

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN

By Olivia Evans



ILLUSTRATED BY BRIAN DUKEHART

A 'NEW WOMAN' NOVEL

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"THE SPIRIT OF THE MOUNTAIN"

By Olivia Evans

PART ONE:

Tucked away in a remote corner of a vast National Park, is a nameless mountain that is thought to be haunted. Haunted, it is said by the malevolent spirit of an old Indian Medicine woman.

Legend has it that the Old Woman of the Mountain was the leader and last surviving member of an ancient enemy of the tribe that lived on the valley floor.

The battle had gone poorly for the Old Woman's tribe. She managed to outdistance her pursuers until she reached a wall of solid granite.

Apparently cornered and facing a certain death, she changed herself into a deer and outran her pursuers.

Saved by the power of her magic, the Old Woman had fled the valley through a fissure in the face of a solid rock cliff. She fled to an exile in the very heart of the mountain itself. From there she lived as the nemesis to the total victory of her enemies.

Fearing that she would grow strong enough again to defeat the Tribe, the Chief sent young warriors to the mountain top to do battle with the Old Woman. Because the Tribe had suffered dreadful losses in the final battle, the Chief was reluctant to send more than one warrior at a time.

Their orders were simple, go to the hide-out of The Woman in The Mountain, into the heart of the mountain and slay the Old Woman.

They were given a day and a night to accomplish the task. To be victorious, the Chief had promised, would be to gain riches and respect beyond the warrior's wildest dreams. To this end, the Chief set aside four hands of ponies.

Individually the warriors went to the mountain, each confident of an easy victory. After all, what would it take to kill one woman, and an old one at that?

Each met the Old Woman and were defeated easily by their own warrior strengths. Shamed and shocked by their utter and devastating defeat, they returned to the Tribe, never again to call themselves warriors.

Before long, the Old Woman became the Tribe's test of a boy's right of passage from boyhood to manhood and warrior. Young males of the Tribe, when they reached a certain age, were sent to battle with the Old Woman of the Mountain's spirit.

No longer did they go forth to kill, for the old hatreds had died out generations before. Now, they faced the Old Woman's challenges to prove their worthiness.

Those that climbed the mountain and were found to be wanting, were punished by the Old Woman's spirit. Those who passed, had earned the right to call themselves warriors.

Either way, the young men were said to have never been the same again.

The strangest part of the old legend is that even though a young man may have failed the old woman's test, he was not shunned by the others. Instead, he was welcomed back into the tribe and treated as an equal by most of the tribal members.

The exact details of the test and the punishment for failure are unknown today.

The coming of the white man and his diseases did what the Old Woman's tribe couldn't do, and the Valley Indian Tribe was no more.

Today, only whispers of the Legend of the Old Woman of the Mountain remain.

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I love the outdoors, hiking and amateur rock climbing in that order, or in any other order for that matter.

I had always liked the outdoors, but really fell in love with it while I was in the service. Just out of boot camp, I was assigned to a then secret Mountain and Cold Weather Training Command, a mountain and winter warfare and survival school located not far from Leadville, Colorado, at Camp Hale, the home of the famous 10th Mountain Division.

Originally assigned as a student, I quickly mastered the courses and found myself tutoring others. From there it was an easy transition from student to staff.

I spent my entire tour of duty at the isolated base and loved every minute of it. But all good things must sooner or later end. In my case it came with my discharge from the military.

I was faced with the possibility of returning home to a job in an office that offered little chance of advancement, or staying in the service. Neither seemed like an ideal solution for me. I searched around for something else that would take advantage of my love of the outdoors, and which paid decently.

I found it in the National Park Service.

No, I'm not a Park Ranger. I work in the lesser known Geological Survey Services Division in a position with the somewhat misleading title of "Contact Field Surveyor". Just what does a CFS do? Well, I suppose you could call me a path finder.

I'm the guy, one of a half dozen or so who do what I do anyway, that designs hiking trails for the Park Service. Using the Department of the Interior's excellent and highly detailed satellite topographic maps, I go into the field armed with a compass, a couple of rolls of survey marker tapes, two cameras, twenty rolls of film and a sixty-five pound back pack. As you can guess, I actually walk the country side blazing new hiking or climbing trails as I go.

Granted, it would be easier just to sit in a nice office in the National Park Service Washington headquarters and draw the trails on a map. But sitting in an office will

not tell you where the best views are or how difficult a hiking trail or a climb will actually be.

Sometimes, it's necessary to lengthen a trail a few miles just to have a chance of seeing that breathtaking view that poets write about and lovers remember long after the honeymoon is over. To do that, you have to see it for yourself. It's a lonely job, but one that has rewards far beyond what you would think.

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Will Smith, the Section Chief of my department, casually dropped the map on my desk. I glanced up from the PC I was using to revise the Park Service's book on wilderness survival. It was one of those wonderful projects that would have netted me some handsome royalties if I was writing it as a private citizen.

"Care to get out of the office for a while, Jim?" he asked. "I've got a project for you, if you do."

"Do I! I've been sitting here just counting the days before my vacation," I said reaching for the map. "What's the project?"

"The Secretary has decided to open some more restricted areas of the new National Park to tourists."

"Tourists!" I snorted and tossed the map back on my desk. "You know how I feel about those damned day hikers. They don't respect nature and are careless. Don't forget, it was day hikers, tourists, that started that big fire a couple of years ago over in Toyobee."

"I know, and our Rangers are constantly looking for the lost ones, usually at great expense and risk to their own lives," Will agreed, repeating the ritual. "But, Jim, that's what the parks were created for, to allow the average person, tourists, the opportunity to experience the 'Great Outdoors' first hand."

Will picked up the map and spread it open on my desk. In spite of myself, I began to study the printed lines. "That's also why people like you and I have jobs. Now, do you want the assignment, or shall I give it to Johnson?"

"Okay," I sighed. "What exactly am I supposed to do?"

"This trip is a little different from the rest. The area you're going to survey has just been turned over to us by the Bureau of Land Management and hasn't been fully explored yet." Will laughed, "at least not by the Park Service. Up until a few years ago, the BLM boys have been letting some cattle ranchers use this big valley here for summer grazing. The other thing you'll be doing is field testing one of those little satellite two way military radios the Park Service wants to equip the rangers with."

"All the comforts of home?" I snorted disgustedly. "What next? A portable satellite television that can receive 250 channels?"

Will grinned and shook his head. "Not yet, maybe next time. Now then, the valley you'll be surveying is located right here."

I halfheartedly followed Will's finger as he traced the topographical lines of a large, nearly flat valley surrounded by steep mountains. It appeared similar in topography to

Yosemite Park, only on a smaller scale. Like its larger counterpart, the hidden valley had been created by glaciers during one of the last Ice Ages.

“We have to open the valley up for the public, but only for a select few, no more than ten campers at a time. This is going to be designated a wilderness area. No modern amenities will be allowed. One of the basic rules will be, if you pack it in, you pack it out. The only permanent buildings will be a small ranger's station just outside the mouth of the valley's entrance.”

My ears perked up at the pronouncement that the valley would be a wilderness. I nodded to myself as I mentally walked the valley floor. From the size indicated on the map, I could easily do the job in a week or two.

“I'll need three weeks, maybe more.”

“I estimated six, so why not take them and enjoy a little vacation on the Government. How soon can you have your gear packed and ready, Jim?”

I glanced up and grinned.

“About two hours! I'm already packed, all I have to do is say good-bye to Kimberly.”

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Slightly less than twenty four hours later, the helicopter carrying me, my gear, including a military surplus satellite two way radio, that was about the size of an old 1950's Zenith Transoceanic radio with a small pie pan shaped antenna on top, and two weeks worth of supplies landed in a clearing in the woods near the exact center of the valley.

I had decided that I would set up my base camp near the stream and work my way around the valley in concentric circles. My main objective, the mountains surrounding the valley, would wait for a few days while I got a feel of the terrain.

I unloaded my gear and waved as the pilot wound up the engine of the chopper and took off. Before he cleared the narrow valley that marked the entrance to the wilderness area I had started to unpack.

It took me the rest of afternoon to set up camp, most of which was spent aligning the antenna of the radio.

Although there hadn't been any reported sightings of any large animals in the valley by the cattle ranchers, I made sure that my cache of food, mostly freeze dried rations, was well out of reach. I loved the outdoors, but had no real desire to “live off the land” unless I absolutely had to.

That night after I had used my satellite radio to check in with the Department Duty Officer, I slept under the stars and more soundly than I had in months.

I spent the next three days exploring the floor of the valley.

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On the forth morning after my arrival, I arose and took a quick dip in the icy waters of the stream. I didn't bother to towel off, preferring to just bask in the warm morning sun until I dried naturally. I wasn't worried about being seen by anyone, because there wasn't supposed to be anyone else in the valley.

By the time I had dried off, modesty and practicality caught up with me and I decided that I had better put some clothing on. I would wear my usual summer hiking outfit, a pair of mid thigh length khaki shorts, t-shirt, a heavy sweat shirt, heavy socks and of course, my trusty ankle high leather hiking boots.

Dressed and much refreshed, I built a small fire, ate breakfast, (freeze dried pancakes and dehydrated maple syrup!) and drank my first cup of coffee before I opened the topographic map and began to plan my day.

Not having any specific agenda other than my basic mission, I decided that I would head toward the largest mountain, which formed the western wall of the valley and was the probable headwater for the stream.

I packed the things I thought I would need in a small haversack, tossed it over my shoulder and started out.

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I had hiked, walked really, for the floor of the valley was nearly flat and level, for about an hour before I caught a whiff of smoke carried on the gentle breeze. My first thought was that I hadn't doused my campfire well enough and it had started up again after I left. I knew that wasn't true, but I was concerned enough to consider returning to my camp.

I changed my mind when I realized that the gentle breeze blowing through the valley was coming from the wrong direction for me to be able to smell the smoke from my fire.

Since it wasn't my fire, it could only mean one thing. There must be someone else in the valley besides myself!

Just to be friendly, I decided to find my mysterious neighbor and followed the smell of the smoke right to the base of an enormous cliff of solid rock. There it disappeared as though it had never existed.

Baffled by the abrupt loss of the smoke, I began to think that I had imagined the entire thing. Shaking my head in bewilderment, I decided that a small clearing thirty yards from the base of the cliff was as good a place as any to have my lunch.

As I ate my lunch, a couple of strips of jerky, an apple and a high energy protein candy bar, I studied the face of the cliff above me.

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I don't know what made me curious about that particular section of the cliff. Maybe it was the slightly different shade of the rock, or the shadow of the cave.

Viewed from the North, the side I had approached it from, it was an insignificant protrusion from the glacier smoothed face of the cliff. Viewed face on, however, the narrow oval mouth of the cave bore an uncanny resemblance to the labium major of a woman's vagina!

A few feet behind the narrow opening was a small round opening that strengthened the similarity to a woman's genitals.

A closer look at water worn smooth surface of the cave's walls revealed that at one point in time, perhaps as recently as a few thousand years ago, the cave was part of an underground stream. The image of water streaming out of the opening on to the floor of the valley was amusing, to say the least.

While I've never been into spelunking, the mouth of the cave looked intriguing enough to trigger a desire to explore the cave. If it proved interesting enough, I would mark it on the map. If not, then future campers would have to find it and decide for themselves.

Pushing my haversack and utility belt with my canteens before me, I crawled into the narrow opening. Over the many eons water flowing through the cave had worn the walls as smooth as if they had been made of glass. For a brief second or two, a strange, almost sexual, sensation flowed through my body. The image of a huge penis penetrating a more than willing woman flashed across my mind.

Amusing, except I was the penis!

The smooth walled cave proved to be not a cave at all, but a short tunnel that opened out into a narrow chimney that opened to the sky above the top of the cliff.

At first I thought it was nothing more than a "chimney", a crack in the surface of the rock face just wide enough to inch your way up with your back pressed against one wall and your feet on the other. I decided that it would be just the challenge amateur rock climbers would love to tackle.

Upon closer inspection however, it proved not to be a chimney at all, but the beginning of a deep narrow channel cut by water flowing over, then eventually through solid rock.

I decided that I would follow it as far as I could.

For the first thirty feet or so, the opening was barely wide enough for me move sideways between the water polished walls. If I hadn't removed my haversack to crawl through the tunnel, I never would have made it.

After I reached the thirty foot mark beyond the entrance of the "vagina", the fissure opened sufficiently to allow me to progress normally, although in some places the walls were close enough to touch my shoulders.

After about a hundred yards, the floor of the high walled trail changed from smooth rock to soft sandy soil. While it had been pretty obvious before that I was following an ancient stream bed, the sand confirmed it. Judging from the sparse growth of plant life scattered here and there, it was evident that there hadn't been a substantial amount of water flowing through here in years.

I had followed the fissure for perhaps a quarter of a mile before I detected the faint odor of smoke and roasting meat. Someone else was in the fissure!

A bare hundred yards beyond the point where I had first smelled the campfire, the walls of the fissure unexpectedly opened into what I can only describe as a small hidden valley. The sheer cliffs surrounding the diamond shaped valley extended nearly two hundred feet above the floor and were worn as smooth as the tunnel had been. Di-

rectly across from the fissure I had entered through were the remnants of would what have been a spectacular waterfall if there had been any water flowing.

The only thing I could compare it to was the valley the ancient temple featured in the adventure movie "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" was located in.

There were differences of course, the temple had been located in the desert in the Middle East and was without vegetation of any kind. My valley was small, perhaps an acre in size, had a grove of small aspen trees, a fair amount of grass and underbrush, a pond of crystal clear water and a slender, blond haired youth squatting by a campfire with his back toward me.

I watched in silence for the few seconds it took me to realize that the youth was not a boy after all but a slender young woman.

"Hello," I called, not wanting to frighten the girl as I moved slowly toward her.

"Hello, yourself," she replied calmly over her shoulder. She stood and turned to face me, a faint smile on her full red lips. "I've been wondering what you would look like," she said smilingly.

Her reaction surprised me. I know she couldn't have heard me crossing the soft sandy soil of the stream bed, yet my appearance obviously hadn't been a surprise to her.

As I walked slowly toward the campfire, I took the opportunity to inspect the brown eyed blonde. Underneath her rolled up denim shorts and t-shirt I could see the outlines of a very sensuous body with long shapely well tanned legs. Her body appeared hard and lean, yet with all the right curves in all the right places. She was maybe ten years younger than I, one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen and was hauntingly familiar.

Where had I seen her before, I wondered. Judging from the relaxed stance she assumed, she had to be a model of some kind. A beautiful blonde model alone in the wilderness.

This could easily become the classic "lost-on-a-desert-island-with-the-girl-of-your-dreams" fantasy, I thought to myself, except this was not an ocean and this "island" could become very dangerous if water suddenly started to flow from the waterfall that had created it.

I suddenly remembered that she said she had been wondering what I looked like.

"You have?" I asked startled. I had the distinct impression as I drew closer, that she was inspecting me as carefully as I was inspecting her. "But how did you know....?"

"I heard you coming through the cut almost an hour ago. It's like an," she paused as though she was searching for the right words, "echo chamber."

"I see," I said. I pulled one of my canteens free from my belt, unscrewed the cap and took a sip before I spoke again. I wasn't really thirsty, I just wanted to take the time to think. "Mind if I join you for a while, before I go back to my camp in the big valley?"

Again the faint smile crossed her lips. "I insist."

I glanced around, suddenly at a loss for intelligent conversation. “The water in the pond looks like it's pretty clear.”

