

NEW GAME NEW RULES



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NEW GAME, NEW RULES

By Mardee Louise Prynne

I guess for some kids, kids with no plans for college, the months after high school can be living the blues. No longer the big men and women on campus, they've got to learn a whole new set of rules whether for work or for college. Dullsville! For me they were anything but that although they started off like they might be. Sure, I had to learn a new set of rules but they were for an entirely different game than I had ever imagined I might play. Let me tell you about it.

My older stepsister and I got on well enough for the few years we were under the same roof. Marcie was bright, witty with a very attractive face and a figure to match. She was, however, angry. Tough and wiry, she had lightning reflexes which, a combination which gave boys and even men pause before they tried having their way with her. She had a way of looking after stray puppies and stray kittens, both the four legged kind and the human kind.

Kids who were thought of as oddballs or sissies felt safe when Marcie was around even though they too were intimidated by her personality and the feminine yet challenging sexuality she exuded. I picked up on those values, and after she graduated from high school, I took over her role of looking after the losers. It wasn't any kind of chore because I got to know and understand all sorts of kids I might not have gotten to know otherwise. I kind of liked a few of them. "Liked" is a funny word with lots of different meanings. You can like someone because they're an okay kid and you can like someone because they turn you on. Don't get me wrong; I was never very close to many of them during high school. Maybe it was partly because at some level I was afraid of losing status that I avoided getting really friendly with the weird kids whether they were boys or girls.

It was a few weeks after I finished high school that first great exception came my way. The big difference with that one was that I didn't realize just how this kid was would turn out to be when we first met.

Friday night wasn't a date night in our neighborhood back in the early fifties. Some kids got together in impromptu gatherings at someone's house or apartment. Most of us just hung out along the main business street or went to a movie especially if there were two different double features playing around the area. That way we could see one with our friends on Friday night and the other on a date on Saturday night. It also gave us an opportunity to look over girls who didn't go to the same school we went to and to try to get any girl we thought cute into a conversation so we could get her phone number. Even though I had finished high school a year early, I still hung out with my friends who were still in school as we all pursued the time honored rituals for meeting girls. It was a late summer Friday night about a month after I turned eighteen when I found myself looking at the lobby cards outside the Elmwood Movie Theatre. It was early and I hadn't yet hooked up with any of my crowd. I turned to move on and almost bumped into kid I had never seen around before. "Oh, sorry. I didn't realize anyone was behind me."

She wore tan slacks and a pea jacket in light blue rather than navy. Saddle shoes completed her wholesome/casual ensemble. Silky honey colored hair was cut short and brushed across her forehead in side swept bangs. She had a wonderfully unique voice that would have been a viola had it been a musical instrument. The regional accent, which I couldn't place, was enough to tell me that she was not from this or any other part of New York City.

"No, my fault really," she replied. "I always move so quietly that I startle people. Just one of the ways I surprise them." She wrinkled her face as if disapproving of something she had just thought. Then she continued as lightly as if nothing had disturbed her. "They usually get used to it and to me."

She kept glancing over her shoulder as if she were expecting someone or something to sneak up on her.

"Mind if I walk with you for a while?" I asked since I was taken by her looks and style.

"Are you sure? I'm not what I seem to be."

"Yeah, I'm sure."

We walked away from the brightly lighted entrance of the movie theatre. A pair of would be Ivy League types approached from the other direction and, not realizing we were together started cat calling at my yet unnamed companion. Why, I wondered, were they calling this sweet kid a pervert, a queer and worse? They were intent on keeping some sort of promise to get even "... 'cause you made me look bad." The implication was that they were going to beat up this cutie.

"Can it, you jerks," I snarled at them.

"Hey, keep out if this. It's none of your business."

I stepped forward, grabbed big mouth by the collar and shoved him over the hood of a parked car. His pal kept a respectful distance.

"I ever hear about you bothering her, I'll find you and feed you your teeth."

They took off at a brisk walk with no further persuasion needed.

My new friend looked upset.

"Relax. They won't bother you again."

"Thanks ever so much. It's never been this bad before but then again I've never lived in a big city neighborhood before. You see my parents are divorced... Let's not talk about my misfortunes."

"I'd like to walk you home. Maybe you can give me your phone number so we can talk some more. Say, why don't we go to the movies. My treat."

"Are you sure? You may have the wrong impression of me."

"I'm sure. And as far as the wrong impression goes, I don't think you're a slut or anything like that. Are you sure I can't treat you to the movies? "

"Maybe some other time. Let's just walk for now. By the way my name's Teddy."

"Hi, Teddy. I'm Dan."

We turned off the main street and onto a tree lined residential block. Our hands accidentally brushed. Teddy's skin felt soft against mine. There was something different about Teddy; something I could sense but not describe and whatever that was was turning me on and it seemed as different as Teddy. At the same time I had this strange and disconcerting feeling that being turned on by Teddy was something that shouldn't be happening to me.

