**Tease to Please**

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**Tease to Please Ch. 01**

**Chapter 1: April 19, 2013**
"We're doing fine," Arthur lied into the phone, "Thanks for asking."

What a whopper that was. Arthur hadn't been part of any 'we' for three years. He just couldn't bring himself to admit that to Sylvia. Label it insecurity or whatever you want. It had been fifteen years since he had last spoken with Sylvia and her voice completely unnerved him.

The truth was too humiliating to explain. Sylvia was the woman he should have married, way back when they were both in their early twenties. He had chickened-out, and Sylvia had married Dan Kozlowski instead. Predictably, their friendship died of starvation during those early years while she and Dan were busy making babies. It took Arthur many years to finally tie the knot with someone else, and once he did Sylvia stopped calling him altogether. Until today.

The truth was, ten years into Arthur's marriage his wife had left him. That unfortunate event had nothing to do with Sylvia and everything to do with an infidelity Arthur committed with a much younger woman during one of his consulting trips to Japan. It had only been a brief dalliance, but it had cost him his marriage and very nearly his career too. Everything Arthur cared for had been stripped from him in the resulting divorce. At least he and his wife had never had children, so he had been spared the agony of losing them too.

"Having an affair," Arthur wrote in his diary on the day his divorce was finalized, "is like inviting an arsonist to live under your house."

Now, out of the blue, three years into his unwelcomed 2nd bachelorhood, Sylvia was on his phone. She reported being happily married and a mother of three. In Arthur's mind she remained a never-forgotten first love. He was caught so off guard he could scarcely think of anything to say to her. He stayed quiet while Sylvia sprayed a geyser of words at him about her family's latest dynamics. To Arthur's ear, it sounded like she was expecting him to absorb the last fifteen years of her life story in a mere thirty seconds. This presumptuousness did not bother him at all.

"Elise," continued Sylvia "is our middle daughter. She's pursuing her physical therapy license. She moved back in with us here in Arizona after finishing college. But to be honest we're a bit worried about her."

"Uh-huh..." mumbled Arthur, wondering why his chest felt so airy and light.

"She needs work experience, and there isn't anywhere suitable near us, so..." Sylvia paused to take a deep breath. "I know it's kind of weird, Arty, but I thought you might be able to take her on for the summer... just to get something on her resume in a more serious medical field, you know? She lacks direction at the moment. She keeps talking about yoga and... and all these other hippy ideas. I think she just needs some real-world experience to give her something more practical to aspire to."

"Well, Sylvia, umm..." Arthur demurred, "I don't know if my lab is really the right place. You know, we don't do clinical work here. It's just research... biomedical research. Nothing at all to do with physical therapy."

"Oh Art," Sylvia purred before resuming her frenetic pace, "You don't need to worry about that. She's only twenty-two! And it would just be for the summer. Surely there must be some project you can stick her on that's worthwhile for your company? She's very smart you know. And I think as long as you offer her enough to break even, she'll jump at the chance to learn something new... even if it's only to get herself out from under my roof for a few months."

Ten minutes further into this conversation Arthur found himself agreeing to look at Elise's resume. As soon as he hung up, it arrived in his inbox attached to a blank email with the subject: 'Thanks Arty.'

Elise's resume contained several surprises; she claimed four years of 'Varsity Rhythmic Gymnastics' in college, a certificate in massage-therapy and, listed under her 'Extracurricular Interests,' were tantric yoga and touch-therapy.

"Hmm," Arthur chuckled to himself, "I could use a massage. She might be helpful after all."

April 20, 2013

The next day Arthur interviewed Elise via Skype. On his computer monitor she came across as smart and eager. Despite the jumpy webcam image, Arthur also noticed she was quite attractive. Perhaps not as stunning as her mother had been all those years ago, but definitely easy on the eyes; long auburn hair pulled back into a ponytail, a fair complexion and bright hazel eyes. She was wearing a dark grey blazer over a white blouse. Arthur noticed both garments looked ill-fitting and loose. "But boy," he mused to himself, "Does she ever have a charming smile."

Five hundred miles away Elise sat before her battered college laptop, trying not to slouch. She didn't care that her interview clothes were borrowed from her older sister. She only knew that she desperately wanted this job. Re-entry from college wasn't going well at home and she felt trapped under the suffocating blanket of her parents' criticism. So, she poured forth her brightest smile to the man on her screen and concentrated on saying smart things. In the previous twenty-four hours her mom had made clear that this guy, Doctor Arthur Peters, held her key to a summer of freedom in California. Elise thought he looked pudgy, boring and middle-aged; a square-faced and bearded version of what came to mind whenever she heard the word 'scientist.'

"Regardless," she mentally scolded herself between answers, "I just need this dude to hire me. He doesn't look too stuffy and he can't be THAT old; at least he still has all his hair. If only I could get him to smile, I'd know for sure. And if I get this job, I'll make some connections in the Bay Area and maybe find a way to move there permanently -- to finally get away from all this hellish negativity."

Elise tried to make her answers not only intelligent but funny too... or at least novel. But the doctor's face remained stony and tense on her screen. She had no idea whether the interview was going well or not.

Elise need not have worried. Arthur's initial goal was simply to make sure she wasn't crazy. He didn't want to babysit someone else's head case. Once he'd established that she was sane and she had affirmed some basic computing and database skills, Arthur signed off by telling her the real challenge would be getting approval from his partner. The brilliant and inscrutable Dr. Yamamoto would probably reject the entire idea outright, he told Elise: "So don't get your hopes up too high."

April 22, 2013

Two days later, Elise's cell phone rang in the middle of her pre-bedtime yoga stretches.

"This is Elise," she answered, uncurling her legs from behind her head.

"Hi Elise," Arthur started, "This is Dr. Peters."

"Oh, hi Doctor. Any good news...? I hope?"

"Well, some good, some bad I'm afraid. Do you have a few minutes?"

"Sure."

"Okay. So the good news is that my partner is willing to allow your summer internship to happen. I think once you get to know Dr. Yamamoto you'll understand how remarkable that is, actually. He's a real stickler for secrecy around here."

"Okay... Sounds good so far! What's the bad news?"

"Well, a couple things; first is the money. My research is nearly all public grant based and there's simply no capacity for me to hire you as an actual employee with benefits and all that."

"Oh."

"Dr. Yamamoto has a bit more flexibility since his budget is private, but he's a tad, uh... secretive, as I mentioned. He doesn't want anyone new having access to all his data or walking around his lab unsupervised. Only after I re-framed this whole idea a little bit for him did he agree to help bring you on board for the summer. So, long story short, we can offer you a thousand dollars per month as a stipend toward your living expenses, but Doctor Yamamoto's pre-conditions are that you need to be classified as a volunteer. That means no benefits. The second pre-condition is that you'll remain exclusively on my floor of the building except when he personally escorts you through his labs, which he's promised to do daily."

"Oh. Umm... well, that sounds okay I guess. Actually, I found out that I'll be able to stay at my friend's apartment in San Francisco for the summer. She and her fiancé just moved in together so it'll be tight, but I think if I throw them five hundred a month they'll let me crash on their sofa. I checked it out and it looks like I could commute from their place to your lab by train. I won't have a car, you see."

"Yes, you can take BART here from the City," replied Arthur. "That's pretty easy actually. There is a station about four blocks from our building. It'll be a reverse commute, so it shouldn't be too crowded. That's lucky about the apartment, money-wise, but... there is still one other pre-condition I need to tell you about."

"What's that?"

"Well, this is a bit awkward, but I'm afraid you'll need to wear a uniform."

"A uniform...? Like hospital scrubs or something?"

"No, not exactly. You see, when I was explaining this whole idea to Dr. Yamamoto, he didn't understand the word 'internship.' His English is really limited. I usually speak with him in Japanese, and my Japanese is rusty... so sometimes we have these funny miscommunications."

"Okaaay. What kind of miscommunication?"

"Yes. Umm, I didn't know the Japanese word for internship, so I told him you'd be like a hospital volunteer..."

"Uh-huh."

"...and when he Google-translated that, he somehow managed to come up with a picture of a candy striper."

"A what?"

"A candy striper. You know, um, ages ago, probably before you were born, there used to be these volunteers at hospitals. They were usually female students and they would do the rounds visiting patients and handing out stuff like newspapers and treats and cheering everyone up. They were called candy stripers because they wore these red-and-white striped dresses, like a candy cane."

"Huh... That's bizarre. So I have to, like, wear stripes?"

"Well... he has a... um, a specific outfit in mind unfortunately. You see, Dr. Yamamoto is very... very detail-oriented and um... well, let's just say he's a bit stubborn. Once he gets an idea stuck in his mind like this I'm afraid he becomes as unmovable as a mountain. And maybe because he doesn't socialize with Americans often enough, he has no sense of what's appropriate or not here in the States. His sense of gender roles, for instance, is very old-fashioned."

"So... what does the uniform look like?"

"I'm forwarding you the picture he sent me. Keep in mind he probably just chose it at random out of a screen full of Google image results. But it's become his fixation. Can you check your email and let me know if it's a deal-breaker?"

"Yeah..." Elise said. She woke up her iPad. Her curiosity was piqued. "I'll pull it up right now. Just a sec..."

"Okay, I'll hold... Again, I'm sorry about this. It's a silly Halloween costume, of all things. You'd need to re-create the look with real clothes somehow..."

A moment of silence passed in which Arthur mentally thanked his stars that he wasn't on a webcam because he could feel his face clenching with anxiety. His short beard felt prickly and hot. He clawed at it with his free hand and squeezed his eyes tight shut. He counted the seconds, waiting for Elise to open the message.

"Oh Jesus!" Elise gasped. "That's -- is this a joke?!?"

"I know, I know," Arthur fumbled. "It's embarrassing for me to even suggest it..."

"There's no way. I mean, this is like... a... a slutty rave costume or something!" Elise immediately second-guessed her use of the word 'slutty.' She hoped it would not give Doctor Peters a bad impression of her manners. But the picture was shocking. She forced herself to calm down and then continued more slowly: "I'm not that particular about my clothes Doctor Peters, but this is, like... waaaaay too provocative. That skirt is absurd... half her butt is showing! And those heels..."

"I know it's ridiculous Elise, but Dr. Yamamoto just doesn't know any better. He's got it into his head that this is what a hospital volunteer is supposed to wear. And even though we're not a hospital, and even though I told him this picture is just a costume, he isn't listening to me. I've been trying to influence him on this for the past twenty-four hours, but he is uncorrectable." Elise double-tapped the screen on her iPad to open the photo up at full-size. "Wow," she whispered.

A long silence stretched out on the phone as they both stared at the photo. It showed a preening young model wearing a pink and white striped micro-skirt and a matching striped blouse that barely covered her enormous breasts. She had long bleached blonde hair that was tied back by a pink bow. White thigh-high stockings and towering pink platform heels completed the outrageous outfit.

"If you want some time to think it over, that's okay," Arthur offered. "I completely understand if you need to say no."

"No, no," Elise blurted, "I'm just, umm... I need to think."

"Sure. And listen, I don't know if this will make any difference but... I know Dr. Yamamoto very well. He's not creepy or anything. He's happily married and goes straight home every night. I've met his wife and they seem totally devoted to each other. He's not a... a fetishist or anything. He just lives a very ordered existence. His mind is way too orderly... OCD in fact, by American standards. So, he gets fixated on things like this. To him, this is simply how medical volunteers are supposed to attire themselves while on duty. In his mental universe it has become a sort of rule, if you will. And once a rule gets in there, I'm afraid he won't bend for anything. It's what makes him a genius and a crazy person at the same time."

"Well... I don't look anything like the girl in this picture, if that's what he's hoping for," Elise said, stalling for time. "I'm five foot three and my hair is brown. And I have, like, no boobs at all."

"It's not you, it's the uniform. That's what he cares about."

"Ugh! I hate decisions like this. What did you say about re-creating this with real clothes?"

"Yes, well: I just figured... it's not like we're going to buy this particular costume for you. Even if I could find it somewhere, it's probably made out of plastic and would fall apart in a day. I'll need your help to find real versions of all these items. I can order them for you -- I don't expect you to buy this stuff given how little we'll be paying you -- but I don't know anything about women's clothes so you'll need to send me a list. Better still would be a list with hyperlinks that I can order from."

"I see. And how far may I deviate from this picture?"

"That's a good question. Funnily enough, Dr. Yamamoto is a bit nearsighted so I think as long as you get the general look right, you know, with the basic elements in place, then I think you can vary the materials and scale... that sort of thing. I don't think he'll care as long as it looks like you are adhering to the basic formula."

"So... like, what about the stockings?"

"Yes, you'll need those."

"Uh-huh. What about the super-high heels?"

"You could get away with lower ones for sure, but umm... try to find ones with that little strap around the ankle, like the picture. He mentioned that."

"Okaaaay.... How about the insanely short skirt?"

"Definitely feel free to find something longer... and more... normal. Whatever you're comfortable with."

"Good... 'cause that skirt in the picture is, like, for strippers. You do realize that don't you?"

"Yes, yes. I realize. Whatever you're comfortable with. I don't think he'll object too much as long as the overall impression conforms to this... model, so to speak."

"Do the stripes matter?"

"Oh yes, but as long as you've got stripes visible somewhere -- they could even be on a scarf or something -- I doubt he'll care."

"Oh yeah, a scarf!" Elise blurted sarcastically. "In the middle of summer... and it would go perfectly with the rest of this outfit! Hah! Sounds like neither of you two get out of that lab much, Doctor Peters."

"No. No we don't, I'm afraid. Keep in mind that I personally don't care what you wear, so really we're just talking about the part of the day Dr. Yamamoto chooses to take you on rounds through his labs upstairs. I can't imagine that will take more than an hour or two each day. I don't see why you'd need to wear this stuff the rest of the time. That may make all this silliness a bit more tolerable for you."

"Okay. Yeah, that might not be so bad. Um, I guess I need to hunt around online and see what I can find. I'm not saying yes yet, but I'll look and see if I can somehow make this work."

"Sure. Do your research and let me know. Another thing: there are only a handful of people working in this building, so it's not like you'll be out in public or anything."

"Well that's a plus... for sure."

"And there's no rush. We're not going to bring in someone else if you decide this isn't for you. Just call me when you've made up your mind."

"Okay, I will. And thank you, Doctor Peters. I really appreciate the offer."

"My pleasure, Elise. Speak with you soon!"

"Yes. Thanks again. Bye!"

May, 2013:

In the weeks that followed, Elise and Arthur communicated by phone and email regularly. By mid-May Elise felt she had already invested a week's worth of her free time in finding skimpy clothes online and negotiating the final selections with Doctor Peters. Each garment initially made her cringe, but in the end she convinced herself that showing off some skin for a few hours each day in a private laboratory wouldn't kill her.

The final shopping list included a half dozen miniskirts with vertical stripes, two clingy dresses (also striped), twelve tops (cropped babydoll blouses and stretchy half-shirts in various shades of white and pink) and fourteen pairs of garterless thigh-high stockings (roughly split between sheer, white and patterned with various lacework seams and ornamental top bands). Lastly, and most expensively, were two pairs of ankle-strap stiletto sandals (one pair in pearlescent white, the other in pale pink). Elise felt some degree of pride in all this work. She had managed to find relatively cheap versions of just about everything, and kept the total number of purchases down by promising to incorporate a few short dresses and tops that she already owned.

For his part, Arthur certainly didn't complain about the prices. In fact, he found the entire process dangerously fun and began to look forward to Elise's arrival with an eagerness that was difficult to conceal. During several of their webcam chats, Elise modeled her own clothes to show how they might be worked into the uniform. Arthur found himself smiling as she casually paraded across his screen in various club-wear dresses and midriff-revealing tops.

Even via Elise's cheap laptop cam Arthur could tell her physique was lithe and impressively fit. It was true that she was very small in the chest, but he didn't mind that. It was her toned stomach and slender hips that caught his attention most. And when she sent him the final shopping list, his hopes were reinforced. She listed her preferred sizes as follows;

Skirts and dresses: size 2

Stockings: small

Shoes: US size 6 (narrow)

Of course, when Arthur subsequently ordered the clothes online he couldn't resist making a few adjustments. Anything elastic, he reasoned, could be ordered one size down. "It's my money after all," he smirked in front of his computer, "I might as well enjoy it."

Everything was shipped to Arthur's lab during the last two weeks of May. He happily stacked the resulting pile of nearly-weightless UPS boxes on the floor within his private office.

Both Arthur and Elise neglected to mention the whole awkward subject of Elise's uniform to her parents. The fewer people who knew about it the better, they agreed.

Elise packed everything else she would need for the summer into two suitcases. One was full of regular clothes for when she wasn't dolled-up for Doctor Yamamoto, and the second was filled with assorted party clothes that would do double-duty as elements of her uniform and as evening-wear in case she and her new summer roommates wanted to go dancing.

Perhaps better still, Elise daydreamed on her short commercial flight to SFO, she might meet a nice handsome guy who'd take her out on a few dates! After all... she was hoping to have some fun this summer too.

**Tease to Please Ch. 02**

 **Chapter 2: Monday June 3rd**
Elise stepped off the BART train at 8:30AM and began her walk to the address of Dr. Peters' laboratory. Since it was her first day, they had arranged to meet outside the lab's delivery door. Doctor Peters had explained that the building had no lobby or formal visitor's entrance because it was never open to the public.

When Elise arrived at the address, she noticed that the building was gigantic and nearly windowless. It occupied an entire city block. She gave the metal doorway marked 'Deliveries' a firm yank, but it seemed locked.

"Well," she thought, "I guess I am a few minutes early."

Elise dropped her backpack onto the cement loading ramp and hoped up onto the metal handrail to wait. She'd worn a conservative pair of blue jeans, old sneakers and a simple cotton blouse. Doctor Peters had said he didn't care how she dressed, so she had assumed casual attire would be okay. In any case, she reminded herself, she didn't own any business attire. But waiting there, alone in the early morning sunshine, it suddenly crossed Elise's mind that Doctor Peters had always worn a tie during their Skype chats. Her heart flashed with sudden self-doubt. What if she'd screwed up already?

A loud bang from behind the metal doorway made Elise jump off the railing. The double-doors swung inward on heavy motorized hinges. Doctor Peters strode out wearing a big smile, corduroy slacks, a white dress shirt, a red tie and highly polished loafers.

"Hi Elise!" Arthur beamed, thrusting his right hand toward her. "Welcome aboard!"

"Hi Doctor Peters," Elise answered cautiously, feeling tiny, young and unserious in her battered sneakers. The doctor's firm handshake swallowed her hand entirely.

They exchanged pleasantries and Elise apologized for her shoes. She was relieved when Doctor Peters brushed that off without any hesitation. He even offered to carry her backpack for her.

"Oh, no worries, Doctor Peters" Elise demurred, "I've got it. It's mostly empty anyhow. I just brought it since I figured I'll need to drag all those clothes back to my friend's apartment tonight."

"Sure, sure," Arthur replied with another broad smile. "Well, anyway, come on in and I'll show you around."

Arthur led Elise inside. The heavy motorized doors swung shut behind them as they walked inward along a wide concrete hallway. Elise followed a few steps behind, taking in the full measure of how large Doctor Peters was. "He must be over a foot taller than me," she thought to herself, "and double my weight!"

The tour was brief. It covered only the first floor because Dr. Yamamoto's section was upstairs. First Arthur led Elise into a huge laboratory occupied by six long tables that were piled high with equipment. Loud fans twirled on the ceiling above. He introduced her to his two research staffers; middle-aged men who looked like they hadn't seen sunlight in years. Then there was an office kitchen, one conference room, various service corridors lined with utility closets, and a large unisex restroom.

Lastly, on the far side of the main corridor, was Doctor Peters' private office. It was huge. It also looked, to Elise's eyes, very homey -- almost lived-in. There were tables and desks of various sizes scattered about, a large leather sofa against one wall, a television on the opposite wall, storage and filing cabinets beneath the TV and a stationary exercise bike in the middle. Doctor Peters' personal desk was at the far end, overlooking the room. The wall behind it was lined with overflowing bookcases.

"Wow," Elise said, "You've sure made yourself comfortable in here."

Doctor Peters smiled in reply. Then he pointed to the least-cluttered desk in the room and declared it to be hers. "The computer on there is for you, too. It's got internet, but it's not connected to our private network, so there's no corporate espionage in your future I'm afraid."

Elise laughed. She was feeling more comfortable with each passing moment. Doctor Peters seemed really easy-going for a scientist type, and she liked the way his huge bear-like hands were always gesturing. She watched him talking and almost giggled because he looked like he was trying to draw pictures in the air of every word that came out of this mouth.

Elise dropped her bag onto her new desk and then followed Doctor Peters around the room as he explained his various filing systems and the projects she'd be working on over the summer. They reviewed her daily schedule and some of the more mundane office-tasks he wanted her to handle. Eventually that brought them to the pile of little UPS boxes on the floor.

"Aha!" Arthur joked with a smile, "Here's the part you've been waiting for: your new clothes!"

"Yeah," Elise answered with a wry smile and a roll of her eyes, "Lucky me!"

"I didn't open them. I figured you'd want to do that. But, you better get moving because Dr. Yamamoto is coming down at 10:30 to meet you."

"Shoot! Okay, yeah, I better get started. I sure hope all this stuff fits after all that work we did."

"Here's a box-cutter. I'll let leave you to it."

With that, Arthur retreated to his desk and pretended to read his email. He had installed thick carpeting wall-to-wall across the back third of the office, under his desk and bookcases, in an effort to warm up the room and soften the load on his feet. In the process he had built an elevated wooden dais to raise the carpeted area a few inches up off the concrete floor. His desk therefore had a commanding view of the entire room. It was easy for him to keep one eager eye on Elise as she sat cross-legged on the floor cutting open the boxes and unwrapping her new clothes.

Arthur was delighted with her so far. Her beauty matched his most optimistic hopes. She had wide hazel irises flecked with radial streaks of feline gold. A constellation of pale freckles decorated her little nose and cheeks. And the compactness of her torso allowed her legs to be far longer than her 5'3" height would have otherwise permitted. Arthur also noticed the amazing way her slim lower body animated her jeans; so dexterous and supple-jointed.

As he watched Elise unwrap a frilly pair of stockings he felt the need to remind himself that there could be no funny-business between them. He had screwed up his life once already with a younger woman. He wasn't about to make the same mistake again. Especially not with a girl who now worked for him... and extra-especially not with Sylvia's daughter! No, this time he would be very content just watching the show... without, so to speak, touching the merchandise. He forced himself to open an email and actually get started on his workday.

"Ugh..." Elise groaned a few minutes later from within a growing circle of packing materials and clothes. "I still can't believe this part is actually real. These clothes are just wrong!"

"That door there," Arthur said, pointing to the nearest of the three doorways on the south wall of his office, "is a walk-in closet. Feel free to try stuff on in there if you need some privacy."

Elise held up one of the mini-dresses for Arthur to see.

"Look at how short this is Doctor Peters," she exclaimed. "It's a size zero... It was supped to be a 2!"

Arthur feigned surprise. Elise kept working her way through the boxes. Soon she had all the clothes unpacked and neatly folded into piles on her desk. Then she began breaking down the torn packages and carrying the paper and cardboard out to the recycling bins in the hallway.

By the time she finished it was nearly ten o'clock and her skin glowed with a light sheen of sweat. Partly, Elise knew, she just had a case of the nerves. Doctor Yamamoto was coming downstairs to meet her at 10:30AM and that didn't leave her much time to pull together her first uniform.

Elise recognized that it wasn't only her impending near-nudity that was freaking her out. After all, her body was in great shape -- she had worked hard to achieve that and was proud. Her physical conditioning had become quite central to her self-confidence and motivated her interests in yoga, dance and massage. And she'd had the confidence during her final years of college to wear skimpy outfits when she went out dancing. So that wasn't it.

No, what made her uncomfortable was failing to live up to the expectations of others. Her most humiliating memories had all been self-inflicted navigational errors that exposed her to the cruel verdicts of social norms she didn't recognize. She felt she had a blind spot a mile wide when it came to complex social interactions. And she hated public speaking. Debate class in high school still gave her nightmares.

"Boundary-issues," her mother constantly remind her, were the source of all her mistakes. And for Elise the price of those mistakes so far had been high. In the year leading up to this internship she had graduated from college and turned twenty-two but she felt nearly friendless. Guys, she reflected, had always been easy to get along with initially but then it always went badly as soon as they misinterpreted her physicality as flirtation. That made other girls jealous of course, and panicked guys into either stupid come-ons or terrified avoidance.

She felt she had been accused of being a tease by more people than she could remember... including every guy-friend she hadn't slept with. The ones she had hooked-up with, on the other hand, became obsessive. But none of them ever held her interest for long, so she'd had to initiate all her own break-ups. That, combined with girls being generally predisposed to hate her out of sheer competitiveness, left her with only a handful of real friends.

This coming summer was a chance to break that cycle. A fresh re-start after her disastrous senior year at college. A new job in a new city would allow her to mingle with normal (she hoped) adults. No more college geeks and sorority bitches... and especially no more married Professors to get entangled with! She was determined to handle this next three months with care.

"Um, Elise?" Doctor Peters called out from behind his wide desk, "Aren't you going to get changed? It's 10:15."

"Shit!" Elise blurted, derailing her own mental train, "I lost track of time!"

Elise quickly grabbed the pearl stilettos, a pink and white candy-striped skirt, a white blouse and some stockings. How long, she wondered, had she been standing there daydreaming, looking like a slack-jawed fool? She glanced sheepishly at Doctor Peters and pleaded: "Where can I change?"

"Right in there," Arthur reminded her, pointing again to the door nearest his desk.

Without further discussion, Elise rushed into the big closet, found the light switch and pulled the door shut behind her.

Arthur tented his fingers and smiled. He was about to witness the fulfillment of two months of anticipation. His face contorted involuntarily into an obscene grin.

The closet door was about three yards from where he sat. He could overhear Elise inside, cursing at all the fussy plastic tags and stickers that had to be removed from the new clothes. There was a crash that sounded like she had knocked something off a shelf. This was followed by more muffled swearing.

"Sorry!" she called out. "It didn't break!"

Arthur shook his head and chuckled. He felt like he was waiting for Christmas morning. The anticipation of seeing Elise in her first uniform made his heart pound. Eventually he heard the sharp clack-clack of her high heels hitting the concrete floor inside the closet.

"Jesus!" Elise exclaimed in muffled panic. Then, more clearly: "I think I'm ready Doctor Peters, but don't laugh, okay?"

"Okay!" Arthur called back to her. He rolled his leather swivel chair out from behind his desk for a better view.

The door opened and Elise tip-toed out into the room.

"Do you have a mirror somewhere?" she asked, apparently unaware that the look on Doctor Peters' face already reflected everything she needed to know about her appearance.

"Ummmm....." was all Arthur could manage. His brain was too busy soaking up the methane-refinery-in-flames level of hotness searing his retinal nerves. "Yeah, uhhhh. A mirror. I might have one somewhere... I'll have to...um."

"Is this okay?" Elise asked him, walking closer. "I know I still need a bow for my hair, but how is the rest of it?"

Arthur let his eyes wander. Elise may have been 5'3" before, but now she was 5'7" showing a bare midriff and nearly a yard of leg. Her candy-striped miniskirt was daringly short and so elastic across her hips that horizontal folds persistently bunched the fabric upward with her every move. The white frilly bands atop her stockings were pulled up as high up as possible on her slender thighs, but still the skirt refused to entirely cover them. Elise continued to teeter nervously toward him in her tall sandals. Then she stepped up onto his carpeted dais.

"This stupid skirt is another size zero," she fretted, tugging the hemline down because it had ridden up dramatically higher when she stepped up onto the dais. "I can't believe how tiny it is!"

"Yes," Arthur replied gently, trying to retain some composure. "Probably not what you're used to, but it's not totally indecent... I guess."

Elise stopped within an arm's reach of Arthur and did a slow turn, tugging and adjusting various parts of her outfit into position. "How does it look from the back, Doctor Peters? Do you think Doctor Yamamoto will say it's similar enough to the picture?"

"I really have no idea what he'll say," Arthur replied, relishing the free tour of his intern's nubile figure.

Elise's ass looked absolutely incredible under the seamless stretchy miniskirt -- like a swollen peach wobbling atop two narrow stems of leg. It rocked from side to side with each shift of her weight. The skirt's vertical stripes followed every curve of her hips and butt, exaggerating their roundness before ending abruptly at her gluteal crease. Arthur felt a perceptible gravitational pull toward the revealed gap between her upper thighs. The four-inch high heels kept her ankles in plantar flexion and tipped her pelvis forward to such a degree that she had to arch her lower back to maintain balance. The pale thigh-high stockings highlighted the athletic definition of her legs. Her midriff was naked above the low-riding waistline of the skirt, all the way up to her ribcage. Arthur marveled at how slender she was. All the muscles in her stomach and lower back were clearly defined, covered only by a thin layer of skin. The top she had chosen was a white cropped blouse with baby-doll sleeves that clung precipitously to the outermost edges of her shoulders. It ended in a wide band snug around her ribcage, just below her breasts. Above that, the material was looser but so thin that Arthur could clearly see her white bra through the gauzy material. She had fastened every button up the front of the blouse, but its wide boat-neck still left her collarbones and bra-straps proudly on display.

Arthur slowly clawed at his beard with both hands and whispered, "I don't see how he could complain."

"Okay, good," Elise giggled, looking down at her outfit once more. "I really hope this is enough, Doctor Peters, because I don't think I can wear any less!"

Arthur's mind reeled at the thought.

Suddenly Elise squatted down in front of him to fix the ankle clasp on one of her shoes that hadn't fully closed. This treated Arthur to a narrow V-shaped show of pink underwear framed between the naked flesh of Elise's uppermost thighs. He felt something stir beneath his corduroy pants and slowly rolled his chair sideways to hide behind his desk. When Elise straightened up, her skirt clung so high on her hips that it revealed the entirety of her legs from feet to pantie. She quickly smoothed the skirt back down, but in spite of her efforts the tiny garment still refused to cover the lace bands atop her stockings.

"My God," she laughed nervously, "I think if I stand perfectly still I MIGHT be able to avoid flashing everyone, but if I have to move... Yikers!"

Arthur just smiled from behind his desk.

Elise tip-toed back down to her own desk and dug through her backpack until she found a couple of clips to hold back the loose strands of her long auburn hair. Then she used a length of satin ribbon to tie a large bow behind her head at the base of her ponytail. Lastly, she put on some silver hoop earrings and refreshed her subtle pink lipstick.

"I'm ready," she announced, turning toward Arthur's desk once more. "How do I look?"

"Fantastic,' Arthur replied honestly. "And you seem to be enjoying this, at least a bit, which is a big relief for me. I was worried about how this whole uniform deal was going to make you feel."

"Oh, that's sweet Doctor Peters but you don't need to worry about me. I wouldn't have come out here if I wasn't cool with it. They're just clothes after all."

"Well, good. You've got a good way of looking at it, I guess. So I won't lose any more sleep over your uniforms, then."

Arthur smiled inwardly at his little joke. He had already lost plenty of sleep fantasizing about Elise's uniforms, and after today he was certain he would lose many more hours lying awake in his lonely bed doing exactly that. That was, in fact, exactly his plan for the evening.

"Oh gosh no," Elise assured him, "Please don't worry Doctor Peters. I do appreciate it, but I'll be fine. Now... what time is it?"

Arthur checked his watch. "Ten twenty-nine. Doctor Yamamoto should be here any second."

Elise bit her lip. Despite what she had just told Doctor Peters, she felt really nervous. But now that she had seen how relieved Doctor Peters was that she felt okay, she didn't want to reverse herself.

"What a sweet man," she thought. It was so flattering that he was worried about her -- that felt good. But this outfit felt way skimpier than she had expected. Elise told herself to put on a brave face and be more confident. But then she began to wonder if Doctor Yamamoto would be offended that she wasn't dressed more professionally for their first meeting. She quickly re-fastened the metal clips holding her hair back, regretting that there was no time to brush it properly after it got disheveled working through all the recycling. She felt the onset of a familiar, creeping uncertainty that usually precipitated some awful mistake or misjudgment.

"My God!" she thought, silently panicking, "I wore dirty sneakers for my first meeting with Doctor Peters, and now I'm dressed like a sloppy hooker to meet Doctor Yamamoto. I must be losing my mind!"

A sharp knock on the door made Elise spin around.

"Doctor Yamamoto!" Doctor Peters' voice called out behind her. "Come in, please! Meet Elise."

In the doorway, standing stiff as a board, was a short, wide Japanese man with a waxy mustache and round wire-framed spectacles. He stood so utterly still that, for a moment, Elise thought he looked fake. But then Doctor Peters' bear-like body rolled past her and went right up to the door to greet him. They exchanged a few phrases awkwardly in what Elise assumed was Japanese, and then shook hands. Elise felt unsure what to do. Was she supposed to walk to the door to great him too? Or wait here? She had no idea which would be more polite, but it suddenly seemed vital to make the right choice. She reminded herself not to stare, but she couldn't tear her eyes away from Doctor Yamamoto. There was something so... formal... about his demeanor.

Doctor Peters was doing his usual wild hand gestures and smiling broadly as he spoke with the squat wall-shaped man that was Doctor Yamamoto. Elise noticed the Japanese doctor's necktie was made of gorgeously thick silk and perfectly knotted around the stiff white collar of his dress shirt. Draped over his dark suit was a long, blindingly-clean lab coat that hung down past his knees. The hair on his head was oily black and parted to one side so precisely that Elise imagined he must have done it with an old-fashioned comb. Maybe he had a professional barber on staff at home, she thought. By the looks of him he could certainly afford it.

"Elise," she heard Doctor Peters say, suddenly breaking from his awkward Japanese. "Come meet Doctor Yamamoto!"

Elise lurched forward out of her reverie and immediately stumbled in her tall shoes. She fell down hard on the concrete floor and only just managed to avoid hitting her head on a nearby stool.

"Oh! Elise, are you okay?" Doctor Peters called out with genuine alarm. Elise sensed him rushing to her aid as she hurriedly erected herself back up onto the narrow stiletto sandals. Before she had even fully recovered she felt embraced by Doctor Peters' giant hands. They gripped her by the shoulders and Elise welcomed their steadying mass.

"I'm okay," she whispered meekly, "No, really. I guess I'm just not used to these heels yet. I'm so embarrassed!"

Doctor Peters' kielbasa-sized digits squeezed her upper arms tightly before letting go. She glanced down to review her outfit again to make sure it was still clean. She could feel her face burning hot with shame, and her left knee hurt too. But at least she hadn't torn a hole in her stockings or anything. She carefully smoothed her miniskirt back down and then raised her gaze toward the doorway. She tried to smile at Doctor Yamamoto in a way that would be seen as an apology.

Doctor Yamamoto looked back at her without any expression at all. Then he began to glide forward. Elise thought for a moment that he really was gliding, on wheels or something. He moved noiselessly across the space between them in such precise, measured strides that his upper body did not bounce at all. Elise had never seen anyone move like that. It struck her as completely alien.

Elise instinctively straightened her posture as Doctor Yamamoto got closer and closer. Wordlessly, he began to circle her, scrutinizing every minute detail of her appearance at close range. She twisted her head around, trying to follow his orbit, but he refused to meet her gaze no matter how intently she smiled at him. He lingered behind her for a long time.

Elise nervously shifted her weight from as the silence began to feel awkward. She noticed the sound of her stockings scuffing against one another between her thighs. She didn't know what to do with her hands. She struggled to stand still. It felt like a she was undergoing a military inspection. When Doctor Yamamoto finally completed his circle he stood directly in front of her and marched his gaze very slowly from her face all the way down to her feet and back again. Elise tried to make herself as tall as possible. Doctor Yamamoto was about one inch taller than her in these heels, but his posture was so incredibly erect that Elise felt compelled to emulate him.

Doctor Yamamoto at last looked directly into her eyes. Elise tried to double the intensity of her smile and reached out to shake his hand. Still Doctor Yamamoto said nothing, so Elise blurted out an overly-enunciated greeting:

"Hi! It is a pleasure to meet you Doctor Yamamoto. My name is Elise!"

Doctor Yamamoto still did not say anything. Or move. Except, Elise thought, maybe his chin dipped ever so slightly toward her. Was that a bow? She pulled back her offered hand and folded it into her other in front of her skirt. Was she supposed to bow back? What was appropriate?

Elise began to panic. She hurriedly dipped her head forward, bouncing her chin once on her chest. Then she straightened up tall again. Her brain screamed: "What the hell is going on here?"

Doctor Yamamoto broke the silence with a single, loud word of Japanese. Then he spun on his heel and glided back toward the door.

Elise turned to Doctor Peters in shock. "What did I do?" she whispered. "He wouldn't even shake my hand -- he hates me!"

"No, no you're fine!" Doctor Peters reassured her. "He doesn't believe it's polite to touch when you first meet someone, that's all. I didn't remember to tell you that beforehand. Go with him, though. He wants you to follow him!"

"Really?" Elise whispered franticly, "Are you coming too?"

"No. He'll show you around upstairs, just like we talked about. But Elise, don't crowed him... stay about a yard behind him and off to one side when you walk with him. He'll think you're more polite that way. Now go! Follow him."

"Okay, okay, I'm going!" Elise squealed as she scurried toward the door. Her high heels clacked loudly across the concrete.

"Elise!" Doctor Peters called after her, "Shhhh!! Try to walk quietly!"

Elise checked-up her long strides and tried to be more careful, but her shoes were so awkwardly tall that she found it impossible to walk quietly. The sharp pointed heels clicked and scraped on the concrete floor with every step.

"Shit," she thought to herself, "I'm never going to get this right!"

Elise finally caught up to Doctor Yamamoto just as he turned the corner at the end of the main hallway and began to ascend the wide staircase leading to the second floor. Elise looked up the long flight of stairs and swore again under her breath. She clutched the handrail with one hand and held the hem of her miniskirt with the other, trying to keep it down. As she carefully climbed the concrete staircase, she prayed none of the 1st floor employees would walk by and see her from below. She could only imagine the show she was putting on as the miniskirt inevitably bunched higher and higher, well clear of her stockings.

For the next hour Elise dutifully followed Doctor Yamamoto around the 2nd floor laboratories. She couldn't understand a word he was saying but even so the tour was very impressive. There were clear plastic over-pressure chambers in some of the rooms, and every surface appeared surgically clean. Never once did Doctor Yamamoto attempt to speak to her directly. He just talked loudly into the air as if educating the instruments and machines all around him. He pointed out two employees along the way. One of them was working inside what appeared to be a huge walk-in freezer. He wore a large white snowsuit that looked very uncomfortable. The other sat in front of a collage of nine flat screen monitors and only broke his gaze away from them long enough to give Elise a quick up-and-down glance.

Between the foreign language, the crazy equipment and her constant vigilance about her auto-hiking miniskirt and loud heels, Elise found the hour exhausting.

When it was all over, Doctor Yamamoto led her back to the top of the staircase and gestured for her to descend alone.

"Okaaaaay," Elise mentally reflected as she tiptoed back down to the lower floor. "That was bizarre."

Doctor Peters greeted her warmly upon her return to his office. "How was it?" he asked with a smile.

"Um..." Elise hesitated. "It was interesting."

"Did you meet Hiro and Kazutoshi?"

"I think so. One of them was in some sort of a freezer I think."

"Yeah, that was probably Kazutoshi. Some of the genetically-modified enzymes Doctor Yamamoto works with are only active at low temperatures. Kazutoshi is the one he trusts to handle the physical experiments. Hiro mostly crunches numbers."

"Yeah, okay..." Elise trailed off. She flopped into her desk chair with a sigh and began unbuckling the ankle straps of her shoes. Her feet were killing her already. Walking around in such high heels was going to take some getting used to, she realized. She began to massage her feet. Then the phone on Doctor Peters' desk rang.

"Oh look, it's Doctor Yamamoto," Arthur remarked before lifting the receiver to his ear. Elise's ears perked up.

Doctor Peters greeted Doctor Yamamoto in Japanese and then quickly glanced up at Elise. He seemed to be listening to a long speech on the other end of the phone. Elise noticed the wrinkles in Doctor Peters' forehead deepen before he slowly spun around in his swivel chair to face the wall of books behind him. The phone call seemed to go on for several minutes before Doctor Peters could get more than a few words in.

A cold, sinking dread began to take hold in Elise's belly. She hoped the conversation they were having wasn't about her, because Doctor Peters' tone seemed very apologetic. Was he suffering criticism about her? The thought immediately made Elise feel guilty. There really was no other possible explanation. What, she wondered, had she done wrong? She could hear Doctor Yamamoto's voice getting louder and louder, until it was positively blasting out from the handset of Doctor Peters' phone.

"Poor Doctor Peters!" Elise thought. He was taking a tongue-lashing for whatever error she had committed. She resolved to find some way to make it up to him.

When Doctor Yamamoto finally ran out of things to complain about, the two men hung up. Arthur slowly spun his chair back around to face the room. His eyes landed on Elise. She had removed her shoes and stockings and was standing barefoot in front of her desk, looking up at him.

"I am so sorry Doctor Peters," she began. "I didn't mean to eavesdrop but I'm guessing all that yelling was about me?"

"Well," Arthur stalled, "he wasn't really yelling. He just gets loud sometimes."

Elise could see the worry-lines around his eyes. He looked tired.

"Please tell me what I did wrong and I promise it will never happen again. I'm sure I can fix it, whatever it is."

"Well... it's kind of hard to explain."

Elise walked forward and stepped up onto the dais. She came right around to Arthur's chair, placed her left hand on his desk's writing surface and leaned her weight onto it. Her long bare legs crossed over one another and her hips adopted a rakish angle. Arthur felt his gaze drawn inexorably to her naked thighs and the slim triangular shadow cast between them by her tiny skirt. Her skin looked so creamy soft, he thought.

"Tell me what's wrong." Elise urged him. "Please!"

"Umm, it's nothing," Arthur demurred.

"No, it's something," Elise insisted. She leaned forward and put her right hand on Arthur's shoulder. "You've got to tell me."

Arthur leaned back, suddenly feeling she was too close. Elise withdrew her hand, but then she stepped sideways between Arthur and his desk and hopped her little round bottom up onto it.

Arthur's mind reeled at how close she was to him. She crossed her legs tightly above the knee and folder her hands in her lap to avoid flashing him.

"Okay, umm...." Arthur began, leaning back in his chair as far as possible. He scrambled for the words he needed to convey Doctor Yamamoto's crazy concerns without totally freaking Elise out. He desperately wanted her to stay the whole summer, but he also needed to appease his insane partner. It was going to be a balancing act, he knew.

Elise sat up straighter, exposing more of her taut midriff, and waited for him to continue. Her bare feet dangled above the carpet, gently swinging between the cuffs of Arthur's corduroy slacks.

"Doctor Yamamoto," Arthur began carefully, "seems to think you are showing insufficient respect for your position here. He wants you... to exhibit more pride."

"What...?! What does that even mean?" Elise blurted.

"Just let me finish. "

"Sorry."

"He mentioned several things that he felt were... inadequate."

Arthur noticed Elise flinch at the mention of that word. Her eyes opened very wide, but she remained silent.

"Don't worry, it's all fixable I think," Arthur continued quickly. "He mentioned posture. He said you slouch... which he feels undermines the level of dignity appropriate for the office. He also thought your hair was messy. And... um, he said it was inappropriate that he could see your bra."

"Oh my god!" blurted Elise. Her cheeks flushed immediately to scarlet.

"He said it's not appropriate to display undergarments at work... which, I mean, on that one I can kind-of see his point."

"But, but... look at this top," Elise whined franticly. She raised her hands up to her shoulders and demonstrated how every time she pulled the baby doll sleeves of her blouse up over her bra straps, they fell right back off to either side.

"Yes but even without that problem, I can see your whole bra through the fabric," Arthur informed her. "You can?!"

Elise looked down and swore under her breath as she flattened the gauzy fabric against her chest. Her bra, she realized, was obvious. Despite her mounting embarrassment, Elise lifted her gaze back up to Doctor Peters' and opened her mouth to defend herself.

But then she noticed real anxiety on the Doctor's big square face. She hated to see him taking the heat for her like this. Instead of arguing, she hopped down off the desk and bent over him, placing her small hands astride his shoulders. She leaned in close until her face was right in front of his.

"I'll do better, Doctor Peters, I promise. I don't want you getting yelled at on my account. I won't slouch anymore. I'll do my hair right and I'll make sure I don't have any wardrobe issues tomorrow."

Arthur couldn't think what to say. He was frozen by her sudden boldness and the proximity of her pretty face. So he just said: "Thanks Elise."

With that conversation over, Elise walked barefoot in her cat-like way back down to her own desk. She pulled out a tissue from her purse and pretended, for Doctor Peters' sake, to blow her nose. What she really did was wipe back the tears that had sprung from her eyes. Doctor Yamamoto's crazy criticisms had stung, especially delivered through the vessel of Doctor Peters' disappointment.

Elise steeled her resolve not to let him down again. She tried to focus on getting her uniforms organized so that tomorrow would go better. Her first decision was that she would leave all her new clothes in the walk-in closet rather than shuttling them back and forth on the train every day. That way she would always have access to the complete collection in case anything went wrong. Her friend's apartment in the City was so cramped anyway that the fewer things she stored there the better.

Elise studiously went through each garment and removed all the stickers and tags. Then she set about organizing them onto shelves and hangars in the closet. Throughout the afternoon it never occurred to her to change into her normal clothes. Without the tall stilettos and stockings she realized she didn't mind the stretchy skirt and cropped blouse. They certainly allowed her freedom of movement.

Arthur didn't mind them either. He ordered a lunch delivery for everyone on the 1st floor and spent the remainder of the day happily guiding his nearly-naked summer intern through various computing tasks that he expected her to master in the coming days. He relished how comfortable she seemed with his big hands' occasional, absent-minded touching. In fact, he noticed that she was prone to the same bad habit. She would often put a hand on his arm or back whenever they huddled around a table or computer screen.

All afternoon the two of them remain undisturbed. Arthur fought back urges he was embarrassed to name. He wanted to trace his fingers over Elise's shallow sacroiliac dimples. He wanted to pry apart her miniature, tight-looking ass. But he knew he had to resist. He had already convinced himself that he would simply enjoy the view this summer and he planned to stick to that plan. He figured he could always relieve his pent-up sexual tensions later when he was alone. This was still a far better arrangement, he knew, than not having Elise around at all.

**Tease to Please Ch. 03**

 **Chapter 3: Tuesday June 4th, 2013**
The 2nd day of Elise's internship began smoothly. She arrived just before 9:00am and buzzed herself into the building with the electric keycard Doctor Peters had given her. She sauntered down the main hall and into his office wearing her favorite jeans, a long-sleeved pullover and flip-flop wedges.

"Hi!" she said brightly to Doctor Peters before settling into her chair.

"Good Morning Elise," Arthur answered casually.

"I can't believe the weather," she volunteered. "It's crazy cold in the City, but then, when I get off the train out here it's so hot!"

"Yeah," Arthur chuckled, "That's summer in San Francisco for you. 'June gloom,' they call it. But it's usually pretty nice out here in the East Bay."

"Yeah, seems like it. It's just hard to know what to wear. I need a jacket in the City and a tank-top out here."

The two of them chatted amicably while beginning the day's work. Doctor Yamamoto wasn't scheduled to pick up Elise until one o'clock that afternoon, so her morning pace felt much more relaxed. Besides, Elise thought, she was far more prepared for him this time. She had risen early, gone for a run to the top of Nob Hill and then taken a long shower to wash and condition her hair and shave her legs. She had been especially careful to do her makeup and hair neatly. Her auburn ponytail was brushed perfectly straight and hung halfway down her slender back. Her equally long forelocks were braided to either side and secured back into a subtle wreath around her head by a slender white ribbon that attached them to the root of her pony tail. It was a style she had worn to a friend's wedding once, and had received many compliments. All that remained now, she thought, was to change into her uniform and stand a little taller – no more slouching!

As the morning wore on, despite her preparations Elise began to feel nervous. At eleven o'clock she got up from her desk and wandered into the closet to reassure herself about her choice of clothes. She planned to wear the white mini-dress with pink pinstripes today, rather than separates. She reviewed the stockings and then held the pink stilettos against the dress to make sure they didn't clash. It all looked okay, so she went back to her desk to get some more work done.

When Doctor Peters started taking lunch orders at noon, however, Elise's stomach was in such a knot that she couldn't even think about eating. She knew the dress was going to be tight and she didn't want to get bloated by eating a big sandwich.

"None for me thanks," she told Doctor Peters with a determined smile.

All three men on her floor decided to eat lunch together in the big kitchen, so Elise took the opportunity to shut herself into the closet and change. First she stripped down to her underwear and bra. Then she pulled the mini-dress off its hangar and gingerly stepped into it.

"God this is tight!" she thought as she tried to wiggle it up over her hips. The dress was far less elastic than the prior day's skirt had been. It was so unforgivingly narrow that she could barely squeeze her ass into it even with its side zipper fully open. She shimmied and danced around the small closet until finally the narrowest part of the dress popped up over her hips. She breathed a sigh of relief, then quickly looped the dress' one strap up over her right shoulder and slid the hidden side zipper up to cinch the dress tight around her midsection. Looking down, she smoothed the fabric into place and noticed how the pink pinstripes followed her every lump and bulge. The dress felt tighter than a compression slip.

Immediately she noticed her first problem. Her bra didn't fit under the one-shouldered dress, even when she converted it to strapless mode. It showed on the left side where the dress dipped below her armpit and even more in back where the dress was cut way down.

"Shoot," she thought, "How did I not realize that before now? Stupid!"

There was nothing to be done except remove her bra, so that is what she did. She peeled the dress off her shoulder, unfastened her size 32A bra and let it drop to the floor. Then she paused for a moment, noticing that her nipples were suddenly plump. She ran her hands over her petite boobs.

"The only advantage of having no boobs, I guess" Elise mused, "is that I can get away without a bra."

She tucked her arm back into the shoulder strap and pulled the top of the dress back into place. Right away the fabric looked smoother over her naked chest, punctuated only by the two subtle bumps of her nipples.

Next came the stockings. The ones Elise chose were mostly sheer, except they were embroidered with white lines that crisscrossed one another in an oversized fishnet pattern. The top bands were smooth and satiny. She carefully pulled each one on over her feet and up to her knees. Once both were that far up, she inched the dress up off her hips and finished pulling the stockings up to the very top of each thigh. This pair was a bit taller than yesterday's, and their satiny top bands snugged right up against her crotch. She noticed immediately that they felt lovely against her skin.

When she pulled her dress back down it seemed just as short as the prior day's skirt had been, but she hoped it wouldn't ride up so much since it wasn't as stretchy.

"Damn, I do feel kinda sexy!" Elise whispered to herself as she caressed the curve-hugging the little dress.

She ran her fingertips around the dress' bottom hem, feeling where it cut off against her stockings.

That's when she noticed the slit in back.

"What the hell?!" she exclaimed aloud. There was a wide slit up back of the dress that felt like it extended three or four inches above the already too-short hemline. She wished for a mirror so she could see it better. It felt like it gapped wide even when she was standing still.

"What will it do when I'm walking?" she despaired.

To find out, Elise strapped on the pink stilettos, opened the door of the closet and clomped her way back to her desk in the awkwardly tall heels.

Luckily the men weren't back from the kitchen yet. She retrieved a small compact mirror from her purse and flipped it open. First she checked that her makeup and hair were still perfect and then she twisted around, trying to line up the little mirror's reflection with the back of her dress. She couldn't hold it steady for long enough to be sure... but she caught a disturbing glimpse of the slit. It seemed to reveal the narrowest part of her lace thong's crotch, right where it disappeared between her butt cheeks.

At that moment Doctor Peters and his two researchers walked in.

"Hi Elise!" Arthur announced.

'Oh!" exclaimed Elise, nearly falling over in her rush to untwist herself and straighten up.

"Whatchya doing?" Doctor Peters asked.

"Ah! Umm, nothing! Just, um, getting changed into my uniform."

"Okay. Well, it looks nice. Anyway, I brought Alex and Jacob by so they could show you how to sort those spreadsheets with the single-cell morbidity data we talked about this morning. I figured you'd better hear it right from them."

"Umm...okay. Hi guys," Elise said, smiling in turn at each of the two skinny, pale researchers who now stood to either side of Doctor Peters. They both stared back slack-jawed, apparently struck dumb by Elise's outfit.

Elise tried to ignore their leering and continued, "Um, Doctor Peters, could I please talk with you for a second first?"

"Sure. What's up?" Arthur replied on his way toward Elise's desk.

"Well, maybe a bit more privately?" Elise whispered, reaching for his hand and leading him toward the back of the room. "It's just that Doctor Yamamoto is coming soon, and I have a, um... a concern about my dress. Can you come to the closet for a sec?"

Arthur followed Elise over to the closet door, admiring the fantastic shape of her ass as it rocked in front of him. It looked so perfect, he thought, accentuated by her narrow waist and stiletto'ed posture. He could not help noticing her dress' daring slit too. Each step she took made it blink at him like a wide arrowhead directing his attention to her bottom.

Elise stepped into the closet and was about to pull Doctor Peters inside when suddenly there was a loud Japanese voice barking in the hallway outside. She let go of Doctor Peters' hand and quickly twisted around in front of him, whispering urgently over her shoulder: "Is this showing my butt?"

Doctor Peters was already gone; headed back across the room to greet Doctor Yamamoto. Elise had no choice but to switch off the closet light and follow him.

Doctor Yamamoto talked loudly amongst the men for a few minutes as Elise walked in silence back to her desk. Her fingers couldn't stop playing with the tall slit. She could definitely feel her butt-crack right inside the triangular gap. She wished she had worn more conservative underwear; something with full back coverage. That way she would have had at least a modicum of protection back there. As it was, her bare butt cheeks and narrow thong were going to spend the next hour on display.

Doctor Yamamoto stopped talking and glided toward Elise. She belatedly remembered his comment about posture and tried to stand ram-rod straight. She noticed that Alex and Jacob had straightened their backs too in the presence of Doctor Yamamoto.

The mustachioed Japanese scientist silently walked up to Elise's desk and scanned the messy pile of paper notes she had scribbled during her morning's work. Then his gaze shifted to her shoes and climbed up her long legs to her dress. He eyes seemed to hesitate at her hips. He stepped around beside her and extended his index finger toward her waist. Elise felt the tip of his finger trace a line slowly around her hips, following the waistband of her lacy thong. His touch tickled. It gave her goosebumps on her arms, but she resisted the urge to squirm. She didn't want to get Doctor Peters in any more trouble.

Doctor Yamamoto barked something angry-sounding in Japanese, which made Doctor Peters actually jog over to see what the problem was. Alex and Jacob froze in place. Elise clasped her hands tightly together behind her back and tried to become as still as a statue.

There ensued a chaotic to-and-fro between the two doctors in Japanese, which Elise struggled unsuccessfully to make any sense of. Finally Doctor Peters, looking defeated, told her in English that the creased line around her dress created by the waistband of her panties was too obvious. Doctor Yamamoto felt she was intentionally disrespecting him since he had just the day before explained the rule about no undergarments showing through her uniform.

Elise felt her face catch fire. She glanced from Doctor Peters to Doctor Yamamoto and then at Alex and Jacob. The eyes of all four men were fixed on her, waiting for her to respond.

She panicked. She had zero idea what to say or do. She felt crazy and lightheaded.

Finally, Doctor Peters leaned in close to her ear and whispered: "Why don't you take them off?"

That suggestion floated around inside Elise's head like a small advertising blimp; its lights calmly blinking 'Take Them Off' over and over. It sounded so reasonable coming out of Doctor Peters' bearded face. And yet, in the back of her mind there was another voice that screamed: 'No fucking way!'

"Ummm... what?" stumbled out from her mouth.

"Just take them off," Doctor Peters whispered again.

Elise saw how nervous he looked. And then she saw how distant and cold Doctor Yamamoto's expression was. It occurred to her that maybe at this very moment her entire summer was on the line.

"Okay," she managed to whisper. A fog seemed to have taken over her brain. She felt like she was watching herself from above. She hitched-up her dress, looped her thumbs through the straps of her lace panties and slowly pulled them down over her stockings until they fell noiselessly to her ankles. She shook her pink stiletto shoes out of them, one by one. Then she shimmied the tight dress back down over her naked hips.

"Dear God in heaven thank you almighty Jesus!" she heard one of the researchers whisper in the background. The other one, Jacob she thought, actually fainted. He crumpled to the floor with a dull thud.

Elise looked at Doctor Peters. His big square face was frozen in an expression of wide surprise. His eyes were locked on her crotch.

Doctor Yamamoto, though, was smiling. Elise instinctively smiled back at him before realizing it was the first time she had ever seen him smile. That snapped her out of her mental fog in a heartbeat.

"Aahk!" her brain screamed at her, "I just flashed my vagina at four grown men! And now I'm standing here with my panties on the floor! What the hell am I doing?"

But there was no time to think about how to recover her dignity. Doctor Yamamoto barked out a cheerful command and gestured for Elise to follow him. She felt compelled to apologize to Doctor Peters though, so she grabbed his arm as she walked by and looked him in the eyes.

"I'm sorry Doctor Peters," she whispered up at him pleadingly. "I didn't mean to shock you. I should have used the closet. I don't know what came over me!"

Then she scurried out the door after Doctor Yamamoto, taking rapid little steps in order to keep her spiky heels quiet.

After she left, Arthur kept staring at the little panties that now lay on the floor of his office. Alex helped Jacob back onto his feet and the two of them followed Elise's footsteps down the hall. When Elise reached the bottom of the brightly-lit staircase, having by then almost caught up with Doctor Yamamoto, she turned and saw the two pale men following her. She took a deep breath, clutched the handrail and began her long, tip-toed ascent toward the second floor. She knew that when Alex and Jacob reached the bottom of the stairs the big slit in the back of her dress would give them a clear view of her pussy. She reached around behind herself and tried to cover the slit with her open hand, but that felt almost more vulgar and somehow made balancing in her heels terribly awkward. So in the end she just gave up and let them have their look.

"At least I got waxed last week," she consoled herself.

Elise mounted the remaining stairs with as much grace as she could muster. When she reached the landing at the top, she glanced back. Sure enough, the two researchers were still there. Alex had even crouched down for a better view.

"Fucking geeks!" Elise thought, "They probably haven't gotten laid in years."

Arthur, alone in his office, bent down and picked up the panties. He looked at the tag. It read: "Victoria's Secret XXS/0/P." He stuffed them into his pocket and walked back to his desk.

Upstairs, Elise spent the next hour following Doctor Yamamoto around as he tried unsuccessfully to explain things to her in Japanese. The only thing Elise learned was that the whirling fans and exhaust vents in each room created starkly different micro-climates. She felt every breeze and temperature change tickle her newly-naked crotch. And having the satin top-bands of her stockings constantly stroking her hairless outer labia as she walked wasn't helping either. In fact, it all got her quite damp, which only made her feel the hot and cold breezes even more acutely.

