**The Exhibitionist Next Door**

by BPClavel

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 321: Home from the Park**

“I’m really sorry about the bushes, but they are the least of our worries,” he said sitting down on the ground next to her. He pulled her down onto his lap, enveloping her in his arms. “Here we go again, right?” he remarked shaking his head in disbelief.

“Please hold me, Nate,” she said snuggling close.

“You’re just never going to clue in about Michelle, are you?” he said.

“I screwed up again, didn’t I?” she said dejectedly.

“We both did, Lover,” he said quietly. “God I hate those two! But I guess that clears up one mystery. Now I suppose we know why Alexa came at you at Sadie.”

“Secret lovers?” asked Dale.

“Imagine that . . . Alexa’s bi! Who would have thunk?” said Nate.

“It makes me so sad, Michelle deserves so much better. She’s so classy. Alexa’s nothing but trash,” said Dale.

“Someday you’ll come around,” said Nate. “There’s nothing classy about Michelle, Dale.”

Dale started crying. “Please don’t say that,” she said. “You don’t know her. Michelle’s still Michelle . . . I know it . . . down inside, she’s a beautiful person. I know how it must look, but she’s not an Alexa.”

“Okay,” said Nate. “For some reason the Michelle I see is not the Michelle you see. But right now, I need to get you home.”

“Yeah, we should go home,” agreed Dale.

“Are you still ‘up’ for the trail?” he asked. “Or should I go for the car.”

“No, the trail is good. I’m not going to wait here alone. I couldn’t take that,” she said. “But let’s get going. Even though being held like this helps, I need to get my blood moving.”

”Okay,” said Nate helping her to her feet.

“Nate…” she said.

“Yes.”

“I love you,” she said. “Thanks. I know you tried to stop me in time.”

“I tried, but I’m afraid they got away with some really incriminating photos,” said Nate. “I wish I knew what to do about that. The flash even went off just as I threw you over my shoulders. Given where I think things were pointed, that has to be a full-blown crotch shot. At least it probably won’t show your face like the others. They might be blurry, but a flash tends to freeze motion.”

Much of the way back they walked in silence. Nate spent the time trying to think of what he might be able to do. He imagined himself paying late night visits to Alexa and Michelle, trying to get their phones, but he knew that the photos might already have been downloaded. Even if they weren’t, what might he really be able to do? They’d probably call the police as soon as he banged on one of their doors.

But since there was really no practical way to get the photos deleted, things might again get a little messy. He found himself back to thinking about what would probably come of the latest photos. Alexa and Michelle were unlikely to be able to use them to get Dale arrested or expelled, he hoped. And Dale had developed quite a tolerance for nude photos of herself being seen and being circulated. As long as they didn’t mess up her life, she didn’t seem to mind that others had nude images. In that regard, at least, she was the exact opposite of Susie.

Even though it was a school night, Dale basically forced Nate to spend the night, not that it took a lot of arm twisting. She didn’t want to be alone, and she needed to be warmed up. Dale peeled off her boots outfit. After they had brushed their teeth, she peeled off Nate’s clothes as well. She pulled him into bed with her, wrapping her chilly limbs around him. For his part, he was already freezing. He had been wearing just a shirt, but holding her he realized how much higher his skin temperature was than hers. He knew that he must feel very warm to her, and he was glad about that.

It was difficult to be cold and have an even colder person pressing themselves up against you, but Nate loved her and tried to do everything he could to warm her up quickly.

Much later, at some point in the middle of the night, Nate woke up. As he gained consciousness, he wondered what had woken him up, but then he realized that Dale was shaking. Thinking that she was awake, he put an arm around her to comfort her. However, at that point he heard her mutter something that wasn’t exactly English. He realized that she was having a nightmare, and she seemed to really be suffering.

“Dale,” he said to her a few times, shaking her gently. He was holding her close, his arms fully around her in the hopes that she would find that comforting.

In the near darkness, he felt her head jerk. She looked at him with a startled look in her eyes. He could tell that she was struggling to place him.

“It’s alright, Dale,” he said in his most comforting voice. “You’re fine. It was just a dream. I’m here with you.”

He saw her frightened looking eyes dart around the room. Things were just barely visible as a little light was coming in the window.

As understanding crept over her, she squeezed him tightly saying, “Oh, My God, Nate. That was awful.”

“I’m sorry,” he said. “It was just a dream. You’re safe. We’re in your room.”

She held him, trying to relax, trying to get her breathing back under control.

“Don’t you ever do that to me again,” she said.

“What did I do?” he asked.

Pulling back and again staring into his eyes, she replied, “Wait, it wasn’t you.” After a lengthy pause as if to think she said, “Sorry, I guess I don’t know what I’m saying. You weren’t even there.”

“But I’m here, and you’re safe, Lover. Just try and relax,” he said softly.

Suddenly she grabbed her chest, feeling all around.

“It was Kelly and Alexa again,” she said. “I hate that dream!”

“I guess both of them came up in the course of the day, didn’t they? The Kelly letter, Alexa with Michelle in the park,” said Nate.

Dale sat up abruptly. “I really hate that dream,” she said again, still shivering, her hands clasped tightly over her nipples.

Feeling sorry for her, Nate said, “It’s okay…relax. Try and lie back down. It was just a dream.

As she lay back down, she said, “But something was different this time.”

“Different?” asked Nate. “Different how?”

Dale lay there thinking, finally she answered, “Before it was always just a giant empty warehouse. The winches, the cords attached to my nipples, that was all the same, but this time there was a crowd…we had an audience. Hundreds, maybe thousands of people, all watching. Before I was always alone with Kelly. She again transformed into Alexa. Not an empty warehouse…this time…there was a big crowd.”

“It’s just a dream,” said Nate. “There’s no crowd. There are no winches. There’s just you and me. We’re in your bed. We’re both safe.” Looking over at the clock, he continued. “It’s four a.m., we should try and go back to sleep.”

He felt her snuggle up against him. He was very glad to notice how warm she felt. Her breathing was quite unsteady for a time, but eventually it did even out.

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 322: Coaching Kenny**

It seemed like just a moment later that Dale’s alarm went off. Nate didn’t want to get out of bed and go to school. He was warm and comfortable right where he was, snuggled up against him dream girl’s nude body under the covers; however, she popped right up and headed down the hall to the shower. ‘If she can do it, then so can I,’ thought Nate, forcing himself to get up and get dressed.

As had happened previously, he bumped into Dale’s mother in the narrow hallway just as he was exiting Dale’s bedroom. Nate was not very comfortable with getting ‘caught in the act’ like that, caught sneaking out of Dale’s bedroom first thing in the morning. While she never said anything to make him feel less than completely welcome in their home, it still felt very awkward. After a quick, but pleasant greeting he went next door for his own morning shower.

As he was drying himself off, his phone signaled the arrival of the photo of the day. Even though he knew exactly what it would look like, he opened it and indulged in studying Dale’s lovely nether region. He made a mental note to tell her that the pussy picture no longer needed to be part of her morning routine. He now had what he needed to take his piece of artwork one step closer to reality; the finished piece that he would enter in the photography contest.

Later at school, Dale was waiting for him in the hallway just outside of Spanish class as he hurried up. She put her arms around his neck. Whispering into his ear she said, “I saw Michelle on the way into school an hour ago. She has a bruise on her cheek. It’s not very big, but I’m sure that it is a bruise. I think it is from trying to stop Alexa last night.”

Recalling the words and sounds he had heard the night before, Nate replied, “And I expect that you think that sweet little Michelle was injured by big bad Alexa because she was trying to protect you.”

Angling her head down as if embarrassed, but with her eyes looking up into his, she said meekly, “I do. What other explanation could there be?”

Nate chuckled, asking, “So why didn’t you ask her if that was what happened?”

“I tried to,” she said dejectedly. “She ignored me.”

Nate continued chuckling, shaking his head in disbelief.

“Don’t laugh, Nate. That’s mean,” she said.

“I don’t want to seem mean, I really don’t,” he said. “But you’re just so slow sometimes. We can talk later, but right now we need to get into class.” He took her hand, giving it a friendly squeeze. Holding hands they entered the classroom and took their seats.

As she sat down, Dale noticed Kenny smiling at her. He leaned over and said quietly, “I have something for you. Don’t run off after class.”

In the hallway right after class, Kenny gave Dale a large rigid envelope.

