

Force-ful

This is a sequel to a previous story of mine, The Force. Reading that story is not 'required', but certainly helpful.

When I was 13, I got hung up on Star Wars. Not the movie, per se, but some of the stuff that happened in it. Stuff like old Obi-Wan's mind tricks on the Imperial troopers, and those too-cool light sabers.

I got so stuck on that stuff, in fact, that I'd ultimately wound up learning how that mind-control gig worked, through a lengthy process that involved self-hypnosis, meditation, biofeedback, electronics, and a lot of other stuff. And by 'learning how', I mean that I'd actually been able to influence people to do things the way I wanted. The results of that had been that I'd been the one to deflower not only my younger sister's best friend Diane, but even my sister Holly. I suppose I could have gone on some kind of mind-control rampage or something, but I **really** didn't want to draw attention to myself. The only exception I'd made - and then only under extreme provocation - was when a guy that my sister had gone out with had all but raped her; she escaped only by giving him a shot in the balls that distracted him long enough for her to escape. HIS payback had come when I took over his mind, and implanted the memories of a couple of other girls he'd done even worse to.

Along the way, I'd also tried to figure out those light sabers - which got me into electronics and physics. It was the electronics and physics that really 'clicked' for me, and by the time I got out of high school, I was doing well enough in physics that I'd gotten a scholarship to state college.

It was the start of my sophomore year, and I was standing in line for class registration - bored out of my mind, of course - when I realized that there was an incredibly beautiful head of hair directly in front of me. Black as the darkest night, it was straight, gleaming, and luxurious. Once I pulled my eyes out of its silky depths, I saw that the girl it belonged to was several inches shorter than me - the top of her head was about chin-level on me - slender, and gently curved.

As I was looking her over - she was certainly an improvement over the pimply freshman behind me - I watched as one of her class registration cards fell from her hand.

Ever the gentleman (okay, I wanted a chance to talk to her), I picked it up and tapped her on the shoulder, saying "I think you dropped this..."

When she turned to look at me, I was surprised and delighted to discover that she was the most beautiful Asian girl I'd ever seen. Her skin was smooth and flawless, her lips full but not overly so, a cute button of a nose, and dark eyes that I wanted to fall into.

Her smile, though hesitant, lit up her whole face when she saw that the card I held in my hand was indeed hers. Her voice was musical, with a trace of an accent that I couldn't place, when she told me "Thank you. I didn't realize". She looked at the card a little closer to see what class it was for - Chemistry 201, the same one I was after - then said "Yes, I would have missed this very much", then offered me another tentative smile.

I smiled back, and answered "No problem. It's what I'd want somebody else to do, if it happened to me."

With that, she seemed to lose her nerve, and turned around again.

I still had a girlfriend at home, and I loved her very much - but my girlfriend had also told me that she knew I'd meet other girls at school, and was okay with it as long as it didn't get out of hand. I decided that the girl in line in front of me was one that I wanted to meet.

Using the ability I'd learned, I 'scanned' her, to learn who she was. I was surprised to find that I had trouble understanding her thoughts. I gently prodded her, and got the answer: she was Susan Nguyen, a Vietnamese refugee. She'd been a child when her parents had fled after the fall of that country, and the whole family had first settled in California; then after her parents got settled in, they'd moved to our state that same year. She was a sophomore, like me, but she was majoring in engineering. I also learned that her father was *very* strict, and would object if she let herself get distracted from her studies - particularly if that distraction was a guy.

I scanned her a little more carefully, and found which particular chemistry class it was she was planning to take. I checked my own schedule, and decided that it would fit reasonably well into my plans, too, and made the necessary changes.

Neither of us had any trouble getting the classes we wanted, and both of us were soon done with registration.

It was another week and a half before we had our shared Chemistry class. I made sure to get there a little early, and found myself a seat generally in the middle - but where I could see people as they came in.

Several minutes later, I saw as Susan came in. I feigned not noticing her, but made sure that she vaguely recognized me when she saw me: knowing how concerned she was about what her father might think, I figured my best bet was to establish myself as a friendly, but benign, entity in her life. She sat several seats, and a few rows, away from me.

The next class, I got there early again and did the same thing - only that time, I let her see me seeing her, and gave her a little smile and wave. It was low-key and unthreatening (to

her mind), and she hesitantly smiled and waved back. I gently planted the thought in her mind I was someone she 'knew', and had her sit just a few seats away from me. After the class, I arranged it so that we would casually meet, and said "If we'd known both of us were going to take the same class, one of us could have save the other some time standing in line!", with a smile.

She laughed, and said "Yes, we could. Standing in all those lines was **really** boring."

I carefully probed her mind, and found that she was both relieved to have a friendly face in one of her classes, and a trifle nervous that I was going to try to start some kind of relationship with her. Not wanting to frighten her, I just laughed with her, and said that I'd see her next time before heading off to do some studying. As I walked away, I scanned her again, and found that she was glad that I hadn't tried to make more of the situation than she was comfortable with, and vaguely disappointed by it, too.

The next time we saw each other, she didn't hesitate to take a seat next to me. Both of us paid close attention to the instructor, but still had to exchange a few comments and questions along the way. Toward the end of the class, we were told that we would be broken up into groups for the lab portions of the class. One of the teaching assistants came in with a list, and I quickly probed him to find out if Susan and I were to be in the same lab. We weren't, but that was easily taken care of. At the end of class we all filed by the podium and were handed our lab assignments. Susan stayed with me, and I pretended surprise - but didn't have to fake the pleasure - when we 'discovered' that we both had the same assignment.

We chatted a little about the class, then went our separate ways - a scan of Susan revealing that I was well on my way toward being completely accepted as a harmless presence.

When we reported for our first lab period, Susan and I stood next to each other as we waited to find out who we would be partnered with. Again, I reached into the mind of the TA (Teaching Assistant) to ensure that Susan and I were paired up. When it happened, she looked at me doubtfully, and asked "Did you say something to him so he would partner me with you?"

"Never met him before in my life. If you look around, you'll see that the lab partners are people that were standing next to each other - just like we were."

She did look around, and saw that I was right. She couldn't know, of course, that that was just what I'd 'guided' the TA to do.

Satisfied that it was just the Universe working in Strange Ways - and not me being tricky - Susan relaxed, and we started doing the experiments in our workbooks.

For once, Fate smiled down on me: it turned out that Susan was as meticulous and careful in chemistry labs as I was, so we got the proper results with little difficulty. It also happened that our respective weaknesses in chemistry were balanced out by the other's strengths - what I wasn't sure about, she was, and vice-versa. We finished the experimental portion of the class quickly enough, and were among the first few teams to leave. Outside, I asked her if she wanted to go to a local diner and have some supper while we did the analysis of the lab. She hesitated, and after I quickly scanned her to find out why, told her "We work pretty good together in the lab, so I figure we can help each other with the analysis. I'm a little hungry and thirsty, and the diner doesn't mind people studying there as long as they buy something every now and then. I'll pay, or we can have separate checks; it's up to you."

She still wasn't completely sure, so I gently reached into her mind and brought up the justifications she needed; a few moments later she agreed.

Inside the diner, we were soon shown a booth, and after looking over the menu, I ordered a grilled cheese sandwich and iced tea; Susan decided that tea was enough for her.

As we waited for the food, we took the opportunity to tell each other about ourselves, and compare notes on the few instructors we had in common.

When my sandwich came, I saw that Susan was curious about it, so I offered her some of it. It took a little convincing, but she finally agreed to take half of one of the halves it had been cut into. By the time she finished it, I could see that she liked it. After she'd taken a sip of her tea to finish washing it down, she admitted that she'd never had it before, but decided it was pretty good. By the time I finished the rest of my sandwich, we were ready to start going over our notes for chemistry. We sat there in the diner for another hour, cross-checking each other on the class, and generally getting to know each other. By the time we were ready to leave, Susan was visibly more comfortable with having me around. I paid the check over her mild protests, and we left to go back 'home' - her to the dorms, me to the house I shared with two other students.

After our non-date to the diner, it didn't take long before Susan and I were regular study partners for chemistry. At her request, we tried meeting in the library, but it didn't take her long to realize that the diner was a far superior study environment. I always behaved myself, never trying to get any closer to her - physically or emotionally - than she was comfortable with. My ability to scan her mind to see what the limits were helped considerably. Along the way, I learned more and more about Susan, and a little about the Viet culture and what her life had been like both before and after her family had left Viet Nam. In return, she learned about me and my family, and my girlfriend Diane.

Mid-term exams came and went, and Susan and I both did better than we'd expected - or even hoped. It was a few weeks before Thanksgiving, and we were both in the diner studying when our concentration was broken by a loud voice.

"So, this is where you are! What are you doing here, and why are you not studying?! And who is this boy with you?!"

Both of us turned to look at who was shouting. I saw an older Asian man, and from the way Susan reacted when she saw him, I figured that it must be her father.

"Well? Speak to me! Tell me what you are doing here!"

"I am studying, Father."

"Studying? You call this studying? How can you study in a place that serves food?"

"It is a very nice place to study, Father - it is very quiet when there is no one shouting."

That gave him reason to pause for a few moments, and he went on at a quieter level
"Why do you study here? Why are you not in the fine library this school has? And who is this boy?"

"Father, I study here because it is a better place for that. Yes, the library is very nice, but not for studying. And this boy is Michael; he is in my chemistry class."

He turned to give me a look that plainly said he suspected I was guilty of all manner of crimes and criminal intentions, but simply hadn't been caught yet. I quickly scanned him, and discovered that he was essentially a bully, used to getting his own way with people by frightening them with his personality - and only respecting those that he couldn't intimidate.

"So why do you study with him, and not someone else?"

"Because he is my partner in our laboratory experiments. Both of us work and take notes on the same experiments, so we are able to study our results easier. I explain things that he doesn't understand, just as he does for me. We work very well together."

"Yes, I think he would like to work very well with you!"

It took her a second, then Susan got the implication her father had just made. She looked horrified, and told him "Father! It is not like that - at ALL! We only study together, here!"

He turned to look at me again, and I simply nodded to confirm what she'd just said. He didn't look like he believed me, but wasn't ready to come out and call me a liar. Susan was a different matter, though.

"How do I know this is true?" he demanded of her.

"I can show you my papers", Susan told him. She rummaged around in the knapsack she carried, and pulled out a handful of papers; it took me only a glance to recognize them as the quizzes and exams we'd had. She set them down on the table and told him "See here? These are the scores I got in the beginning of the class, before Michael and I started to study together. And here are the results I got with his help", as she slowly shuffled through the stack.

"How do I know that this is because of him?"

"Because I have already told you so. Father, there are things about chemistry that I don't understand - but when I study with Michael, he is able to explain them to me in a way that is different than our teachers do, and I understand it better. I have never deceived you, Father, and I tell you that these scores are because I have been able to study with him."

He looked at me again, and I finally spoke up, telling him "And I know that MY grades have improved because of Susan - there is some of this that **I** don't understand, and she helps me as much as I help her. *Both* of us are doing better in chemistry than either one of us would do alone."

That pretty much took the air out of his sails, but he still wasn't ready to give up, saying "But you should still be studying someplace other than this... **place**."

I got an idea, and quickly planted a couple of thoughts in Susan's mind: that maybe it was time to stand up to him, and show him that he was wrong. She resisted a bit, but I was able to find a couple of ways to motivate her, so it wasn't but a few seconds before she spoke up again.

"Father, you are not the one going to school here, I am. And I am the one that has to decide what places are best to study in. Did you go to the dormitory that I live in?"

He answered that he did, and she asked "Did that seem like a good place to study to you? With all the noise and activity there?"

He grudgingly admitted that it didn't, and she went on "That was the decision I made, too, Father. Now, would you come with us to the library so that I can show you something?"

Though unhappy, he said that he would, and waited while Susan and I got our things together. He was surprised when Susan picked up the check for the coffee we'd been drinking, and paid the bill. Outside, he demanded "So, he makes you pay for his help?"

"No, Father. I paid this time because it was my turn. Last time, he paid - for exactly the same things we had tonight. If we eat, each of us pays for our own food."

As we made our way toward the library, Susan and her father got into a conversation in what could only have been Vietnamese - the only parts I understood were the occasional

English words that got tossed in. By the time we got to the library steps, their talk had ended, and we were walking in silence. After we got inside, Susan showed her father around the library while I quietly kept the two of them company. She finally led us back to the front door, where she softly told her father "Now, Father, you have seen the library that you want me to study in. You have seen that the lighting in most places is poor for studying, and the only places where the lighting is good are crowded. In the diner, the lighting is good at ALL the tables and booths. You have seen that the library restrooms are located all on one floor, so that it is inconvenient to use them. The restrooms in the diner are easy to get to. You have seen that there is no food or drink allowed in the library; in the diner, there is plenty of food and drink so that I can stay alert and refreshed while I study. You have seen the signs in the library demanding quiet; in the diner, we are free to speak in tones that are easy to hear - and understand. Tell me, Father - is it better for me to study in the library, or the diner? Which one is the better place for me to get the most from the education you are paying for?"

Standing up to him like that, and asking the questions she had, had pretty much cut him off at the knees. I could see by the look on his face what his *honest* answer had to be - and Susan could see it, too. We walked outside while he contemplated what he wanted to say next.

Standing on the steps, we found that he had to try one more tactic, insisting to Susan "I want you to stop studying with this boy!"

"No, Father. It is by studying with him that I have gotten the good grades that you expect from me. Are you telling me that you will accept lesser grades if I do not study with Michael?"

"But it isn't proper!"

"What isn't proper, Father? He has never tried to kiss me - or even hold my hand, except when it is necessary in our class. He is polite, and a gentleman, and we have never done anything wrong - the ONLY place we study together is the diner, where there are others."

He didn't have anything to say to that, either, and turned to me and demanded "You will stop seeing Susan!"

I just looked at him calmly and answered "No, sir, I won't. When I study with her, MY grades are better. I am here on a scholarship, and I need all the help I can get from Susan. If **she** says she doesn't want us to study together any more, then I have no choice but to accept it - but the decision is HERS, not yours. You aren't in our chemistry class."

"I tell you to stop!"

"No."

The quiet conviction of my tone must have made him realize that he couldn't bully me the way he was used to doing to others. He stood there for a couple of minutes, looking back and forth between Susan and me, before he finally said "Okay. You study together, its okay with me. But no funny business!" - the last directed at me.

"No, sir", I agreed.

He still didn't seem sure that I wasn't going to try something, but since I'd agreed, he didn't have anything to say. Susan took a step toward him, and he turned to her and said "In Viet Nam..." before Susan interrupted him, saying "But this **isn't** Viet Nam, Father. This is *America*. We are HERE, now, and this is where we must learn to live. Father, you send me to school so I can get a good education and do well in America - but what good is my better education if I don't know how to LIVE here - to work with people, make friends, and be a part of this society? Even after we got to this country, you kept all of us in the Viet community, and did not let us learn how to become Americans - not even a little bit. If everything Viet was so good, why did we have to leave? If America wasn't a better place, why did we come here?"

He stood there, stunned, while Susan went on "Father, I am your daughter. I love you, and I respect you, and I honor you. But in this matter, you are wrong. If I am to live in America, then I have to learn how to live as an *American*. I will never stop being Viet; it is what I am and always will be. But if I am to live in this country, I must also learn to be American. That is what they mean by those hyphen Americans you complain about: I must be Viet *hyphen* American - Viet first, but also an American."

Seeing that she had his full attention, Susan continued "Father, you have always taught us to be respectful toward others - but tonight, you have not shown me, or particularly Michael, that respect. All of my life, you have taught me what kind of person you expect me to be - to be a good girl, respectful, and all of that. Do you not think that I learned those lessons? Are you so afraid that I will forget all that you taught me? If you do not trust me, Father, why did you send me to this school?"

Susan waited, patiently, to hear her father's answer. Me, I was busy pretending I wasn't there, or listening, as I tried to memorize the entire night sky star patterns.

Several minutes went by before he finally spoke. He told her "What you say is right - we ARE in America now, and this is where we have to live. Some of what is here is not good - but some of it IS. Maybe that is what it means to be a hyphen American: to take what is best of this country and mix it with what is best about where we come from, and making something that is better than either one. You stay here and learn; not just what they teach in school, but the American part, too. I know that I cannot watch over you for all of your life. Someday, you will marry - perhaps even to an American. So you must learn to live in this place. Me, I think maybe I am too old for that, but you are not. So learn - but do not forget what your mother and I have taught you."

She smiled, and started to cry a little before she stepped close enough to hug him - and after a false start on his part, he hugged her.

When they broke apart, I heard him say "You", then Susan's whispered "Michael, Father."

"Michael", I heard him say.

I turned back around, and looked at him.

"I was not polite with you, and I apologize. I think maybe you are a good boy, to help Susan. You stay a good boy, and maybe I can like you, okay?"

I smiled, and said "Yes, sir, I would like that."

He managed a half-smile in return, and said something in Vietnamese to Susan. She looked at me and asked "Michael, would you mind? I think my father and I still need to talk a little bit."

"That's fine", I assured her, adding "I've got to get home and get some sleep anyway. I'll see you in class tomorrow."

She nodded, and I left the two of them standing there.

Susan and I neither one ever said anything about her father's visit; but that didn't mean that there weren't changes as a result of it. She continued to take her studies seriously, but I could see as the tension and stress slowly drained out of her. On top of that, she easily became more open and relaxed around other people. With me, she was even comfortable enough to actually start touching me - casual, friendly gestures that she'd avoided prior.

For my part, I carefully matched whatever level of physical and emotional sharing that she exhibited. Thanksgiving came and went, and I surprised her by bringing her a plate of Thanksgiving leftovers from the dinner my Aunt Paula had hosted for our family. Susan quickly decided that turkey and all the rest were delicious, though she wasn't completely sold on cranberry jelly. I had to assure her that was okay - I wasn't wild about it, myself.

During my trips home, I'd told my family about meeting Susan, and that we were studying together. They and Diane - who was also my all-but-engaged girlfriend - all agreed that it sounded like her father had kept her pretty much under his thumb, and were glad to learn that he'd finally let her start learning about the rest of America. Diane, and my sister Holly, both teased me about being in love with her; but all of us knew that wasn't the case - Diane and I were simply too close for something like that to happen.

In the couple of years since she'd given me her virginity, Diane had grown up - and out - noticeably. Just an inch or so shorter than me, she had straight dark hair that she'd trimmed back to shoulder length. Her brown eyes sparkled with intelligence and good humor, and her full lips just begged to be kissed - something I did as often as I could. Her breasts had grown with the rest of her, causing her to wear a 34-C bra. Her breasts were capped with dark areolas and large nipples that I delighted in playing with. She was slender, with a trim waist and nicely-curved hips over a pair of legs that almost any woman would have died for. She made a nice counterpoint to my sister, Holly. Holly was a fraction of an inch taller than Diane, but their height was about the only physical thing they had in common. Holly sported dark red hair that was slightly curly, beautiful green eyes, and a peaches-and-cream complexion that differed from the white-with-freckles so many redheads seemed to have. Her 34-B breasts stuck out a little farther than Diane's more rounded bust, and on her slim frame, made her look fairly buxom - particularly with her small waist and softly curved hips. Her small, tight ass sat atop a pair of slender, but nicely shaped legs.

I was staying overnight at Diane's house one night - her parents fully aware of the relationship between us, and approving of it - and we'd finished making love when Diane came up with something out of nowhere:

"Mike, you said Susan's folks - well, her dad, anyway - never really let her experience being an American?"

"That's what she'd told me. She never got to go out for trick-or-treat, or anything like that", I answered.

"What about Christmas?"

"The way she explained it to me, they're Buddhist, and they celebrate Tet. It's the lunar New Year, and it's kind of like Christmas and New Year's all rolled together."

"But not Christmas? Like the tree, and exchanging presents, and all that?"

"No, she's never had that kind of a Christmas. She knows what it's about, of course - I mean, they heard the carols, and saw the movies and all, but she's never HAD one. Why?"

Diane was silent for a few moments, and then said "Why don't you see if her parents will let her visit us for Christmas? I mean, if your folks don't mind. I know Mom and Dad wouldn't mind if she stayed here, and I think she should find out what Christmas is *really* about - not just what the stores make it like."

It was something I really hadn't thought of, before - but once Diane mentioned it, it sounded like a helluva good idea. I didn't hold out any real hope that it would actually happen, but figured it was at least worth trying. I didn't figure Mom and Dad would have any problem with it, but I resolved to find out for certain the next day.

In the mean time, I had the delectable bundle that made up Diane next to me - I rolled over onto my side while she did the same. In just a couple of seconds, we were spooning, my front tucked neatly against her back, my arm around her as we fell asleep.

The next day, I was back at my parent's house helping Dad with some repairs. We'd just finished oiling a squeaky door hinge when I brought up the subject of Susan maybe spending Christmas with us.

Dad got thoughtful for a few moments, and then said "You know, Holly said something about it being a shame Susan had never had a real Christmas the other day. I thought then that it sure seemed like it to me, too. Sure, Mike, go ahead and invite her, if you want. I'm sure we can find room for her **someplace** around here!" with a laugh.

After I got back to school, I hinted around the subject a little, to see if Susan had any thoughts about it, either way. She didn't, and I finally came right out and made the invitation when I was sure that it wouldn't make her uncomfortable. She told me that she thought she'd like to do it, but wasn't sure if her father would approve. I reassured her that she would be staying either with Holly or Diane, and that she was more than welcome to join us. As a kicker, I told her that her father was certainly welcome to call MY folks and make sure that it was okay with them, and to confirm that everything was on the up-and-up.

It was a week later when she told me that she'd finally called him and asked for permission for the visit. He'd been reluctant at first, but when she'd explained the whole thing to him - including the sleeping arrangements and how he could call my folks to verify all of it - he'd finally given his permission. She was still in something of a state of awe that he'd actually approved of it - and mixed in with that was a nervousness about what everyone would think of her, and how she'd act.

In the last couple of weeks before Christmas vacation, I had to repeatedly reassure Susan that she was not only a welcome guest, but that everyone was actually looking forward to finally getting to meet her. Along with that, I was subjected to a little grilling about everyone - what they liked, didn't like, their interests and hobbies and jobs, and the whole thing. Susan was determined to get them a gift, and wanted to be sure it was something they'd like. Several times, I had to tell her that she didn't have to get them anything, but if she did, they would be happy with anything she wanted to give them - that all they *really* wanted was to show her what Christmas was all about. It didn't have any noticeable impact that I could determine.

I was to be finished with final exams before Susan was, so we made arrangements for me to pick her up in front of her dorm building. I got there at the appointed time, and found her waiting for me - with two suitcases. When I got out of my pickup truck - a graduation gift from my Uncle Jack and some of his fellow farmers - I raised an eyebrow and asked "You figuring on moving in, or something? We're only going to be there for a week!"

She laughed, and said "No, I'm not going to move in. One bag is my clothes, the other is gifts."

I just shook my head, and loaded them into the bed of the truck, surprised at the heft of one of them. I covered everything in the bed of the truck with a tarp to keep it all reasonably clean, and Susan and I piled into the cab. Seatbelts fastened, we were on our way. Susan was obviously nervous, so I reached over and patted her on the hand, telling her "Relax. Everything's going to be fine. Nobody's going to bite you, okay?"

She gave me a wan smile, and visibly relaxed - at least, a little. Still, as we got closer and closer, I could see her getting more and more nervous. I tried to get her involved in a conversation, but her nerves kept her from being as communicative as usual.

It was late afternoon when we pulled into the driveway at home, and everyone came out to welcome us - even Diane's parents were there. Everyone quickly got Susan into the house, except for Dad, who stayed behind to help me with the luggage. I grabbed my one bag, and before I could do anything about it, Dad had Susan's. He looked at me in surprise at how heavy the one was, and I just shrugged before telling him "I told her that she didn't have to get us anything, that she was our guest. I made it as clear as I could, but she must have had her own ideas." Dad nodded, and we went inside.

After Dad and I had put the bags away - mine in my room, Susan's in Holly's room, where she'd be staying - we went back downstairs. There, I was promptly chastised by Mom, who told me "Michael, you didn't tell us how **beautiful** Susan is!"

That was followed by Diane whispering in my ear "Yeah, MIKE!", and pinching me on the ass. From the way she'd said it, I knew Diane was just jerking my chain.

Of course, they had to show her around the house, and while they were gone, Dad told me "Your mom's right, son. She IS a very pretty girl. Aren't you worried that Diane's going to get jealous?"

"Diane knows I love her, Dad. But if she gets a little jealous, well, I'll just let her know that she's still first with me."

Dad smiled, and said "If I know anything about women, you'd better get started, then, son."

When they all got back from their tour, we all sat down - Diane right next to me, taking my hand in hers - with Susan a little farther away on the other side of me, apparently for comfort and reassurance. Only then did I realize how it might make Diane feel, having Susan there. Whoops.

While all of them started talking to and with Susan - asking her how she'd gotten to America, how old she was when it happened, what she remembered of Viet Nam, and so on - I made sure I paid proper attention to Diane. A little while later, Diane asked if

anyone else was thirsty, and when they said they were, asked me to help her in the kitchen. "Uh-oh", I thought to myself as I followed her out of the den.

In the kitchen, Diane quickly pulled me into a hug and fierce kiss before stepping back and saying "Michael, you are so funny, sometimes."

"What?" I asked.

Diane laughed, and said "You are so afraid that I'm going to be jealous of Susan, and you're trying so hard to let me know that I don't have to be - when you should already know that **I** know I don't have to be jealous of her."

After trying to work my way through THAT logic, I finally asked "Huh?"

Diane smiled, and said "Mike, I already know you love me - more than anything else. Do you really think I'd be jealous just because you met another girl? Even one as beautiful as Susan is? I know you **like** her, but I also know that you don't really *love* her, at least, not the way you love me. She's had a tough time, and her dad has kept her from really experiencing this country - you brought her here because **I** suggested it, remember? BOTH of us want her to find out what Americans can really be like; that we're not all like I think her father is afraid we are. So don't worry that I'm going to be jealous, okay? You're the only person she really knows here, right now, so it's going to be a few days before she's relaxed enough to not want to be close to you all the time. Okay?"

"Uh, okay"

"Good. Now help me get something to drink for everybody."

And I did. When we got back into the den, we served everybody, and then Diane eased me back down near Susan - who looked relieved - before taking a seat on the other side of her.

A while later, the worst of the questioning was over, and Diane had the chance to take Susan's hand. When Susan turned to look at her, Diane told her "Its okay, Susan. I know that all of us like you, and we're all glad you were able to come and visit with us."

Having my girlfriend talk to her like that did wonders for Susan - her posture was visibly more relaxed when Holly asked her "Would you like to come upstairs and see where you'll be staying? It's my room, but there's enough room on the bed for both of us. If you want, you can put your things away; I made some room for you in my dresser and closet."

Susan nodded, and she and Holly went upstairs. When they were gone, Diane scooted over next to me again and pulled my arm around her, holding my hand in hers. We sat there listening to her folks and mine talking about something or other that they were involved in. At different times, each of Diane's parents looked over and smiled in approval at us.

A bit later, Holly and Susan returned; I figured that Holly must have said something similar to what Diane had, because Susan was smiling as the two of them shared some joke or other. When they got close, Diane removed my arm from around her and scooted over to make room for Susan. Seeing the surprise on Susan's face, Diane told her "I just figured you'd be a little more comfortable next to Mike, since you haven't gotten to know the rest of us yet."

Susan nodded, and sat down between us.

With Susan back, she was again the subject of a number of questions - but more low-key ones. What was she majoring in? How did she get her hair so straight and shiny? How many brothers and sisters? Did she like the school we were attending? She lived in the dorms? How terrible! How did she ever manage? And so on...

Supper that night was roast beef, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, green beans, the works. Susan was a little hesitant at first, but quickly discovered that she liked all of it - particularly the strawberry cheesecake we had for dessert. Nobody singled Susan out, but she was included in the conversation during dinner. Afterwards, Mom and Diane's mom gently shooed her out of the dining room and kitchen when she tried to help clean up.

Back in the den with the rest of us, Susan found out that Dad had gone out and rented a movie for us all to watch: a Three Stooges comedy. As he fed it into the VCR, he told Susan "Susan, what you're about to see is a priceless American treasure - three of the greatest comedians to ever live."

Susan looked around, and Diane and Holly both rolled their eyes at Dad's description of the Stooges - but I had to agree with him, as Diane's dad did. Maybe the Stooges are just a guy thing...

Anyway, Mom and Diane's mom got into the den just as the movie was starting, and we spent the next hour and a half laughing ourselves silly - including Susan, who's soft, musical laughter prompted Diane to lean over and whisper in my ear "Even her LAUGH is beautiful!"

When the movie was over, Diane's folks thanked us for a nice evening, told Susan that they were delighted to meet her, and were looking forward to seeing her again. That said, they left to go home, leaving Diane with us. We stayed up and talked for a little longer, before Dad told us that he still had to go to work the next day. Mom chipped in by telling us that she had a meeting for one of the charities she volunteered with the next morning, so she was going to bed, too. That left me, Diane, Holly, and Susan downstairs.

With the others gone, Holly and Diane were ready to start asking the kinds of questions *they* were interested in: what bands did Susan like? Any particular guy she was interested in? Were her brothers cute? Where did she get her clothes? Was she even **wearing** any makeup, and if so, *where* did she get it?

By the time they got all (okay, all for THEN) girl-talk out of the way, all of us were ready for some sleep. Holly told Susan that she was going to bed, and that Susan was welcome to come upstairs then, or any time she wanted. Susan quickly decided that she was ready for bed, too. Diane and I didn't even have to say anything - we just looked at each other, and agreed: yeah, it's time.

All four of us got up and headed for the stairs, Diane and I with an arm around each other, with Holly and Susan behind us. When we got upstairs and Diane and I continued on past Holly's room, I heard Susan ask "Diane won't be staying with us?", followed by Holly's reply "Oh, no, whenever Mike's home, they stay together."

"And your parents and hers do not mind?" Susan asked, plainly baffled by the situation.

"Not at all. They know how nice and responsible Mike is, and they know how much he and Diane love each other, so they don't mind."

Susan didn't have anything else to say about it just then, and I heard her and Holly go into the bedroom and close the door behind them. Once inside my room, Diane closed the door behind us. Before she could even turn around, I had my arms around her waist, and was kissing her softly on the nape of her neck. She leaned back against me and put her hands on my arms for a few moments before taking my hands and moving them up to her breasts. As I started to softly squeeze and caress them through her blouse, she turned her head so the two of us could share a deep, loving kiss.

When our lips parted, she told me "I've missed you, Mike."

"And I've missed you."

"Show me how much..." she replied - and I did.

I released her breasts, and started unfastening the buttons going down the front of her blouse, and when I was done, slid it off her shoulders to set it aside. Next, I reached between her breasts and undid the hook for her bra. With it unfastened, the fullness of her bust pulled the cups apart, but didn't let them fall free. I slid my hands under the cups to gently run the palms of my hands across her nipples, feeling them harden and extend at my touch, even as I felt her slip her shoes off. With her responding to my ministrations, I lifted my hands free of her breasts so I could guide her bra off her shoulders and down her arms so I could set it on top of her blouse.

My hands returned to her breasts, where I gently squeezed and caressed them for a little while before sliding my hands down her sides to her waist. There, it was only a moment before I found the snap to the slacks she had on, unfastened it, and slid the zipper down. I paused for a few moments so that I could kiss her as my hands softly traced outlines on the smooth skin of her body. I felt her starting to press her ass against my growing erection, and returned to the task at hand - so to speak - and knelt to slide the waist of her slacks down her legs, where she stepped out of them.

Still kneeling, I moved my hands to her waist again after a brief detour to softly massage the firm, rounded globes of her ass. I slipped my fingers under the waistband of the thin panties she was wearing, and slowly slid them down her legs, as well - and taking the opportunity to plant a soft kiss at the top of the cleft of her ass. With her panties around her ankles, Diane stepped out of them, too - using one foot to casually kick them aside before turning around to face me. When she did, it brought the dark strip of her bush in front of me. With her pelvis so close to my face, I didn't have any trouble making out the scent of her arousal, or seeing the edges of her labia where they extended past the short hair covering her mons.

Leaning forward slightly, I placed a soft kiss on her lower belly, right at the fringe of her pubic thatch. From there, I worked my way upward, leaving soft kisses on any part of her that struck my fancy - and there were a lot of them. By the time I reached her breasts, I could hear her soft panting, and could see that her shoulders and upper breasts were faintly tinged with an aroused blush.

Taking the end of one of her breasts into my mouth, I softly sucked on it as I used my tongue to twiddle her hard nipple. In only a few seconds, I could feel the difference between the greater mass of her breast and her crinkled areola with my tongue. After sucking on her nipple for a few more seconds, I switched over to the other breast, and soon had it matching the first. For another couple of minutes, I went back and forth between them, until I had both of them equally glistening with my saliva, and both nipples hard and fully erect.

My next stop was to place a soft kiss at the hollow of her throat before continuing on to tend to her soft lips.

When our lips parted, I pulled my head back to look down at her - her head was tilted back, and when she opened her eyes to look at me, the love she felt for me was plain in them - just as the desire she felt was on her face.

When she reached up to start unfastening the buttons on my shirt, her hands were trembling slightly. I took her hands in mine and asked "Do you want to do that, or do you want me naked and with you sooner?"

She didn't even hesitate to answer "Naked!"

I took a step back so she could watch as I took off my own clothes - and saw the pleasure in her eyes when she saw that I was already semi-erect. Once I was as naked as she, I picked her up in my arms and carried her over to my bed, where I set her down gently. She looked up at me in complete love and trust, and I felt myself fall in love with her all over again.

I lay down next to her, and the two of us started kissing again as our hands renewed their acquaintance with each other's bodies. After a bit, our hands had found each others genitals, and we were happily bringing each other to full arousal. I felt her hips start

rocking in response to the way I was running my finger along the cleft of her sex, letting it graze across her clitoris with each pass. I let our kiss gradually end, then lowered my head to start kissing her lower and lower on her body. I was barely past her breasts when she realized what I intended to do; she took my head in her hands and lifted it so she could tell me "You don't have to do that - God, I'm already ready! What I want is to feel you inside me!"

I smiled and nodded, and she released her hold on my head before laying back and spreading her thighs in invitation. I moved between them, and then got into a squatting position with her legs draped across my thighs. Reaching between us, I angled my penis down slightly so that the head of it slid between the soft, warm petals of her vaginal lips. I pressed myself forward, and watched as the head of my erection slipped through the tight ring of her entrance. Reaching forward, I put my hands on her hips, and pulled her toward me as I eased my hips back to a 'neutral' position. Arching myself forward again, nearly half my length slid inside her; I again pulled her closer to me as my hips moved back. At that point, half my manhood was buried in her, without me having to move forward or backward - from that position, I could make love with her with minimal effort, and still have her open to my tender mercies.

I eased my hips back a little, letting some of my penis slip free of her - and also making sure her feminine lubricants were being properly spread around. My next thrust into her ended with nearly my entire penis inside her; something that drew a soft moan of pleasure from her. As I slid myself back out of her, I could feel that her ample oils had thoroughly coated my member. A few more tries, and I was slowly rocking back and forth, alternately filling and emptying her womanly cavern. A little longer, and she started lifting her hips slightly in response to my penetrations, welcoming each new invasion.

It had been several weeks since we'd last made love, and I knew that I would enjoy emptying myself into her. But more important to me was that SHE enjoy our lovemaking, too - so I took my time, doing everything I could to bring her as much pleasure as possible before finding my own release.

As I rocked back and forth, sliding my erect member between the clasping lips of her womanhood, I let my hand rest on her mons, my thumb atop her clitoris. Each time she raised her hips to accept me, her clitoris would brush against my thumb, stimulating her a little more. It wasn't but a few minutes before I felt her vagina start clenching around me as she softly cried out her release. Even as she was groaning her pleasure, I continued pistoning in and out of her, knowing that what she was experiencing was but the first of several climaxes she would have.

When it was (mostly) over for her, I felt her hand slip under mine, her finger replacing my thumb. With both hands and arms free, I leaned forward to prop my body over hers before lowering my head to begin licking and sucking at her breasts and nipples. I could feel the slight vibration as she softly moaned her pleasure at having another of her

erogenous zones tended to. Where our pelvises were joined, I could feel her hand starting to move a bit more quickly as she increased the attention she was paying to her clitoris.

A few more minutes, and she climaxed again, more strongly, using her free hand to stifle the loudest of her cries. By that time, she was wonderfully hot and wet around me; the added pressure of her vagina tightening around me felt incredible, and I couldn't help but increase the pace at which I was moving in her. With the increase in motion in her, it wasn't long before I began to feel tension in my legs; I knew that if I kept making love with her that way, I was sure to cramp, ending the pleasure for BOTH of us.

When I paused, Diane released a soft cry of disappointment before she felt me moving to a different position. With her legs wrapped around my waist and her pelvis tilted up toward me, I slowly thrust myself into her again. The change in position and the angle between our bodies meant that I could enter her as deeply as possible - my forward motion ending only when our pelvises met, trapping her erect clitoris between us, softly squeezing it. When that happened, I felt Diane's vagina involuntarily clench around me - something that felt so good, it prompted me to do it again. And again and again...

Another couple of minutes passed, and I could feel myself getting closer and closer to the point of no return - and hear it as Diane got closer and closer to yet another orgasm; a strong one, by the sound of her increasing arousal.

It wasn't much longer before I knew that it was going to happen. As I felt my balls tighten up, I began thrusting hard into Diane - and felt her respond to the increased tempo and pressure against her clitoris. I managed to bury myself in her a few more times before I pressed myself in her as far as I could as the first hot jet of my semen erupted out the end of my penis to ricochet off the inside of her vagina. As I felt my penis tighten in preparation to launch the next wad of jism, I felt Diane pull herself up against me, burying her face in my shoulder as she nearly screamed her release.

Back and forth we went, alternating grunts and groans as each of us experienced wave after wave of pleasure. Only when we'd both exhausted ourselves with our climaxes did we collapse into a tangle of arms and legs on the bed.

As we lay there panting, Diane managed to gasp out "Yeah, I'd say you missed me!" before a small shudder passed through her body. We lay there together for a bit longer, holding each other close. Finally, though, Diane got up and put a robe on (she kept one at our house, and I kept one at hers), and headed for the bathroom. She came back a couple of minutes later with a damp washcloth in her hand, which she used to wipe the overflow of our combined juices from my body.

Setting the washcloth aside, she climbed back into bed with me, and pulled the covers over us before snuggling herself into my side. I put my arm around her, gave her a hug, and then kissed the top of her head. Together, we drifted off to sleep, happy to be with each other again.

The next morning, Diane and I got downstairs in time to catch Dad before he left for work. He asked if I'd go out and get our Christmas tree that morning, and we'd all decorate it when he got home that night. With me having a pickup truck, it made good sense to me for me to get the tree; Holly and I both knew what kind of tree that he and Mom liked. The clincher, though, was when he said that Susan might like to go with us - it seemed like a good way to help her realize that she wasn't just a guest; that we were inviting her not just into our home, but our *family*.

I said that I'd be glad to, and before he left, Dad gave me one of his credit cards to pay for it.

Holly and Susan came downstairs a little while after he left. By the time they showed up, Mom had left for her meeting, so it was up to the four of us to manage our own breakfast. Holly and Diane teamed up to make French toast for all of us; Susan had never tasted it before, so they drafted her to help. All they'd let me do was make some coffee - and chased me out of the kitchen as soon as it was ready and I'd poured myself a cup.

Several minutes later, Holly called out to let me know that it was ready. When I got into the dining room, I saw that places had already been set for all of us. I took a seat just as the three of them trooped in - Holly carrying coffee and juice, Diane with butter and syrup, and Susan proudly bearing a large platter of French toast and bacon.

Holly saw me looking at Susan, and said "Diane and I made the first few slices, but Susan did the rest. Did pretty good, too!", causing Susan to blush slightly as she set the platter down on the table. They all took seats, and we got started - with Holly, Diane, and I smiling when we saw Susan's reaction to her first bite of French toast with butter and genuine maple syrup.

When breakfast was over, the girls let me take care of the dirty dishes - I had to 'argue' Susan out of helping - and cleaning up the kitchen. When I was done with that, we adjourned to the den with the last of the coffee. Diane and I told Holly and Susan that Dad wanted us to go out and get the Christmas tree that morning. Susan said that she'd seen trees for sale for weeks, and asked why we had waited until then to get ours. Holly explained to her that it was because when Dad was a kid, one his neighbors had their house burn down when their tree caught fire - the family had always bought their tree as soon as possible, and it had gotten too dry and caught fire one night. Since then, Dad had always waited until the last week before Christmas, as a way of making sure that the same thing didn't happen to HIS house and family.

When Diane let us know that she wanted to spend some time with her folks, Holly quickly jumped in to ask Susan if she wanted to go with us to help pick out the tree. Susan was a little hesitant, having never done it before, but Holly didn't have any trouble convincing her to come along.

After we'd finished our coffee, I took Diane home; when I got back, Holly and Susan were ready to go tree shopping.

We had to hit several lots before we found a nice tree at a decent price. Along the way, we explained to Susan what we were looking for, and what was good and bad about the different trees that we saw. She'd never been onto a tree lot before, and was delighted with the smell of freshly cut pine and fir. At one point, Holly picked up a little scrap of one of the trees and gave it to Susan, who kept sniffing it and smiling as we drove around.

With our tree picked out, I handed over the credit card Dad had given me. After the sale was complete, they trimmed the trunk back a little to make sure it would be fresh when we put the tree up. Then they wrapped it so it would be easier to move around, and loaded it into the back of my truck.

Once we got back home, Susan cheerfully helped us get the tree into the house after Holly got the tree stand ready. Every year, we put the tree in the same place, so there wasn't any problem with getting that much of setting things up - the only question was going to be what view of it Mom wanted to have facing 'out', and that only involved turning the tree around on it's axis until she was satisfied.

