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Thrill Ride

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The first time I rode on a roller coaster, I was eight years old. My brother Frank dared me to do it, even said he'd go along, so it seemed safe enough. He strapped me in next to him in the front seat of an old wooden-frame roller coaster set halfway into a clump of trees, and off we went.

That 60-second ride seemed to last an hour and a half. I remember the clanking sound of the pull chain dragging us up to the first peak, and the sensation of my stomach rising into my throat as we plunged down. I could feel the wooden support structure flexing as we rounded the hairpin turns, and see the trees whizzing by seemingly just inches away. When the car plunged into a tunnel of some sort, leaving me in total blackness with nothing but the sensation of speed and the metal safety rail to connect me to the physical world, I almost peed my pants.

When we got to the end, Frank slapped me on the back proudly. "You were awesome, Jimmy boy," he said. "Not one scream. You must have nerves of steel. How was it?"

I looked up at my big brother, gave him two thumbs up, and then puked on his shoes.

Twenty years later, I found myself cruising down the interstate toward Xtreme World, a brand new theme park. *Why the hell am I doing this*, I asked myself.

The answer was simple: Mel, the incredibly attractive red-headed lady in the passenger seat next to me, was seriously into roller coasters and thrill rides of every sort, and I wanted to be seriously into Mel. We'd been dating casually for about six weeks, but things had been getting cozier of late. Mel seemed to be getting very comfortable around me, and our playful conversational banter had started taking on a slight sexual flavor. She didn't outright say it, but I got the impression from her roommate, Joy, that this trip was a final compatibility test -- if I passed, I'd be eligible for full-time consort status.

So I pulled out all the stops. I went to the Xtreme World web site and studied the online map, the publicity blurbs on the various rides and attractions, the safety rules ... the whole nine yards. I called up Frank and borrowed his van for the weekend, knowing it would be more comfortable for a long trip than either my pickup or Mel's Jetta.

The girls had been suitably impressed when I picked them up at 6:00am that Saturday. "Nice," Mel had said, eyeing the big, emerald-green vehicle. "I was expecting a minivan."

I grinned. "Frank despises minivans," I explained. "Where he lives it's practically a requirement that anyone with 2 kids have one, but he'd give up his left nut before he'd drive one of those pathetic things. This is a real van."

It certainly was: a 15-passenger conversion van complete with raised ceiling, dark tinted windows for privacy, and swiveling captain's chairs for the pilot and co-pilot. Frank and his wife only had two kids; they didn't really need the seating capacity, just lots of space to haul around the kids with their sports gear, so Frank and I made a few customizations. We removed three of the four bench seats to open up floor space. In their place, along the left side of the interior, we installed a long, deep wooden bench with a hinged lid, taking advantage of the existing floor cleats to secure it in place. The bench provided a closed storage space for gear or groceries, and in a pinch could seat several passengers comfortably using genuine GM lap belts we bought from a parts dealer. The open space remaining was roughly the size of a compact pickup's box, which

made the van handy for carting around large objects from furniture to sheets of plywood to dirt bikes.

For our trip, the back area was empty. We used the bench to stow a large cooler containing sandwiches and drinks -- none of us had been to Xtreme World before, but we assumed that any food available there would be grossly overpriced -- and duffle bags containing a change of clothes for each of us.

The trip was a quiet one. Joy happily stretched out on the bench seat and went to sleep as soon as we got onto the highway. Mel took advantage of the reclining passenger seat and cat-napped as well, waking every so often to check our progress on the map.

We pulled into the parking lot at 8:50, which gave us 40 minutes to kill before the gates opened. There was already a crowd at the ticket pavilion, so we dropped Mel there to get our tickets while I started the hunt for a parking space. Finding one big enough to accommodate the van was not easy, but after some searching I settled on a spot at the far end of Row 7C, where we would have some extra space to the right for the main doors.

One advantage to a full-sized van is that it's pretty easy to spot in a crowded lot. Mel found us easily, smiling and waving the tickets as she approached. She also had a printed map of the park, which we spread out on the floor to finalize our strategy.

Xtreme World was divided into three sections: Xtreme Kidz, an area featuring basic rides aimed at the young ones; Wet 'n' Wild, where all the rides were water based (*Appropriate attire strongly recommended*, the map noted); and Hardcore Haven, which catered to hardened thrill-seekers like Mel. Since we were already wearing bathing suits under our clothes, we elected to start out in the water park area. When we were sufficiently water-logged, we'd come back out to the van to have a light picnic lunch and change into dry clothes, then hit the hardcore section for as long as our stomachs could stand it.

Before we noticed the time passing, we heard an air horn blast signaling the opening of the gates. We quickly secured everything we didn't absolutely need inside the bench out of sight, locked up, and joined the crowd flowing into the gates. Mel handed each of us a purple plastic bracelet, which we were to wear on our right wrists. "It's a VIP pass," she explained. "They cost extra, but you get to use special VIP lines for the rides -- they're supposed to be a lot shorter."

Bracelets in place, we strolled quickly past the clowns and cartoon characters that marked the Xtreme Kidz zone and followed the blue arrows on the pavement which would lead us to Wet 'n' Wild.

The first test of my nerve came as soon as we found the entrance. To our right a set of steps made of wood and metal, like playground equipment, wound gently downhill. Ten feet of flat walkway would lead to five or ten steps, followed by more level space, then more steps ... I lost count of the steps, but it was a very long way down. Slow, too -- the walkway was full of people more or less standing still as they waited for the slower ones to make the descent.

Or, cheery signs pointed out, the more adventurous could choose to "Get Wet Right Away!". Left of the stairway entrance, eight plastic-coated chutes awaited the impatient. Attendants at the top of the chutes were checking people's height and handing out plastic sacks with drawstrings, in which people were placing their shoes and purses for what promised to be a fast ride down. I tried to get a look over the edge to see how fast, but the safety rail kept me too far back.

Mel had a devil-may-care look on her face as she angled toward the opening for the chutes. Joy hesitated just a moment, then followed. What could I do but run over to join them?

I dutifully secured my loose belongings in one of the plastic drawstring bags, looping the string over my wrist a couple of times for safekeeping. Sitting down at the top of the slide, I finally got a good look at the bottom: the slide went straight down at an insanely steep angle, then leveled out for a bit and took a final drop into a wide, round area walled with round bumpers. I could see bodies rushing out the bottoms of the slides, arms up and legs splayed, and collecting around the bumpers.

I froze. *This is insane*, I said to myself. *What rational human being would want to fall a story and a half and land in a pile of other bodies?* To my left, I heard a loud cry as Joy launched herself down the chute. I watched spellbound as her body rocketed down the straight drop and shot across the flat, then disappeared for a second before I saw her hit the bumper. Was she moving?

"Are you going down, sir? We need to keep things moving up here."

The attendant's voice startled me. "Uh, yeah," I stammered weakly. "Here goes."

