**Witness Protection**

by Tiny Tommy

This time last year I was 24 years old and had just moved into my first apartment. It was an exciting stage of my life. I had just finished graduate school and accepted my dream job. I had known what my goals were since the start of high school and had focused all of my attention on achieving those goals.

My intense focus resulted in people misunderstanding me. People mistook my drive for being stuck-up. I’m actually a very friendly person, but I knew that if I spent time socializing and dating it would be easy to become distracted from my goals. I came from a poor family, so my only chance at the college education I wanted was to get an academic scholarship. Once I was in college, my only chance for a graduate degree was to get a research assistantship. Even with a graduate degree, I would still need to stand out to get a great job.

Standing out isn’t something that comes naturally to me. I stood out as a teenager because I was the last girl in school to start developing. Changing in gym class was the worst. All of the other girls had pubic hair and noticeable breasts. I was bald and didn’t even need a training bra. I didn’t exactly have to turn down a bunch of requests for dates in high school. My biology lab partner did ask me to senior prom. I was probably the only one in the school nerdier than he was. Our awkward attempt at kissing after prom was the only time I had kissed a guy.

College didn’t change being small. I’m 5’ tall if I really stretch and even when my breasts finally developed they never were much more than little bumps on my chest. I was still a nerdy looking who rarely wears makeup. Somehow makeup always makes me look like an even younger girls trying too hard to look older. College was different in one very important way, being a late-blooming geeky girl didn’t stop a steady stream of guys from hitting on me.

In hindsight, I wonder if my no-dating policy really was the best idea. It seemed like the more guys that I told no, the more intensely other guys hit on me. It was like I was a challenge that they couldn’t resist. But I was determined to focus on my studies and get my dream job. I didn’t date anyone throughout college and graduate school.

I was 24 years old and had never even french kissed a guy. But now I had my dream job and I rented a loft in an area that was undergoing gentrification. I would have preferred a loft just a few blocks south, where the area was already fully converted, but that wasn’t in my price range. Still, I was within walking distance of the best nightlife in town and was ready to start dating. My only rule was that i refused to date anyone from work. No chance I was going to let anyone assume that I was being promoted for anything other than my brains and hard work.

All of my plans went up in smoke less than 3 weeks after moving in. I was sitting on my balcony enjoying the crisp September evening. I had the lights off so that I wouldn’t attract bugs. My attention was drawn to an argument over drugs in the street below. I watched as 2 men efficiently shot and killed 4 other guys. It happened much faster than what you see in the movies. I was about to go inside for my cell phone to call 911 when I heard the 2 men on the radio reporting the shooting. They were police officers. I stayed on my balcony until a loud truck idled nearby. I hoped the truck would cover the sound of my door opening and closing. I didn’t turn on any lights or adjust any blinds. I didn’t want anything that could alert the police to what I had seen. I wasn’t sure I could trust anyone on the force. The next morning I called the FBI. By evening I was completing paperwork to enter witness protection.

The Marshal who came to the office to process my paperwork into the program looked familiar. When he introduced himself he mentioned that we went to college together.

“I thought that you looked familiar, but I couldn’t quite place your face.”

“I didn’t figure that you would. I was in several classes with you, but wasn’t very successful at getting your attention.”

“It wasn’t personal, I was completely focused on my school work.”

“No worries. That was so long ago I barely remember it.”

I suspected he was lying. He sounded a little edgy about it.

“Right now the most important thing is keeping you safe. And the best way to be safe is to be hidden in a place that no one would look. I discussed it with my boss and we have the perfect plan. We are going to hide you as a teenager in foster care.”

“What?” I’m not sure whether I was more shocked or angry.

“Hear me out. We aren’t sure yet how widespread the corruption is within the police department. That will take the FBI a month or so to start figuring out. Hiding someone’s identity from criminals is hard. It is many times harder to hide it from police who are motivated to find someone. One of the best precautions I can take is to avoid any new government issued photo identifications. A teenage girl without photo identification is normal. An adult would draw immediate suspicion. It shouldn’t take more than a couple months.”

