



*Reluctant Press*

# CORSAGES

Diane Johnson



*ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRIAN DUKEHART*

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**AN 'ADULT TV' BOOK**

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## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

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# CINDERELLA WINSLOW

**By Diane Johnson**

**October 28**

The rain had finally stopped. It had held on long enough to foul the evening rush hour. Route 71 was the major thoroughfare through Jackson. It was a six lane 55 mile per hour relic from the late sixties' federal highway expansion program. It was now thirty plus years old and was inadequate even in good weather for the volume of traffic it was asked to carry everyday. Accidents were common. Two cars on Route 71 had met in a slight fender bender, and then four additional cars had joined the party, snarling the traffic. One of the drivers involved in this accident, had attempted to change lanes and had collided with a car he had not seen in his blind spot. The cars following had no chance to avoid involvement. When it was all over, four vehicles were attempting to occupy the same space, crumpling fenders and several tempers. Nothing had moved for twenty minutes.

Tommy Winslow had watched the collage created by the reflection of the emergency vehicle lights on the wet concrete. He hoped that Sandy, his older sister, was not involved, but the accident scene was too far away into the night to tell.

Tommy Winslow was fifteen years old and was a freshman at Jackson Senior High. He was slight of stature - 5'5" and one hundred thirty pounds. Until this morning, he had had scraggly dirty blond hair which fell half way down his back.

Tommy's mother glanced at the car's clock knowing that they were going to be late. Sharon Winslow, was forty three years old. She had been a widow for twelve years. She had raised Tommy and his older sister, Sandy, by herself. Her late husband, Jim, had been a lawyer and was the money behind the Jackson Modeling Agency. Before their marriage, Sharon had been a model and the artistic director of the Agency. When she got pregnant, Sharon had retired to raise the children and keep the home fires burning. Tommy was born four years after his sister. Jim died the following year and the next year, Sharon returned to work, taking over the management of the Jackson Modeling Agency.

Tommy and his mother had spent the day at the Jackson Modeling Agency. He had a complete make over and did not look at all like a teen aged boy. He had a day that would make any teen aged girl envious. His hair had been cut and styled. It now fell onto his shoulders in a honey blond flip. His face had been made up. His lipstick and

nail polish matched his pink blouse. He was wearing a navy blue skirt, a pale blue blazer, and navy pumps with two inch heels.

He had tried on the ball gown. It fit like it had been made for him and it had been. It was silver white satin with a scoop neck and a bell shaped skirt. He was going to wear matching satin pumps. The dress had been pressed and was now hanging in a garment bag at the agency. His mother had a full length black mink coat he wanted to borrow if she would lend it to him. The coat would set off the silver white satin very nicely and with the weather getting colder, he needed something that would keep him warm. He hoped it would fit.

Sandy Wilson was driving west on Route 71, to meet her mother and brother for dinner. Sandy Winslow had finished two years of Junior College, at Alexander County Junior College. She was now working for Radio Station KJAC, as an Administrative Assistant to the station manager. She was nineteen - almost twenty - years old.

She too looked at her car clock to note that she and her passenger would be late. They were meeting her mother and brother at the Brokerage, a restaurant owned by a long time family friend and the father of her fiancé. She had invited a friend to join them. Michael Baird was an accounting trainee in the sales department at the station. He was eighteen and lived with his parents in Jackson Hollow. He was gay. But, the main reason he was with Sandy on that rainy night was that he had agreed to play Prince Charming to Tommy's Cinderella at Jackson's Halloween Ball. The Ball was the major fund raiser for the Jackson Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

Sandy and Michael were now stopped a quarter of a mile behind the accident. Nothing had moved since the accident happened. Wall to wall cars blocked access to the accident scene for the emergency equipment. Finally the police, tow trucks, and a medievac helicopter arrived.

While they sat waiting for the traffic to move Sandy and Michael were discussing the new Health Plan proposals made at the KJAC morning staff meeting. The station was proposing to pay sixty per cent of the health care package for each of the full time employees. They would pay forty per cent for part time people. Michael felt the package was good.

