**Mailgirls on the Run**

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**Chapter One**  
  
Megan Brooks looked up from the papers on her desk to see a naked woman standing in front of her, head bowed, right shoulder thrust slightly forward. Megan sighed and lifted her company cell phone, tapping it against the cell phone strapped to the woman's right arm and listened to the soft chime signifying that a message had been transferred. "Thank you, Five. That's all now."  
  
The naked woman recited in a monotone, "Mailgirls are not to be thanked for doing our jobs. Mailgirls exist to serve." But she said it with a grin, knowing that Megan would only sigh at the familiar litany. Megan had spent two years of her life as Mailgirl Number Two at Sloane Guaranty & Trust. The previous Five, a tall, willowy brunette, had been Megan's best friend among the other mailgirls; the new Five was a short, somewhat chunky redhead. Megan couldn't understand how this Five managed to maintain her roundness after nearly a year of a carefully controlled diet and a steady regime of twelve to fourteen hour days of racing about SG&T's Maryland campus delivering parcels and messages.  
  
Five turned and left Megan's office. Megan knew that Five's immediate destination was a mat next to the receptionist's desk. There she would wait kneeling until the phone on her upper arm, known as a Mailgirl Management Unit or MMU, directed her to her next task.  
  
Megan read the message on her cell phone. It was from Jeremy Digness, the Assistant Director of SG&T's Community Relations Department:  
  
Megan, can you meet with me about the Corporate Challege 10k. Jeremy.  
  
Megan wondered why he just hadn't called her or requested a meeting via SG&T's calendaring program. His sending a message via mailgirl had to have some meaning. Megan knew Jeremy because of last year's Corporate Challenge 10k. It took place just six weeks after the end of her contract as a mailgirl and she had still been adjusting to a normal life. Jeremy was the stuckee to recruit SG&T's team for the Corporate Challenge. When one of the women running for SG&T sprained her ankle the week before the race he had called Megan and persuaded her to run. Megan had run track in college and competed in road races when she worked as a financial analyst for SG&T in Chicago, but had no opportunity to race after transferring to Maryland and then becoming a mailgirl. SG&T's mailgirl program was a 24/7 commitment which didn't allow an outside life. Still, running between offices on SG&T's sprawling suburban Maryland campus had probably put her in the best shape of her life. In the race she'd been hampered by the unfamiliarity of wearing shoes to run in - mailgirls wore neither clothes, nor shoes - but her 4th place finish among the women was number one for SG&T and she'd even beaten a number of SG&T's male runners. She decided Jeremy would explain in his own time and used the calendar app to set up a nine o'clock meeting on Wednesday.  
  
She put consideration of what Jeremy wanted out of her mind and focused on finishing up her current task. She was determined to leave on time today. If she managed that she could stop home and change before meeting Sam and Sarah for dinner in Columbia. The idea of going home and then out to dinner with friends was still faintly unreal to her. As a mailgirl her off-duty hours were spent in the Mailgirl Lounge and the Mailgirl Dormitory in the basement of the main SG&T building. She now slept on a queen-size bed in a spacious two bedroom condo; as a mailgirl she slept in a niche in the wall of the dormitory. She did miss the simplicity of not worrying about what she was going to do (whatever she was told) and what she was going to wear (nothing) that defined a mailgirl's life. She could somewhat understand the four SG&T mailgirls who had signed up for a second two year stint; four of the eleven who had thus far completed their mailgirl contracts. There was also the sexual buzz brought on by the enforced nudity and non-stop humilation of the mailgirl life. Megan's current lifestyle was strangely flat. She expected that Sam and Sarah would be accompanied by a friend. Sarah kept trying to fix her up, but Megan didn't really know where she wanted to be.  
  
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The traffic on Rt 29 heading north was kind thanks to a lull in the seemingly never-ending road construction. Mailgirls didn't commute or get stuck in traffic, a big plus in Megan's mind. Her re-entry into the daily grind of driving on overcrowded roads rife with impatient motorists was a downer. Maryland drivers were no better than those in Chicago.  
  
Sam and Sarah had snagged an outside table at the Columbia Ale House and yes, there was a tall, slender stranger sitting with them. Sarah stood up and hugged Megan and said, "This is Brendan, he works with Sam; he runs too."  
  
Brendan saw a petite, snub nosed woman with soft blonde curls. He stood and put out his hand "Sarah tells me you used to work together."  
  
"That's right, I'm a financial analyst at SG&T in Rockville. Sarah moved on, but I expect to stay at least the next few years."  
  
Megan hadn't known Sarah during the short period she had occupied a cubicle in SG&T's East Coast headquarter complex after transferring from the Chicago office, lured by the exciting prospect of being part of SG&T's new corporate stand-up. The women met when they became two of SG&T's initial cadre of six mailgirls, specifically Mailgirls Two and Five. They went through the mailgirl training program at Dumpster Dawg Enterprises together and then spent two years living together along with sixteen other naked women in the mailgirls' dormitory. They had really gotten to know each other when they became the initial participants in the Mailgirls' Holiday Program, spending a week at the Juniper Resort. That's where Sarah had met Sam; Megan had been the one to comfort and support Sarah during the ten long months of separation while Sarah finished up her mailgirls contract and Sam continued to do something at Fort Meade. The two lovers only contact was via infrequent Sunday phone calls and Sam's access to the Mailgirl app where he could keep tabs on all eighteen (now twenty-four) SG&T mailgirls. Once Sarah's mailgirl contract was up she lost no time doing two things - moving in with Sam and finding a new job. She felt she had no credibility in SG&T's legal department, feeling that the whole legal staff still saw her as a naked, kneeling menial.  
  
"My degrees are in math, but these days I spend more time working as a computer geek."  
  
Sarah broke in, "Sam had Brendan check over the Iphone with the Mailgirl app for malware."  
  
Megan blushed, thinking this stranger had seen the nude photos and video of her as well as the log of mailgirl life: deliveries, demerits, punishments, orgasms ...  
  
Brendan said, "He just had me analyze the software, he wouldn't demonstrate the app for me. So, I know all about how the app works and how it builds a VPN to connect with a server, but I was strictly enjoined not to run the app or try to break into the server. Since it's an American company on American soil that would be legally very questionable for me, even working from home as a favor for a friend. I didn't even need to consult a lawyer," he glanced over at Sarah, "to figure that out.  
  
"Sam tells me you're a runner, I don't remember seeing you at any of the local races."  
  
"I run, but I've only run one race since I moved here from Chicago almost three years ago. I did okay there, but haven't felt the need to compete. I think they've going to try to talk me into running the Corporate Challenge 10k again; Sam also ran that last year."  
  
Sam chimed in "SG&T is hosting the Corporate Challenge this year. I'm sure they'll want to make a good showing and since you were their top finisher last year they'll want you to run again."  
  
Conversation became more general, food and beer were ordered and consumed; there was no talk of mailgirls. At the end Brendan asked if he could see Megan again and they exchanged phone numbers. It was a very normal meeting of four young professional people.  
  
Megan noted that Brendan split up from Sam and Sarah when they all headed out to their cars so she called Sarah as soon as she got onto the road.  
  
"You made me lose my bet, I told Sam the phone would ring before we left the parking lot. Now, I'll have to pay up."  
  
"I don't want to hear about your perverse fantasies. What does he know about you, us, me ... mailgirls?"  
  
"He knows that I was a mailgirl at SG&T when Sam met me. He knows that we worked together at SG&T. He could guess that you and I were mailgirls together and your reaction to my comment about the Mailgirl app should have confirmed it. Brendan may be a bit of a math nerd, but he's not completely clueless. He has however never asked me about mailgirls, or made allusions about mailgirls to me. I got enough of that in the SG&T legal department before I left."  
  
Megan responded, "I thought maybe I'd like to see him again, but when a guy knows I spent two years running around naked it just makes me feel so vulnerable."  
  
"You could leave SG&T. You've spent enough years there for a decent resume and from what I know the HR department has been good about papering over the mailgirl years when providing references."  
  
"Sarah, you know I'm stuck there as long as Sam is there - my Sam, not your Sam."  
  
"I still can't believe Ms Barnes hired your sister as a mailgirl right out of college."  
  
"Better Ms Barnes at SG&T than the Juniper Resort - Ms Anderson was just plain scary. (As told in "Mailgirls' Holiday.) And seeing that Samantha signed up as a mailgirl without being pushed into it, I'm afraid of which way she would have jumped with Ms Anderson."  
  
"True. Why don't you plan to meet up with Brendan at a race? That should be a low-key get together and you'd both have the same skimpy running togs on." Megan could hear Sam snort in the background.  
  
"That's not a bad idea, maybe I'll do that. Anyway, thank you for a nice dinner and a not too awful guy. We'll talk later. I'll let you know what Community Relations wants."  
  
When Megan arrived at home she went down to the fitness center and got onto the treadmill. After a brief warmup, she cranked up the speed and settled into a steady pounding. As usual she ran barefoot, a legacy of two years of running about SG&T bare everything. SG&T had a state of the art fitness center, but Megan hadn't been able to change in the locker room since the day she stripped down to begin her life as a mailgirl. The one time she had attempted to work out at SG&T after returning to the Investment Group, she had what she later realized was a panic attack and had just driven straight home, not even calling in sick until she was safely back in her condo with the door locked.  
  
She thought about Brendan and was she ready to try and resume that part of a normal life An hour of sweat later she still wasn't sure, but thought Sarah's suggestion had some merit. And at a race she could meet plenty of men (and women) who wouldn't know her as Mailgirl Two.

**Chapter Two**  
  
Wednesday morning Megan ran an easy four miles before driving in to work and then spent an hour reviewing her current projects before heading off to Community Relations and Jeremy. Once she would have taken the stairs just as a matter of course, but now took the elevator, avoiding crossing paths with mailgirls.  
  
The receptionist, a plump, middle-aged motherly type - not mailgirl material Megan reflexively noted - waved her back to Jeremy's office. "He's expecting you."  
  
Megan walked into the office and Jeremy stood and walked around his desk to greet her. Jeremy was a gregarious man in his early 30s who just never stopped moving. "Megan, it's good to see you. I hear that you're doing well up on the fourth floor. I hope they're treating you right."  
  
"Jeremy, I have no complaints about my work assignments and Mr Bratz has been thoroughly professional. However, there are entirely too many people who look at me and think "naked slut." The new folks can be the worst. There are two who joined my division since I returned to the fourth floor; one a new hire and the other a transfer from the West Coast. They both got filled in on my history pretty quickly and from the woman I got the 'How could you? You're a traitor to your sex' lecture and the man has several times mentioned that he wishes he could have met me earlier.  
  
"If not for my sister I would have banked my bonuses and back pay and caught the first plane back to Chicago. But I need to be here for her and I know I couldn't face my parents if I abandoned her at SG&T. So I just do my job and get through each day. It's not as bad as being a mailgirl or maybe it is just as bad, just different. And I can't go to Mr Bratz or HR and say this and I will deny unloading on you."  
  
Jeremy sat down. "Whew." He looked up and looked Megan in the eye, "I had no idea you felt that way. You seemed to handle it just fine last fall when I asked you to run and you did so well."  
  
"Yes, I can succeed professionally and athletically - it's living life that's hard."  
  
"Well, let me tell you why I asked to meet with you. SG&T is hosting the Corporate Challenge 10k this fall."  
  
"I heard that last night at dinner from Sarah Stevens' fiance; Sarah, formerly Mailgirl Five."  
  
"Corporate thinks this is a good opportunity to show we're part of the local business community. Also, the people at the top, being ever competitive, passed down word that we are going to do well. I've heard rumors that they plan to transfer in some folks from both the Chicago and San Francisco offices to bolster the men's team. And someone on the fifth floor looked at last year's results and saw that our top woman was Megan Brooks and was informed that you had been Mailgirl Two."  
  
Megan looked at him in horror.  
  
"Yes, he thinks we can do very well if we have mailgirls run the 10k. It's also been suggested that this would show the local business world that mailgirls are just regular employees at SG&T. And, of course, there was no suggestion of relaxing of the mailgirl uniform for any training sessions or the race."  
  
"Is the fifth floor stark, raving mad? I ran in college, my race last fall wasn't just a product of running parcels and messages through the halls. I don't know that any of the other girls had run before. Distance runners are notably thin and I heard often enough about my disappointing tits for a mailgirl and what or who did I have to do to get such a job. Are the SG&T women are going to run through Columbia naked??"  
  
"No, we're hosting the race on the SG&T campus. Someone has been playing with Google Maps and laid out a 3k loop on campus and though the parkland to the north. As for the other point he believes that your performance showed that mailgirl performance translates into athletic success.  
  
"Mr Bratz has been notified that you will be selecting and training our mailgirl team. You are not being asked to volunteer, this is an officially assigned project through race day. You will coordinate with Ms Barnes and Ms Wilhelm."  
  
"Who?"  
  
"Ms Wilhelm, or as you know her Mistress V."  
  
"Jeremy, this just keeps getting better and better. I've read that during the Cold War, athletes from Communist countries would defect to the West at the Olympics What's the Fifth Floor going to say if some mailgirl just keeps running?"  
  
"They believe that the Holiday Program shows that mailgirls will stay. With the race here on campus no one will be shipped as freight, they can just jog back to the dorm. HR will set up your appointment with Ms Barnes and Ms Wilhelm. And good luck, I'll be rooting for you."  
  
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Mailgirl Twenty-two was kneeling on the mat by the receptionist's desk at the entrance to Support Services. This was her first bit of down-time this morning. The first two plus hours she spent delivering packages and office supplies which she found boring. It was hard to work up a thrill lugging a box of printer paper, naked or not. Well, she could do a nice display bending over, but she felt it was wasted on the admins, who after nearly three years of naked deliveries largely ignored the mailgirls. Twenty-two much preferred her last run, delivering a message to the vice president of Information Technology. She would describe his response to her as undressing her with his eyes except, of course, she was undressed.  
  
Twenty-two was a bit of an exhibitionist and enjoyed being a mailgirl. The food sucked and she missed hot water, but the lustful glances and plentiful attention during the long working days kept her on a high. Occasional paddlings and other punishments by Mistress V were a negative for her though some of the mailgirls even got off on that. Twenty-two did wonder how her strait-laced older sister had managed. She had talked with Megan when Megan's calls home coincided with her college holidays, but Megan had been very circumspect about life as a mailgirl. Twenty-two had been intrigued enough to find out what she could about mailgirls and almost as a lark had filled out the application to be a mailgirl on both the DDE and SG&T employment pages. She was tired of school and not sure what she wanted to do with her life; spending two years as a mailgirl didn't seem a bad place-marker. The pay was only minimum wage, but with sixty plus hour weeks and no living expenses, it would add up to a tidy sum over the two years, plus the completion bonus. Her new friend, Mailgirl Two, a stunning black girl just a year out of high school, figured she could make enough to provide a financial cushion when she returned to trying to follow her dream of dancing.  
  
Twenty-two was still kneeling on the mat when her sister walked by, looking every inch the young professional woman. She could see the moment Megan realized which mailgirl she was passing by.  
  
"Samantha, how are you doing?"  
  
"Per Human Capital directive I can only respond when addressed by my mailgirl designation. Also, per Human Capital directive there is to be no social interaction between mailgirls and other SG&T employees." Twenty-two, aka Samantha Brooks, enjoyed tweaking her older sister.  
  
"And how many demerits would you like me to add to your total. That's even more effective than complaining about you to Mom."  
  
Twenty-two just looked straight ahead, knowing this to be an idle threat. She received plenty of demerits, but so far none from her sister and none of the other mailgirls ever mentioned getting demerits from the former Mailgirl Two.  
  
"Okay, little sister, I'll mention your attitude when I meet with Ms Barnes and Mistress V."  
  
The little sister comment was wide of the mark since Twenty-two was six inches taller and two cup sizes bigger than her older sister, but a meeting with the Mailgirl coordinator and supervisor could be worrying.  
  
