**What a Girl Will Do for Love**

by mcmann.molly

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 51**

Betsy ran naked and barefoot through the snowstorm, her tears mixing with the wet snow that melted on her face. She ran without thinking of where she should go, except away from Kate, and out of habit went towards the college. Even at this hour there would normally have been some traffic on Fourth Street, the four-lane thoroughfare that ran along the edge of the campus, but because of the storm the street was desolate. As Betsy ran across it, her feet slid out from under her, and she fell hard on her back. In pain and with the wind knocked out of her, she rolled over in the dirty slush, and when her breath came back she sobbed and did not have the will to get up. She lay face down in the snow-covered street and did not move.

Get up, Betsy.

She heard the rumble of an engine and felt its vibration in the street. Headlights in the distance we're slowly approaching.

Get up, Betsy. Think of Hannah and Mindy and Roy and David. Don't hurt them by dying out here. Kate isn't worth it.

Betsy struggled to her feet and made it off the street before the giant snow plow lumbered by, but now her bare feet were ankle deep in the snow.

Move. Betsy. Get indoors.

Concentrating on only the present moment and nothing else, Betsy tried to think which of her friends lived closest. Aaron. His apartment was maybe four blocks away. She began to run again, but this time with a purpose. She sprinted through the snow like an Olympian and soon reached the garage above which Aaron, Evan and Zach lived. Climbing the steps to their door -- her numb, red feet making the only visible footprints on the snow-covered steps -- she began to fear that all three of them might have gone back home for the holiday. She banged on the door and rang the doorbell over and over, thinking she would have to break a window because she could not stay outdoors any longer.

Finally she heard the lock turning and the door opened. It was Aaron in a rumpled tshirt squinting in the porchlight. Betsy rushed past him, crying “I can't feel my toes! I can’t feel my toes!” She ran to the kitchen, turned on the water in the sink and climbed up on the counter shoving an empty pizza box out of the way and sat sideways with her feet in the sink.

“What happened, Betsy?” Aaron asked. “Why are you out in this weather without shoes?”

“Ow, ow, ow,” Betsy was repeating because even cold water felt hot at first. She gradually made the temperature warmer, and then put the plug in the sink to let it fill up. Aaron hovered, not knowing what to do. As the feeling returned to her toes, Betsy had the luxury of remembering her other troubles. She pressed her forehead against her knees and sobbed.

“Betsy, please tell me what happened,” Aaron pleaded. She leaned against him as he put a tentative arm around her while with the other hand he shut off the water so the sink wouldn't overflow. “Your toes are okay, Betsy, but why weren't you wearing shoes? Why are you out in this weather so late?”

She looked up at him, her cheeks wet and her eyes puffy and red. “I think Kate and I just broke up,” she wailed. “Can I stay here tonight?”

“Of course you can. Evan and Zach are both gone so both of their rooms are available. And we still have your toothbrush.”

Betsy lifted one foot out of the sink and pulled her foot towards her face wiggling her toes. This pushed her bent knee out to the side and opened her pussy wide, but she was beyond noticing such things. “Can I sleep with you?” she asked, looking up into Aaron's eyes.

Aaron choked, his brain having forgotten how to breathe and swallow at the same time. “What did you say?” He finally managed to ask.

“Would you hand me a paper towel?” she asked instead, letting one wet foot dangle while she performed the same inspection on the other foot. Aaron handed her a couple of paper towels and she dried her feet. “Can I please,” she asked again.

“Um, can you what?”

“Sleep with you. I don't want to be alone.”

“Um. Whatever you want, Betsy. I'll do anything you want.”

She hopped down, walked straight to his room and climbed into his bed. He followed her into the room slowly and stood uncertainly at the foot of the bed.

“Am I on the wrong side?” Betsy asked.

“You're fine where you are,” Aaron whispered, having trouble breathing. He went to the other side of the bed and gingerly got under the covers, taking care not to touch her, but as soon as he was settled, she rolled over and wrapped her naked body around him.

“What am I going to do, Aaron?” Betsy whimpered.

“I don't know. You haven't told me what happened yet.”

And so Betsy told him everything, including her own dishonesty early in the semester when she'd pretended she was going naked by choice. As she talked, she cried, wiping her eyes and nose on Aaron's tshirt. She hugged him tight, feeling secure against his hairy, bear-like body. And eventually she fell asleep.

When she woke in the morning, it took a while for Betsy’s brain to sort out why she was in bed with Aaron. When she remembered, the weight of it crushed down on her anew. She dragged herself out of bed and went to the bathroom to pee. She found the toothbrush box with her name on it, and as she brushed her teeth she looked at herself in the mirror. Her hair was a tangled mess, and she had dark circles under her eyes. When she finished, she carefully dried her toothbrush on some toilet paper and put it back in its box. Somehow it gave her strength to know she had her own toothbrush in someone else's home. She leaned close to the mirror to make eye contact with herself, searching for that strong, happy girl she had only recently discovered.

Betsy thought of Kate, trying to decide what she should do. Kate said she was flying out again in the morning. Would she be gone already? Would Betsy ever see her again? She looked at the clock -- almost 9 a.m. -- and knew what she had to do. She went to the door of Aaron's apartment and opened it, squinting into the sunny, snow covered morning. The city plows had been working all night and the streets were clear, but fresh snow mounded on the steps leading down from the apartment and no trace remained of her footprints from the night before. She stepped down onto the snow and pulled the door closed behind her until she felt the lock click. Leaving a fresh set of barefoot prints in the snow, she went down the steps, and hurried across the snow-covered driveway to the relative respite of the plowed street, dry in the sun.

Betsy ran down the same streets as she had the night before, but now it was sunny and people were about. Most of the sidewalks had yet to be cleared, so Betsy kept to the streets, running unhindered. Bundled-up people out shoveling snow paused at their labor to watch the elegant Avery Nudist fly past, her always-nude body freshly tanned from a weekend on the ski slopes. They called out “good morning, Betsy,” and she waved back at them as she ran with a confident, athletic stride, like a cheetah on the African plain. She had to pause at Fourth Street, waiting for the light as friendly motorists honked their horns and waved through their closed windows.

When the light changed, she was off again, afraid she might be too late. Three blocks from home, she rounded a corner and saw a yellow taxi in front of their house. With another burst of speed, Betsy sprinted the remaining distance as Kate walked out to the cab with her suitcase. Kate saw Betsy coming and stopped in front of the car, putting down her bag and opening her arms to accept Betsy back, a look of proud vindication on her face.

But Betsy did not hurl herself into Kate’s arms, instead coming to a stop 10 feet away, her chest heaving as she caught her breath.

Kate dropped her arms, but stood tall and confident. “I'm glad to see you're okay,” she said.

“I . . . stayed with . . . a friend,” Betsy panted.

“You seem to have acquired a lot more friends in four months here than you did in three years at Kentfield. Has it occurred to you why?”

“Because . . . I'm more outgoing now?”

“These people aren't really your friends, Betsy. They only want to be around you because you're naked.”

“Could be,” Betsy said. “That’s what I thought about you.”

“As I told you last night, that was not the case. I hope you've had time to think things through.”

“I haven't thought about anything else, Kate,” Betsy said, losing her composure and wiping away tears.

“Good,” Kate said. “I'm sorry I sprung it on you so suddenly.” She stepped forward, taking Betsy by the shoulders. “Babe, I have to get going to make this flight, but I left you an airline ticket on the kitchen counter. It's dated for tomorrow, but you can push the date back a little if you need to.”

Betsy shook her head. “I . . . I can't go to New Westbrook.”

The cab driver tapped his horn lightly, and Kate whirled around, angrily jabbing a finger at him. “Turn on your f#cking meter, asshole,” she shouted. “You'll get your damned fare.”

Turning back to Betsy, she added, “but he won't get a tip. Okay, Babe, I’d rather not do it this way because it's a waste of money, but if it's this important to you to finish your degree here, we can keep this house for a while longer. You can stay through the end of the semester, and I'll visit when I can.”

“Kate, I'm not going to want to go New Westbrook at the end of the semester either. I'm not leaving Huron.”

“Then why did you come running back here this morning?”

“To . . . to say goodbye.”

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“Oh stop being childish!” Kate scolded. “Are you truly so self-absorbed that you would sacrifice our relationship just so you can prance around naked all the time? I think I'm being reasonable in expecting that if you love me, you will put ME first.”

Betsy bit her lip. “You're right,” she said, looking down past her cold-hardened nipples to her reddening toes. “You're right that I would give up my friends, and my school, and even my nudity . . . for you.”

“Well, that's more like it.”

Betsy raised her head until their eyes met. “If I still loved you.”

Kate's confident expression vanished as quickly as if she'd been slapped. “Now you're just trying to be hurtful, Betsy.”

Betsy shook her head as fresh tears ran down her cheeks. “The last thing I want to do is hurt you, Kate, but our whole relationship has been based on me being afraid of you. I blamed myself every time you got mad, apologized even when I knew I wasn't wrong, and felt most in love with you when you forgave me. That's gone.”

“We had more than that,” Kate whispered. “Didn't we?”

“I think we might have. If you weren't leaving, maybe we would have time to discover that.”

“Are you asking me to stay?”

“No. If you did, you’d end up resenting me for it. You need to be in New Westbrook. And I need to be here.”

Kate looked away, and as Betsy watched, Kate's expression began to harden. Betsy knew what was happening. Kate was closing her heart to Betsy and soon there would be no love left on her face. Betsy didn't want to see that. “Goodbye, Kate,” she said, her voice cracking. She turned and walked away, not looking back.

Betsy was still walking in the street because the sidewalks were not cleared. She heard a car coming up behind her and stepped off the road into a driveway while it passed. As she expected, it was the taxi and Betsy could not stop herself from looking in the back seat window as it went by. She saw Kate in profile, focused on her phone and not looking up.

Betsy watched as the yellow taxi got smaller in the distance and turned, disappearing from view. She was crying uncontrollably, but kept walking. What she'd said to Kate was true on one level, but did not account for the entirety of Betsy’s emotions. She did still love Kate, but she knew it was not a healthy kind of love. Betsy had discovered so much about herself while Kate was gone, and she didn't want to lose that -- which she feared she would if she stayed with Kate. That had already been in the back of her mind in the days leading up to Kate’s return. She had been worried that Kate would not like the new Betsy or that, worse, Kate's forceful personality would overwhelm Betsy’s fledgling independence and Betsy would lose her confidence and revert to the mousy, timid Betsy that Kate probably preferred. To save herself, she had to get away from Kate.

Lost in her thoughts, Betsy paid little attention to where she was walking. It was sunny and the streets and some sidewalks were clear and dry. She played back in her mind scene after scene of her time with Kate, wishing she had asserted herself earlier. Kate said they'd have laughed it off if Betsy had confessed right away, and now Betsy blamed herself for having been too afraid to do so. What if she had challenged Kate’s dominance a long time ago? What a difference that might have made!

At some point, Betsy was vaguely aware that the sun had gone behind clouds and it was snowing again, and soon she was leaving footprints in new-fallen snow. She stopped and looked around, but nothing looked familiar and she hadn't noticed where she had been walking. When she reached the next intersection, she looked at the street signs but still could not get her bearings. That she was now lost on top of everything else made Betsy feel like even more of a failure. She stood on the street corner and cried, her snow-covered toes now painfully cold.

Across the street stood an old red brick storefront with a lit neon sign, saying “Beer & Whiskey.” Crossing the street, Betsy went inside, grateful for the warmth. Although it was not yet noon, a dozen or more men were scattered among the bar’s booths and tables in various states of inebriation. Some blinked their eyes at the unexpected apparition of a beautiful naked girl in their midst while others remained glassy-eyed and oblivious.

With snow still in her hair and on the tops of her feet, Betsy kept her head up as she walked towards the bar, where a gray-bearded biker type sat talking to the bartender. They both watched her approach as the biker remarked, “well this day’s lookin’ up.”

“Could I just sit and warm up a few minutes?” Betsy asked the bartender. “I don't have any money to buy anything.”

“Betsy Andrews is in my bar,” the man stated incredulously. “Snake, am I dreaming or is the Avery College Nudist in my bar?”

“That would be her, Johnny,” the biker said in a gravely voice. “Why don't you give the lady a drink on my tab to warm her up.”

“Thank you,” Betsy said. “but it seems kind of early in the day for drinking. Um, no offense, Mr. Snake.”

“There's no need to put a ‘mister’ on it, darlin.’ Just ‘Snake’ will do.”

She turned her head to look at him directly. He was three times her size with several scars and tattoos visible amid the layers of leather, denim and chains that comprised his wardrobe. “Did your mother name you that?”

He chuckled. “No, my mamma named me . . . something else, and as for the time of day, me and most of these guys work the night shift at the Ford Assembly Plant so this is our evening. That's why Johnny opens this early,”

“That’s very understandable,” Betsy said, “and I apologize if I seemed to suggest otherwise, but I don't have that situation so it's only too early for me”

“Not meaning to pry,” Snake said, “but sadly I’m familiar with what a woman looks like after she's been crying, and I reckon you might be having the sort of day where maybe you don't care what the clock’s opinion is.”

Betsy gave him a second look as the events of the past 12 hours rushed back at her. And then to the bartender she said, “Johnny, may I have a vodka tonic please?”

“Sorry, darlin’ but we don't serve no vodka,” Johnny said. “The sign says ‘Beer and Whiskey,’ and that's what we got.” Johnny held out one arm indicating his inventory behind the bar. “We got all kinds of whiskey -- scotch, rye, bourbon and such, but no vodka.”

Betsy glanced at the dark-colored drink in front of her neighbor and said, “I'll have what he's having.”

Johnny poured her a glass of Glenlivet and set it in front of her. She took a tentative sip and then a more substantial one. “Thank you, Snake,” she said. “I hope you don't expect anything from a lady in exchange for buying her a drink.”

