**The Wanderings of Amy**

by EC

**Chapter 16 - Paul's Secret Desire**

Amy and Paul returned to Chicago greatly refreshed from their trip to Pennsylvania. They spent nearly three weeks with Paul's family. As had been the case going out, Amy and Paul took their time coming back, spending three days traveling along a different route.

Amy thoroughly enjoyed her time at Paul's house, in spite of the family's depressing living situation. She liked his relatives. She was pleased to have put a spark of ambition back into Julie, and to have spent time with Paul's nephew. She helped Julie and Paul's mother in the kitchen and learned several recipes. She also spent several mornings outside, making some house repairs with Paul and Julie.

The times she enjoyed the most, however, were daily afternoon trips with Paul to a secluded location in the forest, about 30 minutes from town. A 15-minute hike from the road took them to a stream that had a surprise, a small deserted beach. Paul explained to Amy why this was so special; it was the one secluded place he knew of where it was possible to spread a blanket and not have to worry about ticks.

Having lived in France, Paul was more open about his body than a typical person from the US. He enjoyed being nude outdoors. This was another attitude he brought back from Europe that set him apart from the conservative mentality of his neighbors. Amy had become used to spending large amounts of her time in the nude as well, but up to now the she had only been nude outdoors in front of Suzanne's camera lens. The time spent with Paul in the forest, relaxing for hours, swimming, sunbathing, eating cheese and drinking wine, gave Amy truly special memories of her short vacation. There were lengthy love-making sessions under the sun and relaxing naps that followed. There were short walks in which Amy and Paul looked and felt like Adam and Eve must have felt, unencumbered with the stress and trappings of civilization. By the time they left for Chicago they were deeply tanned.

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Amy took only one class that summer, an easy English requirement. To Amy's huge relief Burnside went to Europe on sabbatical, so there was a break from being spotlighted in class and from her professor's red ink.

Amy's summer was full of other activity. She had promised Suzanne her time for modeling, given the backlog of projects her friend had wanted to work on. Suzanne welcomed Amy back with a notebook containing a list of planned photo-shoots. The photographer was pleased with her roommate's deep, even tan when she returned from Pennsylvania.

There were hours of studio sessions in front of Suzanne's camera. At the end of June there was a trip to Nebraska and several days of shooting in a wheat field, with the hot summer wind whipping Amy's unprotected skin. There even was a photo shoot for a chain of coffee houses, in which Amy and Wendy, dressed in company uniforms, smiled at Suzanne's camera with their hands operating the company's espresso machines. Of all the photo shoots, the ad campaign was the toughest. Suzanne had insisted that her models learn how to use the company's equipment before the shoot, which meant that Amy and Wendy actually had to train as employees and serve real customers. As usual, Suzanne's insistence on realism paid off; later that year Amy saw herself and her friend on billboards and bus posters all over Chicago, pushing coffee on the city's consumers.

Finally, there was the editing of the essays for Suzanne's upcoming book on Wendy and her gambling problems. As Amy re-wrote passages from the essays, her own bitterness about the damage to the relationship between herself and her friend came out in the revisions.

Wendy's problems were the one thing that spoiled Amy's summer. Suzanne's dark, morbid book and its depressing subject matter weighed down on Amy, as did the fact that Wendy now seemed to be able to open up more to Suzanne. Amy was frightened by Wendy's drawings and failed to see their artistic merit. Wendy's quiet, sullen behavior made her unpleasant to be around. Whenever Amy tried to talk about something pleasant, Wendy's dark eyes looked up at her with a hostile expression. Amy realized that the last thing Wendy wanted to hear was how happy she was with Paul.

Amy continued to disburse money to Wendy out of the income from Suzanne's pictures. Amy wrote all of Wendy's checks and prepaid her expenses whenever possible. She felt uncomfortable talking to Wendy about her finances. She felt like she was taking care of an irresponsible teenager.

Wendy was both grateful and resentful concerning Amy's control over her life. She resented having to ask Amy for permission to use her own money, but at the same time realized that for now she had no choice. The conflict within her came out every time she talked to Amy.

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Suzanne wanted a male model. Suzanne's experience allowed her to size up people quickly and figure out how to get their images on film. Suzanne knew that Paul at first would be nervous about having his body documented on film, and went slowly. She worked on Paul by showing him previous work done with other male models. Then she eased him into modeling for her through a joint portrait session with Amy. Amy herself was not aware of what Suzanne ultimately had in mind when she agreed to pose with Paul for a joint portrait together. Suzanne moved from facial shots to standing shots with Paul and Amy fully dressed. Suzanne moved about the studio, as she asked Amy and Paul to start shedding clothing. Before they realized it Amy and Paul were nude. Suzanne ordered Paul to sit down and Amy to sit on his lap. She retook the portraits, then had Amy and Paul pose together for a long series of joint figure shots. Finally Amy stepped to the side, and Suzanne shot a long series of figure studies of Paul by himself. She experimented with the lighting and backdrops. Before either Paul or Amy realized what had happened, Suzanne had shot several rolls of film on Paul alone.

The next step was to develop the pictures and present the better ones to Paul and Amy. Paul was deeply moved seeing himself on film like this. He was hooked.

Later that week Suzanne took Amy and Paul back to her favorite forest location. Once again her ranger fan locked the gate behind Suzanne's vehicle, this time for two days in a row. Suzanne told the ranger about the progress of her upcoming book with Wendy. She took down his address to send him an advance copy, once the new publication was ready for printing.

Amy and Paul left their clothes in the minivan and walked down the trail holding hands, with Suzanne's cameras clicking behind them. Suzanne spent the next two days taking roll after roll of film of Paul and Amy together, and of each separately. Amy was more muscular than she had been last year and her skin was darker, so Suzanne was every bit as interested in Amy as she was in Paul. Ultimately these pictures would be included with a series of landscapes into Suzanne's fourth book, which she planned to call "Eden".

The following week Paul posed by himself at the studio in the art department. Amy stayed dressed and helped Suzanne with the lighting and equipment. Paul felt a strange excitement, being naked in front of two dressed women and taking orders. Suzanne's commanding voice thrilled him. Increasingly he felt the excitement of submission.

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Paul's new fascination increased dramatically when Amy told him about Burnside's Mardi Gras party and her tormenting of Bill. Paul surprised Amy by wanting to hear all the details. While making love to Amy later that night, images of himself in Bill's situation flashed through Paul's mind. Amy's boyfriend was developing a guilty fantasy. He wanted Amy to punish him. He still was thrilled by any opportunity to spank Amy, but he also wanted Amy to spank him as well.

A couple of nights later Paul and Amy were relaxing on Amy's bed. They were undressed, but had not had sex yet. Paul was on his stomach, inadvertently lying on a couple of Amy's textbooks, his bare bottom close to her. Amy wanted to pick up the books and put them away. She reached over and tugged at one of the books.

"Paul, move please, so I can get these off the bed."

Suddenly Paul decided to stay put and see what Amy would do.

"Paul, please move."

Amy tugged at the book and became irritable.

"Paul, move!"

Suddenly Amy slapped Paul hard on the bottom. He stayed put. Amy slapped him hard again, three more times.

"Paul, if you don't move, you're gonna get it!" He looked at her in anticipation. Suddenly Amy realized that "getting it" was precisely what Paul wanted. A thrill of excitement ran through her. She got up and pulled a thick belt out of her closet. She doubled it and swatted it through the air. Amy tried to speak with a forced tone of seriousness. The cracking in her voice however, as well as her expression, betrayed her excitement.

"OK, Paul, since you want to be that way, let's see what it takes to get you off my textbooks."

Paul, for the first time, felt the thrill of waiting for an erotic punishment. He knew that Amy was strong, having worked out with her over the last five months. This was going to hurt. Yet it was Paul himself who would determine when the punishment would end; all he had to do was roll off Amy's books. He was determined to stay on the books as long as he could stand it.

Amy rubbed her hand over his bottom. She studied the reddish handprints left by her slaps. She teasingly ran her hand between his bottom cheeks and on his thighs. He had a furious erection and shifted uncomfortably. Amy slipped her hand under him, grabbed his penis, and pushed him up slightly. His bottom was now well exposed for Amy's belt.

"Paul, I want you to stay like this until you decide you need to respect my books."

Again Amy ran her hand over Paul's bottom and between his bottom cheeks, now that Paul was raised up and his legs slightly spread. Gently she touched the backs of his balls. Paul now was lifted up enough that Amy easily could have pulled her books out from under him. However, the books were no longer the issue.

Paul was nervous and excited at the same time. His bottom tingled in anticipation at the soft touches of Amy's hand. She was tormenting him and he loved it. She began gently rubbing the belt on his unprotected bottom.

Suddenly she stepped back, measured her distance, and delivered a cruel swat to both of Paul's bottom cheeks. CRACK! Paul jerked from the pain but quickly positioned himself for the second swat of Amy's belt. CRACK! Amy hit Paul hard across the right bottom cheek. She moved to the other side of the bed. CRACK! CRACK! Amy laid two more swats on Paul's left bottom cheek. She moved back around and, full force, laid into Paul with three vicious swats across both bottom cheeks. CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

Paul gasped. The swats hurt more than he had anticipated. However, the intensity of this experience, and the feeling of submission and vulnerability, totally aroused him. He was so hard he could barely stand it. He desperately wanted to jump up and take Amy. However, he resisted that temptation. He wanted this experience to be even more intense.

Amy was totally aroused. She could feel the wetness building between her legs. She studied the pink stripes and ran her hand over Paul's bottom. She noticed his furious erection and desperately wanted to squeeze it to torment him. Amy knew better, however. There was a very good chance, if she squeezed him now, that he would come on the bed and spoil everything.

Suddenly Amy remembered Suzanne's paddle. She wanted to try that as well.

"Paul, are you ready to respect my books?" He looked up, his eyes wild with excitement. He shook his head.

"Then I'll have to teach you. Stay where you are." Paul watched Amy with surprise as she left the room. He was even more surprised when he came back with a paddle in her hand.

POP! Amy laid a sharp swat on Paul's right bottom cheek with the paddle. The sting contrasted with the belt swats, but laid on top of them, made them much more painful. Amy decided that she would give Paul 10 swats of the paddle, then start up again with the belt. She decided to hit him on alternate cheeks to concentrate the force of the swats. Lovingly she caressed Paul's bottom. Paul sighed nervously.

POP!... POP! Amy swatted hard. Paul shifted back and forth slightly and sighed. POP!... POP!... POP!... POP! Paul grunted, from a combination of pain and pleasure. Amy paused to look at the deepening pink color on his bottom. Where she had laid the belt marks were a dark pink, punctuating the light pink circles formed by the paddle marks. She lightly tapped his right bottom cheek and delivered another pair of hard swats to Paul's right side. POP!... POP! Amy shifted position to lay matching swats on Paul's left bottom cheek. POP!... POP! Paul's voice broke with a gasp. Amy could tell the sound was a combination of agony and arousal. She knew, because she had made noises like that plenty of times herself.

Amy picked up the belt again. She was determined to force Paul to get off her books. Paul was every bit as determined to stay over Amy's books as long as he could.

Amy gently caressed Paul's deep pink bottom cheeks. Again she teased him by gently stroking the backs of his testicles with her finger tips. She noticed that he was sweating and shaking slightly.

"Paul, you haven't had your birthday spanking for this year," Amy began sweetly as she gently caressed his bottom. "That's 19 swats with the belt. I need you to lift up a bit and spread your knees some more."

Paul became nervous, not sure if he could take 19 swats of the belt over the paddle swats. He complied, stretching himself for Amy. Amy pressed her hand in the middle of his back to force Paul to turn his bottom up even more. Feeling the cool air against his bottom hole and between his legs made Paul all too aware of his vulnerability.

CRACK! Amy laid the first swat at the base of Paul's right bottom cheek. Paul gasped. CRACK! Another swat, slightly overlapping the first, changed the color at the base of Paul's bottom from deep pink to reddish pink. CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... Amy worked her way up Paul's right bottom cheek with full-force swats, darkening the color. Paul gasped and his breathing became irregular. Amy peeked between his legs. He was harder than ever.

The sight of her love on his elbows and knees, with his eyes closed and gasping from the swats, his marked bottom and furious erection, drove Amy wild with excitement. She changed sides. Viciously she attacked his left bottom cheek with the belt. CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... His voice broke with the last three swats.

Full force, Amy laid the final five swats across both bottom cheeks. CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... CRACK!... Paul's voice broke with each swat. He was covered in sweat. Amy could not stand the anticipation any more. She was so aroused that her voice cracked.

"Paul, get up! I don't give a shit about the books! Take me!"

Paul stood up, but pressed Amy backwards over the bed. The smell of her arousal hit him. Suddenly he wanted to taste her. He buried her face between her legs. The sensation of his kisses made her climax.

"Paul!... Oh Paul!"

Paul stood up. He was totally aroused. He wiped his mouth with his forearm and got on top of Amy. He kissed her. The smell of her sex still was on his face, but she didn't care. She grabbed his swollen bottom and squeezed hard. He entered her and climaxed immediately. Amy climaxed again. Paul heard her familiar squeaks as he continued thrusting. He still was totally aroused and stayed hard. He continued thrusting and finally got what he wanted, a second orgasm. Amy and Paul were drenched in sweat and smelled of each other's sex.

They finally calmed down and separated. They managed to get their breath back. Paul sat up against Amy's pillows and Amy cuddled in his arms. She fell asleep with his arm around her.

Paul stayed awake for a while, contemplating Amy's textbooks, which had fallen on the floor. His bottom, withstanding not only his weight, but also part of Amy's, throbbed. He would not be able to get to sleep until he could get out of a sitting position and relieve the pressure on his welts, but he did not want to disturb Amy.

Paul was shocked about this discovery he had made about himself. Tonight he had been aroused in a way he had never could have imagined before. Under any other circumstances he would have been totally embarrassed about letting a girlfriend know about this sexual desire, one that he himself was unaware of before he modeled for Suzanne. However, he also knew that Amy had been as excited by spanking him as he had been receiving her swats. He could share his soul with her and his secret desires.

Paul and Amy were excited by the same things. They enjoyed the same type of foreplay. Paul realized how lucky he was to have Amy in his life. He had found his soul-mate.

