vaguely from earlier in the year. He was a typical Kate cast-off: linebacker-sized and annoyingly crude. It occurred to Susan that having him along would be awkward for both Luke and Kate, but they didn't seem to mind.   
  
They were picking up Luke's new girlfriend at her parents' house, and then there'd be six of them squeezed into Ken's SUV, along with luggage, skis, snowboards, cases of beer, what seemed like half of Ken's wine cellar, and piles of parkas, gloves, wool hats.  
  
She ended up next to Luke, which had seemed like the safer choice at first. But then he gradually oozed into her personal space, starting with his knee bumping hers, then his thigh, then his hip. An hour into the trip, Susan found herself getting squeezed uncomfortably against the door. Finally Luke turned half-around so that he could talk to Peter in the back seat, which jammed his butt practically onto Susan's lap. She tapped him on the shoulder.  
  
Luke turned back and grinned. His teeth seemed unnaturally large. "What's up, honey?"  
  
"It's Susan, and could you move over a bit? I'm getting kind of squashed."  
  
The grin got bigger somehow. "Why don't you just snuggle up? Then there'll be plenty of room."  
  
Now she was really steamed. She wondered if Ken could hear their conversation. She could really use him to come to her rescue. But he was talking to Kate, listening really, as she chattered non-stop. Susan was on her own.  
  
She stared hard at him. "Could you just move over, please?"  
  
That earned her a cool, appraising look from Luke. He shrugged and slid a couple of inches away from her and turned back to resume his conversation with Peter.  
  
Susan closed her eyes, willing herself to relax. This ski trip was going to be a disaster. She could sense it. Just being around Peter was uncomfortable enough – they'd reached the point where they averted their eyes every time they happened to glance at each other. Fortunately, Kate was oblivious to the tension between them. And it was Ken's party, so she could hardly refuse to come.  
  
After far too long they arrived at the new girlfriend's house and there was more shuffling of bodies and luggage and things were being strapped to the roof. The new girl – Fina? Fawn? Fiona? – seemed a little on the mousey side, although certainly attractive enough, slim with long, dark hair and full lips and a shy smile. She seemed to be built on a different scale than Luke. Susan wondered how they … well, never mind.   
  
When the music stopped, Susan was sitting in the back of the SUV along with Peter and several duffel bags. So there was no help for it. Unless Susan pretended to fall asleep or something, they were going to have to talk to each other.   
  
The SUV bumped down the driveway, and Mr. and Mrs. Fawn (it was Fawn, apparently) waved goodbye. Maps were consulted and everybody settled in for the rest of the drive.  
  
"How have you been?" Peter asked her.  
  
"Fine, thanks."  
  
"It was really nice of Ken to set this up."  
  
She nodded again. "I guess the cabin belongs to his family."  
  
"Have you met them?" Peter asked. He tried to make the question sound casual, but it wasn't.  
  
"No, not yet." She didn't elaborate.  
  
Fawn and Luke, sitting in the middle seat, seemed to be talking to each other as well. Thank god for that, Susan thought.  
  
"Things are going well with Kate?" she asked.  
  
Peter nodded. "She's very … she's hard to resist, you know, when she wants …"  
  
"You don't have to apologize." That had come out a little sharply.  
  
Peter looked chastened. He shifted uncomfortably on his seat. Their legs touched, and he pulled away, abashed.  
  
Susan smiled and touched him on the shoulder. "It's all right," she said.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
The "cabin" was actually a unit in a spiffy complex of wood-shingled town-houses. Ken opened the place up, turned on the heat, and showed everyone around. It was every bit as posh as Susan had anticipated. There was a private hot tub in back and a view across the bottom of a ski slope to a jagged ridge of mountains in the distance.  
  
Susan started to haul luggage inside and found herself at the top of the stairs lugging a duffel and a backpack. As she looked up and down the hallway, trying to remember which doorway was hers, Luke appeared beside her with his usual smug grin.  
  
"Hey, it doesn't really matter," he said, noting her confusion. "Throw your stuff anywhere. We'll probably end up swapping anyway."  
  
Susan stopped cold. "What are you talking about?"  
  
His grin just got wider and he walked past her down the hall.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
After everyone had gotten settled they met downstairs and had some take-out Chinese. Ken had wanted to go out to an Italian restaurant he knew in town, but everyone else had had enough driving for one day. Ken produced a couple of bottles of Pinot Gris (not exactly right with Kung Pao chicken, Susan decided, but still awfully nice). Then they moved into the living room with its beamed ceiling and thick carpet and abstract expressionist lithographs. Ken and Peter swapped stories about their travels to exotic destinations until Luke, feeling left out, perhaps, or just wanting to up the ante a bit said:   
  
"Hot tub?"  
  
Susan stiffened. It hadn't occurred to her to bring a swimsuit. She was about to say as much, then thought better of it. Did one wear swimsuits in situations like this? Probably not.  
  
Kate perked up immediately. "Sure," she said, flashing her best cheerleader smile.  
  
Ken shrugged. "Why not. I'll go out and check the temperature. Should be ready in about twenty minutes."  
  
Everyone else nodded and headed upstairs to do whatever getting ready to go into a hot tub involved.  
  
Susan followed Ken out onto the deck and watched as he pushed buttons and turned knobs and checked thermometers. "Um, are you going in naked?" she asked.  
  
"Yeah, I guess." He turned to look at her. Her nervousness must have been fairly obvious. "Does that bother you?"  
  
"A little."  
  
Ken stopped what he was doing and put his arm around her. She suddenly felt more comfortable, safe and protected. "Then don't do it. Or wait a while until everyone is so drunk they won't notice."  
  
That was a pretty good idea, she decided. "Okay. Maybe I'll call home first, then come down later."  
  
"Good. And I'll be sure to turn the lights down low and crank up the bubbles."  
  
Susan smiled weakly. "Sorry to be so shy."  
  
He smiled back. "I like shy."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan could hear the laughter from below. It had risen a bit in pitch and volume during the previous half hour, thanks no doubt to the wine Ken had been pouring. She walked into the bathroom and was relieved to find a robe hanging there – something else she hadn't thought to bring. She stripped and then folded her clothes carefully. Not that she ever folded them at home; it was just another delaying tactic. When she couldn't put it off any longer she tied the robe tightly and padded down the stairs.  
  
Just as Ken had promised, the back deck was quite dark. Susan could see steam rising from the surface of the tub and someone's shoulders and the back of a head. Fine, Susan thought. I can handle this. She took a moment to steady herself then opened the sliding glass door that led out to the deck. No one seemed to notice her. She took a quick survey of the bodies in the tub, which wasn't made any easier by the steam or the darkness. There was a gap on the far side between Ken and a male she couldn't identify. She walked around, dropped her robe and slid into the water almost in one motion. Enough bubbles churned the surface to make it effectively opaque. Susan hunkered down until only the top of her chest was exposed. Nothing to it.  
  
"This feels great," she said brightly. And it did. "Can someone pour me a glass of wine?"  
  
It took a while for it to register with everyone that she was suddenly among them. But, judging by all the empty wine bottles lying around, Susan figured that she could probably count on slow reactions from this group for the remainder of the evening.  
  
Kate responded first. She sat up to reach for a bottle, and Susan's eyes went wide. Kate had emerged from the water and was completely exposed down to her waist. Her breasts stood out like a challenge, catching the stray light until her skin almost glowed. Susan had never seen anyone look so naked outside of a porn video. She poured some wine into a glass and handed to Susan with a big grin. Kate was totally in her element.  
  
"We saved this for you."  
  
Susan nearly stood up to take it but caught herself at the last second. Kate sat down and resumed the slightly incoherent story she'd been telling, and Susan could finally assess the situation at her leisure. Kate was across from her, sitting next to Peter. Very next to him, actually. Almost on top of him. Ken was on the other side of Kate, which meant … oh, hell. It meant that she was sitting between Ken and Luke. She thought about that. Maybe she should move over to Ken's other side somehow so that she could sit between him and Kate. But she'd just be calling attention to herself. She decided to sit tight and edge discreetly away from Luke.  
  
Kate kept talking, but Luke's harsh baritone cut through whatever she was trying to say.  
  
"Ken, buddy, do you have any tequila in this joint? We should do some shots."  
  
Ken seemed half-asleep. He took a moment to react. "Liquor cabinet's next to the refrigerator. Help yourself."  
  
Luke grinned and stood up, the water streaming off of his blocky torso. He looked powerful and masculine, and he knew it. Susan couldn't help herself – her eyes stayed on him as he stepped out of the tub and onto the deck. His cock caught the light for a moment, raw and heavy-looking with an unusually large scrotum. And his butt … it kind of stuck out, dense and muscular like the rest of him. Not my type, Susan reminded herself. Too crude. Too cocky.  
  
He was back a minute later holding a bottle and a bunch of shot glasses. He sort of posed with the bottle, looking like one of those statues of wrestlers that had fascinated her when she'd first studied Greek history. The wrestlers used to rub oil on their bodies before a match, Susan remembered. And they competed naked. She shivered thinking about it. All Luke was missing was the laurel wreath.  
  
Damn it, Susan thought, what am I thinking? She broke out of her reverie and looked up from Luke's … mid-section to find him staring right at her. His grin widened and Susan looked away quickly. Luke chuckled and got back into the tub, quite close to her this time. Someday, she hoped, she'd get used to being around naked guys, especially attractive ones. For now she was just grateful that she didn't have to feel embarrassed about her pussy being wet. It was wet anyway.  
  
