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# NO TURNING BACK

**by Eleanor Darby Wright**

## **I. PUMPED UP**

"So when do I get to see them?" asked Allison.

"This weekend?" I asked tentatively.

"Ooo, yes," said Allison and I had to giggle. She sounded positively lewd the way that she spoke over the phone. So, I had had a breast augmentation, finally. I was trying to make it like it was no big deal while Allison obviously wanted to make it into a celebration.

Well, I always had my mouth glued to hers when we were in bed and so Allison had a lot of catching up to do. More likely, though, it was payback she was thinking about after the numerous times I'd been so aroused by her fairly large 'hooters'. Still, I had never thought of her as a woman who would be aroused by breasts on another person, not a man, anyway.

"You're going to get me back, aren't you?" I asked her.

"You betcha," said Allison, in her best Sarah Palin imitation. "I was thinking, too, for Saturday night, who the breast men are whom we know."

"Allison!" I laughed loudly at her. We classified the guys we knew as leg men or breast men or ass men with a few minor categories like hair and toes. Marty Weldon, for example, loved a girl, any girl, who would wear a garter belt and stockings. You could go a night with him and he'd never get past those. Well, Allison said that but I hadn't been inclined to find out even though I had gone out with Marty and a buddy of his many times on a double date with Allie.

Allison giggled, a perfect imitation again of my high-pitched giggle. It had taken me a year of practising to get rid of the throaty chuckle I had been born with.

"Okay," said Allison. "Come up for the weekend and, Joanie, have your hair done, will you? I know there are women's hairdressers in Saint Mark's. I don't want to see you in that horrible ponytail halfway down your back, thank you very much."

"I'll see if Lisa will take me," I said to Allison, remembering the fight between Lisa and Allison when I had gone into the hairdressers for the first time. Lisa had been adamant that she wouldn't serve me and Allison had told her that if she didn't, she, Allison, was going to call the sheriff and have her store license lifted for discrimination and a whole heap of charges, from a hate crime to slander.

Now, a number of years later, I was one of Lisa's regular customers and the only thing I didn't like about what she did for me was that she always cut me a little too short. I liked my hair down my back so that I could put it into a ponytail, a 'horsetail' Allison called it, while Lisa said my hair looked so much nicer when it bounced around my neck. Well, I always got compliments when I had a new perm, which meant newer, blonder streaking. Lisa's friend, Marjorie, liked me going in as well as she always tried out one of her new makeup faces on me. I looked rather pretty after 'the works', I thought, as I flounced out of Lisa's with my newest dress floating femininely about me.

Oh, I always wore my best dress to visit Lisa. She'd have been irate if I showed up in jeans and a top. She wanted to see just how her creations would look at their best, she said, and it had become a running joke between us as she would sniff at the designer dress I was wearing, that had come to me through the mail, and ask me where I got that old rag from.

"You really should think of moving here," said Allison as I agreed to a new hairdo.

"I have customers, Al," I told her.

"There is the Internet," insisted Allison. "You're well established now. You could work from anywhere."

"You could move here," I suggested and Allison laughed back at me.

"What, and leave show business?" she said as I agreed to be with her on the weekend. I called Lisa and she didn't have a cancellation but she would fit me in. What a difference from before when she had proclaimed that she wasn't going to work on 'no drag queen bitch'.

"Going to see your lady friend across the mountains?" Lisa asked and I had to smile and agree that I was. "Going to show off your new titties?" she asked me then with a laugh of her own. She hadn't seen me in a month, I'm sure.

"How did you know?" I asked her. "Oh, this town!"

"Shouldn't go sunbathing on that beach of yours," said Lisa then. "Not now that Owen has a new telescope!"

"Owen!" I gasped, thinking of the sheriff's deputy who had his getaway cottage on the same lake as me.

"Told me to tell you he's never seen a sweeter pair," said Lisa. "You ask me, Joanie, that policeman is going to come crawling around your place very soon following up on a little, private investigating of his own."

Oh, goodness, I hoped not. I mean, Owen was very nice and I got a little shiver out of the way that he looked at me but I didn't want to start any complications 'at home' so to speak. I kept all my partying to my visits to Allison. At home, in Saint Mark's, I was a very sedate and very quiet young woman. Well, not so young any more but I still did think young, at least.