**Chapter 17 - Career Paths**

Suzanne started the first Fall semester of her life without having any classes to prepare for. This point was driven home when Amy arrived at the apartment loaded down with new textbooks, and Suzanne realized that this semester she had no reason to visit the university bookstore. As Amy laid out her textbooks on the coffee table for the Fall, Suzanne suddenly felt a longing for the security and structure that had been part of her life ever since she was six years old. She already missed her classmates and her art department dean. She had graduated, and the open-ended nature of her life intimidated her a bit.

Suzanne stayed very busy, however. She worked on editing her new collection of landscape pictures and the images of Paul and Amy in the forest. Suzanne particularly enjoyed preparing this newest book. The pictures were pleasant and mundane, and reminded Suzanne of the beauty that still existed in the world. There was the usual underlying sense of sadness in Suzanne's newest collection of images, but also there was a peacefulness that was lacking in her other recent projects. This book was a quiet non-controversial work, but its peaceful theme allowed Suzanne to establish herself as a mainstream photographer as well as an artistic one.

There was a backlog of other projects Suzanne needed to work on and edit. She had spent the summer taking as many pictures of Amy as possible, suspecting that Amy would be too tied up in the fall to model for her. Now that she had the photos, Suzanne needed to figure out what to do with them.

During September, Suzanne made appearances on several local morning news-hour talk shows to discuss her book on Wendy. Suddenly the Chicago press seemed interested in what Suzanne had to say about a broad range of issues, ranging from her opinions of gambling to censorship and artistic freedom. On three different September mornings Amy and Robert watched Suzanne in television studios being interviewed by local news anchors.

Suzanne was likeable on television. She was not flamboyant and did not fit the stereotype of an artist who would have created the controversial images of her last two books. Her quiet, conservative appearance and calm, respectful manner of talking contrasted with her daring work. She always had her trademark Victorian-style hair and long, loose skirts. The only make-up she wore was what the news stations asked her to put on to avoid camera glare on her face. She looked totally wholesome. The contrast between the artist and her work disarmed many of Suzanne's critics.

A local church group found out the hard way that Suzanne was not a good target. On one morning news show a preacher showed up to confront Suzanne over her work. Suzanne came off calm and respectful while the preacher came off shrill and abrasive. Suzanne quietly made her case for artistic freedom while the preacher tore into her personally and then ranted against the media in general. Suzanne's calm seemed to feed the preacher's anger. At the end of the show segment it was clear who came off looking better in the interview.

Suzanne sought as much as possible to shelter Wendy from the fallout from the book about her gambling problems. Several reporters expressed interest in the model and artist of "Wendy" throughout the fall. Suzanne quietly convinced them to not contact her. Suzanne explained that Wendy would not have much else to say than what already was in the book. More importantly, Suzanne, off-the-record, explained that Wendy had not recovered from her addiction. There was a huge risk in pushing her too hard and the potential for bad publicity if anything happened to her. Since Suzanne made herself available to the press and gave thoughtful, honest answers, reporters interested in Suzanne's work respected her desire to leave her model alone. Suzanne was learning how to deal with the press, which made her an important asset for her publisher.

Suzanne became a rising star by raising the visibility of her Chicago-based publisher. As the fallout from "Wendy" reached its height, Suzanne was included more and more in editorial decisions for her company. She was an attractive spokesperson and projected the image that her publisher wanted. As a result she started to represent her publisher more and more in public.

Suzanne's local profile rose even more when she turned down an offer from a publisher out of New York. Although the new proposal offered her more money, Suzanne realized that her heart was in the Mid-West. She feared that her work would suffer if she left for some other part of the country. Suzanne's apparent loyalty to Chicago won her praise from the local art critics and media. The truth was, however, Suzanne's decision to stay was not out of loyalty to the city, but rather concern that a move to a different area might take away her artistic inspiration. Suzanne had spent her life in the Mid-West, and that was who she was. The Great Lakes, the pleasant countryside and hills to the south, the Mississippi River to the west, the thick forests to the north, the industrial wastelands of the Rustbelt; all of that was ingrained in Suzanne's artistic soul. As an artist she would not survive a move to New York, and she knew it.

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What the local art critics did not know was that Suzanne also was committed to staying in Chicago because she was committed to staying with Robert. There was no question that Robert's career was anchored in the Windy City. He had his partners and clients, he had his living arrangements, and he knew nothing else. He often joked that he was an old dog that couldn't learn new tricks. Every time he said that Suzanne elbowed him. He was only 43.

Robert's feelings about Suzanne only intensified as their relationship developed. He respected her deeply, in spite of the fact almost a generation separated their birth dates. He had been in high school when she was born. Still, she was mature in a way that Tricia never had been. As much as he loved Tricia, Robert was never able to respect her. Tricia was too screwed up in the head. Suzanne was different.

In her quiet way, it was actually Suzanne who became the dominant partner in many areas of the relationship. Robert had been through too much with Tricia and was not in the mood to push anyone around. It was Suzanne who planned their entertainment. It was Suzanne who determined the limits of their sex life. Suzanne was never bossy with Robert; there was no way he would have put up with overt bossiness from her. Instead he was just content to relax with her and let her quietly take command of their time together.

Suzanne's command of their time together had been a feature of their relationship from the very beginning. The relationship had begun because of Suzanne. By last October Suzanne was well aware that Robert was attracted to her. She had waited for him to make a move since the end of the summer. When it became obvious that he would not, Suzanne literally took matters into her own hands. On the spur of the moment, in a flash of pain and passion, she was the one who took Robert and signaled to him that she wanted him that morning after Amy's Halloween party.

Both Suzanne and Robert took it for granted that eventually they would get married. Suzanne and Robert were, in many ways, old fashioned. They foresaw marriage and children in their futures. In spite of their sexual relationship, there would be no living together until after Suzanne had put on the white dress and had a ring on her finger. Even now, rarely did Suzanne spend the entire night with Robert.

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Robert and Suzanne never tired of sex with each other. After nearly a year they were as passionate as they had been last November. Robert still was fascinated by Suzanne's bottom. Often she lay across his lap as he took his time slowly running his hand over her voluptuous bottom-cheeks. The flawless white color and soft feel of Suzanne's bottom held Robert's attention.

Suzanne spent endless hours lying across Robert's lap. Sometimes he spanked her. Usually he did not. It was Suzanne who always made that decision. Usually she simply wanted to enjoy the feel of Robert's caresses on her bottom. She loved it when he touched her bottom-hole and gently massaged the surrounding area. She loved the feel of his fingers between her thighs, gently tracing her labia and teasing her clitoris. Sometimes Robert would simply massage her bottom and she would come close to falling asleep, only to wake up again as his fingers teased between her legs. She loved the way that Robert took his time with her. He was never bored with her. He never took her body for granted.

About once a month Suzanne wanted Robert to spank her. Suzanne always let him know when she was in the mood for a spanking, but she never asked him with words. The way she signaled him was to bounce her bottom up and down a couple of times while over his lap. If he missed the signal the first time she waited a couple of minutes and bounced her bottom again.

Suzanne had to be in the right mood to enjoy a spanking. However when she was in the mood, there was nothing that she enjoyed more than Robert's sharp slaps on her bottom. She loved the sharp stings of his hand, the caresses on her swollen bottom cheeks, the teasing between her legs. Robert always used his hand. Suzanne did not want him to use anything else, nor was she excited by any position other than to be over his lap. She loved the intimacy of that position and of the feel of his hands on her bare skin.

Suzanne was driven wild with passion during these sessions. The fact that they only happened once a month or so made them all that much more special for both Robert and Suzanne. They always started on the living room sofa and ended up on the floor with both of them covered in sweat. There was never any role play or games during Suzanne's spankings, just the physical sensation of Robert's slaps and caresses.

Apart from the sex spankings, Robert never punished Suzanne after that first self-imposed punishment last November. The very thought of punishing her again never entered his mind. Suzanne's behavior that morning was a huge aberration in her life. Suzanne, who always had maintained her self-control, lost it with Amy. After Robert talked to her, Suzanne felt so bad about her behavior with Amy because it was the only time in her life she became abusive to a person she cared about.

In September, Robert did something very special for Suzanne; he modeled for her. They drove to her favorite forest location. Suzanne's ranger fan was there to hang the trail closed sign behind Suzanne's vehicle. Suzanne and Robert walked into the forest a bit, then Robert stripped and put his clothes in a bag. These pictures were for Suzanne. There was no way that they could be published until Robert retired because of his career. After she shot several rolls of film Suzanne ran back to her vehicle and tore off her own clothes. She grabbed a blanket and ran back to Robert. They held hands as they walked naked down the trail, holding the blanket and the bag of Robert's clothes. When they found a nice sunny spot they lay down to enjoy the sun on their bodies and to enjoy each other. The first leaves of fall fell around them as they made love on the blanket.

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Suzanne's father was a dark spot in the lives of Suzanne and Robert. Not only was he the subject of a criminal investigation, but of several lawsuits as well.

Robert's cooperation with the criminal investigation had an unanticipated result. The plaintiffs filing lawsuits against Ed had a hard time claiming that Robert and the other two law partners had anything to do with Ed's behavior. The results of the investigation and Robert's cooperation made that much clear.

Robert's law practice, now reduced to three attorneys, slowly recovered from the whole mess over Suzanne's father. Suzanne's publisher became an important new client for one of Robert's partners after she successfully argued the Nevada lawsuit filed against Suzanne's book. With that the other clients came back, including a couple of Ed's. Robert's career had weathered the storm.

Still, the ghost of Suzanne's father was not a pleasant presence in either of their lives. Robert had known Ed since law school and regretted not having picked up on his behavior earlier. Suzanne still was deeply hurt over the events that led to her breaking off her relationship with him. Ed was going to jail, he was wiped out financially, and everyone in his life had turned their backs on him. In a nine month period he had lost his career, his house, his wife, his daughter, and his friends. Soon enough he would lose his freedom. All of this was due to his own actions.

Suzanne began to have second thoughts about her treatment of her father last fall. Robert disagreed.

"Suzanne, you were right last November. Don't give him the chance to hurt you yet again. If he comes to you asking for forgiveness, then you can give it to him. But he needs to ask you."

Suzanne stared quietly at the floor. Robert, seeing the doubt in her face, continued.

"Suzanne, two things to remember. Your stepmother left him and I'm sure she had her reasons. And if you still have your doubts, I'll show you my copy of his case file. That should convince you."

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Wendy spent the entire fall semester living with Amy and Suzanne, not having anywhere else to go. During the first few days she slept on the sofa. However, once it became apparent that Wendy was going to stay longer than just a few days, Amy bought her an air mattress and Wendy started sleeping in Suzanne's workroom. She had to keep her clothes in Amy's room, but the new arrangement reduced the tension between Wendy and Amy, since it is never pleasant to get up in the morning and have to fix breakfast quietly to avoid waking the guest in the living room.

Wendy's presence did not affect Suzanne's life very much, but it definitely affected Amy's relationship with Paul. No longer was Paul able to come over whenever he wanted for as long as he wanted for sex. There were only two times per week when Wendy had classes and Amy did not, which meant that sex between Paul and Amy could not be spontaneous any more. There certainly could be no thoughts of him staying the night. Their time together now had to be carefully planned.

The air mattress changed Wendy's status in the apartment from guest to a member of the household. Amy warned Wendy about Suzanne's fastidious habits and insistence on having everything cleaned and picked up. She announced to Wendy that she would start paying a fourth of the rent and that she would share buying food and cooking. Now Wendy accompanied Suzanne and Amy to the supermarket, she was required to cook, and she was required to clean up. The change did Wendy a lot of good and reduced the tension from her being a long-term guest.

The moment she saw the air mattress, Suzanne's demeanor changed towards Wendy. She immediately treated Wendy like she did Amy.

"Wendy, you are now a member of this household and you will start acting like one! I want those dishes out of the kitchen sink, and for God's sake clean up that toothpaste in the bathroom and get that hair out of the bathtub drain... that's disgusting!" As Wendy rushed into the bathroom with a bottle of cleaner in her hand, Amy smiled to herself. She had warned Wendy what to expect from Suzanne.

Wendy filled up her time as much as she possibly could. She had anticipated a hard semester, and to make absolutely sure that she had no time to stew over her problems, took an extra class for her major. She would be up to her neck in her accounting requirements. It seemed that numbers offered her the one viable escape from her memories of what happened to her in the Spring.

Wendy was still adrift psychologically. She did fine with her classes, but that was because she could handle numbers in a mechanical manner that did not require her to think or to reflect.

Wendy often sought out Suzanne just to talk. There was too much emotional baggage between Wendy and Amy right now for either to feel comfortable around the other. Especially with Amy's control over her finances, it was hard for Wendy to open up to her. Suzanne became the person closest to Wendy during the fall. She was not directly connected to Wendy's Atlantic City disaster enough to intimidate Wendy. However, she knew enough to understand what Wendy was going through.

Wendy's break with her parents deeply troubled Suzanne. Wendy's father was not like Suzanne's father. She strongly felt that Wendy belonged at home, not with her and Amy.

Suzanne massaged Wendy at least three times a week. Wendy seemed to need the comfort and reassurance of Suzanne's hands on her body. Suzanne was thorough with Wendy, often massaging her for an hour and a half at a time. It gave Suzanne some satisfaction to feel Wendy's tight muscles loosen up as each session progressed. Wendy, who could not sleep at night, often fell asleep on Suzanne's massage table. Suzanne was content to cover her up and let her stay asleep on the table as long as she wanted.

Suzanne felt no regret over having published "Wendy". The book sent a powerful message about the risks of gambling. It solidified Suzanne's reputation as a serious photographer. It replenished Wendy's depleted bank account and gave her financial security, assuming that Amy could keep her out of Atlantic City. It gave Wendy an avenue through which she could express herself. Most importantly, it forced Wendy to face her problems head-on.

When she was not studying, Wendy drew. Her Anime work branched out from the pictures she drew over the summer. Following in the footsteps of Frida Kahlo, Wendy did a large number of self portraits. She started to experiment with figure studies of herself, converting her body to Anime. One afternoon, before giving Wendy her massage, Suzanne took a series of figure studies for Wendy, specifically to use as poses for her drawings.