“Nothing improper, but I reckon you could tell me how you ended up here this morning. If I were still a betting man, my money would be on the fragile nature of romance.”

Betsy laughed darkly. “You are a sage one, Mr. Snake -- I mean just-Snake-without-the-mister, but my tale may require more than one drink.”

“Johnny, keep ‘em coming for Miss Betsy,” Snake said.”

“Just-Betsy-without-the-Miss,” Betsy corrected, and with that her story came out. At first, she made an effort to edit out the more intimate details of her relationship with Kate, but after three drinks she had forgotten this intention and was just reaching the point in the story where she had begun to genuinely love being naked. Driven by a compulsion to make this part of herself understood, Betsy explained sincerely, but at rapturous length, how wonderful it felt having certain of her body parts fully exposed. By this point, her audience was no longer limited to Snake and Johnny. Other haggard and world-worn men, many in biker gear or mechanic’s overalls, had migrated from the darkened, far-flung corners of the room and were seated at a respectful periphery. Betsy had become aware of their presence and had swiveled around on her bar stool (so as not to be rude) as she waxed poetic (if somewhat slurred in pronunciation) concerning the near-religious sense of oneness with the universe and all of humanity that she felt when the universe and all of humanity could see her lady parts.

That uplifting oration took her through her fourth drink, and her fifth was consumed as she related the most recent events -- the revelation of Kate’s deception, and worse, how she then tried to strip Betsy of her nudity just as it had become the life she so loved. Betsy wept as she told this part of the story, and all around her men wiped their eyes with calloused hands and honked their noses into sweat-stained Harley Davidson bandanas.

Having brought herself to the present, Betsy now felt an urgent need to get back to her home even if it would not be her home much longer. Hurriedly thanking Snake for the drinks and everyone else for their hospitality, she slid uncertainty off of the bar stool -- which now seemed higher off the floor than it had been when she arrived -- and navigated her way to the front door, not quite in a straight line, and out into the cold afternoon.

The snow had continued to fall the entire time she'd been inside, and now Betsy's bare feet were ankle deep. She looked around the unfamiliar neighborhood, realizing she had forgotten to ask for directions. She was thinking of going back inside but suddenly felt an overwhelming queasiness. She leaned over an empty flower box and vomited into it. Staggering backwards, she slipped and fell on her butt, and then sat in the snow for a long moment trying to clear her head. For some reason that she could not understand, her mind was filled with a rumbling, roaring sound -- and then she saw three motorcycles emerge from the alley that went along the side of the brick bar. In front was Snake, who put down his kickstand and dismounted to come help her stand up.

“Your old Uncle Snake isn't gonna let you walk home in your condition,” he said, leading her back to his massive Harley. A few minutes later, the three motorcycles were rumbling down busy Fourth Street past campus. The new semester was about to begin and everyone had come back from Solstice Break. The choppers were too loud to ignore so everyone noticed naked Betsy riding with three very hardcore-looking bikers. All along the route, phones came out to capture this latest Betsy sighting in photos and video that would be posted, shared and commented upon within the hour.

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Still quite drunk, but no longer feeling sick, Betsy happily waved and blew kisses to passersby as they lined up on the sidewalk like spectators at a parade. Betsy could see nothing straight ahead except the back of Snake’s leather jacket, which was emblazoned with his nickname and adorned with skulls and cobras. She imagined Mrs. Snake at home in her rocking chair busily embroidering skulls and snakes on all of her husband’s clothing.

When they reached the little blue house that would not be her home much longer, Snake walked her up onto the snowy porch and waited as she retrieved her key from under the clay pot. She stood on her tiptoes to hug him, but he still had to lean down for her.

“Thank you, Uncle Snake,” she said. “Maybe when the weather gets nicer you can take me on a longer ride?”

“Any time you want. And it's Lyle, by the way -- the name my mamma gave me.”

“Well, thank you, Lyle.”

“Just don't tell the boys.”

Once inside, Betsy felt utterly exhausted and threw herself on the living room couch where she fell immediately asleep. Hours passed, and in her stupor Betsy heard knocking at the door and her name being called by familiar voices, but she was unable to respond. When she woke, she felt terrible by every measure. Her head hurt, her mouth tasted like vomit. . . and she remembered. Kate was gone. Betsy would probably never see her again. The house she loved was hers no more. She had to leave it. Where would she go?

Betsy also had not eaten in nearly 24 hours. Hunger drove her to the refrigerator where she stood with the door open stuffing slices of cheese into her mouth. Brushing her teeth became her next priority, followed by peeing -- during both of which she cried.

Her phone was beeping in her purse, and when she retrieved it she saw a dozen unread texts and emails. None was from Kate. Most of the messages were from Lu Chen and Taylor, who had gotten the news of the breakup from Aaron. Betsy quickly replied “I'm okay” to each of them before opening a cheery note from Michelle with a dozen happy photos of her and Dean at Solstice. Betsy could not bear to look at them. Another email was from Maddie McGuire from Channel 5. Maddie gushed over Betsy’s two recent times on TV -- the mid-blizzard standup and the skiing footage from Lake Gaston. Maddie was suggesting arranging another “appearance,” but Betsy could not imagine doing that again. Midway through reading that email, Betsy received a frantic text from Lu Chen. “Where are you?? We've been trying to find you all day. Are you still with those biker guys?? You almost broke the Internet with that one. Please call me!”

Betsy clicked on Lu Chen’s number but on the second ring her phone died. She started to look for her charger, but remembered. This wasn't her home anymore. She had to leave the little blue house forever. Like a zombie, she went from room to room gathering what little actually belonged to her -- shoes, hats, purses, her jewelry box (from which she removed the strand of pearls), her toiletry items, her phone and tablet with their chargers. Some of this fit in her little Ariel backpack, and the rest she put into a grocery sack. She put on tennis shoes and a ball cap, deciding to leave her knee-high boots behind. In part, this was because she didn't want anything Kate had bought her, but also because they were so big. Betsy felt oddly burdened just by the half-filled grocery bag. She put her key on the kitchen counter and stepped out onto the porch, looking back to see the Rapture Blue gradually disappear as she pulled the door shut until it latched.

As she walked away from the house, Betsy wondered why she wasn't crying. She felt emotionally numb, which she decided was an improvement. The sun was going down and Betsy hoped to spend the night at Lu Chen’s but her phone had died before she could ask. Lu Chen lived in the same row of studio apartments Dean did, each with its own exterior door like a low-cost motel. When she knocked on the door, Betsy heard Lu Chen cry, “it’s Betsy!” The door opened a crack as Lu Chen seemed to be confirming that Betsy was alone, and then it flew open and Lu Chen hugged her, saying, “we were all so worried about you! Where've you been?”

Betsy followed her inside, but was too distracted by Lu Chen’s appearance to focus on the question. “Lulu, you're naked!” Just as Lu Chen had never seen Betsy clothed, Betsy had never seen her naked.

Lu Chen reddened and fidgeted as if resisting the urge to cover herself. “Yeah, I'm kinda trying that out, but just when I'm alone at home. So you're okay?”

“I'm fine, Lulu. I just need a place to stay tonight. Can I sleep here with you?”

“Oh god yes!” Lu Chen laughed. “Did you hear that, Brian? I'm gonna sleep with Betsy tonight! She’s gonna finish turning me into a lesbian!”

Lu Chen had a one-room apartment so Betsy was confused until she heard male laughter coming from Lu Chen’s open laptop. “Come meet him,” she said, grabbing Betsy by the elbow.

“He's not naked too, is he?”

Lu Chen laughed. “No, no, just me -- and you, of course! But I'll hang up after you meet him so you and I can talk about more important stuff.”

Betsy followed Lu Chen and sat next to her on the futon in front of her computer. On the screen was a curly-haired blond boy. “Nice to finally meet you,” he said. “It’s really cool what you do. Loo might become a nudist too.”

“I will not” Lu Chen insisted. “Not a full-time public one anyway.”

“So what are you naked girls going to do tonight?” Brian asked mischievously.

“We’re going to TALK,” Lu Chen stressed, “so I’m hanging up now.”

“Wait. I want to get Betsy's take on your bi--”

Lu Chen snapped the laptop shut. “So let’s talk about you, Betsy. Aaron told us what you told him. I’m so sorry. And yet, at the same times I'm also not sorry because of how Kate treated you. Do you want to talk about it some more?”

“Not really, Lulu. I feel kind of talked out for now, but I'll probably be bawling in the morning so stay tuned. Meantime, I could use some cheering up.”

“Okay, what can we do to cheer you up?”

“I already got cheered up seeing you naked! I want to hear all about this part-time nudist thing, and what was Brian trying to ask me about? Your bi . . . cycle? Your bi . . . ology homework?”

Lu Chen blushed again. “You know I tell Brian everything -- including my teeny bit of bisexual feelings, which YOU stirred up in me.”

“How teeny?”

“Very teeny. But I did like it when you kissed me that time. And cleaning that paint off your butt. And putting lotion on your back. And just seeing you naked all the time.”

“Wow, Lulu, so now you're a lesbian AND a nudist!”

“I'm not a lesbian, and Brian talked me into seeing what it's like to go naked sometimes.”

“Hmmm. Well, I say don’t do it unless YOU want to.”

“I do want to. Especially with you. I’ve always imagined what it would be like to just . . . lounge around naked with you.”

“Really? Well let's lounge around then!” Betsy said, stretching herself out on the couch with her head in Lu Chen’s lap. “Is this what you meant by lounging?”

“Yes, Betsy, that's definitely lounging.”

“Well, this is certainly a nice view,” Betsy said. “You have fabulous boobs, Lulu. You know that, don't you?”

“No.”

“Liar. Oh, and look, you have a belly button ring!” Betsy turned her head towards Lu Chen’s body, and with her fingertip she touched the jewel and the skin around it. As she did so, Betsy caught the scent of Lu Chen’s vagina. She felt a powerful urge to kiss the lovely expanse of skin between her belly button and the source of the inviting aroma. Bad idea, she told herself. Lots of reasons. To remove herself from temptation, Betsy sat up again and lounged in the opposite direction, now with her feet in Lu Chen’s lap.

“It's nice that you and Brian are managing to have a long-distance relationship,” she said, trying to get back to safer territory.

“We work at it,” Lu Chen said, now playing with Betsy’s toes. “We talk on video several times a day, and we always tell each other everything.”

“No secrets or lies in a relationship,” Betsy said, pretending to write it down. “I need to try that next time.”

Lu Chen laughed, but Betsy was reminded that she had something to confess. “Lulu, I assume Aaron told you I wasn't being honest with you guys when we first met,” she said. “I lied back then when I said I loved being naked. I do love it now, but I didn't when I first told you that.”

“Oh don't apologize,” Lu Chen insisted. “Kate put you in a terrible situation. But learning that just made what you've done more inspirational to me! You weren't comfortable at first, but you made yourself do it and now you love it. So maybe if I just do it, I'll get over my own reservations.”

“Promise me you'll only do it because YOU want to, and not just to please Brian.”

Just then, Lu Chen’s computer jingled. “I promise,” she said. That's him now, calling to say goodnight.” She opened the lid and there he was again.”

“Hi girls!” he said. “Did you have a good talk.”

“No, we were too busy having SEX!” Betsy said. “I don't know how she got her tongue so DEEP!”

“She's kidding,” Lu Chen said.

“I know,” Brian laughed. “I'd have believed her if she'd said you made out.”

“We didn't do that either.”

“But you officially could.”

“Goodnight, Brian.”

“It’s in the rules.”

“GoodNIGHT, Brian,” Lu Chen repeated, closing the laptop.

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 54**

While Lu Chen opened up the futon and prepared the bed, Betsy retrieved her toiletries. The sight of the grocery bag reminded her anew of her sad situation. She would never go back to her little blue house; she would probably never see Kate again. Looking in the mirror, Betsy made eye contact with herself for a long moment and felt confident she was going to be all right. She mourned the loss of what she thought she'd had with Kate, but now she knew she was better off without what that relationship actually had been. She liked the person she had so recently become and would not give that up for anything. True, she might have saved her relationship with Kate had she been more assertive earlier, but if she had done that she wouldn't be naked now. Whatever Kate's motives, her actions had allowed Betsy to discover her love of nudity, and for that she would always be grateful. As she finished brushing her teeth, Betsy exchanged another meaningful look with her reflection, which smiled back at her and silently mouthed the words “you go girl.”

Lu Chen was already in bed and Betsy slid in next to her, both of them instantly wrapping their naked bodies around each other, giggling like schoolgirls having a sleepover.

“So,” Betsy said. “Are you going to tell me what Brian meant by that last thing?”

“What last thing?”

“About something being in the rules.”

“Oh, he just meant kissing. You and me kissing. If we should want to.”

“There’s a rule about that?”

“It has to do with me being a teeny bit bisexual -- which I didn't know about until you got blue paint in your butt.”

“I thought you were just kidding when you said that was turning you gay.”

“I was kidding -- at least about being an actual lesbian -- but i've come to realize there is some degree of bisexuality in me.”

“And you told Brian.”

“Yes, because I tell him everything. And he said I should explore that part of myself.”

Betsy laughed. “Of course he did! All guys think their girlfriends should fool around with other girls. They're so very ‘tolerant’ in that regard -- right up until the girl decides she likes that better and dumps the guy.”

“I know that won't happen with me,” Lu Chen said, “because I really like what men have between their legs. I just also have the urge to kiss girls, especially you, but I realize that this probably isn't the right time to ask you to do that -- even though we're naked in bed together -- because you just went through a breakup and probably wouldn’t feel like--”

Lu Chen was unable to finish her thought because this was when Betsy kissed her. It wasn't a quick little kiss like she'd given her the first time, but real kiss — the kind of kiss meant to be written about in a diary and remembered in old age.