It took another twenty minutes to restore some semblance of order and start to move traffic. Sandy and Michael turned onto the parking lot at the Brokerage ten minutes later.

Michael opened her door and took Sandy's hand to help her from the car. The wind cut through her clothes, sending a shiver up her back. She wrapped herself more tightly into her coat. They hurried across the parking lot to the door. Michael opened the door and Sandy entered the warm lobby. It felt really good. They crossed the lobby to the elevator. Sandy pushed the up button. They stepped back and waited.

The doors to the outside opened again, letting in a blast of cold air.

“Hi, Kids. I left something in the car. Tommy is waiting upstairs.”

Sandy turned toward the door to see her mother.

“Hi, Mom,” Sandy greeted, “this is Michael Baird. The young fellow I was telling you about. He is an accounting trainee at KJAC.”

“How are you, Michael?” Mrs. Winslow asked as she accepted his hand noting that he certainly could play the role of Prince Charming with those dark brown eyes and soft wavy brown hair.

“Fine, thank you, Mrs. Winslow, I understand you have two very attractive daughters. I have met one of them and am looking forward to meeting the other.”

“Well, I have just met the other daughter myself and if you find Sharon attractive, I think you'll find that my other daughter is almost as beautiful. She is waiting for us upstairs at the Brokerage.”

The elevator doors opened. Sandy and Michael let Sharon enter the car first. They followed her onto the elevator. Another man joined them. He rode to the eighth floor and got off. They rode on to the fifteenth floor.

The doors opened. Sharon got off first. Sandy and Michael followed. She was flush with anticipation. She caught her breath when she saw Tommy. Her mother was right. This was not the brother she had left at home this morning. This was a sister. This was Cinderella. That was the name they had decided on, in honor of the classic make over of all time - the charwoman who became a princess. Michael and Sandy sat down. She was beautiful. There was no way that anyone would think that “she” was a boy in girl's clothing.

The hostess came over.

“We'll have a table for you in a few minutes. When the kids were late, we had to let the table we were holding go.”

“That's fine. I understand.”

Sandy looked at Michael. “What do you think, Michael?”

“I think she has a definite shot at Queen of the Ball.”

Tommy smiled sheepishly. If he had been able to blush, he probably would have. Maybe he did just a little.

Sandy turned to her brother.

“Cinderella, I don't believe it, you're beautiful. I'd like you to meet Michael Baird. He and I work together.”

Tommy stayed seated. He extended his hand up to Michael. Michael took it in his own. The hand was smaller and softer than his own. Debbie was right. It was hard to believe that Cinderella was not a girl. He certainly looked like a fairy tale princess.

Cinderella was sitting at one end of a sofa. Sandy sat next to him. Michael and Sharon sat on the other side of an intervening coffee table. There were several food magazines on the table such as “Cuisine” and “Restaurant Trade Report”.

They had been sitting for several minutes when Dave McIntyre, the owner of the Brokerage and the father of Sandy's fiancé came over to greet them.

"Good evening, Sandy, it is good to see you. I heard there was an accident out on 71. You weren't involved, were you?"

Sandy answered, "No, it was not us, but was several cars in front of us. It was pretty scary. We were just delayed by the traffic."

"Well, it's good it was not you. Was anyone hurt, do you know?"

"No, I don't. Though I don't see how they could avoid it. Four cars wound up in a space designed for one."

"It's good you're safe. Now let me go check on a table for you." As he turned to leave, he noticed Cinderella. "Is this the young lady Bill has told me about?"

Cinderella blushed, full out this time. No one was supposed to know. It was obvious that Sandy had told Bill and that he was unable to keep it a secret. *"Oh well, if that was the worst thing that ever happened in my life, it would be a pretty good life. After all, it was just a Halloween costume,"* he thought, *"Boy, that was funny. How many girls, let alone boys, have \$700 evening gowns made for them as Halloween costumes?"*

Mr. McIntyre started away to check on the table.

"You make a very lovely young lady, Tommy," he said as he left.

Tommy turned to Sandy. He was close to tears. No one was supposed to know.

She smiled at him.

"It's all right, Honey. You are a beautiful young lady."