“Don’t lose this,” he said. “It’s big because it has four eight-by-ten prints of the piggyback ride in the rain photograph. One for each of you, plus one for each of your moms. That’s what Nate asked for. Also inside the envelope, in a separate smaller envelope, there are two thumb drives. They are identical. Each one contains all the Thanksgiving morning photos. You wouldn’t want those to fall into the wrong hands. As an extra measure of security, the data is encrypted, password, ‘snowangel’ one word, all lowercase. For fun I put a lot of other photos on there as well. More images I took of the piggyback ride, as well as the images we took that day with the Maverick. And there are some other candid shots of you together around school and at games or assemblies. Fun stuff like that.”

“Thanks, Kenny,” said Dale, giving him a quick peck on the cheek.

“I’m giving both thumb drives to you, Dale,” he continued. “One of them is for Nate, but the photos are so very revealing. I’m not going to give those photos to anyone other than you. I know you’ll give them to him, but I didn’t want to be the one doing it. I hope you understand.”

“Thank you again, Kenny,” said Dale, turning and giving Nate a smile. Carefully she put the envelope into her backpack, zipping it closed.

“I still have all the Thanksgiving photos myself. I happen to know that I can be trusted, but if you prefer that I not have the photos. I will erase them and allow you to verify,” he said.

“That won’t be necessary, Kenny,” she said. “I’ve recently come to the conclusion that you are more trustworthy than Nate, and for some reason, I trust him.”

As she said that, she reached her arms around Nate’s back and dug her knuckles into his ribs. Nate looked down into the smiling face looking up at him. He tried to read her bewitching expression.

As the three of them walked down the hall together, Dale asked, “So, have you gone out with Hannah again, Kenny?”

“Oh, Dale,” he said with a sigh. “I want to, so very badly, but I’m not sure she wants to. I guess I’m going to mess this up because I’m too chicken to ask her out.”

“Kenny, don’t be stupid,” she said. “She asked you to Sadie. She had a lot of fun. I saw the smile on her face. If you don’t ask her out soon…It’s your turn…you know it’s your turn, right?”

“I know. I should ask her out,” said Kenny.

“You should,” she said. “Like I started to say, if you don’t ask her out soon, she’ll decide that you don’t like her. She’ll be sad.”

“But, Dale, it’s not that easy,” said Kenny looking at the floor.

“Sure it is,” said Dale. “Just ask her. Walk up to her and ask her.”

“What he’s saying, Dale,” said Nate. “Is that he’s shy.”

“Kenny, it’s okay to be shy. But don’t be stupid. It’s not okay to be stupid,” she said from close range, pointing her index finger right between his eyes to show him how serious she was. “Here’s what we’re doing. A week from Saturday, the four of us are going on a double date. Not this weekend because of the game…next weekend. You ask Hannah, Nate will ask me. Okay?”

“Well…” said Kenny staring at the wall and kicking at the baseboard with one of his feet.

“Nate, show him how it’s done,” directed Dale.

Taking a breath to gather his wits, Nate looked into Dale’s eyes saying, “Dale, I had a lot of fun at the Sadie Hawkins dance. I really did. Will you go out with me again? How about a week from Saturday?”

“I’d love to! I had fun, too,” said Dale. Turning to Kenny she continued, “So, Kenny, that’s how it’s done. Easy, right? You have twenty four hours. Tomorrow in Spanish I expect you to tell me that the double date is all set up. You and Nate can figure out the details. If you two need some ideas, let me know and we’ll work on it together.”

They had stopped in the hallway because they had reached the point where they had to split up and go their separate ways to their third period classes.

“Dale…” said Kenny.

“Yes.”

“Thanks,” he replied sincerely.

“She’ll say yes, Kenny. She likes you. The force is strong with this one,” she said laughing.

Turning, she headed off down the hall, leaving Kenny and Nate looking after her in amusement.

“She’s right,” said Nate. “Hannah was giving off some pretty clear signals that night.”

“But, Nate,” said Kenny. “That was Darth Vader’s line, wasn’t it?”

Nate laughed, walking off toward his next class, leaving Kenny alone.

Nate had just started having lunch with his usual group, Kenny, Mason, Felipe and the like, when he got a text from Dale.

“I skipped out of my club meeting,” she wrote. “I was worrying too much to just sit there and listen. Will you be with me?”

“Of course,” he answered. “Where are you?”

“Look to your right,” came her reply.

Looking across the lunchroom, he saw Dale and Carly standing against the far wall. Maybe once upon a time the school had needed such a large cafeteria, back when everyone must have eaten their lunch there; however, now it was so much larger than it needed to be. One end of the lunchroom was essentially unused, and most days the overhead lights there were left off. That was where he saw the two girls standing together and talking.

He gathered up his lunch and his backpack. Muttering something about how someone much cuter than any of them was calling, he made his way across the lunchroom.

As he approached, he saw Carly and Dale hug, and then Carly headed off toward one of the exits leaving Dale all alone. He had grown to really like Carly. She was not at all two-faced like so many girls. She was often so honest with people that they disliked her, but in many ways that character trait was refreshing. One always knew where they stood with Carly.

Above all, he appreciated her for what she meant to Dale. A girl never had a more steadfast friend. She probably really would take a bullet for Dale. And very importantly, she had always been there for her. Surely she had been there, before during and after Dale’s relationship with Michelle. She, and likely Mary as well, had probably served as Dale’s port in many a storm.

“What has you worrying?” he asked as he walked up.

“Oh you know, the usual,” she said as they sat down together. Nate opened his lunch to resume eating. Observing him she asked, “Can I have your apple?”

“Sure,” he said, handing it to her.

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 323: Jason’s Change of Heart**

“They always come and get me from fifth period,” she said. “I’m sure that might be what is about to happen. And then Mr. McRoberts will be showing me Alexa’s photos from last night. They’ll be telling me that such behavior doesn’t fit the high standards expected of a varsity cheerleader. I don’t want to hear all that again. I don’t think they’ll kick me out of school or anything, at least I hope they won’t, but I’d much rather just stay in English. I’ll take Mrs. Barnett any day . . . over again defending myself . . . especially alone.”

“Well, whatever happens, don’t go it alone,” said Nate. “I feel really bad. I’m supposed to be protecting you. That’s my job. I hope you don’t again end up in Mr. McRoberts’ office, but if you do…send me a text. I can come and be with you.”

“They wouldn’t let you,” she said.

“Tell them that I am your lawyer, and then they’d have to,” said Nate.

“Dale chuckled, “But you’re not a lawyer.”

“They don’t know that. I won’t tell them if you don’t,” said Nate with a straight face.

Dale smiled, “I knew you’d make me feel better. Thank you.”

“But I’m serious,” he said. “We’re a team. We can face the music together. You’re not alone. You’ll never be alone. Even if I’m not in the room, I’m with you.”

“The all-seeing, all-knowing, all-caring, ever-present Nate,” proclaimed Dale loftily.

“Yep,” said Nate smiling.

He gave her a hug in hopes that it would help with the worry. He was feeling quite bad about what had happened. They had indeed gone out too early, and yet things wouldn’t be all that bad had she not turned and ran towards the danger.

They spent more time discussing Alexa’s new photos. In many ways they weren’t really all that worrisome. They weren’t at school or a school event, or even in public for that matter. However, enemy number one, as they had been calling Alexa, had possession of them. They knew full well that she would do everything within her power to use them to do as much damage to Dale as possible. She might play her new hand right away, or save her cards strategically. Alexa was both predictable and unpredictable.

“So how’s Carly doing these days?” asked Nate.

“She’s doing really, really good,” said Dale. “I’m so happy for her. She and Felipe are just falling deeper and deeper for each other. He hasn’t told you?”

“I can tell he’s happy and I know that he spends a lot of time with her,” he said. “But he doesn’t really talk about her.”

“You know what I love about it?” asked Dale. “She seems to be gradually turning back into a girl. I mean, I can almost imagine her wearing a dress or a skirt to school one day soon. I’m sure she hasn’t done that since grade school. It won’t be a pink girly dress, but still.”

“Other than at the dances, I’ve never seen her in a dress,” said Nate.

“I know! She’s been playing the tough guy now for so long, but Felipe is making her feel good about herself. It’s so refreshing to see the change,” said Dale.

“What has Felipe been doing that is making her turn back into a girl?” asked Nate.

