

# ***Finally,*** **He Became A Sweet Farm Girl**

**By B C**

We last left the two former boys, now Sandy and Beth Ann, getting into dating boys. John Bell who had been dating Sandy, now was dating Beth Ann as they seemed to have so much in common, i.e. sports and anything outdoorsy. Sandy had started dating her best friend Danny who'd come from California to stay with the Mason family. Then tragedy struck and Danny was pinned under a fallen tractor and killed, leaving Sandy devastated and alone.

One day one of the most unlikely guys, Phil a.k.a. Moose, a neighbor and family friend of the Masons, called and asked Sandy out. (Their mothers were behind all of this) He told her she needed to get out of the house and back into life's mainstream. She'd been grieving for many weeks now. Mom (Peg) insisted she go. That's where we pick up our story.

Sandy had agreed to the date at first to prevent an argument with Mom that she knew she'd lose when all was said and done. Peg had taken total control of the Mason household and she'd let everyone know who was in charge. As Sandy began getting ready she had momentary flashbacks of how excited she used to get when getting ready to go out with Danny and how she did her best to make herself look as amazing as she possibly could for him. It had been many weeks since she'd really paid a lot of attention to her appearance. She did have to be at least presentable every morning as that was one of the first rules Mom laid down. Her girls (including Sandy and Beth Ann) had to be dressed and have their makeup on when they came down the

stairs in the morning.

Sandy was beginning to cheer up just slightly as she worked at getting herself ready to face Phil and the kids at the dance and most likely the burger shack afterwards if all went well. She didn't want everyone feeling sorry for her, so she'd decided to try and put on a happy front tonight. She'd painted her nails and spent extra time on her eyes. She used just the right combination of colors and blending them in on her eyelids, then used black eye liner on her top and bottom lids, along with black mascara on her lashes. She outlined her full lips with a dark pink lip pencil and colored her lips in with a dark pink lip cream with her brush. Then she added gloss to make them shiny and wet looking, and they matched her nails.

Sandy pulled her hair back tonight into a high ponytail, fanned it out and let it fall just past her soft shoulders. She chose a cute little black miniskirt with pleats and a powder blue T-shirt with wide shoulder straps and rounded neck which didn't do much to hide her impressive cleavage. She wore her 2" gold hoop earrings and a gold watch on one wrist and bangles on the other. She slipped her feet into a pair of black flats, spritzed on some Taboo perfume and she was ready as Phil knocked on the front door. Becky let him in and he looked as nervous as a cat with two big dogs in the room waiting to pounce on him.

Phil stuttered hello to everyone to be polite as he usually was. It was his nature to be quiet and unassuming and always polite. The poor boy looked as if he was about to break out in a sweat at any time. The look on his face when Sandy entered the room was priceless. His grin grew from ear to ear and he tried to speak but nothing came out for a minute or two. His face was as red as a fire hydrant as he stumbled across the room and handed Sandy a small bouquet of flowers.

“These...these are for you, Sandy. You...you look like an angel and I want to thank you so much for...for going out with me tonight. I’ve been dressed since lunch and I thought 7:00 was never going to get here. I didn’t want to be late,” Phil said, causing Sandy to laugh just a little.

“Awww, that’s so sweet, Phil. I should be the one thanking you for talking me into getting out of the house for a while tonight. Thanks for the beautiful flowers, I don’t think that anyone has ever given me flowers before in my whole life. Let me put them in some water and then I’ll be ready to go,” she told him

“Phil, you be careful driving and take good care of my little girl and look out for her. No drinking or messing around,” Peg told him

“Oh yes ma’am, Mrs. Mason. You don’t have to...to worry about me. I’m in training for the football season and, well, I never drink or smoke or any of those bad habits. I promise that your Sandy’ll be safe with me. I won’t let anybody hurt her,” he said

Peg called Sandy back over to her and handed her a sweater. “You never know when it might get chilly in the evening. It’s better to be safe than sorry and cold.”