Teddy stumbled on an uneven spot on the sidewalk which gave me an excuse to make physical contact with her. I caught her elbow and fore arm and held her gently while she regained her balance. She put her hand on the back of mine and left there for a few seconds. Then that strangely upsetting feel that I was being turned on when I shouldn't have been. Was it, I wondered, her being so petite that made her seem too young for me to date or was it that she came from a place that was different from this unsophisticated neighborhood?

"Dan, you have the strongest hands, so large and so powerful. I'm so glad you kept me from falling."

She dropped my hand suddenly.

"My hands come with the family business. My father runs a tile business; sells and installs. I'm learning the business and do a lot of tile work. My stepsister runs the office, keeps the books and still has the energy to go to college at night. She's really the brain of the family.

"Yeah, but speaking of hands, you've got really long fingers, kind of graceful. You play piano or something?"

"Dan, you're so observant. Yes, I do play piano, quite seriously really. That's why mother and I moved to New York, so I could study with some better teachers."

"So that's why you were so afraid of hurting your hand!"

We walked on in silence for a few more minutes until Teddy paused in front of the walk of a smaller but well kept house.

"This is where I live. I'd invite you in for tea or coffee but everything is a mess. You see we're still unpacking. Just moved in a few days ago. That's my car in the driveway. Mother's is in the garage. You can see we still haven't gotten New York plates. I'll put mine in the garage as soon as we unpack what's stored in there."

Two things struck me. If she was old enough to drive in New York City, she had to be eighteen which meant Teddy was not too young for me to date. The other thing was that Teddy was making small talk which I hoped meant she didn't want me to leave her just yet. Meanwhile Teddy and I were moving closer to the front steps of her house. Where there's life there's hope, I reassured myself.

"That's okay. We'll see each other again if that's okay with you."

Teddy nodded and then took off her pea jacket and handed to me to hold as she dug her keys from her pocket and started to unlock the front door.

"Yes, I'd like that very much. But please, please, Dan, be sure that you understand. Your friends will talk if they know you spend any time with me."

She knelt down to retie her shoelace. Her slacks pulled taut across her rump treating me to the outline of her panties.

"No, we shouldn't ever get together again. Dan, you don't get it. I would love nothing better than to see you again, to let you take me to the movies. But you'll be hurt.

"Do you remember when one of those jerks said I made him look bad? Well, it was because he realized he was mistaken about me; mistaken like you are now. Sure, I'm pretty and I've always been very girlish but I'm a boy, at least officially. Oh, I know I look like a girl but legally I'm a boy."

That explained that strange sense of foreboding, that feeling that I shouldn't be getting turned on by Teddy. Despite the prevailing values of the fifties I wasn't about to bolt which surprised me. Maybe, on some level I realized that Teddy had, judging by the lines showing through his slacks, a penis in his panties. I should have been panicked but I still wasn't going to run away from Teddy especially not since I noticed the tears in his eyes.

I caught him by the wrists and looked down into his eyes. True he wasn't a girl but I couldn't think of him as a boy.

"Oh, Dan. That was so hard for me to say to someone as nice as you. I'm just such a freak. And yes, I am wearing panties. Go ahead and leave but don't hate me. Here's where I say not to hit me. Sometimes that works." Her talking suddenly accelerated. "I don't know why I'm saying this but I'm not afraid you might hit me. But, Dan, it would make a difference to me if I knew you wouldn't hate me."

I held up my hand in the common sign to stop and rested my fingers gently on her lips. Teddy took my wrist in her hand and held it as she gently kissed my palm. I spoke as I drew my hand away from her mouth

"I could never hate you. Why would I even want to? Juts don't ever call yourself a freak again. You're a really special kid."

I pulled Teddy close to me and hugged her (Yes, her is the appropriate pronoun for a girl even if she does have a dick.) She rested her head against my chest and cried. Then she

looked up at me and smiled. "Thank you," she whispered and then in a soft but matter of fact voice, gave me her phone number.

Reluctant to end our embrace, I softly touched my lips to hers. Teddy rose up on tip toe and parted her lips as we kissed.

A sense of guilt and of fear, fear of being queer, should have overwhelmed me but no such feelings followed.

The kiss was tender and full of promise. Teddy looked up at me with a wonderfully mysterious half smile. I wondered if she wasn't having some kind of bizarre laugh at my expense.

"Teddy, I can't believe you're not really a girl."

"Oh, I guess you can say I'm really a girl but not a real girl. You know, I can pass myself off as a girl any old time. I'd love to live as girl but that's against the law and against what everyone expects. And I have a cock and balls like a boy so I'm not a real girl but I'm really more girl than boy. There I go babbling on. I'm sorry to make you listen to my ranting and just in case you still don't think I'm telling the truth about what I ma, let me prove it to you."