“Nothing out of the ordinary. They just seem to have a nice respectful, balanced relationship. I guess he is just nice to her and appreciates her for who she is – who she is inside – not who she is pretending to be,” said Dale. “I don’t know how to describe the relationship that she had with Darrell, but it was the opposite of that. They were intense, swinging from love to hate to love over and over. It was bizarre to try to keep up with. Jason and I double dated with them some. Let me tell you, I do not miss those days. My life now, even with the Alexa worries, is so much better. I’ve got all that I need. I’ve got the handsome neighbor boy. I’ve got a no breakup EVER commitment, and I have the Nudity Slave agreement. Life’s perfect!”

“I’m glad it is all a good fit for you, because it sure is a good fit for me, Slave Girl,” said Nate. “I love having a Slave Girl…I even love saying Slave Girl.”

“You know what’s funny,” said Dale. “I love hearing it. Call me, ‘Slave Girl’ all you want.”

“One day I’m going to get you a Vanity Plate for your car that reads, Slave Girl,” said Nate.

Dale laughed. “I can’t wait. I totally want that license plate. Someday I’m going to have a Mini…I hope,” she said. “But it won’t fit. It will have to be abbreviated.”

“Okay, how about ‘SLAVGRL’, said Nate, spelling it out. “I think you can have seven characters.”

“And what will yours be? ‘SLAVMSTR’?” she asked. “Hmm…eight. That probably doesn’t fit.”

“When the time comes, we’ll have to put our thinking caps on,” said Nate.

“Nate,” she said. “You always make me feel better. I’m not worrying so much now. Thank you.”

“Okay, but ‘thanks’ only counts if it comes with a sloppy kiss,” said Nate.

“Don’t mind if I do,” said Dale, leaning in and planting her lips softly and affectionately on his.

That kiss, in the far end of the lunchroom, caused Nate’s mind to have one of those moments of disbelief. It still seemed to him that she was out of his league, and yet here he was . . . the most desirable girl in the entire state, leaning in and kissing him. He knew he wasn’t dreaming, but he still felt as if he ought to pinch himself just to make sure.

While they continued talking, Nate’s phone again vibrated, signaling the arrival of another text. To his surprise it was from Jason. It was quite recent that he and Jason had exchanged numbers. Working together on the victory dance meetings had brought it about.

Jason’s text read, “Please don’t say anything to Dale. I can see that you are talking with her right now. I need to talk with you. It’s important. If you can get away, please meet me in the parking lot where we met before.”

Trying to keep from making Dale suspicious, Nate looked around the cafeteria for Jason. He didn’t want to leave Dale, especially given how she was worrying, but a few minutes later he made up an excuse about an assignment he needed to check on and headed out to the parking lot. The last thing he said to her was to notify him immediately if, by chance, they did come and get her out of any of her afternoon classes.

He was very glad to make it through his afternoon classes without hearing from her. He hoped that meant that she had not been called in to the principal’s office. Nate found out that his assumption about that was indeed correct when they met and spoke briefly on his way to football practice.

Originally Dale had set up her first tentative piano lesson for that very afternoon. Nate had been planning on accompanying her. Mrs. Thompson had understood that she would be canceling if the team succeeded in advancing to the final game, extending cheer practice for another week. As that had happened, her first piano lesson was not penciled in for the following week.

When Nate came out of football practice later, he was pleasantly surprised to find Dale waiting for him. She usually got a ride home with one of the other cheerleaders, but lately she had been waiting to ride home with him. He suspected that there might be friction between her and the other cheerleaders, but he had avoided bringing that topic up. He knew that Dale preferred thinking that such friction did not exist.

As soon as they were headed out of the parking lot, he took the opportunity to ask her something, “What in the heck did you and Tink do to Jason?”

“We double-teamed him, why?” she replied.

“I know you two paid him a visit yesterday,” said Nate. “But in Jason’s case, what did double-teaming entail.”

“I don’t really think you want to know, or need to know,” she replied. “You might want to disown me. But why are you asking?”

“Jason has had a sudden and drastic change of heart. He’s taken down the video of you and Tink from where he had posted it, and he insisted that I delete it from my phone,” he replied.

“Did you?” she asked.

“I did,” he said. “However, he doesn’t know that I had already saved a copy on my secure drive. Don’t tell him. But like I said, he’s had a change of heart. He’s working on getting everyone who downloaded it to delete it. He even asked for my help with that. He knew that I had originally tried to get everyone to delete it. So I guess I’m going to be working with him on that project.”

“That’s nice of you,” commented Dale.

“Maybe, but I’m doing it for you and Tink, but also selfishly for myself. That video threatens the victory dance,” he said. “I want the dance to happen.”

“So do I,” agreed Dale.

“But tell me, why is Jason suddenly such a changed man?” he asked.

“Like I said, I’d rather not tell you,” she said. “But what I will admit to is that we explained to him that if this video caused the dance to be cancelled, then there would be over fifty guys and a dozen girls mad at him. And if the dance’s cancelation were to be blamed for the loss of the football championship…well, suffice it to say that we tried to impress upon him how uncomfortable his existence might become if absolutely everything went south. And how if that happened, we’d make sure that everyone focused on how he was to blame.”

“But there’s more to this change of heart, isn’t there?” asked Nate, knowing full well that Dale was avoiding telling him something of significance.

“Yes, but like I said, I don’t want you to have to disown me, so let’s just leave it at that,” she said.

“Not even a hint?” asked Nate.

“Well, let’s just say that Jason will never again trust two short-skirted blonds wielding handcuffs,” she said with a devious smile.

“You didn’t blindfold him and play topless air hockey, did you?” he asked.

“Nothing at all like that,” said Dale. “Exponentially worse, but I’m not telling you. Stop asking already! However, I am glad that he is taking things in stride, apparently, and responding constructively.”

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 324: An Evening House Call**

“I guess he is,” said Nate. “He didn’t even volunteer that you and Tink had been to see him, so I didn’t bring it up. He just talked as if he had suddenly seen the error of his ways and wanted to set things right.”

“Well, good. He did have an unforgettable experience, but let’s leave it at that,” suggested Dale. “Let’s just both remember to not cross Tink. A wolf in sheep’s clothing, that one. She was pretty worked up. But this and our little air hockey game should serve as a reminder that we are only the weaker sex with our consent.”

“That’s a powerful statement, Slave Girl,” he said with a smile. “I like you. I like that you actually seem to be getting stronger even as you submit to my control.”

“Your control of my clothes,” she said as if correcting him.

“Right…that,” he said. “But you know, I like who we have become.”

“So do I, Lover,” she said with a smile. “You’re all mine.”

As they got home and parked, Nate found himself wondering who was in charge of who…and what. But it didn’t much matter. They were themselves. Through it all, that hadn’t changed, and that was a big part of what made it all so wonderful.

After dinner Nate and Dale were studying at the Jordan dining room table. Mr. Jordan was across town, helping a coworker with a frozen pipe. Mrs. Jordan walked through the dining room on her way from the kitchen to the laundry room. She smiled to herself, seeing that they were furtively holding hands under the table. She was so happy for her daughter, thinking that she just might have actually found her special someone, the man she would marry.

A few minutes later, Dale’s mother was in the back of the house when there was a knock on the door. Dale got up and answered it. To her surprise, it was Mrs. Shepherd, the cheerleader faculty advisor.

“Dale,” she said. “May I come in? Im afraid Mr. McRoberts has tasked me with speaking with you and your parents. It seems that Alexa has come forward with new photos. To cut to the chase, she and Miss Whitaker are again trying to get Mr. McRoberts to consider your suspension or expulsion. It’s not a great situation, Dale.”

Nate overheard what Mrs. Shepherd had said, but then Dale stepped outside, closing the door behind her for privacy. Nate suspected that she was hoping to talk with Mrs. Shepherd without her mother overhearing. He went and got Dale’s coat. He opened the door and handed it to her, giving Dale the opportunity to invite him into the conversation. She took the coat, but thanking him, she again closed the door.

He felt very bad about what Dale was dealing with, but he returned to the dining room table and sat back down. He thought about what he had overheard. Alexa’s motivations were now starting to make more sense, given that she was obviously in a relationship with Michelle; however, what was Miss Whitaker’s deal? That made little sense to him.

A few minutes later Dale came back inside, bringing Mrs. Shepherd along with her.

“You can have a seat, Mrs. Shepherd,” she said. “Nate, I’m afraid you’ll have to go.”