Suzanne encouraged Wendy to keep herself as busy as possible. Suzanne had mixed feelings about Wendy's art. Some of it was becoming less morbid. Now, not everything Wendy drew had gambling paraphernalia in it. Wendy was not always the subject of torture in her pictures. Her pictures were still very sad, but the artwork was getting even better and more varied. Some of the better pictures deeply moved Suzanne. However, as much as she saw potential in Wendy's Anime work, Suzanne did not want that to be the focus of her friend's life. Wendy was not Frida Kahlo. She had her family, her studies, and her responsibilities. She had to go back to her parents eventually. There was an entire family business waiting for her to take over, if she could come to terms with herself and her vulnerabilities. Suzanne also knew that no matter how good she was at drawing, Wendy was extremely unlikely to make a living off her art. In spite of her doubts, Suzanne gave Wendy several sets of drawing materials and explained how to use them. Wendy began experimenting with more than just pen and ink.

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The upcoming semester promised to be a brutal one for Amy. For the fall she was enrolled in another of Burnside's classes as an undergraduate. However, Amy suddenly found herself with a much bigger burden thrust upon her by her professor, two days before classes were due to start. Her new responsibility started simply enough, with an e-mail from the professor that read:

Amy: I need to see you in my office ASAP - Burnside -

The next day Amy was in Burnside's office at 9:00 am. Burnside got right to the point:

"Lisa just got a scholarship. To take it she has to cancel her current contract with the department and change assignments. What that means is she'll have to drop her position working as my assistant. I need you to take over."

Amy stared at her professor stupefied. Finally she forced herself to answer.

"Dr. Burnside, I'm not a graduate student. How can I be your aide? Don't aides have to be graduate students?"

"No, they don't. Usually they are because graduate students are better qualified than undergraduates. That's why most of the aides are graduates, not because of any requirement. You're different, so you get the job. Here's a contract and a job description. Familiarize yourself with your responsibilities and bring the contract back signed tomorrow."

Amy still had to absorb the shock. She was just a junior. How on earth could she be Burnside's assistant? However, she knew better than to try to question her professor. She simply asked for which classes she would be responsible. The response was simple; Amy would be assisting with the same two classes she took in the Spring semester. Her responsibilities would include keeping office hours for students' questions and grading tests and term papers. Burnside looked sharply at Amy. There was no question in the professor's mind that Amy would accept this assignment.

Amy accepted, all right. It was an offer she couldn't refuse. Her classmates would have jumped at this opportunity. Hell, many of the graduate students would have jumped at this opportunity.

Still, Amy felt overwhelmed. She was just a junior. She had not taken many of the requirements for the economics major yet. She was scared and wanted answers.

First, she tried talking to her roommate. Suzanne listened carefully to Amy, but had never taken classes from a professor anything like Burnside. She had no point of reference from which to give Amy any observations. Suzanne was well-liked by the dean of the art department, but he was very laid back. The image she always had in her mind of her dean was his round glasses and pot-belly, leaning back in his chair and smoking a pipe through his scraggly-gray beard. Most of Suzanne's other professors fit that same stereotype.

Suzanne had almost no experience in her studies to allow her to size up Amy's economics professor. Meeting Burnside the Monday after Spring Break had been a totally new experience for her. She could feel Burnside's fierce eyes bore into her the day she had to deliver Amy's term paper. She was not intimidated by Burnside, but at the same time was glad not to be her student.

"Amy, I don't know what to tell you. That woman is just plain weird as far as I'm concerned."

Amy next talked to Paul. He seemed to have an answer that made sense, having been Burnside's student himself.

"I think she's testing you. There is something that she wants from you, or something that she expects you to do. It's bull there's no graduate student who could be her aide. She wants you to do it, even though you're not the most qualified person for the job."

"Well, I'm going to ask her what's going on."

"Don't. You won't get an answer. All I can tell you is that Burnside is more interested in you than she is in filling that student aide job. You'll find out why when she wants you to."

Amy paused to think. She looked nervously at Paul.

"Paul, can you help me? I can't do this alone."

Paul took Amy's hand. "I'll do what I can. I think I can help you with the term papers."

**Chapter 18 - A night in Burnside's office**

Amy's time was full that semester, as full as it could be. Although Amy was becoming somewhat better with the math requirements of her field, she was grateful to have Wendy present at all times to ask her for help on formulas for her economics classes. Wendy seemed to have a talent for numbers totally out of reach for Amy. Occasionally Amy thumbed through Wendy's accounting textbooks out of curiosity. She was intimidated by the content. I'm glad not to be studying this, Amy thought to herself.

At the end of October, Amy had two full sets of term papers to grade in a week's time. There were over 150 papers, ranging from 15 to 20 pages. Burnside had told Amy the grading would be a valuable learning experience because she would be able to pick up a lot of diverse information over a very short period of time.

Burnside's method of grading was based on a formula that she had worked out over her years of teaching. She had specific things that she was looking for, based on the course content. She taught that formula to Amy, had Amy grade a couple of papers to make sure that Amy understood how the papers were to be evaluated, and then handed her two boxes. Each box was full of papers. Amy would do the initial grading, then she would give the papers back to Burnside to review for the final grading. The professor planned to review the papers over the weekend before giving them back to the students on Monday.

Paul had promised to help Amy and had cleared his schedule to accommodate her. He finished his term papers early to be able to help Amy when the crisis of mid-terms hit in the middle of October. Amy looked at him in gratitude when he showed up and picked up one of the boxes. Paul and Amy spread the papers out on the dining room table and got started. Amy took half the papers and Paul took the other half. On the papers he was grading, Paul wrote his comments on large post-it notes and attached them to the sides of the pages. Amy then re-wrote the comments on the pages in her own handwriting. It seemed like a pretty good system they had worked out.

Paul and Amy were looking forward to Burnside's Halloween party. Amy decided to wear her nurse's outfit, and Paul volunteered to go as her patient. The only thing he would wear would be hospital slippers and an old-style hospital gown that did not have a back. The gown would leave Paul's back and bottom exposed. Amy liked the idea, but was surprised that Paul would wear something so daring. By pure chance Wendy's black jumpsuit ended up among the clothes she grabbed from her parents' house, so Wendy was taken care of as well. Amy decided to take the three outfits to the cleaner's and Paul volunteered to pick them up.

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Amy turned the term papers back to Burnside with plenty of time to spare on Friday. The professor was a bit surprised at receiving the papers back so early in the day, and at seeing Amy well rested. She quietly accepted the papers. Amy did not notice the glimmer of suspicion in Burnside's expression as she cheerfully unloaded the boxes on professor's desk.

Amy first realized there was a problem that night, when she received an e-mail. Amy knew Burnside, and the tone of the message worried her.

Amy, I expect you in my office at 8:00. We need to talk. -Burnside-

Saturday morning Amy entered the professor's office at 8:00. Burnside was clearly infuriated. Her eyes bore right into Amy's, her face was flushed with anger, and the muscles on her neck were tensed. Without saying any type of greeting, she handed Amy a copy of the student aide contract.

"Amy, read line 12 of the contract to me please."

Amy read "Responsibilities include grading and assessment of course projects, as directed by the tenured faculty member named in this contract. Grading and assessment of work are the sole responsibility of the faculty member. However, within department guidelines, the responsibility of grading may be delegated to the student aide named in this contract at the discretion of the faculty member."

Amy looked at Burnside perplexed. She still did not understand what was wrong. Burnside spoke again.

"You don't get it, do you? Tell me Amy, are you double-majoring in political science?"

"No."

"Then I find the language used in half these papers very interesting. They are well-graded, but unless you have a split personality, the language used in half these papers is not yours. It's not even the language used by an economist. Now answer this question. You did not write the comments for half these papers, did you?

Amy suddenly felt like the floor had opened up beneath her. She felt totally sick, like she was falling. She should have known. However, she forced herself to answer Burnside immediately. She was honest, knowing that attempting to lie would only make her situation considerably worse.

"I had Paul help me with the papers. Those comments are his."

"Well golly-gee Amy, I guess I should be real happy! Two student aides for the price of one! Except for one problem. What do the terms 'sole responsibility', 'delegate to the student aide named in this contract ', and 'at the discretion of the faculty member' mean to you?"

Amy swallowed hard. "That means that I shouldn't have had anyone help me. It means that I... I... violated the conditions... of my contract."

"You violated the terms of your contract. You got that right. Now, do you have anything to say for yourself?"

Amy sadly shook her head. "No, Dr. Burnside. I don't have anything to say. I... I screwed up. I... I'm sorry."

Burnside clenched her fists upon hearing the word "sorry". Her lips tightened. It was obvious that the professor was using every bit of her self control to stay calm.

"You screwed up! What an understatement, Amy! Don't you realize that it's not just your career you've put in jeopardy, but mine as well? I signed a contract with this university, just like you did, and as I recall, NOWHERE in that contract did it say that I could delegate grading to someone outside the department! Certainly not to your little political science boyfriend!"

Burnside grabbed a handful of the papers. She slapped them hard on the surface of her desk. The professor's next words cut to the core of Amy's soul.

"I trusted you! I gave you an opportunity most students only dream about, and you couldn't even grade some papers for me! It would have been better had you not written anything on them, because now they're covered with a bunch of political science jargon! I trusted you, and what do you do? You violated both our contracts! You betrayed 75 of my students, who thought their papers would be graded by an economist! And all you can say is 'you're sorry?!'"

For a moment Amy said nothing. What could she say? The fact that she had ended her career was the least of her concerns at that moment. Her betrayal of Burnside weighed on Amy much more than her own situation. Finally she forced herself to speak.

"Dr. Burnside, would it help if I go to the dean, by myself, and tell him what I did? That it wasn't your fault? Then you, or the dean, or the university, or whoever, can do whatever you want to me. You have my word I won't argue or file any appeal. I'll write a letter, or a confession, or whatever. Just tell me what I need to do, and I'll take care of it."

Burnside looked hard at Amy. Without realizing it, Amy had just saved her job with her last sentence. Maybe there was hope for her yet. The professor calmed down slightly. She sighed and shook her head.

"No. I'm not going to fire you. It would create a scandal in the department, and anyhow, you aren't getting off that easy. We're going to fix this, you and me, this weekend. You are going to take Paul's papers over to that desk and re-grade them. Leave Paul's comments for the benefit of the students. For the most part they're very insightful for a political scientist. I just won't count them for the grading. But now you will put in your own. As for the half that you did grade, sort them and give them to me. I'll get started with those. We have 48 hours to get finished."

"Dr. Burnside... You're going to forgive me... "

"No, Amy. I'm not going to just forgive you. You fucked up, and you're going to pay for it. But you're going to pay for it in a way that won't wreck your future. Now, start sorting those papers."

Amy moved the papers to the TA's desk and sat down. Her heart pounded as she sorted the papers into two piles, the finished pile for Burnside and the unfinished pile for herself. Amy's emotions were in turmoil. She was hugely relieved that her career was not going to be swept away. However, she was scared at the same time. Burnside was totally infuriated with Amy, in spite of having decided not to fire her. Amy knew there would be hell to pay for her irresponsibility.

"Amy, what time is it?"

"Ten 'till nine, Dr. Burnside"

"Good. At nine o'clock sharp I want you to go over to the umbrella stand behind my desk. There is a cane in that umbrella stand. You will take the cane out and hand it to me. Once you've done that, I want you to pull your jeans and panties down and bend over my desk."

Amy was so scared her hands shook, but she said nothing. Punishment was how Burnside dealt with anyone who was dishonest with her, and Amy would be no exception. If anything, Amy was slightly relieved, knowing that if Burnside punished her, eventually she would let the grading incident pass. What Amy did not realize was how much the strokes from that cane would hurt. She hurried to finish sorting out the papers before nine.

At nine Amy laid the papers she had graded on Burnside's desk. She reached behind the umbrella stand and retrieved the cane. Amy's struggled to stay calm as her fingers touched the wood. The cane was truly an evil-looking item. She handed the cane to her professor, then moved to the front of her desk, facing the window. She unzipped her jeans, pushed them and her panties to her knees, and bent over the desk. She grabbed the opposite edge with her hands and waited. Burnside picked up the cane and tapped it on Amy's left bottom-cheek.

"Amy, I promised that you are going to pay for this in a way that won't affect your future. Well, this is it. I will give you two strokes, one from each side, every hour on the hour until we're done with these papers. I think, considering what you tried to pull on me, that's fairly lenient. Anyhow, I'm sure you'll be plenty tired by tomorrow and the strokes will help you stay awake."

With that Burnside struck hard at the lower part of Amy's bottom. A pink line instantly appeared, just above her thighs, precisely where she would have to sit. The pain seemed to shoot through Amy's entire body. As the burning from the stroke increased and Amy gritted her teeth in pain, Burnside struck from the other side. Amy gasped. She bit her lip hard as the pain from her second stroke mounted. She fought back the tears. That was just two strokes! There would be two more at 10:00, two more at 11:00, two more at 12:00... By this time tomorrow Amy would be in pure agony. She knew that the second day would be worse.

"OK, Amy, back to your papers. You might as well take your jeans and panties off. You won't be needing them until you're done with your part of the grading. At 10:00 I want you back over my desk."

Amy sadly slipped her jeans over her feet, folded them, and put them on the floor under the table. Then she sat down in the hard chair, wincing as the welts seemed to bite into her.

Burnside was no hypocrite. She worked every bit as hard as Amy, quickly revising Amy's comments, adding a few of her own, and giving the final grade. On the average she lowered the grade about 3% from what Amy had given each paper. Burnside worked quickly and efficiently, reducing her stack of papers by about 8 per hour.

Amy took longer with her stack of papers, since she had to re-read them and put in her own comments next to the ones she had copied from Paul's post-it notes. As she finished her papers she put them back in their box. After about every 10 papers or so Amy picked up the finished stack and handed it to Burnside. Burnside took the papers from Amy's hand, thumbed through them to make sure they had good comments, then added them to her own pile of un-graded papers. Amy and Burnside worked in silence the entire afternoon. Amy sat uncomfortably, the hard wood of her chair pressing her welts.

