

# No Fool Like An Old ...



# BEA

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# No Fool Like An Old...

**By Bea**

Things change. You go along for years and years, become set in your ways and habits. Then, before you know it? Shit happens.

"C'mon!" I say to Doreen my wife. "Where the hell is Doris now? Screwing something else up?"

Doreen looked. Then with a touch of asperity in her voice, something I'm not accustomed to, spoke to me. "That's your daughter you're talking about. Would you have some patience when you're talking about her? She's doing her best, and I think we have something to talk about anyway."

I'm sitting at my rightful place, the head of the table, just as it should be - and glare at Doreen.

"I'm perfectly aware that Doris is my daughter, God knows I spent enough money in putting her through high school and then all that wasted money in college. Fat, mannish, broad couldn't even get a worthwhile degree. Can't hold down a decent job. Supposed to be serving me my dinner - and as slow as the second coming!" I raised my voice. "Doris! Am I going to die of old age before you get your ass in here?"

Then Doreen does something she has never done before. Puts her elbows on the table and stares at me with some defiance. "The money that YOU spent in Doris's education? If I remember correctly? WE used OUR savings that were partly made by the fact that I was working too and had put a damn good chunk of them into the fund? Or had you forgotten that?"

I can tell that she is nervous. Let's face it, we've been married a fair amount of time and we were both brought up the same way. The man of a household DESERVES respect and obedience! She feels exactly the same way as I do. Yet, there is truth in what she's saying. I retired fairly early - due to cutbacks - and couldn't see her working while I didn't, so

forced her to retire along with me. Before that, however, she contributed to our savings plan just as much as I did.

Our daughter, Doris, is a nice enough person I must admit. Kinda heavy, in a matronly way - something like Doreen. Also a lesbian. She thinks I may not know, but I make sure to overhear things now and then – heard the panic in Doreen’s voice one time when she didn’t know I was listening and was speaking to Doris: “Bring your girlfriend Edna here to meet Dad? Are you kidding! He’s difficult enough as it is! You give him any more excuse? He’ll make life miserable for all of us!”

Doris made some sort of grumbled reply that I didn’t hear, but I smiled to myself at the thought of how she was still dependent on us. Sure she had tried to do different jobs, but I made it a point to criticize everything that she tried. She was a terrible housekeeper and cook, but I loved keeping her that way. Made a lot of fun of her. Kept her in her place so to speak. Teased her a lot and even I had to admit that I wasn’t always pleasant.

Then she brought in the plates for our dinner and laid the plates in front of us. “Hello Doris?” I smiled in pure saccharine. “Was missing you TERRIBLY! Can we get on with our dinner now?”

“Would you get off my back dad? I’m doing the best I can!” She shook her head in annoyance as she sat down at the table.

I lifted my eyebrows and spoke jokingly in a childish fashion. “Ooooh! Did I hurt your feelings? Poor widdul Dowis! Was daddy MEAN to you again!”

Then Doreen surprised me. “She glared at me. “Would you STOP? You know perfectly well that Doris hates housework – and can’t cook worth a damn. Yet you make fun of her every meal Josh! It’s not fair. And I’m getting sick – SICK – of it! You want a better meal? You can cook – I KNOW you can. Get off your ass and do it yourself!”

“Something the matter with you? ” I sneered though surprised by my wife’s vehemence. “If I’m giving your precious daughter a bad time? What’s to stop you from doing what wives are supposed to do – work in the kitchen?” Happily, I started digging into my dinner. With inner satisfaction, I could tell immediately that what I said was awful. Started preparing another verbal salvo.

But Doreen beat me to it. “You’ve been hiding you head in the sand again, Josh. Don’t talk to me about not helping in the kitchen. You’ve been forcing me to try and get financing to start up. You’ve done nothing, but nothing except raise objections to me starting my own little business.”

“Don’t want you to. Forget it!” I said stubbornly, chewing happily on some tough meat. “You don’t have the brains to be a businesswoman. Period. Now shut up!”

I heard a sigh from her. I even heard the nervousness in her voice as she spoke after a pregnant pause. “What happened to a big chunk of our money Josh? What did you do with it?”

I fixed her with an icy stare. “If you had a brain in your head, you wouldn’t DARE ask that question! I handle financial matters around here!” Bent my head over my dinner plate again. Hoped that my confidence and icy demeanor would get us away from this difficult subject. It didn’t.

