**Tami Beethoven**
by Donny Laja

**Part 26**

The atmosphere in the crowded dining room was electric.

The seven onlookers stood around the seated, slightly overweight figure of Mayree, Tami and Rod's old friend, back in town for the St. Patrick's Day weekend. Mayree's husband Brad, tall and dark and silent as always, stood behind her, watching what she was doing with a quizzical interest. As was Rod. Not so quizzical was the interest of Georgene, Spica, Melissa and Jeane, their eyes glued to what was on the edge of the table, the brightly-lit, widely-spread crotch of Tami Smithers as she lay on her back.

"Ow!" their always-naked friend said.

"Stop jerking!" Mayree admonished, readjusting her sweatshirt, shifting in her jeans as she leaned forward in concentration.

"Zhhh," Tami said next, suppressing all motion, yet somehow giving the impression she was about to laugh.

The track lighting, like all eyes, was trained on Tami's partly green, partly reddish pubic hair, so bright that everyone could see each hair casting its own shadow. Peering closely through the bottoms of her bifocals, Mayree worked carefully with tweezers and swabs on what was turning into a hair-by-hair de-greening of Tami's lower hair. The smell of polish remover competed with the smell of Tami's musk to give the air a unique pungency.

This uncomfortable procedure was necessary unless Tami was to wait two months or so, up past graduation, for the green to grow out. The head hair was easy: Mayree, yesterday morning, had henna'd it, and Tami had shampooed it out an hour ago. But her lower hair -- "Tam, your shorties are as nappy as mine" -- had required the more permanent stuff. Which needed special care to remove.

Two of the TL's, Melissa and Jeane, helped by holding Tami's feet back and out so as to maximize the outstretching of her limber, gymnast's legs. Jeane's interest in Tami's crotch alternated with her interest in the toes cradled in her hands. She badly wanted to suck them, from "Hester" (her name for her Queen's right pinky toe) on up to "Hera" (the big toe), but held off.

"Ow! Christ, that hurts!" Tami said, once again almost giggling as if at her own stupidity.

That hair was right near her left lip. Having stretched it out to its greatest extent with the tweezer, Mayree wet the swab in the solution in the little cup next to her and dabbed the hair down to the root. Which then stung.

They had been like this, Mayree, Tami, and their rapt audience, for twenty minutes. They watched as Mayree now spread and inspected Tami's lips clinically, well apart and wet, in the bright lighting. They could see inside too, into her pink cave. Now Mayree pulled the hairs on the sides near the thighs as Tami cringed and tried not to cry out.

"OH! Shit!" Tami said.

"Sorry," Mayree said, examining the hair that she had yanked entirely out. She set it down carefully to the intense interest of the TL's who looked at it like a religious relic. "I think that one's time had just about come anyway."

A few more yanks and stings and Mayree seemed satisfied. Now: "Turn over, I've got to get the ones down near your winkie." Mayree had listened patiently to the TL's enthuse over lunch in front of the blushing Tami, and had decided to humor them by adopting some of their terminology.

As her husband and friends watched, Tami exhaled and lethargically rolled over. They were the motions of a woman with a heavy pelvic area, congested with the fluids of sexual desire, an inevitable outcome of Mayree's ministrations, and the fact that she hadn't had an orgasm since the three that Rod had given her upon awakening that morning.

Tami got on all fours and then lay her head down on her crossed hands. She stuck her butt out, legs spread so that her anus was clearly visible. As Mayree began pulling the hairs on the perineum one by one, Tami's toes wiggled and her anus twitched, signs of her frustration. Then another "Ow!"

"I'd love to lick her right now," Spica said, smacking her lips, though whether it was Tami's pussy or anus she was looking at was unclear.

"No licking!" Mayree said firmly. "Not for two hours at least. You don't want this remover in your mouth."

"Two hours!" Spica said.

"That's how long it takes to dry."

"You can have some too," Spica said, as if Tami was a pie that the TL's didn't mind sharing.

As she swabbed another hair, Mayree said, "Not me. I'm no funny bunny." A stern face that dissolved into a tolerant smile. Like most of Tami's old friends, Mayree found the TL's quaint and amusing, like eager kids.

This was a female affair so Rod and Brad decided to retreat and sit on the couch. As Rod watched from across the room, Tami's butt sticking into the girls' faces, he thought of her decision to "go green" for the parade yesterday. At first she was afraid it might be undignified. The grand marshals of previous years were always old professors or some other eminent personages. But then she decided that after all, her hair was her only clothes, and "One has to wear green, right?" And then she set things up with Mayree, who had done such a wonderful job on her on Tami and Rod's first date, the Black Formal, so long ago.

While Tami was gathering with the rest of the marchers yesterday Rod had lunch with Brad and Mayree, up from Boston, catching up on each other's lives, then the three of them had stationed themselves midway down the route. Campbell was a small town, largely an appendage of the college, and it seemed like every single person was out along Main Street. He wished the weather was a bit better. A damp, chilly day, the kind where the cold dampness just pierces right through you. Impossible to stay warm even in an overcoat and scarf, especially when standing waiting. And then a flurry began, wet early-spring flakes that looked as big as marshmallows.

The street was cleared and the sound of drums and horns told them the parade was nearing. Sure enough Tami was leading. She had been given the option of standing up in a float but had decided to just walk. As he knew well by now, feeling the earth against her bare feet gave her confidence and energy.

She plied the big marshal's stick in her hand, using it as a walking stick, as she paced carefully but proudly all alone in front, her bareness totally on view, wearing her nakedness as if it was the most resplendent outfit in the parade. Her hair was green and shiny, one of Mayree's masterpieces, dancing as she walked, framing her beautiful face and being the same shade of green as her eyes. The big snowflakes stuck to it like God was adding his own highlights to Mayree's handiwork.

Green sparkles were over the tops of her breasts, and down below on her concave tummy. Her green pubic hair was abundant, teased out and fluffy, as carefully done up as the hair on her head, and catching its share of snowflakes too. Green was also the color of her fingernails and toenails.

What was most striking was her bearing. Her feet paced the wet asphalt with the well-bred gait of royalty. And her smile and her wave to the crowds. She was like a good-natured and popular queen "doing my queen thing" with aplomb but also a good dose of whimsy.

And the cheering.

Everyone knew Tami, of course, and every single person whistled and applauded as she passed. It made Rod, once again, proud to be hers. And then he felt himself privileged as she saw him and ran over, giving him a big kiss and hug, before scampering back out to the middle of the street to continue her queenly duties, her breasts bouncing into place.

Now she went on and Rod and Brad and Mayree found themselves looking at the Mayor's float, then the firemen, then the high school band, the majorettes in long-sleeved leotards and protected from the cold by what looked like three layers of black tights.

Their last glimpse of Tami made them laugh once again. As her bare buns retreated from them they could see the green shamrocks painted in the exact center of each, jiggling very slightly with the motions of her tight glutes. "Good work, Mayree," Rod said with a chuckle. "Fine job," Brad said, giving Mayree a kiss.

Later the three of them went to Scholar's with half the rest of the town and watched Tami drink buckets of green beer, tie and untie about a dozen pairs of shoes with her toes, and give an only partly off-key rendition of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" while standing on top of the bar. They drank too but could not keep pace with their naked companion. By then it was dark, and he had to prop her up as she staggered through the slush back to the house.

As she fell face-down onto the bed and immediately started snoring, Rod contemplated her flushed nakedness, her slush-crusted soles, the now-smudged shamrocks, the disheveled green hair, with a mixture of joy and sadness. Tami Smithers had a happy, happy life. She was the most popular person in town. And yet it could not last...

Rod shook himself into the here and now as he heard Tami squeal and watched Mayree pull on and swab the last of the pubic hairs. No green left, Tami's lower hair was now back to its natural dark red. Her horniness was palpable. Her butt up in the air, the anus twitching, the lips below moist with arousal, the toes squirming. Rod felt his dick stirring and wished he could shoo everyone away so he could thrust in deep. Brad and Mayree had to get going for Boston momentarily anyway. Unfortunately he and Tami had invited the TL's for a reason. This was to be their "Tami-thon" afternoon.

The wait enforced by the polish remover procedure was something no one had planned on, though.

"Two hours!" Spica said again, like an outraged, spoiled child.

"Two... hours!" Mayree repeated sternly.

The TL's, who seemed to act in telepathic concert, took seats at the table, looking up at Tami from every angle. Between the four of them, they held her hands and her feet. Tami exhaled a ragged breath. Her head still down, she said, "Sorry guys."

Rod suddenly knew what to do. Time for the unveiling.

It was best done silently. He got up and retreated to the bedroom. When he came back he stood up next to Tami and held the tail up over her. The soft tendrils of the ends of the hairs whispered against her back, making her shiver. Without looking she knew what it was. "Ohhhh... yes..."

**Part 27**

The TL's looked at it open-mouthed. The new, improved "pony girl" tail that Katie had presented to Tami that time in the library when Sarah Wickland visited. The two-foot long hair was beautiful, blond with a shade of red. But all eyes quickly fastened on the incredibly long and thick dildo end. Finally Georgene untied her tongue. "Th - that's not... what I think it is...?"

"There's no way that's going to fit into her pussy!" Spica said.

Rod shook his head portentously, then gently directed the end toward Tami's anus, where the barest contact made his naked wife jolt.

"Oh... my... God!" Spica said. No one could see it but Spica's own buttocks clenched in response.

Rod put the tail into Georgene's hands. She held it reverently like it was fragile, even though considering the pony girl "industry" it was designed for, it could be termed, quite literally, "industrial strength". Then he got the remote out of his sweater pocket. It was a big remote with a lot of buttons and a little touch pad. In anticipation of this, the first actual try-out of the tail inside Tami, he had taped Ms. Wickland's business card to the bottom in case he and Tami had any questions.

He pressed the white button and the base of the dildo, near the hair, expanded to three inches across. Now his first words. "This is what you do at the beginning. It prevents the tail from being ejected during, uh, excitement phase. Press it again before taking it out." Another push of the white button and the base diameter shrank to its original inch and a half -- still huge, but workable for an experienced anus like Tami's. "The dildo part works by pressing against the wall inside Tami to touch her G-spot."

The TL's nodded. Tami's internal center of pleasure was a topic they had studied and discussed much.

He playfully threw the remote to Spica. "Experiment a bit."

The punky 19-year-old TL, fascinated, pressed another button and then another, as bumps appeared and disappeared at various points. Georgene almost dropped the moving thing in her hands while Spica whooped with glee. Then like children she and Jeane and Melissa started fighting over the remote. They eventually settled on taking turns, trying out all the buttons, and then the touch pad, a refined delight. Moving one's finger along the touch pad caused a bump to move along the shaft of the huge dildo. It was amazingly responsive and moved almost as quickly as the controlling finger. Tami, her face against the table, eyes closed, smiled, amused by the sounds of their childish delight.

Now the naked student turned to look up at Rod with heavy-lidded eyes. As if saying, "Now is the time. Please satisfy me!"

Rod got the remote back and took control, like an instructor showing his students how something was done. Dabbing the dildo generously with a jar of vaseline he had brought, he set the greasy end against Tami's anus and gently pushed.

"Ohhh..." The TL's didn't know whether to look at her distending sphincter or her face. It was more than amazing to them. Though Spica might not have admitted it, not one of them had ever been anally penetrated themselves.

"Ohhh... oh God..." Tami's breaths became deep and deliberate, as if she was trying to inhale the dildo.

Georgene leaned forward and said, "How do you do it?"

"Make... believe... I'm... pooping... push... down... ohhhh..."

Rod twisted the tail and slowly increased the penetration until it was in about six inches. Georgene and Melissa each grabbed one of Tami's hands and held tight in support.

"Ohhh... oh man..."

Rod was beginning to get concerned. This was as far as he had ever put a dildo inside Tami. He knew she was capable of more, but he had never witnessed it himself and he always had a fear of hurting her. He bent down next to her face and said, "Are you O.K. Babe?"

Tami, beginning to sweat, swallowed and nodded. For about the millionth time Rod marveled at her self-control, her ability to control her body and make it do what she wanted. He figured out a long time ago that she had learned it the hard way, during that awful freshman year, learning to control her intense desire for clothes, almost shaking at times from the strain of resisting the urge to grab something and put it on.

The TL's leaned closer to her butt. Only half the dildo was in. Jeane wondered if Tami's flat tummy would begin to bulge outward from the displacement. Brad and Mayree couldn't help standing up and watching from across the room. The fully clothed friends watched intently as the naked young woman continued to be anally penetrated in their midst.

"Zhhh..." Rod gently pushed it in two more inches, then felt some resistance. He had met the top wall of Tami's rectum. Tami would have to shift a little to make the dildo go through what she called her "inner butthole", up into her colon.

Tami lifted her head and her shoulders, then twisted her hips by getting off her left knee and planting her foot flat upon the table. When she was ready she nodded and Rod pushed in some more, this time meeting no resistance as the dildo began its journey up her digestive tract. Tami's mouth opened as if the object was about to emerge past her tonsils.

Pushing in was easy now. Rod slid in the last two inches and then pushed in the first of the two little flanges designed to rest on each side of her sphincter, one inside and one outside. Otherwise the tail would fall out or be sucked in by the natural motion of Tami's internal muscles. Tami's anus was now seated against the beginning of the horse-style hair. The TL's sat there open-mouthed with awe at this remarkable creature in front of them.

The naked girl took a couple of deep breaths. Jeane noticed no bulging, Tami's tummy was as concave and smooth as always. Then the naked student pushed up with her arms and stood up on her knees, the rest of her body upright, her head almost up in the little chandelier, the newly swabbed pubic hairs teased out and fluffy.

Awkwardly, with the help of the TL's and Rod, she climbed down from the table, bare feet slapping onto the hardwood floor, and lurched stiffly to the center of the room. Without thinking about it everyone got up and gathered in a circle around her.

She stood there, bolt upright as if "at attention", hands at her sides, her breathing ragged. Then a crooked smile. "Pony Tami, at your service."

Rod supposed he should laugh though he couldn't. The power dynamics were now clear to him. She was putting herself at the mercy of whoever had the remote. The situation that, after all, the tail had been designed for, at Taft McNamee's farm with its dominant owners and submissive ponies.

Rod pressed the white button and Tami inhaled and closed her eyes, obviously intensely feeling the expanding bulb within her. Her toes spread, grasping the floor, as if she was in danger of falling off the earth.

It had to be Rod's turn first, but he was feeling magnanimous and wanted to make it up to the TL's for not being able to lick Tami's pussy as they had fervently planned. He gave the remote to Georgene, who he supposed could be best trusted to start gently.

Georgene looked down at the remote carefully and slid her finger carefully along the touch pad.