From the next lane over, Mel reached over and squeezed my hand. "C'mon, stud," she dared me. "Race you to the bottom." There was a sparkle in her eyes that seemed immune to all misfortune. I saw her start to push off, and knew it was now or never.

I pushed off just behind her and felt the world drop away. My arms flew up of their own accord, and I felt the cool rush of air and water running up my shorts. The plateau was smoother than I thought, with a nice gentle curve making for an easy transition from almost falling to almost riding. I felt myself slowing a bit, looked around for Mel, but saw nothing but blue bumper and sky as the bottom dropped out again. If not for the feel of the water and the smooth plastic chute on my back I would have sworn I was free falling. The chute curved ever so slightly and cradled me, caught me as I slowed and turned out. Before I could completely understand what was happening I was on my back, sliding gently into a soft round bumper at the end of the slide. I grabbed the bumper and started to get up, but my legs were rubber.

"Incoming!" I heard Mel's voice and turned to see her sliding toward me feet first. I scooted back a bit and she landed neatly under my left arm, letting the momentum carry her into a sitting position. "Hooo-eee!" she cried. "Now *that's* what I call an express lane!"

As we climbed over the bumper to make way for the next round of falling bodies, I noticed that my vision seemed sharper and clearer; colors were richer, lines better defined; and the air as I breathed it in tasted better. Then again, maybe that was because I had a sexy redhead next to me in a wet, tight-fitting tank suit.

I admired Mel's athletic form as she bent to put on her sandals. Others around us were showing more skin, but the black tankini Mel was wearing worked beautifully for her. The top fit around her ribs and bust like a second skin, leaving every curve clearly defined. Denim cut-off shorts kept me from seeing much below the bare midriff, but that just gave my imagination something to work on.

"If those eyes were hands, you could get arrested," Joy remarked, coming up from behind me. She was in a bright red strapless one-piece with a short wraparound skirt hugging her hips.

"I'd just plead insanity," I replied, nodding my head back toward the water slide. "Throw myself on the mercy of the court and beg for leniency."

Mel winked and pulled me in for a lusty kiss. "You'll beg," she promised, "but not just yet." Teasingly, she wiggled her butt and marched on to the next ride, pulling me along by the hand.

It was called the DeLuge. It looked like a giant luge track except there was no snow or ice anywhere, just the blue-green chute itself sitting above a pool of water. Every few seconds a dark shape rushed through, the sounds of rushing water and human screams trailing behind. The line started a good hundred feet before the gate; I could see the unbroken trail of bodies filling up the customary rat-maze leading to the platform itself.

"Shit," I muttered, covering up the relief I felt at seeing the long line. "It'll be two hours before we get to the end of this."

Mel grinned broadly. "*Au contraire*, my intrepid one," she said, holding up her wrist with the purple bracelet on it. "We are prepared."

I looked down at my own wrist and regarded the plastic bracelet. **Very Intense Player**, it said in big, bold letters. *We'll see*, was my silent reply.

Sure enough, we walked past the end of the line and found a purple VIP sign directing us to a different entrance. A purple stripe on the floor led us on a short, straight path in full view of the waiting masses and up to the platform. There were a grand total of twelve people ahead of us.

"This is awesome, isn't it?" Mel asked me, her eyes bright with excitement.

"It's something else," I replied, looking at the miserable people in the long line. "I wonder why more of them didn't buy these bracelets."

"They can't," Mel explained. "The park only sells a limited number of these each day; I was lucky to be able to get them."

"How limited?" I wondered out loud.

"Very limited," said a female voice. I turned and saw another party had come up behind us. The speaker was a young brunette, maybe 19 from the looks of her. She wore a thin mesh athletic shirt over a minimal dark green bikini. "One hundred can be sold before the gates open. Another fifty go on sale at noon, 2:00pm, and 4:00pm. The theory is, much more than that and the VIP's will have to wait too long for rides."

"Does it work?"

"So far," she replied. "One thing, though: if you leave the park for any reason, you're supposed to give back the pass and you can't get another unless you manage to score a new one. So don't go out to your car until you're done for the day." The brunette looked around, leaned toward us a little more and lowered her voice. "Or, take the bracelets off and stuff them into a pocket before you get near the gate. But don't let any of the park staff see you do it."

We nodded discreetly and thanked our co-conspirator for the tip. A rushing water sound called our attention back to the platform, where an empty carrier had appeared. It was our turn already.

The carrier looked like a cross between a luge sled and an oversized kayak. It had a cigar-shaped fiberglass body and a long bench seat running up the middle. An attendant checked our bracelets, making sure that day's date was marked on them in permanent marker, and had us sit straddling the bench and lean way back. I was in the rear, with Mel sitting between my legs and Joy between Mel's. A pair of steel bars were brought down along each side. "You can hold on to each other," the attendant told us, "or to the bars. It doesn't really matter which, because once this baby gets going you won't be able to fall out anyway. Keep your hands inside the pod at all times, and have fun."

Feeling bold, I snaked my hands around Mel's waist and locked the fingers together just below her breasts. "Just watch what you grab onto," Mel warned me with a wink and a smile. She got a firm grip on my legs, and Joy grabbed onto the bars. "Ready," Mel announced to the attendant. He gave a thumbs-up sign to someone out of my view, and with a slight lunge the capsule started forward.

It started out faster than I expected, but smooth. I felt the sensation of being pulled up a hill, which was fairly accurate. There was time for me to note that the capsule was almost the full width of the channel in which we rode; the water and a few rollers seemed to be all that kept us from scraping the walls.

The sound of rushing water grew louder as we crested the hill, and then the ride began for real. We saw the waterfall seconds before our pod took us through it, getting us soaked in the downpour. As soon as we were clear the track dropped and went hurtling downward, the rushing water sound drowning out everything else as the volume of water in the channel more than doubled. *So this is what getting washed down a drainpipe feels like*, I thought as the little pod careened around bends,

swaying wildly from side to side as it banked with the turns, the forces at work pressing Mel's body against mine. We took another plunge downward and entered a corkscrew-like section that looped us around at least three or four times. Finally we started to slow, our momentum carrying us up a gentle incline and back to the platform where we stopped. The safety bars clicked and swung out of the way.

Mel tilted her head back to me. "Ahem," she said, patting my arms. That's when I realized that during the ride my hands had crept upward several inches and were now firmly lifting up on her breasts.

I whipped them out of the way instantly. "I'm sorry, Mel," I stammered. "I swear that was not intentional." I could feel my face turning beet red.

Mel gave me another of those enigmatic smiles. "Of course not," she agreed, a touch of laughter in her voice. Then I felt her hands slide over my legs and up my thighs until they were just inside the leg openings of my trunks. Her fingers spread out wide and squeezed as she pushed herself up. Fortunately for me the attendant was too busy looking at Joy and Mel to notice my sudden hard-on.