The silent routine of the office was only broken once each hour when Amy checked the time, stood up, and bent over Burnside's desk. Burnside then stood up, laid her two strokes across Amy's bottom, and then they both sat back down to continue their work. Every hour two new stripes of pain marked Amy's bottom, two new sources of discomfort for her as she pressed into her seat. By the time it was dark outside Amy barely could sit down. It was becoming harder and harder for her not to cry.

At 7:00 p.m. Burnside suddenly realized that she and Amy had gone the entire day without eating. After giving Amy her two cane strokes for the hour, Burnside told Amy that she was going out to get something to eat for both of them and would be back shortly. Amy took advantage of Burnside's absence to have a good cry. She buried her face in her hands and sobbed for 15 minutes. It did not make the pain go away, but now Amy felt that she could hold up for a few more hours. She managed to calm down before Burnside came back. The professor set a plastic container of chopped fruit in front of Amy, as well as a small hot sandwich and a small carton of orange juice. Then they both noticed it was 8:00. Amy, not saying anything, got up and bent over the desk. Burnside picked up the cane and struck her twice. Amy now had 24 cane strokes across her bottom. She winced as she sat down and forced herself to eat.

The night dragged on. Burnside was an insomniac, so it did not bother her to work like this. There was no way that Amy could feel sleepy with the increasing pain from her on-going punishment. They worked grimly through the night. Every hour Amy stood up and bent over Burnside's desk. Amy heard the janitor vacuum outside the door. Much later she heard drunken frat boys screaming around the academic buildings. Burnside jumped up and went outside. Amy heard her voice snarling at the drunks. Amy had to hand it to her professor. She had the guts to go out and confront a large group of drunken males by herself at 2:00 in the morning. There was silence after that.

By 7:00 the next morning Amy was about three fourths the way through her papers. She bent over Burnside's desk for the 23rd time. Burnside struck her with the cane twice, then told Amy she was going to get breakfast for both of them. She asked Amy what she wanted in her coffee. Once again Amy broke down and cried while Burnside was away. She was in much more pain than last night. Judging by the papers still on her desk there were at least six more hours to go. She managed to stop crying just before Burnside got back.

Amy did not see how things could get any worse, but they did with the next set of cane strokes. At 8:00, Burnside decided that she needed to stop caning Amy's bottom. Amy's bottom cheeks were in bad shape and a few more strokes of the cane would risk breaking her skin. When Amy bent over Burnside's desk for the 24th time, Burnside laid two strokes across the backs of Amy's thighs. Amy had been balancing herself with her thighs on the edge of the chair to ease the pressure on her bottom. The two new welts would make that much more difficult.

After her strokes at 11:00, Amy now had four welts on the back of each thigh, as well as the mass of welts on her bottom. By now Amy saw the wooden chair as her enemy. She asked Burnside if she could stay standing or kneel at her desk to ease the pressure on her bottom.

"Amy, you will sit in that chair until you are finished with your papers. If your bottom hurts, well, that's just too bad."

Amy, exhausted beyond belief and tormented by her welts, finally finished the last paper that Sunday afternoon at 12:55 p.m. Burnside took it from her. The professor looked at Amy sharply as she picked up her jeans from the floor and struggled to pull them up over her bottom.

"OK, Amy, that's it. Your part is done. Don't ever tell yourself that you need your boyfriend to help you or that you cannot handle this workload, because you've just proved you can. We have final projects coming up in a month and I expect top performance out of you for the grading."

Burnside's face reflected genuine anger at Amy, as well as disappointment. She continued "Amy, because you let me down, you will host at my Halloween party, just like you did last year. Do you understand?"

Amy struggled not to cry. "Yes, Dr. Burnside. I understand."

With that Amy slowly walked down the empty hallway of the silent economics department. For a few seconds Burnside stood sadly watching her, then the professor returned to her office to finish her portion of the grading.

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Amy called Paul immediately from the pay phone at the entrance of the economics department. He rushed over to pick her up. It was obvious that Amy could not face Suzanne or Wendy right now, so he took her to a motel. He helped her get her jeans and underwear off, and was horrified at the sight of Amy's bottom and the backs of her legs. Amy lay on the bed, face down, crying. The pain from the cane marks did not seem to go away, and having gone without sleep for almost two days totally broke down her resistance. Amy sobbed continuously. Paul did not know what to do. He ran out in the hall to get Amy some juice, soda, and bottled water from the vending machine, and asked her what she wanted. All Amy could do was continue to cry.

It was obvious that something had gone horribly wrong between Amy and her professor, but long time passed before Amy could tell Paul what happened. The worst part was the upcoming Halloween Party. Amy would be punished yet again and forced to serve drinks in the nude all night, to a large number of people who knew her from the Mardi Gras party. The embarrassment of having to face all those people again as a hostess was overwhelming.

There was no way that Amy could avoid letting Paul know that she had been punished because he graded her papers. It really was not his fault that Amy violated her contract, but he felt overwhelmingly guilty. Paul's concern was not over what already had happened, but rather Amy's upcoming public humiliation.

Amy's fatigue took over and she went to sleep. Paul felt horrible as he looked at the cruel marks on her body. Finally he covered her up. He grabbed one of the unopened bottles of water and drank it as he pondered what to do. He resolved that tomorrow he would talk to Burnside and try to host in Amy's place. He owed her at least that much.

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Burnside stared coldly at Paul as he pled for Amy to be let off from any further punishment. Finally she reached in her file cabinet and pulled out a copy of Amy's contract. She shoved it at Paul.

"Look this over very carefully. Do you see your name written anywhere on it?"

"No, but... "

"Case closed, Paul. Amy is responsible because she is the one I hired to grade papers, not you. What you do is your business. You obviously thought you were doing the right thing by trying to help Amy, but it was her decision not to fulfill the terms in here, not yours."

"But I was the one who suggested helping her with the term papers."

"Doesn't matter. She made the decision to not do the papers. You didn't make that decision for her. She's the one who has to face the consequences."

Burnside looked at her watch. "I think our time is up, Paul. I have a meeting in two minutes."

"Dr. Burnside, could I at least host with her? So she doesn't have to be there by herself?"

Burnside was irritated with this troublesome boyfriend. Paul, your ass is going to get it, thought Burnside. "Have it your way. It won't cut anything that's going to happen to Amy, but if you want to play hero, go right ahead."

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This time Amy made no effort to hide anything from Suzanne. Monday night she lay on Suzanne's massage table while Suzanne put lotion on her welts, hoping to soften the skin and reduce the bruising. Suzanne partially felt sorry for Amy, but ultimately agreed with Burnside. It had been Amy's job to grade the papers, not Paul's.

Wendy came in, and for once showed sympathy towards Amy instead of concentrating on her own self-pity. She took over from Suzanne and rubbed Amy's shoulders until Amy fell asleep. Like Paul, Wendy suddenly felt an overwhelming urge to be with Amy and suffer with her as a hostess at the Halloween party. She felt a huge need to repeat her experience from last year, especially if Amy had to endure it as well.

Tuesday morning Wendy was in Burnside's office, asking to host along side Amy. Burnside looked at her, stupefied.

"I don't understand you three. First Paul, now you. It seems that Amy gets in trouble and everyone wants in on it. Fine. Your ass will get a nice whipping just like you had last year. Now, out. I'll see you on the 31st."

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Amy gave up on trying to convince Paul and Wendy to not go to the party with her after two days of arguing with them. They would stick by her and that was that. Deep down Amy was gratified that her boyfriend and her classmate were so loyal to her, but she felt extremely guilty about dragging them into her problems. The afternoon before Halloween, Amy, Wendy, and Paul got dressed in sweats at Amy's apartment. They drove over to Burnside's house in Paul's car, got out, and prepared to face an unpleasant evening. Amy was still horribly sore from her caning only three days before, while Paul and Wendy nervously awaited being punished themselves. Burnside opened the door and saw the three sad students looking at her. Suddenly her determination to "really teach them a lesson" began to fade.

Like the previous year, Burnside had the students move the furniture out of the living room. It was easier this time, with Paul on one end of the bigger pieces and Wendy and Amy on the other end. The sheets went up faster with three people hooking them to the walls instead of two. Once everything was in place, the three students looked at each other in apprehension. Paul and Wendy were scared, even though they had volunteered to come.

Unlike the previous year, Burnside was still wearing slacks and a sweater when she greeted the students. Burnside went to her bedroom to change into one of her leather outfits, while Amy ordered Paul and Wendy to go into the kitchen. Amy told them how she wanted the drink mixing to be organized, now that Paul was there to help Wendy. Amy was determined that she would serve the guests. Then Amy decided that there was no point in the other two being punished. This was Amy's problem, not theirs. They had no business suffering because of her.

Burnside came back to the living room just in time to hear Amy's voice in the kitchen, insisting that Paul and Wendy were not to submit to a punishment that Amy alone had earned. Burnside heard her comment... "Look, I am going to go into the living room and deal with what I did. You two are staying in the kitchen until my punishment is over and that is final! Paul, I will break up with you if you don't respect my feelings about this! This is my screw-up and it's my problem!"

With that Amy entered the living room to face Burnside. Her sad eyes met Burnside's. Suddenly Burnside realized that she did not want to punish Amy. Even before looking Amy in the face Burnside had her doubts anyway, given all that had happened in her office a few days before. But now, seeing Amy alone in her living room, willing to face her mistakes and desperate to protect her boyfriend and her classmate, Burnside lost all desire to do anything to Amy. Her next words shocked her student.

"Did you and the others bring any costumes, by any chance?"

Amy stood silently staring at Burnside. She had expected to be told to get undressed. Burnside became irritated at her silence.

"Amy, costumes. The things you wear for Halloween?"

"I... I don't know, Dr. Burnside. I think Paul has them in his trunk... "

"Well, get them and put them on. You'll be serving in your costumes."

With that Amy ran out to Paul's car. Sure enough, the costumes, now cleaned and in garment bags, were in Paul's trunk. Amy grabbed the costumes and ran back into the kitchen. She passed Wendy her black outfit and Paul his hospital gown.

"Quick, get these on." Immediately she took off her sweats and panties and pulled the nurse's dress over her head. She pulled the white stockings up her thighs and put on her white shoes and nurse's cap. Paul followed suit, stripping and putting on his gown. Wendy seemed totally perplexed and almost had a disappointed look in her face.

"Wendy, get changed. We're off the hook. She's going to let us serve in our costumes." With that Wendy took off her clothes and changed into her jumpsuit. She did not have her high-heeled shoes, which took away from her outfit a bit, but given that she would be spending the night in the kitchen fixing drinks, that didn't matter too much. Amy was missing her medical accessories, but with a drink tray in her hands all night she would not need them anyway. Amy was grateful that her punished bottom would not be on display for the world to study. A few cane marks were visible on the backs of her thighs between the tops of her stockings and the hem of her dress, but that was better than having her entire body on display. Once again Amy went pantyless, not so much to feel sexy, but to avoid having any pressure on her bottom.

When Burnside entered the living room in her leather outfit, she looked at her student and in a quiet voice, so the others couldn't hear, said, "Amy, you've been through enough. Just do a good job serving tonight. We'll start fresh on Monday."

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The doorbell rang and the three students began taking coats to the back bedroom. This Halloween was not as cold as last year, so most of the guests did not have heavy coats. Many of the guests seemed surprised at not seeing their hosts in the nude, since nude hosts had been a trademark of Burnside's parties since she started having them nearly 15 years ago. Her explanation to those who asked was simple enough and partially true, that this time her hosts had volunteered and thus were doing Burnside a favor. Hence they were serving in costume instead of nude.

Amy smiled with amusement as Paul walked to the back room with his arms full of coats, his bare bottom jiggling through the back opening in his hospital gown. Paul, I think you're going to regret putting your bottom on display like that, Amy thought to herself.

Quickly Amy's concerns moved to the endless drink orders pouring into the kitchen. Amy decided to switch off with Paul taking drink orders. One would serve drinks and the other would help Wendy. While working in the kitchen Amy took a look at the crowd to see how Paul was doing among the guests. Paul quickly moved about the room with his drinks, with a nervous expression on his face. Amy noticed that wherever he went, women hooted and cheered as they swatted at his bare bottom. Since he had his hands full of drinks, there was little he could do to avoid the swats, and his tormenters knew it. When Paul finally came back into the kitchen Amy and Wendy took a look at his bottom. It was quite pink. Embarrassed, he smiled at them. "I think next time I'll wear something else." However, he volunteered to go back out with another tray of drinks.

Suddenly Amy felt like doing something a bit naughty to her boyfriend. As Paul stood ready to go out the door with his tray of drinks, Amy ordered him to stand still for a second. The lower pair of drawstrings on Paul's gown were hanging loose. Amy suspected that he had left them loose on purpose to better expose his bottom. Well, thought Amy, let's expose your ass a bit more. She tied the lower set of drawstrings in front to pull Paul's gown completely away from his bottom. Now he was exposed not just from the back, but also from the sides. She kissed him on the cheek and then landed a sharp slap on his bottom to send him out the door.

"Have fun!"

Amy's gratitude from serving in her nurse's dress increased as she ran across the people she had met at the Mardi Gras party in the Spring. It was too dark in the room for the others to notice the welts on the backs of her legs, so Amy's story about volunteering to serve at the party was believed by everyone. She got through the evening with her dignity intact.

She ran across the graduate student with whom she had tormented that frat boy in the Spring and the cop from the campus police department. They were together now and apparently going out. They filled Amy in on what had happened to Bill.

Bill was arrested about a week after the Mardi Gras party. He immediately became an informant for the police against the rest of his fraternity in what turned into a massive drug trafficking investigation involving Rohypnol, steroids, and ecstasy. The investigation branched out and eventually resulted in several arrests over the summer, including a couple of football players. The investigation was still going on, which was why Bill was not in jail yet. In fact, Bill was still enrolled in college due to the need to keep him as an informant. The police approached Burnside and asked her to simply flunk him instead of kick him out altogether for cheating. Upon finding out about the investigation, she agreed and Bill continued with his other classes.