Luke poured shots for everyone. He, Peter and Kate all knocked theirs back and made appropriate grimaces and celebratory noises. Susan sipped hers, and so did Ken. Fawn just held her glass politely, not touching it. Susan hadn't pegged Fawn yet. Did she lack a personality altogether or was she just painfully shy around people she didn't know? Susan made a mental note to spend some time getting to know her.  
  
Luke poured another round, and then another. After a while, Kate spread her arms and lay back against the edge of the tub. Her breasts floated to the surface, pale and luminous. Her nipples hardened quickly in the cool night air. She flipped her long blonde hair so that it spread out behind her on the deck. Peter watched her, his eyes glazed, like some hapless soul in a fairy tale bewitched by an enchantress. Susan shook her head. In a way she was grateful that she didn't have that kind of power over men. Being nineteen and reasonably athletic was already causing her all the trouble she could handle.  
  
She snuggled against Ken, careful to stay submerged, not quite trusting herself after all that wine and tequila. Kate, Peter and Luke had another round. Susan finished her first one and thought, why not?, just one more. Luke's laughter, loud enough to begin with, acquired a piercing, drunken quality that cut straight through the fog that was beginning to form in Susan's head. She leaned even closer to Ken, hoping that he'd put his arm around her to steady her a bit. But he was watching Kate like everyone else. She was standing now, her body on display from her hips upward. Her pussy was still hidden in the froth, but drops of water clung to her little patch of blond pubic hair and sparkled like jewels. She was demonstrating some sort of dance step, but she slipped and had to be steadied by Peter. She finally lost her balance completely and landed in Peter's lap, looking drunk and startled.  
  
"What's that?" Kate asked, looking down at Peter and feeling around under the surface with one hand. Giggling: "You'd better put that thing away before you hurt someone."  
  
But Kate didn't make any effort to move away. In fact, she seemed to be wiggling her hips under the water. Susan looked around. Luke's grin had gotten wider, if that was possible. Fawn looked away shyly. Ken was a Buddha: half-smiling, showing nothing. Susan decided that it was probably time to call it a night. She thought about getting up – clearly the first step in the process. But that suddenly seemed like quite a lot of work. She needed a minute or two to build up to it. Those minutes passed and then a few more after that, and her tequila glass was empty and then it was mysteriously full again. Ken was still close to her, their hips touching, but he seemed to almost be asleep. Is that how he reacts to being drunk, she wondered?   
  
Kate had turned partway around on Peter's lap and was kissing him. Something was happening underwater too, but it was hard to tell exactly what. As usual, Susan's over-active imagination began to fill in the details. She wondered if she should try to wake up Ken. He'd probably be interested. But perhaps he was really awake. His eyelids fluttered, and she could feel fingertips moving along her thigh. She wasn't sure about that at first; it could have been some trick of the water circulation – her experience with spas was limited. But then the pressure became more insistent. The sensation was an odd one, as if a fish was swimming around her legs. Odd but nice, she decided. She'd been feeling a little neglected, she had to admit. Kate and Peter were doing whatever, and Luke had finally started to pay some attention to Fawn, leaning over to whisper something in her ear. It was definitely past time for Ken to show some interest.  
  
The fingertips made looping patterns on her skin. The contact made her tingle and squirm a little, just like Kate was doing. Actually, Kate had moved past the squirming stage. She was sitting directly over Peter's lap now, facing away from him, but leaning back against his chest. Her eyes were closed and her breasts bobbed at the surface. Peter moved one hand up over her chest, dragging his fingers over her nipples. Susan couldn't tell what he was doing with his other hand; perhaps the same thing that was being done to her.  
  
Kate's lips parted and she made a soft, indrawn sigh. Peter shifted his body, and suddenly he was looking right at Susan. His gaze was so intense she didn't know how to react. She watched him stroke Kate's breasts and squeeze her nipples between his fingers. Susan was only vaguely aware of the hand that continued to caress her stomach, sliding over the warm skin and along the undersides of her breasts. She sank a little lower into the tub, which seemed to encourage the hand to roam more freely. It traced one side of her breast then flicked so lightly against her nipple that she couldn't be sure that it wasn't just a stray eddy in the current. But then the hand covered her breast completely and the thumb massaged her nipple making her gasp and arch her back.   
  
Peter's eyes never left Susan's. He was just across the tub, a few feet away, but the steam and the alcohol in her blood made him seem ghost-like, ephemeral. Kate rocked back and forth on his lap, and Susan was suddenly certain that they were doing it. She'd watched them before, hidden in the darkness of her dorm room and again on the stairs in Ken's house. And it was dark now too, and sort of dreamy with the foam and the steam. But this time Peter knew she was watching, and that changed things. But she couldn't look away. She'd never been able to, really, not then, not now. She needed to see when Kate reached that place where nothing mattered anymore except what was happening inside her, when she moaned and bucked and the last of her restraint was gone.  
  
Susan thought about the hand that was touching her, trying to imagine that it was Peter's. But no, he was too far away, and Peter's touch had always been gentler, almost reverent. This hand was rough and insistent, as if it was all about the goal and not about getting there. But she needed it just the same, really, really needed it. The hand was caressing her breasts, but she willed it to go lower. And … yes, the fingers stroked down her stomach and began tickling her inner thighs, which had somehow gotten farther apart, and then they were playing with her pubic hair. Susan drew her breath in and her muscles tensed.  
  
Kate leaned forward. Her body began moving up and down unambiguously. Her face held a look of astonishment, her brow drawn together, her eyes wide. The hand drifted between Susan's legs. Everything about the contact felt different, not slippery-smooth like it usually did. The friction – it was the same everywhere, against her stomach, along her thigh, inside her pussy. It was as if every part of her was aroused. A finger moved against her clit, rubbing it back and forth, harder than she usually liked, but it was perfect tonight. She lifted her hips to drive herself against it and suddenly she was floating. Her breasts emerged like pale islands, her nipples peeking out between the hissing bubbles.  
  
Peter licked his lips. He looked down towards Susan's soft conical points and the swells of her breasts as the water alternately displayed then hid them. The hand in her pussy was pure, raw sensation now, plunging deep into her again and again. Her head pitched back, soaking her hair, and she choked back a scream. The rising heat in her body suddenly made the tub's warmth intolerable. But she was still floating and couldn't stand up, couldn't get her balance, and her hips thrashed against the hand that was inside her.  
  
She put her arms behind her and grabbed the back of the tub. Now she could grind her hips, and she did, shamelessly, knowing that no one could see her. Her body began to tremble. Her skin, already flushed from the warm water, burned a dark pink at the top of her chest and down between her breasts. She hadn't ever felt anything like this before, the heat coming from outside her and inside her at the same time. But she needed to stay in control, she thought dimly. She was sitting outside with her friends, after all. She should …  
  
Susan gasped. There were two fingers now, thick and hard and cruel, ramming in and out of her. "Oh, god," she groaned as an irresistible feeling welled up inside her, expanding, strengthening as it flowed into her limbs. She was shaking and she was half out of the water again. She had a brief glimpse of Peter staring hard at her before her eyes rolled up in her head and the world turned black.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
After a long time her body came back from wherever it had been. She reached down between her legs and gently pushed away the hand that had been touching her. She felt weightless and dreamy and spent. When she could finally summon the energy to raise her eyelids, Peter was standing up. Susan felt a pang of disappointment. She'd missed seeing Kate at the end, missed seeing her body thrash out of control while Peter pounded into her. Susan shook her head, amazed at herself for thinking like that.

"I'm getting out too," Kate was saying with a self-conscious giggle, probably wondering if anyone had noticed what she and Peter had been up to. "I'm starting to prune up."  
  
Fawn, as ever, kept her own counsel, but there was a shy smile on her lips for the first time. And Luke was grinning, which didn't count for much, since that's what he always did. Except that she noticed now how close he was to her in the tub and how the grin was directed towards her rather than Kate. Susan instinctively looked for Ken, but he had drifted away at some point, or maybe she had moved farther from him. He was three or four feet away now, and he looked … serene, his eyes closed, his breathing regular. Was he really asleep?  
  
Susan's heart stopped. The water in the tub, as warm as it was, suddenly chilled her to her core. It couldn't have been … he wouldn't dare …  
  
"See you guys in the morning," Kate said, standing and turning. The sight of her bare butt, bright pink from the warm water, finally drew Luke's eyes away from Susan.  
  
Susan moved quickly. "Right, me too," she said, pulling herself out of the water and wrapping her robe around her shoulders before anyone could notice. She leaned over to rouse Ken, trying to keep the robe closed at the same time. Luke, damn him, was looking up at her from the tub. God only knew what he could see from his low vantage point. She shook her head. It was pretty dark, and she had other problems. She wasn't feeling all that well.  
  
"Hey," she said. "I'm going upstairs."  
  
Ken finally looked towards her, his serene expressing transforming into his familiar warm smile. "Well, it looks like the party's over then."  
  
With a nod towards Fawn and Luke, Ken lifted himself out of the tub in a single smooth motion. Susan wanted to admire his liquid grace, how the water dripped along his smooth chest and the lean columns of his thighs, but she was just too dizzy and miserable. Ken noticed her stumble and put an arm around her waist, and, still naked, helped her upstairs. He hid his disappointment well when she apologized, wobbled to the bed, and then passed out as if she'd been clubbed.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Ken was solicitous the next morning, bringing her tea and sitting beside her on the bed. The room took a while to come into focus. Susan hadn't particularly noticed anything about it the night before. There was a ski-run map on one wall and dark, heavy furniture that looked more expensive than stylish. A window looked out onto a white mountainside that bristled with very conical pine trees.   
  
