**Tami Beethoven**  
by Donny Laja

**Part 37**

The band milled around in the track area, between the Dad's Club stand and the end zone, waiting for the signal from Sarge to get into formation for the halftime show. They had gotten used to the clear plastic ponchos that covered them. It was a struggle at first, but once they were fully on down to your knees, and you got your instrument organized under it, they were not so bad.

The band was trying to relax. But the mobile camera truck loomed over them like it was a tank. They knew they'd be on the local TV news tonight, watched at home by their families, their parents, and most embarrassingly, by their younger siblings. Embarrassing, that is, if something went wrong.

So the air of casualness and joking around was forced. He played with his trombone slide and shot the breeze with Jamal and Jaysee, who was on a crutch, his calf bandaged up, out of the game and a lot more relaxed than his friends. Others paced, chatted, blew through their instruments. The color guard, which would lead the formation, hovered near the edge of the field, straightening their jackets, making sure the flag holders were secure. To have the flag drop would be a disaster. As for the cheerleaders, not involved in the halftime show, they were sipping diet sodas at the Dad's Club.

One of the more relaxed band members was Brigid, near the fence, talking idly with one of the police, Office McElroy, who he remembered was her uncle. He was a big beefy Irish cop kind of guy, with a jolly face, in his heavy coat, gloves, with ear muffs and a ski mask under his cap. On a cold day a guy like him, whose job was just to stand around, had to bundle up. He had pulled the ski mask down to his chin so he could talk. Usually he was three times Brigid's size, but with him all bundled up next to her in her tiny uniform, it was more like ten times.

The two were laughing at something, Brigid's circlets jiggling, flexing her purple toes, idly scratching her butt with her baton. In the chilly, damp wind, her body was a raw red from head to toes, though a little whitish blotch could be seen where the hot tea had splashed her, on the inner slope of her left breast. If Officer McElroy was thinking about what his niece must be feeling like, he gave no sign.

They were joking around about the Star Wars present her brother had gotten at his recent birthday party, from what he could hear. As she scratched her left butt cheek he smiled. I know what Brigid's butthole looks like...

Could anyone else see it? When she was sitting in front of him a few minutes ago, raising her butt to put that black blanket under her, her butt briefly was almost in his face. The string of her bottom, no wider than a shoelace, bisected her butthole; he could see the sides of her secret brown eye on each side. Well, it would never show in performance. Sticking her butt out at the crowd was not part of the majorette's routine.

Now Brigid, talking to her uncle, lazily tapped the baton against her shoulder, then dropped it and tapped it against her bare heel. Now she casually twirled it, joking with her uncle all the while.

The rest of the band, of course, had the benefit of the clear plastic ponchos, which it turned out also afforded some warmth and shielded them from the wind. After the last of the ponchos had been handed out in the stands, Brigid had looked down at the empty box. Whether this was a surprise to her or not, he couldn't tell. But it kind of went without saying that the majorette couldn't perform in a poncho. It turned out, like Sarge said, that he could slide his trombone under it, and the drummers could wield their drumsticks under theirs. But there was no way to twirl in one.

Actually quite warm now in his full-coverage uniform and plastic poncho, he looked at his band's majorette chatting nearly naked in the cold and felt in love again.

He sat across from her in one class, English. He was hoping she hadn't noticed how much he looked over at her. In her turtleneck shirt, jeans jacket, black jeans, Doc Marten boots -- he could picture her naked body under it, knowing how she really looked underneath, the breasts that were hidden in the turtleneck, the butt cheeks in her jeans, the feet and toes in her Doc Martens. With no other girl could one do that. He felt like he had x-ray vision and was looking through her clothes. Then turned away before she caught him staring.

He imagined taking her to the prom, him in his tuxedo, and her going in her majorette uniform. It was certainly dressy enough for a nice party like that, though not allowed by the dress code. Where would she put the corsage he gave her? Maybe it could hang from a circlet. Or pin it one of the strings of her bottom, below the graceful ridge of her pelvic bone. Well, no, the string looked too thin and fragile for that. Better yet, clip it to her red hair, hair that would be braided up like it now was under her cap, so that he could see her lovely neck and bare freckled shoulders.

Sigh... He would never have the courage to ask her to the prom, of course. It was all he could do not to choke up in her presence even without planning on saying anything. As to what she would actually wear to a prom, he could guess. An elegant but modest dress, floor length, maybe sleeveless at the most. No bare shoulders, definitely no bare midriff or bare legs. Sandals, maybe. But covered up.

He shook his head, trying to stop fantasizing, but he couldn't. What if she went through the school day every day in her uniform? With everyone else normally dressed? He pictured her sauntering down the hall, talking with her friends, the clip-clop of her heeled flip-flops along with the thumps of their boots, her breasts jiggling and agitated as she laughed, the circlets dancing their crazy little ellipses in the air, her concave tummy moving with her breathing and laughing. Or playing in a concern in her uniform, with everyone else in their nice clothes, the boys in their ties, the girls in their black floor-length dresses. And in the clarinet section, among the black formal fabric, the bare beautiful white body gleaming in the stage lights as she played along with the other clarinetists...

He cleared his throat and blew through his trombone, watching Brigid and her uncle through the corner of his eye. I'm getting all sappy. I hardly even know her. Yet it was hard not to be in love. Probably a lot of other guys were too. Now Brigid turned with her back to him, flexing her arms, changing the baton from hand to hand over her head, as she spoke. From her cap to her backless sandals she presented a rear view of total nudity interrupted only by the tiny T-string of her bottom that disappeared between her butt cheeks. Then she turned slightly. He loved her from that angle. The side of her breast came into view, but not so much that he could see the circlet perched at its tip. From this angle, she looked like she was topless.

Uh-oh -- her uncle was looking at him, seeing that he had been looking at Brigid. "How're ya doin', young fella?" he said.

He smiled and nodded weakly, thinking he was going to get some sharp warning from this big cop about ogling his niece. But the cop's smile didn't seem to hide anything stern.

Then Brigid turned and said, "Oh hi, that's the guy who was on TV with me. Come heah," she said in her Providence accent, waving him over.

Still not at ease with the cop, and nervous as he always was about approaching Brigid, he walked over, making a show of conscientiously blowing through his trombone under the poncho and checking the slide.

"Yes, I remembah," the cop said, with the same accent. "You and Brigid put on a good show."

"Th - thanks."

"Even though Sahge had us mahching for almost five hundred yeahs," Brigid said. A reference to Sarge's slipup saying that the band was founded in 1527 instead of 1927. She laughed and he did too. He tried not to look at her circlets wobbling. The fine mist had given a sheen to her reddened skin. The scald mark was barely visible, a slightly less reddened area shaped like a flame, along the side of her breast, almost touching the circlet.

He smiled and looked down at his trombone, watching his high boots next to the red bare toes in the sandals. The mist had formed little beads of condensation on the toenail paint.

Now a gust of wind. "Geez, it's cold," her uncle said, shaking his arms under his coat.

"Yeah," Brigid said, shaking her bare shoulders. A rare acknowledgement from her. As she shook the circlets danced. And she smiled, enchantingly.

Now Sarge called her away and spoke to her, his gloved hand on her bare shoulder. He heard him say the word "muddy" but couldn't make out the rest. Probably giving her a pep talk to avoid the disaster of the pregame show.

Sarge shouted, "Get ready!" As they assembled he said, "Change of plan. There's a dedication to Roddington McNeil, I told you about that. He has a request. We're going to do 'Catch That Tiger' instead. Then Mr. Simonetti goes on the field with him and he gives a" -- he spoke in a stage whisper now -- "hopefully short" -- back to loud -- "dedication speech. Then it's "Stars and Stripes", the full version."

Groans from the flute players. He said, "Now this is the last halftime show of the year, so let's end in a big way. Remember --" he looked up and saw that it was beginning a light rain now -- "it's more important to look good and stay in formation than to get every note right. The ponchos are going to muffle the sound a bit anyway. But they're clear plastic and the formation is going to be very visible."

Sarge looked at the general drift of people from the snack area to the stands. Then, again holding his gloved hand on the majorette's bare shoulder, he seemed to count off five seconds and said --

"Now!"

**Part 38**

The six snare drummers lined up behind Brigid and on her signal they began the rat-tat-tat of the opening salvo. This got the crowd's attention and there was an accelerated movement from the Dad's Club area up to the stands. Brigid's signal was to thrust her baton over her head, her breasts wobbling tightly before coming to rest. He loved the way those circlets moved in little, well, circles. Were they being propelled by those hard pink nipples they were screwed onto? Or did the circlets cause her breasts to sway more?

Once again he felt the possessor of secret knowledge, having seen her total nakedness and how the circlets were fastened onto her. He looked at them and wondered how far her nipples, stretched by the hidden grommets, extruded. The circlets themselves didn't seem to protrude very far. They made her breasts look slightly more puffed-out but that was all. Certainly nothing like that pointy bra Madonna wore in the 80's. He wondered how Brigid's nipples felt in this cold. Did the cold make supporting the circlets more bearable? At least it couldn't be as uncomfortable as those "bulldog" clips.

He took in the rest of her posture -- her "call to attention" pose. Her baton up in the air, her other arm extended behind her, fingers outstretched, one leg in front of the other, the rear leg bent slightly at the knee. Kind of theatrical, but that was the name of the game with a marching band. He saw something he'd noticed before. In this posture, the toes of her rearward foot were spread. Her pinky toe, the school colors meticulously painted on the tiny nail, was almost off the sole of her heeled silvery flip-flop and nearly touching the cold muddy ground. It looked so precarious.

But Brigid was strong and, as she began marching and everyone fell into formation behind her as she strutted, she exuded strength and confidence. It had not been a good day for her, one misfortune after another. Being doused by cold water from above. Falling face down into the cold mud which squirmed into her circlets and into her bottom, and squished up between her toes. Having hot tea spilling on the bare slope of her breast and down her tummy, icy water splashing over her bare feet and legs, having a freezing cold cloth poking into her pussy and into her asshole, her whole naked body plunged into ice water with her back against a big block of ice, finally having her nipples bit and stretched by pliers.

But that was then. She had put it all behind her. And now, as he and the other trombones marched out behind the drum majors, the cheering as the band came out in formation, the Tunemasters were supreme. Yes, being in a marching band was considered geeky. The uniforms certainly were, at least in any other setting. But out here on the football field during halftime, no other outfit would do. As they began marching in a circle around the field, each being careful to stay six feet behind the one in front, two feet from the one to the side, the crowd cheered more loudly, a cheering heard even after they started into "Catch That Tiger", and his heart swelled with pride.

This is where all that practice paid off -- all those before-school practices on this same field, at the ungodly hour of 6:30 a.m., in all kinds of weather, enduring Sarge's benevolent but strict discipline, in the rising sun and often in drizzle and biting cold. Everyone in their regular clothes, with coats on when it was cold, though Brigid had taken her shoes and socks off to get used to marching in the majorette sandals. And now, here at the big game, in uniform, all the drudgery was forgotten.

The TV trucks seemed to be everywhere. He couldn't tell from his angle but he guessed there were cameras at every corner of the field. They knew this would be on local TV and probably the Boston local news too. This was their moment! All those guys who teased the band members for being geeky, they couldn't help but envy them at a time like this. The formation was excellent, the band sounded great, not a single flubbed note in spite of the chill. Looked great too. Even though all the band members except one were covered from neck to knees in plastic ponchos, the magnificent uniforms could still be seen clearly, moving in perfect synchronicity around the field as Brigid and the drum majors turned into the center and he hooked up with Jamal in front of him now, and the other percussionists in the rear rank, as the band formed a huge donut circling on the field. In the middle, it was out of his view, but he knew the drum majors were turning around in sync as they did their rolls, and Brigid was prancing and doing some throws.

The cheering continued, audible to him even through the music. The ponchos muffled the sound but only a little. It was beginning to drizzle, as he could tell from looking down on his poncho and feeling it against his face, but he couldn't hear the pitter-pat against the plastic, everything was so loud and alive! The cheerleaders, in the Dad's Club area, put down their sodas and just had to clap. Even the tiny bunch of Brookline fans in their little grandstand stood up, getting some circulation going, and seemed impressed.

Now was his big moment. It was his cue, as the first trombonist, the one on the left. Glancing down carefully while still playing, he stopped exactly at the 47-yard line and marched in place. The other trombonists, watching him, stopped with him. He looked forward as Jamal and his line pulled away. Now, he watched Sarge, in his unobtrusive position on the sidelines. Sarge was waiting for the band to bunch up into "tight" formation, just three feet between each rank. Now Sarge signaled. Still marching in place, Rod turned toward the crowd, as the band went into the "B" part of the tune on the last go-round. The trombonists followed him and now they were in a line, working their slides in the direction of the stands.

In a moment, Brigid and the drum majors came down in front. The band played especially loud the last few bars. A few rim-shots from the drums, then some terrifically high throws from Brigid. He could see the wisdom of not having a poncho on the majorette. The baton would get all tangled up in it. One final throw, and then silence. And now cheers!

He couldn't help but smile. Smiling in formation was O.K. The cheers continued as Mr. Simonetti, with his wireless microphone and a folded-up umbrella, walked tentatively onto the field, at the sideline, about twenty feet in front of Brigid and the drum majors. The cheering had barely died down when he said, "Let's hear it again for the Tunemasters!"

More cheering, and some whistling. The drum majors stepped off to the right, and stopped in line. He looked to the left, at Brigid, whom he could see in profile, about ten feet in front of him, a little to the side, so as to complement, and not obscure, the presentation of the band in formation. She was in "presentation" position, hands on her hips, baton in her left hand (she was left-handed), again with one foot in front of the other, rear leg bent so that her rear foot was on its toes, the sole of the backless sandal separating from her heel. She was smiling too.

Mr. Simonetti introduced Roddington McNeil, and an incredibly old man hobbled onto the field with a cane. He had on a business suit, a fedora on his head, and rubbers over his shoes. He gave a labored wave to the crowd as Mr. Simonetti introduced him. The cheers seemed to be from the older parents. Nobody in the band had seen this guy before, though they'd seen his name on a plaque in the lobby, near the glass case that had the old band pictures and trophies. Mr. Simonetti motioned to the new scoreboard and asked Mr. McNeil to say a few words.

The old guy grabbed onto the microphone, his hand over Mr. Simonetti's, and began to speak in a quavering, old-man voice. He began speaking about when he first came to this school, in 1962...