I thanked Lisa for the warning and made a promise to myself that the black bikini and the silver thong that I had been strutting about in, on the deck, as I sketched out plans for my latest creations, were going to go in the bottom drawer of my bedroom. The thing was, how could you complain to the police about a peeping tom, when the peeping tom was the only policeman within miles?

I was still thinking about that one as I loaded the pickup with my suitcases and the special garment bag for my new dresses. No, I didn't wear any pants or jeans for the simple reason that I didn't possess any. Allison always laughed at that when she got dressed down in jeans and t-shirt or little vest-like top when she came to see me.

"Mind you, I like you in your mini-skirts," she said to me. "Go on, Joanie. Walk away from me again and bend and pick up those turquoise earrings you were making."

I knew better than to do that. When I had first met Allison, I hadn't realized that she had me doing all those sorts of things because then I just naturally bent from the waist as if I was still wearing trousers or slacks. Only when she showed me the pictures she had taken of me, every one showing off me and my panties of the day, did I realize what she was doing.

That's when I learned how to do the bunny dip which Allison really objected to. She likes to see me in my panties. She says it turns her on. But then, everything else about me does as well, even my little nips that she kept telling me that I could have enlarged with no health risk to me. So, I had done it. And now she would have something else about me to turn her on.

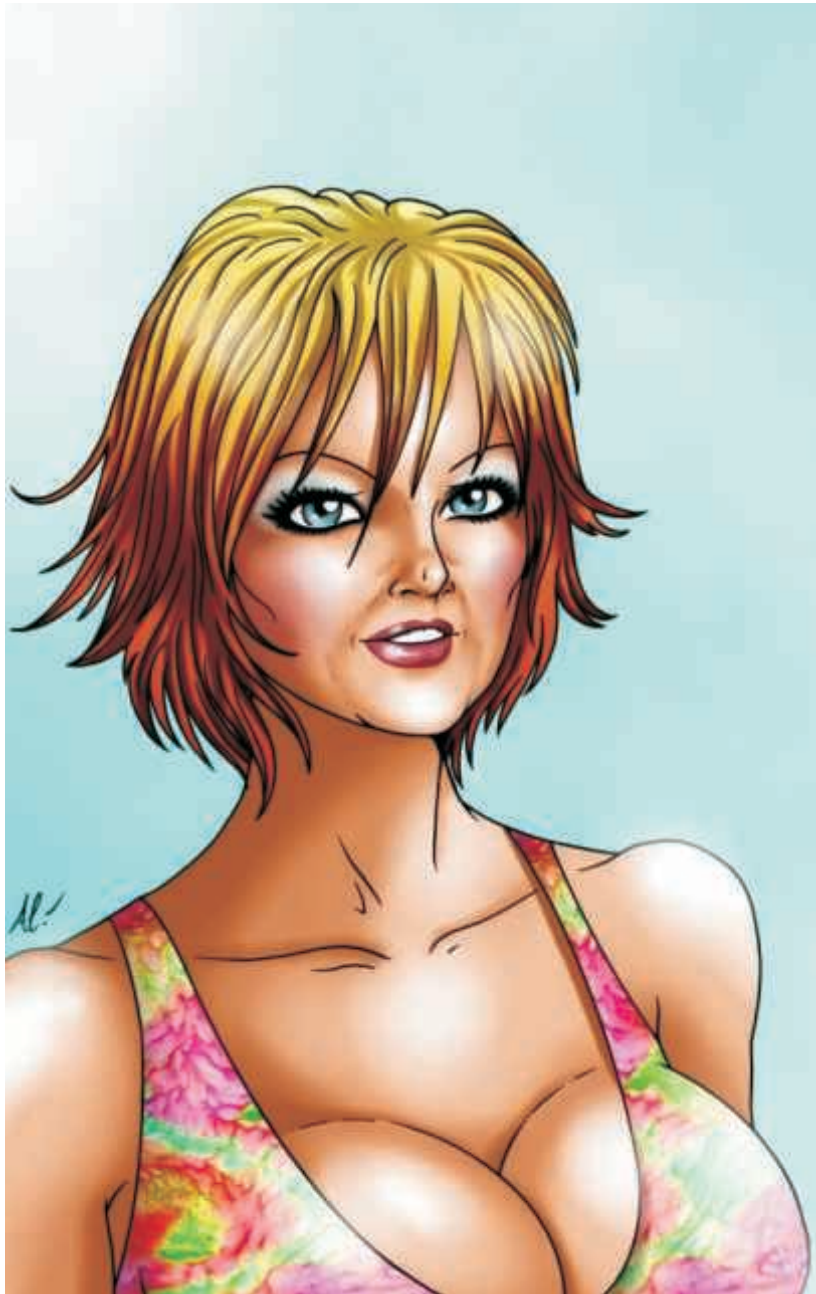
I started off after the visit to Lisa's as early in the morning as she was open. That meant that I drove out of town with my blonde-streaked hair all loose and bouncy about my head, not even the jade earrings I had finished the day before completely covered by the way she had curved and cut my hair. It did look really good and I felt a real vibe from the way I looked, particularly after Marjorie had put more makeup on me than I wore in a week.

