

# THE BASEMENT

*By Dana Brookes*



*ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS*

---

A 'HER TV' NOVEL

---

**Copyright © 2001, Friendly Applications, Inc. - All Rights Reserved**

## *Reluctant Press TG Publishers*

This story is a work of fiction. Any similarity to persons living or dead is entirely coincidental. All situations and events herein presented are fictional, and intended only for the enjoyment of the reader. Neither the author nor the publisher advocate engaging in or attempting to imitate any of the activities or behaviors portrayed.

Persons seeking gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy or any other medical and/or body-altering process should seek the counsel of a qualified therapist who follows the Benjamin Standards of Care for Gender Identity Disorder.

## *Protect Professional Fiction on the Internet!*

We need *your* help! We want to keep providing our readers with low cost, professional quality fiction on the Internet. We spend thousands of dollars to edit, illustrate and typeset *each story*. It is important, therefore, that everyone works to help keep professional fiction alive on the Net.

This story is protected by US and International copyright law, and is owned exclusively by Friendly Applications, Inc, DBA Reluctant Press, which retains exclusive rights to publish these materials. The civil penalties for copyright infringement can be severe, including substantial monetary damages, injunctive relief, and liability for attorneys' fees incurred in prosecuting a case. If a court determines that the infringement was committed willfully, statutory damages of up to \$100,000 for each copyright infringed can be awarded. Even if not found to be acting willfully, a defendant can still be held liable for statutory damages of \$500 to \$20,000 for each copyright infringed. **These penalties apply even if money was not charged.** In addition, criminal penalties may be imposed if someone willfully infringes a copyrighted work for commercial advantage or private financial gain. This crime is punishable by up to five years imprisonment, up to \$250,000 in fines, or both. State civil damages and criminal penalties vary from state to state and country to country, but are always severe.

The best way to keep professional illustrated fiction available on the Internet is to do YOUR part to protect the author's and publisher's copyright. *You can be part of the solution.* Encourage others to purchase our stories. Never share the access rights you've purchased. **You** make the continued availability of TG fiction on the Internet possible. Thank you for your cooperation!

## THE BASEMENT

By Dana Brookes

“Well, well, well... It's nice to see you here on time for a change, Mr. Denton.”

George Denton was still trying to catch his breath as he clipped his nametag to his shirt. The overcast sky outside made the humid morning feel more like evening.

“Thank you, I think,” he chuckled. “Did you see the box of old coats that were left here yesterday? They're in great shape.”

Since he graduated from college two years ago George had been working at Portia's Vintage Clothing. The pay was barely enough to live on, but the owner of the store, Portia Rossetti, made it worthwhile. George's chronic tardiness was no longer an annoyance to the carefree older woman. It eventually became a running joke between them.

“Yes, George, and the coats look lovely. I put several of them out this morning, while you were hitting your alarm clock's snooze button. There are two of them that need to be dry-cleaned, however. I need you to take them to the cleaner's before we close. They should have a few things for you to bring back here as well.”

“No problem, Ms. Rossetti. I'll do it when I get lunch.”

“That would be great. But please try not to spill mustard on them this time. The blouse you ruined last week is serving as a wash rag for my car right now.”

“I'll do it before I eat this time. Promise.”

The spring semester had ended several weeks before, so there weren't many students in the area. During those summer months, business dropped off severely in the college town. It did not worry Ms. Rossetti, however. Nothing seemed to worry her, which is partly why George liked her so much.

The next few hours passed slowly. Just after one o'clock, George watched the first and only customer of the morning walk out of the store with an old pair of low-cut, straight-legged jeans.

“To make shorts,” she had told him. “This has been a brutal summer.”

Now that the store was empty, George decided it was time for his lunch break.

“You can take as long as you want, dear. I don't think we'll be too busy today.”

“Thanks, Ms. Rossetti. I'll tell everyone at the dry cleaner's you said hello.”