Rod realized this might be awhile so he glanced over to Brigid. What a fine view he had. In profile she displayed to him the slopes of her breasts, her flat tummy, one knee in front of the other... He was in love again.

He looked at her tummy. It was more like a hollow. She was on the soccer team, she was in good shape. He remembered again that time he had walked through her gym class, her doing exercises with the other girls in her T-shirt and gym shorts, sneakers and socks. So covered up compared to now. What a fine-looking tummy, flat and just slightly muscular. Flushed red with the cold like the rest of her, though her toes and fingers were a little purplish by now too. White girls' skin was so interesting.

He noted the smoothness of the tummy, down to her navel, then the long expanse down, down, down past her delicate hip bones, down, down, down some more, finally to the top of the tiny V-shaped uniform bottom. He knew what her pussy looked like now, and where her clitoris was, and estimated that they began just millimeters below the top of the little triangle of fabric. The skin above was flawless. How did she shave her pubic hair there? What did she use? A razor? Or some kind of cream like girls use to get the hair on their legs?

He thought of last year's majorette, Grenicia. During one of the halftimes last year, during a moment like this, he noticed she had bumps down there, some kind of irritation. Fortunately for Grenicia her skin was real dark and you couldn't notice unless you were up close. Maybe she shaved too close, or had some kind of allergic reaction to the cream she used. Brigid, with her white skin, could afford no such mishap. To have a red rash visible above her uniform bottom would look pretty bad.

Of course, Grenicia had been lucky. That whole last year, the band was blessed with beautiful weather. Every Saturday was warm and sunny, even into December. St. Patrick's Day was a nice day too. Brigid, at the time marching with the clarinets in a full-cover band uniform, must have looked at the majorette and decided to try out for the job when Grenicia graduated. There were about ten candidates, the way he understood it. And she got picked, the first white majorette in years.

And look at how it turned out! To begin with, the uniform got more skimpy. Grenicia's circlets were four inches across and, her breasts being a little small, covered almost the entire slopes. The uniform bottom had been bigger, the straps going around the waist, and around Grenicia's quite bigger butt, had been thicker too. The sandals had had a strap around the heel which was now gone. But the worst of it was the weather. Grenicia had strutted in the warm sunshine. But except for those first two Saturdays in September, poor Brigid had had to endure the coldest and wettest autumn on record. It was always raining, or windy, or just plain COLD, and sometimes all at the same time. Yet she strutted and marched and twirled as if it was sunny and 70 degrees out and as if being the majorette was a great honor that she was thankful for. Which it was, of course. Yet no one who saw this girl, this unassuming, really quite ordinary though pretty girl, walking through the halls in her jean jacket, talking with her friends -- no one could suspect the steely strength within.

The old guy kept rambling. And now drizzle turned into real rain. Umbrellas went up in the stands, and Mr. Simonetti opened up his big golf-style umbrella so that it covered him and the elderly honoree. Still the old guy kept talking, Mr. Simonetti nodding with just the slightest indication of impatience.

Rod was glad for his poncho. In his full uniform with the thermal underwear underneath, he was not at all cold. In fact the poncho acted like a greenhouse and made him a bit warm. Not a feeling being experienced by the poncho-less majorette. Brigid stood there, in "presentation" pose, smiling, as the rain began to coat her flushed body. Her toes flexed every now and then but otherwise she stayed motionless to the extent she could. He watched as a thin sheet of water developed which ran down her bare back, turned at her sacral dimples, then dripped off the string surrounding her waist. Courses of water ran down further, around the Y-shaped dimple over the beginning of her crack, then washed over the two cheeks of her butt. Jamal was right. Brigid DID have a freckle on her butt, on the right cheek right near her butthole, about halfway down. Then the water ran down the backs of her legs. On the rear leg, it went down to her flexed reddened heel, then dripped off her heel down to the sole of her sandal, from which it ran down and collected under her toes. Through the corner of his eye he could see the TV camera guy, fifty feet away, the camera maybe trained on the speech but could he be actually trained on Brigid?

Rod looked at her frozen smile, as the rain dripped off her nose, off her chin. What was she thinking? Warm thoughts? He saw her start to shiver. That was not unusual. A scantily-clad majorette on a cold day was expected to shiver. It was part of the majorette's life. But still he felt pity as the freezing rain washed over her in its icy caress. He wished he could throw his poncho over her, no more than that, wrap her near-nakedness in his jacket, give her his long pants, his nice warm boots over her frozen feet... He had a fantasy of the end of the halftime show, Brigid jumping into a hot tub set up on the 50-yard line, splashing around in it gratefully, a special chemical in it making her circlets and bottom dissolve, her warm wet body finally jumping up in triumph in her warm wet nakedness to the cheers of the crowd...

He shook himself away from this bizarre fantasy and thought of Brigid in happier times. Those first two Saturdays in September were hot and sunny. The rest of the band was actually sweating in their wool uniforms and Brigid was having a great time. Maybe too great! There was the Bubble Gum Game, the second Saturday. Debra and Virginia had made the ill-advised decision to chew gum on the way to the field. What to do with it? Up in the stands, having to play "Fanfare", they had to put it somewhere fast. There not being any place to put it on their own uniforms, Brigid, who had no playing to do, offered her circlets. And so for the rest of the time up there one could see little pink nubs on her circlets. It looked for all the world like her actual nipples were sticking out through holes. It sure gave him a rise. Neither Brigid nor her girlfriends seemed to be aware of this, as they chatted during fanfare breaks and cheered the team on during runs and touchdowns. But to see Brigid jump up when Jaysee caught that long one in the end zone, the pink nubs bouncing up and down -- he considered himself lucky to have taken in that sight once in his lifetime.

The old guy rambled on... Mr. Simonette was trying, gently, to wrest the microphone away but McNeil had it in a death grip in his gnarled hand. Maybe he was trying to show how hardy he was despite his age, standing up and talking for a long time in this cold rain.

The rain got more torrential now, and now a gust of wind that almost knocked him over. Maybe others in the band too. Their ponchos flapped ferociously around them. Mr. McNeil, perhaps aware of this, spoke louder and closer to the mic.

Brigid adjusted her toes very slightly to the wind but kept in place, smiling, hands obediently on hips, baton wrapped in the fingers of her left hand. Currents of cold rain ran down the slopes of her breasts into the circlets, no doubt chilling her nipples before re-emerging below. Now there were drips coming from the undersides of her breasts, water accumulating, then dripping, accumulating, then dripping... Cold rain likewise ran down her tummy into her uniform bottom, no doubt running in between her pussy lips, maybe going inside... Cold rain washed down her butt, down her crack, no doubt running against her hidden butthole...

Now with the increased flow the rain began going on top of her circlets and spouting off them. Like skiing, or one of those fountains in Italy you saw pictures of, where water squirts out of a statue's nipples. Two little streams, coming off Brigid's breasts. Now her shivering increased and the streams scattered.

How long was this old guy going to go on? Mr. Simonetti leaned forward to the mic, trying to say something, but the guy just kept talking.

He pictured Brigid shivering so much, that her breasts scattered the water like a lawn sprinkler. A comical sight. On sale now -- the Majorette Lawn Sprinkler. Then he scolded himself for being so cruel. Still, he was beginning to get concerned about her. Sarge, under his umbrella in front of the stands, seemed to look concerned too. Hopefully the old guy was almost done. Unfortunately he had only gotten up to 1985 or so...

**Part 39**

He had been getting concerned and the fact that Sarge was concerned made him more so. Sarge had led a band in the Army for years. And this was his tenth year leading the Tunemasters. Marching bands were his life. He could handle any type of situation -- like that time last year when Chelsea, one of the flute players, vomited during the Fourth of July parade. Sarge quickly snatched her to the side and got her some medical help, and moved the marchers around so that the march continued with hardly a blip. Fortunately Chelsea was O.K. But it was the kind of eventuality that he knew how to deal with from his years and years of experience.

But now Sarge looked uncomfortable and uncertain. This was a situation he had never had to deal with before. Majorettes had to get used to marching in the cold in skimpy uniforms, it came with the territory. But the marching kept them warm. Standing still in freezing rain was different.

Rod stood there miserably in his sweaty warmth, feeling the rain pelt his poncho, and underneath the poncho was his jacket, then his shirt, then his thermal underwear. The rain was a remote feeling, like being inside a house and hearing it hit the roof. But Brigid had none of these protections. The rain entombed her bare skin, the cold no doubt piercing her to the bone.

She shivered and the rain cascaded over her, into her circlets and her uniform bottom and deep into her most private crevices, then down finally over her bare purple toes. It was not just her toes. Her entire nearly naked body now had a purplish tinge to it. She had no place to hide from the cold.

And now it got worse.

The rain started feeling hard, like little stones. He looked down at the muddy field and saw to his horror that the rain had changed to sleet!

Yet Roddington McNeil, the old fool, kept babbling on. Mr. Simonetti was getting more insistent in trying to interrupt but Mr. McNeil kept on hogging the microphone. The people in the crowd, huddled under their umbrellas or under raincoats, were losing interest, rolling their eyes, no doubt joking to each other as to when this geezer was going to finish.

This was ridiculous. Everyone in the crowd is all bundled up, wearing gloves, under umbrellas, and Brigid was standing out in front of them wearing practically nothing. She stood as still as she could. Her smile was as frozen as the rest of her. And then, finally, a sign of weakness -- one knee buckled and she had to switch feet. Now it was the right set of toes that was planted firmly downward, spread a little bit, purple from the cold, millimeters from the muddy ground, and the left heel that was arched up, the last few drops of rain dripping from it onto the sole of her miserably inadequate flip-flop. His feet were warm in their socks and boots. How he wished he could give her his socks!

At least with the ending of the rain she was no longer covered with the coursing of freezing water. The temperature might be even lower now but, with the cruel caress of the wintry wind like the world's roughest towel, her skin was drying quickly. Brigid's Rule.

He and the other trombonists decided to check out her goose bumps. A favorite pastime of theirs, on cold days, that is, almost every day of this football season -- taking note of the many varieties of Brigid's goose bumps, where they appeared, how high and how many. Today was a record breaker. She had goose bumps all over -- those on her her shoulders, her arms, and her legs were always visible , but the inner recesses of her butt cheeks were always where they were highest. Today they were monumental, sharp little mountains, going right into her crack, someone inside where the tiny hidden black string bifurcated her cheeks and pressed snugly and intimately against her butthole.

As the old man went on, Rod saw Sarge waving from under the little awning in front of the stands. He had gotten an extra coat from somewhere and was motioning as if to open it up. In other words, he was waving for Brigid to come off the field and put some damn covering on.

A drastic measure, perhaps unprecedented in Sarge's experience, but this was a drastic situation. Rod looked over at Brigid. The freezing majorette evidently saw Sarge -- in fact, from where she was, it was impossible to miss him -- and did not react. C'mon, Brigid! He sighed. She was stubborn.

His thoughts were distracted by the novel sight of the tiny grains of sleet bouncing off her bare shoulders. And the top slopes of her breasts. And her knees. With so many aspects to this new spectacle, each trombonist decided to pay attention to one. Rod looked at the shoulders. The sleet came down in one direction but bounced off at angles depending upon which angle of her beautiful curves they hit. The ones that hit the tops of her shoulders bounced straight up, then came down again, bouncing either in front or behind on the second bounce. The ones hitting the sides of the shoulders bounced off to each side. Some bounced up and fastened onto the lovely wisps of red hair under her cap.

Sidney, the trombonist next to him, watched the grains bounce off her cute little cap and the braided up hair below. George, the next one, was mesmerized by the scattering of the little grains by her breasts and circlets. The ones that hit the circlets shot out especially far out in front of her. Well, he figured, that made sense. The vinyl of the circlets was harder than the skin on the bare slopes of her breasts. Herman watched the sleet bouncing off her hips and butt. Deion liked the sight of her bare knee and how the white stones shot out in front as if she were kicking them. At the other end of the trombone line, Lorenzo watched Brigid's right foot and the specks of ice bouncing off her spread toes.

The sleet got a little bigger and fell harder, and made a real racket against the ponchos. It made it hard to hear McNeil and increased the sense of unreality, that this was some kind of dream. Though of course for Brigid it was all too real.

Sarge's waving became more insistent and he could detect Brigid shaking her head, as slightly as possible so as not to be noticed by the crowd, an incongruous gesture to her frozen smile. Then he realized that following Sarge's instruction was not a simple matter. The TV cameras were trained on the band as well as McNeil, in fact now that the speech turned out to be so boring they were probably more into the band. And it was certain now that the guy at this corner of the field was focused on the majorette. For Brigid to leave the field would be distracting and disruptive to the show, and possibly would be the one item to make the news. "Frozen majorette can't take it any more!" The screaming headline on the Boston Globe. The show, the show -- with a marching band, it was always about the show.

Still, hardy as she had become from all those days marching in the cold, Brigid must think of her health. And so the words came out of his barely moving lips, words that he couldn't really believe he had said until they entered his mind through his ears.

"Brigid, go!"

His first thought was that he was in big trouble, talking out loud in formation like that, but no one could hear him through the white noise of the sleet hitting the ponchos, except Brigid and maybe Sidney and George. He waited for a response. Then he cleared his throat and said again, moving his lips as little as possible so no one in the stands could see, "Brigid, go and put that coat on! We'll be fine!"

Shivering, she replied, "I c - can't!" He screwed up his courage and said, "Don't be foolish! You're freezing!"

"Ya think I don't knnnnow that!" In her Providence accent.

He had confronted her and, in his nervousness, thought he had lost her friendship. So he had nothing to lose. "I care about you, Brigid! PLEASE go get that coat on!"

"N - no." She closed her eyes -- maybe trying to transport herself into a place of warmth, a hot beach maybe. Or under a hot shower. Or maybe thinking of herself as being one of the rest of her band, all covered up under a poncho, as if she was once again marching with the clarinets.

The sleet began to accumulate on her cap. Little crescents of white crust began to form on top of the circlets. Down below, the white grains were filling up the spaces between her toes.

"Thank you, thank you, Roddington McNeil!" Mr. Simonetti said. The old man had had to catch his breath, finally allowing a space to jump in. McNeil looked around, as if awakened, then looked back at the band and at the majorette who was turning into a kind of frost-encrusted sculpture. "Oh sorry -- what a fine band -- thanks for your time!" And with that he hobbled with his cane off the field, followed by Mr. Simonetti.

The sleet, as if on cue, ended. Now it was just a gray sky and a chill breeze.

