**Dana's Story**

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CHAPTER SIX

Dana jerked awake at the sound of her name. Only then did she realize she'd slept. She still clutched the sofa cushion. She felt exhausted, her eyes scratchy from insufficient sleep. Her hair was mussed, and she felt stiff from sleeping on the sofa, which wasn't as comfortable as she'd first thought.

She looked around. Early morning sunlight filled the foyer. The only other person in the room was Zoe, who stood outside the pit, towering over her from that position. It was Zoe who'd called her name. Dana turned away, slumping onto the sofa again and closing her eyes, wishing she could drift off to sleep again. The last thing she wanted was a confrontation with Zoe. "Go away, Zoe.

"Come back to the room, Dana," Zoe said. "Please."

Dana's shoulders rose as anxiety filled her, knotting her stomach. She really didn't want this confrontation right now. She kept her eyes closed though she knew she wasn't going to be able to sleep. "Go away, Zoe," she said again.

"I am," Zoe said. "You can have the room. I won't be back until—later."

Dana opened one eye. She had to twist her neck to see Zoe above her. She was dressed to go out, wearing a hoodie and carrying her backpack. "Yeah?"

"Yeah. You don't have to stay out here."

Dana shifted awkwardly onto her back so she could see Zoe more easily. "Dan's gone?"

Zoe nodded. "He left right after you did."

Dana hadn't expected that. "He did?" She hadn't seen him, but he might have gone out another door or she might just have missed him in the dark—and in her funk.

Zoe nodded again.

"Gonna see him again?" The question answered itself, really. Of course she was.

Zoe shook her head, remaining silent.

"No?"

"No." Zoe's voice caught on the word. Dana looked closer. Zoe's eyes were red-rimmed and her nose was red as well. She'd been crying. Probably 'cause she didn't get fucked all night like she'd planned, Dana thought.

The cruelty in that thought shocked Dana. How could she think such a thing? What did it say about her that she could think something so uncharitable about her friend?

As if she could hear Dana's thoughts, Zoe's hand leaped up to cover her mouth, just too late to stifle a sob. She closed her eyes, but only succeeded in squeezing out tears. She turned away to walk toward the door. Dana gaped, shocked and ashamed. It took a moment to find her voice. "Zoe, wait!"

Zoe didn't hear or ignored her. She dropped the hand covering her mouth, sniffed once loudly, and squared her shoulders. She paused at the door to wipe her eyes.

Dana flung the cushion aside and scrambled to her feet. She stood on the sofa and jumped up to the floor. She lunged and caught Zoe's shoulder as she reached for the door. Her touch surprised Zoe. She flinched and her head whipped around to stare at Dana.

She looked miserable. Her eyes were puffy and red-rimmed, and tear tracks were visible on her cheeks. Her nose was red, and she sniffled frequently. She looked alarmed, as if she expected Dana to lash out at her.

Dana felt the desire to do it. She wanted to yell at Zoe, and hurl accusations at her. But she couldn't. Everything that had happened last night was as much her fault as Zoe's. As much as she wanted to blame Zoe for it, she couldn't.

She wanted to say that. The words were on the tip of her tongue. But she couldn't. It was too raw, too close to truths she didn't want to acknowledge. She settled for tugging gently at Zoe's wrist and inclining her head toward the stairs. "C'mon," she whispered. "Let's go back."

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Dana led Zoe back to their room. Zoe was strangely compliant, going where Dana led and doing what she was told without question. Without speaking at all. It was unsettling. Dana felt sorry for Zoe, for her obvious pain, but angry too. She found herself falling into the caretaker role when she felt just as hurt.

She settled Zoe on the edge of her bed after hastily straightening it up. She boiled water in a small electric kettle her parents had given her for a going-away present, then made tea. All the while neither of them spoke. Zoe just sat, motionless save for her hands, which couldn't remain still. Dana leaned against her desk, too wired and anxious to sit. When the tea was ready, she poured a cup and handed it to Zoe, then poured one for herself and sat down opposite her.

They sipped carefully at the hot liquid, still without speaking.

"Thank you." Zoe's voice was barely audible. She stared at her teacup.

"You're welcome," Dana said.

"I'm sorry," Zoe said, still focused on the teacup.

Dana nodded. "Yeah," she said. "Me too."

Zoe looked up from her tea in surprise. "You?"

Dana nodded. "We did this. Both of us." She let the words hang there between them, stifling the urge to say more. To pin the blame on Zoe, and absolve herself. It would be too easy to rewrite events in her mind to justify herself and demonize Zoe.

"No," Zoe said, shaking her head slowly, looking more distraught. "No, it was me."

"No," Dana snapped, her anger making the word sharper, louder than she'd intended. She closed her eyes and took a breath, fighting down the anger. She opened them again to find Zoe watching her curiously.

"No," Dana said again. "It wasn't just you. It was both of us. I knew—" Her throat tightened up, choking off the words. She forced them out. "I knew you were gonna bring a guy home. Probably bring a guy home. I knew you'd—you'd have sex with him."

She looked away, her face afire. It was probably bright red. Her stomach was in knots, doing slow rolls. Admitting to this, even when both of them knew the truth, was damnably hard. She forced herself to meet Zoe's eyes. "I knew you'd have sex with him and I wanted to watch."

"Dana—"

Dana shook her head, silencing Zoe. She had to get this out. "I knew, and I wanted to watch. If I hadn't been there watching, he never would have caught me. He wouldn't have been so angry and—and so embarrassed."

Now Zoe shook her head. "No, that wasn't your fault. It was me—I kept pushing. I always push. I do!"

You do, Dana thought. But she didn't say it. It might be true, but it's not like she didn't have her own sins to contemplate. Plenty of them. She had no business pointing fingers at anyone.

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"He called me a whore," Zoe said. She had settled back against the lounging pillow she kept on her bed, the big one with arms that Dana always called a husband. ("Why do you call it that?" Zoe had asked early on. Dana had shrugged. "It's just what I've always heard them called.") She was cradling the nearly empty tea cup in both hands, staring down at it.

"He didn't."

Zoe looked up. "He did." She shrugged it off. "I didn't care about that, much. But he also called me a slut." Her eyes filled and she drew a ragged breath. "Am I, Dana? Am I a slut?"

Dana stared at Zoe, unable to formulate a response. Her mind whirled with possible responses—and with arguments pro and con. Was Zoe a slut? Before she'd met Zoe and roomed with her for the last two months, she'd have said yes. Without a question. Everything she'd been taught told her that pre-marital sex was a sin, and casual sex with multiple partners was even worse. Proper young women remained chaste until their wedding night. Only bad girls—sluts—slept around.

If Zoe was a slut, then so was she. Zoe wasn't doing anything Dana wouldn't have liked to do. She would have been having sex years ago if she hadn't been so thoroughly cowed by her parents, by her church, by the whole culture of her small town. She'd long ago decided that the moral arguments against pre-marital sex made no sense to her. Had that been the only thing holding her back, she'd have been doing it since she was sixteen.

But it wasn't. Fear of eternal damnation hadn't restrained her. Fear of being caught at it had. Fear of being labeled as a "bad girl" or a "slut" by her parents, her peers, her church, and her community had. Fear of pregnancy had. Living in that small town had been like living in a fishbowl, and she'd never thought she could have sex without any or all of those awful consequences.

Zoe had been raised without, or had managed to escape, all those restraints. She wanted sex (and lots of it) and wasn't embarrassed in the least to say so, or to act on that desire. If that made her a slut, then yes. But it only meant that they both were.