Next on the agenda was the Paddle Wheel, a huge contraption that looked like the back end of an old-fashioned river boat. It turned out to be something like a ferris wheel -- we sat together in a carrier attached to the rim of a wide wheel which carried us up and around in circles. At the bottom of every revolution it dipped us waist-deep into the water, carrying water and us to the top. At the top the carrier tipped backward, dumping the water onto the unsuspecting heads of the people a few carriers back. After the wild ride we'd had in the DeLuge, it was a bit of a letdown.

The next attraction made up for it. The River Chase had us securely fastened into what looked like a high-tech speed boat. The boat took off quickly and fell in just behind another like it, going quickly to full throttle. We felt the boat banging up and down against the waves as we raced down a narrow creek, apparently in pursuit of the boats ahead of us.

Then the fun really began: just ahead, I spotted the unmistakable figure of a man swimming in the creek. We were heading straight for him. Joy screamed and turned her head, anticipating a sickening impact, but the boat suddenly lurched and swerved, just barely missing the swimmer.

"Holy shit!" I cried, looking back to see if the man was okay. He was fine -- in fact, he was back in his original position, apparently waiting for the next boat to cross his path. "Jesus," I said. "It was just a dummy."

Mel leaned over to me and shouted to make herself heard over the din of the motor. "Who cares?" she replied. "This is great! It's like being in an action movie."

Our boat picked up even more speed and the creek bent to the left, narrowing slightly. At intervals a floating log, a boulder, and an animatronic alligator turned up in our path, forcing our boat to execute a split-second maneuver to avoid catastrophe. We came upon a short drop and the boat went briefly airborne, landing back in the water with a crash and a thud, losing no speed at all in the process. The creek took us into a tunnel, leaving us in total blackness for a few seconds, then through a wall of falling water and back to our starting dock.

Mel was glowing as we climbed out of the boat. "Hooo-eee! I love this place!"

"This is awesome," I agreed. Looking at her, seeing the incredible charge in her eyes and the flush of excitement in her face, had me starting to understand a little bit of her attraction to the rides. After jumping off a cliff, getting flushed down a huge drainpipe, and taking part in a pseudo-death-defying speedboat chase, I was feeling pretty pumped up myself.

Poor Joy, on the other hand, was looking a little green. "I need a break, guys," she pleaded.

"You okay?" I asked, concerned.

"I will be. Just give me twenty minutes to sit on something that doesn't move."

We found Joy a nice, dry, permanently fixed bench to sit on and recuperate while Mel and I braved something called the TurboLift. From a distance, it looked like a huge water tower with big, round chutes winding around it from the top to the ground. Every few seconds a burst of water shot out of the top of the tower along with a body. We couldn't see what happened to the body from the ground, but I had a pretty good idea that was what the spiral chute was for.

Once again, thanks to our purple bracelets there was hardly any time wasted waiting. We reached the base of the tower and were ushered into a separate entrance by the waiting attendants.

Mel went first. A female attendant handed her an oversized inner tube, small on the inside but very wide, and helped Mel put it on so it rode just below her breasts, giving her some verbal instructions I didn't hear. She had Mel step through a large metal door with a porthole and closed it behind her, turning an impressive-looking wheel several times until she seemed satisfied that the door was tight. I could see Mel's face and some of her upper body through the porthole in the door; she adjusted something on the rubber tube and then gave the attendant the thumbs-up sign. The attendant held up three fingers, then two, then one, and hit a large red button next to the door. I heard a faint engine sound, saw Mel seem to tense, and then she lifted straight up and out of sight -- the only thing left behind the door was a solid column of water.

The water receded quickly; a green light above the door came on and the attendant opened the door. "Ready?" she asked, looking at me.

"I guess so," I replied, less than convinced.

She chuckled. "Relax," she told me. "This is my favorite ride -- it's a major kick." I stepped forward and she handed me another of the oversized inner tubes, which I quickly stepped into. "Get this nice and firmly seated just under your armpits," she instructed me. "Once you're inside the chamber, pull on this cord and the tube will inflate so it seals up the space around you. Take a quick peek around, make sure you can't see any gaps around you; if it looks right, give me a thumbs up. I'll count three and then off you go. Got it?"

"Got it." I stepped into the chamber where Mel had been just a minute before. It reminded me of the barrel of a gun: smooth walls, carefully polished and perfectly cylindrical, with a very slight groove spiraling up the inside. I found the cord the attendant had shown me and tugged on it. The tube hissed and expanded, filling up all available space between my body and the walls of the tower. I looked through the porthole at the attendant and gave her the signal; she counted down three and hit the button.

I heard the engine noises again, much louder this time, and within seconds my entire body below the inner tube was under water. I felt pressure against my legs and stomach as the water kept rushing in, meeting resistance from my weight and the inner tube around my chest.

My feet lifted slowly off the floor, and then in a sudden rush I was shooting straight upward, twisting slowly in a spiral. The speed picked up, and I looked up to see the sky coming toward me at a breakneck pace. I shot straight up out of the top of the tower, the water spraying around me, and for one brief moment had a spectacular view of the entire park.

Then gravity reasserted itself. I landed on my butt on a slippery side of the tower's peak and slid downward. A subtle grooving in the tower surface channeled me toward the opening of a tubular slide. My arms went high over my head as I plunged into the spiral and began spinning again, the rubber doughnut guiding me smoothly down the track. After an eternity of spinning and falling, the track ended and I landed softly in a small, shallow pool with more of those large inflated bumpers to break my fall.

I shook my head to clear it, looked around, and found Mel beaming at me. "Helluva ride, wasn't it?"

"Oh, yeah," I agreed, still trying to figure out how to make my legs work again. "Thrill a minute."

Mel laughed and helped me up. She reached under my inner tube and worked a valve of some sort, causing it to deflate. "Ready for more?" Mel asked me as we handed my tube to an attendant.

"Sure thing," I lied, breathless and dizzy but very happy to be leaning on that luscious body for support.

She laughed again, that wild and unpredictable laugh. "Well I've about had it with being soaked," she replied. "What do you say we collect Joy, get some dry clothes and have lunch?"

"Okay," I deadpanned, "if you're sure."

Mel stopped laughing and gave me a bear hug. "You've been a great sport," she said sincerely. "It's okay to let me know if I'm pushing you too far."

I smiled back weakly and managed not to puke.

We found Joy huddled on her bench, looking a little better than when we had left her. "Do you know what I discovered sitting here?" she asked us. "That it's not nearly warm enough yet to be sitting still in a wet bathing suit." Layers of goose bumps testified to her need for a little warmth and dryness. When we told her our plans, she was more than ready to join in.

We ducked into the restrooms and quietly removed our bracelets, then headed out to the van, getting our left hands stamped to allow us to reenter the park after lunch. Nobody gave us a second look.

By the time we reached the van we were all shivering slightly, the breeze reminding us that it was spring, not summer. I took out a large mylar sun screen and placed it across the windshield; between that and the dark tinted side windows, we would have as much privacy as we could reasonably expect in a parking lot. I offered to let the ladies change first, and was mildly disappointed when they didn't invite me in with them. I was a good sport, though; I turned around and leaned my back against the main door, innocently watching the fence across the lane from us.