Sandy said, “Thank you Mother for worrying about me.” She draped the sweater over her arm and continued, “We won’t be late. I think that we are just going to the dance and then maybe the burger shack to have a sandwich and hang out for a while.”

It was all poor Phil could do not to skip down the walk to the car; he was happy and feeling like the king of the whole world right now. He opened the door for Sandy and offered a hand to help her get up into the new pickup truck. He’d spent the whole

morning washing, polishing, and cleaning the truck so it looked like it just came off the showroom floor. She took his offered hand and stepped up on the running board and turned and sat, spreading her short skirt under her legs with her other hand and pulled her legs in. Phil closed the door and went around to the other side, grinning like the cat that caught the mouse.

As they drove away, Phil asked, "How...how are you doing now, Sandy? I'm very sorry for your loss. I know that you've had a really had time of it lately. I didn't really get to know your friend Danny all that well but, I'm sure that he must have been really special. I can't begin to imagine what it's been like for you these past weeks." Phil was trying not to stutter due to his excitement and joy of being out on a date with the girl of his dreams.

"Thank you for asking, Phil. I'm doing a little better each day. It's a hard thing to get over, then you start to realize that it's in the past and you can't change the situation or bring him back. You realize that he'd want you to go on living and not stop because he's not there anymore. I know that is the way I'd feel about him if it had been me. Do you prefer Phil or Philip?" Sandy asked.

"Phil is fine by me, Sandy," he replied. "That's a whole lot better than many of the names the kids at school call me," Phil said, smiling nervously.

"You're kidding. Like what?" Sandy asked.

"Well, like Moose or Tank or Big Ox. I've heard Caveman and Baby Huey. The list goes on and on. I mostly don't pay no mind to the names anymore. They used to bother me when I was younger but I just kind of let it slide right off my back anymore. Even the coach calls me Moose, so I guess that's where the guys on the team all picked it up from and it kind of stuck," Phil told

Sandy

“That’s awful. Kids can be so hurtful and mean sometimes. I don’t think that any of those names fit you, Phil. If any of those people took the time to know you, I’m sure they wouldn’t say those things. You are one of the sweetest guys I’ve known since coming here. I’m surprised that some girl hasn’t claimed you for her own yet. Most people don’t think before they speak. Where I grew up in California it was the same way. I can totally relate because I was a first class nerd and I took a lot of verbal abuse back then so I know how it feels and hurts,” Sandy told him.

“You? You’ve got to be kidding me, Sandy. You are so beautiful and self-confident that I can’t begin to imagine anyone teasing you or calling you a nerd,” Phil offered.

“ You may not believe it, Phil, but, trust me, I’m not kidding you one bit. I was a very different person back then. That’s why Danny and I were such good friends all our lives. We were the two biggest nerds in our school or the town probably. Many very strange things have happened to me that really changed me and made me the person that I am today. I’d bet a million dollars that my own mother wouldn’t recognize me today if she was sitting right here in the truck with us. Trust me, you have no idea. I actually still don’t believe it myself each morning when I wake up and see myself in the mirror. I have to pinch myself sometimes to make sure that it’s me looking back when I see myself in the mirror. Please don’t misunderstand, I’m not being vain or anything like that. It’s just that I didn’t look like the person you see today, I was a lot more Tomboyish,” Sandy told him.

“I’m not sure that I follow you completely but whatever it was that made you what you are today must have been from God.

You are not only beautiful but you're smart and kind and like no one I've ever met."

"You'd better stop, Phil, you're going to give me a big head with all the flattery and compliments," Sandy said. "One thing I know is I don't see how any of the names could apply to you. I think from everything I've seen about you that you are sweet and kind and as thoughtful as any boy I've ever met. Some of the other boys that I've met around her could take a lesson or two from you on manners and kindness, that's for sure.

