



Reluctant Press presents:

Basics

Rhonda Zee



ILLUSTRATIONS BY C PAGANI

AN 'ADULT TV' NOVEL

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Reluctant Press TG Publishers

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Basics

by Rhonda Zee

Riordan looked up from the secretary's desk behind the barrier and glanced toward the door. She had intended it to be the perfunctory glance that she usually gave to anyone who entered the office. The haughtily attractive woman looked at the diminutive teen who had just entered. Her guess was that the visitor was on the wrong floor. Someone so young couldn't possibly have any business with this office and there was no way the youngster could have missed the music dealer across the hall. It had to be someone looking for the local selective service office on the floor above. Certainly not the typical eighteen-year-old boy required by law to register with their local draft board. She wondered why that child was there at all. Riordan put on her glasses to get a better look at the petite adolescent and knew at once why she had the sense that a mistake had been made.

The child in question was facing away from Riordan, studying the printed policies and instructions on the wall over the table covered with forms and brochures.

"Can I help you, miss?"

"Yes, thank you. I'm here to register for the draft. Somehow I get the impression I'm in the wrong office."

Riordan studied the speaker with a subdued smile. No more than five feet four, probably less. She wondered why the poor dear's mother didn't have her wearing at least a training bra. The perky beginnings of breasts thrust against the loose light cotton of the French sailor's shirt. The promise of the fullness that might come was richly seductive despite this lovely creature being perhaps no more than fourteen or fifteen. Exquisitely chiseled facial bones and lips that formed a perfect elongated cupid bow were highlighted by intense, almond shaped hazel eyes. Silky, thick chestnut hair was cut in a pixie style with sideswept bangs. The wide neck of the loosely fitted shirt revealed a swan like neck over delicate shoulders.

Despite the petite delicacy of this child, a subtle physical strength emanated from the lithe body.

Riordan glanced down at the white summer trousers that so complemented the fashion statement this adolescent was making. She spoke tolerantly, trying to neither ridicule nor patronize this intensely attractive sprite.

“That’s quite admirable, quite patriotic of you to want to register but this isn’t the draft board. You’re right about this being the wrong office. That old elevator let you off on the wrong floor. There’s some additional confusion, too. Somehow you’ve been misled. Girls don’t register for the draft. When you do reach eighteen you can ask about joining the WACs or the WAVEs if you’re still interested in serving your country. ”

“No, ma’am. You’re right about some confusion here, but with all due respect, I haven’t been misled at all. You see I am a boy. I turned eighteen last week so here I am.”

Riordan did something she almost never did. She blushed.

The boy reached into the brief case he carried on a shoulder strap and withdrew his birth certificate and one or two documents with his photograph to confirm his identity.

“Well, Mr. Winston Levin, please forgive my confusion. Let me escort you to the right floor and see they treat you decently. When you’re done registering for the draft we’ll go out for a nice lunch to make up for my embarrassing you like that. My treat so don’t argue”

Half an hour later the pair walked out of the building together.

“Really, Miss Riordan. This is quite unnecessary. There’s nothing to apologize for. Happens so often that I’m mistaken for a little girl. Well maybe not a little, little girl but a girl a lot younger than I really am. I’m so used to it that it doesn’t bother me. I mean it’s really neat of you to want to take me to lunch but you really don’t have to.”

They stepped into the empty elevator.

“I suspect that saying you’re used to being mistaken for girl doesn’t bother you is an understatement. Winston, I don’t mean any offense but my guess is that you find it flattering.”

A puckish smile and a nod accompanied by a gentle admonition.

“I’d like to be called Winnie. Suits me, don’t you think?” It was wish he had harbored for a very long time but this was the first time he had actually asked anyone to call him by the diminutive that would describe him so much better than his given name.

Winnie was surprised when his hostess led him into an alley next to the building, unlocked a late model convertible and drove off with him after putting the top down.

“Just relax, Winnie. We’ll be there in a few minutes. I’m sure you’ll feel comfy with where we’re going for lunch.”