"No," Dana said, realizing that she'd remained silent for too long. "You're not a slut. Dan was wrong to say that, or to say—the other thing. It's not true."

"Really?" Zoe's voice cracked and she looked on the verge of tears again.

"Really," Dana said. "He was just pissed off, but that doesn't excuse calling you names. Especially when those names aren't true."

Zoe wiped her eyes with the heel of her palm. "Sometimes I wonder," she said.

"You do?" Dana had no idea that Zoe harbored any doubts about her behavior. She always seemed so self-assured. She said as much to Zoe.

Zoe's smile was low-wattage, but it was a smile all the same. She nodded. "Sometimes. Not often, but sometimes. I try not to let all that patriarchal bullshit get inside my head but it's hard, you know?"

"Yeah, I know." In truth, the whole notion of the patriarchy and its oppressive effects was new to her. Not the sort of thing she'd heard much about back home. She'd been getting quite an education since starting college, though it was probably not the education her parents were hoping for. "I've been steeping in it since I was born. I never even thought about it. It's just how things were. Good girls didn't. Not until they were married."

"But you did," Zoe said, her tone making a question of it.

Dana nodded. "And I felt terribly guilty about it. And it was about as much fun as you might imagine. Quick, furtive, and painful."

"Painful?"

Dana shrugged. "A little. Mostly it was just...uncomfortable. Unpleasant."

Zoe smiled, a little brighter this time. "Let me guess, your first lover was just as inexperienced as you were."

Dana nodded. "Yeah. Mike. I was the first girl he slept with."

"Where did it happen?"

Dana couldn't believe she was sharing this with Dana. With anyone, really. "The backseat of his dad's car. After the senior prom." She shook off the memory of it. "I really hit all the cliches, huh?"

Zoe chuckled. "Yeah. But they're cliches for a reason." She sipped her tea. "Was that the only time?"

Dana felt her cheeks warm again. "No," she whispered. It was frightening to voice these things out loud. But exciting too. "We did it in his bed about a month later. His family was out for the evening. I was scared to death they would come home early and catch us."

"So it wasn't any better, I suspect," Zoe said.

"No. It made me wonder if it was overrated." Dana met Zoe's gaze. "Sex, you know?"

Zoe grinned. "I know. It's not, you know. You just had some bad experiences."

Now Dana had to look away, a blush heating her face. "Yeah," she said. Her throat tightened up, making it hard to speak. "I know. I've—I've seen it."

"That doesn't mean I haven't had some disappointing experiences myself," Zoe said.

That surprised Dana. She met Zoe's gaze again. "Really?"

Zoe nodded. "My first time wasn't much better than yours. The difference is, I didn't expect any different. I just wanted to get that first time over with."

Dana didn't know what to say. She'd never imagined Zoe being insecure or anxious or disappointed about sex. It made sense. There had to be a first time for everyone. But somehow she'd imagined Zoe's first time as some magical experience full of wonder and pleasure. Everything her own first experience had not been.

Zoe must have seen her thoughts in her face. "My second time was much better," she said. "Better than my first, better than yours. He was an older man of nearly eighteen. He did a much better job than the first guy."

She didn't elaborate. Dana still wasn't sure what to say. She finished her tea instead and got up. "More?"

Zoe stared at her own empty cup for a moment, then held it out. "Please. I don't think I'm going to sleep for a while yet."

Dana busied herself making two fresh cups of tea. She was aware of Zoe's eyes on her, watching her. She wondered what Zoe was thinking, but knew Zoe would speak when she was ready. She handed Zoe her tea and then settled carefully on her own bed again.

"Much as we've both enjoyed this," Zoe said, "I don't think you can keep getting your vicarious jollies through me. It's time you got your own jollies."

"I—what do you mean?" Zoe didn't want Dana watching her any longer? Dana was surprised and alarmed to realize that she didn't want to stop. She liked spying on Zoe as she had sex. She liked masturbating to orgasm while she did.

Zoe set her teacup aside carefully, then scooched to the edge of her bed, where she could reach out and clasp Dana's hands around her own teacup. "Don't panic," she said. "I'm not saying we can't keep playing our little game. I like it too, remember." Her eyes twinkled. "I like it a lot, actually. Knowing I'm being watched really turns me on."

She gave Dana a knowing look. "But you'd have a lot more fun if you were having sex instead of just watching. Don't you think?"

Dana cast her gaze around the room, excited and scared and aroused and unable to meet Zoe's gaze for a long moment. Did she want to have sex herself? Hell, yes. Could she? Well, yes, clearly—because she had before. Not good sex, but sex all the same. But could she do it here, at college, in a room she shared with Zoe, knowing that Zoe would know she was having sex? When Zoe would know she wanted sex?

It felt scarily intimate, this sharing such feelings with someone—anyone—else. But it was also liberating. She'd shared more with Zoe in the last two months than she'd ever shared with her sisters, or her parents. Or her friends at home. She'd spent eighteen years doing her best to remain unknown, keeping her crushes, her desires, all but the most innocuous of feelings, from everyone.

And she was tired of it. Tired of being so constrained by expectations. The expectations of her parents and teachers and neighbors. The expectations of her family and friends. They all expected her to be a good, Christian girl. Quiet, polite, obedient, modest. Religious. Chaste. She'd hated it. But she'd complied. In the fishbowl in which she'd lived, what choice had she had? Good girl or bad. Chaste and obedient, or a disowned slut. A fallen woman no decent man would ever marry.

But she'd escaped. She was living away from home, amongst people who'd never lived in that environment. Sharing a room with a girl—a friend—whose own life had been radically different, and who dared to think and act as she wished. Dana hadn't realized how much of that lifelong indoctrination she'd carried with her. Too much.

"Yes," Dana whispered. She wasn't sure Zoe heard her. "Yes," she repeated. "I want to have sex myself instead of just watching."

Zoe smiled slyly. "Or maybe in addition," she said. "And I might want to watch you sometimes, too. Would that be all right?"

Dana felt her shocked, aroused and embarrassed response throughout her body. Trust Zoe to push her a little farther still. "Yes," she said. "I think I'd like that too."

CHAPTER SEVEN

"I feel foolish," Dana said. She also felt daring for admitting as much. Sharing her feelings with Zoe—with anyone, really—was a new behavior, and not yet a habit. It was getting easier, but it was still uncomfortable sometimes.

"Don't," Zoe said. "You look good."

Dana looked in the mirror. "Really?" She and Zoe were standing in front of Zoe's open wardrobe, where a full length mirror hung facing them. An unrecognizable woman in make-up and wearing a scandalously thin dress stared back at her. And it wasn't just the dress. The underwear she'd bought with Zoe was even thinner and wispier than the dress. She felt practically naked.

She watched Zoe look her up and down in the mirror. "Yes, really. You look good. You're just used to only ever seeing yourself in jeans and a t-shirt. You'll get over it."

"I'm practically naked!"

"Yeah, that's kind of the idea. You've got a nice body. It's time you let the world see it," Zoe said. She met Dana's eyes in the mirror. "You do want to get laid, don't you?"

Dana wondered if the make-up on her face would conceal her blush. "Yes."

"Then listen to Auntie Zoe. You're cute even in jeans and a t-shirt, but you're sexy when you take the time to get dressed up. We're going to a party. You want to look good for Darren, right?"

"I guess."

