**Ducks in a row**by Little Joe

Everybody was thrilled at the idea of a weekend away on a 'Team Building' exercise. It was part of the company's new strategy, announced Stephen as he addressed the monthly departmental meeting.

Stephen was our new and very keen boss. He was I suppose about 36, although he looked about twenty. He had light brown wavy hair and big round glasses.

"The company," he said, "is moving forwards to reach the New Horizon. We must push the envelope so as to put clear blue water between ourselves and our competitors. We must embrace blue sky thinking until we have all our ducks in a row."

Or at least that was what it seemed like. I didn't really understand a word until he mentioned the team building weekend. Working as a team was, so it seemed, an absolutely essential part of getting our ducks out of the envelope and on to the clear blue water.

I was immediately struck by my customary panic. Would I make a fool of myself? It was my abiding horror, to make a fool of myself in front of others. For that reason I hated this type of get together. You were always given silly things to do, and to do them you needed confidence, and an assured manner, everything I hadn't got.

'Get a grip on yourself,' Sandie I said to myself, 'you've got to do it!

That's me, Sandie MacTavish, well originally Alexandra, but I thought Sandie (with the 'ie' at the end) sounded more cool. I had always desperately wanted to be cool, but I was the exact opposite of cool – and I don’t mean hot! I was just too shy and retiring. I mean I know I had no reason to be shy, I was bright enough, good at my job, well read and I think I have quite a nice figure. The trouble is that inside every shy person there's a raging exhibitionist trapped trying to get out!

I know what I'll do - I'll stand naked in front of a mirror and describe myself. See - I'm not shy with you. I'm not standing up in front of you at a meeting with all your eyes glued on me stammering over my words and making a fool of myself. I'm not shy writing things down for strangers. You can imagine me naked as much as you like.

Well, there I am in the mirror: five foot two in my cotton socks (not that I'm wearing any), slim build, long dark hair past my shoulders, round face, big brown eyes, cute nose and mouth. My legs are slim and my waist is slender. Oh dear - I've committed myself, I'm going to have to describe the naughty bits. Come on Sandie - you can do it!

My boobs are best described as pert, with little pink nipples and pale areolas (oh dear they're standing right out now!), and my bottom is neat and round and pink - cherubic might be the best description. Oh - you want to know about my... Oh dear - well if I must... It's nice and neat and it's nice and smooth. I like to keep it nice and smooth because... Well I'll explain later. Oh my gosh - that was embarrassing! Telling you about my... my vagina... I keep my pouty little vaginal lips nice and smooth. There I've said it. Well done Sandie! Well I suppose you know everything now. Except perhaps for my voice. It's an embarrassment to me - too high, too squeaky, to ever so slightly northern.

The problem was, and I have to admit it when I look in the mirror, although I was twenty-two, being slim and petite, with my squeaky voice, my smooth vagina and my little girl boobs I looked about sixteen. It didn't give me much confidence looking so young.

Well there wasn’t anything much else to be particularly shy about was there, but I was. I blushed when people looked at me, I stammered when I had to say something and I would do anything to avoid being the centre of attention. And I wished and wished and wished that I was bubbly and effervescent and full of confidence.

So there I was preparing for the weekend of team building at The Manor, a posh country house hotel in rural Yorkshire, and I hadn’t a clue what to take or what to wear. Why not discuss it with the other girls in the office I hear you ask. After all there were eight other girls in the finance department, all going on the weekend. But you see I didn’t really mix that well with the other girls. I couldn’t let my hair down like them. I couldn’t go out on the razz on Friday nights. I couldn’t sit and discuss how long the latest boyfriend could stay up for – that would have been too embarrassing and anyway I hadn’t got a latest boyfriend. And I’d certainly never had one up – not a real one anyway! Oh dear! Is that a very naughty thing to say – you see I’m not shy when I’m writing things for you.

Yes – I admit it – I’ve had plastic toys up. A girl has to get her pleasures from somewhere and you don’t have to be shy with a little friend.