The party got quiet. No one knew quite what to say next.

Michael broke the ice. "Cinderella, after dinner, if Sandy will trust me with her car, I'd like to take you out for ice cream. Does that sound good?"

Cinderella brightened. "Yes it does."

"And something else," Michael continued, "We need to get you a new name. Cinderella is hokey. Is there a name you'd like?"

"I think I'd like Deborah."

"That's pretty. I like that. May I call you Debbie?"

"I'd like that." Cinderella brightened still more.

"All right. It's a date then. Miss Debbie and me for ice cream.

Schering's Ice Cream was the ice cream store in Jackson. They were open from 12:00 noon until 11:00 on school nights and until midnight on week ends. They featured twenty-seven flavors - fifteen were the fifteen flavors voted America's favorites -

and twelve special flavors which rotated each month. You could get a single dip for eighty-five cents and a double dip for \$1.50. With the competition charging more than a dollar a dip, it was a bargain. Besides, it was all homemade and was the richest, most flavorful ice cream in town.

Michael was a regular at Schering's. When Michael and Debbie pulled onto the parking lot, there was a family waiting for cones at the carry out window.

They both agreed they should not get carry out - it was too cold. They should go inside for service. Michael let Debbie out at the door, and then parked the car. She was not wearing anything, but her suit jacket and it had gotten cold. It had been warm when she and her mother had left home, but it was October and the Alberta Clipper had arrived with Arctic air in tow. Michael had his sports jacket for warmth. He found his school letter jacket to keep Debbie warm.

There was one other couple out for ice cream. They had the store to themselves. Michael had hoped that Joey or Paul might be there. He wanted to show Debbie off. They gave him a hard time about his social life or lack of it. They were also regulars at Schering's, but not tonight. Michael picked a booth near the front of the store. One where he could see and be seen by anyone who came in.

They ordered cokes and plates of ice cream for each of them - Rocky Road for Debbie and Black Cherry Smash for Michael. The waitress was new, so Mike did not engage in any extended conversation, as he normally would have. He did ask if she had seen either Joey or Paul. She did not know them. She filled the order and then returned to the job of straightening the dining room for tomorrow's business.

"Debbie, do you have any plans for tomorrow? Would you like to go the game with me?"

"I don't have any plans until Monday. That sounds like fun."

"The game is at 2:30. Suppose I pick you up about 12:30. We'll get some lunch and then go to the game."

Jackson and Grove City were arch rivals. Everyone would be at the game. They turned their attention to their ice cream. They had finished and were about to leave when Joey arrived.

"Hey, Mike, I've been looking for you."

"Hi, Joey, I want you to meet Debbie."

Joey nodded in her direction.

"Hi, Joey, it's nice to meet you."

"Mike, are you going to the game tomorrow?"

"Yes."

"Can I get a ride?"

"Sure. I am picking Debbie up. We're going to get some lunch and then go to the game. Would you and Sue like to go with us?"

"I don't know. I'd have to talk to Sue and let you know."

“Can you call her now?”

“I can try. Do you have a quarter?”

Michael fished into his pocket and found a quarter. He gave it to Joey.

He went to make the call. In five minutes, he was back. He was beaming. “She can go.”

“That's super. I can't wait to meet her,” Debbie said, wondering if she was getting in over her head. *“Double dating held the potential for ruining my party. As long as it was just Michael, they could play the game. Introducing Sue and Joey into the mix increased the chance that someone from school would find out.”*

Joey sat down. He wondered if he had enough money to order something. He had five dollars. Well, it wouldn't be much, but at least he could give Schering's something for having used their booth. He was feeling super.

He ordered a coke and fries.

Michael brought Debbie home at 9:30 P.M. They talked for a few minutes, standing there on the porch. Neither of them believed the events of the evening.

“You know, Debbie, I had fun. I enjoyed myself. Let's do it again.”

“Sounds good to me, but let's talk about it. We don't even know if Debbie will be around after Monday.”

“No, let's not talk about it. Let's plan something now. How about a movie next Friday, Debbie.”

“I don't know. Let me check with Mom. See what she thinks.”