George dropped off the coats and picked up three skirts that were being cleaned for the store. On the way back, he stopped into a pizza place for lunch. He sat down at the table nearest the front window so he could watch people walk by. During the semester

George loved to watch the students and faculty traverse the town. Some have accused him of being nosy, but George preferred to think of himself as curious.

When no one had passed by for five minutes, he turned his attention toward the skirts he picked up. Peeking under the plastic sheathes they were held in, he wondered who had dropped them off at the store. They looked almost new. Two were long, silky affairs. He was more interested in the black leather miniskirt, however. He thought about how it would look on a suitably leggy blonde.

As if on cue, just such a girl strolled past the pizza parlor's front window. George was mesmerized by her flowing, golden hair. In the few seconds before she passed out of view, it was as if the gray sky had parted for a moment. Even from inside the restaurant he could hear the clicking of her long heels on the sidewalk.

“As if legs that long need heels like those,” he said to himself.

And just as suddenly as she appeared, she was gone. George wanted to drop his slice of pizza and follow her, but he knew he'd better not press his luck. He'd barely got to work before opening time that morning. Taking off after the mystery girl seemed like a bad idea.

George consoled himself with the thought that she may live nearby. He made a mental note to keep an eye out for her. He was amazed he hadn't seen her before. George had always had a bit of the wandering eye. He wasn't even paying attention to his lunch anymore. When he realized it had gone cold, he merely shrugged his shoulders and pushed it aside. He picked up the dry cleaning and headed back to work. On the way back to the store he wondered if there had been a single customer while he was gone. He doubted it.

He entered Portia's Vintage Clothing and checked his watch. He'd only been gone half an hour. Feeling proud that he'd taken a reasonably short lunch, he looked up with a smile. He was ready for some goodhearted ribbing from his boss about being on time twice in one day, but that's not what he found on returning to the store.

It was the girl he'd seen just ten minutes ago!

She was at the counter, talking to Ms. Rossetti. George couldn't believe his luck. He quickly walked up to the two ladies and laid the skirts across the counter.

“Thank you for picking those up,” Portia said.

“No problem,” George said. Then he simply stood there for a moment, silently waiting for the precious introduction to the lovely stranger.

“George, I would like you to meet Patricia. She's starting work tomorrow.”

“Really? Well, that's fantastic!” George tried not to sound too excited, but he feared he was failing.

“It's nice to meet you,” Patricia said, extending a slender hand.

“The pleasure is mine,” he replied, taken her hand in his. Her immediately noticed her fingernails. They were the deepest color of red he'd ever seen. As he released her hand he felt them scrape delicately across his palm. He was amazed at their finely filed tips. Their sharpness gave her hands an almost sinister look.

“Did you go to school at the university?” George asked when he finally collected his thoughts.

“No, actually. I moved here six months ago. A very good friend of mine went to school here, however.”

“You don't say! Maybe I know him or her.”

“It's a her,” Patricia said with a peculiar look in her eye. “She graduated this last semester. Women's Studies was her major.”

“No kidding,” George said, trying to remember anything he could of the feminist theory he'd read in school. He couldn't come up with anything. “That's interesting. What did you study?”

“Boys mostly,” she joked. “I didn't find much that piqued my interest at college. I was much more interested in extracurricular activities. Books and lectures just don't measure up to real life experience. I'm so much happier now that I'm done with all that studying.”

“I know what you mean,” George said. He was trying very hard to concentrate on the conversation, but he found Patricia to be very distracting.

While she spoke, Patricia would absent-mindedly fiddle with the last button on her shirt. George thought she was probably unaware she was unbuttoning and buttoning it, so he tried not to stare. Her short white blouse didn't even reach the top of her tight skirt. As Patricia spoke, George would watch her bellybutton peek out from behind the button she couldn't leave alone. He couldn't believe how deftly she troubled the button, considering her long fingernails. They were so shiny they glimmered in the store's modest light.

“Yeah... so, uh,” George stammered as he tried to continue the conversation. Fortunately, he was saved by the bell above the store's front door. In walked a customer.

“I guess I should go be helpful,” he told the lovely girl.