So I didn’t really have close friends. The other girls saw me as a bit of a studious nerd who was quite content to sit at home tackling the latest Sudoku. So I had to decide myself what to wear. I knew I would end up in slacks and a blouse, but I still wanted to buy something sexy, just in case I picked up the courage to wear it in the evening. Not that I went to Sexy Girl, or any of the other little designer boutiques, I’d be far too shy for that. I mean Marks and Spencer’s is considered really cool nowadays. Isn’t it?

Friday night though – in the bar where we all met up – I was in my slacks and blouse, while the sexy girls chatted and flirted with the boys. I sat on my own with my Perrier water and pretended to read a magazine. How I wished I could flirt as well. But I knew people would laugh at me. I knew I would go red in the face. I knew I would get a lump in my voice and start to stammer. So I sat reading a magazine until nine o’clock and I could pretend I was tired enough to go to bed.

I’d brought my little friend with me, and my computer with my favourite film clips of girls dancing naked. That's my little vice. Now I've told you everything. I like to watch girls stripping and dancing naked. Is that so terrible? I put on the video, listen to the music and dance naked with them. That's why I shave my vagina. The girls in the video are all smooth and I so want to be like them. I can do all the routines - all those sexy poses: back arched, head thrown back, bottom and boobs sticking out. I know how to open my eyes wide, pout my lips and give the come hither smile. I know how to squeeze my little breasts with my arms and stand one hand on my hip and one in my hair. How I wished I had the body and the confidence to be a stripper or a nude model. But of course I had neither. Watching the girls and dancing with them would have to do. I thought I would die of embarrassment if anyone saw me naked.

But I was able to enjoy the hour before I went to bed dancing and how shall I put it... Amusing myself...

Saturday morning and the Team Building started in earnest. Alison from personnel or whatever they call themselves nowadays (they have long since ceased to be HR - they're now the Site Human Investment Team Service or some such unsuitable acronym) divided us into three teams of four – three girls and one guy on each team. Of course I ended up on Stephen’s team – probably because nobody wanted the little nerd on their team. Not likely to get her ducks on clear blue sky! Stephen started with his pep talk.

“Right you guys,” he said, “we are the team! We are the best! We are going to win! What are we?”

“The Best!” shouted the others in unison. I turned bright red. I was totally unable to shout ‘The Best’ without turning bright red. Stephen ignored me.

“Okay you guys,” he said, having adopted the distressing American habit of referring to girls as well as boys as ‘guys’, “Okay you guys. Team name. We need a team name. Brainstorm guys. Brainstorm! Run some ideas up the flagpole, let's see who salutes!”

We brainstormed. At least the others did. I turned red and couldn’t think of anything.

“Clear blue water?” no not punchy enough.

“Blue sky thinkers?” too nebulous.

I did stammer in with ‘Ducks in a row’ trying to be humorous, but the blank stares it produced turned me redder than ever. It might have gone up the flagpole, but no-one saluted.

“I’ve got it!” shouted Stephen, “we’re daring, we’re going to win! We’ll be ‘Who dares wins’!”

So it was decided. We would be ‘Who dares wins’, and Stephen made it quite clear. He expected us to win.

There were to be four rounds to the team building competition announced Alison.

The first round of the competition was the Obstacle Race – this was a test of stamina and fitness. A good team, we were told, has to be fit! One person chosen from each team to race round a circuit, with some relatively tame obstacles in it. Nobody wanted to do it. They looked at me. I stared at the ground and went red. At last Tina said she’d do it. Tina was one of those girls that you find in every office: big, blousy, loud mouthed, lived life to the full, drank too much, somewhat overweight. Not perhaps the best person to undertake an obstacle race. But as there were no other takers we were forced to watch Tina as she puffed round the course, her fat bottom wobbling as she crawled on hands and knees along a wooden beam and tried to wriggle under a net. We were last. Everybody blamed me of course. That is one of the problems of being the diffident one who can’t stand up for herself. You get picked on. It wasn’t Tina’s fault for having a fat bottom - it was my fault for not volunteering. It was agreed by all: our failure was Sandie’s fault. Sandie would have to make up for it.