I calmed down when I heard his very logical explanation. “I’m sorry, I guess that makes a lot of sense.”

“I’m glad you understand, because some aspects of this aren’t going to be all that pleasant. I need to make you young enough that you wouldn’t have a driver’s license or even a learner’s permit. You are going to be pretending to be 14. To make that more realistic, you will undergo several cosmetic procedures. You will be getting braces. A doctor will inject you with a modified birth control implant that will give you highly irregular periods, simulating a late-blooming 14 year old. Do you wax your bikini area?”

“What kind of question is that?”

“A very necessary one. If you do, you might need to be extra careful if you let in grow in that no one notices how suddenly your amount of hair changes. Any little thing could be the trigger that raises someone’s suspicion or causes them to talk about you. The less people talk about you, the better.”

“I don’t do any regular grooming down there. Since I’m not dating anyone or going to the beach, it didn’t seem to matter that much.”

“That is actually perfect. We will arrange for you to have a custom laser hair removal. Instead of taking all of the hair, I am told that it can be carefully done to simply thin the hair. What grows back is supposed to be slower and finer than waxing or shaving, so the specialists tell me that it will resemble more of what would naturally happen for a young lady. There is one final thing, and this is also a little uncomfortable.”

“After discussing my pubic grooming habits?”

“Discussing your new bras. You will be custom fitted with bras that make you look smaller, more like a developing teen.”

“I’ve got news for you. It won’t take any special bras to make me look like that. It takes special bras to keep me from looking like that now.”

“Then let’s get started. By tomorrow you will be meeting your new foster family. To make sure that you are safe, the only 2 people in the world who will know that aren’t really a 14 year old girl will be me and my boss.”

I stood in front of a full length mirror at the hotel where I was hidden. I had already taken my shower for the morning, but wasn’t dressed yet. The laser treatment had removed more hair than I expected. I wasn’t completely bald, but there were only a few wisps of hair that didn’t do anything to hide my girl parts.

My breasts were the same size they have been for almost a decade, tiny. The braces certainly sold the look that I was young. I might have a hard time convincing people that I was 14, instead of being even younger. The Marshal was right, even though I was less than an hour away from the city, there was virtually no chance that anyone would think I was an adult with a real job.

On the drive to my new home I learned more about what to expect. I was already registered to attend a small, Christian school. The size of the school assured that they wouldn’t be taking any picture IDs. I would be living with a family that was filing adoption paperwork to make me a permanent member of their family. As a result, the school was registering me under the family’s last name. The couple was in their late 30’s and had two teenage boys.

We arrived at the house just as the family was preparing to eat supper. The Marshal carried my single suitcase to the door.

“Are you with the adoption agency?”

“Yes, I am. Allow me to introduce Sharon.”

They had kept the name change small so that it would be easier for me to recognize. Instead of Sherri, I was now Sharon.

“Sharon, why don’t you change into a dress and join us for dinner.”

“I don’t have any dresses.”

“Then head straight into the kitchen, I’ll be there in a minute.”

I could overhear the discussion about my adoption paperwork. They had described the process as a formality to me saying that I probably wouldn’t be here long enough that the paperwork would even get started. But the Marshal was telling my new Dad that the papers should all be signed by the judge in the next couple of days. That was my first clue that everything might not be exactly what it seemed.

You might have noticed that I never refer to the Marshal by name. I don’t believe that he ever told me and I was too embarrassed to admit that I didn’t remember him at all from school. That turned out to be a big problem later when I wanted to leave witness protection.

The Thompson’s insisted that I call them Mom and Dad beginning with our first interaction. That first interaction surprised me.

“Sharon, why did you choose to flaunt your disobedience of our house rules on arrival? Are you trying to test us?”

“No, I’m not testing anyone. I wasn’t aware of the house rules.”

“Please don’t start our relationship by lying to us. We provided the list of rules to the agency, and they assured us that you had reviewed them.”

I am beginning to suspect that I was set-up by the young man I had rejected in college.