The second the two men were off the field Brigid lurched into action. A bit more stiffly than usual, but it was oh so good to see her come to life. She spun on the sleet-covered muddy field, shaking the white crust from her cap, her circlets, her toes, and thrust her baton into the air. A loud roll-off woke the band up, as instruments went up to lips. And now the intro to "Stars and Stripes Forever". A bit flubby, but by the time they were two bars into the first section they were back on their game. Their final tune of the year, a big finish, the grandest and most famous of all marching band tunes.

And one of the hardest, especially for the flutes. Fortunately the trombone part was not that hard. As he pumped away on his slide he smiled, watching Brigid twirl, at first slowly, but then her body went from purple to red, and her smile once again became the smile of a living person.

But --

Now she stumbled! The heels of one of her flip-flops sank into the mud.

**Part 40**

Brigid stumbled, but only for a second. She didn't seem upset about it. In fact she seemed to expect it. Then, to his astonishment, hardly missing a beat she kicked the heeled flip-flop off to the side, where it landed on the 40-yard line, and on the next beat kicked off the other. And she continued her routine like nothing had happened.

Rod's eyes widened as he pumped his trombone. So did the other trombone guys. Brigid was strutting and twirling barefoot! Yuck! The sleety mud was up almost to her ankles, oozing up between her toes, as she spun and kicked. On her kicks to the side and front, little bits of mud flew out from her toes. Within seconds the school colors on her toenails were totally obscured by brown muck.

Yuck! What a violation of the rule about what Sarge always called "neat and proper presentation"! Yet Sarge, on the sidelines, was actually smiling. And talking to people to his side, as if answering their comments. Rod realized this was what Sarge had been mentioning to Brigid before halftime, when he had pulled her away from chatting with her uncle the cop. "If it gets too muddy, dispense with the footwear."

Now the showy part, and the trombones swung to the left and then to the right, in perfect sync. This was the beginning of the "trio" section, the main tune, and as they broke into it the crowd cheered. Nothing like your folks and your family cheering you on. It was a great feeling. The TV cameras were eating it up, scanning the field, each line of the band kicking and high-stepping, all the way back to the percussion line at the rear. But most of all the cameras trained on the barefoot majorette slopping around in the cold mud.

Brigid was having a great time. As she spun and twirled and threw the baton up, it looked like a different type of dancing. Looser-limbed, more relaxed. More African. She was so stiff and formal sometimes, it seemed like she had a second baton up her butt. But not now! It stood to reason that without having to totter on those heels, having to grip her toes to keep those backless sandals on, she could move around more freely. It also just was the sensible thing to kick off the sandals when twirling on a muddy surface. He wondered when she had practiced majoretting barefoot. Certainly each time he had seen her, doing twirls on that grassy patch during recess, she had worn shoes.

Her face was flushed, not with cold now but with exertion. Imagine! Not two minutes ago she was shivering and miserable and battling hypothermia. Now she was alive and hot. He realized for the first time what twirling meant to her, what a thrill it was for her. Nobody would suspect it, seeing her around school in her regular clothes, mostly a quiet normal girl, talking with her friends in the hall... Now, dancing around barefoot and nearly naked in the mud in front of the crowd and the cameras.

And now as she swung around, her jiggling breasts leading the way as she threw them just so, she looked back at him and smiled. Just for him. His heart leapt. Yes!! She wasn't mad at him for confronting her about running off the field to put on that nice warm coat. He could see now that she had made the right decision to tough it out. How much would have been lost if at this moment the band's majorette was huddled on the sidelines.

But she was smiling at him -- remembering that he had said "I care about you Brigid"! He didn't know what the future would bring, but right now it looked promising.

With the sleet no longer hitting their ponchos, the band really rang out. Now on the final few bars they hit fortissimo. The drum guard's beats sounded like cannons. The big climax to the tune, the show, the season! Now Brigid threw an incredibly high throw, the baton going up what looked like a hundred feet, and she spun around and spun around like five times as it took seemingly half an hour to come down.

Holy ----! She was really going to do it! A split! Brigid turned to the side and her left leg went forward and her right leg back -- and as her bare butt hit the mud, her muddy toes spread and extended in front, kicking out mud, she caught the baton on the final cymbal crash. The trombone players thrust their instruments up to the sky in unison.

A pregnant second, and then the crowd let loose with a big roar. He thought he could detect a chanting undercurrent in there, some guys in the back rows maybe, "Frigid Brigid Frigid Brigid Frigid Brigid Frigid Brigid -- "

Sarge ran out and helped Brigid up. The insides of her legs were coated with mud but she didn't care. On his prompting everyone took a bow. Then Sarge playfully waved to the camera guy who was now within ten feet of them. Brigid waved too, with a big smile and a wink, her other hand tucking the baton next to her bare hip.

Rod smiled, looking at her flushed butt, her total nakedness from behind, interrupted only by the splatters of mud on her back, her buns, her legs, and the tiny horizontal string just above her crack, and he thought of her lovely hidden brown eye. Maybe it was winking at him now. It was corny but he decided to wink back.

Halftime show over, the band broke formation and trotted off the field as the football players, now assembled at the sidelines, waited to charge onto it. Brigid ran to retrieve her sandals; then zigzagged back to the fence, her toes kicking up bits of mud behind her. He watched her go.

She ran to the gate where her three little sisters and two little brothers were waiting along with her parents too, all cheering and laughing, and ready with warm washable boots, a big fluffy blanket to wrap herself in while they watched the second half, and a huge thermos full of hot chocolate!

. . . .

Rod stumbled around groggily and realized he had thrust himself upright out of bed too quickly. He still had his shoes on, and his pants and shirt and jacket. For a moment he wondered what was dream and what was reality.

Knowing fresh air would clear that question up he ambled through the kitchen and out the door. Ahhhh, life is good. The sun was shining, the birds were singing. The smell of fresh earth, from the ground wet with the melted snow. A little chilly but spring was here.

And as he noticed the yellow VW half-out of the garage, he could make out the best thing about his life, evidenced by the bare legs and feet sticking out underneath, the soles gritty with grease, the fluff of plum-colored pubic hair under the bumper.

"Hi, Baby," Tami said as he approached, her hidden face still engrossed in her task. He bent down and kissed her on her lower hair. Then tickled one of her soles.

She giggled and with a good nature said, "S---! You made me miss the eight-thousandths!" She was adjusting the valves, a task she did regularly, taking her sweet time, in her own happy world, her and the valves and the screwdriver and wrench and blade gauge. Tami the Motorhead. She had described the ritual to her friends several times. Rod as an engineer was proud he could understand her because most of her friends sure couldn't. "The manual says to set the intake at .004 and exhaust at .006, but I set both at .008. It makes it a little noisy and there's a little less power, but what the hell, it's only 40 horses anyway, and it saves the valves from burning."

She had been almost finished when he saw her, and now she was done. She replaced the creaking valve cover with a little grunt and scooted out from under the car, her bare back scraping against the concrete. She wiped her hands on a rag and looked up at him, face speckled with bits of crud, grease marks on her bare shoulders, a black smudge covering her left nipple and areola like a circlet. He helped her up and they embraced in a full-body hug, she with the wrench still in her hand, he not minding any stains that might result on his clothes.

"How was Providence, Babe?"

They separated and she looked down. "Sobering."

"What, did they get along with Gretchen?"

"Oh of course they did. It's impossible not to get along with Gretchen. It's just that Dad works so hard at his store, with his heart condition he really shouldn't, but... he was hoping Joe would be back by now to help him. And I found out they are really, really proud of me." Her eyes got wet. "They are such great parents I would do anything for them."

He saw her wipe her tears and then she put her head back under his shoulder. "Oh Rod... I am so lucky."

He let a few moments go by and then he said, "I saw that DVD you left. Babe, you went through hell. I just can't imagine it." Indeed. It was worse than being raped, he thought. A girl being raped could at least turn her head and try to think of something else. But poor Tami had to face that creep Ross right in the eye as she came and came and came...

Tami hugged Rod more tightly, her toes squirming against the cold, gritty concrete. "It was horrible. I tried to escape in my mind, tried to tell myself to get used to these... orgasms... But each one exposed my every nerve... rubbing each nerve raw... and I had to keep my eyes open! Oh Jesus... I thought I was going to go out of my mind. The only thing that kept me from going crazy was thinking of the love of my family, and of you waiting for me... that after the... session was over I could go back into your arms."

He almost cried himself. As it was he sniffled, looked at the top of her head, and ran his hand through her plum-colored hair.

They stood there, embracing, listening to the birds sing. Tami's toes caressed his shoe and the leg of his trousers.

Then he said, "Your parents should know how much you suffered for them. You should -- "

"NO!" Tami stood apart. "Not ever!"

"At least tell them about being forced to -- "

"NO!! And you don't tell them either!"

"I wouldn't do that," Rod assured her. It seemed so wrong, that her parents should not know about all her tribulations, or at least some of them, that she had suffered for their sake, so that she would not lose her scholarship and disappoint them. But of course she was right. Any disclosure would make her parents, and especially her excitable father, very upset. Maybe they couldn't do any more about it than Tami could now, but it would at least keep them awake at night. Nothing is more unsettling than a grievous wrong that can no longer be redressed.

He didn't like to see Tami like this, so worried, remembering her past travails. He hefted her into his arms, in a way glad to be the strong one for once, and carried her into the house. Neither one of them had to be anywhere for the next couple of hours.

**Part 41 The Spring Zing**

Rod was out of his element, he knew, as he sat with his leg crossed over his knee in his business-style suit. He glanced around quickly, as discreetly as he could from the front row, and realized he was overdressed. He had wanted to wear something "nice" but it was a good thing Tami dissuaded him from wearing a tuxedo. That would have been WAY out of place in the midst of this loose-limbed, flamboyantly dressed crowd.

Must be mostly gay, he told himself. He wondered if he was capitulating to stereotypes until he remembered Tami telling him that, yes, almost all the male fashion majors were gay, and actually most of the female ones too. Even in the dark of the Little Theatre one could make out the bright colors of the blouses and shirts and dresses. The focus of the show was the show, of course, the designs that the fashion students had been working on all year. But most of the students were fashion plates themselves. Even including Professors Girardo and Wanamaker, sitting to one side in their ascots, making notes, in preparation for grading. And Professor Ellen Winckel standing on the edge of the stage, announcing each design and reading from her cards, tall and skinny and fiftyish, in her sparkly green A-frame dress.

And including Tami, in her way. Yes, it was still plum colored hair on her head and down below. But the earrings were unusual, half-coral, half-silver, and her fingernails and toenails were striped in the same colors. He had watched her do them, at least the toenails, her feet splayed wide on the kitchen table, as he went here and there getting his tie and his shoes and his shirt.

On stage, it was not as bad a freak show as he had feared. No outlandish designs that looked like alien outfits from a Star Wars universe. Once again he found himself giving these fashion students some respect. Creativity was important but practicality was the key. These clothes were designed to be worn -- more exactly, designed to be sold, to ordinary people who intended to wear them, if not every day, at least often. No dresses made out of balloons or paper clips. No shoes shaped like geese.

Unfortunately the models, few of which were fashion students themselves, more or less fit the runway stereotype -- thin, curveless, walking down that runway with one foot crossing in front of the other. Weird. As an outsider Rod thought this over and over again: weird.

He inhaled sharply and felt his dick stiffen as supple toes wrapped around his sock-covered calf and inched up a bit like five little inchworms. He discreetly but playfully brushed Tami's bare foot away.

Now their attention fastened on the next entry, hers. Gretchen, battling her shyness, strode onstage in a tan-colored dress, tall and blond, chunky, with real curves, looking positively huge after the succession of skinny waifs.

"This is Gretchen Spaulding, modeling for Tami Smithers," Professor Winckel announced. "In this instance the model is a co-creator of the dress. This V-neck midline is made of a fabric designed by Ms. Smithers and by Ms. Spaulding, a new polymer which has been submitted to the Department of Defense for approval. The name they have tentatively picked for this fabric is 'Cherish'. It is designed to afford warmth and alternately ventilation depending on conditions. I note that both Ms. Smithers and Ms. Spaulding have family members serving in Iraq."

The audience had been instructed at the beginning not to applaud until the show was over, but as one might expect, even though no others in the room had family in the military, there was respectful and quite vigorous clapping.

As Rod clapped he thought of his National Guard unit, the architects and engineers who had been marched around like infantry. Then his thoughts went to the dress Gretchen was wearing. The first item designed with Cherish -- the name Tami had given to the horse that had saved her life in the Texas scrubland, whose color was much like the unbleached color of this new fabric. What a story -- like so many others she had to tell concerning her cross-country trek, traveling on her wits, without clothes or food or money.

Truth be told, the fabric didn't seem to him to be quite clothing-ready yet. It seemed a bit too stiff and rubbery, like Gretchen was wearing a big white fried egg. Then he saw that her breast was about to fall out! With unexpected aplomb Gretchen shifted her hips just so, causing the V-neck to right itself. He heard Tami gasp and bring her hand up to her mouth with concern.

But all was OK. Gretchen smiled at the audience, a shy girl overcoming her shyness, and her body issues. The swing of her hips and her breasts as she turned to leave the stage was a nice touch. Flaunting her curves as if to emphasize that the other models didn't have any. He had to chuckle. He felt Tami's head lean against him and he put his arm around her bare shoulder.

Did she get an "A"?

He felt sure of it, as he put it to Tami and Gretchen in their kitchen, having a coffee before heading out to the party at the county airport. There was a two-hour gap between the end of the show and the beginning of the reception. This seemed odd to Rod and Gretchen until Tami explained that the Spring Zing reception was traditionally the time when fashion majors would romp around in their craziest creations, which they needed time to do up.

"I'm not so sure myself, maybe a 'B' this time," Tami said, sitting cross-legged up on the table as usual, then straightening her legs and stretching her toes out past the table edge, taking another sip. "You did a good job hiding it, Gretch, but your boob almost slipped out."

Gretchen playfully hid her face in her hands. "Lord, that was a close call... For once I was proud to have hips and a big bust. Which reminds me, I hope the food there is good. I'm getting hungry. Oops, sorry."

"No that's OK," Tami said. Gretchen couldn't be blamed for being sensitive. With Tami meaning to "wear" her tail to the party, the naked young woman could not eat or have anything in her intestines.

"It's a really good restaurant, from what I hear," Rod said.

"Strange place for a fine restaurant," Gretchen said. "In a small airport."

"It's a pricey place to fly from," Rod said. "I suppose with such an upscale clientele, they wouldn't want just a burger stand."