Okay, maybe not so innocently. A hint of movement drew my eye to the side view mirror just in time to see Mel's reflection as she pulled on a skimpy black pair of panties. I caught a splendid three-quarters view of her bottom and side, including the side of a breast, and my eyes feasted on it. I hadn't seen Mel before in anything less than her tank suit, so the illicit view of all that beautiful skin was irresistible. It was also a mild form of torture: part of me knew that I should look away, and part of me kept hoping she would turn around just a little more before she put anything else on.

Then the prurient thrill turned to horror as Mel's head turned and our eyes met in the mirror. She gave me a steely gaze; an arm came up to cover her breasts, and she wagged an admonishing finger at me. I cringed and looked away, not daring to turn my head again until the van door clicked open behind me. Mel and Joy jumped out, dressed for action in shorts and T-shirts. Mel put her mouth near my ear. "That's two demerits, mister," she whispered. I couldn't tell if she was serious or joking.

I found out a minute or so later, when I unzipped my duffle bag to get out my clean clothes and they weren't there. I crawled around the van, stark naked, checking under the seats, inside the bench, anywhere I could think of. Then I saw Mel watching me in the side view mirror with a catlike grin on her face. The front passenger door popped open and she leaned in, poking her head between the seats. "Nice butt," she said with a wink while I hastily shielded Big Jim and the twins with my hands. She tossed my clothes over; for a second I reached out to catch them, then overrode the instinct and covered up again. "Very nice," she remarked.

"Two demerits," I croaked, trying to be nonchalant and failing.

"So now we're even," she countered. With a quick leer and a lusty wink, she withdrew and shut the door behind her.

I dressed quickly in shorts and a polo shirt, then opened up the bench and set up for lunch. I laid a picnic blanket on the floor and spread it out along with some paper plates, plastic cups, napkins, and condiments. When all was ready, I threw open the side doors and announced, "Café Jimmy is now open, ladies!"

Joy and Mel came inside and sat cross-legged on the floor. I passed out home-made subs -- roast beef for Mel, tuna for Joy, Italian cold cut for myself -- then opened a big bag of chips and set it down in the middle of the blanket area. I then flipped open the cooler and grabbed a perfectly chilled bottle of Sam Adams for each of us.

"You look a lot better," Mel said to Joy when the subs had been consumed and appreciated.

Joy took a swig of her beer and agreed. "I'm fine now. I should have known better than to get on that stupid boat anyway." She caught the puzzled expression on my face and explained. "Mel's been taking me to these things for years. I can handle being flipped over, spun around, shot out of a cannon, whatever ... but boats are my Achilles heel. Get me on a boat and if the ride isn't smooth as glass my insides just turn to clay."

"It's okay," Mel said. "Everybody's got one thing they just can't stand."

"Oh, really?" I said. "What's yours?"

Mel shot me a warning look. "Never you mind." Looking just as sternly at Joy, she added, "And don't you even *think* about telling him."

Before long we were finished with lunch and had the remnants put away. We locked up the van and went back into the park, this time veering left toward the Hardcore Haven section. Once clear of the entrance we ducked into the restrooms and put our purple bracelets back on. Mel hadn't said how much extra they cost, but they were certainly worth it for the time we hadn't spent standing in endless lines. So far this had been the most enjoyable theme park trip I'd ever taken. Of course the company had a lot to do with that, too.

The first thing that caught our collective eye inside the Hardcore Haven area was an attraction called Road Rage. It was obviously a bumper car

setup, but once we were inside the VIP line area we could see these were not ordinary bumper cars. For one thing, they were a lot faster than any bumper cars I remembered seeing -- they fairly zinged around a 5-lane looping track at least the size of a football field. The drivers wore helmets and dual shoulder straps, and rode one to a car. As if that weren't enough, each car also had a hood-mounted cannon that shot bright yellow balls at whatever car or person was in front it. We watched open-mouthed as dogfights broke out between the riders, each one trying to maneuver into position behind someone else and open fire. In between rides, a small army of attendants gathered up the loose balls and reloaded each car through a small hatch in the back.

When our turn came, I jumped into a silver car styled to look like a toy version of a Shelby Mustang. "I know we have a history, Eleanor," I said, patting the dashboard, "and it hasn't always been good. But you take care of me, and I'll take care of you."

Next to me, Mel broke out into raucous laughter. "I hope for your sake that 'Eleanor' didn't see that movie." She had chosen a dark green car that looked vaguely like a Barracuda. A little further up I saw Joy settle into a white VW Bug replica.

As the attendants walked among us, making sure we all had our helmets on, I familiarized myself with Eleanor's controls. Other bumper cars I'd been in had only a steering wheel and accelerator; these cars, I discovered, also had a working brake pedal, side mirrors, and a red FIRE button on either side of the steering wheel, easily accessible to either thumb. The helmet had a clear plastic face shield, lots of foam padding on the inside, and was tethered to the pole that ran up behind me to the electrical grid in the ceiling. The arm straps looped around my shoulders and gave me just enough slack that I could move freely and lean forward a little bit.

An attendant picked up a microphone and gave us all the standard safety lecture. "For your own safety, please keep your helmets on and arms inside the vehicle at all times until all cars have come to a complete stop. Please note that the track has an inner and an outer loop; you can switch between loops as often as you like, but always keep moving in a counterclockwise direction. Your cannons have between 10 and 15 shots in them. That's all you get -- do not try to retrieve balls and reload yourself. Is everyone ready?" There was a general chorus of agreement. "Then, go!"

The attendant threw a switch and I heard a deep-throated growl coming from a speaker on the dash -- canned engine noise. I floored the gas pedal and was surprised at how quickly Eleanor responded. The steering was very tight, which took a little getting used to. I was cruising along, minding my own business, when a yellow ball whizzed by my shoulder, missing me by inches. I turned my head as best I could, then remembered the mirror: just behind me was the green Barracuda. I swerved right as she fired again and missed. The chase was on.

I cut in quickly to the left, putting a car between me and Mel. The driver, a teenage guy, flipped me the bird and took a shot, which hit me squarely on the right shoulder. It stung enough to get my attention and made me want to get him back. I swerved left just a little, then slammed on the brakes and veered right. The kid, in a black toy Porsche, caromed off my right side and spun just a little bit. I hit my Fire button and took great pleasure in seeing my ball bounce off his side. Seeing him wince, I stomped on the gas and fired again, this time hitting him on the arm. He saw me coming at him and started to move, but he was too late -- I rammed him at full throttle and sent him spinning to the outside of the track area. By the time he regained control I was long gone.

