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# THE FACULTY

**By Mardee Louise Prynne**

At thirty years old I was about to start my first teaching job. Being older than most new teachers was, I thought, an advantage. No one would know I'm a rookie, a boot-ass recruit as they said at Bainbridge. I had come a long way from the small Pennsylvania town where I had grown up. Life there wasn't too bad but it was so limiting, so predictable. My stepfather, a good provider and well respected in town, treated us well. That he was well respected and influential was a good thing for me especially with school activities.

My mother never ever let on as to who my real father was. "He didn't want me and he didn't want you so..." and thus began the litany that was her response to my questions about my paternal side.

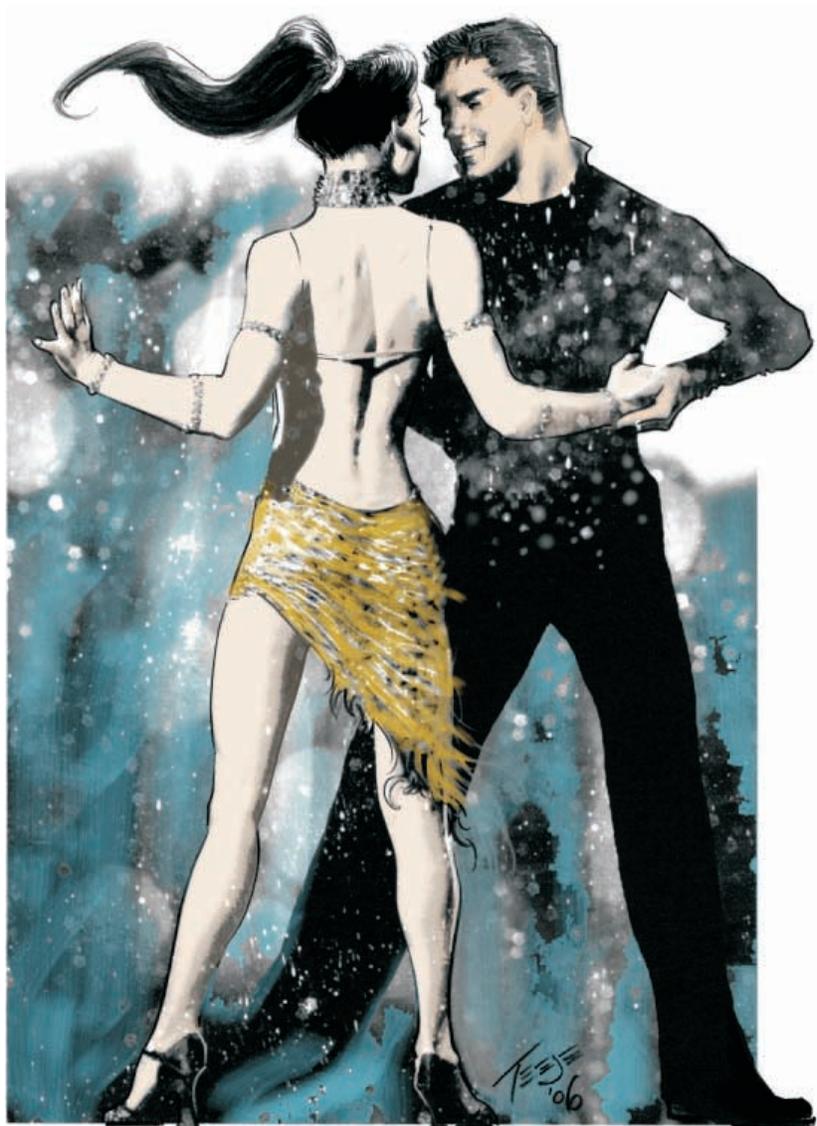
Of course I did catch flack from other kids over being a bastard. Helped me become a real good fighter even though I was quite small, small even for a girl. I had unwelcome opportunities to hone my fighting skills when guys tried to have their way with me. After all, they thought, a rah-rah majorette, even one of peculiarly inverted sexual interests, one whose mother couldn't even wait to get off high school to get knocked up, has to be asking for it. I never sought those opportunities but I always used them to my advantage and eventually began to enjoy them. No guy would admit that a diminutive girl fought off their inept groping and they definitely wouldn't want anyone to know that I had inflicted enough pain to bring them to tears. Their keeping quiet about what transpired between me and them kept guys guessing and brought me more guys whom I could hurt. Some even came back for second and third dates!

