



Reluctant Press presents:

The Firm

Vanessa Kaye



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTA HAIGHT

A 'HER TV' E-BOOK

Copyright © 2005, Reluctant Press - 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 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 Firm

By Vanessa Kaye

Chapter One - The Assignment

The drive into the city was pretty uneventful. Marc had become a little spoiled during his paid leave of absence from The Firm. Not having to report in but once a month, as well as not having to face the rush hour traffic, he'd become more like a tourist in Atlanta over the past few months. As a matter of fact, it seemed he actually noticed more of the city's downtown since his drives were no longer a daily occurrence. Going into the secured parking area at The Firm, Marc thought to himself, "Am I finally going to be reassigned today so I can get back to work?"

Instead of getting out of his car and going straight to the elevator, Marc sat for a few minutes and recounted the last couple of months. The leave of absence was due to his loss of anonymity during his last assignment. Though he had been successful, and Gonzalez had been indicted, he had been identified and his usefulness to The Firm had been compromised. He'd been offered an office assignment, but Marc loved his work as a Field Rep and had asked that he simply be reassigned to a new location. In the meantime, Marc endured what was something that could be nearly described as House Arrest. He was free enough to come and go for "required trips" such as the grocery store and medical appointments, but for the most part, he was confined to his house and The Firm kept a close eye on his comings and goings to ensure his safety. All in all, it wasn't that bad. And, as he lived alone, it gave him time to enjoy his hobby. At least, Marc referred to it as a hobby. His cross-dressing at home and in private was just a way of relaxing. And now, as he got out of the car, and headed toward the elevator he thought, "Well, it's been fun, but now with a new assignment, there'll be no time for that any more."

Marc entered the elevator and swiped his badge to activate the floor buttons, then pushed 5 and waited for the doors to close. On exiting the elevator, he went to the end of

the hall and asked the receptionist to let Mr. Barnes know he had arrived for his scheduled appointment. "Oh, he's waiting for you. You are to go right in as soon as you get here."

Marc could never remember not having to wait at least 15 minutes beyond his scheduled appointment time to see The Old Man, as everyone at The Firm called Barnes. "Must be something up," Marc thought to himself.

"Come in Marc, my boy! Great to see you! How have things been? Are you getting restless yet? Say, would you like some coffee?" Leaning down to his desk, The Old Man pushed his intercom button and said, "Marge, bring Marc some coffee and don't use one of those infernal Styrofoam cups! Turning to Marc, he said, "Well, sit down, sit down. Let's have a chat, Marc."

Marc seated himself in one of the overstuffed chairs that could only possibly be in the office of the Regional Manager. Others in The Firm were lucky to have a swivel chair that didn't fall over when they leaned back. "Marc, it looks like these couple of months off have been good for you. You look relaxed and some have remarked that you actually seem a bit different from your old self. What's your secret?"

Marc was a bit taken aback, "Secret, Sir?" he said.

"Yes, Marc, I mean have you been exercising, eating differently, that sort of secret?"

Marc, relaxing now, said, "Oh, just taking it easy, really. I pretty much just stay at home."

The Old Man leaned over and said, "Marc, I think it's more than simply rest. There are actually some changes in your appearance." Just then, Marge entered with a tray carrying two cups of coffee. She served Marc first and then The Old Man. She left without a word, closing the door behind her.

The Old Man continued his conversation. "Yes, Marc, some have said they've notice some changes in your face, hands and arms."

Marc, sat upright now, set his coffee cup down on the side table. "Crap!" he thought to himself, "I may have gone a bit far with shaving, the manicure and the eyebrows." He tried to compose himself and said, "Well, it must be due to staying indoors and all of the inactivity. I might be a bit out of shape, I guess."

The Old Man just gazed at him. Marc hated that look. It was as if he was being x-rayed with his boss's eyes. That stare, that damn stare. Everyone talked about it, and only those who had been with The Firm for any length of time knew that the best thing to do when The Old Man was staring through you was to keep your mouth shut. Most people made the mistake of babbling on, feeling a need to break the silence, but Marc knew better and picked up his coffee cup, taking a few sips.