With that said, Teddy put her hand on mine and guided it to her crotch. My heart seemed to stop as I felt the outline of her dick under her slacks. I should have been revolted but I wasn't. Teddy kept her hand on mine as if trying to prevent me from pulling it away but there was little chance of that happening as I felt my own prick stiffening. My hand slipped further between Teddy's legs as I massaged her balls.

Teddy half moaned, half spoke in response to my fondling her. "Please believe me. I don't want you stop. It's just that if we don't, I'm going to be all over you and the front porch is no place for sex."

Teddy's next move belied what she had just said. She put her arms around my neck and wrapped her legs around my waist as her tongue probed my mouth. I started to cum just as Teddy whimpered that she was cumming.

Sure, I had been with lots of real girls and had a wide experience of "The Big O" in every kind of situation from heavy petting to hand jobs to oral to full out in bed fucking but this was different. It was spontaneous and mutual like when you first experiment with petting only a lot more intense. Except for the undeniable fact that Teddy wasn't a girl, it was an experience worth repeating.

"Dan, please, please...I didn't mean for that to happen. Go ahead and hit me. It always happens that way sooner or later. Juts not in my face..."

"Teddy, get a hold of your self," I said as I held her by her upper arms. "Why would I even think about hitting you? What happened wasn't anyone's fault and it felt good so let's leave it at that. And I promise I'll call you."

I headed home to find the light on in Marcie's room, the door ajar.

"Still at the school books, hey? Wish I had your brains."

"You do have a good head, Dan. You're at least as smart as I am. Come on in and chat. Say, you look like you've got something on your mind. Did anything bad happen to night?"

"Not bad, not really bad. Just different and maybe embarrassing."

"So tell me. Maybe I can help you work out whatever's bothering you."

"Marcie, you're a pal and I trust you with my life but what I tell you stays between us to the grave."

"Sounds serious; I swear to keep quiet about what you tell me."

So I opened up to her. When I finished, I looked down at my hands waiting for Marcie's words of wisdom. She got up from her chair, walked over to me put her hand under my chin and turned my face up to hers.

"Listen to me. Lots of men and women have an experience like that. And it doesn't mean you're queer or any thing like that... You don't believe me, do you?"

I looked up at her with a puzzled smile. She sat back on her bed, crossed her legs and allowed her skirt to ride up. She recrossed her legs allowing a view of her the front edge of her intensely white panties which was an arresting sight even though her thighs were held close together. I felt my cock stir which reassured me that I could still respond to an attractive woman.

"Marcie, you've got a great way of getting your point across; very persuasive."

We both started to laugh.

"Thanks again for being a real pal," I said as I headed for my room.

"Wait a second, Dan. There's something I want to tell you but don't tell Pop or anyone else just yet. I'm looking for my own apartment. Another semester and I'll have my degree so it's time to get out on my own."

—

As I undressed in my room, I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror attached to the top of my dresser. I didn't look any different although I didn't why I might have thought I would.

Okay, so I was turned on by Teddy but that doesn't make me a queer because I thought she was a girl. And even though I just came, came really hard, I wasn't exactly unaffected by Marcie's way of reminding me I'm not queer. Shit, look at me. I'm thin but really hard muscled. At least I'm not all hairy like some of the guys. Yeah, nothing about me looks queer and that's because I'm not.

Stripped down to my briefs, I decided to do a few pushups to tire me out. Fifty followed by one hundred sit-ups. Of course the cum spot on the front of my reminded me of the strangely satisfying escapade of earlier that evening. Thank goodness for a step sister who understood me. My mind shifted to wondering what Marcie was really all about and what it would be like to watch her undress.

I slipped into my bathrobe, grabbed a pair of fresh briefs and a tee shirt from my drawer and headed to the bathroom that Marcie and I shared. I put my clean underwear on the hamper that was for Marcie's exclusive use. I turned on the shower and waited a few seconds for the water to run warm. As I waited my eye fell on the hamper. I stepped forward opened it and took at the first silky garment I felt. The red nylon panties felt so good in my hand. I pressed the shimmering nylon against my dick and shuddered with erotic delight. It was clear why a boy as effeminate in appearance as Teddy would prefer these to the coarse heavy cotton that guys like me, real guys were expected to wear.

After showering and brushing my teeth, I put on the clean briefs and tee shirt, went to my room, slid under the covers and quickly fell asleep. Dreams soon intervened. Pleasant at first, visions of Teddy or a girl very much like her, in a yellow shirtwaist dress with a crinoline petticoat. The wind stirred her skirt and petti to reveal only the smallest amount of tanned skin above her knees yet that was enough to turn me hard even as I dreamed. She smiled at me, beckoning from across a meadow for me to come to her. I walked toward expectantly and then I was overcome by a sense of urgency. I needed to get to Teddy to protect her, to save her from something awful. No matter how quickly I moved the gap between us never narrowed. I was yelling for her to wait, that I would come to her as soon as I could, that there was nothing to be afraid of. I somehow caught up to her but she was trying to get away from me. As I caught her from behind, she slammed her bottom hard against my crotch. Suddenly my whole body began to quiver as my cock spurted cum all over both of us. I realized this was a very weird wet dream. There was a hand on my shoulder as I awoke with the realization that I had been screaming in my sleep and that Marcie was shaking me awake.