The puzzled boy opened up to Riordan while furtively glancing at her knees as she manipulated the pedals of the car. This was different from the usual voyeuristic ogling of boys and men. Of course there was that thrill that comes with unexpected glimpses of what is usually concealed and forbidden. There was, for Winston, a different kind of curiosity, a different kind of yearning from most males. He longed to know, to know first hand, the sensations of nylon caressing the skin of his legs, to feel the strain of walking in heels, to smooth the back of one’s skirt as one sits, to experience the pressure of a girdle. Once he tried on a slip belonging to his mother; he remembered the strange but knowing stare she gave him when she discovered that the straps had been readjusted. She had never looked at him like that before or since. Even though she didn’t seem displeased, he never dared tamper with her underthings again. That is, unless you call touching her things in the hamper or as they lay folded in a pile of clean laundry.

Winston wondered why he felt so comfortable answering Riordan’s polite questions. More than just being polite or making small talk to pass the time, Riordan gave the impression of being genuinely interested in Winnie. For whatever reason the effeminate boy felt comfortable being with Anne Riordan and honestly answering her questions. Was it, he wondered, that he would never see her again?

It was one of those curious episodes that happen from time to time. Two people with little in common meet by chance and manage to share a little bit more of themselves than they might if they planned on meeting again.

Riordan returned to her office and Winnie sauntered around the downtown-shopping district. After visiting a few stores he made his way back to the neighborhood where Riordan had treated him to lunch. Despite its proximity to the bustling downtown shopping and business district, it was unknown to most people. It was generally thought of as a place where old money and people successful and some hoping soon to be successful in the more acceptable creative arts mingled.

“Thought you’d be out longer. That child is simply gorgeous. God, those bones and that hair! So, what happened over lunch?” asked the only other person who worked in the building with whom Riordan was friendly with away from work. Rick was the only full time employee of the classical music store that shared the floor with Anne Riordan’s enterprise.

“He is gorgeous and he’s as nice and as charming as he is beautiful, but needs some confidence and some self-acceptance. I would say definitely not your type, at least not yet anyhow, and hopefully never. He’s a nice kid, lives with his mother who was widowed and then remarried a bastard according to what he said. She had the sense to divorce him, though.

“Going into his senior year of high school he lost a year because of a serious illness. That’s why he’s so small and thin. He’s not all that much younger than you. Well proportioned, isn’t he? Rick, I’ve got to tell you though, this kid had me totally fooled. I even called him ‘Miss’ when he first came in.”

“It sounds even more interesting now that you’ve told me a bit about him. Too bad we’ll never meet.”

“Oh, I’m not sure about that. I took him to lunch over in the Hill and his face told me he’ll be back to explore it as soon as he can. Poor baby has a very hard time where he lives; he’s a real outsider, and the odds are that he’ll be very happy once he becomes a regular in the Hill.”

While this conversation was taking place, Winnie hadn’t quite yet made his way back to that ‘other neighborhood’, the ‘Hill’ as it was known, where Miss Riordan had shared lunch with him in a small, dimly lighted restaurant. He was making his way through the intimate apparel section of a ‘better class of department store’ as higher quality stores were called back then. A sigh of relief as the sales lady mechanically wrote up his purchase; three pair of size five tailored nylon panties, one with the slightest bit of picot trim at the leg bands, and one mid thigh cotton nightie.

Not one to push his luck by calling unwanted attention to himself by buying too many girls’ items in one store, he went on to a nearby five and ten where he bought three packs of cotton briefs in white, brights and pastels. They were basic but very feminine in a pretty, wholesome and so typically all-American girl manner.