"Eeeee!" Tami leapt up seemingly about three feet into the air, arching her back! Her eyes bugged out!

This greatly concerned everyone. Then Georgene did it again.

"Eeeee!" Tami leapt up again and then fell forward and crumpled to her knees. Rod was about to tell Georgene to stop when he realized Tami was quivering and on the verge of orgasm.

A few presses of buttons and Georgene had forced Tami down to all fours, where she shouted and bucked and launched into a terrific climax. As she spasmed they noticed that the tail, moved by her anal contractions, waved to and fro rhythmically in a wide sweep like a parade color guard waving a flag. After a few more irregular flourishes the tail subsided and once again hung down straight.

Georgene handed the remote to Melissa, who stroked the touch pad and got Tami to yelp and jump back up onto her feet. Tami realized how ridiculous she looked and started laughing as Melissa, relieved that all was well, stroked and stroked the touch pad as Tami leapt here and there, practically up to the ceiling, nearly bumping into people and furniture. She jumped toward the back window, breasts bouncing, and then fell onto all fours again as she spasmed and spasmed, her tail again wagging wildly.

"Oh Jesus..." Tami tried to focus her gaze on Rod. "This thing is incredi -- eeee!!"

The remote had been passed to Spica, who did not show mercy. Laughing, Tami yelped and yipped and jumped, feet slapping against the floor, finally succeeding with fumbling fingers in sliding the back window open and escaping into the back yard.

It was a warm sunny day, not like yesterday, though the outside was sodden with mud and melting snow. The TL's followed Tami outside. Rod, Brad and Mayree, once getting over their amazement, had no choice but to follow. When they got to the back yard they saw the TL's at the four corners of the little yard, throwing the remote to each other in a game of keep-away as Tami frantically lurched toward one and then the other. Her bare feet, caked with mud, slipped and soon mud was covering her breasts, her thighs, her knees, her hands.

It took three TL's to hold her but they did so as Spica flicked the touch pad furiously, causing the naked pony girl to flail about wildly and scream, crazy-eyed, her feet kicking up bits of mud, her hand stretching out uselessly for the remote that was three feet past her grasp. There was underlying good humor. As the orgasm subsided Tami gasped, "You-ll -- pay -- for this -- Spica -- damn you!!"

Tami wrested free and shot through the bushes. The TL's, more prone to worry about getting scraped, had to go around the far end. Rod and Brad and Mayree followed, laughing at this bizarre turn of events. When they emerged out onto the street they saw the pony-girl, her tail swishing behind her, pumping her arms and trying to maintain a rhythmic, athletic pace as she pounded the wet broken sidewalk with tough bare feet, trying to increase the distance between herself and her tormentors.

Rod thought to himself: what is the range of that remote? Tami being Tami, she was soon well ahead of the TL's, almost at the corner of Spruce Street by now, over two hundred feet. Yet the odd splays of leg and jerking of pelvis showed that the remote, now in the hands of the quickly tiring Jeane, was still having its effect.

Rod and his friends followed the TL's up to the corner of Spruce and then turned up the path to Hightop Park. They would never forget what they saw as they pulled even with the TL's at the park gate. Way over across the park, just shy of the woods, Tami had slipped in a patch of mud and was face down in it, her butt up in the air. The TL's had her where they wanted her and did not move as they passed the remote around between them as they caught their breath from running. Tami's bare sweaty butt, glistening in the spring sunshine, heaved up and down as she climaxed for the, well, who was keeping count? The tail swished to and fro, every 0.8 seconds...

Now, trying to get to her feet, her toes squirming and sliding, she slipped and flopped onto her back, all but covered now in mud from face to feet like a naked primitive dancing in a fertility rite, her muddy tummy and hips bucking up with the spasms as if she was having intercourse with the air, the sky, the entire universe.

Rod and Brad and Mayree took in this scene in silence and wonder. Then Brad, who had not gotten any more talkative since his days as Campbell-Frank's most laconic SGA President, spoke up. "I know this sounds wack, but I envy her. I wish I had her ability to feel all that pleasure."

Rod looked up at his friend and then out again at Tami in the distance. As if by rote, he said, "Well, she deserves it, after what she's been through."

"She certainly does."

After another moment, Rod said, "No, you're not wack."

**Part 28**

"G - got - to - be - k - kidding - mmee - ohhh!"

The blonde guy (prospect no. 3) was so obviously phony in his attempt at bad ballad singing that Tami's appraisal was echoed by the TL's.

"You got that right, mi amor," Rosaria said, looking sideways at the TV as she plunged her tongue deep into the pink cave between the lower lips that she was spreading with her fingers.

"He's better than number 1 though," Myra said, sitting next to Rosaria, bending forward to suck one of the upturned nipples while rubbing the other one between her fingers. "Number 1 wasn't even as good a faker."

Jeane, on the other side of Rosaria, smacked her lips as she interrupted her sucking of Tami's toes. "You should have seen last night. I'm surprised the three guys didn't turn that bimbo into a dedicated lesbian."

"Maybe she WAS a lesbian," Melissa said, sitting on the floor, resting her head next to Tami's, sucking on one of the smoothies Tami had made for them, now and then handing it up to Tami's lips so she could have a sip. "This is all a fake, you know."

Responding to Jeane, Tami said, "Th - this is on every night??"

"Three nights a week," Jeane said. "I admit I'm hooked."

"You must l - lose three IQ points every time you watch this -- ohhh," Tami said. Rosaria had just inserted her greased thumb into her anus and was turning it round and round inside her. Then she sucked Tami's clit hard in between her teeth.

"Khhh! Chkkk! Gaaahh! Ohhhh!" The whole couch rocked as Tami exploded again, the four TL's grabbing whatever part of her that was handy with a mixture of lust and tenderness.

"I think -- " Melissa was about to say something but waited as Tami kicked through one last, unexpected spasm. "I think a lot of lesbians watch this."

"Like us," Myra said with a snort. Among them only Spica, who was not there tonight, was a declared lesbian. But the standing joke was they made an exception for licking and sucking Tami.

Tami, catching her breath, said, "Jeane... Doesn't this show make you stupid?"

"It's just fun."

"I suppose so... A waste of time though... ohh..."

The three TL's on the couch turned Tami over, once again. This gave Melissa another chance to do some deep-tongue kissing as she turned her head up to Tami's. Rosaria, recently inducted into the delights of licking Tami's rear entrance, stuck her tongue into the orifice that Tami had cleaned via enema earlier, performing the ablutions in the bathroom as the TL's stood around and watched. At Rosaria's request Tami had done an extra strawberry enema she had brought. As a result Tami was scrumptious! Jeane got to licking the toes on the other foot, trying out the taste of a grapefruit-scented lotion she had bought. As for Myra, she contented herself with tracing her fingers over the beautifully formed, tanned back, running her fingers down to the sacral dimples and onto each butt cheek, then back up to the shoulders, making Tami shiver.

They had been like this for over an hour, another "girls' night in" at Tami's place, on a night when Rod was working late. At Tami's request it was always a low-key affair. "Let's just hang out like we're in the dorm," she said the first time. "I kind of miss those days." So they either watched TV or sat around chatting. Though there were probably no hang-out sessions in dorms where one girl was naked and constantly being licked and sucked, propped up, spread out, or like tonight munched on like a five-foot-five hero sandwich, all the while chatting with the rest to the extent she could.

Tonight began with sitting on the floor, in their stocking feet (except for Tami, of course), over potato chips and smoothies, moved to an intense session with Tami pinned on top of the kitchen counter, her ankles up past her face, from whence they carried her recovering body to the couch to watch the latest "reality" show.

"When is the Spring Zing?" Jeane said in between licks of "Isis" (Tami's right third toe) and "Osiris" (the fourth toe).

"N - next Th - thursday... Seven o'clock in the M - multipurpose roommm... R - reception later... ohhh... But it's at the air - port..."

"The airport?"

"The -- ffaculty -- cafe is under c - construction -- so -- th-there's a nnnice -- ohhh! -- restaurant there -- the C - county airport... "

"County airport?" Melissa said.

"It's about five miles down Route 218," Myra said.

Jeane said, "What's your entry going to be like? A dress? Or a sports outfit?"

"I'm not tellin' -- ohhh -- God, what a creep!"

Prospect no. 2 had just said to an off-camera interviewer, "I think like girls just like want to be basically controlled?"

"I'M not going out with HIM," Myra said, grabbing Tami's right butt cheek forcefully.

Rosaria, diddling Tami's clit from below, extracted her tongue to say, "He's just brave in saying what a lot of guys think."

"You can let them think they're in control even when they're not," Jeane said. "It flatters their ego."

"But if you do th -- that," Tami said, "th - they might get into the -- ohhh" -- Rosaria was diddling her clit more and more furiously now, and the others quickened their attentions to bring Tami up to another crest -- "habit -- OHHH!"

Tami bucked and bucked as the TL's held on. Rosaria timed her diddles at 0.8 seconds and then, judging her time carefully, decelerated very slightly. This extended her orgasm as hoped.

"Ohh -- ohhh -- oh hi -- Roddd!!"

Rod, standing there in his suit and briefcase, smiled and kissed the gasping face of his wife.

As Tami quieted down again, Jeane said, "What do you think, Rod?"

Rod enjoyed watching his wife "come down" and waited until she was back at what, having been educated by the TL's, he had learned to call her "plateau" stage. He thought for a moment. "I think you shouldn't let the guy get away with thinking he's in control if he isn't. The important thing is to be honest."

"Sometimes it's diplomatic to lie a little," Jeane said, pensively licking Tami's little toe like it was a lollipop.

"Well you don't have to be honest right away," Rod said, speaking louder as he retreated to the kitchen and took off his coat. "The church I went to as a kid, the preacher would say, 'Never go to bed with a argument unsettled.' That's bullshit, of course. Just get some rest and things will look better in the morning."

As he returned, he said, "What he MEANT was, don't keep secrets, if there's a disagreement, deal with it, and soon."

He had no jealousy about the TL's involvement in his wife's life. He was actually glad there was someone else to have Tami's needs taken care of, now that work was heating up and he had to come home late and tired.

The only restriction, which he and Tami agreed on, was that the TL's couldn't use the tail inside her. That touch-pad was incredibly powerful and he was afraid Tami might injure herself jumping around like that. And both of them were a little unsure that the TL's could be trusted to be gentle in inserting such a huge object in such a vulnerable place.

Even he himself was wary about the touch pad. Though its operation was silent, it seemed too much like torture, like whipping her from the inside. He conceded it was his own hang-up; Tami herself felt nothing but intense pleasure. But he much preferred the more mellow delights afforded by the purple button, which turned the tail into a simple vibrator. Sunday afternoon had been particularly pleasant. He had sat on the porch, taking in the sunshine, watching the last of the snow melt, the remote in his hand, as Tami writhed on the floor next to him, periodically spasming and moaning, the buzzing inside her faintly audible. Trent had stopped by and the two men had chatted about this and that, idly watching Tami as she climbed one orgasmic peak after another, lost in her own world.

Now he sat in the big chair, sipping an orange juice, and watched the TL's feast on her. He was impressed with their dedication to her. And he remembered what Georgene said once. "Tami is our feminist hero. Men stripped her, but she came back in her nakedness and defeated them." Sounded almost like Jen.

He looked up at the TV and said, "Oh God. Not again." That idiotic dating show.

"Their p - plan to make me s - stupid," Tami said.

"For you, Tam, that would take a long long time." Rod said. He snorted as he saw Prospect Number 2 try to sweep tonight's bimbo off her feet and fall on his butt.

And now the big moment when the bimbo made her selection. Would it be Prospect No. 1, Prospect No. 2, or Prospect No. 3? Unfortunately Tami was cresting again. Rosaria had turned her onto her side and her bare foot flung out, blocking Myra's view. Myra tried to reach out and push it out of the way.

Biting her lip the blonde on the screen said, "I pick -- "

"Ohhhh... ohhhh! OHH!"

"Shhhhh!!" the TL's said in unison.

"Mmmphh... mmphhh... mmphhh... " Tami stifled her remaining spasms with a mighty effort.

The bimbo lingered speechless for an excruciatingly long time. Then she said, "Number 2!"

"Give me a break!" the four TL's said together. Tami, catching her breath, said, "That girl is stuuuu - pid!" Sounding like her 19-year-old friends, except for the orgasmic moans, of course.

Now the credits rolled onto the screen and Tami caught her breath and staggered to her feet and sat in the big chair with Rod, her bare leg draped over his knee. The TL's knew it was time to go. By the time Rod came home they could hang out for a bit but not too long.

After they left, Tami curled up in Rod's lap like a satisfied cat. Strong as she was, she knew how to act like she needed his protection. It made him feel good, pretense though it was.

Tami stroked the limp package within the pants. "You want some tonight, Baby?"

"Maybe I can dream about it, Babe. Sorry but I'm just about pooped."

. . . .

Scene: same living room, the next evening.

Event: Second meeting of the SGA Activities Day Committee.

Personnel: Seated on chairs taken from the kitchen, Celine, dressed in a fluffy black sweater over a pink blouse, jeans, hiking boots with white socks, little assignment pad, pencil; and her roommate Lorinda, in buttoned sweater over nerdy white shirt, black pants, saddle shoes with green socks, white loose leaf sheet over a textbook, pen.

Seated on the long couch: Myra, black flannel shirt under a blue parka, long wool skirt, tights, Birkenstock sandals over thick brown socks, laptop; and Roberto, SGA President, athletic sweatshirt over Oxford-collar shirt, jeans, fake-snakeskin boots, a stack of papers in his hands.

Seated, or rather slouched, on the big easy chair: Trent, in long black coat over a plaid lumberjack shirt, purple velour pants, Pro Keds with blue socks, note pad, pen.

Seated on the floor, leaning against the easy chair: Committee Head Tami, no clothes, right knee up with a notepad on the thigh, pen in left hand; and on the floor in front of her left foot, a clipboard, rested on which was a pen grasped between her second and third toes.

Finally, on the little couch, Samantha, head of the Inter-Greek Council. Samantha was one of the sorority pledges dared into streaking across campus that fateful September evening three and a half years ago. Tami had been caught by campus police, and she had not. On this evening Samantha wore an exquisitely tailored jacket with matching V-neck blouse, houndstooth pants, and argyle socks under ballet slippers. She was fitfully engaged to a blueblood at Dartmouth named Sterling whom she suspected of cheating. She had never had an orgasm.

Roberto handed out the papers, a one-page chart, and waited for the others to absorb its contents.

The first reaction was a snort from Celine. "What the hell is this?"

"My proposed layout for the Multipurpose Room on Activities Night," Roberto said presidentially.

"That's not what I mean," Celine said.

