

Liberality



The 7 Deadly Sins
and Virtues

GIFTS WELL TIMED

Celine
Chatillon



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The 7 Deadly Sins and Virtues Series

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GIFTS WELL TIMED

SEVEN SINS AND VIRTUES SERIES

LIBERALITY

BY

CELINE CHATILLON

*Liberality consists less in giving a great deal than
in gifts well-timed.*

–Jean De La Bruyere

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GIFTS WELL-TIMED

“Go on, Trish... You know you want to. Ask Patrick to help chaperone the Sweethearts’ Dance. Then take him home and fuck his little brains out. The only thing you’ll regret later is why you didn’t come up with the idea yourself in the first place.”

I stared at my teaching colleague, mouth agape. It was so like Nance to say such an outrageous thing that I could almost choose to ignore it. The real shocker wasn’t so much in the sexual implications of Nance’s statement, as she was a dirty old woman of the first degree. No, the real shocker came from the fact Patrick had been added to the equation to begin with.

I chalked it all up to the wintry weather—or the full moon phase. The quality of conversation in the teachers’ lounge had rapidly spiraled into the toilet these last few weeks. No surprise really. Warren G. Harding Memorial High School in mid January wasn’t exactly known for its intellectually stimulating environment anyway.

“Sheesh, Nance!” I finally replied with a roll of my

eyes. "What's in those pills you've been popping lately? Viagra?"

The roundish red-head tossed back her over-permed locks and laughed. "Don't I wish! Nah, it's just plain ol' menopausal hot flash meds for me."

Nance pushed her reading glasses to her forehead and leaned closer to me on the dilapidated plaid sofa, intentionally lowering her voice for effect.

"And that's why you can't afford to dilly-dally any longer, girlfriend. You're no spring chicken. It's now or never."

I didn't need to be reminded. The "big four-oh" beckoned a couple years down the road. My biological clock acted like a time bomb, loudly ticking out the remaining beats of my fertility cycle until I was all but deafened. Any minute the Grim Reaper would stretch out his boney claws to strangle me in my sleep...

Oh well. I'd come to peace with the fact that I'd probably never marry again or have children. I'd had my go at wedded bliss earlier on in my twenties, and pretty much we'd both royally fucked it up. Besides, there were worse things in life than being single—poverty, AIDS, war, hunger, tenth graders who couldn't read above a third grade level...

"Thanks for the vote of confidence, *Grandma*." I leveled a dirty look at my fellow Miss Clairol user. "But I'm Patrick's teaching mentor, remember? I don't think it's good form to seduce one's protégée even if he is suffering from a first class broken heart—don't you?"

Nance took a long sip of her coffee before

answering. "I don't know. You're his friend. Who better to help him mend a broken heart? 'Pat and Pat' — you two are perfect for each other."

"Yeah, right! He goes by 'Patrick'. I'm Patricia and go by 'Trish'. Plus he's about five years my junior. And he teaches math."

Nance frowned. "You say that like it's a bad thing."

"Well, it's not quite as bad as being a foreign language teacher," I teased.

"Or a history slut like yourself, eh?"

I could have said one of a dozen things in retort at that moment, but I was literally saved by the bell.

"Off to the trenches." I stood and gathered my materials. Nance reached out and gently touched my hand.

"Don't forget what I said. This is an opportunity in the making. Sometimes you've got to take chances in life. You give so much of yourself, Trish. I'd hate to see you with no one to share it with in a few years when they kick you out of this place."

Ouch! I'd be at least fifty before I got my full twenty-five years in teaching with the district.

"I'll consider your advice, Nance, but no promises."

She rolled her amber-flecked brown eyes at me and plopped her glasses back down on her beaky nose. "All right. Don't force me to summon up Pete the Poltergeist and sic him on your skinny ass."

At this point in the story I have to admit Nance was right about one thing. My ass is rather on the thin side. I can't help it if God gifted me up top more than

on my bottom half. Some guys quite like my “bouncing bosoms” and don’t mind I stuff Kleenex in my back pockets for butt padding.

But threatening to sic “Pete the Poltergeist” on me? Oh, be real! Nance acted like such a flake at times.

“Pete” was a running joke among both faculty and students. The story goes that many moons ago a janitor died of a heart attack while buffing the floors late one Friday night. The story goes on to say that the poor man collapsed onto the cold tiles and lay there helpless, slowing dying and that nobody found him until Monday morning and by then it was too late to save him. So his spirit is said to haunt the halls of Harding High, aimlessly causing mischief.

Only someone as wacky as my pal Nance would say such a silly thing. The woman actually declared she had psychic powers at a teacher’s workshop once. And at Halloween she decorates her Spanish classroom in the foreign language hall more elaborately than a Mexican graveyard on *El Día de los Muertos*.

Creepy but cool the kids all say. I find Nance’s preoccupation with ghosts and dead folk just plain creepy myself.

I laughed at her. “Pete the dead janitor? You’ve gotta be kidding. I don’t believe in ghosts. But I do believe in giving out tardy slips... See you at lunch, Nance. Watch out that you don’t take too many of those hot flash pills. They’re seriously affecting your sanity.”

“Be on the look out,” she warned. “Pete’s going to

haunt your flat ass if you and Patrick don't get together—and soon."

I headed out the door for class, directing traffic through a multitude of human road blocks on the stairs as I made my way up to the third floor. The more I thought about what Nance said the more frustrated I felt.

Why, the nerve of her! Fifteen plus years of teaching high school social studies classes, and I'd been reduced to nothing but a has-been by one of my best friends. And she even threatened to send a spook to get me out of my dating rut. Hell—it was *my* rut! If I wanted to wallow in it a few more decades, I should be free to do so.

Nance's suggestion to seduce Patrick did take a little wind out of my sails, but that was about it. I've become quite hardened to any and all attempts to get me dating again. I'm the oldest of seven children with a meddling mother who still cries whenever she thinks about how my first and only marriage fell apart after four short years. If I can stay sane—and single—under pressure like that, there's no way Nance's jibes were going to change my mind. But I'll admit she did get me thinking.

"Trish—wait up!" Ronny our principal called out to me.

I halted at my classroom door and gave him a mock salute. "Aye, aye, my captain."

He took a deep breath and mopped his balding brow with his ever present handkerchief. "Whew! Can you ever make time through these halls."

I smiled. "Hey, what can I say? I've had a lot of

practice."

My cheerful grin quickly turned to a frown. Ronny looked really worried. Here it was seven thirty-five on a Tuesday morning and he looked like it was the end of the world. A million awful things rushed through my mind at that instant, from budget cuts to cancer scares.

"What's the matter?" I asked, cringing inwardly. "The lunch ladies ran out of oatmeal raisin cookie batter again?"

He grinned at me sheepishly. "No, it's not that serious. We need a new sponsor for the anti-drunk driving club on campus. Betty down in domestic sciences recommended you. I know it's just another responsibility on your plate, but I—"

"I'll do it." He looked at me as if my head had just spun around three-hundred-sixty degrees. "What's the matter, Ronny? I said I'll do it."

"But you already sponsor the history club, the psych club, the sci-fi club and the young authors club among other things... Are you sure?"

"You asked me, didn't you?"

"Well, yes, I did. But really what I meant was Betty suggested you fill in temporarily until we could find another teacher who hadn't given so generously of their after school time."

I put a hand on my hip and gazed squarely into his faded blue eyes. "Be honest with me, Ronny. How many teachers have you asked already?"

He cleared his throat and shrugged. "About twelve."

"And all of them had a valid excuse or a good

reason why they couldn't sponsor the club didn't they?"

He nodded. "Yes, they did. Most of them have spouses and children. They don't have quite as much free time as you do, Trish, but still —"

I raised a hand to cut him off. "It's fine, Ronny. I understand. I spend my time with my 'children' here at Harding High since I don't have any at home. It's my time to use as I see fit. I really don't mind."

"Bless you, Trish Steelman." I could have sworn I spied tears spilling into his pronounced crows' feet. "If only we had a few more generous souls like you on staff. If only..."

Ronny's remark bugged the heck out of me the rest of the day. It only added to what Nance had said to me earlier in the teachers' lounge. I freely gave of myself every minute of every day and never asked for anything in return. It made me wonder... Was there anything wrong with asking for something for myself every now and then?

* * * *

"Ms. Steelman—you knows everything what goes down at school. Can I ax you a question?"

T.J., a two-hundred pound, five foot four, tenth grade football player in my fifth period Civics class stood before my desk, nervously wringing his graded test paper in his hand. My curiosity was piqued. With a solid B+ average in American History, there really wasn't any reason for T.J. to act so anxious.

"Sure, T. J." I put down my grading pen. "Ask

away. I'm listening."

"Why does Mr. Rodgers seem so bummed? Is it because the football team flunked the algebra exam before Christmas? Or did something heinous happen to him over winter break?"

You knew things were serious if even the sophomore boys noticed Patrick's melancholy. I took a deep breath and plastered a happy grin on my face before replying.

"Mr. Rodgers received some... distressing news around New Year's Day," I explained as cheerfully as I could. "He's okay—it's just taking some time for him to adjust to the changes in his life."

T. J.'s big brown eyes widened in his round face. "Did somebody die?"

"You could say that." I hated lying to the kids. Still, it wasn't my place to blab that the real reason Patrick looked like shit was because his wife had walked out on him.

"Man that sucks. My daddy got shot at during a drug deal on Christmas Eve when I was two years old. He's still locked up for it, too." T. J. shook his head sadly. "I sure hope Mr. Rodgers doesn't go to jail."

"No worries. He'll be fine soon. It's nothing too serious."

But it was.

"Trish, can we talk?"

It was almost five o'clock and snowing heavily by the time I made it to my car. Patrick mysteriously popped out of nowhere and interrupted the running monologue twisting and turning about in my head.