The next thing was to go up into the attic and dig out the decorations - which I did, handing them off to Holly and Susan, who moved them to where they'd be handy by the tree. The attic was a little dusty, so as I cleaned up, Holly opened up a couple of the boxes of decorations and showed Susan some of the ones that had special meaning to us.

Shortly before lunchtime, Mom came home from her meeting, and we had the chance to get the tree position fine-tuned. That accomplished, Mom made hot roast beef sandwiches for all of us. While we were eating, Holly said that she had a little more shopping to do, and asked if Susan wanted to go with her. Susan looked at me for guidance, and I told her that she was welcome to go with Holly or stay - it was **her** choice. After a few moments thought, Susan decided that sounded like fun, and agreed.

After lunch, Holly called Diane to see if she wanted or needed to do any shopping, too. Apparently Diane did, because I heard Holly make arrangements to pick Diane up a few minutes later. When I'd left for college with my 'new' truck (used, but extensively rebuilt and repaired, courtesy of my Uncle Jack and some of his fellow farmers), I'd given Holly my old car. It was a reliable old 1957 Ford Fairlane that I'd gone a ways toward restoring. All the essential mechanical on it was in flawless condition; it's only real problems were minor: a sticky heating/cooling control, the passenger side door had to be slammed **HARD** to latch, and a few other such trivialities. Holly would have preferred something small, fast, and sexy - but it beat hell out of not having *any* car, so she didn't fuss. Dad liked it because it **wasn't** small, fast, and sexy - it was built out of serious **STEEL**, and if Holly was ever in an accident (always a risk with teenage drivers, Dad pointed out to both of us), it would protect her a lot better than "those little aluminum beer cans" as Dad described them.

With Holly and the others gone, I got myself a book and planted myself in a chair in the den. I didn't hesitate to help Mom the few times she needed me; otherwise it was a nice, quiet afternoon.

It was getting toward late afternoon when I heard Holly and the others get back from their shopping trip. I saw Diane stick her head in the den, and when she saw me sitting there, she came in to sit on my lap.

I looked at her inquisitively, and she told me "I'm in here to keep you distracted while Holly and Susan get the stuff we bought up to her room."

"Okay. So how are you going to distract me?" I asked.

Diane just smiled, and leaned in for a kiss - one that went on for quite some time. When our lips finally parted, I told her "Yup, that was definitely distracting. Think they've had enough time, yet?"

Diane laughed and said "Well, maybe not. I think I'd better distract you some more!" before kissing me again. As this one went on, I put my arms around her waist and gently hugged her. We were approaching incendiary levels when we heard someone softly clear their throat. We let our kiss break off, and looked over to see that it was Mom, wanting to know if we'd like some hot chocolate - her only visible discomfort from finding Diane and I like that was that she'd interrupted us. Both of us told her that some hot chocolate sounded pretty good, Diane adding that Holly and Susan would certainly want some, too. Mom gave us a smile before turned to head for the kitchen; when she was gone, Diane told me "If they haven't gotten everything moved by now, they deserve to get caught. I'll go up and let them know about the hot chocolate."

We shared another quick kiss, and a hug, before she got off my lap the start for the stairs. I got up, too, and went in to see if there was anything I could do to help Mom - and not surprised when she told me there wasn't. Not that there wasn't something I *could* do; it was just whether or not Mom was willing to LET me do it. The kitchen was her domain, and she ran it like a Marine Corps drill instructor in drag.

So I found myself a seat in the little breakfast nook we had, and only had to wait a couple of minutes before the others found me there, and took seats of their own. Diane sat next to me on one side, of course, and Holly insisted that Susan take the other side.

Knowing it was a futile question, I asked them what they'd bought - and was promptly told by Holly that I'd find out soon enough. I'd figured that they'd gotten something for me when it was 'necessary' for Diane to distract me while Holly and Susan moved their purchases into her room; the reply I got to my question only confirmed it.

All four of us were a little surprised when Mom brought in the hot chocolate, and sat down to drink a cup of it with us. As we sipped - Susan was delighted with hot chocolate, and positively giddy with the addition of marshmallows - the five of us talked about all

manner of things. Susan was a little quiet and hesitant at first, but it didn't take her long to join in once she realized that Mom wasn't **anything** like her father - that Mom was soft-spoken, friendly, and generally good-natured. After a while, Mom topped off our hot chocolate - adding marshmallows as necessary - before leaving us to go take care of whatever other tasks she'd set for herself.

When she was gone, Susan told us "I'm sorry, but I'm still a little bit nervous with your parents. They are very much different than mine!"

Holly quickly assured her "You don't have to be, Susan. You're in our house, and I know that neither one of them would **ever** do anything to make you uncomfortable. Besides, they like you!"

Susan looked over at me, and a quick scan of her told me that she **wanted** to believe Holly, but still wasn't *quite* sure. To put her mind at ease, I reached over and gave her hand a little squeeze before telling her 'It's true, Susan. If Mom or Dad **didn't** like you, they would be a LOT more polite and formal with you - but they would NEVER actually do or say anything bad to you. If Mom sat down here with us to talk like she did, you can be sure that she likes you, and wants to get to know you better."

Another scan of Susan told me that my words had put her considerably more at ease - but that she'd been fully aware of my touch on her hand, and both pleased and comforted by it.

With Susan thus reassured, they started talking about what they wanted to do the next day. I pointed out that there were still a few things that I needed to get, which got Holly and Diane started telling me what **THEY** wanted - Ferraris, mink coats, diamonds, all the usual stuff. Susan looked on with surprise, until Diane saw the expression on her face and told her "Its okay, Susan. We're just teasing him - we do this every year. Don't we, Mike?"

I faked a serious/surprised look on my face, and asked "You do?"

That surprised Holly and Diane both - until they realized that I **WAS** faking. Then both of them laughed, and told Susan "See? Now he's teasing **US**!" Susan didn't seem all that certain about the teasing until I started laughing, too, at the expression on her face. Realizing that she'd been 'had', Susan started laughing with us - trying to give me a dirty look, and simply not being able to pull it off.

We were still chuckling when Dad got home, and came in to see what the noise was about. Diane told him, and he smiled as he told Susan "Every year, these two ask Santa Clause for the same things, and every year they're still thrilled with what they **DO** get. I'd think they would eventually get the message, but I guess they're prettier than they are smart."

Holly and Diane both promptly feigned indignity at that, making Dad laugh. Having seen the rest of us teasing each other, Susan understood that Dad was teasing the girls, and laughed with the rest of us when they finally couldn't hold it in any longer.

When Dad left, I asked Susan "Anyway, I've got to finish up MY shopping tomorrow. I could use some help, if you want to go with me, but if you want to stay with Holly and Diane, I'll understand."

Susan looked a trifle concerned, and Holly quickly assured her "Do whichever one you want to, Susan. Mike *always* knows what to get all of us, so he'll be fine shopping by himself. If you want to stay with us, we'd love to have your company; but if you want to go with him, that's fine, too."

Satisfied that either decision would be perfectly acceptable to either side, Susan told us "I think I'd like to go with Mike, then."

Diane reached across to pat Susan's hand in reassurance before telling her "That's fine. Holly and I have a few things to keep ourselves busy."

"I'll just bet!" I thought to myself, knowing how much the two of them enjoyed making love with each other. Having one or the other of our or Diane's house to themselves, it was a pretty safe bet that they'd spend at least SOME of that time getting each other off.

Holly seemed to be reading my thoughts and just grinned at me, mischievously.

After supper, we all trooped into the living room so we could decorate our tree. All of our roles were well-established by that time: Mom was the artistic director, Dad supervised, and the rest of us provided the labor. Susan was again a little hesitant at first, apparently not wanting to intrude on a family event, but readily joined in when the rest of us started handing her decorations to put up under Mom's guidance. The last thing to go on was the haloed angel that went on the top of the tree. Holly was always the one that put it up - at least, from the time she was old enough to reach it from the stepladder; but after she picked it up, she hesitated a moment, then handed it to Susan, saying "It's our family tradition that the youngest in the family puts this last decoration up. Once I was big enough, that was me - but since you're the youngest part of our family now, I think it should be you."

From the look on her face, we could all see that Susan was both honored and terrified at the prospect. She looked over at Mom and Dan, and they just looked on approvingly. Next she looked at Diane and me, and both of us just nodded. Last was Holly, who just told her "Please - you're part of our family now, too."

Susan was visibly nervous and shaking as she made her way to the stepladder. Diane nudged me, and I went over to it, too. As Susan started up, I carefully reached out and put

my hand in the small of her back to steady her. She looked at me with concern in her eyes, and I just smiled for her to go on. She took a deep breath, and as she climbed the last couple of steps, I scanned her. I was surprised to learn just how deeply touched she was by Holly's actions, and how profoundly honored she was by the way we'd included her that evening. But what surprised me most was the discovery that she was intensely aware of my hand at the small of her back, and how pleased she was at my touch.

When she had the decoration securely in place, she made her way back down the stepladder. After she had both feet securely on the floor, all of us quietly applauded - making her blush furiously - before Holly and Diane and Mom all went over to give her a hug. When they were done, all of us could see the quiet joy on her face.

With everything in place, Dad hit the switch for the outlet that the lights were plugged into - and all of us marveled at how nice the tree looked. Mom brought our little tradition to its proper close by bringing in hot chocolate for everyone.

The next morning, all of us were up in time to have breakfast with Mom and Dad before they left - Dad to work, and Mom to the volunteer work she did for a local charity.

When it came time, Susan and I got ready to head for the malls. As we were heading out the door, I told Diane and Holly that we probably wouldn't be back until after lunch - discretely letting them know how much time they had. Both nodded and gave us - well, me, anyway - a conspiratorial smile.

I'd already gotten things for Mom and Dad and Diane's parents, so it was Holly and Diane that I was shopping for - and despite their claims to the contrary, shopping for them was always a challenge for me. I was glad to have the help of a girl closer to their ages than the salesladies I usually had to deal with.

Navigating the crowds in the malls was a lot less tiring than usual - due entirely, I'm sure, to Susan's pleasant and attractive company. Through a combination of flattery, cajolery, and teasing, I even managed to get Susan to pose for a photo of her on Santa's lap as she told him what she wanted for Christmas. In the photos that we took home with us, her shy happiness was plain.

Between the allowance Dad gave me for school, the pocket money Uncle Jack sent, tutoring some of the denser freshmen in physics, and what I'd gotten during my summer jobs, I had a tidy nest egg of money for Christmas gifts. It wasn't so much that I could just throw it around, of course, but it was enough that I wasn't as price-limited as usual at that time of year. With Susan's help, I picked out some things for Holly and Susan and got them wrapped. By the time we were done, it was late enough that lunch time had passed for most people; Susan joined me for a couple slices of pizza at the mall before we started home.

There, we found Holly watching a movie in the den; she told us that Diane had gone home to take care of some things. Susan readily did her part by keeping Holly company as I got my purchases into my room. Holly knew what I was doing, of course, and cooperated.

Once I was done, I joined them for the rest of the movie.

Mom got home late afternoon, and after putting her things away, stopped by the den to let us know she was going to start supper. Susan surprised all of us by asking if Mom would let her help - that she wanted to learn Western cooking, and she thought Mom would be a good person to learn from.

Mom was delighted at Susan's request, and more than happy to help Susan get started. The two of them went into the kitchen, and Holly and I could hear as Mom started explaining what she was going to cook, and how.

With it being just the two of us in the den, Holly took the opportunity to talk to me about Susan.

"Mike?"

"Yeah, pumpkin?"

"Do you have any idea how happy Susan is about being here?"

"I guess she's having fun, but after that, not really."

"Well, she's a lot happier than just 'having fun'. Last night, after everyone went to bed, we stayed up a little while, and she told me how she felt when all of us included her in the different stuff we're doing. Mike, she was **so** happy and so *proud* when I gave her the angel to put on the top of the tree - she must have thanked me a hundred times! And I guess her own folks are pretty strict with her, because she kept telling me and Diane how surprised she was when Mom and Dad were so nice to her."

"Yeah, the first time I met her dad, he was yelling at us - well, mostly her. We were studying together in a diner close to school, and he was upset because she wasn't either in her dorm room or the library. Having me there only made it worse for her."

"That's so sad - I'll bet she was really upset; I mean, she's so SHY all the time."

"Yeah, it did upset her - but I guess it kind of got to her, too, because she kind of told him off, too. She was real polite and respectful about it, but she still stood up for herself."

"Good for her! Did you know she's never been out on a date? I mean, just her and a guy? Not even with any of the Vietnamese boys she knows. The only time she was allowed to be around guys was if there were adults around to be like chaperones. Boy, was she

surprised when you and Diane both stayed in your room that first night!", the last with a chuckle.

"I heard her ask you about it, out in the hall", I replied.

"Oh, believe me, she had a lot more questions after we got inside. She just couldn't believe that Mom and Dan were okay with Diane sleeping with you - never mind Diane's folks! I had to explain to her that what you and Diane have, well, it's something special - that most parents wouldn't let something like that happen. She wanted to know why it was okay, so I told her about what kind of guy you are, and how responsible and mature and everything. It helped a lot when she understood that Diane's parents were - I don't know, thoughtful enough? Brave enough? - that they let her start birth control when they did. And that you and Diane have been together for so long, just the two of you, helped, too. When we were shopping yesterday, Diane noticed that Susan was acting a little strange, and finally asked her if something was bothering her. It took a little while, but Susan finally admitted that she couldn't understand how Diane could let you make love to her that first time. Boy, was she surprised when Diane told her that it had been *HER* idea, and that she asked *YOU* to make love!"

After meeting her father, and knowing how *he* felt about guys being around Susan, I could easily imagine her reaction to Diane's revelation, and laughed.

"Anyway, once she heard that, Susan had a hard time believing that Diane was okay with you paying attention to *HER*. It took a while before Diane was able to convince her that she was okay with you and Susan studying together. It wasn't until Diane told her that even if the two of you went out on a date at school, she - Diane - trusted and loved you enough to know that you wouldn't try to make anything more out of it than just two people that liked each other having a nice time together. Susan asked if you had ever been with another girl since the two of you became a couple, and Diane told her that the only times it had happened, she knew who it was and was happy that you and the girl were able to make each other feel good."

Of course, those were the few times that Holly and I had made love after Diane and I had promised ourselves to each other.

Holly went on "Then Susan asked me what kind of big brother you were, and I told her that I thought you were a GREAT big brother - 'cause I do! - and that I was glad that you and I never really had the kinds of problems that some of my friends have with *their* brothers. She asked me what I meant, so I told her - about all the times I came to you for help, and how you were always there when I needed you, and all the rest of it. Well, except for... *him*."

Ever since her near-rape by one of the guys in my school, Holly had never said his name - she would only refer to him the way she just had, her voice all but dripping vitriol. That I'd well and truly taken care of the guy didn't matter - she loathed him, and didn't make any bones about it.

Holly continued by telling me "Susan said that her own brothers were always interfering - they called it 'watching out' for her - in public, and kind of mean to her when they were at home. She was really surprised at how well we get along together."

I smiled at that, thinking about how Susan's opinion of our relationship might change if she were to find out that I had been the one Holly had given her virginity to.

"Anyway, I guess that's why she's so shy: because so many people keep telling her what to do, and getting upset with her about such small stuff. That first night, she went to bed wearing a *nightgown*, for goodness' sake. You know I like to sleep naked, but I put on a bra and panties so she wouldn't feel uncomfortable, so I was really surprised. Last night was better; she didn't put on any more clothes than I did, but I could tell she was still a little nervous. She has this scar on her back, and I guess she saw me looking at it, because she told me that she was hurt back in Viet Nam while she was still a little girl. From the look on her face, I think there was more to it than that; but I didn't want to make her feel any worse than she did, so I didn't ask."

Just then, we hear Dad get home from work; a few moments later, he stuck his head in the den and seemed surprised to see only Holly and me there.

"Susan said she wanted to learn how to cook Western food, so she's in the kitchen with Mom." Holly explained. Dad just smiled, and headed that direction.

A few minutes later, we heard a knock at the door, and I got up to go see who it was - and happy to find Diane and her parents. I invited them in, and as they came in, Diane's mom told me "Your mother invited us over for supper, and to see your tree."

Once they'd hung up their coats, Diane's folks headed for the kitchen while Diane and I hugged and kissed before going back into the den. Once there, Diane and I got started talking with Holly to figure out what else there was that we needed to do before Christmas. It didn't take long to realize that all of us were done with our shopping, so there wasn't anything left to do but simply enjoy ourselves.

I asked Diane and Holly if they'd managed to keep themselves amused while Susan and I were at the mall, and both of them just gave me big grins as they nodded their heads. I told them that I had a surprise for everybody at supper, and they were immediately all over me, trying to find out what it was. After a good five minutes of good-natured badgering, I still hadn't told them, so they finally gave up - if reluctantly.

We were just sitting there when Susan came in with a pleased smile on her face to tell us that supper was ready. When we got to the dining room, we saw that she and Mom had prepared beef stroganoff for all of us. As we sat down, Mom quietly announced that Susan had done all the cooking - with only a *little* help from her. Susan blushed, but the smile on her face grew even wider.

The food was dished out, and all of us told her that it was delicious - it was - making her blush *again*; something that prompted Dad to tease her "You keep blushing like that, Susan, and you're going to run out of blood!" - causing all of us to join in with her pleased laughter. I embarrassed her even more when I showed everyone the photo of Susan sitting on Santa's lap.

After supper, Holly and I cleaned up while the rest went into the den to look at the tree. As had become another tradition in our house, once the tree was up, each person would put their gifts under it when there wasn't anyone watching; so there was a small pile of packages already under it - those from Mom and Dad almost certainly, and probably those from Holly and Diane. I planned to wait until Christmas eve, after everyone had gone to sleep.

When everyone had had a chance to look the tree over again, we decided that it would be fun to go out and look at the Christmas decorations people had put up on their houses. There were too many of us to fit into one car, so it was decided that Mom and Dad and Diane's parents would take one car; with me, Holly, Diane, and Susan in another.

Susan had seen decorations, of course, both in the stores and in TV stories; but she'd never actually been out to see them in person, so she was excited at the chance to see them first-hand. Outside, we decided to take Holly's car; she and Susan would sit up front so Diane and I could sit in back. Holly - in a stage whisper - told Susan "With both of them in the back seat, there would STILL be room for two more people, the way THEY sit next to each other!" - making all of us laugh.

We followed the other folks - in Diane's folks' car - to the first of several neighborhoods that were famous in our area for their elaborate decorations. As we idled along looking, Susan was amazed and delighted at how elaborate and/or beautiful the different decorations were.

It was getting late when we finally made our way back home. Late enough, in fact, that Diane's parents simply stopped in front of our house to let Mom and Dad out before going on back to their house.

Inside, Mom made all of us a good-night cup of hot chocolate - with Susan's help - and when we were done with it, we all made our way to bed.

The next morning, with nothing pressing to do, the girls and I went outside to play in the snow. First thing to happen was a free-for-all snowball fight that quickly deteriorated to all the girls throwing snowballs at me until I surrendered. With gender supremacy decided, then next task was to build a snowman. Holly and Diane decided that he looked lonely, so they got Susan to help them build a snowwoman - complete with breasts, embarrassing Susan a little - followed by a number of snowchildren. My job, of course,

was to collect the necessary materials for them to work with - snow not just from our yard, but from the neighbors on either side, hats, scarves, and other accoutrements.

By the time we were done, it was close to lunch, and Mom came out to see what we wanted to eat - casting a disapproving eye at the large-busted snowwoman, but not saying anything.

None of us was really sure what we wanted until Susan tentatively offered "Grilled cheese sandwiches?"

Her suggestion met with a landslide of approval, and Mom went back inside while the rest of us got into another snowball fight - this one a bit more even, with Diane siding with me against Holly and Susan. We were all cold, wet, and ready to call a truce when Mom stuck her head outside to tell us that lunch was ready. Mom just shook her head in amusement as the four of us laughingly trooped back into the house, jostling and teasing each other.

As we ate our sandwiches and soup - Mom correctly figuring that it would be needed - Mom told us that one of the other volunteers for one of her charities had called in sick, and she'd been asked to fill in. She'd be gone most of the afternoon, but she'd be back in time for supper. Holly got a thoughtful look on her face, and then had a whispered conversation with Susan before asking if it would be possible for us to go out for Chinese food that night. Mom looked doubtful, but Holly pointed out that all we'd had so far had been American type food, and that Susan might like something different. At that, Susan spoke up, saying that she though Mom's cooking was delicious, and that we didn't have to go anyplace special just because of HER. Mom just smiled, said that she thought she could manage to live with a night off, and that Chinese food sounded pretty good to her.

That settled, Mom left us to get her things and go fill in for the missing volunteer.

We all teamed up to clean up from lunch, and while we were loading the dishwasher, Diane told us that she wanted to make another pass through the mall to make sure she hadn't forgotten anything or anyone - would Susan like to go with her?

When Holly didn't say anything, I knew that the two of them had gotten together and cooked up some plan. Susan accepted Diane's invitation, and I said I'd be glad to take them to the mall and pick them up again, but Holly told them that they could take her car - an offer Diane readily accepted. By then, I *knew* something was up, and finally realized that Diane was making sure that Holly and I would be alone together; and right on the heels of that came the understanding that Holly wanted some 'personal' time with me - as in, for the two of us to make love.

Holly went out and got her car started while Diane and Susan waited inside for a few minutes so it would have time to warm up for them. When they judged that it had warmed up enough, they piled into the front seat and left.

Back in the den, I was sitting at the end of the couch when Holly came in and parked herself on my lap. I put my hands on her hips and told her "You and Diane are about as subtle as a circus pony."

"What?" Holly asked, pretending she didn't know what I was talking about.

"That little song and dance about Diane wanting to go to the mall, and taking Susan with her. I know you, Holly, and if there's a mall visit involved, you're one of the first in line. If you didn't want to go, then it was because you wanted to stay here MORE - and I can only think of one reason that you'd want to stay here with ME, just the two of us."

She blushed slightly and gave me a lopsided grin before answering "Okay, we're busted. Diane and I have been having plenty of fun together, but I got to missing YOU. You've been with Diane every night since you got back, and with Susan staying in my room, I really can't sneak out for a visit. So we came up with the mall thing as a way for me to get some time with you."

"And it didn't occur to either one of you to let me know what was going on?"

Surprised, Holly asked "You mean you don't want to...?"

I smiled and answered "Of course I want to. I'm just saying that it would have been a nice gesture if you'd included me in your plans, or at least told me what you wanted. Then I could play my part the way you want me to, and not surprise you."

Holly smiled and replied "Yeah, I can understand that. You did kind of throw us a bit, when you offered to drive them to the mall - I guess we should have figured you'd do that."

Taking my hands in hers, Holly went on to say "Okay, next time, we'll make sure we let you know when we plan to get you to jump one of us" before moving my hands up to cover her breasts as she leaned forward to give me a kiss.

I could feel her nipples hardening under my thumbs - she'd apparently detoured to her room to take her bra off - as Holly's lips parted in invitation for me to do the same. I did, and our tongues were soon dancing in each other's mouths

When our lips finally parted, I used my hands to slide her blouse up, exposing her breasts. As she felt the air across her nipples, Holly leaned forward again, making her breasts even with my face. I paused a few moments to take in the sight of them: they'd noticeably grown since the last time I'd seen them, though they were still generally conical, and tipped with small rose-pink areolas and nipples. Having memorized this improvement in her anatomy, I didn't delay any longer taking one of her breasts in my mouth and softly sucking on it as I ran my tongue across her nipple, feeling it harden even more. Holly put her hands behind my head, pulling me closer to her chest in encouragement to continue - which I did, with the other breast. Back and forth I went,

giving each the attention it so richly deserved. By the time I had the ends of both her breasts at full attention, Holly was slowly rocking in my lap in her arousal.

I finally released the tip of Holly's breast from my mouth, and waited, looking up into her face. When she realized that I had stopped, she opened her eyes and looked back at me. Once I had her attention, I asked "Where do you want to do this?"

Without hesitation, she answered "My room!"

I scooted forward on the couch in preparation for getting up. I thought Holly would slide off my lap, but she surprised me by pivoting slightly and wrapping her legs around my waist before asking "Carry me?"

I just smiled, and struggled to my feet - Holly wasn't exactly small, and it took more than a little effort to get to a standing position. Once there, though, I reached down to hold her ass in my hands to help support her weight as I made my way to the stairs, then on up and to her room. After we were inside, Holly removed one arm from around my neck and pushed her bedroom door closed. With our privacy assured, I carried her over to her bed and managed to get us onto it - Holly on her back, me still over her with her legs and arms wrapped around me.

She didn't seem inclined to turn loose of me until I pointed out to her "It's going to be kinda tough to get anything going here with all these clothes on..."

At that, she giggled and turned loose of me. I started to move away so I could take my clothes off, but Holly had other ideas.

"Just lay down, on your back", she directed. As I did, she moved off the bed, standing next to it as she quickly shed clothing. In less than a minute, she was as naked as the she was born, though a LOT better looking. She stood still for a few moments, letting me look her over before she climbed back on the bed with me. The first thing she did was reach for my waist, where she quickly had my belt and pants unfastened. Following that, she soon had my zipper undone - which was something of a relief, because the sight of her standing there naked had started to get me hard.

When Holly discovered that fact, she got a mischievous grin on her face, and quickly pulled my pants and underwear down far enough to free my rapidly-inflating penis - then wrapped her hand around it to hold it steady as she quickly took the head of it in her mouth. She went after me with enthusiasm, and it wasn't long before I was fully erect and glistening with her saliva. Finally satisfied that she had me completely ready, Holly let me fall from her lips to tell me "Lift your hips, so I can get your pants off!"

I did as commanded, and Holly started pulling my bunched pants and shorts down my legs. As they got close to my knees, Holly's face was again close to where my erection was waving in the air. With a glint in her eye, she took it back into her mouth and started

softly sucking on it as she first used her hands, then her legs and feet, to push my clothes the rest of the way down and past my feet.

With the bottom half of me bare, her next job was to get the other half in the same state. Releasing me from her mouth, Holly moved to straddle my hips, the hot, wet opening to her womanhood pressing my penis against my belly. Rubbing herself along the bottom of it, she reached out to start unfastening the buttons of my shirt. When she was done with that, I lifted my body up enough for her to slide it off my shoulders. Then, by rolling toward one side then the other, she managed to get it down my arms and out from under me, leaving me as naked as she was.

Looking down to where she was continuing to slide herself along my length, I saw that her labia were fully extended and her clitoris was erect and visible. The entire underside of my penis was awash in her fragrant essences and I could feel the smooth globes of her ass flexing against my thighs as she moved herself back and forth.

A minute later, Holly apparently decided that she'd had enough of that, and started to move herself down to where she could take me in her mouth again. I caught her arm with my hand, and said "Me, too!" when she looked up at me. A big grin split her face before she happily pivoted around so that her crotch was aimed at my face. After a little minor adjustment, each of us was face-to-face (so to speak) with the other's sex.

Holly didn't delay to wrap her lips around my penis again, but I took a few moments to look at the flower of her sex - marveling yet again at how something so fragile and delicate could bring such pleasure. I saw that her pubic hair was a trifle thicker than the last time I'd seen it - but not by a lot - and still the same slightly curly tangle of rust red. It had also expanded a little, too, covering more of her pudendum and lower belly than it had before. There in the middle of it, her medium-thick labia were well-parted, the entrance to her vagina easily visible - and thoroughly drenched with her lubrication.

Lifting my head slightly, I extended my tongue and ran it between her vaginal lips, tasting the fresh, salty-musky flavor of her. As I did, Holly released a soft moan of arousal and pleasure; the vibrations of it echoed through my erect penis, stimulating me tremendously. It didn't take long before each of us was enthusiastically trying to bring as much pleasure as we could to the other - and doing a damn fine job of it.

Holly 'won' the first round when a combination of suction, tongue- and lip-pressure, and a twisting motion of her head combined to bring me to the edge of ecstasy - and beyond. I filled her mouth to overflowing with my jism, forcing her to swallow what she had before any more of it leaked from between her lips. In return, I combined gentle, rhythmic sucking on her clitoris while fluttering my tongue across it to freeze her in place as wave after wave of orgasmic delight washed over her. When her release was over, she literally collapsed on top of me in relief.

Even though I was feeling pretty weak myself, I managed to get her turned around and laid out on the bed next to me, where I could hold her in my arms as both of us panted

our way toward recovery. To help her focus - and because I wanted to touch her! - I used one hand to trace random patterns along her body, from shoulders to knees. Just as I'd been the first time I'd been privileged to touch her that way, I was both delighted and amazed at the smoothness of her skin, and how clear and soft it was.

I knew Holly was back in the land of the coherent when I heard her say "So, copping a feel when I'm helpless, huh?"

I looked at her and smiled, answering "Well, you'd do the same to me if you had the chance, wouldn't you?"

She grinned back and replied "Damn right I would!" - causing both of us to chuckle.

A few moments later, she found the energy to capture my hand as it passed over one of her breasts and held it there, telling me "I like it when you touch me like that - but I like it when you touch me like THIS even more."

So we laid there, my hand cupping her breast as we slowly got the rest of our breathing under control, and our energy back. We were comfortable enough with each other that it didn't seem unusual to either one of us when I asked her how things were going in school, did she have any new boyfriends, and so on. She'd long ago started confiding in me about the things that she didn't think she could talk to Mom and Dad about, and *always* listened to the opinions and thoughts I had on the different subject and problems she brought to me. That's not to say that she always did as I suggested, though.

In any event, the two of us spent the next little while just talking to each other, despite the otherwise intimate situation we were in. As I'd expected, Holly had a couple of things troubling her, and together we figured out a way to minimize them. She was doing well in school except for one class that she and Diane were BOTH having trouble with; she promised to give some thought to the idea of the two of them going to the teacher to see if there was anything he had to suggest that would help them - other than studying their books more, which Holly swore both of them were doing, even more than they did for their other classes. She'd gone out with one of the guys from school a few times, but he'd started pressuring her for sex, so she'd dropped him like a hot rock; and then warned all the other girls what he was like. There was another guy she kind of liked, but thought he was a little nerdy. I pointed out to her that **I'd** been thought of as a little nerdy, too, and that gave her something to think about.

By the time we got through talking like that, both of us had pretty much recovered from our previous exertions. We were at the point of talking about what we thought of some of the new music we'd heard when I felt Holly move to take my penis in her hand. As we continued to talk, she would softly squeeze and pull on it, stimulating me to semi-erectness. I knew that she wouldn't be touching me that way unless she was ready for me to do something similar to her, so I let my hand drift down from her breast to her pelvis, where my fingertips started tracing lazy patterns through her pubic hair as we continued to talk.

In time with the slow - but steady - hardening of my penis, I expanded the range of my touch at Holly's pelvis; one of my fingers tracing the delicate shapes of her inner vaginal lips, dipping between them every so often to press gently against the entrance to her vagina, and softly stroking the hard nubbin of her clitoris. It wasn't much longer before both of us were having trouble maintaining the thread of our conversation.

It was after I'd lowered my head so Holly and I could share a long, loving kiss that she decided enough was enough: pushing on my shoulder so that I'd roll over onto my back, she quickly scrambled around to assume the position she'd been in when we'd gotten each other off so completely. The difference was that each of us was only interested in sampling the other's 'wares' for a few seconds before she turned around again and straddled my hips, facing me. My penis was shiny with her saliva, and the area between her labia glistened with the mix of her oils and my saliva - both of us were as lubed up as need be for what was next.

Reaching between her thighs, Holly took my erection in her hand and rose up. After sliding the head along her cleft to thoroughly coat it with her oils, she held it against her opening and slowly used her weight to impale herself on it. When nearly a third of me was inside her, she released her grip on me and leaned forward to put her hands on my chest - using her arms to support her body as she took more and more of me inside her. Only when she felt her firm ass resting against my thighs did she open her eyes to look at me, a broad grin on her face as she said "THAT is what I've been missing!"

I grinned back and answered "Now that you mention it, I've kind of missed it, too!" before reaching up to cup her breasts in my hands, my thumbs rubbing her erecting nipples. She closed her eyes again as she concentrated on the sensations she was feeling - not just from my hands on her breasts, but having me inside her, as well.

A few moments later, I felt her start moving herself on me - in small, fraction-of-an-inch movements at first, and then quickly expanding them to allow nearly half my manhood slide between the fleshy gates of her womanly portal.

We made love like that for quite some time - Holly on top of me, slowly sliding herself up and down my erection. Any time she started to feel a little tired, she'd get me completely inside her, and rest - giving me ample opportunity to play with her breasts, lick and suck on them, and for the two of us to share lengthy, deeply loving kisses.

The longer our lovemaking like that went on, the more frequently Holly felt the need to rest; it was after we'd checked each other's tonsils that I finally asked her if she'd like me to take over for a little while. She grinned, and said that as a matter of fact, yes, she WOULD like that. She followed that by telling me that she wanted us to take our time and go slow - she wanted to enjoy the feeling of having me inside her for a while before we finished. When I suggested that we do it doggie-style, she readily agreed and lifted herself off of me. As I got to my knees, she turned to the side and positioned herself for my entry. Before I moved close, though, I took the time to look at the view she was

presenting me: her tight, firm ass pointed up in the air and the dark pink entrance to her vagina open and glistening in the midst of the darkly matted curls of her soft bush.

The sight of her like that caused an involuntary twitch in my penis, reminding me that she was there for ME. I moved in behind her, and after caressing the smooth globes of her delightfully curved ass, positioned the head of my still-slick erection between her labia. Holding myself steady, I arched my hips, easily sliding through the tight ring of her entrance and on to fill her tight sheath in a single stroke. I put my hands on her hips and held her steady as I pressed myself forward even more, trying to get as much of my penis inside her as I could - and gained perhaps another half inch. We stayed like that for a minute, perhaps two, both of us savoring the sensations created by our incestuous union.

Finally, though, both of us felt the need to have me moving in her. I backed myself out of her until only the head of my erection was inside her, then pushed forward again slowly - both of us again delighting in the sensation of my manhood filling her. Another withdrawal, followed by a slightly faster thrust. Then again, a little faster. Then faster still. After a couple of minutes, I was pistoning in and out of her steadily - fast enough for both of us to enjoy the feeling of our lovemaking, but not so fast as to stimulate either of us too much. The position we were in, and the pace of our lovemaking, were easy and comfortable for me, and we continued on that way for several minutes before Holly lowered her body to rest on her elbows. The change in her position brought a slight difference in the way she felt around me; and apparently, changed the way I felt to *her*: after a minute or so, I could hear that her breathing had quickened a little, and I could feel her getting even wetter around me. I knew that these were both signs that she was getting more aroused, and confirmed it with a brief read of her thoughts. I had to admit that the way she felt as my penis slid in and out of her was having a similar effect on me - it wasn't making love to make it last, any more, it was making love to get off.

Another minute, and there wasn't any doubt: both of us were definitely moving closer and closer to our climaxes. Holly realized it, too, and finally told me "Dammit, Mike, this feels too good! It was nice while it lasted, but now I want to *finish*!"

"Me, too!" I managed to gasp out.

"Let's do it, then!" she encouraged - not that I needed it.

Reaching into her mind again, I found that even a small increase in the pace of our lovemaking would get her off faster and harder. I loved Holly, and wanted to make our time together as pleasant and satisfying as I could - so I sped up, monitoring her mind until I found the speed that pleased her the most. It also did a pretty good job of pleasing me, too.

A few more minutes, and both of us were on the home stretch - gasping and moaning, covered with a fine sheen of perspiration. Holly had a double handful of her bedcovers, kneading them as she groaned out her steadily increasing pleasure and arousal; the liquid

sounds of our joining were partially interrupted by my grunts as I continued to thrust myself into her.

Finally, I couldn't put it off any longer, and I held Holly's hips tight as I pushed myself deep inside her for several long, hard strokes before trying to bury myself in her as the first wad of my cum blasted against her insides. That was all that Holly needed, and she shrieked her pleasure as I felt her tighten around me even more with the onset of her orgasm. The clenching of her hot, wet vagina around my penis was incredible, and the second shot of my semen rocketed out of me nearly as hard as the first, and was quickly followed by a third. With each addition of my cum to her hot insides, Holly would cry out her pleasure before another spasm of her orgasm choked off her breath.

After the last of my spunk had dribbled out the end of my penis, I was still hard, and I held myself inside Holly as she continued to experience a series of gradually-decreasing aftershocks. By the time they ended, my penis had softened enough that it pulled free of her as she managed a controlled collapse onto her bed. I wasn't in much better shape, but somehow got myself laying next to her, where I put an arm across her back and a leg across hers, holding her close as both of us tried to get our breathing something close to normal.

After a couple of minutes, Holly managed to lift herself up enough to turn her head toward me - and on her face and in her eyes, I could see the happiness and pleasure that I'd been able to bring her. She mouthed the words "I love you", and I smiled and told her "I love you, too, pumpkin", making her smile.

We lay there a few more minutes, happy to simply have physical contact and be able to look at each other before I felt Holly move her hips around a little.

"Icky?" I asked.

She nodded, and I asked "Want me to get a towel and clean you up a little?"

She smiled, and nodded again. I got up and went into the bathroom, returning a minute later with the necessary towel and having added a damp washcloth. She managed to turn over onto her back on her own, and lay there passively as I first used the damp washcloth to clean up the outside, then tucked the towel under her to soak up any further overflow. When I was done, I rinsed the washcloth out and left it in the hamper to be washed.

When I got back to her room, Holly had changed position a bit. After she saw me, she indicated that she wanted me to lie back down with her, which I did. Once she was in my arms again, she looked up at me and gave me one of her patented I Love You smiles before telling me "Michael, you are **such** a dear. You always make me feels so good, and you're always so thoughtful and gentle afterwards. If you weren't my brother, I'd be fighting with Diane to see which one of us got to make love with you the most!"

I smiled back, and told her "And if you weren't my sister, *I'd* be fighting with Diane to see which one of us got to make love with YOU the most!", making her giggle.

We lay there snuggling a little while longer before we finally decided that we needed to clean up and get dressed. By that time, both of us were fully recovered, and we had a happy time showering, and 'helping' each other get dressed.

We were downstairs in the den, watching a movie on video cassette when Diane and Susan got back from the mall. I don't think either one of us was surprised when Diane came in with a couple of small bags, evidence that she'd found *something* to buy. When she saw us, Diane gave us a small, private smile; Susan didn't seem to think that the situation was anything other than me and Holly having some quiet brother and sister time.

The four of us finished watching the movie, and were rewinding it when Mom got home; followed a few minutes later by Dad. Dad looked at all of us, and then pointedly stared at me when he asked "Does anyone know anything about the snow people out in the yard? And particularly, about Misses Frosty?"

"I wasn't the sculptor, Dad, just the sculptors go-fer."

Dad looked over at Diane and Holly, both of them grinning at him. He sighed, and said "On the way in, I got a couple of comments from the neighbors. Nobody's upset or complaining, but I think once Misses Frosty has melted, she doesn't need to be replaced, okay?"

Holly and Diane both sobered up a little at that, and nodded their understanding.

A few seconds later, Mom came in and let him know what the plan was for supper, and he cheerfully agreed. A while later, when all of us were ready to eat, we piled into Dad's car (Mom, Dad, Holly, and Susan) and my truck (me and Diane) and made our way to our favorite Chinese place, China Garden. Inside, we were quickly shown seats and given our menus. While we were deciding what we wanted, Holly explained to Susan that we usually wound up ordering a lot of different things, and sharing. Susan smiled, and told us that that was how Vietnamese families ate: several different dishes that the whole family ate from.

Reassured that we weren't doing anything that was going to make Susan uncomfortable, we were all ready when the waitress showed up to take our orders. When she was gone, Dad turned to Susan and asked "Susan, I hope you'll forgive my ignorance, but I'm curious to know if you have any idea of what nationality our waitress is."

Susan looked at her - she was at another table nearby - for a few moments, then turned back and answered "I'm sure she is ethnic Chinese - but I don't think she is from China. From the way she is dressed, and the jewelry she is wearing, I think she is probably from Thailand. When we first got to California, we tried eating in many different Oriental

restaurants, and in most of them, the owners were ethnic Chinese, but from countries other than China. Even one of the Vietnamese restaurants we went to was such a place - the owners were Indonesian Chinese, serving American versions of what they *thought* Vietnamese food was."

That last statement had all of us baffled for a few moments before we realized how ridiculous it was, and started laughing.

When the laughter died, Dad told her "I'm sorry if my question made you uncomfortable, or made you think that I think all Asian people know each other, or are the same. It is just that we have often wondered if this was an 'authentic' Chinese food place, or just people from some other Asian country. I simply thought that you would probably have more experience with Oriental restaurants that we do." Even as Dad was saying it, I realized that I'd been guilty of doing the same thing - if to a lesser extent. I quietly resolved to learn better the first chance I got.

Susan smiled, and told him "I understand. Yes, many people here in America think that all Asian people are the same, and that we all know each other. Of course, that is not the case, any more than all the people from Europe, or even North America, know each other. I'm sorry to say that I know that the people from most Oriental countries tend to stay in groups of people from the same area - my own father is guilty of doing so. That is why I am so ignorant of American customs, and American ways of doing things - something that Mike has been very kind about helping me correct. My own people are sometimes a mystery to me, so I can only imagine what we must seem like to Americans. I do not take offense at your questions; from the way you and your family and friends have treated me, I know that you are kind people, and your questions are honest and well intentioned. I think I am probably the first Oriental person you have ever really gotten to know, just as you are the first American family I have gotten to know; I think there are probably many questions we have about each other, and I hope that both of us can learn about each other in the little time we have together."

Dad nodded in his acceptance of what she'd just said before Mom told her "Susan, I know that I don't know as much about the Orient as perhaps I should - and I know even less about your country, and the terrible things that happened there. If you want to talk about these things, then I would like to hear them - good AND bad. And if you want to know anything about our family or home or country, and I am able to answer, I will tell you as best I can."