"Marc, you've been a great Field Rep for us for a long time. You know how we operate, and you know we look after our own. It should come as no surprise to you that during your leave of absence I've made it my personal responsibility to make sure that none of Gonzalez's people got close to you. And, I've learned a few things about you that surprised me at first. For example, that you wear women's clothing."

“Oh, here it comes,” Marc thought to himself, “I’m about to be dismissed from The Firm.” Marc stood up and faced The Old Man, “You don’t need to go any further, sir. You have my resignation.”

The Old Man jumped to his feet and said, “No, no, my boy! You don’t understand. Actually, this new information has given me an idea on how to get you back into the Field without having to reassign you. Sit down, and let’s chat.”

Marc wasn’t quite sure how to take this, as The Firm was, if anything, extremely conservative where such matters were concerned. Yet the Old Man didn’t seem bothered by Marc’s hobby. “Sir, if I may ask,” said Marc, “who else within The Firm knows about me?”

The Old Man eased back into his chair and said, “Only Emerson. Emerson is the one I had assigned to protect you.”

Marc put his hand to his forehead and let out a big sigh, “Emerson? You had to pick Emerson? The Amazon? Of all people!”

“Now, Marc, I know how you feel, but she’s the best I have, next to you. I know there’s a bit of competition between the two of you, and I know she’s rebuffed your attempts at dating, but this is about business. Actually, it was Emerson who convinced me this activity of yours was of value to us.”

Field Service Rep. Emerson had joined The Firm not long after Marc. She was tall for a woman, but attractive and incredibly talented at her job. Although Marc and Emerson were about equal in height, he often referred to her as The Amazon, something that irritated her, and he enjoyed that. Marc and Emerson had exchanged playful banter in the office for years and, from time to time, Marc would try to ask her out. However, she always found an excuse to turn him down. Of all the people to know of Marc’s hobby, this was the absolute worst choice.

Just at that moment, Emerson entered The Old Man’s office and sat down next to Marc. “Hi Marcia,” she said and caught herself giggling.

“That’s it, I’m out of here,” Marc said.

“Okay, okay, I’m sorry, but I just couldn’t resist it!” Emerson said.

“Now, if you two can act professionally, Emerson will tell you what we have in mind,” The Old Man said.

“So here’s the deal,” Emerson began. “We need someone with your computer skills to get inside Farrin Industries. They are an import/export company we’ve been watching for sometime. It’s clear that they are involved in some arms dealing, but we haven’t been able to get enough evidence to go anywhere with a case. We’re convinced that there are records within their computer system that would be of value, particularly financial records listing off-shore accounts. However, we haven’t been able to penetrate their computer security system, and so it has to be an inside job. Farrin Industries uses a lot of temps for secretarial work. Considering your ‘hobby’ and your incredible computer skills, you’re a perfect candidate for the assignment.”

“Whoa!” Marc said. “Back this train up. Are you saying you want me to go to work inside this company as a female secretary and infiltrate their computer system to get the evidence you need to make a case?”

The Old Man's eyes lit up and he said, "Magnificent! Emerson, you see how quickly Marc understood the assignment! Now, Marc, Emerson will be your contact to The Firm. She'll help you with identification, establish your personal background history and set up the temp agency."

Marc stood up and said, "I didn't say I'd do it. I was simply saying that it was a ridiculous idea. Sure, I've got the computer skills to penetrate almost any system, but I can't pass myself off as a woman. Get someone else, or let Emerson do it."

The Old Man got up, drew the blinds, and turned on an LCD projector, then went to his computer; after a few mouse clicks, a photo appeared on the screen that stunned Marc. "Now, Marc, this is a photo Emerson downloaded from one of the surveillance cameras in your house. I'm sure you recognize yourself?"

Marc, professional that he was, was quite uneasy at having a photo of himself, cross-dressed, displayed on a screen in his boss's office.