"This mailgirl apologizes for giving any offense and was totally in the wrong. My conduct was inexcusable and I will report my transgressions to my supervisor who will take corrective action. You may request to be notified of any punishment that I will receive for my behavior." The rote apologies were nauseous, but they came straight out of the mailgirl manual. There were no shortage of SG&T employees who seemed to get off on the whole punishment thing. Reportedly some employees set triggers in the Mailgirl App to notify them when certain mailgirls were thrashed; nobody had the time to view every punishment dealt out, they had to work sometime.  
  
Megan grimaced and said, "Well, you'll be seeing me downstairs." and headed off to the elevators.

**Chapter Three**  
  
Megan's meeting with Ms Barnes was scheduled for 5 p.m. Thursday; they weren't wasting any time getting to this project. The last time she had been in the Human Capital office was for her exit interview from the Mailgirl Program. She noted that the photo and panties of the new Mailgirl Two had replaced hers on the wall and she deliberately did not check out the frame for Mailgirl Twenty-Two. The receptionist waved her through to Ms Barnes office. Ms Barnes, Mistress V, and an older man that she didn't recognize were already there: Ms Barnes behind her desk, the unknown man sitting in an arm chair, and Mistress V ramrod straight against the wall.

The man stood as she entered and said "Ah, you must be our Ms Brooks. I'm Bob Starnes from Commercial Accounts. I'm here because I play tennis with a senior VP and I ran Boston some thirty years ago. He feels that makes me an expert and has directed me to oversee our running team. Come, take a seat and we'll bring you up to speed so to speak.  
  
"As Jeremy told you yesterday we've transferred in a couple of men that are respectable runners, both have run inside thirty-three for the 10k - not pro runners, but quicker than anyone who ran for us last year. It's not hard to recruit young, single males from other SG&T locations to work in the Maryland office. Conversely, it's tough to induce young women to transfer here. So, Mr Dawlish believes we can leverage the Mailgirl Program based on your performance last year."  
  
"Mr Starnes, I ran cross country and track in college and continued to run while I worked for SG&T in Chicago. I don't know that any of the other mailgirls have a running background and most mailgirls are not ectomorphs. I spent two years hearing that I was flat-chested and in comparison to the other seventeen mailgirls that was true. Most of these women are not built for running."  
  
"But they are all in excellent shape and spend up to fourteen hours a day running and walking through the halls and up and down stairs six days a week. I've looked at their resumes and we have former college soccer and lacrosse players and swimmers on the roster. There's also one aspiring professional dancer. Those kind of athletes often take up running after college because it's a lifetime sport which doesn't require special venues, equipment, or leagues. We've got three months to find and train our female runners."  
  
Ms Barnes broke in, "Mr Starnes has planned a series of time trials over the next few weekends to pick a team and then set up a training program several evenings a week and on the weekends for the girls. We expanded our program from eighteen to twenty-four mailgirls in the past year, we can ease back on the work day for the six girls on the team for those days they have training. And to spur on the competition there will be punishments for those girls who do not run well in the trials. The fifth floor says this is an important project and Human Capital will take it seriously."  
  
Mr Starnes continued "Our plan is to run heats of eight girls the next three weekends to select a team the way you would advance to the finals in a track meet, based on place and time so that they will each have to give their best and not just jog in twenty-four abreast."  
  
Megan asked, "So, we'll have eight girls run each of the next three weeks?"  
  
"No, the eight girls who aren't on duty Saturday will run on Saturday; the other sixteen will be split between two heats on Sunday. We'll repeat the following two weekends with different lineups in each heat. We'll have them run 6k this weekend, 8k the next, and the full 10k on the third weekend. Then we'll sit down and select six girls to train for the race."  
  
Ms Barnes added "You will present this program to the girls before their duty day starts tomorrow. The graphics department is printing out maps of the course to post in the Mailgirls Lounge and on the appropriate Employees' Notice Boards. Mistress V will expect you downstairs at 6:30 tomorrow morning."  
  
"Buildings and Grounds is painting a blue line the length of the 3k loop and a yellow line for the 1k loop so that no one goes astray when running," Mr Starnes finished. "The course starts and finishes in front of the main entrance to this building. You probably want to jog the loops tomorrow before leading the girls out this weekend."  
  
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This was Megan's first trip to the Mailgirl Lounge since she ended her stint as a mailgirl ten months previously. The door only opened to mailgirls and select personnel. Every morning there was an audience looking down from above through the glass walls (mirrored on the inside) gawking at the naked mailgirls preparing for their workday. A mostly male group drank their morning coffee seated at tables with a clear view of the women showering, shaving, putting on makeup, and just waiting around for Mistress V to parcel out their initial assignments and make any announcements. Megan swiped her id badge and the door opened; she had returned.  
  
Multiple heads swiveled in her direction as it was about fifteen minutes before Mistress V normally made an appearance. Tours of the Mailgirl Lounge were a fairly common occurrence, but not by a single unfamiliar woman and not at that hour of the morning. The mailgirls looking at her hastily lowered their eyes as deference to all other employees and visitors had been drilled into them.  
  
Megan decided to get started, thinking it would be easier without Mistress V hovering over her shoulder with her ever-threatening presence. "Ladies, I'm Megan Brooks from the Investment Group, formerly known as Mailgirl Two." That brought the eyes right back up to look her over.  
  
"The fifth floor has come up with a new job duty for select mailgirls. SG&T is hosting this year's Corporate Challenge 10k, which is a race for teams representing corporations and agencies throughout Maryland. The fifth floor wants to win and last fall I was our only finisher among the top fifty women in the race, held a month after the end of my mailgirl contract. They are transferring in some men to bolster the men's team, but they believe they can find some fast women right here."  
  
There were multiple exclamations of derision from the assembled mailgirls, but they immediately quieted and eyes went back to the floor when the door opened behind Megan and Mistress V walked in.  
  
Megan continued, "The race will be on the SG&T campus in three months time which leaves us one month to select a team and two months to train. As with any task assigned to a mailgirl, your enthusiastic participation is taken as a given." Feeling Mistress V looming behind her she went on, "You will be running trials the next three weekends to determine who makes the team. Ms Barnes decreed that slacking will be punished. You will be running in groups of eight, the mailgirls who work Sunday will run on Saturday and the rest of you will run on Sunday. This weekend we'll be running 6k, that's about 3.7 miles. Heat sheets and a map of the course which consists of twice around a 3k loop will be posted on the wall today. Mailgirls will run in full mailgirl attire."  
  
Mistress V broke in, "Thank you Ms Brooks. The slowest runners from each group and overall will be appropriately chastised. You will do your best. Security will monitor the course to ensure your safety. Now it's time to get to work."  
  
Multiple MMUs began to chime as the initial delivery assignments were downloaded from the Mailgirl server. Megan had been prepared to ask if there were any questions, but decided that would have to wait until the girls were lined up for the start of each run. She picked her sister out of the crowd, but Sam wouldn't return her gaze and Megan decided that would wait until tomorrow as well.  
  
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Mailgirls were on two different salary schedules at SG&T. Those mailgirls who were co-opted from the professional ranks were salaried employees and as such not entitled to overtime. Ten hour days, twelve hour days, fourteen hour days - they were all the same as far as the Finance people were concerned. Mailgirls who had been hired on directly as mailgirls were hourly employees working for minimum wage, but they were protected by Fair Labor Laws and were paid overtime. Since the normal mailgirl week started at sixty hours, they earned a lot of overtime. The salaried mailgirls still outearned the hourly crew, even with generous dollops of overtime pay, but where it came into play was in the decision as to which mailgirls worked truly insane schedules - the record was somewhere north of 120 hours in a week - and which ones were sent down to the Mailgirl Lounge early on a holiday or slack Friday afternoon. Mistress V had firm guidance from the Finance people to minimize paid overtime so it wasn't a shock that Twenty-two got sent "home" as it were, early that Friday afternoon. Summer Friday late afternoons in Maryland for non-mailgirls are for driving to the beach or eating crabs in the backyard.  
  
Twenty-two got up from the mat she was kneeling on in Commercial Accounts and made her way through the office to the service stairs at the back. She duitifully kept her eyes lowered as she made her way through the nearly empty office. Then down three flights to the basement, emerging in a back corner by the actual mailroom and then around to the lower lobby where she could look through the glass wall into the Mailgirl Locker Room (though there were no lockers) where Four was showering and Twenty-three was toweling off with a much too small towel that was standard for mailgirls. Not only was a mailgirl not allowed to wrap herself in a towel, it wasn't possible anyway.  
  
Twenty-two pressed her MMU against the door and it opened letting her in to the Mailgirl Locker Room. The RFID reader in the door read the tag on her metal choker, the only thing mailgirls wore besides the armband for their MMU. Everytime a mailgirl passed through a doorway her location was updated and logged. Software akin to what credit card companies use to monitor spending to combat fraud analyzed mailgirl movement and reported anomalies to Human Capital. When the orginal Seven was caught having sex with a mortgage broker on the second floor the tipoff was an unexplained pattern in her movements; Ms Barnes and Security walked in on them in action. The mortage broker was summarily fired; Seven was severely thrashed, Mistress V shaved her head, and she spent the next month making deliveries with her hands cuffed behind her.  
  
Twenty-two was now locked into the Mailgirl Locker Room/Lounge complex until the beginning of her shift on Saturday. She was scheduled from 1-7 on Saturday and then was off Sunday - that is locked into the Locker Room/Lounge, unless summoned to work. She waved hello to Four and Twenty-three and walked over to the toilets to relieve herself. The toilets along with the rest of the locker room area were in clear view through the glass wall of the locker room.The wall was mirrored on the inside so the mailgirls couldn't see or interact with the voyeurs above. While you would expect the lobby to be largely empty late on a Friday afternoon, Twenty-two had heard that young single guys working at SG&T would have their buddies meet them in the lobby for some mailgirl watching before heading out to their bar of choice. She got down onto the floor and lapped water from one of the bowls in front of Mistress V's desk, both slaking her thirst and playing to the unseen audience.  
  
Four came over behind Twenty-two, "I'm not sure I got completely clean, could you scrub my back?"  
  
Twenty-two swiveled her head and back to look at Four who leaned over. They exchanged a chaste kiss. Mailgirls were not allowed to have sex in public, but handholding, modest kissing, and scrubbing each other's backs were tolerated. Full blown girl-on-girl sex was restricted to the Mailgirls' Lounge which was not on view except to those employees who had access to video from the security cameras, two of which provided full coverage of the Lounge. Four and Twenty-two put on a good show in the shower and then toweled each other off before disappearing into the Lounge.

**Chapter Four**  
  
Megan ran the 3k and 1k loops early Saturday morning, looking to beat the heat and also avoiding changing in the women's locker room at SG&T. The 1k loop was essentially just around the main SG&T building, the 3k loop left the parking lot on a walking trail into the woods for a stretch before meeting up with a road that that ran to the back entrance to the parking lot, and then looped around to the starting line. The 10k race would be an initial 1k loop and then three times around the longer run. Given the wide spread in ability in the Corporate Challenge, there would be lapping - not her problem. This weekend the mailgirls would run the 3k loop twice.  
  
After finishing the 3k she toweled off at her car and then grabbing a bottle of water headed into the building. At most corporate offices a young woman walking in wearing just running shorts and a sleeveless top would merit focused attention from any males in the lobby, but with twenty-four naked women running about SG&T every day Megan failed to stand out.  
  
Mr Starnes was waiting just past the security desk for her. "I'll time the girls this morning. I suggest that you lead them around the course at least for the first lap. Mistress V has stenciled numbers onto their hips so that we can positively identify them. I believe that's also the plan for race day since there is no where to pin a number on them without drawing blood..."  
  
Megan walked down the stairs to the lower lobby. Looking through the glass wall of the mailgirl lounge she could see a group of mailgirls standing before MistressV, probably her first group of runners. For the second time in two days she swiped her id at the door and entered. Mistress V turned and faced her. "These are your eight mailgirls for this morning. You are responsible for getting them back here immediately after this exercise. You will also let me know which girl finished last so that I can apply corrective action. Now go girls. You have a job to do."  
  
Megan told the group "Up the stairs and out the front door. Mr Starnes from Commercial Accounts is outside waiting for you. I'll lead you around the course and he will time you at the finish."  
  
Eight naked women filed by Megan on their way out the door: One, Four, Eight, Ten, Fourteen, Eighteen, Twenty, and Twenty-three. Mailgirls at SG&T signed the industry standard two year contract and SG&T had brought the girls on in groups of six. Megan and her friend Sarah had both been part of the first cohort and had completed their contracts and moved on. This One and Four had replaced the original mailgirls who completed their two years. The original second cohort - Seven through Twelve - had also finished their two years, but Ten had signed up for another two years and Eight had replaced a girl who had quit the program prematurely. Fourteen and Eighteen were both from the original third cohort and their contracts would be up in two months - before the race; Megan wondered how that would factor into selecting a team. Twenty and Twenty-three were in the fourth cohort along with Megan's sister and they had started work just before the end of Megan's time. So she knew four of these women well, two only briefly, and One and Four not at all.  
  
The nine women, one in skimpy running shorts and a thin sleeveless top, the other eight bare-ass naked, filed up the stairs and through the front door. The mailgirls rarely used that door. When running messages or parcels to the two other buildings on campus they habitually went via the loading dock as befitted their status.  
  
Mr. Starnes was standing in front of the entrance chatting with one of the security guards sitting in his sedan. He told Megan "Phil will trail the field in his car and keep an eye on the back of the pack. We're putting water out on this table and you'll be able to get a drink or douse yourself at the end of the first lap and at the finish. It's hot out here and the girls probably haven't had a chance to to acclimate to the heat. The good news is they are not overdressed."  
  
Megan did not laugh. "Ladies, I'll lead you through the first lap at a pace I think you all can manage and then your speed is up to you. I'll try to set the same first lap pace for all three groups to start you all on an even footing. I know Mistress V told you that the last finisher in each group and the six slowest overall will be chastised. She will punish the last finisher as soon at the end of the run, those among the slowest six who do not finish last will provide entertainment for the Monday morning gawkers. That being said, take care yourselves in this weather. Collapsing from heat exhaustion will guarantee you a spot in the bottom six.  
  
"Okay, ready, steady, go."  
  
Megan started off at little more than a trot, looking around to make sure all eight women were with her. She could hear the security car keeping pace behind. She found herself unconsciously opening up her stride a bit as she settled into a rhythm. They exited the parking lot onto the trail and moved into the trees. The shade was welcome in the early morning sun.  
  
Four drifted into the lead, Megan admiring her tight ass and well-toned legs. She was a tall, leggy brunette who didn't look to be working hard. Four ran with a relaxed stride and looked to be comfortable. Megan could hear some heavy breathing behind her.  
  
They came to a road and the blue line went to the left. Megan could see a car approaching; it would have to swing wide as they were running against traffic and there wasn't much of a shoulder. She called out "stay to the left, ladies." The car slowed, and then slowed some more, and then stopped as the driver stared open-mouthed at the line of naked women running along the road. Megan gave a little wave as she ran past. Another few hundred yards and they turned left again at the next intersection and headed towards the SG&T complex.  
  
They emerged from the trees and Megan could see the five story building ahead of her and off to the left. There were a number of cars sitting to the side as they ran up a slight grade - Megan closing ground on Four on the rise - and returned to the vast SG&T parking lot. Several men stood by their cars using their cellphones to video the mailgirls running past. The course hugged the perimeter of the parking lot and then curved left to go around the main building.  
  
Mr Starnes was standing to the left of the blue line in front of the building and there was a cluster of men on both sides watching appreciatively as the women approached. Mr Starnes called out "Twelve-fifteen, sixteen, seventeen..." as Megan passed him. She veered right to grab a cup of water off the table and dumped it over her head. Four also grabbed a cup in full stride, Megan taking that as proof that Four was an experienced runner. Megan ignored the suggestions from the crowd to "Take it off."  
  