"Why," she silently asked herself with furrowed brows, "is this humiliating outfit making me so damn horny?"

She felt gazes from Hiro and Kazutoshi tracking her movements. Each time she had to turn her back to them she clasped her hands behind her bottom, trying to cover the gapping slit. Still, the caresses of her satin stockings grew increasingly pleasurable. By the middle of the hour, Elise's nipples jutted out through her dress so prominently that she felt compelled to cross her arms in front to conceal them. But this left her exposed again from behind. Then Doctor Yamamoto had her lean over a countertop to look through a microscope. The room fell silent behind her. She glanced over her shoulder and saw Kazutoshi holding his iphone aloft, aimed in her direction.

"Dammit!" she thought, straightening up without having really studied what was under the scope. Doctor Yamamoto positioned a second slide under the scope and tugged Elise's arm forward onto the device's focusing wheels. Unable to communicate her discomfort, Elise had no choice but to remove her hands from behind her dress bend over again. She crossed her legs at the ankle, hoping this might somehow lessen her exposure, but she doubted that it helped at all. She tried to ignore her awkward plight and instead focused on the wiggling cells on the microscope slide.

Kazutoshi's phone was still filming her when she straightened back up several moments later. He put it away only after Doctor Yamamoto turned around and began walking in his direction. When Elise followed the doctor, she noticed the satin tops of her stockings dragging even more heavily against her outer labia. They were soaked. With every step, the wet satin bands skidded back and forth across her waxed skin like a pair of tongues.

When Doctor Yamamoto finally escorted her to the top of the staircase at the end of the hour, he smiled broadly and patted her lower back before gesturing for her to descend. His touch sent a nervous tremor through her.

Elise carefully tip-toed back down to the first floor. She felt so aroused by then that she decided to take a detour into the restroom.

Inside the bathroom were three toilet stalls, all empty. She chose the one farthest from the entrance, stepped inside and latched the little half-door behind her. Before she had a chance to lose her courage, she yanked her dress up to her waist, propped one stiletto-clad foot up on the back of the toilet and started to masturbate.

As a sexual creature, Elise liked to think she made up for her lack of size with quality. She had out-orgasmed every guy she had ever slept with, often ten-to-one. Hidden beneath the 'cute gymnast' exterior that she consciously presented to the world was a secret: she LOVED her pussy. Even when she had had steady boyfriends in the past, masturbation remained a daily part of her life. Elise rationalized that something so nice couldn't possibly be wrong. It felt good. It felt healthy. And if nobody was looking, then it was nobody's business.

Elise braced herself against the wall of the narrow stall and began circling her exposed clit with two fingers. Then she dipped those fingers between the slippery folds of her inner labia, confirming how wet she was.

During the last few days, living on the couch at her friend's fiancée's apartment, she had not felt comfortable doing this. Today's flashing incident in Doctor Peters' office, walking around with no underwear on, those geeky guys looking up the back of her dress and then the damn satin stocking-tops... it had all made her so desperately horny that she felt she deserved a release.

Elise rubbed her clit faster and faster, conscious that at any moment someone might walk into the restroom.

She brought her left hand into play as well, holding her now-swollen labia wide open so she could thrust her fingers deep inside while bouncing her palm against her starving clit.

"Fuck!" she cried out in a hoarse whisper only a minute later. She could feel an orgasm approaching and it was going to be a good one. She switched back to just rubbing her clit with small light-pressured circles. That always drove her crazy. A wave of serious pleasure began to radiate from her pussy outwards, sending shoots of joy down her thighs and across her nipples. She moved her left hand around to her exposed bottom and pulled one butt cheek aside. Her right hand maintained a steady rhythm on her tingling clit. When the timing felt right, she pushed her left index finger against her anus and wiggled.

"God, I need this!" she thought.

There was a bang as someone burst open the main restroom door. Elise froze; eyes suddenly wide. She heard footsteps entering. Then the door clicked shut. Someone was in the room! She dared not move for fear of making a sound, but she realized that if the person looked under the stall partitions they would see one stiletto shoe on the ground, facing the wrong way for a girl.

Thankfully she instead heard the person enter the stall farthest from her. The sound of plastic hitting metal indicated the toilet seat being raised. Then she heard a zipper. She tried to breathe silently. Her fingers were warm and wet at her crotch and her brain was buzzing with endorphins.

"Who was it?" Elise wondered silently. "One of the geeks? Or Doctor Peters?"

She focused on remaining entirely quiet.

A loud stream of pee hitting water broke the silence. Elise thought it sounded like a really wide stream. That made her think it might be Doctor Peters, though she couldn't imagine why. She had never heard any man pee before, at least not that she could remember, so she had no basis for comparison. The peeing seemed to go on forever. Elise heard the man sigh with relief. His deep-chested breathing confirmed, in Elise's mind, that it was Doctor Peters.

Her fingers started to orbit her clit again, very slowly. She pictured Doctor Peters' huge body standing just one stall away, holding his cock out in those bear-paw hands of his. For some reason she pictured his dick being huge, if only to remain in proportion to the rest of him.

The peeing went on and on. Elise circled her clit faster, feeling it throb in response to her imagined picture of Doctor Peters' cock.

"God, what is wrong with me?!" she thought, furrowing her brow at the sudden, unexpected intensity of her own pleasure. "I can't possibly be getting turned on about this guy!"

The peeing died out. Elise heard a zipper, then a flush. Then the stall door banged open. She froze again, terrified of being caught. Her right leg, which bore all the weight of her body in this lurid pose, was starting to shake. If she got a cramp it would be catastrophic.

The sink faucet came on and she listened as Doctor Peters (or whoever it was) washed his hands. This too, seemed to take forever as Elise struggled not to move from her wide stance. The tiny sole of her left shoe rested precipitously on the chrome plumbing behind the toilet. If it slipped she would probably crash to the floor, naked from the waist down.

That danger seemed to turn her on more. She gently squeezed her clit between her fingers. It felt huge and fantastically sensitive.

She listened as the man dried his hands. Finally the door out to the hall swung open and shut.

She waited another heartbeat or two, just to make sure she was alone. Then she blurred her hands against her crotch in a desperate frenzy; probing, sliding, circling, stretching, stabbing and even slapping her groin. The approach of her long-delayed orgasm felt like the final seconds before impact of an oncoming train. She couldn't help but give way as it crashed into her.

"Fuck meeee!" she moaned, not quietly, in the bathroom stall. Railroad-car sized loads of pleasure coursed through her tiny body, shaking it like a blade of grass caught between their tracks.

Her foot slipped off the plumbing and she tumbled forward, only just catching herself by straight-arming the back wall with her left hand. She stooped over the toilet with her legs as far apart possible. Her back arched involuntarily, pointing her naked ass at the stall door behind her as her three days' worth of orgasm passed through her. She pumped her pussy and clit as fast as possible with her right hand, making squishy sounds that were dangerously loud. She felt a final, lightning-bright flash of pleasure accompanied by a gush from her pussy that overran her palm and sprinkled the floor.

Elise stopped. She was breathing hard. A few moments passed before she recovered enough strength and coordination to stand. She was flush all over, almost sweaty. Her right hand was coated with warm, clear slime.

"Jesus..." thought Elise. "That was insane!"

She took a few more minutes to recover, cleaning herself up with tissue paper. Then she felt the urge to pee, so she did that too. When she finally exited the little stall, she'd been in there for a quarter of an hour.

"Thank god nobody else came in," she told herself as she washed her hands and fixed her hair. She splashed cold water on her face in an effort to hide her now-rosy complexion. The pink blush on her upper chest would be harder to conceal, but she knew it would fade in another ten minutes or so.

She stepped back from the sink and regarded herself in the mirror from a distance, taking in the full effect of her skin-tight dress, tall stockings and high heels. She looked damn hot, she thought, even with that obscene slit up the back of her dress and no underwear.

The door swung open and in walked Jacob.

"Oh sorry!" he blurted reflexively before back-pedaling toward the hallway.

"It's okay!" Elise called out with a smile. "I'm all done."

She glanced in the mirror one more time, tucked a loose strand of hair behind her ear and then turned to walk toward the door. Jacob was standing half inside, holding the door open with his body. Elise gave him a wide smile, turned sideways and squeezed by him out into the hall.

"Poor old Jacob," Elise giggled to herself, purposely adding a little extra swank to her strut as she walked away, well aware that his gaze was locked on her backside. "The guy fainted after a mere glimpse of my coochie!"

When Elise strolled into Doctor Peters' office a moment later, the smirk on her face was a mile wide.

"Well, hello." Doctor Peters said from behind his desk. "Everything go okay upstairs?"

"Oh yeah, it was fun!" Elise answered in a voice full of carefree afterglow. She pulled the little plastic office chair out from under her desk and, momentarily forgetting the slit and her lack of underwear, plopped down onto it. The shock of the seat's cold vinyl against her hot, swollen labia made her jump back up with an involuntary: "Ohh!"

"Everything okay?" Doctor Peters asked.

"Oh... Umm, yeah." Elise replied, trying not to laugh. "I think I'm just going to change back into my normal clothes though, if you don't mind."

"Not at all. Go right ahead."

"Thanks," Elise said, smiling over at him. She walked back to the closet, turned on the light and stepped inside. No sooner had the door shut behind her then she reopened it and poked her head out to look around the room.

"Have you seen my panties anywhere, Doctor Peters?" she asked.

"No," he lied. "Can't say that I have."

"Hmm. That's weird. Well, okay thanks," Elise replied cheerily. She gave the door a pull, turned around and unzipped her dress.

Arthur was delighted to see that the door hadn't quite closed all the way. It stood open by about two inches. He rolled his desk chair sideways until his view through the gap was centered on Elise. The overheard closet lights bathed her in a yellow glow. He watched transfixed as she peeled the little pinstriped dress down off her body and stepped out of it. Wearing only heels and stockings and her fancy hairstyle, she looked like a skinny pin-up model. Arthur stared as Elise propped one leg up on a low shelf and bent over to unstrap her shoe. A moment later she switched legs and stepped down, suddenly losing four inches of height. She leaned away from the door once more to unfasten the other sandal. Her long auburn ponytail slipped off her back and hung to one side. Arthur's gaze focused on the compact globes of her young ass and the narrow void that revealed itself between them as she remained bent over. Within that narrow shadow Arthur glimpsed for one second, or imagined he did, the silhouette of her bare pussy.

His pants felt tight.

Elise peeled down her stockings one at a time and rolled them carefully back into their packaging. She began to move about the closet, leaving Arthur with only passing glimpses. They were fully-naked glimpses though, so he relished every one.

Arthur watched her pull on her tight jeans. She had to hop up and down to squeeze her round ass into them. Arthur wondered what those jeans felt like against her naked crotch. She seemed to take extra care in closing the zipper. He continued to watch as she snapped into her small bra, adjusted its shoulder straps and, finally, shrugged on her long-sleeved shirt. A moment later she emerged in her casual wedge flip flops and walked back to her desk.

Arthur breathed a long, low sigh and slouched lower behind his desk. What a great summer this was going to be, he mused.

The remainder of the afternoon went by without event. At five o'clock Elise cleaned up her desk and prepared to leave. She slung her backpack over one shoulder and approached Arthur's desk.

"Doctor Peters," she asked, "I was wondering... I notice you have this exercise bike in the office here, and um... if it's okay with you, I thought maybe I could use it a couple times a week to work out at the end of the day. That would save me from having to run so early in the morning."

"Well," Arthur replied, genuinely surprised by the question. "I suppose there's no harm in that. It might be a bit big for you, but—"

"Really? That would be so cool of you! The neighborhood where I'm staying doesn't feel safe in the early morning. Plus it's so foggy and cold in the city, you know? I just know I'd feel way more comfortable working out in here. I promise I'll adjust the seat back to where you have it when I'm done. Are you sure it's not going to bother you? I don't want you to have to stay late on my account."

"No problem," Arthur replied, puzzled by the sudden uptick in Elise's word-rate. "I always stay late."

"Cool! I SO appreciate it! I'll bring my gym clothes tomorrow. Is that okay?"

"Sure."

"Thanks Doctor Peters!"

"You're welcome. By the way, Elise, there is something I want to ask you..."

"What's that?"

"Well, I guess I'm curious why you applied for this internship. I remember on the phone you talked about wanting to learn more about the work we do here, but I've yet to see you get excited about the research. It's really cutting-edge and important work, in my opinion. But, compared to how excited you are about that exercise bike, I get the impression you don't share my view."

"Oh! Well, no – I mean yes." Elise stumbled, caught off-guard by the question. "I... I really do like exercising, but I also like what you guys are doing here. I guess I'm still, just, trying to understand it, I think... so maybe that's why I don't seem as excited?"

"There was no other reason why you came here this summer?"

"No," Elise whispered, starting to blush. "Not really."

She knew she was a poor liar. And Doctor Peters did seem really nice so far, she thought, so she confessed. "Well actually, Doctor Peters, the truth is I wanted to get away from home. It's not the only reason, but... I was... going crazy living there. My mom and I, we're just, like, opposites about a lot of things."

"Uh-huh."

"But that's not the only reason, Doctor Peters, please believe me! I also want to learn about biology too... and how to do good research."

"Your mom told me you wanted to be a physical therapist."

"Um... yeah. That's true too, I guess. Can I do both?"

"I suppose it's possible. But I want you to concentrate on your work here this summer, okay? You don't realize it yet, but Doctor Yamamoto and I are on the verge of some pretty amazing things. This may be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for you."

"Yes, I understand. I will... focus on it more."

"And from now on I want you to be completely honest with me, okay? No more half-truths."

"Of course, Doctor Peters. I'm sorry about that." Elise clasped her hands behind her back and crossed her legs at the ankle. She looked down at the floor in front of Arthur's desk.

"It's okay, Elise. I'm glad to have a clearer understanding of you. And while we're on the subject of... sharing personal information, there is in fact something I have been meaning to tell you."

"Really?" Elise asked, lifting her downcast face back up.

"Yes." Arthur replied. He cleared his throat before continuing: "Now... I don't know how much your mother told you about me, but the truth is she and I lost touch a long time ago. For one thing, she probably told you that I'm married. That used to be true, but... the fact is my wife and I divorced about three years ago."

"Oh. I'm sorry to hear that Doctor Peters. I had no idea."

"That's okay. It's not really relevant, except the thing is, during the divorce I lost my house. My ex-wife kept it. So, what I decided to do at the time, rather than borrow a bunch of money to buy a new house just for me to live in alone, was I converted about a thousand square feet of this floor into an apartment.

"Oh."

"So, I live here now."

"Really? Where?"

"Through that door," Arthur said, indicating the farthest of the three doors on the south wall of his office, the one closest to the main hallway entrance. "It's just a basic one-bedroom layout, but I had a nice little kitchen put in and a living room and so on. It's quite comfortable. Anyway, the only reason I bring it up is that you don't need to worry about keeping me here late. I'm always here."

"Oh. Okay." Elise said quietly. She felt puzzle pieces shifting in her mind, but she couldn't quite put her finger on what had just changed. Someone without her blindness to social dynamics, Elise knew, would understand immediately how this information affected her. But it always took Elise longer to figure these things out. She resolved to think about it on her train ride back into the city.

"If you don't mind, Elise" Arthur continued, "I'd appreciate it if you'd refrain from passing that on to your mom... about my divorce and me living here at the lab and such. I'd rather not have her worry about me. Can you do that for me?"

"Oh, sure. I won't mention it."

"Thanks. Well... anyway, have a good night. I'll see you in the morning."

"Yeah. Okay. Good night Doctor Peters. Thanks again. See you tomorrow."

With that, Elise turned and walked across the office and out into the hallway. Arthur listened to her footfalls recede. Shortly he heard the heavy automatic doors of the delivery entrance open and close to let her out to the street. He leaned back in his swivel chair and hoped he hadn't just blown it.

**Tease to Please Ch. 04**

 **Chapter Four: Wednesday June 5, 2013**
"It was FREEZING in the city this morning!" exclaimed Elise when she arrived at the lab. "I'm so glad I didn't have to go out for an early run this morning. I would have frozen into a popsicle!"

She was bundled up in a denim jacket and an ankle-length purple hippy skirt.

"Good morning Elise," Arthur replied. "It can't be all that bad. I didn't hear any reports of snow on the news."

"Well, it seems freezing when you're in that crazy fog and the wind is blowing a million miles an hour. I don't know how people survive in San Francisco. At least out here it's more normal, like, with an actual sun up in the sky."

Arthur chuckled. "I'm glad we can be of service. I would hate our guest from Arizona to die of exposure to fog. By the way, how is BART treating you? I heard on the news there's some sort of labor dispute going on? "

"It's fine. I noticed some people picketing at the station last night, but that's about it."

Elise put down her backpack and doffed her jean jacket onto the extra chair beside her desk.

"I'm going to the kitchen to make some coffee," she volunteered, "Would you like some?"

"Sure. Thanks Elise."

"No problem Doctor Peters."

Arthur was relieved to see Elise so at-ease this morning. His revelations the prior evening about being divorced and living at the lab didn't seem to have affected her outlook on her internship at all. At least not as far as he could tell.

Arthur relished the thought of what the next three months would bring. Not only would Elise become increasingly useful to him as she learned her way around his ongoing research, but the daily excitement of watching her dress up in revealing candystriper outfits was already making him feel twenty years younger. His libido was getting a serious workout. He looked forward to each day like a voyeur at a newfound peephole.

Elise returned a few minutes later and delivered a large mug of fresh coffee to Arthur's desk with one of her signature smiles. Then they both got to work.

About thirty minutes later Arthur's office phone rang. It was Doctor Yamamoto. Apparently he had a gift for Elise that he wished to deliver personally. He indicated he would be heading downstairs right away.

Arthur hung up the phone and told Elise.

"Shoot!" Elise exclaimed. "I'm supposed to be in uniform, aren't I?"

"You better hurry." Arthur replied.

Elise bounded to the closet and shut the door behind her. Arthur heard the scraping of hangars across wardrobe poles and the clack of shoes dropping onto the concrete floor.

Inside, Elise was a blur of naked limbs as she stripped down to her underwear. She had purposely worn an ultra-sheer pair of white nylon boyshort panties today to avoid a repeat of the prior day's embarrassment. She was confident the gauzy, seamless 'Mini Cheekster' shorts would leave no waistband creases visible through her uniform this time. Up top, she wore a strapless padded bra. Again, she intended to have no repeats of yesterday's problems.

Elise yanked a new miniskirt off its hangar and stepped into it barefoot. This one was styled like a tennis skirt. Its top half sat low and tight on her hips while its bottom half flared out in a dozen flouncy pleats. The outside fabric was white cotton but, unlike a real tennis skirt, the interior was lined with bright pink faux satin. A matching pink belt was sewn on around the top of the skirt, but functionally the waist was closed by a zipper at the rear. Elise had to suck in her stomach to get the zipper fully engaged.

Once it was on, she had no time to study the fit of the skirt. If she had, she would have noticed that it was the shortest garment she had ever worn in her entire life.

She pulled a pink knit top from the pile of shirts. The material was very soft. It felt like a thin fuzzy sweater. Elise stretched the crew-neck over her head carefully so as not to mess up her hair and fished her arms through the long sleeves. When she pulled it down over her bra, she noticed the fuzzy fabric actually made it look like she had boobs for once. That was a pleasant surprise. The pink sweater's long sleeves contrasted sharply with its high crop around her ribcage. Her entire stomach and lower back were bare.

There was no time to choose between all the stockings so Elise just grabbed a pair at random. They turned out to be three-quarter length white ones with a prominent seam up the back. The thigh bands were very dainty with a corset-style, laced-up closure at the back. Tiny pink ribbons served as the laces and were tied off in dangling bows that hung down over the topmost inches of the back seams. Elise made a snap decision that the pearl-colored heels were a better match. She buckled them on as quickly as she could and then shuffled out into the office.

Arthur nearly choked on his coffee when he saw her.

"Is this okay?" Elise asked nervously. She did a quick spin that twirled the pleats of her skirt outward. This exposed not only the skirt's bright pink lining but also most of her underwear and ass.

Without a word Arthur stood and followed Elise as she clomped back to her desk to put in her earrings and a hair ribbon.

His eyes were mesmerized by the line of flouncy pleats that wagged back and forth across her butt as she walked. The pink bows at the back of her stockings shook with each footfall of her tall heels. The pink sweater was neon-bright and coordinated perfectly with the bows, belt and pink lining that peeked out between the pleats of her skirt every time she moved.

When Elise reached her desk and stood still, Arthur realized just how shockingly short her skirt was. The front barely concealed her panties. The rear, unbeknownst to Elise, was even more brief and failed to cover her gluteal crease. Anyone behind her who happened to be eye-level with her hips would plainly see the initial swell of her bottom and the gentle widening where her uppermost thighs were bisected by her panties. The fact that her stockings ended at mid-thigh only exaggerated the brevity of the skirt by leaving the top five inches of her slender legs entirely naked.

"Is something wrong?" Elise asked, startling Arthur from his entranced stupor.

"Oh! Um, no," he babbled, "You, um... Your uniform looks great. It's, um, well... I just noticed the seams on your stockings kind of wander. Are those supposed to be straight?"

Elise finished putting in her second earring and twisted around to look down the backs of her legs.

"Are they crooked?" she asked, straining to see past the flouncy pleats of her skirt.

"Yeah. Do you want me to help you fix them?"

"No, no. I got it. I just need to put this bow into my hair first."

Elise dug a wide pink ribbon out of her bag and looped it around the base of her ponytail.

Arthur couldn't help himself. He knelt down behind her and began gently tugging the most crooked areas of her stockings into alignment. Being so close to her made his heart pound. His face was inches from her bottom. While his hands worked the seams straight, he let his eyes wander upwards from the dainty pink bows to the rear hemline of her skirt. He marveled at how smooth her hairless thighs were. Her skin appeared almost diaphanous at the junction of her inner thigh and butt.

When Elise finished tying the pink bow in her hair, she twisted around again and placed one hand on the back of her hip.

"You don't have to do that Doctor Peters," she said softly. "I can fix them."

Arthur couldn't hear her. Her new pose had canted her pelvis even farther forward than her tall sandals had, raising the back of her skirt by another inch. Arthur was eye-to-eye with her butt cheeks. He stared at the thin mini-shorts, stunned by their transparency. The fabric clung to her little creased mound and nearly disappeared between the pert lobes of her ass. He swore under his breath. The panties were so sheer he could actually discern a freckle on one of her outer labium.

In a flash of inspiration, Arthur dug his index fingers under the top-band of one of her stockings and gave it a firm side-to-side wiggle. This set in motion the soft flesh of Elise's thigh, wobbling it in front of his nose. Elise grabbed the desk with her free hand to steady herself. Arthur repeated this twice on each leg, relishing the way the lower half of her petite ass quivered in response.

"Okay, Doctor Peters. Okay!" Elise pleaded. "They must be straight by now."

Arthur carefully rose to his feet. His penis had swollen substantially. It now lay trapped uncomfortably sideways beneath his underwear and slacks. He backed away from Elise's desk and inserted his hand into the front pocket of his slacks to conceal his bulge.

"Are they straight?" Elise continued, facing away from him with her feet together and lower back arched.

"Yeah, almost perfect." Arthur replied. "Just behind your knees, the seams go inward a bit."

To his delight, Elise bent over to fix this. He coached her adjustments as she tugged each stocking into better alignment, but really all he did was soak up the delicious view of her bottom.

Elise had just straightened back up when Doctor Yamamoto strode into the room. He carried a small white box that was about the size and shape of a double CD case. He appeared to be in a good mood. He greeted each of them with a thin smile and then held the box out toward Elise with both hands.

Arthur remember enough from his days in Japan to warn Elise that she needed to accept the gift with both hands while looking Doctor Yamamoto in the eye. To do otherwise would be regarded as a great insult, he informed her.

Elise dutifully accepted the small box with both hands and gave Doctor Yamamoto a slight bow along with her smile. She then opened the lid of the box. Inside was a silver jewelry chain.

Doctor Yamamoto began to explain to Elise in Japanese, with Doctor Peters translating of course, that this was a gift intended to help cure her habit of lazy posture.

Elise held up the chain to examine it closely. It was very thin and wrought of links that were round in cross-section. The links were so closely spaced that the chain felt as smooth as a wire. The clasp was interesting too. It was a tiny heart-shaped box with a keyhole in the front.

Doctor Yamamoto plucked a tiny key from within the box and carefully unlocked the clasp. The chain fell open silently and draped from Elise's hands like a wet noodle.

Doctor Yamamoto began gesturing toward Elise's chair and babbling happily about something in Japanese. Elise looked at Doctor Peters.

"He wants you to stand up on your chair," Arthur translated. "...so he can put it on you. I think he's saying it goes around your waist."

"Oh," Elise replied. "Can you give me a hand?"

She was unsure what to think about this apparent kindness from Doctor Yamamoto, but she had been raised better than to question any gift, especially one from her boss. She accepted Doctor Peters' offered arm and carefully stepped up onto her plastic chair. It wasn't a swivel chair, thankfully. In these heels, Elise reflected, that would have been suicidal.

Once atop the chair, Elise's waist was level with the Japanese doctor's head. He took the silver chain from her hand and quickly looped it around her bare midriff. It felt cool against her skin at first but quickly warmed. Elise looked down and was embarrassed to see that the chain was too short. Even when Doctor Yamamoto held it snugly around the narrowest part of her waist there remained a one-inch gap between the two halves of the clasp.

Doctor Yamamoto said something in Japanese.

"He says to suck in and stand up tall," Doctor Peters relayed.

Elise sucked in her flat tummy as far as she could and tried to stretch herself taller. She felt the chain tighten around her. Then there was an audible: 'click!'

Doctor Yamamoto stepped back. The chain was in place.

Doctor Peters took a step back too. Both men regarded her appearance as though for the first time, scanning her from head to toe.

Elise looked down at her waist. It felt like she could hardly breathe. The chain was indented into her skin all the way around. It wasn't uncomfortable, but she immediately disliked the pudgy appearance it gave her. She sucked in her stomach again until the chain regained a fraction of slack. To avoid that pudgy look, she realized, she was going to need to keep her stomach sucked-in all the time and breathe with her chest rather than her diaphragm.

"This must be how it improves your posture," she thought.

Elise glanced over at the two Doctors, still holding-in her stomach. They stood with their arms folded, staring at her and subtly smirking. Doctor Peters' face looked guilty. And was that a bulge in his trousers, Elise wondered, or did he just have something in his pocket?

Doctor Yamamoto barked something in Japanese and made a swirling motion with his hand. Elise understood that he wanted her to turn around.

It took time to gingerly shuffle around in high heels on the slippery plastic chair. Elise held her arms out to either side for balance. She was somewhat disappointed that Doctor Peters did not offer her a helping hand. The waist chain constantly reminded her to keep her tummy in and back upright, forcing her core muscles to remain tight. She had to remind herself to breathe.

Once she had turned halfway around, Elise carefully looked back over her shoulder at the two doctors. They had backed away another few paces and now sat together on the edge of a console table, staring at her ass and legs. Elise, careful not to lose her balance, lowered her arms and smoothed the back of her pleated skirt down, checking to see if perhaps it was wrinkled. Not feeling anything awry, she bent forward slightly and ran her fingers around to the backs of her stockings to feel whether either of the twin bows had come untied.

She heard Doctor Yamamoto let out a low chortle. Elise finally realized what was happening and straightened up so quickly that she almost fell off the chair. She grabbed the rear hem of her skirt and gasped.

"Doctor Peters!" she squealed, "Why didn't you tell me this was too short in back? It's even worse than the first one!"

"It looks good Elise," Arthur offered. " I thought you knew."

"I didn't know it was THAT short! You're supposed to tell me these things!"

"There wasn't time."

Elise shuffled back around to face the two men. She put her hands on her slender hips and scowled at them.

Arthur, seeing her angry for the first time, thought she looked cute. Despite how much he genuinely liked her, it was impossible to take her seriously in this outfit. All he could think about was how hot she was.

Doctor Yamamoto stood and frowned at Arthur. The two men had worked together long enough that sometimes a simple look conveyed reams of unspoken data. Arthur stood up too and erased his goofy grin.

"Elise," Arthur began in a suddenly commanding tone, "Aren't you forgetting something?"

Elise's scowl softened. She glanced back and forth between the two men, trying to think.

Arthur continued: "Don't you want to thank Doctor Yamamoto for his gift?"

"Ohm'gosh, you're right." she blushed. "I forgot. Can you help me down?"

"Sure."

Arthur approached Elise and offered her an arm to lean on as she stepped down off her chair. Elise walked toward Doctor Yamamoto and then turned to look at Arthur.

"How do you say thank you in Japanese?" she asked.

"You should say, 'Domo arigatou gozaimasu,'" Arthur instructed.

Elise faced Doctor Yamamoto and took his right hand in both of hers. She bowed slightly and repeated, as best she could, "Domo arigatou gozaimasu."

The Japanese doctor chuckled and nodded his head slightly. Then he stepped around Elise and approached Doctor Peters. He dropped the little key that unlocked her waist chain into Doctor Peters' hand, tapped his wristwatch and mumbled something in Japanese before gliding noiselessly out of the room.

"What did he say?" Elise asked once he was gone.

"He said he'll be back in ninety minutes for your daily rounds." Arthur translated for her.

"Oh," Elise said with a trace of disappointment. "Okay. Well, anyway... thanks for teaching me how to say thank you."

"You're welcome. Now let's get some work done, shall we?"

"Um... Sure, but can I change?"

Arthur folder his arms across his chest. It was his turn to scowl.

"I... don't really have time to change, do I?" Elise fumbled, reading his body language. "I would just have to change right back into this again."

"Right," Arthur grunted. "There is work to be done, Elise. As I mentioned yesterday, you should be trying to learn as much as you can."

"You're right Doctor Peters."

"I don't want you wasting all your time on costume changes."

"No, of course not."

"They're merely clothes after all. Isn't that what you said?"

"Yes."

"Well, let's try to maintain that perspective, shall we?"

"Yes, Doctor Peters. I will. I'm sorry if I got out of line there. I just... I just..." Elise's voice trailed off. She clutched the rear hem of her skirt.

"Stop. I accept your apology. Nothing more needs to be said about it. From now on I will tell you if there is anything wrong with your uniforms, okay?"

"Okay, thanks."

"And if I say nothing is wrong, then nothing IS wrong."

"Oh. Got it."

"Are you ready to work now?"

"Yes sir."

"Good. Did you finish those spreadsheets I gave you yesterday?"

"Not yet."

"Well, hop to it then."

"Yes, Doctor Peters."

Elise took the two steps back to her desk, repositioned her chair and sat down. She bit her lip when her backside touched the cold plastic. Her pleated skirt was simply too short to stay tucked under her bottom when she sat down, especially with the upright posture enforced by her new belly chain. The chain made her sit straight up with her shoulders square and her tummy completely sucked in. She already felt taller.

Elise reflected that the ultra-sheer panties she had chosen that morning had become a liability. They were now the only thing separating her privates from the world. Being see-through, they did not inspire much confidence. She could feel the cool plastic under her as if she had nothing on at all.

The next ninety minutes passed in a blur. Doctor Peters seemed intent on keeping her busy. As soon as she finished the first spreadsheet, he called her over behind his desk and instructed her to reorganize a section of his bookcases. He wanted the books sorted by authors' family name rather than by subject area. He pointed out a step-stool for her use when reaching for the top shelf.

Elise quickly realized that the location of the bookcase, against the wall to the right of Doctor Peters' desk, meant that she would spend the entire duration of her new task with her back to him; lifting, bending, squatting and stretching as she moved books from various shelves to the floor and vice versa. Wearing such a ludicrously short skirt, especially in such tall heels, meant there would be no way to keep from flashing him.

Once Elise began pulling the books and binders off the shelves and stacking them on the floor in alphabetical piles, she realized it was even worse than that. The tight chain around her waist really dug into her skin unless she kept her back straight. And the high heels made squatting an awkward balancing act. That left bending from the waist as the easiest method of reaching the lower shelves and the piles on the floor. There would be no shortage of full-moon panty peeks for Doctor Peters then.

Elise felt her face flush red hot at the thought that Doctor Peters might actually be doing this to her intentionally. Did he want to see her like this? Bending over in these humiliating clothes? The very idea ought to have felt insulting but instead she realized, as she climbed up onto the stool and pulled a binder from the top shelf, it turned her on. Why was that? No one had ever put her in such a position before, nor focused so much attention on her body.

"He must think I'm beautiful," Elise silently guessed. "And he's spending his time on me... even making excuses to check-out my ass!"

Elise stepped down off the stool, moved to one side and placed the binder on the floor in front of her.

Arthur slid a spiral-bound document off his desk onto his lap. He was leaning back in his leather chair far enough that his eyes were level with the hem of Elise's skirt. He pretended to read. Occasionally he turned a page, but his gaze rarely detached itself from Elise's backside. He was in love with the pink laces and bows that dangled from her stocking tops. They waved side to side in synch with the pleats of her skirt, making each flexion and extension of her toned legs a special show. All the pink highlights on her uniform really brought out the color in her auburn hair. Her long pony tail bounced against the middle of her back as she worked.

When Elise bent from the waist to place a heavy binder on the floor, Arthur's breathing suspended itself. The twin domes of her smooth bottom came fully into view. The translucent fabric of her tiny undershorts did nothing to conceal the waxed condition of her pubic mound.

For the second time that day, Arthur's penis became painfully erect.

Elise, meanwhile, had decided that she couldn't look at Doctor Peters. She was too worried that the burgeoning lust she felt would be obvious on her face. She had started to perspire, and her whole body felt flushed. She concentrated on preserving what little modesty she could, keeping her legs tight together whenever she had to stand on the stool or bend all the way over. It wasn't much, she knew, but she was not ready to abandon all dignity just yet.

Elise had only gotten about a third of the books sorted when Doctor Yamamoto knocked on the frame of the open hall door and waved for her to follow him upstairs.

For the second day in a row, Elise felt self-consciously aroused climbing the broad staircase to the 2nd floor. Fortunately no one was looking up her skirt this time. Moving all those heavy books had left her slightly out of breath. That was partly, she realized upon reaching the top of the staircase, a result of her new waist chain. The simple act of breathing, using only her ribcage instead of her stomach, was not something she was used to. It felt like work.

As her upstairs hour began, Elise noticed the gazes of Hiro and Kazutoshi following her closely. Doctor Yamamoto seemed delighted to point out her new ornamentation to each of them. He gestured for her to twirl around several times at each man's workstation, showing off the slimming effect of her improved posture. Elise could only imagine what they were seeing from their low computer chairs. She hoped the dampness of her underwear wasn't too obvious.

Doctor Yamamoto went so far as to tuck his finger between her skin and the chain to demonstrate how tight it was. Elise protested quietly in English, but no one understood her. She was horrified, then, when Doctor Yamamoto encouraged Hiro and Kazutoshi to each repeat the trick. In her aroused state, having her bare waist tickled by three grown men speaking a language she didn't understand made her feel vulnerable and incredibly young. They were treating her like a toy!

Things took a turn for the worse when the Japanese doctor gave Elise a large, shallow Tupperware pan full of water to carry and led her into a particularly noisy room behind the walk-in freezer. Massive exhaust fans blasted warm air out from the condensers that regulated the freezer's temperature. The wild crosswinds played havoc with the big square pan, wrenching it to and fro in her hands. Elise was so busy trying to avoid a spill that she failed to notice the three Japanese men watching her. The wind held the pleats of her short skirt aloft, exposing her panties entirely.

Belatedly realizing the ploy, Elise set the pan on the floor and marched back to the top of the stairs. She glanced back, but the Japanese men were out of sight.

She tip-toed in her tall sandals back to the first floor and into Doctor Peters' office. If any of these men were going to ogle her, she told herself, she would prefer it to be Doctor Peters. At least he was nice.

With that thought in mind, she wordlessly resumed her task of rearranging the bookshelf to the right of her boss' desk.

Arthur had been out in the main lab, speaking with Alex and Jacob. When he strolled back into his office he was delighted to see Elise at work again up on his dais. They exchanged hellos as he resumed his seat behind her.

If anything, Arthur noted, the warm glow on Elise's skin had increased in the last hour. She looked positively radiant. The wide pink ribbon in her hair projected an air of feminine innocence and her long auburn ponytail danced as she pulled books from the shelves and stacked them on the floor. When she bent over, the lining her tiny skirt framed her ass in a bright pink halo.

When Elise straightened up again, Arthur noticed her waist seemed impossibly narrow inside the silver chain. She was in shape, he knew, but she hadn't looked quite THAT hourglass-y before. He reached into his pocket and played with the tiny key that could unlock the clasp.

"Elise?" Arthur began.

She was up on the stool again and had to hold onto the bookcase for balance to look back at him.

"Yes?" she answered.

"Is that chain bothering you?"

"Oh, no," she demurred; consciously sucking in her tummy again to make sure the chain looked slack. "Not really."

"It's not too tight?"

"I don't think so."

There was a pause before Arthur continued: "Do you like it?"

"You mean, as a gift?" Elise stalled, shuffling her stocking-clad legs as she tried to lengthen her torso even more without looking too obviously uncomfortable.

"No. I mean do you like wearing it?"

Elise blushed. She honestly didn't know how to answer that yet. Part of her felt victimized by it. But another part of her was starting to appreciate its effects. It was sexy, and it felt like a workout at the same time.

"I like it," she blurted. She hoped Doctor Peters could not see the flush that crossed her face.

"Hm. Okay, good. I like it too... a lot."

Even without the sexual tension between her and Doctor Peters, Elise would have felt flattered by this compliment. But in her current emotional state the words felt as powerful as a first kiss. Her knees knocked together and she instinctively clutched the front hem of her skirt, trying to pull it lower to conceal the tingly feeling beneath her underwear. She bit her lower lip hard and silently cursed herself: "What the fuck is wrong with me?"

Arthur gazed at her from his chair. Her suddenly awkward stance and furrowed brows contrasted with the warm glow on her cheeks. He could not tell whether she was about to laugh, cry or pee.

"You're sure you like it?" he pressed her.

"Yeah," Elise answered in a shallow whisper. "I'm sure."

"Alrighty then. I'll let you get back to work."

"Thanks."

Elise shuffled her tall shoes around atop the stool to face the books and let a lungful of air escape her chest as quietly as possible. Her fuzzy pink sweater was itchy suddenly, and overly warm too. She felt a bead of sweat trickle down the center of her chest onto her stomach. It ran south under the heart-shaped clasp of her waist chain and slipped into the hollow of her navel. It tickled like mad.

Elise climbed off the stool, lowered the books she was carrying onto the floor and then asked Doctor Peters if she could take a break to use the restroom.

"Sure, no problem," Arthur answered. "It's almost time to starting thinking about lunch anyway."

"Thanks." Elise said, before turning toward the door. Lunch was the last thing on her mind.

Elise wasn't planning to masturbate in the restroom this time. She was as aroused as she had been the day before, but this was different. This time she knew her arousal was linked specifically to Doctor Peters. That scared her. She shut herself into the far stall of the restroom and just sat there thinking.

"How could I be getting turned on by this guy?" she asked herself for the second time in as many days. "He's my boss. He's my parents' age. He even knows them! I can't afford to blow my summer like this. It'd be even worse than last year. It's so completely wrong on every possible level!"

Elise's ego wrestled with her libido, trying to make sense of what was happening. Her fingertips played absentmindedly with the clasp of her new belly chain while she thought over the whole absurd situation.

"I like it," she repeated to herself. "That's what I said when he asked me... but what does that mean?"

She felt a tear leak from the corner of her eye, then another. She grabbed a few squares of toilet paper and dabbed her face, careful not to smear her eye liner. The thought crossed her mind that she might be a permanent freak, destined to pursue a series of ill-advised affairs with older men her entire life.

"Dammit!" she swore quietly.

By the time Elise emerged from the restroom, the hallway outside was abuzz with activity. Doctor Peters, Alex and Jacob we all talking outside the kitchen.

"Elise!" Doctor Peters called out when he saw her. "Grab your jacket. You and Alex are running out to pick up Thai food!"

"Oh," is all she could think to say.

Doctor Peters hustled into his office, retrieved her short denim jacket and handed it to her. Alex was already walking toward the exterior doors.

"But, Doctor Peters," Elise mumbled as he shooed her along behind Alex. "My skirt..."

"You'll be fine," Arthur assured her. "We just need you to go along so Alex can park in the white zone when he runs in to get the food. Otherwise the parking is awful at this hour. It's just a short ride."

"Oh, okay," Elise heard herself say. Her brain was stuck on the word 'ride.'

When she and Alex emerged into the sunshine outside, her question was answered. Parked next to the delivery ramp was a large black motorcycle. Alex calmly unlocked it and retrieved a spare helmet from one of the bike's saddlebags.

"Here," he said to Elise. "You've gotta wear one of these in California."

Elise pulled her jean jacket on over her pink sweater and then took the offered helmet. Alex helped her adjust the strap. Then he threw his leg over the saddle of the bike and straightened it up off its kickstand.

Elise had never been on a motorcycle before, even as a passenger. The potential for grave bodily harm had always intimidated her. Now she was being asked to climb on the back of a bike with an almost total stranger while wearing little more than hosiery from her hips down. It seemed insane.

Alex flipped down the rear foot-pegs and patted his shoulder, motioning for her grab onto his jacket for leverage so she could climb on. Elise set the miniscule toe of her right shoe onto the nearside passenger footpeg, grabbed Alex's shoulder and swung her left leg up and over the bike. Her new perch felt precarious and the sun-warmed leather was hot under her bottom. With her knees splayed apart astride Alex's back and held upward by the high footpegs, all her weight rested on her groin. Her boyshort panties suddenly felt twice as snug as they slid high into the crack of her ass.

While Alex shuffled the bike around to face the street, Elise slid her sandals forward until the footpegs dropped into the shoes' tall arches. That felt more secure, she thought.

Alex fired up the motor. Elise winced. Not only was it loud, but the warm saddle's vibration under her ass made a mockery of her thin underwear. She may as well have been straddling a 700-pound vibrator fully nude for all the protection they offered.

It was going to be one hell of a ride, she thought as they pulled out into the street.

For the next several blocks Elise's main concern was not falling off the bike. Alex rode politely enough but she felt incredibly exposed to the rush of concrete and cars swirling all around her. The wind whipped her ponytail violently. It also flung the pleats of her skirt every which way. This was made obvious to everyone on the street by the startling contrast between the skirt's pink lining and white exterior. Elise was too terrified to remove either arm from around Alex's torso, so there was nothing she could do about her skirt. The vibrating blur of her ass atop the bike's high rear seat would remain free for all to see.

As they accelerated from intersection to intersection, crossing the busiest part of town, Elise closed her eyes and tried not to think about dying or the fact that everyone was seeing her essentially naked from the waist down.

She didn't open her eyes until the bike came to a stop in front of the crowded restaurant.

"Stay here," Alex shouted from under his helmet after dismounting. "I'll be right back! And don't take your feet off the pegs... the side pipes are super hot!"

Elise nodded. As Alex walked inside, she tried to arrange her skirt to better hide her crotch and ass, but with her knees bent up so high it was nearly impossible. Passersby were gawking. Her white thigh-high stockings, tall heels and tiny miniskirt were positively irresistible to the human eye.

At least she had a helmet on, Elise consoled herself as she sat there waiting. No one would have recognized her even if she had known people in this town. She clutched the little chrome handhold behind her seat and straightened her back to ease the tension of her waist chain.

When Alex returned, he carefully packed the boxes of food into both saddlebags. Elise remembered to tuck her ponytail down under the collar of her jacket just before they pulled out into traffic.

The ride back to the lab was equally embarrassing. Elise's fear had subsided somewhat, but that only made her more acutely aware of the bike's pleasurable vibrations. She could not help but tighten her hug around Alex every time he revved the big V-twin. It really did feel like giant vibrator. After the first few blocks, she realized her arousal was getting dangerously intense. Alex seemed to notice her tightening grip too, and began twisting the throttle more aggressively, shaking her squashed cunt. There was nothing she could do to alter her posture atop the high seat. Elise closed her eyes again, helpless against the onslaught of stimulation.

The roaring bike leaned right and left as Alex negotiated turns through the suburban labyrinth. It made Elise feel dizzy with her eyes closed, so she opened them. They were alongside a delivery truck. Elise saw the young driver glance over at her and smile. The buzzing in her clit flared sky-high as Alex goosed the throttle to weave in front of the truck.

By the time Alex pulled the bike up outside the lab, Elise was teetering on the edge of a clitoral climax. He gave the bike a final gratuitous burst of revs and then shut it off. Elise felt instantly disappointed.

She climbed off the bike and stood shakily in her tall heels. Echoes of vibration still fluttered inside her. Alex helped her remove his spare helmet. When he looked away, she reached under the back of her skirt with both hands and pulled her soaked underwear out from the crack of her ass.

Alex handed her one of the food boxes to carry. She followed him inside. Everyone was waiting for them in the first-floor kitchen. Even the three Japanese men from upstairs had joined the group lunch today.

Elise helped to plate all the food as the six men talked around a single long table. Their overlapping conversations in both Japanese and English were impossible to follow. She suspected that none of it was about her, but she did catch a few of them glancing at her legs. Her pussy felt like it was on fire.

Eating was the farthest thing from Elise's mind. She wasn't even sure she could eat, what with her waist chain being so tight... but mostly it was because she still felt the bike's vibrations under her skirt. The lightheadedness of hunger was clouding her logic. She took a sip of water and asked to be excused.

The downstairs bathroom seemed way too risky. All six men were likely to use it during their meal. Elise walked down the hallway as quietly as she could until she reached the base of the staircase. She glanced around to make sure nobody was watching. Then she crept upstairs and snuck into the Japanese men's restroom.

As she expected, it was surgically clean inside. The lighting, paint and fixtures were all upgraded compared to the downstairs bathroom. Otherwise the layout was identical.

Elise stepped into the stall farthest from the door, peeled her diaphanous underwear down to her knees and began stroking her tortured clit. She was physically pulsing with desire. She leaned forward and moaned. Her eyes clenched shut. She circled her clit faster and faster, surrendering to a lurid fantasy about Doctor Peters' big hands touching her from behind. This wouldn't take long.

Just as she was about to experience an exquisite release, she slid her other hand up under her sweater and bra to pinch a nipple. Her legs trembled as the orgasm hit her. Her panties fell to her ankles.

"Oh! Ohh! Fuck!" she involuntarily cried out as spasms of pleasure radiated outward from her clit.

The stall door crashed open. Elise spun around mid-orgasm.

Doctor Yamamoto.

Standing there.

Expressionless.

His white lab coat filled the doorway.

Before Elise could react, he lifted one finger to his lips and held it vertically. He shook his head disapprovingly.

Elise felt like she was in free-fall. She saw the doctor's hand reaching for her. Trapped in slow-motion, she could not get her hands out from her crotch and sweater fast enough. His grip latched onto her right wrist. He stepped back and turned, pulling her from the stall.

Elise's panties were still around her feet. She shuffled forward on the verge of tripping. Doctor Yamamoto pulled her firmly along behind him, crossing the bathroom toward the door. She tried desperately to reach down with her free hand to pull up her underwear but he just kept walking and nearly pulled her over. She lunged forward to keep from tripping. The panties tore. They slipped from her feet and were abandoned on the tile floor.

Doctor Yamamoto led her from the room like a naughty schoolgirl. His grip on her wrist was painfully tight as he walked her down the long hall toward his private office. Elise felt terrified, but not brave enough to resist him. Tears of shame rappelled down her cheeks.

They entered Doctor Yamamoto's office. Elise felt hugely relieved when he left the door wide open. He released her wrist at last. The next thing he did was fetch her a white handkerchief. She accepted it and carefully blotted her dripping eyes.

Doctor Yamamoto sat down and began mumbling to himself as he flipped through an old-fashioned Rolodex. Elise realized he was acting totally calm, as if nothing had happened. She used the opportunity to fix her cockeyed bra and smooth her rumpled clothes.

A full minute passed before he found what he was looking for: an embossed business card that he plucked from his Rolodex and carefully laid on the writing surface of his desk. Using a fountain pen, he wrote something on the back of the card. He then rose to his feet and handed the card to Elise with both hands. His face remained impassive.

After she accepted the card, Doctor Yamamoto held his index finger vertically in front of his lips. Elise understood this to mean she should keep a secret. But which one? The bathroom incident, the business card, or both? She turned the card over in her hand. On the back, he had written "Model 0."

She had no idea what that meant. Doctor Yamamoto caught her attention again and pointed at his watch. He held up nine fingers and pointed at the floor. It took a few repetitions, but eventually Elise guessed that he wanted her to return at 9:00 AM the next day. He then tapped his finger on the business card, smiled and pointed at her. Elise had no idea what any of that meant.

Doctor Yamamoto led her back to the top of the stairs. Before gesturing for her to descend, he reached up to the side of her face and gingerly tucked a loose strand of her hair back behind her ear. Elise couldn't believe how gentle his hand felt after that march down the hallway.

She pulled away from him and practically ran down the stairs.

Once safely back in Doctor Peters' office, Elise walked immediately into the closet and shut the door. There was no way she was going to spend another minute wearing this uniform, especially without underwear.

She changed into her long hippy skirt and casual top. Then she walked to the downstairs bathroom to wash her face and re-do her makeup. By the time she returned to her desk, she felt she had concealed all signs of her distress.

Doctor Peters didn't return for another few minutes. Elise tried her best to interact with him normally. There was no way, she decided, she would ever confess to him about being caught masturbating in the upstairs restroom. To admit any of it would destroy her summer and more. But that meant Doctor Yamamoto had leverage. She had to be careful.

As casually as she could manage, she asked Doctor Peters if she could work on her computer for the rest of the afternoon, rather than finishing the bookcase project.

"Sure," Arthur replied, "you can finish the bookcase tomorrow."

"Thanks," Elise said, forcing herself to sound surprised. Given what she was now wearing, she had been pretty confident of Doctor Peters' answer.

She opened a web browser and typed in the url listed on the secret business card. When she hit the Enter key, it brought up the landing page of a Japanese watch manufacturer. She selected 'English' and poked around for a little while. Elise didn't know much about watches, but the ones pictured on this website appeared to be very high-end. She typed 'Model 0' into the site's search box. There were no matches. She tried 'Model Zero' instead. Still nothing.

Perplexed, she surfed the site a little more, looking for a list of all the models they produced. Eventually she found a product list, but again there was no 'Model 0.' Finally, on the verge of giving up, she did a search for "Model O" instead.

Bingo. A pop-up box appeared on her screen warning her that the page she was trying to open was for adults only. She clicked the checkbox to certify that she was at least eighteen and entered the site. It turned out to be a mini-site within the watchmaker's domain. All the text was in Japanese. There was no English-language option.

After clicking around blindly for a quite a while, Elise found some pictures of a product that seemed to be the Model O. It looked like a highly-polished metal toroid, smaller than a man's wedding band. The hole in the middle of the donut-shape was tiny. The exterior appeared to be completely smooth. A schematic drawing of the device's inner workings in exploded view showed a complex stack of gearwheels and jewels arranged around the circle. There was one mainspring wound around the outer circumference. There was also a curved metal arm that looked like it had a tiny sledgehammer head on one end. There were no exterior hands or dials, and no visible means of attaching it to a strap or chain. To Elise's untrained eye, the whole apparatus looked like an automatic watch that had been hidden away uselessly inside a thick, silver Cheerio.

"How weird," Elise muttered to herself. She stared at the screen, trying to puzzle-out how this thing had any connection to her and Doctor Yamamoto. Eventually she copied down the long number with the Yen symbol next to it, opened a new tab and pulled up a currency converter.

"Holy crap!" Elise whispered. The Model O cost nearly twelve thousand dollars!

But that knowledge got her no closer to discovering its relevance. She opened a third browser window and Googled 'Model O' + the manufacturer's name. Only a dozen results appeared. Most of them linked to either password-protected or Japanese language sites. But there was one link that appeared to point to an English language discussion forum about watches. She clicked on it. The horology website was free, but she had to set up a member account to read the forums. She went through the tedious motions of creating a fake username and a disposable email address. In ten minutes, she was reading the forum post that Google had directed her to.

Within that post, the Model O was described in only two words: "clit clock"

Elise froze.

"You're off the clock!" Doctor Peters jovially called out from behind his desk. It was five o'clock already.

Elise squirmed in her seat. Was that a coincidence? His choice of words? Or did he actually see what she was looking at?!

Elise hurriedly shut down Windows and stood. She tried to smile in Doctor Peters' direction, but her mind was racing. She had too many questions, and the only answer she had found so far was positively terrifying.

On auto-pilot, she cleaned off her desk and prepared to leave.

"Aren't you going to work out?" Doctor Peters asked.

"Oh! Umm, I forgot." Elise stalled.

She was not in any state to exercise in front of him. Especially since that would mean wearing her gym clothes without any underwear.

"You know," she continued, feigning exhaustion, "I'm feeling a little too tired Doctor Peters. Is it okay if I use the bike tomorrow instead?"

Arthur's face revealed only mild disappointment, and he said it was no problem.

Elise left the building in a hurry and walked four blocks to the BART station in a state of shock. She was thankful for her long, comfortable skirt. Nobody on the train could tell that she wore no underwear.

**Tease to Please Ch. 05**

 **Chapter Five: Thursday June 6, 2013**
Elise awoke to the soft chime of her smartphone's alarm. She felt exhausted. Sleeping on her friend's sofa was turning out to be less than ideal. Not only did it feel suspiciously unclean, but the cushions were too soft and saggy in the middle. The strain this caused on her spine had accumulated over the past five nights to the point where she woke up stiff and sore. Her new belly chain only made matters worse.

More than that, however, her over-active imagination had kept her awake most of the night. She couldn't stop thinking about her impending appointment with Doctor Yamamoto.

Elise rose and padded to the apartment's sole bathroom. She twisted the shower faucet and sat on the toilet to pee while waiting for the hot water to arrive.

Was it really possible, she wondered, that the Japanese doctor intended to give her (or loan her, who knew?), one of those weird Model O devices; a so-called 'clit clock?'

The fact that he had discovered her masturbating, mid-orgasm, in the lab's upstairs restroom was bad enough. But that his first instinct had been to search-out that business card for her and write the model name on the back was worse. The way he had pointed at the card and then at her with that creepy smile of his... the only possible explanation was that he thought she was some sort of depraved masturbation addict who needed the Model O as a form of treatment. He was a doctor after all, Elise reminded herself. It was probably his first instinct to see anything unusual as a disease in need of treatment. That was why he had given her the waist chain; to cure what he saw as her 'lazy' posture.

Elise stripped and stepped into the grimy clawfoot tub. She massaged conditioner into her long hair and let the shower's hot rain ease the stiffness out of her back. Her mind wandered as she continued to clean her body with soap.

The belly chain was one thing. It might actually be doing her some good, Elise reflected as she ran her soapy fingers beneath it. It constantly reminded her to stand up straight. She could tell already that it was making her look taller and more slim-waisted. But prescribing something for her clitoris was a whole different level of weird (not mention hugely inappropriate) presumptuousness.

Elise looked down as she scrubbed her pubic mound with two soapy hands. She liked keeping the entire area around her labia and clit free of hair. It just felt better and softer that way. A postage-stamp sized square was all that remained of her dark pubic hair after her most recent bikini wax. It didn't start until a full inch above the top of her clit's hood. She always got it waxed like that, and she always kept her remaining hair scissored ruthlessly short, too.

The idea that Doctor Yamamoto wanted to slip a donut-shaped metal collar around her clit (and what other possible method of attachment could there be, she wondered) was terrifying. She could not imagine what it would do to her, but all those internal clockwork gears and springs must have a purpose... especially at such an extravagant price.

Elise cleaned her skin from head to toe and then rinsed the conditioner from her hair.

She could not bring herself to abandon the internship. That would mean moving back home. No; she had to catch her train this morning and go to the lab just like everything was normal. Whatever consequences were coming her way, she would deal with them when they arrived. Maybe this whole 'clit clock' thing was all just a big misunderstanding.

She hoped so.

By 8:30AM Elise was pouring two mugs of coffee in the lab's shared kitchen. She had feigned surprise when Doctor Peters told her that Doctor Yamamoto expected her to do rounds upstairs at nine. She had already known that, of course. But Doctor Peters had no idea about her 2nd encounter upstairs with Doctor Yamamoto the prior afternoon and Elise certainly did not want to enlighten him.

Elise sucked down her mug of coffee as quickly as she could after delivering the other one to Doctor Peters. Then she stepped into the big closet to change.

She had brought a dress from home today in order to avoid any surprises the clothes at the office might have in store for her. It was a little cocktail dress that Doctor Peters had approved via webcam before her move from Arizona. It was made of linen, light coral in color, and had a flattering halter-top that showed off her shoulder-blades. Its hemline was pretty short, but nothing like the things she had been wearing the past three days. She needed to play it safe given what she feared was about to happen.

With the closet door shut behind her, Elise stripped down to her underwear and bra. Then she slipped the linen minidress over her head. Once it fell into position she reached around and pulled the back-zipper up as far as she could. Thankfully her thin belly chain was indiscernible beneath it. She loved how the color of this dress had faded to a very pale coral pink. It brought out the warmth in her auburn hair. She also thought it would go perfectly with the light pink ankle-strap heels.

Before she could put on those shoes, however, she needed to some stockings. Since her dress was a solid, she decided to wear one of the striped pairs of thigh-highs to conform to the candystriper aesthetic Doctor Yamamoto expected. She selected a pair that had alternating inch-wide vertical stripes of white and sheer.

"Ridiculous... yet perfect," Elise teased herself. She was feeling punchier than usual as the caffeine took effect.

She pulled on the tall, striped stockings and then stepped up onto her four-inch-high sandals. Within a few minutes, she was back out in the office standing next to Doctor Peters' desk asking him to do her dress' zipper up the rest of the way. Then it was just a matter of brushing her hair, tying a ribbon through it, donning some earrings and checking her makeup.

With ten minutes to spare, she was ready.

"Doctor Peters, how do I look?" Elise asked, standing in front of her desk.

"Lovely," Arthur answered. "Now, as soon as you get back from upstairs I need you to get cracking on those spreadsheets, alright?"

"Yes, I will."

"I don't understand why you weren't able to finish them yesterday afternoon, in all that time you spent on the computer."

Elise's mood ebbed a bit. "Sorry Doctor Peters. I'll get them done as soon as I get back."

"Great. Then you can finish reorganizing this bookcase up here."

"Sure. I should be able to get that finished for you before the end of the day."

"Good."

Elise felt more than her usual level of unease creeping in. She had no idea what the next hour with Doctor Yamamoto was going to bring, but she was pretty sure it was going to involve exposing her clitoris. That was disturbing on a number of levels. The mere fact that she had considered the man's predilection for stripes when choosing her thong panties this morning was stomach-churning enough. The idea of removing those panties for him was downright awful. She hoped it would not come to that.