Zoe gave her a sharp look. Dana closed her eyes, frustrated by her own reticence. "Yes," she corrected herself. Be honest. "I want to look good for Darren."

It was supposed to be a double date. Zoe would be dating Bobby and Dana would be dating his roommate Darren. So far, nothing to get too alarmed about. But after the party, Zoe would be going back to Bobby's room with him, and Darren...might possibly come back to Dana's room. If she liked him. And if he wanted. And if she didn't chicken out at the last minute.

"And you do," Zoe said. "Let's go knock his socks off."

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Dana clutched a plastic cup of beer in one hand, trying not to spill it on herself or anyone else. That wasn't easy. The party was crowded. Far too many people crammed into too small a space. There was barely room enough to move. The house, a student rental she'd been told, was jammed with enough people to give the Fire Marshall a conniption if he'd known.

The room was dark too. Some things didn't change between high school and college, apparently. And the desire to stumble around in the dark while partying was apparently one of those things. She didn't understand, and never had. Supposedly Zoe and Bobby were here somewhere, but she'd lost track of them almost immediately.

Darren turned out to be a nice looking guy. A little taller than Dana, but solid. His dark hair was cut fairly short. His eyes were brown. He had a nice smile, too. He wore jeans and a long-sleeved pullover shirt. When they first met, Dana wondered briefly what he would look like out of his clothes. That she even entertained the question shocked her initially, but she reminded herself that that was why Zoe and Bobby had set them up.

Now Darren shouted something. The party was loud too. They stood practically nose to nose and she still couldn't make out half of what he said. Something about classes he was taking, she thought. She smiled and pretended she could hear him over the blare of dance music and all the other party-goers shouting to make themselves heard.

This, she thought. This is why I don't go out to parties. All the excitement and terror she'd experienced anticipating her date had long since drained away. Now she was just overheated by the press of bodies, overstimulated by the blaring music and roar of conversations, and bored by it all. She didn't even drink for God's sake! Not that she had any objections to drinking—she had just never developed a taste for beer. She was only holding one because it was the only way to stop everyone around her trying to press one on her.

Darren touched her wrist. Dana realized she'd zoned out. Not very polite of her. She scraped up a weak smile and a nod in response to Darren's words. He chuckled, the sound lost in the noise that enveloped them. He leaned in so he could speak into her ear.

"You're hating this, aren't you?"

Her first instinct was to deny it. To put on a brave face and endure for the sake of being sociable and polite. It was how she'd been raised. One of the many rules she'd absorbed over the years. One of the rules she was determined to shed.

She nodded. "Yes!" she yelled into Darren's ear. She clamped down on the immediate and powerful urge to soften her words, to temporize, justify, explain.

"You wanna get out of here? Go somewhere else?"

Dana felt the anxiety crystallize in her belly like a lump of ice. Oh god. He was going to want to go back to her room and fuck, wasn't he? She wasn't ready for that. All her fantasies about having sex with him had curdled over the last half hour. She didn't feel remotely sexy or horny. The last thing she wanted now was to be so intimate with Darren—or with anyone. Or to have to beg off, to try to placate him. To hope he didn't get angry.

Darren shouted, "Wanna go to Jimmy Wong's?"

Dana nodded, greatly relieved. The icy lump in her belly shrank. He was suggesting they go to one of the delis that surrounded the campus. She'd been there. It was public, it was well lit, and it was quiet. They could sit and talk, probably eat something. He wasn't expecting sex.

Not yet, anyhow. But she could worry about that later. She nodded. "Yes!"

Darren straightened, plucked the nearly full cup of beer from her hand and handed it off to someone in the crowd. He grinned at her, took her hand, and turned to break trail toward the exit, drawing her along in his wake. Dana eagerly followed close, looking forward to her escape.

Popping through a knot of party-goers at the door into the cool night air was a relief. The noise level here was still high, but more tolerable. Darren led her down the walk to the street, where it was possible to speak to one another without shouting. He turned abruptly, and Dana bumped into him.

He smiled at her. "Is this better?"

Her first instinctive reaction was to edge back, putting a little space between them. She did, but only a little. He was a few inches taller than Dana—who wasn't?—but not especially muscular. Definitely male, but not aggressively so. She smiled at him. "Yeah, it is. Thanks."

"Not much point in staying at a party if you aren't enjoying it." He turned to stand at her side, one hand on her shoulder. "Shall we?"

Dana nodded. "Yeah."

They walked across the campus in silence. After the auditory assault of the party, Dana was content to enjoy the silence. But why was Darren so quiet? Was he regretting agreeing to the date? Did he wish he could leave? Was he just being polite in hopes of having sex with her later? Did he want to have sex with her? Maybe he was disappointed in her?

"That party was really loud, wasn't it?"

Dana looked up at him. "Yeah, it was."

"This is better."

Dana nodded.

Darren pulled her a little closer as they walked. She took that as a positive sign. They continued walking. They passed a number of other students, individuals, couples and even a group or two. She put her arm around his waist, feeling daring for doing so, and silly for feeling that way.

Jimmy Wong's Kosher Deli was a small clapboard and brick building just across the street from several campus dormitories. It was one of a number of delis, pizzerias and convenience stores within easy walking distance of the student body. Dana and Darren ordered sandwiches and drinks, then found a table.

"You and Dana double date much?" Darren asked.

Dana shook her head. "This is the first time. My first date, period."

"Really? Nobody's asked you out? I find that hard to believe."

Dana looked down at her food, trying to hide her smile. It was blatant flattery, but she liked it all the same. She felt attractive, sexy even. Not at all the way she usually felt. She wondered if he'd feel the same way if she were dressed normally. "Believe it," she said, meeting his eyes. She smiled. "Besides, technically you didn't ask me out either. Zoe and Bobby arranged this date."

Darren matched her smile. "You've got me there. But that's only because I'd never met you before. I would definitely have asked you out if I had."

More flattery. If he continued it would quickly lose its charm.

He didn't. The conversation turned to getting-to-know-you subjects. Classes. Families. Home towns. Darren was from out-of-state, from New York City. His description of growing up there fascinated her. Her own experience of the fishbowl that was her home town didn't so much fascinate him as shock him.

By the time the conversation ran down, they'd long since finished their meal. Darren excused himself to the restroom. Dana glanced up from her phone as Darren returned. Dana cleared the table, then resumed her seat. She checked her phone for messages, then composed a text to Zoe.

"Ready to go?" Darren asked, returning. He laid a few dollars on the table for a tip.

"Yup." Dana hit Send and then tucked her phone back into her purse. "Just letting Zoe know we left the party. Should have done that earlier."

Darren grinned. "It's been a while. Hope she wasn't waiting on you."

Dana laughed. "I doubt that." She's probably already in bed with Bobby.

"Yeah," Darren said. "Me too." His expression told Dana that he was as aware of Zoe and Bobby's relationship as she was.

Dana felt her smile slip. Zoe and Bobby were no doubt having sex right now.

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The night air outside Jimmy Wong's was cooler still. Dana shivered. Her dress wasn't much protection. Darren stepped up behind her to wrap his arms around her. "Cold?"

Dana nodded. "Yes." The warmth of his arms and torso were pleasant.

"Let's get you home, then," Darren said. And into bed, went the unspoken addendum. Or maybe she was reading too much into it.

Or not. That was the whole point of this exercise, wasn't it? To get her laid? Dana frowned, annoyed with herself. She'd wanted this. She'd agreed to it. She'd spent several days—and nights—fantasizing about it. Why was she so goddamned skittish now?