The cat and mouse with Mel continued for another lap or two. She did her best to get behind me, I did my best to keep the angle bad or to get someone else in between us. Then I thought of a plan. The course consisted of an outer main loop and a smaller inside loop; from the air it might look a little like a drawing of an eye. There were two places where the inside loop touched the outer, allowing cars to change loops. I moved to left center lane, expecting Mel to follow and she did. When we came up to the merge point I waited until the last possible second, then cut sharply across two lanes and into the inner loop. Mel tried to follow, but another car got in the way and she had to stay on the outer loop. I watched her, gauging our relative speed. If I could time it just right ...

I did. As Mel approached the interchange area on the other side, I was just coming around the inner turn. She saw me and realized I had her beat. She moved as if to join the inner loop, but at the last second veered back onto the outer loop. It didn't matter -- I pulled into the outer loop easily and gunned it. Now I was the one doing the hunting. My first shot grazed Mel's left arm. I was lining up for another when I saw her point to the far side of the track.

Joy was over there. Her white Bug had turned sideways, and there was another car pushing her with its nose against the side, firing its cannon and hitting Joy at point-blank range: a black Porsche.

I gave Mel the thumbs-up sign and broke off pursuit. Instead, I hit the inner loop for a half-lap and came out on the other side just a shade behind the Porsche. Joy was trying to get clear but having trouble doing it with yellow balls smacking into her every few seconds. I aimed Eleanor at the asshole's left front corner and floored the pedal. The thud as I rammed him was pretty satisfying in and of itself, but even more so was the second thump as I drove the Porsche into the short wall marking the bounds of the track. The kid (it was the same kid) took a shot, which was stupid because he wasn't in anything close to a good position; his shot just sailed over Eleanor's hood and hit the netting at the edge of the pavilion, which was probably put there for just that reason. He jumped up in his seat and yelled, "Asshole!" at me, then yelped as a yellow ball struck him in the side.

"Thanks!" Joy called, then she turned herself around and sped away.

I kept the asshole jammed against the side for another second or so, then turned the wheel and took off. As I expected, he followed me. I played him, letting him get a half-decent shooting angle and then veering away. He wasted two more shots without even getting close, then stopped shooting. I figured he might be out and was looking for a chance to ram me. What he didn't realize was that while he was stalking me, Mel and Joy were both stalking him. When I saw them on his flanks, I thought of a great way to finish him off. I sped up, giving Eleanor everything she had, until we were on the straightaway, then slammed on the brakes and turned the wheel as hard as I could. Eleanor spun 180 degrees. I took my foot off the brake and let the Porsche bump me, then fired at him. The ball hit him right on the collarbone. I hit the brakes and fired again for another direct hit. Then Porsche boy squirmed and shrieked as he was hit from behind by two more balls from Joy and Mel. I would have been content to keep that up for a while, but after another volley Mel pulled out and drove off, waving for me and Joy to follow. At the first opening in traffic I steered hard right and floored it, pushing the Porsche back a little and getting myself turned in the right direction again. The kid didn't follow us this time.

When the ride ended shortly after, and our cars slowed to a halt within a few feet of each other, we jumped out and shared a triumphant 3-way hug. "We rock!" Mel exclaimed. "We completely, totally rock!" We walked out the exit arm in arm while Porsche boy shuffled out alone, mumbling to himself.

I think we were all on an adrenaline high because we went right into the next ride, called Dark Territory, without even looking to see what it was first. A little voice in the back of my head tried to worry a bit when the attendants asked if any of us were epileptic, but it was drowned out by lingering bravado from the Road Rage ride. Soon we were settled into an open 4-seat carriage with the usual safety bars, ready to go.

The carriage pulled away from the platform and into a dark tunnel. Mel's hand found mine and clutched it tightly. "You okay?" I asked her, surprised.

"I don't know yet," she said, "but I've got a bad feeling about this one."

A series of blue-white lights winked on, surrounding us as we traveled deeper into the tunnel. They seemed to be moving in slow circles, creating the impression of a long, slow spiral encircling the moving carriage. They made sensing direction nearly impossible. "This isn't so bad," I said encouragingly to Mel.

As if I'd spoken a cue, at that moment three things happened: the lights went out, leaving us in total darkness; a blood-curdling scream filled the passage, seeming to come from all directions at once; and the carriage suddenly plunged downward, accelerating quickly to breakneck speed. I heard Mel say, "Oh, shit!" and felt her hand clamp down on mine.

We kept dropping and picking up speed for what felt like an eternity, then suddenly -- every movement is sudden when you can't see it coming -- the carriage turned sharply and seemed to level out. A huge pair of gleaming yellow eyes appeared ahead of us, approaching swiftly. Just as we reached the eyes, they winked out and a fierce roar split the air around us. Only the metal safety bar prevented Mel from jumping into my lap.

The ride continued this way, alternately teasing us with ominous visuals and startling us with chilling sound effects. Mel held onto me like a lamprey, keeping very still and not letting up on her grip for a second. The temperature got suddenly warm as the carriage took one final dive, then a huge red fireball seemed to burst in the air ahead of us and stay there. The carriage ducked below the fireball and then, to our collective horror, looped up and over it. The ride slowed during the loop, leaving us with a split second sensation of hovering over the top of the flame, before straightening out and taking us back into daylight, where the end platform awaited us.

Mel put on a good show for the attendants, smiling and laughing as we strolled away, but I could tell she was shaken. "Jesus Christ, Mel," Joy said, seeing the red marks on my arm. Then, to me, she added, "I hope you don't bruise easily."

"Shut up, Joy." Mel's voice was tense and ragged.

This wasn't good. I spotted a concession stand with picnic tables nearby, and without another word I steered us in that direction. I sat the girls down, paid way too much for three plastic cups of generic mass-produced beer, and brought them back to the table. "Doctor Jimmy says drink these now."

We sat and drank, and in a few minutes Mel seemed a little more at ease. "Do you want to tell me what that was about?" I asked her.

She took another long pull from her cup before answering. "Not really," she answered, "but since I've scarred you for life I suppose I owe it to you." There was the faintest hint of her old, playful smile behind the words; that was encouraging.

I checked out my forearm: the red marks were already fading. "Not for life," I said, "just for the next few minutes. I can butt out if you want me to."

That got me a real smile. "You've earned it anyway," she told me. "Remember how Joy was saying earlier that she can't take rough boat rides? Well, I have a problem with things jumping out at me in the dark. I can handle just about anything if I can see it coming, but the nasty surprises in that last ride really put me off."

"I'm sorry," I said because it felt right.

"Don't be. None of us looked ahead to see what Dark Territory was. Besides, you were right there for me and let me cling to you like grim death. Thank you for that."

"So now what do we do?"

Mel looked at our empty cups. "One more round, I think," she said. "My treat. Then, on to the next ride."

By the time we finished our second round, we were feeling pretty mellow again and all was forgiven. We strolled up the path and into the purple

VIP entrance of an attraction called The Turbine, a gleaming silver saucer that rose up and down between two pillars.

We were able to get on immediately. An attendant ushered us in through a big aircraft-style door and into a huge circular chamber maybe 25 feet across with no ceiling. We each looped our arms through simple safety straps and stood with our backs against the wall of the chamber. When the chamber was full, with people lining the entire circumference, the attendant left us and shut the door behind her.