Precisely at nine o'clock, Doctor Yamamoto appeared at the door. Elise followed him upstairs.

There was no pretense of an educational tour this time. He led Elise straight to his private office and shut the door. Then he lowered all the blinds. Elise felt her stomach do a backflip.

Doctor Yamamoto held out his hand and stared at her expectantly.

"Oh, right," Elise mumbled, "The card. I did bring it. I thought you might want it back."

Elise dug the Japanese watch company's little embossed card out from under her bra where she had hidden it that morning. She held it out to him with both hands.

Doctor Yamamoto gave her the slightest of smiles as he took back the card.

There were two white bath towels folded neatly in the middle of Doctor Yamamoto's desk. Presently he lifted one of them and shook it open. He draped the towel over his wide leather office chair. Then, without further explanation, he gestured for Elise to sit down, in his chair, on the towel.

"Oh Christ this is really happening!" Elise realized in panic. She had gone through all the scenarios in her head overnight, but this was always the worst case. She didn't think he would be this bold.

Doctor Yamamoto was insistent.

With reluctant obedience Elise approached the chair and sat down. Given their language barrier and her desire to keep the inscrutable doctor quiet about her recreational use of the company's restroom, she felt disinclined to resist.

Elise made herself as comfortable as possible in the big chair. She had to admit that there was an aspect of her libido, at least subconsciously, that had become intrigued.

"Maybe he knows what he's doing," her most optimistic mental coping mechanism suggested. He had been right about her waist chain, after all. And she couldn't imagine that he would do anything to hurt her.

Doctor Yamamoto presented Elise with a wooden box. It was beautifully made and quite heavy for its size. When she opened the hinged lid, her eyes beheld a magnificently shiny torus: the Model O.

It was smaller than she had expected. Doctor Yamamoto lifted it from its velvet enclosure and placed it in her palm. She noticed its heft. It felt expensive. Elise was momentarily mesmerized by its jewel-like beauty.

Doctor Yamamoto set the wooden box on his desk and removed a portion of its velvet lining. From underneath he extracted a plastic case containing a small tool-kit that would help with the application of the clit clock. He opened the case and set it down on the nearside edge of his desk. Then he reached over to a mini-fridge hidden beneath his built-in credenza and retrieved a small bowl containing ice cubes wrapped in white cotton. He set the bowl on his desk too. Then he slipped on pair of nitrile gloves, snapping them loudly against his wrists.

Elise shivered.

Doctor Yamamoto dragged a small ottoman over and sat upon it right in front of Elise's knees. He motioned for her to raise the hem of her dress.

This was a turning point, Elise knew. She had been rolling the Model O over and over in her hand, forestalling this moment of consent. Doctor Yamamoto's face remained cool and impassive as he waited. Somehow this made Elise feel a fraction more comfortable. She handed him back the toroid device and shimmied her linen dress upward until it was gathered around her waist.

Doctor Yamamoto set the Model O aside and then, without ceremony, reached for Elise's hips with both hands and pulled her panties out from under her. He slid them all the way down her legs and off her shoes. He then passed the tiny striped thong back to her, dangling it from his fingertips. As soon as Elise took it from his hand, he scooped up her feet and used them to push her knees way back toward her face. He held her there by the feet, waiting for her to take hold of her legs herself.

Elise grabbed the backs of her knees. Doctor Yamamoto immediately reached under her chair and pressed a lever that made the seat recline way back. Elise found herself with her feet in the air and her head hanging off the top of the headrest. Her naked vagina was upturned toward Doctor Yamamoto's mustachioed face.

He adjusted his round eyeglass and stared at her crotch. Wordlessly, he nudged her to spread her legs father apart. Elise stared down between her thighs at him, wide-eyed. No one in her entire adult life, not even her gynecologist, had ever maintained such a dispassionate facial expression while looking at her naked sex. She could not imagine how she had ever gotten herself into this situation.

Doctor Yamamoto selected one of the cotton-wrapped ice cubes from the bowl with a gloved hand and delicately placed it atop Elise's clit.

"Oh my God that's cold!" Elise squealed aloud.

Doctor Yamamoto held a finger to his lips, signaling for her to be quiet while he rubbed the ice cube back and forth.

Elise clenched her teeth and whined, trying as hard as she could not to beg him to stop. It felt so cold!

As the ice gradually melted, drops of nearly-freezing water trickled down Elise's labia to her anus. It was more ticklish than a feather, yet somehow completely non-sexual. Elise felt caught between two sharply conflicting stimuli, unable to respond to either.

Doctor Yamamoto transferred ice-rubbing duties to his left hand and with his right fingers fished out a small white crown of woven thread from the Model O's accessory case. He lifted the ice occasionally, checking on the status of her rapidly-shrinking clitoris. When he saw that her little pink nub had become almost entirely drained of bloodflow, he dropped the ice back into the bowl and quickly looped the crown of string around her clit. As Elise watched from above, he carefully worked the mesh ring down around the neck of her clit like a collar until it was snug against the interior of her clitoral hood with the bulb of her clit entirely through it. Then he carefully plucked one tiny knotted thread out from the circle and gave it an upward tug. As he pulled the little drawstring, the basket-weave collar lengthened and tightened, squeezing around the neck of her clit like a Chinese finger-trap. Each time he tugged upward on the thread, the mesh tube grew taller and thinner, swallowing her clit from below.

It did not hurt, Elise noted with some amazement as she watched her clit being temporarily transformed from a knotty round nub into a narrow column. It simply felt tight. Only at the very last moment, when the distended tip of her clit was about to be cinched into the tube, did it pinch. Doctor Yamamoto gave the tiny drawstring one last tug and her clit disappeared, sheathed entirely within an inch-tall fishnet tube.

Elise squirmed involuntarily on the chair. She breathed through her teeth in a panting whine.

Doctor Yamamoto worked quickly. He grabbed the model O, threaded the taut drawstring through its central hole and dabbed some lubricant beneath it. Then with a gentle, incremental motion he eased the metal donut down around her laced-up clit until it lay flat against her pubic bone.

Elise began to writhe. It was not the device that hurt. She did not even feel the Model O being slipped on. It was the damn basket-weave collar that had distorted the end of her sensitive clit into a tiny tower that felt like torture.

Her moment of relief came quickly. Doctor Yamamoto grabbed a miniscule round-tipped pair of scissors from the case, slid them beneath a critical strand of the net collar and snipped. The latticework strings burst apart, immediately disintegrating into a dozen loose strands.

Elise let out a big sigh of relief and looked down. Doctor Yamamoto held the Model O flat against her, waiting as bloodflow reflated her clit. He plucked stray cotton threads out from under the Model O. Elise's clit quickly returned to its normal size and shape.

Normal, that is, except that the head of her clit was encircled by a shiny round collar.

"Jesus," Elise whispered.

She was in no pain. There had been no piercing or other skin damage. It was, she considered, a remarkably clever design. So long as her clit remained normal-sized, the collar could not fall off. It would just hang there. And when her clit was stimulated and therefore engorged, she imagined, the smooth weighted donut would probably feel wonderful... like an extra set of fingers.

Doctor Yamamoto gently wiped her pubic area with a moist towelette to remove any leftover lubricant or frayed thread. Then he dried her off with the remaining bath towel. Finally, he gave the torus a gentle tug, testing the security of its installation. The fat bulb of Elise's clit held it firmly in place. Without another ice cube and another thread finger-trap, the Model O wasn't going anywhere. He stood and removed his gloves.

Elise up-righted herself in the chair and rolled it backwards until she had enough room to stand. She rose slowly and took a few tentative steps around the room in her tall heels.

To her surprise, the effect of the Model O was very subtle. It simply made her clit feel heavy. It shook when she walked.

Doctor Yamamoto seemed pleased with himself. His face was relaxed as he cleaned all the accoutrements from his desk and folded the two white towels.

Elise slipped her thong underwear back on and snugged them up against her new toy. Having panties on, she noticed as she took a few more exploratory strides around the room, lessened the tugging of the Model O on her clit. But each footfall still had an impact. Like her belly chain, the device served as an ever-present reminder. It gave her clit a voice.

Unbeknownst to Elise, this metaphor was quite apt. The reason the Model O was so expensive, aside from the labor involved in its tiny handmade internal movement, was that its white gold exterior shell was precisely machined to achieve harmonic resonance. Like a tuning fork, it would ring when struck. The little hammer-like component she had seen in the interior schematics the night before was weighted precisely for this purpose. The device's mainspring was self-winding, using a ratcheting counterweight similar to those in automatic wristwatches. But with no watch hands to drive, all its stored energy could be allotted to dinging the metal striker against the exterior case of the torus. It did so in a series of twelve chimes whenever the mainspring became fully wound. This resulted in a bell-like vibration designed to be enjoyable for the wearer.

Normal activity levels, like walking, would typically result in a twelve-strike chiming every fifteen minutes or so, depending on how active the wearer was. Low activity levels, such as sleeping or driving, allowed the device to remain inert. High activity levels, like jogging or vigorous sex, could keep the device chiming every minute.

Doctor Yamamoto opened the door of his office and escorted Elise to the top of the stairs. Elise felt a huge wave of relief wash over her as she tiptoed down the concrete steps in her high heels.

"That wasn't so bad," she thought. "This thing feels kinda cool."

Each footfall in her strappy shoes pleasantly shook her collared clit. It was subtle enough that she felt she could probably ignore it if she tried, but at the same time it was gently exciting. It felt sexy. It felt mischievous. It felt like she was getting away with something.

Elise made it all the way back to her desk and sat down. Doctor Peters remarked that her upstairs visit had been brief. She smiled contentedly in reply as she opened the spreadsheets he expected her to complete this morning. She felt the tension ease from her shoulders as the anxiety she had been carrying around evaporated.

"Now I can get back to work," she told herself.

Beneath Elise's striped thong, the mainspring of the Model O was almost fully wound. Having been turned over and over in Elise's hand while she nervously waited for Doctor Yamamoto to finish his preparations and then banged down the concrete stairs and hallways that led back to her desk, it had swung its tiny ratcheting counterweight back and forth so many times that just a few more movements would set off Elise's first chiming.

"I'm all done!" Elise declared proudly from her desk forty five minutes later.

"Great," answered Doctor Peters. "Can you email them to me so I can save them to the network?"

"Just did. Do mind if I take a quick break before starting on the bookcase?"

"No problem."

"Thanks, Doctor Peters. "

Elise rose from her desk and marched out into the hallway, smiling. She only made it halfway.

As soon as the chiming began, Elise's expression burst into a wide O of surprise. She ran for the restroom as fast as her tall shoes allowed, with both hands holding her crotch. Fortunately the bathroom was empty. Once inside a stall, she quickly lifted her dress and shoved a hand beneath her panties.

She could feel the little device steadily chiming. It felt as if the most expert tongue in the world was patiently flicking her clit... again... and again, with unwavering precision.

Elise clasped the metal donut between her fingers, trying to absorb its resonance. That worked to some degree: the resonance faded more quickly, absorbed by her fingertips. But her encircled clit still felt each strike acutely.

The chiming was just barely audible to Elise as a subtle 'ting... ting... ting...' sound.

Its pitch was at the upper limit of human hearing. That was intentional. Most men (who generally lose their upper-frequency hearing quite young) wouldn't be able to hear it at all. Sitting in the quiet bathroom alone, Elise could hear it though, and she began to panic.

"Oh my God!" she whispered aloud in the stall, "When will it stop?!"

The clit clock struck for the twelfth time and fell silent. Elise breathed out a long sigh and plunked herself down atop the closed lid of the toilet seat.

For several minutes she just sat there, fondling the Model O with her fingertips, trying to come to grips with what was happening. Without access to any sort of instruction manual, she was forced to guess.

She debated marching straight back upstairs to demand that Doctor Yamamoto remove the device. But that might prove difficult seeing as she couldn't speak Japanese. He was bound to resist anyway, since he had been the one who provided it to her. She thought about trying to remove it herself, but that seemed like a really dangerous idea. The last thing in the world she wanted was an injured clit. Talking to Doctor Peters seemed out of the question. That would involve confessing all sorts of things, the most likely outcome of which was being sent home.

Elise considered the other alternative. If she kept wearing it, then presumably at some point before the end of the summer Doctor Yamamoto would help her remove it -- whenever he felt she was 'cured.' It was too expensive to be a gift. He would want it back, she was sure. Maybe she could learn to live with it temporarily, she considered. It might not be so bad. After all, it was barely noticeable when it wasn't ringing; quite pleasant actually.

Elise decided to give herself 24 hours -- a test drive of sorts. In that time she hoped to figure out what made it chime and whether she could remain discreet when it did.

"God help me if I actually start to like it," she cautioned herself as she exited the stall a few minutes later.

Elise washed her hands and returned to her desk. Of course, all that toying with the Model O in the restroom and her walk back to Doctor Peters' office had done most of the winding needed to cue up another burst of chimes. But Elise didn't know that yet.

Elise stepped up onto the dais at the far end of Doctor Peters' big office and resumed her bookcase reorganization project. Doctor Peters smiled at her delightedly as she once again began climbing, bending, squatting and stretching beside his desk. Her lovely coral-colored cocktail dress offered some protection from his prying eyes, but even with her back turned to him Elise could feel his gaze. She thought about how the belly chain was making her hold her tummy in all the time now, even when she was not thinking about it, and how it encouraged her to bend from the waist. Doctor Peters would be getting a real show of the back of her legs again. She just hoped her dress was long enough to keep him from seeing as much of her ass as he had the day before.

Doctor Peters leaned back happily in his chair and watched Elise. He loved the way her little feet were propped up in those strappy high heels and the way her young legs were wrapped in those striped stockings. Each time she bent over to access the piles of books and binders on the floor he could see the naked flesh of her upper thighs above her stockings' top bands. He could imagine the rest.

Elise climbed up to the top step of the footstool to place a book on the highest shelf. She was trying to ignore the growing sense of pressure she felt in her clit. The hefty little donut hanging from her was starting to feel unexpectedly good. It had seemed subtle during her first hour with it on, but now she felt like every nerve-ending near her clit was standing at attention. Each step she took wiggled the device. She could tell her clit was swollen and hot beneath her dampening panties.

The chiming began. Elise nearly dropped the book she was holding.

"Oh God!" she whispered, struggling not to grab her crotch.

"What?" Doctor Peters asked.

"Oh!! Oh... nothing Doctor Peters. I just... oh my God... I just have to sneeze!" Elise managed to say as the Model O tolled out its steady chimes against her sensitive clit.

Elise kept her back to Arthur and clutched the bookcase for support. She pressed her thighs tightly together as the chiming continued. Her knees bent slightly, her feet turned inward and her hazel eyes clenched shut, all in an effort to stay silent.

"Ting... ting... ting... ting... ting..." sounded the clit clock.

Elise wanted to squeal like a schoolgirl. The sensation was unlike anything she had ever experienced. Each chime seemed to focus a shiver of stimulation on her clit so directly that everything else disappeared. All her conscious mind could think of was her clitoris. Nothing else mattered.

"Ting... ting... ting."

After the twelfth chime, it stopped.

Arthur was staring up the back of Elise's dress from his chair, waiting for her to sneeze. Her nubile body seemed entirely tensed. She looked on the verge of exploding.

"Are you alright?" he asked.

Elise took in a lungful of air and exhaled slowly. It was over. She let her muscles slacken a bit and straightened her legs.

"Elise?" Doctor Peters prodded.

"Uh-huh?" Elise whispered, afraid of how girlish her voice might sound.

"I said, are you alright?"

"Oh... um, sorry. I didn't hear you. Yes, I'm fine now. Thank you."

"That looked like it was gonna be one hell of a sneeze."

"Um, yeah. Pretty funny, huh? I hate it when that happens."

"I can see why. For a minute I thought you were going to fall off that stool."

"Well I hope it won't come to that, Doctor Peters."

Elise forced herself to laugh so that Doctor Peters would think she was kidding.

Over the next few minutes, Elise struggled to think of a way to cope. She knew the device was like a clock, and that it must be powered by her motion since there hadn't been any batteries on the schematic. If it was powered by her movement that would explain why it had suddenly chimed twice in succession, only 15 minutes apart, while she was up and around. It hadn't chimed at all while she had been sitting at her desk working on those spreadsheets, she recalled.

Elise decided that she had to finish this bookcase project with as little extraneous movement as possible, especially around her hips. That way maybe she could finish and make it back to her desk before it struck again. Then she could work at her computer without fear.

The plan worked. Elise called upon all her years of varsity gymnastics in college to make her every movement smooth and graceful. She eliminated all sudden twists and bounces. Refilling Doctor Peters' bookcase became an almost yoga-like exercise.

Arthur could not figure out what was going on with his young intern. One minute she looked ready to wet her pants. The next, she was turning his make-work bookcase project into a goddamn ballet. Eventually Arthur gave up watching and got back to his real job.

Half an hour later, Elise re-shelved the last book and smoothly turned around to announce that she was finished.

Doctor Peters gave her a halfhearted thumbs-up from behind his computer screen.

Elise walked as gently as she could in her tall heels back to her desk.

"If I keep this up," she joked inwardly, "pretty soon I'll be able to glide across the room like Doctor Yamamoto."

Elise sat down in her little chair and carefully crossed her legs. Then she scooted forward to tuck into her computer desk.

The Model O chimed again. Elise hid her face in her hands and did her best to hold still as the twelve steady 'tings' sounded against her clit. It was a form of pleasurable torture. When it was finally over, Elise felt like her clit was glowing.

"Do you mind if I change back into my normal clothes, Doctor Peters?" she asked.

"Um..." Arthur hesitated, "I guess that's fine... unless you can think of a reason Doctor Yamamoto might need to see you again today."

"No. I think he's done with me for now."

"Alright then, sure. Go ahead if it'll make you more comfortable."

"Thanks Doctor Peters. It won't take more than a minute."

Elise walked carefully to the closet and shut herself in. With as little extra movement as possible, she changed back into the clothes she had worn on the train. He hoped her snug jeans would help to quell the chiming vibrations whenever the clit clock struck again.

Lunchtime came and went without incident. Over the course of the afternoon, Elise spent as much time in front of her computer as Doctor Peters' work assignments allowed. She managed to keep her movements calm enough that the Model O only chimed about once per hour.

Elise was learning quickly how to conceal her aghast expressions each time the device delivered its blows. Such pinpoint stimulation was impossible to ignore however. She worried how she would cope with her four-block walk to the train station at day's end, not to mention the even longer walk back to her friend's apartment when she disembarked from the train in the city.

In the meantime, Elise's primary concern was her gradually increasing horniness. The clit clock was forcing half her brain to focus on her pussy continually. Her body was responding not only to its chimes, but also to its ever-present weight. And with only Doctor Peters to interact with, all her resulting sexual arousal became directed at him. Despite her effort not to, Elise found herself gazing longingly at his big manly hands. She felt an urgent need to be touched, and her body was indicating a preference for something more sentient than a metal torus.

And so, within Elise's mind, over the course of the afternoon Doctor Peters slowly morphed from a big middle-aged scientist into a kind-hearted bear of a man. She found herself daydreaming of ways to seduce him.

Twelve steady 'tings' arrived in time to punctuate this new fantasy. It left her clit positively aching with unsatisfied hunger. She stared up at Doctor Peters and quietly began flicking her index finger against the Model O through her jeans. Now she wanted it to go off again. She had officially fallen under its spell.

When five o'clock rolled around, Elise rose from her desk. The crotch of her jeans felt damp. She declared her intention to use the exercise bike. Doctor Peters seemed happy to oblige her.

Elise had observed that the position of the stationary cycle would put her directly in the doctor's line of sight. She planned to work up a good sweat in front of him to show off her body. Surely, she calculated, he was already attracted to her. He would not be able to resist the view of her ass pumping away on his bike in some tight gym shorts.

Feeling daring, Elise intentionally left the door of the closet ajar when she stepped inside to change. She was pretty confident Doctor Peters would watch her, but she wanted to appear innocent so she resisted the urge to glance back over her shoulder to confirm. With her back to the doorway she striped down to her thong underwear. She replaced her small lingerie bra with a black running bra. Then, as seductively as possible, she stepped into her navy blue spandex workout shorts and slowly pulled them up. She took an extra-long time to tug them onto the curves of her ass, hoping Doctor Peters would enjoy the view.

With her silver waist chain still in place she knew her body looked sexy, but just to be sure she rolled up a cuff around each leg of her little shorts to make them as brief as possible. She wanted her long legs entirely exposed.

Elise bent over to lace up her size 6 cross-trainers and then casually strutted out into the office. Doctor Peters glanced up from his paperwork. He was trying his best, she assumed, to make it look like he had not been watching her. Elise paraded across the room, plotting every innocent-looking move she could think of to make her upcoming workout as sexy as possible.

The first thing she did, once she was standing in the middle of the room next to the bike, was turn her back to Doctor Peters and grab the waist of her shorts with both hands. She pulled them higher on her hips until she felt them tuck between her butt cheeks. Then she rolled the shorts' waistband down several times so that the straps of her thong panties peeked out above.

Making up her mind to be extra naughty, Elise ran her fingers back and forth under the side straps of her underwear, working them higher on her hips. This pulled the skinny triangle at the back of her thong into view. Then she grabbed the shorts' rolled-down waistband again and, putting an extra degree of arch into her back, pulled them up even higher on her ass.

Arthur couldn't believe what he was witnessing. Elise had just made her shorts tiny. Their cuffed crotch had climbed so high into her ass that a full third of each butt cheek hung naked below. It was a like Elise had taken a peek into his nightly fantasies and decided to make them real.

Arthur watched, gob-smacked, as Elise dexterously stepped onto the nearside pedal of his exercise bike, grabbed the handlebar and then swung her other leg up over the high saddle. Once the balls of her feet were centered on both pedals, she leaned forward on tiptoe and looked back at him.

"Doctor Peters?" she asked with a pout. "Do you think you could help me adjust the seat?"

Arthur leaped from his chair and nearly hopped over his desk on his way to her side. He took up a position right next to her ass. She seemed to be trying to arch her butt toward the ceiling. Her waist chain hung just barely slack under her taut stomach.

The seat post, being set for his 6'4" frame, was much too high for Elise. Its narrow vinyl saddle pointed at her tailbone even though she was up on her tiptoes on the pedals. Arthur loosened the quick release and dropped the seat down until she was able to scoot her crotch backwards onto it.

"Is that better?" he asked as she began to pedal forward.

"Yes. Thank you Doctor Peters," Elise cooed up at him. "That feels great."

Arthur secured the quick release and gave the seat a firm shake to make sure it was secure.

"Ooh!" Elise giggled flirtatiously. "Careful Doctor Peters, there's not much between me and that seat!"

Arthur giggled too. He felt like a kid in a candy store.

Elise was much too small for the bike's large frame. In order to reach the handlebars, she was bent far forward. Her spine was parallel to the floor. She was doing everything she could to make her waist look narrow. Her resulting posture had the wonderful effect, Arthur noticed, of pulling her shorts even farther up into the crack of her ass. Arthur stood right next to her, relishing his view as Elise began to pump her legs around and around.

"Why don't you let me choose a good program for you?" Arthur offered. "Something with some good hills so you really get a workout."

"That would be great," Elise replied eagerly. "All these buttons up here look pretty complicated."

Arthur set about choosing a 'mountain ascent' preset from the menu on the control panel. He coached Elise on how the screen would indicate when to get up off the saddle to climb, and what rpm she should maintain.

Inside Elise's mind there existed only the bare outlines of a plan. Her libido was telling her to seduce Doctor Peters, but really she had no idea how. All she could do, she thought, was make herself seem as sexy and available as possible. After that she hoped he would take the initiative. She certainly was not prepared to make the first move herself -- she was not even sure what that would look like. Would she jump into his arms and kiss him? That was absurd! Surely he would open that door first. Guys had always done so for her in the past.

Elise rose up on the pedals when the machine indicated. The mechanical resistance became really high and she felt herself working hard to keep up with her 70 rpm target.

"Good, good," Doctor Peters encouraged her. "Focus on spinning circles, not just pushing down on the pedals. Work them all the way around: forward, down, backward, up. Every time. That will distribute the workout throughout your legs."

"Okay," Elise said through her rapidly increasing respiratory rate.

"Can you feel it yet?"

"Oh yeah. It's hard."

"Good. Keep it up. This program ought to take you about 40 minutes, okay?"

"40 minutes?"

"Yup. Keep your rpms up above 70. If you have any questions I'll be right behind you at my desk."

"Okay."

Elise felt deflated when Doctor Peters walked away. She knew he would probably enjoy watching her from his desk, but apparently that was all. The realization sank in that Doctor Peters only wanted to ogle her. He must be scared of going any farther, she thought. But she needed more. Right now she wanted to be stripped and groped and licked and rubbed and squeezed and... and most of all: fucked!

As if on cue, the Model O began to chime: "Ting... ting... ting... ting..."

"Oh God!" Elise whispered hoarsely.

"Ting... ting... ting... "

She kept pumping away at the bike, unable to do otherwise. The vibrations radiating her clit felt exquisite. She closed her eyes and let her head hang down slack between her outstretched arms. She was still up on the pedals, climbing some imaginary Alpine hill.

"Ting... ting... ting... ting... ting."

It was over. Twelve chimes, Elise noted. She had counted them this time. She marveled at what a wonderful and terrifying device she had between her legs. Over the course of a single workday it had transformed her from a self-controlled flirt into a wanton nymphomaniac. All she could think about now was sex, sex, sex.

She glanced over her shoulder at Doctor Peters. Sure enough, he was staring at her behind. He smiled and cocked one eyebrow upward, as if asking if she was alright. Elise returned his smile and then looked straight ahead. She needed a better plan. The remaining 35 minutes she had to endure on this bike were a perfect opportunity to think of one.

The bike's resistance faded and the hill-climb light went out. Elise sat her bottom down gingerly on the seat and adjusted her exertion level downward. With the narrow seat against her crotch, she could really feel the gyrations being inflicted on the Model O. Her pumping thighs knocked it back and forth with every stroke. Her swollen clit felt like it was getting toyed with by expert fingers.

The chimes went off again. It was all Elise could do not to swear out loud as the pleasure hit her. Her eyes shut tight and her cheeks flushed red. She focused on keeping her breathing as normal as possible, but it was difficult. She wanted to moan and squeal.

The bike started to beep. Her rpms had fallen below 60. It was telling her to pedal faster.

"God help me," Elise whispered as the chiming played on.

She felt like her clit was having sex without her. The rest of her body was stuck in a workout, hungry for any type of stimulation, while her clit enjoyed a feast of attention.

"Please Doctor Peters," she heard herself whisper.

"Sorry?" Arthur answered from a distance. "What'd you say?"

"Oh, nothing," Elise stammered, "Just talking to myself." Her voice was high and panting. She was on the verge of a clitoral orgasm.

The 12th chime struck just as the bike called for another hill-climb. Elise sucked in a lungful of air and tried to shake off her near-climax. She stood up on the pedals and re-doubled her efforts. She raised her rpms back above 70 and held them there, determined to think of a plan.

It occurred to her to fake a muscle cramp. That way she could get off the bike and ask Doctor Peters to massage her leg. It seemed like a great idea.

She hit the big red 'STOP' button on the bike and dismounted. She clutched her left thigh and staggered around a bit while making 'Ooh' and 'Oww' sounds.

"Oh my! Are you okay Elise?" Doctor Peters exclaimed. He got up and walked to her side.

Elise grabbed his shoulder for support and continued rubbing her left leg.

"I just got a cramp in my leg, Doctor Peters," she whined in an exaggeratedly high voice. "It hurts!"

"Okay. Alright... uh, why don't you come over here and sit on the edge of the step?"

Elise allowed Doctor Peters to half-carry her to the edge of the dais while she hopped along on her 'good' leg. She sat down. Then she flopped back on the carpeted dais with her left leg draped over his arms.

"Can you rub it, Doctor Peters?" she cooed up at him, making her big hazel eyes look as pathetic as possible.

"Sure, sure," Arthur replied with genuine sympathy. "Where does it hurt?"

"All over. But mostly I think it's kinda up and down my thigh, like, especially toward the top, and near the inside too..."

Elise's voice trailed off as Doctor Peters' thick fingers encircled her upper leg and began to massage. Elise relished how strong his touch felt.

"Oh my God, his hands are awesome!" she thought.

"Is this helping?" Doctor Peters asked.

"Yeah, yeah, it's great. Just keep doing that, please! And higher... it's worse right at the top."

Arthur's mind was reeling. How did he get here; kneeling over a sweating, nubile, 22-year-old intern with his hands all over her thigh? She was so much younger, he remembered. He really shouldn't be allowing himself so many erotic thoughts about her at all. But she was just so hot! And right now she was practically begging him to touch her. What was he supposed to do?

Arthur worked his hands up and down Elise's left thigh, relishing the feel of her supple muscles and smooth, hairless skin. Her spandex shorts were so tight and small that they left nothing to his imagination. The central seam in their elastic fabric was nestled into the crease between her labia. And... could it possibly be? Was that round bump her clit? It looked huge!

"Yes, Doctor Peters," Elise moaned, "right there. Dig your fingers in deep!'

Arthur followed her instructions with re-doubled enthusiasm. He kneaded her muscles with all ten fingers, allowing himself the pleasure of touching her uppermost thigh flesh, right under her little shorts. His forehead broke out in a sweat. His penis was rapidly stiffening. He was not sure how much longer he could continue this without succumbing to his animal urges.

"Is it getting any better?" Arthur whispered.

Elise had her eyes closed and her head tossed to one side. She seemed to be grinding her pelvis toward his hands, inching herself closer. Arthur felt the back of his knuckles brush against her crotch. Elise arched up off the floor in response and sucked in air.

"Oh dear God," Arthur thought in a sudden panic, "She's getting turned on!?!"

He let go of Elise's leg and stood up, stumbling backward as the full effect of her prostrate wantonness sank in.

With great effort, Elise resurfaced from her hazy glow and propped herself up on her elbows. She intentionally kept her legs sprawled apart.

"What's wrong Doctor Peters?" she asked.

"I can't... um... We..." Arthur stammered before falling silent. He felt vulnerable and exposed. This was what he had dreamed of, yet he had never expected it to move beyond fantasy. An icy shiver ran through him. Memories of his other affair with a younger woman, the one that catalyzed his entire divorce, flooded his gut with fear. His erection wilted.

Elise clambered to her feet and approached him. This was the moment, she thought: the moment Doctor Peters would lift her into his arms and ravish her like she needed. She laid one hand on his shirt and gazed up into his eyes.

The Model O chimed again. Elise buckled at the knees and sank to the floor, covering her crotch with both hands.

"Ting... ting... "

She was going to have an orgasm this time, right in front of him, for no apparent reason.

"Ting... ting..."

"Please... Doctor Peters," she begged in a whisper. She could not look at him. She was hobbled by the sensations pounding her clit, barely able to keep her eyes open. She could only watch helplessly as his polished loafers inched backwards. He was pulling away from her.

"Ting... ting... ting..."

She climaxed right there, kneeling on the floor.

"Ting... ting... ting... ting..."

Her clit apexed an arc of ecstasy. It took everything she had not to scream like a whore.

"Ting."

A moment later it was over. Her body went slack.

Elise slowly opened her eyes. She was kneeling with her face mere inches above the polished concrete. Teardrops lay sprinkled beneath her eyes.

She jerked upright. Doctor Peters looked as if he had just witnessed an exorcism.

Sexual relief washed through Elise's body. The fog of horniness lifted. Mortification took its place immediately.

The next five minutes were a blur of apologies and nonsensical excuses by each of them. Elise unrolled her shorts and pulled them out of her ass. Arthur walked in a wide half-circle back his desk where he attempted to hide behind his computer screen. Elise wanted to get out of the room as fast as she could. She threw her jacket and jeans on over her gym garb, grabbed her backpack and hurriedly said goodbye.

Arthur did not say anything audible.

Elise jogged down the hall and out into the street as quietly as she could. All her muscles were trembling as she ran to the train station.

A dozen minutes later, Elise boarded her train. She collapsed into an empty seat and silently wept. The Model O chimed again.

"Ting..."

**Tease to Please Ch. 06**

 **Friday June 7, 2013**
Elise and Arthur each awoke at 6:00AM. Nearly fifty miles of suburb, cityscape and saltwater lay between them but it was not enough.

In the East Bay, Arthur had been kept awake by memories of Elise intentionally taunting him atop his exercise bike and faking an injury to trick him into inappropriate touching.

In the City, Elise's sleep had been haunted by her mortifying attempt to seduce Doctor Peters and her growing obsession with the pleasure wrought by her clit's new ornament.

Arthur climbed from his bed naked. His morning erection jutted out, fat and unsatisfied, from his bear-shaped body. He pulled on a bathrobe, shuffled to his private kitchen and made a bowl of cereal for breakfast. He watched some local news, which was all about the impending BART strike. Then he showered and got dressed. His commute consisted of walking through the lockable doorway that connected his one-bedroom apartment to his office at the laboratory.

Elise did twenty minutes of yoga stretches in her sleepwear on the floor of her friends' living room and then showered. After drying off, she pulled on a pink thong, grey jeans, wedge sandals and a zippered hoodie over a sleeveless cotton top and walked nine blocks downhill to the Market Street BART station. Her train ride took forty minutes. She then had to walk four more blocks to get to the lab.

During the course of her commute Elise convinced herself that she needed to confess to Doctor Peters about the Model O. That was the only way he would understand why she had become so aroused during her workout. But she wanted to be selectively honest. It would be too embarrassing to tell him the whole truth; about Doctor Yamamoto discovering her masturbating in the upstairs restroom on Wednesday and installing the clit clock on her the next morning as some bizarre form of treatment. She hoped to pass off the Model O as a personal choice and simply say that she got carried away with it on the exercise bike.

Elise arrived at 9:00AM. Doctor Peters had already made coffee. This eliminated one potential source of their interaction. Elise exchanged polite hellos with each of the three men on the first floor, then sat down at her little desk and got to work.

"Elise," Doctor Peters called down to her from his dais ten minutes later, "Doctor Yamamoto is leaving early today, to get a head-start on his weekend. So, he'll probably need you upstairs fairly soon."

"Oh," Elise replied, "So... should I go ahead and change into my uniform now?"

"That would be best, thank you. And Elise?"

Elise stood from her chair: "Yes, Doctor Peters?"

"As soon as you're in uniform, I'd like to see you up here. We need to talk about your performance yesterday."

"Oh..." Elise felt her face flush. Her mind stuck on Doctor Peters' use of the word 'performance.' He must be referring to the injury she had faked. Or, she considered, perhaps he was referring to the pathetic, kneeling orgasm she'd had right in front of him. Or maybe he meant there was a problem with her actual work performance. There were many possibilities and none were good. Elise suddenly felt too warm in her street clothes. She hurried to the closet with a hushed "Okay, Doctor Peters."

Elise shut herself into the big walk-in where all her candy striper outfits were stored. She had not yet considered what to wear today, and now her mind was preoccupied with all the various explanations she might need to give Doctor Peters. She absentmindedly lifted a halter top dress of cream-colored silk by its hanger. She held the dress up against her skin, and then against her two pairs of ankle-strap high heeled sandals. She decided it looked more innocent with the pearl-colored shoes. Today she wanted to appear as sweet and innocent as possible for Doctor Peters, to compensate for her wanton display the prior evening.

Elise hung the little dress on the back of the door and stripped off her clothes. The halter dress was completely backless, so that meant her bra was out of the question. She was soon barefoot and naked save only for her high-cut lace thong. Elise stood for a moment, alone in the closet, thinking. She considered what Doctor Peters' reaction would be when she told him about the Model O. Instinctively her right hand found its way down to the front of her panties and toyed with the little donut-shaped collar that had encircled her clit for the past twenty-four hours. What would he say? What would he think?

Elise was awash in self-doubt. In the absence of any real plan, she decided the best thing to do was make herself as pretty as possible. Maybe that would entice Doctor Peters to be more forgiving. She hoped so. She didn't want to think about the alternative: being dismissed from the internship and sent home to her parents' house in Arizona.

Elise pulled the silk halter dress off its hanger. She noticed how light it was. It draped from her hand as weightlessly as a silk scarf.

"Wow," Elise thought as she carefully stepped into the dress. "This sure feels fragile. I hope it's not too see-through."

Once the garment was up around her waist, Elise raised the two loose ends of the halter top up over her petite breasts and carefully tied them together in a bow behind her neck. Then she shook the unlined dress down and let it drape naturally against her body. She immediately realized it was much too short. The dress' lower hem ended several inches above her crotch. Its two daringly rounded side slits reached up nearly to her waist.

Frustrated, Elise twisted around to check the little tag that hung inside the rear flap of the dress, which, she also noticed, failed to cover her butt. The label indicated it was a size zero.

"Dammit," Elise whispered, "I'm sure I told him I was a size 2! Why are there so many size zeros in here?"

To make the dress fit, Elise untied the bow holding up the halter top and let out as much free length as possible, leaving just enough to retie the ends in a simple knot behind her neck. Once that was done, Elise looked down and was pleased to see the dress hung long enough to cover her panties in front and her bottom behind. But now the halter top plunged very low between her breasts, almost to her navel. It made the proportions of the dress look a little odd, she thought.

Elise ran her hands down her lower back and felt that the fabric of the dress did not start until below her sacroiliac dimples. Her back, sides and arms were entirely naked. But at least now the dress covered her butt, she reminded herself. She tucked the waist of her pink thong down an inch lower on her hips so that it would not show above the dress. It was worrisome though, that between the dress' gaping u-shaped side slits and backless design, her rear was left covered by a mere square foot of silk dangling by its top two corners. The slightest breeze would wreak havoc with her modesty.

"Well," Elise consoled herself quietly, "at least I don't need to wear this outside in the wind. Now, I just need to pick some stockings. Then I'll suffer through whatever lecture Doctor Peters is about to give me."

Elise looked through all the unopened stockings on the shelf. She wanted a white pair that was as plain as possible. She found one labeled 'white fishnet' and opened it. Inside she discovered not two gartered stockings as she expected, but rather a conjoined pair of waist-high pantyhose. They were indeed white and fishnet, however, which Elise thought would look good beneath the cream-colored dress.

"Well that's nice," she considered, "these will give me a bit more coverage."

Elise stretched the elastic hose between her hands. The diamond-shaped openings in the fishnet weave grew from coffee-straw diameter to the width of a pencil. Each intersection of thread was tied in a sturdy knot.

"Hmm," she thought, "I wonder if you're supposed to wear these with panties or instead of? They're almost like tights and my pink underwear is probably gonna show through this dress anyway... or creep up too high in back again, so...."

Elise thought about the conversation she was about to have with Doctor Peters. He would probably ask to see the Model O once she used it as her excuse for her behavior yesterday. If she put on these pantyhose over her thong, she'd have to roll them both down in order to show him the device. If she wore the fishnet hose without panties, she could probably get away with just lifting the front of her dress. The openings in the fishnet were wide enough that Doctor Peters would probably be able to discern the Model O through them.

"Keep it simple," Elise told herself. She set the pantyhose aside and pulled her lace panties down until they fell to the floor. She stepped out of them and pulled the fishnet hose on in their place.

The pantyhose fit perfectly. If Elise could have watched herself from behind, even she would have appreciated the way their diamond pattern stretched wider and wider and she pulled them up past her thighs onto her round bottom. The most distended squares, the ones stretched taut across the swell of each butt cheek, became as wide as a man's finger.

From her toes to her waist Elise became wrapped in a crisscrossing mesh of white nylon. The material clung to her curves so tightly that it looked painted-on. Each knot created a miniscule dimple in her butter-soft skin.

Unlike real pantyhose, these lacked any sort of double layering in the crotch area or toes. This meant Elise's waxed privates were caged behind a lattice of white thread but otherwise naked. The central seam that held the two halves of the pantyhose together descended vertically down her front, bisecting her twin outer labia. Just above that crease, the highly-polished torus of the Model O pressed the head of her clit prominently outward, ensuring it would be exposed to every tug and twist the fabric might deliver. The central seam continued under her naked crotch, tight against her perineum and anus, disappearing between her butt cheeks before re-emerging at her tailbone where it rejoined the pantyhose's thin waistband.

Satisfied that the hose were on correctly, Elise let the front and rear flaps of her little dress go and observed how they draped over her netted skin. She liked the way the dress' open side slits showed the fishnet pattern continuing uninterrupted from her legs to her waist. She took care to push the waistband of the pantyhose down a bit so it would not peek out above the low back of the dress.

Elise grabbed the skinny pearl sandals off their shelf and stepped up onto them. The shoes raised her standing height from 5'3" to 5'7" and exaggerated her already disproportionately long legs to an extreme degree below her compact torso. She secured the shoes' thin straps around her ankles. Then she cleaned her discarded clothes from the floor and folded them all away neatly.

She had remembered, this time, to bring her purse and cosmetics bag into the closet so she could fully prepare herself before stepping out to Doctor Peters' office. Elise opened a small hand mirror and began to fix her make-up and hair. She pulled the elastic band from her ponytail and brushed her long hair straight until it hung down in a 'V' passed the middle of her back. Then she used two little silver clips to secure her long forelocks behind her ears. Satisfied with her hair, she put on a dangly pair of silver earrings and then got to work on her makeup; thin lines of dark green eyeliner to set-off her hazel eyes, light swipes of mascara on her lashes, subtle gold glitter on her neck and chest, a layer of light pink lipstick and, lastly, clear lip-gloss over her lipstick to give her mouth an extra bit of glistening sexiness.

"Jesus," Elise whispered, "all this to escape a little scolding. I must really not want to be sent home!"

She put away her cosmetics and smoothed the front of her dress down over her breasts. The twin bumps of her nipples under the silk were obvious from her vantage point, but she felt they would be much subtler when viewed from someone else's perspective. The halter straps seemed to want to narrow themselves though, which Elise thought exposed a little too much side-boob. She spread each strap wider and pressed them to her breasts, wishing she had some double-sided tape to hold them in place. She worried that if she leaned forward too far the fabric would hang away, leaving her young breasts dangling naked in midair.

"Well," Elise considered, "at least the waist chain will remind me to keep my back straight. That should keep me out of trouble."

She ran her hands up and down her netted legs one more time to make sure the hose lay smoothly against her skin. Beneath the little front flap of the dress she carefully adjusted the crotch of the pantyhose, making sure the seam was centered and that the Model O had not gotten tangled up in the netting. Beneath her wandering fingers, she could feel how large the nub of her clit was. It bulged from the metal torus like a mushroom cap.

Why was it, Elise wondered, that wearing these outfits always made her so horny?

She toyed with her clit for a few moments, then slid her other hand beneath the front of the dress too. While her right hand played with the Model O, she traced the fingers of her left hand along the little trench between her labia majora. The seam of her pantyhose was nestled quite deeply inside. She teased the tip of her pinky finger through the nylon netting and briefly slipped it between her inner labia. She was soft and squishy inside.

"Okay, I have to stop doing this!" Elise scolded herself, withdrawing her hands from her crotch. "Otherwise, I'm going to get in so much trouble."

"Ting..." the Model O chimed, sending a resonant tremor through her clit.

"Dammit!" Elise whispered, "Not now... I need to be good!"

"Ting... ting... ting..." the clit clock resounded with unwavering precision.

Elise grabbed the shelving for support as the twelve chimes of the Model O slowly unleashed themselves upon her distended clitoris. She had thought she would be more accustomed to the device by now, but when she was already turned-on like this its chimes were breathtaking. They felt like delicate flicks from a bionic tongue. The real killer though was their resonance -- it rang her clit like a tiny church bell. Elise closed her eyes. By the seventh chime her knees dipped. If not for her grip on the shelves, she would have sunk to the floor.

The final five chimes left Elise whimpering with pent-up arousal. When it was over she remained motionless for a few heartbeats. Part of her body wanted the chiming to restart. Instead, she consciously focused on breathing away the pleasure that echoed in her clit. Eventually she straightened up to her full height again. She slipped a hand back under the front flap of her dress and cupped her sex. As she feared, her entire vagina felt swollen and warm.

"Okay, okay," she mumbled after removing her hand, "just take a moment. Get a grip. You can do this."

Elise wiped her hands off on her folded jeans and then smoothed her silk dress down again. She twisted around one more time to make sure the waist of her pantyhose was not showing above the dress' low back.

Satisfied that she looked presentable, Elise re-entered the office.

Doctor Peters immediately called her over. Elise walked up onto the carpet dais and stopped at the nearest corner of his wide wooden desk.

"No, no," Arthur said irritably, "come all the way around here. I want to see this outfit you've chosen."

Elise looped her fingers together behind her bare back and dutifully walked around Doctor Peters' desk until she was standing in front of him. Her nervous muscles could not help gently twisting her body from side to side. Her seated boss inspected her from head to toe.

"You're all in white," Doctor Peters began, "with no stripes anywhere. And that dress fits you funny. Turn around."

Elise's heart sank. The doctor seemed to be in an unforgiving mood. She shuffled her steeply inclined feet around until her back was to him.

Arthur realized it was the first time he had seen her with her hair down. She looked adorable and sexy. But he was not going to cave so easily. Not by a long shot.

"Move your hair so I can see," he instructed.

Elise reached both hands behind her head, gathered her long auburn locks and pulled them forward over one shoulder. She then let her hands fall slack at her sides.

"I think I see what you've done wrong," Arthur said as he rose from his chair.

Elise felt his huge body approaching. He stopped right behind her. Then his hands were on the knot that held up her halter top.

"Doctor Peters, wait!" she spluttered.

"You've tied this too low... I remember from the pictures that this dress is supposed to be tied in a nice bow behind your neck, not this ugly little knot. Don't worry... I'm going to fix it for you."

By then he already had the knot untied. Elise clutched her chest, desperate to make sure her little boobs stayed hidden as Arthur dragged the dress higher on her body. Once he had four or five inches of slack to work with, he re-tied the halter top in a bow behind her neck and patted her gently on both shoulders.

"There," he said, "that should fix the dress, now we just need to sort the rest of it so we can finally get on with our little talk."

"But Doctor Peters," Elise whined, "Look at how short this is now!"

Elise turned to face him, clutching the front hem of the dress, trying to pull it lower. It was useless though. The dress ended above her crotch.

Arthur pretended not to notice: "Your hair needs to be in a ponytail... or up in some way. This is a lab after all, and we can't risk having all that long hair getting sucked into a fan or something. Afterhours you can wear it however you like, but while you're on duty you need to wear it up, okay?"

"Okay," Elise muttered. "I have some hair ties in the closet. Do you want me to fix it now?"

"Yes. And do you have more of that pink ribbon you used the other day?"

"Umm, yeah. I brought a whole spool from home. It's in my bag."

"Good. Bring the whole thing out here. I have an idea."

Elise retreated to the closet clutching the back flap of her dress so it would not fly up when she stepped down off the dais. She fetched the spool of pink satin ribbon from her bag, as well as the cut piece she had used the other day as a hair tie. When she got back to Doctor Peters' desk, he took the spool of ribbon from her and told her to use the existing piece to fix her hair up in a high ponytail. While Elise did this, Doctor Peters sat back down and retrieved a pair of scissors from one of his desk drawers. Elise watched as he cut two equal lengths of ribbon from the spool.

"Okay Elise," Doctor Peters began, "come closer and turn around again, right here."

He pointed at the carpet between his feet. Elise felt renewed embarrassment about her dress being so short now that she was going to have to stand with her bottom right in front of his face. She tip-toed forward in her tall heels until her knees were between his, touching his leather chair, then she slowly turned around.

She stopped once her back was to him and stood with her pert little bottom stuck out. Her posture was less a choice than a consequence dictated by her steep heels and snug belly chain. Her entire back was naked. The dress' rear, a mere flap of tissue-thin cream colored silk, lay draped across her arched tailbone. The flap ended just below the middle of her ass, leaving the net-stretching swells of her lower butt cheeks exposed.

Arthur had been trying very hard up to this point to maintain his composure. He was genuinely pissed at Elise for making a fool of him the evening before with that fake leg injury. Although her arousal had been contagious, he felt used and humiliated. He had given their whole working relationship a lot of thought overnight and had come up with a plan. His intention was to turn things around, starting immediately. But confronted with the spectacle of Elise's nubile ass laced-up in fishnet pantyhose, in a dress that barely covered anything, his resolve did momentarily waiver. His libido just wanted to bury his bearded face between her butt cheeks and smother himself to death. There was no way, by any possible measure of his life's worthiness, that he deserved access to a young woman as hot as Elise.

Arthur leaned forward in his chair. He could smell sex pheromones in the air around her. But his resolve did not crack.

He lifted his hands and gingerly looped a length of ribbon around Elise's left thigh.

"What's that for?" Elise asked, twisting around to see what he was doing to her.

Arthur, forcing his voice to sound dispassionate, said: "Since these pantyhose don't really match the style of stockings you're supposed to be wearing, I'm going to add the appearance of garters to them. These ribbons will also offset your uniform's lack of color today."

He worked the pink ribbon up to the very top of Elise's slender thigh and then tightened it between his fingers. Once he had equalized the length of the two loose ends, he looped them both through two of the diamond-shaped holes in the fishnet nylons and pulled them tight again. He knotted the ribbon onto the netting so it would not fall down. Then he used the free length to tie a large ornamental bow at the back of Elise's thigh.

"Isn't that pretty?" Arthur asked as he began to work on the second one.

"Umm, I guess so. You don't think it looks a bit too... frilly?" Elise asked cautiously. She was horrified that the pink bows would call so much attention to her inadequately-covered butt.

"No. These are great." Arthur replied with genuine enthusiasm as he completed the second bow. "I like this outfit better already."

When he was finished, he asked Elise to march to the wall and back again. He had her do this several times; parading her like a runway model.

Elise could feel Doctor Peters' eyes prying into every pore of her exposed skin. She focused extra hard on walking smoothly, so as not to wind up the Model O too much.

Arthur marveled at how the silk dress clung to Elise's skin. It faithfully conveyed every wobble of her breasts and wiggle of her bottom. The pink bows he had tied onto her pantyhose swayed and shook as she walked. The fishnet hose revealed more than mere nudity ever could. They gave her lower body a quilted texture that highlighted how tender her skin was beneath. And between her legs, where the shortened dress failed to conceal her crotch, Arthur swore he could see the pink flesh of her waxed mound puffing outward through the diamond-shaped gaps in the white latticework.

If any girl could look sexier than this, Arthur did not know how. He felt his cock lengthening inside his trousers.

"Good!" Arthur said. "Now, let's talk. Come on over here and please explain what the heck happened to you yesterday afternoon." He leaned back in his swivel chair and propped one ankle atop his opposite knee to conceal his erection.

Elise returned and stood in front of Doctor Peters' chair, trying to formulate her words. Her outfit was making her feel so exposed that her brain ceased to work right. She felt confused about how much she planned to tell him. The fact that her bare genitals were on display beneath the fishnet was not helping.

"Well..." she began, meekly staring at her toes. "Do you mean about the bike?"

"No, after that."

"Um... okay. What happened was, I got... kind of like, turned-on. Then, afterwards I was embarrassed. I shouldn't have done all that stuff in front of you, the thing with my shorts... and everything. But it wasn't really on purpose. You see—"

"You had an orgasm right in front of me Elise. You're saying it wasn't your fault? Whose fault was it?"

"Um, not anybody's fault really... It's just that I was wearing this piece of jewelry --"

"I'm sorry, did you just blame it on your jewelry?!"

"No. I mean yes, kind of... it's weird. This is awful... to have to explain but, I have this, like, special thing... it's like a little ring around my..." Elise took a deep breath. "My clit. And it chimes when it's wound up."

Arthur's eyes widened. This was far outside the bounds of what he had imagined Elise would say.

"Come again?" he asked.

"Well, I have this, like, this little metal collar. It's like jewelry. I wear it on my clit."

"I'm having a difficult time believing a word of this."

"It's true, really!" Elise pouted. "Here... look." She gathered the front of her dress up to her waist.

Arthur leaned forward in his chair and stared at Elise's crotch. Beneath her hosiery he discerned not only her complete lack of underwear, but also a bright silver donut bulging outward. It was above her labia and below a small square of fine pubic hair. Without thinking, he reached out and touched the little collar.

Elise flinched as his fingers touched the shiny torus.

"Careful," she blurted, "...it's really sensitive."

Doctor Peters glanced up to Elise's face and then back down at her crotch. He encircled the Model O with two fingers and then gently pressed the wide pad of his thumb down onto its center, right on the head of her clit.

Elise gasped. She backed away and dropped the front of her dress.

"No, seriously!" she pleaded, "I can't take that."

Arthur was momentarily in shock. He ran his hands through his beard and tried to grapple with this development.

"So," he began, "you wear this thing... why?"

"Well, uh..." Elise stalled. This was the part she was dreading -- taking ownership of the Model O even though it had not really been her choice in the first place. But she felt she had no alternative.

"It just... kinda feels good," she continued. "I guess I just like it."

"So... it gets you off, is that what you're telling me?"

"Uh-huh..."

"You want to be constantly stimulated?"

"Well, I don't know about that. It's not constant."

"Do you remove it ever?"

"Umm, no. It doesn't come off without, like, a whole process."

"I see. You wear this thing all the time... and did you say it rings? What's it called?"

"It doesn't have a name." Elise lied. She had decided not to reveal this detail to Doctor Peters out of fear that he would look it up online and put too many facts together once he knew it was Japanese.

"And the ringing?"

"Yeah. It chimes kinda like a clock. It'll, like, get wound-up when I move around a lot. So... if I'm doing something really active then it goes off a lot more often."

"And what earthly purpose do the chimes have? Do they tell you the time?" Arthur laughed. He was genuinely curious. He loved intricate devices.

"No. They just... feel good."

"Wow." Arthur said. He leaned back in his chair and folded his hands behind his head. "Huh! Well, you certainly are full of surprises Elise. I must admit I never would have guessed. So, this thing is the reason you got yourself so worked up yesterday?"

"Yeah. Riding on the bike was just, like, total overstimulation. It kept ringing, over and over."

"Jesus."

"Yeah."

The two of them looked at each other in silence for a moment. Elise desperately hoped the conversation was over. She wanted to fade back into the lab's normal daily routine, as odd as that was, rather than explain to Doctor Peters anything more about her clitoris.

Unfortunately for Elise, Arthur was just getting warmed up.

"Tell me, Elise," he began, taking on a lawyerly tone. "Do you think it's normal that you're focused on your own sexual pleasure to the exclusion of all else?"

"Uhhh... Well, it's not actually the only thing I think about."

"Well, do you think it's appropriate to jeopardize your professionalism, particularly so early in your career, by wearing something whose sole purpose is to keep you sexually stimulated all day?"

Elise hung her head. "No," she whispered.

"Do you think, perhaps, that it may have been a poor decision to wear this... this thing, to work?"

"Umm..."

"And furthermore, do you think it was a good idea to let yourself become so aroused yesterday that you actually tried to trick me into having sex with you?"

"No! Not at—"

"But that's precisely what you did, isn't it? Without any regard for the consequences... potentially serious consequences for me I might add. You simply felt horny, and so you decided: 'Well, I'll just seduce him to get myself off!' Isn't that the shape of it?"

Elise's mind raced. She had never seen Doctor Peters so intense before. "I'm really sorry!" she said.

"Well, sorry doesn't cut it, Elise. Not this time. You showed a total lack of consideration for me and zero judgment. Has anyone ever told you that before?"

Elise breathed out. This conversation was going off the rails. Eventually she mumbled: "Yeah, my mom always says... that I lack impulse control."

"You lack impulse control. Yes. That's a succinct way of putting it. I agree. And what have you done to try to improve this shortcoming?"

Elise stared blankly.

"Nothing?" Arthur prompted her.

"I, uh... I guess nothing. It never really seemed like something I could fix."

"Well now, that's interesting. You never thought it was something you could fix. Indeed! So, everyone around you is just supposed to deal, while you continue your thoughtless and selfish behavior forever?"

"No, that's not what I meant." Elise felt tears begin to gather in the corners of her eyes.

"Then what? If you're not willing to improve, how is anyone supposed to trust you? You might at any moment decide on a whim to do something crazy. Am I going to see you on the news, being arrested for... for who knows what... for masturbating in public or something?!"

Elise's face turned absolutely crimson. That was way too close to home.

Arthur waited. Elise remained very still.

"You have nothing to say for yourself?"

"Just... I'm so, so sorry!" Elise whimpered.

"Are you going to try to trick me ever again?"

"No."

"Or lie to me?"

"No."

"And while we're at it: is there anything else you need to divulge?"

Elise hesitated. Then she whispered: "I don't think so..."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, Doctor Peters."

"That lacked conviction, Elise. Let me ask a different question; would you like to improve yourself?"

"Yes."

"Are you willing to work at it? Learn to resist your impulses?"

"Uh-huh."

"And put the needs of others first?"

"Yeah. Definitely... I want to do that."

"It would be a start, wouldn't it?"

Arthur stood. He took Elise's face between his giant hands and lifted her gaze to meet his own. Very gently he swept his thumbs beneath her eyes, wiping her tears away.

"Let me think about all this for a minute, Elise. Why don't you go back to your desk and get some work done? You've presented quite a lot of issues, and I need to sort out how best to help you."

"Okay." Elise whispered. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to trick you. I wasn't thinking."

Elise retreated from the dais and walked back to her desk. The pink bows below her tiny dress danced with every step.

Arthur watched her backside and mentally rubbed his hands together.

Elise, too, was very much aware of her exposed bottom. She carefully lowered herself onto her chair. The fishnet stretched tightly under her privates, providing zero insulation from the cool plastic of her seat. She felt both physically and psychologically stripped. Still, she kept her shoulders square and her back straight to keep her little waist chain from digging into her skin. She did not want Doctor Peters to think she was getting depressed... or worse, chubby.

Within half an hour, Arthur had thought through the next stages of his plan. Elise's revelation of her clit jewelry had not really altered them much. It just made his prospects that much more titillating.

Arthur exited the room through the connecting door to his apartment and returned a few minutes later carrying a sturdy box constructed of polished wood. He set the box down atop his desk and signaled for Elise to join him. Once she was standing beside him, he pointed out two stacks of blank index cards arranged in a plastic tray beside his office phone. One stack was white. The other was red.

"Life," he began with an air of professorial authority, "is made up of relationships. All sorts of other stuff will happen along the way, but essentially everything that matters to you will be a function of relationships. How you manage those relationships determines the quality of your life. Are you with me so far?"

"Sure," Elise replied.

"Good. Now, the way to think about each relationship is like a bank balance. The more you invest in it, the stronger it will be. Conversely, when you make a withdrawal, say, by breaking a promise or disrespecting a friend, your balance in that relationship goes down. If you withdraw more than you put in the relationship ends... or at least it becomes spiteful and begrudging. Make sense?"

"Yeah."