"Josh? I KNOW you're dead against me opening my own women's store. I've listened to you all those years – but I know that I put in a half – at LEAST a half of our retirement fund." Her voice was trembling now, but was gaining certainty all the while.

"Want an accountant now? That what it is?" I was sneering as I interrupted.

My attitude wasn't working. She cocked her head and was looking at me in a way she'd never done before. Her voice was becoming more calm, more reasonable. "No. I don't want an accountant. But I was always under the impression that we were partners. You were the man – the strong one. The one to depend on! But today I find out stuff I didn't know. Want to start telling me all about it?"

I was in a terrible frame of mind now. Wanted to confess, but had to keep hoping that I could keep up the charade. Looked at Doris – but she was as confused as I was, though she was perking up with interest. She'd never heard her mother talk in this way either. I swung my eyes back to Doreen. "Something changed all that in your mind?" I said, trying to be bright – but firm.

She was gaining confidence hand over fist. Her voice was still shaky, but she was still staring at me and I was having problems meeting her eyes. "Me? I think that I've maybe been an idiot all of those years. I want money for a small business I think I can handle – that I know we can afford to open a dress store. You say "NO!" And I listen to you. Don't have the nerve to stand up and say 'I helped work to save this money. I've got a RIGHT!' But I don't. I go around to various banks and try and secure a loan on my own name . . ."

"You shouldn't have done that," I said, suddenly bone tired. Put down my knife and fork and stared at the tablecloth.

She sighed. "If I'd wanted to keep on living in a fool's world – depending on YOU? I probably shouldn't have. But I guess I was foolish. Didn't see any harm in having them take just a look at what we have in assets. Just a look." She sighed again. "We do have a fair amount still – but it's nowhere near the amount we should have. What did you do with OUR money, Josh?"

"Should I be hearing this, mom?" Doris was speaking shakily and rising from the table.

Doreen answered her without taking her eyes from me. "Absolutely! If there's anybody in this world should hear how Mr. Perfect over here stole your inheritance? I can't think of a better person. He's mocked and taunted you for everything. And when he discovered that you liked girls! My goodness – I see it now. He was SO happy! Gave him something more to be critical about." She was pounding softly on the table now. "Tell me how you lost our money Josh. I'd think a girl friend – but I can't imagine someone who is as lousy in bed as you chasing another woman. Gambling? Maybe. But how did you do it?"

"Day Trading." I mumbled. Then felt forced to add. "I'm sorry Doreen."

"Mmmm." She said clearly. Sat more upright and stared at me "You are an uptight, righteous, pain in the backside. Always want your say. Come down on me and my daughter." She paused and thought. "You can piss off right now. Leave. This house and our bank accounts are mine. I'll give you a few thousand to get started and let you keep half of your pension as it arrives. I'll also let you have your social security when you get it. But you have no say left Josh. You're DONE in this house."

"You can't do that!" I said, stricken.

She shrugged. "Did you think I'd NEVER wake up? Did nothing to protect yourself, did you? You think I couldn't do that? Check the accounts we have and see. Leave!"

"I don't have anywhere to go Doreen," I started.

"Is this my DAD!" Doris was speaking up, suddenly angry, and her voice showed it. "YOU? Always so down on me – and mom? Nothing but a common thief! And now you say you have nowhere to go? Piss off you miserable excuse for a man! Mom's finally found you out. I won't be sorry to see you say goodbye at all."

"C'mon daughter," Doreen was saying. "I know he's made mistakes, but you and I? We share some of the blame as well. Bowing down to the male sex. Questioning nothing. There's no such thing as a free lunch – and we took what he seemed to offer. We can't bitch now, because it turns out that he's weaker than we thought." She got up from the table and came around to me. "Okay Josh. Want to stay?"

"Yes please."

She exhaled slowly. "Okay. You can live here – but you start all your macho nonsense and you'll be out on your ear. From now on, this will be what it should have been all along. A partnership."

I let out a relieved sigh, grateful for getting off the hook so easily. "Thanks Doreen!" I said eagerly.

Doreen took my jaw in one hand, and I realized that she is strong. At least stronger than me. "I don't like your tone Josh. Not one little bit." She grated. "We're partners – but I hold ALL the purse strings from this day forth."

"Don't trust him mom!" Doris said and her voice was grim.

Doreen laughed shortly. "I don't. Everything we had was in joint accounts. Today, I just moved everything out and left a few bucks in each one. He's welcome to them – any time he wants to leave here. But I have the bulk of everything now."