"Dan, Dan, it's okay. Either you were having a nightmare or one hell of a sexy dream or both."

"Marcie, thanks for being here tonight. This makes twice in one night. I owe you..."

"You owe me nothing. I care about you so I'll always be here for you."

Marcie switched on the reading light on the headboard. "You might feel better if you tell me your dream."

I nodded as I realized that Marcie hadn't even bothered to put on a robe or peignoir or whatever it is that girls use when they need to be modest. Don't get me wrong about Marcie; she was no tease. She was wearing a barely opaque mid thigh length nightie, modest enough except for no robe. That meant to me that she was in a rush to see why I was screaming that she didn't bother with false modesty and any modesty would have been false in that situation.

My breathing had slowed to just about normal at least as normal as it could be with Marcie sitting on the edge of my bed. She slid back to the foot of the bed and curled her legs under her bottom. Marcie made no effort to conceal her panty crotch. She wasn't trying to turn me on, just acting as casual and as open as if we were truly related, related by blood rather than by the happenstance of our parents having married each other.

"Danny, I'm no trained psychologist but I do know enough to tell you that when a dream turns into a nightmare it's because you can't resolve whatever conflict or wish or other thing that triggered the dream."

I sat silently looking from Marcie's face to her panty crotch and back again. Again my stepsister's charms were getting to me while reassuring me of my normalcy.

"What's the matter, Danny? Cat got your tongue?"

"Marcie. You hit the nail on the head. I was turned on, turned on big time by Teddy. I was chasing her in my dream because I wanted sex with her but I can't. I wouldn't even now how to begin having sex with a boy, not even a fairy boy as cute and as sexy as Teddy."

I started squirming as I realized that even as I was denying I would know what to do with a lover like Teddy, images of what would pass between us were going through my mind.

"So why is that upsetting you if you have no interest in sex with Teddy or any other fairy boy?"

"Shit, Marcie. It may just be I really would be willing to try sex with the right boy/girl!"

"Danny, good you said boy/girl and not fairy girl like you said just before. Shows some respect, respect for what you want and respect for yourself." Marcie paused and then went on. "You and I have always liked these late night chats but pretty soon we won't be able to have them on account of I'm going to move out as soon as I graduate from college. That's in January. If you ever need to talk stop by or even sleep over at my place."

"Pop's not going to like that. You know how old fashioned he can be. What if he fires you from your job if you move out?"

"I should worry. I've got better things lined up. You should find a better deal, too. Yeah, sure, I know the business will be yours someday but he'll work you like a slave until he dies. Sorry, if I'm being insensitive but what I'm saying is true."

"No, you're right as usual. To tell the truth I was thinking about joining up and not coming back here after I get discharged."

"Smart move, Danny."

Marcie gave me a serious look tempered with a smile and then leaned forward so she was on her hands and facing me as I sat leaning against my pillow. I wondered what she was about to do at the same time afraid of what she scheme she might be hatching.

"Be a good boy and let me help you get out of those sticky undies."

Marcie referring to my cum soaked underpants as undies was more than a little exciting as she reached forward and pulled the sheet off my legs. Her knees were now at my feet as she put her hands on either side of my hips and tugged my briefs. I raised my hips so as to allow her to pull my briefs off. She flung them aside and looked at me.

"Naughty boy, wetting your pants like that! But we can't have you exposed like that. You may borrow my panties but only if you ask nicely, show me the deference I deserve."

Marcie had opened up something that was buried inside me; the desire to wear panties but not simply panties. That moment was an epiphany. It was the awakening to the real-

ization that I wanted to wear feminine underthings. Panties were okay to start but I would experience brassieres, girdles, stockings before I would be satisfied.

I rose from the bed only to have Marcie put her hands on my shoulders and guided me to my knees. "That tee shirt makes you look silly, even more naked than if you were totally nude." The hint didn't need repetition and in a few seconds the tee shirt was tossed aside.

Marcie turned her back to me so that her tush was at eye level. I pressed my face to the warm cotton covering her firm butt and kissed the top of her nether cleavage through the soft cotton of her panties.

"Danny, you have such marvelous potential." Her voice was low like Marlene Dietrich's but without the German accent. She turned to face me, gently put her hand under my chin and gently raised me to my feet. "It would be a terrible waste of talent if you didn't develop your gifts."