Because, she answered herself, it's real now. She'd gone to the party with Darren. She'd spent some time with him at the deli, talking and laughing and even flirting. Now the only thing left was to return to her room and take him to bed.

Dana debated with herself the whole walk back to her room. Was she going to go through with this? Kiss him goodnight at her door? She couldn't decide what she wanted to do. Which would she regret most?

Darren pulled open the front door for her. She led him to the stairway and then down the hall to her room. Fortune smiled on her: they didn't run into anyone in the hallway, so nobody gave her a knowing look for bringing a guy back to her room. They reached her door.

"Well, here you are," Darren said, his voice carefully neutral.

Dana met his gaze. She realized he looked as uncertain as she felt. And why not? If she didn't know what she wanted, how could he possibly hope to know? Whatever he was hoping would happen, he clearly wasn't going to push her, or assume a sure thing. If she said goodnight to him here, she felt certain he'd accept it and leave. He wouldn't make a scene, or try to push her into something she wasn't ready for.

Tension she hadn't realized she'd been carrying melted away—and with it much of the uncertainty she'd struggled with. This was her choice, and always had been. She could do what she liked, and what she liked was the idea of sex with Darren. Dana smiled and put her hands on his shoulder, rising onto her toes to kiss him. He kissed her back, his hands finding her hips, then sliding around to pull her into his arms as the kiss went on.

He was warm, and solid and kissed well. Dana relaxed into him, opening her mouth to his questing tongue, meeting his explorations with her own. His arms drew her closer still, one hand slipping down to cup her buttock. She wrapped her arms around his neck, leaning closer, aware of how her breasts pressed against his body, and of the hard lump against her belly.

The kiss ended with Dana practically wrapped around him, her breathing deep and a little unsteady, mingled excitement and anxiety singing through her body. She kissed his cheek before speaking softly into his ear. "Wanna come inside?"

His lips brushed her neck beneath her ear, provoking a shiver. "Very much."

Dana released her hold on him, turning in his arms to face her door. She fumbled the key out of her tiny purse with difficulty, and unlocked the door with unsteady hands. I'm not nervous, she told herself, I'm excited. Either way, her hands trembled and she felt overheated at the same time that her hands felt cold.

She stepped into the room with Darren right behind her, seized by a sudden fear that she might intrude on Zoe and Bobby. She'd left her desk lamp on to provide some illumination without the harsh overhead lights. It revealed an empty room. She and Darren shuffled around until she could shut the door—and lock it.

A locked door between her and the world helped. Nobody would be barging into the room while she was—if she decided to.... Dana shook her head, refusing to let her doubts take hold again. She wanted this.

"Dana?"

"I'm fine," she said. She turned in place, still very close to Darren, until she faced him again. His mouth was very close and very inviting. She kissed him with all the enthusiasm and determination she could muster.

His arms enveloped her again, and she melted into him, exploring his mouth with her tongue the way he'd done to her. She swayed slightly, eyes closed, focused on the excitement of kissing him, expressing her desire so clearly in the way she clung to him. The feel of his arms around her, his hands caressing her back and buttocks through the thin dress made her shiver.

She pulled away enough to speak, lifting her eyes to meet his gaze. "Wanna go to bed?" she asked, half expecting her breath to smoke she felt so overheated with arousal.

Darren's eager expression wasn't matched by his cautious tone. "You're sure?"

Dana nodded.

His grin was joyous. "Yes, please!"

Dana's legs trembled as they walked the few steps to her bed. She felt the butterflies in her stomach fluttering their wings again. She realized she had no clear idea what to do now. Did she undress herself? Undress him? Did they undress one another?

Darren sat down on the bed. He patted the surface beside him. "Let's sit here."

Dana sat, only realizing she'd left some space between them after it was done. It wasn't even a conscious decision. Before she could say something—but what?—Darren moved closer, putting his arm around her. Then he kissed her again. A long, gentle, thorough kiss that helped silence her inner voice.

She kissed him back, relieved to have that voice silenced. She laid one hand against his chest, enjoying the feel of his body against her hand under his shirt. She focused on the feel of his mouth on hers, on the gentle way he nipped at her lip, then strung kisses along her cheek to her neck. His mouth on her sent repeated chills down her spine. His lips and teeth brushing and nibbling on her earlobe made her quiver all over.

Darren's free hand came to rest on her bare knee. Dana drew a startled breath, stifled the flinch response, and arched her neck, offering it to him. Darren nipped at her earlobe again. When she quivered, he whispered, "I love it when you do that," his breath tickling her ear and provoking another shiver of excitement.

She turned her head, finding his mouth with hers, silently demanding more kisses. He was happy to oblige. The hand on her knees slid higher, under her skirt, to stroke her thigh. His touch was firm, not tentative. She liked that. She liked the feel of his hand on her bare leg, and liked that he was confident of her interest.

A brief memory of Mike's fumbling, hesitant touch after the prom surfaced, threatening her equilibrium. She broke the kiss and took Darren's earlobe between her teeth for an instant, before teasing it with her tongue. His full-body shiver surprised her into a giggle, and she thought no more about Mike.

She cupped the back of his head in one hand and pulled him down with her as she lay back on the bed without letting go his ear. He moaned softly, the sound of his pleasure cutting through her to leave her more aroused, and wanting more. She reached down to pluck his hand from her thigh and place it on her breast. He responded by cupping it, his thumb circling her nipple through her dress and bra. She gasped, his earlobe escaping her teeth.

They continued trading kisses, nips and nibbles. Darren drew the shoulder strap of her sundress down, revealing the lacy beige bra and stroking her erect nipple through the sheer fabric. She tugged at the hem of his polo shirt until she'd pulled it free of his jeans, exploring the smooth warm contours of his waist.

At some point, Dana pulled away long enough to reach for and turn out her bedside lamp, plunging the room into darkness. Emboldened by the dark, she groped for and found the hem of Darren's shirt, and tugged at it. He cooperated in pulling it off, then pulled her into his arms as they lay on their sides. His bare skin was warm and soft over firm flesh, thrilling to touch. The excitement of having him half naked in her bed was absurdly intoxicating.

She felt his hand slide up her arm to cup her cheek an instant before his mouth found hers again. As he kissed her, she felt him unzip her dress an inch at a time. When it sagged open, he ran his hand up her bare back to the strap of her bra. He pinched it between his hands and she felt the band separate.

His lips brushed hers when he said, "Let me undress you."

Her voice was barely loud enough for her to hear it. "Okay."

Getting out of her clothes wasn't the effortlessly sexy act Dana might have imagined. It was a little awkward, in fact, involving stray elbows and disarranged hair and muttered apologies and anxious giggles. But she was trembling with excitement when she stretched out again, lying next to him. Skin to skin. Naked.

He was naked too. He'd somehow shed his own clothes while undressing her in the dark. Naked and excited. Lying on their sides once more, facing one another, bodies pressed together there was no way for her to miss it. It felt huge. Monstrous. So enormous that Dana knew her imagination was running away with her. It couldn't be as big as all that.

One way to find out.

The thought bubbled up out of nowhere. It shocked her. And being shocked annoyed her. She reached down to take him—to take his cock—in her hand. It was hot and hard and she could hardly believe she'd done it. Darren made a pleased sound deep in his throat.