These were his treat to himself, a coming of age present in anticipation of the day when he would be free to dress as he pleased but to partake of even the most feminine activities. Winnie walked with a new found freedom and determination as he made his way back to the very nice, very comfortable restaurant where he had enjoyed lunch with Miss Riordan. It struck him that the busses that ran to and through the downtown area all terminated before entering of this unfamiliar place. The parking signs, too, were different. He became convinced that despite its proximity, this was an all together separate place from the city in which he lived. He was right. The Hill, as it was popularly called, was a separate entity which had been founded as a refuge for the more cultured and well to do who removed themselves from the children of immigrants who were moving into the middle class neighborhoods of the small city. Over time the Hill had become an enclave of artists and their patrons. Other assorted well off bohemians congregated there as well. The official name was ‘Compton’s Hill,’ derived from its founder and its site on a hill overlooking a bay.

Winnie was fascinated by the well-maintained brownstones and reproduction federal period houses along the tree shaded streets. Accurately restored Victorian homes dominated some of the streets. The main commercial street had an array of what today would be called ‘interesting’ restaurants and cocktail lounges along with shops appealing to a ‘better class’ of customers, customers who recognized quality but wanted the individual, the different as well the traditional in their furnishings.

The merchandise displayed attested that they were not interested in fads that would look ridiculous in six months. He paused in front a ladies specialty shop, made a mental note to return when he had more time and more money to spend,

not to mention the confidence to shop in this paradise of a store. A few doors down was a shop catering to the needs of dancers. He paused and thought how wonderful it would be to move with the fluid grace of a trained dancer while wearing even the most ordinary rehearsal garb.

Oh, so ordinary for a real dancer but so exotic to this youth who was becoming more determined by the minute to fulfill the needs he had concealed ever since he could remember. He wondered if the dance school above the shop accepted boys who were beginners. But he didn't want to dance as a boy. There were two more floors above the dance studio. One, the third floor of the building, was, according to the directory at the entrance, a studio of an undefined sort. It was a studio that offered training in body-shaping, endurance and self-defense.

A cafe across the street featured sidewalk tables, still a rarity in most parts of the city in the fifties. A glance at his watch showed he had plenty of time to beat the rush hour crowd on the bus home. He scurried across to the cafe.

After taking a seat in the sun, Winnie ordered a pot of tea and a scone. He had never laid eyes on a scone before, let alone eaten one but he knew of them from his anglophile taste in reading, especially mysteries. He tried to appear casual, as if he had been doing this kind of thing for years. The passersby in the street caught his attention even as he caught the eye of many that strolled by in the course of business or of leisure pursuits.

They didn't seem so very extraordinary, only a few degrees of difference set them apart from most people in his own neighborhood. And yet those few degrees of difference enabled so many of them to show some subtle, individual sign of being his or her own person. Perhaps it was the way they accessorized their outfits with a colorful scarf or a bit of unusual jewelry. Winnie wished he could feel secure enough in his own neighborhood to express himself as these people could. No, he was already dismissed as an oddball, a fairy for his interest in classical music and fine art as much as his avoidance of things considered boyish. "Should have known along that he'd turn out to be, well, you know. Never did like what boys are supposed to like. And that mother of his with all her career woman airs. You'd think she would have noticed it when he was playing with dolls. Even heard he played dress-up with the girls."

A few of the snobbier, girls accepted him because he was safe; no need to fear that he would force his hormonal driven attentions on them. What hormones? He was skinny and short, more like a girl who was on the edge of puberty than a boy all ready in high school. Then again, if he ever did try to have his way with them they could undoubtedly put him in his place which, according to some of the more independent thinking girls, was where all males should be, at the their feet, symbolically if not literally. These girls made sure he didn't forget his dependent, even subservient position in the clique but that didn't stop him from feeling good about being able to be with them especially when they forgot or ignored that, despite the many things they had in common, he was still really a boy. The best times were when they talked about fashions in front of him. This was an education that taught him the names of fabrics, styles, and designers. His color sense was better than most girls' were. He became a sort of unpaid consultant whose skill at acces-

sorizing helped the clique get the most for their fashion dollar. It was a special status that made Winnie 'almost one of us girls.'