Her head felt as if someone had dropped a piano on it.  
  
Ken was wearing a robe he hadn't bothered to tie. She wanted to admire him, maybe even touch the places that the robe left exposed, but it just wasn't happening this morning. She'd been wondering what it would take to completely purge her mind of all thoughts of sex. Now she knew. A few shots of tequila would do it, apparently.  
  
"I don't think I'll be doing any skiing this morning," she said, trying to sound chipper.  
  
"Not to worry," said Ken. "I'll just stay here and take care of you."  
  
"No, you should go – it looks like a perfect day."  
  
"Wouldn't dream of it. We've got three more days here. What's the hurry?"  
  
She really did smile this time. "Okay."  
  
Ken found some electronica on the radio and refilled her tea cup. A little later, she decided that she could eat some plain toast, and Ken sat beside her again and stroked her arm until she fell asleep.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
When Susan woke up she felt fine. Well, her mouth was a bit gummy and her eyelids were glued shut, but fine otherwise. Ken was sitting in a chair nearby reading a book – something about Byzantine history from what she could make out.  
  
"Hey," she said softly.  
  
Ken looked up. "How are you feeling?"  
  
"Pretty good. Maybe we can get some skiing in today after all."  
  
He smiled. "Can I get you anything?"  
  
She shook her head, something that would have been impossible a few hours earlier. "No, I'm going to take a shower."  
  
Ken nodded. "Okay. I'll see you downstairs."  
  
She shook her head again, really appreciating her ability to do so for the first time in her life. "Give me a few minutes." She smiled shyly. "Then … would you like to join me?"  
  
\* \* \*   
  
Susan brushed her teeth first, which helped a lot. Then she set the shower as hot as it would go and stingingly hard. She stepped under it and let the spray pound her into semi-consciousness. The tingling of her skin stirred up some uncomfortable thoughts. The hot tub. What had really happened there? Who had been touching her? Even at the time she had sensed that it wasn't Ken. And the truth was that she hadn't cared. She'd been watching Peter. Not that she could really see what he was doing; she'd had to infer it from the way his muscles had bunched and relaxed, from the way his breathing deepened. Having to use her imagination made it worse somehow. She'd needed someone to touch her, to make it all real. And Ken had been so out of it – drunk, tired from the trip? She wasn't sure. And what did that say about her? She liked watching Peter with Kate. Peter's sexual energy was so intense, and Kate was so free, so uninhibited. Susan wished she could be more like that. Seeing them together made her feel … she wasn't sure what it made her feel. Whatever it was, it was different than what she had with Ken.  
  
Susan's skin reddened from the impact of the hot water. She really didn't want to think about it. But now that she'd started, she couldn't clear her head of the steam-shrouded image of Kate sitting on Peter's lap, her breasts heaving, her eyes wild.  
  
A foggy shadow materialized on the other side of the glass. The shower door slid open and Ken stepped in, so at ease that Susan almost didn't notice that he was naked. She threw herself against him and wrapped her arms around his shoulders. That rattled his savoir faire just a little, Susan noted with satisfaction. Her skin almost sizzled where it touched his. Her breasts flattened against his chest, her nipples stiff despite the heat of the spray. He held her, one hand straying down to that spot just below the small of her back that always made her heart race when he touched it. Then he let go of her and reached for the shower handle.  
  
"Mind if I turn this down a bit?"  
  
Susan tried to locate some soap. "No, go ahead."  
  
The water began to fall less like razor blades and more like warm rain. She stood in front of him and rubbed the soap across the front of his body. She hadn't done anything like this before – she was improvising. But it was fun, and Ken was obviously enjoying it. After a minute, he closed his eyes and lost that faintly amused smile of his. And when she got her hands good and soapy and ran them over his cock, it hardened quickly under her fingers. Once his skin was shiny and slick all over, she spread the soap on herself. Ken watched, and Susan noticed a little twitch starting above his cheek. She hadn't meant to … to make a ceremony out of this. But the way he was watching her, his eyes lingering on her breasts and the outward curve of her hips … it made her want to …well, to reward him a little.  
  
She ran the bar of soap between her breasts, rubbing the inner swells, circling around one, then the other, finally sliding it across a nipple. Her own legs began to feel unsteady.  
  
"Don't stop," Ken said a little tensely.  
  
Susan smiled to herself and slid the soap down to her stomach. She moved closer to the spray, and it pelted against her skin, turning the soap film to glossy bubbles that sheeted over her breasts and dripped from the tips of her nipples. Then she put her arms around Ken and pulled their bodies together. The frictionlessness of his skin against hers felt like … like skating, only warmer, of course, warm and yielding … but with the same sense of barely knowing what was going to happen next. She experimented a little, sliding from side to side, feeling her nipples bump along his ribs and her pubic hair scratching against his scrotum. His cock was very hard now, trapped between them, its tip drawing little circles on her slick stomach. She felt breathless all of a sudden, and she kissed Ken with more urgency than he was prepared for. He held her tightly, driving his cock head against her belly, and he reached down to run soapy fingers across her butt.  
  
"Turn around," he said between kisses. "I'll do your back."  
  
That sounded innocent enough, but she didn't want innocent right now. She reached between them and put her hand back on his cock. She'd just meant to touch it, to offer a little encouragement. But, with the blood hammering inside it, it felt so … it felt like she was holding something alive. Sliding the shaft between her fingers was so effortless. She looked down. The head seemed to pulse, as if it could sense her lust, the nearness of her loins. She ran her thumb over the tip and felt his body jerk. So smooth … the wet, fine-grained skin, a bead of sticky pre-cum leaking from the tiny hole at its center. She circled around the opening with one finger.   
  
Ken shuddered. "Turn around," he said again, an edge in his voice this time.  
  
She did. She looked demurely over her shoulder at him while the water dripped down her hair and along the curve of her back. She felt like a nude statue from a fountain. She tilted her hip a little, bent one knee slightly to heighten the illusion. She'd never felt so sexy in her life. Ken moved closer, began to spread soap across her back. She closed her eyes and surrendered herself to the syrupy smoothness of his touch, and then she could feel the closeness of his body, so near that the steam coming off of his skin warmed her own and the head of his cock brushed her butt. A little jolt of electricity flowed from the place where his flesh rubbed against hers. Ken must have noticed the way she reacted. He began to move his hips almost imperceptibly, so that his cock skimmed over her skin, the touch so light that she barely knew it was happening. But there was that spot, the place he could always find, where her butt began to curve away from the small of her back. She shifted a little until the tip of his cock was touching her right there and its heat flowed through her. She had to put her hands against the wall on the far side of the stall to keep herself from falling. She thought vaguely that he might see that as an invitation, her legs a little apart, leaning forward, the muscles along the backs of her thighs taut, her pussy exposed and its lips swollen and wet from the spray and from her arousal.   
  
She looked down and closed her eyes. She felt Ken's cock against the top of one thigh, leaving a trail of warm fluid, and suddenly she didn't want to think anymore, she just wanted to feel him inside her, in the one place that really mattered. She pushed her hips back, tempting him, imploring him. And she felt tears running down her cheeks, almost indistinguishable from the spray of the shower, but salty and hot, and she realized that she didn't have to wait, to just hope that Ken would know what she wanted. She'd been modest, discreet. But she was naked now, alone with her lover. She didn't have to be shy or ashamed.  
  
"What are you waiting for?" she asked.  
  
She looked back over her shoulder again. Now Ken's eyes held the look she'd seen when she opened her robe that evening in his living room. The look that said that he was transparent, stripped of all his pretenses. That look was private, it was just for her. She felt a connection, a special closeness, a feeling that fused with the pressure of his flesh against hers, his cock sliding between her thighs, the head probing her outer lips and the sensitive folds. Her legs began to tremble again and she tilted her hips back until his shaft lay along her furrow, the tip bumping against her clit.  
  
He put his hands on her slippery flanks, digging his fingers into the wet skin of her butt.  
  
"Please, Ken …"  
  
She couldn't control her body. It molded itself to him, trying to draw everything it could from the limited contact, rubbing brazenly against him. She just couldn't wait any longer; she reached between them and nudged the tip of his cock into the entrance to her pussy and pushed back.  
  
Her body remembered his dimensions, and she swallowed him in one smooth motion. She let out a long sigh as he sank all the way in. She felt complete, joined to him as if some part of her had been missing until just now. Her legs steadied and they flowed together in an innate rhythm, as if they'd never been apart. He reached around her, stroking her stomach. The touch made her drive her hips back, holding him still for a moment. The familiar warm, liquid feeling washed over her, flowing outward from her pussy until it filled her up and everything turned soft and indistinct. Ken was holding her tightly and she could feel spasms rocking his body. Then he wasn't inside her anymore; his cock lay against her butt and he was coming, the hot liquid falling in ropes on her back and dripping between her cheeks, mixing with the spray from the shower. She turned, sliding in his arms, until they were face to face. She kissed him hard, rubbing her belly against his still rigid cock, drawing a groan from him and one more spurt of cum that lubricated the place where their bellies touched.  
  
After a long time Ken let go of her and leaned back against the tile wall, his eyes closed, water splashing against his body. Hi s expression was unreadable.  
  