The next task was supposed to test our ability to work together. We had to build a little cart, or bogie as we would call it, out of plastic tubing and pram wheels. Then one of us had to ride it down a hill. I volunteered. I could do that – riding on a bogie - and I was the lightest. But Tricia wanted to do it. Tricia was totally unsuitable being even more amply proportioned than Tina and far too heavy for the femmer construction of the bogie. It collapsed when she sat on it and no way could we get it to roll down the hill. We were last again. Null points.

Of course it was my fault again. I should have been more persuasive. I should have insisted on being the rider. Nobody thought it was Tricia’s fault for insisting or for being too fat. Stephen was beside himself. Other teams had already nicknamed us ‘Who dares loses’ – his whole authority with the department was at stake.

“Why did I have to be lumbered with you,” he shouted at me, “you’re a liability in anybody’s team. Why didn’t you insist on riding the cart?” It was clear that the team thought that I was all the cause of their being last with no points after two rounds.

Ducks in a row - 2

The next task was called ‘Blindfold bluff’. One person from each team was blindfolded and had to follow directions from the other team members to negotiate a course. It was supposed to develop our abilities to give and response to instructions. I couldn’t do that. I can’t tell right from left – it would be hopeless. I’d make such a fool of myself. I just couldn’t tell them though so I just went red and shook my head. Stephen sighed in exasperation. Said he would do it, though he really ought to be the one giving the orders. The whole thing was a disaster. Tina and Tricia kept giving contradictory orders and Stephen wouldn’t take instructions from anyone. I didn’t say anything. I was too embarrassed about making a fool of myself and chirping up with my high voice. We came last and they all blamed me. I should have done it. Stephen would have been perfect at giving the orders. I hadn’t helped to direct him. Nothing to do with the others being incompetent. I was made to feel we were last and it was all my fault.

“Well you’d better make up for it on the last task. That’s all I can say,” said Stephen. Although it didn’t seem to be all he could say because he went on at me for quite a bit longer. He was getting really upset. People were calling us 'Three Ducks in a Row'.

So we came to the last task. It was a bit unusual. Each group had to devise a little tableau or scenario that illustrated ‘Trust’. Perhaps somebody falling backwards and trusting somebody to catch them – that sort of thing suggested Alison.

“Well we can’t use that idea then,” said Stephen, as if he alone had thought of it and it would have won us the round. He looked at me morosely.

“Come on then. This is your round. You’ve let us down in every round so far you’d better think of something good this time. Run some ideas up the flagpole. Any ideas!”

But of course I couldn’t. I just stood there going redder and redder. Then Tricia and Tina started whispering together. They’d come up with an idea.

“We’ve got it. We’ve got it!” shouted Tricia.

“Well, I’m glad somebody is of some use round here,” said Stephen, looking meaningfully at me. I breathed a sigh of relief, but with some apprehension. What had they thought up?

“Come on then girls, what’s the plan?”

“Well,” said Tricia, “What’s the absolutely the most embarrassing thing that can happen to a girl?”

“Come to a wedding wearing the same outfit as somebody else?”

“Worse than that.”

“Forget to put her lipstick on.”

“Even worse than that.”

“I give up,” Stephen wasn’t in the mood for games.

“Being exposed naked in front of all her colleagues.”

“What!” I said turning the brightest shade of red yet, “I can’t do that!”

“Well we don’t expect you to actually be completely naked.”

“Not actually? What do you mean?”

“Well the idea is that you seem to be wearing nothing but a towel. Then you stand in front of everybody and trust us not to whip it away. It’s so simple even you could do it.”

Seen to be wearing nothing but a towel!

"I don’t know,” it sounded dreadfully embarrassing to me.

“It’s brilliant!” said Stephen; he was delighted with the idea.

I went red again, and blushed and said it was too embarrassing.