When their lips parted, Betsy started to make a joke about helping Lu Chen with her bisexuality “research,” but barely got two words out before Lu Chen grabbed her by the head and kissed her back. This went on for a while, during which they caressed each other’s bare backs and hips, but neither tried to escalate the experience beyond kissing. Some small rational part of Betsy’s brain fretted that she really shouldn't be doing this at all, but she didn't listen. It felt too right. She needed this as a reminder that one day she would love again. Kissing Lulu was like kissing Michelle -- slow, gentle, and unhurried. Kate had been an aggressive kisser, always in control and treating each kiss as the most economical next step to reach the ultimate goal. As much as she adored Lulu, Betsy could not help herself from imagining how this night would have played out had Michelle not been in Italy. With Dean. No, it was better this way, she told herself. Lulu only wanted a little bit. Michelle would have wanted more than Betsy could deal with right now. Or Betsy would have wanted more. She wasn't sure, but she knew things were less complicated with Lulu.

In the morning, Betsy woke with Lulu’s limbs still entwined with hers. As she stared at another unfamiliar ceiling, her mind again went through the tumultuous events leading to the present moment, and for the first time the memories did not feel devastating. Lu Chen’s laptop jingled and she woke, smiling at Betsy and opening the computer.

“Good morning, ladies,” Brian said cheerily. It was as if he'd been sitting there in her computer all night, though he was wearing a different shirt. “How was your evening?”

“There was lots of kissing,” Betsy said.

“And breast fondling?”

“Wait -- breast fondling was allowed?” Betsy cried. “Nobody told me that!”

“I’m not sure I'm ready for that,” Lu Chen said, “but Brian said anything above waist is okay with him.”

“What a great guy! You should keep him -- at least until I finish turning you into a lesbian. Then he'll be obsolete, of course.”

Betsy got out of bed and went to the bathroom to give the couple privacy. She took a shower and dried her hair, and then gathered up her backpack and grocery bag. “You can come back tonight if you want,” Lu Chen said. “No boob action, though.”

“Dang it,” Betsy said. “Actually, I’m going to try not to be a burden on anyone during my hopefully brief state of homelessness. I'm planning to mooch off of Tiffany tonight -- though she doesn't know it yet.”

“Oh fine!” Lu Chen pouted, pretending to be mad. “It’s because I don't put out, isn't it?”

Betsy put her arms around her friend and asked, “is there anything in the rules about butt-slapping?”

SMACK! The slap came so quickly Lu Chen had barely had time to digest the question let alone guard herself against it. “Very not allowed!” she shrieked.

“Oops,” Betsy said, heading out the door. “My mistake. You need to write these rules down so a person can keep track.”

Outside, it was barely 20 degrees but sunny, and Betsy enjoyed the chill air on her bare skin. Her first stop was the campus gym, where she rented a locker and spent a few minutes organizing her shoes, hats, a couple of purses and her little jewelry box. Looking at her remaining material possessions, Betsy ached for what she had lost, but felt hopeful for the future. Carrying a small purse over her shoulder and wearing tennis shoes and a ball cap, she set out for her next errand -- but she wasn't looking forward to it.

Betsy walked back to her former neighborhood, to her former house. She intentionally avoided looking at the house and went straight to her car. It was toasty warm inside from the sun, but cooled off quickly when she rolled down all the windows and put down the convertible top. Though she only needed to move the car a few blocks, Betsy drove aimlessly around the neighboring streets before finally pulling up to a parking space. Leaving the top down, she got out and started taking pictures of the car with her phone. As she did so, a guy she knew from class came along.

“HI Ben,” Betsy said. “Want to buy a car?”

“I wish,” Ben said. “It's a beauty. Why are you selling it?”

“Money. Tuition is due and I don't have enough to pay it.”

“Bummer. Want me to take a picture of you with it -- as a memento?”

“Yeah, I'd like that,” Betsy said, feeling sentimental. She handed Ben her phone and posed for a few shots in front of the car and then a few more in the driver’s seat. Afterwards, Ben went on his way and Betsy put the car’s top back up and took another photo.

Had she stayed at her old college, Betsy would have had sufficient funds to get through the year. Avery was a more expensive school, plus she was paying non-resident rates since she'd only recently moved into the province. Fall tuition had tapped most of her remaining savings, but Kate had told her not to worry about it -- that she'd take care of the next one. Betsy knew it would be reasonable, under the circumstances, for her to ask Kate to keep that promise, but she was not going to ask. Selling the car was the right thing to do. Even so, it probably wasn't worth as much as she needed -- and she needed to sell it fast to pay at least part of the tuition. She would have to borrow the rest. She posted the pictures of her car online, Including one shot of herself behind the wheel. It did not show any nudity -- just her face, bare shoulders and arm. She listed it for the price she hoped to get, but reluctantly added “will accept best offer; must sell.”

The next items on her list of things to do included looking for a job and finding a place to sleep that night. She texted Tiffany, awkwardly asking if she might spend one night, and then forced herself to flip through the photos of Michelle and Dean. They looked so happy together and she missed them both. Michelle had ended her note with the question “did Kate make it home for Solstice?” Betsy could not answer that question in the time she had available so she set it aside to answer later.

Now came the grueling task of looking for a job. She started scrolling the job ads: barista, bartender, waitress and cleaning service jobs. Yuck. Of course, Betsy was not unaware of the fact that she could trade on her celebrity. If she was videotaped saying “Eat at Joe’s,” people probably would. But she didn't want to use her popularity in that way. Betsy's perusal of the job listings was interrupted by a call from Tiffany, who had heard rumors of the breakup but was not in the same social circle as Lu Chen, Aaron and Taylor so she did not know the full story.

Once again Betsy told it all, but this time she didn't break down crying. Her voice cracked when she said the words “and I'll probably never see her again,” but otherwise she got through it without tears. There was still an open wound in her heart, but she knew it was starting to heal.

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The call took a while, and when Betsy hung up she saw notifications that several people were bidding on her car. Within minutes, the sale was concluded -- for twice the amount she had asked. She felt a little guilty knowing that including a photo of herself -- even though it only showed her face -- may have been a factor, but she didn't feel too guilty. She was selling her own car, not hawking some commercial product. The windfall meant she had enough to pay for tuition without a loan. She even had some money left over, but not enough to rent an apartment.

That night she shared a bed with Tiffany, who did have not any bi-curious urgings to work through, so all they did was sleep. That’s all Betsy really wanted in her bedmates, and she tried to be clear about it as she began hitting up more friends for sleepovers. It was a temporary strategy, but it gave her a little time to figure things out.

On Monday, she arranged to stay with Marla, who played drums in a band and habitually turned random objects into percussion instruments. Tuesday would be Shelly, a rugby player and weightlifter with legs so strong she once lifted a small car off the ground (or so she claimed). Next would be Jamilah, whose parents were from Somalia but raised her in Manchester, England so she had an adorable accent. And then Thursday she’d stay with AJ, who had 27 tattoos and could expound at length on the symbolism of each. That just left Friday to get her into the weekend.

“I love your Ariel backpack!” a familiar voice called out behind her as she entered a classroom on the first day of the semester. It was Molly, a red-haired girl Betsy had gotten to know dancing with Tiffany and Lashona. “I had one just like that when I was a kid,” Molly went on as they found seats together, “and tons of other Ariel bling.”

“I can see why,” Betsy said, holding the image next to Molly’s face. “She looks just like you.”

“Except SHE has no freckles,” Molly pointed out, slipping off her coat, “which I've always found rather suspicious.” Like Betsy, Molly had a high tolerance for cold weather and nearly always wore skimpy summer dresses, even in winter. Her exposed arms and shoulders were covered in freckles, as was the visible portion of her chest above her obviously braless breasts.

“Are you suggesting the Little Mermaid colors her hair?” Betsy asked with mock alarm.

“Well . . . I don't like to start rumors.”

Betsy laughed and took another look at her calendar. “Say, Molly, are you busy Friday night?”

In this way, Betsy got through her first week of homelessness. Each morning, she would either shower at her host’s home or go to the gym and shower there. The problem with showering at the gym was that often there were no clean towels. They were only the size of hand towels and threadbare from repeated washings, so the average person might go through three or four to get dry, quickly using them up. Betsy discovered this the hard way one very cold morning when she emerged from the showers to find the towel rack empty and the clock saying she had only a few minutes to get to her first class. She had no choice but to exit the building dripping wet into 15-degree weather.

During the day, Betsy had no home to go to and spent whatever free time she had in cafeterias and public lounge areas (where she sometimes took a nap in the afternoon). Though she had many casual acquaintances, Betsy didn't want everyone to know her situation. Her intention was to look for a job that weekend, but her friends worked so hard to distract her from her romantic troubles that she didn't have a moment to spare. Tiffany, Lashona and Molly took her dancing Friday night, while Lu Chen, Taylor and Aaron concocted a ping-pong tournament that totally preoccupied the always-competitive Betsy most of Saturday afternoon. Beyond these events, she only had time for school work and to sort out additional offers she was receiving for overnight accommodations.

The next week was largely a repeat of the first. Each night she slept in a different bed with a different friend, going through the first rotation except for Shelly who got dropped for being too gropey in bed. Betsy replaced her with Lashona, whose 70s-era Afro enveloped Betsy’s head when they embraced, and she also added Annabelle, who was even more ticklish than Betsy and had a high-pitched, squeaky laugh that had been compared to Minnie Mouse having an orgasm.

By the third week, Betsy felt surprisingly comfortable in her vagabond lifestyle, and so enjoyed sleeping with her girlfriends that she gave little thought to changing the arrangement. Even if she could afford it, getting an apartment would represent a psychological next step from the little blue house she'd shared with Kate. Though she tried not to show it outwardly, Betsy was still in mourning for what she had lost. Intellectually, she knew she had made the right decision about Kate, but she had invested so much into that relationship, and the little house. She also had aching regrets about Michelle, imagining what might have happened if they'd both been single at the same time. Betsy’s doubts and fears often haunted her at night when her bedmate of the evening was asleep. Alone with her thoughts while staring at the shadowy ceiling, she would weep quietly, her tears trickling down her temples to the pillow.

During the day, when she was in class or socializing, Betsy felt confident and even happy. The liberty to be naked made her feel so alive, and that thrill was no longer muted by the uncertainties she'd felt before. Now, nothing whatsoever stood in the way of the utter joy she felt being naked -- and being seen naked. She loved coming into a big lecture hall, her bare skin all cold and red from being outdoors, knowing everyone was looking at her. She would take a seat next to someone new -- some dorky guy or shy girl. She would initiate small talk -- learning the person’s name, which she would remember -- while making a show of fishing around in her purse for her chapstick, which she would apply first to her lips and then to her labia -- tending to the second task with meticulous care. As she did this, she would chatter away nonchalantly about how the dry winter air made her sensitive parts more sensitive, especially on days when she was more wet than usual down there. And then she would make eye contact with the person and confidentially whisper, “but I just can't help myself.”

“So I have a question for you,” Lu Chen said. They were in her bed, having just turned out the light. “When you pulled that chapstick stunt in class today -- were you turning yourself on or just teasing boys?”

“Both, of course.”

“So after six month of nudity, it’s still arousing for you?”

“Not constantly, but sometimes I look down at myself and something just clicks, and it's almost like I'm realizing I'm naked for the first time.”

“I've seen you like that!” Lu Chen laughed. “You get all flushed and fidgety.”

“Yep. Sometimes it gets so bad I have to find a place to . . . you know.”

“You do? How often?”

“Not real often. About once a week.”

“Where? In the restroom?”

“Nah, I can't stay quiet enough, and those tile bathrooms really echo.”

“Where then?”

Betsy rattled off five or six semi-private outdoor locations she had tried, all of them imperfect. “I'm pretty quick about it, but it's challenging because I want to close my eyes, but then I can't keep watch in case someone comes by.”

“Wow,” Lu Chen said, and then after a thoughtful pause she added, “maybe you need, like, a spotter.”

“Hmmm, that's an idea. I wonder who I could get to do that?”

Betsy and Lu Chen had a class together at 1 p.m., and they both had the next period free. They agreed that next time Betsy needed to . . . relieve tension, that Lu Chen would be her lookout. Theoretically, that could have been several days away, but the idea of it was so tantalizing that the very next morning Betsy got herself worked up thinking about it, and when she finally made it to her 1 p.m class, Lu Chen took one look at her and knew this would be the day.

“Ooooh,” where are we gonna do it?” she asked.

“Park bench on the hill,” Betsy breathed.

“You sure you don't just want to do it right here? I'm sure no one would mind. Want me to raise my hand and ask the prof if it’s okay?”

“Don't joke about it, Lulu. That just makes it worse.”

“Okay, I'll be good,” Lu Chen said, patting Betsy on the thigh, but then she left her hand there. Betsy pushed it away, hissing “you're supposed to be helping.”

“Sorry,” Lu Chen whispered, and busied herself with note-taking for the rest of class. Betsy’s kettle simmered away, but did not boil over, and after class they went outside together and followed the sidewalk up the snow-covered hill. It was about 30 degrees and had been sunny all morning , but now snow had begun to fall again. Lu Chen zipped her coat and put her hands in her pockets, but for the naked yet over-heated Betsy the cold air felt refreshing.

When they reached the bench, it was covered by a light layer of fresh snow. Lu Chen started brushing it off, but Betsy plopped her bare bottom down on it. Lu Chen sat next to her. “Okay, what do I do?”

“Just keep an eye out on those two sidewalks behind us and that one we just walked up. Tell me if you see anyone coming.”

“Is it okay if I watch you too?”

“Sure, lezbo, as long as you're also doing your job.”

“It's for my bisexuality research. The coast is clear, by the way.”

Betsy already had her hand in her lap subtly rubbing herself in an inconspicuous manner that would be hard to spot from a distance. She knew from experience she was nearly always being watched, and pictures she didn't even know were being taken would show up on the Internet. At this point, she still had her eyes open and caught Lulu intently watching the action.

“Don't forget . . . to do your job . . . lezbo,” she said, as she brought herself close to the tipping point.

“I'm doing my job, you pervy exhibitionist. Just focus on yours.”