"Sheesh, Patrick! You about gave me a heart attack." *Like poor Pete the Poltergeist.* I leaned against the hood of my Camry, my best light-hearted expression splayed across my face. "I didn't know you stayed late on Tuesdays. What's up, Mr. Math Whiz?"

My friendly repartee didn't even bring a tinge of a grin to his generously proportioned mouth. He definitely wasn't in a joking mood. Too bad, because when Patrick Rodgers smiled, the whole world became a brighter place.

Tall, dark and handsome were the three best adjectives to describe my teaching protégée. Of Jamaican and Irish heritage, Patrick possessed sparkling, hazel-green eyes and smooth, café-au-lait skin with close-cropped, dark chocolate-colored hair. His full, resonant voice sounded authoritative without being overbearing. And both his manners and taste in clothing were impeccable.

Patrick had worked for a software company up until three years ago when he decided enough was enough and wanted out. He wanted to make a difference in the world he said. So he turned to teaching.

I was surprised when Ronny matched Patrick and me. As his mentor, I was supposed to guide him through his first difficult years of teaching. Usually an experienced teacher in the same department mentored a new recruit, but Harding High sadly lacked math and computer science teachers. That's how I as a lowly social studies teacher became matched to Patrick Rodgers.

We soon found out that we both had quite a lot in common besides wanting to help kids. I was overjoyed to discover his minor in college was history. Nice guy that he was, Patrick gladly volunteered to fill in during his free periods whenever we needed an experienced sub for a history class.

"Math tests my mettle," he once told me, "but history is like poetry. It's full of people, places and things of long ago... A romantic, mystical study of what has been and what could be once more. The spirits of our ancestors walk again in our hearts and minds. Their wisdom will never be lost."

And he really liked the way Nance decorated her room at Halloween, too. Oh well... you can't expect a person to be perfect.

"Patrick? You okay?" I asked, forcing my thoughts back to the present. "It's freezing out here. You wanna talk inside my car while I warm it up?"

He nodded. I slid into the driver's side and started up the engine and, more importantly, the heat. He slipped in on the passenger side, never raising those beautiful bright eyes of his to meet mine.

"I'm sorry, Trish, for bothering you. You're the only person I feel I can talk to at Harding sometimes. I..." His mellifluous voice with just a hint of Jamaica trailed away. His head dropped into his hands. "Oh, God! I don't know if I can go on any longer pretending like it just doesn't matter!"

I swallowed the lump in my throat. My "prize pupil" was suffering a mental meltdown right in front of me. I found myself at a complete loss for words.

"Golly, Patrick... I'm the one who's sorry. I don't know how to help you. Has Bronwyn indicated she's thinking of returning home?"

He shook his head. "No, she's still out in California. The papers came in the mail yesterday. She's proceeding with the divorce."

I flicked the defrost switch on high. Our words rose like smoke in the damp cold air. The ice build-up on my windshield made it practically opaque.

"Ah, shit." I moaned and *tsked*. "And for sure there's another man involved?"

He looked up toward the ceiling and sighed. "Yes, her former supervisor. When he got the transfer he put in for he went ahead and asked the big wigs for her to be transferred to San Jose, too."

"All this after you told her that you were willing to leave the lovely frozen Great Lakes and move to sunny Silicon Valley?"

"Yes, even after I told her that. I even told her I wouldn't look for a teaching job—I'd crawl right back into the IT rat race. But it doesn't matter one bit. She says we're finished."

I bit my lip and drove my gloved nails into my palms. I really hated saying, "I told you so," but from the very first moment I met Patrick's soon-to-be-ex-wife I knew eventually there was going to be trouble.

Simply put, Bronwyn adored the rat race. She thrived on business intrigue and screwing over others to get ahead. Martha Stewart involved in insider stock trading—yes. Betty Crocker or Suzy Homemaker involved in creating a warm, nurturing atmosphere in their home—most definitely not.

Patrick—bless him—possessed the complete opposite personality. Sure, they both had majored in similar fields, but you couldn't find two people who possessed two more radically different outlooks on life. Did Patrick think by marrying Bronwyn he was going to change her into a caring, generous and unselfish individual? Anything is possible.

And some day soon I expected pigs to start flying.

"Bronwyn says I don't have what it takes to be successful in either the boardroom or the bedroom," he said softly, gazing down at his long and supple hands. "And she's right."

Double shit! I felt like slugging him there on the spot. I wanted to wake him up from this nightmare, to make him believe in himself again. But I didn't know what to do. How could I get out of this conversation gracefully without tromping on Patrick's feelings worse than his old lady had.

"Oh, sheesh, Patrick. Don't take it so personally. She didn't really mean it." I gently patted him on the shoulder to demonstrate my moral support. "Women say those sorts of things when they're angry or hurt. I'm sure if you stayed in IT you could have easily risen to the top of your field."

He snorted derisively. "Hardly."

"Hey, don't be so down on yourself. You won the 'Harding High Best and Brightest New Teacher Award' last year, didn't you? That's quite an honor, so perk up."

"Yeah, that I did. But it doesn't make me feel anymore confident about the second half of her comment."

“What? You mean the part about the bed—”

My jaw froze in mid sentence. I felt my cheeks warm, and it had nothing to do with the heat duct blowing air full blast on my face.

“It doesn’t mean a thing,” I insisted. “Bronwyn feels guilty about cheating on you, and so she makes cruel digs about your sexual performance to justify her affair. Shit... she’s just messing with your mind, Patrick. Ignore her.”

“But it’s true!” A look of utter despair flashed in his eyes. His bottom lip trembled. “For the last few months that we were together I... I couldn’t... couldn’t...” He covered his face with his large hands. “I’m a failure as a man.”

Scotty, beam me up! I can’t take this any longer...

I felt like screaming bloody murder at that point. I wanted to jump out of the car and run—run far, far away. But somehow, I stayed put and managed to plaster a sympathetic expression across my face.

Even with many years in the teaching profession—and hearing many a tawdry confession from a teenager—I’ve always felt extremely uncomfortable dealing with this topic. Other people’s sex lives were their own business. I don’t peek in their bedroom windows, and they don’t peek into mine.

Besides, Patrick and I were friends. Just friends. I gave him advice on teaching and classroom preparation and how to handle discipline problems. I wasn’t Dr. Ruth. My own botched relationships were evidence enough that I possessed no special wisdom in the area of human sexuality.

“Oh, Patrick,” I took a deep breath and continued.

"You are not a failure as a man. You are a wonderful human being. Your students and your fellow faculty members all adore you."

"But nobody wants to rip off my clothes and fuck my brains out, now do they?" He dabbed at his moist eyes with the corner of his scarf. "To be a human being is one thing... but to be a man? Well, I'd have to be attractive to a woman."

Nance's words from earlier that day flashed into my mind: *You know you want to... Fuck his little brains out. The only thing you'll regret later is why you didn't come up with the idea yourself in the first place.*

God damn! My pervy little pal the ghost lover had the right idea. I could ask Patrick to work beside me as a chaperone at the Sweethearts' Dance in four weeks' time. I could seduce him and fuck his little brains out. It would help solve his self-esteem issues, and it certainly wouldn't hurt my self-esteem issues any...

No, no, no! It wasn't right. We were friends. Working colleagues. I should care about Patrick like an older sister cares for her younger brother... I didn't need to jump on his gorgeous, half-Jamaican, rum-colored body. I owned a decent-sized vibrator and was an avid reader of electronic erotica. My eXtasy Books bookshelf alone held over two hundred titles.

"Patrick, you are *very* attractive," I blurted without thinking.

"Really?" His smile lit up. He leaned toward me. "Is that what *you* think, Trish?"

"I... I..." I swallowed hard. "Of course so. You should see how the women stare at your ass

whenever you walk out of the teachers' lounge. We all get a kick out of ogling that hot bod of yours. So stop talking shit about yourself like that. You're dead sexy. Get over it."

I switched off the rear de-icer and checked my gas gauge. "I'm sorry, but I've got to get going. I've got just enough gas to get home if I'm lucky."

He sighed. "I'm sorry. I'll let you go. Thanks for listening. You're a good friend."

I wriggled up my nose and politely punched his upper arm. "Thanks, bud." *Yes, I'm your friend – and that's all we'll ever be.* "Need a lift over to where your car is parked?"

"Sure, I'd appreciate it."

Suddenly, the engine stopped running.

"What the fu..." I looked at the gas gauge again. It read empty. "Shit! I'm out of gas. I could have sworn it had a quarter of a tank just a moment ago."

"Maybe Pete the Poltergeist drained your tank while we were talking?" Patrick arched a thin eyebrow and beamed a mischievous smile at me. "He's good at siphoning gas out of tanks from what I've heard."

I hit the steering wheel and sighed. "Damn. I've always heard Pete is the reason why the hallways doors close and blow open all by themselves at times. So, why would a janitor's ghost be running about a parking lot in the dead of winter?"

"Change of pace? I thought Pete was supposed to be a groundskeeper like Willie the Groundskeeper on *The Simpsons*. A real psycho with a Scottish brogue."

"Interesting, but it doesn't really matter now. I've

got to get some fuel for this thirsty engine. I don't want it freezing solid over night. It'll be hell to get it started again."

Patrick slipped out of the car and jingled his keys. "Come on. I'll drive you over to the gas station."

Snow fell like a cottony curtain in the dusk as we trudged across the teachers' lot from my car to Patrick's car. My many years of experience had its perks. My parking spot was practically next to the assistant vice principal's near the side door. Patrick, as a new hire, had a space located around the back.

Rounding the building, a sudden wind gust practically knocked us both off our feet. I heard a metallic *clink* and then a scraping sound. Patrick cursed then fell to his hands and knees.

"For the love of... Where did my fuckin' car keys go?"

"Did you drop them?" I knelt beside him on the snow-swept asphalt. The blowing icy precipitation stung my eyes and only made things worse. "Ah, shit! We'll need a flashlight to see out here at this time of day in this awful weather. Ooo, I hate winter!"