He approached the couple who had just entered. As he asked them if they needed help finding anything, he tried to keep an eye on the front counter. He could see that Patricia and Ms. Rossetti were laughing, but he could not hear what they were saying to each other. After a few more minutes, Patricia shook her new boss's hand and turned to leave.

George decided to show the couple a selection of scarves near the entrance, in order to make sure he could catch Patricia before she left. As she opened the door, George said, “I'm looking forward to working with you. See you tomorrow!”

She merely smiled. Then she was gone.

“Yes, these are nice. But I was actually looking for a nice T-shirt. I don't have enough summer clothing.”

What did that smile mean, George wondered.

“Excuse me, but I was wondering about T-shirts...”

Was she annoyed that he had been staring at her? Did she think he was trying too hard?

“Sir? I think we'll just look around the store for a bit...”

“Oh, I'm sorry. Of course. If you need anything at all just give me a holler.” George hoped Ms. Rossetti hadn't noticed how unhelpful he was. The last thing in the world he wanted now was to get fired.

George ate dinner alone that night. His roommates went to a movie, but George wasn't in the mood. All he could think about was getting to work the next day. He even considered for a moment that Patricia was hired to get him to work on time. But he quickly dismissed the foolish thought.

He just dropped his dish in the sink. His roommates never washed up after dinner, so why should he? He sat down to read a book, but it couldn't hold his attention. He tried watching television, but that too couldn't distract him. He decided to go to sleep. Before turning off the light, he set the alarm to wake him an extra hour earlier than usual.

George got to work earlier than he ever had before. Ms. Rossetti was pleasantly surprised.

“Well look at that! What are you doing here at this hour?”

George hadn't prepared an excuse. “Um... I guess I just went to sleep early last night. Who knows?”

“That's not like you, dear. Are you feeling okay?”

“Oh, I'm fine, Ms. Rossetti.”

“That's good. Since you're here so early today, maybe you'd like to learn what it is we do before opening each day.”

George figured this was a small price to pay. She showed George how she took an inventory of what was sold the day before and replaced items on the racks. Then she asked him to sweep up around the shop.

“This is a nice break from tidying up every morning. It's a lovely day outside, isn't it?” she said.

“Oh! The sun finally came back out.” George hadn't even noticed the weather. “It seems like we've had nothing but rain for the last week.”

“After you're done sweeping up, would you mind taking these boxes of blouses to the back room?”

“Of course not! I'll do that in a moment. I had no idea how much there was to do in the morning.”

“It's not so bad. And don't worry; I won't be expecting this extra help every morning.”

They both laughed. George was more than happy to do a little cleaning on this day.

Before he knew it, it was 10 o'clock, time to open the store. As he was turning the “Closed” sign in the window around so “Open” faced out, Patricia knocked on the door.

“Good morning! Come on in.”

“Thank you,” she replied. She flashed him a smile and walked right by.

George couldn't believe it. Patricia looked even lovelier today than she had yesterday. Her long blond hair was wavier today. She wore a light purple tank top that did nothing to hide her black bra straps. Her skirt was the thinnest material he'd ever seen. It was light brown with a flowery design around the hem, and George swore she wasn't wearing any underwear from the way it clung to her bottom. It was so thin it created the illusion of being transparent, but it was just the way the material caressed her legs that left little to the imagination. She glided towards Ms. Rossetti on modestly sized heels. She was too tall to need anything longer.

George simply arranged some displays in the store window while Patricia talked to Ms. Rossetti. He couldn't hear what they were saying, but he assumed she was receiving some instructions for the day. Suddenly George heard his name called out.

“Could you come over here for a moment, dear?”

George jumped to attention, but couldn't help feeling a little disappointed it was his boss, not Patricia, who was summoning him. He wondered if he'd be this jumpy all day.

“What's up?” he asked.

“I was just telling Patricia a little about the store. Why don't you show her around a bit? She'll need to know where everything goes.”

“It would be my pleasure.”