Nate started gathering up his books, looking inquisitively at Dale. It was a very awkward situation. Mrs. Shepherd took off her coat, folding it. She sat down on the couch, holding her coat on her lap.

While Nate was putting his books in his backpack, Dale came close. Putting a hand gently on his lower back she stood on her tippy toes, whispering into his ear, “Wait just outside for a minute, okay?”

Nate went out the front door, and waited just a couple of steps down. A minute later Dale came out, closing the door behind her.

“I told Mrs. Shepherd that I wanted you to stay,” she said. “But she thinks that you must be the problem. She says I need to, ‘give thought to breaking up with you’. As she sees it, my ‘behavior issues’ didn’t show up until you and I started dating this fall.”

“So as far as she’s concerned, I’m the bad guy,” said Nate shaking his head. “I’m sorry about all this, Dale. Maybe I am the problem. At the very least, I guess I’m not the Nudity Master that you need.”

“Don’t even start thinking like that. I need to be your Nudity Slave, you know that. You’re absolutely the man I need in my life,” she said.

“Well, I’m trying to be,” he said.

“I tried to talk Mrs. Shepherd out of telling my mom, but she was adamant,” said Dale. “This is bad enough, but at least my dad isn’t here. I’d hate to see the disappointment in his eyes. He’s so proud of me. He thinks he has a perfect daughter, and yet I guess I always knew this would happen. My parents are going to be crushed. But, at least dad’s not here. If Mrs. Shepherd is going to tell someone that their daughter is a streaker, I’d rather it be just my mom.”

“I sure wish I could help,” said Nate, compassion straining his voice. “I wish there was another way.”

“I know,” she said. “I wish there was too, but for now go home. I’ll talk to you as soon as I can. I love you . . . you know that, right?”

She gave him a quick kiss. Taking a deep breath, she pantomimed a scared to death face and went back inside.

As Dale reentered the living room, her mother had just come out of the back hall, noticing that they had company. Mrs. Shepherd stood up.

“Mom, this is Mrs. Shepherd,” said Dale. She typically called her Janice in private conversations, as they had been quite close. She was not feeling very close to her any longer. Continuing, she said, “I’m sure you have met her before. She’s a teacher as well as our cheer advisor.”

“Yes, we’ve met,” said Mrs. Jordan warmly, extending her hand in greeting.

“Hello, Mrs. Jordan,” said Mrs. Shepherd somewhat coldly. “Unfortunately, this evening I’m here on less than pleasant business. We might as well get right to it.”

“Hmm . . . okay then,” said Mrs. Jordan, looking as if she were taken aback. “Please sit. Can I get you something to drink?”

“No, I’m fine, thank you,” said Mrs. Shepherd. As they all found seats around the coffee table, Mrs. Shepherd continued, “If you don’t mind, I’ll cut right to the chase.”

“By all means,” said Dale’s mother.

“First off, let me say how much I care about your daughter. She and I have grown close these past few years. However . . . unfortunately . . . we are dealing with some behavioral issues,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Principal McRoberts has asked me to come here this evening to speak informally with Dale’s parents. I know it is awkward to show up like this, unannounced, but it was what seemed best. But . . . Dale tells me that her father is out for the evening.”

“That’s correct,” said Dale’s mother. “But I see no need to wait for him. What is it that you wish to discuss?”

“Well, like I was saying, we have had behavioral issues crop up in regards to your daughter. Mr. McRoberts believes that it has gotten to the point that you and your husband have to be informed about what is going on.”

“Todd and I know Mr. McRoberts quite well. As I’m sure you know, Tess Jordan is Dale’s older sister. As her parents, we saw the inside of Mr. McRoberts’ office more than I care to admit. And yet you are here regarding Dale?” she said, a perplexed look on her face. “Behavioral issues? I can’t imagine that Dale is anything less than the model student.”

“Well, on that note,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “I’d have to agree with you. However, something is clearly going on, and as her mother, you need to be aware of it.”

Mrs. Jordan looked over at Dale. As their eyes met, she saw Dale shrug. Studying her carefully, she saw a variety of emotions bouncing around on her daughter’s face. She didn’t know it, but Dale was in quite a state. This had always been one of her nightmares, having her parents find out about her secret hobby. Suddenly it was happening.

She had never imagined that Mrs. Shepherd might end up being the messenger. The one saving grace was that she was dressed. In her nightmare scenario, she had always imagined herself being caught in the nude by both of her parents. This was bad, but that surely would have been worse.

“Well, please tell me,” said Mrs. Jordan. “What has my little Dale done?”

Dale was surprised to hear her mother refer to her as ‘her little Dale’. She hadn’t referred to her in that manner for years.

“Today another student brought Mr. McRoberts photos of Dale,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Incriminating photos, to say the least.”

“Who is this other student, if I may ask?” said Dale’s mother.

“Given that she is a student, I’m not in a position to discuss her by name,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Her name is Alexa, mom. Alexa Finch,” volunteered Dale contemptuously.

“Dale, you’re out of line,” scolded Mrs. Shepherd.

Dale saw her mother shoot a stinging glance at Mrs. Shepherd. She was clearly unhappy to see Mrs. Shepherd treating her daughter in such a condescending manner.

“Okay, this Alexa Finch . . . she brought Mr. McRoberts pictures of my Dale,” said Mrs. Jordan.

“Yes, incriminating photos,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“I’m listening,” said Dale’s mother.

Dale saw her mother’s expression change, indicating that her attitude had shifted. She had become very businesslike. Any pretense of cordiality was now absent from her tone of voice.

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 325: House Call continued**

“Well, these photos were taken last night in Madison Park. They show Dale with Nate Miller,” she said. “Actually Mr. McRoberts and I were able to identify Mr. Miller right away, but the girl in the photos was a little more challenging. You see, she was wearing a large hat that covered all but her face. She was, however, represented to us as Dale. I feel I probably should apologize to Dale for tricking her just a bit ago.”

“You tricked me?” asked Dale.

“I’m afraid so,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Since we could not be one-hundred percent positive that you were the girl in the photos, I talked to you as if I knew they were of you. By answering me as if you knew you had been caught, you confirmed to me beyond any doubt that you were the girl with Nate. In that same manner I also confirmed that they were indeed taken last night and in Madison Park, just as represented.”

“Is that an ethical method of evidence gathering, Mrs. Shepherd?” asked Mrs. Jordan.

“It gets the job done,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Mr. McRoberts says he uses it all the time.”

“Have you seen these photos, Dale?” asked her mother.

“I don’t need to,” said Dale, he eyes cast down. “Nate and I were there last night.”

“Okay, the two of them together in a park” said Mrs. Jordan. “That’s hardly a surprise. The two have been inseparable of late. They don’t seem to do anything at all, but that they do it together. City parks are supposedly closed at dusk. But you aren’t here because they were violating that particular rule, are you?”

“No, I’m not. Let me cut to the chase,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “In these photos your daughter is in an advanced sate of undress.”

“Let me see if I understand,” said Mrs. Jordan. “Another student brought your principal photos of my Dale with her boyfriend in a park, and Dale is…”

“She’s essentially nude,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

Dale took a deep breath. There it was. Her secret was out; there would be no going back.

“Okay . . . well then . . . it does sound like we have a problem,” said Mrs. Jordan.

“I’m so sorry to have to be the one to make you aware of this,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Yes, we obviously have a problem,” said Mrs. Jordan, stealing a glance over at her daughter. “You seem to be dealing with a voyeur who is not only taking, but also sharing inappropriate and unauthorized photos of my daughter. This is clearly unacceptable.”

“I don’t think you understand,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Your daughter was naked in a public park.”

“But you said she was with Nate, her boyfriend. Dale’s eighteen; they’re both eighteen. Passion is a hard thing to control. Kids ought to keep a lid on it, and yet…” she replied. After a pause to study Mrs. Shepherd’s expression, she continued, “Even in my day, girls of her age would sometimes manage to lose some, at times all of their clothing in the heat of the moment. And teenagers don’t always pick the best locations for their activities, do they? But I think I understand what your point must be. It was clearly inappropriate for someone to be photographing the two of them doing whatever in the heck they might have been doing.”

“The camera flash caught them running,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Well, good for them,” said Mrs. Jordan. “I have to admit that it sounds pretty smart to run if someone is trying to take your picture when you don’t have your clothes on.”

Dale looked over at her mother with a new sense of respect. She was obviously nobody’s fool.