In student government there are two groups of people: the ones who make the noise, and the ones who do the work. Roberto was mostly a noise-maker but the serious types gathered here gave him some respect because, unlike the previous two presidents, he at least did some work. Though not very well.

"You put the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Alliance next to the ROTC?" Samantha said incredulously.

"The Arab Student Union next to the Jewish Student Union??" Tami said with amusement.

"Planned Parenthood next to the Right to Life Committee!?" Trent said, beginning a laugh that quickly spread.

"Some of these folks, they deserve it," Lorinda said humorlessly. Her roommate, Celine, rolled her eyes at Tami, who smirked in sympathy.

Roberto, at a loss, said, "I was hoping the juxtaposition... the juxtaposition (he liked to say this word)... of opposing groups would put them in contact and get them to know each other better."

"Roberto," Celine explained patiently, "This might not be the right time. It's a nice idea but if it fails it fails big."

"So when else and how else can we get them into contact?"

There was silence. He had a point. The campus was more contentious recently. When else could these strident activist types, who stayed away from each other as far as possible, be forced into proximity? They all had a strong interest in showing up at Activities Night.

Tami exhaled, scratched her nipple with the end of a pencil, making her breast jiggle for a second, then tapped the pen in her toes, looking around the room. She waited for three or four beats and then said, "Maybe he's right. I say let's go for it."

"If it fails, it fails big," Celine repeated. "Well, okay, if you're in, I'm in."

The amazed consensus was soon achieved. Tami as Committee Chair wrote it down in the Official Minutes. While writing the same thing on the pad with her toes, just as neatly, to send to the SGA Secretary.

"Ooo ooo," Trent said, making chimp sounds as he looked at Tami's busy foot. Myra, the TL, followed with her own "Ooo ooo!", maybe a bit more lustfully.

Tami smiled as she continued writing, with just the barest knowing eye-flick at Myra. "I'm a polywriter."

"A what?" Samantha said.

"A Thomas Jefferson invention," Celine, a history major, said. "But he used a steel bar to connect the two pens."

"Maybe started with his toes, who knows?" Tami said.

"He probably diddled two slave girls at once that way," Trent said. This made Tami and Celine chuckle.

Tami's phone rang, not the cell phone, but the phone on the wall.

"Excuse me," she said, handing her pad to Trent. "Be right back."

They saw Tami disappear and waited. And waited. Finally Trent got on with the next order of business, what to do about publicity.

After a space of ten minutes Tami came back. Trent, who had known her the longest, saw the change. She looked shaken, like she'd seen a ghost.

The business of the committee finished up shortly after. Trent stayed behind.

"Tam, what's wrong? What was that phone call about?"

The naked girl exhaled, and as she blinked and looked up at Trent he saw her eyes were a little moist and red.

"It was Jen's dad," she said. "He says he's found Henry Ross."

**Part 29**

"Hear, hear! All rise, Campbell County District Court, State of Vermont, Honorable Prudence Stanton presiding."

All rose, the lawyers and the crime victim and the three dozen or so spectators in the gallery and overflowing to the jury seats on the side, as the wrinkled old lady in black robes entered and ascended the bench in the historic old courtroom, built in 1773 according to the cornerstone outside.

She sat down and everyone else did too. She nodded to the young male stenographer to her side, who poised his hands over the little machine. "Court now in sesson. Good morning, all. As y'know I have strict standards of decorum in heah," she said, lilting in her old-Vermonty accent. She put on the reading glasses hanging from her neck and looked down. "I have here a note from the state medical examiner as to our complaining witness's allergy and I give it due respect. Sorry if it's a bit chilly in here," she said to the only unclothed person in the room. "It's cold in this place even in the summer.

"Now I see we have only one case on the calendar today, People versus Henry Ross. The charge is endangerment in the second degree, which has a statute of limitations of two and a half years, and the motion is to upgrade the charge to first degree, which has a statute of four years. The two and a half years runs out today, which under Section 789 means also that this is the last day the motion can be made. Miss Granby-White?"

At the lawyers' table were the assistant D.A., a thin, young white woman in glasses and a smart business outfit; Jen's father, Marcus McIntyre, in his three-piece suit and shined black shoes; and Tami Smithers. The assistant D.A. and Mr. McIntyre got up and stood in front of the bench. Ms. Granby-White looked up and said, "Your Honor, I believe you have our out of state attorney application for Mr. McIntyre for this case?"

"Yes I do," the judge said, looking at the thin file in front of her. "And it's granted. Welcome to our court, Mr. McIntyre."

"Thank you, Your Honor." Marcus McIntyre motioned for Tami to stand up next to him. She hesitantly and nervously stood her barefoot and naked self beside the two well-dressed lawyers, her hair, once again plum color, carefully braided up, her fingernails and toenails done up nicely in the same color.

Marcus was well aware of Tami's fear of lawyers and courtrooms, a fear well justified by what she had been through. But he always liked to have his clients in court if it made for good theater. This was certainly true of Tami, whose nakedness vividly illustrated the wrong that had been done to her. Last night he had sat down with her, with Jen and Rod in attendance, and went over what was to happen. He explained the status of his investigation, the legal issues involved, the importance of her being there, and the probability that the judge would ask her questions. Tami bit her lip and agreed to appear for the motion.

He began in his usual poised manner. "Your Honor, my client as a freshman at your local college underwent a horrible and unending series of humiliations and intimidations at the hands of the defendant. Her clothes were stripped from her, all her shoes too, and she was forced to spend the entire academic year totally naked, not only while on campus, but wherever she went. Naked and barefoot through the cruel blizzards of winter, the cold rains of spring, her most private areas on view for anyone to see, while being prohibited from showing any sign of modesty upon the threat of having her scholarship revoked, the scholarship which was such a source of pride to her and her family --"

"Yes, yes, I've read the indictment," the judge said. "Now why should the charge be upgraded?"

Marcus was used to giving long, lurid accounts of his clients' suffering and did not expect to get cut off. He quickly sized up this judge as one of those old yankees who hated wordiness. He changed gears. "Since the scheme was exposed, I have had investigators looking for Mr. Ross, necessary because the police could not do it, it being clear that Mr. Ross had immediately left the state. For two years we could not find him. Last month an investigative search finally retrived a 'hit', an airplane ticket bought by Mr. Ross a year ago in Phoenix, Arizona for a trip to Beaumont, Texas. We subpoenaed the airline records and found an address in Arizona, but by that time the residence had been deserted with no sign of where he had gone.

He dramatically lowered his voice. "Then, four days ago, a person matching Mr. Ross's physical description was seen purchasing a handgun at a shop in Boca Raton, Florida. Unfortunately we could not get verification."

"Why is that?"

"Well as you might know, a new federal rule requires all background information as to gun purchases to be destroyed within 24 hours."

The judge rolled her eyes. "Oh, right."

"By the time we got a subpoena signed and served it, it was too late. It would be a grave miscarriage of justice if at the last moment this person, who had subjected my client to such abuse, solely for his sadistic purposes, who took a young female of her tender years and -- "

"Get to the point!"

"Uh, my point being that we are this close" -- he put his thumb and forefinger an inch apart -- "to capturing this man. Witnesses can be interviewed, and the gun shop owner himself seems cooperative. It was a cash sale and he had kept the paper receipt, which said 'Henry Ross', which he had checked by asking to see the buyer's driver's license. So it seems we finally have a real lead on tracking the defendant down."

Marcus went to the table and took out a folder from his briefcase. "I would like to present documentation of what I've told you."

"That's all right, Mr. McIntyre, I stipulate to what you say, and I say so on the record."

"Well if you don't mind, I'd like to put it in your file anyway..."

Ms. Granby-White whispered to Marcus, "What are you doing?" She whispered as lowly as possible but in the quiet courtroom it was impossible not to hear.

"I'm building a record on appeal," he whispered back.

"If she rules against us, it's not appealable," she said. "Not in this state."

Marcus missed only a beat before putting the folder back. Best not to piss the judge off.

The judge said, "Mr. McIntyre, I see your point as to imminent capture" -- with her accent it was more like "capcheh" -- "but that is not relevant to why the charge should be upgraded. I see you have your client with you. If it's OK with you, Miss, I'd like to ask you something."

Tami had been standing quietly, her hands clasped politely in front of her, as it happened over her pubic bush. She cleared her throat and said, "Y-yes, Ma'am." Marcus bit his lip. He had told her to address the judge as "Your Honor", not "Ma'am". But Tami's upbringing was too strong.

"Miss Smithers..." The judge turned to the stenographer. "Off the record, please." She looked down at her file and then up at Tami.

She was at a loss for words, seeing what she saw.

Tami, still looking up at her obediently, had crossed one arm over to cover her breasts, and put the other hand over her crotch.

Tami never did that. There was a silent gasp from the audience, from Rod and Jen in the gallery behind her, and especially from those in the jury seats to the side who had a better view.

Marcus looked over in surprise, then down at Tami's bare toes nervously flexing against the polished wood floor. Tami's motions were great theater, but that could not be why she did it. And any sense of modesty had been burned out of her long ago. Maybe this was an expression of "modesty" in the deeper sense of the word, the modesty that Tami always had. A sign of respect for the judge and an uncertainty as to how she should be presenting herself.

The judge collected herself and said what she had been about to say. "You're not under oath, my dear. Let's discuss this informally. I see here, from what I read, what amounted to a threat to take away your scholarship if you put on any clothes. That fits the bill for endangerment in the second degree. But there's first degree endangerment if the threat was physical. At any time, did Henry Ross, or either of the persons listed as accomplices here, Percy Jorgon or Nevada McMasters, or any of that whole crowd, did they threaten you physically, threaten you with bodily harm?"

This was the key point. Last night Marcus had gone over this carefully. He could not, of course, coach his client as to what to say, but had gone as far as the ethics of his profession allowed: "Tami, you should search your memory and think, were you ever physically threatened? At any time, did Henry Ross, or anyone involved in this say, Tami, if you put on the merest scrap of clothing, or show any sign of trying to cover up, you will be harmed bodily? Beaten up or something? It didn't have to be in so many words, it could be indirect, or a matter of you putting two and two together. Of course," he continued, dropping his voice, "with all the horrible deeds that will go into evidence at trial, if Henry Ross testifies that he never threatened you, and you say he did, it's obvious who the jury will believe."

Tami not answering, the judge said again, "Did they ever threaten you physically, dear?"

In the chilly courtroom everyone held their breath, all eyes on the naked young woman. Rod and Jen could see goose pimples rising on her butt. She seemed to clutch her nakedness tighter and looked down at her flexing toes. For the first time in a long long time, she seemed uncomfortable with being naked. She looked frightened and cold, like a scared 18-year-old away from home for the first time and overwhelmed by her unwanted nudity and the powerful clothed men determined to break her.

Then she looked up and said, "N-no, Ma'am."

"Never?"

Tami looked down and shook her head. She sniffled and rubbed her nose.

The judge and Tami looked at each other for a second, perhaps with a common understanding as women, but mostly across a wide gulf, separated by age, power, and the ownership of clothes.

The judge turned to the stenographer. "Back on the record. Mr. McIntyre, the statute is clear as can be. Without an allegation that there was a threat to Ms. Smithers', uh, body, there is no basis for an upgrade. Motion denied. The statute of limitations has run. The case of People versus Henry Ross is closed."

She banged her gavel. In the gallery there was weeping, Jen's. A couple of TL's also sobbed. The judge got up to leave.

"Your Honor," Ms. Granby-White piped up, presenting a paper from her jacket pocket. "Will you sign an order of protection?"

The judge hesitated and then took the paper as it was handed up to her. She put her glasses back up and read it.

"On this matter I DO have some discretion," she said, sitting down. "I've never signed an order of protection against someone who has never threatened bodily harm, but in this case I don't mind." As she signed it she said, "Also I don't like it that this man bought a handgun. Here you are, dear. Henry Ross is not allowed to enter your home, or call you, or go within 50 feet of you. If he does any of that, Sheriff Wheeler will toss him into jail and I will personally throw away the key."

Tami, still clutching her breasts and her crotch, approached hesitantly as the judge beckoned. She read the official-looking document as she returned to her place next to Marcus and the assistant D.A.

"This court is adjourned." The judge gathered her robes and went back to her chambers.

Tami's hands dropped from covering herself as she passed by Rod and took his hand on the way out. Rod folded up the order of protection and put it into the pocket of his coat.

Outside it was a nasty, freezing, blustery day. Everyone had to put on their hats and gloves right away, Tami in their midst. They stood around silently, not knowing what to say, feeling pretty miserable as they watched Tami's nipples grow stiff in the frigid breeze.

Finally Marcus spoke up. "Sorry, Tami," he said, putting on his gloves and suppressing a shiver. "You are a rare gem... You've had it rough. Let me suggest that the best thing for you to do right now is get drunk. Let me take you and Jen and Rod to the pub for some brews and something to eat. It's all on me."

Tami seemed tempted. But after a moment she said, "No thanks. I'd rather be alone. I'm going home."

And she left them, off to her house by the shortest route, which involved cutting across the village green. Rod started after her but tactfully not too close, as if he was in a marching band and she was the majorette whom he was to follow at a certain distance.

As they watched her stride across the bleak commons, icy wind biting every inch of her nakedness, her bare feet squishing through the freezing mud, they thought of Henry Ross, sitting on a warm beach in Florida somewhere, or maybe in elegant clothes living the high life on an offshore casino.

Wherever he was, Henry Ross was now off the hook.

And, with very minor exceptions, free to go wherever he wanted.

**Part 30**

Acting Dean Anthony Noyes, tall and a little grayer and a little heavier, no longer being able to fit into the three-piece suits that had been his trademark, stood behind his desk and looked out the big bay window on this rainy March day, having hung up the phone. His people had told him just what he had expected. No filings yesterday in state court, and in federal court (the more likely forum) no filings either. The statute of limitations on any suit Tami Smithers could bring against the college had expired. The college was finally in the clear. At least as to lawsuits.

A relief, but not really unexpected. From all signs, she had made her peace with the college a long time ago, blaming her freshman year misfortunes on the machinations of Dean Percy Jorgon and the college attorney Henry Ross, and to some extent Nevada McMasters. Which so far as he knew was pretty close to the truth. Others who were probably culpable too had left before they found themselves in the cross-hairs. Professor Brignon. McMasters's aides, Brendo and Mr. Zipkin. Not Homer Winant, of course, that wily S.O.B.

So now -- what to do about her?