In spite of all this, the graduate student, in her loud cheerful manner of talking, explained to Amy that she imagined that Bill probably wished he had gone to jail. Her roommate, Bill's ex-girlfriend, scanned all the photos taken by Amy and the others at the Mardi Gras party. Then she collected as much of his personal information as she could. She developed websites as a hobby, and put the scanned photos and Bill's personal information in a website and bought a domain name. She put a copy of the website on CD and presented it to Bill to look at. As anyone could imagine, Bill was horrified. He begged her not to post the website. Well, that depends on what I get in return, responded Bill's ex-girlfriend. Bill's new nick-name became "Bitch-boy". Starting mid-May the purpose of Bill's life was to serve his ex-girlfriend and her friends non-stop. He had been subjected to just about every indignity imaginable and every week his ex-girlfriend and the others came up with new things and ideas to torment him with. Any hint of objection, and Bill's ex-girlfriend picked up the CD and waved it in the air. Seeing the CD always put him back in line.

Amy and her acquaintance from the Mardi Gras party chatted about a few other things, mostly gossip. Paul showed up with his drink tray. The graduate student slapped his bottom as he went by. Slapping Paul's bottom seemed to have become the sport of most of the women that night at the party. In fact some of the women had taken bets to see who could swat Paul's bottom the most throughout the evening. Amy smiled as she watched Paul navigate through the crowd, with the sounds of whistles and slaps accompanying him. Amy turned to the graduate student. "By the way, that's my boyfriend in the hospital gown."

Once again Amy felt like being a bit naughty with her hapless boyfriend. She grabbed a small leather paddle from Burnside's supply of implements and handed it to the graduate student.

"Next time he comes by, give him a swat with this."

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The party wound down and the guests started to leave. Finally the last of them was out the door. Amy, Paul, and Wendy put the furniture back and started to clean up. However, Burnside decided to give Amy her second break of the evening, or the morning, as it now was. She told Amy and the others that they could take-off; Burnside would handle the rest of the clean-up herself. With that the students changed back into their sweats and said goodnight to the professor.

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They got back to Amy's apartment. Wendy took a shower and went to bed. Amy grabbed Paul's hand and led him to her room. She took his hands and kissed him. Paul them buried his face in Amy's neck and kissed her hard.

It had been several days since Amy and Paul had enjoyed the chance to make love. They were both quite aroused, enough to forget about the presence of Wendy and Suzanne in the other rooms. Amy jerked Paul's sweatpants down to his ankles, and motioned him to turn around and put his hands on her dresser. His bottom was still badly marked up from all the attention it had received from Burnside's guests just a few hours before. She ran her hands over the marks and bruises, enjoying the feel of his flesh against her fingertips and palm. She resisted the urge to lay some additional hard slaps on his bottom, not wanting to wake up her two roommates.

Paul stood up and unzipped Amy's sweat top. He slid it off her shoulders and pushed her sweatpants to her feet. She stepped out of them. Holding hands, they turned their backs facing the mirror to compare their bottoms. The blotchy red and purple marks on Paul's bottom contrasted with the mass of thin welts on Amy's bottom. It was a strange sight, but standing together as a punished couple intensely aroused both of them. Amy looked down to see that Paul already had a rather impressive erection. She grabbed his penis, then caressed his swollen bottom with her hands. Paul ran his hands over Amy's welts, pressing hard. The pain from Paul's hands squeezing her sore bottom pushed Amy's emotions to their limit. She squeaked and kissed his neck hard.

Paul pushed Amy down on the bed. The pain from her welts intensified as he entered her, pressing her punished flesh hard on the mattress. The sensation intensified the orgasm she was experiencing. Amy squeezed Paul's bottom as hard as she could, digging her fingertips into his flesh. It was delightful for him, the intense pleasure of being inside Amy, combined with the bittersweet sensations coming from his behind.

It was an exquisite end to a very strange evening.

**Chapter 19 - Burnside's Ghosts**

Leaving Burnside's house, Amy, Paul, and Wendy were too tired to notice that the front door stayed open a couple of inches until they drove off. The professor quietly watched the three students as they made their way down her sidewalk; Paul and Amy holding hands and Wendy close to Amy. She watched Paul open up the back passenger door for Wendy and the front one for Amy. She watched Paul get into the driver's seat and close his door. He turned on the ignition and they were gone.

The silent woman in the doorway thought about Amy for a few minutes, and about the huge break she had given her that night. Was that student really so special? Did she really deserve all the attention and chances her professor had given her? She saw something in Amy, something that set her apart, but what?

Burnside's thoughts turned to Paul. He truly loved Amy. The professor reflected that she never had a boyfriend like him. Her love of fetish and her violent temper had made any normal relationship out of reach for Ruth Burnside. Sure, she had enjoyed plenty of sexual relationships. She loved sex and always had at least one lover at all times in her life; usually more than one. But she never had experienced having a boyfriend walk her to his car, holding her hand, and opening the door for her.

She had big plans for Amy, which fortunately had not been derailed by her student's failure to comply with the student aide contract. Still, the professor felt a pang of regret that her plans probably would force Amy to break up with Paul.

Burnside closed her front door and contemplated the mess in the living room and kitchen she had to deal with. She walked over to her coffee maker and helped herself to what was left of the coffee. The coffee tasted bitter after having sat out all night. Appropriate. Matches my mood.

Burnside took a shower and stood looking at herself in her hallway mirror. My fucking tits, she thought; God they look nasty. Just a few years ago she had been proud of her large breasts. They still looked all right in a bra or corset. But recently they had fallen. Loose, they sagged like two partially deflated water balloons, according to the woman's critical view of herself. Her skeptical eye scanned the rest of her body. It still looked OK. But for how much longer? Menopause was staring her in the face. Two, maybe three years more at the most. Then she would look like shit. Just another single old woman. With that on her mind she crawled in bed.

She could not sleep. She was up after a few minutes, dressed in a sweatsuit. She did what she always did when she was depressed; turn on CNBC. As an economist, the lies and cheerleading coming out of CNBC and the other stock channels held a morbid fascination for her. What a bunch of bullshit, she thought. These people belong in jail, promoting stocks that could not hold their value, predicting big things for sectors of the economy that were already over-inflated.

She stared quietly at the screen, remembering her own bitter experience with "high finance", and what happens when foresight gets in the way of profits. Dr. Ruth Burnside saw the telecommunications crash coming, long before the sector peaked. The law of supply and demand. Wasn't anyone paying attention? Too much capacity was being built, too many losses being hidden in acquisitions. Yes, she saw it all coming, and tried to warn the public. The only reward she got for trying to tell the truth was to be blacklisted from the stock channels. They wanted cheerleaders, not the truth. Yes, she had been right, but in the end it didn't matter. Her warnings went unheard, and all those investors (the small ones, that is) lost out.

The embittered economist sipped her cold, bitter coffee as she sat listlessly before the TV, listening to the latest flood of lies spewing out. Men, especially, seemed to be real suckers for this crap. The female announcer had just the right mix of beauty and professional appearance to play to male egos. The professor felt that she could put herself in the heads of the men watching this actress pretending to be an analyst.

Yeah. They were going to be the next Rockefeller by watching CNBC.

The new economy. The new era. New technology. What total shit. The fundamentals never change; they haven't in over 500 years. Go back to the law of supply and demand. Look at history, that's where you will find the truth about the "new economy". But no one was listening.

After torturing herself with CNBC and cold coffee for an hour, Burnside noticed it was light outside. Time to walk the dog.

Old Maynard was on the back porch. The dog, named after the famous economist John Maynard Keynes, was 17, and looked it. His muzzle was white, his eyes covered with cataracts. The dog wagged his tail feebly and struggled to his feet.

Maynard, you're not looking too good today, thought Burnside. The animal seemed to perk up when he saw the leash. The dog's owner was relieved. She had promised herself the day Maynard did not care about his walk would be the day he would have to be put to sleep.

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The professor reflected about her past as she slowly walked behind her decrepit dog. For the first time in a while her thoughts went back to her childhood. She thought about her religious, optimistic parents. They were so naive. They were suckered time and time again, with their house, with their cars, with their insurance, with their investments. No matter how many times her father was ripped off, he always seemed to maintain his faith in the goodness of humanity and the generosity of God. The family lived in poverty, not because there was no money, but because her father was such an idiot about spending it. There always seemed to be bums hanging around, asking her parents for handouts. Invariably they received what they wanted. Ruth and her sister may not have had enough to eat, but the bums always got theirs.

Ruth Burnside grew up hating many things. She hated weak people, and she hated optimists. She hated people who looked on the bright side of things, because the bright side of life was something she never experienced.

From a very early age Ruth hated her parents, a hatred that eventually expanded to everything associated with their lifestyle and beliefs. She hated their fake cheerfulness, she hated their optimism, she hated their religion. She hated her used clothes and meals of Hamburger Helper. She hated seeing the money that should have been used to make her and her sister comfortable instead go to all those fucking bums. She hated being told that God smiled upon those who made sacrifices for the less fortunate. Ruth developed a foul temper and a controlling disposition, even at an early age.

Ruth's feelings towards her parents were more hostile contempt than actual hatred, but towards their pastor she felt nothing but pure loathing. She blamed her church for making her parents into hapless puppets who were detached from any sense of reality. The sight of that deranged man screaming at his pulpit week after week, with his eyes wide with fanatical belief and sweat pouring down his face, did much more to make Ruth into an atheist than anything she could have learned in her science classes.

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As she strolled behind Maynard, waiting for him to dump, the professor's thoughts turned to sex and S&M. Her interest in sex first began as an act of rebellion against her parents. Of course, in her household anything having to do with sexual expression was savagely condemned. The message was pounded into her and her sister constantly, not just by her parents, but also by her shrieking pastor and various Bible-study leaders.

At a very early age Ruth engaged in sexual play with other young teenagers, precisely because she knew that she was violating the most strongly-felt values of her parents and defying the most treasured beliefs of her pastor and bible-study leader. The girl's plunge into sexual adventure was not something she drifted into; it was a decision she took on her own. Sex became Ruth's early obsession in life. She became as fanatical about sexuality as her parents were about their religion. Ruth pursued her secret life with combination of research at the library and sexual play with her friends. She took advantage of every opportunity to find out what she could and already had picked up a surprising amount of information by the time she was only 13. Even before she finished middle school Ruth knew more about sex than most adults.

Ruth's friends were a group of neighborhood boys, some of who were slightly older than she was. They began experimenting when the older boys reached puberty. Ruth, at age eleven, started to use the boys' interest in sex and the fact that she was the only girl in the group to control them. Ruth's increasing control over the boys was a gradual process. She learned to play on their weaknesses. The boys learned that everything with Ruth had its price. She loved forcing the boys to strip completely, sometimes in exchange for something as small as a kiss. Anything more than that had a much heavier price.

By the time she was 13, Ruth became interested in punishing her group-mates. She used her own body to bargain punishments with her friends. From the group there was one boy in particular with whom she spent her time. He let her punish him as much as she wanted. His parents were never home until after six, so Ruth and her friend spent hours at his house after school. He was the only boy in the group for whom she took off all of her clothes. She let him feel and kiss her body. She started to experiment with massaging him. Ruth's price for letting him see and touch her was that he had to lie naked on the sofa while she slapped his bottom and legs. She told him that he could not get up until she allowed him to. If he did, she would never let him see her again. She had him under her control.

Ruth's love of this fetish quickly increased. She loved the sense of control that she had over her friend. Hitting him seemed to give her power that she did not have in any other area of her life. She loved the sight of his naked adolescent body, covered with pink marks and squirming on the sofa. After a couple of months Ruth found an excuse to punish him with his father's belt. The sight of the reddish belt marks on her friend's bottom excited her even more.

Ruth's friend desperately wanted to have sex with her. Slowly she used his desire as a bargaining chip for more severe punishments. She experimented spanking him with other household items such as breadboards and bath brushes. She began to experiment with different positions, such as having him bend over a chair. She delighted in forcing him to do risky things such as streak outside around the house. A couple of times she locked him outside nude, and forced him to stand at the back door negotiating what he had to do to be let back in. Very slowly she let him do more and more with her, but the exchange was always in her favor.

Finally, after two years, Ruth let him get inside of her. After the first time she loved it. She learned at a very early age the joys of combining pleasure and pain.

The first time was on a hot summer day. Ruth and her friend decided to go out into the nearby forest park. She could tell he was desperate to have her. They walked a long way and came upon a growth of willows. Ruth suddenly remembered that willows were what you make switches out of. While her friend watched nervously, she cut some and cleaned off the bark. They found a clearing with a fallen tree lying on the ground. Suddenly she turned to him and took his hand.

"Do you still want me?"

He nodded.

"You gotta to prove it. Get your clothes off."

Ruth took hers off as well. The boy bent over the dead tree and she began switching him. The stripes on his bottom were darker than anything she had seen before. She was totally aroused. The feel of the hot sun against her own body exhilarated her even more. She grabbed his shirt and threw it on the ground. She kissed him and massaged him until he was totally hard. She lost her virginity on his shirt. The blood fascinated her, even though it was her own. She did not enjoy the pain of the first time, but she knew it got better once the first time was out of the way. She made him wear the bloody shirt on the way back.

From that point she had several sexual relationships in school. However, she did not want a normal relationship with tenderness and commitment. What she wanted was the feeling of control that always accompanied punishing her boyfriends. At that time Ruth's sister worked in a pharmacy and was able to supply her with condoms, so in high school Ruth stayed out of trouble. Taking a whipping and wearing a condom, those were to two conditions for anyone who wanted to have sex with Ruth Burnside. She was surprised how many of her classmates were desperate enough for sex to be willing to meet her two conditions.

Ruth spent much of her youth avidly studying S&M literature. When she was 16 one of her old group-mates got a job at a bookstore and was able to get her some books on S&M, both fiction and pictures. The pictures with leather interested her. She loved the black clothing and its contrast with white skin. She still could not get into the adult bookstores to see this stuff for real. She had to wait another two years. But her imagination was fired. The feeling of control, of power, that she experienced by inflicting pain on guys desperate for sex filled her fantasy life.

Ruth took full advantage of her teenage classmates' desperation for sex. She made herself available to a lot of the guys who, for whatever reason, could not have anyone else. But there was always a cost. Sex was on Ruth's terms; a few minutes of pleasure in exchange for a punishment. By this time she had collected some breadboards, bath brushes, and belts and knew how to use them to maximum effect. She knew how to dominate her lovers. More than anything else in her life she loved the sight of a 16- or 17-year old classmate on his knees, nervously looking up at her, waiting.