Michael persisted, “I'll pick you up at 8:00. We'll go to a movie. Everything will be fine. No one even suspected.”

“Well, okay.”

He turned to leave. “I've got to take the bus home. I told Mom I wouldn't be late. Oh, here are Sandy's keys. Thank her for the use of the car. I'll see you in the morning.”

Debbie let herself into the house. Sandy and her mother were sitting in the living room watching television.

“Well,” Sandy asked, “Did you have fun? What did you do?”

“We really did not do anything. We went down to Schering's for ice cream. Tomorrow, he is taking me to the football game. I need something to wear. Sandy, do you have something I can borrow?”



Sandy and her mother looked at each other. This was moving faster than they had anticipated. Tommy was really getting into this.

“I think we can probably find something. What would you like. Shirt and jeans? Sweater and skirt?”

“I don't know.”

“Based on the weather, I suspect shirt, jeans, and sweater,” his mother said. “I have a car coat that might fit you. If it does not warm up before Monday, would you like to use my old coat. It should fit.”

“Which one?” Debbie asked.

“The mink.”

“Could I?” Debbie exclaimed excitedly.

“Of course the queen of the ball can hardly wear a letter jacket with her evening gown. It's hardly fashionable.”

Sandy started up toward the bed room.

“Come on, let's see what we can find for you to wear to a football game.” They went up the steps to her bedroom. They spent half an hour going through her closet, discussing each item of clothing in light of Debbie's breakfast date. Finally they decided on a pale pink and blue sweater and a pair of jeans.

Debbie tried them on. The sweater was fine, but the jeans were too small.

“Darn. I really do like the jeans,” Debbie noted unhappily.

Sandy went back to the closet and, in a minute, was back with a pair of Navy blue stirrups.

“Here try these. These should work, they have more give in them than the jeans.”

Debbie sat on the bed. She stripped off the jeans, and tried on the stirrups.

“Yes,” she exclaimed, “like a glove! May I borrow these for lunch?”

“Of, course. Come on, let's go show Mother.”

They found their mother in the living room. “What do you think, Mom,” Debbie asked. She was smiling broadly.

Her mother smiled and shook her head affirmatively. “They are very nice, Honey. I think you and your sister have made a good choice. Turn around and let me get a good look at you.”

Debbie pirouetted to give her mother a 360 degree picture.

“Yes very nice. I like them. You've made an excellent choice.”

### **October 29th**

Sharon was awake. It was 8:00.

*“It's too early,”* she thought. *“You should be able to sleep in on Saturday.”*

She lay there for a while. She wondered if maybe this whole thing wasn't getting out of hand. *Oh well, Monday evening, it would all be over.*

Finally she surrendered to the notion, that lying in bed on Saturday morning was just not productive and got up. She put on an old chenille bathrobe, tying it at her waist, and went down the steps to the kitchen. She washed out the Mr. Coffee carafe, rinsing out the remains of yesterday's brew, then filled the basket with fresh grounds and the carafe with water. She emptied the water into the machine. The aroma filled the kitchen.

“One of the best smells of the day.”

While the coffee brewed, she went out on the front porch to find the paper. The carrier had good aim this morning. The paper was sitting right there on the steps. More often than not, it played hide and seek and she had to look for it.

She took it back to the kitchen. The front page announced two additions to the city's murder rate. Judged on the employment numbers, the economy was up slightly. New employment and recalls were just marginally better than the layoff rate.

Just as the water had stopped dripping in the coffee maker Sandy came down the steps.

“Hi, Mom, that smells good. Can I get a cup?”

“Of course.” Sharon filled the cup and handed it to her daughter.

Sandy put just a touch of cream in the cup and held it to her nose to inhale the aroma. She took a swallow. It was a little hot, but, oh so good....

Sharon was sitting at the table reading the newspaper.

Sandy took her cup and sat opposite her mother. “May I have the funnies, Mom?”

Sharon separated the paper and handed the Comic Feature section to Sandy.

Sandy could not start the day without reading “Uncle Fuddley”. Fuddley was a single father, trying to raise his two kids. Today, he was giving his adolescent daughter advice regarding boys. His relationship to his daughter was inclined to be klutzy. He did better with his son. Sandy guessed that, that was probably to be expected.