"I'm afraid of you," he said.  
  
\* \* \*  
  
"The cabin actually belongs to my aunt," Ken explained. "She tried to teach me to play the piano years ago. I think she lets me use the place now in gratitude for my abandoning my musical ambitions after the third or fourth lesson."  
  
That was typical of Ken, Susan decided. His self-deprecation was his way of defining himself. All he ever talked about was what he hadn't accomplished, of talents he lacked or projects that had gone comically awry. She had to understand him from the spaces he left between his anecdotes, like those pictures they show you in psychology, where there are two faces looking towards each other, but if you blink you can see a vase instead. So he revealed himself, but you almost had to look away to really see him.  
  
Susan watched the rest of their group while Ken spoke. Kate sparkled – there was no other word for it. She laughed musically when Ken told them about a cross-country ski trip rife with misadventure and featuring encounters with hungry bears, incompletely frozen lakes, and irate land-owners. Kate looked very beautiful when she laughed, her teeth gleaming and her blond hair flying. She was at her best in company, especially if there was alcohol (and there was plenty, not that Susan was having any, thank you). Fawn listened worshipfully. Luke would occasionally whisper something to her and she would respond briefly, then turn her attention back to Ken. Susan could tell that Luke was getting annoyed. Peter listened too, but he seemed brooding and pensive.  
  
Their main courses arrived and Susan picked at her chicken breast. Luke took the opportunity to interrupt Ken's narrative.   
  
"Peter," he asked, "did you do any of those double black diamond runs?"  
  
Peter smiled ruefully. Susan appreciated the break in his dark mood. His tension had been making it hard for her to enjoy herself.  
  
"I'm working up to it," he said. "How about you?"  
  
Susan had been feeling well enough by late afternoon to try a couple of the bunny slopes. Everyone else had been more ambitious. She visualized Peter slicing down the steep runs at the top of the mountain, his athletic body under razor-sharp control. She felt a little twinge.  
  
"Tried a couple of them," Luke answered.  
  
He sounded awfully self-satisfied to Susan, but that may just have been because she wanted to dislike him.  
  
"That Twin Pines run, you just have to close your eyes and hang on. It would be too scary if you looked."  
  
Now Susan imagined Luke wobbling down Twin Pines with his eyes closed and slamming into a tree. She sighed. She just wanted dinner to be over. She felt badly about that. She should enjoy being with her friends, the way Kate obviously did. But right now she just wished she were alone with Ken.   
  
No such luck. Dessert and coffee went on endlessly, and then Ken wanted a glass of port, naturally. She half-expected him to suggest cigars next. But, finally, the bill arrived and they piled into the SUV for the trip to the cabin.   
  
It was still fairly early in the evening when they got back. Dinner had onlyseemed to last forever, Susan decided. The hot tub was the unspoken next phase of the evening. Ken went to the kitchen to organize a bottle of wine and some glasses, and everyone else went headed upstairs to get ready. With the coast clear, Susan saw an opportunity to get into the tub before the rest of the crowd showed up. She still felt reticent, but she decided that modesty in front of this group was getting to be a little silly.  
  
Susan had been soaking by herself for a few minutes when Peter joined her. She had her eyes closed and didn't see him get in. She felt a brief frustration that she'd once again missed the opportunity to see him naked.  
  
"Where's Kate?" she asked.  
  
He shrugged. "Helping Ken with something."  
  
When Susan didn't respond, Peter said: "Ken seems like a good fellow."  
  
"Yes." She kept her voice as neutral as possible.  
  
"But I have to ask, when you go to a restaurant, does he order in French?"  
  
Susan just glared at him. As much as she wanted to reply with some sort of cutting remark, she couldn't quite. The thing was, he did order in French. But it wasn't an affectation or anything, it was just what he did.  
  
Peter looked smug. It didn't suit him.  
  
She leaned forward and snapped: "At least I know that he won't lie to me."  
  
Peter held up both hands. "Hey, sorry." And he really was. "No offence intended."  
  
Susan stared hard at him for another moment while she fought to control all the feelings tangled up inside her head. She was half out of the water, she realized, her breasts very much on display. Her emotion drained out of her as suddenly as it had gathered. She felt foolish.  
  
But Peter was looking into her eyes, not at her chest. That bothered her at a level she didn't even want to think about. She leaned closer to him. The deck lights reflecting off of the snow washed the color from his face, made him seem abstract, like one of those impossibly handsome men in an old photograph. She closed the distance between them, sending ripples splashing around the tub. She put her hand behind his head, pulled him closer, and kissed him quickly.  
  
"You're right. I'm not handling this very well. I want us to be friends."  
  
There was a lot more she wanted to say, but she was pretty sure it wouldn't come out right. She looked down and moved back to her side of the tub. But her bare breasts were still floating on the pale foam.  
  
"You're beautiful," Peter said.  
  
Susan felt herself blushing. She couldn't look at him.  
  
"You know …" Peter's voice trailed off. "You know how these weekends usually go …"  
  
She shook her head. "Not really."  
  
"Well … if everybody's feeling … friendly and they're drunk enough, sometimes, you know, they'll end up switching partners."  
  
"So I've heard," Susan said, suddenly cold again. It had felt so good for a minute, and now he was ruining it. She hated having the same conversation with Peter that she'd had with Luke.  
  
"If that happened, well, then we wouldn't be lying to anyone."  
  
Susan looked down, her face burning. "I couldn't do anything like that." But she sounded tentative, even to herself.   
  
"Let's just see how it goes, okay?"  
  
"I'll think about it."

Susan had meant that to sound discouraging, but Peter smiled warmly, and a minute later, Kate, Ken and the rest of the gang were shedding their robes and passing out glasses of merlot. Susan made absolutely sure that Ken sat downbetween her and Luke this time.   
  
\* \* \*  
  
This group can really put away the wine, Susan thought. She seemed to recall her mother warning her about this kind of behavior when she'd sent her off to college. But as much as Susan wanted to rebel against parental authority, she nursed a single glass for as long as she could.  
  
Ken was explaining about the Amarone grape, how it's dried on straw mats before being crushed, giving it a particularly robust character. Luke talked about their football team, a delicate topic since they finished the season two-and-nine. Fawn, sitting next to Susan, just listened, as usual. But she was doing a fair job of keeping up the boys when it came to downing the wine. Susan wondered if that might help her overcome her shyness.  
  
"How long have you known Luke?" Susan asked.  
  
Fawn seemed surprised at the question, as if she couldn't imagine why anyone would want to know anything about her. "Just … let's see, two weeks?"  
  
"Really? And you decided to go on a ski trip with him?"  
  
"Yeah, well, I didn't have anything else planned for the winter break. I was pretty bummed about that. So it worked out, I guess. How long have you known Ken?"  
  
Susan laughed. "Not much longer, actually."  
  
Fawn looked over at Ken, her eyes almost glowing. "He seems so … so …"  
  
Susan smiled. "Yes. I know exactly what you mean."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan pulled herself out of the tub, hardly thinking about it. She was definitely feeling more relaxed about being … casual with this group. Still, when everybody drifted into the living room still wearing their robes, Susan went upstairs to change. She thought about what to wear and finally decided on the usual – panties and an oversized t-shirt.  
  
Walking downstairs a few minutes later, she could see everyone else lounging in the living room. A couch and a love seat faced each other across a coffee table. Luke and Fawn cuddled on the love seat, Kate and Peter at one end of the couch. Ken, the perfect host as always, was filling everyone's wine glasses and laughing at something Kate had just said. Susan hesitated for a second then sat down on the couch next to Kate who, she noticed, had changed into her pajamas. Susan looked around, wondering what was going to happen next. If anyone suggests spin the bottle or strip poker, she thought, I am soooo out of here…  
  
But no one said anything. Ken put on some music – trip-hop with a bass thump that practically demanded to be danced to. Kate was on her feet right away, grabbing Peter by the hand and dragging him behind her.   
  
Kate was fun to watch. She danced with such innocent abandon. There was a pure joy in her gyrations, whatever they might lack in grace or technique. Susan always felt self-conscious when she danced – just another facet of her overall repression, she decided. She really needed to get over it. And she nodded resolutely to herself: I'm going to have a good time tonight. She stood up just as her intuition sent up a red flag. She looked over toward Luke and, sure enough, he was eyeing her critically. She certainly didn't want to dance with him, so she took the initiative and walked over to Ken. He was still fiddling with the equalizer, so she put her arms around him from behind. She nuzzled his ear with her lips.  
  
"Dance with me," she whispered.  
  
Ken turned, a hint of a smile at the corners of his lips. "It would be my pleasure."  
  
He took her hand gravely and led her to the center of the room. Unlike Kate and Peter, who were moving energetically but rarely touching, Ken put his hand on her waist and held her close. He knew all the social graces, Susan thought. He made everything seem so simple, so effortless. I'm lucky to have him.  
  
"Let's go upstairs," she cooed in his ear after a decent interval.  
  
"I'd love to, but I can't leave my guests."  
  
"They're big boys and girls. They can take care of themselves."  
  
He sighed, obviously struggling. "Let's just give it a few more minutes." He grinned at her. "We could, ah, sit on the couch."  
  
She grinned back. "Okay."  
  
She almost tore his arm out of its socket dragging him back to the couch. He landed awkwardly on top of her, and she poked him playfully in the ribs.  
  
"Kinda klutzy, huh? That's what happens when you hang around me too much. All that style of yours, poof, out the window."  
  