Betsy smiled and closed her eyes. It was a relief having someone being her lookout, and it was arousing that Lulu wanted to watch. After a very short while, she was moaning. “Is it still okay?” she whispered.

“All clear, sweetie,” Lu Chen replied softly, kissing her on the cheek. “I’m protecting you, so just let yourself go.”

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Betsy did, arching her back and then hurling herself against Lu Chen, burying her face in the other girl's neck and nearly climbing onto her lap. Her hand, now wedged between their bodies, was still vigorously at its task. Lu Chen nervously looked around in all directions and still saw no one nearby -- though the carillon bells were starting to chime so she knew students would be streaming out of the buildings down below any second. But Betsy was done, and had collapsed against her. Lu Chen wrapped her arms around her gloriously uninhibited friend’s perpetually naked body, her hand resting on Betsy’s cold, wet butt.

“God, I want to do this every day!” Lu Chen cried, “but you'd better sit normal because people are coming.”

Betsy did not do it every day, but she loved having the option. Lu Chen started coming up with suggestions for other locations they could try, and Betsy was intrigued by some of those possibilities.

Betsy's ongoing sleeping arrangement enabled her to get by for several weeks on the very small amount of savings left from the sale of her car -- which she mostly used to replenish her friends’ supplies of food and beauty products. She kept telling herself she really should get a job, but there always seemed to be a party or lunch date to occupy her, and she continued to put off that decision. She also kept putting off telling Michelle about her breakup with Kate. Though she'd explained it to others many times, that had all been in conversation. Writing it down felt like too much of a burden. Also, she didn't want to make Michelle or Dean feel guilty about not being here for her. They were having a fun and romantic time in Italy, and Betsy didn't want to do anything that would undermine their relationship. Betsy wished it wasn't Dean that Michelle was with. Had it been some stranger, Betsy might have told Michelle already.

Though it was the middle of winter, Betsy no longer thought much about the challenge of outdoor nudity. The Kingsley area received a lot of snow, but the temperature rarely dropped below 20 degrees. She had learned she could handle that, particularly because her day-to-day world was geographically small. She even went barefoot sometimes when the walkways were clear of snow. The gym closed at 9 p.m. so sometimes just before then she would lock up every material object she owned, including her shoes and phone, and walk out into the night with nothing whatsoever, letting the heavy door slam shut behind her and knowing as she heard it latch that she could not get back in until morning. Being utterly possessionless as well as homeless was an oddly erotic thrill she could not quite explain, though she sometimes tried in the dark intimacy of bed. In those tender, quiet moments, her friends would reveal to her their own secret desires and fantasies. She was surprised how many of her friends imagined becoming nudists, though for most of them it would never be more than fantasy. AJ seemed somewhat serious about it because she loved her tattoos and felt they were best displayed holistically. Molly spoke about her urges the most passionately, and had begun going nude around her housemates, while Lulu had allowed Brian’s roommates to see her naked on video chat.

In the middle of her third week of homelessness, Betsy received an email from the general manager at Channel 5 wanting to schedule a meeting “to discuss our proposal.” Betsy thought it must be a mistake or a joke until she remembered the email from Maddie McGuire that she had not finished reading because it came the day after her breakup with Kate. She searched for it in her inbox and skimmed over the initial paragraphs in which Maddie praised the poise, athleticism and personality Betsy had exhibited in the now-several appearances she had made on Channel 5.

“Thus far,” the email went on, “Channel 5 has covered you as a newsworthy local personality, and we are grateful for the time you have provided. Now, we would like to formalize our relationship with you by inviting you to participate in planned programming for which you would be well-compensated.”

A job! They were offering her a job doing standups and things she'd been doing for free! Trying not to sound too eager, she typed a polite reply to the email expressing mild curiosity. Minutes later, she received a response proposing lunch downtown on Friday, and offering to send a car to pick her up. Betsy counted to 100 slowly before replying that as luck would have it she had an opening on her schedule and that she had her own transportation. Neither statement was quite true, given that she would be skipping two classes and taking the train.

Betsy juggled her sleep-over schedule to spend Thursday night with Tiffany, the most glamor-minded of her bed-mates. Tiff was the kind of girl who would not flee a burning building until her hair and makeup were perfect. She gave Betsy the covergirl treatment Friday morning and also provided Betsy’s entire wardrobe —red Garavani pumps with matching bead necklace, earrings and clutch purse. It was a mild day, almost springlike for January, and Betsy felt so elegant as she walked to the train station, though being so “dressed up” gave her a pang of nostalgia for the glamorous evenings she had once spent with Kate.

The train was late, and when she got off downtown, Betsy realized she'd miscalculated and it would be a longer walk through downtown than she'd planned. This meant she was at risk of being late so she tried to walk quickly but that was difficult to do in Tiffany’s heels. Those small concerns aside, Betsy felt absolutely wonderful striding naked through downtown Kingsley. It was the first time she'd been downtown since coming to the decision to stay naked, and now she could relax and fully enjoy it. She loved watching her reflection in shop window and seeing the expressions of surprise and delight on the faces of nearly everyone she passed. Tiffany had done such a nice job on her hair and makeup, Betsy felt like a supermodel -- a naked, sexually aroused supermodel. Knowing she would be a few minutes late, she called Maddie to let them know she was only a block away.

“What street are you on?” Maddie asked.

“Main Street.”

“Coming from the north or south?”

“Um, south. Why do you ask?”

“Oh, no reason. See you in a few minutes. No need to hurry.”

That was curious, Betsy thought as she continued walking. The sun had disappeared behind dark clouds and Betsy's felt a few raindrops on her skin as she began crossing the wide plaza leading to the restaurant. That's when she noticed the cameraman under the restaurant awning filming her approach. Already aroused by the comparatively small number of people watching her in person, now she knew that millions more might soon see her making this walk. Pretending she didn't notice the camera, Betsy sashayed like a movie star across the plaza. Then she felt a few more raindrops on her skin, and as she glanced at the sky the dark clouds suddenly opened and the rain came down. Had she not put so much effort into looking her best, Betsy wouldn't have cared about the rain. Oh well. It was too late to save her hair and makeup, and she would look stupid trying to run in heels so Betsy did what she did best -- kept her chin up and a smile on her face as she strolled unconcernedly through the chilly downpour, coming closer and closer to the camera while never looking directly at it. She saw Maddie in a cluster of men in suits just inside the glass doors where a second cameraman would capture her entrance.

Betsy made it a good one, pushing through the glass revolving door as if the downpour had never happened. “Maddie!” she cried, giving her air kisses on both cheeks. Maddie made introductions and Betsy graciously shook everyone’s hands. Their table was ready and Betsy brushed off any suggestion that she may want to go to the ladies room or even dry off with a towel. She only apologized for being late and encouraged all to sit and get started.

After a little more chatter, the station’s general manager -- a portly man in his 50s who introduced himself as “”Chip” -- got to the point. “Betsy, we've had several segments on you since you arrived in Kingsley, and in each case our viewers loved you. You're incredibly popular.”

“That might only be because I go naked,” Betsy said modestly, thinking back to Kate's criticism. “I'm sure some people might make the argument that any reasonably attractive naked girl would be just as popular.”

“Actually, that's not the case,” Chip said. “Our metrics are pretty sophisticated, and it's clear that while your nudity is certainly an initial attention-grabber, focus groups and surveys confirm that viewers love you for other reasons — your personality, your smile, your laugh, your grace, good humor, your athleticism, and your determination to live life on your own terms, winter or no winter.”

Betsy’s heart was bursting. It wasn't just her nudity. Kate had just been trying to undermine her confidence. She had a moment to think as the waiter brought their lunches.

“That's gratifying to hear,” she said when everyone had been served. “So . . . what exactly are you proposing?”

“We want you on the Channel 5 team, Betsy. We understand, of course, that you're a full-time student and your time is limited, so we're thinking one or perhaps two appearances a week -- not much different than things you've already done, but planned instead of impromptu. The benefit to us is that we can promote it in advance to increase ratings, and the benefit to you is that you get paid.”

Getting paid to be naked on TV! Betsy tried not to show her excitement. “Hmm,” she said, “so what would I be doing -- more weather standups?”

“Sometimes, but not always weather-related. It could be at an event of some kind. But beyond standups, we'd love to showcase your obvious athletic abilities. So far we've seen you rollerblading, running and skiing -- all of which you do with great skill. Perhaps more of those when the weather is better -- water skiing, maybe, or hang-gliding.”

“I can waterski,” Betsy said, “but I've never gone hang-gliding.”

“That's the beauty of it, Betsy. We’d pair you up with a professional instructor, so it would work whether you're already at an advanced level or a beginner. Our options are more limited in winter -- though you've certainly demonstrated you can take the cold. Still, there are some interesting indoor options. Have you ever tried boxing?”

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“Boxing?” Betsy repeated. “Could I really do that for a TV bit? Um, without getting hurt?”

“We wouldn’t let you get hurt, Betsy,” the station manager assured her. “The national women’s champion lives right here in Kingsley. We would just arrange a little training session with her. It wouldn’t be a real fight, of course — just her teaching you to spar a little. But that was just an idea off the top of my head. If you’d prefer not—”

“That would be SO much fun!” Betsy exclaimed, forgetting to play hard-to-get. “I’d love to do ALL of those things!”

“Splendid!” he said, sliding a glossy folder to her. “Now as to compensation, here's what we're thinking to start out with, but we encourage you to engage professional representation to assist in any longer-term contract. We want you to be happy.”

Betsy did her best to retain a poker face, but it seemed like a lot of money for doing something really fun on TV -- naked! Though she'd been on television several times before, now that she felt so confident in her nudity, Betsy found the prospect of being seen naked by millions of people breathtakingly alluring. “When do we start?”

“Actually, we could start right now. Are you willing to do a weather standup out in this downpour? We could write you up a little script on the TelePrompTer so you don't have to wing it live.”

Betsy gulped. “Live?”

“Well, perhaps that's starting too--”

“I'll do it!”

After some communication with the production manager back in the studio, and a quick script Maddie banged out and entered into the prompter, Betsy was back out in the torrential rain. She had taken off Tiffany’s shoes, but still wore the red bead necklace and had somehow had retained most of the matching lipstick, though her short hair was plastered to her skull. The producer ticked down the seconds and pointed at her.

“This is Betsy Andrews with Channel 5,” she said confidently, reading the prompter. “As you can see, the rain is coming down quite hard here in downtown Kingsley. If you live in the eastern suburbs, this is what you can expect within the hour. Channel 5’s Weather Team says it’ will pass through quickly, however, and by evening the skies should be clearing. Officials advise that you not try to drive in this weather, but if you must, watch out for flooding.” That was the extent of the script. She was just supposed to say “back to you, Jim,” but on an impulse she added, “as for me, I'm going to frolick.” Here, she threw up her arms, faced the sky and danced in a circle before leaning close to the camera to say, “back to you, Jim!”

“And . . . we’re out!” the producer said. Everyone applauded Betsy's performance as she stepped out of the rain, shivering a little. Though it was a warm day for January, the temperature was not quite 50 degrees.

“I don't think many of our viewers will be frolicking in this weather,” Chip laughed, “but that was a great ad lib. Welcome to the Channel 5 team, Betsy. I understand you took the train down here, but we’re sending you home in a car. We’ll be in touch soon about your next assignment.”

The rain was letting up as a black SUV pulled up under the overhang and Betsy climbed in back carrying Tiffany's shoes and purse. The interior was luxurious, like that of a limousine. When the driver asked where she lived, Betsy laughed and told him to just take her towards Avery College. As they approached, she gave directions to Tiffany’s building. Tiff wasn't home yet so Betsy found a plastic grocery bag and left the shoes, purse and bead necklace hanging from her apartment doorknob. Betsy's tennis shoes, ball cap and purse were locked inside so all she had was her phone as she walked across campus on a now-mild January afternoon. A few sprinkles caressed her skin, but the rain had largely passed.

Betsy stopped in the middle of the plaza. Where was she spending the night? She had juggled her schedule to stay at Tiffany's the previous night, but what did that mean for tonight? Flipping through her phone messages, she realized she had forgotten to plug this hole. Shoot. And now she saw that her phone was down to one percent power. Shoot. Betsy knew, of course, that any one of her friends would take her in, but she didn't know who was home. She started scrolling down her contact list intending to start making calls when the screen went black. Shoot.

The gym wasn't far away so she decided to go to her locker and see how much of a charge she could get on her phone while she worked out and took a nice, hot shower. That was a good plan until she could not find her charger in her locker and only then remembered it was in her purse in Tiffany's apartment. Locking her dead phone in her locker, Betsy ran on the treadmill until sweat was flying from her body, then rinsed off in the showers and relaxed a while in the hot tub. When she climbed out, her body felt so nice and toasty she ignored the stack of clean towels went straight to the exit and out into the cool early evening air. She was dripping wet and leaving footprints on the sidewalk, but felt warm and happy inside.

An adventure! She would have an adventure! Unburdened by any possession, she headed off campus and towards the bar district. She had no money, but knew she would almost certainly bump into friends who would buy her food and drinks, and maybe she would pick someone new to sleep with. You are such a mooch, Betsy Andrews, she told her reflection in a shop window as she walked past. And such a slut, trolling for someone new to sleep with! I am a wholesome slut, she corrected the next available shop window reflection. It's not like I'm going to have sex with the person I sleep with, and I'm not a mooch anymore because I have a job!

Betsy was literally skipping as she reached the bar district. Her skin had dried, but her hair was still dripping on her shoulders and chest as she walked past “Woody’s Wild Side.” It was Friday night, so she knew without looking that Tiffany and Lashona would be there. She could crash with either of them tonight if she needed to, but first she wanted to check out the scene at “Zoot’s,” the retro swing dance bar. Inside, she heard people call her name and waved happily, relishing her popularity — which she now knew was genuine and not just because she was naked.