“Sorry, the agency has so many forms to read and sign that I didn’t read everything as carefully as I should have. I wasn’t lying to you. I truly wasn’t aware of the house rules, but that appears to have been my fault.”

“Taking responsibility for your mistakes is always better than trying to blame others, so I will reduce your punishment. But you still deserve to be punished for breaking the rules. Wouldn’t you agree?”

“Yes sir.”

I expected that I would have to go to bed early or maybe be grounded for a couple of days.

“Take off your jeans and bend over a chair for a spanking. Caleb, show your sister the right position.”

Caleb was my younger brother. Yes, both boys were much younger than me; but Caleb was a few months younger than Sharon. Caleb stood up, faced the seat of his chair, bent over and placed his forearms on the seat of the chair.

“You want me to undress in front of boys?”

“Quit stalling and get those jeans off or your brothers will be watching you get a bare bottom spanking.”

I recall getting a couple quick swats of the hand to my backside before I started school, but my parents hadn’t believed in spanking kids. The fear of the spanking was even greater than the humiliation of teenage boys seeing me in my underwear. I stepped out of my jeans quickly and bent over the chair.

“Don’t make a mess. Fold those jeans neatly.”

I quickly folded the jeans and placed them under the chair. I assumed my position again on the chair. It was one of the few times that I was glad to be as short as I am. I didn’t have to bend over that far to place my elbows on the seat.

“Have you ever been spanked with a belt before?”

“No sir I haven’t”

“This will not be pleasant. Do your best to stay in that position no matter how much it hurts. Since this is your first spanking with a belt, I won’t give you any extra swat for moving out of position. But you will get back into position quickly. Today’s punishment will only be 10 swats. Are you ready?”

I wanted to scream “hell no, I’ll never be ready for a spanking” but that didn’t seem prudent. So getting this over with as quickly as possible seemed like the best idea.

“Yes sir”

I heard the belt swish through the air followed by a loud crack. There was a delay between the sound and the pain. I had enough time to think “that wasn’t so bad” before the sting hit me. I stood up and grabbed my butt.

“Remember, try to stay in position. Get ready for the next swat.”

I bent over and grabbed the edges of the chair to hold my position.

I tolerated the next few swats and stayed bent over the chair. I had lost track of what number we were on, but with the next swat my knees buckled. My entire bottom felt like it was on fire. I was crying so hard my body was shaking.

“Get back into position, you only have three more swats to go.”

I forced myself to straighten my legs. I think that my new Dad may have gone a little easier on the final 3 swats. Or maybe my butt just hurt so much already that the additional swats weren’t that much worse.

“You are allowed to put your jeans back on, but I will warn you that jeans that tight will probably hurt to wear. Your alternative is to spend the evening wearing just your panties.”

My new Dad let me try on my jeans. He was right, they hurt like hell. Funny, the Marshal had suggested that really tight jeans would help me look younger. I can’t help but suspect that he knew exactly what would happen. I spent the evening around my new Dad and teenage step brothers wearing nothing below my waist except for my panties. It is true that my panties covered more than most swimsuits would, but they were also thinner. I still felt exposed the whole night. Fortunately, Dad wouldn’t have tolerated my brothers staring at me, unless they wanted the same thing I had just experienced. I only had to put up with occasional glances.

Mom checked with me for sizes and went shopping right after dinner. The clothes were much more plain than anything I would picked out for myself, but at least I could comply with the family rules. Speaking of which, Dad gave me a new copy of the rules to review before I went to bed. The rules shouldn’t have been that hard to follow. I could summarize them as: dress conservatively, do your chores, respect your parents, and stay out of trouble at school.

Fortunately my new parents weren’t completely overboard on what constituted acceptable female clothing. Some families require girls to wear skirts, even if they have pants or shorts on underneath because of the physical nature of the activity. My parents were far more realistic. If I was doing a sporting event, I could wear clothing appropriate for that sport. I just need to make sure that it was conservative. Likewise, work or leisure activities that were most appropriately performed in something other than a dress, didn’t require a dress. If the family was going bouldering, Mom and I wore jeans. Jeans were obviously more modest than trying to climb rocks in skirt.