Megan and Four headed off onto the second lap and Fourteen came up onto Megan's shoulder as they were exiting the parking lot again. Fourteen was another brunette, but she was a divorcee in her late 30s who had been dumped by her lawyer husband for a younger blonde. Fourteen had dropped out of college to marry her ex when he finished law school and found herself adrift following the divorce. The story was that a law school roommate of the husband was well up in the heirarchy at SG&T and had brokered a deal where Fourteen got access to a computer in the law library on weekends and took college courses on-line working towards a degree in accounting. Megan thought she would prefer a more traditional alimony arrangement.  
  
As they plunged into the woods for the second time Megan began to worry about the stretch of road where they'd passed the car the previous lap. The mailgirls had been bunched up that time providing safety in numbers; they would be more strung out this time around. She glanced behind her and saw three mailgirls, leaving three more that were back around the last curve. The security car should have them in sight so it should be okay today, but in two weeks on that third lap they would likely be well spread out - she would talk to Starnes about arranging for spotters, maybe recruit from that crowd by the finish area.  
  
Four and Fourteen were running together a few yards in front of her. They were a well matched pair from this vantage point, nearly of a height with long brown ponytails streaming behind. Megan could feel the sweat from the two of them flying back toward her. The trio made the left turn onto the larger road and Megan could still see three mailgirls when she looked back over her shoulder. This time a car came from behind and she could hear it slow behind her as the driver eased off the gas to take in the sights. It still hadn't caught up to her when they made the next left turn, but Megan could see that the car was still on the other side of the center line and now had two more vehicles dawdling behind it. She could now see all six of the trailing mailgirls and the security car which was keeping pace with the last of them.

Megan opened up her stride and accelerated past the two mailgirls. She wasn't exactly racing, but starting that long push towards the finish was ingrained from years of competition. Four responded and pulled up even with Megan as they entered the parking lot past even more cars and cellphones than on the last lap. The two of them finished together with Starnes calling out "23:21", then "23:27" as Fourteen crossed the line. Ten strolled in at 23:45 followed by Twenty and Twenty-three both looking hot and tired.  
  
Some of the more forward spectators at the finish were picking up cups of water and handing them to the mailgirls. Normally mailgirls ate and drank from bowls on the ground and were not allowed to use their hands while in public, but both Starnes and Megan had forcefully argued that this was a health risk when running in a Maryland summer. Four was on her toes in front of Smithers from Marketing who held a cup up to her lips. A short guy that Megan didn't recognize was feeding orange slices to Fourteen. Others moved towards Ten, Twenty, and Twenty-three.  
  
Starnes called out "24:17" and Megan turned to see Eighteen finish looking totally wiped out. One was about five yards back and looked no better. The security car hadn't yet come around the corner of the building and Eight was nowhere in sight, so Megan started jogging back along the course. She made it about halfway to the edge of the parking lot when she saw Eight hobbling along with a decided limp, the security car staying a few yards in arrears.  
  
"Are you okay? What happened?"  
  
"I rolled my ankle when I moved to the side of the road because of an approaching car. There was an instant shooting pain and I came to a stop. I tried to start back up again, but can't manage anything better than this and the jerk in the car wouldn't just give me a ride in."  
  
"We'll have the Med Center take a look at your ankle. Let's just walk straight to the front door and go to the Security Desk. I'll bring you a cup of water."  
  
Megan left Eight kneeling in front of the Security Desk waiting for a wheelchair to take her down to the Med Center. She refilled Eight's cup from the water fountain in the lobby and then went out to collect the rest of the mailgirls. When she led them back into the building Mistress V was standing in the lobby holding a long, thin paddle.  
  
"Who was last?"  
  
Mr Starnes responded "Eight did not finish because of a twisted ankle, One was last across the line."  
  
"I will deal with Eight at assembly on Monday morning. One, ankles."  
  
One, a slender redhead who had been hired away from US Financial a year previously and then induced to sign a mailgirl contract, went pale, then bent over to grasp her ankles, her hair tumbling down to the floor as she looked back through her spread legs.  
  
"Six strokes, you will count them."  
  
The other six mailgirls walked to the back of the lobby to take the service stairs down to the Mailgirls' Locker Room. Most of the men who had been outside watching the finish formed a semi-circle behind Mistress V, jostling to get the best view of One's ass, thrust out to receive her punishment.  
  
Six strokes later with her ass reddening from the blows One swayed in pain.  
  
"Stay in position until summoned, then you will report to my desk." Mistress V concluded.  
  
"No," Megan interjected. "I'm taking her down to the Med Center. She looked bad coming in and I want the nurse to look at her for heat issues. She can hold position here while I take the results downstairs; then she comes with me. The nurse will send her down when she's cleared medically."  
  
Mistress V glared, but Mr Starnes silently handed Megan the list of finishers. Megan rode the elevator down to the lower lobby, then entered the Locker Room and posted the sheet on the wall. Four, Ten, Fourteen, Eighteen, Twenty, and Twenty-three were showering - they had the rest of the day at leisure in the Mailgirl Lounge. Megan left to collect One and then to the Med Center to check on Eight.  
  
"Okay, straighten up and we'll walk down to the Med Center and see how Eight is doing. I checked the duty roster for the Med Center last night and Susan Allen is on duty today; I knew her better as Mailgirl One."  
  
The two women walked slowly towards the back of the building where the Med Center was located. Most of Megan's visits there had been as Mailgirl Two as SG&T provided primary care for mailgirls on site. Only healthy young women were selected as mailgirls and the lifestyle was generally conducive to staying healthy, sore bottoms notwithstanding, and since no SG&T mailgirl as yet had managed to get pregnant, the Med Center had so far been sufficent for their needs. Susan was a diminutive blonde who had an easier time than most as a mailgirl since her old office had been largely suportive and welcomed her back at the end of her mailgirl contract.  
  
Megan pushed open the door to the Med Center and called out when she found no one in the outer office.  
  
"Come on back, we're in Exam Room 2."  
  
Megan and One followed Susan's voice and found Eight lying on an exam table with Susan standing beside her. The Med Center was the only place at SG&T where mailgirls were allowed on the furniture. The mailgirls had the added bonus of not having to wear hospital gowns - the consensus was that naked was better.  
  
"She didn't break anything; it appears to be a mild sprain. I've given her aspirin and will wrap her ankle with an elastic bandage before returning her to the basement."  
  
"Susan, this is the new Mailgirl One. She looked dreadful at the finish line; I'm worried about heat exhaustion."  
  
"I hadn't realized that it manifested in a reddened bottom."  
  
"That was her award for being the last to cross the finish line."  
  
"I thought I recognized Mistress V's work. Come on around to Exam Room 1 and I'll check your vitals and if nothing life threatening let you lay on the table for a while. We even have some cookies from the last blood drive.  
  
"Maria, just lay there for a while longer; I'll bring in juice and cookies for you as well."  
  
As a mailgirl's diet largely consisted of Mailgirl Chow and water, this was a high treat, indeed. Susan was contravening company policy by providing snacks and calling a mailgirl by her given name, but she had experienced life as a mailgirl and gave comfort where she could.  
  
Megan left Susan with her patients and went to find Mr Starnes to talk about tomorrow's trials. She thought that running off both heats even earlier in the morning would be prudent. When she tracked him down in his office he agreed and said that he would arrange for a bicycle to lead the way allowing Megan to range through the field. Tomorrow's runs would be at 7 and 7:30 a.m.  
  
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Fourteen, once Mrs Francis Briggs, made her way up to the law library on the fourth floor after showering and cooling down from her run. She was taking two on-line courses during the summer term. She planned on taking two more during each of the two fall terms which would allow her to finish up with a semester on campus the following spring after her mailgirl contract completed. Then with a BS in Accounting she could either take the position at SG&T as guaranteed in her mailgirl agreement or find a job elsewhere. She planned to work the job placement program at the college hard, returning to SG&T was definitely a fallback strategy.  
  
Fourteen had dropped out of Mt Holyoke after her sophomore year to marry her recent law school graduate fiance and follow him off to a law firm in San Francisco. Several moves, thirteen years of marriage, and five miscarriages later she was in a severe depression after the latest miscarriage when she physically lashed out at Frank who was cruelly taunting her failure. One assault charge later, she was divorced and he was remarried to his pregnant, blonde girlfriend. Fourteen got a small settlement, modest alimony until she was self-supporting, and financial support to finish her education. Frank's old buddy from the San Francisco firm was an in-house counsel at SG&T and before Fourteen knew what hit her she had signed a mailgirl contract with SG&T. Nearly two years as a mailgirl had left plenty of time for introspection and a burning desire to get her life back on track. Life as a mailgirl sucked, but she could have still been Mrs Francis Briggs and on the whole she preferred being a mailgirl, especially a mailgirl who was within sight of getting her degree and moving on. And being able to hold her own, in looks and performance, with the mostly twenty-somethings that were her fellow mailgirls was a boost to the ego.  
  
She pressed her MMU against the scanner by the door to the law library and pushed the door open when it clicked. She didn't see anyone as she entered the room which was all to the good. She walked over to the computer she used, sitting on a low table against the wall and knelt on the mailgirl mat in front of it, since of course she wasn't allowed to sit in a chair to use one of the other computers, nor did she have an account on the SG&T intranet. Computers used by mailgirls - this computer in the law library, one in the Human Capital offices, and three in the Mailgirls' Lounge - were on a physically separate network which did have (filtered) access to the Internet.  
  
Fourteen logged into her computer, then into the distance learning portal on the UMUC website and started working through the latest class session. She pointedly did not look towards the web cam mounted on the wall aimed at her mat; Frank's buddy, Mr Fforde, liked to keep an eye on her progress or naked presence, really.  
  
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Megan arrived at SG&T shortly after six Sunday morning. When working on major deals Megan and the rest of the Investment Group could work truly insane hours as they were carried along in the excitement and pressure of the process - as yet training mailgirls for a 10k just didn't rise to that level. But here she was.  
  
Mr Starnes was out in front of the entrance again with a line of tables and a teen-age boy with a bike. "Megan, come meet my son. Tad, this is Megan Brooks, a valued member of the Investment Group. Tad normally lives with his mother, but I have him for a few weeks this summer before he goes off to college." Tad eyed Megan appreciatively; he was a teen-age boy.  
  
"Does his mother know about this?" Megan hissed.  
  
"Well, we haven't discussed it, but she is fully conversant with the Mailgirl Program and she knows her son. She knows you as well. You worked for her in Chicago. I believe she was a key player in getting you transferred to Maryland."  
  
"His mother is Ms Aldridge?"  
  
"Yes. She reverted to her maiden name after we divorced and has kept it through the two subsequent marriages. My understanding is that she wasn't happy with the attention her now current husband was showing you and got you out of the way.  
  
"Ms Brooks used to work for your mother. Say, hello."  
  
"Good morning, Ms Brooks, it's good to meet you. Isn't it about time for the mailgirls to come out and start warming up? My high school coach was all about a proper warmup."  
  
Megan grew flustered, "I'll get them about fifteen minutes before the start. Right now, I'm heading inside to make sure that they're all properly hydrated. They don't spend a lot of time outside and are unused to the heat."  
  
Megan entered the SG&T building and took the sweeping stair case down to the lower lobby where she entered the Mailgirls' Locker Room. Four of the mailgirls who had run yesterday were preparing for the morning shift, the other four would come on duty at one p.m. Mistress V had the eight mailgirls who were to run at seven kneeling in front of her desk.  
  
Megan asked, "Have they all had enough to drink? They're not running very far today and it's early, but we don't want any dehydration problems."  
  
Mistress V replied, "I had them put out extra bowls of water. They've all had a chance to lap up as much as they wanted to."  
  
"Ladies, as I told yesterday's group, I'll set the pace for the first lap trying to run about the same time we ran yesterday morning. The second lap you're on your own. We have a bike to lead the way today and I'll likely stay to the front for both laps; there will be a car from Security following the last runner. We had some traffic on the park road yesterday, stay to the left and keep an eye on any car - they'll be watching you. We'll head outside about quarter of and start promptly at 7. Good luck and stay safe."  
  
At twenty of Megan told the mailgirls to stand up and stretch. "Mistress V, you'll need to get the next group ready and send them out about 7:15; they'll get out there in time to see the finish of this heat."  
  
Then, "Okay ladies, it's time." Two, Six, Seven, Nine, Thirteen, Sixteen, Nineteen, and Twenty-four headed up the stairs. Megan realized that Sam would be in the last group.  
  
Mr Starnes and Tad were standing by the starting line, Tad gaping at the eight naked women filing out of the building and moving towards him. There were two tables with cups of water already sitting on them. "There's more water if you want it" Megan said. "You can also grab some on your way by to start the second lap - and you can pick up the cup yourself, a special dispensation from Human Capital for race training.  
  
"Tad, we're following the blue line today and doing two laps. I suggest that you keep your eyes on the road in front of you, I'll let you know if you're getting too far ahead."  
  
A few of the mailgirls did pick up cups and drink. Two and Sixteen jogged easily across the parking lot and then jogged back. Tad's gaze flitted from naked woman to naked woman trying to take it all in.  
  
Mr Starnes called the mailgirls to the starting line and said "Go."  
  
This run played out pretty much like the previous day. Tad proved to be a competent leader on the bike though he did take advantage of every turn and curve in the course to look behind. They met no cars on the first trip through the woods and just two parked where the course returned to the parking lot. Megan led through the first lap in 12:13, grabbing a cup from the table as she passed. Realizing that she would be repeating this effort with less than ten minutes recovery time, Megan did not press the second lap the way she'd done on Saturday. None of the mailgirls mounted a challenge and she finished in 23:42 with Two, Six, Nine, and Sixteen in a cluster just a few steps back. Thirteen followed in 23:48, then Twenty-four outsprinted Seven, and Nineteen came across last in 24:07.  
  
The next group of mailgirls was standing to the side watching their colleagues finish up. Nineteen had just picked up a cup of water when Mistress V called out "Nineteen, ankles." Nineteen put down the cup and stepped back from the table before bending over.  
  
"Six strokes. Count them." Mistress V brought her paddle down on Nineteen's upthrust ass.  
  
"One" she gasped.  
  
Tad stood with his mouth wide open watching Mistress V crack the paddle over Nineteen six times with only the sound of the paddle striking flesh and Nineteen's tortured count breaking the silence.  
  
"Straighten up and get something to drink. You next lot, let this be a lesson."  
  
Megan took a quick survey of the finishers and decided that no one looked to be in distress, not even Nineteen really - six strokes of the paddle was little more than a reminder; they had all suffered much worse.  
  
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Twenty-two was not excited about being forced to get up early on her day off. It's not like she had a late night on Saturday; it was the principle of the thing. Also, running was Megan's shtick, not hers. Still, it was a break in the routine and that was a plus. Breakfast was just toast and water - meals eaten out of sight in the Mailgirls' Lounge weren't Mailgirl Chow and water from bowls on the floor, but they were never exciting. The first group of eight went out to the locker room with the four mailgirls on duty that morning. Twenty-two and the other seven emerged when everyone else cleared out.  
  
They'd all had a chance to talk to the eight women who had run the day before and thus understood what would happen. Twenty-two wasn't surprised that Four had done well, she was obviously a jock, but Fourteen was old, how had she run so quickly. Twenty-two's goal was to finish in the middle of the pack - escape punishment, but not get herself drafted to race.  
  
Mistress V led the eight mailgirls up the stairs and to the outside at 7:15. Twenty-two saw a cluster of men standing by a pair of tables that had cups standing on them. The men were looking off to the right waiting for the runners to appear. An older man standing in front of the tables saw the new group of mailgirls and called out "It will be another five or so minutes, anyone who wants some more water just grab a cup off the table." The other men now turned and gazed appreciatively at the mailgirls, gesturing them to come right up and get a drink. Twenty-two walked up to the table and picked up a cup and started sipping slowly while waiting for her sister and the mailgirls. While she looked off to where the runners would be coming from, the men standing around the table were looking at her - well, her and the other seven mailgirls right there, right now.  
  