Heading back to the Omega table, Betsy took note of a couple of girls she liked but didn’t know well yet. She spotted Mandy, who had green highlights in her blonde hair and multiple piercings on her eyebrows, ears and nose, and Lia, a tall, lanky girl with lusciously poofy lips. Either of them would be fun.

The usual Omega men were represented, particularly Charles, the one-time house butler. “Did you come to join the line dance?” he asked.

“Nah, I'm barefoot again and last time I got my toes stepped on doing that,” Betsy explained.

Charles seemed disappointed, so Betsy added, “but actually, I’ve noticed what a great dancer you are. Would you teach me a few of those fancy moves?”

“Gosh, sure Betsy,” Charles said, and the two went to the main dance floor where Betsy’s toes were relatively safe -- Charles being a very good dancer. She was much less experienced, but had a natural ability and picked up the advanced moves quickly. Soon, they were cutting quite a rug, and made a photogenic pair. Charles was tall and handsome, if in a boyish way, and wore a flashy retro suit with white dance shoes. He lifted her off the ground, swinging her to the left and right with confidence and ease. Some of the moves required Betsy to spread her legs wide, and all around them cameras were recording the action. By the end of the evening, dozens of new photos and videos would be added to the digital corpus that tracked the very public life of the Avery College Nudist. As always, some photos would be zoomed and cropped to highlight body parts that certain segments of Betsy's fan base never tired of highlighting.

By late in the evening, the band was taking a break from its usual bebop frenzy and was playing slow music. Betsy and Charles were shuffling a laconic fox trot in the dim light, her arms around his neck and his hands on the damp skin of her back.

“I suppose you heard about my big breakup?” Betsy said.

“Yeah, Tiffany mentioned it. Are you doing okay?”

“I have my good days and bad days. Today has been a good day.”

“I’m glad. You deserve to be happy, Betsy.”

“But I’m totally messed up financially, so I’ve been staying with friends.”

“Um, yeah, Tiff mentioned that too.”

“I don’t want to be a burden so I never stay the same place two nights in a row.”

“I really doubt anyone would mind, Betsy.”

“I just don’t want to take advantage, and it’s been so helpful for my healing process to have friends I can really trust; friends that I can sleep with platonically with the close physical contact that I need right now without it becoming sexual. Does that make sense to you?”

“Um, sure, of course, Betsy. Your friends just want to do whatever they can to help you through this.”

“And . . . and you're my friend too, aren't you?”

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 58**

“Of course I’m your friend, Betsy. I remember when we met, you—”

“So could I sleep with you tonight?”

Charles froze on the dance floor, his feet no longer moving as the band continued its slow-tempo jazz number. “Wh—what did you say?”

“I said may I sleep in your bed with you tonight?” Betsy repeated. “Platonically, of course. I'm sorry to ask at the last minute. I've been trying to plan this out, but I messed up. If you don't want to do it I understand, but I just--”

“Of c-course I W-WANT to,” Charles stammered. “But . . . you're not just . . . tricking me are you?”

Betsy squeezed him tight and whispered in his ear. “I would never EVER do that to you, Charles. You will be doing me a big favor if you allow me to sleep in your bed . . . with you . . . tonight. If you say no, that’s okay, but I’ll have to find someone else, and it’s so late.” Here she made a little pouty face.

“I . . . yes, of course, Betsy . . . but I don't have my own room at the house. Reggie and Trevor do because they're upperclassmen, but I'm a sophomore and we sleep in bunk beds, six guys to a room.”

“Oh, well . . . do you think your roommates would mind?”

“Of COURSE they wouldn’t, but—”

“Is it against the rules? I don't want to get you in any trouble.”

“I don't think it is.”

“Should I ask Trevor? He's right over there.”

“Um . . . well . . . he does have his own room, so--”

“No, I mean should I ask him if I can sleep with you?”

“Well, I--”

Not waiting for an answer, Betsy marched over to Trevor and whispered in his ear for a long while as Charles watched with trepidation. Trevor’s eyes went wide, he whispered something back and then gave a thumbs-up sign to Charles.

And so Betsy and Charles left together and walked through the chilly January night the six blocks to Omega House. A party was going on there and Betsy joined into it. She didn't know most of the boys, but felt a kinship with them due to her history. Drinking from an oversized martini glass, she pretended to adjust her hair in front of the Looking Glass mirror where she had once masturbated. Lots of the boys crowded around her, and she indulged herself in a secret little fantasy in which she did it again in front of them all.

Betsy told them why she was at Omega House that night -- that she'd broken up with her girlfriend, had money trouble, and was platonically bunking with closest friends -- like Charles. She could see that Charles’ stature had just risen meteorically, and she was glad to have made that contribution. “But I'm kind of embarrassed about being temporarily homeless,” she said, “so would you promise not to blab that part?”

The Omega Men chanted “we swear” in unison. Betsy loved hearing it, knowing they took such things seriously. Around midnight, she hinted she was ready to turn in, and Charles and all five of his roommates immediately came to the same decision. They all went upstairs together to hoots and catcalls from others at the party who were not lucky enough to be among Charles’ roommates.

The room they all shared was crammed with three sets of bunk beds. Charles’ bunk was in the middle, and Betsy was relieved to see he had the bottom because the beds were so narrow she thought she might fall out.

“Well, this looks cozy,” she said, and immediately crawled in. “Do you care what side I'm on?”

“Um, take your pick,” Charles said. The back wall of the room was a wide closet with sliding doors and the six boys began to awkwardly undress.

“I'm not looking,” Betsy announced. “I know most people are more modest than I am.”

“Um, Betsy?” Charles asked. “What should I wear . . . to sleep in?”

“What do you normally wear?”

“Just my skivvies.”

“Then wear that. I don't want you to be different just for me. Same for you guys. Just pretend I'm not here.”

That suggestion produced a chorus of laughter. “No can do, baby,” Derrick said. “Nobody can ever pretend you're not around.”

“Well, just be normal please.”

Charles appeared at the side of the bed, wearing only his underwear, but trying to keep one hand in front of his crotch as he slipped under the sheets beside her. The bed was so narrow they couldn't have avoided touching if they tried -- and neither particularly wanted to try. Charles made a half-hearted effort, lying on his back with hands at his sides. She immediately wrapped her body around his.

“These bunks are so narrow,” she remarked. “I'm going to have to hold onto you all night to keep from falling off. Good thing you're not on top.”

This choice of words resulted in some snickering from the other bunks and one of the boys said, “Chuck, is Betsy on top?”

“Oh, you know what I meant,” she laughed. “Boys have such dirty minds.” As she said this, she threw her leg casually over Charles’ body where it briefly came in contact with his bulging erection, with only the thin fabric of his underwear separating them.

“Oops,” she giggled, “moving her leg down a little.

“Sorry,” he whispered. “I can't help it.”

“That's okay,” she whispered back. “I'll take it as a compliment.”

“There sure is a lot of giggling and whispering down there,” Derrick observed.

“If you MUST know,” Betsy said, “we were discussing this gigantic bump in Charles’ underpants. It's like the Macy’s Parade down here!” This produced howls of laughter that would have been heard throughout the house if the party were not still in full swing downstairs.

“See what you've been missing out on?” Derrick said. “A lesbian can't provide you with that.”

“Sure she can,” Betsy insisted. “My ex-girlfriend had one in her dresser drawer. It was twice as big -- no offense, Charles --and never once sheepishly explained that it’d been under a lot of stress lately.”

“Ouch,” Derrick laughed. “Very funny, but have you ever experienced the real thing, Betsy?”

“Why sir! What an impertinent question,” Betsy said haughty, “but no, I have not been so inclined.”

“Well, if you enjoyed that sex toy, you'll like the real thing better -- even if it is slightly smaller and less reliable.”

Betsy gave an exaggerated yawn. “All this talk of penises is putting me to sleep. Goodnight, boys.”

“Goodnight, Betsy.”

Betsy kissed Charles on the cheek. “Goodnight, Charles.”

“Goodnight, Betsy,” he sighed.

Betsy wasn't actually very sleepy, but she wanted to be quiet and enjoy this exciting new experience. She was in bed with a guy! She'd shared a bed with Aaron once, but she'd been so distraught that night, and Aaron’s body was not one for which she could feel any attraction. Charles was closer to the kind of man she could imagine being with, though still not among that tiny percentage of Dean-like men who really stirred something in her. Joel had been in that club, as was Molly’s boyfriend, Jack, whom she'd only met once. So that meant there were three guys on the planet Betsy was attracted to, and two of them were dating her close friends. Joel was therefore the most guilt-free, so Betsy imagined he was the one she'd spent the evening with -- his hands gliding up and down her bare back as they danced. And he was the one she'd asked to spend the night with. And he lived alone! And when she'd asked him what he wore to sleep, he'd said he usually slept nude! And she'd told him that's how he should sleep with her because she didn't want to be any trouble of course. Betsy imagined she was in bed with him now, both of them naked, both of them still awake, yearning for each other. Betsy’s cheek was on Charles’’ bare shoulder, her hand resting on his too thin and nearly hairless chest. Past her hand, she could see the bulge of his erection under the sheet. She knew she could move her hand just a few inches and touch it if she wanted to. She was sure Charles would not mind. But no, she would not do that. Only imagine it.

But what if it were Joel? Or Dean? Oh yes, what if she were with Dean right now? But not like this. They would be alone in Dean’s apartment. And . . it wouldn't be now, but over the summer, the day they went out for drinks after the race . . . but in this fantasy, Betsy had already broken up with Kate, or perhaps they'd never been together and Betsy had come to Huron on her own -- to be naked! Yes, that's how it should have been. While real-life Betsy remained unmoving, fantasy Betsy reached down and wrapped her hand around Dean’s sheet-shrouded erection -- and because real-life Betsy had never done this with any boy, she had to use her imagination. How hard would it feel? Would it be warm? How would Dean react? But wait . . . why were they in bed together in this fantasy? Not for the same reason she was with Charles . . . so there would have been a scene of passion first. They would have come to his apartment from the bar, and would immediately begin kissing right there in the doorway. He was shirtless, wearing only those thin white denim shorts, and of course she was naked, always so naked. She would have unbuttoned and unzipped him while they were still standing, and that's when she would have first felt his erect penis in her hand, and they would have fallen backwards onto his rumpled bed, and he would be on top of her and she would feel him entering her. Though she had never had sex with a man, Betsy had been on the receiving end of Kate’s strap-on, and she’d liked it — really, REALLY liked it. But how would it be different with a man? For one thing, he would come eventually, falling exhausted on top of her, both of them sweaty and spent, having lost themselves in the moment of passion together. With Kate, orgasms never happened simultaneously with wild abandon. Kate was always calmly in control, always doing things in exactly the “best” way. With Dean, Betsy imagined, it would have been crazy and unchoreographed.

But where was Michelle in this fantasy? She would not have met Dean yet. Betsy missed those days when she had her little moments with Dean, and her separate little moments with Michelle. But both relationships had been illicit and stunted because Betsy had been stupidly stuck with Kate. What if Betsy had been free and strong back then? She might have flirted with Dean, but probably not actually gone to bed with him . . . because . . . she would have been with Michelle!

Before she knew it was coming, Betsy sobbed. She pressed her face into Charles’ body to muffle the sound as her shoulders shook involuntary and her tears wetted his skin. Startled, he put his arm around her whispering whatever he could think of — that it would be okay, and that it's hard to get over a lost relationship. Betsy said nothing, unable to explain how she felt.

Realizing that it's services would not be needed, Charles’ penis stood down from its alert status and retreated to a restless and ever-vigilant slumber.

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 59**

A few days later, Betsy stood outside the campus gym in her tennis shoes and ball cap, her blue denim purse slung over her shoulder. A black SUV with tinted windows pulled up and Betsy climbed in back, the plush leather seat soft against her bare skin. She chatted with Vic, the driver, as he took her to an older part of downtown where a sign over a crumbling brick building proclaimed, “Kingsley Boxing Club.” Inside, she pretended the Channel 5 cameraman was not filming her entrance as Maddie McGuire introduced her to Kimmy “Killer” Kowalski, the women’s light heavyweight champion.

Killer Kowalski was about Betsy’s height, but weighed at least 30 pounds more -- all of it muscle. She wore skin-tight shorts and a sports bra, her brown hair pulled back tight into a braid.

“Okay, missy,” Kimmy said, giving Betsy a wink. “You don’t look too tough, but I’m gonna teach you to be a boxer in one week. Are you ready to train your naked little butt off?”

“Yeah!” Betsy growled, making an exaggeratedly tough face. Feeling an instant rapport, she held up one fist and added, “and don’t call me missy.” Kimmy played right back, pretending she was going to slug Betsy, who emitted an ultra girlish squeal and ran around the gym with Kimmy giving chase. They were friends from that moment on.

For the next five days, Betsy went to the gym two hours a day for training, with a camera crew constantly recording the action. Before even getting in the ring, Kimmy put Betsy into a grueling training regimen that included skipping rope and punching the hanging speed bag. Fortunately, Betsy was already in great physical condition and had considerable endurance. Once she mastered the rhythm of the speed bag, she found it addicting and didn't want to stop until her arms felt like lead. She also learned to skip rope with the super-fast speed of a boxer. This sent her smallish breasts in a frenzy.

“I think we just found your boxer nickname,” Killer Kimmy declared. “Bouncing Betsy!”

“Hey, I want something meaner than that!”

“Gotta earn it, kid.”

The camaraderie between them was natural and the producers were getting so much good footage, they had plenty to choose from each night to promote the segment scheduled to air the upcoming weekend. By their third session together, Kimmy had Betsy in the ring, teaching her footwork and how to spar. Like all physical activities, Betsy picked it up quickly.

“Don't hold back, kid,” Kimmy assured her. “Try your best to nail me. I can defend against anything you got, and don't worry about me damaging that pretty face of yours. I won't hurt you. Now, come on and earn yourself a new nickname, Bouncing Betsy.”