Susan smiled at Mom, and said "Thank you. But if you don't mind, I would like to correct a small misunderstanding. Vietnam is not my country, any more - THIS is. I am still Vietnamese, and I will always be from the Vietnamese culture; but my country is America, now. I am a citizen, and very happy to be one. As for the rest, I would be happy to tell you what I remember of Vietnam - but I think it won't be so much, since we left there when I was still very young."

About that time, our food arrived, and we all started digging in. Susan was a willing participant in the various conversations that we had as we ate, but I think all of us noticed that she didn't seem to enjoy the food as much as we did.

When dinner was over, we finished our tea and all opened up the fortune cookies we'd been given, sharing the different saying with each other. Business in the place was starting to pick up, and we decided to leave so the people waiting could have a table.

Back home, we were all in the den when Holly asked Susan "What did you think of the China Garden? You said that your family tried a lot of places when you first got to this country."

Susan thought a moment, and answered "I think maybe it's not as good as many of the places that we went to in California. Please understand that Chinese cooking is a little bit different, depending on where the Chinese people are from - the local spices and such aren't always the same everywhere. There is also a difference between the way most Asians cook for themselves, and how they cook for Americans. I know that is particularly true for Vietnamese food. In California, if we went into a Vietnamese restaurant owned by another Viet family, we would be served food that was different than what was given to the Americans. We were in a refugee camp in Hong Kong for a little while, and the food we got there was much different than what we had here."

"How so?" Mom asked.

Susan looked a little apologetic, but replied "Americans seemed to prefer the sauces to be heavier and thicker, and they wanted their food to be **much** hotter than we like when it got to their table. They also had a different taste for the food than we do, so the food was prepared differently. In Viet cooking, we prefer more vegetables and fish, and less meat than is common in the American diet. We like the taste of fresh stir-fried food, and most of the Americans seemed to like their vegetables cooked longer than we normally would."

Mom nodded, and said "I *think* I understand what you're talking about, at least a little. But since the only oriental kind of food we've ever had has been from places like the China Garden, I have to guess that we don't really know what real Oriental cooking is like."

Susan smiled, and said "If you would like, I would be happy to show you how to cook Vietnamese food before I leave."

Mom reached out and touched Susan's arm as she answered "I would like that very much."

There was a little pause, and Diane asked "If you don't mind, can you tell us how you got out of Vietnam, and came here?"

Susan nodded, and proceeded to do so - telling us how, several months after the fall of Saigon, they'd made their way to the coast, waiting for an opportunity to escape. The country was under martial law, but still chaotic, and they finally got the chance their father had been waiting for - a fairly seaworthy boat with enough room for all of them. When the time came, they had to sneak down to the beach, only to find out that there were so many people going that the boat was going to be overloaded. Her father had spent all of his money on the trip, so they all climbed aboard despite his misgivings, and made their way out to sea. There, they tried to motor and sail their way north to Hong Kong, but with the boat overloaded, they ran out of fuel long before they got anywhere close; and the winds at that time of year weren't consistent enough for them to use as propulsion. They ran out of food about halfway through the journey, and had been completely without water for three days before a passing merchant vessel saw them. The merchant vessel radioed in to the Hong Kong authorities, and the boat was towed into port, where all the families were put into camps. They were given food and water, but little else, while the Hong Kong authorities tried to find permanent homes for all of them. After nearly a year and a half, Susan's family received word that the United States would take them in; but it was still several more months before they got all the necessary paperwork and permissions to emigrate. They were initially settled into Southern California, where they lived almost entirely within the Vietnamese community. Her father found work, and later started a small business. With the success of his business, they made enough money to leave California and move to our state. Her father was partners with another Vietnamese refugee, the two of them running a cleaning supply business.

By the time she finished, Susan's face revealed the sadness she felt, and none of us doubted that what she'd told us didn't even begin to accurately describe the privations and horrors of what she'd been through. Holly changed the subject by asking what Susan remembered about living in Vietnam. That perked her up, and she started telling us about some of her memories from that time - playing in old Buddhist temples, the sight of Buddhist monks in the streets, going to school, the different celebrations and festivals, and so on. All of us were glad to see the smile on her face when she was done talking.

By then, it was getting late; Mom stood up and went over to where Susan was sitting and leaned over to give her a kiss on the cheek before telling her "I know that it must have been a long and scary trip for you - but I'm glad you made it, and that you're here with us now, Susan."

Susan stood up, tears of happiness forming in her eyes, and hesitated only briefly when Mom took her into her arms for a hug. Following that, Holly and Diane both hugged her, too; followed by Dad and I. By the time we were done, Susan was visibly crying and Diane and Holly moved in to comfort her as they guided her upstairs to Holly's room. When they were gone, Mom and Dad shared a look before Mom turned to me and said "I was a little nervous about having her here for Christmas, at first. But she's such a GOOD person, and after all that she's been through... Well, I guess she's got something for all of us to learn about what it means to be thankful. I'm glad she was able to visit us, Mike."

I saw Mom wipe a tear from her eye before she turned and left me and Dad standing there. Dad looked at me for a few moments, and then said "I figured it was going to be something different, having her here with us during Christmas. I didn't really expect that we'd learn so much from her; I only hope that we give back as much as she's given us."

"I think maybe we have, Dad. Holly and Diane have both told me how happy she is to be here, and how proud she is that we pretty much treat her like family." I answered.

"That's good to know, Mike. God knows, she deserves a happier life than what she's already had" he answered, before turning to follow Mom upstairs.

I went around to check the doors and turn off lights before heading up to my bedroom - and not surprised to find it empty when I got there. I had a pretty good idea of how much Holly and Diane cared for Susan, and figured that Diane would stay with her as long as she was needed.

I got undressed and into bed, but couldn't get to sleep - I kept thinking about all that Susan had told us that night. I simply couldn't imagine having to go through everything that she had at MY age, never mind doing it as young as she'd been. Hearing about all of it, I could only imagine what it must have been like for her father and mother - and that made it easier for me to understand why her dad was the way he was, and to excuse - if not forgive - him for the way he sometimes came across. I figured that if I had to worry about not just getting myself, but my entire family, out of the kind of place that Vietnam must have been like, I'd go through some personality changes, too.

I was still laying there when Diane came in, closing the door behind her. Looking at her, I could see that she'd been crying, and I quickly got up to take her in my arms and try to comfort her. I was surprised at the ferocity in her voice as she started whispering a string of epithets that ended with "Dirty, rotten, Commie bastards! What the hell kind of 'political' system is it that puts an innocent young girl THROUGH something like that? Aunts and Uncles dead, others dragged off to god-knows-where; her own family alive only because some lookout on some ship happened to spot their tiny little boat on the whole, big ocean. But after all that, despite the **hell** she's been through, she's still got it in her to laugh and smile and just be the good person she is. I don't know if I could come out of something like that anywhere near as well as she has."

I hugged Diane, and told her "I know. I was laying there thinking about the same things. Is she going to be okay?"

Diane pulled back a little bit, and looked up at me before saying "Yeah, I guess you would think about that stuff. Susan? Sure, she's going to be fine - we started out trying to make HER feel better, and it ended up her telling US it was okay. Jeez, I don't know how she does it. I'll tell you one thing, though - if anybody ever tried to tell me that Communism is a GOOD thing, I'm going to rip their tongue out!"

I couldn't help smiling at the thought of Diane trying something like that, and she seemed to read my mind, because she grinned and told me "Okay, so maybe I wouldn't. But you can sure bet they'll hear what I think about it!"

"I don't doubt it for a minute" I told her as I pulled her close for another hug.

When we separated the second time, Diane finally realized that I was standing there naked. She smiled at me and said "If you'll give me a minute, the next hug can be a lot friendlier." I grinned back, and didn't even *pretend* I wasn't watching her as she slipped out of her dress, then the assorted stuff she had on underneath it.

Naked as I was, she stepped close to me again for another hug - and she was right: it WAS friendlier that way.

When we were in bed and holding each other, Diane asked "After hearing all that tonight, I'm not really in the mood for anything, if you don't mind, Mike."

I hugged her, and answered "It's okay. I'm not either. It's enough to just have you here."

Diane's only reply was to kiss me and snuggle closer. I don't think either one of us got to sleep easily, though.

The next morning, after Dad left for work, Holly and Diane discovered that Susan had never been sledding. They immediately decided to correct that gross oversight, and dug out the sleds that Holly and I had been given when we were younger. They wanted me to go along, but I claimed there was something I still needed to do, so they let me off the hook. Once the three of them were outfitted in boots, mittens, hats, and anything else they thought might help keep them warm and dry - a wasted effort, we all knew, but it had to be tried - they left for a collection of hills not far from our house. I offered to drive them over, but they said they weren't in any hurry, and wanted to walk. Mom insisted on loading them up with a couple of large thermos bottles - one of hot chocolate, the other of soup.

Once they were gone, I got in my truck and made my way to the main branch of our library, where I spent the better part of the day reading about the different cultures in Asia. Susan had glossed over the gross ignorance of most Americans about that part of the world, and I was determined not to share it.

Even with most of my day spent at the library, I still beat the three of them home - if only by a few seconds. As I was getting out of my truck, I saw the three of them turning the corner as they came toward our house. They saw me, and commenced to hooting and cat-calling as they came charging toward me. When they got close enough, I could see that all three of them had met Mister Snowdrift more than once - but they'd had so much fun

and were in such good spirits that it simply didn't matter as they started telling me about each other's (mis)adventures.

Finally, they all decided that it was time to go inside and warm up a little. They shed their outdoor clothing, and as they all started upstairs to change out of whatever was cold and wet on them, Mom suggested that warm showers would probably be a good idea to take some of the chill off. I could almost hear the gears clicking as Diane and Holly looked at each other, but figured with Susan there, they wouldn't take the chance of starting anything with each other.

A while later, the three of them swarmed downstairs, laughing and giggling as they made their way into the kitchen to see if Mom had anything for them to eat. It wasn't long until supper, so Mom didn't have any trouble talking them into hot chocolate and a couple of cookies each. With the promise of food and drink, they made their way into the den where I was; a few minutes later, Mom brought in drinks and snacks for all of us.

They were still telling me about all the fun they'd had when Dad got home some time later. He stuck his head in the den, and was promptly overwhelmed by the three of them welcoming him home, and telling him about their day. I could see that Dad was glad that Susan had had such a good time before he managed to get free of them and get his own welcome home from Mom. After he left, Holly and Diane let Susan know what the known events were for the next few days: our families would stay home Christmas morning to open gifts, then Diane's folks would come to our place for dinner. The next night, we'd go over to their place for supper. Holly went on to explain that our families took turns on who went where - next year, we'd go to Diane's for Christmas, and they'd come over to our place for supper.

A bit later, Susan went in to see if she could help Mom with supper; a request that was apparently granted since the three of us didn't see her again until Mom let us know it was time to eat. In the mean time, Holly and Diane told me that Susan had never been ice skating before, either, so they wanted the three of us to take her to a local rink the next day, and teach her. I agreed, and we got everything planned out.

After supper - baked chicken and fixings - Diane and I cleaned up while everyone else went into the den to get things set up for a couple of movies Dad had brought home. Diane and I went on to fix popcorn for everyone, and joined them. The movies Dad had brought were 'Miracle on 34th Street' and 'It's a Wonderful Life', both big-time Christmas tear-jerkers. By the time Jimmy Steward was running down the street wishing everyone Merry Christmas, all three of the girls and Mom were crying - and I have to admit to damp eyes, myself.

By the time the movies ended, it was time for bed. Dad had to go in to work the next day, but not the day after, which was Christmas Eve. Diane and I stayed behind to rewind the tapes - and make out a little - when the rest of them went upstairs to go to bed.

As we were waiting, I told Diane "I saw the look you and Holly gave each other when Mom said all of you should take a hot shower after you were sledding."

Diane grinned at me, and said "Who? Us?"

I grinned back, and said "Yeah, you - both of you."

"Well, I'll have you know that both of us behaved ourselves quite nicely, thank you - even after we talked Susan into showering with us. All in the interest of saving time, you understand."

I looked at Diane in surprise, and she laughed at the expression on my face before telling me "Yes, all three of us took a warm-up shower together. Susan was a little nervous at first, but she got into the spirit of it quick enough once we got started."

I could only sit there, trying to visualize all three of them naked and slippery with soapsuds. Diane and Holly, sure, that was easy enough; it was the addition of Susan that was throwing me off.

Diane laughed at the way I looked, and said "You'll be happy to know - I think! - that the rest of her body is as pretty as what you've already seen. She's got this scar on her back that she's a little ashamed of, but other than that, she's *beautiful*. Her tits aren't as big as mine or Holly's, but that's pretty obvious, even with clothes on. But what you can't see is that they're such a nice shape, and SO firm. She's got tiny little nipples, and her hair - you know, between her legs - is just a small patch, and real thin."

"And you know her tits are so firm... how?"

Diane smiled and answered "Because we were helping each other warm up in the shower, silly. Two of us teamed up to help wash and warm up the other one, then it was someone else's turn. Susan didn't mind us touching her, and she took a little longer cleaning MY tits than she had to - and I think she did the same thing for Holly, too."

Despite the image of the three of them playing with each other in the shower that kept crowding into my mind, I asked Diane "Why are you telling me all this?"

She just gave me a look that let me know I was being dense before answering "Because Susan is getting a crush on you, you big dummy."

I must have looked as stunned as I felt, because Diane laughed, and said "Yes, you idiot, she's either getting, or already has, a crush on you. Didn't you know?"

I just shook my head, and Diane went on "We were resting from sledding, and just sitting there drinking some of the soup your mom made for us, and we got started talking about guys. Of course, all I could talk about was you, and Susan finally started talking about you, too - how nice you'd been, and how polite and everything, and even how you'd been

so respectful of her dad, even when he was yelling at you and trying to bully you. The way she was talking about you, and the way she keeps asking us questions about you; well, I'd be willing to be cash money that she's got a crush on you, whether she knows it or not. You don't see the way she looks at you, sometimes - but Holly and I have, and believe me, you have DEFINITELY got her attention."

I looked at Diane in concern - the last thing in the world I wanted to do was lose her - and she laughed again before telling me "It's okay, Mike. Us women, we're **always** pleased when another woman shows an interest in our man, as long as she's nice about it, like Susan is. I know you're not trying to hustle her into bed - though I don't think I'd mind too much if she *did* wind up there, as long as it wasn't more than once or twice - and I'm okay with the two of you studying together, and even going places together while you're at school. She's so sweet and nice, I understand how you like to be with her, and I'm not jealous."

I could only sit there and blink for a few seconds before I managed to ask "You're not mad at me?"

Diane just smiled, and said "Why should I be mad? She likes you - well, loves you, I think - for the same reasons **I** do. And you like her for the same reasons the rest of us do - what is there for me to be mad about? Sure, if you dumped me for her, I'd be mad as hell - but I know that you love me and wouldn't do that. And so you don't have to ask, yes, I said I wouldn't mind too much if it happened that the two of you made love. I know you're not going to be the one to try and make it happen, and if she comes out of her shell enough to want to find some of the happiness I know she deserves by being with you, then I can't hold that against her. God knows, she's long overdue for more happiness than she'd gotten so far in her life; and I know that if you made love with her, she'd definitely be happy afterwards."

I just sat there, stunned, while Diane retrieved the second rewind video tape and put it in its box. When she was done, she smiled at me and took me by the hand telling me "Come on, Mike. It's time for bed, remember?" before leading me upstairs.

Once inside my room, we quickly undressed and got into bed - where we made slow, gentle love with each other before falling asleep.

The next day was an amusing adventure for all four of us. Susan was willing to learn to skate, and Holly and Diane were good teachers. Still, it took a while before Susan got the hang of it. All of us - Susan included - had plenty of chances to laugh at the spills that usually left her rubbing her backside when she was vertical again. By the time we were done, she'd learned the technique of keeping herself upright and in control. She wasn't anywhere near being a threat to Dorothy Hamil, but she was firmly in control as she looped around the outside edge of the rink.

As we were taking our skates off in preparation for going home, Susan said something about her butt being sore. I couldn't pass up the opportunity, and told her "That's okay. Holly and Diane fell down a lot when they were learning, too. Of course, it probably didn't hurt them as much, since they've got so much more padding than you do."

It took Susan a second to get it, but when she did, she started laughing at the mildly outraged looks Diane and Holly were giving me. They knew I was teasing them, of course, and Susan's laughter soon had them laughing along with her. Finally, Holly told me "Michael, you are SO going to pay for that!", followed by Diane's "You are in SUCH trouble with me, Mister!" - prompting more laughter from Susan and me.

Over supper - which Susan had helped with - we told Mom and Dad about what we'd done that day. Holly and Diane pretended to be upset with me when I repeated Susan's comment about her sore butt, and what I'd told her about Holly and Diane. Mom and Dad both laughed, and the rest of us joined in.

During supper, Diane had reminded everyone that her folks had invited us over that evening. After Holly and I had cleaned up, we decided to walk the couple of blocks to Diane's house - me with a small knapsack containing a change of clothes; Diane had let me know that I was expected to stay the night. Everybody but Susan knew what was going on, and if Susan didn't know, she was simply too polite to ask.

Once at Diane's house, we were quickly invited in and got our chance to see the tree her folks had bought, and how they'd decorated it. Susan was invited up to see Diane's room while Holly and I stayed in their family room with our folks. When Diane and Susan got back we all decided that a rousing game of Monopoly was needed. With eight of us playing, it took a while before people started getting pushed out of the game. Susan had a blast, finishing second behind Diane's dad. When the game was over, it was pretty late, and Mom and Dad decided that it was probably time to go home. Holly agreed, as did Susan. After they left, Diane and I stayed up a little longer with her folks, talking about how I was doing at school, what they thought of Susan (consistently good in all respects), and so on.

When we were all caught up, Diane's folks wished us a good night and said they'd see us in the morning. Diane and I stayed up a little longer, talking about our plans for the future, but finally followed their example and went to bed.

The next morning, Diane's mom made breakfast for all of us, and after we had eaten, Diane's dad and I were shooed into their family room while Diane and her mom took care of cleaning up.

Once we were seated, Diane's dad asked me how I'd met Susan, and I told him - from seeing her drop her registration card, all the way up to inviting her to come home with me for Christmas; minus the stuff I'd done along the way to help move things along, of

course. When I was done, he told me "Yes, that sounds about right. Diane told us that she'd been the one to suggest you see if Susan wanted to find out what a real American Christmas was like. Diane told us the story of how Susan had to leave Vietnam and how they all got to this country; I've got to admit that I don't know if I'd have the courage and strength her father showed when he decided that they had to escape."

I told him that I'd thought about it, too, and had come to pretty much the same conclusion - and that I was damn glad it wasn't something I'd ever have to face. He smiled, and said "No, I don't think you will - but there are plenty of other things that a man and wife have to worry about when they start their life together. You're a smart young man, Mike, and Diane's mother and I both know that you love her; and that you'll be good to her. We were a little concerned about Susan being here, and how you met her, but I can see that it was just you being the good person we already knew you are. Neither one of us thought you'd deliberately hurt Diane, but we both know what boys are like at your age, too. But I guess both of us forgot that inside you, you're grown up enough that we can't properly think of you as a boy like most. I want you to know that we're both sorry if our worries about you and Diane have caused you any offense."

In a way, I DID understand where the two of them were coming from: they were concerned about Diane's future and happiness, just as I was - and I told him so. He smiled again, and said "Yeah, I suppose you do. Both of us can see how much you and Diane love each other, and how committed you are."

A few moments later, Diane came in and took a seat next to me before taking my arm and pulling it around her so she could snuggle into my side. As she did, her dad looked on in approval.

With Diane there, our previous conversation was apparently over, since her Dad asked us what we had planned for the rest of the time I was home. Susan and I had figured to head back to school a couple days before New Years, so as to avoid as much of the traffic as we could - both of us were aware of the number of traffic accidents, and neither of us wanted to be one of the statistics.

A little later, Diane's mom came in and convinced her dad that the two of them needed to go out for a little while. Her dad grumbled good-naturedly, but went, leaving Diane and I alone in the house.

Neither of us had anything we wanted to do, so we settled for laying on the couch listening to music while they were gone. Diane and I were so comfortable together that neither of us felt any need to have something 'happening' all the time - we were both perfectly content to simply BE together, without talking or watching TV or doing anything else.

We were still laying there when her parents got back - coming into the family room to find Diane laying in front of me on the couch, her hands on my arm where it was draped around her waist. Diane and I had never done anything even remotely sexual when there

was even the slightest chance her parents or mine might see us - but we weren't ashamed or embarrassed to have them see us being *less* intimate, either. Plenty of times, they'd seen Diane sitting on my lap, or the two of us kissing. Both sets of parents knew we were making love, of course - but we were quiet and discrete about it, and that was enough for them.

When it got late enough, Diane talked her folks into pizza for supper - surprisingly, the pizza delivery places stayed open, and apparently did a pretty good business. After we'd eaten, I thanked her folks for having me over - both assured me they'd been glad to have me - and headed back home so they could have their own Christmas Eve together, just my family would have when I got home.

Back at my house, I found Dad teaching Susan the finer points of checkers while - so my nose told me - Mom and Holly baked cookies. Looking at the checkerboard, I saw that there were more of Susan's red pieces than Dad's black, and said "Looks like you're teaching her checkers pretty good, there, Dad!"

He laughed, and said "She *told* me she'd never played before, but I think she was just sandbagging me!"

Susan looked confused at what he'd said, and he explained what sandbagging meant - for a person to deliberately pretending not to be as good at a game as they were, so as to gain an advantage. She got a horrified expression on her face, and Dad laughed before he told her that he was just teasing. She looked at me uncertainly, and I nodded to confirm that that was just exactly what he was doing. She smiled then, and proceeded to jump two of his pieces before asking "King me?"

Dad gave her play-dirty look, making her laugh, before doing as she requested with the comment "I'll tell you one thing - this is going to be the last time I offer to teach somebody to play checkers!" - drawing another laugh from her. I just said "Look at it this way, Dad: this just proves what a good teacher you are!", making both of them laugh before I left.

In the kitchen, I managed to snag a couple of cookies before Mom caught me and laughed as she swatted at my hand to keep me from taking any more. Off to the side, Holly had moved some cookies to a plate, and was pouring hot chocolate into cups, apparently intending to take all of it out to Dad and Susan. I helped by carrying the drinks, and both of them thanked us before Dad made a move that cost him another piece.

When Holly was done helping Mom in the kitchen, she came in to where I was watching Susan clean Dad's clock at another game of checkers. With four of us there, we started playing rounds of checkers against each other. I knew Dad was a good checkers player and better teacher, but when Susan got finished with him, me, and Holly, I wasn't entirely sure she **hadn't** been sandbagging us. By the time bedtime came around, there wasn't any doubt that Susan was the undisputed Checkers Queen of the house - something that

pleased her tremendously. Mom came in to congratulate her, and give her a kiss on the cheek before reminding us all that it was time for bed.

After all of us were in bed, I waited a good hour before getting up so I could move the gifts I'd gotten everyone down to the Christmas tree. I had just my shorts on, and first thought to just wear them - it was late, and I really didn't expect to meet anyone. Then I had second, and even third, thoughts, and decided to put on a robe 'just in case'.

I was glad I did when Susan and I nearly gave each other heart attacks as we almost ran into each other in the doorway to the den.

The surprise at our near-collision gave Susan a case of the shakes - my heart was pounding in my chest; it hadn't done ME any good either - and I quickly put my packages down to take Susan's hand and try to calm her down again. It wasn't working so well with both of us standing there, so I guided her over to the couch and got her seated. Then I picked up my packages again, and quickly got them distributed under the tree before I went over to sit next to Susan.

She was calmer then, but still visibly shaken. I took her hand again, and held it as I talked to her some more to help her relax. When she had all but stopped trembling, I asked her "Susan, you haven't done anything wrong, but what are you DOING down here this late at night?"

She gave me a shy smile, and said "Holly told me that it is your family's custom to put gifts under the tree when no one is looking. You have all made me feel like part of your family, too, so I waited until tonight to bring down the gifts I brought with me."

I smiled, and said "That's fine, Susan - I was doing the same thing. I thought that if I waited until tonight, there wouldn't be anyone else awake, and I could surprise everyone better. It turns out that I was the one that got surprised!"

"Not so surprised as me, I think" Susan said, with a soft laugh.

I laughed with her, and said "Well, now that all the excitement is over, I think I'm ready to TRY to get some sleep."

Susan nodded her agreement, and the two of us stood up. I took a step, but Susan hesitated, and I stopped to wait for her. I felt her give my hand - still holding one of hers - a soft squeeze before she gently pulled me around to face her. Looking up at me, she hesitated again, then said "Michael, there is something that I must tell you, and I cannot say it except if we are alone."

I looked at her in concern, and she gave me a smile before continuing "Your family, and Diane and her family, have all been so kind to me. All of you have made me feel like I am a part of your family, and that is a very special thing to me. But even more special to me is that it has been you that has brought me all this joy and happiness. Without you, I

would not have had the chance to meet all these wonderful people. Without you, I would not really know what it is like in an American family, and how much all of you love and care for each other. Even Diane - your girlfriend, and your wife, I think! - has been much kinder to me than I could even imagine. But it is still because of you that I have gotten to know all of them - and it is because of how kind and gentle you have been with me that I am able to know what happiness is."

With that, she took a step forward and rose up on her toes to give me a soft kiss on the lips, her body pressing against mine. I could feel the firm mounds of her breasts pressing into my chest and the lengths of her thighs against mine - but as much as I wanted to put my arms around her and hold her, I was afraid that if I did, it would only frighten her. So I contented myself with putting my free hand on her hip to steady her as I softly kissed her back - leaving it up to her to decide when it should end.

Several seconds later, she let our lips part and settled back onto her feet. She looked into my eyes and told me "Thank you, Michael" before releasing my hand from hers and taking a step back. I couldn't think of anything to say after what she'd just done, and she gave me a gentle, pleased smile before going around me on her way back to Holly's room. By the time I got my wits back and got upstairs, the hallway was empty, and all the doors closed.

Back in bed, I couldn't help remembering the way her body had pressed against mine, and felt myself responding to that memory. The love I had for Diane was an absolute - but I still couldn't help feeling more than a little guilty at my reaction to Susan's kiss. I didn't get to sleep easily, that night.

Christmas morning was a pretty laid-back operation for our family - I was the first one downstairs, even at 9:00. I went into the kitchen and got some coffee started, sitting in the breakfast nook while I waited for it to finish brewing. A few minutes later, Holly and Susan joined me; about the time it was done, Mom and Dad made their appearance. We all got our coffee and Holly started another pot before Mom shooed us all out of the kitchen so she could heat up some breakfast rolls. The rest of us drifted into the den, where we found comfortable seats and sipped our coffee until Mom appeared with the rolls. Once all of us had something to eat handy, it was time to start passing out gifts.

As youngest, Holly picked which gift was first, and she selected her gift to Susan. Susan was visibly nervous as she opened it, only to be delighted when she saw the large, fluffy - and obviously decadently comfortable - bathrobe Holly had selected. Susan's pick was my present to Holly - a nice watch that I'd seen Holly eyeing during my last visit. Holly's next pick was my gift to Dad, a nice desk set - pens, blotter, the works. Dad had Holly hand Mom's gift to Susan, who found that she had a fairly complete introductory cookbook.

As the pile of presents slowly diminished, Holly had received a beautiful Chinese-pattern silk blouse from Susan - a pale green, it set off her hair and complexion wonderfully. Mom got jewelry from Holly and me, and Dad was pleased with the new wallet Holly had given him - admitting that his old one was well past its prime. Mom and Dad had given me some much-needed clothing, while Holly had managed to acquire some music cassettes that I'd been looking for. Mom and Dad had gotten Holly a beautiful bracelet, and Dad (with Mom's help, no doubt) had picked out a nice sweater for Susan - who promptly put it on, admitting to feeling a little cold, to our amusement.

There was a brief intermission to top off our coffee before we continued with Susan's present to Dad, a hand-decorated silk tie. Next was Mom's gift from her, which turned out to be a wok and bamboo cooking utensils, which delighted Mom. That left only two things: Susan's and my gifts to each other. Susan and I did paper-rock-scissors (Holly had taught her) to see which one of us was first. I 'lost', and found out that Susan had given me a not-so-small brass Buddha. She explained it to me by saying "You have been very kind to me, and made me very happy to have you as my friend. If you will keep the Buddha in an open place, he will bring you many blessings, and the happiness that you have brought to me." The sentiment of her gift had Mom and Holly openly crying; Dad was visibly touched, and I was all but speechless. I finally found my voice, and told her "If he brings me half the pleasure that knowing YOU has brought me, then I will be doubly blessed" - making Susan's whole face light up.

The last gift for us that morning was the one I gave Susan. She looked surprised at the shape and weight of it, and Holly told her "You can't believe anything about what it looks or feels like - Mike likes to put extra stuff in things to keep us from guessing what's really inside." Susan opened the package, discovering what appeared to be a book with a large rock fastened to one corner. Smiling at my trickery, she peeled off the protective paper I'd put around the book, and could only sit there staring at it. She sat there looking at it for so long that Mom and Dad became concerned, prompting Holly to ask "What IS it?" - which finally got Susan moving again. She turned the book around so they could see what it was - a photo atlas of the United States. I'd spent weeks looking for just the right present for her, and knew from the expression on her face that I'd gotten it exactly right. Inside, it was a photo tour of the entire United States, with short stories and articles about different parts of the country: what they were famous for, the people and lifestyles, dress, habits, customs, *everything*. I think the rest of them were as surprised as I was when she suddenly set the book aside and threw her arms around me to hug me as she repeatedly thanked me. I was sitting there, not entirely sure what to do, when Holly solved the problem for me by saying "Hug her back, you big dummy!" I did, accompanied by Mom and Dad's quiet chuckles and Holly's grin.

When Susan finally pulled back from me, her face was the happiest I'd ever seen it, and there were tears of joy in her eyes. If Diane didn't already have it, the look Susan gave me would have stolen my heart.

To spare her any embarrassment, Mom, Dad, and Holly all pretended to be looking at something else when Susan looked around to see if any of them had been watching. From

the smile that crossed her face, I suspect she knew better, but was willing to accept the inattention they were showing when she looked.

I reached over to grab a couple tissues from the box on a table, and handed them to Susan. She smiled again and told me "thank you" before drying her eyes.

Susan started looking through the book, and was soon so thoroughly engrossed in it that she didn't notice when the rest of us started cleaning up the discarded wrapping paper and ribbons. See how happy she was with the book, none of us had the heart or inclination to disturb her. We'd finished and were all sitting there watching her when she finally pulled herself out of the book's pages. Looking around, she realized that we'd cleaned up, and were doing nothing more than watching her. She blushed, and started to say something, but Dad interrupted to tell her "Don't worry about it, Susan. We could all see how much you like Mike's present; and there wasn't much for us to do, anyway."

Susan still looked a bit guilty, and Mom told her "Really, dear, don't feel bad. It's nice for us to see someone enjoying a book that much!"

Susan smiled at that, and nodded, telling us "It's *very* nice; I didn't really understand that there is so MUCH to America. And they say so much about the places..."

With that, Susan got up and started to pick up the different things she'd gotten. It seemed like a good idea, and the rest of us followed her example. By the time we'd gotten everything up to our rooms and put away, it was getting close to time for Diane and her parents to come over. Mom headed into the kitchen to get things started, and Susan went along to help. Dad, Holly, and I watched the parades in the den; a little while later, Mom and Susan joined us. Maybe an hour later, we heard a knock at the door; figuring that it was probably Diane and her family, Holly got up to answer it. A minute later, the three of them joined us in the den, carrying their gifts for us.

The TV was turned off, and we continued our gift exchange. Diane had gotten Susan a nice 'letterman' jacket, clearly pleasing her. Susan had brought Diane another silk blouse, a little different style than she'd given Holly, it's pale yellow making a nice contrast with Diane's complexion and dark hair. Diane gave Holly a nice leather skirt, and got a fringed buckskin vest in return. Diane had gotten me a scientific calculator I'd been lusting after; and was as surprised - and happier - than I'd been when I gave her a promise ring. Susan had another wok and utensil set for Diane's mother - I'd told her that both of them liked to cook - and a pair of gold cufflinks for Diane's dad. The whole thing was wrapped up when Diane's folks gave Susan their gift to her - a nice leather photo album with her name embossed in gold on the front, already loaded with photos that Diane had discretely taken during Susan's visit. Inside, the first photo was the one of Susan sitting on Santa's lap, making her laugh. Following that, there were pictures of Susan helping us decorate our tree, the three of them sledding, and all the other events we'd been involved in. The last photos were from our ice skating, and tucked into the album after them was a note promising more pictures when they were ready. From some of them, I knew that Diane

couldn't possibly have taken all of them alone, and immediately knew who her helper had been.

Susan hugged the album close to her chest, and started thanking Diane and her parents profusely, tears of happiness in her eyes. Diane and her parents were all touched by the obvious sincerity and gratitude Susan was displaying, and all of them quickly assured her that they were happy to do it.

To give Susan a little time to pull herself together, I asked Mom what was for dinner - and as I'd expected, she ran down a list of traditional Christmas fare. Holly did her part by starting to tell Susan about the different foods, and which ones she (Holly) liked best. That was enough to get the rest of us started on different subjects, and it wasn't long before all of us were having our normal conversations with each other. The only way I knew Susan was aware of what I'd done was when she turned to give me a brief smile once, before mouthing the words "thank you" at me. I smiled in return, and went back to discussing football with Diane's dad.

A while later, Mom and Diane's mom got up and said they were going to start dinner. Susan immediately stood up with them, and asked if she could help. They accepted, and the three of them left.

Diane and I found seats on the couch, and Holly didn't have any objections when Dad asked if anyone wanted to watch football on TV. The timing was almost perfect, since the game went to the halftime show just as Mom announced that everything was ready. In the dining room, everything was already laid out, so we all took our seats. Dan intoned a prayer - Susan bowed her head along with the rest of us - and dinner was on. Susan found that she liked almost everything on the menu; the few exceptions were things that one or more of the rest of us didn't care for, either, which helped reassure her that she wasn't dishonoring anybody's cooking. She even told us that some of the food - particularly the sweet potato pie - was very similar to some Vietnamese foods.

As we were eating, Diane's mom let us know that the next night's supper would be a bit different than we'd had before - that Susan had agreed to show her and Mom how to use their new woks to cook Vietnamese food. Susan was a little embarrassed by the attention, but pleased when all of us agreed that it sounded like a *fine* idea, and were looking forward to it.

When we were done eating, we all decided to wait a while before having any dessert. The two moms looked pleased with the dent we'd put in their meal, and put up only token protests when the dads, Holly, Diane, and I said we'd clean up. Susan tried to help, too, until Dad told her "Susan, you helped cook this delicious meal, so you go on in there and relax, too. I think all of us appreciate what a good job you did."

Realizing that she was being given the same treatment as the moms - who she all but worshipped - Susan got a joyful expression and did as Dad told her.

With five of us tending to it, it didn't take long for us to get all the leftovers repackaged and put away, the first load of dishes into the washer, and things generally cleaned up and put away. Back in the den, the dads went to join the moms on the couch; Diane and I shared a recliner, and Holly took another chair next to Susan.

The halftime show had long been over, and rather than try to pick up the rest of the game, we found something else to watch on TV as we all laid back to let the food settle.

It was maybe an hour and a half before we decided that it was time for dessert. The moms asked what everyone wanted and brought it in to us; Susan had opted to try a small piece of pumpkin pie, and when it was gone, had another after admitting that it tasted a lot better than she had thought it would.

When the evening news came on, Diane and her folks decided that it was time to go home. They wished the rest of us a Merry Christmas, and Diane's mom had a brief, whispered conversation before they said goodbye and left.

The rest of the evening was quiet and relaxed, and all of us were feeling sleepy when bedtime rolled around.

Since all the various items of clothing we'd gotten all fit, none of us had any *reason* to have to go to any stores the next day - and there wasn't a one of us that **wanted** to, by a long shot. So we spent the day lazing around and generally enjoying ourselves. Susan was absolutely fascinated by the book I'd given her, and sat in the den with it for almost the entire day.

When the time came, we all put on our coats - Susan proudly wearing the jacket Diane had gotten her, with "Dad's" sweater underneath - and walked the couple of blocks to Diane's house. Inside, we saw that Diane was wearing the blouse Susan had gotten her - and all of us commented on how nice it looked on her - and how nice she looked IN it. Diane's mom quickly latched onto Mom and Susan, and the three of them headed straight for the kitchen while the rest of us filed into their family room.

We sat around talking for a little while - until the aroma of the food they were preparing started drifting in. The moms were both pretty darn good cooks, but the smell of what was being prepared in the kitchen was something else entirely. The five of us looked at each other before Dad asked "Okay, who's going to take the chance of going in there to find out what smells so good?"

We all grinned at each other, knowing that whoever went was sure to be chased out again. Finally, Holly spoke up, saying "Okay, fine - **I'll** go. I have GOT to find out what that delicious *smell* is!"

She stood up, and resolutely headed for the kitchen - then reappeared a little later, saying "All I got to see was chicken and vegetables - and the three of them ganged up around the wok. It looked like Susan was showing them something, because when she was done, she handed the whatever-it-was to your mom, Diane."

By the time Mom came in to tell us it was ready, the lot of us were more than ready. When we got into the dining room, we saw that they'd prepared what looked like grilled chicken strips, an assortment of vegetables, and a large bowl of rice. Just looking at it, it didn't *appear* all that special - but the aroma of it! Also of note was the fact that none of the settings had Western silverware - every one of us had a pair of chopsticks, instead.

We all took our seats, and Susan let us know that the moms were the main cooks - that all she'd done was get them started by showing them how to use the wok. Diane's dad said a brief prayer, and when he was done, the five of us that had been in the family room each grabbed one of the dishes. I got the bowl of rice, and was surprised to discover how heavy it was - and when I went to scoop some onto my plate, that it was sticky, too. I didn't want to embarrass Susan, so I didn't say anything, and just handed the bowl off to Diane - who gave me a look after SHE had dished a portion of it onto her plate.

When all of us had a little bit of everything on our plates, Susan spoke up again, telling us "I think you have all discovered that the rice tonight is different than you are used to. In Vietnam, and most of Asia, rice is often the MAIN part of the meal. By cooking the rice the way it is tonight, it is not only easier to eat with chopsticks, but the part of the rice that makes it sticky also adds to its nutritional value. Remember that most Asian countries are not very rich, so anything that can be done to make what food there is more filling and nutritional is a good thing. I think you will find that if you put a little soy sauce" - she indicated the bottle - "on it, and take bites of rice between bites of the other things, you will enjoy it a little more."

We watched to see how much soy sauce Susan used on what, then followed her example as it was passed around the table. The next adventure was the seven of us trying to figure out how to use chopsticks - all the times we'd been to China Garden, we'd always used the forks they'd provided. Susan saw our predicament, and patiently demonstrated how to manipulate chopsticks so that we could get the food from our plates and into our mouths. There were a number of drops, spills, and other accidents at first, but the food smelled so good that we had plenty of motivation to learn - and we did.

And the food was as good as it smelled. The vegetables were all hot enough for our taste, but still crisp. The chicken was moist and delicious, having a slight 'tang' to it. When Diane's dad commented on it, Susan told him that it had been stir-fried in oil with a small hot pepper in it to give it a little extra flavor. As Susan had promised, having the rice sticky DID help make it easier to pick up with the chopsticks; and the touch of soy sauce we'd all put on it was a nice counterpoint to the flavor of the chicken and vegetables. The pride and embarrassment were plain on her face when all of us repeatedly complimented her on how delicious everything was. She just told us that she really hadn't cooked much of it, that it had been the moms that had done all the work.

When she said that, Mom told us "Work, my foot! I was amazed at how fast and easy it was to cook all this. Believe me, our - my! - wok is going to be seeing plenty of use."

Dad just laughed, and said "As long as what you cook with it tastes as good as this, I won't complain!" - a sentiment that Holly quickly seconded. I was too busy stuffing my face to say anything - but I nodded in agreement.

Diane's dad turned to her mom and asked "What was it the two of you were talking about last night, right before we left?"

Diane's mom smiled, and said "She just asked me to make sure the vegetables were fresh, and asked if I had chopsticks. I told her I would, and that we'd have some. Then she said that if I could find an oriental store, that would be the best place to get the right rice. It sounded strange, but since she was going to be the teacher, I did it - and she was right, of course; that instant stuff in the store never would have worked. I got the chopsticks in the same place, and I was surprised at how inexpensive they were."

By the time supper was over, the only thing left was a few lonely grains in the rice bowl - everything else was *gone*. The funny part for me was that even though I knew I'd eaten plenty, and was full, I didn't feel heavy or TOO full. In fact, when we finally got up from the table, I didn't have any trouble moving around to help Diane and Holly put things away and get the dishes loaded into the dishwasher. None of us had a clue what to do about the wok, though, and Diane finally went in to ask Susan what the best way to clean it was - and coming back to tell us that a quick rinse with hot water and drying it out was all it needed.

We'd been in the family room for several minutes when Diane's mom suddenly exclaimed "Oh! I almost forgot!" before hurrying toward the kitchen. We all looked at each other, wondering what was going on, when she came back in with a plate. On it was an assortment of what looked like **really** thick cookies; when Susan saw them, her eyes lit up and she smiled. Diane's mom saw her, and said "They said I might want these at the oriental grocery, so I got some. Do you want to tell everyone what they are, Susan?"

Susan nodded, and told us "Those are sweetened rice cakes. They aren't as sweet as most American treats, but they are still very good - I think you will like them."

Diane's mom passed the plate around, starting with Susan, and each of us took a couple of them. Susan was right, they weren't as sweet as we were used to - definitely not sugary-sweet - but they were still good, and made for a nice dessert after the meal we'd just had.