“You’re not going to let us down again. You’ve spoiled every round for us so far and now you won’t do this little thing for us. My God! All you’ve got to do is just stand there and you can’t even manage that! I thought we were the team that Dared to Win and you contribute nothing!”

I was totally browbeaten. I just stood there and nodded my head.

“What do I have to do?”

“Simple,” said Tricia, “even you could cope. Go over to the pool. Get a towel. Go into the changing room. Put it on. Come out here. That’s all. Even a moron could cope.”

The implication was obvious. I was a moron, but it wasn’t even beyond me.

“Oh,” I blushed red at the thought, “I guess,” I said stammering.

“Well go on then. We haven’t much time.”

I scampered over to the changing room, grabbed a towel and went in. I took my clothes off and stood looking at myself naked in the mirror. My nipples were rock hard and I shivered slightly. I had to be seen to be naked under the towel.

Everybody would know. How embarrassing. But I had no choice. I had to do it. Hastily I tied the towel round and knotted it firmly above my boobs, and taking a deep breath I walked carefully back to where the others were standing.

“Right. Ready!” Stephen snapped at me. I nodded my head. “Come on then,” we’re on.

He grabbed hold of my hand and led me out in front of everybody.

“Little Miss Prim here,” he pointed me out to the audience, “is totally naked under this towel,” he turned to me and winked. Why did he wink? “She is going to stand here with her hands tied behind her back and trust us not to unfasten the towel and embarrass her in front of all her colleagues.”

Hands tied behind my back! What did he mean? Nobody had said anything about that. It was a new refinement of Stephen’s that he thought would definitely win him the round.

He glowered at me so hard I didn’t dare object as he grabbed my wrists and secured them firmly behind my back with his belt.

“There you are!” he announced, “she has put herself entirely at our mercy. She is trusting us entirely. If someone succumbs to the temptation to loosen the towel she will suffer the most excruciating embarrassment. Her trust is absolute.”

Everyone cheered.

"Pull it off," some wag shouted.

I could feel my face burning again.

With that Stephen put his hand on the towel. I gasped. He was actually going to pull it off. But no! He turned to the audience and beamed.

“Her trust is justified!” he announced to the audience, to much ribald comment, such as, “Come on Steve’, and ‘Let’s see her titties – if she’s got any!’

Then Tina followed him and did the same. Then finally Tricia. I don’t know what I had ever done to Tricia to deserve what happened next. I think she just didn’t really care about winning the contest. It was much funnier, in her eyes, to whip the towel away. One second I was standing there, relieved that my ordeal would soon be over. The next the towel was at my feet and I was standing stark naked in front of everyone, hands tied behind my back, nipples erect, rendered totally speechless by embarrassment.

My face burned as if it was on fire. My legs trembled. My skin was covered in goose bumps. I was naked. Stark naked. Standing completely nude in front of the whole department. They could see everything. My little breasts, my bare bottom, my nice smooth… Oh my God! I half crouched trying to keep my legs together unable to cover my little girly vaginal slit with my hands. It was the worst humiliation of my whole life.

Stephen looked at me mouth agape, “Stupid girl,” he yelled, “you’ve ruined everything. You weren’t supposed to be really naked under there!”

Wasn't supposed to be really naked. Why didn't somebody tell me?

"We said 'seem to be naked'. Are you trying to make an exhibition of yourself!"

‘Seem to be naked’ – I’d thought they’d said ‘Seen to be naked’!

Desperately I tried to pick up the towel with my hands behind my back and toppled over backwards in the effort, my legs went up in the air, and my vaginal slit opened up for everyone. My humiliation knew no bounds. Everybody had seen my most private parts. I scrambled to my feet again.

I should of course have just waited for somebody to pick up the towel and cover me up, but my nerve broke completely. I looked frantically around. Everyone was convulsed with laughter. They were laughing at me! At my naked body. At my pert little breasts, my bare behind, my neatly shaved vaginal lips. I could think of only one thing. I had to get back to my room. I had to bury my head in my pillow. I had to convince myself it was a horrible nightmare. I turned, and hands still tied behind my back I ran, scampering over the lawn. And careered stark naked into the hotel lobby.