She followed my glance.

“It's run off from the snow pack above. Quite chilly, I'm afraid,” she smiled suddenly, “but not cold enough to prevent taking a dip in it now and then.”

Noticing my look, she laughed musically.

“The water looks like it's still, but there is a constant supply of fresh water entering the pond from an underground stream under the old waterfall. The outlet is just behind the aspen grove. From there it disappears underground and comes out as a spring in the big valley. As near as I can determine, the water is exchanged about three times a day.”

I looked at the comma shaped pond again and nodded. “Any idea how deep it is?”

“At the deepest, I think its about six inches over my head.”

I glanced back at the young woman. She was a little taller than average, about five eight or nine, and only a few inches shorter than I, which would make the depth about six feet or so.

“You look tired, why don't you take that thing off and rest a spell?” She sat and patted the ground beside her as if to illustrate her suggestion.

Her gesture was really unnecessary, I had slipped my haversack off before she could finish her question. “Thanks,” I sighed and sat down Indian style beside her on the sandy soil.

“My pleasure,” she smiled. “Would you care for a bite to eat?”

I noticed for the first time the rabbit that she had been cooking over the fire. I decided not to mention that having an open fire, not to mention hunting, was illegal in a National Park without a permit. My light lunch had satisfied my hunger, but the smell of the roasting rabbit was too delicious to turn down.

“Only if you'll let me provide the coffee to go along with it.” I began digging through my haversack and missed the odd expression on her face.

“Coffee?”

“It's only freeze dried, but it's not too bad,” I replied finding myself mirroring her infectious smile. I looked around for a pot to heat some water in. “Do you have something I can heat the water in?”

“What do you need?”

“A small pot would do nicely.”

“There may be something you can use at my tent. Want to look?”

“Your tent?” I hadn't notice a tent before. I glanced around, wondering where she had placed it. I caught a glimpse of a slightly darker shade of green in the aspen grove.

“Oh, yeah, I see it.” I rose and walked over to where the tent was located.

The dome shaped tent was the latest and most expensive two man tent made today. Designed to be erected quickly by one person, it was instant shelter and showed little use. Out of curiosity, I took a quick look inside.

Laying in small neat piles on the floor of the tent next to an apparently unused double sized sleeping bag, stacks of neatly folded women's clothing, enough to fill a dozen of my haversacks. Undergarments, outer clothing, and astonishingly, even a pair of bright red high heeled shoes!

Certainly not the type of foot wear one would ordinarily take on a camping trip.

I closed the overlapping flaps of the tent and looked through the cooking utensils sitting on a folding table next to a small gas stove.

Shaking my head in wonder, I surveyed the utensils.

When that lady goes camping, she goes first cabin, I mused. It was almost as if she had thumbed through an L. L. Bean Outdoor Catalog and said, "I'll take one of everything."

The only amenities lacking were a refrigerator, microwave oven and an electric coffee maker.

A coffee maker.

I remembered what I had been looking for. Selecting a fairly large aluminum pot and two metal cups, I made my way back to the pond for some water, then to the campfire and the blonde.

She smiled as I returned. "Find everything you wanted?"

"That's quite a setup you have there."

"You mean my gear? You don't think it's too much do you?" She tensed as she waited for my answer.

"No, not if you want to set up a semi-permanent camp it isn't."

She relaxed slightly. "I didn't know what to... I mean I didn't want to come unprepared."

I smiled thinking of the red high heeled shoes.

"I think you thought of almost everything."

It didn't dawn on me until much later that what I had seen in her campsite would have required a small truck to carry to the mouth of the cave and would have required quite a number of trips through the narrow passageway.

"Almost," she smiled and poked the roasting rabbit with a wicked looking camping knife. She looked at me quizzically, "Will your 'coffee' be cooked soon? The rabbit is almost ready."

I glanced at the simmering water in the pot and nodded. While we waited for the water to boil, I dug a new, unopened Mylar bag of freeze dried coffee from my haversack.

"Silver?" she asked astonished when she saw the shiny package. "You use silver to keep food in? You must be very rich."

“Silver? No, not hardly,” I laughed. “This is plastic. Here take a look.”

The blonde carefully took the pouch from my hand. She gently tossed it into the air a few inches with an astonished look on her face. “It’s a light as a feather!”

“Not when you have to carry it twenty or thirty miles.”

I accepted the pouch back and pulled it open. I started to pour the contents into the water when the girl’s hand suddenly shot forward to grab my wrist. I waited as she wet a finger on her tongue, touched the dark crystals inside, then stuck her finger in her mouth.

She made a face that told me what she was going to say before she said it. “Bitter!”

I wondered where this woman had been if she’d never tasted freeze dried coffee before. “It tastes better when it’s dissolved in hot water.”

She looked at me gravely and nodded, causing me to laugh again at her serious expression. I hoped she wouldn’t mind if I made the coffee the way I usually made it, universally described as being about one grade removed from paint remover.

Much to my surprise, she loved it. Most women, and quite a few men, didn’t.

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“Where do you bury your garbage?” I asked as we finished the rabbit. I must have been hungrier than I had thought, for I had eaten most of the rabbit by myself. The blonde merely nodded in the direction of the aspen grove as she slowly sipped her fourth cup of coffee and watched me.

I gathered up the remains of our meal and took the bones to the spot she had indicated. I found a shallow pit and a small shovel.

A few minutes later I returned to the campfire only to discover that my mysterious dinning companion had disappeared. I glanced around looking for her, knowing that she couldn’t have gone far.

I spotted what appeared to be a fresh set of foot prints leading from the fire to the pond. She had probably decided to wash up, I thought. Something I could use myself. I walked slowly to the pond, not wanting to surprise her doing anything personal.

When I found her, she was standing at the edge of the pond wearing only a black lace bra, her rolled up denim shorts and an Indian style necklace, made from a single turquoise stone about the half the size of a robin’s egg and a leather thong.

“Uh, excuse me. I’ll come back a little later,” I said gallantly.

“Would you help me with this thing?” she asked over her shoulder, a helpless look in her eyes.

“Are you asking me to help you take your bra off?” Lady, you’ve got to be kidding, I thought.

“Bra? Yes, that’s right, please help me with my bra.”

Gallant as I had been a few seconds earlier, I didn’t have to be asked twice.

She had turned to face me forcing me to reach around her back as I undid the hooks of the bra strap. She shrugged her shoulders and smiled as the lace covered bra

slipped from her well tanned body. It was obvious that she didn't let a little thing like a top interfere with her sunbathing.

“Do you like my breasts?” she asked softly when she noticed that I was staring at her chest. I tore my eyes away from the firm, well shaped mounds and looked into her eyes. I studied the mischievous look in them for a second before I could speak.

“They're beautiful,” I said softly back.

She cupped them in her hands and looked down as if in doubt.

“Are you sure? You don't think they're too big or too small, do you?”

I pretended to study her evenly tanned breasts critically, (actually, what I wanted to do was to fondle them), and shook my head. “They're beautiful and just the right size.”

“Thank you,” she said sincerely as if she, rather than genetics had made her breasts as perfect as they were.

Smiling that mysterious smile again and she dropped her hands to the waist band of her shorts. Before I could react, she unbuttoned her shorts, pulled them down and stepped out of them, exposing a pair of tiny, high cut black bikini panties that matched her lacy bra. Through the lace front of the panties, I could see the lighter blonde color of her pubic hair.

In less time than it takes to tell of it, I suddenly found myself standing in open-mouthed astonishment in front of a beautiful girl, who for all practical purposes was absolutely naked.

“Do you like what you see?” she asked, the mischievous look in her dark brown eyes spreading to the smile on her full lips. I nodded silently, my eyes never leaving her lush body.

“I'm glad,” she giggled and turned her back toward me. It was then that I noticed, just before she pulled them off, that her panties were thong style.

“Aren't those uncomfortable?” I asked looking at the place where the strap disappeared between the cheeks of her shapely rear.

“Not really. Once you get used to them they're quite comfortable,” she giggled. She turned partially toward me and tossed the panties to me. “Here, why don't you try them yourself.”

I caught the panties with one hand and held them up to look at the minuscule garment, laughing. “They'd never fit! Besides they look much better on you than they would on me.”

“You'll never know until you try them,” she laughed. Raising her arms above her head she made a shallow dive into the pond. Seconds later her head popped up at the other end of the pond.

“Well? What are you waiting for?”

I quickly removed my clothing, turning my back, much to the blonde's amusement, as I removed my undershorts.

“Shall I turn my back?” she called out to me. I shook my head and turned around, only to find that she already had.

Walking gingerly to the edge of the pond, I duplicated the blonde's shallow dive. I remember the cold bite of the water before everything went black.

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When I finally opened my eyes all I could see was dark green. As they slowly adjusted to the dim light and I could see more details, I realized that I was in the blonde's tent. Lying naked in her sleeping bag in her tent, I hastily added to myself.

I tried to sit up, only to fall back groaning. I ached all over with most of the pain centered in the middle of my forehead. I felt a cool hand on my forehead.

“You're awake,” a soft feminine voice said stating the obvious. The girl had been sitting beside me, unnoticed until she had touched her soft hand to my head.

“What happened?”

“You must have hit your head on the bottom,” she replied. “I think you'll be okay, but I think you should stay here for a while.”

“Thanks for saving my life.”

“As I said earlier, my pleasure.”

We fell silent for a few minutes.

“You know, I don't even know the name of my beautiful benefactor.” The blonde blushed and glanced down at her hands folded neatly in her lap. “I guess it's about time we introduced ourselves. My name is Jim, Jim Nelson.”

“And my name is translated as Twofeathers in the Light of Dawn,” the girl softly replied. “But you can call me Dawn if it's easier.”

“Twofeathers in the Light of Dawn? That sounds like an Indian name.” I replied. I didn't bother to add that she no more looked like an Indian than I did.

“It's my adopted name. My great-great-grandmother was an Indian who lived not far from here. I decided that I would honor her memory by taking her name,” Dawn said simply. “About the only 'Indian' still remaining in me now, is my brown eyes and the ability to get a fantastic tan.”

“Dawn Twofeathers. That's nice. I like it. Somehow it seems to fit you,” I said wincing. I looked up at the fabric of the tent. It seemed darker than it should have. “How long was I unconscious?”

“About an hour.” Dawn glanced up, realizing what I had seen. “It gets dark here early. In another hour, it will be as dark as dusk, but the sun won't be going down for a couple of hours yet. Looks like we're stuck here for the night.”

“I could think of worse places,” I tried to smile.

Dawn sighed, “So can I. Since we'll be here a while, why don't you tell me about yourself?”

We talked for hours, with me doing most of the talking. Or at least it seemed so. Every now and then, Dawn would ask a question, sometimes logical, sometimes rather strange.

“... so you'd call yourself a warrior then?” Dawn said when I mentioned that I had been in the military.

“No, not quite,” I laughed. “The only action I saw was teaching a lot of men how not to kill themselves in the wilderness.”

“Would you have liked to be a warrior?” my companion asked softly. Had I been more alert, I might have picked up on the fact that there was a hidden meaning in her question.

I thought of all the little trouble spots our armed forces were assigned to. Some of them were, according to all reports I'd heard, quite hazardous. “Good heavens, no! Now day's a man could get killed or seriously injured being a 'warrior'. Besides, haven't you ever heard that old saying, 'I'm a lover, not a fighter'?”

She shook her head, laughed then fell silent for a moment. “I'm glad that you don't want to be a warrior,” she said softly, almost in a whisper.

“Glad? Why should you be glad about that?”

Her answer surprised the living daylights out of me. She leaned over and kissed me passionately. My aches and pains suddenly disappeared as though they had never occurred.

The next thing I knew Dawn had removed her clothing and had crawled into the sleeping bag with me.

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“Do you like my body, Jim Nelson?” Dawn asked as I gently caressed her breasts.

There was a faint thump as a drop of rain fell on the tent above us.

“I love it,” I said as I gently nuzzled her neck. I knew that I could take her right then and there, she was mine to command, to do with as I wished, and what I wished was to.....

The touch of my lips against her long slender neck brought an excited giggle from Dawn. “I love your tiny ears, your delicate nose, slender neck and your lush full lips. I adore every inch, every curve and every opening.”

As I described the parts of her body, I would touch, kiss and most of all, caress, that part gently, yet passionately. I had learned many years earlier that time spent in foreplay was time well spent, both for the girl and myself.

A slow and steady hand. The moral of the story of the Tortoise and the Hare, is just as apropos to love making as it is to any other task worth doing well. Although, if I were to rewrite the fable so that applied to *just* loving someone, I think that I would definitely add the word “tenderly”.

Dawn's little sighs of delight over my tender and sensuous exploration of her body gave way to soft moans of pleasure and heightened desire. The tent began to fill with the musk of our passion as I lay beside her and continued my foreplay for well over an

hour. Not once during that all to brief moment in time had I approached her pussy, concentrating on every inch of her body except there.

Suddenly I felt Dawn tense, then shudder several times as she reached an orgasm. An orgasm achieved solely through my protracted foreplay and without any penetration on my part! The “tease” and patience on my part had done its magic again.

She came down from her orgasmic high surprisingly quickly. “Wow,” she sighed dreamily, “do all you 'white eyes' make love like that?”

“I had a good teacher, a girl, Kimberly Hawkens, who was on the survival school staff with me,” I said truthfully, but carefully refraining from telling her the rest of my relationship with Kim. For some inexplicable reason, I added, “She was a soldier — a warrior, who taught me that making love is different than having sex.”

“A woman warrior?” Dawn chuckled softly “She taught you well then, Jim Nelson.”

“I've never had any complaints.” I wasn't being immodest, just telling the truth.

Dawn sighed contentedly and shifted to her side. “Tell me Jim Nelson, did she teach you anything else about making love?”

“A little. What would you like to try? The girl in the swinging basket routine, or something more exotic?” I asked teasingly. I knew exactly what she wanted, for I wanted it as badly as she did.

Dawn playfully slapped my bare chest. “I want you the old fashioned way, inside of me this time!”

“Well, if you insist,” I began the “tease” again. Or at least I started to. Dawn suddenly pushed me onto my back and straddled my hips. Now this is a girl who knows exactly what she wants, I thought as I felt her hand grasp my penis firmly and guide it inside of her.

As we made love, the turquoise pendant which she had left on, kept swinging from her neck in rhythm with her body movements. Every now and then it would strike me on the chest, sending chills through my body.

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We made love three times that night, and twice the following morning, each time with Dawn on top. I didn't mind, she was doing all the work, and it seemed to be the way she preferred to make love.

We had just finished making love for the second time the following morning when Dawn confessed that she hadn't been bedded (her term, not mine) by a man in a long time.

When I asked curiously how long it had been, she smiled distantly and said, “Oh, it's been at least a hundred and fifty years or so, I guess. And it was never this good.”

I made some inane comment about being celibate for that long would have made her horny enough to be satisfied by even an inept lover.

“Horny? I'll show you what horny really means,” Dawn said as she started to caress my chest with one hand and fondle my penis with the other.

“Whoa,” I said, gently trying to shift out of her reach. “I'd love to continue this, but I think we need to get something to eat. Man doesn't live on sex alone you know.”

Dawn sighed and reluctantly released her hold on me. “I guess we should take a break. Do you have some more of that wonderful coffee?”

“Sure. Let's go find some,” I grinned and crawled out of the sleeping bag into the chilly mountain air.

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We'd heard the rain falling gently on the tent off and on through out the night. Being kept delightfully busy, I hadn't realized the true importance of the gently soothing sounds until we exited naked from the tent.