After we'd finished our rice cakes, Diane's dad asked if anyone wanted to watch a video he'd rented - a comedy that had just been released. None of us had seen it, so we all agreed.

After it was over, Mom and Dad got up, saying that they thought it was time to go home. As they and Diane's folks said their goodbyes, Diane went back to her room, reappearing with a knapsack and joining the rest of us as we put our coats on. Susan and I were scheduled to head back to school the day after next, and Diane wanted to spend as much time with me as possible before we left. Both sets of parents knew it, and neither minded in the slightest.

Once back at our house, we all had a cup of hot chocolate and some of the leftover Christmas dessert as we talked for a little while before heading up to bed. Once we were alone, Diane and I made gentle love with each other.

Diane and I spent the next day just being with each other - talking a little, listening to music, holding hands, and so on. Susan and Holly both left us to ourselves as much as possible, preferring to go off and do their own thing. Mom spent half the day on her volunteer stuff, and Dad was obliged to go back to work.

After we'd all gone to bed that night, Diane and I made love, then again a bit later. The next morning, we all sat down to one of Mom's delicious breakfasts, then Susan and I went upstairs to pack for the trip back to school before all of us idled most of the morning away. When that was out of the way, Diane went with me when I went out to fill up the gas tank on my truck, and generally make sure it was ready for the drive back to school. While we were out, we stopped at a fast-food place for lunch and played 'footsies' under the table.

Once back at home, Susan and I decided that it was probably time to start back - it was a drive of only a few hours, but we wanted to make sure that we got back in plenty of time.

After we'd gotten our bags in the truck and I'd covered and secured them, we were ready to go. Mom came out to tell us to be careful, and kissed both of us before going back inside. Diane distracted Susan long enough for Holly to give me the kind of goodbye kiss and hug she wanted to, then Diane and I did the same before Susan and I got in the truck. I backed out of the driveway, waved to Diane and Holly, and we were on our way.

As we were getting on the highway that would take us back to school, I looked over and saw that Susan was quietly crying. I waited until I had the truck up to speed and wouldn't have to shift any more before quickly scanning her, and discovering that her tears were a mixture of happiness and sadness: she was happy that my and Diane's families had taken her in as part of our own families and been so friendly and thoughtful, and sad that she had to leave them so soon.

I reached over and took her hand, and pretended I didn't know what she was thinking by asking "What's the matter, Susan?"

She tried to tell me that it wasn't anything, but I gave her hand a little squeeze, and said "Those tears don't look like it's not anything. Come on, talk to me."

With that, she broke down, and the tears really began to flow. She squeezed my hand back, and began telling me how she felt about the time she'd spent with us.

When she was done, I made sure she saw me smiling at her, and said "Then it sounds like you had a good time. So why the tears?"

"Because I'm so happy and so sad!" she replied.

"Okay, the happy part I got - believe me, we had as much fun with you as you did with us; and I know that all of them like you as much as I do. So why are you sad?"

"Because now I won't see them again."

That one threw me for a few moments before I finally asked her "What do you mean, you won't see them again?"

"We are going back to school now, and they are staying there. What chance will I have to visit them again?"

"Susan, I go home several times a year, and I don't think they would mind if you wanted to come back with me. I promise - they really do like you. Some of them have even come up to visit me at school at times; if they do that, then you could see them then, too. And if nothing else, we all go to my aunt and uncle's farm to celebrate Easter, and I **know** that my aunt and uncle would be just as happy to meet you."

She sniffled a little, and looked at me uncertainly as she asked "You think so?"

I smiled, and assured her "I'm sure of it. The only way you won't get the chance to see them again is if YOU choose not to."

"Really?"

"Really" I told her.

She didn't seem entirely sure, but a scan of her told me that she *wanted* to believe it. She was looking at me, and I nodded to her to confirm what I'd just said before checking her again to see if it helped. It did, but what really got my attention was her thought that she not only liked having me hold her hand like that, but she was wondering what it would be like if I touched her even more - and on other places on her body. Probing deeper, it became clearer to me: she wasn't actively considering letting our physical contact grow; rather, she was starting to become aware of her own sensuality, and her wonderings were prompted more by curiosity than desire.

To cover my surprise at what I'd learned, I managed to get some confidence in my voice as I told her "You'll see", before releasing her hand so that I could pat it before putting my hand back on the steering wheel.

Even as I was doing it, I recognized the opportunity, and reaching into her mind and gradually brought up a sense of trust and confidence in her, figuring that those would help her feel reassured and thus ease her out of her sadness.

A minute later, she smiled at me and said "Thank you, Michael. I feel much better, now."

With that, she rummaged around in her knapsack and brought out the book I'd gotten her - she was fascinated with it, and had already been through it once, that I KNEW of.

I welcomed the opportunity to do some deep thinking - I was absolutely confident that she'd have more than one opportunity to visit with at least SOME of my family, and almost certainly Diane, and possibly one or both of Diane's parents. What occupied my mind was trying to figure out what I was going to do - she was becoming more and more comfortable with casual physical contact with me, and the patterns of her thoughts seemed to confirm Diane's opinion that Susan had some measure of a crush on me.

During the rest of the drive back to school, I reached into Susan's mind several times, carefully prodding her thoughts in a direction that would get me information that I felt I had to have. A few times, she would turn to look at me, and when I looked back, she'd give me a shy smile before returning to her book.

Once we were back at school, my first stop was to her dorm, where I unloaded her bags and helped her get them inside. When we'd set them down, she turned to face me and said "Thank you again, Michael. I am very happy that I got to meet your family and Diane and her family; and I am very proud that they would welcome me as a part of your family". Having said that, she got up on her toes to kiss me again - but only on the cheek - before letting herself down again.

"I'm glad to know that they were able to help you feel that way" I replied.

The two of us stood there for a few seconds, awkwardly, before I said "If you agree, I would like to be able to study with you again next semester. Would you like to meet me for lunch at the diner tomorrow, so we can see if there are any classes we can take together?"

She smiled, and said "Yes, I would like that very much. Would one o'clock be too late?"

I smiled back and said "That would be fine. I'll see you then" before turning around and going out to my truck and going to the house I shared with two other students.

Susan and I teamed up to go through class registration together; both to make sure we had the same classes for the subjects we were taking together, and to keep each other company.

Classes had been in session a couple of weeks, and we were heading for our Chemistry 202 class when we ran across Sam, one of the guys I'd played baseball with in High School, accompanied by another guy in a team jacket.

"Hey, Mike, I heard you were going to school here, but I didn't see you at any of the team tryouts, so I figured I got it wrong."

"How's it going, Sam? Nah, I got a scholarship, so I have to pay attention to that - I really can't afford to be trying out for any of the teams. Besides, I was only okay in high school; I don't figure I'm good enough for college - except maybe keeping the bench warm." I replied.

"You're not going out for anything? Not even basketball? You did pretty good in that..."

"I'm gonna pass. Like I said, I've got to spend too much time hitting the books."

About then, the guy with Sam spoke up, asking "Who's the gook?"

Something about the casual way he said it, and the tone of his voice, kind of set me off. A quick scan of Susan told me that she was ashamed, embarrassed, and hurt by his comment. I made a show of looking around carefully before answering "Gook? I don't see any gooks around here."

He made a face, and said "Her, the chink standing next to you, dumbass."

Sam made a face like he didn't really want to be associated with Mister Mouth, but with both of them wearing Letter jackets, it was hard NOT to. He told me "That's Gus Meyers; he's on the wrestling team with me - different weight class, of course." Gus was a good hundred pounds heavier than Sam, who was definitely on the lean side.

I looked at Gus and said "The **lady** with me is Susan Nguyen. She's Vietnamese; I think that would make her a 'dink' or 'zip' or 'zipperhead'. The term 'gook' is from the Korean word 'guk', or 'people'; they use Han to mean Korea. So a Korean person is Han-guk; their language is Han-gul, and so on. Chink comes from Chin, the old word for China, and usually refers to a Chinese person. Nip is from Nippon, or Japan. If you're going to be a dim-witted Redneck moron, at least be a GOOD dimwitted Redneck moron, and get your ethnic slurs right."

As I was talking to Gus, I saw Sam's face go from shock to amusement - particularly at the end of my little spiel.

It took Gus a few seconds to realize he'd been insulted - which tended to confirm the dim-witted part of it. Gus took a step toward me, with the fairly obvious intention of pounding me into the ground when Sam spoke up, telling him "I wouldn't try it, Gus!"

Gus paused a moment, and looked at Sam to ask "Why not? He know kung-fu or some of that other shit? Don't he know how to fight like an American?"

Sam got a pained expression on his face, and said "No, that's not it. Mike doesn't HAVE to fight. At least, not after what me and some other guys saw him do to the guy that tried to rape his sister. Mike never hit him; didn't even TOUCH him. He just took the guy over by a tree and *talked* to him. Nobody knows what they said, but whatever it was Mike told him, it scared the guy so bad he pissed himself - right there at school, in front of God and everybody."

Gus looked a little uncertain, but got his bravado back and said "That ain't nothin'. Guys used to piss themselves in fights all the time back in grade school!"

Sam shook his head and answered "This wasn't grade school, Gus. This was Senior year of high school - just a couple of years ago. The guy was bigger than you are, too."

That seemed to get Gus' attention, and he turned to give me another look. The time was right, and I slipped into his so-called mind to reinforce what Sam had just told him. It wasn't hard to plant the thought that if I'd scared somebody else bad enough to piss their pants in High School, then there **might** just be more to me than there appeared. And on the heels of that thought, the idea that it wouldn't be a good idea to find out.

When Gus looked in my eyes, I gave him one last nudge: I let him 'see' that if he started anything with me, 'things' were going to happen that would be MOST unpleasant for him. Exactly what those things would be, I left to the dark place in his mind, where his fear lived. When his eyes left mine, I knew that I wouldn't have any more trouble with him - he'd see to it that he stayed away from me to avoid it.

To give him some cover so he could leave - and he wanted to, desperately - I said "Gus, I don't want any trouble - but I don't want to be around people that insult my friends, either."

He seized on the chance I'd given him and declared "Fine. You and the... girl do what you want; I'm heading for the gym" before turning and walking away.

Sam seemed surprised that Gus had backed down so readily, but let it go so he could look at Susan and say "I'm sorry if he made you feel bad... Susan?" She nodded, and he went on "Gus isn't real smart, but he's a good wrestler - here on a scholarship, in fact. Anyway, I apologize for him, and hope you won't think all Americans are like him."

Susan gave him a smile, and said "I understand. When my family first got here, many people called us unpleasant names. Not very smart people, as you say. And I already know that not all Americans are like that", the last part with a look at me.

Sam smiled back - hard NOT to, and lovely as Susan was - and answered "I'm glad you understand. I'd like to talk, but I have to get to wrestling practice, too. It was nice meeting you."

Both of us wished him well, and we parted company. As we were walking to class, Susan told me "That was very kind - and very brave! - of you to talk to him like that."

"I don't think it was either one, Susan. He has a big mouth and no brains; *somebody* had to teach him some manners, and I just got lucky. I guess he never learned that everybody in this country - well, except for the Indians; I mean, Native Americans - came here from somewhere else, somewhere back in our family's history. You and your family just got here a little later than the rest of us, is all."

She thought that one over for a bit, and tentatively asked "Did someone really try to rape Holly?"

I knew she could see the answer on my face, but I went ahead and told her "Yeah, he did. A big, dumb, bully kind of guy named Charlie. Come to think of it, he wasn't really all that much different than Gus, back there - thought his muscles gave him the right to do whatever he wanted to anybody weaker than him."

A few moments later, she asked "Did you really frighten him enough that he wet himself? Without fighting him?"

I smiled, and said "No, we didn't fight. And he wet himself, yeah. I don't know that *I* had that much to do with it, though."

I glanced over at Susan and saw that she wasn't entirely convinced, but she didn't say anything more about it, either.

On the plus side, the only time either of us ever saw Gus again, it was from a distance, and in passing. Sam, however, took the time to look me up, and he would occasionally join Susan and me for a movie or a meal.

It was coming up on Spring Break when Susan asked me if I wanted to go with her to see the Vietnamese Tet celebrations - Tet was actually a few days after Spring Break ended, but the Vietnamese community had decided to have the celebrations ahead of schedule so all the students could come home and participate. I had an approximate idea of what Tet was and how it was celebrated, but wasn't sure how welcome I'd be - at least, how welcome I'd be to Susan's dad.

I decided to just come right out with my reservations, and told Susan "I'd like to, Susan, but I don't think your dad would be very happy to see me."

She got a slightly troubled look at that, and said "Yes, you are right, of course. But if he agrees, you will come?"

I smiled, and said "If he agrees, I will come."

She got a happy smile on her face, and said "Of course, your family and Diane and her family are welcome, too. You will ask them?"

I promised I would, and did the next time I called home a couple days later. Mom and Dad had to decline, since Dad's company didn't offer Spring Break or Tet holidays. The same went for Diane's folks - but Holly and Diane both would be out of school at the same time I was, and both expressed an interest (!!).

The next time Susan and I met to study at the diner - I kind of tutored her in physics, and she did the same for me in Computer Science, we helped each other in Chemistry - I told her that both sets of parents had had to decline, but that Holly and Diane were both excited at the idea.

Susan looked delighted, and told me that her father had readily agreed to 'hosting' us during our visit: after Susan's visit to us for Christmas, he was more than willing to have us experience a little bit of the Vietnamese culture. Susan had emphasized the Diane and I were all-but-married to him; he wasn't real happy with the idea, but had agreed that Diane and I could share a bedroom; Holly would stay with Susan, who had her own room. Her brothers and sisters were younger than she was; her two brothers shared one room, as did her two sisters.

The next adventure was travel arrangements: Susan lived in almost the opposite direction from school that I did. Susan lived a good five hours away, making three in the cab just *barely* acceptable; four was out of the question. That problem was solved easily enough: Susan's father and mother would come to the school to pick her up, leaving me and my truck to carry me, Holly, and Diane. Getting those two to me turned out to be easier and less hassle than I'd expected: Dad took them to the bus station and kept them company until they left; I was waiting at the other end to collect them. The trip between was non-stop, so there wasn't any risk of them getting lost or left behind during a rest break.

Susan's folks came and got her before Holly, Diane, and I were to leave. They had thoughtfully brought along a nicely detailed map and instructions on how to get to their home from the school; there wasn't a chance of me getting lost or misunderstanding something. Before they left, Susan's mom told me it was nice to meet me; her dad just grunted at me.

I was right there and waiting when Holly and Diane stepped off the bus. Both of them greeted me warmly, which drew me a few envious looks from some of the other males in

the area. After we'd gotten their luggage (they'd limited themselves to ONE suitcase each), we climbed into my truck and went back to the house I shared. My two housemates had already left for the beach, and wouldn't return until a couple days before school started again, so the three of us had the house to ourselves. We weren't scheduled to leave for Susan's until the next morning, so we had plenty of time to catch up until then.

I had a little homework to do, so while I got it out of the way, I let Diane and Holly read a book I'd gotten from college bookstore about Vietnam. Of particular interest were the parts describing Tet and how it was celebrated, and the sections on Vietnamese customs and language. Susan had patiently (!!!) tutored me on how to pronounce a few phrases - 'Hi, how are you?', 'thank you', and so on - so I was able to help Holly and Diane as they started learning to pronounce them, too. There wasn't a chance in hell that I was going to be mistaken for a native speaker, and Holly and Diane even less so - but Susan had assured me that even the attempt would be greatly appreciated.

With my homework done, and the girls having some idea of what was in store for us, we decided that a little supper was called for. None of us wanted to cook, so I took them to the diner where Susan and I studied so often. Both of them agreed that it seemed like a much better place to study than a library. Our waitress recognized me, and seemed surprised to see me with Diane and Holly instead of Susan. I introduced her to the girls, and saw the slight smile on her face when she learned who they were.

Back at the house, the two of them joined me on our couch to watch TV until it was time for bed - and both of them followed me into my room. My bed was barely large enough to hold all of us, but I don't think any of us minded being a trifle 'crowded' - I certainly didn't! Of course, the enforced intimacy was a little more than a little stimulating, and it wasn't long before the two of them decided that they weren't *quite* as sleepy as they'd thought. Knowing full well what the results would be, the two of them got started molesting each other; that quickly escalated to the two of them making love there in the bed with me - which got ME going. The whole thing ended with Holly straddling my face while I tongued her to climax, followed by Diane riding me to our mutual release.

The next morning, we got our things together and loaded up the truck. Breakfast was at the diner, and then we were on the road.

Thanks to the map and directions I'd been given, finding Susan's home was as easy as it could be. Their house was a nice split-level job on the side of a small hill - the garage and something else were at the bottom, with the rest flowing up and out from there, each level offset about half of the floor below.

The driveway was empty, but I didn't want to get off on the wrong foot (again) with her dad, and parked next to the curb - there were a few other cars similarly parked along the street, and it seemed safe enough. We'd all gotten out and were heading for the front door when it opened, and Susan came rushing out. As she got close, her mother and father appeared in the door behind her. Susan kept us company the rest of the way, and

introduced Holly and Diane to her father and mother. During part of the drive, Holly and Diane had both practiced the formal greeting, and both managed a passable pronunciation, which seemed to surprise and please Susan's parents - her mother more visibly than her father. They invited us inside, where we were introduced to Susan's brothers and sisters, oldest to youngest.

Her sisters seemed slightly awed to have us in their home, while her brothers were indifferent-to-mildly-hostile - when their parents weren't looking. I'd heard about Vietnamese gangs, and figured that if there were two kids that were going to turn out bad, it was those two; but kept my opinion to myself.

Susan escorted us upstairs, where she showed Diane and me where we'd be staying, then on to her room, which she'd share with Holly. We left our little bit of luggage, and went back downstairs where her parents were waiting for us - complete with tea and rice cakes.

I offered Susan's father the gift I'd brought - it was for both me and Holly, and paid for by Dad who wanted us to make a good impression - followed by Diane. Our gifts seemed to be appreciated, and we were thanked for them. For the first half-hour or so, it was all pretty stiff and formal. At one point Susan's mother left us, and a few moments later, Susan followed her. When Susan got back, she told her father - in English, as a courtesy to us - that her mother wanted to speak with him. When he was gone, Susan looked sad and upset, and told us "I'm sorry for the way my parents have treated you. They are being very formal and polite, which is proper for strangers, but not for friends. I told my mother how you welcomed me into your homes, and that I was embarrassed at the way YOU were being treated. She said she understood, and would talk with Father. I think that is what they are doing now."

We all hastened to assure her that we understood - that it would take a little time for her family to get to know us, and that we weren't offended. We could see that she was grateful for our understanding, but still unhappy about her parents.

When they got back, her father offered us another cup of tea, which we accepted. A few minutes later, her mother spoke up, asking if we would like to see their home. We all said that we'd like that very much, and were shown around. Nearly all of the furniture was Western, but the decorations were almost exclusively Vietnamese. When we got to their family shrine, all three of us were ready with our own small gifts for it. Susan's parents were both surprised and pleased at what we did, and I explained to them that even though we did not share their faith, we had been brought up to respect the faiths of others, and that our gifts were meant to show that respect.

Susan's mother asked how we knew to make offers that way, and I told her that Susan had given me a Buddha for Christmas - both of her parents seemed to find the idea amusing - and explained to me what it represented, and how it should be treated. I went on to tell them that I'd made a small shrine of my own in my bedroom at the house I shared, which seemed to please them even more. Her father asked why I would do that, and I told him "I took the time to read about the teachings of Buddha; and what he taught

seems like a reasonable way to live. There is some I do not understand, and a very little bit that I am not sure I agree with - but to teach peace and respect for others is an honorable thing, so I have the shrine."

He grunted at my reply while his wife smiled, and they went on to show us the rest of the house. When we were done, Susan's mother said that if we wanted to rest from the trip, supper would be in an hour. We gratefully accepted, and Susan said she would go with us for a few minutes. Out of earshot of her father, Susan told us that we'd made a good impression on her father, and that she thought her mother liked us. She let us know what their household routine was for showers and such, and left us to ourselves. Holly went with me and Diane to our room, where we closed the door and all sat on the bed to talk over what we thought of things so far.

The first thing out of Holly's mouth was to say "I think I like the women here, but I'm not sure I'm going to like the men. Her brothers sure look like they could be a couple of real stinkers - am I mistaken, or did they look like they'd be just as happy if we all fell into a sewer or something?"

Before I could say anything, Diane jumped in to agree with Holly, saying "I think you're right - except I get the feeling that they wouldn't mind HELPING us fall. They look like a couple of gangsters, to me. I like the women, too, but I'm not so sure about her dad - if we weren't guests, I'll bet he could be a real stinker."

Both of them turned to look at me, and I just said "I agree about her brothers; I wouldn't trust either one of them to fall down and hit the floor; they'd probably find a way to cheat gravity. As for her dad, believe it or not, he's actually being pretty good - for him. The impression I got was that her brothers will be just as happy to leave us alone with Susan and the others; I don't think either one of them wants to be around us any more than necessary. I think they'll be just as polite as they have to be, while their folks are around, but no more. Once her sisters get used to us, they'll probably be okay; so will her mom. The only one I'm worried about is her dad. But just be yourselves, and we'll see what happens. The worst they can do is not invite us back - and if that meant I wouldn't have to deal with those two young hoods, I don't know that I'd mind. Just remember what Susan told us about how they got here, and her dad is a little easier to take."

Both of them smiled at my description of Susan's brothers, and nodded in agreement at my estimation of how much of them we'd be seeing. With our 'meeting' over, Holly went to Susan's room, and the three of us lay down for a little while. Still, we freshened up and were downstairs chatting with Susan when her mother came in to tell us that supper was ready. They showed us to our places at the table, and told us what the different dishes were. Susan told us "Supper tonight is pretty much the kind of food that we have most nights for supper. Mother made a couple of special things, though, in honor of your presence as our guests. We all understand that you haven't had real Vietnamese food before, and that it is not to everyone's taste, so if there is something that you don't care for, please don't worry about offending us."

A glance at her brothers told me that my very **existence** offended them, but I didn't hold that against Susan or the rest of her family.

With the explanations out of the way, it was time for supper - and everybody dug in. The three of us remembered the chopsticks lessons Susan had given us, and managed not to embarrass ourselves. All three of us tried some of everything they had; I reached for one bowl, whose contents I'd seen the rest of them adding to their fish, and Susan spoke up to warn me about it.

"You might not want to use any of that one. Its nuoc mam sauce, and very strong. I told you before that there is much more fish in the Viet diet than the American, so nuoc mam is for us what ketchup is for you, I think - except that most Americans don't like it."

I looked around to see that all the rest of her family was waiting to see what I would do. Figuring "what the hell...", I told her "Yes, you said there were things we might not like - but how can I know if I will like it or not if I don't at least TRY it? I'll only use a little bit of it at first; if it turns out that I don't like it, then I don't have to use any more. When you visited us, you ate a little bit of everything we served, even though you didn't care for some of it" - she'd found that mince pie wasn't to her liking, which I couldn't fault her for; I hated the stuff, myself - "and I would like to do the same for the food that your family is offering ME."

She gave me a small smile, and nodded her understanding. I took the bowl and put just a small fraction of the amount I'd seen them use on one end of my fish. I was determined to eat all of it, but I wasn't crazy/stupid enough to make it too hard on myself.

When I'd put the bowl back, I used my chopsticks to pick up some of the fish with the nuoc mam sauce on it, and put it in my mouth. The initial taste was pretty unique, but not unpleasant; it wasn't until I started chewing that it really hit me: that stuff had a BITE to it!

Everyone but Holly and Diane got big smiles on their faces when they saw that the effect of the sauce had hit me; but when I took another bite, I could see that they were surprised. When I picked up a third piece of fish and nuoc mam, I could see Susan's dad's grudging approval - whether at my manners or endurance, I couldn't say. Her brothers just looked disappointed - probably because the back of my head didn't explode as they were hoping.

Any way, Diane started to reach for the nuoc mam, and I put my hand on her arm to warn her "A little bit goes a long way". She nodded, and proceeded to pour even less than I had on her fish, followed by Holly doing the same. Both of them took a bite, chewed, and reached for their glasses of water. But ever the troopers, both ate all that they'd taken for themselves, just as I did.

Other than the adventure with nuoc mam, the rest of the meal went fine - the food was delicious, and all three of us complimented Susan's mother on it.

When supper was over, and everyone started to get up from the table, Diane and Holly both offered to help with the dishes - something that seemed to completely flummox Susan's mother. She and Susan had a brief conversation in Vietnamese before Holly and Diane were told that their offer was appreciated, but that the two girls would do it. I was left with the impression that the two of them had committed some major social blunder, but couldn't figure out what it could be. Susan saw our uncertainty, and quickly stepped in to ask if Holly and Diane wanted to see the vegetable and flower gardens her mother planned to put in.

By that time, Susan's brothers had both disappeared, so the four of us, followed by Susan's dad, made our way to their patio door and on outside. I started to follow Susan and the other two when Susan's dad asked me to wait a moment.

I turned to face him, and he looked up at me to say "Susan told me about the boy that called her names, and how you made him stop." He paused a few moments, and then went on with obvious difficulty "When we first came to this country, many people called us such names, and talked to us very badly. It was a very hard time for us, and hurt our pride very much. What you have done for Susan, helping her with that boy and inviting her to your home, I think maybe you are a good boy. I did not like her to study with you, but the grades she gets are good - better than before. So I think now its okay for you to study with her."

He paused again, and I could hear the respect in his voice when he told me "You have courage. Not many Americans would eat nuoc mam like you did. I think it was too strong for you, but you eat it anyway. So did your sister and your... girlfriend. You show my family respect by eating our food - even nuoc mam! - and respecting our customs. Susan told us that Holly and Diane offered to help clean after supper because that the way Americans are - to try to help other people if they can. That is much different than our ways, and my wife had a little bit hurt pride. But Susan told her that it was not disrespect, but an offer of friendship. She told us that you are nice, GOOD people, and that you do not mean to disrespect us with your ways - and that if we will teach you about our ways, you are willing to learn. Is that true?"

I looked him right in the eyes, and answered "I know that is why we came here - to learn about your people and your ways. I invited Susan to my home so that she could learn more about American people and customs. Susan invited us here so that we could learn about the Viet culture. We do not know your ways, and we are going to make mistakes. I hope that you will remember that we are less than the smallest child in our knowledge of Vietnam, and that you will be patient with us, and help us learn."

He looked at me for a few moments, and said "Susan told me that you are smart, as well as kind, and I think she was right. When we first came to this country, we made many mistakes in our ignorance, and we were often scolded for it when we should have been taught. What you do now is not so much different than what I did then, and I will not make the mistakes with you that others made with me. You are good people, you and your sister and girlfriend; Susan told me how you welcomed her to be part of your

family. We do not have so much time now as you did then, but we will do what we can to teach you, and welcome you into OUR family."

I smiled and thanked him; he just looked me over, grunted, and left. Well, it was an improvement over yelling at me.

I went out to where Susan and the others were, and saw that Susan's mother had already dug up the areas where she planned to plant things. Susan explained to us what plants were going to go in what areas, and I listened to Holly and Diane voice their appreciation. As far as I was concerned, plants were the fluffy green things that grew outside; if they were food, you took care of them - everything else was on its' own.

Once we were all back inside, Susan told us that there was to be a small party that night, and that we'd all been invited. Holly and Diane looked a little uncertain, but Susan assured them that the people issuing the invitation had known that we were going to be with her family, and were more than happy to have us.

Holly and Diane asked if they needed to change clothes, and Susan assured them that they were just fine - it was an informal kind of party, just a group of people getting together before the big celebrations the next day.

There were enough of us that it was decided to take two cars - Susan's mom, her sisters, and Diane and Holly in one; her dad, me, Susan, and her brothers in the other. As the guest, I got 'shotgun' up front; Susan's brothers basically bullied her into the center position in the back. The more I saw of those two, the less I cared for them.

I found out later that despite their initial shyness, both of Susan's sisters were willing to talk to Diane and Holly during the drive to the party.

I was completely lost after about three blocks, and just contented myself with talking about school with Susan - figuring that it was a safe enough subject.

At the party, the hosts seemed genuinely pleased to see me, Diane, and Holly. They were careful to introduce us to everyone, and showed us around their home. I got separated from Holly and Diane, but Susan made sure to check in with all of us throughout the evening. All the people I met were warm and friendly, and thoughtful enough to have most of their conversations in front of me in English. A few had heard about the little run-in with Gus, and took pains to thank me for standing up for her - it seemed that all of them had run into something similar at some point in time. As Susan had predicted, the few phrases of Vietnamese she'd been able to teach me were greatly appreciated - several people even took the time to help me with my pronunciation, and add a word or two to my limited vocabulary.

The party finally wound down, and it was time to go. As we left, all three of us remembered to thank our hosts in Vietnamese, which earned us a round of smiles from everyone within earshot. Even Susan's dad looked less unhappy than usual.

Back at Susan's house, the boys disappeared as fast as they could manage it, while Susan and her sisters wanted to stay up and talk.

Susan's parents gave their permission, but only for an hour, before they went upstairs to bed.

Susan's sisters, Anh (11) and Minh (12), were pretty shy with me at first, but once they saw how relaxed Susan was with me, they quickly came around. One of the first things they wanted to know was if Holly's hair was really that color - a question that embarrassed Susan. Holly assured them that it was, and when they expressed an interest, invited them to look at it as closely as they wanted, and even touch it. They did, and were still somewhat awed by it when they took their seats again.

When the allotted hour was up, both of them quietly got up and left us to go to bed - no muss, no fuss. With her sisters gone, Susan was a little more comfortable, and started talking with Diane and Holly about what had been happening with them since she'd visited. They told her, and there was a fair amount of laughter and giggling as stories were told.

It wasn't much later when Susan told us that it was probably time to go to bed - that the real celebrations started the next day, and that we'd probably want to get there early. All of us agreed, and we followed Susan up to the bedrooms - Holly joining her in Susan's room, Diane and I across the hall in ours.

Breakfast the next morning was appreciably more relaxed and casual than supper had been the night before. Anh and Minh both chattered happily with all three of us while Susan's mom looked on. Afterwards, all of us trooped upstairs to change clothes in preparation for the celebrations we were going to.

When we all met back downstairs, Holly, Diane, and I were speechless - the entire Nguyen family had changed into traditional Vietnamese clothing. Susan, her mom, and sisters were wearing ao dai's and all of them were lovely. Diane whispered in my ear "I thought Susan was beautiful before, but now! Just **look** at all of them!" - the last part a bit of encouragement that I *definitely* didn't need.

Susan's dad was dressed in traditional clothing as well, and I had to admit that it worked on him. Her brothers were similarly dressed, but the faint scowls on their faces detracted considerably from the effect.

The three of us all complimented the ladies on how lovely they were, earning us smiles of slightly embarrassed happiness. Diane and Holly both complimented Susan's dad and brothers on how handsome they looked; Susan's dad looked faintly pleased - I think if he ever actually smiled, his face would crack into a thousand pieces and fall on the floor,

like you saw happen in the old cartoons - but her brothers didn't seem to appreciate the compliments.

The Nguyen women and girls all assured Holly and Diane that they were both just as lovely, and even went on to tell me that I looked quite handsome in the suit I was wearing.

With all of us ready to go, we loaded up the cars as we had the night before.

The events were being held in a large hall, and when we were all inside, I found myself experiencing what I can only call beauty overload: all of the women and girls were dressed in their own ao dai, and every last one of them was lovely - from the little four- and five-year-olds, all the way up to the mothers of teenage kids. Diane, Holly, and I weren't the only Caucasians there, but we were most definitely in the minority.

Susan's brothers had separated themselves from us at the first opportunity. Her mother and father excused themselves to go and visit with friends only after Susan and her sisters told them that they would help us get acquainted. I was surprised to find out that Susan was going to keep Holly and Diane company, while Anh and Minh did the same for me. When they weren't looking, Susan informed me - with considerable amusement - that as much as her sisters liked Diane and Holly, they had decided that I was handsome, and had insisted on keeping me company during the celebrations.

For the rest of the day and into the evening, I was never without at least one of them, and usually both. They took delight in introducing me to their friends, smiling when I greeted them in Vietnamese, and giggling in polite amusement at my occasionally mangled pronunciation or grammar. Neither hesitated to take my hand to lead or guide me to where they thought I should go, and they made sure that I never got thirsty or hungry. The little imps seemed to take a particular pleasure in introducing me to girls about Susan's age - whether to see my reaction, or that of the unfortunate girls that they targeted, I wasn't sure.

Along the way, I met a number of Viet men and women, and one or both of Anh and Minh would translate for me when it was necessary. I also met the few other Caucasians at the celebrations, and they were consistently impressed that I was there only because I knew Susan - all of them were married or otherwise committed to a Viet family, and the casual nature of my relationship with Susan was something of a novelty.

The people that I met were invariably friendly and polite - without the stiff formality that Susan's parents had first shown us. It didn't take me long to realize that my presence was genuinely welcomed; and only a little longer to come to the conclusion that by simply being there, I was exhibiting a willingness to friendship that they were warmly responding to.

Throughout the day, there were a number of special events - dances, celebrations, music, and so on. At different points, Diane, Holly, and I were all invited to learn the steps and

movements for different dances. We were always warmly applauded for our efforts, no matter how indifferent the results might have been.

And of course, there was food. Lots and lots of food. It didn't take me long to follow the example set by the people around me: eating a little bit at frequent intervals, rather than having a few larger meals. Several people noticed, and commented on, my willingness to at least *try* anything anybody offered me. That I didn't care for seconds on some things was easily accepted - there were Western foods that most Viets didn't care for.

At one point, Susan and her sisters traded duties; and as we wandered around, Susan told me that everyone that had met us was genuinely happy to have done so. Even our unrefined attempts at speaking Vietnamese were appreciated - even treasured - by the people we'd met. Susan told me that Diane, Holly, and I were showing an interest in the Vietnamese people and culture that they seldom saw, and our willingness to learn and participate was immensely appreciated by everyone there. She graced me with a smile and told me "Father is having a difficult time, though - the men keep telling him what a nice boy you are. I heard one of them tell him that after meeting you, he wouldn't mind if you were friends with HIS daughter. You should have seen the expression on Father's face - I will never forget it!", the last part with a small laugh.

As it got into evening, the different events got more formal. Diane, Holly, and I got together to watch the dances, and all three of us were absolutely fascinated by the grace and beauty of the dancers.

By the time things started to finally break up, I think ALL of us were ready to go home and get some rest. Once back at Susan's house, the youngest four were all sent to bed; the rest of us stayed up a bit longer after Susan's mother asked Holly, Diane, and me if we'd enjoyed ourselves, and what we thought of the celebrations. None of the three of us had any difficulty assuring her and the others that we'd thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

The three of us had questions about some of the different things we'd seen, done, and eaten during the day and evening; Susan and her parents (mostly her mother) were more than willing to answer and explain.

When we'd talked ourselves out about the festivities, Susan's parents excused themselves and went to bed, leaving Susan with me, Holly, and Diane. When her parents were gone, Susan apologized to me and Diane for the mischief her sisters had caused. Diane and I looked at her in puzzlement, and she said that she was referring to Minh and Anh introducing me to just about every eligible female they could find. Diane and I both smiled and assured her that they hadn't caused any offense or problems for either of us - that we'd actually found it kind of amusing. It took only a little convincing before she finally accepted that her sisters hadn't troubled us. With that out of the way, there didn't seem to be anything else keeping us up, and we all headed off to bed.

The next morning, there was something or other that Susan's father had to do, so the three of us stayed at home with Susan and her mother. Without Susan's father present, Susan's mother was a lot more relaxed with us, and more than willing to ask us questions about ourselves. The morning went by cheerfully as the five of us sat in their kitchen drinking tea as we talked about school, what Diane, Holly, and I wanted to do with our lives, and so on.

That afternoon, there was another party similar to the first one we'd been to, and we met some of the same people. I managed to remember most of the names of those I'd been introduced to before, and they seemed pleased by that fact. Not a few of them had seen my attempts at Vietnamese dancing, and complimented me on my efforts - then laughing when I replied that the amazement wasn't that the horse danced well, but that he danced at all. Diane, Holly, and I had split up at the party; but Susan or her mother would still stop by to check with us to make sure everything was going well. I was pleasantly surprised when several people invited me and the girls to visit them in their homes; when I explained that we were going to be leaving the next day, and all of them expressed genuine disappointment.

After we'd gotten home from the party, we all spent the evening in the family room at Susan's house - where we watched a Vietnamese movie (thoughtfully subtitled in English for us that weren't fluent in Vietnamese) and eating pizza - something the entire Nguyen family had discovered a likeness for. To everyone's amusement, Susan's sisters decided to sit next to me, making sure I was properly fed and taken care of.

At the designated times, Susan's sisters, then later her brothers, quietly left us to go to bed. Anh and Minh wished all of us a good night; the boys weren't to be bothered.

A while later, I think all of us were a little surprised when Susan's dad cleared his throat and started talking to Holly, Diane, and me.

The words obviously didn't come easily to him as he told us "Before you leave tomorrow, I want to thank you for visiting us. Even though Michael has helped Susan, and all of you have been very kind to her, I still thought that it would not be easy to have three Americans visiting my home. But all of you have been much more polite and friendly than I thought. All of the Viet people that you have met have told me how nice you are, and how much they like you - all of you. You took the time to learn some of our language, and even some of our customs, before you came here; and while you have been here, you have been willing to learn even more. All three of you are good people, and have kind and generous hearts - that is something that I have not seen with many of the Americans that I have met. You make your parents proud, and I would like to meet them some day, so I can tell them myself."

The three of us could see that he was uncomfortable, and after we all thanked him for his kind words, we let the matter drop.

With the ride back to school ahead of us the next day, Diane, Holly, and I were the first to excuse ourselves for bed, wishing all of them a good night.

After breakfast the next morning, the three of us got our luggage packed and loaded into my truck. Susan's brothers had disappeared somewhere, but the rest of the family was there to see us off. A question by Anh and Minh to their father was met with grudging approval, and the two of them shyly came over to give me a hug and kiss on the cheek, which I returned - pleasing and embarrassing both of them tremendously. For her part, Susan didn't ask first - she just did it. Her father didn't say anything, and didn't look any more unhappy that he usually did, so I figured it was okay. I didn't chance hugging Susan's mom, but did kiss her hand and thank her in Vietnamese, delighting her. I almost fell over when Susan's dad actually stuck his hand out in invitation to shake - and when it was over, I felt like I'd just been Knighted or something.

All of us thanked them again, said our goodbyes, and loaded ourselves into the truck for the ride back. Back at school, one of my housemates had come back from break, but he didn't mind the girls staying the night before I put them on a bus the next day. Diane spent the night with me, and Holly slept on the couch, despite my housemate's assurance that the third member of our household wouldn't mind having her sleep on his bed.

The next morning, I was there to keep both of them company and to make sure they got onto the right bus; Mom would meet them at the other end and get them home.

When Susan and I got together after break, she had some surprising news for me: after meeting me, and seeing how I treated her, Diane, and Holly, her father had realized that her brothers weren't turning into the kinds of sons that he really wanted. He'd done some checking on them, found that that they WERE already in gangs, and had pitched such a fit that both boys had immediately dropped out. On top of that, he'd told them - in front of the whole family - that they weren't to abuse their sisters any more: any 'watching out' would be done by him and their mother. He'd then gone on to make them apologize to her and her sisters for being so mean to them. From all she told me, I got the idea that her father had slapped them down - **hard** - and then gone on to put them on a DAMN short leash.

As the rest of the school year went by, Susan and I both did quite well in our classes - particularly those we shared.

Uncle Jack wrote to tell me that the other farmers in the area had gotten together and decided that they'd like me to work for them that summer. The pay was to be a little better than I usually got with my summer jobs, and Uncle Jack assured me that I'd still

have enough free time to take care of whatever I needed to. He went on to tell me that if I already had something else lined up, or wasn't sure about any of it, that he'd take care of letting them know so there weren't any hard feelings. I didn't think any of them would have hard feelings about it, anyway.

I thought it over, and decided to accept. Then Uncle Jack told me that whenever Diane and Holly decided to come to visit, I'd be 'off the clock' for the other farmers so I could have some time with the girls, too. Even as I was reading that, I realized that it was a perfect opportunity to get Susan a little more exposure to America than she might get if she stayed with her parents all summer. I wrote back to Uncle Jack, and as I expected, he told me that Susan was more than welcome - he and Aunt Paula had talked with Mom and Dad about how nice Susan was, and they were delighted at the chance to meet her, and show her a Real Working Farm.

The next step was to see what Diane and Holly thought about it, and both were plenty enthusiastic about it. The final step was to see what Susan had to say.

I half-expected her to be as hesitant as she'd been at the idea of spending Christmas with my family, but she surprised me at how pleased she was at the invitation. She had to clear it with her father, of course - and HE surprised me even more by not only approving it, but encouraging her.

With a little back-and-forth and some negotiating, it didn't take long to make arrangements that satisfied everybody: Susan and I would each go to our respective homes for the first week after school let out. Then, I'd bring Diane and Holly to Uncle Jack's farm, then Susan's mom and dad would bring her the next day. That would give all of us some time to 'wind down' from school before we headed for the farm, where the work I did for Uncle Jack would help me get ready to work for the rest of the farmers until the last couple of weeks before school started again. The only real change was to be that Holly, Diane, and Susan would stay at the farm for a month, instead of the usual couple of weeks we'd spent there before.

Susan was anxiously looking forward to seeing the farm, and asked me what kind of gifts would be appropriate to bring. I told her that she *really* didn't need to do that, but if she was going to, then a wok like she'd given Mom and Diane's mom would be perfect: Aunt Paula loved to cook more than the two of them, together. Then I added "And if you teach her to cook with it, you just *might* even get her secret fried chicken recipe!" Susan had had a chance to try some of the leftovers I'd brought home from my meals at the farm, and knew that the recipe for Aunt Paula's chicken was something to be treasured.