I stayed out of trouble at school and at home for almost 2 weeks. But I couldn’t keep my mouth shut when one of the ignorant teachers was completely wrong in how he was explaining a science concept. When I challenged him on the information, he accused me of being insubordinate and called me to the front of the room for a spanking.

The school was, I felt, rather lenient on how and when a student could be spanked. A teacher was allowed to pull up someone’s skirt or have them drop their pants as long as the student’s bottom was facing away from their classmates. I bent over his desk and he raised my skirt. His twenty swats with the wooden ruler were mostly on my thighs rather than my butt, so they hurt even more.

Getting spanked in front of my classmates should have warned me enough to keep my knowledge to myself. However, being wrongly spanked just raised my indignation even more. I spoke up again and was sent to the principal/pastor’s office.

“Apparently a ruler over your panties doesn’t get your attention. Take off everything except your bra and kneel on my desk.”

“Why can’t I just lift my skirt?”

“It is that exact attitude that is getting you into trouble. I’m going to amend your punishment, take off everything and kneel on my desk.”

That shut me up quick. I knew that I could expect the same punishment at home that I received at school. I wondered if that included taking off all of my clothes. Part of me hoped that it did. The first swat with the strap stopped my mind from wandering.

It didn’t seem like our principal spanked as hard as my Dad did. Or maybe that was just because it was my first time in his office. Either way, I was able to stay in position for all 15 swats with the strap. I was crying. My bottom ached. But I felt a small sense of victory that I had stayed completely still for the entire spanking.

“Stay in exactly that position until you are done crying and ready to go back to class. Then you can get dressed and return.”

This was the first I realized just what an exposed position I was in. The principal sat in his chair and his face was level with my privates. I didn’t dare turn my head to see if he was looking at me, but I felt like he was staring right at my cunt. It was the first time that any man had seen me completely naked. I wondered if he liked what he saw. I could feel myself getting damp between my legs, like when I rubbed myself against a pillow. I know, I was plenty old enough that I could have had a dildo before I came to Hicksville. But I never had. I think I was afraid that if I liked that too much, I might lose focus on my studies. I never bought a sex toy. I never even touched myself. But I did rub myself against my pillow and stuffed animals.

I realized that I had stopped crying long ago and was still kneeling on the desk with my damp pussy on display for a man. I got dressed and went back to class for the final hour of the day. I still wondered what would happen when I got home.

Mom was seriously pissed. I knew that our house rules were that if you got spanked at school, you would get the same thing at home. I didn’t realize that, if it was considered bad enough, I could expect to be punished by both Mom and Dad.

Mom didn’t waste any time. I was bent over a kitchen chair getting 20 swats with a wooden spoon. It was similar to being spanked with a ruler in front of the class except she had me remove my panties and didn’t say anything to my brothers watching my exposed butt from the doorway.

My panties were still off when I went to the yard to cut a switch for the rest of my spanking. I would learn later than Mom never used the belt or strap, those were reserved for Dad. When she was upset, she opted for the switch. Being pantiless under a dress shouldn’t have mattered. It wasn’t like anyone could see something. But it still made me feel more exposed, which I guess was the point.

Mom made me completely undress and kneel on the coffee table in the living room. My brothers weren’t in the room for the spanking, but I’m sure they found a way to watch. I didn’t think being spanked with a switch could be that bad. Then came the first swat. Mom expertly landed the switch right at the transition from my thighs to my butt. I don’t have a big, round butt so that aim was even more impressive.

The stinging pain was much worse that a belt or strap. I had no idea how I would take 14 more swats with the switch on my thighs. I couldn’t think about anything except just enduring the spanking.

Dad wouldn’t be home for another hour or so. Mom allowed me to get a pillow for under my knees, but I would have to kneel on the coffee table waiting for him to get home. I’m really glad my brothers aren’t allowed to have cell phones. I’m sure they would have tried to secretly take some pictures of me. I am also certain that they made far more trips through the living room that afternoon than any other day in their lives.