“That’s not my point at all. You still don’t seem to understand,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Dale was naked in a public park.”

“Well, if laws were broken, then this must be a matter for the police,” she said. “Have the police been contacted?”

“Well, no,” said Mrs. Shepherd, her expression one of surprise. “We’ve been hoping to handle this such that the police need not be involved.”

“Tell me then, if this all happened in Madison Park,” said Mr. Jordan. “How does it concern the high school?”

“It is our hope, my sincere hope frankly, to handle this behavior issue internally, in concert with her parents. I don’t want to see the police involved. I don’t want to cause Dale any more trouble than necessary,” she said.

“Behavior issue. There’s that term again,” she Mrs. Jordan. “Are you implying that my Dale is a behavior problem?”

“Sadly, I am,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “This is not an isolated incident. As recently as Halloween we had a different set of nude photos of Dale brought to our attention.”

“Is this all true, Dale?” asked her mother turning and speaking directly with her daughter.

“I’m afraid so, Mom,” said Dale, hanging her head. “This time Alexa took the photos. Last time, Halloween, Alexa and some of her gang stripped me…they took everything, underwear, shoes…everything. Nate helped me escape. He wasn’t even my date that night, Tyler was, but Nate saved me. I don’t know who took those photos, a neighbor I think they said. But I was photographed naked…escaping from Jodie’s party with Nate.”

“That’s right,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“And Mr. McRoberts knew about this and purposefully chose not to inform Todd and I . . . or the police?” she asked.

“Again, we have been trying to handle things internally,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Dale, after Nate helped you escape, did he behave? I mean, did he take advantage of your vulnerability, of your nudity?” asked her mother.

“Of course not!” said Dale looking indignant. “Other boys might do that, but never Nate. He’s always the gentleman. He got me home safe, virtue intact.”

“Thank him, for me, the next time you see him,” she said. Turning back to Mrs. Shepherd she continued, “It does sound like you are dealing with a difficult issue. Now I see why you have been using the term ‘behavioral issue’.”

“I’m glad you understand,” said Mrs. Shepherd relaxing a little.

“Yes, this Alexa is clearly a problem. She stripped my daughter and now she is continuing to violate her privacy rights by taking and circulating illicit photographs of her doing whatever it is that girls do with their boyfriends.”

“You are failing to appreciate your daughter’s role in all of this,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“I am?” she asked. “Did Dale ask to be stripped? I know it is said that some accuse rape victims of asking to be raped. Is that what you are claiming? That Dale was asking to be stripped?”

“No, of course not,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Okay, help me out,” said Mrs. Jordan. “What is Dale’s role in all of this . . . that I am failing to understand?”

Dale looked at Mrs. Shepherd who seemed to be at a loss for words. Finally she said, “Don’t get me wrong. I am here tonight because I care about Dale. I believe in her, I really do. However, her behavior has clearly changed this fall . . . even how she dresses seems to have changed . . . coincidentally at about the time that she started going out with Nate. Unfortunately, I have come to the conclusion that Nate might be the problem. I hate to speak ill of the boy, but I am afraid that he must be bad for your daughter.”

“Do we need to get his parents over here? They are probably next door. Has Nate broken a law?” asked Dale’s mother.

“I’m not aware that he has broken any law, and there is no need to make this any bigger than it needs to be. Let’s not include his parents,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “However, in my opinion, Dale needs to give some thought to breaking up with Nate.”

“Did I really just hear what I think I heard?” asked Mrs. Jordan, her mouth hanging open. “You have an opinion about who my daughter should be dating.”

“I’m sorry, but I simply have come to the conclusion that he is a bad influence,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Hmm…” said Mrs. Jordan thoughtfully. “Has Nate violated school policy?”

“Again, not that I am aware,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“And yet, you think he might be the problem,” said Mrs. Jordan. “And you have no evidence.”

“I just have my suspicions, but it all adds up,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Dale’s problems began this fall. Nothing at all like this happened during the years she was dating Jason.”

Dale saw her mother stiffen at the mention of Jason’s name. A hardened look came across her face as her eyes narrowed. Dale knew full well that the idea that Jason was a good influence and Nate a bad influence would be fighting words from her mother’s perspective. She could see her mother pausing to collect her thoughts.

“With all due respect, Mrs. Shepherd,” said her mother. “Let me tell you what I see. First, my daughter, a straight A-student. An exemplary young student leader in every respect. A student athlete. Given that Haley graduated last year, Dale won’t have a rival for the position of Prospect’s top gymnast this coming spring. And unlike my Tess, she has always stayed completely away from drugs and alcohol. And Nate Miller, our longtime neighbor. Last year a C-student. Now I understand he is getting all A’s. He’s a starting member of a football team that is vying this weekend for the state championship.”

Dale saw Mrs. Shepherd nodding in agreement as her mother continued, “You suggest that Nate might not be a good influence. Well, allow me to offer my perspective. This fall Dale has been happier than she has been her entire life. Let me say that again, because it is important . . . her entire life! As a mother, I want my daughter to be happy. It is wonderful that she goes to the effort required to get good grades. We love it that she works hard and excels at sports, but to Todd and I, her happiness is more important than anything else.”

Dale blinked a tear out of her eye. She was seeing a side of her mother that she rarely saw. He mother was rising to the occasion, and she was a strong, confident woman. Her mother’s strong feelings of love were evident, even though they were somewhat masked behind the logical argument she was laying out.

Mrs. Jordan continued, “Nate and Dale are having fun…together. They care deeply about one another. Nate is there for Dale, day in and day out, providing her with what she needs. They study together nearly every evening. That’s what they were doing this evening when you arrived…studying. They’re making good grades; they’re making college plans.”

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 326: House Call concluded**

“As I said, Mrs. Jordan, I’m a big fan of your daughter’s,” interjected Mr. Shepherd.

“Please let me finish,” said Mrs. Jordan. “But, by the way, what is this Alexa’s GPA?”

“Frankly, it wouldn’t be appropriate to tell you, but truthfully, I have no idea,” said Mrs. Shepherd.

“Well, it probably doesn’t matter,” said Mrs. Jordan. “But as I was saying, Dale and Nate are good kids. You have another student, this Alexa. She has stripped my daughter at a party. She has taken illicit photos of her, and she has been sharing these photos with Mr. McRoberts, a middle aged man. God knows who else she has been sharing them with. That’s clearly a problem…a problem that needs to be dealt with severely.

“I know Mr. McRoberts quite well. I’m embarrassed for him. I’m embarrassed for you. The sex lives of two responsible eighteen year olds is none of my business, and it should be none of your business. It is certainly none of the school’s business. Again, I’m embarrassed for you and Mr. McRoberts that you seem to be taking an interest in the sex lives of your students, rather than protecting their privacy. Go back and talk to Mr. McRoberts. Tell him what I have said. If need be, I’ll come in and tell him myself. Truth be told, he won’t want that to happen. That’s why he sent you out here all alone and unsupported tonight. He didn’t want to talk to me himself. So go back and talk to him. It does sound like you have a problem student to deal with, but it is not my Dale. And it is not her Nate. It’s clearly . . . what’s her name again?”

“It’s Alexa, Mom,” said Dale.

“Right,” she said. “Alexa. I don’t know all the details, but based on what you have told me, it sounds as if that needs to be addressed. Probably by involving the police. Have you at least spoken with her parents?”

“Well…no,” said Mrs. Shepherd, looking surprised to be asked that question.

“Well, the night is young,” said Mrs. Jordan. She stood up as if to signal that she was done talking about the matter. She continued, “Or is there something that I have missed? Anything important that you have not yet told me?”

“Well, I guess not,” said Mrs. Shepherd also rising to her feet.

In short order, Mrs. Shepherd said goodbye and left. It was obvious that she couldn’t get out of there fast enough. Dale could tell that she was glad to escape after the dressing down that she had just received at her mother’s hands.

“Thank you, Mom,” said Dale once they were alone.

“I love you, dear,” she said. “I hope you know that. I think you need to be more careful, obviously. And you certainly need to keep away from this Alexa. I hope they do something about that. Continue to make your father and me proud, that’s all I ask.”

“Are you going to tell dad?” she asked. “I probably will, unless you prefer to tell him yourself. He loves you. He deserves to know what is going on. He’ll give Mr. McRoberts hell, should it come down to that. Your father is a good man. I tell him everything.”

“I don’t want to tell him, so…if you must,” said Dale. “It’s quite embarrassing to be talked about like this.”