It was really easy, Marjorie had kept on telling me, to keep my look, shaping my eyebrows to the thinnest arc they had ever been before applying lots of white and skin-toned eye shadow that really made my eyebrows and eyes look so vividly feminine and attractive. With blusher and a new lipstick, never mind the outrageously expensive perfume, I was ready for a night out with Allison. The only pity was that it was going to take me over a day to reach her.

I should have changed out of my red high heels that matched the colorful dress that I was wearing so that Lisa could see how good I would look for Allison. Lisa approved anyway and so I got on my way. I should have known that my luck would be changing from the start of the trip as I got behind two logging trucks and managed to miss the ten o'clock ferry.

I had to wait for an hour then with two truckers eyeing me all the way to the Ladies' Restroom. Well, I had to go, and then the guys smiled and tried to start a conversation with me as I came clicking in my high heels down the path to my new pickup. I put on my dark sunglasses and refused their offers of coffee and stuff as they tried to talk to me about my pickup and tell me how great a little truck it was.

I'm not interested in trucks. In fact, I'm not interested in most manly pursuits and so the conversations soon petered out. The next ferry was late arriving and we had a huge lineup behind us, the loggers and me. By the time the heavy trucks heading south got off and I got to go on first, well, the ferry had to be re-organized with more loggers having caught up to our line-up. I sighed in frustration as I saw how they parked. I might have been first on the car ferry but I wasn't going to be first off.



It's a steep climb once you come off the ferry anywhere in the mountains and I was blocked by the trucks and campers let off in front of me. I wasn't paying as much attention as I should have been, I suppose, but when I felt the front tire rise up in the air and heard the bang, I knew I had run over something dreadful, something off one of those darned trucks.

"It's just a flat tire," said one of the truckers who was driving one of the rigs that had caught up to me in the line-up. He was the only one to stop as all of the other cars, SUVs and campers took off up the hill as if we were at the start of a race. "Call your automobile association." He'd seen the decal on the back of the truck. "They'll send a truck out from Kenner. Won't be too long."

"An hour out if they started now," I said, swaying in my red dress and heels, looking as frightened and upset as I could. I mean, I could

change the tire, but should I, looking the way that I did? Surely, there must be some white knight about to help me.

A young man jumped down from the truckers' rig, tossing an old, used pack on the side of the road. "Thanks for the ride, Jake," he said to the older trucker. "You go ahead and I'll help the lady. If we pass you before we get to Kenner, if she's not going west, I'll look for another hitch from you."

The older trucker smiled as he looked at me. "I got to go on, lady," Jake said to me. "Best offer you've had today. Adam, isn't it?"

Adam grinned and put out a fairly clean hand and shook my freshly manicured hand lightly. "Yes, it's Adam Richards, ma'am," he introduced himself, taking out his wallet to show me his driving license with a picture of him and his name and an address in Cambridge, where Allison lived.

Ma'am? Well, I was a lot older than this young man. Was I old enough to be his mother? Probably, if I had been pregnant as a young teenager. Well, that wouldn't have been so bad, would it? "Joan Meadows," I said to him. "Have you ever changed a tire on a pickup before, Adam?"