Dana stroked him, very gently. Darren groaned in pleasure. She marveled at the feel of soft skin sliding over hard flesh, and she smiled to herself. He wasn't nearly as big as her imagination had suggested. Large enough, yes. But not a monster.

She continued caressing him, wondering if she were doing it right. She guessed yes, based on the way Darren's hips moved gently and the sounds of pleasure he made. When she tentatively caressed the head of his cock, he gasped and then groaned louder. "Oh wow, that's so good," he said.

Dana propped herself on one elbow. Her eyes had adapted to the dark, which wasn't really so dark after all. The LED alarm clocks, the power lights on chargers, on the laptops open on the two desks, all provided light enough to see dimly. She could see what she was doing now, even if she didn't know what she was doing.

But she'd always been a quick learner. She experimented with her grip, with the speed of her strokes, and the length. She listened to and watched Darren's reactions, and felt them in the way he moved under her hand. Once or twice he hissed softly and she saw him make an abortive move to grab her hand. "Not so tightly," he said once, and "That's a little rough."

She modified her approach and there was no more of that. Only the soft animal noises of pleasure that turned her on. It excited her to learn this, to realize she could make him feel so good, that she was in control. And she was. He liked this a lot, that not so much, and this made him quiver all over and make sexy little noises.

When he took her hand, stilling it, she glanced at him, wondering why. Wondering if she were doing something wrong. His smile eased her fears. "My turn," he said.

He rose on one elbow, mirroring her posture. He gave her a kiss. "Why don't you lie down?" he said.

When she complied, he lowered his head to kiss her again, a long, soft kiss that ended too soon. He followed it up with a kiss to the cheek, then a string of kisses along her jaw and down her neck that tickled slightly and made her skin tighten with anticipation. He cupped one breast in his hand a moment before his lips closed around her nipple.

Dana sighed with pleasure. The flick of his tongue across her nipple made the breath catch in her throat. She arched her back, wanting more. Darren obliged her, sucking, licking, occasionally nipping at her nipple as he caressed her breasts with both hands. He shifted his attention to her other nipple for a time, then alternated between them briefly.

He kissed his way down her belly, pausing for a moment to make her giggle ticklishly when he explored her navel with his tongue. Then he resumed his advance. Dana wriggled with excitement and nervousness. She remembered seeing Zoe's lovers going down on her, and how much Zoe had enjoyed it. The thought of Darren kissing her so intimately was intensely arousing, and she wanted very badly to feel his mouth on her.

He planted a kiss in the soft curls of her pubic hair, pausing to draw an audible breath. Dana felt a momentary stab of doubt. She was wet and her labia swollen, more physically excited than she could ever remember being. Could he smell her? Did he like how she smelled? What if—no. She cut the thoughts off. Damned if she was going to let her doubts interfere now.

She spread her legs, eager for his mouth on her pussy, the act itself making her feel wanton, even slutty. Good girls didn't. Or so she'd been told endlessly. Well, she was a good girl and she damn well did. Or was damn well going to.

He kissed her again, squarely on her pussy. Delicately. It was a pleasurable sensation, but not earth-shaking. The awareness of lying naked in bed with a guy, her legs spread for him, as he kissed her pussy—that was almost more than she could bear. She felt light-headed and shaky, excited almost beyond endurance by the situation.

Darren's lips parted to allow his tongue to caress her. He stroked her with it, licked and lapped and explored her pussy. He was very careful at first, almost too careful, too hesitant. She appreciated that he cared about her comfort. But she wanted, she needed, more. She tried to speak up, tried to say as much.

Her voice failed her, choked off by all those years of programming, unable even now to speak candidly. It was infuriating, or could have been, if she were willing to let it break the mood. But she was too close to getting what she wanted now.

She used her hands instead. She placed her hands on Darren's head and pulled him close, guiding him.

He took the hint. His attentions became more confident, more insistent. The delightful sensations grew stronger. Her hold on him relaxed, then fell away entirely, as she lost herself in the pleasure. It made no difference now. Darren needed no more guidance.

Dana lay with her eyes closed, the better to focus on the delicious sensations Darren was providing her. She lay sprawled on the bed, body limp save for the hard points of her nipples and the lovely tension being generated by Darren's talented mouth.

He caressed her pussy lips with his lips and tongue, sliding between them to lap at her juices, or send a jolt of pleasure through her when he stroked her clit. She sensed him moving around, but the slippery friction of his lips and tongue never slackened. She groaned aloud, unable to keep silent but also wanting him to hear, to know how much she enjoyed what he was doing to her.

It got even better when he began to use his fingers too.

The tension between her legs intensified, stoked by the pleasure of first one, then two fingers, gently but insistently stroking deeper and deeper inside her. All the while his lips and tongue glided around and over and across her clit, ratcheting the delicious tension higher and higher. It spread to her belly, quickened her breathing, and tightened her skin all over. Her nipples felt so hard and so sensitive that she thought a single touch would send her over the edge.

She panted with desire, the tension reaching unbearable heights, pressing her hands into the mattress, arching her back and spreading her legs, wanting more. Desperate for more. She heard someone begging and realized it was her own voice softly chanting, "don't stop, don't stop, please don't stop—"

He didn't. His lips and tongue and fingers drove her beyond endurance. For one dizzying instant of clarity she sensed her orgasm looming over her like a tsunami, an unstoppable force of nature, awe-inspiring and terrifying all at once. The instant passed, and all thought vanished, blotted out by the pulsing waves of ecstasy.

The waves of pleasure peaked and receded, leaving her limp and panting, aware of lying in the dark with Darren kneeling by the bed, his arms resting on her thighs. He alternated kisses to her her inner thighs, close enough for his chin to brush her pubic hair when he turned his head. Dana shivered at the sensation, too sensitive for more but enjoying the stimulation.

She touched his head. He looked up. Words failed her again. She gestured for him to come closer. He grinned and scrambled up to stretch out beside her, slipping an arm beneath her head. She felt his hard cock against her thigh, feeling hot enough to burn her flesh.

He held her gaze for a moment, a contented smile on his face, before kissing her.

His lips were wet, and he tasted of...well, of her. In fact, his cheeks and chin were wet, too. Not too surprising, really. He'd gotten her very excited. For a moment, she wondered how he felt about that. Wondered if he was disliked it, disliked the smell and the taste and the evidence of her...unladylike reactions. Slutty, you mean her inner Good Girl corrected her.

Shut up, Dana replied. Just shut up. She kissed Darren as enthusiastically as she could manage, defying the voice. She breathed in the scent—her scent—and found that she liked it. She wrapped her arms around him, and hooked one leg over his hip, clinging to him, trying to show him with her behavior if not her words, just how much she'd liked what he'd done.

They smooched for a long time. Long, lingering kisses that sometimes involved tongues and sometimes didn't. Darren toyed with her breasts, teasing her nipples into hard points that sent jolts of pleasure through her body to her pussy. He ran a large, warm hand across her belly, her thighs, and occasionally through the damp tangle of her pubic hair.

She stroked his body everywhere she could reach. She liked the lines of his jaw, the curve of muscle over his shoulder, his arms and chest. She spent a lot of time exploring the shape of his hip and buttocks and the small of his back. She built up a detailed mental map by touch, enjoying the opportunity to explore a guy's body so thoroughly.

All the while she was acutely aware of his cock, lying against her thigh, or poking her sometimes as they moved. She knew he wanted to fuck her, though he seemed endlessly patient. More patient than she had any right to expect, really. And besides, she wanted him to fuck her too. The thought brought mingled excitement and nerves, but the balance had shifted. It excited her to imagine feeling him inside her, feeling him come inside her—and to imagine, to hope, that she'd come too.