“You know, Mom, I get the feeling that we may have done Tommy a real favor with Cinderella. I know boys are supposed to be boys, but he doesn't seem to be very happy as a boy, and he makes a very happy girl, in the event that you have not noticed.”

“I have. Debbie does seem to be a much happier person than Tommy. She paused and then continued, ”Sandy, do you think I have been a good mother?”

Sandy laughed. “Don't be ridiculous, Mom, of course you have. You obviously could not have completely filled the void in our lives left when Dad died, but, I don't think you made too many mistakes. Tommy was raised in a feminine environment. Some of it was bound to rub off.”

“What time is it getting to be and what time is Debbie's date?” her mother countered wondering if she might not have been a better mother for Tommy if she had re-married.

“She said Michael was going to pick her up at noon. It's 9:20 now. I guess we should wake her. I'm not certain that she is really aware of how much time it takes for us women to get our acts together.”

Her mother joined into her laughter as Sandy started up the steps.

Debbie's door opened. She was wearing blue fuzzy slippers and a blue terry cloth robe over blue flowered pajamas.

"Hi, how did you sleep?" Sandy asked.

"Great. Michael's going to be here at noon. Can you help me get ready?"

"Sure, but don't you want some breakfast first?"

"Okay."

Sharon had started breakfast. She had poured three orange juices, two bowls of corn flakes, and gotten herself another cup of coffee.

The girls joined her at the kitchen table.

"Good morning, Mother," Deb greeted her mother.

"Hi, Daughter."

Debbie smiled. "I probably shouldn't say this, but I really enjoy being Debbie."

Sharon also smiled. "I know, Darling."

Debbie finished her cereal. "Sandy, I want to take a shower. May I borrow your shower cap?"

"Of course."

Debbie went up the steps. Sandy finished her breakfast and followed her ten minutes later finding Debbie was still in the shower. She went into the bathroom and sat on the toilet seat.

"Do you think Michael has any idea how much trouble we girls go to for boys?"

"I don't know."

"Did the agency paint your toes? Do you want me to? We will match your toes to your fingers. You did bring home the polish, didn't you?"

"Mom got it."

"Do you know what she did with it?"

"It's probably in the make up bag."

"Let me ask."

Sandy was back two minutes later.

Debbie was standing with a towel wrapped around her slender, boyish body.

"You know," Sandy observed, "hormones do wondrous things."

Debbie actually had slight curves where a girl ought to have curves. Sandy had been sharing her birth control pills with her brother and they had an effect. Her breasts were small and easily hidden in an oversized top, but there was still enough there for an "A" Cup. She finished drying and put on the bath robe.

They went into her bedroom. The sweater and jeans were lying on the bed, with a bra, panties, pantyhose, and a pair of penny loafers.

Sandy watched Debbie get dressed, offering suggestions. When she had finished, Sandy went to work on Debbie's make-up. She kept it understated, dusting blush on her cheeks, and just a touch of pinkish eye shadow on her lids. She colored her lips with "Just a Hint of Pink" lip gloss. As she worked, Debbie watched in the mirror.

She liked what she saw.

Sandy handed Debbie a towel to cover her lap to avoid spilling the polish in her lap. She took Debbie's hand and started to work on her fingers. The polish matched the blush. Half an hour later, she was running a hair brush through Debbie's hair. It was cut in a Monk Cut, a short cut, that fell over her ears onto her neck.

It was 11:45 when Sandy pronounced her, "Beautiful" and ready to meet her public.

Sharon came in and agreed, "Michael will not be disappointed."

He wasn't. Fifteen minutes later he was at the door.

Mrs. Winslow opened the door. "Hi, Michael."

"Hi, Mrs. Winslow, is my girl ready?"

Debbie came down the steps from upstairs. She had been combing her hair and checking her make-up one last time. Sandy had reassured her for the fifth time that she was beautiful.

"Hi, Michael."

"Hi Debbie. Are you ready?"

"Yes, I am."