“I’m sure it is,” said her mother. “I hope what I said didn’t embarrass you or anything. I tried to keep my cool, but it wasn’t easy.”

“You did great mom,” she said. “You were polite, but also so very firm and confident sounding. I’m very proud of you. Thanks so much for sticking up for me. And I can’t tell you how much it means to me that you stuck up for Nate.”

“Well, I know you don’t get along with her, but you have Tess to thank for this,” she replied. “Tess gave your father and me many opportunities to learn how to deal with teachers and principals…from grade school on.” Shaking her head she continued, “But the very idea that it might be okay to photograph a girl while she is sharing private time with her boyfriend. How ridiculous! I hope I was successful in making Mrs. Shepherd see the obviousness of their mistake. But, Dale, you have your bedrooms.”

“I know, I know,” said Dale. “I’m sorry.”

“I can tell you’re antsy to go next door,” said her mother.

“Can I go tell Nate?” she said. “He was worried.”

Of course you can, dear,” said her mother.

“If you quote me at all tonight, when you talk to Nate, make sure that he hears that I stood up for him. That I supported him. I want him to know that I believe in him, because I do. I want him to know that I think he is a good influence, because he is. I want you both to know that I am a staunch Nate supporter,” her mother said.

“I will mom. Thanks for being nice to Nate. Thanks for liking him. I really love that you like him.” said Dale, wiping a tear.

“I do, he seems to be an awfully good kid. But that Mrs. Shepherd…My God! Thinking that Nate might be a bad influence. Hardly!” she said, shaking her head. “But Dale, tell me honestly. Ignoring for a moment my own opinion, tell me, is Nate a good influence or a bad influence?”

“He’s good for me, mom,” she said, wiping another tear from just below an eye with a finger.

Dale’s mother gave her a hug, saying, “That’s what I thought. Now go. I can tell that you’re itching to run next door.”

In the blink of an eye, Dale was out the door, headed to the Miller’s.

Nate had been attempting to study at his own dining room table. He had gotten nowhere. His mind was completely absorbed by thoughts of what Dale was being subjected to next door.

He imagined her crying and being tortured by a barrage of questions from Mrs. Shepherd, as well as from her own mother. He was sure that she was being put through the wringer and it made him mad. Mad at himself for his role in it all, but mostly mad at Alexa.

Dale’s expression when she burst through the door was quite a surprise. It was hardly a gleeful Dale that plopped down into his lap to hug him, but it was also not the tearful Dale that he had been anticipating.

“My mother was amazing, Nate!” she announced energetically.

“I’m glad to hear that. I like your mom,” said Nate, but lowering his voice he continued, “but let’s go back to my room where we can talk.”

Once they were in his room, she exclaimed, “Well, she likes you. She stood up for you. You should have heard her. Mrs. Shepherd accused you of being the problem, of being a bad influence,” said Dale. “Well, my mom would have none of that. She laid waste to those accusations.”

“Well, that’s nice to hear,” said Nate. “Did you see Alexa’s photos? Did Mrs. Shepherd show them to your mother?”

“I don’t even know if she had them with her. That didn’t exactly come up,” said Dale. “My mom told her that she and Mr. McRoberts should be protecting our privacy, not showing so much interest in our sex lives,” said Dale.

“Our sex lives?” asked Nate, his brow wrinkled in a puzzled expression.

“Yeah, our sex lives. Mrs. Shepherd brought up the photos as being of you and I, with me being ‘essentially’ nude. Well, my mom jumped to the conclusion that these were photos of us making out, engaging in sexual activity of some sort. She brought up how even back in her day girls would sometimes end up without their clothes, when they were with their boyfriends.”

“So she thinks that the photos are of us having sex. Would that it were true,” said Nate chuckling.

“Hey, Buster,” said Dale. “No pressure, alright! I said it was in the works, remember? But yeah, that’s what my mom seems to have assumed, and I’m not going to set her straight. Girls and boys getting naked and having sex is a lot more mainstream than what we do. More acceptable, I suppose. It probably shouldn’t be. Streaking is much less likely to result in pregnancy or the spread of STD’s, but sex is what people are used to…what they find acceptable.”

“So is the latest scare over?” asked Nate.

“I wish, but probably not,” said Dale. “Mrs. Shepherd will surely report back to Mr. McRoberts. Then they’ll strategize about the next thing that they will do to make my life miserable.”

Dale didn’t know it, but she was not going to have to wait very long to learn just how correct she was on that particular score.

“I hope not,” said Nate.

“Can I spend the night, Nate? Please…there’s lots of kisses in it for you, but no actual sex,” said Dale, with an honest smile.

“I’d love to have you stay,” he replied. “Sleeping together is therapeutic, not that we need any justification to spend the night in each other’s arms.”

“But we can justify being together in our bedrooms. At one point, after Mrs. Shepherd had gone, my mom took it upon herself to remind me that we ‘do have our bedrooms’. AWKWARD! Right? But I’m sure she was simply putting me on notice that our bedrooms are where I should be getting naked. Not the park,” said Dale.

“She’s right,” said Nate. “You need to get naked. There’s your drawer. There’s the lock. But maybe first we should go next door so I can thank your mom, immediately and in person.”

“No, I don’t think that’s necessary,” said Dale, pulling her shirt and bra off over her head in one quick motion. “If I went home, my dad might be there. I could get sucked into a lengthy rehash of the conversation with Mrs. Shepherd. That wouldn’t be very therapeutic. So here’s my suggestion . . . just keep your Nudity Slave happy. That’s what mom said that she wants . . . for me to be happy.”

“Well, that’s my goal,” said Nate. “I just wish I were better at it.”

“What do you mean?” asked Dale, stepping out of her panties. “Look at me. I’m naked. I’m happy.”

“Maybe,” said Nate, grabbing her and throwing his nude girl down on the bed and jumping on top of her. “But there is room for improvement. You could have had a happier evening. Maybe if I squish little ol’ you underneath big ol’ me you’ll be even happier.”

“It’s worth a try,” said Dale giggling, but tickling him to combat his weight advantage.

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 327: A Morning Meeting**

The next morning Dale was running slightly late. She had no sooner set foot in the front entrance of the school than one of the office attendants got her attention, whisking her straight to Mr. McRoberts’ office. To her astonishment, Alexa was already there and seated.

Mr. McRoberts was at his desk. He stood as she peered in his office doorway. To the left of his desk were two chairs, the far one already occupied by Mrs. Shepherd, an empty seat next to her. To the right of his desk were two more chairs. They were occupied by Alexa and Miss Whitaker.

As Mr. McRoberts attempted a cordial greeting, Dale baulked. ‘Isn’t this a lovely way to start the day,’ she thought. ‘I feel like I’m late to the party. Oh look, how nice! They waited for me. I must be the main course.’ She thought. She hesitated, backing away.

Seeing her discomfort, Miss Whitaker announced, “You made your bed, Miss Jordan. Now it’s time to lie in it.”

That did it for Dale, she turned and walked briskly away, not having a strategy in mind, not knowing where she would go.

“Well done, Debra,” said Mrs. Shepherd scoldingly. Heading out the door she shouted back over her shoulder, “I’ll try and bring her back.”

Alexa laughed, and Mr. McRoberts pointed at her saying, “Miss Finch, watch yourself. Debra, I’m very disappointed in you. Don’t make me regret including the two of you in this meeting. We can always change course.”

A couple of minutes later, Mrs. Shepherd was back with Dale. Showing obvious signs of trepidation, Dale set down her backpack and hung her coat on the coat tree. She thought about texting Nate, but she knew that Mr. McRoberts wouldn’t let him in. He had a set plan in mind, that much was clear.

“Okay, Dale,” said Mr. McRoberts, after Dale had taken her seat. “I trust you know why we’re here.”

“To discuss Alexa’s compromised mental state?” offered Dale flippantly.

Not only was she feeling defensive, but she had also decided that she felt like being cocky. She had given some thought to how her mother had deflected the issues the night before with Mrs. Shepherd. That had given her the feeling that attempting to focus things on Alexa might be a better strategy than simply kowtowing.

“Dale, that’s not helping matters,” said Mrs. Shepherd sternly.

“In short,” said Mr. McRoberts, “We have a problem that needs to be dealt with maturely. The time for action is at hand. We are here to find a solution that can restore harmony to our little corner of the globe.”