That energized Betsy, and she put her all into it -- dancing, weaving and attacking with a flurry of blows that looked quite impressive while doing little damage. Kimmy began calling her “Buzzsaw Betsy” as she egged on Betsy’s attacks.

When the program aired, viewers were treated to shots of a sweat-shiny Betsy battering the speed bag, jumping rope (close-ups here on the bouncing), and in the ring with Killer Kowalski, attacking her with a barrage of blows as the confident champ weathered the attack and landed a few soft touches on Betsy which could have been knockdowns if she'd been trying. To the televised (and online) audience, it looked like a real fight, though the witty banter between the two women made it clear the champ was letting Betsy look good in the ring.

The show set a new record for Channel 5’s website. More importantly, several days of advance promotion resulted in sky-high ratings for the news broadcast -- with advertisers bidding against each other for the limited spots. For Betsy, it meant a sizable paycheck -- though not as sizable, Maddie quietly informed her, as it could be in the future if Betsy had an agent representing her in a longer-term contract. Even if that were true, Betsy was not yet sure she would want such a contract. She didn't even want the responsibility of having her own apartment quite yet, though now she could probably afford it. The only thing she felt certain about was that she wanted to stay naked.

Betsy’s next TV assignment a few days later was a lot easier. All she has to do was interview people standing in line all night outside of Apple stores waiting to buy the latest watch. It happened to be one of the coldest nights of the year, so people were bundled from head to foot, many with scarves wrapped around their faces so that only their eyes showed. Betsy wore only tennis shoes and a Channel 5 ball cap. She walked up and down the line interviewing people and shivering with them. It was bitter cold, even for her, and Betsy sought shelter in the news van every 15 minutes or so. After visiting several stores, they went out for a hot breakfast and then returned to one of the stores at opening time.

Now, at least, Betsy got to work indoors interviewing the sales staff and getting a demonstration of the new watch’s groundbreaking holographic features. Billed as the first watch that could truly replace a laptop, it could project both a virtual screen and an interactive keyboard. Only slightly larger than a traditional man’s watch, it had a retro/steampunk design, was entirely waterproof, and recharged itself with the wearer’s motion.

Though she had tried to remain professionally objective while reporting the story, Betsy fell in love with the device and wanted to buy one as soon as the cameras stopped rolling. Because the watch was so new it was quite expensive, but they were also offering it on a lease plan. Although Betsy now had an income, she found the concept of leasing alluring because she had the urge to own fewer things, not more. She signed a contract on the spot and wore the watch home.

That night at Lu Chen’s, Betsy transferred all of the data from her phone and tablet to her new watch, and the next day she sold them both. The watch also handled purchases, and contained an official digital version of her Citizen ID card -- which meant she didn't need her purses. These she donated to Goodwill, and the next time she spent the night with Molly, Betsy gave her the mutually beloved Ariel backpack (which Molly immediately personalized by giving Ariel freckles with an orange sharpie).

Betsy loved that her new watch was motion-charged, which freed her from needing a separate charger. Unfortunately, as all the tech reviews had pointed out, this was the product’s weakest feature. The holographic features tended to drain the battery faster than it could be recharged through normal arm movements, so Betsy began wearing it on her ankle to compensate. She would take it off when she needed to use it as a laptop or phone, but for texting or some other quick task, she simply crossed her legs like a man so that her left ankle rested on her right knee. This was convenient and had the additional benefit of requiring her to spread her leg in a natural and necessary manner. Betsy would admit to herself, if not to others, that she enjoyed displaying herself, but she wanted it to seem unintended and incidental. If she needed to check the time or glance at an incoming text when she was in a standing position, she was sufficiently limber and well-balanced to lift her left foot up to almost chest level, and then with one hand pull her foot close to her face for a few seconds to read the screen. She tended to do this at busy street corners while waiting for the light to change, and became so practiced at it that she could do it very quickly.

Every time she went to her locker, Betsy had the urge to get rid of something else. Her watch was leased, and each of her regular bedmates had by this time provided her with a toothbrush -- which she had not purchased and did not technically own. Now that she had an income, Betsy nearly always showed up at her girlfriends’ places with grocery bags filled with the exact foods, wines and chocolates that each girl loved. She also made it a point to replenish each girl’s supplies of lotions or hair care products, which Betsy used, but she made sure she was buying the precise product the other girl preferred, rather than sneaking in her own preferred products. This was, of course, the polite thing to do, but in Betsy's mind it also meant that the products did not belong to her.

Along the way, Betsy stopped wearing makeup so she could throw out her makeup bag. She had her hair cut short so she didn't need brushes or hair ties. She decided she could still use gel and a blow dryer if she had access to those wherever she was staying, but that she would use no combs or brushes and only her fingers. If she showered at the gym, she would just let her hair dry on its own and do whatever it wanted.

By mid-February, she was down to little more than footwear and hats. She had been saving a pair of sandals and some flip-flops for warmer weather, but now she saw no purpose for these items to even exist. Why would she wear any kind of footwear in warm weather? It no longer made sense. Her last few bits of jewelry had to go also, even though she really loved some of them. Once these were all gone, Betsy had only a single pair of tennis shoes and one ball cap. These were her most necessary possession while winter lasted, but she ached to get rid of them too.

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 60**

Though it was Betsy’s first winter in the Kingsley area, she learned from longtime residents that by the end of February, the worst would be over. By early March, snow was typically minimal and a hint of spring would be in the air. She had nearly done it! She had gone through almost an entire winter totally naked -- never once putting on a coat or even a sweater! Betsy had also recently celebrated her six-month anniversary of continuous nudity (with a big party at Dizzy’s). She no longer considered ever going back to wearing clothing, and was, if fact, fighting the urge to give up her last pair of shoes to experience what it would be like to have no possessions at all. Betsy told herself she would wait until at least March 1 to do this, but during the third week of February, a warm front swept through the area and for the next few days, daytime temperatures hovered enticingly around 50 degrees. Though she knew the weather could -- and probably would -- change again, Betsy was finding it increasingly difficult to resist her obsession.

One afternoon during this period, Betsy was wearing all that she owned -- two shoes and a hat -- when she passed the big clothing donation bin on the edge of campus. She knew the bin well, having already fed into it many of her other possessions. This time, she tried to walk past it without leaving an offering, but it called out to her. She had to give it something, so she opened the mailbox-like door of the donation bin and put her hat in it. She closed the door and opened it again and the hat was gone, now beyond her reach -- impossible to take back. But the bin wanted more. Her shoes had to be next, she knew. There was no other way. It had to be today. It had to be now. Betsy took off her shoes and placed them carefully on the open door of the bin. She held it open a moment, sunlight warming her skin, and then she closed the door and heard the shoes drop inside the impenetrable metal box. They were gone beyond retrieval. She opened the door again and looked at its emptiness. Everything she had ever owned was gone.

She turned back onto campus heading for her next class, and with each step Betsy was exquisitely aware of the feel of the pavement beneath her feet. She had gone barefoot many times, but now that she HAD to it felt different. As she passed other students, Betsy smiled cheerfully as she always did, watching as so many eyes danced along her body before connecting briefly with her own eyes, only to dart down again. This always happened. Nothing had changed, except for Betsy’s own emotions. Somehow it all felt fresh and new. Each time some boy’s eyes went between her legs, it seemed like it was happening for the first time. Her pussy had been on display for six months, and during that time she had possessed no article of clothing with which to cover it. Yet now that she had discarded her last pair of shoes, she felt more keenly aware of the rest of her exposure. Her nearly forgotten feelings of embarrassment resurfaced in a new and different way, and she reveled in it. The feeling was not exactly “embarrassment” anymore, but something similarly intense. She didn't want to ruin it by analyzing it too much.

As thrilling as this was, Betsy did not imagine she would remain possessionless indefinitely. It was just an experience she wanted to have for some little while. A transition, She knew she would acquire shoes and hats and jewelry again someday, perhaps after a few weeks or months. She would know when it was time. Betsy felt absolutely certain she would not go back to wearing clothing, but she would have possessions again, and a home and . . . and love. She would open her heart again to love, like a flower in spring. But first, for reasons she did not fully understand, she felt compelled to have nothing at all and live her life truly naked . . . until . . . well, she would know when.

Betsy’s next TV assignment was to play basketball with the Apollo Globetravelers, who were coming to Kingsley Arena for an exhibition game. Channel 5, which was broadcasting the game, had arranged for Betsy to be introduced as “trying out” for the team. She would actually sit on the bench for most of the game, but would be on the floor a few minutes before and after station breaks, and perhaps participate in one or two of their famous trick shots. The Globetravelers typically spent a week in each city in advance of the game and often concocted some new bit to involve a local celebrity -- the specifics of which would depend on that person’s own basketball skill level.

Betsy had played basketball in high school, but hadn't been one of the stars. She was a good ball handler, though, and began practicing at the campus gym as soon as she heard about the assignment. By the time she had her first practice with the team, she had shaken the rust off and was ready to show what she could do, such as it was, Though they had been around the world, the Apollo Globetravelers hadn't been in a situation quite like this before. They were as impressed with her as she was of them, and were put at ease by her sunny personally and matter-of-factness about her nudity.

“Oh, let's all just look at each other for a few minutes,” she laughed because she had never been so close to professional basketball players. Her brothers were 6’4” but these guys were even taller, and exquisitely muscular. She was particularly amazed by their center, Jamal Jasper, who was 7’1” with magnificent dreadlocks, tattoos covering both arms, and hands so big he held a basketball the way someone else might hold a softball. After blatantly checking out each other for a while, they started playing some basketball. Betsy showed off her super-fast dribbling skills. She was good with both hands and could pass the ball between her legs and behind her back. Of course, she was nowhere near their level, and any of them could have stripped the ball from her, but they applauded her moves and started showing her their trick passes and flamboyant plays.

“Got any ideas, Betsy?” one of them asked. “Something you always wished you could do in a regular game?”

“Well,” she said, “I've always wanted to dunk.”

Jamal tossed her the basketball and then put his giant hands on her little waist and effortlessly lifted her off the ground. He took a few steps towards the basket and Betsy gleefully slammed the ball in. When he let her down, she jumped up and down, happily squealing, “I have ALWAYS wanted to DO that!”

The Globetravelers grinned at each other, and one of them said, “this is gonna be a fun week.”

They went to work, arranging several plays that would end with Betsy making a Jamal-assisted dunk. One play had her start with some fancy dribbling and go for a layup, leaping towards the basket as Jamal grabbed her by the rib cage and put her in position to slam down her dunk. This took some practice, and sometimes she leaped at the wrong moment and Jamal had to just catch her without making the play. Whenever she made the play, Betsy would grab the rim and swing triumphantly. It was a long way down so she only let go when Jamal was there to catch her. His teammates would forever envy Jamal’s good fortune in having his hands on the naked girl so much, not to mention the view he got each time she dangled from the rim. (Decades later, Betsy would get a full chapter in his memoir).

After the success of her boxing segment, Channel 5 wanted to make the most of Betsy’s growing popularity, and scheduled her for a sit-down with popular talk show host Opal Whitmore, known her probing interviews on the love lives of celebrities. Betsy was ready to tell her story, wanting to be honest with her fans. She admitted that in fact she had not been strong or self-confident at the beginning and had initially become a nudist only to please someone else and out fear she would be abandoned. She went on to explain how she had gained confidence and had broken off that unhealthy relationship over Solstice and had since that time been in a healthy place, remaining a nudist because of her own desires and not someone else’s. Betsy felt relieved having finally said it all publicly. Channel 5 promoted the interview as “What a Girl Will Do for Love: The Shocking True Story of the Avery College Nudist:”

In her next practice session with the Globetravelers, they worked on a new play. In this one. Betsy did not have to drive to the basket, but only run and leap into Jamal’s arms, catching a pass at the last moment and slamming it through the rim. This play was actually a lot harder than when she dribbled the ball herself,and Betsy missed either the catch or the basket several times at first. But she loved the play and insisted on sticking with it until she had it mastered.

That night, Betsy was sleeping with Annabelle, who lived the farthest from campus, and had Vic drive her there. A true professional, he never asked why she had so many addresses. Betsy was exhausted, and Annabelle was tired from a long day as well. They climbed in bed together and immediately fell asleep.

In the morning, Betsy shuffled into Annabelle’s bathroom to pee, squinting out the little window to see that it had snowed all night, and was still snowing. Crap. She was a mile from campus without shoes.

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 61**

Whenever she slept with Annabelle, Betsy always took the bus back to campus, but the bus stop was five blocks away and there was no shelter while waiting. But at least the city’s mass transit system was reliable, and Betsy could be reasonably sure the bus would arrive on schedule.

Annabelle herself had no morning classes and was still asleep as Betsy went about her now-spartan morning routine -- which on this day consisted of washing her face, brushing her teeth and running her fingers through her hair. She planned to shower at the gym after her morning workout. After lifting her left foot to check the time, Betsy kissed the still-sleeping Annabelle on the cheek and let herself out of the apartment. Since she had no key, Betsy was once again fully committed, pulling the door shut until it clicked and stepping out barefoot into the snow.

As on most winters days, the air temperature itself was tolerable -- barely cold enough for snow, and there was little wind. The snowflakes were fat and fluffy and the busier streets were slushy from the heat of traffic. However, none of the sidewalks had yet been cleared so Betsy jogged through eight inches of wet, heavy snow five blocks to the bus stop, where she was the only one waiting. She lifted her left foot to check the time, and saw that in her eagerness not to miss the bus, she had arrived four minutes early — which meant she had to stand in the snow for four minutes. That was okay, she told herself. Her toes would be complaining soon, but Betsy now had enough experience to know that no actual harm would come of such a brief exposure. Like a seabird, she alternated standing on one foot at a time as she waited, and soon the bus lumbered up.