As he looked down on the campus Tami appeared as if on cue, hefting a big bag of dead leaves over her shoulder, squishing through the grass toward the front lawn, oblivious to the cold rain that plastered her hair to her shoulders and had everyone else scurrying around in raincoats. Now she came to one tree with a branch which the brown leaves had somehow clung to throughout the winter. As if she was born to do it, she scurried up on prehensile toes and reached over, her breasts crushed against the rough bark, shaking the leaves free. Then hopped to the ground and stuffed them into the bag with her bare hands. Remarkable.

He turned and sat down at the big oak desk and pondered. The presence of a naked student had never stopped being a trial for the college and its conservative benefactors. There was just no getting around it. It had paralyzed the Dean Hiring Committee; there was no way to say to candidates, "We are a religiously based, conservative institution," and then say, "By the way, we have a girl who walks around naked all the time." As a result the Acting Deanship had been a hot potato passed around between him and Vanessa Congi and even Mildred George, who was 75 years old.

Tami Smithers was only two months from graduation -- but sure to get a graduate assistantship if that was what she desired. That would mean two more years of enduring her public nudity. And then what if she became an adjunct, or even a professor? She could be here for 20 years! Noyes held his forehead just at the thought of it, it was so agonizing.

The commencement ceremony itself was all too much to contemplate. She would be the valedictorian and giving her speech. It was a near miracle that the college had avoided national press thus far, but commencement exercises were always publicity magnets. "The Naked Valedictorian." A Newsweek cover for sure. Some of the trustees had suggested canceling the commencement on some pretense. But he just could not do that. Tami had earned the right to give her speech in public just like any the college's 212 other valedictorians throughout its history.

It would be easy if she was a troublemaker, but she was anything but. Her behavior during her long ordeal, and ever since, had been exemplary. Tami Smithers enjoyed an immense amount of respect, from faculty, the other students, recovering fundamentalists like Rev. Stipend... Even the more stuck-up benefactors grudgingly admitted she was a credit to the college, at the same time as they were waiting on pins and needles for her to leave.

As far as finding out what she might do, he had run into a brick wall. He certainly couldn't ask her directly. What would be the point? There was no way he could say, "We like you Tami but we want you to leave. Here are some possibilities..." Or even hint it. He had called Abu Jamal about their attempts to cure her allergy but the Chalfont people absolutely would not talk to him. He could understand their position. They had been traumatized by the fallout from the McMasters experiments and were forever in debt to Ms. Smithers for voluntarily re-doing them when their accreditation was threatened. If anything, it would be better for him NOT to know her plans. That way, if he suddenly hit upon an idea that would get her out of here, he could spring it on her more innocently.

He had similar bad luck with the Fashion people. It would be strange, but great, if she won that International competition and got sent back to Rhode Island. But Girardo would not tell him what her chances were. And he had no pull with the people running the competition, of course.

A knock on the door.

It was Tami Smithers herself, wet and muddy, though she had been careful to wipe her feet. She stood in his doorway, naked and strong, her bookbag slung over her shoulder, carrying a four-foot long narrow thing that looked like a folded-up easel. "Hello, Mr. Noyes," she said, respectfully but with an air of familiarity.

"Hello, Tami." He was aware, of course, of yesterday's ruling refusing to extend the statute of limitations in the criminal matter. Tami seemed to have bounced back from what must have been a bitter disappointment. Of course, the college itself being in effect an accomplice, there was no way he could express his condolences or anything like that.

"Can I ask you something?"

"Sure, Tami." He glanced at her up and down, from her wild, wind-strewn hair, the tanned wet breasts, then down to the fragments of leaves in her pubic bush, finally to the widely-spread toes covered with bits of grass, as if she herself were a wet tree and her toes were the roots. "Is Omar working you too hard? Have a seat."

"Well no, I shouldn't, I'd mess up your chair... I'd like to ask your permission... Could I please wear something?"

"Uh -- " He had never been so astonished at a simple question. He almost gasped. Had her allergy been cured? If so, why was she asking permission?

Tami, realized how absurd her request sounded, smiled and set down her bookbag and held out the easel, which it turned out was a narrow, four-foot-long case. "This was a present that was given to me."

As soon as he saw her bend down to open the case, her breasts wobbling in front of her, he realized with dread what it was. He had been told about it by Sarah Wickland, that West Coast lawyer with the kinky clients. The immense dildo with a two-foot long tail of horsehair.

"It's called a tail. Ms. Wickland gave it to me. You know, from the pony farm."

A reminder of Tami's further horrible tribulations. Which again she had made peace with.

Obviously unaware that he knew about it, Tami stood up with the object in her hand and explained it. "This part goes into my rectum and up into my sigmoid colon. There's a remote control that makes it into a sexual stimulator. But without the remote, just as a fashion accessory, I think the tail is pretty neat looking. I think I look good in it. See?" She approached him with a photo of herself, half-turned to the camera, with the tail waving behind her, coming out from between her bare butt cheeks, the smile on her face as innocent as if she were seven years old and showing off her First Communion dress. It was jarring to see. As she evidently knew: "I'm asking you because I can see why some people might, um, freak out.

"I won't wear it anywhere on campus," she said quickly. "But I was thinking of wearing it to the reception after the Spring Zing. There will be faculty there, so I wanted to know what you thought."

He looked at the tail and at the picture. He just could not imagine where there was space in that slim body for that gigantic thing. But then, Tami Smithers was remarkable.

He also knew that the Spring Zing reception was traditionally a time when the fashion majors would show off with their most outlandish creations, kind of like a costume party. "I trust you to exercise your good judgment. You have always shown good judgment as a student here, Tami. I think... I think it will be OK But let Mr. Girardo know about it ahead of time."

"Thank you, Mr. Noyes." He was relieved to see Tami put that thing away, into the long case.

As she was about to leave he thought of something. "Tami, I have some things for you."

With the results of those phone calls he was going to send for her to get them anyway. It might as well be now. He couldn't wait to get them off his hands, and with the statute of limitations having run, the college had no duty to preserve them. He led Tami into the large storage closet down the hall and took a box off the shelf.

"These are some things that were found at Henry Ross's place after he escaped. Mostly videos and discs that show some of the, uh, things that happened that year. From what I understand the criminal matter against him is now closed. So there is no need to keep them. If you ask me they should be destroyed. But a sense of justice compels me to give them to you. YOU should be the one who destroys them.

"There are also some DVD's of the Chalfont experiments. As you remember you deleted the computer files in Dr. Schnitzler's office. But it turns out Nevada McMasters took his own videos from a hidden camera in Lab 6. Possibly to use as evidence against Ross, I don't know. I really have no idea what was going on between those two. But he left them in a cabinet in Lab 5. So these are yours too, Tami. I know I've said it a hundred times, but we are very sorry what you endured, Tami."

He got a kind of rolling briefcase off another shelf, like people use to pull packages in at airports. "This is called a trial bag, lawyers like Mr. Halifax use it." George Halifax being the person who replaced Ross as the college attorney. "This one's extra. Here, let me put the things in here."

Soon, Tami Smithers, with her bookbag and her horse-tail-dildo and all that odious crap from Chalfont and Ross, was gone. Anthony Noyes looked outside the bay window and saw her leave the building, strolling casually and nakedly through the rain. He exhaled as he saw her wheel away the DVD's and videos, and though it was Tami who was getting wet, he felt like it was he, and Campbell - Frank College in general, who had been showered clean.

**Part 31**

Rod, sitting at the kitchen table in his pajamas, looked at the sample logos that Trent had made for Tami's clothing designs. It seemed unlike the naturally modest Tami to blow her own horn so, but apparently it was recommended for fashion students to create a "brand" for their designs, for copyright protection purposes. He could understand that.

Trent was an art major and, unlike some of the others, was actually good at drawing human bodies and faces. Rod respected that, down-to-earth engineer type that he was. Trent and Tami had gone through a hard time after 9/11, dealing not only with their grief but also their guilt. Both had been invited to Jeffrey's photo exhibition that day and had not gone; Trent because he had the flu, and Tami declining the ride down with Mandy because she didn't want her nakedness to distract everyone from what was supposed to be the first big day in Jeffrey's professional career. Like many others who had lost loved ones that day, Trent and Tami had formed a bond.

Trent's empathy for Tami came through in his drawings. They were not detailed but they were realistic. The one Tami preferred was a plain line drawing of a girl holding a long coat in front of her. You could tell she was naked from the shoulders, the exposed hip, the toes on the feet below. It was unclear in the drawing whether she was offering the coat to the viewer or about to try it on herself. The ambiguity was a nice touch. Below, the motto: "It's a Tami Original".

Now Tami padded in, rolling that damned "trial bag". She hefted it onto the table and sat up next to it in her usual cross-legged position.

"I don't really want to look through this stuff," Rod said.

"I don't either, but I suppose we should see what's here," she said. "So what do you think of Trent's logos?"

"They're a product of real talent," Rod said, "speaking as an engineer who can draw nothing but blueprints. I like the one you circled too. Tami, you really are 'an Original'."

"Oh Baby." She was so limber that it was easy for her to bend her head down and give him a wet kiss. "Not an original-sounding motto, though. I can't think of anything better at the moment."

Rod smiled. "I like your new clothes. I mean your old clothes. That really is your color, Babe."

Tami, still sitting cross-legged, opened her legs some more to show her lower hair. "Plum is for me, I think. It matches my little thing." She leaned back a little, spread her lips and made her clit jump. "Hi hi! Now... what do we have here?"

As they rummaged through the bag they saw it was a collection of unmarked DVD's and a few VHS tapes. They sifted through them silently.

"I say, throw them all out," Rod said. "I don't know how you can stand viewing them anyway."

"Maybe... Let me think about it." She laughed. "Maybe I'll get Gretchen to sort them out."

Rod chuckled, glad that so much time had passed that she could laugh at such things. "Don't torture that poor girl... So you're going to go down with her?"

"Yes." Tami was going to Providence to see her parents this weekend. Rod couldn't go; he had National Guard service.

"I don't think the VW is going to make it," Rod said. They drove in it yesterday and it pooped out on a hill, forcing them to turn it around and jump-start it by pushing it back down.

"It just needs the timing checked. I can do that next week. We're taking her car anyway. Wow, look at this."

A brown bag obviously holding VHS's. On top was a handwritten note: "Found these at the house. George Halifax." Halifax had moved into the college attorney's house formerly lived in by you-know-who. "Oh Lord!" They were commercial porn tapes. Tami took out the first one. On the box was an interracial couple that looked almost exactly like Rod and Tami! "THIS we've got to see!"

Rod wasn't that into it but Tami set it up like a movie night. She had him microwave popcorn while she pushed the couch in front of the TV and dug out the VCR that hadn't been used in about two years. She cut the lights and they sat in their usual TV-watching position, him with the popcorn beside him, she stretching her naked self along the couch, her legs over his lap so that he could idly play with her pubic hair. Her dexterous toes tapped on the remote sitting on the arm of the couch.

Rod had seen more porn than he liked to admit, but for Tami it was a new experience. She watched entranced as the first few minutes showed the white woman with red hair writhing on a bed in a tiny negligee, stroking herself, not very skillfully portraying a bored, frustrated wife. She must have been bored by the decor as well: her "bedroom" looked like a motel room.

Now a sudden blast of gangsta rap and a black man in a pimp outfit climbed through the window. He wrestled the woman until she was pinned to the bed, her eyes showing that she was not very interested in resisting.

"Oh Babe, this is insulting." Rod was offended and embarrassed by hip hop culture.

Tami had long been aware of that, but said, "Let's see what happens," as she inhaled another handful of popcorn. Now the man had his pants off and was slapping his half-erect penis across the woman's face.

"Wow," Tami said. "That guy is huge."

"She's got awfully big hands too," Rod said. Tami guffawed as he saw what he meant. The effect of the camera angle and what must have been a fish-eyed lens became clear as soon as the woman put her fingers around the porn star's dick. If his penis was huge, her fingers must be the size of bananas.

Then they both got a laugh as she started sucking him. The camera was from above and the lens made her nose get dramatically bigger with each upstroke, throbbing in size like a cartoon character who has just gotten punched.

About five minutes later, with no discernable advancement of either plot or technique, Tami said, "This is getting boring."

"Welcome to the world of porn, Babe."

She flexed her pinky toe and was about to hit "stop" when the man pulled back and shouted, "Take this, bitch!!"

As the music crescendoed the woman smiled and a big spurt hit her on the chin. Then a few dribbles before the black penis above her stopped quaking.

"That's weird," Tami said. Rod was surprised at this comment but then reminded himself: the "money shot" might be a convention of the genre, but despite what Tami has been through, she's hardly ever seen any porn.

"That's called a 'facial'," Rod said.

Tami decided to give up on this movie. "Let's try one more." Rod sighed in resignation.

This movie -- apparently Henry Ross only liked interracial, black male-white female porn -- was a bit easier to take. The black male was a tall skinny guy who was always smiling. No gangsta rap. He seemed to get a kick out of having two blond girls chasing him. At one point he had his pants half down and was trying to run down the stairs away from them, his dick flopping in front.

Ten minutes later, he too doused the white woman's face with a few hits of semen, with great yowls that sounded like, "Yeeahhhhh --- ohhhhh --- yeahhhhhhh!!" Rod snorted. But Tami said, "It's great that he can express himself like that. Why should women be the only ones who get vocal?" It was only then that Rod realized he had snorted to cover his embarrassment.

The blonde gathered up the semen with her finger and slurped it up like it was caviar. She really hammed it up, rolling her eyes. Again Rod snorted. But Tami said, "That's exactly how I feel. Semen is the stuff of life."

"It must be an acquired taste," Rod said.

"Only the first couple of times. When I realized how much your body works to produce it, and how much you loved me, it became yummy." Of course, they kissed after she said that.

"One more," Tami said as Rod sighed.

In this one, the black man talked constant trash while humping the white woman from behind. "Take this bitch, you stinkin' ho, take this n----r dick all the way, you ain't nothing but --"

"UGHHH!" Tami said, thudding the "stop" button forcefully with her heel.

They looked at the blue screen for a moment.

"Who watches stuff like that?"

"White guys."

"So what do black guys watch?"

"Me, I used to watch black on black porn. There's not a lot of it around though."

Tami brought her foot up and stroked behind Rod's ear with her toes, and behind the other ear with her hand. She was getting good at knowing this sensitive area and his dick began to stiffen. With her other hand she munched on a handful of popcorn. With a half-full mouth she said, "What if I told you to pick out what porn you wanted and masturbate to it, what would you pick?"

"I don't think I would watch porn now. Or even jerk off. It just doesn't compare with being with you. It's like playing with a toy, then having the real thing."

Holding onto Rod's neck, she did everything with her feet, tapping the "off" button on the remote, then reaching forward to hit the "eject" button on the VCR, then, swinging a leg over, grabbing the tape with her toes and dropping it into the bag. "Ooo ooo," Rod said playfully.