They went out the door. Mike's father's Plymouth was parked at the curb. Mike opened the door and Debbie got into the car.

Sharon was watching as they drove away. She took a deep breathe and turned to Sandy. "I hope she is all right."

"Don't worry, Mom. Michael will take care of her. I think he is into this much more than you and I realize."

"What do you mean?"

"Michael has never been much of a lady's man. In fact, I suspect there are some people who would tell you that he is more of a man's man. Debbie gives him a beautiful girl to show off.

"You might be right. I had not thought of it that way."

Sharon was still anxious. It was easy to say that there was nothing to worry about. It was another thing to stop worrying.

The Hut was a step up from fast food, carrying a large menu, featuring a large menu of Burgers and Eggs. There were fourteen different burgers on the menu; Worcestershire Burgers, Blue Cheese Burgers, or BLT Burgers. You name it and if it went with a burger they had it. They served side orders of homemade slaw, potato salad, pasta salad, baked beans and homemade pies and ice cream for dessert.

When they arrived there was a parking space in front of the building so Michael pulled into it and turned off the engine. "Come on, you ready for lunch?"

"I'm starved."

"Good, let's get something to eat."

He got out of the car and walked around to open Debbie's door.

Debbie got out of the car and Michael closed the door behind her. He took her arm and they crossed the sidewalk to the door. Joey and Sue lived half a block from the Hut, so they were meeting them here. They were seated in the waiting area where Joey introduced the two girls.

"Sue, this is Debbie."

Debbie smiled. "Hi, Sue."

"Hi, Debbie. Joey tells me you are a freshman at Jackson. Do you know Nancy Lincoln?"

"I know who she is, but I don't know her. She has red hair doesn't she?"

"Yes, she and I go to church together. St. Andrews. I go to school there."

The hostess greeted them. "Good afternoon. We'll have a table for you in just a few minutes." It did not take that long. She was back in a sixty seconds. "This way, please." She led them toward the back of the room to a table. Michael held Debbie's chair for her as she sat down. Joey was slow picking up on the cue, but did finally and helped Sue. The hostess put menus in front of each of them.

"I already know what I want," Sue said. I want a blue cheese cheese burger, and a coke.

Joey looked at the menu. He didn't know why he had to look at the menu. He knew what was on it. I'll have a Worcestershire burger - medium rare and a chocolate shake.

The waitress arrived to take their orders. Sue repeated her choice, as did Joe. Debbie ordered a chili burger and Michael decided on a cheddar cheeseburger. Each of them ordered a coke.

It was 1:45 when they finished lunch. Joey and Michael stopped at the cashier to pay the bill. Sue and Debbie went to the ladies' room. When they came out the boys were waiting.

Twenty minutes later they were at the game. They found seats on the thirty yard line. The teams were on the field warming up.

Grove City won the coin toss and elected to kick off. It paid immediate dividends. Jackson ran three plays, but could not move the ball and had to punt. Grove City drove the ball down to Jackson's thirteen yard line, before Jackson's defense stiffened and held. Their kicker, an Austrian Exchange Student, split the uprights and Grove City led 3 to 0. Grove City kicked off. Dave Brown, Jackson's top flanker, ran the kick off back to Grove City's thirty yard line, where he was caught from behind and tackled. Seven plays later they scored. The point after was good. The game then turned into a "three yards and a cloud of dust" game. The two teams moved up and down the field, but neither was able to score again in the first half. The half ended with the score: Jackson 7 Grove City 3.

During the half time intermission, Joey and Michael went down to the hot dog stand and caught coke and hot dogs for themselves. The girls did not want anything.

The boys returned just before the kickoff. The second half was almost a replay of the first. Grove City scored on a long pass to go ahead 9 to 7. They kicked the extra point. Jackson came back, running the ball. They scored the go ahead touchdown with eight minutes left and now led by four points. Grove City's next possession ended in an interception and the game ended with Jackson running out the clock.

Joey and Michael asked the girls if they wanted to get something to eat after the game. Each was still full from lunch so the quartet decided they would not stop for a post game "something to eat".

Michael brought Debbie home at 4:45

"I had fun. I hope you did too, Deb."