After both of us had finished final exams, we met at the diner for a celebratory meal and to confirm the arrangements for us to meet at the farm. From the town where Diane and Holly and I had gone to see the movies the summer I'd had my idea about stacking hay, I

made up a map and explicit directions on how to get to Uncle Jack's farm - her family had taken care that I didn't get lost, and I was determined to do the same for them.

Susan's dad had told us roughly when they'd be arriving, so all of us were ready and waiting when their car pulled into the driveway of Uncle Jack's farm shortly before noon.

Susan was visibly delighted to see the girls and me, but just as visibly anxious about meeting Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula. Her parents were a little awestruck at being out in the middle of nowhere, on top of meeting Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula. Both Jack and Paula seemed to know what the problem was, and cheerfully walked forward, introducing themselves to Susan's parents while Susan got her own welcome from the three of us, before changing partners - Diane, Holly, and me welcoming Susan's parents as Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula did the same for Susan.

Reassured that Susan was welcome and in good, friendly hands, her parents relaxed, and accepted Aunt Paula's offer to come in for some refreshment. She'd baked a couple of apple pies the day before, and there was still plenty for all of us. When we'd all finished, the girls and I took Susan outside to show her around the farm buildings while Paula and Jack talked to her parents.

We were walking back toward the house when Jack and Paula and Susan's parents came outside - Susan's parents looking considerably more relaxed and confident than they'd been when they arrived. The four of us met the four of them at Susan's parents' car, and they said something to Susan in Vietnamese, causing her to nod and answer back. With that done, they wished us all well, got in, and started on their trip back home.

As we moved toward the house, Uncle Jack told us "Why don't you young 'uns go ahead and get acquainted again this afternoon, and we'll get you started on some chores tomorrow."

Susan plainly didn't have the faintest idea of what to do, so the rest of us suggested a swim - it promised to be a hot summer - and Susan agreed. Holly and Diane explained about the stock tanks and their associated hazards as the four of us went inside to change into our suits. Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula both knew about Diane and me, and had given us our own bedroom without saying anything. Diane and I were last to get ready - due primarily to the playful groping we did as we changed - we went out onto the porch to find Holly and Susan ready and waiting for us. Holly was in her preferred skimpy bikini, while Susan was wearing a much more modest one piece number.

Towels in hand and sneaker-shod, we made our way to where the stock tanks were - and Holly and Diane's warnings proving valid as we carefully walked around the 'presents' the cows and horses had left behind.

Susan was initially pretty nervous about the cows - much to the amusement of the rest of us - but quickly got over it when Holly teasingly told her that cows just slobbered a lot, they weren't rabid. That they tended to move away from us as we got close helped, too.

Once we were in the stock tank - blessedly free of animal drool, for a change - Holly and Diane promptly reached behind their backs and untied the knots there before pulling their tops off and draping them across the rim of the tank.

I'd seen both of them naked before, of course, so the only surprise to me was that they'd done it in front of Susan so soon. A scan of Susan told me that she was more surprised by Holly's willingness to take her top off in front of me than Diane's - and mildly envious not just of their figures, but their obviously relaxed attitudes.

To her credit, it was Susan that spoke up first, asking Diane and Holly "Aren't you... embarrassed to do that?"

They looked at each other before looking at her, and Holly answered "No, not at all. You already know about Mike and Diane, so he already knows what SHE looks like. He's my brother, so I know he's not going to try anything with me; and he already knows what tits look like, so **that** isn't a big deal. Besides, if he looks at me, so what? It just means that he likes what he sees, and it's nice to know I look good, even if he IS my brother."

Diane smiled, and said "Susan, if you took that suit off right now, ALL of us would look, because you're so beautiful. But NONE of us would say or do anything to make you uncomfortable."

Susan looked surprised and said "You... you think I'm pretty?"

Holly answered "No, Susan, we don't think you're pretty. We think you're BEAUTIFUL."

She seemed to have forgotten I was there when Susan said "But you - both of you - you're so **pretty**! You have such pretty eyes and curly hair; mine is just black and straight. My... chest is not as big as yours. And my body is not as curved as you..."

Diane and Holly shared a look before Diane replied "Yes, we are different from you - but that doesn't make you any less beautiful. Believe me, you ARE! Your face and eyes and hair and all the rest of you - all of you together, it makes you a very beautiful girl."

Holly added "So you aren't as curved as we are - but the WAY you're curved! It's so smooth and delicate, like a flower or something. And so what if your breasts aren't as big as ours? I thought they looked wonderful, just like the rest of you, when we saw them in the shower. Sure, you look different than us - but that's part of what makes you look so beautiful."

Only then did Susan seem to remember that I was there, and looked over at where I was propped up against the side of the stock tank, my arms stretched out on the rim. I smiled

at her and said "The first thing I noticed about you - standing in line behind you at registration that first time - was your hair: how straight and black and silky it is. Then when you turned around to look at me, you were so beautiful it almost took my breath away. No, your tits aren't as big as theirs - but you wouldn't look right to me if they were. Susan, you're not pretty like an American. You're BEAUTIFUL like a Vietnamese - and all of us recognize it."

Susan didn't blink or register any other kind of reaction when I told her - with deliberate uncouth - what I thought she looked like. She just stood there, looking at the three of us in turn. I reached into her mind, and found that we'd succeeded - at least, in part - in convincing her that she wasn't the plain, unattractive person she'd thought she was. She was willing to accept that we thought she was attractive, and with that acceptance came a degree of self-confidence that she hadn't had before.

And as she continued to look from to the other of us, and saw the honest sincerity of what we'd just said, that confidence in herself grew - and grew some more. As I continued to scan her, her memories came to the fore: how her brothers had teased her mercilessly when she'd hit puberty. How her parents - almost always her father - had said things to her that squashed the small, isolated feelings of independence she'd occasionally felt. How she would hear others say how this girl or that was pretty - but never telling Susan herself how lovely she was. How the only physical attention she got was from her brothers - and that of a kind no one should have to tolerate.

As each of her bad memories came out, I carefully and gently helped her find her own reasons and excuses for them, so that she was able to neutralize them. With the recognition of her own inherent dignity and self-worth, her confidence and pride in herself grew even more. Why, yes, compared to other girls, she WAS prettier. As a matter of fact, she WAS smart. Now that she thought about it, she WAS a diligent and hard worker.

In real time, it was a matter of just a few seconds as all of this went through her mind - and at the end of it came the realization that despite the lies she'd told herself, she **had** felt certain physical sensations - and yes, they WERE of a sexual nature. And contrary to what she'd been taught, they *didn't* feel particularly 'bad' or 'shameful' - actually, they felt pretty damn good!

On the heels of that admission to herself came the understanding that by denying the feelings and sensations she'd experienced thus far in her life, she'd lost the opportunity to learn about the very things she'd felt. And inside her, I saw her develop the determination that she wasn't going to let any more chances to learn slip by - that she was going to resolve the feelings she'd had, and find out for herself how much she'd missed out on by denying the things her body had tried to tell her.

Watching her mind work that way, I was amazed at the transformation going on within her - the realizations, the commitments, the absolutely incredible growth of her courage and emotional strength. Looking at her from the outside, I could see that she was

experiencing **something** - but it took looking at her mind to fully understand the breadth and depth of the changes going on in her. Underneath the rest, she was still Vietnamese, and would always carry with her the emotional and psychological underpinnings of her culture. But added to that was the strength of character, self-confidence, and courage she would need to make her way in the American culture that she was just getting to know.

Holly and Diane both watched as Susan went through the mental metamorphosis that would change her forever; then they looked over at me in curiosity. I simply gave them a small shrug as though to say "Damned if I know". By the time their eyes returned to her, it was over, for the most part. Looking inside her, I could see that she still had a few things to resolve, but once she'd settled them, she was going to be a *very* different person - an even better one, I thought.

With her internal conflicts mostly resolved, Susan again became aware of where she was, and who she was with. She gave us an only-slightly embarrassed smile, and after looking around at all of us, said "I'm sorry - but what you just said to me made me think of some things, and I got distracted."

None of us showed the slightest reaction to that; the only response came from Diane, who told her "Oh - okay, that's cool. Happens to me, too, sometimes", accompanied by Holly's nod of agreement.

At that, Holly and Diane started telling Susan about some of the chores they would likely have around the farm - and emphasizing that none of the work was particularly hard or tedious; that Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula gave all of us things to do as much to be able to tell our folks that we 'helped' as to keep us from getting bored. Susan smiled at that, and said that her father had let her know that he expected her to work AT LEAST as hard as anyone else; all three of us laughed and Holly told her that doing that wouldn't be difficult at ALL.

When we'd all tired of soaking in the stock tank, we showed Susan around some more of the farm. Along the way, she completely lost her nervousness about cows, and even dared to let one of the horses take an apple from her hand. We were still walking around showing her some of the features of the farm and familiarizing her with what different parts of it were called when we heard Aunt Paula ringing the big bell she had to let us know that it was supper time.

Back at the house, we found out that Aunt Paula had decided that in honor of Susan's visit, supper was to be a traditional all-American farm meal: fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, and fresh home-made rolls. After her first few bites, Susan dug with the same enthusiasm as the rest of us. Aunt Paula had to caution her to leave a little room for dessert - which turned out to be hot apple pie a la mode, a new taste that positively delighted Susan.

After supper, we all sat out on the front porch while Aunt Paula and Uncle Jack chatted with Susan, getting to know her. Holly, Diane, and I all chipped in when there was something for us to add.

As it got toward bedtime, Uncle Jack let me know what he had for me to do the next couple of days; Aunt Paula followed him by asking for the girls' help with a few things. Having given us our 'chores' for the next couple of days, Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula excused themselves to go to bed after reminding the rest of us that we could sleep late if we were willing to get our own breakfast - earning smiles from Diane, Holly, and me. There wasn't a chance in the world we were going to miss a bite of Aunt Paula's cooking.

When it was just the four of us on the porch, we worked out the timing of what we had to do, then decided that another afternoon at one of the stock tanks would be nice. With the next afternoon's arrangements made, we all got up and headed inside to get some sleep - the next day would be starting early.

I was a little surprised when Diane asked if I'd mind if she stayed with Susan and Holly that night. I told her I didn't - that she and Holly would only have the couple of weeks with Susan while she and I would have our own times together later. She smiled, and after a hug and kiss, went with the other two to their bedroom.

The next morning, I was more than a little surprised at how tired and bleary-eyed the three of them looked when they made their way to the breakfast table. I noticed that Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula noticed it, too, but they didn't say anything - they figured that if we weren't actually 'grown up' yet, we were close enough that it didn't matter - we were old enough to make our own choices, and live with the consequences.

After a cup of coffee, all three of them seemed to have gotten the 'jump-start' they needed, and breakfast went as it usually did on the farm.

My jobs that morning were pretty simple, and as usual, Uncle Jack had given me plenty of time to do them in. While I was loading up the chemical fertilizer in one of his Big Green Machines, Uncle Jack was dropping some fodder off in one of the fields. When I was done, I opened the gate between that field and the one that had some of the cows in it, and get them moved over. With the fresh fodder, and the cows knowing the routine, it went just as smoothly as could be hoped for. Only one cow thought about going off in a different direction; but when I got in her way and waved my arms at her, she changed her mind and did as she was supposed to. I'd secured the gate (double-checking it), and was on my way back to the house when Uncle Jack swung by to offer me a ride on the tractor.

We were in sight of the house when Aunt Paula came out, apparently to ring the bell to let us know it was time to eat. She saw us coming, waved, and went back inside. After we'd cleaned up, Uncle Jack and I sat down at the table with the rest of them for lunch - hot roast beef sandwiches and French fries with plenty of iced tea to wash it all down.

After lunch, I went out onto the porch to do a little reading while the girls went in to take a nap - much needed, judging from the way they'd looked at breakfast. I'd been out there for maybe an hour or so when Aunt Paula came out to tell me that she was going in to town to pick up a few things. I asked when she'd be back - she knew I was asking so the rest of us would be there to help her bring things in - and she told me. A couple minutes later, and I watched as she headed down the driveway to the paved road.

A while later, I went inside to change into my swimsuit so I could go to one of the stock tanks. I found Diane in our room, and as I started to change, she woke up and smiled as she watched me. I smiled back and asked if anybody still wanted to go. She assured me they did, and left to wake up Holly and Susan to let them know it was time. When she was back in our room, I sat on the edge of the bed, watching HER as she changed into her bikini. We were out on the porch waiting for the others when they made their appearance - surprising the hell out of me when I saw that Susan was wearing the more modest of the two bikinis Holly had brought with her.

I managed to fumble around enough that Holly and Susan started for the tank before Diane and I did - and even then, I walked slow enough to give them a good head start on us before quietly asking Diane "Okay, I'll play - what the hell happened to Susan? Yesterday, she's in that hide-all-the-good-stuff suit she brought with her, and today, she's in one of Holly's bikinis."

Diane playfully pinched my side, and said "What happened to her is that the three of us were up until damn near two o'clock in the morning, talking. After all of us told her how nice we thought she looked, you remember how she kind of spaced out on us?"

I did, of course, having been part of the reason for it. I nodded in reply to Diane's question, and she went on "Well, apparently that got her thinking about stuff, and she wanted to talk to me and Holly last night - that was why I stayed with them. You wouldn't *believe* some of the questions she had for us! It was like she'd never learned **anything** about her body or sex or guys or ANY of that stuff."

Seeing the puzzled look on my face, Diane explained "She was asking us stuff like did we ever have 'feelings' between our legs, did our breasts ever feel tight and our nipples get hard, what did it feel like when we knew a guy was looking at our bodies, stuff like that."

I understood part of it, but being a guy, I couldn't completely understand all of it. Diane seemed to realize what the problem was, and told me "What she was asking us was stuff that most girls learn about while we're growing up. When she asked us about 'feelings' between our legs, we didn't know what she was talking about, and she had to explain - then we finally knew she was asking us if we ever felt *horny*, for goodness' sake! You should have seen her blush when we said that of COURSE we did, and how we'd take care of it ourselves. Mike, you wouldn't believe how **isolated** she's been for so much of her life! Well, you've known her longer than we have, so I guess you would - but I was still amazed at the things she didn't know, and had to ask us about. Holly and I had to

promise her that we'd help her learn about the stuff she wants to know. She said that she'd touched herself, you know, masturbated, but she doesn't think she's ever had an orgasm - and if she doesn't think she has, then I *know* she hasn't. I think she wants to learn, but she's still too embarrassed to say anything about it in front of both Holly and me; I think she wants to ask Holly about it when it's just the two of them, since she knows Holly a little better than me."

By the time Diane finished, we were getting close to the tanks, and Diane cautioned me "Now don't you say a WORD to her, and whatever you do, DON'T STARE!"

I just gave Diane a Look, letting her know that the last part hadn't been necessary.

Once in the stock tank, we splashed around for a few minutes, then Diane and Holly took their tops off, as they'd done the day before. I was surprised again when, after a brief hesitation, Susan elected to do the same - if a bit more nervously. With the material covering them gone, I could see that she had smallish breasts - about the size of baseballs - capped with small, chocolate-brown areolas and nipples. I let her see me looking at her, then smiled to let her know that I appreciated the way she looked before closing my eyes and letting my head roll back to rest on the edge of the tank.

But that wasn't the end of the attention I paid to her. With my eyes closed, and to all outward appearances utterly indifferent to her state of undress, I reached into her mind to try and find out how she felt about what she'd just done.

There, I found that she was - as expected - nervous about exposing herself that way; but she was also feeling a number of other things, as well: satisfaction that she'd actually had the courage to do it. Pleasure that I'd liked what she'd shown me. Slightly envious that Holly and Diane were more buxom than she was. Curiosity at what Holly and Diane's breasts would feel like, as compared to her own. More than a little unfocused sexual desire. An intense awareness of what her breasts felt like - tight and hard, her nipples slightly erect in reaction to the cool water in the tank.

Looking further into her mind, I was able to see that Diane had been right: Susan *did* want to ask Holly about some of the things the three of them had talked about the night before. I also found that there were a few things on Susan's mind that Diane - nor Holly, I suspected - had any idea about.

Working **ever** so carefully and gently, I stayed inside of Susan's mind, helping her to find the different things she needed to be able to open up to Holly and Diane. In some cases, it was just bolstering her courage; in others, it was necessary to help her find or remember reasons and justification for the different things she wanted to talk about, or do. Some of the things surprised me, and a couple of them simply astonished me - but after checking to make sure they were Susan's ideas, and not someone else's, I helped her see and find ways to accomplish them.

The entire process required a lot of patience and very subtle involvement on my part, and it wasn't until it was nearly time for us to start back for the house was I finished. Fortunately, the three of them were content to talk with each other between bouts of splashing around a little; my apparent relaxation at the edge of the stock tank was considered entirely reasonable - particularly since I took the occasional opportunity to open my eyes and be seen looking them over when they got a little boisterous.

When I was satisfied with that I'd been able to help Susan as much as I could (dared), I opened my eyes and participated a little more in the general conversation and light horseplay. Still, it wasn't much more than twenty minutes or so before we decided that we should go back to the house so we'd be ready when Aunt Paula got home.

I didn't even pretend not to watch as the three of them all picked up their suit tops and put them back on. I figured that my activities inside Susan's mind had worked when she didn't even give me a glance as she got the bikini cups adjusted on her breasts.

Holly and Susan took the lead on the way back to the house, and as Diane and I walked behind them, I took the opportunity to give Susan a closer look than I had before. As Diane had told me during Christmas, there was a scar that ran across Susan's back - healed and faded from time, but still visible. It wasn't large or ugly, simply a fine line that ran from near her spine, across and slightly up, over where her left kidney would be. Other than that one minor disfiguration, the rest of her skin was smooth and beautiful. Her legs were slender and trim, with nicely curved calves and thighs. Her ass was, simply, a work of art: small, tight, and obviously firm. Her hips and waist were in proportion to the rest of her, their curves making it clear that she was delightfully female. Her hair hung down to the middle of her back; and even wet, it looked incredibly thick and luxurious. Her delicate shoulders supported a trim and graceful neck, and when she turned to talk to Holly, she revealed a delightful profile.

Diane saw me looking, and gently nudged me in the ribs, saying "Looks pretty good, doesn't she?"

I smiled and said "You told me she did, but I really didn't realize HOW good she looks until now. Didn't the two of you have some idea of, like, **ravaging** her or anything?"

Diane grinned, and answered "Damn straight we did! But she was so shy then - still is, I suppose, but maybe not as much after our talk last night. Either way, we decided that we're not going to try anything with her - though both of us want to, REAL bad! - until or unless she makes it clear that she's willing."

I grinned back, and said "And of course, you're not hoping anything like that happens..."

Diane got a mock-surprised look on her face, and in a fair effort at a serious tone, answered "Oh, NO, we'd NEVER do anything like THAT!" - before all but collapsing in a fit of giggles. Holly and Susan turned to look at us, and I made circling motions with

my finger next to my head, letting them know that I thought Diane was crazy. Both grinned, and went back to their conversation.

We all rinsed off and changed back into our clothes, and were waiting on the porch when Aunt Paula got home. She'd only brought back enough for each of us to carry in one bag before everything was inside.

When it came time for supper, Susan was comfortable enough with Aunt Paula (who made it easy for people to be comfortable with her) to ask if it was okay to help with supper - that she (Susan) wanted to learn more about Western cooking. Aunt Paula was delighted with the request, and from the sounds that came out of the kitchen, the two of them had a fine time preparing supper. Holly, Diane, and I continued to be banned from the area, of course.

When bedtime rolled around, Diane joined me in our room, and the two of us had a pleasant session of gentle lovemaking before we fell asleep.

When breakfast time came, Diane had to quietly go and give Holly and Susan a second wakeup call - and when they came out to eat, neither of them looked like they'd gotten a moment's sleep. Diane was clearly surprised at their appearance, but from the scan I'd done of Susan the previous day, I had a pretty good idea of what had kept them occupied.

After we'd eaten, Uncle Jack checked me out on the tractor again (I'd driven it before, so he was just making sure I hadn't forgotten anything), and the hay baler. My job that morning was to go out to one of the fields and bale the first growth of fodder for the animals. There was a Citizen's Band radio in the tractor, so if I ran into any problems (unlikely, but Uncle John was a careful man), I could call him for help. During previous visits to the farm, I'd shown him that I was fully aware of what I *didn't* know about farm machinery, and wasn't the slightest bit reluctant to ask for help with something I wasn't **absolutely** sure about.

Baling hay wasn't something I did very often, so I took the time to make sure I got it right - as Uncle Jack knew I would. I was about three quarters of the way through the field he'd sent me to when he stopped by to give me a ride back to the house for lunch. He looked on in approval as I carefully got everything ready to pick up where I'd had to leave off, and shut everything down - then double-checked what I'd just done, to make sure.

On the way back to the house, Uncle Jack told me "When you start working for Andy and Tommy and the boys, you remember what I've taught you about the machines. They all know you're not a farmer, so don't worry about going too slow or anything like that. They know you're going to work as hard as need be, and they're not going to be upset with you if you take a little time to make sure you do things right and SAFE. None of us wants you getting hurt - you've got too much between your ears for that kind of nonsense. And don't be afraid to ask them questions, just like you do me; every last one of us would rather

spend five minutes explaining something beforehand, than five hours fixing it afterwards. Okay?"

I nodded, and Uncle Jack clapped me on the shoulder and said "You're doing fine, Mike; and I'm sure the others will be just as happy having your help as I am. You're not afraid to work, but you don't stop thinking while you're doing it. You know, we haven't had a single hay fire since we all started stacking our hay up like you suggested? It's a fact. And believe me, there's a lot of farmers that know who to thank for it, too. If you were to walk up to any farmhouse within fifty miles of here and tell them who you are, there isn't a one of 'em that wouldn't give you a place to sleep and a hot meal, right on the spot."

I was spared having to try to answer that by the appearance of the house - which distracted Uncle Jack into wondering aloud what lunch was going to be. He and Aunt Paula had been married for over twenty years, and he STILL looked forward to her meals.

As I was cleaning up for lunch, Diane found me and asked if I knew of anyplace that she, Holly, and Susan could go for some privacy. It surprised me, but I thought about it for a few moments and said "Why don't you just go to the stock tank again? If all you want is privacy, I've still got a little more baling to do; and when I'm done, I want to go over and have a look at the creek - I had an idea for something, and I'd like to check it out."

Diane kissed me on the cheek, and said "Thanks, Mike. I knew you'd figure something out. Don't you want to know what it's about?"

I just grinned and said "I figure you'll tell me if or when I need to know."

She grinned back, and held my hand as we made our way to the table.

After lunch, I asked Uncle Jack if he'd give me a ride back to the field I'd been working in, and he told me that I didn't have to hurry - that tomorrow would be fine. I answered that I was nearly done, and would just as soon finish it, if I could. He smiled, and said that in that case, he'd be glad to.

It wasn't but another hour and a half, and I was done with the baling. I carefully parked the baler where it would be out of the way, but easy to get to, and then just as carefully disconnected it from the tractor. From there, I drove over to the creek that ran along one side of Uncle Jack's property. I'd read something in a book, and wanted to see if it was something that could be used on the farm.

I took my time looking along the entire creek, and finally decided that what I'd read about would work - and then spent a little more time trying to work out some of the details in my mind. When I was finally satisfied that I'd done everything I could there, I drove back to the house, and went out to the barn and storage shed to see what materials were

available. Aunt Paula didn't say anything when I got myself a beer, and went out onto the porch. I was sitting there thinking through different things when I saw Holly, Susan, and Diane coming back from the stock tanks - all three of them in bikinis again.

When they got close enough to see me, they all waved, and I waved back. A couple minutes later, they were close enough for Holly to ask me what I was doing on the porch drinking beer. I told her that I'd finished the haying, and was thinking about something. She and Diane both knew that when I started 'thinking about something', it was usually good, so she asked me what it was. I told her I didn't want to talk about it yet because I still had a couple things to work out, but that if it worked, I thought she'd like it. She stuck her tongue out at me, and I made a kissing gesture at it, making the others laugh before they went inside to change clothes. I was still out there thinking when Aunt Paula came out to tell me supper was ready.

After we'd eaten, I asked Uncle Jack if he had any plans for some of the materials I'd seen: some aluminum flat stock, wire mesh, and baling wire. He wanted to know why I was asking, and I said that I'd had an idea that might get him fresh fish without having to go fishing. He just smiled and told me that if I had something in mind, I was welcome to use what I needed - just to let him know if he needed to get more of any of it. He asked how long it would take to do what I wanted, and when I answered I thought a half day, maybe less, he told me to go ahead and do it the next morning if I wanted. I thanked him, and he just grinned, saying "If you can get me fresh fish without having to spend three or four hours out there with a pole, you'll have made me a happy man!"

A few minutes later, Diane came out and asked if I wanted to go sit up in the hayloft and watch the sun set. I knew that she wanted to be able to talk to me in private, and agreed.

Once we were seated in the barn, looking toward the sunset (which was beautiful without the city pollutants and other obstructions), she started telling me about what had gone on that caused Holly and Susan to look so worn out that morning, and what had transpired at the stock tank that afternoon.

It seemed that the night before, Susan had gotten up the nerve (no surprise to me) to ask Holly about how she (Holly) "took care of herself" - Susan's term for masturbation, something that Holly had needed clarified. Holly, of course, had been more than a little surprised that Susan had come out and asked that way. With a little talking back and forth, it became clear to Holly that Susan had never really masturbated before - that she'd touched herself, and even gotten some small pleasure from it, but had never continued long enough to get the full effect.

On learning that, Holly had been simply stunned, to say the least. But she'd covered it, and had gone on to try and describe to Susan the mechanics of the process. That had proved to be insufficient, and ultimately, both of them had gotten naked so Holly could SHOW Susan what she was talking about. From there, things had slowly escalated until Holly and Susan were both touching each other's bodies, and masturbating each other to climax. With the discovery of what an orgasm felt like, and comfortable with Holly and

herself touching each other, Susan's next topic was if there was anything else that two girls could do to make each other feel good - which had led them to giving each other orgasms individually (Holly doing Susan first, then Susan doing Holly); and culminated in a furious session of 69 that ended only when both of them had gotten the other off yet again - at something like three in the morning.

In the morning, Susan had been highly embarrassed, and it had been all Holly could do to reassure her that what they'd done had been by mutual consent - and most certainly pleasurable. It was only when Holly had told Susan that she (Holly) and Diane had done the same things that Susan seemed to calm down. The session of the three of them at the stock tank had been so that both Holly and Diane could talk to Susan. Susan had still exhibited some misgivings that had disappeared only after Diane and Holly had taken off the bottoms of their suits and shown Susan that it really WAS okay for two girls to bring pleasure to each other. The whole thing ended with Diane bringing Susan to a thundering orgasm, followed by Susan doing the same for her.

By the time they had to get their suits back on, Susan had seemed fairly accepting of the things they'd done with, and to, each other - not even hesitating to join in when they started playing with each other's asses as they walked back to the house.

I just sat there, apparently stunned (but thinking to myself that I'd been right about Susan's wishes, and glad that I'd been able to help her), when Diane finally said "That is **some** kind of change in Susan, from the way she was the first time we met her - and even from how she was that first time in the stock tank! What do you think has gotten into her?"

I couldn't resist, and asked "You mean, besides you two?" with a grin.

Diane playfully slapped my arm, and I went on "Damned if I know, for sure. The only thing I can figure is that whatever it was about her that kept her so locked inside herself, being around us - well, you two, anyway - is gone; leaving her to try out the stuff that she's maybe always wanted to know about. I mean, you saw how she zoned out that day in the tank; maybe us telling her that we really thought she was pretty was the key that let her unlock whatever box all that other stuff was inside."

"Yeah, but why do you think so much and so fast?"

I pretended to think it over a few moments and answered "Well, she's twenty years old, and she's only now getting to find out about that stuff. There's nobody around telling her NOT to, or that it's bad, or anything - maybe she'd just trying to make up for lost time, or something."

Diane nodded at that, and after a few moments of thought told me "Yeah, I guess that makes sense. I think I know how *I'd* be if I'd had to wait that long!"

A couple minutes went by, and Diane told me "If she's this willing and eager to learn about herself, and girls, I wonder what she's going to be like when it comes to guys?"

"Beats me. From what I've been able to learn, all this stuff is pretty much taboo in the Viet culture - I mean, from what I've seen, and the way her dad acts, I figure all this sex stuff is kept pretty quiet and tucked away. But if she's acting the way she is with you and Holly, there's no telling what she'll be like with a guy. I'd bet she's still a virgin" - "She is!" Diane informed me - "and the girl-girl stuff doesn't really affect that. There's SOME stuff she could do with a guy, but after a certain point..."

"Yeah - after a certain point, she's not a virgin any more."

"Right. I guess the question is, how much is she going to want to be involved with guys? Is she going to let the way she was brought up, and her culture, limit what she learns about guys, or not?"

The two of us sat there in the hayloft, thinking about what might happen with Susan, when Uncle Jack got close enough to call up to us, saying "If you two young'uns are done necking up there, it's getting on toward bedtime!", followed by a chuckle.

Diane called back, telling him "We're not necking up here!", and we both heard his quiet "Not much, I reckon", and a soft laugh.

We went back into the house, finding Holly and Susan sitting in chairs, watching the late news. Both looked up when we came in, and I didn't give any indication that Diane and I had done anything other than necking with each other, as Uncle Jack had suggested.

Diane and I went to bed, and a couple minutes later, we heard Holly and Susan come down the hall as they prepared to do the same.

The next morning, both Holly and Susan looked like they'd finally gotten a decent nights sleep - but from the looks they gave each other, I suspected that they'd found a way to help each other relax beforehand.

Uncle Jack helped me load the supplies I'd mentioned, along with a variety of tools, onto a cart before taking me and the cart to the section of the creek that I'd settled on using. The only thing he had to say to me was "Just take care, Mike!" before heading off to his own chores.

I sat there for a good half hour, planning what I wanted to do and how to do it, before picking up even one tool. But when I was satisfied that I could do what I wanted, I went at it. The creek wasn't particularly wide - four or five feet - and not very deep; maybe a couple feet at the center. The bottom was gravel, so it made for reasonably good footing; under that it was nice and solid, easily holding the posts I drove into it.

It didn't take as long as I'd thought it might, so I was ready when Uncle Jack came by to take me and the cart back to the house. He stopped to look at what I'd done, and after a couple of minutes, asked "Okay, Mike, you want to tell me what I'm looking at?"

"A fish trap", I told him.

He looked at me in curiosity, and I explained "It's something I saw in a book a few months ago. The ones I read about were used to catch ocean fish that came up close to shore when the tide was high. The idea is that the fish can swim past the first part, but not back out again. I just had to add a couple things so it would work on a creek like this: adding that second 'fence' upstream so they don't just keep going, and making it so that both parts can be pulled out of the way, so you aren't trapping fish all the time, and so you don't have to leave it in the water come winter. Just let the two parts into the water, and the fish **SHOULD** get stuck between them; then all you've got to do is net the ones you want."

With my explanation, Uncle Jack saw how it was supposed to work, and nodded approvingly.

"I made the upstream part so that smaller fish - too small to cook, I think - can still get through. That way, you only get something big enough to bother with."

Uncle Jack smiled, and said "That's a nice trick, there, Mike. Just drop those two little gates you built, and stop by every so often until you've got your fish dinner! Think she'll work?"

I grinned, and said "I'm hoping so - otherwise, I just wasted some of your supplies!"

He laughed, and said "Well, it looks like it'll work, to me - and you didn't use enough materials to fuss about if it doesn't, so don't worry about it. I see you already let those gates down; I'll stop by and check it later this afternoon - and if there's anything in it, it's fish for supper! But we'll wait until we see if it'll work before we say anything - I think it'd be a nice surprise for everybody."

"And keep me from looking like an idiot if it doesn't work..." I added, with a grin.

Uncle Jack turned to look at me, and said "Mike, ain't nobody I know ever gonna think that - maybe this'll work, maybe it won't; but isn't anybody gonna think you're stupid for *trying*."

With that, he slapped me on the back and said "C'mon - let's go see what kinda road kill your aunt is trying to poison us with!" Every so often, Uncle Jack would tease Aunt Paula that she'd cooked up something she'd found laying dead in the road, and she'd come right back by telling him that it went well with the rest of sorry mess she had to cook - that same sorry mess being food he'd raised. I could only hope that Diane and I were as happy

and comfortable with each other after we'd been married as long as Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula.

After lunch - delicious, despite Uncle Jack's claims that it was dead gopher, or maybe a skunk - Holly, Diane, and I decided that it was time for Susan to learn how to ride a horse. She was willing enough, but visibly afraid of the two geldings (Jake and Elwood) that Uncle Jack kept for himself; the others on the farm were 'boarded', after a fashion. Only after we'd gotten them saddled and she'd had a chance to lead them around the barnyard by their reins did she realize how gentle they were. With the worst of her fears put to rest, it was time to get her up on one of them, and by almost-unanimous vote, I was elected to keep her company. I took the more rambunctious of the two - Jake, about as fierce as a puppy, compared to the kitten Elwood was like - and Susan took the other. We started out at a nice, slow walk around the barnyard as I explained to her how to use the reins and her heels to control her horse. She caught on quickly, and it wasn't long before we were going a little farther and a little faster.

When she had a firm grasp of the fundamentals of horseback riding, I turned Jake over to Holly, who continued the lessons. Diane remembered the camera she'd brought along, and ran inside to get it so she could get a couple of photos of Susan on Elwood. Susan and Holly happily posed for the requisite pictures, and then it was Diane's turn to keep Susan company for a slow ride out into one of the nearby fields. While they were gone, Holly asked me "Diane told you about us? Susan and me, I mean?"

"And her and Susan, too."

Holly smiled, and said "I thought she would; but I don't think Susan thinks you know."

"Don't worry - I'm not going to say or do anything. I'm like Sergeant Shultz: I know NOTH-THINK!", the last in my Sergeant Shultz (from the TV program "Hogan's Heroes") impression, earning me a giggle.

For the rest of the afternoon, the three of us took turns escorting Susan as she got familiar, then finally comfortable, riding something that was so much bigger than she was. The highlight came when she dared to break into a gallop with me as we made our way back to the barn the last time. As we rode, her hair was flying behind her and I could hear her delighted laughter as she enjoyed the feeling of riding at a full gallop across the field. When we finally came to a stop in the barnyard, her face was flushed in excitement, and Holly and Diane were both laughing and smiling at seeing the happiness on her face.

We had unsaddled the horses and were currying them - something that Susan took great pleasure in doing - when Aunt Paula came into the barn and in a very puzzled tone, told us "Your Uncle Jack just radioed in that I shouldn't start supper yet - he says we're having fresh fish! I know he was out mowing all afternoon, so I don't know WHERE he got it!"

I couldn't help grinning, and all four of them looked at me before Diane asked "Okay, Mike, what have you been up to?!", a smile on her face.

I just told them that it was a surprise, and that I'd let Uncle Jack tell it - hoping that by dragging him into it, they'd forget about quizzing ME about it until later.

It worked, but Aunt Paula still had a confused expression on her face as she left the barn.

The fish were still twitching a little when Uncle Jack got back to the house, prompting Aunt Paula to concede "Yeah, I guess they're fresh, all right! But where did you GET them?"

"I'll tell you after supper", Uncle Jack answered.

With the promise of an explanation, Aunt Paula seemed satisfied, and turned to ask Susan "I was told that you can do a pretty good job of cooking fish in that wok. This seems like a good time for me to learn how to use it, if you don't mind teaching me."

Pleased, Susan said that she would be happy to, and the two of them took the fish - three nice, big ones - into the house.

Diane and Holly followed, leaving me and Uncle Jack alone. He asked me "You didn't say anything about the fish trap?"

I grinned, and said "Nope. Kind of hinted that you knew more than I did about it - said that you'd explain it!"

He grinned back at me, and said "Didn't want the third degree, huh? Can't say as I blame you..." before leading the way into the house.

I think Uncle Jack was a little surprised at how soon supper was ready - but having a chance to smell what was cooking, I don't think he minded any more than the rest of us. Diane and Holly were permitted to help, but only to the point of setting the table after Holly made a brief detour into the room she was sharing with Susan. As she went by us, she told me "sticks", which I figured to mean that Susan had thought to bring chopsticks.

When we were told it was ready, Uncle Jack and I took our places at the table - and saw that Susan and Aunt Paula had prepared a meal not much different than what we'd had at Christmas. The rice looked a little different, and it took me a minute to realize that it was basically instant rice, but cooked so that it would stick together a little better; there wasn't much in the way of Asian stores out in the country.

Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula were both baffled by chopsticks, but quickly got the idea after Susan demonstrated how to hold and use them. The rest of us showed that we'd remembered what Susan had told us before, and let Aunt Paula and Uncle Jack know about soy sauce and the rest of it.

Uncle Jack and the rest of us complimented Susan on how delicious everything was, and Susan told us that it had been Aunt Paula that had actually done most of the cooking. I let

Susan see me looking around the table, before telling her "Susan, it looks like there's something missing - I'm surprised you forgot it."

She immediately got a concerned look on her face, and looked over everything on the table herself before turning back to me in puzzlement. I kept a serious expression on my face when I said "We're having fish, but where's the nuoc mam?"

She looked over the table again and got a positively horrified expression on her face - then remembered the reaction the girls and I had had to it at her parents' house. Remembering that, she realized that I was teasing her, and tried to give me a dirty look - making Holly and Diane both grin, simply because she was too pretty to really make it work.

Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula were both watching all of this, knowing that *something* was going on, but not having the slightest idea of what it was. Only when the rest of us started laughing, and Susan joined in, did they realize that I'd been teasing her. Seeing the baffled looks on their faces, we told them about our nuoc mam adventure at Susan's house, making them both smile before Uncle Jack said "I know what kind of appetites these three have, Susan, and if that - nuoc mam? Did I say it right? - wasn't to THEIR taste, it's probably just as well you didn't make any for us!"

Susan laughed, and said "I think so, too!" and tried to throw another dirty look at me for my trick.

After supper, we all gathered on the porch, where Aunt Paula finally asked Uncle Jack where he'd gotten the fish. He told her how I'd approached him for some materials, and what I'd done with them - earning me a number of comments for not admitting to what I'd done when Aunt Paula had found us in the barn. There was still some daylight left, so the rest of them simply HAD to see what a fish trap looked like. I went with Uncle Jack to hook a cart up to the tractor, and all of us piled on for the ride out to the creek. There, I explained what I'd read in the book, how it was supposed to work, and how I'd adapted it to the creek.

I was surprised when Uncle Jack told us "You can bet the next time the county Ag agent stops by, he's going to see this idea, too. Mike would you mind drawing up something to show how you did this, and how it works? I'd bet there's other folks that could put it to use, too."

I nodded, and Aunt Paula looked pleased as she could be - if the county Agriculture agent picked up on it, it would be the second thing I'd done to get into the local newsletter he put out.

When we got back to the house, Aunt Paula showed Susan the semi-shrine she and Uncle Paul had put up, detailing some of the things I'd done - my idea for stacking hay so that it didn't catch fire as easily, the letters I'd had published in the physics journals I subscribed

to, and so on. Susan came away from it looking at me as though I was some kind of demigod, embarrassing me to no end.

Over the next few days, the girls and I went through about every combination there was, keeping each other company during our 'off' times on the farm. Along the way, Susan had more than enough chances to reaffirm the pleasures that she and another girl could give each other; when she was with me, I simply pretended that I had no idea what was going on, or that she had any part of it. She was more willing to hold my hand and even give me an occasional hug or kiss on the cheek, but I didn't make anything special of it; I just continued to treat her as the good friend she was. The very few times I scanned her, all I found was that she was enjoying her time on the farm and happy to be with me.

It was nearly a week before we all decided that another trip to a stock tank was in order. Of course, as soon as we were in the water, all three of them took their tops off; when they did, I noticed that all three of them were developing nice tans - minus tan lines, of course, except where their suit bottoms were. Susan, in particular, had turned to an incredibly sexy pale tan color that was simply gorgeous on her.

I was in my usual position - head back on the towel I used as a pillow, my arms resting on the rim of the tank - enjoying the contrast between the warm sun and cool water when I heard the three of them start whispering among themselves.

The first thing I thought was that they might be planning some prank - splashing me, pulling me away from the tank rim so I went underwater, or something similar. But as the whispering went on, occasionally becoming somewhat agitated, I decided they were hatching something else. I was comfortable where I was, and **really** didn't want to bother with anything; so I simply ignored them, figuring that whatever they were up to, it wasn't anything to worry about just yet.

Oops.

I was on the very edge of falling asleep where I was when I felt someone move next to me, then heard Diane's voice in my ear, softly saying "Mike, we need to ask you for a favor."

"Wuzzat?"

"We want you to let Susan touch you."

"She does already."

"No, I mean **touch** you - you know, *there*."

It took a couple seconds (I TOLD you I was almost asleep!) before I got it: Holly and Diane wanted my permission to let Susan touch my cock and balls.

I opened my eyes and turned to look at Diane - who was staring at me intently - and in a fit of absolute brilliance asked "Say what?"

Diane seemed to realize what the problem was, and gave me a half-smile before explaining "Ever since Susan and us started, you know, having fun, she's been wondering about guys, too. I mean, she knows about the differences and everything since she helped take care of her brothers and sisters when they were young; but she knows that she's changed since she was that age, and figures guys do, too. She's been asking us about it, and we've tried to explain and everything, but there's really only so much we can talk about before we need a real example. Holly and I were hoping that you wouldn't mind doing it - I mean, we know you're not going to try to touching her back or anything. She's *really* curious about it, but she's afraid, too, if you know what I mean."

"What are we talking about, here?"

"We just want to let her see a guy's parts, and touch them if she wants to, while we explain things to her from a girl's view."