The pond, which had been perhaps a quarter of the small valley the day before, now covered about half, including the site of last night's campfire. A small but steady stream of water was flowing over the old waterfall, further filling the pond. All of my gear, including my clothing, was now either underwater or floating somewhere in the middle of the pond.

“Damn,” I swore and waded to the spot where everything had been. I was able to recover my haversack, which was floating only a few feet away from where I had dropped it. My clothing however, was out in the middle of the ponds.

“All my clothing is gone.” I said disgustedly as I waded back to Dawn. “But I saved the coffee,” I grinned ruefully holding up my haversack like a trophy.

Dawn giggled. “I kind of like you without your clothing on.”

“Yeah, right. That's easy for you to say, you've got all the clothes you need. Other than what's out there somewhere,” I waved in the general direction of the pond, “everything else is back at my camp.”

“Jim, I can loan you some of my things if you feel like wearing anything,” Dawn suggested. Seeing my startled look, Dawn quickly added, “At least until we dry your things out.”

PART TWO:

“Like what?” I asked, frankly inspecting Dawn's naked body and wondering what, if anything, of hers would fit me. Although she was only a few inches shorter than I, she had a mature woman's figure, hips that were slightly broader, a considerably narrower waist and, except for her bust measurements, was much smaller on top than I. “You're tall, but I don't think anything you have will even come close to fitting me.”

“Well,” Dawn said brightly, “we won't know until we try, now will we?”

“No, I suppose not,” I sighed in defeat, deciding that after it warmed up, I could wade back into the pond and retrieve my clothing . I would only have to wear her things for a couple of hours. Besides there were just the two of us and no one would ever see me wearing women's clothing except Dawn.

I followed Dawn back inside the tent. Under other circumstances I would have enjoyed the view, but at the moment I was too cold to care. By the time we had closed the flap of the tent, I was mostly goose bumps, extended nipples, rock hard scrotum and shrunken penis.

Well, damn it, I was cold!

Oddly, the cold did not seem to effect Dawn as much as it did me. That extra layer of insulation that help give women their delightful curves was apparently serving her well.

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“Hum, let's see. We can obviously eliminate this thing,” Dawn smiled as she held up a bra. “Unless your chest isn't as cold as the rest of your body?”

It was, but I just smiled and shook my head. Laughing, she tossed the bra to me anyway and continued to rummage through her neat piles of clothing.

Out of curiosity, I glanced at the label on the bra. There was something odd about the label. Size 36 “C”, Dawn was no slouch in the bust department. Of course, by this time I didn't need a couple of unfilled bra cups to tell me that!

It took me a few seconds to realize what had struck me as being strange about the label. The printing, which normally fades with time and washing, was sharp and clear, as were all the labels on Dawn's clothing she was thrusting upon me. Once again I had the strange feeling that everything was brand new and, except for possibly what she had worn yesterday, unused.

“Here, these should fit you,” she said tossing me a pair of panties. Unlike the nylon thongs bikini Dawn had worn the day before, the pale pink French cut briefs were made of a very soft cotton. After a moment of misgivings, I pulled the loose fitting garment up to my waist. The elastic waist band felt like it was being stretched to it's limit while the seat was too large by at least an inch and a half.

Dawn glanced at me out of the corner of her eye. “Cute,” she said, never breaking her rhythm in rummaging thorough her clothing. In short order she tossed me a pair of khaki mid thigh length shorts with cuffed legs, a woman's heavy cotton camp shirt and something she called a “cropped tank top”. Having seen a nearly identical undergarment before I recognized it as actually being a sports bra.

The sports bra was also pale pink cotton like the panties, with narrow shoulder straps that formed a “Y” in the back and a deeply cut “U” shaped double fabric front. The elastic hem would end a few inches below my nipples. I debated about half a second before pulling it on, then figured “what the hell”.

It felt soft next to my skin and fit snugly, but not unduly so. Looking down at my extended nipples softly concealed by the double fabric of the bra, I realized that had I been a girl built like Dawn, my breasts would have been displayed quite prominently, yet still adequately covered for modesty.

I looked doubtfully at the camp shirt and started to hand it back. There was no way it would fit across my shoulders. Dawn pushed it back to me when I protested.

“I'm sure it will fit, Jim. Why don't you just try it on?”

I shrugged and slipped my arms through the sleeves, ready to say "I told you so" when I proved that it wouldn't fit. Much to my surprise, other than being a little snug through the shoulders, it fit a lot better than I expected. I left the shirt unbuttoned which for some strange reason brought a smile to Dawn's face.

"Try the shorts on too," Dawn smiled encouragingly. I returned her smile gamely and slipped into the shorts, thinking of Dawn's narrow waist and sensuous hips.

Understandably, they, like the panties I had already pulled on, were loose through the hips and rear and too snug through the waist to button comfortably. I compensated for the too tight waist by pulling the zipper about two thirds of the way up, then flipped the little tab down to lock it in place.

"Shoes?"

I glanced at the absurdly out of place red high heeled shoes out of the corner of my eye and shook my head. "No way in hell, lady," I snorted.

Dawn looked disappointed, but nodded. She rummaged around a little more and found a pair of heavy wool socks. Like the rest of her clothing, the socks were a little more snug than I was used to but fit adequately.

"There. All better?" Dawn asked.

"Yes, thanks. Uh, shouldn't you put some clothing on too? Not that I'm complaining, mind you," I grinned, "I kind of like looking at naked girls. Especially if they're as beautiful as you."

Blushing at the compliment, Dawn looked down at her nakedness as though she hadn't noticed it before. "I suppose you're right. Then can we have some of that wonderful coffee?"

I laughed as she hurriedly put on an outfit that was a virtual duplicate, even finding another sports bra, of the one she had given me.

"Look," she squealed happily, "we're twins!"

I joined into her laughter, "Yeah, twins, except you're the much prettier one."

Dawn suddenly looked serious for a second and cupped my face with her hands. "You're not bad looking yourself," she said looking deeply into my eyes as she ran the tips of her fingers tinglingly over my face.

"That felt good," I sighed. I scooted closer to her and rose up on my knees. Pulling her up to join me, I cupped her chin in my hand and tilted her head back to kiss her.

"So did that," she sighed, put her arms around my back and returned my kiss. As we kissed deeply Dawn ran her hands lightly over my back and waist. Breaking for air she sighed and laid her head upon my chest. "That was nice," she sighed again.

We stayed that way for a few moments before she abruptly dropped her hands and slapped me gently on my rear. "Now time for some coffee!"

Dawn turn away and crawled out of the tent. I sighed and followed, enjoying again the view of her well rounded rear. As we crawled, the little tab on my zipper popped open and I had the uneasy feeling that my shorts were falling off. The feeling intensified when I, finally clear of the tent, stood.

Without much conscious thought about what I was doing, I pulled the zipper all the way up and easily fastened the waistband button. My action brought a small knowing smile to Dawn's lips.

“Now then, why don't you fire up the camp stove, while I get us some fresh water for our coffee?” I suggested.

Dawn nodded, looking doubtfully at the camp stove as I picked up the pot I had used the day before and started to the pond.

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Even though we had been outside the tent only a few minutes earlier I took the time to look around, seeing the valley as if for the first time.

Our little valley, washed clean by the gentle rainfall we'd had the night before was beautiful. Even the colors of the plants and surrounding cliffs appeared sharper and clearer than I remembered from the day before.

I drew a deep breath and stopped for a moment, trying to identify the not unpleasant odors of the valley. As I slowly identified each smell, the fresh crisp clean smell of the aspen grove, the sweet smell of several tiny flowering bushes now half submerged at the edge of the pond, I became aware of a subtle, yet tantalizing natural scent of a mature woman.

Shaking my head in wonder that I could detect Dawn from such a distance, I continued to the pond for our water.

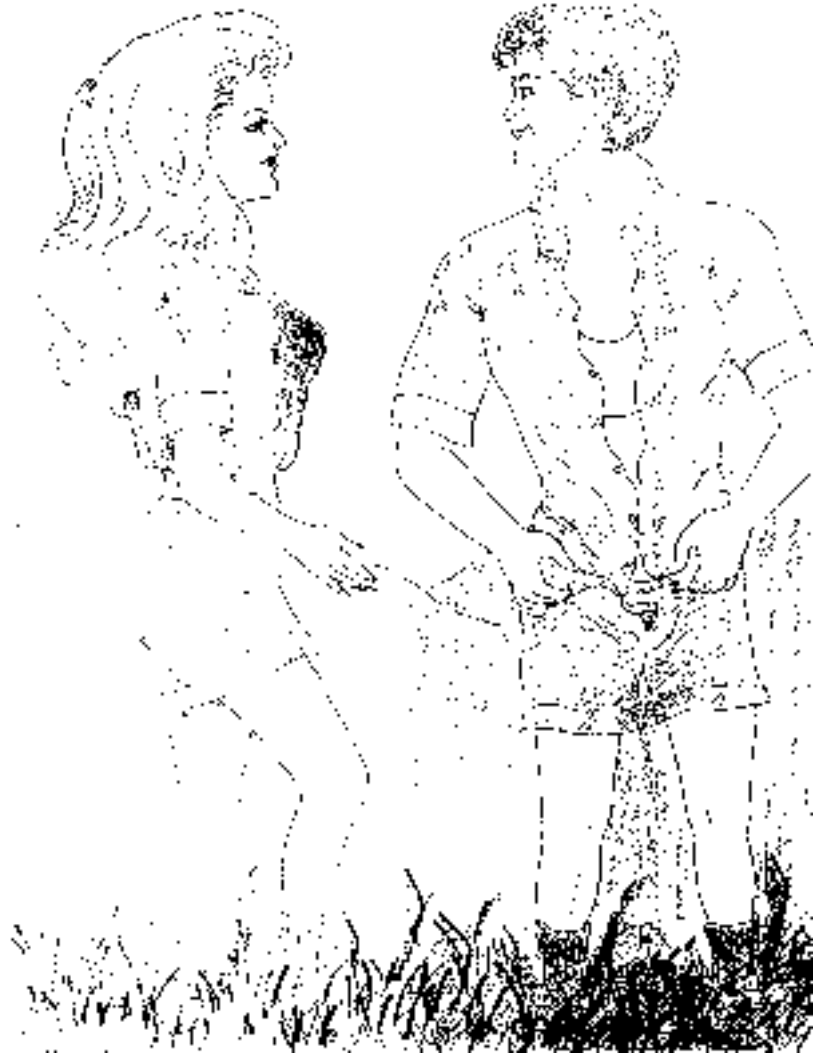
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Dawn was staring at the utensils on the camp table when I returned.

“What's the matter?”

“I, I don't know what to do with all this stuff,” she admitted looking at me helplessly.

“No problem,” I laughed. I set the pail of water on the folding table and set about screwing the propane canister to the small camp stove. A few seconds later, I was rewarded by a gentle hiss as the gas escaped through the vents of the burner.



“All set. Where's your matches?”

“Matches?”

“Yeah, you know, the things you light fires with?” I gently chided her. “Never mind, here's some.” I mumbled something very uncomplimentary under my breath about helpless females.

She looked back at me, a hurt look in her eyes. She shook her head and carefully studied the now dry waterfall over my left shoulder.

I almost missed seeing her expression harden as I lit the small stove. I realized that I had inadvertently said something to offend her. “Dawn, look I'm sorry. I should be locked away until I have my first cup of coffee in the morning.”

“Yes, you should be. Just like a man,” she mumbled sullenly.

I instantly regretted my comment. “I'm sorry, Dawn. Why don't you let me make it up to you by making breakfast?”

Dawn seemed surprised. “You want to cook a meal for me? You can cook?”

I grinned and nodded. “I'm actually quite good at that too.”

She stood back and motioned toward the gas stove. “Make coffee first,” she commanded sternly, causing us both to laugh.

She silently watched me for a moment as I poured the coffee crystals into a pot of water.

“Now then, what do we have around here to eat?” I asked myself. I rummaged through the boxes of staples that were under the table. I found, much to my relief, everything I needed. We would have rich sausage gravy on biscuits I would have to make from scratch and, of course, lots of coffee.

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“That was delicious,” Dawn said as she wiped the last of her gravy up with a fresh biscuit. I pretended not to notice the slight hint of surprise in her voice.

“Well, the biscuits were a little over done,” I said modestly. “It's hard to bake them properly on a camp stove.”

I stood and collected the dirty dishes, scraping what little scraps of food that remained into a paper bag. While the water was heating to wash the dirty dishes, I would take the bag to Dawn's dump and bury it. I became aware of Dawn's eyes on me, watching every movement I made.

“Something wrong?” I asked smiling back at her.

Dawn shook her head. “No, I was just wondering about you.”

“Wondering about me. What about?”

“I've never met a man quite like you before,” Dawn replied in wonder.

“I'll take that as a compliment,” I grinned. “But I'm curious, how am I different?”

“You just are,” she shook her head and looked away, changing the subject.

As I washed the dishes, I could feel her eye's on my back again. "What?" I asked turning to her.

"I was just thinking."

"About what?"

"You, and why you came here," she said slowly.

"I told you last night, I came to survey the valley for the Park Service."

"No, not that. I was wondering why you came to see me," Dawn said mysteriously.

I thought about that for a second. I hadn't been aware that I had intentionally sought Dawn out, stumbled over by accident was more like it. I hadn't even known that someone was within a hundred miles of my camp.

"I'm sorry, I still don't understand what you're talking about."

Dawn rose and walked to my side. She looked deep into my eyes and ran her finger tips over my cheek. I took hold of her hand and kissed her palm, bringing a smile to her lips.

"Jim, why don't you make some more coffee while I build a small fire by the pond. I think we need to have a serious talk."

"Sure, I'm through with the dishes anyway. Be a few minutes," I said dumping the dish water out. I re-lit the stove and set another pot of water on it.

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Dawn was sitting with her back against a log facing a small fire just large enough to take the chill out when I brought the coffee to her. She looked up, smiled and held out her cup. I poured us both some coffee and set the pot next to the fire to keep it warm.

Sitting down beside her, I leaned back, took a sip from my cup and sighed contentedly.

"Why don't you take your socks off and stick your feet in the sand, like this. It feels nice and warm." Dawn suggested.

It sounded like a good idea and I pulled off my socks. The sand was warm against the soles of my feet. A few seconds later I had dug them in as Dawn had, completely burying them up to my ankles. My cold feet slowly began to warm up.

I turned to my beautiful companion. "Now that we're comfortable and you have a fresh pot of coffee, would you care to tell me what you were talking about back at your camp?"

Dawn leaned her head against the log and stared up at the cloudless sky for a moment before speaking.

"Do you know what the Indians who lived in the valley called this mountain?"

I shook my head. It wasn't even named on the geological survey map, just a number.

"It's called 'Two Spirits'."

"Two Spirits? Sounds like it was a sacred area of some kind."

"It is, or was," Dawn sighed. "Now I'm not sure."

"What makes you say that?"

"Jim, tell me something. Didn't you wonder about the cave, or this valley, or even how I came to be here? Why I look the way I do. Or the reason why you're wearing my clothing right now?"

Her questions gave me pause. "Uh, no not really. I guess that I just thought that you had discovered the cave as I had and decided to explore it."

"And I just happened to have all this stuff along with me?" Dawn smiled and waited while that inconsistency sunk in.

The more I thought about it the less likely it seemed.

"Okay, just how did you manage to end up in this little hideaway with enough equipment and supplies for a small army?"