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As a young teenager Ruth Burnside became as obsessed with money as she was with sex. She knew that understanding money was just as important as having it, just as understanding sex was just as important as experiencing it. Ruth's early experience with money began as soon as she entered high school, a clandestine career that gave her much more control over her daily life than her parents could have envisioned or would have granted.

An unexpected result of Ruth's fixation with learning about the forbidden topic was that, by age 14, her research skills matched those of many college students. When she entered high school Ruth already knew how to search through card catalogues, conduct investigations, and rapidly go through shelves of books for selected information. She became an expert at locating everything from obscure medical passages about sexual intercourse to sex scenes in novels. She had to learn how to search for the information by herself, because she was not about to let the library staff know what she was looking for.

High school research projects that daunted her classmates were nothing to Ruth. Upon entering the ninth grade, she began earning illicit income by writing term papers for various classmates. She did excellent original work that was not traceable as cheating and forced her customers to take the time to learn what was in the papers they were turning in to avoid being caught. As Ruth's reputation spread her prices went up. She had no qualms about taking advantage of a classmate's desperate situation to extort more money, or forcing two classmates to bid against each other to get a paper. Her knowledge of plagiarism and her total contempt for people unwilling to do their own work began at a very early age.

The most important lesson Ruth learned from her high school career of writing black-market term papers was the power having money could give her. As she increased her small hoard of cash, she learned that to have money was to have choices and freedom. No longer did she have to ask her parents for anything (not that she would have gotten it anyway), because whatever she wanted she could purchase with her own cash. Apart from items she could pass off as school supplies, she couldn't buy anything expensive-looking that her parents would see at home. However, in her school locker she kept several pairs of new shoes, some books, cosmetics, a large collection of cassette tapes and a Walkman, and other small luxuries that would have outraged her parents and pastor. Whenever she wanted to get something expensive to eat, she bought it. By the time she finished high school the only thing she needed or wanted from her parents was a place to sleep.

Ruth Burnside graduated from high school with a vast knowledge of academic topics. However, her intelligence was not reflected in her grades, because she had spent so much of her time doing other people's work instead of her own. Her grades were slightly above average, but not outstanding and definitely not good enough to earn her any scholarships or grants. Of course, from her parents there would be no money for college. The church, the bums, and the con-artists had taken it. Like her sister before her, Ruth enlisted in the Navy and later would go to college on the GI bill.

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Just before she enlisted, Ruth celebrated her 18th birthday by touring several sex shops. She did not have enough money to buy the expensive items, but she would be in the Navy in a few weeks and then would have some income. Her ability to extract a heavy cost for sex took off when she put on her sailor's uniform. There was no shortage of desperate guys willing to do anything for a few minutes of sex in the Navy. Seaman Burnside now had money, so she could buy the leather sex toys she craved. The Navy gave her a steady supply of lovers to use them on, including a couple of officers.

Burnside reflected that it must have been in the Navy when everyone started calling her and thinking of her as Burnside instead of Ruth. Briefly, as an undergraduate, people did call her Ruth again, but she still thought of herself as Burnside, and signed all of her papers and correspondence with just her last name. By the time she entered graduate school, not many people even knew her first name.

Burnside liked the military. She liked the discipline and attitude about weakness. She liked having plenty of spending money. She liked her growing savings account. She would have stayed in had she not become pregnant. The pregnancy hit her a few months before her first contract was about to finish. She wanted an abortion, but her ship was at sea and she did not have access to a clinic until it was too late. Rather than sign up again, she returned to civilian life to wait out the pregnancy. She applied to several universities and lived off her savings until the baby was born.

She gave up the child for adoption. She had to, not because of her financial situation, but because she knew that her violent temper would make her an abusive parent. She cared for her daughter enough to know that she could not raise her. She was brutally honest about herself with the adoption agency. When her adoption counselor suggested that she seek help for controlling her anger, Burnside snapped "My temper is part of who I am. I can't fix it. That's why I'm here."

Burnside avoided sex for almost two and a half years after she had her daughter. She was disgusted with having allowed herself to become pregnant. She knew better. She punished herself by staying celibate until she finished her undergraduate degree.

Burnside's self-imposed punishment ended as soon as she had her undergraduate diploma. Her fantasies returned with a vengeance when she joined a Chicago sex group. She began to have longer-term relationships with other graduate students and professors who also were into fetish. One of her old professors, her first mentor Jim Halsey, was still her most trusted lover to this day, after nearly 20 years. Burnside started hosting small S&M parties at her apartment. Those gatherings later evolved into the elaborate parties that she currently hosted three times a year at her house.

Burnside started college two weeks after the baby was born and disappeared from her life. She took double loads of classes, getting her undergraduate degree in just two and a half years. She had her Masters Degree in a year and a half, and her Ph.D. two years later. She was obsessive about studying and good at her classes and projects. She became a student aide and quickly bullied any of the students she felt were not working to their potential. By age 27 Dr. Burnside was teaching. By age 31 she was tenured.

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The final turn in Burnside's sex life took place when she became a teaching assistant. Having taken double-loads of classes as an undergraduate and still maintaining a GPA of 3.8, she had little sympathy for undergraduates who, taking half the classes per semester that she had taken, still could not handle the material. Nearly every undergraduate who came into her office complaining about her harsh grading was there because of personal irresponsibility. Burnside learned how to question the undergraduates to get out of them the fact that they had gone to a party the night before they took a test, or how they obtained a plagiarized term paper. She loved reducing irresponsible undergraduates to tears by probing them with their own words. It was only a matter of time before Burnside's dominating of irresponsible students went a step further.

Burnside was in her final semester getting her MA degree when she punished her first student. She remembered the incident with loving detail. It started when she graded a term-paper. She already had seen this paper four times before. It seemed to be circulating between two sororities. The first time she saw the paper the TA had graded it and returned it. The second time she saw the paper, she realized that she had been tricked. She was furious, but there was nothing she could do against the first user of the paper. The second, third, and fourth times she saw the paper resulted in expulsions of the users from the university. Now was the fifth time. It seems these stupid sorority bitches don't learn. Burnside laid out copies of the second, third, and fourth versions of the paper on her desk and waited for the fifth user to show up.

The girl's name was Jessica. The offender was not the stereotypical rich-bitch that Burnside most loved to humiliate. She was blond, but naturally. Her face and figure were so stunning that even the TA was attracted to her, but she carried herself in a quiet, shy manner.

The student came in to the instructor's office shaking. The TA, with her typical severe demeanor, silently pointed at the three previous versions of the paper. Burnside began sarcastically:

"Well, Jessica, it seems you took this class three times before, under different names. You really like the class that much?"

Jessica went white. There was no way that she could argue with the three term papers on the desk, staring at her like three witnesses. Burnside waved the student's paper in the air and laid it next to the others.

"Looks like I have copy number four for my collection. You understand what happens next, right?"

Jessica did not break down crying like the others. Her voice trembled, but she clearly was determined to get out of her situation if at all possible.

"Ruth, please. I'll do anything for you. I... can't get kicked out."

"Well, you should have thought about that before you turned in the paper. I can't help you. You did this to yourself."

"Ruth, please. Anything. I'll do anything. Whatever you want. Please give me a second chance."

"The matter is closed. You fucked up. That's the end of it."

"Ruth... I'll do anything you want. Anything."

Burnside suddenly realized what Jessica meant. She was offering herself to her TA.

Burnside opened he mouth to reject Jessica's plea yet again, but then paused. The girl was stunning and being totally submissive to her. Burnside, who liked women as well as men, was attracted to her. This was a chance to have some real fun. Why not?

While the student sat nervously watching, Burnside typed up the following on her computer for the first time:

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, admit to having attempted to commit plagiarism on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I have read and fully understand this university's cheating policy, and am fully aware of the consequences for committing an act of plagiarism under the student code of ethics.

In lieu of disciplinary action from the university administration, I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, freely and willingly choose to accept the disciplinary alternative offered by my TA, Ruth Burnside. I understand that upon completion of the disciplinary alternative to Ms. Burnside's satisfaction, I will continue my coursework and no further action will be taken against me.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Her heart pounding, Burnside printed the sheet and handed it to the trembling undergraduate. "OK Jessica, here's your second chance."

The TA knew what she was about to do was risky. But the temptation of Jessica was simply too much for her to resist. She told the girl to be at her apartment that night, and let her know that the "disciplinary alternative" would be physical. Jessica, overwhelmed with relief that she was not going to be kicked out of the university after all, grabbed Burnside's hand with both of hers.

"Oh Ruth, thank you! I'll do whatever it takes to make you forgive me!"

"Well, we'll see how grateful you are tonight. Remember, what happens between us will be to my satisfaction. You signed that."

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A few hours later, Jessica was standing at Burnside's door, shaking. The TA greeted her wearing regular clothes. Her habit of wearing outfits during discipline sessions only started after she bought her house.

The girl was scared. The earlier elation of avoiding expulsion had worn off. She realized that this was going to be a rough experience, when her TA picked up two sets of leather cuffs. Ruth loved the expression in the undergraduate's face when she saw the cuffs.

"OK, get your clothes off."

Jessica shook even harder as she took off her clothes. Burnside took the clothes to her bedroom. She returned to the living room to find the girl trying to cover herself.

Burnside wrapped the cuffs around Jessica's wrists and ankles. She then clipped the offender's hands behind her back as tears started rolling down her cheeks. She cupped one of Jessica's breasts in her left hand, while gently brushing the tears off the girl's cheek with the fingertips of her right hand.

"Jessica, you made you first mistake tonight by trying to cover up. I made you take off your clothes precisely because I want to see you. I am going to look at every part of your body and touch you where I want. You will spread your legs when I tell you to. You will touch me where I tell you to. When I tell you to do something, you will do it. Do you understand?"

Holding back the urge to cry, Jessica nodded. Burnside then led the student to the middle of her living room in front of her sofa.

"Stand up straight. Spread you legs."

Burnside sat down. She spent a long time looking at the naked body in front of her. Jessica forced herself to stay standing straight with every bit of her willpower. The TA then stood up and started to touch the undergraduate's shoulders and breasts. She kissed and licked her nipples until they got hard.

Burnside reached between the girl's legs. She ran her hand up and down the insides of her thighs. She put one hand on Jessica's bottom and ran her other hand through her pubic hair. She stroked her labia and clitoris. In spite of her fear and embarrassment, the girl became wet. Burnside rubbed her fingers back and forth soaking them with her lover's arousal. Then she held her hand to the student's face.

"I don't want this on my hand. Clean it off."

Burnside grabbed Jessica's hair with her clean hand and pushed her fingers from the dirty hand against the girl's mouth. Jessica licked the fingers clean. Feeling the young woman's tongue on her fingers aroused her even more.

Burnside then took off her skirt and panties. She lay on her back on the sofa, with her legs spread wide. Jessica, her hands still behind her back, knelt in front of her TA. Burnside grabbed Jessica's hair and guided the girl's head between her legs. Jessica knew what was expected of her. Her tongue moved up and down Burnside's clitoris and vaginal opening. At first she was a bit clumsy with her tongue, but she figured it out quickly enough. Burnside's breathing quickened and she gasped as she climaxed.

Jessica's ordeal was just beginning. Burnside forced her to get up, then kneel again on the floor in the middle of the room. She took a washrag and cleaned off the student's face. Somehow not being able to clean her own face made the experience even more humiliating for the younger woman. Burnside knew that, and loved the girl's expression as she began quietly crying. The TA got a couple of tissues and held them to Jessica's nose.

"Blow your nose... there, that's a good girl."

Jessica's punishment was next. Burnside unhooked her cuffs from behind her back and re-hooked them in the front. She then took Jessica's arm and guided her back to the sofa. The TA sat down and guided the student over her lap. Jessica had a beautiful bottom. Burnside moved her hand over her lover's trembling bottom and up and down the backs of her thighs. She slipped her hand between her bottom cheeks and moved her fingers up and down her vagina. Then, just as Jessica was about to climax, Burnside began spanking.

SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP! SLAP!... The loud swats resonated throughout the living room. Jessica quickly started crying again, this time much louder. Burnside continued slapping until her arm began to hurt. She lost count of how many times she had swatted Jessica. By the time Burnside was finished the girl's lovely bottom was a deep dark pink, as dark as it would have been had she been hit with a paddle. Her body was shaking with sobs.

Burnside glanced at her clock. She noticed that nearly 45 minutes had gone by since she had started spanking. No wonder her arm was so tired. She gently ran her hand over Jessica's bottom until the student stopped crying. She then slipped her hand between the girl's legs again. After a while, Jessica parted her legs and thrust herself up. Burnside gently fondled and caressed the entire area between the girl's bottom-hole and clitoris as she gasped and groaned. She looked up. Her eyes met those of her TA.

"Ruth! Ruth, please!"

Burnside had not counted on this. She helped Jessica sit up and kissed her. Then it was the TA who had her head between her student's legs, making her climax. Jessica lay back on the sofa, gasping with delight, her cuffed hands grabbing Burnside's hair.

They ended up spending the night together. Burnside took her time with Jessica, in contrast with most of the guys she had slept with. Both women would remember that night for the rest of their lives.

In spite of the intense experience they shared that night, Burnside and Jessica never spent another night together. Jessica had a boyfriend and Burnside had her various lovers. Burnside always hoped that her student might come back for another session, but she never did. Still, she gave her one-time lover an A on her make-up term paper when she should have gotten a B. Jessica passed the class and moved on with her life.

Jessica was the first student out of many whom Burnside would punish for plagiarism or cheating. The professor was able to size up the students she had caught cheating, to determine who would submit to a physical punishment and who would not. So far she had stayed out of trouble with the campus administration.

Burnside never felt guilty about using cheating as a justification for satisfying her sexual desires. What was the alternative for the student? Expulsion. Being blacklisted. A wrecked life. Burnside's method ultimately was much more humane. A night of pain, and then it was over. The student could move on with his or her studies. Her method gave the student a second chance. The student code of ethics did not. Amy was not the first student that she had punished who later had ended up being one of her best.

Burnside knew most of her students hated her and were afraid of her. But, each semester, there were the few who were fiercely loyal to her. Those were the ones who kept her in teaching, when she could have pursued work in the private sector for more money.