There were those conversations after school or on rainy Saturday afternoons while seated on a girl's bedroom floor. It was during these hen sessions that he felt both exhilarated and frustrated. It was an era when well brought-up girls rarely wore slacks or jeans. The girls felt relaxed; having Winnie with them wasn't really like having a *real* boy there. They felt at ease, comfortable enough to let their skirts fall as they may. Their legs showed well above the knees, well past stocking tops allowing Winnie unfettered views, views and not fleeting glimpses, of the cuffs of the then ubiquitous panty girdles, and even, on not so rare occasions, enough panty to note not only color but the details of the fabric and trim. Then the conversation would shift from the clothing styles to which 'foundations' were right for each style. They would kneel over shared copies of 'Seventeen' and of 'Young Miss' as they studied the ads. It was at these times that Winnie felt so terribly frustrated. The stirring he sometimes felt caused his dick to harden and strain against his trousers. It was both sexual arousal and envy that he experienced at those moments.

Winnie smiled to himself as he realized his purchases were what the girls referred to as the *basics* of their very demure but ever so sexy intimate wardrobes.

A music school on the second floor of a building across the street offered instrumental and vocal instruction as well as theory and harmony. It brought to mind one or two girls who were especially nice, supportive when he first started high school. They liked to sing and became stars of the high school chorus. They loved to sing along with popular records, to accompany each other on the piano. It was they who encouraged Winnie to join them and so it was that he discovered his superb alto voice. They goaded him to audition for the chorus. The music teacher was smitten by his natural abilities, his gift of a voice that sounded right in every form of vocal music. But as an alto he would be the only boy in his section. The teasing was more than he could bear and so he quit chorus. The girls who had been so encouraging were now more distant. Was it that the boys they had begun dating wondered why they were friends with the queer or were they angry because he didn't stay in chorus with them? Perhaps, he thought, they had simply out-grown him.

Winnie glanced at the bags holding the things he bought earlier that afternoon. He smiled with the realization that these were only the first of what he hoped would be many acquisitions, the beginnings of a new wardrobe.

The braking of a taxi brought him out of his reverie and back to the moment. He again studied the passersby. More than one well dressed gentleman, all late twenties or early thirties, smiled at Winnie. These were anything but smiles of derision at seeing a poorly cut-out boy. These were the smiles that appear spontaneously when a man sees a woman he finds attractive or beautiful or seductive. These were the fleeting smiles that appear unbidden, the kind we're not aware of until it's too late to stop them. Winnie felt flattered, even smug. Perhaps, he wondered, they think I'm a real girl. Not really, he conceded with a sense of defeat.

But then he perked up at the realization they found him attractive even though they saw him for what he was; an effeminate but very lovely boy.

Winnie was tempted to exploit his extraordinary attractiveness, to experiment with flirtation by developing the tilt of the head, the tantalizing *almost* smile that he knew from the girls drives boys and men to distraction. He crossed his legs, rested an elbow on his thigh, put his finger to the side of his face as if in contemplation. Leaning ever so slightly forward he caught the attention of a well-dressed young executive type who surreptitiously eyed the androgynous young beauty. Knowing this, Winnie leaned forward to adjust the bags that lay at the side of his chair. Winnie raised his head and made eye contact with the young man who was now staring unabashedly at him. The brief but unmistakable smile was both a treat and discomfit to the young man who was caught in eyeing this beautiful, classy but forbidden being who, despite his beauty and allure would be forever unavailable according to the outmoded social strictures that had been drilled into him from childhood. Poor dear, thought Winnie. The boy-girl smiled openly knowing that his first foray into flirtation had been a success.

The summer break was only two months away. It would be wonderful to be able to give up the paper route he had for years and get a summer job that continued part time during the school year and that would give him enough money to move out of his mother's home. He felt a note of bitterness as he thought about how the other newspaper carriers mocked him, called him a fairy behind his back even when they knew he could hear them. They tolerated him only because he was willing to cover their routes when their social lives demanded they be elsewhere. It would be wonderful to be rid of them forever. If he could just find a job in this newly discovered part of town.