He shifted around, still mostly on top of her, until he could look into her eyes. Her t-shirt had ridden up her legs, and Ken put his hand on her thigh. He slid his fingers upward until they were on her hip. Susan looked around quickly. Was anybody else watching? No. Peter and Kate were still dancing – well, it was more like Kate was hanging onto him, laughing drunkenly. And Luke and Fawn, tangled up on the love seat across from them, were already a couple steps ahead of everyone else in the public-display-of-affection department.  
  
What the hell, Susan thought. Why wait? She wriggled her hips a little to encourage his explorations and turned her face towards his until she found his lips. There was something almost unbearably soft in Ken's kisses, as if she might sink so deeply into his embrace that she could never escape. She'd been reluctant before, afraid of losing control, but she welcomed it tonight. She tickled his tongue with hers, nibbled at his lower lip. Her hand went under his robe and found his chest, toyed with his nipples. His hand kept busy too, stroking along her inner thigh, brushing her mound and her pussy lips through the fabric of her panties.  
  
Susan's t-shirt was up around her waist, completely exposing her legs. But Ken's body blocked everyone's view, more or less. And it wasn't as if they were paying attention anyway. She really wanted to feel his cock. It was stupid and adolescent, but she'd been thinking about it all evening. She reached down, but the critical area was pressing against her thigh and she couldn't quite get to it. Finally, Ken figured out what she was up to and lifted himself a little to make it easier. She had to loosen his robe, and her efforts grew more and more frantic. It was another frustrating few seconds before she finally had his very hard shaft in her hand. She ran her thumb along the ridge at the base of the head. She loved that part, so fragile and silky, and she just had to barely touch it to hear him gasp and jerk his hips upwards. Anyone watching them could guess what she was doing from his reactions. That excited her, she realized with some surprise. She felt the tell-tale drip of moisture along her inner thigh and the flush spreading at the base of her neck. She just held him for a moment, feeling the blood-pulse beneath his flesh, deep and steady. She saw muscles pull tight on his face and a bead of sweat form in the little space between his eyebrows.  
  
"You're driving me crazy," he whispered. "Are you sure you want to do this here?"  
  
She gave him a small nod, trying to make it confident. It wasn't exactly how she felt. She leaned towards him until she could find his lips again, and Ken laid his hand on the front of her panties, his thumb pushing the fabric into the crevice between her lips. She was already wet down there, and the cotton rubbed against her folds with a smooth, sticky lubricity. His fingers sawed up and down, pushing in harder, deepening her arousal with every stroke. Thick pre-cum was leaking from his cock and she scooped it up with a finger and swirled it around the tip. Ken put his other hand under her shirt, slipping it over her stomach until he could cup one breast. She leaned into him, to heighten the contact, flattening her stiff nipple against his palm.  
  
An excited voice slashed through her reverie. "… over here." Then it was closer. "Come on," followed by a heavy thump right next to her. Susan turned away from Ken to find Kate sprawled beside her, pulling on Peter's arm. After a moment of teetering indecision he landed on the couch at the far end. The couch was big, but not that big. Kate's shoulder rested against Susan's and, as Peter rearranged himself, Kate's upper body threatened to end up on Susan's lap. Just then, Ken took Susan's nipple and rolled it lightly between his fingers. She felt paralyzed. She looked down and saw Kate, lying on her back now, looking up at her with a blissful smile and a conspiratorial wink. Peter's hands were everywhere (although still outside her P.J.'s thank god) – stroking her breasts and her thighs, tickling her exposed stomach. Susan glanced at Peter for a moment and found him staring back at her. His look was a challenge, hard and unforgiving. Susan felt a little frightened, but she couldn't seem to avert her eyes.  
  
Fortunately, Kate solved the problem by pulling Peter down until he was lying on top of her, almost horizontal. Kate reached inside his robe. Susan could see one hand running over his butt and the other tracing the muscles of his back. Unconsciously, Susan gave Ken's cock a small squeeze. Ken groaned softly, and his finger began to work its way beneath the hem of Susan's panties, finally pulling them impatiently to one side. Susan turned her hips towards him a little and spread her legs wider. She wanted his fingers inside her now, she wanted his thumb pushing her hood aside to reveal the hard nub of her clit, she wanted to cum with her hips thrusting up against his hand until it glistened from his wrist to his fingertips with her excitement.   
  
She looked quickly over her shoulder at Peter. He and Kate were kissing hungrily. But if he were to look up … with Susan's t-shirt up around her hips, her pussy would be completely visible. The thought made her breathe harder. Peter would be able to watch Ken's fingers stroke her lips, forcing them apart to reveal her moist pink recesses. Peter was close, only a foot or two away, close enough to smell her excitement. Was that what she wanted? For Peter to watch while Ken touched her? The thought made her dizzy, disoriented. She felt like she didn't know who she was anymore, didn't recognize the girl who inhabited her body.  
  
Ken's fingers sank deeper into her and all her doubts dissolved. Her eyelids fluttered and she settled bonelessly into the couch. Kate's hair lay strewn carelessly across Susan's bare thigh, and she reached down to stroke it idly. Something made her look towards Luke and Fawn, still sitting in the love seat a few feet away. Susan made a small startled sound when she realized what they were doing. She had thought that she was immune, that nothing could surprise her anymore. But Luke's robe was open, completely open, his legs, hairy and thick with muscle, were bare, and his cock stood up like a cudgel, blood red and menacing. She glanced at his face, and for once it wasn't grinning back at her. He was looking at Fawn. He had one arm around her shoulder, and he was coaxing her lower. She hesitated, glancing around the room as Luke's hand moved her head irresistibly towards his crotch. Susan tried to catch Fawn's eye, to tell her that she didn't have to. But it was too late. Fawn was looking down at Luke's cock, and her tongue flicked across her lips. Her mouth opened, opened wide, and she began to swallow the blunt head. Susan stiffened as more and more of his cock disappeared into her mouth. She forced herself to away from Fawn and Luke only to see Kate pushing off Peter's robe until he was completely naked, his muscular back and lean butt exposed.  
  
Not again, she thought. I don't have to. I don't have to watch them.  
  
She turned back towards Ken. His hand continued its gentle explorations. But he was looking at Kate and Peter, drinking in the sight of their bodies grinding together. I don't have to watch them, she thought again. Susan closed her eyes and nuzzled Ken's ear. With his body leaning on hers and Kate's head lying across her thigh, she really couldn't get up. And Ken's hand, the feel of it stroking her over-heated flesh, she didn't want that to stop. Kate's hair was warm and soft. Susan played with it a little, letting the strands slide through her fingers.  
  
A grunt from Luke snapped her eyes back open. Fawn was licking along the length of Luke's shaft, its tip quivering with each stroke of her tongue. He was sprawled back in the love seat now, his arms along the back of the cushions. The scene in the living room had settled into a sort of a tableau, repeated in an endless wet rhythm.  
  
Peter disturbed the equilibrium by undoing several buttons of Kate's pajama top, exposing the inner swells of her breasts. The bottoms had shifted as well, riding down over her hips and exposing the top of her pubic mound. Peter's eyes raked her from head to toe – and then he glanced at Susan, too quickly for her to guess his purpose. Was it a rebuke? Or was he asking her permission? She met his eyes uncertainly, just as he seemed to be making up his mind. He grabbed the waistband of her bottoms. Kate lifted her hips and off they came. She was naked underneath, her legs long and pale beneath the generous swell of her hips; and her pussy, the smooth lips obviously swollen and damp with excitement, even with her legs together. Susan had never seen another woman like this. It seemed too personal, too private. She felt herself flush, and once again she tried to turn away. But she got it now, why guys wanted this.  
  
Peter kneeled between Kate's thighs, hunched up at the far end of the couch. Kate shifted back a little to give him more room, so that her head now lay fully on Susan thigh. And, with that, Susan knew she was committed. She was a part of the scene, part of a silent agreement to share their intimacies. She wasn't hiding in the shadows this time or pretending to be asleep. But she didn't feel ashamed or uncertain. She was deeply aroused, barely in control of her own thoughts, the pressure at her center leaving her faint and breathless. She lifted her hips as best she could to nudge Ken's fingers deeper into her pussy.  
  
Peter's head disappeared between Kate's legs, and he began to kiss the smooth skin of her inner thighs. Kate closed her eyes serenely and parted her lips. Peter took his time, as he always did, tracing a path up one thigh and across her stomach with his tongue, tickling her belly button. Kate drew in her breath as he nuzzled her pussy lips for the first time. And Susan felt the sudden need to touch Ken again. As she started to reach for him, he undid his robe, which left him bare from the waist down, like Luke. Actually, everyone except for Fawn was in pretty much the same state, Susan realized. She brushed the fine, fair hair on the tops of Ken's thighs and played with his pubic hair, so much curlier than everywhere else. She dragged a fingertip along the vein that ran up the underside of his shaft. He was harder than she'd ever seen him. But even so, her eyes kept straying back to Peter. His hands were pushing Kate's thighs further apart, his thumbs spreading her outer lips.  
  
Ken slid a little forward to give Susan better access to his cock. She admired his openness. Sex was something that interested and excited him, like history or thermodynamics, like French wine or renaissance music. He watched as Peter's tongue swirled around Kate's clit as raptly he might watch an opera or a World Series game.  
  