She never had with Mike. But Mike, she knew now, had not been a good lover. He'd been as inexperienced, nervous and anxious as she'd been. It wasn't his fault, but his fumbling efforts had left her unmoved. Watching Zoe and her lovers had shown Dana what good sex could be. She wanted that.

She kissed him again, wrapping both arms around his neck, pulling him with her as she rolled onto her back. He lay on top of her now, his hard cock trapped between them, his hips cradled between her spread legs. She rocked her hips, evoking a groan from him. She lifted her head, kissing him more urgently, wordlessly signaling her desire.

Darren broke the kiss. He pushed himself up onto his hands, taking his weight off her, then reached out with one hand to snag a condom packet from the bedside table. He pushed himself upright to kneel between her legs. Dana watched him tear open the packet and put the condom on. He was really going to do it. She was really going to do it.

The knowledge that she was about to have sex was almost more than she could bear. It left her feeling light-headed, as if she might pass out. She felt incredibly grown-up, and at the same time silly for feeling that way. This was only new to her. People had been having sex for forever; there were people having sex all over the campus tonight.

This wasn't even her first time. Just the first time she'd really wanted it, the first time she expected to really enjoy it. She wanted it very badly.

Darren lowered himself onto his elbows, his body poised above hers. The weight of his belly on hers, the insistent hardness of his cock pressed into her flesh mere inches from her pussy, thrilled her. She spread her legs wider, opening herself to him, offering herself. She wanted desperately for him to fuck her. Why wasn't he fucking her yet?

Face to face, almost nose to nose, he paused to study her expression in the dark, his own face sober. She knew he was watching for some sign, some indication that she was sure she wanted this. She felt an instant of exasperation. How could he not know she wanted this so badly? That she was as hot for it as he was?

Wasn't it obvious? Wasn't it?

Well, if not, she'd make it obvious.

Dana reached down between their bodies, between her legs and grabbed his cock with one hand. It was hard and hot and the rubbery sheath felt slick against her palm. Darren drew in a noisy breath, from surprise or arousal or some other emotion when she grabbed him. She couldn't tell and she didn't care.

She tilted her hips to present her open pussy, dragged the head of his erect cock through her pubic hair, over her clit—drawing her own noisy breath of excitement at the slippery friction—before seating it firmly between the open, sopping lips of her pussy. The slippery friction here wasn't so intense, but it was still powerfully exciting. And surely he couldn't mistake her intent now!

He didn't. He drove forward, not quickly but firmly. His cock, which felt immense, slid deeper, parting her flesh, opening her up as he impaled her. She drew her hand out of the way, wanting nothing between them. She wanted nothing to prevent him getting deeper. She wanted all of him. She felt him going deeper and deeper, filling her up in way Mike never had.

It felt glorious. She'd never felt herself stretched open like this, never felt anyone penetrate her so deeply. Possibly too deeply. But just as she began to worry that it was too much for her, she felt his pubis touch hers. She'd taken it all. He was buried to the hilt inside her. He felt immense, hot and hard, and it was close—it was so close!—to too much. She lay utterly still, feeling that the slightest movement would tip her over the edge into discomfort.

Darren remained still as well, save for drawing a deep breath and then releasing it in a long sigh. "That feels so good," he whispered, before he brushed his lips against hers in the lightest of kisses.

He shifted his weight. Dana whimpered, afraid for an instant that he was going to try to go deeper—and then in displeasure when he eased backward, withdrawing. Pulling away, dragging his hard cock out slowly, despite the slippery friction her pussy, sent a burst of pleasure through her body like a shower of sparks.

Dana heard herself make a wordless sound of pleasure, that ended on a note of disappointment. He'd pulled almost all the way out. Moments ago she'd feared that having him buried inside her was too much, and now she missed the sensation. She tightened her grip on his buttocks—when had she grabbed him that way? She tightened her hold, prepared to pull him closer if she had to.

She didn't have to. He pushed forward, driving his cock inside her again. He thrust harder this time, not so slowly. She felt less resistance this time. She didn't feel quite so tight, or he didn't feel quite so big. But the pleasure was more intense.

Darren withdrew again. The slippery friction sent a sudden shiver through her body. She felt the muscles of his ass flex and he was driving himself inside her again. Dana's fingers tightened on his ass. She liked feeling it move beneath her fingers, liked how it moved his cock inside her, back and forth. It felt good either way.

He began to move more rapidly now, and oh god it felt good. Dana maintained her hold on his ass at first, but it was soon clear that he didn't need any guidance from her. She let her hands slide up his back, admiring the hard muscles she felt there, and the way they too flexed as he supported his body above hers, as he thrust his hips, driving his cock inside her over and over.

Fucking her.

He was fucking her. And she was letting him. No, better than that. She wanted him to fuck her. She wanted to fuck him, and she was.

The enormity of it all took her breath away. That she could even admit that to herself felt huge. She felt as if she'd become someone else. And maybe she had. The girl who had moved into this room weeks ago could never have imagined doing what she was doing. She could never have imagined that she'd have a good-looking guy like this in her bed, kissing her well, fucking her so good.

So good. So...fucking...good. Oh god—

Dana quivered and her arms tightened around Darren's torso, pulling him down on top of her. Pleasure roared through her body like fire, consuming everything. She trembled and gasped and clung to Darren with desperate strength.

The firestorm burned itself out, leaving her weak and gasping for breath. The weight of Darren's body, easily ignored a moment ago, became uncomfortable. She relaxed her hold on him so he could take his weight on his elbows again, allowing her to breath. His hips remained cradled between her spread thighs.

Dana could feel him, still hard and still inside her. He thrust forward gently. The jolt of pleasure that rolled through her body was almost more than she could bear. She was still coming down from her orgasm. Still very sensitive. And, she realized, still horny. She thought she could come again. If Darren kept fucking her, she could come again.

She wanted that. Until this moment, she'd never really thought of it as a possibility. But now it was, and she wanted it. She wanted it badly.

Dana rocked her hips, silently urging Darren to continue.

He took the hint.

He was eager, and probably as excited as Dana was. The careful, gentle thrusting of before was a thing of the past. He crouched above her, his weight on his elbows, face to face with her, panting as he fucked her faster and harder. Dana held his gaze, wanting him to see her expression as the pleasurable tension she felt ratcheted higher and higher.

His expression grew wilder, his panting breaths grew louder. Seeing him grow more excited only added to Dana's excitement, which seemed to turn him on even more. Her arousal spiraled up to an unbearable pitch and she cried out as it overwhelmed her once more. She convulsed, unable to control her body as the pleasure burned through her flesh once more.

She was distantly aware of Darren rigid and shuddering above her, of the wordless moans of pleasure he made. Her own pleasure peaked and faded, leaving her gasping for breath, heart racing. Darren's body lost its rigidity and he sagged above her, only his elbows keeping him from crushing her beneath his weight. He gasped for air as well. Sweat beaded his forehead.

He met her gaze and gave her a weary, satisfied grin. "That was fun."

She found herself matching his grin with her own. "Yes, it was."

He said nothing more, just stared at her. His eyes danced as he studied her face. She wondered what he was seeing. She wondered if she should say something else. But what?