Scoffing at what had just been said, Miss Whitaker interjected, “Mr. McRoberts, harmony? Really? Based on what we know, today’s meeting needs to result in Miss Jordan’s suspension or expulsion. That much is clear. I know that opinions might differ as to which of the two is most appropriate; however, those are our only realistic options. Additionally her permanent dismissal from the cheerleading squad should be a given that we can all agree upon.”

Dale’s jaw dropped in surprise as her brow contorted, betraying the anguish surging through her. Miss Whitaker had gone straight for the jugular. Cheer was what she lived for.

“You’re getting ahead of yourself, Miss Whitaker,” said Mr. McRoberts. “This is my meeting. We follow my agenda.”

“Mr. McRoberts,” said Dale raising her hand slightly to get his attention. “May I ask a question?”

“By all means,” he said with a nod and a weak smile.

“Thank you,” she said politely, fighting to regain her equilibrium. Turning to address Miss Whitaker directly, she continued, “Miss Whitaker, with all due respect, why do you hate me? I don’t know you. You don’t know me.”

“That’s where you’re wrong, little lady, I know you a lot better than you seem to realize. I know you by what I see, both around school and via the photographic evidence. And, I know you by reputation. Based on your reputation, you do not have the moral standards to represent our school. Neither as a cheerleader . . . nor through organized sports . . . as a member of the gymnastics team, for example.”

Dale’s jaw again dropped. That comment felt like the knife being twisted in the wound. ‘Not both cheer and gymnastics,’ she thought. She knew she would be crushed. Even if she were allowed to attend school, being denied the opportunity to participate in her two favorite activities would be the end of life as she knew it. She didn’t know what to say. Everyone in the room seemed to be aware of the affect that Miss Whitaker’s words were having on Dale, and for a long moment nothing was said.

Dale looked over and saw a gloating expression of glee on Alexa’s face. Her mother’s effective strategy came back to her: offense over defense.

“Wait a minute,” she said mustering the courage to stand up for herself. “Surely I have a spotless reputation. If any of the guys in this school talk about me, I understand that it tends to be about how I am the queen of the prudes. Alexa on the other hand, your pet student, has exactly the opposite reputation. There is not a synonym for promiscuous that is not regularly used to describe her within the halls of Prospect High.”

“Dale, that’s uncalled for,” said Mr. McRoberts. “We’re not here to discuss Miss Finch.”

“But we should be,” said Dale. “If there are moral standards for representing the school as a cheerleader, then those standards would surely apply to the Captain of the Drill Team. How many guys have been in your panties, Alexa? Or did you lose count in ninth grade?”

“What did I tell,” said Alexa acting insulted. “Not a kind bone in her wicked little body.”

“Stop it, you two,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “You especially, Dale. I’m disappointed in you.”

“Me?” said Dale. “And just what am I supposed to do? Look at what you’ve all blindsided me with this morning. This little four against one meeting feels terribly unjust. I can tell by how the furniture is arranged that I am supposed to believe that everything is fair and balanced. I’m supposed to imagine that you, Mrs. Shepherd, are my faculty advocate, that you are here to support me. But you’re not on my side, are you? I’m feeling very betrayed.”

“A teacher can’t have favorites, right Miss Whitaker? But Dale, I’m attempting to help you by being objective,” said Mrs. Shepherd calmly. “Please work with us.”

Dale looked over at Alexa again. Her expression was one of merriment. She actually looked as if she were exerting some effort to hide the glee within.

“Work with you?” said Dale. “That sounds like five against zero. With all due respect, I feel as if I have to stick up for myself. If I don’t, then who will?”

“Please allow me to redirect the conversation,” said Mr. McRoberts. “This Alexa vs. Dale, Dale vs. Alexa feud needs to stop. It needs to stop today.”

“Yes, Dale,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “You two need to find a way to get along. That is the reason that we are having this unconventional meeting…with you both present. You two need to find it within yourselves to end this feud.”

“Feud?” said Dale, astonishment written all over her face. “A feud takes two. There is no feud. I’ve never had anything against Alexa. I’ve never done anything to harm her or otherwise make her life difficult. All I’ve ever done, through the years, is to turn the other cheek. She never leaves me alone. She stripped me at the Parker Halloween party. That you know, but that wasn’t the first time. She and her band of followers also stripped me back at the start of the school year.”

“We do have issues with Miss Finch,” said Mr. McRoberts. “But that is not the subject of today’s meeting. I’ve decided to try a meeting with you both present to hopefully find a more lasting solution. It is my hope that you two can talk this out. Again, I think that harmony is a worthy goal. At the very least, some sort of a truce that you both buy into.”

“Mr. McRoberts,” said Miss Whitaker. “I think the most direct route to harmony is via punishment. Your past leniency vis-a-vis Miss Jordan has taken its toll on both your credibility as well as the overall discipline within the rest of the student body.”

“Okay,” interjected Dale. “I have an idea. If you want Alexa and I to talk, then let us talk. Leave us alone for a few minutes.”

“I don’t think I like that idea,” said Alexa.

“What’s your concern?” asked Dale indignantly. “I don’t bite. Besides, we both know that you can hold your own in a physical fight. There is a certain girl walking around this school with a bruise on her face as evidence of your willingness to hit.”

“Fine,” said Alexa abruptly. “I’ll talk to her. That is, if the rest of you think that it might be productive. I’m very open to doing my part to find the ‘harmony’ Mr. McRoberts seeks. I’m willing to meet her more than halfway, but I don’t expect her to be equally open to finding a real solution.”

“Sure. I’m game to letting the two you try,” said Mr. McRoberts, taking a deep breath. “It’s worth the effort. We’ll be right outside when you’re done.”

Dale looked over and saw Alexa glaring at her through squinting eyes, as Mr. McRoberts and the two faculty members stood up and filed out.

Once the door was closed, Alexa said angrily, “So, bitch, what is it?”

“Wow, your tone sure changes when there are no longer any faculty members present to witness the real Alexa,” said Dale.

“I’m bringing you down!” said Alexa spitefully.

“Don’t be too sure, Alexa. I’ve got a lot of fight left in me,” said Dale in an even tone.

“So is that all you wanted to say to me, you f\*\*king bitch?” said Alexa.

“No,” said Dale. “I guess I am now aware that your sexual orientation differs from what you seem to want everyone to think it is.”

“So now you’re threatening me?” asked Alexa, sitting up and leaning toward Dale in an aggressive posture.

“You took that as a threat?” asked Dale with a smirk on her face.

“You bitch! Don’t act all innocent . . . I know full well why you brought it up,” said Alexa, her hackles up. “I told Michelle that you’d do to me just what you did to her.”

“You know full well that nothing of what happened to Michelle was intended,” said Dale. “By the way, how long have you and Michelle been together? I really wish she would talk with me.”

“That’s your own f\*\*king fault. Little surprise that she won’t talk with you,” said Alexa. “But just to be fair, I do owe you one little debt of gratitude. Michelle and I have been together essentially from the day you cast her so rudely aside. You brought us together. How ironic, right?”

“Well, that also wasn’t my intention, but I’m happy for you,” said Dale. “She’s a very special person.”

**The Exhibitionist Next Door - 328: Insults and Lies**

“And I’m not so special?” asked Alexa.

Dale laughed out loud, she couldn’t help herself.

Stifling her laugh as quickly as she could she said, “I didn’t say that.”

“You ARE thinking of ‘outing’ me, aren’t you?” she said. “You’re hoping to force me to abandon my efforts to bring you down by threatening to ‘out’ me.”

“Again, I didn’t say that. Where is that coming from?” asked Dale.

“But you thought it,” said Alexa. “It’s your plan A. I know it is. That’s why you had the others leave. That’s why you wanted to speak with me in private, to blackmail me.”

“Not everyone thinks like you, Alexa,” said Dale.

“Well, I’ll give you three reasons why you aren’t going to ‘out’ me,” said Alexa. “First, ‘outing’ a second girl will show a pattern. It will do irreparable harm to your own reputation. You’ll be an outcast. Second, Michelle would be so disappointed in you, and we both know that you don’t want that. Michelle doesn’t seem to realize it, but you and I both know that you’re still in love with her. And third, it would be the beginning of World War Three. You don’t want to find out what I am really capable of.”

“So, who is threatening who?” asked Dale.

“I just want you to make your decision from a position of knowledge, that’s all, bitch,” said Alexa as maliciously as she could manage.