"Well time to get into my Spring Zing costume," Tami said, hopping off the table, soft footfalls on the floor, then off to the bathroom to use the big enema bag.

"It's OK, you don't have to say sorry," Rod said after his wife left. "I still feel funny about it, but you know Tami, she's so strong-willed. It's her decision to wear that thing; no one's forcing her to wear it. Not like at that pony farm. It always amazes me how Tami can put that horrible experience behind her."

They both snorted at this unintended pun.

They talked for a while about Roger, Gretchen's fiancé, flying missions in northern Iraq.

"I... am... ready!" Tami said, sauntering into the kitchen as if she were padding onto the red carpet at the Oscars, a little black purse clasped in her hand. She swiveled and planted the other hand on her outthrust hip, showing off the long, plum-colored hair flowing from between her butt cheeks almost down to her bare heels.

Gretchen had been told about the tail but had never seen it. "Wow..." Tami allowed her a few seconds to take it in. The color of the tail matched Tami's pubic hair exactly, as well as the hair on her head. Tami wiggled her hips and the long delicate filaments swished back and forth like a thin jungle waterfall.

"It's beautiful," Gretchen concluded. "Strange but beautiful."

Rod leaned forward to kiss Tami. "Just like the rest of you." Then he stood back, hands in his jacket pockets, as if to appraise the sight from afar.

Gretchen had already changed from her Cherish dress into her most formal dress, long, black, spaghetti straps. She looked down at her black pumps, and pictured how she might look in a costume like Tami's, all naked, her brownish pubic hair maybe bleached blonde like her natural head hair, black polish on the toenails of her bare feet. Maybe all the women at Campbell-Frank College had fleeting fantasies of being naked like Tami. Of course, actually being naked in front of people, well she would just die of shame! A stage through which Tami herself had passed a long time ago.

"I'd better freshen up," Gretchen said, and excused herself to go to the bathroom. By this she meant she had to pee, and brush her teeth again after having that coffee.

In the kitchen, Rod continued to stand back, hands in his pockets, looking at Tami flaunt her new accessory. The only clothes she could wear. They engaged in idle chit-chat. Then --

"Ohh -- " A flash of recognition in Tami's amazed eyes, then an accusing look at Rod. "You absolute prick!!" It was the expansion of the tail inside. Then --

"EEEEE!" Tami's eyes burst open and she jumped three feet into the air, legs splayed out, tail leaping up behind her, then she bent forward as she came down, hands hitting the floor, her crooked, trembling legs stretched out almost into a split, her crotch a mere foot from the floor.

Gretchen came back and stood open-mouthed in concern.

Tami looked up at Rod, hair scattered, and in a husky voice said, "Rod, you are Evil -- "

Actually it was more like "EEEEVV -- owww!" She never got the whole word out. Again she leapt into the air, doing a half-turn, this time landing with her back against the counter, her legs spread and her crotch widely displayed almost in Gretchen's face. Gretchen saw the impish smile on Rod as he pulled the remote control out of his pocket.

For the first time Rod noticed that Gretchen had come back. "Sorry Gretchen." He seemed to have second thoughts to Tami too. "Sorry Babe," he said, turning the remote off. "I couldn't resist."

Tami's concave tummy heaved in and out as she caught her breath, or tried to.

"I suppose you have to do your hair up again," Rod said. He seemed more contrite. "Sorry again."

Tami looked down, breathing heavily, her toes spreading and grasping the floor.

In spite of being disturbingly fascinated, Gretchen felt compelled to say, "Maybe I should stay in the living room -- "

But she didn't leave, wanting to stay. She couldn't help but see Tami's widely-spread pussy lips, the hard pink nub of her clitoris, palpating tensely.

"N - no, it's OK," Tami said. Campbell-Frank's only naked student looked up at Rod. "D - don't leave me like this..."

Rod said, "OK, Babe." As Gretchen watched intently he started working the remote again.

"OHHH!" Tami leapt and spun around again. "OHHH!"

Gretchen watched as Tami danced around. It was amazing how high she would leap with every stroke of Rod's finger on the little touch pad. Gretchen felt odd watching this spectacle, but then she told herself, 'This is what Tami does. Be naked and have orgasms in front of people. It's been a part of her life for so long she's become used to it. In fact it's been odd that I'm one of her best friends and yet I've been one of the few people on campus not to watch a Tami Smithers orgasm.'

With Rod's increasing finger pace Tami quickly crested. To Gretchen's shock she lurched forward and held Gretchen's hand to anchor her as her body spasmed, her feet slapping on the floor with each jolt.

Gretchen was amazed to see the tail wag back and forth with each contraction, like a dog's tail, or a horse's, or a cow's swatting flies... back and forth, back and forth, swishing with each spasm of Tami's internal muscles.

For a moment Tami looked up at Gretchen with eyes that seemed to be pleading, or maybe in pain, or maybe as if trying to say something but not being able to... It was the strangest expression Gretchen had ever seen.

When it was over Tami dropped to the floor, on all fours, sweating, catching her breath.

"Oh God..." she said between gasps. Then she lay down on the floor, the tail sticking up, still jerking now and then. Gretchen and Rod watched silently.

Finally Tami struggled to her feet and said, "I suppose we'll be fashionably late. I gotta shower again."

**Part 42**

She should have known that Tami could not sit down with her new accessory inserted. Gretchen smiled as she looked back at her naked friend, who had her knees on the rear seat, looking out the rear window. The things we women do for fashion. Uncomfortable shoes, tight bras, stifling nylons... not that any of these were familiar to Tami, except maybe as vague memories.

It was about five miles to the airport. Rod struggled with the gear shift of the ancient Beetle. There was a whirring sound and then the car shuddered whenever he changed gears. "Sounds like it needs a new clutch, Babe."

"Actually it sounds like the pressure plate's warped," Tami said, looking idly at the road escaping behind them, elbows on the top of the rear seat. With both hands she re-twisted a little braid that had fallen onto her forehead. In the near-darkness of the little car Gretchen looked down at Tami's bare feet, sticking out between the front seats, caressed by the ends of the long filaments of tail, almost touching the gear shift. "That's a big project though. Remember, fourth gear is 28."

"I know, but I just don't have your touch."

"What?" Gretchen said.

"At the right speed you can change gears without a clutch," Tami said. "Fourth gear is about 28 miles per hour on this car."

"Oh." Gretchen had driven farm equipment on her family's dairy but she never knew that.

She looked forward again, at the next curve in the road, and considered how they must look. Here I am in my formal dress, Rod next to me in his suit, and a naked girl in the back seat with a weird "tail" stuck into her rectum. It looks like Rod and I are a kinky couple and Tami is our sex slave.

She looked down at Tami's feet again, the spread toes. How human feet naturally look, she supposed, without being crimped by shoes. Prehistoric feet. And the hard soles that have walked on all kinds of surfaces, hot and cold, rough and smooth, for over three years. Tough yet sensitive. Last year, at a party in Rod and Tami's back yard, Tami's old friends Marisol and Desmond had come up. Desmond was blind and had little Braille blocks. Tami got up on a table, in the same position as she was now, as he pressed them against her soles. Tami got almost every letter right. Even after three beers.

What a super woman Tami was. Men stripped her and made it impossible for her to wear clothes ever again. Yet she turned nudity into an advantage, exploiting the unused abilities of skin, the same way a blind person like Desmond was able to use his hearing so well. Desmond could hear things nobody else could. He was the first to hear the distant thunder that day, five minutes before anyone else. Then the sudden thunderclap which everyone heard, and the instant downpour. They all hurried into the house except Tami. They watched as she scurried around covering up the grill and the food, her body sleek and wet, rain dripping from her chin and spinning off her nipples.

Now Gretchen's gaze traveled up the long, beautiful tail to where the plug nestled in Tami's widely-spread anus. She knew there was a bulb inside here, to keep the tail from being ejected, but even the plug part looked huge. Maybe an inch across. And Tami's anal ring holding it like a -- like what? It was stretched out so there were no wrinkles. The only analogy Gretchen could think of had to do with sex. Like the mouth of a woman who is trying to suck a penis that is too large for her mouth.

Not that Tami would be eating tonight. Yet another sacrifice made for fashion. Preparing for an evening with the tail inside her, Tami had stayed off solid food today, drinking nothing but juice and smoothies, then done her enema thing a while ago in the bathroom. Gretchen detected a slight whiff of strawberry. She knew that a few of the TL's liked licking Tami up there and would bring flavored enemas that they asked Tami to take while they stood around and watched. Yuck. Even with all attention paid to cleanliness, licking an anus was a disgusting thought to Gretchen. Yet she had accepted that others could be turned on to it. Yet another surprise, part of being Tami's friend.

"How you feeling, Babe?" Rod asked as he negotiated another turn.

"Sehr gut," Tami said, using one of her German phrases. "So long as you don't try anything again."

"No, I took the batteries out," Rod said. He fished them out of his pocket as Tami turned to look. "And look." The remote control came out of the other pocket, battery door swinging open and empty. "Of course," he said in a low voice, "AFTER the party, they might find their way in again."

Tami giggled. Of course that would happen after they dropped Gretchen off. It was a little embarrassing for all of them when she walked into the kitchen as Tami spasmed. Gretchen couldn't get the image out of her mind -- of Tami's pulsating pussy lips, pushed out from the bulky thing behind them, moist and wide open between her widely spread legs as she leaned back against the counter under the hidden assault of the moving bump massaging her internal centers of pleasure. And then to look into Tami's eyes! Gretchen could only stand it for a second before averting her gaze. It was too intense, like looking up at the sun.

Gretchen contemplated the tail filaments next to her, right over Tami's heel. Except for their plum color they looked like hairs from a violin bow. She couldn't resist giving one a little touch. To her surprise Tami grunted and her toes curled. "That's got to be you, Gretchen."

Gretchen blushed at being found out. "Wow -- you could feel that?"

"The vibrations go all the way inside. My gut is very sensitive."

Gretchen looked up at her naked friend's firm, tan butt cheeks in amazement. Somewhere deep inside there, Tami felt what I just did. I've touched her way deep inside. Tami repositioned one of her knees and a few filaments slid across Gretchen's wrist. She had to admit it was a thrill.

"This is very beautiful," Gretchen said, stroking the filaments.

"It was a bitch to get it all the same color," Tami said. "It's not real hair, so regular dye didn't work. Thanks though."

"Can you wag it back and forth now?"

"No, only when I'm coming. Here. Let me try again." Without appearing to move, Tami grunted, then looked back. Her anal ring wiggled a bit. "No, only during, um, orgasmic contractions." The hesitation in her voice -- perhaps a slight, vestigial feeling of shame?

Gretchen felt brave and asked something that had been on her mind. "Tam -- I've heard that you sometimes -- have an orgasm -- while talking to people -- "

"Never right in public," Tami stressed. "Never when there's professors or administration people around. But when no one's around, sometimes my friends like to lick me."

Rod snorted. "Sometimes! More like ten hours a day! Those girls are inexhaustible!"

Returning to her question, Gretchen said, "Well how can you -- talk -- while..."

Sparing her shy friend the task of completing the question, Tami broke in to answer it. An answer that was well-considered and based on years of experience and thousands of episodes. "There's only three things I can't control when I come. One is the anal contractions. The other is, my pupils dilate. And the third is my mind goes all fizzy for a few seconds. But when that's over I can replay in my mind what the person just said and stay in the conversation. So it's no problem."

For a few moments the three were silent, Rod watching the dark, winding road, Gretchen looking ahead and then glancing at Tami's feet, and Tami watching the road going away behind.

"How many people at this thing, Babe?" Rod said.

"Maybe 50, vielleicht. Professors and students, mostly. Some staff. At least that's what they say. I'll try to catch Professor Girardo and see how I did at the Zing."

It was unusual for Tami to talk so much about herself. But then again, this was her night. "I'm getting inspired for that International scholarship."

Rod shook his head good-naturedly. "They keep telling you the odds are a thousand to one."

"Well at least get picked as a finalist. That means I go to the finalist fashion show in Montreal next month. I want to make my parents proud."

"I know," Gretchen said. On that ride back from Providence she had seen Tami cry, unexpectedly. "I have such good parents," Tami had kept saying, before drying her tears finally as they approached the Campbell-Frank exit.

"When will they tell you if you made it?" Rod said.

"Soon, according to Professor Girardo. I have to go through an interview with this Dr. Lambert -- I mean Lam-BARE," Tami said. "He's French. And pompous and a real tough guy to make a good impression on. The Prof wants to prepare me right beforehand, whenever that is. I get the feeling he's nervous about it, that he wants me to at least make the finals for the good of the school's reputation."

"Whether you make it or not, I'm sure you'll do fine Babe," Rod said. He fondled Tami's foot as if he was holding her hand. To Gretchen's surprise Tami's flexible toes grabbed up and enclosed Rod's fingers.

Another turn in the road and the trees cleared away into flat land and now, Campbell County Airport under the full moon. Rows of blue lights crossing the little plain, converging on the FAA tower and next to it, the little terminal, brightly lit, a newish three-story structure with a glass enclosure on the top floor. Small planes were parked in a line to one side. At first it looked deserted. But then blinking lights approached from the side, from over the trees, past the revolving red radar stand, a little ten-seat jet coming in for a landing. Another little airplane was taxiing its way around a far bend. A fuel truck passed behind the terminal. A guy in an orange suit walked across, disappearing behind the terminal.

They came to the sign that said, "Welcome to Campbell County Airport and the Skyview Restaurant". Rod turned into the parking lot. At the terminal entrance there were a few professor-looking types standing around, and a couple of students, gaudily dressed, passed through. One looked dressed as a dance hall dancer, the other in a Mae West outfit complete with long cigarette holder, though of course without a cigarette in it.

"Time for your grand entrance," Gretchen said cheerfully as she helped Tami out of the backseat. She looked down at the bare feet and coral-and-silver toenails pressing onto the asphalt, then up to the lower hair ruffled by the chill evening breeze, the concave tummy, the stiff nipples, then the braided hair framing the tanned face and luminous green eyes that caught the rays of the streetlight above.

"Thanks," Tami said. Then they followed her as she strode in front of them to the entrance, proudly and upright, the long flowing tail waving gently and sensuously with the swing of her hips, sweeping across her lithe but muscular calves.