Diane's request seemed perfectly reasonable - at least, coming from Diane - but I couldn't help think that there was something she was missing. I pretended to be thinking about it as I reached out to scan Susan's mind to see what SHE was thinking - and what I found didn't surprise me as much as it probably should have.

I looked at Diane again, and asked "So what happens if - when, I think - I start to, uh, respond to all this looking and touching?"

Diane replied "If you do, then I'll take care of you!" with a smile.

"I'm sure you would - but what I meant was: what about *Susan's* reaction?"

That cleared the smile from Diane's face, and she said "I guess we'll just explain how that's part of how guys are."

"And how do you deal with it if or when Susan says something about Holly being here? I mean, you did say 'we'. And what if Susan wants to do more than just look and touch? What if she sees what you're doing to 'take care' of me, and decides she'd like to find out what it's like, too?"

I could see from the expression on her face that those were things Diane and Holly really hadn't considered. I told Diane "If you three **really** want to do this, fine, I'll go along - but make damn sure what you're getting yourselves into before you start. We've still got over

half a month before all of you go home, and there would be a lot of questions if she asked to leave early, or you three suddenly stopped having so much fun together."

Diane nodded her understanding, and moved over to where Holly and Susan were watching us. A few moments later, Susan looked surprised and slightly hurt when Diane and Holly moved a short distance away from her to have their own private conversation. Susan turned to look at me, and I just smiled and nodded to try and reassure her. It seemed to help, a little - but only a little.

A couple minutes later, Diane was back, telling me "Okay, the story is that Holly knows what you look like because she came in while we were making love one time. She'll explain that to Susan if it comes up, so Susan doesn't have to know about you and her. If Susan wants to, uh, participate, then its okay with me - this is stuff she should already have known, and dammit, I *like* her too much to be upset about it."

I nodded my understanding, and asked "Okay, so what do you want ME to do?"

Diane just grinned, and said "Just lay back and let us do our thing - and don't worry about it if you start to enjoy it".

I grinned back, and Diane leaned over to give me a quick kiss before heading back to where the others were waiting.

I laid my head back on my towel pillow, closed my eyes, and just waited to find out what they were going to do. I wasn't surprised in the least when I felt them moving toward me, and didn't react when I felt one pair of hands lift my feet up from the bottom of the stock tank - with the water supporting most of my weight, it wasn't a difficult trick supporting them - while another started slipping my swimsuit down my legs. I heard a slight gasp - undoubtedly Susan's - when my suit was down far enough to expose my genitals. I was slightly surprised when my suit was completely removed, then realized that with it holding my legs together, it might make some of the viewing a little difficult.

With my male anatomy fully exposed, the 'class' began. Holly and Diane had apparently realized that with me as the model, it was best if Diane did the explaining as she moved things around; but when Holly offered a few comments of her own, I knew that mine wasn't the only example of male physiology that SHE knew about.

From the tone of her voice, I knew that Susan was nervous at first - but when I didn't show any outward signs of concern, or even interest, she quickly got over it, and became much more willing to ask questions and participate.

As long as it was Diane's hands on me, I was able to control myself pretty well. But when I finally felt Susan's delicate fingers touching me, it didn't take long before my fight to remain 'relaxed' began to crumble - after a few minutes of Susan's hands on my penis and testicles, I could feel myself starting to get hard.

Just as she'd said she would, Diane simply included my involuntary reaction as part of the 'class' - explaining to Susan that it wasn't something that I was completely in control of (at that point, I had NO choice in the matter, but that was something else entirely), that it didn't necessarily mean that I HAD to have sex, and so on. In my fully aroused state, Susan was again slightly hesitant to touch me, but began to do so after receiving assurances from Diane that she didn't mind.

Susan took her time - asking questions and making sure she was completely familiar with the details of the aroused human male anatomy. I didn't object.

When she was finished, I heard Susan ask "What happens to Mike now?"

Diane asked "What do you mean?"

"He is hard - erect - so he can make love. What happens if he doesn't?"

"If he doesn't, then he will get soft again, like he was when we started. Depending on how excited he is, and whether or not anything is happening to help keep him like this, it may take just a couple of minutes, or maybe longer." I heard Diane say.

Holly added "Sometimes a guy will try to tell you that if you don't do something to make him climax, it will cause him to get sick - but don't believe it. He's just trying to get you to either have sex with him, or at least do something to make him climax. You NEVER, EVER have to do anything you don't want to; if some guy tries to make you do something with his words, he's not someone that you want to be with. If he tries to make you do something by force, then its **rape**, and you should report him so that he doesn't do it to other girls. But don't tease a guy by helping him get like that, then stopping, either. Don't touch him that way unless you're ready and willing to help 'take care' of him."

Diane added "Of course, that doesn't apply to Mike. Even when I was giving him my virginity, he was willing to stop even after he was a little bit inside me, but before he was through my 'cherry' - my hymen."

Susan asked "What can you do to... 'take care' of him?"

Diane answered "If you want to, you can use your hand to masturbate him, like this", taking my penis and slowly stroking it to demonstrate. A moment later, I felt Susan's hand replace Diane's, and listened as Diane gave her a quick tutorial on handjob.

Then I heard Diane say "If you don't want to actually make love, the other thing you can do is to use your mouth on him...", followed by the sensation of her lips being wrapped around me. As I felt Diane's mouth sliding up and down my erection, I could hear a brief flurry of whispers between Holly and Susan. Then Diane's mouth pulled free of me, and I heard a little more whispering between Diane and Susan - then felt what could only have been Susan's lips on me as she took her first, tentative steps at fellatio. Fortunately, Diane was paying close attention, and quickly corrected the few mistakes Susan was making.

From there, it was on to address the finer points of the process: sensitive spots, pressure, suction, and so on. Susan was a quick and willing student, and it didn't take long for her to master the techniques Diane was instructing her in.

Diane knew that Susan's actions were having an effect on me, and stopped her before the inevitable happened. I could hear the slight disappointment in Susan's voice when she asked "Was I doing something wrong?"

Diane laughed, and said "No, I think you were doing everything RIGHT - if you kept doing that for much longer, Mike would have had a climax, and I didn't want you to be surprised by it."

"What happens when he climaxes?"

"That's when he ejaculates his sperm - uh, cums, or shoots his stuff. It's a thick liquid, kind of like custard, only a little salty. If you aren't ready for it, it can be a big surprise; and some girls don't like the taste of it, so they won't let a guy cum in their mouth."

"How do you know when that is going to happen?"

"If you hold his testicles - his balls - in your hand, you'll feel them pull up next to his body. Then when you feel his penis suddenly get harder, that's the last thing that happens before it happens. Then you can either pull your mouth off and use your hand to finish him, or let him cum in your mouth. If you let him do that, you can either swallow it, or not."

There was a pause of a few seconds, then I heard Susan's tentative "Is it okay... Would you mind if I... ?"

Diane asked "You want to do it? Make him cum?"

"If it's okay with you. And Mike, of course..."

I heard Diane laugh softly before she said "I don't think Mike would mind in the slightest; and if you want to find out what it's like with him, I certainly don't mind. I think you could do a whole lot worse - I **like** the way he tastes!"

A few moments later, I felt myself being enveloped by what must have been Susan's eager mouth - and finally opened my eyes to look down and see that it was true. Susan saw me looking down at her, and let me slip free of her mouth long enough to give me a shy, pleased smile before taking me in again. I looked at Diane, and saw her looking at me; her happy expression making it clear that she was glad I was feeling pleasure, even if she wasn't the one giving it to me.

At my feet, Holly watched, fascinated by the sight of the virginal Susan with my erect penis between her lips, eagerly sliding them up and down the length of my erection. As I

watched Susan's head bobbing up and down over me, I saw movement in the corner of my eye. I looked over, and saw that Diane was sliding the bottoms of her suit down - then off, tossing them to the side of the tank before reaching between her thighs to begin masturbating. After a few moments, she pulled her hand from between her legs, and moved over to where Susan was, then reached out to the waist of Susan's bikini bottoms. When Susan didn't make any protest, Diane carefully pulled them down, too. Reaching for her own crotch again, Diane's other hand reached out to Susan's exposed womanhood. I could tell when contact was made by the way Susan's eyes closed, and she hesitated briefly, half my penis protruding from between her lips.

Susan quickly got her attention back to what she'd been doing to me, and was soon taking nearly my entire length into her mouth again. But I knew that Diane was having her own fun with Susan by the way Susan would close her eyes and hesitate briefly when Diane did something particularly pleasurable.

I looked at Holly again, and saw that her eyes were jumping around from what Susan was doing to me, to what Diane was doing to herself, and on to what Diane was doing to Susan. Holly didn't even seem to notice that I was looking at her - her eyes were somewhat glazed at what was happening in front of her, and she kept licking her lips as though they were too dry; her breasts were visibly tight, their nipples hard and erect.

The sight of my erection disappearing into Susan's hot mouth, and Diane's hand busy between her thighs, coupled with the knowledge of what Diane was doing to Susan soon had me as hard as I'd felt in a LONG time. Then when I felt Susan's soft, delicate hand and fingers cupping my balls and gently stroking them, it was all I could take: another minute, and I felt my balls tighten up as I got ready to unload them into Susan's eager mouth. Susan felt it, too, and I saw her eyes widen slightly in the realization that it was going to happen soon - but she didn't slow down in the slightest. If anything, she increased her efforts, and it was only a few seconds more before I felt the first hot wad of my jism erupt from the end of my penis. Susan got a slightly surprised look on her face that was quickly replaced by one of absolute delight - and she kept going, softly sucking every drop of my cum into her mouth before swallowing it.

When she realized that I was done, Susan lifted her head, letting my still-hard penis fall from her semen-flecked lips. As Susan reached for her breasts, Holly released my feet then quickly slid a hand into the front of her suit where her finger began busily dancing on her clitoris and dipping into her vagina. Susan rose up slightly as she squeezed her breasts and pulled on her nipples; when she did, I could see that Diane was steadily circling Susan's clitoris with her finger, even as she was doing the same to herself. In less than a minute, I watched as Susan suddenly froze in position before releasing a soft cry as Diane's attentions finally had the desired effect. A few moments later, Diane did the same, gasping as wave after wave of release washed through her.

As Susan came down from her orgasm, she saw Holly and what Holly was doing. Susan didn't hesitate to step out of her suit where it was bunched around her ankles, and move

over to where Holly was. There, she pulled down Holly's suit, and replaced Holly's fingers with her lips and tongue.

Even though I'd just had a climax, the sight of the beautiful Susan with her face buried in Holly's crotch started to get me hard again. Diane saw it, and quickly came over, reaching down to take me in her hand and start stroking me in encouragement. With Susan's dark hair fanned out on the water behind her, I watched as her delicate pink tongue danced between Holly's labia, and across her exposed clitoris. Between that sight, and what Diane was doing to me, it was only a matter of a few more seconds before I was fully hard again. When I was, Diane didn't delay any longer, and moved to straddle my hips so both of us could watch Susan and Holly. Once she was satisfied she was in position, Diane quickly lowered her body to impaling herself on my erection.

The sight of Susan and Holly was so incredibly erotic that it wasn't long before Diane and I had the water in the tank sloshing around from the force and enthusiasm of our mating. I figured that Holly was being subjected to the same joyful enthusiasm I had, and wasn't surprised when she tripped over into orgasm just a couple of minutes later, crying out as Susan's tongue continued to flutter across her clitoris in time with the contractions that seized her body.

I was still pistoning in and out of Diane when the two of them finally realized what we were doing. Both stood up in the tank and turned to watch us, Holly standing behind Susan. Susan in particular was fascinated by our coupling, her eyes locked on where Diane and I were joined. Holly, too, liked what she saw, and reached around to cup Susan's breasts. As Holly began gently squeezing them and pulling on her nipples, Susan spread her legs slightly and reached between them - either unaware or indifferent that she was giving Diane and I both a clear view of her pubis.

As Diane had told me, her pubic area sported only a small patch of hair - it didn't appear to be very long, but seemed as straight as the hair on her head; it was sparse enough that the cleft of her sex was easily discerned. But it was her clitoris and vaginal lips that fascinated me: her clitoris was large and easily visible, as were the thin, obviously soft and delicate, lips of her labia.

Diane and I watched as Holly continued to play with Susan's breasts and nipples while Susan's fingers dipped between her smooth thighs to caress the entrance to her vagina and softly stroke her engorged clitoris. I knew that Diane found the sight of them as erotic and stimulating as I did by the way her vagina kept clenching around me as she got closer and closer to her orgasm - and by doing so, moving me along to my own release.

Finally, the view before us became too much for Diane and me; even as I felt Diane tighten around me as her orgasm started, I was lifting my hips to bury myself as far inside her as I could as I began to empty what was left of my sperm into her.

If Susan didn't know what was happening, she must have guessed: even as Diane and I were gasping and groaning our pleasure, she froze in place again before emitting another soft cry of release.

As Susan's orgasm passed, Holly helped guide her back down into the water, holding her close and softly stroking her body as Diane and I did the same to each other.

When Susan had gotten her breath back, she surprised us by suddenly blushing furiously and lowering her head in embarrassment.

Holly asked her what was wrong, and Susan managed to tell us that she was sorry for watching me and Diane make love, and that she was embarrassed that I saw what she'd done to Holly.

The three of us looked at each other, uncertain what to do or say, before I finally spoke up to tell her "Susan?"

"Yes, Michael" she answered, without looking up.

"Susan? Would you look at me, please?"

"I am too ashamed."

"There is nothing for you to be ashamed about. Please, look at me."

She shook her head briefly before saying "I can't."

"Of course you can." I thought a moment, and added "Susan, it is the American way to look at people that you are talking to. If you don't, it is a sign of disrespect."

I figured the last part might get to her at a level that would work, and I was glad to see I was right when she finally managed to lift her head far enough to let me see her face - and the pained expression on it.

"Susan, there is nothing for you to be ashamed of, or embarrassed about. I already knew that Diane and Holly sometimes make love with each other. If you want to make love with them, too, then that is up to you to decide - and not for me to judge."

With communication started again, Diane spoke up, saying "Really, Susan, it's true. Mike has known about Holly and me since the first time we ever made love."

Susan looked at her in surprise, and Holly added "Honest, Susan. The first time we ever made love, Diane was staying overnight at my house. We had watched some scary movie, and neither one of us could sleep. We kind of started fooling around - kind of like what you and I did that night. Well, the same thing happened with Diane and me as it did with you and me - except that WE made a lot more noise. Mike came in to see what the

noise was about, and saw us. All he said to us was that if we wanted to have fun like that, it was okay with him as long as we were quiet."

Susan looked at her, and Holly nodded in affirmation of what she'd just said before Susan turned to look at me.

I told her "I don't see anything wrong with two people making each other feel good like that. It didn't look like anybody was MAKING you do it" - Susan blushed slightly - "so if you're doing it because you want to, then it's not up to me to decide if it's right or wrong for you. As far as I'm concerned, if you're making each other feel good, then that's a GOOD thing, not a bad one. Okay?"

With the realization that I didn't think badly about her for making love with another girl, Susan seemed to relax considerably. But she was still visibly upset when she said "But I still watched while you and Diane..."

Holly hugged her, and said "I watched too. So?"

Diane added to that, saying "Susan, that's okay, too. If we cared if you saw or not, we wouldn't have done it where you could see - we would have gone someplace more private."

Susan didn't seem entirely sure about that, and I told her "Really, Susan - we didn't mind. We could see you, too, and it looked like you were enjoying what you saw" - she blushed again at the realization we'd watched her masturbate - "and I can promise you that we liked what WE saw."

At that last, she lifted her head completely, and with a surprised tone in her voice asked "Really?"

I just smiled, and said "Really. I thought it was VERY sexy and VERY special to watch you - it brought me even more pleasure from making love with Diane."

Diane spoke up, adding "I felt the same way about it - it made me SO excited to watch you while Mike was making love to me like that. And I know that Mike is telling you the truth: after he has a climax like you gave him, it usually takes a while before he can get hard or cum again. But watching you and Holly, he was hard very quickly. And because watching you made him so excited, he was able to climax inside me again much sooner than he usually could. I like it when he does that, so I should be THANKING you for letting us watch you, if seeing us make love made you that excited."

Susan looked around at all of us, and Holly gave her another hug before saying "Susan, you already know that we like you. You're SO sweet, and such a good person. And we already told you how beautiful we think you are. Why should you be surprised when we think you're sexy, too?"

I could see Susan thinking it over, and decided that a little of my own special assistance might be useful. I reached into her mind to help her; when I was done, she was as relaxed and happy to be with us as she'd ever been - and even more trusting and confident of herself and her judgments. Better still, she had finally accepted the truth of what we'd told her we thought about her.

Even though all of us were comfortable in our nudity, it seemed like a good idea to make sure we knew where our suits were, and we all got up to locate them. I wasn't surprised when Susan took the opportunity to come over and give me a hug and kiss under Diane's approving gaze. Having the delectable bundle of a naked Susan in my arms, I couldn't help but start to respond to the feel of her firm breasts and soft mound pressing against me. Susan felt it, of course, and simply smiled up at me; my involuntary effort at saluting her only adding to her confidence, while my failure to do anything more than return her affection in equal measure only increased her trust in me.

When all of us had located our suits and gotten them handy, it seemed to be time for Susan to start asking questions about what *guys* thought about - what we thought was sexy, what we liked and didn't like, and so on.

Obviously, most of them were directed at me. I answered as best I could for myself, and when I thought I could, for guys in general. Diane and Holly chipped in with their own observations and opinions where they thought they had something to add.

By the time we got dressed to head back to the house for supper, Susan had at least a rudimentary grasp of what passed for the American Male Mind.

A little less than a week went by with the four of us pairing off in various combinations to do different things.

At different times, all of us went horseback riding with Susan - an activity she delighted in. As small as she was, she wasn't up to putting the saddle on or taking it off her horse; but once it was low enough for her to get to, she insisted on putting it away herself.

Susan and Aunt Paula got along famously - Aunt Paula was overjoyed to have Susan teaching her how to cook Oriental food with the wok, and Susan was an attentive student of Aunt Paula's cooking. All the rest of us benefited from their efforts.

At one point, Uncle Jack even managed to get her to join him for one of his farm chores, and after a little encouragement, got her to drive the tractor for a little while. She was uncommonly proud of herself after Uncle Jack told the rest of us what a good job she'd done.

Once, when it was Holly and me, we took the opportunity to bring each other to climax after a session of slow, gentle lovemaking. When it was Susan and me, and we weren't

riding the horses, she liked to walk around the farm, simply enjoying the quiet solitude as she talked to me about what she wanted to do with her life. I listened to her carefully, and sometimes asked leading questions to help her see - and think about - things from a different direction or perspective. If something in particular was troubling her, I would gently reach into her mind and help her find a solution to it - but I was always careful not to bias her one way or another; I simply helped her see the key points so she could make her own choices.

When it was just Diane and I together, we were content to just hold hands and talk about our futures and our plans. During one of our walks, Diane surprised me by telling me "You remember at Christmas, when I told you that I thought Susan was getting a crush on you?"

"Yeah."

"Well, it's more than just a crush. Holly and I have both been watching her, and listening to the way she talks about you, and there isn't any doubt in either one of our minds: Susan flat-out loves you."

"But whatever *for*?" I asked.

Diane gave a small laugh and said "For the same reasons Holly and I love you, only more so. Because you've been so kind to her. Because you've been so patient and gentle. Because you're so damn **smart**. Because even after she used her mouth on you, you haven't tried anything with her. Because you treat her right, and her own family doesn't - at least, not the way you do. Because, as she puts it, you've got such a big heart."

I snorted, and Diane looked over at me, a serious expression on her face as she told me "I mean it, Mike. You *are* like that, even if you don't know it or want to admit it. I know the first thing you noticed about her was how beautiful she is - but I also know that's not the reason that you've been so interested in her."

I started to say something, but Diane interrupted me to say "No, I know you're not interested in her **THAT** way - at least, not enough for me to worry about. But you **ARE** interested in her as a human being. I don't think you know how much being around you has helped her."

Of course, I had a better idea of what I'd done for Susan than Diane did, but didn't say so; I simply listened as she went on "Even from when we first met her at Christmas, and now, Holly and I can *see* the changes in her - and they're **GOOD** changes. She's more confident in herself, more secure, more happy, more **open**. If she's changed that much just since Christmas, I can't imagine what she must have been like the first time you met her! But the thing is, **SHE** knows she's changed, too - and how much. And she knows who helped her change. She's told me and Holly both that we've done a lot to help her - but it's **you** that she gives most of the credit to. When she talks to us about you, it's **SO** obvious that she loves you."

I kept quiet, waiting for Diane to continue, which she did.

"Ever since that day in the tank, when we used you to show Susan about guys, she's been even more willing and eager to make love with us. Before then, she was willing to take our word that there wasn't anything wrong about what we were doing; but when YOU told her the same thing, well, that made it *right*" she told me.

She went on to say "She's tried to be real careful about it, but from some of the questions she's asked Holly and me, I think that she wants to lose her virginity - or to be more correct, I think she wants to give it to **you**."

I turned to look at Diane in surprise, and she just nodded before telling me "Yes, you heard right. Holly and I have kind of compared notes about some of the things Susan has said, and we both think that she's at least THINKING about having you be her first."

"But I don't necessarily *want* to be her first!" I declared.

Diane smiled, and said "I didn't think you did - that's why I waited until now to bring it up: because it's becoming more and more clear to Holly and me that that's what she wants. You just said that you didn't *necessarily* want to be her first - but that's different than saying you WOULDN'T be her first. And that's the other part of why I wanted to talk to you about it."

"What?" I asked, suspiciously.

Diane just grinned, and said "To find out what it would take to make it happen. For you to be the one that Susan gives herself to first. Holly and I both love her dearly; and both of us know how patient and gentle you were with US the first time. Both of us have heard stories from other girls at school about how hard a time they had when they lost THEIR virginity, and we don't want Susan to have to go through *anything* like that; we want her to learn that making love can be a *good* experience, even for her first time. Both of us would rather have YOU do it, than some guy that might hurt or scare her."

"Did you just say 'we' - as in, you're agreeing to this, too?"

Diane just smiled and said "Yes, I said 'we' - that I'm agreeing to it, too."

"Why?"

"Because like I just told you - I love her dearly, and I care about her enough to be willing to let the two of you be together like that if it meant that her first time would be as good as you made mine and Holly's."

I sighed heavily, and said "But I don't *want* to be her first. I did it with you and Holly because I love both of you so much; I just don't know if I love Susan that way. Sure, if

she wasn't a virgin and you said it was okay, I'd jump at the chance - but to be her first? I just don't know..."

Diane nodded, and said "What you just said? That's why I'm not afraid to let the two of you be together - because I know you wouldn't want it to be any more than that. You just said that you didn't know if you loved Susan that way, and that's all I need to hear to know how much you love ME. But I don't think you really understand what a big thing it is for a girl to give herself to a guy the first time; it's the kind of thing she'll remember for the rest of her life, and how it goes for her will decide how she feels about sex and making love for a LONG time. Holly and I both know how lucky we were that our first time was with you. I know that you care for Susan - probably a lot. What you've got to decide is if you care for her enough to do this for her, or take the chance that some other guy bitches it up for her."

Having made her point, Diane shut up and let me think as we continued walking.

And I did think about it. Hard. Sure, I'd *love* to be able to make love with Susan - but to be the one she gave her virginity to? It was a responsibility I wasn't all that sure I wanted.

It was a good twenty minutes before I finally spoke again, telling Diane "If you and Holly really think that I can do it **right**, then I agree - you're right, I DO care for her enough to not want to take the chance some other guy will mess it up."

Diane smiled, and said "Good! And yes, Holly and I DO think you can do it right - you did with us!"

"Fine. But I've got a couple of conditions, though."

Diane's smile immediately disappeared, and she asked "What conditions?"

"First, that it's Susan that comes to me and makes it clear that that's what she wants."

Diane nodded, and waited for me to continue, which I did by saying "Second, that we have a decent place for it to happen - I don't know if I'll ever see Susan again after college, and if that's the case, I want to do it *right*: no haylofts for her, okay?"

Diane nodded again, and I said "And the third condition is that we have the TIME to do it right. You and I had to concern ourselves about time too much. I don't want Susan and me to have to worry about time any more than we absolutely have to, for the same reason I want the place to be nice. It was you that told ME that a girl's first time making love is something she'll remember for the rest of her life. You and me, we're going to have the rest of our lives to make up for anything that wasn't quite right for OUR first time; Susan and I won't have that chance."

Diane smiled again, and said "Holly and I accept the last two conditions, and I don't think Susan would mind the first one - if that's what she really wants. You're right about the

time and place, and that's why Holly and I agreed that you would be the right person for this: because you care enough to want to make it good for her."

With that settled, we went on to talk about other things.

A few days went by, and I noticed that Susan was looking at me more and more when she didn't think I would notice - and scans of her at those times told me that Diane and Holly had been right: she *was* in love with me, and not just a little bit. Other than confirming that neither Holly nor Diane were doing anything to 'encourage' her to do anything, I left Susan's thoughts and attitudes alone. I'd hedged a little bit when I told Diane I didn't 'necessarily' want to make love with Susan: I would welcome the opportunity, whether it was to deflower her, or not. The thing of it was that I wasn't going to do anything that would get in the way of what Diane and I had, and anything that happened between me and Susan would have to be of **Susan's** choosing. With Diane telling me that she was agreeable, it was now pretty much entirely up to Susan to decide for herself what she wanted; from scans of them, I knew Diane and Holly would do everything they could to make it happen, if that was what Susan decided.

It was almost a week after Diane brought up the matter of Susan giving her virginity to me when Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula told us that there was going to be a big meeting among the farmers in a couple of days, and that both of them would be attending. Seeing the puzzled looks on our faces, Uncle Jack explained "It's going to be a pretty long meeting, I expect - at least four hours, and it may go as long as six or seven. It'll be starting at noon, which means you youngsters will be on your own most of the day and evening."

On hearing that, I knew that the girls had just been handed the opportunity they needed - *if* anything was going to happen between Susan and me. A glance at their faces revealed nothing; a scan of their minds confirmed what I'd thought. Diane and Holly were both starting to figure ways to take advantage of the opportunity that Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula had just handed them; Susan recognized that if she wanted anything to happen between her and me, that **THIS** was the time to do it, if she was going to do it at all.

The four of us assured them that we'd be fine - that we all knew what our regular chores were, and that we could handle things. Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula both smiled, and said that they'd figured as much.

In the couple of days before the big meeting, all four of us made an extra effort to show Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula that we really could handle the routine chores that would need to be done while they were gone. Both of them let us know that they appreciated the extra attention we were showing, and the efforts we were making to show them they didn't have to worry about us.

On the fateful day, Aunt Paula made lunch early, feeding all of us hot roast beef sandwiches, mashed potatoes, gravy, and the works. When we'd finished eating, she told us that the rest of the roast and leftovers of the side dishes were all in the fridge, and that all we had to do was heat them up for supper. That out of the way, she and Uncle Jack both changed clothes and headed in to town for the meeting.

I was sitting out on the porch, reading a book, when Diane came out to join me. She took my book out of my hands, marked my place with the bookmark I had in the back of it, and set it aside before planting herself in my lap. I figured I had a pretty good idea of what was going on, and wasn't surprised when she gave me a hug and kiss before saying "Mike, Susan made her decision, and she wants you to be the first one to make love with her. Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula" - she wasn't related to them, of course, but being like family, she called them Aunt and Uncle like Holly and I did - "are going to be gone at least four hours, and that's plenty of time for you and Susan. And none of us could think of a better place than our bedroom - yours and mine, I mean. The bed is big and comfortable, and it's a quiet, clean place - about as perfect as we could ask for. While you and Susan are together, Holly and I will be taking care of the other things outside, so you'll have all the privacy you want. We'll also be watching for anyone to stop by, and we'll take care of it if they do; and if you and Susan want to take longer, then Holly and I will be watching for Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula so we can let you know if when they're coming back: we can see almost all the way in to town from the hayloft, so you'll have plenty of warning."

I nodded, and asked "So what do you want me to do?"

Diane smiled, and said "Just go into the bedroom and wait for her. She really wants to do this, but she's still nervous, too - just like I was OUR first time. Holly and I have both tried to reassure her that everything will be just fine, and it's helped. But she's still going to need YOU to show her that it will be, too."

I told her I understood, then asked "And you're okay with this? I'm sure I can think of something to put it off without hurting her, if you're even a *little* bit unsure."

Diane hugged me again, and said "You are such a dear! Yes, I'm okay with it - but it's sweet of you to ask, even now. Now get up and go wait for her. Like I said, she's nervous, so it might be a little bit - but she'll be there."

She got off my lap so I could get up, and when I was standing, gave me another hug and kiss before saying "Really, Mike, it's okay. If you make her as happy as you did me and Holly, everything will be fine."

I hugged her, and went inside to the bedroom Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula had given me and Diane. Inside, I closed the door behind me, but didn't latch it, then sat down in the armchair to wait for Susan.

As Diane had warned me, it was several minutes before I heard a soft knock at the door, followed by Susan's soft query "Michael?"

I told her "Come in, Susan", and when she opened the door, I was mildly surprised to see that she was wearing the large, soft bathrobe that Holly had given her at Christmas. Susan came the rest of the way in, and closed and latched the door behind her before turning to face me. The tawny shade of her tanned skin and luxurious blackness of her hair made a delightful contrast to the brilliant white of the bathrobe as Susan stood in front of me.

Though clearly nervous, she told me "I think you know that in the Viet culture, it is expected that the wife will be a virgin on the night of her marriage. For that reason, all Viet girls are taught to protect their virtue from the time they are very young. I want you to know that I am a virgin, just as my parents and culture expect of me. But I do not want to wait until the night of my marriage to give that part of myself to the man that I love - at least, not when the man that I love is already here. Michael, it is to you that I want to give myself to for the first time. You have shown that you care for me and about me in so many ways, and I want to show you how much you mean to me by giving myself to you this way. I would like YOU to be the first man to know my body, and to be the one to make me a woman."

Having said that, she reached for the belt of her robe and untied it, then let the robe fall to the floor so that she stood naked before me.

She was trembling slightly, and I quickly scanned her to confirm that she was there of her own choice, and certain of what she wanted. She was, on both counts, and I got out of the chair to stand in front of her as I told her "Susan, I am honored that you would choose me for this. Yes, I care for you very much - and even love you. But it is Diane that has my heart, and always will. Do you understand that even if we do this thing, it will not change the way I feel about Diane? That even if I am the one you give your virginity to, that it will be Diane that I love and will stay with?"

Though still obviously nervous, she managed a smile, and said "Yes, Michael, I know that. I offer myself to you, and ask nothing more than that you are patient, and use me gently. I know that we will never have more than this one time together; it is enough for me that YOU will be my first lover."

"Then I accept the gift you offer me, and will do the best I can to be worthy of it", I replied before reaching out to cup her face with my hands.

She responded by reaching up to take my hands, and gently pull them away from her face before turning her head to kiss my palms before moving them down and placing them over her breasts. Her eyes locked with mine as both of us took pleasure at the feel of her firm breasts in my hands, her nipples erecting into my palms - almost exactly where she'd kissed them.

After a few seconds, I pulled my hands away and reached for the buttons on my shirt. As her hands reached up to mine, she told me "I... I would like to do that."

Her hands replaced mine and I let my arms hang at my sides as she slowly and deliberately went about starting to undress me. When she'd gotten my shirt unbuttoned, she slid it down my arms before draping it across the back of the chair I'd been sitting on before reaching for my chest again. She spent a minute, maybe two, just running her hands across my torso; feeling the muscles of my chest, shoulders, and arms. She finally let her hands drop to feel the muscles of my abdomen, then let her hands move a little lower to the waist of my pants.

When she started to work the fastening of my jeans, I pulled my stomach in a little bit so that she would have a little extra room to work in. After a little trial-and-error, she finally got them undone, and I saw her hand trembling slightly as she reached for the tab of my fly. When she had hold of it, she hesitated briefly, and after a deep breath, lowered it.

She hesitated again, and then kneeled in front of me before reaching up to take the waistband of my jeans and underwear in her hands. A few moments later, both were pooled around my ankles, putting her face-to-face, as it were, with my semi-erect penis. I'd already slipped off my sneakers, and helped Susan by lifting each leg in turn so that she could slide my pants and underwear the rest of the way off my legs, leaving me standing there as naked as she was.

To my surprise, Susan stayed on her knees, and I understood why when she started running her hands along my thighs and around to my ass. After a few moments of familiarizing herself with those parts of my anatomy, she finally brought her hands back around, and took hold of my penis with one while using the other to cup my balls.

With her soft, cool hand wrapped around my penis, I couldn't help but start to respond a little; Susan noticed it, of course, and lifted her head to look up at me in pleasure.

Satisfied that she was getting the response she wanted, she stood up again, and I took her into my arms to give her a hug as our lips met. I could feel the top edge of her pubic hair softly tickling the head of my penis while her small, firm breasts pressed against me as we kissed. At first our kiss was gentle and loving, but as she slowly released the building desire and passion she was feeling, it became more and more intense.

Both of us were panting slightly when our lips finally parted, and Susan pulled back slightly to look into my face. Realizing that I was feeling the same things she was, but had no intentions of moving things along any faster, she smiled and moved closer again for another kiss.

As our second kiss progressed, I felt Susan's lips part, and readily met her tongue with my own. Our tongues danced in each other's mouths as our kiss became even more passionate, and our hands started a tactile exploration of each other's bodies. My penis grew even harder with the increase in our desire, and I knew that Susan could feel it

pressing against her. I chanced a quick scan of her, and found that she was FULLY aware of it, and pleased by the reaction she was getting from me - and slightly surprised with herself at how she was responding.

When our kiss finally broke, I could see that Susan had a slight - but distinct - flush on her face and across her shoulders. She looked up at me questioningly, and I simply told her "I'll be happy to stay here and kiss you as long as you want us to. We only go as fast, and as far, as YOU want."

She looked into my face closely for a few moments, then nodded and answered "Yes, that's what Diane told me - that you would not 'push' me. But I want this - now, even more than before. Teach me, Michael. Help me learn to be a woman."

I slid my hands along her arms until I had her hands in mine, then lifted them to my lips to give each a soft, gentle kiss. She responded with a confident smile, and I released one of her hands, using the other to guide her to the bed that Diane and I shared.

Susan didn't hesitate to climb onto it, and then lay down on her back, where she watched as I did the same so that I was laying on my side next to her.

I laid my hand on her belly, about halfway between her breasts and pubis, leaving it there as I lowered my head to give her a series of small, soft kisses. It was only when I'd lifted my head again, and we were looking into each other's faces, that I started moving my hand. Even then, it was with small movements, directed toward 'neutral' parts of her body: I was deliberately avoiding making any advances toward the overtly sexual parts. Another scan of her had told me that she was confident of what she wanted us to do, but was still slightly apprehensive, and nervous because both of us were on the bed. I thought that if I stayed away from the 'sexual' parts of her body at first, it would help her to relax about having me touch her - and make it easier and more comfortable for her when I finally DID increase the intimacy of our contact. Kind of a sexual one step back, two steps forward approach.

And it worked. As I let my touch expand to include her sides, and on down to the tops and outsides of her thighs, a scan of her told me that her nervousness was quickly fading. My hands continued to roam across her body, and progressively got closer and closer to her breasts and her pubic area. Another scan, and I knew that she was not only enjoying my touch, but my avoidance of those areas of her body was making her even MORE aware of them - and with that awareness there was a growing wish that I WOULD touch them.

So I did.

Not all at once, mind you, but in small, slow increments. In response to the gradually increasing intimacy of my touch, I watched as Susan's nipples grew a little more erect with each slight caress of her breasts; and felt it as her thighs parted slightly each time my hand ranged far enough to include her pubic area. Before long, my fingertips were

brushing across her puckered areolas, and dipping between her thighs to trace a path through the soft, sparse hair of her pudendum. By the time I let my finger trace the delicate folds of her inner lips, Susan was lifting her hips slightly in welcome to my touch as her head slowly twisted back and forth in her increasing passion and arousal.

I finally let my hand come to rest between her thighs, cupping the mound of her mons as my finger lay across the opening to her sex. After a few moments, she realized that I wasn't doing anything, and opened her eyes to look up at me. I raised an eyebrow in question, and she gave me a small smile before nodding her head in permission for me to continue.

Her eyes stayed on my face as I slowly curled my finger, dipping it between the thin, slick lips of her labia before finishing up by drawing it across her clitoral hood. When I did that, her hips lifted slightly and her eyes closed in response to the feelings I had created in her. When she opened her eyes again, I could see the slight increase in her desire, and repeated my actions with the addition of letting my finger press slightly against her opening. She gasped slightly in response, and I could feel a slight tightening of her entrance, as though she were trying to draw my finger inside.

I repeated my actions a few more times, and she would respond favorably with each effort. Once I was sure that my attentions were welcome, I lowered my head to take her nipple between my lips, and started to gently suck on it as I continued to plow her furrow with my finger. In less than a minute, I could hear her softly panting as her pelvis raised up in welcome to each of my probes; with each pass of my finger across her gradually erecting clitoris, I could hear her release a soft gasp of pleasure.

A few more minutes of that, and she was writhing under my touch; softly mewling her desire and passion as I slowly increased the pressure I applied to her opening, until, finally, my finger slipped inside her. She let out an audible gasp, and her hips lifted as she tried to get even more of my finger inside her. I didn't want to hurt her, or cause her any discomfort, and lifted my hand in response, so that I was only inside her as far as the second knuckle. At the end of my finger, I could feel the membrane of her maidenhead, and took care not to press against it.

Holding my finger in place, I used my thumb to start softly rubbing her clitoris in a circular motion. As I did, I could feel her getting wetter and wetter inside, and the tightness of her around my finger gradually decreased. I started to scan her mind almost continuously; when she was ready, I slowly slid my finger out of her, and then back in again. Over the next few minutes, I gradually increased the speed that I slid in and out of her, and did a few other things to try and help stretch her out a little so that it would be easier for her if/when she decided she wanted us to go that far.

I scanned her again, and was surprised to discover how close she was to having a small orgasm. Figuring that the more relaxed she was, the easier it would be for her, I happily continued my ministrations of her until, as expected, she released a soft cry as she was taken over by a climax.

I could feel her tightening around my finger, and was surprised at how much wetter she got as spasm after spasm of release washed through her.

When I saw that it was over for her, I quickly scanned her again, and was happy to discover that she was as physically aroused as she'd been before - and ready for me to make love with her.

As I slid my finger out of her, I gave her nipple a few small licks, and then raised myself up so that I could look down at her. She gazed up at me with a delighted smile on her face, and I told her "If it's what you want, I will be happy to keep giving you orgasms as long as we have time. Or, if you want, we can spend the afternoon giving **each other** climaxes, without actually making love. And if you're still sure that's what you want, we can make love, too. What we do - today, or later, or EVER - is up to you."

Her face got a positively radiated joy, and she told me "Thank you, Michael. What you just did for me felt wonderful - but I want to make LOVE. I want to know what it feels like to have a man inside me, and I don't want to wait until later. I want it to happen now, today."

I nodded, and asked "Uh, do I need to do anything like, uh, pull out of you?"

She gave a small laugh, and answered "No, you don't have to do that - but it's good to know that you are concerned about it. I do not start my menstrual cycle for another three days, and if what they taught us in High School sex education is correct, I *can't* get pregnant now. And I **want** you to be inside me when it happens; I want to know what it feels like to have a man's juices - YOUR juices! - inside me. Please, Michael - make love to me."

I smiled in response, and asked "What would you like for us to do? How would you want us to make love for your first time?"

Susan got a slightly thoughtful look on her face, and said "Holly and Diane both told me about the different... positions? I think I would like it if you were behind me for the first time; I think that might be easier - for BOTH of us."

"If that's what you want, that's how we'll do it, then", I told her.

She looked down to where my erect penis was sticking out from my groin, and asked "Is there anything *I* need to do to help you?"

I answered "Only if you want to - being able to touch you, and look at you, like this has me ready, if you are."

She giggled a little, and said "Yes, I can see that. I know that I'm very wet inside; would it be easier if you were wet on the outside?"

"Yeah, it would - but not that much. You don't have to if you don't want to."

She gave me a grin, and said "But I think that I DO want to!"

With that, she reached over to gently push me onto my back before pivoting around and turning over enough so that her face was above where my erection was waving in the air. She turned her head to give me a small smile, then turned back, took me into her hand, and lowered her head to wrap her lips around me.

I gave her a quick scan, and found that she was pleased that the contact we'd had with each other had had that kind of reaction for me. I also found that she actually rather liked using her mouth on me the way she was - knowing that she could bring me pleasure that way was not only satisfying for her, but exciting, as well.

After she'd slid her lips up and down my penis a few times, I reached over to put a hand on her leg and softly press against it. She understood what I wanted, and didn't hesitate to lift her leg and let me guide it over my body, so that we were in the classic '69' position. It was only then that I had my first clear look at the area between her thighs.

Her pubic hair was sparse and straight, and in the area between her thighs, I could see her thin, straight labia. They were parted, and the area between them glistened with her oils. The heady musky/spicy scent of her wafted into my nostrils, and as much as I wanted to memorize the sight of her, the aroma pulled my head up so that I could extend my tongue and draw it across the wet opening of her vagina. Her oils were light and thin, and flooded my taste buds with pleasure. I quickly applied myself to licking up as much of them as I could, then went on to flutter my tongue across her again-erect clitoris, drawing it out even further.

I was able to enjoy the sight and taste of her for only a couple of minutes before she released my penis from her mouth, moaned, and told me "That feels WONDERFUL - but I want you inside me. Now!"

My face separated from her crotch - as much from her pulling away from me, as the reverse - and she moved to her hands and knees next to me.