"But are we poor mom?" Doris continued in a worried tone. "Will we have to give up the house. Anything like that?"

Doreen thought before answering. "Nah. It's not that bad. We WERE well to do and now we're not as well off. Still have a decent amount of money and . ." She looked at me. "I intend to use a chunk of it on my dress store. He's been stopping me , but now? I think it's my turn to gamble a little."

"I wouldn't do . ." I started. Then Doreen did something she'd never, ever, done in her life before.

"Josh? Shut the shit UP!" she said quietly.

All of a sudden, I saw my wife in a different light. She wasn't menacing or anything. Don't get me wrong. But although she's not fat in any way, she's a fine figure of a woman. I'm not a fine figure of anything. Very small and weak if you want to know the truth. Suddenly I felt stripped of all the masculine authority I'd had all of those years. Got the terrible feeling that all that stood between me and her was physical strength – and it was her that had it – not me. I then did something that was totally against my grain. Astonished all

of us there. "I'm sorry." I found myself saying meekly. It was the tone more than anything else I think.

Nothing else happened that evening of any note. I think that we all were digesting what had gone down. Frankly, I think that we were all unsettled and unsure of ourselves. I know that I was anyway. Even in our bedroom, Doreen and I maintained a silence. It wasn't one of those huffy times that fall between married couples. I just think that neither of us knew what to say.

She must have thought of what she was going to do the next morning though. I had eaten my breakfast. She had hers earlier along with Doris as they were going out together. I was sitting reading my paper over my dirty dishes when they both came into the room. "We're just taking off for a little while. Can I see your wallet?" Doreen asked.

She was still distant, but reasonably friendly. I still hadn't got into my later habits of obedience though. "What for?" I shrugged, but reached for it anyway. She just smiled at me and waited for me to give it to her. My face then got red as she made a point of looking into my wallet – something that had always been forbidden to her- checked out the money that was there and took some out. Then she deliberately looked through all my cards and took out all of my credit cards.

"I've left you a few dollars" She said. "When you need more, ask me or Doris. Understand?"

"You must be . ." I started.

"I've taken your credit cards. You won't ever need them again. Your Drivers license I've put up here in plain view. You can take Doris's car if you wish – but the first time you leave here without asking permission from either of us ladies, and indicate what you want to leave for? Don't bother coming back. You won't get back in here, the locks will be changed. I'll leave the license there at all times so that I know where you are. Okay?"

"That's fine," I mumbled.

"You know what I'm saying here and accept it? Doris and I are the bosses here?" She was bearing down on me now.

"Yes."

"Goodbye for a little while," she said, her voice pleasant after my obvious surrender.

"Goodbye," Doris said sweetly. "Do those dishes while we're gone." She pointed at my breakfast dishes then looked at her watch. "We should be home about 12.30. Would be nice if you made us lunch? I'll assume that you'll do this? I'll use my cell phone to call and let you know if we'll be later. Otherwise? Have our lunch ready at that time!" She stared at me until I, open mouthed in astonishment, nodded. Then, smiling at each other, the two women left.

I'll admit that I ranted and stomped around for a while, promising all sorts of vengeance but had the feeling in my heart of hearts that Doreen had spoken the truth. Then I called around and checked with the banks. Our accounts were down to a few hundred dollars. Went into the brokers using my computer. Just about all of our combined assets were either locked or transferred under Doreen's name. I knew that I could fight both the banks and broker, but if she made a fuss, my idiocy in the day trading would be dis-

played. On top of that, it would be seen that I couldn't control my wife. I shuddered at that thought. Went and did the dishes. Made lunch for the women coming home just after noon.

They were in a delightful mood. Doreen had done a lot of research into a dress shop that was for sale. It turned out that she had made a bid for the shop that was away under asking price. The agent had refused. Doreen sat at our table over the finished lunch. "He should call any minute. The woman who owned that shop was a fool. She won't be able to resist an offer – and mine is fair."

It sounds silly, but I suddenly had a feeling of pride in my wife. Okay, a lot of it was at my expense, but she seemed to be gaining confidence hand over fist. Of course I couldn't show this. I mean, after all.

Sure enough, the phone rang. I sat there for a moment before I realized that both women were looking at me expectantly. I picked up the phone. "Smith residence."

A male voice asked for Doreen, and sheepishly I said she was right there and handed it over to her. She immediately started talking in low terms. Doris looked at me.