“There isn't much to learn here,” she said to Patricia, “but it wouldn't hurt to get your bearings this morning.”

“Of course,” Patricia said.

Then she turned to George. He felt his heart skip a beat when their eyes made contact. “So, what's first?”

George gave her a brief tour of the store. There wasn't much to see; the store was mostly racks of clothes separated by category. Soon Patricia had seen everything, and Ms. Rossetti asked them to put a few new items out on the floor. She brought a small stack of skirts out from the backroom.

“Here you go. I don't expect these to last very long,” she said as she handed them to George.

“Oh, they're very nice,” Patricia said. “I think I have one just like that black one.”

George wanted to continue the conversation. “I've been here a couple years, but I've never seen anything like the skirt you're wearing today.”

“Thanks, I made it myself.”

“No kidding! It looks great. Do you make a lot of your own clothes?”

“A good portion. I don't like a lot of what you see in the stores. I guess I just have... different tastes than most people.”

“I know how you feel. That must be great being able to sew like that.”

“And it's a lot cheaper. Since I can make a skirt when I need a new one, I can save my money to spend on more pleasurable things. You could do the same, if you wanted.”

“Oh, I don't think I could ever sew that well. Plus, I'm a guy! I don't need more than some pants and a few shirts.”

“Well that's boring,” she said playfully. “I've noticed that about the guys I've known. They just don't care about looking nice. Maybe they're afraid it will appear too feminine.”

“I don't think I worry about that,” George said without even thinking about what he was saying. “I'm sure there are some guys that aren't afraid to appear a little feminine.”

“That's refreshing to hear. I just don't know why guys wouldn't want to try out different things. I love being able to dress differently each day. One day I might feel serious and somber. Today I'm feeling... excited. It's my first day of work, after all!”

“It's kind of like role playing, or something like that,” George said, not really sure what she was talking about.

“That's right. I couldn't have said it better myself.”

George thought the conversation was going well, but he realized they had finished putting out the clothes. Before he could start up the conversation again, a customer walked in.

George walked right up to them and asked if they needed any help. Patricia stayed back and just watched. The girl looked young; she was almost certainly a student at the university. She was out shoe shopping, so George pointed her towards the back of the store, where the wall was lined with shelves of women's shoes.

He didn't want to be too pushy, so he left the girl alone with the shoes. He kept an eye on her as he stood next to Patricia.

“So... do you live nearby?” he asked.

“Yes, my roommate and I are just a few blocks from here. A little way off Main Street.”

“That's convenient. Do you room with a friend, or are you just renting a room with strangers?”

“Oh, no. I would never rent a room in a house full of strangers. I need plenty of privacy. My roommate is the Women's Studies graduate I told you about yesterday. She's the best.”

George was curious about this friend. He wondered what kind of person scored so highly Patricia's book.

“You're really lucky. I'm just renting a room in a house a decent way from here. They're all grad students. I think they met in a fraternity. We don't talk much. I'm not even sure they know my name.”

“That's no fun. I can totally be myself around Deborah.”



“Deborah's your roommate?”

“Right. She's just the best. I really love her to death.

George wanted to find out more. “So what kind of stuff do you guys do around here? This town can be kind of beat in the summer.”

“Oh, we don't go out much. It's too expensive. We just hang out at our place. We've got a really nice house. We're busy fixing it up just the way we want it. The most important rooms are already done.”

“Wow, that sounds like it could be a lot of work. Does the house need much work?”

“Fortunately, no. It just didn't have the ambiance we wanted for it. Plus, it was so boring before. We're trying to spice it up a little.”

“I can't stand my place, but it I just have a room there. So there isn't much I can do about it. They're all guys there, so it's pretty messy.”

“I can't even imagine what it would be like living with a bunch of guys.”

“And I can't imagine what it would be like living with girls. It must be nice.”

“Well, you know how girls can be. You'd have to be used to being bossed around, I'm sure!”

George laughed aloud. He was having a wonderful time talking to such a beautiful, charming girl. In fact, he was having so much fun he didn't notice that the girl looking for shoes had left. He hoped Ms. Rossetti hadn't noticed him slacking off on the job. He nearly yelped when she yelled for him.