"You got a flashlight in your car?" He stood slowly and helped me to my feet.

I shook my head. "No, but I have one in my classroom."

"Why do you have one in your classroom but not in your car?"

I shrugged. "We needed a flashlight for a psych club meeting experiment a while back, and I kept forgetting to put it back in the glove compartment."

He frowned. "You've got your school keys, right?"

I patted my coat pocket. "Yeah, I think so. Let's go through the back hallway. It's too damn cold to keep marching about this building."

* * * *

"I can't believe this..." I threw up my hands in exasperation. "It's not here. I could have sworn my flashlight was perched on that top shelf."

Patrick chuckled at our predicament. "Okay, what are the odds that your car ran out of gas and I lost my car keys at about the same time—and then we come inside and find your flashlight missing? Pete is working overtime tonight."

"Pete? Pete the Poltergeist? You and Nance are raving lunatics. There are no such things as ghosts. Get real."

"Speaking of Nance," Patrick said in that slow, irritatingly sexy manner of his as he ambled over to my side, "is she still here? Perhaps she has a flashlight or can give you a ride over to the gas station. Then you could give me a ride home to pick up my spare car keys and then we could all call it a night."

His nearness shot a tingle of heat throughout my frame. Suddenly an image of Patrick and me lying together naked on a bearskin rug before a roaring fireplace appeared in my mind. I took a step backward and partially unzipped my suffocating jacket.

"I don't think Nance stays late on Tuesdays. But someone besides us has to be in the academic building. And if not, somebody's got to be over in the

gym area. Isn't there a basketball game tonight?"

"It was cancelled in first period according to a couple of my students. In fact, with the approaching cold front and the heavy snow forecast, a lot of this evening's activities probably were cancelled."

"Really? I knew I should have listened to the weatherman this morning."

He gazed at me through hooded eyes. "We may be the only two living souls still on campus."

"I sincerely doubt that." I picked up my purse and started scavenging for my cell phone. The auto association or the cops could rescue us and take us both home. "Crap and a half... I must have left my phone in the charger at home this morning."

"Funny, so did I." Patrick frowned. "Let's see if we can call out on the land lines."

All attempts to get a dial tone proved fruitless. I stomped my feet and growled. This weird series of coincidences did more than freak me out—they frustrated the hell out of me!

I headed toward the door. It suddenly shut in my face. I grabbed the handle and jiggled, but it seemed to be locked from the outside.

"Hey! What gives?"

Patrick laughed. "You must have upset Pete by saying you didn't believe in ghosts. He's wreaking his revenge on your disbelief."

"Ha, ha. This school is over seventy-five years old—creaks and moans and rattling doors are normal for a building of this age." I jiggled the door handle again. It was still locked.

Sighing, I put my hands on my hips. "Oh, all right.

I believe in ghosts. Will you please open the door now, Pete?"

Just as mysteriously as it closed, the door swung open. I had to use both hands to close my gaping jaw.

"D-d-did you see that?" I squeaked.

Patrick took me by the arm and quickly escorted me out of the room. "Yes, I did. And I take back every negative thing I've ever said about ghosts, too."

We headed toward Nance's room. Nothing. We strode up and down the echoing hallways, calling out, "Hello? Anybody here?"

Not a word came in reply.

"I can't believe this." I shook my head as we circled back toward the teachers' lounge. "It's five-thirty. We can't be the only people still here—can we?"

Patrick's furrowed brow turned his expression to positively grim. "Let's turn on the TV and see what the weather report says."

We doffed our winter gear, plopped down on the old plaid couch in the lounge and switched on the television set. Sure enough, the storm that had been forecasted for later tonight had barreled into town early. A foot or more snow—on top of the five or six feet already on the ground—was likely to fall within the next few hours. City buses were permanently parked. The airport even now was closed. People were advised to stay indoors until the worst of the storm had passed.

"I wonder why Ronny didn't come on the P.A. and tell us to leave before the weather got worse..." An eerie feeling that we had been purposefully cut off from the rest of civilization descended over me. I felt

we'd become victims in a slasher movie. No matter what we did, we were doomed.

"I know I didn't hear Ronny say anything," Patrick said. "I stayed after to grade papers and install a new program on the lab computers. I'm sure I would have heard an announcement telling everyone to leave the building."

I nervously giggled. "Pete the Poltergeist really knows how to make a point, huh? Maybe he switched off the P.A. speakers in our rooms?"

"You mean, you think Pete deliberately kept us from hearing Ronny's announcement? That our resident poltergeist is trying to bring us together against both our better judgment?"

Grinning, Patrick scooted closer to me on the sofa and casually stretched an arm across the back. "Perhaps he's trying to tell us something?"

"Oh, no!" I jumped up a bit too abruptly causing Patrick to fall to his side. "Sorry."

I took a deep breath to calm my jangled nerves then turned around to face him. "What I meant to say is that maybe this is a 'wake-up call' of sorts... Pete wants both of us to realize that we're giving too much of ourselves to this school."

"Too much of ourselves?"

"Well..." I shrugged. "You gotta admit it—it's like we both practically live here at times."

Patrick sighed. "What can I say? It's better than living at my place lately."

Aw crap... I had to get Patrick to stop thinking about Bronwyn's and his non-existent love life—and I had to do this without making him think I was

coming on to him, too. I felt like pacing about the lounge but figured this would seem too obvious an avoidance mechanism. So I made myself sit down and began to verbally ramble.

"We're practically twins when you come to think about it, Patrick. We both sponsor way too many after school activities. We both spend way too much time working on our class rooms and planning our lessons plans. Even Ronny thinks we both should be more selfish with our time."

"Selfish isn't part of your vocabulary, though, is it?" He fingered a lock of my hair. "You're the most wonderfully generous person I know, Trish."

I blushed. "Thanks."

Something deeply primal glowed in his hazel eyes as he wound my shoulder-length sandy blond tresses about his long, nimble fingers. My gaze felt glued to his face. I was totally mesmerized. Here we sat all alone in the teacher's lounge on a Tuesday evening, essentially snowed in from the rest of the world, and already I was seriously considering Nance's proposition.

Fuck his little brains out.

I had to break the spell between us before things got out of hand.

"You hungry?" I ventured. "I've got some frozen dinners stashed in the freezer in the break room, and I'm sure we can scavenge a few other edible things in there or from the cafeteria."

Wriggling from his grasp I stood up. "Let's see about those frozen dinners. I have a lasagna and a chicken-broccoli casserole in there for sure. I know

Nance won't mind if we raid her soup collection. Plus, there's some leftover birthday cake from Cyndi's party the other day..."

We kept our thoughts pretty much to ourselves as we microwaved our dinners, listening to the blizzard howling outside. Thank the Lord the electricity hadn't gone off line! Last year a sudden ice storm in March knocked off the electricity for almost seventy-two hours. My fireplace and a camping power generator—courtesy of the Venturers' crew I'd recently chaperoned on a skiing trip—had come in handy. Otherwise, I would have frozen to death.

As long as the heat stayed on and the TV worked tonight, I felt confident that I could fend off any libidinous impulses either Patrick or I displayed. But as if the power company had read my mind, the minute we finished eating and cleaning up our mess the lights dimmed then went completely out.

"Triple shit!" I cried. "I just saw a cigarette lighter on the counter... and I know where there's a perfumed candle in the bathroom. Stay put and I'll get them."

"I'm not going anywhere," he replied in a husky tone. Even in the pitch black dark I swore Patrick's pearly whites positively glowed.

I fumbled around until I found the lighter then stumbled toward the teachers' restroom. Luckily I was able to retrieve the pillar candle that sat next to the sink with a minimum of bruising.

"There. At least we're not entirely in the dark."

Chuckling, Patrick placed an arm about my shoulders. "Well, at least not in the visual sense. I

have to admit I like this ghost Pete. He's got a great sense of humor."

What was that supposed to mean? We didn't have time to flirt and make jokes. We had to find some other ways to illuminate the room and keep warm. The building's heat was turned down to about fifty-five overnight anyway... In a few hours without power, the temps could drop to below freezing. I put on my mental Scout cap and thought hard.

"The nurse's office might have some flashlights and blankets," I said at last.

"You suggesting we make ourselves a little tent and camp in here?"

I nodded. "Yeah, it's the only thing we really can do to keep warm. Since this is a basement room opposite the side where the winds are coming from, it should retain heat fairly well."

"Should we raid the library for banned books to burn in our camp fire?" Patrick chuckled. "It might make us a few friends on the current school board."

"Ha, ha. Very cute. But starting a fire in a basement without proper ventilation is extremely dangerous. The next best thing to having a fireplace or a Franklin stove to keep from freezing to death is shared body heat."

"Shared body heat?" He wagged a thin black eyebrow and grinned at me. "So that's what the blankets are for? Sounds good. But aren't you forgetting something—Shirley locks her office door securely each night before she leaves. Think of all the student medications stored in there."

"You're right. Of course the nurse's office is locked

up tight..." I shrugged and sighed. "Oh, well, let's give it a try anyhow. Maybe Pete can pick the lock for us?"

Patrick laughed. "Now you're talking."

I wished to God I hadn't said anything about Pete, for when we arrived at the nurse's office the door miraculously drifted open before us.

"Uh, thanks, Pete." I nervously giggled like a fool. "Terrific—I see a couple of super-sized flashlights on top of the book shelf." I placed our lone candle on the desk and began rummaging about for other useful items.

"Here's a bunch of wool blankets and some sheets and pillows in this closet." Patrick gathered the articles and stuffed them into a plastic garbage bag. "I think I see some scented candles under the sink, too."

"Yeah, Shirley told me once she hates nasty smells, so she lights candles to keep the funk of sickly teens at bay."

"Do the flashlights work?"

I switched one on. "Yes they do. Strong light beam and the batteries seem fresh." I handed Patrick the other flashlight then headed over to blow out the candle on the desk.