My brothers spent more time looking at my butt, and presumably pussy, that was on display as I bent over. I preferred this over having them looking at my little titties. Even if I was supposed to be 14, I was still ashamed of how small I was up top. I have a hard time imagining any male, grown or still a boy, who would find such small tits attractive. I think this is more of an issue since I had to stop wearing padded bras. Now everyone knows just how small I really am.

I wasn’t looking forward to another spanking, but I was still relieved when Dad got home, until he called a family meeting. It felt good, at least physically, to stand up. But my little titties look even smaller standing up.

“Sharon, you are new to our family and perhaps you haven’t understood just how seriously we take good behavior both at home and away from home. Being sent to the principal’s office for any reason indicates a serious case of poor choices and bad behaviors. Neither of your brothers have been sent to the office in the last couple years. I also know that our principal doesn’t give a spanking unless there is no other choice. Needless to say, your Mother and I are very disappointed with your behavior. We have to make sure that your punishment at home reflects the severity of your bad behavior and the disappointment we feel. Having your brothers watch your punishment accomplishes two things. It makes the punishment worse for you and it reminds them what will happen if they misbehave at school.”

I’m pretty sure that the only thing the boys are thinking about is my naked body.

“Normally, I would give you two strokes for each one that you received from the principal. Since this is your first time, I will only give you one.”

My bottom was still sore from the earlier spankings. I knew that 15 with the belt were going to hurt, but it was a whole lot better than 30. I bent over and put my hands on the coffee table.

“Bend over further than that. Rest your elbows on the table.”

I placed my elbows on the table and gripped the far side of the table to hold my position. As short as I am, this still meant that my butt was the highest part of my body. I guess I wasn’t as displayed as my Dad would like. He tapped my knees indicating I should spread them wider. I’m sure my brothers thought that the view was amazing.

The first whack with the belt ended any thoughts about how I looked. It was all I could do to hold my position and count the stroke out loud. My Dad took his time, waiting between each stroke of the belt. I couldn’t decide whether the pause was a welcome break between the swats or if it just prolonged the punishment.

Finally the spanking was over. My bottom hurt terribly. It was like a burning sensation, only worse. My face was soaked in tears and I was sobbing so hard I could barely catch my breath. My knees felt weak and wobbly. Still I knew there was one more thing I needed to do. I stood up and hugged my new Dad.

“Thanks Daddy. I know that I need that so I become your good little girl.” Even as I told the lie I realized that there was some small part of me that embraced this as true. I did need the spanking and I did want to become his good little girl. That scared me.

I was thankful to be allowed to go to my room. I laid on my belly and left my naked butt uncovered as I tried to process my conflicting emotions. Between the pain on my bottom and the thoughts running through my head, I couldn’t sleep. It was late when I heard a noise downstairs. I could make out my Mom giggling and my Dad barking out orders. I could hear his tone, but I couldn’t quite make out the words. I heard some slaps from his belt and some muffled squeals from my Mom. It was quiet for a little while before I heard some thumping from downstairs. It wasn’t a sharp smack like a belt, it was more of a thud. The thumping got closer together and I heard my Mom squeal again. The house fell silent after that.

I worked hard to be a good little daughter. True, I didn’t want another spanking. But I also wanted to please my new parents. My school, particularly the Principal, seemed to have a different idea. I had already noticed that even though the girls were much better behaved at school, we were still far more likely to get spanked.

I only made it one more week without getting spanked. Apparently I was talking too loudly in the hallway and disturbing other class. The principal called me into his office for a spanking.

“You are off to a very bad start at our school, Sharon. Not many students get spanked twice in the same week, much less twice in 7 days. I’m not sure how well you are adjusting to this new school. I should probably keep a closer eye on you.”

I suspected that a closer eye would mean even more spankings.

“Bend over and grab the chair.”

It was a little confusing for me because I wasn’t sure whether I was relieved that he didn’t ask me to get completely undressed or slightly disappointed.