I had one really good friend who shared my tactics in dealing with boys. She and I practiced French kissing together and then some. We decided we liked each other more than we liked boys. People talked about all the time we spent together but mom and my step-dad told them it was none of their concern. They told me I would probably grow out of it and if not, well, that was my choice. Pretty broad-minded for that time and place. It made me feel all kinds of great to know that I had a family willing to accept almost any-

thing from me. I was astute enough to limit my attentions to Val and to leave other girls alone. Dates with boys continued only for appearances and as way for me to get a thrill by hurting them. Outsiders began to think my mom had been right because I seemed to be outgrowing my sexual inversion.

It was ironic that Val, my intimate girlfriend, an attractive girl with a very butch personality, had a brother named Len who was often mistaken for a girl. Len envied Val's dance lessons, and, Val and I strongly suspected, her dance apparel. Kids stopped teasing him after Valerie and I showed them the error of their ways. Nothing like being beaten up in public by a girl to show some macho ass-hole that it really isn't nice to tease a sissy boy. It was just so odd that after Val and I made it safe for Len to be what he really needed to be, several other boys became less interested in the usual boy stuff and began reading romantic novels and dressing more neatly. A few of the regular guys, really less than a handful, started being nice to Len. They were kind of friendly and even invited him to sit with them in the school cafeteria. Val and I first thought they were planning to have some laughs at Len's expense. It turned out to be not like that at all. Val never thought much about it but I wondered if at some level they liked being near Len the same way they liked being around a cute girl.

What saved me from the predictable and static life of finishing high school, marrying some local jerk and having a load of brats was my stint or 'cruise' in the navy. Girls usually avoided military service at the time I enlisted which was about a year or two before the start of the so-called Korean police action. For me it was an acceptable way to find a life in which I could explore options



that world the had to offer, come to an understanding of myself, and, above all, grow and develop.

The week after my high school graduation I said good-bye to my mother and her husband and got on a bus for the county seat. The only recruiter who was free when I walked into the recruiting office was the one for the navy. No existential decision here. Just chance. Worked out well.

I was eventually posted to Washington where I learned style and sophistication. I became classy. There was enough free time for me to think about keeping fit, not a usual pursuit for young women in the early fifties. I took a dance class that was a hybrid of ballet and modern. It was there that I met a few girls of similar age and, as it turned out, similar inclinations. Through these girls I came to spend several evenings a week at a women's self-defense club where I mastered judo, aikido, and some rudiments of karate. These activities provided a further opportunity to develop friendships with other like-minded girls, girls who could take men or leave them, but who preferred relationships with girls who today would be called 'lipstick lesbians.' There were dates of a sort, dates spiced with casual intimacy made all the more special by being free of any promise beyond the moment.

That my mom and my stepfather had allowed me to take my time in finding myself helped me avoid the self-loathing then so common in anyone with tastes and preferences even slightly out of the ordinary. Their acceptance of me set an example that taught me to accept, without thought or hesitation, the wonderfully different crowd of students and adults I would meet as a beginning teacher.

My time in Washington and the skills I learned there served me well when I returned to civilian life. I made a point of not returning to the town I came from. I no longer could even think of it as my hometown. My years away had made me too different, too independent to ever return to what I was and where I had been. More like what I had been pretending to be. Funny, but I never really thought of it as pretending when I was living that role. It was just the way things were supposed to be. The experiences I had, the people I knew since leaving had taught me I could make decisions. There were always choices, choices that were mine to make.

My first civilian job as an executive secretary put me in touch with men who were considered desirable. By that time I had come to see most men as puppets to be manipulated to for my own advantage or simply for my amusement. In those days before prenuptial agreements I reasoned that any failed marriage could be used for my own profit. Not that I wanted a bad marriage. This was just insurance if any marriage of mine didn't work out.

Thus it was, hoping for a brighter outcome than came about, that, after a whirlwind courtship, I married a well off guy who turned out to be a womanizing bastard. He came after me one night a few months after the honeymoon so I let him put few bruises on my faces before I beat the piss out of him and then called the cops. Those spoilsports arrived just as I was holding him against the wall and repeatedly kneeling him in the balls. He kept fainting but each time he did, I held him up until his head cleared enough for him to feel pain and to realize who was inflicting it on him. Then I resumed my repeated battering of his injured manhood. I must tell you I was really getting off on that, so much so that my

panties were soaking wet. I was more turned on by beating him up than I ever was by sex with him.