"Don't let them get to you or let them turn you into what they are. It's so nice to be with someone with a little class. Any girl should be proud to be with a nice guy like you over some macho braggart jerk," She saw him smile a bit as she reached over and touched his arm affectionately, reassuring him she meant it.

As Phil pulled into the parking lot and found a place to park, Sandy reached for the door handle. "Please Sandy, allow me," Phil said and he jumped out, ran around to the other side, opened the door for Sandy, and helped her down.

As they walked into the big pavilion with Sandy putting her arm through Phil's, wide eyes and open mouths turned their way from every corner of the place. It seemed no one could believe what they were seeing. Moose here at the dance with the hottest girl in the city!? Why was Sandy Mason with *him*?????

Phil felt 10 feet tall right now but didn't forget his manners. "I have to apologize, Sandy, I'm afraid that I'm not much of a dancer," he said.

"That should make us a good pair because I'm still learning myself but one thing I've discovered is you shouldn't worry about

what others think. We're just here to have a good time. We'll muddle through together and have fun with it," Sandy said.

They really looked the odd couple, Phil 6ft 5ins and Sandy dwarfed by his big body. She was 5" 5in., if that. As they began to dance to a slow song, it was apparent that Phil was doing his best not to step on her or let her fall. As the song went on they were soon picking up the rhythm and feeling the music and forgetting everything around them, each concentrating on not messing up.

After about three songs went by, they were gliding around as one. Phil engulfed her in his arms as if to protect her. Sandy didn't remember putting her head against his shoulder and flowing around the dance floor, forgetting all her problems for the moment.

Their peacefulness was interrupted when someone tapped Phil on the shoulder to cut in. Phil looked at Sandy and said he'd get them a drink and pointed to a table across the room.

"I'm Jamie, what's up with Moose? I think that you can do better than that Miss...what's your name? Sandra Dee?" he grinned.

"First of all, Mr. Jamie, I happen to be with Phil and I also happen to think that he's a pretty great guy. I see he has our drinks. Thanks for the almost dance," she said and walked away.

"Hey pretty lady, it's OK. Moose and me, we're friends, I didn't mean anything bad. Come on, finish the dance with me," Jamie said.

"Trust me, our dance is finished. If you'll excuse me please, my

date is waiting there with our drinks. Please let go of my arm or I'll call him over here and we'll see how close friends you are if his thinks you're hurting me," she said with a grin, then pulled her arm back and joined Phil at the table.

As she walked away, she had a thought. "If I want to keep all these guys away from me, I need to make a statement that I'm not available." So as she got to Phil, she reached up with both arms around his neck, stood on her toes and kissed him right on the mouth.

She took her drink from him and said, "Thank you, Phil. Sorry about the kiss in front of everyone but I'm hoping that that sends a message to all that I'm not available," she told him

" Hey, don't apologize, you can kiss me any time you and for any reason you want. I'm always glad to be at your service, Sandy," Phil smiled.

There were no further incidents at the dance that night for Phil and Sandy. There was however a lot of talking and whispering and shaking of heads. No one could figure out what they were seeing. It didn't matter to Sandy and she and Phil were getting better and better as partners with each dance. She really did need this night; it turned out to be fun and she really did like being with Phil as he more than made her feel safe and protected. He was the real deal, he never missed a chance to compliment her or be attentive to her every need the whole night long.

They left the dance and headed out to the burger shack for something to eat, as Sandy was actually hungry for the first time in quite a while. They'd both worked up an appetite from the dancing.



A lot of eyes and mouths opened wide once again when Phil and Sandy walked in. She had her arm looped in his and they were laughing at something he said. Phil walked up to one of the smaller tables and held the chair out for Sandy and then slid it in once she sat down. They'd no sooner sat down and there was buzzing sound all around the room; many couldn't believe that these two were together.