I got to my knees, and moved behind her with her eyes locked on my swaying and saliva-slick erection for as long as she could keep it in sight. Once I was behind her, I couldn't help but hesitate a few moments to take pleasure at the sight she presented me: the graceful curves of her ass cheeks above and bracketing the mound of her womanhood.

Before she had to say anything, I moved close behind her and reached down to take hold of my penis. I slid the head of it between her vaginal lips, wetting it with her oils as she moaned softly in response, before gently wedging it against her opening.

To my mild surprise, she pressed herself back against me, helping to hold me in place. Holding myself steady with one hand, I put the other on her hip and told her "Susan, we

can stop at any time - even after I'm inside you a little ways. Until we get past your hymen, no one will ever know what - if anything - happened between us today. If you want me to stop, I will - no questions asked, and no hard feelings. I am NOT going to hurt you on purpose. If I do *anything* that hurts, or makes you uncomfortable, TELL ME, and I'll stop until YOU tell me you're ready to go on. Okay?"

Susan turned to look back at me over her shoulder, and said "Diane told me you would be willing to stop; but that's not what I want. I WANT you inside me, Michael. Yes, if it hurts or feels uncomfortable, I will tell you - but I DON'T want to stop, now, or ever."

After she said that, I felt her press herself back against me even more. Knowing that she was ready and willing, I eased myself into her mind so that I could better monitor what she was feeling as I pressed myself forward.

The experience of having my finger inside her had done wonders for her, and I could feel her vaginal opening relaxing as she consciously tried to make it easier for me to penetrate her. Inside her mind, she was still a bit nervous - but when I didn't try to just 'bull' my way inside her, that nervousness quickly disappeared.

I steadily increased the pressure of my penis against her entrance, and I don't think either of us was all THAT surprised when I finally popped through. Of course, I immediately stopped; Susan's mind told me that having the full size of me inside her even that little bit was a little uncomfortable - but not painful. I waited patiently until her mind told me that she was ready - and then a little longer, until I heard her words say the same thing.

With one hand holding myself steady, and the other on Susan's hip, I arched my back and eased perhaps another inch of my penis inside her before stopping again, as her mind told me she wanted. I waited again until she told me she was ready, and eased myself out of her slightly to spread her oils before pushing myself in until her mind told me she needed me to stop again. After she told me she was ready, I eased out, then back in again - and could feel the thin obstruction of her hymen against the head of my penis before I had to stop again.

When she was ready, I backed out until only the head was inside her, then eased myself back in again, stopping when I felt her maidenhead blocking the way. I slid myself in and out of her several times like that - out until only the head was inside her, stopping when I got to her hymen. The motion of sliding in and out of her not only helped her get used to having me inside her, but also made sure that as much of me as was inside her was thoroughly slick with her oils. And I needed that slickness: she was incredibly, almost painfully, tight around me.

Finally able to slip in and out of her relatively easily, I released my hold on my penis so that I could have both hands on her hips. I slid myself out of her again, and as I was pressing myself into her, I was surprised when she suddenly pressed back against me - hard enough that my penis not only hit, but pushed through, her maidenhead, accompanied by her soft cry. I quickly went into her mind, and was only slightly relieved

to find that the pain was fairly mild for her - but if I'd had a choice, I would have preferred that she hadn't experienced **any** pain from it.

I held myself steady in her as I softly stroked her body and offered gentle words of reassurance. I went into her mind several times, and each time I found that the pain was a little less, and the pleasure from having me inside her was a little more. It was only a minute or so before I knew she was ready to go on - but I still waited until she TOLD me so.

When I slid my penis out of her the next time, I looked down and could see smears of blood from the tearing of her maidenhead. But I knew that the worst of it was over, and pressed myself back into her, gaining perhaps another inch. A quick scan showed that she wasn't feeling any more discomfort, so I backed out of her, and eased myself back in again - stopping only when I felt the tight ring of her vaginal entrance wrapped tightly around the base of my penis. I was inside her, completely, filling her with my manhood.

I couldn't resist the temptation to scan her and find out what it felt like from HER perspective. What she felt was FULL. Totally, completely, almost mind-blowingly FULL. And to go along with that fullness, she felt a combination of satiety, happiness, pleasure, and above all, *completeness* - as though she'd been missing something her entire life, and only then knew what it was.

I held myself inside her for a few moments, then withdrew about half my length before sliding it back in again, accompanied by her moan of pleasure. Looking into her mind, I knew that she wanted me to stay inside her for a bit, so she could savor the sensation of being so completely filled - and delight in the fact that it was ME doing it.

Only when I felt her start moving in front of me, rocking back and forth slightly, did I start making love to her again. Hold her by the hips, I started slowly emptying and filling her by turns, taking my time so she would have plenty of time to adjust to my actions. She quickly got used to having me inside her, and it was only a few minutes before I was pistoning in and out of her in a rhythm that was pleasing to both of us - but I was careful to make sure that it was closer to what made HER feel good than what worked for *me*. I wanted to be sure that she got as much pleasure as possible from our joining before I found my own release.

As we continued to make love, I released my hold on her hips so that I could lean forward and cup her breasts in my hands, feeling the hard pebbles of her nipples pressing into my palms as the firm mounds of her mammaries shifting in my hands. Lowering my head, I managed to place a number of soft kisses on her shoulders and back before lifting my head again. The feeling of her small, firm breasts in my hands was a delight, and I shifted my hold on them so that I could softly squeeze them and pull on her nipples, drawing a series of soft moans from her.

When I finally felt the stirring in my balls that told me I was getting closer to my climax, I released my hold on her breasts and rose up again to hold her hips once more. As I

continued to thrust into her, I reached into her mind and found that she was getting close to her own release. Knowing that she wasn't far off, I checked her mind to see what I could do to help it happen, and found that some hard thrusting into her would be all she needed to push her into an orgasm. By that time, I was getting close myself, and knew that her climax would be enough to trigger my own.

Taking a slightly firmer hold on her hips, I started to thrust into her more and more forcefully, until I was almost pounding into her. It was just what she needed/wanted, and it was only a couple of minutes before I heard her cry out her release as she tightened around me. I was close enough that I pressed myself as far inside her as I could; and as her vagina went into a series of spasms, I felt my balls tighten up before I sprayed the deepest recesses of her with the first hot jet of my semen. She must have felt it, because she threw her head back and cried out in Vietnamese in apparent response.

Even as I continued to fire round after round of semen into her, Susan's vagina went through a series of spasms: tightening around me incredibly before going through a fluttering sensation as they relaxed before doing it all over again.

With my male limitations, I was the one to finish climaxing first - but the feeling of Susan's vagina around my penis as she went through wave after wave of release was more than enough to keep me hard. When the spasms passing through her finally tapered off, she nearly collapsed in front of me; only by quickly wrapping an arm around her waist was I able to keep her from falling forward onto her face. I looked around for something to put under her - knowing that there would be some leakage - and was pleased to discover that the girls had been kind enough to put a few towels within easy reach of the bed. I quickly grabbed one and managed to spread it out under Susan with just one hand. Only then did I carefully ease both of us forward and down to rest on the bed, and then gently unplug myself from Susan's womanhood.

Looking at each of us in turn, I could see that both of us had a definite pinkish tinge from the blood of Susan's now-defunct hymen. A thought struck me, and I looked around some more, not overly surprised to see that we'd also been left a small bowl with a couple of damp washcloths in it. I took one, and softly wiped the traces of blood from between Susan's thighs, then my own.

I laid down next to Susan and put my arm across her back, holding her as her breathing gradually slowed. When it was something close to normal, she rose up enough to turn her head to look at me, and smiled. I smiled back, and she told me "Thank you, Michael. I enjoyed that VERY much, and it means a lot to me that it was you that helped me find such pleasure my first time."

I answered by saying "I'm glad you enjoyed it - but I'm sorry that you experienced the pain that you did. It wasn't necessary - there were ways to make that happen without hurting you."

She smiled again, and told me "Yes, Diane and Holly both told me that. But I wanted to be sure that I knew when it happened - to **mark** it, in a way, as the start of my life as a woman. It didn't hurt so bad, and the choice was mine, if you remember."

"I would have spared you that hurt, if I could have."

"I know you would. But as I said, the choice was mine. It's over now, so don't worry about it - *I* certainly don't! And the rest of it was wonderful, thanks to you. You have made me very, VERY happy."

She got a slightly distracted look on her face, and I saw as she made a few tentative movements of her hips and legs.

I figured I knew what she was trying to find out, and told her "One or both of Diane and Holly left us some towels and damp washcloths. There was a little blood on both of us, so I used one of the washcloths to clean it off. I also put one of the towels under you so that you wouldn't have to worry about, uh, leaking on the bed."

She blushed, and started to say something, and I interrupted to tell her "It's okay, Susan. That's what happens when two people make love. Everybody that's ever made love knows it, and there's nothing to be ashamed or embarrassed about."

She still blushed a little bit, and told me "Thank you, anyway. Yes, Diane and Holly told me about it, but I forgot until now."

I grinned, and said "I don't blame you for forgetting - it seems like you were a little bit distracted at the time."

Susan grinned back, and said "Yes, distracted is a good word. And I had a very good reason for it, too - thanks to you!"

She turned over to lie on her back, and I saw that I hadn't gotten all the blood off of her. She noticed it, too, and started to cover herself with her hands.

I told her "Don't worry about it. There's another washcloth, and it will only take a moment to wipe it off."

She started to get up, and I gently pushed her back down, saying "Let me."

She didn't seem entirely sure, but did as I asked, watching as I leaned over her to get the other damp washcloth from the bowl. When I started to wipe her off, I saw her hands start to reach for mine, but she got control of herself and let me do what I'd started. I was gentle and thorough, so by the time I was done, there wasn't a trace left.

I put the cloth back, then laid back down next to Susan and put my hand on her belly. She reached down to take it, and move it up to cup her breast, telling me "I like it when you touch me - but I like it most when you touch me this way."

I lowered my head to softly kiss her on the lips, and she returned it just as softly. I looked at her and asked "Are you okay?"

She didn't seem to know what I was talking about for a moment, then realized what I meant and answered "Yes, I'm fine. The pain is long gone, so all I feel is pleasure and happiness", and after a few moments, she added "And if I remember what Diane and Holly called it, I feel a little 'squishy'."

I smiled, and said "Yes, that's what Diane tells me she feels like, afterwards. You're certainly welcome to take a shower, if you like. When you're done, I'll take one too."

Susan looked at me hesitantly, and said "I am most grateful that Diane would share you with me, and even more glad that you made my first experience so enjoyable... but do we just have the one time?"

I smiled, and said "No, we can have more than that, if that's what you want. I just thought that you might want to not feel 'squishy', is all."

Susan smiled in relief, and told me "Yes, I would like more than just the one time. I know that I will never have another time with you, so I want to make love with you as much as possible."

I smiled back and told her "I am honored and flattered that you feel that way."

Susan told me "I am glad to hear that. But I think that I would like to take a shower, as you said - I don't want to be 'squishy' for next time."

She got up to a sitting position, then hesitated a few moments before turning to ask me "You take showers with Diane?"

"Yes, most of the time."

She hesitated again, and asked "Would you like to take one with me?"

I grinned, and told her "I would be delighted!"

She grinned back, and said "Would you mind waiting a little bit, first? So I can..."

I laughed a bit, and said "Of course. I'll knock on the bathroom door in three minutes, if that's okay."

She nodded and said "That would be fine - thank you" before getting up. She started to reach for her robe, then realized that the only people that might see her naked already had - and turned to give me a slightly embarrassed smile before opening the door and turning for the bathroom.

When she was gone, I took the towel off the bed, and then carried it and the bowl of washcloths to the laundry room. Diane had told me that she'd be doing laundry that afternoon, and I was glad to see that she'd been thoughtful enough to wait before doing towels and such. I discretely tucked the towel under a few other things, and carefully rinsed the washcloths out - and after considering it for a moment, put them back in the bowl and taking it back into the bedroom. By the time I was done, nearly five minutes had gone by, and I knocked at the bathroom door before hearing Susan's permission to come in. Still naked of course, she was adjusting the water temperature, and reacted to having me see her that way only when I whistled approvingly, and said "beautiful!".

With the water adjusted, we helped each other into the shower, and had a pleasant time cleaning each other up. A naked Susan was fun; a naked and slippery Susan was even more fun, as I discovered.

Suitably cleaned up, we dried off and made our way back to the bedroom, where we took up the positions we'd been in right after we'd made love: Susan on her stomach, me on my side next to her.

I lowered my head and gave her a small kiss on the cheek, and she positively beamed at me in response. I started to caress her back, and it wasn't long before my fingers found the scar that I'd seen. When I touched it, I felt her stiffen under my hand before she said "Please don't. It's ugly."

"How did you get it?" I asked.

She hesitated a moment, then told me "When I was still a little girl, while the war was still going on, there was an explosion at one of the government offices just a short distance from where we lived. I was asleep in my bed when a piece of metal came through the window of my room and cut across my back before being buried in the wall. They said later that it was part of a steel desk, and that if I had been sleeping a little closer to the wall, it would have cut my spine, and I would not be able to walk."

I considered that for a few seconds before I rose up, and moved my head down to kiss it. When I lay down again, she was looking into my eyes as I told her "The only ugly thing about it is how it happened, and that such a thing would happen to a child. I am sorry for you - not because of the scar, but the pain that it has caused you."

I could see her start to get wet around the eyes, and a quick scan of her told me that she was going to have herself a nice cry. I quickly scooted up to rest against the headboard of the bed, and with almost no urging, Susan moved to sit astraddle my lap where I could hold her as she cried into my shoulder. She didn't go through the great, wracking sobs of

a major emotional event; rather, it was more quiet - as though each of her warm tears was a tiny piece of the pain and hurt she'd carried in her soul. I gently held her in my arms, holding her close and murmuring words of encouragement and consolation.

After the tears had stopped, she pulled away from me a little, her head tilted down so that I couldn't see her face. I suspected that she didn't want me to see her face after she'd been crying, and reached over to fish one of the damp washcloths out of the bowl and hand it to her. I heard her laugh softly before she said "Thank you, Michael" and accepted it.

She wiped her face with it, then mopped up most of the tears she'd shed onto me. She delicately blew her nose, and then seemed at a loss about what to do with the washcloth. I took it from her with the tips of my thumb and forefinger, and with exaggerated care, put it back in the bowl with the other. She watched, and laughed at my teasing before playfully slapping at my chest. When I had both hands free again, I put my arms around her waist and she leaned back slightly so the two of us could look into each other's faces.

She smiled at me and said "Thank you, Michael. You have made this a special day for me, again."

I looked at her, slightly confused, and she said "I used to wonder what it was that I did to deserve being hurt like that, and could never understand why I was. Even after you and Holly and Diane all told me how pretty you think I am, I had a hard time to believe it, because of that scar on my back. But when you told me why YOU thought it was ugly, I finally understood that I had it not because of anything I had done, but because of the hateful actions of someone else. Then, after you kissed it, I could see in your eyes that it hurt you because of what you felt for me and the pain that it has caused me - not because of how it looks. Before, it was a scar not just on my body but on my heart; now it is only a symbol of a terrible time, long past, in my life."

With that, she smiled at me again before cupping my face in her hands and leaned forward to bring our lips together. The kiss we shared was soft and loving and gentle, and as it continued, Susan's hands moved from cupping my face to resting on my shoulders. I started to caress her back, and she didn't flinch in the slightest as my fingers slid across the flesh-and-blood symbol of all she'd been through in her life.

Our lips parted, and Susan leaned back to look into my face again. Apparently satisfied with what she saw, she moved close again for another kiss - one that started much the same as the first, but quickly escalated when I felt her lips part and her tongue touch my lips. In just a few moments, our tongues were dancing in each others mouths; and not long after that, I could feel Susan starting to wriggle around in my lap.

I couldn't help but start to get hard again; Susan felt it and redoubled her efforts to help move things along. I could feel the hard pebbles of her nipples pressing into my chest as she slid herself along the length of my rapidly growing penis. Before long, I was fully erect, the top of my manhood pressing firmly against Susan's mons. As our kiss deepened and intensified, Susan continued to rock back and forth on my lap, running the slit of her

womanhood along my length - gradually coating it with a thin film of her steadily increasing wetness.

Just when I thought I couldn't stand it any more, she raised herself up and reached down between us to hold my penis steady as she first positioned the head at her entrance, then lowered herself in a series of small, careful movements until I was again buried inside her.

When she was again resting on my lap, she pulled away from me again, leaning back far enough that she had to support herself with her arms - and leaving the delightful mounds of her breasts exposed for my attention. She started rocking her hips back and forth slightly, allowing perhaps an inch of my erect penis to slide in and out of her vagina as I leaned forward and tilted my head down so I could start licking and sucking on her breasts and nipples.

Between my lips and mouth at her breasts, the way my hands wandered across her body, and the feeling of having me inside her again, it wasn't long before Susan was panting and moaning her pleasure. We continued like that for several minutes before Susan had a small orgasm - one she announced with a cry of pleasure even as I felt her tightening around me. When it happened, she froze in place over me, so I started hunching myself up into her so that I was sliding in and out of her only a little less than I'd been doing before. I knew what I was doing was right when she cried out again in obvious pleasure.

My thrusts drew out her climax, making it last longer, and helped maintain her level of arousal: when she finally 'came down' again and opened her eyes, I could see in them that she wanted - even needed - for us to continue. But I could also see that she was starting to tire a little.

Taking her into my arms, I moved my legs around so that I was almost kneeling before carefully leaning forward so that I could lay Susan down on the bed in front of me. Susan realized what I was doing, and quickly moved her legs so that they were draped over mine, leaving me sitting between her thighs, my legs folded underneath me, and my penis still inside her. With only a little adjustment, I was ready to start making love with her again: rocking forward, I could bury myself deep inside her hot, wet tunnel of love; rocking back, all but the head of my penis would slip from between the thin, glistening lips of her labia.

Without hesitation, Susan reached up to start caressing and squeezing her breasts and nipples as I softly slid my hands over as much of her body as I could reach - from just below her breasts all the way down to her feet, my hands traced the smooth contours of her body as I repeatedly probed the depths of her womanhood.

We made love like that for several minutes, Susan's head tossing from side to side more and more quickly as the slow pace of our lovemaking steadily moved her toward another orgasm. Again, the feeling of her vagina tightening around me was accompanied by a cry from Susan as her second, stronger, orgasm overtook her. And again, I continued to slide

myself in and out of her as wave after wave of release washed through her, leaving her panting and her eyes glazed.

As before, her recovery was relatively quick; and her level of arousal quickly and easily reached the level it had been at before. Between moans of pleasure, she managed to look up at me and gasp out a request: "Please, Michael... more... make love... to me... more."

Since I already WAS making love to her, I didn't quite understand what it was she wanted. So I quickly scanned her, and found out that what she wanted was for me to move more quickly, and enter her with a little more force.

I knew that I couldn't do what she wanted in the position we were in, and tried to change things around without having to withdraw from her - but simply couldn't make it happen. I finally told her "I'm sorry, but we're going to have to stop for a bit so we can move around enough for me to make love to you the way you want."

She nodded her understanding, and released a soft moan of disappointment when I slid myself out of her completely. As I was repositioning my legs, Susan reached over and grabbed a couple of pillows, putting one under her head before pushing the other toward me. I looked at her in puzzlement, and she didn't even blush as she told me "I... I want to watch..."

I smiled, and quickly positioned the pillow under her when she lifted her hips: with the way it angled her pelvis, and the support under her head, she wouldn't have any trouble looking down to where we would be joined.

When I was ready, Susan was too: she readily lifted her knees and spread her legs, leaving me with a clear view of the area between her thighs. The small, sparse thatch of pubic hair she had did nothing to block the view of her parted and dark labia, or the glistening opening between them. I moved between her thighs, and wasn't surprised when Susan reached between us to take my erection in her hand and position the head at the entrance to her vagina. Lifting her head, she watched as I arched my hips, sliding the glans through the tight ring of her opening. Once I was in place, she released her hold on me and continued to watch as I slowly pressed myself the rest of the way into her, stopping only when our pubic bones bumped. As I slid into her, her eyes had gotten wider and wider; only when I was fully inside her did she let her eyes close and her head fall back as she emitted a deep groan of pleasure and satisfaction. Looking down at her, I could see that her breasts were tight and hard, her nipples hard and erect atop her puckered areolas.

She felt me shift slightly, and opened her eyes and raised her head to watch as I slowly slid myself out of her - apparently fascinated by the way her thin, dark labia extended, as though clasping at me, only to quickly disappear when I pushed myself into her again.

As erotic as the sight was, it was the *sensations* we were generating that motivated us more than anything else. It wasn't long before both of us had foregone watching as I slid in and out of her, to enjoying the feelings that our union was producing.

Just as I'd done before, I started to monitor Susan's mind almost constantly, adjusting the speed and force of my thrusts into her to bring her as much pleasure as I could. Even after all the lovemaking we'd done, she was still delightfully tight inside - and as her passion and arousal increased, she became even hotter and wetter inside, too. It wasn't long before both of our pubic areas were soaked with the overflow of her oils, resulting in a wet slapping noise each time our pelvises met.

My attention to doing what made Susan feel good had its own benefits: as she got more and more excited, and closer and closer to her release, her vagina would tighten around me slightly before relaxing with a slight quivering sensation that stimulated me tremendously.

Finally, though, it happened. With a surprisingly loud cry of release, Susan clamped down around me. I was close to my own climax, and pressed myself as deep inside her as I could as she repeated the tightening/fluttering of her vagina as she'd done the first time I'd brought to orgasm. The sensations she was generating around me were all I needed, and I felt my balls pull up to my body just before I unloaded the first wad of my cum into her. As I felt myself start to fire each wad of semen into her, I would press myself forward, using my pubic bone to apply a slight pressure against where her clitoris was trapped between us; she responded by pressing back, and crying out in Vietnamese with each addition of my jism.

When I'd emptied my balls in her, I could barely hold myself above her. Not wanting to crush her with my body, and enjoying the feeling of being inside her too much, I finally decided to roll the two of us over, so that I was on my back with Susan over me. After a quick look to make sure where the towels were, I collected Susan in my arms and moved my legs outside of hers. Then, with great care and gentleness, I rolled us over before snaking my legs back between hers, so that Susan was straddling my hips. She was still recovering from the intensity of her orgasm, and barely seemed to notice that anything had changed.

With the change in our position, Susan was exposed to the slight air currents in the room. Both of us were covered with a fine sheen of perspiration, and it was only a few seconds before I felt her shiver slightly as she started to cool off. I reached over and pulled the bedspread over the two of us - at least, enough to cover Susan.

About half of Susan's weight was on me, but I didn't mind - she didn't weigh all that much, having admitted to 94 pounds after a little teasing from Holly and Diane one day. To me, it was worth it to have her smooth, slender form in such close contact with my own body: the mounds of her breasts pressing into my stomach, her head resting on my chest, and so on.

When she finally got her breath and senses back, she tried to raise up to move off of me, but I just held her close as I told her "Its okay, Susan. You're not heavy, and I **like** holding you like this."

I felt her blush slightly, but she stopped trying to get up. A few moments later, she reached back to pull the bedspread off.

We lay like that for a couple more minutes, but we could feel my softening penis slowly pulling free of her. She lifted her head to look around, and spotted the towels. She rose up enough to grab one, and I told her "If you want, we can put that underneath me, so we can stay like this for as long as you want."

She smiled her agreement, and quickly unfolded it before setting it next to my hips. She stayed right with me as I lifted my hips and slid the edge of the towel underneath me; when the end of it was within reach, she took hold of it and pulled it the rest of the way before lowering herself to rest on my body again.

Her hair was scattered across both of us, so I reached up to gently move it so I could see her face, then put my arms around her. She tilted her head back to look up at me and smile before snuggling closer.

As expected, my shrinking penis finally did pull free of her, letting a small flood of our combined juices drain out of her, onto my pelvis, and on down to where the towel was waiting to soak them up.

When it happened, I felt her blush slightly, and told her "Its okay, Susan. I don't mind - at least, not if it means I get to hold you like this for a little longer. Besides, most of it's from me, anyway" - the last making her giggle.

We lay there like that for several more minutes, simply content to have the physical contact we were sharing. Finally, Susan rose up again, holding herself up with her arms as she looked down at me and said "Thank you again, Michael. Each time we make love, it feels better and better, and you are so thoughtful and kind afterwards. I did not know such pleasure was possible between two people, and I am glad that I have learned it from you. I will forever be in Diane's debt for letting us have this time together so I could know what it really means to be *loved* by someone, and to love them in return."

I smiled up at her, and answered "I think Diane would tell you that there is no debt for her; and I tell you that there is none for me, either. Both of us love you very much, just as Holly does, and we want you to be happy the same way that WE are. You are such a good person in your heart and mind and soul - all of us know that you deserve as much happiness as you can get, and we are happy if we are able to help you find it."

She smiled back, and said "Thank you, anyway. And whether you think there is a debt or not, I will always know how much all of you - including your parents and your aunt and

uncle! - have done for me. But I think what would make me most happy now is another shower - for both of us, I think!"

I grinned, and said "You've got yourself a deal. Would you like a few minutes, first?"

To my surprise, she got a slightly defiant look on her face, and replied "No, not this time, I think. Before, I was still a little embarrassed, but not now. You have shown me that it doesn't bother you, so I'm not going to let it bother ME. Like you said, it's what happens when two people make love, so I will accept it that way: as a part of what we have had together."

With that, she got off of me and stood next to the bed - a thin trail of our juices trickling down the inside of one thigh. Without any visible concern, she reached for the towel, and didn't hesitate to use it to wipe most of the fluids from my penis and testicles. When she was done, she told me "I will take this to the laundry room, and you can get the shower started", then turned and headed out of the bedroom, patently unconcerned about anything other than getting the towel to the laundry.

I was quietly amused at the change in her, and didn't delay to do as she'd instructed. By the time she got to the bathroom, the shower was ready for both of us - and we had a fun time cleaning each other up.

Cleaned and dried, we found ourselves back in the bedroom that Diane and I shared - still naked, and cuddling with each other on the bed. Both of us were a little tired from all the activity we'd been engaged in, and we just lay there talking to each other. Susan told me about some of the problems and troubles she'd had growing up - I wasn't surprised to learn that most of them were from being abused in varying ways by her brothers - as well as some of her happier memories, too. In return, I told her about how I'd gotten interested in physics, and how Diane and I had gotten together. Susan was still amazed that Diane's parents had allowed her to start using birth control, and finally began to accept it only after I explained that their doing so was a sign of their love and respect for her. Susan and I then had a little discussion on the differences between Viet and American cultures, and both of us began to understand a little more about how the other's worked, and what prompted the differences to develop.

As we talked, we would change positions on the bed to make ourselves more comfortable, or to be able to talk with each other better. Too, neither of us was hesitant or reluctant to touch the other - a caress here, a gentle touch there, softly stroking this or that, and so on.

I was lying on my back with Susan on her side next to me when she started softly dragging her fingernails along the inside of my thigh, from near my knee up toward my groin. Her touch was so light, so gentle, that I couldn't help but start to respond to it: when she started, I felt my scrotum tighten up; then as she continued, my penis lengthened and started to inflate. From the corner of her eye, she could see it when my

penis started to twitch; she looked down at it, then turned her head back to look at me with a mischievous grin on her face as she asked "Is that for *me*?"

I grinned back, and answered "Unless you don't want it..."

She laughed, and replied "Oh, I want it, all right!"

A few more strokes of her hand along my thigh, and I was almost fully erect - and the 'almost' part of that was only because everything we'd already done that afternoon: I simply wasn't ABLE to respond any more.

Susan stroked my thigh a few more times, but when I didn't get any harder, she seemed to realize that I was going to need a little more direct stimulation than she was already providing. Taking my penis in her hand, she sat up long enough to pivot herself around so she could lean forward and wrap her lips behind the glans before letting her tongue start caressing the head.

What she was doing to me felt wonderful and it didn't take long before she once again had me fully erect as her lips danced along the length of my manhood.

She was kneeling on the bed next to me, and it took me only a minute to decide that I wanted to return the favor. I reached over to put my hand on the calf of her leg, and gently nudge her. She paused - with half my penis still in her mouth - and turned slightly to look up at me. I simply told her "I want to do you, too."

Her only immediate response was to take more of my erection into her mouth, but when I nudged her leg again, she willingly shifted her weight and lifted her leg, letting me guide it over to the other side of my body.

Above and before me was the treasure that she'd shared with me twice that afternoon: the core of her femininity. Her vaginal lips were already slightly extended, and the area between them glistened faintly. At the top of her cleft, the hood of her clitoris was readily visible, and slightly pulled back to show the pearl of flesh it protected.

Lifting my head slightly, I was able to gently stroke the exposed part of her clitoris with my tongue before letting it slip back between the thin lips of her labia. As my tongue passed across her opening, I paused briefly to press the tip of it into her; she responded with a low moan as she tried to press herself onto it. I tried to help as best I could, but my tongue wasn't long enough, and she was still tight enough, that I couldn't penetrate her as far as I would have liked.

So instead, I went back to using my lips and tongue and mouth to bring her as much stimulation and pleasure as I could manage - and from the sounds and movements she made in response, it was enough. It only took a few minutes before I felt her starting to tense up over me, and a few minutes after that was when she released my penis from her mouth so should almost literally scream her release as I brought her to climax. The

clenching of her vagina as spasm after spasm passed through it pushed a surprising quantity of her lubrication out of her - and I happily lapped it up as fast as she could produce and present it to me.

After most of her orgasm had passed, her arms were trembling slightly as she lowered her body onto mine so she could rest and recover from what had clearly been the strongest orgasm she'd had. I stopped my ministrations to her sexual parts, and switched over to softly kissing the insides of her thighs and as much of her delightful ass as I could reach while I softly caressed her body with my hands. Her face was right next to my erect penis, and I could feel each exhalation of her breath as a soft breeze through my pubic hair. I wasn't particularly surprised when, after a minute or so, she took me in her hand again and tilted my penis over enough to give it a soft kiss. A few moments later, she lifted herself up again, greedily licked at me for a few seconds, and then took me into her mouth to start softly sucking on me.

When she did that, I figured that she was ready for more - and quickly and happily went back to what I'd been doing before.

I could feel her body starting to tense above me, and from the way her vaginal opening was clenching, I knew that she was getting close to another orgasm when she suddenly let my erection pop free so she could tell me "Please, Michael - stop. I want you to be inside me when I climax again!"

I couldn't resist giving her a couple more swipes with my tongue, and felt her quivering slightly in response, before doing as she wanted by letting my head fall back onto the bed.

She slowly moved her leg over so that she was again kneeling next to me before she looked down and asked "I think that maybe both of us are tired from making love so much. Is there another way that we can make love that would be easier for both of us?"

I thought about it a moment, and said "I think so. If you lay on your side next to me and put your leg over mine, I think that we could make love that way."

She didn't seem entirely certain what I was talking about, but was willing to give it a try. She quickly moved to lie on her side, and when I moved to 'spoon' with her, she seemed to understand what we needed to do. She readily lifted her leg and draped it across mine, opening herself to me. A little more adjustment on both our parts, and we were again making love slowly and gently.

The way we were positioned, I wasn't able to penetrate her fully; but there were other compensations - such as having a hand free to reach almost any part of her body that I wanted.

Susan twisted her body around slightly, and we found that we were able to kiss with little difficulty. As we did, my hand continued to wander across Susan's body: cupping her

breast, gently squeezing it before softly pulling on her erect nipple, letting my fingers trace across her soft and smooth skin, and reaching down to softly stroke the hard nubbin of her clitoris as my penis steadily moved in and out of her hot, tight sheath. A few moments later, Susan's hand was resting on mine, teaching me how best to please her.

When our lips finally parted, I could see the passion and desire Susan was feeling in her face. I carefully dipped into her mind, and found that she liked having me playing with her clitoris as I made love with her. Satisfied that SHE was satisfied, I lowered my head and took her breast in my mouth, softly sucking on her puckered areolas and hard nipples. She gasped slightly when I did it, and from the corner of my eye I could see as she used her other hand to start playing with her other breast.

In just a couple of minutes, she had a small orgasm as I continued to slide my penis between the petals of her womanly blossom while my hand and mouth made their own contributions. When it was over for her, I slid my hand back up to again caress and squeeze her breast as the two of us again kissed.

With only minor variations in what we were doing, we made love like that for a long time. When my hand was playing with one or the other of her breasts as we kissed, her hand would be at her crotch; her fingers either resting softly on my penis as it slid in and out of her, or stroking her clitoris in time with my thrusts. If it was my fingers between her thighs, I would either be sucking and licking her breast and nipple, or we would be kissing while she hand her own hands at her breasts. Along the way, she had a couple more orgasms, each of them noticeably stronger than the one before. And each of her orgasms would both move me a little closer to my own release, and leave her hotter and wetter inside - the hotness of her stimulating me even more, and the wetness resulting in a fog of her scent that was almost palpable.

It was after she'd had a fourth orgasm that I could feel myself fully responding to all the stimulation I was receiving - I knew that my own release was finally approaching. I slowly increased the speed of my thrusts into her, and Susan responded by spreading her legs to open herself up to me even more.

Susan seemed to know when I finally hit the 'home stretch', and managed to get my attention long enough to tell me "Michael! I want to feel you all the way inside me! Please!"

I managed, somehow, to stop long enough for us to change positions again. Without separating, we got shifted around so that she was on her back again, with me over her and between her thighs. The delay while we got moved around was enough to let me pull back from the edge a little. I had just started to move in her again when she looked up and told me "I want to feel you as far in me as you can get, Michael. You have done so much for me this afternoon, that all I want now is for you to have as much pleasure as you can. Don't think about making me happy - you have already done that much more than I would have dared to hope for. All I ask is to feel you as deep inside me as you can get while you find your own pleasure."

I could only look at her for a few seconds before asking "You're sure?"

She smiled up at me and replied "Yes, Michael, I'm *very* sure."

I smiled back, and lowered my head and body enough that the two of us could share a kiss. When I rose up again, I told her "For me to be inside you like that, it might be a little bit uncomfortable for you - you would be almost folded in half, your knees would be almost to your shoulders."

She just grinned, and told me "I am very limber and flexible. If you can help hold me, then I will be able to do it for as long as you want."

I quickly explained to her what position she would have to be in, and she just nodded before lifting her knees toward her head - and getting them damn near as far as my arms before she had to reach down to pull them the rest of the way. When they were raised far enough, I lifted each hand from the bed to get my arm behind Susan's knees, holding her legs up and apart. When both of her legs were draped across my arms, she released her hold on them and relaxed - and didn't seem the least bit uncomfortable at being in that position. She was fully spread and open to me, and we looked into each other's eyes as I pressed my hips forward, sliding the last fraction of an inch of my penis into her even tighter vagina. It was only with the help of the copious lubrication that she'd produced that made it possible for me to bury myself in her - even as I felt the tight ring of her vaginal opening at the very base of my penis, I could feel the head of my erection pressing against the deepest part of her. As that was happening, I could see her eyes get wide at the sensation of having every last bit of herself filled so thoroughly and so completely. I quickly dipped into her mind, and found that rather than making her uncomfortable, it was arousing her tremendously - so much so, in fact, that all I would have to do would be hold myself inside her like that and she would orgasm from it!

Knowing how incredibly turned on she was getting just from having me so deep in her was turning ME on even more - but I still needed the stimulation of moving in her before I would be able to find my own climax. I pressed myself into her a little more - gaining perhaps a millimeter more penetration - then slowly withdrew about half my length before pushing back in again until I felt her opening again clamped around the base of my manhood. I began to slide myself out, then back in again; each a little faster than the one before, until I was pistoning in and out of her in a steady, but fairly quick, rhythm. Each inward stroke ended only when I felt the head of my penis pressing against the deepest part of her - and with each such stroke, she would gasp, and press herself up against me, as though to draw me even deeper.

The feeling of my penis bumping against the furthest reaches of her vagina, along with the incredible sensation of the tight ring of her vaginal opening sliding up and down my erection, was turning me on far more than I could have imagined - and only served to prod me into moving even faster, and thrusting into her even harder. Her only response was to gasp and moan in pleasure, grunting out Vietnamese words of encouragement as

her head thrashed wildly on the bed as she squeezed her breasts, and pinched and pulled on her nipples.

There finally came the time that I knew it was going to happen - and I **knew** that it was going to be incredible. To draw out my pleasure and make it more intense, I slowed down the last few strokes, lengthening them so that nearly the entire length of my penis was sliding in and out of the two-sizes-too-small liquid ecstasy that was Susan's womanhood. When the moment came, I slammed myself into her as hard and deep as I could manage, causing Susan to cry out in a mixture of pleasure and pain as I started unloading jet after jet of hot semen into her - so much, in fact, that I thought my balls might simply collapse.

As my climax tapered off, I thought something felt strange; I looked down to where I was buried in Susan, and saw a white froth where we were joined. I felt myself dump another load of cum in her, and a second later, saw the froth grow. It took me a few seconds to realize: I had her so filled up that there wasn't enough room for my cum - each new wad of my jism was forcing out some of what I'd already unloaded in her!

More than a little dazed at this new experience, I looked down at Susan and realized that she was incredibly close to having another orgasm - and that unless something happened, she wasn't going to make it. I again dipped into her mind, and found that I wasn't quite right: she was close, all right, but that she could still finish it if something happened *soon*.

It took me only a moment to figure out what to do, and I did it: pressing my pubic bone against hers, I started a small bumping motion, applying a slight, rhythmic pressure to her clitoris. That was all she needed, and I watched as she was overwhelmed by her sixth? seventh? eighth? orgasm of the afternoon.

With the start of her orgasm, the deepest inside part of her seemed to expand, creating a slight pulling sensation around the head of my penis - but my third climax of the afternoon had been so intense that even the truly incredible mix of sensations that Susan's vagina was creating around it wasn't enough to keep me hard. Even as her spasms were tapering off, I could feel that I had softened considerably, and knew that it wouldn't be long before I shrank enough to fall out of her.

Even so, I was determined to make what I knew would *have* to be our last session of lovemaking a happy memory for her - something that she would recall with fondness and pleasure for the rest of her life. I stayed over her, holding my body above hers with my knees and elbows, keeping her covered and warm as she slowly came down from what had obviously been a very powerful orgasm for her.

When I saw that she was getting her breath back, I started slowly and softly kissing her face and shoulders to help her get her focus back. As she became aware of what I was doing, I saw her smile; a few moments later, her eyes opened to look up at me with a mixture of love, satiety, and gratitude. I lowered my head to give her a soft kiss on the lips - a kiss she greedily welcomed, and amplified by opening her mouth and touching her tongue to my lips. I opened my mouth, and our tongues danced for a few moments

before I pulled back to look down at her again. Susan looked up at me, her pleasure and satisfaction clear on her face. I was surprised when she threw her arms around me and pulled me down to rest on her, then hugged me fiercely as she told me "Thank you, Michael. You have not only made me a woman, but you have done it with kindness - gently, and with love; and helped me find pleasure that I did not know was even possible."

I smiled, and told her "It was my pleasure."

She grinned at me, and answered "I know - and that pleases me, too."

About that time, my penis finally shrank enough to pull free of her, and I could feel the mixture of our juices start trickling out of her vagina. I started to lift myself off of her so I could reach for a towel, but Susan held me where I was, saying "No, don't move yet. I think that I have used you up, and I want to stay with you like this for as long as I can."

"I think that maybe I'm a little bit heavy to lay on you like this, though. Would it be okay if I moved just a *little* bit, so that I'm not so heavy on you?" I asked.

She thought it over for a moment, and said "I think that would be okay - but I still want to feel your body touching mine like this."

I smiled and told her "That much I can do...", and carefully got my arms and legs a little more under myself so that I was supporting most of my own weight - but keeping the front of my body in full contact with the front of Susan's.

We stayed like that for several minutes; every so often, one or the other of us would give the other a soft, gentle kiss - sometimes on the lips, other times on the shoulder or cheek or anyplace else that struck our fancy.

There finally came the time, though, that both of us felt the need to move - our combined fluids started to feel cold, and sticky where our pelvises were touching. When I could see that the discomfort of the sensation was distracting Susan, I simply raised my eyebrow in question. She understood, and nodded; without having to exchange a word, she let me move off of her, and reach over to collect a damp washcloth and towel - then lay back and let me clean the area between her thighs and dry it off. When I was done, she took the washcloth from me, and gently pushed me onto my back before telling me "My turn, now" before starting to perform the same service for me.

With both of us cleaned off, she surprised me by moving to lay on top of me, straddling my hips, her head tucked neatly into my shoulder. I put my arms around her and held her close, treasuring the feel of her small, firm, and smooth body against mine as I softly and slowly ran my hands up and down her back, caressing her.

We lay like that for another several minutes before Susan spoke, asking me "You would let me lay on you like this as long as I wanted to, wouldn't you?"

"Of course."

She lifted her head to look down at me, and said "I don't think it's 'of course' for so many people. I have heard some of the married women talk, and almost all of them are disappointed that their husbands don't want to - what do you call it? snuggle? - with them after making love."

"Then those men are very foolish - making love is a **happy**-making thing, and I like to snuggle when the other part of it is over to help make the happiness of it last longer."

"And I have made you happy?"

The question surprised me - a lot - and I slid my hands around to cup her face in my palms as I looked her in the eyes and told her "You have made me VERY happy - not just from making love with me, but from letting me be a part of your life, and being a part of MY life. I think that knowing you has helped to make me a better person. You will always be a special person in my life - not just because of what we have had this afternoon, but just for having met you, and learned about you and the Viet people and culture. Yes, you have made me happy this afternoon; and more than that, I am honored that you would choose to give yourself to me; but I was happy to know you even before the time we have spent like this."

She smiled down at me, and I smiled back before telling her "Susan, I am happy to hold you - when you are in my arms like this, it is making a happy memory for me; something that I will remember with joy for the rest of my life. I treasure ALL of our time together."