"Now, in your case, you seem to have trouble putting the needs of others before your own, so your bank balances are always low. Then your impulsiveness writes checks that your relationships can't cash. It's like taking money you don't deserve. It's selfish."

"Oh. But I'm not trying to be selfish," Elise countered softly.

"But you don't know better, do you? That's what makes you so frustrating. You need to learn to think of other peoples' needs rather than just your own. Otherwise you'll keep bankrupting all your relationships."

This did actually make sense to Elise. Her senior year of college had involved a lot of bankrupt relationships. "Okay," she said. "How do I learn to do that?"

"Practice. That's how everyone acquires new skills. To help you, I have prepared a little game. It will introduce some structured learning to your summer here at the lab, and I think you will catch on quite quickly."

Arthur lifted the two stacks of index cards and continued: "Each time you do something selfish, I'm going to give you a red card. Each time you do something selfless, I'll give you a white card. The cards you earn will all be placed into this box."

Arthur tapped his finger on lid of the wooden box. It was slotted in the middle like a ballot box.

"At the end of each day," Arthur continued, "we'll open the box together and do a little math to see if you're in debt."

"So," Elise asked, "if I have more white cards than red cards, that's good?"

"Exactly. And if you have more red cards than white it means you've been selfish. The difference between this game and real-life however, is that we can make the consequences of having too many red cards felt immediately. That's how you'll learn."

"Okay," Elise said, biting her lower lip. "It sounds a bit... silly, but—"

"Silly games are how children learn. And this whole concept, which is more or less just about being considerate of others, is something folks usually learn in kindergarten. You, however, seem to have made it all the way to twenty-two without this important skill. So now you're going to learn it the way a child would. I think this game will be very effective."

Elise was humbled to hear Doctor Peters compare her to a child. She crossed her feet and folded her hands behind her butt. Her gaze got stuck on Doctor Peters' shoes. She simply said, "Okay."

"Good. Now, I'm giving you three red cards to start; one for tricking me yesterday with that fake injury, one for the selfish orgasm you had at my expense, and one more for needing so much help with your uniform this morning."

Doctor Peters counted out three red cards and slipped them into the wooden box. Elise stood in silence, her mouth slightly agape.

"Now," Arthur continued, "Don't panic. You have all day to try to earn white cards. Hopefully you'll avoid more red ones. At the end of the workday, for each extra red card in your box you'll pay a consequence."

Arthur tapped the red cards against the top of the wooden box. "We're going to call this your Consequence Box."

Elise swallowed hard, looked back and forth between the box and Doctor Peters and then asked: "What kind of consequences are in there?"

"The old-fashioned kind. The kind you'll learn from."

"Like what?"

"You'll have to wait and see. Of course, if you start doing lots of good, selfless things, you may not need a consequence today... but somehow I doubt you'll be in suspense for long."

Elise felt too embarrassed to press the issue. The whole incentive structure was so infantile, and yet she felt utterly compelled by it. At some level she knew she deserved consequences, and this little game might be good for her. Her life so far had been much too sheltered from the sort of constructive criticism Doctor Peters was dishing out.

"What can I do to earn a white card?" she asked.

"That's for you to figure out. If I have to suggest something, it won't count. You are supposed to proactively think about other people's needs. That's the whole point."

"Oh. Right."

"Now -- do you understand the game?"

"Yeah."

"And your consequence box? Are you prepared to take responsibility for what goes into it each day?"

"Yeah."

"Without a lot of whining?"

"I think so."

"Good." Arthur stepped back to his chair and sat down. "Then let's please get on with our workday, shall we?"

"Yes of course, Doctor Peters."

Elise retreated to her workstation. Arthur pushed her consequence box to the far edge of his desk and began to click away at his computer.

By noon, Elise had failed to earn any white cards. She had made a fresh pot of coffee and walked it around to all three men on the first floor of the lab, and then repeated her tour to offer each of them refills, but Doctor Peters told her this was just an expected office courtesy. White cards were earned by doing things above and beyond her actual job, he said.

Alex and Jacob sure seemed to appreciate the coffee though, Elise noticed. Both men tried to drag her into long conversations as she stood beside their desks out in the main lab. And over the course of the morning they seemed to make a lot of frivolous excuses to visit her. Several times she caught them staring at her absolutely wide-eyed as she walked around the lab. She discounted it as typical geeky lecherousness and tried to focus on her work.

All that walking around on the concrete floor in such high heels, however, was winding up the Model O pretty often. Elise found she really had to force herself not to daydream about sex. Otherwise when the Model O chimed it simply felt too good. She didn't want to have a repeat of Thursday's autoerotic orgasm. Not only would it be incredibly embarrassing, but she didn't want another red card. She was already three cards in the hole.

Doctor Yamamoto never stopped by to take Elise upstairs for rounds. He simply called Doctor Peters and said he was leaving earlier than planned. He failed to say goodbye to anyone on the first floor.

After the Japanese doctor left, Elise considered asking Doctor Peters if she could change out of her uniform. She quickly thought better of it, though, recalling his lecture earlier in the week about not wasting time on costume changes. She racked her brain instead for ideas of nice things she could do. She needed to give Doctor Peters an unexpected treat.

"I've got it!" she suddenly thought, "I'll give him a backrub!"

She was a licensed massage therapist after all. She recalled Doctor Peters making a comment about having back pain. Surely one of her expert 20-minute neck and shoulder rubdowns would deserve a white card.

She put down the glass lab equipment she had been polishing, stripped off her sterile gloves and walked back to Doctor Peters' office.

"Hey, Doctor Peters?" she asked in a chipper voice en route to his desk. "I was wondering if you'd like a back rub."

"A back-rub, huh?" Arthur replied with a subtle grin. "Right now?"

"Yeah. I mean, it's really more of a neck and shoulder thing... not a full backrub with oil and everything. But I can do it while you're sitting there. I'm really good at them."

Arthur thought for a moment. He wondered if Alex and Jacob would find it strange if they walked by and saw. "What the hell," he thought, "it's just a shoulder massage. It's not like I'll have my clothes off or anything."

"Okay, sure Elise." He said with a smile. "That sounds nice."

"Great!" Elise cheered, virtually skipping up onto the dais. She took up a position behind Arthur's office chair and immediately set to work on his broad shoulders.

Elise's little hands felt quite strong, Arthur thought to himself as he leaned back to enjoy her ministrations. Elise squeezed and rubbed his neck and shoulders from every angle. Soon she had him lean forward and put his elbows on his knees. Then she practically climbed onto his chair for leverage as she worked her way down his back, palpating all the thick, knotty muscles hidden beneath his dress shirt.

"You sure seem to be carrying around a lot of tension, Doctor Peters." Elise piped up from beside his chair. She was pressing the blade of her forearm down onto each of his muscle groups, working out kinks Arthur did not even know he had.

"Yeah, that feels great Elise. I had no idea you were so talented. Thank you for thinking of this."

"Well, I can do it every day if you want! I've got to earn my good cards somehow, right?"

Arthur chuckled: "Indeed."

Twenty minutes later she was done. Arthur stood up and stretched. His back really did feel pretty good suddenly, as if a weight had been lifted.

"Wow," he said to Elise, "you've got to teach me how you did that. I feel awesome."

"No problem," Elise beamed with a proud smile. "Anytime!"

Doctor Peters retrieved a white index card from the stack on his desk and made an elaborate show of slipping it into her consequence box.

"Yea!" Elise said playfully. "Only two more to go."

Unfortunately for Elise, she had a real mental block on thinking of other acts worthy of a white card. And because it was Friday and Doctor Yamamoto had already gone home, Arthur decided to close the lab early.

At 3:30pm Doctor Peters rose from his chair and walked out to the main lab to dismiss Alex and Jacob. On their way out the two skinny men could not resist stopping by to wish Elise a good weekend and to congratulate her on finishing the first week of her internship. Alex even opened his arms for a hug, compelling Elise to rise from her chair and briefly press her little body against his. Naturally Jacob, though far shier, followed suit and insisted on giving Elise a big hug as well. Elise was reminded of how seriously underdressed she was when each man's embrace left warm palm prints all across her naked back. She even felt the steel buttons of Alex's motorcycle jacket through the thin silk covering her chest.

When the two lab assistants had gone, Elise asked Doctor Peters if she could have more time to earn white cards.

"No," Doctor Peters replied, "I'm afraid your time is up. Let's get on with your consequences, okay? I want to start my weekend too."

Elise took a deep breath and sighed. She had no idea what to expect, but she didn't feel scared. She knew Doctor Peters was not mean or crazy. She was simply embarrassed at her inability to do better at the game.

Doctor Peters instructed Elise to collect her consequence box from his desk. She did so, lifting the shiny wood container with both hands and remarking that it felt heavy.

"Every day," Arthur began, "we'll do this same little ritual. You'll carry the box, since after all it's yours, right?"

"Right," Elise answered, standing beside him.

"And you're going to take the box into my apartment. Follow me."

Arthur removed a steel key from his pocket as he led Elise across the room to the door closest to the hallway, which connected through to his personal apartment. He unlocked the door and held it open for Elise. After she stepped through, he followed her and shut the door behind himself. The light in the short connecting hallway switched on automatically via a motion sensor. Within a few steps Elise found herself in Doctor Peters' living room.

Arthur squeezed by her and directed her to set the box down on the carpeted floor behind a large leather sofa that sprawled across the middle of the room. He turned on a few lights as Elise bent from the waist and set her consequence box down on the floor as directed.

Elise straightened up and looked around, taking-in the floor plan of the apartment.

Arthur found himself reflexively playing tour guide. He was proud of the living space he had commissioned and it offered him something neutral to discuss to mask his growing excitement about the surprise he had in store for Elise.

Elise followed him around and made polite noises of approval as he rambled on about the eat-in kitchen he had designed and the gas fireplace across from the convertible sofa bed. Arthur did not plan to show Elise his master bedroom, so he merely gestured in its direction. To his surprise, Elise ventured off that way by herself. Arthur had to double-back from the kitchen to follow her. He mumbled an apology about the mess, but Elise seemed impressed anyway. She stood at the foot of his king-sized bed for a moment, looking around the large room. She even ducked her head into his en-suite master bathroom.

"Cool, Doctor Peters," she concluded. "I like it."

Arthur thanked her but was uncomfortable. Elise in his bedroom was not part of his plan. It felt too intimate. He was suddenly warm under his dress shirt.

Elise, by contrast, appeared very relaxed. Arthur noted how smoothly and gracefully she carried herself in her tantalizing outfit. She was poised, almost gliding. The big pink bows on the backs of her thighs shook only slightly as she toured his living space. Her eyes studied everything, taking it all in, but she did not touch. He, meanwhile, had no choice but to stand there like a good host and endure the inspection.

It dawned on Arthur that he was getting a small taste of his own medicine. Ever since Monday morning he had been the watcher and Elise had been the target. Now their roles were reversed. He briefly panicked upon seeing that his personal laptop was open on the bedside table. If Elise picked it up she might find his collection of digital porn.

Arthur was thankful for his full beard as blood rushed to his face.

Elise eventually walked back to the living room and poked her head into the adjoining half-bath. Then she surveyed the wall of built-in bookcases and audio/video gear surrounding the fireplace. Finally, she turned to Doctor Peters and announced that his place was 'super comfy.'

Arthur was not quite sure what to make of that comment, so he refocused Elise's attention on the consequence game. He laid his broad right hand on her lower back and gestured politely for her to join him at the back of the sofa. Arthur knelt down beside her consequence box after withdrawing a tiny key from his back pocket. Elise placed one hand on the back of the sofa for balance and then squatted in her high heels beside him.

Arthur unlocked the lid. "Okay," he said to Elise, "you can open it. Tell me what you see inside."

Elise grinned nervously. She swung the box's hinged lid upward and away until it stayed open, hanging on a slender brass chain. The interior of the box was lined with beige felt.

"Um," she began, "I see one white card, three red ones, and a Ping-Pong paddle."

"Right," Arthur said. "Now, take out your white card and one red one. They offset each other."

"Okay," Elise giggled, removing a white and a red card and handing both to Doctor Peters. "What's the Ping-Pong thingy for? You don't expect me to play, I hope... at least not in these shoes."

"No. I want you to tell me: How many red cards do you have left?"

"Two... Duh," Elise joked.

"Right. So, in order to remove those red cards you have to endure two consequences. That's what the paddle is for."

Elise was silent.

"Each consequence will remind you how old you are. Can you guess what they are?"

Elise pursed her lips and slowly shook her head, afraid to vocalize the mental guess she had made.

"Each consequence is twenty-two swats on the bottom. With the paddle."

"Doctor Pe-"

"No whining, Elise. This is not a negotiation. They won't hurt much. It's really just the humiliation of being spanked that leaves a lasting impression. It will remind you not to end up with so many red cards next time."

Elise's eyes were so wide Arthur thought they might fall out of her head. He scooped the rubber-faced paddle out of the box and shut the lid, leaving the two red cards inside. He stood up. He looked down at Elise and transferred the paddle to his right hand.

"Come on, Elise," he said as calmly as he could manage. "This will only take a short while."

Elise slowly rose to her feet. She clutched both arms across her stomach. Her little dress appeared to shimmer atop her small breasts.

"Thank you," Arthur continued. "Now, step right up onto your consequence box. Careful not to scratch it with those high heels. Then I want you to lean forward over the back of the sofa."

Elise's trembling worsened. Her mind was a blur of anxiety and shame. This whole situation would have been unimaginable to her only moments ago, but now it felt all too real. Doctor Peters was going to spank her bottom... with a paddle... right now in this apartment.

Doctor Peters' deep voice broke her reverie: "We're going to be doing this every day Elise, so don't be shy."

Elise looked up at him. Her mouth parted to speak, but nothing came out.

"Have you ever been paddled before?" he asked.

"No, of course not," she replied breathlessly.

"When was the last time you got spanked?"

"I... I have no idea. Like, maybe when I was five?"

"Well, there's no better corrective for bad behavior."

"But..."

"No whining Elise. Come on, step up. Let's get started."

"But --"

"NOW, young lady."

Elise placed one pearlescent high heel onto the closed lid of the box and then stepped up. This raised her ass another six inches off the ground, bringing it level with Doctor Peters' belt. Already unsteady in her tall shoes, she became even less sure of her balance and instinctively bent forward to rest her hands on the back of the leather sofa in front of her.

Doctor Peters took up a position beside her and placed his left hand across her lower back, just below her waist chain.

"Bend all the way over, Elise," he instructed her quietly.

Arthur had his own wide-eyed moment as Elise obeyed him. She lowered herself onto her elbows and arched her back. The pale moon of her fishnet-clad ass revealed itself from beneath the small rear flap of her dress. With her feet crowded together atop the box, her legs formed a single exclamation point. The snug crease between her butt cheeks widened slightly as she lowered herself into a jackknifed posture.

Arthur lifted the rear flap of her dress and flipped it over. Her netted ass then lay before him, entirely on display. He stepped back half a pace to remove his shadow from her backside, savoring a well-lit view of Elise's exquisite derriere. The satin bows dangling from her upper thighs made her look giftwrapped.

"Please... just do it gently," Elise pleaded.

Arthur could not bring himself to speak. He was too entranced by the perfect twin hills of flesh being presented to him for punishment. His left hand wandered across Elise's tailbone and gently teased the waistband of her pantyhose higher. The knotted fabric was so tight, and her skin so delicate, that when he first tugged them higher their fishnet pattern remained imprinted on her pale skin.

In a self-indulgent stupor, Arthur curled his left hand under the rear of her pantyhose and yanked them upward. Elise squeaked and squirmed as their central seam sunk deeper into her crotch.

Doctor Peters took a deep breath and let it out slowly. Then he swung the paddle down onto Elise's right butt cheek.

"Wap!"

The pink bows jumped. Elise's entire body flinched.

"Ow!" burst from her mouth, followed immediately by: "Not so hard, Doctor Peters, please!"

"That wasn't hard enough to hurt. It's just the shock you're feeling. And traditionally, Elise, you're supposed to count them out. Since you didn't know that, I'll let that one stand. But from now on you need to count them out loud, okay?"

"Ohmygod, ohmygod, ohmygod," Elise pleaded, "Are you serious?" She could not bring herself to look back at him. She was hugging the sofa's center cushion, her face above the throw-pillows. She felt as though her ass was glowing somewhere up near the ceiling, as wide as the whole room.

"Wap!" It was her left cheek this time.

"Ahow!" Elise whelped. Her elbows slipped and she tipped forward. The sofa's backboard caught her hips, keeping her ass high. The tiny soles of her shoes teetered on the very edge of the consequence box as she said: "Oh my God, it stings so bad!"

"What number was that?" Doctor Peters asked.

"Two!" Elise whined. She was breathing hard and fast. Her bottom throbbed.

"Good girl. See? You're learning already."

"Wap!"

It was her right cheek again. Elise felt the sting rush down the back of her thigh. Her bottom had caught fire. "Three!" she said.

"Wap!"

This time the paddle struck up high on her left cheek. She barely managed to whimper "Four!" before the next one came.

"Wap!"

Elise counted out the next few smacks. Doctor Peters administered them on alternating sides of her ass. He moved the paddle around a little bit, making sure the resulting pink glow bloomed evenly across her entire backside. He held her hips in position with his left hand, keeping her pantyhose wound tightly around his fist. The way the hosiery quilted Elise's soft skin was driving him crazy, and he guessed the tension he was applying to their central seam was translating directly to her vaginal crease.

"Wap!" The pink bows shook again.

"Ten!" Elise wailed. Arthur could see her ribcage panting. Her dress was in disarray. Most of her left breast came into view, squeezed out sideways from beneath her halter top as she lay pressed over the sofa.

"Wap!"

"Oh my God... Eleven!" Elise whimpered.

"You're halfway there, Elise. Through the first set anyway."

"Ow-ow-OW, it hurts all the way to my knees!"

Arthur took a break and looked over Elise's backside carefully. In truth, he wasn't hitting her hard at all. The stinging she felt would be very short-lived. The loud smacking of the paddle made it seem worse than it was. Still, with her privates so poorly protected, Arthur did not want to take any chances. He had been carefully keeping well clear of her pouty genitals. This was more challenging than it sounded. Due to the posture she had adopted, her sexy little mound protruded quite prominently between her flattened gluteal folds. He could even see the silver glint of her clit ornament. It looked like it was forcing the tip of her pink clit out through one of the holes in the fishnet.

"Elise," Doctor Peters said, "Why don't you reach between your legs and cover your genitals? Just for safety's sake."

Elise did not respond orally. She just worked one hand down under her crotch and cupped her entire pussy.

Doctor Peters began to deliver the next eleven swats in a very slow, steady rhythm. Elise kept count, but her voice grew fainter and fainter. Her bottom bloomed into a rosy shade of pink that nearly matched her two faux garters.

Inside Elise's mind a different kind of rose had bloomed -- one that obscured all logic. She found herself clutching the sofa's thick brown hide with one hand while squeezing, equally tightly, her pussy with the other. Her face was sideways, cheek to the leather. Her eyes were tightly shut. Drool was leaking from her mouth.

Each smack that arrived fanned a fire inside of her that was already too hot. Her bottom felt huge and aglow. Her thigh muscles trembled like runaway sewing machines. She was starting to enjoy this.

The counterweight inside her Model O was being spun furiously by each impact of the paddle. It would not be long before it chimed.

Elise felt something very strange happening within her young body: the tiny muscles lining her vagina began to contract involuntarily in anticipation of each paddle strike. A startling tremble ran through her all the way down to her ankles. Beneath her right hand, she felt her pussy weeping.

"Wap!" The pink bows danced again.

"Twenty." Elise breathed.

"Wap!"

"Twenty one."

"Wap!"

"Twenty... two."

"Very good," Doctor Peters praised. "You endured those admirably. You may step down now and remove one red card from your consequence box."

A few seconds passed before Elise could move at all. Eventually she gripped the back of the couch and slowly straightened up. Her legs trembled visibly as she stepped down off the box. As soon as her tall shoes were both on the floor, she began to rub her bottom.

At Arthur's prompting, Elise squatted down and retrieved a red card from inside the box. She handed it to him. He immediately asked her to climb back into position. Begrudgingly, she did so.

Once Elise was leaning over the back of the sofa again, Arthur set his paddle aside and ran both his hands across her bottom. He marveled at the taut firmness of her rosy cheeks.

"Elise," he began, "if you'd prefer I can do the next set by hand... instead of with the paddle."

Elise propped herself onto her elbows and looked back at him. "Will it hurt less?" she asked.

"It's less consistent, but it might be quieter."

"Okay, yeah. Use your hand."

"In that case, I'm just going to roll these down a bit," Arthur said, working his fingers under the waistband of Elise's pantyhose.

"Oh. But—" Elise began hesitantly as she felt the hose peeling down off her ass.

"This is traditionally how it's done."

Elise said nothing more as Doctor Peters worked the tight fishnets down to her upper thighs, bunching them around her pink bows.

"You have a lovely bottom," he said without thinking.

"Thanks," she answered quietly.

Arthur stared down for a long moment at Elise's smooth pink ass. Removing the pantyhose had revealed her few remaining secrets; the tiny star of her anus, the narrow bridge of her perineum, and the delicate petals of her inner labia. These last were perfectly symmetrical and bright pink where they peeked out between her hairless outer labia. The entirety of her sex was glossy with arousal. Arthur wished he could think of some excuse to press his thumb into her. Or any part of his body, really. His brain ground to a near standstill.

Elise caught a glimpse of the look on Doctor Peters face and realized he was entranced by her upturned bottom. This knowledge on served to heighten her own excitement. All week she had been attracted to his huge hands. The idea that they were about to spank her bare bottom brought on a troubling rush of excitement.

"Doctor Peters?" Elise cooed over her shoulder, "Should I... cover myself again?"

Arthur woke from his reverie. "Yes, yes of course Elise. Please do."

Elise leaned farther forward and slid her right hand down between her legs.

Arthur watched Elise's little hand cup itself over her narrow mound. As he prepared to start her next spanking, he saw her hand begin to wiggle.

"Slap!"

Elise jumped in her heels. The counterweight inside her Model O ratcheted around and around. A large handprint appeared in faint pink on the left side of her ass.

"One," Elise moaned.

"Slap!"

"Twooo!"

Another wide handprint bloomed across Elise's pert bottom, on the right this time.

"Slap!"

"Thr—three Doctor Peters!"

The tone of lust in Elise's voice was giving Arthur a stiffening erection. Was it possible, he wondered, that she was really enjoying this?

"Slap!"

"Four!" Her voice crept higher.

Elise's right hand was definitely shifting side-to-side upon her pussy, Arthur noted. She was rapidly flexing her knees in succession too, making her ass and thighs wiggle temptingly.

"My God," Arthur thought, "she really IS getting off on this!"

Elise found herself waiting impatiently for his next barehanded slap. She wanted to be discreet about how much she was enjoying it, but the urge to rub her naked clit was way too strong. Once again, she was failing to resist an impulse.

"Slap!"

"Ting..." the Model O began to chime.

"Five!" she squealed, her voice suddenly three octaves higher. "Oh God, Doctor Peters!"

"Slap!"

"Ting..." A second bolt of joy coursed through Elise's little body.

"Fuck yes!! I mean six!"

"Ting..."

"Slap!"

"Seven! Oh..."

"Ting..." continued the Model O.

Arthur saw Elise's hips wiggle furiously. He spanked her again.

"Slap!"

"God yes!" whined Elise. "Seven?"

"No Elise, that was eight. Try again." Arthur's voice no longer calm. His gaze was fixed on her wriggling fingers. Her tiny perineum looked soaking wet.

"Ting..."

"Slap!"

"Eight!" Elise panted. She lost the ability to think of anything other than pleasure. She blurred her hand over her clit as the Model O tinged again. Between all that stimulation and Doctor Peters' swats, she was about to climax.

The next two spanks went uncounted.

Arthur stopped spanking her and instead cupped her wiggling right hand. He gently forced his two longest fingers between the petals of her inner labia. Elise arched her back and moaned, struggling to lift her hips higher.

The Model O chimed for the twelfth time as Arthur's fingers sank inward, embraced by an incredible slipperiness.

Elise squealed, hurriedly working her clit. Her hips pumped against Doctor Peters' hand and her vaginal canal tensed repeatedly. Arthur saw her anus do the same. When the orgasm hit, her entire body trembled. Her feet slipped off the consequence box and she tipped over the back of the sofa. Pleasure exploded through her and her face burrowed into the leather seat cushion.

"Ahhh!!" she cried out.

"My God..." Arthur whispered, feeling her young pussy convulse around his embedded fingers, "you're so wet."

Elise's body shook from head to toe. The leather cushion under her mouth became sprinkled with spit.

"Please!" she begged as Arthur's thick fingers embedded themselves further. "Spank me Doctor Peters... just a few more times!"

Arthur was in no mood to refrain. He extracted his hand and swatted Elise's upturned bottom again. His erection twitched each time he saw Elise's tender flesh jiggle beneath his blows. Wetness dribbled from her. Her body quaked beneath him.

Eventually Elise's rabid panting slowed and Arthur stopped spanking her. After allowing her a few breaths to recover, he pulled her back up onto her feet and stepped back. The small rear flap of her dress fell into position as she stumbled down off the consequence box and stood before him. Her skin was trembling. Her pantyhose remained twisted around her thighs. Her right hand still cupped her crotch and her eyes were teary.

They stood face to face, no more than a foot apart, and stared at each other. Despite her four-inch heels Elise was still a foot shorter than him. Her bodyweight was less than half his, yet her breathing was almost as loud. Perspiration shone on both their foreheads.

"I'm sorry Doctor Peters," Elise said between breaths. "I came... in front of you again."

Arthur swayed uneasily. He had no idea what to say. His lifted his right hand to his beard. It smelled subtly sweet from Elise's wetness. He felt evil for having touched her.

"I think," he began quietly. "I think we're done here. You may go home now, Elise."

Elise let her watery gaze wander down to Doctor Peters' beltline. She saw a prominent ridgeline under his pants, descending at an angle from his crotch. It looked painfully thick and long.

"Are you sure?" she asked, glancing back up at him. "I don't want to be... selfish."

Arthur took a step backward. "No, it's just, it's just..." he stuttered, "I didn't think you would... enjoy that."

"Me neither."

Elise still had not raised her pantyhose. She stood exposed in front of Doctor Peters with her nipples jutting obviously through her dress and her wet mouth ajar. Her skin was flush with arousal. She moved her hands to her bare bottom and slowly rubbed it up and down.

Arthur's penis was pounding with excess blood pressure. Its proximity to Elise's naked and willing vagina was maddening.

"You..." he said "make me want to do very bad things."

Elise gently twisted back and forth above her shoes and grinned. She let her gaze fall to Arthur's crotch again.

"Ditto," she said softly.

Elise looked back up into Arthur's eyes and kept smiling. She continued absentmindedly rubbing her bare bottom. A long silence stretched out.

"Should I... put my clothes back on?" she asked finally, raising one eyebrow.

"Yes... yes, I think that would be best." Arthur answered. He let out a heavy sigh. Then he continued: "We can't do... It wouldn't be right."

Elise pulled her pantyhose up, wiggling her hips into them. "I know."

Arthur escorted her back to his office in the laboratory. She went to the closet and changed into her normal clothes. Within ten minutes they had bidden each other goodbye with a hug and Elise exited through the heavy mechanical delivery doors out onto the street. The early evening light gave the scene outside a golden glow. Arthur watched her walk to the end of the block. He smiled when she paused to rub the seat of her grey jeans. Then he shut himself in behind the doors and plodded back to his apartment.

He turned out the lights and collapsed across his bed. His groin ached. His testicles felt enormous.

"God... Dammit!" he moaned into a pillow.

**Tease to Please Ch. 07**

 **Sunday June 9, 2013**
Elise awoke on her friend's couch with a brutal hangover. She had convinced her summer apartment-mates to go out clubbing on Saturday night and things had gotten out of hand. She recalled a blurry swirl of crowds, dance floors and thumping bass -- and then her friend getting pissed about something. Elise racked her aching brain: What was it...?

Oh God, that's right: the fight!

Memory rushed in. Elise had been enjoying herself a WAY too much on the dance floor thanks to the Model O and a several vodka shots. Some random dude started manhandling her. She had been too drunk and horny to push him away. Her friend's fiancé stepped in and told the thuggish dude to back-off. Elise was unclear on the details of what happened next. She just remembered being in a brightly-lit waiting room at the hospital for hours, in full clubbing attire, while her friend's future husband received stitches. When the poor guy finally emerged his head was wrapped in bandages like an unlucky war veteran. There had been stony silence between the three of them during their taxi ride back to the apartment at dawn.

Elise sat up on the sofa. Even that small motion made her skull pound. She dared not think what the wounded boy in the next room felt like.

"Fucking disaster," she groaned.

In great discomfort, Elise extricated herself from the sweaty ruins of her club dress and pulled on some yoga pants and a t-shirt. Then she closed the window shutters, hobbled to the kitchen, drank two tall glasses of water and filled a third. She made her way to the bathroom, took two Advil and had a pee. When she returned to the sofa, she found the remote and switched on the TV. She lowered the volume way down.

It was the news. They were announcing the BART strike. It would commence at midnight and continue until Labor and Management reached a deal, which the station's panel of experts said might take weeks. There would be no BART service at all in the interim.

"Dammit..." Elise swore again. She needed breakfast, coffee and a new life.

The very least she could do for her abused hosts was venture out into the blinding midday light and retrieve provisions suitable for hangover-recovery. She killed the television, pulled on her cross trainers, a hoodie and sunglasses. She walked down the building's three flights of common-area stairs to the street and then to the nearest Starbucks. She blew thirty dollars on greasy breakfast sandwiches, three Greek-yogurt-&-honey granolas and three Venti coffees. Thusly equipped, she walked back to the apartment building. Halfway up the stairs, the Model O went off. Elise clenched her teeth. In her present non-sexual mood the little torus' chimes were more akin to dirty jokes than stimulation. She chose not to laugh. After the twelfth 'ting' Elise finished climbing the stairs and returned to her couch.

No one was awake yet. It was going to be a miserable, guilty day.

Elise ate a yogurt, a ham-and-egg sandwich and drank half her coffee. Thinking about her sudden lack of transportation to work, she decided to start by trying to find a cheap hotel near the lab. That would ameliorate her commuting problem. Plus it would give her roommates some space and time to heal. Their forgiveness would bloom faster if she was off their couch for a while. She wondered how much it would cost though, and how long she could endure the extra expense. The BART strike could potentially outlast her meager savings, depending on the hotel's daily rate.

A quick internet search on her old college laptop confirmed her fears. There were few hotels near the laboratory and their cheapest rooms were over $75 per night.

When her friends awoke Elise closed her laptop and tried to make herself as useful and attentive as possible. Her contrition was total. Mr. fiancé would have to go to work on Monday looking battered and bruised. The couple openly fretted about whether the scar above his eye would heal in time for their wedding. It was bad news all 'round.

After Elise had done what she could to salve their misery, she climbed the staircase in the outdoor light-well to the building's flat tar roof in order to use her cell phone privately. With her sunglasses on to protect her headache from the white daylight, she dialed and waited. There was no answer, so she left a message:

"Hi, Doctor Peters. It's Elise. I'm sorry to bug you on a Sunday, but... I'm sure you saw the news about the BART strike. I, um... I'm working on alternatives. I think I'll take the train out your way this afternoon before they shut it down. Hopefully then I can find a hotel out there. Anyway, please give me a call as soon as you get this, okay? Thanks. Bye."

Arthur was out grocery shopping. He had never given Elise his cellular number. She only had his office line. When he returned to the lab he was surprised to see the message light blinking. He generally received few calls on Sundays.

Arthur had spent the prior thirty-six hours trying to re-nestle himself into his solitary, boring and comfortable life. Only through this effort had his sense of guilt (and the vision of Elise's spanked bottom) begun to fade from his mind. He felt sure he had taken things too far on Friday.

On Monday he intended to let Elise opt out of the whole Consequence Game. It had been a silly, crazy idea. There was no way he could get away with paddling his intern every night after work, even if she enjoyed it. He needed to be the responsible one. He was her boss. And for some reason he longed to be trusted by her.

From now on he planned to help Elise have as normal a summer internship as possible, notwithstanding the candy striper outfits she had to wear for Doctor Yamamoto.

When Arthur listened to Elise's message, however, his nobler instincts waivered. Her subtext was clear: she needed a place to stay, he had a sofa bed, she had seen it, and his home was located exactly where she needed to be every day. Nothing could be more obvious.

Arthur picked up his cell phone and dialed Elise. Within the first two minutes of their conversation she asked if she could crash at his place for the duration of the strike. He said yes. Elise thanked him profusely and then started to cry.

"Doctor Peters, the truth is," she began, "It's not just the stupid BART strike. I did something horrible, and I need to get out of here for a while."

"Oh?" Arthur responded. "What's happened? Are you okay?"

"I'm okay. But my friends, the ones I've been staying with... hate me right now. Last night I got really drunk ... we were out at this club. It was awful. A fight started because of me... and, and, now his face is all beaten up. They're supposed to get married soon, and..."

Elise's voice trailed off into a series of blubbering gasps.

"Okay, okay, Elise. Calm down. It's okay. You can stay at the lab for a while, like I said. Let things blow over with your friends there. It makes sense during the strike anyway."

Elise continued to sob guiltily into her cell phone. Eventually she squeaked out a quiet: "Thank you."

"Do you need me to come pick you up? Or can you manage on the train?"

"I can manage. You don't have to do that."

"Well, as soon as you've caught a train, just send me a text at this number. It's my cell. Let me know when you'll arrive at the station here. I can come pick you up."

"Thanks, Doctor Peters... that's great."

They hung up. The sedate pace of Arthur's universe was accelerating once more.

Arthur's next call was to Doctor Yamamoto. His Japanese partner needed to be briefed on this development given its potentially unseemly optics. Trying to conceal it from him would only invite disaster, Arthur knew.

The ensuing phone conversation between the two doctors was in Japanese and barely ten minutes long. To Arthur's surprise, his eccentric colleague was unfazed by the idea that Elise would be sleeping in his living room for a while. Arthur felt so encouraged by this that he decided to tell him about the Consequence Game as well. At that point Doctor Yamamoto became positively enthusiastic, which was really saying something.

Doctor Yamamoto suggested his own involvement was critical to make such a treatment regime as effective as possible. In his view, strict round-the-clock supervision was exactly what Elise needed.

The dirty half of Doctor Peters' mind wanted to agree but something bothered him about the excitement in Doctor Yamamoto's voice. It sounded as though he had plans for Elise that Arthur knew nothing about.

After the two men hung up Arthur forced that concern aside. Instead he did a quick mental tally of the number of red cards Elise deserved; one for getting too drunk at the club, one for causing injury to her hosts, one for running away from the consequences of those errors, one for failing to find a more self-reliant way to weather the BART strike and lastly, just for good measure, probably one per day going forward just to account for his inconvenience in providing her room and board. She would start work Monday with a five-card deficit -- IF, that is, she decided to continue the game.

He wondered how he would break the news to Doctor Yamamoto if Elise said no.

Arthur spent the next two hours furiously cleaning his entire apartment. He laundered sheets and towels, unfolded the sofa bed and made it up with a feather-down comforter, washed the windows, cleaned the kitchen and the two bathrooms, shoved every stray personal effect into his bedroom closet and vacuumed everywhere.

He realized his sofa bed had never been used before. He could still recall the argument he and his ex-wife had had about whether to pay extra for its luxury mattress option. He had wanted a cheaper version since it was unlikely to be used often, but had lost that battle with her like so many others. Now three years later he was unfolding it for the first time as a reluctant bachelor. It seemed poetic justice that his ex-wife's predilection for expensive bedding was about to be enjoyed by a hot little intern.

"At least the money I spent will finally be appreciated," Arthur chuckled.

Back in San Francisco, Elise was packing her suitcases. She had decided it would be best to leave most of her clothes behind in order to minimize her footprint on Doctor Peters' personal living space. She sorted her warmest clothing into her big suitcase, which would stay at her friends' apartment. Outside the city genuine summer weather awaited her. Only her shorts, miniskirts, underwear, gym clothes, sleepwear, candystriper uniform elements and a few t-shirts went into the carry-on suitcase headed for Doctor Peters' place. She would carry all her toiletries and lotions in her backpack.

Once her bags were organized, Elise showered. After toweling off she slathered her skin with moisturizer from head to toe and pulled on a tiny string-back thong. Then she squeezed into her favorite cutoff jeans, a push-up bra and a small t-shirt with three-quarter sleeves and a long line of buttons descending from its wide neckline. She blow-dried her long auburn hair, put on delicate hoop earrings and stepped up onto some tall cork wedges. Subtle make-up around her eyes and a layer of shimmery lip-gloss completed her outfit.

Just as she was arranging her hair, the Model O chimed again. This time it brought on a smile, but nothing more.

With that, Elise bid her hung-over roommates goodbye, carried her backpack and suitcase downstairs, hailed a cab to the BART station and began her 40-minute ride to the East Bay. Doctor Peters confirmed by text that he would pick her up at the station nearest the lab at 3:30PM.

With only ten minutes to spare, Arthur threw his vacuum cleaner back into its storage cabinet and climbed into his eleven-year-old BMW 540i. All that cleaning had left him a sweaty mess. His sciatica was in total flare-up.

Elise, waiting for him under the curbside awning of the suburban BART station, waved with a beaming grin as his car pulled up. Arthur caught his breath at the sight of her. Her slender legs were entirely exposed, subtly gleaming between her steep cork wedges and cutoff jean shorts. The topmost buttons of her tight shirt appeared un-done, revealing a shadow between her small breasts that could only be the result of a push-up bra. Her navel peeked out amid two inches of bare midriff. With her long hair held back by nothing more than a pair of sunglasses, she looked adorable.

Arthur yanked on the BMW's parking brake and leaned across to open the passenger-side door.

"Hi!" Elise exclaimed.

Arthur climbed out to help load her bags into the trunk. Elise politely resisted and together they carried her two bags clumsily to the rear of his car. By the time Arthur got them loaded and the trunk closed, he and Elise were on the wrong side of each other. She squeezed by him, briefly pressing her little body against his ursine mass. He smiled awkwardly and apologized.

Elise lowered herself into the leather passenger seat of his car. As soon her door was closed she kicked off her wedge sandals, tucked one bare foot up under her opposite thigh and turned to face the driver's side. She leaned back against her door.

Arthur climbed behind the wheel. As they drove out into the direct sunlight, Elise slid her sunglasses down over her eyes. Arthur squinted. He willed himself not to glance at Elise's naked thighs or tiny denim shorts. Out of the corner of his eye he could tell she was watching him. She pulled her long hair forward over one shoulder and began playfully twirling the ends around her fingers.

"I talked to my mom on the way here," Elise announced.

Arthur felt his stomach instantly knot itself into a ball and climb up toward his throat. "You... you did?"

"Yeah, I told her how nice you're being."

"You really talked to her? About me?"

"Yeah. She sure asks lots of questions."

"What, um... what kind of questions?"

"Don't worry Doctor Peters," Elise said with a sly smile, "I remembered our deal. I didn't mention your divorce... or where you live."

"Oh..." Arthur said, feeling his stomach relax slightly. "Thanks."

"Uh-huh. Anyway, she was super grateful when she heard you were taking me in during the strike."

Arthur's head snapped around in surprise. "You told her you're staying with me?!"

"Sure. It made her so happy. She never liked the idea of me living in the City in the first place. She was like: 'Ooh, what a sweetie! Give him a great big kiss for me, okay?'"

Arthur brought the car to a halt at a red light. He stared at Elise, eyes wide with incredulity, and said: "She didn't say that really."

Elise pulled off her sunglasses. Her hazel eyes gazed at Arthur above a smile that became subtly mischievous. Wordlessly she pressed the release button on her seatbelt receiver. She leaned over the center armrest and whispered: "Yeah. She really did."

Then she planted a soft kiss right on Arthur's lips.

He was too stunned to move. His heart did a backflip and his bearded face turned as red as the stop light hanging above the car.

"That's from both of us," Elise purred.

Arthur was frozen. His vision flickered between reality and a time long ago when Sylvia, Elise's mom, had begged him to propose. Sylvia had kissed him like that... so many, many times during those years. A lump choked his throat. His eyes grew misty. Seconds slid by, unnoticed.

"It's green," Elise said.

Arthur awoke from his dream. Elise was all buckled into her seat again. She pointed through the windshield at the traffic signal, which was blazing green. Too abruptly Arthur stepped on the accelerator and released the clutch. The BMW's rear tires chirped and Elise's head bounced against the seatback.

"Sorry," Arthur mumbled. He was completely unmoored. The tenderness of Elise's kiss left a lingering buzz on his lips. His head was swimming.

Three blocks later they pulled up outside the laboratory garage's large commercial roll-up door. Arthur pressed a remote to open it. Inside, next to the spot in which he parked the BMW, there was something long and shark-shaped under a dusty car cover.

"What's under there?" Elise asked as they each extricated a bag from the sedan's trunk.

"Oh, just an old front-engined Porsche," Arthur replied as nonchalantly as he could. "It needs some work."

"Oh."

They entered his apartment through a connecting door. Arthur set Elise's suitcase down beside the unfolded sofa bed in his living room. She doffed her backpack and purse beside it. Arthur poured two glasses of ice water, handed one to Elise and then sat down on a kitchen barstool.

"Make yourself at home," he offered, trying to establish an air of normalcy. "There're some empty drawers in those built-ins if you want to unpack. And help yourself to anything in the kitchen. Later we can order-in for dinner. I, um, unfortunately don't cook too often."

"Thanks Doctor Peters," Elise said with a smile before taking a long sip from her ice water. "I really do appreciate this."

"It's fine, it's fine. Um... listen: I've been running around a lot today, so I'm just going to jump in the shower for a sec, okay? There's a remote for the TV over there and just, you know, help yourself to anything."

"Okay, thanks."

"I'll be right back."

Elise shooed him off toward the master bedroom with another big smile, telling him not to worry.

As soon as Arthur shut the door to his room he slumped against the wall and let out a long sigh, grateful for the privacy. He slid down the wall into a crouch. His eyelids drooped and his hands gathered in front of his bearded face. He could still taste Elise's flavored lip gloss.

Something about that moment in the car with her had made his penis fat with optimism. He was terrified to admit it, but he felt as though Elise had morphed somehow into a kind of mini-Sylvia; returned across decades of time to offer him a second chance.

"Damn," he muttered. It was either a blessing or a curse, he knew not which, but that one kiss had evaporated his contentedness and apathy. Year after year of his wasted adulthood replayed like a movie inside his mind. He felt as though he had been breathed upon by a ghost.

Elise unpacked her small supply of clothes and re-folded them into two empty drawers. She tucked her toiletries away in the half-bath off the living room. Then she kicked off her wedge shoes, hid her empty suitcase beneath the fold-out bed and curled up in the middle of its plush down comforter. It was the first bed she had been on since leaving home eight days ago.

Despite the room's bright lighting she was asleep within five minutes.

When Arthur returned from his shower, wearing dark jeans and an old Tommy Bahama vacation shirt, he found Elise dead asleep. Not wanting to wake her, he dimmed the lights halfway. Then he retrieved a beer from his fridge. He sat down at the kitchen bar and gazed across the room at her peaceful shape.

Elise was lying on her side with her long hair sprawled about. Her arms and bare legs were collected loosely in front of her torso. Her narrow feet spooned each other.

Arthur spent the next few minutes thinking of what to do. For a week now he had been obsessing about Elise; ogling her and fantasizing. All along he had convinced himself that he would never act on his impulses in any material way, and in the back of his mind had been the comforting thought that Elise would never find out. More depressing, but equally reassuring, had been his assumption that Elise would never consider him attractive in return. Now all these assumptions lay in ruins. On both Thursday and Friday Elise had beguiled him into touching her and had made her willingness to go farther obvious. It had been HE who backed away in panic, not her.

Now he understood why; he was still in love with Sylvia. Elise's kiss (or Sylvia's kiss, depending how you looked at it) had clarified that.

And now Elise, with her own mother's blessing, was asleep in his living room. What Sylvia surely could not know was that Elise had a sex toy attached to her clitoris and a newfound love of being spanked. How on Earth, Arthur wondered, was he supposed to deny himself such a gift?

Still, he guessed he had way more to lose than Elise did. He was not married anymore, as he had been during his earlier affair with a younger woman, but he was still Elise's boss. With the critical patents and FDA permits he and Doctor Yamamoto were waiting for being so close to approval and the hoped-for sale of those assets looming in the near future, the last thing in the universe he needed was a sexual harassment claim. That would scuttle everything. Doctor Yamamoto would have no choice but to cut him out of the deal to liability-proof it for future investors. It mattered not what legal nuances might distinguish an intern from an actual employee... especially an intern who just happened to be the love of his life's daughter. It was simply too outrageous.

Arthur's mind returned to the question of Sylvia. Why, after all these years, had she decided to send him her middle daughter?

He finished the last sip of his beer and stood. He quietly put the empty bottle into a recycling bin and opened another.

Italian food, he thought, sounded good. He pulled a paper delivery menu out from under a magnet on the refrigerator and retreated to his bedroom.

An hour later Arthur returned to the living room and sat down on the edge of Elise's bed. He reached over and gently touched her ankle.

"Hey Elise," he whispered, "Wake up. Food's on its way."

Elise stirred and stretched like a cat. She propped herself up on one elbow and brushed her hair back from her face. "Sorry—" she said before being cut off by a wide yawn.

"No worries. I just didn't want you to sleep straight through and miss dinner. You must be hungry."

"Yeah. Starving actually. What time is it?"

"Almost six. I ordered some Italian. Should be here in a few minutes."

"Awesome. Let me just freshen up. Then I'll help you set the table."

Elise swung her legs to the far edge of the bed and stood. Arthur could not help but watch as she tugged her cutoff jeans down out of her petite ass. She ambled to the half-bath barefoot and shut the door.

Arthur stood up and walked to the kitchen. "Will you have a beer with dinner?" he called out.

"Ugh..."Elise groaned inwardly. After last night she shouldn't. But... she was a guest. It was important to be polite and not make Doctor Peters drink alone. She called back through the door: "Okay!"

Arthur opened two beers and stood them on the kitchen's small dinette table. Then he got out cloth napkins, two large plates and some utensils. He set it all down in the middle of the table, then walked to the stereo and turned on an old playlist of classic rock he had created ages ago.

Inside the small washroom Elise regarded her image in the mirror. Her hair was slightly matted and her lipstick was gone. She hated it when her lips looked so dry.

She wanted Doctor Peters to enjoy having her around. The BART strike might take a long time to resolve itself. The least she could do was make herself pleasant to look at. Elise pulled out her cosmetics bag and applied a fresh coat of pink to her lips followed by a thick layer of lip gloss. Then she brushed her hair until it hung straight down her back in a long, wide 'V.' Next she adjusted her t-shirt and bra, undoing one more button on the former and tightening the shoulder straps of the latter to lift her boobs a little higher. She cursed her little A-cup breasts for never allowing her to have any cleavage. Next she looked at her faded jean shorts. They were pretty cute -- her favorites in fact. But she wondered whether Doctor Peters found them too casual. Maybe, she considered, a skirt would be better for dinner. Doctor Peters was hosting her in his home after all.

Elise heard the doorbell ring and guessed it was probably the food arriving. There was no time to run to the living room to pick out a skirt. Instead she pulled an old trick from her teenage summers. She rolled up the stringy fringes of her jeans into little cuffs around her upper thighs. This made them appear less casual. She also unfastened their top button and folded the waistband down once around her hips. Then she refastened it with the top button inside-out. This lowered and tightened the waistband since it now encircled two layers of denim. She pulled the shorts up higher on her slim hips. Due to the tightened waist, they stayed. Elise turned around and admired the way the blue denim hugged her ass. The shorts' new cuffs were snugged up tight against her crotch.

"I hope this doesn't look TOO desperate," Elise fretted.

Doctor Peters called to her through the door, saying the food had arrived. Elise checked her makeup a final time and then opened the door. She walked barefoot to the dinette table where Doctor Peters stood waiting for her.

Elise wished she had her shoes on. Without them she felt especially short in front of Doctor Peters. She complimented the aroma of Italian food and tried to keep her smile casual as he held a chair back for her. Elise felt a twinge of disappointment that he had not looked her up-and-down. If he appreciated her appearance at all he was hiding it well.

The two of them ate heartily and talked. Elise attacked the Caprese salad. She was more circumspect with the pasta, meat sauce and garlic bread. Doctor Peters, by contrast, loaded up on the latter three as was his wont.

Elise recounted the full version of Saturday night's events. When she was done with her story Arthur suggested that she needed to send her friends a written apology. Elise at first assumed he meant via email, but Arthur clarified that he meant an actual handwritten letter.

"There is nothing more sincere," he said, "than a handwritten note. If you want them to forgive you anytime soon, it's the best way."

Elise agreed; though she could not remember the last time anyone she knew had sent or received a real letter. Arthur rolled his eyes and mumbled something about the slow murder of social etiquette by technology.

An hour later the dishes were done and Elise had accepted a second beer. Doctor Peters switched to water and sat down in his leather armchair, which faced the convertible sofa. The open sofa bed was the other natural place to sit, so Elise climbed onto it. She leaned back against the headboard, propped her knees up high with her bare feet planted slightly apart in front of her and took a slow sip from her beer.

Arthur anguished himself trying to avoid the view of Elise's slender thighs. Other than her tiny denim shorts she was naked from the waist down.

"You know," he began, trying to preoccupy his mind with conversation, "I had an interesting chat with Doctor Yamamoto today."

Elise coughed, almost spitting her beer. She felt a moment of total exposure, like when Wile E. Coyote runs off the edge of a cartoon cliff and hangs in midair with his legs still spinning. She wiped her mouth and tried not to look guilty.

"When I told him you would be staying here for a while he didn't seem to have much of an opinion about it," Arthur continued. "But he became surprisingly supportive when I told him about our little Consequence Game. He even volunteered to help award your cards."

Elise winced. She glanced at Doctor Peters, trying to figure out how much he knew about her interactions with the crazy Japanese doctor. She felt her facial expression admitting vast culpability.

"Can you think of any reason why he would so readily embrace that idea?" Doctor Peters continued.

Elise looked away and hid her face behind another long sip from her beer bottle. Then she quietly muttered: "Uh... no?"

Her head drooped. She hated lying to him. If Doctor Yamamoto had told him everything, about catching her masturbating in the bathroom and then installing her clit clock, it would mean her internship was already over. She scratched the paper label on her beer dejectedly with her thumbnail. Inside her head a feminine burst of tears wanted out.

"No reason, huh?" Doctor Peters said, gently stroking his beard. "Okay. Well, anyway, now that you're here, we should discuss a few house rules."

"Okay," Elise responded. She felt a glimmer of hope.

"Please abide them while you're under my roof, okay? I don't want you out drinking all night and bringing home trouble like you did to your other roommates."

"That won't be a problem, Doctor Peters. I promise."

Elise celebrated inside her mind. It seemed Doctor Yamamoto had not revealed her secrets. A relieved smile grew on her face. She took another long pull from her beer to mask it.

"Great. Now, I'm sure I'll think of other stuff once I've had more time to think about it, but for starters there are these:

"1. No guests. 2. No annoying beeps and alarms in the morning. I'll wake you up myself. 3. Please keep your area clean: this living room and the half-bath. That includes converting your bed back into a sofa each morning. You should also help with the dishes. 4. My room is off-limits except for when it's your turn to shower, which you can do while I'm having breakfast. I'll shower after. That will give you extra time to get ready for work. 5. Both doors to this apartment lock automatically. Without a key, you won't be able to get back in. That includes the connecting door between here and the lab. When you go to the lab for work, be prepared to stay there all day. 6. You can stay up as late as you like, watching TV or playing on your laptop or whatever, but please keep the volume down while I'm sleeping.

"In return," Doctor Peters continued, "you can help yourself to whatever food you want, use the phone, the Wifi and so forth. And you'll live rent-free of course, as my guest."

"Thanks, Doctor Peters," Elise replied.

Arthur set aside his water glass and adjusted himself in his chair. Then he said: "I also want to talk about our little Consequence Game. What happened last time... on Friday...you, you seemed to enjoy your first spanking a little too much, didn't you?"

Elise blushed. She took another sip of beer. Eventually she managed to look him in the eye. "Sorry."

"Well... The game's whole point is undermined if you enjoy the consequences. So I've decided to give you a choice. If you want to continue we can, or, and this is important Elise, if you want the game to end, now is your chance. I'd be fine with that. In fact it would be less work for me. Just say so and I'll tell Doctor Yamamoto that it's over."

Elise let her eyes roam Doctor Peters' bearded face. A sudden rush of affection ran through her, followed by guilt. After all the poor decisions she had made, he was allowing her to decide the best way forward -- even offering to go to bat for her against Doctor Yamamoto's wishes.

Elise realized she was much more accustomed authority figures dictating what she should do. Even this internship had been entirely her mother's invention. She felt suddenly abandoned. She hesitated and then said: "I don't... want to quit."

"You like it that much?" Arthur chuckled.

"Well, no I... I wouldn't want it to go on forever but... maybe just a little while longer?"

Elise felt her face turn pinker. She had no idea what she was doing.

"I mean," she continued, now thinking aloud, "that thing on Friday was really scary at first, but then... I learned, like, a whole new side of myself. I think... I think you should teach me more. I need it."

Arthur tipped his head back against the easy-chair and groaned melodramatically. After a moment he said: "You know you're putting me at risk of a heart attack, don't you?"

Elise met his gaze. Her shy smile returned and she took another sip of beer. She wanted Doctor Peters to continue the game and enjoy having her around but she worried that he did not take her seriously. She imagined that he just considered her a liability: a useless, troublesome little girl.

Elise lowered her beer and tried to show Doctor Peters that she could be mature and coy. She extended her legs until they were flat atop the bedspread, then gave him a smoldering look and asked: "How many red cards do I have now, Doctor Peters?"

Arthur hesitated, his gaze wandering down Elise's bare legs in an obvious way. Was she taunting him or was it just his imagination? Either way, it was working. He straightened his posture. His libido jumped to the fore and the old gravitas returned to his voice: "Five."

"Five?!" Elise gasped. "No kidding? Really!?"

"Yes, and that's being generous. You've gotten yourself into a lot of mischief this week. I should give you more after hearing that story about last night."

"But..."

"Shh," Arthur cut her off with a raised finger. His mood had flipped. "I don't want to hear a bunch of excuses. We're going to continue the game and there will be some new protocols. It'll be more work for me... but since you want my guidance, you should appreciate that I don't do things in half-measures."

Elise could not put her finger on why, but she felt relief that Doctor Peters was taking command again. She looked at him attentively and asked, "Prepare myself for what?"

"I haven't decided yet. I'm going to sleep on it. But together we're going to evolve you into a much more mature girl."

This wording choice slowly percolated through Elise's mind. She finished the last two swallows of her beer and set the empty bottle down on the small table next to her sofa bed.

The conversation was over. Arthur stood up and stretched. He rubbed his lower back where the pain of his sciatica emanated. Then he glanced at Elise's fold-out bed and asked: "In the meantime, are you comfortable enough for the night?"

"Uh-huh," Elise intoned. "Very comfortable. Thank you. I appreciate you taking such good care of me, Doctor Peters."

"Good. I'll give you 'til the end of tomorrow to earn your way out of those red cards. But first you should write that letter."

"Sure, Doctor Peters, I will. And speaking of earning cards... How's your back? You look like you're in pain."

"Oh, I just get a little sciatica from time to time."

"Sciatica, huh? It goes down your legs?"

"Yup."

Elise smiled: "I've got a trick for that, you know. People say it really works. You might even consider it worthy of a white card."

"Go on."

"It's a pressure-point technique I learned in PT school."

"Is it going to give me a heart attack?"

"No, I'm being serious. I can help you."

"Okay. Well, so... what would I have to do?"

"Nothing. Just go and change into a towel. Then lie down here." Elise gestured with a sweep of her hand.

"Oh, just that?"

"Come on, PLEASE?" Elise begged. "I've got to earn my good cards somehow. I'm actually a certified practitioner you know."

"I remember," Arthur stalled for a moment. His lower back really did feel uncomfortable. A little relief, no matter how temporary, would definitely improve his sleep. "Okay," he said.

"Cool," Elise grinned. "Where can I find an extra beach towel or something like that? I don't want to get massage oil all over this nice bed."

Arthur's curiosity perked up at the mention of oil. He directed her to a little storage closet where he kept extra stuff like folding chairs and beach towels. Then he retreated to his room, stripped naked and wrapped a fresh white cotton towel around his waist. When he returned to the living room, Elise had pulled the comforter off her bed and spread two giant towels over the bottom sheet.

"Okay Doctor Peters," she grinned, "Just lie down an' get comfy. I'll be right back."

Elise disappeared into the half bath to retrieve a bottle of massage oil form her backpack. Arthur crawled onto the fold-out bed as gracefully as a man his size could wearing only a small towel. He sprawled across the double bed face down and waited.

He felt the bed shift when Elise climbed aboard. She knelt beside his waist and popped open the spout of a squeeze-bottle.

"Sorry for the cold," she said, upturning the bottle to pour a stream of clear lotion onto Arthur's back. "It'll warm right up."

The next thing Arthur felt was a gentle turning-down of his towel to expose his tailbone. He shifted his legs, but resisted the urge to protest. Then Elise's small hands were all over him, smearing oil every which way. Arthur let out a long sigh and closed his eyes. It felt wonderful to have her ministering to his muscles again. She really did know exactly how to touch him.

As Elise worked on his broad back, layers of stress gradually erased themselves from his body and were replaced by a deep sense of calm and relaxation. He forgot all about Sylvia... and his wasted decades.

"God," he whispered about ten minutes later, "this really is nice."

Elise had secured her hair up into a coiled pile atop her head and pushed back the sleeves of her shirt. She was up to her elbows in massage oil. She used the blades of both forearms to iron out the stubborn lumps in Arthur's musculature. Occasionally she locked her arms straight and centered her shoulders above the pads of her thumbs. This helped her press deep into pressure points along either side of Arthur's lower vertebrae and tailbone. Moans emanated from her prone patient.

After twenty minutes she stopped. Arthur felt the mattress shift as Elise crab-walked sideways on her knees. Then her warm, smooth thighs landed across his calves, straddling him. A stream of fresh oil coated the backs of his legs, followed almost immediately by Elise's hands sliding in unison from his knees up to the top of each femur and back down again. An irresistible tingle of excitement ran through his groin.

Elise stroked his muscular thighs in sync using both hands. Arthur felt like he was being bathed in oil. Every time her hands slid up to the top of his legs, his penis tingled. It was growing, and he did not want it to stop. She soon began working on each thigh separately, squeezing down on his muscles with both hands. Her fingertips set off all sorts of ticklish sensations, especially when she reached his upper thigh. She was altogether ignoring the boundary of his towel. Oil ran everywhere. Arthur felt his testicles shift and tighten. Her hands ventured closer and closer on each upward journey but never quite touched him there. Nevertheless his erection was soon completely full. It lay trapped painfully to one side, crushed between the bed and his pelvis.