Rod hefted his naked white prey onto his shoulders and carried her to bed. He kept one eye on the clock radio and decided to lick her for one hour exactly. He realized with some amusement that his motivation was to do better than the TL's. Pacing himself, he succeeded in managing her orgasms so that she came once every two minutes, ending up with 28 for the hour. Like the TL's, he knew Tami hated being counted (though only he knew the reason), so he kept the number to himself.

At the end Tami was sweating all over and Rod's tongue was tired, in fact his whole body was tired. But Tami was not winded in the least. After holding his head against her breasts for a few minutes, she made him stand up and revived him by sucking him.

The porn movies had made an impact on her. As he got close she said, "Come on my face!"

He was surprised and might have been turned off, her sucking tonight was especially ardent and deep. He pulled out at the right moment. He hadn't come in a few days and it was a big load. He even let himself groan out loud -- "Ohhhh Babe!" The four biggest arcs landed on her face, striping it from forehead down to her chin, a little dripping onto her breasts.

Rod, drained, catching his breath, looked down at his handiwork with mixed emotions. He did NOT want to be one of those pimped-out porn minstrels. But he was proud of being able to produce such a big load for Tami. Almost her whole forehead was coated.

Tami quickly unmixed his feelings. She was able to open her eyes and led him to the bathroom where they looked in the mirror, her face next to his.

"You marked me, you dog," she said with a giggle. "I'm your bitch." Then she smeared the semen over her face. "Well, it's good protein, right? Good for the skin."

He kissed her gently, not even minding that he got some on his own face. Tami could make just about anything sexy and loving.

**Part 32**

"Baby, after looking at these I think we should keep them somewhere. They are my testament to my dedication to you and my folks and all the people I love.
Tam"

This was unusual, this almost Biblical language from Tami. On this Sunday evening Rod sat in the kitchen and pondered the note she had left yesterday next to the little stack of DVD's before heading down to Providence with Gretchen. The note just added to the unreality of this weekend, this sense that his world was beginning to tip out of control.

He had left for his National Guard service like always, at 5 a.m. Saturday morning, while she was still asleep. He could barely stand to leave her, as she lay sprawled atop the covers, arms and legs splayed out in all directions, the forest of her lower hair the highest point on her body. Then up to Camp Grafton and it was all hup-hup-hup. The last few services had been disturbing. A platoon of engineers and architects, second lieutenants, and they were being put through paces like infantry. Nobody dared mention the I-word, but it sure looked like they were getting conditioned to go to Iraq. And not to build bridges either.

Worse, some of the guys had not been showing up. He couldn't believe they would just blow it off, risk getting reported. Some were volunteers of course; they weren't doing their tour as a condition of having gotten a scholarship like Rod was. But how could you have such a delinquency on your record? At the very least it would come back to haunt you someday.

Rod looked at the note again and at the stack of DVD's.

"They are my testament to my dedication to you and my folks and all the people I love." He supposed she meant for him to take a look. And she wasn't going to be back from Providence until late. Well...

Rod set himself up in the living room and popped in the first DVD. Oh God --

The mechanical, factory-like sound was almost deafening and he had to turn the volume down. The sweaty, naked body of Tami, seen from the waist up, against the brightly lit background of Lab 6, three years ago. She was only 18 then and she looked like a child, not quite as muscular as now, with whiter skin. Her eyes were closed, her breathing ragged. Her sweat-soaked hair was plastered to the sides of her face. Her arms were stretched out to the sides -- hands tied to the posts that were out of camera range. He knew the sliding, clanking sounds were from the unseen dildo shafts below, pistoning on their cams aimed at her widely-spread, tied-apart legs, plunging past her cervix, and deep into her colon, in an alternating rhythm. Under her ribs he could see her concave tummy lurching slightly forward and back as she was penetrated front and rear, a mixture of chills and sobs going through her frame as she felt the ridges on the front dildo bump past her clit and inside past her G-spot. Her nipples were stuck in those awful suction tubes that went up and out, bristling and sucking and stimulating...

Oh Jesus -- entering the camera's range, the face of Henry Ross! In his lawyer suit. And now next to him McMasters in his tacky blazer and open collar. "Good afternoon Miss Smithers," Ross said affably.

Tami's heavy-lidded eyes opened. Her lips parted slightly but she said nothing.

"So as I understand it," Ross said to McMasters, "during orgasm her eyes dilate?"

"That is one of the many things we have discovered about female orgasm, thanks to Tami's participation," McMasters said eagerly. "To be precise, her pupils dilate, and her eyes lose focus." He looked down, presumably at dials on a console. "Why don't you watch on her next orgasm?"

"You mean she's had more than one?" Ross said with perhaps too much of a play at naiveté.

"Good Lord, Mr. Ross, Tami is the most multi-orgasmic girl we ever heard of." Looking down again, he said, "She's been hooked up for about an hour, and has experienced orgasm twenty-two times."

"Twenty-two times!" Ross looked at Tami's face, her eyes now closed again. "That's hard for one to imagine," he said with a convincing tone of innocent wonder. "The greatest physical pleasure a human being can know, and she's enjoyed it twenty-two times in just the past hour... You are a lucky young woman, Miss Smithers!"

"I'll say," McMasters said. "And each one is an unusually intense experience in its own right. She averages twelve contractions, which is more than the typical person has." He leaned down out of sight and must have turned a knob, as casually as if he were adjusting the throttle on a lawn mower. Tami's eyes popped open and she strangled a loud grunt. "There, I've increased the RPM and the depth of insertion somewhat. She should climax again soon. Excuse me, Mr. Ross, I have to go down the hall to get a refill for our EKG scroll. Why don't you stay here and watch. I'll be back in five. Tami," he said now in a slightly louder voice, "Remember to open your eyes and look directly at Mr. Ross on your next orgasm, okay?"

Tami, eyes closed, trying to hold back the quaking of her body, waited a second before slowly nodding once.

Rod felt miserable. At the time this was happening, he had no idea. Neither did Rebecca or Jen or Marisol or anyone else. They all thought of Tami as a happy, though quiet, girl who had decided to be a nudist. And he supported her and said he admired her for it! Tami kept her torments a secret from him and everyone, not wanting to let them down, and especially, as he knew now, not wanting to jeopardize her scholarship. Totally out of her element, the first person in her family to go away to college, too frightened and intimidated to tell anyone, too frightened to seek legal advice. He thought of what Rebecca had during her little sermon at their wedding. "One of the hardest things to do is to be brave, when no one can see that you are being brave."

Now, back on the DVD, Ross could be seen watching McMasters leave. Then he turned to Tami again.

"Totally naked," he said, looking her up and down. "I can see every inch of you, Miss Smithers. So has everyone else. How does it feel, to be naked all the time and not cover any part of yourself for even one second? This jacket, for example," he said, grabbing his lapels. "I'm also wearing a shirt, pants, shoes, socks, underwear. Quite comfortable and handy on a chilly day like this. Yet you have nothing."

He walked around behind her, out of camera range. "I understand many people have seen your, uh, anus. Few people can stand to have anything inserted into this, what most people consider their most private spot. Yet this, uh, dildo like thing is going into you and it is huge. It must be penetrating deep into your gut. In... out... now in again... out again..." Now he moved around in front again, looking down, stroking his chin. "And this front dildo thing is no less remarkable." He bent down, out of range. "The way it stretches your, uh, vaginal lips wide apart is amazing." He stood up again. "I understand those ridges provide intense sexual stimulation, both inside and outside."

He let a moment go by, listening to Tami's labored breathing and watching her closed eyes. Now he stood up now aggressively, literally getting into her face, not more than a foot away. His tone now was menacing. "Feel those thrills! And that rear shaft going right up into you! You can't escape me, Miss Smithers! That is ME, going up into you! ME, driving you to orgasm! ME, reaching right into your soul at your most vulnerable moment!

"Ah, I see now you're beginning to crest up to yet another climax! You MUST open your eyes and look at me! Otherwise I will have evidence that you're modest and you will be exposed as a liar! 'Religious nudist', indeed! Declaring that you don't believe in modesty, indeed! You were just streaking that night, admit it!! An expellable offense! Keep your eyes closed and you will be EXPELLED!"

Tami's eyes strained open in anguish and terror. Her body quaked with the onset of orgasm.

"You really think you can win, Miss Smithers?!" Ross got even closer, looking right into her eyes. "You think you're being heroic, don't you! The scholarship that made your parents proud! Sticking it out for your stupid, beer-swilling parents! And your stupid, N----R boyfriend!! It won't work!

"LOOK AT ME!! I WON'T GO AWAY!"

She opened her mouth and her eyes twitched with the strain of keeping open as she launched into a convulsive climax. Her shouts reverberated through the cold lab.

"Ahhhhh!

"Ahhhhh!

"Ahhhhh!

"Ahhhhh!"

Was she berating him? Yelling at him? Crying for help? Shouting a prayer to God? Her shouts were unearthly, weird. Rod had heard Tami cry out in orgasm hundreds, possibly thousands of times, but never heard sounds like these.

The orgasm went on and on. Of course, everything being done to her was designed to extend and intensify her "pleasure". After the last few, irregular cries she dropped her head and started sobbing. So young, her crying sounded like a little child's. Rod was about to cry himself.

McMasters returned and she raised her head and sniffled, trying to compose herself, though this was not totally possible as the dildos, unaware that she had just suffered an intense, mind-ripping orgasm, kept on pistoning inside her with their constant rhythm. McMasters looked down. "I see she just had number twenty-three," he said genially. "Did she open her eyes for you?"

"No, I don't think she did," Ross said blandly. Tami's eyes opened and she looked dully at the floor. A tear formed at her right eye and rolled down her face.

"Well, that's OK, just wait until she has her next one," McMasters said. "Sometimes she's too distracted to follow instructions, as you might imagine. At the onset of orgasm ideation and perception become scrambled. That's another thing we've learned. She cries, she sobs, she prays out loud sometimes. Sexual ecstasy can be a religious experience."

"So one could imagine," Ross said. As they watched her catch her breath he observed, "This could be a disturbing sight. If one didn't know she had specifically agreed to it in writing."

"Indeed. We are eternally thankful to her. Well, like I said, let's just wait. It shouldn't be long. She's on a plateau from which she can peak easily, come down a bit, and peak again. Here," he said, leaning down.

Tami's tortured eyes were forced upon and another cry was ripped from her throat. Evidently McMasters had intensified the stimulation again.

"Here she comes, so to speak," McMasters said as Tami looked up to the ceiling with increased bucking of her hips. He raised his voice. "Now Tami -- look Mr. Ross in the eye!"

Tami's agonized expression again reluctantly focused on her nemesis, Ross's vicious, sadistic leer staring into the look of pure terror in her tortured eyes --

-- Rod couldn't stand it any more. He hit the "STOP" button and sat back and covered his face. "Jesus," he said.

**Part 33**

Rod turned in his bed, then untwisted the pajamas that had tangled around his arms. Tami used to encourage him to sleep naked but he just couldn't get to sleep like that. Wasn't she back yet? His bleary eyes looked at the clock radio. It was only 11 o'clock. She said she'd be midnight or later.

He was still upset by that Chalfont DVD. Then he thought of Tami, the Tami of today, the self-assured, proudly naked 21-year-old. He smiled. Ross might be free and off the hook, but in many ways Tami ended up with the better part of the deal. Ross lost his job and his reputation. Where could he find work now? And Tami, happily naked, sexually satisfied, popular...

. . . .

He waited anxiously, nervously fidgeting with the slide of his trombone. Mr. Watson, whom everyone called "Sarge" from his years as a bandleader in the Army, waited impatiently as Jamal fiddled with the A-V equipment. It was first period practice in the crowded rehearsal room. They had just gone through their usual warm-up tune, "Captains and Kings". Now they were snorting with anticipation. Except for him. And Brigid in the clarinet section, sitting between Debra and Virginia, in her usual jean jacket, white turtleneck, black jeans and Doc Martens. She was easy to pick out because she was one of only five white kids in the whole band. She bit her lip and was as nervous as he was.

Finally -- the big screen lit up blue. The screen was ripped here and there. T--- High School might be known locally for its marching band but this was not a school district with a lot of money.

Some out-of-synch blurry images and now the genial, grandmotherly face of Melba McCann, the anchor of the local news show. "And now, we have with us guests from the famous T--- High School marching band, who will be performing at this Saturday's regional title football game between their school and Brookline High School." Her first words sounded like she was talking underwater but then Jamal's hand slammed down on something in the control room and the sound cleared up. "Here we have -- "

The camera panned over to the three guests, Sarge in his business suit with the black tie, Brigid in her majorette uniform, her baton laid primly across her bare thighs, and he himself in his braided wool uniform, holding his trombone in "rest" position in front of him.

Watching the screen, he cringed as he saw the beads of sweat on his forehead. It wasn't just nervousness -- it had been hot in that studio. Sarge had insisted on getting there half an hour early. Already burdened with his trombone case, he had needed Brigid's help in hefting his big uniform bag out of the car and through the many hallways before finally getting to the dressing rooms. Brigid went in front of him, holding up the boots end of the bag, her baton slung over her shoulder. At the end of the baton dangled her own uniform bag, a tiny pouch like a beanbag.

Then it had taken him forever to struggle into his uniform in that tiny cubicle, what with the cummerbund, the epaulettes, the big boots. Finally he emerged into what they called the green room, where guests were made up before walking onto the set.

Brigid was there sitting up on a high stool, already dressed, while the gay-looking guy powdered her with makeup. He supposed that a white person would look like a ghost on TV without some cosmetic help. Especially Brigid, whose Irish skin was very white, with a smattering of freckles across her bare shoulders.

She smiled at him as she said, "I'm getting the royal treatment." The makeup man had a lot of skin to cover, what with her entire uniform consisting of two little circlets covering her nipples, and that tiny triangle over her pubic area held on with silvery strings that went low around her hips and the other string that disappeared between her butt cheeks. Below, her bare feet rested on the bottom rung, the flip-flop style majorette sandals on the floor.

He got the trombone out of his case and sat and watched, having nothing else to do. Brigid's circlets seemed to have gotten smaller. The uniforms had just come back from their twice-yearly cleaning. Maybe the majorette uniform was subtly altered before it came back. He thought about the photos in the glass case, and wondered about the shrinkage in the majorette uniform over the years, how it was done, how past majorettes dealt with it. Around about 1970, for example, how did the majorette for that year find out that her short skirt and blouse had morphed into a leotard? How did the 1990 majorette deal with a short short that had become a bikini-style bottom? Or the 1999 majorette who found that the strings on her top had disappeared and she now had to wear circlets?