A moment later, Kate's body began to react violently to Peter's attentions. She gripped the couch cushions and her hips bucked. Her mouth was wide open now and she made small reedy cries. Her back arched, stretching her pajama top across her breasts, nipples hard and pushing at the thin cotton that barely covered them. Ken was whispering in Susan's ear, but she couldn't focus long enough to make out what he was saying.  
  
"Susan."  
  
She forced herself to blink, to hear what he was saying.  
  
"Susan, unbutton her top."  
  
His voice was the seductive, polished one she remembered from their first night together. It was a voice that frightened her, even as it caressed her more surely than his hands or his lips.  
  
"Go ahead," he murmured. "She won't mind."  
  
She looked at Kate. Only three buttons held her top together at this point. Susan could reach all of them easily. Her hand moved up without any conscious effort, without her ever really deciding to move it. But she hesitated at the last moment.   
  
"Go on," Ken whispered.  
  
Susan bit her lower lip. She put her hand on the edge of the fabric where it separated below Kate's neck. Kate inhaled and the top was taut again. The smallest motion of Susan's fingers and the top button popped free. More of Kate's cleavage emerged, all of the voluptuous inner curves and the dark edges of her aureoles. Susan reached for the next button and released it. The top was open almost to Kate's waist. The last button looked ridiculous, uncomfortable. Susan had to lean over a little to get at it. She held it between her fingers for a moment, just held it. Then she pushed the button through its hole and the two halves of Kate's top came apart. Her breasts seemed to quiver, sensing their freedom. They looked so soft, so inviting. There were little bumps around the edges of her aureoles, right before they rose to form stiff round nipples, heightening the contrast with the creamy skin around them.  
  
"Touch her," Ken urged.  
  
His words hung in the air. Susan's hand was still close enough to Kate's chest to sense the heat steaming off of her skin. She turned towards Ken and gave him a slow grin.  
  
"Are you trying to corrupt me?"  
  
That earned her a raised eyebrow and a sly Mr. Smooth smile. "Absolutely. Is it working?"  
  
Susan turned back towards Kate without answering. She shifted around a little until the angle was right, until she could lean over and touch one breast with her tongue. She kissed the dark nipple then squeezed it gently between her lips. Kate sighed, lost somewhere, her eyes still closed. Her skin felt so alive, responding so openly to Susan's touch. She envied Kate that: no guilt or uncertainties, no repressed feelings. Just pleasure. But something intruded at the periphery of her vision. She turned her head a little. Peter was watching her, his expression unreadable. His tongue was still buried in Kate's pussy, but his eyes looked up over the soft mound into Susan's. Was he disappointed in her, or was he only surprised? Did it excite him? Shock him? The held each other's eyes for only a second, and Susan sat up. It felt nice, touching Kate like that. But it was just too complicated.  
  
The loss of contact roused Kate from her trance. She opened her eyes and looked mistily at Peter.  
  
"Come on," she said. And there was no refusing her.  
  
Peter's eyes turned helpless and bewildered. Susan sighed, recognizing that look. He would do whatever Kate wanted. And both he and Susan knew what that was. Peter crawled forward until he could prop himself up on his elbows. His face was only a foot or so away from Susan's, but he was only seeing Kate now. His powerful shoulders tensed, and Susan recognized that as what his body did in the moment before penetrating Kate. She turned away, appalled at herself for knowing something like that, something Peter probably didn't even realize himself; but the first thing she saw didn't help at all. It was Luke's face, oddly slack, his hand lying idly on Fawn's head. She was wiping liquid off her cheek and lips. Oh, god, Susan thought, realizing what it was. At least that didn't excite her – very much the contrary. She was disgusted and embarrassed for Fawn, although the object of her sympathy seemed indifferent, as if she'd just been a bit clumsy at breakfast. No, it was only Peter she enjoyed watching, couldn't stop watching. Only him.

Something in Fawn's expression changed as Susan looked towards her. The bland, doormat look was gone, and now she was looking at Ken with a brave, hopeful smile. Ken wasn't looking back, though. He was watching Kate. Peter was still positioned over her. He was rubbing his cock along her oozing slit, the tip bumping against her, pushing her folds apart. Susan wasn't sure if Peter was being awkward or if he was trying to maintain some sort of teasing control. If so, he was barely holding it together. A muscle spasmed on one side of Peter's face, but the effect on Kate was even more electric. She thrashed her hips, frantically trying to position the head of his cock properly to slip inside her. Her mouth was open and her eyes darted from side to side in a sort of panic. Her shoulders came up off of the couch so that her head tilted back, pressing harder on Susan's thigh.  
  
Susan looked at Peter, feeling almost as distraught as Kate. Come on, what are you waiting for? Can't you see how much she needs it?  
  
Peter's face looked strained, as if his head was at war with his loins. But Kate's carnality was sapping his will; and then her thighs wrapped around his hips, and that did it. He sank into her with harsh, dissonant groans from both of them. They began to move together immediately, violent slaps sounding as their bodies met. Beads of sweat sprang from Peter's forehead, dripped down his face and onto Kate's chest. Her look was wide-eyed, astonished, her cries guttural now, from deep in her chest every time Peter's hips lunged towards hers.  
  
But Peter wasn't ready to abandon himself, he was fighting it, fighting his own primal needs. Susan could see the resolution on his face, and with a single brutal effort he pulled himself almost upright, kneeling at the end of the couch with his cock still buried deep between Kate's folds, perspiration gleaming on his chest, his expression unreadable again, but his eyes looking straight into Susan's. Her mouth opened in shock. He'd been thinking about her the whole time. Susan looked away only to find Luke staring at her. He had pulled himself back together and his expression was the one she liked least, cool and appraising.  
  
This is pretty fucked up, Susan thought. Peter and Ken are watching me, I'm watching Peter, Ken is watching Kate, Fawn's looking at Ken. Susan shook her head. I shouldn't be part of this. I'm lucky to have Ken. He's good for me, he challenges me, opens me up, teaches me about myself.  
  
She forced herself to concentrate on Ken, on what was doing to her. His hand was slipping all the way under her hips, forcing her to lift them a little off of the couch, touching her in places where … where she wasn't used to being touched. She realized that Peter could see her, and probably Luke too. Actually, Luke was looking at her pretty intently. The hell with him, she thought. She reached down and wriggled her butt until she could work her panties off, then pulled them down and off her feet. She leaned back and opened herself for Ken, feeling liberated and primitive and devastatingly sexy.  
  
Ken's hands caressed her skin, glided along her inner thigh and the ridge at the top of her hip. He laid his palm on her belly. His flesh seemed to burn against hers. She was suddenly so sensitive everywhere. His breathing deepened as he ruffled her pubic hair. It was his way, she realized. Like slow music. He was savoring her in the same way he would sip a glass of his beloved Margaux. Susan smiled luxuriously and relaxed into his rhythm, feeling the sensations heighten with each stroke of his fingertips.   
  
Even so, she couldn't really ignore Kate and Peter – Kate's head banged against Susan's leg with each thrust of Peter's hips. Susan looked down to the point where their bodies met. The long, slick shaft of Peter's cock slid in and out savagely, stretching her lips wide and pushing them in on every stroke. His balls were hidden beneath their bodies, but she could hear their slap each time their hips came together. The muscles on Peter's chest were pulled tight and the complicated ridges of his stomach rippled and contracted. He reached down and covered Kate's mound with his hand. Susan felt her own excitement spike out of control and she realized that Ken was rubbing his thumb in circles around her clit, just as Peter was starting to do to Kate. Susan squirmed hard against Ken's hand, and he slid one finger all the way inside her. She gasped and grabbed his arm, holding him there while her pussy contracted hard and moisture spurted. She arched her back, but her eyes stayed on Peter. Their gazes locked for a moment, and Susan's vision narrowed. All she could see was Peter's face and his shoulders, as if everything else in the universe had momentarily faded away. A sheen of perspiration illuminated his skin, and his clear brown eyes, more enigmatic than ever, stared so deeply into hers that she finally had to look down. But that was even worse. Now she was watching Kate's breasts sway violently at the impact of Peter's hips and her stomach curving smoothly into the darkness where the rigid column of his cock, dark with blood, pumped in and out, the rounded tip pausing for a moment at her entrance each time, and his dark pubic hair holding sparkling drops of her liquid.  
  
For a moment Susan lost track of what was happening to her. The constant pressure that Ken had been applying was suddenly gone. Its loss left her stunned and almost desperate, but then she felt Kate take her hand, and at the same moment her legs were being pushed farther apart. She sighed and squeezed back on Kate's fingers, knowing what was coming next, and she could finally look away from Peter and close her eyes.  
  
She tried to figure out where Ken was now – on his knees in front of her, leaning over her? In front, she decided. If he were leaning over her she'd feel his chest against her leg, but there was only the whispery touch of his fingers on her inner thighs and his warm breath on her pussy. She was already so aroused she didn't want to wait any longer to feel his tongue inside her. But rushing wasn't his way. He kissed her thighs everywhere; and she imagined all her nerve endings lighting up. And his fingers caressed her where his mouth had just been, stoking the sensations, enflaming her, keeping her at the edge of … something, something she'd only imagined but never knew if she could really have. And every time she thought his lips would touch her where she most wanted him, he would pull back, and then he began to give her little bites, just pulling at her flesh with his lips, scraping it here and there with his teeth, letting her feel the different textures of his mouth, and licking, tickling … and then, oh!, finally brushing her outer lips with his nose, with his lips, kissing them, blowing lightly on them. She wriggled on the couch, tilting her hips up, trying to get closer to him, but the weight of Kate's head and shoulders prevented her from moving much. She bit her lip in frustration. But Ken didn't react. He kept kissing her, nuzzling her. Now he was following the inner landscape of her loins with the tip of his tongue, barely touching her, just tracing the contours of her folds, pausing to lick up her moisture.  
  