The last cars going up the incline passed us and the cars going back across the lake came slowly down onto the ferry. Almost all of them had a good look at the pickup, the lady driver in her red dress, and the damage I had done to the tire but not, I hoped and prayed, to the wheel casing or axle.

"Yes, ma'am," said Adam with a grin, stepping over to the side of the road and hauling back pieces of timber and some stones to prevent the car from rolling back on the slope. He knew much better than me where the tools were and how to take off hubcaps and undo the nuts holding the wheels. With the amount of force he had to apply to get a couple of them to move, his muscles straining in his t-shirt, I knew that I would never have been able to fix these tires.

"Must have put them on with a hydraulic in the shop," said Adam with a smile. He had very nice, white teeth. I imagined that he was very popular with the young ladies wherever he worked. "But the rest is easy now."

Adam knew how to operate the jack and where to put the supports to keep the car up while he got out the spare wheel, put it on, threw the flat in the bed of the truck along with his pack and then showed me his filthy hands. He was also sweating a lot as we stood there, alone, the last cars having been sardined onto the ferry and it was moving past the headland already.

"I'll walk up to the restroom and clean up," Adam said, pointing up the road. He looked a little uncertain then. "You will wait and pick me up, won't you, ma'am?"

It had occurred to me that I could pitch his bag off my truck and take off at some stop along the way. If I had done it, even after I reassured him that I would do no such thing, I might have saved myself quite the adventure that happened to me. But the Goddess was watching over me. So I waited nervously for my white knight. I even smiled at Adam when he held up his hands for me to inspect, before he got into the front of the pickup, and we headed off to Kenner.

I sat primly behind the wheel as Adam studied me as I knew that he would. Well, men are like that, aren't they, at any age? "Where are you headed to, ma'am?" he asked me then as I drove fairly carefully along the forest-lined, winding road.

"Kenner," I told him. Yes, I could drive with him for an hour. I could put up with his scrutiny and the way that he looked at my legs and stockings until then. Yes, Adam Richards was definitely a leg man.

"I'm bound for Cambridge," Adam said then. "Got a job that starts there."

"On a rig?" I asked him, just because it was Cambridge after all and Cambridge meant oil and gas.

"Yes, ma'am," said Adam. "Going north, way north. Into the winter as well when the ground freezes and the heavy equipment can get in. Many people think you can't work in the north when it's winter. You do lose some days when a blizzard blows in. But it's usually dark and so we work twenty-four hour shifts. Come into town loaded with money then and ready to party."

I glanced at him with a tolerant smile. What was he? Twenty years old? "Who told you all that?" I asked him with as nice a smile as I could. I'm sure a woman of my age would have looked at him and talked to him as I did. He was after all probably thinking that he was my hero after he had fixed the flat tire for me.

"My cousin, Grant," Adam said with a beautiful smile for a man. I could see that he was looking at me and wondering how much he could put me on to impress me. I think I must have been just like Adam Richards when I was as young as him. "He's been up there two years in a row and he's got a pickup, a bit like this, a hemi. You need the power up north. But it's brand-new and all paid for."

"This," I said, patting the dashboard with my hand, noting my freshly painted nails and smooth, manicured skin, "is nothing like a hemi. This wouldn't last five minutes in the Northern Territories or Alaska, either."

"No, ma'am," Adam agreed with a smile. He chatted on about trucks and cars then and we passed Jake and another logging rig on one of the long climbs where they were crawling and we were still moving at the speed limit. Jake blasted his air horn after us and Adam lowered the window to wave back at the guy who had been giving him a ride earlier.

"Isn't it illegal now to hitch along the highways?" I asked Adam and he agreed right away.

"But I'm not hitching with you, ma'am," he said with another grin. The 'ma'ams' were beginning to get on my nerves. "I'm riding with you into Kenner, yes, and after that, I'll wait to see Jake. He said he was going to pull in at the first truck stop in Kenner. You could let me out there, ma'am."

"All right," I said primly, seeing how his eyes were on my flesh-colored stockings again.