I stood nude before her, reminding myself that we were not blood relations as I became more aware of my intense, almost painful erection. Glancing down at myself must have betrayed my discomfort to Marcie who smiled scornfully as she ran her finger tips over my nipples making them as erect as my dick. Then she cupped my balls in her hand and squeezed so hard that I shrieked. To my greater surprise, the pain felt good!

"I'm awfully sorry but I just couldn't resist. And don't tell me it felt all bad." Marcie was almost apologizing for the new sensation she had given me.

"No, no, Marcie. It felt good, exciting."

"You see, Danny, there's so much you can still learn. Just open your mind and let me be your mentor."

I nodded.

"Listen to me, Danny, honey. Pop will be home soon and you know how miserable he can make things. No sense pissing him off. Quickly now," she lowered her voice along with her panties. Stepping out of them, she held them on her index finger.

Here, take these and try them on. I'll bet you'll love sleeping in them. Just drop them in the hamper in the morning."

I shook my head. I may have been fascinated by a girl like Teddy but I wasn't about to become one. Marcie said nothing but seemed to be taking my 'no' at face value.

She turned to leave but paused, turned to me, and, holding her panties so that they obscured whatever shadow of hair that might have showed through her nightie, she spoke as if she were having second thoughts about what had just happened between us.

"Danny, neither of us planned what just happened. It's never going to happen again and it is never going to be mentioned again but that doesn't mean you don't have talent. I'm not sure what it is or even what I mean by that but I still want to help you perfect it; like a counselor or an advisor. Forget it! This sounds too crazy."

Pop was all ready sitting in the kitchen reading the paper when Marcie and I came down for breakfast the next morning. It was a busy day in the shop. It used to be that Pop

would go out to do estimates but kept the shop closed on Saturdays. Halfway through high school I started going with him to do estimates. Now I could come to within a couple of dollars of Pop's estimates. The shop was open almost every Saturday these years. The do it yourself customers came in and bought all their supplies. We never sold them more than they needed and even helped them by cutting tiles to fit odd shaped spaces at no charge. They liked that they got a fair price, some free advice, occasional free custom tile cutting, and not least of all, a chance to ogle Marcie's great legs and cleavage. The business was very lucrative but I didn't want it; not then.

Pop looked up from his paper and eyed us both with a funny look that said he was about to spring a surprise on us.

"Marcie, I know you're finishing college pretty soon so I guess you'll be going out on your own. Come on. Don't try to kid me; and besides you shouldn't be hanging around here with an old man and this guy." He tilted his head to indicate he meant me.

"Here, Marcie. This'll get you started; furnish an apartment, take a trip, open some kind of office, go for more degrees, invest it. For whatever you like."

He shoved an envelope toward Marcie. A look of shock came over face when she took out the bank check. She dropped the check on the table and threw her arms around Pop's neck. I glanced at the check. It was for ten thousand dollars, year's income for an upper middle class family in the fifties.

Later that morning I managed to catch Marcie at a slow moment in the shop. "And you thought you would have a problem letting Pop know you'd be going out on your own soon."

"Danny, I feel like I'm leaving you flat."

"Don't worry about me."

"Right. Last night you said you're going to enlist rather than wait to be drafted. I guess he'll be okay with that."

"Yeah, okay until he figures out I'm not coming back here either."

"Just promise me one thing. No heroics on the battlefield. I want you back whole."

Pop's voice called from the front of the shop. "Danny, I need you to help this lady with an overall estimate. She has measurements." As I paused next to Pop while he pointed out the woman to me, he whispered "Use all your charm and don't scare her away. Looks like we can get a big contract from her."

She sure did have measurements and they weren't diminished by the fashionable Christian Dior 'new look' ensemble which emphasized her small waist and well proportioned but very adequate bust line. She wore a wide brimmed hat and long gloves which covered her arms to the edge of her three quarter length sleeves. The flared skirt, although long, did little to conceal her shapely legs and chiseled ankles flattered further by her high heel pumps. A bracelet watch was worn on the outside of glove added to the air of classy, glamorous sophistication she exuded. What didn't quite fit with her looks and attire was that she carried a flat leather brief case in addition to her handbag.

Despite her being more than twice my age, I was more than attracted to her. Despite my exertions of the night before, I felt a flutter in my groin as I eyed her. This reassured me that it wasn't only boy/girls like Teddy who could turn me on.

She spoke first. Her accent suggested somewhere in Europe. Germany or Austria would have been my first guesses. "Hello, Danny. It's so good to meet you. I am Karen Petrovna. I'm so very pleased that you can wait on me." She extended her hand and to my surprise, her grip was nothing like the soft indeterminate handshake of so many women and girls of that era. Although she didn't squeeze, not exactly, her firm grasp of my hand suggested a strength that reflected physical as well as emotional power. That sensation of her power made me reluctant to be released from her grip.