It pissed Sandy off that people didn't have a little more respect for Phil. A few of the guys walked over. Jim Tate said hi to Phil while looking straight at Sandy, never even glancing at Phil at all. "What's up, Moose? Nice to see you out, Sandy. Sorry about your friend, that was a shame. Want to join the gang over here at the big table?" Jim asked, ignoring Phil

"Thank you. No. Maybe another time. I'm with Phil and we are just kind of hanging out and getting to know each other a little better. He's been such a good friend to me since Dan's accident. Phil's such a great guy and I don't know what I'd do without someone as goodhearted and kind as him lately," Sandy said just loud enough for the girls and other guys at the big table to hear. She looked up in time to see Phil blush and the other girls look at each other with surprised looks on their faces.

Before long, Greg Sweeny, Roby Evans, Jeff Stout, Doug Cole and Dean Francis all made trips to the table just as Jim Tate had done earlier. They got the same answer she had given Jim Tate.

It was starting to make her mad that they continued this parade to their table, knowing she'd said she was with Phil. This was really insulting to Phil and showing him a total lack of respect. She finally got up, moved her chair right next to Phil and scooted over close. She put her arm through his, gave him a kiss and

put her head on his shoulder, emphasizing that she was here with Phil as his date. Phil, not knowing what to make of all this, was beginning to feel pretty good about himself suddenly. But then he thought that she was only doing this for the benefit of the others in the place to build up his ego.

They talked about the coming school year and football camp starting up soon. Phil asked Sandy if she liked sports or if she was considering cheerleading or any other extracurricular activities when school started. Sandy told him that she was never really involved much in any kind of extracurricular activities in school, or anywhere for that matter.

She didn't dislike sports or group activities. "It's just like I told you, it's hard to explain but I was a very different person back then and kind of an outcast. As a nerd that pretty much kept to myself or with Danny, I didn't get invited to too many parties or group functions. It was OK though because we had each other and we were good with that most of the time."

"I'm sorry but I just find that so hard to believe. I mean look at you. Sandy. You are anything but a nerd. You're the most beautiful girl I've ever known. I would think every kid in the school would have wanted to be around someone like you. Gosh, just look what it's been like since we walked in the door here. You just draw people to you like bees to honey. You don't think that everyone in this place right now isn't asking themselves 'What's that girl doing with that big dumb ox? And thank you for saying such nice things about me, even though you were stretching things quite a bit for my benefit. Well either way, you should get involved and have fun, and you'll be one of the most popular girls in the school in no time. I know that you are going to have a hard time keeping every boy in the school from beating on your door. It's inevitable," Phil said

Then Sandy said something that shocked poor Phil to his core. “What makes you so sure that I have any interest in any of these other guys? How do you know that I might not rather be with a big strong guy like you that knows how to treat a girl and has manners and good strong morals and ethics?”

“Don’t go selling yourself short, Mr. Forbes. Any girl would be lucky to have someone like you. Truth be told most girls don’t really want a guy that swears and brags about his self or his conquests, or has to be the baddest dude around, always trying to one up the other guys.” She said all this and meant it but shocked herself a little, wondering where all these feelings came from. “Wow, I really am *such* a girl now,” she thought to herself.

After they’d been served and had talked a while, Sandy had to use the ladies room. She excused herself and somewhat self-consciously made the trip across the room. She came out of the stall and began touching up her lips in the big mirror when a couple of girls walked in and introduced themselves to her. Sandy already knew Cindy from the dance but Judy, Suzy, Tami and Terri all introduced themselves to Sandy.

“Cindy says that you are living with the Masons now?” Suzy asked.

“ Yes, they are my Aunt and Uncle and my only living relatives and now. They adopted me and my sister Beth Ann after our parents died in an accident almost a year ago now,” Sandy said, wondering what this group gathering was all about.

“I’m really sorry. On top to that, didn’t you just lose your boyfriend recently in a farm accident? You poor thing, that’s a lot to take in one life time, let alone one year. None of us really knew either of you so we weren’t any support at all. We’re all

sorry for your loss and would like to offer our friendship. We want to welcome you to our school and hope we'll all soon be good friends. I understand that you are going to be a senior when we go back?" Suzy asked.