The bruise on my face proved what I did was self-defense so I ended up with a pretty juicy uncontested divorce settlement. I banked it all, got a new secretarial job and started seeing a psychologist to learn more about what made me tick. Therapy convinced what I had always suspected was true; I was perfectly normal, just very much my own person. My self-assurance being bolstered I decided to use the GI bill to get a four-year college degree with a double major in English and psychology. This didn't make me a psychologist but it did give me enough credits to get a job as teacher and guidance counselor at the high school level.

The odd part of my marital experience is that even though I never learned to fully enjoy sex with a man, at least not nearly as much as with another girl or even an older woman, I learned to appreciate the feeling of a hard cock inside me as long as I was in control.

Now here I was, about to start my first year of teaching and guidance counseling. If I liked it, I would go for higher degrees, become a licensed psychologist, go into private practice and maybe teach at the college level. If not, I might try law school or medical school or something like that. Pretty ambitious for a hayseed bastard girl from Pennsylvania.

Sounds like I had been around and had seen all kinds of people who were doing all sorts of things, doesn't it? I thought so too. All that paled to insignificance compared to what I was about to get into and what I was to learn from a wide assortment of pupils and staff.

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I smiled as I looked around after stepping of the bus in front of the school. Even though classes weren't due to start for another ten days there was quite an assortment of hangers-on loitering in front of the school and on the playing areas across the street. It was foreign to me, a woman from a place so different from this city high school. A few greasers were combing their well-oiled hair while girls with enough makeup to totally obscure youthful prettiness looked on. The jocks were across the street nonchalantly tossing footballs back and forth; really not nonchalantly at all as they kept glancing at the girls who were congregating in front of the school.

A group of baton twirlers, drum majorettes was probably what they had called themselves back then, had appropriated a section of the playing fields across the street and were showing off their skills to some freshman girls who were all too anxious to put up with harassment from these rah-rahs so that they might be allowed to try out. I couldn't help but smile at these athletic, well conditioned, superbly coordinated girls who were forced by the social code of those days to be no more than adjuncts to the boys' athletic teams, to put up with the macho bravado although most them were in far better condition than the egotistical, overbearing males. I sensed that many of these baton twirlers were the sort of kids I could easily relate to especially since they were more interested in impressing

each other with their well-shaped legs and perky butts than they were in impressing the boys. It didn't take much to realize that not a few of these fetching and very feminine girls would doubtless prefer the intimate companionship of others like themselves far better than that of any male. The fact that their short shorts only just covered the hems of their panties wasn't lost on me. If only they would bend over and allow those shorts to ride up my morning would have been made.

The self-contained, narcissistic baton twirlers weren't the only group of girls that drew my attention. The group of preppies that had congregated to see and be seen was exuding confidence and poise from every pore. Keds style sneakers, with and without socks, were part of their subtle uniform. Well-tailored Jamaica shorts in a variety of pastels and plaids were not so conservatively tailored as to prevent panty lines from being visible. Deliberately so, I was sure.

As I appraised these girls, they turned to look at a minor commotion on the playing field across the street. The bus I had been on pulled away allowing me to see across the avenue to where a few jocks and their equally moronic pals were trying to intimidate the twirlers into giving them the area they were using. One of the girls was daring them to take it. As a spindly, ungainly boy who was with the jock crowd made a move to grab her wrist, she shot the end of her baton into his solar plexus. He clutched his abdomen as she shoved him from the side. He would have fallen had his buddy not been standing there. End of that discussion. The boys laughed uncomfortably as they attempted to convince the girls and, more significantly, themselves that they were just joking. I briefly studied the boy who had been so easily knocked around by the girl. My first impression was confirmed; he was spindly and ungainly. But now I noticed his face; it was wasted on a boy.

"Oh, I really like that new girl. She really made those jerks back off. Maybe we can take a cue from what she just did." This from one of the preppies.

"Elizabeth Ann, I just can't believe you would even think of something so awful let alone say it," remarked one her friends in disgust. Darn, I was hoping that girls who liked to beat up boys might be the norm around here. It didn't seem that way but this sweet young thing had just shown some real potential. Perhaps, I thought, a little education might make assertive, even dominant girls the norm.