I introduced myself and admitted to her that I was flattered she was pleased to have me at her service. She described the work she wanted done in both her townhouse in Brooklyn Heights as well as a house she was planning to remodel on The Delaware River. She added, "I know that's not your usual area but I can pay well for your time and trouble. I suppose you want to know how I selected this shop. You import tile directly from Italy so there are no middlemen and your reputation is unquestionably excellent. And to be frank, I was taken by your looks and by the young lady's." She nodded toward Marcie. "I assure you I have no improper intent. If one must do business it's just as well to be among beautiful young people." As she smiled her teeth parted slightly to allow the tip of her tongue to slide slowly over her upper teeth. Karen Petrova then unzipped the brief case and spread some detailed plans complete with linear measurements as well as area calculations. Pop was right; there were some serious contracts in the offing as well as some serious contact with Miss Petrovna. She wasn't the only one who liked doing business with beautiful people. That applied to me as well even if it meant compounding my general state of horniness.

"These drawings and measurements will be very helpful. Thank you for bringing them, Miss Petrovna. Do you have any idea of your color schemes?"

"Yes, I do. I have paint samples with me. I also have some catalogue numbers of samples I've seen here and there. And, Danny, it is Madame Petrova or as you Americans say 'Mrs. Petrova.'"

"Oh, I'm so sorry."

"You needn't be and I only corrected you to see you squirm uncomfortably." Her laugh suggested she was joking but her remark made me aware that I was vaguely intimidated by this woman.

"In that case we can go into one of the offices and do some cost estimates."

Once in the small sales office, Madame Petrova sat herself in the customer's seat and asked if she could smoke. I half expected her to take a cigarette holder from her pocket-book but no; just a package of Pall Mall and a lighter. She offered a cigarette to me to me. I took it although I had never smoked a long cigarette before. "Oh, and do call me Karen in private."

Karen tamped her cigarette against an enameled gold lighter before lighting it and then moving the lighter flame to my cigarette. Crossing her legs in the petticoated, flared skirt gave me an unfettered view of her thighs clear up to the edge of the darker welting at her

stocking tops. She had no problem with this rather uninhibited way of sitting even though ladies invariably made certain not to reveal even their knees when seated in skirts in the fifties. Karen also made it clear that I was supposed to notice her unrestrained posture by running her fingers over the tops of her knees and then smiling pleasantly.

"You are wondering about me, aren't you? My accent, the Russian name. The accent is Russian with an overlay of German. You see I was born in Berlin to Russian émigrés who fled after the Revolution. They were killed by Stalinist agents when I was on the verge of becoming..., becoming a woman. I was fostered by a General Petrov and eventually became his lover, his mistress you might say. We never married so, in effect I was his common law wife. That is all you need know for now." I wondered why Karen had the need to tell me so much of her personal history and why she added 'for now' when saying that's all I need to know considering that I gave no indication of wanting to know more than she had already told me.

After an hour or two I had a very lucrative order with a check for a fifty percent deposit and a contract for us to install the tile. Pop was pleased and I was looking forward to seeing Madame Petrova at her townhouse.

We closed at one on Saturdays and Pop left leaving Karen to do the books and make up the bank deposit.

I sat waiting to walk Marcie to the bank for the night deposit. She knew what was on my mind.

"That Madame Petrova is creepy, isn't she? And it isn't just because she's a foreigner putting on airs. Glad it's you who is going to have to deal with her and not me."

"Yeah, she is strange. Calls herself Madame even though she was never married to General Petrov. She really is stuck up in a strange way. Had the need to spill her background to me before we could get down to business. Something's not quite kosher there."

"I wonder what she's all about. Say, there's this graduate library assistant at my college. They say he's an expert on all sorts of off beat history and he claims to know lots of stuff about the Russian émigrés who fled to Berlin and Paris. He's different from most guys but he's okay. Seems like a loner. I'll bet if we invited him out for coffee or something, he'd fill us in or tell us how to find out about this Karen Petrova."

We got home to find a letter for me from the draft board. Now I had to sign up or be drafted. Pop would have no complaints about me leaving since the being drafted gave me no choice but to serve. I decided to sign up in order to be able to choose the branch of service I would go into. That might also buy me a few weeks time to find out more about Karen and to try to see Teddy.

I walked by Teddy's house a number of times over the next few days in hopes of catching Teddy as she was leaving or returning home. It was as if she disappeared like a dream. At work I was desperately making phone calls in hopes of expediting delivery of Karen

Petrova's. This was as much in hope of seeing her at her townhouse as it was of completing the delivery and collecting the balance due us.

Marcie approached me a few days later to tell me the check from "that Petrova creep cleared. There's got to be a story lurking there," she added gratuitously. "Sorry, Danny. You got a thing for her but play with fire and you might get burned."

"Okay, but just lay off a little until we talk with your friend from school."