"Marc, Emerson seems to think you can be convincing as a woman, and nobody else has the skills to get into Farrin's computer system but you. Now, you can take this assignment, and help out The Firm, or, I could release these photos and let you resign. Of course, if you resign, The Firm won't be responsible for your safety any longer, and there are still a lot of Gonzalez's people who'd like to get their hands on you. So, which will it be?"

"I seem to have little choice in the matter, but I'm telling you I'll never get away with it," Marc said.

"Sure you will!" Emerson said as she stood up. "I worked my way through school as a cosmetologist. You'll be quite convincing when I'm done with you. Shall we get started?"

Marc, now moving toward the screen displaying his femme photo said, "So, you really think we can pull this off?"

Emerson replied, "No problem!"

Chapter Two - Becoming Marcia

The next few days were a whirlwind of activity. Makeup sessions with Emerson, photos for ID cards and a new driver's license, lessons in deportment, a hair weave, body waxing, ear-piercing, moving into a new apartment, and endless shopping.

"Well now," Emerson said, "you look good enough to me. Now, clean off all of that make-up, take a quick shower and put it back on by yourself. And remember to wash your hair. It's not real, but nobody else would know."

Marc did as instructed and 30 minutes later was seated at his new vanity. "Did you shave your face twice like I told you?" Emerson asked.

Marc held Emerson's hand on his cheek, "See, baby smooth!" said Marc, as he proceeded to apply his make-up.

First, a little orange-red lipstick, blended with a sponge, covered his beard. Then, a concealer, followed by setting powder.

"Now, don't forget to spritz with a little alcohol, as it will set everything and help make it last all day," Emerson said as she handed Marc a small spray bottle. After the foundation had set, Marc moved on to his eye makeup and finally lips. "Now, you need to learn a bit about setting your own hair, as I'm not going to be here every morning to do it for you." Emerson continued, "It's sort of a shag, so you don't really need to curl it, just use a blow drier and a soft brush to give it some body or fluff."

It took awhile but when he'd finished with his hair, Marc looked in the vanity mirror and said, "Hey! Not too bad, huh? What do you think, Emerson?"

Emerson had wandered other room, and was watching CNN. As she reentered the bedroom, she said, "Not bad. Not bad at all! Told you that we could pull this off. And, why are you wearing that towel around your waist?"

"Well," Marc said, "You didn't move any of my clothes in here. So I don't have a robe."

"Sure you have a robe," Emerson replied. "It's just behind the bathroom door. Why don't you go and get it?"

Marc returned wearing a short kimono-style robe, made of a satin material. "How's that feel?" asked Emerson.

"It feels very nice, especially since I have no chest hair. Did you buy this?"

"Don't be silly, The Firm has paid for all of this." Emerson replied.

"Any chance you can get them to spring for one of those big screen plasma televisions?" Marc asked jokingly.

"I doubt it," Emerson said, "But, if you're really good, I might buy you something special myself."

"Define 'good'," Marc responded.

"Well, I guess if you pass tonight's test, that would be 'good'. Up to the challenge?"

"Bring it on!" replied Marc.

"Then let's concentrate on your breasts," Emerson said as she opened up two breast form boxes. "These aren't the cheap foam things you've been wearing around your house. These are attachable silicone forms. They'll look much more convincing and have some bounce to them." Marc watched as Emerson got out a bottle of adhesive and some lotion. "Open your robe up," Emerson said to Marc.

As Marc opened up his robe, Emerson said, "Okay, that's gross. Get some panties on or we stop here."

Marc went the dresser and opened the drawer, where he found dozens of panties, all new. He selected a black pair of full brief style and slid them on. "Okay, this better?"

"Yes, that will do for now. I really prefer that you don't walk around with your male parts showing, okay?" Emerson said in a rather stern voice.

"Sure, whatever you say. I'll keep my candy hidden if that's what you prefer," Marc replied.

"Good, then shall we continue? First, we apply the skin barrier. Your waxing should keep you smooth for a week, maybe two. This barrier protects the skin from the adhesive.