The man to Twenty-two's left leaned into her and asked, "How fast are you?"  
  
She pretended to misunderstand and replied, "I'm just hoping not to finish last. My sister is the runner." A bike appeared in the distance followed by a cluster of women. "Oh, there she is."  
  
"Your sister is a mailgirl?"  
  
"She was. She's the one in the blue top." They both watched the runners approach. The unknown man placed his hands on Twenty-two's hips.  
  
"Do not touch the mailgirls."  
  
The man stepped back and a line of fire etched itself across the top of Twenty-two's bottom. Mistress V was on duty. The crop hurt when applied forcefully as she just demonstrated. "Get over with the rest of the girls."  
  
Twenty-two moved off to the side and watched her sister lead a pack of mailgirls in to the finish. There were four just a step or so behind and then the other four strung out in arrears. She saw Twenty-four just nip Seven at the line and then Nineteen struggle across about ten yards back. Twenty-two heard Mistress V call out to Nineteen and then apply six strokes of her paddle to the curvy blonde's ass. Well, better the paddle than the crop with which she'd admonished Twenty-two, but still Twenty-two resolved not to finish last.  
  
The older man at the finish line cried out, "Next heat on the line."  
  
The eight mailgirls walked up to the thick blue line painted on the asphalt at right angles to the thinner yellow and blue lines stretching out across the parking lot. Megan was still at the table sipping a cup of water, her blue top clinging to her scant curves, her nipples pushing hard against the damp fabric. She was garnering as much attention as the sixteen naked women standing in the sun.  
  
"Ms Brooks, if you're ready."  
  
Twenty-two was checking out the cute boy on the bicycle. She assumed that he wasn't jail bait and he was a bit skinny, but he had possibilities and he certainly looked like he approved of what he was seeing. Megan walked up next to her and the older man called out "Ready, steady, go" and off they went following the boy on the bike.  
  
The run started at a fairly relaxed pace. They were moving quicker than the normal stroll through office space, but certainly not at the dead run that a mailgirl might be forced to as the seconds ticked down on a delivery. Twenty-two settled in near the back of the pack running alongside Eleven, a short, thin Oriental girl with a surprisingly large pair of tits which bounced about as she ran. They strode across the parking lots and ducked into the woods on an asphalt trail. So far, Twenty-two wasn't having any trouble keeping up and no one looked to be in distress. Well, they did spend their days dashing about SG&T and they were all a lot fitter than when they signed their contracts and became mailgirls.

Megan led the way through the trees and then left onto a road. Megan called out "stay to the left, there may be cars."  
  
Twenty-two didn't see any cars, but there were a line of bicycles on the road heading in their direction. The leading bike swung out wider and then braked to a stop as the cyclist exclaimed "What the hell!" The other bikes also came to a stop and heads swiveled to watch the line of mailgirls run by.  
  
Megan turned to the left again at the first intersection, followed by the field. All eight mailgirls were still clustered behind her as they emerged from the trees and could see the SG&T building across the parking lot. Just as yesterday's runners related there were several cars parked at the edge of the parking lot and a couple of men videoing the approaching women. As they started up the slight grade Five and Twenty-one began falling back; Twenty-two was still feeling relaxed.  
  
The now strung out field ran across the parking lot and around to the front of the building. The crowd of spectators had grown since the mailgirls started off. The man at the finish line called out Twelve-eleven as Megan passed, Twelve-fourteen for Twenty-two. Megan grabbed a cup of water off the table and dumped it over her head, Twenty-two followed suit, figuring that her sister had done this before. As they started across the parking lot to begin the second lap Megan was leading followed by Twelve and Twenty-two.  
  
Twenty-two was feeling relaxed and strong, but she had no interest in racing for SG&T so she eased off and let Three and Fifteen go past. She knew herself to be thoroughly heterosexual, but appreciated the boucing boobs and tight asses on display under a thin sheen of perspiration. They exited the parking lot back into the woods and she wondered if the bikes were still hanging about. Megan had opened up her stride and was now twenty yards clear of Twelve as she turned onto the road.  
  
No, no bikes in sight, but Twenty-two could hear a car approaching from behind. "Looking good, ladies. Anyboday need a ride?" Twenty-two refused to look, keeping her gaze focused on Three's ass five yards in front. The car had slowed to keep pace with the mailgirls and Twenty-two continued to look straight ahead.  
  
Megan made the left turn heading back towards SG&T, looking back over her shoulder to check on the mailgirls trailing her. Twenty-two could see her sister slow as she continued to look back. Then Megan picked up the pace pulling away from the mailgirls trailing her as she headed for the parking lot Twenty-two was beginning to struggle a bit, but saw that she was slowly gaining ground on Twelve and Fifteen. There were even more cars parked by the entrance to the parking lot this time through. They cheered for the mailgirls by number, encouraging Three to catch the "overdressed blonde."  
  
Three eased off as they rounded the SG&T building and Megan finished with only the bike for company. Three crossed the line about twenty-five yards in arrears, then Twelve, Fifteen, and Twenty-two came across together as the man at the finish line called out "Twenty-three twenty-six." There was a long gap before Eleven and Seventeen came in and another equally long way back to Twenty-one. Five finished all alone looking thoroughly exhausted. Twenty-two was alternating gulps of water from cups held by two men that she thought looked familiar, but couldn't quite place.  
  
Mistress V called out, "Five, ankles." The plump redhead bent over, but when Mistress V cracked her paddle over Five's ass for the first blow, she stumbled and barely caught herself before straightening up and then back into position.  
  
Megan said "No. You'll have to postpone that until tomorrow. I'm taking her down to the Med Center."  
  
Twenty-two was shocked that her sister defied Mistress V. She had certainly learned that she could not do so. She watched Megan lead Five through the doors into the building.  
  
Mistress V then called out, "Mailgirls. Inside, now!"  
  
Twenty-two and the other six mailgirls streamed into the building and then down the stairs to the lower lobby and the Mailgirls Locker Room.  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
Megan walked Five down the hall to the Med Center. She had made sure that Susan would be on duty again this morning. "I've got another overheated mailgirl for you."  
  
Susan took Five into one of the exam rooms and told her to lay down while Megan got her some water. When Megan returned she reported "She's mildly dizzy, but doesn't look to be in any great distress. I'll keep her here for an hour or so making sure that she drinks and then down to the Mailgirls Lounge for her.  
  
Megan went back outside where Mr Starnes was supervising the post-race cleanup. He asked about Five and handed Megan the results of the two runs that morning. "Between the IT folks and Security the stretch of the course outside the parking lot is entirely covered by wifi and web-cams. They were keeping an eye on the car that was following along in that last lap. He zoomed off when the Security car pulled up onto his bumper."  
  
"It might be safer to have Security block that section of road while we're running on it. I don't want to have an accident because the drivers are staring at naked women instead of paying attention to the road." Megan responded.  
  
"I'll have Community Relations talk to the Montgomery County Police about it. Traffic control for the runs would be a popular assignment I'm sure."  
  
Tad walked up to Megan and asked, "Which of the mailgirls was your sister?"  
  
"Samantha is Mailgirl Twenty-two, she ran in the last race. You can look at the mailgirls, but you can't touch."  
  
She looked back at Starnes, "I'll post the results in the Mailgirls' Locker Room and then I'll check on Five. When they send her back from the Med Center, I'm heading home. We can meet with Jeremy tomorrow to make plans for next weekend."

**Chapter Five**  
  
Megan drove back to her condo after walking Five back to the Mailgirls' Locker Room, leaving her to the none-too-tender mercy of Mistress V. Three not-all-out 6ks in the past twenty-four hours shouldn't have done her in, but it was hot and challenging Mistress V on the behalf of One and Five had been tense. She was looking forward to iced tea, a shower, and then collapsing – perhaps not in that order.  
  
While laying on her couch with NPR playing in the background Megan decided to call Brendan. Getting her mind off of naked women would be a good thing. She googled "Howard County Striders" to look at the schedule of local races and saw they were holding a "Meet of Miles" at one of the local high schools – that seemed like a nice, normal topic to call Brendan about. Feeling sufficient re-hydrated she went to her wine refrigerator and pulled out an Albarino, a little Spanish courage would help. Pouring herself a glass, she laid back down and called Brendan.  
  
"Megan, this is a pleasant surprise. How have you been?"  
  
And despite her best intentions she responded, "Getting sucked back into the world of naked women. Oh, my God, did I just say that?"  
  
"Well, I heard 'world of naked women' so if that's what you said..."  
  
"Look, you know that Sarah and I were mailgirls at SG&T, right?"  
  
"I know about Sarah, and I thought you probably were as well. You're certainly attractive enough to be recruited. Neither Sam, nor Sarah, has said anything much about mailgirls and I haven't prodded them. I did some web searches and read the rather bland mission statement from SG&T and of course, there are thousands of photos and videos posted on social media. The scenery at Fort Meade is far less attractive."  
  
"I ran the Corporate Challenge last year two months after putting clothes back on and returning to my job as a financial analyst. The fifth floor is competitive in all things and they want to do well in this year's race, especially since we're hosting it. They've transferred in some men from other locations, but based on my performance last year some bright soul thinks they can field a squad of mailgirls in the women's race. And I've been officially assigned to help coach and select the team.  
  
"Community Relations dropped this on me on Wednesday, Thursday I met with Human Capital – those are the folks who manage the Mailgirls Program – and Friday I returned to the Mailgirls Locker Room to sell this to twenty-four naked women. We ran three 6k trials, one Saturday morning, the other two this morning splitting the women into three heats all of which I paced. This being a Mailgirls activity the last finisher in each trial and the six slowest overall are all promised a beating of which Mistress V administered two following the first and second trials. One woman dnf'd with a sprained ankle and the last finishers in both the first and third trials were obviously suffering some degree of heat exhaustion so I screwed my courage to the sticking point and shepherded those three away from Mistress V to the Med Center. Tomorrow morning Mistress V will deliver six strokes to the asses of the four women who escaped immediate chastisement.  
  
"And I don't know why I'm telling you this except I have to vent to someone."  
  
"Who's Mistress V?"  
  
"She's the direct Mailgirls supervisor. She was a mailgirl that SG&T imported from a German program. She has her own apartment in the basement and wears clothing, but is trapped like the other twenty-four. She makes up the work schedules and cracks the whip and paddle and crop to keep the others in line. Having spent two years under her thumb, I amazed myself when I pried Eight and One and Five away from her to the safety of the Med Center. I nearly wet my pants just thinking of it."  
  
"Why tell me, why not Sam or Sarah or some other friend or family member? And why haven't you followed Sarah's lead and left SG&T?"  
  
"My younger sister Samantha graduated from college last year and promptly signed on as a mailgirl at SG&T. My dad hasn't talked to me since he found out that I was a mailgirl and my mom blames me for Samantha's decision. So, I'm stuck there keeping a sisterly eye on Mailgirl Twenty-two while trying to rebuild my life. And no, I did not encourage her – I was horrified when she was delivered to SG&T two months before the end of my contract.  
  
"I couldn't dump on Sarah or Sam; she's moved on and I'm happy for the both of them. Becoming a mailgirl is a seismic event – my friends from school, college, work in Chicago mostly recoiled in shock, horror, embarrassment and I haven't renewed any of those ties in the past year, none of them are geographically close, anyway. I need to move on, but it's been hard and tossing me back into the Mailgirl Program, even though I'm wearing clothes now, is not what I need."  
  
"Why did you do it? Become a mailgirl, that is."  
  
"I had just transferred from the Chicago office, eager to be part of SG&T's new East Coast headquarters. I was proud of my work in Chicago and saw this as a step up with new challenges. I was right about the new challenges. When I reported in that first day they sent me up to Human Capital where I was offered the choice of a dead end job in Marketing at less than half of what I had been making in Chicago or to be a mailgirl with a slight rise in salary plus a signing bonus and a completion bonus. They told me this was a ninety-day pilot program and there was no guarantee that it would continue on. The completion bonus was only applicable if the program was picked up for the full two years. I would be on call 24/7, but the contract included housing and meals. I was also guaranteed a slot as a financial analyst at the end of my mailgirl contract with another boost in pay. They didn't emphasize the financial penalties for breaching the contract, but I read those carefully and they are punitive. I called my old boss in Chicago and she urged me to take the position – consider it a gap year with a big financial payoff, she said. And so I signed.  
  
"The six of us in the pilot program were flown business class to the West Coast for off-site training at Dumpster Dawg Enterprises. After six weeks of hard physical training to build stamina and non-stop humiliation to beat down any self esteem we were returned air freight and introduced to Mistress V and our living quarters in the basement of the SG&T building. The fitting out of the Mailgirls suite in the basement told us all this was no ninety-day pilot. Then ensued two years of non-stop debasement, cold showers, awful food, minimal intellectual stimulation.  
  
"On the up-side, I paid off my student loans, maxed out my 401K, and upon return to the real world paid cash for my new car and put down a hefty down-payment on my condo. Financially, I've never been better off, well at least until I start paying for the therapy I undoubtedly need."  
  
"How are you doing at work now?"  
  
"Except for this new task my assignments have been challenging and professionally fulfilling. My boss has been nothing but positive and has supported me fully. On the other hand the people that I work with have all seen me running around in the nude, being forced to abase myself in any encounter, and had numerous opportunities to watch me bending over a padded bar to be paddled or caned to work off excess demerits. The new people have all seen photographs and videos of my life as a mailgirl. Many of them believe that I essentially whored myself to get my current position. Spending the next three months working closely with mailgirls will do nothing but reinforce that image. Still I feel that I need to do it to protect those women as much as possible; the ex-mailgirls on staff have a bit of latitude to treat mailgirls with some compassion."  
  
"How many ex-mailgirls still work at SG&T?"  
  
"Eleven women have completed the two year contract, three of us work in Maryland, one transferred to San Francisco, three left SG&T, and four signed on for another two years as a mailgirl. Five more contracts run out two months from now. The original twelve mailgirls were all recruited from the professional ranks at SG&T; the current twenty-four are a mixture of sometime professionals, a few admin types, and a number of women who applied to be mailgirls, including my sister."  
  
"This is a long way from the personnel practices of the Department of Defense."  
  
"And my original reason to call was to ask you about the Meet of Miles on Wednesday. What is it?"  
  
"The Striders mostly put on road races from five to 26 kilometers. At the Meet of Miles they just run a series of mile races on the track, splitting the entries into reasonable size heats based on projected times. It's a more manageable distance in a Maryland summer and gives everyone a chance to run a classic distance."  
  
"Do I enter on-line?"  
  
"Just show up Wednesday and plunk down your $2. We have everything from twelve plus minute milers to a few high school and college types inside 4:30. Only the high schoolers train for the mile so the rest of us are faking it; we can do the distance, but speed kills."  
  
"If I can escape from work Wednesday afternoon, I'll give it a go."  
  
"I hope to see you there."

**Chapter Six**  
  
Megan drove into work early Monday morning. Aside from her mailgirl days the only previous times she'd been at SG&T at this hour was when they worked the night through – doing deals overseas didn't always fit in a 9-5 schedule. She didn't know when Mistress V had scheduled her punishment parade and Megan felt she needed to be there in support of Eight, Five, Eighteen, and Twenty-one. Seven had run fourteen seconds quicker than Twenty-one providing a clear margin between those who escaped the paddle and the to be red-bottomed six.  
  