Susan's body was feeling so warm she imagined that she would be covered in sweat before long, her t-shirt sticking to her skin, clinging to her damp breasts and belly. Should she just take it off now or would Ken like seeing her like that? Those thoughts scattered when Ken began to suck on her inner lips, running his tongue across the trapped skin. His fingers were there too, and one had begun to worm back into her recesses, squelching against the swollen flesh. She heard herself making small, sharp cries every time his lips explored some new spot that always seemed to be even more sensitive than the last.  
  
He had a second finger inside her now, and her breathing became erratic. She couldn't coordinate her motions; her muscles just wouldn't respond. She tingled everywhere and her body tightened and she knew she was past the point of no return. Ken's tongue lashed across her clit and Susan screamed. Her pussy contracted hard and she felt as if she were being overwhelmed by a wave that left her drenched and breathless and so sensitive that she wanted to push Ken away; but she couldn't. She was paralyzed, all her nerve endings firing at once. And then it happened again, her body spasming uncontrollably, and then she had to make him stop, she had no choice, only she still couldn't move.  
  
But, as always, Ken could sense her mood perfectly, and he pulled away and sat back down next to her, arm around her shoulder, rubbing her back gently. Clarity returned little by little, although her pussy kept quivering and muted ripples of pleasure continued to flow through her body. She was vaguely aware of Peter groaning sharply and Kate's voice becoming a hoarse wail and her body stiffening against Susan's leg.  
  
And then it was very quiet. The music had stopped – had stopped quite a while earlier, Susan guessed – and there were no sounds at all, just breathing and the wall heater cycling on and off. When Susan finally opened her eyes, she realized that Ken had thoughtfully pulled her shirt down to cover her pussy and he was lightly touching her neck and her cheek. Her return to consciousness was almost like a signal to the others. Peter and Kate were sitting up and rearranging their clothing. Luke stood and stretched. He'd re-tied his robe at some point, Susan was relieved to see. He went into the kitchen and came back with a handful of shot glasses and the now-half-empty bottle of tequila. He poured a couple of fingers for everyone and passed it around. Susan tried to demur, but Luke gave her a glass anyway. Everyone (except Susan) knocked back their shots, and it gave them all an excuse not to talk for another minute or two.  
  
And then Luke, who was still standing, looked around the room casually and asked: "So are you guys ready to switch?"  
  
Kate giggled, and Fawn's eyes darted towards Ken for a second. Susan's thoughts drained abruptly from her head. She knew that she needed to say something, but no ideas came. She tried again, even opened her mouth, but still nothing happened. There was a pause that drew out right to the limit. One more second, Susan prayed, one more second, and if no one says anything it won't happen …  
  
Then, of all people, Fawn piped up with: "Sure. That sounds like fun."  
  
Everyone glanced slowly at everyone else now. Ken's arm held her a little more lightly. Kate, for once, looked down shyly and blushed. And it seemed that the decision had been made without Susan quite realizing how. It was another moment before she noticed that she was staring right at Luke. The grin she hated began to form at the corners of his mouth.  
  
"How about it, Susan?" he asked. "Are you up for it?"  
  
Her throat went dry. But that didn't matter, since she didn't have the dimmest idea of how to reply. She looked towards Ken for support, but he was wearing his Buddha smile. Was it the tequila kicking in or was he just letting her choose, not putting any pressure on her one way or the other? Susan felt completely flustered. She tried again to speak, to buy herself some time …  
  
And Peter stepped between her and Luke.  
  
"Hey," he said lightly. "I saw her first. Susan, would you like to dance?"  
  
She could breathe again. The wave of relief was as intense as her orgasms had been a few minutes earlier. Peter had his hand out. She glanced quickly back at Luke. He looked stunned, standing in the middle of the room with an almost comically perplexed expression. He was used to getting his way, she figured, and he hadn't decided how to react to this turn of events. Susan had to put her hand in front of her mouth to avoid laughing.  
  
She stood up and glanced back at Ken. He smiled indulgently. Then, at the last second, she remembered Kate, now sitting almost primly at her end of the couch. She looked a little blank, perhaps not completely recovered from her session with Peter. Susan took that as permission. She rose and accepted Peter's hand. He led her over to the other side of the living room and picked out something slow from the stack of CD's. Peter put his arm around her waist and she melted into him as the music started.  
  
Susan wasn't much of a dancer normally – she always felt too self-conscious to really enjoy herself. But this was different, completely different.  
  
"Thanks for rescuing me," she whispered into Peter's ear.   
  
"Hey, my pleasure. I've always wanted to dance with you."  
  
They swayed quietly for a moment, Susan comfortably aware of his lingering sexual scent and his gradually hardening cock pressing against her stomach. But that was no big deal. She always associated Peter with sex, so it was all a familiar part of the picture. She felt very mellow right now, and she could appreciate him without the bewildering, guilt-saturated yearning she usually felt.  
  
"This is a little weird," Susan said.  
  
Peter nodded companionably.  
  
"Sorry I was … sharp with you earlier," she added.  
  
He kissed her lightly on the neck as a reply.  
  
They weren't alone, Susan noted idly. Ken was dancing with Fawn, her steps a little tentative, his elegant, as they always were. Kate and Luke were standing nearby, but they were talking in low voices, not dancing. As Susan looked over, trying to make out what they were saying, Luke gave her his appraising glance. She quickly put her head back against Peter's shoulder.  
  
"It's all right," he said, "if you don't want to …"  
  
She looked at him quizzically.  
  
"You know … switch."  
  
Susan stiffened. Until now, she'd just been worried about getting away from Luke. She hadn't been able to think beyond that. But suddenly she felt that sweet ache at her center, the pressure building gradually, irresistibly.  
  
"Susan, are you okay?"  
  
She had stopped moving and let go of him. How had this happened? Peter was staring her. She didn't see lust or swagger or masculine pride in his eyes, just affection and a little concern. She looked back at him, suddenly lost in his deep liquid gaze.  
  
"Yes," she said. "I'm okay. And, well … you know, if everyone else wants to …"  
  
"Peter?"  
  
Susan's concentration was broken, but she couldn't react yet. Too many things were going on in her head.  
  
"Peter?"  
  
It was Kate's voice. There was a catch in it, a little nervous tremor. Kate had moved close to them and she was looking back and forth, from Peter's face to Susan's.  
  
Peter finally turned towards her. "What?"  
  
His voice had just the slightest edge to it.  
  
"Peter, I'm pretty tired – all the skiing, you know? Can we just go to bed now?"  
  
She was almost pleading. Susan saw a dozen emotions race across Peter's face so quickly she couldn't quite identify them: Disappointment? Anger? Frustration?  
  
He finally nodded. "Right now?"  
  
"Yes, please." Like a little girl.  
  
Susan exhaled slowly, uncertain which of that range of emotions she should be feeling herself.  
  
Kate took Peter by the arm and led him away. And Susan was suddenly standing by herself in the middle of the room. It finally occurred to her that the field was clear for Luke again. Now that was a non-starter.  
  
"Ken?"  
  
He and Fawn were still dancing, apparently oblivious to all the drama. But Ken looked up right away, catching the urgency in Susan's voice.  
  
"I think I'm going to call it a night," she said.  
  
Ken nodded. Fawn looked a little shell-shocked.  
  
He kissed her on the cheek. "Thanks for the dance. Until tomorrow, then?"  
  
Fawn didn't respond, and Ken untangled himself from her embrace. He took Susan's hand.  
  
"Are you all right?" he asked.  
  
"I am now."  
  
\* \* \*  
  
Susan took her turn in the bathroom and found Ken snoring softly when she came out. She felt a little guilty pang. Was he angry at her? Or maybe he'd just had a little too much to drink after a long day. The dance with Peter had left her feeling a bit … restless. All right, very restless. She had hoped to work on that with Ken, get the whole episode in the living room out of her system.  
  
She sighed. She wasn't really tired. Quite the contrary. Getting into bed with Ken right now would just make things worse. But she couldn't really go downstairs, not after publicly declaring that she was ready to call it a night. She spent a few minutes brushing her hair. She looked out the bedroom window. Snow was falling, catching the light from the back deck and drifting in silent spirals. Susan shivered and wished that she had a cup of tea.  
  
She stuck her head into the hallway. Silence. She really, really wanted a cup of tea.   
  
She waited another moment then padded downstairs in her t-shirt and bare feet. She seemed to be the only person awake anywhere on earth. She poked around in the kitchen cabinets until she found some tea things. She'd started the kettle going and was taking a tea bag out of its little paper envelope when she heard a voice.  
  
"Hey." It was almost a whisper.   
  
Susan froze.  
  
"Couldn't sleep?" Peter asked. He was wearing sweat pants and no shirt.  
  
Susan exhaled slowly and shook her head. "No."  
  
"Me either. Where's Ken?"  
  
"Snoring. How about Kate?"  
  
"Out like a light. Can you make me a cup too?"  
  
She nodded and busied herself with the pouring and steeping. She dragged the process out a little, enjoying the little domestic scene. She'd never really done normal things like this with Peter – the clothing always seemed to come off before they could just be around each other like regular people. She finally handed him his mug, careful not to touch his fingers. They stood close to each other, looking at the steam rising.  
  