If we didn't use it, you'd get a nasty rash, and we wouldn't want that, would we?" Emerson then applied the skin barrier lotion to Marc's chest. "Okay, give that a few minutes, then we'll wipe off any excess."

"Here, hold this right about here," Emerson said as she held up one of the forms against Marc's chest. "Yes, that's about right. Now we'll make a light outline around it using this eyebrow pencil. Okay, that's got it. Now you can turn the form over and we'll apply the adhesive."

Marc watched as Emerson applied the adhesive to the form with a small brush. She then let it set for a minute or so, then carefully put it to Marc's chest, aligning perfectly to the outline she had made. "Oh, you look a bit lopsided! Guess we had better do the other one."

They repeated the same process with the second breast form. "Okay, that looks good, and they're quite even. Only one more little touch." With that, Emerson opened up a small pouch, revealing the contents to Marc she said, "These are called Nympho Nipples, they'll add some more realism to your appearance, and they just stick right on. Here, you do it."

With that, Marc applied the two nipples. "Oh, very nice," Emerson said, "Much better than the foam things you were using before, don't you agree?"

Marc looked down at his chest, wiggled from side to side a bit and then said, "Very nice, a bit heavy, but nice. How long does this glue last?"

Emerson replied, "Quite a while, days anyway. Depends upon how wet you get them and such. We'll probably have to repeat this from time to time."

Pleased with their progress so far, Emerson said, "Now, get dressed. Do you need any help with the rest?" Marc waved her off and went into the closet while Emerson went back to the news.

A few minutes later, Marc was finished and came into the living room. "Okay, I'm done."

Emerson looked him over closely, and had him do a slow turn. "Terrific! Now, get your purse, Marcia, and let's go out. You've only got the weekend to get ready for your new job, so we'll be spending a lot of time practicing." Marc had been getting pretty used to his new name and actually liked it. Having been a closet cross dresser most of his adult life, this was all too good to be true.

"So, where are we going?" Marcia asked.

"Oh, to a little bar I know. It's one of my favorites, and if you can pass there, you can pass anywhere. Are you up to it?"

Marcia flipped down the sun-visor on the passenger side, looked in the mirror and said, "No problem!" Little did she know what was coming.

Pulling into the crowded parking lot, the place looked to Marcia like any other bar in downtown Atlanta. "Okay, sister, let's get to it. And remember, you're a woman, and you need to act like one. The Firm is counting on you."

They both got out, Emerson in her faded jeans, tank top and sneakers, Marcia in a short black leather skirt, peasant blouse, black velvet choker and knee high boots. "Oh, they are going to love you!" Emerson said as they entered through the door.

Once inside, Marcia noticed something a bit odd about the place. What was it? There was a bar, ordinary enough, music, three pool tables, and a small dance floor. "The dance floor, that's it," Marcia thought, "The only ones dancing were women with other women." Marcia, tugged on Emerson's shirt and whispered, "This is a lesbian bar!"

Emerson smiled and said, "Nothing gets by you, Marcia! I hope they don't eat you alive. They love lipstick dykes in here!"

Together, they went up to the bar and ordered a couple of beers. As they sat on two adjacent stools, Marcia turned to Emerson and said, "So, this is why you never went out with me? You're a lesbian?"

Emerson turned on her stool, putting her legs on each side of Marcia's and said, "Well, that's not a problem now, is it?" Emerson gave Marcia an evil wink and knowing grin. "And besides," Emerson said, "The job at hand is for you to pass as a woman. The girls in here can spot a cross dresser a mile away. This is as good a test as I could come up with for you. Be a lady, speak softly, have fun, and I'll be watching to make sure you're safe. Now mingle!" Quickly, Marcia left her stool, carrying her beer and purse and went over to one of the pool tables.

"Play nine-ball?" The short blonde asked.

"Sure, but I'm not very good." Marcia replied.

"Well, honey, I'll rack 'em and you can break. That is, if you can play in those boots. I've got a table over here, you can set your purse down there."