I shouldn't have bothered.

"You've got a great pair of lungs." Patrick hoisted the sack of bed linens over his shoulder. "Did you really blow out that candle from halfway across the room?"

"Sure I did." The flashlight's beam started to dim. "With a little help from Pete our friendly ghost, of course." The beam intensified once more.

I wanted to scream like a dizzy chick in horror movie... I felt seriously weirded out by this point. "Come on, Patrick. Let's get the hell out of here."

* * * *

We pushed two long L-shaped sofas face-forward together for the base of our "tent". Luckily they were the exact same height, and, with their matching ottomans, created a warm, soft rectangular surface in the middle of the teacher's lounge. We grabbed a couple of brooms from the kitchen and hung the poles from the ceiling on a couple of leftover wires from dangling Christmas decorations. In the dim light of the candles and our two flashlights we somehow managed to hang blankets in a teepee fashion about our cushioned nest, lining it tightly with bed sheets.

"Wow, I didn't think it possible, but I've worked up quite a sweat." Patrick safety-pinned the last blanket wall to the corner of the couch. "There. We should be fairly air-tight. How are we going to get oxygen in there?"

"That's why I made sure we left a little hole up at the top. The heat rises and mixes with the sinking cool air a bit, allowing in fresh air. Just be sure you take off your outer wear before you climb inside."

He looked at me oddly then smiled. "Are you asking me to strip, Trish?"

"Uh, no, no... But you won't need that thick wool sweater you're wearing once we're inside. And if you've sweated in it, the moisture could freeze against your skin, somewhat defeating the purpose of

keeping warm."

I pulled my sky-blue, fuzzy sweater over my head, revealing my white, clingy silk turtleneck underneath. "See? I'm pulling off my outer layers, but I'll bring my sweater inside with us to keep it warm. It'll be better in the long run."

"All right, you're the camping expert."

He tugged the charcoal gray sweater over his head revealing a drool-worthy, bare-skinned, lightly haired, taut,—muscled chest underneath. My eyes about fell out of my head and my tongue rolled out like a red carpet. The man hadn't an ounce of extra flesh on him. His sculpted pecs and abs were to die for.

"Patrick, you dummy!" I yelled in a vain attempt to reign in my raging hormones. "I can't believe you. Haven't you heard of wearing layers like an undershirt or turtleneck under your sweater? It's freakin' forty below some mornings... How in the hell does a Jamaican boy keep warm by just wearing one layer in an Ohio winter?"

"We moved directly to the Midwest from Kingston when I was five years old. I don't remember much about Jamaica except for the couple of times we went there to visit relatives. Now, Ireland, that's a different matter. My Irish granny knitted me this lamb's wool sweater. It's as soft as a cloud and about twelve inches thick. You want to feel it? I don't need anything under it to keep warm."

Damn, I don't need anything but one good feel of your gorgeous bod to keep me warm...

My crappy hormones once again were playing tricks on

my impressionable mind. An image of the two of us wrapped in nothing but the sheets played out before my eyes. I mentally slapped myself and sighed.

"Blow out the candles, Patrick. Last one inside the tent is a frozen tamale."

* * * *

We sat cross-legged in our teepee telling "ghost stories" by the light of a single flashlight for almost an hour. Then we started in on our complete life histories. I didn't want to share mine at first, but Patrick kept urging me to open up to him.

"Please tell me more about yourself, Trish," he pleaded. "I hardly knew anything about Bronwyn before we got married... That's one of the reasons we weren't happy together. We barely knew each other and what we really wanted out of life. I understand that now."

And so I told Patrick all about my brief and disastrous marriage. I told him about a couple of my brief and disastrous relationships after the divorce as well.

"Just another case of history mercilessly repeating itself," I joked. "My life story would play great on *Lifetime*, huh?"

"Whose wouldn't?" Patrick looked thoughtfully at me and nodded. If he didn't feel depressed before I began my sordid tale, he certainly would now.

But, surprisingly enough, he seemed very upbeat when he shared his life history.

He told me about how after his parents retired

from the nursing profession they became medical missionaries in South America. He told me how he'd wanted to help others like they did. His life's goal was to better other people's everyday existence and not simply use his talents to land a cushy programming job.

He even told me how lonely he'd been at times growing up as an only child. I admitted that I'd never once felt lonely growing up in a crowded household and that I've always wanted to have seven kids of my own. But after my shitty marriage I had to settle for having several hundred students a year instead.

Just as I was about to mentally congratulate myself for keeping my hands off my protégé's hot bod for the last two hours, from out of nowhere Patrick blurted:

"Why haven't I ever noticed before what a desirable woman you are, Trish Steelman?"

"Because you're married?" I laughed, trying to make light of his offhand comment. A sinking feeling filled my heart, however. I knew the real answer to his question. I wasn't all that desirable.

He frowned, wrinkling up his nose at me. "If I were a real man, I'd have noticed you anyway. That only proves Bronwyn right."

Oh, Lord! Not this again... I had to nip this horrible lie in the bud before it got any bigger. In the dim light, I reached out and took his hands in mine, looking him straight in my eyes.

"Patrick, I want you to listen to me very carefully. This is very important. I'm speaking to you as your mentor and as your friend. I will say this only once."

I cleared my throat and spoke slowly and distinctly using my best teacher's tone. "Patrick, Bronwyn is a first rate asshole. Forget her."

There. I'd said it. He stared at me as if I had grown a second head. Well, as long as that bit of info was on the table I figured I might as well let him know his self-depreciation was totally unfounded.

"Now, I want you get this through your thick half Irish-half Jamaican skull – are you listening?"

He nodded, a slight smile curling the corners of his full lips. Satisfied I was getting through to him, I continued.

"You are a sex god. Half the faculty wants to jump your bones. The other half isn't into men. But if they were, they'd want to fuck your brains out as well. End of discussion."

Before I could release his hands, Patrick pulled me into his arms and kissed me. Electricity instantly sparked between us. I sighed against his lips, melting further into the strong embrace of his solid, brown arms. The kiss deepened. Our tongues tentatively probed then aggressively intertwined with each other. Breathless with unchecked passion, I felt the world spinning about me.

I couldn't fight it anymore. My better sense fled. For heaven's sake! Harding High prided itself on enforcing a strict "no public display of affection" policy, and here I was demonstrating my undisguised lust toward a fellow faculty member. At last we came up for air.

"Trish, darling, I realize now that it's you... you that I've been longing to hold for ever so long."

He cradled me closer, showering tingling kisses across my face, neck and shoulders. Trembling with emotion, we fell backward into our nest of pillows.

"But I couldn't touch you. I'd made a commitment to that bitch Bronwyn to remain faithful. But now that's she gone we can be together at last."

His lips hungrily descended upon mine. His hands roamed freely across my curves, cupping my double D cups. I grabbed hold of his firm buttocks and was pleasantly unsurprised to discover he wore no bulky long johns under his wool slacks. The luscious curves and bumps outlined by his slacks were all him.

Thank heaven for the cold and our clothing barriers or else I'd be sorely tempted to... to... No! We couldn't do *that*—could we? This was a school for heaven's sake!

"Take this off," he commanded me, tugging at the hem of my turtleneck. "I want to revel in your fantastic knockers, you beautiful, sexy, love goddess."

I hesitated—but only for a second. Bronwyn stood tall, raven-haired and thin as a razor. I was much shorter, blondish, and top-heavy to boot. Maybe a completely opposite kind of woman finding him attractive would convince Patrick that he wasn't such a failure in the bedroom after all?

Another inner voice nudged me further: *Is there anything wrong with asking for something for myself every now and then?*

No, *there isn't*, I decided at last. I gave of myself all the time. Didn't I deserve to enjoy the attentions of an incredibly attractive man once in a while?

"You don't think my boobs are too much?" I asked.

Patrick shook his head no and slowly licked his lips. I sat up and slid the silky top over my head.

"I thought about having reduction surgery once, but I chickened out."

He reached over and unhooked my bra, instantly freeing my full, round breasts. "Hmm... I'm glad you did. How can you ever have too much of a good thing?"

I squealed with delight as his tongue suckled and laved my nipples to hard, pointed peaks. He seemed totally enamored of my "knockers" as he called them. I felt feminine, worshiped and adored... All too soon familiar tremors low in my belly threatened to wipe all sense from my brain. I wiggled about, trying to disengage the luscious suction on my tits. I had to maintain control

"You'd better stop now, Patrick. Listen to your mentor. This behavior isn't quite proper for our professional relationship – oh! Oh my!"

He thrust a hand down the front of my jeans and began fingering my clit. Gasping, I bucked against the pressure.

"Naughty boy! You'll have to stay after school if you can't obey your teacher," I teased.

"Yes, ma'am!"

He worked his magic fingers against my sensitive nub until I thrashed about, shrieking like a banshee as the first wave of my climax crashed over me. A husky chuckle escaped his throat. In the dim flashlight beam I spied a maniacal grin practically splitting his face in two.

"Aha! So... you're a screamer. You don't lie there

silent as a corpse, and expect me to do all the work, eh?"

I ran a cool hand over my flushed face. "Goodness gracious no! Who could simply 'lie there' when you're in the room?"

"Do you really mean that?"

My heart ached when I glimpsed a trace of self-doubt in his hazel eyes. To hell with Harding High's zero-sex tolerance policy! I eagerly kicked off my jeans.

"Do it again—please."

"Yes, teacher." He waggled an eyebrow as he wiggled his fingers under my lacy panties. "My oh my, but are you wet. I should towel you off with my tongue before you freeze."

"With your tongue?"

My lacy panties soon disappeared. Patrick nestled his face firmly between my ample thighs and began to lick my pussy with exquisite strokes.

"Oooo... Why, you naughty, naughty, *good* naughty boy. You'll have to stay after school with teacher more often."