After about ten minutes Elise whispered behind him: "Okay Doctor Peters, time to roll over."

Arthur felt her rise off his calves. Her hands were no longer touching him. She was waiting.

"Uhhh..." Arthur stalled, aware that the little white towel had no hope of concealing the engorgement of his penis.

"Don't be embarrassed," Elise said softly. "You won't be the first guy I've seen."

"Elise..." Arthur stalled for time again, "I think I feel better already. You don't have to—"

"Come on, Doctor Peters. I'm just trying to make you feel better. Don't be so shy." She punctuated her request with a playful tug on his towel.

His manhood thusly challenged, Arthur propped himself up onto his elbows and began to roll over. His little towel was overlapped and tucked into itself up front, but his hips' girth meant a gap opened between the towels' two ends in front of his left thigh. As soon he turned belly-up his cock sprang free and swung in an arc toward his waist. It hung there in midair, shadowing his belly.

Elise's cute mouth became a shiny 'O' of pink lipstick. Her oily hands clenched and unclenched in the air above his knees.

"There," Arthur said matter-of-factly, "Now you've seen it." He pulled the towel out from under himself and draped it across his pelvis to restore some semblance of decorum.

Elise was not ready to talk. She devoted a dozen seconds to staring at the prominently tented towel. She was blinking rapidly, having just realized that she was younger and less experienced than she thought.

"Uh..." she muttered softly.

Arthur was enjoying the look on her face. "You were saying?" he taunted her.

Elise finally broke her stare and looked up at Arthur. Her jaw opened to speak, but instead shifted from side to side. A nervous laugh commingled itself with her voice. Finally she began: "You, uh... you really... uh..."

Arthur chuckled. He lay back and tucked one hand behind his head.

"Sorry, um..." Elise continued, looking back down at his bulge. "But seriously, how are you not in a zoo?"

Arthur laughed sharply, then demurred: "Oh be quiet."

Elise chuckled, pleased with her little joke. She was still astride his lower legs. Her hands were on her hips now and her head was shaking as if regarding a naughty schoolboy. Their brief laughter had removed most of the tension from the air. Each had breached the barrier of nudity now. Elise felt her playful confidence and curiosity return. Her smile widened.

"So tell me, Doctor Hung -- I mean Doctor Peters," she smirked. "How long has it been since your last... confession?"

Arthur shrugged, but he was grinning.

"Since your divorce?" Elise guessed.

"No, no. Well... not quite that long."

"But no serious girlfriends, huh?"

"I guess it's been a while, yeah."

"That's a shame... If only the local bluehairs knew what they were missing!"

Arthur belly-laughed before amiably protesting: "That's a bit harsh! I'm not THAT old."

"Well? How old are you?"

"Forty five."

"For real?"

"No, not really. I'm, um... let's see... nearly fifty one I guess."

"Huh."

"Yup. Too old for you by a long shot."

"Oh! Uh, no..." Elise blushed again. "That's not what I meant Doctor Peters. Obviously I know you don't...or wouldn't..."

Elise looked away and smiled quietly. Her cheeks became more and more pink the longer the silence drew out between them. In an attempt to change the subject, she grabbed the bottle of massage oil, poured some into her palms and squirted a bit onto each of Arthur's quads. Then she set the bottle aside and paused.

She glanced furtively at shape of his penis. It was so obvious under the towel. Despite herself she giggled as she began to massage his quadriceps.

"What's so funny?" Arthur asked.

"Nothing... it's just... I'm not used to the whole, you know, caveman look. Girls my age... they'd think you're being rude. A little manscaping is, you know..."

"A little what?"

Elise smeared the oil into his thighs. "Manscaping," she repeated. "Like, haven't you ever shaved your um... your privates?"

"No!"

"Oh Doctor Peters, you really have been under a rock all these years haven't you?"

"Is that what everyone does now?"

"Yeah. It's not just for girls anymore."

"Oh."

Elise worked her oily hands into his thigh muscles.

Arthur could not help but blush at the eroticism of Elise stroking his legs with oil while talking about his cock. The long lump under his towel bounced.

Elise tilted her head to one side and gazed at his body. From Arthur's vantage, the way she was leaning over allowed him to see down the front of her shirt. Her breasts were too small to create cleavage normally, even with an aggressive push-up bra, but squashed together between her arms as she worked on him they became kissing domes of flesh.

Her big hazel eyes suddenly glanced up at him.

Doctor Peters realized he had been caught her staring at her boobs. The blush deepened on his face.

Elise said nothing, but she re-doubled the intensity of her slippery grip, sliding both hands up to the top of his legs.

"You know," she said with a deviant purr, "if you'd like, I could shave you."

Arthur gasped aloud.

Elise tried to hide her wide grin. "Hey, I'm only trying to help."

"Absolutely not!"

"You've really never done it before?"

"You mean shaved myself? No."

"Too bad..." Elise shrugged playfully. "Your whole... you know, package, would look so much more attractive if you did."

"This is totally inappropriate Elise."

"I'd do it for another white card. That's all I meant."

Arthur looked at her face and waivered for a moment. Then he said: "Well, certainly that would be beyond your normal duties, yes. So, IF it was appropriate then I suppose it would be worth a white card. But it's not, so let's drop it. Please."

"Oh, but you would love it..." Elise countered with a mischievous cast in her eye. It was the same look she had given him in the car. "I mean really..."

Arthur fell silent, mesmerized by her eyes. They looked huge and playful. His genitals throbbed.

"I'd do such a good job," Elise purred up at him. "You won't even feel it. No razor burn or anything."

Arthur covered his face with both hands to disrupt her spell-casting gaze. Conflicting impulses coursed through him. His penis was taut, aching to be touched. It would feel amazing. Plus, she still had four red cards to offset... why shouldn't he let her earn another white one??.... 'BECAUSE IT'S SO FUCKING WRONG!!' his brain screamed.

Elise's oily hands slipped beneath his towel. Arthur felt them stop just astride his crotch. She gently scratched his skin. His penis became a diamond.

"My God you're evil." he whispered.

"Is that a yes?"

After a pause he exhaled a slow, resigned: "Damn it."

"Yea!" Elise squealed, removing her hands. She climbed off the bed and trotted barefoot to the half-bath to fetch her shaving gear.

Arthur listened as Elise then went to the kitchen and ran the sink tap. In little more than a minute she returned to the bed holding a stainless bowl of hot water, a can of shave gel and her round-headed Lady Gillette razor. She stood near his feet and nudged them apart with her knee.

"You'll need to spread your legs a little if I'm gonna fit between them, Doctor Peters."

Arthur cautiously widened his legs. Elise climbed between them and knelt. She set the steaming water bowl, gel tube and razor down next to him. Then she gently pulled his towel aside.

Arthur's erection twitched. Elise looked it over as she re-tied the knot holding her hair atop of her head. She dipped her fingertips into the water.

Arthur went wide-eyed.

Elise squirted a blob of shave gel onto her damp fingers and rubbed her hands together until it lathered. With a final impish glance at Doctor Peters' face, she smeared the lather onto his balls and all around the lower half of his shaft.

Arthur's head rolled sideways. He let out a moan. It was the most glorious feeling he had experienced in ages.

Elise's hands smoothly circled under his balls. Foam leaked out between her delicate fingers.

"Is it okay so far?" she whispered.

An affirmative grunt was all Arthur could manage.

Elise studied his genitals closely. She had never had a cock this big in her hands before; not by some margin. Its girth was impossible to encircle one-handed; she couldn't even get close. As she worked the lather into his skin, she noticed the weight of his testicles inside their slippery sack. Each one felt like a peeled chicken egg. But it was the head of Doctor Peters' penis that impressed her most. His exposed glans formed a wide beret of purple flesh with a circumferential ridge twice as prominent as any she had ever seen. It gave his whole intimidating organ a halo that made her insides quiver.

"What the hell would this feel like inside me?" Elise thought to herself. Beneath her little cotton thong a part of her awoke that wanted to find out. She bent closer. Her hands relished the warmth of tense engorgement beneath his skin. She heard Doctor Peters moan again as her hands rose halfway up his shaft. She had to consciously resist the urge to stroke his penis all the way up to its head. She wanted him to enjoy it, after all, but she did not want appear slutty. She softened her grip and slowly slid her hands back down his shaft. As she did so, Elise let out a long sigh, carefully aiming her lips to blow a stream of warm air at his frenulum.

Doctor Peters' hips flexed in response.

Elise decided he was ready to be shaved. She withdrew her hands and dipped them in the water bowl to rinse off. Then she lifted her little razor and got to work.

Arthur clenched his eyes shut when her hands returned. He felt her nudge his scrotum first one way and then another. The touch of her razor was very gentle; a faint licking sensation working its way around his balls. She kept swishing the razor in the water bowl to clear its blades of hair. Soon she was working under his sack, clear-cutting his taint. Then she smeared fresh lather all around the trunk of his cock and began carefully stroking the razor up from below.

Elise angled his cock different ways and watched closely to make sure she didn't nick any of his raised vascular ridges. When she aimed his penis straight down to shave its top side, Arthur caught his breath. The extra tension this position involved was divine.

He opened his eyes and looked down. Elise was leaning in close, directly over his penis. He felt outrageously stiff. Slick fingertips brushed across his frenulum. He yelped as his cock jumped from her hands and smacked her chin.

"Oh! Sorry!" Elise blurted in startled surprise. She caught hold of his cock again and looked up at him with a worried expression. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine." Arthur answered breathlessly. His heart was racing.

Less than five minutes later, Elise announced she was done. She patted him dry with the little white towel.

Arthur stared down, crestfallen that the experience was over so soon. He moved a hand to his penis and adjusted it this way and that, reviewing her work. She had left a large patch of pubic hair above his penis, but everywhere else was shaved. Even with residual lather and loose hair scattered around, Arthur recognized that his genitals looked younger, cleaner and amazingly bigger.

"You should probably go rinse off," Elise suggested as she clambered off the bed carrying the stainless steel bowl. "You're still covered in oil. I'll clean up out here."

Arthur sat up and re-covered his erection with the towel. "Thanks," he said, "I think."

Elise canted her slender hips to one side and smirked at him: "So? Do I get two cards?"

Arthur let his gaze slide down Elise's tight body and back up again, then answered: "Yeah, two. And thanks for the massage. My back really does feel better."

An awkward silence stretched out between them. Elise's playful confidence melted into embarrassment. She could not believe what she had just done with Doctor Peters. She spun on her heel and walked to the half-bath. When she got inside she shut the door.

Arthur heard the sink come on. He stood and walked back to his room. The darkening sky of evening showed through his window. A familiar, unsatisfied ache lingered inside his groin.

While Doctor Peters was starting his shower, Elise scrubbed the massage oil, shaving cream and pubic hair from her hands and rinsed out the steel bowl and her razor. Then she washed her face and brushed her teeth. Once done with all that, she stooped to retrieve the big pump bottle of skin lotion from her backpack and carried it out to the living room.

She hoped to tuck herself into bed before Doctor Peters returned from his shower. But first she had to clear away the beach towels, put the down comforter back onto her bed and moisturize.

After remaking her bed, she went to her clothing drawers to pick out some sleepwear; little grey cotton boyshorts and a thin white tank top.

She laid them out on the bed and then quickly unbuttoned her denim cutoffs. She pushed them, along with her thong, down to the floor. Then she removed her shirt and detached her bra.

Once naked, she pumped a creamy blob of skin lotion into each palm and began smearing it all over her legs. Then she did her arms, shoulders and neck, carefully working the lotion under her hair. She slathered more lotion up and down her torso. As she smeared the buttery cream onto her breasts, she noticed that her nipples were ripe. Not wanting to take too much time, she quickly pumped another squirt of lotion into each hand and caressed the load all over her lower back and butt.

Satisfied, Elise pulled on the stretchy little boyshorts. Then she threaded her arms through the tank top and pulled it down over her head. It was cropped well above her flat stomach and waist-chain. Both garments clung to her like a second skin.

Elise let down her hair. She placed the lotion bottle on her bedside table and walked to the wall to switch off the room's main lights.

Only the light in the hallway that led to the master bedroom remained on. Elise crawled into bed and dragged the comforter up to her chin. Her head found the center of a good pillow and she closed her eyes. She felt safe. Her muscles began to relax. After so many days on her friend's couch it was wonderful to be in such a comfortable bed.

Elise giggled as she recalled shaving Doctor Peters. The memory of his erection preoccupied her mind's eye. Thinking about it made her blush. A faint tingle ran from her nipples down to her genitals.

'God I've been such a tease to him today,' Elise mused. 'I hope he's finishing himself off in the shower.'

The thought of Doctor Peters masturbating was enough to kindle her own libido. She slid one hand beneath her tiny shorts and gently circled her clit. Touching the Model O made her realize it had not done its thing for quite some time. It was likely to be close to another chiming.

Elise rolled onto her back and bit her lower lip. She rocked the little metal torus between her fingers, anticipating its chimes with a sudden breathless craving. She spread her legs and pulled her knees up high, lifting the covers. Sure enough, in less than a minute the device began to ring. Its delicate chimes made her clitoris sing with pleasure. Elise twirled it frantically, her mouth agape at the intensity of joy being delivered.

Eyes tight shut, she pictured Doctor Peters' penis in front of her again, swollen with the pressure of his long-deferred lust. The urgency of this image made her voice box squeal. She shoved another hand beneath her shorts and dug two fingers into her vagina. Her inner wetness was extreme. Within moments Elise arched her back and sucked in a lungful of air. She was shocked by the proximity of her own climax.

But the Model O finished chiming, rudely interrupting her flow. Elise grunted and thrashed beneath the comforter, trying to finish. But her hands felt boring without that delicious mechanical accompaniment.

Frustrated, she pushed the boyshorts down past her knees and reached for the bottle of skin lotion. She pumped a big squirt across her left hand and returned it to her pouting labia. She closed her eyes and smeared the lubricant all over her genitals, from her clit to her anus. She concentrated on an imaginary view of Doctor Peters in the shower -- his big hands playing with that freshly-shaved erection.

It worked. The rising arc of her arousal restored itself. Elise relaxed into her groove again: legs apart, shoulders shrugged forward and face mewing at the ceiling.

Meanwhile, Doctor Peters had finished his shower and brushed his teeth. He was clean and naked. The darkness outside his bedroom window was total. It was 9:30PM.

He wanted to see Elise one more time before bed, so he pulled on some thin sweatpants and opened his bedroom door.

He was surprised to see the living room so dark. His mp3 playlist was still running quietly on the stereo. He crept down the short carpeted hallway and peeked around the corner toward Elise's bed. In the faint light he discerned a tented shape. The puffy comforter was aloft between her knees.

Arthur abruptly raised the dimmer on the main lights and walked into the room. Elise jerked upright and then twisted away from him. The dirty side of Doctor Peters' mind guessed exactly what she had been doing.

Beneath Arthur's sweatpants, his penis flopped loosely from side-to-side as he walked across the room. Elise eyed him closely. He stopped in front of the bookcase and began shutting down the music.

"Are you going to sleep?" he asked as casually as he could.

"What?" Elise whispered, pretending to be drowsier than she was.

"It's okay. I just came in to say good night."

Elise shifted beneath the covers. She was trying, unsuccessfully, to find her shorts.

Arthur walked up the edge of the sofa bed and stared down at her face. She stopped moving.

"God you're pretty," he whispered. "You know that?"

Elise shook her head. She had been at the threshold of orgasm again. It was difficult to relinquish such an intense level of arousal, especially now -- lying there beneath Doctor Peters' gaze with lotion smeared all over her sex. It was just too fucking erotic. She had been masturbating about him. She had imagined him touching her. Now, here he was, NOT touching her. Not even looking like he wanted to. He was just standing there, unaware that her pussy was naked, lubed and pining for him beneath the covers.

Elise lowered her eyes to the front of Arthur's sweats. The outline of his cock was clearly discernable.

"Doctor Peters?" she began.

"Yeah?" he whispered.

"Did you moisturize?"

"What?"

"You need some lotion... where I shaved you."

"Uh... No, I... I'm sure I'll be fine."

Elise looked up into his face and tried to make her expression anxious and pleading. "Well, you should. Otherwise it's gonna hurt in the morning. Razor burn."

Arthur said nothing. He was lost in the beauty of her recumbent face surrounded by all that auburn hair.

Elise pushed the comforter down to her waist and raised herself up onto one elbow. Her long tresses draped to the white sheets in disarray. Very casually, she traced two fingers along her waist chain, across her flat stomach and up to her right breast. Her nipples were prominent under the thin tank top. She peered at Doctor Peters through her loose forelocks, watching his reaction as she pinched her right nipple through the shirt and pulled. Her subtle gasp punctuated the tease.

No words could explain what Arthur felt. His penis rolled over and engorged itself.

She noticed the movement beneath his sweats and smiled. The opportunity to see and feel his cock again was present.

"Come on," Elise said while reaching for her lotion bottle. "I'll do it for you."

"Jesus Elise, no!" Arthur snapped.

Elise brought the plastic pump bottle to her chest and grinned. "Relax, Doctor Peters. The best part of shaving is the lotion afterwards."

Arthur's erection was by then uncontrollably obvious. He had neither the courage to accept her offer nor the conviction to walk away. He just stood there, staring.

Before he could react, Elise reached over and pulled his sweatpants straight down. His cock sprang free and swayed in the air between them.

Arthur could not move.

Elise rolled onto her back and shuffled her body around until she was under him. The comforter slipped to the floor.

Arthur's eyes bulged at the sight of her nude body. It gleamed damply under the lights as if she were some otherworldly nymph. The contours of her waxed outer labia were smooth and pale. Between them her tantalizingly delicate inner petals glistened pink.

Elise took hold of his cock with two slippery hands.

His voice panicked: "HhunNo! Mm-mm!!"

"Hush," Elise whispered as innocently as she could: "This will only take a few minutes. Then you'll have a good night's sleep."

Arthur inhaled sharply, staring straight down as her slender hands smeared moisturizer back and forth along his shaft. "But... But... What about—?"

"It's okay, Doctor Peters. I meant to include this with your shave."

Arthur's shoulders sagged and his head rolled back. He let out a guttural, defeated moan as Elise's greased hands caressed his cock. It felt exquisite.

Now sure of his surrender, Elise stared up at the tense phallus above her face. Its underside was beautifully long and thick... and veiny. His freshly shaved balls hung above her forehead. She took a deep breath to calm her pounding heart rate and concentrated on smearing the lotion back and forth, enjoying the feel of his swollen shaft.

Moisturizer was going everywhere. Drops of it leaked out between her fingers and fell onto her face.

Arthur groaned and pumped his hips forward. Elise slid her hands in unison down his full length. Then she moved one hand to his scrotum and swirled her slippery fingers around it. She kept her other hand on his penis, pumping him back and forth. Elise could hear him gasping somewhere above her but she could not see his face. A wide cock was obstructing her view.

Arthur looked down again. Elise's skinny body lay sprawled before him, naked except for the flimsy tank top. Her slender legs were bent apart and slack. Her small, nearly hairless mound was right there. He could see that it was wet. As her hands busily pleasured his cock, he could not resist the urge to touch her.

The final barrier of resistance in Arthur's mind finally cracked. He bent forward and grabbed Elise's crotch, pressing her into the mattress. His other hand pulled up her shirt and pawed her small breasts. One of his big fingers found its way into her humid cunt.

Elise whined loudly.

Arthur hooked a second finger deep inside her and began to gyrate his palm atop her clit.

Elise exhaled a whimpering, eager plea. His touch, at last, was driving her crazy.

Arthur leaned farther over her supine body. His phallus, embraced within her busy hands, swung close to her face. She felt her ribcage being squeezed under the weight of his left hand.

Her breathing became shallow and irregular. Her nipples tingled wantonly.

"Oh, Doctor Peters," she wheezed, suddenly out of breath and claustrophobic beneath him.

"Fuck you are so wet!" he answered.

Elise bucked her hips against his hand. Her mouth was parted and trembling. She lost track of what her hands were doing.

The Model O began to chime.

Elise's body arched up off the mattress in a silent scream as if she were being electrocuted. She let go of Arthur's cock and suddenly grabbed his hips. She lifted herself to him, pressing her face to his crotch. His genitals became all she could see or smell.

Her climax burst.

Arthur hooked his left arm under her and tried to lift her off the mattress while the fingers of his right hand thrust madly inside her vagina.

Elise writhed as she came. It was all Arthur could do to hang on to her. Her girlish moans vibrated against his groin.

Amidst the crashing waves of her own orgasm, Elise felt Doctor Peter's rigid phallus sliding all over her face. Cock-scented lotion permeated her breathing. Testicles smeared her forehead. His glans throbbed against her cheek and lips.

The torus on her clit chimed on. She widened her mouth to scream.

His cock pushed in.

"Oh God!" Arthur yelled.

Elise squeezed her arms around his hips, feeling every detail of his cockhead as it filled her mouth. She swirled her tongue and sucked as hard as she knew how. His penis was warm and smooth, but too fat to take any deeper. Elise moaned, realizing how badly she wanted his cum.

Arthur's voice cracked, high and desperate.

Without warning he fell forward onto the bed with a crash. He landed beside Elise and his cock pressed further into her face, overstuffing her palette and forcing her jaw wider.

His hips jerked repeatedly as he came.

"Nnngkth!" Elise gagged as semen gushed past her epiglottis.

Instinctively she began to swallow and cough, trying to keep the copious pulses out of her airway.

Arthur clamped his right hand on the back of her skull and yelled in surprise. Elise felt more cock slide in through her outstretched lips. The overwhelming pressure of it forced her throat wide.

Doctor Peters had so much pent-up semen inside of him that Elise nearly drowned. It was more cum than she ever dreamed possible. Her mouth overflowed. Saliva and semen burst from her lips and ran into her hair and eyes.

Arthur was having an epiphany. No sensation compared to this. His eyes rolled back into his head. He felt every spurt of ejaculation being met by a squeezing swallow. Elise's throat felt like a slippery noose tightening repeatedly around his cockhead.

"Gaah!" he screamed animalisticly, "Fuckn' minx!"

Mid-spasm he rolled to his side, keeping her head clasped firmly to his erupting cock. She made wet, gurgling sounds around him.

Arthur yanked her slender torso closer and buried his face between her legs. He sucked her ringed clit into his mouth and shivered it side-to-side.

Elise tried to wail in response but her mouth was too full. A brief laryngeal vibration on his cockhead was all she managed.

Eventually Doctor Peters' climax faded and his right hand released her head.

Elise immediately twisted free and gasped for air. His slimy, softening cock flopped sideways. She pushed his bearded face away from her clit. It was far too sensitive just then.

Arthur rolled onto his back and let out a long, gratified exhalation. A shiver ran through him as dopamine flooded every extremity of his nervous system. He had not felt anywhere near this good in years.

Elise spluttered and coughed into her hand. Her face was awash in cum. Auburn hair clung to her cheeks in goopy strands.

She got up and ran to the bathroom.

Doctor Peters gradually climbed off the bed and stood. He was delirious. As he pulled his sweatpants up from his ankles he almost tumbled into the bookcase. His mind was a swirl of giddy wonder.

'Holy shit that was good!' he thought, 'My God! How did that just happen? What the hell am I supposed to do now?'

He could see Elise standing before the bathroom sink. She was washing her face. She looked tiny.

Arthur finally managed to stand up straight. He walked to the bathroom door and leaned one hand tentatively against the frame.

"Are you okay?" he asked.

Elise turned off the faucet and grabbed a towel. She glanced at him between blotting her face dry. She did not appear ready to say anything.

"I'm sorry," Arthur continued. "That... shouldn't have happened."

"It's okay," Elise muttered shakily, still not quite trusting her voice. "I, um... I kinda wanted it to."

"But..." Arthur stammered.

"It was fun."

"Yeah, but..."

Elise laid the towel over the sink rail to dry and stepped toward him. She placed a finger to his lips and whispered: "Shhh. Just go to bed. You can... be nice to me tomorrow."

Arthur backed away. He scratched his head and looked at Elise with a mystified yet relieved expression. He had expected her to be furious.

Elise slipped past him and walked to the sofa bed. She lifted the feather-down comforter up from the floor and dragged it over herself as she climbed in. She lay her head down on a pillow and rolled away from him.

Arthur exhaled slowly.

"Goodnight Doctor Peters," Elise said.

"Okay, um. Goodnight Elise," Arthur mumbled.

She sighed contentedly. Arthur slowly realized he had been dismissed from the room. He walked to the dimmer switch and turned the main lights off, leaving only the soft glow of the few red LED nightlights that were plugged into outlets around the room. He stole a final glance at Elise's bed, then ambled down the short hallway to his room and shut the door.

Elise closed her eyes and tried to fall asleep. The passageways inside her head felt like they were still clogged with semen. She was not sure if she could sleep with that smell and taste coloring her every breath. It was not a bad taste, really. Just strong. She tried to think of other things.

Maybe it was the two beers, but more likely it was her body's lack of sleep and her overwhelming delight at being in the comfort of a real bed, but in any case she dozed off in just a few minutes. Her dreams, however, became a recurring loop of abstract experiences involving Doctor Peters' slippery cum. She dreamed of cum in her hair, cum on her shoes, cum on her food, cum in her water bottle. It was inescapable. Each time she tried to wipe it off, it appeared somewhere else. She even dreamed of a party where someone handed her a mirror and a straw. There were four white lines of cum on the mirror and she had to snort them through her nose in front of everyone. In all these vignettes she never escaped the impression that the semen surrounding her was all from Doctor Peters. And it was all for her.

**Tease to Please Ch. 08**

 **Monday June 10, 2013**
Elise woke up just after 5:00AM. She propped herself up on one elbow and looked around. It took a few seconds to get her bearings. The red LED nightlights scattered along the baseboards cast a stealthy glow around Doctor Peters' living room. So many changes had occurred in the prior twenty-four hours that it was difficult to remember them all, but the faint smell of dried semen in her hair soon brought everything into focus.

Sleep had erased the last remnants of her Sunday hangover. She ran one hand through her sticky forelocks and reflected on her situation; her bed was cozy, she felt safe, Doctor Peters was sleeping just down the hall. She wondered what he might be dreaming about and giggled quietly. She had been such a tease to him all week. The poor man, she supposed, had probably been suffering from a horrendous case of blue-balls. No wonder he had finally cracked and accepted her offer of relief. It was, Elise reassured herself, the very least she ought to be doing for him.

And besides, it had been so much fun!

Elise flopped backwards onto her pillow. She stared at the ceiling and recalled Doctor Peters grunting and cursing in response to her touch. Slowly, without really thinking about it, she began to fondle her clitoris. The Model O held it out like a chewy gumball. A gentle twirl of her finger around the metal torus made her body respond immediately.

A minute later Elise's back was arched into the warm joy of a fantasy. Her eyes were closed. She had one hand up under her tank top, pulling on her nipples. Her other hand was busy administering a complex rhythm of inputs at her crotch.

The Model O began to chime just as Elise hoped it would. She tucked two fingers into herself while grinding her collared clit with her palm. Her head rolled to one side. Messy strands of auburn hair fell over her brow. The twelve high-pitched 'tings' of the Model O were too quiet to be heard above the down comforter, but her clit responded to each one loud and clear.

After the final chime a soft, anticipatory moan escaped Elise's vocal chords. She blurred her fingers faster and faster, recalling the urgency with which Doctor Peters had ejaculated inside her mouth. Slippery dampness surged through the walls of her vagina. Her nipples stood taut and proud. Her brows furrowed together. One memory played particularly brightly in her mind: that of Doctor Peters' big hand clutching the back of her head as he came, confessing a desperate need he would otherwise never admit.

Warmth, wetness and soft contractions embraced her buried fingers. Her clit felt like it was quivering. A few moments later the Model O began a second round of chiming.

"Yessssss!" Elise hissed, bucking her pelvis as she came. Her toes curled with ecstasy.

It was a short, sharp orgasm. Enough to make her flip onto her side and groan, but it was over too soon. It left her body feeling empty and very awake.

Someone else's skin against her own – an embrace. That's what she needed now.

Elise propped herself up on one arm again and peeled back the covers. She looked down over her lean figure. Her hand returned to her crotch and began to tickle her clit again. She rocked the Model O from side to side.

She slid her feet over the edge of the bed in the direction of Doctor Peters' room. Then she stopped.

"No... that's crazy," she scolded herself. "I can't do that to him."

Elise lay back down and pulled the covers up. She closed her eyes and tried to calm down. She noticed she could hear the big doctor snoring peacefully in his bedroom. It made her smile. She worked her head deeper into the pillow and sighed.

She was too aroused to sleep however. She wanted to wash her hair and begin her day. But the only shower was in Doctor Peters' room. She would have to wait until he awoke.

'Exercise... that's the other thing I need,' Elise realized.

She rose to her feet and hunted around until she found her grey cotton 'cheekster' shorts on the floor at the foot of the sofa bed. She stepped into them and pulled them up onto her naked hips. As quietly as she could, she transformed her bed back into a sofa and put all its leather cushions back in place. Then she grabbed her cross-trainers from her clothing drawer, laced them on and retrieved a towel from the half-bath.

She crept to the doorway that connected the apartment to Doctor Peters' office in the laboratory. She used the towel as a wedge to prevent the door from locking behind her. She found the main light switch in the office and then climbed onto the stationary exercise bike. After selecting the 'Alpine Ascent' program that Doctor Peters had shown her on Thursday, she began her workout.

Forty-five minutes later Elise was drenched in sweat and breathing hard. Constantly spinning the bike's pedals at over seventy rpm had kept the Model O fairly active but she found that by focusing her mind on the effort of her workout instead of sex, she was able to power-through without becoming uncontrollably distracted. The combination of exercise and stimulation felt great, actually.

Her mind became refreshed and alert. Her thin clothes became patchy with sweat. Her long hair swung freely behind her in a ragged ponytail. The endorphin high from sustaining an elevated heart rate was something she had missed these past few days. It felt marvelous to be training her body again.

At the bike's request, Elise rose up onto her feet for one last virtual hill climb. The muscles in her lean legs flexed rhythmically beneath smooth, wet skin. The miniature shorts rode high. She was panting and aglow.

"Elise?" Doctor Peters interrupted. He was holding the connecting door ajar, wearing a large bathrobe that was tied securely at the waist. His hair was a thick, dark tangle.

"Oh, hi Doctor Peters!" Elise answered without missing a beat on the bike. "I hope you don't (pant) mind. I got up early (pant)... and decided to work-out."

"Well... that's okay. But don't be too much longer... I need you to be done showering soon so I can get ready for work too."

"Almost finished! (pant)...I'll be right there."

Arthur looked Elise over before retreating to the kitchen. He still could not believe what had happened the night before. Seeing her slender form in full athletic glow reminded him how incongruous it was that she had seduced him. She was less than half his age and about a hundred times hotter than any woman he had been with since his twenties. Since Sylvia, actually, and that just made the whole situation downright weird.

'God almighty,' he thought to himself as he assembled a bowl of cereal in the kitchen, 'what the hell was I thinking when I let Sylvia go? And why has she sent me her little minx of a daughter after all these years? It makes no sense.'

Elise scurried through the room behind him on her way to the master bath. Arthur turned around quickly enough to catch a glimpse of her petite ass jogging down his bedroom hallway in damp shorts. He shook his head in disbelief. Then he switched on the TV news and ate his breakfast alone.

Elise spent a solid half-hour in Arthur's bathroom, largely to allow conditioner to soak into her thick auburn mane. Blow-drying all that long hair took time as well, and then of course she wanted to moisturize her entire body too. Finally satisfied, she wrapped herself in a towel and returned to the living room.

Arthur informed her that Doctor Yamamoto had just called, requesting her presence upstairs at 8:00AM. Without further explanation he disappeared to his room and shut the door, telling Elise to be fully dressed in one of her candy striper uniforms by the time he returned.

Elise hurried back through the connecting door to the office wearing only her towel. At the last second she remembered to prop it under the door so it would not lock behind her. She then hurried, nude, to the walk-in closet and retrieved a set of her uniform clothes and shoes; a pale-pink blouse, a white linen miniskirt with dozens of vertical pleats, sheer thigh-high stockings and the pale-pink heels. She gave the combination a cursory inspection to make sure they coordinated well enough, and then carried them all back to the apartment.

She plucked a white lace G-string from her drawer in the living room and stepped into it before zipping the pleated miniskirt snug around her hips. After donning one of her own bras, she buttoned herself into the cropped pink blouse, which was short enough that it left most of her stomach exposed. She paused for a moment to adjust her delicate belly-chain, noticing with pride its pre-breakfast looseness. Elise then opened the new package of stockings and carefully pulled them up to mid-thigh. Lastly, she stepped up onto her pink stiletto sandals.

Finished with her clothes, Elise walked to the half-bath to brush her hair and apply some makeup. She took extra care to look polished and sexy, remembering Doctor Yamamoto's intolerance for any untidiness. She did not want him to find fault with her appearance, especially now that he too would be handing out cards as part of her Consequence Game. She still had three outstanding red cards to worry about, after all, despite her extraordinary efforts the night before. The last thing she needed was for Doctor Yamamoto to punish her with a bunch more.

Ten minutes later, just as Elise was putting the final touches on a pink bow that held back her silky ponytail, Doctor Peters emerged from his master bedroom. He was fully dressed and seemed impatient to get to work.

"Let's see what you've got on, Elise," he said, waving for her to emerge from the small half-bath.

Elise took a deep breath and tried to relax. She teetered out into the middle of the living room atop her strappy high heels. The big bearded doctor motioned for her to twirl.

Arthur had been making a concerted effort all morning to abide by his better angels. This had been difficult because for one thing he had woken with a raging erection, and for another he was battling some impatient and long-suppressed passions that Elise's ministrations had resuscitated. As he gazed at her nubile form slowly pirouetting for him, this mental battle reached a fevered pitch. She was so pretty and so scantily clad that, despite how much he genuinely liked her, his libido's dark urges nearly overthrew him.

Nearly. Sufficient self-control prevailed in him to say: "You look fine. Let's go in."

Doctor Peters led Elise out to the lab. As the apartment door snapped shut behind them, Elise belatedly realized that she had not eaten breakfast.

"Um, I'm gonna make us some coffee," she volunteered.

"Great," Doctor Peters replied as he sat down at his desk. "Just don't be late upstairs. For some reason Doctor Yamamoto sounds eager to see you at eight-sharp. He's sending Hiro down to collect you."

"Oh."

Elise checked the clock on the wall. She had ten minutes.

By the time Elise returned with two steaming coffee mugs, she could hear Hiro's footsteps bounding down the staircase at the far end of the hallway. She delivered Doctor Peters' coffee to his desk and managed a few sips of her own before being ushered from the room.

Hiro's face conveyed an air of enthusiasm that Elise did not remember seeing the week before. As they walked down the hallway and up the stairs he babbled excitedly in his heavily-accented English, asking Elise questions about her relocation to Doctor Peters' apartment. His level of interest made Elise uneasy. Surely it conveyed something, but she dared not guess what. Doctor Yamamoto was behind it though – of that much she was certain.

When Hiro and Elise reached the top of the stairs the young scientist led her to the far corner of the second floor, straight into his boss' office.

Doctor Yamamoto was pacing the floor impatiently. The digital clock on his credenza displayed: 8:04. He barked something in Japanese so icily that Elise jumped to attention like a Marine recruit.

Hiro translated to her: "Doctor Yamamoto say you very late. Alway late. Much improper."

Elise somehow knew better than to look Doctor Yamamoto in the eye just then. She stared straight ahead, off into the middle distance and uttered a piteous: "Sorry."

An abrupt interrogation commenced. Doctor Yamamoto circled Elise's upright figure while Hiro stood to one side and did an animated job of translating. Occasionally, it seemed to Elise, Hiro took the liberty of adding his own addenda to his boss' lecture. Elise felt outnumbered and distraught. She had no idea whether Hiro was accurately relaying her responses to the older Japanese doctor. She only knew that she was being asked to explain every detail of Friday's Consequence ritual.

Re-telling the story of how Doctor Peters had spanked her bare bottom twenty-two times for each un-offset red card was absolutely humiliating. Elise did manage, however, to omit the most damning aspect of the ordeal: her libido's response. Disclosing the fact that she had masturbated to orgasm during the second round of swats was more degradation than she was willing to self-inflict.

Eventually Doctor Yamamoto sat down in his swivel chair – the same chair Elise had reclined upon during his installation of her Model O. He retrieved a long, sharp-looking pair of scissors from a drawer and arranged it in the exact center of his desk's leather writing surface.

Hiro relayed to Elise that Doctor Yamamoto would now begin an experiment; one which would provide her an opportunity to demonstrate her awareness of her proper role at the laboratory.

Elise's anxiety rose to a new level. Her stomach filled with butterflies.

"Doctor ask you stand at him," Hiro continued, pointing. "Nex him."

Elise walked around the desk and stood directly in front of Doctor Yamamoto. He proceeded to study her clothes with a scowling expression. To her surprise he then adopted a very calm tone as he began to speak again in Japanese.

Hiro translated: "He say this uniform require so many adjustment."

"Uh... what kind of adjustments?" Elise asked meekly. "I really thought he would like this. Tell him that, please... that I thought he would like the pink top and this little skirt. No?"

Elise looked down at Doctor Yamamoto's stiffly seated posture while Hiro relayed her response.

The Japanese doctor mumbled a few dismissive-sounding phrases of Japanese and then lifted the scissors from his desk.

"He say you typical, lazy American girl," Hiro relayed. "You show insufficient care to style of uniform."

"What are those for?" Elise asked, "He's not going to cut my clothes is—"

"Shht!" Doctor Yamamoto cut her off with a raised finger. Long strings of Japanese words flew from his mouth, each less calm than the last.

Hiro translated rapidly, struggling to keep up: "Skirt is too old-fashion. Today, and for future, you must show respect to proper uniform. More beautiful. More modern. All scientist here works very hard, every day. You volunteer for job. You must smile alway. Not wrinkle nose. Not ask many, many questions. Candystriper responsibility is for to make everyone else happy. Every mens enjoy how pretty you can be. You must focus, like good teammate, smiling alway. Otherwise go you home. Understand?"

Elise's mind reeled, trying to decompress this string of insane pronouncements into something actionable.

"Yes, Doctor Yamamoto," is all she could think of to say.

"Good," Hiro continued. "Now he say you turn away."

Elise shuffled her feet until her backside was to the seated Japanese madman. She felt him tug at the lower hem of her skirt and then heard the scissors cutting through its thin fabric. She closed her eyes and clenched her hands together in front of her bare stomach. She could scarcely believe what was happening. As the cutting and tugging continued, a horrified pink flush widened across her face and neck.

'What on Earth is he doing to my skirt?' she quietly despaired.

Doctor Yamamoto was removing vertical strips of fabric between each pleat of her skirt. Without this connective material, the pleats became independent of one another – mere ribbons of cloth hanging from the snug waistband. As he worked his way around the skirt he also shortened every other pleat (the narrower, inner ones) by half, leaving only the outer pleats at their original mid-thigh length. He worked the long scissors in an efficient cadence, nudging Elise through quarter-turns until he was done.

When the cutting stopped, Elise opened her eyes and looked down. She let out a gasp.

"Doctor Yamamoto! I can't wear this!" she squealed.

"Absorutely you can," Hiro relayed. "It show happiness to all worker. A free help to you."

"But..." Elise stammered. She ran her fingers through the newly-separated pleats and realized how their alternating lengths created a peekaboo effect revealing bare skin well above her stockings.

Before she could formulate any rational objections, Doctor Yamamoto gestured for her to walk to the opposite wall and back again. He then had her twirl around rapidly. This sent the loose pleats flying outward. Elise was sure her tiny panties were quite obvious under these conditions. She made a mental note to avoid all sudden movements.

The two men began talking in Japanese again.

"Doctor Yamamoto say is not right," Hiro stated. "You come to him again now."

Elise was trembling. She felt angry at herself for getting into such a predicament and terrified at the prospect of spending the entire day parading around in front of everyone in a skirt that had been cut to ribbons. Hesitantly, she walked back to Doctor Yamamoto's chair and stood in front of him. She watched wide-eyed as he raised the scissors to the front of her skirt and began slicing pleats even shorter.

"Doctor Yamamoto, please don't take off any more!" Elise whined.

The doctor snipped the front pleats diagonally, angling each one progressively shorter toward the centerline of the skirt. The pleats in the middle he made shortest of all, cutting them off right in front of her crotch.

"Not to worry," Hiro relayed, "Uniform more better soon. Always improving for you is nice Doctor, see? Short in front but side are long? This name 'high-low skirt.' So very fashion now, yes? Another happy gift for you."

"Oh God..." Elise whispered. There was no way she could avoid flashing her panties now, even standing still.

"Proper!" Hiro enthused a minute later when Doctor Yamamoto sat back and nodded. "Now you turn away... do same in back."

Elise wanted to burst into tears. Her feet refused to move so Doctor Yamamoto clasped her hips and crisply spun her around. She almost stumbled in her tall heels. A whimper escaped her lips as the sound of cutting resumed. She buried her face in her hands and waited.

"Ah so!" Hiro announced a minute later, sounding triumphant.

Elise opened her eyes. The floor around her feet was littered with shards of white linen. She tentatively traced her fingers around her skirt's new wavy hemline. At its shortest two points the outer pleats ended above her crotch and gluteal crease, respectively. It was far too short to conceal the little gap that widened between the tops of her inner thighs. Even worse, her fingers discerned, the inner pleats had been cut still shorter, following the same high-low pattern as the outer ones but a few inches higher.

"Oh, Doctor Yamamoto," she whispered, "you're just... mean!"

"Not so offensible, Elise," Hiro deprecated, "You walk for Doctor Yamamoto again. Show it moves."

Elise tried to lower the skirt down on her hips, but it was inelastic and already quite snug. It would not sit any lower. Feeling defeated, she paraded across the office wearing a sulky expression. With each step she felt the skirt's unequal and disparate pleats flitter across her bare skin. When she made it to the opposite wall and turned about-face, she could not resist the urge to reach behind herself again. The centermost rear pleats were terribly worrying. Without a doubt her bare bottom would be revealed with every step as she walked. If her panties had been wider in back they might have offered some coverage, but because she had chosen to wear a G-string it was hopeless. From behind, she knew, her underwear was nothing more than a single seam of white fabric nestled between the cleavage of her butt cheeks.

Elise shuddered at the idea of spending her entire workday like this. If she so much as hinted at bending over, everyone would have an unfettered view of her ass.

Doctor Yamamoto gestured for her to twirl again.

Teardrops began to form in the corners of Elise's eyes. Still, she spun for him.

'Why?' she thought to herself behind furrowed brows. 'It's a sickness! And these stupid pleats fucking tickle! Just please, God, don't let this shit turn me on...'

Doctor Yamamoto harrumphed. It was apparent he had only achieved a bare minimum level of satisfaction with her outfit. He spun around in his chair and began clicking the mouse and keyboard on one of his two computers. Before long, a photograph that Elise immediately recognized appeared on his screen. It was the slutty candystriper costume that had been the genesis of all her wardrobe obligations.

The Japanese doctor pointed at the absurd blouse worn by the girl on his screen and looked back at Elise while verbalizing something to Hiro.

"Doctor Yamamoto," Hiro relayed "say shirt style must be like this. Not so big as now, yes?"

Over Elise's protestations, the two Japanese men insisted that she fold the lower half of her little blouse up under itself until her bra was partially exposed. Then, using the excuse that Doctor Yamamoto would not tolerate the display of undergarments, Hiro made Elise remove her bra.

The two men crowded around Elise and made a series of further adjustments by hand until her pink shirt was rolled up so high around her ribcage that the bottom third of her bare breasts peeked out below. Doctor Yamamoto unbuttoned the neck of the blouse and pulled its dainty baby-doll sleeves down off her shoulders until they hung droopily around her upper arms. He then instructed Hiro to pinch the shirt's rolled-up fabric together as tightly as possible behind her. Elise had to exhale as the shirt was tightened like a rubber band around her ribcage. The under-curve of her petite breasts bulged out beneath it.

Doctor Yamamoto pulled out a stapler. Elise flinched as he slid the cold foot of the device up under the back of her shirt, right between her shoulder blades. Shock widened her eyes as a succession of staples was driven through her blouse, securing its new folds tightly behind her.

The shirt became little more than a four-inch band of pink encircling her chest.

"Please don't make me work all day like this!" she begged. "I'm practically naked!"

Doctor Yamamoto sat down.

"Very great now," Hiro declared, gleefully ignoring her plea, "Every mens can say so pretty. American too will say. Mister Alex, yes, and maybe Mister Jacob."

Hiro laughed loudly as if at some profound joke. Then he continued: "Look much like photo, Miss Elise. You may to thank doctor for nice help, yes?"

Elise was speechless. She pouted and stamped her little feet like a child. The heart-shaped lock on her belly chain jangled loosely. Hiro frowned.

Doctor Yamamoto leaned forward in his chair and extended his hand toward Elise's waist. He looped two fingers under her delicate belly chain and gently tugged at its slackness. Her mini tantrum, she realized belatedly, had allowed the doctor to notice how loose it had become.

Elise looked down and half-twisted away from the doctor's ticklish touch. Notwithstanding her lack of breakfast, she did actually wonder how her waist could have become so much narrower over the course of only a few days. It seemed impossible or, at the very least, unhealthy.

Doctor Yamamoto barked a series of instructions at Hiro, which sent the younger man scurrying from the room. He then rose from his chair and glided smoothly by Elise to a small closet on the other side of his office. He extracted a shiny steel cylinder and set it down on the floor. It rolled on built-in caster wheels. He proceeded to attach to it a flexible hose.

Elise recognized it was a fancy vacuum. It struck her as fittingly psychotic that the squat, hyper-demanding doctor would be incapable of delegating the vacuuming of his office. Why else would he keep an expensive-looking miniature shop-vac in his personal closet? He was too compulsive to leave such work to others, evidently.

Elise smiled. This small insight provided a mental diversion from her humiliating costume.

Doctor Yamamoto switched on the vacuum. To Elise's horror he then made a surprisingly agile assault on her miniskirt with it. He seized her wrist to keep her mostly in one spot while he worked the suction hose up and down each little pleat. Elise screamed and danced, twisting one way and another as the noisy little hose worked its way around her skirt's shredded remnants. The suction was so strong each linen ribbon made a flatulent sound as it got sucked into the hose. This would have been childishly funny had Elise not been so mortified that her underwear were about to get sucked off too. Eventually she realized the doctor was trying to suck away all the stray threads and shards from the cuts he had just made.

In no time Doctor Yamamoto was finished. He released Elise's wrist and redirected the machine's nozzle at the floor. He removed, using a very efficient pattern, every fallen shred of skirt fabric from the linoleum surface. When finished, he stopped the machine as suddenly as he had started it.

Doctor Yamamoto handed the warm vacuum to her, gesturing dismissively for her to return it to its rightful place in his closet.

"Fucking lunatic," Elise muttered under her breath as she put the machine away.

Hiro jogged back into the room. In his hand he held the little key which unlocked her belly chain. He gave it to Doctor Yamamoto who promptly waved Elise over to his chair while rambling on about something in Japanese.

Hiro informed her that the doctor was pleased with the rapid progress she had made on her posture. "You not slouch so lazy now. Good job!"

Elise did not know how to respond. It was a compliment, obviously, but she was too upset with both men to care. A moment of silence passed during which they stared at her expectantly. She rocked back and forth atop her tall shoes, stewing about her cruelly modified clothes. Finally her manners trumped her scandalized dignity and she uttered a quiet: "Thank you."

Doctor Yamamoto promptly reached toward her navel and unlocked the clasp of her chain. He then asked, via Hiro, for Elise to straighten up and suck in her tummy as much as possible. With great trepidation Elise did so. She felt the chain become taut again as Doctor Yamamoto pulled every millimeter of excess length through the little clasp.

She glanced down nervously at him. He was smiling. Elise recognized this to be a bad omen.

A metallic click signaled the relocking of the heart-shaped clasp. Elise carefully exhaled and stared down. The chain was wickedly tight around her waist. The clasp, centered just above her navel, had a full inch of new excess chain dangling below it.

"Doctor very proud, Miss Elise," Hiro intoned as she struggled to adapt her posture to its new confines. "His generosity gift much improve your health so fast! You agree it so impress?"

"I guess so," Elise said, struggling to keep her breathing shallow and her abdomen tight. She did not want to relax in front of them, since doing so would surely allow the slender chain to dig into her skin, making her look pudgy.

"Keep up Elise. You get so tall. So pretty."

"Thanks... I think."

"Good!" Doctor Yamamoto suddenly announced, using the first English word Elise had ever heard pass his lips. He rose from his chair.

Elise backed away, startled, but his thick hands encircled her waist and she found herself being lifted abruptly into the air.

Hiro laughed uproariously at the sight, saying: "Good day, Miss Elise! Doctor say almost like anime doll now. Nice for you job."

Elise's hands reflexively grabbed Doctor Yamamoto's shoulders for support as her feet kicked freely above the linoleum. She saw, beneath the doctor's heavy eyelids, a terrifying glint of mirth.

Being hoisted off the ground in front of Hiro made her skin crawl with embarrassment. Something about the ease with which Doctor Yamamoto was holding her aloft, combined with his eyes' unwavering gaze and her own hyper-awareness of her scant uniform, all combined to make her sexual organs tingle.

Despite herself she giggled. The humiliation itself was like a drug.

When Doctor Yamamoto set Elise back down onto her high heels, she quickly turned and stumbled away toward the window in an effort to recover her composure. Unfortunately, those few steps were the final motions needed to finish winding the Model O.

The resonance of that first 'ting...' on her clitoris felt far more delicious than it should have. Elise gasped in surprise, recognizing immediately that she was drunk on a cocktail of arousal and shame. Her knees wobbled. Her stride faltered. She barely made it to the window after the second chime. She grabbed the lower sill and closed her eyes. Every tendon in her neck stood out as she strained to keep herself from squealing aloud.

The next two chimes of the Model O almost made her collapse.

"Please God," she whispered through gritted teeth. "Don't let me lose it. Not here!"

With each succeeding 'ting' her arousal ascended like a rocket. All the attention lavished on her by the two Japanese men, combined with the thought of spending the day wearing this outfit, conspired to render her completely impious. The Model O's chimes merely telegraphed her condition from the subconscious to the palpable.

Despite having braced herself against the frame of the window, Elise slowly sank into a crouch. She could not help emitting a series of whimpering squeaks as the Model O continued to strike its resonant tune upon her clitoris.

Behind her, Doctor Yamamoto spoke. Hiro asked: "Is small toy happening now?"

"Yes!" Elise shrieked in desperation. She was down on the floor by then, kneeling with her face to the wall. Dignity was no longer a viable concern. Her right hand had dropped to her crotch and she began to rub her clit through her panties. Her left hand let go of the window and groped her breasts in turn.

She had never been so easily aroused in her life. Worse still was the awareness that her condition was entirely a result of what Doctor Yamamoto had done to her clothes.

Elise sensed the men moving behind her. She opened her eyes. Hiro and the wall-shaped doctor appeared to either side of her, squatting on their haunches. They each wrapped an arm around her torso and another under her knees. They lifted her off the floor and carried her out into the main part of the laboratory.

Elise felt helpless. Her body curled reflexively into Doctor Yamamoto's chest. Her eyes re-closed. All she could feel was the ringing joy inside her clit.

Hiro let go, allowing Doctor Yamamoto to carry Elise alone. He followed behind them as they crossed the lab.

The Model O finished chiming but Elise no longer needed it. She still had one hand tucked into her crotch. She knew her body was only a few heartbeats from orgasm. Imagining what Doctor Yamamoto would think of her if she came in his arms so whorishly was itself an erotic stimulant. He would witness her most intimate self-expression up close; a carnal, guttural admission of her depravity. It would validate every twisted idea his mind contained, and probably many more it did not. Her debasement would be total.

These thoughts raced through Elise's mind and her body tensed with anticipation. Resistance seemed impossible. She wanted to moan out loud. Her orgasm was going to be amazing. It would happen in mid-air, curled up in Doctor Yamamoto's stiff embrace; a collision between ecstasy and utter disgrace.

And she had no one to blame but herself.

Suddenly Elise felt Doctor Yamamoto lowering her onto her feet. His grip loosened around her torso. She opened her eyes and stumbled slightly before regaining balance. They were in the second-floor kitchen. Her genitals tingled fiercely, hovering near the verge, but the stimulation was gone. She was abandoned, unsatisfied.

"No," Doctor Yamamoto whispered into her face in English. His expression conveyed cold disapproval.

Elise backed one step away from him. She felt light-headed and dizzy. Her right hand found its way to her crotch again. She did not care anymore what any of these men thought. She just wanted to cum now; even if that meant masturbating right in front of them.

Doctor Yamamoto crisply batted her hand away, preventing her from touching herself. He spoke again in terse Japanese.

"No, Miss Elise," Hiro piped up beside her. "He say you too hot. Not learn lesson. Time for work now."

"But I'm so close!" Elise whined.

"No!" they both answered in unison.

Doctor Yamamoto grabbed her by the wrist and led her across the kitchen. He opened the freezer door and extracted one ice cube from within. Elise stared, bewildered, as he sucked the ice cube into his mouth. Once its rough edges were smooth, he spat it back into his hand and said something to Hiro.

"This cool you off," Hiro translated.

Doctor Yamamoto pulled Elise closer by her wrist. He lowered the ice cube to the front of her skirt and then smoothly slipped his hand under her panties. Elise gasped at its shocking coldness against her vulva.

Then she screamed as the frozen cube was shoved high up into her vagina: "No-no-no-fuck-NO!"

Doctor Yamamoto ignored her. He held her still and made sure the ice cube was wedged deep inside. He then removed his finger and snugged her underwear back into place.

Elise's knees knocked together and her face contorted itself into a frozen scream. The ice burned. Her cervix was in Antarctica being trampled by penguins.

Before she could react further, the two Japanese men each took her by an arm and led her diagonally across the lab, not bothering to explain where they were headed. Elise felt ice-water leaking from her. It dribbled down her inner thighs and ran under her stocking tops.

"Let me take out the ice, please!" she begged. "It's killing me!"

"You go for nice walk now, Miss Elise," Hiro intoned with a grin as they arrived at a set of double doors. "Fresh air good for lady too hot."

Hiro let go of her arm and pushed the steel crash-bar on the doors. Daylight and chilly air poured through. Outside Elise recognized the narrow balcony of a fire-escape. Morning sunlight slanted across the leafy treetops on the opposite side of the street.

She clutched her cold, wet panties with her free hand while Doctor Yamamoto led her out onto the fire escape. She shuffled awkwardly beside him, her thin heels catching in the metal balcony's striated floor.

"You walk to other side now," Hiro instructed, imitating his boss' sternness. "Ring bell at de-wivery door. Doctor Peter come for you."

Doctor Yamamoto finally let go of her other arm.

"But, Hiro!" Elise pleaded in desperation. "People will see! This outfit makes me look like... like a whore!"

Hiro nudged her further out into the sunlight and gave her bottom an abrupt swat.

Within moments the two men had retreated back through the doors. They pulled shut with a metallic clang.

Elise was alone, outside on a second-story fire-escape at 8:40am wearing an outfit that left absolutely nothing to anyone's imagination. The melting ice cube inside her young pussy had thoroughly soaked her white lace panties. Anyone standing below would have discerned that she paid to have her crotch waxed nearly hairless.

The cold water dripping down her inner thighs gave her goose bumps. Her nipples hardened into small rocks, blatantly distending the fabric of her stapled-tight blouse.

Elise looked down and scanned the street in either direction. The laboratory building occupied the entire block and the delivery entrance was on the exact opposite side from where she stood. It was going to be a long walk.

'What the fuck is wrong with me?' she wondered, nearly in despair. Mentally she felt just as slutty as she looked.

She wiped her eyes and then grabbed the handrail. There was no point crying. She turned around and began carefully descending the steel ladder that would take her down to the sidewalk. A light breeze tossed the loose pleats of her skirt in all directions. The tiny footpads of her shoes threatened to slip off the rungs of the ladder at any moment. She had never felt so exposed.

Once on the ground she wrapped her arms around her petite chest in an attempt to conceal her boobs, which still peeked out below her shortened blouse. There was little she could do about her shredded skirt however. She considered running all the way to the delivery entrance but immediately realized it was impossible in such tall heels – she could barely walk in them smoothly.

The sidewalk was clean but narrow. The side of the building she was on was not on a major thoroughfare, but Elise knew it was rush hour and that plenty of people would be passing through the neighborhood anyway. Worse yet, there were no parked cars to hide behind.

She walked only twenty yards before hearing the sound of an engine accelerating from the intersection behind her. She forced herself not to look back, expecting honks and cat-calls.

Instead there was an eerie silence. Elise kept walking. The approaching car slowed and glided by her at a crawl. She glanced briefly at the driver and saw a young man's face staring back. His expression was a picture of surprise. A moment later he accelerated away and Elise thanked her stars. But then she saw his blinker light up. His car turned right at the end of the block and disappeared. Another car approached from the oncoming direction. It was being driven by an elderly couple who thankfully did not notice her at all.

Elise quickened her pace, realizing she had a long way to go. The busiest streets lay ahead of her, around the corner and along the far side of the building.

A protracted ten minutes elapsed before Elise reached the lab's delivery door. They had been some of the most mortifying minutes she had ever experienced. No cars had actually stopped, luckily. And she had not been physically accosted. But she knew that at least a hundred people had seen her. This included a large commuter bus bearing the logo of a well-known high-tech company. Its lightly tinted windows had been crowded with South Asian faces undoubtedly working on H-1B visas. They had pointed and stared, their expressions at once both mocking and rapturous.

The young man in the first car had managed to circle the block three times to stare at her as much as possible. Several other cars had nearly crashed. Everyone's eyes were out on stalks, glued to her near-nakedness.

The entire experience felt massively dangerous. She hated Doctor Yamamoto and Hiro for exposing her so publicly.

Once at the delivery entrance Elise pounded on its steel door with her small fist, wishing she had her keycard with her. There was no answer from within and, just as she had expected, there was no bell to ring either. Hiro had just been toying with her about that detail. She had no option but to keep pounding until Doctor Peters heard her, all the while enduring stares from each passing vehicle.

Time passed agonizingly slowly. Several additional cars began to circle the block, their male occupants gawking at her more lewdly with each circuit. Elise turned her back to them and faced the door. She knocked on its cold metal surface for what felt like the hundredth time. She knew the passing strangers all had a clear view up the back of her destroyed skirt. Its pleats were cut so short that probably anyone with decent eyesight would recognize the lace pattern in her white panties and the fact that they tapered to a single seam between her butt cheeks.

'Actually,' Elise thought, shivering as a final drop of ice-water trickled down her inner thigh, 'my panties are so wet it probably looks like I'm not wearing any at all... like I'm out here just begging for it!'