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Ruth Burnside's thoughts returned to her daughter. She wondered if her daughter was in college now, and if so what she was studying. She wondered if her daughter would ever try to contact her. If she did, Burnside had nothing to hide. She would tell her daughter the truth about herself and why she could not keep her. She had a feeling that wherever her daughter was, she was doing great things. She would be about Amy's age right now.

Amy entered Burnside's mind again. Amy Debbs had her faults, but she was tough. She was a survivor. Burnside just recently had found out about her student's months on the street and the overdose of her friend. She also knew that Amy's parents were dead and that she was living with that photographer. Amy had overcome all her losses and was now in college. Burnside liked that about her.

Burnside realized that Amy admired her and wanted her understanding of the world. She understood that Amy was desperate to please her, and not just for grades. There was something more to Amy's feelings about her, something much more personal. The professor saw that quite clearly tonight. It was the expression in Amy's face that caused the professor to cancel her punishment.

Suddenly Burnside realized what it was she saw in Amy. She looked into her student's face and subconsciously saw her daughter. She saw a girl she wanted to mold, to toughen, to prepare for great things in the world. Burnside was doing it the only way she knew how. Had she been able to keep and raise her own daughter, she would have been like Amy, faults and all. Amy had no parents and obviously had that gap in her life. Burnside obviously had a gap in her own life, her missing daughter. Somehow, in a weird, distorted way, Amy Debbs and Ruth Burnside were drawn to each other.

My daughter, thought Burnside. I guess losing her affected me more than I realized.

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Maynard finally dumped. His owner bent down to pick it up with a paper towel and dropped it in a paper bag. With her mission accomplished, the professor took her dog back home. Maynard had been her companion since her last year getting her Master's degree. He would be gone in a couple of weeks at the most, along with Burnside's youth. She sensed that the dog's passing would mark the halfway point of her life. It was all downhill from here.

Burnside snapped at herself. Stop it! So you're no better than anyone else! You have 30 good years left to do something with yourself! Get your next lecture ready, for a start!

With that she sat down to review her lesson plans. Then she e-mailed a couple of co-workers to exchange information about the latest cheating scams going on. She got an e-mail back with a new website that had a bunch of papers posted from UCLA. Her e-mail acquaintance gave her a password to access the site. Burnside checked the website and looked over the list of papers. She was sure that eventually she would see some of these in her classes. Ha! She would have to tell Amy and her other student aide to be on the lookout for this newest batch of papers.

Dr. Burnside was ready for class, but still had an hour to kill before she had to be at the university. She began to clean up, starting with the dishes. Suddenly the enormity of her task dispirited her. She finished filling the dishwasher and turned it on. The rest would simply have to wait. To hell with it. She could clean up tonight.

Her depression returned. She was desperately tired, but still could not sleep. She gave up on the thought of getting any rest and got dressed for class.

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As she put on her severe dark business outfit, the professor glanced down at a very worn-out stuffed toy raccoon that was sitting by her dresser mirror. The stuffed animal seemed out of place, sitting alone on her dresser. However, in her life that toy was not out of place at all. Seeing the threadbare raccoon returned her thoughts to her childhood, and to the hatred she felt for her parents and their religion. She thought about that one Christmas, which more than any other event in her life, forged Ruth Burnside's character and personality.

Ruth was seven at the time, just about to turn eight. At that time she still believed. She still believed in Santa Claus, in God, and in Christmas. Like any other small child, she had her wish list of things that she wanted. She knew better than to hope for a lot of presents, but she had made it a point to be good all year. Certainly Santa and her parents would reward her efforts with something. Ruth's hopes rose when she saw a large number of toys and other presents in the garage. She peeked through the door when her parents and another couple from their church wrapped them. Then came Christmas Morning. Ruth was heartbroken when all she got were a couple of sweaters.

Ruth's father, beaming with happiness, gathered the family for breakfast and lectured his daughters on the joys of giving. Then the family piled into the car and drove to different charities to drop off the gifts. So that was it, the gifts were for charities, not for Ruth and her sister. As the trunk was emptied of presents Ruth's emotions went from hope, to despair, to hatred, and then to rebellion. Her child's mind asked the question, why were the charity children more important than herself and her sister? She had been good, really good, but she realized that there would be no presents for her, just the same crappy clothing. So Santa had not listened, or if he did, her father had taken her presents for the charity children. She was old enough to understand what her father's words, "the joy of sacrifice" really meant for her. The Burnside girls would sacrifice, but for her there was no joy in it. As they went from charity to charity Ruth quietly glared at the other children with hatred as they opened the presents that should have been for her.

Ruth's rebellion that day was a quiet one, but it was the first out of many secrets she would keep from her parents. When her father was not looking, she grabbed a small soft package and pushed it under her father's car seat. Later she could retrieve it and see what it was. Santa had failed her. Ruth had to help herself.

Ruth's heart pounded for the rest of the trip around the charities. Would God punish her? She was sinning. She felt the terror of religious guilt, and wondered if God would strike her down. But no, nothing happened. The Burnside family finished their distribution of presents and returned home. There would be the evening prayers, and then their meager dinner. Ruth's father spent the day blissfully unaware of the change that was taking place in his daughter's soul.

That night Ruth slipped into the garage to see what was in the package. It was a small stuffed toy raccoon. It was cute, but an average child would not have looked at it twice. She returned to her bedroom and got in bed with it, snuggling her face against the toy's soft fur. She called the raccoon "Rickster".

Rickster led a clandestine life in Ruth's bedroom. She made a bed for him out of a small cardboard box and some old washrags. Ruth wondered where Rickster could sleep and not be discovered. Finally she settled on the inside of her chest of drawers. She realized that if the bottom drawer was pulled completely out, there was just enough room for Rickster and his bed behind the drawer. At night Rickster slept with Ruth.

Ruth quit praying shortly after Rickster entered her life. She quit believing in Santa Claus. Once she was exposed to evolution in school, she was able to quit believing in God. She stopped respecting her father and stopped feeling guilty about loathing the recipients of her family's charity donations. And to think, Ruth's entire transformation had started with the theft of a simple toy, a stuffed raccoon that probably did not even cost $ 5.00.

Over the years Rickster became more and more worn out, as Ruth lavished her attention and playtime on him. When Ruth got older Rickster went in her school backpack to bring her good luck. Rickster went into Burnside's seabag in the Navy and to college with her. For the last 20 years he had sat in silent vigil on the professor's dresser and had witnessed many strange things in her bedroom.

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Finally Burnside decided to sit down and torture herself with CNBC some more. The phrases of that pretty announcer and her cheerleader guests drifted through her mind... great investment opportunity... I see only great things ahead for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)... great long term prospects... in the long run... long term... buying opportunity... invest... dynamic sector... bright future...

Old Maynard staggered into the living room, feebly wagging his tail. He shoved his nose under his owner's hand.

Burnside half-heartedly petted her dog, thinking about his namesake, John Maynard Keynes. Long term. Long run. What shit.

John Maynard Keynes knew the correct answer. She reflected that it was Keynes who made the truest statement that ever came out of an economist.

"In the long run, we're all dead."

**Chapter 20 - A Conversation with Burnside**

Wendy's disappointment with not having been punished at the Halloween Party intensified throughout the first two weeks of November. Perhaps Amy and Paul did not need to be punished, but she did. Wendy increasingly became convinced that an intense punishment experience was what she needed to get over her problems with gambling. She realized that she could not talk to either Amy or Suzanne about what was going on inside her head. They would not understand. Finally she decided to talk directly to Dr. Burnside.

In the middle of November Wendy went to Burnside's house with a copy of her book, "Wendy". Her heart pounding, she rang the professor's doorbell. It was strange to see Burnside opening the door dressed in a simple sweatsuit, instead of a business outfit or a fetish outfit. Yes, even Ruth Burnside wore sweats.

Burnside was working on some lesson plans, but she was not really rushed, so there was some time for her to sit with Wendy and look at her book. Wendy was so nervous she barely could speak. She could not look her former professor in the face. At first Burnside was totally perplexed as to why Wendy had come to her house. She could tell that Wendy was not too sure herself. However, she was polite to Wendy. She invited her in and offered her some tea.

Wendy sat down. She looked at Burnside nervously. Her hands shook as she gripped her book. It was the professor who began.

"Wendy, from the looks of you I'm going to guess there is something in your life that you are having a lot of problems with. I'm going to guess that you expect me to help you. I hope it's not something with your studies, since you're not my student."

Wendy nervously shook her head. Finally she held out the book to her hostess. Burnside took it, read the back cover, and thumbed through it. Immediately it captured her attention. Burnside thumbed back to the beginning of the book and read the introduction. She skimmed over the essays and again looked at the pictures. The issue Wendy was dealing with was clear enough. The fact that Wendy had come to her for help also was clear enough. What Burnside was not sure about was how to help Wendy. She looked over the pages trying to figure out what was going on in Wendy's head and what she wanted. That was hard, since Wendy did not know herself what she wanted.

Burnside studied Wendy's drawings for their artistic merit. They were extremely good. Some of the images aroused Burnside. Every so often Burnside looked up at the artist, who was fidgeting nervously. Finally Burnside decided to get some more answers from Wendy.

"Your work is very good. I'll be honest and tell you that your pictures excite even me. But I need to know why you're showing me this book."

"I... I don't really know. I... need help. I don't know what to do. This... thing in me... "

"Wendy, let's get something straight. There is no "thing" inside you. You gamble because you want to. The issue you face is not getting rid of a 'thing'. The issue is convincing yourself that you don't want to gamble anymore. What you're dealing with is not a chemical dependency, and you'd better stop thinking of it like that."

"Dr. Burnside, my counselor says that... "

"Bullshit. What you do is because it's what you want to do. There is no 'thing'. Now, what do you want from me?"

Wendy fidgeted. She looked at the floor. She couldn't answer because she still did not know.

"Let's get something else straight. I don't like people who look away during a conversation. You look at me."

Reluctantly Wendy looked up. Her eyes met Burnside's.

"Now answer. What do you want?"

Wendy shook with fear. Her voice was barely audible.

"Dr. Burnside, this past Spring I gambled $ 60,000 dollars. I want... I need... "

"Come on, Wendy, out with it. You need to say whatever it is that you want to tell me."

"I need to be punished. I need to suffer. I need to pay for my stupidity... with real pain.."

"And so you are asking that from me... "

Wendy nodded her head. Burnside's lips tightened.

"Wendy, you don't nod when I ask you a question. Now, answer it properly."

"I... I want you to whip me. Like in my drawings."

"Whip you? Why? What good do you think that's going to do you?"

"I... I don't know. I... just want it to stop. I want it all to stop."

"What to stop, Wendy? I'm not going to try to guess what's going on in that brain of yours. So let's hear it."

Suddenly Wendy broke down crying.

"I hate my life! I can't stand myself! Those pictures... that's what I want to happen to me! And no one gets it, no one understands... not even you! I thought... you'd understand... but you don't!"

As Wendy buried her face in her hands, Burnside suddenly was faced with a dilemma. The girl was asking her for help. The professor took a deep breath, trying to figure out how to deal with this huge burden that suddenly had been thrust upon her.

Burnside was not a subtle or gentile person. She was not one to sit with Wendy and hold her hand and try to comfort her. Burnside suspected that Amy and Suzanne must have spent the entire year trying to comfort Wendy, to no avail. It was apparent that she had been receiving counseling, but that wasn't working either. Wendy did not need to be comforted; what she needed was quite the opposite.

"Wendy, sit up! Get your hands off your face and sit the fuck up!"

Wendy was surprised as being spoken to so harshly. She complied, although tears continued to stream down her face.

"Now, we need to get a few things straight! Don't tell me that I'm the one who doesn't understand, because it's YOU! You're the one who doesn't understand! You don't understand a god-damned thing about who I am or why I do what I do! And something else. You say that you want to be punished like in your drawings. It's obvious you don't know what you're talking about! There's no way I'd go that far with anyone, even if they asked me to! I'm not into punishing people to the point I have to pay their hospital bills! Your drawings are excellent, but they're not real! It's obvious you can't separate fantasy from reality if you think you could endure what's in your drawings!"

Wendy sat silently, shaking slightly. Suddenly, Burnside realized something that alarmed her. Wendy was in very serious psychological trouble, something that went way beyond a simple addiction to gambling. Burnside wondered if perhaps she was only days away from committing suicide. There was only one way to find out, and that was to ask her quickly and directly, extracting the truth before the student had time to think of an evasive answer. Burnside drew a quick breath.

"OK, a quick question. Are you, right now, thinking about committing suicide?"

Wendy sat silent.

"I asked you a question. Are you thinking about committing suicide?"

"Yes."

"And how are you planning to do it?"

"I thought about cutting my throat."

"With what? What are you planning to use?"

"My fantasy was one of those old straight edge razors, but I don't know where to get one. So, I... I have this Swiss Army knife with a real sharp blade."

"You gave it some thought, then, method and instrument. Got it all figured out."

Wendy looked at the floor. "Yes, Dr. Burnside. I've been thinking about it."

Burnside stood up.

"You're thinking about cutting your throat with a Swiss Army knife. How nice! How fucking selfish of you! Did you ever give it any thought as to what that might do to Amy or your photographer friend, if they found you dead with your throat cut? Or to your parents, if they had to see you in the morgue with a big, bloody gash in your neck? Any thought about any of that at all? Or was it just all about you?"

Wendy sadly shook her head.

"Don't you shake your head, you answer my question!"

"No, I never gave that any thought."

"So it was all about you! Poor little Wendy, oh poor baby, how much she suffered! Never mind anyone else! Never mind that the people who care about you the most are the ones who you'd hurt the most by cutting your throat! Never mind that whoever finds you would have to look at a floor full of your blood, deal with the police, explain to everyone what happened, try to make sense out of it themselves, and probably have nightmares for the rest of their life! I guess that just doesn't matter! Think about that, for a change!"

Wendy sat staring straight ahead of her, tears running down her face.

"I was hoping that... maybe if you punished me, it would force out whatever it is in me that's making me... I don't know... making me think all this stuff."