Adam was giving me instructions on where I should go to get my tire fixed as we pulled into the service station where he said he would meet Jake and his big rig. "You don't want to be up in the passes and have another one blow, ma'am," he said seriously.



"You just don't know who's going to stop when they see a pretty woman alone like you are."

Well, he had noticed, I thought smugly. I loved being called a woman. I loved anything said about the female gender applied to me. That was why I didn't correct Adam when he called me ma'am. It was so nice to be thought of as a woman. Such words as 'she' and 'her', applied to me, sent shivers and tingles through me. If only you could really get to know me, Adam, I thought smugly. I bet that a simple boy like you would still think that I was a woman, even though I wasn't, when I got through with you.

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## II. GOING SOME OF THE WAY

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"Goodbye," I said nicely when we made the turn at Kenner and there was the first service station just across the bridge, "and thank you, Adam." He smiled at me and took another look at my smooth legs and my stockings before he left, obviously committing them to memory.

"Ma'am," Adam said, looking up at me with a smile. "It was a pleasure."

Adam was just about to slam the door on the pickup when I heard a yell. Adam whirled around and in my side mirror, I saw two guys pointing at him. One of them yelled, "Hey, you!" and began running towards my pickup. Without a second thought, Adam, jumped right up back into the passenger seat.

"Drive!" he yelled at me and I drove. Well, Adam had something in his hand that he had taken out of his pocket. To me it looked like an unopened stiletto knife. I was in a panic as I raced my pickup out of that parking lot, showering Adam's pursuers with dust and gravel. They had their arms up to protect themselves and one of them was clawing at his eyes.

"Oh, slow down, ma'am," said Adam as I jolted him around as well. I was speeding along the bypass with the town of Kenner in the valley below us. "There are a lot of cops around here. I don't want to be stopped by a cop right now."

Adam didn't want to be stopped by a cop? What about me, I was about to say, but I didn't. I didn't want to be stopped by a cop on any pretext. I had a driving license that said that I was Joan Meadows. For a time, I could be 'Joan' as well and not 'John'. So, I carried, in one of my suitcases, the identity of the real me. I hadn't used any of it in a year, and over the 'Net, I didn't have to. I was Joan Meadows, artist, jeweller, buyer and seller of semi-precious stones, as well as I was John to my older customers.

"I can let you off in town," I said to Adam as he stared into the side mirror, checking to see if we were being pursued.



"No, don't do that," Adam said sharply, fingering the closed stiletto blade against his jeans. "Evan lives here." Then he thought about it for a moment. "You live here as well, don't you, ma'am? So you must know Evan Durgan, the mayor's son?"

I shook my head and my hair floated about my neck most seductively. I had to shiver at that. "I, I live out of town," I said hurriedly.

A ghost of a smile crossed Adam's face. "If you don't mind me asking, ma'am, how far out of town? Cambridge?"

I had said a few things just chatting with the kid. I'd wondered at the time how sharp he had been. He hadn't let on at all that I had said where I was really headed. Yes, Adam Richards was a lot sharper than he had appeared.

"Why are you running from those men?" I asked him, trying to figure out what kind of man was riding in the cab with me.

"An argument over a girl last time I was here, what, four days ago," said Adam. "Seems Evan doesn't like anyone making eyes at any of the local girls. But she was willing and we had a real nice time until Evan came busting into our motel room at Sundown Village."

"Our motel room?" I asked him cynically. "Who paid for the room?"

"She did," Adam admitted and then, a few moments later added, "ma'am."

"I guess she was Evan's girl then," I said, wondering where the speed cops were as I raced along. I wouldn't mind at all meeting one now and having them remove this kid and his switchblade from my pickup.

The blade disappeared into Adam's jeans. "I guess she was, but she said her daddy was a park warden," said Adam with a grimace of a smile. "So, you see why I'd rather not be picked up by the police or a warden right now. Please, ma'am, slow down. They're not coming after us and there were radar cops up ahead when I was coming down this way."

"You came down here and now you're going back," I said as I had to ease back on some of the corners. "Haven't you ever thought of taking the bus?"