Elise's stress level verged on panic. She could not bring herself to turn around. To face the traffic would be even worse. Not only was the front of her outfit equally provocative, she really did not want to show her face. She guessed that her current expression of aroused helplessness would only incite the men further. Instead she shut her eyes and banged on the door again.

An increasingly familiar sense of futile desperation thrummed within her.

The sudden loud bark of a motorcycle made Elise jump. Though she dared not look, she could tell it was right behind her. The rattling, belching noise elevated her sense of vulnerability to an even more acute level.

The bike engine stopped. Elise was frozen, eyes tight shut, convinced that she was about to be roughly abducted. She imagined a tattooed, lawless biker hauling her away to serve as his permanent sex slave. Days of endless rape and filth flashed through her mind.

She heard the ping and tick of the hot metal cooling behind her... then bootsteps. Her mind's eye perceived a huge, burly man dressed entirely in black leather approaching her from behind. His gloved hands were reaching out... it would only be a moment now... she had to scream before it was too late!

"Elise? Is that you?" Alex's voice intoned softly behind her.

Elise instantly spun around, eyes wide open.

"Oh thank God!" she gushed, tumbling headlong into Alex's body and wrapping her arms tightly around his jacket. "I forgot you had a bike. I've been stuck out here and... I thought... well, anyway, I don't have my key and... oh my God, I'm just so glad it's you!!"

Elise's voice trailed off as relief washed through her. She did not want to tell Alex everything, no matter how grateful she was. It would all sound too crazy.

Alex returned her hug briefly and then relaxed his grip. Elise pulled away, somewhat embarrassed about having just thrown her near-naked body against him so desperately. She crossed her arms in front of her chest to conceal her half-naked boobs. Alex dug his keycard out from his pants' front pocket.

Elise caught him glancing at her furtively as he shuffled to the keypad. He looked like he was trying to be polite, but at the same time it was clear he was struggling with the spectacle of her outfit. Elise presumed he had never seen a girl dressed so scandalously before. Perhaps at a strip club, but certainly not outside in broad daylight. As they traded places at the top of the loading ramp, she consciously straightened her posture and sucked in her stomach to make sure her shortened belly chain did not look too tight.

Alex scanned his card. The heavy metal door opened and he held it aside. He gestured for Elise to enter as his eyes raked her over once more.

"You uh.... You look nice today, Elise," he said as she preceded him into the interior hall.

"Thanks," Elise answered softly. Her panic gradually evaporated and was replaced by a level of shyness and embarrassment dictated by her ridiculously revealing attire. She glanced back over her shoulder to smile at Alex, only to find his gaze locked on her ass and legs.

The door shut behind them with a boom.

"I'm sorry you got stuck out there," Alex piped up a few strides later. "Next time you forget your keycard you should just call me. I can be here pretty quick if you ever need help like that."

"Oh... that's nice of you," Elise replied, not glancing back this time. She was very aware that Alex was maintaining his pace a couple yards behind her as they walked. The concrete hallway was long, leading all the way to the center of the lab. Elise could sense that his eyes were crawling repeatedly up and down her backside.

There was nothing Elise could do about it though. In fact, she foresaw her whole day unfolding as one long peepshow for her co-workers. But somehow that glimpse of awed lust she had just seen on Alex's face felt reassuring after her panic-attack outside. She was very grateful he had been on that motorcycle, rather than some wild-haired outlaw. She felt rescued.

Elise mulled these sentiments as she strode down the hallway in front of Alex. Her confidence soon returned. Much to her own surprise, she found herself subtly flicking her ponytail from side to side. A tentative sashay colored her gait, rocking her hips slightly more than necessary. She quickly rationalized that this was just for Alex's benefit; a sort of reward for saving her. She could not help grinning silently as she imagined the expression on his face as he recognized her bare skin between those disconnected pleats. She exaggerated each footfall in her tall heels to wiggle the taut flesh of her ass. Anything less than a little show, she decided, would be rude under the circumstances.

"Hey Elise?" Alex asked a few strides later. He caught up to her and his hand was at her elbow. Elise turned to face him.

"Yeah?" she answered softly.

"I'd love to have your number actually. Not just for emergencies like this morning, but... you know, like, 'cause I'd love to take you out sometime. If you want to, that is."

"Oh, umm, yeah..." Elise fumbled, caught off guard not just by Alex's proposition, but also by how awkward and nervous his voice had suddenly become. Alex was usually pretty confident around her, but now he seemed completely tongue-tied. It must be, she realized, something to do with her uniform.

Without really thinking through all the implications of what she was doing, Elise rattled off her cellular number. She watched Alex type it into his own phone.

"Great," Alex thanked her, "I'll send you a text so you'll have my number too."

"Um... Okay."

Elise felt at a loss for further words. She was not sure if Alex had just asked her out on a date or merely suggested that he might in the future. And... had he asked her permission, too? Not knowing what to do, Elise stood still in front of him and waited while he typed away on his smartphone.

Alex looked too lanky to be attractive, Elise thought, especially stooped-over his phone like that. His poor posture reminded her to straighten her own spine and suck in her tummy. She ran her fingers along her slender waist chain and felt annoyed by its snugness. She had not even had breakfast yet! How was she supposed to eat anything if it was already this tight?

The awkward silence between them was cut short by a loud outburst in Doctor Peters' office. The big bearded doctor charged through his open doorway a moment later, nearly at a run.

"We got approved! We got approved!" Doctor Peters yelled. He rushed up to Alex clutching a piece of paper in both hands.

"What?" Alex said, looking up from his phone.

"The attorneys just sent this over. Our PVA tissue has been approved! We can finally go public now! We've got to get Yamamoto's investors together, ASAP. I'm going upstairs to tell him myself!"

"Wow," Alex exclaimed. He seemed just as startled as Elise.

Doctor Peters jogged away down the main hallway like a bear in search of salmon. Elise and Alex listened as he rounded the corner and ascended the staircase that would take him up to Doctor Yamamoto's labs.

"What's so exciting?" Elise asked.

"Jesus. It's um... it's huge. Really big. They've been working on it forever. Even before I got here."

"Working on what?"

"PVA tissue. It's – So, that's short for pre-vascularized adipose tissue. Basically it's transplantable clones of human fat."

"Ew! Sounds gross."

"Well, kinda, I guess. Anyway there's a big market for it. Lots of companies have been trying to crack the cell-morbidity problem, but those two figured out a way to vascularize the tissue prior to implantation, and that makes all the difference."

"Uh... okay... What does vascularize mean?"

"Sorry. Tissue needs bloodflow to stay alive. You know, like arteries and veins? Otherwise it rots. They can grow small-scale capillary networks from a live sample. That's not so hard, but the main thing is they figured out a way to successfully stage those networks within cloned adipose tissue prior to implantation. It makes the whole process viable. And since it's all made from the patient's own DNA, etcetera, there's no rejection. It's all-natural, so to speak. It'll take over the market."

"The market for... fat people?"

Alex chuckled. "Yeah. Some people need adipose tissue, like, for reconstructive reasons. Other people want it for cosmetic reasons."

Elise wrinkled her nose and shook her head, clearly confused.

"Think boobs, Elise. Boob jobs."

"Ohhhhhhh..."

"Four hundred thousand procedures per year in the U.S. alone. Even more overseas. It's a multi-billion dollar industry. And that's with the current crop of shitty synthetic implants. When people find out they can use their own natural tissue..." Alex cupped his hands into a ball and then made a gesture like it was exploding in all directions. "Ka-boom..." he whispered.

"Jesus."

"Yeah. Now you get it."

"But, how will they do it? I mean, this lab is pretty big but they can't do all those surgeries here."

"Oh, no," Alex chuckled again. "They won't do anything here. They're just gonna sell the technique and the patents to some big pharma company and then move on to the next research project. Maybe they'll do some consulting work along the way, but mostly at this point it's just about negotiating for the highest possible bid. The one with the fattest residuals."

"Money, you mean?"

"Yeah. A LOT of money, Elise."

"Wow."

"Like, 'fuck-everybody-money.'"

Alex looked down at his phone again. "Anyway, I have a feeling things are about to get real busy. I gotta get to my desk."

"Okay," Elise replied quietly. Part of her was happy to see him so distracted. She longed to retreat into the relative privacy of Doctor Peters' office and hide. Her clothes were not feeling any less shameful with the passage of time.

As Alex walked away there was a creak followed by a boom at the far end of the hallway. It was the delivery door swinging open and shut. Jacob appeared in the distance, walking toward her.

"Hi Jacob!" Elise called to him with a wave and a smile.

Jacob said nothing at first. As he got closer, Elise noticed his eyes were wide with disbelief.

"Jesus Elise..." he began, "What the hell are you wearing?"

"Oh! Uh..." Elise stammered. She had no idea how to explain it herself. She tried to cover her little breasts, but was quite aware of how preposterous she looked. "It's, um... a hi-lo skirt. A little bit too small, I know, but..."

Jacob stopped in front of her, looking quizzically at her face. "Are you okay?"

"Uh, yeah. Why?"

"I just, can't imagine you actually buying that at a store. Or you even being in the type of store that would sell that."

"Well... yeah. It's kinda a long story. I, um... I should get to work."

"You're sure you're okay?"

"Yeah. Oh! And ask Alex about the new patent that just got approved! Doctor Peters is super excited."

Jacob nodded and turned toward the main laboratory where he and Alex had their workstations.

Elise scampered across the hall into Doctor Peters' office. Her brain was struggling to come up with a cover-story that would explain her shredded, stapled outfit without necessarily divulging all the details of her molestation by Hiro and Doctor Yamamoto. It seemed an impossible needle to thread with a lie, but she knew that as soon as Doctor Peters saw her, he would want to know what had happened.

Elise sat down at her little desk. Her coffee mug was cold. Her tummy growled with hunger.

The next several hours passed in a flurry of activity. Doctor Peters called an all-hands meeting in the downstairs conference room. Everyone was talking at once. Flowcharts were drawn. USB-sticks and hard-drives were skidded back and forth across the table. Task-lists were assigned. Elise felt lost and useless. The men hardly even noticed her sitting atop a stool in the back corner of the conference room. Everyone else was excited, but she had no idea what to do.

As time dragged on her hunger became painful. She concentrated on keeping her legs crossed as tightly as possible so as not to flash the room. Finally an idea popped into her head; she jumped down off her stool and announced: "Hey, do you guys want me to order lunch?"

A chorus of affirmatives answered her, including calls for coffee, coke and pizza. And everyone wanted different toppings.

Elise wrote it all down and then happily escaped from the stagnant air of the conference room. She walked to Doctor Peters' office and sat down at her desk to place the order.

The afternoon was far more successful in Elise's eyes. Not only did she have food in her stomach for the first time all day, but the guys had found work for her to do; a ton of work actually. She became their designated gopher, shuttling between upstairs and down, carrying paperwork, binders, laptops and test equipment to and fro. All the scientists were furiously busy. Everyone seemed to be taking her appearance in stride, as if it were normal.

Doctor Peters had explained in the conference room that he and Doctor Yamamoto would be calling each private investor together to announce to news. All investors would be invited to the laboratory for a big meeting to hash-out the details of how to market the new patents to potential corporate buyers. The goal was to sell the patent as quickly as possible, for the maximum return on investment for themselves as well as for the investors. The longer they delayed, the greater the likelihood that someone else would come up with a competing methodology.

Elise found herself tasked with cleaning huge areas of the lab. They seemed like the rarely-used places, where dusty equipment sat stacked for months at a time. Jacob gave her some gloves and eye-goggles, and Elise wore them gratefully, but it seemed absurd to her that her eyes and hands were protected when the rest of her skin was so obviously exposed.

Alex shot her a few lustful glances throughout the day. Jacob seemed more genuinely appreciative of her labor. He thanked her repeatedly when she helped him clean up his workstation. Alex, in contrast, only seemed to enjoy it when Elise got down on her hands and knees to tidy up the cables under his desk. Elise knew exactly what he was looking at as he rolled his chair around behind her, but she could not muster the gumption for a fight with him just then. In the midst of all the excitement it seemed a petty grievance, so she let him have his look. Then she avoided him the rest of the afternoon.

Just after 4:40PM, Elise finally made it back to her desk. She stripped off her tall rubber gloves and sat down for the first time since lunch. Doctor Peters was pacing back and forth on his dais, apparently trying to wind-up a long phone call. Elise folded her arms across her desk and put her head down. She felt bushed.

A few minutes later Jacob walked into the room to say goodnight. Doctor Peters was off the phone by then. Jacob made a point to let him know what a big help Elise had been all day.

"She really went over and above," Jacob emphasized.

Doctor Peters smiled and said he appreciated the report. He lifted a white index card from his desk and shoved it into the Consequence Box.

As Jacob turned to leave, he gave Elise a knowing wink. She could not help but smile in return. Her regard for Jacob swelled tenfold.

Soon Alex stopped by to say goodnight as well. Then Hiro and Kazutoshi walked by the door, waving to Doctor Peters.

Elise began to relax. She thought about how wonderful it was going to be to get back into some normal clothes and just chill-out in Doctor Peters' apartment all evening. Her eyelids drooped. A big yawn forced itself upon her.

"Sorry," she muttered into her folded arms, not directing it at anyone in particular.

Doctor Yamamoto entered the room as noiselessly as a knife falling through water.

He was carrying a paper bag. It was precisely five o'clock.

"Oh. Right," Doctor Peters exclaimed upon noticing him. He checked his watch. "Yes, um, wake up Elise. It's time for our little game."

Elise lifted her head. Doctor Yamamoto stood in the middle of the room, smiling at her. Her heart almost stopped. Her whole body wanted to shrivel up and hide. All she could think to say was, "Oh."

It all happened very quickly. The math was simple. She had two un-negated red cards remaining, so each doctor agreed to administer one set of twenty-two spankings. Doctor Peters would go first.

Arthur felt somewhat irked by the contents of Doctor Yamamoto's paper bag; a black eye-mask, the sort people wore to sleep on airplanes, and a bottle of baby oil. A twinge of jealousy and concern ran through him but it was short-lived. His mind remained too distracted by the tumult of the day's events and the promise of a new, very wealthy, future. He set aside his concerns and led Elise, carrying her Consequence Box, and the Japanese doctor, with his bag, into his apartment.

Elise soon found herself standing atop her wooden Consequence Box behind Doctor Peters' sofa, bent over just as she had been on Friday evening. But this time she was blindfolded. And there were two of them. It was alarming.

Doctor Peters flipped aside the loose pleats of her skirt and began smacking her ass open-handed. Elise counted out the strokes in an increasingly tense voice. Her smooth bottom quivered beneath his wide hand.

Doctor Peters was hurrying through his strokes. To Elise, the whole experience seemed less erotic than it had on Friday, but just as painful and embarrassing. She wished he would slow down. She was absolutely terrified of the approaching moment when the Japanese sociopath would take over.

Blindfolded as she was, she could not see what Doctor Yamamoto was doing – or whether he was still smiling. That had been such a bad sign, Elise reflected as the smacks continued to land across her upturned bottom. He had smiled at her in the office. He had smiled all the way into Doctor Peters' apartment, and as she stepped up onto the box and bent over the sofa. He had still been smiling when he pulled the sleep-mask down over her eyes. That deranged smirk had been the last thing she'd seen.

Smack!

"Twenty!" Elise called out.

Smack!

"Twenty-one!"

Smack!

"Twenty-two!"

Silence spread through the room. The twin lobes of Elise's ass felt huge and aglow. She was sure her skin was flamingo-pink. It stung and tingled. She desperately wanted to rub it, but instinct prevailed upon her to not move. She held still and waited. Her arms extended vertically, supporting her shoulders above the leather sofa cushions. Her long legs, still ensconced in sheer thigh-high stockings, rubbed idly together as she stood atop the Consequence Box in her pale-pink heels. She knew this motion was unnecessary, and probably wiggled her ass a bit too invitingly in front of the men, but she could not help it. Nervous energy coursed through her.

She heard Doctor Yamamoto begin to talk. The two men exchanged a number of phrases in Japanese that Elise could make no sense of. She tried to hold still. She waited.

Suddenly she felt hands fiddling with the ankle-straps of her shoes. Doctor Peters announced that his partner was taking them off; first the left one, then the right. Elise shifted her weight as each shoe was removed. The same hands then pulled down her stockings; first the left, then the right. Again Elise lifted her feet in sequence to assist with their removal.

She then felt the hands move to her beltline and quickly unzip her miniskirt. There was so little of it left, Elise rationalized, that it probably did not matter. Still, she felt more naked than ever as the skirt fell to the floor. Her only remaining clothing was the stapled shirt and her white G-string.

'Jesus,' Elise thought in silent torment, 'This is fucking crazy!'

In one smooth motion her G-string was pulled down to her ankles.

"Wait!" she squealed. "Why is he taking my underwear?!"

"Because of the oil, Elise," Arthur responded. "He doesn't want to ruin them."

"Oh my fucking God."

Elise clenched her fists in tight balls atop the leather cushions. Baby oil all was being poured all over her ass. Then two hands began to rub it in.

"Doctor Peters," she whispered pleadingly, "Please don't let him hurt me!"

"He's just being dramatic, Elise." Arthur replied. He sounded unsure though, as if he were trying to convince himself too.

Arthur's eyes were closely attuned to the orbital movements of his partner's hands upon Elise's pert young bottom. The high gloss of baby oil was making an absolute spectacle of it. Large handprints from his recent attentions glowed pink. The overhead lights reflected as bright specular pinpoints all across its oily surface.

Elise felt more oil being squirted onto her ass. It tickled her exposed genitals. It ran down the backs of her thighs.

Arthur watched, gob smacked, as filaments of baby oil began to drool off her vulva. The dirty half of his mind reveled: 'Damn...'

Doctor Yamamoto waved his hand to get Arthur's attention. Then he made a lifting gesture with two fingers and spoke a few words of simple Japanese.

"Elise," Arthur began, "he wants you up on tip-toe... as if you were wearing heels."

"Uh... Like this?" Elise asked, raising herself up onto her toes.

"Exactly. Just hold that pose dear. Doctor Yamamoto has told me that he will restart your count at zero if, at any time during his spanking, your heels drop to the box. Do you understand?"

"Um...Are you kidding?"

"I don't think he's kidding, no."

Doctor Yamamoto lifted the ping pong paddle in his right hand. He flexed his fingers around the handle, testing its weight and balance. Then he turned his body perpendicular to Elise and crouched low with his feet wide apart. He drew back his right arm. Arthur realized he was adopting the stance of an Olympic table-tennis player about to serve.

"Uhh..." Arthur hesitated.

There was a brief whistle followed by a sickening crack as the paddle crossed Elise's upturned bottom.

She screamed so loud that Arthur's ears felt pain.

"STOP!!!" he yelled in fright. "Are you fucking insane?!"

A wail escaped Elise's throat. Her knees buckled. Her hands shot backward to cover her ass and she collapsed forward onto the back of the sofa with a cry of shock. But her naked feet remained on tip-toe. Her heels did not drop. And then, after sucking two breaths through gritted teeth, she surprised even herself by uttering a plaintive, terrified: "One?"

"No, Elise! Don't encourage him. Are you okay?"

Elise allowed herself a single sob. She could not answer. Her left ass-cheek was momentarily numb, but she knew the pain was coming. She knew the pain was about to explode through her nervous system.

"Yamamoto!"' Arthur bellowed, turning his full attention to the squat doctor beside him. "WAY too fucking hard! Understand?!"

Doctor Yamamoto's visage remained cool for a moment. Then his impassivity softened. There was no need to translate Arthur's body language. The big man's outrage was clear.

The Japanese doctor straightened himself into a less athletic stance, turned slightly to face Arthur and dipped his chin. It was a mere fraction of a bow, barely noticeable across the room, but it was genuine. He yielded. He turned the paddle over in his hands and then extended it to Arthur, handle-first. As soon as Arthur accepted it, he spun abruptly on his heel and left the room.

Arthur's panic mushroomed.

"Jesus Christ Elise, are you okay?" he asked, quickly leaning over to help her up onto her feet.

Elise resisted his touch. She twisted away, crawling over the back of the sofa and down onto the seat cushions. She yanked off the eye mask and curled into a ball, clutching her left buttock.

"I'm so sorry!" Arthur fumbled, desperate to undo the past few seconds. "I had no idea that he—"

"—that he's an asshole?!!?" Elise finished for him, spite seething in her voice.

Arthur swallowed. His forehead began to sweat.

Elise continued: "You do realize he's insane, don't you? Completely bat-shit insane?!"

"Well, he's odd, yes, but..."

Elise's face was bright red. The pain had arrived and it was overwhelming. Not able to hold out any longer, she released a long, loud cry: "AahOwwww!"

Tears streamed from her eyes. She repeated the same cry until her voice softened to a whimper.

Arthur felt his heart collapsing inward. He moved to front of the sofa and knelt down, feeling useless as he gently stroked the top of Elise's head. All of this was his fault.

"I'm so sorry," is all he could think of to say. He kept repeating those words.

Eventually Elise regained enough lucidity to ask for an ice-pack. Doctor Peters, glad for any way to make himself useful, ran to the kitchen to prepare one. He then sat down next to her and gently held it to her injured bottom.

Elise would have a bruise, clearly, but they both agreed that the skin had not been broken. She did not seem to have the makings of a welt, either. So that was a something. Probably, he suggested, just a few days of tenderness. The bruise would fade through its various colors, as bruises do, and be gone in a week at most.

"I'm cold," Elise said.

Arthur fetched a blanket and wrapped it around her near-naked body. He felt a wave of relief wash over him when Elise managed to smile. She made a joke about Doctor Yamamoto being 'a real pain in the ass.'

Arthur forced out an awkward chuckle. Once again it was he who was terrified of consequences, not Elise.

"I'm hungry," Elise whispered a few minutes later.

Arthur brought her a selection of take-out menus. She chose a Mediterranean place and asked him to order her a large Greek salad.

Twenty minutes later Doctor Peters was backing his old BMW out of the garage to go pick up the food.

Elise stayed behind. She took a quick shower without getting her hair wet, washed the tears and make-up from her face and changed into some yoga pants and a t-shirt. Then she unfolded her sofa-bed and laid silverware and plates on the dinette table. By the time Doctor Peters returned with the food, she was laying sideways atop her bed, checking email on her old laptop.

During dinner, the two of them had the most open and mature exchange of life-stories either could remember. Arthur re-counted the entirety of his divorce-tale, even the less flattering parts. Elise told him about her disastrous college years, including her affair with a married Professor.

They were, both realized, suddenly relating as equals. It felt good.

When the dishes were done Elise crawled into bed. She was beyond exhausted. Doctor Peters paced around the room for a few minutes, tidying up this and that, but he was clearly at loose ends.

"Goodnight Elise," he said finally. He turned toward the short hallway that led to his master bedroom.

"Goodnight Doctor Peters,' Elise replied. "Thanks for uh... saving me."

"No. Don't say that. I never should have started... it. I'm sorry."

"It's okay."

"Well... we can talk about it tomorrow."

Elise rolled onto her side beneath the feather-down comforter. Arthur turned off the light.

**Tease to Please Ch. 09**

**Tuesday June 11, 2013**
Elise was spinning the pedals of Doctor Peters' exercise bike again. It was very early. She had been the first to wake up. Her brain felt clouded with anxiety and she hoped a dose of physical exertion would enable her to see the best path forward.

The left side of her bottom had been sore at first, but after twenty minutes on the bike it felt better. A quick peek in the bathroom mirror had revealed a faint bruise there, vaguely circular in shape, but it was far paler than she had imagined it would be. It was not particularly sensitive to the touch either. She was fine.

This contributed to Elise's sense that she had overreacted the night before. She was especially embarrassed about raising her voice to Doctor Peters and telling him Doctor Yamamoto was crazy and an asshole. Just thinking about that moment now made her face blush.

'Jesus,' Elise mentally scolded herself, 'just because Doctor Yamamoto put a little muscle into my spanking doesn't mean he's crazy. He's just strict, that's all. So don't be such a cry-baby, Elise. Doctor Peters has been too easy on me. It may have been a shock getting the spanking I deserve but, after all, my Consequences aren't supposed to be a turn-on... they're supposed to be a corrective!'

Speaking of turn-ons, Elise's fast pace atop the bike was doing an admirable job of winding up the Model O. It began its second series of chimes as she reached the halfway mark on the bike's 'Alpine Ascent' program. She had not felt particularly sexy at the outset of her workout, but by the time she reached the final hill climb forty minutes later she could tell that her entire vulva was swollen and damp. She was breathing hard. In fact her whole body was sweating, aroused and flushed with energy.

Elise rose up on the pedals to conquer the last virtual hill. Her tiny Lycra shorts, bright white with black piping, were pulled tight against her crotch. Her small jogging bra was infused with sweat. Her lean legs cycled around and around, pushing her little sneakers determinedly through the bike's resistance.

When the program's cool-down routine finished a few minutes later, Elise swung her right leg up and over the saddle and jumped to the floor. She blotted her forehead with a towel and sauntered back to the apartment. Her taut bottom peeked out below the shorts, flexing and un-flexing as her hips rocked from side to side.

She found Doctor Peters standing at the kitchen counter making a bowl of cereal. She sensed right away that he felt awkward about what had happened the night before. He started to speak first, but Elise energetically cut him off:

"No, Doctor Peters, I'm the one who should be apologizing. I totally over-reacted last night and I shouldn't have said those things about Doctor Yamamoto. It was... I wasn't thinking clearly. I shouldn't have been so disrespectful. I was raised better than that, so... I'm sorry."

As Elise spoke, she walked around the kitchen peninsula until she stood facing Arthur. She placed her right hand gently on his terrycloth bathrobe and looked up into his eyes before continuing:

"I know I'm just an intern here. And you and Doctor Yamamoto have way more important things to do than worry about my stupid clothes and my... my inability to control myself. So, I just want to apologize for the way I've been acting. Yesterday evening I kinda... was in shock or something. But I'm fine now and the last thing I want is for you to be disappointed in me, especially with all the new stuff that's going on. And also, I uh... I didn't tell you this before, but Doctor Yamamoto had to spend a long time yesterday morning fixing my uniform. So, I totally get why he was frustrated. I think that's why he swatted me so hard with the Ping-Pong paddle; to, you know, like, teach me a lesson. Anyway, I get it now. I know I need to do a better job meeting his expectations. And I will. I promise."

"Um..." Arthur hesitated. He felt unable to compute Elise's contrition. He had been awake half the night mentally rehearsing his own apology, expecting her to be upset and injured this morning. The first thing he had planned to say was that he would cancel the whole Consequence Game. Now it appeared that might not be necessary. Elise was genuinely contrite about the whole incident.

In fact, the way she was talking so sweetly and standing so close was making Arthur feel suddenly horny. He could see that her workout clothes were really tight. What little coverage they offered was undermined by the way they clung to her skin. Her nipples stood out prominently.

Arthur wished he had put on some underwear. He could feel his penis lengthening beneath his white bathrobe. Aside from the terrycloth belt tied around his waist, there was nothing holding the robe shut. If he got an erection there would be no way to conceal it. He stood very still and tried not to think about Elise's proximity.

Elise adjusted her feet and leaned even closer. She clutched the lapel of Arthur's robe and brought her other hand up to the side of his stomach.

"I just want to be a good intern, Doctor Peters," Elise said quietly, still looking up at his face from below. She was standing directly in front of him, diminutive without her high heels on. "I want to learn, to anticipate what you need before you even ask me... you know?"

"Uh-huh."

"So don't be so easy on me, okay? Show me, like, how to improve your day. I want to be useful."

Elise went quiet as if she were suddenly deep in thought. Her left hand absentmindedly slid down to the knot of Arthur's terrycloth belt.

"Mm-hmm..." Arthur murmured with increasing anxiety. He felt his cock flooding with new blood pressure. It began to rise between his thighs and push against the front of his robe. He stepped sideways away from Elise and set down the carton of milk he had been holding. He turned to face the counter and leaned his pelvis into the lower cupboards to conceal his burgeoning erection.

"I'm sure you're angry with me," Elise continued, re-emerging from whatever brief daydream she had been having, "and probably disappointed too. I'm sorry it's taken me so long to realize."

"No, no. I'm not angry at all, Elise. In fact, I—"

"I love working here, Doctor Peters. And the things you're doing are amazing. I finally get that now."

Elise closed the gap between them for a second time, gently pushing her petite jog-bra against the arm of his bathrobe. Arthur exhaled a measured breath, trying unsuccessfully to stall the ascent of his libido.

"You're helping so many people," Elise continued. "...and I get to have a front-row seat, right at the most exciting part. It's really cool."

"Yes, well..." Arthur muttered, "It is going to be exciting I guess."

"So exciting! And I want to help. So use me a lot, okay?"

"Okay," Arthur grimaced, unable to resist his mind's naughty reading of her words.

Elise tugged at his sleeve, saying: "I mean it. You've got to take advantage of me, especially while all this stuff is going on. Otherwise you'll just go crazy."

"Yes," Arthur said quietly. He was staring at the countertop, trying NOT to imagine all the ways to take advantage of Elise and her nubile body.

"Do you forgive me?" she pouted.

Arthur turned his head and saw that Elise now held her arms slightly apart, requesting an embrace.

"Yeah, yeah," he fumbled, "There's nothing to forgive. You're not in any sort of trouble with me, Elise."

"Okay, well then give me a hug, you big softie!" Elise giggled. She yanked his sleeve firmly.

Arthur had been balancing mostly on one leg. Elise's insistent tug made him stumble toward her. He spun and reflexively caught himself on her shoulders. Elise tried to hug him but his erection sprang through the robe's gap and collided with her navel.

"Oh!" she squealed, jumping back and covering her mouth. Her eyes went wide at the sight of him. Arthur grabbed his penis and quickly tucked it back under his robe. He then flattened one hand over his crotch, afraid to let go.

"Sorry!" they said in unison.

Elise laughed into the palm of her hand, but Arthur felt too embarrassed to say anything. He turned back toward the cabinets and wrapped his robe a little tighter around himself.

"I... I didn't mean to," Elise stuttered. "I mean, I wasn't trying to flirt with you Doctor Peters. Honest!"

Her mind raced through all things she had just said and the little ways she had been touching him, seeing them in a new light. She realized how it all might have been misinterpreted by someone with as much pent-up stress and loneliness as Doctor Peters. She blamed herself for being so unaware.

"No, it's not your fault," Arthur said in a low tone. He crossed his arms in front of his chest and stared down at the countertop.

Elise was momentarily at a loss for words. She gazed silently at the side of his bearded face, feeling regretful about causing him such an understandable embarrassment.

"Jeez, Doctor Peters," she said eventually, "I wish... I guess I wish you had a nice girlfriend who... Well, it's just... you deserve more. Like, someone cute... to help you, you know, relax."

"Thanks Elise. That's kind of you to say, but I'm fine. Really. I didn't mean to frighten you."

"No, no. It's -- I mean I wish, umm..."Elise looked at the floor and crossed one foot behind the other. "Well, anyway, I get why you think I'm not appropriate for you, and of course you're probably right. But, God! If I was your girlfriend I would be, like, SO nice to you."

Elise released a soft sigh into the silence that followed. Arthur looked sideways at her. Her face wore a tight-lipped smile that widened incrementally as she raised her eyes up from the floor to meet his. Silence stretched out between them.

His erection felt like a hammer pounding the cabinet door in front of him.

'Why?' Arthur agonized internally, 'Why is she even here? It's like she was created specifically to tease me. And of all times, why now?'

"I think," Elise whispered, glancing down at her hands, which had started fidgeting. "I think I better go get in the shower. Otherwise I might do something really awkward."

In the brief moment of stillness that followed her statement, Arthur felt invisible electricity zap across the air between them. Then Elise began to turn away.

"Like what?" he blurted. He had not meant to say anything. It just came out. He regretted it instantly.

Elise stopped mid-spin and looked over her shoulder at him. Her half-suppressed smile broke free, becoming a wide, mischievous grin. She planted both hands on the edge of the kitchen counter next to him and shrugged her shoulders while capturing his gaze with her big hazel eyes. She arched her back slightly, exaggerating the thinness of her tummy while sticking her bottom out just a little father than necessary. She knew her tiny white gym shorts accentuated the roundness of her ass.

"I dunno..." she said coquettishly. "But, if I actually was your girlfriend... is there something you'd want?"

"Oh for God's sake, Elise," Arthur groaned. "I'm sorry, that was an inappropriate question. Just go! Get in the shower."

"No. We're talking. No harm in that, right?"

Arthur rolled his eyes and shook his square, bearded face from side to side. "Yes, there can be a lot of harm in that. Especially when I'm your employer and you're my intern... whose half my age and very, very hot!"

"Very... very hot?" Elise grinned even wider, raising one eyebrow. "Well, that's nice of you, Doctor Peters. For a second there, it almost sounded like you were flirting with me."

"I really think you should hit the shower now. We both have a lot of work to do today."

"Well... If you say so," she answered coyly, still aiming her smile at him like a weapon. "But just so you know: if I was your girlfriend... you would be having a LOT of sex right now."

Elise giggled and reclined her head far enough that the end of her ample ponytail tickled her tailbone. Her white teeth gleamed at him. Arthur's cock pulsed painfully against the wooden cabinet door. He could not hold her gaze. He balled his fists and thumped them on the countertop. She was going to be the death of him. He knew it.

"Shower," he whispered without moving his jaw. His tone was almost pleading.

Elise straightened and let an extravagant sigh escape her lips. Then she spun on her heel and skipped away down the hall toward the master bedroom, still grinning.

When the bedroom door shut behind her, Arthur stepped back from the countertop. His erection sprang out from his bathrobe and pointed urgently toward the ceiling. It was so swollen that it looked purple. It nearly hurt. He reached down and gave it a tentative stroke with his right hand. A drop of pre-cum appeared at the tip. He closed his eyes. There was nothing in the world he wanted more than to bury his organ balls-deep in Elise's tiny body. He imagined her pussy would grip him tighter than a greased fist, and that she would enjoy every second of it too. Considering what they had done Sunday night, he guessed she was a tigress between the sheets.

Water pipes squeaked somewhere behind the wall. Arthur visualized Elise naked, stepping through the glass door of his spacious walk-in shower. He debated for a moment whether he should march down there and join her. He was certain she would welcome him with open arms (and probably open legs!). He squeezed his shaft and trembled, imagining her little peach-like pussy split by his thrusting cock.

"No," he hissed, releasing his grip and thumping his hand on the counter again in frustration. "Get ahold of yourself, man. She's Syliva's daughter!"

Half an hour later Elise emerged from his room wearing only a towel. Her skin was freshly moisturized. Her shiny auburn hair had been blown-dry and swung buoyantly to and fro across her naked back as she walked around the living room picking out her underwear and cosmetics. Arthur clumsily stacked his breakfast dishes in the kitchen sink and strode to his bedroom as quickly as he could; aware that if he stayed around to watch Elise get dressed his erection would make an irresistible comeback.

Once Doctor Peters was gone, Elise pulled on a gauzy pair of white bikini-cut panties and a white mesh tube-top that she had brought from home. If Doctor Yamamoto really considered her to be a 'lazy American' for not wearing revealing enough tops, she thought to herself, then she was going to show him a thing or two about how girls get through the 120-degree summers back home in Arizona! The mesh top was unquestionably the most see-through shirt she owned. Her pale, braless skin would be obvious. She knew if her nipples became hard there would be nowhere near enough resistance in the fabric to restrain them.

'This,' Elise thought as she stretched the garment into place over her A-cup breasts, 'won't leave him with anything to complain about!'

Elise padded her way, barefoot, out to the office closet to choose a skirt, stockings and shoes. She found a pale-pink miniskirt that she had not worn before. It was nothing more than two flaps of silk tied together by a loose knot at either hip. She tied it low around her pelvis and grabbed a packet of white fishnet stockings and her pink strappy heels. The stockings had lace garter bands at mid-thigh, leaving several inches of her bare skin exposed below the short skirt.

After stepping up into the now-familiar heels, Elise returned to the apartment to finish getting ready.

She fixed her hair and make-up, then ate the only piece of fresh fruit in the entire kitchen; a green apple. She also drank a small glass of milk even though it was her least favorite beverage. There was, she discovered, hardly anything else nutritious in the entire kitchen. She did not want to endure a repeat of Monday morning's starvation. The milk and fruit, she figured, would hold her over until lunch.

The silver belly chain that Doctor Yamamoto had shortened Monday morning seemed just as tight now as it had then.

When Doctor Peters emerged from his bedroom a little while later, he gave Elise an unsubtle up-and-down look. Elise interpreted his wide-eyed, pursed expression as an indication of approval.

"You like it?" she asked, slowly twirling in the center of the room.

Arthur shook his head from side to side, feigning disbelief. "Yeah," he muttered, "you've outdone yourself."

"Hah! Well, good," she smirked. "Maybe later you'll rub me down with oil or something."

"Jesus. Let's go."

'Perfect,' Elise told herself as she followed Arthur into the laboratory, 'If I can hold his attention all day, maybe he'll tell the other guys to keep their damn hands off me for a change.'

By 9:00am Doctor Peters had assembled another all-staff meeting. The men were drinking plenty of coffee, which kept Elise busy running around refilling mugs and brewing. They seemed to relish keeping her on her feet, but she had become quite accustomed to her tall shoes so it did not trouble her. The occasional pat on the back of her thigh however, usually paired with a verbal 'thanks,' was beginning to get on her nerves. Ostensibly, she knew, it was just a gesture of appreciation. But some of the men, particularly Alex and Hiro, were definitely getting a little too touchy. She wondered whether she should draw the line with them directly or instead mention it to Doctor Peters.

He, she noticed unhappily, seemed totally absorbed in the business of the organizing the sale of his new PVA patents. He scarcely acknowledged her all morning.

Near the end of the meeting, Doctor Peters informed everyone that the PVA project's investors were going to visit the lab on Thursday. It would be a suit-and-tie affair, since so many of them were high-finance types. This meant the four junior scientists and Elise needed to go shopping for business attire. Doctor Yamamoto, perhaps feeling a small degree of remorse about paddling Elise so hard the night before, was taking her along for an appointment with his personal tailor. They had arranged a limousine to carry six of them into San Francisco to hit all the shops in one fell swoop. Only Doctor Peters would remain behind at the lab, since he needed to continue working the phones with investors and lawyers.

The limo Doctor Yamamoto had ordered arrived fifteen minutes ahead of schedule. In the rush to get everyone out the door, Elise did not even consider her clothing. She was inured to walking around the lab wearing next-to-nothing, but when she sat down in the back of the limo she realized that shopping downtown in her outfit would be an entirely different experience.

Elise had been second-to-last getting into the limo. She was wedged into the middle of the back seat between Hiro and Kazutoshi. The L-shaped bench across from her was rather cramped due to a large bar and entertainment console which occupied the limo's right side. Alex and Jacob had arranged themselves on the curved bench quite comfortably, but it looked like it might be too small for three adults.

When Doctor Yamamoto leaned his head into the car to join them, it became obvious that he intended to sit by the door, which meant (without anyone needing to say it aloud) that Elise would have to give up her middle seat so Hiro could slide over.

Alex promptly volunteered that Elise should sit on his lap. In the awkward shuffling of bodies that followed, Elise felt as though every guy in the car had his hands on her at one time or another. When she finally arrived on Alex's lap, there was not nearly enough headroom for her to sit upright. Instead she had to sprawl sideways across the limo's L-shaped bench, draping herself across both Alex and Jacob. Her butt was on Alex's lap and her head and shoulders were leaning against Jacob. Her dainty, stiletto-clad feet were atop Kazutoshi's knees.

Elise tried to sit up straighter, but it only became less comfortable for everyone. There was not even room for her feet on the floor. All the men's legs and shoes were jammed together in the narrow aisle between the seats and the limo's entertainment bar.

When the limo began to move down the block, Elise could not help but grimace at the way so many male hands rushed to steady her. It hardly helped however. At the first corner she rolled face-down over the knees of both Americans. They laughed and clutched her naked limbs to keep her from tumbling onto the floor.

The car travelled across the suburban streets toward the nearest freeway on-ramp. Elise struggled to maintain her balance and dignity. Soon Alex leaned across her and retrieved a bottle of champagne from the refrigerator under the bar. This elicited a cheer of enthusiasm from all the men. Plastic cups were distributed and everyone received a sloppy pour.

By the time the limo roared onto the freeway, a party-like atmosphere was building in the rear compartment. The stereo was on, blasting a local hip-hop station. The first bottle of champagne was empty and a second one just had been opened.

Doctor Yamamoto sipped his champagne rather more slowly than the others and kept watch over the scene with a cool eye.

Alex refilled Elise's second cup nearly to the brim and she felt compelled to drink it down quickly to avoid spilling. The alcohol went straight to her head, making it difficult to remain impassive about the increasingly daring fingers she felt all over her skin.

Elise was very aware that in her prone position her flappy skirt offered almost no concealment. She was certain the men in the back half of the limo were getting an intermittent view of her gauzy panties. She forced herself to get comfortable with this idea because the more worrying thing was that so many hands were roving all across her legs and feet that it became difficult to keep track of who they all belonged to. Alex in particular seemed to have decided that the best way to hold onto her was to put his hand between her thighs, just below her crotch. Kazutoshi and Hiro took charge of her feet, tickling them through her stockings and roaming their fingers to her ankles and knees. Jacob's arms were wrapped around her upper torso, managing to balance his champagne cup in front of her while intermittently squeezing her left breast. Elise began to feel dizzy from the alcohol and the surfeit of attention.

It was not long before the conversation in the limousine became a freewheeling and very intimate discussion of Elise's physical attributes. Some of it was in Japanese but Elise understood the gist. All the men were obsessed with her legs and ass. They began favorably critiquing her physique, illustrating certain aspects by tracing their fingers up and down her legs and lower back. They asked Elise her own opinion, and when she declined to play along they all jeered and taunted her. Alex set aside his champagne cup and intentionally rolled Elise back onto her tummy. He took hold of her slender hips and suddenly hoisted them high into the air.

"This is your favorite, isn't it?" he asked her, much to the delight of everyone in the limo. "That's why you're always wearing these tiny skirts."

"No!" Elise squealed, trying to twist herself from his grip so she could lower her bottom.

All the men cheered in the affirmative, in both English and Japanese. Someone lifted the back of her skirt. Elise felt multiple gropes and slaps across her thighs and bottom.

"Look at that ass!" Alex said loudly.

Elise squirmed and begged to be allowed to roll back over. So many hands touching her at once felt crazy. It was ticklish, humiliating and, worst of all, erotic.

Seemingly out of the blue, one of the men mentioned yoga. Elise was too flustered to even notice.

"Yeah, show us some of your yoga moves," Alex said, abruptly letting go of her hips.

Elise tumbled from his lap onto the floor and came to rest sitting among the men's clustered feet. She grabbed the edge of the bar for support as the men shuffled their shoes around to make room for her.

"Downward dog!" said Alex.

One of the young Japanese men seconded the idea.

"Oh my God, no way!" Elise answered. Her mind was a blurry cocktail of humiliation, panic and alcohol. Ten eyeballs were staring at her from three directions.

"How 'bout the splits?"

"No. Don't be stupid."

"You can't?" Jacob asked.

"Well, sure, but not here. Not like this." Elise answered, gesturing at her surroundings.

"Come on, show us!" Alex urged.

"Yeah, we'll make sure you don't fall," said Jacob.

"No way. I mean, come on, guys! There isn't even room in here."

"Sure there is," Alex said, "just put one foot in Jacob's lap and the other down there by Doctor Yamamoto."

"That's not safe!"

"Nonsense. We'll hold onto you. Right everyone?"

An affirmative cheer resounded loudly through the limo. Even Doctor Yamamoto's impassive face seemed amused by the idea. The heavy bass line of a rap song began to permeate the cabin.

Elise gave in. It was just the splits after all; certainly no worse than lying across their laps in such an absurd miniskirt. She got into a low squat in the middle of the floor with her back against the entertainment console and extended her right leg sideways to the rear-facing seat.

Jacob's eyes became transfixed as his hands accepted her delicate foot.

Elise placed her own hands flat on the floor in front of herself for support and then began to hop her left leg in little steps toward the back of the limo where Doctor Yamamoto sat. As she did so she felt hands scoop under her from all sides; lifting her fishnet-clad legs and feet. She became nearly weightless atop a bridge of hands as her second leg went parallel to the floor. A happy cheer went up in the limo as she achieved full extension.

Elise could not help smiling at the intensity of the men's appreciation. All around her, their faces and eyes reflected awe at her flexibility. She held a perfect 180 degree leg-split spanning the length of the compartment and grinned proudly back at them. Drinks were quaffed and cups discarded so that more hands could support her.

The car sped along the concrete freeway, bouncing over expansion gaps and the occasional staccato burst of Botts' dots.

Someone turned the music louder.

Elise realized her coworkers were inebriated. They were lifting her legs higher and higher in time to the song's beat. Each was being gentle, but in their collective excitement they were lifting her well above the carpeted floor. Unable to get out of the splits or stay upright, her weight tipped forward onto her hands. She called out in protest as her legs and ass were raised inexorably behind her. No one listened.

Very soon Elise was completely inverted, forced into an involuntary headstand with her stiletto-clad feet captured at opposite ends of the limo.

Her silk skirt fell to her ribcage, completely inside-out, leaving her gauzy underwear on full display. The cabin exploded with celebratory exclamations in both languages.

Her face was to the bar, inverted. Her torso's weight balanced on a tripod formed by her hands and the top of her head. The men held her perfectly upside down with her legs 180 degrees apart. Her privates, she knew, had just become their utmost fixation. A cacophony of approval drowned out her desperate pleas to be released.

Blood rushed to her head, making her champagne buzz positively delirious. She began to pant for air, feeling claustrophobic in the narrow foot-well amongst all the shoes and trousers. She complained loudly again and again, but could not make herself heard. She knew her tissue-thin panties would hardly conceal her waxed crotch from the men's eyes. She just hoped they would not notice the Model O.

"You should twerk for us!" Alex yelled out.

A chorus of male voices affirmed his suggestion.

"What?! No way!" Elise whined. She could barely hear herself amid the music and the thrum of the road passing under the limousine.

She tried to flip herself back over, but made no progress. Someone grabbed her pelvis and begin to shake her ass in time to the music. All the while firm hands kept her ankles as far apart from one another as possible. Her leg tendons were taut beneath the smooth skin of her inner thighs. She felt her hip joints nearly over-extend.

The bump-bump of earthquake expansion gaps passing under the limousine sent tremors through her skull.

An avalanche of appreciative comments spilled from the mouths of men as they leaned in close to examine Elise's upended body. In her position she could no longer see their faces. She was lost in a forest of shoes and trouser legs. Music and male voices comingled into a frenetic swirl of sound that rose in intensity as several fingers ventured above her garters.

"Oh my god!" Elise cried out as she felt a man's finger tickle her innermost thigh, right beside her panties. Then someone snugged the back of her underwear deep between her butt cheeks.

The erotic display of a girl's ass waving around in the middle of the limousine was more than several of the men could handle. They began to lose their cool, giggling and swearing as they leaned in and squeezed whatever parts of Elise's body happened to be within reach.

Elise closed her eyes and clenched her teeth amid the onslaught of sensations. The music's pounding beat, the thrum of the freeway against her skull and the swarm of fingers caressing every millimeter of her legs and ass combined into a single mad rush of panic and endorphins.

"Oh my God, please let me down!" she yelled. Her face turned and pressed sideways against the carpet, still surrounded by men's shoes. Someone's fingers were pinching the big tendons that stood out in high relief to either side of her crotch. Whoever was holding her hips was keeping very good time with the music. Fingers kneaded the soft spots behind her knees.

Elise opened her mouth in shock. Someone smacked her ass to the beat. A high-pitched moan escaped her throat.

The Model O began to chime.

Elise convulsed at its first resonant "Ting...!" It was devilish. Her exposure, the roving fingers and the champagne all combined to make her anticipation of the device's next eleven strikes too much to bear. She whimpered into the carpet as the second 'Ting...!' rang around her clit.

Elise realized her arousal was about to become obvious but there was nothing she could do about it. She was trapped, unable to spare even one hand to cover herself. When the third "Ting...!' struck, her hips reflexively pumped in mid-air.

"Mmmm! MMMuhh!!" she moaned in a mixture of pleasure and humiliation as the Model O measured out its steady chiming on her clit. Her vagina began to soak itself with lubricant. Again her hips pumped in midair.

"She's twerking!" Alex's voice exclaimed. The others cheered.

Someone lifted her hips higher, relieving most of the weight from her neck. Whoever it was began to exaggerate the gyrations of her lower body.

Japanese and American obscenities filled the back of the limo as Elise involuntarily twerked. Everyone but Alex believed she was actually performing for them out of pure enjoyment. The hip-hop music blasted from all sides.

By the time the Model O chimed for the twelfth time, the song had changed and Elise's face was a mess of tears and tangled hair.

She heard Jacob's voice rise above the din.

"Okay, okay, gentlemen!" he bellowed, "I think that's enough!"

Elise felt her right ankle being released and a few other hands retreated from her legs. She twisted herself onto one shoulder as the grip around her hips relaxed, allowing her to sink closer to the floor.

She opened her eyes and looked straight up. Alex was staring down at her from between her legs. His chin was directly above her underwear.

"Come on dude," Jacob said to him, "don't get carried away."

Alex's face disappeared and his hands withdrew. Elise winced as her full weight settled awkwardly across her back. Finally her other ankle was released, the one apparently held by Hiro, and she collapsed onto her side amidst the sea of men's shoes.

Jacob leaned forward from his rear-facing seat and helped Elise clamber up onto his lap. She folded her petite shape within his gentle embrace.

All eyes were on her. She was teetering on an unsteady fulcrum between breakdown and climax. Her face was pink, her hair disarrayed and her skin coated in a fine sheen of perspiration.

"Are you okay?" Jacob whispered in her ear.

A tremble ran through her. She was grateful the experience was over, yet knew her arousal had probably been obvious to everyone. She wanted them to stop looking at her. She turned away from their eyes and buried her face into Jacob's shoulder, whispering: "I'm fine."

The radio played on, but the remaining few minutes of the limo ride passed without conversation. When they arrived in downtown San Francisco, the Japanese men and Alex started talking again. Elise, still balled-up in Jacob's lap, lifted her gaze to the window and watched the tall buildings and busy streets pass by.

They arrived at a crowded shopping district on Market Street. The limousine pulled over and stopped. As planned, everyone began to disembark except Elise and Doctor Yamamoto.

Jacob squeezed Elise's arm gently as he waited his turn to climb out. "Sorry about all that," he said sheepishly, "I thought you were having fun at first and, umm... I was kinda distracted by your feet. They're fucking perfect."

Elise gave him a wary smile. She was too humiliated to speak.

A few moments later the doors slammed shut and the limousine began moving again. Elise felt conflicted about being alone with Doctor Yamamoto, but given their language barrier there was really nothing to say.

Their long car crawled through clogged intersections, one after another. Elise leaned her head against the seat and tried to relax. Doctor Yamamoto appeared to be in a safe mood, at least. He had turned off the music and was gazing intently at his phone, scrolling through emails with his thumb.

Elise stared out the window. People-watching from behind the anonymity of tinted windows was a novel treat for her. She folded her arms in front of her chest and let out a long sigh as her heart rate and stress level faded.

A few minutes later Doctor Yamamoto pressed a button which lowered the privacy glass between the driver and passenger compartments. In surprisingly cheerful Japanese, he began to converse with the driver.

'Ah,' Elise realized, 'that's why Doctor Yamamoto arranged the limo... he must use this guy all the time.'

Indeed, Doctor Yamamoto seemed to be on friendly terms with the chauffeur. When they finally reached their destination, they parked in an underground garage and the driver accompanied them up through a warren of hallways and elevators to a sprawling multi-level shopping area spanning the base of several adjacent skyscrapers. It became clear to Elise that he also served as Doctor Yamamoto's translator on excursions like this.

Once above ground, Elise was embarrassed to be seen by so many people. Her outfit was scandalously out of place among the business suits and long overcoats of downtown San Francisco. Everyone was staring; men and women alike.

Fortunately it was only a short walk and one escalator ride before they arrived at a small custom-tailoring shop. An elegantly dressed older woman welcomed them inside the glass doorway. She greeted each of them cheerfully and waved her hand toward the back of the store. There, two bespectacled and balding tailors stooped over an enormous leather-topped worktable. The table and the men appeared, not coincidentally Elise guessed, antique.

The two tailors welcomed Doctor Yamamoto like a favorite customer. It was clear he had spent a sizable amount of money at this establishment over the years.

As they spoke with Doctor Yamamoto via the driver, each man glanced quizzically in Elise's direction. She knew her outfit was ridiculous in this environment. It would have been ridiculous in any environment, really, other than a strip club or a "Pimps & Ho's" theme party.

Doctor Yamamoto gestured once or twice in her direction. Once his words had been translated, the shorter of the two tailors approached Elise with a friendly smile and an outstretched hand.

"Welcome to Cuthbert's, Miss..." he said while pumping her hand up and down in his soft, dry palm.

"Thanks. I'm Elise."

"Ah, Miss Elise. Wonderful. My name is Giuseppe Spazzafragiotti, but you may call me Beppo. Capisce?"

"Okay. Hi."

"We will be outfitting you with a new suit today. Is that right?"

"Um, yes. That's right. It's for a business meeting this Thursday."

"Perfecto. Very well, Miss Elise, I'm sure we can put something lovely together for you. Why don't you come along to the back and we'll start with your measurements, yes?"

Elise felt like she was talking to a character from a black and white movie. There was no way the old man was less than eighty. He shuffled along in his brown leather loafers, motioning proudly at all the racks of suits and bolts of fabric lining the walls. Once they reached the rear of the shop, he gestured for Elise to step up onto a low platform flanked by three mirrors. He pulled a ribbon-like measuring tape from the front pocket of his coat and began to take her measurements.

Elise marveled at his professionalism. Never once did she feel discomfited by his touch as he worked the soft tape through an efficient sequence of movements. He was the polar opposite of those damn lab-geeks, she realized. And his mind was still sharp. He took every measure he needed in succession and only then penciled them all out, from memory, on a long rectangular piece of cardstock. Throughout this process he appeared totally nonplussed by her scandalous attire, even when taking her bust measurements around her diaphanous mesh top, and her waist measurement around her little belly chain, and her inseam right up to the top of her thigh. Elise felt comfortable the entire time.

The other tailor and Doctor Yamamoto passed through the back room briefly. It seemed to Elise that they were test-fitting bespoke dress shirts, which the Japanese doctor must have ordered previously. She knew he was not in need of a new suit, anyway, since she had seen him wearing one every day beneath his white lab coat.

Giuseppe disappeared for a minute and then returned to Elise wheeling a rack full of women's skirt-suits. He asked her to begin by trying on the suit jackets. Most were charcoal grey and had a slim, tapered cut ending just above her hips. One after another, Giuseppe slipped each jacket onto her while tut-tutting about the fit. Finally he found a size and cut that he deemed workable. He set it aside and retrieved the matching skirt from its hanger.

Elise untied one side of her silk miniskirt. She hesitated briefly, glancing around the room, and then peeled it off her hips in one smooth pull. Giuseppe pinched the tiny pink garment between his thumb and forefinger, carried it a few steps away and gingerly draped it over the back of chair. Now down to her underwear, stockings and mesh top, Elise could not resist momentarily checking herself out in the three mirrors. She thought she looked pretty damn good. In a slutty way, but still.

Giuseppe held the new suit skirt open for her to step into. She rested a hand on his stooped shoulder and threaded her tall shoes through the opening. Once the garment was up around her waist and zipped, they both agreed it was too loose and too long.

"A young woman," Giuseppe informed her, "nowadays can wear the skirt shorter and still be professional. So, just tell me where you would like the hem."

With Giuseppe's help, Elise folded the bottom of the skirt under itself until it was up at mid-thigh. That looked flattering, Elise thought, while still being sensible.

Doctor Yamamoto glided through the room again. His jacket was off and a new shirt hung from his wide shoulders, open to the waist. He paused for a moment, regarding Elise. His face betrayed no emotion, but he made a gentle lifting motion with one hand.

"Okaaay," Elise muttered, "I guess we need to go a little shorter, Beppo. He's the one buying."

"As you wish," Giuseppe offered, helping her roll the hem farther up her thighs.

When Elise felt the skirt had reached the point of no return, beyond which it would become an unwearable joke anywhere outside the laboratory, she stopped.

"Just a little longer than that please, Beppo."

"Perfecto, Miss Elise. Please just give me a moment. You must stand still while I chalk the line."

Giuseppe lowered himself to one knee and marked the new hem with white chalk. Then he asked Elise to turn away from him. He began pinching the dark gray fabric together along the central rear seam, scribing vertical chalk marks to record how much fabric was to be removed to make the skirt perfectly snug.

Next, he had Elsie put on the suit jacket again so that he could mark the cuffs. They agreed the waist and shoulders were already fine, so there would be no need for any difficult tailoring there.

With that task complete, Giuseppe disappeared again. This time he brought back a stack of white silk vests.

"These," he offered proudly, "Are our specialty for women's suits. You will not find them anywhere else."

Elise smiled brightly. She adored the old man's calm earnestness. She doffed her charcoal-colored jacket and began trying on the vests in a progression of sizes.

They really were, it turned out, rather unusual. They had a French lapel/collar combination made of gorgeously shiny off-white silk. What was interesting was that the collar also served as a halter-top. The vests were nearly backless.

No fabric existed other than the silk lapels until about halfway down her chest. Even then, the vest itself emerged gradually, tapered steeply downward as it wrapped around her ribcage. At the rear, it was only about four inches tall. In the middle of her back, at the vest's lowest point, the two sides were joined together via an eyelet-and-ribbon style closure. The front material, below the deep V where the lapels overlapped, was entirely devoid of seams. The vest only opened in the rear.

Once they found the correct size, Giuseppe demonstrated how the laces in back were to be drawn tight to make the front of the vest lay completely flat across her stomach.

"Wow," Elise whispered as he tightened the laces behind her. "That's pretty sexy, Beppo. Are you sure I can wear this to a meeting?"

"Always keep on your jacket, Miss Elise. Only you will know. You will see how it improves the fit of the coat, to have no material bunching across your shoulders and back. It is a lovely effect. My female clients always tell me they love the freedom of movement it gives. I hope you will agree."

Giuseppe helped her slip on the suit's small jacket again. She turned this way and that in front of the three mirrors, seeing the full ensemble for the first time. She enjoyed the way the silk lining slithered across her bare arms and shoulders. With the jacket's two buttons done in front, the vest's French lapels peeked out beautifully, as though she were wearing an expensive silk blouse. But because she was not, the jacket itself lay that much closer to her skin, flattering her figure.

"Oh, Beppo..." Elise whispered. "I love it!"