**Part 43**

It was a measure of Campbell-Frank's influence in this county that their naked student could stride proudly and effortlessly into the terminal. The security officers, having been warned, watched tolerantly and in bemusement as Tami and Rod and Gretchen politely nodded to them and crossed the simple little lobby and passed the information desk. Of course the sight of a beautiful naked young woman was not unpleasant. That her companions were fully and formally dressed made her nakedness even more striking. And seeing that tail swish behind her as she sashayed by, her little black purse in one hand, and placed her bare feet on the escalator, well, that was something they'd never forget!

The terminal had three floors, the first of which had the waiting area, the baggage claim, a newspaper stand, and overhead screens showing arrival and departures to cities like Boston, Cincinnati, Toronto, and St. John. As the three young people got to the second floor they saw the airport administration office and offices rented out to various businesses, the Campbell County Development Authority, and a flight school. The few people they passed glanced at Tami as if they couldn't believe what they were seeing, but then again, there were enough outlandishly dressed fashion majors going up with them that they provided her a kind of cover. Most assumed the tail was just somehow glued on to her outside. They could not have imagined that it was of a piece with a thick, 12-inch dildo that went up into her colon.

Another escalator up to the third floor, the Skyview Restaurant, and now one was in a different world. A world of elegance, with the muted lighting, the circular bar with two bartenders in tuxedos, the big cocktail area with the little high tables to stand around, the soft classical music in the background, the waitresses in their ruffled white shirts and long black pants. Around them, the blackness of night and the glass walls. The lights of the runways and the airplanes were like constellations.

And the hubbub of conversation, the place just beginning to fill up, with brightly colored and outrageous costumes of the students contrasting with the more muted tones of the professors and other "grown-ups".

It was now that Tami made her entrance. Not being a natural show-off, but realizing she would unavoidably be the center of attention, she strode in front of Rod and Gretchen. Conversation died down and she placed her hands on her bare hips, then turned slightly and shook her tail by shaking her butt. Maybe it would have been a shocking sight otherwise, but everyone had been told. Polite clapping and a few whistles as Tami turned and then, looking down at the carpet for a moment, did a graceful cartwheel, trained gymnast that she was, the purse still in her hand. The long strands of tail whirled behind her, a long spiral caressing her heels and her bare butt and finally wrapping around her hips as she came back up standing. Rod's mouth went dry and he felt himself getting hard. He shifted his leg a bit and was reassured that no bulge would show through his pants and jacket. His outfit was black and it was too dark to see in this place anyway.

They went to the bar and showed their I.D.'s and got their drinks. Tami got her usual, a martini. Rod was a beer guy but tried to be cultured and got a glass of red wine. Gretchen, after some indecision, decided on a rum and coke.

"Hi Tam," Trent said, hugging her. "Woo!" That was Tami, looking down at his costume for the first time as they separated. Trent was in a body stocking with a fig leaf design sewn over his crotch. On his feet were red high-top sneakers. His blond hair was set up in braids. Then she looked at his companion, Cyrus, even taller and thinner than Trent, a handsome young black man with a goatee. Cyrus was similarly dressed.

"We're Adam and Steve," Cyrus said. Which got a good laugh, even from Gretchen, who was trying not to look at the fig leaf designs, both of which seemed to be hiding large bulges. What was in there? Socks?

Now a couple of girls from Tami's fashion design class, Claire and Joany. Claire was a very thin Asian girl who tonight was done up in a geisha outfit.

"Socks with sandals? Isn't that a fashion crime?" Tami kidded her.

Claire said, "Just for once I'm traditional -- whoa!" Her flat wooden flip-flops were about four inches high and she tipped over onto Tami, causing a little of Tami's martini to spill onto a nipple. Tami flicked it off, causing her breast to jiggle.

"Sorry, let me get you a napkin," Claire said, lurching over to the bar.

"No, that's OK. I'll get Rod to lick it off."

Rod felt his face getting hot. He would always be an outsider to this crowd. He sipped his wine. Yuck. It tasted sour to him but he tried not to make a face.

Now Professor Ling, the faculty supervisor for Tami's and Gretchen's polymer project. It was surprising to see him here. But as Rod looked around he saw some other professors he remembered from his math and science classes. It wasn't just the fashion crowd.

Dr. Ling said hi, his eyes fastened strictly on Tami's face. Then he got into a conversation with Gretchen and the two drifted off. Tami finished her martini and ordered another. Rod tried like hell to enjoy the wine.

Now, Roberto, the Student Government president, and his girlfriend Maria. Tami and he chatted a bit about the upcoming Activities Night. He said hi to Rod and made some small talk while Maria complimented Tami on her tail. "This is quite an event," Rod said. "Some wild outfits." They looked at a male fashion major across the room who was dressed like Barney the Dinosaur, only wearing a lacy white bra.

"Yes," Roberto said. "Quite a juxtaposition." His favorite word.

Professor Congi and Mrs. George. As usual they gushed. "Beautiful tail, Tami," Ms. Congi said. Rod watched as Mrs. George bent down to touch a strand and Tami jumped. The tiniest vibration thrilled Tami's gut. On a scale like that, bumps protruding from the dildo inside would be like an explosion. No wonder they made her jump halfway to the ceiling. He felt around in his jacket pockets, the empty remote control in one and the batteries in the other.

Now two of the Tami Lickers, Barbara and Melissa. Both were dressed pretty much the way they always did. Barbara was in a granny dress with boots. Melissa, tall and blonde and model-like, wore a black riding outfit, complete with cap. They tried to engage in small talk but were clearly preoccupied with their lust, a lust that found expression when Barbara said, "I can't believe how lovely your lower hair is, in that color."

"Thanks," Tami said, placing her martini on the bar, looking down, opening her legs for their benefit, spreading her lower lips for the small circle of friends. Her toes spread on the carpet to anchor her. Through her spread legs one could see the softly swaying tail filaments falling like a soft summer rain.

"If only -- " Barbara said.

"NO," Tami said, sternly and playfully at the same time, closing her legs, the toes of one foot wrapping over the other.

The friends went to nibble on the little snacks on the bar. Rod felt his stomach growl but resolved that, if Tami couldn't eat because of her tail, he wasn't going to eat either. As usual Tami's nipples picked up his thoughts. "Go ahead, my hungry man."

"No."

Tami took another sip. She was about halfway through her second martini and, being Tami, none the worse for wear. "I have to pee. Hold this, OK?"

He watched as she cantered gracefully away, her tail swishing behind her, looking into her little purse probably for her lipstick. Those pony tails that white girls like to wear that go down their back; he would never look at one the same way again. He could probably count every vertebra, from her neck down to the crack in her butt. Having the tail in her made her stand and walk a little differently. She had to arch her back a bit, a little like bikini models do when they're trying to look "hot". Once again he counted his blessings. So many guys, and a lot of women too, lusted after her. But she was his.

After she was gone Rod tried another sip of the wine. Bleacchh. Then despite knowing better he tried a sip of Tami's martini and almost choked. Martinis were her favorite bar drink but he didn't know how she managed it. They were like pure alcohol.

Tami's tastes, he noted, tended to be extreme. She liked the shower water scalding hot, so hot he could never get in with her. Well, maybe that was understandable, maybe she was hoarding heat for when she had to go naked in the snow. But her coffee was the strongest he'd ever tried to taste. She liked spicy food -- at the campus snack bar she used to order her burritos "suicidal", whereas he could manage only up to "medium hot". When she put on her iPod headphones while studying, the music was so loud he could hear it from the next room.

He loved Tami more than he had ever loved anyone, they were a team, they shared a life and knew many things about each other that no one else knew. He had seen her in all kinds of moods, in good situations and bad. Yet somehow he felt like he didn't know her. There was something about her that was as inscrutable as a sphinx.

Why was that?

It must be because her experiences were so different than anyone else's. That awful freshman year, in particular. Bad things happen to people, of course. What happened to Trent, for example -- he thought this as he saw "Adam", across the room, holding hands with "Steve" -- loosing your lover on 9/11. A horrible tragedy. Yet people lose loved ones, albeit not so dramatically. It was part of life. He thought of losing his own father two years ago, now his lonely mother had to sell that old house that was too big for her to take care of, and move in with his aunt.

But Tami -- the terrified freshman forced to go naked all year, terrified to show the slightest sign of modesty. Strapped to that dildo machine at Chalfont, hundreds of unwanted orgasms, often while having to look at creepy people like McMasters and Henry Ross right in the eye. Having to go across the country naked, then captured on that pony farm. Nobody could imagine what all that must be like. You couldn't say all that was just "part of life". But looking in her eyes you knew all that hurt and pain was in there somewhere, a hurt unlike anyone else's.

And now she seemed OK. In fact, with this tail, like the one that was stuck in her at that pony farm, she seemed to treat the past like a little bit of a joke. How can she do that? Did her psyche have some superhuman ability to survive?

Maybe she was in denial. Maybe all those horrible feelings, all those memories, were being repressed, just so she could get through life. He could almost sympathize with Dr. Abu Jamal and Dr. Kantor over at Chalfont. It had been two and a half years and they hadn't been able to cure her allergy to clothes. Apparently the "treatment" had all been external, testing her skin responses. Maybe the real problem was in her mind and they were afraid to go there, fearing the can of worms they might open up.

For now he just had to hope for the best. Presumably she could continue the naked life after graduation by staying on at the college as a graduate assistant. As a certain valedictorian she would have no trouble finding such a job. But how long could that go on? He chuckled, thinking of her newfound determination to get into the finals of that International Fashion thing. What if she actually got that fellowship? Going back to Providence -- naked!

Well maybe he shouldn't chuckle. That her parents were supportive had apparently been a surprise to her. Once again, she wanted to make them proud.

And what about these dreams he'd been having?

Tami came back and got her martini and then who wheeled up to them but Homer Winant, working his wheelchair manually as always, in a business suit with his "Grafton Transmissions" cap.

"Hi Homer," Tami said.

"Hi," Rod said, still not being able to fully trust this guy.

"Hello friends," Homer said. "Congrats on having the best costume in this freak show." What might have been an insult came out as a compliment, the way Homer said it.

"Thanks," Tami said, turning to show her tail, making a leg, one bare foot up on its toes.

They stood around for a moment as Homer ordered a beer. Then he said, "Got something for you." He brought a bag out from under his chair and gave it to Tami.

**Part 44**

"Wow," Tami said, opening it up. Wooden platforms with metal runners underneath. "A new pair of skates."

Specially designed by Homer so that Tami could skate at the little rink outside the gym building, which during warm weather served as an outdoor basketball court. They were just hard soles, without tops, molded to the contours of Tami's feet, with ridges between the toes so that she could grip them without relying on any strap which would trigger an allergic reaction. "The old ones broke," she said to Rod.

"Yes I remember," he said. That was about a month ago.

"These shouldn't break," Homer said. "The old ones were wood, these are fiberglass. Go ahead, try 'em."

Tami dropped them to the floor and set them under her feet, balancing on the runners. Of course she could not jump in them but it was possible to grip them, with her well-developed foot muscles, so as to skate pretty fast. Others came around and looked down. She even managed to lift one and then the other, by squeezing her toes together. "Thanks Homer. You're a genius." Which of course everyone knew. She put them back in the bag. "It's a little late for this year though."

"Nonsense. We always have an April blizzard, and a cold snap. You know that better than anyone."

"We didn't have one last year," Tami observed.

"Then we're due," Homer said.

Tami sipped her martini and then said, "Rod, I'd better chat with Ling and Gretchen." And she left Rod at the bar with Homer.

Rod watched her go. As she chatted with the Professor, Mrs. George joined them, and then some guy from the local Chamber of Commerce. Tami knew how to comport herself on occasions like this. He thought of her adjusting valves the other morning, smeared with grease. And now here she was, as graceful and polished as a princess. He thought of the last time they had been at an elegant affair, last fall at that faculty - administration cocktail party they'd been invited to, that black tie affair. Tami gracefully made the rounds, saying exactly the right thing... totally naked, yet elegant in her braided hair and perfectly done fingernails and toenails, the carefully tended pubic hair. Acting like she clearly had the most beautiful and luxurious gown, yet was too modest to seem to be aware of it.

It was her hair, upper and lower. She considered her hair to be her "clothes". So she didn't really feel naked. Or at least that's what she said.

"How's the engineering life?" Homer said, waking Rod from his reverie.

"Oh, OK." He forced himself to take another sip of that wine, then looked out at the blackness through the glass walls, the lights of the runway, lights of a little plane coming in for a landing. A thought hit him and he got concerned. "Can't everyone out there see in here? Seeing Tami might distract them. Could be dangerous." It sounded like a joke but he was serious.

"Oh I don't know," Homer said, looking out. "Sure is pretty with that full moon. Everyone's too far away to see anything."

Rod looked up at the FAA control tower looming over them. "What about that tower? It looks like tinted glass. They could be up there with telescopes."

Homer laughed. "You're getting paranoid. That tower's got to be a hundred feet away or more."

"Well..." Rod looked up at the tower, then down at one of those guys on the runway in the orange vests, hoping the guy wouldn't look up at them.

To his relief Homer wheeled away to chat with Ms. Congi. Then Tami came back. A waitress passed by with snacks.

"I keep telling you, EAT," Tami said.

"No... Babe, were you ever in band in high school? Were you ever a drum majorette?"

"No."

"A cheerleader?"

A sip from her martini. "No."

"Do you have an uncle who's a cop?"

"I have THREE uncles who are cops," Tami said, pulling back a wayward strand of hair from her face and then scratching a nipple. "I thought you knew that."

Oh, right. He met them at a family gathering last year.

"These are weird questions. What's bothering you Baby?"

"Well... lately I've been having these strange dreams about --"

"WHOA! OHMIGOD!"

It was Terry, Tami's old roommate from Pilgrim Hall! Dressed up in a killer outfit, white sleeveless blouse with a plunge neckline, a black miniskirt, fishnet stockings and spike heels. Leading by the hand a dark-skinned, Indian-looking guy in an open collar and brown jacket and dockers.

Rod got his share of hugs from Terry, and shook hands with the guy, who seemed about 40. In the rapid female exchange that followed he gathered that he was a publishing company executive, had a name that sounded like Karu, and they had been living together in Boston for the past two years. Terry hadn't changed. Always full of energy, admiring Tami's tail, catching up on the doings of Jen, Mayree, Dawn, the old gang. Rod thought of the great unspoken sadness, the third roommate in that room, Mandy, gone forever.

And now, Professors Girardo and Wanamaker, with something to say. They both seemed a little nervous. Did they already have a grade for Tami's entry in the Spring Zing? It seemed too early for that. What with the reunion of old friends, they knew they had come in at a bad time but whatever they had to say somehow couldn't wait.