"I was waiting for you," Dawn said.

"Waiting for me? Whatever for?"

"You are '*Kwe'rhame*'," she said as if the odd sounding word explained everything.

"Quwe'rah-who? What's that?"

Dawn turned and studied my face for a second. "You really don't know much about the Indian legends around here do you?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "No. I'm sorry, but I don't."

"Then perhaps its time you learned," Dawn said. "Hundreds of years ago, there were two Indian tribes...."

Dawn began to tell me the legend of the Old Woman of the Mountain. As she told her tale, I became intrigued.

"She disappeared through a fissure in the mountain? You don't mean that cave that looks like a woman's..." I trailed off when Dawn nodded. I glanced around the little valley. "And this is where she was supposed to have lived."

"Did live, Jim. She actually existed," Dawn said softly. "As I was saying, the Chief of the Valley tribe decided that as long as she lived, the safety of the tribe would be in jeopardy. So he commanded his braves to find and kill the Old Woman."

"What happened then?"

"When the braves found her, she subjected them to a test of their manhood." Dawn's soft laughter echoed off the walls of the valley.

"Really? A test of their manhood? What kind of test?"

"I'll explain that in a minute. Jim, I said a few minutes ago that you were '*Kwe'r-hame*'." She paused, seeing my blank look. "Have you ever heard of it or the term '*hwame*'?"

I searched my memory for either of the words and drew a total blank on both. "No, I can't say that I have."

"Perhaps you've heard the more common term, '*berdache*'?"

“That was a man who lived as a woman in an Indian tribe, wasn't it?” Dawn nodded. “What does that have to do with the legend of the mountain?”

“Jim, the English translation of '*Kwe'rhame*' is 'Two Spirits'. The braves came to the Old Woman to prove their manhood. Those that failed became '*Kwe'rhame*'.”

“What was the test?” I asked as I stared at my buried feet. I suddenly noticed the hair standing straight up on my bare legs. I had read somewhere that people who had been hit by lightning, and had live to tell about it, reported a similar phenomenon just before lightning struck. I glanced up at the cloudless sky and breathed a little easier. I tried to rub the hair down with the palm my hand.

“In the old days, tribes would place a child in a thicket with two items, a bow and arrow, and a 'burden', which females used to carry things. The thicket was then set afire and the child was told to bring out one object and one object only. If he chose the bow, he was destined to take a man's role in the tribe. If he chose the 'burden', however, he would be considered a 'woman' for the rest of his life.”

“Wow! Pretty heavy stuff for a child to decide on, isn't it?”

Dawn smiled and shook her head.

“Actually, most of the children put to the test had decided long before hand what they would save.”

“That's fascinating,” I replied. I glanced around the valley. “Where would the old woman's test thicket have been, do you suppose?”

“She didn't use a burning thicket, there were too many other things, symbols really, that told her what the challenger truly desired.”

“Really? What were they?” I rubbed my legs a little harder.

“The first was to enter the cave, signifying the desire to be reborn.”

“As a brave?”

“Perhaps, but I'll get back to that in a moment. The second test was the old woman herself. When the child first laid eyes upon her, she would assume the shape the child would become. If he saw a young male, much like himself, then he would become a brave. If he saw a young female...”

“Then he would become a '*Kwe'rhame*', and live as a female, right?”

“Yes, but that only part of the tests he had to pass,” Dawn smiled, “or fail depending upon how you look at it.”

“What else did he have to do?”

“The third test was actually based on the results of the second. If the youth had seen another male, he was given a test that involved the hunt and bravery. He was placed in a situation where a wounded puma, a mountain lion, charged him. He had to stand his ground and kill the lion.”

“And if he'd seen a female?”

“Then the youth was presented with an even more unique challenge. Through a series of tricks, the old woman would remove first her clothing then the youth's. If he re-

sponded to her body, then he was given a chance to make love. If just they had sex, as opposed to making love as you did, he would remain a male.”

“Sounds like the same thing to me,” I snorted. “What's the difference?”

“Remember, the test were symbolic. One, just sex without love or meaning, signifies masculine aggression. The other, 'making love', signifies the ability to nurture and give pleasure unselfishly, which is more traditionally a feminine trait.”

“Sounds like I failed the test then,” I joked. The humor of my little quip suddenly disappeared when Dawn shook her head slowly.

“You passed the test with flying colors,” Dawn smiled ruefully. “In a way, it's a shame. You truly understand women, Jim, and in a way, that makes you a better man than any of the old Indian braves.”

“Me? Understand women?” I laughed. “My wife Kim might argue that point with you!”

“You have a wife?” Dawn asked surprised.

“Yes. I'm sorry, Dawn, I should have told you before we, well, I should have told you. I have no excuses for what I did last night and this morning, other than you're one of the most beautiful and sensuous woman I've ever known,” I paused and smiled gently, “but neither do I have any regrets. I hope that you feel the same way.”

“No matter,” Dawn waved her hand as if to dismiss the issue, “it makes things a little more complicated, that's all.”

“Like I said, I'm not sorry.”

Ignoring me, Dawn continued, “The next, and the final test was even simpler than the others. The youth had to willingly wear the female clothing the spirit offered him and later prepare a meal, from start to finish.”

I stared at Dawn for a second as I realized that if what she had been telling me were actually true, I had performed every test she mentioned. If she were the Old Woman of the Mountain then I would start wearing dresses when I returned to my “tribe”.

It was the most ludicrous story I'd ever heard. I tilted my head back and laughed. “Looks like I'm doomed to a life of skirts and high heels then,” I said when the echoes of my laughter ended.

Dawn looked annoyed. “You should not make fun of something as serious as this.”

“I'm sorry. Please continue.”

“That brings us to yesterday.”

“Yesterday?”

Dawn looked at me with a faint smile. “Jim, I asked you before, didn't it seem strange to you that you found me here?”

“As I said earlier, I thought that you had found the cave as I had....” Dawn's look of amusement stopped my vocalized train of thoughts. I suddenly remembered that she had also said that she had been waiting for me. There was absolutely no way she could have even known that I was in the big valley. “You had better explain.”

“Jim, I didn't find the cave, I made it! I made it when I escaped from the Valley tribe. I am the 'Old Woman of the Mountain!'”

“Well, then, since I seemed to have 'passed' the tests you described to be a '*Kwe'r-hame*', did you change me into one?” I laughed.

“Yes,” Dawn said simply, an amused look on her face. “Or rather it has begun.”

I started to laugh again, then sobered when I saw Dawn's look of amusement had turned serious.

I felt my stomach do a flip-flop. My God, what if all this *were* true? What if this beautiful young woman actually was the personification of a long dead Indian Medicine Woman? What if she could make me want to wear dresses? If the legend was true, then I would be wearing dresses, like it or not.

Unlike the *Kwe'r-hame* of old, I wouldn't be accepted by my “tribe”, I'd be the laughing stock of the Department.

I thought about it some more for a moment. Unlike the days when Indians were the sole occupants of North America, modern women's roles were different. They were no longer expected to be content to fit in the narrow niche of wife and mother. Many had careers, as Kim had, and many wore articles of clothing that either were, or strongly resembled men's.

Men's roles on the other hand, were as sharply regulated by modern social norms as the ancient Indian braves had been. A man wearing a dress went against the 'norm' and was shunned and ridiculed by most, especially his wife if he happened to be married. I shuddered to think what would happen the first time I even looked at one of Kimberly's dresses!

I shook my head in denial. It would be impossible to conceal a secret desire to wear women's clothing, at least for me it would be. This was no longer sounding like a joke.

“Just when will this uncontrollable urge to wear women's clothing begin? When I return home?” I asked worriedly.

“It won't be an urge, Jim. It will be a necessity.”

“A necessity! What are you talking about?”

“When you entered the cave expressing your desire to become '*Kwe'r-hame*', it was a commitment made for life. It isn't just your desires that will change — your body will too! You will be a real female for the rest of your life.”

“WHAT? That's impossible!”

“Is it? Look at your legs, or feel your cheeks,” Dawn suggested.

I looked down to where I had recently been rubbing. At first I didn't notice anything wrong.

Then I noticed that nearly all of the hair on my legs, the hair that I had so recently seen standing on end, was gone. Denuded of most of their hair, my legs looked different, slimmer and with less muscular definition. They looked as though they should have belonged on Dawn rather than me! A quick check of my cheeks and chin confirmed that my face was as hairless as my legs.

I broke out in a cold sweat as my hand shot to my groin as if it had a mind of its own. Everything was still where it should be! I exhaled explosively the deep breath I'd been unconsciously holding.

I stood up and shook my head in anger. "Look lady, I don't know what you did to make me lose the hair on my legs or my whiskers, but I don't think it's funny!"

"Calm down Jim, please," Dawn said quietly. "It is done. There is nothing you can do about it other than to accept it."

When I continued to stand over her glaring, she rose and faced me.

As we stood eye ball to eye ball I resisted the urge to glance down at her feet, knowing that she should have been shorter. We were was not the same height! She had to be standing on a slight mound, she just had to be!

"Jim, please calm down. I know that you're upset..."

"Upset! You're damned right I'm upset!" I shouted, interrupting her.

"... but it's for the best, believe me. Your, soul, your true spirit has been waiting all its life to fulfill its destiny."

"Fulfill my destiny? As what, a woman?" I asked numbly.

"Yes, as a woman," Dawn confirmed. She paused, looking at me thoughtfully before continuing. "Although, maybe not entirely."

"What the hell does that mean? I'm going to end up as some kind of she-male?" I demanded.

Dawn looked at me quizzically. "A she-male?"

"Never mind," I snapped. I turned to walk away from her, afraid that if we talked much longer I would end up hitting her. I'd never hit a woman in my life and I didn't intent to start now.

As I walked toward the pond, I happened to pass through a beam of sunlight reflected off of some shiny object at Dawn's camp. I glanced at my silhouette cast upon the face of the steep cliff and froze.

There was something strange about it. It looked misshapen somehow. It was if the lower half of my body had grown, had expanded, becoming fuller, rounder, had become a woman's!

With fingers that were numb with apprehension I reached down and felt my hips through the cloth of Dawn's shorts then slowly slid them around to feel my rear. I glanced down toward my chest as my hand shot back around to my groin.

Everything felt and looked absolutely normal! I glanced back to my shadow again. Again I was confronted with a silhouetted illusion that my hips were wider.

Confused and more than a little frightened, I quickly removed my camp shirt and shorts, stripping down to sports bra and panties. I looked again at my shadow. It had the unmistakable curves of a woman. I turned to look at my silhouette in profile. It too showed the likeness of a woman, high firm breasts and large softly curving rear.

“Your shadow spirit knows the truth, Jim,” Dawn said from behind me. “You are destined to be a woman.”

I spun around and stared at the woman. “Why are you doing this to me?” I cried.

Dawn looked doubtful for a moment as if she were unsure of the answer herself. “Because you asked for it.” she replied with conviction.

“I did no such thing!” For some reason my protest sounded false even to my ears. I abruptly sat down on the sandy soil and of all things began to cry.

Dawn sat beside me and put her arms around my shoulders. “There, there,” she said softly as if she were comforting a child or a very young girl. I turned slightly and buried my head on her shoulder. “Don't fight it, a good cry will do you a world of good.”

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It felt like it had to be at least an hour later when I finally cried myself out. I didn't need Dawn to tell me that I had just exhibited a very feminine trait.

“When will the changes be complete?” I asked feeling an odd mixture of a deep sense of loss and reconciliation to my fate.

“Soon,” she replied evasively. “Very soon.”

We sat silently side by side for a long time, lost in our own thoughts. I was scared about my future. But mostly I was worried about Kimberly and how she would react to her suddenly feminine husband. In retrospect, my fears were funny, but I couldn't help myself.

Dawn finally broke the stillness of the valley. “Jim, make love to me, one last time. Please,” she said softly.

“Something to remember my manhood by?” I asked sarcastically.

“Yes.”

“Why not?” I said, taking her into my arms again. I began to kiss her on the neck, then her lips as I slipped her shirt off of her shoulders. Dawn gently pushed me away for a moment while she removed her sports bra.

“Take off your clothing,” she commanded gently as she unbuttoned her shorts and peeled them down her hips. “I want to see all of you.”

Dawn remained smiling at me as I slipped out of my bra, allowing it to fall to the ground. I started to remove my panties only to be stopped by Dawn.

“Let me do that,” she said as she slipped her hands into the waistband. We kissed deeply as she pulled my panties down to my knees. From there I took over, half allowing gravity and a quick flick of my foot to send the panties sailing.

“Last night you showed me how you make love,” Dawn said. “Now it's my turn to show you.”

Gently pushing me on to my back, Dawn began with sucking and pulling on one of my flat male nipples with her mouth. Gently at first, then slowly progressing to a suc-

tion like feeling that felt as if she was trying to pull milk from my chest! Far from being painful, the most wondrous tingly sensations flowed through my body.

I was surprised to feel the other nipple snap to an erect position. I was almost paralyzed with the wonderfully strange sensations, centered where her mouth was busy working on my nipple and radiating through my body, . A minute or so later, although it may have been only seconds, she switched to the other side.

The first nipple was still tingling as though she had suddenly been endowed with two mouths to work on me as the other began to resonate as though in sympathetic harmony. I reached up with one hand to feel what I expected to be little more than an eraser sized nub.

Somehow it didn't surprise me that my nipple was now huge, or at least it felt that way. A few minutes of probing the sensitive protrusion with my finger tips revealed that the nipple was considerably larger, about the same size as Dawn's had been the night before. It looked strange against my flat chest as I tilted my head up to look at it.

As odd as that fat nipple appeared, I felt a profound sense of pleasure staring at and playing with that plump nipple.

Dawn saw what I was doing out of the corner of her eye and brushed my hand away only to replace my fingers with her own as she gently twisted and pulled. I tensed as a particularly strange sensation shot through my chest.

Dawn pulled her mouth free from the nipple she'd been sucking on just long enough to whisper, "relax, things will go faster if you don't fight it."

Things will go faster? My pleasure-numbed mind asked itself. Faster? I suddenly realized what was happening. Dawn, the Old Woman of the Mountain was literally sucking women's breasts into existence out of my flat male chest.

And there wasn't a thing I could do about it, except lie back enjoy the sensations and feel the weight of my breasts grow steadily heavier on my chest.

Dawn alternated between nipples for a few minutes longer. Suddenly she stopped and pulled away.

Until that moment I had been staring with sightless eyes at either the top of her head or at the cliff behind her. As my eyes slowly refocused, my vision was filled with a man's hairy chest inches from my face. For a second I was confused. I knew that Dawn and I were the only ones in the valley, yet the chest was undeniably a male's. Then it dawned on me, I was staring at what could only be my upper torso on Dawn!

Rather than creating my new breasts from my own body, Dawn had somehow transferred the soft mounds from herself to me.

Still stunned by what I had seen I looked down at my bare chest. Never before had I seen a pair of women's breasts from this angle. While I knew that they were well proportioned on Dawn's body, and not particularly large in the Dolly Parton sense of the term, they felt and looked huge on me!

"They look very nice," Dawn whispered huskily. Surprised at the very male sound of her voice, I tried to look up into her face. Dawn's head dropped heavily to my chest, painfully crushing one of my new breasts against my rib cage.

Flinching with a pain that I'd never known before, I started to reach for her with a slender hand. "Dawn....?"

She shook her head and pushed my hand away. "I need to rest... It's been so long since I've done this," she whispered, then fell instantly asleep, half-lying on top of me in my arms.