Adam laughed. "That's what this girl, Molly, said to me, over at Mellon Falls," he said, "but it was a motel room or the bus and a night under the stars. No romance, that girl, she preferred the room. But, I always have good luck on the highway. I'll be back in Cambridge tomorrow, you'll see, and I'll be flying out next week with Grant with a few stories to tell him about this trip that will keep us amused in the winter if we do get snowed in together."

There were signs that there was a last gas station before the mountains ahead. "I can drop you there," I said to Adam and he was surprised.

"You never said, ma'am," Adam said then, "but you are going to Cambridge, aren't you? Is there any reason why I can't ride with you all the way?"

The switchblade in your pocket, I wanted to say. Or that I cannot keep up Joan's voice in the morning until I have had a lot to drink. When I take off my makeup, which I must somewhere along the road as I am not driving all the way to Cambridge on mountain

roads at night, Adam would probably realize that I could never be his mother, despite the chest that I now possessed that suggested that I could.

There were all kinds of mistakes that I could make and most likely would happen when I got tired. I had mentioned the shopping centers in Cambridge and how I had to visit several and take new orders for the jewellery I was newly making. That came after he had admired my necklace, which rested in my cleavage which Adam must have noticed as well. He had liked my ring, my bracelets and my necklace and wondered how easy they were to make.

"Not easy if you do a good job," I had told him testily and he had laughed at that.

"They're very pretty, though, ma'am," Adam had said. "I like polished stones set off in gold. Girls like them, too, and they don't cost much."

I didn't tell him that the stones I was wearing, and the settings they were in, were a collection selling in the thousand dollar range. Allison said that they were priced too low but I didn't care. I sold all that I made and spent all I made on pretty dresses and lingerie, new shoes and makeup.

So long as the money kept rolling in to finance my 'hobby', as Allison called it, I was happy. Of course, the breast augmentation was a flamboyant thing to do. But Allison had goaded me into it. She had told me that Paul wouldn't go out with her 'flat-chested' friend any more. And I had really liked Paul and thought that he had liked me. He had liked kissing me, I was sure of that.

"Ma'am?" said Adam as I was thinking about it. "I can ride with you to Cambridge, can't I?"

"I suppose so," I said curtly. "Do you have any money at all, though, Adam? Or a credit card?"

Adam smiled at me and shook his head. "No, ma'am," he said. "Not a cent till I meet Grant. He said he was going to stake me."

"I can't drive through the mountains at night," I said to Adam then. "I have to stop and sleep."

"I can drive, ma'am," said Adam. He glanced behind us. "You could lay out on the seat back there, ma'am. I'm not tired. I'm sort of a night owl, really, ma'am. I can keep going."

"All right," I said after thinking about it, thinking about being driven by this kid with his switchblade into the night and hoping that I would wake up intact in the morning. I was still 'ma'am' to him as well which said something about how he saw me as an older woman. Well, I wouldn't have minded a little flirting with a young guy as good-looking as Adam was, but it was probably as well that he was looking at me as if I was his mother, wasn't it? Ugh!

"Could you pass me my purse," I smiled at him, my hair bobbing with my earrings, so tight on my earlobes, "and I'll call the hotel I have in Garrett and cancel the reservation I have?"

Adam found my purse and my cellphone and gave it to me. What would he do, I wondered, if I called the police and told them I was travelling with a switchblade-toting youth?

Would I be in trouble? Would they be able to read me right away and know what was being concealed by my pretty dress and well-permed hair? Would I be the one strip-searched at some time in the procedure of accusing Adam of threatening me?

"Are you over the pass yet?" asked the young, female clerk at the Garret Hotel when I finally got someone after two more hours of driving into the night and through the early darkness.

"Coming down the western road, about an hour out," I said.

"Well, Mrs Meadows," said the girl cheerily. "I don't think that you want to cancel your reservation tonight. You may not have heard on the radio," I hadn't had that on since I had left my house that morning, "but there's a big slide on the east road to Cambridge. We're fully booked up tonight and I am holding the room for you. Everyone's calling us and I'll let it go, no charge, if you want me to but you won't find any other place to stay in town now. Even the campgrounds are full and they're allowing campers to be parked at the shopping malls."