“Alexa,” said Dale. “You make no sense. I really just thought that we might be able to get along. Frankly, I don’t know where I went wrong with you. I had no intention of ‘outing’ Michelle, and I have no intention of ‘outing’ you. Your life is yours to live. You apparently want everyone at school to think that you are one hundred percent heterosexual. That’s your decision, as far as I’m concerned.”

“You’re a bitch with a capital ‘B’ that’s what you are,” said Alexa.

“You’re sure not very creative with the insults,” said Dale condescendingly. “Surely you can think of something to call me other than just ‘bitch’. Maybe if you switch it up a little, I’ll start to realize that you don’t like me.”

“Okay, you titless wench. Like that better?” asked Alexa.

“That doesn’t faze me. Besides, I’m not titless,” said Dale wondering why she had criticized her for not being creative with the insults.

“Well, your babies will starve, that’s for sure,” said Alexa.

“That’s not true,” said Dale. “I’ve read that small breasts can produce an adequate supply of milk.”

Alexa started laughing, “You’re worried, aren’t you! Why else would you have spent time researching that? You’re such a titless wonder.”

“I do have tits, they’re just small,” said Dale.

“You’re telling me? I guess I struck a chord, didn’t I?” said Alexa laughing obnoxiously. “But okay, I’ll call you ‘Tiny-Titted Bitch’. Flat or tiny, it’s all the same, but I know why you had your nipples pierced. So Nate could find your chest by feel alone . . . in the dark.” She laughed at her own joke. “Am I right, or am I right?”

Dale was doing everything she could to keep Alexa from seeing how much her words were stinging. The last thing she needed was for a tear to run down her cheek. She couldn’t let that happen in front of Alexa. Why, oh why, had she ever given Alexa a hard time for calling her a ‘bitch’?

“It must be tough to grow up poor AND flat,” said Alexa. “I’d be embarrassed if I had to bum rides everywhere I go. It must be tough having parents who can’t even provide you with a car to drive, not even an old one. I feel so sorry for you, you poor tiny-titted bitch.”

“This is obviously going nowhere,” said Dale.

“I know what I’ll call you,” said Alexa gleefully. “Tit-poor! Just like dirt-port…only tit-poor instead. I like the sound of that! You’re a tit-poor bitch. That’s it! No money, no tits, so sad!”

‘Time to get out of here before I give away how much this hurts,’ thought Dale.

“Well, no one can say that I didn’t try,” said Dale. “We may as well have the rest of them come back in.”

“We may as well. Time to move things along to the penalty phase! Time for the tit-poor bitch to find out what she has coming,” she said gloatingly. “No money, no tits, so sad!”

As Mr. McRoberts and the two teachers filed back in, Dale discreetly dabbed her eyes dry. She couldn’t believe how mean Alexa was.

Just after everyone had taken their seat, Alexa announced, “I’m sorry to tell you that my best efforts were for naught. I extended the olive branch, but all Dale wanted to do was to call me names. When you were in here, I was accused of being promiscuous, but as soon as you left I was a ‘slut’, a ‘whore’ and even a four letter word that rhymes with ‘punt’.”

Dale had hardly begun to recover from having her chest and her family’s financial position made fun of and suddenly she was taken aback by Alexa’s lie. In a way she knew she had set herself up for it by what she had said earlier about promiscuity. Wisely she took a deep breath, deciding to keep quiet. She realized that Alexa was provoking her in hopes that she would snap at her. Doing so would have only served to confirm her lies.

“Disgusting!” said Miss Whitaker. “But I’m not surprised. And she claims to think that I don’t know her. Go figure!”

“Well, frankly, I do know her,” said Mrs. Shepherd. “Dale doesn’t talk like that.”

“Thank you,” said Dale quietly, still struggling to recover from the shock of Alexa’s name calling and now her lies.

“Maybe not when you’re around,” said Alexa in a most sincere sounding voice.

“Alright, alright,” said Mr. McRoberts. “Enough of that. I take it that you two got nowhere.” His comment was greeted with silence. After a long pause, he continued, “That’s disappointing, but I suppose it isn’t surprising. That approach seemed to be a long shot. Do either of you have any constructive suggestions about how we, as members of the faculty and administration, can help you two put your disagreements behind you?”

“A disagreement between students isn’t the real issue today, Mr. McRoberts,” said Miss Whitaker.

“She’s right, Mr. McRoberts, and this seems to be going nowhere. I know you had your hopes, but…it’s time to move on.” said Mrs. Shepherd.

Mr. McRoberts looked around the room, from face to face. “I guess you’re right, Janice. Okay, I guess I don’t have anything more to say with both Miss Finch and Miss Jordan present in the room. So, now I’d like to speak with both Miss Whitaker and Mrs. Shepherd individually, Miss Whitaker first. The decision is mine, but I’d like to hear your advice at this particular juncture. The rest of you, if you don’t mind, please wait in the outer office.”

Dale got up and quickly made her way out, grabbing her coat and backpack along the way. She already knew which chair she wanted, so she made a beeline for it. It was the lone chair on the far side of the administrative assistant’s desk. She didn’t want to talk to Mrs. Shepherd or Alexa while they waited, so she pulled out one of her textbooks and buried her nose in it.

She thought about texting Nate. She wanted to, but she realized that he would still be in his first period calculus class. There was no reason to interrupt him. Sending and receiving texts while in class was a big no-no, but it still happened.

After about ten minutes, Miss Whitaker came out, and it was Mrs. Shepherd’s turn to talk privately with Mr. McRoberts. She was trying not to think about it, but she was quite certain that Miss Whitaker would have spent her time with Mr. McRoberts pushing Alexa’s agenda, trying to get her expelled and trying to convince Mr. McRoberts to deny her the privilege of participating in student activities such as cheer and gymnastics.

She hadn’t gotten the feeling that Mr. McRoberts was likely to side with Miss Whitaker; although, Alexa’s attitude seemed to indicate that she should be worrying. She was acting as if she had some sort of inside information.

She started trying to think of how she would cope if everything went against her. At least she would have Nate to help her deal with things…that, at least, was a comforting thought. She wouldn’t be alone, and somehow life would go on. She found herself worrying again about how an expulsion might affect getting into college and her chances of getting much needed scholarship money. There was a lot riding on Mr. McRoberts’ decision, to say the least.

She suspected that Mrs. Shepherd was arguing on her behalf. However, it was obvious that Mrs. Shepherd was looking at the entire issue much more maturely, much more objectively than Miss Whitaker. As she thought about it, it seemed like that might be a winning strategy. Mr. McRoberts might be more open to listening to what she had to say since she seemed to be taking a more thoughtful approach.

She decided that she felt bad for Mrs. Shepherd. The entire situation had unfairly put her on the spot.

A few minutes later she, Alexa, and Miss Whitaker were all filing back into the principal’s office, presumably to hear what Mr. McRoberts’ decision would be. She expected to shortly learn how severely she might be punished. She had decided to set her expectations on punishment of some sort so that it would be less of a shock to her system once she found out what his decision was.

It seemed ridiculous that all this had occurred because Alexa had just so happened to be in Madison Park late Sunday night and had managed to get a handful of nude photos.

As they sat down, the bell rang signaling the end of first period. That meant that they had now all spent fifty minutes talking about what should be done about Prospect High’s naughty cheerleader. As she considered that, she found herself wondering who was handling Mrs. Shepherd’s and Miss Whitaker’s first period classes. She didn’t know if they had first period classes, but she thought that they probably did.

Dale wondered if she should be unhappy with herself, unhappy with Nate, unhappy with the American culture that lay behind her difficulties. She decided that she was mostly at peace with everything. Nudity, it really was a victimless crime, if it was a crime at all.

She had decided previously that she was who she was, and that fighting her inner nature didn’t work. Doing so only seemed to have a way of making everything worse. Maybe Nate should have kept her from doing such things, but she couldn’t blame him. She loved him and she loved the situations that he got her into. Running to the park that night, in her new boots outfit, had been a lot of fun.

She knew that she was a junkie and that she needed her fix, but more than that she loved it. She didn’t want there to be repercussions, but it was what she lived for. She loved her life as Nate’s Nudity Slave. She wouldn’t have it any other way. At the moment it still all seemed worth it. However, she realized that if she did end up getting kicked out of school, cheer and gymnastics that one day she might no longer feel that way. Someday she might decide that it hadn’t all been worth it.