“George! I'm in the back. Can you bring me yesterday's receipts? I left them under the counter.”

Patricia put her hand on his shoulder. “Don't worry, I'll do it. I saw her put them there when I got here this morning. You keep an eye out for customers. Maybe we didn't do such a great job with the last one. She didn't even buy anything!”

George wanted to thank her, but he couldn't speak. He practically felt faint when she touched his shoulder. As she turned to help Ms. Rossetti, her hand lingered just a moment on his shirt. Her pointed nails, painted purple today, dragged across the coarse fabric. It made a sound that made his heart race, but he couldn't explain why.

He watched her saunter into the back room. When she walked, her hips swayed just a little. It wasn't obvious, but if you were watching with George's intensity it was plainly obvious. He could have watched her walk all day.

Before she returned, George made himself busy straightening up. He didn't want her to notice him staring at her. She stopped to look at the shoes on display.

“Oh, there you are. I didn't notice you back there. Does Ms. Rossetti need anything else?”

“No, she said we should just keep an eye on the store.” Patricia moved on from the shoes to the T-shirts nearby. “So what do you do all day here?”

“Pretty much just what we're doing now.”

“You admire women's clothes all day?” she joked.

“No, no, that's not what I mean. I just make sure I'm out here when a customer comes in.”

“So why was I hired? It seems like you barely have enough work yourself?”

“When summer is over all the students come back. We do a lot more business then. In the meantime, I think Ms. Rossetti wants to take more days off. So I guess I'll do the managerial stuff while you help customers.”

Patricia had grown bored with the T-shirts and was now looking at the longer skirts hanging on a rack. “Hmm,” she said under her breath. George heard her and tried to think of something to say. She was unaware how closely she was being watched.

“So... are you enjoying your first day?”

“Of course I am. I love clothes, all kinds. My roommate teases me about it. She thinks it's too typically feminine. But what's wrong with a little femininity in your life?”

“I've never thought about it that way. No one should tell you how to live your life.”

“Well, plenty of people have tried. You can't imagine how much trouble I've had keeping a boyfriend longer than a week or two. That's part of the reason Deb and I get along so well. She knows all about me, and she accepts me. She's practically a boyfriend and a girlfriend all wrapped in one.”

George couldn't imagine how any guy could leave Patricia. He desperately wanted to ask her if she currently had a boyfriend, but he didn't know how to do it without seeming too forward.

“That's surprising,” he said. He figured a little flattery couldn't hurt. “What's not to like about you?”

“Oh, I guess I've got a few little... quirks. But who doesn't? Most guys are just so butch. They always want to be in charge. And I'm not a passive girl!”

“There must be guys out there who wouldn't want to be too pushy.”

“Well, perhaps Deb and I can be a little insular sometimes. Maybe guys feel ganged up on by us. We're practically inseparable.”

“That sounds really nice, if you ask me. All my friends are students at the university. They've all gone away for the summer.”

“You should hang out with us some time. Especially since you don't get along with your roommates very well.”

George couldn't believe it. This was exactly the opportunity he was looking for.

“I'd love to!”

That seemed simple enough. He couldn't wait to spend more time with her, especially outside of the shop. He wanted to invite her to lunch that very day, but he felt that would be too much too soon. If she had a history of boyfriend problems, he figured coming on too strong would rub her the wrong way. He wanted to be the opposite of all those other guys.

“Do you think you can handle being out here on the floor without me for a little bit?”

“Sure, why?”

“I think I'm gonna grab lunch in a second. I won't be gone long. There's a place just down the block that I'll go to. Do you want me to pick up anything for you?”

“No, I'll be fine. I'm meeting Deb for lunch. She's at the house now, right where I left her this morning. I'll call her when I'm about to get lunch. She's dying to hear how my first day is going.”

“That's cool. It's pretty laid back here. You can take your lunch anytime I'm here to watch the store.”