Marcie had made an appointment for us to meet her teaching assistant friend at a café in Brooklyn Heights the next Sunday afternoon. I parked the car and walked toward the small café where I had dropped Marcie. On turning the corner I noticed a slender young man crossing the street in my direction. He wore powder blue slacks, an unbuttoned camel's hair double breasted polo coat, and a beret tilted at a rakish angle. This rather androgynous ensemble was complemented by a long scarf thrown around his neck and over his shoulder with a studied carelessness. I noticed him with the same feeling I had when I first noticed Teddy.

Much to my astonishment this young man hurried to catch up with me and gently caught my elbow for an instant before dropping it. I paused and turned to face him as he gave me a disarmingly pleasant smile. If this were a girl and not a young man smiling at me like that I would have said 'flirtatious' in describing that smile.

"I'm so terribly sorry to seem familiar but you must be Danny." I nodded and opened my mouth to speak but he went on. "You don't look a bit like Marcie, not in the least. But there is something about your walk that tells me you two are related. I'm Leslie, Marcie's friend."

Leslie extended his hand and I took it. His fingers were loose and his skin soft. It was like shaking hands with the most gentle of girls. Leslie facial features matched his hands; perfect Cupid's bow lips, fair but pale skin, green eyes and blond hair that peeked coquettishly from under the beret.

"It's so good to meet you. But let's hurry. We can't keep Marcie waiting." Leslie turned in the direction of the café but was slow to completely release my hand. His soft, gentle hand felt good in my own but I dropped it rather than risk being shouted as a queer in the middle of the street. Suddenly, I felt disgusted with my self for worrying about being called 'queer.' Hadn't I risen to Teddy's defense; then again, that was I thought she was a real girl.

There was earnestness and charm about Leslie just as there was an androgynous beauty about him. That charm and beauty made me want to know more about him, to spend time with him, to get to know him. How closely, how intimately were questions that flashed through my mind but which slipped from awareness almost immediately.

In the few weeks I would before beginning my military service, in a branch yet to be determined, I might as well not let any preconceived macho ideas get in the way of making richly fascinating friends and acquaintances however out of the ordinary they may be.

Marcie was waiting for us inside the café where the hostess recognized Leslie and immediately seated us at a quiet table. "Leslie, you were right when we set this up. You look

very different outside of work than you do at the college." Marcie looked as surprised at Leslie's flair for dressing as I had been.

It became apparent to me as we ordered omelets and white wine that Marcie had been acquiring sophistication as well as book learning in her night college classes.

Leslie draped his polo coat over his chair, removed his beret and shook his hair loose. I was more and more taken by him as I noticed the unmistakably feminine rings on his fingers and the bangle bracelets on his wrists. He tilted his head as he raked his fingers through his hair combing it into a casual style.

"Let's get to the point," he said in a soft, conspiratorial voice as he leaned closer. "You want to know about General Petrova. Well, he had some very peculiar testes in sexual partners. Karen Petrova was his common law wife just as she claims to have been. However, General Petrov likely had more than one wife or lover. The mystery is how she survived the camps after being rounded up by the Nazis. That she was a collaborator of the worst sort is one theory. She managed to amass a great deal of money from providing what in some circles are called English lessons. In plain words, she was and likely is a dominatrix. That part is true but doesn't account for the money that she had almost as soon as the war in Europe ended."

We sipped wine and nibbled salads as I sat dismayed by what Leslie had told us.

"Danny, sweetie, I didn't mean to upset you. I know what you've just heard is hard to believe but I have some material in my apartment that I can show you if you care to come by my place for an hour or two. If you don't have time now, we can make a date to go over the material when you feel like it."

Marcie ordered a plate of pastries and a pot of coffee for the three of us and then walked to the hostess station where she paid the entire bill and tip before returning to our table.

"Thanks, Marcie, but that wasn't necessary."

"Of course it wasn't but I can treat my two of my best guys to lunch especially since I brought you two together."

It sounded vaguely like something she might have said had she set up a successful blind date for a girl and a guy. Maybe she knew something that I didn't.

"Can we get back to Karen Petrova for just a second," Leslie said as he brought us back to the reason for this meeting. "Danny, you have a unique opportunity to add to the files various individuals and agencies share, files specific to Karen Petrova. We need to talk more about this but in a less public place."

"Well, if that invitation to go to your place still holds, I'm game. Just give me an example of those agencies."

"Is Interpol acceptable as an agency?"

I nodded.

"So we have a date then." Leslie suddenly blushed and then corrected himself. "Sorry. I meant to say appointment."