Because she had been staying with Annabelle once a week all winter, Betsy had ridden the same morning bus several times. She always sat on one of the bench seats facing inward, across from the same regulars who took the bus every day. She had learned their names. Tiny, elderly Mizz Henrietta worked for the BMV, but always dressed like she was going to Sunday morning church. Her pillbox hats with delicate their little veils had probably been in her closet since the 1960s. Jonah’s name was easy to remember because it was stitched on the breast pocket of his mechanics’ overalls, and Ty was a pimply teenager in a fast food uniform. Betsy gave them a cheery greeting, asked after their families and joined in on discussion of the weather. Earlier in the winter, she had followed weather forecasts religiously, but as her confidence grew and spring approached, she had paid less attention and was only now learning that this particular storm was expected to last all day and dump more than a foot of snow.

“Why you not even wearing shoes, child?” Mizz Henrietta asked. “You used to at least be wearing shoes.”

“I’ve gotten a little crazier since you saw me last,” Betsy explained brightly. “Oh, here comes my stop. Have a good day everyone!” As the bus was slowing down, Betsy felt a buzz on her ankle indicating a text message. She raised her foot to take a quick glance and saw that it was from Michelle.

“I just watched your Opal interview,” the text said. “You broke up with Kate two months ago?? Why is your ‘best friend’ just now learning about this? Or maybe I’m not your best friend any more either.”

Betsy was so stunned she was still holding up her foot when the bus came to a stop -- having provided Jonah and Ty a longer than usual display of her pink parts.

“Your stop, Betsy,” the bus driver said over her shoulder.

Leaping up, Betsy dashed off the bus and immediately sat down again on a snow-covered bench in front of a busy coffeehouse. Crossing her leg again, she re-read the message and punched out a quick response as snow continued to fall heavily all around her. “Michelle, I am SO sorry I didn't tell you. You are still my VERY BEST FRIEND.”

The carillon bells were ringing. Betsy had to run across campus in the ever-deepening snow to get to her class, and she couldn't be late because she was making a presentation. She got to class barely on time, making a dramatic entrance as she ran in and nearly fell when her wet feet slid on the marble floor. To give her presentation, Betsy had to take off her watch and plug it into the classroom projector. She was so focused on the setup that she didn't look up at the big screen until she heard uncomfortable laughter mixed with awwws of sympathy. There, for all to see was her conversation with Michelle -- with a long reply from her saying, “Well that's sure not what it seems like to me! All this time I’ve been writing you long emails and you reply with two lines. I told myself it was because of Kate, but apparently she’s been out of your life since Solstice and you not only didn't tell me about THAT, but now I realize I can't even blame her for how you've been treating me.”

Had it been any other personal message inappropriate for displaying to 100 random people, Betsy would have instantly clicked it closed, but she had to read it to the last line. Tears were running down her cheeks when she finally closed the window and said to the class, “today’s presentation is about 15th century provincial literature, of which the most notable--”

“Write her back!” someone yelled.

“Write her back!” another voice called out, and the whole room joined in the chant.

Betsy looked at the prof, who said, “I think your presentation can wait a few minutes if you would like to unplug and address this clearly urgent personal problem first.”

Betsy clicked the reply button, not bothering to disconnect the big screen. “Michelle,” she wrote, “The truth is that the biggest regret of my life is that I didn't break up with Kate the day I met you. I felt myself falling for you even then, but I thought I needed to be loyal to Kate. I made the wrong choice, and by the time I realized it you were with Dean, and I didn't want to undermine your relationship by telling you my true feelings. But now you are asking for the truth, so this is what it is. I realize we can no longer have the kind of relationship I SO WISH we could have, because now you are with someone else, but I hope we can at least still be friends. And whatever you may now think of me, you were the best friend I ever had, and nothing will ever change my mind about that. Please forgive me.”

Betsy clicked send and and the whole room applauded. She closed the application, wiped her eyes and said, “now about 15th century provincial literature. . . “

When her presentation was over, Betsy took questions. The first few were about her topic, but then someone asked, “did she write back?”

Betsy had already disconnected her watch from the projector and was holding it in her hand. She relaunched her messages program. It only took a few seconds, but the whole class seemed to hold its collective breath, watching Betsy’s face. Her expression revealed the answer. “Not yet,” she said, her voice cracking. She quickly left the room so she did not have to cry in front of 100 people.

The snow fell steadily all day, and Betsy walked through it barefoot without noticing the discomfort. She was numb, and focused only on her watch, which she lifted her foot to look at every five minutes. She considered moving it to her wrist but didn't want to risk the battery going dead. In class she barely paid attention, sitting with her leg crossed so she could see her watch. She re-read the exchange a hundred times and could have recited it from memory. She told herself Michelle was probably just in a situation where she could not reply. It would be past 5 p.m. in Italy, but she could be at an important dinner, or in a late class or at the movies. Perhaps her phone battery was dead.

Betsy was an emotional wreck by the end of her last class, but her day was far from over. She walked to the gym where an SUV with the Channel 5 logo on it was waiting to take her downtown. It was the night of the Globetravelers game and she would have to pretend to be that happy, carefree Betsy that everyone loved.

“Good evening, Betsy,” said Vic, the driver, as she climbed snow covered into the back seat. “How ya doing?”

“I'm having a bad day, Vic,” Betsy said, and burst into tears.

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 62**

On the drive downtown, Betsy unloaded everything that she'd kept bottled up all day, and by the time they got to the arena, she was cried out. It would be okay, Vic assured her. It would be okay. A retired security guard who had never married and rarely spoke to anyone but his cat, Vic had no idea what to say about romantic relationships, especially those involving naked lesbians. All he could think of to say was that things would be okay. Betsy accepted it as the wisdom of the experienced and thanked him earnestly as she got out of the car at the arena.

She was a little early, so she climbed up among the empty seats of the arena and sat down to write Michelle another message. She recounted at some length her memories of the little bits of time they had shared together, and how she wished it could have been more. She wrote of her own evolution during those weeks Kate was away, and that she was so much stronger and self-confident now. “If I could have one selfish wish,” she wrote in closing, “it would be to have a second chance with you. But the most important thing to me is that you are happy -- even if that is with someone else. So if all I can have is a small part of your life, please let me still have that.” Out of time, Betsy said a little prayer and clicked the send button.

In order for Channel 5’s nudist correspondent to “suit up” with the team, a body paint artist was brought in to put “Andrews” across her shoulders, and the number “0” on her chest and back. When that was done, Betsy asked her to also paint a fake tattoo on her arm -- a big, red heart with “Michelle” across it. By this time, spectators were taking their seats, and the Globetravelers were out on the floor warming up and clowning around with the crowd. Betsy joined them, tossing the ball around and fast-dribbling around the vastly taller men. While she was out on the court, Betsy felt her ankle buzzing and was filled with hope that it was Michelle. She would understand now, Betsy told herself, and at least their friendship would be intact.

When they went back to the bench, Betsy immediately crossed her leg to see several messages, but none from Michelle — not yet anyway. Instead they were from other friends watching the live pregame show on TV. More than one of them informed her that the announcers had spotted her “tattoo” and were wondering aloud who this “Michelle” might be. Betsy smiled at that, hoping Michelle might be watching from Italy, or at least that someone would text her about it. As she was reading, a new text came from Lulu: “Do you realize the cameras are zoomed in on you? The world is getting a great view of your pink parts! I bet you're doing that on purpose, you pervy exhibitionist!”

Betsy had not actually been thinking of that at all — but now she was. Yet she was slow to change her posture and kept looking at her phone. This was perfect, she realized. She was accidentally displaying her open pussy to millions of people, and she did not want to stop. A wave of erotic energy swept through her body, making her shiver. She imagined the camera zooming in ultra close and the announcers discussing her increasing wetness. (“She's really pumped up for this game, Bill. It's starting to drip out! Can we get in a little closer so all the viewers can see how turned on Betsy is right now?”)

But then she heard the referee’s shrill whistle and looked up to see him pointing at her. Oh no, she'd been caught! He knew she was doing it on purpose! The whole world would know she was a pervy exhibitionist. Feeling her face go hot, Betsy moved her foot to the floor and put her knees together, but the ref kept whistling and pointing at her. He was walking towards her.

“No electronic communication devices permitted on the bench,” he said. “You need to go stow that watch in a locker.”

“Oh!” she exclaimed. “Right! Sorry!” Leaping up, Betsy hurried off the court, smiling apologetically to the camera. In the locker room, she had a nearly irresistible urge to masturbate. The initial awareness of her exposure had been sexy enough, but when she thought she'd been caught, the sense of embarrassment had been beyond anything she'd ever even imagined. As aroused as she felt, Betsy did not want to risk masturbating. There were too many cameras and microphones. She assumed the locker room would be safe, but how could one be sure? (“Let's check on Betsy in the locker room, Bill. She's really going at it. Look at that technique!”)

Deciding to only grab a wad of toilet paper to dry herself off a bit, Betsy took off her watch and started putting it in a locker, it buzzed again with three new messages. Two were from Lulu teasing her about her perviness, but the third was from Michelle! Holding her breath, Betsy clicked it open. It was a single line saying, “I don't have time to read your long message right now.”

Betsy read it again, confused. She'd been prepared for Michelle to say she was still angry, or that she didn't share Betsy’s feelings . . . but not even to have read the message? True, it was eight or nine paragraphs, but surely she could spare the five minutes required to read it. This was . . . a complete rejection. She was saying: I don't even care enough about you to read your love letter! Betsy felt dizzy. She closed the locker door and staggered towards the sink where she vomited.

The arena’s PA system was piped into speakers in the locker room, so Betsy could hear they were beginning the team introductions. She knew she would be last, but even so she had only seconds to pull herself together and get out there. She rinsed her mouth, splashed water on her face and tried to decide whether to quickly wash off the stupid, pointless, idiotic tattoo. But no, there was no time, and people had already noticed it so removing it now would attract even more attention to it. And besides . . . it was still true. She loved Michelle even if Michelle did not love her back. Betsy ran up the ramp just as they were introducing her.

“And, number zero, trying out for the Apollo Globetravelers tonight, the newest addition to the Channel 5 news team, Kingsley’s very own BETsy ANNNNdreeeeewwws!” The local crowd whooped and cheered as Betsy ran out on the floor with her game face on and nothing else.

The game went as planned, with the flamboyant Globetravelers scoring at will and performing their many elaborate trick plays. Betsy ended up with more floor time than planned, and earned thunderous applause each time she slammed down a dunk with Jamal’s flawless assistance. Despite her internal distress and sadness, Betsy found herself caught up in the performance and buoyed by the supportive crowd. Her teammates kept feeding her the ball and the opposing players (themselves part of the Globetravelers organization) made her look good by letting her dribble circles around them on her way to another dunk. Betsy got so sweaty, Jamal had a harder time keeping a grip on her and twice she slipped through his big hands and slammed into his face. He would later admit, in his autobiography, that only one of those had been accidental.

When the game was over, Betsy was interviewed by Maddie, who pressed her on the identity on the mysterious “Michelle.” Betsy did her best to be coy and playful, but she knew she could only keep her game face intact for so long -- especially given the subject matter. Unfortunately, Maddie wouldn't let it rest -- wanting to know if this Michelle might be wearing a matching tattoo with “Betsy” written inside. The question caught Betsy off guard and her eyes welled up as she whispered, “probably not.” Finally taking the hint, Maddie switched to a basketball question, which Betsy answered with false cheer as viewers saw her hastily brush away a tear.

As soon as she could break away, Betsy went down to the locker room to retrieve her watch. She had dozens of messages, but nothing new from Michelle, who presumably STILL did not have five minutes to spare for the drudgery of reading Betsy’s love letter. Jamal and the guys came down to the locker room and she stayed out of the showers to give them privacy, and instead washed herself at the sinks, using wet paper towels to remove the body paint and perspiration. She watched in the mirror as the smudged remains of her heart tattoo came off.

“Stupid idea,” she muttered to herself.

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 63**

Soon the guys were at their lockers getting dressed in expensive suits and diamond jewelry. Betsy tried not to watch them dress, but stole a peek at Jamal putting on his underwear to see if it was true what they said about men’s hands. (It was!) Although she didn’t really feel like socializing that night, Betsy decided not to decline when the guys invited her to come with them to a trendy hip-hop club downtown. They had become friends during the week and now the guys were moving on to a different city and Betsy didn’t know when she’d see them again. She was getting tired of not seeing people again, so she joined them. Channel 5 provided the cars and drivers and the group stepped out of the cars in front of the club to the flash of photography. Channel 5 was, of course, filming it also.

The club was the hottest place in town and a long line of people waited, trying to get in, while Betsy and the Globetravelers were ushered like royalty through a side door for VIPs. Inside, they danced and sat together in a plush round booth where they talked and laughed about their time together. When it was time to say goodbye, Betsy hugged them all. They all had to bend down for her and Jamal just picked her up since he’d been doing that all week.

Throughout the evening, Betsy would feel buzzing at her ankle and would periodically take a quick peek at her watch. All of her friends were making comments about her basketball performance, and sending around still images and video snippets of her dunking the ball. She showed these to Jamal and the guys and they all laughed together at how well the stunt had worked out. Another popular image going around was of Betsy on the bench, her left leg bent so she could see her watch (thereby exposing herself to the TV cameras) and the stricken look on her face when the ref started whistling at her. Betsy was relieved that none of the commenters guessed she had been exposing herself intentionally. Still others were sending around photos of the fake tattoo, with celebratory comments about what they assumed was a change in Betsy’s relationship status. It made her stomach hurt to think about how to even respond to those comments. Every time she felt a buzz Betsy felt sure this time it was Michelle . . . only it never was. Betsy managed to mask her anguish until at last she was alone in the Channel 5 car with Vic. On the ride back to Avery, she poured out her heard to the taciturn driver who again felt way out his depth in providing any kind of romantic advice. About all he could think of to say was “it’ll be okay” — though later that night he would discuss it at length with his cat.