Those first circlets were huge compared to the ones Brigid had to wear. Her breasts were round and firm, maybe a bit bigger than average; and around her circlets all her breast slopes, top, bottom, and sides, were in full view. He wasn't about to do math calculations but the circlets covered maybe 15% of Brigid's total breast area. He thought of the big plastic eyeball model in the science room, the area formed by the iris and pupil. About that much.

He saw the makeup man do his work, puffing the powder between Brigid's breasts. He had seen boobs bounce before, of course, but always in tank tops or bikini tops. Brigid's breasts, not strapped to her body or to each other, moved independently, one wobbling a bit while the other was still, sometimes bobbing the same way, sometimes toward each other, one moving in a tight little circle while the other lurched left to right...

The makeup guy bent down and Brigid parted her knees as he got that area around her uniform where she had shaved her pubic hair. The triangle bottom seemed to have gotten smaller too, more like a narrow "V" now. She looked down with a neutral expression as the guy powdered industriously. "Spread a little more, please..."

Sarge came in. "We're on in five minutes. How's it going?"

The two band members smiled and nodded. Now Brigid spread her toes as the guy powdered them. Pretty toes. She had carefully painted the nails in the black-and-white school colors. Cummerbund and epaulettes and braided jacket and high boots were part of his uniform; toenail paint was part of hers.

He put on his white gloves and looked at them. Even one of his gloves provided more coverage than Brigid's entire uniform.

Then he remembered getting suddenly nervous as Melba McCann came in to get them, and Brigid picked up her baton and followed Sarge into the big room with all the cameras surrounding the set, and he followed Brigid...

Sarge sat down in one of Melba's guest chairs and chatted with her quietly while a commercial was being shown. Rod and Brigid, waiting by the big camera setup, looked at each other. Rod was so enchanted with this shy Irish white girl that he choked up whenever he wanted to speak. Finally he croaked out, "How do I look?"

He stood up straight as Brigid, holding her baton in her armpit, adjusted his jacket and tugged at his epaulettes. "Great. How about me?" She held up her arms and her breasts stuck out. "Are my 'T''s straight?"

Rod was open-mouthed, unsure of what she meant, looking down finally at her ribs and the hollow tummy below. "Your -- "

"My 'T's!"

He swallowed and felt flushed as he realized she meant the "T" school logo on each of her circlets. He bent down a bit so that Brigid's breasts were at his eye level. "Fine. Both straight."

"Good. Oh no!" Brigid opened her mouth and out came a retainer. "This'll show! I forgot entirely!"

She frantically looked around for a place to put it. He heroically took it and held it in his gloved hand. "It's safe with me."

"Oh thanks, you're a dear," she said. He felt his heart skip a beat.

Then Sarge motioned for them to sit down next to him, and the camera guy counted down...

Now, in the band room, watching with everyone else, he sat through Melba McCann's introduction and then smiled as Sarge fell over his words in describing the marching band, at first saying it was founded in 1527 instead of 1927. Sarge, sitting on his conductor's stool, covered his face in good-natured embarrassment.

Melba then said, "We have here also Brigid O'Dierna, the band's majorette, and Rod Sykes, first trombonist. You're part of a proud tradition. How do you like marching with the band?"

Looking at the big screen, the band saw Brigid and Rod smile at each other shyly. Brigid giggled nervously, her breasts bouncing with her laugh, then jiggling for a second after her body had stilled. He said something to the effect of, "It's a great band and it's great marching with your friends." Brigid said, "We all work together." Not memorable words, exactly, but what the heck, they were petrified.

"The forecast for Saturday is cold and drizzly," Melba said. "In your majorette outfit," she said, looking up and down at Brigid, "how do you stay warm on days like Saturday?"

"You keep moving," Brigid said. Her stock response.

And now in the band room there was a general shifting of chairs with anticipation as Melba McIntyre announced Rod and Brigid were going to do a tune. His friends in the trombone section smiled at him but he was not nervous because he knew what was coming.

The two band members on TV stood up, him with the trombone up to his lips, her with the baton tucked under her arm. Then she nodded and he launched into a verse of "American Patrol" which was flawless. Watching in the band room, he smiled. He had been so afraid he was going to botch it but he hadn't. Good tone throughout, not one note flubbed -- while successfully hiding Brigid's retainer carefully in his slide hand. Meanwhile Brigid twirled. She couldn't do any throws in Melba's little studio but she did everything else, spinning, fanning, switching arms, down through the legs, even that special trick she did where the baton seemed to crawl back over her shoulders on its way from one hand to the other. She spun around, leading with one breast and timing it so that the other breast followed. A performance as flawless as his.

At the last note he and Brigid froze, as planned. He was sweating in his wool uniform. She was not immune to the studio heat, either. As she posed, her breasts coming to rest, a trickle of sweat was visible that had started below her neck, rivered between her breasts and down her flat tummy, and delta-ed at her navel.

Melba and Sarge clapped, then it went to a commercial and the clip ended. Jamal turned off the screen light. Everyone in the band room applauded.

"Stand up and take a bow, well done," Sarge said. He stood up in his sweatshirt and long jams. Brigid stood up in her jean jacket and turtleneck and black jeans. Local stars!

"One fine performance deserves another," Sarge said. "Time for a big tune. Let's do 'March Grandioso'!"

. . . .

Rod turned and was again awakened by the twisting of his pajamas. Again he untwisted them. A soft rain raised up and started pelting the roof, feeding the night grass outside, hypnotic, lulling him to sleep...

. . . .

"The long walk", they called it, from the locker rooms to the football field, everyone trudging through the wet grass before game time, the team and the band and the cheerleaders in front. It was a chilly day, no doubt about it, and it was almost noon and hadn't warmed up a bit. It had rained yesterday and there were sloppy mud patches to be avoided. Of course, the football players were resigned to getting all muddy, but for a variety of reasons that did not bother them so much. The odd conversation between them mixed with the more subdued chatting of the band members and the much quicker talking of the cheerleaders.

He finagled it so that he was walking near the front, next to Brigid, who was mindful of the cold. Parades were one thing, but games, where the band had to sit for long periods in the stands, were another. She wore her green wool poncho over her uniform, her sandals in her hand as she trod the wet grass with red Converse All-Stars on her sockless feet. The poncho barely came down past her butt and she looked like she was naked underneath. Some of the football players said hi to her as they passed.

He looked up. The clouds were gray but it looked like the sun might break through. With luck...

They got to the field and waited for Sarge, as the players, led by their captain, charged onto the field to go through their warmup plays while the visiting team from Brookline went through theirs. Brookline was a wealthy town and their football uniforms were a dazzling gold and green. The almost all-white team looked like a bunch of future executives. T--- should make short work of them today.

He noted, with irritation, the ten or twelve cops hanging out around the stands. Just because we're a mostly black school they send riot control. Well, at least the cops they usually sent were nice.

Brigid chatted with a couple of the cheerleaders, who wore coverall sweats over their short skirts. They had long sleeves too. Brigid's bare legs and arms really stood out. He listened to their conversation. They were going bowling later. Cheerleaders traditionally were pretty snobby, and didn't like the band majorette -- maybe they thought she upstaged them during the halftime shows -- but they had made an exception for Brigid.

The cheerleaders went off to get their stuff at the storage shed as Sarge showed up, with his little briefcase, wearing thermal gloves, and an open overcoat over his business suit. "Band, this is a big day," he said, in his "announcement" voice. "Also a cold day. It's thirty-eight degrees and it might rain. But you know what I say, if our team has the courage to play out there, WE can play too.

"We have one tune before the game, then we sit and then at halftime we'll do the roll-off with Brigid and the drummers and then 'Washington Post'. Local TV will be here. But before that happens they're presenting a dedication to Roddington McNeil. You know who he is? No? Well he was principal here for 25 years. He retired ten years ago. They're dedicating the new scoreboard to him.

"Now this is the big game for our team. They go to the regionals if they win. While we're sitting up there waiting, I want you to cheer them on. Remember, we're their biggest fans."

He looked up at the sky. "Looks like we might get lucky. Maybe the sun will even come out. Well, let's go."

He led them as they walked, not in formation, to the admissions area where the ticket takers were setting up their tables. Past it, the Dad's Club was setting up their refreshment stand. They had a big metal tub on a dolly with Jamal's uncle using tongs to put big ice chunks into the tub and then filling it with water to keep the cans of soda cold. Sarge had a brief call to make on his cell phone. The band stood around and watched the tub fill up until he was done.

Now they walked behind the stands, under the announcer's booth where Mr. Simonelli was opening up, trying to pry open the top compartment which was submerged in three inches' worth of yesterday's rainfall. The band, with its majorette right behind Sarge, turned under it.

It was then that the first of Brigid's many misfortunes that day occurred.

**Part 34**

Walking behind Brigid, watching her bare legs flushed with the cold under her poncho, he followed her as they turned into the narrow passage between the two grandstands.

At first they thought it was a sudden downpour. But then they saw that the only person getting poured on was Brigid. She shrieked as a narrow but persistent torrent of water came from way above and doused her on her poncho-covered shoulder. Everyone stopped in alarm, trying to help but afraid of being doused themselves. Sarge looked back. Brigid tried to dodge the gush of water but it seemed to follow her as she zigzagged left and right in the narrow passage. Finally a few dribbles and it ended.

Brigid stood there miserably, arms out, her poncho totally soaked and lying heavy and flat against her body, probably weighing about twenty pounds, dripping onto her equally soaked sneakers.

Sarge looked up and yelled. Mr. Simonelli looked down and, mortified, apologized frantically. There was no time for recriminations, though. Brigid breathed heavily, on the verge of tears, and starting to shiver.

"You've got to take that thing off, you'll get hypothermia," Sarge said. Wearing a sopping wet cold poncho on a day like this was not healthy.

Rod was glad to help. He put his trombone down on the pavement and helped Sarge as they carefully lifted the poncho off her. Sarge folded it up and put it on one of the grandstand benches.

As the band members came up from the rear and encircled Brigid, everyone looked at her, her arms still out to the sides, her white goose-pimpled skin interrupted only by her majorette uniform, the little circlets covering her nipples and the little "V" down below with the strings. Everyone looked around for a towel or something to dry her off or cover her with, but under a grandstand such things are not to be found.

"Maybe we should get you inside," Sarge said.

"No," Brigid said, realizing that she would be needed momentarily to lead the band's pre-game performance. "My uniform's not wet," she said, holding up her breasts to get a close look at the circlets. She seemed to be speaking to them as she said, "The rest of me will dry off in the air in a little bit."

Which was true. The band members had noticed it during that first wet game, the first game of the year back in September. There was a downpour early in the game. At the halftime show everyone else was still soaked except for Brigid, whose bare skin and minimal uniform dried swiftly.

"I'd best get rid of these, though," Brigid said, noting her sneakers. She got the poncho from Sarge and put it on the ground, then untied the sneakers, wiped her bare feet on the poncho, then slipped on the low heeled silvery flip-flops that were part of her uniform. The rest of the band, fully covered and in their big boots, looked on silently as she wiggled her toes in the sandals as she stood up.

"OK then," Sarge said, as they resumed their journey through the grandstands.

The stands were filling up quickly and they didn't have long to wait. The sky looked like it might be clearing up. The wind subsided. This might not be a bad day after all.

Sarge ambled over to Coach Gunderson, who was corralling his players to the sidelines. They chatted a bit and when Sarge came back he said, "Five minutes".

They stood around and waited. Rod worked the slide of his trombone. On a cold day he was sure to prep with a lot of valve oil, but it looked like it wouldn't be that cold. So now he was worried he might have used too much, and it might drop onto his gloves. Or worse, his jacket. He kept the trombone away from it, the expanse of white with black borders, with the big "T" on the right side next to the row of black buttons. Behind him, the rest of the band was playing with their instruments too.

He looked over across the field where a van was parked, near the visitor's grandstand, which of course was a lot smaller, and half-filled with dedicated Brookline fans. They looked almost like a country club crowd, except maybe for some beefy guys with "B" sweatshirts standing up on the top bench.

The van looked like a TV van, and sure enough a crew was getting out. They didn't look like they would be ready to catch the pre-game set. At least they'd catch the halftime show.

He worked his slide again. Sarge examined the sky. Brigid checked her fingernails with the alternate black and white polish, looked down at her circlets, and then clutched the baton between her bare thighs as she examined her spreading toes on one foot and then the other. He looked down. It must be hard to get the polish on those pinky toes. He pictured her in the locker room, sitting on a bench, carefully painting them while the other girls were pulling on their long trousers, their braided jackets, attaching the epaulettes and cummerbunds, and pulling on the tall boots.

He thought of the time he had seen her in the girls' gym class, as he was walking through it with the other boys on the way to the b-ball court outside. The girls were doing jumping jacks. In their white T-shirts, black shorts and sneakers with socks, even though Brigid was wearing the same exact outfit as the other girls, the rest of them looked as bare as he'd ever seen them -- except for Brigid, who looked unusually covered up.

He looked at the smattering of freckles across Brigid's shoulders. She had a great body, possibly the best in the school -- it was impossible to say, of course, only hers was ever on display like this -- but just her skin was so interesting to look at.

Did she really have 83 freckles? Jamal and he had joked about it in the locker room before coming out.

"You mean you really counted the freckles on her shoulders?" he had asked incredulously.

"Of course. During that long roll-off at practice yesterday. She has one on her butt too. On the right cheek, halfway down to her butthole, under that little 'Y' over her crack."

He laughed as they put their shakos on and headed toward the door. "I can't believe you count the freckles on a white girl's butt!"

"Hell, no sisters will go out with me, I'll take what I can get!"

He thought: Jamal won't admit it but he's probably as in love with Brigid as I am.

As they emerged, he had said, "Man, another cold day. Brigid will be freezing her circlets off."

"So what? She's used to it!" Jamal said.

As they trotted out he had laughed. "Lord, you're awful!"

Now Mr. Simonelli, evidently having gotten over his guilt at spilling all that rainwater, cranked on the P.A. system and said, "Welcome to our last game of the season! To our guests from Brookline, welcome to T--- High School! Today -- "

It was his usual long-winded introduction. He talked about the season record, the presence of the TV crew, rules as to trash and conduct, the snacks and soda and coffee available, the thanks to the Dads' Club, etc., etc. Sarge waited impatiently. He joked quietly to his band, at least the ones in front who could hear, "The whole game won't last this long!" Meanwhile Brigid shook out her body, arms and legs, trying to get circulation going. As she did her breasts jiggled tightly.

Finally Mr. Simonelli introduced the band and the crowd woke up and cheered. The band was this school's pride and joy. Sarge marched out smartly and they followed in double file. They followed him as he detoured around a nasty-looking patch of mud at the sideline, then got into formation astride the 50-yard line.