A few seconds later, the whole chamber began to move. Slowly at first, then pickup up speed, the chamber and everyone in it began to revolve around an unseen pivot point in the center. As the speed increased I felt the outward force holding me against the wall. Soon I had the uneasy feeling that I couldn't pull myself away from the wall if I wanted to. At that point a voice announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, prepare for liftoff."

I wasn't sure what preparing for liftoff was supposed to entail -- I couldn't move a muscle anyway, thanks to the unseen forces holding me against the wall -- but I don't think anything could have prepared me for what happened next: the floor detached from the chamber and seemed to sink away. It took me a moment before I realized that the floor wasn't sinking, the rest of the chamber was rising. I stood there, pinned to the wall, while the chamber ascended to the top of the pillars. The sight of the ground below spinning wildly was dizzying.

As if being spun in a circle a hundred feet in the air weren't disorienting enough, a hydraulic hum heralded yet another change, and within a few seconds the view under my feet was that of white clouds circling in the sky. The chamber remained upside down for a short time, then began to tilt again. It flipped a slow 180 degrees, bringing us right-side up again, but didn't stop; instead it continued to revolve slowly, spinning us now in two directions like a giant centrifuge on a spit. A weird sort of euphoria came over me as I gave up trying to figure out which end was up.

I came back to my senses when the rolling motion stopped and the chamber began to sink slowly to the ground. Soon there was a floor touching my feet again, and the invisible force holding me to the wall softened. The ride came to a very gradual stop, but even still it was several seconds before I trusted my legs enough to let go of the safety straps.

The three of us walked away from the Turbine arm in arm, feeling ten feet tall and an inch wide. I figured at any moment I'd be getting another look

at those beers we drank before the ride, but the only one of us that really looked pallid was Joy. Mel's entire face and neck were flushed, and her hand gripped mine firmly. "Next?" Mel said, grinning at both of us.

Joy pointed to one of the many wooden benches Xtreme World had been kind enough to place near the exit to the Turbine. "The only thing I'm riding for at least the next few minutes is that," she declared. "Unless, of course, one of you wants to be wearing my lunch."

Mel laughed. "Okay, you win. Pit stop time." She veered off toward a nearby restroom structure, tugging me along behind her. Joy let go and plopped down on a bench.

I hoofed it to keep up with Mel lest she separate my shoulder by accident. "You planning on taking me into the bathroom with you?" I asked. "Someone might object."

"We're not going to the bathroom." Instead, she led me past the women's entrance and around to the back of the stone structure. She pressed her body against mine, wrapping her arms around me, and our mouths met in a hot, hungry kiss. Her lips melted into mine and parted, allowing our tongues to explore each other freely. I felt my dick stiffening rapidly in my shorts, seeking the warm spot I knew was only a few layers of cloth away where Mel's groin pressed against mine. Her hands caressed my back and mine followed suit, feeling their way across her beautiful, smooth back through the cotton T-shirt. There was a quick tug, and then Mel's hands had slipped under my shirt, lifting it, snaking underneath, making my skin tingle and my knees go weak.

I slid down to a sitting position with my back against the stone wall. Mel stayed with me, keeping our mouths locked together, straddling me as I sat. I pulled the T-shirt loose from her waistband and slipped my hands inside it. Her skin was smooth and soft and warm, just as I'd imagined it must be. My fingers brushed the clasp of her bra. Mel nodded, so I fumbled for a few seconds until it came free and then slid my hands around to the front to cup her breasts. The nipples were firm and hard and standing tall. I rolled them between my fingers for a second and thrilled to hear the hitch in her breath as she let out a short moan. Mel shifted back a little bit, opened my zipper, and reached a hand inside my shorts. Her fingers traced the outline of my bulging package and squeezed in just the right spot.

"Mmmmmmm," Mel moaned. "This is going to feel so *good* inside me." My groan of agreement turned to dismay when Mel stood up. "Not here," she said. "I don't want to have to rush."

"You're right," I grudgingly agreed, standing up. "I can wait a little longer."

Mel grinned at me with that devilish light in her eyes. Slowly, deliberately, she reached into her sleeves and pulled out the straps of her bra, slipping them over her hands. Then she reached in under the front of her shirt and pulled the bra out. Carefully and neatly, she folded the cups together and tucked the straps inside. "Hold on to this for me, will you?" she asked.

"Sure," I replied, puzzled.

Still grinning, she grabbed the front of my shorts and pulled them forward, taking the elastic band of my briefs with them. With her other hand she stuffed the folded bra into the front of my briefs, folding the soft satin cups around my still-hard shaft. She kissed me once again while her hand rubbed me up and down through the satin for a few seconds. "I *will* be back to collect it," she promised.

Joy had fully recovered when we came out from behind the restroom building. Her eyes moved quickly from our faces to Mel's bosom to my crotch. "Lose something, Mel?"

"I don't think so," Mel replied nonchalantly. "Why?"

Joy looked my way again, and I felt myself reddening. "No reason," she said, with the slightest hint of a wink to me. "Shall we move on?"

So we moved on to our first actual roller coaster of the day, a fiendish device called The Twister. It was an inverse coaster; the carriages hung suspended below the track, like a ski lift. Mel, Joy and I were seated in a carrier that seemed little more than a fiberglass porch swing with a safety bar, our legs hanging freely. I noticed the attendant checking out our footwear as he secured the safety bar. A large sign on the platform explained why: "*Shoes must be securely fastened. Flip-flops, sandals, and similar footwear should be removed and left with the attendants.*"

The ride was a wild one. It started with a long, slow climb that gave us plenty of time to study the upcoming turns and twists in the track, imagining what our little carriage would do as the momentum carried us around it. Then it started with what felt like an 80-foot drop almost straight down. We saw the river from the speed boat ride in front of us and the

overhead rail pointing straight at it. I braced myself for a wet impact and was almost disappointed when at the last second our carrier swooped up and to the left. From there we went through a hair-raising series of loops and turns. True to its name, the ride flipped us over several times, and at one point had us in a long barrel roll. Finally it whipped us around in one more loop and came to a stop back at the platform.

I got a good look at Mel before the attendant released our safety bar, and it was an eyeful. Her skin was flushed and hot-looking. Her nostrils seemed to flare slightly, and I could swear her nipples were poking out against the cotton T-shirt she wore. Her hand was resting on my bare thigh, the fingers toying with the short hairs they found. I could relate -- between the rides, the make-out session behind the bathrooms, and the promise of more to come, my adrenals were getting the mother of all workouts.

Next came the SideWinder, a slightly more conventional coaster in that the cars rode above the track, but with the added twist: the cars were wedge-shaped and designed to pivot on the front point, swinging wildly from side to side as the track went through its turns. There were no loops on the SideWinder, but plenty of vicious sharp turns to keep us sloshing around in our carrier. As with the Twister, I sat between the two girls with one arm around each; when the ride was over, they were both slow to break contact.