"While you're up?" she said.

"Huh?" I replied.

"May as well clear off the table." She said.

"But I made the lunch!" I said – though hating the quarreling tone in my voice. It was almost as if I were declaring my daughter to be my equal. I was even more disgusted when she looked at me with a faint smile on her face. Leaned back in her chair. "So?" she said.

"Hey!" I said. "You and mom always split the dishes before. One cooked, the other cleaned up. She's busy on the phone, so now it's your . . ."

"Would you two be QUIET!" Doreen put her hand over the mouthpiece and glared at us.

"But it's HER fault!" I complained childishly. "She's telling . . ."

"WOULD YOU DO AS SHE TELLS YOU?" Doreen whispered venomously. "Can't you see I'm busy!"

Doris laughed silently at me as I started to clear the dishes away. I gritted my teeth and waited for Doreen to finish. After all, I knew I had a valid case. Finally, she put the phone down with a smile on her face. "Got it!" she said triumphantly.

"Wonderful mom!" Doris said, and clapped her hands together.

"It's NOT fair!" I burst out. "Look Doreen! When one of you made a meal? The other cleared up and you split doing the dishes. This time, I made the lunch and Doris asked me to do the dishes as well . . ."

"Did NOT ask him mom!" Doris laughed.

"Yes you DID!" I thundered. "Don't tell lies!"

Doris shrugged. "I TOLD him mom. Didn't ask. Told him!" She grinned, delighted.

Doreen looked at me coldly. "One of the happiest moments in my life – and you want to squabble about dishes?" She was glaring at me now. "How many YEARS have you sat around while Doris and I slaved over your meals." She took a deep breath. "Now Josh? It's your turn. Get on with the dishes. And after this? Do as Doris tells you! Don't bug me with stupid little details – you'll make me MAD!"

She was laying down the law now. There was some uncertainty about her but I was in no mood to challenge her just then. The feeling I'd had the night before now came back to me even stronger. I was arguing with two women, both of who outweighed me and I wasn't too sure that they weren't about to show their particular advantage in strength over me. Inside I cowered at the very thought of being matched up with either of them and found wanting. I knew that I'd lost a tremendous amount of face in less than 24 hours. The thought of being bested physically by either was far too much for me to bear. Shamefaced I went back to doing the dishes. I thought I was at the lowest point in my life, but I was wrong.

I had just come in to do my last clean up when Doris grinned mockingly. "When you do the dishes Dad-Dee? Don't forget to put an apron on. Some of mine are hanging up behind the door. Pick any one of them you like. They're all clean. Though? If you get it dirty, would you wash and iron it for me please?" She laughed out loud.

"Oh Doris!" Doreen remonstrated, though with some humor. "The poor man has been through a lot. An apron is maybe rubbing it in a little, don't you think?"

"Mom?" Doris answered. "I'm mannish. Makes no sense to deny it. Dad-Dee here got it into his head to torment me. Wouldn't let me keep going to college. Said I was only fit to do women's work around the house. Said that if I was going to do that kind of work – I should take pride in it. Made me wear those damn fancy aprons! All flowery and frills! Bought the goddamn things for me! Embarrassed and humiliated me by making me wear the frilly, feminine, things. Don't you think I should be getting my own back?"

Doreen looked at my flushed and suddenly frightened face and replied to Doris although she spoke to me. "You know Josh? When Doris and I used to fight over anything? You said it was beneath your dignity to get involved in womanly squabbles? Now?" She gave an evil smile. "I think it's beneath MY dignity to get involved in who does and who does not get involved in doing dishes and wearing pretty aprons. Looks as if I'll be the breadwinner around here. Doris doesn't know it yet, but she'll be starting back at college pretty soon. I'll be busy – so it'll be up to you two to figure out who is doing the housework – the womanly housework!" she added bitterly. "And come to think on it - are you going to say that you're some kind of sexist? That if a woman does a job she MUST wear something? Whereas if a MAN does it, he doesn't need to dress the same?" She smiled again. "But I guess that it's up to you two!"

I excused myself saying that my hands were full of dishes and went into the kitchen. Flushed and somewhat humiliated I took the dishes to the sink, put them down at the side and then took a hold of the sink front and gripped it until my knuckles were white.

"You look upset Dad-Dee?" Doris spoke quietly behind me.