“Then maybe I'll call Deb while you're at lunch. I'll take my break when you get back.”

“Sounds good. Let me make sure Ms. Rossetti doesn't need anything while I'm out.”

George went to the back room to check on his boss. She was sitting at the desk, entering receipts into the computer. She was always poring over the finances of the store. Even though the space was cheap to lease and the store didn't sell a large volume of clothing, Ms. Rossetti was always checking and checking again her business affairs.

“I'm about to go to lunch. Is there anything you want me to do before I go?”

“No,” she said without looking up from her papers. “Everything's fine here. How is Patricia doing on her first day?”

“She's doing just fine,” George said. “I think she's gonna be great.”

George stepped into the doorway leading back into the store. He didn't see Patricia at first. Then he heard something from the corner of the store. He peeked through the doorway to find Patricia trying on a pair of shoes.

George quickly glanced back at Ms. Rossetti, who was lost in her calculations. She didn't even know he was still there. George was trying to think of something charming to say to Patricia as he watched her trying on shoes. She was in the process of putting a pair back on the shelf when she knocked a “25% Off” sign off the wall. The sign was simply a piece of paper that George had taped up earlier that month. It floated down from the wall and under a rack of pants.

Before he could offer to help, Patricia got to her knees to reach for the sign. She didn't realize George was standing in the doorway, watching her crawl under the rack. George's eyes widened when he realized he could see up her tiny skirt. She wore the tiniest blue G-string he'd ever seen.

When she found the sign, George quickly busied himself with straightening some displays nearby.

“Oh, there you are. So are you going to lunch now?” she asked innocently.

“Um, yes. Right now! I'll be back soon.” George was relieved that she didn't seem to have noticed his peeping.

Lunch would have tasted better if George hadn't been so distracted. He didn't go far from the store; he simply walked next door for a sandwich and soda. Instead of regret-

ting the dry turkey and bland cheese he had paid good money for, he was lost in thoughts of Patricia. Over and over he replayed the scene of her brown skirt riding up her thighs. He began to get a little too excited, and he figured he should get back to work. He dropped the last half of the sandwich in the trash and left.

The fifteen feet between the cafe and his store were filled with promise. George's anticipation of seeing her again increased each step closer he took. He imagined how she would smile to see him back from lunch, how he would tell her not to bother with the cafe next door, how he would ask her what she was doing after work even. As he opened the door, he froze in his tracks.

Patricia was laughing and talking to young man. George hoped he was just a customer, but he was troubled by it nonetheless. He was never that friendly with the customers. He tried to shake it off as he regained his composure and entered the store.

Walking up to Patricia and the man, he opened his mouth to say hello. But just at that moment, Patricia took the man's arm and led him to a rack of men's jackets. George felt deflated. He couldn't believe she was actually touching the tall, handsome guy.

George silently fumed for a few minutes. He heard the front door's bell ring, signaling a customer's entrance. He turned to see a pretty young lady, wearing worn jeans and a black T-shirt. George practically ran up to her. He decided to give Patricia a taste of her own medicine.

"Hello!" George said just loud enough for Patricia to overhear. "Can I help you find anything?"

"Actually, I'm just here..."

"Oh, you should really check out the new summer dresses we have in. A lovely girl like yourself should never be without something pretty for an evening out on the town."

George glanced back at Patricia. She was watching him! The look of surprise on her face made George think his plan was working. He decided to kick it up a notch.

Before the girl could reply, he put a hand on her elbow and tried to lead her over to the dresses. He leaned in close to her, but before he could crack a joke to make her smile, she removed his hand from her arm.

"Pats!" she shouted over his shoulder.

George was confused and turned just in time to see Patricia wave to the girl.

"Deb, what are you doing here?"

"I'm here to take you to lunch, my treat. So how's my working girl doing on her first day?"

As the two girls met in the middle of the store, George figured he should help out with the customer Patricia had been talking to. He tried to listen in on the girls' conversation, but it was difficult to do while ringing up the sale.