I held her tightly to my new breasts, just feeling her warmth and the steady rhythm of her breathing through the incredibly sensitive mounds of flesh on my chest. After a half hour of laying like this, I had to relieve the pain of her weight and the urge to go to the bathroom.

As carefully as I could, I eased Dawn off of me and on to the sandy soil. I already knew that I hadn't been changed from the waist down, but I took a quick look anyway. Satisfied, I picked up the sports bra I had dropped earlier and walked quickly toward the area Dawn had set up her latrine.

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As I stood peeing into the foot deep slit trench, I realized that this would probably be the last time I would ever be able to do so standing up. Unless it was straddling a latrine slit trench like this. It would make camping a little more difficult, I thought.

Oddly, the thought suddenly seemed funny. Here I was, with my very own set of boobs that were impressive enough to do any woman proud, peeing into a trench through my own penis and wondering how I would be able to go to the bathroom the next time I went camping.

It was insanity.

This whole thing was some kind of insane joke. The breasts on my chest were nothing more than optical illusions or a hypnotic suggestion, mere smoke and mirrors.

Yet, I knew they weren't. No smoke or mirror could produce the incredible sensations or the weight that was hanging from my chest. I sighed and pulled the sports bra on. After adjusting my breasts where they felt reasonably comfortable in the now tightly fitting bra, I was stuck by the amount of support and sense of relief over having my breasts covered.

The thing to do now, I thought, was to get out of here while I still had the most important parts, (at least to me), of my body left. Once I got out, I would have to have surgery to remove my breasts of course, but that would be small price to pay, I would still be a man.

But first, I had to find some clothing that I could wear. After all, I couldn't very well walk around wearing nothing but a bra, now could I? I didn't want to return to where Dawn was sleeping for the clothing I'd been wearing, that was too risky. Her camp and the clothing in the tent were my best bet.

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The tent was just as we had left it that morning, the single double wide sleeping bag was open and still smelled faintly of our love making. I smiled as I began to search through Dawn's clothing for something that would fit my male and female composite body.

The top was absolutely not a problem, I just grabbed the first t-shirt that I could find. From the waist down, however, was a different story. I didn't want to spend all day looking for something to wear, so I grabbed a pair of bikini panties and a pair of form fitting black Lycra bike shorts.

I took a chance and slipped my bare feet into a pair of women's leather cross training shoes that had been laying next to the high heels. Much to my surprise and anguish they fit perfectly, although they should have been about four sizes too small.

Walking as quietly as I could through the underbrush, I headed to where I knew the exit to the valley was located. When I reached where I thought it should have been it was gone!

I wandered around the end of the valley searching the face of the cliff for what seemed to be hours before finally admitting defeat. The "Old Woman of the Mountain" was not going to let me out of here until she was done with me.

I returned to the tent, picked up a couple of blankets and started back to where Dawn lay sleeping. Out of the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of her face in profile.

"Uh, I got chilly, and I..." I started to explain as I turned to face her. I stopped cold when I realized that the Dawn I'd caught a glimpse of had actually been my own reflection in a mirror hanging from a tree branch!

In stunned disbelief, I stared at my reflection in the mirror as I ran my hands over my face. I had already known that she had somehow removed my beard along with the rest of my male pattern body hair sometime when we had made love, but when had she changed my face to resemble hers?

PART THREE:

There had been only two obvious opportunities for her to affect the changes to my face. The first when I commented about her being the more beautiful twin and the other was when she had exchanged her breasts for my chest. I realized when she had made changes in my face, it had been when she had been lying on top of me.

Unlike the added weight on my chest, my face felt no different than it always had, unless I touched it with my hands that is. It felt as normal as my breasts were beginning to feel. My breasts! Involuntarily I reached up to my chest and felt their fullness. It was a strangely comforting feeling.

I knew now that I had little choice in whether or not I would end up as a woman, a '*Kwe'rhamé*' to a tribe of Indians that had died out a century and a half before I had been born.

Understandably, I wasn't in any great rush to finish the job either. Having literally nothing but time on my hands and no place to go, I fixed myself a light snack and ate.

Sitting on a log at Dawn's camp, I ate my snack slowly, both because I was in no rush to go back to where Dawn lay and because I found myself savoring each subtlety of taste, texture and smell of my simple sandwich.

Women must have a better sense of smell and taste than men do, I realized. The fact that a simple meal like a ham and cheese sandwich could taste like a gourmet meal to a woman seemed wondrous to me. Mentally trying to find a metaphor, I decided that the difference between a man's palette and a woman's, was like comparing Margarine and real butter! Both look alike and do much the same thing, but ah, the subtle difference in *flavor!*

Shortly after I had discovered this interesting bit of feminine trivia, I discovered that while my mind's appetite was still male, my stomach size was definitely more of a female's. Two thirds of the sandwich done, and I was full.

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Dawn was still sleeping when I returned to her. I draped one of the blankets over her. I tossed another log on the fire, wrapped myself up in the other blanket and sat down beside her to wait.

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I had nearly dozed off in the warm sunlight when I felt Dawn stirring beside me. She sat upright and for a long moment she sat silently giving me a careful inspection.

"Looks like I haven't lost my touch. You're quite beautiful, just as I planned," she sighed in relief.

I looked away, feeling the anger growing inside of me again. "When are you going to finish the job?" I asked bitterly.

Dawn laughed softly. "Not until you are ready, and I've rested some more."

"There's no reprieve then?"

"Tell me about the world outside, Jim," Dawn asked, abruptly changing the subject.

"What would you like to know?"

"Everything.

"Well since you said that you haven't seen anyone in a hundred and fifty years, I'll just hit the highlights, okay?"

"Until you reach your own life, yes. After that I want to hear about everything in detail."

"A hundred and fifty years, humm. Well, you know about the American Revolution then...." Dawn nodded and I proceeded to give a thumbnail sketch of the last hundred and fifty years.

I progressed fairly rapidly through the 19th century and the first half of the 20th, until I reached the later part of World War II. Then in September of 1945, the President ordered dropping the Bomb."

"The bomb? You speak of it as if it were a singular thing. How could one weapon no matter how large, make a difference in such a terrible war?" Dawn asked bewildered. She had grown quiet and appeared to be disturbed about what she was hearing now.

"Because it was capable of killing tens, even hundreds of thousands in an instant."

“Hundreds of...,” Dawn looked shocked then saddened. “There is no honor in being a warrior in a war such as this.”

“From the perspective of one who is accustomed to 'counting coupe' against their enemies just as often as killing them, I agree. But you must understand, the world, by the time this occurred was not the relatively simple one you knew, but one that took only a few days to cross vast oceans. Why in the European part of the War, unmanned missiles, large weapons that were something like a thrown lance, could travel hundreds of miles and kill innocent civilians without warning.”

“After the war, there were a few years of relative peace then another war broke out. This one, called the Korean Conflict, never has been resolved. Right now, if I recall correctly a state of cease fire exists.... And then there was a place called Vietnam....”

“Stop! No more, please,” Dawn cried raising her hand palm out toward me as if to ward off my words. In the dimming light I could see that it was shaking. Whether from anger, fear or disgust from what she had learned I couldn't tell. We stared at the glowing embers of the fire for a few moments before I tossed another log on the fire. We watched sparks float high into the air before dying out.

“What did the women do about all of this?” Dawn asked slowly.

“Well, most stayed home to take care of their children of course. But many joined the military.”

“They became warriors then?” Dawn seemed surprised.

“No, not at first. They were used mostly to keep track of the hundreds of thousands of tons of paper work that a modern war generates. Now, of course, they are permitted to fight next to the men.”

“Like your Kimberly,” she said.

“Very much like her, although, she is no longer in the military,” I added.

“Sounds like your world is not much fun,” Dawn said sadly.

“Sometimes it can be very fun,” I laughed.

Dawn looked at me oddly. “Perhaps. So far you've told me about the big things, now tell me about yourself and the part of the world you occupy.”

“Okay, you already know that I'm married. Kim and I live in a small house in the suburbs of Washington,” I began telling Dawn of my life story.

I told her of the good times, and the not so good. I held back nothing, driven to tell this strange young woman who was in reality far older than I, every detail that I could think of. Every now and then she would ask a question about something I had said. As I talked, I could sense that she grew easier, less afraid of the outside world when she realized that the wars I had described were only a small part of life.

“I wish I could see the things you've described,” Dawn sighed. “It sounds so fascinating, so alive.”

“Why don't you see for yourself?”

“Because, I cannot leave this mountain. I am linked to 'two spirits' as surely as the sun sets in the West.”

“And for as long as it continues to do so?” I smiled.

“Yes,” Dawn nodded.

“Seems like a waste. The only reason you exist is to fulfill a centuries old legend that you yourself help to create. When the Park is opened, I seriously doubt that you will receive much, uh, business.”

Dawn looked sad for a moment, then smiled. “I grow weary in my old age. There is one way for me to escape this mountain and the legend.”

“Oh, really how? If it's something we can do now, give me back the rest of my body and we'll go,” I offered hopefully.

Dawn smiled, “Sorry, but it isn't possible. It requires two people, a man and a woman.”

“But that's us!”

“No, Jim, we are a spirit and almost a '*Kwe'rhame*'. I am a ghost, and you are — incomplete. We will not leave the valley until you are complete.”

I sighed, it had been worth a try. My morbid curiosity got the better of me. “But if there were a man and a woman, how would it be done?”

“The man would have to impregnate the woman while she where still in the valley. My spirit would enter the womb through the man. Only in that way, can I leave my prison.”

“Oh,” I replied thoughtfully. We seemed to have reached an impasse in my idea of leaving the valley intact.

“Tell me more about the world, Jim. What other wondrous things are there? What do the women do and wear?”

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It was nearly daybreak before we finally finished talking. In the hours since I had brought the blanket and built a small fire I learned more about the strange person who called herself “the Old Woman of the Mountain”.

I couldn't help feeling sorry for her, in spite of what she had done to me. She was just as much a prisoner of the mountain and legend she helped to create as I was of the strange half man - half woman body she'd bestowed upon me.

We stared into the dying embers of the fire for a while, each lost in our own thoughts. I got up and threw another small log on the fire and wrapped myself in our blanket again.

“Please don't hate me for what I've done to you, Jim. I really had no choice in the matter.”

“I know,” I said lightly rubbing my hand along her smooth bare thigh. Dawn sighed and shifted slightly, putting her large masculine arm around my narrow shoulders. She pulled me against her and began to gently stroke the hair on my head.

“You know how all this will end don't you,” Dawn asked. I nodded as she continued. “In a little while, you will take off your clothing and we will make love very slowly and very tenderly. With every thrust made, a little bit more of us will be exchanged. Until...”

“Until?”

“Until you have your first orgasm as '*Kwe'rhome*', a woman.”

I shivered slightly in spite of the warmth of her naked body next to mine. “We don't have to do that right now, do we?”

Dawn took my chin in her huge hand and turned my face toward hers. “No, but it should be soon. I have taken too long already,” she sighed. “I must truly be getting old. A hundred and fifty years ago, the changes would have taken me only a few hours. Most were '*Kwe'rhome*' before they barely knew what was happening to them.”

“I thought you said that they were with you for a day and a night?”

Dawn nodded, “They stayed overnight to learn the way of a woman.”

“The 'way of a woman'? What exactly is that?” I asked with morbid curiosity. I would find out soon enough I knew, but I had to ask.

Dawn sighed heavily. “It means nothing now. Then it was how to skin a rabbit for dinner, what roots were good to eat, how to prepare your camp, all of the skills necessary to be a good Indian squaw, a good wife and mother to her warrior husband's children.”

A cold chill ran through my body. “I hadn't thought of that!”

“Thought of what?”

“By this time tomorrow, I could have a baby!”

Dawn looked startled then laughed loudly. “I'm good at what I do, but not that good! I cannot create life at the snap of my fingers. No, Jim, I'm afraid that you'll have to do it the old fashioned way. If you are to have a child, you'll want a man to help you.”

“You know what I mean,” I said, beginning to blush at the thought of wanting a man.

She laughed again. “And I think you'll find that it takes a little longer than overnight. Besides, if what you have told me about the outside world is true, you should take the time to enjoy being a woman for a while before you have a child. You have your whole life ahead of you, don't rush it.”

I blushed even harder as I realized that Dawn was giving me the same advice that mothers have given their daughters for years when they entered puberty.

Tears suddenly began to form in my eyes when I realized that the analogy I had just drawn applied as much to me as to any other young girl. I half-laughed and half-cried as I finally understood that, mature feminine breasts notwithstanding, I was very much like an adolescent girl who had just begun on the path of the discovery of her own sexuality.

The idea both frightened and strangely, excited me. I'd no idea that females, even half females such as myself, were so damned emotional over such a little thing as being on the brink of womanhood!

Torn between the opposite extremes I did the only thing possible, I broke down and bawled like a baby.

Dawn held me close to her as I cried my fears and frustrations out. As my tears began to subside, I became aware that holding me was not the only thing she was doing with her hands.

One strong arm was around my shoulder while the hand of the other was busy fondling my breast! I knew what she was doing, but I was still too distraught to protest or remove her hand. Besides, I was beginning to enjoy her soft and gentle caresses.

Almost before I knew what I was doing, my tears had dried up, I was pinned flat on my back with Dawn on top of me. We kissed with a hunger that I'd never experienced before. A small part of my mind was screaming at me to stop, but an even larger part was screaming at the top of its lungs to go for it!

Dawn was not to be rushed however. She knew that when my transformation was complete she would fade back into whatever part of the mountain held her captive. Who knew when another such as myself would unknowingly seek out the "Old Woman of the Mountain" in fulfillment of their true destiny?

In spite of Dawn's insistence that being a woman was my destiny and of my own doing, I was in no rush to become one. Hoping instead for some last minute miracle to save me, I tried to delay as much as humanly possible.

Intending to draw the end out as long as possible for completely different reasons, neither of us took into account the frenzy our passion quickly generated in ourselves.

"Take your clothing off," Dawn cried as she frantically squeezed my rock hard erection through the fabric of my bike shorts.

Feeling the same sense of urgency, I struggled to get out of my sports bra first. When I succeeded, Dawn's mouth was almost instantly around one of my erect nipples. Unlike the first time she'd done this, there wasn't the strong "vacuum cleaner"-like suction that had signaled the "creation" of my breasts. As I arched my back to allow Dawn full access to my breasts, I discovered what women in the same position as I have known for years.

It's hard to concentrate on anything, let alone try to peel a pair of tight pants off of yourself, when someone is so sensuously playing with your breasts.

After struggling, albeit not too hard, for what seemed like ages, I decided that if either of us were going to get anywhere, I would have to remove my shorts and panties.

I decided that I would have to try a different tactic, the direct approach. "No, don't," I moaned trying to push her away. "Stop it, Dawn. Please stop! I have to take off the rest of my clothing."

Reluctantly, Dawn stopped what she was doing just long enough for me to pull my shorts and panties down to my knees. Impatient to resume where she had left off, Dawn reached up with her foot and pulled everything off the rest of the way. She used

her foot because her hands were busy, one on my breast, the other firmly clenched around my penis.

Quickly she sat up on her knees to straddle me and began to guide me into her eagerly waiting vagina. Just as it seemed that the tip of my penis was barely touching the lips of her opening, she froze.

Surprised by the abrupt halt, I looked up at Dawn. She seemed distracted by something out of my line of sight. "What's wrong?" I asked, vaguely disappointed that we hadn't already begun.