I didn't turn around. "That's a disgusting name. You can call me Dad, or even Josh. But that is humiliating. Stop it!"



There was a pause while she seemed to digest this, then she spoke again. Her voice was still low and reasonable, but there was no mistaking the command in it now. She wasn't even pretending to be my daughter. Was talking to me as one equal talks to another.

"This name I call you? It's an experiment. Now turn and look at me."

I didn't turn. Kept my rigid posture.

"I asked you nicely, Dad-Dee. Now I'll try to explain to your back." She let her tone basically ask me to turn around, so she continued, still in the level tone of voice when I didn't. "You have never accepted me. Didn't like me as a little girl – laughed at me when I excelled in something athletic. I look at you now and wonder – were you jealous, huh?"

She sighed when I still didn't answer. "All those years of you lording it over mom and me. Talking to us like we were some lowly slaves. Now I can see that you were nothing but a common thief. But know what makes it all so much worse?"

At this point she did raise my curiosity. "I suppose that you're going to tell me – whether I want to or not!" I sneered.

"First things first," She said calmly. "You ever use that tone of voice to me again, I'll whomp you! I feel like punching you right now but I'll let you off. But next time? I'll humiliate you. Now tell me that you're sorry."

"I may have spoken out of turn. It's been a very upsetting time for me!" I found myself whining.

She laughed shortly. "I can SEE that. But you still haven't said that you're sorry. Do it!"

"I'm sorry Doris," I said.

"Much better! Now let me explain something. All this time, you've been so pompous! So RIGHT all the time! So all-seeing!" She was breathing heavily now. "But just a little while ago, mom stands up to you – for the very first time – and you fold like a wet piece of paper. No guts to you at all. Then I start talking down to you – and you get all huffy, like some of the girls I've hung out with in the past! It dawns on me suddenly! You are just like a little sissy. No balls at all! So now, here's what's going to happen. I'm going to go back into the room and join mom. When you come back in to finish, and until you've washed the dishes and tidied up? You'll wear one of those nice aprons!"

I finally turned around at her insult. "Will not! I've had enough out of you! I'll take my license and leave!"

"Good riddance!" she laughed, sure of herself now. "But it was MOM who said you could do that, not me. You can leave all right if you want. But not until you've done the clean up, and then washed the dishes – while wearing a pretty apron. You're gonna have to go through me to get to the front door. Got it?"

She was openly threatening me now, and I surrendered. "Don't tell your mom about this, will you?"

She looked at me scornfully. "I won't need to Dad-Dee. Now get on with your housework!" With that, she left the kitchen.

When I went back into the dining room I knew immediately from the look that Doris flashed Doreen that she had been nowhere near as confident as she'd appeared. Cursed

myself for buying the feminine apron to humiliate Doris that I now wore. The frilled, gauzy, full apron with the butterflies and orchids embossed.

"I thought it over and felt that it was practical after all," I mumbled. "Didn't want to dirty my pants."

"And it looks very nice too dear!" Doreen said, straight faced.

"Sure does mom." Doris laughed. "Looks SO cute!"

Red faced and embarrassed, I finished clearing the table and went back into the kitchen and basically hid there by taking a while to do the dishes. Nobody said anything when I appeared without an apron. Cowed now though, I later wore one to prepare dinner and then clean up. Neither woman offered to help me.



Doreen shamed me in our bedroom that night. Half humorously, she looked at me. "You seem to have got yourself into a fine mess, don't you?"

"Doreen? It's that Doris! Can't you do something about her? Okay, I screwed up and feel guilty about it – but she wants to humiliate and embarrass me,"

"You want ME to do something about the way she's treating you!" She laughed outright. "Josh? You mistreated me for years – you weren't physically abusive – but you were emotionally cold and miserable. I learned to put up with that – but even when I caught you screwing around with MY money – as well as your own? You tried bluff and bombast. Finally did something I don't recollect you EVER doing before. You apologized to me."

"But I DID apologize!" I blurted.

Doreen shook her head. "Doris doesn't give a hoot

about the money. But she sees now that you made her life miserable. Wouldn't accept her sexuality . . ."

"I can't be blamed for saying she's queer! She is!" I argued.

"Are you DUMB or something? She can't help being a lesbian any more than you can help being a miserable person. She's your flesh and blood and you've treated her like dirt for years."

"Well, I don't see what I can do about it now!" I said angrily.