Megan walked through the glass doors into the upper lobby and stepped to the side while she brought up the Mailgirl App on her Android phone. She only had access to the Mailgirl database from the internal network which was not accessible over the Internet. There were individuals who could access the Mailgirl database by connecting to a VPN – Sarah's Sam had been given an Iphone with that capability after their meeting at the Juniper Resort, but its access had been revoked at the end of Sarah's mailgirl contract. She brought up the daily calendar and saw the punishment was scheduled for 10:30 a.m. in the courtyard off the employee dining room. One, Five, Eight, and Eighteen were indeed on the list and clicking on the thumbnail photos next to each number brought up a photo of the mailgirl crossing the finish line, obviously exhausted and drenched in sweat. The photo of Eight showed her in full limp, being supported by Megan whose shorts and running top were plastered to her body and left little to the imagination. She knew she didn't want to emphasize her association with mailgirls, this whole project was a bad idea for so many reasons.  
  
There were, as always, a number of men having their morning coffee and pastries while sitting at the tables overlooking the lower lobby and the Mailgirl Locker Room. This SG&T coffee shop did much better breakfast business than at any other SG&T location. Megan knew this for a fact since she'd been tasked with reviewing the financials of SG&T's food service programs system-wide: coffee shops, dining rooms, vending machines. SG&T Maryland's vending machines did mediocre business; the coffee shop in the lobby, the employee dining room, the executive dining rooms outperformed all other locations. Part of this was due to the suburban location – there were a vast array of food choices within easy walking distance of both the Chicago and San Francisco sites. Mostly she ascribed it to the floor show, both executives and worker bees ate at a significantly rate on-site than at the other locations and fewer still ate at their desk. Virtually all visiting clients to SG&T Maryland were wined and dined on-site; as a mailgirl Megan, that is Mailgirl Two that was, had delivered countless messages to client luncheons and dinners and spent more than a few evenings serving at soirees when table service replaced the normal cafeteria style presentation. Megan hadn't thought so much about the gallery when she made her first visit to the Mailgirls Locker room on Friday, she could feel their eyes burning into her back as she descended the stairs and entered this morning.  
  
She could see the usual morning prep going on on the other side of the glass walls, mirrored on the inside. They weren't all out yet, some mailgirls were still out of sight in the Mailgirls Lounge or Dormitory. Sinks, showers, toilets, beauty supplies were all in the Locker Room and they had to be properly groomed when Mistress V made her appearance; still some mailgirls preferred to wait as long as possible. Megan never understood that – what's an extra five to ten minutes of exposure in a twelve to fourteen hour day.  
  
"Ladies, what do you want me to take back to Ms Barnes today? They're not going to give up on this scheme, but what can we do to make it better?"  
  
Seventeen, a sultry brunette with a truly outstanding pair of breasts, said, "I need support up here. Twenty-one spent hours Sunday afternoon kissing them better, but longer runs are going to kill me."  
  
There was a general cry of support for more support.  
  
"I'll try to make them understand. Ms Barnes, at least, should appreciate that issue."  
  
Two asked, "Why the whole trials thing? Why not just ask for volunteers and offer some time off for training, or maybe some better food?"  
  
"I can't argue except Management doesn't ask mailgirls anything, mailgirls only obey. Plus, I expect someone is getting his rocks off on the whole coercive aspect of all this and then extra asses to beat..."  
  
Thirteen said, "My contract is up on 19 September and then I'm out of here. So what do I care about a race in October? I understand you ran last year as a regular employee, but I'm on a flight to Miami on the 20th and I am not coming back."  
  
"I will ask that question, but never underestimate the likelihood of Human Capital screwing you over. If you want to make that flight, make sure that you don't make the team. Seven of us have finished out our mailgirl contracts and moved on so they have been willing to honor the two year commitment. There is one mailgirl alumna who is a lawyer and now on the outside so they're will be an advocate if they try to change the rules; still it's Human Capital."  
  
"There were small rocks on the path and along the road. That's not good with bare feet."  
  
"Agreed, and it's not in their interest to get anyone hurt. I will impress upon Ms Barnes that the course needs to be thoroughly swept, but then I have this vision of mailgirl chain gangs with brooms."  
  
Suddenly there was no more noise from the mailgirls and Megan knew that Mistress V had arrived. She turned and said, "Good morning. I was asking how the runs went this weekend in preparation for my meeting with Ms Barnes and Mr Starnes."  
  
She turned back to face the mailgirls and said, "Thank you for your time ladies. I will let you know what happens in today's meeting."  
  
Mistress V hissed, "you do not thank mailgirls, they are here to serve without question."  
  
Megan just looked at her and then exited through the door, not allowing herself to tremble until she was on the other side of the mirrored glass.  
  
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Megan brought up her calendar as soon as she made it to her desk and logged in. She had a pending meeting with Ms Barnes in Human Capital at noon. Well, that meant lunch would be provided, probably delivered via mailgirl. She clicked the accept button, not that she had much choice. Otherwise the day was clear to work on actual financial projects and do real work affecting SG&T's bottom line. She set an alarm on her computer for 10:15 which would give her time to make a cup of tea and then make her way to the employee dining room to witness the four mailgirls being punished.  
  
Deep into reviewing a proposed project seeking SG&T financing and/or investment, Megan was brought up short by her computer insistently buzzing at her. She poured a cupful of water into her kettle and set it to boil, then measured out a spoonful of loose tea into the silver plated caddy and set it in her mug waiting for the water. The dining hall just provided hot water out of an urn – she didn't mind the selection of tea bags, but the water was never hot enough to make proper tea. After giving her tea five minutes to steep, Megan headed for the employees dining room.  
  
There looked to be quite a crowd considering that the grill hadn't even opened. All heads were turned to the courtyard. Eight came darting past Megan, then stopped, uncertain how to get through the crowd to the courtyard. Mailgirls could not ask for anyone to make way for them and any delay in deliveries due to employee clogged aisles or other issues was, of course, not a mitigating circumstance. Megan looked at her and said, "Follow me, Maria."  
  
Megan pushed her way through the crowd of men, feeling Eight right on her heels, and finally made it to the exit door which the mailgirl went through even as her MMU flashed red indicating that she was late for her "delivery." Five, Eighteen, and Twenty-one were on the grass before Mistress V who was holding both paddle and cane. Mistress V looked at Eight and said "Knees" and the mailgirl sank to the ground next to five with knees spread, ankles together, and head lowered.  
  
Mistress V said "Twenty-one" and the mailgirl rose and walked over to what looked like a vaulting horse without the handles and draped herself over it, ass-high.  
  
"Count" and Mistress V crashed the paddle down onto the mailgirl's left ass-cheek.  
  
"One" and the paddle smacked down onto the right ass-cheek followed by "Two."  
  
Mistress V delivered six swats alternating cheeks and then said "Stay.  
  
"Eighteen." The Latino woman gracefully rose to her feet and moved over to the horse, bending over it next to her fellow. Mistress V repeated the punishment and then ordered "Inspection". The two mailgirls rose from the horse and moved to the side where they went up onto their toes and laced their hands behind their heads, displaying their asses to the crowd in the dining room.  
  
"Five." The chunky redhead rose and went to the horse, needing to rise up onto her toes to lean properly over the bar. Mistress V exchanged her paddle for the cane and delivered six quick strokes across the plump behind leaving a pattern of parallel lines on the upturned ass.  
  
Megan could hear someone pronounce with relish, "That must have hurt."  
  
Mistress V gestured, "Eight."  
  
The last mailgirl bent over the horse next to Five and Mistress V added "an extra six for tardiness."  
  
That elicited a murmur of anticipation from the onlookers. Megan felt ill, twelve strokes with the cane by Mistress V was a trial.  
  
Mistress V moved from side to side etching a cross-hatched pattern onto Eight's taut buttocks. Eight started crying out with the ninth stroke, but held position through the end.  
  
Mistress V said "Five minutes." The she gestured to the two mailgirls standing on their tiptoes and said "Back to work." Eighteen and Twenty-one dropped down onto their feet, then swiped their MMUs to indicate they were again available for deliveries and left the courtyard heading for a mat near the service stairs where they would await a summons for their next task.  
  
The crowd in the dining hall started to disperse, some employees going back to their desks, others settling down on seats with a view of the two mailgirls still on display. Megan had started forward when Eight began to cry out, but knew that she couldn't interfere and finally turned and left.  
  
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Twenty-two had just completed a delivery to the fourth floor when her MMU buzzed for her next assignment. She read "Dining room pick-up for Human Capital." Mostly her destinations were given by floor and grid number, but the system listed some locations just by name. The dining room was just one flight down, then into the center. She hoped the order was just for Ms Barnes at her desk rather than a group getting briefed on mailgirls. Carting a large order – not that there was a cart involved – up two flights and to the back end of the building and then there was the whole zoo animal feeling of corporate types observing mailgirls in captivity. It might be okay if it was a petting zoo, but in Human Capital the only petting would be with paddle or crop.

There was a small box labeled "Human Capital" waiting for her when she got to the counter in the Dining Room. Twenty-two then had to wait for one of the women behind the counter to tap her smart phone to confirm the pick-up which started the timer again for the trip back upstairs to Human Capital. The box wasn't heavy, but it did take two hands which would slow her down opening the doors to both enter and exit the service stairs. She also had to take care to carry the box at the proper height as she could be give a demerit by any passing employee if she unnecessarily blocked the view of either her breasts or pussy. That demerit was a given if she was careless within the Human Capital suite.  
  
Twenty-two carried the box up to the front desk in Human Capital and Ms Bradley, one of the admins, told her, "Into Ms Barnes' office, set it up on the table."  
  
Twenty-two put the box down on the small conference table which had three chairs set around it. She recognized the mailgirls' mat on the floor against the wall. When she had stripped down in her first day at SG&T Ms Barnes had her kneel down on that mat and wait to be taken away. Six weeks later after her training at DDE she had been back on the mat, but this time had needed no instruction to assume the proper "Knees" position and had waited with Twenty-one at her side until Mistress V came to take them down to the Mailgirls Locker Room. She wondered if she would be spending some time on that mat today.  
  
She opened the box which contained a selection of sandwiches, a large bag of premium potato chips, a platter and a large bowl for the sandwiches and chips, respectively, three small plates, two metal dog dishes, a can of Mailgirl Chow, and a bottle of water. So, she would be attending the meeting, almost certainly on the mat against the wall. Twenty-two placed the platter and bowl and small plates in the middle of the table, dumping the chips into the bowl and arranging the sandwiches around the platter. She placed the two dog dishes in front of the mailgirls' mat and opening the can let the chow slide into one of the dishes. It was the shredded stuff in gravy – well, that was better than the paté which came out in a lump which left no good way of eating it without utensils or the use of hands, neither of which were authorized for mailgirls. She rinsed out the can with some of the water, pouring it over the shredded stuff, and then poured the rest of the water into the other dish. Human Capital claimed that Mailgirl Chow was a perfectly balanced meal and judging by the generally excellent health of the mailgirls at SG&T, that was probably correct. Balanced yes, healthy yes, but unappetizing and messy to eat. Twenty-two put the empty can and bottle into the box and sat it in the corner, then gracefully dropped onto the mat and waited.  
  
Ms Barnes and the man who had been timing the run on Sunday entered the office together chatting companionably. Ms Barnes said, "Oh, good. Lunch is here. We have coffee in the office or I can send Twenty-two here off to the vending machines for a soft drink."  
  
"Coffee is good."  
  
Ms Barnes walked to her desk and pressed the intercom, "Miss Bradley, can you bring us a coffee – black, I believe –" Mr Starnes nodded, "Yes, black." Ms Barnes opened the small refrigerator behind her desk and pulled out a bottle of water. "Now, we just need our team leader..."  
  
The door opened again and Megan entered, coming up short when she saw her sister kneeling on the mat. She was carrying a mug, tea Twenty-two surmised.  
  
Ms Barnes said, "Shall we all take a seat around the table. Miss Bradley will be bringing in coffee for Mr Starnes. Can I have her get you anything, Megan?"  
  
"No, I'll just stick with my tea."  
  
"Well then, let's get down to business and do grab a sandwich and some chips. How do you think the girls ran this weekend?"  
  
Mr Starnes replied, "The times were respectable, but not exceptional. Still, it was a first effort, none of them are acclimated to the heat and I don't believe any of them saw any need to try and beat Megan. Three and Four both stayed with her and didn't look particularly stressed. This project may actually work."  
  
Megan added, "Overall, they ran better than I expected, especially considering the heat. And that is a consideration. The race is in October and while it could be unseasonably warm, it's likely to be a good deal cooler and we're selecting a team in mid-summer. There may be someone well back in the pack in July who doesn't handle the heat well who might run very well indeed in better running weather."  
  
Mr Starnes nodded, "That's true, but this is the time line that we have and I think having the time to do some specific training will be more important than waiting to make the best possible selection. I don't see either management or the mailgirls looking favorably on having all twenty-four of them taking the time to do the training."  
  
Megan said, "Another thing – most of those women need support for their breasts. I know they walk/run all over the building naked, but those short bursts are different than 35-45 minutes of running. I know there is some soreness today and the only answer for that is support."  
  
Ms Barnes responded, "I realize that and I've made that point to the fifth floor and Mr Dawlish is giving it his personal attention. He's been looking through lingerie catalogs and websites and has ordered a number of samples: open cup bras, balconette bras, some downright fetish wear that look to provide support with a minimum of coverage, and who knows what else. He expects to have a selection on hand for this coming weekend to see what actually works with minimal disruption to the mailgirl uniform."  
  
Mr Starnes chimed in, "My understanding is that he has thrown himself into this aspect of the project."  
  
Megan had nothing to say about this revelation.  
  
Megan continued, "And another question was raised: the race is in October and the contracts of Mailgirls Thirteen through Eighteen will be coming to an end in September. Is there a reason those six women are taking part in these trials?"  
  
Ms Barnes again responded, "We expect some of those girls to stay on at SG&T. Eight of the eleven girls who have already completed their contracts still work for SG&T, four as mailgirls. Based on those numbers we lose only two of the six.  
  
Mr Starnes interjected, "I think the fifth floor has visions of an all mailgirls running squad, present company excepted, but if Fourteen or Fifteen, for example, make the team I can't see dropping them just because they're wearing clothing and back to work as professionals in October."  
  
Ms Barnes said, "We don't have anyone specifically in the pipeline to replace any losses in September, but I've identified some candidates now training at DDE who have running experience. I've also got my contact at DDE looking into mailgirls at other institutions who are on re-assignable contracts and fit the profile. While you will continue to work with the twenty-four girls we have now, there is a possibility that we bring in someone new."  
  
Megan stammered, "How many mailgirls have re-assignable contracts?"  
  
"Our original twelve mailgirls were all in-house hires and were bound to SG&T. Starting with the third cohort we did some direct hires, like Twenty-two here, and all of those girls have re-assignable contracts. We could even trade one of those six mailgirls for a mailgirl that runs; we have nearly three months to pull that off."  
  
Megan blanched, "Oh, my god, that would be inhuman."  
  
"No, it's just business. The trading deadline for major league baseball is coming up and we will see even higher priced talent get shipped across the country though most of them will fly first class.  
  
"When Mistress V makes out the weekend work schedule I'll see the two of you get it and you can divide up the girls again for the next set of runs. Thank you very much, I believe, we've made some progress."  
  
Twenty-two had been kneeling quietly in the corner eating her Mailgirl Chow and mostly using the water dish to try and clean off her face. After lunch she would return to the Mailgirl Locker Room to shower and otherwise clean up for her afternoon duty. She had been keeping an eye on her sister and saw that the mention of re-assignable contracts had floored her. She thought if she got traded elsewhere then Megan wouldn't have the excuse of needing to watch over her to stay at SG&T. It was good that Megan have something new to worry about.  
  
Ms Barnes concluded, "I believe we've made a good start. We'll do another review after the second round of runs this coming weekend."  
  
Megan added, "One of the women mentioned that the course needs to be thoroughly swept. When I step on a bit of gravel in my running shoes I barely notice it; it can be very painful with bare feet and even cause an injury that will stop a runner."  
  