Marcia put her purse on the table and then picked out a cue. If there was one sport Marc was good at, it was nine-ball. At one time, he had thought about quitting The Firm and hitting the professional circuit. Nine-ball championships on television were one of his addictions. Marcia chalked up her cue and went to the end of the table to break. The boots, with their two-inch heels, were a bit awkward, but she felt up to the challenge.

"What'll we play for, sweetie?" The blonde asked.

"Oh, anything you like," Marcia replied.

"Well, tell you what, if I win," said the blonde, "you go to a little party with me."

"And if you lose"? Marcia asked.

"Well, then I'll go to a party with you! Either way, we should party together tonight!" the blonde said. "By the way, I'm Bree Ann. And you are?"

"I'm Marcia, and I think you're going to lose."

"Oh honey, if I get to party with you, I won't be losing. Shall we make it two out of three?" Bree Ann said.

It took Marcia a while to get used to playing pool dressed as a woman, but she took the first two games easily. "Had enough? Or shall we make it four out of seven?" Marcia asked.

"No, sweetie, that's not what's on my mind, I've been paying so much attention to watching you, in that short skirt and boots, that I haven't been concentrating on the game at all." Bree Ann said, "I'm thinking about doing something much more interesting than playing pool with you."

With that, Bree Ann laid down her pool cue and approached Marcia. Then, she proceeded to take Marcia's cue and lay it on the table. As Marcia was not quite dressed for either fighting or running, she simply backed up against the table. Bree Ann then stood in front of her and straddled Marcia's legs with her own. The blonde now grabbed hold of Marcia's wrists, and leaned toward her.

Marcia actually felt threatened, perhaps even dominated. She noticed something else, too. She could feel her penis shrinking into her panties. She was, in fact, scared! "This was not a good idea for my first time out!" Marcia was thinking to herself. "And where is Emerson?"

"So, would you just like to call it even and go to my place for that party? I assure you that I'll be gentle with you, Miss Priss."

"Uh, well," Marcia said, "I, sort of have some things to do, and I don't think that would be too good an idea tonight. Maybe some other time?"

"Look, prissy bitch," Bree Ann said, "Just because I'm not all prettied up like you, doesn't mean that I don't know how treat a lady. I know what you like, so let's just get in my truck and go party in private."

Just then, Emerson walked up to the table and glared at Bree Ann.

"Uh, hey, I had no idea she was yours," Bree Ann said.

Emerson pulled Bree Ann away from Marcia and said, "Well, live and learn, sis." Emerson then went over to Marcia and said, "Get your purse, honey, we're done here."

On the drive home, there was an uneasy silence in the car. Finally, Emerson said, "Well, you passed. I'm sure you're happy."

Marcia was a bit shocked and said, "What's up with you? Why so bitchy?"

Emerson kept her eyes focused on the road. She didn't dare to look at Marcia right now, so at the stop light she said, "Well, you fooled a whole bar room of lesbians into thinking you were a woman. I'm sure that is what you wanted. But you could have jeopardized the mission."

Marcia tried to ease the tension, "Emerson, if it hadn't been for you, I never would have been able to do it. You are terrific. Thanks for saving me from Cro-Magnon Babe! I guess I'm ready for Monday morning, huh?"

Emerson drove on silently, and not realizing that she was speaking out loud, said "You may be ready for Monday morning, but I'm not sure about after that."

What do you mean?" asked Marcia.

"We'll see," replied Emerson.

As they reached Marcia's new apartment, Emerson put the car into park, and said, "Well, okay, so I've done all I can do for you right now. So, I guess, you'll be at your new job on Monday. You can take some time to relax tomorrow."

Marcia opened her door and got out then walked around to the other side and leaned in Emerson's window. "You know," Marcia said, "You've been a life saver for me. I mean, I really do appreciate your help with this assignment. I know it's a bit strange, but that's life in The Firm, isn't it? I mean all of our assignments are a bit odd. That's what makes the work so interesting."

Emerson, started to roll up her window, then stopped about halfway, "Look, it's just a job. The Old Man told me to help you, and so that's what I'm doing. My job is to make you as convincing a woman as possible. Do you need anything else, or are you ready for this?"