The image of Elizabeth Ann stayed with me although at first I wasn't sure why. She was medium height with a full body, the kind of body that might come to be thought of as statuesque in a few years time. Her quiet prettiness promised to mature into world-class beauty. Her well-filled Bermudas hugged her curves to perfection without being too tight. These weren't just off the rack but had been altered to fit. As my gaze dropped to her legs, I knew what it was that drew me to her. Under her smooth curves, curves that could be called womanly despite her youth, lay a strength and power that was waiting to be unleashed.

I strolled casually toward the building entrance as if I really knew where I was going. About ten minutes remained before my appointment with Miss Carver, the vice-principal. We had met briefly during my second interview at the school board office. She was in her mid to late forties, statuesquely attractive, and terribly intimidating. To my surprise, she turned out to be a strong advocate for offering me a position. It would never do to be late and alienate the one ally I might need in the politics of the school system.

One of the greasers stepped in front of me as I was about to climb the front steps of the school. "Hey, you're a new teach. Pretty nice..."

"Why thank you," I responded with a smile before he could finish whatever inane comment he planned to make. "I'm Miss Muller." He was more than a little surprised by my matter of fact response. His awkward reaction was to simply stare at the hand I offered him. After giving him my most sardonic smile I continued loudly enough for his cronies to hear. "Gee, I hope a tough looking man like you isn't afraid to shake hands with the new teacher, especially when she's just a girl."

Dumbfounded, he hesitantly extended his hand. He dared not look toward his friends lest they see the frightened expression on his face. I took his hand in mine and applied a joint locking hold to his thumb and wrist. His face contorted and turned white as his mouth opened in a silent scream. I smiled warmly and spoke softly. "Keep your fresh remarks to yourself or I'll break your arm off and use it to beat your balls to a pulp." I let go of his hand only to wrap my arm over his and apply another hold. This time it was a hold guaranteed to send bolts of agony through his arm and shoulder and leave enough residual soreness that would remind him of me each time he tried to use that arm for the next week at least..

His friends were staring in disbelief as the look on his face became ever more anguished and yet he appeared helpless to fight back or even try to break away from the woman who, despite being smaller than he, was so easily torturing him.

"If we keep playing around like this, I'll be late. Really, we must do this again and soon."

I released his injured arm and continued up the stairs managing to turn and smile over my shoulder. A few girls who were part of his group stared at him in disgust while the boys stared in shocked disillusionment. I made a point to remember the faces of the girls who looked at him with such loathing. That loathing might very well indicate that these girls would be eager to learn what I had to teach them.

"Say, did you see what that new teacher did to that Louis character? That was so neat. I wish I could do that to boys when they step out of line with."

"Elizabeth Ann Cohen! What's gotten into you today? That is so unladylike. This is the second time this morning that you've been excited about a girl or a woman behaving like a rowdy roughneck."

You have no idea how excited I really am thought Elizabeth Ann as she smiled blandly while resisting the urge to touch her wet panty crotch.

Miss Carver received me promptly. Her office was furnished in a traditional, no non-sense style that suited her efficient and businesslike personality. She extended a firm hand in warm greeting. I was taken by her green eyes and auburn hair which was clipped in a short, wavy style that framed her strong but pretty features. In a moment I was seated in her visitor's chair as she half sat, half stood resting one cheek of her bottom on her desk. The straight skirt of her tailored suit was long enough to keep me from becoming too distracted by Miss Carver's ample charm.

"Miss Muller, Patricia, if I may call you that..." She paused while waiting for answer.

"Please do."

She went on to describe my program, which was left several open periods daily. I wondered what academic or administrative chores Miss Carver would suggest to fill them.

"I'm also asking you to teach an elective on significant women characters in literature. The class is mainly girls with a smattering of two kinds of boys. The first are those who need to fill up their program with electives and who think they'll be 'cock of the walk' in a class of girls. That they call these young women girls is an example of their foolish male arrogance. I prefer to think of our senior girls as young women who are just beginning to realize their power. The other sort of boy is..."

She glanced around to make sure her door was closed. Her voice dropped as she continued. "The sort of boys who intuitively understand the natural superiority of women and try to incorporate into themselves those traits that make women the higher beings that we truly are. Someday, perhaps soon, the male dominated society will wither away and the natural order return. Boys like these will be a superior caste along with women."