Terry and Karu ordered drinks and it was as they were sipping them that Professor Girardo spoke.

"Tami, we were impressed with your entry in the Spring Zing," he said. "I, uh, want to prepare you for something. I apologize but it was out of my control. Dr. Lambert is here." Pronounced, of course, Lam-BARE.

Behind him loomed a very tall man with a distinguished-looking beard, a high forehead, and a three-piece suit that looked like it was from 1920 or so. Complete with watch chain going into the vest pocket.

His presence was such that conversation around them ceased.

"Tami Smithers, meet Doctor Francoise Lambert," Girardo said. "Dr. Lambert, Tami's husband, Rod -- uh -- "

"Sykes," Rod said, shaking his hand.

The Doctor looked down at everyone like a king surveying his court. His words were pure noblesse oblige. "Sorry for this interruption, and sorry for doing this to you, Ms. Smithers, but I am a very busy man and unfortunately I am being called away to Tokyo tomorrow on business. I will have to conduct your International interview now."

"Oh -- well -- " Tami turned and pushed her tail back, embarrassed by it. "I can -- just give me a moment -- "

Dr. Lambert laughed gently. "That's perfectly all right dear. You might not believe me but I have seen stranger, shall we say, 'costumes'." He looked up into the middle distance. "Personally I find myself more disturbed by the purple dinosaur with the brassiere."

There was polite laughter, sycophantic, but actually it was kind of funny.

He looked at Tami's martini. "I must say, I will give you a pass if you have had a few drinks. I want to be sure you answer the questions with a clear head."

Tami replied without hesitation. "No, I'm OK." She put her martini on the bar, took a deep breath, and stood up straighter; her nipples sticking out and up at Dr. Lambert as if saluting.

Girardo's and Wanamaker's faces he saw that the fault was not theirs. And he could tell that they were hoping like hell that Tami would do well at this interview. Having one of their students make it to the finals in Montreal was important for the school. And, of course, important to Tami's parents and therefore to Tami. At the very least, even if she didn't get in, the way she conducted herself and how she answered the questions would be buzzed about around campus, and around the International design community, to her credit no doubt. He didn't know anything about fashion design but he was sure Tami would make everyone proud.

Dr. Lambert retreated and asked Tami to join him. He sat down at a table behind the bar where he had some papers out and a checklist of some kind. He asked Tami to sit across from him but she motioned that it was impossible with her tail. So she stood obediently, feet slightly apart, tail flowing down past her calves, waiting. At her request Rod stood by. Behind them, Girardo and Wanamaker sat at the bar, on tenterhooks, nervously sipping their wine. Gretchen was close by also.

It was like Tami was a finalist in a spelling bee. Rod watched as Dr. Lambert began with some kind words.

"Let me say I was quite impressed with your efforts at the polymer you and Ms. Spaulding are developing." He looked at Gretchen, who was now joined by Professor Ling and Mrs. George. "You are working on the 3,2,5 ester, from what I understand."

"Y - yes," Tami said, evidently surprised that this man had such technical knowledge.

"I have here a series of fifty questions," he said with some weariness, as if the long checklist was not his idea but he was resigned to it. "I'd like you to answer them carefully." He looked up at her. "Of course for any fellowship given by the International, your composure during this interview is important and it will factor into your score. I apologize for the beauty contest aspect of this, but that it just how things are, if you want to represent the International and become a success in this business."

Tami cleared her throat and nodded. This was a heavier deal than expected. It was like she was being tested for worthiness to enter the outside world of adults.

He launched into the first question.

"What do you see is the purpose of fashion design?"

Tami must have expected this one. "To make -- uh --"

Her eyes opened wide in surprise as the Doctor looked down at his papers, then she regained her composure as he looked up again. "To make clothing that is useful, satisfies the wearer, and makes that person a -- visual asset."

The Doctor wrote the answer down, as Tami looked at Rod with daggers in her eyes.

Rod knew exactly what had happened. Inside Tami, the tail had expanded into a three-inch bulb. As if he had pressed the white button on the remote.

He fished out the remote as quickly yet unobtrusively as possible, and showed it to Tami, the little door swinging from the empty battery compartment. He shook his head helplessly.

Then her body jerked and she gasped, a tiny gasp, and straightened up as the second question was asked.

"What is the secret to a good line? You can give different answers for men and women if you like."

"Well, it's the same for both." Just a tiny quiver of the tail filaments betrayed what must have been happening.

Rod went into a silent panic, as Tami, suppressing an increasingly intense series of quivers, answered the second question in as even a voice as she could. Behind her, Gretchen and Girardo and Wanamaker watched intently, rooting her on. So much depended on this...

**Part 45**

Dr. Francoise Lambert continued the interview that, if passed successfully, would qualify Tami Smithers for the final phase of the International competition, the fashion show and presentation in Montreal.

"What type of shirring do you prefer in synthetic overgarments?"

"I should say... bias style, to reduce the risk of bunching."

Rod knew that the short pause in Tami's answer was to keep a gasp from interrupting the flow of her voice. From making love to Tami he was well acquainted with the telltale quiver in the legs, the slight tensing of the taut muscles in her tummy. The spreading of the toes. Dr. Lambert might have ascribed this to basic nervousness which would be only to be expected during such an important interview. Rod knew it was something much more profound, explosive, deep, disruptive...

Tami's body jerked slightly. Fortunately the Doctor was looking down at his questionnaire at the time. Her nipples got even stiffer than usual.

As the Doctor recited his fourth question, the tail behind Tami quivered. Then it began waving back and forth like a dog's.

Rod looked on in horror and suddenly Barbara and Melissa were at his side. They were fixated on Tami anyway, no matter where in the room they were, but the glimpse of the wagging tail was like an alarm -- they knew exactly what it meant and they were there like a shot. Rod and the two TL's looked at each other and then at the tail, still wagging from side to side, then at the face of poor Tami as she struggled to answer the fourth question.

Tami, bringing her hand up in a carefully controlled motion, scratched her head and paused, as if pondering what to say. Then after the last uneven wag, she gave her answer, no doubt having "played back the question in her head", as she would have put it.

"What's happening?" Barbara said.

"I don't know!" Rod said. Once again he brought the empty remote out of his pocket to prove his innocence.

"Someone must have another remote around here!" Melissa said. The three of them looked around, glances darting all around the room in as subtle a way as possible.

"Jesus," Rod said, watching his naked wife listening to another question, standing straight up in her nakedness before the seated personage of Dr. Francoise Lambert, bare feet placed a foot apart on the carpet, her hands clasped primly in front of her plum-colored lower hair. "Tami's really suffering!"

"She should excuse herself," Barbara said.

"No, Tami wouldn't do that," Rod said. "I know her. This interview means a lot to her parents. And to the school, I bet."

"I like to see her come, but not like this!" Melissa said. She looked around. "Some evil person is around here!"

"I didn't even think there was another remote!" Rod said. Then he exhaled and gathered his thoughts. "Let's split up and check every person!"

They tried not to be frantic but each of them bumped into someone as they turned. Rod scoured the main area between the bar and the entrance. Melissa checked around the edges of the room. Barbara checked around the circular bar itself. As it turned out everyone's hands were visible and nobody was holding anything except drinks and hors d'oeurves.

They met in front of the bar and watched Tami from a distance of fifteen feet. They saw the clenching butt muscles, and now the tail began moving back and forth again, back and forth, back and forth, every 0.8 seconds... all the time she was carefully answering the Doctor's latest question. They thought of the explosive energy the tail detonated inside her, how it made her jump halfway to the ceiling... all that energy now contained in the iron vise grip of her self-control, finding a crimped outlet now in the slight motion of her hand up to her head, smoothing away a lock of hair that had gotten loose from its braid...

In his desperation Rod decided to call on the assistance of Homer Winant.

Homer was on the other side of the bar, chatting with Gretchen, Professor Ling, Vanessa Congi and Mrs. George. "Could I speak with you?" He decided to go for broke; Tami needed all her friends at a time like this. "In fact all of you." How to explain it? "You see that tail Tami has? Well, it's not just a tail. Inside it's... it's..."

"It's a sex toy, yes I know," Homer said. "Works by remote, as I understand."

"Well here's the remote," Rod said, waving it in front of them. "See? I took the batteries out! Tami's going through that interview; and it's somehow gotten activated. Look!" They watched as the tail wagged again. "That's what happens when she has an orgasm with that thing!"

"Oh Lord!" Mrs. George said.

Gretchen and Ms. Congi and Professor Ling looked with widened eyes.

"Well tell that Doctor guy to stop the interview!" Ms. Congi said.

"I'll try to butt in," Rod said. "IF Tami will let me. Meantime it doesn't solve the problem of that... thing... noodling around inside her."

"Can't she just pull it out?" Gretchen said.

"No, it's expanded inside. That works by remote too. It's expanded to a bulb inside three inches across. It's physically impossible to take it out unless the expansion button is turned off." Rod looked around. "We've GOT to find that extra remote! We've looked around, and everyone here has, um, hands all accounted her."

Homer took charge. "Let's move it! I'll speak to Hank, he's the security guy. We'll search the kitchen, the maintenance room, downstairs... What's the range of the remote?"

Rod remembered the TL's chasing Tami down the street and into Hightop Park. "I'd say two hundred feet."

"Oh shit... it could be anywhere in the terminal... Well, I'll get moving." And he quickly wheeled past the bar and opened a door that said "Staff Only".

"God, I hope there IS an extra remote," Ms. Congi said, voicing what everyone was dreading.

They stood around helplessly, watching Tami suffer through another question. She idly twisted her toes against the carpet, then scratched a nipple. They saw her tummy expand and contract in a deep exhale. The Doctor was engaging her eye-to-eye. Rod and Gretchen, remembering the ride here, and Tami's description of uncontrollable orgasmic responses, wondered if the Doctor could detect the dilating of her pupils. Rod thought about what Tami had said about her trials at Chalfont, about how she tried to get used to them, tried to get used to the orgasms, but each one just ripped her heart out and shook her emotions to the core.

Professor Ling, quickly up to speed on this, said in his professorly manner, "What if there is in fact no other remote? What if that... device... inside her has simply gone haywire?"

"Oh God," Barbara said. She and Melissa looked at each other. "They'd have to extract it somehow!"

"Chalfont has an emergency room," Vanessa Congi said. True. As part of a funding obligation the Chalfont Institute had a small walk-in clinic on the far side, where the highway was, that was open 24 hours. Not widely known among faculty and students. The college had its own health center, and the clinic dealt almost exclusively with people from the town.

"We've got to drag her there first," Rod said. "And that sounds really dangerous. How can they take it out? They'd have to take it apart, inside her."

Though it was not visible through their elegant clothes, all four of them clenched their buttocks at the thought.

A man in a security guard's uniform bolted out of the "Staff Only" door and hurried out of the lounge and down the escalator. Conversation began to die down as there was a sense that something was wrong. People looked around.

Rod didn't want people looking at Tami, he didn't want a whole crowd of people witnessing her in her dire distress. So when he sidled back toward the table where the Doctor was interviewing the standing naked girl he did it as slowly as possible. Gretchen sidled over with him, leaving the three older people to look on from afar.

He got in next to Professors Girardo and Wanamaker, who had been watching the interview intently, not aware that anything was amiss, thinking that Tami showed a little nervousness -- especially that curious nervous twitching of her tail -- but was otherwise acquitting herself quite well.

Now all three looked on in alarm as the Doctor paused in the middle of a question.

"Are you all right, Miss Smithers?" he said.

Tami's eyes were wet and a tear had trickled down which she was wiping away.

"Yes -- I'm OK" -- the tail began to wag, and Tami timed her words in between wags -- "it's just -- hay fever..."

The Doctor laughed. "Oh I quite understand. I sympathize, my dear. I used to suffer from that as well." How relaxed, how casual he was, as he idly tugged his mustache and looked down at his papers to continue the question, question number seventeen.

"Gentlemen!" Rod whispered urgently to Girardo and Wanamaker.

"Please, Mr. Sykes, we're busy," Girard said.

Rod, realizing for all he knew he might be jeopardizing Tami's chances by doing just this, took Girardo firmly by the arm and led him away. Wanamaker followed.

In a carefully controlled urgency he whispered the situation to them. Both men turned in amazement to Tami's tail.

"You mean she is having orgasms while being interviewed?" Girardo said, as if in outrage.

"She can't help it!" Wanamaker said. "We've got to do something!"

Girardo was still having trouble assimilating this sudden and astonishing information. "So every time that tail wags -- I've counted ten times already -- ten orgasms?!?"

"Her capacity is incredible. Look, she's being... violated. We've got to stop this interview!"

"Oh Jesus, this will torpedo our chances at the International for sure," Girardo said. "A candidate who's allergic to clothes, and now she's having orgasms during the interview!"

"You've got to stop the interview!" Wanamaker said, echoing Rod.

"Well go ahead," Girardo said.

"No, you're the head of department. It's got to be you!" Wanamaker said.

He was right about that. Girardo drained the last of his wine and cleared his throat. He had obligations to the school but his obligations to his students were greater. He approached the table where the Doctor sat.

After a brief hesitation, he said, "Dr. Lambert, I must tell you something."

"Please!" the Doctor said in his most imperious manner. "I'm in the middle of the interview. You know it shouldn't be interrupted!"

"But Doctor, this interview must come to an end." Girardo looked at Tami, up and down, with concern that must have told Tami that he was aware of what was going on inside her. "Miss Smithers is not able to continue."

"NO! I'm... OK -- ohhh!" Tami blinked and her body lurched forward and she looked like she was about to cry, having betrayed her emotions for the first time with that little moan. With tremendous effort she straightened herself up, her toes grasping the carpet. "G - give me the next questionnn..." She looked at both men in the eye, with as even an expression as possible, pupils dilating. Behind her, the tail wagged again.

With a very presumptuous motion Girardo took Dr. Lambert by the arm and led him aside. He motioned for Rod, who quickly explained the situation. The Doctor looked at the suffering naked girl in amazement and approached her.

The distinguished Dr. Francoise Lambert, tall and elegant and exquisitely dressed in his three-piece suit, looked down at the naked five-foot-five quivering young woman, who strained to meet his gaze with wet, twitching eyes.

"My dear, I'm very sorry... I've been told about the, uh, device inside you. Under the circumstances we can... postpone the rest of the interview."

Just then Homer busted onto the scene, wheeling in with an urgency that was very unusual for him.

"We've looked everywhere. Nobody has any remote!"