"It was great, Michael. Thank you for being part of Debbie's first excursion and making it so special."

"Well, I've got to get home. Mom tells me we're having company for dinner and I need to be there by 5:30. I'll see you Monday."

Mike went down the steps and was gone.

Deb waved to him as he drove off. He blew the horn in response. Sandy and her mother were in the kitchen. "Did you have fun?" Sandy asked.

"Yes and we won."

"Are you going to have room for dinner or did you ruin your dinner with something after the game?"

"No, we told the boys we were not hungry. I had a chili burger and a coke for lunch. I am getting hungry."

"We're having pea soup and biscuits for dinner. Will one of you set the table for dinner."

Deb went into the dinning room and got dishes and silver out of the sideboard. She put a soup spoon and butter knife at each place. She took the soup bowls into the

kitchen to her mother. Sandy was taking the biscuits out of the oven. She put them in a basket and took them to the table.

The soup was really good. Her mother had used a ham bone and a half pound of sausage to flavor the soup. It was nice and thick.

When dinner was over, Sandy and Debbie cleared the table and washed the dishes. Sandy washed and Debbie dried. When they finished, Sharon had rented a video, Little Big Man, the hokey story of a Marshall from the old west who cleans up a corrupt town. It was not "Oscar" material, but it was okay.

It was 11:10 when Deb went to bed.

### **October 31**

Monday dawned cold and overcast. It had started raining Sunday morning and had continued until early Monday morning. It was 9:15, when Deb woke up. She had an 11:30 appointment with Donna at Jackson Modeling for a comb out and with Sally for a manicure. Sharon or Sandy was going to do her make-up for the dance. She put on the sweater and jeans again.

Sandy was already up. "Would you like an egg or breakfast?"

"How are you fixing them?"

"Scrambled."

"Sounds good. Shall I fix some toast?"

"Yes."

"Where's Mom?"

"She went to the store to get some milk."

The girls were finishing their breakfast when Sharon returned. They had each had one and a half scrambled eggs with toast and jelly.

It was 10:10. Debbie borrowed a skirt and blouse for her hairdresser appointment.

Donna was waiting when they got to the Agency. "How was your weekend?"

"It was great. I had dates Friday and Saturday. Friday, a friend took me to Scher-ing's for ice cream, and Saturday, he took me out to lunch and to the football game."

"Boy, my social life is not that good. Did he know?"

"Yes, he did. The couple we doubled with did not."

"You didn't have any trouble, did you?"

"No."

Donna chuckled. "I guess I do pretty good work, don't I?"

“Yes.”

Donna took the comb and brush and ran it through Debbie's hair. It fell softly on her shoulders in a flip. She took the can of hair spray and lifted the hair. She began spraying the hair very lightly, letting the hair fall through the mist. She worked for twenty minutes. When she finished, she took the mirror showing Debbie the back of her head. She was beautiful.

Sally was finishing a customer, so Deb took a seat in the waiting room.

Carol, the receptionist asked, “How was your weekend?”

“It was great. Are you going tonight?”

“No, Paul has to work and I am staying home. I've got some housework that I need to do.”

The phone rang. Carol answered it, “Jackson Salon.”

There was a copy of Fashion sitting there on the table. Debbie picked it up. The cover article, “What You Will Wear to The Prom,” said there would be lots of bare shoulders come spring with spaghetti straps and strapless being big this year.

It was ten minutes before Sally finished. That was okay. This was Debbie's day and waiting a few minutes for a manicure was not going to spoil it.

Sally took Deb to her work table. She took Debbie's hands and inspected the nails. They still looked good from Friday. She took remover and removed the polish from the nails, then put her fingers into a bowl of warm soap water to loosen the cuticle. She soaked for ten minutes, while Sally took a phone call. When she returned, she examined the nails and asked, “What color is your gown? What color shall we use on your nails?”

“The gown is silver white, so you pretty much have free reign.”

“How about soft baby pink. How does that sound to you?”

“I like that.”

Sally showed Debbie the bottle of the polish she had in mind. Debbie agreed it was a good choice. Sally deftly covered Debbie's nails as she watched. It took twenty five minutes. Finally, Sally announced that she was done.