"Are you saying these boys are sissies?"

"No, not all. It's much more complex than that. Of course some are simply sissies. Many of the boys I speak are often perceived as sissies but they seek the power that accrues to women who understand that is they, not men, who are the superior beings.

"The course serves to raise the awareness of our young women and offers insight for those boys who are salvageable. You do understand what I mean when I say salvageable?"

I nodded diffidently wondering at what her real meaning might be.

Miss Carver removed her suit jacket and hung it in a closet. She opened the top buttons of her white broadcloth blouse. Her impressive physical charms were enhanced by a white lace-edged bra flirtatiously showing each time the front of her blouse gapped. Certainly very outré for a school administrator to wear to work under a not very opaque blouse. That explained why she kept her jacket on until she closed the door behind us. She was, I was certain, letting me know that there was more to her than met the eye, attitude as well as pulchritude.

"I would like very much to develop a core faculty that would go along with providing these boys a peer group that we help them discover who they really are, educate them in self-acceptance and in truths that are usually only shared among women and girls even as we educate them in the more ordinary sense of that word."

"I quite understand you but wouldn't the rest of the faculty, let alone the school board and the community balk at something so non-traditional, so radical?"

"Quite so. I hope to eventually start a private school founded on those principles. However, in the very near future we may see something along the lines of the scouts; perhaps a summer camp for our older students and graduates where we can train both the girls and these specially gifted boys in arts and skills that will suit their needs. This will give them what they so sorely lack; and that is a peer group. Just ending their solitude, their sense of isolation will, by itself, be very therapeutic. Above, we will empower them."

I momentarily pondered her use of 'we' before I answered. Did this mean she was already developing a cadre of women to staff her fantastically improbable and still non-exis-

tent programs? Was I meant to be part of this bizarre but intriguing scheme? Or was this simply the royal 'we'?

"Miss Carver, this is a wonderful experiment. I had a very close girlfriend I really cared about. There were times we felt so alone but at least we had each other. She had a brother who was the kind of boy you describe..."

"Of course, Patricia, I don't mean to cut you off but this is neither the time nor place to share memories of a wasted past. I promise we'll talk more some other time.. For now we have to get on with staff orientation. My secretary will give you a packet of orientation information and schedules. I'm afraid you'll find the week quite tedious."

How dare she speak to me of a wasted past! It was by no means wasted. My memories of Val and of Len were important to me. Val was my support and my affirmation. Len showed me that the artificial, rigid social roles could be rejected without being struck by lightning from heaven. Len had made a difficult choice and often paid a price for keeping to his choice, but in making the choice he did, he was true to himself. I had profited from knowing Val and Len, had been reassured that I, too, could be whatever I decided to be. What was wasted was Miss Carver's clumsy, inappropriate turn of phrase.

Miss Carver's hollow statement made to cover up for her insensitivity told me that there was a very selfish and unfeeling aspect to this woman. My instincts told me she was a user who would take advantage of anyone who could help advance her schemes. I would have to be more guarded. She was grandiose if nothing else. Her grand plan to empower young women and a select group of boys who identified with women or even as women was imaginative and appealed to my own view of the world and of social relations. It was inconceivable that any of this could possibly come to fruition although I was thrilled by the thought. It was time to change the subject although I did it more diplomatically than Miss Carver did when she cut off my attempt to share recollections of Val and Len. I tried to bring the conversation away from Miss Carver's grandiose scheme and back to the pragmatic issues of a new teacher.

"Miss Carver, there's still an open teaching period on my program..."

"I'm fully aware of that. There's a mentoring project I'm thinking about launching. It's going to include both individual and group aspects of counseling a select group. Perhaps 'elite group' would be a more apt description. Your background and personality make you uniquely suited for what I have in mind. However, I need to be sure of your unwavering and wholehearted support before I say more. Need I add loyalty?"

Miss Carver's tone and posture told me in no uncertain terms that no further information about this mentoring project would be forthcoming; not now and probably not for a long time. Despite her haughty demeanor and her air of distant superiority, there was something about Miss Carver that made me want to know more about her, to draw close to her, to be accepted by her and to become part of her world. It wasn't simply physical attraction although that was part of it.

She sat down on a leather couch facing the visitor's chair and crossed her shapely legs. I turned to face her directly, adjusting the full skirt of my shirtwaist dress as I did.