The people who passed by were so different from the blue collar and lower level office workers who lived in his neighborhood. The women were so much freer, more personal in their clothing styles; so much more artistic in the often-exotic jewelry they sported. They moved with a more relaxed grace and fluidity than the women where he lived. The men, too, less stuffy in their choice of attire.

Winnie noted that the very pretty waitress, a girl not much older than he, wore no makeup yet managed to look more striking than almost any girl in his high school did. Her long, graceful fingers sported more rings than were commonly worn in his uptight, petty bourgeois community. Her wrist was delicate at first glance but a closer look presented a lean muscularity; it was perfect for the wide cuff bracelet she wore. He wasn't able to place her accent but it was definitely not local.

Her sculptured, muscular calves were almost completely concealed by her flowing peasant skirt. The magnificent legs along with her erect carriage and smoothly elegant way of moving made him think she was a dancer.

"New around here, aren't you?" The waitress chatted as she handed him a menu card. "I hope you make this a habit; I just know you will. Not just this place but the Hill. I just know you'll fit in so well once..." She was interrupted by a pair of mid-thirtyish women shoppers rudely demanding their check.

“Sorry about being so busy but we’re short on staff. Love to chat with you, even show you what’s really cooking around here. That is if we ever meet when I’m off.” Winnie was puzzled by the girl’s enigmatic references.

Winnie paid the waitress, left a generous but not ridiculous tip, gathered his bags and started to walk toward the bus that would take him back to the mundane, unimaginative place where he had lived all his life, a place that felt as wrong to him as having to play the role of a boy.

Glancing back at the young waitress, Winnie felt a twinge of jealousy. He thought how really neat it would be to waitress in a little cafe like that one while studying dance or music or art. To wear pretty panties under a loosely fitted skirt, to use a scarf as a sash, to discover the latest in avant garde jewelry before it became the popular trend was a life style Winnie thought would be the perfect existence while learning the skills that would make bring out the sophisticated, arty and talented female that he wanted to be. The seeds of this superb female had lain dormant within Winnie for too long. Now in the warmth of the early spring sun these seeds were beginning to stir.

There was a corner pharmacy down the street from the little cafe. Winnie hadn’t planned any more purchases that day but some things in the window of that little pharmacy caught his eye. There were some really neat sunglasses; they were shaped like the cat eye style so popular with girls but were not so extreme as to make a boy look ridiculous were he to dare wear them. Then he noticed the tortoiseshell barrettes. He took a deep breath and paused before deciding he would buy them. In he went.

The woman came out from behind the counter and offered to help him select the glasses that would be best for his facial contours and hair color. They decided on the dark green frames to complement his brown hair with its natural auburn highlights.

“Oh, yes. I’d like to see some of barrettes...like those in the window.”

He paused watching the woman as he waited for her snicker, waited tensely for the supercilious sneer. They never came. She helped him select two pair of barrettes that would slip into place easily and hold his hair back from his ears were he to let it grow even a tiny bit longer. He didn’t need the saleslady to tell him that these barrettes were so easy to put into place meant that he could carry them with him and slip them on as soon as he got to a safer, more accepting milieu than the one in which he lived.

“I’ll wear the sunglasses right now,” he remarked as he paid for his purchases. He hesitated before he spoke what he really felt, before he said something that might call the wrong kind of attention to him but he didn’t want to risk seeming ungracious seeing that he would almost certainly be back to this strange store where no one blinked at this inexplicable boy who could so easily have been a girl, and a girl more attractive and more desirable than this boy could ever be.

“Oh, and thanks ever so much for not making fun of me.”

“Really no need to thank me. Rather than teased or mocked, you should be applauded and praised for being so loyal to your real self. It’s very hard at first. We do get a number of youngsters like you. I just feel we have to help you through those very awkward first purchases. Do call again and feel free to ask for any guidance with any cosmetic needs.”