She glanced down at me and smiled, "Nothing. Nothing important, my love." She glanced up again then back to me smiling broadly she asked, "Shall I continue?"

Her answering smile seemed to drive me into an even greater urgency. "Hurry please, before I change my mind," I said as I urgently put my hands around her waist and tried to pull her down onto my erection.

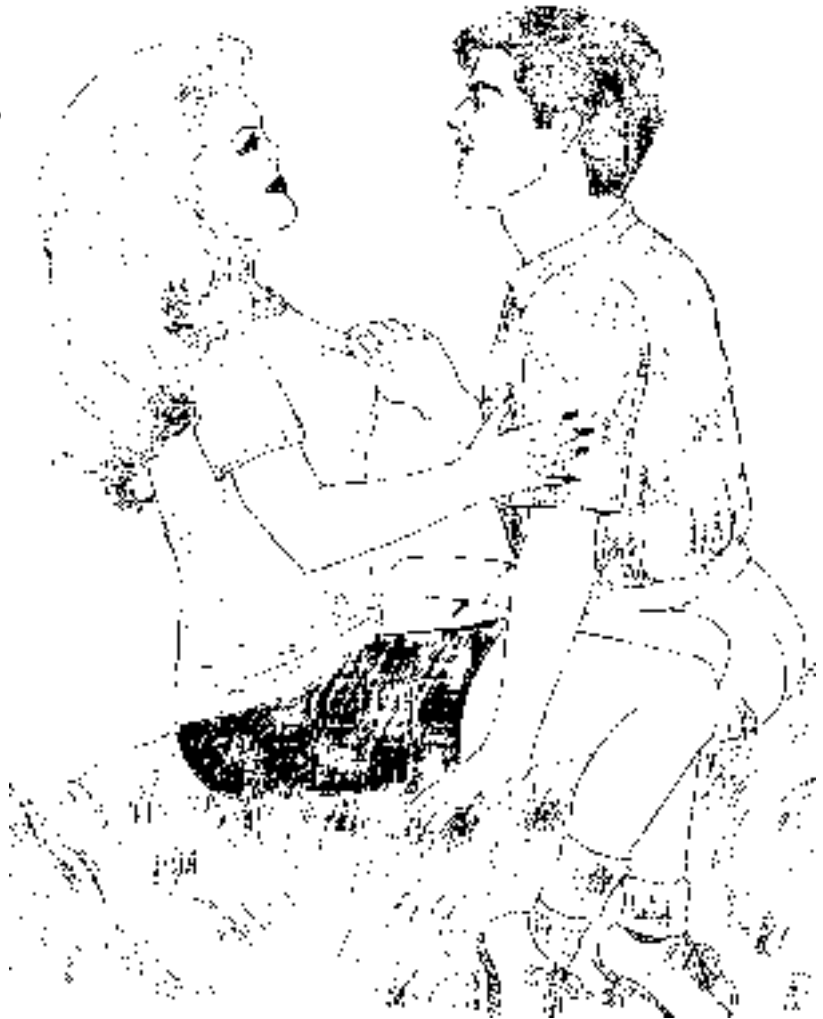
Carefully repositioning me at the entrance of her vagina, Dawn began to lower herself onto my penis with a deliberation that felt almost sadistic in my apprehension and mounting passion.

Driven almost mad with desire, I tried to force my hips upward. She countered my movement with a movement of her own, rising as fast as I did. I sunk no deeper into her warm inviting pussy than she allowed me to be.

No matter what trick I tried to speed up the process, Dawn countered until it was obvious that this was going to be done her way.

"No, my darling, I want to enjoy this as long as I can," Dawn said. Continuing with a speed that was almost maddening in its unhurried ease, she slowly lowered herself downward until I was fully engulfed.

For a long moment we stayed in that position. Dawn reached for my breasts and began to knead my painfully erect nipples with her thumb and forefingers. When I



thought I couldn't stand it any longer, she began to move her hips slowly, as if we had all the time in the world.

If someone, say a casual voyeur, happened to be watching us, he would have been as confused as I was amused by the image we presented.

Picture if you will, a man who is a woman from the waist down, straddling the hips of a man, who is a woman from the waist up. They are copulating, yet something seems odd even about that. The person on top is moving his/her hips in a rocking forward and back motion, not up and down as he/she would if she/he had been a woman impaled by a man.

I didn't have much time to reflect on the outlandish spectacle we presented, I was too busy trying to figure out the peculiar sensations my body was experiencing. It is difficult enough to explain to someone who has never had sex what it feels like. Trying to explain my feelings, as I was the one being penetrated, it was nearly impossible. Yet, that is exactly what it felt like. With each thrust of Dawn's body the sensation grew stronger and deeper inside of me.

I could feel a pressure building inside of me, a sensation that was both strangely familiar and uniquely different than any I'd ever had before. I had almost reached the final boundary that separated control and ecstasy awaiting that final thrust that would trigger both my climax and new femininity, when Dawn abruptly stopped!

"Oh, noooo. Please don't stop now," I pleaded, barely able to get the words out. I began to feel somehow cheated of something that I had waited my entire life for.

I forced my eyes open to see what had happened. Dawn was staring over my head again, her head cocked to one side and her eyes wide as though she was surprised by what she had seen or heard.

"What is it?" I managed to force out. In the brief moment it took Dawn to answer I could feel myself cooling down, slipping down the wrong side of what I knew would have been the most fantastic wave of ecstasy I'd ever experienced.

"Someone comes," she said simply, "Quickly, Jim, you must have your climax! You must concentrate!" With that she resumed her odd rocking-thrust movements that swiftly brought me back to and then over the brink!

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Wave after wave of indescribable ecstasy flowed through and over me. I thought it would never end, and was disappointed when it did. As the waves grew slowly further apart and gentler in intensity, all I wanted to do for the rest of my life was to just lie there with Dawn trapped deep inside of me.

I open my eyes and was disappointed to see Dawn looking not at me, but at whatever had distracted her during the final moments of our love making. Her words, "Someone comes." uttered only moments before began to register. Someone else had found the cave! Who? I wondered, trying to twist my head to see.

I managed to catch sight of a dark shadow moving rapidly toward us. It was then that I heard the familiar voice that I'd heard so many times before.

“Jim, you bastard! The first time I let you go camping by yourself and you end up screwing the first blonde bimbo you meet!” my wife Kimberly screamed.

Dawn leaped to her feet, pulling out of me so fast that for a second I thought she had left her penis behind. By the time my body had registered that the shaft that had given it so much pleasure was no longer there, I too had risen shakily to my feet.

When I finally gained my balance, I was astonished to see Kimberly angrily striking Dawn with the open palm of her hand. For a moment I could only stand and stare at the absurd scene in dumfounded amazement. Kimberly had mistaken Dawn for me!

It was understandable, for Dawn no longer looked like herself but was the exact duplicate of me, while I, on the other hand, was undeniably the other woman!

The other woman? Momentarily distracted by the sensations of my body, I gingerly reached between my legs. There was warmth, moisture and a void that hadn't been there only a few moments before. I am '*Kwe'rhome*', a woman, a soft very feminine inner voice said joyously.

Another female voice rose to a higher pitch. “Come back here and take your punishment like a man!” Kim screamed.

I forced my attention away from my soft and curvaceous body back to the scenario unfolding before me.

“First I'm told that you haven't checked in with the office in over twenty four hours and might be in trouble, making me worried sick that you're sick or injured, or maybe dead and being eaten by wild animals! Then when I decide to find you myself, I had to fly in a damned helicopter, and you know how much I hate doing helicopters, just to get here! Then I had to search the entire valley to find where you've gone, then when I do, I'm attacked by some damned mountain lion and almost killed!”

She didn't look as if she had a scratch on her from where I was standing. She certainly didn't act like it either.

“And when I do find you, you're merrily screwing some blonde bimbo in a little hideaway love nest as if you didn't have a care in the world!” Kimberly yelled.

Kim was punctuating every sentence with sharp stinging slaps to Dawn's head and shoulders. Dawn kept bobbing and weaving, as though she were a prize fighter looking for just the right opening. I had to stop it before Dawn got mad and took a swing at Kim.

“Kimberly! Stop that!” I screamed. “Leave her, uh him alone!”

Almost before I could blink, Kimberly had turned on me. Before I could blink again, she was standing in front of me, her fist drawn back.

“And as for you,... you,... you damned bleached blonde slut! I'll teach you to mess with my husband!”

I threw up my hands and started to scramble backward. I remember saying hastily,

“No! Kim, honey, wait! I can explain everything!” Then everything went black.

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When I awoke, it was night time and I was still naked. Expecting to find myself lying on the ground where Kimberly struck me, I instead found myself in Dawn's sleeping bag and inside her tent. I had the sorest eye I could ever remember having.

Greatly surprised that I was still alive, I gently reached up to touch my tender eye and was rewarded with a pounding throb that seemed to end somewhere in the center of my head. Groaning softly to myself, I laid back to wait until I could be sure of being able to move without my head falling off.

As my headache slowly faded, I became aware of faint sound of voices, one was Kimberly's the other a male who sounded strangely familiar. Torn between nursing the pain in my head and listening to what they were saying, I slowly crawled out of the sleeping bag and out the opened flap of the tent.

Sitting side by side in a small clearing in front of a small fire, were Kimberly and Dawn, who was still in my body. Dawn had managed to find some men's clothing somewhere and was now fully dressed. Kimberly was still clothed in the hiking shorts and oversized t-shirt she'd been wearing when she had found us in a rather compromising position.

It was obvious from the way they were sitting that Kimberly and Dawn had struck up some kind of odd of friendship. Both were drinking what appeared to be coffee and were talking softly. To further add to air of casual friendship, Kimberly had removed her boots and appeared to be warming her feet by the fire.

I was dying to hear what they were saying, but reluctant to suddenly appear wearing nothing but an obviously blackened eye and a painful smile. Even though I had been a female for less than 12 hours, I knew that "Nice Girls", just didn't wander around without any clothing on. There was an even more compelling reason to put some clothing on, I was growing cold after being in the warm envelop of the sleeping bag. And let me tell you, extra layer of insulation or not, those boobs sticking out in front do get cold!

I reluctantly returned to the tent to find some clothing — woman's clothing. In darkness that was darker than night, I dressed in bra and panties, which to this day I couldn't even begin to describe, a sweat shirt, pair of jeans and a pair of warm wool lined moccasins.

Now, more suitably attired against the slight chill, I left the tent again and quietly walked the short distance to the near edge of the clearing. Neither Kim nor Dawn seemed to notice my presence and I didn't advertise it. I sat in the shadows directly across the fire from my wife and Dawn to listen to their conversation. I knew that the light from the fire would blind them to my presence even though I was less than ten feet away.

"Of course, I think he makes a cute girl, he has a terrific figure and could probably make a fortune with that face of his. But it's still a shame that his male body has to go to waste like this," Kim was saying.

"Oh, I agree, but I really don't see what I can do about it. After all, it was his destiny to become a '*Kwe'rhome*'. Even if I could change him back to what he was, the shock would cause him to become — how do you say it, crazy?"

"I guess that I wouldn't care to see that happen," Kim sighed. "You know, in spite of how he looks, what he is now, I can't help still feeling a great deal of affection toward him. He was the kindest, most gentle and compassionate man I've ever known."

Thanks, Kimberly, I thought, but I'm not exactly dead, you know. Not exactly my old self either for that matter, but I was far from dead. Dawn seemed to mirror my thoughts.

"But he is not gone, Kimberly. He did not lose the spirit that is his and his alone, inside he is still your kind and gentle Jim. He's still here, clothed in a female body that will allow him to finally use his repressed nurturing instincts as it was meant to be used, to comfort and care for others."

"But, he did that before," Kim protested.

"Yes, that's true. But it was wrong for him. His false 'warrior' side was fighting her true spirit."

"Be that as it may, all I know is that I've lost my husband and I want him back!"

"No, Kimberly, the only thing that's been lost was her manhood and that was no big thing," Dawn laughed softly looking down at what used to be my crotch.

I almost started to protest that it hadn't been *that* little when Kimberly laughed, then sighed heavily.

"I know. But still, I'll miss him. The house will seem so empty without having Jim around."

And thanks to you too, Kimberly, I thought a little hurt.

"But, why would you not let her live with you?" Dawn asked in surprise. "You love Jim, and I'm pretty sure that she feels the same way about you. There isn't any reason why the two of you couldn't continue where you left off. You'd just need to do things a little differently, that's all."

"You can't mean what you're saying!" Kimberly sounded as shocked as she looked. "He's not my husband, he's another woman now, and I'm no lesbian! I couldn't even conceive of touching another woman like that! No, sleeping or even living with Jim in her condition is out of the question!"

"I've been told that such a relationship can be very rewarding," Dawn insisted.

Kimberly crossed her arms over her breasts, a sure sign that she had made up her mind. "Absolutely not! No, we'll just have to forget that we were ever married and go our separate ways."

I was deeply saddened by the stubborn stance that Kim had taken. It was true that I still loved her, more than I could ever love anyone else. Dawn had been right, we would have to learn how to do things differently. I would have been more than willing to learn, if only to know how to please Kimberly.

"I see," Dawn said quietly as she stared into the flames of the fire. "Then you will both lose something precious to each other, yourselves."

"I guess so," Kimberly said softly. I noticed from the light of the fire shining in her eyes that she was crying quietly. Crying the grief of a woman who has lost the love of her life.

For a long time the two were silent, lost in their private thoughts and just watching the flames. I was about to announce my presence, but something, a sense that the small drama unfolding before me had not yet been played out, held me back.

"Tell me more about this '*Kwe'rhome*' thing," Kim said breaking the silence. She wiped her tear streaked cheeks with the tips of her fingers. She inspected her finger tips, obviously to avoid looking at Dawn. "How does it work?"

This is where I came in, I thought as Dawn began to tell Kimberly more about the Legend of the Old Woman of the Mountain. I covered a yawn with a slender hand, and crawled back to the tent.

It was growing late, I'd heard the story before and I was exhausted from everything that occurred. Maybe in the morning I'll wake up to find that this has all been a horrible dream.

Of course, I knew that it wasn't.

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Dawn was nestled tightly against my back when I awoke the following morning.

Far from being upset, I found I actually liked the feel of a naked man pressed tightly against my back. I almost regretted removing only my jeans and bra when I had crawled into the sleeping bag.

Not that wearing a sweat shirt seemed to have bothered Dawn much. She had slipped an arm under the front of my sweat shirt and was lightly cupping one of my breasts with her hand. Her penis, so recently a part of my own body, was stiffly erect and pressed tightly against the back of my panties. I could even feel a slight dampness just below the waist band of my panties were she'd leaked from a nocturnal emission.

I have to admit that I enjoyed that sensation as well.

However, morning rituals being what they are, I was more interested in going to the bathroom than messing around with someone in my old body. Although, the brief thought of doing so was starting the juices flowing in the most unusual places in my new body!

I carefully reached under my sweat shirt and removed Dawn's hand from my breast. Moving as carefully and as quietly as I could, I slowly slipped out of the sleeping bag and out of the tent.

Once free, I headed directly for the latrine, hoping I wouldn't have too much trouble adapting to my new plumbing.

Fortunately, I didn't. I'd lived with Kimberly long enough to have a basic idea of the extra steps involved. So, while I had a little problem balancing myself as I straddled the slit trench with my panties wrapped around my knees, I had no problem with the reason I was in that rather ungainly position.