Doreen looked at me and laughed again. "You know? I think you could have got out of all this bad feeling – or at least a LOT of it, by simply apologizing to her . . ."

"Apologize? To my own daughter?"

"Yeah. But you're too late now I think. Doris wants her pound of flesh – and I think you either better pay her – or grab that license of yours and get out of town."

"I'm not going to allow my daughter to run me out of my own home!" I said bitterly.

"Suit yourself Josh. But know what, I feel kinda sexy tonight for some reason. Come to bed!"

To tell the truth, I think she was as surprised as I. Let's face it, our sex life hadn't been that great from the beginning – and it all wasn't my fault. This wasn't totally a change, some of our more successful sex had come when she was the aggressor, but it had never been stated this boldly before. Certainly not out loud – not in my memory at all, and certainly not in hers if her expression was to be believed. But, blushing, I climbed into bed, not quite knowing what to do. I shouldn't have worried. She did most of the work and although I was ashamed to admit it, it was the best sex we'd had in a long time – if not ever. I think we were both amazed at whatever had turned us on. As a matter of fact, Doreen muttered just before she fell asleep. "You'll have to steal money more often Josh." But I knew she was wondering about what had happened, just as I was.

Doreen left early the following day. Doris mockingly checked the apron I wore to prepare breakfast and commented how nice I looked. I finally tried to mend the broken fences.

"Look Doris?" I said. "I'm sorry. I may not have been the best dad . . ."

She interrupted me. "Dad-dee! What could you possibly mean?" And before I knew it, she had engulfed me in her arms and was showering kisses on me! I knew that she was only being sarcastic, but made the mistake of fighting her. At that point, our hierarchy became firmly established. I had made the mistake of struggling against her and she showed her superior strength. There was no doubt about who the stronger one was now and, as she smiled down on me, we both knew that I was going to stay in her arms until she decided otherwise.

"I'll say this!" she smiled, enjoying her hold over me. "You were a terrible dad! But we all have to have a second chance, do we not?"

Held firm in her arms, I had a sudden surge of hope. Maybe she HAD accepted my apology after all? But her next words chilled my soul.

She fingered my apron lovingly. "I've been thinking about you – and now I'm almost certain. You look so cute in your lovely finery? I'll either make you my honorary sister or sweet little pet. How does that sound?"

"Aw Doris C'mon!" I groveled. "I'm trying to say I'm sorry. Honest!"

She let me go! Stepped back and smiled. "Wow! If you mean that? Come over here and sit on my lap. Then you can tell me how sorry you are!"

With that, she went and sat on a straight back chair. Smiled, ever so softly, at me. "Come and convince me that you love me? That you're sorry for all those years!" She spread her jean-clad legs widely and crooked her fingers in invitation. "You've never sat on my lap before – though when you look at us now? That would seem so silly to have passed up on that chance, would it not? It's a lot more realistic than me sitting in yours, is it not?"

Her point was valid. If either of us were the smaller now, it would be me. "You're not kidding me, are you Doris?" I asked weakly.

"There's only one way to find out – is there not?"

I felt internally that I was doing wrong but I had an idea that she had only just begun to humiliate me. There might be MUCH more to follow if I couldn't halt it soon. Perhaps it was worth the possible embarrassment that she might inflict on me if I, just this once, did as she asked. Flushed with shame I started to sit on her lap.

"But don't forget to smooth out the skirts of your apron now!" she taunted me a little. "Can't let them get all crushed, can we?"

"Please Doris?"

"Your apron dear!" It was a command now.

Like a chastened child, I smoothed out the apron skirts. Again I was shown her strength as she put an arm around me and drew me close as I sat on her lap. "You were saying?" she cooed as she coached me in what I had to say.

"I'm sorry for being a bad daddy!" I mumbled, but taking the hint.

Her loving giggle sounded forced. "Ooh that's LOVELY! You've no idea, how I've longed to hear you say just that." She kissed me – but her lips were cold. "But let me ask you this. You want Doris to forgive you?"

"Yes please!"

"Would you do a little thing for me?"

"Within reason Doris. I'd love us to be friends again." I was as sincere as I possibly could be,

"Well, I hate to say this, but you really weren't very nice to me over a long period of time, were you?" She was pleasant, but wanting an answer.

"No Doris, I wasn't – and that's what I'm trying to make up to you!" I tried to move a little, but realized again how powerless I was. Doris was STRONG!

"I never was your pet, was I?" She was cooing again, but her words had venom in them.