"Would you like to finish that dance?" Peter asked.  
  
Suddenly her heart was beating so fast she couldn't hold her cup steady. She put it down, sloshing a little onto the counter.  
  
"Was that a yes?"  
  
She made a very small nod. Peter looked at her over the rim of his mug with the same dark, flashing eyes that always drained her of her judgment. He nodded back and walked into the living room, leaving her alone in the small kitchen. The house was quiet again for a moment, then she heard something sad and sweet and very soft playing on the stereo. The music drew her closer. Peter was waiting inside, almost a silhouette in the dark room. The light from the kitchen painted the smooth contours of his chest with silver. She put her head against his shoulder and her arms around him. She could feel the beat of his heart through his bare skin, steady and comforting.  
  
They didn't dance so much as hold each other. Her nipples were so stiff and sensitive that it hurt a little to press her chest against his. His cock was growing, working its way into the space between their bodies. She wanted to reach into his sweats and feel it, but she held back, for now anyway, and just rubbed her belly a little from side to side against the front of his pants. Peter's breathing lost its reassuring steadiness. Susan smiled to herself and swayed a little faster.  
  
And then, without really meaning to, she was kissing him. When their lips touched she felt completely connected to him. That was his gift. When she was with him like this, nothing else seemed important. Ken, Kate, Luke … they all just receded, faded. She let her fingers stray through his dark hair. She was aware without really thinking about it that the bulge in his pants was pushing against her and that her hips were gyrating in response. Her pussy felt warm and slippery and everything seemed to be moving with such a dream-like slowness that she didn't notice at first that he'd stepped away from her.  
  
"Susan?" He held out his hand. "Susan, follow me."  
  
Peter's voice was so soft that she almost didn't recognize it. He had taken her hand and was pulling her along, past a door that led to a powder room and down a short, dark hallway. He opened another door at the end, led her inside, and closed it behind them.

The room was very dark, and Peter bumped around until he found a desk lamp and turned it on. They were in an office. It reminded her of the one in Ken's house, actually – there was a desk with a guest chair against one wall and a big fold-out couch opposite it. Susan looked around and her body went suddenly numb.  
  
Peter and I are going to have sex on that couch.  
  
He threw the cushions onto the floor and unfolded the mechanism until the bed part lay out flat. It was neatly made up with sheets and a light blue blanket.  
  
I'm going to betray Ken and break Kate's heart.  
  
Susan couldn't help it. She started to cry. Peter was about to pull the covers down, but he stopped when he heard her.  
  
"Susan?"  
  
He put his arms around her shoulders and held her. Tears dampened the place where her cheek lay against his chest.  
  
"Bad idea, right?"  
  
Susan nodded mutely.  
  
Peter took a step back. Something had changed in his eyes. He grabbed the bottom of her t-shirt.  
  
"Peter? What …"  
  
"Shhh. I want to look at you."  
  
That made her cry again. Stop, she told herself. I'm being stupid.  
  
When she didn't say anything, Peter lifted the shirt, and Susan raised her arms when the time came. She stood awkwardly in front of him for a moment, then she half-turned and pulled her panties down and stepped out of them. She heard Peter's in-drawn breath as she turned back to face him. The desk lamp outlined the edges of her curves dimly. Most of her body was in shadow, just hints and suggestions of secret, dark places. She wasn't even sure how much of her he could see. But she watched Peter's face. His look went from stunned to wistful to achingly sad.   
  
She didn't know what to say.  
  
She stepped towards him, close enough that their bare chests touched for the first time. Her nipples, fiercely, painfully hard, nestled in his chest hair. She kissed him chastely on his cheek then turned around in his arms and closed her eyes. Peter stood still for a moment. Then, when she didn't move, he began to run his hands along her body.  
  
At the first touch, Susan felt as if she were dissolving. She remembered the foot massage Peter had given her in his room, how intimate his touch had felt. It was like that, a different kind of sex. Better, maybe. At least now it was; it was exactly what she needed. It didn't really matter where his fingers were: brushing the tops of her shoulders, caressing her breasts, bumping over her ribcage, tracing the lips of her pussy. The sense of someone who knew her so completely, who wanted her so completely was overpowering. She let her qualms melt away, let his touch consume her.  
  
Susan sighed. She'd lost track of time, and Peter probably had too, but they both knew it was time to stop. She stepped away and turned back towards him. His eyes were fixed on her, intent and unblinking, as if he was straining to remember every detail, every ill-lit surface of her body.  
  
Susan put her clothes back on and waited. Peter gave her a shy smile.  
  
"I'll see you in the morning, okay?"  
  
"Okay."  
  
He opened the office door, peered out, and he was gone.  
  
Susan exhaled. The long, difficult day unreeled in her head. Her morning convalescence. Ken in the shower. The little bit of skiing. The long dinner. The hot tub. Kate and Peter on the couch. The dancing that almost spiraled out of control. Peter's touches. None of it had been planned. None of it should have happened at all. She shook her head and walked out of the office, back into the hallway. At its far end, where it entered the living room, the hallway suddenly dimmed. Susan stopped, feeling a vague sense of unease. Abruptly there was a hulking figure in front of her, blocking the light.   
  
Luke.  
  
Susan took a step back, cold sweat prickling on her skin.  
  
He came closer, nearly filling the narrow space in front of her. His look was the calculating, appraising one she dreaded.  
  
"I wonder where Kate is," he said mildly.  
  
Susan didn't answer. She was pretty sure he knew exactly where Kate was.  
  
"Peter was in there with you," Luke continued, pointing to the office.  
  
Something in the smugness of his voice ignited a tiny blue flame of loathing in her. "Your point being?"  
  
Luke shrugged. "Maybe I should see if Kate's in there too. You know, just to say goodnight."  
  
"Don't waste your time. She's upstairs."  
  
Now the grin appeared. "Why don't you and I go into the office. Discuss this."  
  
"What's there to discuss?"  
  
"I think you know."  
  
She glared hatred at him, but that just made his grin widen.  
  
"All right," she said, turning around and stepping back into the small room. She was practically admitting some sort of culpability, but she needed to give herself time to think. Unfortunately, it wasn't hard to guess what he wanted.  
  
Luke followed her in and closed the door behind him. Susan noticed for the first time that, like Peter, he was only wearing sweat pants, no shirt. His torso was really quite splendid. And she decided that she'd never seen anyone she was less attracted to.  
  
"Nothing happened in here." That sounded hollow, even to her.  
  
Luke pretended he hadn't heard. "I'm sorry we didn't get a chance to dance tonight. You were very popular."  
  
Susan didn't reply.  
  
"Looks like you're free now. Shall we?"  
  
He stepped close to her and put his hand on her waist. Susan shuddered, but she didn't move. She needed to think. Could she get Peter to … to do what? Threaten Luke? Beat him up? Even if he could, that wasn't likely to help. Damn it, she just didn't know what to do.  
  
"Maybe we should just skip the preliminaries," Luke said.  
  
He reached down and put his hand underneath her shirt. Susan froze.  
  
"Take your hands off of me," she said tightly.  
  
"Sure."  
  
He was breathing on her, stale tequila and sour wine. His hand slid up her leg. "I'll just go upstairs and see if Kate has time for a chat. You two are best friends, right?"  
  
His hand stayed where it was, but he started to turn towards the door.  
  
"No, wait." There was an edge of desperation in her voice. "What are you going to say to her?"  
  
"Oh, I'll just tell her what I saw. She and I go back a ways. She should know what her roommate and her boyfriend have been up to."  
  
"Asshole," Susan hissed.  
  
Luke just grinned. His hand moved further up her leg.   
  
"Come on, Susan, you wanted it in the hot tub. I know you did."  
  
She realized with a cold, certain horror that it was his hand that had touched her the night before. She couldn't let this go any farther. She fought to clear her head. None of this made sense. Whatever he did to her now – it wouldn't change anything. He could still talk to Kate later, or Ken for that matter.  
  
Luke stepped closer. His hand moved up under her shirt to her bare breast. There was no teasing exploration, no sensual discovery. He just grabbed her. At the contact, something flared in her head, the blue flame turning white hot in an instant. She lashed out at him with one arm, trying to push him away, shoving upward and catching him hard across his nose with the heel of her hand. She felt a distinct and oddly satisfying crunch.  
  
Luke stepped back and bent over, holding his hand to his face.  
  
"You stupid bitch!" he yelled, blood starting to spurt out of his nostrils.  
  
Susan glared back at him. "I'm not stupid."  
  
"God damn, that hurts. I think you broke my nose."  
  
"You think? Maybe I should try again, just to make sure."  
  
She raised her hand menacingly.  
  
"Crazy bitch," Luke muttered, backing away and staggering out of the office.  
  
Susan stood in the middle of the room in a sort of trance. There was an old mechanical clock on the desk, and it was so quiet in the room she could hear it ticking. With each passing second she could feel the heat of her fury drain away. She seemed to be collapsing inward, deflating, losing every bit of the energy that had sustained her. Luke was right, she thought. I really am stupid.  
  
She knew that she would have to think of something, and soon. Luke wasn't going to just drop this, although his ego would probably keep him on ice for a little while, at least until his nose stopped bleeding. She couldn't talk to Ken. But Peter … maybe Peter would have an idea. She felt a dead weight in the pit of her stomach. Everything was coming unraveled. But she had to do something.  
  
Susan took a deep breath and headed back upstairs.