"Of course you do, Miss Elise," he replied with a wink. "You came to Cuthbert's."

Half an hour later arrangements were made for the new clothes to be delivered to the laboratory by private courier the following day. The two tailors expressed the utmost confidence that they would have the requisite adjustments made in plenty of time for the courier to pick them up at 10AM.

Doctor Yamamoto paid for everything with a featureless black credit card. Elise had never seen anything like it before, let alone experienced the fragile rush of having an older man pay for her shopping.

Elise and her two chaperones left the store. She was heartbroken to be back in her uniform clothes. She wished she could have worn her new suit instead, especially now that walkways were teeming with lunchtime shoppers. She found herself the subject of a thousand leering, disapproving stares as they marched through the outdoor shopping center. She clasped her skirt's little flaps to her thighs, desperate to avoid flashing the men and women they passed. Her high heels clacked loudly across the pale tile flooring. Everyone within earshot turned their heads to look. The wind whipped between the tall buildings and she felt cold, which was mortifying because it made her nipples stand out through the mesh tube top. The stares of women in their 30's and 40's were particularly hateful.

Elise realized she looked like a paid escort walking alongside Doctor Yamamoto and his chauffeur. If her parents could see her now, she thought, they would both go absolutely postal. Especially her mom.

Instead of meeting the oncoming tide of stares, Elise began to watch the ground in front of her clacking feet. Disturbing thoughts about her mom were quickly supplanted by a much more immediate concern: shoes!

Neither pair of candy striper heels would go with her beautiful new suit at all. She needed black or grey pumps, without question.

Over the next few minutes Elise frantically tried to convince the chauffeur and Doctor Yamamoto of her plight. Her word-rate tripled as she sensed the Doctor's resistance. They had been headed toward a cigar shop that was another of his favorites. He was not sympathetic to the idea of making a stop along the way. Finally, when Elise spotted an upscale shoe store directly across the street from their intended path, he relented. He handed Elise two crisp one-hundred dollar bills and told her (via the driver) to join them at the cigar shop a block away in less than twenty minutes. Elise grabbed the cash, gave him a hurried hug and then ran (or rather speed-walked as fast as she could) across the street in her tall pink sandals.

Elise suddenly felt emboldened. She had a fistful of cash and a shoe store to raid. The sense of independence, of being away from the laboratory and all its men, even if only for twenty minutes, was like a holiday.

Of course, everyone in the store nearly fell over when they saw what she was wearing. Elise hardly noticed though; she was on a mission.

"Hi," she said abruptly to the nearest unoccupied saleswoman. "I need a pair of black pumps. I'm a six. Narrow if you have it."

The saleswoman turned and gave Elise an unhurried onceover. She became particularly wide-eyed when she noticed her braless skin through the mesh tube top.

"Uh-hmmmm," she began languorously, "I'm sorry, sweetheart. What was that?"

"Size six pumps. Black or very dark grey. To go with a suit. Like, like..." Elise looked around desperately at all the racks of women's shoes. "Like those!"

She pointed across the room, toward a woman wearing two-inch high closed-toe pumps.

"Except in black," she continued quickly. "Or almost black, and taller. Do you have anything like that? In a six?"

The saleswoman adjusted her glasses and slowly rotated her head in the direction Elise had pointed. Then she turned back and gave Elise another up and down look, this time paying particular attention to her feet. After a lengthy pause she said: "Size seven, did you say?"

"No. Six. Please, I only have a few minutes!"

"Well. I suppose..." the woman sighed heavily. "Let me see what I can find in the back. Just have a seat, dear."

Of course, Elise did not want to 'have a seat, dear.' She would have preferred a deer rifle and a box of ammo. Then she could have gotten what she needed from the back of the store, tried it on, paid in cash and been out the door in less time than it took her sales lady to amble past the register.

'Crap!' she swore to herself, looking around the room. It seemed impossible her new pet tortoise would ever return in less than twenty minutes. Elise plunged between the chrome racks of discounted shoes and started looking. In less than fifteen seconds she determined there were no dark pumps in her size.

"Can I help you find something?" another sales lady asked behind her.

Elise bolted upright and spun around. "Yes!" she began fiercely. But, realizing her mistake with the first woman, she paused for a moment to think. Then she laid on her softest, most syrupy and conspiratorial tone, whispering:

"I am SO sorry to bother you like this, but I have a real doozy of a situation on my hands and I just KNOW you can help me. You see, we're all just on our way in a few minutes to a charity costume party, which is why I had to wear these absurd clothes, and you see earlier today at the office I broke the heel of my best dark pumps... and since we're all downtown for the charity event tonight I just knew if I popped into my favorite shoe store, you could help me pick out a new pair!"

Elise gave the woman a smile that would have set fire to an iceberg.

"Oh! Well, yes, of course. What's your size?"

"Six. Thank you so much. And narrow if you have it."

"Dark pumps, with um, say... a three inch heel?"

"You know me!" Elise smiled.

"Yes, yes. Right. I'll be back!"

Within two minutes Elise was surrounded by three women, all helping her to try on shoes. It took very little time to identify a perfect pair. Elise paid, collected her change and skittered out the door and down to the end of the block carrying her new shoes in a box. She found the cigar shop and handed sixty dollars of change to Doctor Yamamoto. He checked his watch and gave her a faintly admiring look. They had been apart for nineteen minutes.

Elise did her best to befriend the driver during the long walk back to the limousine. He turned out to be a multi-generational native of the City as well as a Japanese-American. He, like Giuseppe, remained resolutely professional and charming, never once allowing Elise's skimpy uniform to crack his decorum.

When the three of them reached the limousine, Elise was delighted that Doctor Yamamoto had no objection to her request to sit up front with the driver.

Fifteen traffic-clogged minutes later, they were back at the Market street shopping center. The four lab geeks were waiting on the sidewalk outside an empty Tourneau store. They piled into the rear compartment, looking unhappily sober and footsore. The driver neatly arranged all their plastic garment bags into the trunk.

Elise was glad to be up front with the chauffeur as the long car crept toward the East Bay through the afternoon traffic. She propped her elbow onto the sill of the passenger side window and leaned her head back. With the privacy glass rolled up, the front of the limo was quiet. She allowed herself a tranquil, contented doze all the way back to the lab.

Doctor Peters had been busy during their absence. Apparently two of the project's most well-connected investors had already put the word out to their contacts about the potential of the PVA patents. As a result, executives from two competing biomedical device manufacturers would be attending Thursday's gathering.

This raised the stakes considerably. Doctor Peters insisted on another all-hands meeting as soon as the limo was unloaded. The junior scientists seemed exhausted as they settled one by one around the conference room table, but Elise felt rested and upbeat.

Now that prospective buyers would be in attendance, the two senior doctors were noticeably more anxious about Thursday's big meeting. To them it represented not only the culmination of ten years of collaborative work, but also, especially in Doctor Peters' case, a singular chance to sell something really valuable. Most of Arthur's prior achievements had been scientifically significant and commercially useless. This, in contrast, had the potential to revolutionize an entire well-funded industry.

Elise desperately wanted to help him, but felt at a loss for how. She watched him standing at the front of the room, looking a bit like a retired football player, going through a draft of his PowerPoint slides for everyone to critique. She could tell that he was not thrilled with the presentation's content. In mid-rehearsal he paused and shook his head.

"We need more punch on this, guys," he said to everyone in the room, "this pitch-book is probably the most critical thing we'll do all year. It has to sing! What am I missing?"

He was answered by a collection of sighs from the hung-over troops. Doctor Yamamoto was pacing the opposite end of the room, just stroking his moustache and looking worried.

"How about..." Elise began quietly. She had been standing off to one side of the conference room, listening intently but staying out of the way. "How about a demonstration?"

She was met with silence. Only Doctor Peters looked at her.

"A what?" he asked.

"You know, like, on me. Why don't you show them how it's done?"

Every single face in the room turned in her direction.

"Um... no. Absolutely not," Arthur began. "We don't have time for wild ideas right now. We have to nail this presentation, that's all."

"Well, yeah..." Jacob countered, "That's true, Doctor P., but actually... if Elise were serious; if she's seriously willing to do that, it would be one hell of a ballsy move. I mean, think about how much confidence that would show, both with the process itself and with its proximity-to-market."

"No. Too many unknowns. Way too much downside. Imagine if something went wrong. Besides, it's totally unethical."

"But..." Elise began to say.

Suddenly the table was swirling with both Japanese and English conversations and none of them involved her. The longer it went on, the more it seemed to Elise that everyone was turning on Doctor Peters. Doctor Yamamoto and the four geeks were in favor of the idea. A live demonstration, they argued, was the best way to show off the simplicity and superiority of the PVA tissue implantation process relative to traditional breast implant surgery. There was no better way to make those benefits palpable.

Doctor Peters just kept shaking his head. He glanced at Elise with an annoyed expression, as if she were at fault for deliberately overstepping some boundary. Elise recognized that she had, in fact, created a disruption in the team's unity. Doctor Peters was their leader. Everyone knew he was their best point-person as far as communicating with the investors and potential buyers. And now they had all turned on him, distracted by an idea she had introduced. It had probably been unfair, Elise realized in retrospect, to throw out a potential game-changer like that in front of everyone. She should have run it by him privately instead.

The cat was out of the bag though, and Doctor Yamamoto and the rest of the team were doing their best to convince Arthur that the idea was not only viable, but actually the best move possible.

"Think of the message it would send," Jacob reiterated, "That we're so confident in this procedure that we'll do it live, right in front of two outside buyers as well as our own investors!"

"Yeah," Alex chimed in. "It would be epic, Doctor P. Those greasy MBAs will be talking about it for decades."

"No you guys. It's just not right," Arthur protested, "I'm sorry. Besides, Elise isn't in a position to give informed consent. It would look like I was forcing one of my employees to be a Guinea-pig. We'd be run out of town!"

"But I'm not an employee," Elise piped up. "Technically I'm a volunteer, remember? I have no financial incentive either way. I just happen to want, you know... the results."

"Elise," Doctor Peters said, raising his hand to stop her from saying more. "I appreciate it. I really do. It's a sweet offer, but it's simply not okay with me. I'd feel like I was taking advantage of you."

"Does how I feel about it count for anything?" she said.

"Well, not really. Not in this case. This is a business deal, not a personal choice."

Elise furrowed her brows and glared at him.

"Look, Elise, of course you matter. That's not what I meant. This is just... not the way to go... and besides, you don't even need... God! This is supposed to be a business meeting! How did we get so far off track?"

There was an awkward silence. Arthur looked back at the slideshow projected on the screen behind him and shook his head.

Doctor Yamamoto dragged a chair back at the opposite end of the table and sat down stiffly. He laid both hands flat on the tabletop and began to speak. He and Doctor Peters volleyed Japanese back and forth for a solid ten minutes without interruption from anyone else.

In the end, the two partners agreed to a compromise of sorts. Doctor Peters would call the lawyers and run Elise's idea by them first. If they had no overwhelming liability-related objections, then he and Doctor Yamamoto call their top two investors. If they thought it was a good idea, Arthur would concede and Elise would get new PVA boobs. In the meantime, just in case, the Japanese team was going to prepare a clinical theater in the upstairs lab while the Americans worked on improvements to Arthur's presentation.

The whole team embarked on a quick roundtable discussion of logistics. If the demonstration got the go-ahead, they would only have about thirty-six hours to prepare. The rough workflow would be this: Doctor Yamamoto and Kazutoshi would liposuction whatever small amount of subcutaneous adipose tissue they could from Elise's abdomen. This fat would be processed in a centrifuge to refine its stem cell density. Then, overnight, they would begin cloning sufficient quantities of the refined tissue as well as a sample of its vascular network. By late the following night, after twenty-four hours of 'grow time,' they would be in a position to re-combine the resulting tissues into a mass of injectable, uniformly-vascularized goop.

It was an achievable timeline, but only just. The team would need to pull shifts in order for everyone to get at least a few hours of sleep each night. There was no room for error but nothing could be done about that. Doctor Yamamoto felt confident that by Thursday afternoon he would be ready to inject the new tissue beneath Elise's skin, but he cautioned that it would be so fresh that it would most likely contain still-active growth agents. It would remain quite hygroscopic for the first few days.

Doctor Peters adjourned the meeting. He seemed sure the law firm would take his side. Elise tagged along behind the two partners as they retreated to Arthur's office to make the phone calls. She imagined the lawyers might want to speak with her directly, to ask if she was 'of sound mind' or something. The whole plan did seem a little bit crazy after all, even to her.

Two hours later the pair hung up from the evening's third and final phone call. Everyone had been on-board with a live demonstration. The lawyers just wanted Elise to sign a boilerplate release document they used for clinical trials. The investors were enthusiastic.

'Poor Doctor Peters,' Elise thought. 'He looks miserable.'

Doctor Yamamoto stood from his chair and glided toward the door. His face was determined, as though he had a tremendous number of tasks to accomplish, which in fact he did. Upstairs, his two junior scientists were already working flat-out on the necessary preparations.

"Let's take a walk," Doctor Peters said to Elise. "I need to stretch my legs, and you need to hear more about what you're agreeing to before you sign this thing."

Elise rose from her chair. With Doctor Yamamoto gone, she pulled the ribbon from her hair and shook out her long ponytail. It had been tied too tight and was starting to give her a headache. Before she followed Doctor Peters out into the lab's long center hallway, she dug her cell phone out from her desk and brought it along. She imagined he might want to call her parents for approval or something.

The two of them spent the next fifteen minutes strolling, talking and wandering deep into the laboratory's maze of hallways. As far as Elise could tell, they were not headed anywhere in particular.

Doctor Peters was rambling, trying to convince her not to do the procedure, telling her that her figure was already beautiful and that, in any case, large breasts were over-rated. When that line of reasoning failed to sway her, he started talking about the discomfort involved: saying the procedure was essentially a long series of needle-sticks without any anesthesia. Elise remained undeterred. Then he started talking about the unknowns. They had tested the process on roughly a hundred volunteers during the past five years, mostly in Asia, but they had never done the procedure in the U.S. before, and never on such short notice.

"I trust you," Elise said, walking beside him. "I know you've been working on this for a really long time. I'm sure your investors wouldn't have so much faith in you if the method was unsafe."

"Look," Arthur said finally, "I appreciate your confidence in me, and... I'll admit that, if everything goes well, it really will be a compelling demonstration. It will help sell the PVA patents, for sure. Which would be great, but... I don't feel right about submitting you to this when so much of the benefit will inure to me and Doctor Yamamoto, rather than to you."

"So what? It's still a win-win."

"No. You need to let me pay you somehow. Especially if it helps us make the sale."

"Pay me? Well... I hadn't really thought of that. I'm just excited to be getting it done for free. I mean, the only reason I'm even considering this is because they'll be natural, made of my own tissue rather than some stupid plastic implant. Fake boobs are gross. I'd never want a foreign object in my body. But these will be real. Just like, a little bit more. Which is exactly what I've always wanted."

"That's all fine. But you need to be compensated."

"Well, okay, so pay me. Obviously I could use the money. Here I am couch surfing, after all, right? But... you know... there is actually one thing I'd like even more."

"What?"

"A job," Elise said, touching Arthur on the forearm. "Why don't you hire me?"

"Seriously?" Arthur stopped and turned to face her.

"Yeah. Like, full-time. I could be your assistant, or the office manager or something. Whatever you want. But I want to have real responsibilities... and a salary and benefits and all that."

"Huh. That's actually not a bad idea."

"I know." Elise smiled up at him. "It'll be awesome. I could get my own place and really feel like I have a career."

Doctor Peters did not say anything, but the lines around his eyes faded. He looked almost happy.

"So...? It's a deal?" Elise said.

"Office Manager. I like the sound of that. But it'll have to wait. I can't afford to hire you until the ink is dry on the sale. And in any case you need to be a volunteer for at least the rest of this week."

Elise threw her arms around his neck, standing on tiptoe and stretching her body to hug him tightly. Arthur clutched her torso in return, his wide hands spanning her back. They stood hugging for most of a minute, pressed together at the far end of a seldom-used corridor.

"Oh, and one more thing." Elise said, dropping back onto her heels and sliding her hands down to Arthur's chest.

"What's that?"

"The guys; especially Alex and Hiro. You have GOT to talk to them about their manners. They're getting way too touchy with me. It's gross."

"What?!"

"Yeah. I didn't want to say anything before, but today in the limo was kinda... too much."

"What on Earth do you mean?" Arthur asked, instinctively removing his hands from around Elise's ribcage.

"No, no, I didn't mean to make it sound so dramatic. And it has nothing to do with you, Doctor Peters," she backpedalled; snugging her hands around his waist and leaning back with her hips purposefully pressed against him to emphasize that second sentence. She hung there, like as squirrel on the trunk of an Oak tree. "It's just, I think partly because of my uniform, you know, the younger guys sometimes can get a little frisky."

"But who has touched you? I need to know."

"Don't take it that way. I'm not trying to get anyone in trouble. It's just that... I know a word or two from you would go a long way. That's all."

"I'm so sorry, Elise. I'll handle it right away. And you just let me know if you ever feel uncomfortable again, okay?"

"Thanks Doctor P." she grinned up at him.

Arthur's expression softened again: "Oh yeah? And since when do you get to call me that?"

"Since now," Elise purred. Then she let go of him and sauntered away a couple paces. She casually linked her fingers behind her butt and spun around to face him, flicking her long hair to one side and flaunting her skimpy outfit. Her wide hazel eyes regarded him confidently, inviting his gaze in return.

"Office Manager," she said proudly.

"Yep."

"I wanna take a picture... to remember this."

"Oh, come on..."

"No, really! Just stay right there. I'll use my phone, n'kay?"

Elise unlocked her smartphone and noticed she had a missed call from her mom. She tapped 'Ignore' and triggered the phone's timed-photo function instead. She then propped it vertically atop a steel file cabinet near the opposite wall of the hallway.

She scampered back to Arthur and pulled his hands up onto her shoulders as she turned to face the camera. The countdown ticked away. She leaned back against him and relaxed her arms at her sides. She crossed her feet. At the very last second she moved her left hand behind her butt and gently touched Arthur's pants.

There was a flash.



**Tease to Please Ch. 10**

 **Wednesday June 12, 2013**
The oven clock in Arthur's kitchenette displayed 1:21AM.

"I'm, I'm -- Oh God!" Elise whined. Her voice was high and fast:

"OhGodDoctorP!"

Arthur's two big hands held her to the living room wall; one squashing her right breast and the other attacking her crotch. His bearded face was latched to her neck, sucking and kissing the reddening flesh between her ear and shoulder.

Elise's eyes shut with bliss. Her face lifted toward the ceiling. The big guy had finally given in. She had wanted this so badly.

Everyone's pace at the laboratory since Tuesday afternoon had, right up until this moment, been relentless. Arthur had only just excused his two lab assistants to go home at 1:00AM. Even still, upstairs on the lab's 2nd floor, all three members of the Japanese team were working furiously to prepare an operating theater for Elise's initial procedure. Things had fallen behind schedule.

The two senior partners, Doctor Peters and Doctor Yamamoto, remained at loggerheads over the propriety of using Elise to demonstrate the PVA tissue's cosmetic application. But with their two largest investors and all four lab geeks on his side, Doctor Yamamoto appeared to have won that argument. In victory, as in almost everything, he was unyielding. He dismissed Arthur's anguish over the impending procedure as childishly sentimental and, worse, a weak attempt at moral imperialism. Together, he told his two Japanese employees as they labored past midnight, these represented a uniquely American combination of faults.

A series of digital tones, arranged to approximate the most memorable bit of Mahler's Ninth symphony, sounded from Doctor Yamamoto's beltline. It was his cell phone. Mrs. Yamamoto was calling.

Downstairs, Elise's phone vibrated inside her purse to announce the arrival of a text message. Its small screen brightened, pointlessly illuminating lipstick tubes and other sundries.

The text read: "Stop ignoring. Call me! --Mom"

At that moment Elise's mind was supremely unconcerned with her mother. She felt only one person: a tall, very strong doctor with messy dark hair who was pressing her torso to the wall of his apartment.

Arthur's fingers and mouth practiced an art older than any, carrying her young body toward that primeval eclipse of reason inhabited by ecstasy.

"Yeah..." she panted. "Right there, right -- Ah AHH!"

Arthur's hand was inside her stretchy yoga pants, tangled around her thin underwear. For the last five minutes he had played her torus-adorned clitoris like the frets of a fragile guitar.

Elise's voice produced an indecipherable melody, perfectly expressing her joy. Her long auburn hair dragged across the wall as she twisted her head to one side. Her left leg stood on tiptoe. Her right leg was pulled high, hooked over the crook of Arthur's left arm. Delicate tendons fluttered beneath her neck's pale skin. Her jaw flexed. She embraced his sturdy shoulders for support as her muscle coordination melted away.

Arthur lifted his face from her collar and kissed her full on the mouth. Their tongues wrestled within the vacuum of mating lips. Her petite, elastic body quaked within his arms.

"MMnnn... MMMM!" she moaned into the seal of his maw.

It had all happened so fast. After they had taken that photo in the hallway Tuesday afternoon, she and Doctor Peters had set to work; each doing everything possible to speed the complex preparations for Thursday's demonstration. Arthur had abandoned his efforts to sway her against the procedure, instead concentrating on the many tasks at hand. But Elise could tell it still bothered him.

When the upstairs team announced it would be another few hours before they were ready to perform the liposuction phase, Arthur dismissed Alex and Jacob and sent Elise back to his apartment to get some sleep. He walked upstairs to see what he could do to help, but his feelings betrayed him. He found himself standing with his hands in his pockets, staring at the makeshift operating table with mounting dread.

He recognized that he was at the brink of a gothic horror.

Knowing that Doctor Yamamoto was unpersuadable, Arthur thundered down the stairs to his apartment to try once more to talk Elise out of it.

He burst into his small living room just as Elise was changing into a pair of yoga capris to sleep in. She was topless. She spun around at the sound of his entry, crossing her arms to hide her small breasts.

Arthur strode to within reach of her and stopped. His mouth parted to speak, to reiterate every reason he hated the plan. No voice emerged. His eyes were fixed on Elise's expectant face.

"What?" she said.

Pent-up desire, at last, avalanched through Arthur's body. He closed the distance between them in a single step and hauled Elise into his arms. He lifted her up to conjoin their mouths and carried her to the wall as she wrapped her limbs around him.

It was their first real kiss. A deep, mutually intentional one, measured in minutes rather than seconds.

So it was that Elise found herself pinned to the wall in the arms of the man she wanted as her lover while her cell phone buzzed, unnoticed, with her mother's demand. She still knew nothing of her mother's intimacies with the same man those many years before. Even if she had, she lacked the willpower to deny herself this quenching. She relished it.

"Please," Elise begged into his mouth. "Take me to bed."

Arthur's actions were no longer subject to his conscious mind's control. Her countless episodes of teasing had built within him a great hoard of lust. He carried Elise down the hallway to his bedroom, kicking the door wide with the toe of his shoe. They landed across the covers of his bed in an almost noiseless crash, limbs tangling and untangling as they fought to remove all clothing.

Elise's yoga pants and underwear were stripped away as a single item. The slender chain around her waist and the tiny clockwork torus around her clitoris were all that remained of her adornment. Arthur buried his square, bristly jaw between her thighs and tried his best to consume her.

His tongue dug between her petals. His nose shoved the bright ring of the Model O from side to side, stretching the swollen nub of her clit. He recognized her taste as sun-warmed peach.

Elise's impatience did not allow him to remain there for long. The more rampant her pleasure became, the more she wanted him inside. She tightened her fingers through his thick hair and pulled his skull up from her sex. She urged him onto his back to more easily finish his disrobement. In frantic cooperation they got the job done in seconds.

Then Elise was astride his naked belly. Arthur grabbed her outer thighs. She collapsed onto him, pressing her lips to his in an eager kiss, cutting off his breath. Her mouth sucked at his lips and tongue with all the excitement of a teenager in love. Arthur kissed her in return, reacting with unfiltered instinct.

Her petite breasts dangled above his collarbones. Her thighs tightened around him.

Arthur's hands went wild -- caressing and squeezing every inch of her flesh.

Elise moaned into his mouth and curled her arms around his neck. She ground her lithe form against his ursine mass, hungrily pressing her soft parts to him.

Arthur could feel her inching downward. His cock felt like a maypole, poised inches from her naked sex. It was visibly beating at the pace of his heart.

Elise still kissed him, her slick tongue crawling inside his mouth. Her lips smeared and puckered against his.

"Oh God Doctor Peters," she whispered. "I've wanted to kiss you for so long!"

Arthur wrapped his hands around her pelvis and gently eased her down until the tip of his penis touched her expectant labia.

Elise broke off their kiss with a sharp intake of breath. She sat up and looked back over her shoulder. With one hand, she gently touched his erection.

Arthur moaned, "Don't tease me. No more."

Elise smiled and leaned forward to kiss him again. She re-wrapped her arms around his neck and rocked her hips gently from side to side, taunting his impatient glans with her labia. A few moments later she lifted her face slightly above his and took a series of sultry breaths.

"Really?" she whispered, her wide hazel eyes staring into his across mere inches. "Are we doing this?"

"God, yes!" Arthur grunted. He raised his hips toward hers, desperate to begin that first inch of penetration he craved.

Elise toyed with him, tucking her pelvis in one moment, moving it sideways another, dodging his cock by mere millimeters. She raised herself higher and smiled playfully.

"I've wanted to since my first day," she purred.

Arthur looked up at her. Her arms were extended straight down, squashing her little breasts together above him.

"My God," he whispered, "you are beyond perfect."

"So, you like me?" Elise goaded, still dodging the thrusts of his penis.

"Yes, Elise" Arthur moaned, "You've defeated me."

With that, Elise lifted her hips off him and crawled backward. Wordlessly, she took hold of his shaft and ducked her face to meet it. Arthur arched up off the mattress with joy as his cockhead disappeared into her pretty mouth. She sucked and slurped noisily, telegraphing her eagerness. He combed his fingers through her long auburn hair, pushing it back from her face. He was mesmerized by the view of Elise sucking his penis. Her moist lips dragged over the wide beret of his glans, making it gleam under the lights. She had one thumb and forefinger wrapped around the very base of his shaft. Her other hand was between her own legs, fluttering side-to-side on her clitoris.

Arthur could not resist the urge to pump his hips up toward her. The fat head of his cock bounced against the soft hole at the back of her mouth. A reflexive cough fluttered out between her stretched lips. Rivulets of saliva leaked down the trunk of his cock. He held her head still and moaned as pleasure radiated through his body.

Elise allowed him as deeply as she could and began twisting her head in gentle orbits, caressing his glans with the top of her throat. Her tongue and inner cheeks clung to him as she sucked.

"Ohhhh... God that's nice," Arthur groaned.

"Hmmmm," was Elise's muffled response.

Arthur relaxed his grip. Elise's face began to bob up and down in earnest, making the top third of his penis disappear and reappear. Drool began to stream down the rest of his shaft, overrunning her fingers and thumb. A rhythmic, squishing noise emanated from within the seal of her mouth.

Elise picked up her pace and began to pant through her freckled nose. Her other hand was very busy at her crotch. Arthur moaned again, twisting his head against his pillow. His fantasy had come true.

The toroid device on Elise's clit began to chime. Her brow instantly furrowed and a series of muffled squeals fought free from her crowded mouth as the Model O's resonant "Ting's..." worked their steady magic. Had her mouth been empty she would have cried out with pleasure, but she could not bring herself to relinquish his warm organ. It felt too good. Instead she bobbed her head harder, stretching her mouth and unconsciously keeping time with the Model O. A chain of falsetto grunts evinced her delight in both sensations at once.

Arthur eyes rolled back. He could not believe how good it felt to be inside the vacuum of her energetic mouth.

Elise sensed the inexorable approach of her next orgasm. She lifted her face from his cock. Tendrils of saliva hung from her puffy lips as she looked up at him. Her eyelids were heavy. Her pupils had dilated.

"n'Kay," she whispered.

Her left hand wiped the saliva off her chin and reached between her legs to smear it across the entrance of her young pussy. She crawled quickly up onto his torso and began kissing him again. Arthur reached between their bodies and grabbed the base of his erection. Elise raised her slender hips, blindly searching for him.

"Go slow," she whispered as the very tip of his penis began to immerse itself within her slippery and denuded entrance.

Arthur let out a groan as Elise backed her pussy down, incrementally enfolding the head of his cock between her delicate petals.

"Oh Guh-HOD!" Elise squealed in a high voice as her labia caved inward, stretched wide by the circumference of Arthur's glans.

"Jesus you are fucking tiny!" Arthur cried. He was having a near meltdown. It felt like a jellied fingertrap being squeezed onto his cockhead. Ecstasy coursed through his entire groin. His testicles bunched up, suddenly tight and tingly.

A need to get deeper became Arthur's sole awareness. He wrapped his hands around Elise's girlish hips pressed down. She whimpered at first and then called out, alarmed as he thrust his pelvis upward and buried half his cock into her in one greasy plunge.

"FAAH—Wait!" she squealed. Her fingernails dug into his shoulders. A shiver ran through her body. "God just... please, slower. T'so much."

"Okay," Arthur managed to grunt. He was happy just to be halfway inside her. Her vagina was so incredible that he was willing to wait there forever. In fact, he began to worry that once she adjusted to him and they started moving again he would cum instantly.

Arthur let go of her hips and instead pulled her shoulders down for another kiss. Elise pressed her chest onto his. As they kissed she gently moved her pelvis in small circles, letting his big cock stir her insides. Her collared clit pressed against the skin above his pubic hair.

"God you feel good!" Arthur panted into her mouth between kisses.

"Yeah," Elise replied in a shaky whisper, "Right there. Right there is nice."

Arthur's hands wandered Elise's skinny torso until they found her breasts. He squeezed them tightly and ducked his head to suck her distended nipples each in turn. Elise grabbed the back of his neck with one hand and arched her chest toward his face, moaning loudly.

She was in heaven. Doctor Peters' bearded face and wet mouth stimulated every pleasurable nerve in her nipples and chest.

His penis, meanwhile, was stretching her insides so tight that she could feel his heartbeat through her vagina. Its fat head had been shocking to accept through her narrow opening, but now that it was inside she never wanted it to leave. It seemed to fill her entirely. She could feel its prominent crown rubbing against the underside of her pubic bone, right where her favorite spot was. Farther back it felt like her rectum was being massaged. Her perineum was stretched so thin to accommodate his girth that her asshole could not even pucker. Her entire vulva was taut, on the edge of being painful but not quite. It felt wonderful.

A full minute passed, with Arthur kissing and caressing her chest while her body gradually stretched.

Eventually Elise breathed out another quiet: "Okay..."

Arthur took this as permission to move again. He lay back against the pillow and slowly started to thrust his hips, gently pumping his cock back and forth within Elise's slender body... just moving an inch or so in each direction.

Elise felt her insides melting around him like hot butter. Her arousal ascended by the second. She began to whimper. She clawed at his shoulders.

Arthur looked up and saw that her brows were furrowed tightly together and her eyes were closed. She looked almost worried, except that her mouth was parted in an expression of pleasure.

"Do you like that?" he asked.

"Mmn-himm!" she moaned.

Arthur lowered his hands to her hips again and began to intensify his thrusts. Elise's mouth widened. They both felt her insides clenching elastically around his shaft. He pulled back until only his glans remained within her and then thrust himself in aggressively, burying most of his length.

"Oh God!" Elise gasped. Her eyelids fluttered wide with surprise. A strand of drool descended from her lower lip. Then her brows re-furrowed and she tucked her chin, determined to accept his full measure.

Arthur could no longer restrain himself. He began pumping his hips, thrusting his cock back and forth within her narrow cunt. Elise huffed in synch with his penetrations, her mouth agape and eyes closed. Her hair became a bouncing waterfall of auburn, waving and shaking all around him.

"You can't..." Elise whispered, clutching his shoulders for support, "You can't cum inside me, okay?"

Arthur grunted an affirmative. Merely hearing the words 'cum inside me' from Elise's cute mouth was almost enough to push him over the edge. His penis felt insanely hard and her vagina was too snug. He lowered his hands to her ass and grabbed each cheek, prying her wide open to make more room for his penis. Elise began to whimper each time his cock bottomed-out within her. Her collared clit was bouncing against his pubic bone.

Their collisions became audible; a wet, smacking drumbeat.

Arthur felt her secretions weeping steadily down his cock. They painted a thick, ticklish line down the middle of his scrotum.

A minute later Elise slapped her palm against Arthur's chest and cried out. Her cunt tensed rapidly around him.

"YEHESS!" she wept. "Fuck!"

She was cumming. Arthur thrust his hips like a madman, bouncing his cock into her so hard that his balls slapped her perineum and anus, escalating the sound of their lust.

She was taking very nearly all of him, shaking with each impact of his long penis.

"Oh God! Oh God!" Elise chanted over and over.

Arthur gripped her ass with both hands and pounded in from below.

Elise threw her head back and yelled. Her little vagina gushed, soaking Arthur's crotch and the sheets below. Her voice made no sense.

Arthur was climbing to the verge of release as well. He thrust as deeply as he dared into her nubile body, relishing the way his cock made her shriek.

When he could barely contain himself another second, he arched his hips up off the mattress and froze. He held Elise there, aloft and impaled, and watched her ride out the orgasm. Then he hooked his right arm around her waist and flipped them both over so that she landed under him, on her back. He managed a final string of manic thrusts into her quivering pussy, then pulled out and came in the air above her stomach.

His semen shot forth and landed all the way up at Elise's neck. Squirts followed in rapid succession, laying down a splatter of drops all across her chest and stomach.

"Yeah, yeah..." Elise panted, reaching down to stroke his cock as he came.

She wriggled down under him and pulled his spurting manhood closer. Her other hand surrounded his balls. Semen sprayed all over her lightly-freckled tits. Arthur grunted as his climax peaked. His eyes were riveted by the visuals unfolding beneath him. He raised a knee to get his pelvis closer her face.

Elise ducked her parted lips to the tip of his cock. The soft embrace of her mouth engulfed Arthur's glans as a final pulse ejected from him. Her flushed cheeks dented inward. Her tongue slithered under his frenulum, coaxing out the last dribble of his ejaculate.

Arthur grabbed the headboard, shivering with post-climactic joy as he watched his summer intern nurse upon his cock. Her fingertips stroked his balls. It was a vision he would remember forever.

Eventually Elise pulled her lips clear with a dramatic 'pop!' and gazed up, smiling. She traced a finger along the underside of his softening shaft.

"Did you like that?" she whispered, her voice still wet with seed.

Arthur collapsed sideways onto the bed next to her.

"Yes!" he moaned, "Fuck!"

A deep heave exhaled from his lungs.

Elise remained on her back beside him. She was grinning from ear to ear. Her fingertips began to roam her torso, idly smearing his cum this way and that. She looked down and traced slimy circles around her stiff pink nipples. She squeezed her small breasts together, relishing her view of the gooey lake that formed between them.

"God, how fun!" she exclaimed. "Can we do that again?"

"I wish," Arthur chuckled contentedly. "But you're the only one who's twenty-two. I gotta recover."

"Later then? You promise?"

"Definitely."

Elise giggled like a happy schoolgirl. "Good!"

She rolled over onto Arthur, laying her slippery chest against his stomach. She slid down between his legs until her breasts straddled his semi-flaccid cock. His balls were gently squashed beneath her solar plexus. Using the semen on her chest as a lubricant, she began to smear herself up and down against his penis.

Arthur flinched and moaned, helpless against the onslaught of too-sensitive pleasure.

"Just wait 'till these are bigger," Elise cooed.

"Ah! Ow!" Arthur winced, watching his exhausted penis repeatedly disappear beneath Elise's slippery chest. His mind's eye wanted this glorious show to continue, but his body was way too sensitive.

"Okay, okay!" he begged. "I can't take that right now! Jesus!"

Elise gradually lifted herself off him. A dozen tendrils of cum stretched between their bodies as she hovered above him on all fours.

"Later," she whispered with her big hazel eyes fixed on his face, "...it's gonna be awesome."

She lingered there, smiling and letting Arthur's eyes drink-in her sordid display for many seconds. Then she climbed from the bed and walked to the master bathroom.

Arthur stayed on his back. His belly and crotch were thoroughly beslimed with ejaculate. His mind reeled at the upgrade his life had just experienced. It felt like nothing would ever be the same. He shut his eyes.

A distant knocking sound wormed its way into his brain.

"Rap, rap... Rap, rap, rap."

Arthur sat up. Tension returned to his face.

"Rap, rap, rap."

The shower turned on, obscuring his hearing.

"Shit," he swore as he clambered to his feet and began a search for clothes.

There was creak and a thud out in the living room followed by Doctor Yamamoto's voice calling his name.

Arthur's addled brain could not react fast enough. He staggered in a circle, his long arms scrambling the littered floor for something to wear. At the last moment he spotted his bathrobe on the back of the closet door. He leapt sideways, grabbed it and flung it around his shoulders.

Doctor Yamamoto stepped into view, a ring of keys dangling from his right hand.

"Hi," Arthur blurted. "I, uh, I didn't hear you."

His Japanese colleague emerged from the short hallway and stepped over the threshold into Arthur's bedroom. He stopped still and let his eyes wander the floor. His nose twitched, sampling the scent of recent sex. One black eyebrow pulled high, well above the rim of his spectacles. Then his gaze settled on Arthur's face. His expression narrowed into a spear.

"Not good," he said in Japanese, using words that he knew from experience were simple enough to be understood by his American colleague. That statement hung in the air between them. His unblinking eyes pierced Arthur's reddening face.

Eventually the Japanese doctor continued: "The demonstration cannot proceed. My wife called, and she reminded me of something."

"What? Your wife?" Arthur responded in halting Japanese.

"Yes. She is wise, whereas you and I are merely smart. We cannot use Miss Elise."

"Uh... Okay. That's good."

"I do not like this," Doctor Yamamoto continued, rotating his upper body to indicate the span of Arthur's bedroom. "It is a mistake."

"I understand," Arthur mumbled in Japanese. He repeated it a second time with a nod.

"You have trusted yourself too much here, my friend, and not enough in the laboratory today."

Arthur said nothing.

Doctor Yamamoto slowly turned his head toward the sound of the shower and then back to Arthur again.

"Is it true that the mother of Elise is... your ex-lover?" he asked.

Arthur could admit no response to this. Not even in English. The hiss of water was steady beyond his bathroom door. He glanced at the ceiling, unable to meet his partner's gaze.

"You failed to inform me," Doctor Yamamoto continued. "However that is not my purpose in coming here. You alone must fix that. Upstairs, we have stopped our work in time. You will never imagine why."

"No."

Doctor Yamamoto clasped his hands tightly behind his back and stood even straighter than usual, positively radiating self-assurance.

"Not for the reasons you gave," he spat. "No. Your thinking has been very weak. I see that now. This situation I find you in... is unspeakable. Yet you dared to insult me for acting forcefully with the girl's punishments, when you are the real abuser of authority... here in this room!?"

The Japanese doctor's indignation peaked with those final words, but then almost as quickly it dimmed. His respiration slowed to a normal rate and he continued quite calmly:

"My wife, you see... she thinks more clearly than you. She reminded me that the highest and best use of PVA is for reconstructions, not for cosmetics. American companies, with their American shareholders, will pay to flatter their own ego... their childish desire to heal the world. For this, they will pay more. We were foolish to not see that. I have sent Hiro and Kazutoshi home. There will be no demonstration with Miss Elise. Only the data presentation, as you had wished. You may thank my wife when you see her next."

With that, the squat Japanese doctor gave Arthur a final look of disdain, spun on his heel and left the room.

Arthur said nothing. His posture remained frozen until he heard the connecting door of his apartment close behind his partner with a dull thud. Then he breathed out a curse and bent forward, resting his hands on his knees. A long sigh escaped his lips.

"Are you coming in?" Elise called from the shower.

Arthur's face widened into a fateful grin. No part of him would turn her down now. He was already over the wall.

The new pair spent the next half-hour beneath the showerhead's hot rain; Arthur kneeling for the most part as he brought Elise to a string of orgasms using his mouth and fingers (plus an assist from the Model O). His tongue was indefatigable. Elise adored every minute.

At one point she clambered up onto his shoulders, straddling his bearded face with her thighs while his wide hands supported her butt from below. He held her there securely, pressing her back against the shower wall. Her feet dangled above the floor, her calves flattened themselves across his back. Her fingers clawed his hair, pulling his face tightly to her crotch. Arthur wiggled one thumb into her from below. She came like a bad actress, almost injuring herself when she flung her head back against the tile wall.

Eventually Elise was exhausted. They stood up and re-lathered themselves in soap and conditioner. Each thought the task of getting clean had never been so fun, swirling soapy hands over the other.

A few minutes later they were toweling off outside the shower.

"Turns out I won't be waking you up in a few hours," Arthur began calmly.

"What do you mean?" Elise replied, her face showing only mild confusion.

"Doctor Yamamoto changed his mind. Or rather, his wife changed it for him. You won't be... there won't be any demonstration, is what I'm saying."

Elise stopped drying herself. She wrinkled her nose at him. "Seriously? After all that?"

"I hope you're not too disappointed."

"Well... but why? I thought--"

"He changed his mind. They've all gone home now; the whole upstairs crew."

"That's it? Everything is cancelled?"

"No, no. Not at all. We're just going to emphasize the non-cosmetic applications more, that's all. We'll do my original presentation, with all the data... after making it better of course. He's decided it'll be better that way, and I, as you know, already thought so."

"But... so, um..."

"Don't worry. Nothing else has to change."

"Okay. But... wow. Is that what you came down here to tell me? 'Cause when you came in you looked really... stressed."

"No, it's not. I still thought the whole thing was going ahead then. In fact, I intended to talk you out of it."

"But then how...? When did you find out that Doctor Yamamoto...?"

Arthur chuckled. "He, um... he stopped by."

"He stopped by?"

"Yeah. Right after we... you know. You were in the shower. It was kind of an awkward moment."

"What?! Are you serious? Does he know?"

"Yeah. Definitely."

"Holy shit!"

A look of worried wonderment befell Elise's face. She had no idea what to say. Deep in her bones she felt her situation had become perilous.

They finished toweling off in silence.

Exhaustion's high tide rushed in, dampening their spirits. It was well after 2:00AM. Without even a kiss, they parted ways to sleep. There was no talk of sharing Arthur's bed.

As Elise drifted off in her comfortable sofa bed, inklings of doubt began to sprout from the fertile ground of her mind.

08:11 AM:

Elise awoke to the smell of frying bacon. She rubbed pearls of sleep from her eyes and sat up. After pushing her long auburn mane back behind her shoulders, she turned toward the kitchen and beheld an unfamiliar sight.

Doctor Peters was cooking. He was also, Elise noted with concern, attempting some sort of uneven dance. His balance was shifting from leg to leg while his head bobbed forward like a walking duck.

"Doctor P," Elise croaked, her voice not yet awake, "what the hell is going on over there?"

Arthur swiveled to face her, smiling. A pair of greasy tongs was in his right hand. He was fully dressed, ready for work, but wore no tie. A stiff canvas barbeque apron covered his belly.

Laughter burst from Elise's mouth, decorating the audible spectrum as a wind chime might, only better.

"Don't laugh... or you won't get any breakfast," Arthur joked.

"Wow!" Elise said, still giggling, "Those are some nice moves there. You better pray nobody ever gets that on camera."

"Hey, are you hungry or what? I gotta go soon. It's late."

Elise scooted herself to the edge of her bed and stood up. She had slept in her yoga capris and a demi tank top. She stretched tall, curling her toes into the soft carpet as her arms reached toward the ceiling. Her body felt pleasantly sore, she noticed, especially down there. She smiled across the room at Arthur. He stood still and let his eyes dip once, scanning her lean shape.

"Did you sleep?" Elise asked as she walked drowsily toward the kitchen's bar.

"Oh yeah... Like a dead tree. How 'bout you?"

"Great, clearly; look at the time."

"Good," Arthur nodded. "I hope you like scrambled eggs and bacon."

"Uh... Sure, once in a while. Who doesn't?"

"Thata'girl. Eat up!" Arthur said. He extended her a plate piled high with buttered toast, steaming eggs and six strips of bacon.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa... I'll eat, like, a fraction of this."

"Really? Huh. Well, more for me then. Enjoy."

Arthur loaded his own plate with an equal helping of food and then sat down on a barstool opposite her.

Their conversation began with relaxed banter about the day to come and Thursday's big meeting. After a few minutes, however, they found themselves eating in silence. They sipped hot tea and stared passed each other.

Great volumes of information seemed to hang over them, unspoken. Neither wished to break the armistice of speech that kept it at bay. It was too early for all that.

After breakfast and the requisite clearing-up and brushing of teeth, Elise and Arthur found themselves back in the living room. Both were aware that she was nowhere near ready to follow him into the lab. An uncertainty over how to part company magnetized the air between them.

"I'll hurry," Elise blurted. "It won't take me long."

"Sure. No problem," Arthur answered. "And skip the whole candy striper nonsense. I need everyone's full attention today."

"Okay. But... what about Doctor Yamamoto?"

"Just ignore it."

Elise lowered her eyes to her hands, which were fussing with each other. She canted her hips to one side, resting all her weight on one narrow leg. Her un-weighted foot hid behind its mate.

Arthur stared at her, unsure how to leave.

"Is... is this, um..." Elise began anxiously. "Is this gonna be okay?"

The question hung between them a moment too long before Arthur's response arrived: "Yeah. Don't worry."

Elise was unconvinced. Her uncertainty felt confirmed. Without looking up, she darted toward Arthur and threw her arms around his shoulders. He reciprocated her hug, but it was an unbalanced union.

Inside Elise's mind the desire for his kiss burned afresh. Actually, she thought, it did not need to be a kiss. She would have welcomed any gesture no matter how small or large, so long as it ratified their new bond. She let her body go slack, hanging from his broad shoulders, and closed her eyes. The feel of his hands spanning her back became sustenance. She experienced a vivid urge to sink to her knees, to please him directly. She would have done it gladly had she felt sure of his wants.

Arthur rubbed one hand up and down her back in a too-casual style. Then he interrupted her doubts with his voice.

"Hey," he said. "I've gotta head over there. Everything's going to be fine."

Elise let go, accepting her weight back onto her own two feet. A quick peck landed atop her cowed head. Then Arthur's feet shuffled away toward the laboratory.

The connecting door closed between them with a thud. Though they could no longer hear each other, both sighed in unison.

Elise whispered, "Shoot!" and wiped a trace of dampness from beneath her eyes.

Arthur glanced at his watch and strode to his desk. A stack of unread e-mail greeted his eyes as soon as he entered the password to wake his computer from sleep.

Back in the apartment, Elise's disconsolate reverie was broken by a generic ringtone. She took three steps to reach her purse and then fished out her smartphone. It was her mom calling.

Elise tapped 'ignore' and unlocked the screen. A digital bubble appeared, informing her of three missed calls and two unread texts.

"Jesus," she sighed as she saw that all five were from her mother.

Despite the apparent urgency, Elise felt unprepared to deal with Sylvia at that moment. Her new relationship with Doctor Peters preoccupied all her thoughts. Whatever invented drama her mother wished to wave in front of her face would have to wait. She needed to get her feet back on the ground first.

To that end, Elise quickly rinsed off in the shower without getting her hair wet. Then she squatted in front of her clothing drawers, naked, and tried to pick out a new outfit.

Dressing up for the lab, however odd it may have seemed to her a week before, now felt like a re-assuring crutch. Skimpy clothes had become her mask; an avatar that kept reality at bay. She felt a need for that today more than ever.

Elise lifted an ivory sweater-dress from the bottom drawer. She smiled and clutched it to her bare skin like a cherished teddy bear. The dress was thin and soft, made of an expensive blend of cashmere and just enough synthetic to give it an elasticity that flattered her subtle curves. It was one of her favorite possessions.

Over time, because of repeated laundry mistakes, the short dress had shrunk to such a degree that Elise only wore it with leggings. But today, she assured herself, she would dare to leave her legs bare. No stupid stockings, either. Just miles and miles of leg, freshly shaved and lavishly moisturized. That, Elise mused, would surely give Doctor Peters reason to pause and consider.

A white thong was the only other garment she wanted. As she stretched the sweater-dress over her head and fished her arms through its skinny sleeves, she relished the feel of fuzzy cashmere against her skin. She tugged the hem down over her hips and smoothed the waist flat. The dress was just long enough to cover her bottom without about an inch to spare.

Elise hugged herself and let out a sigh, feeling comforted by the garment's familiarity. Her confidence slowly rebuilt. Still barefoot, she padded to the half-bath and finished fixing her hair and makeup.

It was time to call her mother.

"HellO-ooo," Sylvia answered on the third ring.

"Hi Mom," Elise muttered.

"Oh, Darling Elise! Where on Earth have you been? I've been trying to reach you for a week!"

"Uh, really? I don't--"

"Yes, I've called a hundred times! Are you hiding? You know I can't stand it when you do that."

"No. Sorry. It's been busy here. What's going on?"

"Oh it's been a whirlwind Darling, but the main thing is I'm coming to see you! Isn't that fun? I'm flying in on Saturday. I have to spend a few days with friends in Monterey next week, but before all that I thought well, I'll just pop over to wherever you are and take that darling boss of yours out to dinner or something. After all he's done for you I think it would be rude not to, don't you agree? And of course I can't wait to see you and hear what-all you've been learning."

"Wait, what? You're coming here?!"

"Yes of course I am! I miss you, Darling. And we have lots to discuss."

Elise's mind shifted into overdrive. This was nutty, even by her mom's standards. Words continued to flow through the phone at high speed; inane nonsense about a rental car and the rate at her hotel. They were all packaged in that stupid faux falsetto her mom used when trying to charm someone, but Elise's brain had stopped trying to process any of it.

"Mom, Mom... Mom! Stop," Elise interrupted. "What are you doing? Why are you coming here?"

"What? What a horrible question! Can't I visit my own daughter? You act as though I were arriving on a broom!"

"Four years, Mom. I was away at college for four years and you didn't visit once. Now suddenly you're gonna rush out here to see me after two weeks?"

"Oh, Elise, don't be ridiculous. I certainly did visit you in college. That's—"

"No, Mom, you didn't. Trust me. I would remember."

"Darling, let's not fight," Sylvia answered, her voice finally dropping to its natural octave. "I just want to say hello and check in on you. We have some things to talk about. Then, I'll go visit my friends in Monterey and you can have your sacred solitude back."

"My—Uhh! Who are you visiting?"

"That's not important. I don't think you've seen them since you were a child."

"Fine. Whatever. What do we so desperately need to talk about? I'm supposed to be working right now, but... I have a few minutes."

"Oh no, darling... I won't keep you. We should really discuss it in person anyway."

"What is it? Tell me."

"No. It's..."

"Mother, please! Just tell me. You're freaking me out."

There was a lengthy pause. Elise knew well enough to keep quiet. There was nothing her mother hated more than silence. It would pry the words from her more effectively than any other tactic.

The cellular connection stuttered between the two women as Sylvia paced through the small kitchen of her home in Arizona. She raked long fingernails across the hip of her sheath dress, stalling for time. She blinked rapidly, sensing the onset of tears that might ruin her mascara. She took a deep breath and fanned herself with an open hand.

Elise could hear the faint jangling of her mother's costume-quality wrist bangles through the phone. She pictured her standing there; all dressed up with nowhere to go, jet-black hair perfectly coiffed, a million bits of cheap jewelry hanging from every socially acceptable location and, of course, perfume. The god-awful rose perfume that kept even the family cat a safe distance away.

"Well," Sylvia began, her patience broken. "If you must know... Darling... I'm leaving your father."

Elise flinched. If a bullwhip had cracked the air above her head it would have shocked her less. "What?!"

"It's time, Darling. That's all."

"Mom! What are you saying? You can't do that to dad!"

"Oh, he'll be fine."

"No, you're crazy! And what does that even mean, 'It's time?' Time for what?"

"I know... I know this is a bit of a shock, Elise. We can discuss it when I see you Saturday, I promise. You'll under—"

"No. You're not seriously doing this. No way!"

"I'm afraid it's true, dear. It's already happening."

"No, Mom, you cannot be serious. Please tell me you're kidding!"

"Elise..."

"But... but," Elise stumbled, suddenly on the verge of tears as the gravitas in her mother's voice sank in. "But why?"

"It's just time, honey."

"Gah... Nuhoh!!" Elise sobbed, momentarily losing her capacity for speech.

"I'm sorry, Darling. You'll—"

"Did you tell Stephanie?"

"Yes. Yesterday."

"'Becca?"

"No, not yet. And don't tell her, okay Darling? I've got to find time to call her when she's not in the middle of finals. She's my baby... the one I worry about."

"Jesus do you even...? Uhhh! What about Dad? Does he know yet?"

"Of course he knows, Sweetheart. He's known for years."

"Years?!? How long have you been planning this?!"

"Oh 'Leesie, I wish you wouldn't take this so hard. When you're older you'll understand. There are times... entire decades when you just want to keep everyone else happy. Raise a family. So that's what I did. And then, at last, now that everyone's all grown up, it's time. Time to go back to being... to being a real woman again. Not just some mom... in a 'Seventies ranch house, in this ancient kitchen. It's just my time, Darling."

Elise felt nauseous. Spittle flew from her mouth as she shouted into the phone: "Do you even hear yourself? The stupid kitchen? You don't even cook! You... you're not just some mom, you're MY mom! You have three daughters. You can't pull this kind of shit on us after everything we've— God! It's fucking abnormal!!"

Elise yanked the phone off her humid cheek and smashed her fingertip on the red 'end call' icon.

She threw the phone down, buried eight fingers into her hairline and yelled "Fuck!" while sinking to the floor. She began to sob into the soft carpet.

Out in the lab, Arthur could only hear the gentle hum of equipment functioning normally. He had successfully set aside his worries about Elise and Doctor Yamamoto, instead focusing on his more quantifiable concerns and aspirations.

The workday hours slid by, unfolding along two entirely separate pathways for Elise and Doctor Peters.

Arthur threw himself into the revisions that his presentations so desperately needed. He felt confident and focused. His mind had been liberated by the sating of his libido's appetite, leaving him free to pour every ounce of his substantial intellect into the work at hand. By noon, he was ready to rehearse the final draft in front of the entire staff.

Elise, quite outside the sphere of Doctor Peters' awareness, had a good long cry on the carpet before mustering the strength to rise. With a concerted effort she suppressed her emotions, masked her face and entered the lab. She was no longer a centerpiece of the coming presentation, so there was not much work for her. She loitered all morning in Doctor Peters' office, halfheartedly trying to make him notice her lovely legs, or at least grant her some outward sign of his affection, but it was a lost cause. He was too focused on work to even see her, which was, she realized, probably for the best considering what was at stake for him on Thursday.

When all the men tucked themselves into the kitchen to eat lunch, Elise slinked away to a remote corner of the laboratory's first floor in search of solitude.

After wandering awhile, she placed a call to her older sister Stephanie.

The two consoled each other adeptly, trying to make sense of their mother's announcement. They had each, out of necessity, grown up learning how to deal with Sylvia's eccentric outbursts. But divorce was several orders of magnitude more severe than anything she had done before. They compared notes, trying to figure out her motivations, but it seemed hopeless. They debated calling Rebecca, their youngest sister, but eventually agreed not to. Not yet anyway.

"I'll try and talk some sense into her when she's out here on Saturday," Elise offered.

"Yeah. At least find out why. That B.S. about her wanting to become her own woman or whatever... that seems totally fake. Maybe she read it in a book. There's gotta something else, but I dunno what... "

"Do you think Dad could've cheated on her?"

"Nah! No way. Too gross to even think about. Anyway I don't think he would, even if he could, you know?"

"Yeah. Pro'ly not."

Elise looked down at her pearl-colored stilettos. It felt nice to be talking with her big sister. They did not do it often enough. Having grown up in a household of four females, the eldest and youngest of whom chattered ceaselessly without import, the two quiet girls in the middle never learned to appreciate the full value of their own conversations. Elise felt it now though. Having someone with so many shared experiences to speak with was an elixir for her sadness.

After an hour, she started to feel normal again.

"Hey Elise!" a male voice called from behind her. Elise spun around and saw Alex approaching down the hallway. She waved him off, pointing at the handset pressed to her ear and mouthing the words, "I'm on the phone."

Alex kept approaching, not stopping until he was directly in front of Elise. He was talking, not at all concerned that he was interrupting her conversation with Stephanie.

"Hey, Steph?" Elise said in frustration, "I gotta go. One of the guys I work with needs something. I'll call you back later, okay? Uh-huh... Yeah, okay... Okay. You too. Bye!"

"What, Alex?" Elise spat after terminating the call. "Can't you see I was on the phone?"

"Gosh, Elise, I didn't realize you're supposed to be making personal calls all day. Is that your new job description? 'Cause I'm pretty sure it's not. You've been AWOL since lunch. Is there a legitimate work reason for you to be hiding all the way down here?"

"No, I just... had to talk to my sister."

"Oh, I see. Well, that sounds important. Doctor Peters doesn't know where you are, does he?"

"Alex, stop. It was just a quick phone call."

"It's two in the afternoon Elise. He sent me to look for you. You missed the entire meeting."

"What meeting?"

"Exactly," Alex said, taking a malicious step closer. "You don't even know. You probably don't remember anything we talk about, do you?"

Elise flinched as Alex's hand came up to the side of her face. His body blocked her way back toward the center of the lab. Behind her was a doorway marked 'Do Not Enter. Alarm Will Sound.' She glanced sideways, seeing only concrete walls.

"Stop," she whined, pleading up into Alex's gaze.

"Stop what?" Alex said. "I was instructed to find you. Now I have found you. I'm not the one doing anything wrong."

His other hand was suddenly at her stomach, pushing her toward the wall.

"Come on, let me go!" Elise begged as she stumbled backwards in her high heels.

"Such a pretty dress today," Alex intoned, rotating his right hand downward across the soft cashmere. "Why don't we pick up where we left off in the limo yesterday? That was fun, wasn't it?"

Elise felt her shoulder-blades hit the concrete wall.

"No..."

"Sure it was. Especially for you. All that attention made you feel good about yourself, didn't it?"

Elise was beyond speech. The fingers of Alex's left hand gripped the back of her neck while his thumb pushed her jaw askew and brushed her lips. His eyes had stopped blinking. Elise's began to flutter uncontrollably.

"Such a dirty little tease," Alex continued. "Getting off like that in front of everyone."

Elise tried to say no, but Alex's thumb pushed its way into her mouth just as she formed the 'O' with her lips. The sound that came out sounded more like a quiet moan than anything else.

"Yes," Alex hissed, pressing his thumb deep into her mouth while tightening his fingers' grip behind her neck. The web of his thumb peeled her cheek aside like a fishhook. His other hand grabbed her pubic mound through her dress, pressing her firmly to the wall.