The Hammerhead ride was short, but memorable. We were seated in a column -- me in back, Mel in the middle, Joy in front -- in a cigar-shaped carrier on a normal-seeming track. Instead of the usual gradual start, though, the Hammerhead took the opposite tack: a sudden jolt thrust us forward instantly at full speed. We went almost immediately into a near vertical climb. I could feel the car slowing, losing momentum, still pointed straight up in the air. It slowed and slowed, and for a gut-churning moment it stalled. Joy screamed and grabbed my legs as the car began to fall backward. *Oh, shit, something's gone wrong*, I thought. Then the car pivoted on an unseen catch, pointing itself toward the ground, and went into a dive. I could see we were still on the track, and in that instant I understood where the ride had gotten its name. I relaxed into the adrenaline buzz, letting my muscles ease off a bit. The car finished its dive, transitioned into an overhead loop, then leveled off and came to a halt at the platform.

Mel and Joy both looked at me with something like admiration when we left the Hammerhead. "You must have balls of iron," Joy told me. "I almost

wet myself up there, and all of a sudden you just relaxed as though you were at home in your easy chair."

"I was scared, too," I explained. "Then, in a flash, I realized what they were doing -- they were simulating a hammerhead stall." Both girls gave me blank looks, so I elaborated. "It's a well-known maneuver to stunt flyers. You put the plane into a near vertical climb and hold it there until it stalls; then you let it roll to one side until it's pointing straight down and, once you've got up enough speed, gradually level it off. The loop at the end was extra, probably to help bleed off excess momentum."

"So you've done that before?"

I shrugged. "Only if Flight Simulator on my PC counts. But once I understood what was happening, I figured why not relax and go with it?"

Joy shook her head slowly. "Balls of iron," she repeated.

Mel sidled up beside me. "I'll have to examine them myself," she whispered hotly into my ear. "See if she's right."

We walked around the park for another half hour, checking out the remaining rides. I think we were all a bit distracted, though. Mel walked closely by my side, holding hands and making frequent side contact. Joy stayed close, pretending not to notice the growing sexual electricity between me and Mel, but I caught her in a few furtive glances.

Finally, Mel made the motion we were all waiting for. "We've done all the good rides," she said. "Anything else would just be a letdown. How about we call it a day?"

I was fine with that. Walking around for half the afternoon with Mel's bra stuffed down my shorts had been a strange sort of torture. With every step the cloth moved a little around my package; it was like getting a long, slow hand job from someone wearing a satin glove. Between that and the endorphins running through my system from the rides, I'd spent the afternoon in a constant state of semi-erection -- all I could think about was how much I wanted to finish what Mel and I had started behind the bathrooms. The sooner we got home, I figured, the sooner that would happen.

By the time we reached the van, I had it all mapped out. It was just a hair before four o'clock; if we grabbed dinner at a drive-thru we could drop

Joy off at home around 7:00, get to my place at 7:30, and be in ecstasy by 7:45. But Mel had plans of her own.

"Hey, Joy," she said. "Feel like driving for a while?"

Joy shrugged. "Sure, if Jim's okay with it."

I was dubious, and not just because it threatened my little timetable. "Have you ever driven a big van before?"

"Oh, yeah," she assured me. "I used to drive for a shuttle service; I spent 40 hours a week driving a van like this one."

Mel sensed my hesitation and moved in close. "She won't hurt the van," she told me in a sultry voice. "And it will give us a chance to sit in the back and neck."

All my reluctance vanished. I tossed the keys to Joy. "Here you go."

Joy got herself settled into the driver's seat. I helped adjust the right side mirror, then climbed into the seat behind her, next to Mel. I watched pretty closely in the beginning, but by the time we were out of the parking lot it was obvious that Joy was an expert at maneuvering the beast.

Mel wasted no time. Once we were on the highway, she snuggled up right against me and pulled me in for a deep, erotic kiss. Lips and tongues played together, and soon our hands were busy exploring each other's curves and textures.

God, that girl can kiss! A few seconds of mouth-to-mouth put my little soldier on full alert; a few more had me suddenly worried about him firing before the target was in range. Then I felt Mel's fingers working their way into my shorts, and I tried to pull away.

"What's the matter?"

"Timing," I said. "If your hand goes in there, I might last 10 seconds before creaming in my pants like a horny teen. I don't want to blow this."

"Trust me," she breathed. "I know exactly what I'm doing."

So I let her continue. She planted another long, languid kiss on me while her hand finished opening up my shorts and snaked through the front slot

in my briefs. Her fingers closed around my extended shaft, which was still wrapped up in the cups of her bra. "Feels like iron to me," she said.

Joy must have heard some of what was going on. She tried her best to look back at us without losing sight of the road. "Melanie Eileen Loughlin, what the hell are you doing?"

Mel ignored her and kept whispering hotly into my ear. "Ten seconds, eh? Let's see ..." She squeezed my quivering cock and started pumping it. "One," she counted, and melted me with another hot kiss. "Two." Another pump and another smoldering kiss. "Three ..."

I made it as far as eight. My system exploded under the relentless stimulation; all I could do was groan in exquisite agony while Mel pumped me dry. When my spasms ended she withdrew the soaked, sticky satin and set it aside. "There," she said, a satisfied smile on her face. "That should take the edge off. Now we can take our time and really savor each other."

Now it was my turn to grin. "I know what I want to savor first." I grabbed her T-shirt with both hands and lifted it straight up and off. Mel's breasts, in full view for the first time, were just perfect. Each was a generous handful, the soft flesh covered in that extra-pale, freckle-dotted skin so common in natural redheads, with a pronounced (and at the moment, very erect) nipple like the cherry on a sundae, begging to be eaten first.

Mel reclined on the seat, resting her head on the arm. I lay down on top of her, shifting down a little so my mouth could easily reach the objects of my desire. I divided my attentions equally between them, kissing and licking and nibbling, caressing with my hands and my tongue and my lips. I could see Mel trying to suppress moans, and out of perversity I concentrated my efforts until she gave up and started moaning out loud.

I'd just about forgotten Joy, but she was apparently very aware of us. "C'mon you guys," she protested, "I'm trying to drive here. If you can't keep your clothes on until we get home, you could at least get out of sight and be quiet about it."

"I'm trying ... oooooohhhh ... to be quiet," Mel responded -- or tried to, while I kept doing everything I could think of to break her train of thought. "It's just ... mmmmm ... I mean ... aaaahhhh ... oh, never mind." I started moving south slowly, kissing her ribs, under her breasts, her navel. She grabbed at me and tried to pull me back up, but all she ended up doing was pulling up on my shirt. I let her take it. There wasn't enough room in

the seat for me to go where I really wanted to without having my butt pressed up against the side window, so I lifted her leg up over my shoulder and started kissing and caressing her thigh, letting my fingers wander up and down, inside the leg of her shorts and back out. Mel was loving it; her breath came in gasps, her back arching with each one, her head lolling backward.