Sarge, as was his tradition, yelled out, "My name is Herbert Quincy Watson and this is our band -- the T--- High School Tunemasters!!"

Loud cheering from the stands as Sarge walked off the field. It was his style not to hog the spotlight. The band was a product of his hard work, on both the music and the marching, but he didn't wear a uniform himself, and didn't lead. He just got out of the way and let the band shine.

Which it certainly did. They stood there in "attention" position -- Brigid in front, feet together, arms down, her baton upright with one end in her left hand (she was left-handed) with the other end pressed against the front of her bare shoulder -- and behind her, he and the rest of the line of trombones, then the flutes, clarinets, trumpets, the tubas in back, and on the side, the drum guard. The uniforms were splendid, even Brigid's, scanty though it was. The black and white colors were the same, the T's on her circlets and on her little cap matched the T's on the chests and on the big shako hats of the rest of her band. Her uniform might be different than everyone else's but it fit in as one of the band.

The cheerleaders, having reluctantly gotten out of their sweat pants, assembled to the side, shivering in their shortish skirts, and posed with their pom poms at their hips. Their uniforms were fine-looking too. All in black and white, the school colors, yarn bows in their hair, long-sleeved sweaters (which they wore in the cold weather -- in hot weather they wore tank tops) with an embroidered black "T" over a megaphone. Then pleated skirts that came to just above the knee, long white socks and black sneakers. They would stand there still during the band's performance and then, at the final flourish, jump and cheer and wave their pom-poms and begin their cheerleader thing that they would do throughout the game.

With a swing of the baton, Brigid started marching in place. That was the drummers' cue and they started vamping. Now she did her first throw which was the cue for the roll-off.

Rod blasted away as they launched into "Stars and Stripes Forever", the cut-down version. They didn't have to march in place or anything but he could feel his boots give a little. He glanced down and saw that the field was still pretty muddy.

As they played, Brigid pranced and twirled and threw. That was how majorettes stayed warm, he mused. Only they were allowed to move around so much. He could see the wisdom of a majorette's scanty uniform, having free movement in the arms and legs. To go through those moves in a full uniform like his would be uncomfortable, and hot, even on a day like this. Now -- a really high throw.

Brigid was serious about her twirling. She did it a lot during recess and after school in that little out of the way courtyard past the gym, pretty much out of view so that people wouldn't think she was showing off. But he watched her once and noted her diligence. (She was in her regular clothes of course; the majorette uniform would have violated the dress code.) She was totally concentrated on it, trying more and more difficult throws, doing the same throw maybe fifty times or more until she was satisfied she got it right. She would vary what she was wearing, sometimes even throwing while she was wearing a coat. She would use different size batons, and even tied little weights to them. The idea was to be able to throw accurately under any type of condition.

Still, today one could tell that the mud was gumming up her style a bit, the heels of her sandals sinking in and taking an extra split-second to pull up. Being flip-flops, they separated from her feet at the heel and slapped back up against her sole on the upstep more smartly than usual, though with the band playing he couldn't hear it.

And now a big spin and one real high throw, maybe thirty feet in the air. Brigid spun around and looked up.

It came down a hundredth of a second sooner than she expected and hit her pinky.

Brigid dropped the baton.

It fell on the wet ground and she missed only an eighth of a beat, picking it up and starting the next twirl, but the sense of shock was palpable. The whole season and this was her first drop. Her face was deadpan as she continued her paces and the band finished up, and it was not the end of the world of course, but everyone who knew Brigid knew she had to be mortified. One of the baton knobs was smeared with mud, a reminder of her shame at letting down the band which would not go away.

One final throw, perhaps not as high and risky as she would have done otherwise, and the band finished with a cymbal crash. The crowd cheered, but it was a muted cheer. Not because the crowd appreciated the performance less but because they were stunned.

The cheerleaders did their woo-hoo pom-poming and the players got ready to take the field. The drums started the walk-off vamping and Brigid began to lead them off, baton tucked under her armpit, the mud-smeared knob hidden. She must have still been distracted by thinking about her drop, and eager to get out of view as quick as possible. At least that was the theory everyone had afterward. It explained why she marched straight for the grandstand gate and did not see the patch of mud.

Brigid's foot slipped back out from under her and she fell forward, face first. As she tried to pry herself up from the cold mud her hands slipped and her face and upper body hit the mud again. Mud slopped to the sides. On her third try, quaking by now, just one hand slipped and she flipped over onto her back.

Across the field, some of the big beefy guys in the visitor's grandstand hooted.

The band was in disarray. The cheerleaders looked over from their places with concern. Sarge rushed out and shooed the rest of the band to leave the field. Everyone carefully stepped around the patch. Sarge helped his majorette up.

She was crying. One flip-flop fell off and her bare foot squished into the mud. She slipped her muddy foot back into it and almost twisted her ankle before she finally righted herself. Her white face was all muddy. Mud was all over her front, covering her circlets, and actually appearing to be shoved in under them. Mud was over half her tummy. Down below it gummed up and covered the lower half of her uniform such that it looked like she didn't have a bottom at all and had simply stuffed mud into her crotch. As for her back, brown goo dripped from her butt down her thighs, making it look like she had had a bad "accident".

In the stands, people stood up to see what was going on. As the band walked up to their reserved area halfway up, trying not to look back, Debra and Virginia stayed behind to help Sarge take the crying majorette under the stands.

Rod felt miserable, about to cry himself. He hated the jeers coming from the visitors’ stands. This was horrible. Aside from the humiliation he just could not imagine how Brigid must feel with gritty cold mud over her body.

The game started and he couldn't get focused on it. He sat on the near side of the band section, looking down at his trombone and weakly moving the slide. A few moments later he looked over and saw Debra and Virginia with their muddied friend at the Dads' Club stand, evidently waiting for Sarge who was on his cell phone. They had tried to wipe off the mud with the little paper napkins available but it was pitifully inadequate. Poor Brigid was still smeared from her face down to her bare toes. The wind had kicked up and lifted the used napkins out of the trash. They scattered around the feet of the brown-smeared majorette, looking like used toilet paper.

Someone offered Brigid a coat to put on but she declined, not wanting to get it dirty. She had stopped crying, the dried tracks of her tears visible where they had washed away the mud on her face. She sipped a hot tea as Debra and Virginia, in their full uniforms, their clarinets on the refreshment table, huddled around her.

Rod watched with pity. He had always been too shy and tongue-tied to express his affection for her but he was more in love with her than ever now. He did not know that Brigid's misfortunes today were only beginning.

**Part 35**

‘Come on, Brigid, eat something. Have a hot dog. It'll warm you up.’ That's what he thought as he played with his trombone slide, looking over at the majorette with her two friends next to the Dads' Club area. Jamal's uncle was pushing food on her, free of charge. Of course the cold soda cans bobbing in the ice-filled metal tub wouldn't be a good idea. But there were hot dogs, chips, bags of popcorn. Brigid refused all this, preferring to stand between Debra and Virginia and sipping her tea, watching the game with them. They were behind the little table that held the napkins and the serving board with the partly covered tins of ketchup, mustard, relish and sauerkraut.

She had composed herself by now. Ms. Farkas, the gym teacher who ran the cheerleading squad, walked over to her and talked. So did one of the policemen. Sarge got off his cell phone and said something to Brigid and Ms. Farkas. Standing still like that, Brigid looked like she was finally beginning to feel the cold, hugging herself with her bare, mud-streaked arms, her legs together, wiggling her gritty toes, tapping the heels of her muddy flip-flops against the gravel, as she sipped the tea and held the cup close, feeling the steam on her smeared face. How was she going to get cleaned up in time for halftime?

Rod got distracted by action on the field. His friend Scotus had intercepted a pass and was running for a touchdown. He got into cheering like everyone else. Scotus went all the way to the 10-yard line before getting tackled, having run 40 yards. Yay team!

The air on this raw, gray day filled with excitement now. This would be the first score of the year. The cheerleaders, spinning around in their shortish skirts, pumped up the crowd, which really didn't need much pumping up. This town had plenty of school spirit.

Rod looked over. Debra, Virginia and Brigid were cheering too, each jabbing the air with one fist. Brigid's breasts jiggled in time, the mud-streaked circlets tracing independent epicycles in the air. To be honest, the bouncing of the fringes of Debra's and Virginia's epaulettes on their jackets was quite fetching too. There was something about a girl in a uniform, the regular band uniform as well as the majorette uniform, which was sexy.

Now --

Jamal's cousin Jared, helping out at the stand, engrossed in the game, rested a foot on the dolly holding the ice tub. The dolly gave way, one wheel collapsing, and the tub lurched and nearly slid off it. The tub had been full almost to the brim and now a little tidal wave of ice-cold water washed over the legs and feet of the three girls.

It was a surprise but not an ordeal for Debra and Virginia in their tall rain-proof boots. Quite a different experience, though, for the majorette. Brigid shrieked and hopped back, then yelped with pain as hot tea leapt from her jolted cup and splashed over the slope of one breast, down her bare tummy and onto a thigh. She felt unsteady on the gravel and leaned back on the table to catch herself, unfortunately causing the serving board to slide and flipping the tins, the lids of the tins flying off.

She fell backward and sauerkraut flew onto her face. Before her bare buns hit the gravel, relish had sprayed over her tummy. As her feet went up, one flip-flop flying off, the mustard tin overturned onto her supine body, coating her left circlet.

No one in the stands saw this except Rod, but everyone in the refreshment area was in shock. Debra and Virginia quickly took off their white gloves and helped their friend up. Once again Brigid broke down crying. ‘What a day she's having,’ Rod thought. As she tried to stand, her bare foot, hunting around for its sandal, lurched forward and stepped into the ketchup tin, the red tomatoey goo oozing up between her toes.

Her face, with sauerkraut around her nose and over her forehead, was pretty disgusting. It looked like she had sneezed with a nose full of boogers. She turned and he could see the bits of gravel stuck to her mud-smeared back, the nakedness interrupted only by the encrusted string across the tops of her butt cheeks. Gravel also coated the backs of her thighs and calves. As she cried, holding the mustard-smeared flip-flop, she staggered forward, collecting gravel between her ketchupy toes. She was led by Ms. Farkas under the stands and out of Rod's sight. Meanwhile Jamal's uncle and Jared were scurrying around to prop up the dolly to prevent further spillage. The uncle got a toolbox from his van and set it up on the dolly as he frantically began screwing the wheel back on.

Now Sarge was bounding up onto the stands and stood on the lower aisle, looking up at his band. He spoke loudly. "Brigid is getting cleaned up. She'll be ready for halftime. If not, I'll get out there and conduct. Let's go!" He held up his arms. "Fanfare!"

This was the short tune they played as a cheer. Instruments rose to lips. Nobody in the band liked sitting in the stands on cold days like this, everyone's butts getting numb on the metal benches. But at least playing warmed you up a bit.

The tune evidently had talismanic powers. Right on the last note, Scotus pushed over the goal line. Six nothing, T----!

As his team launched into the next kickoff Rod wondered how Brigid was going to get cleaned up. Probably they had some towels in Ms. Farkas' car or something like that. Taking her to the locker room showers was probably not possible. Between the time it took to walk all the way there, and showering, and the time back, they would already be into halftime. And after that, it didn't matter. The halftime show was the last thing the band did; for the rest of the game, properly he supposed, all eyes belonged to the team.

He saw the camera guys coming around the field from the visitors' stand. Too bad they missed Scotus' interception. Well at least they missed Brigid's misfortunes too. Though he really didn't think they would put that on the local news. Local news wasn't as mean-spirited and tasteless as the networks.

It was a long kick. Brookline was forced to make a fair catch. On the next three plays they gained only three yards. The early signs were that T---- was going to win this game.

He flexed his butt muscles to get some circulation back. Man, even through his wool uniform trousers and his thermal underwear his butt was cold. On a day like today the metal benches were like sitting on blocks of ice. He looked around and could tell that everyone else in the band felt the same way.

He thought back to his first-ever conversation with Brigid, last week before their appearance on Melba McCann's show. His eye was attracted to her whenever he saw her in the hall. It was between periods and she had been walking with Shonday and Luisa. Then she stopped at her locker.

Brigid had a distinct if understated fashion sense. One could call it "the Brigid look": jean jacket over a white or black turtleneck, black jeans, Doc Martens with the thick soles, pink socks. It was cute, the way her red hair, shoulder length, draped over her jacket. He supposed white girls had plenty of hair options, but Brigid always wore her hair the same, straight and unstyled. She was on the quiet side, though if teased she could give as well as she got. And modest. Even in hot weather she didn't show much of that white, freckled skin. He had seen her come to school in shorts only once.

That day at the locker, he had come up and, careful to clear his throat and speak slowly, said, "We're going to be TV stars."

She smiled; a shy but gorgeous smile. Then she waved her hair back from her face in a way that was adorable. She could be a model if she wanted to. "Yeah. I just know I'll make a fool of myself." A little wave to one of her friends passing by.

Another throat clearing. "Probably say the wrong thing. I will, I mean." Not you, Brigid. I meant ME!

"Yeah, well. I'm sure Sarge will do all the talking. Just so we look nice and our uniforms are straight."

"Mine will be."

"Mine too." She glanced briefly down at herself. He knew they were both picturing themselves wearing their band uniforms, the majorette and the first trombonist, here in the hall.

"Well, gotta go. Later." He wished he could stay with her but he couldn't think of what else to say.

"Later."

As a first-ever conversation, it wasn't too bad.

Now Rod sat on his cold butt and rubbed his white gloves over the crook of the trombone and idly watched the game.

Then he glanced down and noticed something strange. Between the floor board and his bench, he had a constricted but clear view of what was under the stands and saw what looked like a blanket tied to one of the understruts. Leaning to one side revealed a makeshift triangle of privacy enclosed by tarps and a blanket. In the center was the long metal tub on the dolley, having been quickly repaired and rolled there, Jamal's uncle's tool box still lying on the end. To one side was a little tin like the ones that held the condiments. Inside the enclosure were Debra, Virginia, and Ms. Farkas. And Brigid.

A totally naked Brigid.

Rod's mouth opened and his eyes widened. Brigid was spread out in an "X", her legs wide apart, her toes gripping along the wide brim of one side of the tub, while her hands grasped struts overhead three feet apart. Scanty as her uniform was, she looked totally different in the altogether. What a magnificent, beautiful, perfect body. The first live naked girl he had ever seen. Thank you, thank you, thank you God, thank you --

Rod's head bobbed up and he looked at the band members around him. No, nobody was looking down, nobody suspected anything was going on down there, nobody was blessed with the view that he had. Again: Thank you, thank you, thank you God --

He glanced down again, as casually as possible, and made it look like he was adjusting his spit valve. The next thing he noticed was that Brigid had not shaved all her pubic hair like he had theorized: she had cut it down to a "pubic Mohawk". And it was reddish, kind of like the hair on her head, though partly caked with mud. Miraculously, her head hair and her little "T" cap had not been affected by her misfortunes, the cap still immaculate white and black. It was pinned to her hair which was braided up, no doubt to stay out of her way during her twirling but perhaps not coincidentally giving a clear view of her neck and shoulders.