Her face positively radiated happiness at that, and she lowered her head to my shoulder again with a contented sigh. I put my arms back around her, and went back to caressing her.

Some time later - I don't know how long - there was a discrete knock at the door. Knowing that it could only be Diane or Holly, neither Susan nor I either one were concerned about it; I simply called out "Yeah?", and heard Diane's voice saying "I just wanted to tell you that it's getting late - Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula could be coming back any time. We'll warn you when we see them; I just thought you might want to know."

"Thanks, Diane. We'll be out before long."

We heard her answer "Okay" before her footsteps faded down the hall.

We lay there a bit longer before Susan finally said "I would stay like this with you forever - but I think we have to get up now."

I gave her a small hug, and said "Yeah, I think so, too. Shower?"

She eased herself off of me, and then moved to stand next to the bed before turning and taking my hand and saying "Yes - if it's with you."

Still holding her hand, I got out of bed, too, and the two of us walked hand-in-hand to the bathroom where we shared an unhurried, and playful, cleanup. Dried and dressed, Susan joined me in the bedroom and helped clean things up, then carried the used washcloths and towels to the laundry - where she didn't hesitate to load the washing machine and get it started.

Holding hands again, the two of us made our way outside, where we found Diane getting ready to get the cows into the barn for milking; we could also see Holly sitting in the hayloft door, looking down the road that led into town - obviously watching for the return of Aunt Paula and Uncle Jack. When she saw us walking around, she waved at us, and got up with the obvious intention of coming down to where we were.

Diane waited until Holly joined us before asking Susan "Are you okay? Did everything go all right?"

To my surprise, Susan didn't blush as she answered "I'm fine - more than fine, I think. Yes, everything went even better than I had hoped. It... it was *wonderful*." - the last part with a Significant Look toward me.

Holly and Diane both looked at me in approval, and I told them "Okay, I know you're all going to want to hear the gory details; I don't mind. Why don't the three of you find someplace to park yourselves, and I'll take care of getting the cows milked."

All three of them grinned, and Diane and Holly each took one of Susan's arms as the three of them started toward the screened-in porch we sat on in the evening. I picked up where Diane had left off, and soon had the cows lined up for their turns with the milking machine. By the time the milking was done and I had the machine cleaned and prepped for the next day, it was time for supper. I got back to the house in time to hear the microwave oven announce it was done with something, and headed straight for the kitchen. There I discovered that the girls had teamed up to get the table ready and prepare supper - all I had to do was clean up and take a seat.

I knew that Susan had told them pretty much everything that had happened when all three of them kept doing little things to 'take care' of me - keeping my iced tea topped off, making sure I had plenty of food, asking if I needed anything, and so on. When supper was over, I tried to help clean up, and was promptly chased out of the kitchen - then out of the house and onto the porch, where Diane brought me a bottle of beer a couple minutes later. After handing it to me, she sat down in my lap and told me "Susan told us how patient and gentle you were with her, just like I told her you would be. Mike, you made her so happy, and made her feel so good, and I'm SO proud of you and happy for her!"

I set my beer aside, and took Diane in my arms to give her a hug and kiss; when it was over, she pulled back slightly, and looked at me lovingly as she told me "I knew that you would make it *right* for her, and you did. She told us ALL about it, and I know that what you had with her this afternoon was a very special thing - but special in a different way than what you and I have. I know that you'll always remember being with her, and I don't mind - I want to make SURE you know that I'm not jealous of her, or anything like that. I know what kind of affect you've had on me, and even Holly, and I'm not going to be upset when - not if, but *when* - she wants to hold hands with you, or even kiss you before she has to leave. She wanted to know what it was like to make **love**, and she learned how from the perfect person to teach her: you. She loved you before, but now she loves you even more - she told us so. But she also told me that she knows that it was just the one time with you; she actually said that she envied me because you love me so much, and are so dedicated to me. Yes, she told me what you said about me having your heart, and how I always would!"

Diane let me pull her close for another kiss before she pulled back again to tell me "Anyway, I just wanted you to know how much **I** love you, too, and that you don't have to worry if Susan wants to hug you, or hold your hand, or kiss you - go ahead and do it; I won't mind. I'm going to have you for the rest of my life, and that's more than *any* girl could ask for."

Having said her piece, Diane gave me another kiss before getting up to go back into the house.

I sat thereon the porch while the three of them sat inside talking. From the occasional bits of conversation that drifted outside, I knew that they were talking about what all had gone on that afternoon. I carefully scanned Diane and Holly, and was reassured when I found that neither one of them had the slightest ill-will about the time Susan and I had had together - in fact, both of them were genuinely delighted that she'd had such a pleasant and *satisfactory* introduction to making love. As for Susan, she was feeling a mixture of contentment (from the orgasms she'd had), gratitude (that I'd been gentle and gone slowly with her), regret (that it had taken her so long to discover the physical pleasures of making love, whether with a girl or a guy), sadness (that it would be only the one time with me), and happiness (that she had learned about making love from me).

I was contemplating all the changes that had happened in my life as a result of learning how to use The Force when I saw headlights on the road, and a few minutes later, watched as they turned into the driveway. When Uncle Jack's truck got close enough, the girls heard it, and the three of them came out to stand on the porch with me as Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula got out. As Aunt Paula started asking to see if we were all okay, and had had supper, I ran down the list of chores that I knew Uncle Jack would want to know we'd gotten done. When I was done, he just clapped me on the shoulder and said "Yup. Figured you young'uns could handle it" - and said it loud enough for the girls to hear him, too, making them smile in pride.

Diane asked if they were hungry, and Aunt Paula told her that they'd had supper in town - it had exactly ONE café, which had stayed open late in anticipation of the 'rush' after the meeting. Uncle Jack said that he figured he could manage to get himself wrapped around a slice of Paula's pie, and Holly and Susan went inside to get it - coming back out with a piece for each of us. As we sat there enjoying our dessert, Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula let us know what all had happened at the meeting - it turned out that it was just a general get-together organized by the county Agriculture agent to let the farmers know about some things the government was getting ready to offer. He also told us that he'd invited the Ag agent to stop by the next day to see the fish trap I'd built - exciting the girls considerably.

By the time we finished our pie, and got caught up on what had gone on at the meeting, it was getting late enough that all of us were ready for bed.

I wasn't surprised when Diane got into bed with me, and just spooned against my front after pulling my arm around so I could cup her breast in my hand. She knew that I really wouldn't be ready or able to make love with her, and was content to have me hold her.

The next morning, I saw Susan as she was heading for the dining room for breakfast, and saw that she was walking a little oddly. She saw me watching her, and gave me a shy grin before quietly telling me "I did not feel it last night, but I am a little bit sore this morning."

It took me a second to realize where she was sore, and when she saw the look on my face, she quickly told me "Oh, no, I will be fine - it doesn't *hurt*, it just feels like a muscle that has been stretched a little too far. And it was stretched in such a NICE way!" with a grin.

I grinned back, and as she went by, I gave her a little pat on the butt - making her turn and grin even wider.

The county Ag agent showed up, and was shown the fish trap I'd built. He was surprised that someone had adapted the idea to a freshwater water course, and impressed all over again when he found out that it had been my idea and design. As Uncle Jack had asked, I had a brief 'paper' ready, describing what I'd done, and how it could be modified to fit other locations. The Ag agent asked me what I was majoring in, and when I told him physics, he looked disappointed and told me "Son, we need people with your kind of brains in agriculture. This is the second good idea you've had before you're even out of college. I know folks that haven't had *any* ideas, *ever*! You sure you don't want to change majors? With this, and that hay idea, I can guarantee you full scholarships for the rest of your schooling, and a good-paying job when you graduate."

I thanked him, and said that I appreciated the offer, but that I really did like physics; he took it well enough. A couple weeks later, Uncle Jack got the Ag agent's newsletter, and right there on the front page was my fish trap modification. When Aunt Paula saw it, she looked at me like she was proud enough to bust.

For the rest of the time the girls were on the farm, the three of us found ample time and opportunities to match up in various combinations for fun and pleasure. As Diane had predicted, Susan was more than willing to hold hands with me, give me hugs, and kiss me at the slightest provocation - as Diane looked on with patient amusement.

Whenever I was at the stock tank with them, the girls wouldn't hesitate to take off their suits, and tease me until I followed their example. With all of us naked, a lot of playing and teasing and groping went on - enough, in fact, that different combinations of us would team up to get each other off. I never actually made love with Susan again, but she and I had more than enough fun using our hands and mouths on each other - usually while Diane and/or Holly looked on, or joined us. Holly nearly killed Susan with pleasure as Susan watched me having anal sex with Diane (at Diane's request, made where Susan could hear it). Susan had already been on the verge of an orgasm when Holly slid her finger into Susan anus; Susan immediately started having an orgasm that had her thrashing around in the stock tank as she all but screamed her release. When it was over, Holly had to hold Susan out of the water until she got enough strength back to keep herself from drowning. Watching Susan going through such an obviously powerful orgasm triggered Diane, and then me, into our own more-powerful-than-usual climaxes. Holly could only stand there staring at us, and the reactions she'd brought about from what she'd done to Susan.

As was his custom, Uncle Jack gave us all the last couple of days of the girl's stay as 'off time'. We took advantage of it to the utmost - finding a spot well away from where anyone might find or see (or hear!) us, we packed a picnic lunch and spent almost an entire day naked, playing and pleasuring each other. Susan either didn't notice - Diane was happily using her mouth to tease her to a climax - or didn't care when Holly and I took the opportunity to make love with each other. In return, a little while later, Diane encouraged Susan and I to make love again while she and Holly were locked in a fierce, and highly erotic, '69'. Susan was still in her menstrual cycle, so I wore a condom, but that didn't appreciably decrease the pleasure for either of us. By the time we were ready to start back to the house, all of us were thoroughly satiated - sticky and sweaty, too, but satiated. We had to stop off at one of the stock tanks for a quick skinny-dip to rinse the assorted dried secretions and fluids off, so Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula wouldn't be TOO suspicious.

When Susan's parents came out to the farm to collect her, Aunt Paula and Uncle Jack were there to greet them, as were the rest of us. Susan made a point of taking her parents to the 'brag area' Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula had put up about me. Both of them came away from it looking more than a little surprised and impressed. Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula shooed the girls and me outside so they could talk with Susan's parents - it being pretty obvious that that was something her folks wanted to do. The four of us went out to the barn, and Susan told us "I think this will be the last chance I have to thank all of you - particularly you, Michael! - for the friendship and kindness you have shown me. I have had a *wonderful* time here, and with all of you."

With that, Susan moved to stand in front of Holly and kissed her. From where I stood, I could see that the kiss was more than passingly friendly - particularly when both of them raised their hands to cup, then caress and squeeze, each other's breasts. Both of them were panting slightly when they separated; then it was Diane's turn - and she was just as willing a partner as Holly had been. Finally, it was my turn - and Susan got things off to a proper start my reaching down to take my hands and putting them on her breasts before stepping close enough to kiss me. As our tongues danced in each other's mouths, I felt her nipples harden under my thumbs, and didn't hesitate to squeeze her breasts and gently pull on her nipples. After a bit, though, the position was a bit uncomfortable, and I slid my hands from between us and moved them down to where I could hold Susan's small, tight ass in my hands - and heard her soft moan of pleasure as I started squeezing her firm globes. By mutual understanding and consent, we broke our kiss *just* before we started tearing each other's clothes off; before she pulled back from me, Susan pulled my head down a little farther so she could whisper in my ear "Thank you, Michael, for making love with me. I will never forget it, or you."

A couple minutes later, we were back out in the farmyard when Susan's parent came out, carrying her suitcase. Susan went over to Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula, and gave both of them a hug and kiss on the cheek as her dad put the suitcase in the trunk of the car.

They each opened a car door, and Susan paused long enough to say another goodbye to each of us, finishing by telling me "Thank you, Michael - for **everything**." - getting me a look from her father, but nothing more.

Diane and Holly were both crying as we watched their car go down the drive, then make the turn on the highway toward 'town', and the way home.

Supper that night was a quiet affair - even Aunt Paula's excellent cooking couldn't make up for the absent Susan.

A couple days later, Dad and Mom came down to the farm to get Holly and Diane; they had lunch with us, and Uncle Jack took them out to see the fish trap - and told them about the Ag agent's offer of a full scholarship and a job if I wanted to change majors. Mom and Dad both looked pleased and proud at hearing about it.

The girls and I had a hug and kiss before they got into the car with Mom and Dad and started for home. When they were out of sight, Uncle Jack came up to me and said "Well, Mike, you get tomorrow off, then you start working for the boys. You ready?"

I just grinned and answered "Reckon so", getting a laugh from him.

I spent the next day down by the creek, thinking - about Diane, Holly, Susan, the farm, and all kinds of things. I thought about where I was at in my life, and where I wanted to go, and how I could get there - and who I wanted with me along the way. Uncle Jack and Aunt Paula seemed to realize that I needed the time alone, and left me to my thoughts; neither one said anything about how I'd spent the day at supper that night.

The next day, I started my brief career as a 'hired hand' for the farmers in the area. Uncle Jack took me into town with him for coffee, so that I could go off with whichever one of the farmers it was my time to help. I had no idea how they'd come up with their system; all I knew was that they were paying me more money than I'd usually make on summer jobs - and that I was determined to earn it.

As it turned out, about the first thing any of them had me do was build them their own fish trap, if they had a section of a creek on their land. Those that didn't were told that they were welcome to use someone else's, if they wanted. Once that was out of the way, it was normal farm chores for me - cutting and/or baling hay, shuffling cows or horses around, and so on. As Uncle Jack had said, none of the farmers tried to work me to death, and all of them took pains to make sure I knew not to hurry or get myself hurt - and all of them were more than willing to answer my questions. Every one of them saw to it that I had plenty to eat when they took me to their houses for lunch - and I decided that there wasn't such a thing as a farm wife who was a 'bad' cook; there were just varying degrees of damn good. Toward the end of each day, whoever I was working for would see to it that I got back to Jack's place - by taking me there themselves, or seeing to it that I got dropped off where Uncle Jack could pick me up on his way home.

I worked hard that summer. Not drag-ass-to-bed hard, but I didn't have any trouble falling asleep, either. Most of the work was relatively simple (what with me not knowing enough about farming to be turned loose with complicated stuff), and it left me plenty of time to think. With Holly and Diane and Susan gone, my mind started going over my studies - what I'd learned already, what I was reading in the books I'd brought along, and so on. I also took the opportunities to start refining my skills with The Force - learning how to use it in different ways: how to *feel* things around me, and how to tap into it faster and easier, and so on.

One day, it hit me that of all the people that I could use The Force on, I'd never tried using ON MYSELF - and promptly rectified that oversight. It didn't take long to learn to control my body - and I don't just mean silly stuff like slowing my heart rate, or lowering my blood pressure. I discovered that I could use it to control my body in ways that I'd never even considered before: a small cut on my hand that healed so fast that even Aunt Paula commented on it; adjusting my vision so that I could almost 'zoom in' and clearly see something that would normally be little more than a blur; heightened senses of hearing and smell and taste. I caught myself breathing less - my body was using the oxygen I was taking in more efficiently, so I didn't need to breathe as deep or as often: on a day off, I amazed myself by staying underwater at the stock tank for nearly ten minutes without any difficulty at all. After debating it with myself for several days, I gave in to the temptation, and 'grew' my penis a little longer and thicker - not a lot, but some.

The biggest surprise, though, was when I started trying to use The Force on my own mind: I couldn't. It was like there was an impenetrable shield around the part of my mind/brain that was **me** - even though I'd been able to get completely into the minds of others, I simply couldn't get into ANY part of my own. I tried everything I could think of, including stuff like doing it in front of a mirror, and pretending the person in the mirror

wasn't really me. All I ever accomplished was to give myself some SERIOUS headaches - and then promptly use my newly-developed skills to make them go away.

It was after I'd cured one of my self-induced headaches that I got the idea of approaching the problem from a different direction: seeing if changing the structure of my own brain had any effect on how my mind worked. The idea both intrigued and terrified me: if it worked, I'd learn more about the human mind than all the psychologists that ever lived; if it didn't, I was running the risk of making myself totally insane - or worse.

I finally settled on using the safest approach I could think of: remembering the physiology texts I'd read when I first got started on trying to find The Force, I remembered how the brain was constructed: dendrites, axons, and synapses and the chemical reactions that went on in the brain. Using my abilities, I was able to go into my own head and examine the structure of my brain - and carefully went about modifying it: teaching my brain to grow more dendrites, increasing the number of junctions (and reducing the space between them) and potential pathways in my brain.

As the days went by, I could FEEL myself changing, mentally - and even physically. Things that I used to have to think about were coming to me more quickly, and with less effort. I noticed my reflexes were improving - and realized that I'd 'told' my body to change nerve cells - and not limited it to those in the brain: my entire nervous system was becoming more efficient, along with my brain. I could see how the changes to my nervous system could have an adverse effect on my life, and quickly focused on making the changes just happen in my brain. It was when I caught myself speed-reading a new physics text - and not only able to recall what I'd read, but UNDERSTANDING it without effort - that I realized that the changes I'd been making were having a greater effect than I'd anticipated. I immediately stopped growing my brain cells, but didn't dare try to 'reverse' it, even a little bit: if I tried, how would I know when to stop? Could I stop *in time*? WAS it reversible? I *thought* it was reversible - but how to be sure, short of actually TRYING it, something I didn't dare do?

Instead, I had to learn to live with the changes I'd 'forced' (pun intended) on myself: as the increased number of synapses started working, I found that I could read and understand virtually anything I read; as the reduced gaps between dendrites and axons began being used, my thought processes sped up, as well. I was not only getting smarter, but thinking faster, too.

The changes in me were so great that even Uncle Jack felt obliged to bring the subject up, asking me one night "Mike, seems like you've been going through some pretty serious changes while you've been here this time. Anything you think I should know about?"

"I dunno, Uncle Jack. I've noticed it, too, and it kinda worried me at first. But nothing hurts or feels bad or anything. Only thing I can figure is that it's some kinda growth spurt or something."

He gave me a strange look, but said "Yeah, I suppose that could be it. But you let me know if you start having any kind of problems, okay?"

"You bet, Uncle Jack."

By the end of the summer, I knew that the changes I'd made to myself were only beginning to take effect - but after Uncle Jack's 'casual' questioning, I took extra care not to reveal the full extent of what was happening to me.

The last few days I was on the farm, I was again given the time off - after all the farmers I'd been working for got together with Uncle Jack and me to give me a check to cover not only the salary they'd promised, but a pretty hefty bonus on top of it. The bonus was sizeable enough that even Uncle Jack was surprised at it, and it was Tommy Smithers that explained "I don't reckon any of us expected Mike to slough off on us while we were payin' him - but I figure that he worked some harder than we had any reason to expect, too. We all knew he had brains between his ears, and that fish trap contraption just proved it all over again. Me and the boys, we just figured that hard as he worked, and smart as he is, well, he deserved something more than what we were payin' him for."

Uncle Jack had told me before that Tommy Smithers wouldn't 'spend a nickel he didn't have to', so him being the one to say that I'd earned the bonus only told Uncle Jack that I really had earned it, to their way of thinking. I thanked all of them for the chance to work for them, and the bonus; it was Andy Gibson that told me "We was glad to have your help, Mike. We though we were doing you a good turn, and you turned it around on us!", the last with a laugh. He went on to add "You get any more ideas, you make sure and write 'em down and send 'em to Jack - I expect all of us would be glad to hear them!", which prompted the others to smile and nod their agreement.

With my paycheck in my pocket, they opened up a cooler to reveal that they'd iced down a pretty fair amount of beer - and it was Uncle Jack that reached in, pulled out the first one, opened it, and handed it to me, saying "I reckon you earned the right to the first one, Mike!", earning him a chorus of agreements from the others. I took a healthy pull on it, then told the others "Right tasty!", causing them all to laugh as they reached for their own bottles. There were enough people there that it worked out to where each of us only had three beers - but as young as I was, three was plenty. I wasn't drunk when we headed for Uncle Jack's truck, but I damn sure wasn't full sober, either. Uncle Jack looked at me with patient amusement as he told me "You must have done some job for those boys, Mike, if they were willing to pony up that kind of bonus."

I carefully thought out what I wanted to say before I told him "They were paying me more than I would have made with any other summer job I could get, Uncle Jack. I just wanted to make sure I earned it."

Uncle Jack gave a short laugh, and said "Well, I'd have to say you certainly did that!" before the two of us climbed into the truck for the ride back to the house. Aunt Paula was waiting for us, and smiled when Uncle Jack told her about the bonus they'd given me - and then gasped when he told her how much it was.

Then she got a look at me, and realized that I was just a WEE bit tipsy - and demanded "Jack! Did you and those other hooligans let this boy drink too much beer?!"

Uncle Jack just laughed, and told her "Now, I just told you what kind of bonus they gave him - don't you think if he's grown enough to earn something like that, he's old enough to drink beer? Besides, it was only three, and he's still standing. Let him be; he'll be all right in a hour or so, I figure."

Explained to her that way, Aunt Paula seemed to see his point, and did just that - let me be. And as Uncle Jack had predicted, I was just fine an hour later - and more than ready to put away several pieces of her fried chicken, along with the rest of supper.

A couple days later, it was time for me to go home, and get ready to head back to school. As usual, Aunt Paula fixed me plenty to eat on the road, and send me back with more than enough fresh food for the rest of the family. As I was getting ready to climb into my truck, Uncle Jack stuck his hand out and told me "When the boys offered to let you work for them this summer, I knew you wouldn't let me down. But what you did, well, it made me proud of you, Mike. I just wanted you to know that."

I was more than a little shocked by what he'd said, and it took me a couple seconds to take his hand and shake it as I told him "Uh, thanks, Uncle Jack."

He looked at me for a second, and said "I reckon if you're man enough to work that hard for what they were gonna pay you, you're growed enough to just call me 'Jack', like anyone else. You've earned it."

"Uh, thanks again... Jack"

He just smiled and gave me a wink before telling me "Now, you be careful driving home - Paula's got you so loaded down, you'll likely break an axle if you hit a good pothole!"

Aunt Paula slapped his arm, and came over to give me a kiss on the cheek before telling me "You make me proud, too, Mike. Now you be careful!"

I got home just fine, of course - and everyone was home to greet me. Dad and I unloaded the stuff from the farm while Holly, Diane, and Mom decided what was to go where.

Supper was pizza - tough to get delivered out in the country - and sodas while I told them about all I'd done for the different farmers. Mom and Dad both commented on the change

in me - I'd 'filled out' a bit after the girls had left. I knew that it was more than just a little bulking up from hard work, as they thought, but didn't say anything. When it came time for bed, Diane was surprised to find that I 'filled her up' a bit more than I had the last time we'd made love - it never occurred to her that I might have grown a bit in that particular area, and she just attributed it to her own 'shrinkage' due to my extended absence. That didn't stop her from enjoying the results, though.

As the days went by before I had to go back to school, I carefully - and slowly - let some of my newly developed abilities start to peek out. Not much, and not often, but enough to establish a precedent for the plan I'd come up with to let me expose and openly use the abilities I'd brought about. Everyone was surprised, of course - but not TOO surprised, since I didn't reveal that much of what I knew I was capable of.

It was the day before I was to head back to school when we got a letter from Susan. All of us were pleased and surprised to see it - and after reading it, disappointed. She'd written to tell us that thanks to the grades she'd gotten while studying with me, she'd been given a scholarship to another school - and that as much as she wanted to see all of us again, it was a chance that she simply couldn't pass up. We all understood, of course, but that didn't make it any easier.

It was Diane that got us all laughing again when she asked "So, Mike, who are you going to bring home THIS Christmas? A Swedish girl?"

I came right back at her by answering "Nah, that's NEXT year. THIS year, it's going to be a girl from Venezuela!" - and making everyone laugh that much harder.

Once I was back in school, it was easy for me to start making even better grades than I had before - but I still didn't want to draw too much attention to the changes I'd made to myself, and was careful to 'ramp up' my GPA, using the entire first semester to do it. The second semester, I continued with my plan, ending the year with a near-perfect score. In fact, my grades were high enough that a technology company accepted my application for an internship for the summer, meaning that I was able to earn a tolerable paycheck for a lot less manual labor. That the company's offices were in my home town only made it that much nicer.

My Senior year, I went at it full speed, getting perfect grades in all my math and physics classes, and near-perfect grades in the other stuff. That got me the attention of the company that I'd interned for: they offered me a job after graduation, with a pretty nice starting salary - and they were willing to work with me about letting me work on my Masters degree. The first year I worked for them, I kept my mouth shut and my head down - learning how things worked in the 'real world'. That all came to a crashing halt the day I was in our research lab, and our chief researcher was pitching a fit at one of the technicians for fouling up an experiment. I looked at the data that the tech had collected, then at the instructions the chief had given him. Then I looked at the formulas the chief

had written on the board, and saw where he'd made his mistake. By that time, nearly everyone in the lab was watching, but I didn't notice them as I told the chief "Sir? The data he gave you is completely consistent with the instructions you gave him. If you wanted the data you say you did, then you should have used THIS formula, instead of the one you have up on the board..." - and proceeded to write a slight modification to what he'd already written.

I thought he was going to have a stroke, right on the spot - all he could do was stand there and sputter at me before he finally managed to yell "And who the HELL do you think YOU are to tell me what kind of data I should be getting, and how to get it?"

I just looked at him and said "I think I'm the one who saw the mistake, and how to correct it."

That just set him off again, and as he was leaving the lab area, we all heard him yelling "No young punk talks to ME that way! I'll see you FIRED!"

When he was gone, a few of the senior people came over to look at what all the fuss had been about - first at the data that had been collected, the chief's instructions, then his formula, versus mine. One of them asked me about my formula, and I untangled it a bit so that she could see where I was getting a derivative. She saw what I was doing, and nodded before saying "Oh, yes, of course." Then she turned to look at me and asked "How long have you been here?"

"A year."

"And your degree?"

"I'm about halfway through my physics Masters."

She nodded, and said "That's a *very* nice piece of reasoning you have there. That you're right and the Chief is wrong isn't going to help you very much, I'm afraid."

I shrugged my shoulders, and told her "If he insists on doing it his way again, that's so much wasted time and money. If he does it my way, he gets the results he's after. Sooner or later, somebody's going to insist he try my way - it just seems better if it happens sooner, rather than later."

"And if you're not here when that happens?" she asked.

I just shrugged my shoulders again, and answered "Then somebody let a loud voice override their reason. There's other places I can work, I think."

She smiled, and said "I think you're right. But I also think you're too sharp for us to let that happen."

She turned to some of the other senior lab people, and asked "You see what he did? Where he got the derivative?"

They all nodded, and she said "If the Chief tries to get him fired, I think we need to make it clear to Management who's right, and who's wrong - and why."

Several of them looked at each other before one of the men spoke up, saying "I think you're right. The kid, here" - gesturing at me - "got it right, just from looking at the data and the Chief's equations. He's somebody we need to keep around - even if he does stir up trouble", the last part with a friendly smile at me.

The woman turned back to me and said "Don't worry about the Chief. If he manages to get Management moving, that'll be a miracle in itself; if he gets them moving enough to have any interest in firing you, we'll let them know what REALLY happened. What's your name?"

"Mike Silverston."

She put her hand out, and I shook it as she told me "I'm Dr. Alicia Keyes. It's nice to meet you, Mike. That derivative - did you learn that in school?"

"No, ma'am. I just looked at what the Chief was trying to get, and then his equations. It looked pretty obvious to me what needed to be changed."

She gave me an appraising look, and said "Pretty obvious to you wasn't so obvious to me - or any of the rest of us. Were you planning on going for your Doctorate?"

"I thought about it - but it's a lot of time and money, and I don't know if I can afford either, just yet. I'm getting married next year, after my fiancée graduates."

She gave me another look, and said "If you can see stuff like that" - gesturing at the board full of equations - "in as little time as it took you, I don't think you're going to have any trouble finding the time or money."

"Ma'am?"

She laughed, and said "Could I ask you to quit calling me that? It makes me feel older than I already do, some days. Please, call me Alicia; if you HAVE to be formal, Dr. Keyes will do."

I smiled, and said "I'll try, ma... Alicia. What did you mean, I won't have any trouble with the money or time?"

"That's better - I think. What I meant was, if you can show the company that you're a good investment, they sometimes part with the cash and give an employee the time to pursue an advanced degree. If you weren't already doing it yourself, I'd tell them to start

you on your Masters. You've got a sharp mind - and guts, to stand up to the Chief like that!"

"I guess that's a problem I have - me, I don't *care* who comes up with it, as long as we find the answers as soon as we can."

She grinned, and said "With an attitude like that, you're NEVER going to make it in the Chief's crew - don't you know he's ALWAYS right?"

I just made a show of looking at the board of equations, then back at her before saying "If you say so."

She laughed, and said "I think I like you, Mike. You don't seem to give a damn about anything except finding the answers."

"I thought that was what we're here for."

She smiled, and told me "It is - for all the rest of us. For the Chief, it's about being Right." The way she said it, I could hear the capital letter.

About that time, the chief researcher came stomping back in, heading straight for me. When he got close enough, he said "You have an appointment with Mr. Holmes in Administration at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. Don't bother bringing your lunch to work" - the last with a tone of bitter satisfaction - before making his way to a different part of the lab.

Alicia had heard him, of course, and as he was walking away, gave him a look that would have felled an ox. She turned back to me and said "Don't worry about it. Bring your lunch tomorrow - you'll be here to eat it" before turning away and starting toward a small cluster of the other senior people.

When she was gone, the tech the Chief had been yelling at made his way over, and said "Thanks, Mike. You didn't have to do that - but I'm glad you did. I did the experiments **exactly** the way he said to in his instructions, and gave him the data just the way he asked for it. I don't understand enough about the stuff you guys do to know if it's what he wanted, or not."

I told him "That's okay. I had to look at it a little bit before I saw what the mistake was - and it wasn't something YOU did. I just called it the way I saw it."

"Maybe - but you're still kind of green around here. There's gonna be trouble, I think."

I looked over to where Alicia was talking with some of the others, and said "Maybe. Maybe not. Anyway, I think both of us better get busy before someone decides we BOTH need to be yelled at!"

He laughed, and we headed our separate ways.

The next morning, I reported to Mr. Holmes at the appointed time. He invited me right in, and offered me a seat before taking station behind his desk. We sat there looking at each other for a few seconds before he told me "That was a rather nice bit of work you did yesterday, spotting the error Dr. Hunsaker made. It's a shame you had to spot it, and bring it to his attention, the way you did."

I told him "When I got there, Dr. Hunsaker was literally yelling at the tech who did the experiment for him - something I didn't think this company allowed staff to do. I looked at the Chief's instructions and the data that he got back, and they matched up. When I heard him yelling about the data that he WANTED, I couldn't see how he expected to get it. That's when I looked at his equations, and saw the mistake. I just tried to get him off the tech - it wasn't the tech's fault, after all."

Mr. Holmes looked at me for a few more seconds, and said "Yes, I understand. What you just described matches with what the senior staff told me - each of them paid me a visit yesterday afternoon, coming to your defense. It seems that the speed and accuracy of your analysis impressed them - particularly Dr. Keyes. She was your most vocal and enthusiastic defender. She made it most clear that if I was to comply with Dr. Hunsaker's demand that we fire you, it would be the company that would be the loser, not you."

I didn't figure there was anything I could say to that, so I just sat and waited to see what else he had to say. He went on a few moments later by telling me "It isn't often that we have a Masters candidate draw such attention to himself - either from Dr. Hunsaker, OR Dr. Keyes. Sadly, Dr. Hunsaker is frequently rather troublesome, though he has his periods of brilliance. But it is the solid, reliable people such as Dr. Keyes and the other staff that provide us with the innovations that make the company a success. Dr. Keyes took the time to show me how your insight into Dr. Hunsaker's problem would benefit the company - and made a point of telling me that you saw the solution well ahead of any of the rest of them. When I expressed the difficulty that I would face if I *didn't* comply with Dr. Hunsaker's demands, Dr. Keyes offered what would seem to be an ideal solution: she is willing to effect what can only be called a trade - she will give Dr. Hunsaker one of her people, in exchange for you. I was dubious at first, and suggested that the loss of one of her staff was a high price to pay for keeping you around. Dr. Keyes merely laughed, and said that SHE was getting the better end of the deal; if she is of that high of an opinion of your abilities, I think that it would be prudent for the company to keep you, and accept her offer. Of course, this will necessitate a small change in your scheduling, but I would think that would be better than the alternative, eh?"

"Thank you, sir."

He sat there looking at me for another minute or so, then said "Yes, I think that would be a workable solution. Thank you for stopping by, Mr. Silverston."

I knew when I was being dismissed, and got to my feet and started for the door. I was just reaching for the doorknob when Mr. Holmes spoke up.

"Mr. Silverston?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Do try to stay away from Dr. Hunsaker, won't you?"

"With delight, sir." I answered.

I saw his slight smile, and made my way back to the lab. There, I found Dr. Keyes waiting for me. She discretely guided me away from the Chief's area, and said "I trust everything went well?"

"Yes, ma' - I mean, Dr. Keyes. Thanks to you, and the other senior staff."

She grinned, and said "Alicia is fine. And we didn't necessarily do it for you - we did it for US. You've got a good mind, and we need it. Holmes told you about the trade?"

I nodded, and she smiled before telling me "The Chief thinks he's pulled one over on me - he got someone with a Masters, while you're still in school. What he doesn't know is that the Masters he's getting is someone who's fine at following instructions, but can't think his way out of a paper bag - and I've got *you*. You know you're going to have to shift your schedule a couple of hours, right?"

"Yeah, Mr. Holmes mentioned that."

"Fine. We start a couple hours earlier than they do, so I'll expect you here at 7:00 sharp tomorrow morning. And bring your brains - you're going to need them! If you're going to work for me, you're going to learn more than you ever thought existed."

She looked at me, and saw that I was simply waiting to see what was next - I was patently unconcerned about her 'threats'.

"You're not scared?" she asked.

"Nope."

"Think you can keep up?"

"Yup."

She gave me another appraising look, and asked "Pretty sure of yourself, aren't you?"

I just looked back at her, and said "Pretty sure. You are too, or you wouldn't have offered to trade for me."

She looked stunned for a few moments, then laughed, saying "Now I KNOW I like you! You don't just have school brains, you're SMART, too. Yeah, I've got confidence in you - but you're still going to be busting your hump. Pay attention, ask questions, and do what you're told, and you'll do fine. Ready to get after it?"

"Lead on, Boss."

She laughed again, and led the way to where the others were working.

She was right: I DID need my brains. Dr. Alicia Keyes did more to help me learn practical physics than anyone I worked with before or after. As long as I was working with and for her, I didn't have TIME to slow down - she kept all of us moving from the time we got to work until it was time to go home, and every last one of us on her crew loved it. As I learned more and more about the 'real' physics that we were working on, I was able to make more and more significant contributions to our work. Nobody minded that I came up with so many of the end-arounds that led to our breakthroughs - if anything, I came to be considered the 'guru' of our little group: all of them recognized that I seemed to have a talent for thinking around the corners of the problems we ran into. At different times, all of us made mistakes - including Dr. Keyes. And all that mattered to the rest was finding and correcting it; we didn't have the time or inclination to worry about someone's ego: we were too busy doing PHYSICS.

A few years later, Dr. Hunsaker finally made the decision to retire; Dr. Keyes was named as his successor. To my infinite surprise, she named ME to be HER successor - conditioned on the company providing me the time and funding to go after my Doctorate. By that time, Diane and I were married, and not long in our house. We talked it over, and Diane agreed that with the company paying the expenses, it was too good of an opportunity to pass up - it would mean that the two of us wouldn't have as much time together for a little while, but the benefits made the short-term inconvenience acceptable.

With the additional knowledge I got from my Doctorate, and taking the time to get a Masters in Mathematics, I began to see some interesting possibilities in some of the research being done by the company. I took my ideas to Dr. Keyes, and was mildly surprised when I had to show her the basis for some of my suppositions and theories. When she finally understood what I was talking about, she just sat back in her chair and stared at me for several minutes before saying "Mike, you've finally done it - you've gone past what I know, or can even theorize. I can see the basis for what you're talking about, and I **think** I can see where it might lead - but you're so far past me that I can't be sure that I'm seeing as far ahead as you are. If you can think of stuff like that, you've got no business being where you are. Hell, you don't even need THIS job! What you need is your own lab, and your own people, and your own funding. You start trying to fill in

some of the gaps in what you've shown me, and I'll start working on getting you what you need to make it happen. It's going to take some time, but don't fart around - when it finally happens, it's going to happen *fast* - what you've shown me is THAT important. I'm sorry to say this, but I think that it's going to have to involve government money - I don't think anyone else would be able to undertake the kind of long-term investment needed to make your ideas pan out. And you know what government money means: military, and weapons. They're going to want SOMETHING that goes 'bang' to justify the expense. There's no way you're going to be able to avoid it - but please, Mike, make it a relatively *small* bang, would you?"

I smiled at her, and said "Boss, I kinda figured that the Department of Defense might enter the picture somewhere along the line. I've already got a couple of little projects in mind that might turn out a couple of small firecrackers - but move things a pretty good distance toward the final goal. I'm not a naïf, like Oppenheimer and that bunch with the Manhattan project - so wrapped up in the immediate goal that I forget to worry about what happens after."

She smiled back, and said "I suppose I should have known you'd have thought of that already. Once I got you trained, you usually were a step or two a head of me."

"Well, maybe half a step, sometimes."

"Bullshit. You think I couldn't see what kind of MIND you had, even then? When you were on familiar ground, you could think rings around the rest of us - and damn near every one of us knew it! I guess you didn't know it, but every last one of us spent time with you JUST SO we could feed you more information and get more ground under your feet so you could *think* for us that much better! When you knew what we did, there wasn't a one of us that didn't feel like a little kid, compared to how your mind worked - and judging from this, how it STILL works. Didn't you ever notice how many PATENTS your name got onto?"

"Uh, not really - I mean, I never really paid attention to it. Somebody from Admin would come down with a handful of papers; I signed just to make them go away."

Alicia laughed, and said "You really WERE focused on the work, weren't you? Once we got you up to speed on what we were doing, your name wound up on every patent that we applied for - for the simple reason that it was your ideas and suggestions that got us past the roadblocks we ran into. WE knew who made those patents possible - yes, some of us did pretty good, but none of us could have done it without your help. Maybe the rest of us did ninety percent of the work - but it was *invariably* the ten percent that you put in that made whatever the project was a success. Every time we hit a brick wall, YOU were the one that figured out how to get that first brick loose so the rest of us could finish tearing it down - and we made damn sure you got the credit you deserved by making sure your name was on every patent for every project you worked on. I'll bet you didn't know it was all the money we were making for the company that finally convinced them to ease old Hunsaker out the door, did you? Sure as hell - I've got THIS job because you were so

damn good at YOUR job. And that's why I'm going to use every bit of power I've got in this office to see to it that you get the lab and people you need to see your ideas brought to life. You've done more for me that you could ever imagine; and now it's time for me to pay you back - and I'm damn glad to be able to do it!"

That was ten years ago. It took Alicia nearly two years to make good on her promise - but she did. And as she'd predicted, it happened damn fast - from the time my proposal got into the right pair of hands, to the time I first fired up the lab, the elapsed time was barely a year and a half - and the biggest part of that due to the necessity of construction. Uncle Sam has a couple of fingers in the pie - but thanks to The Force, I'm able to keep those fingers small and relatively clean. Every Washington bigwig that has tried to pull a fast one on me had wound up getting burned. The only time they tried to cut my funding, I - and my whole staff - took extended coffee breaks that lasted about a week before the finance people got the message. Being able to read the REAL motives of the employees I hired, and being able to make the minor adjustments necessary to ensure loyalty, does wonders toward making sure no outside party can get inside our labs.

As I promised Alicia, the few little 'toys' I've had to turn over to the military have been relatively small: one of them was the first few prototypes of the Star Wars light sabers. Those things turned out to be surprisingly simple, once we got past the science-fiction mindset. They're just plasma charges, held inside the only thing that CAN hold plasma: magnetic fields. We've still got one of them around, and any time some VIP shows up, we take a few slices off a steel I beam to impress him. The things aren't anywhere near commercially viable or mass-producible - but they work, and they came out of OUR labs. And as I also promised Alicia, what we learned from making the light sabers was of more significance toward our REAL goal: a container for a fusion generator. Every one of the toys we've turned over to the military has been an intermediate development on our way toward more peaceful and constructive applications. We're only a few years away from viable fusion energy production, for example.

Diane and I? We're still married - happily, ecstatically so. We have a couple of kids that Diane home-schools while the rest of the kids in the neighborhood are in a mix of public and private schools - and her dedication to their education shows. Uncle Jack had another accident on the farm a few years ago, and is unable to tend to it the way he used to. He and Paula still live in the house, but lease out the property to the neighboring farmers. They have enough money that they're able to go on trips in the big motor home they bought, and they have a blast. Jack still keeps his hand in farming by taking care of the large flower and vegetable garden they have. Under the guise of 'teaching' him how to control the occasional bout of pain from his accident, I've been able to fully develop the affinity for plants he always had; his garden is the envy of anyone that sees it. Holly stopped by to visit Diane and I every so often for a few years, but eventually found the kind of guy she deserved; the two of them have a kid of their own that both of them dote on. Diane and I and Holly and her husband take turns spending Thanksgiving with each other, and exchange family-to-family Christmas presents, as well as birthday cards. Susan got her degree in engineering, and ultimately wound up marrying a Swedish foreign

exchange student and moving to Sweden with him. All of us still hear from her every now and then - the last picture she sent, she was proudly showing off her first pregnancy.

No, I have no illusions that I'm another Einstein or Fermi or anybody of that caliber - but I'm not under the illusion that I'm missing it by much, either. You don't know who I am, really, but I promise you: you'll know the results of my experiences with The Force.