Joy seemed pretty distracted, too. The rear view mirror kept drawing her eyes for longer and longer at a time. Once or twice I felt a sharp jerk as she made a too-hasty course correction. "We're distracting the driver," I told Mel between kisses, "and I need more room to move around. Let's go to the back."

Mel nodded enthusiastically and started to scoot off the seat. I took advantage of the movement to strip off her shorts and panties in the process. She scampered around the seat quickly and dropped to the floor in the back. Before following suit, I winked at Joy through the rear view mirror. "Show us the monuments," I quipped, then laughed when she rolled her eyes and groaned.

In the back area, Mel was hurriedly unfolding the picnic blanket we'd used as a tablecloth earlier in the day. We laid it down in the open area and met in the middle, kneeling and embracing and indulging in more of those long, open-mouthed kisses. Our hands roamed freely over each other from top to bottom. Mel's came upon my shorts, open and unzipped but still hanging on, and quickly had them and my briefs down at my knees. Big Jim was happy for the breathing room, as he was beginning to stand out again.

After one more glance at the rear view mirror -- I caught Joy peeking at us again, and this time she actually blushed and looked away -- I gently pushed Mel down onto the floor. Using kisses and caresses, I worked my way slowly from her mouth downward, paying loving attention to every curve and crevice until I reached the fiery red racing stripe on her mound. There was plenty to taste already; her thighs were slick and shiny on the insides, and the scent of her arousal released the animal in me. My world narrowed to the immediate area of her sex, and I left no nook or cranny unexplored. Her hips rose up to meet me, gyrating wildly at times, and her legs locked around me tightly enough that for a while I could barely hear the moans coming out of Mel's mouth. Then I heard her squeal. Her body shook uncontrollably. Her fingers locked around my head, grabbing fistfuls of hair and pulling me in tighter as she shrieked repeatedly.

Finally her fingers let go and her body seemed to loosen up again. She was still panting and still shaking just a little bit. I lifted her legs up and spread them open a little more. "Ready for the next ride?" I asked.

Mel nodded breathlessly. I rose up and knee-walked up to her, giving Big Jim a glimpse of heaven. He took his cue and plunged directly into the tunnel of bliss. Grabbing Mel's hips, I lifted her up to improve the angle and managed to bottom out inside her. Mel wrapped her legs around my torso and used them for leverage, working me in and out slowly and easily. I freed up one hand and felt around for her magic button until I found it. I gave that a nice, gentle tweak and Mel really came to life. Her legs and hips started working me like a piston, in and out, in that primal rhythm that takes over when a woman is about to come hard. My knees and hamstrings protested, but I stayed in the saddle until Mel came again. This time I got to watch her as she came, and it was a sight to do any man proud. Her chest heaved up and down, her back arching and releasing with each thrust. The skin of her chest, belly, and up her neck glowed bright pink. Her face had that loose, slack-jawed look of total abandon -- only her lips moved as she panted and moaned with the rhythm of her hips and back.

After a very long time, Mel's breathing and movements slowed. Her eyes opened and fixed on my face. I slipped out of her, still hard as a railroad spike, and joined her in a happy sigh. She held her arms out to me and I eased down on top of her, indulging in another of those incredible kisses. She reached between us and checked out Big Jim, who was still swollen with pride at his performance. "Roll over," she said, giving me a gentle push.

I complied, and Mel rolled with me. She sat up straight, gave my eager member a nice stroke or two, and then buried it inside her again. I felt her pelvic muscles grip me firmly and I groaned a little in response. She grinned and did it again, watching me melt as my brain transferred control to the battle bridge. Mel's eyes locked onto mine and she looked right into me, holding me in her gaze while she rocked up and down on my saddle horn. I felt a tickling sensation and realized she had her fingertips on my balls, tracing the line down the middle. She traced back, using the excess fluid for lubrication, and found that really sensitive spot all the way at the back. Big Jim went nuts; I felt every muscle in my body go into spasm mode, clenching and releasing with the force of my orgasm. I heard someone groaning in sweet agony and realized it was me. And all the while Mel watched me as I had watched her, fully enjoying the results of her expert ministrations.

Soon it was over. My breathing returned to something approaching normal, and Mel was relaxed on top of me, tracing little circles on my chest with her fingertip. My hands moved idly up and down her back, not trying to arouse anymore, just enjoying the feel of her skin.

A sharp moan cut through the afterglow, followed by another. The voice was soft, feminine, but it wasn't Mel. We looked at each other, and realized together that the van was no longer moving. As one, we knelt up and looked over the seat. Joy had pulled over into a rest area, one of those places where you can park and look at the mountains on the side of the highway. Joy's face, reflected in the rear view mirror, was taut; her eyes were closed and her jaw clenched.

"Should I?" I whispered.

"Do it," Mel answered.

I kissed her one more time, then quietly slipped around her and crept up behind the driver's seat. Using the side view mirror, I could see Joy better. She had her shorts undone and one hand working feverishly inside them; the other had lifted up her shirt and bra and was aimlessly wandering across her chest. Centering myself behind the seat back, I reached around with both hands and put them flat on Joy's stomach. She jumped as if hit with an electric shock, her head looking wildly back and forth. I didn't give her time to react: my hands moved immediately upward and cupped her breasts. At the first gentle squeeze she moaned deeply and relaxed again into the seat. I caressed and stroked her breasts while she continued to finger herself below, and in a very short time Joy was gasping and panting and coming like a freight train.

By the time Joy opened her eyes, I was back behind the rear seat with Mel. Joy turned and saw us there, watching her. "What are you two looking at?" she said irritably. "You started it."

All three of us laughed ourselves silly.

"To road trips," Mel proposed, raising her iced tea glass in the air. We clinked glasses and drank.

"To my brother Frank," I offered, initiating another round of clinks.

"And his van," Joy added to round things out.

We were sitting in a corner booth at a steak house, having decided that we could spare the time for a good, solid dinner. The meal, and the activities preceding it, had us feeling nice and mellow.

"What I want to know," Joy said, "is which one of you that was behind my seat."

Mel and I exchanged a conspiratorial look, grinned together, and said nothing.

"Look," Joy continued. "It doesn't really matter. I mean, between the rush from the rides and the show you two put on right behind me, I was too far gone to care at the time."

"And now?" Mel prompted.

"Now that my head's on straight again, I'm curious."

Mel and I shared another silent, secretive smile.

"Then again, maybe I don't want to know."

The waitress brought us our check. We left a hefty tip and piled into the van for the rest of the trip home.

"I'll drive from here," I volunteered. "I think I can keep my libido under control until we get home."

"But what if I can't?" Mel asked teasingly.

"You'll think of something, I'm sure." With another chorus of hearty laughs, we took our seats. I readjusted everything for me and took us back onto the highway.

All the way home, I kept a close eye on the rear view mirror.

-wg
5/14/01