When George was finished and the customer had left, he joined in.

"So, you're this Debbie girl I've heard so much about."

“Oh, let me introduce you,” Patricia said. “George, this is my roommate Deb; Deb, this is George. He's worked here for a while. I hope I'm not giving him too much trouble while he shows me the ropes.”

“Oh, you're doing great,” George said. “So are you guys getting lunch now or something?”

“Yeah, I guess I'll go tell Ms. Rossetti now. Be right back.”

Patricia walked into the back room, leaving George and Debbie to deal with the awkward silence of two strangers.

“So... How long have you known Patricia?”

“A few years now. We met in school.”

“That's cool.”

George was at a loss. He wanted to know more about Patricia, but he felt very uncomfortable around her friend. There was something about her that made him feel that way, but he couldn't put a finger on just what it was.

“...Well, what do you two do for fun around here. It's pretty beat during the summer.”

“We don't have any trouble entertaining ourselves,” she said mysteriously.

“That's... great.”

To George's relief, Patricia returned.

“Okay, let's eat!”

It seemed like the girls were at lunch forever. George watched a couple customers browse the store, but no one bought anything. He didn't even bother to come out from behind the register. After working there for so long, he could tell which customers were looking for clothes and which were just killing time.

During one of the many lulls, Ms. Rossetti came out from the back room.

“How was your lunch, dear?”

“Oh, nothing special. Everything look okay back there?”

“Everything's just fine. There should be a young man dropping off a bag of clothes later today. If he gets here before you leave, maybe you could show Patricia how we tag the items before we put them out in the store.”

“Sure thing.”

George was having trouble keeping up his end of the conversation. Realizing her employee wasn't feeling very chatty, Ms. Rossetti went back to her office for lunch.

George simply stared out the front windows of the store, wondering when Patricia and her friend would arrive. Finally, they returned. He even thought he saw them holding hands before entering the store, but he could not tell for sure.

“Thanks for lunch. I've never eaten there before,” Patricia said.

“Congratulations on your first day,” Debbie replied.

“Before you go, I want to show you something,” Patricia told her. “Stay right there. I’ll be back in a second.”

Patricia skipped over to the rack of women's pants. She was busy looking for something there, so George decided to get involved.

“What are you looking for?”

“Oh, I saw a pair of pants here that I thought Deb might like. Now where were they?”

As she rummaged through the clothes, she knocked a couple items off their hangers. Too intent on finding the pants, she didn't even notice.

“Here they are! Deb, come here.”

Debbie took a look at the pants and smiled. Then Patricia took her by the arm and led her to the changing room right next to them. It had swinging doors that did not reach all the way to the floor. The two girls stepped inside. George heard the latch on the doors close.

George leaned over to pick up the clothes that Patricia had knocked to the floor. As he was reaching under the rack, he looked over to see the legs and feet of the two girls as they stood in the changing room. His curiosity piqued, he took his time finding the fallen pants.

He watched as Debbie pulled her pants down to her ankles and stepped out of them. He could only see the bottom half of the girls' calves and feet, but it was enough to make him excited. He imagined the two girls standing in the cramped room, Patricia in her little skirt and tank top, Debbie in her T-shirt and underwear. As Debbie pulled the new pants over her feet and up her legs, George wondered what type of panties she would wear, if she wore any at all.

“Oh, that's nice,” he heard her say. “I really like them. How much are they?”

“Ten bucks, can you believe it?” Patricia said.

“Can I just wear them out of here?”

“Of course. Turn around for a second,” Patricia said.

George could see Debbie's feet shuffle as she tried to turn in the tiny space.

“I have to warn you, I can see your underwear through these pants,” Patricia said.

George couldn't believe he was overhearing this conversation. It was like they forgot he was there. What was even more surprising was the sight of Debbie removing the pants and then pulling her white cotton panties down her legs.

“George, where are you?” Ms. Rossetti suddenly said.

George nearly had a heart attack. He quickly jumped up from where he was kneeling.

“What's up?” He hoped he hadn't been caught.