The snow had stopped earlier in the evening and by the time Vic left her off in front of Tiffany’s, Betsy was walking in a misty fog. The temperature had risen considerably and she felt a hint of Spring in the air. Tiff was out of town, but had given Betsy the keypad code to stay there anyway. It would be the first night since her breakup with Kate that Betsy would sleep alone, but somehow that felt appropriate.

In the morning, she woke alone in Tiffany's bed, and immediately scrolled through dozens of new messages — none of them from Michelle. Betsy felt sad but did not allow herself to shed fresh tears. Perhaps it was time for her to be on her own and not need anyone. Through everything that had happened the past few months, Betsy had clung to a fantasy that someday she would be with Michelle, but apparently that was never going to happen. Betsy could accept that, but she could not bear to imagine that they would stop being friends — and she assured herself that surely this would not happen Michelle might still be mad at her, Betsy supposed, but more likely she was taken aback by Betsy’s sudden profession of love and didn’t know how to respond. She was with Dean now, and she’d had a boyfriend when Betsy first met her. She was probably like Lulu — bi enough to want to fool around a little with her girlfriends, but not interested in an actual lesbian romance. So Michelle’s silence might simply be because she didn’t know how to break it to Betsy that she wasn’t interested in her that way.

After showering and indulging in some of Tiffany’s ultra-girly skincare products, Betsy left the apartment smelling frilly and made her way through Avery’s little downtown towards campus. The temperature had continued to rise overnight and the electronic sign at the bank said it was 69 degrees. It felt like Spring even though giant mounds of melting snow were still heaped up wherever the snow plows had left them. As always, Betsy looked in the shop windows as she passed — partly to watch her own reflection — and she paused in front of a little jewelry store. Being utterly possessionless was starting to get old and Betsy was thinking about perhaps owning a small bit of jewelry again. Pushing open the door to the shop jangled the bells hanging from it and the sales clerk smiled at her.

“I’ve seen you passing by before,” she said. “I’m glad you decided to come in. What can I show you?”

“I saw something in the window,” Betsy said, and together they went to retrieve it — a silver ring adorned with an abstract heart.

“Is this for someone special?” the woman asked.

“In a manner of speaking,” Betsy replied, trying the ring on several different fingers until she found where it fit. The clerk rang up the sale and Betsy raised her left foot up to the counter to ping the transaction. Then she was out the jangling door again and back on her way, holding her right hand out to look at her new possession in the sunlight. The heart shape would be a good reminder that Betsy was the guardian of her own heart. She would open her heart to love and relationships — and sometimes those would not work out and her heart would hurt, but it would always heal. Betsy felt strong on her own and was determined to experience life without fear, and no matter what happened her heart could take it.

On campus, the melting snow had flooded many of the lawns ankle deep, but it was bathwater-warm from the sun and Betsy enjoyed splashing through it, knowing that her indestructible watch could handle it. Having gotten to campus a little early, she found a park bench and sat down, the wood nicely sun-warmed beneath her bottom. She was proud of how well she’d handled her first naked winter, but was really looking forward to warm weather for a change. Draping her arms over the back of the bench, Betsy leaned her head back and let the sun fall on her face. Her watch buzzed again and she ignored it until a cloud passed in front of the sun. Crossing her leg, she looked at the watch . . . and saw Michelle's name.

“Hi,” was all it said.

Betsy sat up straight and stared at the little screen with its inscrutable, two-character message.

“Hi,” she tentatively replied.

“I apologize for the long delay in replying to you, and for the abruptness of my last message. I was unable to use my phone most of yesterday.”

That seemed like an insufficient explanation, but Betsy just replied, “ok.”

“After reading the things that you said, I feel the need to explain my own feelings. There's something I'd like to give you that might help. It's in my cubicle at the Art Building. Would it be convenient for you to go over there and get it before we continue this conversation?”

Despite her feelings of self-confidence a few minutes earlier, Betsy started crying. Michelle was being so formal and distant. She was saying goodbye. “Can't you just tell me?” Betsy typed, tears running down her cheeks.

“It would be better if you would accept my gift -- if only for old time’s sake.”

A sob escaped Betsy's throat, and she tried to hide her tears because she was in public and no doubt being watched by someone. “Okay,” she replied, slipping the watch off her ankle so she could text and walk at the same time. She was very close to the Art Building as it was. “I'm heading over there now. Where is it in your cubicle?”

“In my hammock.”

“Can you at least described it?”

“Actually, I have to hang up for now, Betsy. We can talk later after you have your gift.”

Betsy panicked. “Michelle, please don't push me out of your life. I don't want a goodbye gift. I love you so much. I'm so sorry for all the things I did wrong. I can't stand the thought of losing you. Please.”

“I love you too, Betsy. I thought you knew that.”

Betsy stopped, wanting to read those words all by themselves and not part of this painful conversation. Then she replied, “I hope you’re not saying you love me in a people-who-used-to-be-friends kind of way.”

“No, Betsy. I’m saying I love you in a passionately romantic, holding-hands-til-we-die, rolling-off-the-bed-having-sex kind of way.”

“What? You do? Really??”

“I'm hanging up now. Go get your present before she gets impatient.”

“She?”

**What a Girl Will Do for Love, Part 64**

Betsy started to run. She was close to the Art Building already, and as she crested the hill she could see it across a grassy, flooded lawn. The main door flew open, and a naked girl stepped out. Michelle! Betsy ran splashing through the flooded lawn, screaming for Michelle, who started running also. Her dark hair flowed behind her like a horse’s mane and her pale skin glowed white in the spring sunshine. The two naked girls came together in a whirling embrace that threw them both off balance and sent them tumbling together into six inches of pooled water warmed by the sun. Their mouths found each other and they kissed as they rolled to a stop.

Betsy cradled Michelle’s face in her hands, barely able to believe it, but there in front of her were those crystal blue eyes and and those adorable freckles scattered across that beautiful upturned nose. “How can you be here?” she exclaimed.

“They have these things called airplanes now,” Michelle laughed, displaying her dimples. “That's why I couldn't use my phone most of yesterday. They made me turn it off on the stupid plane.”

“I thought you were mad at me.”

“I was — until you said you wanted to be my girlfriend,” Michelle said, as she began peppering Betsy’s face and neck with kisses. “You’d better have meant that.”

“I did!” Betsy giggled, trying to protect her ticklish neck. “So are those girlfriend kisses now? They seem just like the ‘friendship’ kisses you used to give me.”

“There’s an important distinction,” Michelle explained. “Allow me to demonstrate.” She kissed Betsy again, but this time also put her hand between Betsy’ legs, finding her clitoris as they kissed. “Did you notice a difference?” she asked afterwards. “It's subtle.”

“Let me try,” Betsy said, and the girls wasted no more time on banter because their mouths and fingers were too busy. It did not take long before Betsy gasped, having had one of her quick little orgasms.

“Oh my god, did you just come?” Michelle laughed. “You are SO easy!”

“I'm just getting started, amateur,” Betsy said, pushing Michelle onto her back and straddling her. Mouths locked together, they rolled and splashed in the sun-warmed water. Both girls competed to be on top, sometimes resorting to tickling to gain the advantage. Michelle made a quick move as they rolled, and before Betsy realized it, Michelle had turned her body so they were kissing upside down as Michelle leaned her weight on Betsy’s shoulders to keep her pinned on her back, water lapping at her ears. Betsy remembered the move, but this time she wasn't going fight it.

“You don't need to hold me down,” she said, caressing Michelle’s upside-down face as they kissed, and letting her legs fall open. “Come and get me.”

They kissed each other’s faces and necks and chests and underarms, moving on together until their mouths were at each other’s breasts, their fingers between each other’s legs. All four nipples experienced lavishly prodigious sucking before the girls mouths moved on, counting down ribs and dwelling on belly buttons. The rest of the journey went in micro-progression as each taste of skin and scent of womanhood was savored. Still on her back, her hair floating in water, Betsy leaned her head back against the soft wet earth as Michelle's hairless pussy passed over her eyes, and gasped when Michelle's lips found her own clitoris. Her hands on Michelle's butt cheeks, Betsy pressed her face into the warm wetness above her and made love using her nose and chin and lips, thinking no conscious thoughts because that part of her brain was no longer functioning. Her body and Michelle's had become one, fused together mouth to vagina, arms wrapped tightly around each other's waists as they thrashed and rolled like a creature with four legs.

Neither could have said how long this went on (though a video later posted to the Internet would clock them at seven minutes and 27 seconds). When it was over, the exhausted girls lay sprawled in the water, their sweaty limbs still entwined, heads resting on each other's thighs. Betsy’s mind had regained sufficient self-awareness for her to worry that they might have been seen, and she was just starting to sit up to look around when the cheering and applause began. There, on the roof of the Art Building, more than a dozen of Michelle’s classmates were watching them -- nearly all of them with phones or cameras in their hands.

“Crap,” Betsy said.

“Hi everybody!” Michelle called out, jumping to her feet and waving.

“I hope you're ready to be famous,” Betsy said, standing up as water rolled down her body.

Michelle performed a deep bow to their audience like a performer on stage. “Famous for being your girlfriend? You bet I am.” Grabbing Betsy’s hand, she led them both in another deep bow to more applause. Though she was embarrassed at having been caught having sex, Betsy went along with it, enchanted by the moment and overwhelmed with happiness that Michelle had come back to her. But now something else was entering her mind.

“Encore!” someone shouted.

“Show’s over!” Michelle called back. “For now.”

Everything had happened so fast, Betsy had barely had time to digest it. “Michelle,” she said. “What about Dean? Is he still in Italy?”

“No, he came back with me last night. Oh, that reminds me -- I told him we'd meet him in the plaza. C’mon. He's dying to see you.”

Pulling Betsy by the hand, Michelle started off across the swampy grass towards the plaza. “Wait,” Betsy said. “Don't you need to put on one of your skimpy outfits first?”

“No, I do NOT,” Michelle announced importantly, “because I am now officially a nudist! I registered online while we were waiting on our flight, and took off my clothes on the plane as soon as we were in Huron airspace. I got applause then too.”

“Oh, Michelle! That's wonderful! Congratulations on being Kingsley’s second nudist.”

“Thank you, but I think I might be third. We got in really late last night and were taking a cab in from the airport about the time the bars were closing. We saw a naked girl wearing a backpack like yours and I thought it was you at first, but it was some chick with red hair.”

Betsy chuckled, but then turned serious. “So . . . did you break up with Dean? Is he okay?”

“What? No, there was nothing to break. We're not a couple.”

“But I thought--”

“We sort of were for a little while. We hit it off big-time at your party, but on our first actual date he confessed that he was in love with you.”

“He said that?”

“I believe his exact words were ‘I’m hopelessly in love with Betsy.’ And I said to him, well get in line, because I am too! So we discovered we had something in common. We both loved you and we both felt rejected because you chose Kate over either of us.”

“I so regret that.”

“Well, you’re making up for it pretty good right now. Dean and I had a lot of fun together, but as romantic couples go, we were pretty pathetic because all we could talk about was you. We had our best sex whenever a new video of you would hit the Internet, and that’s probably not a good foundation for a relationship. Oh look, there he is now.”

They had reached the edge of the sun-drenched plaza, on the opposite side of which Dean stood looking at his phone. He was wearing shorts and a sleeveless tshirt that showed off his muscular arms and broad shoulders. Sunlight reflecting off a large snow mound behind him seemed to make his body glow. Betsy gasped, not quite having prepared herself to see him again.

“Ooh, are those sparks coming out of you?” Michelle asked, laughing. “I happen to know he has sparks for you too. He told me so, like, a million times.”

Betsy was confused. “But I . . . I'm in a relationship with you now. Aren't I?”

“Damn right you are -- so no other girls for you -- but Dean’s not a girl. He has one of those penis things you may have heard about.”

“Michelle! Are you talking about a three-way?”

“Nah, those are kinda awkward and not nearly as much fun as people think they will be.”

“Well it sounded like--”

“So we could just take turns.”

“Michelle!!”

“Well, you're the one who brought up sex. I was just talking about love, or sparks, or whatever it is that’s going on between you two.”

“You mentioned his penis.”

“For categorization purposes. The point is, he cares about you, and you care about him, and I absolutely adore you both. We’ll work out the details as we go along. You have a big heart, Betsy. Isn’t there’s room for both of us in there?”

Betsy looked down at her ring, and back up and Michelle, smiling as tears of joy ran down her cheeks. “I do have . . . feelings for him.”

“Good. So do I. Now go kiss him or something.”

“And you won’t go away?”

“Never EVER again. I’ll be right behind you -- watching your cute butt.”

Betsy grinned and broke into a run just as the carillon bells began to peal. Dean was frowning at his phone and oblivious to her approach until she yelled, “you better catch me!” He looked up and Betsy saw his expression change from worry to delight, like a little boy who just got an unexpectedly wonderful present for his birthday. She knew in that instant that she loved him. Her heart was full -- she could love them both. It was okay to love them both!

Dean had just enough time to put his phone in his pocket and set his feet before Betsy leaped, legs spread to wrap around his waist. This time, he had nothing solid behind him, and Betsy’s momentum knocked him off his feet. She had her arms around his neck and her lips locked on his as their airborne bodies plowed into the mound of wet snow behind him.

Michelle had been trotting slowly across the plaza, but when she saw them disappear into the snow, she squealed a laugh and quickened her pace. She could see their feet sticking out of an igloo-like snow cave inside of which Betsy sat on top of Dean, straddling him. Deciding there might be room for three in there, Michelle leaped, expanding the opening, and landed in the slushy snow beside them. This new disturbance was too much for the impromptu igloo’s precariously unplanned architecture, and it collapsed, covering all three of them in several inches of snow.

Students crisscrossed the plaza as the carillon bells continued to ring, signaling change as they aways did. No one noticed one of the snow mounds was moving, nor did they hear the voices coming from it.

“Okay, now I'm getting cold.”

“You have to get up before I can.”

“Ow! Whose elbow was that?”

The End