I smiled awkwardly but feared saying what was going through my mind. I wasn't about to say a date would suit me fine with Marcie sitting there with us. Marcie excused herself saying she wanted to meet a friend and left us alone to, as she put it "to get know each other." That sounded like she the third party on a date. It was as if Marcie wanted to play matchmaker for Leslie and me. The short hair on the back of my neck stood up as I wondered what would happen if I went to Leslie's with her. At that instant I had admitted to myself that by using 'her' in thinking about Leslie she was, in my mind, as female as any real girl. This was the second time in a couple of weeks that I was reacting to a guy like it was a real girl. What amused me was that I wasn't at all upset at the idea.

Leslie moved his hand across the small table and rested his finger tips lightly on the back of my hand. The thrill of his touch brought me back to the moment.

"A penny for your thoughts," was all he said as he tilted his head and winked.

I parked the car after a short drive later Leslie and I were strolling along one of the tree lined side streets as she led me to her apartment. It turned out to be in a nineteenth century Greek revival brick building overlooking the Prospect Park. We went inside and walked up to the second floor where Leslie unlocked the door and switched on the light. I noticed a wrought iron spiral stair way that led to the second floor of this impressive duplex apartment.

We were in seemed to be a small entrance room that led to a corridor going through to the rear of the first floor. It was well furnished in an eclectic style that had the influence of a woman's hand. Leslie noticed me looking around and smiled proudly.

"Like it? I decorated it myself. Picked out everything, the colors, the furniture and the accessories."

"I love it. It's really personal and very comfortable, livable."

"I'm so glad you like it. Then you wouldn't mind spending time here, would you?"

"I'd like it very much but only if you were here with me." My body was jolted by a burst of adrenalin as I realized we were coming on to each other and that I didn't mind one bit.

"If this were a movie this is where the vamp would say "Mind if I change into something more comfortable?"

"And I would say "I don't mind a bit. Go right ahead."

Leslie kicked off her black patent leather flats as she moved toward the door.

"I'll get some ice so I can mix you a cocktail while I change. Come help me."

Leslie took me by the wrist and led me to an eat-in kitchen toward the rear of the apartment. After taking an ice tray from the freezer compartment of her fridge, she asked me to take out the ice.

"Bucket's in left hand cabinet. Be right back." Leslie had an impish expression as she disappeared down the hall.

I filled the ice bucket, refilled the ice tray with water and replaced it in the fridge. Wondering whether to wait whether I was or return to the room where we had been, I had Leslie called to me from the front of the apartment. I hurried to meet her.

“Something’s different about you.”

“Do you like the difference?”

“I like the way you look but I’m not sure what about you has changed.”

Then it hit me. She had put on the lightest dab of lipstick and had extended her eye lids with a bluish pencil or liner. I smiled knowingly.

“You’ve gilded the lily. You were lovely without makeup but now you’re exquisite.”

“Thank you for being so accepting of me.” A brief pause punctuated by a sigh. “Scotch, rye, bourbon? I even have Irish whisky if that’s your tippie. I mix a mean Manhattan.”

Never having had a cocktail, I thought it was time for one, especially a mean Manhattan, whatever went into one.

Leslie excused herself and returned a few minutes later with a file folder labeled ‘Petrova, Karen.’ She handed it to me and I set it aside saying simply “Later.”

“Please don’t think I’m loose. Sure I’ve invited guys up here before but they always end up slapping me around. You do know that someone like me can’t call the police so I tried to learn to protect myself. Never had a chance to try it since then because I swore off trying to have an affair until I met you today.”

She sat down on the couch very close to me.

Leslie, it’s not that I don’t want you; it’s just that I have to be honest. I got my draft notice. I’ll be signing up this week so I can have my choice of which branch I’ll serve in.”

“Oh, Danny. I promise to write even if you don’t.”

She put her hand behind my head as I turned to meet her lips with my own. The kiss was as superb as Leslie’s beauty. I was hooked and I didn’t mind in the least.

“Danny, honey, I said I was going to change into something more comfortable.”

Leslie stood a few feet in front of me and unbuttoned her blouse. Shrugging it off her shoulders, she let it slide slowly down her arms. The creamy silk of her camisole made me want to reach out and caress her body through the sensuous lingerie. She he undid the top button of her slacks and turned her back to me as she lowered them revealing yellow Van Raalte style brief panties that clung enticingly to her feminine hips and derriere.

Turning to face me once more, she crossed her arms and slowly lifted the cami. Her body was smooth, hairless, her breasts tiny swells surmounted by pink nipples. She ran her hands over hips as I became aware of the outline for cockhead under the soft nylon of her panties. Pulling her close to me, I kissed her navel.

Leslie pulled me to my feet and unbuttoned my shirt, then my trousers. Soon we stood facing each other nude but for brief underpants and panties. The next kiss was deep, slow and redolent with the promise of the intensity that was yet to come. Our hands explored our bodies as we clung close together.

Then we lay side by side on the couch far enough apart for me to trace the lines of Leslie’s now very hard dick through the so conservative panties. I raised my hips as she tugged my briefs down and threw them aside.