Sighing, I arched my hips closer to his talented tongue, affording him more access. Suddenly I felt a finger, then two, thrust inside my slick passage.

"Ooo! What are you doing? I... I..."

"You like it?" I moaned and shook my head. "I'll take that as a yes."

Stroking my g-spot, he brought me to orgasm over and over again. If Pete the Poltergeist was nearby and had ears, he'd be deaf by now. I was practically hoarse from screaming by the time Patrick was done

with me.

Flushed and sated, the musky scent of sex permeating my senses, I pulled my talented bed partner into my arms and caressed his muscular backside.

"Patrick, dear, I think it's only fair I return your wonderful favor." I reached for his zipper, but he brushed my hand away. "What's the matter?"

He turned away. "I don't want to disappoint you like I did Bronwyn."

"Disappoint me? How in the hell could I be disappointed? I came more in the last half hour than I have in the last five years. Please stop thinking about your ex-wife's evil ranting. You're a magnificent lover."

"Thank you. It means a lot to hear you say that—more than you'll ever know. I just don't want to... to... disappoint you in other ways."

Bronwyn Rodgers had to be the luckiest bitch in the world. She was damn lucky I didn't own a gun, and I didn't know where she lived. Because blizzard or no blizzard, I swear I would have tracked her down and shot her dead at that moment for all the pain and suffering she'd caused my dear, sweet Patrick.

I pulled myself to a sitting position. My goal was clear. To hell with propriety and no PDAs on school grounds. I'd willingly do whatever it took to un-teach that bitch's false teaching.

"Look at me, Patrick." He slowly rolled over to face me. "I am your mentor, and I wouldn't steer you wrong, now would I?"

He nodded. "No, you wouldn't."

"You trust me, don't you? You trust my judgment?" Again he nodded. "Good. Take off those pants."

"But Trish, I—"

"Do it! Now—no arguments."

My authoritative tone and stern expression worked on grown men as well as it worked on misbehaving teenagers, it appeared. Patrick shucked off his trousers and sat across from me in our love nest in nothing but his bulge-tight bikini briefs.

"Hmm... I like your red and green striped undies. Christmas present?"

"From a few years ago. Bronwyn bought them as a joke. I'm a joke for still wearing them, but they were handy this morning."

I raised an eyebrow. "No more putting yourself down—and no more mentioning that woman's name ever again or you will be punished. Understood?"

"Yes, ma'am." He pouted playfully. "Will you make me stay after school?"

Smiling, I slowly scooted near him. "Yes, I will. I'll make you work on an extracurricular project with me. A project that I've been working on for a very long time and that I need an able assistant to help me with..."

I took him by the hand and raised him to his knees. I wrapped my arms around him from behind and kissed and nibbled his ears, neck and shoulders. He sighed, but did not resist. My hands played across his broad chest, dipping down to the elastic of his underwear, teasing but never quite touching his

penis. I massaged his firm butt checks and stroked his beaded nipples until he moaned.

No matter what that evil witch woman had told him, Patrick wasn't impotent. Not by a long shot. The front of his briefs stretched forward and a sticky spot appeared. He was physically able to enjoy intercourse, but psychologically his ex had destroyed all his confidence. Hopefully my attentions would inspire him to believe in himself again.

"You want to know more about my 'project'?" I teased, quickly delving a hand into his briefs.

He stiffened—his body, that is. His cock momentarily drooped. I'd have to go slow. Patrick's fear that he'd be unable to perform haunted him more than Pete the Poltergeist haunted the halls of Harding High.

He forced a chuckle to hide his apprehension. "Does this project have anything to do with what's in my shorts?"

"Smart boy. Yes, it does." I gently stroked his shaft while rubbing my pebbled nipples against his back. "I told you about a few of my failed relationships earlier. Well, there's been one nagging fear that's bugged me all these years that's made me doubt myself as a woman."

"You shouldn't doubt your femininity, Trish. You're definitely all woman. All screaming, shouting, multiple-orgasmic woman."

"Thanks. But I still wonder if I'm woman enough to keep a real man happy in bed. And I've always wondered if it's because I spit and don't swallow."

"Swallow? Oh, I see." He reached a hand behind

him and squeezed my ass for reassurance. "It doesn't make you less of a woman if you don't swallow. It's never made any difference to me."

"Really?" I tugged down his briefs, releasing his half-hard cock. "Care to demonstrate?"

I could tell my proposition intrigued him. His hard-on strengthened. By allowing him to come this way, I'd lessen some of his performance anxiety.

He stretched out horizontally against the pillows and allowed me to remove his underwear. Heavens above! With only a partial erection the man was truly blessed. How his imbecile soon-to-be-ex-wife could have even thought of leaving this sweet, sexy man was beyond me.

I knelt between his legs and continued my intimate massage. "I've also wondered if it matters a lot how much of a man's cock I can squeeze down my throat all at once. I mean, I've tried deep throating guys, but unless they're on the petite size, I've not had much success."

"Well, you should be able to swallow my whole pecker at once. It's not listed in the Guinness Book of Records by any means."

I playfully swatted his backside. "Bad boy. What did I tell you about downing yourself?"

He laughed. "Okay, I won't say mean things about myself anymore. But Trish, I'm very confident in your deep throating abilities. I don't want *you* to feel bad about yourself. And so I'm willing to let you practice on me."

I grinned. "Thanks."

Leaning forward, I cradled his cocoa-colored rod

between my milky breasts, gently rolling it between the fleshy orbs. This did the trick—his cock immediately stood at attention.

"I've only seen that done before in porn films!" Eyes wide, he rose to his elbows to watch closely. "You sure you don't have a summer job in the adult entertainment industry?"

I continued rubbing the sticky staff sandwiched in my cleavage. "I can't say I haven't thought about it at times. I mean, you don't have to worry about pick up lines and first dates. You just report to the set, strip off your clothes and get down to business."

He chuckled, arching a curious eyebrow. "You'd really like that, eh? Getting fucked by guys hung like elephants—one, two, three or more at a time?"

I tickled the top of his cock with my tongue as it peeked out. "Elephants? Goodness gracious! I'm not sure I'd be able to handle anything of that size. After all, I'm the 'butt-less wonder' according to Nance. All top and no hip or ass. My little pussy doesn't take much to fill it, you know."

I began licking him in earnest now. The salty taste of his cock and the sweet scent of my drenching-wet cunt flooded my senses.

He tilted his head back and moaned. "Hmm... Your pussy is probably the tightest, sweetest spot on the planet. How I wish I could..."

I stopped my tonguing and looked him straight in the eye. "You wish you could do what?"

His enthusiasm slightly flagged. "Nothing. It's nothing."

I rolled his rigid rod between my swaying tits,

reviving him. "Say what you mean, or I won't keep doing what I'm doing."

"You're a tough teacher, Trish Steelman. You don't give up, do you?" He took a deep breath. "All right, I won't say I can't do something anymore. Are you satisfied?"

"For now." I winked then swallowed him whole in one big gulp. He moaned loudly.

"Dear God, woman! And you worry you can't deep throat? Head out to Hollywood—they'll be begging you to take the lead in a porn film."

I smiled to myself. My lesson plan seemed to be working. I worked my tongue up and down his cock shaft and around and around the sensitive head, caressing his balls with my hands. The firmness of his erection intensified. From the sounds of his sighs and groans I felt certain I'd taste the salty load gushing down the back of my throat any minute.

"Stop... stop what you're doing," he said, panting. "I want to... I want you to..."

I paused to take a deep breath. I didn't want Patrick to push me away and refuse himself this much needed release.

"You want me to do what? Don't fight it, Patrick. Just relax and enjoy the moment."

He grabbed my arm and pulled my face toward his. "I won't fight it. I want to be inside you, Trish. I want you to sit on top of me. I want to fill your tight pussy with my cock. Please?"

I blinked. My lesson plan in reviving Patrick's flagging confidence in the sack hadn't really included intercourse at this stage. After all, neither one of us

had a condom handy.

"It's okay, isn't it?" His eyes glimmered with doubt and fear of rejection. "You're on the Pill or something?"

I bit my lip. I wasn't on the Pill—and it wasn't because I was a good lapsed Catholic, either. I hadn't been in a steady relationship for a few years and what with my age and other risk factors... Well, condoms and foam had worked quite well for me and my partners in recent times. Surely, with my erratic menstrual cycles it'd be safe just this once, right?

Gazing upon my dear friend's tentative face, I knew what I had to do. To reject Patrick now could crush his fledgling self-confidence. I hated the thought of screwing him over the same way as his wife from hell had done. I swore to myself I wouldn't hurt him through my selfish actions.

I'd accept the risk. This one and only time would be my special gift to Patrick.

"The Pill or something," I said, smiling. "Hmm... I'd love to feel you deep inside me."

Quickly straddling his hips, I gently teased my nether lips with the tip of his generously proportioned cock. Saints be praised! It had been a while for me, too. The glorious sight and musky scent of a man wanting to fuck my brains out made me tremble in anticipation. What can I say? It was practically a religious experience.

I gasped the instant he thrust his hard cock into my waiting hole, my cunt muscles clenching and spasming about his thick shaft, shooting ripples of exquisite pleasure-pain throughout my body. Slowly I

ground my hips in a circular motion, gasping at the intensity of feeling even now building low in my belly.

He raised his head and brought one of my aching nipples to his lips to suckle. "Hmmm... You are so beautiful, Trish. And so tight it's unbelievable. Tell me if I'm hurting you, okay?"

"Drop a ton of snow on me right now. I wouldn't care. Oh my Lord, Patrick! Why haven't *you* auditioned for a porn film before? Fuck me as hard and fast as you like, Big Boy."

His laughter lifted my spirits higher as his cock thrusts bounced me heavenward, closer to the top of our makeshift tent. He worshiped my breasts, lapping and nipping and suckling my tits until I shrieked with delight. All the while, he rammed his rod into my moist mound harder and faster than I thought humanly imaginable. Colorful swirls and sparkles danced across my vision, my climax tortuously building to a Himalaya-like height.