"Thank you about my parents and thank you for welcoming me here. Yes, I'll be a senior this year. I would have already graduated back home in California if not for the accident but I lost most of the year so that's why I'll be a senior this year," Sandy replied

Judy Short asked her, "Um, it's none of my business really but, are you and Mo...I mean Phil Forbes really dating?"

This instantly made Sandy a little mad and she replied, "Yes, Phil is a real sweetheart. He is so thoughtful and kind and is like a big protective Teddy Bear. He's not like all the other boys around that I've met. He doesn't have to show off or puff out his chest and be vulgar or all macho. He's a quiet man but strong when he needs to be without wanting to be rewarded.

"I'll tell you, Judy, it's really nice and refreshing to be treated like a lady and Phil is so sweet. He checked on me almost every day after the funeral and brought flowers and candy and sometimes just sat and listened to me ramble on without a word. He just listened and was such a comfort. He's old-fashioned. He won't even let me open a door or pull out my own chair," she told them, knowing that she was laying it on a little thick but it really wasn't all that far from the truth.

"But isn't he a little, you know...slow-witted?" one of the other girls asked.

" I realize that I haven't known Phil as long as the rest of you

girls but NO, I don't think that's true at all. He's not slow witted, he's just shy and as far as I can tell he is smart and good with his hands, if you know what I mean. All I know is that very few men or boys I've ever known have treated me with as much respect and kindness.

“Not only is he smart, that boy knows how to kiss a girl so she knows that she's been properly kissed. I am totally shocked that some girl around here hasn't found that out by now. Somebody has really been missing out on a really great guy,” she told the girls who were all standing there with their mouths open in disbelief at what they were hearing. Soon they all felt something inside stir as they listened and visualized being kissed like Sandy was now describing by this big old hunk of a guy.

Sandy had to smile as she looked at the expression on their faces as they heard what she'd been saying about Phil's kiss. They almost oooed and ahhhd out loud from the pictures in their minds.

As soon as Sandy saw the look on their faces she realized that if she didn't date Phil on a steady basis, at least for a while, that they would know that she was making this all up to just make him look good. It would all be for nothing and would end up doing more harm than the good she'd intended. They would also know her to be a liar and she already had enough problems without being tagged that kind of girl.

Without meaning to she'd dug herself into a hole that she may not be able to climb out of in an effort to try and promote Phil as a decent guy worthy of their friendship instead of the whipping post that most of them had used him for. Sandy knew all too well how that felt and she sure didn't want him to revert back to that status. He deserved better. Besides she did have some

feelings for him and liked feeling safe with Phil.

Tami asked if Sandy was going to try out for one of the two open positions on the cheerleading team, as one girl had moved away and the other had gotten herself pregnant. She was going to keep the baby and was due shortly after school began. “You’d make it easy. We really need someone soon to start learning the reps and routines, I think I can speak for the others when I say we’d love to have you and you’d fit in perfect,” Tami said, all bubbly and excited.

“I was just telling Phil that I was never really into sports or group activities in my old life back home in California. I was a very different person back then and the only really wild thing I’ve ever done is surfing,” She told Tami.

“Like on the computer or in the ocean?” Terri asked.

“Oh, it was in the ocean all right. We only lived a couple of blocks away from a really big beach and just around the corner was a huge cove that really brought in the big rolling waves at tide change. We, Danny and me, spent a lot of our free time alone there at the ocean surfing and hanging out, mostly by ourselves. Dan and I were best friends since about first grade in school,” she told them and they were impressed.

“Wow, that’s so cool. That had to be the coolest life ever. I can see why you’d be sad to have to give all that up to come here and then to lose your friend after just losing your parents! I guess we can see why you say that you’re a different person. Your story would make a good movie. You’ve been through a lot,” Tami said, shaking her head.