“Thanks awfully for being so understanding. I’ll be back, I’m sure.”

The woman helped Winnie adjust the sunglasses on his face. She took a comb from her pocket and ran it thorough his hair before turning him toward a mirror. He loved the look. A shadow of concern clouded but didn’t spoil his attractive features.

“Don’t be afraid. It takes some getting used to. And just believe that you can take care of yourself.” She touched his chin and tilted his face up toward her own.

Helen, that was the name embroidered on her smock, kissed him on the forehead.

“You look great. Good luck...Oh and make sure you push your hair back the way it was before you get home...And remember, if anyone gets rough with you, just kick them where it counts and watch how fast they back off.”

This prompted an awkward smile from Winnie, who didn’t know what to make of Helen’s last remark.

“Darling, that’s not just an idle remark. It’s sound advice. Don’t ever forget it.”

* * *

The walk home from the bus stop was often a daunting experience for the boy who didn’t fit in with the values of a neighborhood peopled with traditional types for whom their assigned place in the world as well as their assigned role in life were a source of comfort and stability. Anyone who dared to express values other than their own or who broke the mold of imposed stereotypes was seen as strange, as dangerous. Such individuals were to be treated harshly until they conformed or left the community. To be sure, there were a few in addition to the clique of snobby girls who tolerated and even showed affection and support for the lonely child.

It was the kind of late afternoon that brought out all the worst kinds of hangers on. The whole gamut from old retired men to the greasers and their tough girl friends were all lounging in front of soda fountains and delis. Winnie surveyed the street as he stepped off the bus. He remembered Helen’s advice and mussed his hair with his fingertips. A tentative move to remove his sunglasses was stopped before he took them off. No! He liked these glasses and how they flattered his pretty face. The glasses were going to stay on.

A pair of greasers blocked his way as their girls stood near the curb. Something about today, about realizing there was another world, a world he somehow

knew would accept him, had given him a new confidence. Winnie made no move to avoid the taller, heavier tough who stepped in front of him.

“Nice glasses. Mind if I try them?”

“Don’t you dare!” He slapped his assailant’s hand away as the hood reached to take off his glasses. Winnie was surprised by the sharp, aggressive tone his voice had taken on as much as he was by his striking a blow however feeble and ineffective it might turn out to be. What followed was anything but ineffective action by Winnie.

“Whatcha gonna do? Hit me with your pocket book?”

“You don’t want to find out.” Again he was surprised by his calm and forcefully steady response.

The girls giggled. His tormentor turned red with anger and with the embarrassment of having failed to intimidate this little faggot weirdo. Winnie knew there would be no backing off. He felt himself being pulled forward by his shirt.

“You got balls for a fairy. I gotta hand you that. How about if I hand you your balls? You got no use for them anyhow.”

Winnie didn’t know where he got the courage from but he grabbed the thug’s shirt and, as he yanked the tough forward, drove his knee with all the force he could muster into the punk’s crotch. Winnie smiled maliciously as his antagonist’s eyes widened and his mouth opened in a voiceless scream. The larger boy sank to his knees, his hands clutching his injured manhood.

“Speaking of balls, how do yours feel?”

Winnie stood with his hands on his hips glowering at the deflated punk who lay on the sidewalk curled into a fetal position as he gasped for air.

The girls were still laughing but it was no longer Winnie who was the source of their intense amusement.

“Shut the hell up, you bunch of bitches, before I shut you up,” snapped a second youth

“Yeah, like I’m really scared of you,” laughed one of the girls. She was certainly not the hardest, toughest looking one in the group although her aggressive stance and defiant mouth might have suggested otherwise. “Look out before we jump you. Maybe you think you’d like being jumped but it won’t be what you think.”

The girl who goaded the youth was the most independent of the group. She was also the most successful student among them. Marilyn was, until that moment, the girlfriend of Ron, the youth who was so humiliated by Winnie. The word was that Ron bullied her into being his girlfriend.