I ran across the lobby with what seemed like a hundred pairs of eyes staring at me. I ran to my room, struggling all the while to get my hands free. At last I got them loose and tugged at the handle of my room door.

Stupid, stupid, stupid! It was locked. I hadn't got the key.

I turned and ran again. All the way back along the corridor, down the stairs, across the lobby to the front desk.

The girl on the desk stared at me.

"You shouldn't be in here with no clothes on little girl," she said.

"I'm not a little girl," I squeaked. I could see her eyes take in my pert boobs and glance down at my smooth vagina. She didn't seem convinced.

"I'm Miss MacTavish, room 421, and I'm locked out my room."

"Well I think we'd better get you back in quickly. You don't have any ID on you? No - I suppose not. Well under the circumstances we can skip the formalities."

She made out another plastic key card and I ran to my room as fast as I could and buried my face in my pillow.

The adrenaline of my flight subsiding I felt the shame and embarrassment of my experience welling up inside me. All those laughing faces, my legs in the air exposing my intimate parts, running bare bottomed across the lawn. I shook uncontrollably with shame and bawled into my pillow. They had all seen my little girly body in the nude. It was too much.

There was only one thing to comfort me. I put on my sexy new dress. I had bought it specially because it looked like the dress the stripper wore on the video. I put the video on, and I started to do my striptease routine with the girl on the video. I always enjoyed that – as I said, inside every painfully shy girl is a screaming exhibitionist trying to get out.

I didn’t dare go down to dinner and ate a bite in my room. But at about ten Stephen rang my room and asked where I was. I had to go down and meet everybody in the bar. I absolutely had to go down. So I went. Well I’d have to meet them some time. I kept my sexy stripper-girl dress on. I was past caring.

Stephen was in tremendous high spirits. My little escapade had won us so many points that our team had won.

“Never laughed so much in my life,” said Alison, as if that was supposed to be a comfort.

“Well, you’re a dark horse, sexy smooth girl,” said Tina, as if I wasn’t red enough already.

“Oh I don’t think little Sandie’s old enough to shave yet,” said Tricia, and everyone collapsed in laughter. It was too bad.

"The trouble is she's got acute vagina," said Tina, "and we've all seen it!” The laughter must have been keeping half the hotel awake.

Stephen however was in high spirits; he had ordered a bottle of champagne and he filled my glass. I don’t normally drink, but on this occasion I needed something. I drank one glass, then two, then other people were buying me drinks. Within an hour I was totally tipsy, as indeed were most of the others.

Stephen leaned over to me, “That’s a very lovely dress,” he said.

I leaned back conspiratorially, “It’s my stripper-girl dress,” I said. Oh why did I ever say that!

Ducks in a row - 3

“Hey guys,” shouted Stephen at the top of his voice, “Sandie’s a stripper!”

“We know that!” seemed to be the main response.

“Stoop teasing her,” said Alison, “Sandie couldn’t do a striptease to save her life.”

“I could that,” I said. Oh why did I ever say that!

In thirty seconds I was on the table dancing to the music. I was going into my favourite strip routine. Maybe it was the alcohol. May it was the time of night. Maybe it was the events of the day, but it was as if all my inhibitions were gone. The screaming exhibitionist, trapped for so long, had escaped. I went into my favourite strip routine.

I unzipped my dress and slipped it off. Everybody fell silent as if they couldn’t really believe I was actually going to do it. I kicked off my shoes and gyrated in my pants, my bra and my stockings. I sexily rolled down each stocking in turn and tossed them into the crowd. I turned my back, unhooked my bra and threw it over my shoulder. I glanced sexily back and pouted. A great cheer went up. I hadn’t been going to take my panties off, but with that cheer I felt I just had to. I hooked my thumbs in the waistband and slowly lowered them to the ground, keeping my legs straight and displaying my little round bottom as I did so. Then I was naked again. Stark naked. And I went into my dance routine – striking the poses: I did them all stretching my arms, arching my back, sticking out my bottom, playing with my hair, jiggling my little girl boobs. I knew all the sexy nude poses. I’d practiced them often enough. And with each pose the cheers got louder and I got more and more intoxicated with the adulation. And so I went on until I collapsed exhausted in a heap.