Darren interrupted her train of thought by kissing her abruptly, a fierce, aggressive kiss that surprised her, then excited her. He crushed his lips to hers, and his tongue explored her mouth. She could hear and feel the deep, warm breaths on her cheek before he broke the kiss to gasp for air. "God, you're sexy," he said when he had recovered his breath.

Sexy? Her? "Really?"

"Damn right," Darren said. He kissed her again, a gentler touch of his lips. "You're gorgeous and sexy and I'm very glad I'm in your bed."

"I'm glad, too," Dana said, but even as she spoke, she felt uneasy. What now? She'd accomplished her goal. She'd had sex with Darren. And he'd had sex with her. What did he want to do now? Would he want to leave? Did she want him to?

Darren rolled onto his side, still pressed up against her, but no longer looming above her. He propped his head on one hand, his gaze roaming over her face. "What are you thinking?"

The question took Dana by surprise. She blinked. "Isn't that my line?"

"Why?" Darren asked. He held her gaze. "Because you're a woman?"

Dana opened her mouth to reply, then hesitated, appalled. He was right. She was buying into some serious sexism. "Yeah," she admitted, shamefaced.

Darren shrugged it off. "So, what are you thinking?"

Dana met his gaze, uncertain how to respond. No, not uncertain of her response. Uncertain whether she wanted to tell him. Or whether she could. She feared her voice would betray her, as it so often did by falling silent when she needed it. She looked away, unable to face him while she wrestled with her fears.

"Hold that thought," Darren said. He turned away to rise to his feet by the bed, his back to her.

Dana felt her heartbeat thud abruptly in her breast. Was he leaving? Was he mad at her, or disappointed? "What? Where are you going?" Had she fucked up somehow?

Darren turned, surprise in his face. "Just...going to clean up a bit," he said. He held the condom he'd been wearing between two fingers. "Be right back." He walked into the bathroom and closed the door.

Dana sagged into the mattress, covering her face with one hand. Jeez. Over-react much? She felt really stupid again, and self-centered too. He probably didn't know or care about her inner debates. It was just a casual question, a conversation starter. Not the third degree. Not everyone overthought over moment of their existence.

He was probably just happy he'd gotten laid.

No. That was unfair. Yes, he was probably happy he'd gotten laid. She hoped so. But she was happy she'd gotten laid too. That was the whole point of this exercise, after all.

Dana lowered her hand. The bathroom door was still closed. She heard the fan running, and the water. She had a minute or two to think. She felt slightly chilled now without Darren's body next to hers as the perspiration on her skin evaporated. She twitched the sheet up to cover herself. She felt herself grinning broadly and the thought burst up into consciousness again: I had sex!

Would he want to fuck her again? She hoped so, because she knew she wanted to fuck him again. It had been more exciting and more pleasurable than she'd hoped it would be. Not as long-lasting or athletic as Zoe's escapades, but she didn't have Zoe's experience. Did Darren? She had no idea how much experience he had. More than she, clearly, but that was probably true of almost everyone.

The bathroom door opened and Darren emerged. He walked over to stand by her bed, looking down at her. He smiled broadly. "Hey."

Dana matched his smile. "Hey."

"Mind if I join you?"

Dana threw the sheet aside. Exposing her nudity to him that way felt naughty and exciting, never mind that he'd seen her naked already. "Please do."

Darren perched on the edge of the narrow bed, then stretched out on his side so they lay belly to belly. He kissed her, a brief pressure of the lips at first, then longer and deeper kisses. One hand caressed her hip. The other cupped the back of her head, supporting it as he kissed her repeatedly.

She returned his kisses, exploring his mouth with her tongue. She caressed him too, letting her hands wander. He had such strong shoulders and arms, and she liked the feel of hard muscle beneath smooth skin. His chest was broad, not quite hairless, and his nipple hardened under her fingertips. The sound of surprised pleasure he made as they kissed aroused her.

"Like that?" she asked, her lips brushing his as she spoke.

He nodded, pulling her into another fierce open-mouthed kiss. His hand moved from her hip to cup her breast and stroke a thumb across her nipple, sending the same thrill through her body that she'd given him. Why had she never realized his nipples could be as sensitive as hers? Lack of experience, she decided. This was no time for self-criticism.

She broke their kiss and shifted position to lick at his nipple instead. His response was immediately evident in the sigh of pleasure he made—and the way his hard cock poked at her belly. She wrapped her lips around his nipple and flicked her tongue across it.

He hissed as if burned. He must really like that. She did the same to his other nipple—and he rolled onto his back to give her complete access. Yeah, he liked it. Dana giggled, giddy with excitement and triumph, unable to continue sucking his nipples until she mastered herself and could purse her lips again.

She alternated sucking and licking his nipples, all the while caressing his body with her free hand. Darren lay passively accepting her attentions now, content to let her do as she wished. She felt powerful and sexy. His belly quivered beneath her touch. His thighs spread when she reached lower, brushing and then grasping his hard cock. It felt so hot and hard and yet somehow delicate. Darren groaned and lifted his hips as she stroked him.

Dana had done that before. She knew better now how to excite him with her hand. Stroking his cock at the same time she teased at his nipples aroused him even more thoroughly. She was certain she could make him come this way. But she wasn't ready for that yet.

She wondered what it would feel like in her mouth.

Time to find out.

Dana gave Darren's nipples a last kiss, then wriggled down the length of the bed until her knees hung over the edge. She supported herself on one elbow, her breasts pressed against his thigh, one hand clutching his cock. It looked enormous in her hand, though she knew now that it wasn't as big as she'd once feared. It was just the right size to please her.

And she intended to please him.

She licked the underside of the head. The effect on Darren was electrifying. He twitched all over. Dana grinned, then took the head into her mouth. He tasted...like Darren.

"Oh god," Darren muttered. "That's so nice."

Dana took more of his length into her mouth, then backed off. Then tried again, going a little deeper, working her tongue against his cock as she pulled away. That producing another groan of pleasure. She looked up at Darren, who lay with his eyes closed, a blissful expression on his face. She grinned, then resumed her explorations.

Several minutes taught her quite a lot. Just like giving him a handjob, this really got a reaction from him, that not so much. She took only a bit of his length into her mouth, accepting that she wasn't going to be able to take it all, not without a lot of practice. Darren didn't seem to mind at all; he sighed and groaned and occasionally quivered.

She didn't miss the tension gathering in his thighs. Or the way he shifted his hips now and then. He was really enjoying what she was doing. She wondered if she could make him come this way. Did she want him to? She wasn't sure how she'd feel about him coming in her mouth. What if she didn't like it? But what if she did?

She paused for a moment, remembering seeing Zoe giving Bobby a blowjob, and seeing her swallow the result. She'd seemed to like it. Dana shrugged mentally and resumed sucking Darren's cock, caressing him with her tongue as she did. There was only one way to find out.

She stroked the length she couldn't swallow as she did. Darren groaned loudly and shifted beneath her, rocking his hips gently. She took the hint and sucked and stroked him in time with his hip motions. His breathing grew louder and more ragged, and she could feel the trembling in his thighs and abdomen now, almost twitching.

"Oh god, Dana," he muttered. "I'm gonna come."

She felt her own excitement peak at that, thrilled by the feeling of power she was exercising over him. She carefully maintained her rhythm, steeling herself for the inevitable result. Darren's whole body convulsed and he made a strangled noise of pleasure as he came in her mouth. His cock throbbed, spurting a vast volume of semen with every pulse.