If you had asked me only yesterday, I would have never believed it. My protégé had a lot to teach his mentor about lovemaking!

"Trish, darling, I'm sorry," he said, panting. "It's been so long... I can't hold back."

"Same here, my dear, dear sweet Patrick. Ahh!"

I swiveled my pelvis faster about his granite cock-pole. Fireworks suddenly exploded in my scrambled brain, shaking my entire body with rapturous seizures. Climax after climax vibrated outward from my core like a never-ending series of earthquakes. My screams reverberated within the walls of our love

nest, echoing throughout the empty halls of Harding High. My lover's satisfying song soon rang out as well, warming my heart. Patrick shouted my name over and over like a prayer as his hot seed erupted deep within me.

Slowly the shudders subsided. Content and sated, I crumpled against his chest. Passed out in each other's arms, we promptly fell asleep.

But not for long.

"Trish, darling? You awake?"

My eyes flickered open the promptly shut again. I yawned. "Sort of."

"You hear the wind howling outside?" He lay spooned behind me, languidly stroking my nipples.

"Uh-huh. Sounds pretty bad. We could be buried alive in snow and stranded here for days."

He chuckled. His hand slid down to rub my tender but happy clit. "We'll have to find ways to keep generating our own heat, then, won't we?"

I felt his erection rubbing up against my buttocks. I gently swayed my hips against his sticky staff and sighed. "Yeah, I'm afraid so. Whatever will we do to stay warm?"

He lifted my top leg and eased his length into my slick passage from behind. "Hmm... I'm sure we'll think of something."

* * * *

The sound of Patrick's soft breathing against my shoulder instantly woke me from my bliss-filled dreams. I instantly sat up.

“Oh shit! I’m late for school.”

Patrick reached out and gathered me into his arms. “No worries – you’re already *at* school.”

I blinked. The gray darkness within our canopy of blankets blocked out any light from the windows, throwing my internal body clock for a loop. Slowly the haze lifted from my brain.

“You’re right. Shit! What if someone discovers us in here like this?”

“I sincerely doubt anyone’s going to find us today. Listen.”

I perked up my ears and frowned. Silence. Not a howl or a squeal of wind. Then it dawned on me.

“Oh, my Lord... We’re buried alive in a huge snowdrift.”

“Yeah, it’s probably up to the second or third floor windows. At least it traps the heat in the building. We certainly didn’t freeze to death in our sleep.”

“What sleep?” I giggled. Wrapped only in a sheet and little else, the interior of our tent love nest seemed rather toasty. It had kept us much warmer than I thought possible, but the sound of a vent blower clicking on overhead gave me a clue as to why our birthday suits had kept us plenty warm.

“Aha, the electricity must have switched back on sometime during the night.” I sat up again and peaked out under the blanket closest to my head. “Yep, nothing looks worse for wear out there. We can turn on the TV and see what the rest of the world is up to – and then try to call our friends and family to tell them we’re fine.”

With a pot of coffee on to brew and some bagels

warming up in the toaster oven, Patrick and I slipped on some of our clothes and cuddled under a blanket on the plaid couch to watch the news. We were entertained by stories of stranded motorists, roofs collapsing under the weight of the snow and happy sledding children liberated from school for at least two to three days according to most weather experts.

"Whew! The thought of Ronny or Nance or somebody waltzing in here and finding our little love nest..." My thoughts trailed away as I caught the mischievous gleam in Patrick's eyes. "Hey! You actually wanted someone to come in here and catch us bare-ass naked in bed together, didn't you?"

"I can't deny it, but, yes. Yes, I would have loved it if we had gotten caught in the middle of doing something 'naughty'. I would have given that peeping tom permission to shoot some photos of us, too."

"Say what? I never realized what a kinky son-of-a-bitch you were before now, Patrick Rodgers. You sure you haven't acted in a porn film before?"

He laughed. "No, I'm not all that kinky. I just want a few pictures of our first night together for my scrapbook—and to email to my soon-to-be-ex-wife. That would show the bitch that it was *her* problem and not mine she couldn't enjoy herself in bed."

I placed my cup on the coffee table, regarding my lover through half-closed eyes. "Ohh...kay. I think I understand where your kinky streak is coming from now. But why would you want me in the photos? You want to make her jealous and not nauseous, right?"

"Don't down yourself, woman. She'd feel plenty

jealous." Patrick squeezed the boob closest to him and winked. "Bronwyn is as flat as a pancake. What she wouldn't give to have enormous melons like yours."

"Don't be so mean!" I teased. "Flat-chested women feel horribly insecure in their femininity."

"Personally, I don't give a damn how Bronwyn feels anymore." He pulled me closer and tenderly kissed my forehead. "I just want her to know that I'm very happy she left me now. Very happy indeed."

Our lips met and then our bodies quickly molded together as one. One in flesh, one in heart... I never wanted the snow to melt! I wanted to melt into my lover's arms instead, never to awaken from this beautiful dream.

The shrill sound of a telephone ringing all too soon infiltrated the hazy blanket of our morning lovemaking session. I reached over and hit the flashing button on the console.

"Uh, hello. This is Harding High School," I said tentatively. Who on earth knew we were here?

"Trish? Trish Steelman, is that you?" Ronny's voice sounded half relieved and half astounded. "Nance told me that she spied your car in the parking lot when she left around four fifteen yesterday, and no one had heard from you since and we were all so—"

"It's okay, Ronny. I'm fine. I couldn't get my car started and so I very wisely came back to my classroom. But by then the phones were dead, and I realized I'd left my cell phone at home."

"That explains it. Nance was out of her mind with worry. Have you heard anything from Patrick Rodgers by chance?"

Patrick kissed my bare shoulder. I grinned at him, stroking his firm chin. "Yes, I've heard from Patrick. He's sitting right here next to me, actually. He lost his car keys in a snowdrift when a big gust of wind knocked them out of his hand. We took refuge in the teacher's lounge with some blankets borrowed from Shirley's office. I hope that was okay."

"That's fine, Trish. I'm just glad to know you both are safe and sound. It may take until tomorrow to dig you all out. You think you two will be all right until then?"

My eager lover rolled me to my back and began suckling my tits. I signaled for him to remain silent. "No problem. I'm sure we'll both be fine. There's plenty of food in the teachers' lounge refrigerator. And with the electricity back on, we can grade papers and email out reading assignments to our classes."

"That's the spirit." I could hear the smile in our principal's voice. "I knew I could depend on you two. But don't overdo it. We'll be closed for at least three more days until the roads are cleared enough for the buses to get through. In the meantime, can you do the district building maintenance supervisor a big favor?"

"A favor?" I tried swatting Patrick's hand away from my throbbing clit, but it was useless. It had been at least fifteen minutes since our last tryst, and the man was eager to fuck me senseless once more. "What kind of favor can we do you for, Ronny?"

"Gerald wants you to check out the property for burst water pipes, holes in the roof, snow leaking in, etcetera. Oh, and he needs you to test out the hot water boilers, too. Go and turn on some of the

showers in the locker rooms. That'll do the trick. Is that a problem?"

I placed a hand over the mouthpiece to giggle, flashing a dirty look at Patrick as he lowered his face to lap at my pussy. I cleared my throat quickly then continued, "No, that won't be a problem at all. I'm sure Patrick would enjoy a nice long, hot shower. I know I will."

"Hmm... It seems the hot water boilers are operational in every sense of the word."

Patrick nibbled at my earlobes, slowly rubbing the aloe-scented soap across my breasts and stomach. He had excused himself earlier to check out the boy's locker room and retrieve a towel and some sweats from his work-out locker. Feeling more than a bit sweaty from our sensual exertions, I'd turned on the taps, never believing for a second he'd sneak up behind me in the shower. My screams bounced off the pink tiled walls, echoing around the gymnasium area. It amazed me how the vibrations didn't cause the snow to come cascading through the gym windows in an avalanche.

Lathering my body with suds, Patrick lingered for a time on my throbbing tits. He rolled the nipples between his thumb and forefinger until they peaked like arrows pointing out from a rosy target. Finally I managed to snatch the soap from him and returned the favor, my attention focusing on cleaning his well-exercised masculine appendage.

"Yes, the girls' locker room showers are working just fine," I said, caressing and squeezing his balls until his cock saluted me, tall and proud. "Remind me

to call Ronny later today with our building report."

My soapy hands trailed down Patrick's muscular backside, curving against his solid buttocks. Lord above! What could I say? The man possessed practically superhuman strength and flexibility in the hip region. He could make love all night long with hardly a rest interval in between. It was exhausting—yet exhilarating—keeping up with my cocoa-colored sex god.

"You think these showers have ever seen so much 'action'?" I wondered out loud. I tilted the shower spray to rinse off his sudsy staff, then dropped to my knees. Slowly I eased his length into my mouth, swirling my tongue about the sensitive head and shaft. He moaned.

"Hmm... Perhaps the boys' showers have seen some action, but this could be a first for the girls'."

Once his erection was firmly established, he reached for my hand and helped me to my feet, plunging a finger into my equally slippery passage. I promptly dropped the soap.

Patrick's chuckle came low from the back of his throat. "Dear me, Trish. You'd better bend over to retrieve our soap bar. You're so clumsy today. That's about the third time this morning isn't it?"

"At least three times. I feel so dizzy for some reason. I wonder why?"

Sighing, I gladly assumed the position. Bracing myself with a firm grip on the metal safety bar, Patrick came behind me and rammed his hard cock deep into my hungry cunt. We soon established our rhythm in the warm spray, my big breasts swaying

with a hypnotic motion. *Slosh, slosh, slosh...* I could never get enough of the man and his beautiful body.

"Ooo, I can't get enough of you. Fuck me harder—harder please."

"Yes, ma'am! Let it not be said that Patrick Rodgers didn't do his best to please his teacher."