"How long is this going to last?" I asked in dismay, looking at the handsome boy dozing in the seat beside me. I had waited before for slides to be cleared and they usually took a day.

"Oh, they only last overnight," said the cheery girl, agreeing with my assessment of the situation. "But it is raining pretty hard here and that might slow the work down. So, are you still going to want your room?"

"Yes," I said and the girl hung up as there were a 'million calls' waiting for her.

Adam shook himself awake and wiped his eyes. There were endless cars, it seemed to me, stretched out before us, heading into Garret in a long line. There'd been nothing but the occasional single car going the other way, no trucks I realized.

"On the hill down to Garret?" Adam asked, and I felt a little tingle pass through my feminized body as he looked at my legs again and at my high heels. He'd commented that he didn't know how I could drive in them. How did I do that? Practise, I had told him, which was the truth. And because I, being a woman now, loved to wear high heels. "We should change drivers there."

"No," I said to him, my hair bouncing again so femininely as I shook my head.

"Ma'am?" Adam asked me in surprise, his hand moving to his pocket.

"There's a rockfall," I said to him quickly. "On the eastern side of Garret."

"Shoot!" exclaimed Adam. "How do you know, ma'am?"

I told him about my call to the hotel. Adam turned on the radio then and the first Garret station had an account of it all. "Can't tell exactly how long it's going to take to clear," the reporter said. "Tomorrow afternoon is what police said right away but the wardens are saying that propping up the treacherous section at the Eight Sixty Mile Marker is going to take time. Even if traffic can move tomorrow, it's going to be one line of trucks only allowed through, wardens who are working all night to get the road open are telling me."

Another person then talked about the hotels in Garret being jammed and suggested huge detours through the mountains north and south for those who couldn't find accom-

modation. "But it is summer and so everywhere within a hundred mile radius of Garret is full and police are opening up parking lots for campers," an excited woman was saying.

"Geez," said Adam. "We should go back."

"Well, I do have a room," I said to him, my eyes hurting as much from the makeup on them as from the act of holding the car so steady for so long. "I didn't cancel it."

"Oh, good," said Adam, smiling at me. "Truth is, ma'am. I really am wasted. I celebrated too hard yesterday. I shouldn't be driving tonight. But I'll be all right tomorrow after a good night's sleep."

"I don't have a room for you, Adam," I told him, startled by what he was saying.

"Oh, of course not," said Adam then. I sensed him looking at me but I couldn't look back not with the traffic and the darkness. There was even a light rain starting to fall which suddenly increased to a real squall as we saw the lights of Garret for the first time.

It was chaotic in the town, from the highway and along every paved road. I could drive up to the Garret Hotel, but there was nowhere to park but in the parking lot of the mall across the street. I reluctantly drove over there but, in my high heels and nice dress, I wasn't ready for crossing the road in the pelting rain.

"Wait there, ma'am," said Adam and he jumped out of the van. I had just a glimpse of him crossing across the road and weaving between the cars blocking the entrance and the exit to the hotel.

I had started to find the suitcase with a woman's coat in it for me when Adam came running up. He opened the door and tossed a wettish, plastic raincoat and hat towards me and then came round to my side with a huge umbrella.

"I'll come back for your suitcases, ma'am," he said. "But let's get you over to the hotel and checked in before they give your room away. They're going to do that with all the vacant rooms at eleven that aren't occupied. That's why all the cars are lining up and seeing if they can get some place."

"But you," I began.

"I can stay in the pickup tonight, ma'am," said Adam cheerfully, holding up the huge umbrella as I put the transparent hat and raincoat about me, took my purse and overnight bag and let Adam lock up. He led me across the street, my stockings getting soaked anyway, but I was able to claim my room while Adam shook out the umbrella and slicker and put them back where he was directed by the hotel staff.

I got two of those plastic, computer keys from the clerk for my room. "I just need one," I began.

"I'm sorry, Mrs Meadows," said the older woman, older than me, staring disapprovingly at my breasts in my low-cut dress, at my makeup and jewellery, and at my dry, bouncy hair. "We have no extra room for your son travelling with you. As I told him, we will provide bedding materials for the sofa. The police have already told us that the schools are being opened for families if you wish to go there."