Mr Starnes chimed in, "That's a good point. I'll talk to the landscaping contractor to see what we can do. I'll see you Saturday morning for round two."  
  
Megan and Mr Starnes both stood up and left, Mr Starnes politely bowing Megan out first, leaving Ms Barnes and Twenty-two behind in the office.  
  
"You can box up the remaining sandwiches and chips and take them down to the Mailgirls Lounge for later. Drop the crockery off at the dining room on your way. That will be all."  
  
Twenty-two rose and cleaned off the table, then picked up the two dishes on the floor, and left carrying the box knowing that she would report the meeting to the other mailgirls that evening. She decided that she would talk to Ten first. Ten was a second term mailgirl who had originally be co-opted from Human Resources and in some ways played Mother to the newer, younger mailgirls helping them understand their place at SG&T in a less brutal fashion than Mistress V. Also, as an HR professional, Ten could likely provide a better understanding of re-assignable contracts and trading and recruiting mailgirls. She had undoubtedly read and understood her mailgirl contract better than Twenty-two who had never made it through all the fine print and whereases.  
  
Megan made it back to her desk and then just logged off her computer and locked up. She never left early and often worked long hours, not uncommon behavior in the Investment Group and indeed many of the other divisions, but today she was out of here. My God, 're-assignable contracts' and while Ms Barnes didn't mention it the folks in Human Capital had been assigned Power of Attorney for each of the mailgirls under the terms of their contracts and Megan guessed that they could just unilaterally extend a mailgirl contract. She would have to talk to Sarah about that thought; Sarah was an attorney.  
  
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Megan called Sarah as soon as she got home and got voicemail as Sarah hadn't left work early. "Sarah, this is Megan. Please call me this evening, the subject is mailgirls." Then she did what she always did when faced with an intractable problem, she changed into running attire and went over to the fitness center and ran.  
  
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Twenty-two dropped off the dishes at the dining room and then made a fleeting visit to the Mailgirls Lounge to drop of the box of leftovers, not that a few sandwiches and a half bag of chips would go far between twenty-four mailgirls. From there it was out to the Locker Room where she showered and tidied herself up for her afternoon shift, playing to the unseen crowd behind the mirrored walls. It really was more fun with a partner. Twenty-two wasn't a lesbian, but she did enjoy teasing her audience whether she could see them or not. If she didn't cross paths with Ten sometime during her shift she would talk to her in the Lounge in the evening assuming neither was selected for late night duties.  
  
It was just past five and Twenty-two was kneeling on the mat by the receptionist for Branch Services when another mailgirl dropped into position next to her. "I hear that you're looking for me" Ten said pitching her voice to be barely audible even to Twenty-two just at her side. Mailgirls were not permitted to initiate conversations while on duty, well except to request an escort to the restroom.  
  
"I was in Ms Barnes' office when they talked about the running. When Megan asked about the mailgirls whose contracts would be up in September, Ms Barnes said they have been inquiring at DDE about mailgirls with a running background who had re-assignable contracts and raised the possibility of a trade just like they do in baseball. She said six of our mailgirls, including me, have re-assignable contracts and could be traded for a runner."  
  
"Well, you might want to run a little faster next weekend. Before lights out you can fill us in on the rest of the meeting and I'll see if anyone in HR will talk about mailgirl trades."  
  
Twenty-two's MMU chimed, alerting her to a new delivery, and she dashed off with a quick "Thank you" to Ten.  
  
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Megan was warming up left-over Chinese when Sarah returned her call. "You want to talk about mailgirls, I'd hoped it was Brendan."  
  
"I'll get to him, but first it's mailgirls and my sister."  
  
"What's she done now?"  
  
"It's all to do with the Corporate Challenge. We ran the first set of trials this past weekend and they did much better than I expected. Factor in the heat and the times look even better, especially since you know none of them was really interested in pushing themselves – what would it gain them. We had half a dozen run 6k inside 23:30 – that may mean something to your Sam – which projects to about a 40 minute 10k which may even mean something to you. I wound up taking three of them down to Susan Allen in the Med Center: one sprained ankle and two for heat exhaustion.  
  
"Today, we met to review where we stand. I pointed out that running naked is one thing, but most of those women really could use a running bra. Ms Barnes agreed and said that Mr Dawlish has been pouring over lingerie catalogs looking for something that provides support without concealment – even she seemed to regard his interest as on the pervy side. She said he's express ordered some samples that should be here in time the trials this weekend. Oh, and the course runs into the parkland on the edge of the parking lot and picks up the road that comes into the back end of campus. We startled a few drivers each time past and brought a whole line of bicycles to a halt on the third run. Security is providing a trailing car to keep an eye on things."  
  
Sarah giggled at the bicycles. "So, what's the problem? we always knew the fifth floor had a salacious interest in mailgirls."  
  
"Well, I also pointed out that there are a half dozen mailgirl contracts expiring between now and the race. Ms Barnes responded that they've been talking to DDE about replacements with a running background and then mentioned re-assignable contracts. There are also half a dozen mailgirls including my Sam that could be traded for a mailgirl with a track background. Also, since SG&T holds power of attorney for the mailgirls couldn't they just unilaterally extend someone's contract? Ms Barnes didn't mention that possibility."  
  
"I don't think they'd want to do that. That could definitely spark a law suit and would not play well in public. I could see them offering a one month extension with an additional bonus if there was someone they particularly wanted to keep. Were there any in that group that stood out?"  
  
"Both Fourteen and Fifteen ran sub 23:30 – you remember Fourteen, the ex-wife of a lawyer?"  
  
"Good for her. She could use something to boost her self image. And what about your Sam?"  
  
"She ran 23:26 and was running faster before she realized that she wanted to finish in the middle of the pack. Ms Barnes had her kneeling on the mat during the race review today so she heard about re-assignable contracts. Ms Barnes likened it to trading baseball players."  
  
"Will you follow Sam if Ms Barnes ships her off?"  
  
"I think Ms Barnes was just trying to keep me in line. I was surprised she didn't dress me down for taking the three women to the Med Center, but she didn't say a word about that."  
  
"Every now and then she does something that makes me believe she might care about mailgirls as people; she did well by Sam and me. You're the only one who got hurt in the whole Holiday gig and that was the crazy lady at the Juniper Resort."  
  
"I seem to attract them. It turns out that Mr Starne's ex-wife was my boss in Chicago and he strongly implied that she shipped me to Maryland with malice aforethought."  
  
"And what about Brendan?"  
  
"I called him Sunday and just unloaded on him, not at him, I just freaked out to him about the whole mailgirl thing. Then I told him that I'd meet up with him at a Howard County race on Wednesday and we left it there."  
  
"You go, girl. Don't run too fast."  
  
\* \* \* \* \*  
  
It was a typical Monday. Twenty-two had just made a delivery to the fifth floor when her MMU chimed to let her know that she was off duty. Her MMU started counting down from three minutes – while she was off the clock, so to speak, she still had to make it to the Mailgirl Locker Room within the specified time to avoid racking up yet another demerit. She'd been on duty for just shy of twelve hours, eight hours at minimum wage, three hours at time and a half. Lunch and dinner from a dish on the floor in the employee dining room and her post-lunch shower and grooming were considered personal time and not paid. She made it to the Locker Room with twenty-three seconds to spare, there being less human traffic to dodge in the evening, and took her third shower of the day, skipping the show for the unseen watchers at this hour. She did give a last wave before disappearing into the Mailgirls Lounge.  
  
The Lounge was unique in the mailgirls world in that it was behind a wall and out of sight. There were surveillance cameras that covered the entire space, but only the folks in Security had access to the video feed and everybody knew the nerds in IT had hacked into it. Unless there were visitors the mailgirls could behave pretty much normally for worlds that consisted of twenty-four naked women and no furniture. They could even pick up food with their hands while eating.  
  
The was one piece of furniture in the Lounge – a low spanking bench complete with leather straps for when Mistress V didn't bother to haul a recalcitrant mailgirl out to the Locker Room for punishment. Mailgirls were not allowed to sit or lie on it unless it was being used for its intended purpose. Twenty-two had been strapped to it more than once when a quorum of mailgirls decided that she had misbehaved. It was also an SG&T tradition that a new girl spent her first night strapped to the bench while the rest of the mailgirls had their way with her until lights out and then lay covered in her own and others juices until morning. This practice dated back to the hiring of the third group of mailgirls – the four mailgirls that had renewed their contracts had also been welcomed back into the fold. Ms Barnes visit to the Lounge to announce to the mailgirls that there would be no recriminations for their appropriate use of the spanking bench due to heartfelt pleas from both Security and IT had occurred before Twenty-two's first day; she was told the story while strapped to the bench for her initiation.  
  
Two walls comprised the Mailgirls Dormitory, thirty 4' x 4' niches, each 5' deep and covered by metal grilles that locked into place at lights out. There were a half dozen networked computers that allowed mailgirls restricted access to the outside world, all set on low pedestals since the mailgirls sat in front of the monitors in lotus position. There was an emergency exit door which opened to a tunnel that popped out in the parking lot – the mailgirls were familiar with that exit since the local fire department insisted on quarterly unannounced fire drills and emergency evacuations which were monitored by that local fire department. The mailgirls were always impressed by the number of firefighters on hand to watch twenty-four naked women emerging from that tunnel when the fire alarm was sounded, invariably in the middle of the night.

Twenty-two entered the Lounge and saw that most of the mailgirls were present. Ten saw her and gave a loud whistle to get everyone's attention. "Twenty-two has an update on the running."  
  
"I made a lunch run to Human Capital today where Ms Barnes, my sister, and the suit that timed us yesterday met about the running project. Both Megan and Mr Starnes said they were impressed with the results. Megan did raise the problem of bouncing boobs and Ms Barnes said that Mr Dawlish had taken that on as his personal project and was ordering samples from various catalogs which sounded as pervy then as it does now. When asked about the mailgirls whose contracts are up between now and October, Ms Barnes said she expected some of those mailgirls to stay at SG&T. Plus she has talked to DDE about hiring some mailgirls with a running background. She has also talked to DDE about mailgirls at other firms with re-assignable contracts that they might be able to trade for, mentioning that there are six of us that could be traded."  
  
Ten chimed in, "I've got some friends in HR quietly checking into mailgirl trading. I'm sure that anyone shipped elsewhere would still have their contract honored as to duration and the financial arrangements, but programs do differ in how we are treated and that's in a gray area. And if it's ambiguous, it won't be to our advantage."  
  
Fourteen mused, "My contract is up in September, but that will be too late for me to start classes in the fall semester and I haven't made any decision as to what I'll be doing until the next semester starts in February."  
  
"I walk the day my contract expires," said Seventeen.  
  
Twenty-three said, "Maybe it's the Mailgirls Abroad program for me – do they have mailgirls in Kenya?"  
  
Nineteen put in, "I'm holding out for England."  
  
"We're mailgirls, we just do what we're told. It's more likely that any trade would be to the West Coast since that's where most of the US programs are located, but it won't be our choice. We've heard from Fourteen and Seventeen, how about the other four of you – anyone planning to re-up?"  
  
Thirteen shook her head; Fifteen said, "I've been promised a lead analyst position in Chicago;" Sixteen looked down and whispered, "I don't know."  
  
Eighteen's mouth dropped open. "are you crazy?"  
  
"Maybe. But Marketing isn't calling to me and I just don't know where I want to be. Ten, what is going to happen; does Human Capital email us a new contract offer?"  
  
"I got summoned to Human Capital about a month before my contract was up and met with Ms Barnes and my old boss from HR. We had a career development session – with me on my knees, of course. I had been so looking forward to the end of my contract; and then I signed up again. I'm still not sure why. I do know being a mailgirl is like being a professional athlete – it's a short career and then you're dropped into the real world. I just wasn't ready to return, so I panicked and went with the week's holiday, the re-signing bonus, and another two years of naked."

**Chapter Seven**  
  
Megan was back to her usual extended day on Tuesday, but got herself out the door nearly on time Wednesday. She carried her running bag into the office that morning knowing that it would be more efficient to change at work and drive straight to the race. She knew she could change in the locker room at the Fitness Center at the end of the day. Then she found herself rushing through the research on her current financial project and realized that changing at work wasn't going to happen. She still wasn't ready to strip down again at SG&T even in the safety of the women's locker room. Megan logged out of her workstation, locked up her desk, and headed out carrying her running bag.  
  
A quick stop at her condo later, she was back onto Rt 29 mired in its usual rush hour crawl. She thought she'd left herself plenty of time, but with the traffic. Well, maybe it would be better to arrive just in time to sign up and run and skip all the pre-race socializing. She was an attractive, unattached woman and would almost certainly draw attention from the unattached men at the race. Meeting up with Brendan would just bring his friends over to check her out. Maybe she should just stop at a KFC or Panera's and pick up carryout.  
  
She was concentrating on her GPS, trying to negotiate the maze of Columbia's streets when her phone rang. She tapped the button on the dash to answer and Brendan said, "Megan, are you coming to the Meet of Miles today?"  
  
"My GPS says I'm just a ¼ mile and four turns away."  
  
"Great, I'll meet you in the parking lot."  
  
Megan turned into the high school parking lot and saw Brendan standing under a tree. She was surprised to realize how happy she was to see him there. She parked and walked over to join him. Brendan reached out and drew her into a hug, Megan stiffened, then relaxed and enjoyed the contact. "So, where do I sign up?"  
  
Brendan led her through a crowd of people, not a bare breast or naked ass in sight, but plenty of skin on display with many men opting to go shirtless and women wearing crop tops. Megan was wearing a sleeveless top with no mid-rift gap. "If you want to run in a pack sign up for the the heat that you figure you belong in; if you want to win sign up for the next slower heat. You wouldn't be alone."  
  
Megan looked at the sign-up sheets on the table and put her name down on "sub 6 minutes".  
  
Brendan said, "Planning to impress the locals, are you?"  
  
"I ran three 6ks over the weekend in just over 23 minutes each which works out to 6:15 mile pace if I have my math right, so I ought to be able to duck inside six for a single mile. It's been a few years since I stepped on a track so we see how it goes. Shall we jog a bit to warm up?"  
  
"They'll run the races fast to slow and the sub-five heat will go off in about fifteen minutes and then it will be you. I'm signed up for the fast heat where I'll get dusted by the high school and college hot shots, so I'll cheer you on if I'm not laid out on the track after I run."  
  
Megan and Brendan ran an easy couple of laps around the track, weaving their way through slower runners. Then it was time for the first race.  
  
Brendan and about fifteen others, including two women, lined up along an arc about ten yards from the finish line, well 9.3 meters if Megan remembered the conversion correctly. As Brendan predicted a couple of young men dashed out into the lead with the rest of the field strung out behind them. An older man looking at his wrist called out "sixty-one, sixty-two" as they led through the first lap. Brendan came through at "sixty-nine" just in front of the first woman. The two youngsters led through the second lap "two eleven" with Brendan still leading the first woman. A slightly older man, probably a college runner Megan thought, moved into the lead just before the final lap "three twenty-four" and Brendan had pulled ahead of the first woman who had been caught by the other woman in the race. The college boy finished in "four thirty-two", Brendan was back in the pack at "four forty-seven", and the first woman came across in "four fifty-four."  
  
"You looked good Brendan, how do you feel?"  
  
"Gutted at the moment" he grunted. "But, it will wear off. They'll be calling you to the line in another few minutes. Good luck."  
  
Megan's heat was larger than the first, but still only with two women. She avoided the jostling to get onto the front line and stood patiently behind. When the starter cried "Go" everyone sprang forward and Megan went with them running a bit extra on the outside, but avoiding the even more active jostling in lane one. She moved up easily on the back straight before tucking into the inside heading into the second turn trailing a half-dozen men and boys. She heard "seventy-eight" as she crossed the finish line for the first time. She heard Brendan cheering "Looking good, Megan" as she started down the back straight again. She was fourth when she finished lap two to "two thirty-five." It felt good to stride out fully and she flashed past Brendan again as she moved into third. Megan was in second with a lap to go "three fifty-four." She launched into a full sprint coming out of the final curve, but couldn't close on the leader. The timer called out "five o-one" and then "five o-seven" as Megan crossed the line.  
  