Do not ever let anyone say to you that taking a piss is just taking a piss! The sensation of relieving yourself as a man is entirely different than doing the same thing as a woman. For one thing, it's much quicker, having less of a distance to go, for another.... Well, let's just leave it with the fact that it's not the same.

I stood and started to pull my panties back on when I realized that it had been a couple of days since I'd bathed. Right at the moment, I smelled! I smelled of sleep, day old sex and sweat. Not a very appetizing feeling for a girl of the tender age of one day old.

I unceremoniously dropped my sweat shirt and panties by the latrine and walked slowly to the pond, intent on taking a dip in the inviting water. I abruptly changed direction when I thought about taking some soap and a towel with me.

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The water was a little chilly but invigorating. I took my time washing, savoring each new curve and shape my hands found. Gradually, I began to feel human again.

I was about to get out, when I saw the thong panties that Dawn had worn the first day floating past me. On an impulse, I grabbed them and after taking a few seconds to figure out which way it went, I pulled them on and went swimming. Dawn had been right, after a while you do tend to forget you're wearing them.

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"Hi there," Dawn said as she waded naked into the pond to join me.

"Hi, yourself," I responded. I had been floating on my back with the tips of my toes resting on the bottom of the pond and my head and the nipples of my breasts barely breaking the surface of the water. When I had first seen Dawn walk to the waters edge, I suddenly became self conscious of being nearly naked. I twisted around and sank to my knees, allowing only my head to be above water.

"Where's Kimberly?" I asked looking around. Even though the two had appeared to be friends last night, I didn't want to see a repeat of the fight that had earned me my black eye.

"Oh, she's around somewhere," Dawn smilingly replied. She slowly waded over to me and duplicated my position. Sitting on our haunches, only our heads were visible as we faced each other. She broke into a smile that was a cross between a leer and a grin.

I smiled nervously back at her, unsure what would happen next.

"You're very beautiful, do you know that?" Dawn said. She reached out and gently ran her hand over my cheek.

I could feel myself blush. "Thanks, but I really haven't had much of an opportunity to look at myself lately."

"Yeah, I know. I'm sorry about the eye," Dawn said reaching up and gently touching the tender spot.

"It's okay. Kimberly didn't mean to. She just didn't know that I wasn't who she thought I was," I replied.

“Jim,” Dawn began softly. She hesitated, frowning. “Hum, we can't keep calling you that now. Have you thought of a girl's name for yourself?”

I shook my head. “I really hadn't considered it.”

“I see. Well, then I have a suggestion. How about the name Kimberly, Kim for short?”

“Kimberly? But what about Kim? Won't she object?”

“I don't see why she would, after all, she can't use the name herself any longer.”

“What are you talking about?”

“It's just that in spite of the song '*A Man named Sue*', men with feminine names don't go over too well.”

“Men with...?” It suddenly dawned on me what she was talking about. “Kim? Is that you in there?”

“In the flesh, lover. In the flesh,” Kim grinned happily.

In the true fighting spirit that was one of Kim's strongest personality traits, she had found a way that we could remain together. She had somehow convinced Dawn to change bodies once again. This time for mine!

I let out a shriek of joy and threw my arms around her neck wanting to kiss her wildly. Before I could even clasp my hands together, Kimberly had put her hands around my waist and pulled me upright.

Picking me up in her strong arms, Kim carried me to the shoreline and gently set me down. A second later her lips were against mine and we kissed for the first time in days.

We broke free just long enough for Kim to whisper in my ear. “Why don't you take your panties off?”

Not needing a second invitation I hooked my thumbs in the waist band and peeled them off. Kim paused, looking in curiosity at the tiny bikini. “How can you wear those things?” she asked, having never worn a pair of thong panties herself.

“Actually, they're quite comfortable. After a while you even forget that you're wearing them.” I picked them up and held them out to her. “Here, why don't you try them yourself.”

“I don't think they'd fit,” Kim laughed eyeing the tiny strips of cloth. “At least not at the moment.”

We both looked down at her groin and laughed again, the front of the thong bikini wouldn't cover even half of her stiff erection.

“No, I suppose not,” I giggled, reaching downward with my hands to cover what the thong bikini could not.

“Besides, from this moment forward, you'll be the only one in this family that will ever want to wear panties again,” Kim grinned. “But not right away,” she concluded as she tossed the thong bikini in the general direction of the pond.

Pulling me tight against her naked body, Kimberly looked deep into my eyes as I tilted my head back and opened my mouth to receive her tongue.

Kimberly, was right of course, it was several hours before I put another pair of panties on again. And only then because I've never cared for the idea of cooking a meal without wearing at least something. After we ate however, the panties somehow just kind of got lost.

I loved ever minute of it, too!

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That was ten years ago.

Jim and I have both adjusted to our new roles in life very nicely since our '*Kwe'r-hame Day*' as we call the day of our change and discovery.

Jim, as Kimberly is now known, still works for the Park Service, while I stay home, take care of the house and do a little writing.

We still go camping, but not alone as we had before our lives were changed so dramatically by the "Old Woman of the Mountain". Now we make it a foursome, my handsome husband Jim, our two beautiful daughters, Shawna, nine, and Jennifer, five, and finally, myself. Both Shawna and Jennifer have taken to camping as if they had been doing it for years, Shawna especially so.

I hope that, the baby will enjoy it as well when she makes her appearance in another two months.

In spite of what a man might think, the idea of being a '*Kwe'r-hame*' for the rest of my life does not bother me. Even though admittedly, there's been times when I wished I had never found that cave, but most of the time, in fact nearly all of the time, I can't imagine any other life than the one I have now.

All things considered, it's such a nice, warm, *comforting* feeling to know that I will always be a woman, a mother, a giver of life and most of all, wife to my "warrior" husband.

Oh, by the way, if you are interested, I have a few copies left of a very special map. A map of a well known National Park that shows the location of a treasure that is more precious than any other in the world.

To get there, you must first crawl through the vagina to the mountain's very womb. There you will meet a beautiful young woman ...

“THE DOLL”

By Olivia Evans

Paul Wilkinson looked up and down the street and shuddered inwardly. *“What in the hell am I doing here,”* he wondered.

Trash and garbage littered the street and gutter everywhere. Several stripped hulks of cars parked at crazy angles to the curb added to the abandoned look of the neighborhood and made him even more nervous.

Even at high noon the narrow street looked sinister. Well, not exactly sinister, more like a recently abandoned war zone, complete with burned out shells of half demolished buildings and rubble filled vacant lots. The only thing missing, Paul thought with a grim smile, were the bodies of the dead and screams of the wounded.

“I wouldn't want to be standing here after dark,” Paul thought to himself. As soon as he completed his business here, he would leave, never to return again. If only he knew what his business here was. Why was he in this particular part of town?

He remembered leaving his office for his home a little after five this evening. Like most commuters, his mind was on other more important things, like that night's game, as soon as he entered the expressway. His thoughts literally a hundred miles away, Paul took the wrong exit, one he had never even noticed before.

Before it fully registered that he had taken the wrong exit, Paul found himself driving down a narrow, deserted street in the poorest section of town. A few moments later, a slightly confused Paul pulled up and parked across the street from a small building, the only structure still standing on the block.

Surrounded by rubble and trash strewn vacant lots, the three story building looked forlorn, almost resigned to the ultimate fate of its neighbors. The upper two floors appeared to have been apartments at one time. Whether or not they were still occupied, Paul neither knew nor cared. What attracted his attention was the shabby looking storefront on the ground floor.

Shabby looking or not, Paul had a sense of an almost supernatural strength radiating from deep inside the building. He half suspected that if the rest of the neighborhood was ever torn down, this building would be still standing.

Paul took a deep breath and after checking again to assure himself that his car was really locked, he walked across the deserted street.

“Dolls for All Occasions”

“Dolls?” Paul asked himself as he studied the fading six inch high gold painted letters on the store's cracked display window.

Paul hesitated, fingers inches away from the doorknob, contemplating his next action. Why HAD he sought out this place? He had no real need or desire for a doll. He was married, had been for nearly twenty years, but he and Karen had no children, no girls to give a doll to.

In fact, he didn't really even know any young girls, not even a niece, that he might want to purchase a doll for. He didn't think that Karen would want one either.

He certainly didn't want one for himself!

Still, there was something about the store and the dolls he knew would be inside. A feeling that suddenly bordered on an obsession to see, to touch, to **experience**, the dolls inside.

Paul peered through the cracked and dingy display window, hoping beyond hope that the store, like the rest of the neighborhood, was nothing more than an abandoned shell.

Dimly seen through the display window, the interior of the store appeared surprisingly clean, neat and in use. Intrigued by the apparent contradiction, Paul grasped the doorknob and opened the door. A small spring mounted bell tinkled merrily above his head as he stepped inside.

“May I help you?” a man's voice asked from deep within the dark interior.

Paul peered toward the source of the voice, seeing only a dark shape of a tall slender man.

“I, uh, I was driving by, and uh, saw your store, and uh, I was curious, so I, uh . . .,” Paul stammered, not really sure why he had opened the door or seconds later, why he had stepped inside the store. He fell silent, feeling awkward and more than a little uneasy.

“Of course. I was about to close, but please come in and take a look at my dolls. I think you will find them quite interesting,” the disembodied voice encouraged.

Paul stood in the doorway, allowing his eyes to slowly adjust to the dark. “Kind of dark in here isn't it?”

“What? Oh, sorry, business has been slow lately and the cost of electricity, you know. . . I'll turn on some lights.”

Paul saw the dark shadow at the rear of the store move toward the darker rectangle of a doorway. A second later he heard a “click” and dim lighting filled the interior of the store. It wasn't much, but it was sufficient for Paul to see details.

The store was much as he expected it to be. Shelving lined the walls from floor to ceiling along three sides of the small room. Sitting, standing and in a few cases lying on the shelves were thousands of dolls. Dolls of all sizes, colors and description, mostly female, some male, and of all ages groups, from infant to old.

Hands clasped tightly behind his back, Paul began to move around the room slowly, pretending interest in the collection of dolls.

In spite of his desire to leave the store as quickly as possible, his crab-like sideways movements slowed as he began to notice the incredible detail of the dolls. Unlike the

mass produced dolls he had seen in department stores, every doll was different. Facial features were finely sculpted into miniature human features that were lifelike and appeared almost alive.

Paul picked up a doll at random and studied the face. The miniature appeared to be a pretty girl in her late teens, wearing a cowgirl outfit of short denim skirt, boots and a checked blouse. The expression on the face was cheerful, as though the girl had been caught in the middle of a laugh.

“They're all hand made, you know,” the man's voice sounded from behind Paul.

Startled by the sudden appearance of the man, Paul almost dropped the doll. Recovering quickly, he carefully replaced the doll on the shelf before turning to look at the storekeeper.

Paul's first impression was that the man looked a little like a balding Albert Einstein with a huge white handlebar mustache. “I'm sorry, what did you say?”

“I said 'they're all made by hand'. Quite a demanding task, if I say so myself.” the old man said justifiably proud of his wares.

Paul looked at the doll again. “They're . . .,” he searched for just the right word, “they're beautiful.”

The storekeeper smiled modestly. “Thank you.”

“You made these?”

“Yes. All of them.”

Paul selected another doll from the shelf.

The doll was a replica of a young blonde haired woman, no more than twenty one or two years old.

The doll's face was smiling the smile of a woman who has just greeted her lover at the door to her bedroom. It was a smile that welcomed as well as hinted at the pleasure that was sure to follow. The doll's incredibly detailed body, barely concealed under a delicate, nearly transparent ivory lace and satin negligee, would have been at home on a centerfold, if she had been a real woman.

Paul gently pulled the delicate fabric tight against the front of the body. He was astonished to see the well shaped breasts had perfectly proportioned nipples. Nipples that were obviously erect in aroused excitement!

Not caring about the impression his actions gave, Paul gently pulled the doll's negligee over its head exposing the front of the figure.

“Why, she's even got pubic hair!” Paul exclaimed when he saw the tiny carefully trimmed tuft of darker blonde hair in the “V” between the legs.

“You will note the bikini trim, so popular with the younger women today,” the old man pointed out.

Paul looked again. “She looks so lifelike,” Paul said, awed by the exacting details he had observed.

“All my dolls are anatomically correct,” the storekeeper said simply.

“Really? All of them?” Paul asked surprised. He resisted the urge to spread the doll's legs apart to see for himself.

“Every one.”

Paul started to replace the doll on the shelf, then hesitated.

“I want to buy this doll.” Paul was scarcely aware that he had spoken, suddenly aware what had mysteriously brought him to this very spot. He wanted to buy a doll, this doll!

“Ah, yes, sir. *'The Virgin Bride'*. Very popular and an excellent choice, sir,” the old man's smile broadened. “I'm sure your daughter will love it. When is the wedding?”

Paul tore his eyes away from the doll. “Wedding? There's no wedding, in fact I don't even have a daughter. I want this doll for myself.”

The old man's smile slowly faded. “I'm sorry sir, but that's a girl's doll. Boy's dolls are on the shelf on the other side of the room.”

“What?” Paul shook his head as if to clear his thoughts. “I don't want a 'boy's doll'. I want this one,” he said firmly.

“You don't want . . .?” The old man looked confused for a second before his smile returned. “Oh, I see. You don't know what these are, do you?”

Paul studied the old man for a second, wondering what he was about to say. He decided that the man was just trying to create the impression that the doll was worth far more than the price listed on the price tag. The price was steep enough for a mere child's plaything, but considering the incredible detail, well worth it.

“It's just a doll, a very pretty one, but just a doll as far as I'm concerned. Now then, please wrap it up.”

“Sir, ethics demands that I warn you about special properties of my dolls.”

“Ethics? Warn? Special properties?” Paul snorted. “What are you trying to do? Jack up the price?”

The old man laughed softly, as if at some private joke. “No, not in the least, sir. Once the price is set, it's set. No more, no less. It's just that I think you will be happier with another doll — a boy's doll.”

“No, I would not! I've already told you, I like this one!”

The old man sighed in defeat. His customer was adamant about buying the doll. If the man wanted a girl's doll, why should he worry about it. Business had been a little on the slow side lately, and a sale is a sale, after all. But still, he had to try one last time.

“Sir, I must warn you. Once you buy that doll, there are no returns or exchanges. All sales are final.”

“That's fine,” Paul sighed, wishing the old man would hurry it up. He wanted to get out of this neighborhood as quickly as possible. Gripping the doll as if afraid someone would take it away from him, Paul followed the old man to the cash register.

“With tax, that will be one hundred and seventy two dollars, sir,” the old man said punching the amount into the brightly polished old fashioned brass register. While Paul dug through his wallet for the money, the old man placed the doll in a bed of white tissue paper inside of a white cardboard box. On the cover stamped in new looking gold letters was the name of the shop; **“Dolls for All Occasions”**

“It's all there,” Paul nodded toward the money laying on the counter. He picked up the box containing his doll.

“I'm sure it is, sir,” the old man said agreeably. “If you'll wait a minute I'll give you the instruction manual and a receipt.”

“Instruction manual? For a doll?” Paul asked incredulously.

“Certainly, sir. I said all of my dolls have special properties, did I not?” The old man nodded in response to his own question. “Sir, I strongly recommend that you read the manual before . . .”

The old man trailed off when he saw the look of impatience in his customer's eyes. Shrugging his shoulders, he reached under the counter and pulled a small folder out. Opening the lid on the doll box a fraction, he slipped the manual in. “Please read this when you get home, sir.”