I woke up with a raging thirst. How much had I drunk last night! Then the memory came back to me. How much I’d drunk was the least of my worries. I’d done a striptease in front of the boss. I’d done a striptease in front of the head of personnel. I’d done a striptease in front of… Oh no! The clear recollection came back to me. Tina holding something up. A mobile phone. Blinking. Recording every second of my act and every inch of my naked flesh. Oh my God. Why had I ever done that! I put my head back in my pillow and bawled again.

I thought and thought about that mobile phone. I knew Tina. Not only would the video be all round the office, it would be on one of those video websites with thousands upon thousands of people viewing. With all of my old inhibitions back it was too awful to contemplate. My red face was back in my pillow again and I was bawling again. I just had to get that video back before she uploaded it, which meant getting it back before the morning. If I could just get her phone! Even if it was locked I could get the media card out and destroy it. The more I though about it, the more I knew. I just had to get that phone.

It woud be lying about in her room. I knew it would, and she would be dead to the world with all that drink. If I could just get into her room!

It was then that the mad plan came into my head. And once it was there it just wouldn't go away. How had I got back into my room - by going to the front desk and saying I'd got locked out. If I went to the front desk pretending to be Tina, they'd give me a key to her room. I could sneak in, pinch the phone, get back to my room and destroy the wretched video at my leisure. There was only one snag! They would ask me for ID and I hadn't got any. There was a way round it though. From the moment I thought of the plan I knew there was a way round it. The same way I had got into my room. Go to the desk naked!

I tried putting the idea out of my head. After all walking naked to the front desk voluntarily was different to the blind panic situation I had been in earlier, and I would have to be completely naked, there was no other way.

But the alternative was too awful to contemplate. Before I could even think about changing my mind, I slipped my jim-jams off, walked out the door and set off down the corridor. I was standing at the front desk before it struck home. I was naked in a hotel lobby. I was completely naked! What if somebody came along! Whatever had I done!

The night porter came out. He was a young lad of about twenty. Somehow I had expected a girl receptionist. I stood rooted to the spot, all my old shyness flooding back. I could feel my face burning, I could feel the goose bumps on my skin, my legs shook uncontrollably as I stood there in that ridiculous 'girl caught naked' pose - left arm clamping my right arm across my breasts, right hand clamped over my vagina.

Why do we stand like that? What's so terrible about somebody seeing a nipple or a vagina when they can see everything else?

I felt I would die of embarrassment. I was completely naked! What had possessed me! Why ever had I done it!

I opened my mouth to say something, but all that came out was a dry croak.

"Can I help you?" He asked smiling pleasantly.

I looked at his face. He was enjoying every second. Not just enjoying seeing me naked. He was enjoying my embarrassment.

I opened my mouth to speak but could only croak.

"Are you locked out?" He asked grinning. I nodded.

"In the nude?" He added grinning even more.

I nodded again.

"Turn round," he ordered, indicating with his finger that I was to do a 360 degree turn. I shuffled round on the spot.

"Completely nude," he added.

I nodded.

"Right I'll make out another key for you. Room number?"

Oh My God! I knew Tina was round the corner from me, but I had no idea what her room number was!

"I'm Tina Cummings," I croaked. He left me standing in that ridiculous pose while he tapped away at the computer on the desk looking up the room number. After what seemed like an eternity a new key card popped out.

"Right room 456 - just sign here Miss," he said, pushing over a form.