It was then, in the middle of an increasing circle of onlookers, that Tami Smithers shook and collapsed onto the carpet, her butt and the tail sticking up in the air, and began to sob.

**Part 46**

In the midst of this elegant restaurant and bar, and the fully dressed, if outlandish, finery of the smart fashion set, the naked girl with the tailed dildo deep in her rectum was on the floor, on all fours, her jerking butt high in the air.

Absurdly, she tried to stand up and apologize to the distinguished men. Her tummy quaking, her navel twitching, she staggered up with a great, slow effort on unsteady bare feet as another crest washed over her, shaking her to the core. "D - doc - torrr... P - p - professsssorrr... I'm s-s-so sorrrry you... have to -- ohhh!" -- she bent forward as if punched in the stomach -- "Seee me like thissssss... ohhhh..."

Dr. Lambert got up to speed much more quickly than Girardo had. "We have to take her to an emergency room," he said. He didn't look it but he was seventy years old, and gay, from an era when being gay was strange and abnormal and one tended to do other abnormal things too. He remembered the ill-advised experiments with tin cans, ketchup bottles, light bulbs. Embarrassing as it was, going to the emergency room was the only solution.

"What can they do for her there?" Rod said. "That thing inside her is too big now to take out!"

"They'll have to break it inside her."

"How?! It will cut her up inside!"

"Make a plaster of paris mold around it, then crush it."

Homer said, "How can they work inside her with her jerking around like that?" They felt like explorers climbing through the vault of Tami's rectum, looking for a way out. Meanwhile, in the outside world, Tami had crumpled to the floor again. The horrified and helpless circle of people looked on as she flopped around like a fish on a boat deck.

"Anesthesia, of course," Lambert said.

"Would that work?" Rod said. Would knocking Tami out stop these intense reactions? This was different than when Spica and the other TL's were at the house that day, toying with Tami like a marionette on a string. The efforts of their fingers on the touch pad ebbed and flowed with Tami's crests and troughs. Here, it appeared that the moving bumps massaging and mauling Tami's innards were continuous. Which was scary. Maybe there was no devious hidden person with a second remote. Maybe the thing was malfunctioning, stuck on "drive Tami crazy!" until whatever batteries worked it ran out. Hours? Days?!

"Oh - oh - oh - " Tami had flipped tummy up now, eyes squeezed shut, her hands and feet supporting her crab-like, jerking her open, palpating pussy up with each spasm, right into Lambert's and Girardo's faces. Her toes spread and squeezed in time.

As they watched this gruesome scene, a strange fascination took hold. Especially on the part of the men, witnessing this spectacular display of the female multiple orgasm. What was it like, to have an earth-shattering climax -- and then, a few seconds later, have another, just as intense? And then another? And another? --

"Somebody do something!!" Terry said. She and Rod looked at each other. The only ones there who had read Tami's freshman year diary, the only ones who knew the horrors the naked freshman had endured at the Chalfont Institute...

Quickly Rod realized something. He pulled out his remote and saw Sarah Wickland's card that he had taped to it. He whipped out his cell phone.

Tami lay on her side, trying to catch her breath. "Oh Rod... please helppp..."

He dialed the number of Mrs. Wickland's office in California, turning away from the scene so as to hear better, so that he faced the glass and the starry nighttime view of the runways. Homer wheeled around to his side.

His heart sank as he heard a recording. "This is the law office of Sarah Wickland." In fact it wasn't Sarah's voice, but the voice of her assistant Nina West. "We are moving this week and will reopen at our new location on Monday, March 30. If you need assistance call the Encino County Lawyers Service at 555-2367."

"Shit!!" Rod said. He said to Homer, who he thought should be in the loop, "a damn recording!"

"Ohhh -- " Tami was in tears, her face beet red, sweating, looking over at him. "Please Rod! Help me!"

"I'm calling Mrs. Wickland!!" he shouted back. With urgent fingers he tapped out the new number. So urgent that he misdialed. Cursing himself, he started over. As he waited, and waited, watching his naked wife in her dire distress, he tapped his foot. Finally a ring. Then another. Then another.

"Good morning," a sprightly female recorded voice said. "Welcome to the Encino County Lawyers Service automated directory. Please say the name of the attorney you wish to contact. Say the first name first, then the last name. You can interrupt these instructions at any time. Don't worry, I won't mind."

"Ohhh... God..." Terry held Tami's hand. Now Trent hugged her as she tried to catch her breath again. Nobody was counting but Tami was recovering from orgasm number fifteen.

Rod hated these voice activated menus. With as even a voice as he could manage, he said, "Sarah Wickland." A long pause.

"Did you say... Farley Pickler?" the sprightly voice said. "Say yes if I have that correct."

"No!"

"Please try again. Say the first name first -- "

"Sarah... Wickland!"

"Eeee!" Tami wailed as she was pulled up to the peak yet again. Terry and Trent looked at Rod desperately.

A pause. "Did you say... Perry Winkler? Say yes if -- "

"Sarah Wickland!!"

A pause, punctuated by the sound of Tami's sob. "Did you say... Scary Pinkler?"

"Get me an operator please!" Rod closed his eyes and felt about to cry himself, with frustration.

A pause. "Did you say... Gotmolly Pease?" Sprightly voice.

"Get me an operator please!"

A pause. "Did you say... Gremlin O'Reese?" Sprightly voice.

"Get me a f\*\*king operator please!!"

A pause. "Did you say . . ." -- Trent was trying to give the rapidly dehydrating Tami a glass of water -- "Gotfranklin Reese?" Sprightly.

"Get me a f\*\*king operator please!!" Rod felt like hurling the cell phone through the glass enclosure.

A pause. A long, long pause. Rod wanted to curse but dare not say anything more. "Let me transfer you to an operator."

"Thank God!!" Rod said out loud. When he got a live person, an old-sounding female, he blurted out that he needed Sarah Wickland in a hurry. Then was told Sarah's cell phone was not public knowledge. He was in a private hell before he thought to say the magic words -- "Tami Smithers needs her right away!" Evidently the operator had a note allowing the cell to be given out if Tami called.

Rod tapped out the cell phone number and, afraid of what he might see, turned to look. Tami's body was upright and stretched out into an X, legs apart on the carpet, Terry stretching out her left hand, Trent her right. Her body was all red now and sweating, overheating, dehydrating. Jorge, the bartender, now began aiming water at her from the selzter spritzer hose behind the bar. Jorge must have been risking his job, knowing the water would ruin the elegant carpet. The arcs hit Tami all over, her face, her shaking breasts...

Rod thought of Tami in happier times, sweating after her grounds crew labors, being doused by Jose. And there was that dream about that damn majorette, marching in the freezing cold, then dancing in the jets of fire hoses...

After some hesitating, Jorge conceded the part of Tami that needed cooling down the most, and he began to concentrate the streams on her quaking, pulsating pussy. In an effort to tamp down her reactions, Barbara knelt in front, getting soaked herself, and pulled the outer lips open and apart as wide as she could, so that the ice-cold water could enter her womanly cavity. People crowded around to watch. Tami's eyes blinked and blinked with her gasps.

"Sarah! Tami wore the tail to a party we're at and it's gone haywire! It won't stop! And it's not me! I had taken the batteries out of the remote!"

"That's impossible," the concerned voice said on the phone. "There's -- "

A moment of silence. Then Rod realized the connection was lost. Do I call her or wait till she calls me?

"EEEE!!" Tami's eyes popped open.

**Part 47**

Fortunately his cell rang right away and Sarah was back.

"There's only one remote," Sarah said. "I made sure Stirchak destroyed the prototype. And right now there are no pony girls within a thousand miles of you. We keep track of them, you know."

"Who's Stirchak?"

"Ted Stirchak. He's the guy who invented the new tail. A neurologist. He did the research about the crushing testicles -- "

"Where is he? Could you call him? This is an emergency! I don't know how much more Tami can take!"

A short pause. "Yes I can call him. I'll be right back to you."

Tami had collapsed onto all fours, her head down. Evidently in a blessed gap between orgasms. Jorge had stopped spritzing. The place was quiet, everyone waiting to see what would happen. Tami's voice was heard, half crying. "Oh Rod... Rod... help... EEEEE!" Her head jerked up and her eyes bugged out. Not again!

Rod watched as Tami went through the strangest agony a woman can know. She bucked back and forth like a bull trying to throw off a rider. And now, to his horror, he felt his dick getting hard! He was not alone. Almost every straight male was having the same reaction.

The cell rang and he was glad to focus on something else. This time it was a man's voice, with a strange accent. Gretchen, a native of upstate New York, could have told him it was a Buffalo area accent. "Mr. Sykes! Is that you?"

"Yes!"

"I understand there's no time for chit-chat so let's go. There's an override code. Put the batteries back in the remote... OK? Now, press the buttons in this order, purple, purple, white, green, white, green, white. After that you're in override and you can press the black 'off' button."

"What am I overriding? Is there another remote?"

"There has to be. The tail won't go on and on just by itself. It's got no internal battery and has to be activated from outside, and besides, there's an automatic shutoff if the signal doesn't vary for more than five minutes. I don't know how it happened but somebody must have made another remote."

Rod fumbled with the batteries and dropped them and then picked them up and finally managed to shove them into in the damn remote. "So what's that sequence again?"

He pressed the buttons as ordered and then, hovering close over Tami, pressed the "off" button and aimed the remote at her as if he was shooting her with it.

Nothing. Tami kept quaking.

He tried it again. Tami kept quaking, waiting for the next onslaught.

"Well then somebody must be overriding the override," Stirchak said. "I just don't know what's going on. I'm sorry about this. Maybe an emergency room?"

Now, an unearthly wail from Tami, as she looked up through the glass enclosure at the black night, and the full moon. Everyone held their breath as she launched into another orgasm, one she dearly did not want, as if in the last stages of an extended, tortured execution devised by... some deviant genius...

"O - ho! O - ho!" It sounded like the wailing of a widow, falling on her husband's casket. With Tami on all fours like that, bucking back and forth with her tail, it might have seemed almost comical, a dog-bitch howling at the moon. That is, unless you loved her and cared about her.

Homer said, "Let's get her the hell out of here and out of range. Meanwhile we'll look again for whoever is doing this to her."

Rod thought: Of course! Why didn't anyone think of this! "Gretchen, can you work a stick?"

"Of course, I'm a farm girl!" she said.

"You drive her to our house. Meanwhile Homer and I will tear this damn place apart."

Terry and Karu and Trent and Gretchen carried the sobbing, sweating naked girl away, holding up her entire weight, her bare feet making only occasional contact with the carpet. She seemed trying to bring her legs together but was unable. "We'll follow behind," Terry said as they left.

"Let's get cracking," Homer said. Again he divvied up the responsibility for searching each area of the terminal, among Rod, Trent, whoever else could help. It turned out everyone volunteered, without exception, including Girardo and Dr. Lambert. "This time look into corners, into closets... When I find that creep I'll either run over him with this thing or strangle him."

It was ten minutes later when Rod got a call on his cell from Gretchen.

"It's stopped," Gretchen said. He could hear in the background the loud clatter of that old VW's air-cooled engine. He pictured Gretchen looking over at Tami, lying on her side in the back seat. "She's crying a bit but I think she's about to doze off."

"Oh thank God," Rod said. At the moment he was sweating, shirt unbuttoned, sitting cross-legged in his destroyed suit on the floor of the restaurant kitchen. "Ask her if she can pull that thing out."

"OK I'll -- oh wait -- she already pulled it out. It's on the floor... Tami? No, she's asleep now."

Well... it will be a good long time before Tami wants to have anything to do with that tail. "Gretchen, thanks. Can you stay over tonight?"

"Sure. She needs taking care of now."

"Amen to that."

Rod sighed, the emergency suddenly over. He looked around him. He had searched under every cabinet, every table. Found out things about this restaurant that he rather would not have known. Like how dingy the sink was. But nothing that looked like a remote.

He wearily dragged himself up and went out to the bar, which Jorge had practically dismantled. Homer was there in his wheelchair. People were coming back from their searches, exhausted. Tables were overturned, papers scattered. The place looked like a bomb had hit it. In the corner, two security guards were conferring, each looking quite perplexed.

"She's OK, out of range now," Rod said.

Homer was frustrated and flustered, not a usual condition for him. "I'll be danged," he said. "So it wasn't a malfunction, there is another remote. But damn well hidden."

The night framed Homer and Rod, up next to the glass walls overlooking the airport. They looked at each other.

Then their heads slowly turned up to the FAA control tower, unapproachable federal property, its silent tinted windows, black in the night, watching over everything.

. . . .

Of course Tami had to call in sick but he made the calls for her. Everyone on campus knew what had happened; there was no problem with her missing classes and meetings, or her grounds crew assignments. Lots of e-mails asking how Tami was. He answered them all the same. "She's resting. Thanks for your thoughts."

Tami slept for two days. Oddly, she felt uncomfortable on the bed, she wanted to sleep on the cold tile of the kitchen floor. A normal person could not do that but Rod kept reminding himself of her trip across the country nude, sleeping on rocks, desert sand, and stiff dry prairie grass. How he wished he could have rescued her from that. Yet it was part of what made her what she was: strong. He tried sleeping next to her on the floor but couldn't. Finally he dragged the couch into the kitchen and slept on it, waking now and then to look down at her.

Rod made meals for her and walked her to the shower. She was a bit dazed and dead tired. She drank huge amounts of water. He hated himself for having gotten aroused at her torture, hated himself. Yet it was probably a normal male response. He had heard a psychology major friend of his talk about "the wisdom of the penis" -- what turns you on is, on some level, good for you. What a crock!

On the third day, a sunny brisk day with a cool wind, he came home and found the house empty. Then he saw that the TL's had set up a table in the back yard. Upon which was Tami. Each of the six of them was attending to a body part of their naked Queen -- massaging her neck, her tummy, her arms, her legs, her feet. Yet staying away from her sexual parts. That must have taken a lot of self-control on their part.

"We've done this three afternoons now," Barbara said. "I think she's coming around."

"Indeed I am," Tami said, surprising her acolytes, turning around and sitting up cross-legged. She sipped an espresso Melissa had given her. Then she leaned forward and hugged Rod. He pulled her up off the table and she wrapped her legs around him, massaging his butt through his pants with her tough heels.

He felt tears coming to his eyes. "Thanks, girls, thanks," he said.

After a moment, as if in thought, Tami whispered in his ear, "Rod, let's make love. Nice and gentle. I want to get back to what love feels like."