Out of nowhere she grabbed Sandy and gave her a big old bear

hug. "I'm really sorry for all you've had to endure, I have a feeling that things are going to get really, really good for you in the future. You are well overdue for good news."

"Hey, if you've been used to all that surfing then you must really have good muscle tone and would be a shoe in for cheerleading. It's really fun once you pick up the cheers and routines and get to know the girls. Not to mention that we're right down there with our boys right on the field and at the parties or dances after all the games. I just know you're going to love it," Suzy said.

"The only thing that we'd have to worry about with your looks and that hot body is all of our boyfriends dumping us and making a play for you." Cindy winked and laughed. "Although I'm not so sure that you couldn't have any boy in our school eating right out of the palm of your pretty hand for the asking right now." Cindy grinned but there was a sense that she meant it.

"Well girls, you can all rest easy because the only boy that I'm interested in right now is the great guy that brought me here tonight, Phil Forbes. So none of you have to worry about me and any other boy in your school. I'm very happy and lucky to have him as my friend. I'm telling you, girls, someone around here really missed the boat when they overlooked Phil as boyfriend material. Speaking of Phil, please excuse me. I have to get back out there to him before he thinks I've left him and he goes home without me," Sandy told them.

Just for effect Sandy walked across the room, heels clicking and hips a swaying. She walked straight to Phil, never taking her eyes off of him, put her arms around his big thick neck, stood on her tip toes and once again blew his mind with a big wet kiss on his soft lips. "I'm really sorry, Phil, that I was so long in the

ladies room. The other girls came in and introduced themselves to me and invited me to cheerleading tryouts. They can be pretty persuasive and I tried to let them down but I'm not sure they are taking no for an answer. I tried to tell them that I've never done anything like that but they all think I'll be a natural. Then they tried very hard to dismiss or dispute the fact that we are together. They wanted to know about my relationship with you."

"They did? Well, that figures. I guess I knew it couldn't last. But like I told you, you going out with me tonight, Sandy, is the best night of my life," he said.

"Aren't you even going to ask me what I told them?" Sandy asked, kind of teasing.

"Do I really want to know?" Phil asked.

"Well, I don't know. Do you?" she replied

"Yes, good or bad, I guess I do. So what did you tell them?" he asked shyly.

Sandy's answer was to slide over, put her arms around his neck again, lift herself up to his face and kiss him long and passionately on the mouth. "Does that answer your question, Mr. Forbes?" She smiled, sat back down next to him, put her head on his big shoulder and silently wondered what she'd gotten herself into. Poor Phil, you could have turned all the lights off in the room and it would have still been very bright from the glow on Phil's face. All he could do was grin from ear to ear and he couldn't stop no matter how hard he tried.

Sandy know that she'd started something here tonight that she wasn't going to be able to get herself out of easily. Truth be



known, she wasn't so sure that she wanted to. Phil, despite being shy and a little slow, was actually a ruggedly handsome man and he really was most all of those nice things that she'd been saying about him so far as she could tell. It wasn't as if they were getting married or moving in together or anything serious like that. She calmly determined that she was just going to have to play it out and see where it went for the time being. Besides, she liked the fact that she knew she'd be safe and protected with Phil.

Phil paid the bill and they walked out to the big pickup truck. With Sandy being more than a full head and a half shorter than Phil, they made an odd couple. Again she looped her arm through his as they walked. Phil tried hard but simply couldn't help himself from almost strutting out of the restaurant like the proud head rooster in the chicken coop. Phil gently lifted Sandy up into the cab of the truck and closed the door for her.

The drive home was mostly quiet with each of them lost in his or her own thoughts. Phil was still floating on a cloud. This was better than Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, and his birthday all in one. He honest thought his heart was going to explode, he was so happy. It was actually hard for him not to bust out singing, "I love you Sandy Mason." He told himself, "If this is real, I'm going to make that girl the happiest girl around or die trying."