Brendan caught her two steps past the finish, "Let's keep walking. We'll go over and get a cup of water. Good job."  
  
Megan grimaced, "Just call me Number Two." and then giggled. "Sarah was Mailgirl Five and I was "Mailgirl Two. I still think of myself as Two as times. I was Megan for my first twenty plus years, but I was Two for a very intense two years."  
  
Brendan walked her over to the water jugs while a number of other runners called out, "Great run ... terrific race ... looked really good." Brendan introduced her to a number of the other runners while the other races were going on and Megan wound up jogging easy laps of the adjoining field with the two women from the first race as a cool-down. She begged off an invite to join some of the others at Clydes, gave Brendan a quick kiss on the cheek, and made her way out to her car and then home. Maybe next time she would stay and socialize.  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
Twenty-two got summoned to the Fifth Floor late Thursday afternoon. She met up with One, Eleven, and Seventeen heading in the same direction. Eleven looked at the other three and whispered, "Any bets that we're going model bras for Dawlish? Do you think this will be a private showing or will there be a quorum of pervs?"  
  
Mr Dawlish's secretary, a no-nonsense woman in her 50s, looked up as the quartet of mailgirls approached. "He's ready for you."  
  
Seventeen opened the door and the mailgirls filed in to find Mr Dawlish seated behind his desk puffing on a cigar with Megan and Mr Starnes seated before him.  
  
"Took you four long enough. Okay, who's 38D."  
  
"Mailgirl One's measurement is 38D, sir."  
  
"Well, come over here and let me fit you with this bra. I don't see why you need it, you've been running around this building without one for the last two years."  
  
Megan interjected, "As busy as we keep mailgirls, sir, they're rarely in motion for more than eight to nine minutes at a stretch and often that is at a walking pace. That's far difference than running steadily for forty minutes or more."  
  
"I thought these were supposed to be fast women, why else are we doing this?"  
  
Mr Starnes chimed in, "Forty minutes is a respectable time for a woman to run 10k and in training for the race they will be running farther and slower, but still at a pace that will lead to uncomfortable bouncing around. Large breasts are considered an attribute for mailgirls, we don't have waif-like models running the halls."  
  
Mr Dawlish picked up what looked like a handful of green straps and shook them out. "The catalog says this is a cage bra."  
  
One reached out to take the bra from him, but he said "No, I'll put it on you and then adjust it as necessary. Put your arms through the straps. Now turn around and I'll fasten the clasp." There were straps nestling under her breasts, with other straps radiating out from her nipples, the whole effect framing, not covering her breasts. "Now turn again and let me get these straps settled properly." Mr Dawlish was tugging the straps across One's breasts, getting plenty of hand on breast action. "Okay, you can take your position. Knees."  
  
Megan thought the bra was very attractive, in an up-market tart style – she wasn't sure how much support it would provide while running.  
  
"36C."  
  
"Mailgirl Twenty-two's measurement is 36C, sir." Twenty-two stood up and walked to Mr Dawlish.  
  
"This is an open cup bra, it might work for you flatter girls."  
  
Twenty-two's breasts were framed by the frilly straps, with nothing at all covering the breasts. Megan couldn't see the point of this bra at all.  
  
"Forty DD." This was Eleven, she got a "Fran Bra" which was the open cup bra plus sheer fabric stretched in a diagonal across the outer half of Eleven's breasts bisecting her aureoles. This looked most promising to Megan.  
  
"Forty G." Seventeen got an out and out piece of fetish lingerie, Mr Dawlish called it a "Bondage Bra." Heavy leather straps came over her shoulders and cinched the base of her breasts. Her nipples were covered by a leather disk that attached to the circling strap with thin cords. Megan decided it would certainly provide support, but looked uncomfortable from the get-go and when that leather became soaked with sweat, she thought Seventeen's focus would be on her breasts and not her running.  
  
Then Mr Dawlish said "Thirty-four B" and looked at Megan.  
  
"Sir, I am not a mailgirl. I will be running in normal athletic kit with a sports bra underneath."  
  
"Well, I won't force the issue now, but take this bra and report back on how well it works for you." He held out a small handful of light blue fabric and Megan reluctantly took it from him.  
  
"Now, we're all going to the Fitness Center where you girls can run on the treadmills and we'll see how well the bras work for you. Go, go."  
  
The four mailgirls rose and headed out the door for the service stairs and the Fitness Center on the first floor. Megan walked out to the elevator with Mr Dawlish and Mr Starnes. Normally she used the stairs, but she needed to distance herself from the mailgirls with Dawlish. She detoured past her desk to drop off the bra and then caught up with the men at the Fitness Center.  
  
"Oh, that should be worth a bundle of demerits." Megan recognized an obnoxious trader from the fourth floor.  
  
"Mailgirl Number One was directed to wear this bra by Mr Dawlish as part of the team selection for the Corporate Challenge."  
  
"You're all still out of uniform and I'm assessing you each demerits for that. You don't have to take them off yet, but the demerits stand."  
  
"Mailgirl Seventeen apologizes for being out of uniform and thanks you for your concern."  
  
The trader tapped furiously at his smartphone and each of the mailgirl's MMUs pinged with each demerit.  
  
Mr Dawlish broke in, "Okay, girls onto the treadmills and let's see how those titties bounce."  
  
One and Twenty-two's breast bounced pretty unrestrained – all of the men paying close attention to the action. The "Fran Bra" did a better job of controlling Eleven's 40 DDS; Megan thought that bra might prove reasonably helpful for the less well endowed. Seventeen drew the most attention with her large breasts being held by the Bondage Bra; Megan predicted that it would chafe more and more as the leather absorbed the sweat from Seventeen. For a short run on the treadmill in the air conditioned Fitness Center it might work out, but 8 kilometers in the summer heat this weekend would be another story.  
  
Mr Dawlish asked, "How long should we have them run?"  
  
Mr Starnes responded, "At least twenty minutes" and Megan nodded.  
  
"Well, I guess we'll just enjoy the floor show."  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
"Is there a method as to whether you freak out to me or Brendan?"  
  
"Bitching about Dawlish's pervy bra choices is definitely a wail to Sarah. He called four mailgirls up to his office at the end of the day, plus Mr Starnes and me. He then proceeded to fit sample bras onto the mailgirls, plenty of Dawlish hand to mailgirl breast contact. The first two bras were open cup, the green number he wrapped around One was quite attractive in a boudoir setting – I'm not sure how much support it gave. Both One and Twenty-two bounced freely while running on the treadmill testing out the bra. Eleven got an nearly as attractive sheer bra that covered the outer half of her breasts and did provide some measure of control. Seventeen, she of the 40 G bust, got a leather bra straight out of a bondage flick which looked to provide considerable support, but I expected that it chafed something awful and would be much worse as the leather straps soaked up her sweat. Then there was the bra that he handed me."  
  
"What? Did you tell him that you're not a mailgirl?"  
  
"Yes, and he said that he wouldn't force the issue at this time."  
  
"I think it's time you started floating your resume. You need to be out of there."  
  
"Well, it is a truly lovely bra. It covers the middle third of my breast and actually does provide enough support for me – I ran for thirty minutes on the treadmill downstairs to check it out. It doesn't have quite the wow factor of the green bra that One tested, but either would be good if I did get serious about Brendan or someone else.  
  
"I'll check in with the four mailgirls tomorrow morning to get their reports on bra testing. I'm interested to see in what they're wearing this weekend."  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
Megan could have gone in early to catch the mailgirls in the Mailgirls' Locker Room, but decided that she could just call them in via the Mailgirl App. Normally an analyst at her level wasn't gifted with the chits needed to require special services beyond such mundane matters as expedited delivery. Her allotment had been bumped up after being assigned to this project so she could request a specific mailgirl report to her. She also pulled up the lineups for this weekend's heats. Eleven was running Saturday morning, the other three bra testers were in the first heat on Sunday. Megan reserved a small conference room for noon and ordered a sandwich platter and bottled water and four mailgirls.  
  
Mr Bratz stopped by her desk and asked, "Do I need to be brought in on why you've reserved a conference room today?"  
  
"No, it's nothing to do with my real job. It has to do with the Mailgirls Running Team project so I'll be talking to four of the mailgirls about Mr Dawlish's new idea."  
  
"I'm sure I don't want to know, but you and four mailgirls is liable to cause some speculation. You might want to leave the door open."  
  
"I'm planning on a closed door meeting, but for confidentiality, not carnal reasons."  
  
"You do good work Megan. I'm glad to have you back on my team. Just let me know if you need anything."  
  
"Thank you, sir."  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
Megan had just shoved the conference table to the side of the room when Seventeen arrived carrying a box from the dining hall.  
  
"You can just put the box down and then put the platter and water on the table. I've also called for One, Eleven, and Twenty-two. We'll shut the door when they all get here. It will just be the five of us."  
  
"You're quite hungry today."  
  
"Keep it up and I'll order a can of Mailgirl Chow and a bowl just for you."  
  
"Mailgirl Seventeen would like to know how your bra worked for you while running."  
  
"It did an adequate job of controlling my bouncing breasts, but I doubt that it would be up to managing yours or Eleven's."  
  
"I think old Dawlish would have liked to have you on the treadmills along with the rest of us, in correct mailgirl uniform, of course."  
  
"In his dreams and I'm planning to keep that scenario just in his dreams."  
  
One and Eleven arrived and Megan said, "Now we're just waiting for Twenty-two. Another demerit for her."  
  
When Twenty-two, still Samantha in Megan's mind, came through the door, Megan told her to close it and then told Seventeen to pass out sandwiches and water. "You can eat and drink normally, but I'm afraid my flouting of protocol doesn't extend to telling you that you can sit on the table or chairs. But, sit however you wish to and tell me how the great bra testing went."  
  
One said, "Great looking bra, no support whatsoever."  
  
"I told Sarah, Five that was, that I could see wearing that bra for seduction, but running, no."  
  
Twenty-two chimed in, "The open cup number that Mr Dawlish gave me didn't do the job aesthetically or athletically."  
  
Eleven reported, "The bra I wore might have done a decent job for you flat-chested types. My nipples kept rubbing against the fabric which made it hard to focus on the running until they rubbed enough to go from horniness to some abrasion."

Megan said, "The normal fix for that is Vaseline; even some men grease up their nipples for marathons to keep them from running against their singlets."  
  
"The bondage number Dawlish wished on me worked quite well actually, except that nipple shield rubbed as well." added Seventeen. "Dawlish called me up to his office this morning and handed that bra back to me, but with a hole cut in the middle of the nipple shield and then walked me down to the fitness center and had me run another thirty minutes on the treadmill. He told Ms Barnes he had his eye on another bra as well which he thought might also work with suitable alternations."  
  
Megan responded, "I still think a longer run in the heat could make the leather uncomfortably stiff and cause significant chafing. Keep reporting on how well these bras work for you and I'll keep reminding Dawlish that this project is about winning the Corporate Challenge 10k, not getting his rocks off."

**Chapter Eight**  
  
Megan was back to SG&T by 6:30 Saturday morning, ready to run. There were many more cars in the parking lot than there had been the previous weekend. It seemed the running of the mailgirls was worth getting up for. There were a couple of tables set up near the finish line and a few men filling cups of water at placing them on the tables. Mr Starnes was standing by the tables and Megan saw Tad with his bike off to the side. Megan walked over to talk to Starnes.  
  
He looked at her appreciatively and asked, "Are you wearing Dawlish's bra?"  
  
She flushed and responded, "Yes.  
  
"My suggestion is that we run the 1k loop twice to start and then run the 3k loop twice to finish up the 8k. If we alternated we could have lapping on the second 1k loop. Based on last week's times that's an unlikely scenario, but there's no compelling reason not to run it that way."  
  
"Makes sense to me. We have an impressive number of spectators for a time trial. The race in October will be the most watched road race in the state."  
  
"I'm going in to get the women. They should be out here by quarter of to acclimate a bit and make sure that they're properly hydrated."  
  
Megan entered the SG&T building then down the stairs from which she could see mailgirls milling around. There was a larger collection of men in the upstairs lobby than usual for a weekend morning. Most men normally opted for a lie in on Saturday since they'd already had five chances to watch the floor show that week. Megan could separate out her eight runners from the eight mailgirls preparing for the Saturday morning shift. The runners were applying sunscreen to themselves and each other, some of them clearly playing to the spectators above. A thorough coating of their breasts made sense, but really they needed to pay more attention to their faces and arms rather than lavishing care on their inner thighs. Nine was doing a conscientious job of applying protection to Six's upthrust buttocks.  
  
Mistress V met Megan at the door. "Here, you can give this to Mailgirl Eleven when she gets outside. No clothing is permitted in the building." Her demeanor clearly showed that she didn't approve of clothing for mailgirls outside the building either. "Let's go girls. I will meet you at the finish." She didn't add 'paddle in hand', but the subtext was clear.  
  
Mailgirls Three, Six, Nine, Eleven, Fifteen, Nineteen, Twenty-one, and Twenty-four filed out of the locker room, up the stairs, and through the lobby to the outside doors. Megan reminded them to drink some water before the run and to grab a cup or two mid-race.  
  
The nine women emerged into the bright sunshine, slowing as they saw the crowd of men turned in their direction. Megan handed Eleven her bra, the other seven would run again without support. Eleven made a show of putting on the garment, then adjusting her breasts within the half cups. Megan had returned to the Investment Group before Eleven made her debut as a mailgirl, but Megan could remember the shy, forever blushing petite Asian with the incongruously large bust – that girl was long gone now.  
  
Men were crowding around the mailgirls offering them cups of water. It seemed to Megan there was a different tone to the interaction than the taunting, overbearing, abusive treatment of the mailgirls in the workplace. None of the mailgirls was assuming any of the positions – 'Knees', 'Feet', 'Toes' – that they were forced to in the offices and corridors of SG&T.  
  
Mr Starnes called out "Five Minutes." and Megan shook herself back into race mode.  
  
"Ladies, listen up. We're running eight kilometers today, that's about fifty yards less than five miles. We'll run two laps around the parking lots following the yellow line, then finish with the two laps we ran last week – that's the blue line. You'll have an opportunity to take water every time we complete a lap – drink it or dump it over your head."  
  
Mr Starnes called the mailgirls to the starting line and then it was "Ready, steady, go."  
  
Megan following Tad on his bike and led the parade of naked women twice around the parking lot urged on by a cheering throng. She grabbed a cup of water and took a sip before splashing it onto the back of her neck. Then it was out of the parking lot onto the trail through the trees. Turning left onto the road she noted a patrol car off to her right, lights flashing and a policeman standing by it watching the women run by. The patrol car at the end of the stretch of road was a state police car, that officer gazed at them from under his wide brimmed hat behind the the inevitable mirrored sunglasses. Three was striding just on Megan's shoulder with Fifteen just a few steps back.  
  
As she approached the water table one man stepped out and splashed a cup of water onto her front. Three was likewise heralded. The two women still grabbed cups off the table and sipped from them as they ran.  
  
Three pushed the pace through the trees and onto the road. This lap there were several cars pulled off to the side with men standing beside the vehicles. Some were holding up their cell phones, likely videoing the women running past. Three opened up her stride heading back towards the SG&T building and the finish, triggering Megan's competitive fire and she threw in a finishing kick crossing the line as Mr Starnes cried "Thirty fifty-eight." She heard "Thirty-one o-one" to signal Three's arrival. Megan reached out and drew the staggering mailgirl into a hug to appreciative whistles from the spectators.  
  
Fifteen was another dozen seconds back with the rest of the mailgirls well strung out. This race was not only longer than the previous weekend, but Three had pushed Megan to a quicker pace. Fifteen was sitting on the curb trying to catch her breath with a trio of young men holding cups standing around her.  
  