Burnside thought about the situation. She realized that she did have a good opportunity to help her forlorn guest, because she felt that she understood Wendy better than anyone else in her life. Burnside suspected that she had been the first person to hear her visitor clearly admit that she wanted to commit suicide. It was obvious that the kindness and support that Wendy had been receiving were not helping her. Burnside was convinced that instead of being treated with kindness, Wendy needed to be treated roughly and submitted to a very strict regime. What the girl needed was a lifestyle change. Yes. A lifestyle change, that was it. She needed to be driven, to be forced into a structured existence, and face real consequences if she failed to meet her obligations. Burnside thought about basic training in the Navy. She remembered one part of her training, facing the gas chamber. She had been afraid of the gas chamber as much as everyone else. But when she came out, cleared her lungs, and wiped the snot and tears off her face, she felt better about herself. Burnside realized at that moment she could face her fears and overcome them. Wendy needed something along those lines. The professor felt she could do something that would work.

"What you are asking from me is something more long term. Sure, I can whip you. But what good will that do if you don't change your lifestyle? It's your lifestyle you need to change. You have a lot of stupid thoughts floating around your head, and what you need is a long-term change in the way you live to get your mind on something else. That's why people go to in-patient counseling, to change their lifestyles and to change what they're thinking."

Wendy looked at Burnside intently. The professor mulled over her next words. An idea began to take shape in her head.

"Wendy, how would you like to live with me in the Spring? I can work with you. I'll make you change your lifestyle."

Wendy nodded. Burnside's face became tense with anger.

"Wendy, you do not nod when I ask you something! That's the third time I told you! Answer me properly!"

"Yes, Dr. Burnside, I'd like it if you can help me. I'll live with you, if you think it will do me any good."

"OK. I want to explain a few things. Once you move in, you will give up your independence and your life as you now know it, for the entire Spring semester. The moment you come through that front door, you will remove all your clothing, and you will put on a collar. That collar will be the only thing I will let you wear when you are in my house. Once you enter my house I will lock up your clothes and you won't see them again until you leave in May. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, Dr. Burnside."

"You will study. You will take a full load of correspondence classes in your major and get A's in all of them. I will check your work before you send it off. You'll exercise and get into decent physical shape. I will give you a schedule that you will adhere to. You will not have much time to think about gambling, or anything else. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Dr. Burnside."

"You will be responsible for maintaining my house clean to my satisfaction. You will cook my meals. You will clean my shoes and iron my clothes. You will serve me and my guests. You will host my Mardi Gras party. You will do whatever I tell you to do. You will satisfy me sexually, when I'm not with one of my other friends. If you make any mistakes you will confess them immediately and I will punish you. You do anything that irritates me and I will punish you. If I need to tell you to do something twice I will punish you. If you ever give me or anyone else attitude, I will punish you. Do you understand all that?"

"Yes, Dr. Burnside, I understand."

"Now, is that what you want?"

"Yes... Dr. Burnside, that is what I want."

"Good, so we have an agreement. I want you to think this over until the end of the semester. I expect you to finish well and get A's in your classes. Don't sign up for anything in the Spring except correspondence classes. I can help you get a couple of independent studies so you don't lose the semester if you can't get a full schedule. If you are determined to go through with this, be here the day after Christmas at 9:00 am. You'll need to bring a cell phone that you can re-charge. That's all you will need. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Dr. Burnside, I understand."

"There is something else I want you to understand. This will be a chance for you to start over. It's a second chance at life. Beats cutting your throat."

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Wendy left the house with her emotions in turmoil. She was dreadfully afraid of her tentative arrangement with Burnside. It was obvious that Wendy would suffer intensely during the time she would spend with her former professor. She wondered about the classes. The fact that Burnside wanted her to take correspondence classes and independent studies obviously meant that she would not be let out of her mentor's house. She would spend the entire semester in isolation, naked, and at Burnside's mercy.

As cruel as the professor would be to her, it also was obvious that Burnside's thoughts never excluded Wendy's future. She would be taking a full load of classes, or at least close to it. Academically, her impending sentence of servitude would not affect her. Wendy understood that her future mistress expected her to leave the house at the end of the spring semester and continue with her studies and her life.

Wendy trembled at the thought that the slightest mistake on her part would result in a punishment. She had seen Burnside's array of punishment devices. Probably she would feel all of them at some time or another. That scared her and excited her at the same time. Over the past six months the student had fantasized continuously about horrible punishments being inflicted on herself. Burnside had said that she did not go that far, but Wendy knew from her own experience that Burnside knew how to inflict intense pain on another person. If Wendy went through with the arrangement, her body would be feeling that pain on a daily basis.

Burnside had said that Wendy would be wearing a collar. Wendy knew enough about S&M culture to realize the significance of that statement. Wendy officially would become Burnside's slave at 9:01 on December 26.

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What Wendy did not realize was that her upcoming servitude under Burnside already was changing her. For the first time since the Spring she forgot about her urge to gamble and her secret urge to commit suicide. She had to get ready for December 26. There was a lot to take care of.

She started with her parents, telling them that she was going to enroll in an intense in-patient counseling program at the end of the semester, something similar to a boot camp. The only contact she would be permitted with the outside world would be her cell phone, and that only in the case of an emergency. Wendy's father, still totally perplexed at his daughter's gambling insanity, agreed that Wendy had to do whatever it took to get back to normal. His anger at her had softened. It was clear that if Wendy could overcome her problems, eventually she would be able to repair the relationship with her parents and move back in with them.

Without telling Amy, Wendy's next step was to visit Robert at his office. She asked him to draft a power of attorney that would allow Amy to completely take over her affairs until May. Wendy told Robert the same version of her situation that she told her father; she was about to enroll in an intense in-patient counseling program that would last the entire spring semester. That left Robert perplexed, since he had heard of all kinds of programs, but never one like what Wendy was describing. He did not press her for details.

Wendy concentrated even more on her classes. Burnside told her that she had to get A's. She already was doing well, but the thought of Burnside's leather switch made her push herself even harder.

Wendy talked to her department chairman to see what classes she could take through correspondence. She entered the chairman's office with a copy of her book and her explanation about the in-patient counseling program. There were four courses that she could take as correspondence classes. Wendy made arrangements with one of her professors for two independent studies. That gave her six classes. She figured six classes would be plenty, given all her other upcoming responsibilities.

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The biggest immediate change in Wendy's life was her relationship with Amy. Wendy suddenly was desperate to spend time with Amy and have fun with her as much as possible before December 26. During November and December Wendy invited Amy to several movies and a concert. Their daily meetings for coffee, suspended since late March, resumed again. Wendy shocked Amy by asking her the details of her life with Paul and her studies. She was curious as to what Suzanne was doing with her pictures. Wendy had taken no interest in Amy's life since Spring Break, and this was a nice change. Wendy was eager to share meals with Amy and help her in the apartment. Amy was elated at having her friend back to normal.

In spite of Wendy's return to "normal" in Amy's eyes, she realized that something strange was happening, or about to happen, to her friend. As finals approached, Amy asked Wendy what was going on. Wendy, with only a touch of apprehension, explained her upcoming arrangement with Burnside.

"That's why I'm so anxious to spend as much time as I can with you. I'm afraid I won't see much of you or anyone in the Spring."

Amy was surprised, but she did not object to her friend's plans. Amy had undergone enough painful experiences of her own to be able to comprehend Wendy's thoughts more than she realized. Amy could understand what Wendy hoped to accomplish by submitting to Burnside. Wendy's internment in the professor's house would be a death, of sorts. She would be re-born coming out of Burnside's house in May. Wendy did not know how she would turn out, but she knew that she would be different than she was now.

Amy realized that two years ago she had gone through a similar experience. She suffered tremendously during the final weeks of her trip with Courtney. Amy's high school life, and everything she had been up to that time, died in that alley with Courtney. Amy saw the strapping she received from Robert as her painful re-birth into the world, and the beginning of who she was now. Wendy would have a similar experience with Burnside.

Amy and Wendy became much closer during the final two weeks before Christmas. They opened their souls up to each other. Amy finally was able to talk completely freely about Courtney and what she felt about her death. Wendy opened up about her own experiences in high school. They talked about their parents and their childhoods, their friends, and life in general.

Amy thought with regret about Wendy's lovely body being covered with welts. But she also trusted that Burnside would be careful and not go too far.

Amy thought about Suzanne. She knew that the photographer would be horrified upon learning about Wendy's plans.

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Amy decided to talk to her professor about Wendy, right after the last of the finals had been graded and turned back to the students. With finals over, Burnside seemed more relaxed and talkative. They discussed the tests and how to improve them, the plans for the spring semester, and Burnside's thoughts on recent economic developments in the US. Finally Amy asked about her friend.

"Amy, I don't care to talk about Wendy. What she tells you is her business. But I cannot add anything. She will spend time with me, she will face her problems, and she will move on with her life. That's as much as I can say."

"But will I see her?"

"I don't know. You might. It depends on how she does. You'll at least see her at the Mardi Gras party, but I know that's not what you're talking about. I'll let you see her if I feel it will help her."

Amy sat silently for a few moments, then spoke again.

"Dr. Burnside, you will at least let her work on her art? You'll give her time for that?"

"Of course I will. She's good. I like her drawings, but I'm sure that doesn't surprise you. Do me a favor. Pick up whatever art supplies you think she'll need over the next semester and give them to me before Christmas. I'll have them in her room waiting for her when she comes over."

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Wendy spent Christmas with Amy. Robert had invited both of them to spend Christmas with himself and Suzanne, but Amy turned him down, explaining that she needed to spend time alone with Wendy prior to her treatment. Robert was even more perplexed about the whole affair. He explained his doubts to Suzanne. The photographer simply responded that whatever was going on, Amy knew about it and had not objected.

The morning after Christmas Amy and Wendy got into Suzanne's minivan. Wendy wore a sweatsuit and had in her hand the only item Burnside allowed her, her cell phone with its re-charger. Wendy would not be allowed to talk to anyone, but she would have the phone in her room in the same way a person might use a safeword during S&M play. Wendy's correspondence books already were at the professor's house. Amy had taken them over a couple of days before with Wendy's art supplies.

Wendy was scared, but at the same time resigned and relieved. Her six weeks of nervous waiting were about to come to an end. She was more determined than ever to go through with this.

Amy drove up into Burnside's driveway. She squeezed Wendy's hand, and with that she got out. Amy watched as her friend rang the doorbell. The door opened almost immediately. Wendy slipped through the door and vanished as the door went shut.

Amy pulled out of the driveway. For the first time in almost two years she felt terribly alone. Not lonely, but alone. She wondered what was happening to her friend on the other side of that door.

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Amy returned to the apartment after dropping off Wendy at Burnside's house. She still felt adrift after having left her to a semester of harsh servitude. For the last month she had truly enjoyed having her friend back to normal, and now she was gone again.

Amy faced the prospect of spending a couple of days by herself. Paul was in Pennsylvania with his family and would not be back until December 30. Of course Amy could go over to Robert's place, but as soon as she did there was the problem of explaining where Wendy was and what had happened to her. Amy felt that she needed to talk to Suzanne and Robert separately about what Wendy was facing and why she felt it was necessary to submit to Burnside. Amy felt that Robert would understand more than Suzanne, considering what he had endured with his wife Tricia. Amy remembered Robert's comment about Tricia that day, now almost two years ago, that she first asked about Robert's strap and later had it used on her own bottom. "Tricia was a lot like you. She had a wild side that if let out of control, would wreck her life."

Amy's memories went back to that moment in Robert's car, and to her feelings of guilt, anxiety, desire, curiosity, and sexual arousal. She remembered Robert's cruelty and kindness to her that night, and the days following when she re-entered the world changed. It was not the punishment that changed her. The change in Amy's life began months before when she watched Courtney slowly kill herself. The change intensified when Courtney died and Robert picked Amy up from the police station. The change in Amy's soul continued when she enrolled in classes and began modeling for Suzanne. The shock of the strapping did not change Amy, but it symbolized her painful re-entry into the world. It was only afterwards that Amy was able to forgive herself for her actions in high school and the disaster with Courtney.

Amy's thoughts went back to the first Halloween party at Burnside's house, now over a year ago, and the term paper that followed. That term paper finalized Amy's change from who she had been in high school to who she was now. Amy realized that she owed Burnside a huge debt for giving her a sense of direction in her studies. It was because of that party that she had met Wendy in the first place and made the discovery about her own grandfather.

Ruth Burnside was by no means a lovable person, but she had pardoned Amy twice for offenses that should have ended her career under the university rules. Amy realized that Burnside, in her unique way, actually was very forgiving of people's mistakes. She forgave on her own terms, which were not very pleasant ones. However, she always was willing to give a person a second chance, or in Amy's case, two second chances. She realized, at that moment, that she cared deeply for Burnside, in spite of the professor's unpleasant personality and harshness.

Amy did not know how Suzanne would react to Wendy's servitude, other than she would be very upset. It was possible that her roommate would storm over to Burnside's house and demand that Wendy come out. Amy wanted to avoid that if at all possible, because she was convinced that Wendy was doing the right thing. Wendy needed the same sense of direction that Amy now enjoyed. Most importantly, she needed to forgive herself for her trips to Atlantic City and her attempt to pawn her family's pendent. If Wendy were anything like Amy, the only way she could forgive herself would be to endure a harsh experience first.

Amy knew that the idea of seeking out suffering made no sense to Suzanne. Amy's roommate had no need for enduring a harsh experience, because she had endured seven years of physical and emotional abuse from her father. Amy realized that Suzanne was a survivor. She still was amazed that Suzanne had endured so much suffering and had not turned to drugs, or alcohol, or religion, or some other escape while in high school. There was no self-destructive flaw in her personality as there was in the personalities of Amy, Wendy, Courtney, and Robert's dead wife Tricia. Instead Suzanne had pushed ahead in her life and had become a rock in the lives of Robert and her models. How could Amy explain Wendy's needs to Suzanne in a way that made sense to her?

It was bitterly cold outside and Amy had no desire to go back out. She spent a long time just looking out the window at the bleak cold weather. Finally she went into Suzanne's studio to deflate the air mattress Wendy had been sleeping on. She rolled it up and took it back to her room. She returned to Suzanne's studio room and sadly looked through the volumes of pictures of Wendy and of the two of them together. Amy wondered if she ever would model with her friend again.