Sign? Sign? I hadn't had to sign before. I looked forlornly at the form. I am right handed and my right hand was hiding my vagina. What was I to keep hidden - my breasts or my vagina! The answer was academic as I needed my left hand to steady the form. I signed a shaky signature and grabbed the card, displaying boobs and vagina in the process, and ran back to the stairs as fast as my legs could carry me. No doubt giving a pleasing rear view as I did so.

I ran up to our floor and along the corridor to Tina's room. It was past mine and round a corner. I stopped at her door and taking a deep breath I noislessly inserted and withdrew the key card. The lock flashed green. I was in! I slipped in through the door. The room was a total mess, but through the gloom I could just make out the outline of her phone on the bedside table. I crept towards it when suddenly...

RING RING - RING RING

The room phone went off. Tina sat bolt upright in bed and I fled, stark naked, out the door and down the corridor with only one thought in my mind - to reach the safety of my own room. Breathlessly I arrived at the door and flung myself at it. Of course it didn't open. How could I have been so stupid? Oh Sandie! You stupid, stupid girl! I had gone out on my naked adventure without taking my door key with me. I really was locked out of my room stark naked! And I couldn't go back down to the front desk again and ask for a different room key. I was stuck naked in the corridor for ever!

I sat down on the floor put my burning face in my hands and bawled again.

"Dear me little bare Sandie. Sandie the stripper! What have you been up to now?"

I looked up to see Tina standing there in her robe, phone in hand, capturing my latest humiliation. I just bawled louder.

"You see," she went on, "the night porter just phoned me to ask if I was all right. Apparently a naked little girl had just been to ask for my door key, but had signed her name as Sandie MacTavish."

Oh no! How could I have been so stupid! I'd signed my own name!

I looked up at Tina and sobbed, "Please".

"Pretty please," she replied

"Pretty please,' I said.

"You know what," she said, "I think we'll leave you out here till the morning," and with that she turned on her heels and left.

I was left sobbing outside my door. Stupid, stupid Sandie! I'd made things ten times worse. I was going to be found naked asleep on the corridor floor in the morning. It was all too horrible to contemplate.

I went and hid in the fire stairs. The stone steps we're cold on my bare bottom, and it was freezing there, where there was no heating. In half and hour I was shivering with cold. I couldn't stay there till morning. I'd have to do something.

Only one idea came to me and it filled me with dread. I would have to ask Stephen for help. He would shout at me and call me stupid, but at least he wouldn't be nasty and take more photos.

I crept shivering along to his room and tapped tentatively on his door, then a bit louder till I heard shuffling inside.

"Stephen."

"Who is it?"

"Sandie. I'm in trouble. I need your help."

He opened the door slightly to reveal my naked shivering form and my tear stained face.

"Sandie! What on earth! Come in."

I crept in, covering myself as best as I could with my hands.

"What's the matter? What happened?"

Tearfully sobbing I told him the whole sorry tale: pretending to be Tina, creeping into her room, being locked out, hiding fearfully on the fire stairs.

"Poor little Sandie," he said, not shouting at me at all, "you must be frozen. What you need is a hot bath."

He went into the bathroom and turned the taps on.

"Get yourself in young lady. You have a good soak there while I go and sort out Tina."

And you know even though I was in his room with him stark naked I wasn't in the least bit shy about it. It was as if he had taken all my troubles off my head. I felt at ease. I climbed into the bath and lay there nude and vulnerable. He looked at me for a while then said, "I won't be long," and left.

He was back in twenty minutes. I was out the bath, towelled dry and waiting. I was still nude. There didn't seem to be any reason to cover myself - I felt so at ease naked with him.

"Tina's sorted," he said, "video's wiped. There'll be no more said."

I smiled.

"Into bed with you then. I'll sleep in the chair."

"Oh no you won't," I said.

Was this really shy little Sandie speaking. Somehow all my uptight inhibitions had gone with my cothes.

"What do you mean?" he asked open mouthed.

"Well," I pouted, "I thought you might like to push your flagpole up my daring envelope."

So I got my ducks in a row – or something that sounded very like that!