He lifted my skirt and removed my panties.

“Spread your legs wider and bend your knees a little.”

The good news is that I felt less confusion now. I could feel the cooler air from the room on my bare pussy and it was easy to imagine how nicely it was displayed for this older man while I waited in this position. He took his time. He didn’t say anything and didn’t retrieve any punishment instruments. I couldn’t be sure whether he was ignoring me or staring at my pussy. But it didn’t really matter, I was getting very damp.

“I think you need a stronger lesson; last time your spanking clearly wasn’t a sufficient deterrent if you are back again so soon. What was your punishment last time?” “You gave me 10 with the ruler and 15 with the strap.”

“10 more with each might get your attention.”

The ruler didn’t seem as bad as I recalled. Each smack stung, but the pain didn’t linger. He applied 5 quick slaps to my left butt cheek. They felt spaced out across my whole bottom. 5 more swats landed on my right cheek. I dared to think that perhaps this wouldn’t be too bad after all.

All thoughts that I was ready to handle a spanking went out the window with the first swat of the strap. How could I possible stand 24 more swats? I didn’t long to think about it as the next swat fell. I gripped the chair hard to hold my position, I didn’t want any extra swats for moving too much. My whole world was reduced to the swish of the strap as it flew through the air, the smack as it landed against my skin, the new wave of pain that followed shortly, and the feel of the chair in my hand as I gripped it. I probably screamed from the pain; I don’t recall. I was sobbing in pain when I noticed that no more swats from the belt were falling. I started to get up.

“Your not done yet. Stay in the position until you stop crying. Then you have 10 more with the ruler to finish up.”

I just wanted this over. I tried to control my crying. Time plays tricks on me during a spanking, but I think it took about 5 minutes for me stop crying. The first shot with the ruler hurt far more than I expect. I had relaxed my grip on the chair and stood up for a second after that shot. I quickly got back into position.

“I’ll ignore that once. But if you move again, I will add 5 extra swats with the ruler.’

I made it through with moving again. I was allowed to wait in his office, bent over the chair, until I was ready to go back to class. Sitting on the plastic chairs was agony throughout the remainder of the day. My mind wandered more than usual.

I was thinking about my current situation. I had never thought much about my family life growing up. I was an only child in a poor family. Poverty stretched back for generations. Neither of my parents finished high school. Mom worked 2 and sometimes 3 jobs when I was growing up, so I rarely saw her. Dad worked when he could find work and hung out with his buddies at the bar when he couldn’t. Dad never laid a finger on Mom or I. He didn’t verbally berate us, he just wasn’t around much.

I compared this my current situation. My “pretend” parents weren’t rich either. They were barely middle class. But they were always home. In just a couple weeks I felt more like I was in a family than I had the entire time I was growing up. I liked feeling like I belonged. But I dreaded knowing that I would get spanking again at home. Another 20 with a ruler and 25 more with the belt. Or more, depending on whether both Mom and Dad spanked me.

I didn’t like being a teen again. My teenage years were the most awkward years of my life. And I certainly didn’t like being spanked. So my feelings about my new family were very confused. By the end of the school day I had reached a decision.

I needed to run away. I could call the Marshal and explain that this situation wasn’t working. I could insist that he needed to find a new place to hide me right away. I just needed to be able to stay somewhere my parents couldn’t find me long enough that I could figure out how to reach him. It made sense at the time that he didn’t give me a business card, because I couldn’t own anything that could link me back to the crime I witnessed. But now I realized that I should have had some way of getting in touch with him.

I knew that my new parents would already be looking for me. The school would have called earlier in the day to tell them about my punishment. When I didn’t arrive home at the normal time, they would easily guessed that I was trying to avoid being spanked. I certainly wasn’t the first kid who didn’t go straight home when a spanking was imminent. I wondered how long I had before my parents had the police looking for me. It was probably best if I could make it out of this small town.

I thought it would be simple enough to hitchhike. Lucky me, the person who stopped was an over-protective, good samaritan.