Debbie smiled. She couldn't have been happier. Sharon had come in from the mall, while Sally worked. When Sally finished, Sharon paid her. The touch up had cost ten dollars plus tip. Sharon and Debbie agreed it was worth it. Debbie could not have been happier. Her hands and hair looked great.

As they left the Agency, Sharon asked her, “Are you hungry?”

“A little, but not enough to eat lunch.”

“How about a coke and a bagel or English Muffin?”

“That sounds good.”

They crossed Route 71 to Henry's in the Mall.



Henry's was a stand up lunch counter with a half dozen tables. They specialized in hamburgers and hot dogs, but did have an assortment of other items, including bagels and pastries. The stood at the counter. Henry, a balding mid forties Italian took their order.

Sharon ordered a blueberry muffin and a coffee. Debbie - a raisin English muffin and a coke. They were out of blue berry muffins, so Sharon decided on a raisin bagel instead. When they had finished, they went back to the agency to retrieve the dress. Everything was now ready.

It was 2:15 when they got home. Debbie tried to take a nap. "Don't let me sleep beyond 4:00 o'clock. I want to take a bath." She may have napped, but if she did, it was only briefly. At 3:30, she was in the kitchen, looking for a cup of tea and something to eat. All she had had since breakfast was a bagel and a coke.

Sharon put the tea kettle on the stove. It had just boiled and quickly did so again. Sharon took the kettle off the stove and poured the steamy liquid onto the tea bag. Debbie added just a touch of milk and sugar and then let it steep for a minute. She tasted the brew. It was just right. She decided a blueberry muffin would hit the spot. Michael was coming to dinner before they went to the dance.

At 4:15, Sandy came in from work. Deb had just gotten into the tub. Sandy stuck her head in the door.

"May I come in? I want to hear all about your day."

Deb offered her a spot on the toilet seat. "Let me go change and I'll be right back." She was back in five minutes.

"Well, tell me about it. How was my little sister's day?"

"It was great! You're going to help me dress, aren't you?"

"Of course, if you'd like me to, but tell me about your day."

They talked for half an hour, each taking turns telling the other of the high points of her day. When she had finished her bath, Debbie took the towel and dried. She wrapped herself in the terry clothe robe and slipped on her slippers.

She and Sandy went into the bedroom. The dress was hanging from a hook on the back of the door and her lingerie was lying on the bed. There was a pair of panties, a long line bra, a long full half slip, and a pair of white pantyhose. She started with the bra and the hosiery, then added the panties and the half slip.

Sandy suggested, "Put your shoes on, while I get the dress." Debbie stepped into the shoes. Sandy took the dress off the hanger and held it up, so that Debbie could put her arms up through the skirt. She let the dress slide down over Deb's slender

body. Sandy adjusted the skirt so that the dress was on properly. She then worked the zipper up Debbie's back.

"It fits!"

"Of course it does, Silly, it's supposed to. It was made for you. Let's go show Mom. She'll be tickled pink."

Debbie went down the steps first. She quickly discovered that she had hold up her skirt to avoid stepping on it. She got the hang of it.

Sharon was in the kitchen, mashing the cheese potatoes.

Debbie was going into the kitchen when the door bell rang. She turned. "I'll get it." She headed back through the dining room to the front door to the front door. It was not Michael as she thought it would be. It was a cab driver looking for an address. The address was two blocks away. She got him headed in the right direction.

The cab driver started back down the walk. Over his shoulder, he said, "Thank you, Ma'am."

Debbie smiled and turned away from the door.

Five minutes later, the bell rang again.

This time it was Michael. He was wearing a dove colored mourning coat and gray stripped trousers. A ruffled tuxedo shirt and black tie completed the picture. He was wearing a tan rain coat, in the event the forecasted rain materialized. He looked like the groom at a formal wedding.

"Michael, you look fantastic." she exclaimed.

"You do too, Deb."

She stepped back from the door. "Come on in."

He had a corsage box in his hand. He handed it to her. "Here, this is for you."

She took it.