It was more than she'd expected, abruptly filling her mouth with a warm, slightly salty liquid. She swallowed some of it, not sure yet if she liked it or not. A little leaked from the corners of her mouth as she continued bobbing her head. She swallowed again, and then once more before he was done.

Darren touched her head. "That's enough—please," he said quietly. "I'm very sensitive after I come."

Dana let his cock escape her lips. Some of his semen spilled down her chin. She wiped it away with a finger. She still wasn't sure how she felt about swallowing it. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't good either. Still, she liked the effect it had on him when she swallowed.

"Oh my god," Darren said, his breathing heavy. "That was...incredible. C'mere, you." He urged Dana to stretch out alongside him; as soon as she did, he kissed her thoroughly, a deep, tongue kiss. It surprised her, but she kissed him back.

"I'm glad you liked it," she said, her voice a little thick. The intensity of her feelings, of the pride she took in giving him such pleasure, tightened her throat.

"'Liked it' doesn't begin to describe it," Darren said. He kissed her again before settling down beside her. He gazed at her face for a long moment. "I'm glad we did this," he said.

Dana felt her face warm. "Me too," she said.

They lay in companionable silence. Dana's mind threatened to run away with her as usual, spinning off into endless questions and worries and fantasies—good and bad—about what she'd just done with Darren, and what it might mean. She did her best to just enjoy the moment. She kissed him every time she sensed her thoughts spinning up.

She kissed him frequently. He seemed to like it. Better, he didn't seem to need to fill the silence with chatter. She remembered that from their date at the deli. He talked, and asked questions, and listened. But he didn't fear occasional silences. That was more her style, and she continued kissing him every time the nagging voice in her head opened its mouth.

They dragged the top sheet back up over them after a time. Then the blanket. Dana began to feel sleepy. So did Darren, to judge by his kisses.

"Did you want me to stay?" Darren asked quietly. "Or would you rather I leave?"

Dana's arm was draped over his torso. She tightened her hold on him. "Stay," she said. Two bodies made for very close quarters on her narrow twin mattress, but she liked the feel of his body against hers, his arm holding her close.

"Good," Darren said.

They both squirmed a little, getting comfortable before settling down. They exchanged a few more kisses, and a few more words. Dana didn't remember afterward what they said to one another. She remembered waking to find herself spooned by Darren. His hand stroked her bare hip. She turned her head to find him smiling at her. "Didn't mean to wake you," he whispered.

"Liar," she said, grinning. She reached back to wrap her hand around his hard cock, which was pressed firmly against her backside. A sense memory of him moving inside her, of the pleasure she'd experienced, made her next breath shaky with wanting. She twisted to lie on her back, never releasing her hold on him.

Darren kissed and caressed her, arousing her until it was she who reached out to grab a condom package from the bedside table. Somehow her fumbling efforts to tear it open, then to remove the condom and roll it onto his cock didn't ruin the mood. Frustration gave way to anticipation as he moved into position, then to pleasure when he entered her.

"Oh, god." The slippery friction of him sliding inside her was delightful. Impaled on his cock, Dana pulled him down on top of her, excited by the feel of his body against hers, the wantonness of clasping him to her bare breasts and cradling him between her thighs. He kissed her thoroughly, otherwise unmoving, before he began to fuck her.

This wasn't the frantic, rapid coupling of earlier. Darren fucked her slowly, his whole body rocking against her, his mouth never far from her own. The lazy rhythm was nonetheless having an effect on her, driving her desire higher, quickening her breath and ratcheting up the delicious tension in her belly and thighs.

Darren kissed her again. "You are so hot," he whispered, nipping at her ear.

Dana couldn't have spoken if she'd wanted to. She'd never thought of herself as hot, as sexy. The thought that Darren found her hot still felt alien to her, and never mind that he was in her bed. That he was fucking her. Again. She clutched him more tightly, her sigh of pleasure also a sob, so strong were the feelings his words produced in her.

Her reaction fed his. He began thrusting more firmly, breathing more deeply. Dana rocked her hips, wanting more, wanting hard, wanting faster. She groped for his ass with one hand, urging him onward. Her other hand slid through his hair to pull him into another long kiss. Darren responded, giving her exactly what she wanted, fucking her harder, fucking her faster. She held the kiss as long as she could, urgently exploring his mouth with her tongue, breath hissing through her nostrils, as she rode the long climb to orgasm.

It roared through her like fire, consuming her. She broke the kiss to cry out, her body shuddering, curling around the ecstasy that filled her. When it receded, she was left panting and trembling, filled with a glorious lassitude. It was almost a shock to realize that Darren was still fucking her.

He was close. Very close. He was panting heavily and thrusting hard, driving himself into her with urgent desire. Her orgasm had drained her of desire, but she was excited to feel his desire in the way he fucked her. Every thrust sent a jolt through her body. The slap of flesh against flesh filled the room the way he filled her.

She enjoyed it very much. The feel of him moving inside her, his weight on her belly, his arms holding her. It was an entirely different sort of pleasure than the frantic, growing need to come that she'd experienced. The intimacy of it, and the knowledge that he was taking such pleasure in her body was a turn on all on its own—as was the look in his eyes.

His eyes were dark but they gleamed in the dark like his smile. He'd watched her lose control, watched the pleasure turn her into a mindless animal, unable to think, intent only on the sensations he provoked in her.

Dana smiled back, unembarrassed. No, not unembarrassed—proud. Proud to be able to lose herself like that in front of him, proud of herself for pursuing this night of sex instead of chickening out. She watched him intently, wanting to experience his loss of control as he came, eager to see what effect she could have on him.

It was everything she could have hoped. His eyes glazed, open but no longer seeing her, for an instant before he closed them. He groaned loudly, his rhythm lost as he hammered her into the mattress with frantic, irregular thrust of his hip before going rigid, body arched above her. She could feel him coming inside her, his cock pulsing repeatedly.

Dana rocked her hips to add to the stimulation. Darren whimpered, gulped for air, his quivering body drawn tight as a bow. Then it was over. He sagged, collapsing on top of her, breathing hard. It would become uncomfortable shortly but for the moment she reveled in the weight of his body on hers, in knowing that she'd reduced him to this.

She stroked him all over, admiring the width of his shoulders and the curve of his lower back. She kissed his neck and the corner of his jaw. "That was a nice encore," she whispered. "I enjoyed it."

He chuckled, sounding exhausted. "Me too."

Sleep beckoned again. Darren made another trip to the bathroom. When he returned, Dana took her turn. She didn't turn on the light. Washing her hands in the dark after flushing the toilet, she watched her dark reflection in the mirror. She seemed familiar, but also a stranger. Tonight she'd done something she'd never done before.

Not the sex. She'd had sex before. Choosing sex—consciously, deliberately, setting out to have sex with a young man simply because she wanted to. Not the fumbling, lackluster effort—as much from a sense of obligation as from any real desire—that she'd shared with Michael back home.

She'd had sex with—she'd fucked—Darren because she wanted to, and because she wanted to experience the kind of pleasure she'd seen Zoe experience. She grinned at her reflection. No doubt Zoe would still be at it. But Dana didn't have her experience, and she already knew she'd be a little sore tomorrow. But god—it was worth it!

She dried her hands and returned to the bed to find Darren asleep already. She nudged him. "Shove over, you," she said. He obediently rolled over, away from her, though she doubted he'd actually awakened. She lay down beside him, dragged the bedclothes up to cover them, and snuggled up behind him, already drifting off.