Patrick granted my request with several mind-blowing thrusts. I practically twisted the safety bar off the wall in delight. I screamed, the wanton sound reverberating over and over again in the tiled room until we both were deafened.

"Yes—yes!" I shrieked. The intimate assault continued. He pounded my pussy harder and harder until shooting stars streaked across my eyes and the earth quaked beneath my feet. My womanly muscles clenched tight, sucking every last drop from him as he shot his hot load deep inside me.

Sated and waterlogged, we rinsed each other off then turned off the taps. We patted each other dry and shuffled slowly to a locker room bench to collapse.

"Man, oh man. Woman—can you ever scream. I need to get some earplugs. You're phenomenal."

Patrick leaned over and kissed me passionately on the lips. Our tongues darted from their respective shelters and met in a friendly exchange of thrusts and parries. The familiar electric attraction intensified once more. Sighing, I flung my arms about his neck. Soon I felt myself levitating above the bench as I was drawn into his lap.

With a little lazy maneuvering on my part I straddled his hips. I could feel his rebounding hard-

on nudging against my sensitive nether lips. Was there any doubt? I knew I'd be fucked at least one more time before we got dressed.

"I'm so glad you're on the Pill, Trish," he whispered, slipping his cock inside me. "I don't think I've ever made love as much to one woman in my entire life."

"Yes, it's lucky for us I'm on the Pill," I said, grinning sheepishly.

Soon I was steadily bucking my pussy against his constantly rocking cock, my qualms silenced by the symphony of our moans and cries.

Besides, what Patrick didn't know for sure couldn't hurt him, could it?

* * * *

We were rescued early the next morning by a backhoe and several dozen snow blowers. Even then we had to exit the building via a second story window. It was "a blizzard for the record books" according to the weather forecasters.

"An extended lovemaking session for the record books" is what I'd call it.

It took almost a week to restore power to the entire town and to clear out the side roads. Our students enjoyed their impromptu winter vacation with sledding, snow fort building and ice skating on nearby ponds. Patrick and I enjoyed our activities indoor for the most part.

But before we left our love nest, we made sure to rearrange the furniture in the teachers' lounge and

picked up all the soap bars in the showers. Neither Patrick nor I wanted any gossip circulating about the school in regards to our assignation. Knowing how determined Nance would be to find out about our relationship—and broadcast it to the rest of the faculty—we thought hard about how to cover our tracks.

Finally Patrick hit upon a most effective strategy.

“All right, we’re agreed?” Patrick asked. I nodded my consent. Looking up toward the ceiling he called out, “Attention Pete the Poltergeist... We have a small favor to ask of you.”

* * * *

The week we returned to classes was an amusing one. Whenever Nance caught sight of Patrick and me together in the hallway or in the lounge, she immediately zeroed in on us. This is where Pete’s help proved invaluable.

Doors would suddenly shut—and lock—in front of Nance’s face whenever she came looking for us. It was absolutely comical. For instance, she’d spot us walking into my room after school and start to follow us and then—*slam!* The door effectively silenced her snooping. Patrick and I would giggle insanely, wrapped in each other’s embrace until our lips met and our laughter threatened to turn into heated passion.

All I can say is that I’ll never look at the top of my desk in quite the same way ever again.

One afternoon the two of us stood chatting in a

crowded hallway, and, for some reason, Nance passed on by as if she couldn't see us. It seemed like an invisible curtain had dropped in front of Nance's eyes, blocking her view.

Weirder yet, Ronny waltzed by the two of us in the teacher's lounge early one morning giving each other a quick feel-up on the plaid sofa. He didn't even say "good morning" but went about his business retrieving his intra-office mail and getting a cup of coffee.

"Whew! Thanks, Pete," Patrick joked. "We owe you big time for that one, buddy."

I laughed, but what can I say? Pete the Poltergeist truly is a career lifesaver.

Our passionate nights were usually spent at my place. I couldn't blame Patrick—who'd want to make love in the same house where your soon-to-be-ex-wife belittled your performance in bed? Besides, my old brick ranch was much better insulated, both acoustically and thermally, as compared to the swanky cardboard box townhouse Patrick and Bronwyn had purchased in a newer, upscale part of town.

And my neighbors could care less if I had boyfriends that spent the night. There was no telling if Bronwyn had parked spies around their home looking for something to gain the advantage of Patrick in their divorce proceedings.

"Hmmm... I hate to kiss and run, but I've got to pick up some more heart-shaped helium balloons at the party store before the dance tonight," I told Patrick around lunchtime of the day of the

Sweethearts' Dance. "You want me to swing by your place afterward and give you a lift? There's no use in both of us driving in this wintry muck. Besides, the teacher's parking areas are going to be opened up for the students to park in. We measly chaperones will have to fight it out for the closest spots with the kids."

"That's okay. I'll drive myself to the dance. I've got a few things I need to take care of this afternoon as well. I'll meet you here at six forty-five. Okay?"

"Sure," I said. As we parted company, a cold, sinking feeling descended upon me. Something didn't feel right. But for the life of me, I couldn't put a name to it.

I drove toward the shopping center frowning. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that my smiling toy-boy had become unusually withdrawn and secretive over the last few days. At first I assumed it was the thrill of our new-found relationship simply wearing off. But now? I wasn't quite sure what to make of his distant behavior. Even when he acted depressed Patrick hadn't seemed so remote, so distracted.

Oh, God... I was losing him!

It was a repeat of my last serious relationship all over again. I'd bored him to tears. Me and my deafening orgasms had become too much for him. He'd discovered he hated my Goodyear blimp-like breasts. He'd lost respect for me as a mentor since I acted like a sex-crazed, dizzy blonde between the sheets.

A sob wrenched from my throat. What was I going to do?

The point was driven home even harder as a wave of nausea overwhelmed me.

I made a quick left turn and pulled into the parking lot of a chain drug store. The helium balloons could wait a few minutes. I had to know the reason for my recent aches, pains and nausea, even if my worst fears only drove the heartache home deeper.

* * * *

Balloons stashed in the back of my Camry, I made my way home and readied myself for tonight's chaperone duties. Before I dressed, I opened the small box from the drug store and followed the instructions as well as I could with shaking hands.

Holy shit... The little indicator line changed color faster than my nipples peaked when I was cold. No doubt about it. My missed period wasn't a sign of my irregular cycle.

I had given the gift of confidence to Patrick. In return, I'd received the gift of a child.

A child! It's what I always wanted... To be a mom. I couldn't have asked for a more generous gift.

Tears welled up in my eyes. I sniffed them back. I couldn't very well work the Sweethearts' Dance with a tear-stained face and red nose. After all, it was a dance for lovers. Even if Patrick had soured on me, I couldn't go about in public looking like the heartbroken, pregnant, almost middle-aged has-been that I was.

I dressed mechanically in my cranberry velour sweater, silky black circle skirt and black suede dress

boots, slathering on plenty of make up. I piled my shaggy yellow locks on top of my head and put on my dangling, pink rhinestone, heart-shaped earrings. Tonight I'd look like a million bucks outside even if I felt as bankrupt as the national deficit inside.

Somehow I made a right at the stoplight when driving out of my neighborhood and found myself heading toward Patrick's place instead of Harding High.

Odd, I hadn't made any conscious effort to go to Patrick's first—particularly since he'd said he had some errands of his own to do this afternoon and would meet me at the school. Perhaps deep down somewhere I realized that Patrick would welcome this news as well. He loved kids—didn't he? Wasn't it evident in his choice of profession?

My heart lightened and my hope grew. Yes, everything would be all right. My hormones shifting around inside were playing tricks on my emotions. I continued driving toward Patrick's home, pulling up in his driveway behind a small, luxury sports car with California plates.

Bronwyn!

Trembling, I put on the parking brake, revved the engine slightly to make sure it didn't stall then stepped out of my car. Head held high I walked toward the front door, halting in my tracks at the sight of two silhouettes outlined behind the sheer white blinds of the living room window.

There could be no mistaking who these tall, svelte individuals were. It could only be Patrick and what I'd assumed to be his soon-to-be-ex-wife Bronwyn.

Worse yet, he was holding her in his arms.

The moment I caught sight of his lips lowering to her face I turned around and ran back to my car.

Fortunately, Patrick's condo association cleared and salted their sidewalks well. Running in high heeled dress boots is never a good idea in the best of weather. And think what could have happened to the baby if I'd fallen...

The baby. My child. *Our* child. Patrick's and my love child.

I slid behind the wheel and tore off down the street. Strangely enough, no tears came. I didn't feel sad or angry or even bitter. Somehow at that moment I felt happy. For even if it wasn't our destiny to be together, I'd always have something—or should I say "someone"—to remind me of our wonderful time together.

* * * *

"Are you sure you didn't spike the punch bowl?" I questioned a group of junior boys with awkward grins plastered on their faces. "Come on and fess up. If I take a sip of this and promptly throw up all over the place, I'll know you spiked it."

"Oh, I wouldn't drink any of it, Ms. Steelman." Rocky, their ringleader in black Goth eyeliner and baggy back suit with matching punk rock band T-shirt, pulled a hip flask of vodka out of his pocket. "You're much too nice to get sick."

He handed me the small booze bottle and whispered, "You won't tell Mr. Maus about this, will

you? My mom will kill me if I get suspended. She wants me to become a doctor someday, ya know?"

I glanced across the gymnasium at Ronny animatedly chatting with our senior quarterback and the head cheerleader, both shoo-ins for Sweetheart king and queen. I sighed. I didn't have the heart to come down on this poor kid from a broken home who was basically a good student and a nice guy. I slipped the bottle into my pocket and did my best to frown disapprovingly at the group.

"All right, you guys. I won't tell Mr. Maus—this time. But if I catch you up to no good again tonight, you're all history at Harding High. Is that understood?"