“Do you have any idea how dangerous hitchhiking is for a girl your age?”

“I wasn’t really thinking about that. I just needed to get to Middleville.”

“Fortunately for you, I came along rather than some rapist or serial killer.”

I thought that perhaps this lady watched too many crime shows.

Before I could ask where she was driving, we arrived at the police station. She parked and walked me inside. I was quickly taken into the chief’s office.

“Your parents are looking for you. They have been worried sick.”

“They aren’t really my parents.”

“They explained. I know that you are adopted and that it hasn’t been final for very long.”

“You don’t understand. They think they are adopting me, but I’m actually in witness protection. I’m really 24 years old.”

At this point coffee sprayed out both of his nostrils. Not that I can blame him, it must be awfully hard to believe that this young looking girl in front of him is really an adult. But I pushed on.

“Seriously. I’ve always looked young for my age and the Marshal service helped me look even younger so that I could stay hidden until the trial.”

“I guess we can clear this up quickly enough. What is the Marshal’s name?”

“He didn’t tell me his name. We went to college together. I think his first name is Jim or Tim. Maybe it was Tom.”

“That is going to be hard to verify.”

“OK, look up the murder. I saw 4 people get murdered last month.”

The chief was being unbelievably patient with me. I wouldn’t have believed my story at this point, but he was looking up news on the murder.

“According to the court records, a member of a rival gang confessed to killing these 4 in a drive by shooting. The case is closed. There wouldn’t be any need for a witness.”

I realized how thoroughly I was screwed. My former classmate was almost certainly on the take with these cops and had conveniently removed me from the investigation. I guess I could be glad that he didn’t have me killed.

“I really am telling the truth. I understand why you don’t believe me. I wouldn’t believe me either. But I swear it is all true.”

“Sweetie, I’ve heard stories that your church school can be downright abusive in their punishments. And plenty of parents who send their kids to the school are even worse than that. I heard that you were punished at school today and that you were avoiding going home. If either the school or your parents are abusing you, please tell me. I’ll get Child Protective Services here so fast it would make your head spin.”

I thought about his offer. The chief really was a kind man. I’m sure that he tracked down ever story I told him just to build trust with me. He was clearly concerned about my welfare. But neither he nor Child Protective Services could do anything about me being trapped in the life of a 14 year old girl.

“I’m sorry. I was spanked at school and I will be in trouble when I go home. But I deserved the spanking and I would hardly call a few swats ‘abuse’. My new parents love me and I feel bad for worrying them. They would never abuse me.”

I expounded on the lie.

“I just didn’t want to be a disappointment to them. Maybe they would change their mind about the adoption. That’s why I ran away. The Thompson’s have been great to me. I don’t want to get them in any trouble.”

I think he suspected that I was lying to him.

“You can always come to me and talk if that ever changes. I don’t tolerate schools or parents that abuse their kids.”

“That’s good to know. If I am ever abused, you will be my first call.”

You are probably wondering why I wouldn’t claim abuse. Certainly the marks on my bottom from the principal’s strap would verify my story. I considered saying something; I even came close to explaining the situation. But I realized that I truly felt like part of a family for the first time in my life. I knew my “parents” cared about me.

My parents were delighted to see me when they picked me up from the police station. That delight wasn’t going to transfer into a reduced punishment. I knew, even before they explained it in the car, that I could expect additional punishment for my shenanigans that afternoon. They didn’t ask me to explain, they just described the consequences. In addition to the ruler and the belt, I would be cutting and stripping a switch for 25 extra swats on my thighs for trying to run away. My brothers while smiling at me, anxious to see their new sister’s bare bottom again. I saw a smile pass between my parents too.

I considered that my life this time as a teen would be very different this time. I wasn’t an only child. I had parents who were always around and paid considerable attention to me. Hopefully I had learned something about navigating relationships. Maybe this was a chance to shape a better life than the one I had before. Maybe I could be successful in my studies and career while also having real relationships. I had every reason to embrace this new life rather than clinging to my old, failed one.