"Oh thank God you're all right!"

The TL's knew to disperse as Rod carried Tami into the house.

Tami and Rod, after lying in bed for a while, hands clasped. They started slow and did manage to make love. Tami was lazy, drowsy at first, as if she was a virgin, uncertain as to where things might lead.

After about twenty minutes she had her first orgasm, a slow, rolling affair. They both sighed with relief, almost crying. Tami had not been permanently damaged by her ordeal. No doubt the love and concern around her had helped. As opposed to being alone and leered at in a cold, sterile lab.

Soon there were other climaxes.

But a problem surfaced. And it was not Tami.

**Part 48**

"Nnnhh! Nnnhhh! Nnnnnnhhhh!"

Rod looked up at Tami as she crested yet again. He was so glad that she was back to her old self. That horrible experience at the airport restaurant must have been worse than her travails at Chalfont. True, she was surrounded by people offering love and support, even though they were helpless to do anything aside from hold her hand. Or her pussy lips. That was desperate, Barbara holding open Tami's pussy so that it would be filled with cold water. He supposed that would normally kill any woman's desire, even someone so used to the cold as Tami. But it didn't help.

"Mmmmmmm... mmmmmm..." Tami slowly rode him as she came down to the plateau.

It was grotesque, seeing the spritzes from Jose's seltzer hose shooting into Tami's opened pussy, only to see the water squirted back out again at 0.8 second intervals. A horrible experience for poor Tami. At least at Chalfont it was a controlled experiment. No one knew the cause of the pulsations of the tail deep inside her, it might have been a tail malfunction, going on and on and on, maybe a short circuit, a spark deep inside that might electrocute her...

"Oooooohhhh... love you baby..." Tami bent down to kiss him on the cheek. He expanded it to a tongue kiss and then she straightened up and threw her head back, her whole body trembling as she ascended again.

He cursed himself for not thinking of the obvious solution, finally arrived at by Homer, to get Tami the hell out of there. Then they both looked at the FAA tower and got a creepy feeling. It was only a hundred feet away, if that. To someone working a remote up there, the restaurant would be well within range. And with the glass enclosure, at night, he or she could see clearly what Tami was doing, and would enjoy the poor naked girl's uncontrollable bodily responses. Of course that was just a guess. Finding out what was going on up there in the tower was just unknowable. Even if you tried, you'd probably be suspected of being a terrorist. No, not a good idea for someone in the National Guard completing a scholarship obligation.

He was not much use to Tami during that airport ordeal. At least now, he was useful to her.

"Zhhhh... ohhhh... " This one was mellow, calm, rolling. Not like her violent ones. He wondered what her mind was like right now, what it must be like to feel all that pleasure. Now that her orgasms were voluntary he felt more at ease asking himself the question he had pondered during Tami's torture. What was it like -- to have a shattering orgasm, and then, a few seconds later, another? And another? And another? And -- and so on? Whenever he came, spurting his seed deep into whatever orifice Tami had offered, he always needed at least a few minutes to get hard again. And then it was not easy to have a second orgasm, at least not the past couple of years. From what he knew, it would get even more difficult as he got older. Tonight, he hadn't come even once yet. He had gotten close at the beginning, but he knew he had to last, so he held back. As she was having her THIRD orgasm. And now, though erect, he was quite a ways from the desire to ejaculate.

"Mmmmmmm... mmmmmmm..."

He looked out the window, to the hedges out back. He could still see them at night because of the streetlight. They were starting to bud, finally. April was almost here, after a wet and cold March. Tonight it was a bit windy. Now one of the azalea buds blew off and arced in a trajectory halfway across the yard, like a long fly ball, before landing in the grass.

"Uhhhhh... uhhhhh..."

The trajectory of that bud -- what year was that World Series? 1991? 1992? That fly ball that won the seventh game. Man, that was some series. Braves versus the Twins. His uncle Cabot, from St. Paul, was visiting with his family and Cabot was in heaven. Yeah, spoiled. The Twins had just won a series a few years before. Meanwhile the Red Sox were into the 70th year or so of their curse. At the time it seemed like the Sox would never ever win again.

"Zhhhh..."

Every damn game of that series was a cliffhanger. And then that seventh game. He was only ten years old then but he remembered it vividly. Wait, let me adjust my hip so that Tami's clit gets a better pressure from my dick --

"OH! Yes Rod! Ohhhh..."

Strange. It was one out and a guy on third, bottom of the twelfth inning or something like that. Who was that? Dan somebody. The batter was Gene Larker, he thought the name was, a benchwarmer, and he hit a fly ball that went over Brian Hunter's head in left field. Hunter didn't even try to go for it, he knew it would be deep enough to let that Dan guy tag up and score. He just started trotting in before the ball even landed, as the crowd went wild and Uncle Cabot jumped up and down, knocking his beer bottle over, while Pop smiled tolerantly and said, "How about that!"

"OHH!" Tami's eyes bugged out as she approached a big one. "OHHH! OHHHH! OHHH! Godddd! Zhhhhhh -- OHHH!"

WAS that ball really out of range? He wondered why Hunter didn't run back and at least try for it. The odds were a hundred to one, but this was the deciding play of the World Series, for God's sake. Maybe that Dan dude might have slipped and fallen on the way to home plate, twisted his ankle, torn a tendon. Things like that do happen.

Tami rested her gasping, sweaty self onto Rod's chest. He could feel her nipples poking into him. He massaged her back, right under the shoulder blades. Now she stuck her tongue way into his mouth. Rod returned the kiss and looked up at the ceiling, dully visible with the nightlight on, the Spiderman nightlight she said she had had since she was a kid.

"Mmmmm..." Tami, her sweaty chest slipping over his, moved her hips so that her clit was pushing against his pubic bone. That had been orgasm number twenty-two. "Mmmmm... ohhhhh..."

He looked at the clock radio. It was 8:17, that meant they had been at it for one hour and six minutes. Exactly one orgasm per three minutes. A pretty good clip. He wondered if he could get it down to once every 2.8 minutes. That would be a pretty good E.R.A. He remembered Tim Wakefield, the Red Sox pitcher, trying to get below 3.00, not always with success. Of course, knuckleballers are expected to give up some runs. The important thing is to give up fewer runs than the other guy.

"Gg - ahhh!" Tami jerked in response to a favorable motion against her clit. She tried it again. "Gahhhh... ggg... gahhhh..."

That crack on the ceiling really has to be watched. Last week it was only a foot past the molding, now it was more like two feet. Something up there must be settling.

"Ohhh..." Tami was going up again. "Oh - oh - ohhhh..."

The crack reminded him of the graph of a second degree differential, the one he was using to calculate the stresses on that dam project --

"OHHH!" Tami's eyes opened. "OHHH! Nnnnnn -- nnnn -- UHHH!" With a great heave she started bucking her hips in time with the spasms. Rod, looking at the crack, heaved along with her to the last, irregular jolt.

Tami caught her breath and stroked his face. "Your turn, Baby..."

"What?"

A low, womanly giggle. "I said your turn Baby."

Rod looked up at her. Then at the ceiling. Then he looked down at Tami's breasts and was silent and motionless for a moment.

Tami's eyebrows furrowed. "What's wrong, Baby?"

He tapped her shoulders and said, "I... I just have to be alone a moment."

He got on his bathrobe and hunted for his slippers. Then he slid open the door in the living room and stepped out to the back yard and inhaled the windy cold air.

Five minutes went by before he returned. He found Tami standing in the middle of the living room, bolt upright in her usual posture. Breasts thrust out, hands at her sides, legs a little apart. She was covered with drying sweat, with her drying juices running down her thighs. There was a look of concern on her face.

Rod sat down on the couch. Tami sat down next to him, caressing his shoulder through his bathrobe. Her toes came up to caress his knee.

He exhaled. "Babe... I'm... jealous."

"Jealous of what?"

"Of your... capacity. I wish I could come over and over like you do... And I feel so... ROTTEN about it. I think of that DVD of you at Chalfont, being forced to..." He shook his head, then he made himself look Tami in the eye. "And then what happened at the restaurant. That must have been hell."

Tami looked down and nodded. "Yes it was." She held his hand. "But I had you there. That's why I didn't go out of my mind."

"Yes, yes, I know. But STILL I'm jealous. I'm always asking myself how it must feel, to come over and over." He blinked and his eyes became wet. "God, how crummy!"

They sat like that for a few moments. Then Tami said, "I had a feeling something was up."

Rod chuckled mordantly. "I won't be up for long, if this goes on. What's in my head, I mean." He chided himself for making such a juvenile joke.

Tami knelt between his legs and got out his limp dick.

"No Baby, don't."

She toyed with it. "You know Rod, I'm the one who should be jealous. I'm jealous of this. This magic wand. Sometimes I wish I had one."

Rod smiled weakly. "It's not what it's cracked up to be."

She picked it up with one hand and ran her tongue under it, the sensitive part. Perhaps reluctantly, it began to stiffen. Then she brought her limber foot up and around. "And these two... little items," she said, hefting his balls with her toes, one by one, with her big toe and second toe, grunting as if they weighed as much as cannon balls. "Mmmmhh! Wow that's almost beyond my strength!"

She took his dick into her mouth like it was a lollipop and looked up at him with a blank stare.

He chuckled. "You look really innocent."

She giggled, which with his dick in her mouth was quite a sensation. Then she gave his balls a closer look. "Think of all the billions of sperms in here. Billions!" She looked up at him. "What's female orgasm anyway? A way to feel good? But when a MAN comes, he's propagating the species. That's what life is about, what keeps life going. The male orgasm. When you come, it's like the whole surging wave of the universe goes through you, in that moment life goes forward into the future. No woman can possibly know what that feels like." She sucked on his dick loudly, then with a final slurp let it fall. It was mostly hard by now and stuck out at her. "That's why I'm jealous."

"Your Catholic upbringing is showing."

She smiled. "'Every sperm is sacred.' As they say, you can leave the Church, but it never leaves you."

Rod picked up his dick and waved it back and forth slowly, appraisingly, as they both looked at it. "Tell me, were you a good Catholic girl? Did you go to Catholic school?"

"No, but I went to Catechism class, every Monday. They'd let us Catholic kids out early for it. I was a pretty good girl. Well, except once, in third grade."

"Oh? What happened?"

"Well, we had gotten trained in First Communion, and you know how it goes? The priest says, 'Body of Christ', and you say, 'Amen', and he puts that wafer on your tongue. It's really dry and always sticks to the roof of your mouth, but you're not supposed to stick your finger in there to get it loose. It's like glue. Anyway, there's the priest, and the line of kids kneeling at the padella..."

"The what?"

"That low railing, it's called a padella. So it's, 'Body of Christ', 'Amen', 'Body of Christ', 'Amen', 'Body of Christ', 'Amen', When he got to me, he said, 'Body of Christ', and I said, 'I know.'"

Rod laughed. "Well DID you know?"

"Of course, I believed all that stuff, so I figured I wasn't being cheeky. I KNEW it was the Body of Christ and I figured I was just letting the priest know that I knew."

"I bet you got a talking to."

Tami's eyes rolled. "Oh Lord. The priest called my Mom, and then my Dad heard about it... I had to confess it and my pennance was to say 50 Hail Marys."

"Wow."

"Actually we kids could rattle them off pretty fast. It doesn't take much practice." Tami got up on her knees closed against each other, the rest of her upright as if at attention, breasts stuck out as if she wasn't aware of them. "Watch." She cleared her throat.

"HailmaryfullofgracetheLordiswiththeeblessedartthoughamongwomenandblessedisthefruitofthywombJesusHolymarymotherofgodprayforussinnersnowandatthehourofourdeathamenHailmaryfullofgrace --"

It seemed gibberish but eventually Rod slowed it down in his mind and understood what she was saying. By that time she had gone through about eight recitations. Stopping for a quick breath every minute or so, Tami got through all 50 of them before it got boring.

Rod clapped. "You are forgiven."

Tami lay down against his thigh and played with his dick again. "Do you feel better, Baby?"

"A little."

Now Tami knelt in front of him, holding his erect dick in front of her face. She made a little bow with her head. "Body of Christ." Then she inhaled the first four inches of it so as to make him gasp.

He could feel the surging wave of the universe beginning within him. Between his gasps he said, "Oh Babe, you are bad. You'll burn in hell."

Tami giggled and between slurps said, "Jesus wouldn't mind. In fact he'd get a kick out of it. I'm sure of that now." And now she took him in even deeper.

. . . .

The next afternoon, up in the woods miles away, in the little trailer overlooking the dam site, his subconscious mind was pondering what Tami had said, while his conscious mind was working on the plan for one of the dam buttresses, when his cell phone rang.

It was the polite, tense, Pakistani-inflected voice of Dr. Abu Jamal from Chalfont.

How odd. "Mr. Sykes, I hope you are well."

"Yes, I am. What's up? Is Tami all right?"

"She's not here. I called to speak to you, to discuss her case."

"Okay..."

"It's best that we discuss it at our office here, you and I and Dr. Kantor, if you don't mind."

He put down his pen and switched the cell phone to his right hand. "What's up?"

"Can you be at my office at seven o'clock tonight?"

"Tami has a student government meeting then."

"She doesn't need to be there, just you. I am glad that she would be otherwise engaged. I ask that you not tell her where you will be."

"Um... OK I'll be there."

"Thank you. Until later."

After the call was over he began to work on the plans again, but then called right back at the number on his cell phone.

"Dr. Abu Jamal, Tami really should be there. I don't see why we should be keeping a secret from her."

"Mr. Sykes, when we began our course of treatment we elicited from Tami an agreement that her case could be discussed with you, outside of her presence, if necessary. It's BECOME necessary."

He found it hard to concentrate on the buttress after that. Some time later he called Tami to say he would be working late. He hated lying to her. Fortunately it was on the phone. One should never lie to Tami, after all the lies she had been told, and lying to her face would just be impossible.

At seven o'clock, with a feeling of foreboding that had become overwhelming, Rod stepped into the office that used to belong to that old dignified German guy, Dr. Schnitzler. His successor, Dr. Abu Jamal, of a different race and culture but equally diginifed, greeted him. The room was just like before, portraits of old guys with beards, red textured wallpaper, elegant upholstered furniture, a small bar with brandy snifters to the side. He sat on the plush cushion of the Louis XVI style armchair.

Seated next to Dr. Abu Jamal's desk was Dr. Kantor. It was he who spoke.

"Mr. Sykes. . . Tami's allergy is advancing. Significantly."