Despite rumors to the contrary she was still a virgin by dint of being able to get Ron to ejaculate almost instantly whenever he tried to engage her in what was called ‘heavy petting.’

“You know it was pretty good to see the way Marilyn shut you guys up. A really eye-opener. It was like she rarely scared you. She’s right, too. We could jump you

guys and really make you look like the jerk-offs you really are. Maybe we should be the ones giving orders around here from now on.” A second girl had joined Marilyn in her defiance.

Ron was standing now and was looking for a way to make up for his humiliation. His pal had had stomped off in fear the girls might make good their threats and leave him as hurt either physically or mentally. Ron was left alone to face Marilyn’s taunting. He didn’t dare go after Winnie after having been so quickly and thoroughly conquered by the small, skinny and very effeminate teen.

Ron swallowed hard, took a deep breath and tried to regain some semblance of his lost macho authority.

“Marilyn, shut the hell up before I shut you up.”

“Yeah, right. Like you could do something. If Winnie could lay you on your ass so easily, so can I.”

“You really think so.” Ron tried to keep his from shaking as Marilyn’s defiance further withered the little self-respect that remained to him.

“I know so. Just give me half an excuse and you’ll know it too.”

Her defiance, coupled with his recent defeat, was more than he could handle. He tried a softer approach.

“Come on, Marilyn. Let’s just go.”

“Go where? I ain’t goin’ anywhere with a loser like you no more.”

“A loser am I? We’ll find out who’s a loser around here. If I didn’t have better things to do I’d teach you a lesson you really need to learn, cure you of being the little loudmouth you really are.”



“Come on and try something. We’ll see who gets taught a lesson.”

A worried look came over Ron as he began to wonder he could really take this defiant, confident beauty who was all the more sexy for having intimidated him. He had to distance himself from her, not just now but permanently. “We’re through, so fuck you!” was all he could say. He turned and walked away before the girls could see him cry.

Marilyn started to laugh. “Fuck me? You can’t fuck anybody with that pathetic thing of yours. You cum as soon as you get it up. That is when you can get it up.”

Ron reddened a sure signal that Marilyn was right. Even his buddy joined the girls in laughter as Ron stomped off.

Marilyn caught up with Winnie a few minutes later.

As soon as Marilyn got home she changed out of her wet panties. She was thinking of Winnie as a real girl when he dropped Ron with a well-placed, surprisingly powerful knee to the balls. She was turned on instantly. Marilyn lay on her bed and fingered herself as she fantasized about beating up boys and men.

* * *

The phone rang as Winnie was making room in his dresser drawer for his new underthings. Despite his newly realized commitment to explore his own needs, to fulfill his once hidden fantasies, and to take them as far into reality as he needed to, he was not yet able to say, even to himself, his new ‘underthings’ were panties.

Winnie was still brooding over this when the phone rang.

“Hi, Mommy...How late will you be home? I can have some supper ready for you...There was no trouble at the draft board except I went to the wrong office and met this really nice lady who took me for lunch in this really neat neighborhood. Then I went shopping downtown and I bought some, er I’ll tell you all about the stuff I bought when you come home. After that I went back to that neighborhood. And you know what? I treated myself to dessert in a cafe like the ones you told me about in Paris... You know about that section! That’s really keen. Oh, Mommy, you’re so neat, okay! I’ll tell you all about it when you come home.”

Winnie decided he was going to put his *panties* away and what’s more he was going to tell his mother about his shopping expedition right down to the last detail of his purchases. He remembered how, when he was little, she told him to ignore the roughneck boys who teased him when he preferred to play house and jump rope with the girls. Maybe she would accept his current needs, the needs he had hidden for far too long.

A salad and quiche for dinner. Winnie set the table with good china and silver. He glanced at his watch; still time to go to the liquor store to get a bottle of white wine. (In those years, eighteen was the drinking age and the age at which one could buy alcohol over the counter.)