Twenty-one had straggled in last to be met at the finish line by Mistress V. "Ankles." The tall blonde, formerly a colleague of Jeremy's in Community Relations, wearily bent over and grabbed her ankles presenting her ass to Mistress V's paddle.  
  
"One...Two...Three...Four...Five...Six...thank you, Mistress." and then fell to her knees.  
  
Megan and Tad moved over to the punished mailgirl. "Are you okay?"  
  
"I can't stand."  
  
"Well, you can't stay here, kneeling on the asphalt. That's going to get very bad. Tad, go get a couple of cups of water."  
  
The young man came back quickly with two cups of water. "Okay, hold one up to her lips and let her drink. Once we get some liquid in her, you and I will help her up.  
  
"Three, come over here."  
  
The slim brunette walked away from the cluster of men around her and came over to where Megan was standing over Twenty-one. Megan reached up to Three's MMU and keyed in a destination. "Okay, you're off to the Med Center, bring back a chair for Twenty-one; then we'll roll her down to get looked over."  
  
Three dashed away and Megan looked at Tad, "You're going to help me put her in the chair and then wheel her to the Med Center.  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
"Tad and I took Twenty-one down to the Med Center, but Susan wasn't on duty this weekend so her reception there wasn't great. The nurse on duty checked her vitals, decided she wasn't critical and was ready to send her to the Mailgirls' Locker Room. I bitched about it, so she had Tad fill a bowl with water and put it down on the floor and directed Twenty-one to lap it up. She then had Tad lay out a couple of mailgirl mats on the floor and told Twenty-one to lay quietly, telling me that she'd keep her under observation for an hour or two. She all but pushed Tad and me out the door. I'll check on Twenty-one in the morning.  
  
"On a lighter note, Tad was thrilled with so much direct contact with a naked woman; I'm sure it made his day."  
  
Sarah gurgled, "And how did the race go?"  
  
"Three really pushed the pace, I never realized she was so competitive. What with her taking off and the longer distance we were really strung out on the final lap. Fifteen wasn't far back, but there was a sizable gap back to Nineteen and then three girls came in together with Twenty-four and Twenty-one well back."  
  
"Well, Three did come out of Marketing, you've got to be competitive to do well there. And given the choice between Mailgirls and Marketing, I could see sticking with being a mailgirl. There's not much of a future in either and being a mailgirl might be more honest and probably pays better at SG&T. How did the great bra experiment go?"  
  
"Eleven was the only one of the four who ran this morning and I didn't take time to get a report from her. The other three run tomorrow, so I'll get the complete story then."  
  
"Did you wear your Mailgirls' Bra?"  
  
Megan flushed. "Yes, and it didn't do a bad job supporting my boobs, but I can tell you I wouldn't whip off my top ala Brandy Chastain wearing that bra except maybe in the bedroom with a guy I wanted to seduce. It's thin enough that it should dry fine by tomorrow's first run."  
  
"Well good luck. Sam and I are sleeping in – he's not racing this weekend, so we can enjoy a leisurely brunch like normal people."  
  
\* \* \* \*  
  
Six-thirty Sunday morning Megan was back at SG&T descending the stairs to the Mailgirls' Locker Room. The crowd outside was even bigger than it had been the day before. The young professional, bar-hopping male staff of SG&T had been telling friends about running mailgirls and the SG&T parking lot looked like outside of Soldier Field before a Bears game except with a notable lack of female fans. Megan was predicting food trucks for the third weekend.  
  
Four and Samantha were stretching on the other side of the mirrored glass walls. Twelve was at the water bowl, Ten was kneeling next to Twenty-three. Mistress V was stalking about, crop in hand. The four mailgirls on the Sunday morning shift were in the midst of their grooming routine. From the comments Megan overheard as she passed through the lobby there was a sizable portion of non-SG&T employees patronizing the coffee shop and enjoying the floor show. She had also heard the whispers of SG&T employees as she passed through outing her as an ex-mailgirl to their friends. Megan kept her head high and looked straight ahead as she made her way to the locker room.  
  
Mistress V met her at the door and pointed to the small pile of fabric sitting on one end of the near spanking bench. "You'll take those out just as you did yesterday. Don't forget to retrieve them as soon as the run concludes. I'll bring the second group out in time to see the first eight finish, none of them will be out of uniform."  
  
"Okay, ladies the run begins in twenty-five minutes. We can go out now or wait for another five to ten minutes."  
  
Mistress V hissed, "Mailgirls do not decide what to do; they leave now."  
  
Megan sighed and picked up the garments from the bench, noting the alteration to Seventeen's bondage bra. "Out the door and up the steps, ladies. One, Seventeen, Twenty-two, you'll stop on the steps outside the entrance to put on your bras. Let's go."  
  
Four led the way, followed by Twenty-three, Ten, Five, Twelve, Megan, One, Seventeen, and Samantha. There was cheering from the lobby above, Megan bet herself that that was the non-SG&T contingent. The nine women walked through the lobby and then piled up in front of the front doors as Four stopped short at the sight of the crowd in the parking lot. "OMG."  
  
Megan responded, "That's one way to describe it. Let's go outside, ladies. We have a race to run." She led the way outside. "Everybody not getting fitted for a bra go find the water table and make sure you've had enough to drink, Twenty-two and Seven, here are your garments, help each other put them on. Eleven, I'll help you."  
  
Eleven settled the straps over her shoulders and adjusted the fit of the leather circlets around the base of her generous breasts. "When I get these set right you can draw the chest strap snug and clip it in."  
  
Megan noted that while most of the crowd was focused on the five naked mailgirls clustered around the water table, the bra fittings had drawn their share of attention. "Let's get some water, ladies and then another ten minutes to race time."  
  
Mr Starnes was at the finish line and picked up a microphone. "I would like to remind you gentlemen that there will be no physical contact with the mailgirls. That is grounds for termination for SG&T employees and possible charges of sexual assault for everyone." That brought a few boos from the milling mob. As had been the case the day before, few mailgirls were holding cups of water, they were sipping at cups offered by eager men surrounding them.  
  
Megan repeated her spiel, "Five minutes to go. We're running eight kilometers today. That two laps around the parking lot following the yellow line, then twice around the larger loop following the blue line just as we did last week."  
  
Nine women toed the line with only Megan's toes shielded from view. After Mr Starnes "go" they started off at a relaxed pace following Tad on his bicycle to the cheers of the onlookers. Megan resolved to run conservatively, Three had pushed her yesterday and she would likely have less than fifteen minutes between runs today. Four, Twelve, and Twenty-two shared the lead through the two laps around the parking lot before Twenty-two moved into the lead to start the third lap when the other two mailgirls slowed to grab cups of water as did Megan.  
  
When they exited the path through the woods Megan was surprised to see a solid line of cars parked along the road as they turned left. There was continuous cheering mixed in with a few calls indicating that Megan was overdressed. Four reeled in Twenty-two as they made the left turn back towards the SG&T buildings; Megan settled in beside Twelve. All four women grabbed water this time past the finish line, Megan just dumping hers on the back of her neck. She knew that she would have to pace her drinking with the second run looming before her.  
  
Four pulled ahead entering the path for the second time and Megan found herself closing the distance on her sister. "Just stride along with me, Sam. You're looking good." Twenty-two was working too hard to deliver her usual sarcastic rejoinder. Four finished about fifty yards clear of the Brooks' sisters who crossed the line to a call of "Thirty-one eleven." Megan turned to see Twelve finish as Starnes called out "Thirty-one, twenty-three." Ten and Twenty-three were in sight, there was three more mailgirls still to appear.  
  
The finishers were sharing the water table with the other eight mailgirls with Mistress V glaring balefully at the entire scene. Twenty-two was not alone in enjoying the admiration of the non-SG&T spectators who didn't have the whole 'Mailgirls are the lowest of the low' meme drummed into them. Mistress V delivered a quick swat across Four's ass "Eyes down, mailgirl."  
  
Finally, Five came across the line to "Thirty-three seventeen."  
  
"Ankles." and the curvaceous redhead bent over proffering her ass.  
  
"One, thank you; two, thank you; three, thank you; four, thank you; five, thank you; six, this Mailgirl thanks you for correcting me." The last two lines came out in gasps of pain. Even the men up close and personal with mailgirls at the water table paused to watch.  
  
Mistress V said sharply "All mailgirls who have just run will return to the Mailgirls' Locker Room, now. Those of you out of uniform will hand your garments to me before you enter the building. The last one through the door will receive a half-dozen in the Locker Room."  
  
Five women turned and headed for the building entrance, the other three peeled off their bras and detoured past Mistress V, then dashed for the door. Eleven was the unlucky laggard. There was a surge of spectators in their wake hoping to get a good vantage point for the punishment session to follow.  
  
Megan's rest interval was down to ten minutes as she made her way over to grab a cup of water. One good looking guy moved to intercept her and asked, "Why are you wearing clothes?"  
  
Megan looked up at him and responded, "Because I'm a financial analyst, not a mailgirl. I spend my days investigating investment opportunities rather than dashing between offices delivering messages and supplies. I do my running the old fashioned way, on the roads and trails."  
  
"You certainly are attractive enough to be a mailgirl. Have you ever thought about it?"  
  
"SG&T and I would rather put my four years of college and two of graduate school to more profitable uses. Thank you, but I'll keep my clothes on in the office. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get this next group of women ready to run." Megan was shaking with something between deep humiliation and barely suppressed fury, but hoped that it didn't show. She just needed to get this next run over with so that she could escape to the safety of her condo.  
  
Tad handed her a cup of water and noted "Your sister ran really well even if the two of you lost to Number Four."  
  
"Yes, Four did really well as did my sister and Twelve. I have to do it all over again in just" looking at her watch "seven minutes. Thank you for the water. Are you up for another five miles?"  
  
Tad grinned, "Oh, yes. I really need a rear view mirror on my bike, or better yet a camera. My buddies at Eagleton Prep are never going to believe this."  
  
"I'm sure you'll be able to find videos on social media. You'll just have to find one that shows you leading the way."  
  
Mr Starnes called out, "Five minutes."  
  
Megan gave thanks that this weekend was cooler than the last. She wasn't sure that she could handle three fast 8km runs in 24 hours and battle the heat, too. Three 10kms next week would definitely be a challenge. The pool at her condo was calling.  
  
Megan repeated the course directions and with a minute to go the nine women walked up to the start. She looked over the field and decided this was the weakest of the three heats; Fourteen had been the quickest of the group the week before.  
  
They ran the two 1km loops at a leisurely pace, keeping the pack together. Two took the lead entering the first 3km loop because she proved to be handiest at grabbing a cup of water on the run. The would-be professional dancer had a well toned body and Megan enjoyed the view from behind as did the cheering spectators. The crowd had picked favorites and Sixteen, the tall, blonde ex-Marketing rep, seemed to garner the loudest support. The line of cars parked along the road now extended well beyond the comparatively short stretch that the mailgirls ran and there was a raucous crowd standing in the road at both the turn onto and off of the road with a police car blocking the road at each end. Megan was impressed that the officers looked to keep their focus down the road in both directions rather than turn their back to potential traffic to check out the really real naked women.

Fourteen came up on Megan's shoulder as they turned into the parking lot. The older woman was breathing easily and looked strong. She set out in pursuit of Two while Megan just held onto her rhythm. When they turned to start the final lap Megan could see Sixteen and Thirteen striding along together about thirty yards back. Fourteen caught up to Two and Megan watched the shorter black woman try to lengthen her stride to try to stay with the taller brunette. Megan kept telling herself "it's not a race" but muscle memory kicked in and she upped her tempo to try to reel in the two leaders.  
  
It was Fourteen all the way and Mr Starnes called out "Thirty-one eighteen, nineteen, twenty-one" as Megan edged Two on the run-in. Sixteen finished to a cacophony of cheers with ginger-haired Thirteen just a few steps back. Then came Seven, Eight, Twenty, and Eighteen.  
  
Now the crowd started chanting "Six, six, six, ..." as Eighteen despondently stopped a few steps past the finish line and reached for her ankles even before Mistress V called out. Each thwack of the paddle was greeted with a cheer while the other mailgirls were clustered around the water table attracting closer attention.  
  
Mistress V called out "Inside" and the eight Mailgirls obediently turned and headed for the front entrance, followed by Megan who was happy that she wasn't shepherding another mailgirl to the Med Center.  
  
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"Sarah, you wouldn't believe the scene Sunday morning. The lobby was as full as I've ever seen it and the coffee shop was doing record business. The parking lot was overrun with spectators, all men, of course. I think every horny young male SG&T employee told all of their friends – how did that many people pry themselves out of bed at that hour on a Sunday morning, shouldn't they be sleeping off Saturday night? I think Mistress V was distressed at the scene. The non-SG&T men had obviously not been briefed that mailgirls are the lowest of the low; they cheered for the runners. Sixteen, you remember: tall well-built blonde from marketing, was a crowd favorite. I know there was still the men clothed, mailgirls naked going on, but it was an entirely different vibe from delivering a message to some suit on the fifth floor. I'm afraid that Ms Barnes and Mistress V will feel a need to inflict something dreadful on the mailgirls to remind them of their place."  
  
"And did Megan get any of that admiration?"  
  
"I got cheers and catcalls about being overdressed and one guy came up to me and told me that I was attractive enough to be a mailgirl, so why not."  
  
"Oh the joy of a mailgirl, to know that you look good enough to be beaten."  
  
Mistress V demanded that the bras not be worn in the building so the test subjects put them on and peeled them off in front of the parking lot crowd – that was well received."  
  
"So, who is in the running to run?"  
  
"Three had the quickest time, pushing me all the way on Saturday. Four beat me in the first run Sunday morning, I was thinking of my fifteen minutes between runs. Sam and I finished together in that heat. Fourteen beat me in the second run on Sunday, I was feeling it by then, and Two finished just behind me. Fifteen also ran well on Saturday as did Twelve in the first heat on Sunday. Fourteen and Fifteen's contracts are up in September so I don't know how that will play into things. And as I said, the crowd favorite seemed to be Sixteen, also nearing the end of her contract. Five finished last for the second straight week; Eighteen and Twenty-one also got six of the best in their heats. When Mistress V sent the mailgirls from the first heat back into the building and announced the last one through the door would be paddled in the locker room, there was a surge of spectators from the parking lot into the building opting for watching chastisement over the start of the second heat."  
  
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Later, in talking with Brendan, Megan said, "I'm a middle distance runner, not a marathoner. I can stretch out to run a decent 10k, but these three runs in twenty-four hours are brutal. If the temperature soars next weekend I could be struggling to avoid the last place prize in that final heat."  
  
"Well, since you're skipping the Striders race this week, I may have to get up early next weekend to cheer you on."  
  
"Just remember which runner that you'll be watching."  
  
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Fourteen was on her mat in the Law Library that afternoon working on one of her current courses when Mr Fforde came up behind her.  
  
"You're looking lovely, my dear, all this running about must agree with you. I've had a chat with Human Capital and some of my friends on the fifth floor." He put his hands on her shoulders and squeezed gently. Fourteen had tensed up at the sound of his voice so some gentle massage would be welcome, but why him.  
  
"If you qualify for the running team, I've brokered a deal where your mailgirl contract will be amended to put you in a part time status from mid-August through the end of the year. You would be on duty at SG&T from Friday morning through Monday afternoon just as you are now and would be released to the outside Tuesday through Thursday, which would allow you to take classes on campus. Of course, you'd need to sort out your living arrangements during the week, but we could find you something."  
  
Fourteen had a pretty good idea of what living arrangements Mr Fforde had in mind and she thought no. Being able to take classes on campus this semester was a good thing, she'd have to figure out housing and transportation on her own.  
  
"Well, I won't keep you. Think about this offer and if things work out Ms Barnes will call you in the week after next."