The next thing he noticed was that the soda cans had been taken out of the tub, leaving only the cold water and that huge long chunk of ice, and that Debra and Ms. Farkas were busily wetting washcloths and applying them, fore and aft, to the many streaks and smears on Brigid's body. Brigid seemed to be wanting to help, at one point bringing a hand down to grab a cloth, but this made her posture too precarious. She needed to grip with both hands on those understruts.

Now, he noticed Virginia bent over the little tin, her bare hands freezing as they scrubbed in the cold soapy water. It took a moment to figure out what she was doing -- cleaning Brigid's uniform. The little tin was all that was needed.

Brigid was trying not to flinch from the application of the freezing cold cloths, and Ms. Farkas and Debra were trying not to press too hard, but they were not making much progress in de-mudding, de-mustarding, de-sauerkrauting, de-relishing and de-ketchuping their majorette. Brigid closed her eyes, taking measured breaths, shivering but trying to control it. Good thing the blanket and the tarps shielded her from the wind. Ms. Farkas and Debra, their gloves off, frequently shook the fingers of their bare hands, probably going numb from the freezing water.

Now the toes of Brigid's left foot slipped and the leg gave way and -- she flipped sideways into the tub! It was a deep tub, maybe two feet deep, and poor Brigid's nude body totally went under, her backside making almost a body-long contact with the ice, bubbles exhaling from her nose. She splashed helplessly for a moment, then spun around on her knees and stood up, one foot and then the other pushing down against the bottom of the tub. As she emerged the icy water dripped off her chin, her fingers, and coursed off the stiff red pebbles of her nipples.

"OHH -- OHH!!" He could hear her shudder. Then after a few breaths she shook her head free of water and seemed to realize something. Maybe it was the shock of the cold immersion, but she was no longer shivering. Also, due to her little dip her skin was now mostly clean.

She grabbed the cloth from Debra and went to work completing the process, sitting on the edge of the tub, vigorously and of course quickly passing the cloth over her tummy, astringently rubbing it over her nipples, scrubbing her toes.

"Fanfare!" Sarge's call brought Rod's gaze back up to what seemed like the outside, daytime world, as opposed to the secret ablutions going on out of sight below. He quickly checked around and saw again that he was the only one privy to Brigid's trials.

The first quarter ended with T---- ahead, 13 - 6. The teams changed sides.

When the band rested again, Rod looked down. And he was in for another surprise, one that made him almost ashamed to look, as if he as a male should be not invading such a private, female scene. But of course he looked.

**Part 36**

He turned back up to the game, watching Scotus do another short run. He knew that what was going on below was not meant for his eyes. But he couldn't help it. He looked down again.

Brigid, face up, was doing a kind of suspended animation crab-walk on the tub, arms and legs spread, her hands grasping each side, her toes grasping each side at the other end, careful to keep her bare butt well clear of the ice floe below. Straining in her awkward posture, she looked down at her upthrust crotch with concern, as Ms. Farkas carefully swabbed it with the dripping wet cloth that she had dunked into the icy water.

Rod's gaze was as furtive as possible given his degree of amazement. He made it look like he was glancing down at his spit value. He played with it a little to keep the pretense convincing. A quick look around -- no, nobody else was privy to what he was seeing.

He was fascinated by the white girl's pussy. He had never seen an actual pussy before. The closely-cropped tuft of reddish hair, now almost free of mud, framing two lips, with a little pink thing -- was it called a clitoris? -- at the top. The lips were spread wide by Ms. Farkas as she burrowed the freezing cloth in between two inner, redder lips as part of a sweeping motion. Those inner lips opened and closed with Brigid's gasps, revealing a narrow open slit where it was too dark to see. Man, I feel like a gynecologist looking at that...

It was hard to believe Ms. Farkas was making Brigid go through this, but as he thought about it it made perfect sense. If it rained or even drizzled during the halftime show, the smallest bit of mud would cause a streak of brown to go down her thigh, painfully visible on this white girl and sure to be detected by the TV cameras. A streak of brown coming from her uniform bottom sure wouldn't look too good. Possibly the band could do the show without Brigid, with Sarge conducting as he said he would, but they had never done that before and it wasn't reassuring. They needed Brigid and, though modest and unassuming as she was, she probably knew it.

Brigid winced and jerked as she felt the icy rag deep within her private area. To her side, Debra and Virginia were furiously scrubbing the tiny bits of the majorette's uniform in the little tin. Without their band gloves, which they had laid carefully on top of Jamal's uncle's tool box, their hands were red and probably numb. So were Ms. Farkas'. He felt sorry for them, their hands all exposed and dunked over and over again into freezing water. Yet it was all school spirit. This school was as dedicated to its marching band as it was to its football team.

He looked up, distracted by cheering. Brookline had intercepted a pass but his friend Jaysee had forced a fumble and recovered it. Go, go go!

"Fanfare!"

He brought the trombone up to his lips and as he moved he realized once again how cold his butt was. Man, he hated playing in the cold, especially sitting on these freezing metal benches. Everyone in the band felt the same way. They were counting down the minutes until halftime. Then the halftime show, where at least they got to move around a bit, and that was it for them. The rest of the game belonged to the cheerleaders, who were rushing in and out of their coverall cloaks as they did quick cheers and then covered up again. And of course, to the team.

And halftime would be it. This was the last game of the season. After that, there would be just concerts up until the St. Patrick's Day parade. Though there were rumors of an invitation to go up to Vermont, the big ski resort at Killington, to play in some kind of winter festival they had up there in January. Please let it be an indoor event...

They finished the fanfare, with a few less flubs than before. As he put his trombone down he looked down and -- oh Jesus --

He shut his eyes but of course opened them again. Brigid had turned over, her butt high in the air, fingers and toes grasping the edges of the tub. And now Ms. Farkas was swabbing her butthole! Ewww! He had never looked at a butthole before and averted his gaze. Brigid must be intensely ashamed and he didn't want to see her in her shame. But he couldn't resist looking again. How disgusting.

Well, maybe not disgusting. Brigid's butthole was neat and clean, the cold water coursing over it, spasming now and then as Ms. Farkas poked and probed. The ring of brown skin there winked at him like a little brown eye as the majorette was shocked by the cold water on her most sensitive spot. It was strange to think such a thought but Brigid's butthole seemed beautiful, just like the rest of her. He thought: Brigid has three eyes, two green ones and one brown one, and they are all pretty!

Not that Brigid was enjoying this. Her face turned upward, eyes squeezed shut, and she clenched her teeth and grimaced, maybe from shame or just discomfort, as Ms. Farkas poked, making sure to get every speck of mud out. Poke, wince, poke, wince, now a deep poke, and Brigid's eyes squeezed even more, as her toes squirmed against the cold metal rim of the tub. He couldn't see the muscles of her hollow tummy from up where he was but he was sure they were quaking...

Suddenly he realized that if she opened her eyes she would be looking right at him. He turned up to look at the game. Not much exciting happening, a slow march down the field by T---- as they gradually gained first down after first down.

Whoa -- now Scotus had the ball again and was rushing for a touchdown. Twelve-zip T----. Now a two-point coversion. Sonny, their quarterback, threw a perfect shot to Scotus deep in the end zone.

He thought of Brigid's anus. Wow, I've seen every part of her, even her most secret part. He felt like he possessed some secret knowledge of the majorette, that maybe just Ms. Farkas and Debra and Virginia shared. He looked down and was relieved to see the grueling ablutions were ended. Brigid was once again standing on the rim of the tub, hands stretched up to hold the understruts. And she was smiling, because Debra and Virginia were presenting her with the prize of their frantic labors -- Brigid's uniform, sparkly clean! Debra balanced the circlets on the tips of her index fingers. Virginia had stretched out the tiny V-shaped bottom over her thumb, the strings dangling down. On her other hand dangled the stringy silvery uppers of the majorette sandals.

He smiled, happy for Brigid. She was a modest girl and no doubt wanted to be back in her uniform. Not that it gave her much protection from the cold. Then again, the pinned-up blankets shielded her from the wind. And that involuntary ice bath a few minutes ago had stopped her shivering, probably by shocking her metabolism into higher gear. Like in swim class when you dive into cold water but it doesn't feel cold after you get used to it.

Also, her body was now dry. "Brigid's rule": bare skin dries quickly. Unfortunately there was another problem. As Ms. Farkas handled the circlets he saw that the way of keeping them on had changed. No more bulldog clips. That was good -- those must have hurt. Maybe they were too big for the smaller circlet design. He had been right, when he had seen her sitting for that makeup guy in Melba McCann's studio. The circlets were indeed smaller, maybe two and a half inches across now. And now they had a detachable short threaded cylinders, perhaps half an inch long, which --

He almost laughed but suppressed it because it would have attracted attention. But the little grommets (he thought that's what they're called) were designed to slip over the nipples, then the "T"'s were screwed onto them with a racheting motion. More comfortable than the clips, for sure. The grommets were a little narrower than Brigid's nipples -- he wondered if they had had to be specially fitted? Of course, if they weren't narrower, they wouldn't stay on her nipples and the circlets would fall off.

But the cold presented a problem not present in a nice warm locker room. The cold made Brigid's nipples pucker, made them tight and hard, and Ms. Farkas's fumbling frozen fingers could not draw them out far enough to slip the grommets on. She pinched the pink nubs and pulled them out, causing Brigid to wince, but just as she was about to slip the grommet on, the little pink pebble slipped from her grasp, making the breast jiggle tightly. He sighed. For poor Brigid this day has been once trial after another, staring with getting her green wool poncho soaked...

A howl from the crowd brought his head back up. Jaysee had gotten tackled and didn't get up. Mr. Bailey, the trainer, ran over with his first aid bag. Before he got there Jaysee showed signs of life. He struggled to his feet and put his arms up for the crowd. What a relief -- football was a dangerous game. One of many reasons he had never tried out for it (another reason being that he was terrible at it).

Jaysee, helped by Mr. Bailey, hobbled from the field. He was replaced by Rodrigo. Four minutes left in the half . . .

He looked down and -- good grief -- will this ever end!

It was the most shocking sight yet. Brigid was still standing up in an "X". As Ms. Farkas held the grommets in each hand, waiting for the right moment, Debra and Virginia had taken two pairs of pliers from the tool box and had applied them to Brigid's nipples!

At first it seemed like torture, like those things that middle-aged people do to each other when they can't get turned on any other way, like those kinky sites he had seen on the internet. But it wasn't torture. It was simply the sensible thing to do, with Brigid's nipples being so tight because of the cold. And her friends were going about it as gently as possible. They were squeezing the pliers, and pulling with them, very carefully.

Still it looked grotesque. Brigid shared her friends' determination but her face betrayed what she was feeling, once again a grimace, eyes shut, teeth clenched. Her pink nipples, pinched in the jagged jaws of cold metal, stretched out obscenely from the rest of her breasts.

Again he realized that if she opened her eyes she would be looking right at him. So again he turned back up.

"Fanfare!"

After that was done he looked down again. The grommets were on. Brigid looked down at them, and at the ends of her nipples emerging from them just the slightest bit. Ms. Farkas carefully screwed the circlets on. One of them ended up a little crooked, at 11 o'clock instead of 12, and she had to twist the whole circlet together with the now-hidden grommet. Bridget bit her lip and endured...

He decided he would not look down there again. Then during a long time-out he felt the urge. No, no, must... not... look... Brigid... naked...

He exhaled and cheered with everyone else as Brigid, all suited up, bounded up onto the lower aisle. She held her hands up, one with the baton, as if in triumph, the circlets bouncing with the rest of her. Quite a change from the crying, mud-streaked wretch as the band had last seen her.

She hopped up the steps, her low heels clanging echoes against the metal, Debra and Virginia close behind her. In a moment they were seated right in front of him.

He felt like he should avoid eye contact, ashamed at having been a Peeping Tom, though of course they didn't know it. But they were busy in their own world, chatting about ordinary things as the quarter wound down. Not much was happening on the field. T---- was on the Brookline 30 yard line and was running plays into the line to run out the clock.

"Zhhhh!" Brigid shivered, then got up a bit and massaged her bare butt cheeks. That cold metal bench must be super-cold to her! On top of that the sky was getting gray and the wind was picking up. He felt a tiny raindrop on his nose, then another.

Debra and Virginia offered half a lap each, and Brigid was now spared the cold bench by sitting up on their uniformed thighs. She dropped her sandals off and wrapped her feet around the jacket of Luisa sitting down in front of them. Brigid put her arms around Debra and Virginia as Luisa, putting down her flute, rubbed the majorette's toes with her gloved hands.

From what he could tell they were talking about bowling again. Mostly about the goofiness of the shoes they gave you. Jeremy, one of the trumpet players, sitting a few rows up, said, "Hey Frigid!" Brigid gave him a killer look and aimed her baton like she was about to throw a spear at him. Then got back to talking.

Sarge passed up a black blanket, donated by a parent probably. Brigid put it underneath her, then curled up cross-legged in what had to be welcome warmth. She looked like an ancient Druid, wrapped up in a black robe, except for the jaunty little Tunemasters cap. And the lovely white neck, with a few strands of her braided-up red hair hanging down, tossed with the cold damp breeze.

One minute left. And now a fine mist filled the air.

Sarge walked over on the lower aisle with a big box and set it down. "Attention folks. It's almost halftime, then we wait on the track for ten minutes while the crowd gets their snacks, then our big show. The cameras are set up. I don't have to tell you what a big deal this is. I know you'll come through like you always do. Brigid, come down and help me OK?"

Brigid unwrapped herself and, toting her baton, bounded down to Sarge. She gave him the folded-up black blanket. He opened the box and showed her the contents, saying something.

Now back to his announcement voice. "Now, it looks like rain. We haven't had to do this so far, but it's time to put on the plastic ponchos. You heard me talk about this in September. Walking around in a wet uniform on a cold day is a sure route to hypothermia. Not in my band! These..." Helped by Brigid, he slipped one on. "Fit over the head and will cover your shoulders and down to about your knees. I know they look strange but the point is the crowd can still see your uniforms and believe it or not, you can still play your instruments, even the trombones and drums. They're that loose. Remember -- the formation is just as strict with these things on as otherwise." He put his gloved hand on the majorette's bare shoulder. "Brigid, help me hand these out O.K.?"