"NNN!" Elise said in garbled panic. Alex's thumb was squashing her tongue. The concrete behind her skull was unyielding. Eyes wide, she grabbed Alex's left wrist with both hands and tried to push it away from her face, but he was too strong.

"You like that don't you?" Alex grinned, flexing his thumb toward the back of her mouth. "Yes, a skinny girl who likes her mouth to be penetrated... I bet you'll go far!"

Elise tried to twist away, anything to get clear of his vile thumb.

"But you know what?" Alex hissed. "Just 'cause you're skinny doesn't mean you're hot, you little slut. Nah-uh. You gotta pay the piper sooner or later. And I vote for sooner."

At that moment Alex's right hand went under her dress and cupped her panties directly.

Elise yelled in protest, but again it sounded like a muffled cry of pleasure rather than panic.

Alex laughed. His face approached hers, mouth agape and tongue lewdly protruding.

Every muscle in Elise's body revolted at once. Her hands attacked his face, her right knee kicked his crotch, her teeth bit his thumb and she sprang off the wall with the same strength that had propelled her through four years of varsity gymnastics.

Alex fell back like a ninepin. Elise's momentum was so strong it carried her forward and she fell onto him. She landed with one knee in his solar plexus and her hands still latched to his face. Their collective impact on the concrete floor blew all the air out of Alex's lungs. Still he managed to bat Elise's hands away from his face. His knees came up reflexively, knocking her off balance from behind. She tumbled onto the floor beside his head, but was so quickly back on her feet that Alex didn't see what was coming next. Neither of them did.

Elise raised one stiletto-clad foot high in the air and brought it down as hard as she could across the middle of Alex's face. Her sandal's four-inch heel only just missed his eye.

There was a loud crack as the heel snapped off against Alex's cheekbone. The sandal's narrow sole struck his teeth and nose. He jerked sideways, away from the source of the blow. Elise lost her balance and fell back onto her butt.

Alex's hands immediately covered his face. He tried to scream, but there was still no air in his lungs. When it returned with a sudden gasp, he cried out like a wounded animal.

Elise clambered back onto her feet, one shoe now dramatically shorter than the other.

"Asshole!" she cursed. "Never touch me!"

Alex only groaned. A wide swath of pain bloomed across his face. He was prone, cowering near the threshold of the armed door. Salty blood assailed his tongue.

Elise stooped to retrieve her sheered-off heel from the floor. Then she turned and limped down the hallway as quickly as possible.

Alex rolled onto his side still clutching the injured half of his face with both hands. His eyes opened and he watched Elise hobble away.

"Crazy bitch!" he yelled after her.

Elise made it to the bathroom without being seen. She stripped off what remained of her shoes and checked her look in the mirror. She washed her face, swished water around in her mouth and spat. Then she cleaned up her hairstyle.

By the time she walked back into Doctor Peters' office, she looked relatively normal. She headed straight for the closet and traded her broken sandals for the pale pink pair. Then she smoothed down her dress, exited the closet, shut the door behind herself and strode to Arthur's desk.

Doctor Peters looked up from his computer with a smile.

"Everything all right?" he asked casually, "You missed my rehearsal."

"Yeah," Elise said as calmly as she could manage, "Sorry about that. I had to call my sister. 'Lil bit of drama today, family-wise. How did it go?"

"Uh... great, actually. Yeah. We're ready. It's gonna be good."

Doctor Peters stared at her from behind his desk for a long moment, then continued, "Are you sure everything's okay? You look really... pissed."

"Oh, it's nothing," Elise dodged, shifting her weight and glancing away. "Just, my mom is... freaking out and umm... Oh, and I broke a heel," she added, trying to sound nonchalant.

"The heel of your shoe?"

"Yeah, uh-huh. The white pair."

"And what's going on with your mom?"

Elise let out a quick sigh. She felt unready for this conversation, but it was better than telling him about the face-stomping she had just unleashed on Alex.

"She claims she's leaving my dad."

"Seriously?" Arthur replied, sitting up straighter.

Elise's eyes narrowed slightly at his reaction. One advantage of having her bloodstream thoroughly laced with adrenaline was that she noticed every detail of body language. Doctor Peters' perky response irked her, but she could not put her finger on why.

"Apparently it's in the works already," she continued. "My sister says they've already sent some papers to a lawyer or something. Not sure what all that means, but I'll know more on Saturday."

"Why Saturday?"

"Well... that's the other news. She says she's stopping by."

Arthur's posture straightened another notch. "What... what do you mean?"

"She's coming here. She said she wants to take you to dinner or something crazy. I don't know... It could just all be in her head. You can never tell. Actually, I'm sorry, I shouldn't say that. It's just... this whole thing is kind of a big surprise. None of us saw it coming."

"So, uh..." Arthur fumbled, suddenly aware that his head was swimming and that he did not want Elise, under the circumstances, to notice the visceral reaction he was having. "So you... Wow... So. You must be upset. I'm really sorry to hear that."

"Yeah. Thanks."

"Do you need some time... to be on the phone or something? You're welcome to use the apartment if you want some privacy."

Elise felt her nerves quiet. She even smiled. "Thanks Doctor P. That's nice. I, um... I might take you up on that, actually. It's really been a weird day."

"Sure, sure," Arthur said. He clambered from his seat and strode toward the connecting door, walking right past Elise without touching her. The idea of a wall between them sounded great to Arthur at that moment. If nothing else, it would give him time to wrap his brain around the idea that Sylvia was coming. And that she was getting divorced as well.

Elise followed him to the doorway. He unlocked it and held it aside for her. She stopped right next to him and put a hand on his forearm.

"You sure you don't need me out here?" she asked.

"No, no. It's fine. I'm pretty much all done anyway. You rest. I'll, um... I'll just finish up out here."

Elise hesitated briefly, caught between two impulses. She took a half step forward, then abruptly rose onto tip-toe and tried to give Arthur a quick peck. Her kiss landed awkwardly on his chin. He did not stoop to return it either. Elise dropped back to her heels and skittered through the doorway feeling foolish.

The door shut firmly between them, leaving Elise alone in the apartment.

Her brain swirled, trying to figure out what was going on. It seemed like Doctor Peters was rejecting her, but that made no sense. They had just had sex for the first time less than twenty-four hours before, and it had been incredible. Nobody could get cold feet that fast.

'It must be the pressure of the meeting tomorrow,' Elise rationalized silently. 'That must be it.'

She unstrapped her high heels and flopped down onto the sofa.

No sooner had she lain down than a deep flood of terror overcame her as the trauma of Alex's attack flooded back to the forefront of her mind. The multitude of nasty ramifications potentially still to come from that episode blotted out all her other thoughts. Her skin went clammy and she felt a need to vomit. She jumped up and ran to the bathroom.

By six o'clock Arthur still had not come back to the apartment. Elise was feeling much better. She stuck her head out through the office door and gently called for him, but there was no answer. He was out of earshot.

Starving, she plucked a menu off the refrigerator and called in a dinner order to be delivered. She fished her credit card out of her purse to pay for it in advance. She hoped a hot meal on the table would beat back whatever demons were haunting Doctor Peters.

She wanted his company tonight, and not just sexually.

When the food arrived, Elise arranged it on the small dinette table along with two beers from the fridge. Then she dug out her phone and dialed Arthur's mobile number. It rang and rang until it eventually went to voicemail.

"What the hell?" Elise said aloud. She hung up without leaving a message, walked to the connecting door and called his name again. She considered wedging a book under the door and searching the entire laboratory for him, but quickly talked herself out of it. Not only was she afraid of running into Alex, she did not want to bother Doctor Peters if he was really that busy getting ready for the big meeting. It would seem totally needy, and she did not want to appear so selfish.

Besides, Elise considered as she walked back to the table to eat alone, going back to the lab that would require getting dressed again. She had changed into some barely-there cotton shorts and a spaghetti-strapped tank top that was definitely for Arthur's eyes only. They were both sleepwear, ostensibly, but she knew herself better than that. The instinct that had drawn her to both garments, out of all the others in her drawers, was not an innocent one.

When Doctor Peters walked through that door and saw her, she wanted him to know exactly what was on the menu.

Unfortunately for Elise, the evening did not go the way she hoped. Arthur frittered away the working hours upstairs on the second floor with the Japanese team. Partly he was trying to repair his relationship with Doctor Yamamoto. When he mentioned that Elise's mom might be stopping by the laboratory on Saturday, his Japanese partner's eyes went a little wide.

"No visitors on my floor," he said in Japanese. "And you too, should be careful."

Arthur was unsure why, but he sensed more than the usual concern for privacy in Doctor Yamamoto's response. He stayed there, chatting with him, until he dismissed his team and departed for home.

Thereafter Arthur rehearsed his presentation alone in an upstairs alcove. Throughout the evening his mind was doubly preoccupied. A life-changing business deal on the one hand and a potential rekindling of long-lost love on the other, have a way, when both occur at once, of distracting a man from that which is right in front of his face.

It was eleven thirty by the time Arthur snuck, ever so quietly, back into his apartment downstairs. Elise was asleep in her bed. Her laptop lay crookedly beside her, also asleep. The kitchen was clean and the lights were all on. It was obvious she had tried to wait up for him.

Arthur killed the overhead lights and tip-toed down the hall to his room. He shut the door. After disrobing and brushing his teeth, he slid quietly between the cool sheets of his king sized bed and extinguished the last light in the apartment. Despite his body's exhaustion, his busy brain refused to shut down until almost one o'clock in the morning. Then it, too, fell asleep.

Out in the darkened living room, Elise twitched. Her eyeballs moved rapidly beneath closed lids. Her pulse was at a canter. Tendons fired in her wrists and feet, combating some ethereal enemy.

**Tease to Please, Chapter Eleven:**
Saturday, June 15, 2013

8:22AM

Elise and Doctor Peters had climbed very high these past few days.

Thursday's presentation had gone better than anyone expected. Both biomedical device manufacturers were interested in buying the PVA patents. Their respective corporate legal teams were planning to work straight through the weekend and into next week to hammer out what remained of the due diligence process. Actual offer terms were not final yet, naturally, but all the numbers talked about so far sounded very promising to Arthur. On Friday he had penciled-out his own potential compensation (deducting for all the investors' and Doctor Yamamoto's stakes) and he expected it to be somewhere in the low eight-figures.

That would be life-changing. Even after taxes.

Making matters still happier, nearly every waking moment since Thursday evening that he had NOT spent working on these auspicious developments had been devoted to having sex with Elise.

The two of them had been going at it like rabbits. Highly-caffeinated rabbits.

Now they lay side by side, naked atop the tangled mess Arthur's bed. He was fast asleep, as he had been since their final coital session sometime after midnight. Elise was vaguely awake, drifting in and out of a happy haze. A white undershirt was wadded up beside her. She had used it hours earlier as a rag to wipe his semen from her skin.

Her phone began to chime.

"Crap," Elise whispered, unsteadily sitting up. "What time is it?"

Arthur did not answer. He was deep in satisfied slumber.

Elise rose from the wide bed and hobbled to her phone. Her entire groin felt bruised, especially deep inside. Doctor Peters' big cock was taking some getting used to and her petite body was protesting.

She assumed it was her mother calling, but by the time she dug the phone from her purse in the living room it had already gone to voicemail. She noted the time and did a little mental math. Most likely her mom was at the airport in Arizona, just checking in.

Elise winced and dipped her knees slightly to relieve a head-rush caused by standing up too quickly.

A few moments later she listened to her new voicemail, which proved her assumptions correct. Sylvia was on her way.

She tossed her phone back into her purse and sighed. The thought of seeing her mother was not a source of happiness. She rubbed her sleepy face, returned to the bedroom and nudged Doctor Peters awake. Then she hopped into the shower to get clean.

An hour later Elise was fully dressed and their breakfast dishes were in the sink. Even though it was a Saturday, quite a bit of office-work needed doing. Doctor Yamamoto would be coming into the lab as well, to help Arthur review all the materials their lawyers were preparing in response to the buyers' due diligence requests.

Elise was dressed in a casual stretchy miniskirt, a thin sweater and her cork wedges. Without any pretext of a candy striper uniform today, she just wanted to be comfortable. This did not stop her from putting her hair into a cute ponytail however, because she knew Doctor Peters liked it that way.

As she waited for Arthur in the living room she reflected on the fact that her mother's impending arrival was making not only her nervous, but him too. She could tell just by the clipped tone of his voice this morning. Instinctively this made her want to shore-up her relationship with him even more, not only to put his mind at ease but also to reassure herself of their still-new bond.

As Arthur entered the living room, his eyes raked up and down Elise's outfit once. He smiled.

Elise smiled back, enjoying the familiar rush his approval always gave her. She couldn't get enough of it. She felt like she had a brand-new boyfriend whose gaze just happened to be her favorite aphrodisiac.

She followed him into the short connecting hall that led to the laboratory. Just as he was reaching for the doorknob she grabbed his shoulder and spun him around to face her, then rose to her tiptoes and began kissing him. She slid her arms around his waist in the process.

Doctor Peters kissed her back with modest enthusiasm, but that was not enough for Elise. Soon she pushed him back against the wall of the hallway and began using her fingers to massage his penis through his flat-front slacks.

"Later, later," Arthur whispered into her kisses.

"Nah, come on... this won't take long," Elise smirked up at him confidently.

"I have so much to do this morning, Elise..."

"Yes you do, Doctor P. Yes you do."

Elise tugged his zipper down and reached inside. She extricated his penis carefully through the opening and sank to her knees while muttering: "And this time... you gotta let me finish."

Her cute mouth encircled Arthur's cockhead with a silent gulp.

"Fuck..." he moaned.

Elise hummed contentedly, feeling his glans gradually swell within her palette. Her jaw stretched open to make room for him. Her wet tongue danced under his frenulum, sending tingles of pleasure down to his testes. His shaft slowly stiffened. She began to bob her head.

Arthur leaned against the wall for support. His knees were slightly bent. His hands found their way to the back of Elise's head and encircled the jaunty ribbon of her ponytail.

"Why are you doing this to me?" he whispered.

Elise pulled her mouth away and gave him an amused look: "Because. I like you."

"AH!" Arthur flinched as her lips popped back over the crown of his glans. He actually felt a little sore. That had not happened since his honeymoon.

Elise took him in as far as she could, squashing her epiglottis against his fat cockhead. She quickly undid his belt. In no time she had his pants down around his knees. She paused for breath and fished his erection backward through the fly of his boxer shorts, then pushed those down to his knees as well.

With his genitals thusly exposed, Elise unleashed everything she knew about fellatio. Arthur's expression widened into a round 'O' as he watched her devote herself entirely to his pleasure.

Truthfully Elise was no expert at this in terms of experience, having had fewer than five prior lovers (no matter how broadly one defined that term), and none as well-endowed as Doctor Peters. Still, she tried to make up for it with instinct and enthusiasm.

Her hands gently tugged his scrotum toward her chin. She hummed hungrily and repeatedly pushed her mouth as far down his length as she could. Every so often she pulled back off him completely, angled her head to one side and slid her puckered lips back and forth along the underside of his shaft like a harmonica.

Arthur's breathing shuddered when she did that, so she slurped noisily on the exterior of his shaft and scrotum for half a minute before gulping his glans back into her mouth.

Arthur found it difficult to remain standing. The suction her cheeks and tongue created was incredible. Had it not been for the wall behind him he would have tipped over.

Saliva began to leak from Elise's mouth. She continued her rhythmic ministrations, seemingly unaware of the long clear strands hanging from her chin.

Elise attended to his cock with every feature of her mouth including her voice box, which moaned and hummed. The muscles in her tongued rubbed and pushed. Her inner cheeks clung and sucked. Her puffy lips held on tight.

Every time she took him in deep she twisted her head, palpating his glans with the soft pocket atop her throat.

Elise maintained all these rhythmic ministrations until she ran out of oxygen. Then she pulled back and gasped briefly before diving at his balls and gently sucking each one into her mouth in turn while swirling one hand around his slobbery shaft.

Every nerve-ending in Arthur's cock stood at attention.

Elise realized she had never enjoyed this so much before. To her, giving head had always been fun, sure, but Doctor Peters' cock was special. It was warm, extra big and tasted good too.

She took a deep breath and then re-impaled her mouth, emitting a happy moan.

She could not believe the way this made her drool. Spit was dripping onto her bare knees and running down the front of her neck and under her sweater. It was leaking everywhere. A wet spot was forming in the carpet.

As the minutes slid by, Elise scrunched her body smaller beneath him and looked up, blinking rapidly from the surfeit of cock in her mouth. She wanted to open her throat for him. She had tried several times already these past few days, but always failed. He was simply too thick.

Arthur towered over her, gazing straight down as her pretty face sucked and slurped on his cock. He could tell she was trying her best, eagerly straining to please him. Still, she had not managed to take any more than half of his length through her lips.

He wanted more.

He stooped slightly and rearranged his hands behind Elise's head, clasping the base of her skull. Gently, while keeping her mouth entirely full of cock, he began to recline her face and guide her shoulders lower and closer. Elise adjusted her folded legs to comply and stared straight up at him, expectantly. The remaining inches of Arthur's cock protruded from her young face, worryingly wide and veiny outside her already-stretched mouth.

Inside Elise's stomach, butterflies of panic began to flutter. She knew exactly what he wanted. She had been trying already to accept him there; to slacken her throat enough to grant him that urgent, breath-stealing penetration. By now she was actually afraid because she knew his cock was too big.

Elise understood this. Doctor Peters, apparently, did not.

He did not speak. He just started pressing his hips forward while holding her head still. Elise felt the bulbous end of his cock pressuring her, inexorably loosening the knot of muscles protecting her throat.

Her epiglottis was already pinned flat. She was well beyond the point of breathing.

Her hazel eyes shimmered as her tear-ducts went into overdrive. She blinked faster and tried to relax her throat. She desperately wanted to please him.

Doctor Peters' hands pulled tighter and tighter, urging her open. Her vision blurred. She became slightly dizzy.

Then something happened. A wet squeak from the back of her throat signaled total distention. The front side of her neck rippled outward, suddenly swollen with cock.

Arthur cursed aloud.

Elise's gag reflexes contorted around him deliciously tightly, but he kept the pressure on, exulting "Ah! Yes!" as the final inch of his shaft disappeared.

Elise knew only panic. Nothing had ever been so deep in her throat. She was trapped mid-retch, her esophagus held painfully wide while her nose was buried in pubic hair. She felt like his cock reached to her collarbones.

She slapped both hands against Doctor Peters' thighs. Arthur held her there for an extra moment anyway, relishing her throat's silky contractions. Then he let go, allowing her to extricate the entirety of his penis in one stroke. Elise yanked her head backward and sideways, coughing up a wet glob of phlegm.

"God that was nice!" Arthur exclaimed. "Can we do that again?"

Elise was winded, fanning her face with one hand and trying to get the sensation of retching to subside. Her eyes streamed with tears. She had to swallow a mouthful of drool just to recover her ability to breathe. It took another ten seconds before she could talk.

"I... No, I... I can't," she stuttered shakily. "Way too... way too much. I couldn't... get used to that."

Arthur was not in the mood to concede so easily. His libido was pretty much in charge now.

"Just try," he said. "Please."

Elise looked up at him. She was aware of having started this interlude in the hallway; over his objections actually. And, she HAD been enjoying herself... right up until that very last part. She wanted to please him.

She really, really wanted to please him.

Elise looked at the way his penis hung before her. It stood straight out, level with her face and soaking wet. It looked vaguely alien, but at the same time sort of magnificent.

"Maybe," she whispered, "maybe just... once more, n'kay?"

Arthur grinned down at her.

Elise aligned her mouth with the tip of his cock and began again, carefully. For a while she just sucked on him at her own pace, rebuilding her confidence and enthusiasm. She did everything she could to excite his pleasure. She remembered his balls too, massaging them gently with her fingertips and occasionally ducking her head to nurse them in turn.

Arthur leaned his head back against the hallway wall and let his shoulders sag. He was in a very happy place.

When Elise next took him back into her mouth, her dainty fingers began pulling his balls closer. Arthur's hands were still wrapped around the back of her head. He could not restrain himself.

Vigorously, he impaled her throat.

Elise surrendered to the full magnitude of his penis, allowing it to pump up and down inside her neck over and over. Bubbles emerged from her straining mouth. Veins that had been invisible before became prominent in her forehead. Faint ridges beneath the skin of her neck bulged outward, tracing every move his length made within her narrow throat.

Such an abundance of sex during the previous few days meant that now, despite the marvelous tightness of Elise's throat, Arthur's penis retained a degree of flexibility which no doubt helped to ease her plight. It also meant he was a long way from orgasm.

Arthur held Elise down on his cock slightly longer than he should have. When they separated, she gasped for air loudly through a streaming mouth.

Elise recognized that she had serious work to do if she intended to finish him like this. Bravely, she encouraged Arthur to fuck her throat once more.

And he did. He pulled her face against his groin and pumped his hips against her, relishing the contractions of her gag reflex around his long cock. The sheer amount of pleasure he was experiencing quickly exceeded his wildest fantasies.

Elise acceded to his deep penetrations several more times, allowing her freshly made-up face to become a slutty mess. Running mascara streaked her cheeks. A pink smear of lipstick widened around her mouth. Still she pressed on; coughing, drooling and starving her lungs to near anoxia repeatedly over the next ten minutes.

Arthur felt divine, but his conscience began to bother him as more and more time went by. He twice suggested they stop but Elise refused. Intuitively he realized he was benefitting from some weird type of mother-daughter tension that was motivating Elise. She seemed desperate to make him cum one last time before Sylvia arrived.

Elise professed that her privates were too sore for intercourse. She told Arthur that she wanted to finish him with just her mouth instead. Hearing this, he was only too happy to oblige her wish.

Arthur closed his eyes and willed himself toward orgasm. He knew she could not withstand this abuse for much longer.

'Just once more,' he kept telling himself, but he could not stop. Elise's throat felt too good. It was so tight around his cock and delivered such an intensity of pleasure that he only wanted more and more.

He penetrated her again, burying his cock to the hilt between her outstretched lips, and shuddered with joy.

Eventually, after a dozen more penetrations, Elise became so congested and throat-sore that continuing would have been cruel. She could barely see straight.

Arthur released her head.

Elise remained relentless, especially now that she could tell he was close to orgasm. Her goal was near, so she doubled the tempo of her bobbing head. Arthur opened his eyes long enough to record what she was doing, but then his head tilted back again. It felt so good he could barely keep from crying.

Elise beat her soft mouth down around the first half of his cock over and over, moaning and gurgling continuously. Streams of spit leaked from her. The entrance of her throat was playing catch-and-release with his cockhead.

Arthur's toes curled up in his shoes. His teeth bared themselves. He became unable to control his facial expressions.

Elise kept on driving her face forward, stroking him with her entire mouth. She was giving everything she had.

The psychological effect this had on Arthur's arousal was intense. Elise was so eager! That in itself was thrilling. She was the girl he had privately sworn he would not touch; the teasingly hot and way-too-young-for-him summer intern sent by his ex-love Sylvia. And now she was excitedly pummeling the ring of her throat with his quivering bulb, over and over.

Arthur let out a whimper. Within his testes, a fresh discharge began its ascent.

His was in unknown territory, having never before climaxed so often in so few days, but the delicious grip of Elise's esophageal opening was dragging it out of him. Stroke by stroke, his pleasure's conclusion became irreversible.

"Gah...ha...HAH!" he cursed as his ejaculation finally commenced. He grabbed the back of Elise's bobbing head and pulled her face down all the way once more. Her throat was so abused by then that it accepted him without much fight.

Semen exploded into Elise's head, firing down her gullet in sustained squirts. Arthur held her tight and yelled. His balls actually hurt from so much pleasurable exertion.

Elise gagged fiercely and wriggled backward. Cum ricocheted out through her nose and both corners of her mouth at once. She coughed and spluttered until Arthur let go.

As soon her throat was empty she gasped for air, tongue out and mouth agape. Rapid pulses of semen continued spurting from him, showering her in goopy strands.

Elise shivered, swallowed and then re-opened her lips while stroking his erupting penis. Arthur grunted and cursed, eyes tight shut.

Elise's small hands pumped him until the last dribbles of his ejaculate were out, then stopped. She was delirious and could no longer see.

It was over.

Arthur opened his eyes and looked down. Milky cum was all over Elise's beautiful face. It lay especially thickly around her lips, which were trembling with fatigue.

Elise felt like she had swallowed semen more than nature ever intended. She pushed the remainder from her mouth and let it slide down her reclined neck in long, wet globs.

"God that was intense," Arthur panted.

Elise attempted to sniff once through her nose and then began to laugh quietly. She had never worked so hard to make a man cum before. Her sinuses were totally congested and she felt dizzy. Her right eye refused to open. Cooling, sticky goop clung to every feature of her face. Her forehead, chin and both cheeks were linked by ropey bridges of the stuff. She guessed that she looked ridiculous.

"Wow..." she giggled, finally able to talk again. "I think my jaw is, like, almost broken."

"So crazy," Arthur panted. "You drained me... there's nothing left."

Elise finally got her right eye open, despite the gluey stuff clinging to its lashes. She smiled blearily up at Doctor Peters and said: "Good."

"You... you should look in the mirror. You're a spectacle."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah."

"Well..." she grinned, pausing to wipe a ticklish glob of cum from under her nose, "Does that mean I get a white card now?"

Arthur chuckled and slouched over her, hands on his knees. Elise laughed too, then rubbed the hinges of her jaw and complained that it hurt to smile.

"You are so bad," Arthur whispered.

"You mean I'm so good," Elise corrected him. "And don't you forget it."

"No way I could; not ever."

Elise struggled to her feet with Arthur's help. Her legs were asleep. She stood unsteadily before him, clutching his arms for support. Arthur held her by her elbows. They both laughed at the state they were in. Elise's face, neck and bare legs were soaked. The front of her sweater was streaked with drool and cum. Arthur's pants and boxers were too. The carpet was disgusting.

It took a quarter of an hour for them to get clean again. While Elise was brushing her teeth she noticed how sore her throat was.

'Great,' she mused, 'On top of everything else, now it hurts to swallow.'

Once clean, she changed into the most boring outfit she could find; jeans, a sweatshirt, sneakers and no makeup.

The two of them were soon settled behind their respective desks in the lab, and the remainder of the morning slid by in an uneventful stream of work. The highlight was a lunch delivery at noon.

After eating, Doctor Peters spent the early afternoon upstairs with Doctor Yamamoto, leaving Elise by herself on the first floor, checking spreadsheets in Excel.

At two thirty in the afternoon, her phone rang.

Elise took a deep breath before answering. She wanted to sound cheerful. Not only was she trying to hide her displeasure with her mother's impending visit and divorce news, but she also needed to conceal her underlying pelvic discomfort. And now her throat hurt too, which seemed to be making her voice a bit deeper. Clearly, Elise thought, having this much sex with Doctor Peters was not a sustainable pastime.

"Hi mom!" she answered as brightly as she could.

"HellOOoo!" Sylvia greeted her. "I've just landed and my goodness what a horribly crowded flight that was! I couldn't get a martini and the man next to me watched the most violent movie the entire time and now, would you believe, the rental car people have given me a PURPLE car?! Have you ever heard of anything more ridiculous? It's like a grape, honey. Anyway, I'm off to the hotel and the car apparently knows the way. It keeps interrupting me with some nonsense about keeping left! I don't know how anyone gets around out here, it's all a zoo..."

Elise closed her eyes and exhaled, forcing herself to remain silent as the familiar nattering melodrama streamed through her phone. It was the soundtrack of her childhood.

"Mom, mom... MOM!" she finally interrupted. "What time do you think you'll get here?"

"Oh... well, I need to get settled at the hotel first and freshen up a bit. Then I'll drive over. You sent me the address, didn't you?"

"Yes. It was in my text yesterday. Did you get it?"

"Oh, I don't know, Honey. I'm sure it's in my phone somewhere, but I'll have to look later. You know how I despise all this technology. I suppose I should be there by mid-afternoon. Have you asked Arthur for a good restaurant nearby? Make it someplace with a decent wine list, for God's sake sweetie."

"No, I haven't. And I don't understand why you even want to take him out to dinner anyway, Mom. It's just weird. If anything, he should be taking ME out to dinner."

"Don't be ridiculous Elise, you've only just met him. Plus you're an intern and he's the head of the company! People don't take interns to dinner, for God's sake... that would be silly! Don't suggest any such thing or he'll think I've raised you with the manners of a -- Good Lord, lunatic! Almost hit me! How do these people survive?"

"Mom! Watch the road. Please! Anyway, that's not my point. Why are you guys going to dinner? You said yourself you haven't even seen him since you were like twenty or something."

"We'll, Darling, we were actually much older than twenty the last time, but, in any case, you know what they say: A woman never forgets a man who's good in the feathers!"

Her mother's laughter tinkled through the cellular connection. Elise became rooted to the carpet. A freezing ball of angst materialized in her stomach and immediately threatened to explode outward.

"Wha—what?!" she stammered.

"Oh, didn't he mention that? Hmm, how professional! I suppose he didn't want you to think I was the reason you got the job. Isn't that sweet? Well, anyway, I don't mind telling you... we were the "it" couple back in the 'Eighties. But he's right. It's not really an appropriate thing for him to talk about with you, Darling. Besides, it was a long time ago and we've both been married since then, so... I'm sure we'll just have ourselves a good laugh about it, seeing each other after all these years. That's all."

Elise's jaw clenched so tight her teeth began to squeak.

Her mother's voice carried on talking but Elise did not hear a word. Revulsion blared within her brain like a short-circuited car horn, blocking out all sound.

"I... I have to go," Elise announced robotically. She was not sure her mother had even heard her, but she hung up anyway.

She needed to be alone; very alone and very celibate for a very long time. Her entire body felt unclean.

For a while Elise was beyond speech. Then she heard Arthur's footsteps descending the staircase from the second floor, and she went into a fury. She charged out to the main hallway and confronted him about her mother. She yelled all sorts of things, including that she never wanted to speak with him again. Tears streamed down her cheeks. Arthur's face reflected panic and abject guilt. He found no words to counter her assault.

Eventually Elise ran out of unanswerable insults and walked away. She felt emotionally hollowed-out. Arthur was left standing alone in the hallway, looking despondent.

Elise shunned him, hiding out at Jacob's empty workstation and quietly cursing the afternoon away.

Eventually she rose to her feet and starting pulling herself back together, at least enough to look presentable for her mom. She promised herself to never admit this latest misjudgment to Sylvia. Even thinking about it made her feel disgusting.

She went to the main restroom and washed her face, then pulled out her ponytail and parted her long auburn hair down the middle. She brushed it straight down either side, encapsulating her head in a defensive hood. There was no way in hell she wanted her mother to know that she had been crying.

Arthur still cowered in his office behind his big desk, surrounded by bookcases.

By the time Sylvia parked her rental car outside the laboratory, dusk was approaching. She sent Elise a text message, letting her know she was outside. Elise rose from Jacob's chair and began the long walk down the hallway to the delivery entrance.

As Elise walked, she steeled her nerves. She wanted to seem totally nonplussed about Doctor Peters and instead focus on her mother's crazy divorce plans. She needed to find out what was motivating that process, she reminded herself, if she and her sisters were going to have any chance of reversing it.

Just inside the delivery entrance Elise stopped. She tucked her hair back behind her ears and tried to make her expression completely neutral. Then she hit the button on the wall that opened the heavy steel doors.

Her mother's purple rental car was parked crookedly against the curb. Its driver's side door was wide open, blocking half a lane. She saw her mother still sitting inside the car, checking her make-up in the rearview mirror.

"Jesus," Elise muttered under her breath. Then she stepped over the threshold and waved.

"Hi Darling!" Sylvia called out as she clambered from her seat.

Elise did a double-take once she saw what her mother was wearing; patent leather heels and a little black cocktail dress that looked new. And her hair had been professionally straightened.

Elise felt her face scrunch up with unhappy concern.

"Why are you wearing that?" she blurted as soon as Sylvia was halfway up the delivery ramp.

"Hello to you too, Darling. What a way to greet your own mother! Honestly, I don't know what's gotten into you. Give us a kiss."

Sylvia stopped right in front of Elise, her be-jangled arms spread wide.

Elise grudgingly accepted her mother's embrace. Then she noticed the smell.

"You... why'd you change your perfume?" she asked over her mother's shoulder. Her concerned deepened.

"Oh, it's just a little something I used to wear. I found it the other day and wanted a change. What, with everything else that's going on, I needed something fun. Do you like it?"

"I guess so. It's better than that rose stuff."

"Well, there's no need to be rude, 'Leesie! Now take me inside. I'm cold."

Elise stepped aside and held the door for her mom, saying: "Maybe if you were dressed normally you wouldn't be. What's up with the dress anyway? Is it new?"

"Yes. Do you like it?" Sylvia asked, doing a sprightly twirl across the threshold.

"Hmm, it's... different, I guess. Maybe a bit small for you though, don'tcha think?

"Oh, Darling, for God's sake let your mother have a little fun. Do you know how long it's been since I've been out to dinner with anyone besides your father?"

"Eww! Don't -- just don't say stuff like that. It's gross."

Sylvia sighed dramatically and marched up the hallway, leaving Elise to trail behind. She walked briskly, almost as if she had an idea where she was headed.

"Mom, slow down. You don't even know where you're going. It's like a maze in here."

"Well alright, Honey, show me the way!" Sylvia answered without breaking her stride.

Elise had to jog to catch up. She tried and failed to divert her mother away to the empty main labs so they could talk alone, but no excuse seemed effective. Reluctantly she showed Sylvia the way to Doctor Peters' office. Their awkward reunion seemed to be her mother's inevitable objective. It mattered not that Elise found the whole idea abhorrent.

Sylvia stopped still, framing herself in Doctor Peters' doorway with one hand lifted high in faux surprise and the other on her hip. She was blocking Elise.

Arthur looked up from his desk like a startled deer. His eyes absorbed Sylvia's hair, dress and shoes. They were all raven-black.

"Oh my dear Arthur, look at you!" Sylvia exclaimed with a dramatic smile.

Arthur slowly rose in his chair, eyes still wide. He had to remind himself to smile as though nothing was wrong.

"Hi... Sylvia," he began awkwardly, feeling the strangeness of that greeting on his tongue. "It's been quite a while, eh?"

His heart was racing. His forehead felt sweaty. Still, he forced himself to walk down off the dais to greet her.

Just behind Sylvia he could see Elise. She was scowling.

Sylvia gave him a long, lingering hug, pressing her chest to his and squeezing her fingernails into his back. Her perfume teleported him directly to 1989.

"It's wonderful to see you, Arty. Are you keeping yourself well, I hope? You were always such an ox when we were young... don't you remember? All those football practices..."

Arthur smiled uncomfortably, still trapped with his face hanging above her shoulder. Glancing up he saw Elise fold her arms tight. There was nothing remotely friendly about her expression.

"You've put on a little weight I think" Sylvia continued with a falsetto laugh. "But then again I supposed we're all guilty there, aren't we? Uh! So many years, Arty! Far, far too many."

Sylvia finally relinquished her embrace and stepped back. She returned one hand to the air and slowly turned in a circle, remarking pointlessly about the room.

Elise knew exactly what her mother was doing. She was trying to get Doctor Peters to check her out in that damn dress. This entire situation was nauseating.

Arthur looked at the ceiling, then at the wall, doing everything he could to keep his gaze off Sylvia's body as she pirouetted in front of him. He, too, felt a little nauseous.

"Well!" Sylvia continued brightly. "I supposed Elise and I ought to run off to some rabbit hole and catch up for a few minutes. But when we're done I want to see you dressed for dinner Arty! I'm taking you out. It's the very least I can do after all the help you've given my little lamb here. What do you say?"

"Uhhhhh..." Arthur stalled. "That's really not necessary, Sylvia. You two go... and take your time! I have a whole lot of work to do this evening anyway and—"

"Nonsense, Arty. I'm taking you out. I'm just dying to hear what-all you've been up to!"

"Well, but we're actually right in the middle of a big transaction and—"

"Don't be silly," Sylvia said with a bright smile. "I never knew you to be so industrious. Don't go and grow up on me now! One little bitty dinner is all I ask... I won't take no for an answer. We'll go someplace nice and have a little wine. It's Saturday night after all... It'll be good for you."

From where she stood in the doorway Elise couldn't be sure, but her mother's head dipped to one side as she spoke in a way that suggested a wink.

A clammy shiver ran down Elise's arms. She barked something barely sociable to get her mother's attention and then hauled her out of the room by the hand.

They retreated to the main laboratory together, much to Sylvia's displeasure. Within a minute Elise had her mom seated in a distant corner of the giant room. She began interrogating her about the divorce.

The conversation did not go well. Sylvia just kept repeating what she had said on the phone, about needing to be herself again. It became apparent to Elise that this family catastrophe really had been years in the making. Her mother was fully committed.

Elise's efforts at inquiry were made more challenging by her own distraction and disgust about Doctor Peters. The fact that she and her mother now shared that unmentionable commonality seemed like the most miserable and depressing reality she had even had to face. It kept her mind off-track. She was bumbling and repeating simple questions, unable to hear the answers.

Long pauses intersperse their conversation, in which Elise's mind wandered to her own future. She had to quit the internship. That much was clear. There was no way she could work for Doctor Peters knowing what she knew now, and certainly no way she could share his apartment, let alone his bed.

It was like mentally processing a break-up. Doctor Peters had somehow become her boyfriend despite her self-assurance that it was only a physical thing, and now she actually cared about him a lot... which made his dishonesty all the more hurtful.

Elise began to cry, right in front of her mother. Sylvia rubbed one hand up and down her daughter's back a few times and tried to say some conciliatory things, but even she knew she was no good at this part of parenting. Tears just made her uncomfortable.

Elise, naturally, made no attempt to let her mother off the hook, even though Sylvia had no idea of the real reason for her tears. Elise purposely rubbed it in, sobbing that it was all her mother's fault and that she was being selfish by abandoning the family.

There was only so much of that talk Sylvia could take. Her mind was distracted too; by a wholly different and long-imagined agenda. Dealing with an ungrateful and weepy daughter was not high on her list of priorities today. She was, after all, dressed for fun!

"Don't you have somewhere you can lie down?" Sylvia asked.

Elise recognized this instantly for what it was; a thinly-veiled escape attempt. She sniffed back her tears and looked away from her mother.

"Fine. Just go," she whispered.

"Oh 'Leesie Dear, that's not what I meant," Sylvia lied.

"Yeah it is, Mom! Just go already, okay? It's so obvious... all you wanna do is hook-up with your stupid precious 'Arty' again. It's fucking gross."

Elise stood up and walked away before her mother could answer.

Sylvia was left behind, dumbstruck. Being so directly called-out by her daughter actually made her pause and consider, which was not her forte at all.

Elise disappeared from the room and climbed the main staircase as quietly as she could, hoping to hide out upstairs without getting roped into any actual work by Doctor Yamamoto.

Sylvia sat by herself for a few minutes. When Elise failed to return she stood and began to gather herself for what was, in her mind, the main event. She pulled a compact from her purse and re-powdered her face.

Her black hair was still arranged perfectly. Nothing short of a tornado was likely to dislodge it, so intense had been its dousing with hotel hairspray.

Once satisfied, Sylvia tightened her expression into a wide smile and sauntered across the main hall into Arthur's office.

She found him there, pacing behind his wide desk.

"Oh, Arty, do get changed, would you? Elise is in a bit of a state, I'm afraid, and I think she'd prefer some alone time. That's how she's always been, you know. She seems to be taking all this news rather badly. Did she tell you about it? That Dan and I are splitting up?"

The smile on Sylvia's face held fast, waiting for his answer.

"Uh, yeah," Arthur began. "She mentioned it a few days ago. Do you think she'll be alright? I don't want to—"

"Oh of course! She's a tough one. Don't let her quietness fool you. She'll be fine in an hour or two, you'll see. Now... where would you like to go to dinner?"

"Uh, look. Like I was saying earlier, tonight's probably not the right time, Sylvia..."

"Nonsense, Arty. How long has it been since I've seen you? Twenty years or something? Go put on a nice jacket and let's hit the town. We'll turn that frown of yours upside down."

"No, listen... Really. I just can't."

"Well... in heaven's name why not Arty? It's not like your married!"

Arthur flinched. "How... how did you know? Did Elise tell you?"

"Oh honestly, Arty. Do you think I've haven't kept tabs on you?! Of course I know. Three years ago, right?"

"Yeah, but—"

"You see? Wasn't so hard was it? Believe me, I couldn't possibly judge you about that. After all, I'm doing the same thing right now."

Sylvia smiled directly at him again. Goosebumps appeared on the back of Arthur's neck.

"No, uh... no. My situation was not the same, at all. I was—"

"Oh pish! Don't YOU start crying over spilt milk too, Arty That's kid-stuff... Let's just go have some fun."

"Wait... honestly Sylvia, I can't go to dinner with you. It's nice of you to offer, and to stop by and visit with Elise and all that, but I just can't go. There's a ton of work to do this weekend, and my partner is upstairs right now. He probably needs my help to—"

"Arty, hush," Sylvia announced, her voice exchanging a falsetto lilt for its natural tone. "Listen... I just want to talk. That's all, okay? I'd hoped to have this conversation over a pleasant dinner, but if you're going to be a stick in the mud we can do it here instead."

"What... Talk about what?"

Sylvia stepped up onto the dais and sidled over to the edge of Arthur's desk.

"You and I," she began softly, "have quite a history, don't we?"

Arthur nodded silently. Such proximity to Sylvia escalated his discomfort. He glanced at the hallway door, anxious to know whether Elise was nearby, or within earshot.

"We were good together, weren't we?" Sylvia continued, planting one hand on his desk and leaning slightly toward him. "You know... Dan was always my second-fiddle. You know that right? You were the real one... for me."

Arthur shook his head in silent refusal.

"Haven't you always wondered if someday we might get another chance? You've wondered, Arty, haven't you?"

Arthur back away, confused and in panic. He was hemmed in on three sides by bookcases. Sylvia dragged a fingernail lazily across the top of his desk, feigning nonchalance.

"Well I know I have. We could have been great, you and I."

"Sylvia—"

"Do you remember that night I found you outside Tosca's? Standing around with all your drinking pals?"

"Uhh, maybe."

"You looked so sad when you saw me. Like you really missed me. I... I just had to have you one last time, remember? We snuck away and hid in your car, hoping nobody would see... and I let you have your way with me?"

"God Sylvia, that was... that must have been..."

"It was 1990, Arty. Don't you remember? You had just bought that silly red car? The one that looked like a spaceship..."

"The 928."

"Yes, the Porsche... God we were both so young back then. What a silly waste that was. But for that one evening we enjoyed it, didn't we? Do you remember? We put seats waaay back..."

"I'd, I'd forgotten," Arthur stammered. "You were married. I was drunk. It wasn't our best moment."

"Well, I've never forgotten, Arty. Because you see... the thing is, Elise was born the following February."

Arthur's heart stopped. He opened his mouth, but no sound came out. His vision began to vibrate.

"That night," Sylvia continued in a whisper, "was in late May, so... "

"No."

"I never told you because I wasn't sure. I never wanted to be sure, actually. I simply couldn't face it, so I convinced myself she was Dan's. And she might be, but... I mean... her hair. Nobody on my side has auburn hair like that. Nor on Dan's. But..."

"N-n."

"Your mother... Didn't she?"

"No!!"

Arthur's fell to his knees on the carpet. His face melted, distorted by pain. Sylvia straightened up and stepped closer, genuine concern crossing her face for the first time all day.

"What-what Arty? What's wrong? It's why I sent Elise to you. I thought you should get to know each other, just in case it turns out to be true. I thought you'd be proud."

Arthur's hands squeezed both sides of his head like a vice. Intense, pounding fear reverberated through his body. Blood pressure began to hammer his brain. He felt as though a locomotive was crushing him in slow motion, severing his body into grotesque segments beneath immense steel wheels. The signature of guilt scrawled itself across his face.

"What's wrong Arthur? Don't you like her?"

Arthur squeezed harder, trying to prevent his skull from exploding.

"Sweetheart relax, you don't have to be a father if you don't want to be. She's already grown and she doesn't know... she doesn't have to know, ever Arty, if that's the way you want it... okay? I thought you would want to know, that's all."

When Arthur still did not recover from his knees, Sylvia grew impatient.

"Jeez Arthur, get ahold of yourself. Stand up... Be a man. It's not a death in the family... It's not like you've slept with her for God's sake!"

Arthur's spine kinked unnaturally leftward as if she had stabbed him. A Munch-ian scream escaped his lips.

"Dear God!" Sylvia cursed. "Did you?! Tell me you didn't! Tell me right now, Arty!"

It happened so fast that Arthur had no time to warn her. His features widened and then his vomit hit the floor and splattered all over her black pumps.

"Jesus Christ!" Sylvia screamed, backing away in horror. "What... kind of monster...?!"

Arthur grabbed the arm of his chair for support. His gut purged again. Finally he crawled through the muck and collapsed onto his wastebasket. He emptied the rest of his stomach into the plastic bag inside.

Sylvia kept staggering backward; one hand over her mouth, the other flapping violently to one side. She backed right off the edge of the dais and fell to the floor, landing on her butt.

Ten seconds later Arthur's retching was done. He looked up from his knees. His eyes were bloodshot. His beard was a mess. His face turned nearly purple as he stared at Sylvia.

"Get out of here!!" he bellowed. "Get the fuck OOUUTT!!"

His roar echoed loudly throughout the lab's concrete passageways. Elise and Doctor Yamamoto froze upstairs, each turning only their eyeballs toward the sound.

Sylvia scrambled to her feet and ran. She had never been so terrified in her entire life. When she tried to round the corner into the main hallway, her slime-covered shoes slipped out from under her and she crashed to the floor again. Her dress tore, but in no time she was back on her feet and running toward the exit.

Elise was on the move too. She ran to the top of the stairs and took them two at a time, sneakers slapping the concrete steps. Halfway down she caught sight of her mother sprinting by. The terror on her face turned Elise cold.

"Mom!" she called out. "What happened? Stop!"

Sylvia kept running until she crashed into the delivery doors at full speed, forcing them half open on impact. An alarm went off, triggering a security cam that displayed the unfolding events on a monitor in Doctor Yamamoto's office. The motorized doors tried to close, but Sylvia slipped through and was gone. Elise, running a dozen yards behind her, had to stop and allow the doors to close before she could re-open them properly using the button on the wall. By then her mother's purple rental car was halfway down the block.

Arthur staggered off his dais like a wounded bear. He crashed through the narrow connecting hallway to his apartment and locked himself in.

On unsteady legs, he weaved through his apartment knocking small things over. His hands were flailing. Eventually he stooped to drink water from the kitchen faucet and wash his face. Over and over.

Nothing helped.

He caught sight of the sofa bed where Elise had slept. He blundered past the kitchen table on his way to it, flipped it over and crashed the heavy piece into the built-ins below his television.

In a blind rage he then ran to his garage, grabbed the yard-long steel handle of his floor-jack and swung it wildly against the side of his neglected Porsche. The passenger side window exploded inward. A hole appeared in the car cover where the end of the jack-handle had punched through. Arthur then lifted the steel tube back behind his right shoulder and swung it again with all his might, this time aiming for the windshield. The heavy handle bounced free of his grip on impact and helicoptered backward, striking him behind the ear.

He collapsed to the floor in silence.

Elise was running again, this time toward Arthur's office. The scene she found there disturbed her. The stench of vomit was overpowering and Doctor Peters was nowhere to be found. She called for him and pounded on the apartment door. She heard something inside: a faint and unidentifiable crash. Then there was nothing. Only silence.

Elise beat her hands against the door over and over, calling Arthur's name. Finally she ran back upstairs, remembering that Doctor Yamamoto had a key.

After several minutes of hand-wringing and failed communication, the two of them were back outside the locked door. Doctor Yamamoto used his master key to open it.

Elise ran into the apartment. By the time Doctor Yamamoto was halfway across the living room, she had already searched the bedroom, both bathrooms and the larger closets.

"He's not here!" she yelled. "Where is he?"

Doctor Yamamoto shrugged. Then he pointed toward the back door that led to the garage.

They found Arthur lying on the floor. He was on his side in a vaguely fetal position beside the old 928. The red jack-handle lay next to him.

"Doctor Peters!" Elise cried out as she leapt down the three steps to the garage floor. She skidded to her knees beside him and lifted his head.

He was conscious and breathing. A tall goose-egg was rising from the side of his head.

"Say something! Are you okay" Elise pleaded.

Arthur shook his head slowly. "Go home, Elise. Just leave me here. Go home."

"No, I won't. What happened?"

Doctor Yamamoto took a knee beside Elise and gently began to palpate the circumference of Arthur's skull, assessing the damage.

Elise glanced worriedly between the two men. She saw blood appear on Doctor Yamamoto's fingers.

"Is he okay? Should I call 9-1-1?"

Both men shook their heads in unison. Working together they got Arthur into a seated position with his back against the covered Porsche.

"What happened?" Elise asked. "What did she do?"

"Just go. Leave me," Arthur whispered. His eyes stared blankly at the floor, unfocussed.

"No, I don't want to leave. I forgive you."

"Don't say that."

"But it's true!"

"You can't stay here."

"Why not? Look at me. I forgive you... Why won't you even look at me?"

Arthur lifted his eyes to her and said: "I don't deserve to be forgiven. We can't be together. Not ever."

Elise began to cry. Doctor Yamamoto stood up and left to retrieve some ice from the apartment's kitchen.

Arthur stayed quiet until his partner was out of the room. Then he confessed Sylvia's tale in a whisper, finishing with a miserable: "That's why."

Elise sat down on the floor beside him. She kept one hand on the injured side of his head.

"No," she said flatly. "That's bullshit. There's no way. But... she really cheated on my dad? With you? Right around then?"

"Yes. I mean, I was drunk but I do remember it. Never would have remembered the date, but she did. She said it was right around the time I bought this car, and that's right. She said she never had the nerve to find out but, she thinks I'm your dad."

"Nah-uh. I know my dad... and he IS my dad. Not you."

"But your hair... it's like my mom's was. She's right."

"No."

"I'm so sorry, Elise. I've done the most horrible thing anyone...the worst possible—"

"It's not true," Elise retorted, turning to look him squarely in the face. "Don't say that. This is just one of her weird fantasies; built-up over God knows how many years. It's bullshit, okay? I'm telling you... it's not real."

There was silence between them. Arthur was crying.

Doctor Yamamoto returned. He crouched and placed a makeshift ice pack against Arthur's ear, then lifted the big man's hand to it so he could hold it himself. He then started interrogating Arthur in Japanese.

To Elise's untrained ear, it seemed an imbalanced and somewhat unfair conversation. In the end however, Doctor Yamamoto squatted down in front of Arthur and spoke at length. He seemed to be relaying some sort of story, and when it was over he reached out and patted Arthur on the shoulder. It was the closest thing to affection Elise had ever seen him express.

"What was that all about?" Elise asked Arthur once they were back inside the apartment a few minutes later. The three of them had righted the sofa bed, but then Doctor Yamamoto had gone.

Arthur relayed his Japanese partner's suspicions, as embarrassing as they were to admit. There seemed to be no point in concealing anything from Elise now.

"He has a theory," Arthur began, leaning back against the sofa with the ice pack pressed to his skull. "And it's ludicrous, but anyway here it is: Apparently, when the whole thing with my divorce was going on, there was some talk among the Yamamoto's friends in Japan about the girl... the girl I slept with out there. Some of them claimed she was a prostitute."

Elise's eyebrows lifted in surprise and she sat down beside him.

"But she wasn't," Arthur continued. "At least, to me she wasn't. I never paid her anything, and she didn't ask me for it either. Doctor Yamamoto says his wife suspected I had been set-up; that someone paid the girl to seduce me. But, because there was no motive; I mean, nobody stole my laptop or anything on that trip... he felt unsure of it and let it go. He never told me. But now... and this is even crazier... now he thinks maybe it was your mom."

Elise sucked in a quick breath. "Shit, are you serious? I... I mean... is that even possible?"

"I don't know. It seems far-fetched. The only thing is... I never did learn exactly why my ex-wife found out. I mean, out of the blue three weeks after I got home from that trip she got an email from someone in Japan, telling her the whole story. I got home that night and walked into a total ambush; my marriage was already over. But... who in Japan would care? My ex-wife had never met anyone over there... and why would a stranger want to destroy my marriage? That's the part I've always wondered about."

"Unless it was their job, you mean? Like, unless they were hired to do exactly that."

"Yeah. Unless that."

"What the hell?" Elise whispered reflectively. "I dunno... I guess anything's possible."

"But, it still doesn't make sense. If she had done it in order to get back together with me, then why would she wait another three years before leaving Dan?"

A few seconds of silence passed before Elise answered: "'Becca. She wanted to wait until 'Becca was in college. She's my youngest sister. She's just finishing her first year."

"Jesus. I don't know, Elise. It all sounds crazy. I mean, when I knew your mom she was a little intense, but nothing like this. Not back then. I just... I don't think it's possible."

"Yeah. I dunno either, but... she has been really weird these past few years. And it's getting progressively worse. If she's convinced herself that you're my real father, which you're not by the way, then maybe she had some sort of fantasy that we'd all reunite in California... in some kind of sick soap-opera finale or something."

"We have to find out," Arthur stated flatly. "Not about your mom. I mean about us."

"You're not my dad. Trust me."

"I have to know... for sure."

"Fine. Okay... isn't there a test or something? Like they do on Jerry Springer?"

"Yeah... but I don't want to do it here. Not in California. The fewer discoverable records the better, 'cause if it's true I'm gonna have to do some serious damage-control. Otherwise I'll lose everything. I'm not going back to zero again. I can't."

Elise looked over at Arthur. There was a desperate intensity in his gaze.

"Don't worry," she said. "It's not true."

Three hours later they were speeding Eastbound on the I-80 freeway, bound for Reno, Nevada. The drive so far had been conducted almost entirely in silence. After all, what does one talk about with a lover who may have just turned out to be a first-order relative?

Elise had never spent so long in a car with someone who spoke so little. Even the radio was off. Only the steady whirr of the BMW's V8 and the thrum of the tires kept her eardrums occupied.

As the sun set behind them, they swooshed past Auburn and began the long ascent to Donner Pass. Arthur propped his elbow up on the edge of the door, tilted his head leftward to leaning against three fingertips and cleared his throat. The he said:

"The past... is never dead. It's not even past."

Elise turned and regarded him. One eyebrow lifted slightly on her face. "That's... Faulkner, isn't it?"

"God, I don't remember. Sounds about right. You must've paid more attention in college."

"Hardly. That was high school."

"Huh. Well, anyway. Whoever it was, it's true."

"I guess."

There was a long silence before Arthur muttered: "What a miserable species we are."

Elise stared at the road behind them in the side mirror. A 16-wheeler slid rearward in the lane to their right.

"Regardless of how this turns out," Arthur spoke up again a few minutes later. "I'll help you get an apartment. I know you don't want to go back home."

"Really?" Elise asked.

"Yeah. And you're gonna need a new job too. Our little idea about having you work at the lab is ridiculous. I'll help you find something else. Whatever you want to do."

"Well, um, thanks. I agree actually. I've been thinking I could maybe work for a yoga studio. I have all the credentials... it's what I've always wanted to do."

"Exactly. I'm sure we can find a place like that. They'd be lucky to have you... and who knows? If this patent deal goes the way I think it will, then... maybe someday, if you really like it, I could help you start your own studio."

"Serious?"

"Yeah. You'd be a good investment."

"Okay," Elise whispered, more than a little stunned.

"But your internship is over."

"Yeah. I know. And you know what? The happiest person to hear that will be Alex."

Arthur looked at her sideways, confused. "Why?"

"Well... You know how he said he dropped his bike and cut his cheek on the mirror or whatever?"

"Yeah?"

"Well... that's a big fat lie. I kicked his ass on Wednesday, or his face actually. That's how I broke my heel."

"You broke your shoe on his face?! How the hell...?"

"He deserved it. Let's just leave it at that."

"That fucking weasel! Tell me what happened!

"No, nothing."

"Ugh! I'm so sorry. At least, at least you're okay... and I'm glad you told me. Jesus, what a week."

It was well past dark when they arrived in Reno. They got separate rooms at a no-name economy hotel, checking in 30 minutes apart. They each paid with cash. Per Arthur's plan, they would use no plastic for any transactions nor visit any ATMs until they knew they were okay. He wanted no digital footprints, just in case.

Elise had called ahead and made an appointment early the following morning at a quickie-marriage licensing place that also did relationship testing. She used the cover story that she was adopted and looking for her real father. The lady behind the counter sampled each of their DNA with a cheek-swab and told them to come back in five hours for the results. They idled the day away at roadside diners, a grungy urban playground and sitting in Arthur's car. At the appointed time they returned to get their results. The lady handed Elise a sealed envelope.

Arthur was waiting outside in the parking lot, having instructed Elise not to open the results inside. He did not want the staff to see them react. He wanted to remain as forgettable as possible in their eyes.

When Elise climbed back in with the envelope, Arthur put the car in gear and pulled away. He drove two blocks to an empty parking lot. The sunshine was bright, but he would have been sweating in any case.

Elise handed the envelope to Arthur without smiling. She mumbled something about not worrying, but deep down she was nervous too.

They unfold the results together, each peering at the computer print-out.

"Thank God!" Arthur said.

"So, we're not?" Elise asked, still scanning the form-letter.

"No. Look here: 'Probability of parentage: zero!'"

Elise burst into tears and threw her arms around Arthur's shoulders. "Oh my God," she sobbed against his injured ear, "I'm so glad, I'm so glad, I'm so glad."

Arthur twisted toward her and gave her a half-hug back. It was all he could manage. His other arm was trapped between them.

"Yes," he whispered. "We're okay."

Elise lifted her head and began kissing him on the mouth. Arthur felt his body unwinding beneath the flurry of her kisses. Every muscle that been clenched tight throughout the past day slackened with sudden reprieve.

Eventually Elise stopped kissing him. She slid back into her own seat, flipped her luxuriant hair away over on shoulder and said with a grin: "Let's go somewhere."

"Yeah," Arthur answered, smiling for the first time all day.

"Back to the hotel?"

"You kidding? No! That place was a pigsty. Let's go somewhere nice. For like, a week."

"Seriously?" Elise asked, her face brightening with incredulous excitement.

"Yeah," Arthur stated, twisting the key to start his car. "I'm stealing you."

"Okay!"

"You ever been to Tahoe?"

"No!"

"Well good... then that's where we're going. Get out your phone and call the lab's main number. You'll get the machine. Tell them you quit and... we'll be back in, I dunno... a week? Just say I'm taking a vacation. With you."

"For real?"

"Yeah," Arthur grinned. "For real."

The BMW's tachometer wound smoothly toward redline in 2nd gear before he snapped off a crisp shift to 3rd. The car rushed onto a cambered highway onramp, curving Westward.

Elise laughed out loud.

The Sierras climbed across the windshield; clean and unstinting.

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THE END