Marcia, stood back from the car, held her purse with both hands and did a small twirl, "I'm ready, can't you see? I'll be in touch, Monday night."

Sunday, Marcia spent most of the morning laying out her wardrobe for the week. Emerson had been very thorough in their shopping and there were a lot of separates to mix and match. Satisfied that she was all set for the week, Marcia, body shaved to remove any stubble, cooked some lunch and watched football. Then the phone rang, "Hello?" said Marcia, as she held he phone to her ear.

"Hi. So, I was wondering how you're doing today?" it was Emerson.

"I'm fine, not much happening here, just chilling out, I guess."

"So, would you like some company?" Emerson asked.

"I guess so," Marcia said, "if you like football", said Marcia.

"Oh, I love sports. You know me, I'm a TV junkie." Emerson answered.

"Actually, I thought you only watched the news," Marcia responded.

"Oh, there are a lot of things I like that you don't know about yet. So, should I bring anything?"

"Anything you like, it's just me here," replied Marcia.

"Okay, so I'll be there in about an hour. See you then," Emerson said.

Within the hour, there was a knock at Marcia's apartment door. Marcia got up, opened the door to see Emerson and said, "Come on in, great to see you."

"Thanks for letting me come over, I know it's a bit out of the ordinary, but you are my assignment, and I need to make sure things are going okay," Emerson said, as she came in and set a box and small sack on the counter.

"So, what are these?" Marcia asked.

“Well, in the sack is a bottle of wine that I thought we could share. I know there are wine glasses in your cupboard, because I put them there. And, in the box, is something from me, not The Firm. It’s a gift for you,” Emerson said.

“A gift, from you? I’m astonished. To what do I owe this pleasure?” Marcia asked.

“Well, I guess I was a bit bitchy last night, and you really did pass well, and, oh hell, just open it!”

With that, Marcia opened up the box, and beneath the tissue paper was a pale pink baby doll nightgown and matching bra and panties. “And this is a peace offering?” Marcia asked.

“Sort of. Anyway, I thought you’d like them. I meant it that way.” Emerson said.

“I like them! I’ll keep them for later.” Marcia replied.

“So, you won’t try them on for me now? It’s better than that T-shirt you’re wearing.” Emerson said.

Marcia looked at the items in the box and looked at Emerson and said, “Well, I really do like them. But I think it would be kind of weird to wear them while you are here.”

“Weird? Why is that? You’re supposed to be getting ready for an assignment as a woman, and I’m supposed to be helping you. How is this weird?” Emerson answered.

“Okay, tell you what, I’ll put it on at half-time. Deal?” Marcia said.

“Deal, now you sit down and I’ll open the wine. Go back to your game,” Emerson encouraged.

At half time, Marcia went in to the bedroom with her new items from the boxed and changed. She put on the panties and bra. She was amazed at how well the bra fit her. Then, she slipped the gown over her head and looked into the mirror. “Oh, I need to brush my hair and put on some lipstick, or else this will look silly.” So, she touched up her hair and did her lips. Coming back into the living room she said, “It fits perfectly. Thank you, Emerson.”

“You look adorable! And if you had your full make-up on, I’m telling you, nobody would know.”

“Really think so?” Marcia asked.

“Yes, I really think so,” replied Emerson as she refilled their glasses. “Now, come and sit down and we’ll watch the rest of the game.”

Marcia sat down on the sofa next to Emerson and they watched the second half of the game together in silence. From time to time, Emerson would stroke Marcia’s hair, and caress her ‘breasts’ through the gown. Marcia enjoyed the attention. At one point, Marcia actually lay back on to Emerson, and seemed to be enjoying herself while Emerson held her. When the game ended, Emerson said, “Well, I guess I’ll be going.”

“Going? Why?” Marcia asked.

“Well, I don’t want to wear out my welcome. And you start your new job tomorrow.”

“Oh, I’d like you to stay a while. Let’s order something to eat and we can talk, if you like,” Marcia said.