They nodded and mouthed "thank you", disappearing into the crush of dancers before I could change my mind. I motioned to Nance to come help me remove the tainted punch bowl from the refreshment table.

"Where's your sexy protégé, Trish?" Nance wheeled an empty cart over to me to place the punch bowl on. She grinned like a feral cat who had spotted a wounded squirrel to devour. "I haven't seen Patrick since we oversaw the ticket taking at the door."

"He's around here somewhere I guess," I said. I couldn't look her in the eye. All the memories of our ill-fated love affair threatened to crash over me all at once. Damn raging hormones!

We lifted the punch bowl together onto the cart and wheeled it off to the kitchen, pouring the contents down one of the large metal sinks. I slipped the vodka flask from its hiding place and emptied it as Ronny's

voice echoed on the P.A. system in the gym.

"It's time to crown this year's king and queen of the Sweethearts' Dance."

"Let's leave the washing up for later, Trish." Nance put down her dish cloth and headed for the door. "I don't want to miss the excitement."

"You go on then." I turned on the taps and squirted some dish soap into the bowl. "I'll clean this thing out. I don't want Ronny to get a sniff of what those boys spiked it with."

Sighing, Nance turned and went back to the party. Laughter, cheers, hoots and jeers greeted my ears. A stabbing pain in my heart reminded me of my bad luck... I'd never wear a paper crown with a handsome prince by my side.

"Trish, darling! There you are. I've been looking all over for you."

I continued washing the dishes. Patrick crossed the kitchen to my side and kissed my cheek. I winced.

He took a step back as if stunned. "What's wrong?"

"A couple of junior boys got a little creative with the punch mixing. I decided the bowl needed to be completely cleaned and sterilized before returning it to service."

"That's not what I mean and you know it." He turned me to face him. "Why are you avoiding me tonight?"

I placed the clean punch bowl on the counter and pulled the sink plug. "I'm not avoiding you. I'm busy with my chaperoning duties – that's all."

"Not it isn't. Talk to me, Trish. Are you upset because we didn't drive over together tonight?"

I wouldn't dignify that question with a reply. I dried my hands on a dish cloth and headed back toward the gymnasium. Patrick followed.

"I told you I had some important errands to do this afternoon," he explained. "I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings."

"What would you know about feelings!" I blurted, spinning around. My hormones were getting the better of me, and I couldn't stop them. So be it.

"You know all about numbers and computers and dry, dead facts, Patrick, but what the hell would you know about human feelings?"

Tears threatened to burst the dam of my self-control. I stormed away from him and swung open what I thought was the door leading back to the gymnasium area. Instead I marched straight into a large dry-goods pantry.

"Shit!"

Before I could escape with some scrap of dignity, Patrick entered the small room as well and switched on the light. The door softly clicked shut behind him.

He crossed his arms about his broad chest and leveled a serious gaze at me. "Are you going to tell me what this outburst is all about?"

"No, I'm not." I pushed past him and turned the doorknob. It wouldn't budge. I jiggled it again. How on earth did we get locked in? Then it hit me...

Pete!

"All right, Pete the Poltergeist," I said through gritted teeth. "This isn't funny. Open the door, please."

Patrick stared at me as if I was mad. "There isn't a

lock on this door." He tried the handle as well to no effect. Then he started to chuckle. I stomped my feet in frustration

"Damn it! What's so funny, Patrick? We're locked in here! We could be stuck in here all weekend. No one will find us until Monday morning when the cafeteria cooks start preparing breakfast."

"I know. Isn't it ironic?"

I frowned. "Ironic? How?"

"We finally admitted to our feelings for each other while trapped in the school building a few weeks ago... and now we're going to work out our first big spat in quite the same manner." He looked up at the ceiling. "Thank you, Pete."

"Screw you, Pete!" I shook a fist at our unseen tormentor. Sighing, I slowly settled myself on top of a large crate of individual-sized breakfast cereal boxes. "Oh, I take what I said just now back, Pete. Please be a nice ghost and open the door. Pretty please?"

"He doesn't seem to be listening." Patrick sat down beside me. Gently he caressed my cheek. "Please tell me what's troubling you."

I took a deep breath to steady my nerves. Better to tell him now than never.

"I'm pregnant."

His eyes widened. A smile slowly crept up the corner of his full lips. "You're sure?"

I shrugged. "About as sure as a drug store test kit can be. But I've skipped a period, and I've never felt so... hormonally challenged in my life, you could say."

"Trish, darling!" He scooped me into his arms and

squeezed me tight. "I'm so happy."

"You are?" Crystalline tears spilled onto my cheek. "Are you really? What will Bronwyn say?"

"Who gives a flying fuck what that bitch has to say. I'm going to be a daddy – a daddy!"

He kissed me passionately for so long and so thoroughly that I gasped for breath when at last he released me.

"But I thought... I saw you two through your living room blinds. I thought you had patched things up."

"Me and Bronwyn?" He rolled his eyes and squeezed me again. "Don't be silly. That's why I couldn't come with you tonight. Bronwyn came back to town to sign a few legal papers. We're officially divorced now. We agreed to sell the house and equally divide the spoils between us. Fair is fair after all."

Oh, Lord... I'd misinterpreted what I'd seen through the window. Patrick wasn't kissing Bronwyn hello as much as it was one last kiss good-bye.

"I'm sorry I jumped to conclusions." I stroked his chin and smiled. "I just couldn't believe my good luck, and I assumed the worst. I thought you had dumped me to get back together with your wife."

He cleared his throat and affected his most proper teacher's tone. "I should keep you after school for thinking such naughty thoughts, Trish Steelman. I can come up with a few 'projects' to keep you busy so you don't spy on other people ever again."

"I'll be a good girl from now on." I lay my head against his heart, soaking in its warm rhythm of love.

"I can't believe it... Two wonderful things have happened to me within the span of one month."

"You say that like you've never experience happiness before."

"Honestly, I haven't. First off, I enjoyed making obscene amounts of love with the world's sexiest man. And if that wasn't enough, I'm knocked up."

Patrick threw back his head and laughed. "You're not 'knocked up', Trish. You're glowing. I thought you looked even more beautiful than ever tonight when I first saw you. And now I know the reason why."

He pulled me into his lap and began to kiss me in earnest. A hand slipped under my skirt and began to pet my pussy while another undid my bra catch. I quickly unbuttoned his shirt and allowed my hands to roam across the luscious planes of his chest.

"You think we really should make out in the pantry?" I whispered.

"Why not? Pete's locked the door. And if he can make folks not see us in the hallways together then I'm sure he won't mind helping us out likewise tonight.

I giggled. "Okay then."

I lifted my sweater over my head and freed my breasts from their cage. Patrick dove into them, suckling and kissing and licking my nipples until I squealed—as quietly as I could. After all, there were several hundred impressionable youths located just down the hallway.

Keeping most of our clothes on, we somehow wiggled out of our undergarments. I circled my

tongue around his firm cock until his low, blissful moans reverberated the pantry's metal shelves.

Patrick laid his jacket across several crates of lettuce and then laid me across it. I raised my legs high over his shoulders. He entered my quivering cunt with one self-confident stroke.

"Ooo... Yes, yes! Harder—fuck me harder, Patrick."

He hesitated "You certain it won't hurt the baby?"

I shook my head. "No, it won't. I think I even read somewhere that orgasms helped the baby grow by providing fresh blood to the womb."

Chuckling, he picked up the pace of his pounding. "Well, then... We're going to have one mighty healthy child."

I arched my pelvis and met each thrust with one of my own. I bit my lip to refrain from screaming too loud as the pleasurable sensations swiftly built to an almost unbearable tension. Climax after climax soon crashed over me like stormy ocean waves until at last Patrick joined me with a hot gush of seed.

A frantic knocking at the door interrupted our afterglow moment.

"Trish? Are you in there? The door appears to be jammed."

"It's all right, Nance. We're working on it from the inside."

Chuckling quietly, Patrick and I quickly helped each other get dressed again. We did our best to smooth down our slightly disheveled hair and fix my smeared make-up.

"Don't worry," came Nance's voice through the

door. "I'm getting help."

A moment later the door easily swung open.

"That's odd." Nance frowned, scratching her head. "I could have sworn the door was stuck fast."

"Old buildings sometimes have their quirks," Ronny said, looking at Patrick and me through narrowed eyes. "What happened here, you two? You come in here for more paper cups or something?"

"Or something," I said, practically biting my tongue in half to refrain from laughing as Patrick pinched my butt cheek from behind.

"Actually, I followed Trish in here to give her a very special something."

Patrick removed a small, red velvet-covered box from his pocket and slowly opened it. My eyes widened at the sight of the sparkling, heart-shaped diamond solitaire ring inside.

I covered my mouth with my hands and gasped. "F-for... for me?"

Patrick pulled me into his arms and kissed me soundly—right in front of the school principal and our chief gossipmonger. "Yes, only for you, my darling, darling Trish. Happy Valentines Day, sweetheart."

* * * *

Patrick and I were married by Easter. Our healthy, eight pound, three ounce girl was born the week of Halloween. In the spirit of the occasion—and at the suggestion of my matron of honor, Nance—we came up with the perfect name for our daughter:

Petra Patricia Rodgers.

It seemed only fitting.

We brought our baby to Harding High a couple of weeks later and gave her the grand tour, lingering quite a while in the teachers' lounge where we conceived her.

As the school bell rang, clearing out the room of our fellow faculty members, Patrick and I looked heavenward and sighed.

"Thank you, Pete the Poltergeist," I said. "Thanks for all your help. And, most of all, thank you for helping us both discover the gift of love."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Celine Chatillon is the alter ego of multi-published contemporary romance novelist, Cynthianna Appel. Celine finds writing erotica a very pleasant departure from her day job as a small press manuscript reader. Her erotic short story, "A Taste for Vengeance" appeared in the premiere edition of *Xodtica magazine*. Read more about Celine's erotic writings at

<http://www.celinechatillon.com/>