Paul nodded curtly and closed the lid to the doll box tightly. Without another word, he spun around, left the store and walked briskly across the street to his car.

Safely seated in the vehicle, Paul felt both inordinately pleased with his purchase and relieved that his car hadn't been stripped.

It wasn't until later, after he'd arrived home, that Paul realized his hubcaps had been stolen.

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“Karen honey, guess what I found today,” Paul said excitedly to his wife Karen when he arrived home.

“It's very pretty dear,” Karen said when Paul opened the box to show her the doll. Karen glanced out of the corner of her eye at her husband, wondering what had possessed him to buy a doll. It was beautiful, but it was a *doll* of all things.

“Just look at the details, honey. It's the most fantastic thing I've ever seen!” Paul took the doll out and carefully, almost reverently, handed it to his wife. “If she were a real person, how tall do you think she would be?”

“Oh, I don't know. She looks pretty tall, maybe five eight or thereabouts,” Karen guessed. She had to admit, the doll was unlike any she'd ever seen before.

“Really? That tall?”

“The legs and body seems proportioned for about that height. Nice figure!” Karen continued, silently wishing her figure and legs looked that good.

Unlike her husband, Karen had no problem looking under a doll's clothing, it was just a doll after all. Holding the doll by its legs, Karen raised the negligee casually, a fixed smile on her face.

She blinked twice when she noticed the little tuft of bikini trimmed blonde pubic hair, she blinked a third time when she gently spread the doll's legs and discovered that the doll was as the old man had promised her husband, anatomically correct, astonishingly so.

"It's really very pretty and beautifully well done, darling. But don't you think that I'm a little old to be playing with dolls?"

Paul looked oddly at his wife of nearly twenty years. "I'm sorry, I uh, thought you understood. I didn't buy it for you, honey, I bought it for myself."

Karen burst out laughing. "For yourself?"

"Yes, what's wrong with wanting a doll?" Paul asked defensively.

"What on earth would you want a doll for? Certainly not to play with!" Karen chuckled humorously as she laid the doll carefully back into the box. "Or is there a side to you that I've never suspected. A side that just might want to borrow a pair of my panties to wear sometime?"

Paul reddened. "Karen, please, that's not funny."

"I know, dear. But the thought of you wanting a doll just struck me as being a little odd, that's all," Karen sighed. "Why *did* you buy that thing anyway?"

Paul, who had been almost willing to come to blows with the shopkeeper to obtain the doll, opened his mouth to reply then snapped it shut again. He looked thoughtful for a second then tried again.

"I have no idea," he said honestly, looking bewildered. "I just knew that I had to have it."

Karen held up the doll again, wanting to inspect the incredible workmanship one more time. "I have to admit it's a beautiful work of art. And so lifelike."

Karen ran her finger tip over the broad hips and smooth, flat abdomen of the doll. The doll's skin was smooth, soft, flawless, Karen thought.

The silky smooth, flawless "skin" of the doll felt slightly warm to the touch and almost as soft as Karen's own. Moving her finger tip to a breast, Karen pushed gently against it, causing the well formed breast to flatten slightly. "Just like a real woman's," Karen thought to herself, astonished.

Continuing her exploration, she felt a chill run up her spine as the tiny nipple moved slightly under the pressure of her finger, also like a real woman's. "Paul, go put this thing away somewhere, will you? Somewhere where I don't have to look at it."

"Jealous?" Paul teased.

Karen smiled faintly. "Of a doll, no, not really. The thing just makes me nervous to have it around. I . . . I'm not sure I could explain why, darling. It just does. Please humor me and go put it away somewhere."

Paul looked at his wife oddly. He didn't see anything wrong with the doll. In fact, he loved it, even if he didn't really know why. Perhaps it was because the expression on the doll's face reminded him of Karen's on their wedding night. That must be the an-

swer, he thought as he carried the doll to their bedroom. It reminded him of Karen when they had first married.

His mind wandered a little as he remembered their honeymoon, especially the first night. Karen had worn a nightgown very similar to the one the doll was wearing. He softly caressed the smooth surface of the doll under the nightgown trying to bring back the excitement of that first night they spent together.

Paul couldn't bear to stick the doll in his closet, or even in one of his dresser drawers. Having no other place to put it, Paul slipped it under his pillow. He would remove it later, when he went to bed, he decided.

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Strangely relieved that the doll was no longer in the room with her, Karen sat down at the kitchen table staring at the lid of the opened box.

"Dolls for all Occasions," she read softly to herself. "Catchy name for a doll store."

She noticed a small booklet half hidden under the tissue paper. Curious, she removed it from the box, discovering that it was an owner's manual of some kind.

"The Virgin Bride"

"The Virgin Bride', companion piece to 'The Groom', is a carefully detailed rendering of a young woman on her wedding night. The wedding night, a truly magic moment in the life of every 'new Bride'."

"From the expression on her face, it is obvious that she is anxiously awaiting her new husband. She is anxiously waiting to surrender her virginity to her new husband totally, unconditionally and until 'death do us part'."

"To love and be loved for the rest of their lives as the Bride and Groom grow old together. With a lot of love, a little bit of luck and mutual understanding, the newlyweds will live a long and happily life together."

Karen smiled as she read. Her own honeymoon certainly had been almost magical. The magic had continued in their marriage for the first few years, then had slowly faded. She still loved Paul, more than anything else in her life. But there was something missing. She didn't know what it was, or perhaps she did and didn't want to admit it even to herself. Perhaps if they'd had children . . .

Shaking her head to clear the unwanted thoughts from her mind, Karen read on.

"The Bride' doll is not for little girls, rather it should be purchased by, or given to, a real Bride-to-be the day of her wedding. Weddings and honeymoons are decidedly the things dreams are made of, but Reality occasionally needs help. Ownership of 'The Bride' will create the excitement that so many young brides miss in the stress of the moment. The Bride (or Groom if the bride is too shy or nervous to realize the need), should place 'The Bride' near the Bride's side of the wedding bed for the doll's maximum effectiveness."

"Maximum effectiveness? What does that mean?" Paul asked from behind her.

Karen shrugged her shoulders. "Haven't got the slightest idea."

Paul covered his mouth, trying to conceal a yawn. He wasn't too successful. "I'm sorry honey, but I'm exhausted. I think I'll turn in."

“I think I'll stay up a little while longer, dear. Give me a kiss before you go?” Karen tilted her head back to receive her kiss. Paul obediently bent over, kiss her then yawned again. Karen laughed pushing her husband gently away. “Go to bed,” she commanded, “before you fall asleep standing up.

Paul smiled weakly and turned to go to the bedroom. Karen watched her husband until he disappeared around a corner. She turned her attention back to the “*Dolls for All Occasions*” booklet.

Although there were three more pages of finely printed text Karen hadn't read yet, she found herself yawning. She skimmed quickly through the rest of the booklet before deciding that she too should go to bed.

Karen shook her head in amazement when she finally crawled into bed. Paul was sleeping in the nude, as he usually did. What *was* unusual however, was that tightly gripped in one of Paul's hands was the doll.

Karen debated about taking the doll from him, but decided not to. Tomorrow would be soon enough for the doll to become “lost”.

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Jolted out of a sound sleep the following morning by the sound of his wife's cries of astonishment, Paul sat up, feeling confused, disoriented and oddly peculiar.

He became aware of two things simultaneously, Karen's soft cries had become screams and it felt as though someone had attached two heavy weights to his chest.

Turning abruptly toward source of his wife's piercing, now almost continuous, scream, Paul was startled to see a look of utter disbelief and horror on her face.

Struggling to make sense of what Karen was doing and the odd feelings in his body, Paul allowed his eyes to follow the path of his wife's horrified stares. He looked down at his bare chest in shock.

A second woman's scream joined Karen's when Paul discovered that the two well formed women's breasts on his chest were not a product of his imagination, but were exceedingly real!

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Karen looked up and down the trash littered street nervously.

Paul had told her what to expect, but being told and actually being there were two entirely different things.

The little bell on the spring over the door tinkled merrily as Karen opened the door. Karen stepped into the store hesitantly and slowly looked around.

Unlike when Paul had visited “*Dolls for All Occasions*”, the little shop's lights were on and there were customers.

A little girl, about five years old, was holding a pretty ballerina doll while her brother, a boy about a year older, was holding a doll wearing a soldier's dress uniform with two stars on the shoulders. Their mother, a shapely and attractive blonde, was quietly paying for the dolls.

Karen waited patiently until the young mother and her children left the store. She wondered briefly if the blonde, who's radiant glow reminded Karen of someone else, had been the end result of a "*Virgin Bride*" doll as well.

"May I help you, ma'am," the old shopkeeper asked.

"My name is Mrs. Wilkinson. My husband bought a doll from you last week," Karen began.

"Yes?" The old man frowned, obviously not recalling his customer.

"A doll named '*The Virgin Bride*,'" Karen finished.

The old man looked momentarily confused. It was one of his more popular models. "*The Virgin Bride* doll?" It was hard to remember all of his customers.

"You remember the doll, blue eyed blonde, a figure to die for, sheer negligee? My husband said that he told you he was buying it for himself?"

"Oh, yes," the old man replied. A guarded look of comprehension crossed his face as he remembered the man. "How is, uh, he doing?"

"SHE is doing much better, thank you!" Karen said coldly.

"How is he — she handling it?" the old man asked curiously. It wasn't often that the sale of one of his dolls triggered a sex change, at least not in an adult.

"We've had a whole week to make adjustments for Paul's new body. The initial confusion and shock of suddenly being turned into a girl is finally wearing off," Karen replied flatly.

Inwardly pleased with the unanticipated success of the doll, but well aware of Karen's frame of mind, the old man nodded solemnly. "I understand."

"Why didn't you warn my husband what would happen if he took that doll? Or at least insist that he read the owner's manual before he did anything else with it?" The sudden, barely controlled, tone of outrage in Karen's voice caused the old man to step backward a pace.



"I tried to," the old man sighed tiredly, "but he wouldn't listen. He — she was a very stubborn man."

"Pigheaded was more like it!" Karen snapped.

The old man smile faintly and waited. The woman was here obviously not just to agree with his impression of her husband. "If you're here for a refund, I'm sorry. The policy of the store is 'No refunds — No exchanges'. All sales are final."

"I suspected as much," Karen sighed heavily. "I guess that leaves me with only one choice then. The one last option I had been dreading would be necessary."

Karen began to dig purposely through her purse. The old man watched carefully, there was no telling what the distraught woman might do.

He relaxed when Karen brought out a wad of money rather than the gun he'd half expected.

"I want to buy a doll," Karen hesitated momentarily, as if she was wondering if she were doing the right thing. "I want to buy a boy's doll."

"I'm sorry, but it won't work," the old man sighed.

"It won't work?" Karen asked, dumfounded.

"No, I'm truly sorry ma'am, but no, it won't. Once a person has been refashioned by one of the dolls, there can only be minor modifications. There is no turning back, ever. Especially in case's like your husband's where the change was so extreme. I'm afraid that he'll be a woman for the rest of his life."

"For the rest of his life?" Karen repeated to herself. Comprehension of what the old man was trying to tell her suddenly struck home. For the first time since she'd walked into the store, Karen laughed.

"I'm sorry, did I say something amusing?" the old man asked, bewildered by Karen's abrupt shift in temper.

Karen smilingly shook her head. "It wasn't what you said, as much as what you think I said. You think that I want the doll for my husband!"

"Uh, you don't?" the old man asked, surprised. It had been exactly what he'd been thinking.

"Quite the contrary. I LIKE him like this. In spite of his uh, new plumbing arrangement," Karen giggled, "Paul still has all the qualities that I fell in love with when I first met him. Regardless of what she looks like outside, inside, it's the same old Paul."

"Really?"

Karen grinned for a second then grew serious. "Only now he's softer, gentler, more loving and a lot more fun to be with. I'm beginning to discover that Paul, as a girl, as Paula, is really quite exciting to be around."

Slightly amused, the old man smiled. "I take it that uh, 'Paula' feels the same way?"

"Frankly, I was surprised when it dawned on me that Paul was having a lot of fun with his new body. Between you and I, I think he actually enjoys being a female. Of

course, he hasn't had his first period or yeast infection yet, either,” Karen laughed softly.

The old man smiled in what he felt was sympathy. To whom, he wasn't sure. “But, I'm not sure I understand. If he seems to be enjoying being a female so much, why did you want to buy another doll?”

“Because,” Karen chuckled, “every *'Virgin Bride'*, especially one as sexy as Paula, should have a loving groom, shouldn't she? Paula is becoming adjusted enough to become curious about her new sexuality. Before long she'll want to try out that new 'plumbing' of hers. Frankly, the idea of losing Paul to someone else, just because they've got something between their legs that I don't, is unthinkable! No, sir, the doll will be for me.”

“I see,” the old man looked thoughtful for a moment. “Perhaps then, I should show you *'The Groom'*.”

They walked over to where the “boy dolls” were located. The old man handed Karen a doll wearing only a pair of red silk boxer shorts. Perfect male attire for a wedding night.

Karen ran her finger tips over the handsome features of “*The Groom*” and down his heavily muscled chest. She pulled the doll's boxer shorts down to its knees and smiled. “Kind of big, isn't he?”

The old man had the decency to blush. “The ladies seem to like him that way.”

“Yes, I can appreciate that,” Karen chuckled knowingly.

“You know, we have other dolls,” the old man said hesitantly.

“Other dolls?”

“For the bride,” he pointed to a doll on the shelf, “for after the honeymoon, you understand. How soon is usually left up to the bride. But in this case, perhaps it might be better if you made the decision for her.”

“But, I thought you said that Paul could never change again?”

“No, I said slight modifications were possible,” the old man corrected gently.

Like the other dolls in the store, the doll the old man had pointed to was incredibly detailed and lifelike. Unlike the majority of the other dolls, however, the figure was totally naked.

Karen picked up the doll and read the name tag attached to its wrist. With an amused look on her face, Karen ran her finger tips lightly over the doll's naked torso.

“I don't know,” Karen began hesitantly. She glanced at the price tag, then at the shopkeeper who was standing beside her.

“Is there something wrong with it?” the old man asked, concerned that someone may have accidentally damaged the doll.

“No, its beautiful, perfect in fact. I'd love to have it, but its so expensive. I, I'm not sure I have enough money for them both,” Karen sighed doubtfully.

She started to place the doll back on the shelf. The old man stopped her with a surprisingly strong hand on her wrist. Karen looked up at the old man in surprise.

Releasing her wrist, the old man smiled broadly.

“Consider it a gift. It's the least I can do for a young couple just starting over again.”

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On the way home, Karen couldn't help being amused with her contents of the two doll boxes sitting on the seat beside her.

“*The Groom*” was for herself, of course. After all, *someone* had to be the man of the family.

Karen knew that since Paula would never again be able to physically, or figuratively, fulfill that role, she would have to make the sacrifice. It was a scary thought, but still, something told Karen that their second honeymoon in their reversed genders might be even more fun than the first!

The other doll, another “girl doll”, was for Paula after the honeymoon. Karen had already decided that she would keep the “girl” doll hidden from Paula until just the right moment.

She hadn't decided exactly when yet, but knew it wouldn't be for at least a year, maybe two. It would take at least that long before she and Paula were truly comfortable in their new roles.

Karen laughed softly, wondering how Paula would react when he saw the other doll, with its extended stomach and swollen breasts.

She wanted to be there when Paula read the name tag, “*The New Mommy*” doll, for the first time.

Karen could hardly wait.